Call for Evaluators

The EIT HEI Initiative – Selection framework for Standard Evaluators and Rapporteurs.

EIT HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education
Coordinated by KIC EIT RawMaterials

EIT RawMaterials GmbH ("Contracting Authority" or "CA")
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1. Introduction to the HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education

The EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) 2021-2027[1] sets the strategic direction, priorities and objectives of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (EIT KICs).

One specific objective in the new SIA 2021-2027 is to create systemic impact in higher education at institutional level, by supporting higher education institutions (HEIs) to strengthen their innovation and entrepreneurial capacity and integrate into and engage with innovation ecosystems. By doing so, HEIs will be empowered to become engines of impact and support the realisation of a carbon-neutral, digital, circular, and inclusive society.

> Under the EIT SIA 2021-2027, the EIT and the EIT KICs will raise the bar and create systemic impact in higher education by strengthening innovation ecosystems. This will be achieved through the following:
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> - Increasing the entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of higher education institutions across Europe by promoting and supporting institutional change in higher education institutions
> - Strengthening the integration and contribution of higher education institutions to innovation ecosystems

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[1] Decision (EU) No 2021/820 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 on the Strategic Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) 2021-2027: Boosting the Innovation Talent and Capacity of Europe and repealing Decision No 1312/2013/EU, OJ L 189/3 of 28 May 2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D0820&from=EN.

To realise these ambitions, the EIT and EIT KICs have established the *EIT HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education.*

The EIT HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "HEI Initiative") has been designed with the aim of increasing the innovation and entrepreneurial capacity in higher education by bringing together HEIs in innovation value chains and ecosystems across Europe.

A central philosophy of the EIT is the integration of the EIT Knowledge Triangle Model[2] into all its activities. HEIs selected to participate in the HEI Initiative will also leverage and use the Knowledge Triangle Model as an enabler, facilitating the creation of systemic, institutional change. Additionally, HEIs selected to participate in the HEI Initiative will contribute to and leverage Smart Specialisation Strategies[3], the Regional Innovation Impact Assessment (RIIA) Framework[4], as well as align with the goals of the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS)[5]. This will strengthen the links between HEIs and their local and regional ecosystems and provide an impetus to leverage additional funding sources beyond the HEI project funding period of the selected HEI projects.

HEIs are encouraged to prepare applications which will support the development and implementation of six Actions in their institutions as listed in Section 2.1 of EIT HEI Call 3, cumulatively leading to institutional transformation, an increase in entrepreneurial and innovation capacity, and integration with innovation ecosystems.

As per the SIA 2021-2027, the first three years (2021-2023) of the HEI Initiative have been designated as the pilot phase. After the pilot phase concludes, the EIT Governing Board shall determine if the HEI Initiative will be continued for the remainder of Horizon Europe (2024-2027).

Although the EIT SIA 2021-2027 sets out that the majority of funding under the HEI Initiative will go to HEIs which are not currently partners[6] of the EIT KICs at the start of the HEI project, the HEI Initiative will unite EIT KIC partners and non-partners to cultivate collaborative relationships and leverage the existing innovation and entrepreneurial knowledge base developed within EIT KICs thus far. Participation in an application selected for funding will not result in any obligation to become an EIT KIC partner or pay a membership fee. However, a non-partner may become a partner of an EIT KIC if deemed desirable by the non-partner organisation.

The scope of the HEI Initiative is broad. It aims to address the need for HEI transformation and the role of HEIs in boosting sustainable economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of Europe. More specifically, the HEI Initiative aims to encourage HEIs to review their own practices and the opportunities for

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[2] The Knowledge Triangle refers to the interaction between business, education and innovation, which are key drivers of a knowledge-based society. https://eit.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eit_innovation_model.pdf.

[3] https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu.

[4] https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/regional-innovation-impact-assessment-riia-.

[5] https://eit.europa.eu/our-activities/eit-regional-innovation-scheme-ris.

[6] Any legal entity which is a member of an EIT KIC, and may include, in particular, HEIs, vocational education and training providers, research organisations, public institutions, public or private companies, financial institutions, regional and local authorities, foundations, and non-profit organisations. Unless otherwise specified, references to 'KIC partner' or 'KIC partners' include the KIC LE and the entities with the CLC role.

increasing their impact in their ecosystem in Europe, and it provides support to HEIs to develop and undertake concrete Actions which are specifically tailored to achieve such enhanced impact. HEIs will, consequently, identify the potential to take a significant step forward in increasing their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity.

The overarching aims of the HEI Initiative are to empower HEIs across Europe to become innovative and entrepreneurial in general, and in their approach to education, research, and engagement with businesses and the broader regional and local innovation ecosystem, including but not limited to civil society, public institutions, regional authorities and third sector organisations, in the most inclusive and gender-balanced way.

The specific aims of the HEI Initiative are multi-fold:

- Encourage HEIs to look at their own practices and the opportunities for increasing their impact in their ecosystems in Europe.
- Ignite an entrepreneurial culture and mindset which inspires people to transform and catalyse their knowledge and expertise into tangible, societal value.
- Extend the impact of the EIT beyond the EIT KICs and thereby contribute to the EIT's core mission of boosting sustainable economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of Europe. This is in line with the Horizon Europe goals of fostering entrepreneurial and innovation skills in a lifelong learning perspective, including increasing the capacities of HEIs across Europe.
- Leverage and make available the innovation and entrepreneurial knowledge base built in the EIT KICs, their partnerships and projects.
- Enable EIT KIC partners and non-partners to collaborate, co-create and mutually learn.

2. Evaluator Pool

Submitting an application does not guarantee that you will be selected for assignment. However, you will be entered into the Evaluator pool. The application will be valid for three years.

The first assignment for which evaluators will be selected is the evaluation of the proposals from HEI Call 3. The details of this assignment form the basis of this Call Text, although additional evaluators may be selected for later assignments if needed.

3. About HEI Call 3

This HEI Call 3 will select the third cohort of projects to be funded under the HEI Initiative pilot phase (2021-2023), as per the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027. Call 3 will incorporate a thematic focus on the capacity of HEIs to foster deep tech talent at HEIs in order to respond to the identified importance of deep tech talent development for the future of innovation in Europe.

This means that while Call 3 remains framed within the underlying HEI Initiative objective of boosting the innovation and entrepreneurship capacity of European HEIs, a significant portion of HEI Initiative-funded activities will be geared towards doing so within the Deep Tech talent development area.

Call 3 provides an opportunity to fund up to 16 additional HEI Initiative projects. There will be two implementation phases, namely:

- **Phase 1: 1 May 2023 – 30 November 2023**

- **Stop-Go decision period: 1 December – 15 January 2024**

- **Phase 2: 15 January 2024 – 31 July 2024**

The project activities implemented in Phase 1 in 2023 will incorporate evaluation, learning, and improvements before entering Phase 2 and scaling up their activities.

4. Timeline of the HEI Call 3 Evaluation Process

- Call for Evaluators opens: 13 *December 2022*
- Call for Evaluators closes: *9 February 2023, 17:00 CET*
- Evaluators entering the Evaluator Pool: *10 February 2023, 17:00 CET*
- Evaluators selected for EIT HEI Call 3 informed by EIT RawMaterials: *20 February 2023, 17:00 CET*
- Deadline for selected EIT HEI Call 3 evaluators to confirm participation to EIT RawMaterials: *24 February 2023, 17:00 CET*
- Online Evaluator Briefings: *1, 2 March 2023*
- Evaluations assigned to evaluators: *13 -14 March 2023*
- Remote individual evaluations: 14 *March – 7 April 2023*
- Rapporteur preparation of combined evaluation scores and texts: *8 – 14 April 2022*
- Remote consensus meetings: 17 – *19 April 2023*
- Remote Panel meeting: *20 – 21 April 2023*

5. Scope of the experts involved

5.1. Evaluation Principles

In line with the principles defined by the European Commission, the following overarching principles underpin the entire evaluation process:

- **Excellence:** Projects must demonstrate a high level of quality in relation to the topics and criteria set out in the calls
- **Transparency:** Funding decisions must be based on clearly defined rules and procedures, and applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation
- **Fairness and impartiality:** All proposals must be treated equally and evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants
- **Confidentiality:** All proposals and related data, knowledge, and documents must be treated in confidence
- **Speed and efficiency:** Proposals should be evaluated, and grants awarded and administered as swiftly as possible in line with these principles, without compromising quality

5.2. General objectives

The EIT HEI Initiative appoints external evaluators to support the evaluation of the applications received during the third call for proposals ('HEI Call 3'). The proposals will be for projects aimed at increasing the innovation and entrepreneurial capacity within the corresponding HEIs, at institutional level, incorporating a thematic focus on the capacity of HEIs to foster deep tech talents at HEIs in order to respond to the identified importance of deep tech talent development for the future of innovation in Europe. Independent external evaluators may assist in the independent evaluation of proposals and in performing the rapporteur role during the evaluation process.

5.3. Who we are looking for

These general conditions apply to the appointment of evaluators and rapporteurs to assist the EIT's HEI Initiative for tasks primarily in connection with the evaluation of the proposals for projects. Normally three evaluators will be assigned to each proposal which has passed the eligibility check. Evaluators will review a proposal against the evaluation criteria defined in the Call Text for HEI Call 3. All three evaluators will review the proposals assigned to them; however, for each proposal one of the evaluators will be rapporteur and the other two will be standard evaluators.

5.3.1. Standard Evaluators

- Standard Evaluators will be familiar with the relevant background documents (all call-related documents and guidelines) and attend the online briefing training with the EIT HEI Initiative's Coordination Team.
- They will qualitatively and quantitively evaluate the assigned proposals according to the pre-defined evaluation criteria.
- Standard Evaluators will appraise applications according to each specified criterion (and each related question) with a score accompanied by a clear qualitative statement in English, clearly justifying the given score as well as providing evaluation conclusions per criterion. If applicable, suggested recommendations/conditions should be included.
- Standard Evaluators are expected to be available to discuss their evaluations in consensus meetings with other evaluators, chaired by a rapporteur.

5.3.2. Rapporteurs

- Rapporteurs must perform the same duties as Standard Evaluators, namely:
    - They will be familiar with the relevant background documents (all call-related documents and guidelines) and attend the online briefing training with the HEI Initiative's Coordination Team. They will qualitatively and quantitively evaluate the assigned proposals according to the pre-defined evaluation criteria. Rapporteurs will appraise applications according to each specified criterion (and each related question) with a score accompanied by a clear qualitative statement in English, clearly justifying the given score as well as providing evaluation conclusions per criterion. If applicable, suggested recommendations/conditions should be included.
- The rapporteurs also play a further vital role in the evaluation process. They are independent arbiters who collate the convergent or divergent opinions of experts and summarise the three individual evaluation reports into an overall evaluation summary.
- Rapporteurs will create a list of pertinent open issues to resolve from the individual evaluation reports to be brought to the consensus meeting. During the remote consensus meeting, the evaluators will discuss the scores and justifications, with the rapporteur bringing the evaluators to consensus.
- After the consensus meeting takes place, the rapporteur will submit the consensus evaluation scores and consensus evaluation texts per evaluation criterion. The rapporteur will also submit an **overall evaluation summary**, summarising the overall score and justification.

5.4. Award criteria

5.4.1. Expertise

Evaluators and rapporteurs must also have expertise in **one** of the deep tech fields below:

Deep technology or deep tech is a classification of an institution, an organisation or a start-up company, with the expressed objective of providing advanced and emerging technology solutions to deep societal challenges. They present scientific or engineering challenges requiring lengthy research and development, and large capital investment before successful commercialization. Their primary risk is technical risk, while market risk is often significantly lower due to the clear potential value of solution to society. The underlying scientific or engineering problems being solved by deep tech companies generate valuable intellectual property and are hard to reproduce. Moreover, the solutions provided by deep technology and applications are critical for solving the complex global challenges that humanity faces, including climate change, sustainable energy or health.

The indicate list of deep tech fields, in which EIT aims at mobilising the one million talents within include:

- advanced materials and manufacturing;
- aerospace, including drones;
- artificial intelligence and machine learning;
- biotechnology;

- blockchain;
- Web 3.0;
- electronics;
- photonics;
- quantum computing;
- robotics;
- semiconductors (microchips);
- sustainable green energy and clean technologies.

5.4.2. Assessment Criteria

Candidates will be assessed on their application. The EIT's HEI Initiative team will assess candidates' profiles based on the following documents:

▪ **Evaluator Application Form**

▪ **CV**

The criteria for selection are based on the specificities of the assignment, taking into consideration the professional and technical skills required. Additional considerations may include English language skills, geographical, sector, and gender balance.

Applicants should be aware of the following criteria before application:

- Evaluators can be of any nationality/citizenship but must have substantial experience in the expertise listed in section 5.4.1 in a **European context**
- Experience with EU-funded projects will be considered an asset
- Proven capacity to work in English is mandatory
- Previous experience as a rapporteur for evaluations will be considered an asset for those applicants who wish to apply to be rapporteurs.

Applications for assignments will be judged on relevance (demonstrating relevant experience and expertise) and quality (the standard of the application overall). Each criterion will be scored from 1 – 4 (1= Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, and 4 = Excellent). The decisions made on behalf of the EIT's HEI Initiative regarding the outcome of applications is final.

Applications will close on **9 February 2023 at 17:00 CET**.

The selected evaluators will then be asked to select one of the following dates for an Online Evaluator Briefing:

- PM Wednesday, 1 March 2023
- AM Thursday, 2 March 2023

A declaration of impartiality and confidentiality will be issued for signature alongside the service agreement. Additionally, experts will be required to submit a conflict-of-interest declaration for each proposal they evaluate.

5.5. Diversity

The EIT's HEI Initiative values diversity and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates regardless of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnic background.

6. Payment for Participation

The payment is structured as such:
Evaluator Briefing: 225 €
Individual Remote Evaluation 225€ (per proposal)
Panel Meeting: 56.25€ (per meeting)
Consensus Meeting Attendance: 56.25€ (per meeting)
Consensus Score and Feedback Submission (*Rapporteur only*): 56.25€ (per proposal)

7. How to Apply

An Evaluator Application Form is available here. Via this form you will also be able to upload your CV and a Declaration of Non-Participation. Submission of a completed application form does not guarantee you will be selected for assignment but will enter you into the evaluator pool. The Expression of Interest will be valid for three years.

The criteria for selection as an evaluator are outlined above.

Prior to any work assignment, you will be issued guidelines covering a description of the tasks, duration, location (remote/physical), remuneration rates, and reimbursement methods. You will be issued a contract, which will include guidance on confidentiality.

The evaluators will also confirm the absence/existence of any conflict of interest with regards to an assigned proposal, based on the conflict-of-interest criteria provided during the Evaluator Briefing. Should a conflict of interest exist, the corresponding evaluator will be assigned to another proposal by the HEI Initiative Coordinating Team. Periodically, a Call for Evaluators may be reopened to maintain an open, transparent, and fair selection of experts.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with Regulation No 2018/1725.

8. Data Protection

Personal details which are submitted for the purpose of applying to the Call for Evaluators (names, email addresses, etc) will be stored by EIT RawMaterials for the purpose of processing applications, specifically for the following:

- to enable you to submit your application and CV to apply for specific call;
- to match your details with the potential assignments related to the call and to eventually contact you;
- to retain your details and notify you about future opportunities similar to the specific role for which you have contacted us;
- to answer your enquiries.

The personal data provided will be stored with the utmost of care and in accordance with data protection requirements. Applicants may at any time request to see the personal data that we hold relating to them, and request their deletion, by contacting hei@eitrawmaterials.eu.

The EIT HEI Initiative privacy policy can be found at https://eit-hei.eu/privacy-policy/.