EIT ANNOUNCES AWARDS FINALISTS

Budapest, 17 November 2026 – The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) today announced the nine finalists for the 2026 EIT Awards, recognising outstanding innovators from the EIT Community – Europe's largest innovation ecosystem. They will compete for the top prizes at the EIT Awards Ceremony on 2 December 2026 in Budapest, Hungary.

Selected from 19 nominees, the finalists are advancing solutions in healthcare, sustainable food production, clean hydrogen, urban mobility and digital inclusion. Their work demonstrates how the EIT and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) help turn ideas into market-ready solutions through training, mentoring, funding and connections across Europe and beyond.

Martin Kern, EIT Director said: *'Our finalists show how their excellent innovations can improve our lives and at the same time strengthen Europe's competitiveness. It is not by coincidence that they achieved their success thanks to the support of dedicated innovation communities. We look forward to hearing their pitches at what promises to be an exciting final in Budapest on 2 December.'*

EIT Awards categories

The EIT Awards recognise outstanding innovators across three jury-selected categories and one category decided by public vote:

1. EIT Changemaker Award – recognising leaders within the EIT Community whose activities and achievements generate significant social impact.
2. EIT Innovation Team Award – celebrating diverse teams that have developed a unique product, service or process with high added value and breakthrough potential.
3. EIT Venture Award – recognising successful startups within the EIT Community that address societal challenges and demonstrate strong growth potential.
4. EIT Public Award – recognising the public's favourite finalist, chosen through an online vote.

The three jury-selected awards each carry monetary prizes of €50 000 for first place, €30 000 for second place and €20 000 for third place.

Meet the 2026 EIT Awards finalists

EIT Changemaker Award:

- Elias Pajares (Germany), nominated by EIT Urban Mobility, for founding Plan4Better and developing open-source tools that help cities make evidence-based urban and mobility planning decisions.
- Esther Murphy (Ireland), nominated by EIT Health, for developing Digi-ID, a digital skills programme co-created with people with intellectual disabilities and their support networks to improve inclusion.
- Matteo Mazzola (Italy), nominated by EIT Food, for co-founding Iside Farm, a farm-lab advancing regenerative agriculture, soil restoration and biodiversity through community-based farming.

EIT Innovation Team Award

- ARISE (Belgium), nominated by EIT Urban Mobility, for piloting and validating OTIV.TWO, an AI-powered tram driver assistance system that detects hazards and support safer operations.
- Joii (Ireland), nominated by 28DIGITAL, for an AI-powered smartphone medical device that measures menstrual blood loss to support earlier diagnosis and monitoring of heavy bleeding.
- Noah Labs (Germany), nominated by EIT Health, for developing AI-powered technology that analyses short voice recordings to detect worsening heart failure and support earlier intervention.

EIT Venture Award

- Digistain (United Kingdom), nominated by EIT Health, for an AI-powered tumour analysis platform that assesses individual cancer risk to guide chemotherapy decisions in early breast cancer.
- Hycamite (Finland), nominated by EIT RawMaterials, for developing methane-splitting technology, producing low-carbon hydrogen with no direct CO_2 emissions and high-quality carbon for industrial use.
- Kokomodo (Israel), nominated by EIT Food, for growing cacao from plant cells in bioreactors to reduce land and water use, deforestation and exposure to climate risks.

Winners to be announced in Budapest on 2 December

The 2026 EIT Awards Ceremony will take place in Budapest, Hungary, bringing together innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers and representatives of Europe's innovation ecosystem. The ceremony will also be streamed online.

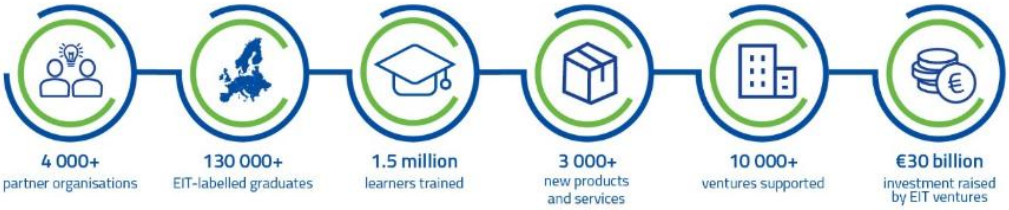
Online voting for the EIT Public Award is open until 16:00 CET 2 December 2026. Members of the public can vote for their preferred finalist here, please find the voting rules here.

Further information about the ceremony and registration is available on the EIT Awards 2026 event page.

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

The EIT strengthens Europe's ability to innovate by powering solutions to pressing global challenges and by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT is an EU body and an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The Institute supports dynamic pan-European partnerships, EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which bring together leading companies, research labs and universities. Currently, nine EIT KICs 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 business creation activities across Europe: entrepreneurial education courses, start-up creation and acceleration services, and innovation-driven research projects.


4 000+
partner organisations
130 000+
EIT-labelled graduates
1.5 million
learners trained
3 000+
new products and services
10 000+
ventures supported
€30 billion
investment raised by EIT ventures