Ref. Ares(2026)8985100 - 23/09/2026

European Institute of Innovation & Technology

The EIT is a body of the European Union



European Institute of Innovation and Technology

Amendment to Invitation 2026-2028 to submit proposals to implement activities under the Grant Agreements for KIC Business Plans and HEI activities in 2026-2028 to support the manufacturing sector

(Call HORIZON-EIT-2025-KIC-IBA)

Version 1.1
22 September 2026

HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	09.07.2026	Amendment to Invitation 2026-2028 to submit proposals to implement activities under the Grant Agreements for KIC Business Plans and HEI activities in 2026-2028 to support the manufacturing sector	
1.1	22.09.2026	- Clarification about use and ringfencing of grant allocated - Revision of budget absorption sub-criterion under past performance assessment - Indicative % of prefinancing adjusted - Mandatory DEL for manufacturing activities was added - Compliance requirement	5 10-11 13 14 14

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 4
2. Available budget 5
3. Timetable and deadlines 6
4. Admissibility and documents 6
5. Eligibility criteria 6
5.1 Eligibility under this invitation 6
5.2 Amendment of eligibility conditions of the original invitation 7
6 Additional Business Plan activities 2026-2028 8
6.1 Description of additional Business Plan activities 8
6.2 Award criteria 9
7 Additional HEI activities 2026-2028 12
7.1 Description of additional HEI activities 12
7.2 Award criteria 13
8 Additional funding allocation decision – Grant Agreement amendment signature 13
Annex 1 Declaration for MoC KICs 15

1. Introduction

This is an invitation addressed to all eligible Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) to request the amendment of the signed Business Plan and HEI Grant Agreements following the *Invitation to submit proposals for Grant Agreements covering KIC Business Plan activities 2026-2028, Cross-KIC activities 2026-2028 and HEI activities 2026-2028 ("original invitation")*.

Therefore, in accordance with Article 39 of the Grant Agreement, the coordinators of the Business Plans and HEI Grant Agreement will submit a request for amendment directly in the Portal Amendment tool in eGrants.

This invitation has the following purposes and scope:

- For the **ongoing Business Plan activities in the 2026-2028 period**: to invite all eligible KICs under Partnership Agreement to support activities addressing the manufacturing sector;
- For the **ongoing Higher Education Initiative (HEI) activities in the 2026-2028 period**: to invite the HEI consortium to update their activities by including the provisions for Call 6 (Cohort 6).

The main conditions for the above-mentioned Grant Agreements are defined in the original invitation 2026-2028 and linked documents. These conditions continue to apply unless otherwise indicated herein.

Further requirements concerning the amendment and the requirements for the additional funding allocation are laid down in this document.

This invitation is launched and the EIT financial contribution to the KICs will be determined based on the criteria and processes, in line with the following decisions of the EIT Governing Board:

- Decision 21/2021 of the EIT Governing Board on the authorisation of the EIT Director to prepare, negotiate and conclude partnership agreements and grant agreements[1];
- Decision 38/2023 of the EIT Governing Board on the continuation and scaling-up of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Innovation Capacity Building Initiative beyond its pilot phase[2];
- Decision 08/2025 of the EIT Governing Board on the principles for the determination of the EIT financial allocation to 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 Initiative[3];
- Decision 17/2025 of the EIT Governing Board 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 KICs, to Cross-KIC activities and to the EIT Higher Education Initiative[4];

[1] Ares(2021)3798804
[2] Ares(2023)8036119
[3] Ares(2025)2983206
[4] Ares(2025)8031398

- Decision 17/2026 of the EIT Governing Board on the principles for the determination of the EIT financial allocation for 2027 to the Knowledge and Innovation Communities' (KICs') Business Plans, and the Higher Education Initiative[5];
- Decision of the EIT Governing Board on the amended Final Single Programming Document (2026-2028), Annex XI on Grants (EIT Work Programme 2026)[6];
- EIT Budget 2027[7].

KICs shall submit their amendment proposals in accordance with the conditions laid down in the original invitation and should be aligned with the Horizon Europe and EIT Guidelines. The invitation takes precedence over the guidelines.

2. Available budget

The total estimated budget under this invitation for the 2027 additional funding allocation equals EUR 80 000 000 and shall be distributed by means of two separate 'funds' as follows:

Type of 'Fund'	Indicative budget (in MEUR)
EIT-KIC Fund: Additional allocation for Business Plan activities of EIT Health, EIT RawMaterials, EIT Food, EIT Urban Mobility and EIT Culture & Creativity	40
HEI Fund: Additional funding allocation for HEI activities	40
Total	**80**

The budget of each individual proposal for additional funding allocation from the EIT-KIC Fund for Business Plan activities is expected not to exceed EUR 10 000 000.

KICs' proposals belonging to a specific fund that do not meet the quality threshold (see Chapter 6) will not be funded. Grant awarded under this allocation shall be ringfenced for the objectives described in chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

Any unspent funds belonging to this invitation will be either reallocated to the Amendment invitation for MoC activities or returned to the EU budget.

[5] Ares(2026)6226486
[6] Currently under adoption in written procedure by the EIT Governing Board.
[7] To be adopted in December 2026.

3. Timetable and deadlines

The indicative timeline of the submission and evaluation procedure is as follows:

Key dates	Date and time or indicative period
Deadline to submit the requests for amendment	**1 October 2026**
Assessment of the requests for amendment Requests for additional information and clarifications from the EIT	30 October 2026
Additional funding allocation decision by the EIT Governing Board Letters sent to the KICs, including strategic recommendations	**End November 2026** Beginning December 2026
KICs to submit the final requests for amendment	January 2027
Additional award decisions by the EIT Director	**February 2027**
Signature of the amendments of the Grant Agreements	**February 2027**

4. Admissibility and documents

Amended proposals must be submitted no later than the deadline for submission indicated in Chapter 3.

The requests for amendment must be submitted by the KIC/HEI Coordinator within the above deadline, via the amendment functionality of the **eGrants tool**.

The submission shall comply with the respective Guidelines and the templates and standards available on the Portal. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to the rejection of the proposal.

The proposals must be drafted in English.

5. Eligibility criteria

5.1 Eligibility under this invitation

This invitation is addressed to the following KICs: **EIT Health, EIT RawMaterials, EIT Food, EIT Urban Mobility and EIT Culture & Creativity**, as they may receive an additional funding allocation under this Amendment invitation.

(Additionally, this invitation concerns the **MoC KICs** in Chapter 5.2.1 and **EIT Water** in Chapter 5.2.2.)

5.2 Amendment of eligibility conditions of the original invitation

5.2.1 Amended eligibility conditions for MoC KICs

This invitation changes the original invitation's provisions of the eligibility of KICs under Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) as follows:

MoC KICs might **extend their participation in all Cross-KIC and HEI activities also in 2028 (until 31 December 2028), provided that:**

- **they commit to abide by the rules and provisions of their signed MoC in 2028 as well,**
- **and they sign and submit a declaration as a deliverable under the respective Cross-KIC and HEI Grant Agreements (see the declaration template in the Annex).**

5.2.2 Participation of EIT Water KIC Legal Entity in the Shared Service Cross-KIC Grant Agreement 2026-2028

The EIT Water KIC Legal Entity may participate, as a beneficiary[8], in the Shared Services Cross-KIC Grant Agreement from the date of its incorporation and prior to the signature of the Partnership Agreement with the EIT.

Such participation shall be subject to the conditions and obligations applicable under the Shared Services Cross-KIC Grant Agreement and shall not prejudge the outcome of the EIT Governing Board decision on the endorsement of the start-up phase of EIT Water and finalisation of the new KIC's designation process.

In the event that the EIT Governing Board adopts

- a **positive decision** regarding the finalisation of the designation of EIT Water:
    - the EIT Water KIC Legal Entity will represent the partnership in the Shared Services Cross-KIC Grant Agreement,
    - and the co-location centres or other entities affiliated to the KIC (if any) may accede the Shared Services Cross-KIC Grant Agreement

  from the date of signature of the Partnership Agreement.
- a **negative decision** regarding the finalisation of the designation of EIT Water: the participation of the EIT Water KIC Legal Entity in the Shared Services Cross-KIC Grant Agreement shall be terminated with effect from the date of that decision.

[8] As an„other legal entity" in line with Section 5(6)(h) of the Statutes of the EIT Regulation.

6 Additional Business Plan activities 2026-2028

6.1 Description of additional Business Plan activities

Additionally to the general and specific requirements outlined in the original invitation, eligible KICs are invited to submit an amendment to design **activities specifically calibrated to the manufacturing sector's needs, but connected to the KIC's own societal challenge.**

Only the following mainstream activities are included in this amendment:

- Addressing the knowledge and skills gap in the manufacturing sector;
- Support to manufacturing startups through acceleration, mentorship, and access to KIC networks;
- Innovation projects at the intersection of each KIC's thematic area and manufacturing challenges.

These activities will need to be clearly identified through a separated Task inside the relevant WP, to be added to the existing ones. The specific budget of the manufacturing-related tasks shall be included in the proposal.

Among the specific activities, the following constitute a non-exhaustive list:

1. **Creation of new EIT-labelled Master courses** with a specific link to the manufacturing sector and aligned with the KICs fields of expertise. The engagement of the manufacturing related actors shall be included as part of the KIC ecosystem when implementing this activity.
2. **Manufacturing upskilling and/or reskilling courses** addressing the KIC sector through the involvement of the industry, held in hybrid formats and aiming at upskilling at least 500+ students per course in two years (2027-2028).
3. **Support to innovation projects** on advanced manufacturing technologies, biomanufacturing, sustainable and green manufacturing. Activities could focus on (non-exhaustive list):
    a. Supporting the deployment of innovation on the shop floor at factory level, involving one technology provider with a solution at high TRL and one manufacturer.
    b. Extending product life or reduce carbon footprint or integrating second life batteries for energy storage in manufacturing facilities
    c. Supporting manufacturing companies to solve their manufacturing challenges through solutions coming from RTOs, startups or innovative SMEs.
4. **Entrepreneurship support** to manufacturing start-ups at different maturity levels, which may include direct (through FSTP) and indirect (through different access to finance actions) financial support. Specific consideration to start-ups from the RIS regions is strongly recommended.

6.2 Award criteria

The financial allocation will be decided on the basis of the Horizon Europe criteria excellence, impact, and quality and efficiency of implementation, as follows:

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE	TYPE	EVIDENCE
Amended Business Plan proposal Evidence of the HE criteria in the additional activities for the 2026-2028 period	50	Qualitative, future outlook	Amended Business Plan
Past performance ▪ KPIs in 2021-2025 ▪ Budget absorption in 2023-2025 ▪ Co-funding leveraged in 2023-2025	 20 15 15	Quantitative, past performance 2023-2025	Final Report validated targets/ amounts

An amended Business Plan proposal can receive a funding allocation provided that each main criterion (*Amended Business Plan proposal* and *Past performance*) receives **at least 60%** of the points: the score received by each KIC will be converted to funding, based on the available budget, in proportion of the KICs' relative scores.

The following **sub-criteria**, scoring methodology and evaluation evidence shall be applied:

6.2.1 Amended Business Plan proposals

Amended Business Plans for 2026-2028 will be assessed by the EIT with support of external experts, with respect to three sub-criteria:

- Excellence, including objectives and ambition; methodology; financial sustainability; contribution to gender equality objective.
- Impact including KIC's pathways towards impact; measures to maximise impact - dissemination, exploitation and communication.
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation including work plan and resources at portfolio level; capacity of participants and KIC Partnership as a whole.

Each of the three sub-criteria can score maximum 5 points. The following scale will be used:

- 0: KIC fails to address the relevant aspects
- 1: Poor – KIC addresses the relevant aspects inadequately, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- 2: Fair – KIC broadly addresses the relevant aspects, but there are significant weaknesses
- 3: Good – KIC addresses the relevant aspects well, but a number of shortcomings are present
- 4: Very good – KIC addresses all relevant aspects very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
- 5: Excellent – KIC successfully addresses all relevant aspects. Any shortcomings are minor.

Evidence: The evaluation with scores will be based on the evaluation of submitted amended Business Plans and compulsory annexes, supported by external experts.

The overall score will be converted to a scale of 0-50 points (final score divided by 15 and multiplied by 50).

6.2.2 Past performance: KPIs

The final score will be calculated as the sum of the results for the following EIT core KPIs based on the validated values achieved in the years 2021-2025.

CODE	TITLE	MAX SCORE
EITHE02.4	Number of **innovations launched on the market** during the KAVA duration or within 3 years after completion with a sales revenue of **at least 10 000 EUR** documented	4
EITHE04.4	Number **of start-ups created** as a result / based on the output(s) of KAVA(s), or start-ups created for the purpose of an innovation project to organise and support the development of an asset (but not later than three years after the completion of KAVA) having a financial transaction of **at least 10 000 EUR** for a service/product sold to customers	4
EITHE05.1	Number of **start-ups created by students enrolled and graduates from EIT-labelled** MSc and PhD programmes	4
EITHE06.1	**Investment attracted** in EUR by KIC-supported start-ups and scale-ups	4
EITHE07.4	Number of **graduates from EIT-labelled** MSc and PhD programmes	4

The results will be benchmarked against the annual targets for 2021-2025 approved in the KIC Strategic Agenda. Any 10% underachievement will lead to 0.5 point deduction from the maximum for each of the EIT core KPIs set out in the above table. Furthermore, if for any of the above EIT core KPIs at least 15% of the achievement is attributable to RIS countries (i.e. innovation, start-up or student originating from RIS country), 0.5 extra point will be awarded per KPI. Nevertheless, the total score for KPIs cannot be higher than 20 points.

Evidence: The assessment with scores for the EIT core KPIs will be based on the submitted KPI evidence and validated by the EIT.

6.2.3 Past performance: budget absorption in 2023-2025

The budget absorption coefficient will be scored based on the percentage of the KIC reported costs under the Business Plan GA2023-2025 (GA2024-2025 for EIT Culture & Creativity) compared to the amounts awarded by the EIT. The score resulting from the table below will be multiplied by three.

BUDGET ABSORPTION RANGE	MAX SCORE
90%-100%	5
80%-89%	4
70%-79%	3
60%-69%	2
50%-59%	1
<49%	0

Evidence: The assessment with scores for the budget absorption will be based on the overall EIT awarded funds under GA 2023-2025 (GA 2024-2025 for EIT Culture & Creativity) extracted from eGrants against the costs reported by the KIC under the FR 2023-2025 (FR 2024-2025 for EIT Culture & Creativity).

6.2.4 Past performance: co-funding leveraged in 2023-2025

The co-funding coefficient will be scored based on validated data in the EIT Portal for the Business Plan GA2023-2025 compared to the minimum percentage established in the SIA. The score resulting from the table below will be multiplied by three.

LEVERAGED CO-FUNDING	MAX SCORE
> 8+%	5
+6%-7.9%	4
+4%-5.9%	3
+2%-3.9%	2
Up to -1.9%	1
Same as SIA	0

Evidence: The assessment with scores for the co-funding will be scored based on the data reported in the EIT Portal and validated by the EIT (e.g. project co-funding, NEFA, own co-funding, etc.) against the minimum rate based on the KIC maturity, as established in the EIT SIA.

7 Additional HEI activities 2026-2028

7.1 Description of additional HEI activities

Additionally to the general and specific requirements outlined in the original invitation, interested KICs are invited to submit an amendment to design the launch of a Call 6 (cohort 6) introduced through an additional Work Package (WP)

WP3: Strategic implementation of Call 6 (cohort 6)

- In collaboration with EIT, the EIT HEI consortium shall design and define the strategic steps for launching cohort 6 of the EIT HEI, including designing the call for proposals, the evaluation and selection of proposals, management, monitoring and reporting of the projects' implementation.
- The EIT HEI consortium shall ensure that cohort 6 contributes to the following objectives:
    - achieving the EU level target to provide dedicated training on innovation, entrepreneurship and IP management to 200 000 STEM higher education students, academics and staff by 2028
    - strengthening the role of higher education institutions as key actors within manufacturing-relevant innovation ecosystems, through knowledge triangle integration, interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement with R&D organisations, SMEs, start-ups and industry
    - enhancing the role of HEIs as innovation pipeline integrators by strengthening the research-to-market pathway for manufacturing and deep-tech innovation and commercialisation.
- The call for cohort 6 shall follow the EIT call template and include the implementing provisions, to be approved by EIT before its launch. Implementing provisions shall be outlined in a separate handbook where the common pre-financing, reporting and payment provisions are stated.
- The EIT HEI consortium shall ensure that selected proposals develop action plans on how to address identified needs in areas such as innovation management, start-up creation and development, technology transfer including intellectual property rights management, sustainability and climate neutrality by design, people and organisational management, the integration of gender approaches in innovation and engagement with local stakeholders and civil society; and the implementation of innovation capacity development action plans and follow-up actions.
- The EIT HEI consortium shall monitor the implemented projects, ensuring the following: exchange and implementation of best practices in knowledge triangle integration, including organisational learning, training for up-skilling and re-skilling, coaching and mentoring.

In addition, the **EIT Higher Education Initiative should extend the EIT impact beyond KICs** and contribute to the following:

- Reinforced innovation capacity of the Member States and Associated Countries, therefore contributing to the EIT's core mission of boosting sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, in line with the Horizon Europe goals of fostering entrepreneurial and innovation skills in a lifelong learning perspective;
- Reinforced the EIT's pivotal role in strengthening EU competitiveness;
- Increased capacities of KICs at the institutional level across Europe.

The EIT HEI consortium is **requested to give special attention to gender mainstreaming, and incorporation of the gender dimension in the expected outcomes, objectives, scope and impact of proposed activities,** in accordance with the Annotation to the EIT specific provisions of HE MGA Annex 5, and the EIT Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.

The HEI activity shall contribute to the same KPIs (from the EIT Impact Framework and specific for HEI) outlined in the original invitation by increasing the related values. The list of mandatory deliverables remains the same, to be complemented by all standard cohort-specific reports pertaining to cohort 6 (e.g. Call Evaluation Report, Implementation Handbook, Stop-Go Decision as relevant, Report on support activities, Insights to Impact) and by a detailed Call Evaluation Plan to be submitted before the call closure Milestone need to be updated in accordance with the tasks.

Finally, the **HEI consortium shall ensure that the implementation of the selected projects follow the multiannual cycle based on the requirements below**:

- Common 25% of pre-financing of the project budget.
- An interim report at the halfway point of the implementation period, and a final report.
- Payment transfer within 30 days from the approval of the interim report (detaching the project interim report from the HEI interim report) and 30 days from the EIT balance payment of the HEI final report.
- Optimisation of data management by eliminating duplicated data flows, reducing administrative burden on projects, and ensuring consistent, high-quality data.

7.2 Award criteria

The award criteria are aligned with the Horizon Europe legal framework and are detailed in the original invitation.

8 Reporting and payment arrangements and deliverables

The prefinancing percentage in the first line of the table in Chapter 15.4 of the original invitation should be modified as follows:

	When	Requirements	Reporting period
First pre-financing payment (approximately 55% of the overall grant)	Within 30 days following the signature of the grant agreement.	5% as a contribution to the Mutual Insurance Mechanism will be retained from the first prefinancing payment.	

Considering the specific nature of this invitation, deliverable(s) specific to the manufacturing activities must be added during the amendment of the grant agreement.

9 Additional funding allocation decision – Grant Agreement amendment signature

The EIT Governing Board will take the **additional funding allocation decision** on the **maximum EIT financial contribution for the eligible KICs and for the HEI activities.**

KICs need to demonstrate the compliance of their control systems before the final award of the grant.

The EIT Director will communicate the evaluation results to the KICs and request the submission of the updated version of the proposals based on the EIT requirements for the proposal revision, if any.

The formal requirements issued by the EIT – including the maximum EIT contribution – shall be met prior to the approval of the proposals as a condition for the additional grant award and the signature of the amended Grant Agreements.

A clarification session is offered following each EIT requirements letter.

The EIT Governing Board's funding allocation decision will serve as the basis for the **award of the additional grants by the EIT Director**, provided that the updated version of the proposals, including the estimated budget:

- are in compliance with the requirements laid down in this invitation and respective guidelines;
- meet the requirements for the revision of the proposals issued by the EIT Director, including the decided maximum EIT financial contribution;

In the event of the additional grants awarded by the EIT Director, **the EIT will sign the amended Grant Agreements (GA) in eGrants**.

Annex 1 Declaration for MoC KICs

DECLARATION[9]

On the abidance by the rules and provisions of the signed Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in 2028

Name of MoC KIC: [InnoEnergy / 28 Digital / Climate-KIC]

Grant Agreement(s) reference: 2026-2028 [Grant Agreement title]

The undersigned [Name of KIC CEO], representing the KIC, hereby confirms that the **KIC will continue implementing [Cross-KIC / HEI] activities in 2028** in accordance with the applicable [Cross-KIC / HEI] Grant Agreement(s) and all related legal and operational requirements, and **agrees to abide by the rules and provisions of the signed Memorandum of Cooperation until 31 December 2028**.

The undersigned declares that it is duly authorised to sign this declaration on behalf of the KIC.

[Name of KIC CEO]
Chief Executive Officer

[9] To be signed and submitted as a deliverable under the respective Cross-KIC / HEI Grant Agreements.

Electronically signed on 22/09/2026 17:59 (UTC+02) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121