

EIT Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership Program

Startup Stairway – Call for startups and scaleups

Table of contents

1. General information about the program
2. Activity description
3. Target audience
4. Important dates
5. Eligibility criteria for applicants
6. Selection procedure and criteria
7. Financial support
8. Startups obligations
9. Personal data processing
10. Appeal procedure
11. Exclusion criteria
12. Logos and trademarks
13. Confidentiality
14. Intellectual property
15. Communication and dissemination of results
16. Applicable law
17. Contact details

1. General information about the program

The EIT was set up to power Europe's ability to innovate, to tackle major societal challenges with world-class solutions, create jobs and increase competitiveness. We will only achieve our mission if we mobilize women and men equally. Not only because it reflects the EU's core values - ensuring equality between women and men, but also because it delivers more ideas as women have different backgrounds, needs and experiences which bring new perspectives. Technology is changing the way we live, and we need our whole population engaged and contributing.

Women-led startups amount to 30% at best within EU countries, their presence is lower in deep-tech start-ups, and it can be considered rare in certain economic sectors, such as manufacturing industries. Also, it is known that start-up experience as employee is a trigger to start-up creation. It is important to promote entrepreneurship and startup founding as a career path for women and not only the traditional and safe professional opportunities. Moreover, nowadays women presence across professional roles is unbalanced. Specially, they are under-represented in STEAM roles and historically predominant in, for example, marketing or office administration. The Startup Stairway will identify startups and scaleups seeking to hire more women and will match them with women students and/or recent graduates and (when appropriate) will co-fund the internship placement.

The Startup Stairway activity is designed to foster female activity as entrepreneurs by exposing them to a start-up experience early in their careers. The program is an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) under the SUPERNOVAS - EIT Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership Program.

2. Activity description

We are looking for highly innovative startups and scaleups, working on the high or deep-tech field which are seeking to attract more women to their teams and improve their gender balance.

3. Target audience

We are targeting high tech a deep tech startups and scaleups:

- Seeking new hires for their technical and scientific teams
- Committed to improve the gender – balance of their teams
- Offering paid internships in STEAM related positions for at least 3 months. A maximum of 50% co-funding will be offered to those promising start-ups with less financial capacity to recruit.
- Willing to engage with the programme as Ambassadors

4. Important dates

The program will be organized around the following dates:

Stage of the call	Date
Call opening	June
Call closure	July
Selection process	End of July and August 2022
Internship	Starting from September 2022

5. Eligibility criteria for startups and scaleups

- Working in the high tech and/or deep tech fields.
- Actively looking to grow.
- Demonstrated meaningful customer traction.
- Operative for more than one year.
- Dedicated full-time team with a headquarters incorporated in any EU or Horizon Europe associated country.
- Commitment from the top to increase the team gender diversity in STEAM roles.

6. Selection procedure and criteria

The evaluation and selection process are designed to be open, accountable, multi-step and based solely on the merit of the submitted applications. All the eligible startups and scaleups will have the same opportunities.

Each eligible startup will be evaluated by a team composed by the EIT WELP staff and collaborators.

The evaluation process is planned to take place in July and August 2022, and selected startups are expected to host the intern from September 2022 to at least December 2022. However, the organizers reserve the right to change this timeline.

The startups evaluation will be conducted in two phases.

1st phase – Online evaluation and preliminary scoring

The startups and scaleups application has to be done through the form that will be available in the Startup Stairway Awards Platform link. All the compulsory fields must be completed, and the form has to be sent before the call is closed. Only applications submitted on time will be evaluated.

Applications will first be reviewed online by a panel composed by EIT WELP staff. Each evaluator will have to score each application based on 4 standardized criteria (with different weighting) for a maximum of 20 points. The sum of all scores will give the total score for a given applicant and the minimum score for continuing in the selection process will be 5 points.

Criteria	Scoring
Excellence	1 to 5 (25%)
Impact	1 to 5 (25%)
Quality and efficiency of the idea implementation	1 to 5 (25%)
KIC portfolio strategic fit and compliance with the knowledge triangle integration	1 to 5 (25%)

2nd phase – Online interview

The startups selected in the previous stage will be interviewed online by a panel composed by EIT WELP staff. From this phase, the final list of startups and scaleups that will participate in the program will be obtained.

Communication of results

The results will be communicated by email.

- After the first stage, notification to the preselected startups will be sent via email.
- After the second phase, notification to the selected startups will be sent via email.
- Scores and comments made by evaluators will remain confidential. There is no appeal process.

7. Financial support

Startups and scaleups will cover the costs of the internship (equivalent to the minimum inter-professional salary of the country where the startup or scaleup is placed) that will be paid to the selected candidates. However, a maximum of 50% co-funding will be offered to those promising start-ups with less financial capacity to recruit.

8. Startups obligations

- Integrate in your team, talented women with excellent academic performance.
- Understand that this is an educational experience and not a professional one. The participants are completing and enhancing their capacity, knowledge and skills.
- Benefit the intern more than the company.
- Not replace a regular employee with an intern.
- Assign to the intern duties and responsibilities aligned with the objectives of the program and accordingly to the activity agreement.
- Keep an effective communication with the intern and provide feedback about her work.
- Cover the full or partial (in case of being co-funded) internship cost.
- Communicating effectively with the EIT Manufacturing CLC West and providing feedback about the intern evolution, at least in three specific occasions during the internship duration.
- Sign the required legal documents before, during and after the internship.

9. Personal data processing

EIT MANUFACTURING ensures that any processing of personal data shall be performed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

You have the right to access, rectify or delete your personal data. You can also object to their processing. To exercise these rights, please contact us at dpo@eitmanufacturing.eu.

The sole purpose of the collection of personal data provided in the application and the questionnaires for Individual applicants or start-ups ("personal data") is to verify the eligibility of the submitted applications and to identify the best candidates among the participants. Individual applicants also accept that their personal information can be shared with the relevant start-ups and that the personal data of contact people in the start-ups with the relevant Individual applicants for the purposes of matching Individual applicants with start-ups for the activity and related internships.

Participants also consent that EIT Manufacturing may grant access to parts of their submission to its subsidiaries or external parties, such as evaluators and may use their personal data for the purposes of disseminating and promoting the activity.

The application submission and evaluation process will be done via Awards Platform, an online submission management tool by Submittable Holdings, Inc.

YOUR CONSENT TO THE USE OF SUBMITTABLE AS SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION TOOL: By submitting your application within this challenge you implicitly state your consent to the Terms and Conditions as well as the Privacy policy of Submittable.

YOUR CONSENT TO THE USE OF PERSONAL DATA: By submitting your application within this call you consent that EIT Manufacturing will collect, transfer, process, store and delete your data in accordance with the aforementioned conditions.

10. Appeal procedure

Applicants may appeal the selection decision only on grounds of human or technical errors. A request for redress from the applicant and addressed to EIT Manufacturing's CEO may be submitted in writing through the contact email address provided in the call document, within five days of the date on which EIT Manufacturing informs the applicant of the evaluation results.

Please note that redress on the evaluation points contained in the technical judgment of the evaluators is not admissible.

An EIT Manufacturing Appeal Committee will examine the request and provide an opinion on possible technical or human errors in the evaluation process and not on the merits of the proposal. Based on this opinion, a decision will be taken by EIT Manufacturing, and the applicant will be notified in writing.

11. Exclusion criteria

Participants will be excluded from receiving co-funding if they are in any of the situations of exclusion defined in Article 136 of the EU Financial Regulation.

Participants will be excluded from receiving co-funding if, in the course of the award procedure, they fall under any of the situations defined in Article 141 of the EU Financial Regulation.

12. Logos and trademarks

The start-ups participating in the activity grant EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries (e.g. CLCs) a free and non-exclusive license to use their brand solely for the promotion, dissemination of information, organization, management and completion of the Activity.

Similarly, EIT Manufacturing grants participating Start-ups a free and non-exclusive license to use their brand solely for the promotion, dissemination of information, organization, management, and completion of the Startup Stairway Activity.

The Participants and EIT Manufacturing mutually acknowledge and accept that the respective trademarks are and remain the exclusive property of their respective owners and that no provision of this Notice is intended to confer any rights on such trademarks, outside the provisions of the previous paragraph. Therefore, the participating Start-ups and EIT Manufacturing will not be able to assign, sublicense or otherwise dispose of the trademarks of others, without prior written consent.

13. Confidentiality

The Selected Start-ups and Individual applicants undertake to use any confidential information shared by the Start-ups or EIT Manufacturing solely for the purposes of the activity. Confidential information shall mean data and/or information that is proprietary to or possessed by the participants and not generally known to the public or that has not yet been revealed whether in tangible or intangible form, whenever and however disclosed and might also be included in the application form.

The Selected start-ups and Individual applicants also agree to (i) not disclose Confidential Information, without prior written authorization of the company concerned; and (ii) not to use it for purposes other than those strictly necessary for participation in the activity.

14. Intellectual property

The intellectual property rights in the works produced during the internship of the individual participants will be property of the start-ups, without prejudice to the moral rights of the Individual participants to be recognized as authors, creators or inventors or to relevant national applicable legislation. For the avoidance of any doubt, all patents, trade secrets, information, know-how, inventions, technology, data and other intellectual property rights owned by the participants prior to the participation in the activity shall remain the sole property of the respective participant.

Participants (be it start-ups, individuals) agree to respect the provisions of Article 16 regarding intellectual property rights, background and results and access rights and rights of use of the grant agreement signed by EIT and EIT Manufacturing. A link to the model grant agreement is provided further below.

15. Communication and dissemination of results

Participants agree to respect the provisions of Article 17 regarding Communication, dissemination and visibility of the Grant Agreement signed by EIT and EIT Manufacturing. A link to the Model Grant Agreement is provided further below.

Participants agree that EIT Manufacturing and its subsidiaries can disseminate, publish and make use of non-confidential information regarding the Startup Stairway in order to promote the activities of EIT Manufacturing or establish reports or other necessary documents for EIT.

16. Applicable law

The present call is governed by the applicable Union law (i.e. the EIT Regulation, the EU Financial Regulation and the Horizon Europe Regulation) and is complemented, where necessary, by the laws of France.

The participants agree to observe the obligations set forth for the recipients of funding in the Grant Agreement signed between the EIT and EIT Manufacturing and more particularly Articles 12 (conflict of interest), 13 (confidentiality and security), 14 (ethics), 17.2 (visibility), 18 (specific rules for carrying out action), 19 (information) and 20 (record-keeping) also apply to the third parties receiving the support (recipients).

The participants must also ensure that the bodies mentioned in Article 25 (e.g. granting authority, OLAF, Court of Auditors (ECA), etc.) can exercise their rights also towards the recipients of funding. The Model Grant Agreement can be found [here](#).

17. Contact details

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