

Call Guidelines

Business Plan 2023 – 2025

Call for proposals Empowering SMEs

EIT MANUFACTURING



Version history

Date	Comments
03 November 2023	The total maximum EIT funding allocated to this call has been increased to 1.000.000 EUR (section 2.5) .

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Disclaimer: this document provides the applicants with detailed information on the EIT Manufacturing Call for proposal Empowering SMEs for the EIT Manufacturing Business Plan 2023-2025. The information given is subject to revision, according to new potential rules or requirements provided by EIT and/or by the EC.

Abbreviations

BP	Business Plan
CLC	Co-Location Centre
EC	European Commission
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
EU	European Union
FSM	Financial Sustainability Mechanism
IER	Individual Evaluation Report
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MGA	Model Grant Agreement
MT	Management Team
PMO	Programme Management Office
RIS	Regional Innovation Scheme
SO	Strategic Objectives

Keywords

Activity	Everything that EIT Manufacturing does is organized into Activities. Each Activity belongs to one Segment, and each Segment to one Area. Each Activity should contribute to the integration of the knowledge triangle of innovation, education, and business creation.
Area	EIT defines several areas in which it operates: Education; Innovation and Research; Entrepreneurship; Communication, Dissemination, and Outreach; Regional Innovation Scheme; and Management and Coordination.
Business Plan	The document specifies the detailed plan of EIT Manufacturing for the upcoming years. Based on the draft Business Plan submitted in September (and some other criteria) EIT decides on the budget available to EIT Manufacturing in the following years. The Business Plan will then be adjusted to match the assigned budget and forms the basis for the internal activity agreements of EIT Manufacturing with its partners.
Call for Proposals	The call is the instrument used to allocate grant funding by EIT Manufacturing to consortia of organizations, individuals, or third parties to support the deployment and development of the Strategic Agenda through activities. EIT Manufacturing uses two types of calls: (1) general call aligned with the corresponding Business Plan (BP).

	This type of call involves the different Thematic Areas of EIT Manufacturing (before the year of BP implementation), and (2) ad-hoc call, normally involving only one Thematic Area, which aims to complete or balance the portfolio outlined in the respective BP, through the allocation of the non-committed budget of the BP or the allocation of additional funding not initially included in the respective BP (during the year of the BP implementation).
Call Guidelines	Document where any call for proposals' terms, conditions, and criteria are defined and stated according to the principles of transparency, equal treatment, open competition, and sound procedural management.
Call Report	Document summarising the results of the call and its most important outputs.
Co-Location Centre	Co-Location Centre/affiliate of EIT Manufacturing
Deliverable	Deliverables are documents encapsulating the outputs (e.g., building blocks of the proposal information or data mapping, a design report, a technical diagram, an infrastructure or component list, or a software release upon which the product/solution or service depends) that must be produced during the activity lifecycle.
EIT Manufacturing partner	A member of the EIT Manufacturing Association (Core or Associate Partner under the Article of Association conditions)
Evaluation Process	The process by which EIT Manufacturing examines the quality of a proposal to decide if it should receive EIT funding.
Evaluation Panel	Group of normally 3 evaluators + 1 rapporteur with specific expertise in a specific area/segment of the call, aiming to evaluate a set of eligible proposals submitted to a call.
Evaluation Report	A written report, covering all proposals and the process behind the individual evaluation results from the consensus meetings (an evaluation panel comprising evaluators and a rapporteur) that is forwarded to the EIT Manufacturing Management Team.
Evaluation results list	List of proposals in order of scoring, based on the evaluation process results.
Evaluation Summary Report	Following the completion of the evaluation process, a final Evaluation Summary Report is made for each proposal, summarising the proposal's strengths, weaknesses, risks, and commercial and social value. It is an expert deliverable drafted by the rapporteur and presents the consensus on a specific proposal.
Individual Evaluation Report	Applications to the calls are assessed individually by external expert evaluators according to the terms and criteria stated in the call for proposals text. Each evaluator issues individual reports for each eligible application.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)	<p>Set of indicators used to measure how effectively a consortium is meeting the objectives.</p> <p>There are 2 sets of KPIs: the EIT Core KPIs defined by the EIT that reflect the EIT operational objectives for education, entrepreneurship, and innovation, and the KIC specific KPIs defined by EIT Manufacturing that reflect the societal challenge that the KIC is addressing.</p> <p>KPIs need to be reported.</p>
KIC	<p>“Knowledge and Innovation Community” – EIT Manufacturing is one of the 9 KICs that operate under the regulations of EIT.</p>
Milestone	<p>Control points to chart progress. They may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable that allows the next phase of work to begin.</p>
Model Grant Agreement	<p>Model Grant Agreement is used in the Horizon Europe programme financed by the European Commission.</p>
Panel review	<p>All the written external evaluations are discussed in a consensus meeting where the points of scoring, convergence, and divergence are discussed and debated. The evaluation panel reviews all the individual evaluations made on submitted proposals and reaches a consensus about their scoring and ranking. The results of the panel review are set out in the minutes and the call report.</p>
Pillar	<p>Used as a synonym for Area</p>
Rapporteur	<p>Member of the evaluation panel who facilitates the discussion during the consensus meeting by synthesizing the individual evaluations of the panel experts and writing the minutes and the evaluation summary report including the evaluation results for each proposal as per the conclusions of the panel.</p>
Services Agreement	<p>Previously “Financial Sustainability¹ Agreement”. The Agreement which is signed with the aim of contributing to the Financial Sustainability of the KIC EIT Manufacturing and its community.</p>

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/819 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (recast), Article 2 Definitions p. 16: ‘financial sustainability’ means a capacity of a KIC to finance its knowledge triangle activities independently of contributions from the EIT.

Call summary

Call for Proposals Main Features	
Dates	<p><i>Call publication:</i> 3rd October 2023</p> <p><i>Call opening:</i> 11th October 2023 at 10:00 CEST</p> <p><i>Call closing:</i> 11th December 2023 at 17:00 CEST</p> <p><i>Eligibility and admissibility check:</i> January 2023</p> <p><i>Evaluation of proposals:</i> February 2024</p> <p><i>Communication of results:</i> March 2024</p> <p><i>Selected activity proposals start date:</i> April-June 2024</p>
Introduction	Selected proposals are expected to innovate their existing solution in order to be adopted in different industrial contexts, applications or sectors that they have not yet reached.
Total EIT funding allocated to this call	1.000.000 EUR
Duration of the project	12 months
Link to the submission portal	https://eitmanufacturing.submittable.com/submit/275880/empowering-smes-call-2023
List of documents to be submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form available on the Submittable platform • Financial plan and revenue forecast annex to be attached to the application form • Letter of Commitment from end-user
List of documents to take into consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Q&A • Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement • EIT Manufacturing Strategic Agenda • Appeal and redress procedure • Eligibility of expenditures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI Definition • Declaration on honour • Financial Support Agreement • Activities Monitoring Process Guidelines
<p>Evaluation criteria</p>	<p><i>Evaluation criteria assessed by the independent experts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence, novelty, and innovation, • Impact and financial sustainability, • Quality and efficiency of the implementation, including sound financial management • Strategic fit

1. General conditions

EIT Manufacturing is strengthening the competitiveness of the European manufacturing industry through innovation and collaboration. As a knowledge and innovation community (KIC) established by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), we strive to drive sustainable growth, technological advancements, and job creation in the manufacturing sector.

Technological progress is now exponential, and it is changing the industrial, social and competitive landscape faster than ever before.

At EIT Manufacturing, we firmly believe that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in driving innovation and economic development. They are the backbone of Europe's manufacturing landscape, contributing significantly to job creation, regional prosperity, and overall economic resilience. Recognizing their importance and potential, EIT Manufacturing decided to launch a Call for Proposals aimed at providing financial support to SMEs willing to adapt and expand proven solutions beyond their current applications. This call embodies our commitment to fostering innovation and knowledge transfer across the manufacturing value chain.

By focusing on proven solutions, we aim to leverage existing successes and facilitate their widespread adoption in new contexts. We believe that SMEs have the agility and entrepreneurial spirit necessary to embrace these solutions and adapt them to address diverse challenges and market opportunities.

SMEs are often characterized by their ability to swiftly respond to market needs, experiment with new ideas, and collaborate closely with customers. These characteristics make them highly adaptable and flexible, positioning themselves as key drivers of innovation. However, SMEs often face resource constraints that can hinder their capacity to explore and implement new solutions effectively.

Together, we can empower SMEs to scale up their business, solve industrial needs and create a vibrant and competitive European manufacturing sector that leads the way in innovation and sustainability.

2. Call specific conditions

2.1 Call topic

Purpose

As part of EIT Manufacturing's strategy of ensuring adoption of innovations, improving market reach and promoting impact, the *Empowering SMEs* call aims to attract, select, and support SMEs willing to innovate their existing solutions to adapt and expand the market beyond their current applications.

The activity will provide financial support to the selected SME (in case of single applicant) or to the SME and the end-user (in case of small consortia).

Topic Description

Selected proposals are expected to bring existing solutions (already launched in the market with a proven market traction) to new industrial contexts, applications, or sectors that they have not yet reached.

The existing solution must be already available in the market and applicants are expected to provide references from existing clients and quantify the revenue already generated.

The solution shall fit at least one of the following topics:

- Optimising production processes and increasing resources efficiency through digital solutions
- Socially sustainable and human-centric manufacturing
- Environmentally sustainable manufacturing through circular business models and new technologies

Based on the specific context and needs of the new target market, SMEs will have to innovate their solutions, testing new ideas and approaches with some degrees of experimentation.

The new solution, adapted for the new market(s), is expected to achieve TRL 8² or higher by the end of the activity. The "demonstration in relevant environment" must be proven and the new solution will need to be introduced on the market by 18

² https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

months after the project started with sales revenue of at least 10.000 EUR documented.

Applicant should balance between building on proven successes and fostering new ideas to achieve impactful and commercially viable results.

A Letter of Commitment from the end-user, stating the commitment to support the SME in identifying the requirements and test the developed solution is mandatory. A commitment from the end-user to buy the solution before the end of the project is not mandatory but will be considered a strong plus.

Applicants are requested to provide a workplan to describe the implementation of the activity. The following 3 milestones shall be included:

- By month 4: first test performed at end-user facility
- By month 8: solution development concluded
- By month 11: solution implemented at end-user facility

Applicants shall organize by the end of the activity a “training day” where they will explain in detail to the end-user’s employees the solution, including a hands-on session. The end-user should be able to use the solution after the above-mentioned training.

Expected outcomes & impacts

Proposals should demonstrate that the new solution will contribute to one or more of the following expected outcomes:

- Enhance overall factory efficiency
- Shift to flexible manufacturing and rapid response to changes and need for adjustment
- Improve decision-making, prediction and anticipation of needs in energy and resource use
- Develop effective human-machine interaction
- Increase workplace safety and performance.
- Facilitate the recycling, reuse and transformation of resources
- Enable and scale a circular business model

Proposals should set out a credible pathway to contribute to one or more of the following expected impacts:

- Increase competitiveness of manufacturing companies in the global economy
- Create new value streams thanks to circular economy
- Reduce waste of resources and environmental burden through optimised production processes
- Create safer, more accessible and inclusive work environment that increase employees' well-being.
- Make manufacturing seen by a large part of society as an attractive, clean, safe, and high-status job.
- Decarbonise manufacturing industries, in compliance with the Green Deal strategy.

Examples

Some examples of activities that can be addressed include:

- Robotics-assisted assembly technology used in automotive manufacturing line, innovated and adopted by food and beverage industry.
- IoT-enabled inventory management system for clothing manufacturers, innovated and extended to their entire value chain.
- Production-as-a-service management software designed for metal industry, innovated and applied to wood sector.

2.2 Duration

This call is open to proposals with duration of 12 months.

2.3 Applicants profile

Entities eligible to participate

Applicants must be established in one of the following countries at the time of proposal submission:

- the Member States of the European Union, including their outermost regions:
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.
- the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the Member States.

- the countries associated with Horizon Europe and the low- and middle-income countries³;

Consortium composition

Each proposal can be submitted by:

- A single applicant (SME)
- Small consortium (SME + industrial end-user)

A Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) is a category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. It consists of enterprises that employ fewer than 250 persons and have either an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million. A full definition is provided in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC⁴. This category includes start-ups.

The industrial end-user could be an SMEs or Large Company. It is important that the solution is applied in real industrial environment. Test areas or simulated environment will not be considered as industrial applications.

2.4 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contribution

The applicants have to contribute to the following mandatory KPI:

KPI	Short title	Target
EITHE02.4	Number of innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within 6 months after completion with a sales revenue of at least 10 000 EUR documented	1

³ See the [Horizon Europe List of Participating Countries](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf) on the Portal for an up-to-date list of these countries
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

⁴ Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (2003/361/EC), OJ L 124, 20.5.2003, p. 36.

2.5 Budget and funding

The total maximum EIT funding allocated to this call is 1.000.000 EUR. EIT Manufacturing is expecting to fund a maximum of 10 activities.

Final EIT funding allocated might vary based on the number of proposals evaluated and selected and other factors. The exact number of activities to be funded will depend on the quality of the proposals received and total funding available.

The maximum EIT funding per proposal is:

- Single applicant (SME): 60.000 EUR
- Small consortium:
 - SME: 60.000 EUR
 - End-user: 40.000 EUR

The financial contribution will be awarded as a lump sum. Applications submitted to this call are expected to have a minimum 30% co-funding⁵ rate. The minimum co-funding rate refers to the total project budget.

The aim of the use of the lump sum funding is reducing administration and financial errors, as well as to simplify complex and time-consuming reporting, making the participation more accessible for SMEs.

The lump sum offered will cover the applicants' eligible (direct and indirect) costs for the activities.

All applicants must provide in the Financial Plan and Revenue Projection annex a detailed cost estimation, which must approximate the actual costs. The estimation provided must be:

- subject to the same eligibility rules as in actual costs grants, i.e. cost estimations can be included only if the same cost item/type of cost would be eligible in an actual cost grant
- detailed in terms of tasks: applicants must identify the budget assigned to each task and the expected ending date of the task
- must be in line with normal practices
- must be reasonable/not excessive
- must be in line with and necessary for the activities proposed

For information on the eligibility of costs of your project's budget, please refer to the document Eligibility of Expenditure published on the Call webpage.

⁵ By co-funding we mean applicant own resources or financial contribution other than EIT Manufacturing funding

The lump sum grant will be transferred to the successful applicants in two (2) instalments:

- 40% of the funding to be received will be paid at the beginning of the project upon acceptance by the EIT Manufacturing of the Kick-off package (see paragraph 2.7)
- 60% of funding to be received will be paid after the official closing of the project, upon acceptance by EIT Manufacturing of the Final Performance Report (see paragraph 2.7) and achievement of the mandatory KPI (see paragraph 2.5)

The non-completion of the mandatory deliverables and/or the non-achievement of the mandatory KPI might affect the payments and might imply the application of the performance rate methodology to the balance payment and eventual payments recovery.

In case of applicants subjected to EU administrative sanctions⁶ or in one of the exclusion situations listed in the “Declaration of Honour” (LINK) that ban them from receiving European funding, **EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to withdraw the funding at any step.**

2.6 Mandatory deliverables

Deliverable	Due date	Value assigned to deliverables regarding the total funding to be received
<p><u>DEL 1: Kick off package.</u></p> <p>This package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Financial Support Agreement • Signed Service Support Agreement 	M1	40 % of the funding

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1046-20221214>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of Honour • Kick-off meeting presentation. 		
<p><u>DEL 2: Interim Performance report.</u></p> <p>The document will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the report of preliminary test conducted with the end-user; • the technical development status • the commercialization plan 	M7	N.A.
<p><u>DEL 3: Final Performance report.</u></p> <p>The document will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the report of results achieved • the report from the end-user about the implementation of the solution 	M12	60 % of the funding (only if the mandatory KPI is achieved)

The templates for the deliverables are provided by EIT Manufacturing.

2.7 Financial sustainability

To ensure a continued support to applicants in their effort to commercialise the outputs of their funded activities, EIT Manufacturing is setting up a new Services Agreement framework. This framework will also allow EIT Manufacturing to gradually become financially independent from EIT funding and secure its ability to continue supporting European manufacturing organisations in the long term, with the goal to bring innovation to the European market, reinforce competitiveness, create jobs and develop the appropriate skills for students and professionals.

Description of services

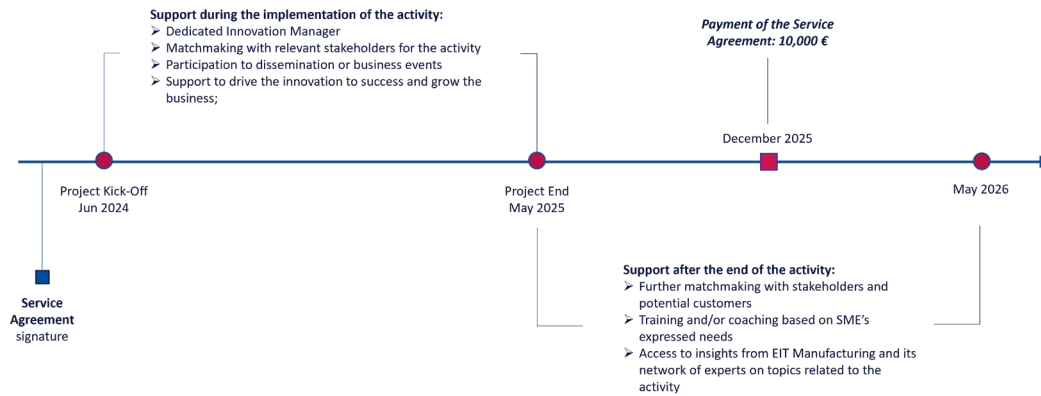
All selected activities should sign the Services Agreement before their start. The Services Agreement will run throughout the duration of the activity, and, for a minimum of 1 additional year. It will give access to the following services:

- **During the implementation of the activity:**
 - Dedicated support from an EITM Innovation Manager;
 - Matchmaking with any stakeholders that may be interested in the activity (Businesses, Research Centers etc);
 - Participation to dissemination or business events;
 - Support to drive the innovation to success and grow the business ;
- **After the end of the activity:**
 - Further matchmaking with any stakeholders that may be interested in the activity to further expand it and fully monetize it at pan-European level;
 - Training and/or coaching based on SME's expressed needs and EIT Manufacturing's catalogue of training courses;
 - Access to insights from EIT Manufacturing and its network of experts on topics related to the activity.

Payment conditions

A payment of 10,000 EUR, 6 months after the end of the activity.

The following figures summarizes the framework:



3. Reporting and monitoring

Reporting periods and technical reporting follow to the rules and procedures established in the EIT Manufacturing Monitoring guide with the focus on successful completion and approval of the mandatory deliverables.

If a mandatory deliverable is declared incomplete or needs to be improved, it will be rejected by the EIT Manufacturing, and the lump sum amount concerned will be not paid at that point in time. The entity will have to complete/improve the mandatory deliverable later and resubmit it for its approval and subsequent payment.

If the rejection of the mandatory deliverable is confirmed, the total project budget (or the percentage) linked to it is not paid/recovered.

4. Proposal preparation and submission

All applications and supporting documents and material must be submitted in English using the application forms linked on the competition website (link available on October 11th)— no paper submissions will be considered.

The official language of the call is English (i.e., all submission material must be submitted in English).

The following documentation must be submitted by the applicants through the submission tool **no later than the call deadline**:

- *Empowering SMEs* Application form (online)
- Financial plan and revenue forecast annex
- Letter of Commitment from end-user

NOTE: Only applications submitted through the online link (as noted above) before the deadline will be accepted and considered. The organizers reserve the right to extend the submission deadline; any extension of the deadline will be communicated to the public on the Call website.

Any documentation missing or considered incomplete may be a reason for application rejection.

Call Contact Email

All applicants may contact EIT Manufacturing to ask questions and clarify any points on general or technical procedures and call content by sending an email message to innovation@eitmanufacturing.eu.

5. Proposal evaluation and selection process

5.1 Eligibility and admissibility check

A submission will be considered admissible if:

Completeness	The submission is completed, submitted in time, and via the submission tool, in English, with all its mandatory sections and compulsory documents included.
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Admissible submissions will be considered eligible if:

Applicant profile

The applicant’s profile is in line with the requirements presented under paragraph 2.3 “Applicant profile”.

Applications containing one or more inadmissible or ineligible elements will receive an official communication from EIT Manufacturing setting out the outcome of the eligibility and admissibility check and explaining why the proposal failed to meet the criteria.

The applicant deemed ineligible who disputes the ineligibility decision may appeal. This appeal must be made within 5 working days from the official EIT Manufacturing notification of ineligibility (see paragraph 5.5 of this document and the document Appeal procedure linked to the call and available from the Call website).

5.2 Evaluation of proposals

The proposals which successfully pass the eligibility check are evaluated and scored against 4 criteria: Excellence, Impact, Implementation and Strategic Fit.

The evaluation process will be carried out by three independent external evaluators supported by one independent external rapporteur.

External evaluators will assess each evaluation sub-criteria will be assessed according to the following scores on a scale **from 1 to 5**

Score	Description
1	<i>Extremely poor or None</i> The information provided is considered irrelevant or inadequate compared to the specific call provisions
2	<i>Bad</i> The information provided lacks relevant quality and contains significant weaknesses, compared to the specific call provisions
3	<i>Average</i> The overall information provided is adequate, however, some aspects are unclearly or insufficiently detailed, compared to the specific call provisions
4	<i>Good</i> The information provided is adequate with sufficiently outlined details, compared to the specific call provisions

5	<i>Excellent</i>	The information provided is outstanding in its details, clarity, and coherence, compared to the specific call provisions
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The scores shall be given at the sub-criteria level are then summed together to come with a final score, as follow:

Excellence	Max. scoring
The proposal provides clear information of the existing solution, including the references from previous clients and indication of revenues already generated.	5
The difference between the existing and the new solution is clearly explained and the proposal describes the development necessary to scale the solution in different industrial contexts, applications or sectors that they have not reached yet by the applicant.	5

Impact	Max. scoring
The solution address at least 1 of the 3 call topics and the expected outcomes and impacts are aligned and relevant.	5
The proposal convincingly describes how new solution will have direct and indirect environmental and social impact, including also gender balance, demographic diversity (age, language) and inclusivity.	5
The solution is scalable and demonstrates a competitive advantage over existing offers in the market that can be leveraged by the SME.	5
The innovation impact potential is high, with a convincing and realistic revenue projection and commercialization plan.	5

Implementation	Max. scoring
The workplan and related budget are realistic, justified and reflect value for money.	5
The SME has the right competencies, skills, and expertise in accordance with the application scope.	5

Strategic Fit	Max. scoring
The proposal addresses the RIS aspects (impact generated in RIS countries by the result(s) exploitation).	5
The achievement of the EITHE02.4 KPI (Marketed Innovation) is feasible and supported by end-user interest in adopting and buying the solution.	5

The total scoring of 50 points is distributed as follows:

Excellence	Max. score: 10 Threshold: 6/10
Impact	Max. score: 20 Threshold: 12/20
Implementation	Max. score: 10 Threshold: 6/10
Strategic Fit	Max. score: 10 Threshold: 6/10
Total	50 points Threshold 30/50

The evaluators will assess each application by use of the evaluation tool included in the Submission Management Platform “Submittable” (each application is evaluated 3 times) The tool will automatically create an average score per application based on

the individual scorings of the evaluators. The independent external evaluators will meet in a consensus meeting chaired by a rapporteur to discuss and build an agreement. The rapporteur will address any notable divergences between them and will develop the final Summary Evaluation Reports (ESRs).

5.3 EIT Manufacturing strategic evaluation

EIT Manufacturing Innovation Director will carry out a strategic evaluation of the proposals.

Only proposals assessed from the independent evaluators (results of consensus meetings) as eligible for funding (above the threshold in all the 4 criteria and overall) will be passed to the EIT Manufacturing strategic evaluation.

A maximum of 5 additional points (top-up) will be assigned by assessing the following criteria:

Criteria	Scoring methodology
Portfolio fit	1 Extremely poor or None
	2 Bad
	3 Average
	4 Good
	5 Excellent

The final overall score assigned to a project proposal will be calculated as follows:

Final Overall Score = Consensus meeting final score + Selection Committee top-up

The final overall score cannot be lower than the consensus meeting final score and it can reach a maximum of 55 points.

The Innovation Director in charge will shortlist the proposals to be funded based on the Final Overall Score.

5.4 Communication of results

EIT Manufacturing will communicate the results to the email of the applicant representative registered at the submission platform (Note: Please, check your spam folder). Results will be communicated with a rejection letter or email to non-qualified applicants. Results will include the evaluations (Evaluation Summary Reports).

The applicants might receive 3 types of evaluation feedback:

1. The application is accepted for funding. The application has got a high evaluation score and is selected for funding based on available budget assumptions.

2. The application is rejected. The application has failed to reach the threshold of an individual evaluation criterion or the overall threshold and is therefore not considered for funding.
3. The application is retained in the reserve list: the proposal has passed all thresholds but due to budget constraints it cannot be funded. In case of finally unused budget, the application might become eligible for funding, e.g. in case a proposal accepted is unable to complete the project. The duration of the reserve list is up to end of June 2024⁷.

5.5 Procedure for complaints and appeal

The applicant (the representative of the legal entity) of a rejected application who disagrees with the decision may request an evaluation review. **Only procedural aspects of an evaluation may be the subject of a request for an evaluation review**, for example process errors or technical problems. The evaluation of the merits of an application shall not be the subject of an evaluation review. In this case, the applicant will have 5 working days after receipt of the final evaluation results to submit an appeal to the Evaluation (see document Appeal procedure)

5.6 Selected applicants and follow up

Selected applicants will have to diligently collaborate to complete the following document before the kick off of the project:

- Financial Support Agreement
- Declaration of Honour
- Service Support Agreement

⁷ The validity of reserve lists may be prolonged according to the needs of EIT Manufacturing. Being on a reserve list, however, does not guarantee access to funding. A decision on the extension of the validity of a reserve list will usually be taken a few weeks before the list expires and will be communicated via email. If no such decision is taken, the list expires as foreseen.

6. Other terms and Conditions

6.1 Communication, Dissemination, Visibility of funding

Applicants that are awarded funding (financial support to third parties) must promote the funding and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) strategically and effectively. Communication activities related to the funding (including media interviews, press statements, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), must acknowledge EU support and display the EIT Manufacturing logo (emblem) and text. The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands, or text. Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EIT Manufacturing support. When displayed in association with other logos (e.g. sponsors), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of these obligations, the applicants that have been awarded funding may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT Manufacturing. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means. Any communication or dissemination activity related to the funding must use factually accurate information.

The EIT Manufacturing may use, for their communication and publicising activities, information relating to the funding, as well as photos or audio-visual material that they receive from the applicants (including in electronic form), and photos and videos taken either in preparation for the dedicated EIT Manufacturing event or during the dedicated EIT Manufacturing event. The EIT Manufacturing will publish the name of both the shortlisted/s and the selected applicants, their origin, the amount of the funding, and their nature and purpose.

6.2 Intellectual Property Rights

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

Applicants agree to indemnify and hold harmless EIT Manufacturing and/or any assignee or affiliate from any third-party allegations or claims of intellectual property

rights infringement by the product or service of applicants. Applicants shall have the right to further develop, use and license their intellectual property rights for creating, making, marketing, and distributing products, services, and technology. Applicants agree to respect the IPR Rules (Article 16) of the Model Grant Agreement. Applicants also agree to respect the [EIT Manufacturing IP Policy](#)

6.3 Right to activate audits

EIT Manufacturing retains the right to activate an audit on Empowering SMEs applicants that have been awarded funding, in case of alerts and/or to confirm governance and proper usage of the financial support.

EIT Manufacturing keeps the right to request any data related to the Empowering SMEs applicants that have been awarded funding for 5 years after completion to ensure transparency and allow monitoring from EIT.

6.4 Withdrawal of the funding — Recovery of undue amounts

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

- false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- the awarded applicants were not eligible or should have been excluded or – the awarded applicants are in serious breach of their obligations under the Guidelines reported in this document.

6.5 Data protection

EIT Manufacturing ensures that any processing of personal data shall be performed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). As a data subject, you have the right of access, the right to rectification, the right to erasure, the right to restrict processing, the right to data portability, the right to object, and the right not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing. If you have a question about personal data processing or want to exercise your data subject

rights, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dpo@eitmanufacturing.eu. In the case of complaints, you can address them to the French regulator CNIL.

The collected personal data will be used solely for the procedure and assessment of the applications and the management, completion, organisation, dissemination of information, and publicity of the Call. The data controller is EIT Manufacturing and/or its subsidiaries.

Personal data shall be deleted 5 years after the announcement of the call awarded to applicants.

Applicants have the possibility to indicate that EIT Manufacturing may grant access to parts of their submission to trusted investors and partners.

The application submission and evaluation process will be done via Submittable (<http://www.submittable.com>), an online submission management tool by Submittable Holdings, Inc.

YOUR CONSENT TO THE USE OF SUBMITTABLE AS SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION TOOL: By submitting your application within this challenge you implicitly state your consent to the Terms and Conditions as well as the Privacy policy of Submittable, available under <http://www.submittable.com/terms> and <http://www.submittable.com/privacy>.

YOUR CONSENT TO THE USE OF PERSONAL DATA: By submitting your application within this call you consent that EIT Manufacturing will collect, transfer, process, store, and delete your data in accordance with the aforementioned conditions.

6.6 Acceptance of the Guidelines

By submitting the application form, the applicant agrees to these Guidelines and their Annexes, which form part of the submission. Applicants agree that they have no legal entitlement to funding.

EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to these Guidelines. Amendments and additions to these Guidelines shall be valid only if communicated in writing or otherwise made available to the applicants on the call page of the EIT Manufacturing website.

EIT Manufacturing also reserves the right to cancel or declare the Call unsuccessful provided all applicants are informed and sufficient justification is given (for example no applications received, or all applications do not pass the default thresholds).

6.7 Confidentiality

EIT Manufacturing undertakes to use any Confidential Information shared by the applicants solely for Empowering SMEs call. Confidential information shall mean data and/or information that is proprietary to, or possessed by, the applicants and not generally known to the public, or that has not yet been revealed whether in tangible or intangible form, whenever and however disclosed and might also be included in the application form. Confidential information must be expressly labelled as such in the application form.

Applicants agree that EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries can disseminate, publish, and make use of non-confidential information regarding the call, to promote the activities of EIT Manufacturing or establish reports or other necessary documents for EIT.

The applicants agree that data and information in the application form not labelled as confidential may be disclosed in connection with the activities of EIT Manufacturing. Considering the confidential nature of the data and information referred to above, EIT Manufacturing also undertakes to (i) not disclose them in any way and any form, without the prior written authorization of the company concerned; and (ii) not to use them for purposes other than those strictly necessary for participation in the Empowering SMEs call

Confidential Information may be shared among EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries (e.g. CLCs) solely for the Empowering SMEs call activity. EIT Manufacturing undertakes to impose this confidentiality obligation on its employees and the employees of its subsidiaries and its collaborators, as well as on Rapporteurs and independent experts and all subjects who, by virtue of participating in the call for proposal as members of the Selection Committees or Jury, will take knowledge of or may have access to such confidential data and information.

6.8 Exclusion Criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the call if they are in any of the situations of exclusion defined in [Article 136 of the EU Financial Regulation](#). Applicants shall sign a Declaration of Honour to confirm that they respect the above-mentioned criteria at the application stage. All selected applicants that have been awarded funding may be requested to provide relevant recent documentation substantiating the Declaration of Honour. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in the exclusion of the applicants concerned.

6.9 Applicable Law

The present guidelines are governed by the applicable European Union laws (i.e. the EIT Regulation, the EU Financial Regulation, and the Horizon Europe Regulation) and are complemented, where necessary, by the law of France. The applicants agree to observe the obligations outlined in the [\(Model\) Grant Agreement](#) signed between the EIT and EIT Manufacturing and particularly Articles 12 (conflict of interest), 13 (confidentiality and security), 14 (ethics), 17.2 (visibility), 18 (specific rules for carrying out action), 19 (information) and 20 (record-keeping). These obligations will also be mentioned in the contracts to be signed if the application is successful.