



## 23 PILOT PROJECTS SELECTED BY EIT TO UNLOCK HIGHER EDUCATION'S INNOVATION POTENTIAL IN EUROPE

15 July 2021 - Budapest, Hungary – The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is pleased to announce 23 winning consortia for the EIT's HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education Pilot Call for Proposals. 135 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and 140 non-academic organisations from 32 countries will benefit from the EIT's HEI Initiative and will see up to EUR 27.5 million of funding supporting their innovation capacity.

This new initiative will support HEIs with expertise and coaching, funding and access to the EIT's innovation ecosystem, Europe's largest innovation network. The [Pilot Call for Proposals](#) invited HEIs and local partners across Europe to design institution-wide action plans to improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity across all institutional levels. By supporting such activities, this new EIT initiative will create systemic impact, empowering HEIs and fostering sustainable growth and jobs across Europe.

**Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth** said: *'Universities have a critical role to play in the development and growth of local and regional innovation ecosystems. This new initiative will help them boost their entrepreneurial capabilities at all levels and unlock their innovation potential. I congratulate the selected consortia for putting bold and promising ideas on the table, and now it's time to step into action and make them a reality!'*

64 consortia representing nearly 750 organisations from across Europe applied to the Pilot Call that closed in May 2021. As a result, 23 projects involving 135 HEIs and 140 non-academic organisations (companies, research centres, public authorities and associations) from 32 countries will benefit from this first call with funding of up to EUR 27.5 million available. Organisations involved in the selected projects include the Medical University of Plovdiv (BG), University of Pardubice (CZ), Robert Bosch GmbH (DE), Foundation Startup Wise Guys (EE), Universidad de Zaragoza (ES), University of Eastern Finland (FI), Athens University of Economics and Business (GR), University College Dublin (IE) and Confindustria Trento (IT). More details on the selected projects can be found [here](#).

**Gioia Ghezzi, Chair of the EIT Governing Board** added: *'The selected projects will benefit from the expertise and coaching of Europe's largest innovation ecosystem, the EIT. We are delighted that the EIT could broaden participation of HEIs in our activities and look forward to more European universities becoming regional engines of entrepreneurship and innovation.'*

Each selected pilot project can be awarded a maximum of EUR 1.2 million with up to EUR 400,000 for Phase 1 (July – December 2021) and upon successful completion a conditional EUR 800,000 for Phase 2 (January 2022 – July 2023). Projects can focus on several themes, including:

- fostering institutional engagement and change;
- strengthening partnerships between higher education, business and research organisations;
- developing innovation and business support services;
- enhancing the quality of entrepreneurial education;
- creating and disseminating knowledge.

A second call for proposals will be announced in late 2021 for projects that will start in 2022. The initiative aims to reach 550 higher education institutions by 2027 to boost European innovation in higher education and support the twin transition towards a more sustainable, digital and competitive Europe.

