



Sofia, 29 September 2023

EIT Manufacturing DeepDive RIS Conference highlights innovative approaches to nurture talent in deep tech and foster entrepreneurial spirit in the manufacturing sector

The Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) Hubs Conference in Sofia on the 28th and 29th September showcased the development of Skills for Deep Tech in relation to the knowledge triangle, showing how to attract deep tech talents and develop their entrepreneurial mindset before reaching the market.

Sofia, 29th September 2023. [EIT Manufacturing](#), supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, successfully concluded the second edition of the RIS Hubs Conference. Over the course of two days, the DeepDive RIS Conference gathered around 80 attendees from various countries, coming together to build collaborations and share knowledge. Notable participants included representatives like **Prof. Dr. Georgi Angelov**, Vice Minister of Innovation and Growth, **Milen Obretenov**, Director of "Management of Territorial Cooperation" Directorate, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

How to enhance deep tech innovation through local and national synergies

The first day of the conference focused on how local and international stakeholders work to engage the local ecosystems in activities aimed at developing deep tech talents and skills, ultimately increasing the innovation capacities of RIS countries. The event started with an introduction by **Konstantinos Georgoulas**, and featured keynote speeches by **Prof. Dr. Georgi Angelov**, Vice Minister of Innovation and Growth, **Milen Obretenov**, Director of "Management of Territorial Cooperation" Directorate, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, **Milena Damyanova**, Director of Science Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science, **Smilen Valov**, Executive Director of the Employment Agency, and **Eva Atanassova**, Head of the Monitoring and Evaluation Section at the EIT - European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

"Fostering a robust ecosystem for deep tech innovation requires strategic collaborations and synergies at both local and national levels. This is exactly what the EIT Community, as Europe's largest innovation ecosystem, excels at. We are committed to equipping talents with the right skills to contribute to deep tech innovations that can solve some of our most pressing global challenges. Today's event shows the importance of collaboration to bring the manufacturing industry forward and nurture a generation of entrepreneurial deep tech innovators." - **Eva Atanassova**, Head of the Monitoring and Evaluation Section at the EIT - European Institute of Innovation and Technology

"The Ministry of Innovation and Growth is actively working towards the support of innovation in various manners. It concentrates not only on the provision of funding for development and deployment of new technologies, but also on the designation of dedicated financial instruments, targeting startups and SMEs in their green and digital transformation." - **Prof. Dr. Georgi Angelov**, Vice Minister of Innovation and Growth



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“The participation in this conference of high-level stakeholders from ministries and from the management of international corporates and SMEs shows the importance of deep tech and the key role that EIT Manufacturing can play in supporting the local ecosystems adapting to a new way of working and innovating. We are excited to continue working with local stakeholders to bring even more impact in these countries through all our initiatives and activities, and particularly with our RIS Programme.” - Dr. Konstantinos Georgoulas, Director of RIS & EU Affairs, EIT Manufacturing

The event continued with insightful panel discussions covering the three sides of the Knowledge Triangle: Business Creation, Education, and Innovation, which were moderated by EIT Manufacturing pillar directors.

“The high-level speakers that took part in the panel discussions highlighted the multifaced character of the discussion on deep tech. From the different methods to attract young talent to a STEM career, to how to become an entrepreneur in deep tech and reach the market, the panelists and our pillar directors gave the audience interesting perspectives on the way the EIT Manufacturing network is contributing to the future of the manufacturing industry.” – Loris Valero-Leconte, RIS Hubs Manager, EIT Manufacturing

“It is a great honour to host the EIT Manufacturing Hub Conference in Bulgaria this year. The event showcased the achievements of the EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs and gave a floor to the local businesses to present their promising deep tech solutions. The green and digital innovations are the backbone of the entrepreneurial development in the region and are put very high also in the agenda of the policy makers. We are triggered by the potential of the local innovation ecosystem and will continue to support it in the upcoming years in order to see more examples from the RIS countries reaching global markets.” – Mariyana Hamanova, Executive Director of Cleantech Bulgaria – Hub Manager of EIT Manufacturing.

The Metaverse: an additional tool to make the innovation happen

How will the metaverse impact the manufacturing industry future? This is the question that the speakers tried to answer in the afternoon panel discussion moderated by **Patricia Karrer**, EIT Manufacturing Project Manager and creator of the EIT Manufacturing RIS metaverse. The panelists dived deep into the different ways to approach this new technology and the ways it can bring value not only to young entrepreneurs but also to big companies. The participants also had the opportunities to explore the RIS metaverse with the help of VR glasses directly on the spot.

Building meaningful connections through matchmaking

The second day of the conference began with a panel discussion on ecosystem builders, highlighting their crucial role in nurturing innovation ecosystems. The event then continued with a showcase of EIT Manufacturing success stories coming from RIS countries: Thermoodit, Tamtech, Cupffee, LAM’ON and PSK Group that developed their innovations with the support of EIT Manufacturing. Closing the conference on a high, the participants had the opportunity to take part in a matchmaking session where they discussed project ideas for the EIT Manufacturing Call for Proposals, which is currently open. More than 20 1:1 meetings were set and took place alongside the conference.

Background information

About the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT):

The [EIT](#) is Europe's largest innovation ecosystem bringing together over 2 400 partners from top business, research and education organisations in 50 innovation hubs across Europe. The EIT is an EU body and an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#), the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Through dynamic pan-European partnerships, called Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) the EIT Community offers a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities, strengthening Europe's ability to innovate and powering solutions to pressing global challenges while nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe.

About EIT Manufacturing

[EIT Manufacturing](#) is one of the nine innovation communities supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. EIT Manufacturing's main goal is to bring European stakeholders focused on manufacturing together in innovation ecosystems that add unique value to European products, processes and services and inspire the creation of globally competitive and sustainable manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together more than 85 members (universities, research institutes and companies).

The [EIT Manufacturing Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\)](#) aims at widening participation as well as increasing the impact of EIT Manufacturing in EIT RIS countries. The EIT RIS has been designed as a two-way interaction scheme. By sharing its good practice related to Knowledge Triangle Integration and increasing its activities in EIT RIS eligible countries, EIT Manufacturing welcomes activities for further developing business skills, talent, cooperation opportunities in education, currently untapped entrepreneurial potential, accessing markets and business, customers for innovative ventures, innovation, knowledge, know-how and technology transfer possibilities, additional testbeds for applications of innovative solutions as well as supporting access to co-funding options provided by EU, regional and national support schemes.

EIT Manufacturing — Making Innovation Happen!

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