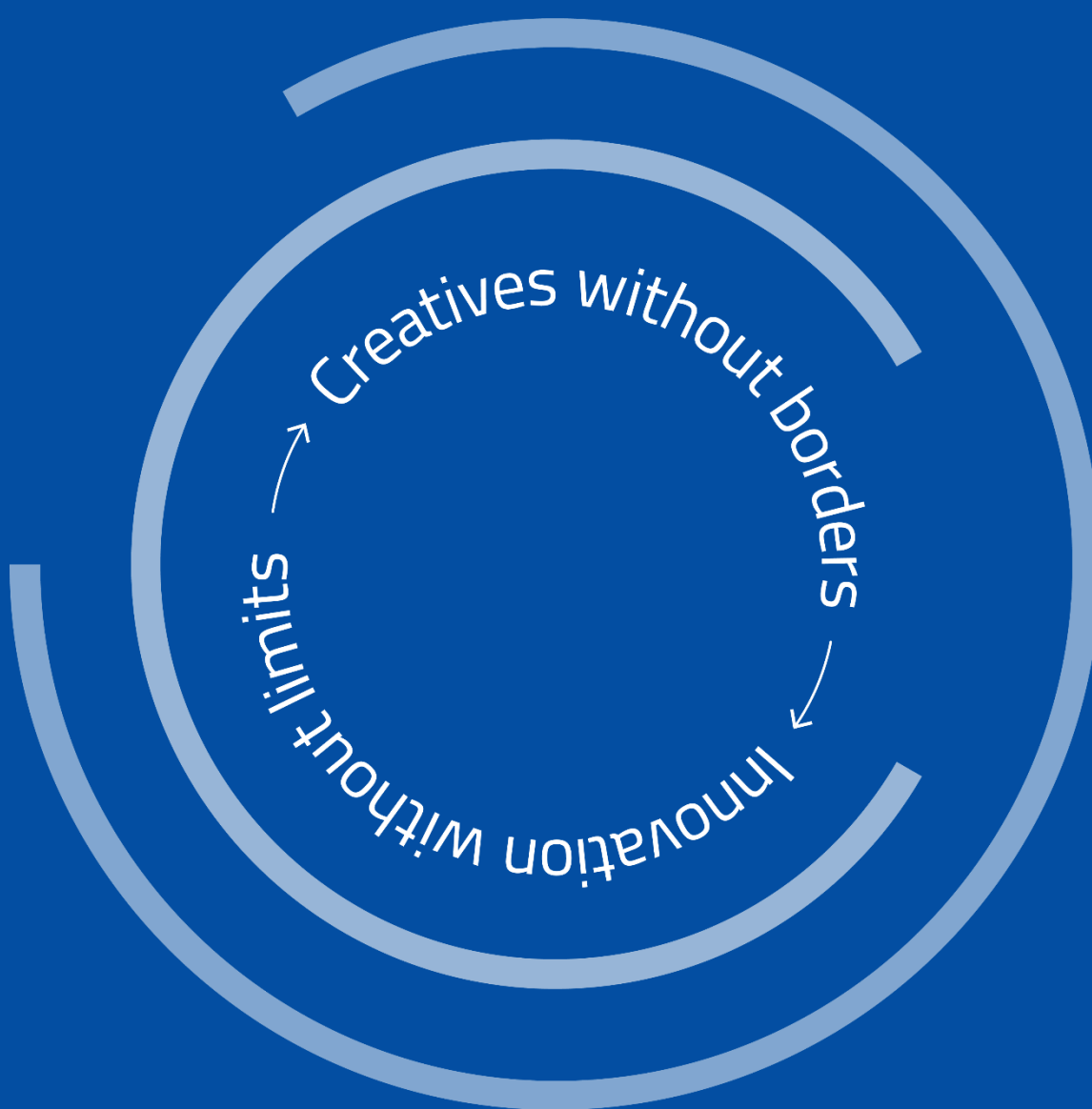


Regular Open Call

Short Innovation Projects 2025

Call Guidelines





Regular Open Call for Proposals 2025

Short Innovation Projects

Version 1.0 (2025)

History of Changes

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	11/02/2025	Initial version.

****This call may be subject to corrections, modifications and clarifications. Applicants are encouraged to regularly check the call pages of the EIT Culture & Creativity website for updates.****



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. CALL FOR SHORT INNOVATION PROJECTS 2025	6
3. CALL SUMMARY	7
4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS	11
4.1. EIT CC STRATEGIC FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES	11
4.1.1. <i>Vision and mission</i>	11
4.1.2. <i>Impact goals</i>	11
4.1.3. <i>Challenges</i>	11
4.1.4. <i>Strategic objectives</i>	12
4.1.5. <i>EIT CC priority areas</i>	12
4.2. WHO CAN APPLY	13
4.2.1. <i>Segment 1: Single beneficiary projects</i>	14
4.2.2. <i>Segment 2: Collaborative projects</i>	14
4.2.3. <i>Documentation</i>	14
4.2.4. <i>Special cases</i>	14
4.3. MEMBERSHIP	15
4.3.1. <i>Membership options</i>	15
4.4. INTEGRATION OF RIS APPLICANTS	15
4.4.1. <i>Encouragement for Participation of RIS applicants</i>	16
4.4.2. <i>Co-funding rate</i>	16
5. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS	17
5.1. CALL STRATEGIC FOCUS	17
5.2. SEGMENTS	17
5.2.1. <i>Segment 1: Single beneficiary projects</i>	18
5.2.2. <i>Segment 2: Collaborative projects</i>	18
5.3. COMMON TO BOTH SEGMENTS	19
5.3.1. <i>General background and scope</i>	19
5.3.2. <i>Eligible activities</i>	19
5.3.3. <i>Out of scope</i>	19
5.4. TOPICS	20
5.4.1. <i>Fashion</i>	20
5.4.2. <i>Architecture</i>	21
5.4.3. <i>Cultural Heritage</i>	21
5.4.4. <i>Audio-Visual Media</i>	22
5.4.5. <i>Gaming</i>	22
5.5. SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE TRIANGLE INNOVATION	23
5.5.1. <i>Segment 1: Single beneficiary projects</i>	23
5.5.2. <i>Segment 2: Collaborative projects</i>	23
5.6. TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL	24
5.7. GENDER AND DIVERSITY	25
5.8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) FOR THE INNOVATION CALL	25
5.8.1. <i>Mandatory KPIs</i>	25
5.8.2. <i>Additional KPIs</i>	26
5.9. PROJECT DURATION	27
5.10. FINANCIAL ASPECTS	27
5.10.1. <i>EIT Culture and Creativity financial support</i>	27
5.10.2. <i>Payment modalities</i>	27



5.10.3.	Co-funding rate	28
5.10.4.	Eligibility of expenditure	28
5.10.5.	Contribution to EIT CC's financial sustainability	28
5.11.	SPECIFIC MONITORING REQUIREMENTS	29
5.11.1.	Deliverables	30
5.12.	LEGAL ASPECTS AND DOCUMENTATION	31
5.12.1.	Funding limitations for BP 2024-2025	31
6.	PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE PROGRAMME	32
6.1.	SUPPORT GIVEN TO APPLICANTS PREPARING A PROPOSAL	32
6.1.1.	Application guidelines	32
6.1.2.	Call information sessions	32
6.1.3.	Applicants contact point	32
6.1.4.	FAQ	33
6.1.5.	Submission of a proposal	33
7.	EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS	34
7.1.	ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK	34
7.1.1.	Admissibility criteria	34
7.1.2.	Eligibility criteria	35
7.2.	STAGE 1 – EXTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS	36
7.2.1.	Quality evaluation	36
7.2.2.	Total scoring from quality evaluation	39
7.3.	STAGE 2 – PORTFOLIO SELECTION	39
7.3.1.	Portfolio selection process	39
7.3.2.	Thresholds, ranking, and awarding of financial support in a nutshell	40
8.	FINAL RANKING AND SELECTION OF PROPOSALS	41
9.	COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS TO APPLICANTS	42
9.1.	SELECTED PROPOSALS	42
9.2.	RESERVE LIST AND REJECTED PROPOSALS	42
10.	APPEAL PROCEDURE	43
11.	FAST TRACK PROVISIONS	44
11.1.	ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT	44
11.2.	IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION	44
11.3.	EVALUATION PROCESS	44
ABBREVIATIONS		45
GLOSSARY OF TERMS		46
ANNEX I. APPLICATION FORM		49
ANNEX II. APPEAL PROCEDURE		55
ANNEX III: GENERAL RULES FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS WITH THE RESPECT TO THE'S COMPLIANCE PRINCIPLES		58



1. INTRODUCTION

EIT CULTURE & CREATIVITY

As the ninth Knowledge & Innovation Community (KIC), EIT Culture & Creativity (EIT CC) aims to fundamentally change the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) across Europe. Our mission is to empower and nurture a sustainable innovation ecosystem, bringing together education, research, business, and public organisations to address sector-specific societal and economic challenges. By fostering interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration, EIT Culture & Creativity seeks to unlock the innovative potential of the fragmented CCSI, contributing significantly to Europe's green, digital, and social transitions.

EIT Culture & Creativity focuses on five priority areas: Fashion, Architecture, Cultural Heritage, Audio-Visual Media, and Gaming. These sectors face unique challenges but collectively represent a substantial portion of the EU CCSI workforce and revenue. By strategically emphasizing these areas while also welcoming participants from the broader spectrum of CCSI, we aim to create and maintain jobs, increase resilience, and accelerate sustainable and responsible economic growth.

Our Strategic Agenda 2024-2027 outlines our approach to transforming the CCSI, aiming for competitiveness, resilience, and sustainable economic growth. With 60 partners from 20 countries, EIT Culture & Creativity is building Europe's first knowledge and innovation community for the CCSI. This unique pan-European and cross-sectorial community will be inclusive and open to all players, leveraging diversity as a strategy to enhance innovation and competitiveness globally.

Key strategic objectives:

- **Future-proofing CCSI students and professionals** with entrepreneurial and cross-disciplinary skills for the green and digital transition.
- **Deploying and scaling CCSI innovations** on green and digital technologies and new business models, unlocking positive societal and economic impact.
- **Accelerating and scaling CCSI market opportunities** to compete globally.

Co-Location-Centres (CLCs):

In addition to the headquarters in Cologne, Germany, EIT Culture & Creativity operates through a network of six subsidiaries, so called Co-Location Centres (CLCs), across Europe to ensure broad accessibility and support for innovators and creatives. The CLCs facilitate regional engagement and collaboration. They are located in:

- **CLC Northwest:** Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- **CLC North:** Helsinki, Finland
- **CLC South:** Bologna, Italy
- **CLC Southwest:** Barcelona, Spain
- **CLC Southeast Europe & Alps:** Vienna, Austria
- **CLC East:** Kosice, Slovakia



2. CALL FOR SHORT INNOVATION PROJECTS 2025

Globalisation, digitalisation, and emerging technologies such as AI continue to revolutionise how stakeholders in the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) produce, distribute, and engage with partners, customers, and audiences. The increasing urgency of climate change and the need for greening within the sector further compound these challenges, making environmental sustainability not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity. Many European CCSI stakeholders face challenges in adapting to and innovating within these rapidly evolving market landscapes, as they often lack the capacity, networks, resources, and financial security to experiment and bring their ideas towards commercialisation.

The aim of the EIT Culture & Creativity's 2025 Innovation Programme is to foster a balanced portfolio of projects that address key challenges in EIT Culture & Creativity's five priority areas: Fashion, Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Gaming, and Audio-Visual Media. This call will focus specifically on short innovation projects – projects with a duration of no more than 6 months – that can drive tangible, impactful results within a limited timeframe. These projects will provide rapid, scalable solutions that can be brought to market quickly. The short duration of the innovation projects will enable them to deliver direct, tangible results in a shorter timeframe, producing concrete, market-ready innovations. In addition to financial support, EIT Culture & Creativity reserves the right to offer further services to selected innovations during and beyond the grant period to ensure long-term sustainability. These services may include access to market support activities such as events, investor pitch sessions, networking opportunities with the EIT CC and broader EIT community, and activities hosted at the Co-Location Centres (CLCs). These additional activities will maximize the project's contribution to EIT CC's financial sustainability.



3. CALL SUMMARY

This is an open call launched under the cascade funding mechanism, providing financial support to third parties based on actual costs incurred. The selected projects will receive EIT Culture & Creativity funding through a sub-granting model, where financial contributions are allocated to consortium members as subgrants. The final eligible subgrant amount refunded will be determined based on the eligible costs incurred and reported at the end of the project, in accordance with applicable financial rules and verification procedures.

Section	Description of information to be provided	
	Segment 1	Segment 2
Key dates of the call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call opening: 11 February 2025 • Call closure: 11 March 2025 at 17.00 CET • Eligibility and admissibility check: mid-March 2025 • External evaluation of proposals: Until beginning of April 2025 • Portfolio selection: Until mid-April 2025 • Communication of results to applicants: Mid-April 2025 • Publication of results: Beginning of June 2025 (1 month standstill period) • Tentative projects start date: Beginning of June 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call opening: 11 February 2025 • Call closure: 11 April 2025 at 17.00 CET • Eligibility and admissibility check: mid-April 2025 • External evaluation of proposals: Until beginning of May 2025 • Portfolio selection: Until mid-May 2025 • Communication of results to applicants: Mid-May 2025 • Publication of results: Beginning of July 2025 (1 month standstill period) • Tentative projects start date: Beginning of July 2025
Scope and topics of the call segments	<p>The Call for Short Innovation Projects supports 6-month projects carried out by a single SME or micro enterprise. These projects advance technologies from TRL 7 to TRL 9, ensuring rapid commercialisation. The single applicant must independently manage the project, act as the commercial member, and implement the innovation.</p> <p>Priority areas include Fashion, Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Gaming, and Audio-Visual Media. The expected outcome is a market-ready product, service, or business model, with a clear path to commercialisation across multiple European markets.</p>	<p>The Call for Short Innovation Projects supports 6-month projects carried out by a consortium of two entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One SME or micro enterprise as the innovation developer (and often the commercial member). • One supporting entity providing innovation support (e.g., research or technology development). <p>These projects advance technologies from TRL 7 to TRL 9, ensuring rapid commercialisation. Priority areas include Fashion, Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Gaming, and Audio-Visual Media. The expected outcome is a market-ready product, service, or business model, with a clear path to commercialisation across multiple European markets.</p>



Section	Description of information to be provided	
	Segment 1	Segment 2
Type of activities to be financially supported	Projects advancing technologies from TRL 7 (system prototype demonstration) to TRL 9 (actual system proven in operational environment) , focusing on rapid commercialisation. Activities will prioritise scalable solutions in the Fashion, Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Gaming, and Audio-Visual Media sectors, ensuring quick market introduction.	
Total estimated EIT Culture & Creativity financial support allocated to this call	<p>The total EIT CC financial support provided for this segment is up to €595,000.00 with a maximum €59,500 of EIT CC financial support per project.</p> <p>EIT CC financial support allocations will be distributed in two instalments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of the project: up to 30% as prefinancing (<i>*The initial pre-financing will only be disbursed once all required documents have been duly signed by all parties, and all necessary validations have been successfully completed.*</i>) Completion of the project: up to an additional 70% as final payment. After revision and validation of the final report. 	<p>The total EIT CC financial support provided for this segment is up to €2,640,000.00 with a maximum €120,000 of EIT CC financial support per project.</p> <p>EIT CC financial support allocations will be distributed in two instalments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of the project: up to 30% as prefinancing (<i>*The initial pre-financing will only be disbursed once all required documents have been duly signed by all parties, and all necessary validations have been successfully completed.*</i>) Completion of the project: up to an additional 70% as final payment. After revision and validation of the final report.
Co-funding	<p>All proposals must have a minimum co-funding rate of 30% across the project. Members within a consortium may have different individual co-funding rates, if the overall co-funding for the entire project meets the required minimum of 30%.</p> <p>Costs funded by other EU programmes or sources are not eligible as co-funding to avoid double funding.</p>	
Applicant requirements	<p>Proposals must be submitted by a single SME or micro enterprise established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe-associated country. The single entity acts as both the innovation developer and commercial member, progressing an innovation from TRL 7 to TRL 9 within 6 months. The entity is fully responsible for market readiness and contributing to financial sustainability through the Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM).</p>	<p>Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of two entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One SME or micro enterprise (the innovation developer) as the project leader. One supporting entity (e.g., research organisation, technology provider, or business consultant) providing complementary expertise to support market readiness. <p>The members must be from two different EU Member States or HE-associated countries. The commercial member role must always be held by an SME or micro enterprise. The project must advance the innovation to TRL 9 within 6 months.</p>
KPIs to be addressed	All submitted proposals must address the mandatory KPI listed below:	



Section	Description of information to be provided	
	Segment 1	Segment 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EITHE02.4 – Innovations Launched on the Market: The proposal must aim to launch at least one innovation (new product or service) on the market within the KAVA duration or within three years of completion, with documented sales revenue of at least €10,000. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum target: 1 <p>Also, proposals may address the following optional additional KPIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EITHE01.1 – Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): The proposal should aim to generate and apply for at least one IPR (patent, trademark, registered design, etc.) resulting from KIC activities. • EITHE04.4 – Start-ups Created: The proposal should aim to establish a start-up based on the project’s outputs, with financial transactions of at least €10,000 for services/products sold to customers. 	
Admissibility and eligibility criteria	<p>Admissibility criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is submitted before the specified deadline. • The proposal is written entirely in English. • The proposal is submitted through the designated application platform. • The proposal includes all necessary accompanying documents (in English). <p>Eligibility criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lead applicant and, when applicable, the rest of the consortium members must be registered on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal with a PIC (Participant Identification Code) number. • Applicants must comply with the applicant’s requirements. • The proposal demonstrates a minimum co-funding rate of 30% across the project. • The proposal addresses the mandatory KPIs. 	
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic fit: The proposal aligns with EIT Culture & Creativity’s strategic objectives, its relevance to the specified call topics. It includes a realistic financial sustainability mechanism (FSM) to ensure long-term viability of the course and to contribute to EIT Culture & Creativity’s financial goals. • EU dimension: The proposal demonstrates a clear EU dimension, not just in the consortium composition (if applicable) but also in its market impact and scalability across multiple European markets, targeting various stakeholders across Europe. • Excellence: The proposal emphasises novelty, creativity, and innovation in addressing unmet needs within the cultural and creative sectors. • Impact: The proposal encompasses the expected KPIs, societal and market benefits, market analysis (TAM, SAM, SOM), commercialisation, implementation and scaling strategies, and realistic five-year revenue projections. • Quality and efficiency of the implementation: The proposal demonstrates a clear and feasible work plan, compliant communication strategies, effective risk management strategies, appropriate resource allocation, well-defined member roles, commitment to gender diversity, and a justified budget that ensures value for money. For segment 1, a single entity must demonstrate sufficient expertise to manage all aspects independently and clear incorporation of the Knowledge Triangle integration. For segment 2, both members must prove their complementarity and clear roles while integrating expertise from 	



Section	Description of information to be provided	
	Segment 1	Segment 2
	<p>Knowledge Triangle to achieve project’s results. Budget must be clearly defined and demonstrated: for segment 1, ensure that all activities are feasible within the EIT CC financial support limit; for segment 2, the budget is distinctly distributed among both entities according to their roles and responsibilities.</p>	
Portfolio selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business intelligence: The proposal introduces innovative approaches, disrupts markets, and shows strong potential for scaling, partnerships, and adoption by key stakeholders in the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). • Strategic portfolio fit: The proposal complements and diversifies EIT Culture & Creativity’s portfolio, addressing gaps and creating synergies in underrepresented areas. • Financial and commercial scalability: The project demonstrates a scalable and feasible Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) with potential to secure additional EIT CC financial support and contribute to EIT Culture & Creativity’s financial goals. 	
Application platform	<p>Segment 1 (single applicant): The application form will be available from 11 February 2025 to 11 March 2025 17:00 CET.</p> <p>Segment 2 (consortia, 2 entities): The application form will be available from 11 February 2025 to 11 April 2025 17:00 CET.</p> <p>Please make sure you have a Participant Identification Code (PIC), if not register first on the EU Funding & Tender Portal.</p> <p>Please submit your applications here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short innovation call application form, segment 1 (single applicant, 1 entity): https://wkf.ms/417YuBP • Short innovation call application form, segment 2 (consortia, 2 entities): https://wkf.ms/3Ermw1M 	
List of documents to take into consideration	<p>Applicants must submit the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online application form (see link above and template in Annex I) • Budget plan and EIT funding request as Excel file • Work plan and project timeline as Gantt chart • Link to the video (max. 2 minutes and optional) <p>Additional documents relevant to the call:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call guidelines • Budget plan and EIT funding template • Eligibility of expenditure • Appeal procedure (Annex II) • PIC Registration Guidance • EIT Culture & Creativity Strategic Agenda 2024-2027 • List of participating countries in Horizon Europe • Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA) • EU Financial Regulation (Article 61) • Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union • Ethics: Self-assessment 	



4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1. EIT CC STRATEGIC FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

Proposals submitted to this call must support EIT CC vision and mission and directly contribute to tackling our challenges, impact goals, strategic objectives (SOs) and priority areas.

EIT CC acts in compliance with HE MGA Regulations and ensures that the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, sound financial management and no conflict of interest (including having procedures agreed with the granting authority regarding links with recipients) are ensured throughout the selection, evaluation and implementation of the sub granted activities.

Proposals need to demonstrate how the project will not just align with, but also actively contribute to the EIT Culture & Creativity Strategic Agenda 2021-2027 (SA).

4.1.1. Vision and mission

Vision:

EIT Culture & Creativity envisions a transformative shift in the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) towards enhanced competitiveness, resilience, and sustainable economic growth.

Mission:

Our mission is to empower and nurture a sustainable innovation ecosystem that includes all actors of the knowledge triangle within the CCSI. EIT Culture & Creativity, along with its partners, addresses sector-specific challenges in education, innovation, and business creation. By fostering interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration, we aim to unlock the innovative potential of the fragmented CCSI ecosystem, thereby contributing to Europe's triple transition and accelerating competitive and resilient cultural and creative entrepreneurship.

4.1.2. Impact goals

Working towards this mission, EIT CC will pursue three overarching impact goals for the EU CCSI:

- **Create and maintain jobs in a resilient CCSI ecosystem** able to scale and compete in global markets.
- **Increase resilience in and by EU CCSI** by reducing environmental impact and increasing social cohesion.
- **Accelerate transitions towards sustainable and responsible economic growth** of EU CCSI.

4.1.3. Challenges

EIT CC has defined three challenges that affect the EU CCSI struggle to stay competitive on a global level, to be resilient, and to deliver wider economic and societal impact:

- Lack of appropriate skills for future job markets.
- Lack of innovation implementation capacity.
- Lack of venture creation & scaling, IP revenue, and growth.

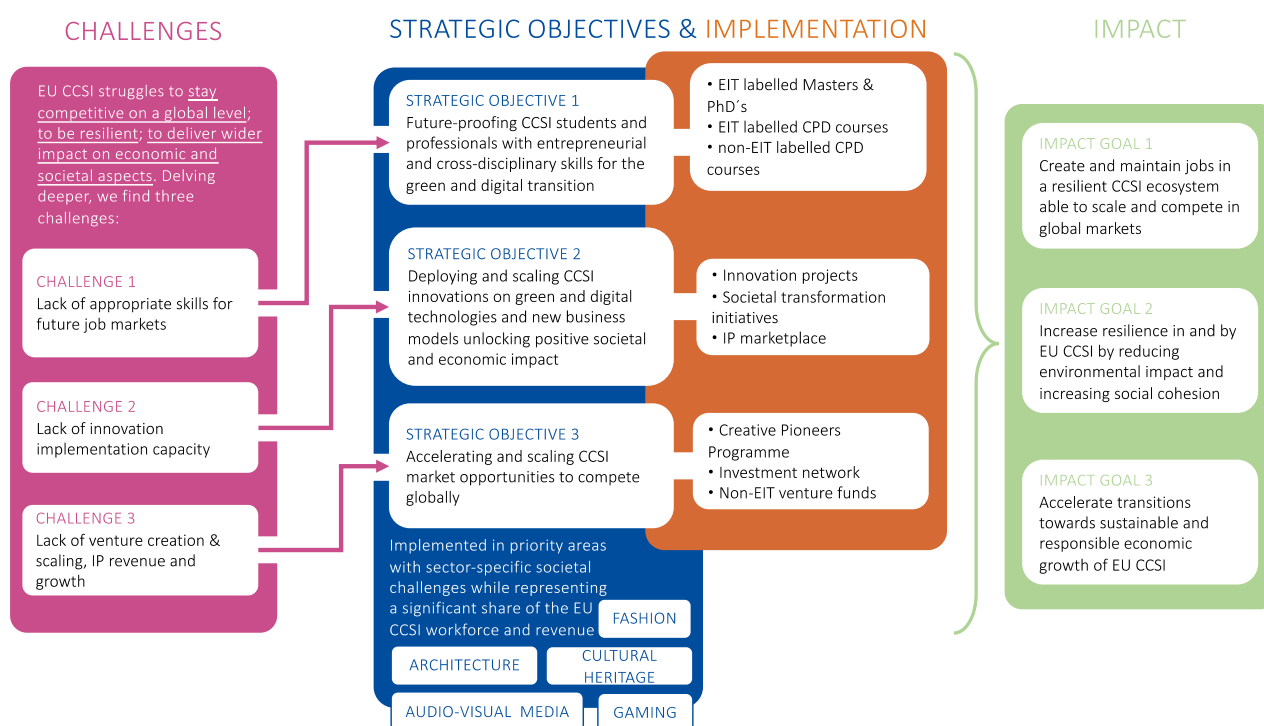
4.1.4. Strategic objectives

To achieve our mission, EIT Culture & Creativity will focus on the following strategic objectives:

- **Future-proofing CCSI students and professionals:** Equip CCSI students and professionals with entrepreneurial and cross-disciplinary skills necessary for the green and digital transition. This includes addressing emerging technologies, environmental challenges, market disruptions, globalization, and talent shortages.
- **Deploying and scaling CCSI innovations:** Support collaborative innovations that have significant commercial potential and societal benefits, focusing on green and digital technologies and new business models.
- **Accelerating and scaling CCSI market opportunities:** Provide business support to create and scale ventures, enabling them to compete globally and access necessary capital, markets, and audiences.

These strategic objectives are designed to create and maintain jobs, enhance resilience, and accelerate sustainable economic growth within the EU's CCSI.

The following graphic illustrates the relationship between our challenges, strategic objectives, and impact goals, highlighting how each proposal can contribute to the overarching mission and vision of EIT Culture & Creativity.



4.1.5. EIT CC priority areas

EIT Culture & Creativity focuses on five key priority areas, each with its unique challenges and intervention needs. These areas represent significant shares of the EU Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) workforce and revenue, making them critical for targeted innovation and development efforts. Below are the descriptions and objectives for each priority area:



Priority Area	Objective	Key Challenges
Fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive circular innovations, new textile processing, recycling technologies, and supply chain innovations. • Promote circular business models and circular design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High reliance on raw material consumption and environmentally damaging production processes. • Significant waste generation leading to environmental degradation and social issues. • SMEs and new ventures face difficulty competing with global industry players and scaling up.
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster circular innovation with a social dimension, focusing on new biobased materials and technologies. • Affordable climate adaptation, enhancing liveability and cohesion in urban environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing demand for reusing and renovating existing buildings over new constructions. • Limited entrepreneurial skills among architects and lack of capacity to use architecture to promote social cohesion. • SMEs and freelancers in architecture struggle to scale and find appropriate economic models.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate emerging technologies and new business models for commercialising scalable products and services. • Preserve cultural heritage, increase societal impact towards social cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappearing traditional knowledge and craft skills. • Limited skills for emerging technologies and entrepreneurship. • Financial bottlenecks making it difficult to monetize and find new revenue streams from cultural heritage.
Audio-Visual Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote responsible and trustworthy use of technology, including generative AI, audience data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity to implement and commercialise new technologies. • New business models based on disruptive technologies. • Issues with data ownership and privacy. • Stagnant revenues and limited investment capabilities.
Gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster innovation with disruptive technologies focused on digital ethics and cross-sectoral collaboration. • Enhance the societal impact of the gaming sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to talent and strict industry-specific curricula. • Barriers from global platforms restricting market access and choice of distribution channels. • Difficulty for EU gaming companies to maintain and grow market share against dominant American and Asian players.

4.2. WHO CAN APPLY

This **Call for Short Innovation Projects** is open to all **legal entities** established in **EU Member States** or **Horizon Europe-associated countries**. The call specifically targets **small and medium enterprises (SMEs) or micro-companies** in the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI), with a focus on close-to-market innovations progressing from **TRL 7 to TRL 9 and target market readiness**.



4.2.1. Segment 1: Single beneficiary projects

- **Applicant type:** Segment 1 is open to single SMEs or micro-companies with the capability to bring innovative products, services, or business models to market within a 6-month period.
- **Commercial member role:** In segment 1, the SME or micro enterprise will also take on the role of the **commercial member**. This means the SME will be responsible for the development of the market entry strategy, scaling efforts, and ensuring the project's financial sustainability through the **Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM)**. The SME or micro enterprise must demonstrate its ability to independently handle commercialisation aspects, including validating the business model and leading the product or service launch.

4.2.2. Segment 2: Collaborative projects

- **Applicant type:** Segment 2 is open to a consortium of at least two independent legal entities, including one SME or micro enterprise and one additional support entity, such as universities, research institutions, or other entities with expertise in innovation development and market support.
- **Commercial member role:** In segment 2, the role of **commercial member** can be undertaken by either the SME or the supporting entity, depending on the consortium's structure. However, in most cases, the SME is expected to lead the commercialisation process, leveraging its direct market knowledge and readiness to scale the innovation. If the supporting entity takes on this role, they must have proven expertise in market entry strategies, scaling, and ensuring the financial sustainability of the innovation.

Innovation focus

Both segment 1 and segment 2 proposals must focus on close-to-market innovations in the priority sectors of **gaming, audio-visual media, fashion, architecture, and cultural heritage**. Projects should aim to launch the innovations within **6 months** from the start of the project. short duration of these innovation projects will enable them to deliver direct, tangible results in a shorter timeframe, producing concrete, market-ready innovations.

4.2.3. Documentation

Proposals must include the necessary documentation demonstrating the applicant's legal status, the innovation's viability, and a clear plan for achieving market readiness. The proposal should also address the project's expected contribution to **EIT Culture & Creativity's financial sustainability** goals.

This call supports innovations that will significantly contribute to the European CCSI and ensure financial sustainability beyond the EIT grant.

4.2.4. Special cases

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.

Eligibility of Associated Countries

Countries in the process of associating with **Horizon Europe** must have completed their association agreement by the **launch date of this call** to be considered eligible. Only entities from countries officially associated at the time of publication of this call will be eligible for funding. Any association agreements finalised after the call publication date will not apply retroactively to this call.



Temporary eligibility requirements for Hungarian universities

Following the Council's Decision on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary that entered into force on 15 December 2022, special participation and EIT CC financial support restrictions may affect Hungarian public interest trusts and their linked universities participating in any EIT CC calls. For further information and the list of affected entities, please refer to Annex I of the Eligibility of Expenditure document. This call for proposals follows the main rules and principles established by EIT rules and EU general principles. All call processes respect the principles of openness, transparency, equal treatment and efficacy.

4.3. MEMBERSHIP

The implementation of financially supported innovation projects is a key activity within EIT Culture & Creativity. Beyond project implementation, being part of the EIT Culture & Creativity community provides additional opportunities for collaboration, networking, and strategic involvement aimed at driving impact and scaling innovation in the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI).

Once an application is selected for EIT CC financial support, the financially supported entities will automatically become members of the EIT Culture & Creativity community. As members, they will benefit from the support of the KIC's ecosystem. To continue their engagement after project implementation, they will be required to choose one of the following membership categories:

4.3.1. Membership options

- **Community participant:** position yourself or your organisation in your region with specialised advice from our regional hub teams and connection with local networks. The cost ranges from €100 to €5,000 per year, depending on whether you apply as an individual or an organisation, and the size of your organisation.
- **Cooperation partner:** boost your organisation's opportunities for collaboration and engagement with Europe's cultural and creative ecosystem. Cooperation Partners benefit from personalised advice and tailored service roadmaps provided by our expert team. Membership fees range from €5,000 to €20,000 per year, based on your organisation's size.
- **Core partner:** Core Partners enjoy all the benefits of the Cooperation Partner level, with additional privileges such as becoming part of our governance structure and voting at the General Assembly. This premium membership is designed for organisations ready to play a leading role in shaping the future of EIT Culture & Creativity. The annual fee is €25,000.

This model ensures that financially supported projects are embedded in the EIT Culture & Creativity community, fostering long-term collaboration and providing ongoing support even after the project lifecycle.

4.4. INTEGRATION OF RIS APPLICANTS

EIT Culture & Creativity encourages the participation of organizations from countries with moderate or emerging innovation scores, as defined by the European Innovation Scoreboard. These countries are part of the Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS), and applicants from these regions are referred to as "RIS applicants."



4.4.1. Encouragement for Participation of RIS applicants

While there are no mandatory allocation requirements for this call, proposals that include activities contributing to innovation and impact in **RIS countries** will be positively considered during the evaluation process. Projects that demonstrate a strong potential to foster innovation in RIS regions or create a positive societal or economic impact in these regions are particularly welcomed.

The inclusion of **RIS applicants** or a focus on activities that benefit **RIS regions** aligns with EIT Culture & Creativity's mission to support a more inclusive European innovation ecosystem. These projects help bridge gaps between regions with diverse levels of innovation performance and contribute to building a sustainable and dynamic innovation network across Europe.

Accordingly, proposals can enhance their alignment with EIT CC's RIS objectives by:

- Including members from RIS-eligible countries and regions in their consortium.
- Highlighting activities specifically designed to address regional challenges or opportunities in RIS areas.
- Identifying measurable outcomes or contributions to innovation, capacity-building, and societal impact in RIS regions.

4.4.2. Co-funding rate

RIS applicants are subject to the same co-funding rate as all other applicants, which is set at 30%.

By actively engaging with RIS members, applicants contribute to the integration of regions with moderate or emerging innovation performance into the broader European innovation landscape. This not only strengthens the impact of the projects but also ensures a more inclusive and diverse approach to innovation across Europe.



5. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

5.1. CALL STRATEGIC FOCUS

The primary objective of this short innovation call is to support the rapid development and piloting of new, close-to-market products, services, and business models within the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). Projects should start at a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of at least 7, with the goal of progressing to TRL 9 (market-ready) within 6 months from project initiation.

EIT Culture & Creativity's 2025 Innovation Programme will focus on building a balanced portfolio of projects in **five priority sectors: Gaming, Fashion, Audio-Visual Media, Cultural Heritage, and Architecture**. These sectors were selected to address both current and emerging challenges within the rapidly evolving CCSI landscape, with the ultimate goal of accelerating market entry and driving economic growth.

Key Priority Areas:

- **Gaming:** Supporting innovations that leverage emerging technologies, such as AI and VR, and blockchain to enhance user safety, reduce development time, and enable cross-sector applications in the fields like healthcare, education, and entertainment.
- **Fashion:** Fostering circular fashion innovations, including new textile processing methods, digital fashion technologies, and sustainable production processes that reduce waste and promote sustainable consumption.
- **Audio-Visual Media:** Encouraging the development of sustainable production methods, generative AI tools, and innovative solutions to improve content creation workflows and enhance audience engagement.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Supporting innovations that leverage immersive technologies like AR/VR to strengthen the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, while also developing business models that can scale internationally.
- **Architecture:** Promoting digital and circular innovations that reduce energy usage in existing buildings, support reuse in construction, and contribute to sustainable, climate-resilient urban spaces.

Selected projects must aim to bring their innovations to market within a short timeframe. In addition to the EIT CC financial support provided, projects will also have the opportunity to access additional support services such as participation in networking events, pitching sessions to investors, and engagement with the broader EIT Culture & Creativity community. These services are offered in alignment with the membership options chosen by the participating entities and may be subject to specific conditions depending on the level of membership.

By aligning with CCSI's needs and fostering rapid innovation in these five priority areas, this call will significantly contribute to the broader objectives of EIT Culture & Creativity's mission to drive impactful growth within the European cultural and creative ecosystem.

5.2. SEGMENTS

This call is divided into two segments to accommodate different project structures, both aiming to support small and micro enterprises in accelerating their innovations to market within a 6-month period.



5.2.1. Segment 1: Single beneficiary projects

Segment 1 is designed for **single applicants**, specifically SMEs or micro-companies, capable of independently advancing their innovation from **TRL 7 to TRL 9** within 6 months. The applicant acts as both the innovation developer and the **commercial member**, responsible for ensuring market readiness and financial sustainability via the FSM.

- **Applicant type:** Single SME or micro enterprise.
- **Consortium composition:** no consortium required; this call is addressed to single entities.
- **Rationale for segment:** This segment targets SMEs and micro enterprises with the internal innovation capacity and the necessary resources to independently drive their projects. By focusing on single-entity projects, the segment recognizes that some organisations are well-equipped to manage the development and commercialisation of innovations without external support. This approach enables them to streamline processes and maintain full control over their project implementation as results.
- **Role of commercial member:** The SME or micro enterprise itself assumes the role of the commercial member.
- **Funding provided:** €595,000 with up to €59,500 per project (up to 10 projects will be financially supported).

5.2.2. Segment 2: Collaborative projects

Segment 2 is intended for projects involving a consortium of **two entities**: one SME or micro enterprise and one supporting entity, who have the capacity to independently drive their innovation from **TRL 7 to TRL 9** within 6 months. This allows the consortium to leverage external expertise to successfully bring the innovation to market.

- **Applicant type:** Consortium of two legal entities.
- **Consortium composition:**
 - **SME or micro enterprise:** Acts as the innovation developer and typically the commercial member.
 - **Supporting entity:** Could be a research organisation, technology provider, or business development entity that complements the SME's capabilities.
- **Rationale for segment:** This segment is tailored for SMEs or micro enterprise that may lack the internal capacity or expertise to bring innovations to market on their own. By fostering collaboration with entities like research organisations or technology providers, the segment ensures these SMEs gain access to the necessary skills and resources. This approach acknowledges potential gaps in their innovation capacity, helping them to achieve market readiness through strategic partnerships.
- **Role of commercial member:**
 - Usually undertaken by the SME.
 - The supporting entity may assume this role if it brings significant expertise in market entry and scaling.
- **Funding provided:** €2,640,000.00 with up to €120,000 per project (up to 22 projects will be financially supported).



5.3. COMMON TO BOTH SEGMENTS

5.3.1. General background and scope

This innovation call specifically targets small and micro enterprises, providing financing for short innovation projects aimed at capitalizing on their innovation potential and accelerating the market readiness of their innovative products, services, and business models. Supported projects will be close to market (starting at a **Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of at least 7**), and the goal is for these innovations to be launched on the market within **6 months** from the start of the project.

5.3.2. Eligible activities:

- **Progressing from prototype to final product**

Activities that involve refining a prototype based on user feedback and testing to deliver a market-ready product. This includes improving the design, functionality, and reliability of the product to ensure it meets market standards and can be scaled.

- **Conducting market research and testing**

Performing thorough market research to better understand customer needs, preferences, and market dynamics. This also includes testing the product/service with potential users to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments to facilitate market entry.

- **Launching activities for new products/services/business models:**

Planning and executing the launch of the new product/service/business model. This includes conducting marketing campaigns, public relations (PR) activities, and events to generate awareness, attract customers, and build market presence quickly.

5.3.3. Out of scope:

The following activities are not eligible for EIT CC financial support under this call:

- **Projects lacking substantial innovation:**

Any project that does not demonstrate a clear and substantial component of innovation, whether in product development, business model, or market approach, will be considered out of scope. Simply expanding an existing product or service without incorporating significant new features, technologies, or processes will not be supported.

- **Incremental updates to existing products or services:**

Minor improvements or routine upgrades to existing solutions, which do not introduce transformative or disruptive innovations, will not qualify for support.

- **Pure commercialisation activities without an innovation component:**

Projects focused solely on marketing, sales development, or regional expansion without significant innovation in the product or service will not be eligible. There must be a tangible advancement in the product's features or functionality tied to its market launch.



- **Replication of existing solutions without significant adaptation or innovation:**

Copying or replicating solutions without clear differentiation, customization, or innovation for new markets or users will also be considered out of scope.

Additional out-of-scope activities may be identified for specific priority areas and will be outlined in the relevant sections of the call guidelines.

5.4. TOPICS

5.4.1. Fashion

Background and scope

The European fashion industry is currently facing significant challenges due to its dominant linear value chain (take-make-dispose), environmental degradation, and social issues related to production and disposal. Circular fashion innovations and the integration of digital technologies are vital for addressing these challenges and creating sustainable business models. Innovations that reduce material use, promote reuse, and enhance sustainability in production and consumption are highly prioritised.

Priority areas for innovation:

- Innovative uses of **Audio-Visual Media** (hereinafter **AVM**) and gaming technologies to reduce environmental impact, lower material use, and shorten value chains.
- Solutions that alter consumer behaviour by promoting repair over replace and increasing acceptance of repurposed materials.
- Circular fashion practices that focus on sustainability and global brand-building through digital and innovative methods.

Out of scope:

- Direct recycling technologies.
- Business models that **“outsource” CO2 emissions** without leading to a net reduction.

Expected outcomes and impact:

- Market-ready circular fashion innovations that reduce environmental impact.
- Enhanced consumer engagement with sustainable fashion practices.
- Scalable business models that promote sustainable fashion consumption across European markets.

Projects must result in commercially viable innovations within 6 months, with clear strategies for market entry. They should present plans to scale in at least two European markets.



5.4.2. Architecture

Background and scope

The architecture sector is evolving with increasing focus on sustainability and the circular economy. There is a growing need for digital innovations and materials that support the reuse of existing structures while reducing the environmental footprint of buildings. Projects that promote more sustainable building practices and energy-efficient retrofits will be prioritised.

Priority areas for innovation:

- Digital innovations that enable circular building practices, supporting reuse and reducing waste.
- Architectural innovations that strengthen social cohesion and promote sustainable urban environments.
- Innovations that reduce energy consumption in existing buildings through retrofitting.

Out of scope:

- Development of new materials for use in new and existing buildings.
- Renovation of buildings without a focus on sustainability or circular practices.

Expected outcomes and impact:

- Circular innovations in architecture that improve sustainability and reduce energy use.
- Solutions that promote social cohesion and more inclusive urban environments.
- Scalable solutions for building retrofitting that can be applied across Europe.

Each project must deliver commercially viable products, services, or business models that reach market-readiness within 6 months.

5.4.3. Cultural Heritage

Background and scope

Cultural heritage is a key pillar of European identity and economy. Innovations that support the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage through modern technologies like AVM and gaming are essential for driving its sustainable development. Business models that enhance the accessibility and international scalability of cultural heritage projects are encouraged.

Priority areas for innovation:

- Projects that leverage AVM and gaming technologies to support the preservation of cultural heritage.
- Business models that create new revenue streams for cultural heritage, scalable across international markets.
- Innovations that strengthen local heritage, identity, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Out of scope:

- Renovation of buildings and cultural heritage sites without technological innovation.
- Tourism-focused innovations not directly tied to cultural heritage preservation.



Expected outcomes and impact:

- Scalable innovations that preserve and promote cultural heritage using modern technologies.
- New business models that enhance the financial sustainability of cultural heritage projects.
- Solutions that contribute to local identity and heritage preservation across multiple European markets.

Projects should result in financially viable innovations, with market-ready outcomes expected within 6 months.

5.4.4. Audio-Visual Media

Background and scope

The European audio-visual media (AVM) sector is experiencing rapid growth, but it also faces challenges related to sustainability, data privacy, and responsible technology use. AI-based innovations and cross-sector applications of AVM technologies are necessary for addressing these challenges while promoting efficient content creation and workflow improvements.

Priority areas for innovation:

- AI-based innovations that improve workflow in content production and reduce environmental impact.
- Cross-industry applications of immersive AVM technologies in sectors such as healthcare, gaming, and fashion.
- AVM technologies that support decision-making platforms for town planning and community involvement.

Out of scope:

- Development of audio-visual content not linked to technology validation.
- Support for film festivals or other events without a focus on technological innovation.

Expected outcomes and impact:

- AI-driven innovations that streamline AVM workflows and improve content production efficiency.
- Cross-sectoral applications of AVM technologies that promote sustainable production methods and audience engagement.
- Scalable business models for AVM technologies that address ethical and sustainability challenges.

Projects should deliver market-ready solutions within 6 months, focusing on commercialisation in at least two European markets.

5.4.5. Gaming

Background and scope

The gaming industry holds significant untapped potential for societal impact beyond entertainment, especially through cross-industry applications. Innovations that enhance user safety, leverage AI to improve gaming experiences, and introduce new monetization strategies are central to driving the growth and sustainability of the gaming sector.



Priority areas for innovation:

- AI solutions that improve user safety, including addressing gaming addiction and toxicity.
- Development and scaling of disruptive technologies like AI, no-code platforms, and third-party payment systems.
- Cross-industry applications of gaming technologies in fields like healthcare and education.

Out of scope:

- Development of content for specific games unless part of a broader cross-innovation project.
- Innovations tied to a single platform (e.g., PlayStation, Xbox).

Expected outcomes and impact:

- Innovations that enhance online safety and mitigate issues such as gaming addiction.
- Cross-industry applications of gaming technologies that drive innovation in sectors such as healthcare and education.
- Scalable business models that promote sustainable monetization in the gaming industry.

Projects must achieve market-readiness within 6 months and should aim to commercialize in at least two European markets.

5.5. SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE TRIANGLE INNOVATION

EIT Culture & Creativity (EIT CC) promotes collaboration within the **Extended Knowledge Triangle (EKT)**, which encompasses **Education, Research, Business, Cultural Institutions**, and includes **policy makers, public administrations, and civil society stakeholders**. This broad approach is designed to harness the full spectrum of expertise and innovation potential within the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI).

The projects supported by EIT CC aim to leverage collaboration across these diverse sectors, with a specific focus on **near-market innovation**. To accommodate the different requirements of **Segment 1 (Single Beneficiary Projects)** and **Segment 2 (Two Beneficiaries Projects)**, the roles within the consortia are defined as follows:

5.5.1. Segment 1: Single beneficiary projects

In this segment, the single applicant, typically an SME or micro enterprise, is expected to independently fulfil all critical roles in the project:

- **Project applicant and commercial member:** The SME acts as both the project applicant and the commercial member, owning or having the rights to exploit the intellectual property (IP). They are responsible for driving the project, implementing the innovation, and ensuring its commercialisation.

5.5.2. Segment 2: Collaborative projects

This segment supports projects involving a consortium of two legal entities, enabling SMEs or micro-companies to leverage external expertise and resources:



- **SME or micro enterprise (innovation developer):** The primary SME or micro enterprise assumes the role of innovation developer and, in some cases, may also act as the commercial member, bringing the innovation to market.
- **Supporting entity (innovation support):** The second entity is expected to provide innovation support, offering expertise in areas such as applied research, technology development, or business advisory. This entity complements the SME's capabilities, helping to drive the project toward market readiness.
- **Role of commercial member:** The commercial member role can be undertaken by either the primary SME or micro enterprise or the supporting entity, provided that the role is always held by an SME or micro enterprise. This ensures that the commercialisation responsibility remains within the hands of small or micro-enterprises.
- **Additional members from the Extended Knowledge Triangle:** While not mandatory, members such as universities, cultural institutions, or public sector actors are welcome in segment 2 if they enhance the project outcomes. Their inclusion will be positively evaluated as they bring valuable sectoral insights and technical expertise to the project.

The inclusion of members with roles that do not add demonstrable value to the project will be closely scrutinised during the evaluation process to ensure efficient use of resources.

Role of the project leader

The project leader will be responsible for the overall coordination and execution of the project. Their key duties include managing and monitoring the project's work plan, ensuring that deliverables, milestones, and KPIs are met, and serving as the primary communication point with EIT Culture & Creativity. The project leader will also oversee compliance with all legal, financial, and administrative requirements throughout the project's duration.

Additionally, the project leader is required to sign the Financial Support Agreement (FSA) with the KIC on behalf of the consortium (for segment 2 projects). By signing the agreement, the project leader formally accepts the terms and conditions of the grant and ensures that all parties involved adhere to the obligations set forth.

5.6. TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL

EIT Culture & Creativity supports **near-market innovation projects** that are in the later stages of development, aiming to accelerate their readiness for full market deployment. Proposals for this call must demonstrate that the innovation is at a **minimum Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 7**.

TRL 7 refers to a stage where the technology or solution is working and has been **demonstrated in an operational environment**.

The objective of the call is to support the progression of these solutions to **TRL 9**, which represents **full commercial deployment**. At **TRL 9**, the technology or solution has been **proven in operational use**, is fully operational, and is ready for large-scale market adoption.

The selected projects should demonstrate their ability to reach **TRL 9** within **6 months** after project's completion, with a focus on achieving market adoption, scalability, and sustainability.

Proposals are strongly encouraged to include a **short demonstration video** (maximum 2 minutes) showcasing the solution's key features and providing evidence of the current TRL.



Diversity and inclusion are key drivers of innovation, enabling us to address pressing global challenges more effectively. To ensure that innovation reflects and meets the diverse needs of society, it is crucial to consider gender and diversity in all stages of project development.

5.7. GENDER AND DIVERSITY

EIT Culture & Creativity aims to support organizations that value diversity and gender equality. In line with this, projects applying to this call should **demonstrate how gender and diversity** are integrated into the design, development, and implementation of the project outputs (products, services, processes, etc.), including how these factors interact with other identity traits such as age, race, class, sexual orientation, and physical ability.

5.8. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs) FOR THE INNOVATION CALL

The following KPIs must be achieved no later than 12 months after the innovation project is finished.

5.8.1. Mandatory KPIs

To be eligible, all submitted proposals must address the mandatory KPIs listed below and indicate the expected minimum target value for each selected KPI.

EITHE Code	KPI Title	KPI Description	Minimum target	Evidence Required
EITHE02.4	Innovations launched on the market	Number of innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within three years of completion with a sales revenue of at least €10,000 documented.	1	Structured data for the KPI and the sub-KPI: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year of reporting • Name of the innovation • Type of innovation (e.g. new product, new service) • Market (country) • Country of origin of the company commercialising the innovation • Description of product or process with specified performance characteristics/ physical parameters/ functionalities demonstrating novelty (new or significant improvement) of the product/process • Declaration demonstrating link with a the specific KIC project • Documented proof such as an invoice or an online sales record demonstrating that the purchase has been made by a customer



5.8.2. Additional KPIs

In addition to the mandatory KPIs, proposals are expected to contribute to other KPIs. Although they are not mandatory, they will be positively assessed during the evaluation:

EITHE Code	KPI Title	KPI Description	Evidence Required
EITHE01.1	Intellectual property rights	Number of innovative products, processes, and methods & Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) applications resulting from KIC activities.	<p>Supporting evidence: A declaration filled in with the following information signed by the company's legal responsible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of intellectual property right: patent, trademark, registered design, utility model, other • Application title • Application reference • Application date • IPR owner • Country of the IPR owner • Does the IPR owner take part in the HEI Capacity Building Initiative (HEI CBI) • IPR status: has the IPR protection been awarded • IPR Award reference if any • Technology Readiness Level
EITHE04.4	Start-ups created	Number of start-ups established in year N as a result / based on the output(s) of KAVA(s), or start-ups created for the purpose of an innovation project to organise and support the development of an asset (but not later than three years after the completion of KAVA) having financial transactions of at least €10,000 for services/products (result of the KIC KAVA) sold to customers.	<p>Structured data for the KPI and sub-KPI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year of reporting • Company name • Company registration number • Country of the company registration • Gender of the company CEO • Link to the specific KAVA • Was the company created through a cross-KIC project? <p>Supporting evidence only for the sub-KPI with the threshold of 10,000 EUR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration certificate of a start-up established in year N • Description of the start-up and its core business • Document such as an invoice or an online sales record certifying financial transactions of at least 10 000 EUR for services/products (result of the KIC KAVA) sold to a customer.



5.9. PROJECT DURATION

This call is open to proposals with a duration of up to 6 months.

If additional time is required to meet KPIs, the project leader may request a no-cost extension from EIT Culture & Creativity. If approved, the project will be extended to ensure the achievement of the specified KPIs.

5.10. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

5.10.1. EIT Culture and Creativity financial support

This short innovation call aims to support projects that accelerate the market entry of innovative products, services, and business models within a 6-month project duration. The total financial support allocated for this call is €3,235,000, divided between the two segments as follows:

- **Segment 1 (single beneficiary projects):** A total of **€595,000** is allocated for this segment, with individual projects eligible for up to **€59,500** in in EIT Culture and Creativity financial support.
- **Segment 2 (two beneficiaries projects):** A total of **€2,640,000** is allocated for this segment, with individual projects eligible for up to **€120,000** in in EIT Culture and Creativity financial support.

The EIT CC financial support will be provided for the development and piloting of solutions, helping projects finalise prototypes, conduct targeted market research, develop commercialisation strategies, and prepare their innovations for market entry. This financial support ensures that all projects achieve **TRL 9** by the end of their lifecycle.

Proposals will be evaluated based on their innovation potential, commercial viability, and alignment with the strategic goals of EIT Culture & Creativity, with specific consideration for the structure and objectives of each segment.

5.10.2. Payment modalities

Entities receiving financial support from EIT Culture and Creativity for the implementation of the selected projects will become subgrantees under the Grant Agreement (s) between EIT Culture and Creativity and EIT.

Necessary arrangements are put in place to ensure eligibility of costs and compliance under the Grant Agreement(s) between the EIT and EIT Culture and Creativity.

All validated entities will have to proceed with the signing of the Financial Support Agreement (FSA), before any financial support can be provided.

EIT Culture & Creativity will provide funding through the following payment structure:

- **Pre-financing payment:** A pre-financing payment of up to 30% of the total contribution will be disbursed upon the successful signing and validation of the Framework Support Agreement (FSA) by all consortium members (in case there is a consortium or by the sole applicant for mono-beneficiary projects).
- **Final payment:** The remaining payment (up to 70%) will be made after the final review, which includes the submission of the final cost and performance report by the applicant and a final review report issued by EIT CC, including the final assessment from the EIT CC. Payment will be issued upon approval of the project's final outcomes. The final payment will be adjusted based on the eligibility check conducted through a Certificate on the Financial Statements (CFS) or EIT CC's internal verification. If any costs are deemed ineligible, they will be deducted from the final payment.



EIT Culture and Creativity shall be under no obligation to distribute EIT funding as financial support to the entities selected unless the cost eligibility rules of Article 6 of the Grant Agreement (as transposed in the Financial Support Agreement) are complied with, always subject to final confirmation by EIT.

5.10.3. Co-funding rate

All proposals must have a minimum co-funding rate of 30% across the project. Members within a consortium may have different individual co-funding rates, as long as the overall co-funding for the entire project meets the required minimum of 30%.

Costs funded by other EU programmes or sources are not eligible as co-funding to avoid double funding.

5.10.4. Eligibility of expenditure

For information on the eligibility of costs of your project's budget, please refer to the document Eligibility of Expenditure published on the call webpage.

5.10.5. Contribution to EIT CC's financial sustainability

As part of its long-term strategy, EIT Culture & Creativity (EIT CC) is committed to becoming financially independent from European Union funding. To achieve this goal, a robust Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) has been implemented. This mechanism is based on generating income through revenue sharing, equity participation, and intellectual property (IP) exploitation. All financially supported projects within the innovation calls are required to contribute to EIT CC's financial sustainability. Please note that EIT CC's preferred option for projects supported in this call is for Equity Participation (shareholder agreement or SAFE). However, if this option is not suitable, revenue sharing or profit sharing will be considered.

1. Equity participation

For projects where there is significant growth potential, EIT CC will negotiate an equity stake in the companies it supports. This allows EIT CC to benefit from the long-term value creation of the companies through shareholding agreements or SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) instruments. Equity stakes will generally range from 5-10%, based on a comprehensive assessment of the project's valuation, potential, and EIT CC's contribution. These equity arrangements are designed to align with market norms and the project's success potential, with a focus on long-term investment strategies that enhance the financial assets of EIT CC.

2. Revenue or profit sharing

Projects that are not suitable for the equity approach outlined above but will result in the sale of products or services developed with EIT CC support will enter into revenue-sharing agreements. A percentage of the revenues generated by these products or services will be shared with EIT CC. This model ensures that as projects succeed in the market, EIT CC benefits proportionally, thus contributing to the organization's financial sustainability. The percentage of the revenue share will be negotiated based on the project's growth potential and expected market success.

Financial sustainability process:

1. **Proposal submission:** All proposals must clearly identify a commercial member with a credible commercialisation strategy and proven track-record in commercialisation, which will contribute to the financial sustainability of EIT CC through one of the aforementioned FSMs.



2. **Financial clearing:** Selected projects will undergo a financial review to ensure that they have the potential for market success and sustainability. During this stage, the general terms of the FSM (equity or revenue share) will be agreed before the project starts.
3. **Project implementation and monitoring:** Throughout the project's lifecycle, EIT CC will monitor the financial contributions based on the agreed FSM. Companies with a revenue-sharing model will share revenue based on agreed timelines, while equity arrangements will be executed according to the specific agreements.

By implementing these FSMs, EIT Culture & Creativity ensures that all supported projects contribute to the organization's financial independence, allowing EIT CC to reinvest in new innovation opportunities and further its mission to foster creativity and culture across Europe.

5.11. SPECIFIC MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

EIT Culture & Creativity will manage all projects according to the general rules and procedures outlined in the **EIT CC Guidelines for Project Monitoring and Controlling**. This document offers a structured framework to ensure efficient project management, execution, and compliance with EIT requirements. Please note that these guidelines are subject to updates based on EIT directives, although major changes are not anticipated. Detailed information will be provided once activities are selected, with additional guidance at the kick-off meeting. Below are the key monitoring elements that project participants should keep in mind:

1. **Project implementation life cycle:** Project activities and monitoring will take place simultaneously. The project leader is responsible for delivering the work plan, while EIT CC oversees progress to ensure milestones, KPIs, and deliverables are completed according to the agreed schedule.
2. **Kick-off meeting:** A mandatory kick-off meeting must be held within the first month of project initiation. This meeting will involve EIT CC and the project leaders. During the meeting, the project objectives, timelines, and any concerns will be clarified. More specific details on the implementation process will be provided during this meeting.
3. **Day-to-day implementation:** The project leader is tasked with managing daily operations, ensuring that deliverables are submitted on time and that the project adheres to the approved work plan. Regular communication with EIT CC is essential for discussing progress, risks, and any potential deviations.
4. **Project changes:** Minor adjustments, such as reallocating small budgets (<10% of the total budget), may be made without formal approval. However, significant changes, such as budget increases from one or more members (as result significant relocation of budget among members), will require formal approval from EIT CC.
5. **Performance and cost reporting:** final performance and cost reports must be submitted by the project leader (the sole SME for segment 1, or the designated SME for segment 2). These reports will be reviewed by EIT CC to assess the project's alignment with the agreed objectives. Funding may be adjusted in cases of underperformance.
6. **Reviews:** Only one review will be conducted to monitor the progress of the 6-month projects:
 - **Final review (M6):** Conducted at the end of the project, the final review will evaluate the overall success of the project. The final report will detail all deliverables, KPIs, outcomes, and financial statements.



- Monitoring and support:** EIT CC will provide ongoing monitoring and support throughout the project duration. Regular meetings will be scheduled with the project leaders to ensure the project remains on track and to offer guidance on any required adjustments.

Further details on project implementation and innovative methods for continuous project validation and evaluation will be shared after the selection of activities, and the kick-off meeting will provide a complete overview of the specific steps to follow.

5.11.1. Deliverables

The EIT Culture & Creativity Innovation Programme emphasises results-based management with a strong focus on performance, outputs, KPIs, and measurable impact. Project consortia should prioritise high-quality, impactful deliverables closely tied to the development of innovative products, services, or business models. These deliverables will also support the strategic goals of EIT Culture & Creativity, ensuring projects align with the objectives of creating value and commercializing solutions in the Cultural and Creative Sectors.

Mandatory deliverables

Each project proposal must include the following mandatory deliverables:

Deliverable	Description	Due Date
Market and product plan	A comprehensive plan detailing the roadmap for each innovation being developed for commercialisation, including market analysis and strategies, a roadmap for future use/commercialisation of the innovation, and the plan for funding rounds (related to KPI EITHE02.4).	Month 3
Financial Sustainability Mechanism agreement	An agreement outlining the chosen Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) for the project, including terms for revenue sharing, equity, or other financial returns.	Month 3
Demonstrations/testing report (if applicable)	Detailed report on the testing phases and validations of the product, including outcomes and future recommendations.	Month 6
Technical performance and specification report	A deliverable detailing the technical performance of the innovation in an operational environment and the technical specifications of the product/innovation delivered to market.	Month 6

Optional Deliverables

Besides the previous mandatory deliverables, the following optional deliverable may be useful to correctly track the performance of the project activities:

Optional Deliverable	Description	Due Date
Business plan (if applicable)	A business plan for projects creating a new company (spin-off), covering strategic, financial, and operational elements (related to KPI EITHE4.4).	Month 3



5.12. LEGAL ASPECTS AND DOCUMENTATION

All applicants will be required to sign a Declaration of Honour in the format provided for under the Financial Support Agreement.

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the exclusion situations referred to in the Declaration of Honour that ban them from receiving EU funding cannot participate.

Entities that have never been part of projects financially supported by EIT Culture and Creativity and do not have a PIC validated by the European Commission's Research Executive Agency (REA) will be subject to a PIC validation process managed by the EIT Community Onboarding Service.

EIT CC financially supported activities are part of Horizon Europe, general funding rules and cost eligibility rules are governed by the Horizon Europe Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AGA).

Through the Financial Support Agreement that each selected entity will have to sign, the provisions of the Grant Agreement(s) between EIT and EIT Culture and Creativity are transposed in the arrangements with the entities implementing the selected projects. The entities selected will work as subgrantees to EIT Culture and Creativity in a modus of cascading EIT funding.

The participation in the EIT Culture and Creativity calls takes place entirely at the applicants' own costs and risk. Any actions taken by the selected entities to start the implementation of the projects selected before the Financial Support Agreement is signed, equally happens at their own costs and risk. EIT Culture and Creativity can in no circumstances held liable for any actions or costs incurred by the applications selected entities before signature of the Financial Support Agreement.

EIT Culture and Creativity does not undertake any commitment regarding the provision of financial support until EIT has confirmed the eligibility of the projects selected by EIT Culture and Creativity and the Financial Support Agreement is signed. As already mentioned, all financial support to be provided by EIT Culture and Creativity is subject to the cost eligibility rules referred to in the Financial Support Agreement and always subject to final confirmation of the eligibility of the costs by EIT.

5.12.1. Funding limitations for BP 2024-2025

Under the 2-year Grant Agreement (GA 101159520), participants from EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries have a €6 million funding cap for the entire BP24-25 period. Legal entities from non-Horizon Europe Associated Countries can participate but are limited to €60,000 over two years. These limits apply to all EIT funding, including activities and prizes.



6. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1. SUPPORT GIVEN TO APPLICANTS PREPARING A PROPOSAL

6.1.1. Application guidelines

EIT Culture & Creativity has developed the application guidelines to assist all potential applicants during the proposal preparation and submission processes. This document is available on the call webpage as part of the call package and provides detailed information and instructions for the use of the application system and preparing your proposal for submission.

6.1.2. Call information sessions

To help applicants with the preparation and submission of their proposals, EIT Culture & Creativity will host information sessions after the publication of the call. These online information events will focus on the call content, topics, and requirements, and on general procedures, such as the submission and evaluation process, financial aspects, and monitoring and reporting activities.

Type of Event	Topic Covered	Date and Time (CET)	Access to Platform
Webinar 1	Overview: Information session on the strategic focus, scope, and topics of the call.	19 February 2025, 10.00–11.00 CET	Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 389 155 340 869 Passcode: pw2br95g
Webinar 2	Commercialisation and financial sustainability: Information session on how proposals should address commercialisation and the project’s contribution to EIT Culture & Creativity’s financial sustainability.	19 February 2025, 11.00–12.00 CET	
Webinar 3	Evaluation criteria and application process: Information session covering eligibility and evaluation criteria, assessment and application process.	19 February 2025, 12.00–13.00 CET	
Webinar 4	Hands-on demonstration: Proposal preparation and submission process, including information on the application platform, detailed submission steps and budget setup.	19 February 2025, 13.00–13.30 CET	

6.1.3. Applicants contact point

All applicants may submit their inquiries via the official **EIT Culture & Creativity Contact Form**: [Contact Form](#).

This form should be used for all questions related to **call content, technical aspects, thematic focus, administrative, financial, or procedural matters**. The relevant team will review and respond accordingly to provide clear and aligned guidance throughout the application process.



6.1.4. FAQ

A repository of common queries and troubleshooting guides will be created and maintained on the EIT CC website.

6.1.5. Submission of a proposal

Before starting a proposal, all applicants (project leader and consortium members, as applicable) must register on the following two platforms:

- **The EU funding & tender opportunities portal** to obtain a nine-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC number).
- **The EIT Culture & Creativity application platform.**

Please carefully read the registration and submission processes outlined in the call guidelines.

More information on the use of the platform will be also provided during the webinars.

The following mandatory documents must be submitted through the EIT Culture & Creativity application platform no later than 11 March 2025 at 17:00 CET for segment 1 and 11 April 2025 at 17.00 CET for segment 2:

- Online application form
- Budget plan and EIT funding requested as Excel file
- Work plan and project timeline requested as Gantt chart
- Link to the video (optional)

Any proposals submitted after the deadline will be inadmissible.



7. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Once the applicants have submitted their proposals, EIT Culture & Creativity will take the following steps:

- **Admissibility and eligibility check:** Proposals will undergo an initial check for admissibility and eligibility. Applicants with inadmissible proposals will be automatically rejected. Applicants with ineligible proposals that can be remedied will be notified and given the opportunity to address the relevant criteria within a specified period.
- **Quality evaluation process:** The quality evaluation process ensures that only the best proposals, aligned with EIT Culture & Creativity’s objectives, move forward. Proposals are scored across five criteria groups: Strategic Fit, EU Dimension, Excellence, Impact, and Implementation. Each group has its own threshold (60% of the maximum score), and proposals must also achieve at least 65 points overall out of 100 to advance. This structured approach guarantees fairness and transparency while focusing on selecting impactful and innovative projects.
 - For **segment 1** projects, evaluation panels will be composed of **one evaluator** and **one evaluator rapporteur**.
 - For **segment 2** projects, evaluation panels will consist of **three evaluators** and **one rapporteur**.
- **Portfolio selection and final scoring:** Only applicants, whose proposals meet or exceed the minimum quality evaluation threshold of 65 points and represent no more than 200% of the available budget per topic, will be invited to the Portfolio Selection stage which will be assessed by the Selection Committee (SC). The SC shall comprise, at a minimum: Three Thematic Area Directors (including the Innovation Director and other 2 Thematic Area Directors or their representatives for the areas of Education and Business Creation) and the EIT Culture & Creativity CEO in charge of Operations Management. Additionally, the SC will include a representative from the EIT CC Supervisory Board acting in quality of observer as well as an external observer.
- The Selection Committee will assign additional scores based on the portfolio selection criteria – business intelligence, strategic portfolio fit, and financial and commercial scalability. Each proposal can earn up to 30 additional points across all three portfolio selection criteria. The final scoring will be the sum of the points obtained in the quality evaluation phase and the points awarded during the portfolio selection phase. The portfolio selection process will conclude with a final ranking of proposals, determining which will be selected for EIT CC financial support or included in the reserve list.

7.1. ADMISSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY CHECK

To be considered for EIT CC financial support under this call, proposals must meet the following admissibility and eligibility criteria:

7.1.1. Admissibility criteria

Criteria	Description
Time	The proposal must be submitted by the specified deadline.
Language	The project proposal and all its attachments must be written entirely in English.
Submission Platform	The proposal must be submitted through the designated application platform.



Criteria	Description
Time	The proposal must be submitted by the specified deadline.
Completeness	The proposal must include all required documents, completed form sections, and annexes.

Proposals containing one or more inadmissible elements will be rejected and will receive an official communication from EIT CC setting out the outcome of the admissibility check.

7.1.2. Eligibility criteria

Criteria	Description
Applicant registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For segment 1, the single applicant must be registered on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal with a valid PIC (Participant Identification Code) number. For segment 2, both consortium members must meet this requirement.
Applicant eligibility	All applicants (whether single entities in Segment 1 or all consortium members in Segment 2) must be legal entities established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe-associated country.
Consortium composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For segment 1, proposals must be submitted by a single eligible SME or micro enterprise, from an EU Member States or HE-associated country. For segment 2, proposals must be submitted by a consortium consisting of exactly two eligible entities: one SME or micro enterprise (innovation developer) and one supporting entity, both from two different EU Member States and HE-associated countries. The commercial member role must always be held by an SME or micro enterprise.
Co-Funding rate	All proposals (whether Segment 1 or Segment 2) must demonstrate a minimum co-funding rate of 30% across the project. The co-funding rate can vary per member (if applicable), but the overall rate must meet the 30% minimum.
KPIs Addressed	Proposals must address the mandatory KPI – EITHE02.4 – with the minimum target required – 1 – as outlined in the call guidelines, within 6 months after the project completion.

Proposals failing to meet one or more eligibility criteria will receive an official communication from EIT Culture & Creativity, informing the applicant of the outcome of the eligibility check and explaining why the proposal failed to meet the criteria.

Correction process for incorrect eligibility information

Applicants with incorrect information related to eligibility (e.g., PIC registration, KPIs, or co-funding rate) will be given 5 calendar days after receiving the official communication to address and correct the identified issues. This opportunity ensures procedural fairness, especially for minor technical or administrative errors.

If the applicant submits the corrected information within the specified timeframe, the proposal will progress to the next evaluation stage.

If the applicant fails to respond or responds after the deadline, the proposal will be deemed ineligible and will not proceed further.



7.2. STAGE 1 – EXTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The purpose of the quality evaluation is to assess the Strategic Fit, EU Dimension, Excellence, Impact, and Quality and efficiency of the implementation, of each proposal that successfully passes the admissibility and eligibility check.

This individual evaluation process will be carried out by one external evaluator and one external evaluator rapporteur for Segment 1 and by three external evaluators and one external rapporteur for Segment 2. EIT CC makes sure that all independent external experts are carefully selected and there is no conflict of interest between them and the evaluated projects (see Annex III). Each evaluation phase is comprised of groups of criteria and sub criteria, which will be assessed according to the following scores. Please note that only whole (entire) points will be awarded; fractional scores (e.g., half points) are not permitted to ensure consistency and transparency in the scoring process:

Score	Description	Explanation
1	Very Poor	The information provided is considered irrelevant or inadequate compared to the specific call provisions.
2	Poor	The information provided lacks relevant quality and contains significant weaknesses compared to the specific call provisions.
3	Fair	The overall information provided is adequate. However, some aspects are unclearly or insufficiently detailed compared to the specific call provisions.
4	Good	The information provided is adequate with sufficiently outlined details compared to the specific call provisions.
5	Excellent	The information provided is outstanding in its detail, clarity, and coherence compared to the specific call provisions.

7.2.1. Quality evaluation

The Quality Evaluation process is a decisive step in assessing proposals submitted to the call. Within this process, each proposal is independently reviewed by two for Segment 1 projects and three for Segment 2 projects external expert evaluators (EEEs), with evaluations based on the five pre-defined criteria groups: Strategic Fit, EU Dimension, Excellence, Impact, and Quality and Efficiency of Implementation.

Each group of criteria has a maximum possible score and an associated threshold of 60%. Proposals must meet or exceed this threshold for each group to proceed to the next stage. For example, in the case of Strategic Fit, with a maximum score of 15 points, proposals scoring less than 9 points will not advance further. Similarly, for the EU Dimension group, a minimum of 3 out of 5 points is required.

Additionally, to proceed to the Portfolio Selection phase, proposals must achieve a cumulative score of at least 65 points out of the maximum 100 points across all criteria groups. Evaluators assess sub-criteria within each group based on specific indicators and assign scores accordingly.

Strategic fit evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 15 points Threshold 9/15
The proposal contributes to the EIT Culture & Creativity Strategic Objectives, as outlined in Section 1.1.	5



Evaluation Criteria	Max. 15 points Threshold 9/15
The proposal is clearly aligned and identify with one of the topics stated in Section 2.3.2.	5
The project clearly defines a Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM), ensuring a tangible contribution to the financial sustainability of the KIC.	5
	15

EU Dimension for multi-beneficiary projects

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 5 points Threshold 3/5
The proposal demonstrates a clear EU dimension, not just in the consortium composition but also with regard to market impact and scalability across multiple European markets.	5
	5

Excellence: Business model and innovation

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 25 points Threshold 15/25
The aim and the objectives of the project are SMART and clearly related to the workplan, KPIs and outputs of the project.	5
The project outcomes and results have been specified in relation to the expected product innovations/service/ solution proposed.	5
The project demonstrates its need and relevance for society, target group or market.	5
The project demonstrates a significant advancement beyond the current state-of-the-art, introducing bold, transformative, or disruptive innovation within the CCSI sector. It clearly differentiates itself from existing solutions, addressing critical gaps or emerging opportunities with a high potential for scalability and impact.	5
The project clearly outlines the types of IP generated, the protection strategies in place, and the role of IP in supporting commercialisation. It also specifies IP ownership and define exploitation rights agreements among members, if applicable.	5
	25

Impact: Market and societal benefits

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 30 points Threshold 18/30
The project's expected KPIs are clearly defined, relevant and measurable.	5
The project has a significant impact on at least one of the impact goals identified in the Strategic Agenda.	5
The project presents a structured communication, dissemination and outreach plan which guarantees the communication of the project activities to different target audiences (MGA Art.17).	5



Evaluation Criteria	Max. 30 points Threshold 18/30
The proposal provides credible data on the Total Addressable Market (TAM), Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM), and Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM), and clearly identifies customer segments. End-users/customers are meaningfully engaged in the project.	5
The project presents a viable commercialisation plan as well as funding rounds to raise private capital (if applicable). The plan identifies an appropriate commercialisation member and outlines a clear path to long-term financial viability, market success, and IP protection.	5
The project provides realistic five-year revenue projections. The projections demonstrate a credible path to financial sustainability, market scalability, and alignment with the project's strategic goals.	5
	30

Quality and efficiency of implementation

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 25 points Threshold 15/25
The project work plan is clear, well structured, feasible, with relevant risks and risk mitigation measures identified. The project identifies management structures to guarantee an effective management of the project's resources.	5
<p>For segment 1: The applicant must demonstrate that their team possesses the necessary expertise, capacity, and diversity of skills to manage all aspects of the project independently. The composition of the team should reflect a well-balanced skill set, ensuring effective project execution, risk management, and quality assurance.</p> <p>For segment 2: The proposal must demonstrate that both members bring complementary competences and have clearly defined roles that align with the scope of the project. The combined team should showcase the necessary expertise, collaboration capacity, and coordination mechanisms to ensure a well-structured and efficiently managed project.</p>	5
<p>For segment 1, the single entity must demonstrate how the project incorporates or draws on elements of the Knowledge Triangle (education, research, and business). This could include leveraging prior research, collaborating informally with external stakeholders (e.g., cultural institutions or universities), or integrating educational and business strategies into their innovation development.</p> <p>For segment 2, the project must show how the collaboration between the SME or micro enterprise and the supporting entity actively integrates expertise from multiple sides of the Knowledge Triangle to deliver impactful outcomes</p>	5
The project consortium and activities show a clear commitment to gender mainstreaming and diversity, ensuring the inclusion of underrepresented groups. The proposal outlines specific measures to promote gender equality and diversity throughout the project implementation.	5
<p>For segment 1, the budget must be clear and justified, ensuring the proposed activities are feasible within the funding limit of €59,500 and represent good value for money.</p> <p>For segment 2, the budget must be clearly distributed between the two members, appropriately reflecting their roles and responsibilities while ensuring efficient use of resources and alignment with project objectives (value for money).</p>	5
	25

7.2.2. Total scoring from quality evaluation

Category	Threshold	Max Score
Strategic Fit	9 points	15 points
EU Dimension	3 points	5 points
Excellence: Business Model and Innovation	15 points	25 points
Impact: Market and Societal Benefits	18 points	30 points
Quality and Efficiency of Implementation	15 points	25 points
Total Points	65 points	100 points

7.3. STAGE 2 – PORTFOLIO SELECTION

Only proposals ranked at or above the threshold of 65 points in the external quality evaluation and equalling no more than 200% of the available budget per topic will be invited to the second stage: the Portfolio Selection. During this phase, these shortlisted proposals will be evaluated by the EIT Culture & Creativity Selection Committee.

The SC shall comprise, at a minimum: Three Thematic Area Directors (including the Innovation Director and other 2 Thematic Area Directors or their representatives from the areas of Education and Business Creation) and the EIT Culture & Creativity CEO in charge of Operations Management. Additionally, the SC will include a representative from the EIT CC Supervisory Board acting in quality of observer as well as an external observer.

7.3.1. Portfolio selection process

The Portfolio Selection process will be conducted by the Selection Committee, who will consider the following factors and will add up to 30 points to the score obtained by each proposal in the first stage evaluation.

Assessment Factor	Description of the Assessment	Max. 30 points
Business intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal introduces novel approaches, disrupts existing markets, or addresses unmet needs in the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). The proposal shows potential to create a broader impact across the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI), including scaling opportunities and fostering new partnerships. The proposal demonstrates a strong potential for its outcomes to be adopted and integrated by industry stakeholders, including cultural institutions, policymakers, and other key players within the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). 	10 points (5 points x 2) <i>Threshold 6/10</i>
Strategic Portfolio Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal complements the existing and planned portfolio of EIT Culture & Creativity projects, addressing gaps or creating synergies. The proposal diversifies the KIC's portfolio, filling thematic or regional gaps and creating synergies with other projects, particularly in underrepresented areas. 	10 points (5 points x 2) <i>Threshold 6/10</i>



Financial and commercial scalability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal demonstrates the financial scalability and commercial feasibility, highlighting its potential to secure additional funding or investment within 2-3 years while contributing to EIT Culture & Creativity's financial sustainability goals through innovative FSM options aligned with EIT CC priorities. 	10 points (5 points x 2) <i>Threshold 6/10</i>
		30 points

If one or more proposals receive the same score, additional consideration will be given to the factors of KPIs and demonstration impact, as follows:

- Proposals that include any of the additional KPIs will be ranked higher.
- In case of a tie, proposals which address a greater number of targets on the mandatory and additional KPIs will be ranked higher. Priority will be done for addressment of the mandatory KPIs.
- If still a tie, proposals providing a major amount of co-funding (in %) will be ranked higher.

7.3.2. Thresholds, ranking, and awarding of financial support in a nutshell

Proposals must meet **all required thresholds** at each stage of the evaluation process to be considered for financial support:

- During **quality evaluation**, each evaluation category (e.g., Strategic Fit, EU Dimension, Excellence, Impact, and Implementation) has an **individual threshold**. Proposals failing to meet the threshold in **any** category will **not** proceed to the portfolio selection stage.
- Additionally, proposals must reach the **minimum total score threshold** in the quality evaluation to advance to portfolio selection. Proposals that do not meet this overall threshold will not be considered further.
- During **portfolio selection**, proposals that fail to meet the required threshold in **any of the assessment factors** will **not** be included in the final ranking list for financial support.

Financial support will be awarded in **strict ranking order** based on the final scores, until the total EIT CC financial support budget is exhausted. Proposals that pass all thresholds but are not selected due to budget limitations will be placed on a **reserve list**. The final financial support decisions for reserve list proposals will be communicated within a timeframe that allows for proper project implementation.



8. FINAL RANKING AND SELECTION OF PROPOSALS

Following the results of the Portfolio Selection, a **final ranking list** of all proposals will be established by summing the scores obtained in the Quality Evaluation phase and the scores awarded during the Portfolio Selection phase. The combined total score determines the position of each proposal on the Final Ranking List.

Proposals will be classified into three categories:

1. **Selected for EIT CC financial support:** The top-ranked proposals (up to 32, or more, if the budget permits) will be selected for EIT CC financial support.
2. **Reserve list:** Proposals meeting the quality evaluation threshold (assessment groups thresholds + 65 points overall threshold) and passing the minimum threshold of 6 points in each of the Portfolio Selection criteria but ranked below the financial support line will be placed on a reserve list. The reserve list will remain valid for a period of one year from the date of the final selection decision.
3. **Rejected:** Proposals failing to meet the quality threshold or ranked too low to receive EIT CC financial support.

EIT Culture & Creativity retains the right to reach out to proposals on the reserve list within one year of the portfolio selection. This may occur if additional EIT funds become available under the current Business Plan and in justified cases.



9. COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS TO APPLICANTS

9.1. SELECTED PROPOSALS

The project leader of each selected proposal will receive formal communication from EIT Culture & Creativity, including the Evaluation Summary Report, an evaluation letter outlining the next steps in the process.

9.2. RESERVE LIST AND REJECTED PROPOSALS

EIT Culture & Creativity will notify the project leaders of reserve-listed and rejected proposals of their final status including the Evaluation Summary Report, and an evaluation letter.



10. APPEAL PROCEDURE

Applicants may lodge an appeal in the following cases:

1. **Admissibility and eligibility check outcomes:** If the applicant disagrees with the decision on the admissibility or eligibility of the proposal.
2. **Evaluation results:** If the project leader of a rejected proposal disagrees with the decision based on evaluation comments that clearly contradict the information provided in the proposal.

Appeals can only be lodged on the following grounds:

1. Process errors by EIT CC.
2. Technical problems beyond the applicant's control.
3. Obvious human/mechanical errors by EIT CC.
4. Factual errors during the evaluation process.

For evaluation result appeals, the project leader will have 15 calendar days after receiving the final evaluation results to submit an appeal. For admissibility and eligibility outcomes, applicants will have 5 calendar days to lodge their appeal. Detailed guidance on the appeal procedure can be found in the Appeal Procedure Annex below.



11. FAST TRACK PROVISIONS

Disclaimer: The Fast-Track Mechanism described in this section is subject to approval by EIT Culture & Creativity in coordination with the EIT. Until formal guidelines are finalized and agreed upon, any Fast-Track Mechanism and additional financial or in-kind support are contingent upon EIT's approval.

For all EIT Culture & Creativity projects eligible for a Fast-Track Mechanism, the successful execution and completion of the activities financed under the framework of the present call may unlock the possibility of receiving additional EIT Culture & Creativity financial support for upscaling purposes after project completion. This process is regulated by the provisions included in EIT Culture & Creativity's fast-track mechanism.

11.1. ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Projects that demonstrate exceptional performance and outcomes may receive additional financial support to scale their innovations, up to a maximum amount specified in the call guidelines. These selected projects will undergo an additional evaluation to determine whether further support will be allocated. The evaluation will be carried out by both external evaluators and EIT Culture & Creativity experts.

11.2. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

In addition or instead of financial support, EIT Culture & Creativity may provide in-kind contributions, such as access to its business acceleration or incubation programmes. These programmes will be offered to companies that can benefit from continued business development support or those planning to create spin-offs to commercialize their innovations. The provision of these services will be contingent upon the needs and potential of the company, as well as the available opportunities within the EIT CC ecosystem.

11.3. EVALUATION PROCESS

This fast-track mechanism will be activated following the project's final review, where the potential for additional EIT Culture & Creativity financial support or in-kind support will be evaluated. If a project receives a positive evaluation, an additional grant or in-kind support may be allocated.



ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Term
AGA	Annotated Model Grant Agreement
CCSI	Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLCs	Co-location centres
CLV	Customer lifetime value
CPD	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses
EIT	European Institute of Technology and Innovation
EIT CC	EIT Culture & Creativity
EITHE	EIT-specific key performance indicator designation
ESR	Evaluation summary report
FS	Financial sustainability
FSA	Financial Support Agreement
FSM	Financial sustainability mechanism
HE	Horizon Europe
IER	Individual evaluation report
IP	Intellectual property
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
KPI	Key performance indicator
KTI	Knowledge Triangle Integration
RIS	Regional Innovation Scheme
SA	Strategic Agenda
SAM	Serviceable addressable market
SME	Small and medium enterprise
SOM	Serviceable obtainable market
TAM	Total addressable market
TRL	Technology readiness level



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Call for Proposals	The instrument used by EIT Culture & Creativity to allocate financial support through projects to third parties, supporting the Strategic Agenda. Includes Open Calls and Calls for Partners as outlined in the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA) Annex 5.
Call guidelines	The main document outlining the terms, conditions, and criteria for any call for proposals launched by EIT Culture & Creativity, adhering to principles of transparency, equal treatment, open competition, and sound procedural management.
CCSI	Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) are based on cultural values, creativity, skills, and talent with the potential to generate innovation, wealth, and jobs through social and economic value creation, particularly from intellectual property. Sectors include architecture, archives, artistic crafts, audio-visual (film, TV, software, video games, multimedia, recorded music), cultural heritage, design, high-end industries and fashion, festivals, live music, performing arts, publishing, radio, visual arts, and advertising. (Source: European Parliament (2016/2072(INI))).
CLC	Co-Location Centres (CLCs) are operational units that bring together regional and local clusters and nodes of excellence. A CLC is a physical hub promoting links and collaboration among Knowledge Triangle actors, building on existing labs, offices, or campuses of KIC's core partners.
Commercial member	<p>A commercial member is a business entity or organisation that plays a crucial role in ensuring the marketability and financial sustainability of the innovation or project. Given the KIC's mission to foster long-term sustainability and commercial success, the commercial member must be a key driver in the project's commercialisation strategy. They should possess a strong understanding of the market, customer needs, and distribution channels, and be capable of scaling the solution. This member is essential for validating the Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) and ensuring that the outcomes of the project can be launched onto the market with a clear path to generating revenue.</p> <p>Commercial members can be large companies, SMEs, business associations, or entities with established market presence and proven experience in scaling products or services. Their role is not limited to providing financial support but extends to offering expertise in areas such as market entry, business model refinement, distribution, and sales strategies, ensuring the innovation is ready for market adoption and has a clear trajectory for long-term growth and investment opportunities.</p>
Deliverable	Key outputs of a project, such as analysis reports, feasibility studies, strategy documents, pilot action reports, and training documentation, demonstrating the project's achievements and judicious use of public funds.
EIT	The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an EU body established in 2008 to strengthen Europe's innovation capacity. It is part of Horizon Europe, the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and funds EIT Culture & Creativity (www.eit.europa.eu).
EIT Culture & Creativity	EIT Culture & Creativity, designated by the EIT in 2022, aims to fundamentally change the CCSI towards new understandings of competitiveness, resilience, and sustainable economic growth. Its prime impact goal is to create and maintain jobs in a resilient CCSI business ecosystem able to scale and compete in global markets. (www.eit-culture-creativity.eu)



EIT Knowledge Triangle Model	The Knowledge Triangle Model includes organisations from education, research, and business to foster innovation. EIT Culture & Creativity expands this to include public sector and civil society organisations, promoting technical, non-technological, social, and artistic innovation.
Evaluation Panel	A group of expert evaluators, usually including at least three external individuals and a Rapporteur, with expertise, at least, in the specific area of the call for proposals which they are evaluating. The panel evaluates eligible proposals based on predefined criteria, assisted by a Quality Controller from EIT Culture & Creativity to ensure compliance.
Evaluation process	The process by which EIT Culture & Creativity, supported by external experts, examines the quality of a proposal to determine its suitability for EIT CC financial support.
Financial sustainability mechanism	A strategy implemented by a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) to ensure its capacity to finance knowledge triangle activities independently of contributions from the EIT. This involves generating returns through various mechanisms, such as revenue sharing, equity stakes, or other financial instruments, which are reinvested into the KIC to support ongoing innovation and operations. In the broader EU context, financial sustainability refers to the ability of initiatives to maintain long-term viability through responsible investment, efficient resource allocation, and alignment with EU economic and sustainability priorities.
HE MGA	The Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement sets out the rights, obligations, terms, and conditions applicable to the grant awarded.
KAVA (Key Added Value Activity)	A strategic activity or project supported by an EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) that contributes directly to achieving the KIC's objectives. KAVAs are designed to deliver measurable impact aligned with the KIC's Strategic Agenda, including innovation, education, and business creation activities, often involving collaborations across the Knowledge Triangle (industry, academia, and research organisations).
KIC	Knowledge Innovation Communities (KICs) are European Partnerships addressing global challenges and strengthening innovation ecosystems. They integrate education, research, and innovation, promoting entrepreneurship and the creation of innovative companies in synergy with the EIT.
KIC specific KPIs	Indicators defined by EIT Culture & Creativity reflecting the societal challenges the KIC is addressing.
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators defined by the EIT and EIT Culture & Creativity (see Annex 2).
Large company	A large company is a business that exceeds the thresholds of a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). Specifically, it has 250 or more employees and an annual turnover greater than €50 million, or a balance sheet total exceeding €43 million. These entities typically possess significant resources, established market presence, and extensive networks, making them valuable members for scaling innovations.
Milestone	A significant point or event in a project's timeline used to measure progress. In the context of this call, milestones are key deliverables or achievements that indicate the project is on track and meeting its objectives. They help track progress and assess performance at specific intervals.
Priority areas	Key focus areas for EIT Culture & Creativity, representing significant shares of the EU CCSI workforce and revenue, aimed at targeted innovation and development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fashion: Circular innovations, textile recycling, and sustainable business models. • Architecture: Circular biobased materials, climate adaptation, and social cohesion. • Cultural Heritage: Emerging tech, new business models, and heritage preservation.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio-visual Media: Responsible tech use, generative AI, and new business models. • Gaming: Digital ethics, cross-sector collaboration, and societal impact.
Project leader	The main contact for EIT Culture & Creativity from the time the financial support is awarded until the project is implemented. In multi-beneficiary calls, the project leader represents the project and consortium members. For mono-beneficiary grants, the single legal entity involved also has the project leader role.
RIS	The Regional Innovation Scheme boosts innovation performance in countries with moderate or modest innovation scores.
Scaleup	A scale-up is defined as a company that has been in operation for a minimum of 3 to 4 years and has demonstrated consistent growth. Specifically, it should have achieved an annual growth rate of at least 10% in either turnover or number of employees over three consecutive financial years.
Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE)	SAFE is a financial instrument that provides the investor (in this case, EIT CC) with a right to acquire equity in a company in the future under predefined conditions. This approach minimises immediate financial risk while supporting innovation-driven growth.
SMEs and micro enterprises	Defined by EU recommendation 2003/361 based on staff headcount and either turnover or balance sheet total: Medium: <250 staff, ≤€50 million turnover or ≤€43 million balance sheet; Small: <50 staff, ≤€10 million turnover or balance sheet; Micro: <10 staff, ≤€2 million turnover or balance sheet.
SO	Strategic Objective of EIT Culture & Creativity. Five SOs form the framework's main pillars.
Social innovation	New ideas addressing unmet needs that are social in their ends and means, creating new social relationships or collaborations (European Social Innovation, 2010).
Triple transition	EIT Culture & Creativity's term for driving green, digital, and social transformations in Europe, building on the European Twin Transition.
TRL	<p>Technology Readiness Level (TRL) is a metric used by the EU and EIT to assess the maturity of a particular technology, from basic research (TRL 1) to full deployment in real-world applications (TRL 9).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRL 1-4: Research and concept validation. • TRL 5-7: Prototype and demonstration in relevant environments. • TRL 8-9: System qualification and operational readiness.



ANNEX I. APPLICATION FORM

Section 1: General Information

1. **Lead applicant**

Organisation Name, Legal Form, Address, Country, Contact Person, Email, VAT number, PIC number.

2. **Project title:**

Max 100 characters

Provide the title for your project.

3. **Project acronym:**

Max 50 characters

Create a short acronym for your project.

4. **Project duration:**

Indicate the estimated duration of the project.

5. **Project executive summary:**

Max 2000 characters

Provide a brief summary of the project.

6. **Innovation Topic:**

Identify the topic being targeted and choose between:

- Fashion
- Architecture
- Cultural Heritage
- Audio-Visual Media
- Gaming

7. **For segment 2, consortium member:**

- **Consortium member 2 (segment 2 only):** Organisation Name, Legal Form, Country, PIC number.

Section 2: Strategic fit

1. **Strategic fit:**

Max 1000 characters

Describe how the project aligns with EIT Culture & Creativity's strategic objectives.

2. **Topic alignment:**

Max 1000 characters

Describe how the project aligns with the topic selected.



3. Contribution to financial sustainability:

Max 1000 characters

Explain the chosen Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) and how the project will contribute to the KIC's financial sustainability. Provide a timeline and estimate for expected financial returns.

Section 3: EU dimension

1. EU dimension:

Max 1000 characters

Describe how the proposal addresses the EU dimension, not just from the consortium composition (if applicable), but also in its market impact and scalability across multiple European markets, targeting various stakeholders across Europe.

Section 3: Excellence

1. Project specific objectives

Max 750 characters

Identify the specific objectives of the projects and relate them to the work plan (and work packages - WPs) of the project.

2. Project concept, results and outcomes

Max 750 characters

Provide a high-level overview of the proposed project, identifying the expected results and outcomes and how they will be measured.

3. Innovation:

Max 250 characters

Define the innovation (product, service, business model, etc.) that will result from the project and how it represents a clear step forward regarding the current state of the art of the technology.

Link to video demonstration (optional): Please provide a link to a video (maximum 2 minutes) showcasing the solution's key features and providing evidence of the current TRL. Note: Ensure the video is accessible via a public or password-protected link.

4. Background and need:

Max 2000 characters

Describe the need (for society, target group or market) that your project addresses. Identify current competition and state-of-the-art solutions, and how your innovation represents a non-trivial advancement.

5. Intellectual Property (IP) management:

Max 1000 characters

Describe the potential types of IP generated, protection strategies, and how IP will support commercialisation. Identify IP ownership and exploitation rights agreements between members (if applicable).



Section 4: Impact

1. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Max 1000 characters

Please select the mandatory and optional KPIs that will be addressed below and indicate the target values. In this field, specify the target achievement dates (DD.MM.YYYY) for each.

- KPI EITHE02.4 – Innovations launched on the market – minimum target: 1
- KPI EITHE01.1 – Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) (optional)
- KPI EITHE04.4 – Start-ups created (optional)

2. Impact goals

Max 1000 characters

Describe how your project addresses at the EIT Culture & Creativity impact goals stated in the EIT CC Strategic Agenda.

3. Communication, dissemination and outreach plan

Max 2000 characters

Outline the project's structured communication, dissemination, and outreach plan. Detail how the project activities will be communicated to different target audiences as per MGA Art.17.

4. Market potential

Max 1000 characters

The project provides credible data on the Total Addressable Market (TAM), Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM), and Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM). It clearly identifies customer segments and outlines how end-users will be meaningfully engaged to ensure market relevance and impact.

5. Commercialisation strategy

Max 2000 characters

Describe the commercialisation strategy and demonstrate its viability, including the timeline for launching the innovation. Highlight which member(s) will be responsible for commercialisation and the markets and early adopters that will be targeted.

6. Expected Revenue Projections (5 years):

- Expected revenue projection 2026: €
- Expected revenue projection 2027: €
- Expected revenue projection 2028: €
- Expected revenue projection 2029: €
- Expected revenue projection 2030: €
- Provide justification for your revenue projections based on the commercialisation strategy.

Section 5: Quality and efficiency of the implementation

1. Project work plan

No limit of characters

Describe the project working plan. Identify the work packages (WPs), tasks included in each WPs as well as its related milestones and deliverables.

Please upload your Gantt chart: Ensure the Gantt chart with a work plan and a clear project timeline is attached.

2. Partnership

Max 1500 characters

For Segment 1 (Single-beneficiary projects): Describe the team's competences, expertise, and capacity in relation to the project scope. Clearly outline how your team will independently manage all aspects of the project, including innovation development, project implementation, and commercialisation. Provide details on the skills, experience, and coordination mechanisms that ensure effective execution. Additionally, explain how your project integrates elements of the extended Knowledge Triangle (e.g., leveraging prior research, market insights, or education-related activities) to successfully deliver the activity.

For Segment 2 (Two-beneficiary projects): Describe the team composition and combined expertise within the consortium in relation to the project scope. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each member, specifying which member acts as the commercial member and which provides innovation support. Explain how the teams from both members complement each other, ensuring a balanced and well-coordinated collaboration. Detail how the partnership leverages expertise from multiple sides of the extended Knowledge Triangle (e.g., education, research, and business) to successfully deliver the activity.

3. Diversity, equality, and inclusion

Max 750 characters

Describe how their project addresses gender mainstreaming and promotes diversity and equality. Applicants should outline specific measures and strategies to ensure the inclusion of underrepresented groups in both the consortium and project activities.

Note: If your project is selected, you must submit a Gender Equality Plan before signing the FSA.

4. Risk management:

- **Main Risks:**

Max 750 characters

Identify the three main risks that may affect the project.

- **Risk monitoring, mitigation and contingency measures:**

Max 750 characters

For each risk, explain the monitoring and mitigation measures you will implement. Provide details on contingency plans to ensure project continuity and success.



5. Value for money

Max 500 characters

Explain the budget allocation, ensuring value for money. Outline its distribution among members based on their roles and highlight the significance of the budget assigned to RIS countries.

6. Total budget and EIT funding request:

Please upload the detailed budget plan and EIT funding request

Applicants must upload the detailed budget in Excel format, including a breakdown of costs per member, tasks, and work packages.

- Lead applicant – EIT funding request: €
- Consortium member 2 – EIT funding request: € (if applicable)
- Total project EIT funding requested: €
- Total project budget: €
- Total co-funding: €
- Total co-funding: %

Section 6: Further information and declaration of honour

1. **Please confirm the proposal is not double funded by another EU project.**
2. **Please confirm that your project contributes to open science.**
3. **Does your proposal involve any ethical considerations? State yes or no. If "yes", please explain.**
4. **For reporting purposes, please select all keywords that best describe your project:**
 - Creative Europe
 - Architecture – culture
 - Audio-Visual funds and TV broadcasters – media
 - Gaming
 - Fashion
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Innovation
 - Technology readiness level (TRL)
 - Market-ready products
 - Financial Sustainability Mechanism

Section 7: Declaration of honour

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that:

The information provided in this application is accurate, complete, and truthful to the best of my knowledge.

The proposal complies with all eligibility and funding requirements as outlined in the call for applications.



I have the legal authority to represent the consortium and submit this application on its behalf.

The proposed activities align with the objectives of the funding programme and adhere to applicable ethical, legal, and financial regulations.

There are no conflicts of interest that would compromise the integrity of the application or its evaluation process.

The applicant commits to using any granted funding in accordance with the specified guidelines and for the intended purposes outlined in this proposal.

If selected, the applicant will comply with all reporting, monitoring, and evaluation requirements as stipulated by the funding body.

The applicant acknowledges that false or misleading information may result in disqualification from the selection process and potential legal consequences.

The applicant confirms that the declaration of honour includes confirmation that none of the participants are under investigation for legal or financial reasons, including but not limited to fraud (OLAF) or inquiries by national authorities.



ANNEX II. APPEAL PROCEDURE

The rules set out in this document are aimed at providing the applicants with a transparent appeal procedure concerning the decisions made by EIT CC during the eligibility and admissibility check as well as the evaluation process of a proposal submitted to a call for proposals launched by EIT CC.

1. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS

The project leader is the only person entitled to file an appeal.

The right to appeal against a decision regarding the proposal selection applies to the project leader whose proposal was found ineligible during the admissibility and eligibility check or was rejected after the evaluation process.

The appeal is to be lodged against the communication issued by the EIT CC Program Management Office (PMO) based on the decision taken by the EIT CC Selection Committee.

The appeal can be lodged against the outcomes of the admissibility and eligibility check or the evaluation upon the following grounds **only**:

1. Process errors by EIT CC
2. Technical problems beyond the applicant's control
3. Obvious human/mechanical errors by EIT CC
4. Factual errors during the evaluation process

Appeals cannot be made based on other grounds than those indicated above.

If an appeal is accepted according to ground - *Factual errors during the evaluation process* mentioned above, it is possible that all, or part of the proposal, is re-evaluated by a new evaluation panel. Otherwise, there will be no follow-up or re-evaluation of the proposal unless there is clear evidence for appealing under the grounds provided above.

The project leader must formally submit the appeal, including all the mandatory information required below, by email to pmo@eit-culture-creativity.eu within **15 calendar days** of receiving the official notification of the outcomes.

Appeals received after 15 calendar days will not be considered.

The appeal must contain:

- Name and address of the organisation of the project leader;
- Name, position and contact details of the appellant;
- Reference number and acronym of the proposal that is the subject of the appeal;
- Clear reasons for the appeal, including all elements which are being appealed and/or failures in adherence with procedures limited to those criteria outlined in point 4.
- Any supporting documents. The project leader must provide relevant documentation in support of its appeal.

The relevant documentation included in the appeal shall be provided for the sole purpose of supporting it. It will not alter the quality or content of the evaluated proposal. The PMO will confirm the receipt of the appeal in writing to the project leader.



An appeal will be rejected if:

- It is submitted after the set deadline;
- It is based on other grounds than those set out in point 4;
- Any of the information requested at point 5 is missing.

In case the appeal is rejected under provisions set out in point 7, the PMO will convey this information within 5 calendar days (of receipt of the appeal) to the project leader and inform the responsible Thematic Area at EIT CC.

The appeal procedure will be published in the call guidelines, providing applicants with clear details of the grounds for appeal, steps of the appeal process, timelines, and composition of the Appeal Panel. Applicants will also be informed of their right to appeal, including the limitations of this procedure, in the official notification of the evaluation results.

2. INTERNAL APPEAL EVALUATION PROCESS

The PMO acts as the secretariat and examines the appeal of an ineligible or rejected proposal duly submitted by the project leader within the set deadline and according to the appeal requirements. The PMO prepares a technical examination on the merit of the appeal and sends it to the Appeal Panel.

The appointed Appeal Panel evaluates all the available information provided by the project leader and the technical examination prepared by the PMO.

The role of the Appeal Panel is to ensure a coherent interpretation of the requests and equal treatment of applicants. The Appeal Panel itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Instead, the Appeal Panel evaluates the grounds of the appeal and ensures compliance with the announced evaluation criteria, EU Financial Regulation Article 61, and EIT legal framework. Decisions are made through consensus, ensuring equal treatment and adherence to the announced call criteria. Any recommendation for re-evaluation must demonstrate clear procedural or factual errors impacting the proposal's assessment. In light of its review, the Appeal Panel recommends a course of action to be followed.

The Appeal Panel's evaluation follows these steps:

1. **Review of relevant documentation:** The panel examines the appeal submission, technical examination, original proposal, and supporting documents.
2. **Verification of grounds for appeal:** The panel assesses the appeal against set criteria, such as process errors, technical problems, and factual inaccuracies.
3. **Structured decision-making process:** The panel ensures each ground is addressed with clear rationale, referencing relevant policies or regulations.
4. **Documentation:** The panel consolidates its findings, recommendations, and binding decision into a standardized report template to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Appeal Panel consists of at least 3 members, to be appointed from among the following bodies:

- Two members of the EIT CC ELSI Board, ensuring independent ethical and legal oversight.
- One Thematic Area Director not involved in the portfolio selection for the call under review, ensuring relevant expertise while maintaining impartiality.
- One Legal Counsel, serving in a legal advisory capacity only, without voting rights.



The members of the Appeal Panel (and their respective deputies) are appointed by the CEO of EIT CC at the beginning of each year. Impartiality of members of the Appeal Panel towards the case under review must be ensured. If this cannot be provided, the relevant member shall refrain from the relevant case's review and be replaced by another impartial member.

The PMO shall provide the members of the Appeal Panel with a copy of:

- The appeal and all the supporting documents provided by the project leader.
- The technical examination prepared by the PMO.
- The original proposal and all supporting documents that were taken into consideration by the relevant bodies during the proposal admissibility and eligibility check and the evaluation process.
- Any other document requested by the Appeal Panel members relevant to the appeal.

The Appeal Panel will have 5 calendar days to provide a binding decision after the receipt of the documentation provided by the PMO, through a written justification with explicit reference to the grounds mentioned in point 4.

The decision on the appeal is taken by the Appeal Panel by consensus and is communicated by the PMO in written form to the project leader within 5 calendar days of the receipt of the Appeal Panel decision.

The appeal procedure, from the receipt of the appeal to the communication of the Appeal Panel's decision to the project leader, should be resolved within a maximum of 20 calendar days.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further appeal proceedings within EIT CC based on the same grounds.



ANNEX III: GENERAL RULES FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS WITH THE RESPECT TO THE'S COMPLIANCE PRINCIPLES

This annex outlines the general rules and responsibilities for all stakeholders – beneficiaries, affiliated entities, external evaluators, and other participants—regarding Conflict of Interests, Confidentiality and Security, Ethics and Values, Data Protection, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) - in relation to the selection, evaluation, and implementation of sub-granted activities under this call.

All stakeholders involved in the call, including beneficiaries, affiliated entities, external evaluators, Selection Committee members, and the KIC, must act in full compliance with the **Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA)** regulations and the principles enshrined in the **EU Financial Regulation (Article 61)**. These principles include:

- **Conflict of Interest management:** Preventing and addressing any situation where impartiality or objectivity may be compromised due to personal, economic, or other interests.
- **Transparency and openness:** Ensuring clear, open, and traceable decision-making processes throughout the call lifecycle.
- **Non-discrimination and equal opportunity:** Providing equal access and impartial treatment to all applicants and stakeholders, regardless of nationality, gender, or other characteristics.
- **Confidentiality and data security:** Safeguarding sensitive information and ensuring the secure handling of all data related to the call and its participants.
- **Ethics and integrity:** Adhering to high ethical standards and values in all interactions, including respect for diversity and social responsibility.
- **Data protection compliance:** Ensuring the handling of personal data complies with relevant data protection regulations, including GDPR.
- **Intellectual property rights (IPR) protection:** Respecting and securing intellectual property rights in line with EU regulations and the HE MGA.

<p>Conflict of Interests</p>	<p>All stakeholders must comply with <u>Article 61 of the EU Financial Regulation</u> and adhere to the EIT Culture & Creativity Code of Conduct and Anti-Fraud Policy, which outline standards for impartiality, transparency, and ethical behaviour in agreements or project participation. Conflicts of interest may arise from familial, emotional, political, economic, or other personal connections.</p> <p>General Obligations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders must promptly disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest to the granting authority and take immediate corrective action. • Measures will be implemented to prevent and address actual or perceived conflicts in all roles and responsibilities. <p>For Independent External Experts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before engagement, experts confirm their availability and receive a draft contract, which includes the Conflict-of-Interest (CoI) policy (Code of Conduct).
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CoI policy is an integral part of the contract, requiring disclosure of any potential conflicts and prohibiting involvement in evaluations where impartiality may be compromised. A mandatory briefing workshop is conducted at the start of each evaluation process, covering evaluation procedures, tools, timelines, and responsibilities. This includes a dedicated section on CoI obligations to ensure understanding of the policy. <p>Experts are well-informed and have multiple opportunities to recuse themselves at different stages if a conflict of interest arises. Non-compliance with the CoI policy results in immediate removal and replacement to safeguard the integrity of the evaluation process.</p> <p>For EIT CC and Selection Committee Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and committee members must declare any conflicts before engaging in evaluations or decisions and recuse themselves where impartiality is at risk. A Conflict of Interest register will document all disclosures and actions taken to ensure accountability. <p>Additional Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent communication with applicants through designated channels, ensuring equal and fair treatment. Dissemination of FAQs and consistent guidance to support applicants. <p>These measures are designed to uphold the highest standards of integrity and fairness throughout the process. For further details, refer to the EIT CC Code of Conduct and Anti-Fraud Policy available on EIT CC website.</p>
<p>Transparency and openness</p>	<p>These are key principles in the EIT Regulation, the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027, and are detailed in Article 7.2 of the Partnership Agreement. They shall apply at each stage of the calls of KICs in order to ensure a fair and impartial selection of projects.</p>
<p>Non-discrimination</p>	<p>In accordance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, all stakeholders shall prove no discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.</p>
<p>Confidentiality and security</p>	<p>The parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as sensitive in writing ('sensitive information') — during the implementation of the action and for at least until the time-limit set out. The beneficiaries may disclose sensitive information to their personnel or other participants involved in the action only if they: (a) need to know it in order to implement the Agreement and (b) are bound by an obligation of confidentiality. The granting authority may disclose sensitive information to its staff and to other EU institutions and bodies. It may moreover disclose sensitive information to third parties, if: (a) this is necessary to implement the Agreement or safeguard the EU financial interests and (b) the recipients of the information are bound by an obligation of confidentiality.</p>
<p>Ethics and values</p>	<p><u>Ethics</u>: The action must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles.</p> <p><u>Values</u>: The beneficiaries must commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities).</p>
<p>Data protection</p>	<p>The beneficiaries must process personal data under the Agreement in compliance with the applicable EU, international and national law on data protection (in particular, Regulation 2016/6794*). They must ensure that personal data is:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subjects• collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes.• adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date - kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the data is processed and• processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the data. <p><i>* Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC ('GDPR') (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1)</i></p>
Intellectual property rights	<p><u>Ownership of results:</u> The granting authority does not obtain ownership of the results produced under the action. 'Results' means any tangible or intangible effect of the action, such as data, knowhow, or information, whatever its form or nature, whether it can be protected, as well as any rights attached to it, including intellectual property rights.</p>