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**2024 FAST TRACK TO MARKET INITIATIVE**

**Request for Implementing Participants**

**Guidelines**

**EIT FOOD**

Leuven, Belgium

February 2024

Version 1.1

Amended 15 February 2024

**Eitfood.eu**

**History of Changes:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Publication Date** | **Changes** |
| Version 1.0 | 7 February 2024 | Original version |
| Version 1.1 | 15 February 2024 | Sections 1.1 and 6.1 eligibility criteria corrected an error which now correctly reads:   * Be a [SMALL sized company](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en) as defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&locale=en) (between 3 and 49 employees and less than 10 million turnover or balance sheet). |

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# Introduction

## 

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**

A blue circle with blue and white apples and a heart

Description automatically generatedA green and black sign with a tractor and arrows

Description automatically generatedA sign with orange and purple outline and fish and a shield

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

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](https://www.eitfood.eu/media/documents/EIT_Food_Strategic_Agenda_2021-2027.pdf) agreed with EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology). For more about our Missions-led approach please visit [our website.](https://www.eitfood.eu/missions)

## 1.1 Fast Track to Market at a Glance

In support to prospective applicants, below is a summary table containing the key information of the Fast Track to Market opportunity:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SME eligibility (full criteria listed in Section 6.1) | Each applicant must:   * Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the [EU or Horizon Europe eligible countries](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf) for a minimum of 12 months of business activity. * Be a [SMALL sized company](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en) as defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&locale=en) (between 3 and 49 employees and less than 10 million turnover or balance sheet). * Have a minimum of 3 full-time employees (3 FTEs) * Comply with requests for documents during due diligence/validation. * Provide a PIC Number: <https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf> |
| Scope of product or service | [EIT Food missions](https://www.eitfood.eu/missions):   1. Healthier lives through food 2. Net-zero food system 3. Reducing Risk for a Fair & Resilient Food System |
| Total funding available for each selected SME | Up to €400.000 |
| Project duration | Up to a maximum of 10 months |
| Legal Agreements | The selected SME will sign two agreements with EIT Food: a sub-grant agreement that outlines the conditions of the financial support provided, and a revenue-based financial return agreement that outlines the terms for the repayment of the investment from the SME to EIT Food. |
| Cost eligibility | SME’s will be the sole funding beneficiaries and must allocate the funding to eligible activities up to a maximum of 10 months from the contract signature date (expected mid-May 2024). |
| Mandatory documents to be submitted for a complete application | 1. A complete application form 2. Mandatory documents listed in Section 5.3 |
| Submission instructions | Please email your completed application documents in PDF form to [fasttrackcall@eitfood.eu](mailto:fasttrackcall@eitfood.eu) |

# Scope of the Fast Track to Market

The purpose of the Fast Track to Market is to **accelerate the commercial activities of** **mature Start-ups and SMEs** **resulting in impactful technologies**, products, and services reaching the market and scaling further in the food sector.

The proposed projects should aim to significantly shorten the time to market while guaranteeing as much as possible a marketable outcome for the SME’s innovation or product. Eligible activities will therefore be related to **post-trial completion and consumer marketing**, including but not limited tosales development, consumer promotions, merchandising, trade advertising, establishment of distribution channels, etc.

We invite you to apply to the Fast Track to Market if your company fits the following scope:

* The focus of your Start-up or SMEs’ commercial activities should directly contribute to [EIT Food’s missions](https://www.eitfood.eu/missions).
* A short-term project (up to 10 months) can help your company deliver on an existing business case with a high potential to generate B2B/B2C sales for new or improved technologies and/or existing food products and services, in a new or existing market. Generally, this requires a minimum TRL 7, and/or MRL 8.
* Your company must be currently working on a **business case** for accelerating a **product to the market** **in order to generate sales, or to increase sales of a product already on the market.** The funded activities necessary to achieve this must be schedule-driven with a clear start and end date and aimed at achieving an invoice based sales transaction within 10 months of the project start date.
* Your company has an existing track record of a tested proof of concept, product development, innovation, and sales that increase revenue and turnover.
* Your company can deliver a new technology/product/service/solution to the market within 10 months of the project start with proof of sales amounting to a minimum of 10.000 EUR, according to EIT requirements for marketed innovations.

# Description of Role & Profile

The Fast Track to Market is open to all **eligible Start-ups and SMEs** according to the eligibility criteria defined in Section 6.1. We welcome applicants who are already affiliated with EIT Food (e.g., FAN and Rising Food Stars) as well as new companies who want to work with us.

We are looking for fast-moving, mature start-ups. They are often perfectly aware of the missing pieces of knowledge, technology, or market validation needed to deliver concrete and marketable products, services, or processes. Their B2B/B2C technological solutions are close to the market. The extra support that EIT Food offers via association with the world’s largest and most dynamic food innovation community can speed up the marketability and potential commercial success of their solutions.

# Required Impact Tracking and Deliverables

**Knowledge Performance Indicators:**

All **EIT Food funded** projects aimed at testing, launching, or scaling products and services should achieve relevant Core Knowledge Performance Indicators (KPIs). For the Fast Track to Market initiative, the main KPI is called **Marketed Innovations**, which is an indicator of products reaching the market and generating sales.

EIT Food tracks **Marketed Innovations** by requiring specific reporting documentation at the end of the funding period in order to prove the number of innovations introduced on the market during the project duration with a sales revenue of at least 10 000 EUR.

**Deliverables:**

All proposals must include the following mandatory deliverables in their workplans for Fast Track to Market:

* DEL 1: a commercial agreement
* DEL 2: a final Communication and Dissemination report
* DEL 3: a final technical and commercial report

# 5. Application Preparation, Submission & Evaluation

## 5.1 Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action | Date |
| First Application Open | 7 February 2024 |
| Webinar 1 for applicants | 21 February 2024 |
| Webinar 2 for applicants | 13 March 2024 |
| Application Close | 10 April 2024 – 12.00 noon CET |
| Expert Evaluation | 11 April – 2 May 2024 |
| Panels | 6-10 May 2024 |
| Communication to selected participants | 22 May 2024 |
| Indicative start of project implementation | 10 June 2024 |
| Second Application Open | Dates to be announced |
| Application Close | Dates to be announced |
| Evaluation and Selection | Dates to be announced |

## 5.2 Who can apply?

Funding for this Request for Implementing Participants is available to all organisation from Member States of the European Union (EU) and from [Horizon Europe Associate Countries](https://www.eitfood.eu/files/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf#asset:245707@3). Legal entities from non- Horizon Europe Associate countries can participate in consortia but are limited to funding of 60 000 over 3 years, as stated above.

## 5.3 Application documentation

The proposed project must make a significant and immediate impact on the commercial success of the SME within 10 months. To achieve this, EIT Food requires each application to include the following supporting evidence, outlined in detail within the application form associated with these guidelines:

1. A fully-written company business plan and presentation
2. A pitch deck outlining the commercial readiness of your proposed fast-tracked product or solution
3. A commercialisation plan that describes your company’s commercial capacity for current and future assets/products
4. A report attesting to your company’s financial statements and health
5. A project plan outlining the activities to achieve next sales milestones
6. A budget plan outlining the expected costs for the proposed project scope

## 5.4 Application Submission

The [application form](https://www.eitfood.eu/open-calls/fast-track-to-market-2024) must be completed and sent by the application deadline of **10 April 2024 – 12.00 noon CET**. It must be sent to via email to [fasttrackcall@eitfood.eu](mailto:fasttrackcall@eitfood.eu). The title of the email subject should begin “Application Submission: 2024 Fast Track to Market”.

# 6. Evaluation and Selection Process

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check and evaluation to determine their feasibility and suitability for funding. The evaluation will be conducted by at least 3 external evaluators and 1 internal evaluator.

All external evaluators have been selected in an open and transparent process. All evaluators, both internal and external, are trained extensively on the [**European Union´s Code of Conduct for Evaluators**](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/support/expert/expert_code_of_conduct.pdf), namely on the importance of transparency, fair treatment of all applicants, confidentiality and how to avoid conflict of interest. Evaluators must contractually agree to recuse themselves in the event of a conflict of interest.

## 6.1 Eligibility

The Fast Track to Market is addressed to **a single legal entity, or mono-beneficiary**, therefore proposals must be submitted by one single entity only. Proposals with multiple entities will be deemed ineligible.

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check in order to advance to the evaluation stage, according to the evaluation criteria below. Note that EIT Food may ask for additional financial documentation of your company, according to the criteria below and documentation package you provide as part of the application.

Please read Annex 1 carefully, in addition to the following eligibility criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organisation Eligibility | Each implementing participant must: |
|  | * Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the EU or Horizon Europe eligible country listed above for a minimum of 12 months of business activity. * You have a technology, product, service, or solution within one of the three EIT Food Missions. * Be a [SMALL sized company](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en) as defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&locale=en) (between 3 and 49 employees and less than 10 million turnover or balance sheet) * Have a minimum of 3 full-time employees (3 FTEs) * You are past the ideation phase, you are generating revenues from paying customers and not only from pilots. * Provide a PIC Number: <https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf> * Comply with requests for documents during due diligence/validation. |
| Application Eligibility | To eligible applications must: |
|  | * Be complete, with all mandatory supporting documents. * Be submitted on time via our application template, in English. |

## 6.2 Eligibility Criteria for EIT Food-affiliated participants

[**Rising Food Stars**](http://www.risingfoodstars.eu/) and **EIT Food FAN** alumni from the past 3 years are **eligible** to apply for this Fast Track to Market opportunity, provided their membership has been confirmed before signing the sub-grant agreement.

Companies with an SME EIT Food partners status [[1]](#footnote-2) are also **eligible** to benefit from the Fast Track to Market. The partner status must be obtained before signing the sub-grant agreement.

## 6.3 Exclusion

An applicant will be deemed ineligible if they are a beneficiary in an EIT Food funded project in 2024, conducting similar testing or marketing activities for the similar technological solution in a similar geographical market with the same legal entities involved.

## 6.4 Evaluation Process

At least 3 external evaluators and 1 internal evaluator will evaluate proposals based on the criteria below. All external evaluators have been selected in an open and transparent process and must contractually agree to recuse themselves in the event of a conflict of interest.

The following criteria and weighting will be used in the assessment:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Description** | **Score** |
| **Excellence**    **30%** | * Ambitious, disruptive and impact-oriented vision/mission of the SME aligns with one or more of EIT Food’s missions * The fast-tracked technology/product/service/solution in question delivers an unique value proposition, aligned with EIT Food’s missions * Fast Track funding mechanism directly serves the purpose of accelerating the SME’s commercial success | 0-5 |
| ***The Technology* & the Market potential**    **30%** | * An analysis of the identified total addressable market, the serviceable obtainable market, the growth potential, and the level of competition yields commercially attractive and achievable results. * Submitted documents denote the presence of a well thought-out intellectual property strategy and safeguarded know-how/expertise * Project plan evidences the feasibility to increase the MRL/TRL level of the innovation within the timeframe proposed to launch on the market * Submitted documents indicate the robustness of the commercialisation strategy for the technology/product/service/solution in question, including but not limited to traction in the past 12 months with potential customers | 0-5 |
| **Company’s Financial Due Diligence**  **20%** | * Submitted documents demonstrate that the company aims to play in a large, growing, and profitable market, and/or that they are already playing in several markets and are aiming to expand in the next 12-24 months * Submitted documents verify that the company has already started generating revenues (target value above 100K euros) from other products and/or services through a defined go to market / customer acquisition strategy * Submitted documents attest to the adequacy of the company’s financial resources to deliver on the business case. This will be assessed based on annual statements and forecasts * The ramp up in the company’s expected annual revenues is realistic and substantiated by project milestones for market introduction and commercial scale-up | 0-5 |
| **Implementation and Feasibility**    **20%** | * Evidence that the broader team is ready and qualified to establish and/or continue developing a commercially oriented organisation via activities including but not limited to sales, marketing, customer acquisition, business development, operations, etc. * Evidence that the founding team has the potential and skillset to lead the company towards successful scale up (e.g., agri-food expertise, entrepreneurial and management skills, business development experience, etc.) * The submitted project plan is clear and convincing in demonstrating achievable commercialisation milestones * Submitted risk register is thorough and comprehensive, and includes a corresponding mitigation plan | 0-5 |

Each evaluation sub-criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 using the following scoring system.

**The quality threshold for selection is a total score of 3.5.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score |  | Description |
| 0 | Not addressed | Not addressed |
| 1 | Poor | The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses |
| 2 | Fair | Application broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses |
| 3 | Good | Application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present |
| 4 | Very good | Application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present |
| 5 | Excellent | Application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor. |

## 6.5 Panels

EIT Food staff will compile a preliminary ranking of all proposals that scored above the Quality Threshold of 3.5. Those proposals above the threshold will be invited to a live teleconference at a specific date and time. The purpose of the panel is for the evaluators and the Startup/SME members to meet; the Startup will pitch, followed by a Q&A session for the evaluators to resolve any open questions from the evaluation. They may amend their scoring based on the answers provided by the applicants.

**Protocol:**

* Prior to the Panel Meeting, expert evaluators and internal EIT Food staff will review the selected proposals and prepare questions for the applicants.
* At the Panel Meeting, each applicant will make an online pitch followed by a Q&A session with the evaluators.
* Following the Panel, evaluators will enter their final scores and the Rapporteur will compile evaluator feedback to be shared with each applicant.

## 6.6 Selection

**Proposals will be selected based on a final ranking until the funding is exhausted.**

Proposals will not be offered funding if they are in any way manifestly contrary to EU general principles or established EU priorities or policies.

## 6.7 Communication of Results to Applicants

EIT Food will send each applicant an email with the final results, including evaluator comments and feedback.

If EIT Food issues a conditional offer, said conditions will be included in the decision letter.

# 7. Success-Based Financial Return to EIT Food

In return for de-risking your commercial investment through our funding, we’ll ask you to participate in a *Success Sharing Mechanism*. This allows us to reinvest in our community to drive more systems change that will benefit us all.

This creates the potential, over a reasonable period, to return a minimum of 100% up to a maximum of 150% of the value of the project funding you benefit from in your commercial plans and outcomes under the project award.

## 7.1 Revenue Based Financing (RBF)

For the Fast Track to Market, selected sub-grantees will commit to EIT Food’s Success Sharing Mechanism through signing a Revenue Based Finance Agreement, which consists of a repayment based on your company’s revenue. It is not dependent on the sales of the foreseen marketed innovation.

The default RBF multiplier is 1.5 x the Subgrant Amount and will be repaid either semi-annually or annually, within 4 years, with amounts that vary between 3% to 8% from your company’s top-line revenues of the 6 preceding months. EIT Food incentivizes high performing SME’s by decreasing the multiplier as the SME repays faster. The RBF revenue cap will therefore range from 1.1 – 1.5 with a repayment period between 1 to 4 years.

## 7.2 Prefinancing and RBF Repayment

Selected SME’s will receive the funding in two pre-financing rounds. The first release of 60% is scheduled upon signature of the sub-grant agreement. The second release of 40% is scheduled upon the successful completion of the project (i.e. sales transaction). The minimum repayment equals the first pre-financing amount.

The SME must repay EIT Food according to the terms below, based on the company’s top-line revenues. This means that the repayment is not linked to the sales generated from the product or service being launched on the market as part of the Fast Track to Market. The principal amount in the RBF agreement will be lowered if the 2nd release is cancelled following EIT Food’s decision to revise or terminate the project.

## 7.3 Summary of Terms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Key Terms | | | **Revenue-Based Financing** |
| Scheme | | | Repayment based on the company’s top-line revenues including a possibility to adapt duration terms according to business performance and speeds of generating revenues. |
| Principal Amount | | | Up to 400.000 EUR |
| Repayment | | | Repayment of the RBF Amount equal to X% of the company’s revenues on a semi-annual or annual basis |
| Multiplier | | | The default RBF multiplier is 1.5x the Commitment with a 4-year repayment period. It decreases as you repay faster:  1.1x the Commitment if paid in 2025 = 440.000 EUR  1.2x the Commitment if paid by 2026 = 480.000 EUR  1.4x the Commitment if paid by 2027 = 560.000 EUR  1.5x the Commitment if paid by 2028 = 600.000 EUR |
| Additional rights | | | As long as the RBF amount payable is outstanding, EIT Food is keen on having the same information rights as members of the SME Applicants Managing Board. |

# 8. Administrative Items

## 8.1 Appeal to 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 Annex 2: [Redress Mechanism.](https://eitfoodivzw.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/Call2023/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B3E2A62B4-244D-4BD2-A23B-CB1A2C8F460D%7D&file=EIT%20Food%20Redress%20Mechanism%20.docx&wdLOR=c036C4229-1DA3-DC49-94A8-4D3329648B88&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

## 8.2. EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed

**Subgrant Agreement:** document that outlines the conditions of the financial support provided.

**Revenue-based financial return agreement (RBF):** document that outlines the terms for the repayment of the investment from the SME to EIT Food.

## 8.3 Funding

Implementing participant recipients will receive a subgrant to fund their cost. This is cascade funding:

* Participation in the KAVA may begin at the earliest from June 2024 up to a maximum of 10 months of funding from the start date.
* Estimated funding for that period per participant is up to a maximum of 400.000 EUR.

There is a 6 million EUR limit per participants from Member States of the European Union (EU) and from [Horizon Europe Associate Countries](https://www.eitfood.eu/files/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf#asset:245707@3) for the 3-year business plan. Legal entities from non- Horizon Europe Associate countries can participate in consortia but are limited to funding of 60 000 over 3 years. This KAVA is implemented under GA 01101912.

The Subgrant is based on actual costs and value for money. 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).

## 8.4 Payment Schedule

EIT Food will transfer funding in instalments.

A proportion of the funding will be prefinanced. The amount of the prefinanced funding will depend on the category of the participant organisation.

Subsequent payments being linked to the completion of deliverables.

The majority of the grant will be transferred at the end, once eligible costs have been determined and contractual obligations have been met.

**Please note:** the amount and timing of funding is dependent on the dispersal of funds to EIT Food from the EIT.

Selected SME’s will receive the funding in two pre-financing rounds. The first release of 60% is scheduled upon signature of the sub-grant agreement. The second release of 40% is scheduled upon the successful completion of the project (i.e. sales transaction).

EIT Food puts in place a cashflow friendly pre-financing scheme of two transfers. The first, significant, transfer is expected at the start of the project. The expenditure and progress on the project plan will be monitored periodically and reported, with a review at the end of the project period to determine if expenditures have been made in line with the cost eligibility criteria. The second tranche, the remainder, is scheduled upon successful completion of a final report.

## 8.5 Monitoring

The Fast Track to Market project will be monitored regularly and may be audited.

EIT Food monitors projects to ensure that agreed targets are achieved during the 10 months’ timeframe. Monitoring will take place in two phases:

1. During the funding period

The aim is to understand the implementation progress, help the SME mitigate project risks and manage potential delays. In the case of serious underperformance, EIT Food may decide to re-orient the funding or stop an underperforming project.

1. After the funding period

Additionally, EIT Food will monitor SMEs after their funding period to track long-term societal impact and ensure the repayment terms and abilities to repay as agreed in the Revenue-based financial return agreement.

## 8.6 Support

If you have any questions about this Request for Implementing Participants, please contact [fasttrackcall@eitfood.eu](mailto:fasttrackcall@eitfood.eu).

Please visit [our website](https://www.eitfood.eu/open-calls/fast-track-to-market-2024) for information about upcoming events to support your application. You will also find our list of Frequently Asked Questions.

# ANNEX 1: Eligibility

Please Note:

1. Failing any of the above criteria will make your application ineligible. If an applicant is ineligible, the participant will be informed.

2. According to EU policies and measures, Russian 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.

3. Pursuant to Article 2 (2) of the Decision 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary *where the Commission implements the Union budget in direct or indirect management pursuant to of Article 62(1) points (a) and (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046,* ***no legal commitments shall be entered into with any public interest trust established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust****.* This prohibition applies to financial support to third parties (sub-grants and prizes), hence the proposal of any entity or group of entities where a Participant is included in the list of public interest trusts shall be considered as not eligible.

4. Applicants will be deemed ineligible if:

a. 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 organisation 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 organisation is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the organisation 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;

d. is found to be attempting to influence the decision-making process of the call during the process;

e. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the call process;

f. it has been established by a final judgment that the organisation is guilty of fraud, corruption or money laundering.

# Annex 2: Redress mechanism

In case proposers have concerns that there have been procedural shortcomings and/or factual errors in the evaluation of their proposal, they can seek a review of the evaluation procedure through the redress mechanism. It should be noted that this mechanism is not meant to call into question the judgement made by the expert review panel.

Upon receipt of the Evaluation Summary Report, the Activity Leader of the proposal (or a representative of their organisation) may request an evaluation review, if there is an indication that the results of the eligibility checks were incorrect or that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment.

The request for an evaluation review through the redress mechanism can be made if the Activity Leader considers that the assessment of the eligibility and/or evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this evaluation procedure and the Call for Proposals document. The deadline to launch a complaint is 30 days from the date of receiving the Evaluation Summary Report.

Complaints must be:

* related to the evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the proposal in question;
* set out a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
* received within the time limit specified in the information letter;
* sent by the Activity Leader or a representative of their organisation;
* sent to EIT Food’s Innovation Director Adam Adamek: adam.adamek@eitfood.eu.

An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to complainants no later than one week after the deadline for submitting the complaint. This acknowledgement of receipt will indicate the estimated date of a definitive reply.

The relevant EIT Food staff will internally review the grounds of the complaint and only in case that there are solid indications and evidence that the results of the eligibility checks were incorrect or that a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment has occurred, EIT Food will convene a redress committee. In case that the relevant EIT Food staff considers that the grounds of the complaint don’t show enough evidence that eligibility checks have been incorrect or that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment, a reasoned written response will be send to the complainant will be send with the grounds of refusal of the convenience of the redress committee.

The redress committee will examine the eligibility or evaluation process for the complaint. The redress committee will bring together relevant staff of EIT Food and will be chaired by Andy Zynga, EIT Food CEO. The committee’s role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and fair and equal treatment of applicants. During the evaluation review procedure, the committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the experts. The committee will not call into question the judgement of appropriately qualified panels of experts. In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note:

* a re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria;
* the evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score;
* only one request for evaluation review per proposal will be considered by the committee;
* all requests for evaluation review will be treated in confidence.

1. The legal entity which is a Partner in EIT Food, and may participate in Funded activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)