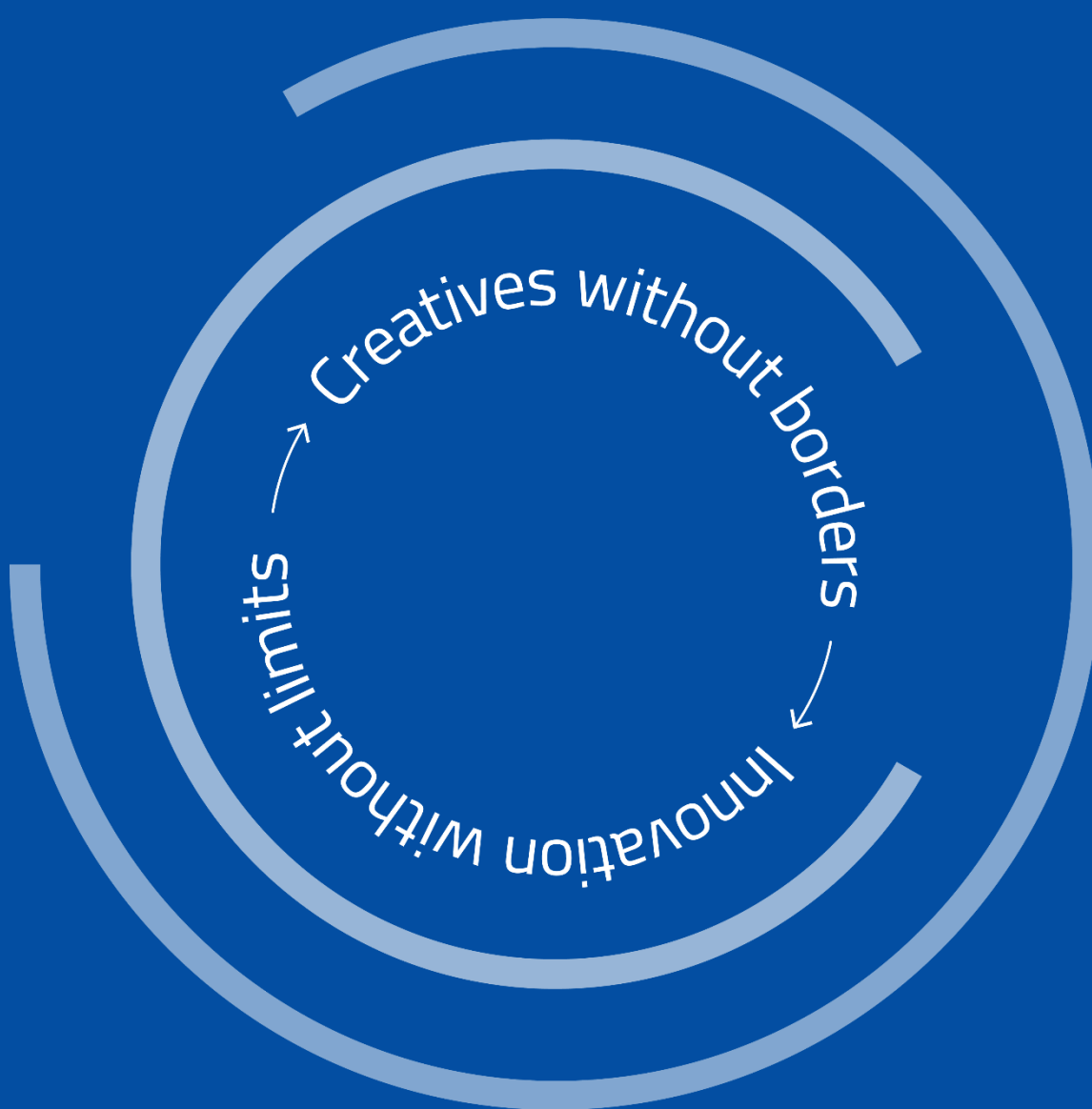


Regular Open Call

Main Innovation Projects 2025

Call Guidelines





Regular Open Call

Main Innovation Projects 2025

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.****



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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 emphasising 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 MAIN INNOVATION PROJECTS 2025

Globalisation, digitalisation and emerging technologies such as AI have profoundly changed and will keep to dramatically change, the way CCSI stakeholders produce and distribute their work and relate to their 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 are struggling to adapt to – and innovate within – disruptive, evolving market expectations and behaviours, lacking the capacity, network, resources, and financial security to experiment with these and implement them towards commercialisation.

The overall goal of the Innovation Programme is to develop a balanced portfolio of projects addressing key challenges in the EIT CC's five priority areas: Fashion, Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Gaming and Audio-Visual Media. As part of the development of the portfolio, EIT Culture & Creativity's will seek to develop long-term partnerships and expand the innovation ecosystem surrounding the sector.

For all projects financed through this call, EIT Culture & Creativity reserves the right to provide additional services to the selected innovations and companies during and beyond the lifetime of the grant to support the innovation's growth and, therefore, maximise their contribution to the KICs financial sustainability plans. Additional activities may include activities aimed at supporting access to market such as events, pitching sessions to investors, networking sessions with the EIT CC and broader EIT community, activities at the CLCs and more.



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
Key dates of the call	<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: Second half of May 2025• Communication of results to applicants: End 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	The Regular Open Call for Main Innovation Projects supports one-year initiatives designed to advance technologies from TRL 6 to TRL 9, ensuring a smooth transition to market. These projects must be completed within a 12-month period, with a focus on rapid commercialisation. Priority sectors for this call include five EIT CC priority areas: Architecture, Gaming, Audio-Visual Media, Cultural Heritage and Fashion. Projects will focus on refining prototypes, branding, market research, and scaling distribution channels. The expected outcome is a market-ready product, service, or business model, with a clear path to commercialisation across multiple European markets.
Total estimated EIT CC financial support allocated to this call	<p>The total budget for this call is € €7,000,000, with each selected project receiving up to €350,000.</p> <p>EIT CC financial support allocation will be distributed in three instalments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beginning of the project: up to 20% 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>)• Mid-way through the project: up to an additional 40% as interim payment. After revision and validation of the interim report.• Completion of the project: up to an additional 40% 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	At least two eligible entities from two different EU Member States or countries associated with Horizon Europe are required to form a consortium. Single applicants will not be considered. One of the entities in the consortium must come from the business sector (micro

Section	Description of information to be provided
	enterprise, SME, large company, business association, etc.). Additionally, the consortium must have both a commercial member and a research or academic member . If the consortium consists of only two members, the business entity may also serve as the commercial member .
KPIs to be addressed	<p>To be eligible, all submitted proposals must address the mandatory KPIs listed below:</p> <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, if applicable, all 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 clear Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) to contribute to the KIC's financial goals. • EU dimension: The proposal demonstrates a clear EU dimension, not just in the consortium composition, 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 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.



Section	Description of information to be provided
Portfolio selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing assessment: The proposal demonstrates credibility and effectively communicates its vision during the hearing, addressing questions and integrating feedback in real-time. • 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 proposal demonstrates a scalable and feasible Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) with potential to secure additional funding and contribute to EIT Culture & Creativity's financial goals.
Link to the application form	<p>The application form will be available from 11 February 2025 until 11 April 2025 17:00 CET. 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"> • Main innovation call application form: https://wkf.ms/411dnpw
List of documents	<p>Applicants must submit the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online application form (see template in Annex I) • Budget plan and EIT funding requested as Excel file • Work plan and project timeline as Gantt chart • Link to the video (max. 2 minutes and optional) <p>Additional documents to be taken into consideration</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 Culture & Creativity's 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 proposal will not just align with, but also actively contribute to the EIT Culture & Creativity's Strategic Agenda 2024-2027.

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

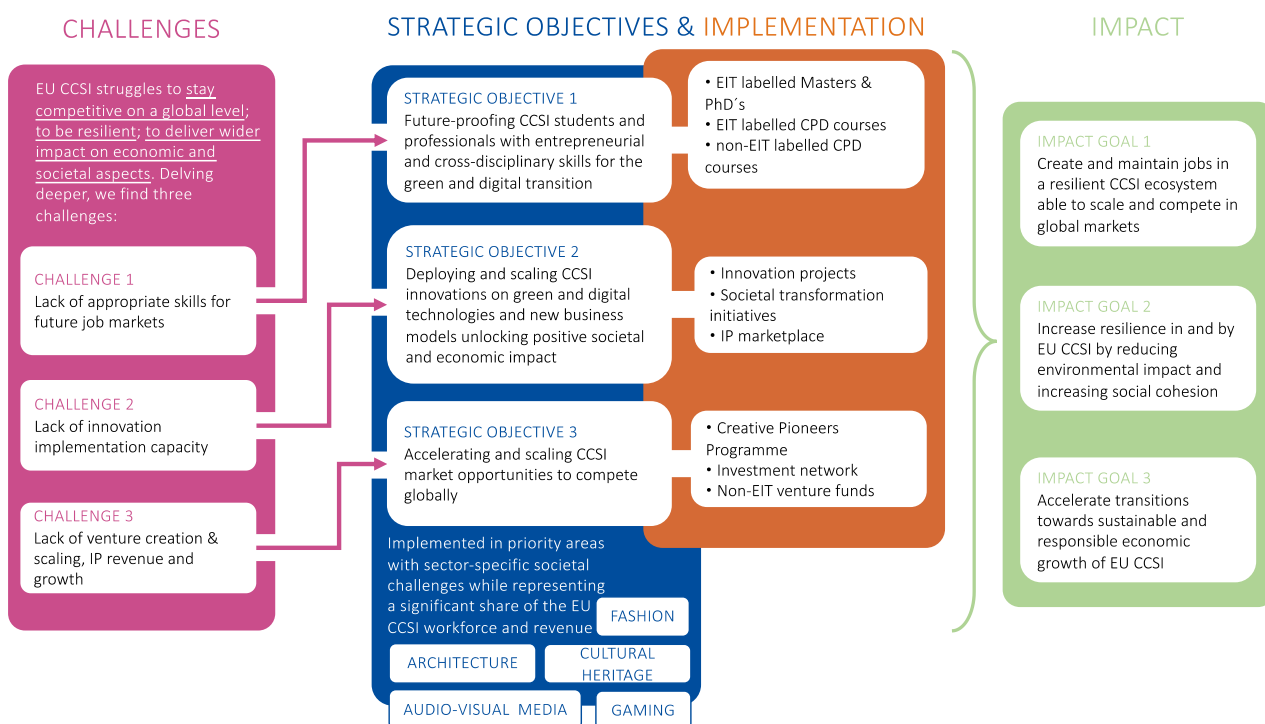
4.1.4. Strategic objectives

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 Culture & Creativity 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 innovation projects is open to all **legal entities** established in **EU Member States** or **Horizon Europe-associated countries**, including SMEs, universities, research institutions, and large businesses. Proposals must focus on advancing innovations from **TRL 6 to TRL 9** and target market readiness.

- **Consortium requirements:** A proposal must include **at least two independent legal entities** from two different EU Member States or Horizon Europe-associated countries.
- **Business member:** The consortium must include at least one **business member** (which can be the same or different from the commercial member), such as a micro enterprise, SME or a large company, actively involved in developing, testing, or commercialising the innovation. Business members play a critical role in ensuring the market viability of the proposed solutions.
- **Commercial member:** One of the members must be identified as the **lead commercialisation member**. A commercial member is the entity responsible for ensuring the project's market readiness and financial sustainability. They must have expertise in market entry, scaling, and customer needs, while also validating the Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM). Commercial members can be large companies, SMEs, or business associations with proven experience in bringing innovations to market. If the consortium consists of only two members, the **business entity may also serve as the commercial member**.
- **Research or academic member:** The consortium must also include at least one member representing the academic or research side of the Knowledge Triangle Integration (KTI), bringing valuable expertise in innovation and applied research to the project.

Proposals must focus on close-to-market innovations in the priority sectors mentioned below, with the goal of launching these innovations within 12 months of the project's initiation.

Documentation

Proposals must include the necessary documentation demonstrating the involvement of all consortium members, the innovation's viability, and the plan for 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.

4.2.1. 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 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

EIT CC is committed to expanding the innovation ecosystem by fostering collaboration with RIS countries and regions. Proposals are encouraged to meaningfully engage with RIS members and allocate a portion of their activities and budget to addressing challenges and opportunities specific to these regions. While there is no mandatory requirement for a minimum budgetary allocation, proposals that demonstrate strong engagement with RIS countries will be positively evaluated during the assessment process.

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 innovation call is to support the development and piloting of new, go-to-market ready products, services, and business models within the Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI). Specifically, projects should start at a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of at least 6, with the goal of reaching TRL 9 (market-ready) within 12 months from the project's initiation.

EIT Culture & Creativity's 2025 Innovation Programme will focus on building a balanced portfolio of projects across **five key priority areas: Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Fashion, Audio-Visual Media and Gaming**, to address current and anticipated challenges in these rapidly evolving sectors. The aim is to strengthen the innovation ecosystem around the CCSI and drive economic growth by bringing groundbreaking technologies to market.

Key Priority Areas:

- **Cultural Heritage:** Leveraging new ICT and AI technologies as well as gaming methodologies to reduce climate impact and improve visitor experience: innovations that improve climate resilience.
- **Architecture:** Supporting innovations that reduce climate impacts and improve resilience in both existing and new buildings.
- **Fashion:** Fostering circular fashion innovations, new textile processing methods, and digital fashion technologies that promote sustainable production and consumption.
- **Audio-Visual Media:** Encouraging the development of sustainable production methods, generative AI tools, and innovations that enhance audience engagement and improve content creation workflows.
- **Gaming:** Supporting innovations that leverage emerging technologies, such as AI and VR, to reduce development time, enhance user safety, and foster cross-sector applications (e.g., healthcare, education).

Additionally, selected projects may have the opportunity to access valuable services such as participation in events, pitching sessions to investors, and networking within the broader EIT 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 strategically aligning with the CCSI's needs and promoting innovations in these three priority areas, this call will help deliver on the broader objectives of EIT Culture & Creativity's mission.

5.2. GENERAL BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

This innovation call aims to support the development and piloting of new, close-to-market innovative products, services, and business models. Supported projects should be at **Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 or above** at the start and must aim to launch their innovations on the market within **12 months** of the project's initiation.

5.2.1. Eligible activities:

- **Progressing from prototype to final product**

Activities that involve refining a prototype (Minimal Viable Product) based on user feedback and testing to deliver a market-ready product. This includes improving the design, functionality, reliability, and scalability of the product.

- **Developing product/service branding strategies**

Activities related to creating a strong brand identity and strategy to differentiate the product or service in the market. This involves developing the brand name, logo, messaging, and positioning that resonates with the target audience and aligns with the company's overall mission.

- **Conducting market research and testing**

Carrying out thorough market research to understand customer needs, preferences, and market trends. This includes testing the product or service with potential users to gather insights and make necessary improvements for a successful market entry.

- **Creating and refining distribution and sales channels**

Developing and optimising the channels through which the product or service will be sold and delivered to customers. This involves identifying effective sales strategies, distribution members, and logistics solutions to ensure smooth market entry and scalability.

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

Planning and executing a comprehensive launch strategy for the new product, service, or business model. This includes running marketing campaigns, public relations (PR) efforts, and events designed to generate attention, attract customers, and build market presence.

5.2.2. Out of scope:

The following activities will not be considered for EIT CC financial support:

- Projects focused solely on commercialisation activities (e.g., sales development, regional expansion, etc.).
- Expansion of existing business models without any significant innovation.
- Incremental updates to existing products or services without substantial innovation or market impact.

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

This framework ensures that supported projects are both **innovative** and **go to market**, aligning with EIT Culture & Creativity's mission to drive impactful solutions that advance the CCSI and contribute to the broader European innovation ecosystem.

5.3. TOPICS

5.3.1. Cultural Heritage

Background and scope

Europe ranks second in the global heritage tourism market, accounting for 40% of all European tourism. Of 104 000 museums worldwide, 58 000 are in Europe, and cultural heritage contributes 3.4 % to Europe's total services economy. However, the cultural heritage sector faces several societal challenges, including adaptation of culturally valuable buildings to climate change and increasingly extreme weather events, insufficient social inclusion and decline of traditional crafts.

Rapid urbanisation had led to an increase in disadvantaged and disenfranchised urban populations, together with depopulated rural areas. Additionally, the sector is challenged by a general lack of capacity to integrate emerging technologies, innovative materials and digital media (especially ICT and AI) to increase economic growth, together with limited cross-sectoral collaboration with for example architecture and gaming.

Priority areas for innovation:

- Innovations that leverage ICT tools and AI to provide cultural heritage sites with better potential for **reducing environmental and climate impacts** and – where relevant – optimising visitor offerings.
- New innovations that take apply gaming and **gaming methodologies** to enhance visitor experience.
- Innovations that increase **climate resilience of cultural heritage sites**.
- Innovative business models that **drive economic growth**, such as development of innovative revenue streams and models.

Out of scope:

- Innovations whose use is **limited to specific cultural heritage sites** (or a limited number of them), meaning these innovations must have significant market potential.
- Innovation business models that **simply outsource CO₂** emissions without resulting in a net reduction.

Expected outcomes and impact

Expected outcomes:

- **Scalable innovations aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage**, utilising cutting-edge technologies to safeguard traditional craftsmanship, historical landmarks, and cultural practices. These innovations incorporate advanced tools such as digital archiving, 3D modelling, and augmented reality to enhance the accessibility and preservation of heritage, while ensuring that these efforts can be expanded and replicated across different regions and communities.
- **Development of new business models that ensure the long-term financial sustainability of cultural heritage projects**, combining creative funding strategies, public-private partnerships, and revenue-generating initiatives.
- **Comprehensive solutions that support the preservation of local identity and cultural heritage**, tailored to different European markets, recognizing the unique historical, social, and cultural context of each region. By



integrating local values into broader European heritage initiatives, these solutions contribute to a unified yet diverse cultural landscape.

Proposed activities must result in a **financially viable innovation** (product, service, process, or business model) with clear commercial objectives. Each project must have a **strategy for commercialisation** in at least two European markets, with a clear plan to launch within **12 months from project initiation**. Projects must identify a strong exploitation member with relevant expertise to support this process.

Impact:

- Development and **integration of AI and new technologies** in preserving and supporting cultural heritage in Europe.
- **Sustainable solutions** that reduce environmental impact and enhance resilience of cultural heritage sites.
- Adoption of **new business models** that preserve local identity, social context and sustainability across European heritage sites.

5.3.2. Architecture

Background and scope

Architects in Europe contribute over €21 bn to Europe's economy (Architects' Council of Europe), placing the architectural sector at the intersection of multiple societal challenges. The need for **climate-resilient buildings**, coupled with increasing demand for housing combined with a need to lower the carbon emissions in the construction sector, is driving the growth of **sustainable architecture**. Almost half of Europe's architects 'frequently' designing low-energy buildings. Furthermore, a significant amount of EU assets – ranging from cultural heritage sites to ageing housing stock – requires maintenance, renovation or rebuilding.

Despite the challenges and market drivers, the architectural sector in Europe currently lacks the capacity to test and work with new (bio-based) materials and technologies. Limited collaboration between architecture and other sectors, such as cultural heritage, restricts the **opportunities available in reuse and repurposing of existing buildings** and reduces potential benefits of climate adaption.

Priority areas for innovation:

- Innovations that **leverage new technologies** (such as 3D printing) to reduce CO₂ emissions and increase climate resilience in existing buildings and infrastructure.
- Innovative uses of new, more **climate-neutral materials** that minimize CO₂ emissions in construction and during buildings' lifetime.
- Leveraging of **collaborations with the cultural heritage** sector to accelerate the innovation areas outlined above.

Out of scope:

- Development of new building materials from scratch.
- Innovative business models that **simply outsource CO₂ emissions** without resulting in a net reduction.



Expected outcomes and impact

Expected outcomes:

- **Innovative approaches in architecture that embrace circular design principles**, focusing on sustainability by minimizing waste and maximizing the reuse of materials, ultimately reducing overall energy consumption. These innovations aim to create eco-efficient buildings and urban spaces that contribute to a sustainable built environment.
- **Solutions designed to foster social cohesion and inclusivity in urban settings**, ensuring that urban development is accessible and beneficial to all segments of society. These solutions prioritise the creation of spaces that promote interaction, cultural exchange, and equitable opportunities for residents.
- **Scalable and adaptable strategies for building retrofitting**, designed to be implemented across a wide range of existing structures throughout Europe. These solutions focus on improving the energy efficiency of older buildings, lowering their environmental impact, and making them more resilient to climate change, all while ensuring the approach is versatile and suitable for diverse architectural contexts and regional needs.

Proposed activities must result in an innovation (product, service, process, or business model) that has a clear commercial objective. The innovation must be **market-ready** within **12 months after project initiation**, with a detailed **plan for commercialisation** in at least two European markets. Applicants must present a **viable strategy** for scaling the innovation, including the identification of exploitation members.

Impact:

- **Responsible integration of new technologies** in creative processes, ensuring ethical, human-centred approaches in building and construction areas.
- **Minimising environmental impact** by adopting circular innovations that reduce waste and lessen dependence on raw materials in construction.
- **Creating synergies with cultural heritage** sectors to maximize collaboration in sustainable construction that can be applied across Europe.

5.3.3. Fashion

Background and scope

The European fashion and textile industry generates yearly revenues of €147bn by 2021 (Euratex.eu), positioning Europe as the second-largest exporter globally. However, the sector is burdened by a **traditional linear value chain** (take-make-dispose) that relies heavily on raw materials and environmentally harmful production processes, resulting in significant waste, social issues, and economic losses. European fashion businesses, especially **SMEs and new ventures**, face challenges in scaling, accessing financing, and commercializing **digital innovations, new textile technologies, circular business models**, and **supply chain innovations** such as the **Digital Product Passport**. The industry is also hindered by limited collaboration between SMEs and other sector players, which constrains growth opportunities.

Priority areas for innovation:

- **Circular fashion innovations** that focus on new textile processing techniques and the repurposing of materials.
- Adoption of **circular design, circular business models**, and supply chain innovations to enhance sustainability and reduce waste.



- **Innovative applications of Audio Visual Media and gaming technologies** to reduce the environmental footprint, lower material use, and shorten supply chains, while engaging customers in sustainably produced fashion.
- Innovations that encourage **behavioural shifts** in consumers, such as promoting "repair instead of replace" and fostering acceptance of repurposed materials.

Out of scope:

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

Expected outcomes and impact

Expected outcomes:

Proposed activities should lead to the creation of **market-ready innovations** within 12 months after project ending, addressing key challenges in the fashion industry through **circular practices, sustainable supply chains, and consumer behaviour change**. Innovations should demonstrate the potential for financial viability, market adoption, and commercialisation across **at least two European markets**.

Selected projects must outline a clear **commercial strategy**, including plans for **scaling the innovation** and bringing it to market. The involvement of **commercial members** with expertise in fashion and sustainability will be critical for ensuring market success.

Impact:

- **Reduction of environmental impact** through circular innovations that minimize waste and reduce reliance on raw materials.
- **Enhanced consumer awareness** and behavioural change towards sustainable fashion practices, such as increasing acceptance of recycled or repurposed materials.
- **A more sustainable European fashion industry**, capable of competing globally by leveraging new technologies, business models, and supply chain improvements.

5.3.4. Audio-Visual Media

Background and scope

The European **Audio-Visual Media** (hereinafter **AVM**) sector has seen a significant rise in spending on original content, increasing from €16.3bn in 2019 to €20.8bn in 2022. Despite this growth, the sector faces challenges related to **digital ethics, data privacy, sovereignty**, and the **responsible use of emerging technologies** like artificial intelligence (AI). Concerns also include **fake content, mental health impacts** from social media use, and **hate speech**, as well as the sector's contribution to environmental degradation. There is a need to develop innovative solutions that tackle these issues while also embracing disruptive technologies.

Priority areas for innovation:

- **AI-based innovations** for workflow improvements in content production, from contracting through to post-production.



- Solutions that **strengthen sustainability** by reducing environmental impact, such as novel production methods, emissions-monitoring software, and sustainable resource use.
- Enhancements in **audience engagement** through mobile devices and immersive technologies (e.g., gaming methodologies), including efforts to increase engagement with European original content.
- Cross-sector innovations applying **immersive AVM technologies** to other industries like healthcare, gaming, and fashion.
- Solutions that promote **democracy, digital identity, and sovereignty**, including using AV technologies for community decision-making and city planning.
- **Generative AI** integration, focusing on transparent, human-centred approaches and interactive AI-human feedback loops.

Out of scope:

- Development of new audio-visual content that does not directly demonstrate technology validation.
- Support for events like film festivals or showcases without a focus on technology demonstration.

Expected outcomes and impact

Expected outcomes:

- **AI and sustainability-driven innovations** that reduce environmental impact in AVM production and improve workflow efficiency.
- **Audience engagement technologies** that enhance interaction with European original content, fostering stronger connections between consumers and AVM producers.
- **Generative AI solutions** that address ethical concerns and improve human-machine collaboration in creative processes.
- Cross-sector applications of **AVM technologies** driving advancements in other industries such as healthcare, gaming, and fashion.

Proposed activities must result in an innovation (product, service, process, or business model) that has a clear commercial objective. The innovation must be **market-ready** within **12 months after project initiation**, with a detailed **plan for commercialisation** in at least two European markets. Applicants must present a **viable strategy** for scaling the innovation, including the identification of exploitation members.

Impact:

- **Stronger European AVM sector** with a focus on digital ethics, privacy, and sovereignty.
- **Sustainable AVM production methods** that reduce environmental impact and promote resource efficiency.
- Greater **audience engagement** with innovative content and immersive technologies, particularly with European-origin content.
- The **responsible integration of AI** in creative processes, ensuring ethical, human-centred approaches to media production.



5.3.5. Gaming

Background and scope

The global gaming market is valued at approximately **€179 billion** (Statista), with more than **3 billion people** worldwide engaging in video games. Despite its size, the EU gaming industry represented only **11%** of the global market in 2021. While gaming is often viewed as a form of entertainment, sometimes with concerns about addiction, its potential societal and cross-industry impact remains significantly underutilised. Key challenges include overcoming restrictions imposed by global platforms, such as limited access to data, market entry barriers, payment provider choices, and distribution channels. The adoption of disruptive technologies like AI, third-party payment systems, no-code platforms, and the integration of EU regulatory adaptations are vital to transforming the sector.

Priority areas for innovation:

- Development, testing, and scaling of disruptive technologies such as **AI** to improve game development and player experiences.
- Innovations that **accelerate time-to-market** and reduce development cycles.
- Solutions that utilize **user-generated content**, **no-code platforms**, and third-party payment systems to enhance customization and monetization.
- Cross-industry projects that apply gaming technologies to sectors like **healthcare, audio-visual media, fashion, and the automotive industry**.
- **Enhancing online safety**, especially for young users, with innovations addressing gaming addiction and automated AI solutions for flagging toxicity and harmful content.
- **Disruptive business models** and novel monetization strategies for games.
- Innovations that promote **community management** and increase engagement with end-users.
- Complex **visualisation technologies** that enable realistic interactions.
- Projects that utilize **local culture** to generate authentic content, preserving regional traditions and narratives while ensuring accurate representation of minority groups.

Out of scope:

- Development of content for specific games, unless part of a broader cross-innovation solution (e.g., gamification in sectors like audio-visual media, automotive, etc.) or solely for demonstrating technology validation.

Expected outcomes and impact

Expected outcomes:

- **Innovative gaming technologies** that are market-ready, with faster development cycles and enhanced user experiences.
- Solutions that address **societal challenges** within gaming, such as gaming addiction and online safety, especially for younger players.
- **Cross-industry applications** of gaming technologies, driving innovation in sectors like healthcare, audio-visual media, and fashion.



- **Sustainable business models** that enhance monetization strategies and community engagement in gaming.

Proposed activities must result in a **financially viable innovation** (product, service, process, or business model) with clear commercial objectives. Each project must have a **strategy for commercialisation** in at least two European markets, with a clear plan to launch within **12 months from project initiation**. Projects must identify a strong exploitation member with relevant expertise to support this process.

Impact:

- Strengthen the **EU gaming industry's global presence**, increasing market share and competitiveness.
- **Scalable solutions** with strong commercialisation potential that contribute to economic growth in the gaming sector and beyond.
- Promotion of **cultural preservation and diversity**, ensuring gaming content reflects local traditions and minority representation.
- Innovations that improve **online safety** and reduce risks such as gaming addiction, creating safer digital environments for all users.

5.4. 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**. Consortia for this call must include the following roles:

- **Business member:** A member that represents a business entity, such as a large company, business association, or SME, which provides the necessary market perspective and business acumen to ensure the project's commercial success. The business member is expected to offer market insights, distribution expertise, and the ability to scale the innovation effectively.
- **Commercial member:** A company that takes the lead in the commercialisation of the developed product or service. This member should own or have the rights to exploit the intellectual property (IP) and will be primarily responsible for bringing the innovation to market. The commercial member also plays a critical role in contributing to the financial sustainability mechanism (FSM) of the project, ensuring the innovation has a clear pathway to generating revenue post-launch. If the consortium consists of only two members, the **business entity may also serve as the commercial member**.
- **Research or academic member:** A member representing the academic or research side of the Knowledge Triangle Integration (KTI), bringing valuable expertise in innovation and applied research to the project. This member supports the project's development by offering insights that help refine and validate innovative solutions, ensuring they are aligned with market needs and ready for commercialisation.

Additional members from the **Extended Knowledge Triangle** – such as research institutions, universities, cultural institutions, or public sector actors – are **welcome** and their inclusion will be **positively evaluated**, but they are **not mandatory**. These members provide crucial **sectoral insights, technical expertise**, and a broader impact perspective that can help enrich the project outcomes.



To ensure the project's success, all members must have a **clearly defined role** and an appropriate budget for their activities. The inclusion of members with **performative roles** – those without demonstrable value to the project – will be closely scrutinized during the evaluation process.

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. 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. This accountability ensures the partnership operates cohesively and aligns with the project's objectives.

5.5. 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 6**.

The focus at **TRL 6** is on demonstrating that the technology works under conditions that are relevant or like the intended operational environment but has not been tested in an operational environment yet.

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 **12 months** after project's initiation, 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.

5.6. 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.

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

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

5.7.1. 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 per course	Evidence required from applicants
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

5.7.2. 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 from applicants
EITHE01.1	Intellectual property rights	Number of innovative products, processes, and methods & Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	Supporting evidence: A declaration filled in with the following information signed by the company's legal responsible:

EITHE code	KPI title	KPI description	Evidence required from applicants
		applications resulting from KIC activities.	<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.

5.8. PROJECT DURATION

This call is open to proposals with a duration of up to 12 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.



5.8.1. Project duration & funding beyond 2025

While this call is launched under the 2025 Business Plan (BP2025), some projects may extend beyond 2025. Applicants should be aware that funding beyond 2025 is subject to future Grant Agreements (GAs) with the EIT, and funding conditions may be subject to change. The continuation of financial support for projects extending into 2026 will depend on future budget allocations and EIT approvals.

Projects extending into 2026 may be required to sign a separate Financial Support Agreement (FSA) for 2026 funding.

5.9. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

5.9.1. EIT Culture & Creativity financial support

This innovation call aims to support projects that bring new innovative products, services, and business models closer to the market. The total funding allocated for this call is €7.000.000, with individual projects eligible for up to €350,000 in EIT CC financial support (up to 20 projects will be financially supported).

The financial support will be provided for the development and piloting of solutions, helping projects refine their prototypes, conduct market research, enhance branding strategies, and bring their innovations to market. This financial support ensures that projects reach TRL 9 by the end of their lifecycle, with all activities completed within the 12-month project duration.

Proposals will be evaluated – among others – based on their innovation potential, commercial viability, and alignment with the strategic goals of EIT Culture & Creativity.

5.9.2. 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 financial support through the following payment structure:

- **Pre-financing payment:** A pre-financing payment of up to 20% of the total EIT Culture & Creativity contribution will be disbursed upon the successful signing and validation of the Framework Support Agreement (FSA) by all consortium members.
- **Interim payment:** A second payment of up to an additional 40% of the total EIT Culture & Creativity contribution will be disbursed following the interim review (applicable only for EIT-labelled courses). This review includes the applicant's submission of the interim cost and performance report, an interim review meeting between the applicant and EIT CC, and the issuance of an interim review report by EIT CC, including the review assessment and the label received by the project. Payment is contingent upon this overall assessment. Costs deemed ineligible will not be reimbursed.
- **Final payment:** The remaining payment (up to 40%) 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 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.

5.9.3. 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, if 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.

5.9.4. 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.

5.9.5. 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.

5.9.6. 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 provides a comprehensive framework to ensure efficient project execution and compliance. Please note that these guidelines are subject to changes based on EIT requests, though significant modifications are not expected. Below are the key points that project leaders and beneficiaries should keep in mind:

1. **Project implementation life cycle:** Project activities and monitoring will occur simultaneously. The project leader is responsible for implementing the work plan, while EIT CC monitors progress to ensure deliverables, KPIs, and milestones are met according to the agreed schedule.
2. **Kick-off meeting:** A mandatory kick-off meeting must be held within the first month of project initiation, involving EIT CC and all consortium members. This meeting will clarify objectives, establish timelines, and address any initial concerns. More detailed guidance on project implementation will be provided at this stage.
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, including changes in members or significant budget increases from one or more members (as result significant relocation of budget among members), require formal approval from EIT CC.
5. **Performance and cost reporting:** Interim (M7) and final reports (M12) on project performance and costs must be submitted by the project leader. These reports will be reviewed by EIT CC to assess whether the project is on track. In case of underperformance, financial support adjustments may be applied.
6. **Interim and final reviews:** For the 12-month projects, two key reviews will be conducted to monitor progress:
 - **Interim review:** This will take place after the first 6 months (M7) of project implementation. The interim review will focus on assessing the project's progress, ensuring that milestones are being met,



and identifying any potential risks or issues that need to be addressed. A report will be submitted by the project leader to provide updates on deliverables, KPIs, and financial expenditure.

- **Final review:** This will be conducted at the end of the project (M12) to evaluate the overall success of the project. The final review will assess the completion of all deliverables, KPIs, and financial expenditure. Project leaders must submit a comprehensive final report detailing outcomes, achievements, and financial statements.

7. **Monitoring and support:** EIT CC will monitor projects regularly, offering support and guidance as needed. Regular meetings between EIT CC and project leaders will help ensure that the project remains on track, allowing for adjustments to address any deviations from the initial plan.

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.

5.9.7. 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 signature	A final agreement outlining the chosen Financial Sustainability Mechanism (FSM) for the project, including terms for revenue sharing, equity, or other financial returns shall be signed within 6 months after the start of the project.	Up to month 6 of the project
Demonstrations/validations testing report	Detailed report on the testing phases and validations of the product, including outcomes and future recommendations.	Month 12
Final dissemination report	A thorough dissemination report including best practices for the EIT CC Innovation Marketplace and a video showcasing key outcomes and pilot results.	Month 12

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 EITHE04.4).	Month 3

5.10. 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.

5.10.1. 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 BP 24-25 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 awards.

6. APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

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	<u>Join the meeting now</u> 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., and application form.	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](#)**.



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. Proposal submission

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 the 11 April 2025 at 17.00 CET:

- Online application form
- Budget plan and EIT funding requested as Excel file
- Work plan and project timeline 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:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Portfolio selection and final ranking:

Shortlisted 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 an online hearing. During this hearing, applicants will deliver an up to 10-minute pitch followed by an up to 20-minute Q&A session with 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 assess the hearing as the first portfolio selection criterion. After the hearing, the remaining portfolio selection criteria – business intelligence, strategic portfolio fit, and financial and commercial scalability – will be assessed. Each proposal can earn up to 40 additional points across all four 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 Culture & Creativity 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	The lead applicant and all consortium members must be registered on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal with a PIC (Participant Identification Code) number.
Applicant eligibility	The lead applicant and all consortium members must be legal entities established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe-associated country.
Consortium composition	Proposals must be submitted by a consortium consisting of at least two eligible entities from two different EU Member States or HE-associated countries. One of the entities in the consortium must come from the business sector (micro enterprise, SME, large company, business association, etc.). Additionally, the consortium must have both a commercial member and a research or academic member . If the consortium consists of only two members, the business entity may also serve as the commercial member .
Co-funding rate	All proposals must demonstrate a minimum co-funding rate of 30% across the project. The co-funding rate can vary per member, 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 12 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.

7.1.3. Correction process for missing 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 eligibility and admissibility check.

This individual evaluation process will be carried out by three independent external expert evaluators. 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 three 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 4.1	5
The proposal is clearly aligned and identified with one of the topics stated in section 5.3.	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 evaluation criteria

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

Excellence: Business model and innovation evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 25 points Threshold 15/25
The aim and the objectives of the project are SMART and clearly related to the work plan of the project as well as its expected results.	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 defines exploitation rights agreements among members, if applicable.	5
	25

Impact: Market and societal benefits evaluation criteria

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 EIT Culture & Creativity 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
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 strategy 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

Evaluation Criteria	Max. 25 points Threshold 15/25
The project work plan is clear, well structured, feasible, and realistic. The project identifies management structures to guarantee an effective management of the project's resources.	5
The project team demonstrates the necessary expertise, competencies, and diversity of skills in accordance with the scope of the project, with clearly differentiated roles and responsibilities. The project leverages a well-balanced team and members from multiple sides of the extended Knowledge Triangle to effectively deliver the activity, ensuring strong collaboration and complementary expertise.	5
The project consortium and activities demonstrate 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
The project identifies the main risks that could impact its success, providing clear and realistic mitigation measures for each. The proposed measures demonstrate a proactive approach to minimising potential disruptions and ensuring project continuity.	5
The budget is clearly outlined and justified; distribution of budget between members is appropriate given their roles and responsibilities in the project. The project presents a good value for money. The budget assigned to RIS countries is significant.	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 (overall threshold 65/100)	65 points	100 points



7.3. STAGE 2 – HEARING AND PORTFOLIO SELECTION

Only proposals ranked at or above the threshold of 65 points in the quality evaluation and equalling no more than 200% of the available budget per topic will be invited to the second stage: the Portfolio Selection (including the hearing). During this phase, these shortlisted proposals will be invited to pitch to 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 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.

7.3.1. Panel hearing assessment

Hearings will be held online via MS Teams (and recorded exclusively for internal use). Each proposal must be represented by a maximum of two consortium representatives, typically consisting of a senior representative from the lead applicant's entity and one other key team member from the consortium.

Shortlisted proposals will have to deliver an up to 10-minute pitch about their proposal and expected impact. This will be followed by an up to 20-minute question and answer session.

During the hearing, proposals will be assessed based on the criteria outlined below. Results will be communicated after the hearing. If applicable, selected proposals will go through a condition clearing phase to adjust their project according to the requirements of the selection committee.

A pitch template and further instructions on how to prepare for the pitch will be provided to shortlisted proposals, together with the invitation to the hearing.

7.3.2. 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 40 points to the score obtained by each proposal in the quality evaluation.

Assessment Factor	Description of the Assessment	Max. 40 points
Quality and credibility of the hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality and credibility of the project presentation during the hearing.• Clarity and relevance of the responses to questions raised by the Selection Committee during the hearing.• Ability to address concerns and suggestions from the external expert evaluators in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), if applicable.• Effectivity with which the team communicates their vision and plan during the hearing, including their ability to integrate feedback and address challenges in real-time.	10 points (5 points x 2) <i>Threshold 6/10</i>
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).	10 points (5 points x 2) <i>Threshold 6/10</i>

Assessment Factor	Description of the Assessment	Max. 40 points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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). 	
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 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>
		40 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

7.3.3. 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 funding.

Financial support will be awarded in **strict ranking order** based on the final scores, until the total available 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 process, 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:

- **Selected for EIT Culture & Creativity financial support:** The top-ranked proposals (up to 20, or more, if the budget permits) will be selected for EIT CC financial support.
- **Reserve list:** Proposals meeting the quality evaluation threshold (assessment groups thresholds <65 points overall threshold) and passing the minimum threshold of 12 points for 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.
- **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 (ESR), an evaluation letter.

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 Annex II.

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
CLC	Co-location centres
CLV	Customer lifetime value
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-sized enterprise
SOM	Serviceable Obtainable Market
TAM	Total Addressable Market
TRL	Technology Readiness Level

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Business Association	A voluntary organisation comprising enterprises or entrepreneurs that represent the interests of for-profit businesses in economic and political arenas, providing services to its members.
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 organization 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



Term	Definition
	<p>primate impact goal is to create and maintains job in a resilient CCSI business ecosystem able to scale and compete in global markets.</p> <p>(www.eit-culture-creativity.eu)</p>
EIT Knowledge Triangle Model	<p>The Knowledge Triangle Model includes organizations from education, research, and business to foster innovation. EIT Culture & Creativity expands this to include public sector and civil society organizations, promoting technical, non-technological, social, and artistic innovation.</p>
Evaluation panel	<p>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 evaluation. The panel evaluates eligible proposals based on predefined criteria, assisted by a Quality Controller from EIT Culture & Creativity to ensure compliance.</p>
Evaluation process	<p>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.</p>
Financial Sustainability Mechanism	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
HE MGA	<p>The Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement sets out the rights, obligations, terms, and conditions applicable to the grant awarded.</p>
KIC	<p>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.</p>
KIC Specific KPIs	<p>Indicators defined by EIT Culture & Creativity reflecting the societal challenges the KIC is addressing.</p>
KAVA (Key Added Value Activity)	<p>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 organizations).</p>
KPIs	<p>Key Performance Indicators defined by the EIT and EIT Culture & Creativity.</p>
Large company	<p>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 partners for scaling innovations.</p>
Milestone	<p>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.</p>



Term	Definition
Priority areas	<p>Key focus areas for EIT Culture & Creativity, representing significant shares of the EU CCSI workforce and revenue, aimed at targeted innovation and development.</p> <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. • Audio-visual Media: Responsible tech use, generative AI, and new business models. • Gaming: Digital ethics, cross-sector collaboration, and societal impact.
Project leader	<p>The main contact for EIT Culture & Creativity from the time the EIT CC 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.</p>
RIS	<p>The Regional Innovation Scheme boosts innovation performance in countries with moderate or modest innovation scores.</p>
Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE)	<p>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.</p>
SMEs and micro enterprises	<p>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.</p>
SO	<p>Strategic Objective of EIT Culture & Creativity. Five SOs form the framework's main pillars.</p>
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. **Consortium members:**

- **Consortium member 2:** Organisation Name, Legal Form, Country, PIC number.
- **Consortium member 3 (if applicable):** Organisation Name, Legal Form, Country, PIC number.
- **Consortium member 4 (if applicable):** Organisation Name, Legal Form, Country, PIC number.
- **Consortium member 5 (if applicable):** 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 EIT Culture & Creativity'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, but also in its market impact and scalability across multiple European markets, targeting various stakeholders across Europe.

Section 4: 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. SWOT analysis

- **Strengths and opportunities:**

Max 1000 characters

Briefly outline the strengths and opportunities of your project.

- **Weaknesses and threats:**

Max 1000 characters

Briefly outline any weaknesses and threats to your proposal.

6. 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 5: 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 CC Impact goals stated in the EIT CC Strategic Agenda.

3. Communication, dissemination and outreach plan

Max 2000 characters

Communication, dissemination, and outreach plan

4. Market potential

Max 1000 characters

Provide credible data on the Total Addressable Market (TAM), Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM), and Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM). Identify customer segments and describe how end-users will be 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 6: 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

Describe the competencies, expertise, and diversity of the project team and partnership in relation to the project scope. Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each member and explain how the combined team brings complementary skills, ensuring effective collaboration and execution of the project. Additionally, describe how the partnership leverages multiple sides of the extended Knowledge Triangle to successfully deliver the activity.

3. Diversity, equality, and inclusion

Max 750 characters

Describe how the 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:

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

- Lead Member - EIT funding: €
- Consortium member 2 - EIT funding: €
- Consortium member 3 - EIT funding: € (if applicable)
- Consortium member 4 - EIT funding: € (if applicable)
- Consortium member 5 - EIT funding: € (if applicable)
- Total Project EIT funding requested: €
- Total project budget: €
- Total co-funding: €
- Total co-funding: %

Section 7: 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
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Fashion
 - Architecture
 - Gaming
 - Audio-Visual Media
 - Scaling innovation
 - Business support
 - Commercialisation



- EU Funding and Tenders

5. 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 inadmissible or 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 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 KIC staff, 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.

Conflict of Interests	<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 (Col) policy (Code of Conduct).
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	<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. 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>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>
Transparency and openness	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.
Non-discrimination	In accordance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights , all stakeholder 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.
Confidentiality and security	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.
Ethics and values	<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>
Data protection	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:



	<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>