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# EIT Food Entrepreneurship Programmes – Terms & Conditions

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## **EIT Food – Making Food Innovation Happen**

Knowledge & Innovation Centre on Food,  
part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)  
<http://www.eitfood.eu>

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# 1. EIT Food

## 1.1 EIT Food

EIT Food IVZW is an international non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Belgium, having its registered address at Philipssite 5, Ubicenter A bus 34, 3001 Leuven, Belgium, registered at the Crossroads bank for Enterprises with number 0672.423.992, Register of Legal Entities Leuven (hereinafter referred to as 'EIT Food').

EIT Food is a pan-European partnership designed to empower innovators and entrepreneurs to develop world-class solutions to food challenges, accelerate innovation, create jobs and increase Europe's competitiveness. As one of the largest food-related initiatives worldwide, EIT Food wants Europe to lead a global revolution in food innovation and production, improve nutrition and making food systems more resource-efficient, secure, transparent and trusted. EIT Food is one of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology) and funded by the European Commission. It unites more than 60 partners along the Food value chain – academic and research institutions as well as industry– from more than 20 European countries. Its five Innovation Hubs across Europe (also called Co- location Centres - CLCs) aim at fostering innovation across the regional ecosystems of industry, research institutions and universities.

## 1.2 Objectives of EIT Food

EIT Food aims to boost the skills and entrepreneurial spirit in the sector and unlock the potential of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) who will accelerate innovation, create jobs, benefit businesses, and increase Europe's competitiveness. EIT Food has six strategic objectives:

### **Overcome low consumer trust**

EIT Food supports European citizens in the transition towards a smart food system that is inclusive and reassuring.

### **Create consumer valued food for healthier nutrition**



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EIT Food enables individuals to make informed and affordable personal nutrition choices.

### **Build a consumer-centric connected food system**

EIT Food develops a digital food supply network with consumers and industry as equal partners.

### **Enhance sustainability through resource stewardship**

EIT Food develops solutions to transform the traditional 'produce-use-dispose' model into a circular bio-economy.

### **Educate to engage, innovate and advance**

EIT Food provides 'food system' skills for more than 10,000 students, entrepreneurs and professionals through advanced training programmes.

### **Catalyse food entrepreneurship and innovation**

EIT Food fosters innovation at all stages of business creation.

## 2. Seedbed Incubator

### 2.1 Scope of the programme

The Seedbed Incubator is a 6-month market discovery programme that trains and incubates entrepreneurial teams developing cutting-edge disruptive technologies with applications in the agrifood sector. The aim of the programme is to transform innovative ideas into market-validated business propositions.

The Seedbed Incubator Programme is delivered by top EU Universities, Research and Innovation Organisations, and Entrepreneurship programme specialists who provide their expertise in startup training and technology commercialisation. The programme is focused on entrepreneurial academics, aspiring entrepreneurs and newly formed startups, typically younger than 12 months, with business propositions that could transform the food system and are underpinned by science and technology. During the programme, Seedbed participants are provided with access to expert training and personalised business support to identify their core business assumptions, to develop a commercial roadmap that's validated with stakeholders in the agrifood sector. Additionally, participants are provided with financial support to speak to at least 100 customers and users to test the market need and refine product ideas. There's also potential for follow-on support to spin out or startup a new company, or fund pilot feasibility tests with identified partners via EIT Food's Impact Fund.

This document sets out the further details and the terms and conditions with regards to the sub-granting budget of up to €10,000 to deliver the tasks associated with participating in the EIT Food Seedbed Incubator Programme and travel to Seedbed events.

### 2.2 Funding

The EIT Food Seedbed teams that successfully complete the four-day online virtual Bootcamp and are subsequently selected for the market discovery phase of the programme, that is up to 50 teams, will be allocated a sub-granting budget of up to €10,000 per team in phased milestone payments. This budget is allocated as a lump sum made in 3 different tranches (milestones) and are based on achieving key deliverables. The key deliverables per Milestone and payment schedule can be found in section 2.7 - Payment arrangements

## 2.3 Expected timeline

The following table outlines the expected timeline for the EIT Food Seedbed Programme. These dates may change but the EIT Food Seedbed Programme Coordinator will notify you if there are any changes to this expected timeline.

Application opens	November 21, 2024
Application closes	February 21, 2025
Application Evaluation Period	February to mid -April
Outcome notification for Stage I (pre-Incubator)	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of April 2025
Start of Stage I - Online four-day bootcamps	May 12-29, 2025
Selection for shortlisted startups for Stage II (Seedbed Incubator)	1 <sup>st</sup> week of June 2025
Award letter to Stage II (Seedbed Incubator), Subgrant Agreement, Participant Consent Form and relevant programme agreements signed	June 2025
Seedbed Kick-off & start of Market Discovery Journey (approximately)	June 2025
Seedbed Final Event	November 2025

## 2.4. Eligibility

### 2.4.1 General considerations

Our EIT Food Entrepreneurship programmes (i.e. Seedbed Incubator, EIT Food Accelerator Network and RisingFoodStars) are complementary, each focusing on a different stage of business with a different offer. Therefore, a participant cannot be part of more than one programme per calendar year. Consulting services companies without novel technology, products or IP, and one-person ventures are not eligible.

Ventures owned by EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food government bodies and ventures in which EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food government bodies have an interest, are also excluded. EIT Food includes all CLCs of EIT Food and all government bodies.



## 2.4.2 Eligibility criteria

To be considered eligible for the programme, applicants must fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

### For legal entities

- Have a science-based innovative product/solution (experimental proof of concept - TRL 3 min to TRL 9) that can positively impact the European agrifood ecosystem;
- Requiring support for validating your market;
- Be a legal entity based in the EU and its member states or EU associated countries ([LINK](#))
- 
- Submit a fully completed application in English before the deadline;
- Provide a PIC number. Please see [here](#) for guidance. Not be involved in another EIT Food Business Creation programme (i.e. RisingFoodStars and EIT Food Accelerator Network);
- Be committed to the programme for at least 8 hours a week – we expect active, consistent engagement in the programme;
- Accept these Programme Terms and Conditions;
- None of the Exclusion Criteria must apply to the applicant, as outlined in article 2.4.3.

### For individuals / natural persons

- Have a science-based innovative product/solution (experimental proof of concept - TRL 3 min to TRL 9) that can positively impact the European agrifood ecosystem;
- Requiring support for validating your market;
- Be a resident / citizen based in the EU and its member states or EU associated countries ([LINK](#))
- Submit a fully completed application in English before the deadline;
- 
- Not be involved in another EIT Food Business Creation programme (i.e. RisingFoodStars and EIT Food Accelerator Network);
- Be committed to the programme for at least 8 hours a week – we expect active, consistent engagement in the programme;
- Accept these Programme Terms and Conditions;
- None of the Exclusion Criteria must apply to the applicant, as outlined in article 2.4.3.

Only applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be evaluated. .

### 2.4.3 Exclusion criteria

Applicants may be excluded if they (or the recipients):

- are subject to an administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion or financial penalty);
- are in one of the following situations (exceptions and conditions may apply following the applicable laws):
- bankrupt, being wound up, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, having their affairs administered by a liquidator or by the courts, entered into an arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or subject to any other similar proceedings or procedures under national law (including persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
- declared in breach of social security or tax obligations by a final judgment or decision (including persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts) found guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the person or entity belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence by a final judgment or decision (including where a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the person or who has powers of representation, decision or contract with regard to that person or a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in this situation)
- convicted of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including where a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the person or who has powers of representation, decision or contract with regard to that person or a natural person
- who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in this situation)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under a legal commitment financed by the EU or Euratom budget (including where a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the person or who has powers of representation, decision or contract with regard to that person or a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in this situation)

- found guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including where a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the person or who has powers of representation, decision or contract with regard to that person or a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in this situation)
- It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the person or entity has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business or it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent for doing so (including where a natural or legal person who is a member of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the person or who has powers of representation, decision or contract with regard to that person or a natural person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment is in this situation);
- have misrepresented information required for participating in the EIT Food funding scheme or fail to submit such information;
- were involved in the preparation of the any documentation regarding this call or are involved in the evaluation process of this call and this entails a breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including a distortion of competition (that cannot be remedied otherwise);
- if EIT Food is required to do so following the applicable laws and regulations or directions from the EIT;
- the participant no longer complies with these terms and conditions.

For additional exclusion criteria please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

## 2.5 Application and evaluation process

### 2.5.1 Application

Interested applicants must apply on the Seedbed Incubator website (<https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship/launch-seedbed-incubator>). EIT Food will screen

the applications to ensure all applicants meet the stated eligibility criteria and they are sent to the programme which is relevant to their startup needs.

This is a completely open call. We welcome applications from all EU Member States and associated countries and encourage diversity.

The programme language is English so all submission material must be submitted in English. Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing.

### 2.5.2 Outline of the programme

The EIT Food Seedbed Incubator Programme takes place in two key stages:

Stage I. This is a pre-incubator activity. It comprises training and coaching at a 4 –day online bootcamp for up to 60-65 shortlisted applicants. The final number of shortlisted applicants can differ and will depend on the number of quality applications received.

Stage II. This is the 6 Month Market Discovery Journey of Seedbed Incubator for up to 50 finalists, depending on the quality of the participants, with one-on-one business coaching, warm introductions to the ecosystem and online entrepreneurship training courses on CANVAS learning platform (throughout the programme).

Stage II also offers events like the Seedbed Kick-off & the Final Seedbed Showcase.

A Project Team’s place on the Seedbed Programme is subject to successful completion, evaluation and approval of its action plan following the online training programme.

Date	Seedbed Incubator	Description
April 2025	Outcome Notification	Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application. Successful applicants (up to 60-65 teams) will be invited to the 4-day online bootcamp.
<b>Stage I: Four-Day Online Bootcamp</b>		

May 2025	Training & Final Selection Process	<p>Successful teams will be invited to attend an online 4-day Bootcamp (Stage I). The Bootcamp will train and support entrepreneurial teams on (1) Strategyzer’s Lean methodology to define clear value propositions and winning business models; and (2) digital testing and market discovery methodologies to gather rapid and accurate market feedback on the likely success of their business idea. A key output of the 4-day online Bootcamp will be for teams to finalise and submit their business model canvas (BMC), market discovery action plan and participation in a final online pitch session. All teams will receive training and coaching support in preparing these documents and pitching.</p> <p>A Seedbed panel will complete an appraisal of the quality of the team’s engagement and performance at the Bootcamp, including an evaluation of their BMC, action plan, and pitch. Up to 50 of the highest-ranking teams will be recommended to proceed to Stage II of the Seedbed Programme. All teams will be notified on the outcome of this selection process beginning of June. Award criteria are outlined below.</p>
<b>Stage II: Market Discovery Journey</b>		
June – November 2025	Market Discovery Journey	<p>Following the Bootcamp, successful teams selected for Stage II, Market Discovery, will have access to €10,000 equity-free funding, in phased milestone payments, to speak to potential customers, stakeholders, and end-users to better understand the market needs. The Market Discovery phase will take place across 5-6 months. During this time, Seedbed teams are required to access remote and/or face-to-face coaching and business training from their assigned Seedbed Coach and Business Experts. Additionally, participants will be offered access to online training modules on the CANVAS platform, with clinics and workshops offered for 1:1 support by top-quality trainers on key entrepreneurial topics. Some of the activities above are mandatory and all Seedbed participants are expected to participate. Teams will be provided with a full detailed timeline for participation upfront.</p>

Stage II Events: Seedbed Kick-off & Seedbed showcase for Presenting your Seedbed Journey and Planning Next Steps		
June 2025	Seedbed Kick-off	The EIT Food Seedbed programme will host an in-person kick-off event in June 2024 (location TBD), bringing together the Seedbed organisers and the entire cohort, in order to introduce the market discovery programme and incubator requirements. Participants will benefit from expert speakers from the EIT Food ecosystem, engaging panel discussions, and other interactive activities designed to add value and insights.
November 2025	Seedbed Showcase	The EIT Food Seedbed programme will additionally hold a final in-person event to conclude the programme. All finalists selected for Stage II of the programme and receive funding will be expected to attend the event and present their Seedbed journey and learnings to a panel of experts. The panel will offer advice on next steps for commercialisation as well as the appropriate course of action in terms of follow on support from EIT Food.

Throughout the time on the Seedbed Programme, teams are required to update their Business Action Plans which will be used to monitor team activity monthly. This should be kept up to date and detail activities, learnings, outcomes, and actions to be carried out as a result of engaging with the market. Seedbed Business Coaches will use this document to assess if satisfactory progress is being made against key milestones.

### 2.5.3 Selection

#### Evaluation criteria for Stage I participation:

The online applications will be scored by a panel of internal and external evaluators according to the eligibility and evaluation criteria. Ineligible applications will not be evaluated further. Evaluation for eligible applications will be completed in 3 rounds. The programme involves 30 plus independent evaluators, including both internal and external experts with either business and / or technical background.

Evaluation criteria, all of equal weight, will be focused on the following aspects of the applicants' proposal:

- Problem / Solution fit;
- Technology;
- Intellectual Property;
- Unique Selling Point;
- Business Model / Commercialisation Potential;
- Team's strength and composition;
- Potential impact on the Food System.

Depending on the quality of the applications, up to 60-65 high-scoring applicants will be offered a place in one of the 4-day online Bootcamps. The three Bootcamps will take place in May 2025.

**Award criteria for Stage II participation:**

Participation in Stage II (Market Discovery) is subject to successful completion, evaluation and approval of its business model canvas, action plan and pitch following the 4-day online Bootcamp. Out of all the teams invited to the Bootcamp, up to 50 teams will be awarded a place in Stage II (Market Discovery) of the EIT Food Seedbed Incubator Programme.

**A Seedbed panel will score with a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best score) the teams attending the Bootcamp, according to the following award criteria:**

- The team actively engaged and completed all aspects of the trainings and bootcamp training, submission of business model canvas and market discovery plan and budget, and final pitch
- The team are coachable, open minded and have shown the skills and qualities necessary to engage with potential stakeholders, customers and users and learn from the market discovery phase. The team has taken the training and advice from the delivery team and business coaches into consideration to evolve their business model canvas
- The team's technology / intellectual property is solving a clearly articulated problem, has a clear USP and is sufficiently developed to warrant exploring commercial opportunities
- The team has articulated a unique value proposition and have identified a number of assumptions which underpin them to evaluate with the market
- The team have a basic business model in place that can be validated as part of the programme

At EIT Food we are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all European citizens and citizens of associated countries. EIT Food firmly believes that equality is key to a more

sustainable, healthy and trustworthy food system and we encourage applications from those currently underrepresented in the startup ecosystem.

#### **2.5.4 Redress or appeal on evaluation results**

c. Applicants can submit an appeal within 5 days of receiving their result, if:

- The evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

For more details, please refer to [EIT Food Redress guidance](#).

## **2.6 Project reporting**

Participants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (e.g. legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour on exclusion grounds, reporting in the context of a subgrant agreement etc.). Moreover, startups supported by the Programme agree to participate in the Programme evaluation at the end of the Programme. Moreover, they agree to participate in the Programme impact survey and to provide additional information (such as company financial data and information on investment capital raised) for up to three additional years after the end of the Programme. Finally, participants in the Programme shall allow and support any checks, reviews, audits and investigations by EIT Food, EIT and/or any other competent EU body deemed necessary.

## **2.7 Payment arrangements and agreements to be signed**

The successful Seedbed teams, awarded a place in the Market Discovery Phase of the programme (Stage II), will be allocated a sub-granting budget of up to €10,000. In order to receive the grant funding, which will be allocated in three different lump sum payments when certain Milestones are achieved, each team/participant sign a subgrant agreement outlining the conditions of the financial support provided. This subgrant agreement ensures compliance with the funding to EU and Horizon Europe guidelines. The funding received through the subgrant is to be spent on eligible innovation activities spanning no further than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. Thus, all the funding provided is to be spent in 2025.



This budget is allocated to deliver the tasks associated with participating in the EIT Food Seedbed Incubator Programme. These specific tasks will be outlined in the Market Discovery Action plan, signed off by both the team and the Seedbed Coach and will be detailed in Annexe 1 of the subgrant agreement. The general expectations to achieve each Milestone, and thus release associated payments are as follows:

#### Milestone 1:

##### DELIVERABLES:

Submission of all EIT Food Seedbed Bootcamp expected deliverables including a satisfactory BMC (Business Model Canvas) and Action Plan

Completing the Seedbed Incubator Entry Survey

\*Attend the mandatory kick-off meeting in person

Completing Milestone 1 related to market discovery, as described in Action Plan described in the subgrant agreement.

Satisfactory progress approval linked to the first Team Progress Meeting.

**PAYMENT:** A total of 4000€ is available upon achieving Milestone 1, composed of:

A lump sum of 3000€ - THREE THOUSAND EUROS - will be paid within 30 days after the successful submission and approval of Milestone 1.

\*A lump sum of 1000€ - ONE THOUSAND EUROS – will be paid if at least one member of the Recipient team attends the programme Kick-off in person. This reimbursement is not intended to fully cover actual costs, nor will the costs be pre-financed. This reimbursement will not apply in case the event is held online and in the case of no show up to the event.

#### Milestones 2:

##### DELIVERABLES:

Complying with EIT Food Brand guidelines regarding Recipient Project related social media and website materials.

Completing Milestone 2 related to market discovery, as described in Action Plan (Annex 1) of the subgrant agreement

**PAYMENT:** A lump sum of 2000€ - TWO THOUSAND EUROS - will be paid within 30 days after the successful submission and approval of Milestone 2



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Milestone 3:

**DELIEVRABLES:**

Completing Milestone 3 related to market discovery, as described in Action Plan (Annex 1) of the subgrant agreement.

\*Attending the Project Showcase event in person

Completing the Seedbed Incubator Exit Survey.

**PAYMENT:** A total of 4000€ is available upon achieving Milestone 1, composed of:

A lump sum of 3000€ - THREE THOUSAND EUROS - will be paid within 30 days after the successful submission and approval of Milestone 4.

\*An additional 1000€ - ONE THOUSAND EUROS – will be paid if at least one member of the Recipient team attends the Project Showcase event in person. This reimbursement is not intended to fully cover actual costs, nor will the costs be pre-financed. This reimbursement will not apply in case the event is held online and in the case of no show up to the event.

Milestones ARE related to market discovery are agreed between the Recipient and Business Coach at the beginning of the Project and are reflected in the Action Plan (Annex 1) of the programme subgrant agreement. The milestones are linked to learnings and actions through up to 100 Customer Conversations with satisfactory progress approval at discretion of a Business Coach following Team Progress meetings. Teams should continue to update the Action Plan learnings and Actions as a result of these conversations. The updates will be reviewed against the Milestones by the team's Business Coach. The learnings that have been documented can then be used to review progress at the Team Progress Meetings. The Milestones should be reported by the Recipient to his/her assigned Business Coach for his/her approval during regular coaching sessions.

Calendar of the payments and further payment conditions will be discussed with the participant and will be set out in full in the Subgrant Agreement. Payments shall be made to the bank account indicated by Participant in the Agreement.

The awardees shall be responsible for all possible taxes, wire transfers and other possible costs related to the payments.

For additional information please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

## 2.8 Other

### 2.8.1 IP rights and confidentiality

The applications submitted are handled confidentially. Information submitted will be viewed on a “need to know basis” by a limited group of people within the EIT Food community. Submitted information will only be used for review purposes, and those reviewing the submitted information have confidentiality agreements in place with EIT Food.

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their intellectual property rights, during and after the funding period.

By submitting their application participants warrant that they hold ownership or have legally secured the right to use all elements of the innovative product or service and that the provided materials and information do not infringe any intellectual or other property rights, including patents, of any other persons, companies or other entities. Elements of the submission that are based on rights held by others, such as patents, shall be marked as such in the submission. Participants shall indemnify and hold harmless EIT Food IVZW, or any assignee or affiliate for any allegations or claims by third parties of infringement of intellectual property rights by the product or service of participants. Participants shall have the right to further develop, use and license their intellectual property rights for creating, making, marketing and distributing products, services and technology.

### 2.8.2 Publicity – Promoting Programme – Visibility of the EU Funding

#### **Publicity by the participants**

The companies selected must support the promotion of EIT Food, by providing targeted information in a strategic and effective manner.

**Unless EIT Food requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, selected applicants must:**



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- **Display the EIT Food logo with the EU emblem** on their web page or any other communication material regarding the participation in the Programme. When displayed together with another logo, the EIT Food logo and EU emblem must have appropriate prominence;
- **Include the following text:** “This activity has received funding from EIT Food, the innovation community on Food of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the EU” on their web page or any other communication material regarding the participation in the Programme.

For the purposes of their obligations, the selected participants may use the EIT Food logo and the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT Food. This does not, however, give it the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

#### **Publicity by EIT Food**

EIT Food and its partners may use, for its communication and publicising activities, information relating to the action or the product or service of the participants, documents notably summaries for publication as well as any other material that it receives from the participants (including in electronic form).

EIT Food or its partners may publish the name of the participants their origin, affiliation, the amount of funding and its nature and purpose — unless they have requested to waive this publication (because disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest). EIT Food may include applicant information in its startup-corporate matchmaking programme.

Photos, videos and sounds taken/recorded by EIT Food during the programme, in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony and other EIT Food events are the sole property of EIT Food and may be used for press releases or publications by EIT Food or its partners.

### **2.8.3 Privacy**

#### **Processing of personal data by EIT Food**

Any personal data will be processed by EIT Food in accordance with the [EIT Food privacy policy](#).

### **Processing of personal data by the participants**

The participants must process personal data in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements, if any), see the GDPR recommendations.

### **2.8.4 Security**

The activities must be carried out in compliance with Commission Decision 2015/444, i.e. security-sensitive information must be EU-classified, if its unauthorised disclosure could adversely impact the interests of the EU or of one (or more) of its Member States. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be admitted to the programme.

### **2.8.5 Conflict of interest**

The participants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective award of the grant is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interest'). They must inform EIT Food without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

EIT Food may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

### **2.8.6 Liability for damage**

To the maximum extent permitted by law, EIT Food cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the participants or to third parties as a consequence of the grant, including for gross negligence on the part of the beneficiary.

EIT Food cannot be held liable for any damage caused by any of the participants in the context of the grant.

To the maximum extent permitted by law, under no circumstances and under no legal theory whether in tort (including negligence) contract or otherwise shall EIT Food, the EIT Food Partners or the EIT, any of its nodes or affiliates, be liable for any special indirect, punitive, incidental or consequential damages, including loss of profit.

If the liability of EIT Food or the EIT cannot be excluded following the applicable laws, but can be limited, the liability of EIT Food IVZW or the EIT shall be limited to the amount of grant awarded.

Please note other liability clauses may apply at a later stage.

### 2.8.7 Administrative sanctions

**If a participant has committed irregularities or fraud or has made false declarations, EIT Food may also:**

- Exclude the participant from all future contracts, grants and contests financed from the EU or Euratom budget and/or
- Impose a financial penalty

### 2.8.8 Miscellaneous

In general, the Participant should understand that EIT Food is supported by the EIT and is bound by the agreements with the EIT.

## 2.9 Cancellation or postponement of the Programme and withdrawal

**The Programme may be cancelled or postponed:**

- In case of irregularities, fraud, breach of obligations;
- No applications are received;
- If directed or decided by EIT or following the applicable laws and regulations;
- In case of exceptional circumstances including force majeure;

- If underlying agreements such as the FPA or SGA or an internal grant agreement would be terminated or suspended or if specifically, EIT Food's participation to the same would be terminated or suspended.

Please note that amounts may also be rejected, recovered, postponed in case the exclusion criteria would become applicable to the participant, the participant is no longer eligible or if imposed accordingly by the applicable laws and regulations or the agreements signed between EIT Food and the EIT.

## 2.10 Amendments

EIT Food reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to these terms and conditions e.g, due to changes in laws and regulations or EIT rules. Amendments and additions to these terms and conditions shall be valid if communicated in writing on the EIT Food website or otherwise made available to the applicants.

## 2.11 Applicable laws and jurisdiction

These terms and conditions are governed by the laws of Belgium. Any disagreement or dispute which may arise in connection with these terms and conditions which cannot be settled amicably will be brought before the courts of the registered seat of EIT Food.

## 2.12 Contacts

For more information regarding the Seedbed Incubator, please contact:

**Chryssa Dimaki**

Seedbed Incubator Activity Leader (point of contact for applicants)

[cd@food.au.dk](mailto:cd@food.au.dk)

Seedbed & Other information sources

EIT Seedbed Incubator Programme web page: <https://entrepreneurship.eitfood.eu/launch/>

## 3. EIT Food Accelerator Network

### 3.1 Scope of the programme

The EIT Food Accelerator Network (FAN) is a multi-Hub accelerator programme delivered across Europe (with a presence in Brazil), to support high-impact agrifood and foodtech startups to further validate their technology and accelerate their go-to-market readiness. Once startups have applied for the EIT FAN and have chosen the theme that best matches their product/solution, they will go through a rigorous selection process where they will be evaluated by a series of experts, including entrepreneurs, investors and experts from the agriculture and food industries.

If successful, startups will be invited to join one of the six accelerator programmes taking place in parallel across Europe:

- Munich, Germany - Theme “Farm to Fork: Transforming Tomorrow’s Supply Chain”
- Haifa, Israel – “Food as Medicine”
- Bilbao, Spain – Theme: “Sustainable Food Packaging”
- Helsinki, Finland – Theme: “Circular Solutions for Food Systems”
- Paris, France – Theme: “New ingredients and bioprocessing”
- Warsaw, Poland – Theme: “Future resilient agriculture”

Over a 2-3-month acceleration period spread between May-October, 2025, selected startups will have access to a great variety of tools, resources, mentors and expertise and will get the opportunity to (re)-shape their product tech development roadmap as well as advance their commercial and investment readiness with the ultimate goal: a successful market adoption.

- At the end of the accelerator programme, there will be a Technology Validation pitch event per Hub where startups from that specific Hub will be invited to pitch their Tech Validation Case in front of a Jury of entrepreneurs, researchers and experts from the



agriculture and food industries. The top 3 best performing startups of each Tech Validation pitch event (18 startups in total) will receive a financial award of 50,000 euros, 30,000 euros or 20,000 euros to implement their project with the facilities of their choice (Universities, Research Centers).

The aim of the EIT FAN is to provide support to agrifood startups:

- To accelerate their Technology Validation and access cutting-edge facilities and equipment across Europe;
- To reach the market faster via the EIT Food Innovation Community, e.g. finding potential partners and piloting customers (i.e. pilot projects);
- To facilitate access to future funding opportunities (such as seed investments, financing loans and other financing instruments);
- To gain higher visibility via EIT Food channels, the agrifood space in general and to connect them to the local and European startup ecosystem.

### 3.2 Timeline & admissibility

The present call is open until February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025. After the cut-off date, the following process will apply (more details on the application documents and selection procedure can be found below).

1. Submission of online application before cut-off date – by February 21<sup>st</sup> 2025
2. First evaluation round (Round 1) by a carefully selected panel of experts – early to mid-March 2025
3. Acceptance/rejection notification and written feedback on the application provided (after Round 1) – late March
4. Shortlisted startups are participating in the second round of evaluation (Round 2) – early to mid-April 2025
5. Acceptance/rejection notification and written feedback on the application provided (after Round 2) - late April 2025
6. Acceptance letter and agreement signed – late April 2025
7. Start of the local accelerator programme – late April – early May 2025

Applications must be submitted in English by the contact person of the company via an online platform. Incomplete applications or applications submitted in another language may be

considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing. For more information, please contact the accelerator manager at the end of this document.

### 3.3. Eligibility

#### 3.3.1 General criteria

- You are not involved in another EIT Food Business Creation programme (i.e. Seedbed and RisingFoodStars). Each is focusing on a different stage of company with another offer. For a complete overview of current EIT Food programme offering, please visit the [homepage](#).
- You have no conflict of interests. Ventures owned by EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food governing bodies and engagements in which EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food governing bodies have an interest are also excluded. EIT Food includes all CLCs of EIT Food and all governing bodies.

#### 3.3.2 Formal criteria

To be considered eligible for the programme, applicants must be agri-food startups:

- That are set to make a big impact on any part of the agriculture or food supply chain in Europe thus committed to building a healthier, more trusted and sustainable food system;
- That have an innovative solution/product in one of the EIT FAN themes 2025:
  - **FARM TO FORK: TRANSFORMING TOMORROW'S SUPPLY CHAIN**
    - Optimising crop processing and storage
    - Advanced tracking, tracing and predictive models
    - Reducing food loss across the supply chain
    - Precision measurement, reporting and verification
    - Smart wastewater and on-farm sludge management
    - Preserving aboveground biodiversity
  - **FOOD AS MEDICINE**
    - Targeted and functional foods
    - Food reformulation
    - Probiotics, prebiotics, symbiotics and postbiotics

- Food bioactive ingredients (antioxidants and beyond)
- Food safety, sensitivities and allergies
- Food for healthy ageing
- **SUSTAINABLE FOOD PACKAGING**
  - Alternative materials
  - Recycling processes, traceability and data efficiency
  - Circular packaging platform
  - Smart preservation technology
  - Life cycle assessment (LCA) tools
- **NEW INGREDIENTS AND BIOPROCESSING**
  - Biotechnologies (cultivated meat, precision fermentation, biomass fermentation)
  - Plant-based new ingredients (incl. algae, mycelium)
  - Ingredients replacing unsustainable crops (e.g. cocoa, palm, sugar)
  - Clean label innovation
  - Enabling technologies, incl. AI modelling
- **CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS**
  - By-products and waste stream valorisation (nutrient recovery and upcycling)
  - Upcycled food raw materials and ingredients (good taste, solubility, high nutritional value)
  - Upstream processes and feedstock optimisation
  - Closed-loop farming solutions
- **FUTURE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE**
  - Soil health and biodiversity
  - Water management
  - Crop innovations
  - Bioinputs
  - Carbon and nitrogen farming
  - Smart farming, incl. AI and robotics
- At (pre-)seed stage successfully completed customer validation and potentially can already demonstrate traction indicator (e.g. Lols, sales, letters of support);
- Registered company in or after 2015 with a prototype or ongoing pilot project (paid or unpaid);
- Have between 1 and 20 employees, not including interns and contractors;
- Having revenues between €0-500K;
- Last founding round – pre-seed/seed;

- Legal entity based in the EU and its member states or EU associated countries ([LINK](#)) Committed to the programme (we expect active, consistent engagement in the programme - this requires the presence from at least one team member for the duration of the accelerator programme);
- Submit a fully completed application in English through the online platform by the deadline set in article 3.2 including all requested documents;
- Accept these Programme terms and conditions;
- None of the Exclusion Criteria must apply to the applicant, as outlined in article 3.3.2

EIT Food offers several programs targeting entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs at various stages of maturity.

We encourage projects at idea/concept stage, without being a registered company, to consider applying for the “Seedbed Incubator”. Link: <https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship/projects/Seedbed>

For scaleups with more advanced product(s)/service(s), we recommend applying to become member in the “Rising Food Stars association”:

Link: <https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship/projects/risingfoodstars>

For a complete overview of current EIT Food programme offering please visit the following homepage: <https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship>

### 3.3.3 Exclusion criteria

Consulting service companies without tangible product will be excluded, including one-person company.

Participants that have already received a maximum funding of 60,000 EUR from any of the Knowledge & Innovation Communities (KIC) supported by the EIT in this particular calendar year cannot participate in the programme.

Participants will be excluded if they (or one of them):

- Are subject to an administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion)
- Are in one of the following situations:

- Bankrupt, being wound up, having their affairs administered by the courts, entered into an arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or subject to any other similar proceedings or procedures under national law (including persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
- Declared in breach of social security or tax obligations by a final judgment or decision (including persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
- Found guilty of grave professional misconduct by a final judgment or decision (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control)
- Convicted of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control)
- Shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under a procurement contract, grant agreement or grant decision financed by the EU or Euratom budget (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control)
- Found guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control)
- Have misrepresented information required for participating in the EIT FAN or fail to submit such information
- Were involved in the preparation of the grant documents and this entails a distortion of competition.

For additional exclusion criteria please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

### 3.4 Documents

Participants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour on exclusion grounds, etc). Moreover, startups supported by the EIT FAN agree to participate in the programme evaluation at the end of the programme. They also agree to participate in the EIT FAN impact survey and to provide additional information (esp. financial data and information on investment capital raised, innovations introduced on the market) for up to three additional years after the end of the programme. Finally, participants in the EIT FAN shall allow and

support any checks, reviews, audits and investigations by EIT Food, EIT and/or any other competent EU body deemed necessary.

For additional information please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

### 3.5 Selection procedure, financial support and criteria

The application procedure is the following:

#### 1. Online application:

Applicants must submit by February 21<sup>st</sup> an [online application form](#) where they should illustrate: efforts to achieve product-market-fit, technology and IP, traction and impact, market and competition, business model, revenue projections, team expertise.

#### 2. Online Evaluation (March 2025)

The first evaluation round is performed online by a carefully selected panel of entrepreneurs and experts in the agrifood space to evaluate the (potential) impact of the startup and the alignment of the application with the underlying objectives of EIT Food: the best applications passing this screening will be invited to pitch their idea to a panel of experts in an online session. After the first evaluation round, every startup receives written feedback from the panellists on the evaluation of their application.

The first evaluation round criteria includes (total maximum score – 49 points):

- Problem-Solution Fit (7 points)
- Technology Novelty (7 points)
- Technology Validation Needs (7 points)
- Business Model Validation & Traction (7 points)
- Quality of the Team (7 points)
- Fit with EIT Food Core Strategic Missions and Thematic Areas (7 points)
- Overall Recommendation to join the Programme (7 points)
- 

#### 3. Technology & Business Deep Dives and motivation interviews (mid-March – mid-April 2025)

The second evaluation round is an online pitching session (“Technology & Business Deep Dives” and motivation interviews) organised by the local accelerator representatives. A carefully selected panel of entrepreneurs and experts both internal and external in the agrifood space will evaluate each startup based on the criteria mentioned below during the

EIT FAN Technology & Business Deep Dives: tech validation needs, (potential) impact of the startup, the economic viability as well as technical and customer readiness levels. The evaluator panels during rounds one and two have a different composition.

To ensure there is an adequate fit between the support the EIT FAN provides in each Hub and a startup's need, each applicant will be asked a few questions to assess the motivation to join the programme.

The results of the Technology & Business Deep Dives and motivation interviews will result in a global ranking. Taking into account theme preferences, corporate interest in a startup applicant as well as position in the global ranking, applicants will be invited to join the programme. The selected applicants will sign an agreement with EIT Food to enter the programme at a particular location.

### 3.5.1 Redress or appeal on evaluation results

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

- The evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

For more details, please refer to [EIT Food Redress guidance](#).

## 3.6 Other conditions

### 3.6.1 Payment and arrangements of financial support

EIT Food is committed to support the best ideas and the projects with the highest potential to generate an impact in the agrifood value chain.

With regards to the EIT FAN, EIT Food provides access to subgrants:

- to cover travel expenses. The 60 startups of the cohort can receive a subgrant of 3,000 EUR as a lump sum at the end of the programme if they submit a subgrant milestone report showing that:
  - They have attended at least 80% of the programme

- They have placed the complete EIT FAN logo on their website
- They have participated in the Tech Validation pitch event
- They have completed the EIT FAN programme Satisfaction survey

A subgrant support agreement will be signed by the startups as well as a subgrant milestone report to demonstrate that the eligibility criteria have been met. Templates are provided by EIT Food.

- as part of the Tech Validation pitch events. The top 3 best performing startups of each Tech Validation pitch event (18 startups in total) will be offered a chance to receive receive funding of 50,000 euros (1<sup>st</sup> winner), 30,000 euros (2<sup>nd</sup> winner) or 20,000 euros (3<sup>rd</sup> winner) to implement their project with the facilities of their choice (Universities, Research Centers). Startups are evaluated by a jury composed of external experts, EIT Food and Hub representatives and corporates (if no conflict of interest) based on pre-defined criteria linked to the Tech Validation feasibility and the relevance with the business. Winning startups will be requested to sign a subgrant agreement including a budget outline on how they plan to spend the money. An intermediary report and a report post-project completion will also be requested to ensure that the milestones have been met;
- Startups winning and accepting to receive Tech Validation funding from EIT Food will be requested to sign a Simple Agreement Future Equity (SAFE) in addition to the subgrant agreement;
- Templates for the subgrant agreement, the [SAFE](#) and the reports are provided by EIT Food;
- EIT Food, European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Court of Auditors may carry out checks, audits and investigations in relation to the grant.

### 3.6.2 Publicity – Promoting the EIT FAN – Visibility of the EU Funding

#### Publicity by the participants

The companies selected must support the promotion of the EIT Food Accelerator Network, by providing targeted information in a strategic and effective manner.

Unless EIT Food requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, selected startups must:





Co-funded by the  
European Union

- a) display the EIT Food Accelerator Network logo with the EU emblem and
- b) include the following text:  
“Co-Funded by the European Union” on their web page.

For any communication activity related to the EIT FAN (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.) startups must:

- c) Use “#EITFAN” for online communication about the programme
- d) Tag EIT Food Accelerator Network if applicable (LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/eit-food-accelerator-network/> ; Facebook: @EITFood.eu; X: @EIT\_Food)

When displayed together with another logo, the EIT FAN logo and EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

For the purposes of their obligations, the selected companies may use the EIT FAN logo and the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT Food.

This does not, however, give it the right to exclusive use.

Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

### Publicity by EIT Food

EIT Food may use, for its communication and publicising activities, information relating to the action, documents notably summaries for publication as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material that it receives from the participants (including in electronic form).

EIT Food will publish the name of the funded companies, their origin, and its nature and purpose — unless they have requested to waive this publication (because disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest). EIT Food may include applicant information in its startup-corporate matchmaking program.

Photos and videos taken by EIT Food during the EIT Food events where the selected companies will feature are the sole property of EIT Food.

### 3.6.3 Dissemination and exploitation of results

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. By submitting their application, applicants warrant that they hold ownership or have legally secured the right to use all elements of the innovative product or service and

that the provided materials and information do not infringe any intellectual or other property rights, including patents, of any other persons, companies, or other entities. Elements of the submission that are based on rights held by others, such as patents, shall be marked as such in the submission.

EIT Food and their authorised representatives in the program undertake to ensure the confidentiality of the projects presented and developed throughout the EIT FAN. By submitting the application within the program, applicants consent that EIT Food and its accelerator Hubs will collect, transfer, process, store and delete your data under abovementioned conditions.

The selected companies agree that their data as well as non-confidential information about their project, may be used by EIT Food and their authorised representatives without compensation for promotion of their activities.

### 3.6.4 Processing of personal data

#### Processing of personal data by EIT Food

Any personal data will be processed by EIT Food in accordance with the EIT Food privacy policy notice(s): <https://www.eitfood.eu/pages/privacy-policy>

#### Processing of personal data by the participants

The participants must process personal data in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements, if any), see the GDPR recommendations.

### 3.6.5 Ethics

The activities must be carried out in compliance with:

- a) ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
- b) applicable international, EU and national law.

No funding will be awarded for activities carried out outside the EU, if they are prohibited in all Member States.

The participants must ensure that the activities of their company have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

The participants must respect the highest standards of research integrity — as set out, for instance, in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

### **3.6.6 Security**

The activities must be carried out in compliance with Commission Decision 2015/444, i.e. security-sensitive information must be EU-classified, if its unauthorised disclosure could adversely impact the interests of the EU or of one (or more) of its Member States. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be admitted to the programme.

### **3.6.7 Conflict of interest**

The participants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective award of the grant or funding is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interest').

They must inform EIT Food without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

EIT Food may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

### **3.6.8 Liability for damages**

EIT Food cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the participants or to third parties as a consequence of the grant, including for gross negligence.

EIT Food cannot be held liable for any damage caused by any of the participants in the context of the grant.

### **3.6.9 Withdrawal of the (non-)financial support – Recovery of the undue amounts**

EIT Food may withdraw the funding after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- a. false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- b. a winner was not eligible or should have been excluded

- c. a winner is in serious breach of its obligations under these Terms & Conditions.

### **3.6.10 Administrative sanctions**

If a participant has committed irregularities or fraud or has made false declarations, EIT Food may also:

- a. exclude the participant from all future contracts, grants and contests financed from the EU or Euratom budget for a maximum of five years (or 10 years in case of repetition) and/or
- b. impose a financial penalty between 2% and 10% of the value of the grant (or between 4% and 20% in case of repetition).

### **3.6.11 Cancellation of the programme**

EIT Food may cancel the programme or decide not to award any of the aforementioned grants or funding — without any obligation to compensate participants —, if:

- a. no applications are received
- b. the jury does not find a winner
- c. the winner(s) is not eligible or must be excluded

### **3.6.12 Terms & Conditions**

By signing the confirmation of participation, applicants agree to the Terms and Conditions. EIT Food reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to these Terms and Conditions. Amendments and additions to these Terms and Conditions shall be valid if communicated in writing on the EIT Food website or otherwise made available to the applicants.

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of Belgium. Any disagreement or dispute which may arise in connection with these Terms and Conditions which cannot be settled amicably will be brought before the courts of Brussels, Belgium.

To the maximum extent permitted by law, under no circumstances and under no legal theory whether in tort (including negligence) contract or otherwise shall EIT Food and the EIT Food partners involved in this activity be liable for any special indirect, punitive, incidental or consequential damages, including loss of profit.

You may withdraw your application as well as participation in the EIT FAN any time by informing us by email or withdrawing your registration any time.

### 3.7.Contact

The EIT FAN is organised by EIT Food and its regional Accelerator Hubs which act as managing partners in coordinating the collection, evaluation, awarding and follow-up process at regional level.

#### Contact Details EIT Food

**Yulia Bodnar**

EIT FAN Programme Manager

E-Mail: [yulia.bodnar@eitfood.eu](mailto:yulia.bodnar@eitfood.eu)

#### Contact Details Accelerator Hubs

**Accelerator Hub Bilbao, Spain**

Juliet Bray

E-Mail: [juliet.bray@eitfood.eu](mailto:juliet.bray@eitfood.eu)

**Accelerator Hub Munich, Germany**

Nikola Baumschlager

E-Mail: [nikola.baumschlager@unternehmertum.de](mailto:nikola.baumschlager@unternehmertum.de)

**Accelerator Hub Haifa, Israel**

Dr. Avital Regev Siman-Tov

E-Mail: [avitalr@technion.ac.il](mailto:avitalr@technion.ac.il)

**Accelerator Hub Helsinki, Finland**

Laura Forsman

E-Mail: [laura.forsman@helsinki.fi](mailto:laura.forsman@helsinki.fi)

**Accelerator Hub Paris, France**

Marie-Charlotte Poyet

E-Mail: [mariecharlotte@shakeupfactory.com](mailto:mariecharlotte@shakeupfactory.com)

**Accelerator Hub Warsaw, Poland**

Kamila Czerwinska

E-Mail: [kamila.czerwinska@eitfood.eu](mailto:kamila.czerwinska@eitfood.eu)

#### Other information sources

EIT Food web page: [www.eitfood.eu](http://www.eitfood.eu)

EIT FAN web page: <https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship/accelerate-food-accelerator-network>

## 4. RisingFoodStars Programme

### 4.1 Introduction

The RisingFoodStars is an Entrepreneurship programme provided by EIT Food. The beneficiaries of the RisingFoodStars programme are impact-driven, aspiring scaleups that demonstrate the desire, potential and readiness to begin their transformational journey to unlock their commercial potential with the aim to scale rapidly and become a food star of tomorrow. They have the ambition to improve any part of the agriculture or food supply chain, thus committed to building a future-fit food system that is healthier and more sustainable. You can only become a RisingFoodStar upon submission of an eligible application. This guideline serves the companies who are willing to become a RisingFoodStar in 2025.

### 4.2 The programme

The RisingFoodStars programme identifies the most promising ventures in the Agrifood-Tech space who are on their scale up journey and empowers them to lead the revolution towards a future-fit food system. The higher goal of this programme is to give you Pan-European recognition and to provide you with access to all the resources, tools and network you need to challenge, design and follow your own journey to successfully scale up and become a food star of tomorrow.

RisingFoodStars programme boosts your chances of scaling up successfully by supporting you in all relevant dimensions of this journey. Some of these are:

- Challenge and re-fine your vision, mission, business model and adapt your pitch to your new growth stage as a promising scaleup;
- Define your strategic priorities to scaleup efficiently and successfully;
- Unlock your commercial potential and attract the right customers;
- Define your fundraising strategy and attract the relevant investors;
- Build your leadership and management capabilities, revamp your organisation structure and attract the right talent;
- Transform from a technical product / service to a commercially oriented organisation.

### 4.2.1 Core programme

By joining the RisingFoodStars programme, you receive the core services below:

1. **SCALE UP/COMMERCIALISATION READINESS DIAGNOSIS:** You receive a thorough expert scan of your company to assess your strengths and shortcomings and define together your specific needs in order to successfully scale up.
2. **SCALEUP ACTION PLAN:** After defining your strategic priorities, we provide you with small group customised and interactive workshops as well as 1:1 mentorship sessions to develop a plan of action and build your capabilities. The workshops menu is accessible to all your team.
3. **PARTNERSHIP BUILDING:** We help you identify and connect with the right decision makers within our 100+ corporate partners to widen your market access and commercial reach. Thanks to our corporate venture services, we support you to personalise your value proposition to industry partners and connect you with the right stakeholders in our partner organisations.
4. **FUNDING:** We help you to find the right funding opportunities through our own EIT Food impact fund and our network of 30+ leading investors including Food Sparks by Peak Bridge. As part of your core membership, you are also eligible to receive direct financial support from EIT Food impact fund to fuel your growth and your commercial partnership pilots with corporate partners: up to €1,500,000 per venture through a Simple Agreement For Future Equity (“SAFE”) instrument (this is not guaranteed, the decision at the sole discretion of EIT Food impact fund team). Read here for more information: [Investment: EIT Food Impact Fund - EIT Food](#).
5. **VISIBILITY:** We give you privileged access to leading corporates and investors via the biggest pan-European conferences such as FutureFoodTech London, F&A Next or our own venture summit in Lisbon. As part of a RisingFoodStar, you also receive financial support to travel to those key events. On top of this, we highlight your success story in our media channels including social media, website and podcasts with a reach of over 8Mn.

The core services detailed above are priced at 4,500 euros/ year. For new members onboarded in 2025, since they will be joining us in July 2025, the membership fees for 2025 will be 2,250 euros (pro-rated to the number of participation months, covering our core services till end of December 2025).

## 4.2.2 Side Tracks

To complete the participation and to support you further with your scaling journey, we also developed side tracks you can choose from based on your needs (highly recommended but optional). As a minimum, we will be offering the following side tracks in 2025:

### 1. Series A investment readiness track

- Two-day in person Bootcamp in small teams (a max of around 8 startups) covering all you need to be ready for your series A fundraising
- Access to best-in class tools, models, templates, frameworks built by top-notch investors.
- Additional 4h of exclusive mentorship in a 1:1 format with the best mentors in the market
- Detailed feedback session on your series A pitch from our investment team.
- Privileged access to leading series A investors in agrifoodtech

### 2. Visibility track

- Hands-on and tailored mentorship leading to a revamped communication strategy, increased confidence in developing investor, corporate and consumer pitches, as well as upgraded storytelling skills targetting all different kinds of audiences.
- Extra visibility in events: First right of refusal on free tickets, booths and pitching\* (whenever relevant and subject to availability), up to 6 events per year.
- Extra travel budget: up to 2 extra trips (for a total value of 1000 euros) covering EIT Food sponsored events or your choice of relevant events related to your scaling journey
- Extra media boost: support on video/ content generation, PR, social media, podcast...

Tracks 1 and 2 are priced at an additional 2,000 euros each. A 20% discount is applied to the second purchased track, if you choose more than 1 side track.

## 4.2.3 Access to Grants

The selected companies to the RisingFoodStars programme are entitled to get support grants under the form of lump sums for the following purposes:

- Travel to EU or International Agrifood events (up to 2000 euros)
  - 500 euros for EU and associated countries
  - 1000 euros for international events
- Up to 6 hours of mentorship (up to 900 euros: lump sum of 150 euros per hour)



They are entitled to claim the grant over the period running between the date of signature of the contract and 31<sup>st</sup> December of the running year. To validly claim a support grant, the company shall send out the following justifications:

- Travel: proof of attendance to the event, e.g. name of the company and the employee on attendance list with name and dates of the event or scan of the badge of the event including name of the employee, company, name and dates of the event or picture of the recipient representative in the booth or on the stage of the event.
- Mentorship: timesheet of the mentor stating number of hours provided, at which dates and name of the recipient company

## 4.3. Eligibility

### 4.3.1 General criteria

- You are not involved in another EIT Food Business Creation programme (i.e. Seedbed and EIT Food Accelerator Network). Each is focusing on a different stage of company with another offer. For a complete overview of current EIT Food programme offering, please visit the [homepage](#).
- You have no conflict of interests. Ventures owned by EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food governing bodies and engagements in which EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food governing bodies have an interest are also excluded. EIT Food includes all CLCs of EIT Food and all governing bodies.
- You add value, and you are complementary to the current pool of RisingFoodStars and network of EIT Food partners. The current list of members is available [here](#).

### 4.3.2 Formal criteria

- You have your legal entity based in a Member State of the European Union (EU) or Horizon Europe associated countries
- You submitted a fully completed application and requested supported documents (pitch deck) in English through the online platform by the deadline set on the EIT Food website.
- You read and accepted the EIT Food Privacy Policy, the RisingFoodStars service contract and Model Subgrant Agreement upon submission.
- You are a [SMALL sized company](#) as defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](#),

Category	Staff headcount	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
<b>Small</b>	<b>&lt; 50*</b>	<b>≤ € 10 m</b>		<b>≤ € 10 m</b>
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m

(\*) Excluding interns and contractors

- Your company exists for **less than ten years**
- You have a technological solution within one of the [EIT Food 3 Strategic Missions](#).
- You have a **unique and scalable technology validated in market conditions** combined with a healthy business model (TRL>6)
- You are generating revenues from a strategic multi-customers portfolio (Min 100K euros) and/or you are aiming to raise a Series A within the next 6-12 months.
- You have a compelling vision with the right capabilities and mindset to transform from a technological product/service to a commercial organisation.
- You have a team of around 10+ Full Time employees with both technical and commercial skills.

For a better understanding of our priorities, please check our website: [www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship](http://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship)

For additional exclusion criteria please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

## 4.4 Application and evaluation process

### 4.4.1 Timeline

Below are the expected timelines for the application process:

Application opens	21/11/2024
Application closes	21/02/2025
Evaluation and Pitch rounds	March/ April 2025
Outcome notification (expected date)	End of May 2025

Service contract signature and announcement	June 2025
Onboarding and start of the programme	July 2025

#### 4.4.2 Application

To apply please fill in the application form on our website:

<https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship>.

Applications are transparent and open to all eligible applicants from November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to February, 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

#### 4.4.3 Evaluation

1. After receiving your full application, we will first assess your data against the eligibility criteria. If eligible, our evaluation committee will score your application against some key criteria, each of which is scored from 1-5. All criteria carry the same weight.  
Impact-driven mission and vision: clearly articulated, ambitious, disruptive and impact-oriented vision/mission that aligns with one or more of EIT Food priority areas
2. Strength and uniqueness of the technological solution behind the product/service.
3. Healthy business model and go to market with notable traction signs
4. Scalability of the business model. Your business model should be validated in the market and scalable.
5. Strategic leap to go international. Ambition and capacity to scale internationally.
6. Founding team. Technical and managerial skills. Agrifood prowess.
7. Founding team business skills and commercial orientation.
8. Evaluation Stages:
  - **Evaluation Round 1:** The evaluation Committee of the RisingFoodStars programme will review all eligible applications. The Committee consists of between 3-5 members of EIT Food, its partners and independent expert evaluators. The Evaluation Committee will score your applications online.
  - **Evaluation Round 2:** The highest scored candidates will be invited for a pitching and Q&As session. Any remaining questions from the Evaluation Committee will also be discussed online in this Q&A. The exact dates will be announced on the website of the EIT Food and the relevant RisingFoodStars applicants will be informed by email. The

purpose of the pitch is to clarify any outstanding issues and give some more background if needed.

- **Evaluation Round 3:** Candidates selected after the pitching round will be called for a leadership interview to assess their leadership skills and coachability.

#### 4.4.4 Notification of candidates

All applicants will be informed individually on the final decision through the email address provided on the application. The RisingFoodStars Management Team will reach out to successful applicants to prepare their membership. Note that we handle the submitted applications confidentially. Confidentiality agreements bind everybody that reads the applications during the review process. Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their background intellectual property rights.

##### Onboarding:

We will invite the selected RisingFoodStars to attend a deep dive about EIT Food, to get a full insight on the EIT Food ecosystem, its partners, its opportunities, and its staff. At least one member of your team must be present, and we will ask you to confirm this in your submission.

#### 4.4.5 Redress or appeal on evaluation results

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

- The evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

For more details, please refer to [EIT Food Redress guidance](#).

### 4.5. Terms of the contract

**To benefit from the RisingFoodStars programme each company has to comply with a number of Obligations:**

a) Before entering the programme, each beneficiary must have:

- Signed contract specifying which services they are willing to purchase (core programme, side track 1, side track2, side track 3).

- Filled in and signed the Subgranting agreement to be entitled to get grants for travel and mentorship.
- Paid the related service invoice.
- Provided the legal registry document proving the incorporation of the legal entity.
- Filled the onboarding form.
- Attended the onboarding meeting by at least one representative of your team.

For additional details please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

b) At the end of each legal year, the beneficiary can renew the contract for up to 3 times (i.e. four consecutive years). If the beneficiary is willing to renew the contract to participate in the RisingFoodStars programme, the company must:

- Continue to be eligible for the programme
- Show proof of involvement in the programme's activities (min of 3 events or trainings)
- Show proof of growth and success (revenue, fundraising, expansion to new markets, job creation)
- Attend the mandatory 1:1 with the RisingFoodStars Management Team at the end of the programme.
- Comply with the branding guidelines (displaying EIT Food Logo on the website: <https://www.eitfood.eu/branding/how-to-use-the-eit-food-eu-logo>)
- participate in the Programme Impact and Satisfaction surveys.
- Reconduct the service contract.

c) After exiting the programme and for 3 years after participation, the companies must commit, upon request, to provide additional information such as financial data and information on investment capital raised).

## 4.6 Contact

**For more information regarding the EIT Food RisingFoodStars programme, please contact:**

**Magdalena Herrador Moreno**

EIT Food RisingFoodStars Lead

[Magdalena.Herrador@eitfood.eu](mailto:Magdalena.Herrador@eitfood.eu)

**RisingFoodStars & Other information sources**

**EIT Food RisingFoodStars Programme web page:**

<https://entrepreneurship.eitfood.eu/scale/>

## ANNEX 1 – Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items

### 1. Exclusion criteria

Please Note:

1. Failing any of the above call specific 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 its 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.

## 2. Administrative items

### a) Onboarding (only applicable for legal entities)

Entities that have never been part of projects funded by the EIT Food and that do not have a PIC validated by the Research Executive Agency (REA) of the European Commission will be subject to a PIC validation process managed by the EIT Community Onboarding Service. All validated entities will proceed with the signature of legal agreements with EIT Food.

As part of the onboarding process, selected entities must:

- Sign and submit the Declaration of Size.
- Sign and submit the Financial Information Form.
- Register on EIT Food grants management platform.

Additionally, EIT Food reserves the right to request to the EIT Community Onboarding Service a Financial Assessment Capacity to check the financial capacity of any entity of a selected proposal. In such case, EIT Food may require:

- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several liability for all subgrantees or joint and several liabilities of Affiliated Entities if any
- prefinancing paid in instalments (multiple/additional prefinancing)
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees

or

- propose no prefinancing or



Co-funded by the  
European Union

- request that the entity be replaced or, if needed, might reject the entire proposal

In other words, if the assessment results are not satisfactory, the EIT Food might reject the participation of this entity and will then check whether the proposal is still eligible.

For further information on the project implementation, please read the [EIT Food Activity Implementation Guidelines for Participants](#).

b) EIT Food Legal Framework documents to be signed

Selected applicants will receive a second communication with instructions regarding the completion of the following documents, as well as agreeing to EIT Food's conflict of interest policy:

To be signed between the participant and EIT Food:

1. Subgrant agreement

Any other legal agreements to make this grant eligible.