



# EIT HEI INITIATIVE Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education

Scale Up Academy

SUA



## Participating partners

**Institute of Technology Sligo**  
(Lead partner)

IRELAND

**Karel de Grote University of  
Applied Sciences and Arts**

BELGIUM

**University of Miskolc**

HUNGARY

**JAMK University of Applied Sciences**

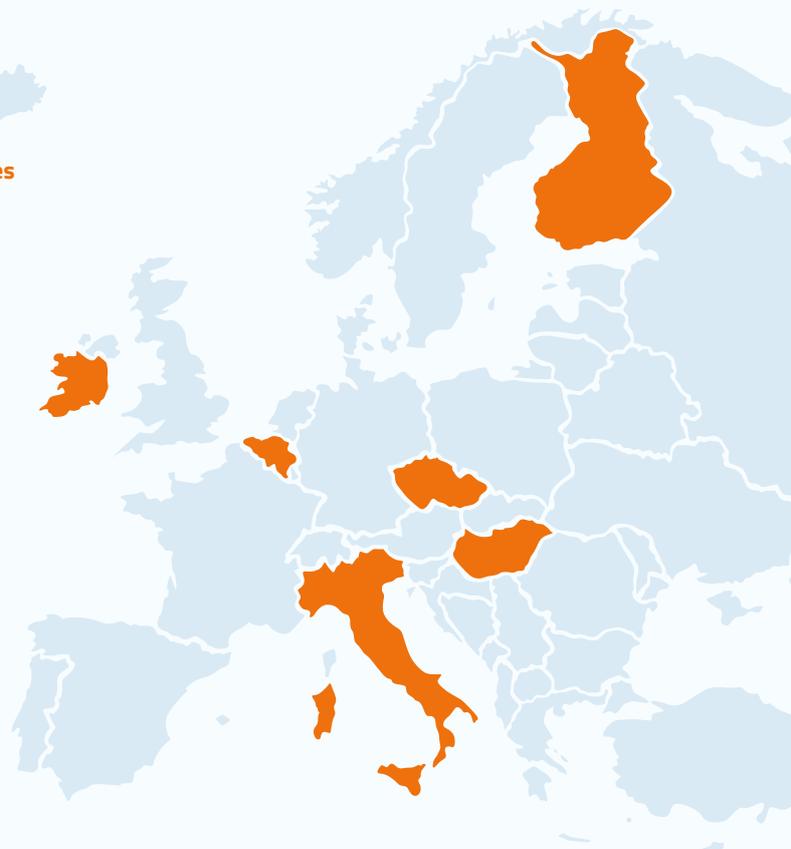
FINLAND

**Technical University of Ostrava**

CZECHIA

**University of Sannio**

ITALY



Max. funding Phase 1

**€400,000**

Max. funding Phase 2

**€800,000**

## Project description

The project proposes establishing a new Cross-European Scale Up Network which will work across six EU Member States and support 140 established SMEs to move to the next stage of growth over two years.

The profile of participants to engage will be owner-managers of SMEs that have been established for at least three years, who have a clear ambition to internationalise and take their company to the next level.

Core engagement with the network will take the form of one small group meeting per month, with each group consisting of 10 participants. Each group will be from multiple Member States and most meetings will be virtual. However, physical meetings will also be supported in order to help establish and sustain relationships. Each group will focus on one of four EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) – EIT Manufacturing, EIT Digital, EIT InnoEnergy and EIT RawMaterials – and include companies in sectors relating to that KIC.

A group of 14 organisations – six higher education institutions (HEIs) and eight other organisations from industry – will act as patrons of the network. Each organisation will nominate a senior manager for the Programme Steering Group and also nominate two managers with potential to be trained as a group facilitator. This role has proven to be one that is valued for career development and therefore facilitators do not charge for their time.

The project budget will support the organisation of mentoring and of training and workshops on issues that are regularly raised by participants as ones they need support on, including the most effective new uses of digital technology - using the 'just-in-time' learning principle. The central task undertaken by all is to prepare a strategic plan for their company to reach the next level. To help with this, training will be organised specifically on how to do this.

An innovative feature of this proposal is that the resulting plans can be submitted for an accredited academic award. This model represents an innovative way for HEIs to engage effectively with SMEs and, if successful, it could open up a much wider range of possibilities to engage HEIs in innovation. The SMEs will provide material for research case studies.

SME networks have traditionally been local. However, following the COVID-19 pandemic, many will be more open to attending virtual meetings involving people from multiple Member States. This in turn will help to accelerate participants' readiness to internationalise and develop some critical contacts for this purpose. This proposal therefore represents a new development in harnessing digital technology, not only for access to learning materials but for interactive learning between entrepreneurs.

### Pilot Call Timeline



### About the EIT's HEI Initiative

The EIT's HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education was launched by the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT) and is led by EIT RawMaterials – one of the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities.

The initiative is part of the EIT's [2021–2027 EIT Strategy](#), and it aims to help higher education institutions to build the capacity to innovate and to teach innovation and entrepreneurship. More specifically, the initiative aims to encourage these institutions to look at their own practices and develop concrete actions to increase their impact on their ecosystems.

In March 2020, the HEI Initiative launched a Pilot Call for Proposals, inviting higher education institutions to design activities that will improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity. We are pleased to announce the results of this Pilot Call. To stay updated on the latest developments, visit the initiative website (<https://www.eit-hei.eu/>) and subscribe to our newsletter.