

DECISION 17/2026
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

ON THE PRINCIPLES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF THE
ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION 2027
TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITIES' (KICS') BUSINESS PLANS,
AND TO THE EIT HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

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)© 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 1291/2013³;

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 (hereinafter referred to as the "EIT Financial Regulation")⁵, in particular Article 1 thereof;

HAVING REGARD to the Decision of the Governing Board of the EIT of 16 December 2009 on the selection and designation of KIC InnoEnergy, Climate KIC and EIT ICT Labs⁶;

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 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1-222

⁵ Ref. Ares(2019)6810859

⁶ Ref. Ares(2010) 130286-11/03/2010

HAVING REGARD to the Decision of the Governing Board of the EIT of 9 December 2014 on the designation of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) in the 'Innovation for healthy living and active ageing' theme and the: 'Raw Materials sustainable exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and substitution' thematic area⁷;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 29/2016 of the Governing Board of the EIT on the designation of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) in the 'Food for Future' and 'Added Value Manufacturing' themes of 17 November 2016⁸;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 6/2018 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 2 March 2018 on the designation of the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the 'innovation for healthy living and active ageing' theme and on the rejection of other applicants in the 2014 call for KICs' proposals⁹;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 36/2018 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 4 December 2018 on the designation of the Knowledge and Innovation Community in the 'Urban Mobility' thematic area¹⁰;

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) activities¹¹;

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 agreements¹²;

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)¹³;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 06/2022 of the Governing Board of the EIT 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 EIT¹⁴;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 18/2022 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 22 June 2022 on the selection and designation of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the area of Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries¹⁵;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 38/2023 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 23 November 2023 on the continuation and scaling up of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Innovation Capacity Building Initiative beyond its pilot phase¹⁶;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 24/2024 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 28 June 2024 on the conclusion of the Memorandum of Cooperation with EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy¹⁷;

⁷ 02008.EIT.2014.I.EIT.GB

⁸ 05940.EIT.2016.I.GB42

⁹ 01148.EIT.2018.I.E1

¹⁰ Ares(2018)6260797

¹¹ Ares(2021)3111256

¹² Ares(2021)3798804

¹³ Ares(2021)7384565

¹⁴ Ares(2022)2098580

¹⁵ Ares(2022)4608261

¹⁶ Ares(2023)8036119

¹⁷ Ares(2024)4696453

HAVING REGARD to Decision 8/2025 of the Governing Board of the EIT of 11 April 2025 on the principles for the determination of the EIT financial allocation 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 Initiative¹⁸;

HAVING REGARD to Decision 17/2025 of the Governing Board of the EIT on the initial allocation of the financial contribution to the KICs for the 2026-2028 Business Plans of the second, third, fourth and fifth wave of KICs, to Cross-KIC activities and to the EIT Higher Education Initiative¹⁹;

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 EIT²⁰;

HAVING REGARD to the Invitation to submit proposals for Grant Agreements covering KIC Business Plan activities 2026-2028, Cross-KIC activities 2026-2028 and EIT Higher Education Initiative activities 2026-2028 (hereafter referred to as the 'Invitation 2026-2028')²¹;

HAVING REGARD to the Invitation to submit proposals for KICs under Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to submit proposals for MoC activities in 2026-2027 (hereafter referred to as the 'MoC Invitation')²²;

WHEREAS

- (1) Decision 8/2025 of the EIT Governing Board laid down the funding allocation principles for KIC Business Plans for 2026-2028, to Cross-KIC activities and shared services for 2026-2028, and to the Higher Education institutions (HEI) Initiative for 2026-2028.
- (2) Further to Decision 8/2025 of the EIT Governing Board, in June 2025 the EIT launched its Invitation for the submission of the proposals Business Plans, Cross-KIC activities and shared services, and to the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Initiative in 2026-2028, laying down the conditions and requirements for the EIT grants in the specific topics. The KICs submitted their proposals on 3 September 2025, which were then evaluated by external experts.
- (3) Following the hearings on 22-23 September 2025, by its Decision 17/2025, the EIT Governing Board decided on the initial maximum funding allocation to each Business Plans 2026-2028 and for the Cross-KIC 2026-2028 and HEI 2026-2028 activities.
- (4) In August 2025, a separate Invitation was launched for the MoC activities of the first wave KICs in 2026-2027.

¹⁸ Ref. Ares(2025)2983206

¹⁹ Ares(2025)8031398

²⁰ Ares(2025)11282234

²¹ Ares(2025)4822733, as amended by the EIT on 29 August 2025 (ref. Ares(2025)6999925).

²² Ares(2025)6527154

- (5) In accordance with the mission of the EIT, the EIT Governing Board is committed to continue supporting the manufacturing thematic area within the European Union and the Horizon Europe eligible countries and to mitigate the effects of the liquidation of EIT Manufacturing ASBL. It wishes to allocate funding for manufacturing-relevant activities within the thematic mandates of KICs and through a sixth HEI call for proposals to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurial capacity of higher education institutions, with a focus on manufacturing-relevant innovation ecosystems and on enhancing the role of HEIs as innovation pipeline integrators.
- (6) Therefore, the present Governing Board Decision shall lay down the distribution of the funds of the additional funding allocation 2027. Then, the EIT Director should define the specific detailed criteria and modalities of the additional funding allocation process with regard to the assessment of the amendments of the Business Plans, MoC and HEI Initiative activities.
- (7) 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. The Commission, by way of its Representative in the EIT Governing Board, gave its agreement with the adoption of the present decision.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Application of the funding allocation principles for the additional funding allocation

- (1) The provisions of Decision 8/2025, including the funding allocation principles, shall apply to the additional funding allocation 2027.
- (2) In accordance with Article 4(2) of Decision 8/2025, the EIT Governing Board may take an additional funding allocation decision to either finance additional activities within the same Grant Agreements or to identify and finance strategic initiatives, together with the European Commission. The additional funding allocation will take into account the available EIT budget, the ongoing multiannual legal commitments between the EIT and the KICs, the performance of the KICs and the estimated financial needs.
- (3) It shall be ensured that there is no double funding of KIC activities.

Article 2

Distribution of the 2027 EIT budget to the KICs

- (1) The EIT budget for the additional funding allocation of KICs throughout 2026-2028 is MEUR 100 (indicative) from the estimated EIT budget available for 2027.

- (2) The funding shall be distributed by means of three separate ‘funds’, as follows:

Type of ‘Fund’	Indicative budget (in MEUR)
Additional allocation to KICs under Partnership Agreement ²³ (EIT-KIC Fund)	40
Additional allocation to HEI (HEI Fund)	40
Additional allocation to MoC KICs (MoC-KIC Fund)	20
Total	100

- (3) After deducting the additional HEI Fund from the overall 2027 EIT budget available for KICs, the remaining EIT budget shall be distributed between the two other “funds” in accordance with the table above. However, KICs’ proposals belonging to a specific fund that do not meet the quality threshold will not be funded, and any unspent portion belonging to that invitation will be either reallocated to the other invitation or returned to the EU budget.

Article 3 **Definition of modalities**

- (1) Based on the funding allocation principles laid down in this Decision, the EIT Director shall define the modalities of the amendment assessment processes, in particular:
- the requirements regarding the additional activities of the KICs and the amendments,
 - the detailed specific criteria and corresponding weightings for the evaluation of the amendments,
 - the timeline of the processes including when further communication to the KICs or feedback is foreseen,
 - the formal requirements for receiving the EIT financial contribution for the additional funding allocation,
 - the role and profiles of the independent external experts.
- (2) The EIT Director shall launch the Invitations for amended KIC Business Plan proposals, the HEI proposal, and MoC proposals.
- (3) The additional funding allocation shall be subject to compliance with the EIT’s recommendations (if any) and the adjustments to be made to the amendments after the EIT’s assessment.
- (4) With the launch of the Invitations for amended Business Plans, HEI and MoC activities linked to the manufacturing sector, MoC KICs will have the possibility to extend their participation in the MoC activities, HEI and Cross-KIC activities also in 2028, provided that they abide by the rules and provisions of their signed MoC in 2028 as well.

²³ EIT Health, EIT RawMaterials, EIT Food, EIT Urban Mobility and EIT Culture & Creativity

Article 4

Performance-based allocation of the EIT-KIC Fund

- (1) The additional financial allocation for the EIT-KIC Fund will be decided based on assessing the proposals against the Horizon Europe criteria (excellence, impact, and quality and efficiency of implementation) and the KICs' past performance as follows:

Criteria	Maximum score	Threshold per criterion	Type	Evidence
Amended Business Plan proposal Evidence of the HE criteria in the additional activities for the 2027-2028 period	50	60%	Qualitative, future outlook	Business Plan
Past performance - KPIs - Budget absorption - Co-funding leveraged in 2023-2025	20 15 15	60%	Quantitative, past performance 2023-2025	Final Report validated targets/amounts

- (2) Each KIC proposal will receive a maximum funding allocation provided that the total scores reach at least 60 points: the score received by each KIC will be converted to funding, based on the available budget, in proportion of the KICs' relative scores.

Article 5

Entry into force

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

Done in Nicosia, on 16 June 2026

For the EIT

(e-signed)

Stefan DOBREV

Chairperson of the EIT Governing Board