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**RIS Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) Open Innovation Call**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**1 GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. **What is the submission deadline?**

The submission deadline is 5th June 2023 11:59 PM CEST

1. **What is the amount of funding available for this Call?**

The funding amount for this Call is 1.5 million EUR in total.

1. **Is there a maximum amount for the grant?**

Grants will be up to 750.000 EUR per Activity.

1. **How will the actual grant be calculated?**

The maximum reimbursement rate in this Call is 70% of eligible expenditures.

1. **What is the duration of the projects?**

All proposals may have a maximum duration of 24 months.

1. **Which KPIs are required?**

Activities must deliver at least one KPI EITHE02.1 Marketed Innovation, including documented sales revenue of at least 10.000 EUR (ten thousand Euros) in the year the KPI is to be delivered, and no later than 6 months following the official end date of the Activity.

During the reporting period proof will be requested for those sales, including invoices and other documents as proof of payment of those invoices. The granting authority (EIT) will review the documentation submitted by EIT Food on behalf of the Consortia. The KPIs will be considered as validated upon approval by the granting authority (EIT).

1. **Will the proposals be submitted via PLAZA or another portal?**

The proposals will need to be submitted via [PLAZA](https://plaza.eitfood.eu/PROMISE/PRIVATE/PARTNER_EOI/eoi.aspx?_ga=2.62792172.1968863647.1679901519-1009322039.1664525389&_gac=1.213759334.1679057046.Cj0KCQjwn9CgBhDjARIsAD15h0CMtSXARWwottGbR5TyekHVv4YQMxjg8kkS5dtkA1vn-n5q9zmy2ZMaAiI0EALw_wcB).

**2 CONSORTIUM ELIGIBILITY AND EIT FOOD PARTNERSHIP QUESTIONS**

1. **Can a company which is not an EIT Food member participate in a project and under what conditions?**

Yes. Funding for this call is available to all organisations, both EIT Food partners and non-partners, from the following eligible EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Horizon Europe Associated Countries: Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine.

Organisations have to:

* Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the EU or Horizon Europe eligible countries listed above for a minimum of 3 years.
* Have at least 3 years’ published accounts showing business Activity.
* Provide a PIC Number: <https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PICGuidance.pdf>

1. **What are the consortia eligibility requirements?**

Consortia must have:

* Have at least 3 eligible organisations committed to collaborating between 2 different eligible countries, representing at least two sides of the knowledge triangle, with at least one industry organisation.
* Each of the three organisations must be an active participant in the consortium, showing a role, commiserate with the level of budget, and should not fall under the same ownership.
* At least one Exploiting Party/Parties responsible for commercial exploitation resulting from the Activity.

1. **Is there any advantage in the evaluation for EIT Food partners?**

No. There is no difference in evaluation between Consortia including one or more existing EIT Food Partner(s) and consortia of all external organizations. The same is for the Activity Leader.

1. **Who can lead the Activity?**

Any eligible Consortium participant can be the “lead partner”. However, we encourage the Activity to be led by the participant responsible for commercializing the Activity’s results.

1. **Can a research institute apply for the Call? E.g., an on-farm animal breeding experiment (practical conditions, in cooperation with a medium-sized farm)?**

Yes, we encourage any organisation that meets the eligibility criteria to apply.

1. **Can an NGO take part?**

Yes, if an organization meets the eligibility criteria. For example, associations of producers could participate.

1. **What are the restrictions regarding Russian and Belarusian entities?**

According to EU policies and measures, Russian and Belarusian entities will not be authorised to participate in any new grant under the EU Research and Innovation programmes. This ban applies not only to their potential participation as beneficiaries, but to their potential participation in any kind of role: beneficiaries, linked third parties/affiliated entities, subcontractors, in-kind contributors, international partners/associated partners, and third parties receiving financial support. Find the full statement from the European Commission [here.](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1544)

**3 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, REIMBURSEMENT RATE, COST ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS**

1. **What are the Proposal eligibility criteria?**

Proposals must:

* Be complete, with all mandatory supporting documents uploaded Be submitted on time via our submission template, in English
* Proposals must be committed to delivering at least one Marketed Innovation launched on the market including documented and valid sales revenue of at least 10.000 EUR (ten thousand euros)
* Contribute to the EIT Food Missions Align with one or more EIT Focus Areas Have an innovation with 5 (TRL)

1. **What are the reimbursement and co-funding rates for this Call?**

EIT Food will fund up to 70% of total eligible costs of the Activity (reimbursement rate). As such, the Consortium must co-fund a minimum of 30% (co-funding) of the total project eligible costs with sources of funding other than EU funding.

1. **Can you specify and/or give examples of fundable costs that can be calculated in the budget? Internal vs. external etc.**

All costs need to comply with Horizon Europe regulations regarding the eligibility of expenses. Please refer to Article 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf) and the [Annotated Model Grant Agreement](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf).

In addition to the guidance provided by Horizon Europe, the proposals must comply with the following maximum thresholds:

* Subcontracting can amount to a maximum of 15% of total costs
* Depreciation can amount to a maximum of 30% of total costs. In case of adding additional depreciation costs, please consult EIT Food in advance.
* Sub-granting: participants will be funded through a subgrant. Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party.

1. **Will the Cascade Model be in place for these projects?**

Yes, the Cascade Model will be in place for these projects. Cascade funding, also known as Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) or sub-granting under the EU Financial Regulation, is a commonly used mechanism to deliver EU funding. For this call this means that the implementation of the portfolio of activities is cascaded by the beneficiary, EIT Food, to further recipients, the selected Activities.

**4 TRL AND COMMERCIALIZATION QUESTIONS**

1. **Can you please elaborate on what you consider a viable business opportunity?**

A viable business opportunity has a clearly defined market need and commercialization plan with the ability to grow and expand.

1. **Does the Consortium have to show documented sales of 10.000 EUR?**

Yes. An invoice is required to verify proof of sales of 10.000 EUR. Additional documentation might be requested for validation, for example, proof of payment of such invoices.

1. **Is there any formal obligation to deliver the sales evidence by a certain time after project completion?**

Sales evidence of 10.000 EUR must be submitted in the year the KPI is to be delivered and not later than 6 months following the official end date of the project.

1. **What qualifies as an "innovative technology " i.e., when we talk about circular business models, is a new business model/ecosystem with specific criteria put in place considered an innovative technology?**

Innovations include new or significantly improved products (goods or services) and processes sold that address at least one of the specific challenges within the EIT Food Focus Areas. Our specific focus area priorities include innovations and investments in sustainable biogas production, precision farming, carbon farming, regenerative agriculture and other sustainable solutions and methods in the food systems. We seek solutions encompassing open standards, protocols, tools, and technologies to promote collaboration and the potential for innovative solutions. We prefer to support solutions with open access; however, it is not obligatory. Further information is available in the [Call Guidelines](https://www.eitfood.eu/files/EIT-Food-RIS-CEE-Guidelines-Template.pdf).

1. **Does the result have to be a completely new products or can it also be an augmented/ improved already existing/selling products?**

Innovations include new or significantly improved products (goods or services) and processes sold which address at least one of the specific challenges within the EIT Food Focus Areas. Further information is available in the Call Guidelines.

1. **What are the specific Challenges for this Call?**

For this Call, there are no specific challenges, however, there are examples of challenges listed in the e [Call Guidelines](https://www.eitfood.eu/files/EIT-Food-RIS-CEE-Guidelines-Template.pdf).