

DECISION 06/2026
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

ON THE PRINCIPLES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF THE
EIT FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR 2027-2028
TO THE BUSINESS PLAN 2027-2028 OF THE
KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY
EIT WATER

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

HAVING REGARD to Regulation 2021/819 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (hereafter referred to as the “EIT Regulation (recast)”) ¹, in particular to Article 18(7), Section 2(1)(c) and Section 3(5) of the Statutes annexed thereto;

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 (hereafter referred to as the “EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027”) ², in particular to Sections 3.6.2-3.6.3 and 5.2.1 thereof;

HAVING REGARD to Regulation 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 ³;

HAVING REGARD to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (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 (hereinafter referred to as the “EIT Financial Regulation”) ⁵, in particular Article 1 thereof;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 42/2021 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 23 November 2021 on the supervision framework of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) ⁶;

¹ OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 61-90.

² OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 91-118.

³ OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 1–68.

⁴ OJ L 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, p. 1.

⁵ Ref. Ares(2019)6810859

⁶ Ref. Ares(2021)7384565

HAVING REGARD to Decision 14/2021 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 7 May 2021 on the principles for financing, monitoring and evaluating Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) activities⁷;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 21/2021 of the Governing Board of the EIT on the authorisation of the EIT Director to prepare, negotiate and conclude partnership agreements and grant agreements⁸;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 42/2021 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 23 November 2021 on the supervision framework of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)⁹;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 06/2022 of the Governing Board of the EIT on the on the amendment of the principles on the financial sustainability of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) and repealing decision 13/2021 of the Governing Board of the EIT¹⁰;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 21/2025 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 11 November 2025 on the designation of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors and Ecosystems¹¹;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 17/2025 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 23 September 2025 on the initial allocation of the financial contribution to the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) for the 2026-2028 Business Plans of the second, third, fourth and fifth wave KICs, to Cross-KIC activities and to the EIT Higher Education Initiative¹²;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 29/2025 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 16 December 2025 on the adoption of the Final Single Programming Document (2026-2028) of the EIT¹³;

WHEREAS

- (1) EIT Water ('EIT Water' or 'KIC') was designated on 11 November 2025 by the EIT Governing Board as a Knowledge and Innovation Community.
- (2) The KIC is currently in its start-up phase until 31 December 2026, with the main objectives to reach legal and operational readiness, including the preparation of its first Business Plan for 2027-2028.
- (3) The present Decision shall lay down the funding allocation principles for the initial funding allocation for the first Business Plan of the KIC for the period of 2027-2028. Further to this, the EIT will launch its Invitation for the submission of the Business Plan 2027-2028 proposal, laying down the conditions and requirements for the EIT grant. The funding allocation decision of the EIT Governing Board which will be taken by the end of 2026 will follow the evaluation of the KIC's proposal by external experts and the hearing with the EIT Governing Board.

⁷ Ref. Ares(2021)3111256

⁸ Ref. Ares(2021)3798804

⁹ Ref. Ares(2021)7384565

¹⁰ Ref. Ares(2022)2098580

¹¹ Ref. Ares(2025)9722755

¹² Ref. Ares(2025)8031398

¹³ Ref. Ares(2025)11282234

- (4) The EIT Director should define the specific criteria and modalities of the funding allocation process with regard to the assessment of the KIC's Business Plan proposal for 2027-2028, in accordance with the principles laid down in this Decision.
- (5) The KIC shall be allowed to participate in ongoing Cross-KIC and shared services, and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Initiative activities in the 2027-2028 period under the same conditions as all the other KICs. The KIC may accede these ongoing grant agreements via amendments.
- (6) In line with point 5 of Section 3 of the Statutes annexed to the EIT Regulation (recast), the agreement of the European Commission, expressed by its Representative in the EIT Governing Board, is necessary for the adoption of the present decision. Following the voting, the Commission, by way of its Representative, gave its agreement with the adoption of the present decision.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1 *Funding allocation principles*

- (1) As required by Chapter 5.1 of the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027,
 - at least 10% and a maximum of 15% of the overall EIT budget (2021-2027) shall be dedicated to implementing EIT RIS activities, thereby increasing the number of KIC partners from targeted regions;
 - a maximum of 7% of the overall EIT budget (2021-2027) shall be dedicated to Cross-KIC activities, including support to KICs for which the partnership agreement is expired or terminated;
 - a maximum of 3% of the overall EIT budget (2021-2027) shall be dedicated to a pilot to help develop the entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of Higher Education Institutions (HEI), the pilot initiative shall have a duration of three years.
- (2) The KIC shall be allowed to participate in ongoing Cross-KIC and shared services, and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Initiative activities in the 2027-2028 period under the same conditions as all the other KICs. The KIC may accede to these ongoing grant agreements via amendments.
- (3) The KIC's co-financing requirements shall be aligned with the rates indicated in Chapter 3.6.2 of the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027.
- (4) In accordance with the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027, some KIC activities, due to their specific nature, might need extra incentives to be performed. To this aim, the EIT Governing Board decides that the EIT RIS activities of the KIC will be implemented in 2027-2028 at a funding rate up to 100%.
- (5) The EIT RIS activities shall be integral part of the KIC Business Plan, in accordance with Chapter 3.2 of the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027.

Article 2 *EIT Water KIC Fund 2027-2028*

- (1) For the 2027-2028 period, the EIT budget available for the initial multiannual funding allocation decision for the Business Plan of the KIC ('EIT Water KIC Fund') is in the range of **EUR 40-70 million (indicative)**.

Article 3 **Availability of EIT budget**

- (1) The EIT Governing Board will take a multiannual funding allocation decision for the 2027-2028 period for the EIT Water KIC Fund, based on the assessment of the criteria laid down in this decision and a prudent multiannual planning.
- (2) If the final EIT budget available for 2027 require it, the EIT Governing Board authorises the EIT Director to make non-significant adjustments which do not result in a major change of the provisions of this Decision.

Article 4 **Definition of modalities**

- (1) The EIT Director shall launch the Invitation to submit the KIC Business Plan proposal 2027-2028 of EIT Water.
- (2) Based on the principles laid down in this Decision, the EIT Director shall define the modalities of the KIC Business Plan 2027-2028 proposal assessment process, in particular:
 - the expected structure and content of the proposal and the estimated budget,
 - the specific criteria and corresponding weightings for the evaluation,
 - the timeline of the processes including when further communication to the KIC or feedback is foreseen,
 - the formal requirements for receiving the EIT financial contribution,
 - the role and profiles of the independent external experts.
- (3) The funding allocation shall be subject to compliance with the EIT Governing Board recommendations (if any) and the adjustments to be made to the proposal after the EIT's assessment.

Article 5 **Criteria for the funding allocation for the EIT Water KIC Fund 2027-2028**

The EIT grant for the KIC in 2027-2028 shall be allocated based on the following criteria, encompassing excellence, impact, and implementation quality:

Criteria	Maximum score
1) Progress made in the start-up year in implementing the multiannual strategy as set out in the original proposal and the start-up plan	50
2) Business Plan proposal (2027-2028)	50

Article 6
Entry into force

This decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

Done in Budapest, 17 March 2026

Stefan DOBREV
Chairperson of the Governing Board