WOMEN TechEU

Guidelines for Mentors: Open Call #1

Author(s):	Ignacio Reina (Sploro)
Editor(s):	Teresa Hernández (EITM)
	Angele Giuliano (AcrossLimits)
	Clare McGee (AwakenHub)
	Miguel García (Sploro)
	Virginia Gómez (Sploro)
	Maja Horvat (Sploro)
Responsible Organisation:	Sploro
Version-Status:	V1
Submission date:	01/07/2024
Dissemination level:	Public

**Funded by
the European Union**

Table of Contents

1. Women TechEU Introduction

1.1. About Women TechEU project

The Women TechEU project is on a mission to ignite the potential of women-led early-stage start-ups in deep tech. 160 talented women entrepreneurs from across the European Union and Horizon Europe associated countries will be receiving direct support. With 75k€ grant (non-diluting finance) and a personalized business development programme, the project will be paving the way for these innovators to shine as leaders in deep tech innovation across Europe.

This project is a continuation of the Women TechEU scheme that was managed before by the EISMEA (European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency) during 2021 and 2022, and it has now become a fully-fledged cascade funding project that is run by an EU-wide consortium made up of different innovation ecosystem players, representatives of women entrepreneurs and also investors.

For 2 years the project will give out a total of 12 M€ in non-diluting finance over 4 different competitive calls. Each cohort of successful entrepreneurs will then be also invited to use the menu of business development services that will be provided over a period of 6 months. Constant contacts and checkups of the KPIs that will be jointly developed by the entrepreneurs and their coaches will ensure that there is a smooth ongoing scaleup of their businesses, to prepare the winners to eventually also apply for the EIC Accelerator scheme.

1.2. Objectives and ambition

The main objective of the project is:

To create a targeted programme of support for women founders and entrepreneurs leading deep tech start-ups from Europe to grow into tomorrow's tech leaders and to put women at the forefront of deep tech in Europe.

Our ambition is to directly contribute to interconnected, inclusive, and more efficient innovation ecosystems that draw on the existing strengths of European ecosystems to engage new, less well-represented stakeholders and less advanced innovation territories. Women TechEU will leverage its experience and the strengths of existing start-up accelerators, Universities and other multiplier organisations around Europe to foster greater long-term inclusivity of women in deep tech.

Women TechEU will furthermore implement selection criteria for participants that prioritise **green, digital and social transitions** in line with European objectives, and will support accepted applicants in defining a social innovation strategy. The project will also **target less advanced innovation territories** (widening areas) to reduce territorial inequalities in access to innovation support.

The funding provided alongside our support services and the facilitation of investor meetings, particularly for start-ups from less- connected ecosystems, will enhance cross-border network connectivity and inter-regional collaboration of regional innovation valleys by reinforcing their capacity to create, reshore, and renew European value chains towards the green and digital transition. This approach will further strengthen and expand cooperation between innovation ecosystems worldwide.

2. Women TechEU Programme of services

The unique Women TechEU Programme offers a set of services to the selected applicants, including but not limited to:

- Service 1: Women mentors
- Service 2: Investor outreach and pitch preparation
- Service 3: Investor and Export Readiness check
- Service 4: Soft Skills Training
- Service 5: Sales Strategy & Execution
- Service 6: Environmental Impact Assessment
- Service 7: Corporate Access

This call refers to Service 1: Women mentors

2.1. Service 1: Women mentors

In this service, we offer women entrepreneurs access to carefully selected, and experienced women mentors who will provide guidance, support, and valuable insights tailored to each founder and designed to help them succeed in their business ventures. Through the Sploro platform, we will enable specific matchmaking 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.

The Mentoring support services take place during the whole duration of the Women TechEU services programme starting from mid-September 2024 to mid-March 2025. In the first month of the programme, an onboarding and KPIs definition session will take place guided by the Women TechEU consortium. Afterwards, the mentoring will take place in the form of 5 one-to-one meetings during the programme. As mentioned before, Women TechEU will release 4 open calls to select top-notch women-led deep tech startups. In case the performance of the mentors is

satisfactory, the contract could be prolonged to perform the same services for the upcoming cohorts. The tentative timelines of the upcoming programme of services are:

- Programme of services for Open Call 2: January 2025 – June 2025
- Programme of services for Open Call 3: June 2025 – December 2025
- Programme of services for Open Call 4: July 2025 - January 2026

The Mentor is expected to provide personalised guidance, support, and valuable insights to each mentee, aimed at helping them succeed in their business ventures. This involves offering advice based on experience, helping navigate challenges, and sharing industry knowledge tailored to the mentee's specific needs. The mentor is also expected to challenge the entrepreneur to ensure that they are meeting with the agreed KPIs, milestones and growth aspirations.

2.2. Remuneration and Payment

For this Open Call #1, the remuneration of the service is 100€/session x 5 sessions/mentee served = 500€/mentee served including VAT.

One mentor will be assigned a maximum of 5 mentees to ensure that the quality of the service is maintained. Mentees will be matched per areas of knowledge and expertise of the mentors and the mentees. For all the mentors that will have a mentee assigned, there will be an onboarding Info session scheduled on September **4th at 11 CEST** (Brussels time). The session is mandatory, so mentors should make sure that they are available and present.

Period	Service	Remuneration
Whole duration of the WTEU programme	**5 one-to-one meetings** per mentee	100€/session x 5 sessions/mentee = **500€/mentee**

2.3. Payment conditions

As an integral part of the mentoring services, it is mandatory for all mentors **who are VAT registered in their respective countries.**

Mentors based on Member States need to be registered in the VIES. The VIES registration ensures that mentors possess valid VAT identification numbers, contributing to the transparency and credibility of the mentoring process. This measure aligns with international standards and is crucial for handling financial transactions associated with the compensation system outlined below.

Each invoice submitted to Sploro by the mentor must clearly state at the end of delivering the services:

- The reference of the contract: Women TechEU Mentors Call #1
- Identification of the mentor.
- The number of mentees.
- The Mentor's address, international bank details & VAT no (if applicable).

Sploro will make a single payment via bank transfer after the service has been completed by the Mentor. All payments will be made to the bank account provided by the mentor, strictly in euros, to bank accounts that accept euros. The transfer will be made to the mentor's account within 60 days of receiving the invoice.

All taxes, including VAT, are included in the fees payable by SPLORO. It is important to note that SPLORO is not subject to any commercial tax, including VAT, and the amount indicated as the project fee is therefore considered as all-inclusive.

3. Monitoring process

To monitor the progress and impact of the Women TechEU's programme on the selected projects, a contact point from the Women TechEU consortium will assist the selected projects.

A set of KPIs, encompassing both technical and business aspects, will be established at the outset of the programme for each project. The follow up of the KPI progress will be integrated into the Sploro platform, which automatically keeps tabs on the progress, saving time and effort.

The platform seamlessly requests information from the projects' teams and updates the data associated with each KPI ensuring real-time visibility into the projects' progress. The platform provides an analytics section with intuitive graphs of each KPI.

Moreover, both mentors and selected projects will independently rate the one-to-one sessions, yielding a quantitative analysis of the progress made in the areas under focus. This evaluation of the mentoring sessions will be done through the Sploro platform. The evaluation process will also serve to identify any requirements for substituting mentors, should the need arise.

4. How to Apply

If you are interested in joining our pool of mentors, please submit your expression of interest **until the 5th of August, at 13:00 CEST** (Brussels time). To do so, simply create or log in to your account in the Sploro platform and fill the corresponding form.

If you have any questions or need more information about Women TechEU Call for Mentors, don't hesitate to reach out to us at helpdesk@womentecheurope.eu. We'll be happy to assist you.

Important Note

Please keep in mind that expressing your interest to participate as a mentor in the Women TechEU Programme does not constitute a binding commitment to the project. The selection of mentors will occur at a later stage, considering various criteria, including expertise, affiliations, and diversity. Your participation is valued and appreciated in advancing the goals of Women TechEU.

4.1 Eligibility criteria

The Mentors should comply with a set or criteria:

- They need to be women
- European (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to an EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list here. (Note: if not a citizen of these countries but a resident/taxpayer in one of these countries, you are still eligible to become a mentor).
- For Member States nationals, registration in the VIES registry (VAT Information Exchange System) is required.

    Women TechEU is looking for mentors with expertise in:
- Deep tech Innovation: Mentors should have a strong understanding of deep tech innovation, including the ability to support projects achieving their professional goals.

and/or
- Entrepreneurial, Investment, or Innovation Background: to effectively support the mentees in the context of the Women TechEU programme.
- Experience in mentoring deep tech start-ups.

4.2 Helpdesk support channel

Women TechEU offers a dedicated support channel available for applicants at helpdesk@womentecheurope.eu . However, the Helpdesk team should not be your first

resource for information. Applicants are requested to consult these Guidelines before resorting to the Helpdesk.

The Helpdesk is the only official channel of communication for applicants. Any email or communication received outside the designated support channel will not be considered. This includes, but is not limited to: emails, calls, and messages to individuals within the Women TechEU consortium on their personal or professional accounts; messages sent on social media to the Women TechEU pages; messages sent to the social media accounts of individuals or organisations within the Women TechEU consortium.

Harassment and unprofessional conduct when communicating with the Helpdesk will not be tolerated. Individuals conducting themselves in such a manner will be warned. Should such behaviour continue, applicant will be automatically disqualified. Examples of such conduct include, but is not limited to, repeated demands for information that the Helpdesk is not at liberty to provide, attempting to sway the Helpdesk team or put pressure in favour of your application, asking or demanding for an exception from the rules to be applied to you, using profanity, and personally harassing individuals within the Women TechEU consortium through their personal contact addresses.

Requests to the Helpdesk will normally receive a response within 2 working days. (Monday-Friday 0900-1700 CET). While all possible effort will be made to respond in a timely manner, the applicants should plan their submission, accordingly, allowing enough time before the deadline (i.e., at least 2 working days) if they expect an answer.

The Helpdesk reserves the right to extend its period of reply from 2 working days to 4 working days during times of high communication volume, such as in the days leading up to and after a call deadline. In such cases, the Helpdesk team will apply an automatic notification system informing people of these circumstances.

Technical issues

Applicants should be aware that it is best practice to submit at least two days before the deadline, to avoid any technical issues that can occur when there is a very high volume of activity on the online platform.

If you do experience technical issues preventing your submission in some way, this must be reported to the Helpdesk team BEFORE the official deadline. Anything received AFTER the deadline, even if just a minute later, will not be considered nor investigated.

At the event that you encounter technical issues, please contact the Helpdesk clearly explaining what you are experiencing, including any error messages or unexpected behaviour. Specify the steps leading up to the problem, so that we can replicate it. Include a timestamp screenshot of your entire screen or the specific part where the issue is visible. Ensure that the screenshot includes the system clock or another form of a timestamp. If applicable, provide any other relevant details such as the device, operating system, and browser you are using.

Even if you have a timestamped screenshot showing the error taking place beforehand, if the message with the screenshot does NOT reach the Helpdesk before the deadline, it will not be considered nor investigated. The time log of when the initial report reaches the Helpdesk email is the only factor that will be considered. If an applicant provides a screenshot showing that, on their end, an email was sent before the deadline, but this time does not match with the time log on the end of Helpdesk, it is always the Helpdesk's time log that will be considered.

Do not wait until the last moment to report technical issues to our Helpdesk. We recommend that you attempt to submit your work at least 48 hours before the official deadline to avoid any unforeseen problems.

Any communication stating technical issues received after the call deadline will not be considered nor taken into account.

5. Mentor's selection process

Mentors will be selected by the Women TechEU team members based on their competences, needs for the Service 1 and demand of Women TechEU participants.
All the applicants for mentors will first undergo an eligibility check to see if they comply with the eligibility criteria. Once they pass this stage, they are evaluated based on their competences and expertise and how aligned they are with the programme of services and the applicants' deep-tech sectors. The results of the evaluation will be communicated around 26th of August and there will be no prior communication and revealing of results. The selected candidates will then be invited to sign a contract, which needs to be finalized by 3rd of September at the latest. All candidates should consider the timeline below when applying to ensure a smooth process and no delays. Only selected candidates with a signed contract will be invited to participate in an onboarding call on 4th of September.

Tentative timeline overview of the selection process:

Call deadline: **05/08/2024 at 13:00 CEST** (Brussels time)
Evaluation of mentors: **06/08 – 23/08/2024**
Communication of results: around **26/08/2024**
Signing of contract: **26/08– 03/09/2024**
Onboarding call: **04/09/2024 at 11:00 CEST** (Brussels time)

If you know someone else who might be qualified for this task and might be interested, please forward these details to them. By applying to Women TechEU Call for Mentors, applicants automatically accept all the rules and conditions described below.

5.1 Mentors' liability

All mentors must sign as part of their contract a declaration of confidentiality agreement with the Women TechEU consortium prior to the start of the service.

By applying to the Women TechEU mentor Call and registering on the SPLORO platform, the mentor:

- understands that submitting an application (registration) does not guarantee selection as a mentor for the Programme of services.
- confirms that the team in charge of the Mentors call will inquire about their availability to perform the service within the specified timeframe.
- confirms interest in being informed about future opportunities to act as a mentor in ongoing and upcoming open calls.

5.2 Admissibility

• Applications for the call for Mentors can be submitted at any time starting from **01.07.2024 to 05.08.2024** at **13:00h CEST** (Brussels time).

• Applications for the call for Mentors must be submitted electronically through the SPLORO platform, as indicated in this call, using the provided form on the platform, and **a Europass CV must be attached as a .pdf file** as part of the application. Paper or email submissions are **NOT** eligible.

• Applications must be completed in all parts, and the CV must be legible, accessible, and printable.

5.3 Confidentiality

All information connected to the mentoring process is confidential, thus mentors are bound by secrecy. They are not permitted to reveal any information regarding the mentees to anyone. They are also not permitted to use the mentees concepts for their own purposes.

5.4 Language proficiency

English is the only official language for the Women TechEU project. Submissions done in any other language will not be eligible and will not be evaluated. This means that all the communication and materials will be in English, and all deliverables will only be accepted if in English.

All communication during the Mentoring programme should also be done in English.