



## EIT LAUNCHES CALL WORTH €40 MILLION TO TURN HIGHER EDUCATION INTO A STRONGER ENGINE OF EUROPE'S DEEP-TECH AND MANUFACTURING INNOVATION

*Budapest, 20 October 2026* – The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has launched a new call to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions to turn their research into innovations focused on the manufacturing and deep tech areas. This call under the EIT Higher Education Initiative aims to allow beneficiaries to develop innovation and entrepreneurship skills, improve technology transfer services and better connect universities with business.

With a budget of €40 million from the EIT, the 2026 Call for proposals will provide up to €1.25 million per selected project over 18 months. The [EIT Higher Education Initiative](#) invites consortia of higher education institutions (HEIs), businesses, research organisations, public bodies and other innovation partners to apply. This activity is aligned with EU initiatives, such as the [Union of Skills](#), the [STEM Education Strategic Plan](#), the [Competitiveness Compass](#) and the [Clean Industrial Deal](#).

Selected projects will strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions by developing innovation and entrepreneurship skills among students and staff across science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and related fields most relevant to manufacturing and deep tech innovation. The projects will among others enhance knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and intellectual property management at higher education institutions. At the same time, the projects will support higher education institutions in building stronger links with industry, investors, and innovation networks, supported by the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

**Martin Kern, Director of the EIT, said:** *'Turning a research breakthrough into a successful business takes skills, confidence and targeted support. This call will help students, researchers, and university staff to take that step. By bringing new technologies from the lab to the market with a focus on advanced manufacturing and deep tech, we support higher education institutions to play a stronger role in Europe's innovation future and competitiveness.'*

**Natalie Walsh, Project Coordinator, Idea to Impact (i2i),** a beneficiary of a previous call, said: *'The EIT HEI Initiative has connected partners and projects at a deeper level through in-person meetings and trainings – something you don't always get from EU funding. The initiative has created a real community of practitioners, educators and experts and empowered them to create more opportunities to support our students, staff and ecosystems to develop and grow.'*

### ELIGIBILITY AND CONSORTIUM REQUIREMENTS

- **Consortium composition:** each consortium must include at least five funded partners: at least three HEIs (from three different Horizon Europe-eligible countries, including at least one EU Member State), and at least two business/industry partners and/or business/industry representative organisations (e.g., SMEs, startups, larger enterprises, industry associations); industry partners that operate in manufacturing or deep-tech technologies are strongly encouraged to join a consortium.



- **Eligibility:** organisations funded under the EIT Higher Education Initiative Call 2025 are not eligible to apply under the 2026 call. Each organisation may participate as a funded beneficiary in only one 2026 call application.

Consortia of higher education institutions, businesses, research organizations, public bodies, and other non-academic partners can prepare their applications by consulting the full [call text](#) and finding potential partners through the [matchmaking platform](#).

Consortia have until 13 January 2027 17:00 (CET) to submit their applications. Selected projects will be announced later in 2027.

### ABOUT THE HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The [EIT Higher Education Initiative](#), coordinated by EIT RawMaterials, is a European funding programme dedicated to driving systemic innovation in higher education, connecting HEIs with business and industry from the earliest stages of the innovation lifecycle. Since its launch in 2021, the initiative has supported more than 500 higher education institutions across Europe and beyond, alongside a wider network of associated institutions. It has trained more than 150 000 students and staff in innovation and entrepreneurship and helped EIT HEI projects establish more than 1 300 new partnerships beyond their consortia. EIT HEI-funded projects have helped startups attract more than €18.1 million in investment. They have also helped create over 207 startups and bring 25 innovations to market.

### ABOUT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

The EIT strengthens Europe's ability to innovate by powering solutions to pressing global challenges and by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT is an EU body and an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#), the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Institute supports pan-European partnerships, the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities, among leading companies, research labs and universities. Currently, nine EIT Knowledge & Innovation Communities are supported: [Climate KIC](#) (formerly EIT Climate-KIC), [28DIGITAL](#) (formerly EIT Digital), [InnoEnergy](#) (formerly EIT InnoEnergy), [EIT Health](#), [EIT RawMaterials](#), [EIT Food](#), [EIT Urban Mobility](#), [EIT Culture & Creativity](#) and [EIT Water](#). Together with their leading partners, the EIT Community offers a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities across Europe: entrepreneurial education courses, business creation and acceleration services, and innovation-driven research projects.

