

CALL FOR PROPOSAL

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR SYSTEMS INNOVATION

Overview

Programme

Orchestrated Innovation Ecosystems

Date Published

13/09/17

Project Type

Cross-European

Closing Date for Applications

03/11/2017

Anticipated Project Start Date

1st Quarter 2018

Who should apply

This is open to Climate-KIC Core or Affiliate partners. If you are interested in joining our partner network, please contact one of our local Climate-KIC offices. To maximise alignment with this new programme area for Climate-KIC, we strongly encourage any prospective applicants to enter into a dialogue with Climate-KIC Team members at the earliest opportunity.

What we are looking for

We are specifically looking for initiatives that help build connections between cities, regions and networks on a cross-European basis, and are focused on building the capacity for genuinely transformative innovation at a systems level. We also believe that one successful outcome of such initiatives will be to strengthen our innovation pipeline for early stage and later stage innovation projects, where these are more focused on systems change aligned with our 2030 Impact Goals.

Proposals will likely involve a range of skills development activities, knowledge sharing, partnership approaches, co-ordination across different domains and stakeholder groups and cross-country learning processes and exchange.

Application Details

- Download [Project Proposal Form](#) | [2017 Thematic Priorities](#)
- Submit completed applications via email to applications@climate-kic.org
- A webinar to provide further information on this call will be held on Monday 18th September 2017 at 15.00 (CET). [Click here to register for the webinar](#).
- A letter will be sent to applicant within four to eight weeks from the closing date to inform you of programme board's decision on the proposal.
- For further information, please contact your local Climate-KIC office.

1 Background

During 2017, Climate-KIC initiated a ‘theory of change’ process to improve its understanding of how innovation can help trigger transformational climate action. One conclusion is that innovation needs to be at the systems level, involving influencing drivers of change that span policy, regulation, technology, markets, finance and behaviour among others.

Consequently, in the 2018 Climate-KIC Business Plan, there is a stronger focus on systems innovation for transformation. In this Plan, Area 1 focuses on building the place-based capacity for systems innovation as a way of stimulating the kinds of innovation projects and relationships that can lead to impact in line with tackling climate change at the scale and speed required. Such an approach to innovation is closely aligned to the type of innovation that the EIT and the European Union is seeking to pursue. In its position paper on ‘The Future EIT and its Role in the European Innovation Landscape’ (May 2017), the EIT set as its first objective “to strengthen sustainable innovation ecosystems by connecting people, disciplines, sectors, organisations and resources.”

For more than two decades the European Commission and Member States have been developing their thinking and approach to innovation. Increasingly commentators and architects of the European approach to innovation have shifted away from innovation as a linear process driven by the science lab, to a new “broad-based” approach recognising that the ability of society to develop new solutions needs a wide partnership of actors. This broader innovation model takes many forms, such as novel advances in organisations, services and business models; is not limited to new products; and increasingly recognises the distinctive role of place within an evolving system of multi-level governance. The report of Pascal Lamy’s High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU research and innovation programmes highlights the growing role of cities and regions as key players able to “act as innovation laboratories of change in piloting new ideas and concepts.” Major opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation have to be undertaken in place-based systems such as transport, waste and buildings and requires new initiatives.

The 2018 Business Plan reflects this thinking, by:

- Focusing attention on efforts to turn places and networks into hot spots of system-wide innovation for transformative climate action.
- Emphasising action towards 2030 Impact Goals for the Climate-KIC community that have a strong place-based dimension (see Annex A)

With this call for proposals, we are specifically looking for initiatives that help build connections between cities, regions and networks on a cross-European basis, and are focused on building the capacity for genuinely transformative innovation at a systems level. We also believe that one successful outcome of such initiatives will be to strengthen our innovation pipeline for early stage and later stage innovation projects, where these are more focused on systems change aligned with our 2030 Impact Goals (see Annex A).

Proposals will likely involve a range of skills development activities, knowledge sharing, partnership approaches, co-ordination across different domains and stakeholder groups and cross-country learning processes and exchange.

While we expect proposals to detail how they will help achieve Climate-KIC's 2030 impact goals, further thoughts on prioritisation on a theme-by-theme basis is as follows:

- In the past two years, the *Sustainable Production Systems* theme has been developing a network of eco-clusters based on existing EU industrial networks and clusters. The theme has built connections with 30 EU eco-clusters, performed initial stakeholder mapping, market analysis and customer profiling. Our expectation is that proposals in this area should ideally build upon this work, aiming to establish Climate-KIC as a trusted intermediary for accelerating innovation in Circular Economy specifically for high-emission material systems (e.g. steel, aluminium, plastics and chemicals, cement) and innovation contributing to deep decarbonization of carbon intensive regions (e.g. areas with strong presence of coal, fossil fuel, chemical, cement and steel industries).
- The *Urban Transitions* theme is working with some of the most ambitious districts in Europe and is looking to expand its engagement and collaboration with other cities, funders and other urban stakeholders such as large portfolio owners in areas such as mobility, nature-based resilience solutions and decentralised energy systems and deep retrofit.
- The *Sustainable Land Use* theme is seeking to develop place-based capacities to deliver climate smart agriculture, reimagining of food value chains and improved forest management approaches in the context of integrated landscape approach.
- The *Decision Metrics and Finance* Theme has been working on the initial steps to connect European financial centres with ambitions to become hotbeds of responsible/sustainable investment and centres of best practice and learning.

Proposals will involve multiple stakeholders, each committed to promoting transformational change. The goal is to build stronger, connected and orchestrated innovation ecosystems to support the ambitions of the Climate-KIC community and in a way that reflects the geographical diversity of Climate-KIC's partnership across Europe. More information to support the background and context of the call is given in Annex A.

2 Call Details

Successful proposals will:

- Bring together partnerships of city or regional innovation clusters/networks across a minimum of three European countries, where these are focused on common climate change-related ambitions/challenges. We are particularly keen to support partnerships with a good geographical spread reaching into Southern and/or Eastern Europe.
- Demonstrate how connections will be developed and sustained between locations within and across the participating countries (e.g. through learning platforms, professional mobility, exchanges etc).
- Assemble a consortium of key stakeholders focused on achieving system-wide change in line with Climate-KIC's 2030 Impact Goals.
- Be transformative in their ambition.
- Be longer-term partnerships of between 12-36 months.
- Include a strict minimum of 50% (EIT eligible) co-funding of the EIT sum requested.
- Envisage how the Climate-KIC Team will engage, contribute to and benefit from the activities planned.
- Detail how annual outputs from the initiative will contribute to indicators as follows:
 - # of project-based innovation collaborations involving at least two different domain stakeholders (e.g. *academia + public, or private + academia*) across national boundaries.
 - # of project applications for funding applied for from private and public bodies (from sub-national, national, supranational sources)
 - # of knowledge services (e.g. toolkits, guides, training packages) created to share learning within or between innovation ecosystems.
 - # of expert advice services related to socio-technical assessments on regional settings, dynamics of industrial systems and low carbon scenarios.
 - # of exchanges of human capacity between organisations from different domains (e.g. *professional mobility programmes*).

In 2018, we have allotted €2.25 million to this activity and expect to retain similar allocations in 2019 and 2020. We envisage supporting between three and five pan-European projects, addressing the criteria outlined above.

This programme is distinct from calls within Earlier Stage Innovation, which focus on smaller-scale, short-term actions of no more than one year, or from Later Stage Innovation Projects (such as Demonstrators or Scalars).

Further examples of different proposal elements are as follows:

- Those focused on testing how climate innovation clusters can be developed in a variety of regulatory or economic settings.
- Those exploring different pathways for transformational change on mobility, energy systems or food value chains for example, where co-creation and learning happens between cities or regions.

- Those developing practitioner exchange programmes, helping to facilitate cross-fertilisation and strengthen capacities.
- Those directly contributing to systems innovation policy agendas on climate change, whether with nation states or at the EU level.
- Those helping to promote the development of new knowledge and training materials to help build the capacity for transformational climate action at the systems level.
- Those specifically considering how climate action can help to strengthen local economies and accelerate local innovation hotbeds.
- Those contributing to Climate-KIC's remit to diversify its sources of funding, for example by helping to lever in resources from EU agencies, national governments, or foundations.

3 Proposal Submission

Proposals can be submitted at any time from the launch of the call to the closing date detailed on the Climate-KIC website. We recommend that you liaise with your local Climate-KIC lead prior to submitting an application for support and guidance to complete your application. All proposals must be submitted in both PDF and Word format to applications@climate-kic.org.

Note: No extensions will be granted under any circumstances. Any changes to the proposal requested by the applicant after submission will not be allowed.

Climate-KIC has a responsibility to ensure that any public funding it provides is used for its approved purposes and that, when an organisation receives funding, it is used appropriately. The information that is requested (and listed below) is required to verify that projects are set up and planned effectively by the organisation(s) receiving funding.

Please ensure that all the information requested in the Proposal Form is provided. Without the availability of the relevant information, the application will not be progressed.

3.1 Avoiding duplicate funding

If applicants are knowingly involved in any EU funded project (of a similar nature to your proposal) that is currently underway or pending approval, then details should be provided. Especially in instances that involve shared resources or shared outputs. e.g. same person working, similar outputs, using same equipment etc.) For further guidance, please contact your local Climate-KIC Lead.

Resources requested should be described in sufficient detail for the reviewers to identify what is required for different aspects of the work. If costs are not sufficiently clear and well justified the board may cut costs before awarding the grant, or award a lesser amount.

3.2 Deadline dates

Proposals must be submitted by the advertised closing date.

3.3 Guidance on resubmissions

Resubmissions will only be considered where applicants have been invited by Climate-KIC to do so. The resubmitted proposal must acknowledge the initial submission, detailing modifications which merit re-consideration. All proposals are checked in a review administration process to identify uninvited resubmissions.

3.4 Conflict of interest

Conflicts of interest should be declared by applicants before submitting proposals. Interests declared will be scrutinised by non-conflicted Climate-KIC staff and drawn to the attention of members of the decision-making board on funding (such members themselves should also not be subject to a conflict).

Climate-KIC Terms and Conditions include a requirement for organisations to have effective processes in place to manage conflicts of interest. If new conflicts arise once an award has been made these should be declared and managed using the organisation’s and Climate-KIC’s established processes.

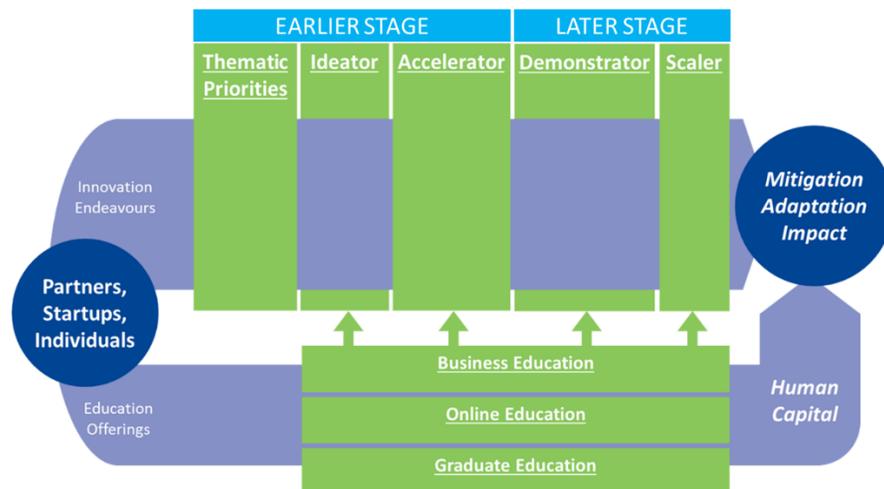
4 Proposal Assessment

Introduction

Climate-KIC defines innovation as:

The application of new ideas to solve a valued need

The Climate-KIC Innovation Framework was created to support our Partners in the pursuit of climate-relevant innovation. It encompasses our entire implementation approach, integrating and packaging how Climate-KIC supported activities deliver climate mitigation and adaptation impact.



Each of the programmes in the Innovation Framework focuses on different dimensions of innovation progress:

- Thematic Priorities – Identify the challenges and market need for climate relevant innovation.
- Ideator – Through refining ideas and understanding markets, identify the Innovation Opportunities that can be exploited. An Innovation Opportunity is where both the discovery underpinning the idea and the market need have been clearly identified.
- Accelerator – Identify how would Innovation Opportunities exist and sustain themselves – their potential business model.
- Demonstrator – Proving the innovation and its ability to sustain itself.
- Scaler – Scaling the innovation to deliver material climate mitigation and adaptation impact.

Every proposal will be assessed in the context of the Climate-KIC programme it is within and how it contributes to the Thematic Priorities of one or more of the Climate-KIC Themes:

- Urban Transitions
- Sustainable Land Use
- Sustainable Production Systems
- Decision Metrics and Finance
- Education

The success of projects depends on whether the project was the ‘right’ initiative to implement in the first place and contributes to Climate-KIC’s objectives. The objective of the assessment is to ensure that the innovation proposal is in the context of the defined strategic objectives, that there is a rationale for undertaking the project, and that the projected costs and timelines are justified.

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Proposals will be assessed in the context of the relevant programme. Assessments will be carried out on a proposal if:

- It is submitted via an electronic submission means, i.e. mail address: applications@climate-kic.org and before the deadline. No extensions will be granted under any circumstances.
- It is legible, accessible and printable.
- It fulfils Programmes specific conditions as shown in table below.
- All information required is provided. This includes requested data, supporting documents specified in the call and use of an correct template.

No changes to proposals after the submission deadline will be accepted.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Maximum duration	Between 12 to 36 months
Maximum EIT funding request	We expect bids to be within a range of €500,000 - €1M (Five Hundred Thousand to One Million Euros) per annum including co-funding, although we are able to be flexible for exceptional applications.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Co-funding (Co-funding will influence the decision making)	Total declared co-funding is at least 50% of the EIT grant requested.
Other specific to the Programme	N/A
European added value	Successful proposals will bring together partnerships of city or regional innovation clusters/networks across a minimum of three European countries.
Partner Status	<p>Only Climate-KIC partners are eligible to submit project proposals and to receive EIT funding for these projects. Non-Climate-KIC partners are not subject to EIT funding, however in specific circumstances they may participate in Climate-KIC projects in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) A Non-Climate-KIC partner, interested in becoming one, has been declared strategically important by a Geography and/or Theme. ii) A Non-Climate-KIC partner is crucial for the project, but has not been declared strategically important by a Geography and/or Theme. Sub-contracting options can in this case be explored together with the local Climate-KIC Lead. iii) A Non-Climate-KIC partner is part of a stakeholder partnership; intends to participate in the project; and doesn't make any direct request for Climate-KIC funds.

Notes

- All application documents should be written in English. Exceptions can be made for supporting documents, such as Letter of Intent, which could be written in one of the official languages spoken in the country the application is submitted. In order to be assessed by all reviewers, you may choose to provide a short summary in English. Climate-KIC reserves the right to request for a translation at any time.
- Co-funding minimum levels are applied at the project level (not individual partner level, example a consortium may not insist on co-funding from some partners) At project reporting stage partners are to claim EIT funding and report on co-funding as normal. At reimbursement stage by Climate KIC, EIT claim amounts will be adjusted if partners do not meet the minimum co-funding levels specified.

4.2 Quality Assessment

Climate-KIC will use the following criteria in assessing the Innovation Ecosystem proposal:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Challenge addressed or identified	<p>The proposal should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey clearly the challenge it is seeking to address and why this is important for Climate KIC. • Have relevance to a variety of regulatory, climatic and economic settings and therefore should have both a good geographical spread and bring together a range of relevant stakeholders across a range of domains.
Innovation potential	<p>The proposal should indicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how it will generate innovation cross-fertilisation at the pan-European level; • how it will test models in a variety of settings and develop transition pathways in its identified area of interest • how it will translate these activities into new knowledge and training materials and policy insights for wider dissemination
Quality of the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan must explain at a high level how the Innovation Ecosystem objectives will be achieved. • A clear structure to the work, clearly defined milestones and deliverables for progress and outputs will be presented. • Plans should allow for flexibility, as projects may evolve during project implementation, due to their exploratory nature. • Consideration should be given to how the plan will consolidate and apply knowledge developed by the project.
Strategic fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic fit refers to how closely the proposal aligns with the current Climate KIC strategies outlined in the Business Plan. • Proposals will be assessed on the clarity with which they align.
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for Money will be judged on a number of factors, including: • How well the proposed activities are focused on an impactful project outcome. • How appropriate the scale of the activities is compared to the anticipated benefit/importance of the activities. • How well the partnership is suited to the activities described. • How many complementary activities outside the main project budget are leveraged to stimulate the innovation ecosystem.
Co-Funding	<p>The level of co-funding offered will influence the decision on a proposal.</p>
Climate relevance	<p>This criterion evaluates the climate relevance of the project in terms of climate change mitigation and/or climate change adaptation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change mitigation - Project has a clear focus on contributing to climate change mitigation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate change adaptation - Project has a clear focus on increasing adaptive capacity or creating climate resilience with clearly defined objectives and mechanisms.
Project outputs	The proposal should show clearly how it would contribute to the outputs indicated within the call details. The capacity to do so will influence the decision on the proposal.

Additional weight will be given in the assessment criteria to the sections on innovation potential and quality of the plan.

5 **Proposal Decision**

Following decisions on the proposals by the selection board, a Project Decision Letter will be sent to applicants outlining the panel's decision to either reject the proposal or accept the proposal to progress through to the next stage of the process. Depending on the project type, the Project Decision Letter could take up to eight weeks from date of submission.



6 Annex A: Supportive Material

This call is designed to build stronger innovation ecosystems across Climate KIC and its Themes and to reflect the geographical diversity of Climate KIC’s partnership across Europe. The urgency is clear. Preventing catastrophic climate change and achieving the ‘well below 2°C’ Paris agreement target requires a speed of de-carbonisation at least six times faster than anything the global community, has achieved to date. Time is running out and innovation for gradual, incremental changes will not be enough. Instead, we need a more fundamental transformation of economic, social and financial systems that will trigger exponential change in de-carbonisation rates. To illustrate this, rather than an economic model based on growth-consumption-obsolescence that continually exploits the planet’s resources, we need a circular economy where waste is feedstock, recycling rates are 100% and fossil carbon stays underground. In social systems, rather than large, centralised, polluting energy systems, we need to switch to local clean energy production and consumption including by peer-to-peer trading between households. For mobility, the shift has to be to cycling, walking, full electrification and clean mobility-as-a-service that may require changes in the way we live and work. Around financial systems, a focus on short-term returns must be replaced with patient capital designed to fully value the social and environmental benefits of investment; accompanied with a radical shift away from banking on the ‘stranded assets’ of the dying fossil economy. Our impact goals are set out below.

THEME	CLIMATE-KIC 2030 IMPACT GOALS (COMPARED WITH 2018 LEVELS)
Urban Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to deep cuts in energy consumption at a district level through tripling annual retrofit rates across Europe and enabling district scale energy production. • Contribute to the deployment of 20 new and retrofit nature-based urban infrastructure solutions for climate resilience. • Contribute to a three-fold emissions reduction resulting from a shift towards clean mobility-as-a-service in Europe
Sustainable Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to a tripling of application of innovative Climate-smart Agricultural solutions (CSA) in Europe. • Contribute to radical transformation of climate-damaging food value chains and significant improvement in the climate resilience of food supply. • Contribute to enhanced carbon sequestration by forests, reduced deforestation rate globally and carbon substitution in downstream value chains.
Sustainable Production Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to transformation of production of two major high-emissions materials (e.g. cement and plastics). • Contribute to five major energy intensive industry stakeholders globally having changed their approach, avoiding significant emissions. • Contribute to 2 major ‘fossil fuel’ regions having become zero carbon innovation regions that grow, even as dirty industries decline.

THEME	CLIMATE-KIC 2030 IMPACT GOALS (COMPARED WITH 2018 LEVELS)
Decision Metrics and Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to decision metrics, standards and targets compatible with the Paris Agreement, having been mainstreamed in corporate and financial investment decision-making. • Contribute to the ten-fold expansion of the global market for physical climate risk information. • Contribute to the closing of the funding gap to meet European climate and energy goals.

Climate-KIC’s Innovation Insights Series gives additional background reading. [Click here to view and download a copy.](#)