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Expression of Interest for Business & Commercial Co-founders in TeamUp

EIT Food / Expression of Interest for Business Co-founders in Seedbed TeamUp
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EIT FOOD

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Expressions of Interest

This is an invitation to submit your Expression of Interest (EOIs) to become part of the Seedbed TeamUp Venture Building programme.

We are looking for talented and ambitious individuals with strong business and entrepreneurship knowledge and experience who want to build a new startup that will help transform the European food and agriculture system.

Individuals chosen through this EOI will be invited to join a 6-week online matchmaking programme to help them find an ambitious and motivated co-founder currently working on an innovation in relevant fields of science, technology, research or engineering applied to the agriculture and food system.

These co-founders will be guided through a process of co-founder matching, team-creation and opportunity exploration in a series of workshops. The result is a Project Proposal which the teams will present to a panel of independent/external experts at the end of the 6-week Matchmaking phase.

The panel will select up to 15 of these teams to continue into the next phase of the programme: Exploration

During this 12-week Exploration phase each team will receive a stipend of 6,000 EUR to further develop their idea through customer development interviews, tech exploration and market validation activities. They will also receive training to help them develop the skills needed to succeed plus intensive one-to-one coaching by experts in business and technology in the food and agriculture sector.

At the end of the Exploration phase the project teams pitch their business proposal to a panel of independent experts. The panel will select 4 projects to receive prizes of 40,000, 25,000, 15,000 and 10,000 EUR to launch their businesses.

Who Can Apply?

We welcome Expressions of Interest from individuals who are experienced in business and entrepreneurship and have the ability to navigate the journey to build an agrifood startup. (Examples include sales and marketing, market research, business development, digital marketing, business model development, finance and fund raising and business strategy).

You should demonstrate how you can lead the business and commercial aspects of creating an innovative agrifood technology or solution with potential for creating impact that is aligned to EIT Food Missions and Themes.

You should demonstrate strong motivation, evidence of a collaborative mindset and past success in forming and collaborating in high-performing multi-disciplinary teams. You must have good proficiency in English: writing, speaking, presenting and pitching. The entire programme is delivered in English.

You must have sufficient time available to commit at least 10 hours of work per week to this programme from the end of May until mid-November 2026. During this time you also need to attend at least one online meeting or workshop of approximately 2-3 hours per week. Usually these are scheduled on weekdays between the hours of 16:00 and 21:00 CET.

What will you gain

If you are selected you will receive access to our online matchmaking platform and a series of events and activities over 6 weeks in which you will meet and get to know potential co-founders. The aim is to help you find a partner with complementary skills and a well-matched personality and working style.

You will have opportunities to present yourself and your ideas to other co-founders and to the experts running TeamUp. You will also participate in activities to help you evaluate your own skills and aptitude and to understand better what type of co-founder could work for you.

If you are successful in finding a match you will prepare a proposal together that will be evaluated at the end of Matchmaking. If successful you and your co-founder will be invited to join the second phase, where we will provide you with a small stipend of 3,000 EUR each to work on your project over the next 12 weeks.

In the final stage, projects are evaluated by our panel of experts and 4 will be selected for prizes.

How will your Expression of Interest be evaluated?

Your EOI will be evaluated on:

- your passion and motivation to lead an impactful agrifood startup
- your business and commercial experience and expertise
- your relevant agrifood experience and expertise
- your ability to collaborate to build a startup with a co-founder
- your knowledge and understanding of how startups can contribute to EIT Food Missions or Themes

Timeline

- Thursday 7th May 2026: Applications for Expression of Interest open
- Friday 18th May 2026 at 16:00 CEST: Info webinar for interested applicants. [Register here](#)
- Thursday 28th May at 13:00 CET Applications closed
- Monday 8th - Wednesday 10th June 2026: Invitations sent to selected applicants
- Monday 15th June 2026: Seedbed TeamUp Kickoff
- Tuesday 28th July 2026: Matchmaking phase ends

How to Apply

Submit your completed application form via the myeitfood.eu site. Please avoid using LLMs to complete this application – we want to hear about you in your own words.

Ensure your proposal includes a clear, concise description of your experience, suitability and motivation to create an impactful agrifood startup. Also include your CV.

More information about Seedbed TeamUp, including examples of past projects can be found on our website: <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/teamup>

Have questions? Email us at: teamup@eitfood.eu with Subject: Tech Co-founders

Funding and collaboration principles

To ensure transparency and fair resource use, applicants will be asked to disclose any other funding received for previous or related projects. This helps us understand the full picture, even if there is overlap.

All selected individuals will sign an Agreement with EIT Food, outlining the terms of engagement for developing and delivering their project. All IP rights to your work remain the property of the co-founders. You will need to negotiate with your co-founder to agree shareholder rights and share allocations. The prizes awarded to the 4 selected projects at the end of Seedbed TeamUp are provided as a SAFE instrument.

Annex 1 – Detailed information about Seedbed TeamUp

This programme includes two Calls for Expressions of Interest:

1. Call for Business & Commercial Co-founders (this one)
2. Call for Technical Co-founders, which can be found [here](#)

Recruiting Science & Technology Co-founders to Seedbed TeamUp

This EIT Food Request for Business & Commercial Co-founders has the objective of recruiting participants to join the Seedbed TeamUp venture building programme.

TeamUp is a programme that matches technologists with entrepreneurial business professionals and supports them through a structured, six-month journey to co-create food and agriculture startups. The programme is delivered fully online and combines selection, matchmaking, training, coaching, mentoring, networking and financial support.

Description of the Activity

Stage 1: Application

Open call for individuals to express their interest in joining TeamUp. Individual applications are evaluated on eligibility and selection criteria.

Stage 2: Matchmaking

Selected applicants are invited to join a Matchmaking programme. They participate in structured matchmaking activities, including pitching, compatibility analysis, psychometric self-reflection, peer feedback and one-to-one interviews.

The objective is to form balanced founding teams composed of at least one tech co-founder and one business co-founder. At the end of this process, teams submit an application to join the main programme which takes place over the next three months and provides a small stipend to successful teams.

Stage 3: Exploration

Selected teams undertake a three-month exploration phase equivalent to a demanding part-time commitment. Activities include team building, leadership development, business skills training, value proposition and business model validation, and intensive coaching.

Stage 4: Graduation

Teams are evaluated during Pitching Days and the highest-scoring teams are awarded SAFE investment prizes. Winning teams receive additional coaching and are expected to formalise their startup.

Programme timeline:

- Completion of matchmaking and team formation (end of July 2026)
- Submission of exploration stage assignments (Sept 7th, Sept 28th, Octo 27th)
- Participation in Pitching Days (Nov 4th & Nov 5th)
- Final evaluation and graduation outcomes (Nov 16th)

Description of Role & Profile

Role

Participants who are accepted into TeamUp begin as individual applicants. If they successfully match with another co-founder they then operate within newly formed startup project teams. Participants are expected to:

- Actively engage in matchmaking and team formation
- Commit sufficient time during the exploration stage
- Collaboratively develop and validate an agrifood startup concept
- Agree the basis for their future collaboration as co-founders
- Participate in training, coaching and evaluation activities

Profile

Technologist applicants must present an innovative agrifood technology or solution with potential impact aligned to EIT Food Missions. They should demonstrate advanced knowledge of some aspects of food and/or agriculture or a relevant discipline that can be applied to agrifood.

All applicants must demonstrate strong motivation, collaborative mindset and good proficiency in English. They must have sufficient time available to commit at least 10 hours of work per week to this programme from the end of May until mid-November 2026. During this time participants also need to attend at least one online meeting or workshop per week of approximately 2-3 hours. Usually these are scheduled on weekdays between the hours of 16:00 and 21:00 CET.

Funding

Individual participants who are selected for the second stage of the programme will receive a stipend of 3,000 EUR as a subgrant.

After the final Pitching Days, the top four projects co-designed by technologists and business professionals will be awarded prizes.

First prize:	40,000 EUR
Second prize:	25,000 EUR
Third prize:	15,000 EUR
Fourth prize:	10,000 EUR

Winners must register a legal entity to receive the prize. The prize will be awarded to the created entity.

The project runs from June 2026 to January 2027.

There is a 6 million EUR limit per participants from Member States of the European Union (EU) and from [Horizon Europe Associate Countries](#) for the whole 3-year Grant Agreement. Legal entities from non- Horizon Europe Associate countries can participate in consortia but are limited to funding of 60 000 over 3 years for a Grant Agreement. This funding is implemented under GA 101269771. In those limits are included all the EIT Funding awarded to an organization across all the activities and prizes for the 3-year grant agreement.

The Subgrant is based on pre-fixed lump sum and value for money. All costs, including co-funding, need to comply with Horizon Europe regulations regarding the eligibility of expenses. Please refer to Article 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and the [Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#).

Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party.

The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed in instalments. It is conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverables mentioned below. Each deliverable is associated with proportional cost allocation and deduction rate. In cases where deliverables are not completed or only partially fulfilled, a deduction will be applied up to the amount associated with the incomplete deliverable.

Deliverable:

- Part 1: Business Model (End of Month 1)
- Part 2: Customer Interview Transcripts (End of Month 2)
- Part 3: Attendance sheet from Coaching Sessions (End of Month 3)

All parts must be completed for deliverables to be deemed fulfilled (End of Month 3).

The lump sum is intended to support a broad set of activities aligned with Horizon Europe and EIT Food priorities. It should cover the following costs:

- Subsistence for core team members (e.g. founders, technical or commercial leads) engaged in product development, commercialization, and investor readiness.
- External experts (e.g. legal, regulatory, or IP), outsourced product development, software tools, fundraising support, and other operational services that drive business growth.
- Business support: Coaching, mentoring and advisory support
- Travel: In-person attendance at critical meetings with partners, investors, and pilot collaborators within Europe.

Annex 2 – Eligibility

Please Note:

1. Failing any of the above call specific criteria will make your application ineligible. If an applicant is ineligible, the participant will be informed.

2. [According to EU policies and measures](#), Russian and Belarus entities will not be authorised to participate in any new grant under the EU Research and Innovation programmes. This ban applies not only to their potential participation as beneficiaries, but to their potential participation in any kind of role: beneficiaries, linked third parties/affiliated entities, subcontractors, in-kind contributors, international partners/associated partners, and third parties receiving financial support. Find the full statement from the European Commission [here](#).

3. Pursuant to Article 2 (2) of the [Decision 2022/2506](#) of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary *where the Commission implements the Union budget in direct or indirect management pursuant to of Article 62(1) points (a) and (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, no legal commitments shall be entered into with any public interest trust established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust*. This prohibition applies to financial support to third parties (sub-grants and prizes), hence the proposal of any entity or group of entities where a Participant is included in the list of public interest trusts shall be considered as not eligible.

4. Applicants will be deemed ineligible if:

a. bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business Activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

b. it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the organisation is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

c. it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the organisation is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the organisation belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence;

d. is found to be attempting to influence the decision-making process of the call during the process;

e. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon its undue advantages in the call process;

f. it has been established by a final judgment that the organisation is guilty of fraud, corruption or money laundering.