

Request for Proposals to Organize EIT Food Startup Awareness Event

EIT Food CLC North-East Sp. z o.o. with its registered seat in Warsaw ("EIT Food CLC North-East") is looking for organisations to organise the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event for the local agrifood ecosystem in April-November 2025

The organisations invited to apply for this call should be based in one of the following countries:

- **Albania, Montenegro, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of North Macedonia**

Application deadline: 14 March 2025, 23:59 CET.

Application template: see Annex.

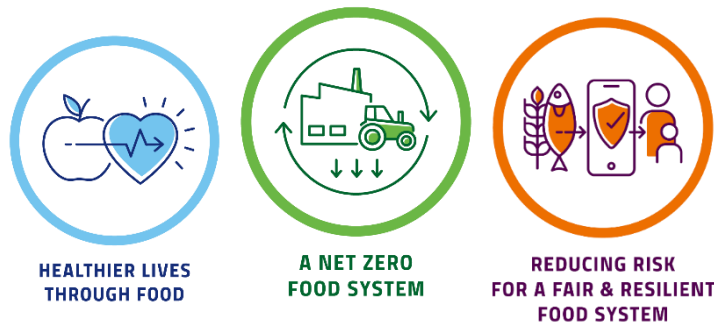
Further details about EIT Food can be found at: www.eitfood.eu, and the principles of the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme are described at: <https://eit.europa.eu/activities/outreach/eit-regional-innovation-scheme-ris>. With respect to the present call, **EIT Food will not provide new information that has not already been included in this call document**, but can assist the potential applicants by explaining the contents of this document

1) Background information: 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



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](#).

About EIT Food Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)

The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) is the EIT Community's outreach scheme introduced in 2014 to share good practices and experiences emerging from EIT Community activities. The EIT RIS provides targeted support to individuals and organisations to take part in and benefit from EIT Innovation Communities' activities, services and programmes.

EIT Food RIS aims at strengthening those regions in Europe which are modest and moderate in terms of innovation in the agri-food sector. It is open to innovators that are not partners of EIT Food and supports targeted stakeholders through a portfolio of projects.

EIT Food Competency Framework

The EIT Food has defined a [Competency Framework](#) that identifies the key competencies and capabilities required for innovators and entrepreneurs to possess to drive effective change in the food system. Each of these consisting out of four competency levels. Ranging from exploring the foundations of the skill, to possessing the ability to positively transform the food system as we know it. The EIT Food Competency Framework consists of eight priority areas to develop talent in the food system:

Entrepreneurship. The ability to recognise, develop and act on entrepreneurial opportunities in a range of organisation settings, and to play an effective role in new venture formation and growth.

Problem-solving. The ability to analyse and understand the problem space, generate new ideas, assess their validity, and co-create solutions.

Critical thinking. The ability to assess facts and evidence to drive decision-making, including constructive questioning of the status quo.

Leadership. The ability to be an effective leader, and to mobilise resources efficiently to accomplish a goal based on responsible management practice.

Communication. The ability to drive interpersonal communication and translate complex ideas for different audiences.

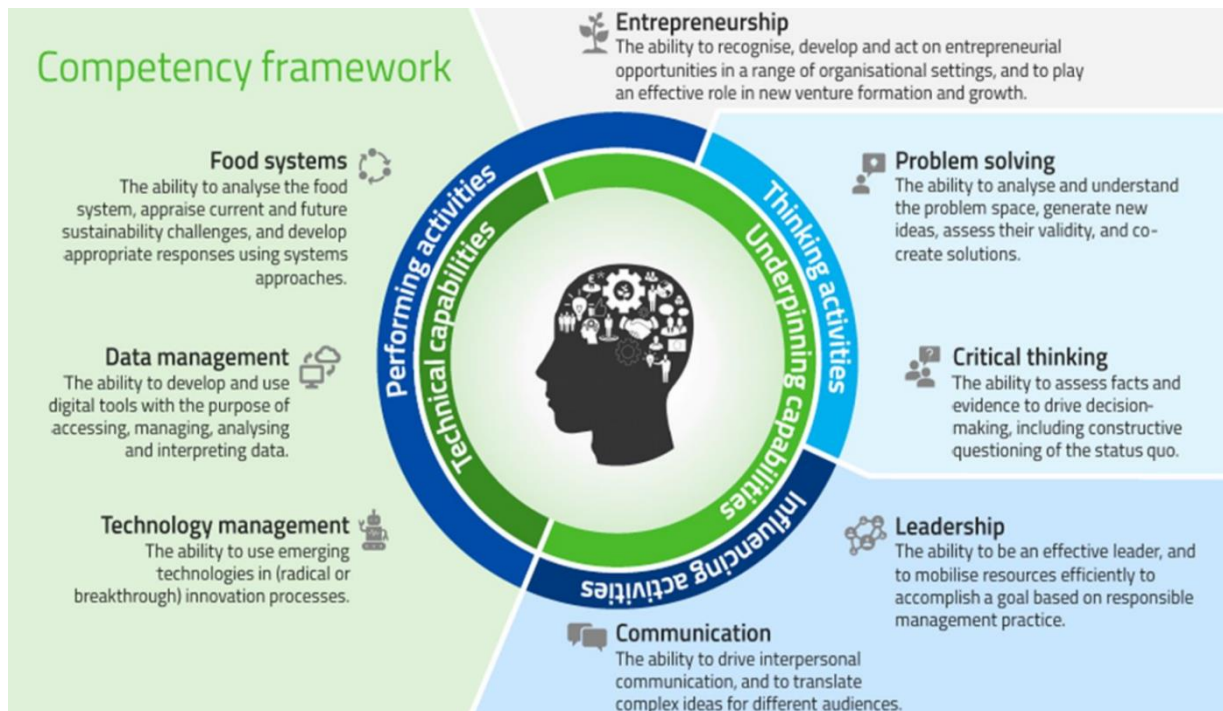
Technology management. The ability to use emerging technologies in (radical or breakthrough) innovation processes.

Data management. The ability to develop and use digital tools with the purpose of accessing, managing, analysing and interpreting data.

Food systems. The ability to analyse the food system, appraise current and future sustainability challenges, and develop appropriate responses using system approaches.

EIT Food's educational activities, workshops and training for students, startups and other stakeholders shall support the development of at least two priority areas.

Figure 1. Competency framework



2) Background information: EIT Food Startup Awareness Event

The present call is launched by EIT Food CLC North-East to select up to 6 organisations (more than one organisation can be selected in one country) that would become organisers of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event. Each organiser will organise one event in their country (the "Event").

The Event will be composed of two parts:

The first part will be constituted by the EIT Food Challenge Labs, which is a multi-stage programme designed using principles from design thinking and service design. Its aim is double fold: to find innovative solutions to big, tangible problems faced by the food sector and to build capacity among the participants to develop entrepreneurial skills. EIT Food Challenge Labs aims to include students, technologists, scientists, professionals, consumers, and companies. This diverse mix helps analyse the food system comprehensively, exploring sustainability challenges through conversations with industry experts and consumers.

The main goal of the second part (the Networking event) will be to introduce EIT Food programs and activities to the local agrifood and innovation ecosystem and scout for potential participants for EIT Food entrepreneurship programs. The Event will also aim to bring together the members of the local agrifood ecosystem and initiate the discussion about the current state and challenges of the ecosystem in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship.

2.1. Programme format and requirements

The proposed format of the Event should consist of 2 parts:

- 1) **EIT Food Challenge Labs (see 2.3. Challenge Labs content)**
- 2) **A networking event for the members of the local agrifood and innovation ecosystem (see 2.4. Networking event content)**

Both parts of the Event should be organised between April and end of November.

The modality of the Event will be in person, with the possibility to streamline both parts of the Event to have greater reach. The details on formats and timeline are going to be decided based on proposals from applicant organisations.

Activities can be run in local language.

The applicants are welcome to introduce more detailed information to the proposed format of the Event to better realise the purpose of the Event in the target countries. The selected organisations will work closely with EIT Food CLC North-East on customising the format and schedule of the Event to the peculiarities of the local agrifood and startup ecosystem.

When applying for the call, interested organisations should submit an **agenda proposal** aligned with the Event format requirements and a short **budget proposal** listing the costs associated with the Event planning and organisation.

2.2. Event budget.

The total budget for the organisation of the Event will be of at least €17,000. The selected organisations will sign a subcontracting agreement with EIT Food CLC North-East with gross funding of up to 15,000€ (per both parts of the Event) to cover the eligible costs of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event. On top of this funding, the selected organisation will provide with a minimum of €2,000 of co-funding in kind, in cash or as sponsorship.

Prizes for winner entrepreneurs sponsored by external organization can be considered.

The external co-funding can be dedicated to pay the prizes.

2.3. Challenge Labs content

The EIT Food Challenge Labs aims to tackle both immediate challenges and foster long-term growth in a given country agrifood sector. It focuses on boosting the quality of emerging startups, and helping their technologies reach the market. It aims to at least 10 ready teams or early-stage start-ups or at least 30 individual participants who want to join these teams, fostering their growth and providing a platform for creativity and collaboration in the agri-food field. Applicants should carefully review the attached list of EIT Food KPIs provided in Annex 2 and select the metrics that best align with their project goals. Applicants must articulate their chosen KPIs in the application form.

To learn more about Challenge Labs Activity (the “Activity”) you can enter the official website:

<https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/challenge-labs>

The EIT Food Challenge Labs is the EIT labelled programme reported with KPI EITHE07.2. Details of accreditation requirements will be shared with selected organisation in the onboarding phase.

Stage 1 – Scouting phase

- **Collaboratively agree on final challenges** between the selected organization and EIT Food
- **Scout thematic mentors/experts**, in relevant topics (e.g., entrepreneurship, business model, sales, pitching, marketing, customer discovery, policy making, etc.), **moderators** (the persons from the selected organisation that help and coordinate the implementation of the Activity, and **partner company(ies)/sponsoring company(ies)**, that will/may define its challenge or industry problem to be solved by the participants; **adjust training opportunities** to the local ecosystem;
- **Secure collaboration with at least one university**, scientific institute, or technological park to involve students and PhD students in the Activity;
- **Scout participants beyond universities**, aiming for a diverse mix from the start-up community, entrepreneurs, researchers, academics, young farmers/food producers, and agrifood sector employees.

Stage 2 – Recruitment of participants

- **Recruit participants** from diverse backgrounds, including students, graduates, young researchers, entrepreneurs, and professionals interested or involved in agrifood.
- **Evaluate applications and select participants.** EIT Food CLC North-East will monitor the recruitment process at all stages. Details regarding the participant recruitment process, application evaluation, eligibility, and selection criteria will be discussed with the selected organization.
- **Ensure a minimum of 30 workshop participants or at least 10 early-stage start-ups with at least 8 participating experts/mentors** and an adequate number of **moderators**. The selected organization is also responsible for collecting a minimum of 30 signed **Participant Consent Forms** from the individual participants or **all necessary supporting documents** in case of start-up training, **group presentations** (as evidence of acquired skills), and **NDAs** with experts/mentors to protect the Activity solutions. Ready team members should explain their motivation to participate together. Ensure that each team member signs the Participant Consent Form.

Stage 3 – Implementation of the Activity

- Deliver online and/or in-person activities, offering resources to build participants' entrepreneurship skills. At least 3 skills of The EIT Food Education Competency Framework are expected to be acquired. The format and method may vary based on the selected organization's agenda but culminate in a Final Pitching Activity or presentation of team solutions. This could involve a public speaking and business competition to select winners and connect them with the local start-up and business ecosystem, including investors and industry representatives
- Conduct workshops covering various aspects of innovative solution creation, such as law, finance, marketing, logistics, product management, business planning, prototyping, pitching, and negotiations. Organize group sessions with thematic experts focusing on entrepreneurial skills development, including design thinking, creative tasks, natural talents, emotional intelligence in business, and coaching tools. Provide training on specific and relevant

aspects of Intellectual Property (IP) rights in a given country and legal issues surrounding product or technology creation.

- Address real challenges – participants' outcomes should be measurable and possess the potential to evolve into a product, initiate a startup, or participate in EIT Food programs available to participants in a given country for further project development.
- Submit a final Activity agenda for approval by the EIT Food CLC North-East representative at least 3 weeks before the Event. Provide a press release/other communication information for the acceptance of the EIT Food Communication team.
- Manage invitations and registrations of the participants, registration of their attendance, and logistics. Design, and organize the Pitching competition, including its rules and terms. Evaluate the final pitch deck of each group/team and define the winners. Contribute at least three independent members to the Jury for evaluating participants' pitching presentations.
- Conduct workshops and Final event in local language providing English translation if needed. Pitch decks could be provided in English.
- Arrange venue, catering, audio-visual materials, moderators, and speakers for face-to-face events.
- Create a landing page and use social networking platforms for participants to access materials, updates, news, and chat.
- Collaborate with EIT Food CLC North-East to customize the Event format and schedule based on the local agrifood and start-up ecosystem specificities.
- Promote other EIT Food programs available for participants within the Activity's agenda. Additionally, introduce the [EIT Food Start-up Manual, available online](#).
- Applicants are encouraged to be creative and propose additional features for the Event format. The selected organizations will collaborate with EIT Food CLC North-East to tailor the Event schedule to the local agrifood and start-up ecosystem.

Stage 4 – Summary report and Follow-up support

- Provide a final Activity report and share success stories and best practices, obtain the participants' feedback, and send all necessary documentation to the EIT Food CLC North-East representative.

Tasks during all Activity stages:

- Designate a contact person for permanent communication with the EIT Food CLC North-East representative, ensure regular follow-up sessions with him/her on the Activity progress, carrying internal activity coordination.
- Contribute to disseminating the Activity and news through internal communication and social media channels. Send evidence of at least 3 media publications in the national press (digital or paper).
- Ensure correct branding, and EIT Food visibility and respect its visual identification in all communication materials (online events, agendas, etc.) in accordance [with the guidelines](#) provided by EIT Food CLC North-East.
- Encourage and foster the participation of the selected participants on social media, interviews on the national media and/or in EIT Food channels.

Research on industry challenges

Using EIT Food's and the selected organization's online and offline channels and network, the selected organisation is expected to propose EIT Food CLC North-East a series of challenges facing food system through research and interviews with agrifood sector representatives and agrifood companies. Ideally 2 or 3 challenges will be generated by an agrifood company who will become co-financing partner of

the Activity. Research should focus on the identification and formulation of problem statement/specific challenges within the EIT Food missions: Healthier Lives Through Food, Net Zero Food System, Reducing Risk for a Fair and Resilient Food System. The organisation should prepare a short report summarising the findings and main challenges identified which will be then used as the starting point of the workshop.

***Example 1:** The problem with regenerative agriculture is that traditional companies are not willing/able to pay the additional prices required for the mode of production.’ “How to bring to the table a fresh, convenient and sustainable lettuce”. “How to produce a circular yogurt”.*

***Example 2:** Products made with alternative proteins are still less available and more expensive than meat. How can we use technology to increase sustainable production of plant based products on a bigger scale?*

***Example 3:** Packaging of food products is often not sustainable and contributes to production of non-recyclable waste. How can we change current food packaging to minimize their negative impact on the environment?*

2.4. Networking Event content

The second part of the Event must be a **networking event** for the members of the local agrifood and innovation ecosystem.

The **networking** event will serve as a platform to 1) discuss the current challenges and opportunities in the local food system and 2) present and get to know the EIT Food activities to the invited audience.

The purpose is building a strong community and ecosystem around the Event to foster networking, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among participants.

Target Audience: startups, investors, food companies, universities and research centres, Ministries, Innovation Agencies, companies from the agri-food sector, clusters, farmer associations. It will be required a **minimum attendance of 60 people** to the networking event.

Duration min. 3 hours/180 minutes in person with streamline if possible.

The Event organizer will be responsible for venue selection, marketing and promotion, speaker recruitment, agenda planning, logistics management, attendee engagement, and post-event follow-up as well as for sponsor recruitment support, logistical support, and financial assistance or sponsorship opportunities.

Collaboration and partnerships between Event organizers, sponsors, speakers, and other stakeholders are highly encouraged to enhance the quality and impact of the Event.

2.5. Contribution to EIT Food KPIs

The organizer, through this Event will contribute toto achieving the following EIT Food Core KPIs:

Graduates from EIT labelled programmes [EITHE07.2] = 30

Sum of graduates from EIT labelled education activities awarded EIT Label (in year N). Structured data to report this KPI:

- Year of reporting
- Name
- Contact detail/email address EIT RIS KPI
- Gender
- Country of origin
- Country of residence
- Education programme/activity
- Education programme type
- Name of the HEI / education provider
- Year of starting the studies under the EIT label
- Year of completing the studies under the EIT label

People reached through communication activities [EITHE17.1] = 60 minimum

Reach of KIC's communication activities: This will present aggregated figures for the entire KIC (e.g. corporate account, CLCs, hubs, activities), [no target, reported only], including:

- # website visitors/unique website visitors
- # social media following and engagement (data collected to include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn followers and engaged users on each channel)
- # of external events organised by KIC (1) and # of participants (60 minimum)
- # of external events where KIC and KIC activities were presented (1)
- # media coverage (articles and broadcast in global / European / national / local press, TV, radio, etc.).

3) Applications to organise the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event

EIT Food CLC North-East invites legal entities from countries or regions listed in point 3.1. to submit their proposals to become an organiser of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event.

3.1. Countries or regions targeted by this Request

Each application should concern one of the following countries:

- 1) Albania
- 2) Montenegro
- 3) Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 4) Republic of North Macedonia

Each applicant can prepare only one application (for one country).

3.2. Eligible organisations

- Legal entities (such as companies, incubators or accelerators, innovation centres, higher education institutes, non-governmental organisations);

- Operating in a country/region targeted by this Request;
- Able to sign a subcontracting agreement with EIT Food CLC North-East and act as a subcontractor in a project funded based on Horizon Europe/EIT modalities;
- Recognised as important players in the local innovation ecosystems with a strong regional outreach;
- Experienced in entrepreneurship support;
- Experienced in the organisation of events/workshops locally, face to face and online;
- Able to organise the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event in the respected timeframe between April and November;
- Committed to contribute to achieving KPIs and comply with the accreditation requirements.

3.3. Benefits for organisations selected as EIT Food Awareness Event organisers

Organisations chosen by EIT Food to organise the Event will be offered the following benefits:

- Ability to benefit from the association with EIT Food and the EIT community (as subcontractors in EIT Food activities);
- Subcontracting agreement with EIT Food CLC North-East with gross funding of up to 15,000€ (per the “Event”) to cover the eligible costs of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event’s planning and organisation;
- Expertise and organisational support of EIT Food CLC North-East in organising and implementing the Event.

Organising the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event shall be considered an opportunity to become associated with EIT Food, establish relations with its community and become better embedded in the EIT Food activities. The selected organisation will also benefit from the increased visibility in their local innovation ecosystems, strengthening their position on the regional and national levels.

3.4. Selection process

Interested and eligible organisations are invited to submit their applications in English by 23:59 CET on 14th March 2025 using the “EIT Food Startup Awareness Event – Application Form”. Please send the electronic version of the application, based on the form available.

Incomplete applications or applications submitted by ineligible organisations will be automatically rejected. Complete applications received by EIT Food CLC North-East will be evaluated by a committee including representatives of EIT Food using selection criteria presented in point 3.5.

EIT Food CLC North-East reserves the right to designate the subcontractors only if the submitted applications ensure the excellence and value for money, and to relaunch the Request if the present selection process would not yield satisfactory results. EIT Food CLC North-East reserves the right to contact the applicant organisations by e-mail or phone asking for additional explanations or supporting documents, and to schedule selection interviews with short-listed organisations. All applications will be evaluated using transparent selection criteria. The selected organisations will be required to sign subcontracting agreements with EIT Food CLC North-East. If for some reasons on the part of chosen organization the subcontracting agreement is not signed in a month after the announcement of the call results, EIT Food CLC North-East may select another applicant based on the ranking lists without launching additional Request.

3.5. Selection criteria

All proposals will be evaluated taking into account the following criteria, related to the applicant organisational capacity and EIT Food Startup Awareness Event requirements:

1. **Experience in training and supporting innovative startups** (examples of the most relevant workshops/trainings from 2020-2024 that were provided by applicant organisation to entrepreneurs and startups from the region, including short description of these activities, key outcomes and impact);
2. **Experience in organisation of events in the field of agrifood concerning innovation/entrepreneurship/foodtech** (examples of the most relevant events/projects in the field of agrifood that were organized by applicant organisation in 2020-2024 including short description of these activities, type of an engagement in the project, project partners, key outcome, etc.);
3. **Role in the ecosystem** (familiarity with the agrifood industry in the target country; existing contacts and projects with relevant local stakeholders; existing pipeline of early-stage innovative startups);
4. **Approach to the organization of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event:** proposed Event format, specific topics, speakers and how they correspond to the purpose of the Event outlined by EIT Food;
5. **Co-funding** (minimum €2.000);
6. **Cost of service** planned by applicant organisation.

Criteria 1-5 will be evaluated on a 0-15 scale: 0 – not satisfactory; 5 – satisfactory; 10 – good and 15 points – very good. The application can receive max. 75 points for criteria 1-5 .

In criterion 6 application with the lowest price will receive 40 points while other applications will receive proportionally lower numbers.

3.6. Appeal on Evaluation Results

Applicants can submit an appeal within 5 days of result receipt, if:

1. There is an indication that the results of the eligibility checks were incorrect
2. The evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

For more details, please read our Appeal Procedure/Redress Mechanism.

3.7. EIT Food Startup Awareness Event – Application Form

*Please fill in the application form, ensuring that **all fields** are completed. Please submit the application in electronic format **both as PDF and editable MS Word files** by **23:59 CET on 14th March 2025** to:*

malgorzata.druciarek@eitfood.eu Applications incomplete or sent after the deadline will be rejected.
Please do not provide further supporting documents and capture all relevant information in this form.

1. What country/region are you applying from (<u>underline one</u>)?	
1. Albania 2. Montenegro 3. Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina 4. Republic of North Macedonia	
2. Name of the applicant organisation in English	
3. Name of the applicant organisation in local language	
4. Legal form	
5. Office address (street, city, country)	
6. Website address	
7. Type of organisation (<u>underline one</u>)	
business enterprise	higher education institute
	public research organisation
knowledge transfer intermediary (incl. industry association, innovation cluster, technology park, entrepreneurship support organisation)	
other (please specify)	
8. Name of contact person	
9. Position	
10. E-mail	
11. Phone	
12. Year of establishment of your organisation	
13. Total number of employees	
14. Please list social media channels currently used by your organisation (with web addresses):	
Facebook	
Twitter	
LinkedIn	
YouTube	
Other (please specify)	
15. Please provide a brief description of your organisation and its main activities:	
16. Please provide examples of the most relevant workshops/trainings from 2018-2024 that were provided by your organisation to startups from your region, including short description of these activities, key outcomes and impact [Experience in training and supporting innovative startups]:	

17. Please provide examples of the most relevant events/projects in the field of agrifood that were organized by your organisation in 2018-2024 including short description of these activities, type of your engagement in the project, project partners and key outcomes *[Experience in the organization of events in the field of agrifood dedicated to innovation/entrepreneurship/foodtech]:*

18. Please present familiarity with the agrifood industry in the target country; existing contacts and projects with relevant local stakeholders; existing pipeline of early stage innovative startups *[Role in the ecosystem]:*

19. Please propose the agenda of two parts of the EIT Food Startup Awareness event (Challenge Labs and Networking event), including the subjects and preliminary speakers (please take into account the guidelines provided by EIT Food in 2.3. and 2.4.) *[Approach to the organization of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event]:*

20. Please describe the planned source of co-funding *[Sources of co-funding]:*

21. Please propose the Event budget (in EUR), taking into account the guidelines provided by EIT Food *[Cost of service planned by applicant]:*

22. Would you like to add any other information relevant to this Request and application?

By submitting this application form, I confirm that the information provided above correctly represents the scope of activities and plans of my organisation. I understand that the information provided in this form may be used to define obligations and performance targets in subcontracting agreement. I give consent to processing the application by EIT Food, its Co-Location Centres and external experts involved in the evaluation process. I am willing to cooperate and provide further information or documents confirming the facts presented above. If selected by EIT Food CLC North-East, I declare the willingness

to act as the organiser of the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event in 2025, based on conditions described in the "Request for Proposals to Organize the EIT Food Startup Awareness Event".

Date, place

Name of the person submitting the application

Position

Organisation submitting the application