EIT RawMaterials
SME Call
Instructions and process description

EIT RawMaterials is committed to supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as they lead activities that will improve innovation capacity across its community. The primary goal of this call is to boost and accelerate the launch on the market of new products (goods or services) within the context of the value chains and topics of the three EIT RawMaterials Lighthouses (Sustainable Discovery and Supply, Sustainable Materials for Future Mobility, Raw Materials and Circular Societies). Therefore, this call specifically targets KPI EITN03 ('Number of Products (goods or services) or processes launched on the market'), while at the same time encouraging the achievement of other EIT core KPIs. This call is also fully aligned with the EIT's goal of supporting innovation and business creation, accelerating the commercialization of innovation to the benefit of European citizens.

The call is especially suited to companies that are facing a challenge to bring their specific innovative product, process, solution or service to the market, and that are seeking additional financial support of up to €500 000 to solve their challenge. To qualify for funding, the company must propose solutions that are aligned with the value chains of the raw and advanced materials network and must fit the definition of an SME according to the European Commission (an entity engaged in an economic activity, with less than 250 employees and an annual turnover of no more than €50 million and/or a balance sheet of no more than €43 million).

This document describes the process for the preparation, submission, evaluation and selection of proposals in response to the 2020 SME Call (hereafter 'SME Call') launched by EIT RawMaterials. This call is a EIT RawMaterials Knowledge Added Value Activity (KAVA).

Proposals can only be submitted using the EIT RawMaterials IT platform 'SeedBook'.

The maximum total EIT funding per project for this call is €350 000 excluding the mandatory minimum Partner co-funding (30% of total budget). The funding period would be normally distributed over two calendar years, with a maximum yearly EIT funding of €200 000 per company per calendar year (note, however, that other restrictions may apply, e.g., the €100 000 yearly cap for Project Partners of EIT RawMaterials). The maximum project duration is 12 months. The total amount of EIT funding to be distributed in this 2020 call among selected applicants is expected to be €1 000 000.

All entities involved in the submission of a proposal in response to this call should read the following documents carefully:

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- This document (the call text)
- *SME Call Proposal: Guidance and Template for complementary information*
- *EIT RawMaterials communication and dissemination guidance*
- The *Lighthouse Appendix*, which outlines the topics and criteria for application through the Lighthouses
- *Communication and dissemination guidance*
- *Project Management Guidance*
- *FAQ* (Frequently Asked Questions) that will be posted in the online proposal submission platform "Seed book" (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
- *The Strategic Agenda 2018-22 of EIT RawMaterials* (FPA, Annex I)

All of these documents can be found in the SeedBook Help tab and in the EIT RawMaterials web page.

1. Eligibility criteria – who can apply

Five eligibility criteria apply to this call:

1. The lead partner must be an SME. All SMEs registered as a legal entity in the EU (including H2020 EU 'Associated Countries') are eligible to apply as the Leading Organization. The call is open to existing Partners of EIT RawMaterials at the time of application, as well as non-Partners. Entities that are not partners of EIT RawMaterials at the time of application, however, must become partners of EIT RawMaterials before the Project Agreement can be signed. Please note that if the entity chooses to become a Project Partner, an EIT funding cap of €100 000 per year will apply, and Project Partners can participate in a maximum of 2 EIT RawMaterials projects at the same time. Membership fees will be levied pro-rata in the first year (depending on project commencement date) and in full in the second year.

2. There must be a Coordinating Partner. The Coordinating Partner must be an EIT RawMaterials Core or Associate Partner when the project starts, and must remain an EIT RawMaterials Core or Associate Partner, over the duration of the project. Failure to meet this requirement at any stage will result in the immediate termination of the project.

3. Mandatory minimum 30% co-funding. The co-funding contributed by the project consortium must be minimum 30% of the total funding (not 30% of the EIT funding). This is the minimum amount set by the EIT for innovation projects. Projects that provide a higher co-funding will be evaluated positively. The co-funding contributed by each partner does not need to be proportional to the funding allocated.

4. Mandatory financial backflow for the KIC (EIT RawMaterials). Before the Project Agreement is signed, EIT RawMaterials will discuss with the Consortium a strategy for the financial sustainability of the KIC, which must be defined at the time of proposal submission and must be fully addressed and outlined in the proposal.

EIT RawMaterials is committed to supporting the best ideas and the projects with the highest potential to generate impact in the raw materials value chain, as well as to developing its financial sustainability strategy as mandated by the EIT. EIT RawMaterials requests a financial backflow in case of project success. The definition of success will be negotiated and agreed upon with EIT RawMaterials and must be defined at the time of proposal submission. If the success conditions are met, EIT RawMaterials will consider two main types of backflow schemes:

1. Revenue sharing: EIT RawMaterials receives a percentage of the revenue generated from the Project in the amount of the allocated grant, plus a 10% mark-up, if the commercialisation is successful.
2. Any other reasonable mechanism contributing to the financial sustainability of the KIC the Parties may agree upon.

The scheme shall reasonably take into account the amount of the grant allocated, the impact generated by it and, if applicable, additional opportunities provided by EIT RawMaterials such as successful access to investors and customers. Details of the backflow will be negotiated prior to the signing of the Project Agreement (PA) and will be outlined in the PA. The option selected for the KIC's financial backflow must be outlined in the proposal to a sufficient level of detail that will allow a proper assessment of the project's financial risks and benefits for the KIC. If the project is recommended for funding, the details of the backflow mechanisms (amount, caps, timeline, responsible party/ies, conditions, etc.) must be fully defined and agreed upon in writing by both parties before the project is included in the 2021 Business Plan (expected by the end of August 2020).

5. The project should address EIT RawMaterials Lighthouse(s). One (or more) of the topics listed in Section 6 (topics 1-6 of Section 6.1 OR topics 1-6 of Section 6.2 OR topics 1-3 of Section 6.3) of the 'Lighthouse Appendix' must be addressed by the project. Prospective applicants must consult the EIT RawMaterials staff listed in Appendix 1 prior to the submission of their proposal. The assessment of eligibility in terms of topic is at the sole discretion of EIT RawMaterials.

There are no restrictions on the number, type and geographic distribution of the entities forming the consortia. The Coordinator acts on behalf of all entities in the Consortium, and will be the single point of contact with EIT RawMaterials.

2. *Specific rules on funding*

Funding will be provided to fulfil the project workplan covering the costs of activities necessary to deliver according to the KPIs and deliverables defined in the proposal. Although it is expected that much of the funding will be used to cover personnel costs, other cost categories can be covered. As a general rule, cost eligibility, documentation and reporting are subject to the same guidelines and conditions applied by EIT and EIT RawMaterials in the 'standard' KAVA projects. These include provisions for the selection and appointment of sub-contractors. Prospective applicants are expected to familiarize themselves with these guidelines and conditions prior to applying. Within these rules, the decision to fund specific costs will be at the sole discretion of EIT RawMaterials.

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

1. There is no requirement to contribute KCAs (KIC Complementary Activities).
2. The following cost categories do not apply:

   a) Cost of large research infrastructure
   b) Prizes
   c) Scholarships
   d) Sub-granting ('Task Partners')
   e) Unit costs EIT labelled Master programmes (AVSA)
   f) Unit costs EIT labelled PhD programmes (AVSA)

3. Other conditions and information

1. Pre-financing from EIT RawMaterials will be distributed according to the same rules and with the same timeline as that applicable to BP2019 projects.

2. Project Agreements (PAs) will be issued after the evaluation process has been completed.

3. All the funds awarded in this call must be fully expended by the end of the calendar year in which they have been awarded.

4. All activities supported in this call must be fully completed by the end of the funding period.

5. Projects selected in this SME Call need to follow the regular EIT RawMaterials Business Plan reporting cycle and rules.

6. Each proposal must have clear KPI targets including at least one product or service launched in the market. The proposal must have at least four deliverables and at least one output (e.g., a service launched in the market). These must be described in detail in the proposal. The four deliverables are:
   a) the final report, which will be used both internally (e.g., to define possible specific calls in the future) and externally to promote the KIC's activities and showcase its innovation capacity and achievements;

b) a PowerPoint presentation (maximum 10 slides) with the scope and main outcomes of the project;

c) a two-page project description for inclusion in the EIT RawMaterials website and for EIT reporting; and

d) data gathered and generated during the project in Excel format with corresponding graphics illustrating the main outcomes.

7. The proposal must include a kick-off meeting with EIT RawMaterials staff, a follow-up meeting after six months and a final project meeting at the end of the project, organized by the Project Coordinator and attended by the relevant Senior Advisor and Business Development Manager.

8. Projects must aim for product launch in the market and revenue creation within 12 months after the end of the EIT funding period. The proposal must clearly state who (which partner) will be responsible for commercialization, and outline a business plan including a market introduction.

9. A detailed work plan must be provided for each year of the project duration at the time of proposal submission.

10. All projects will be tracked, and their progress will be assessed for 5 years after the end of the funding period.

11. Specific tasks may be attributed to subcontractors, as long as the necessity is clearly justified and follows the general H2020/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 subcontractor to become a partner.

12. It is possible to add other partners to the consortium after the project selection, but without changes to the total budget allocated to the project.

13. 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 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 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.

14. The maximum total EIT funding per project for this call is €350 000 excluding the mandatory minimum Partner co-funding (30% of total funding). The funding period would normally be distributed over two calendar years, with a maximum yearly EIT funding of €200 000 EUR per company per calendar year (note, however, that other restrictions may apply, e.g., the €100 000 yearly cap for Project Partners of EIT RawMaterials). The maximum project duration is 12 months.

15. 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*'

Above and beyond the specific EIT RawMaterials Eligibility criteria, all projects must comply with H2020 and EIT rules, and with the conditions set in the current EIT RawMaterials Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA).

4. *Proposal evaluation and selection*

There are two types of criteria for the evaluation of proposals:

Eligibility criteria - mandatory requirements (proposals that do not meet such criteria will not be considered for further evaluation), as described in Section 1 of this document;

Quality criteria - quality criteria against which the eligible proposals will be scored and ranked, according to the evaluation grid presented below.

The quality of proposals will be evaluated by an internal panel of experts appointed by the EIT RawMaterials Operational Management Team (OMT). EIT RawMaterials will strive to achieve balance in the Evaluators' gender and geographic provenance.

- In the first step, the assigned experts evaluate each proposal remotely using the   criteria set out in the Criteria grid.

- The final evaluation of all proposals is conducted by the entire panel. The strengths and weaknesses of each proposal as perceived by the panel will be documented and communicated once the evaluation process is completed.

The final selection of all proposals is conducted by the EIT RawMaterials OMT, based on the outcome of the evaluation process. 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 funding available, the EIT RawMaterials OMT 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.

Coordinators of projects that are selected for funding will be informed after approval by the Executive Board and receive also 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.

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.

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Each application will be scored on the criteria listed in the following table:

WEIGHT	CRITERIA	EXPLANATIONS
1	1. TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT	The technology development should be innovative and have a clear roadmap and its exploitation should be feasible in the short term.
1	2. BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY	The market size, competitors, substitutes, the potential of the applications and the customer portfolio need to be well-defined, and commercial leads must be ongoing. A Business Plan must be in place.
1	3. TEAM QUALITY	The team members must demonstrate relevant expertise and fulfil the functions required to execute the project.
1	4. PROJECT PLANNING	A project plan with objectives, tasks, milestones and deliverables or outputs needs to be defined, together with a sound budget.
1	5. KPIs and BACKFLOW	Number and strength of EIT Core KPIs and the business needs. Effective and sustainable financial backflow mechanism to EIT RawMaterials.

Evaluation scale: In relation to each of the criteria listed above, a score between 0 and 5 is awarded 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.

Therefore, the maximum score that can be awarded to a project is 25 points.
The average of the evaluators' scores will be used to produce the ranking.

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The outcomes of the proposal selection will be communicated to Project Coordinators by the Head of Business Development. Project Coordinators will be responsible for making all changes and updates in BlueBook.

5. Confidentiality

If a proposal is approved for funding, the full details of the approved project will be communicated to the EIT as part of the Business Plan 2020 and the proposed Business Plan 2021, where it will be included in the EIT's evaluation.

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 website, 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 relating 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.

6. Calendar

9 March 2020	Launch of call for SME projects
6 May 2020 at 13.00 CEST	Proposal submission deadline
May 2020	Proposal Evaluation
1st week June 2020	Approval of list of projects for funding by Operational Management Team & communication to partners
10 June 2020	Response to mandatory changes requested by the Selection Panel ('Change requests'), PA negotiations and signature
1 July 2020	Starting date for approved projects
1 September 2020	Latest starting date for approved projects
August 2020	Inclusion of selected projects in Business Plan 2021, to be submitted to EIT

There is a second cut-off date to be defined later this year.

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7. Proposal submission using SeedBook

Proposals must be submitted no later than 6 May 2020 at 13.00 CEST via SeedBook. The attached *SME Project proposal: Guidance and Template for complementary information* offers guidance for the content of the proposal. Evaluation will commence immediately after submission, and the outcomes of the evaluation will be communicated on the first week of June 2020.

8. Appeal and redress procedure

Upon receipt 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 receipt 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 and 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 OMT. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could have affected the funding decision, 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 already been assessed and validated.

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- 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 any other criterion.
- 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.

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