



NEW EIT INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO BOOST INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Budapest, Hungary, 24 March 2021 - The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is launching the HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education – a new initiative to unlock the full innovation potential of higher education institutions’ (HEIs) by increasing their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity whilst integrating them into Europe’s largest innovation ecosystem.

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth said: *‘Higher Education Institutions play a key role in our society to nurture the talents of the future. Therefore, the new EIT Regulation contains a new pilot initiative focusing on the innovation and entrepreneurial potential of European HEIs. I am proud that today this new pilot initiative will kick off with the publication of a first call. The EIT will work with HEIs and their leadership to equip them with the right tools to support innovation across their campuses and beyond. I am looking forward to the results of this initiative that will give our universities an even larger role in Europe’s innovation landscape.’*

Gioia Ghezzi, Chair of the EIT Governing Board added: *‘Embedding higher education into the innovation ecosystem is a distinct EIT feature and I welcome the launch of this new initiative to strengthen our collaboration with HEIs. The EIT Community will now have the opportunity to engage with higher education at all levels to help boost their innovation capacity. I am confident that we will see the emergence of even stronger and more entrepreneurially equipped universities whose guidance and expertise will support Europe’s ability to innovate.’*

The initiative is a joint EIT Community activity coordinated by EIT Raw Materials. The Pilot Call for Proposals invites European higher education institutions to design institution-wide action plans that will improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity across all institutional levels. By supporting such activities, this new EIT initiative will create systemic impact, empowering HEIs to become regional engines of innovation and foster sustainable growth and jobs across Europe.

23 pilot projects will be selected and implemented over 24 months from July 2021. Each pilot project could be awarded a maximum of EUR 1.2 million with up to EUR 400 000 for Phase 1 (July–December 2021) and up to EUR 800,000 for Phase 2 (January 2022 - July 2023). 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 **25 May 2021**, and the selected pilot projects will be announced in June 2021. To learn more about this initiative and how to apply, visit eit-hei.eu and see factsheet.

The **HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education** is a key objective for the EIT as part of its new strategy, the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) 2021-2027. The initiative 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 complementing the needs of individual higher education institutions.



EIT - MAKING INNOVATION HAPPEN!

WHAT IS 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. 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.

EIT POWERS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The EIT's eight Knowledge and Innovation Communities work to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy ([EIT Climate-KIC](#)), drive Europe's digital transformation ([EIT Digital](#)), lead the global revolution in food innovation and production ([EIT Food](#)), give EU citizens greater opportunities to lead a healthy life ([EIT Health](#)), achieve a sustainable energy future for Europe ([EIT InnoEnergy](#)), strengthen the competitiveness of Europe's manufacturing industry ([EIT Manufacturing](#)), develop raw materials into a major strength for Europe ([EIT RawMaterials](#)), and solve the mobility challenges of our cities ([EIT Urban Mobility](#)).

In line with the EIT's new strategy for 2021 to 2027, a Call for a new [EIT Culture and Creativity](#) Knowledge and Innovation Community will be launched in November 2021.

EIT FACTS & FIGURES

- **Europe's largest innovation network:** 2 000+ partners from top business, research and education organisations across Europe in 60+ innovation hubs across Europe
- **Making innovation happen:** powered more than 3 100 start-ups and scale-ups, created more than 1 170 new products and services that have gone to raise more than EUR 3.3 billion in external capital. More than 3 100 students have graduated from EIT labelled master and doctoral programmes and over 10 000 have participated in EIT Community entrepreneurial trainings.



*figures August 2020