

# WOMEN TechEU

## Frequently Asked Questions

### OC#1

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CLOSING: 20 May 2024 at 17:00 CEST (Brussels time)

\* The deadline for submission is as stated in this Guidelines document. Please note that the platform for submission's time depends on the user's configured timezone and may or may not coincide with the correct time (this depends on the user, not the platform for submission). Any discrepancies in system time will not be grounds for deadline extension.

Project Website: [www.womentecheurope.eu](http://www.womentecheurope.eu)

Open Call platform: [application link](#) ([bit.ly/3UYYPEm](https://bit.ly/3UYYPEm))

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## 1. APPLICATION

### 1.1 Who can apply for the Women TechEU?

Women TechEU targets early-stage deep tech start-ups founded, or co-founded, by women holding a top management position (CEO, CTO or equivalent). Women should hold at least 25% of the shares in the company at the time of submission. The company must be registered and established in an EU Member State or a [Horizon Europe Associated Country](#) for at least six months and a maximum of eight years from the time of submission.

The company must be a SME according to the [European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#) and must be at a stage before reaching a high fidelity Minimum Viable Product<sup>1</sup> as well as having raised less than 1M€ in equity.

Neither the application as a whole nor any parts of it should have already benefitted from any other similar EU programme before e.g. Women TechEU initiative, EmpoWomen etc.

### 1.2 What countries are associated to the Horizon Europe?

Association agreements are currently under negotiation with a number of third countries. Until these have been signed, the transitional arrangement set out in the General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 is applicable with regard to the following countries and legal entities established in these countries, with which association negotiations are being processed or where association is imminent. The applicable list is the one published by the European Commission at the time of submission: [Associated countries](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A MVP is defined as the version of a new product that allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort

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### 1.3 My company is registered in the UK – can I apply for Women TechEU?

Yes. The UK is associated to the entire Programme, with the only exception of the EIC fund, which is part of the EIC Accelerator of Horizon Europe that provides investment through equity or other repayable form.

### 1.4 My company is not yet registered. Can I still apply for this call?

To apply, your company must have been officially registered and established at least six months before the submission of the application. You must meet all eligibilities criteria, including the registration date of the company. No exceptions will be made.

Being "registered" means that your company has been officially recorded on a government registry or database, confirming its legal existence as a business entity. This will be verified by means of the date of the certificate of registration of the company in the national business register.

### 1.5 What do you mean by a start-up?

Under Horizon Europe, a 'start-up' should be understood as an SME in the early stage of its life cycle, including those that are created as spin-offs from university research activities, which aims to find innovative solutions and scalable business models, and which is autonomous within the meaning of Article 3 of the [European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#).

### 1.6 What do you mean by an early-stage start-up?

Early-stage refers to the phase of start-up development generally preceding the rapid growth phase. For the purpose of the Women TechEU topic, we consider the following criteria to define an early-stage start-up:

- start-ups that have been established and operating for not more than 8 years from submission of application date,
  - start-ups that have raised limited funding (up to 1 million EUR in equity at submission date),
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- before reaching high fidelity MVP (Minimum Viable Product).

These criteria are part of the eligibility check and are grounds for exclusion. Applicants must comply with all the eligibility checks.

### 1.7 How is the 1 million € in equity calculated and what types of funding are counted towards it?

The aim in this eligibility requirement was in order to ensure that the startups that are going to get funded by Women TechEU are not already well funded themselves. Therefore investments in cash or equivalent are the ones counted towards the 1 Million €. This will include private equity investments from business angels or VCs, SAFE notes where the money is already available in the bank account of the startups and convertible loans. What is NOT included are the investments of the co-founders themselves, sweat equity or public grants.

### 1.8 My company raised more than 1 million € in an equity round. Am I eligible to apply for the Women TechEU?

No. We would suggest that you look towards other funding instruments like the EIC Accelerator.

### 1.9 If our company has managed to raise money from grants, can we still apply?

Yes, since the maximum 1 million € raised do not include grants but only private equity investments (see previous FAQ). What is important however is to avoid double funding that the startup has not already applied and been granted funding in previous Women TechEU sessions, EIC Accelerator or other similar funding programmes like Empowomen. Other grants from local, regional or European programmes are allowed.

### 1.10 What is understood by CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent?

For the purpose of this call, we accept female founders holding a CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent position in the company.

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### 1.11 Could you please define requirements for female founders or co-founders?

If you are legally recognised as the founder or co-founder of the company in a Member State or Associated Country, you are eligible to apply for Women TechEU. You should be able to provide proof of your status as founder or co-founder by either showing the official list of shareholders or else another similar document provided by your national company registry.

### 1.12 Does the founder of the company have to currently hold a top management position in the company?

In order to apply to Women TechEU, the founder of the company must also currently hold a top management position (CEO, CTO, CSO, or equivalent position) within that same company.

### 1.13 We are two female co-founders and we both hold top management positions in the company – can we apply jointly?

There can be only one application per company, however, two or more women co-founders can apply together. For administrative reasons you must nominate one person to be the 'lead applicant', representing your company towards the programme. In the application form please describe both of you, please submit CVs of both of you (and preferably also the rest of the team) and please record the video together.

### 1.14 Is it necessary to hold a majority or significant equity participation as a female co-founder?

At the moment of submission, women must hold at least 25% of the shares of the company and should be indicated in the Capitalization table in the application form.

### 1.15 How is the 25% shareholding of women calculated?

The full current CAP table (shareholders list) will need to be given at application stage. In total the shareholding percentages will need to add up to 100% and the total of all the women shareholders need to be 25% or more.

### 1.16 Does the founder/co-founder & CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent need to be the woman owning at least a 25% of the shares?

Not necessarily, the guidelines say “Women legally recognized as founders or co-founder of the company. The founder or co-founder of the company must also currently hold a top management position (CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent) within the same company. It will be also required that women hold at least 25% of the shares in the CAP table (capitalization table) of the company”. This means at least a 25% of the shares need to be owned by women, not necessarily the same co-founder/founder & CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent owning this percentage, as different women could own that amount all together.

### 1.17 What is your definition of a woman?

Women TechEU supports women in all their diversity. The word 'woman' equates to a cis woman, or a transgender woman who is legally defined as a woman. The means of verification will be the Identity Card issued by the country of their nationality.

### 1.18 How do you define deep tech?

Deep tech innovation aims to provide concrete solutions to our societal problems by finding its source in a deep interaction with the most recent scientific and technological advances and by seeking to produce a profound impact in the targeted application areas.

Sectors, which are most fertile for deep tech applications are life-science, computing, food and agri-tech, aerospace, energy and clean-tech, industrial technologies, telecom, new materials, chemistry. However deep tech also includes, among other

things, artificial intelligence, deep learning and machine learning. We welcome applications from all deep tech fields of activity.

### 1.19 My company uses technology in the delivery of its goods / services, am I eligible to apply?

Using technology and being a deep tech company are very different concepts. Just because one is adopting industry standard technologies or slightly modifying content, materials, integration of existing components etc, does not make the company a deep tech one. A deep tech company is one that is advancing science, it is creating new technology in a ground breaking way to provide solutions to societal problems. For way of example, the following are NOT deep tech – elearning platforms where the content is the innovative part and not the technology, ecommerce apps where the innovation is the business model/pricing and not the technology, gaming apps which use industry standard components, online information portals where the news and articles are the innovative component etc

### 1.20 What are the minimum requirements concerning TRL levels in this program? What TRL level should be completed at the time of submitting the proposal?

Women TechEU does not require the minimum TRL to apply for this call. However, this call is targeting early-stage start-ups, which are in their formative stage, therefore by definition we target rather lower TRL innovations.

### 1.21 Which legal documents do I have to provide at the moment of application?

The eligibility check is done via a self-assessment questionnaire in the application form. If selected for funding, a legal validation will take place. These will require some documents that may take some time to collect, please take that into consideration. The requested elements for validation are:

- To validate the identity and the power of attorney of the person who will sign the sub-grantee, Women TechEU will ask for the **ID number and an ID scanned copy of the signatory**. On the scanned copy, personal information included on the ID card could be covered if not relevant for the contract

signature such as religion, ethnicity and/or personal address. The picture, expiry date, name, surname, gender, number of the document and nationality should be visible without exception. Women TechEU will also ask for **the power of attorney** of the person who will sign the Sub-grantee agreement.

- **SME declaration** (see Annex 2): form based on the standard templates by the EC in which Women TechEU can verify the ownership structure and financial figures to verify the size of the company.
- **Balance Sheet and P&L accounts** for the last two closed years (if applicable) and the most recent CAP table (shareholding distribution). In companies with linked or associated entities, additional information (accounts for mother companies, group trees, etc.) could be requested.
- For entities that are already validated by the European Commission's Funding and Tenders Portal that count with a registered and validated PIC Number, we will request:
  - The PIC Number and a screenshot of the Funding and Tenders portal in which it's evidenced the type of organisation which has been selected as a beneficiary is required.
- For entities without a validated PIC number OR without a validated status (like self-declared SMEs), we will request:
  - **Legal entity form.** The Legal Entity form for private companies, and public law bodies necessary for the awarding of EU funding. Company Register, Official Journal and so forth, showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and public law bodies necessary for the awarding of EU funding. Company Register, Official Journal and so forth, showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and
  - **VAT Number registration** (if applicable), a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).

**A legal entity that does not provide the requested data and documents in due time will not be awarded.**

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### 1.22 Which other documents must I submit?

You must submit the CV of the woman founder and the team, and the investors pitch deck, all in pdf format.

### 1.23 Must the video be professionally made?

No, we are not expecting high-resolution videos. These can be recorded on any device, even a phone camera. We simply want to find out more about you and your company. It is recommended to upload the video in YouTube (or any other public video-streaming platform), private mode, and copy the link in the application form.

### 1.24 Which questions should be answered in the 3-minute video?

The video should be a short teaser pitch, to introduce yourself and tell us why you are applying. You should pitch the company, its mission and vision, its technology and future plans. Note: The video pitch cannot exceed three minutes. This is a strict condition to apply. Evaluators will be instructed not to evaluate the content from 3:00 onwards.

### 1.25 Where should I upload the video pitch?

Firstly, you should upload the video on a file-sharing platform or website, e.g., YouTube, Google Drive, Dropbox, etc. Secondly, include the link on the application form i.e., paste your link in the indicated box.

### 1.26 What language may I submit my application in?

All information, documents and video must be in English. English is the only language permitted in your applications. Applications in any other language will be considered non-eligible. For formal documents provided by national institutions, these can of course be in the national language, although an English translation will need to be provided.

### 1.27 I obtained previously an EU grant. Can I apply for the Women TechEU?

If you have previously benefitted from other EU funding, you can apply for Women TechEU as long as these previous EU funded projects have not funded the exact same things that you are requesting this funding for as this will constitute double funding. The exception to this is if you have already benefited from the previous Women TechEU initiative, or other similar women related funds like Horizon Europe EmpoWomen and similar.

### 1.28 I'm planning to apply / I applied for another EU funding. Can I still apply for the Women TechEU?

You can apply in parallel to various EU calls by submitting similar proposals. However, if you are selected for funding by more than one EU scheme/EU programme for the same or similar proposals, then at the moment of the grant agreement preparation, you will have to choose one of the funding schemes to move forward with. If proposals submitted under various EU funding schemes are sufficiently different, then the various proposals may be selected and move forward under the separate funding streams (subject to the specific eligibility conditions under each call).

### 1.29 Could you comment whether our project / company is eligible for the Women TechEU call?

To ensure fair and equal treatment of all the applicants, we have to remain impartial. Therefore, we are not allowed to give any comments or guidance on your application/idea, nor to give individual assessments or piece of advice to potential applicants. Evaluation of all proposals will be done by independent evaluators.

### 1.30 Our company's situation is very complex and we are not sure that we fit or not in the eligibility criteria, what should we do?

Since we cannot pre-evaluate proposals without receiving all the details, if there is a grey area, we always suggest that the application is submitted and this is why we are engaging experts from both technological and business sectors that will then give the

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final decision on the matter. The application form is very lean and it will not take too long for the startups to fill it in if they already have existing materials like business plans and a pitch deck.

### 1.31 Where can I apply for the Women TechEU call?

The application process will be exclusively through the [Sploro platform](#). Before you begin, we recommend carefully reviewing the guidelines and the Annex 1, a preliminary version of the form, to familiarize yourself with key elements. Find the files in the following [link](#).

## 2. EVALUATION

### 2.1 Who will assess my application?

Your application will be assessed by independent external expert evaluators with an entrepreneurial, deep tech, investment or innovation background.

### 2.2 Which are the evaluation criteria?

There are three evaluation criteria: Impact, Excellence, and Implementation. Each criterion comprises several sub-questions, which mirror the application form.

1. **Impact:** The impact is evaluated according to the following criteria:
    - a. The quality of the business plan;
    - b. The SWOT analysis i.e., whether it is realistic and convincing;
    - c. Their contribution to the green, digital, and social transition.
  
  2. **Excellence:** projects must demonstrate high quality and a clear set of objectives aligned with the Women TechEU vision and with the general objectives of the project. The Excellence is evaluated according to the following criteria:
    - a. Alignment of the application with the call;
    - b. Degree of deep tech innovation i.e., going beyond the state-of-the-art, chances to succeed, its feasibility;
    - c. The growth potential of the proposed innovation/solution in terms of turnover, profit, and jobs, as well as its broader economic impact;
    - d. How critical this grant is for the company, and whether it will make a difference and add value to the company.
    - e. Their eagerness to pursue a EIC Accelerator grant in the near future.
    - f. IPR aspects.
  
  3. **Implementation:** The implementation is evaluated according to the following criteria:
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- a. Relevance of the woman (co-)founder role in the company i.e., whether the woman (co-)founder has a leading role in the company, whether she is the decision-maker, whether she has a management capacity and whether she can bring the company to the next level;
- b. An overall gender balance and the position held by women in the start-up;
- c. Team's skills, motivation, and commitment to execute the project;
- d. Quality and efficiency of the work plan i.e., whether the proposed activities are sound and well explained, as well as whether these activities are most needed at this stage.

### 2.3 When will I receive the results of my application?

The results of the Women TechEU call will be communicated around 5 July 2024.

### 3. PROGRAMME

#### 3.1 Which activities can we fund with the EU grant of EUR 75 000?

Taking into account your particular needs and requirements it is up to you (the applicant) to choose how you plan to allocate funds towards activities that will accelerate the development, growth and sustainability of your business. For example, you can spend this grant on business model upgrade, update and consolidation of business plan and growth strategy, business model validation, update of financial plan, certifications, IP strategy and freedom to operate, commercial plan, market analysis, customer validation and technical/clinical assessment, finding partners and investors, etc. Independent expert (s) will assess whether the proposed activities are most appropriate and required to support your company's growth and development

#### 3.2 Are the grants awarded to the woman-founder or to the company?

Grants will be awarded to the company.

#### 3.3 What type of support will I receive through the Programme of services?

The unique Women TechEU Programme offers 7 Services. At the moment of application, the top 3 preferences must be chosen:

- **Service 1 Women mentors (one meeting per month during 6 months):** As part of the programme, we will offer you, as a women entrepreneur, access to carefully selected, and experienced women mentors who will provide guidance, support, and valuable insights tailored to your requirements and designed to help you succeed in your business venture. Through the Sploro platform, we will enable specific matchmaking of and connections and mentorship sessions between women, fostering a supportive network that can help overcome the unique challenges women

entrepreneurs often face. Research has shown that positive influence from successful women can play a crucial role in the success of other women-led businesses.

- **Service 2 Investor outreach and pitch preparation:** We will open doors and make introductions to investor entities (business angels, VCs, funds) in our networks who are positively welcoming women entrepreneurs. Our experts will provide pitch presentation review and rehearsal support providing guidance and feedback to improve confidence in delivery. This will help you overcome the challenge of raising early investment that women founders often face.
  - **Service 3 Investor and Export Readiness Check:** Using a structured approach with questions on the core business areas, your start up will be assessed on team, product, market, finance, operations and IP in order to determine if you are ready to pitch in front of investors, or present to potential clients. Women entrepreneurs tend to doubt themselves a million times more than male counterparts so practising with one of our experts will build your confidence, and if there are areas that need attention, you will be helped to address those before pitching. Connections with EIT Food programme in internationalization RocketUp will be sought, when possible.
  - **Service 4 – Soft Skills Training:** Since the Women TechEU start-ups are at the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey, you will be offered development content on soft skills areas like public speaking, presentation, leadership skills, improve productivity by using AI, and more. Given that your expertise is in the deep tech sector, we anticipate that your hard skills will be top-notch, but we want to train you to become an all-rounder with our blended courses (mix of in-person and recorded sessions).
  - **Service 5 – Sales Strategy & Execution:** The go-to-market strategy is the area where most companies fail. We see this in front of investors as well as in pitches to competition or awards juries. Here at Women TechEU we expect the companies to be even more embryonic in their understanding of how to find leads, how to fill their pipeline, when and what to say upon follow up and even how to tune the pricing models to the right target group of clients. Women entrepreneurs tend to be less
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aggressive in their sales strategy and we want to instil in you the knowledge and confidence that it is ok to ask for money for services and products.

- **Service 6 - Environmental Impact Assessment:** The environmental impact of technology and business models from entrepreneurs is a growing area of interest to investors. Women TechEU will offer the service of climate impact projections to support you to understand the environmental impact of your innovations and help you design sustainable and impactful business models from the outset. The service leverages an online tool designed for start-ups, based on the benchmark Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) method. Users can explore new options to make a positive climate impact reducing CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions of their business model and deep tech innovation. It can also measure health, ecotoxicity, and resource depletion like rare earth minerals.
- **Service 7 - Corporate Access:** Leveraging the large network of corporates provided by EIT KICs, this service provides a platform for you to connect with potential partners and customers. As women are underrepresented in the corporate world, this service offers a great opportunity for you to expand your reach, showcase your innovative solutions, and secure valuable partnerships that can help you achieve their business goals.

At the moment of submission, you as the applicant must select your top three services that you would like to get from Women TechEU project. During the execution of the Programme of Services selected services from the EIC Business Accelerator Service will also be offered.

### 3.5 Will there be other calls?

During the Women TechEU project (2024 - 2026) there will be 4 open calls in total.

### 3.6 Does the De Minimis rule apply for Women TechEU?

In the case of the EU contribution funded under Women TechEU, the De Minimis rule does not apply. Union funding, i.e., centrally managed by the institutions, agencies, joint undertakings, or other bodies of the Union that is not directly or indirectly under

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the control of Member States, does not constitute State aid. It should not be considered in determining whether the relevant ceiling is complied with.

Are your questions answered?

For any further question we advise you to consult the [Guidelines and the Annex 1](#) – application form of this call. If any question persists, contact us at [helpdesk@womentecheurope.eu](mailto:helpdesk@womentecheurope.eu) .