

EIT RawMaterials

Call for KAVA 12 Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)

Capacity Building Projects

Instructions and process description

November 2023

1. Purpose and scope of this document

This document describes the process for preparation, submission, evaluation and selection of Proposals in response to the 2023 call launched by the EIT RawMaterials (EIT RM) for RIS (Regional Innovation Scheme) Capacity Building Projects (KAVA – KIC Added-Value Activity in EIT terminology).

Before submitting a Proposal, you are required to register your intention to do so and are recommended to contact the Co-Location Centre/Innovation Hub staff and the Thematic Officers/Senior Advisors before submitting the Proposal. The Co-Location Centre/Innovation Hub staff can offer further advice.

All Project participants involved in the submission of a Proposal in response to this call should read the following documents carefully:

- The present document (call text) [B]
- The template for Upscaling DRAFT proposals [B]
- EIT RawMaterials Upscaling Project proposal FINAL SUBMISSION Guidance and Template for complementary information [B]
- EIT RawMaterials communication and dissemination guidance [B]
- EIT RawMaterials Project Management guidance [B]
- The Lighthouse Appendix that outlines the topics and criteria for application through the Lighthouses programmes renamed “Circular Societies”, “Responsible Sourcing”, and “Sustainable Materials”. [I]
- Go-to-market strategy for upscaling projects – Process and guidance [B]

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- The Strategic Agenda 2021-27 of EIT RawMaterials [I]
- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) that will be posted in the online Proposal submission platform “Seedbook” (<https://seedbook.eitrawmaterials.eu>), also containing explanations of the terminology used in this document; Project Coordinators should check this section regularly to ensure that they are fully informed and updated on important matters such as eligibility and evaluation criteria, advice on the compilation of the Proposal, costs and cost allocation. [I]

It is important to note that the documents listed above will be referred to in the Project Agreement and be either binding on the parties or used for interpretation of the parties’ obligations defined in the Project Agreement. Documents are marked above with a letter into brackets after the name of the document between binding (B) and for interpretation (I).

Definitions and acronyms are in Annex II.

2. Project call and selection process

The aim of EIT RawMaterials is to take the optimal pathways to reinforce and expand activities in regions of strategic importance, taking into account synergies with the various raw materials actions that the EU Commission has planned to implement with non-EU partners from 2015 onwards.

For the so called EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)¹ activities, EIT RawMaterials regards the RIS regions as areas where there are opportunities to make an impact in line with our objectives and the overall aim of increasing the innovation level of RIS countries. See description of RIS and RIS eligible countries; <https://eit.europa.eu/our-activities/eit-regional-innovation-scheme-ris>

Our strategy for delivering maximum impact in the RIS regions is:

1. Engage strong key partners from RIS regions or those having focus on and commitment to RIS regions to enable outreach to the local stakeholders. Engage the local stakeholders so that they benefit from being involved in KIC activities. Create long-lasting networks around regional challenges, supported by local and national authorities.
2. Transfer the Knowledge Triangle Integration concept into RIS regions to contribute to increasing the innovation capacities of the local ecosystem, via capacity building activities and closer interactions between the local KT innovation actors (such as, clusters, networks, regional public authorities, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), research organisations, SMEs) and their activities.

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3. Grow KIC participation from non-partners (and potential partners) from RIS regions by securing a strong presence in the RIS countries through various KIC activities.
4. KIC's RIS activities should address a realistic and existing challenge, quantify it and through the Project provide a solution and/or knowledge on how to solve it in a practical way.

EIT RawMaterials will outreach mostly to those EU regions where a smart specialisation strategy supports the raw materials agenda and/or where there is potential for raw materials related activities (and where smart specialisation strategies are not yet developed).

2.1. Examples of RIS Capacity Building activities

The RIS Capacity Building activities can be defined on a case-by-case basis. They may include for example (the list is not exclusive):

1_ Cooperation with innovative groups that work on and have developed tools and technologies that can be tested in RIS regions with the aim to solve raw materials value chain related challenges. The innovative groups can be one of the following: start-ups (with focus on start-up's supported by EIT RawMaterials), SMEs, RTOs, other industry groups, etc. The solutions can come from both KAVA activities as well as other activities not related to EIT RawMaterials.

2_ Train-the-trainer activities intending to: a) increase the entrepreneurship/business skills of students in RIS regions, b) improve the innovation capacity of the Higher education institutions themselves in RIS regions by promoting Knowledge Triangle Integration resulting transformative changes of raw material related education generating overall impact to the region. Thematically: Circular Economy, recycling and zero waste shall be among focus areas.

3_ University-Business Cooperation (UBC) activities, e.g. a) internships, b) bonuses for graduates returning to their native country and finding employment in local industry (to leverage brain drain), c) extending / bringing in other best UBC practices to RIS countries, under condition to provide a reasonable amount of the EITHE10.2-EITRIS (# EIT RIS Active KIC partners) and other EIT Core KPIs achieved in RIS eligible countries.

4_ Additional activities to prepare a RIS upscaling Proposal or investment case from RIS for ERMA: <https://erma.eu/investment-Proposal-template/>, <https://erma.eu/investment/>.

5_ Preparation of a market analysis or a Go-to-market strategy for future RIS Upscaling Proposals of great importance or with potential to bring high impact, which are then to be

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applied at the next KAVA Call as RIS Upscaling.

6_ Activities contributing a reasonable/significant amount of EIT Core KPIs achieved in RIS eligible countries.

7_ Courses and other educational activities addressed to professionals and students from RM sector, thematically responding to the specific needs identified in RIS region(s), to improve their technical and/or transversal competences needed in the regional market, incl. competences related to entrepreneurship, marketing and sales in the international context.

8_ Activities based on the results of completed EITRM-funded Project(s), considering that their further development (thematically, geographical, commercial etc.) aims at ensuring outstanding impact and significant contribution to achieving KPI targets and/or commercialization of the previously developed products/services.

2.2 General rules and guiding principles

EIT RawMaterials identified the following three priority outreach regions:

- The East & South-East Europe (ESEE) region is of particular interest due to its unique raw materials potential, especially for critical minerals (both geological resources and secondary raw materials) and its specific geopolitical situation. The ESEE region is also included in specific transnational programmes as part of the EU Cohesion Policy;
- Baltic countries as fast developing regions;
- The southern Mediterranean region: South Italy (including Molise and Campania regions and Sicily and Sardinia), regions in Spain (Andalusia, Asturias, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y Leon, Extremadura, Galicia), Malta and Cyprus.
- **RIS eligible countries are:** a) EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia; b) Horizon Europe Associated Countries: Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine and c) Outermost Regions: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain).

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The following general rules and guiding principles apply:

- All Projects must lead to specific deliverables and outputs over a defined timeline.
- Projects will be financed by EIT RawMaterials (the KIC) only for a defined duration.
- Proposals must meet the highest expectations and performance on the creation of impact (please refer to Strategic Agenda 2021-2027).
- Only the Proposals that are fully aligned with the EIT RawMaterials 2021-2027 Strategic Agenda will be considered for funding. In particular, the Proposal should address at least one of the topics listed in the [Lighthouse](#) Appendix and must be developed in close cooperation with the KIC staff that have been assigned to the Proposal. Proposals that do not address the topics listed in the Lighthouse Appendix will be considered for funding, but will be given lower priority.
- The EIT RawMaterials Lighthouses are the following :
 - Circular Societies
 - Sustainable Materials
 - Responsible Sourcing
- RIS Capacity Building Proposals may include RIS Task Partners. Eligibility and selection criteria are outlined in the document RIS Capacity Building Project Proposal: Guidance and Template for complementary information.
- The Proposal should intend to build a strong community (KTI) and have a clear plan for continuation after the duration of the proposed KAVA Project.
- All Projects must define aims and objectives and lead to specific deliverables, outputs and final results over a defined time schedule and they will be financed by EIT RawMaterials (the KIC) only for a defined duration.
- Proposals must meet the highest expectations and performance on the creation of impact (please refer to EIT Core KPI targets and Strategic Agenda 2021-2027).
- A detailed work plan must be provided for each year of the Project duration at the time of Proposal submission.
- RIS Project Proposals that aim for obtaining additional / complimentary funding (i.e. from national or regional funding schemes such as European regional development fund, Cohesion fund, Recovery fund, Just transition fund, WBIF, IPA, ERASMUS+, European

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University Initiative) demonstrating a detailed plan to secure co-funding from national/regional funds will be evaluated positively.

- A clear plan must be provided on continuation of activities after the duration of the Project, how the end results will be used, by whom, on how these activities are to be financed.
- All Projects will be tracked and their progress will be assessed for 5 years after the end of the funding period.
- Specific tasks may be attributed to subcontractors, as long as the necessity is clearly justified and follows the general Horizon Europe principles. Please note that only a limited part (in budget and scope) of a Project may be subcontracted; depending on the scope of the work to be provided, it may be necessary for the entity to become a partner.
- It is possible to add other partners to the Consortium after the Project selection, but without changes to the total KAVA budget allocated to the Project.
- Non-RIS entities may be part of the RIS Proposal's consortia but a minimum of 70% of total EIT funding must be allocated to RIS entities.
- Regardless of the funding source, if an entity incurs costs as part of a KAVA they need to become KIC partners (with the exception of the RIS Task partners). In other words, non-members who receive funding, or who incur costs as a result of a KAVA (even if the funding is brought in by them) need to become partners, supply all documents, pay fees and they need to report their costs, be subject to eligibility, etc. like any regular partner. Non-members who participate in a KAVA but receive no funding and incur no costs in the Project do not need to become partners. They need to sign the PA, however, because this includes statements on IP, confidentiality, etc. that still need to be respected.
- The Project duration can be from a minimum of 1 year to a maximum of 2 years (in exceptional cases a 3 year long Project could be accepted but only with justification and individual review).
- Above and beyond the specific EIT RawMaterials Eligibility criteria, all Projects must comply with Horizon Europe and EIT rules, and with the conditions set in the current EIT RawMaterials Partnership Agreement (ParA).
- Consortia are encouraged to consider offering our EIT RM Alumni an internship in their Project and/or a site visit. Our Alumni are past or present participants in EIT RM Education

or Business Development activities. The EIT RM Alumni Association would assist in the logistics involved in an internship or study/Project visit.

- Proposals claiming to achieve any positive environmental impact, such as resource and energy savings, waste reduction, waste valorization, emissions reduction, etc., must include a Work Package on the assessment of the environmental impacts of the developed products or processes using LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) methodologies.

2.2.1. Budget, funding and costs

From 2023 the EIT and EIT RawMaterials change their operational modality to the so-called cascading system. Therefore, selected Projects will be following cascading modalities to administer the funding. The practical implementation details are currently being developed between the EIT and EIT RawMaterials, and will be to ensure eligibility and compliance under the Grant Agreement(s) to be signed between the EIT and EIT RawMaterials, as well as Project Agreement(s) to be signed between EIT RawMaterials and the selected activities. Further details will be shared whenever they become available, either through amendment of the call, or updates to all applicants. EIT funded activities are part of Horizon Europe, general funding and cost eligibility regulations are governed by the Horizon Europe Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AGA).

Expected budget and funding

The exact number of Projects to be funded in the framework of this call will depend on the quality of the received Proposals and the total available funding.

At EIT's request a minimum of 10% (and maximum of 15%) of a KIC's budget must be allocated to RIS activities. The exact number of Projects funded will depend on the quality of the received Proposals from the KIC, and on the total available funding for 2023-2025. The funding allocation to Lighthouse Projects will depend on the overall strength of the Proposals. Lighthouse and non-Lighthouse Proposals will be evaluated together, and selection for funding will be based only on the eligibility, quality and strategy criteria outlined in Section 2 of this document (additional eligibility criteria apply to Lighthouse Projects as outlined in the 'Lighthouse Appendix' document).

Funding is disbursed on a yearly basis, with a certain percentage of pre-financing being paid as a lump sum during the course of the year, and a balance payment being paid during the following year on an actual cost basis. Partners are expected to have at their disposal certain liquidity reserves for the periods between payments. A set of requirements, updated and communicated by EIT RM yearly, must be fulfilled before receiving any funding. All payments are conditional on the project implementation. Balance payments are conditional on fulfilling the cost eligibility rules and may be subject to an audit.

Cost eligibility

Specific tasks may be attributed to subcontractors, as long as the necessity is clearly justified and follows the general Horizon Europe principles (see [Horizon Europe Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#) for more information). Please note that only a limited part (in budget and scope) of a Project may be subcontracted; depending on the scope of the work to be provided, it may be necessary for the entity to become a partner.

It is possible to add other partners to the Consortium after the Project selection, but without changes to the total KAVA budget allocated to the Project. Those partners have to be formally named to and approved by EIT RawMaterials, and in case of a non-member to submit an EIT RawMaterials membership application.

Regardless of the funding source, if an entity incurs costs as part of a KAVA they need to become KIC partners (with the exception of the RIS task partners). In other words, non-members who receive funding, or who incur costs as a result of a KAVA (even if the funding is brought in by them) need to become partners, supply all documents and pay fees; they need to report their costs, be subject to eligibility, etc. like any regular partner. Non-members who participate in a KAVA but receive no funding and incur no costs in the Project do not need to become partners. They need to sign the Project Agreement (PA), however, because this includes statements on IP, confidentiality, etc. that still need to be respected.

Above and beyond the specific EIT RawMaterials Eligibility criteria, all Projects must comply with Horizon Europe and EIT rules, and with the conditions set in the new EIT RawMaterials Partnership Agreement.

2.2.2 Activity implementation and reporting

A detailed work plan must be provided for each year of the Project duration at the time of Proposal submission. The work plan must contain major milestones to be achieved during each of the year(s) of the funding period, including main deliverables and description of the envisaged Project status.

Deliverables must include a mandatory Final Report and an explanation of whether and how the KAVA Project will be continued by the partners. The Final Report must include a Conclusion. All Projects will be tracked and their progress will be assessed for five years after the end of the funding period.

In case some KPIs are planned outside of the funding period, the Proposal should also include a work-plan for the following period after the Project duration consisting in additional KPIs which implementation and compliance should be documented in annual reports (“Legacy Reporting”), as well as a work-plan for reporting revenues generated thanks to the results of the Project.

All Projects will be tracked by KIC and their progress will be assessed during the Project duration and up to five years after the end of the funding period. This includes onsite visits on short notice to control effective implementation of tangible milestones. Revenue tracking remains for as long as the FSM agreement is in effect.

Milestones achievements, as reported by the Consortium and assessed by KIC, will be scored by KIC based on various criteria such as GTM strategy quality, risk management, project and agile change management, project progress.

Non-compliance with Milestones, or lack of reporting, which might result in impossibility to achieve a commercial use within the period defined in the Project may result in various sanctions which can go up to funding suspension or freezing, or the Consortium’s obligation to repay the funds.

2.2.3 Re-application

In the case of a reapplication, it is mandatory to highlight the improvements made.

In case of a Proposal selected at Stage 1 of KAVA Call 11 that did not go to Stage 2 by submitting a FINAL Proposal in time, the Consortium must provide the reasons and resubmit a DRAFT Proposal at Stage 1 of KAVA 12.

If a Proposal has already been supported with previous funds, please indicate them with the name of the Project as well as the source of funding.

2.2.4. Confidentiality, data protection and ethical considerations

Access to the Proposals will be given to EIT RawMaterials Management Team and to the evaluation panel conducting the evaluations. Everyone with access to the Proposal texts will have signed a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement before access is granted.

If a Proposal is approved for funding, the full details of the approved Project will be communicated to the EIT as part of the proposed Business Plan 2023-25, where it will be included in EIT's evaluation of the Business Plan.

The title, scope, summary, name of partners in the Consortium, name of coordinator and overall budget of Projects approved for funding will be shared within the EIT RawMaterials community, and therefore will be made publicly available (e.g., on the EIT RawMaterials' web site, in presentations at conferences etc.). Public dissemination of the Project's main results and outcomes is a mandatory condition for funding, and will be arranged jointly by the Consortium and EIT RawMaterials staff taking into account the Consortium's legitimate confidentiality requirements.

All data and information related to the Proposal and its evaluation will be handled and stored in the 'SeedBook' platform according to EIT RawMaterials' customary procedures. The EIT RawMaterials' Code of Conduct will be followed throughout the evaluation process. External evaluators will receive specific instructions on the evaluation process, and access to the Proposals will be granted to each Evaluator only after the upload of her/his 'Evaluator Agreement' with provisions on confidentiality, conflict of interest and code of conduct.

All applicants are obligated to disclose any conflict of interest they might be facing as soon as they identify it, and shall comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, and sound financial management.

2.3. Proposal preparation, submission, evaluation and selection process

2.3.1. Proposal preparation and registration

Matchmaking events organised at the Innovation Hub level or during the EIT RM Expert Forum will allow partners to discuss Project ideas and form potential consortia. It is mandatory for the Coordinator to inform her/his Innovation Hub Manager for each Project Proposal to be submitted. The Innovation Hub and RIS hub staff provide guidance and support in order to:

- Set up a solid Consortium and find missing partner(s) if required;
- Advise and support the Consortium with their Project Proposals to ensure they are in line with the evaluation criteria.

It is a requirement to register your intention to submit a Proposal and a recommendation to contact Innovation Hub staff and the Senior Advisors before submitting the DRAFT Proposal using the Seedbook platform (<https://seedbook.eitrawmaterials.eu>).

A series of 3 Expert fora have been organised in the Fall of 2023 to facilitate networking among the Candidates and the generation of ideas for new proposals, and the Business developers and Education managers at EIT RawMaterials will be happy to inform any organisation wishing to apply for this call.

It is mandatory for all Candidates to register in the European Commission's Funding and Tenders Portal and obtain a Participant Identification Code (PIC) number.

DRAFT Proposals must be registered by **Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 13.00 CET (Berlin time)** using the SeedBook online platform.

The registration form will become available through Seedbook by November 2023. Following registration, the Proposal will be assigned to a Project Officer who will be the primary point of contact with the Project Coordinator throughout the submission process. Note that Project Coordinators will be able to access the online Proposal submission template only after their Project has been registered and assigned to a Project Officer.

2.3.2. Proposal submission

The Proposal submission will take place in two stages, with a DRAFT Proposal (Stage 1) and a FINAL Proposal (Stage 2). **Both submissions will be evaluated.** It is therefore imperative that the DRAFT Proposals contain sufficient information for a comprehensive evaluation.

- **Coordinators must submit a DRAFT Proposal (stage 1) no later than Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 13.00 CET (Berlin time)** using the SeedBook online platform.
- **FINAL Proposals (stage 2) must be submitted no later than Thursday 29 May 2023 at 13.00 CET (Berlin time)** using the SeedBook online platform. The attached Upscaling Project proposal: Guidance and Template for complementary information offers guidance for the content of the proposal.

2.3.3. Proposal evaluation and selection process

DRAFT Proposal (Stage 1)

The DRAFT Proposals should not exceed 5 pages and should contain an executive summary, the objectives, outcomes and final results expected, and the DRAFT Proposal will be evaluated using the 5 following criteria, which will be evaluated as "yes/no". Only Proposals receiving "yes" to all of

5 Stage 1 criteria will be invited to submit a FINAL Proposal in Stage 2. Stage 1 evaluation criteria are:

1. Proper alignment with the EIT RawMaterials Strategic Agenda 2021-27: the DRAFT Proposal draft a.) fits clearly into one or more of the 6 Knowledge & Innovation Themes and b.) addresses EIT Regional Innovation Scheme objectives and EIT RawMaterials strategy for delivering maximum impact in the RIS regions as described in this call text.
2. High impact: the Proposal aims at a.) actively integrating new RIS partners (a minimum of 1 new core, associate or Project partner) during the course of the Project (KTI) and b.) achieving² EIT Core KPIs (in a RIS eligible country)¹.
3. Relevance and potential: the Proposal a.) is proving/demonstrating an existing RIS challenge, quantifying it and is presenting a solution to be provided by the Proposal Consortium and b.) is demonstrating alignment with relevant national/regional strategies and is demonstrating the potential to bring in additional national/regional funding.
4. Project implementation capacity : a.) Project coordinator and Consortium have a solid track record in executing Projects and b.) the Consortium has clear roles assigned & all aspects of the Proposal are covered by relevant partners.
5. Potential for Project continuation : The Proposal a.) is building a strong community (KTI) and b.) has a clear plan for continuation after the duration of the proposed KAVA Project (including tentative timeline, next steps, funding sources and future activities).

A template will be provided in SeedBook for the submission of the Stage 1 DRAFT Proposal (“Template for RIS Capacity Building DRAFT Proposals”). The template will contain specific instructions and the DRAFT Proposals must contain sufficiently detailed and convincing information addressing the above Stage 1 criteria. The evaluation will be carried out by the EIT RawMaterials Management Team.

The DRAFT Proposal template must be completed and uploaded in SeedBook by Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 13.00 CET (Berlin time) using the SeedBook online platform.

Proposals that do NOT have this document uploaded by the due date will not be considered further in KAVA 12.

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FINAL Proposal (Stage 2)

The FINAL Proposals will be evaluated according to three sets of criteria :

Eligibility criteria - mandatory requirements (Proposals that do not meet such criteria will not be considered for further evaluation), as described in Section 2.3 below;

Quality criteria - quality criteria against which the collected Proposals will be scored and ranked by external evaluators, according to the evaluation grid presented in Section 2.5.1. "Quality Criteria".

Strategy criteria - strategy criteria against which the collected Proposals will be scored and ranked by the EIT RawMaterials Management Team, according to the evaluation grid presented in section 2.5.2. "Strategy Criteria".

Eligible Proposals will be selected based on the **quality and strategy criteria** ranking. Quality criteria (external evaluation) account for the 50% of the final score, while strategy criteria (EIT RawMaterials evaluation) account for 50%.

Proposals' quality will be evaluated by a panel of external experts appointed by the EIT RawMaterials Management Team. EIT RawMaterials will strive to achieve balance in the Evaluators' gender and geographic provenance.

- A minimum of three experts will be assigned to the evaluation of each Proposal.
- In the first step, these assigned experts evaluate each Proposal remotely using the criteria set out in the 2.5.1. Quality Criteria.
- Final evaluation of all Proposals is conducted by the entire panel (with the exclusion of any member with a conflict of interest). The strengths and weaknesses of each Proposal as perceived by the panel will be documented and communicated to the Project Coordinator once the evaluation process is completed.
- EIT Raw Materials staff and management will act as the secretaries of the panel and facilitate the discussion during evaluation panel meetings but will otherwise not take part in the evaluation process.

Proposals' strategy will be evaluated using the criteria set out in the 2.6 Strategy Criteria grid. The final selection of all Proposals is conducted by the EIT RawMaterials Managing Board using the same

criteria. The strengths and weaknesses of each Project will be documented and communicated to the Project Coordinator once the evaluation process is completed.

Based on the evaluation and the overall available funding, the EIT RawMaterials Managing Board will propose a portfolio of Projects to be funded. The Executive Board will approve the portfolio of Projects to be submitted to the EIT for funding, for the Business Plan 2022-24.

Successful and unsuccessful Candidates will be informed via email within five working days following the day of the final decision by the Executive Board. Coordinators of Projects that are selected for funding will also receive the feedback from the evaluation panels. The feedback may include a list of requested changes that must be made by the Project Coordinator before the Project can be given the final approval.

Final recipients of funding will be obligated to comply with the IPR rules under Article 16 of the MGA.

A standstill period of 30 days shall be in effect.

Also following approval by the Executive Board, Coordinators of Projects that were not selected for funding will be informed. They will receive evaluation feedback as soon as it is finalised.

2.4. Eligibility criteria

Eligibility will be checked at the time of Proposal submission and at the time of signing the Project Agreement, and will be applied throughout the Project's funding period. In line with Horizon Europe rules, Proposals that do not meet all the eligibility criteria at the time of **FINAL Proposal** submission will be deemed ineligible and will not be evaluated. Proposals that do not meet all the eligibility criteria at the time of signing the Project Agreement will be deemed ineligible and will not be funded. After the signature of the Project Agreement, EIT RawMaterials will not consider any changes that impact on eligibility criteria, and the Project will be immediately terminated if these are not met. The following **eligibility criteria** apply to RIS Capacity Building Proposals:

- The lead Project participant must be from a RIS country.
- **The majority of Proposal activities are executed in RIS countries, they provide benefits for RIS countries and aim to raise the innovation level of entities in RIS countries.**

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- It must be clearly explained how the Proposal is aligned with the Strategic Agenda 2021-27 of EIT RawMaterials.
- The RIS Capacity Building Proposals may request up to 90% of EIT funding (out of the Total Proposal Funding) for eligible KAVA costs, if they clearly present effectiveness, efficiency and value for money. Co-funding above the mandatory minimum 10% of total funding will be evaluated positively. The RIS Capacity Building Proposals may request up to 100% of total funding to be EIT Funding only in well justified, exceptional cases, applicable only upon approval of the EIT RawMaterials.
- The Project Consortium must consist of a minimum of two Project participants (at the time of Proposal submission).
- The Project Consortium must consist of a minimum of three KIC Core, Associate or Project Partners (at the time of the Project's start), coming from a minimum of two different countries.
- The lead Project participant must be a Core or Associate Partner (or Linked Third Party to a Core or Associate Partner) of EIT RawMaterials by the time the Project starts and based in a RIS eligible country.
- The Project Consortium must include KIC partners from at least two sides of the knowledge triangle (education, research, industry/business - as defined in the Partner registration documentation).
- Project participants that are Non-members are eligible to apply only if they submit an EIT RawMaterials as Members by early July 2024. Failure to apply for EIT RawMaterials membership by the early July 2024 will result in their removal (including the requested funding) from the Proposal (note that the Project will be immediately terminated if eligibility criteria are not met at this stage). This provision does not apply to non-members that meet eligibility and selection criteria for RIS Task Partners
- The Project cannot have one partner (including its Linked Third Parties) as the Work Package leader in all Work Packages. In most Projects, it is envisaged (but not mandatory) that each partner will lead at least one WP, and that no more than 50% of the EIT funding will be assigned to any one partner (justification to be provided otherwise). It is eligible for non-RIS partners to lead a WP.
- A detailed work plan must be provided for each year of the Project duration at the time of Proposal submission, including determined milestones planning as described under 2.2.

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- All Proposals must include a ‘Dissemination and Communication Plan’ Work Package, following the communications guidelines included in the document ‘*EIT RawMaterials Communication and dissemination guidance*’
- All Proposals must include a ‘Project Management’ Work Package, following the guidelines included in the document ‘*EIT RawMaterials Project Management guidance*’. The Project should be managed by a Project manager (PM) with relevant expertise in managing complex Projects. Her/his profile can differ from the Project coordinator’s (PC’s), and s/he should commit to the Project with a 15% full-time equivalent (FTE), to be monitored with timesheets (timesheet approved internally + declaration of honour) during Project reporting. A one-page CV of the PM must be provided.
- In case the Proposal is mainly focusing on cooperation with innovative groups that work on and have developed tools and technologies that can be tested in RIS regions with the aim to solve raw materials value chain related challenges, the technology readiness level (TRL) must be minimum 4 at the start of the Project).
- Additional eligibility criteria apply to Lighthouse Proposals as outlined in the document ‘*Lighthouse Appendix*’.
- *Also above listed “general rules and guiding principles” apply.*

2.5. Evaluation criteria

The following Quality and Strategy criteria apply to RIS Capacity Building Proposals.

2.5.1. Quality criteria

Weight	Description of Criteria (bullet points refer to examples but these are not exhaustive, and not all the points must be addressed in each Project)
7	Innovation / impact creation capacity

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall rationale for the Project’s importance, impact and innovation capacity • RIS importance of the targeted theme/challenge • Potential to deliver tangible results and products, processes or services that have not been delivered by other institutions • Clear dissemination strategy and application (to other countries, on-going initiatives and programmes, links to development in other materials, themes, markets, audiences, partners, etc.) • Expected benefits for each involved RIS partner should be described in detail as well as benefits for community and region • Creation of synergies with other actors in the local ecosystem to create an impact beyond the individual Project itself is well described
7	<p>Quality of the Project definition and scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the raw materials challenge addressed by this Project (proving/demonstrating that this is an existing challenge and quantifying it) and why the Project will deliver robust solutions (background, data, current situation, issues and opportunities – specifically pertaining to EIT RawMaterials) • Detailed, step-by-step Project work plan, broken down into design and implementation phases and defining work packages, management and milestones to show how the Project delivers value to the Project Consortium and its key stakeholders • Definition of aims, objectives, deliverables, final results and their relevance to EIT RawMaterials • Demonstration of the Project’s added value in terms of promoting entrepreneurship and innovation • Identification of key risks and success factors supplemented with a mitigation strategy to overcome those risks • Quantitative demonstration of short-term and long-term impact of the Project, especially illustrating how the Project impact will contribute solutions to societal and industrial challenges (Market analysis where applicable)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective and comprehensive communication and dissemination plan, building on the communication guidelines • A level of excellence is expected on the content and description of the work packages to generate optimal impact •
3	<p>Quality of the Consortium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance and demonstrated commitment of the lead partner • Relevant experience, expertise and resources, and demonstrated commitment and engagement of each of the partners • Diversity and complementarity of the partners, and clear definition and description of roles and responsibilities with justification of why these partners were selected • Appropriate level of cooperation and interaction within the Consortium to support effective knowledge management • Active involvement of industrial partners where applicable • Clear definition and description of role and responsibility of the industrial partner within the Project • Demonstrated commitment and engagement of the industry partner(s) with written evidence • Involvement of relevant external stakeholders from RIS countries to contribute to the Project objective and scope • Project governance structure and operational coordination mechanisms
3	<p>Continuation Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected/planned continuation of the activities building on results of this KAVA Project (including tentative timeline, next steps, funding sources and future activities). • Soundness of the Proposal from a regional (RIS) demand perspective

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Total weight =20

The score given for each criterion by the panel will then be multiplied by the weight. Maximum score is 100 = 20 (total weight) * 5 (maximum score for each criterion). These quantitative scores will be used as input for the consensus evaluation panel.

2.5.2. Strategy criteria

Weight	Description of criteria
8	<p>1.Strategic importance for the KIC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall contribution to the KIC’s objectives, the strategic agenda and the EU dimension. • Fits clearly into one or more of the 6 Knowledge & Innovation Themes. • Targets raw materials critical to the green energy and circular economy transition. • Involvement of the 2 sides of the knowledge triangle. • The Proposal is solving more than one of key items from LHs. • The Proposal is aligned with national/regional strategies, has the potential to obtain additional national/regional funding and is presenting a detailed plan to secure co-funding from national/regional funds. • The Consortium aims at strengthening the existing collaboration with the European Commission (DG Grow (including the Executive Agency for SMEs, EASME), DG Environment, DG RTD, DG Regio). • There is a solid prospect for the Project to translate into a larger Project for which additional capital/investment will be required or attracted as a result of KAVA.

8	<p>2. Expected impact for the KIC (return on KAVA investment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposal aims at actively integrating new RIS partners (a minimum of 1 new core, associate or Project partner) during the course of the Project. • The Project Proposal aims at generating societal impacts and/or is building a strong community with a clear plan on continuation of activities after the duration of the KAVA Projects, presenting a detailed plan for how the end results will be used, by whom, on how this will be financed. • The expected impact from the Proposal on the RIS regions involved (and broader) is clearly presented. • The Project Proposal will empower one or more RIS stakeholders/partners to coordinate Projects and Proposals and/or submit Proposals to future calls. • The Project Proposal brings in a reasonable number of EIT Core RIS KPIs and a reasonable-high number of EIT RIS KPIs.²
4	<p>3. Sustainability and Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposal indicates continuation of activities after the end of the Project and also reveals a clear plan for continuation. • Financial sustainability mechanism potential/ or even indicated will be evaluated positively. • The Proposal describes very well the challenge in RIS region/country to be solved, what economical, social, KTI benefit it will create (in detail), what added value it will provide (vs current solution) • Customers/users/stakeholders are very well identified, ongoing engagements already exist. • Completeness and clarity of information provided in the Proposal. • Quality of the Project budget definition: clear explanation and justification of costs, proper balance of costs among partners in line with their assigned roles.

Total weight =20

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The score given for each criterion by the panel will then be multiplied by the weight. Maximum score is 100 = 20 (total weight) * 5 (maximum score for each criterion). These quantitative scores will be used as input for the consensus evaluation panel.

Evaluation scale: In relation to each of the criteria above, each Project will be scored from 0 to 5 according to the following scale, and we reserve the right to ask the applicant / consortium for pitching of the FINAL proposal, (after the eligibility check for eligible proposals only). This would contribute to the evaluation of the final proposal and scoring according to the quality and/or strategy criteria"

0	Non-existent: no relevant information provided in the application file or cannot be judged because out of range
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: While the Proposal addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correction
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

2.6. Call timeline

Thursday 16 November 2023	Launch of call
Thursday 16 November 2023	The Proposal submission platform “Seedbook” (https://seedbook.eitrawmaterials.eu) goes online
Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 13.00 CET	Proposal <u>REGISTRATION</u> deadline
Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 13.00 CET	<u>DRAFT</u> Proposal <u>SUBMISSION</u> deadline (DRAFT Proposal is uploaded in SeedBook)
Thursday 1st February to end of February 2024	Evaluation of DRAFT Proposals & pitching of the pre-selected one
End of February/Beginning of March 2024	Outcomes of the evaluation of the DRAFT Proposals is communicated to the consortia
Wednesday 29 May 2024 at 13.00 CET	<u>FINAL</u> Proposal <u>SUBMISSION</u> deadline
Till end of June 2024	Evaluation by panel of external experts
End of June 2024	Preparation of list of projects for funding by KIC Management Team
Early July 2024	Approval of list of projects for funding by KIC Executive Board & communication to partners
End of June to early July 2024	Response to changes requested by the Selection Panel (‘Change requests’) and inclusion of selected Projects in Business Plan 2023-2025
July 2024	Registration of new partners
October 2024	Earliest starting date for approved projects (to be confirmed)
To be confirmed	EIT approval of Project portfolio after all the requests for clarification have been satisfied (to be confirmed)

2.7. Registration and proposal submission using SeedBook

Registrations and proposals can only be submitted using the IT-tool SeedBook. Project Coordinators who do not have a SeedBook account are invited to register via this link <https://seedbook.eitrawmaterials.eu> to get access to the tool and commence the proposal submission process. Innovation Hub staff will assist in using the IT tool.

The DRAFT Proposal must be submitted Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 13.00 CET (Berlin time).

The FINAL proposals must be submitted by Wednesday 29 May 2024 at 13.00 CET (Berlin time).

2.8. Appeal and redress procedure

Upon reception of the feedback, the applicant may wish to lodge a request for redress, if there is a concern that there might have been a shortcoming in the way a Proposal was evaluated, or if the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect. The redress procedure is not meant to call into question the judgement made by the expert-evaluators. It will consider only procedural shortcomings and factual errors.

Requests for redress should be raised within one month of the reception of the evaluation feedback sent by EIT RawMaterials, and should be sent to Compliance@eitrawmaterials.eu. Requests must:

- be related to the evaluation process, or eligibility checks;
- include a clear description of the grounds for the complaint;
- be received within the time limit specified above.

An initial reply will be sent to complainants no later than two weeks after the deadline for redress requests. This initial reply will indicate when a definitive reply will be provided. A redress committee of EIT RawMaterials may be convened to examine the evaluation process for the case under consideration. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and equal treatment of applicants. The redress committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the Proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the evaluation experts. Following its review, the committee will recommend a course of action to the EIT RawMaterials Operational Management Team (OMT). If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the Proposal may be re-evaluated. Unless there is clear evidence of a shortcoming there will be no follow-up or re-evaluation. The Executive Board of EIT RawMaterials will be informed of any redress procedures in due course.

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned with the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process.
- The committee will not call into question the judgment of the individual expert-evaluators, whose qualifications have been already assessed and validated.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a Proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a Proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria.
- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
- Only one request for redress per Proposal will be considered by the committee.
- All requests for redress will be treated confidentially.

¹<https://eit.europa.eu/our-activities/eit-regional-innovation-scheme>

²EIT RawMaterials can approve, in exceptional cases, a RIS Capacity Building Project that does not include Core EIT KPI targets based on its other merits and large impact.

Annex I: Partner Categories At-a-Glance

Process description and instructions for RIS Activities – KAVA 12

	Core Partner	Associate Partner	Project Partner	Task Partner (for RIS)
KIC (e.V.) Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Governance • KIC Level	GA Attendance, right of speech, ask questions	GA Attendance, right of speech, ask questions	GA Attendance, right of speech, ask questions	No
	Full vote in GA	One delegate per CLC in GA	One of their number for all Project Partners in case of AoA amendm./ modific.	No
	• CLC Level	In CLC Steering Committee	In CLC Steering Committee	Part of a respective regional CLC (CLC internal rules to apply)
Number of annual activities / Leading a KAVA	Unlimited / Yes	Unlimited / Yes	Unlimited / No	Dedicated events and activities / No
Annual KIC funding ceiling*	Unlimited	EUR 300.000	EUR 100.000 (as in proposal)	60K, selected via open call
Annual Cash contribution	EUR 100.000 as membership fee	EUR 30.000 as membership fee	EUR 10.000 as membership fee	None
Horizon Europe treatment	Third Party	Third Party	Third Party	Third Party dependent on TP Patron

Annex II: Definitions and Acronyms

DEFINITIONS:

Process description and instructions for RIS Activities – KAVA 12

KPI(s): Key performance indicators – quantifiable indicators of the key project results, used for reporting and controlling how successful the project is in producing the desired results.

Milestones: Significant scheduled events in the project lifecycle occurring upon achieving a key planned result.

Project: the future activity described in a Proposal. It comes into existence only once the Proposal is selected and becomes a Selected proposal.

Proposal: a written document describing a future project which a number of participants (the consortium) wish to implement after receiving funding by the KIC.

Proposal submission: the act of officially submitting a Proposal for evaluation by the KIC.

Selected proposal: a Proposal which is officially confirmed to be funded by the KIC.

Upscaling: the activity of bringing a technology to a higher TRL level.

Candidate: a legal entity (LE) working on or having completed a Proposal submission.

Project participant: a legal entity (LE) taking part in a Project; can be a former Candidate, or can enter the Project at a later stage; can be funded by KIC, or participating only through ‘co-funding’ (own money) or funding from a non-Horizon Europe program (like UK national funding). Must become a KIC Partner in order to be eligible to receive EIT funding. Sub-contractors are not considered participants, and KIC Partners cannot be sub-contractors in a Project, they must be a participant.

Consortium: all Project participants together form the Consortium. A Project Agreement is not valid unless all Project participants - forming the Consortium have-signed it.

Lead partner: a Project participant responsible to lead and coordinate the Consortium; the Lead partner appoints the Project coordinator.

Commercialising partner(s) - the Project participant(s) responsible for bringing the project results to the market. Depending on the situation, that might be one or more Candidates, a newly entered Project participant, or a newly created startup/joint venture.

Partner (or ‘Partner organisation’) means a legal entity which is a member of a KIC and may include, in particular, higher education institutions, vocational education and training providers, research organisations, public institutions, public or private companies, financial institutions, regional and local authorities, foundations and not-for-profit organisations.

Member: Legal Entity (LE) (ies) who have applied and been accepted as members of the e.V. KIC LE. Depending on the membership tier, their voting rights and funding thresholds vary.

Linked Third Party (LTP), also called an Affiliated Entity, is a legal entity which has a close relationship with a Member through shared ownership, control, or influence.

They are not a Member but can participate in a Project and then share the benefits and obligations of the Member they are linked to.

Process description and instructions for RIS Activities – KAVA 12

Project coordinator: a person appointed by the Lead partner, who acts on behalf of the Consortium and steers the Project activities, 'has overall responsibility for the project; is the first point of contact between EIT RawMaterials and the consortium; is responsible for entering and updating data and information in SeedBook and BlueBook on behalf of the consortium, for submitting the proposal in SeedBook and for coordinating the smooth transition into BlueBook (response to feedback, change requests, project reviews, etc.). The Project Coordinator is also responsible for 1) defining the mechanisms for the generation of the financial sustainability to the KIC and 2) the clear identification of the total amount and the entity/ies that will provide this financial sustainability (taken from the Project Management Guidance).

Project officer: a person assigned by KIC LE to accompany the Consortium throughout the project implementation. The PO is the main contact person for the PC regarding all matters concerning the Project's agreements, reporting, and other implementation topics.

ACRONYMS:

- FSM: Financial sustainability mechanism.
- ROI: Return on investment.
- PIC: Participant Identification Code.