SUPERNOVAS

ROCKET UP PROGRAMME

Open Call for Applications from
Women-Led European Startups, 2027

eit Community Supernovas

Funded by the European Union

SUPERNOVAS

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EIT
European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The largest and most influential innovation community

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an EU body established in 2008 to strengthen Europe's capacity to innovate. It is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The EIT fosters the development of dynamic, long-term partnerships between leading businesses, research organisations and higher education institutions. These partnerships are known as EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

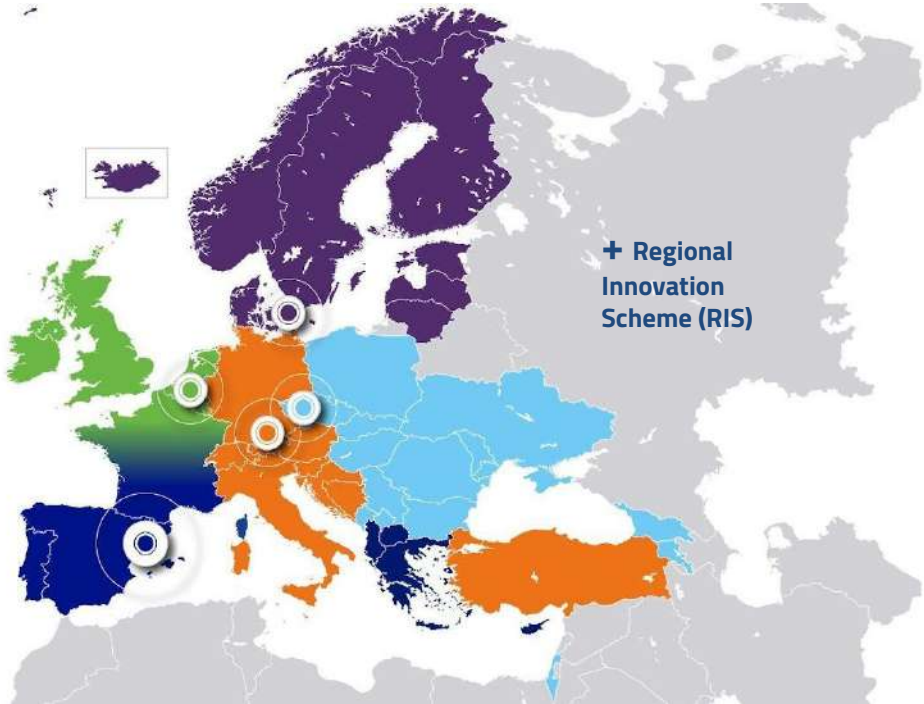
Together, the EIT ecosystem brings together more than 2,900 partners across these KICs, making it one of Europe's largest innovation ecosystems.

EIT

European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The largest and most influential innovation community

Leading network across Europe:



Region separation and offices differ between EIT Communities (KICs) 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 & Technology (EIT) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities aiming to bring more women into the world of entrepreneurship and investment.

Supernovas **empowers women-led startups** while nurturing the next generation of women venture capitalists and angel investors.



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"It's time for women to shine"

SUPERNOVAS

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OUR IMPACT (2022-2026)

722
WOMEN TRAINED IN INVESTMENT

133
SUPPORTED WOMEN-LED STARTUPS*

Women2Invest
Supporting women with STEAM studies in launching their careers in Venture Capital

243
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

319
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

Investment attracted by supported startups
€95 million

Leverage effect^
119x
(vs 13x EIT average)

***From 23 countries.**

18 startups participated in both Rocket Up and Investment Forums in this period

^This means that for every euro invested in the programmes, €103 were raised.
EIT average source

Are you a woman founder or CEO leading a bold, scalable European-based startup?

This is a programme for **European women-led innovative growing startups** with international ambitions wanting to work on a **market by market GTM strategy** and would like a **structured approach**, **guidance** from those who have 'been there, done that' and an **accountability partner** to **fast track** your strategy development & market entry steps. This is a programme for startups with already **proven track record** in at least 1 geographical market and with **growing revenue**.



Rocket Up Programme 2027

The Rocket Up Programme in 2027 will be the 6th 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 2027 – November 2027, all sessions are online except for the kick off session in Barcelona in person, and the final session in person in Helsinki, the day before Slush. All participating startups are given a ticket to attend Slush as part of their programme participation.

This is a **free of charge** programme provide with EIT funding for selected European startups. Travel & accommodation for events is paid by the startups. However, the minimum requirements and attendance must be met, otherwise a repayment fee can apply.

Rocket Up in IMPACT

8.7	Average evaluation scores per session in 2025: 8.7 (out of 10), 9 out of 10 for 2024
8.7	NPS for programme overall: 8.7 in 2025, 8.5 in 2024
57	number of startups supported by RU since 2022
6th	Edition of this programme will take place in 2027

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

- Sales and marketing
- Partnerships
- Talent recruiting
- Legal implications
- Pitch training
- Final go-to-market strategy

Regional Expert Phase

Rocket Up Programme

Online Sessions

All sessions take place online except for the Kick Off Session and the Final Session Demo Day.

Sessions online are between 45 minutes and 2 hours depending on the session format type. Homework is provided during group sessions with the expectation to complete these tasks in own time and bring outcomes/learnings to next meetings to discuss parts of the outcome of these in sessions with the rest of the group.

Session Durations & Formats

Founder Q&A

45 min

Interactive sessions focused on direct Q&A with experienced founders.

Guest Speaker Workshop

1.5 hours

Expert-led workshops covering key growth and expansion topics.

Programme Group Workshop

2 hours

Collaborative group working sessions designed for practical implementation.

In-Person Events

In person sessions are typically almost a full day and usually also includes some form of (optional) networking activity as well.

KICK OFF

April 29, 2027

Daytime Event Mandatory | Evening Event Optional

Barcelona, exact location provided closer to the date.

- In person networking opportunities, especially to get to know the other founders in the programme.
- Kick off the programme with live and interactive workshops to start working on internationalisation readiness and target market selection.
- Guest speakers on site.
- Evening networking event (optional) to attend.

Evening Networking Event

In the evening we will host a small networking event for founders to attend. More information on this will be provided closer to the event.

Rocket Up Graduation Day

Nov 16, 2027

Demo Day takes place the day before Slush in Helsinki.

From morning to afternoon, startups pitch their go-to-market strategy to an expert jury and to a room of relevant investors, corporates and ecosystem partners selected by the EIT Supernovas team. Format and final details will be shared during the programme. This is a mandatory event for all Rocket Up participants to attend & present at in person.

The strongest pitches win one of two award types from our investors, corporates and ecosystem partners. Up to three startups receive a cash prize based on their best rated GTM strategy and pitch on the day.

Founders & Funders Night

In the evening, we will host **Founders & Funders Night**. This is a curated, invitation-only (& optional) gathering for startups actively fundraising. It brings together investors, corporates, ecosystem partners, industry leaders and policymakers for focused conversations in a small setting. More details will follow during the programme.

1:1 support

1:1 meetings are always scheduled between the expert and the founder directly per shared availability. These are not pre-scheduled or planned. However, 1:1s should be completed during their designated time range.

Pitch Coach

18 - 29 October 2027

45 min

Individualised pitch advice and feedback. Pitch feedback can be relating to GTM strategy pitch or with specific pitch questions/guidance requested to the pitch coach for targeting investors and commercial pitching as well.

GTM Strategy Expert

Programme Onboarding: 29 March - 16 April 2027,
Target Market Selection 14 June - 1 July 2027,
1 x GTM Strategy Draft Review 11 - 22 October 2027

(up to) 3 hours

1 x 30 min programme onboarding (required), 1 x 30 min 121 on target market selection (required), 1 x 30 min draft run through of GTM strategy presentation pitch (required) and remaining hours can be used by startup during the programme as they wish

Fundraising Support

1 May - 5 November 2027

45 min

Individual diagnostics meeting to understand startup's fundraising readiness with feedback, and/or pitch deck review and/or guidance and action planning for investment raising process

Business Mentor

7 May - 30 July 2027

(up to) 10 hours

Individual support provided by a matched Business Mentor per each startup. Startup can personalise the topics and time spent in these mentoring hours themselves. Focus recommended on internationalisation readiness and target market selection.

Regional Expert

10 September - 30 November 2027

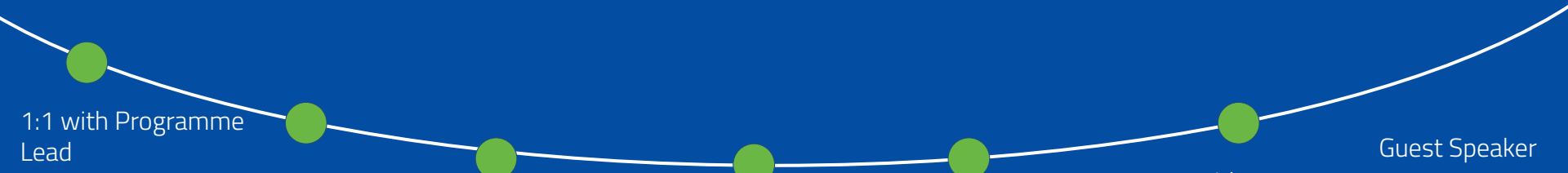
(up to) 10 hours

Individual support provided by a matched Regional Expert per each startup. Startup can personalise the topics and time spent in these mentoring hours themselves. Focus recommended on validation of target market, shaping localisation and positioning for target market and getting input for a strategic market entry.

Rocket Up Programme

Roadmap

Business mentor assigned to startup by no later than May 7 2027 and mentoring hours can be used until 30 July 2027. Target market selection is required to be submitted by startups by no later than July 1 2027.



1:1 with Programme Lead

Participant Onboarding

Between 29/03 - 16/04
ONLINE
Mandatory

Session 1

Kick Off

Thu 29/04
9:00 - 17:00 CEST
IN PERSON
Mandatory

Q&A: Guest Speaker

Experienced Entrepreneur

Wed 12/05 10:00 - 10:45 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

Session 2

Target Market Analysis & Commercial Implications

Wed 26/05 14:00 - 16:00 CEST
ONLINE
Mandatory

Guest Speaker

Pricing Strategies

Wed 09/06
14:00 - 15:30 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

1:1 with Programme Lead

Target Market Selection Support

Between 14/06 - 01/07
ONLINE
Mandatory

Guest Speaker

Fundraising Support: Understanding investors & their terms

Wed 07/07
14:00 - 15:30 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

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Regional Expert assigned to startup by no later than September 7, 2027 and mentoring hours can be used until 30 November 2027.

Q&A: Guest Speaker

Experienced Entrepreneur

Wed 21/07 10:00 - 10:45 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

SUMMER BREAK
21/07 - 30/08

No group sessions taking place

Session 3

Localisation, Value Prop & Culture & Sales/Partnership strategy

14:00 - 16:00 CEST
ONLINE
Mandatory

Guest Speaker

Pitch Training

Thu 02/09
14:00 - 15:30 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

Q&A: Guest Speaker

Experienced Entrepreneur

Wed 22/09 10:00 - 10:45 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

Guest Speaker

Fundraising Support : Exit Strategies

Thu 29/09
14:00 - 15:30 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

Guest Speaker

Market Specific Info Session

Between 13/09 - 08/10
ONLINE
Optional

Session 4

Operational Scaling & your GTM Strategy

Wed 06/10
14:00 - 16:00 CEST
ONLINE
Mandatory

1:1 with Programme Lead

GTM Strategy Draft

Between 11/10 - 22/10
ONLINE
Mandatory

Guest Speaker

Fundraising Support: Ask Me Anything & Preparing to meet investors at Slush

Wed 27/10
14:00 - 15:30 CEST
ONLINE
Optional

Guest Speaker (Pitch Coach)

Individual Pitch Support

Between 18/10 - 29/10

Final Session

Demo Day & Slush

Tue 16/11 (Demo Day)
9:00 - 16:30
IN PERSON
Mandatory

& Wed 17/11 & Thu 18/11 (Slush)
IN PERSON
Optional

SLUSH

Rocket Up Programme

Founder Participation Requirements & Expectations

Mandatory & minimum contribution from startups:

- Founder must attend **in person Kick Off Session in Barcelona** & **in person Demo Day Event in Helsinki** (startups also must pay their own travel & accommodation in person for both events)
- Founder must complete a minimum of 15 hours out of total 20 hours with their two assigned mentors (Business Mentor and Regional Expert) during the programme assigned dates
- Founder must attend and actively participate in 'Session 2', 'Session 3' & 'Session 4' online. 'Actively participate' refers to camera on, actively engaging in discussion verbally and in chat and working on activities live in session.
- Founder must submit a geographical target market decision by no later than 1 July 2027 to Programme Lead with strategic reasoning based on Market Opportunity Analysis exercise/s.
- Founder must deliver a GTM strategy presentation at the Demo Day Event in person
- Founder must work on & submit at least 50% of all homework provided. Homework entails activities and prompts strategic decisions that contributes to their overall GTM strategy process. However, there are 2 pieces of critical homework provided that must be submitted: Market Opportunity Analysis for target market selection & GTM pitch deck creation.
- Founder must allocate at least 4-5 hours per week of dedication to this programme between April 29 2027 - November 16 2027. This covers attendance in sessions (pre-scheduled), mentoring (scheduled between mentor & founder) and homework completion (own time allocated).
-
- Participating startups must include the provided EIT Supernovas logo on their website until August 2029 once selected in the programme. Startups should ensure this is applied within 1 month of contract signing and onboarding into Rocket Up.

Rocket Up Programme

The programme is 100% subsidised — but continued access to the programme is conditional on meeting the minimum requirements.

The terms

WHAT IS COVERED

- Programme participation: €0
- 1 Slush ticket per startup

WHAT STARTUPS COVER

- Travel & accommodation for the Barcelona Kick Off Day
- Travel & accommodation for Helsinki Demo Day & Slush

HOW PARTICIPATION IS MONITORED

- Attendance and participation are checked after each mandatory session and during mentoring trajectory.
- If a mandatory requirement is missed, the startup will be notified and asked to provide a justification.
- All mandatory requirements must be completed by the woman founder / woman CE. Other team members are welcome to attend alongside her, but cannot substitute for her.

ACCEPTED REASONS FOR ABSENCE

A missed mandatory requirement may be accepted where there is sufficient justified reasoning, such as:

- Serious personal illness or injury
- Force majeure
- For mandatory in-person events: visa refusal by the relevant authorities, where the founder submitted the visa application with sufficient time.

IF A STARTUP STOPS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING

If a startup is no longer communicating and/or actively participating in the programme and/or is not meeting the minimum requirements, EIT Supernovas team reserves the right to withdraw:

- Slush ticket
- Regional Expert
- Fundraising support (if a confirmed participant)
- Access to remaining programme sessions & programme opportunities

REPAYMENT

If the minimum programme requirements are not met, a €2,000 repayment fee to EIT may apply, in line with the programme's EU funding conditions. This invoice can be shared with the startup during the programme at any time in communication with the founder, once the minimum requirements are not met & without approved justification (as above).

Applications whose solution fits focus area in Urban Mobility, Digital or Food receive extra weighting in the scoring during the 1st phase of application review.

Rocket Up Evaluation Criteria

During the **1st phase of application review,** participants will be evaluated based upon the participant eligibility criteria (see slide 21)

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 of 3 people 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 that is fully dedicated to the startup.

02 **Strong Team**
Approximately 5-30 FTE

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, Climate, Digital, Water, Culture & Creativity, Raw Materials or Energy. (**Please note: Health/Wellness tech is excluded)**

05 **Market Ready**
Commercially active with product–market fit in home market, including at least €100,000 in revenue in 2026 or equivalent (ability to demonstrate revenue based traction)

06 **Home Market**
Company is registered and operates within an EU country (including Horizon Europe countries)

Disclaimer: in 2nd and 3rd round, applications/interviews will be conducted by 3 people in each round. This will be a combination of internal and external evaluators.

Rocket Up Application Timeline

Call for applications open

17 November 2026, 3pm CET

Interested & eligible startups invited to submit application via evaluation platform

Call for applications closes

22 January 2027, 3pm CET

Applications no longer able to be accepted for consideration after this date/time.

1st Round Applicant Review

1 February 2027 12pm CET

All submitted applicants will be informed of application status to pass or reject for the next round of review based on eligibility check only (slide 21).

2nd Round Applicant Review

8 February 2027, 5pm CET

Candidates shortlisted based on first round review as per evaluation criteria (slide 20) and informed of decision for next steps.

3rd Round Applicant Review

16 February-25 February 2027

Shortlisted candidates invited for interviews to take place during this period.

Communication of Selected Startups

26 February 2027, 5pm CET

The 10 selected startups are informed. All other participants will be informed no later than 26 February with an update on their application.

Participant Contracts Formalised

19 March 2027, 5pm CET

Contracts signed by successful participants and onboarding into programme begins

Open Call for Rocket Up Participants

How it works

If you are interested in being considered as a participant for the EIT Community Supernovas Rocket Up programme in 2027, please fill in your application via **this link**.

This open call is open between 17 November 2026 - 22 January 2027.

SUPERNOVAS

ROCKET UP PROGRAMME

Call for Applications
Women-Led European Startups, 2027



CONTACT:

Kirra Pickering

Rocket Up Programme Lead

kirra.pickering@eitcommunity.eu

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