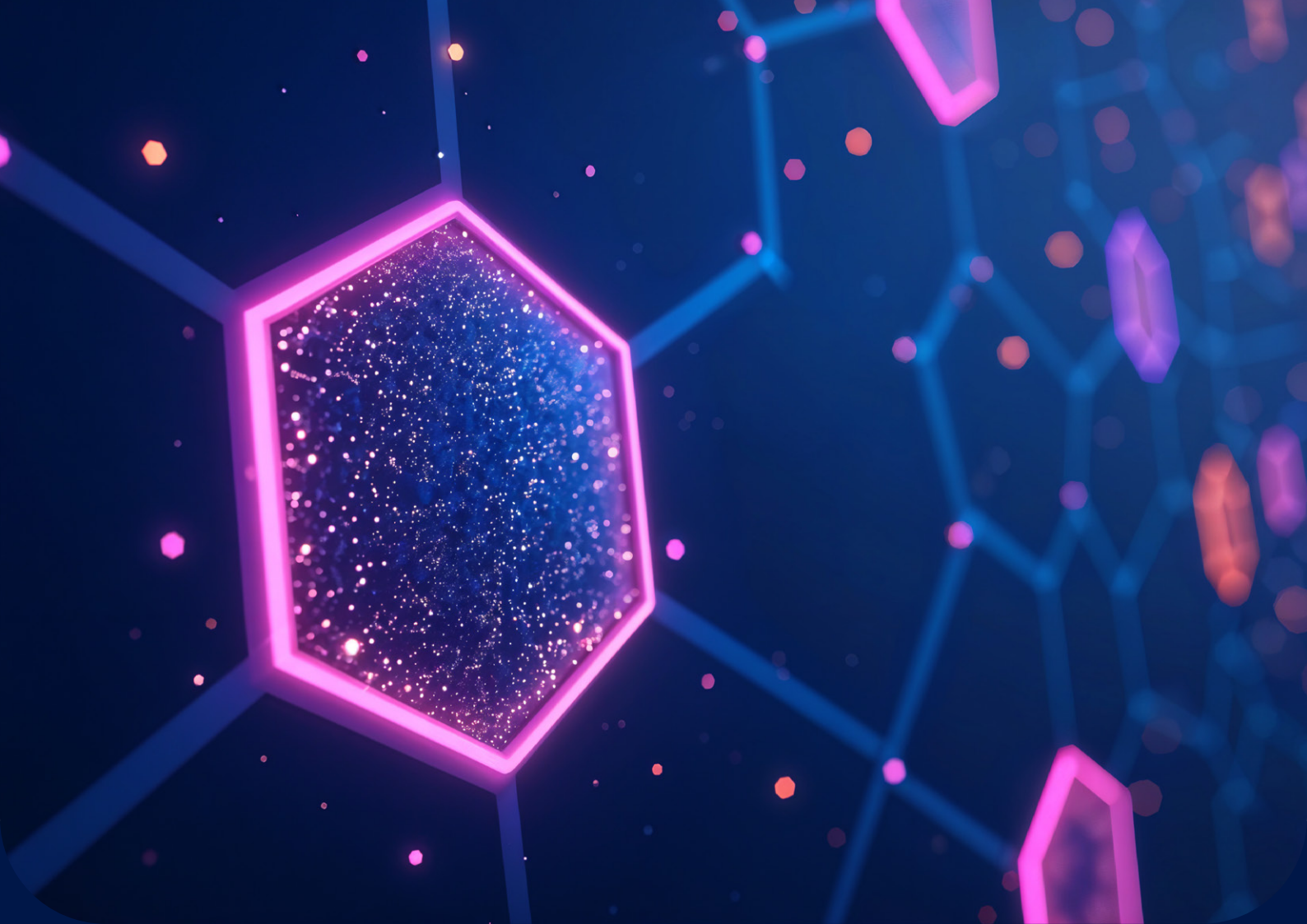




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EIT Regional Innovation Scheme **Activity Report** **2024**

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Foreword



Martin Kern

Director, European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)



The EIT' Regional Innovation Scheme plays a critical role in ensuring that no innovative idea is left behind in Europe. By supporting and connecting on the ground all across Europe we provide a platform from which talents and companies can succeed with their innovations.



Normunds Popen

Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC), European Commission



Over the past ten years, the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) has proven to be more than a support mechanism for emerging and moderate innovators; it has become a true catalyst for bridging the innovation divide across Europe. It empowers local ecosystems and harnesses emerging talent and ideas. Through strengthening regional innovation capacity, connecting local actors to European networks, and supporting entrepreneurship, RIS creates synergies and catalyses transformative change. It enhances knowledge transfer, promotes cross-border collaboration, and fosters smart specialisation strategies tailored to regional strengths. These efforts contribute to a more united, resilient, and competitive Europe – fully aligned with the European Commission's political priorities to boost competitiveness and its flagship initiatives such as the Union of Skills and the Start-up and Scale-up Strategy.

Executive summary

EIT RIS REPORT 2024

The 2024 **Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) Activity Report** highlights the steady evolution and growing impact of the **EIT RIS** – a programme steered by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and implemented by its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC). 2024 marks 10 years since the introduction of the EIT RIS, which has since become a key instrument of the European Union (EU) for fostering inclusive innovation and bridging the gap between Europe's strongest innovators and those in emerging and modest performing innovation ecosystems¹.

In 2024, the EIT RIS continued to support eligible countries in accessing pan-European innovation networks, targeted capacity-building activities, and investment opportunities. At its core, the EIT RIS contributes to tackling **critical industrial and societal challenges**, working collaboratively with innovators, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders across borders – from the green and digital transitions to regional resilience and talent retention.

EIT RIS aligns closely with the EIT's strategic mission and ambitiously contributes to key EU initiatives including the [Union of Skills](#), the [EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy](#), the [New European Innovation Agenda](#) as well as other broader EU policy priorities.

These include advancing deep tech, promoting responsible artificial intelligence, and ensuring that innovation reaches all corners of Europe.

In 2024, start-ups and scale-ups in the EIT RIS area, supported by EIT, attracted **over EUR 216 million in investment** – highlighting the growing trust and interest from investors compared to previous years².

EIT education and training activities reached **over 105 000 participants** in RIS area in 2024, a clear sign of growing demand for entrepreneurial skills³.

Additionally, **1 231⁴ start-ups were created or supported and 219⁵ innovations were launched to the market**, reflecting improved commercialisation capacity across EIT RIS area.

Through these significant results and achievements, EIT RIS also expanded its reach through strategic programmes in Ukraine, Türkiye, and the Western Balkans⁶ and the EU's Outermost Regions⁷. The deployment of EIT Community Hubs and the launch of cross-regional initiatives like [EIT Jumpstarter](#), [EIT Red Kalyna](#), and [EIT InfraBooster](#) programmes have enabled stronger regional ownership of innovation processes and better alignment with EU strategic goals, including cohesion, resilience, and digital and green transitions.

The EIT Community's enhanced involvement in the EU's neighbouring regions demonstrates its ability to catalyse inclusive innovation, even in challenging and rapidly evolving environments. This is done by implementing the EU's strategic goals through practical support programs, community engagement, and capacity development

1. According to the European innovation scoreboard: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard_en

2. Between 2021 and 2023, 681 million euro in investment was attracted by EIT supported start-ups and scale-ups in the EIT RIS area

3. Between 2021 and 2023, 197 042 participants benefited from EIT Education and training activities in EIT RIS Area

4. Between 2021 and 2023, 3787 start-ups were created or supported in EIT RIS area

5. Between 2021 and 2023, 501 innovations were launched to the market in EIT RIS Area

6. Western Balkan economies are referred to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia

7. EU Outermost regions are referred to countries of Guadeloupe (France), French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain)

Over the past decade, the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme has evolved from a mere widening programme into a pivotal component of the EIT's mission. Today, it serves as one of Horizon Europe's most potent instruments for bridging Europe's innovation gap, guaranteeing that talent and potential are fostered, nurtured, and amplified wherever they emerge.

Between 2014 and 2024, the EIT RIS has proven to be more than a support mechanism for emerging and moderate innovators; it has become a catalyst for bridging the innovation divide across Europe. **Nothing more can demonstrate it than the 324 000 skilled and upskilled people through EIT education activities, more than 6500 created and supported ventures, more than EUR 1.33 billion EIT grant dedicated to EIT RIS area and more than EUR 3.23 billion Investment attracted by EIT RIS-based KIC-backed ventures in past ten years.** This outcome underscores the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of EIT's long-term commitment to strengthening innovation ecosystems in modest and moderate innovator countries.

As the programme moves into its second decade, the EIT and its KICs are building on this strong foundation to deliver more strategic, coherent, and impactful support across the RIS-eligible countries and regions. Moreover, a central component of the EIT's forward strategy is

the establishment of a new network of EIT Community Hubs, the one-stop shops that will keep serving as comprehensive access points for all EIT opportunities, simplifying access to services, information, and support mechanisms across the EIT Community.

To further accelerate regional innovation potential, the EIT is preparing the launch of the EIT Regional Innovation Booster pilot initiative in the next years to come. This new instrument will offer long-term, strategic support to the most promising early-stage ventures operating in EIT RIS-eligible countries one by one.

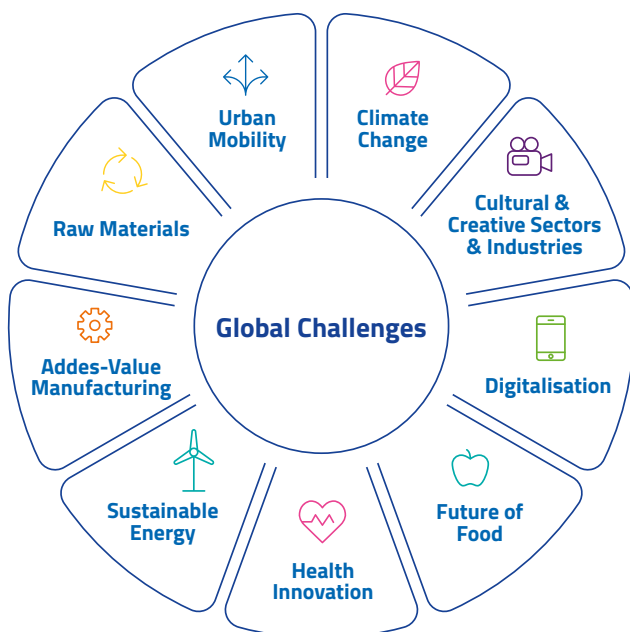
In the coming years, the EIT will focus its RIS activities on identifying and scaling high-potential early-stage ventures. These efforts will be complemented by tailored support services to improve investor readiness and help innovators navigate the broader EU funding and policy landscape. Given the growing geopolitical and economic relevance of the Union's neighbouring regions, strengthening EIT RIS activities beyond EU borders remains a strategic priority.

Through strengthened coordination with national authorities and EU institutions, the EIT RIS will contribute to more coherent and effective innovation policy alignment across Europe.

1. Making innovation happen!⁸

The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#) is the EU's flagship body for boosting innovation across Europe. Founded in 2008, its core mission is to bring **business, education, and research** together – a model known as the **Knowledge Triangle** – to solve real-world challenges, create jobs, and drive sustainable economic growth.

Unlike traditional funding agencies, the EIT does more than hand out grants. It builds **large-scale innovation ecosystems**, called **Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)**, that unite universities, start-ups, research labs, corporations, and policymakers across Europe. As of 2025, the EIT supports **nine KICs**, each dedicated to a major societal challenge:



EIT initiatives have **helped launch over 9 900 companies**, supported the development of **more than 2 400 new products and services**, and trained over 1.3 million learners in entrepreneurial and tech skills. Start-ups backed by EIT have collectively raised close to **EUR 9.5 billion** and reached a combined valuation exceeding **EUR 71 billion**⁹.

EIT's mission aligns directly with key EU goals: boosting competitiveness, closing regional innovation gaps, building a skilled workforce, and achieving digital and green transitions. **EIT RIS** ensures that countries with moderate or modest innovation performance also benefit, especially those in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe.

Find out more about EIT here: [European Institute of Innovation & Technology \(EIT\)](#) | [EIT](#)

8. EIT results in year of publication of the report

9. [EIT Governing Board vision for a competitive Europe](#)

2. EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) – Closing the innovation divide in Europe

Across Europe, countries are showing varied innovation performances. This has resulted in classifying European countries into four main groups: innovation leaders and strong innovators versus moderate and emerging innovators¹⁰.

To address the underrepresentation of countries with emerging and moderate innovation performance in its Innovation Communities, the [EIT launched the Regional Innovation Scheme \(EIT RIS\)](#) in 2014 to help strengthen their innovation capacity and foster more inclusive participation.

In 2024, the countries taking part in the EIT RIS were¹¹:



EU Member States:

Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia



Horizon Europe Associated Countries:

Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine



Outermost Regions:

Guadeloupe (France), French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain)



Luke Incorvaja

Innovation Officer at EIT



Over the past decade, the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme has grown far beyond its origins as a widening programme — it has become a cornerstone of the EIT's mission. Today, it stands as one of Horizon Europe's most effective tools for bridging Europe's innovation divide, ensuring that talent and potential are supported, nurtured, and scaled wherever they are found.

Since its launch, EIT RIS has empowered a growing number of regions to strengthen their local innovation ecosystems, connect to pan-European networks, and access the tools, knowledge, and support needed to drive lasting impact. It's not just about increasing participation in EIT activities – it's about ensuring that **innovation thrives everywhere in Europe.**

Find out more about EIT RIS here:

[The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme \(RIS\): Closing the Innovation Divide in Europe | EIT](#)

10. According to the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#)

11. Countries (and the regions in those countries) that are classified as either 'moderate' or 'modest' innovators in at least one of the three EIT annual reports issued in: (a) 2018, 2019 and 2020 for 2021-2024; " As per the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027 Publications Office

3. 2014-2024: A Decade of Innovation in the EIT RIS area

2024 marks a milestone: a decade of impact through the EIT RIS – one of the key drivers in strengthening Europe’s innovation fabric from the ground up. Over the past ten years, the EIT RIS has proven to be more

than a support mechanism for emerging and moderate innovators; it has become a catalyst for bridging the innovation divide across Europe.



324K+

People are skilled and upskilled through EIT education and training activities in the EIT RIS area (66% of the total)



6.5K+

Ventures created and supported by the EIT in the EIT RIS area (50% of the total)

The latest figures highlight the EIT’s unique capacity to connect higher education, research, business, and entrepreneurship – the so-called knowledge triangle – and to turn ideas into real-world impact. Nowhere is this more evident than in the RIS area, where the EIT’s

model of local anchoring and pan-European reach has enabled thousands of start-ups, researchers, educators, and regional actors to co-create, collaborate, and compete on a global stage¹².



€1.33+ billion

EIT grant dedicated to EIT RIS area (33% of the total)



€3.23+ billion

Investment attracted by EIT RIS-based, KIC-backed ventures (20% of the total)

Over the past decade, the EIT has invested approximately EUR 1.33 billion in innovation, education and entrepreneurship activities across the EIT RIS area. As a result of this targeted support, start-ups and ventures from the concerned countries have attracted more than EUR 3.23 billion in additional public and private funding.

As we look ahead, the next decade offers a critical opportunity to scale what works. With a sharpened focus on closing the innovation and talent gaps, the EIT – through its RIS community – is well-positioned to continue driving inclusive, challenge-driven innovation across Europe and beyond.

This outcome underscores the **efficiency, effectiveness, and impact** of EIT’s long-term commitment to strengthening innovation ecosystems in modest and moderate innovator countries.

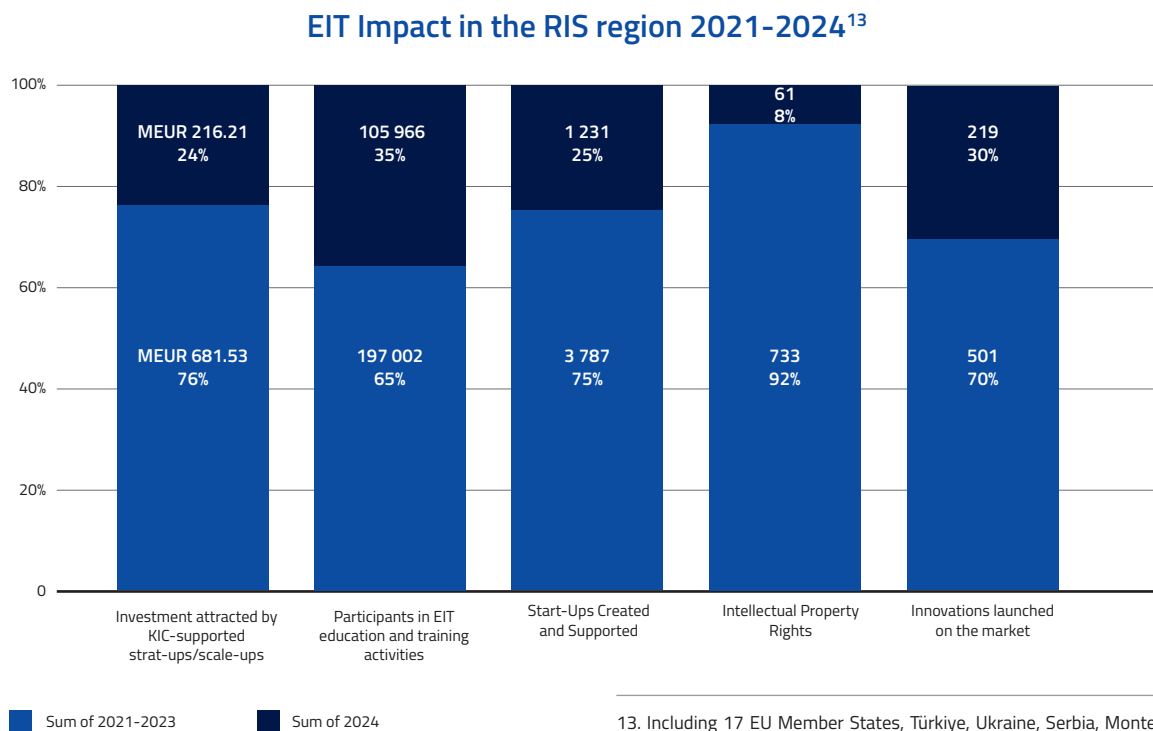
12. Results of skilled and upskilled people in EIT education and training activities derive from the EIT Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), adding up KPIs of 7.1 “Graduates from EIT-labelled programmes” and 8.1 “Participants in non-labelled education. Result of ventures created and supported by the EIT derives from the EIT KPIs, adding up to 3.1 “Start-ups and scale-ups supported by KICs”, 4.1 “Start-ups created of/for innovation” and 5.1 “Start-ups created by students of EIT-labelled programmes”. Reference: [EIT Impact Framework \(2022-2027\).pdf](#)

4. 2024 EIT Results and Impact in the EIT RIS area

- In 2024, the EIT continued to be a powerful engine driving Europe’s innovation ecosystem forward in EIT RIS area across multiple dimensions:
- **EUR 216 million** in funding was attracted by start-ups and scale-ups from the EIT RIS area – out of the EUR 4.7 billion total EIT-supported investment. This reflects a 30% growth compared to 2021–2023, underscoring the increasing confidence of private and public investors in the talent and potential of innovators from RIS economies.
 - A total of **105 966 learners** – representing more than two-thirds of all EIT education participants – engaged in programmes designed to strengthen entrepreneurial mindsets and STEM competencies. This marked a 56% increase compared to 2021–2023, clearly demonstrating the growing demand and reach of EIT-supported education initiatives.
 - **1 231 start-ups** were created and supported in the RIS area – out of 2 182 supported by the EIT in total. This marks a 32% increase compared to 2021–2023.
 - Considering market-oriented innovation, **The EIT RIS area maintained its role as a key contributor**, launching **219 innovations** – 56% of the total EIT results in the same period.

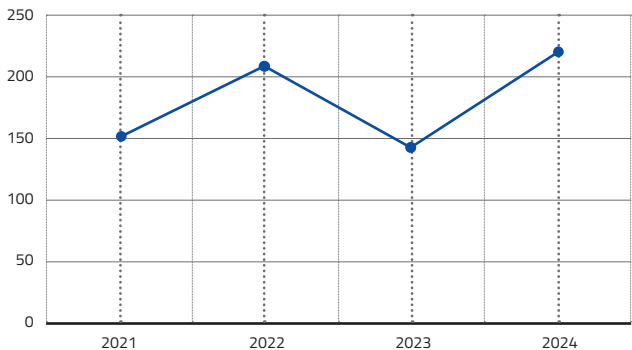
While 2024 marked a strong year for outreach, entrepreneurial growth, and innovation deployment, targeted efforts are still needed to improve Intellectual Property (IP) generation and protect emerging technologies, which are critical for long-term resilience and competitiveness in the countries covering the RIS area. To address this challenge and based on the Memorandum of Understanding the EIT has signed with the [EUIPO](#) and [EPO](#), in 2024 joint efforts have been implemented to enhance the IP capacity of start-ups and innovators in the RIS area.

The following charts present the impact achieved in 2024, disaggregated by country and grouped by type of territorial classification. This breakdown provides insight into the geographical spread of the EIT Community’s efforts and highlights the diversity of innovation ecosystems supported under the EIT RIS framework.



13. Including 17 EU Member States, Türkiye, Ukraine, Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia. 2021 –2024 result were captured since the start of the Horizon Europe Research and Framework programme in 2021.

Innovations launched on the market (2021 - 2024)

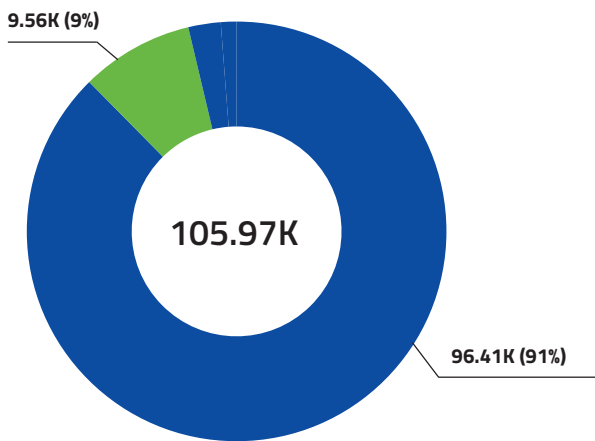


- **EU Member States (RIS eligible):** Countries that are full members of the European Union and participate in EIT RIS as part of the EU's cohesion and innovation policy efforts, including Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia.
- **Horizon Europe Associated Countries (HE Associated):** These are non-EU countries formally associated with the Horizon Europe Programme. In the context of this analysis, this includes Ukraine, Türkiye, Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. Their association grants them access to a wide range of EU innovation instruments, including EIT programmes.

The chart **Innovations launched on the market (2021-2024)** illustrates not just growth, but resilience and momentum in the European innovation ecosystem. Starting from around 150 innovations in 2021, the number rose above 200 in 2022, showing a strong acceleration of activity. Although there was a decline in 2023, dropping to roughly 140, this setback proved temporary. By 2024, innovations peaked at about 220 – the highest level in the period observed.

This trajectory highlights the ecosystem's ability to recover quickly from challenges and emerge stronger, turning 2024 into a record-breaking year. It demonstrates that the EIT Community and its partners are not only supporting innovators but also enabling them to transform ideas into market-ready solutions at an accelerating pace.

Participants in EIT education and training activities in 2024 (per type of the RIS country)



Type of the RIS country

- RIS EU-Member state
- HE Associated Countries

In 2024, a total of **105 966 participants** engaged in EIT education and training activities across the EIT RIS. The vast majority – **91% (96 407)** – were from **EU Member States**, while **9% (9 559)** represented **HE Associated Countries**.

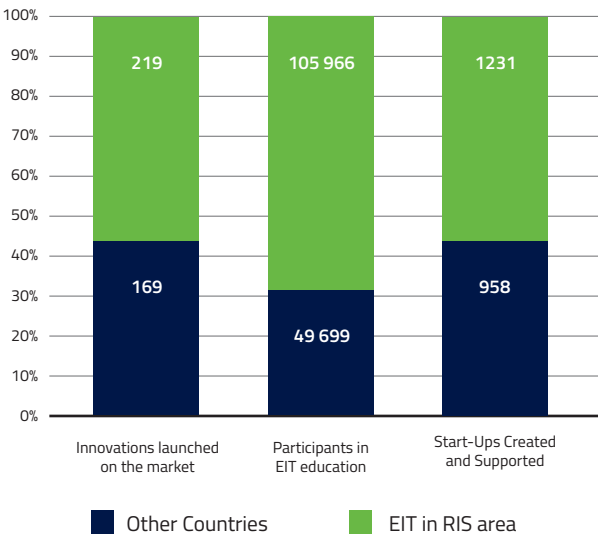
In 2024, out of **388** innovations launched, **219** came from EIT RIS area, showing that more than half of the innovation output originated in moderate and modest innovation regions. This underscores the growing maturity and capability of these ecosystems.

The education data further reinforces this trend. Of the **155 665** participants in EIT education programmes, **105 966** were from the RIS area. This means nearly **70%** of learners engaged in EIT-supported education activities came from RIS areas – a significant step toward bridging the innovation divide across Europe. In terms of entrepreneurship, a total of **2 189** start-ups were created or supported, with **1 231** located in RIS area. This reflects that over 56% of start-up activity in 2024 occurred in these regions, validating the success of targeted outreach and support mechanisms.

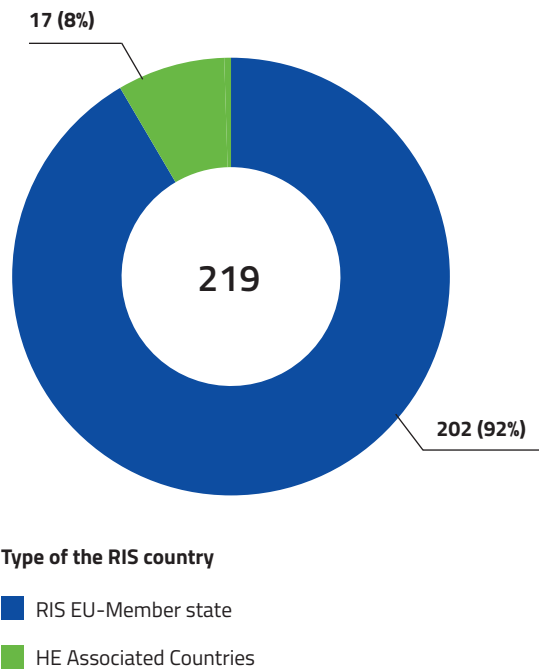
Overall, the chart demonstrates that EIT RIS countries are not only catching up but are playing a pivotal role in driving innovation, education, and start-up development across Europe.

In 2024, a total of **219** innovations were successfully launched to the market through EIT RIS-supported activities. EIT strongly contributed to commercialisation of innovations in EU Member States – **92%** of all EIT RIS-supported innovations were launched in the EU. HE Associated countries played a significant role, launching with the support of EIT, 17 innovations (8%).

Impact in the EIT RIS Countries in 2024



Innovations launched on the market in 2024 (per type of the RIS-country)



Start-Ups created and supported in the EIT RIS Region in 2024 (per country)



This distribution reflects a robust focus on talent development within the EU, aligned with the EIT’s mission to strengthen innovation capacity in Widening countries. At the same time, it demonstrates the strategic outreach to neighbouring regions, underscoring the importance of broader inclusion under the European Commission’s Competitiveness Compass package and the Union of Skills Strategy.

The continued participation from HE Associated Countries also contributes to developing a highly skilled workforce and addressing key societal challenges across Europe and beyond.

Over this period, between 2021 and 2024, the EIT Community has outperformed Horizon Europe in terms of participation from these regions¹⁴. This means that it has mobilised a greater share of actors from countries that traditionally face barriers to accessing EU innovation programmes. For example, EIT RIS countries¹⁵ participation in EIT programmes reached 59.06%, compared to 37% in Horizon Europe. The gap is even wider in the Western Balkans¹⁶, where EIT attracted 3.52% of participants, compared to 0.64% under Horizon Europe. Similarly, EIT initiatives recorded 39.94% participation from Horizon Europe Widening countries¹⁷, more than

double the 17.97% under Horizon Europe. **Among the EU-13 Member States¹⁸, the difference remains notable: 24.6% for EIT compared to 9.21% in Horizon Europe.**

These figures matter as they illustrate the EIT’s success in activating innovation ecosystems where support is most needed, helping to bridge the gap between established and emerging regions. This not only aligns with the EU’s broader goals for cohesion, talent retention, and regional development but also complements Horizon Europe by ensuring that ideas, talent, and entrepreneurial potential are tapped across the entire Union, not just in innovation strongholds.

14. The analysis is grounded in publicly accessible data from the Horizon Dashboard, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard>

15. Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Türkiye, Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia

16. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

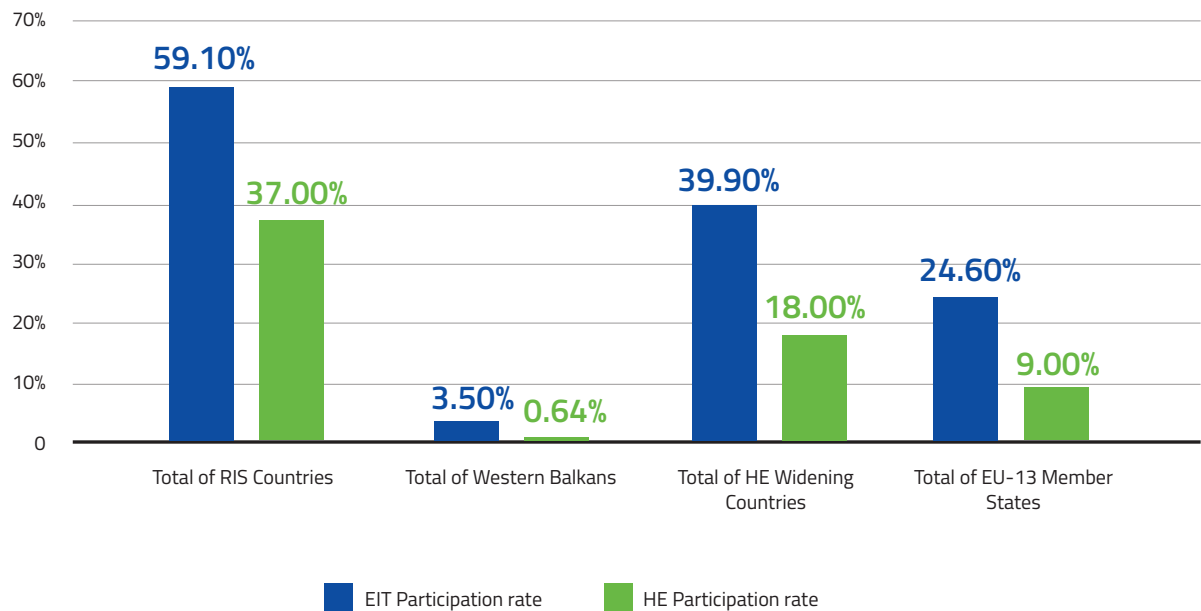
17. Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Faroe Islands, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Morocco

18. Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

* MN - Montenegro

** MT - Malta

Participation rate 2021-2024
EIT Community compared to Horizon Europe (HE)



5. Fostering Innovation Ecosystems in EU Neighbourhood Regions

In alignment with the [EU Neighbourhood Policy](#) and [Enlargement Strategy](#), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology has significantly enhanced its presence and support for innovators in the Eastern and South-Eastern neighbourhood.

Through dedicated initiatives in Ukraine, Moldova, Türkiye, the Western Balkans and the Outermost regions, the EIT Community is playing a pivotal role in bridging innovation gaps, fostering economic resilience, and advancing strategic partnerships in regions of geo-political importance to the Union.

These efforts are in line with the objectives of the [New European Innovation Agenda](#), which calls for a more inclusive and geographically balanced innovation landscape, and the [Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance \(IPA III\)](#), which underpins cooperation and development in candidate and potential candidate countries.

Ukraine: Driving Resilience and Innovation Amidst Crisis



The EIT Community has scaled up its operations in Ukraine in response to the war-induced challenges, with the aim of strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems, supporting women innovators, and integrating Ukrainian start-ups into EU value chains.

Moreover, a multi-pronged project dedicated to supporting Ukraine was launched in 2023 by the EIT Community, under the [Strategic Regional Innovations \(SRI\) Cluster](#). The primary objective is to strengthen Ukraine’s innovation ecosystem, preparing for closer cooperation with the EU.

Key Impact in 2024:



EIT Jumpstarter: Ukrainian participation consistently exceeded 20% across stages. **35 new Ukrainian start-ups** were supported through the EIT Jumpstarter pre-accelerator, helping transform innovative ideas into commercially successful ventures in areas such as digital health, smart cities, and energy.



EIT InfraBooster: **55 Ukrainian researchers** upskilled in the knowledge valorisation area; **2 research teams successfully developed new services** by leveraging existing research infrastructure and showcased their innovations in Budapest.



EIT Red Kalyna: Promoted female entrepreneurship with **10 Ukrainian women innovators selected** in 2024. Their expertise spans from education, research, to business and international leadership. The initiative is supported by European and Ukrainian partners, including [EUIPO](#), [COST](#), the [Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine](#) and [Diia.City](#).



EIT Founders2Founders Programme: **70 start-ups trained** across four Ukrainian cities (Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro and Odesa), with strong participation from female founders (41.3%). Winners included [CARETECH HUMAN](#) and [LLC KARE - Parostok](#).



EIT Community Hub in Ukraine: Operational since early 2024, the Hub delivered **33 community events**, attracted **EUR 23 000 in local funding**, and facilitated strategic engagements with partners like Sigma Software Labs and the Ministry of Digital Transformation.



EIT HEI Initiative: As a result of the 4th EIT HEI Call, **43 Ukrainian partner organisations** (with a 58% success rate) were benefiting from the EIT HEI support.



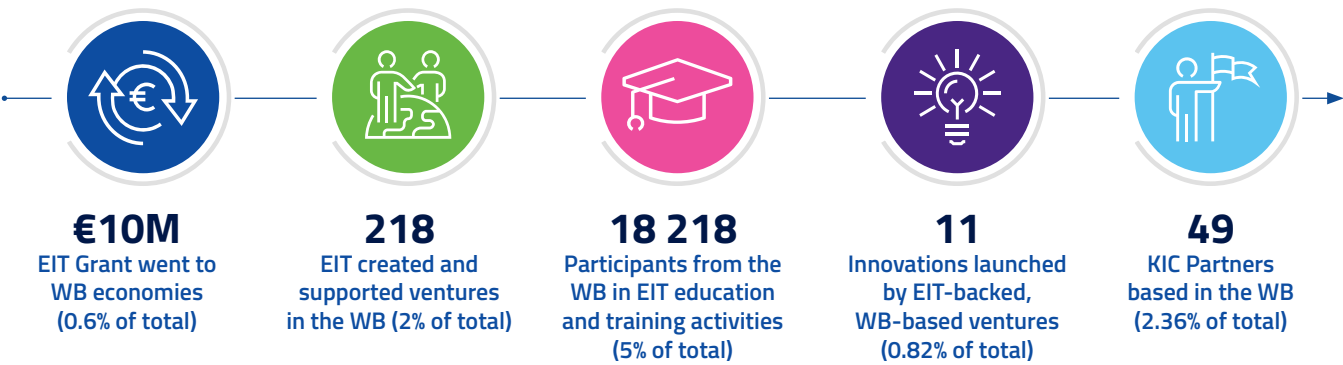
Girls Go Circular: **1544 Ukrainian female students were trained** by the Girls Go Circular initiative by the end of in 2024.



EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative (EIT DTTI): The EIT DTT is a pioneering programme led by the EIT that will skill one million people within deep tech fields by the end of 2025. **16 Ukrainian organisations** joined the Pledge and proposed their training courses by the end of 2024.

Western Balkans: Expanding Reach and Institutional Synergies

EIT Community in the Western Balkans (2021-2024)



The EIT has deepened engagement across the Western Balkans, including countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹⁹, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aligning with EU enlargement priorities and regional development programmes supported under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)²⁰.

The EIT also supported the creation of a Regional Innovation Centre in Albania (EIT RawMaterials), which focuses on gender-inclusive skills development and industry-relevant STEM²¹ training. The raw material sector has been identified as part of the priority sectors under the Government of Albania’s Smart Specialisation Strategy. The Regional Innovation Centre, based in Elbasan, acts as a hub to catalyse innovation, education and business creation in the raw materials for Albania and the wider region. This partnership marks the first of its kind between EIT RawMaterials and a Western Balkan government, laying the groundwork for future collaborative initiatives in the region.

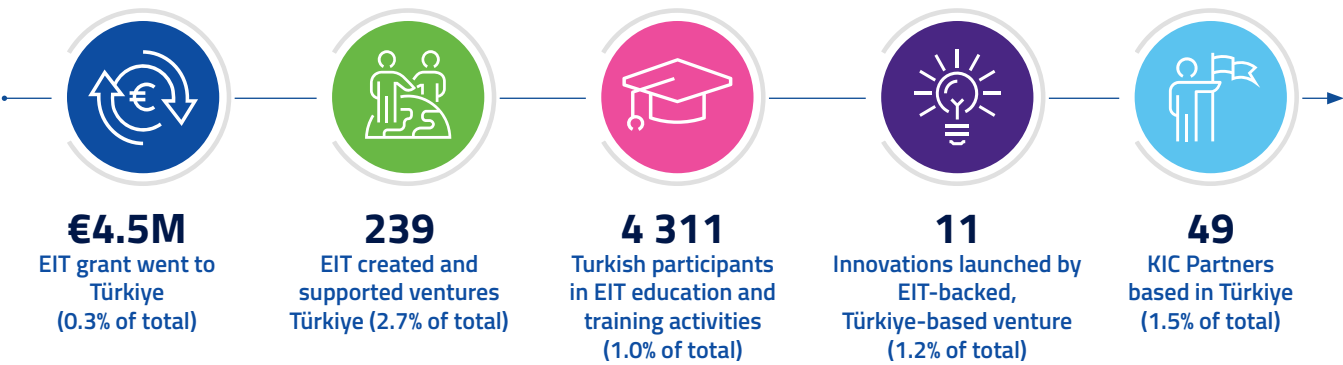
19. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.
20. [Overview - Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance - European Commission](#)
21. Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.

Key Impact in 2024:

- EIT Jumpstarter:** Demand for the EIT Jumpstarter programme consistently exceeds capacity, with 2 applicants from the Western Balkans competing for one seat in 2024. 2 teams (from Serbia and Kosovo) won prizes at the EIT Jumpstarter Grand Final.
- EIT InfraBooster:** 8 new services developed around the research infrastructures teams from North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, in collaboration with universities and laboratories in the region.
- Regional Hubs:** EIT Community Offices are fully operational in [North Macedonia](#) and [Montenegro](#). [Albania’s](#) EIT Hub was launched with EUR 300 000 support from the [EU4Innovation](#) initiative via IPA III in December 2024.
- Events & Ecosystem Engagement:** Notable activities include the [Skopje Innovation Week](#), EIT-themed panels at the [Science|Business Widening Conference](#), and co-organisation of the [AI Tech Summit Skopje](#).

Türkiye: Scaling Support Through Strategic Partnerships

EIT Community in Türkiye (2021-2024)



Türkiye has emerged as a dynamic participant in EIT initiatives, and 2024 marked a milestone year with the operational launch of the **EIT RIS Hub Türkiye** (in Istanbul).

Key Impact in 2024:



EIT Jumpstarter: Turkish innovators showed strong interest in the programme, submitting 64 applications, of which 23 were selected, resulting in a competitive 36% success rate. Turkish start-up **YAPAR 3D** won 1st place in the Manufacturing cohort.



RUMI-TECH a Turkish start-up supported by EIT Jumpstarter (InnoEnergy cohort) in 2023, secured EUR 612 000 in funding in 2024.

The EIT Community Hub's activities are strategically aligned with Türkiye's participation in Horizon Europe and the [EU–Türkiye Statement on Innovation Cooperation](#).

The EU Outermost Regions – Advancing Inclusive Innovation

In line with the EU's commitment to territorial cohesion and the principles outlined [in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union \(TFEU\)](#), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology has released a [dedicated strategy to support the EU Outermost Regions \(ORs\)](#). Building on this strategy, which is the first dedicated strategy of an EU instrument, such as the EIT, the EIT Community is strongly committed to boosting its outreach to the EU ORs by building on and scaling up its current activities targeting their innovation ecosystems. These include nine regions located in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the Caribbean, and South America – all of which face

unique structural challenges due to their geographic remoteness, limited connectivity, and vulnerability to climate change.

The EIT's strategy reflects the broader objectives of the [Cohesion Policy](#), the [New European Innovation Agenda](#), and the [Long-Term Vision for EU's Rural Areas](#), by fostering innovation-driven growth in regions often underrepresented in EU innovation ecosystems. Through targeted outreach, regional partnerships, and strengthened engagement with local stakeholders, the EIT aims to increase participation of the Outermost Regions in its programmes and activities, particularly through the **EIT RIS and EIT KICs**.

Key Impact in 2024:



The [INCORE project](#), part of the **EIT HEI Initiative**, is working to enhance innovation and entrepreneurial capacity within higher education institutions in these regions.



In Gran Canaria, the start-up [Osteobionix](#), which specialises in biomedical engineering for bone reconstruction, has grown significantly with the support of **EIT Health's Bridgehead programme**, reaching over EUR 1 million in annual revenue.



Meanwhile, the [La Palma Research Centre](#), an independent geoscience think tank and key partner of **EIT RawMaterials**, contributes actively to the sector through projects that promote geoscience education among girls, improve mobility within raw materials master's programmes, and develop innovative exploration and value chain methodologies.

The EIT Community's expanded role in the EU neighbourhood illustrates its capacity to act as a catalyst for inclusive innovation, even in complex and emerging ecosystems. From war-affected Ukraine to aspiring EU members in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, the EIT is operationalising the EU's strategic objectives through actionable support programmes, local engagement, and capacity building.



How EIT KICs are shaping Europe's Innovation Landscape

Driving transformation through entrepreneurship, education, and innovation ecosystems

6. EIT Climate KIC*

Europe's leading climate innovation agency and community

Climate-KIC is Europe's leading climate innovation agency and community, creating climate-resilient communities and fighting climate breakdown by mobilising systems change in countries, regions, cities, and businesses.

Together with partners across the globe, we orchestrate solutions and facilitate learning to bridge the gap between climate commitments and current reality, driving faster and more ambitious action.

Climate-KIC focuses on place-based experimentation, education, and entrepreneurship to catalyse change in critical areas such as land use, finance, cities, and industry. By convening innovation ecosystems and fostering deep demonstrations, it tackles the root causes of climate change rather than the symptoms. The organisation also supports climate-aligned start-ups and talent development, equipping future leaders to lead transformation.

In 2024, the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) activities of Climate-KIC played a strategic role in advancing the organisation's mission. Efforts focused



Morten Sorensen
Strategic Programmes
Orchestrator



At Climate KIC, we don't just support climate innovation, we orchestrate systemic change across regions where it matters most. Our mission in the EIT RIS countries is clear: empower ventures to turn climate challenges into possibilities.

on identifying and responding to the growing local demand for systems innovation services across increasingly mature and expanding EIT RIS markets.

Climate KIC plays a pivotal role in implementing the [European Green Deal](#) by aligning innovation portfolios with EU climate objectives and bridging the gap between climate ambition and action.

EIT Climate KIC Flagship RIS Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**

Eligible countries: **Worldwide**

Number of supported start-ups
in EIT RIS in 2024: **20**

Website: [ClimAccelerator – Scaling start-ups for climate impact](#)

ClimAccelerator

It is a **global accelerator** that supports early-stage climate start-ups with funding, training, and expert mentorship. It connects founders to a global ecosystem of investors, corporates, and city partners. The programme offers structured stages to scale impact, from business model validation to market entry and growth. Its key value lies in turning climate-positive ideas into scalable, investable solutions for real-world climate challenges.

* EIT Climate KIC became Climate KIC in February 2025

Climate KIC Academy

The **Climate-KIC Academy** offers professionals committed to reshaping the way we live, work, and collaboratively innovate to help create a fairer future a flexible training opportunity focused on climate innovation and systems transformation. It equips participants with interdisciplinary skills through a blend of academic learning and real-world challenge-based experiences.

QUICK FACTS

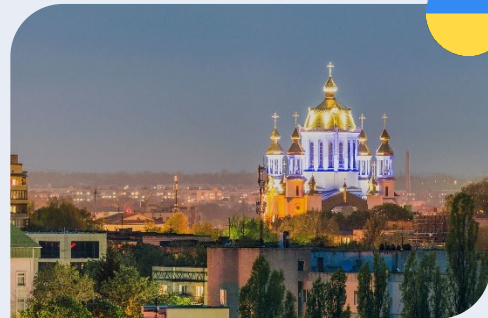
Type of activity: **Educational**
 Eligible countries: **Worldwide**
 Number of graduates in EIT RIS in 2024: **30**
 Website: [Climate KIC Academy](#) | [Climate KIC](#)

The Academy's added value lies in fostering climate leaders who can drive systemic change by combining scientific knowledge with entrepreneurial and innovation capabilities across sectors. Participants will gain actionable knowledge, connect with like-minded people, and (hopefully) find joy in the collective effort to address climate change. We're not just solving problems – we're diving into exploring what approaches need to be taken to move things along day to day.



Participation in the Academy has not only been an honourable opportunity for the city of Rivne but also a valuable tool for rethinking governance approaches in the context of Climate Challenges.

Artem Hanuschak
 Deputy Mayor of Rivne



QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**
 Eligible countries: **Spain**
 Website: [Gipuzkoa: Systems innovation and social cohesion for the transition to sustainability](#)
[Climate KIC](#)



Climate Deep Demonstration

Gipuzkoa is a province in the Basque Country, northern Spain. The Climate-KIC pilot there supports systemic change through its *Deep Demonstration of Resilient Regions* initiative.

It works with the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council and local stakeholders to address climate challenges such as sustainable mobility, energy transition, circular economy, and inclusive governance.

The goal is to develop scalable, community-driven climate solutions rooted in local innovation and collaboration. The initiative supports **systemic change**, tackling climate challenges not through isolated actions, but by reshaping how institutions and communities collaborate for sustainability.

Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **Latitudo 40**
Country of origin: **Italy**
EIT support: **ClimAccelerator**
Year of graduation: **2022**
Website: **[Display to - Empower Sustainable Growth with AI-Driven Satellite Insights | Latitudo 40](#)**



Eyes in the Sky for Greener Cities: The Latitudo 40 Impact

Latitudo 40, a start-up supported by the **ClimAccelerator**, uses satellite data and AI to help cities monitor climate risks and plan sustainable urban development.

Through the programme, it gained mentorship, funding, and visibility to expand its solutions across Europe. Its platform supports data-driven decisions on heat islands, green spaces, and air quality, helping cities become more resilient and climate-smart.

Remonda Bio: Circular Solutions Blooming in Sevilla

Inspired by Sevilla's fragrant orange blossoms, Mónica, Celia, and Marina founded **Remonda Bio SL** to turn the city's 5.7 million kilos of wasted orange peels into a biodegradable alternative to plastic.

They met during a **Climathon by Climate-KIC**, which empowers citizens to co-create local climate solutions. Their project, rooted in circular economy and local pride, is now scaling through the New European Bauhaus initiative to boost climate-positive impact.

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **Remonda Bio SL**
Country of origin: **Spain**
EIT support: **EIT Climathon**
Year of graduation: **2021**
Website: **[Home - Remonda](#)**



7. EIT Digital

For a strong digital Europe. Inclusive. Fair. Sustainable.

EIT Digital is a key European innovation community focused on digital technologies. It supports the EU's priorities under the [Digital Decade Policy Programme](#), the [Digital Strategy](#), and contributes directly to the EU's goals for technological sovereignty, strategic autonomy, and a digitally skilled workforce.

EIT Digital connects businesses, research centres, universities, and entrepreneurs to develop and scale European deep tech solutions. Its activities focus on key strategic areas such as **cybersecurity**, **digital cities**, **digital industry**, **digital wellbeing**, and **digital finance** — all critical to Europe's digital and economic resilience.

The organisation supports early-stage start-ups and scale-ups through its Accelerator programmes, helping them grow and access international markets. It also runs entrepreneurial education programmes, including a pan-European [Master School](#), to train future digital innovators and address the EU's digital skills gap.



Tuan Trinh

EIT Digital Region East Director



Through RIS, local ecosystems are empowered by connecting them to our broader pan-European network. The success of the programme is reflected in the growing number of deep tech start-ups, cross-border collaborations, and increased engagement in digital innovation from RIS countries, also in academia.

EIT Digital contributes to building a strong European digital ecosystem by enabling the commercialisation of research, supporting innovation-driven business creation, and fostering cross-border collaboration

EIT Digital KIC Flagship RIS Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

- Type of activity: **Business support**
- Eligible countries: **RIS countries**
- Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **74**
- Website: [Venture Incubation Program EIT Digital](#)

EIT Digital Venture Incubation Programme

[The EIT Digital Venture Incubation Programme](#) helps early-stage entrepreneurs in 22 European countries launch deep tech start-ups.

In just 8 weeks, founders receive expert mentoring, business development support, product validation, and up to EUR 25 000 in equity-free funding — accelerating company creation, market entry, and investor readiness in regions with untapped innovation potential.

EIT Digital Master School

The [EIT Digital Master School](#) offers a two-year, dual-degree programme combining digital tech and entrepreneurship.

With 18 partner universities, 8 technical majors, and over 2 000 alumni from 80+ countries, it prepares students to launch start-ups or lead innovation. 92% of graduates are employed within 6 months, with 30% founding their own venture.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**

Eligible countries: **RIS countries**

Number of graduates in 2024: **237**

Website: [EIT Digital Master School](#)



QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**

Eligible countries: **RIS Countries**

Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **33**

Website: [Open Innovation Factory](#)

EIT Digital Open Innovation Factory

The [EIT Digital Open Innovation Factory](#) turns deep tech innovation into a scalable business. It supports consortia of industry, SMEs, and universities to co-develop products, launch start-ups, and enter the market fast.

Beneficiaries receive up to EUR 400 000 in co-funding, expert business support, and access to EIT Digital's EU-wide ecosystem - accelerating tech commercialisation and pan-European growth.



Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **EverPixel**
Country of origin: **Türkiye**
EIT support: **EIT Digital Master School**
Year of graduation: **2023**
Website: **EverPixel**



Turning passion into products: Görkem Algan's journey from EIT Digital Master School to AI start-up founder

After completing his degree at the EIT Digital Master School, Görkem Algan pursued a PhD in deep learning and worked as a computer vision researcher.

Over time, he realised he wanted to build products people could use. In 2023, he founded EverPixel, a start-up offering AI-powered mobile tools for image and video editing.



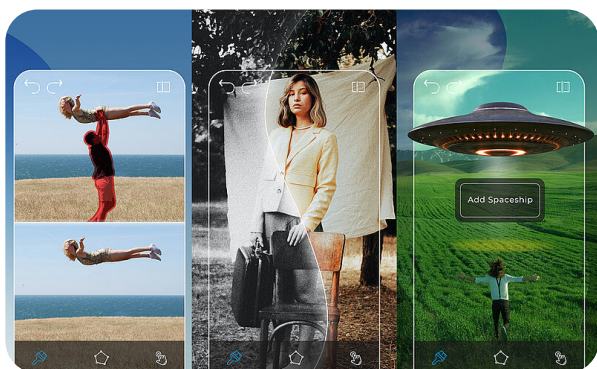
everpixel

Görkem Algan

Graduate of the EIT Digital Master School, Founder and CEO of EverPixel



After working in the top tech companies and doing a PhD I decided that I had enough knowledge to build something novel. I believe it was the excitement I got from EIT that let me quit my job after all these years.



The first app was simple – a photo eraser – but within six months, it grew to 100 000 monthly users. Görkem credits the Master School with introducing him to entrepreneurship and encouraging him to think beyond research. The combination of technical training and business education helped him later recognise when the time was right to start his own company.

EIT Digital and HDB Join Forces to Power Innovation in Greece and Europe

EIT Digital has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hellenic Development Bank (HDB) to strengthen digital innovation and entrepreneurship in Greece and across Europe. The partnership aims to support start-ups and SMEs through shared advisory services, joint events, and access to funding opportunities. Activities will include info days, webinars, pitching sessions, and collaboration on acceleration programmes.

A key focus is bridging the gap between research and market by supporting commercialisation, spin-offs, and business partnerships. Both organisations will explore synergies between EIT Digital's open calls



and HDB's Innovation Guarantee Fund. The MoU also promotes knowledge exchange and joint participation in conferences, training, and ecosystem-building activities.

By combining their networks and expertise, EIT Digital and HDB aim to create a stronger, more connected digital innovation landscape in Greece and beyond.



Learn more about this collaboration here: [EIT Digital and Hellenic Development Bank sign memorandum of understanding to strengthen digital innovation in Europe // EIT Digital](#)

8. EIT Food

Accelerating innovation to build a future-fit food system that produces healthy and sustainable food for all.

EIT Food is the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community. It plays a key role in advancing the goals of the [EU's Farm to Fork Strategy](#), which aims to create a fair, healthy, and environmentally-friendly food system.

EIT Food invests in projects, organisations, and individuals that are committed to transforming how food is produced, distributed, and consumed — in line with the EU's ambition for sustainability, innovation, and resilience across the food value chain. It unlocks innovation potential within businesses and universities. It supports the creation and growth of agrifood start-ups that deliver new technologies, products, and solutions for a more sustainable food future.

By equipping entrepreneurs and professionals with the skills to drive systemic change, EIT Food fosters a new generation of food system leaders. Consumers are placed at the heart of its efforts — echoing the Farm to Fork Strategy's emphasis on transparency and trust — by reconnecting people with the origins of their food and encouraging healthier, more sustainable choices.



Viktoria de Bourbon de Parme

Chief Partnership Officer,
EIT Food



I believe that impactful innovation begins with strong partnerships. By connecting diverse talents and regional strengths, we're cultivating a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food system for all.

Through these actions, EIT Food is not only contributing to the transformation of Europe's food system but also reinforcing the [EU's broader Green Deal](#) objectives.

EIT Food Flagship RIS Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**

Eligible countries: **RIS countries**

Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **20**

Website: [Test Farms - EIT Food](#)

EIT Food Test Farms

Test Farms connects agrifood start-ups with farmers and testing environments to validate and demonstrate their innovative solutions in real-life conditions.

By bridging the gap between tech developers and end-users, the programme accelerates market readiness, builds trust, and enables valuable feedback from the field, helping start-ups scale faster and smarter across Europe.



The programme enhanced our visibility within the food and agricultural sectors and opened doors to valuable partnerships and collaborations. Connecting with industry leaders, experts, and other start-ups helped us strengthen our network and explore new opportunities. The programme gave us a platform to present our technology to the right audience, resulting in increased interest and funding opportunities

Microbe+, Poland

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**

Eligible countries: **RIS countries**

Number of supported students in 2024: **215**

Website: [EIT Food RIS Fellowships - EIT Food](#)

EIT Food RIS Fellowship

[EIT Food RIS Fellowships](#) offer students and graduates from Southern and Eastern Europe the chance to gain hands-on experience in the agrifood sector through paid internships. By matching young talent with leading companies, the programme boosts career development, fosters innovation, and strengthens regional ecosystems with fresh skills and perspectives.

EIT Food Empowering Women in Agrifood

[The EWA programme](#) supports aspiring female entrepreneurs in turning agrifood ideas into sustainable businesses. Over a 6-month journey, participants receive expert training, one-on-one mentoring, and access to a network of industry leaders and investors. The programme also offers funding opportunities of up to EUR 10 000 to help kickstart or scale their ventures. EWA empowers women to lead innovation in the agrifood sector and drive real impact.

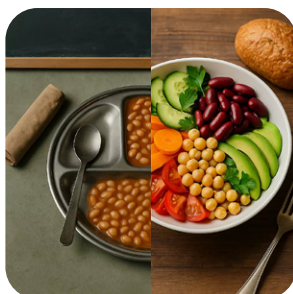
QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**

Eligible countries: **Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Ukraine**

Number of supported innovators in 2024: **110**

Website: [EWA | Empowering Women in Agrifood - EIT Food](#)



Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

EBRD and EIT Food Partner to Strengthen Agri-Food Start-ups in CEE

A new accelerator hub has opened at the EIT Food North-East office in Warsaw, marking a strategic collaboration between EIT Food and the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development \(EBRD\)](#) under the EIT Food Accelerator Network. This synergy aims to strengthen the Central and Eastern European (CEE) start-up ecosystem by supporting innovative agri-food solutions and unlocking regional potential.

Recognising the dynamic growth of the CEE innovation landscape and increasing investor interest, the hub targets pre-Series A start-ups working on 'Future Resilient Agriculture' – including soil health, bioinputs, smart farming, and carbon/nitrogen solutions. Start-ups will benefit from tailored mentoring, access to EU-wide research infrastructure, exclusive industry connections, and funding opportunities of up to EUR 50 000.



Jelena Erker

EBRD Associate Director, Food & Agribusiness



The agrifood industry faces immense challenges, particularly from climate change. Our new partnership with EIT Food will bridge the gap between start-ups developing cutting-edge technologies and established corporates that need innovative solutions to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. By bringing together start-ups, corporates, and investors, we aim to create a sustainable, inclusive agrifood system that accelerates the adoption of green technologies in the agrifood sector.

Learn more about this collaboration here: [EBRD and EIT Food launch a new accelerator Hub for agrifood start-ups - EIT Food](#)

QUICK FACTS

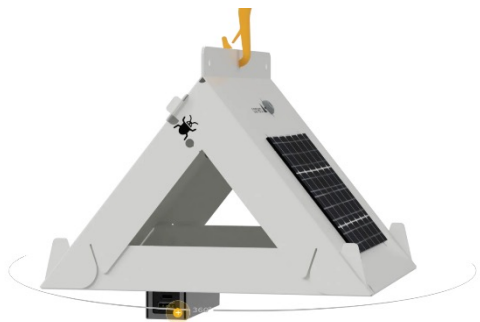
Name of the start-up: **Scoutlabs**
 Country of origin: **Hungary**
 Funding raised: **over EUR 2 000 000**
 EIT support: [EIT Food Sales Booster](#)
 Year of graduation: **2023**
 Website: scoutlabs.ag



Hungarian Agri-Tech Start-up Scoutlabs Expands Globally with EIT Food Support

Scoutlabs was born from real farming challenges. Founders Jimmy and Donat and their team are revolutionising pest control.

Their mission? Make smart pest monitoring accessible to millions of farmers worldwide. Through their dense network of AI-powered traps, they're transforming agriculture from guesswork to precision, protecting crops, profits, and our planet's future.



Thanks to the [EIT Food Sales Booster](#) programme in 2024:

- Expanded into North America and Southern Hemisphere markets
- Secured EU backed commercial loan for working capital and manufacturing operations
- Established a clear separation between manufacturing and operational expenses
- Enabled production of pilot units for field testing, crucial for market entry
- Raised further significant private and public investment of more than EUR 2 000 000.

9. EIT Health

Promoting innovation in health!

EIT Health is a leading European network advancing healthcare innovation through education, research, and entrepreneurship.

Aligned with the EU's priorities on healthy ageing, innovation-driven economies, and [the European Health Union](#), EIT Health addresses major societal challenges like rising healthcare costs and ageing populations. Its three goals - better health for all, sustainable systems, and a competitive health economy - translate into improved outcomes, cost-efficiency, and job creation. Acknowledging the systemic barriers to innovation in healthcare, EIT Health fosters collaboration across sectors to convert knowledge into impactful solutions.

As part of this mission, [EIT Health InnoStars](#) plays a vital role within the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme, engaging underrepresented regions and scaling local innovation. EIT Health InnoStars is one of EIT Health's eight geographical areas. It covers half of Europe, including Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Portugal, as well as additional regions, such as Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Ukraine.



Mónika Tóth

EIT Health RIS Director



The ambition of EIT Health RIS programme is to create an enabling environment for healthcare innovation in European countries with moderate and emerging innovation capacity. Through RIS activities, we contribute to the EU efforts to turn the diversity of the EU's territories into a strength, by leveraging the specific assets of each region and facilitating collaboration to build new EU value chains.

EIT Health Flagship RIS Initiatives

EIT Health InnoStars Awards

The programme supports early-stage healthcare start-ups from EIT RIS.

The programme offers two tracks: the Validation Track provides mentoring and up to EUR 25 000 to test MVPs (Minimum Viable Product¹⁷) with real users; the Investment Track supports incorporated start-ups with funding up to EUR 50 000, investor training, and market exposure. It empowers high-potential teams to scale and compete across Europe.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**

Eligible countries: **RIS countries**

Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **38**

Website: [InnoStars Awards - EIT Health](#)

17. A basic version of a product with just enough features to satisfy early users and provide feedback for future development.



At Manina Medtech, we aim to increase the success rate of assisted reproduction treatments by developing an instant test that requires only a sample of uterine fluid. Participation in the EIT Health InnoStars Awards has been instrumental in Manina Medtech's development journey. The programme provided early-stage funding, training and mentorship, facilitating the advancement of SEEDCHRONY from concept to clinical application. The EIT Health network also offered invaluable exposure to potential investors and partners within the European healthcare ecosystem.

Mónica de la Vega

CEO / Co-Founder at [Manina Medtech](#), Spain



EIT Health Innovation Days

i-Days promote health innovation among university students through dozens of one-day and two-day programmes held in academic institutions around Europe.

Students from all academic areas receive an introduction to practical health innovation tools and compete in teams to tackle real-life health challenges posed by EIT Health, local organisations, private corporations or start-ups. The winning team of each i-Day will attend the Winners' Event, a final competition that unites students from around Europe.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**

Eligible countries: **Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia**

Number of supported students in 2024: **682**

Website: [i-Days | EIT Health](#)



QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**

Eligible countries: **RIS Countries**

Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **10**

Website: [InnoStars Connect | EIT Health](#)

EIT Health Connect

EIT InnoStars Connect is a challenge-based programme in addressing real-life regional health challenges. It fosters cross-sector and cross-border collaboration between local authorities, academia, and innovators across Europe.

Selected partnerships receive tailored mentoring and up to EUR 25 000 in funding to co-develop and pilot practical solutions, helping build resilient, connected health ecosystems aligned with EU priorities.

Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **Ligence**
Country of origin: **Lithuania**
Funding raised: **over EUR 3 000 000**
EIT support: **EIT Jumpstarter and EIT Health InnoStars Awards**
Year of graduation: **2020**
Website: **[Ligence Echocardiography software](#)**



Lithuanian Health Tech Start-up Ligence Advances Echocardiography

Faced with a shortage of skilled specialists, hospitals often struggle to deliver timely and accurate heart ultrasounds.

Ligence Heart changes this. By automating measurements and reports, it matches expert cardiologists in diagnostic accuracy, as shown in a 2020 study. This AI-powered tool reduces variability and saves time, up to 15 minutes per patient, helping clinicians make faster, more reliable decisions and improving access to quality cardiac care across healthcare systems.



Arnas Karužas

Chief Executive Officer of Ligence, Lithuania



Thanks to the funding received under EIT Health InnoStars, our company can solve the problems of assessing the heart damage of patients more quickly and allocate more human resources to this project. The funding enabled us to cover the costs associated with the development of R&D.

QUICK FACTS

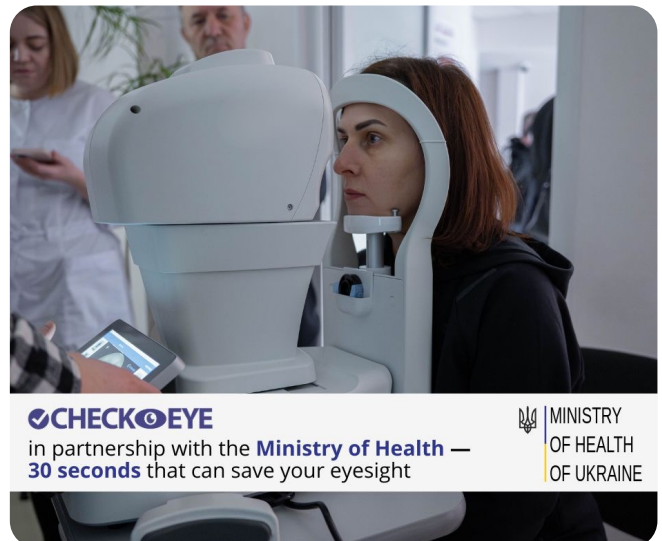
Name of the start-up: **Check Eye**
Country of origin: **Ukraine**
Funding raised: **over EUR 1 300 000**
EIT support: **EIT Health InnoStars Awards**
Year of graduation: **2024**
Website: **Retinopathy Prevention.**
Early Detection of Chronic Diseases



Ukrainian Start-Up CheckEye Brings Vision to All with AI-Powered Eye Screening

In many regions, early detection of diabetic retinopathy is limited by a lack of specialists and equipment.

CheckEye tackles this gap with an AI-powered screening tool that analyses retinal images using just a photo from a fundus camera. It enables fast, affordable diagnosis – even in remote areas. By bringing expert-level screening to primary care settings, CheckEye helps prevent vision loss and supports healthcare systems in delivering early, accessible eye care to those who need it most.



10. EIT InnoEnergy*

Transitioning global energy - transforming every industry.

EIT InnoEnergy is one of the founding KICs of the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology**, established in 2010. It plays a strategic role in advancing Europe's energy transition by supporting innovations that promote decarbonisation, energy security, and industrial competitiveness. EIT InnoEnergy actively contributes to key EU priorities including the **Green Deal**, **Fit for 55**, and **REPowerEU**.

With a mission to accelerate sustainable energy innovation across Europe, EIT InnoEnergy builds strong industrial value chains, supports more than 500 start-ups and scale-ups on a yearly basis, and delivers targeted education and skills programmes. It connects over 1200 partners across 30+ countries, ensuring real impact at scale - from renewable energy and storage to mobility and circular economy solutions. This strengthens Europe's energy independence and economic resilience, which are in line with the EU's strategic goals.

In 2024, EIT InnoEnergy significantly strengthened its role as a catalyst for sustainable innovation and



Piotr Pawelec

Regional Innovation Scheme Manager, InnoEnergy



With its mission to transform industries, de-risking innovation and boosting re-industrialisation of Europe InnoEnergy pays a lot of attention to bring together all RIS stakeholders to build ecosystems based on proven innovations supported by EIT ecosystem and bring them to next level in strong and resilient RIS region countries.

entrepreneurship across RIS countries. The organisation's programmes and investments supported the development of groundbreaking technologies, scalable start-ups, and impactful cross-border collaborations, particularly in Romania, Poland, Estonia, Hungary, and Bulgaria.

InnoEnergy Flagship Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**

Eligible countries: **Worldwide**

Number of attendees in 2024: **1700+**

Website: **[The Business Booster 2024](#)**

InnoEnergy The Business Booster 2024

The Business Booster (TBB) 2024 is InnoEnergy's annual flagship international networking event. It showcases more than 150 sustainable energy technologies under one roof. This two-day event is dedicated to accelerating the clean energy transition. Each year, *TBB* takes place in a different European city, gathering a diverse mix of industry leaders, investors, policymakers, and entrepreneurs.

* EIT InnoEnergy became InnoEnergy in March 2025

InnoEnergy Skills Institute

InnoEnergy's Skills Institute is a leading European platform for upskilling and reskilling the workforce in the clean-tech and sustainable energy sectors.

Backed by the European Battery Alliance and aligned with EU priorities such as the Green Deal and REPowerEU, it has already trained over 100 000 professionals across the continent.

In 2024, it continues to address the growing demand for skilled professionals by offering industry-driven training programs across key areas such as solar energy, battery production, and electric mobility. With over 100 000 workers trained, 600+ hours of content, and certifications aligned with real job market needs, the Skills Institute supports both individuals and companies in building a future-ready green workforce. Its flagship academies include the European Battery Academy and European Solar Academy, helping meet the EU's goals for energy transition and industrial competitiveness. Backed by the European Battery Alliance and aligned with EU priorities such as the Green Deal and REPowerEU.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**
Eligible countries: **Worldwide**
Number of upskilled people in EIT RIS in 2024: **50 000+**
Website: [Skills Institute](#)



The InnoEnergy Skills Institute has successfully trained 100 000 workers through the European Battery Alliance (EBA) Academy, marking a significant milestone in workforce development for the battery sector. Launched in 2022, the EBA Academy was mandated by the European Commission to address the skills gap in the rapidly evolving battery industry.

Building on this success, the Academy plans to expand its services to include sourcing, hiring, onboarding, and retention, ensuring a holistic approach to workforce development.

Oana Penu

Director, InnoEnergy Skills Institute

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**
Eligible countries: **Worldwide**
Number of supported participants in EIT RIS in 2024: **119**
Website: [Hello CleanTech 3.0](#)

InnoEnergy Hello CleanTech

The Hello CleanTech programme is a strategic innovation support initiative designed to accelerate the growth of start-ups, innovators, and researchers in the sustainable energy sector. It provides a dedicated platform that facilitates connections between emerging cleantech ventures and international corporations, enabling collaboration, market access, and scaling opportunities.

Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

InnoEnergy-Backed Breakthrough in Romania's Energy Storage

Romania's largest electric energy storage system, developed by [Prime Batteries Technology](#) and [Monsson](#), marks a major milestone in Europe's energy transition. With strong backing from InnoEnergy, the project delivers an initial 24 MWh capacity within a planned 216 MWh hybrid wind-solar-battery facility in Constanța County.

[Prime Batteries](#), an InnoEnergy portfolio company, led the development with over 7 000 hours of local engineering and assembly. The system draws power

from the 50 MW Mireasa Wind Farm and the 35 MW Galbiori 2 PV plant, operating through Monsson's proprietary control software.

EIT InnoEnergy played a critical role by providing both funding and strategic guidance. This collaboration highlights InnoEnergy's commitment to advancing sustainable energy solutions and supporting innovative projects that accelerate the shift to clean, resilient, and autonomous energy systems across Europe.



Răzvan Nicolescu*

the EIT Governing Board member and former energy minister in Romania



I am very excited that such an important storage capacity is manufactured and installed in Europe by a Romanian company benefiting from InnoEnergy support.

The project is very important for the resilience and energy autonomy of Europe because the batteries are produced in Europe and this is also the biggest project of this size on the continent.

Learn more about this collaboration here: [Romania's largest electric energy storage launched by Prime Batteries and Monsson | EIT](#)

* former GB member, terms of office: 2021-2025

TOKWISE Launches GuardianTrade: AI-Powered Autonomous Trading for Renewable Energy

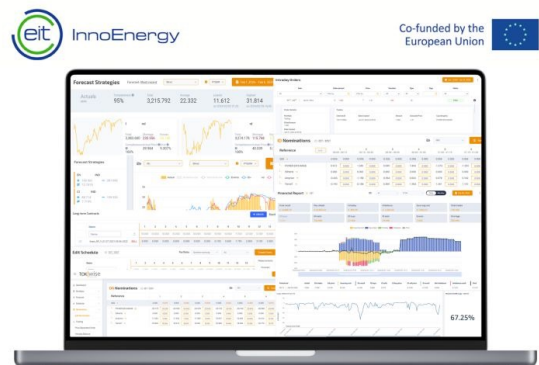
TokWise, an EIT InnoEnergy portfolio company from Bulgaria, has launched GuardianTrade – an AI-powered trading system revolutionising renewable energy portfolio management. Developed through 18 months of R&D with leading IPPs, GuardianTrade enables 24/7 automated trading, dynamic risk control, and real-time market responsiveness.

This breakthrough reflects InnoEnergy's ongoing support for high-impact ventures that drive innovation in energy markets and empower the transition to smarter, more resilient renewable energy systems.



QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **TokWise**
 Country of origin: **Bulgaria**
 Funding raised: **over EUR 3 000 000**
 EIT support: **EUR 220 000 in investments**
 Year of graduation: **2024**
 Website: [Software & AI models for Renewable Energy | TokWise](https://www.tokwise.com)



**TokWise launches GuardianTrade:
 AI-powered autonomous trading
 for renewable energy**

11. EIT Manufacturing

Empowering global manufacturing innovation!

EIT Manufacturing is Europe's leading innovation community for the manufacturing sector, driving sustainable and competitive industrial transformation. It aligns with key EU strategies such as the [Green Deal](#), [Digital Europe](#), and the [New Industrial Strategy](#), aiming to make European manufacturing more resilient, resource-efficient, and globally competitive.

By supporting advanced technologies, circular economy models, and the upskilling of workers, EIT Manufacturing strengthens Europe's industrial base and fosters innovation-led growth. The community brings together industry, research, and education to develop new solutions, support start-ups, and empower talent. Through these efforts, EIT Manufacturing contributes to Europe's twin transition - green and digital - ensuring that manufacturing remains a cornerstone of the EU economy in the decades ahead.



Dr. Verónica Rodríguez García

RIS Strategy and Impact Manager
at EIT Manufacturing



2024 has been a year of remarkable results for the EIT RIS countries at EIT Manufacturing, underlining the tremendous potential for growth in these regions. We are committed to supporting and advancing this growth moving forward.

EIT Manufacturing Flagship RIS Initiatives

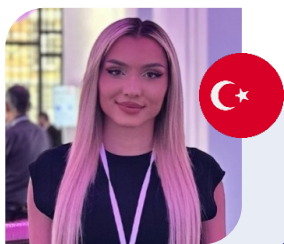
QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: [Business support](#)
Eligible countries: [EIT RIS countries](#)
Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **28**
Website: [LEADERS - EIT Manufacturing](#)

EIT LEADERS – Women Innovators in Manufacturing at EIT RIS

The [EIT Manufacturing LEADERS](#) programme empowers women innovators from EIT RIS countries by supporting their entrepreneurial ideas in manufacturing.

Participants receive training, mentoring, and visibility to develop solutions aligned with EU industry and sustainability goals. Winners receive a EUR 10 000 prize to further their ventures, promoting gender balance and inclusive innovation across Europe's manufacturing ecosystem.



Selen Şenal

CEO / Founder at Founder of [Algbio Inc](#), Türkiye



EIT has always felt like a family to me, returning to this community feels like coming home, and their unwavering support has been invaluable.

Study visit for Slovak public institutions

EIT Manufacturing East hosted a strategic innovation study visit for representatives of Slovakia’s Ministry of Economy and the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO).

The visit promoted cross-border collaboration and shared best practices in advanced manufacturing, digitalisation, and sustainability. It also facilitated dialogue with Austrian innovation stakeholders, strengthening regional cooperation and supporting EU priorities for industrial competitiveness and cohesion.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**
Eligible countries: **Slovakia**
Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **10**
Website: [EIT Manufacturing East Hosts Slovak Delegation for Strategic Innovation Study Visit - EIT Manufacturing](#)

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**
Eligible countries: **EIT RIS countries**
Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **5**
Website: [RIS Inclusiveness call - EIT Manufacturing](#)

EIT RIS Inclusiveness

The EIT RIS Inclusiveness programme supports initiatives that make the manufacturing sector more accessible and innovative in EIT RIS countries. With up to EUR 40 000 in funding, it empowers organisations to launch projects such as inclusive training for people with disabilities, accessible technology demonstrations, or events promoting equal opportunities - advancing EU goals for a fairer, more resilient industrial ecosystem.



EIT Manufacturing RIS Inclusiveness has been one of the few programmes fully focused on collectives with disabilities and inclusiveness, as one fundamental step to approach these huge integration challenges for our factories.

From CTAG we are very happy to have participated in the programme, as an excellent opportunity to address human-centric and Industry 5.0 current problems.

Dr. Angel Dacal

Head of Innovation and Impact
in Manufacturing at [CTAG](#), Spain



Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **Neendu**
Country of origin: **Poland**
EIT support: [EIT Manufacturing Leaders](#)
Year of graduation: **2024**
Website: <https://neendu.com/>



Neendu: Smart Infant Monitoring Powered by Innovation and EIT Support

When **Neendu** set out to support parents of newborns, it envisioned a smart, non-invasive wearable that tracks infants' vital signs in real time - pulse, oxygen, temperature, and breathing - sending alerts via mobile app. Backed by neonatal expertise and smart algorithms, the device offers accuracy without false alarms.

As the 2nd place winner of the RIS LEADERS 2024, Neendu gained EUR 7 500, expert mentorship, and key industry connections that refined its pitch and opened doors to hardware partnerships.



Participating in the RIS LEADERS Competition has provided us with funding and visibility. The visibility gained from being recognised as a finalist in such a prestigious competition has significantly increased our exposure to potential partners, investors, and customers. This recognition has not only validated our mission but also opened up new opportunities for growth, collaboration, and market expansion.

Julia Wilk

Chief Executive Officer at [Neendu](#), Poland

From EIT Jumpstarter to Game-Changer: UP Catalyst's Cross-KIC Climate Tech Journey

UP Catalyst: From Vision to Impact Across the EIT Innovation Ecosystem

UP Catalyst, a cleantech start-up from Estonia, began its journey to transform CO₂ into sustainable carbon materials by winning the **EIT RawMaterials Jumpstarter** programme in 2019. This milestone marked the start of a long-standing partnership with the EIT Community, unlocking support through the **EIT RawMaterials Acceleration Programme** and the **KAVA Upscaling Project**, which provided EUR 1.8 million in funding across 2022–2023.

Their momentum continued as UP Catalyst was selected for the **EIT ClimAccelerator** in 2022, where they received grant funding, climate impact assessment, and tailored mentorship to refine their business and sustainability strategy.

Demonstrating cross-sectoral appeal, UP Catalyst also entered the manufacturing domain, securing **second place in BoostUp! RIS 2021 (ACCELERATE category)**, an innovation competition by **EIT Manufacturing**. This opened doors to deeper

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **UpCatalyst**

Country of origin: **Estonia**

Funding raised: **over EUR 24 000 000**

EIT support: **EIT Jumpstarter, EIT Raw**

Materials Acceleration Programme,

EIT ClimAccelerator, EIT Manufacturing

BoostUp! RIS 2021

Year of graduation: **2021**



collaboration, and by 2022 they became a project leader under the **EIT Manufacturing RIS Open Call**, coordinating the **MoReCCU project** with EUR 559 636 in funding.

Over two years, UP Catalyst and its partners advanced their **Molten Salt Carbon Capture – Electrolysis Technology (MSCC-ET)** by innovating in high-temperature press filtration and salt regeneration—paving the way for scalable, circular carbon conversion.

Today, UP Catalyst stands as a leading example of how integrated support from multiple EIT KICs can empower climate-focused innovation from lab to market.

12. EIT RawMaterials

Securing Raw Materials. Driving Innovation. Enabling Sustainability.

EIT RawMaterials is the world's largest and leading partnership in raw materials and closely connected with the policy agenda of the European Commission.

Metals and minerals are key enablers for the [European Green Deal](#) and will substitute fossil fuels in the long run. At the same time, Europe is highly dependent on importing raw materials for its manufacturing industries and to accomplish the transition to a resource efficient, sustainable society.

This is why the European Green Deal defines access to resources as a strategic security question for Europe's ambition to develop into a green economy. To meet this challenge, the vision of EIT RawMaterials is to develop raw materials into a major strength for Europe.

EIT RawMaterials' mission is to advance Europe's transition to sustainability by driving innovation along the entire raw materials value chain. To fulfil the mission, three strategic objectives are addressed: securing raw materials supply, designing materials solutions, and closing materials loops.

In the EIT RIS region the KIC focuses on entrepreneurship and outreach, and fostering innovation, education, and capacity building.



Tina Benda

EIT RawMaterials RIS Manager



The implementation of the Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) exemplifies effective collaboration and strategic partnering. Through EIT RawMaterials initiatives such as the KAVA funding call, capacity building, and entrepreneurship support, strong progress has been made towards achieving the regional objectives.

We are dedicated in advancing regional integration by promoting sustainable development, fostering innovation, and enhancing educational and entrepreneurial collaboration across the value chain.

EIT RawMaterials Flagship RIS Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**

Eligible countries: **EIT RIS countries**

Number of supported organisations in 2024: **131**

Website: [Call for RIS Projects \(Capacity Building and Innovation\)](#)

EIT RawMaterials Call for RIS Projects

[The EIT RawMaterials RIS Capacity Building and Innovation Call](#) funds projects that develop practical solutions for critical raw materials challenges in EIT RIS regions.

It supports pilot actions, skills development, start-up support, and tech transfer initiatives led by local actors - universities, SMEs, and RTOs (*Research and Technology Organisations*). Selected projects receive up to EUR 1 000 000 to boost innovation uptake and foster resilient regional value chains.

Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **DOK-ING**
 Country of origin: **Croatia**
 Funding raised: **EUR 6 100 000**
 EIT support: **Innovation KAVA (Upscaling) initiative**
 Website: **[DOK-ING - Don't send a man to do a machine's job](#)**



DOK-ING – Revolution in Mining Sector

DOK-ING, based in Zagreb, is revolutionising mining with its NRE Fleet – an advanced, eco-friendly solution for extracting narrow reef ore bodies. With strategic backing from EIT RawMaterials the company received funding, business mentorship, and access to a strong innovation network.

This support enabled DOK-ING to raise EUR 6.1M, accelerate market entry, and set new safety and sustainability standards in mining. Employing 236 professionals, the company exemplifies how EIT RawMaterials empowers pioneering ventures to deliver high-impact solutions in the raw materials sector.

New Ground for Innovation: Albania Partners with EIT RawMaterials

On 23 April 2024, EIT RawMaterials, the largest raw materials partnership in Europe, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania signed a historic agreement marking the establishment of the Regional Innovation Centre in Albania.

The official launch took place in Elbasan, attended by Deputy Prime Minister Belinda Balluku, EU Ambassador Silvio Gonzato, and EIT RawMaterials CEO Bernd Schäfer, alongside over 100 stakeholders from government, academia, and industry.

The centre will operate daily to support Albanian universities, innovators, investors, and raw materials

stakeholders. It aims to drive innovation, enhance skills development – especially among women and STEM students – and align national efforts with EU green and innovation agendas.

This initiative supports the European Commission's **Growth Plan for the Western Balkans** and promotes regional integration through sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and educational collaboration across the value chain. The Innovation Centre will also serve as a bridge to EIT RawMaterials' wider European network, fostering impactful partnerships and economic progress.



Learn more about this collaboration here: [EIT RawMaterials Hub in Albania](#)

13. EIT Urban Mobility

Mobility for more liveable urban spaces

EIT Urban Mobility, established in 2019 aims to accelerate the shift toward sustainable and inclusive urban mobility. Based in Barcelona, it unites over 250 partners - cities, industry, academia, and research institutions - to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and education in urban transport.

As a key contributor to EU strategies, EIT Urban Mobility supports the [Green Deal](#), the [Cities Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030](#), and [the New European Bauhaus](#). It collaborates closely with regional and local governments, delivers real-life mobility pilots, backs start-ups, and provides advanced training to future mobility leaders. Through its work, the KIC advances the EU's CO₂ reduction targets and climate neutrality ambitions, making urban transport safer, greener, and more connected for all Europeans.



Lluís Puerto

Head of RIS & EIT Community
EIT Urban Mobility



In 2024, thanks to EIT Urban Mobility RIS programme, 2266 professionals have graduated from our training programmes, 7 new ventures were created, and EUR 5.7 million of investment were attracted by our RIS start-up portfolio. In this way, we increased our impact in the regions where the innovation score is lower, and we need to close the gap with the rest of Europe.

EIT Urban Mobility Flagship RIS Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**
 Eligible countries: **EU and Horizon Europe associated countries**
 Number of supported start-ups in EIT RIS 2024: **10**
 Website: [Future Mobility - EIT Urban Mobility](#)



EIT Urban Mobility Future Mobility Accelerate2Move

[The Accelerator](#) offers early-stage startups a EUR 2 500 grant to support prototyping and pilot activities. Accelerate2Move (A2M) supports start-ups and scale-ups generating solutions in advanced technologies (AI, Blockchain, 5G, vehicle-2-everything [V2X] and Internet of Things) that can contribute to sustainable urban mobility.

Additionally, participants benefit from a 6-month tailored acceleration programme, including 80 hours of mentoring, 12 thematic workshops, and a five-day bootcamp in Latvia.

Start-ups also gain access to EIT Urban Mobility's extensive network, increasing visibility and opportunities for further investment.

EIT Urban Mobility Citizens on the Move

Launched in 2023 by EIT Urban Mobility, the [Citizens on the Move](#) training programme is designed to enhance the capabilities of European civil servants in engaging citizens and stakeholders in the sustainable mobility transition.

Through a combination of online modules and practical workshops, participants apply citizen engagement techniques to real-life case studies from their cities, fostering public acceptance and co-creation of urban mobility solutions.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**

Eligible countries: **EIT RIS countries**

Number of upskilled people in EIT RIS in 2024:

19 participants from 15 cities and 8 countries

Website: [Professional training - EIT Urban](#)



QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Innovation creation**

Eligible countries: **Horizon Europe and associated countries**

Number of supported organisations in EIT RIS in 2024: **5**

Website: [IMPULSE - EIT Urban Mobility](#)



Innovation Project

EIT Urban Mobility IMPULSE

In 2024, the IMPULSE project piloted their platform that optimises the management of e-bus fleets by processing real-time data on batteries' status, charging stations, and planned routes in Lisbon, Portugal and Istanbul, Türkiye.

The project was led by CARNET and included Carris, realCity ITS (commercial partner) and Municipality of Kadikoy. The solution aims to overcome the technological and operational barriers to the electrification of bus fleets by optimising vehicle fleet management and batteries recharging operations planning.

The project saw some significant results, for example, in Lisbon, there was a 30% reduction in e-bus failures per 10 000 km and an 8% reduction in kilometres lost due to service interruptions. The platform facilitated the Carris e-bus expansion from 15 to 59 buses in 2024 creating the equivalent reduction of over 3 000 tonnes CO₂ per year.

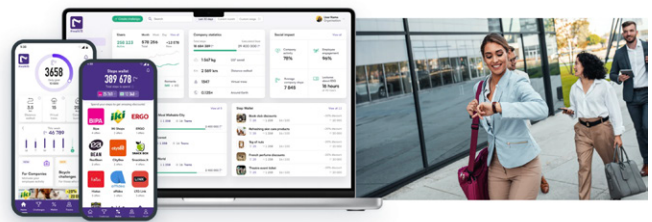
Showcasing Excellence: Best Practices, Alumni, and Success Stories

Wellbeing in Every Step: Boosting Teams, Health & Motivation with Walk15

Walk15 serves as a tool for your personal and organisational well-being and sustainability goals. Create and engage in step challenges, unlock exclusive discounts by exchanging your steps, and foster motivation and team spirit among your colleagues. EIT Urban Mobility investment (EUR 150 000 in 2023) allowed Walk15 to be recognised for its growth and impact. Walk15 has been selected as one of [Sifted's top 30 fastest-growing start-ups](#) in the Eastern Europe & Baltic region.

QUICK FACTS

Name of the start-up: **Walk12.app**
 Country of origin: **Lithuania**
 Funding raised: **EUR 30 000 000**
 EIT support: **EUR 150 000 in investments**
 Year of graduation: **2024**
 Website: [Walk15 – Every step counts](#)



Vlada Musvydaitė-Vilčiauskė

CEO & Founder [Walk15](#), Lithuania



The investment of EIT Urban Mobility has been pivotal for Walk15's growth, paving the way and opening doors to the current Series A funding round. This funding enabled us to expand rapidly in the Baltics and Germany, establishing a stronger presence and engaging more users and organizations. The EIT Urban Mobility team's expertise and support have been invaluable as we continue to grow and innovate in the wellness and sustainability sectors.



EIT Community Strategic Regional Innovations (SRI) Initiative

Where Industries Meet: Boosting EIT RIS Innovation Through Collaboration

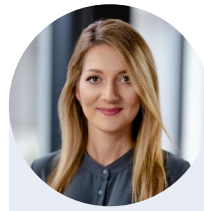
14. EIT Strategic Regional Innovation (SRI) Cluster

One of the key collaboration platforms funded by the EIT in the EIT RIS area is the [EIT Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster Initiative](#). It acts as a connector hub, which breaks down silos between sectors like health, food, digital, climate, and energy, manufacturing, raw materials, culture & creativity and urban mobility. Thanks to EIT's push towards efficiency and synergies, its nine thematic communities, instead of working in isolation, interlock like gears in a well-oiled machine, driving more coordinated responses to today's complex global challenges.

This Initiative serves as a launchpad for modest and emerging innovator countries, including Ukraine, Türkiye, Moldova, the Western Balkans, and Europe's Outermost Regions.

Since 2023, it has taken on a bold mission: to connect underrepresented innovators with the tools, networks, and funding they need to scale their ideas. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of the Initiative, **33 new start-ups were launched in 2024 alone**, while **637 innovators were equipped with essential business skills to turn their ideas into impact**. To further empower local ecosystems, **18 EIT Community Hubs** were established across Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, serving as one-stop shops where innovators can access hands-on support, mentoring, and the right opportunities to scale their solutions beyond the lab.

Beyond numbers, this success reflects a strategic shift: the Initiative worked actively to build synergies with key European innovation actors, including the [European Patent Office \(EPO\)](#), the [European Union Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#), the [Enterprise Europe Network \(EEN\)](#), the [Regional Cooperation Council \(RCC\)](#) and



Marta Kaczmarek

Director of the EIT SRI Initiative



At the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, building bridges is not just a metaphor – it is a mission.

Through the Strategic Regional Innovation Initiative, we connect innovators from Europe's most dynamic but often underrepresented regions with the knowledge, networks, and funding needed to thrive. Whether in Widening countries of the EU or Ukraine, Türkiye, the Western Balkans, the EU's outermost regions, our role is to ensure that promising ideas – no matter where they originate – have a pathway to impact. By uniting all nine EIT Communities under a common goal, we are not only widening participation, but we are also deepening Europe's innovation capacity at its very edges.

the [COST Association](#). These partnerships ensure that innovators across Europe benefit from a **more connected, less fragmented support system**, unlocking pathways to growth, protection of IP, and access to markets.

Find out more about the EIT Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster here: [Home - EIT Regional Innovation Scheme](#)



EIT Community Flagship Initiatives

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**
 Eligible countries: **EIT RIS countries**
 Years in action: **7+**
 Number of supported teams in 2024: **133**
 Website: [EIT Jumpstarter](#)

EIT Jumpstarter

[EIT Jumpstarter](#) is a pre-accelerator programme that helps early-stage innovators turn their ideas into viable business models. By offering expert training, mentoring, and access to a broad EIT Community network, it empowers teams from emerging European regions to launch impactful start-ups and bring their solutions to market. Moreover, starting from 2024, EIT Jumpstarter graduates officially became part of [the EIT Jumpstarter Alumni Community](#).



Monika Štěpánová

CEO & Co-Founder at [Lightly Technologies](#)



The programme helped us sharpen our value proposition, improve communication with stakeholders, and develop a clear go-to-market strategy. It also guided us in identifying the most promising markets and refining our commercialisation approach.

EIT Jumpstarter NEXT

[EIT Jumpstarter NEXT](#) is a follow-up programme designed for advanced teams who have completed early-stage support like EIT Jumpstarter. It helps start-ups move from idea to market by offering tailored mentoring, investor matchmaking, and access to networks, guiding them through critical steps toward commercialisation and scaling across Europe.

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**
 Eligible countries: **EIT RIS countries**
 Years in action: **1**
 Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **8**
 Website: [EIT Jumpstarter Next Programme](#)

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Educational**
 Eligible countries: **Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Moldova**
 Years in action: **2+**
 Number of supported participants in 2024: **75**
 Website: [InfraBooster - EIT Regional Innovation Scheme](#)

EIT InfraBooster

[InfraBooster](#) empowers public research organisations to turn their scientific infrastructure into innovation drivers. Through tailored training and mentoring, the programme helps institutions identify commercial opportunities, build service offerings, and engage with industry, unlocking the economic potential of research facilities across emerging European regions.



Vaska Mojsovska

Owner, AGRO KALEM DOOEL, North Macedonia - a company that purchased one of the services developed within the EIT InfraBooster programme



AGRO-KALEM is highly satisfied with the services of the UKIM Institute of Agriculture's Laboratory for Seed Control and Plant Health Analysis, designed during participation in the EIT InfraBooster programme. Their professional 'one-stop-shop' service saved us time and resources, and the confirmation and recommendations were essential for obtaining a valid certificate for the health status of our mother plants. We highly recommend the Institute and the offered service for its professionalism, expertise, and efficient.

EIT Red Kalyna

EIT Red Kalyna is an initiative that supports Ukrainian women innovators and leaders across all sectors. It offers tailored mentoring, capacity building, and access to the EIT Community to help participants rebuild, grow, and lead innovation efforts. The programme strengthens Ukraine's innovation ecosystem and promotes gender-inclusive recovery and resilience. In 2024 it was conducted in partnership with [EEN Ukraine](#), [COST](#), [EUIPO](#), [Diia.city](#), and [the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine](#).

QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Awareness raising**

Eligible countries: **Ukraine**

Years in action: **2+**

Number of supported innovators in 2024: **14**

Website: [Red Kalyna - EIT Regional Innovation Scheme](#)



QUICK FACTS

Type of activity: **Business support**

Eligible countries: **Ukraine**

Years in action: **2+**

Number of supported start-ups in 2024: **73**

Website: <https://eit-ris.eu/eit-founders2founders/>

EIT Founders2Founders

EIT Founders2Founders is a series of expert-led, one-day workshops designed to help early-stage and advanced deep tech start-ups in Ukraine refine their business models, improve investor readiness, and expand internationally. Held across multiple cities in 2024, the programme brought together a strong mix of tech entrepreneurs, mentors, and investors, culminating in a pitching competition awarding EUR 60 000 in prizes.

EIT one-stop shops in your country

The **EIT Community Hubs** serve as a *one-stop shop* for local stakeholders, bringing together the full power of the EIT Community to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and education across Europe's regions. These hubs act as local access points, connecting innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and policymakers to opportunities within the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

Each hub is led by an **EIT Community Officer (ECO)** who serves as a visible and active representative of the EIT on the ground. The ECO facilitates the flow of information between local stakeholders and supports the integration of regional actors into Europe's wider innovation landscape.

As of 2024, the EIT Community Hub Network comprises **18 operational hubs**, a significant scale-up from the initial pilot in 2023.



As the ECO for Malta, I aim to foster growth in the national innovation ecosystem by tangibly serving the innovation community on the ground and acting as a dynamic enabler among local government, Malta's innovation community, and EIT KICs... Working closely with local government bodies, I will support and accelerate the innovation process, ensuring a seamless exchange of ideas, resources, and best practices.

Diana Miceli EIT Community Officer, Malta



Becoming the ECO EIT Community Officer crowns the long string of our achievements as the waypoint for innovators in Slovenia. It will build upon the great work that was done by the whole Slovenian EIT community and especially by the NCP. The hub will provide us with crucial on-the-ground contact for implementing new programs and driving further innovation.

Jakob Gajšek EIT Community Officer, Slovenia



By identifying the right opportunities for innovation and research-entrepreneurial talents and innovative companies from Montenegro within the KICs, the EIT Community Hub will serve as an access point to the EIT innovation marketplace in the nine thematic fields of the KICs. The Hub will act on fostering collaboration among the EIT Community and institutions in Montenegro so as to reach synergy of the different policies and instruments aimed at innovation development.

Branka Žižić EIT Community Officer, Montenegro

The presence of these hubs is instrumental in making EIT services more accessible, increasing visibility of local innovation efforts, and reinforcing the EIT's commitment to balanced innovation growth across all EU regions.

Each EIT Community Hub operates under the supervision of a designated EIT KIC. The respective KIC was

responsible for contracting the EIT Community Officer, supporting the launch of the hub in alignment with the guidelines provided by the Coordination Team. The lead KIC SPOCs advised on hub preparation, reviewed monthly reports, and conducted interim and annual performance assessments of the EIT Community Officers.

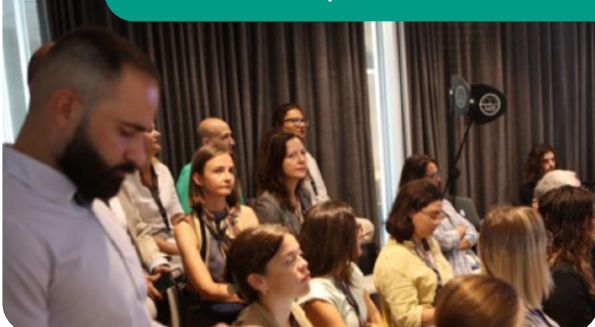
EIT Community Hub kick-off event in Kyiv, Ukraine - 30 January 2024



EIT Community Hub kick-off event in Riga, Latvia - 1 March 2024



EIT Community Hub kick-off event in Valletta, Malta - 4 September 2024



15. EIT Regional Innovation Scheme: A Forward Look

Over the past decade, the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) has become a key driver of innovation and capacity building in countries with moderate and emerging innovation ecosystems. As the programme moves into its second decade, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) are building on this

strong foundation to deliver more strategic, coherent, and impactful support across the RIS-eligible countries and regions. In 2024, 19 participants from 15 cities and 8 countries (such as Türkiye, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, Romania, Poland, Italy and Latvia) were engaged.

Strengthening Local Presence: The EIT Community Hubs

A central component of the EIT's forward strategy is the establishment of a new network of **EIT Community Hubs**. These hubs will consolidate the EIT's existing local outreach and offer a unified interface for stakeholders at the national and regional levels. Designed as **one-stop shops**, the hubs will serve as comprehensive access points for all EIT opportunities, simplifying access to services, information, and support mechanisms across the EIT Community. They aim to

reinforce the visibility, accessibility, and integration of EIT activities in local innovation ecosystems, fostering stronger community engagement and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Special attention is being given to the EU's Outermost Regions, with plans to launch **EIT Community Hubs** in 2025 across the French, Portuguese, and Spanish Outermost Regions.

Launching the EIT Regional Innovation Booster Pilot

To further accelerate regional innovation potential, the EIT is preparing the launch of the **EIT Regional Innovation Booster pilot initiative**. This new instrument will offer long-term, strategic support to the most promising early-stage ventures operating in EIT RIS-eligible countries one by one. By fostering partnerships with experienced regional and European stakeholders, the Booster will help selected ventures progress toward international scalability, market

access, and investment-readiness.

The initiative is envisioned as a key mechanism to complement existing EU innovation instruments and facilitate smoother transitions to support programmes such as [the European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#) and the [European Investment Fund \(EIF\)](#).

Focusing Support on High-Potential Innovators

In the coming years, the EIT will focus its RIS activities on identifying and scaling **high-potential early-stage ventures**. These efforts will be complemented by tailored support services to improve investor readiness

and help innovators navigate the broader EU funding and policy landscape. This targeted approach will not only maximise impact but also support more efficient resource allocation across the RIS portfolio.

Enhancing Strategic Impact in the Union's Neighbourhood

Given the growing geopolitical and economic relevance of the Union's neighbouring regions, **strengthening EIT RIS activities beyond EU borders** remains a strategic priority. The EIT RIS has already demonstrated its value as a flexible and effective policy instrument in delivering place-based innovation support in the Union's neighbourhood.

Going forward, the scheme should be further enhanced and its eligibility broadened, enabling it to more effectively respond to regional needs, provide tailored capacity-building, and contribute to the Union's external innovation engagement and strategic autonomy.

Reinforcing the EIT's Policy Support Role

As part of the EIT's broader mandate to support EU policy implementation, the EIT RIS will continue to play a pivotal role in **translating local insights into high-level policy recommendations**. Over the past decade, the EIT Community has accumulated a significant body of knowledge and operational experience through RIS implementation. This expertise is increasingly valuable for informing national innovation strategies, fostering

cross-border collaboration, and supporting evidence-based policymaking at the EU level.

Through strengthened coordination with national authorities and EU institutions, the EIT RIS will contribute to more coherent and effective innovation policy alignment across Europe.

The future of the EIT RIS is anchored in its capacity to evolve, scale, and respond to both systemic innovation challenges and emerging geopolitical realities. With a renewed strategic focus, enhanced delivery models, and stronger ties to EU policy frameworks, the EIT RIS is well-positioned to remain a **cornerstone of Europe's efforts to create a more inclusive, resilient, and competitive innovation landscape**.

Annexe 1. EIT Jumpstarter Success Stories

This document showcases selected start-up success stories from the EIT Jumpstarter programme. Each example achieved exceptional growth - whether through significant investment rounds, outstanding strategic partnerships, or as compelling journeys through the broader EIT ecosystem. All company valuations are sourced from Dealroom. The "Recent News" section focuses on the most recent funding, granting and collaboration milestones.

DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **Ligence**
 Country of registration: **Lithuania**
 Country of origin of the founders: **Lithuania**
 Field: **Health Tech**
 Website: <https://www.ligence.io/>



Enterprise value

EUR 12-18M - [Ligence company information, funding & investors | EIT Innovation Ecosystem](#)
 - Dealroom

EIT Programme and the year of participation

EIT Jumpstarter 2019

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [Ligence attracts EUR 3M Investment in 2024 led by Polish Simpact Ventures](#)
- [In 2023 Blackford and Ligence Announce Echocardiography AI Partnership – Ligence Heart](#)

Consumer solution of the year



Main idea

AI-powered echo analysis for faster, better care in cardiology. An **AI-powered software that automates the analysis and reporting of 2D transthoracic echocardiography (TTE) studies**. It identifies echocardiographic views, segments heart structures, performs measurements, and generates standardized reports, reducing manual workload and variability. Designed to integrate seamlessly with existing medical systems, Ligence Heart enhances diagnostic efficiency and accuracy in cardiac imaging.

DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **ReCatalyst**
Country of registration: **Slovenia**
Country of origin of the founders: **Slovenia**
Field: **Raw Materials**
Website: <https://recatalyst.si/>



Enterprise value

EUR 7-10M, [ReCatalyst company information, funding & investors | EIT Innovation Ecosystem](#)
- Dealroom

EIT Programme and the year of participation

EIT Jumpstarter 2020

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [ReCatalyst secured external funding in 2023, raising EUR 1.7M in a seed round. This funding round was led by High-Tech Gründerfonds \(HTGF\) and other international investors, including xista science ventures and OCCIDENT, along with Slovenian investors.](#)
- [Joining hands under the ENABLER project, two companies ReCatalyst and ionysis achieve fuel cell performance targets](#)
- [Recatalyst newsroom](#)



Main idea

Development and commercialization of next-gen platinum-based catalyst composites for the use in hydrogen fuel cells. The company has developed a patent-pending nanotechnology platform that produces next-generation platinum-alloy catalysts for proton exchange membrane (PEM) fuel cells. This innovation significantly reduces the amount of platinum required, cutting catalyst production costs by up to 50% and overall fuel cell system costs by approximately 30%.

DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **RumiTech**
 Country of registration: **Türkiye**
 Country of origin of the founders: **Türkiye**
 Field: **InnoEnergy**
 Website: **Rumitech | IoT Energy Solutions**



Enterprise value

EUR 7M - [RumiTech company information, funding & investors | EIT Innovation Ecosystem](#) - Dealroom

EIT Programme and the year of participation

EIT Jumpstarter 2023

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [RumiTech secures EUR 400K Investment to Advance Sustainable Energy Solutions from ITU ARI Teknopark, Ahmet Gönüllü, Adem Torun, and an unnamed foreign investor in 2025.](#)
- [The investment follows a pre-seed funding of EUR 230K received from the SabancıARF programme in May 2024, bringing the company's total funding in 2024 to EUR 630K.](#)

Main idea

RumiTech is a Turkish start-up revolutionizing urban infrastructure by transforming traditional lighting poles into smart, off-grid energy hubs. Founded in 2023, the company integrates solar and wind energy generation with advanced IoT technologies, enabling these poles to operate independently of the traditional power grid. Each unit can produce an average of 2–5 kWh per day, storing energy in lithium batteries to power various devices such as lighting, cameras, and sensors. This plug-and-play solution eliminates the need for excavation or cabling, reducing installation costs and carbon emissions – each pole can prevent up to 10 tons of CO₂ emissions annually.

DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **Coffeeco Upcycle**
Country of registration: **Greece**
Country of origin of the founders: **Greece**
Field: **Food**
Website: coffeeco.gr – [Upcycled Coffee Innovations | Sustainable Skincare & Bio-Based Plastics](#)

coffeeco

Enterprise value

EUR 7M – [Coffeeco company information, funding & investors | EIT Innovation Ecosystem](#)
– Dealroom

EIT Programme and the year of participation

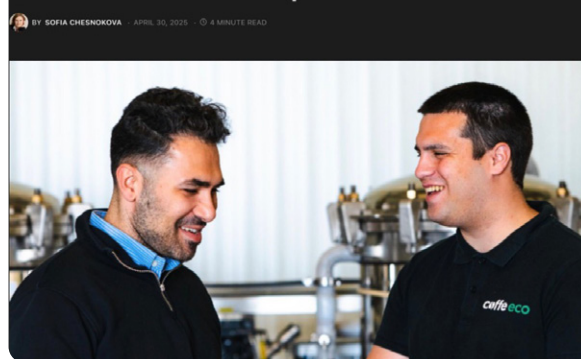
EIT Jumpstarter 2018

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [Coffeeco Upcycle raises EUR 715K in 2025 to turn coffee waste into skincare and bioplastics, backed by London-based boutique financial firm VDK Capital](#)



Exclusive: Greek startup Coffeeco Upcycle raises €715K to turn coffee waste into skincare and bioplastics



Main idea

Coffeeco transforms coffee waste into valuable resources using innovative, science-based processes. The company is pioneering sustainable solutions in areas such as skincare and biobased plastics, actively contributing to the development of a circular economy.





DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **NeoPill - NeoFunction**
 Country of registration: **Serbia**
 Country of origin of the founders: **Serbia**
 Field: **Health Tech**
 Website: [Neo Pill - The future of dental hygiene](#)



Enterprise value

EUR 80-120K - [NeoPill company information, funding & investors | EIT Innovation Ecosystem](#) - Dealroom

EIT Programme and the year of participation

EIT Jumpstarter 2023, EIT Jumpstarter Next 2024, EIT InnoStars Awards winner 2024, SPICE 2025

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [NeoPill is part of the EIT Health Spice programme, supporting high-potential start-ups toward commercialization and has received support in grants exceeding EUR 40K in total from EIT programmes.](#)
- [EIT Health invested EUR ~8,8K \(USD 10K\) in NeoPill's Biz Plan Competition funding round in 2023.](#)
- [NeoPill finalized production and began local market distribution. Their first 1,000 devices were distributed in Serbia and Bulgaria.](#)

Main idea

Neo Pill simplifies oral care for patients with fixed dental braces. This compact device eliminates bacteria from the spaces between teeth, gums, and braces – areas that regular cleaning methods can't reach. No water or bathroom needed. Neo Pill will help maintain a healthy dental environment anywhere, anytime, with zero discomfort.



Biomimetic spider silk

A hidden gem in the world of advanced materials innovation

DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **PrintyMed**
Country of registration: **Latvia**
Country of origin of the founders: **Latvia**
Field: **Health Tech**
Website: [Home | Printymed](#)



PrintyMed

Enterprise value

EUR 800 000 (in accordance with the interview with the founders)

EIT Programme and the year of participation

EIT Jumpstarter 2023,
EIT Jumpstarter Next 2024

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [Printymed attracts EUR 800K - two grants from the Competence Center for Smart Materials and Technologies in 2024.](#)

Main idea

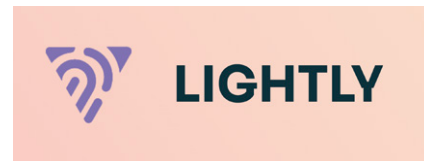
Artificial spider silk for 3D bioprinting and medical devices. Serves as a biocompatible scaffold for applications such as artificial heart valves, nerve repair, and tissue regeneration. This material offers superior mechanical strength, biodegradability, and reduced rejection risk, aiming to address the global shortage of transplantable organs and improve patient outcomes.





DATA INFO

Name of the start-up: **Lightly Technologies**
 Country of registration: **Czechia**
 Country of origin of the founders: **Czechia**
 Field: **Health Tech**
 Website: **LIGHTLY – Portable device based on „UV-Fingerprint technology”**



Enterprise value

Not disclosed

EIT Programme and the year of participation

EIT Jumpstarter 2023,
 EIT Jumpstarter Next 2024

Recent news about external funding obtained and other milestones

- [Lightly Technologies showcased their opioid crisis solution at SXSW 2025, boosting their US presence with JIC support.](#)
- [Secured first place in the “Validation Track” of the EIT Health InnoStars competition, outshining nearly 50 healthcare startups and was recognised as “EIT Post-Jumpstarter’s Most Outstanding Alumni”.](#)

Main idea

Lightly has developed a portable device based on patented **UV-Fingerprint** technology that enables rapid, in-situ analysis of liquid samples to detect active substances, impurities, and adulterants. It delivers results within 10 minutes, which are processed through Lightly’s software and compared against a global database to identify chemical patterns and matches. This unique approach allows for accurate substance differentiation and batch tracing in the field. Unlike mass or Raman spectrometry, Lightly’s solution is accessible to non-experts and provides detailed chemical profiling. The technology is particularly impactful in the fight against counterfeit drugs, offering law enforcement agencies the ability to trace pills back to specific manufacturers. Lightly’s innovation combines speed, accuracy, and usability to enhance public safety and disrupt illegal drug distribution.

Annexe 2. EIT Red Kalyna Success Stories

EIT Red Kalyna is more than just another initiative for women – it's a powerful community of trailblazing changemakers. With the support of the EIT, these women don't just grow – they thrive, becoming real role models who inspire others to follow. Meet the women of **EIT Red Kalyna** and see for yourself.

“Building Something Bigger Than Myself: How One Ukrainian Woman Is Redefining Innovation – From Kharkiv to All of Europe

„You don't have to walk the path alone. But you do have to dream – and act.”

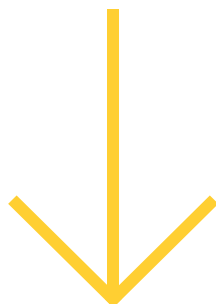
Meet **Olha Shapoval**, a visionary, a leader, a mother, and a 2024 laureate of the EIT Red Kalyna initiative, the flagship programme of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) that supports Ukrainian women in innovation. Her story is not only about professional achievements. It's about values, community, and an unshakable drive to reimagine the future of Ukraine.

Olha leads Kharkiv IT Cluster, a community of 650 tech companies and partners, a major business, education, and institutional platform transforming the IT landscape not only in eastern Ukraine but across the country. Today, Kharkiv IT Cluster is a space where members can scale their efforts, exchange knowledge, and protect industry interests.



*„We don't look for what divides us
– we look for common ground and
build on that.”*

With a background in international business management and over 20 years in top executive roles, Olha made a bold shift from corporate business to civic leadership. Why? Because the question that kept her up at night wasn't "What's next in my career?" but "What kind of world am I building for my children?"



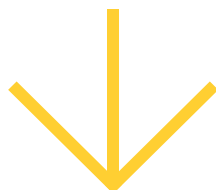
Leadership shaped by crisis

In 2022, the Cluster faced war, evacuation, and uncertainty. But the team didn't stop — they grew stronger.



I remember when we created the IT Cluster in the Cloud platform for relocated tech companies closing their offices but not their businesses. The full-scale war had just started, and thousands were leaving Kharkiv. At the same time, companies were seeking ways to stay connected and supported beyond geographic limits. Nearly 500 companies joined the platform in its first year. In many ways, we became an anchor for those who had scattered across Ukraine and the world but remained part of the community.

Under Olha's leadership, the Kharkiv IT Cluster coordinated evacuations, launched emergency support funds, and helped set up safe educational environments. Together with the city, the team initiated the Kharkiv Emergency Coordination Center, a 24/7 rapid-response system for coordinating services and reacting to threats.



The success of Kharkiv IT Cluster is a team story, a puzzle made up of the efforts of our team, our members, and our partners. Our Executive Team is made up of extraordinary women whose achievements inspire me more than my own. I'm grateful to each of them for the commitment that shapes the Cluster's story.

Olha is actively involved with other organizations: she serves on the Board of the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance, uniting clusters across all sectors, is a Supervisory Board member of Diia.City Union, the largest association of Diia.City residents, and co-founded the Coalition of Industry and Business Communities of the Kharkiv Region.

Despite COVID, war, and economic shocks, the Cluster has continued to grow. Among its key achievements: building Europe's largest IT education network, uniting over 240 partners and 60 universities. This educational ecosystem spans all levels – from schoolchildren to university professors. Each year, over 35 000 people take part in its programmes, supported by more than 1 000 mentors from real tech companies.

A new kind of platform

For Olha, being recognized by EIT Red Kalyna wasn't just an award, it was the first time she allowed herself to tell the story of what her team had built. Her colleagues nominated her, even though she's always preferred action over the spotlight. EIT Red Kalyna became a platform of a different kind – one grounded in values, honesty, and mission.



It wasn't about headlines – it was recognition for years of real work, for impact, and for staying true to my principles.

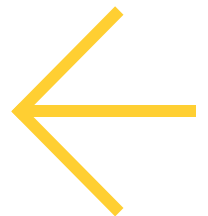
As a laureate, Olha gained access to leading European innovation networks, grew her public presence, and shared her story with the world. Today, she champions transnational collaboration, inclusive leadership, and next-generation innovation policy, aligning with initiatives like the AI Continent Action Plan, the Startup and Scaleup Strategy, and the Union of Skills Strategy, part of the European Commission's Competitiveness Compass package.



As a child, I wanted to be a vet – to care for those who can't care for themselves. Over the years, I realized what truly inspires me is working alongside people with shared values, building ecosystems and partnerships that make the impossible possible.



When people entrust you not only with their business but with their lives, you understand the true weight of your work.



In 2024, Olha began working on a PhD dissertation that will help scale her experience in business and cluster leadership. Her research explores a new paradigm of managing the international competitiveness of SMEs, one where companies adapt their management systems to benefit from cluster membership.

Whether launching educational programmes or forming new alliances between business, education, and government, Olha's story embodies the essence of EIT Red Kalyna: resilience fuelled by innovation and leadership grounded in real impact, not ego.

Disclaimer

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