



Cross-KIC Circular Economy Call for SMEs and Circular Economy

Instructions and process description

Circular Economy is currently one of the main strategic initiatives at European level. Moving to more circular economic models promises a much brighter future for the European economy. It would allow Europe to rise to the current and future challenges of global pressure on resources and rising insecurity of supply. Pumping resources back into productive use again and again, cutting waste and reducing dependence on uncertain supplies is a direct route to improving resilience and competitiveness. By helping to decouple economic growth from resource use and its impacts, it offers the prospect of sustainable growth that will last.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the economy and a key player to steer our economy towards a more circular model. However, their small size means that they face unique challenges on the path to closing loops and improving resource efficiency.

1. Eligibility criteria – who can apply

All partners of participating KICs (EIT RawMaterials, EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital, EIT Food, EIT Manufacturing and EIT Urban Mobility) are eligible to apply.

This call is designed for individual partner applicants as well as consortia of maximum three members. This call is made available to prospective applicants through the participating KICs websites and internal communication channels.

2. Aim and content

Some of those unique challenges faced by SMEs can be linked to lack of company environmental culture, lack of financial support, lack of adequate legislation, lack of adequate innovation legislation and support mechanisms, lack of information and many other.

The six KICs involved in this Cross-KIC initiative are a diverse set of publicly and privately funded bodies uniquely positioned to tackle the above barriers for circular economy adoption by SMEs. The overall aim of this call is to enable the joint competencies and capacities of the KICs to help solve for more systemic circularity in an orchestrated effort as well as possible specific approaches towards circularity in SMEs.



Partners of participating KICs are invited to submit an application for the work on the development of an in-depth analysis covering the following topics:

- Investigation of current situation regarding CE and SMEs in Europe considering mainly those sectors covered by the participating KICs.
- Investigation of main barriers hampering CE implementation in SMEs and potential measures to overcome those barriers including EIT/KICs activities.
- Investigation and analysis of current activities carried out by participating KICs to support CE implementation in SMEs and estimation of efficiency.
- Clear and detailed proposal for both how to improve current support activities and new possible actions considering individual KICs but mainly joint actions from Cross KIC Projects.
- Clear analysis on how those support activities should be coordinated with other initiatives to avoid any overlapping and increase efficiency.
- The project should create an advisory board composed by relevant experts and SMEs representatives providing advice to the project development.

3. Output and deliverables

The winning applicant should develop:

- A detailed workplan from July to December 2021
- An interim and final report including all the aspects already identified in section 2.
- A Powerpoint summarising the proposal described in final report.

4. Funding specification

Funding will be provided to cover the costs of activities necessary to generate the deliverables. Although it is expected that much of the funding will be used to cover personnel costs, other cost categories can be covered.

The winning applicant will follow the administrative rules of its partnering KIC; however, considering there are a number of partners participating in several KICs, the winning applicant/s participating in several KICs should choose the one doing the administrative follow up of the project.

The technical follow up will be carried out by the Cross-KIC group in Circular Economy through a kick-off meeting and monthly online meetings to ensure a correct development according to the Cross-KIC group requirements.



Note that, unlike for the 'standard' KAVA projects:

1. There is no co-funding requirement.
2. Cross-KIC Group intends to take an active role for the technical follow up of the project; details to be agreed with the winning applicant.
3. The Applicant must provide a list of their projects/activities related to the topic carried out during the last 6 years. For each project/activity, the list must include: title, name of coordinating institution and coordinator, duration, short description (300-500 words), funding institution.
4. The following cost categories do not apply:
 - a. Cost of large research infrastructure
 - b. Equipment and infrastructure depreciation
 - c. Prizes
 - d. Scholarships
 - e. Sub-granting ('Task Partners')
 - f. Unit costs EIT-Labelled Master programmes (AVSA)
 - g. Unit costs EIT-Labelled PhD programmes (AVSA)

The maximum project cost will be € 85.000,00.

5. Other conditions and information

1. Pre-financing from the KIC doing administrative control will be distributed according to the same rules and with the same timeline applicable to BP2021 projects. Availability of pre-financing will be determined with the administrating KIC.
2. All the funds awarded in this call must be fully expended by 31 December 2021.
3. All activities supported in this call must be fully completed by 31 December 2021.
4. The proposal selected in this Cross-KIC Call needs to follow the regular Business Plan reporting cycle and rules.
5. Each proposal must have a final report and a PowerPoint presentation. These must be described in detail in the proposal:
 - a) final report including complete analysis of both main barriers for CE implementation in SMEs and tools to overcome those barriers. The final report should also include a specific chapter analysing current support activities to SMEs implementing CE from each participating KIC and proposal for further activities to improve that support.
 - b) a PowerPoint presentation (maximum 10 slides) with the scope and main outcomes of the project.
6. The proposal must include a kick-off meeting with Cross-KIC Group and follow-up meetings every month.



7. The winning proposal will receive access to the joint circular economy strategic documents prepared by this Cross-KIC initiative in 2020.
8. The circular economy innovation portfolio of all participating KICs is available for reference here: <https://kumu.io/ckicsj/eit-cross-kic-circular-economy-initiatives-wp1>
9. A selected innovation portfolio of European-level circular economy initiatives is available for reference here: <https://kumu.io/ckicsj/european-circular-economy-initiatives-wp2>

6. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the Cross-KIC Group using the criteria listed below. Based on the evaluations and the overall available funding, the Cross-KIC Group will rank the proposals and select the winning proposal. The total maximum score for a project is 15 (3 criteria, each with a maximum score of 5).

Only one proposal to be funded.

In addition to the eligibility criteria listed in Section 1, the following criteria will apply:

| Maximum score | Description of criteria |
|---------------|--|
| 5 | <p>1. Strategic importance for the Cross-KIC initiative in Circular Economy including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall rationale for the project’s strategic importance • Contribution to the Cross-KIC portfolio that is in line with its strategic objectives |
| 5 | <p>2. Experience, expertise and budget allocation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of how your organization is capable of performing the project • Profile of the team members • Related past projects that demonstrate the level of experience • Details of how the funds are to be used: clear budget plan and timeline with justification • Clear and detailed definition and description of outputs and deliverables |
| 5 | <p>3. Quality and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of aims, objectives and deliverables and their relevance to the Cross-KIC Circular Economy. • Clear and detailed description of the project structure including WPs and Management strategy (including kick off, regular online meetings and final meeting) |



- Demonstration of the project's added value: realistic assessment of the expected contribution that the project will make to the impact of the KICs in relation to the requested budget
- Contribution to the KIC's KPIs (if any; this is not mandatory)

Evaluation scale: In relation to each of the criteria above, the score ranges from 0 to 5 according to the following scale:

- 0 **Non-existent:** no relevant information provided in the application file or cannot be judged because out of range/scope
- 1 **Very poor:** The criterion is addressed in a very incomplete and unsatisfactory manner
- 2 **Poor:** There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question
- 3 **Fair:** The criterion is somewhat addressed, but there are significant weaknesses
- 4 **Good:** The proposal addresses the criterion well, although some improvements are possible
- 5 **Excellent:** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor only.

Coordinator of the project selected for funding will be informed by the Cross-KIC Group after approval.

7. Confidentiality

Access to the project proposals will be given to all the KICs participating in this Cross-KIC action. The title, scope and overall budget of the project will be shared within the KICs communities and will be made publicly available (e.g., on the KICs web site, in presentations at conferences etc.).

8. Intellectual Property provisions

Ownership of the Results generated under the Project, including any copy or other intellectual property rights attached thereto ("IP Rights"), shall be co-owned by the KICs LE and the Project Participant with the following understanding:

- Each Party shall be free to use, disseminate, extract and modify the Results for non-commercial purposes of the KICs, itself and its affiliates.
- Future commercial use shall be possible and aimed at a collaborative basis of all Parties interested therein.
- The transfer of rights in the Results to third parties shall require the consent of the other Parties.



The Project Participant shall make sure it does not infringe IP Rights of third parties in producing the Results. Further details if necessary, should be agreed between the project participant and the KIC carrying out the administrative control of the project.

9. Proposal submission

Proposals should be submitted via email to:
ignacio.calleja@eitrawmaterials.eu

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| Opening call: | 1 April 2021 |
| Closing call: | 31 May 2021 |
| Evaluation: | June 2021 |
| Start project: | 1 July 2021 |
| Finalise project: | 31 December 2021 (latest) |