Call for Proposals 2025
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Applicants

1) General and Scope Questions

What are the main objectives of the 2025 Call?

The 2025 Call has two core objectives: (1) strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship capacity of Europe's STEM talent pipeline; and (2) build long-term synergies between European University alliances and the EIT KICs to boost competitiveness, resilience, and strategic autonomy. The call is structured in two Topics: Topic 1 – STEM capacity building; Topic 2 – Building synergies.

For more details, see section 2 of the Call text.

How does this Call link to EU policy priorities?

Selected projects are expected to contribute to the Union of Skills (especially the STEM Education Strategic Plan), accelerate research-to-market, and improve conditions for start-ups and scaleups (e.g., Choose Europe).

For more details, see section 2.1 of the Call text.

What is the high-level scope for all projects?

Answer (GENERAL)

Projects are expected to fully integrate the three dimensions of the EIT Knowledge Triangle **–** education, innovation, and business – to strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions, industry, and other innovation actors. This integration should accelerate the translation of knowledge and research into tangible societal and economic impact and reinforce entrepreneurial mindsets and skills across the participating institutions and their ecosystems at regional and European level while showing a measurable commitment to diversity and inclusion.

For more details, see section 2.2 of the Call text.

What is expected of HEI leadership and institutional engagement?

Top management must be actively engaged from proposal stage through implementation, embedding innovation and entrepreneurship (I&E) in institutional strategies and governance. A signed top-management commitment letter (template in the Application Portal) is required, listing the participating faculties/departments.

For more details, see section 3.6 of the Call text.

How should we avoid double funding with other EU calls?

Applications must explain complementarity and avoid duplication with other EU funding (e.g., HORIZON-WIDERA and Erasmus+ for European Universities). Any duplication which presents a risk against double funding will automatically exclude the proposal from the selection process.

2) Eligibility and Consortium Composition

Who can apply? Do we need non-HEI partners?

 Consortia must follow the Knowledge Triangle model and must be comprised of a minimum of three higher education institutions (HEIs), based in three different Horizon Europe eligible countries, at least one business partner (any size private-sector enterprise) and at least one other non-HEI organisation (this can be a second business partner) as full consortium members.

For more details, see section 6 of the Call text.

Do KICs participate as partners in proposals?

 No. EIT KICs do not participate as partners in proposals. Selected projects are allocated to a participating KIC for project management purposes (contracting, monitoring, support) and will act as intermediary grant authorities during the full life cycle of the funded projects.

For more details, see section 3.3 of the Call text.

Are European University Alliances (EUAs) eligible?

 Yes. EUAs are encouraged—especially under Topic 2—to establish long-term strategic cooperation with 2–3 KICs, aligning with KIC priorities where relevant.

What documentation do HEIs need regarding accreditation and leadership commitment?

 Each HEI must provide proof of accreditation by national authorities and a top-management Commitment Letter listing the engaged faculties/departments (official template available in the portal).

For more details, see section 3.6 of the Call text.

Can previous partners, including those who have already acted as coordinators, apply to Call 5 either as partners or as coordinators?
 Organisations that have previously participated as full partners in selected EIT HEI projects from Cohorts 1, 2, 3 and 4 are permitted to apply again either as full partners or coordinators. Furthermore, Cohort 1 – 4 EIT HEI partners should assume the role of "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Pioneer" within their consortium and the wider EIT HEI Community. This pioneer role, and the associated activities, must be clearly described and justified throughout the project's IVAP.

For more details, see section 3.7 of the Call text

Do previous EIT HEI partners (Cohorts 1–4) have a special role?

Yes. They are encouraged to apply and should act as Innovation & Entrepreneurship Pioneers—mentoring novice partners, transferring proven approaches (especially to STEM under Topic 1) and sharing good practices. For Topic 2 applicants, European University alliance-member organisations with previous experience of the EIT ecosystem are expected to further embed their previous innovation capacity building activities into the wider alliance strategy and portfolio, with particular emphasis on cooperation with the EIT KICs.

For both topic 1 and topic 2, proposals must clearly describe and justify this pioneer role throughout the project´s IVAP.

For more details, see section 3.7 of the Call text.

3) Topics: Choosing Between Topic 1 and Topic 2

What is the difference between Topic 1 and Topic 2?

 Topic 1 funds STEM-focused innovation capacity building, embedding I&E and IP management into STEM education and research-to-market pathways. Topic 2 supports European University Alliances to build long-term, strategic cooperation with 2–3 EIT KICs, including pursuit of EIT-labelled programmes where appropriate.

For more details, see section 2.2 of the Call text

Do both Topics require alignment with KICs?

Yes. Both Topics must select at least two and at most three EIT KICs and show how the project will contribute to and engage with their strategic objectives and key activities.

For more details, see section 3.3 of the Call text

What training quality standards are expected under Topic 1?

Training should integrate and scale high quality innovation, entrepreneurship and IP training into STEM curricula and staff development; ensure that quality is aligned with the European Education Area; and follow EntreComp for entrepreneurship competence development. Applicants may also consider micro-credentials or other certifications recognising innovation, entrepreneurship and IP management competences and/or the EIT Label for non-degree training where relevant. In practice, this means proposals should clearly describe:

- learning outcomes linked to innovation, entrepreneurship and IP skills
- how training quality will be assured
- how training will be embedded sustainably in STEM programmes or staff development

For more details, see section 2.3.1 of the Call text

What training quality standards are expected under Topic 2?

Topic 2 encourages applicants to improve and embed innovation, entrepreneurship, and IP management training across the alliance, including the pursuit of the EIT Label where suitable, with a strong focus on strengthening the integration of research–education–innovation and employability/entrepreneurial readiness of graduates. When relevant, proposals should include plans for certification or for strengthening existing EIT-labelled courses.

For more details, see section 2.3.2 of the Call text

4) Application and Submission

What is the Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP)

The full proposal (part A and part B) is your Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP) and is submitted via the Application Portal as: Part A (online technical information) and Part B (narrative Word template upload).

Do all HEIs need to complete HEInnovate?

Yes. All HEIs in the consortium must complete the HEInnovate self-assessment (individually or as a group). Results are used to baseline capacity of the universities in the consortium and to select the eight most relevant funded actions from the EIT HEI Impact Domains.

How do we select Actions under the EIT HEI Impact Domains?

You must select exactly eight Actions: at least one from each of Domains 1–4 (Actions #1–#4), two additional Actions from Domains 1–4 (Actions #5–#6), and both Actions in Domain 5 (Actions #7–#8).

5) KPI Requirements and Funding Model

What are the minimum KPI requirements for projects applying to Topic 1?

Minimum totals for 1 Sep 2026 – 31 Aug 2028:

- **EITHE03.1:** 6 supported start-ups/scale-ups (≥2 months of services).
- **EITHE04.1:** 2 start-ups established.
- **EITHE08.1:** 4,000 successful participants (≥10 learning hours; distributed across students, academic staff, and non-academic staff).
- **EITHE19.1:** 4 new/improved structures (at least one must enhance diversity & inclusion).
- **EITHE20:** 4 new partnerships (choose sub-indicator 20.1 or 20.2).

Plus choose **at least one** Core KPI to achieve by 31 Aug 2028 (**EITHE02.4** – innovation ≥€10k revenue; **EITHE04.4** – start-up established with min. €10k in financial transactions or €200k raised via private investment into start-up equity; **/EITHE06.1 private/public capital attracted by start-ups supported > €10k)**

For more details, see section 3.11 of the Call text

What are the minimum KPI requirements for projects applying to Topic 2?

Minimum totals for 1 Sep 2026 – 31 Aug 2028:

- **EITHE03.1:** 6 supported start-ups/scale-ups (≥2 months of services).
- **EITHE08.1:** 4,000 successful participants (≥10 learning hours; distributed across students, academic staff, and non-academic staff).
- **EITHE09.1:** 50 students enrolled in EIT programmes
- **EITHE19.1:** 4 new/improved structures (at least one must enhance diversity & inclusion).
- **EITHE20:** 4 new partnerships (choose sub-indicator 20.1 or 20.2).

Plus choose **at least one** Core KPI to achieve by 31 Aug 2028 (e.g., **EITHE05.1** – start-ups established by EIT graduates (min. 1); **EITHE07.1** – Sum of graduates from EIT labelled programs (min. 10)

For more details, see section 3.11 of the Call text

Are KPIs set annually?

No, no minimum annual targets are set. You plan KPIs by calendar year, but delivery is assessed against the commitments in your application over the funding period. You must thus achieve the minimum KPI targets set in section 3.11 of the Call by 31 Aug 2028.

What training duration/recognition applies for KPI EITHE08.1?

Participants must successfully complete trainings with defined learning outcomes and competency assessment, totalling a minimum of 10 learning hours.

What is the total call budget and project funding model?

Indicative total: €70M (Topic 1: ~€36M; Topic 2: ~€34M). Maximum grant per project: €2,000,000 at a 100% funding rate (eligible costs under Horizon Europe rules). The awarded amount may be lower than requested. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of 100%.

For more details, see section 4.2 & 4.3 of the Call text

What is the project duration and funding period?

24 months: from 1 Sep 2026 to 31 Aug 2028.

How are projects monitored and reviewed?

There will be two main reviews aligned with the EIT HEI Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework: The Mid-Project (after year 1) and End-of-Project reviews. Projects must participate in these learning/evaluation processes.

In addition, projects will be monitored on a regular basis by their allocated EIT KICs and will be required to report to them on an annual basis.

For more details, see section 3.4 of the Call text

Does the 2025 Call still use the 2024 "two-phase stop-go" model?

No. The 2025 Call specifies a single 24-month funding period (1 Sep 2026 – 31 Aug 2028).

6) EIT KIC Connection and Community Activities

How many EIT KICs must we align with, and how do we show this?

You must select 2–3 KICs relevant to your scope and clearly demonstrate your project´s contribution and engagement with their strategic objectives and activities (e.g., pathways from HEI-funded start-ups to later-stage KIC accelerators; participation in EIT Community activities) throughout your IVAP.

For more details, see section 3.3 of the Call text.

What is the role of the EIT KICs during implementation?

Each selected project is assigned to an EITKIC for contracting, support, monitoring and reporting purposes. EIT KICs will also facilitate their allocated EIT HEI projects with access to relevant EIT resources.

What EIT HEI community activities/events should we plan for?

Expect a portfolio of online and in-person events (e.g., IVAP Workshop, DEI Masterclass, System Innovation training, Sensemaking sessions, KIC discovery days, annual community events). Travel/time should be budgeted by the project to attend these events; you can aggregate these under an "EIT HEI Community Integration" task

For more details, see section 3.8 of the Call text.

7) Diversity & Inclusion, and the Regional Dimension

What is required regarding Diversity & Inclusion (D&I)?

A D&I value statement and action plan is mandatory, reinforcing the EU Gender Equality Strategy and EU Cohesion Policy—e.g., gender-sensitive teaching/mentoring, equal participation, and targeted inclusion of under-represented groups.

For more details, see section 3.9 of the Call text.

Do any KPIs explicitly link to diversity/inclusion?

Yes. Under EITHE19.1 (structures/mechanisms), at least one of the four required structures must enhance diversity & inclusion (e.g., support for female entrepreneurs).

How should projects address regional impact and Smart Specialisation?

Projects should map their regional ecosystems pre-application, while their IVAP should align with Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) and are invited to demonstrate how they will engage with relevant regional

authorities, businesses, and other ecosystem actors to support cohesion and innovation-driven growth; contribute to cohesion and balanced innovation-led growth; and position themselves with Choose Europe.

For more details, see section 3.5 of the Call text.

Is there an expectation to involve RIS/Widening regions and broader geographies?

A broad geographical scope, especially involving organisations established in RIS and Widening countries, including EU outermost regions and third countries associated to Horizon Europe which have not typically benefited from EU funding resources, support or networks before, is strongly encouraged. An ambitious but realistic explanation as to how such institutions will be involved in the project and how they will benefit from the project's activities will be positively evaluated. It is suggested that relevant regional/territorial authorities be consulted in the process of application development.

For more details, see section 3.5 of the Call text.

Additional Clarifications from 2024 FAQ That Still Help Applicants

What makes a strong IVAP (proposal)?

Clear alignment to the Initiative's objectives; credible pathways to institutional capacity building; ambitious yet realistic KPIs; relevant partners across the Knowledge Triangle; and appropriate geographic scope.

How ambitious should we set KPIs?

Ambition is positive if achievable given the consortium profile and scope. Evaluators consider capacity and realism, not "one-size-fits-all."

Can I apply to both Strands, in other words submit an application to Topic 1 (capacity building) and Topic 2 (building synergies)?

No, organisations can only participate in one application as a full partner and therefore can apply to only one Topic (1 or 2). Organisations/consortia should consider which Topic best suits their innovation and entrepreneurship capacity building needs.

Can the training programmes be delivered 100% remotely?
Yes, the training can be delivered face-to-face, hybrid or entirely online. This is at the consortium's discretion.

Are the KPIs counted per participating partner or per consortium
The KPIs are counted per consortium, and all participating partners should be contributing to the fulfilment of the KPIs.

My organisation is looking for potential consortium partners to apply for the call. How can we reach them?
The EIT HEI Initiative has provided access to an online networking and matchmaking platform specifically for this Call for Proposals, hosted on Conversation Starter. Please create a profile and browse potential partners HERE.

Who can I address to seek advice on applying to the EIT HEI Initiative Call for Proposals 2024?
 For general queries, such as application process and rules for participation, you may contact: hei@eitrawmaterials.eu.
For questions on specific Knowledge Innovation Community (KIC) alignment, you may address the dedicated KIC contact person. Find the list on the Call 2025 webpage.

Quick Reference (At a Glance)

- Topics:
    - **Topic 1:** STEM I&E/IP training, KTO/TTO capacity, research-to-market, institutional structures.
    - **Topic 2:** EUA–KIC strategic cooperation, EIT-label pursuits, alliance-wide I&E/IP training.
- **KIC alignment:** Select **2–3 KICs**; show concrete engagement/contribution.
- **Consortium:** Include **≥1 business** and **≥1 other non-HEI** as full partners; KICs are **not** proposal partners.
- **Application (IVAP):** Part A (portal forms) + Part B (narrative upload).
- **HEInnovate + Actions:** All HEIs complete HEInnovate; select **8 Actions** across Domains 1–5.
- **KPI planning:** No minimum annual targets; plan by calendar year; deliver full-period commitments.
- **Budget/duration:** Up to **€2,000,000** per project at **100%**; **1 Sep 2026 – 31 Aug 2028**; total call **~€70M**.
- **Community:** Budget time/travel for EIT HEI community activities/training/events.