

Call Guidelines

Business Plan 2023 – 2025

EIT Manufacturing Call for Proposals

Inno2Market – Empowering SMEs 2024

EITM-I2M-2024-EmpoweringSMEs

EIT Manufacturing
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eitmanufacturing.eu

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History of changes

Version	Publication date	Changes
1.0	10/09/2024	Initial version
1.1	03/10/2024	Updated 3.2 Applicants' profile; 3.6 Duration and workplan; 4.1 Application process and proposal submission
1.2	29/10/2024	Updated 3.7 Available budget and co-funding
1.3	07/11/2024	Updated 5.2: removed the reference to paragraph 3.3 for eligibility. Updated call calendar with the postponement of 1 week for the call results.

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Abbreviations

BP	Business Plan
IC	Impact Centre (previously known as CLC)
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
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.
Activity Leader	The Activity Leader is the person nominated for each activity as the main contact point between the entities involved in the activity and EIT Manufacturing. This person is affiliated with the Lead Partner of the activity. The Activity Leader can nominate or revoke an unlimited number of contacts from the entities involved in the activity.
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.
Services Agreement	Previously “Financial Sustainability ¹ Agreement”. The Agreement which is signed with the aim of contributing to the Financial Sustainability of the KIC EIT Manufacturing and its community.
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

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.

	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, including the ranking list.
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 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.
Impact Centre	Impact Centre/region of EIT Manufacturing
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 Marketable Innovation	Key Marketable Innovation (KMI) is an innovative concept, product, or solution that has been identified and prioritized due to its high potential to be commercialized and generate revenue in the marketplace. KMIs typically offer unique features or benefits that differentiate them from existing solutions and address unmet needs or opportunities in the market. KMIs are innovations that have a high potential for commercialization, as they offer a valuable solution or improvement to a market need, and can generate significant economic value for the organization that develops and markets them.
Key performance indicators (KPIs)	Set of indicators used to measure how effectively a consortium is meeting the objectives. 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. KPIs need to be reported.
KIC	“Knowledge and Innovation Community” – EIT Manufacturing is one of the 9 KICs that operate under the regulations of EIT.
Milestone	Control points to chart progress. They may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable that allows the next phase of work to begin.
Model Grant Agreement	Model Grant Agreement is used in the Horizon Europe programme financed by the European Commission.
Panel review consensus meeting	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 consensus meeting are set out in the minutes and the call report.
Ranking list	Ranking of proposals selected for funding by the EIT Manufacturing Management Team.
Rapporteur	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.

1. Call summary

Disclaimer: The information given in this document is subject to revision, according to new potential rules or requirements provided by EIT and/or by the EC.

Call for Proposals Summary	
Dates ²	Call opening: 17 th September 2024 at 12:00 CEST Info day: 30 th September 2024 at 12.00 CEST Call closing: 18 th November 2024 at 17:00 CET Eligibility and admissibility check: by 21 st November 2024 Evaluation of proposals: from 25 th November 2024 Communication of results: 7 th February 2025 Stand-still period: 31 st January 2025 – 28 th February 2025 Start date of the projects: 1 st April 2025
Introduction	The Empowering SME 2024 call aims to ensure market adoption of innovations, accelerate go-to-market processes, and promote social and economic impact. It seeks to attract, select, and support SMEs willing to innovate their existing solutions to expand into new industrial contexts, applications, or sectors.
Duration of the projects	9 months
The total budget allocated to this call	EUR 2 000 000
Links to the submission tool	New Organization? Register here New person? ³ Register here Log in to the submission tool
List of documents to be submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application form to be completed on the submission tool• Letter of Commitment from end-user

² Please note that this calendar is indicative. Dates might be subject to slight changes.

³ It applies to new persons of registered organizations

List of documents to take into consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIT Manufacturing Strategic Agenda • Appeal and redress procedure • Eligibility of expenditures • Financial Support Agreement, including annexes • Services Agreement • Activities Monitoring Process Guidelines • Call Q&A • Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement
Evaluation criteria	<p><i>Evaluation criteria assessed by the independent experts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence • Impact • Quality and efficiency of the implementation • Strategic fit

2. General conditions

Proposals submitted under the Empowering SMEs Call for Proposals must support EIT Manufacturing mission and directly contribute to tackling its strategic objectives. Proposals need to demonstrate how the activity will actively contribute to EIT Manufacturing Strategic Agenda 2021-2027.

2.1 EIT Manufacturing mission and strategic objectives

Mission

EIT Manufacturing is a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC)⁴ of European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT). EIT Manufacturing will put Europe at the centre of a global revolution and boost manufacturing innovation by connecting people with skills, technologies with markets, and innovators with investors. Technological progress is now exponential, and it is changing the industrial, social and competitive landscape faster than ever before. EIT Manufacturing aims not only to adapt to this revolution but to lead it, by overcoming value network fragmentation and bringing stakeholders together. We need to make better use of our knowledge and our strengths to create value and deploy agile mechanisms to accelerate and steer innovation, shaping the future role of manufacturing in our society. With the needs, concerns and ideas of the economy and society at its core, the mission of EIT Manufacturing is to empower its partners and stakeholders to fundamentally transform the manufacturing system and meet the global demands of present and future generations.

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.

⁴ 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. 2: A large-scale Institutionalised European Partnership, as referred to in Regulation (EU) 2021/695, of higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders in the innovation process in the form of a strategic network, regardless of its legal form, based on joint mid- to long-term innovation planning to meet the EIT challenges and contribute to attaining the objectives established under Regulation (EU) 2021/695

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 Inno2Market 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.

Strategic objectives

EIT Manufacturing's Strategic Objectives (SOs), as set out in the Strategic Agenda 2021-2027, are ambitious and steer its activities to help responding to major challenges shared by the manufacturing industry and society:

- Put people at the centre of manufacturing
- Accelerate green manufacturing
- Foster sovereignty and competitiveness

3. Call specific conditions

3.1 Topic description

The overall aim is to attract SMEs, including startups, willing to scaling up their business, solving industrial needs and creating a vibrant and competitive European manufacturing sector that paves the way to sustainable innovation.

Proposals are expected to:

- 1) Bring existing solutions to new industrial contexts, applications, or sectors not already exploited but suitable to be a fertile playground. Applicants should balance between building on proven successes and fostering new ideas to achieve impactful and commercially viable results. The existing solution must be already commercialised with proven market traction in the reference sector. Applicants are expected to provide references from existing clients and quantify the revenues already generated.
- 2) Fit at least one of the following topics:
 - a. Optimising production processes and increasing resources efficiency through digital solutions
 - b. Socially sustainable and human-centric manufacturing
 - c. Environmentally sustainable manufacturing through circular business models and new technologies
- 3) The proposed solutions or activities contained in the application must take place in an EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories, OCTs) or in an Associated Country to Horizon Europe.

Based on the specific context and needs of the new target market, SMEs will have to innovate their solutions and test new ideas and approaches with some degrees of experimentation. The solution must be applied in a real industrial environment. Test areas or simulated environments will not be considered industrial applications. The new solution, adapted for the new market(s), is **expected to achieve TRL 8⁵ or higher** by the end of the activity (“system complete and qualified”).

⁵https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

Proposed solutions that harm the environment or social welfare or discriminate on basis of gender, age, socio-economic and geographic situation, disability, ethnicity, and sexual or gender identity, or are not in line with the Do No Significant Harm Principle are not eligible.

Examples of activities can 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.*

3.2 Applicants' profile

This Call is open to:

- Any SME and startup established in one of the Member States (including overseas countries and territories, (OCTs)) or [Associated Countries to Horizon Europe and the low- and middle-income countries](#)⁶ which presents a solution fitting one of the topics presented under 3.1.
- Applicants with a registered PIC Number⁷.
- Applicants may choose one of the following configurations:

⁶ EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)⁹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/05). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity. Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map.

Measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary — Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16 December 2022, no legal commitments can be entered into with Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for prizes. However, as long as the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to be awarded the prize.

⁷<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>. If you have already participated in projects funded by the EU before and have your PIC number validated, you can proceed with the registration of your organisation on the submission tool. If this is your first time participating in an EU-funded project or your organisation cannot access your already validated PIC and there are updates to the organisational data that need to be done, you need to register/re-register your organisation. Primary registration of your PIC number takes about 10 minutes, and your PIC number is generated within another 10 minutes and will be sent to the email address that you have indicated during the registration. All new PIC numbers get assigned a status of "Declared", which means your organisation has not been fully validated, but the new PIC number can already be used during your proposal submission

- Sole applicant (SME⁸, including startups);
- Small consortium (SME + 1 Industrial end-user). The industrial end-user could be either a SME or a Large Company. In case of a small consortium, legal entities must be independent from each other.

Regardless the applicants' configuration (Sole applicant or small consortium), **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 by the project end is not mandatory but will be considered a strong plus in the evaluation.

All applicants must register in the [Participant Register](#) to obtain a PIC number and in the application system⁹— before the call deadline (check Chapter 4 for consequences of not compliance).

Please note that: EIT Manufacturing partners are eligible to apply for funding nevertheless applicants do not need to be EIT Manufacturing partners to apply.

3.3 Integration of RIS aspects

EIT Manufacturing fosters the participation of organizations from countries with “moderate” or “emerging” innovation scores, as defined by the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#), in its activities. Applicants from countries under the [Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\)](#) are strongly encouraged to apply. Additionally, applicants not from RIS countries are encouraged to design projects that will have a significant impact in RIS regions.

3.4 Expected outcomes and commercialisation purpose

Project results are expected to contribute to the following expected outcomes:

- Increase competitiveness of manufacturing companies in the global economy.
- Create new value streams through circular economy practices.
- Reduce waste and environmental burden with optimized production processes.

⁸ A full definition is provided in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

⁹ You shall make sure that the information that you are providing on the submission tool is consistent with the legal information connected to your PIC (legal name, VAT, registration number, legal address, LEAR – legally appointed representative responsible for updating the organisation's information on the EU participant portal).

- Develop a safer, more accessible, and inclusive work environment that boosts employees' well-being.
- Enhance the attractiveness, cleanliness, safety, and status of manufacturing jobs.
- Decarbonize manufacturing industries in line with the Green Deal strategy.
- Enhance overall factory efficiency and shift to flexible manufacturing with rapid response capabilities.
- Improve decision-making, prediction, and anticipation of energy and resource needs.
- Develop effective human-machine interaction and increase workplace safety and performance
 - Facilitate the recycling, reuse, and transformation of resources to enable and scale a circular business model.

In any case, the new solution resulted as project outcome must be commercialised within 6 months after the project completion, with documented sales revenue of at least EUR 10 000 (see paragraph on Key Performance Indicators).

3.5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Proposals submitted to this Call must comply with the following mandatory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) definition and the required minimum target value.

Proposals selected for funding will be required to provide the supporting evidence described below

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 EUR 10 000 documented	1

The abovementioned KPI will be considered achieved when sales revenue of minimum EUR 10 000 will be properly documented.

3.6 Duration and workplan

Applicants are requested to provide a workplan to describe the implementation of the activity. **Proposals must cover a maximum activity duration of 9 months.**

The following 3 milestones shall be included:

- By month 3: first test performed at end-user facilities
- By month 6: solution development concluded
- By month 8: solution implemented at end-user facilities

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.

3.7 Available budget and co-funding

The total maximum EIT funding allocated to this call is EUR 2 000 000. The funding is in the form of a lump sum with a fixed amount as indicated below:

- Sole applicant (SME, including startups): EUR 60 000
- Small consortium:
 - SME: EUR 60 000
 - End-user: EUR 40 000

Applications submitted to this call are expected to have a minimum 30% co-funding¹⁰ rate. The minimum co-funding rate refers to the total project budget.

The lump sum offered will cover the applicants' eligible (direct and indirect) costs for the activities. The costs incurred in the implementation of the project will be paid out upon successful receipt of the mandatory deliverables as explained in the dedicated paragraph.

All applicants must provide 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.

¹⁰ By co-funding we mean applicant own resources or financial contribution other than EIT Manufacturing funding. Any form of double funding of costs from EU budget is forbidden.

For information on the eligibility of costs of your project budget, please refer to the document Eligibility of Expenditure published on the Empowering SMEs Call for Proposals webpage.

3.8 Payments arrangements

The lump sum grant will be transferred in two (2) instalments:

- 40% of the funding will be paid at the beginning of the project upon acceptance by the EIT Manufacturing of Deliverable 1 - Kick-off package (see paragraph 3.6);
- 60% of funding will be paid after the official closing of the project, upon acceptance by EIT Manufacturing of Deliverable 3 - Final Performance Report and achievement of the mandatory KPI (see paragraph 3.6).

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 potential payments recovery.

In case of applicants subjected to EU administrative sanctions¹¹ or in one of the exclusion situations listed in the “Declaration of Honour” (annexed to this call) that ban them from receiving European funding, **EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to withdraw the funding at any step.**

Prior to the payment, the cumulative funding received by an individual entity in the Business Plan 2023- 2025 for all the EIT Manufacturing projects they participate in will be checked. Whenever an entity reaches a cumulative EIT funding of 430,000 EUR, a Certified Financial Statement (CFS) audit will be requested prior to the payment.¹² The CFS audit will be performed by an external auditor. EIT Manufacturing will provide the reference of the appointed auditor.

The CFS review is independent from the Activity monitoring described in paragraph 3.10. The scope of the CFS audit is to check the eligibility of the costs reported so far by a specific entity for all projects where they participate, altogether. The first CFS audit will check costs reported up to a specific date “D”. A second CFS audit (meaning an entity reaches again a cumulative EIT funding of 430,000 EUR) would check the costs reported from date “D+1 day” to date “D2”, and so on. The result of each CFS audit can be either:

1. No findings are detected. All costs are paid according.

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02018R1046-20221214>

¹² According to Art 24.2 of the Horizon Europe MGA

2. The auditor report lists findings: EIT Manufacturing Finance department will decide if the findings correspond to ineligible costs. The decision will be based on conditions for cost eligibility set out in the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement and transposed in the document “Eligibility of Expenditure”, which is part of EIT Manufacturing Call for Proposals documentation. In the case that EIT Manufacturing determines that the CFS findings are ineligible costs, these costs are excluded from the amount to be paid to the partner.

3.9 Mandatory deliverables

The minimum number of deliverables expected from an activity are shown in the table below. This provides the minimum requirements for compliance.

Deliverable	Due date	Value assigned to deliverables regarding the total funding to be received
<u>DEL 1: Kick off package</u> This package includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signed Financial Support Agreement• Signed Service Support Agreement• Declaration of Honour• Kick-off meeting presentation.	M1	40 % of the funding
<u>DEL 2: Interim Performance report</u> The document will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the report of preliminary test conducted with the end-user;• the technical development status• the commercialization plan	M6	N.A.
<u>DEL 3: Final Performance report</u> The document will include:	M9	60 % of the funding, only if the mandatory KPI is achieved

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the report of results achieved • the report from the end-user about the implementation of the solution • KPI justification and evidence 		
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3.10 Financial Sustainability and Service Agreement

To ensure an effective support to Business Owners in their effort to commercialise the outputs of their funded activities, EIT Manufacturing set up a Service 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.

All selected activities should sign the Services Agreement before their start. It will give access to the following services:

- **During the implementation of the activity:**
 - Matchmaking stakeholders interested in the activity/solution (Businesses, Research Centers etc);
 - Participation to dissemination or business events;
- **After the end of the activity:**
 - Matchmaking stakeholders interested in the activity/solution to further expand it and fully monetize it at pan-European level;
 - Access to insights from EIT Manufacturing and its network of experts on topics related to the activity.

Payment conditions

- An initial payment of EUR 10 000 triggered at the end of the activity, corresponding to the provision of services during the activity;
- Subsequent payments, according to a revenue-sharing mechanism for a duration of 3 years (2026, 2027 and 2028). The payments will be due in Q1 of each year and are related to the total sales revenue of the previous year coming from selling the solution developed within the project (Key Marketed Innovation). This

mechanism will be triggered by the first sales of the Key Marketed Innovation realized beyond the EUR 10,000 needed to reach EITHE02.4 KPI.

The percentage of revenue sharing can be decided by the Business owner, with a minimum of 5%. The most attractive proposals should be able to offer a financial return to the KIC at the level of the grant provided in case of successful commercialisation.

Preferred mechanism for startups

The following mechanism is available for business-to-business companies that have a unique, technology-based solution with high scalability potential and strong IP protection. In such a case, the Business Owner is expected to choose an equity shares agreement instead of the above mechanism (Revenue-sharing) by ticking the associated box in the application form. They can contribute to the financial sustainability requirement by offering equity instead of cash. If the proposal is selected, the Business Owner would go through a simplified internal investment evaluation process. In case of successful evaluation, the Business Owner would enter a negotiation with EIT Manufacturing regarding the equity shares agreement.

Only startups that are successful in this process will be allowed to use this alternative mechanism. All Business Owners, including startups, must initially accept the general mechanism (Revenue-sharing).

3.11 Activity monitoring

Reporting periods and technical reporting may follow general rules and procedures established in the [*EIT Manufacturing's Activities Monitoring guide*](#) (Go to Simplified monitoring) with a focus on the successful completion and approval of the mandatory deliverables. However, EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to provide simplified templates for the reporting.

If a mandatory deliverable is declared incomplete or needs to be improved, it will be rejected by EIT Manufacturing, and the lump sum amount concerned will not be paid at that point in time. The startup 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 will not be paid or recovered.

Furthermore, EIT Manufacturing will monitor all activities up to 5 years after activity completion to track long-term impact and to ensure the achievement of expected results and outcomes after the activity ends.

All projects selected for funding undergo continuous monitoring by EIT Manufacturing to ensure effective progress and implementation.

The successful execution and completion of the activities financed under the framework of the present call may unlock the possibility of receiving additional funding. Only projects assessed as “green” according to the “Activities Monitoring Process Guidelines” may be eligible for fast-track opportunity via a subsequent dedicated call or direct award.

3.12 Ethics and values¹³

Activities must comply with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles. Moreover, they must respect basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities). The activities must comply with:

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

Applications that did not respect the above ethical principles and standards cannot be awarded a grant.

3.13 Gender equality and inclusiveness

EIT Manufacturing aims to support organisations that value diversity and gender equality. To this end, projects applying to this call should:

- Demonstrate how gender and diversity are considered in the design/development of the project outputs.
- Describe the measures in place to promote a mixed team with women and underrepresented groups taking an active role in project implementation, with a special focus on managerial levels

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/how-to-complete-your-ethics-self-assessment_en.pdf

4. Proposal preparation and submission

4.1 Application process and proposal submission

All applications and supporting documents and material must be submitted in English through the [submission tool](#) and using the application forms provided on the Call dedicated webpage.

To access the submission system, applicants must follow these steps:

1. **For previously registered organisations:** if your organisation has already participated in EIT Manufacturing calls, there is no need to register again. You can proceed by registering your user account through the [Contact Form](#). Once your user registration is complete, access the call submission forms via the link provided on the call webpage.
2. **For new organisations:** if your organisation has not participated in EIT Manufacturing calls before, you must first register your organisation through the [New Organisation Registration Form](#). After registering the organisation, proceed to register your user through the [Contact Form](#). Once both the organisation and user registrations are completed, you can access the call submission forms via the link provided on the call webpage.

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

- *Empowering SMEs* Application form (online)
- Letter of Commitment from end-user

Only applications submitted through the submission tool 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, incomplete or sent after the deadline, will be inadmissible.

All entities participating in this call for proposals must have a PIC number otherwise they may not be eligible for funding.

All entities must be registered in the submission tool as early as possible and no later than 3 working days before the call closes, 12th November 2024 17:00 CET otherwise they may not be eligible for funding.

Please note that, if your proposal is successful, the information provided when registering your organization will need to be validated. EIT Manufacturing will contact you to submit the needed supporting documents.

Call information event

EIT Manufacturing will carry out an Info Day at the publication of the call to ensure open, free, and fair access to the wider manufacturing community.

Call Contacts

All applicants may contact EIT Manufacturing to ask questions and clarify any points on general/technical aspects and call content by contacting respectively support@eitmanufacturing.eu and call.programme.management@eitmanufacturing.eu. **With a view to equal treatment, EIT Manufacturing staff cannot give a prior opinion on the admissibility, eligibility, quality or any other relevant element of a specific proposal. Applicants are strongly discouraged from approaching any member of the Selection Committee to seek for specific advice or support regarding their application.**

5. Proposal evaluation and selection process

5.1 Admissibility check

Applications must be

- submitted before the **call deadline** (*see Call Summary*);
- submitted in **English**;
- submitted **electronically** via the submission tool. Paper submissions are NOT possible; and
- **complete** and contain all the mandatory information in the online application form and all mandatory documentation.

Proposals containing one or more inadmissible elements will be **rejected** and will receive an official communication from EIT Manufacturing setting out the outcome of the admissibility check.

5.2 Eligibility check

A proposal is considered eligible if it respects the following Eligibility Criteria:

Eligibility Criteria	Applicants' profiles should align with the requirements presented in paragraph 3.2.
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Proposals containing one or more ineligible elements will receive an official communication from EIT Manufacturing setting out the outcome of the eligibility check and explaining why the proposal failed to meet the criteria.

The applicant of any proposal 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 by sending an email to support@eitmanufacturing.eu according to the Appeal procedure document linked to the Call (see paragraph 5.6).

5.3 External evaluation

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

The scores shall be given at sub-criterion level are then summed together to come with a final score per criteria. Thresholds apply to individual criteria and to the total score.

The detailed sub-criteria evaluation grid is provided here below. For each sub-criteria, specific information and evidence are expected.

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 addresses 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. The proposal supports gender equality and promotes wider diversity and inclusiveness in the manufacturing sector.	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 the solution. End-user willingness to buy the solution will be positively considered.	5

The proposal offers an ambitious financial sustainability return to the KIC. In particular, for startups equity-sharing option will be positively considered.	5
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The total scoring of 55 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: 15 Threshold: 9/15
Total	55 points Threshold 33/55

The external evaluators will assess each proposal independently by using a dedicated evaluation tool. 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 the evaluators and will prepare the final Summary Evaluation Reports (ESRs).

5.4 Strategic assessment and portfolio selection

Starting with the highest-scoring proposal and proceeding in descending order, a selection will be made of the best-ranked proposals that meet or exceed the thresholds in both individual criteria and overall (consensus meeting results). Only proposals requesting aggregated financial support equalling no more than 200% of the available budget will be passed to the strategic assessment and portfolio selection.

The strategic assessment consists of a remote assessment totalling up to 5 additional points and will be run by the Director of Innovation-to-Market and the Director of

Investment following the scoring methodology described in paragraph 5.3 *External evaluation*.

Criteria	Description of criteria	Max Score
Portfolio fit	The proposal reinforces EIT Manufacturing's portfolio of technological solutions and supported business owners	5 points

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

Final Overall Score = Consensus meeting final score + Strategic assessment top-up

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

Proposals will be selected for funding based on the final ranking and available budget. High-quality proposals not selected due to budget constraints will be placed on a reserve list.

5.5 Call Report and Stand-still period

At the end of the evaluation process and when the portfolio selection is completed, EIT Manufacturing sends the Call Report & the Final ranking list to the granting authority (EIT) and applies a stand-still period of 30 days before signing agreements with the selected recipients, to allow the granting authority to verify compliance with the procedural requirements.¹⁴

5.6 Communication of results and negotiation period

The evaluation results will be provided to all applicants. EIT Manufacturing will inform via email all applicants within 5 working days after the evaluation completion.

The applicants might receive 4 types of evaluation feedback:

- The proposal is accepted for funding. The proposal has got a high evaluation score and is selected for funding based on available budget assumptions.
- The proposal is accepted for funding with conditions. The proposal has got a high evaluation score and is selected for funding based on available budget

¹⁴ According to Rules on page 127-129 of the Horizon Europe MGA (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf)

assumptions. Conditions for changes will be provided from EIT Manufacturing. Changes shall be done and re-submitted on time.

If the applicant fails to comply with the requested conditions or does not respond by the time allocated, the proposal will be rejected and the next proposal on the ranking list will be then proposed for funding.

- The proposal is rejected. The proposal has failed to reach the threshold of an individual evaluation criterion or the overall threshold and is therefore not considered for funding.
- The proposal 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 proposal might become eligible for funding, e.g., in case a proposal accepted with conditions is not funded.

As soon as the communication of results is done, the successful participants will receive contractual documents to be signed with EIT Manufacturing, including:

- Financial Support Agreement - long term agreement regarding financial support to third parties under Horizon Europe
- Declaration of Honour
- Service Agreement – as described in paragraph 3.10

In parallel, each participant will need to provide additional documents to EIT Manufacturing, such as:

- Legal and financial documents (depending on the legal form of the participant and if requested by EIT Manufacturing)

5.7 Procedure for complaints and appeal

The applicant of a rejected proposal 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 a proposal 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 EIT Manufacturing by sending an email to support@eitmanufacturing.eu according to the Appeal procedure document linked to the Call (see document Appeal procedure).

6. Other Terms and Conditions

6.1 Dissemination, communication, and exploitation

Applicants should engage in dissemination, communication and exploitation of the results of the activities. Applicants need to respect the provisions of Article 16 regarding the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) — Background And Results — Access Rights And Rights and Article 17 regarding Communication, dissemination and visibility rules of the (Model) Grant Agreement.¹⁵ including branding guidelines and obligations. Communication activities and infrastructure, equipment of major results funded by the grant must display the KIC's logo with the following text: KIC [name] is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union”).

6.2 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.¹⁶ All applicants selected for funding shall sign a Declaration of Honour in order to confirm that they respect the above-mentioned criteria at the application stage. Successful Applicants shall provide, if requested by EIT Manufacturing, relevant recent documentation substantiating the Declaration of Honour at the latest before signing the agreements mentioned under point 5.6. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in the exclusion of the applicants and the proposal concerned.

6.3 Logos and Trademarks of the Applicants

The entities participating in the Call for Proposal grant EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries (e.g., ICs) a free and non-exclusive license to use their brand solely for the promotion, dissemination of information, organisation, management and implementation of the Call for Proposal. The applicants and EIT Manufacturing mutually acknowledge and accept that the respective trademarks are, and remain, the exclusive property of their respective owners and that no provision of these guidelines is intended to confer any rights on such trademarks, outside the provisions of the previous paragraph. Therefore, the participating entities and EIT Manufacturing will not be able to

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

¹⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&from=EN>

assign, sublicense or otherwise dispose of the trademarks of others, without prior written consent.

Participating entities will send their brand related information (logos, brand guidelines and any other relevant communication material) as requested by EIT Manufacturing, to support@eitmanufacturing.eu in vector format or in image format with at least 300 dpi.

6.4 Confidentiality

EIT Manufacturing undertakes to use any Confidential Information shared by the entities solely for the purposes of the Call for Proposals. Confidential information shall mean data and/or information that is proprietary to, or possessed by the entities 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 in any form, without prior written authorization of the entity concerned; and (ii) not to use them for purposes other than those strictly necessary for the purposes of this Call for Proposals.

Confidential Information may be shared among EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries (e.g. ICs) solely for the purposes of the Call. 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.

6.5 Intellectual Property

Participating entities agree to respect IPR Rules (Article 16) of the (Model) Grant Agreement.¹⁷

Participating entities also agree to respect the EIT Manufacturing IP Policy available on this link.

6.6 Disclaimers

EIT Manufacturing denies all liability from an applicant participation to the call for proposal.

Submitting the application does not establish a grantor-grantee relationship between applicant and the EIT Manufacturing as final decision will be made after the evaluation process and the final confirmation of acceptance of the application and all other procedure mentioned herein.

These call for proposals guidelines may be subject to changes/updates. In such a case, the changes will be communicated publicly (published) transparently and clearly. Applicants having already applied will also be informed in writing.

6.7 Processing of Personal Data

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 on 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 call applications and the management, completion, organisation, dissemination of information and publicity of the call. The data controller is EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries.

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

By submitting your application for this call, you consent that EIT Manufacturing will collect, transfer, process, store and delete your data in accordance with the aforementioned conditions.

Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available in the privacy statement in the submission tool.

6.8 Applicable Law

The present call is governed by the applicable European Union laws (i.e. the EIT Regulation, the EU Financial Regulation and the Horizon Europe Regulation) and is complemented, where necessary, by the laws of France. The applicants agree to observe the obligations set forth in the (Model) Grant Agreement¹⁸ 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.

6.9 Rights to activate audits

EIT Manufacturing retains the right to activate an audit on the funded activities in case of alerts and/or to confirm governance and proper usage of the grant.

EIT Manufacturing keeps the right to request any data related to the activity for 5 years after completion to ensure transparency and allow monitoring from EIT.

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf