OPEN CALL ANALYSIS

EIT HEI CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026

HEI-led consortia building deep-tech and manufacturing innovation capacity

EUnita strategic translation

This is a capacity-building grant for universities, not a research grant. The EIT Higher Education Initiative, run by seven EIT KICs and coordinated by EIT RawMaterials, reimburses 100% of eligible costs, up to EUR 1.25 million per project, over 18 months from 1 May 2027. A consortium of at least five funded partners must be led by a higher education institution (HEI) and include at least three HEIs from three countries and at least two business or industry partners. The project must serve deep-tech and manufacturing innovation, choose eight Funded Actions from a fixed list and commit to KPIs: at least 2,200 successful participants, new structures and partnerships, and one Core KPI with documented sales, investment or capital. Independent experts score four criteria; each needs 17 of 25 and the total 75 of 100. Organisations funded in the 2025 call and still in their Cohort 5 project cannot apply.

EIT HEI ANALYSIS

Fit assessment | Sources | What it funds | Boundaries | Budget & competition | Eligibility | Money | Evaluation | Timeline | Risks

Deadline: 13 January 2027, 17:00 CET (18:00 in Romania)

Call budget: EUR 40,000,000 (estimated) | Grant per project: up to EUR 1,250,000 (100% of eligible costs) | 18 months from 1 May 2027

Prepared by

EUnita — EU Grant Advisory & Consultancy

Analysis date: 18 November 2026

*This analysis interprets the official call documentation for applicants. It is not legal advice. The official texts are the EIT HEI Call for Proposals 2026 text (version 1.0, 20 October 2026), the Project Design and Implementation Guide, the FAQ (version 1, 20 October 2026), the templates and the model Project Grant Agreements, as published on the call page and read on 18 November 2026; where this analysis and an official text differ, the official text prevails. Labels used: **Confirmed** (stated in an official source), **EUnita interpretation** (our reading or recommendation), **Derived estimate** (our arithmetic on official figures).*

1. Decision summary: is this call for you?

The EIT Higher Education Initiative (EIT HEI) Call for Proposals 2026, also called Call 6 for Cohort 6, funds consortia led by a higher education institution (HEI). Projects strengthen how HEIs turn STEM talent, knowledge and research into deep-tech and manufacturing innovation and entrepreneurship. Up to EUR 1,250,000 per project is available for 18 months, from an estimated call budget of EUR 40,000,000. Applications close on 13 January 2027, 17:00 CET (18:00 in Romania).

Item	Confirmed position	Source
Call	EIT Higher Education Initiative (HEI) Call for Proposals 2026, version 1.0 of 20 October 2026. No call or topic identifier is published. One call, one set of rules	Call text p.1-2
Run by	The EIT HEI Consortium of seven EIT KICs, coordinated by EIT RawMaterials. The allocated KIC signs a Project Grant Agreement (PGA) with each consortium. The model PGA is drafted for EIT RawMaterials GmbH as the allocated KIC; other KICs may use different operational terms	Call text p.7-8, p.32; model PGA p.1
Type of funding	Grant paid as reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred, under Horizon Europe cost rules. Not a lump sum	Call text p.31
Call budget	EUR 40,000,000, estimated. It depends on an EIT Governing Board decision expected in November 2026 and on an amendment of the Grant Agreement. The organiser may increase it or leave funds unspent	Call text p.30
Grant per project	Up to EUR 1,250,000 (ceiling). The grant may be lower than requested. Funding rate 100%; co-funding is encouraged but not assessed. Pre-financing 25%	Call text p.30, p.32
Duration	18 months: 1 May 2027 to 31 October 2028	Call text p.30
Applicants	A consortium of at least five funded beneficiaries. An HEI coordinates. At least three HEIs from three different Horizon Europe eligible countries (one in an EU Member State). At least two business or industry partners and/or industry representative organisations	Call text p.28-29
Countries	Funded organisations must be established in an EU Member State, an Overseas Country or Territory, a Horizon Europe associated country or a certain low- or middle-income country. Romania is an EU Member State	Call text p.34; HE General Annexes p.11
Focus	Deep-tech innovation and its translation into manufacturing and industrial applications. Three Policy Objectives, all of which a project must serve	Call text p.9-10
Procedure	One-stage submission, one-step evaluation by at least three independent experts, one ranking list. Threshold 17 of 25 on each of four criteria and 75 of 100 overall	Call text p.40-45
Dates	Opened 20 October 2026. Deadline 13 January 2027, 17:00:00 CET. Evaluation from 14 January 2027. Results in the week of 22 March 2027. Start 1 May 2027	Call text p.31, p.45, p.52
Platform and language	EIT HEI Application Portal (SeedBook); proposals in English	Call text p.33, p.53
Status on 18 November 2026	Open. The call page reads 'Call 2026 - Open now!'	Call page, 18 Nov 2026

Good fit

- ✓ Universities and technical universities with engineering, manufacturing, ICT or other STEM faculties, able to coordinate at least four more funded partners
- ✓ Consortia that already hold two or more industry partners (manufacturers, SMEs, start-ups, industry associations) willing to do real work
- ✓ HEIs with a STEM student and staff pool large enough to deliver 2,200 successful participants, each with at least ten learning hours
- ✓ Institutions with top-management backing that can finish a HEInnovate self-assessment no more than six months old at submission
- ✓ Consortia with technology transfer, accelerator or investor partners that can show documented sales, start-up investment or capital by 31 October 2028
- ✓ Participants of EIT HEI Cohorts 1 to 4, and Associated Partners of 2025 projects, that can show clear additionality

Not a fit

- ✗ A single organisation, or a consortium without an HEI coordinator, three HEIs from three eligible countries and two business or industry partners
- ✗ An organisation funded in the 2025 call that is still in its Cohort 5 project (call text p.24, p.29; FAQ p.5, narrower)
- ✗ Projects whose main aim is research or product development, not building the innovation capacity of HEIs
- ✗ Teams that cannot commit to 2,200 successful participants and a Core KPI within 18 months
- ✗ Projects that need more than EUR 1,250,000 or must start before 1 May 2027
- ✗ Entities under EU restrictive measures, or in Russia, Belarus or non-government-controlled areas of Ukraine (in any role), and Hungarian public interest trusts and the entities they maintain (in any funded role)

EUnita verdict (interpretation)

EUnita interpretation: pursue this call if a consortium that meets the five gates (five funded partners, three HEIs in three countries, two industry partners, an HEI coordinator, no organisation funded in the 2025 call that is still in its Cohort 5 project) exists or can be built before the deadline. The work is heavy: a HEInnovate assessment for each HEI, eight Funded Actions, binding KPIs, mandatory in-person events and a 45-page narrative. It rewards consortia that already know their STEM pool and their industry partners. The budget is an estimate and the number of grants is not published. This is a reading of the documents, not an evaluation score or a chance of selection.

2. Source verification and document status

Confirmed: every fact below comes from documents published by the EIT HEI on its call page or from the Horizon Europe documents the call text refers to. The documents were read on 18 November 2026.

Document	Version and date	Used for
Call text	Version 1.0, 20 October 2026; 54 pages	Rules, dates, budget, evaluation. The authoritative text
Project Design and Implementation Guide	Call 2026; 15 pages	How to build the proposal; examples
FAQ	Version 1, 20 October 2026; 13 pages	Eligibility and process answers
Part B template	Word; re-uploaded 13 November 2026	Narrative structure, page limit
Budget template	Excel, version 2; re-uploaded 11 November 2026	Budget planning
Top-management letter, Associated Partner letter, Declaration of Honour	Word templates	Mandatory attachments

Document	Version and date	Used for
Model PGA, Cohort 6	30 pages; linked from the call page; uploaded 27 October 2026	Illustrative grant terms and payment schedule
Model PGA dated 15 October 2026	38 pages; the file linked in the call text	Same, with extra declarations
Participating organisations, Call 2025	Version 3; 24 pages	Organisations funded in Cohort 5, not eligible to apply
KIC synergy briefs (seven)	Call 2026; 3 to 12 pages each	Choosing two or three KICs
Info sessions 1 to 5, slides (1, 4, 5)	4 to 17 November 2026	Explanations; some points differ from the call text
Call page	Read on 18 November 2026	Status, links, event dates
Horizon Europe documents: General Annexes, country list	Work Programme 2026-2027; list version 4.2 of 7 October 2026	Eligible countries and cost rules

Confirmed: the FAQ and the Guide each say the Call text is the authoritative source for eligibility, requirements, deadlines and funding rules (FAQ p.2, p.12; Guide p.2). The call text calls the model PGA illustrative (p.32). The model PGA says that, once signed, it ranks above the EIT-KIC HEI Grant Agreement, the Call and the Horizon Europe framework (model PGA 2.2, p.4). This analysis follows the call text and says where another document differs.

Where the official documents differ

- **Evaluation end date.** 19 March 2027 in the key-dates table (Call text p.31, info session 1 slide 31); 22 March 2027 in the annex table (p.52). Both give results in the week of 22 March 2027.
- **Interim payment.** The call text says one interim report 'at the midpoint' and payment within 30 days (p.30). The model PGA fixes an interim period of 1 May to 31 December 2027, a 90-day outer limit and an 80% ceiling on pre-financing plus interim payment (model PGA Annex 6.1, p.22). The FAQ says the schedule 'may follow an annual schedule' (p.9). The balance differs as well: the call text pays it within 30 days after the EIT's balance payment to the EIT HEI Coordinator, following approval of the Initiative's final report (p.30); the model PGA pays it within 30 calendar days of approval of the final reports, processed within 30 calendar days of receiving the funds from the EIT (Annex 6.1, p.22).
- **Two model PGAs.** The call page links the 27 October version, which has 'Annex 3.3 Not used'. The call text footnote 51 links the 15 October version, which adds Annex 3.3 with anti-money-laundering, politically-exposed-person and sanctions-list declarations (15 October version p.3, p.21-27).
- **Part B template.** It cites 'Section 3.8 of the Call' for IPR (the call has Section 5.7) and speaks of one 'mandatory business partner' (the call and the FAQ require at least two business or industry partners and/or representative organisations).
- **Financial support to third parties.** The call text, FAQ and slides allow prizes only (Call text p.32; FAQ p.9). The budget template also lists 'Scholarships'.
- **Applicable law.** The call: EU law supplemented by Belgian law, courts of Brussels (call text 12.11-12.12, p.51-52). The model PGA, once signed: German law, courts of Berlin (model PGA 13.9 and 13.10.2, p.11). Once signed, the PGA ranks above the call (model PGA 2.2, p.4).
- **Cohort 5 bar.** The call text says organisations funded in the 2025 call and taking part in an active Cohort 5 project 'are not eligible to apply' (p.24, p.29). The FAQ is narrower: 'not eligible to participate as funded beneficiaries' (p.5). The list of participating organisations says 'funded as beneficiaries' (list p.1). Follow the call text.
- **Duplicate participation.** Info session 1 slide 22 says an organisation 'must not participate in more than one Proposal', with automatic ineligibility of the whole proposal. The call text lets it join other proposals as an Associated Partner and considers only the first submitted proposal that names it as a beneficiary (p.28).
- **Core KPI timing.** The EITHE02.4 definition counts sales 'within three years after completion', while the Core KPI must be achieved within the funding period (Call text p.22).
- **Declaration of Honour.** The Lead Partner submits one for the consortium (Call text p.37, p.53); Section 8.3 says the coordinator and all proposed partners must submit one (p.38). The template also asks for a KIC-links declaration that the call text does not mention (see Section 11).
- **Structures KPI.** Info session 1 slide 26 says one of the four EITHE19.1 structures must enhance diversity and inclusion, such as a new structure supporting female entrepreneurs. The call text (p.20) does not say so. Follow the call text, and plan one such structure in case.
- **Reporting after the project.** Info session 4 says formal KPI reporting is not foreseen after the funding period (slide 23); the model PGA requires an annual Post-Project Impact Report (VII.2.6).
- **Smaller points.** The IVAP Workshop is dated Q3/Q4 2027 on p.26 and Q4 2027 on p.53. The KIC Discovery Day is '23 November 2027' on p.53 and 23 November 2026 elsewhere. The call text names EIT Raw Materials Deutschland GmbH as data controller (p.49), the model PGA names EIT RawMaterials GmbH.

3. What the call funds

Confirmed: the call has a strategic focus on deep-tech innovation and its translation into manufacturing and industrial applications. It supports HEIs in strengthening links between STEM talent, research, knowledge valorisation, technology transfer, entrepreneurship, manufacturing and industry (Call text p.8-9). The call text sets this in the context of the Competitiveness Compass, the

Clean Industrial Deal, the Union of Skills, the STEM Education Strategic Plan, the EU Start-up and Scale-up Strategy and EU valorisation policy (p.8).

Three Policy Objectives: a project must serve all three

1. **STEM talent for deep-tech and manufacturing innovation and entrepreneurship:** build the innovation, entrepreneurship and IP competences of students, researchers, academic and professional staff (Call text p.9).
2. **HEIs as institutional drivers of innovation, from lab to market:** strengthen structures, processes and leadership that let HEIs develop, valorise, transfer and commercialise knowledge and technology (p.9).
3. **Connection to regional and European deep-tech and manufacturing ecosystems:** links with industry, investors, entrepreneurs, research organisations, infrastructures and EIT KICs (p.10).

Confirmed: the Specific Objectives (1.1 to 3.3) and their sub-objectives are listed on p.11-13. A project is not expected to address every one; it must show a clear line from institutional needs to objectives, Funded Actions, outputs and results (p.11, p.15).

How a project is built: HEInnovate, Impact Domains and eight Funded Actions

- Each funded HEI completes the HEInnovate self-assessment, with results no more than six months old at submission. It sets the baseline and informs the Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP), which is the proposal (Call text p.13-14).
- Five Impact Domains organise the work: leadership support and institutional change; partnerships and networks; innovation and business generation; innovation and entrepreneurship education; sharing knowledge and success (p.15).
- Each project selects exactly eight Funded Actions: at least one from each of Domains 1 to 4, two more from Domains 1 to 4, and both Domain 5 actions (p.15). The call lists 14 Funded Actions: three in Domain 1, two in each of Domains 2, 3 and 5, and five in Domain 4 (p.16-17).
- Examples from the call text: secure leadership engagement; build inter- and multi-disciplinary support structures; create structures for people to start businesses and transfer technology; develop innovation and entrepreneurship curricula, training and mentoring; organise internships in businesses; up-skill businesses, especially SMEs; collect and share success stories (p.16-17).

KPIs: the quantitative commitments

KPI	Minimum total target	What it measures
EITHE03.1 and/or EITHE04.1	4 combined	Start-ups and scale-ups supported for at least two months (03.1) and/or start-ups established (04.1); the same start-up is not counted twice
EITHE08.1	2,200	Successful participants in training of at least ten learning hours with defined learning outcomes and a competency assessment. Students, academic staff and non-academic staff must each be covered. The target is a minimum
EITHE19.1	4	New or improved structures and mechanisms in participating HEIs that support innovation or entrepreneurship
EITHE20	4	New partnerships (20.1), or the number and share of HEIs taking part in other KIC activities (20.2); only one sub-indicator is needed
EITHE01.1 (optional)	None	Innovative products, processes and methods and IPR applications

KPI	Minimum total target	What it measures
Core KPI: one of EITHE02.4, EITHE04.4, EITHE06.1	1; 1; EUR 10,000	At least one innovation with documented sales of EUR 10,000 or more (02.4); at least one start-up with EUR 10,000 of transactions or EUR 200,000 of private investment (04.4); EUR 10,000 of private and public capital attracted in year N by supported start-ups or scale-ups (per country) that received EIT HEI project support for at least two months (06.1)

Confirmed: for EITHE06.1 the call text reads 'Total EUR amount of private and public capital attracted in year N by supported start-ups/scale-ups (per country) that have received EIT HEI project support for a total duration of at least two months', with a minimum total target of EUR 10,000 (p.22). The EIT Impact Framework 2022-2027 (p.4) gives the same indicator as 'Total EUR amount of private and public capital attracted within year N by supported start-ups / scale-ups (per country) that have received KIC business creation services support or HEI CBI project support of total duration of at least two months, within a maximum of three years following the last received KIC KAVA incl. project support activity'. Whether the EUR 10,000 is counted per country or for the project in total is not stated in either document.

Confirmed: targets are set and reported at project level; the consortium is responsible for them. There are no minimum annual targets; plans are made by calendar year. The mandatory KPIs must be met during the funding period, 1 May 2027 to 31 October 2028; the Core KPI year of achievement is stated in the application and 2028 is recommended (Call text p.18-22). Info session 1 says Call 2026 is expected to deliver an estimated 70,000 of the 200,000 STEM learners targeted by 2028 (slide 12).

Connection to KICs and the EIT HEI Community

Confirmed: the application names at least two and at most three EIT KICs, using the seven KIC briefs. KICs are not funded beneficiaries. After selection each project is allocated to one participating KIC for contracting and management; preferences are considered but do not decide the allocation (Call text p.24, p.47-48). Funded projects also join the EIT HEI portfolio and Community (Section 9).

4. Boundaries: avoid the wrong door

Confirmed boundaries of this call:

- **Consortia only.** A single organisation cannot apply. The coordinator must be an HEI (Call text p.28-29).
- **Not a lump sum.** The grant reimburses actual eligible costs; budgets are justified line by line under Horizon Europe rules (p.31-32).
- **Prizes are the only financial support to third parties** (p.32; FAQ p.9). Subcontracting must follow EU public procurement rules (p.32).
- **KICs cannot be funded beneficiaries** (p.24). Organisations funded in the 2025 call and in an active Cohort 5 project 'are not eligible to apply' (p.24, p.29; FAQ p.5, narrower).
- **Closed in any role:** entities under EU restrictive measures and entities in Russia, Belarus or non-government-controlled areas of Ukraine (p.35).
- **Closed to funded roles only:** Hungarian public interest trusts under Act IX of 2021 and the entities they maintain. They may take part unfunded as Associated Partners, which this call allows (p.35-36, p.34).
- **Co-funding is not scored.** It is encouraged, but the evaluation does not consider it (p.32).
- **The call funds institutional capacity, not product development.** The objectives concern talent, institutional structures and ecosystem links (p.9-13). EUnita interpretation: a team that mainly wants to build a prototype or a company should look at the instruments the call text itself names for later steps: the European Innovation Council, ERC Proof of Concept grants and the Interregional

Innovation Investments Instrument (p.13).

Neighbouring route inside the same initiative

Confirmed: the 2025 call (two topics, up to EUR 2 million per project, 24 months) is closed. Its 35 projects run from 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2028 (Call text p.29; Call 2025 text p.26-27). Organisations funded in the 2025 call and in an active Cohort 5 project 'are not eligible to apply' (call text p.24, p.29; the FAQ p.5 says 'as funded beneficiaries'). Organisations that were only unfunded Associated Partners in 2025 projects can apply (Call text p.24 fn 35, p.30). The documents do not say whether a 2025 funded beneficiary may join a 2026 proposal as an unfunded Associated Partner: do not assume it, and ask hei@eitrawmaterials.eu, the call's contact for general questions, before relying on it.

5. Budget, competition and expected number of grants

Item	Confirmed position	Source
Total budget	EUR 40,000,000, estimated, 'subject to the funding allocation decision of the EIT Governing Board expected in November 2026' and an amendment of the Grant Agreement between the EIT and the EIT HEI consortium	Call text p.30
Possible change	The organiser reserves the right to increase the budget (to be announced on the call page) and not to award all funds	Call text p.30
Ceiling per project	Up to EUR 1,250,000. The amount is fixed by the allocated KIC from the estimated project budget at a 100% funding rate, and may be lower than requested	Call text p.30
Number of grants	Not stated. The call funds proposals in rank order until the budget is exhausted, subject to funding limits; a reserve list is kept	Call text p.45
Applications received	Not published	-
Initiative target	Call 2026 is expected to deliver an estimated 70,000 of the 200,000 STEM learners targeted by 2028	Info session 1, slide 12

Derived estimates

- Derived estimate: EUR 40,000,000 divided by EUR 1,250,000 is 32. If every grant were at the ceiling, the budget would cover 32 projects. Lower grants would allow more; a budget change would alter the figure.
- Derived estimate: 70,000 learners divided by 2,200 learners per project is about 31.8, which is close to the first figure. This is arithmetic on two official figures, not a statement by the organiser.

Competition: what the previous round shows

Confirmed: the 2025 call (EUR 70,000,000) received 138 applications, 102 for Topic 1 (STEM capacity building) and 36 for Topic 2 (European Universities alliances), from 1,865 organisations in 61 countries. It selected 35 projects, 18 for Topic 1 and 17 for Topic 2 (news pages of 24 March and 8 July 2026).

Derived estimate: 18 of 102 Topic 1 applications is about 17.6%; 35 of 138 overall is about 25.4%. EUnita interpretation: these ratios are not a forecast. The 2025 call had two topics, a larger budget, a EUR 2 million ceiling and a novice-HEI requirement; the 2026 call has one focus, a smaller budget and a narrower scope, and its number of applications is not published.

6. What has been funded before

Confirmed: the funder's past-call pages and news pages give the following history of the EIT Higher Education Initiative.

Call	Money and format	Outcome
Pilot call (announced March 2021)	At most EUR 1.2 million per project in two phases	60+ applications; 23 pilot projects; 142 HEIs from 32 countries; at most EUR 28.8 million in total
Second call (November 2021 to February 2022)	Two phases	56 consortia (680+ organisations) applied; 26 projects with 147 HEIs and 147 non-academic organisations; over EUR 31 million at most
Call 2022	Up to 16 projects; at most EUR 750,000 each	Selected projects announced May 2023
Call 2024 (Cohort 4)	Up to 42 projects planned; EUR 1.34 million per project; 25 months; deadline 12 December 2024	47 projects selected
Call 2025 (Cohort 5)	EUR 70 million: EUR 36 million Topic 1, EUR 34 million Topic 2; up to EUR 2 million per project; 24 months; deadline 4 March 2026	138 applications; 35 projects; 552 organisations from 49 countries (351 full partners, 201 Associated Partners)

Confirmed: info session 1 summarises the whole initiative as 147 projects, 700+ HEIs and 400+ non-academic organisations reached, 150,000+ people trained and 2,400+ start-ups and scale-ups supported (slide 6). Other funder pages give other figures for the number of HEIs (500+ on the call launch news of 26 October 2026, 622 on the news of 8 July 2026), so this analysis does not rely on one number.

What changed from Call 2025

- Two topics became one deep-tech and manufacturing focus (Call text p.9; Call 2025 text p.26).
- The ceiling fell from EUR 2,000,000 to EUR 1,250,000 and the duration from 24 to 18 months; the estimated budget fell from EUR 70 million to EUR 40 million (Call text p.30; Call 2025 text p.26-27).
- The rule that at least two HEIs be new to EIT HEI projects is gone. The consortium now needs at least two business or industry partners and/or representative organisations, where 2025 asked for one business and one other non-HEI partner (Call text p.29; Call 2025 text p.30).
- Organisations funded in 2025 projects and still in an active Cohort 5 project are not eligible to apply; organisations that were only unfunded Associated Partners are eligible (Call text p.29-30).

Romania in Cohort 5

Confirmed: the list of participating organisations shows Romanian funded HEIs in 2025 projects: West University of Timisoara, Transylvania University of Brasov, Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iasi, Constanta Maritime University, Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, 1 December 1918 University of Alba Iulia, University of Bucharest and Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iasi (nine HEIs in all), and two Romanian companies, Carbon Smart Europa SRL and SUDOTIM AS SRL (list p.6 and p.13). These organisations are not eligible to apply while their Cohort 5 project is active. Other Romanian organisations appear as unfunded Associated Partners and remain eligible.

7. Who should apply, and with which ideas

EUnita interpretation: the call suits a coordinating HEI that has a clear institutional gap in innovation, entrepreneurship and IP, a large STEM pool, and industry partners with real manufacturing or deep-tech activity. The roles below follow the eligibility rules (Call text p.28-29).

Role in the consortium	Requirement	What it brings (EUnita interpretation)
Coordinator (HEI)	Must be an HEI, with proof of accreditation, a top-management letter and a HEInnovate result	Leads the IVAP. Confirmed: carries the financial capacity check if it requests EUR 500,000 or more (call text p.40)
Two further HEIs	In two other Horizon Europe eligible countries; at least one HEI in an EU Member State overall; each involves at least two faculties or units	STEM students and staff for the 2,200 target; structures for the 4 new or improved structures
Business or industry partners (at least two)	SMEs, start-ups, larger enterprises or industry associations, public or private	Industrial challenges, internships, up-skilling, testing; manufacturing or industrial technology partners are strongly encouraged
Other funded partners	Research organisations, VET providers, technology transfer offices (own PIC), public bodies, NGOs, social enterprises, HEI associations	Technology validation, valorisation, investor and ecosystem links
Associated Partners	Unfunded; commitment letter; for organisations that cannot or do not wish to be funded beneficiaries (Call text p.34)	Extra reach and support; no funding and no beneficiary obligations

Project ideas the documents support

- EUnita interpretation: challenge-based and project-based learning with manufacturing firms, ending in internships and mentoring (Domain 4 and Specific Objectives 1.2).
- EUnita interpretation: a shared technology transfer and IP service across the HEIs, with spin-off and start-up support, tied to the start-up KPIs (Domain 3 and Specific Objective 2.1).
- EUnita interpretation: up-skilling programmes for SMEs and a link to regional industrial clusters and testing facilities (Domain 4 and Domain 2; Specific Objectives 3.1 and 3.2).
- EUnita interpretation: leadership engagement and cross-faculty structures that keep the changes after the project (Domain 1; Specific Objective 2.2).

Confirmed: participants of Cohorts 1 to 4 may apply, including previous coordinators, if the proposal shows clear additionality and does not simply continue earlier activities. They are expected to mentor less experienced partners (Call text p.24-25; FAQ p.4-5).

For Romanian applicants

- Confirmed: Romanian HEIs, companies, research organisations, public bodies and NGOs are eligible for funding on the same terms as those of other Member States. The call is run and funded by the EIT; the documents name no Romanian national funder, national annex or national contact point.
- Confirmed: the deadline of 17:00 CET is 18:00 in Romania. A Romanian organisation funded in a 2025 project and still in its Cohort 5 project 'is not eligible to apply' (call text p.24, p.29; the FAQ p.5 says 'as funded beneficiaries'). Whether it may join as an unfunded Associated Partner is not stated: do not assume it, and ask hei@eitrawmaterials.eu before relying on it.
- Confirmed: the FAQ encourages participation from Regional Innovation Scheme areas and widening participation but sets no quota and lists no countries (FAQ p.2, p.6, p.11).

8. Eligibility checklist

Marks: ✓ a requirement the documents set that the consortium must be able to meet; ✗ a hard bar; ? a point the documents leave open or where they differ. Page numbers are in the Call text unless stated.

✓	At least five funded beneficiaries, each with a PIC in the EU Participant Register before submission (p.28).
✓	An HEI as lead partner and coordinator (p.29).
✓	At least three HEIs, in three different Horizon Europe eligible countries, at least one in an EU Member State; each HEI involves at least two faculties, departments or equivalent units (p.29).
✓	At least two business or industry partners and/or industry representative organisations, public or private (p.29).
✓	Each HEI: proof of accreditation by the national authority (p.28), a top-management commitment letter (p.23), a HEInnovate self-assessment no more than six months old (p.13).
✓	Funded organisations established in an EU Member State (outermost regions included), an Overseas Country or Territory, a Horizon Europe associated country or a certain low- or middle-income country (p.34).
✓	Two or three EIT KICs named in the application (p.24).
✓	Submission in English through the EIT HEI Application Portal, complete in all mandatory fields, by 13 January 2027, 17:00 CET (p.33, p.52).
✓	Declaration of Honour signed by the lead partner for the consortium and uploaded before submission (p.37, p.53). The template also asks for any capital, financial, legal or structural link of each participating organisation with a participating EIT KIC or its subsidiaries; 'none' if not applicable (Declaration of Honour template).
✓	Coordinator: confirmation of a financial self-check or a recent EU financial viability check at submission (p.40).
✗	An organisation funded in the 2025 call and taking part in an active Cohort 5 project (p.24, p.29; FAQ p.5, narrower; list).
✗	An organisation as funded beneficiary in more than one proposal; only the first proposal submitted is considered (p.28).
✗	EIT KICs as funded beneficiaries (p.24).
✗	Entities under EU restrictive measures, or established in Russia, Belarus or non-government-controlled areas of Ukraine, in any role (p.35).
✗	Hungarian public interest trusts (Act IX of 2021) and entities they maintain, in any funded role (p.35-36; list of 21 HEIs).
✗	Entities in an exclusion situation under Article 138(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 (p.36-37).
?	Duplicate participation: the call text allows Associated Partner roles in other proposals; info session 1 slide 22 reads as a flat ban (Section 2).
?	Whether a 2025 funded beneficiary may join a 2026 proposal as an unfunded Associated Partner: the call text and FAQ are silent on the unfunded role (p.24, p.29-30; FAQ p.5). Do not assume it; ask hei@eitrawmaterials.eu before relying on it.
?	How many partners beyond five: info session 1 says there is no maximum (slide 22); the call text sets a minimum only.
?	Whether the call contact can rule on a specific consortium. Call text p.53 gives hei@eitrawmaterials.eu for general enquiries, and the FAQ (p.12) for general questions about the application process and participation rules.

9. How the money works

Item	Confirmed position	Source
Form of grant	Reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred by beneficiaries, with supporting records. Rules of Horizon Europe, Article 6 of the Annotated Model Grant Agreement	Call text p.31
Funding rate	100% of eligible costs ('up to 100%' on p.31); co-funding encouraged, not assessed	Call text p.30-32
Cost categories	Personnel; subcontracting; purchase (travel and subsistence, equipment, other goods, works and services); other (financial support to third parties as prizes, internally invoiced goods and services); indirect costs	Call text p.31-32
Indirect costs	25% of eligible direct costs, excluding subcontracting and financial support to third parties. Calculated automatically by the portal; the applicant does not enter them	Budget template, General Information point 4; info session 5, slide 7
Ceiling and indirect costs	Not stated whether the EUR 1,250,000 maximum includes the indirect costs the portal adds. The budget template calls EUR 1,250,000 the maximum grant amount and adds indirect costs automatically	Budget template, General Information; call text p.30
Equipment	Declared as depreciation, only for the share used on the action	Info session 5, slide 8
Budget planning	By calendar year, with activities and KPIs	Call text p.30
Pre-financing	25% of the total grant, within 30 days after signature	Call text p.30; model PGA Annex 6.1
Interim payment	On approval of the interim report, within 30 days (call text). In the model PGA: reporting period 1 May to 31 December 2027, within 30 days of approval and at most 90 days after submission; pre-financing plus interim payment capped at 80% of the total funding	Call text p.30; model PGA p.22
Balance	For 1 January to 31 October 2028. Model PGA: within 30 calendar days of approval of the final reports, processed within 30 days of receiving the funds from the EIT; timing depends on EIT funds. Call text: within 30 days after the EIT pays the balance to the EIT HEI Coordinator	Model PGA p.22; Call text p.30
Reports	Reporting periods 1 May to 31 December 2027 and 1 January to 31 October 2028; the KIC may ask for monthly or other regular progress reports; final report within 60 calendar days after the end	Model PGA p.22 (Annex 6.1), p.24 (VII.2.2), p.25 (VII.2.4)
After the project	An annual Post-Project Impact Report by 31 March, for five years after the last funding year or until 31 December 2032, whichever is later	Model PGA p.25 (VII.2.6)
Financial capacity	Checked for the coordinator if the requested funding is EUR 500,000 or more; remedies include joint liability, backing by another legal entity or instalment pre-financing	Call text p.40

Derived estimate: 25% of the ceiling of EUR 1,250,000 is EUR 312,500 of pre-financing; the 80% cap on pre-financing plus interim payment is EUR 1,000,000 at the ceiling. Both figures change with the grant actually awarded.

Confirmed: the grant parameters are fixed in the PGA signed with the allocated KIC; the call text says the model PGA is illustrative and that operational details may vary between KICs (p.32). A consortium

agreement is allowed but is subordinate to the PGA, and the KIC can object to provisions (model PGA 13.2, p.9-10). Horizon Europe rules on IPR (Article 16) and on communication and visibility (Article 17) apply (Call text p.32-33). The KIC may also withdraw funding and recover payments for errors, irregularities or breaches, and may audit for five years after completion (p.51).

Reading the payment rules

EUnita interpretation: plan cash flow on the model PGA schedule, not on the call text's shorter wording. Pre-financing is 25%, the interim payment follows the first reporting period (1 May to 31 December 2027), and the balance depends on final approval and on EIT funds. Partners should be able to carry costs until the interim payment arrives.

10. Evaluation

Confirmed: proposals are checked for admissibility (deadline, platform, completeness, English) and eligibility, then assessed by at least three independent experts per proposal. The process ends in one ranking for all proposals. Operational capacity is assessed in the external evaluation; financial capacity only for successful applicants (Call text p.33, p.40-41). The EIT HEI Call Evaluation Committee, representing the participating KICs, oversees the process and applies the tie-break and allocation rules (p.41).

Criterion	Maximum	Threshold	Main aspects
1. Excellence	25	17	Clarity and relevance of the objectives: a coherent response to needs shown by HEInnovate and the IVAP, contribution to the Policy and Specific Objectives, a credible manufacturing and deep-tech focus. Quality of the proposed coordination and support measures, including the method and DEI (Call text p.41-42)
2.1 Impact: credibility of the pathways to the expected outcomes and impacts (scale)	25	17	A clear link from actions to institutional change; realistic plans for the mandatory KPI targets; lasting change; pathways to validation and commercialisation; contribution to the portfolio and Community (p.42-43)
2.2 Impact: measures to maximise outcomes and impacts	25	17	The dissemination and exploitation plan: dissemination, communication, exploitation, sustainability and transfer of results; use of the EIT HEI Community for uptake and scaling (p.43)
3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation	25	17	Coherent work plan with work packages, milestones and deliverables; sequencing against Funded Actions and KPIs; monitoring; risks. Capacity and role of each participant, and how the consortium as a whole brings the expertise (p.43-44)
Total	100	75	A proposal below any threshold is not considered for funding (p.44-45)

Confirmed: the scoring scale is 0-4 (fails or cannot be assessed), 5-9 (poor), 10-16 (fair), 17-21 (good), 22-24 (very good) and 25 (excellent) (Call text p.45). Proposals that pass all thresholds are funded in descending order of score until the budget is used up. A reserve list is kept for proposals that pass but cannot be funded, and may be used if a selected project withdraws (p.45).

Tie-break for equal scores (Call text p.46)

1. The Excellence score, then the Impact 2.1 score.

2. Portfolio factors: gender balance and other diversity considerations, participation of non-academic organisations, geographical diversity, other factors justified by the call. The Committee records its reasons in the Evaluation Report.
3. The composition of the whole portfolio and synergies between projects.

After the scores

- KIC allocation: the Committee allocates selected projects to participating KICs using the KIC alignment in each proposal, the spread of projects across KICs and their capacity (p.47-48).
- Standstill: 14 days after the results before the PGA is signed (p.46).
- Redress: a request within 14 days of receiving the evaluation report, to compliance@eitrawmaterials.eu. It covers procedural shortcomings and factual errors, not the experts' judgement; only the first request per proposal counts; a re-evaluation can lower the score (p.46-47).
- Clarification: errors or missing information may be corrected within ten calendar days of the official request; otherwise the proposal stays inadmissible (p.48).

11. Application package and timeline

Confirmed: the proposal is the Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP), submitted in two parts through the EIT HEI Application Portal (info session 5, slide 3; Call text p.53).

Part or document	Content and rules	Source
Part A (online)	General and applicant information; partners and Associated Partners; Impact Domains and Funded Actions; KPIs; KIC alignment; work packages (maximum 10); project budget; deliverables and milestones; risks	Info session 5, slides 3-4; Part B template
Part B (Word, uploaded)	Excellence, Impact, Quality and efficiency of implementation. At most 45 pages, Times New Roman 11 pt or larger, single spacing; prompts and the annex deleted. For deliverables the template suggests four to eight a year	Part B template
Budget	By calendar year, in the portal and the Excel template	Call text p.30; template
HEInnovate	Self-assessment for each funded HEI, results no more than six months old	Call text p.13
Commitment letters	Top-management letter from each funded HEI; Associated Partner letters	Call text p.23; FAQ p.4-5
Declaration of Honour	Template, signed by the lead partner for the consortium, uploaded before submission. The template also asks the lead partner to declare any capital, financial, legal or structural link (for example membership of, or a contract with, a participating EIT KIC or its subsidiaries) of every participating organisation; such links 'will be assessed and may lead to mitigation measures or exclusion from the Call'. Each beneficiary signs the standard declaration at onboarding	Call text p.37, p.53; template
PIC and accreditation	PIC for every funded beneficiary; proof of accreditation for each HEI	Call text p.28
Financial self-check	Coordinator confirms a self-check or a recent EU financial viability check	Call text p.40

Confirmed: the call page lists a partner-search link and recordings and slides of the info sessions held on 4, 6, 11, 13 and 17 November 2026; a KIC Discovery Day on 23 November 2026 (10:00-12:15 CET) and an Open Q&A session on 3 December 2026 (15:00-16:30 CET) are still to come (Call page; Call text p.52).

Event	Date	Source
Call and application portal open	20 October 2026 (hour not published)	Call text p.52
KIC Discovery Day (online)	23 November 2026, 10:00-12:15 CET	Call text p.52
Open Q&A session (online)	3 December 2026, 15:00-16:30 CET	Call text p.52
Submission deadline	13 January 2027, 17:00 CET (18:00 in Romania)	Call text p.31, p.52
Evaluation	14 January to 19 March 2027, or to 22 March 2027 (see Section 2)	Call text p.31, p.52
Results to applicants	Week of 22 March 2027	Call text p.45, p.52
Standstill, then PGA preparation	14 days after the results; PGA preparation in April 2027 (indicative)	Call text p.31, p.46
Project start	1 May 2027	Call text p.30
Community Engagement Plan; DEI Value Statement and Action Plan; Dissemination and Communication Plan	Month 3 (31 July 2027)	Call text p.25, p.27, p.33
Data Management Plan	Month 6	Call text p.33
IVAP Workshop (2.5 days, in person, at least four representatives)	Q3/Q4 2027 (p.26) or Q4 2027 (p.53)	Call text p.26, p.53
Cohort 6 Sensemaking (2.5 days, in person, two representatives)	Q2 2028	Call text p.26
Project end	31 October 2028	Call text p.30

Confirmed: dates after the deadline are marked indicative in the call text. Other planned events, among them the System Innovation Training, the Co-creation Workshop Series and DEI training, have no fixed dates; precise dates go to funded projects later (Call text p.26).

12. Risks and red flags

1. **Budget not final.** The EUR 40 million figure is an estimate that depends on an EIT Governing Board decision expected in November 2026. The number of grants is not stated, and the organiser may increase the budget or leave funds unspent (Call text p.30).
2. **Four thresholds.** Each of four criteria needs 17 of 25, and the total needs 75 of 100. A strong total does not rescue one weak criterion (p.44-45).
3. **KPI commitments are heavy for 18 months.** The four start-ups (supported and/or established), the 2,200-participant target (each with at least ten learning hours and a competency assessment, across students, academic staff and non-academic staff), the four structures, four partnerships and a Core KPI with documented money are set at project level (p.19-22).
4. **Eligibility traps.** An organisation funded in 2025 and still in its Cohort 5 project, a beneficiary named in two proposals, or a missing HEInnovate or letter can make a proposal ineligible. The documents are not fully consistent on duplicate participation (Section 2).

5. **Document inconsistencies.** Two model PGAs, differing payment wording, a Part B template with stale cross-references and re-uploaded templates without a change log. The call text prevails until a PGA is signed, and then the PGA ranks above it.
6. **Tight start.** Results come in the week of 22 March 2027, a 14-day standstill follows and the PGA is prepared in April, for a start on 1 May 2027. A call may also be cancelled before the PGA is signed (p.48).
7. **Cash flow and recovery.** Reimbursement of actual costs means partners carry costs; the interim payment is capped (80% with pre-financing) and the balance depends on EIT funds. Payments can be revised after EIT review (model PGA p.22).
8. **In-person events.** Mandatory: the IVAP Workshop needs at least four representatives and Sensemaking two. Other planned in-person activities are a System Innovation workshop for up to two representatives (Q1 2028) and one of up to three annual Community events. The call text asks applicants to have resources for the eligible costs of participation in in-person activities (p.26).
9. **Obligations that outlast the project.** Annual Post-Project Impact Reports run for at least five years after the last funding year (model PGA VII.2.6), and the KIC may audit for five years after completion (Call text p.51).

13. EUnita recommendations

EUnita interpretation: the sequence below follows the order in which a consortium usually succeeds or fails on this call.

1. Test the gates first: five funded partners, three HEIs in three eligible countries, two industry partners, an HEI coordinator, and no organisation funded in the 2025 call that is still in its Cohort 5 project. Check every partner against the 2025 list.
2. Start the HEInnovate self-assessment now for each funded HEI. Its results must be no more than six months old at submission, and they should decide which eight Funded Actions you choose.
3. Write the case around the three Policy Objectives and a credible manufacturing or deep-tech story, with industry partners that have named tasks and budget, not only letters of support.
4. Size the KPIs to the consortium before writing: 2,200 successful participants, four structures, four partnerships, four start-ups supported or established, and one Core KPI by 31 October 2028.
5. Write to the grid: aim well above 17 of 25 on Excellence, Impact 2.1, Impact 2.2 and Quality and efficiency. Ties are broken on Excellence, then Impact 2.1.
6. Budget the in-person events and the Community Officer's time as direct costs in the calendar-year plan. Do not enter indirect costs: the portal adds them at 25% of eligible direct costs, excluding subcontracting and financial support to third parties (budget template, General Information, point 4). Plan cash flow on the model PGA schedule.
7. Name two or three KICs with a reason for each from the KIC briefs. Allocation is not decided by preference, so the plan should work with any participating KIC.
8. Submit well before 13 January 2027, 17:00 CET (18:00 in Romania). Clarification is allowed only for errors or missing information, within ten calendar days.
9. If you are a Romanian organisation funded in Cohort 5, you are not eligible to apply while that project is active. If you are not on the 2025 list, you can be a funded partner or coordinator.

Unresolved points

- The number of grants and the final budget: they depend on the EIT Governing Board decision expected in November 2026.
- The number of applications to Call 2026 and any success rate: not published.
- Which model PGA version governs the payment schedule and whether Annex 3.3 declarations will be asked: the two versions differ.
- Whether duplicate participation is a flat ban or allowed as Associated Partner (call text) with automatic ineligibility (slide 22): follow the call text.
- Whether a 2025 funded beneficiary can join a 2026 proposal as an unfunded Associated Partner: the documents do not address the unfunded role. Do not assume it; ask hei@eitrawmaterials.eu before relying on it.
- Whether the EUR 1,250,000 ceiling includes the indirect costs the portal adds at 25%: not stated in the documents read. To verify with the call contact.
- Whether the EUR 10,000 minimum for the Core KPI EITHE06.1 is counted per country or for the project in total: the indicator says '(per country)' and the documents do not settle it.
- Final dates of the IVAP Workshop, Sensemaking and the other mandatory events.
- The hour at which the application portal opened on 20 October 2026, and any change log for the Part B and budget templates re-uploaded in November.
- Whether the call contact (hei@eitrawmaterials.eu) can rule on a particular consortium: the call text gives it for general enquiries and the FAQ for general questions about the application process and participation rules.

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- Info session 1: overview, slides: https://eit-hei.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/EIT-HEI-Call-2026-Info-Session-Overview.pdf (4 Nov 2026)
- Info session 4: KPI expectations, slides: https://eit-hei.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/EIT-HEI-Call-2026-Info-Session-KPIs-expectations_13112026.pdf (13 Nov 2026)
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Checked 18 November 2026. Official updates prevail.