

# EIT Regional Innovation Booster (EIT RIB) 2026 Malta edition

## Terms & Conditions

Version 1  
14.05.2026

## CONTENTS

1.	ABOUT MAIN PARTNERS OF THE EIT REGIONAL INNOVATION BOOSTER .....	3
	European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) .....	3
	Xjenza Malta.....	3
2.	OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EIT REGIONAL INNOVATION BOOSTER (EIT RIB).....	3
2.1.	Description of EIT RIB.....	3
2.2.	Structure of EIT RIB 2026 – Malta edition .....	4
3.	APPLICATION PROCESS.....	7
3.1.	Who can apply.....	7
3.2.	How to apply .....	8
3.3.	Exclusion criteria .....	9
4.	EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS .....	9
4.1.	Evaluation methodology .....	9
4.2.	Selection process in details .....	10
4.3.	Eligibility check .....	10
4.4.	Remote evaluation .....	10
4.5.	Evaluation Criteria .....	11
4.6.	Final notification.....	12
5.	APPEALS PROCEDURE.....	12
6.	FUNDING TERMS AND CONDITIONS .....	12
6.1.	General conditions .....	12
6.2.	Financial support for participation in different stages .....	13
6.3.	Form of financial support.....	13
6.4.	Payment Schedule.....	14
7.	IP RIGHTS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST.....	14
8.	EIT COMMUNITY’S REPRESENTATION / COMMUNICATION POLICY .....	14
9.	AUDIT RIGHTS .....	15
10.	DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY.....	15
10.1.	Liability for damages .....	15
10.2.	Force Majeure .....	15
11.	KEY DATES .....	15
12.	HOW TO GET IN TOUCH.....	15
	LIST OF ANNEXES .....	16
	Annex 1 – EIT RIB Code of Conduct .....	17
	Annex 2 – Scoring criteria .....	18
	Annex 3 – Detailed thematic scope .....	20
	Annex 4 – Overview of the EIT and the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities organizing EIT RIB	22
	Overview of Climate KIC .....	22
	Overview of 28Digital .....	22
	Overview of EIT Food .....	23
	Overview of EIT Health.....	23
	Overview of InnoEnergy .....	23
	Overview of EIT RawMaterials.....	23
	Overview of EIT Urban Mobility .....	24
	Overview of EIT Culture and Creativity.....	24
	Annex 5 – Technology Readiness Levels - A quick guide.....	25

## 1. ABOUT MAIN PARTNERS OF THE EIT REGIONAL INNOVATION BOOSTER

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 25 November 2025 by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and Xjenza Malta, both institutions will jointly provide resources for the implementation of the EIT Regional Innovation Booster in Malta.

### European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

The EIT strengthens Europe's innovation capacity by driving solutions to pressing global challenges and nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs. As an EU body and an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#) — the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation — the EIT supports dynamic pan-European partnerships, known as [Knowledge and Innovation Communities \(KICs\)](#), bringing together leading companies, research centres, and universities.

The EIT Community offers a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities across Europe, including entrepreneurial education courses, business creation and acceleration services, and innovation-driven research projects.

### Xjenza Malta

[Xjenza Malta](#) is Malta's national public agency responsible for promoting and supporting scientific research, technological development, and innovation. It plays a central role in strengthening the country's research ecosystem by funding projects, facilitating collaboration between academia and industry, and aligning national priorities with European research and innovation strategies. Through a range of funding programmes, support mechanisms, and practical tools, Xjenza Malta actively drives projects from concept to market, helping innovators and researchers translate ideas into viable products and services. By fostering innovation uptake and commercialisation, the agency enhances Malta's competitiveness, addresses societal challenges, and contributes to sustainable economic growth, while also ensuring strong participation in European research and innovation initiatives.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EIT REGIONAL INNOVATION BOOSTER (EIT RIB)

### 2.1. Description of EIT RIB

The EIT Regional Innovation Booster (EIT RIB) is a new flagship initiative of [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), designed to tackle Europe's innovation unbalance by boosting innovation ecosystems in emerging and moderate innovator regions. Building on the interim evaluation of [Horizon Europe's Innovative Europe Pillar](#) and aligned with the [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021–2027](#), the EIT RIB leverages the EIT's pan-European network and its Knowledge Triangle model to provide tailored, integrated, and place-based innovation support.

EIT RIB specifically targets start-ups and scale-ups in less-developed regions—those performing below the EU average in terms of innovation ecosystem maturity, as identified by the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#). The initiative, based on a place-based approach, aims to simplify and streamline the start-up and scale-up support landscape by connecting national, regional, and EU-level initiatives into a cohesive entrepreneurial support pathway. Implementation is led by the EIT Community Regional Innovation and Internationalisation (RI&I) Cluster, ensuring alignment with regional priorities, especially Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), and promoting long-term ecosystem capacity-building.

The EIT RIB aims to:

- Enable the international growth of start-ups and ventures from moderate and emerging innovator regions.

- Create a seamless support pathway across local, national, and EU levels to help high-potential start-ups and scale-ups succeed in national and international markets.
- Strengthen collaboration between EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) and local innovation actors and instruments.
- Boost innovation output and visibility of emerging ecosystems within European networks.
- Provide targeted funding, mentoring, and strategic resources to selected ventures.
- Promote synergies, best practice sharing, and efficiency gains across the EIT Community and national authorities.

The EIT Regional Innovation Booster 2026 – Malta Edition – is one of the first initiatives of this kind globally. The pre-pilot of the EIT Regional Innovation Booster took place in Poland in 2025, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Poland (MRiT). Malta is the second country to adopt EIT Regional Innovation Booster (EIT RIB) and jointly with EIT initiate a customized programme edition to support innovation ecosystem. It is exclusively available to Maltese startups and scaleups at TRL 7 or higher (See Annex 4). The “Maltese start-up or scale-up” refers to a company that, prior to the launch of this call, is legally registered with its headquarters in Malta and maintains active business operations within the country. Start-ups and scale-ups offering innovative solutions with thematic scope in line with one of the industry-specific areas supported by a different EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (EIT KIC: Climate, Digital, Food & Agritech, Healthcare, Energy and Renewables, Metals, minerals, industrial side streams, Urban Mobility, Culture and Creativity) can submit their applications to participate in the programme. The programme is divided into three distinct stages, beginning with a cohort of up to twelve startups and narrowing down to the top four performers by the final phase. Priority is given to applicants with established sales and external investment or those that are advanced and on track in these areas of startup development. Throughout the duration, the program will be supported by strategic European and Maltese partners.

## 2.2. Structure of EIT RIB 2026 – Malta edition

The core activities of the EIT RIB 2026 Malta edition will be organised in the following stages:

Stage	Stage 0: Application period	Stage 1: Market Entry Strategy and Readiness	Stage 2: Market tapping and Commercial Execution	Stage 3: International exposure and investors scouting
Date	14 May 2026 – 15 July 2026	August – October 2026	October – December 2026	January – April 2027
Number of participants per stage	Open to all eligible applicants	Up to 12 startups selected	Up to 6 startups selected	Up to 4 startups selected
Target country	Indication of a preferred target country	Confirmation of the target country	Initial Market access	Deepening Market access
Funding for a venture	No grant	No grant	Grant (up to 50,000 EUR per entity; lump sum)	Grant (up to 40,000 EUR per entity; reimbursement of actual costs)
Scope of support	Application submission and expression of interest	- Two bootcamps focused on scaling, commercial and financial strategy, investment readiness, and marketing - Introduction to the	- Activities aimed at securing traction in the target market (e.g. pilots, letters of intent) - Cooperation with dedicated experts	- Tailor-made support in securing strategic partners and investors in the target market - Optional access to an additional market

		Market Landing Roadmap - Introduction to geography-focused streams	from target markets - International online matchmaking - Optional participation in EIT Community events	(United Kingdom) - Progress monitoring
<b>Framework</b>	n/a	Development of Market Landing Roadmaps with expert support	Finalisation of the Market Landing Roadmap	Validation of the Market Landing Roadmap
<b>Key deliverables</b>	Application with pitch video	First draft of Market Landing Roadmap	Finalized Market Landing Roadmap Letters of intent with potential clients or partners	Letters of intent/Contracts with potential clients or partners Investor pitch Incurred costs report

Dates are tentative and could change, but the project management team will report them appropriately.

**Stage 0 - Submission of ideas:** the call for applications opens **on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2026 and closes on July 15<sup>th</sup> 2026 at 23:59 CEST**. Applications must be submitted in English through the [online application form](#). More details of application process, including the eligibility conditions, evaluation criteria and selection procedure, are provided in point 3. The selection of participants for the programme will be conducted in line with the principles of Horizon Europe, ensuring a fair, transparent, and merit-based process. All applications will be assessed against predefined criteria, and the process will ensure equal treatment of all applicants.

In addition to applying for the core programme, applicants may indicate their interest in receiving thematic support from one of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). These non-binding declarations help startups/scaleups in receiving more channeled opportunities beyond the EIT Regional Innovation Booster scheme. Indicating interest in participating in the RIB core programme does not preclude submitting an expression of interest in EIT KIC opportunities in parallel. Likewise, if a startup is only interested in individual KIC opportunities, it is not required to apply to the RIB core programme, but only express an interest in the KIC opportunity via the application form.

**Stage 1 - Market Entry Strategy and Readiness:** after recruitment and initial selection up to 12 selected startups/scaleups will be invited to join Stage 1 of the EIT RIB 2026 Malta edition. The first stage focuses on defining a startup's current state and start building a concrete strategy to scale within a target European market. Participants engage in two bootcamps: two-day onsite<sup>1</sup> bootcamp followed by 1.5-day online bootcamp, both taking place in August - September 2026. At the end of Stage 1 the participants will need to develop the first version of their Market Landing Roadmaps – a framework helping to define their scaling strategy. Moreover, startups gain access to geography-focused streams to understand country-specific value propositions, regulatory landscapes, and other business aspects, ensuring they are fully prepared for the complexities of international expansion. The participants will be required to confirm one of the preferred target markets: Italy, Germany or France to accelerate internationalization and commercialization. The participating startup/scaleup can indicate one country out of the list.

---

<sup>1</sup> The organiser reserves the right to change on-site bootcamps to an online format or to modify the form of the training in duly justified circumstances.

**Stage 2 - Market Tapping and Commercial Execution:** from October to December 2026, up to 6 top-performing startups will be selected by the evaluation panel to join Stage 2 focused on initial market engagement and early traction. Following the insights gained in the first stage, the participants will be asked to re-confirm the market chosen at application stage. A major advantage of this phase is the "EIT RIB Buddy" system - each startup is paired with a carefully selected, local market expert who provides hands-on guidance on pricing, positioning, go-to-market logic, industry connections, and access to potential clients and partners who can support the commercial deployment of their product or solution in the chosen markets. These experts facilitate warm introductions to potential clients, strategic partners, and investors to help validate product-market fit. Participants also benefit from initial on-line matchmaking activities, increased visibility through planned events and, optionally, travel to EIT Community events in the target countries, helping them transition from a strategy to active commercial execution and benefit from international innovators and investors network. The startups will be asked to present the final Market Landing Roadmap and letters of intent with potential clients or partners at the end of this stage. The participating startups will get national grants of up to 50,000 EUR per entity for activities within Stage 2. The grant, paid as a lump sum, can cover personnel costs, external services (e.g. feasibility study, patent services, technical development and testing, legal support), travel and participation cost (e.g. fairs, participation in the investors meetings, thematic conferences), commercialization activities (e.g. pilot projects, demonstrations). The full list of eligible costs will be presented to the selected ventures in Stage 2 and Stage 3.

**Stage 3 - International exposure and investors scouting:** the final stage, taking place in Q1 2027, supports the top 4 startups in executing growth and converting their initial traction into revenue or long-term partnerships. Up to 4 startups will receive up to 40,000 EUR per entity in the form of a grant. The full list of eligible costs will be presented to the selected ventures in Stage 3. This phase focuses on the successful implementation of the scaling strategy, 1:1 monitoring to track progress and address growth gaps. Key outcomes include the conversion of letters of intent into formal contracts and the entry into serious discussions with international investors (for instance, receipt of terms sheet). Participants gain access to EIT KICs' thematic events and international matchmaking opportunities. The programme concludes with a final Investor Pitch Event, providing a high-stakes platform to present directly to corporates and ecosystem stakeholders. The objective of this stage is to enable high-impact connections between startups and key ecosystem players in selected markets as well as explore partnership potential and chart the path to successful market entry.

In case of reporting fast progress and achieving promising results, four startups/scaleups selected to Stage 3 may in addition, receive the opportunity to access the UK market through the EIT Community UK Hub, regardless of the earlier selected market. In such a case, the costs of participation in the activities aiming to scale to the UK (e.g. travel and accommodation costs) will be eligible to be covered by the grant.

Specific areas and topics covered by the stages may be slightly adjusted based on participants' needs; any changes will be duly reported by the project management team.

#### Additional opportunities

During and after the programme, startups and scaleups may benefit from additional support services and investment opportunities offered by the EIT Community. These opportunities may be provided by EIT KICs, depending on the availability of their programmes and alignment with the startup's thematic focus. The EIT Community representatives will advise on the most suitable opportunities across different thematic areas.

### 3. APPLICATION PROCESS

#### 3.1. Who can apply

Applicant eligibility criteria:

A. Company Stage & Type:

- The entity is a for-profit small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) according to the [EU definition](#).
- Only registered legal entities are eligible to apply; sole entrepreneurs are not permitted.
- The entity must be registered in Malta and keeping its operations in Malta prior to launch of the call.
- SME applies alone, not in the consortium.
- The entity must have a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 7 or higher, indicating a mature product nearing market deployment. The solution must demonstrate clear potential for commercialisation and scalability. Please see the TRL explanation in Annex 4.
- The entity needs to be owner of the IPR or full exploitation rights of the solution that will be promoted in the new market.

B. Participation Requirements:

- The entity must have 1-2 FTEs working at the time of the proposal submission.

*Note: A maximum number of two co-founding members or management representatives per entity are eligible to take part in the EIT RIB programme to ensure high quality and comfortable conditions of the training activities. In justified cases, the EIT RIB Coordinator may allow the participation of more team members in specific activities.*

Please note that, to be eligible for Stage 2, the entity must have at least CEO, CTO, or COO engaged on a full-time basis by the end of Stage 1. Personnel costs may be partially covered through the grant.

C. Main Focus:

- The entity must be developing innovative solutions, services, products, or business models that address relevant societal challenges in line with one of the industry-specific challenges and categories mentioned in point 2.1 of this call.
- The entity must have a clear intent to scale up, aiming to expand its workforce, revenue, or market presence. Companies must be committed, and a solution should be applicable to be scaled to one of the following markets: Italy, Germany or France. In addition, the top performing participants will be given an opportunity to access an extra market - UK in Stage 3.
- The deep tech dimension is welcome, but not mandatory. Applications from deep tech ventures, offering advanced or emerging technology solutions that address complex societal challenges, are encouraged. **Note:** For the EIT RIB programme, *deep tech* refers to technologies rooted in cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries, requiring continuous engagement with new research and developments. Deep tech innovations are those with the potential to deliver transformative solutions, based on breakthroughs in science, technology, and engineering, including innovations that combine advances across the physical, biological, and digital domains. Deep tech is distinct from “high tech,” which typically refers only to the intensity of R&D activities. (*Definition based on the EIC Work Programme 2025*)

D. Dual Use Policy:

- Solutions with [dual-use](#) potential (civilian and non-offensive defence applications) are allowed.
- Purely military-focused solutions are strictly excluded from the programme.

E. Market Traction & Proof:

- Applicants must demonstrate early market traction, through
  - o proof of customer traction in Malta — ideally Letters of Intent (LoI) or similar agreements with existing clients validating the technology.  
And/or
  - o Funds obtained from other public and/or private sources for the solution proposed in the application.

F. Ethical Constraints:

- Entities must have no ties (founders, shareholders, partners, etc.) to Russian Federation and/or the Republic of Belarus.

G. Gender balance:

The European Commission and the EIT are strongly committed to advancing gender equality in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. As an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EIT emphasizes the importance of gender balance as a driver of innovation excellence, organisational performance, and societal impact. EIT upholds these values by promoting gender diversity across all supported and funded activities. This includes fostering inclusive working environments, ensuring compliance with EU and national gender-related regulations, attracting and retaining diverse talent, and leveraging gender balance as a catalyst for organisational and systemic change.

- Accordingly, proposals submitted under this call are expected to reflect gender balance within entity management teams. Additional attention will be given during evaluation to how gender aspects are addressed, in line with Horizon Europe requirements and EIT's commitment to inclusive innovation. **Note:** During the selection process for Stage 1, ventures led or co-led by women will be awarded an additional point in the evaluation.

Only proposals that meet all admissibility criteria will proceed to the eligibility assessment stage. As English is the working language of the EIT, applicants are required to submit their proposals in English. If any attachments are provided in another official language of the European Union, the EIT may request an English translation of the relevant documents. Furthermore, all submitted proposals must be accessible and legible.

### 3.2. How to apply

The application will be made through the dedicated form at application platform. In order to avoid disappointment, we strongly advise applicants to familiarise themselves with EIT RIB Application Form before beginning their application, and to begin the application process at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline. All applications for the programme must be completed as follows:

- a. Applicants must fill in all required information tabs in the application form.
- b. Incomplete submissions or submissions via any other means (e.g. email) will be rejected.
- c. Proposals must be submitted before the deadline; all late applications will be rejected.
- d. The application must be within the scope of the main challenges (details in Annex 3):
  - *Climate innovation for place-based transformation at the local level* powered by Climate KIC.
  - *Digital Tech, Digital Cities, Digital Industry, Digital Wellbeing, and Digital Finance* powered by 28 Digital.
  - *Food & Agritech* powered by EIT Food.
  - *Healthcare* powered by EIT Health

- *Energy and Renewables* powered by InnoEnergy
  - *Metals, minerals, industrial side streams* powered by EIT RawMaterials
  - *Urban Mobility* powered by EIT Urban Mobility
  - *Culture, audiovisual, creative sector* powered by EIT Culture and Creativity
- e. Additional information, such as a weblink to the project, can be uploaded to support your application. These additional documents are not mandatory, and please be aware that if you do not explicitly refer to such documents in your application, the reviewers may not consider these attachments as the basis for their evaluation.
  - f. Multiple submissions are not accepted. Each applicant must use a unique email address for submission.
  - g. Individuals, co-founders, and project team members are not eligible to be part of more than one submitted project at the same time and/or submit more than one project at the same time.

### 3.3. Exclusion criteria

Applicants shall be excluded from participation<sup>2</sup> if they:

- a. are subject to personal bankruptcy;
- b. have been banned from taking part in public procurement processes, performing executive duties or shareholder status, completing professional work;
- c. are guilty of grave professional misconduct (professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information to gain advantage);
- d. have committed fraud, corruption, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking;
- e. have shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar;
- f. are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests;
- g. have created an entity under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social, or other legal obligations in the country of origin;
- h. have a conflict of interest at the commencement or at any time during the entire duration of the application or the completion process; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest related to the call.

## 4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

### 4.1. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology used during the entire programme is as follows. The evaluation will be conducted in four rounds:

- (1) Evaluation of applications and Selection to the Stage 1 with Bootcamps,
- (2) Evaluation of Market Landing Roadmaps drafts and Selection to the Stage 2,
- (3) Evaluation of revised Market Landing Roadmaps and Selection to Stage 3,
- (4) Evaluation of reports on Market Landing Roadmaps implementation and Selection to complementary

---

<sup>2</sup> To join the Programme applicants will be required to sign EIT RIB Code of Conduct for Participants (Annex 1) confirming that the exclusion criteria do not apply to them.

activities EIT KICs events and accessing an additional market – United Kingdom.

To participate in the respective stages of the programme the candidates will be evaluated and selected by an evaluation committee composed of 3 evaluators. Evaluators are contractually required to recuse themselves in the event of a conflict of interest. At each evaluation round startup's deliverables will be evaluated and a ranking list of the candidates based on their deliverables will be prepared. The selection will be made on the basis of this ranking. The top highest-scoring candidates will be selected.

The first round of evaluation and initial selection process for this call will consist of a single proposal submission. To be selected, applications must score at least 70% in remote evaluation. Following submission, all applications will undergo an eligibility check. All applications must satisfy the eligibility requirements before proceeding to the next step. Please see the relevant section for the general and specific conditions of the evaluation process. Notifications for all applications will be sent to applicants by email.

#### 4.2. Selection process in details

The selection process aims to ensure that applicants provide information for evaluation only at the necessary moment in the selection funnel, while strengthening proposals to maximise the success and impact of activities ultimately welcomed into the EIT portfolio.

#### 4.3. Eligibility check

Entities will be invited to submit an application form, as well as general information on their activity. The minimum requirements for applying, including eligibility criteria, are specified in the previous section. An eligibility check will be performed against the eligibility criteria stated in section 3.1 to validate the application's compliance with the requirements outlined in this Call. Rejected will receive a notification. Accepted applications will directly move to remote evaluation.

#### 4.4. Remote evaluation

Eligible applications will be evaluated by external evaluators based on the criteria below (see point 5.3 Evaluation Criteria). Evaluators are instructed to check for conflict of interest and to inform the EIT, if necessary, before evaluation of the proposal proceeds.

- A maximum of 50 points will be awarded by each of the evaluators during the remote evaluation.
- **Note:** During the selection process for Stage 1, ventures led or co-led by women will be awarded an additional point in the evaluation.
- The final remote evaluation score will be the average of all remote evaluators' scores. Projects must score at least 35/50 to be conditionally invited to the EIT RIB programme.
- In case there are more applicants scoring above the threshold than available places (12), the ones with higher scores will be conditionally accepted. In case there are many applicants with the same scoring, earlier date and hour of submission will decide on the higher place of the applicant.
- **Note:** In the programme, selection between Stages will be conducted by an independent committee. The Marketing Landing Roadmap will be one of the documents evaluated between the stages.

## 4.5. Evaluation Criteria

For the quality check (remote evaluation), evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- **Excellence (30%)**

These criterion assesses the innovation and technical moat: the strength of the innovation and its novelty, its technological potential and market relevance. The following sub-criteria will be evaluated:

- Innovation and Differentiation:** Solution proposed by the applicant demonstrates a novel approach, unique value proposition clearly differentiated from current market offerings.
- Deep-tech or high-growth technology sectors focus:** Proposed solution is based on scientific discoveries, engineering, advanced research or targets high-growth technology sectors.
- Market-Solution Fit:** Foreign market choice is supported by justification and rationale for expansion and evidences of initial market knowledge.

- **Impact (20%)**

These criterion assesses the strategic fit and long-term value: systemic impact of the proposed solution, alignment with the EIT RIB goals and with EU strategic agendas (e.g., green/digital transition, competitiveness) and likelihood of long-term success and societal benefit.

- Market Potential:** The applicant provides clear evidences of commercial viability and a large enough "addressable market" for its solution.
- Societal and Economic Benefits:** The applicant aligns with the thematic, sectoral, and innovation goals described in the call and demonstrates measurable positive outcomes for economy, environment, or society.

- **Quality and efficiency of the implementation (50%)**

These criterion assesses the start-up's ability to execute the expansion: team's readiness and capability to scale across EU markets, operational strength, evidences that the solution is operationally and strategically ready for growth, maturity of the go-to-market plan and financing approach, thoughtful identification of potential technical, financial, or market risks and mitigation measures.

- Operational Capabilities and International Expansion Readiness:** The applicant demonstrates both ambition and capability to enter and scale in EU markets. The start-up has the infrastructure and systems in place to manage growth efficiently. The expansion plan is mature, realistic, and supported by a clear timeline.
- Regulatory & Compliance Readiness:** Solutions are capable of meeting industry regulations and certifications required for international expansion.
- Funding Strategy:** The application presents a viable financial model and credible plan to attract future investment.
- Risk Management:** The application provides a credible assessment of key risks and outlines robust mitigation strategies, particularly for international scaling.
- Personnel Expertise and Stakeholder Engagement:** The team possesses the right mix of industry, technical, and business skills and demonstrates readiness to collaborate with institutions, corporates, R&D centres, and international partners.

Startups taking part in the EIT RIB programme with success may be granted additional KIC funding at a later stage of the programme. This process is regulated by the provisions included in the corresponding EIT KIC guidance on the fast-track mechanism.

## 4.6. Final notification

Up to 12 applications with the highest score will be invited to join the EIT RIB programme. The list of selected entities will be published no later than mid-August 2026. To be formally accepted, participants will need to provide a signed Concept note to participate in the programme.

## 5. APPEALS PROCEDURE

Applicants to the EIT RIB may appeal through the process for the selection. Similarly, the participants of the programme may appeal for errors in the programme execution. The only grounds for appeal are process errors, technical problems beyond the control of applicants (e.g. the technical failure of the electronic submission system), Human/technical errors made by EIT KICs staff.

Scores awarded in the process of evaluation, regardless of the phase of the programme, do not constitute the grounds for an appeal.

Applicants should send their appeals in writing to [redress@eitfood.eu](mailto:redress@eitfood.eu) as soon as they identify an error, but no later than 15 days after receiving their result. EIT Regional Innovation Booster Lead acknowledges receipt of the appeal within 48 hours, assesses the claim and delivers a first response within 2 weeks.

If there are grounds for appeal, EIT RIB Coordinator will attempt to remedy the consequences (e.g. if a technical error of EIT RIB prevented the submission of a proposal or application, a late submission may still be accepted as eligible).

The Steering Committee of the EIT Community Regional Innovations and Internationalization Cluster is notified about the matter if:

- the applicant does not accept a rejection of the appeal, or the remediation suggested by the EIT Regional Innovation Booster Coordinator,
- there are grounds for appeal, but the problem cannot be remedied any more without disrupting the process.

The final decision regarding the appeal and the suggested remedies shall be brought by the Steering Committee of the EIT Community Regional Innovations and Internationalization Cluster within 4 weeks.

## 6. FUNDING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The total budget for financial support in this call is EUR 460,000. Recipients may receive one or two subgrants to fund their costs, depending on their participation and performance in the Programme. Financial support will be distributed to the team only if all required deliverables are submitted and a respective agreement is signed.

### 6.1. General conditions

Participants will be eligible to receive financial support at different stages of the Programme, depending on their successful completion of each stage and submitting required deliverables within a time frame defined in the point 2.2. Financing is based on startup, no matter if the startup team is represented by just one or two or more members. Participants may not receive financial support twice during the Programme cycle for the same activity.

To participate in the respective stages of the programme and to receive (if applicable) financial support, the candidates will be evaluated and selected in based on their submitted deliverables: (1) application with pitch-video and pitch deck, (2) market landing roadmap draft, (3) revised market landing roadmap

with supporting documents.

Up to 12 startups will be selected in 1st round of evaluation to join Stage 1. Then up to 6 will be selected in 2nd round of evaluation to participate in Stage 2, where they will become eligible to receive a grant (50,000 EUR) under condition of submitting required deliverables and signing a financial support agreement. Then up to 4 best startups will be selected in 3rd round of evaluation to participate in Stage 3, where they will become eligible to receive a subgrant (up to 40,000 EUR) under condition of submitting required deliverables and signing a financial support agreement to attend final stage of the programme.

The grant can cover personnel costs (e.g. salaries for key hires and advisory aid, etc.), external services (e.g. feasibility study, patent services, technical development and testing, legal support, etc.), travel and participation cost of meetings and scaling activities (e.g. fairs, participation in the investors meetings, thematic conferences), commercialization activities (e.g. pilot projects, demonstrations). The full list of eligible costs will be presented to the selected ventures in Stage 2 and Stage 3 and provided in the grant agreement.

## 6.2. Financial support for participation in different stages

### **Stage 1 - Market Entry Strategy and readiness with Bootcamps (August-October 2026)**

Not applicable

### **Stage 2 - Market tapping and Commercial Execution (October-December 2026)**

Each team that participates in the Stage 2, signs a grant agreement and submits the required deliverables within required deadlines will receive a lump sum of EUR 50,000 to cover their costs related to attending the Stage 2, as well as other eligible project development activities. The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed in instalments, with specific terms described in grant agreement shared with teams selected to the Stage 2. The first instalment (60% of the grant amount) will be disbursed after signing the grant agreement. The second instalment (40% of the grant amount) is conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverables (described in p. 2.2 and specified in the grant agreement).

### **Stage 3 - International exposure and investors scouting (January – April 2027)**

Each team that participates in the Stage 3, signs a grant agreement and submits the required deliverables within required deadlines will receive a grant of up to EUR 40,000 to cover their costs related to attending the Stage 3 activities, as well as other eligible project development activities related to the international exposure. The grant will be disbursed as a reimbursement of actual costs incurred. The grant will be disbursed in instalments, with specific terms described in grant agreement shared with teams selected to the Stage 3. The first instalment (60% of the grant amount) will be disbursed after signing the grant agreement as a prepayment. The second instalment (up to 40% of the grant amount) is a balance payment conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverables (described in p. 2.2 and specified in the grant agreement, e.g. incurred costs report).

## 6.3. Form of financial support

Financial support will be provided as a lump sum and actual costs reimbursement.

Financial support to startups will be based on a financial support agreement signed by a startup. EIT KIC responsible for EIT RIB implementation will provide all necessary documentation to the startup. If a participating startup does not accept the financial support agreement, this startup will not be eligible for the financial support.

## 6.4. Payment Schedule

The financial support will be disbursed in instalments following the completion of respective programme milestones for every startup eligible for financial support (details in point 2.2). Payments will be made upon signing the corresponding agreement and submission of the corresponding deliverables within maximum 60 days from delivery of all required deliverables mentioned in point 2.2 and 6.2. Each deliverable is linked to a proportional cost allocation and a defined deduction rate of 100% of the amount of financial support. If a deliverable is not completed or is only partially fulfilled, a deduction will be applied up to the amount allocated to that deliverable, meaning that in cases where deliverables are not completed or only partially fulfilled, funding will not be disbursed.

## 7. IP RIGHTS, CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The applications submitted to EIT for the EIT RIB programme are handled under confidentiality. Everybody who comes in contact with the applications and deliverables during the review process is bound by confidentiality agreements. By applying for the EIT RIB programme, applicants consent to access, keep, and use their data by the EIT Communities and Climate-KIC, EIT Food, EIT Health, 28Digital, InnoEnergy, EIT RawMaterials, EIT Urban Mobility, EIT Culture and Creativity for the Programme implementation. In particular the personal data of applicants will be shared with the EIT and Xjenza Malta for reporting purposes as well as with evaluators and mentors of the programme. For further regulations regarding personal data protection see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. The organiser and their authorised representatives in the programme undertake to ensure the confidentiality of the ideas and project details developed throughout the programme, which are not revealed by the participants in the publicly available parts of the programme. Please note: The submitted applications should be grounded in the unique ideas and creations of the applicant. If it incorporates intellectual property (IP) not originally the applicant's, it is crucial to have clear permissions, like a license agreement or a formal transfer of IP rights from the IP rights holder.

The intellectual property rights of all materials, curriculum, and methodology used during the EIT RIB are fully owned by the leading EIT. Participants cannot share them with externals or use them for other purposes not related to the EIT RIB.

## 8. EIT COMMUNITY'S REPRESENTATION / COMMUNICATION POLICY

- Participants selected to the EIT RIB programme must display the EIT Community logo on their website in a visible place within one month after finalising the Stage 1. The EIT RIB Coordinator will share the relevant guidelines with the teams during the programme.
- Participants are eligible to be interviewed, and they shall participate in any media interview at the organisers request.
- When participants announce that they became a member of the EIT RIB community, they shall make sure to have the EIT Community logo displayed on the image they are using or should mention the EIT RIB account, if it is available on that platform (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, others).
- It is recommended to promote the programme as the ambassador among local networks, by sharing information about being accepted and completing each step of a programme in the professional network and social media.
- All images and assets where an EIT KIC, the EIT Community, the EIT RIB, or the EIT itself is displayed

shall be approved by the organizers of the programme. EIT visual guidelines must be respected in this case. Guidelines will be provided to the teams during the programme and upon request.

## 9. AUDIT RIGHTS

Participants are aware that EIT RIB Programme Lead, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities, the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) can carry out checks, reviews, audits, investigations on the participants and evaluations related to the Call.

## 10. DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

### 10.1. Liability for damages

EIT Communities cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the participants or to third parties as a consequence of the grant, including for gross negligence. EIT Communities cannot be held liable for any damage caused by any of the participants in the context of the grant.

### 10.2. Force Majeure

EIT Communities shall not be liable to the other parties for non-performance or undue performance of the Programme implementation as a result of force majeure understood as an objective, external, unforeseeable, unexpected, whose consequences cannot be predicted and cannot be prevented, which occurred despite the due diligence required in commercial relations in order to properly perform the Programme (in particular: pandemic, fire, flood, hail, etc.). In this case, no contractual penalties will be charged.

EIT Communities reserves the right to discontinue the EIT RIB 2026 Malta edition in a situation when financing for the programme provided by EIT or Xjenza Malta is terminated.

## 11. KEY DATES

- Deadline for submitting application: 15 July 2026 at 23:59 CEST
- Announcement of selected applicants: 31 July 2026
- Bootcamps 1 & 2 (on-line and on-site, Malta): August - September 2026
- Submission of First draft of Market Landing Roadmap: 30 September 2026
- Stage 2 selection and grant agreement signing: October 2026
- Stage 2 Workshop: October-November 2026
- Submission of Finalized Market Landing Roadmap: 31 December 2026
- Stage 3 selection and grant agreement signing: January 2027
- Investor Pitch Event: February-April 2027 (tbd)
- Submission of final deliverables and reports on validation of the Market Landing Roadmap: 30 April 2027

Dates are tentative and could change, but the project management team will report them appropriately. Any changes will be published in the updated call manual.

## 12. HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

For general programme-related questions, please contact EIT RIB Coordinator Malta: [adam.strzelecki@eitfood.eu](mailto:adam.strzelecki@eitfood.eu)

## LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1 – EIT RIB Code of Conduct

Annex 2 – Scoring criteria

Annex 3 – Detailed thematic scope

Annex 4 – Overview of the organizing Knowledge and Innovation Communities

Annex 5 – Technology Readiness Level description

## Annex 1 – EIT RIB Code of Conduct

### EIT RIB CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARTICIPANTS

#### EXCLUSION CRITERIA – CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicants shall be excluded from participation if they:

- are subject to personal bankruptcy;
- have been banned from taking part in public procurement processes, performing executive duties or shareholder status, completing professional work;
- are guilty of grave professional misconduct (professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information to gain advantage);
- have committed fraud, corruption, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking;
- have shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar;
- are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests;
- have created an entity under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social, or other legal obligations in the country of origin;
- have a conflict of interest at the commencement or at any time during the entire duration of the application or the completion process; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest related to the call.

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby provide my declaration, stating that I am not in one of the situations of exclusion listed above. In case of doubt, I hereby approve that I may be requested to provide supporting evidence of non-exclusion.

Date and place:

---

Signature

## Annex 2 – Scoring criteria

In selection all applicants will be evaluated in accordance with the pre-defined eligibility and selection criteria.

Eligibility criteria (yes/no, if no – not eligible):

- Geographical criteria (The applicant is a startup/scaleup registered and keeping operation in Malta prior to launch of the call) yes/no;
- Thematic scope (The startup/scaleup offers a product or service within the thematic scope of the programme) yes/no;
- Form of business activity (The applicant is a for-profit small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) according to the [EU definition](#) which have at least 2 [FTEs](#) working at the time of the proposal submission, and a CEO engaged full-time in the company at the time of the proposal submission
- Funding limits (the sum of grants received from EIT by the applicant does not exceed the funding limit of EUR 60,000) yes/no;
- Application format (The applicant fulfils the application format as set out in the T&C) yes/no.

For the quality check (remote evaluation), evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

Selection criteria to the stage: 1, 2, 3:

General Criterion	Criteria	Scores
Excellence (A,B,C)	A. Innovation and Differentiation	0-5
	B. Deep-tech or high-growth technology sectors focus	0-5
	C. Market-Solution Fit	0-5
Impact (D,E)	D. Market Potential	0-5
	E. Societal and Economic Benefits	0-5
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (F,G,H,I,J)	F. Operational Capabilities and International Expansion Readiness	0-5
	G. Regulatory & Compliance Readiness	0-5
	H. Funding Strategy	0-5
	I. Risk Management	0-5
	J. Personnel Expertise and Stakeholder Engagement	0-5

- **Excellence (30%)**

These criterion assesses the innovation and technical moat: the strength of the innovation and its novelty, its technological potential and market relevance. The following sub-criteria will be evaluated:

**A. Innovation and Differentiation:** Solution proposed by the applicant demonstrates a novel approach, unique value proposition clearly differentiated from current market offerings.

**B. Deep-tech or high-growth technology sectors focus:** Proposed solution is based on scientific discoveries, engineering, advanced research or targets high-growth technology sectors.

**C. Market-Solution Fit:** Foreign market choice is supported by justification and rationale for expansion and evidences of initial market knowledge.

Evaluation Focus:

Innovativeness and maturity of the go-to-market plan.

- **Impact (20%)**

These criterion assesses the strategic fit and long-term value: systemic impact of the proposed solution, alignment with the EIT RIB goals and with EU strategic agendas (e.g., green/digital transition, competitiveness) and likelihood of long-term success and societal benefit. The following sub-criteria will be evaluated:

**D. Market Potential:** The applicant provides clear evidences of commercial viability and a large enough "addressable market" for its solution.

**E. Societal and Economic Benefits:** The applicant aligns with the thematic, sectoral, and innovation goals described in the call and demonstrates measurable positive outcomes for economy, environment, or society.

Evaluation Focus:

Likelihood of long-term success and societal benefit.

- **Quality and efficiency of the implementation (50%)**

These criterion assesses the start-up's ability to execute the expansion: team's readiness and capability to scale across EU markets, operational strength, evidences that the solution is operationally and strategically ready for growth, maturity of the go-to-market plan and financing approach, thoughtful identification of potential technical, financial, or market risks and mitigation measures. The following sub-criteria will be evaluated:

**F. Operational Capabilities and International Expansion Readiness:** The applicant demonstrates both ambition and capability to enter and scale in EU markets. The start-up has the infrastructure and systems in place to manage growth efficiently. The expansion plan is mature, realistic, and supported by a clear timeline.

**G. Regulatory & Compliance Readiness:** Solutions are capable of meeting industry regulations and certifications required for international expansion.

**H. Funding Strategy:** The application presents a viable financial model and credible plan to attract future investment.

**I. Risk Management:** The application provides a credible assessment of key risks and outlines robust mitigation strategies, particularly for international scaling.

**J. Personnel Expertise and Stakeholder Engagement:** The team possesses the right mix of industry, technical, and business skills and demonstrates readiness to collaborate with institutions, corporates, R&D centres, and international partners.

Evaluation Focus:

Confidence in the team and execution plan.

Evidence that the solution is operationally and strategically ready for growth.

Financial sustainability.

Additional selection criterion to the stage: 1:

General Criterion	Criteria	Scores
Impact (K)	K. Female co-/founders	0-1

**K. Female co-/founders:** The applicant's team has a female co-/founder.

Each evaluation criterion scored from 0 to 5 will be using the following scoring system:

0	Very Poor	The criterion is not addressed, or there are critical deficiencies, that make the evaluated deliverable unacceptable with respect to this criterion.
1	Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed and presents major weaknesses.
2	Fair	The criterion is partially addressed, but significant weaknesses remain.
3	Good	The criterion is adequately addressed, though several shortcomings are present.
4	Very Good	The criterion is well addressed, with only minor shortcomings.
5	Excellent	The criterion is very well addressed, fully meeting or exceeding all relevant aspects.

Each evaluation criterion scored from 0 to 1 will be using the following scoring system:

0	Not documented	The criterion is not addressed or not sufficiently documented in deliverables.
1	Documented	The criterion is addressed and sufficiently documented in deliverables.

Startups taking part in EIT RIB programme with particular success may be granted additional KIC funding at a later stage of the programme. This process is regulated by the provisions included in the corresponding KIC guidance on the fast-track mechanism.

## Annex 3 – Detailed thematic scope

The applications submitted must be within a scope of the main challenges:

- *Climate innovation for place-based transformation at the local level powered by Climate KIC.* We are looking for solutions that help cities and regions plan and implement climate actions, analyse data, engage stakeholders, test new approaches and scale successful solutions at the local level, contributing to measurable impact and long-term systemic change. More details are accessible here: <https://www.climate-kic.org/>
- *Digital Tech, Digital Cities, Digital Industry, Digital Wellbeing, and Digital Finance powered by 28Digital.* 28Digital invests in strategic areas to accelerate the market uptake and scaling of research-based digital technologies (deep tech) focusing on Europe’s key societal challenges. More details are accessible here: <https://28digital.eu>
- *Food & Agritech powered by EIT Food:* optimising resource efficiency and environmental sustainability of agriculture supply, primary production, processing, storing, packaging, logistics/distribution, retail, consumer research, nutrition monitoring, and food service; developing nutritionally customised food products, addressing unmet needs and generating consumer relevant functionalities; building trust in the food system, securing traceability and auditability of food quality, safety, and authenticity, combining digital and sensor technologies to acquire and transmit information through the food value chain. In general – the development of solutions that will put new products on the market, introduce new and improved commercial processes and services, and achieve: Healthier Lives Through Food, A Net Zero Food System, and A Fully Transparent, Fair, and Resilient Food System. More details are accessible here: <https://eitfood.eu>
- *Healthcare powered by EIT Health:* New models to deliver healthcare; Facilitating the uptake of digital medical devices in Europe; Harnessing the full potential of health data for innovation; Supporting the deployment of Important Project of Common European Interest in Health (IPCEI) to address market failures. More details are accessible here: <https://eithealth.eu/who-we-are/our-focus-areas/>
- *Energy and Renewables powered by InnoEnergy:* energy costs reduction, system performance increase, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions decrease, circular economy (particularly in the context of energy usage), green hydrogen, solar energy, energy management systems, energy usage of waste, recycling related energy sector, new solutions to energy-heavy industries that optimise energy usage or change its sources to more sustainable and energy storage. Any other innovative approaches that are based on sustainable energy generation, storage, or usage are welcome. More information is here: <https://www.innoenergy.com/>
- *Metals, minerals, industrial side streams powered by EIT RawMaterials:* Technologies and solutions for improved and new mineral exploration; Digital solutions for remote monitoring, analytics, sensing, modelling, digital twins, etc.; Advanced and fully integrated exploration – smart targeting of ore deposits; Technologies and solutions for more efficient, safer and sustainable modern mining; Technologies and solutions for mineral and metal processing and for improved materials production; Improving processing efficiency by reducing resource use and/or emissions and CO<sub>2</sub>-footprint; Technology that address equipment-damage problems such as wall thinning, creep or corrosion; Technologies and solutions for materials supply from secondary sources and recycling; Cost-efficient and clever collection, dismantling and sorting of waste; Turning waste resources into a valuable raw materials feedstock for EU industries; New technologies, materials or services that make it possible to substitute or use lower quantities of critical or toxic materials

in key industries; Solutions and business models implementing circular economy concepts; Design of products for recycling and lifetime extension; Resource efficient design of materials; Innovation to improve traceability, sustainability, and transparency across raw materials value chains. More details are accessible here: <https://eitrawmaterials.eu/>

- *Urban Mobility powered by EIT Urban Mobility:* Active Mobility (walking and cycling), Sustainable City Logistics (delivery, waste management, circular freight, logistics infrastructures, shared logistics, etc.) , Future Mobility (traffic management, waterborne mobility, shared mobility, urban air mobility, etc.), Mobility and Energy (electrification, hydrogen for mobility, battery tech and circularity, net-zero e-fuels, etc.), and Transport Infrastructure, (intermodality, autonomous public transport, demand-responsive transport, smart parking, etc.) are the main focus areas. This is not a closed list, any idea/solution to solving city challenges is welcome. More details are accessible here: <https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/who-we-are/about-us/>
- *Culture, audiovisual and creative sectors by EIT Culture and Creativity:* architecture, gaming, fashion, cultural heritage and audio-visual media. We support innovators every step of the way to scale their ideas, translate innovation into impact and redefine what entrepreneurship means today. More details are accessible here: <https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/about-us/who-we-are>

## Annex 4 – Overview of the EIT and the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities organizing EIT RIB

The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#) is dedicated to enhancing Europe’s ability to innovate by nurturing entrepreneurial talent and supporting groundbreaking ideas. Through its "knowledge triangle" model, the EIT connects leading companies, universities, and research centres to form dynamic cross-border partnerships called Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). These communities work collaboratively to address pressing societal challenges and drive innovation.

Currently, there are eight thematic KICs under the EIT umbrella, actively participating in the EIT RIB Programme:

- Climate-KIC: Tackling climate change through innovation.
- 28Digital: Fostering digital transformation.
- EIT Food: Driving innovation in the agri-food sector.
- EIT Health: Advancing health and well-being.
- InnoEnergy: Leading the transition to sustainable energy.
- EIT RawMaterials: Securing sustainable supply chains for raw materials.
- EIT Urban Mobility: Improving mobility and urban living.
- EIT Culture and Creativity: Empowering Cultural and Creative Innovation in Europe.

The [EIT Community Regional Innovation and Internationalisation \(RI&I\) Cluster](#) is a horizontal initiative providing a platform for KICs to collaborate, share best practices, and launch joint activities. It focuses on fostering innovation in Emerging European regions, including countries eligible for the [EIT Regional Innovation Scheme](#). The EIT RIS aims to bridge the innovation gap, particularly in countries where innovation performance is considered modest or moderate, as defined by the European Innovation Scoreboard.

### Overview of Climate KIC

Climate KIC is Europe’s leading climate innovation agency and community, working with public and private stakeholders to support climate transition. Climate KIC creates climate-resilient societies and fights climate breakdown, building better futures for local communities globally. It uses innovation to mobilise systems change and bridge the gap between climate commitments and current reality. Together with partners, Climate KIC generates, implements and integrates climate solutions by mobilising finance, testing business models, and opening pathways for institutional change and behavioural change. Climate KIC makes systems transformation meaningful by enabling change in the places where people live and work, creating a positive feedback loop for change. <https://www.climate-kic.org/>

### Overview of 28Digital

28Digital embodies the future of innovation by mobilizing a pan-European multi-stakeholder open-innovation ecosystem of top European corporations, SMEs, startups, universities and research institutes, where students, researchers, engineers, business developers and investors address the technology, talent, skills, business and capital needs of digital entrepreneurship. 28Digital builds the next generation of digital ventures, digital products and services, and breed digital entrepreneurial talent, helping business and entrepreneurs to be at the frontier of digital innovation by providing them with technology, talent, and growth support. 28Digital answers specific innovation needs by, for example, finding the right partners to bring technology to the market, supporting the scale-up of digital technology ventures, attracting talent and developing their digital knowledge and skills. <https://28digital.eu>

## Overview of EIT Food

EIT Food is the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community. We accelerate innovation to build a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all. Supported by the EIT, we invest in projects, organizations, and individuals that share our goals for a healthy and sustainable food system. We unlock innovation potential in businesses and universities and create and scale agrifood startups to bring new technologies and products to market. We equip entrepreneurs and professionals with the skills needed to transform the food system and put consumers at the heart of our work, helping build trust by reconnecting them to the origins of their food. For more information please visit: <https://www.eitfood.eu/>

## Overview of EIT Health

EIT Health is one of Europe's largest public-private partnerships in healthcare innovation, comprising approximately 150 partners, including leading companies, universities, research and development centers, hospitals, and institutes. Its mission is to build an ecosystem that fosters the development of future healthcare solutions, enabling European citizens to live longer and healthier lives. Key contributions of EIT Health include:

- Upgrading the skills of healthcare professionals across Europe.
- Investing in Europe's best talent and entrepreneurial projects.
- Facilitating the commercialization of innovative health products and solutions.

EIT Health is co-funded by the EIT, a body of the European Union. For more information, visit their official website: [www.eithealth.eu](http://www.eithealth.eu).

## Overview of InnoEnergy

[InnoEnergy](#) operates at the centre of the energy transition and is the leading innovation engine in sustainable energy. It brings the technology, business model innovation and skills required to accelerate the green deal, progress towards Europe's decarbonisation and re-industrialisation goals, whilst also improving energy security.

[Ranked as the most active investor in the energy sector in 2022 by Pitchbook, named in 2023 as one of Europe's top 10 most active deeptech investors by Sifted, and recognised in 2022 as Europe's leading impact investor in cleantech by Startup Genome,](#) InnoEnergy backs innovations across a range of areas. These include energy storage, transport and mobility, renewables, energy efficiency, hard to abate industries, smart grids and sustainable buildings, and cities.

InnoEnergy has a portfolio of more than 200 companies, which are estimated to generate €110 billion in revenue and save 2.1G tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e accumulatively by 2030. Collectively, these companies have raised more than €9.7 billion in investment to date. InnoEnergy is the driving force behind three strategic European initiatives which include the [European Battery Alliance](#) (EBA), [the European Green Hydrogen Acceleration Center](#) (EGHAC) and the [European Solar Photovoltaic Industry Alliance](#) (ESIA).

## Overview of EIT RawMaterials

Minerals and metals are key enablers of the green and digital transition. Raw materials are critical to preserving the global competitiveness of the EU's most strategic economic sectors. Today, only a fraction of the most relevant raw materials is produced in Europe. This can be changed through a circular economy approach, through innovation in recycling, substitution, processing, mining, and exploration. EIT RawMaterials overarching mandate is to support securing the supply of critical raw materials to the

European industry by driving innovation along the raw materials value chain.

EIT RawMaterials builds on the world's largest network of partners in raw materials. EIT RawMaterials mission is to develop raw materials into a major strength for Europe by boosting competitiveness, growth and attractiveness of the European raw materials sector via radical innovation, new education approaches and guided entrepreneurship. For more information visit: <https://eitrawmaterials.eu/>

### Overview of EIT Urban Mobility

Founded in 2019 as an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, EIT Urban Mobility is committed to accelerating the transition to sustainable mobility. We accelerate the sustainable urban mobility transition by providing established businesses, startups, universities, research institutes, and the public sector with access to markets, talent, funding and knowledge. We empower our partners to develop and deploy new solutions that address the mobility challenges European cities face. We work in partnership with over 250 organisations and collaborate with a wider network of more than 1,100 organisations across 35 countries. Our work supports our vision for sustainable and decarbonised urban mobility and more livable urban spaces for all. For more information visit: [www.eiturbanmobility.eu](http://www.eiturbanmobility.eu)

### Overview of EIT Culture and Creativity

[EIT Culture & Creativity](#) is the institutional partnership dedicated to transforming Europe's Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries to become more sustainable, resilient, and competitive. Established in 2023 by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), an EU body, the organisation offers funding, knowledge, and tailored support. Our vision is to empower the CCSI as a vital force for economic, social, and environmental transformation. Our mission is to drive responsible growth through innovation, education, business creation, and societal impact. Our initial strategic focus is on five sectors — architecture, gaming, fashion, cultural heritage, and audiovisual media — offering targeted support to innovators to scale ideas, translate innovation into impact, and redefine entrepreneurship for the creative economy.

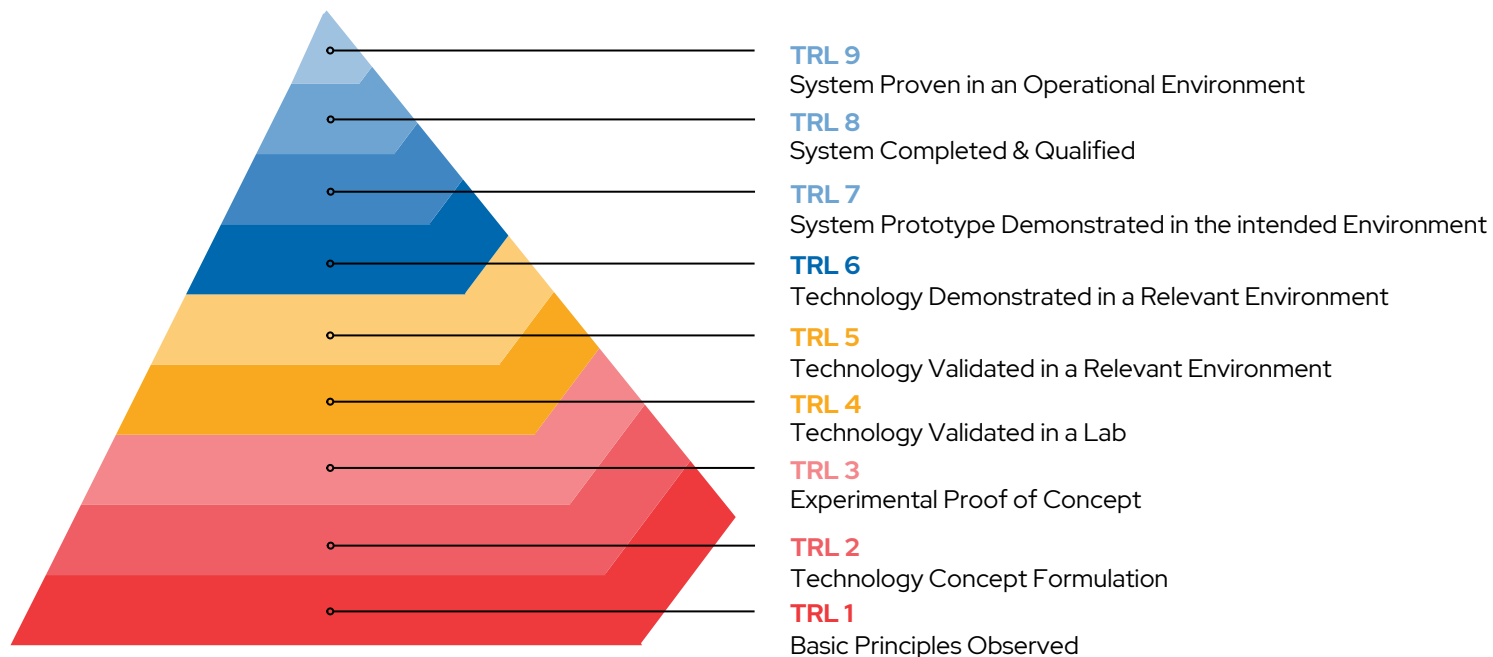


## Annex 5 – Technology Readiness Levels - A quick guide



# Technology Readiness Levels

## A quick guide



N.B. Please note that “Technology” is defined as the application of knowledge and tools to solve problems, enhance capabilities, or improve efficiency across various fields.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL)	Definition	Explanation
<b>TRL 1</b>	Basic principles observed.	Lowest level of technology readiness. Process concept with basic scientific foundation.
<b>TRL 2</b>	Technology concept and/or application formulated.	Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development. Applications are speculative and may be unproven.
<b>TRL 3</b>	Analytical and experimental critical function and/or characteristic proof-of-concept.	Active research and development is initiated, including analytical / laboratory studies to validate predictions regarding the technology.
<b>TRL 4</b>	Scientific & process validation in laboratory environment.	Basic technological components are integrated to establish that they will work together, in a controlled environment.
<b>TRL 5</b>	Scientific & process validation in intended environment.	The basic technological components are integrated with reasonably realistic supporting elements so it can be tested in a simulated environment.
<b>TRL 6</b>	System /subsystem model or prototype demonstration in an intended environment (ground or space).	A representative model or prototype system is tested in an intended environment.
<b>TRL 7</b>	System (full-scale) prototype demonstration in a real operational environment at pre-commercial scale.	A prototype system that is at the planned operational system.
<b>TRL 8</b>	Actual system completed and validated as capable commercial system.	In an actual system, the technology has been proven to work in its final form and under expected conditions.
<b>TRL 9</b>	Full commercial application and technology available for consumers	The system incorporating the new technology in its final form has been used under actual mission conditions.