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# PoC Co-Financing Instrument Guidelines

23769-25 Corporate Venturing Services

EIT FOOD

Leuven, Belgium

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[eitfood.eu](http://eitfood.eu)

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## Call Fact Sheet

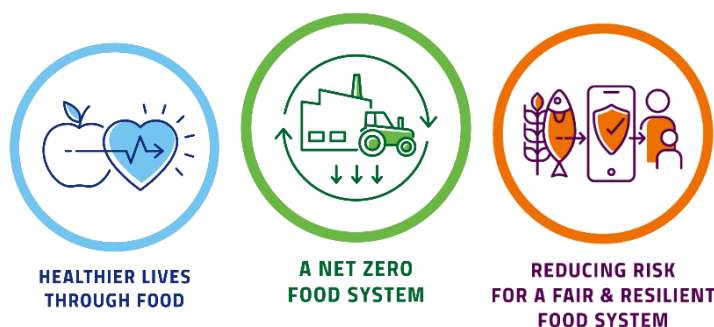
<b>Title of Call</b>	PoC Co-Financing Instrument
<b>Objective and Scope</b>	Promote Startup-Corporate collaboration
<b>Call Deadline</b>	<b>30/11/2025</b> Cutoff date 1: 30/06/2025 Cutoff date 2: 31/07/2025 Cutoff date 3: 30/08/2025 Cutoff date 4: 30/09/2025 Cutoff date 5: 31/10/2025 Cutoff date 6: 30/11/2025 Submitted applications will be evaluated by expert panels after each cutoff date
<b>Available Funding</b>	The maximum allocation to this call is €2.000.000 with up to 100.000€ available per project
<b>Project Duration</b>	1-12 months
<b>How to apply</b>	Application submission via Salesforce
<b>Contact Information</b>	Christoph Mandl: Christoph.mandl@eitfood.eu

### 1. 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



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

## 2. Purpose and scope of PoC Co-Financing Instrument

EIT Food facilitates corporate innovation by connecting world-leading industry with impactful agrifood startups. The purpose of the PoC Co-Financing Instrument is to financially de-risk the commercial activities of agrifood startups that will ultimately result in impactful technologies, products, and services reaching the market and scaling further in the food sector.

Usually, the first step towards a long-term collaboration between a startup and a potential corporate customer is a proof-of concept or small-scale pilot project. Once this kind of experiment was deemed successful from both sides, it will ideally lead to a bigger scale pilot project or the start of commercial activities. The extra support that EIT Food can offer at this stage is to financially de-risk startup-corporate experiments in an attempt to promote the commercial success of their solutions.

In this context, EIT Food targets proof-of-concepts and small-scale pilot projects between startups and prospective corporate clients with less than €100.000 in project costs. Proposed projects must exhibit a clear pathway towards commercial success. Project activities should therefore be strictly related to deliver on the proof-of-concept or pilot project proposed together with the corporate client. Example projects include but are not limited to: Sample creation, field trials, functionality and property tests, & efficiency assessments.

## 3. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Deliverables

### 3.1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

All **EIT Food funded** projects should achieve relevant Core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For the PoC co-financing instrument, the main KPI is:

Code	KPI	KPI Definition
EITHE02.4	<b>Marketed Innovations launched into the market</b>	Number of innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within 3 years after completion with a sales revenue of at least 10 000 EUR documented

**Please note:** At the end of the funding period, EIT Food requires specific structured data and documentation to verify the achievement of KPIs. Grantees must report their KPI achievements through the grant management tool and ensure that all required structured data and supporting evidence is submitted in accordance with the guidelines provided (see [EIT Food KPI Guidance Document](#) for details).

### 3.2. Deliverables and Milestones

Grant recipients must submit final deliverables at the end of the implementation period. For this activity the deliverables include:

- Supporting evidence for KPI EITHE 2.4
- Communication, Dissemination and Outreach Plan

Grant recipients have obligations on communication, dissemination and visibility rules. Please see Article 17 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and EIT Food's [Brand Guidelines](#).

Grant recipients must adhere to [EIT Food Intellectual Property's \(IP\) Policy](#) which complies with the IP provisions outlined in Article 16 of the Horizon Europe [Model Grant Agreement](#).

## 4. Eligibility

The PoC Co-Financing Instrument is addressed to a **mono-beneficiary**, therefore proposals must be submitted by one single entity only. Proposals with multiple beneficiaries will be deemed ineligible.

**Note that, although the present call is addressing a mono-beneficiary, the corporate client counterpart must also accept the terms and conditions of this call. Specifically, the corporate client counterpart must enter into an agreement with EIT Food ivzw hereby accepting the terms and conditions of the PoC co-financing instrument (see templates on the call website).**

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check to advance to the evaluation stage, according to the evaluation criteria below.

During the eligibility check, should EIT Food identify obvious application or technical errors in a proposal, the applicant may be given the opportunity to correct or resubmit their proposal within three (3) calendar days following proper communication from EIT Food. Such errors may include system malfunctions, typos, or missing supporting documents.

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

Organisation Eligibility	Each implementing participant must:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the <a href="#">EU or Horizon Europe eligible countries</a> for a minimum of 12 months of business activity.</li><li>• Have a technology, product, service, or solution aligned to one of the three <a href="#">EIT Food Missions</a>.</li><li>• Be either i) a <a href="#">SMALL sized company</a> as defined in the <a href="#">EU recommendation 2003/361</a> (less than 49 employees and less than 10 million in turnover or balance sheet), or ii) a <a href="#">MICRO sized company</a> as defined in the <a href="#">EU recommendation 2003/361</a> (less than 10 employees, and less than 2 million in turnover or balance sheet).</li><li>• Provide a PIC Number: <a href="https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf">https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf</a></li></ul>
Application Eligibility	To be eligible, applications must:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be complete, with all mandatory supporting documents, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Signed agreement between corporate client and EIT Food ivzw detailing the PoC co-financing instrument terms and conditions (see templates on the call website)</li><li>○ A company presentation (i.e., pitch deck), outlining the commercial capacity and capabilities of your company as well as the readiness of your proposed product or solution for market entry / expansion</li><li>○ A project plan outlining the milestones and activities to achieve project completion (i.e., marketed innovation)</li><li>○ A budget plan outlining the expected costs for the proposed project scope, including co-funding ratio.</li></ul></li><li>• Be submitted on time via the submission platform.</li><li>• Be fully written in English.</li></ul>

An applicant will be deemed ineligible if they have received EU funding and/or are a beneficiary in an EIT Food funded project in 2025, conducting similar testing or marketing activities for the similar technological solution in a similar geographical market with the same legal entities involved, ensuring that there is no double charging of costs.

Please note, you are not required to be an EIT Food partner to submit a proposal, or to receive funding under this call.

## 5. Funding

The total budget for this call is a maximum of €2.000.000. Applicants can submit more than one project with different corporate clients. Beneficiaries will receive a subgrant to fund their cost. This is cascade funding. The project can start from June 2025 and last up to a maximum of 12 months of funding from the start date.

There is a 6 million EUR limit per participants from Member States of the European Union (EU) and from [Horizon Europe Associate Countries](#) for the whole 3-year Grant Agreement. Legal entities from non- Horizon Europe Associate countries can participate in consortia but are limited to funding of 60 000 over 3 years for a Grant Agreement. This funding is implemented under GA 01101912. In those limits are included all the EIT Funding awarded to an organization across all the activities and prizes for the 3-year grant agreement.

The Subgrant is based on actual costs and value for money. All costs, including co-funding, need to comply with Horizon Europe regulations regarding the eligibility of expenses. Please refer to Article 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and the [Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#).

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

- Subcontracting should be kept at minimal and cannot be higher than 40% of total costs.
- Depreciation can amount to a maximum of 20% of total costs. In case of adding additional depreciation costs, please consult EIT Food in advance.
- Sub-granting: Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party.

### 5.1. Payment schedule

Each participant will receive their allocated funding depending on the amount of project costs either as

**Option 1 if project costs are less than €60.000:** As a lump sum within 30 days following the signature of all relevant agreements

**Option 2 if project costs are between €60.000 and €100.000:** Beneficiaries will receive 90% of the grant based on actual costs within 30 days and the remaining 10% within 30 days once the KPI evidence has been submitted. This completion includes the submission of the marketed innovation KPI, requiring a sales transaction of at least €10.000.

The expenditure and progress on the project plan will be monitored periodically and reported, with regular monitoring and reporting gates set out by EIT Food to determine if expenditures have been made in line with the cost eligibility criteria

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

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

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

**Subgrant Agreement:** document that outlines the conditions of the financial support provided (see template on call website).

The EIT mandates a mandatory 30-day standstill period following selection. The selection results are to be reviewed by EIT, so the subgrant agreements will not be signed prior to EIT consent.

**Please note:** The template provided may be edited and adapted depending on each selected applicant's circumstances. Other legal documents may also be considered necessary to make the grant eligible.

## 6. Timeline and Application

### 6.1 Timeline

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below:

Call Open Date	01.06.2025
Call Deadline	30.11.2025
Evaluation	Within 15 days after submission
Communication to selected participants	Within 30 days after submission
Standstill period, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting	30 days
Indicative start of project implementation	Flexible start

The standstill period is a set time after funding selection for appeals, final administrative checks, and compliance in the award process. The project cannot start before this period. The standstill period of 30 days applies to this call.

### 6.2 Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via Salesforce (see link on call website), no later than the call deadline.

The application form must be completed and submitted by the application deadline of **30 November 2025 – 23.59 CET**. It must be submitted via the Salesforce application portal, which requires previous registration before submission. **Please allow sufficient time prior to submitting your application to register for an EIT Food Salesforce account.**

## 7. 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 a minimum of 2 external evaluators as well as one internal evaluator, based on the criteria below.

All 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](#), 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.

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

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
<b>Commercial Viability (50%)</b>	- Written confirmation of PoC co-financing instrument terms and conditions by corporate client	1 or 5
<b>Excellence (25%)</b>	- Traction & milestone achievements - Problem-Solution-Fit - Collaboration experience of corporate client	1 - 5
<b>Impact (25%)</b>	- Alignment with EIT Food missions - Technology Novelty - Ability of the PoC co-financing instrument in accelerating the applicant's commercial success	1 - 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 weighted score of 3.5.**

Score		Description
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.

**Proposals will be selected if they meet the quality threshold (i.e. weighted score of 3.5) until the funding is exhausted.**

### 7.1 Appeal on Evaluation Results

All Applicants will be alerted in writing to the outcome of their proposal.

They 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](#).



## 8. Monitoring

The PoC co-financing instrument will be monitored regularly and may be audited.

All Activities selected for funding undergo continuous monitoring by EIT Food to ensure effective progress and implementation at each stage in accordance with the Project Agreement. The monitoring will cover several aspects relating to the Activity implementation including but not limited to achievement of deliverables and KPIs; risk management; financial management; quality assurance; progress against KPI achievement and impact delivery; communication and dissemination (in compliance with MGA Article 17); and progress towards commercialisation and exploitation of results.

EIT Food will request the reporting of actual costs incurred with the subgrant, as well as regular reporting of KPIs and deliverables, together with the supporting documentation, and monitoring reports.

In the case of under-performance, significant delay of implementation, misconduct, or any other reason jeopardizing the timely implementation of the Activity identified during the monitoring process, EIT Food reserves the right to discontinue or restructure the funding of the Activity at any point during the Activity duration. Furthermore, EIT Food will monitor all Activities up to 5 years after Activity completion to ensure the achievement of KPIs anticipated after Activity end.

## 9. Administrative Items

Entities that have never been part of projects funded by the EIT 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, where they might be required to provide additional documentation and to sign a Declaration of Honor (DoH).

As part of the onboarding process, selected entities must:

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

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, you will be contacted by Business Support Team.

## 10. Support

For technical assistance please contact [support@eitfood.eu](mailto:support@eitfood.eu). For any other questions about this call that has not been addressed in this guidelines or annexes, please contact Christoph Mandl [christoph.mandl@eitfood.eu](mailto:christoph.mandl@eitfood.eu).

Please visit [our website](#) 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 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.