



Building engines of innovation: new EIT call launched to boost innovation in Higher Education

18 November 2021 – Budapest, Hungary – The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is pleased to announce the [EIT HEI Initiative's](#) new call for proposals supporting up to 40 consortia of higher education institutions (HEIs) and non-academic organisations with a maximum of EUR 1.2 million each. With the support of the EIT Community, Europe's largest innovation ecosystem, HEIs will design activities that will improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity at all levels becoming engines of innovation.

Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth said: 'Higher education institutions are at the heart of Europe's innovation and industrial ecosystems. The additional support offered by the EIT Community to boost the innovation capacity of higher education institutions across Europe is fully in line with the Commission's priorities. I look forward to seeing these priorities translated into concrete actions that will help achieve our objectives of supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators that will transform global challenges into opportunities for the future.'

Gioia Ghezzi, Chair of the EIT Governing Board added 'During Europe's recovery it is more important than ever that our Higher Education Institutions play an even stronger role in helping their students to become innovators and in turning research into concrete solutions. Boosting innovation capacity in Higher Education is a key priority for the EIT and we already work with hundreds of HEIs through our Knowledge and Innovation Communities. It is therefore only natural that we mobilised Europe's largest innovation ecosystem to make a systemic impact, improving entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of HEIs. This new call will increase the number of universities we support and will help us to deliver the innovations needed for a more sustainable future.'

The EIT HEI pilot initiative builds on the success of its first call launched earlier this year which saw close to 750 organisations from across Europe apply for support. As a result, the pilot awarded 24 projects involving 142 HEIs and 155 non-academic organisations (companies, research centres, public authorities and associations) a total of EUR 28.8 million of funding, mentorship, and access to the EIT's innovation ecosystem.

For the new call for proposals, up to 40 projects will be selected and awarded a maximum of EUR 1.2 million with up to EUR 300 000 for Phase 1 (July–December 2022) and up to EUR 900 000 for Phase 2 (January 2023 - July 2024). Activities can focus on several themes, including:

- fostering institutional engagement and change;
- strengthening partnerships between higher education, business and research organisations;
- developing innovation and business support services;
- enhancing the quality of entrepreneurial education;
- creating and disseminating knowledge.

The deadline for submitting proposals is **28 February 2022**. Full details and access to the application portal can be found at eit-hei.eu.

To present the EIT HEI Initiative's new call in more detail and answer applicants' questions a series of webinars will be held. The webinars will cover eligibility requirements, evaluation, administration, and guidance on how to define an Innovation Vision Action Plan. The available dates for the info sessions are:



- [7 December 2021, 14:00–15:15 CET \(register by 4 December 18:00 CET\)](#)
- [8 December 2021, 10:00–11:15 CET \(register by 5 December 18:00 CET\)](#)
- [10 December 2021, 13:30–14:45 CET \(register by 7 December 18:00 CET\)](#)

EIT - MAKING INNOVATION HAPPEN!

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

The EIT strengthens Europe's ability to innovate by powering solutions to pressing global challenges and by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT is an EU body and an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#), the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Institute supports dynamic pan-European partnerships, EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities, among leading companies, research labs and universities. Currently eight EIT Knowledge & Innovation Communities are supported: [EIT Climate-KIC](#), [EIT Digital](#), [EIT InnoEnergy](#), [EIT Health](#), [EIT RawMaterials](#), [EIT Food](#), [EIT Manufacturing & EIT Urban Mobility](#). Together with their leading partners, the EIT Community offers a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities across Europe: entrepreneurial education courses, business creation and acceleration services and innovation driven research projects.

The EIT is Europe's largest innovation ecosystem bringing together close to 3 000 partners from top business, research and education organisations across Europe in 200+ hubs. The EIT has powered more than 3 800 start-ups and scale-ups, created more than 1 400 new products and services that have gone to raise more than EUR 3.9 billion in external capital. Ventures supported by the EIT include unicorn Northvolt, the Swedish venture is producing the world's greenest battery with support from the EIT Community. More than 3 800 students have graduated from EIT labelled master and doctoral programmes and over 100 000 have participated in EIT Community entrepreneurial trainings. On 26 October, the EIT launched a Call for Proposals for a new EIT Knowledge & Innovation Community in the Cultural & Creative Sectors and Industries, EIT Culture & Creativity. The winning consortium for EIT Culture & Creativity is set to be designated in 2022.

THE EIT HEI INITIATIVE: INNOVATION CAPACITY BUILDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The EIT HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education is a joint EIT Community programme led by [EIT RawMaterials](#) – one of the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities. The initiative is a key objective for the EIT as part of its new strategy, the [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda \(SIA\) 2021-2027](#) and aims to support higher education institutions with expertise and coaching, access to the EIT innovation ecosystem, and funding, enabling them to develop innovation action plans contextualised to the needs of individual higher education institutions. In July 2021, 23 projects started their activities after the EIT HEI Initiative Pilot Call. By 2027, the EIT HEI Initiative aims to support 550 higher education institutions boosting European innovation in higher education and driving the twin transition towards a more sustainable, digital and competitive Europe.