

SUPERNOVAS

ROCKET UP PROGRAMME

Call for Applications
Women-Founded European Startups, 2026

SECTION 1

Who are we?

Section 1 – EIT & our network

Section 2 – Supernovas & our
impact

SECTION 2

The Programme

Section 1 – Rocket Up

EIT

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology

The largest and most influential innovation community

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an EU body created by the European Union in 2008 to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate. The EIT is an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#), the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

EIT supports the development of dynamic, long-term partnerships among leading companies, research labs and higher education. These partnerships are called EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (or KICs) - you can see the 9 active KICs in the image (see right)

We bring together more than 2900 partners, associated to each one of these KICs, making the EIT Europe's largest innovation ecosystem.

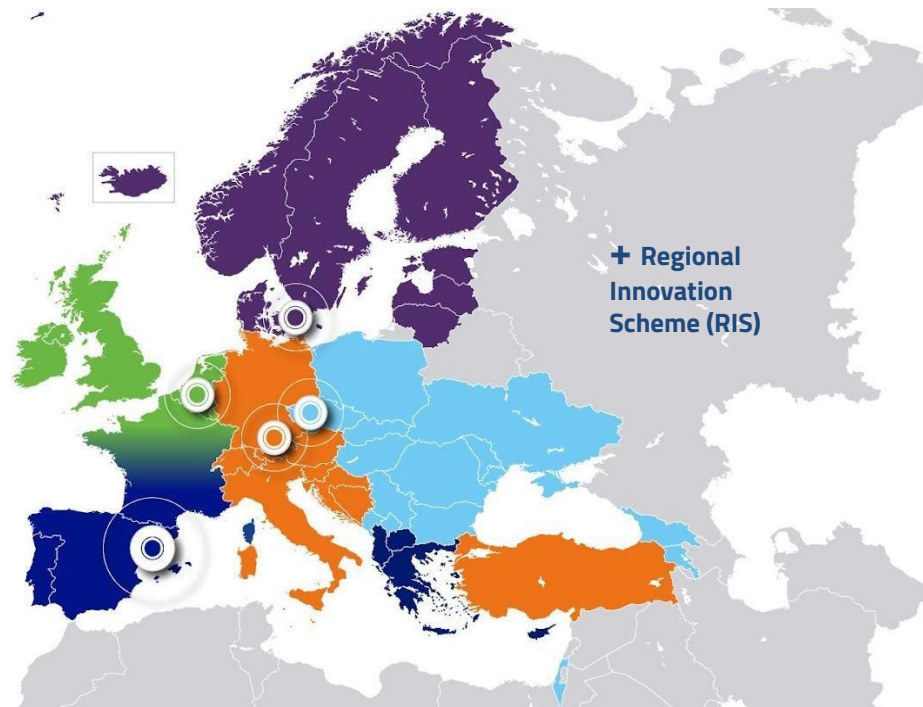


EIT

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology

The largest and most influential innovation community

Leading network across Europe:



Region separation and offices differ between EIT Communities but all of them cover all Horizon Europe related countries and have special RIS offices

About SUPERNOVAS

Supernovas is an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities aiming to bring more women into the world of entrepreneurship and investment. The EIT is an EU body and an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

Supernovas **empowers women-led startups** and future role models for women in business while at the same time fuelling talent to the next generation of women VCs and angel investors.





"It's time for women to shine"

SUPERNOVAS IMPACT - IN 4 YEARS

524

WOMEN TRAINED IN INVESTMENT

Women2Invest

Supporting women with STEAM studies in launching their careers in Venture Capital

189

Women trained

35

VC Funds collaborating today in recruiting

30

Internships/FT jobs to date

VC Academy

Training programme in personal and professional skills for women venture capital investors

175

Women investors trained

Business Angels Academy

Training programme for new and experienced women business angels

160

Women trained

Rocket Up

Startup programme to support women-founded ventures on their internationalisation

42

Participants

Investment Forums

Curated investment forums for both startups and investors

76

Participants

Data Room

Women-led startups supported by EIT showcased in a rich & user-friendly data base

1,150+

Startups showcased

100

SUPPORTED WOMEN-LED STARTUPS*

Investment attracted by supported startups

+88M€

Leverage effect[^]

97x

(vs 8x EIT average)

***From 23 countries 42% have fundraised**

The total is lower than the sum of 42 and 76, as 18 startups participated in both the Rocket Up and Investment Forums over the four-year period.

^This means that for every euro invested in both programmes, €96 were raised.

EIT average source

Rocket Up Programme 2026

The Rocket Up Programme in 2026 will be the 5th edition of EIT Supernovas supporting European women entrepreneurs with developing an internationalisation strategy to enter into a target market within the EU.

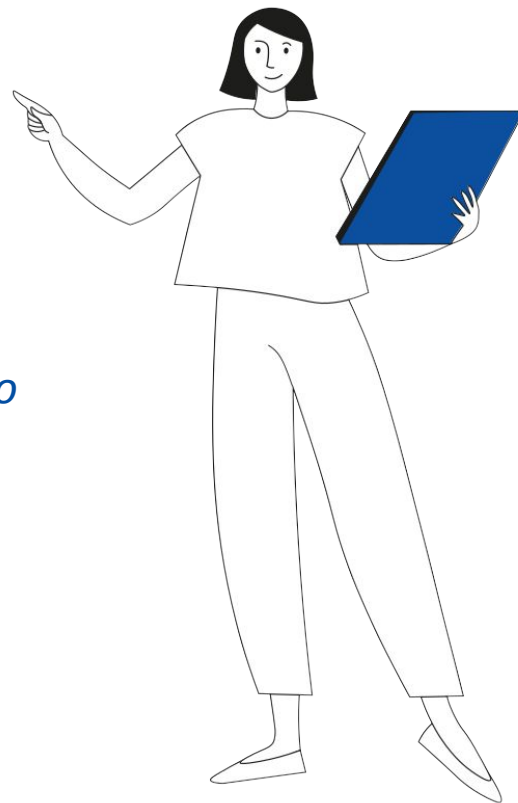
The aim of the programme is to provide participants with the following:

- **Selection** and clear definition of their **target market**.
- **Methodology** to select other target markets in the future.
- Development of a **validation strategy** (and started its execution).
- Building of a localised **Go-to-Market strategy** for their target market.
- Understanding which steps to take to **implement their strategy**.
- **Network** of women founders

The programme consists of online group sessions with a structured perspective on how to expand a company beyond its borders, and 1:1 online mentoring sessions interspersed with both Business Mentors and Regional Experts.

Rocket Up takes place between April 2026 – November 2026, all sessions are online except for the final session which is in person in Helsinki, the day before Slush. All participating startups are given a ticket to attend Slush as part of their programme participation.

Are you a woman founder or CEO leading a bold, scalable European-based startup? If you have a strong team, product-market fit in your home market, and the ambition to expand globally—the Rocket Up programme is for you!



Rocket Up Programme

Content Overview

Phase 1

April - July

CHOOSE YOUR MARKET

- Identify success factors
- Measure market attractiveness
- Market validation
- Business cultures
- Risks evaluation
- Value proposition localisation

Business Mentor Phase

Phase 2

September – November

PLAN YOUR STRATEGY

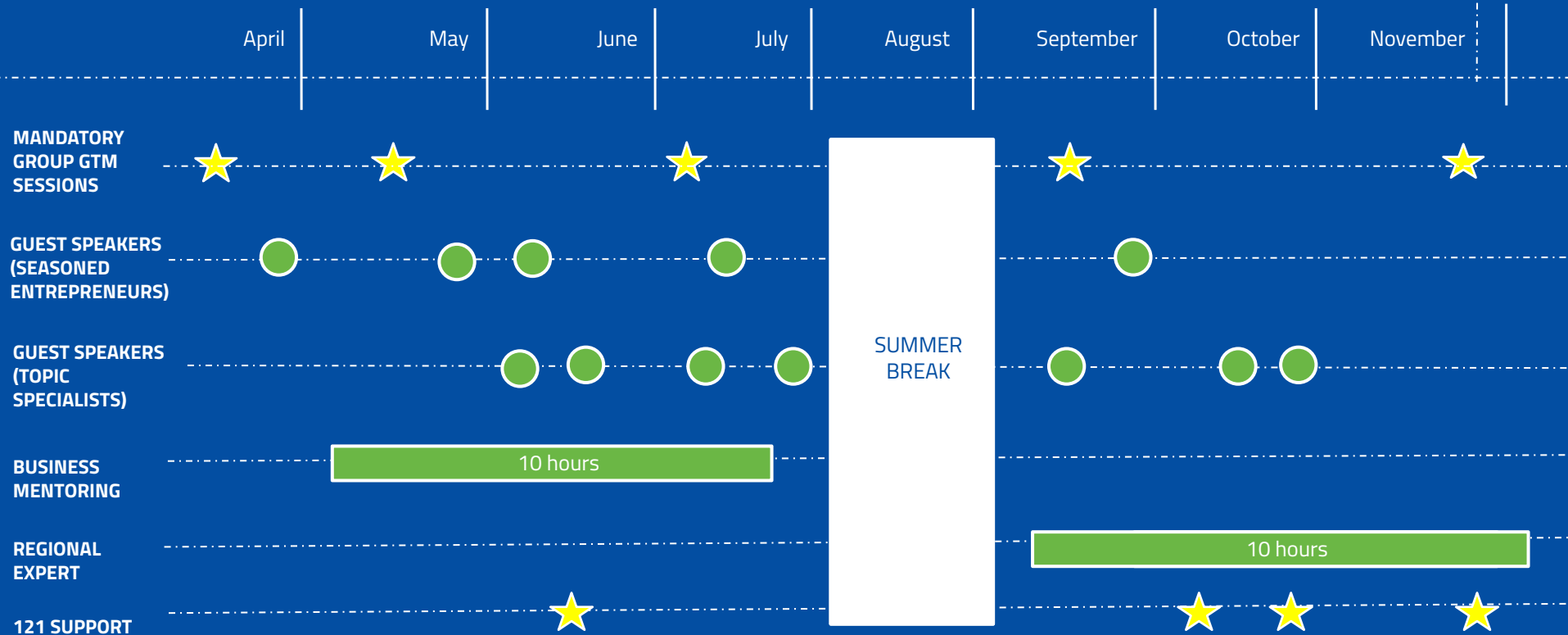
- Comms localisation
- Sales and marketing
- Partnerships
- Talent recruiting
- Legal implications
- Expansion fundraising
- Final go-to-market strategy

Regional Expert Phase

Rocket Up Programme

Timeline & Overview

SLUSH



Rocket Up

Programme

Group Session Dates

All sessions are 'live' & interactive. We do not provide recordings for these sessions. Homework is provided between group sessions with the expectation to discuss parts of the outcome of these in sessions with the rest of the group.

Mandatory group sessions are designed for founders to attend and participate in actively. Additional team members are welcome to join any/all of these sessions with the participating founder.

Please note: Session dates are subject to change, successful participants will be notified of the exact confirmed session dates during onboarding in March 2026.

Mandatory Group GTM Sessions	Guest Speakers (Seasoned Entrepreneurs)	Guest Speakers (Topic Experts)	Guest Speakers (Topic Experts, Continued)
Kick Off (online) - Tuesday April 21, 2026	Q&A session with experienced founder (online) - Wednesday April 29, 2026	Pricing Strategy (online) - Wednesday May 13, 2026	Pitch Workshop Part 2 (online) - Tuesday October 6, 2026
Session 2 (online) - Tuesday May 12, 2026	Q&A session with experienced founder (online) - Wednesday May 27, 2026	Sales Workshop Part 1 (online) - Tuesday June 2, 2026	Personal Branding & Expanding your Network (online) - Wednesday October 28, 2026
Session 3 (online) - Tuesday June 30, 2026	'Founder Resilience' Session with experienced founder (online) - Wednesday June 3, 2026	Partnership Strategy (online) - Wednesday June 10, 2026	
Session 4 (online) - Tuesday September 15, 2026	Q&A session with experienced founder (online) - Wednesday July 8, 2026	Pitch Workshop Part 1 (online) - Wednesday July 1, 2026	
Final Session (in person, Helsinki) - Tuesday November 17, 2026	Q&A session with experienced founder (online) - Wednesday September 30, 2026	Sales Workshop Part 2 (online) - Tuesday September 1, 2026	

Rocket Up Programme

Practical Details & 'Fine Print'

Time Investment

To maximize the benefits of the program, the recommended time dedication is of **4-5 hours per week** between mid April - mid November. This is inclusive of the group sessions, individual mentoring & homework.

Mandatory Commitment

As a minimum requirement, it is required that you attend **all mandatory group sessions, at least 5 of the guest speaker sessions & all 20 hours of mentoring** (10 with Business Mentor, 10 with Regional Expert). In case your mandatory commitment is at risk of not being achieved, additional opportunities such as access to a Regional Expert, a ticket to SLUSH & access to fundraising support can be refused.

Participant Costs

This programme is **free of charge** for all selected (& eligible) participants in the programme due to 100% sponsorship for your participation fee. The EIT team will provide each startup with 1 SLUSH ticket to attend SLUSH in November, 2026. However, **participating startups must buy their own accommodation and travel to Helsinki** in order to attend the final session of the Rocket Up programme and SLUSH.

Repayment Clause

Because EU funding is used to provide participating startups with a free programme to fuel your international growth ambitions, we require that **if you are not able to meet the minimum requirements of the programme**, that you would pay (at the end of the programme) a fee of 2k to EIT.

Fundraising Support for selected Rocket Up Participants

Access to funding is often key for the execution of a solid go-to-market strategy. That's why Supernovas offers additional support to selected Rocket Up participants in their fundraising efforts.

In addition to meeting the minimum completion requirements for the Rocket Up programme, participating startups must:

- be actively fundraising (already in touch with investors or planning to be within the coming 2 months)
- have an investor-focused pitch deck
- have a draft of a tangible fundraising plan or strategy

Selected Rocket Up participants are eligible to request fundraising support during the year of the Rocket Up programme and for up to 2 years after completing the programme.

Places note that places for fundraising support are limited, and the intensity of support offered may vary depending on each startup's needs.

01

Individual coaching (investor pitch deck, pitching, investment strategy, target investor list, negotiation)

02

Investor matchmaking & introductions where possible via platform

03

Group sessions to improve knowledge about fundraising, adapted to the cohort collective needs

Rocket Up Evaluation Criteria

During the **1st phase of application review**, participants will be evaluated based upon the participant eligibility criteria (see slide 16)

During the **2nd phase of application review**, participants will be evaluated based upon the evaluation criteria in the table on the right by 3 evaluators.

During the **3rd phase of application review**, participants will be invited to pitch to a live jury online to present their product pitch deck combined with their motivation to participate in this programme & 'why now'. Evaluation criteria is the same as the table on the right, with addition to evaluation of founder commitment/motivation.

Evaluation Criteria	
Product & Innovation	Cutting-edge technology and innovative business models that introduce a new and feasible service or product to the market. Creation of a patent or IP protection. Venture that addresses any EIT KIC (excluding Health)
Team	Motivated and diverse team, with background experience and leadership. Degree of women's leadership in the company. Stakeholders' relations: companies, investors, coaches and other partners.
Market	A realistic interpretation of market size, go to market strategies, competition, and differentiation of the product. Short- and long-term objectives, user attraction and retention and sound financial figures.
International Capacity & Readiness	Product or service scalability. International experience, diversity, and English level of the team. Potential clients outside home market or multinational. Level of clarity and efficiency of processes.



Participant Eligibility Criteria

Our programme is designed for ambitious, women-led startups that are ready to scale beyond their home markets. We're looking for strong teams with scalable solutions, real traction, and the drive to expand internationally. If this sounds like you, we'd love to see your application.

Please check the most important eligibility criteria here first:

01

Women-led

Company has a woman founder or woman CEO leading the team.

02

Strong Team

Has approximately 5-30 FTE in your team

03

Young Startup

Incorporated after 31/12/2016 and officially registered as a business

04

EIT Focus

Solution fits one of the EIT verticals: Urban Mobility, Food, Manufacturing, Climate, Digital, Culture & Creativity, or Energy.

05

Market Ready

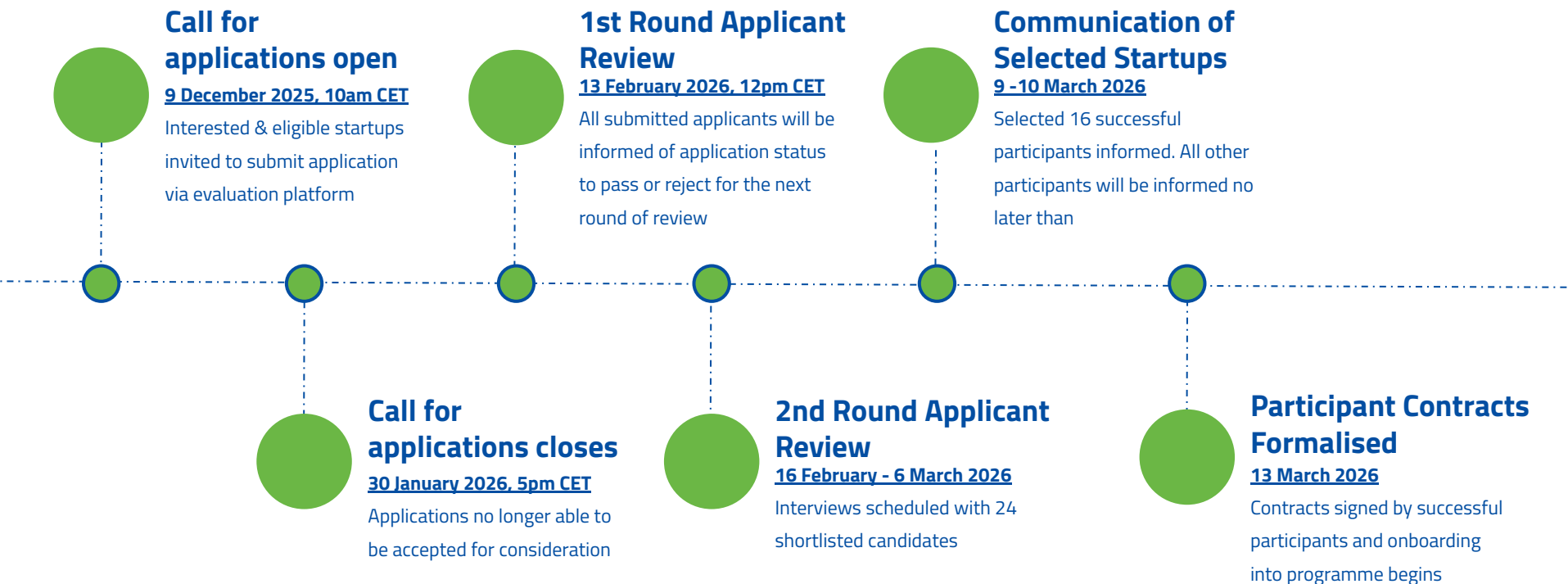
Commercially active with product-market fit in home market, including at least 100k in revenue in 2025 or equivalent (ability to demonstrate revenue based traction)

06

Home Market

Company is registered and operates within an EU country

Rocket Up Application Timeline



Open Call for **Rocket Up** Participants

How it works

If you are interested in being considered as a participant for the EIT Supernovas Rocket Up programme in 2026, please fill in your application via [this link](#).

This open call is open between 9 December 2025 - 30 January 2026.

SUPERNOVAS

ROCKET UP PROGRAMME

Call for Applications
Female-Founded European Startups, 2026

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