

EIT Food Accelerator Network (FAN) – Terms & Conditions

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EIT Food – Making Food Innovation Happen

Knowledge & Innovation Center on Food,
part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

<http://www.eitfood.eu>



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1. EIT Food Business Creation

1.1 Objectives of EIT Food

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.

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

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.

1.2 EIT Food Accelerator Network

The EIT FAN is a multi-hub accelerator programme delivered across Europe, to support high impact agrifood startups to maximise their success. Once startups have applied for the EIT FAN, they will go through a rigorous selection process where they will be judged 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
- Haifa, Israel
- Bilbao, Spain
- Lausanne, Switzerland
- Cambridge, UK
- Helsinki, Finland

Over a 4-month acceleration period, selected startups will have access to a great variety of tools, resources, mentors and expertise to accelerate the growth of their business. At the end of the accelerator programme, there will be a final round of judging and the three best startups from all hubs will be awarded attractive financial prizes. The aim of the EIT FAN is to provide support to agrifood startups:

- 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 future funding steps (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

2. Timeline & Admissibility

The present call is open until April 14th. 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
2. First evaluation round by a carefully selected panel of experts
3. Acceptance/rejection notification and written feedback on the application provided
4. Shortlisted startups are invited to a second round of evaluation (i.e. online pitches)
5. Acceptance/rejection notification and written feedback on the application provided
6. Acceptance letter and agreement signed
7. Start of the local accelerator programme

Applications must be submitted by the contact person of the company via an online platform. Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing. For more information, please contact the accelerator manager at the end of this document.

3. Eligibility

All EIT Food activities are governed by the rules set out in the Framework Partnership Agreement (see Model FPA) as well as the Model Specific Grant Agreement with the EIT, under the Horizon Europe Annotated Grant Model.

3.1 Eligibility 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 thus committed to building a healthier, more trusted and sustainable food system
- At (pre)seed stage successfully completed customer validation and potentially can already demonstrate traction indicator (e.g. LoIs, sales, letters of support)
- Registered company successfully completed technology readiness level 4 (“technology validated in lab”) and customer readiness level 4 (“confirmed problem/needs from several customers and/or end users”)
- Active in the EU and its member states or EU associated countries (i.e. Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Israel,

Moldova, Switzerland, Faroe Islands, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Tunisia, Georgia Armenia),

- Committed to the programme (we expect active, consistent engagement in the programme - this requires regular presence from at least one team for up to 30 days for the duration of the accelerator programme) EIT Food offers several programs targeting entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs at various stages of maturity:

PhD students working on a business idea may consider to apply for the “Global Food Venture Programme”:

Link: <https://www.eitfoodacademy.eu/phd-s/>

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>

3.2 Exclusion Criteria

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

Participants that have already received from EIT Food a maximum funding of 60,000 EUR in this particular calendar year cannot participate in the EIT FAN.

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.

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. Moreover, they agree to participate in the EIT FAN impact survey and to provide additional information (esp. financial data and information on investment capital raised) 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.

5. Selection Procedure, Financial Support and Criteria

The application procedure is the following:

1. Online application:

Applicants must submit by April 14th 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 composition and expertise.

2. Online Evaluation:

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.

	Criteria	Remarks	Maximum
1	Problem-Solution - Fit	What is the problem the startup is trying to solve?	7
2	Innovative Potential	How innovative is the solution, product, service, or business model to the agrifood space?	7
3	Business Model & Traction	Key drivers of business economics and clarity of business model, pricing, margins etc.	7
4	Quality of the Team	The capability of the utmost importance since it all comes down to execution (e.g., relevant expertise and track records of the team members).	7
5	Fit with EIT Food strategic objectives and future plans	Since the source of the funding is public, we are interested to hear how the startup contributes to the strategic objectives of EIT Food (section 1) and is willing to contribute back to EIT Food and its community.	7
6	Overall recommendation to join programme	Overall impression of business and team	7
	Total		42

3. Technology Deep Dives, Hub Interviews and selection:

The second evaluation round is split in two components: an online pitching session (“Technology Deep Dives”) and Hub Interviews with local accelerator representatives. A carefully selected panel of entrepreneurs and experts in the agrifood space will evaluate each startup based on the criteria mentioned below during the EIT FAN Technology Deep Dives. Evaluators will especially take into account (potential) impact of the startup, the economic viability as well as technical and customer readiness levels. The evaluator panels during round one and two usually have a different composition.

	Criteria	Remarks	Maximum
1	Impact	Does the venture have the potential to make a substantial long-term impact on business, environment, and society?	7
2	Scalability	Will the technology be able to maintain or even increase its level of efficiency when tested by larger operational demands? Will the product/service be able to grow it’s environmental and/or social impact proportionally with business growth?	7
3	Newness	Is the venture addressing an industrial, societal, or environmental unmet need or creating a new market?	7
4	Viability	Will the technology be taken up in the market and generate profits?	7
5	Desirability	Does the technology address a clear problem or need within the agriculture and food sector? How much has the startup carried out stakeholder research?	7
6	Technology Readiness	Is the venture mature enough to enter into a partnership with EIT Food partners	7
7	Overall recommendation to join programme	Overall impression of business and team	7
	Total		49

To ensure there is an adequate fit between the support the EIT FAN provides in each hub and a start-up's need., each applicant is interviewed in parallel by an EIT FAN hub representative based on the criteria below.

	Criteria	Remarks	Maximum
1	Motivation	Motivation and founder commitment to join the EIT FAN programme	7
2	Fit with local programme	Needs of applicants and key milestones can be met through EIT FAN programme support,	7
	Total		14

The results of the Technology Deep Dives and the Hub interviews will result in a global ranking. Taking into account location preferences, corporate interest in a start-up 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.

6. Other Conditions

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. As regards to the EIT FAN, EIT Food provides access to sub-grants to cover expenses in product development and travel. A budget outline on how the startup plans to spend the money shall be submitted after the announcement of the cohort. A template for cost categories is 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.

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:

- a) display the EIT Food Accelerator Network logo with the EU emblem and
- b) include the following text:
“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; Twitter: @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).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

6.7 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.

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.

6.9 Withdrawal of the (non-)financial support – Recovery of the undue amounts

EIT Food may withdraw the prizes 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.

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).

6.11 Cancellation of the programme

EIT Food may cancel the programme or decide not to award any of the aforementioned prizes—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

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 Bruxelles, 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.

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

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Other information sources

EIT Food web page: www.eitfood.eu

EIT FAN web page: www.eitfan.eu

Partners of EIT FAN: www.eitfan.eu/partners