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Pre-qualification Notice

EIT Community Officer of the EIT Community RIS Hub in Estonia

EIT FOOD

Leuven, Belgium

May 2024

Eitfood.eu



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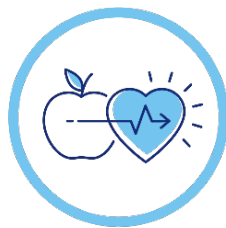
1. Overview

1.1. The EIT Food

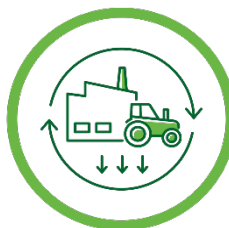
EIT Food is the world's largest food innovation community, creating connections right across the food system. Supported by the European Union (EU), we invest in projects, organisations and individuals which share our goals for a healthy and sustainable food system.

We have built a unique not-for-profit business to carry out transformative programmes in skills, education, entrepreneurship, start-up investment and communications. We deliver these programmes in partnership with our members to create a culture and build a community which sees the long-term value in the food innovation we fund.

Our Missions



**HEALTHIER LIVES
THROUGH FOOD**



**A NET ZERO
FOOD SYSTEM**



**REDUCING RISK
FOR A FAIR & RESILIENT
FOOD SYSTEM**

EIT Food's Missions respond to major societal challenges within the food system. The alignment of our chosen challenges towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and EU policy is detailed in our main funding [strategy document](#) agreed with EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology). For more about our Missions-led approach please visit [our website](#).

1.2. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the Knowledge and Innovation Communities

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a European Union body established by Regulation (EC) No 294/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2008.

The EIT's mission is to contribute to the sustainable European economic growth and global competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the Member States and the Union and addressing major challenges faced by the European society. It does this by promoting synergies and cooperation through integrating higher education, research, and business in order to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in the knowledge triangle integration model. The EIT combines strategic orientation at EIT level, primarily through its Governing Board, with a bottom-up approach within the thematic remits of its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). KICs are highly integrated legal entities, which function as pan-European partnerships and bring together excellent universities, research organizations, small-, medium and large enterprises and other innovation actors on a long-term commitment around specific grand societal challenges.

The Knowledge and Innovation Communities are designated by the EIT on the basis of an open competitive call. In 2009, the EIT designated three initial KICs in the fields of sustainable energy (EIT InnoEnergy), climate change adaptation and mitigation (EIT Climate-KIC) and next generation information society (EIT Digital, until 2015 named EIT ICT Labs). In 2014, two new KICs were designated in the areas of healthy living and active ageing (EIT Health) and raw materials – sustainable exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and

substitution (EIT Raw Materials). In 2016 the EIT selected one additional KIC: EIT Food – sustainable supply chain from resources to consumers. In 2018 two KICs were designated in the thematic areas of Urban Mobility and Adding Value Manufacturing. In 2022 the newest KIC was designated to house a sustainable ecosystem for European Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). Each KIC has been set up as a legal entity and has appointed a CEO to run its operations – a first for an EU initiative. The KICs operate under a great degree of autonomy to define their legal status, internal organization and working methods, and the KICs have been conceived so that they are able to react in an effective and flexible way to new challenges and changing environments.

Each KIC has regional Co-location Centres (Innovation Hubs) with partners in proximity, which is essential to facilitate interaction among members of the regional community. Co-location Centres are the focal point for the KICs’ activity within these areas of focus. Co-location Centres build on the existing labs, offices, or campuses of some of the KICs’ core partners, which serve as clusters for a particular region, discipline, or task. There they bring together people and teams from across the knowledge triangle for ideation, projects, and other initiatives. Partners in KICs work together with a common goal: a positive societal and economic impact for Europe, to be measured in terms of new business creation, innovation in existing emerging industries, businesses and SMEs, jobs creation, entrepreneurship education and delivery of a new generation of entrepreneurs, and the overall success of the KIC in addressing societal challenges within their priority thematic areas.

1.3. The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme

The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS)¹ was introduced by the European Parliament and the Council as part of the EIT’s Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) 2014-2020. The EIT RIS is designed to share good practices and experience emerging from the EIT Community’s activities, as well as to widen participation in KICs’ activities. The aim of the EIT RIS is to help disseminate the knowledge and know-how of the EIT Community and widen participation in the KICs across Europe. The EIT RIS focuses on countries that are moderate and modest innovators according to the European Innovation Scoreboard² and have limited or no participation in the EIT Community’s activities.

Countries eligible to take part in the EIT RIS (2021-2024):

- EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain.
- Horizon Europe Associated Countries: Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine.
- Outermost Regions: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain).

1.4. EIT RIS Hubs in the EIT RIS Countries

In order to promote KICs activities in the EIT RIS countries, KICs engage local organizations to serve as EIT RIS Hubs in the respective EIT RIS countries and regions. KICs have established EIT RIS Hubs in the countries where they did not have presence in terms of Co-location Centres or partners. Hence, an EIT Hub functions as a representative of the respective KIC and mobilizes local organizations to take part in joint activities with the KICs.

¹ [The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\): Closing the Innovation Divide in Europe | EIT \(europa.eu\)](https://eit.europa.eu/eit-ris)

² [European innovation scoreboard - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg_8_3_1)

Local organizations are selected through an open competitive selection process and are designated to function as an EIT Hub for a specific KIC. The primary role of an EIT Hub is to ensure the visibility of the EIT Community and raise awareness of the EIT Community activities and cooperation opportunities for local players representing education, business and research areas. The organizations serving as EIT Hubs have a strong footing in local ecosystems and help promote KICs' good practices and know-how of KTI. In addition, EIT Hubs also liaise with the relevant national, regional and local authorities and facilitate the sharing of EIT Innovation Community expertise with them. A network of over 90 EIT RIS Hubs present in all EU Member States and beyond drive the successful implementation of the EIT RIS. The EIT RIS Hubs have helped the EIT Community to significantly widen its geographical spread. Over 1,300 organisations from the EIT RIS countries have become partners of [EIT Innovation Communities](#) while some 2,500 start-up teams from eligible countries were coached and prepared to enter accelerators.

1.5. The EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster

EIT Community SRI Cluster is a joint activity of several KICs, funded by the EIT, to implement cross-sectoral actions to boost innovation in Europe's emerging economies, including those countries eligible for support under the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS). The objective of the Cluster is to bring together all of the EIT KICs in the context of one formal project to enable joint learning and improve the efficiency of the KICs' RIS projects and activities by sharing best practices, and utilizing synergies built on common geographical and thematic interest. The guiding and decision-making body of the EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovation cluster is the Steering committee composed of two representatives of each KIC. The KICs that actively take part in the EIT Community SRI Cluster are:

- EIT Climate-KIC: Working to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy;
- EIT Digital: Driving Europe's digital transformation;
- EIT Food: Leading a global revolution in food innovation and production;
- EIT Health: Giving EU citizens greater opportunities to enjoy a healthy life;
- EIT InnoEnergy: Achieving a sustainable energy future for Europe;
- EIT Manufacturing: Strengthening and increasing the competitiveness of Europe's manufacturing industry;
- EIT RawMaterials: Developing raw materials into a major strength for Europe;
- EIT Urban Mobility: Smart, green and integrated transport;
- EIT Culture and Creativity: Creatives without borders, innovation without limits.

1.6. EIT Community SRI Cluster actions for Estonia

The focus of the support activities of the EIT Community SRI Cluster in Estonia will be laid upon deep tech solutions in the fields covered by the KICs listed above (without excluding other areas).

The actions of the EIT Community SRI Cluster will aim to address the needs of the Estonian innovation ecosystem primarily by establishment of the EIT Community SRI representation on-the-ground in the form of an EIT Community RIS Hub, managed by an EIT Community Officer (ECO).

The EIT Community RIS Hub will help to strengthen the activities of the EIT Community SRI Cluster, as well as the activities run by EIT KICs individually, especially by:

- connecting the EIT Community with relevant Estonian stakeholders,
- assisting in the preparation of EIT Community events and participation in national-level events to promote the EIT Community,
- scouting for high-potential Estonian startups and talents, as well as helping upskilling/reskilling talents into entrepreneurs and paving the way towards increased uptake into EIT or EU programs in general,
- exploring synergies with pan-European programs and organizations also supporting Estonia,
- identifying potential further EIT Community Hub actions for joint delivery and, as appropriate, taking forward the development of these actions into joint proposals.

Detailed definition and scope of the EIT Community RIS Hub and EIT Community Officer can be found below. EIT Food has been designated the task to launch the procurement procedures on the setting up of the EIT Community Officer in Estonia and to co-ordinate and monitor the operation and activities of the future EIT Community Officer of the EIT Community RIS Hub together with the representatives of the EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster and the Steering Committee in the period between 2024 and 2025.

1.7. Definitions

EIT Community RIS Hub (EIT CRH) – is a coordination mechanism, providing local innovators with a unified source of information on all services and opportunities provided by the entire EIT Community, both locally and internationally. It serves as a centralised gateway, for local innovators, to all EIT KICs, irrespective of their local on-the-ground representation. It is established under the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) to foster innovation and entrepreneurship by linking local innovation actors with the broader EIT ecosystem.

EIT Community Officer (ECO - previously referred to in the strategic documents as National Secretary) – An individual or entity appointed to represent and facilitate the activities of the EIT Community RIS Hub at a country level. The EIT Community Officer acts independently of any KIC, and at the same time represents all the KICs to ensure impartiality and avoid conflict of interests. EIT Community Officer is responsible for tasks as outlined in detail in the [“EIT RIS HUBS Minimum Standards and Guiding Principles”](#), specifically in the “List of Tasks and Responsibilities of the National Secretary / EIT Community Officer” (see Annex 3). Among ECO’s key duties are facilitating communication, organizing events, consolidating data, and ensuring adherence to EIT standards and principles without exerting hierarchical control over RIS Hub entities.

2. Scope of work

2.1. General terms and conditions

In order to ensure the provision of the services described in section 1.6 (and in details in section 2.2), EIT Food was designated to launch an open service procurement procedure, on behalf of the EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster, whose overall goal is to bring together all of the EIT KICs in the context of one formal project to enable joint learning and improve the efficiency of the EIT KICs' RIS projects and activities by sharing best practices, and utilising synergies built on common geographical and thematic interest.

In the framework of the present pre-qualification procedure, EIT Food is seeking to shortlist candidates willing to overtake the position of the EIT Community Officer in Estonia. The aforementioned EIT Community Officer will undertake the facilitation and support of the local EIT Community RIS Hub.

The following documents regulate the terms and conditions under which the selected Tenderer (i.e. Contractor) shall fulfil the specific tasks as a result of the current procedure:

- a) The Pre-Qualification Notice;
- b) The Request for Proposal for the EIT Community Officer of the EIT Community RIS Hub in Estonia (to be shared with pre-qualified Applicants);
- c) The Contract to be signed with the selected Tenderer.

The Contracting Authority is responsible for sharing all available, relevant information, existing documents and data on the projects related to which tasks are to be performed by the Contractor based on individual purchase orders, if relevant. The Contracting Authority is responsible for the validity and completeness of all such information.

The EIT Community Officer's tasks are defined in the "[EIT RIS HUBS Minimum Standards and Guiding Principles](#)", published in September 2022, and revised in December 2023 and shall be used to measure the successful operation of the EIT Community Officer (see Annex 3).

The EIT Community Officer will act independently of any EIT KIC, and at the same time will represent all the KICs to ensure impartiality and avoid conflict of interests.

The working language for the performance of tasks is English.

The detailed list of tasks and objectives are listed in the sub-sections below.

2.2. Detailed scope of work

The support that is required and requested should cover the following areas and tasks. All tasks will be in full coordination with the EIT Food (as Contracting Authority) and the EIT Community SRI Cluster Steering Committee to ensure strategic fit and alignment of the selected Contractor, activities, timing, and execution.

2.2.1. Internal Communication and Coordination (EIT Community Officer, EIT RIS Hubs, Community Members and EIT KIC offices)

- Develop a good understanding of the EIT model and keep up to date with the KICs activities;

- Form good working relations with all EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members, and other EIT KIC Offices present in the same ecosystem both nationally and regionally;
- In consultation with the EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members, and other EIT KIC Offices present in the same ecosystem, establish a smooth and efficient working method which limits the administrative burden on the EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members, and other EIT KIC Offices, while supporting their minimum functions;
- Design an appropriate work method and necessary tools for information sharing / coordination so as to facilitate continuous information exchange between the Hub Community Members, EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices present in the same ecosystem both nationally and regionally.
- Keep an up-to-date record of all entities which are members of the EIT CRH (MoU signatories) and involve them in the coordination of the EIT CRH as set out in the EIT CRH governance MoU.

2.2.2. Physical space

- Set up and maintain a physical space in Tallinn or Tartu, in the location accepted by the EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster and the EIT, where local stakeholders can physically, walk-in to obtain information on, as well as gain access to the EIT Community, while additionally, aiding with the EIT's on-the-ground visibility and branding.
(Please note that in the tendering stage of the procedure pre-qualified applicants will be requested to share their ideas about the physical space of the EIT Community Officer's office - including a cost estimate - in their offer. The EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster can decide to use the offered option or to suggest hosting for the EIT Community Hub if a better option is given.)

2.2.3. Communication and dissemination

- Serve as a centralised contact gateway for local stakeholders to the EIT Community as a whole and refer stakeholders to contact persons within other relevant EIT KICs, best suited to support their needs.
- Collect information to share through applicable channels related the EIT KICs' activities, events, results, and opportunities of interest to local stakeholders with a view to their dissemination internally and externally.
- Coordinate and support the EIT RIS Hubs local joint communication efforts, including by: managing and updating the EIT Community RIS Hub website, in English and in the local language, with information on EIT Community activities and opportunities, including dedicated sections targeted towards specific stakeholders, including, students, start-ups, national authorities and so on; facilitating the organisation of EIT Community awareness-raising events, including possible open days within the context of INNOVEIT (the EIT's annual innovation forum), and coordinating and supporting the participation of EIT Community representatives in relevant national events;

2.2.4. Financial sustainability

- Coordinate the collection of local funding opportunities and relevant key national events and bring these to the attention to the local Hub Community Members, EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices.

- Scout for and recommend to the EIT KICs opportunities to implement joint projects financed through other EU / national / regional funds including the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III);
- Contribute to, support and where appropriate, with the agreements of the EIT KICs, lead any horizontal exploratory efforts towards securing co-funding opportunities, including securing meetings with relevant national / regional authorities and facilitate the preparation for the submission of joint proposals for national / regional funding in case of general Cross-KIC actions;

2.2.5. Stakeholder engagement

- To the greatest extent possible, ensure a coordinated approach amongst the EIT KICs' RIS Hubs towards national authorities including relevant NCPs and Managing Authorities.
- Identify the need for and facilitating the implementation of shared services for Hub Members with a view to improve efficiency.
- Suggest and support, including, where appropriate and with the agreement of the EIT KICs, lead, the implementation of possible joint activities amongst the EIT KICs, to be implemented nationally and / or regionally, aligned with relevant RIS3³ priorities.

2.2.6. Local intelligence gathering

- At the request of the EIT KICs, support any necessary updating of the local Country-specific roadmap and support its implementation, as appropriate.
- Upon request, provide support, additional to that already offered by the EIT RIS Hubs, to the EIT and the EIT KICs with navigating the local innovation landscape, including by contributing to the development of EIT maps / ecosystem mapping.

2.2.7. Other tasks

- Any other tasks mandated by the EIT Management which, in principle, supports the EIT RIS Hubs to contribute to the achievement of the EIT's Objectives and implementation of its Strategy and Annual Work Programmes.

2.3. Location, timing, planning and reporting

2.3.1. Start date & period of implementation

The term of the contract commences on the date of its signature by both parties until the date specified therein, expected to last until 31/12/2025.

If budget for the service is provided after 2025 and both parties agrees, to ensure seamless functioning of EIT Community RIS Hub in Estonia and smooth ECO role takeover, the contracting authority might extend the contract until the date of effective contracting of EIT Community Officer selected for the period after 2025. In such a case the contract shall be extended by no longer than 6 months. The financial terms will remain the same with service fee calculated pro rata for the time of extension.

³ [Guide on Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation \(RIS3 Guide\) - Smart Specialisation Platform \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.eu)

Estimated dedication for the performance of this assignment is 0,5 FTE, which converts to approximately 800 hours per year.

In case of year1 (2024) the performance requested shall be calculated proportionately and pro rata temporis, in line with the date of contracting. This means that the dedication for year 1 must be calculated for 4 months in case the commencement of the contract is 1st September 2024.

As there have been more open procurement procedures published parallelly related to the EIT Community Officer in the RIS regions, a longer procurement procedure is envisaged.

2.3.2. Location

The scope of operation covers the full territory of Estonia. All services (2.2.1 – 2.2.7) will be provided in person and online. Video conferences and telephone conferences are preferred options for team meetings. Candidates are requested to set up and maintain physical office space in one of the cities accepted by the EIT Community SRI Cluster and the EIT (in Estonia: Tartu or Tallinn) because the EIT Community Officer should be contacted physically by the local stakeholders, who can walk in to obtain information and gain access to the EIT Community. As it has been emphasised under section 2.2.2 the pre-qualified candidates are requested to share their ideas about the physical space of the EIT Community Officer office in the tendering stage of the procedure.

On a needed basis, the provider can be called for specific assignments either to EIT Food, EIT or the EIT Community SRI Steering Committee or any other project site designated by EIT Food.

3. Pre-qualification procedure

The pre-qualification is the first phase of the two-stage procedure of selecting winning Tenderer to implement the organisation and exploitation of.

During the pre-qualification procedure the EIT Food will, based upon the presented technical/ professional capacity, establish a list of potential Tenderers. During the second phase the EIT Food will invite pre-qualified Tenderers to submit a detailed bid. During pre-qualification, candidates are not allowed to submit a bid.

Please note that an alliance of pre-qualified Applicants to submit a joint tender will be only allowed in the second phase when both applicants have been selected in the pre-qualification stage.

3.1. Participation

Participation is open to all interested applicants, which include both legal entities and natural persons. Applicants may not form an alliance to jointly submit Applications. In case the Applicant is a natural person, he/she should be able to invoice his/her services by the time of contracting.

A third party receiving financial support under a grant agreement from EIT/ Horizon Europe is eligible for sub-contracting under the present procurement process in case there is a clear division of tasks and obligations between its sub-contract and sub-grant.

All Applicants must sign a Letter of Interest in the form provided by the EIT Food, attached as Annex 1 and Annex 2 to the present Notice.

3.2. Submission of Application and timeline

The indicative timeline for the pre-qualification procedure is as follows:

	DATE
Publishing the PQN	12 May, 2024
Deadline for requesting clarification from the EIT Food	3 June, 2024
Last date for the EIT Food to issue clarification indicative	7 June, 2024
Deadline for submitting Letter of Interest	12 June, 2024
Intended date of notification of pre-qualification	1 July, 2024
Establishing a pre-qualification list and sending Request for Proposals to pre-qualified Applicants	3 July, 2024

Applications must be emailed by 12 June, 2024, 23:59 CEST, to the following address:

Contact name: For the attention of Miss. Milda Krauzlis, (RIS Programme Manager) at EIT Food

E-mail: milda.krauzlis@eitfood.eu

The Contracting Authority notes that Applications will be deemed timely received or submitted by the Contracting Authority if they are received by the Contracting Authority by the submission deadline. All risks associated with delays will be borne by the Applicants only.

All times specified in hours in any procedural document are to be understood as Polish local time. The Contracting Authority will consider Applications submitted after the submission deadline as invalid.

The representative of the Contracting Authority will make records of the opening of the Applications, which will be sent to all Applicants within 3 days from the opening of the Applications.

3.3. Requirements as to form and content

The Application shall include:

- A signed Letter of Interest (Annex 1), including the list of relevant experience. The list of references shall contain at least the following information: Contracting entity; Project/Programme title; Contract start date; Contract end date; Subject-matter of the contract.
- Reference Letter(s) signed by the Authority(ies) confirming the experience(s) presented to comply with pre-qualification selection criteria described in Section 3.6. The Reference Letter(s) must include all necessary information that will allow the Contracting Authority to fully assess compliance with the pre-qualification selection criteria. Please note that experience listed but not, or only partially supported by Reference Letter, will not be considered.
- A signed CV(s) of the expert(s), presenting the requirements to comply with the pre-qualification selection criteria described in Section 3.5.
- The Applicant must submit its application via email in proper (legibly) scanned and non-editable PDF, which is accessible without entering a password. Application may not be submitted by joint Applicants.

3.4. Clarification requests

The Applicant may seek to receive additional information about the provisions of the documentation before the submission deadline from the Contracting Authority, who will provide the requested information at least one day before the submission deadline.

The Applicant is asked to send its request for additional information electronically to the following Contact name: For the attention of Miss. Milda Krauzlis, (RIS Programme Manager) at EIT Food

E-mail: milda.krauzlis@eitfood.eu

The Contracting Authority is not obliged to answer questions in case it makes a decision not to do so.

To ensure a rapid response to the questions received, the Contracting Authority asks the Applicants to send their questions in an editable MS Word format.

3.5. Exclusion criteria

The Candidates will be excluded from participation in the current procedure, if:

- a) it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;
- b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the Candidate is

- in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
- c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the Candidate is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the Candidate belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
- i. fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract;
 - ii. entering into agreement with other Candidate with the aim of distorting competition;
 - iii. violating intellectual property rights;
 - iv. attempting to influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority during the procurement procedure;
 - v. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure;
- d) it has been established by a final judgment that the Candidate is guilty of fraud, corruption or money laundering.

3.6. Pre-qualification selection criteria

The pre-qualification will be based on the professional capacity of the Applicant. The following selection criteria will apply:

3.6.1. Minimum eligibility criteria

- Natural person is a resident of Estonia.
- Legal entity has a registered office in Estonia. In case the Applicant is a legal entity, only a sole candidate/expert will be appointed for the full duration of the services, and the appointed expert should fulfil the requirements below:
- Candidate possesses C1 level fluency in the official language/s/ of Estonia,
- Candidate possesses C1 level fluency in English,
- Candidate has a university or a related higher education degree in business, economics, law, political science, environmental studies, sustainability, or other innovation-related fields.
- Candidate has at least 3 years of professional experience in innovation, entrepreneurship and/or European affairs as a project manager or key expert
- Managed/worked as a key expert for at least 1 EU-financed project for at least one year.

3.6.2. Special eligibility criteria

Special eligibility criteria	Description
Secondary eligibility criterion	<p>Connection and knowledge of the local innovation ecosystem.</p> <p>Number of delivered projects for Innovation ecosystem development in the last 8 years.</p> <p>The Applicant must provide evidence of number projects.</p>
Third eligibility criterion	<p>Knowledge of the EIT system, and collaboration experience with EIT/EIT KICs/RIS Hubs in the last 8 years.</p> <p>The applicant must provide evidence of collaboration.</p>
Fourth eligibility criterion	<p>Experience with networking services (events organised, studies or other services provided for international networks) in the last 8 years.</p> <p>The applicant must provide evidence of services delivered.</p>

Applicants are allowed to refer to contracts completed within the reference period of the last 8 years even if started earlier.

During the assessment of the minimum eligibility criteria, a range of the number of tenderers will be set and in the second stage, the Request for Proposals will be sent only to a number of candidates, which fall within the upper limit of that range. The upper limit of that range will be 3 candidates.

At first, the suitability of all the candidates will be checked upon the Minimum eligibility criteria. In case more than 3 candidates meet the minimum eligibility criteria, these candidates will be assessed against the Secondary eligibility criterion, and it will be checked if candidates can be shortlisted into 5. If not, the third eligibility criterion will be applied.

Reference Letters must contain all relevant data allowing the Contracting Authority to fully assess the compliance of the Applicant, otherwise, the experience will not be considered

3.7. Cancellation of the pre-qualification procedure

In the event of cancellation of the pre-qualification procedure, the Contracting Authority will notify Applicants on the cancellation. In no event shall Contracting Authority be liable for any damages in any way connected with the cancellation of the procedure.

3.8. Appeals/Complains

Applicants believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the evaluation process

of the applications may file a complaint. Appeals should be addressed to the Contracting Authority. The Applicants have 3 days to file their complaints from the receipt of the letter of the notification of selection.

3.9. Ethics clauses/Corruptive practices

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the selection procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the Contract, the Contracting Authority may refrain from concluding the Contract.

The Applicant shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). He should inform the Contracting Authority immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

Annexes

Annex 1: Letter of Interest form

PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATION FOR EIT Community Officer of the EIT COMMUNITY RIS HUB in Estonia

Application submitted by

Name of Applicant / Legal entity*	
Official address	
Tax registration number	

* Please, consider it carefully. If the applicant is a natural person, her/his name has to be indicated. In case the applicant is a legal entity offering a sole expert for the assignment, the name of the legal entity must be indicated in this row.

Contact person

First Name and Last Name	
Address	
Telephone	
e-mail	

In response to the Pre-qualification Notice published on the EIT Food website for appointing EIT Community Officer of the EIT Community RIS Hub in Estonia,

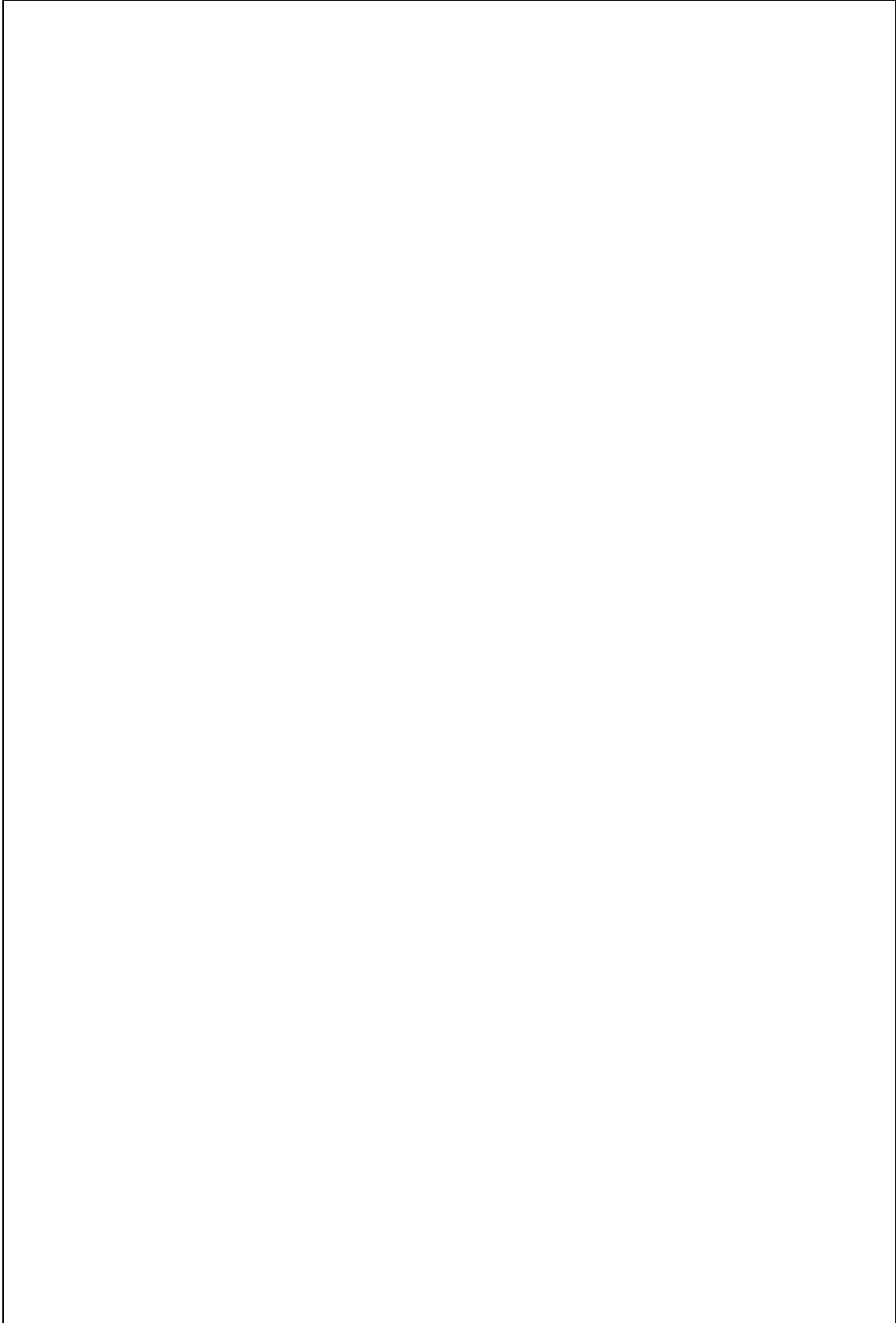
I, _____

(hereby referred to as Applicant) would like to express my interest in undertaking the activities mentioned in the notification. As instructed, I have enclosed all the necessary documents for your information and records.

EXPERIENCE

Please present the relevant expertise of the Applicant with special regard to the tasks and role of the EIT Community Officer of the EIT Community RIS Hub in Estonia. Please specify the exact references, upon which further information may be requested by the Contracting Authority.

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SIGNATURE (and stamp if applicable)

In case of a natural person signature of the Applicant.

In case of legal entity signature of the person authorised to represent the entity and the expert to be delegated to perform a role of the EIT Community Officer in Estonia

Annex 2: Application Form

A. Personal information

Name	Surname
Nationality/ies	Country of Residence
Email	Mobile
Gender	Country's official language (C1 level min.)
Languages	English (C1 level min.)
Professional Web Profile (i.e. LinkedIn, ResearchGate)	

B. Administrative part

Please include all the information and attach documents required by the EIT Food for the evaluation of the application based on the exclusion and selection criteria set out in the pre-qualification notices.

The candidate is a natural person and is a resident of Estonia.	YES / NO**
The candidate is a legal entity with a registered office in Estonia and offers a sole expert who will be appointed for the full duration of the services, and the appointed expert fulfils the requirements below.	YES / NO**
Candidate possesses C1 level fluency in the official language/s/ of Estonia	YES / NO
Candidate possesses C1 level fluency in English.	YES / NO
Candidate possesses a university or a related higher education degree in business, economics, law, political science, environmental studies, sustainability, or other innovation-related fields.	YES / NO
Candidate has at least 3 years of professional experience in innovation, entrepreneurship, and/or European affairs as a project manager or key expert.	YES / NO
Managed/worked as key expert for at least 1 EU-financed project for at least one year.	YES / NO

** The candidate is a natural person or a legal entity. Therefore please, indicate YES only for one question out of the first two.

C. Technical part

Please include all the information required for the technical evaluation of the pre-qualification notice and attach relevant documents. The technical part shall be listed by the applicant. Please, enclose your CV as part of this application.

CV

(Paste here)

Listed experience linking the evidence document in accordance with special eligibility criteria

Description	Listed Evidence
Connection and knowledge of the local innovation ecosystem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Knowledge of the EIT system, collaboration experience with EIT/EIT KICs/RIS Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
Experience with networking services (events organised, studies or other services provided for international networks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

Signed on behalf of the Applicant

Name	
Signature	
Date	



Annex 3. EIT RIS Hubs Minimum Standards and Guiding Principles

CONTEXT

The [EIT SIA 2021-2027](#), designates “increasing the regional impact of the EIT KICs”, through an enhanced [EIT Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\)](#), reinforced with a significantly stronger mandate and additional financial resources, as a key, EIT priority. While this recognises the Scheme’s success since its establishment, as well as its potential to do more, expectations on the EIT RIS to deliver increasing levels of impact, in line with the EIT’s objectives, are very high. To meet these expectations, the EIT RIS needs to have “all hands-on deck”, with the whole EIT Community working together towards a common goal. In particular, it must be ensured that the EIT RIS Hubs, with their unique, on-the-ground presence across Europe, strongly contribute to the EIT’s objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Towards this aim, a set of minimum standards and guiding principles for EIT RIS Hubs, have been drawn up in close consultation with the Cross-KIC Strategic Regional Innovations (SRI) Cluster and the EIT-KIC Forum, and fully aligned with, and complementary to, the EIT Legislative Framework and the [EIT RIS Implementation Framework \(2022-2027\)](#). This document sets out a common strategic approach, which will underpin the establishment and operation of all EIT RIS Hubs, aimed at ensuring their consistent effectiveness in contributing towards achieving the EIT’s objectives and KPIs, while also rationalising the EIT Community’s on-the-ground presence. These minimum standards and guiding principles will be the basis for the Business Plan 2023-2025 process with some pilot actions rolled out in 2022. This document will be reviewed and potentially updated in 2024.

MISSION

In line with Article 2(4) of the [EIT Regulation](#), EIT RIS Hubs are “physical hub, established by a KIC and forming part of its structure, in a Member State or in an associated country targeted by the RIS and 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”. EIT RIS Hubs form the backbone of the EIT RIS’ “place-based” innovation approach and have the core mission of delivering on the EIT’s objectives and KPIs, especially those directly related to the EIT RIS. The EIT Legislative Framework also includes a goal that the EIT RIS Hubs could pave the way to the establishment of a Co-Location Centre in the targeted region.



EIT RIS HUB MINIMUM FUNCTIONS

To deliver on their mission, all existing and future EIT RIS Hubs are required to fully perform the following minimum functions, all of which must be specifically included as fundamental requirements in all contractual agreements between the local EIT RIS Hub organisations and their EIT KICs:

- Improve the innovation capacities of the local ecosystem

EIT RIS Hubs must deliver on the EIT RIS' core objective of improving the innovation capacities of local ecosystems, through capacity building activities, and closer interactions between the local knowledge triangle innovation actors (such as, clusters, networks, regional public authorities, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), research organisations, Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, SMEs) and their activities. These activities should include the dissemination of the EIT Community's results and good practices, as well as activities focused on citizen engagement. EIT RIS Hubs should be able to demonstrate measurable results and impact of their activities and provide opportunities for feedback from local ecosystem stakeholders and adjust their activities accordingly.

- Attract and facilitate the integration of new participants in EIT Community activities

EIT RIS Hubs must directly support the EIT RIS' objective of attracting and facilitating the integration of potential new partners and participants in the EIT KICs and their activities. The EIT RIS Hubs must strongly promote EIT Community opportunities within the local innovation ecosystems and help to link these to the EIT Community's pan-European innovation ecosystems. EIT RIS Hubs must also serve as a pipeline of talent and innovation potential (including students, ideas, start-ups, etc) towards the EIT Community, manifestly contributing to the attainment of the EIT's objectives and KPIs, including the EIT KICs' Financial Sustainability targets and the RIS Hub's own Financial Sustainability targets.

To do this, the EIT RIS Hubs must liaise closely with local/regional/national authorities and stakeholders, including the EIT National Contact Points (NCPs). NCPs are expected to act as an assistance, information and referral point for potential beneficiaries, who will be redirected to the respective local EIT RIS Hub or EIT KIC Office according to their needs. To achieve this, the Hubs should regularly provide the EIT NCPs with all relevant information to support their core functions, and if requested, help the NCPs understand the specificities around the KIC they



represent and the type of activities they deliver. Once an EIT Community RIS Hub is established in a particular country or territory, the consolidated provision of information to the local EIT NCPs can be centrally delivered by the EIT Community RIS Hub EIT Community Officer with fully support from the EIT RIS Hubs. This should also enable EIT RIS Hubs and NCPs to team up for regular outreach, communication and awareness raising activities, and eventually reach new audiences and increase the number of national EITbeneficiaries.

The detailed task sharing and cooperation rules for all local EIT related local entities should be described in the establishing MoU of the EIT Community RIS Hub, which will be signed by the contributors. The management of the MoU signature (as all coordinating tasks) are the responsibility of the national EIT Community Officer (ECO).

The EIT RIS Hubs should additionally actively scout for the most promising talent and innovation potential in their local ecosystems with a view to channel such talent towards their EIT KICs' education programmes, Accelerators and so on.

- Support the establishment of synergies

With support from the EIT in a “door opener” role, via the national EIT Member State Representative Group (MSRG) representative and NCPs, the EIT RIS Hubs must spearhead efforts to establish synergies between EITCommunity activities and the local innovation ecosystem, aligned with the relevant Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). EIT RIS Hubs should engage with relevant local authorities as well as, undertake regular mapping exercises to identifying potential funding and collaboration opportunities.

With a view towards the EIT RIS Hubs' own financial sustainability, they should also actively seek possibilities for co-funding of their activities from local private and public funding sources. Special attention should be paid to efforts aimed at realising synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III). Here too, the EIT will support in a “door opener” role, via the national EIT MSR representative and NCPs. EIT RIS Hubs must additionally serve to support the implementation of synergies identified between the EIT and the European Innovation Council (EIC), including by contributing to capacity building actions under the EIT-EIC Fastrack Scheme and facilitating the cross participation of local start-ups and SMEs in EIT and EIC activities.



- Coordinate with other EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices

To fully perform all these minimum functions, each EIT RIS Hub must coordinate its work closely with other Hubs and EIT KIC Offices, such as Co-Location Centres and Satellite Offices, present in the same innovation ecosystem. This includes providing other EIT RIS Hubs and EIT KIC Offices with regular updates on its ongoing and planned activities, including via any coordination mechanisms to be put in place, as well as, concrete cooperation, including joint activities with a view to maximise impact. Once an EIT Community RIS Hub is established covering a given country or territory, all Hubs present in that ecosystem should be linked to it and therefore, this coordination and information distribution amongst EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices will be supported by the EIT Community RIS Hub EIT Community officer.

The EIT RIS Hubs should dedicate, on average, 10% of their time to coordinate with the EIT Community RIS Hub, other EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices. Additionally, each EIT RIS Hub must also be able to accurately address queries beyond their EIT KIC specifically, including helping to refer stakeholders to contact persons within other relevant EIT KICs, better suited to support their needs.

EIT RIS HUB KEY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Establishment of new EIT RIS Hubs

Any new EIT RIS Hubs will only be established following the consent of the EIT, with any decision taken based on a thorough needs analysis. Plans for new Hubs must be reported in the Country-specific roadmaps which has been drawn up in consultation with and adopted by the EIT as part of the Business Plan process. The EIT KICs are entitled to propose updates to their Country-specific roadmaps, in circumstances driven by unforeseen fundamental changes that make this necessary, including lessons learnt from the launch of the already established and operating EIT RIS Community Hubs for consideration by the EIT.

The aim of the Country-specific roadmaps is to describe, in a single document, the country-specific plans of the KICs, to be implemented either individually or jointly, including:

- planned changes in a KIC's on-the-ground presence;
- a timeline towards the establishment of the local EIT Community RIS Hubs; and;
- plans for Cross-KIC activities, aligned with the local RIS3 priorities, to be implemented locally.



The last version of the country-specific roadmap adopted by the KICs and the EIT on November 8, 2023 is the governing one, the modifications and adaptations that become necessary after the agreement are recorded by the EIT and the KICs in an attached annex.

The Country-specific roadmaps must take into consideration the specificities of the target territory and will be officially approved by the EIT as part of the 2023-2025 Business Planning process. Country-specific roadmaps should be drawn up for all EIT RIS-eligible country and territory at either national or Regional-level.

New EIT RIS Hubs should ensure complementarity with existing EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices present locally, as well as the local EIT Community RIS Hub, once established. New EIT RIS Hubs should also contribute to boosting the EIT KICs' geographical balance across the EIT RIS-eligible countries and territories. Additionally, the engagement of local organisations or other entities to serve as EIT RIS Hubs, must be subject to an open call process. Where appropriate, non-country specific open Calls to set up new, impact driven, EIT RIS Hubs, are encouraged.

- Integration of EIT RIS Hubs into EIT Community RIS Hubs

By the end of 2020, 97 EIT RIS Hubs had been established to drive the successful implementation of the EIT RIS. The concentration of multiple EIT RIS Hubs in some countries is creating a complex landscape which many stakeholders are struggling to navigate, yet, at the same time, several EIT RIS-eligible countries and territories do not have on-the-ground representation by some or even any EIT KICs. In this context, focus should now shift towards strengthening local-level synergies and ensuring the presence of the EIT Community in every EIT RIS-eligible country and territory. Towards this end, the Cross-KIC SRI Cluster will be mandated and provided with the necessary resources to establish EIT Community RIS Hubs to be run by a EIT Community Officer (ECO) covering every EIT RIS-eligible country and territory, by the end of 2025, either at the national or Regional (such as Baltics, Western Balkans, etc)-level.

These EIT Community RIS Hubs will, primarily, be a coordination mechanism, providing local innovators with a unified source of information on all services and opportunities provided by the entire EIT Community, both locally and internationally. It will also serve as a centralised gateway, for local innovators, to all EIT KICs, irrespective of their local on-the-ground representation.

In those ecosystems where EIT RIS Hubs are already established, the EIT Community RIS Hubs will aim to integrate these Hubs' and rebrand them as Community Members. Community Members will maintain their RIS Hub functions



but will be required to:

- undertake a rebranding and renaming exercise aimed at external stakeholders;
- to commit to an enhanced level of cooperation with the other Community Members operating under the same EIT Community RIS Hub, including by implementing joint activities.

In exchange, they will not lose any of the operational independence they enjoyed prior to integration, and will not be requested to relocate. A common naming and branding approach across all EIT Community RIS Hubs and their Community Members will be put in place. Once EIT RIS Hubs become Community Members, they will be commonly renamed to “EIT [KIC name] RIS Hub [country], member of the EIT Community RIS Hub [country]”. This will allow for each EIT Community RIS Hub to be displayed as a unitary Hub on the EIT’s external communications maps.

Each EIT Community RIS Hub will be run and coordinated by an EIT Community Officer chosen by the Cross- KIC SRI Cluster, following an open call process or employed directly by the entity which is agreed by the KICs to take over the ECO role (local CLC or RIS Hub). The EIT Community Officer can be a natural person or an entity as well. In case of the selection of an entity, the lead expert qualification, who is taking over the ECO role, must be the major selection criteria. This lead expert can be just replaced with a contract amendment accepted by the Cross-KIC SRI Cluster. The ECO must be fluent both in English and in the official local language/s. A list of tasks and responsibilities of the ECO are included in annex 1.

With active support from the EIT, as appropriate, national authorities may be invited to finance or co-finance the cost of establishing and / or operating their local EIT Community RIS Hub, as well as joint activities aligned with the local RIS3 priorities from which all Community Members could potentially benefit.

Unless external funding can be found, the cost of the ECO, who will be compensated based on a performance-based system of remuneration, other direct and indirect costs related to the running of the EIT Community RIS Hub, such as the operation of the website, the set up and maintenance of a small physical space (if this cannot be accommodated in an existing EIT Community space or another offered space), as well as Cross-KIC management costs related to operationalising the Hubs, will be covered from the Cross-KIC SRI Cluster’s budget. The Cross-KIC SRI Cluster’s budget for 2023-2025, will be adequately increased to reflect this, having taken into consideration a total cost estimation to be drawn up by the Cluster. Similarly, unless external funding can be found, Cross-KIC activities could be jointly financed from the EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members’ budgets.



As with all aspects of this document, where necessary, starting from 2023, the contractual agreements between the local organisations running an EIT Community RIS Hub Network Member and their EIT KICs should be updated, to reflect this provision.

Six pilot EIT Community RIS Hubs has been established in 2022 and 2023, starting in North Macedonia, followed by Latvia, Ukraine, Cyprus, Malta and Montenegro. On the basis of learnings gleaned from the establishment and initial operation in these six pilot EIT Community RIS Hubs, the process for the establishment of the remaining 19 EIT Community RIS Hubs covering all EIT RIS- eligible countries and territories by 2025 might be fine-tuned. The intention is that 14 EIT Community RIS Hubs will be established in 2024, followed by the final 5 in 2025. A clear establishment schedule is contained in the Country-specific roadmaps.

- EIT RIS Hub financing

EIT RIS Hubs are co-funded by the EIT KICs as either a local independent organisation or a consortium of organisations working with the EIT KICs as KIC partners, subcontractors or subgrantees. Local organisations engaged to serve as EIT RIS Hubs will only be eligible to receive EIT RIS funding for operational activities directly related to the fulfilment of its mission. Administrative costs such as offices and related infrastructure, personnel costs, and so on, are not eligible. All EIT RIS Hubs must demonstrate cost effectiveness.

As part of their Business Plan submissions, the EIT KICs should also include binding, multi-annual Financial Sustainability targets for each of their EIT RIS Hubs. While subject to the final Memorandum of Cooperation review, in principle, all EIT RIS Hub will need to achieve 100% financing from non-EIT sources by the time their EIT KIC reaches the maximum fifteen-year period of EIT grant support. This means that for the first wave KICs' EIT RIS Hub, 100% financing from non-EIT sources will need to be reached by the end of 2024.

The Cross-KIC SRI Cluster should develop a unified and simplified evaluation and reporting principles to ensure that each EIT KIC can establish a system to closely track, measure, and assess the timely performance of their own EIT RIS Hubs. These unified principles will ascertain the measurement of the performance of the EIT RIS Hubs against a common set of concrete, time-bound and measurable, multi-annual impact delivery KPIs, which demonstrate contribution to the EIT's and EIT KICs' objectives and KPIs. The targets for each EIT RIS Hub will need to be communicated to the EIT for approval as part of the Business Plan process.



A unified and simplified evaluation and reporting system shall also be introduced for the EIT Community RIS Hubs to assess the performance of the ECOs. This system will be operated by all the KICs jointly in the Cross-KICSRI Cluster project. The ECOs' individual targets will need to be communicated to the EIT for approval as part of the Business Plan process.

Since both evaluation systems will be performance based, in cases of underperformance applicable financial penalties and other mitigating measures, should be transparently delineated. The EIT approved the EIT RIS Hubs unified and simplified evaluation and reporting principles based on the EIT Common List KPIs and the revised suggestion of the unified and simplified evaluation and reporting system for the EIT Community RIS Hubs is under evaluation of EIT in 2023 containing also the adequate monitoring mechanism as part of its monitoring strategy in 2023.

ANNEX: LIST OF TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EIT Community Officer(ECO)

- Develop a good understanding of the EIT model and keep up to date with the KICs activities;
- Form good working relations with all EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members, and other EIT KIC Offices present in the same ecosystem both nationally and Regionally;
- *Manage the signature of the EIT Community RIS Hub MoU with all local EIT representations on the ground to finalise the establishment of the EIT Community RIS hub*
- In consultation with the EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members, and other EIT KIC Offices present in the same ecosystem, establish a smooth and efficient working method which limits the administrative burden on the EIT Community RIS Hub Community Members, and other EIT KIC Offices, while supporting their minimum functions;
- Set up and maintain a physical space, in a city accepted by the Cross-KIC SRI Cluster and the EIT, after having consulted with the national authorities, where local stakeholders, including NCPs, can physically, walk-in to obtain information on, as well as gain access to the EIT Community, while additionally, aiding with the EIT's on-the-ground visibility and branding;
- Design an appropriate work method and necessary tools for information sharing / coordination so as to facilitate continuous information exchange between the Hub Community Members, EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices present in the same ecosystem



both nationally and Regionally;

- Collect information to share through applicable channels related the EIT KICs' activities, events, results and opportunities of interest to local stakeholders with a view to their dissemination internally and externally;
- Coordinate the collection of local funding opportunities and relevant key national events and bring these to the attention to the local Hub Community Members, EIT RIS Hubs and other EIT KIC Offices.
- Contribute to, support and where appropriate, with the agreements of the EIT KICs, lead any horizontal exploratory efforts towards securing co-funding opportunities, including securing meetings with relevant national / regional authorities and facilitate the preparation for the submission of joint proposals for national / regional funding in case of general Cross-KIC actions;
- Coordinate and support the EIT RIS Hubs local joint communication efforts, including by:
 - managing and updating the EIT Community RIS Hub website, in the local language, with information on EIT Community activities and opportunities, including dedicated sections targeted towards specific stakeholders, including, students, start-ups, national authorities and so on;
 - facilitating the organisation of EIT Community awareness-raising events, including possible open days within the context of INNOVEIT (the EIT's annual innovation forum), and coordinating and supporting the participation of EIT Community representatives in relevant national events;
- To the greatest extent possible, ensure a coordinated approach amongst the EIT KICs' RIS Hubs towards national authorities including relevant NCPs and Managing Authorities;
- Scout for and recommend to the EIT KICs opportunities to implement joint projects financed through other EU / national / regional funds (including ESIF and IPA III);
- Suggest and support, including, where appropriate and with the agreement of the EIT KICs, lead, the implementation of possible joint activities amongst the EIT KICs, to be implemented nationally and / or Regionally, aligned with relevant RIS3 priorities;
- At the request of the EIT KICs, support any necessary updating of the local Country-specific roadmap and support with its implementation, as appropriate;
- Serve as a centralised contact gateway for local stakeholders to the EIT Community as a whole, and refer stakeholders to contact persons within other relevant EIT KICs, best suited to support their needs.;



- Identify the need for and facilitating the implementation of shared services for Hub Members with a view to improve efficiency;
- Upon request, provide support, additional to that already offered by the EIT RIS Hubs, to the EIT and the EIT KICs with navigating the local innovation landscape, including by contributing to the development of EIT maps / ecosystem mapping;
- Any other tasks mandated by the EIT Management which, in principle, supports the EIT RIS Hubs to contribute to the achievement of the EIT's Objectives and implementation of its Strategy and Annual Work Programmes.