



Budapest, 3 December 2024

## Artificial intelligence as the driver of sustainable manufacturing in EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) countries

[EIT Manufacturing](#), supported by the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT), a body of the European Union, organised the third edition of its annual RIS Hubs Conference. As part of "The Next Decade of Innovations for the Future of Europe" conference, marking the tenth anniversary of the RIS, the event highlighted the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the sustainable manufacturing future.

The EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs Conference focused on the value of AI in harnessing green manufacturing in RIS countries for a sustainable future. Ten years ago, the [EIT RIS](#) initiative was designed to reduce Europe's regional innovation disparities.

On this occasion, the EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs Conference gathered over 100 attendees from 27 countries to foster collaborations and knowledge sharing. Notable participants included a keynote speaker **Dr Adam NAGY**, Deputy State Secretary for Industry Affairs, Ministry for National Economy of Hungary, along with representatives of the European innovation ecosystem coming from the EIT RIS regions, such as INESC TEC (Portugal), Tartu University (Estonia) and Cleantech Bulgaria.

### Enhancing deep tech innovation through local and national synergies

The conference explored how artificial intelligence can transform manufacturing processes making them more efficient, sustainable, and globally competitive, with a focus on RIS countries. The event kicked off with an introduction by **Dr Konstantinos GEORGOULIAS**, Senior Director of Corporate Affairs & Strategic Initiatives at EIT Manufacturing, followed by an opening speech from **Caroline VIAROUGE**, EIT Manufacturing CEO.

*"DeepDiveRIS 2024 serves as a call to leverage the power of AI in manufacturing to foster sustainability and innovation across Europe. EIT Manufacturing is committed to bringing together key players from RIS countries to accelerate green and digital transitions in the region, shaping a more inclusive and competitive future for European industry."* – reflected **Caroline VIAROUGE**, EIT Manufacturing CEO.

Discussions united around the vision of the future of manufacturing in RIS countries, based on inclusiveness, gender equality, training and skills for AI and green manufacturing. The speakers highlighted the role of policies as catalysts for strengthening regional innovation ecosystems, while collaboration between industry, research and academia was deemed essential for boosting AI-driven green manufacturing in RIS countries.

The EIT Manufacturing ecosystem is making significant strides towards the future of manufacturing in Europe and showcased successful projects that are already making an impact on the industry and among talent. Since 2020, EIT Manufacturing has allocated **an additional 10 million EUR** funds for business creation, innovation and education activities in RIS eligible countries. As a result, more than **14,000 pupils and teachers** were trained to ensure highly skilled future talent.

Through the RIS programmes, EIT Manufacturing has facilitated the creation of **32 startups**, bringing ideas to the market. Through funding, coaching and networking activities, **over 60 startups** and **SMEs** were supported, and **25 innovations** were brought to the commercialisation phase.



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*“EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs Conference showcased the innovation potential of EIT RIS countries and the key role they play in Europe’s twin transition. We are particularly proud of the success of our EIT Manufacturing RIS programme constantly overachieving its objectives, and bringing new ideas to market, and skilled people to shape the future of sustainable European manufacturing.”* - commented **Dr Konstantinos GEORGOULIAS**, Senior Director of Corporate Affairs & Strategic Initiatives at EIT Manufacturing.

## Celebrating success at the EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs Conference 2024

The Grand Final of the RIS LEADERS 2024 Competition, designed to support women leaders in the manufacturing sector was staged during the event. Over the past four years, over 120 women from EIT RIS countries have been actively involved in this initiative. **Selen ŞENAL**, PhD C., Founder, CEO and Biotechnologist at BioFlocean developed by Algbio, **Julia WILK**, neenCare CEO, and sharing the third place **Mariia ALIPATOVA**, CEO and Co-founder of Solar Optic, and **Šarlota KAŇUKOVÁ**, PhD, Co-founder and Scientist at Spicy Cells, secured the top three positions of this year’s edition and were awarded 10,000 EUR, 7,500 EUR, and 5,000 EUR.

*“As the 1st winner, I am deeply honoured to represent the incredible potential of women leaders in manufacturing. This award was achieved through our BioFlocean project, and it is a source of great pride for me to bring an innovative approach to algae-based bioplastic production through this initiative developed by my company. EIT has always felt like a family to me, returning to this community feels like coming home, and their unwavering support has been invaluable.”* - stated **Selen ŞENAL**, PhD C., Founder, CEO and Biotechnologist at BioFlocean developed by Algbio.

The conference concluded with an award presented by **Dr Konstantinos GEORGOULIAS** to [Iceberg Plus](#), the EIT Manufacturing RIS HUB in Romania, named the *“Best performing EIT RIS Hub 2023”*.

*“I am deeply honoured and grateful for this recognition, which reflects the hard work and dedication of the entire Iceberg Plus team. This award is proof of the power of collaboration and the shared commitment to driving innovation and growth through our RIS HUB. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our team, and to the EIT Manufacturing RIS team, respectively EIT Manufacturing South East team, for their support and collaboration. Together, we are making a lasting impact.”* - highlighted **Raluca LUCĂŢ**, Manager of Iceberg Plus, EIT Manufacturing RIS HUB Romania.

Recognised for its significant impact on innovation and regional development, Iceberg Plus, an innovation consulting and tech transfer company representing EIT Manufacturing in Romania since June 2020, demonstrated outstanding contributions in advancing the EIT RIS initiative and fostering collaboration within its ecosystem. This award underscores the vital role of innovation-driven partnerships in regional and international progress.

## Future prospects for the Regional Innovation Scheme

The EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs Conference 2024 delivered actionable insights and tangible outcomes for stakeholders in the manufacturing and innovation ecosystem from policy to inclusiveness by bridging education with innovation and business creation. The recognition of trailblazing innovators with success stories demonstrated the success of EIT Manufacturing RIS programmes.

*“EIT Manufacturing RIS Hubs Conference highlights the remarkable achievements of innovators in the RIS countries, underlining the tremendous potential for growth in these regions. We are committed to*



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*supporting and advancing this growth moving forward.” - said **Dr Verónica RODRIGUEZ GARCIA**, RIS Strategy and Impact Manager at EIT Manufacturing.*

## About EIT

The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#) 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 which is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Institute supports the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships – EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities – among leading companies, research labs and universities.

## About EIT Manufacturing

[EIT Manufacturing](#) is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, and it is one of eight innovation communities within EIT. 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 80 members (universities, research institutes and business).

The [EIT Manufacturing Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\)](#) aims at widening participation in the Knowledge and Innovation Community's (KIC) activities, 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 – Improving people’s lives through sustainable manufacturing](#)

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