



DECISION 33/2024
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

**ON THE ADOPTION OF THE EVALUATION CRITERIA OF THE EIT'S CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2025
FOR A NEW EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY
IN THE WATER, MARINE AND MARITIME SECTORS AND ECOSYSTEMS**

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2021/819 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (recast) (hereafter referred to as the "EIT Regulation")¹, in particular Articles 9 and 17(3) thereof;

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 (hereafter referred to as the "Horizon Europe Regulation")² in particular Article 28 thereof;

Having regard to Decision 2021/820 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) 2021-2027: Boosting the Innovation Talent and Capacity of Europe and repealing Decision No 1312/2013/EU (hereafter referred to as the "EIT SIA 2021-2027")³, in particular Section 3.3 and Appendix 2 thereof;

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (hereinafter referred to as the "EU Financial Regulation")⁴;

Having regard to Decision 21/2019 of the EIT Governing Board of the EIT of 25 September 2019 on the Financial Regulation of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (hereafter referred to as the "EIT Financial Regulation")⁵, in particular Article 1 thereof;

¹ OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 61

² OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 1

³ OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 91

⁴ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1–222

⁵ Ares(2019)6810859



WHEREAS

- (1) The EIT Governing Board must adopt the selection procedure for the KICs in accordance with Article 9 of the EIT Regulation and the EIT SIA 2021-2027, in particular, the evaluation criteria, the key element of the procedure for the selection of the proposals to be submitted in response to the EIT Call for Proposals 2025;
- (2) According to the past experience, the evaluation criteria have been reviewed taking into account the lessons learnt from the EIT Call for Proposals 2021, feedback from the EIT Governing Board and the EIT Staff, and the latest developments of the EIT KIC model.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1 Adoption

The evaluation criteria for the EIT Call for Proposals 2025, as laid down in Annex 1 of this decision, are hereby adopted.

Article 2 Entry into force

This decision shall enter into force on the date of its signature.

Done in Budapest on 30 October 2024

[E-signed]
Stefan Dobrev
Chairperson of the EIT Governing Board

Annex - Evaluation criteria for EIT Call for Proposals 2025 for a new EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community in the Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems





Technical EVALUATION CRITERIA

EIT Call for Proposals 2025

for a new EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) on Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems ('Water')

Following the deadline of the EIT Call for Proposals, admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria checks will be performed for each proposal.

1. Admissibility criteria

Prior to the evaluation, proposals will be examined for compliance with the following admissibility criteria:

- the proposal must be submitted electronically via the proposal submission system operated by the European Commission in accordance with the provisions of the [EU Financial Regulation](#)¹ (Article 149(2));
- all mandatory parts of the proposal must have been completed;
- the proposal must be submitted by the Call deadline.

Only proposals satisfying all the admissibility criteria shall pass on to the eligibility criteria assessment stage.

Since the working language of the EIT is English, applicants are requested to submit the proposal in English. If the proposal is submitted in any other official language of the European Union, the EIT may ask for the English translation of the specific document from the applicant.

In addition, the proposal must be accessible and legible, otherwise the EIT may request the applicant to resubmit the application document.

2. Eligibility criteria

Following the admissibility check, only proposals complying with the following conditions will be considered eligible for further evaluation:

- the applying consortium must contain at least three independent partner organisations established in at least three different Member States;

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012



- at least two thirds of the partner organisations forming the consortium are established in different Member States;
- the applying consortium includes at least one higher education institution, one research institution and one private company;
- the applying consortium shall not include the following entities that are part of a KIC under Partnership Agreement or a KIC under Memorandum of Cooperation:
 - KIC legal entity;
 - co-location centre;
 - other entities part of a KIC's legal/corporate structure²;
- the proposal must be submitted by a consortium containing a maximum of 50 partners.

Only proposals satisfying all the eligibility criteria shall pass on to the evaluation stage.

3. Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participation in the Call and from the award if they are in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) of the EU Financial Regulation.

As evidence, the applicants (i.e. the Coordinator and all the proposed partners participating in the applicant consortium) will have to submit a declaration of honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest. Following the designation decision, the winning consortium may be requested to submit recently issued evidence (e.g. registration and tax certificates, judicial records) in support of the declaration of honour, in accordance with Article 137 of the EU Financial Regulation.

Only admissible and eligible proposals will be evaluated against the financial and operational capacity criteria.

4. Financial capacity criteria

At the proposal submission stage³, the Coordinator will be asked to confirm that the organisation has carried out a self-check of the financial capacity of the organisation through the financial self-check tool⁴ or has been covered by a financial viability check for an EU project for the last closed financial year.

The Coordinator's organisation will be subject to the financial capacity assessment if (and when) the winning consortium has been designated: the financial capacity check will be done at latest before the

² Such as KIC subsidiaries, foundations, associations, etc. The requirement does not exclude KIC partner organisations.

³ This confirmation will be requested on the SEP system as part of the proposal submission forms.

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do>

award of the start-up grant. The financial capacity will be assessed based on the financial viability check of the Coordinator's organisation⁵.

If, following the designation decision, the Coordinator's organisation's financial viability would be assessed as 'weak' or 'insufficient':

- the Coordinator has to step down from his role but can participate in any other; in this case, the applying consortium must put forward a solution, including the appointment of a new Coordinator and reassignment of the coordination tasks;
- the consortium's activities will be subject to additional monitoring and reporting based on an action plan;
- if no acceptable solution or action plan would be presented by the Coordinator, the KIC designation/start-up phase may be terminated, and the designated consortium may be cancelled.

Following the provisions of Article 198(5) of the EU Financial Regulation, public bodies, including Member State organisations, international organisations, or legal entities whose viability is guaranteed by a Member State or a Horizon Europe associated country, will be exempted from the financial capacity check.

5. Operational capacity criteria

1) The Coordinator's familiarity with the Call's theme and experience of coordinating and/or participating in international projects related to innovation, research and education (separately or together), as well as familiarity with the European Union's financial procedures, is proven through having:

- Participated in at least one project as a project consortium member or coordinator, where its project budget share exceeded EUR 3 million; and
- coordinated at least one project with at least two other partners (three in total) from at least three different European countries and from at least two sides of the Knowledge Triangle; and
- participated in at least two EU financed projects in the capacity of a project partner.

The Coordinator should provide references for the above required projects as evidence of its operational capacity (one project may meet several of the above criteria). The projects should have been successfully completed, the final implementation date of the projects should not be earlier than 30 June 2023, and the minimum budget of the projects should be higher than EUR 300.000 to make the reference eligible. All reference projects should be related to the relevant thematic area.

⁵ The organisation's financial viability will be assessed by checking that: it has sufficient liquidity – it is able to cover its short-term commitments, it is financially autonomous, it is solvent - capable of covering its medium and long-term commitments, it is profitable – by generating profits, or at least with self-financing capacity.

2) The capability and necessary experience of the key members of the Interim Management Team, namely the CEO (Chief Executive Officer), COO (Chief Operational Officer), Chief Financial Officer (CFO) are evidenced through them having:

- at least 7 years’ managerial work experience relevant to the position of Interim CEO, Interim COO and Interim CFO (i.e. tasks in the Interim Management in case the consortium is designated);
- for the CEO 7 years, and for the COO 5 years’ work experience in the Call’s thematic field;
- at least 5 years’ work experience in international public or private organisations, or international projects.

A curriculum vitae (maximum four pages) in the Europass format⁶ covering the related professional qualifications, the work experience in international environment and the managerial experience and relevant expertise shall be attached to the Coordinator’s Motivation and Commitment Declaration.

Only proposals that pass the operational capacity verification will be evaluated by the external experts.

6. Technical evaluation criteria

Further to the Horizon Europe criteria requirements⁷, the following EIT specific technical evaluation criteria will be applied:

Table 1 – Technical evaluation criteria

EXCELLENCE 40 points max.	QUALITY & EFFICIENCY OF IMPLEMENTATION 30 points max.	IMPACT 30 points max.
TOTAL 100 points		
<p>1.1 STRATEGIC APPROACH</p> <p>Relevance and added value of the strategic approach in addressing the Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems societal challenge in an integrated manner within the selected thematic focus areas with the highest innovation and commercialisation potential.</p> <p>Effective application of the EIT KIC innovation model under a business-oriented approach and quality of the</p>	<p>2.1. KIC GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL SET-UP</p> <p>Effectiveness of the proposed KIC’s governance and management model, including selection and connectivity of co-location centres and demonstration how the knowledge triangle integration approach will be implemented at the operational level. This should also include clear reference to</p>	<p>3.1 IMPACT</p> <p>Ambition and feasibility of the planned pan-European impact, incl. in EIT RIS eligible countries, in line with the EIT Impact Framework for each of the following impact pathways, demonstrated by relevant KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - societal impact relevant to the Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and

⁶ <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>

⁷ Article 28 Horizon Europe Regulation

<p>EXCELLENCE 40 points max.</p>	<p>QUALITY & EFFICIENCY OF IMPLEMENTATION 30 points max.</p>	<p>IMPACT 30 points max.</p>
<p>proposed intervention logic to tackle the societal challenge by integrating entrepreneurship and skills education, innovation and business creation/acceleration (Knowledge Triangle integration).</p> <p>Added value and excellence is demonstrated in each activity area, as well as there is a strategy in place to build on and upscale innovative solutions developed under existing programmes and initiatives such as other Horizon Europe programmes, in particular other Partnerships, and EU missions.</p> <p><i>[20 points max]</i> [0-5 points; weighting: 4]</p> <p>1.2 PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION POTENTIAL</p> <p>Potential of the consortium’s composition to implement the future KIC’s strategy, demonstrated by the combined quality and commitment of the partners (including SMEs), forming a diverse, complementary and balanced high-quality excellence-based partnership to improve the innovation capacity of local ecosystems and deliver the uptake and deployment of innovation at scale, incl. through the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme and demonstrated open and transparent partnership growth strategy.</p>	<p>how the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme is integrated.</p> <p>Suitability of the proposed KIC’s governance and operational set-up (incl. proposed profiles, talent acquisition and management) to deliver KIC’s commercial side of activities and distribute and control the EIT grant.</p> <p><i>[15 points max]</i> [0- 5 points; weighting: 3]</p> <p>2.2 KIC BUSINESS MODEL AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Feasibility of the future KIC’s business model and financial plan to achieve financial sustainability based on diversified revenue streams, incl. revenues and return generating assets’ creation, and attraction of public and private co-investments.</p> <p><i>[15 points max]</i> [0- 5 points; weighting: 3]</p>	<p>Ecosystems societal challenge;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technological/ economic/ innovation impact by influencing the creation and growth of companies, creating new innovative solutions, supporting the uptake, commercialisation and deployment of innovative solutions at scale, creating direct and indirect jobs and mobilising additional public and private investments; - educational impact by strengthening human capital and reducing skills gap in research and innovation in water, marine and maritime sectors, enhancing innovative and entrepreneurial skills both at individual and organisational levels. <p><i>[20 points max]</i> [0-5 points; weighting: 4]</p> <p>3.2 COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH</p> <p>Relevance and effectiveness of the proposed KIC’s plans for communications and outreach including the contribution to the EIT Community brand identity, and consistent visibility of EU.</p> <p><i>[5 points max]</i></p>

EXCELLENCE 40 points max.	QUALITY & EFFICIENCY OF IMPLEMENTATION 30 points max.	IMPACT 30 points max.
<p>Relevance and specificity of the consortium's strategy to become a sustainable institutionalised European Partnership.</p> <p><i>[10 points max]</i> [0-5 points; weighting: 2]</p> <p>1.3 SYNERGIES</p> <p>Demonstrated added value and readiness to establish concrete synergies, cooperation mechanisms and complementarities, positioning of the future KIC within the landscape of other relevant public, private and third sector initiatives at EU and other levels, notably the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters and relevant Horizon Europe partnerships, as well as other relevant KICs.</p> <p><i>[10 points max]</i> [0- 5 points; weighting: 2]</p>		<p>[0- 5 points; weighting: 1]</p> <p>3.3 DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS</p> <p>Relevance and effectiveness of plans for dissemination of results, valorisation of knowledge and especially management and exploitation of intellectual property, including sharing good practices within, among and beyond the KICs, across EU Member States, regions and local stakeholders and institutions to maximise the take-up of the new knowledge, both for commercial purposes and for policy making.</p> <p><i>[5 points max]</i> [0- 5 points; weighting: 1]</p>

7. Hearing with the EIT Governing Board and designation of the EIT KIC

Following the approval of the evaluation results by the EIT Governing Board, the representatives of those proposals reaching the threshold of 70% points at the Panel of Experts evaluation stage will be invited to a hearing of the EIT Governing Board.

At the evaluation stage of the Governing Board Hearing, the overall strategic rationality and consistency of the EIT KIC model presented in the proposal, as well as the proposed interim team's readiness for the KIC start-up phase will be assessed. This will be done by evaluating the proposals from a holistic perspective against the three main criteria: Excellence, Quality & Efficiency of Implementation and Impact. In particular,

the aspects shown in table 2 are key to the effective implementation of the EIT KIC model and will be assessed:

Table 2 – Evaluation criteria for Hearing with the EIT Governing Board

EXCELLENCE 10 points max.	QUALITY & EFFICIENCY OF IMPLEMENTATION 10 points max.	IMPACT 10 points max.
TOTAL 30 points		
<p>Potential for excellence of the proposed KIC’s strategic approach in terms of addressing the Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems societal challenge in an integrated manner, innovation potential, commercial and financial sustainability and start-up creation success, and contribution to the EIT’s strategic objectives.</p> <p>[0- 5 points; weighting: 2]</p>	<p>Feasibility of the proposed KIC governance and operational model and its plan towards financial sustainability, taking into account lessons learnt from current KICs. Feasibility and quality of the plan for the management (incl. interim team) of the KIC start-up phase.</p> <p>[0- 5 points; weighting: 2]</p>	<p>Consistency of the proposal in relation to potential and feasibility to achieve a significant measurable and sustainable systemic impact in line with the EIT’s overall objectives and EIT Impact Framework.</p> <p>[0- 5 points; weighting: 2]</p>

The Governing Board’s score will be calculated as the average of the individual scores of the Governing Board members. The sum of the points from the Governing Board Hearing will be added to the points obtained at the technical evaluation stage (Panel of Experts stage). The proposal receiving the highest number of points out of the maximum of 130 points can be designated by the EIT Governing Board. The EIT GB can designate one applicant and may establish a reserve list with one applicant.