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# RIS Call for

## RIS Straight to Market (S2M) 2024

* Startups, Scaleups and SMEs

# Guidelines

## EIT FOOD

### Leuven, Belgium

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#### Eitfood.eu

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# Introduction

EIT Food is the world's largest food innovation community, dedicated to building a sustainable, healthy food system. Supported by the European Union, we empower innovative projects, organizations, and individuals to drive transformative change. Our collaborative programs in skills, education, entrepreneurship, investment, and communication create a vibrant community with a shared vision for the future of food.

EIT Food has a strategic approach to systems change to create societal and economic impact. This is underpinned by a robust Theory of Change and a clear set of impact indicators and goals published in our [Strategic Agenda 2021-27.](https://www.eitfood.eu/media/documents/EIT_Food_Strategic_Agenda_2021-2027.pdf)

EIT Food CLC South, is based in Spain covering Southern European countries implementing EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) instruments, supporting those regions in Europe which particularly require support for innovation in the agrifood sector.

# What’s in It for You?

The RIS Straight to Market program offers startups a unique opportunity to refine and launch groundbreaking food products. Whether you’re developing a new product or enhancing an existing one, this program provides the support and resources needed to bring your innovations to life.

# Summary of the Call

The RIS Straight to Market programme, seeks to support small and medium-sized companies (SMEs), startups and scale-ups, **to** **bring to market new food products in the process of development or being highly improved at a nutritional/sustainable level**.

The strong market-oriented aim of this call will be combined with the engagement with consumers, through co-creation workshops in which their needs and expectations will be heard, and feedback on product is given to validate the added value in terms of nutritional improvement for consumers.

**Role of Startups**

The selected startups will have access to participate in a co-creation process with consumers, gathering feedback from them, in the country where the product is meant to be launched to get their products ready to market.

The role of startups will be focused in finishing the development of a new product or significantly improve the product characteristics of an already developed product (either from a nutritional or sustainability perspective) following a co-creation process. Including consumers feedback and demands in final product design.

After gathering consumers feedback, each selected startup will work to market their new or highly improved food product by 1st July 2025 and will commit to achieve EIT Food Impact KIPIs for each marketed product by 1st December 2025.

# What We’re Looking For

We seek innovative **food products that are new or highly improved at a nutritional/sustainable level,** including improvements in ingredients, packaging, nutritional profiles, labelling, and innovative features (with exception of changes in branding or packaging visuals), to support their successful reach to market. The product should align with EU policy priorities and EIT Food’s impact framework, focusing on reducing obesity, NCDs, promoting alternative food sources, minimizing food waste, and enhancing environmental sustainability and personalizing or changing diet in line with relevant Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for Europe.

The objective is to test and launch in the market at least 1 new food product per company, in alignment with EIT Food’s Impact Framework regarding new food products:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EIT Food goal** | **Type of Solution** |
| **1. Reduction in relative risk ® of obesity & Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) prevalence in target populations due to known dietary factors** | Products with levels of salt &/ or free sugars &/or trans & saturated fats reduced to, or below, recommended Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for Europe (targeting food groups known to be major sources of these dietary factors); or products on the market with an improved nutritional profile. |
| **2. Products on the market derived from alternative sources** | Products on the market derived from alternative sources (e.g., alternative proteins; new plant varieties; alternative production techniques, etc. |
| **3. Reduction in food waste & food loss** | New products or processes launched using revalorised &/ or reintegrated food system side-streams and waste streams |
| **4. Improvement in food system contribution to outcomes under EU Circular Economy Monitoring Framework and Improved environmental impact of agrifood systems** | New products or processes using revalorised &/ or reintegrated food systems side-streams and waste streams. Outcomes under EU Circular Economy Monitoring Framework include inter alia waste management, recycling, competitiveness & innovation. Volume reduction in CO2 equivalent tonnes from Agri-Food system through products |
| Table 1. EIT Food’s Impact Framework specific food products | |

* All products should help to **achieve EIT Food´s Missions**:
* Healthier Lives Through Food
* A Net Zero Food System
* A Fully Transparent, Fair and Resilient Food System

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mission** | **Success Indicators** |
| **Healthier Lives Through Food** | Increasing the availability of food products with improved nutritional profile to consumers.  Increasing the availability of food products with reduced levels of salt, sugar, or trans and saturated fats to consumers.  More consumers using innovative products or services that help to change or personalise their diet in line with relevant national dietary guidelines. |
| **Net Zero Food System** | Reduction of CO2 in the food system (measured in tonnes).  Reduction of other significant environmental impacts in the food system (usually measured in CO2 equivalent tonnes).  An increase in the number of products on the market that use food waste or side-streams.  An increase in the use of food waste or side-streams in food production.  An increase in products on the market that use alternative or new ingredients and improve environmental impact outcomes. |
| **Fully transparent, fair, and resilient food supply** | Reduction in the estimated cost (€) burden attached to food insecurity and food safety issues.  Adoption of packaging and/or technology improving transparency, traceability or security across the food system. |

# Timeline/ Phases

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Call open** | Until 15th September 2024 | This call for startups is meant to select organizations that will participate in 2024 edition of the programme. |
| **Official announcement of selected Projects** | 30th September 2024 | Selection of startups will be made by EIT Food, by at least three evaluators from EIT Food and public announcement of results. |
| **Kick-off meetings and Project beginning** | 05th October 2024 |  |
| **Product Testing by startup** | By 1st December 2024 | Consumer testing and co-creation of products and activity report delivery |
| **Market launch of new products** | **by 1st July 2025** | KPI achievement |
| **Reporting of product launch and KPI achievement justification** | **by 1st December 2025** |  |

All testing and co-creation activities (including the activity report) will have to be carried out and finished by December 1st 2024 with exception of:

5.1 Product launch in market to be delivered by July 1st 2025

5.2 Technical and comercial/sales report, including sales invoices, communication and dissemination report to be delivered by December 1st of 2025

# Call specific requirements

## 6.1 Duration

For the startups, the RIS S2M programme will have its activities ending in December 2024.

All activities of the **2024 edition of RIS Straight2Market** have to be finished and delivered by December 1st 2024, with exception of product market introduction, expected to be delivered by 30th July 1st 2025 and Technical and comercial/sales report, including sales invoices, communication and dissemination report , expected to be delivered by December 1st 2025

## 6.2 KPIs

Each of the selected Projects (1 start-up + 1 retailer) will have to comply timely the following **mandatory KPIs:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **KPI reference** | **KPI title** | **KPI description** | **Supporting evidence** | **Target date** | **Target**  **Per**  **PROJECT** |
| EITHE02.4 | Marketed Innovations | Number of innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or at the latest within 18 months from the start of the project with a sales revenue of at least 10 000 EUR documented.  Innovations include new or significantly improved products (goods or services) sold. The number and quality of marketed innovations will be evaluated. | Declaration of the product owner describing the innovativeness (new or significant improvement in terms of physical of functional parameters) of a product/process, link to the KIC societal challenge and the KAVA, as well as information on the KAVA investment in the innovation development.  **Documented proof such as an invoice or an online sales records demonstrating that the purchase of at least 10,000 EUR has been made by a customer/s.** | **Each “Project” should launch a product in market by 30th June 2024.** | **1** |

## 6.3 Market Readiness Level (MRL)

Proposed innovative solutions must:

* The product must be close to market enough to achieve a successful launch before 1st July 2024 and to reach the level of sales requested by the KPI (10.000€ by 1st December 2025)

## 6.4 Deliverables

The following tasks and commitments are required for each project:

* Maintain continuous communication with EIT Food during the whole duration of the Project;
* Respect and comply with programme deadlines, outputs, deliverables and KPIs in due time;
* **Commitment to market one new, innovative food product or one with significantly improved nutritional and/or sustainability profile per Project, in a specific section of the retailer’s facilities, no longer than 30/06/2024, in compliance with EIT Food’s branding regulations; and achieving requested KPIs**
* Submit a detailed product description (including a clear description of improved product characteristics) and plans for market introduction **and further commercialisation, including** sales forecast following the product launch;
* **Submission of** a **report on the co-creation activities** with consumers (including details on its organisation, data on participants, descriptions of the methodology and creative process, summaries of results, lessons learnt, recommendations from consumers);
* Submit a **document stating product development after the consumers input** (including clear scientific data on the specific product improvement)
* **Collaborate with EIT Food in communication and outreach campaigns** about the project or the new product (i.e. providing with interviews, quotes, pictures or news about it);
* Comply with communication and [EIT Food Branding guidance](https://www.eitfood.eu/branding/start-here) for activities and product branding;
* **Participation in at least one EIT Food event** to promote new product after product launch and/or the participation in the programme (if required by EIT Food)
* **At least 1 publication in social media to disseminate Results/Good Practices/Lessons Learnt;**
* Collaborate and contribute with EIT Food on project **monitoring and reporting** (including sales report and costs justification,)
* **Submit a documented proof such as an invoice or an online sales records** demonstrating that the purchase of at least 10,000 EUR has been made by a customer/s latest by 30/12/2025.

## 6.5 Communication and product branding

Selected startups must promote the project in as many platforms as possible available by the startup (newsletter, mailing, media, social media). Publications related to the selected product for launch must refer to EIT Food, describe the EIT Food RIS Straight 2 Market programme and communicate the new product.

Communication materials must be consistent with EIT Food visual identity standards using the EIT Food branding guidelines and visuals, including logo of EIT Food and EU Flag (or other similar logo format, as defined by EIT/EIT Food) on packaging and marketing materials.

All products launched shall have the EIT Food logotype displayed in its packaging for at least the whole duration of 1 year’s production after product being marketed. Logotype size and position can be decided by consortium of retailer and startup and will be validated by the EIT Food Programme Leader.

## 6.7 Intellectual Property Policy

EIT [Food](https://www.eitfood.eu/files/EIT-Food-IP-Policy-V.Plaza-21052021.pdf) Intellectual Property´s (IP) Policy complies with Horizon Europe´s IP Policy, found in Article 16 of the [Model Grant Agreement](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf).

# How to Apply

* **Eligibility:** Open to startups, scale-ups, and SMEs from targeted RIS countries, including EU Member States (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain), Horizon Europe Associated Countries (Turkey), and Outermost Regions (Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands).
* **Submission:** Prepare your application and submit it via salesforce by 15th September 2024

# Evaluation and Selection Process

Your proposal will undergo a rigorous evaluation process to ensure it meets the program’s criteria and objectives. Successful applicants will be notified and invited to kick-off meetings starting September 2024.

## 7.1 Eligibility

The RIS Straight2Market is opened to all startups, Scaleups and/or SMEs wanting to participate in the programme that comply with eligibility (Annex 1)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organisation Eligibility | Each participating organisation must: |
| Startup, scaleups and/or SMEs | * Applications will be accepted from organizations having the status of legal entities in Southern European RIS countries mentioned above. * Be a [SMALL sized company](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en) as defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&locale=en) (between 3 and 49 employees and less than 10 million turnover or balance sheet). * Comply with requests for documents during due diligence/validation. * PIC Number: <https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf> |
| Proposal Eligibility | To eligible proposals must: |
|  | * Be complete, in time and with all mandatory supporting documents uploaded in English: * Propose 1 near-to-market food product, commercially viable and with proven added-value for the consumer, with increased healthy/sustainability properties * Commit to deliver at least one Marketed Innovation launched on the market including documented and valid sales revenue of at least 10.000 EUR (ten thousand euros) by June 2024; * Contribute to the EIT Food Missions; * Align with one or more EIT Focus Areas. |

## 7.2 Evaluation Process

At least 3 expert evaluators will evaluate each proposal based on the criteria below. All evaluators agree to excuse themselves in the event of a conflict of interest.

The following criteria and weighting will be used in the assessment:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Impact (50%) | * Potential impact of the solution on the industry and scalability of the solution. (Commercialisation potential (ability to develop new products based on existing and improved manufacturing capacities and to relate with other actors in the commercialisation chain -startups, retailers- through the existing food delivery network)) 40% * Proposed food product and demonstrated market and societal need/demand for the proposed innovation.20% * Innovativeness of the proposed solution, expected impact on better nutrition, health and/or sustainability provided by the new product; 20% * Contribution to specific challenges in the industry listed in the call, including extent of alignment with EIT Food Missions 20% | 0-5 |
| Excellence (30%) | * Soundness/credibility of the business concept and robust commercialisation strategy plan are aligned with the market readiness level feasibility to launch product on the market. 40% * Demonstrated understanding of market for the proposed innovation 40% * Submitted documents denote the presence of a well thought-out intellectual property strategy and safeguarded know-how/expertise 20% | 0-5 |
| Quality and efficiency of implementation (20%) | * Potential for Project delivery (employees and resources capable of facilitating improved and innovative marketed solutions). 40% * Relevant experiences (participation in Projects related to new product development in agri-food/packaging sector, marketed innovation and consumer engagement; ability to present the relevance of these experiences for EIT Food; experiences in delivering consumer focused activities, involvement of other relevant KTI actors (Universities, Research Centres, etc) 30% * Risk analysis and mitigation plan in place. 30% | 0-5 |

Each evaluation sub-criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 using the following scoring system.

The quality threshold for selection is a total score of 3.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Classification | Description |
| 0 | Not addressed | Not addressed |
| 1 | Poor | The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses |
| 2 | Fair | Proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses |
| 3 | Good | Proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present |
| 4 | Very good | Proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present |
| 5 | Excellent | Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor. |

# 9.Next Steps for Selected Proposals

## 9.1 EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed

Following the initial notification letter, selected proposals will receive a second communication with instructions to sign Project agreements based on the required Outputs, Deliverables and KPIs form the Project, as well as agreeing to EIT Food´s conflict of interest policy.

## 9.2 Appeal on Evaluation Results

Activity leaders can submit an appeal on within 5 days of result receipt, if:

* There is an indication that the results of the eligibility checks were incorrect.
* The evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

For more details, please read [EIT Food Redress Mechanism](https://www.eitfood.eu/files/EIT-Food-Redress-Mechanism-1.pdf).

## 9.3 Monitoring

All Activities selected undergo continuous monitoring by EIT Food to ensure effective progress and implementation at each Stage in accordance with the Project Agreement, and to ensure the achievement of deliverables and KPIs.

The monitoring will cover several aspects relating to the Activity implementation including, but not limited to achievement of deliverables and KPIs; risk management; quality assurance; progress against KPI achievement and impact delivery; communication and dissemination; and progress towards commercialisation and exploitation of results.

EIT Food may request regular reporting of actual costs incurred, as well as regular reporting of KPIs and deliverables, together with the supporting documentation. The monitoring process may result in an amendment to the Activity workplan and/or budget, however the Financial Return Mechanism Agreement cannot be renegotiated following the approval of the Project.

In the case of under-performance, significant delay of implementation, misconduct of the consortium, or any other reason jeopardizing the timely implementation of the Activity identified during the monitoring process, EIT Food reserves the right to discontinue or restructure the Activity at any point during the Activity duration.

Furthermore, EIT Food will monitor all Activities up to 5 years after Activity completion to track long-term impact, the status of commercialisation and to ensure the achievement of KPIs anticipated after Activity end.

# 10. Your Questions

If you have any questions about this Call for Proposals, please contact [elvira.domingo@eitfood.eu](mailto:elvira.domingo@eitfood.eu).

Please visit our [website](https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ris-straight2market-2) for information about the programme.

# Annex 1 - Eligibility

Please Note:

1. Failing any of the above criteria will make your proposal ineligible. Failing to meet the Individual Organisation criteria will make that single organisation ineligible, which might affect the eligibility of the whole proposal, depending on the relevance of the role of the applicant being removed. If an applicant or the proposal is ineligible, participants will be informed.

2. According to EU policies and measures, Russian entities will not be authorised to participate in any new grant under the EU Research and Innovation programmes. This ban applies not only to their potential participation as beneficiaries, but to their potential participation in any kind of role: beneficiaries, linked third parties/affiliated entities, subcontractors, in-kind contributors, international partners/associated partners, and third parties receiving financial support. Find the full statement from the European Commission here.

3. Pursuant to Article 2 (2) of the Decision 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary *where the Commission implements the Union budget in direct or indirect management pursuant to of Article 62(1) points (a) and (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046,* ***no legal commitments shall be entered into with any public interest trust established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust****. This* prohibition applies to financial support to third parties (sub-grants and prizes), hence the proposal of any entity or group of entities where a Participant is included in the list of public interest trusts shall be considered as not eligible

4. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if any organisation is:

a. bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business Activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

b. it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the organisation is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

c. it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the organisation is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the organisation belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence;

d. is found to be attempting to influence the decision-making process of the call during the process; e. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the call process;

f. it has been established by a final judgment that the organisation is guilty of fraud, corruption or money laundering.

4. EIT Food reserves the right to select organizations only in some of the targeted countries, contingent on the quantity and quality of the submitted applications, ensuring the excellence of selected applications, and to relaunch the call for the countries where the present selection process would not yield satisfactory results.

5. EIT Food reserves the right to contact the applicant organisations by e-mail or phone asking for additional explanations or supporting documents, and to schedule selection interviews with the short-listed organisations. All applications will be evaluated using transparent selection criteria, and all applicants will receive concise written feedback, sent to an e-mail account indicated in the application template. Results of the call will be published by EIT Food on its website.