

EIT Regional Innovation Scheme Applicant's Guide

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European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

Innovation is the key to growth, competitiveness and social well-being in the 21st century. The capacity of a society to innovate is crucial in an ever more knowledge-intensive economy.

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) aims to enhance Europe's ability to innovate, which translates into adapting quickly to the fast pace of development, being one step ahead in providing solutions to rapidly emerging societal problems and developing products that meet the demands and desires of consumers.

Europe is facing a significant innovation challenge, where despite an excellence research base, dynamic companies and creative talent, good ideas are too rarely turned into new products or services. Europe needs a real change of mind-set towards the promotion of a more innovative and entrepreneurial culture.

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a body of the European Union based in Budapest, Hungary. It was established by the Regulation (EC) No 294/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2008. It became operational in 2010 in its premises of the EIT Headquarters. The EIT currently employs approximately 50 members of staff and its Interim Director is Martin Kern since 1 August 2014.

Find out more about the EIT on <https://eit.europa.eu/>

Climate-KIC and the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS)

Climate-KIC is the EU's largest public-private partnership addressing climate change through innovation to build a zero carbon economy. Climate-KIC is one of five Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

We address climate change across four priority themes: urban areas, land use, production systems, climate metrics and finance. Education is at the heart of these themes to inspire and empower the next generation of climate leaders.

We run programmes for students, start-ups and innovators across Europe via centres in major cities, convening a community of the best people and organisations.

The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) is our outreach programme to:

- Support integration of the knowledge triangle
- Increase the innovation capacity of European regions that don't yet benefit directly from the EIT and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

The programme connects Climate-KIC with selected partnerships from business, higher education and research, as well as regional policy-makers, public entities and other stakeholders to spur innovation in Europe.

The initial Climate-KIC RIS network was launched in 2014 to include the following members:

-  Cork/Dublin, Ireland (2014-15)
-  Estonia (2015 –)
-  Slovenia (2014 –)
-  Northern Portugal with Lisbon (2014 –)
-  Helsinki Uusimaa, Finland (2014-15)
-  Timis, Romania (2014 –)

Figure 1 Climate-KIC RIS Partner Regions

Find out more about us on our website: <http://www.climate-kic.org>

Key principles of the EIT RIS



Figure 2 EIT RIS Key Principles

Coherent and structured outreach scheme

The EIT RIS is a structured outreach scheme which forms an integral part of the KIC's overall strategy. It has clearly defined strategic objectives translated into targeted activities and resulting in concrete outcomes.

Excellence

The EIT RIS is targeted at excellent partnerships representing the three sides of the Knowledge Triangle - leading higher education institutions, research organisations and businesses - as well as other stakeholders essential in spurring regional innovation, such as regional policy makers and public entities. With a view to fully embrace opportunities for enhancing innovation capacity, the EIT RIS implemented by the KICs aims at capitalising on the untapped potential offered by the diversity of regions in Europe. If harnessed well, it will allow the EIT and its KICs to extend their reach to new geographical areas and to reach out to excellent partnerships of the Knowledge Triangle.

Thematic alignment

EIT RIS partnerships should demonstrate a clear thematic alignment with EIT themes and KIC specific focus areas. With a view to ensure strategic impact at larger scale, they explicitly refer to relevant regional innovation plans, including the Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) designed to boost regional innovation in order to achieve economic growth and prosperity by enabling regions to focus on their strengths.

Voluntary and autonomous implementation by KICs

KICs implement the EIT RIS on a voluntary and autonomous basis. Implementation will be driven primarily by the co-location centres as hubs of the Knowledge Triangle integration.

Openness and transparency

EIT RIS partnerships will be selected by the KICs through open and transparent processes. Participation in the EIT RIS does not imply automatically a potential future partnership with a KIC, however, it does not impede it either. Strategic decisions on the widening (and/or deepening) of their partnership remain solely at the discretion of the KICs.

Countries eligible for participation in EIT RIS¹

The following 25 countries are currently eligible for participation:

- 1) Bulgaria
- 2) Croatia
- 3) Cyprus
- 4) Czech Republic
- 5) Estonia
- 6) Greece
- 7) Hungary
- 8) Italy
- 9) Latvia
- 10) Lithuania
- 11) Malta
- 12) Poland
- 13) Portugal
- 14) Slovakia
- 15) Slovenia
- 16) Spain
- 17) Romania
- 18) Albania
- 19) Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 20) Faroe Islands
- 21) Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- 22) Moldova
- 23) Montenegro
- 24) Serbia
- 25) Turkey

¹ As specified per EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) Implementation Guidance Note, Budapest 22 May 2015, Ref: 00263.EIT.2015.D.MK

Climate-KIC specific core selection criteria

Commitment to the Low Carbon Agenda

Must be able to demonstrate commitment to the low carbon agenda and can show clear low carbon priorities in its Structural and Investment Fund programme as well as regional innovation strategy, e.g. Regional Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) or equivalent.

Track record in innovation

Must be able to demonstrate a track record in low carbon sector innovation as well as the capacity to carry out activities across the entire innovation framework, working across the knowledge triangle (education, research, business).

Strong group of partners

Has a group of partners from across the knowledge triangle – universities, local authorities, companies and business intermediaries, research institutes, non-governmental organisations – who are keen and motivated to participate.

Capable intermediary organisation

Can identify an organisation which will act as the key intermediary with the host region. This organisation is in the position to commit and co-finance qualified resources to successfully manage the delivery of activities in the RIS region and promote the programme.

High-level political support

Must be able to demonstrate high-level political support at national and/or regional level. The support of policy-makers is strongly encouraged in order to strengthen synergies and complementarities at all governance levels.

Plans to use other sources of funding

Must outline plans to use “other sources of funding”, such as national and regional funding, including EU Structural Funds, pre-accession assistance monies and own resources, to participate in the EIT RIS and create synergies.

Application process and webinar

Please request your application kit from our RIS Programme Officer Julia Panny, julia.panny@climate-kic.org Depending on the number of expressions of interest received, we will schedule at least one webinar (Mid-May) as well as an information event in Brussels to give interested stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions. A recording of the webinar will be made available via the Climate-KIC website.

Applications close on **10 June 2016, 15:00 CET**.

Please get in touch if you have any questions concerning your application or the EIT RIS in general.

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W: <http://www.climate-kic.org/ris-apply>

Selection process, panel and timeline

We welcome applications from individual organisations or consortia (joint applications of several partners with one organisation acting as the lead partner are preferred), able to meet the eligibility criteria for the EIT RIS.

All complete and eligible applications received before **10 June 2016, 15:00 CET** will be assessed against the Climate-KIC core selection criteria. The threshold to pass the first assessment round is set at 70 points. The minimal score that has to be achieved per criterion may not be less than 5.

The following table illustrates the maximal scores that can be achieved in each of the core criteria.

Criterion	Max. score
Commitment to the low carbon agenda and alignment with smart specialisation goals	15
Track record in innovation	15
Strong group of partners across the knowledge triangle keen to participate	15
Capable intermediary organisation identified	15
Able to demonstrate high level of political support	15
Plans to use other sources of funding	15
General fit with Climate-KIC's themes and geographies	10
	100

The selection panel will be composed of representatives of Climate-KIC's geographies and themes as well as independent experts.

After this first round of assessments, Climate-KIC will schedule bilateral calls/meetings with the candidates whose applications were scored with 70 or more points to further discuss their applications and answer any outstanding questions. The four most qualified candidates will be selected to participate in the EIT RIS.

Time	Action
10 June 2016	Call closes
10-30 June	1st assessment round (based on the written applications)
1-15 July	2nd assessment round (interviews)

15-31 July	Communication of selection results
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The results of the selection will be communicated to all applicants no later than **31 July 2016**. The selected participants for the outreach programme will receive confirmation in writing.

The assessment sheets to evaluate the individual applications will be provided to the applicants upon request.

Types of activities under the EIT RIS

Activities undertaken as part of the EIT RIS ensure the flow of both knowledge and people between KICs and selected partnerships with a view to enhance the regional innovation capacity by fostering the integration of the Knowledge Triangle. EIT RIS activities are an integral part of the KICs' operations. They are designed by KICs in a fit-for-purpose way taking into account their own specificities, overall strategy and portfolio in order to optimise the potential benefits and impact for both the participants and the KICs themselves.

The EIT RIS will fund structured mobility actions to ensure that talent – students, researchers, teaching staff and entrepreneurs of any age and gender and at all career levels and across disciplines – beyond the KICs have the opportunity to get involved in and learn from the KIC activities.

In the past activities, Climate-KIC RIS activities have included workshops, knowledge exchange visits, professional education courses, fact finding missions, etc.

Activities in the future will be based on the Climate-KIC innovation framework (see illustration below) and will take place both at the regional level (focused on education, ideation and acceleration) and inter-regional level (focused on demonstration and scaling).

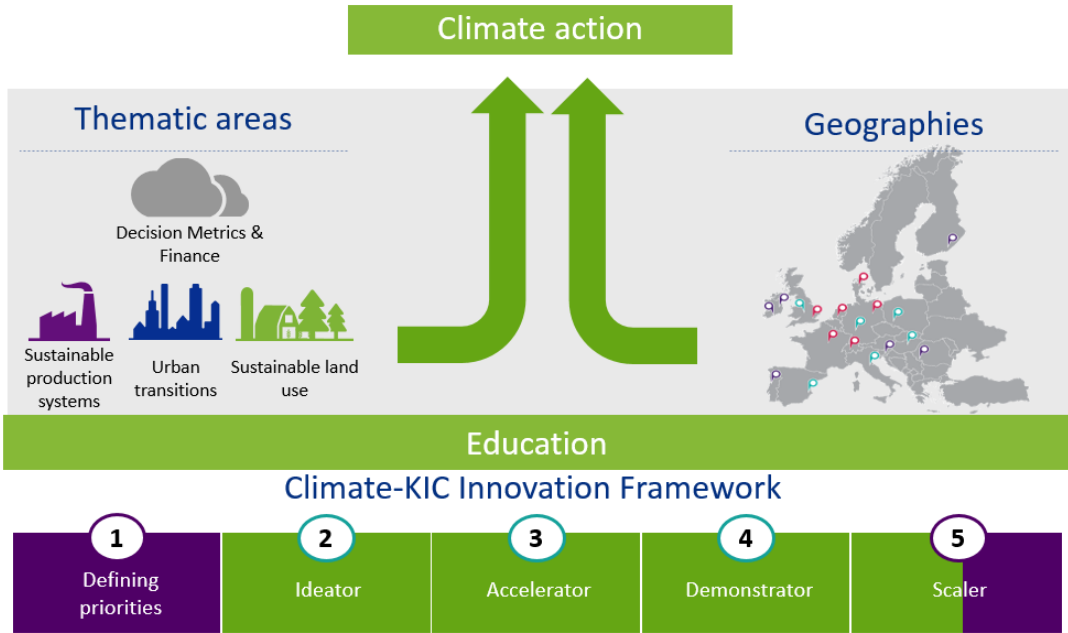


Figure 3 How we deliver impact

Funding under the EIT RIS

The EIT RIS is not merely a funding/granting scheme. The primary sources of funding for the RIS will be from non-EIT sources (national funding, structural funds, participants' own resources, etc.). The EIT RIS funds specific mobility actions to ensure that talent beyond the KICs (students, researchers, teaching staff and entrepreneurs of any age and gender and at all career levels and across disciplines) have the opportunity to get involved in and learn from the KIC activities. In 2016, the maximum budgeted amount per new EIT RIS region is € 280,000 (EIT contribution, maximum grant per EIT RIS region) to support activities across the innovation framework. The exact amount of funding will be determined after the selection process. For the year 2016, the work must be carried out, and the results must be delivered, until December 2016.

Synergies and complementarities with other EU, national, regional innovation initiatives and funding sources are encouraged.

Framework for Collaboration

Through the EIT RIS, Climate-KIC is looking to expand its geographical reach and bring in committed partners to join our [community](#). Climate-KIC intends to enter into partnership agreements with the selected EIT RIS partners, to be renewed on an annual basis.

In return for the partnership fee, the partner will have access to a range of benefits and services. Becoming a Climate-KIC partner will not only enable you to benefit from funding under the EIT RIS, but will also grant you all the benefits of getting involved in our community:

- Membership of a long-term community which is transforming climate change ideas into commercial success. We bring together the most influential and commercially minded players in the climate change space
- Attractive returns on investment through open innovation
- More influence in the climate change field by working alongside the brightest academic minds and commercial entrepreneurs
- Being part of a network which not only effectively combats climate change but also generates prosperity across Europe with global impact

Benefits of the EIT RIS

Selected EIT RIS partnerships and their regions benefit from the exchange of knowledge and good practice capitalising on their strengths, accelerating their innovation output, boosting regional innovation, and thus contributing to economic growth and prosperity. As main innovation actors in the regions, their participation in the EIT RIS will strengthen the regional innovation eco-system and output.

Based on the principle that people are and/or act as carriers of knowledge, participants from diverse backgrounds will be able to apply the knowledge, expertise and entrepreneurial mind-set gained through this stimulus scheme in the KICs. Upon return they will benefit not only their institutions but

also the way in which innovation is approached in their areas of origin. Moreover, they may act as multipliers by sharing the insights gained and the tangible benefits of the scheme with the selected partnership and beyond.

By collaborating with excellent partnerships from across Europe's regions, KICs benefit from an influx of talent and ideas which add value to their activities and amplify their impact in spurring innovation. Selected partnerships may act as test beds for the EIT and its KICs with a view to explore how Knowledge Triangle governance and activities could be replicated in and how lessons learnt and emerging good practices can be transferred successfully to a multitude of environments.

Synergies and complementarities

The EIT RIS will create synergies and complementarities with other EU, national, regional innovation initiatives and funding. There are opportunities for mutually reinforcing interaction with the EU's Cohesion Policy by addressing the links between the local and global aspects of innovation. KIC Co-location Centres are well positioned to capitalise on various funding schemes from their respective regions. The Co-location Centres offer platforms for cross-border collaboration playing a major role in strengthening the local-global connectivity of the KIC as a whole, including through close co-operation with regional authorities, in particular those involved in designing and delivering the Regional Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3).

Relation between the EIT RIS and Smart Specialisation Strategies

The EIT RIS has been conceptualised in a way that allows for synergies and efficiency gains for regions that have been designing Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) and are looking for a better integration of the Knowledge Triangle as a driver on enhanced innovation capacity at regional level. The identification of relevant funding instruments, in particular the use of EU Structural Funds for participating in the EIT RIS is strongly encouraged and supported by policy makers in order to strengthen synergies and complementarities at all governance levels.