



EIT AWARDS €63 MILLION TO BOOST INNOVATION CAPACITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Budapest, 20 May 2025 – As the EU steps up efforts to close the innovation and talent gap, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is investing €63 million to strengthen the role of higher education in building a more innovative, resilient, and skilled Europe. The funding, awarded under the EIT Higher Education Initiative's Call for Proposals 2024, will support 47 cross-sector projects connecting 620 organisations in 46 countries to enhance their innovation capacity.

The EIT Higher Education Initiative is the only European instrument solely focused on boosting the innovation capacity of higher education institutions, empowering them to become the innovation leaders of tomorrow. It grants project partners access to Europe's largest innovation ecosystem. Of the 47 EIT Higher Education Initiative projects announced, 12 will also focus on Deep Tech and will directly support the [Deep Tech Talent Initiative](#), the EIT's flagship programme training 1 million deep tech talents by the end of 2025.

Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness said: *'When universities, research centres and businesses team up, ideas become real-world solutions. The EIT Higher Education Initiative has helped build closer links between academia and industry, driving innovation and growth. The results of this Call for Proposals are a show of confidence in Europe's innovation capacity. These are the investments that keep Europe strong and competitive.'*

Stefan Dobrev, Chairperson of the EIT Governing Board, added: *'The results delivered by the EIT Higher Education Initiative since its launch four years ago are impressive. This is the only European initiative dedicated to the earliest stages of the innovation lifecycle within higher education institutions. It is core to the EITs mission of linking academic excellence to impact for society and the economy. The achievements of the first 65 projects are a testament to the power of this approach. We are pleased to welcome the new project partners, including a record number of industry partners, to Europe's largest innovation ecosystem. We have no doubt that these new projects will deliver significant impact for Europe.'*

The new projects, which kicked off on 1st April 2025, bring together 620 organisations, of which 284 are HEIs, 186 are businesses, and 150 are other non-academic organisations, including research centres, public authorities, and associations. This Call introduces 193 new HEIs as full partners, raising the total number of funded HEIs to 501 since 2021, surpassing the original target of 500 participants by 2027 ahead of time.

A total of 130 consortia, bringing together 1 480 organisations from 55 countries applied to the 2024 call, which closed in December. Due to the high quality of applications, five more projects were funded than originally planned, bringing the total to 47 projects, each receiving up to €1 340 000. Each consortium includes full partners, who receive funding directly, and associated partners in a supporting role.

The strong number and quality of applications, along with the wide range of partners involved, show the growing momentum of the EIT Higher Education Initiative and its ability to connect industry and higher education institutions to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe.

More details on the selected projects can be found [here](#).



BACKGROUND: EIT- MAKING INNOVATION HAPPEN!

ABOUT THE EIT HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Since established in 2021, the [EIT Higher Education Initiative](#) has already awarded over €69 million to 308 HEIs and 135 non-academic organisations to support 65 pan-European projects. Its projects have delivered creative and original approaches to innovation and entrepreneurial capacity-building. The links established between HEIs and companies, research and public bodies have led to integrated ecosystems in which HEIs act as hubs creating lasting a systematic impact. Between 2021 and 2023, these projects trained over 90 000 students on innovation and entrepreneurship and supported more than 1 700 start-ups and scale-ups. To date, the initiative has also contributed to the creation of over 240 start-ups. The EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities collectively implement the EIT Higher Education Initiative, with EIT RawMaterials in the coordinating role.

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 and EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities among leading companies, research labs and universities. Currently nine EIT Knowledge & Innovation Communities are supported: [Climate-KIC](#), [EIT Digital](#), [EIT InnoEnergy](#), [EIT Health](#), [EIT RawMaterials](#), [EIT Food](#), [EIT Manufacturing](#), [EIT Urban Mobility](#) and [EIT Culture & Creativity](#). The EIT has also launched a call for its 10th Knowledge and Innovation Community, [EIT Water](#), that is open until 17 June.

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. To date, these have resulted in:

