

Request for Proposal (RfP)

CFS Audit Services – Grant Agreement 2023–2025

August 2025

Deadline for offer submission: 14th August 2025

1. Context

EIT Manufacturing is one of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) focused on promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and education in the domain of manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together leading organisations along the entire value chain from smaller companies to larger industry, excellent academic and research institutions, as well as public sector organisations, to promote the transformation of manufacturing towards a sustainable, people-centric, resilient European industry, by removing barriers to innovation, promoting talent and education, leveraging enabling technologies and exploiting big data.

EIT Manufacturing is an association under the law 1901 created in 2019. Along with the EIT Manufacturing there are eight other Knowledge Innovation Communities (“KICs”) with the aim to lead the action and create services across Europe, improving the competitiveness of European companies.

EIT Manufacturing ASBL is seeking to engage a qualified external auditor to perform Certificates on the Financial Statements (CFS) for the Grant Agreement 2023–2025. The audit must comply with the requirements established under the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement and EIT financial guidelines. The services will cover the main legal entity (ASBL), its Impact Centers (ICs), and a number of sub-beneficiaries. This audit process is part of the mandatory requirements under the Horizon Europe programme. The objective is to ensure that the financial declarations of beneficiaries and sub-beneficiaries meet the eligibility conditions and comply with the cost principles set by the European Commission.



2. Work Scope & Deliverables

The CFS audits must be performed in two distinct scopes:

A. SCOPE 1

ASBL and Impact Centers (ICs):

- **Audit period:** From July 2024 to the closure of the Grant Agreement (estimated 30 August 2025).
- **Entity:** EIT Manufacturing ASBL and ICs.
- 7 entities to be audited.
- CFS audit threshold set at 430 000 EUR of EIT funding per beneficiary per grant agreement.
- All entities are located in Member States of the European Union (France, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Austria).
- The services shall be performed from the date of contract signature until an estimated completion in mid-October 2025. This date is provisional and will be confirmed in the workplan to be agreed with EIT Manufacturing during the contractual phase.

B. SCOPE 2

Sub-beneficiaries

- **Audit period:** From January 2025 until the closure of the Grant Agreement (estimated 30 August 2025). *Please note that, depending on the context and specific cost categories, values from previous periods (e.g., 2023 or 2024) may also be subject to audit.*
- Entities:
 - **“CFS Candidates”:** These will be the confirmed partners whose cost reporting meets the applicable threshold and who will require audit.
 - **“Additional CFS Candidates”:** These will be the potential candidates whose inclusion is conditional upon the receipt and analysis of their cost reporting. **This service line is therefore provisional and may or may not be activated. In addition, the list of Additional CFS Candidates to be communicated to the selected supplier is indicative and subject to change during the contractual period. It may be reduced based on final reported costs but will not be expanded once confirmed.**
- Approximately 18 entities to be audited.
- CFS audit threshold set at 430K EUR of EIT funding per beneficiary per grant agreement.
- Member States of the European Union or in countries associated to the Horizon Europe framework programme.
- The services shall be performed from the date of contract signature until an estimated completion in mid-September 2025. This date is provisional and will be confirmed in the workplan to be agreed with EIT Manufacturing during the contractual phase.

The confirmed list of entities, including legal names and relevant contact details, will be disclosed only to shortlisted candidates under a confidentiality undertaking.



3. Budgetary Threshold and Procedural Framework

This procurement procedure is conducted under the internal procurement policy of EIT Manufacturing, which provides that requests for proposals with an estimated value between EUR 143,000.01 and EUR 220,999.99 (excluding VAT) may be published only on the EIT Manufacturing website and remain open for a minimum period as indicated in our indicative timeline.

In accordance with this framework, the total value of the offers submitted by tenderers must not exceed EUR 220,999.99 (excluding VAT) for the entire contractual period and the full scope of services described in this RfP.

Any offer exceeding this maximum amount will be considered non-compliant and excluded from the evaluation process.

4. Deliverables

The selected service provider will be expected to deliver the following outputs:

- a) **CFS Audit Reports (Certificates on the Financial Statements) for subgrantees:**
 - a. Audit closure meeting to present and discuss audit findings.
 - b. Individual audit reports must be prepared for each audited entity, in accordance with the requirements set out in the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement. These certificates must follow the standard format provided by the European Commission and include all required documentation and confirmations related to eligible costs, thresholds, and compliance with applicable rules.
- b) **Audit Report for EIT Manufacturing ASBL and Innovation Communities (ICs):**
 - a. A separate CFS certificate must be prepared for EIT Manufacturing ASBL and its IC entities, covering the defined audit period.
- c) **Summary Report of Key Findings on ASBL, ICs and Subgrantees:**
 - a. Where relevant, the auditor shall provide a summary overview of key observations or non-conformities identified during the audits. This report should highlight any systemic issues, areas of improvement, or matters requiring attention from the Grant Coordinator or the EIT.

5. Timeline and Execution Plan of the Services

The audit services shall be carried out in two phases, depending on the category of entities:

- a) **Non-CfP 2025 Entities** (i.e. confirmed beneficiaries with cost reporting already available):
The audit process for these entities should begin **as soon as possible following the signature of**



the service agreement, to avoid delays in the Grant Agreement closure and final reporting to the EIT.

- b) **CfP 2025 Entities** (i.e. beneficiaries with provisional status based on 2025 budget thresholds): The audit of these entities is expected to start **between mid-September and early October 2025**, depending on when the final cost reports are submitted. The inclusion of these entities is subject to confirmation.

CFS Audit reports should be submitted to the relevant party and copied to ASBL by a date to be defined in the workplan to be annexed to the contract to be signed between the parties. This date shall not be later than two weeks after the final complete audit procedure.

All deliverables must be submitted in English, in electronic format (PDF), and according to the deadlines mutually agreed with EIT Manufacturing team. The service provider shall ensure timely communication with the project team throughout the process, particularly in case of delays, findings, or need for clarification with beneficiaries.

6. Eligibility and Requirements

- a) Familiarity with EIT grant structure and CFS formats.
- b) Ability to work in English.
- c) Local presence or coordination capability in France or Belgium is a plus though field work does not require on-site presence.
- d) Providers with EU-wide coverage or prior experience auditing EIT KICs will be considered an asset.

7. Submission Guidelines

Interested providers are invited to submit their proposal including:

1. Pricing proposal, including breakdown per entity or group.
 - a) Estimated timeline and availability.
2. Detailed methodology.
 - b) Proposed team and locations.
3. Relevant references and experience with Horizon Europe CFS audits (if applicable).

Interested providers must also present the **Tenderer's declaration of honour** – see Annex 1, which needs to be completed.

8. Timeline of this RfP

The deadline to submit the offer is **14th August 2025**. The **indicative** timeline for the Request for Proposals is as follows:



Activity	Responsible	Date
RFP Opening	EIT Manufacturing	31 st of July 2025
Submission of Proposals	Suppliers	14th August 2025
Evaluation phase	EIT Manufacturing	From 14 th August to 18 th August 2025
Notification of Award to the selected supplier	EIT Manufacturing	18 th August 2025
End of the Standstill	EIT Manufacturing	23 rd August 2025
Estimate Date for Contract Signature	EIT Manufacturing/Suppliers	25 th August 2025

9. Proposal Submission Procedure

All offers shall be submitted within the above-mentioned deadline to the following link: <https://eit-manufacturing.prioritize.linksquares.com/new-task?token=eqfghK7TdycO3ZdVaPfVqgS5gx2LiEf2lmaueYxnGfUzCJhpKHMNjUwW1oN-KF7i>

To start your application, please follow the outlined “step-by-step”:

1. Click on the link above and then click on “Procurement - Make a request for the Legal Team related to Procurement Procedures”.
2. Fill out the Task Name with this description: “**RfP - CFS Audit Services**”.
3. Fill out the Requestor Name with your name.
4. Fill out the Requestor E-mail with your e-mail address.
5. Leave the following fields blank since they are not mandatory: Task type, Deadline and Priority.
6. Fill in the field “Describe Task” with the message you wish to convey to our team and/or any details and comments you have regarding your proposal. If you have none, simply write the name of the RfP: “**RfP - CFS Audit Services**”.
7. Click on attachments and upload your Commercial Proposal as an attachment.
8. After completing the above-mentioned information, click on “Submit Task” to finalise your application. Please note that you will not receive any confirmation in your e-mail. However, you should ensure that this message appears to you on the screen after submitting your proposal: “**Task created successfully**”.
9. If you have any questions, please contact us at the following email address:
procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu

Please note: All tenderers must include the documentation mentioned in the item 4 “Submission Guidelines” of this RfP.

Disclaimer of Liability for Technical Failures:



EIT Manufacturing shall not be held liable for any technical failures, interruptions, or glitches occurring in its digital tool designated for receiving proposals in the Request for Proposals (RfP) as mentioned in the link above, irrespective of the underlying reasons. EIT Manufacturing assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage resulting from such technical issues.

Verification of Proposal Receipt:

In case of any doubt or uncertainty regarding the submission status, the supplier is obligated to take appropriate measures to confirm the receipt of their proposal, utilizing the communication channels and tools made available by EIT Manufacturing for such verification. It is the sole responsibility of the supplier to verify the successful submission and receipt of their proposal through the available means provided by EIT Manufacturing. By participating in the proposal submission process, the supplier acknowledges and accepts that EIT Manufacturing disclaims any liability related to technical failures affecting the digital tool and that the supplier is accountable for ensuring the successful transmission and receipt of their proposal.

10. Evaluation of Proposals

Timely received proposals submitted by the tenderers will be examined, evaluated, and compared in accordance with the following criteria and the contract shall be awarded to the highest ranked tenderer. The decision will be made according to the “Best Value for Money” principle. The award criteria will be the following:

- Relevant experience and expertise (40%)
- Quality and clarity of methodology (10%)
- Cost competitiveness (10%)
- Timeliness and availability (40%)

An Evaluation Committee of at least 3 (three) people will be established and supervised by EIT Manufacturing. Each bid will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria above.

The compliance with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and absence of conflict of interest will be ensured.

The successful and unsuccessful tenderers will be informed in writing (via email) about the result of the award procedure. In case the winning tenderer is unable to enter into the contract, EIT Manufacturing may decide to contract the supplier receiving the second highest ranking.

Upon request from the tenderer concerned, EIT Manufacturing will as quickly as possible, and in any event within 15 calendar days from receipt of a written request, inform:

- any unsuccessful candidate of the reasons for the rejection of its request to participate,



- any unsuccessful tenderer of the reasons for the rejection of its tender, including, if this is the case, its decision that the works, supplies or services do not meet the performance or functional requirements,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender selected as well as the name of the successful tenderer or the parties to the awarded contract,
- any tenderer that has made an admissible tender of the conduct and progress of negotiations and dialogue with tenderers.

The information referred to above may be withheld where the release of such information would be contrary to the public interest, would prejudice the legitimate commercial interests of an economic operator, or might prejudice fair competition between economic operators.

Should there be a suspicion that the provider will not be able to perform according to the price offered, EIT Manufacturing has the right to ask for explanations and may reject the tender where the evidence supplied does not satisfactorily account for the low level of price or cost proposed.

Complementary Note on the Evaluation Process:

After the initial evaluation of submitted proposals, it is possible that the potential top-ranked suppliers may be shortlisted and/or invited to submit clarifications through email or meetings. It is important to emphasise that the evaluation will be conducted in strict accordance with the criteria outlined in the published Request for Proposal (RfP) and our Procurement Policy (available at: <https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/who-we-are/legal-documents/>).

11.Complaint Procedure

Tenderers believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint respecting the deadline mentioned. Appeals shall be addressed to EIT Manufacturing only via the following email address procurement@eitmanufacturing.eu. The tenderers have **5 (five) days** to file their complaints from the date of receipt of notification of the results.

In their application to EIT Manufacturing, the complainant shall explain what procedural aspects they consider having been violated along with any recommendations or remarks. Such charges need to be supported with data and facts and, if possible, with documentation. An appeal whose sole purpose is to obtain a second evaluation for no reason other than that the complainant disagrees with the final award decision is to be rejected.



12. Negotiations

In general, this kind of flexibility is not allowed in open public procurement procedures, where all interested suppliers must have equal opportunity to compete under the same conditions. The principle of transparency requires that all terms and selection criteria be clearly defined from the outset, leaving no room for negotiation once the procedure is launched.

However, negotiation is permitted in certain exceptional cases, under the negotiated procedures foreseen by the EU Public Procurement Directive (Directive 2014/24/EU, Articles 26 to 32). These cases include, for example:

- When the contract cannot be awarded without prior negotiation due to the nature or complexity of the works, services or goods involved;
- When technical specifications cannot be established with sufficient precision in advance;
- When only irregular or unacceptable tenders have been submitted in response to an open or restricted procedure.

In such cases, the contracting authority may use the competitive procedure with negotiation or the negotiated procedure without prior publication, depending on the circumstances. However, these options are tightly regulated and must be justified on objective grounds, ensuring that the fundamental principles of EU procurement law—transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination, and proportionality—are respected at all times. It is essential that any decision to enter into a negotiated procedure be properly documented and auditable.

13. Contract

The final award does not yet constitute the Contract. The Contract will be concluded at the time of signature by the Supplier and EIT Manufacturing. The winning supplier will be sent the contract to be signed (indicating the deadline by which the signed contract should be returned to EIT Manufacturing).

The contract is expected to be signed by mid-August/September 2025. It shall remain in effect until the completion of the services. The invoicing will be based on a mutually agreed schedule, to be detailed in the contract. Any renewal shall respect the applicable thresholds defined in this RfP.

The completion of the services occurs upon the closure of the evaluation of the Business Plan by EIT. Interested suppliers must remain available to respond to follow-up questions or provide additional information requested by EIT, as needed, until the evaluation process is formally concluded.



The tenderer agrees that the total value of the contract to be signed with EIT Manufacturing for the mentioned period will in no way exceed the bid (the amount contained in the offer) of the tenderer.

The awarded supplier will be asked to sign Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) if no other GDPR compliant safeguards exist, and the supplier is in a country for which the EU Commission has not issued an adequacy decision.

Bid preparation costs are not reimbursable and must be borne by the tenderers.

EIT Manufacturing owns all bids received in this request for proposals.

14. Confidentiality Obligations

All information, whether written or oral, exchanged between the parties involved in this Request for Proposals (RfP) process, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties" shall be considered confidential and proprietary.

The Parties agree not to disclose, provide access to, or otherwise make available any confidential information to any third parties, including but not limited to individuals, companies, or organisations, who are not directly involved in the RfP process, without the express written consent of the disclosing Party.

"Confidential Information" shall encompass, without limitation, all data, documents, proposals, discussions, designs, specifications, financial information, technical data, trade secrets, and any other information disclosed by one Party to the other during the RfP process.

The obligations of confidentiality shall not apply to information that is:

- a) Publicly available at the time of disclosure or subsequently becomes publicly available through no fault of the receiving Party.
- b) Already in the possession of the receiving Party prior to disclosure and not subject to an existing confidentiality obligation.
- c) Disclosed to the receiving Party by a third party with the legal right to do so without breaching any confidentiality obligations.
- d) Required to be disclosed by law, court order, or governmental regulation, provided that the disclosing Party is promptly notified and given the opportunity to seek a protective order.

Any Party found in breach of this confidentiality clause shall be subject to legal measures, including litigation, injunctive relief, and monetary damages, as deemed appropriate by the disclosing Party.



The obligations of confidentiality as set forth in this clause shall survive the termination or completion of the RfP process and shall remain in effect for a period of 5 (five) years, unless both Parties mutually agree in writing to terminate this confidentiality agreement.

This confidentiality clause shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of France. Any legal action arising out of or in connection with this clause shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Paris, France.

15. Cancellation of the Proposal Procedure

In the event of cancellation of the proposal procedure, EIT Manufacturing will notify tenderers of the cancellation. In no event shall EIT Manufacturing be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a proposal procedure, even if EIT Manufacturing has been advised of the possibility of damages.

The tenderer shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). S/he should inform the EIT Manufacturing team immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

The supplier cannot be an EIT Manufacturing Partner or Activity Partner. Any bid from such an economic operator will be rejected.

Tenderers will be excluded if:

- a) they are being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations; they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- b) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the EIT Manufacturing can justify;
- c) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or any other country of the EU;
- d) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the EU' financial



interests;

- e) following a procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the EU budget, they have been declared in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

The tenderers must not be in a situation of a conflict of interest, and they have sufficient economic and financial capacity, technical and professional capacity, and legal and regulatory capacity to perform the requested services. Additional evidence or declarations might be requested by the contracting authority.

EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud. If substantial errors, irregularities, conflict of interest or fraud are discovered after the award of the tender, EIT Manufacturing may refrain from concluding the Contract.

This Request for Proposal (RfP) does not create any entitlement or expectation for tenderers to enter into a contract with EIT Manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing is under no obligation to award or conclude a contract with any supplier, including the selected tenderer, either now or in the future. Furthermore, EIT Manufacturing reserves the right to cancel or withdraw this procurement process at any time, without incurring any liability.



ANNEX I - Tenders Declaration of Honor

[Place and Date]

[Name of the Legal Entity and/or Signatory]

I, [Full name of the supplier's representative], hereby declare the following in connection with my application for the Request for Proposal (RfP) **CFS Audit Services – Grant Agreement 2023–2025**.

a) I will commit to take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). I will inform the EIT Manufacturing immediately if there is any change in the above circumstances at any stage during the implementation of the tasks.

b) I accept that during the implementation of the contract and for five years after the completion of the contract, the supplier must keep confidential any data, documents or other material that is identified as confidential at the time it disclosed ('confidential Information').

c) I accept that during the implementation of the contract and for five years after the completion of the contract, the EIT Manufacturing has the right for the purposes of safeguarding its financial interests, the offer and the contract of the supplier may be transferred to internal as well as external audit services.

d) I confirm that I or the entity represented by me is not currently experiencing any of the following situations. If any situation applies, details are provided in an annex to this declaration along with a brief explanation.

- The entity is not bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, and its assets are not being administered by a liquidator or by a court. It is not in an arrangement with creditors, and its business activities are not suspended, nor is it in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national legislation or regulations.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing a breach of obligations related to the payment of taxes or social security contributions.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing guilt of grave professional misconduct, including but not limited to fraud, violation of applicable laws or regulations, ethical standards, distorting competition, violating intellectual property rights, attempting to influence EU Bodies' decision-making processes, attempting to obtain confidential information, or any other wrongful conduct impacting professional credibility.
- There is no final judgement establishing guilt of fraud, corruption, participation in a criminal organization, money laundering or terrorist financing, terrorist-related offences, child labor, or other forms of trafficking in human beings.
- The entity has not shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement, or a grant decision financed by the European Union's budget, leading to early termination, application of liquidated damages, or other contractual penalties, discovered through checks, audits, or investigations.
- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing that the entity has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95.



- There is no final judgement or final administrative decision establishing that the entity has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social, or any other legal obligations.
- In the absence of a final judgement or final administrative decision in the cases mentioned above, or in the case of point (d), I acknowledge that the Applicant may be subject to:
 - i. Facts established in the context of audits or investigations by EPPO, the Court of Auditors, OLAF, or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit, or control performed under the responsibility of the authorizing officer.
 - ii. Non-final administrative decisions, including disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics.
 - iii. Facts referred to in decisions of persons and entities implementing Union funds.
 - iv. Information transmitted in accordance with the Financial Regulation.
 - v. Decisions of the Commission or national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

I hereby declare the accuracy and truthfulness of the above statements.

Yours faithfully,

[Full name and entity]

