EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative:
Call for Training Proposals

This Call is subject to potential refinement and amendments contingent upon forthcoming directives directed towards the Deep Tech Talent Initiative. Applicants are advised to routinely monitor the call pages hosted on the Deep Tech Talent Initiative website for any updates.

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1. Introduction

A new wave of innovation is emerging rapidly worldwide with the power to drive change across the economy and society: deep tech. Deep tech innovations are indispensable in solving the most pressing global challenges. However, Europe lacks the talent and skilled labour force necessary to properly leverage the new technology and enable its green and digital transition. To address this skills gap and in alignment with the European Commission's New European Innovation Agenda, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is developing a strong deep tech talent pool across Europe with the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative. The EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative is a pioneering program led by the European Institute of Technology and Innovation (EIT). The Deep Tech Talent Initiative started in 2023 and it will skill one million people within deep tech fields by the end of 2025.

To this end, the Deep Tech Talent Training Initiative launches, on **3 April 2024**, an open call for training proposals with a submission deadline of 20 June 2024. The process is guided by the EIT Community Business Plan 2023-2025.

2. EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative

The EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative aims to train one million talents in deep tech areas, by the end of 2025. These talents will be EIT's contribution to Europe to have future entrepreneurs and innovators who can help solve our major societal challenges with the help of deep tech technologies.

During this three-year timeframe, the EIT will coordinate and oversee the following activities, which pave the way to reaching the target:

- Develop, upscale and launch new deep tech training by the EIT Community, under the lead of EIT Manufacturing, while also building links with the newly launched EIT Campus, the future one-stop-shop portal integrating education offered by all EIT Knowledge Innovation Communities (KICs).
- Engage training providers, companies, institutional and financing partners to join the initiative via the Pledge for Deep Tech Talent (https://www.eitdeeptechtalent.eu/the-pledge/).
- Incentivize the creation or improvement of new or existing deep tech training programs through Calls for Proposals to develop new deep tech courses.
- Launch of a Deep Tech Platform for European deep tech education, listing all deep tech courses and related tools to offer value via the ecosystem for those that have been trained and for the organizations that join the initiative from the EIT community and beyond (e.g. technology radar, talent and skills matching tool, learners' database).

In 2024, we are seeking proposals from the Pledgers [1]of the Deep Tech Talent Initiative to create new courses, training and skills development programs to train people in deep tech. The proposals should be aimed at developing tertiary training. These audiences include students and faculty at universities, those seeking vocational training, and professionals in the deep tech areas looking to develop their skills further.

3. Deep Tech Talent Initiative Call for Training Proposals 2024

The Deep Tech Talent Initiative Call for Training Proposals is specifically designed to engage a wide array of organizations committed to pioneering the future of deep technology education and skill development across Europe. This call is open to a diverse range of entities, including educational institutions, non-profits, startups, and companies, which align with the initiative's goal to enhance deep tech capabilities in Europe.

Addressing this goal requires innovative approaches to training and education that meet current industry standards and anticipate the needs of the future. Therefore, applicants to this Call for Training Proposals must demonstrate a history of success in tackling deep tech training challenges and a forward-thinking vision that contributes to sustainable, long-term impact in the deep tech ecosystem.

Applicants should clearly demonstrate that their proposals will lead to a creation of a new course, training, or skills development programme.

Proposals should reflect on past achievements and outline clear, actionable implementation strategies for future training. These strategies should aim to achieve scalable solutions that can be adapted and replicated across different contexts and communities, thereby amplifying the initiative's impact on a pan-European scale.

Through this Call for Training Proposals, the Deep Tech Talent Initiative seeks to catalyse collaboration among stakeholders in the deep tech training ecosystem, promote the exchange of best practices and innovative methodologies, and ultimately, contribute to the creation of a highly skilled, adaptable, and inclusive deep tech workforce capable of leading Europe's technological future.

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[1] Please note that applicants need to become pledgers prior to submitting their application. Further information on how to become a pledger can be found here: https://www.eitdeeptechtalent.eu/the-pledge/join-the-pledge/

3.1. Expected Outcome

The Deep Tech Talent Initiative is designed to catalyse significant advancements in deep tech education and training across Europe. Through this Call for Training Proposals, we anticipate a range of impactful outcomes that will collectively elevate the capabilities, reach, and innovation within the deep tech sector. Successful training programs developed through the call are expected to achieve the following objectives:

- **Innovation in Course Development**: Design and launch ground-breaking courses, trainings and skills development programs.

- **Bridging the Deep Tech Skills Gap**: Specifically target and mitigate the skills shortages in the following deep tech areas:

  - Advanced Computing / Quantum Computing
  - Advanced Materials
  - Artificial Intelligence applied to specific sectors
  - Cybersecurity
  - Robotics
  - Semiconductors (microchips)
  - Clean technologies
  - Immersive technologies

- **Enhancing Program Appeal and Reach**: Focus on empowering underrepresented groups through training programs, particularly aiming at bridging the skills gap and fostering diversity and inclusion within the deep-tech. Specifically, It has been expected to list the activities that will be undertaken to attract women participation in training programs and provide attention to ensuring inclusivity across all EU members states and those members states that score low in terms of advanced digital skills levels, according to the Digital Economy and Society Index.

- **Reaching the target of the goal by the end of 2025:** Increase the desirability and reputation of deep tech training programs, with a goal of engaging more talents annually. This effort will ensure a steady influx of skilled professionals ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities in the deep tech industry. The proposals should describe efforts to reach a goal of at minimum 500 trained learners by June 2025, of which at least 30% represent women, on the newly created training program.

- **Fostering Creativity and Innovation**: Support the development of innovative training methodologies that encourage creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking among participants. This includes incorporating hands-on, real-world trainings and collaborative learning experiences that mirror the dynamic nature of the deep tech sector. Any type of training can be envisaged: online, offline, seminars, master and doctoral programs, workshops, summer or winter schools, if they meet the outlined criteria.

- **Adherence to High Standards**: Ensure that all courses adhere to the Quality Check standards by adherence to specified mandatory criteria which uphold the quality and relevance of deep tech training.

- **Collaborative Efforts and Phased Implementation**: Applications must involve a consortium of at **least two entities**, demonstrating a collaborative approach to deep tech training. All partners must become pledgers of the Deep Tech Talent Initiative by the time of proposal submission.

3.2. Quality Assurance and Commitment

In proposing -Deep Tech Talent Initiative supported training, pledgers agree to adhere to the latest quality assurance standards, ensuring that training programs meet high levels of educational excellence and relevance. A Quality Check process will take place upon submission of the training on through the platform within phase 1. All requirements are to be fulfilled within this timeframe. The Deep Tech Talent Initiative reserves the right to revoke support for programs that fail to meet these standards or if the applicants do not maintain their status as pledgers within the stipulated timeframe. The standards include:

- Clear focus on one or several deep tech areas, as outlined in the Deep Tech DefinitionsDeep Tech Definitions.
- A minimum of 50 hours of learning for adults above 18 years of age (equivalent to 2 ECTS), combining guided and independent learning/coursework.
- Alignment with at least level 3 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF).
- Issuance of a verifiable certificate of achievement or qualification (or equivalent) by the training provider using the Deep Tech Talent Initiative Certificate template, recognizing the learners' accomplishments and skills.
- Content description that matches the indicated EQF level.
- Clear learning objectives.
- Quality management process for planning, implementation and review of the training/course.
- Coherent learning, teaching and assessment designs.
- Learner feedback gathering process which includes actions for quality enhancement and a feedback loop to learners for more transparency.
- An outline for course delivery, in terms of dates, venue, teaching materials.

For any questions or clarifications regarding the Quality Check process, general or technical procedures, or requirements, applicants are encouraged to visit the Quality Check webpage or contact the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative Quality Check Team via email at quality-check@eitdeeptechtalent.eu.

- Reporting Data: Chosen applicants are expected to report the following data for their learners by the end of 2025: course content and learner objectives and the data on

successful graduates. The data submission should meet the reporting requirements of EIT Impact Framework for Participants in non-labelled education and training[2].

3.3. Eligibility Criteria

Any legal entities are welcome to apply, provided that the conditions laid down in the Horizon Europe Regulation have been met, along with the specific call conditions.

A 'legal entity' means any natural or legal person created and recognized as such under national law, EU law, or international law, which has legal personality, and which may, acting in its name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations.

To be eligible for the call, applicants must be established in one of the following countries:
- The Member States of the European Union:
  Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.
- The EU Outermost regions linked to the Member States of the European Union.
- The countries associated with Horizon Europe;

To be eligible for the Deep Tech Talent Training Call for Proposals all applicants:
- must have completed their pledge registration, including signing the pledge document, and received the confirmation.
- cannot have received funding from Horizon Europe related to the same action.
- cannot be EIT KICs.

Role of consortium members:

Applicant/Lead Pledger: A participating entity that submits the application on behalf of all the consortium members. The applicant/lead pledger bears full responsibility for ensuring that the project is implemented in compliance with the agreement. Its coordination entails the following tasks:
- Representing and acting on behalf of the consortium (as applicable) towards EIT and the EIT KICs.
- Assuming the financial and legal responsibility for the proper operational, administrative, and financial implementation of the entire project.
- Providing reports to the respective EIT KIC.
- Communicating and disseminating project results, outcomes, and impacts.

Consortium members: All consortium members must be legal entities and meet the above stated criteria. Those involved pledgers who play an active role in advancing project goals. Every

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[2] https://eit.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eit_impact_framework_2022-2027.pdf

member must serve as a pledger and take on the responsibility of acting as the primary beneficiary, representing themselves throughout the project's implementation.

3.4. Budget and Duration of the project

Through this initiative, we aim to **fund up to maximum 20 projects** that embody these principles and outcomes. The call will distribute a **total amount of up to 2 million euro**, so each financed project would receive between 100.000-150.000 euro for project implementation.

The duration of the projects selected from this call will be structured in two phases. The activities proposed for funding should be planned for a maximum duration of 10 months, clearly distinguishing between Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities.

The **project implementation** will be structured in two phases[3] to optimize development and impact:
- Phase 1: This phase will run from September 2024 until December 2024. The total funding per project for Phase 1 is 40% of the project budget. The projects must meet the requirements below:
    - The creation and validation of the training content.
    - Submission of the training content as an implementation report.

- Phase 2: This phase will run from January 2025 until June 2025. The total funding per project for Phase 2 is 60% of the project budget. The projects must meet the requirements below:

    - Submitting the course for the QC process and obtain a positive result.
    - Launch and execution of the training programs, applying the curriculum in practical and impactful ways to cultivate deep tech expertise among participants.
    - Meeting the KPI requirement is 500 learners per project.
    - Submission of KPI data report and project evaluation report.

3.5 Funding Schemes and Operational Modality

The reimbursement of eligible expenditures adheres to the Horizon Europe Rules for Participation and corresponding eligibility criteria.

The funding rate applicable to the selected projects is up to 100%. The budget allocation for these projects will be determined based on the estimated expenses associated with project

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[3] The phase1 begins in September and may extend up to December 2024 at the latest. The phase2 must start no later than January 2025.

activities, with the possibility of covering 100% of all eligible costs, although co-funding is encouraged.

All requested funding must be substantiated in relation to the planned activities outlined in the application, with comprehensive descriptions and justifications provided for all costs. These expenses should be reasonable, justified, and directly linked to the delivery of training. Furthermore, contracting procedures must adhere to EU public procurement regulations.

The EIT and KICs employ a cascading system as their operational modality. The practical implementation details of this operational modality for the call are currently under development and will be communicated to selected projects through the FAQ section of the call, whenever available, or at the latest, upon the final funding decision. These projects fall under Horizon Europe, and the general regulations regarding funding and cost eligibility are governed by the Horizon Europe Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AGA).

4. Submission Guidelines

The application process for the Deep Tech Talent Initiative: Call for Training Proposals is meticulously designed to ensure clarity, accessibility, and fairness for all prospective applicants. Below is a detailed guide to navigating this process, incorporating the additional guidelines and deadlines:

1. **Proposal Submission Platform**: All proposals must be prepared and submitted through the EIT Digital submission system. Leading pledger should submit the application on behalf of all the partners of its consortium. This platform can be accessed exclusively via the EIT Digital intranet page, ensuring a secure and streamlined submission process. Proposals must be submitted in English.

2. **Submission Deadline**: It is crucial that proposals are formally submitted before the specified hard deadline on **20 June 2024, 17:00 CEST (Central European Summer Time, Brussels time).** This deadline is firm, and applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals well in advance to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties.
Only applications submitted through the designated online link, as detailed above, will be accepted. This ensures a standardized review process and maintains the integrity of the competition.
While the organizers adhere strictly to the deadline, they reserve the right to extend the submission period if necessary. Any changes to the deadline will be officially communicated through the Deep Tech Talent Initiative website, providing all potential applicants with updated information.

3. **Completeness of Documentation**: Applicants must ensure that all required documentation is complete and submitted in its entirety. Incomplete applications or missing documentation may result in the rejection of the proposal.

To assist applicants in crafting compelling and compliant proposals, a series of information events will be organized between April and June 2024. These sessions aim to provide valuable insights and tips to enhance the quality of submissions, significantly improving applicants' chances of success.

Should the quality of proposals not meet the expected standards, as outlined in the detailed evaluation criteria, the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative reserves the right to request revisions or, in some cases, reject submissions.

For any questions or clarifications regarding the application process, general or technical procedures, or call for proposals text content, applicants are encouraged to contact the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative via email at info@eitdeeptechtalent.eu. This line of communication is open to all applicants seeking guidance or further information to strengthen their proposals.

5. Proposal Review process

5.1. Evaluation Gates

Each training proposal undergoes a structured evaluation process comprising several distinct steps. Each step in the evaluation process supersedes the preceding one.
First Gate - Experts Review: Submitted proposals are assessed by independent external experts. The external experts will have a profile with a background of the deep tech area focus of the call and education. Each expert individually evaluates each proposal following the evaluation criteria- Excellence, Impact, Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation, and Strategic fit - described in the Annex 1 and provides comments to the proposal supporting their assessment and feedback to the applicants, plus, recommendations to the Review Gate.

Second Gate - Review Gate: Experts come together and discuss each proposal based on their own individual assessments, following the requirements and guidelines of this document. The outcome is a consensus evaluation for each proposal that integrates and supersedes individual assessments as well as recommendations to Management Committee Gate.

Third Gate – Deep Tech Talent Management Gate: The Management Committee of Deep Tech Talent Initiative analyses the Review Gate outcomes and recommendations. Final approval of the proposals will be contingent upon agreement from the Deep Tech Talent Initiative Management Consortium. This consortium will consist of representatives from EIT Manufacturing, EIT Digital, and EIT Food.

5.2. Evaluation Criteria

Three external experts will assess each evaluation criteria according to the following scores on a scale from 1 to 5.

Score	Description	
1	*Extremely poor or None*	The information provided is considered irrelevant or inadequate compared to the call provisions
2	*Bad*	The information provided lacks relevant quality and contains significant weaknesses, compared to the call provisions
3	*Average*	The overall information provided is adequate, however, some aspects are unclearly or insufficiently detailed, compared to the call provisions
4	*Good*	The information provided is adequate with sufficiently outlined details, compared to the call provisions
5	*Excellent*	The information provided is outstanding in its details, clarity, and coherence, compared to the call provisions

The scores are given at criteria level (e.g., Excellence) and then summed together to determine a final total score.

Thresholds apply to individual criteria and to the total score. The maximum score for a proposal is 20. The default threshold for individual criteria is 3, and the default overall threshold is 12 to be considered for funding a proposal. Meeting the funding threshold does not guarantee selection for funding.

Criteria	Score	Threshold
Excellence	1 to 5	3/5
Impact	1 to 5	3/5
Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation	1 to 5	3/5
Strategic Fit	1 to 5	3/5
TOTAL	**4 to 20**	**12 / 20**

The experts will assess each application (each application is evaluated 3 times). An average score per application based on the individual external experts' scorings' and produce an evaluation report per application. The experts will meet in a review gate to discuss and build an agreement. During the gate it will be addressed any notable divergences between their evaluations and will develop the final reports of the evaluation of proposals.

The proposals will be ranked according to their scores. If multiple applications receive the same score, priority will be determined based on the quality of the proposals and target KPIs first, followed by the judgment of experts.

5.3. Feedback and Following Steps

The applicant will be informed via e-mail with the receipt of evaluation results. Once, the funding has been received, the creation of the new training will start. The new training must pass the Deep Tech Talent Initiative Quality Check before the end of phase 1. The Deep Tech Talent

Initiative Quality Check Course Approval Panel will meet on the dates below and courses will need to be submitted at least three weeks before the meeting dates. It is also common, that the panel will require additional information or amendments before being able to grant approval. So, ensure you allow enough time for this step. Information events about the Deep Tech Talent Initiative Quality Check will be offered during phase 1. before the end of phase 1. The DTTI Quality Check Course Approval Panel will meet on the dates below and courses will need to be submitted at least three weeks before the meeting dates. It is also common, that the panel will require additional information or amendments before being able to grant approval. So, ensure you allow enough time for this step. Information events about the DTTI Quality Check will be offered during phase 1.

Deep Tech Talent Initiative Quality Check Course Approval Panel provisional dates:

- 06 September 2024
- 30 October 2024
- 13 December 2024

Annex A. External experts' evaluation criteria

The assessment by independent external experts will be based on the questions reported below. Reviewers will be asked to provide a score and comments for each question, as well as an assessment of the whole proposal.

1. **Excellence (score: 1 to 5).**
   - The application demonstrates excellence in clearly illustrating and defining the pertinence of the addressed deep tech area, the relevance of the set objectives.
   - Excellence in the novelty of the upskilling approach, soundness of the methodology to address the deep tech area especially regarding stakeholder and learner needs.
2. **Quality and efficiency of Implementation (score: 1 to 5).**
   - The application demonstrates quality and efficiency of the project plan and execution in all aspects.
   - The application clearly connects the implementation towards bridging the skill gap for learners in defined deep tech areas.
   - The application is aligned with the requirements (workplan, KPIs, topic, financials, sustainability, format, responsibilities).
   - The consortium members involved in the application possess the competencies and experiences to ensure the proposal's successful implementation. The capacity and the role of each participant, as well as the extent to which the consortium collectively combines the requisite expertise.
3. **Strategic Fit (score: 1 to 5).**
   - The application is aligned with the objectives of the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative.
   - The training program is clearly aligned with the call requirements.

4. **Impact (score: 1 to 5).**
   - Significance of the contribution of the training to the European Innovation Agenda, especially in regard to upskilling one million deep tech talents. The number of talents is an important factor in the impact evaluation.
   - The addressed training program demonstrates scalability and transferability.
   - The application has defined the impact of addressing the deep tech area clearly and in regard to the deep tech area focus.
   - The application has at least 30% women as a target for the implementation of the course.

To qualify for financing under the Deep Tech Talent Training Call for Proposals, it is required that proposals demonstrate a comprehensive level of quality and alignment with the Deep Tech Talent Initiative's goals.

Annex B. Appeal procedure

An appeal should be issued, by the proposers, to the attention of the Deep Tech Talent Initiative, by factually underpinning the alleged incorrections in the evaluation and feedback provided.

To respect the tight timeline, the following will apply:
1. Upon receipt of the evaluation results, request must be submitted within 30 calendar days and should be sent to info@eitdeeptechtalent.eu.
2. An appeal should pertain to the evaluation process and provide a clear explanation of the reasons. The purpose of the appeal procedure is intended to address procedural deficiencies and factual errors.
3. The Deep Tech Talent Initiative examines the appeal, and if the grounds for the appeal are found with merit, then the appeal will be sent for a second review by the Deep Tech Talent Management Committee. The Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision.

Annex C. Information on the call dates

Key Dates	Timeline
Launch of the Call for Training Proposals	3 April 2024
Opening of the Call Application Portal	3 April 2024
Deadline for the Proposal Submission	20 June 2024
Call for Training Proposals Info Session	15 April 2024
Call for Training Proposals Match Making Event	26 April 2024
Call for Training Proposals Q&A Session	10 June 2024
Evaluation Period	20 June- the beginning of August 2024
The Announcement of Evaluation Results to All Applicants	Mid- August 2024
Official Announcement and Start Date of Projects	1 September 2024