



**Call for applications for
women innovators of manufacturing-related
solutions to apply to the**

***LEADERS – Women Innovators in
Manufacturing at EIT RIS competition***



EIT Manufacturing invites women innovators (i.e. professionals, researchers or entrepreneurs) from EIT RIS eligible countries who have played a leading role in developing innovative manufacturing-related solutions to apply to the **LEADERS – Women Innovators in Manufacturing at EIT RIS** competition within the **EIT Manufacturing's RIS programme**.

Submission Deadline: **July 5, 2022 – 23:00 (CET)**

For applying for the call, visit: <https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/news-media/calls/leaders-call-now-open>

Document Version: 2022.04.11

Version History:

Version	Changes made
Version: 2022.04.11., V1.0	Initial version published



1. Overview

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (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 a body of the European Union which is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. EIT supports the development of dynamic pan-European partnerships – EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities – among leading companies, research labs, and universities.

EIT Manufacturing is supported by the EIT and is one of several innovation communities within EIT. EIT Manufacturing's vision is that the global manufacturing innovation is led by Europe. EIT Manufacturing's main mission is to bring European stakeholders focused on manufacturing together in innovation ecosystems that add unique value to European products, processes, and services and inspire the creation of globally competitive and sustainable manufacturing. EIT Manufacturing brings together more than 65 organizations (universities, research institutions, and businesses) from several countries.

The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) is designed for EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries in Europe who are modest and moderate innovators (according to the European Innovation Scoreboard). Strategically, the scheme is an additional offer to these countries to facilitate their engagement with the EIT Innovation Communities and enhance their innovation capacity. The EIT RIS serves the purpose of providing targeted support to individuals and entities from EIT RIS eligible countries to take part in KICs activities and benefit from KIC services and programmes.

2. Structure of the LEADERS call

LEADERS – Women Innovators in Manufacturing at EIT RIS is a competition aiming at reaching out to support and highlight the best women innovators (i.e. professionals, researchers, entrepreneurs) playing a leading role in developing solutions / initiatives addressing manufacturing-related challenges with strong financial, environmental, or societal impact. Females from EIT RIS eligible countries are strongly encouraged to apply.

EIT Manufacturing seeks to broaden the appeal of manufacturing, especially for highly talented young women considering pursuing a professional career in manufacturing.

The competition consists of two selection rounds. In the first selection round the applicants submit an online application form about their solution / initiative. Based on these the best 30 candidates will be selected. They will receive an online pitch training to harmonize the format of their video pitches for the second round of submissions and their presentations at the grand final event.

At the second round of selections, the pre-selected 30 candidates submit a comprehensive application form complemented with a video pitch. Subsequently, six candidates will be selected and invited to the awarding ceremony. Each of the selected six candidates will receive publicity through inter alia EIT Manufacturing channels. Based on the live presentations and written applications, the top-ranked three candidates will receive prize money and publicity. The grand final event is tentatively planned to be organised as a physical event.

**Main elements of *LEADERS*:**

- Open call for application for women innovators of manufacturing-related solutions/initiatives.
- Selection of the best 30 applicants based on a written application (electronic application platform).
- Online pitch training for the pre-selected 30 applicants.
- Submission of an application complemented with a video pitch as well as further information regarding their innovative solutions by the 30 pre-selected candidates.
- Selection of the competition's finalists – 6 candidates will be invited to the awarding ceremony.
- Awarding ceremony: selection of 3 candidates who will receive a prize.

3. Eligibility criteria – who can apply

Eligible applicants must be women who have played a leading role in developing innovative solutions/initiatives addressing manufacturing-related challenges with a strong financial, environmental, or societal impact. It is possible to propose a team-invention. However, it will be necessary to prove the leading role of the applicant within the team who invented the innovative solution/ initiative.

The call is open for women being citizens of one of the following EIT RIS eligible countries:

- EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain.
- Third countries: Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.
- Outermost Regions: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain).

The applicant must be able to prove her citizenship of one of the aforementioned EIT RIS eligible countries or EU Outermost Regions.

4. Selection criteria – how will be evaluated

Applications in the first, second and third round of selection will be evaluated by EIT Manufacturing using the criteria listed below. EIT Manufacturing will rank the proposals and select the winning applicants. The total maximum score for a project is 100:

- Excellence and innovativeness of the manufacturing-related solution – 35 points
- Financial, environmental or societal impact of the solution – 30 points
- Role of the candidate in the development of the manufacturing-related solution (a leading role of the applying candidate needs to be proven in case the proposed solution/ initiative is a team-invention) – 35 points



It will be considered positively if the solution/initiative is of relevance to one or more of EIT Manufacturing's focus areas.¹

After selecting up to thirty (30) candidates based on the received written applications, a second round of selection will be organized. In this round these pre-selected applicants will be presenting their projects in a video format in English language. Also, they will have to address further questions on their proposed manufacturing related solution/initiative. The second round of selections is expected to take place in September 2021. Based on the video pitch and provided additional information about the manufacturing solution/initiative, six (6) applicants will be invited to the grand final event. There the applicants will present their projects in a verbal format and answer questions to an international jury panel in English language. For the selection of the three (3) winning applicants their presentations at the final event will be considered (in 40%) as well as all the initially provided written information about their solution/initiative (in 60%).

A Selection Committee will be appointed to carry out the evaluation of applications submitted. Please note that the Selection Committee's internal proceedings are strictly confidential.

5. Contract Signing and Payments

EIT Manufacturing will sign a participation agreement regarding the competition with the pre-selected 30 candidates applied to this call.

Each of the six top-ranked applicants will have the opportunity to travel to the grand final awarding ceremony and will receive for this purpose a budget of up to EUR 600 to cover travel and accommodation costs. Reimbursement will be at actual costs following the submission of a cost report by the candidate.

Prizes for the three winning candidates are following:

1 st	10,000 €
2 nd	7,500 €
3 rd	5,000 €

¹ EIT Manufacturing's focus areas are the followings:

- Flexible Production Systems for Competitive Manufacturing
- Low Environmental Footprint Systems & Circular Economy for Green Manufacturing
- Digital & Collaborative Solutions for Innovative Manufacturing Ecosystems
- Human-machine co-working for Socially Sustainable Manufacturing

For more information about EIT Manufacturing's focus areas please visit: [Focus Areas \(Flagships\) - EIT Manufacturing](#)



6. Confidentiality and IP rights

The applications submitted to EIT Manufacturing for the *LEADERS* call are handled under confidentiality. **Everybody who comes in contact with the applications during the review process is bound by confidentiality agreements.** By applying to the competition, the applicants consent to accessing, keeping, and using their data by EIT Manufacturing for the purposes of the competition.

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. By submitting their application, they affirm that they hold ownership or have legally secured the right to use all elements of the innovative solution or initiative.

Applicants agree to indemnify and hold harmless EIT Manufacturing and/or any assignee or affiliate from any third-party allegations or claims of intellectual property rights infringement by the solution or initiative of participants.

7. Evaluation review procedure

Applicants may have recourse to redress if they have grounds to believe that their application has been adversely affected by apparent shortcomings in the evaluation process or the eligibility check of their proposal. A request for redress from the applicant and addressed to EIT Manufacturing may be submitted in writing through the contact e-mail 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 technical judgment of the external expert evaluators is not admissible. An EIT Manufacturing Evaluation Review Committee will examine the request and provide an opinion on the procedural aspects of 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.

8. Application and timeline

Please note that only complete applications will be evaluated. A complete application should consist of a filled out "LEADERS" **application form** (submitted online). The application should be **in English language only**.

Closing date for participants from EIT RIS eligible countries **is July 5, 2021**.

For any clarification you may refer to the following e-mail address:

megi.witerna-plaku@eitmanufacturing.eu

**Intended timeline:**

Opening call:	May 10, 2022
Closing call:	July 5, 2022, 23:00 (CET)
1 st Evaluation:	July 2022
Pitch Trainings:	August – September 2022
Submission video pitch:	October 2022
2 nd Evaluation:	October – November 2022
Grand final awarding ceremony:	December 2022



Disclaimer:

The provided information and guidance in this document are intended to contribute to a better understanding of the call for the LEADERS competition. This guidance does not create any enforceable right or expectation. EIT Manufacturing retains the right to change the structure, and the rules of the call described as well as of this document, as needed. As this document reflects the current state at the time of its preparation, it should be regarded as a 'living document' open for revisions and its content may be subject to modifications without notice. Finally, EIT Manufacturing retains the right to cancel the call at any time and for any reason.

The applicants are encouraged to check the call webpage regularly in case for any updated versions of the relevant documents (each document's version is always provided in the second page).