FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

EIT WATER: A NEW KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY IN WATER, MARINE AND MARITIME SECTORS & ECOSYSTEMS

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SECTION 1: SCOPE & ACTIVITIES OF THE NEW EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY (KIC)

1. How will the new KIC tackle the security of water supply?

According to the European Commission's Staff Working Document, water supply and security are of high importance, yet the sector experiences fragmentation and disconnection within the knowledge triangle, including education, research and innovation. Hence, there is a need for coordinated and integrated approaches to ocean and freshwater management. The new KIC in water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems shall aim at addressing these challenges by fostering collaboration, upskilling, and supporting the development of a sustainable blue economy and water sector.

2. Is the new KIC only for technologies improving the use and quality of water or also for measures that aim to stabilize water cycles and improve ground water levels in the landscape, as well as raise awareness around the importance of these actions?

The new KIC on water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems – with a holistic and integrated approach – will help address the following broad challenges:
- Water scarcity, drought and floods,
- Marine and freshwater ecosystem degradation,
- The circular and sustainable blue economy.

Establishing a KIC in water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems will contribute to strengthening innovation ecosystems, stimulating cooperation across the knowledge triangle to accelerate the uptake of new technologies and approaches, and boost the development and deployment of more sustainable products.

The new KIC will help promote the blue economy vision and boost the worldwide competitiveness of European marine and maritime science and technology. To this end, the new KIC should bring innovative products of blue science and technology to the market that will provide solutions to the urgent practical challenges of sustainability. More information can be found in the Commission Staff Working Document on the relevance of the new KIC, available here.

Typically, the applying consortium sets its strategic direction based on the identified challenges where the need and potential for innovation and commercialisation is the most pertinent and where the skills and entrepreneurship education is most necessary.

3. Does the new KIC compete with other existing public-private partnerships, e.g. Zero Emission Waterborne Transport, in terms of content and funding?

The upcoming KIC in water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems must have concrete synergies and complementarities with existing EU-level initiatives and European partnerships, spanning various policy domains such as biodiversity conservation, sustainable blue economy, circular economy and climate adaptation. It will be aligned with the overarching goals of the European Green Deal as well as the broader Sustainable Development Goals.

The KIC will further consolidate an integrated, multidisciplinary and cross- sectoral approach to ocean and freshwaters in so far as it would cover all marine, maritime, and water sectors and ecosystems, thus building on and complementing the systemic approach taken by the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters. This focus, coupled with the typical activities of KICs, would position it as a valuable contributor to the EU objectives in the water, marine and maritime field and beyond. More information can be found in the Commission Staff Working Document on the relevance of the new KIC, available here.

4. Would a project focused on ecosystem restoration fit within the objectives of this call?

The new EIT KIC will develop a holistic and integrated approach across water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems and will address the following challenges and opportunities through the EIT's innovation model:
- Water scarcity, drought, and floods
- Marine and freshwater ecosystem degradation
- Circular and sustainable Blue Economy.

Establishing a KIC in the water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems will contribute to strengthening innovation ecosystems, stimulating cooperation across the knowledge triangle to accelerate the uptake of new technologies and approaches, and boosting the development and deployment of more sustainable products. Please review the evaluation criteria, especially in relation to the strategic approach, for more information on how the thematic positioning of the proposal will be evaluated.

The Call's purpose is to establish a new Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the field of water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems. A KIC is not a partnership that manages a single project, instead it takes a portfolio approach through an integrated partnership bringing together leading companies, higher education institutions, research organisations and other stakeholders in the innovation process to tackle pressing societal challenges through the development of products, services, processes and business models, and by supporting innovative entrepreneurs. A KIC's portfolio of activities typically includes, inter alia, entrepreneurial education and training programmes, innovation projects, as well as incubation, acceleration and support to start-ups and scale-ups.

5. What kind of cooperation can be expected between the new KIC and the Mission "Restore our Oceans and Waters"?

The new KIC in water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems is expected to have significant synergies and complementarities with existing EU-level initiatives as well as international ones. Furthermore, the new KIC shall build on and upscale the innovative solutions developed within the Horizon Europe programmes, other relevant missions, including the Mission on Ocean and Waters and European partnerships.

6. Will EIT Water take into account the EU Taxonomy-aligned environmental objective on the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources as a trigger for existing and future technology development?

The EIT Water KIC could support innovation, specifically focusing on corporate water stewardship investments in line with EU directives and frameworks such as the EU Taxonomy. For further details, please consult the EC Staff Working Document on the relevance of the new KIC.

7. Can you please define the maritime aspect in the context of the new KIC? Does it include maritime transport, i.e. shipping, ports, etc.?

Among other objectives, the EIT Water KIC will support the blue economy and enhance the global competitiveness of European marine and maritime sectors. More details about the scope of the challenges addressed can be found in the Commission Staff Working Document on the relevance of the new KIC.

Please note that consortia typically set their strategic direction based on identified challenges where the need and potential for innovation and commercialisation are most significant and where skills and entrepreneurship education are most necessary.

8. Does the EU collaborate with other continents on maritime issues?

To enhance competitiveness and strengthen the international appeal of the European economy and its innovation capacity, the EIT and its KICs play a key role in attracting partner organisations, researchers, and students from around the world. They cooperate with non-EU organisations and, in line with EU strategic priorities, promote international collaboration in innovation.

The EIT Community Global Outreach Programme supports these efforts. More information can be found in the Strategic Framework for EIT Community Global Outreach Activities.

9. Can you elaborate more on the type of synergies foreseen please?

Please consult the section 2.2.9 Synergies in the Call invitation text, as well as the respective technical evaluation criteria. In addition, further description on the synergies can be found in the European Commission Staff Working Document.

10. What are the expected synergies between EIT Water and the upcoming Circular Economy Act?

Please note that one of the key challenges EIT Water aims to address is the development of a circular and sustainable blue economy. Establishing synergies with relevant policies, initiatives, and programmes is of utmost importance. Please refer to Section 2.2.9: Synergies in the Call invitation text, as well as the respective technical evaluation criteria.

SECTION 2: APPLYING FOR THE CALL

1. In order to apply, is it required to do so in consortium with other entities? Are there any requirements (geographical, legal) regarding the composition of the consortium?

According to the EIT Regulation, the minimum condition to form a KIC is the participation of at least three independent partner organisations, that are comprised of at least one higher education institution (HEI), one research organisation and one private company and that are established in at least three different Member States. In addition, at least two thirds of the partner organisations forming a KIC shall be established in the Member States. More detailed information and criteria can be found in the Call for Proposals.

2. What kind of organisation can participate in the consortium proposing to establish the KIC? Is there a type of organisations that must be part of it?

A KIC is an integrated partnership, more specifically an 'institutionalised European partnership' under Horizon Europe. It operates within the EIT Community that brings together businesses (including SMEs), educational institutions, research organisations, and other innovation stakeholders such as public authorities and NGOs. According to the EIT Regulation, the KIC partnership as a minimum should be comprised of higher education institutions, research organisation and private companies.

3. Are NGOs eligible to become partners?

Yes, NGOs are eligible to be part of the consortium.

4. Is the Call open for Horizon Europe associated (e.g. Türkiye) and third countries?

In accordance with the Horizon Europe Regulation (Article 22), entities regardless of the place of establishment are eligible for participation in the EIT Call for Proposals. The EIT's Call will result in the designation of the winning consortium by the EIT Governing Board (no funding will be awarded at this stage of the procedure).

As regards eligibility for funding, the designated winning consortium will receive funding for the start-up phase of the KIC. As a general rule, entities from EU Member States and Horizon Europe associated countries are eligible for funding (Article 23 of the Horizon Europe Regulation). Additionally, entities established in low- to middle income countries are automatically eligible for Horizon Europe funding. In line with Article 9(4) of the EIT Regulation, at least two thirds of the partner organisations forming a KIC shall be established in the EU Member States.

Information regarding the state of play of Horizon European association procedures and the list of eligible countries can be found on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the Horizon Europe Online Manual: list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf (europa.eu).

5. In terms of entrepreneurship, is it expected to include acceleration programmes as in other EIT KICs? If so, could you please detail the type of programmes to be included?

All KICs offer business creation and acceleration services as this is part of the EIT innovation model based on knowledge triangle integration. The new KIC is also expected to run integrated business creation and acceleration programmes. Typically, in their business creation and acceleration programmes, all EIT KICs offer a range of business support services that help entrepreneurs and innovators translate their ideas into successful, thriving ventures. These services focus on areas such as support for technology, market assessment, access to human resources, access to new markets and customers, mentoring, seed and venture capital through specific KIC innovation funds and investor networks.

6. Will the new KIC in water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems have regional and country hubs? Will these (regional & national hubs) be established via the same call that will establish the KIC (planned for 2025)?

A KIC brings together organisations of different sectors, countries and disciplines. This is enabled physically through co-location centres (also referred to as EIT innovation hubs). A co-location centre (CLC) is a physical hub, established in an open and transparent manner that promotes links between and active collaboration among knowledge triangle actors. It acts as a focal point for knowledge exchange and a KIC's partners are able to access facilities, and the expertise needed to pursue their common objectives there. Typically, after the designation, the winning KIC consortium shall set up CLCs during the start-up year.

In parallel, KICs typically have EIT RIS Hubs – physical hubs, established by a KIC and forming part of its structure, in a Member State or in a Horizon Europe associated country targeted by the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) that serves as focal point for the KIC's activities and for the mobilisation and involvement of local knowledge triangle actors in the activities of the KIC. Typically, EIT RIS Hubs are set up after the designation of the winning consortium.

More information is available in the Call for Proposals and Innovation Model Paper.

7. Who is expected to coordinate a KIC proposal: a research/education partner or a partner from the private sector?

It is the discretion of the consortium to decide which organization will be the coordinator. A consortium should be representative of all sides of the knowledge triangle (business, research and higher education). Information on the necessary operational and financial capacities of the coordinator are available in the chapter *"Evaluation procedure and criteria (admissibility, eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria)"* in the Call for Proposals.

8. Is it sufficient to present the proposed business model in the proposal or is it requested to present also a (preliminary) business plan of the consortium?

Please refer to section *5.2 Proposal content and structure* of the Call for Proposals for more details on what elements should be part of the proposal. However, typically, the first business plan is submitted to the EIT during the KIC start-up year, after the consortium designation.

9. Is there an (indicative date) for the Call opening?

The Call will be launched in January 2025.

10. What is the budget of the Call?

The designation of the KIC does not result in a direct award of funding. After designation, the consortium enters a start-up phase and receives a grant of 5 million EUR to set up the KIC from strategic, operation and legal perspective. The practice shows that following the start-up period, the EIT grant for the first Business Plan is between EUR 20-35 million per year.

11. Will there be only one proposal financed?

The EIT Governing Board will designate only one consortium which will receive a start-up grant to support the efficient setting up of the new KIC. After a successful completion of the start-up phase, the KIC will be awarded a 7-year Partnership Agreement.

12. Will there be a matchmaking event or an online platform to find partners or join the forming consortium?

A dedicated networking platform is available to help organisations connect with potential partners for the upcoming EIT Call for Proposals s: https://networking-for-eit-water.b2match.io/.

13. How can individual contributors/innovators from the corporate world contribute?

A consortium can only be composed of legal entities, not individuals.

14. How can universities become part of an EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC)?

Higher education institutions are a fundamental component of the consortium that will establish a new KIC. A consortium should represent all sides of the knowledge triangle (business, research, higher education).

15. According to the eligibility criteria of the EIT Call for Proposals, existing KICs cannot become members of consortia applying for the Call for Proposals. How can applying consortia collaborate with already established KICs?

Applying consortia are encouraged to learn from the success of other KICs, in particular the 1st wave KICs who have demonstrated great success in achieving the financial sustainability goal. Following the designation of EIT Water, the new KIC will have the opportunity to collaborate with other KICs on a practical level, to ensure thematic complementarity, sharing of good practices, as well as benefitting from transfer of strategic and operational know-how. More details will be laid out in the guidance for the KIC start-up phase after the designation of the new KIC.

16. Is it necessary to register in the group of 50 agents before 17 June in order to participate?

According to the EIT Regulation, the minimum condition to form a KIC is the participation of at least three independent partner organizations, that are comprised of at least one higher education institution (HEI), one research organization and one private company, and that are established in at least three different Member States. In addition, at least two thirds of the partner organizations forming a KIC shall be

established in the Member States. According to the eligibility criteria, the maximum number of the partners in the consortium is 50. To apply, consortia are not required to establish a KIC legal entity or other legal forms or entities.

Please refer to the evaluation criteria to learn more about how the quality and composition of the partnership will be assessed.

17. Could you kindly confirm whether it is permissible for a university to submit more than one application within the current Call (as coordinator and/or partner), or if there are any restrictions regarding this matter?

There are no restrictions for the number of different consortiums that an applicant can participate in to apply for the EIT Water Call. Please note that in accordance with section *5.2 of the Call Invitation*, proposals will be evaluated solely based on the consortium members that are included in Part A of the application form. Applicants in their proposals should not name other organisations that are not members of consortium (e.g. 'network partners', organisations that 'endorse' or 'support' a proposal, etc.), as this information will not be taken into account during the evaluation. Any prospective enlargement of the KIC partnership should be described as part of the open and transparent partnership growth strategy.

Please note that while the Call text does not exclude the possibility for an entity to participate as a coordinator in multiple consortiums, we encourage potential applicants to focus on the quality of their proposal rather than the quantity.

18. In the Call text, it's stated that "As a general rule, entities from EU Member States and Horizon Europe associated countries are eligible for funding". Canada is now an associated country with Horizon Europe Pillar 2. Since this Call is under Pillar 3, I wonder if our university would be eligible to participate and request funding from this Call.

Since this Call for Proposals is for the designation of the winning consortium (not yet for the award of a grant), the eligibility criteria in the Call for Proposals say the following:
- The applying consortium must contain at least three independent partner organisations established in at least three different member States;
- At least two thirds of the partner organisations forming the consortium are established in different Member States;
- […]
- The proposal must be submitted by a consortium containing a maximum of 50 partners.

This means that for the Call for Proposals for EIT Water, an eligible application may include Canadian entities (if the other eligibility criteria indicated in Chapter 6.2 are met).

However, following the designation decision to be adopted by the EIT Governing Board in November 2025, the winning consortium will receive a grant to implement the start-up phase in 2026 (i.e. to ensure the legal and operational readiness of the new KIC), and – according to the HE rules currently in force – Canadian entities are not eligible to receive an EIT grant, i.e. they are eligible for participation, but are not eligible for funding, because the EIT is under Pillar 3 of Horizon Europe. This means that Canadian entities could participate in the start-up activities of the future KIC in 2026 only as non-EIT funded entities.

19. In the Call section: Operational Capacity Criteria (page 21), for the criteria "Participated in at least one project as a project consortium member or coordinator, where its project budget share exceeded EUR 3 million (…/..)"

> a. Do projects where the institution had a coordinating role, even if not in a framework of a consortium, fulfil this criterion?

> b. It is understood that the criterium allows for projects irrespective of being financed by European or national level. Is this interpretation correct?

> c. Does this criterion contemplate any type of research infrastructure projects if they fall under the realm of Call theme?

a. It is not clear to us what a coordination role outside a consortium would entail, however, based on the limited information you have provided, we would like to stress that the operational capacity criterion verifies if the coordinator has experience coordinating a European consortium consisting of organizations representing at least two sides of the "knowledge triangle".

b. Please note that the criterion aims to verify if the coordinator has 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. The relevant experience should be substantiated by the evidence that the coordinator has:

- participated in at least one project as a project consortium member or coordinator, where its project budget share exceeded EUR 3 million—no specific type of funding source required,

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— no specific type of funding source required,

AND

- participated in at least two EU financed projects in the capacity of a project partner—funding source specified, i.e. EU financed projects.

c. The Call criteria do not specifically exclude infrastructure projects, however, the coordinator has to provide evidence that it has 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.

20. Is there a membership fee required for an institution joining the consortium? If so, what is the current membership fee for universities? Additionally, could you provide information on membership fees from previous years?

Please note that there is no membership fee for any entity that wishes to participate in a consortium that is applying to this call. However, financial contribution should be estimated in the application form, Part B2.

Membership fees will be part of the planning of the Financial Sustainability Strategy. Please consult the EIT Innovation Model Paper to learn more about the KICs' financial sustainability strategy: https://eit.europa.eu/library/eit-innovation-model-paper .

21. In Section 6.2 Eligibility criteria of the Call document, the following restriction is mentioned:
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:
 1. KIC legal entity;
 2. co-location centre
 3. other entities part of a KIC's legal/corporate structure14; (Such as KIC subsidiaries, foundations, associations, etc. The requirement does not exclude KIC partner organisations).

Could you please explain the meaning of the phrase "The requirement does not exclude KIC partner organisations"? Taking into account that our institution is being funded by an existing KIC, in the framework of an active project, we would like to ask you whether our institution is considered (or not) to be a member of this KIC.

Please note that entities that are part of the KIC legal and/or corporate structure are not eligible to apply (e.g., KIC Co-location Centre, KIC HQ, and similar), while organizations that are KIC partners or participate in KIC activities and projects are eligible (such as universities, research organizations, etc.).

22. In the context of Hungarian higher education institutions being excluded from direct EU funding (Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506) we are wondering if Hungarian institutions are eligible to join an EIT Water KIC. If so, which roles and possibilities would they be eligible for? Is there a limitation as to which kind of member/partner they are allowed to be? Would they be eligible for funding during the start-up phase?

As the current Call for KIC will result in the designation of the winning consortium, any applicant consortium which meets the eligibility criteria laid down in Section 6.2 of the Call text can submit a proposal. Since this procedure does not result in the award of a grant, an applicant consortium may include entities (in any role) which are currently not eligible for funding from Horizon Europe, such as the Hungarian universities affected by Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506.

Nevertheless, as a next step, the designated consortium is foreseen to receive a start-up grant in 2026 in order to ensure the legal and operational readiness of the new KIC. This means that entities not eligible for funding, such as the Hungarian universities affected by the Council Implementing Decision can only participate in the start-up activities if they finance their own costs. Such entities cannot take the coordinator role of the start-up grant.

23. Please, would you confirm whether an organization in Scotland (United Kingdom) would be eligible to lead the submission of an EIT Water KIC proposal, provided all eligibility criteria in section 6.2 of the 'Call for Proposal 2025' document are satisfied?

Eligibility criteria listed in section 6.2 of the Call for Proposals 2025 Invitation document are the sole criteria for potential applicants and consortia. Please note that in the event of the designation, a coordinator organization together with the interim management team will coordinate implementation of a start-up year, for which the coordinator organization should be eligible to receive the EIT grant under the Horizon Europe framework in 2026. Furthermore, if a consortium is considering establishing a legal entity that is a part of the KIC legal/corporate structure in a coordinator's country, a long-term perspective should be considered in terms of association with the Framework Programme 10 and eligibility to receive EIT funding.

24. On page 22 it says the following: "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 (...)". Does it mean that the project budget has had to exceed 3 M€ or that the coordinator's budget has had to exceed 3 M€ in one project?

This operational capacity criterion refers to the coordinator's experience, hence the bullet point "Participated in at least one project as a project consortium member or coordinator, where its project budget share exceeded EUR 3 million" should be read as the organisation, which is applying to be a coordinator in EIT Water proposal, should demonstrate that it participated in a project where its [EIT Water proposal coordinator's] share exceeded EUR 3 million, and not the total budget of the reference project.

25. The text is unclear on the nature of the "coordinator". The coordinator seems to indicate it is an organisation, while section 6.4 mentions "The coordinator's organization" and later it mentions "the coordinator has to step down from his role", contradicting our assumption. Could you clarify this? If the coordinator is an individual person, what information do you require on the coordinator? However, there is no place in the application for any information on an individual coordinator, only on the coordinating organization. Therefore, does all the eligibility text (including the operational criteria) actually refer to the coordinating organization, rather than an individual person?

The eligibility criteria refer to organisations. Natural persons cannot become members of consortia.

26. Section 6.5 "Operational capacity criteria" mentions "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.
- Can you please confirm that the 'implementation date' refers to the end date of the project contract?
- To be 'successfully completed', does this mean that the projects need to have had their final report and financial checks approved, or is it sufficient that the end date of the project contract has passed?
- For a project to be eligible, does it mean that all projects need to have realistically ended within an 18-month period from 1. July 2023 to 31. Dec 2024 (so that the project fulfils being 'successfully completed')?

"Implementation date" refers to the end date of the project contract.

27. The call text specifies that "A KIC should set up five to eight CLCs with partners...".
- Are these in addition to the Coordinator/HQ?
- Is it possible to have the coordinator, HQ and a CLC in one country but aligned to different organisations?

Each KIC has its Headquarters (also referred to as the KIC Legal Entity) and Co-location Centres across Europe to ensure geographical spread and physical presence in local ecosystems. KIC HQ is a legal entity which will have to be set up during the startup year (2026), CLCs may be either branches of HQ or separate legal entities owned by KIC HQ (to be set up during the start-up year). In the application form, applicants should present and substantiate the chosen legal and governance set-up of the KIC.

28. Can you please specify a week number for the EIT GB Hearings?

The indicative time of the EIT GB Hearings is the first half of November.

29. In requirement 1, it is stated that the coordinator needs to have coordinated another project where "its" budget was above €3 million. Does the "its" relate to the overall project budget or really the coordinator's budget? Related to this same requirement, the text below asks for projects with a minimum budget of €300k and an implementation end date between submission and 30th of June 2023. How do those two figures of €3 million and €300k relate to each other? Does the implementation end date relate to the date on which the project was officially closed by the funding body?

This operational capacity criterion refers to the coordinator's experience. Hence the bullet point "Participated in at least one project as a project consortium member or coordinator, where its project budget share exceeded €3 million" should be read as the organisation, which is applying to be a coordinator in the EIT Water proposal, should demonstrate that it participated in a project where its (i.e., the EIT Water proposal coordinator's) share exceeded €3 million, and not the total budget of the reference project.

€300k refers to other reference projects, as listed in the operational capacity criteria for coordinators. To satisfy operational capacity criteria, the coordinator's organisation will have to provide at least two reference projects fulfilling requirements in all three bullet-points (section 6.5 of the EIT Water Call Invitation):

- 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 rationale is that the Coordinator will also have to enter into a Startup Grant Agreement with the EIT and coordinate the implementation of the startup year for which the envisaged EIT Grant is €5 million. Most of the grant is typically spent by the Coordinator. In practice, this means that the Coordinator will have the legal and financial responsibility to implement the Start-Up Grant Agreement leading to the establishment of the EIT Water KIC from the operational, legal, governance and strategic perspectives. Please refer to the EIT Water Call Invitation, section 7.3.

30. Would EIT Water receive extra points at the formation phase for its cross-KIC approach, e.g. raw materials or climate?

The consortium will be evaluated solely based on the evaluation criteria and respective scores detailed in the EIT Water Call text, sections 6.6 and 6.7. Additionally, please refer to section 2.2.10 on *Cross-KIC cooperation and sharing of experience* in the EIT Water Call text.

31. In the FAQs, a question about the budget of the call states: "…following the start-up period, the EIT grant for the first Business Plan is between EUR 20-35 million per year." What is the EIT grant for the Business Plan?

This depends on the duration of the Business Plan. Currently, KIC Business Plans cover a three-year period.

32. Will the €5 million Start-up Grant be allocated only to the Coordinator, or will other entities also receive funding?

The Start-up Grant will be awarded to the Coordinator and consortia members directly involved in the KIC start-up phase. However, the Coordinator will be contractually responsible for managing the EIT Start-up Grant. Historically, the majority of the start-up grant has been allocated to the Coordinator. More details will be outlined in the Guidelines for the Start-up Grant.

33. Why is the budget for this KIC lower than previous ones during the SUGA phase (€5M vs €6M)?

The start-up phase for this KIC is planned to be shorter, leveraging the existing knowledge, lessons learned, and support available from the EIT and the EIT Community, leading to a more cost-effective and efficient process. Furthermore, the proposal template and evaluation criteria are more closely aligned with the KIC Strategic Agenda logic, enabling a more efficient drafting process for the first KIC Strategic Agenda.

34. I thought an element of impact on societies outside the EU was a requirement. Has this criterion been removed?

Please refer to evaluation criterion 3.1 Impact, outlined in the [EIT Water Call Invitation text](). The criteria aligns with the [EIT Impact Framework](), which follows Horizon Europe's key impact pathway.

35. What percentage of SMEs is recommended to be part of the consortium?

Please consult the EIT Water Call eligibility criteria, Section 6.2 of the [Call Invitation Text](). The consortium should be composed of at least one higher education institution (HEI), one research organisation, and one private company, established in at least three different Member States. The consortium is free to determine the number of SMEs participating in line with its strategy; however, the partnership should be balanced to encompass all aspects of the Knowledge Triangle.

36. Are pre-revenue startups eligible to join a consortium?

Please consult the EIT Water Call eligibility criteria, section 6.2 of the Call Invitation Text; there are no additional limitations.

37. The conditions in this Call for Proposals are apparently so restrictive that may limit competition: in addition to requiring the candidate to have participated in and completed a project in which they had an own budget exceeding €3 million, they must have done so recently, within a period of less than two years prior to the closing of the call. This same condition, in previous calls, allowed the €3 million to be allocated to the entire project (not just the candidate's) and allowed for completion within the last four or five years. I might be misinterpreting the criteria, as no explanation for this change has been published. With the current wording of the call, practically any entity would be excluded, as it would require the completion of a very big project within a very limited period. Projects with such large budgets and recently completed

are not common in this area. Therefore, it is not easy to understand what the EIT is looking for, or if this situation is just caused by a mistake. Therefore, I ask for your help to help me clarify the exact interpretation. In addition, I would like to relate my question to the following points:

1.   If these requirements refer to a coordinator, do they refer to the partner (PIC number) or the individual person (project coordinator)

2.   If the €3 million requirement refers to the partner budget for an individual project or a sum of the project budgets for several relevant European projects?

The operational capacity criteria refer to the coordinator's experience, hence the bullet point "Participated in at least one project as a project consortium member or coordinator, where its project budget share exceeded EUR 3 million" should be read as the **organisation**, which is applying to be a coordinator in an EIT Water proposal, should demonstrate that it participated in a project where its [EIT Water proposal coordinator organization's] share exceeded EUR 3 million, and not a total budget of the reference project or a sum of several project budgets. Individuals (natural persons) are not eligible to apply. To satisfy the operational capacity criteria, a coordinator organisation has to provide **minimum** two reference projects fulfilling requirements in all three bullet-points (section 6.5 of the EIT Water Call Invitation):
- 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 organisation may provide more than two project references in order to meet the operational criteria. This means that a reference project demonstrating that the organisation has a recent experience in managing project budget of more than 3 MEUR **does not have to necessarily be a Horizon Europe project, and it does not even need to be financed by EU funding**; as well as it may also be an infrastructure project. The rationale behind this requirement is to have solid assurance of the organisation's recent track record in managing projects of large budgets.

Please note, the Coordinator of the winning consortium will enter into the Start-Up Grant Agreement with the EIT and coordinate the implementation of start-up year in 2026 for which the envisaged EIT grant is EUR 5M. Most of this start-up grant is typically spent by the Coordinator, and it will have to be done within one year time. In practice, it means that mainly the Coordinator will implement the Start-Up Grant Agreement leading to the establishment of the EIT Water KIC from the operational, legal, governance and strategic perspective. Please refer to the EIT Water Call Invitation, section 7.3.

38. Funding is available to the UK as an associated country, but the minimum condition still requires the UK entity to partner with at least 3 entities established in 3 different Member States – if this is correct than this becomes at least 4 entities if a UK entity wants to join, rather than at least 3.
According to the EIT Regulation, the minimum condition to form a KIC is the participation of at least three independent partner organisations, that are comprised of at least one higher education institution (HEI),

one research organisation and one private company and that are established in at least three different Member States. In addition, at least two thirds of the partner organisations forming a KIC shall be established in the Member States.

Please note that consortia historically consist of significantly more than three members; the maximum number is 50. Out of the total number of consortia members, maximum 1/3 may be from outside the EU.

39. Could you please let us know whether a Swiss entity can be a full partner (i.e. "beneficiary") of a consortium aiming at building the future KIC for Water, Marine and Maritime sectors and ecosystems, under the current Association Agreement between Switzerland and the European Union? Or is this still to be agreed upon between the Swiss authorities and the EU?

In accordance with the Horizon Europe Regulation (Article 22), entities regardless of their place of establishment are eligible for participation in the EIT Call for Proposals. The EIT's Call will result in the designation of the winning consortium by the EIT Governing Board (no funding will be awarded at this stage of the procedure).

However, following the designation decision to be adopted by the EIT Governing Board in November 2025, the winning consortium will receive a grant to implement the start-up phase in 2026 (i.e. to ensure the legal and operational readiness of the new KIC). Entities established in Switzerland will be eligible to receive EIT funding as part of the startup grant in accordance with the agreements in effect in 2026.

To this end, Swiss entities are eligible to be a consortium member in the applying EIT Water consortium.

40. Several benefits that members in the KIC can leverage, are also part of the services the KIC offers within its programmes for the participants free of charge. In several innovation programmes, there will be mandatory co-funding rates for companies to access the calls. Is it allowed to reduce the co-funding rate for projects for KIC members?

This approach would very much appear to be an indirect way of linking EIT funding to membership status, which is a limitation to openness and competition when it comes to selecting projects and distributing funding. The value proposition should be decoupled from the grant (or co-funding paid in this case), and rather linked to providing services, having decision-making rights in the KIC, access to information, participation at events, etc.

41. Regarding the membership, if a consortium already has many high-quality partners ready to join the partnership (more than 50 core and associate partners), is it allowed to give those committed partners priority to join the partnership when the KIC enters operation after the SUGA year?

It is necessary to have a partnership growth strategy with clear and transparent rules; however, it is acceptable to welcome such organisations into the KIC partnership at the SUGA stage. Please note, the proposals will be evaluated solely based on the consortium members that are included in Part A of the application form. Applicants in their proposals should not name other organisations that are not members

of the consortium (e.g. 'network partners', organizations that 'endorse' or 'support' a proposal, etc.), as this information will not be taken into account during the evaluation. Any prospective enlargement of the KIC partnership should be described as part of the open and transparent partnership growth strategy.

42. Impact KPIs. We understand the KPI table in the application form (Part B2) is a selection of the KPIs listed in the EIT impact framework. Do we need to include only the KPIs of the application form (plus additional KPIs to measure societal impacts), or all KPIs listed in the impact framework, for example also KPIs on HEIs?

Please complete the application form as per the guidance given therein and in line with the evaluation criteria. Complete the KPI table as given and describe the impact indicators.

SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

1. What are some good examples of involving non-profit-organisations like research organisations or universities? Many would probably not fit into the business model but could still provide relevant expertise. Does it make more sense to involve them in advisory committees?

All nine existing EIT KICs are a good example of knowledge triangle integration, bringing together actors from research, higher education and business. The EIT innovation model is based on integrating skills and entrepreneurial education, innovation and business creation/acceleration, hence research organisations and education play a fundamental role in all three areas, and notably in education.

2. There is criticism about the lack of transparency as the KICs move onwards on their journey. To what extent are founding partners able to influence the ecosystem as the KIC progresses?

KIC partners form the highest decision-making body of the KIC – the Partner Assembly (also in some instances referred to General Assembly), where based on the membership mode, each partner has a voting right. Further, partner representatives are also typically forming a KIC Supervisory Board. According to the good governance principles spelled out in the Partnership Agreement, the KIC Supervisory Board should be composed of up to 49% of KIC partner representatives.

3. How can entrepreneurs and young researchers get involved in the activities of the EIT?

The EIT makes higher education an integral – and often currently missing – component of a comprehensive innovation strategy. As such, the EIT fosters entrepreneurship in higher education and R&I activities by promoting excellent entrepreneurial education and skills development programmes. The EIT education and training activities:

- address disciplines to meet critical European socioeconomic needs and expand the EU's talent base;
- promote the development and improvement of relevant innovation, entrepreneurial and leadership skills;
- encourage the mobility of researchers and students;
- foster knowledge-sharing, mentoring and networking among recipients.

The EIT Community can help professionals advance their careers. A KIC partnership lets them develop creativity, broaden their skills, stay up to date with the latest technologies and network with other professionals from world-class organisations.

A KIC provides insights into the latest innovation trends, creating new business opportunities. Professionals can take part in entrepreneurship-driven courses to stay competitive, obtain business coaching, work across borders and disciplines or bring a company's innovation projects to fruition more quickly. Working with a KIC and its expert network can offer a creative blast – an exposure to new ideas, new partners, new facilities, new disciplines and new cultures.

For university researchers, the KIC can grant access to corporate labs, applied research disciplines and ambitious entrepreneurs to turn ideas into concrete products and services. For private-sector researchers,

a KIC can broaden partner networks, bring out new ideas and draw on new disciplines to ensure that research results help bring solutions to the market, address the needs of citizens and make a societal impact.

4. What is the business model behind a KIC after the funding stage? How do they stay financially viable? Would it be possible to share some concrete examples of financial sustainability? What kind of activities have been already implemented in other KICs resulting in long-term funding?

Financial sustainability means the capacity of a KIC to finance its knowledge triangle activities independently from EIT contributions. EIT's KICs must develop and implement revenue-creating strategies to maintain their innovation partnership and their activities beyond the period of EIT funding. Each KIC must aim to become financially sustainable within a period of 7 to 15 years after its designation by replacing EIT funding with other private and public sources, particularly via revenue streams like return on investments, revenue sharing, licensing, equity stakes in start-ups, commercialising education programmes, rendering services and consulting. Hence, from its onset a KIC must have a strong business logic and mindset to into revenues.

EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy will cease receiving EIT funding in 2025, and the independent final reviews of all three KICs demonstrate that they have achieved financial sustainability.

The reports can be accessed here:
Final Review of EIT Climate_Report.pdf
Final review of EIT Digital_Report.pdf
Final review of EIT InnoEnergy_Report.pdf .

5. How may EIT KIC partners access EIT funding? Can they propose specific activities to be included in the business plan that they would directly implement? Or is their funding based on open calls? If the latter one, do EIT KIC Partners have some advantage as compared to non-EIT KIC partners in accessing funding?

As a general rule, KICs should ensure high degree of openness in order to attract the best talents and ideas with the highest innovation potential. This means that a KIC must ensure a high degree of openness when managing KIC funding schemes, including openness of calls for projects to non-KIC partners. The rules of these Call for Proposals of KICs are laid down in the EIT specific rules of Annex 5 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement.

6. How would you recommend combining EIT funding for startups and other sources to take equity in startups in order to build an investment portfolio?

The EIT grant cannot be directly invested in start-ups. However, as part of the knowledge triangle integration activities, all KICs set up business creation activities and support and accelerate start-ups at different stages of their development. To this end, KICs provide services and consulting to start-ups and in return may receive equity shares. KICs may also opt to apply revenue sharing agreements with supported start-ups.

7. Universities increasingly develop services for their spin-offs, often still free-of charge. Given the EIT' financial sustainability regulations: what would be the value added of an EIT KIC's financial support?

EIT KICs offer a wide range of services and facilitate access to a broad pan-European network (covering locations beyond Europe as well, through the EIT Global Outreach programme), connecting innovators, talents, VCs, public funding bodies and infrastructure. The KIC services also provide support in acquiring customers. For more information, please consult the Catalogue of EIT KICs Business Creation Programmes.

8. From Part B3 of the application documents it seems the KIC must have at least 3 C-level management positions: CEO, COO, and CFO. Is there a possibility of combining two of these positions in one person, or must there be three separate positions filled with individual people?

The interim management team should be composed of three separate positions filled with individual people. Please kindly refer to section *6.5 Operational Capacity Criteria* of the Call Invitation (page 21), where it is clearly stated that the capability and necessary experience of all three positions of the interim management team, namely the CEO (Chief Executive Officer), COO (Chief Operational Officer), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), will be assessed. Only proposals that pass the operational capacity verification will proceed to the next step of the evaluation process and will be evaluated by the external experts.

9. In the Call section "2.2.8 The EIT Innovation Hubs: Co-location Centres and RIS hubs" it states that: "An 'EIT RIS hub' means a physical hub, established by a KIC and forming part of its structure, in a Member State or in a Horizon Europe associated country targeted by the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) that serves as focal point for the KIC's activities and for the mobilisation and involvement of local knowledge triangle actors in the activities of the KIC. [....] RIS Hubs could pave the way to the establishment of a CLC in the targeted region." Can you please confirm that it is at the discretion of the consortium to propose a strategy for establishing RIS hubs, including concepts that go beyond shared offices or resources with other KICs?

No prior approval of the EIT is required when designing the proposal. Please consult the EIT RIS Implementation Framework to guide your strategy and approach towards EIT RIS Hubs.

10. Can we protect the competitiveness of the KICs?

In a nutshell, EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) provide a wide range of support services to start-ups, from the ideation stage onwards. They also educate and (re)skill talent and the workforce for industry and start-ups, while deploying innovative solutions to the market that help address societal challenges. As a result, the EIT has been recognised as Europe's top investor in Sifted's 2024 ranking.

11. Is a holding structure established between the KICs?

EIT KICs operate independently from one another but collaborate through dedicated EIT Community activities, projects, and programmes. Additionally, KICs have established various working groups on topics such as business creation, intellectual property, and shared services.

12. What about cases where the business plan involves licensing for manufacturing?

EIT KICS engage in various forms of cooperation, both thematically and on cross-cutting topics such as business creation, intellectual property, and education. The EIT actively encourages cross-KIC collaboration and synergies among the KICs.

13. Some universities say they struggle to navigate the different governance structures of the KICs, which has reduced their appetite to participate. Do you have any advice or guidance on how to address this?

We encourage you to consult the EIT Community ecosystem map: https://eit.europa.eu/eit-ecosystem-map .The map includes all KICs and their Co-location Centres, main offices (headquarters), EIT RIS Hubs, and EIT Community hubs.

14. What has been the experience with the sustainability of previous KICs?

KICs undergo independent 7-year and final reviews to assess their relevance and performance. The reports are available on the EIT's website:

- EIT Raw Materials 7-year review
- EIT Health 7-year review
- EIT Food 7-year review
- EIT Digital final review
- EIT Climate-KIC final review
- EIT InnoEnergy final review

15. Is the 7-year Partnership Agreement impacted by the upcoming FP10 and the uncertainty surrounding the future of the EIT?

In accordance with Article 20 of the Partnership Agreement (EIT PA Jan 2021 updated version), the transition to a new framework programme does not terminate an ongoing Partnership Agreement. However, the new framework programme may necessitate amendments to ongoing Partnership Agreements to align with new strategic objectives and requirements.

16. Regarding the 7-year Partnership Agreement: Since Horizon Europe is ending in two years, is this new KIC expected to become financially sustainable within that time, or is the 7-year funding guaranteed

According to the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027, the EIT funding rate throughout the KIC life cycle follows a gradual reduction, with an increasing share of financing expected from other sources. Full financial sustainability is anticipated between years 12 and 15 of the KIC life cycle.

	Start-up	Ramp-up	Maturity	Exit from EIT grant
Years	1 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 11	12 – 15
EIT funding rate	Up to 100 %	Up to 80 %	Up to 70 %	Up to 50 % at year 12, decreasing by 10 % per annum

Figure 1: EIT funding rates 2021-2027

17. What is the most successful KIC, and what are its key success factors?

Please consult the Innovation Model paper on the EIT website. The Paper includes a chapter named *"What makes a successful EIT Knowledge and Innovation community?"*

Please consult the Innovation Model paper on the EIT website, which includes a chapter titled "What makes a successful EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community?"

Additionally, KICs undergo independent 7-year and final reviews to assess their relevance and performance. The reports are available on the EIT website:

- EIT Raw Materials 7-year review
- EIT Health 7-year review
- EIT Food 7-year review
- EIT Digital final review
- EIT Climate-KIC final review
- EIT InnoEnergy final review

For a concise overview of each KIC, please refer to the KIC Factsheets.

18. Could you confirm the total funding from EIT funding over the course of the project? I saw 5 million EUR for 2026 - then is the funding supposed to come solely from investments and partner membership fees?

The designated consortium will receive a Start-up Grant of indicatively 5 million EUR from the EIT for the year 2026 to set up the KIC from its legal and operational perspective. It is expected that the new KIC will sign a Partnership Agreement with the EIT at the end 2026/ early 2027 allowing to receive the EIT grant for KIC activities. The grant amounts which will be allocated to the new KIC as of 2027 will be subject to EIT Governing Board funding allocation decisions. The EIT financial contribution to the KICs may cover up to 100% of the total eligible costs of KIC added-value activities in the initial stages of a KIC's life cycle. According to the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027, the EIT funding rate over the years is as follows:

	Start-up	Ramp-up	Maturity	Exit from EIT grant
Years	1 – 4	5 – 7	8 – 11	12 – 15
EIT funding rate	Up to 100 %	Up to 80 %	Up to 70 %	Up to 50 % at year 12, decreasing by 10 % per annum

Figure 1: EIT funding rates 2021-2027

The table also indicates the gradual increase of financing of KIC activities from other sources.

The practice shows that following the start-up phase, the EIT grant for the first (multi-annual) Business Plan is between EUR 20-35 million per year.

19. Will the EIT issue a #BlueBond?

No, the EIT does not issue bonds of any kind. As part of Horizon Europe, the EIT allocates grants to its KICs.

20. When is the newly established EIT Water KIC expected to launch its first project pipeline and open calls for funding?

Once the Partnership Agreement is signed (expected end of 2026/early 2027), the EIT Water KIC will receive EIT funding to implement its activities and projects. During 2026, in the start-up phase, the new KIC will develop and submit its first Business Plan to the EIT. Once approved, the KIC will be able to launch specific calls.

21. Could you clarify the difference between Co-location Centres (CLCs) and EIT RIS Hubs?

Please consult the EIT Innovation Model Paper, which explains these differences in the "An Integrated Network" sub-chapter.

22. Do co-location centres need to submit an application, or should they be integrated into the KIC application?

Consortia are not required to establish Co-location Centres, a KIC legal entity (headquarters), or any other legal forms at the application stage. These elements will be set up in 2026 as part of the start-up phase, for which a €5 million EIT grant will be allocated.

23. How many KICs can be created under the EIT Water umbrella?

Only one KIC will be established under the Water, Marine, and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems theme following the designation of the winning consortium.

24. Could you elaborate on the integration of Régions Ultrapériphériques/Outermost Regions, within the RIS strategy? What is the difference between RIS Hubs and EIT Community Hubs?

The EU Outermost Regions are fully eligible for all EIT activities, including the EIT RIS, and must therefore be well covered as part of the EIT KICs' RIS Strategies. The EIT's vision for the EU Outermost Regions is outlined in a dedicated Strategy published in 2024, which is subsequently reflected across the EIT RIS Implementation Framework. Under this framework, the EU Outermost Regions benefit from the highest levels of support and the most preferential participation conditions.

EIT RIS Hubs and EIT Community Hubs are on-the-ground offices within the EIT RIS area, governed by Chapter 9 of the EIT RIS Implementation Framework. Both follow the definition under Article 2(4) of the EIT Regulation and are central to the EIT RIS's "place-based" innovation approach. They serve as crucial tools for attracting and integrating potential new partners into the EIT KICs, addressing the needs of local ecosystems in EIT RIS countries and regions, and bridging the innovation gap within Europe.

While EIT RIS Hubs represent a single EIT KIC and perform a set of minimum functions outlined in the EIT RIS Implementation Framework, EIT Community Hubs act as one-stop shops for the entire EIT Community. In principle, EIT RIS Hubs are established by new EIT KICs within their first five years of operation. Within a maximum of six years from their establishment, EIT RIS Hubs must be fully integrated as members of their local EIT Community Hub, ensuring enhanced cooperation with other members operating under the same hub, including through the implementation of joint activities.

25. Scaling down is as important as scaling up. What are the chances the EIT will support localised best practices?

EIT KICs are Europe-wide networks; hence, the partnership should span across Europe. However, the KIC model also integrates a place-based approach through the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme, EIT Community Hubs, and EIT RIS Hubs, as well as through the Co-location Centres. Read more: EIT Innovation model.

26. As part of the application process, we are currently wondering, if it is allowed to include capping mechanisms into the calls and programmes of the upcoming KIC or if there is generally a funding limit per entity in a certain time. Previously funding caps for different membership types were installed by other KICs, but as we understand this is not allowed anymore?

Indeed, capping of EIT funding is not allowed. According to the EIT Regulation, KIC calls should be in open, hence also decoupled from a membership status. Membership fees shall be linked to the value proposition of the KIC, not directly to EIT grant amounts that KICs distribute.

1) Impact KPIs. We understand the KPI table in the application form (part B2) is a selection of the KPIs listed in the EIT impact framework.
--> Do we need to include only the KPIs of the application form (plus additional KPIs to measure societal impacts), or all KPIs listed in the impact framework, for example also KPIs on HEIs.

27) RIS hubs: Do you expect locations for RIS hubs to be defined in the application, or rather a strategy to select them during SUGA/later on? In case of the first: Is there an expectation on the number of hub locations to be defined already?

The approach to setting up EIT RIS Hubs and how will they be part of the KIC set-up should be described in section 2.1 of the application form. It is not explicitly required to mention countries as EIT RIS Hubs are selected via open calls following a thorough needs analysis. To this end, please describe your plans and strategic approach for EIT RIS Hubs to the best detail you see possible within the context of the overall KIC set-up and strategy. Please refer to the EIT RIS Framework Guidance https://www.eit.europa.eu/library/eit-ris-implementation-framework-updated-2025-2027

28) Development of RIS hubs: We understand some KICs have developed RIS hubs into CLCs later on. At the same time, some RIS hubs have been transferred to Community Hubs. Is it still possible to develop RIS hubs into CLCs later on, once the capacity is present, or are all RIS hubs expected to become Community hubs? How and when do you expect RIS hubs to become Community hubs?

According to the EIT SIA, in accordance with the KIC expansion strategy, EIT RIS Hubs could pave the way to the establishment of a CLC in the targeted region. Therefore, there is an ambition for EIT RIS Hubs to become CLCs. This is outlined in the EIT RIS Implementation Framework as well. If EIT RIS Hubs do not grow into CLCs, they should integrate into their respective EIT Community Hubs. EIT RIS Hubs do not become EIT Community Hubs. The EIT Community Hubs are already established and present in all EIT RIS countries. According to the EIT RIS guidance, within a maximum of six years of their establishment, EIT RIS Hubs funded by the EIT must be fully integrated as EIT Community Members. To this end, EIT RIS Hubs sign Memoranda of Understanding with the EIT Community Hub.

29) Is there a distinction in funding levels between commercial entities and non-profit organizations (such as universities or associations) in this call? Do all project participants receive 100% funding of eligible costs?

The EIT Call for Proposals 2025 does not result in a direct grant award. Only one proposal will be designated to become a KIC. After the designation, the winning consortium will enter a start-up phase (one year, through 2026) and receives a grant of 5 million EUR to set up the KIC from strategic, operation and legal perspective. The start-up grant may cover up to a maximum of 100% of the eligible costs regardless of the legal status of partners.

As of 2027 the EIT funding will be provided in line with the maturity of KICs and funding requirements aligned with the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027. The costs will be reimbursed at the single reimbursement rate indicated in the grant agreement. Co-funding will be mostly provided at the level of projects implemented through financial support to third parties. The conditions for financial support to third parties, including co-funding requirements will be set out in the Grant Agreement.