Funded by the European Union

WOMEN TechEU

Frequently Asked Questions

OC#4

Author(s):	Maja Horvat (Sploro)
Editor(s):	Miguel García (Sploro) Virginia Gómez (Sploro) Teresa Hernández (EITM) Angele Giuliano (AcrossLimits) Clare McGee (AwakenHub)
Responsible Organisation:	Sploro
Version-Status:	V2
Submission date:	02/06/2025
Dissemination level:	Public

Disclaimer: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

© Copyright by the Women TechEU Consortium

OPENING: 2nd June 2025

CLOSING: 4th August 2025 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

Open Call platform: application link

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 3

1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA 6

1.1. Who can apply for the Women TechEU? 6

1.2. What countries are associated to the Horizon Europe programme? 7

1.3. My company is registered in the UK – can I apply for Women TechEU? 8

1.4. My country is registered in Switzerland. Am I eligible to apply for the Women TechEU call? 8

1.5. Does being registered in a particular country increase our chances of winning the grant? 8

1.6. My company is not yet registered. Can I still apply for this call? 9

1.7. What do you mean by a start-up? 9

1.8. Can a non-autonomous SME as defined in the 2003/361/EC Recommendation be eligible to the Women TechEU programme as long as it respects the SME definition as in the Recommendation and other eligibility criteria within Women TechEU call? 9

1.9. What do you mean by an early-stage start-up? 9

1.10. What is the concept of "Before reaching a high fidelity Minimum Viable Product"? 10

1.11. How is the 1 million € in equity calculated and what types of funding are counted towards it? 10

1.12. What is the difference between equity and private funding? 10

1.13. My company raised more than 1 million € in an equity round. Am I eligible to apply for the Women TechEU? 11

1.14. If our company has managed to raise money from grants, can we still apply? 11

1.15. What is understood by CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent? 11

1.16. What is your definition of a woman? 11

1.17. Could you please define requirements for female founders or co-founders? . 11

1.18. Does the founder of the company have to currently hold a top management position in the company? 12

1.19. We are two female co-founders and we both hold top management positions in the company – can we apply jointly? 12

1.20. Is it necessary to hold a majority or significant equity participation as a female co-founder? 12

1.21. How is the 25% shareholding of women calculated? 13

1.22. Does the founder/co-founder & CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent need to be the woman owning at least a 25% of the shares? 13

1.23. Is it permissible for women to hold shares through a holding company? 13

1.24. How do you define deep tech? 13

1.25. My company uses technology in the delivery of its goods / services, am I eligible to apply? 14

1.26. What are the minimum requirements concerning TRL levels in this programme? What TRL level should be completed at the time of submitting the proposal? 15

1.27. Is there any flexibility to the eligibility criteria? 15

1.28. Could you comment on whether our project / company is eligible for the Women TechEU call? 15

1.29. 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? 15

1.30. I made an error in my application form and accidentally selected the wrong information when doing my eligibility self-declaration. As a result, my company and application were declared non-eligible, when we actually are, and I can provide proof that we are eligible. Can my application be re-assessed since this was a human error? 16

1.31. Should I continue filling in the application if I do not fulfill any one of the eligibility criteria? 16

1.32. What is the points system mentioned in the guidelines and how does it work? 17

2. THE APPLICATION PROCESS 17

2.1. Where can I apply for the Women TechEU call? 17

2.2.Which legal documents do I have to provide at the moment of application? 17

2.3. Which other documents must I submit with my application form? 19

2.4. Is there a template for the pitch deck? 19

2.5. My CV is not in Europass format, will this be accepted? Does this include the CVs of the team members as well? 19

2.6. Must the video be professionally made? 20

2.8. Where should I upload the video pitch? 20

2.9. What language may I submit my application in? 20

2.10. What is meant by the Green, Social and Digital Transition? 21

2.11. If our application is rejected, can we reapply to the next call? 21

2.12. What should I do if I encounter technical issues? 21

3. EVALUATION 23

3.1. Who will assess my application? 23

3.2. Which are the evaluation criteria? 23
3.3. When will I receive the results of my application? 24
4. PROGRAMME 25
4.1. Which activities can we fund with the EU grant of EUR 75 000? 25
4.2. Are the grants awarded to the woman-founder or to the company? 25
4.3. What type of support will I receive through the Programme of services? 25
4.4. Will there be other calls? 27
4.5. Does the De Minimis rule apply for Women TechEU? 27
4.6. Are your questions answered? 28

1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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.

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 Annex to EU recommendation 2003/361:

- An "**autonomous enterprise**" is any enterprise which is not classified as a partner enterprise within the meaning of paragraph 2 or as a linked enterprise within the meaning of paragraph 3
- Employ fewer than 250 persons
- Have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million

Their legal form must be of a commercial entity (thus not a Foundation or NGO). Furthermore they must be at a stage before reaching a high fidelity Minimum Viable Product[1] (not more than TRL6) 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, EIC accelerator.

Missing any single one of the above criteria will immediately render your application as non eligible.

1.2. What countries are associated to the Horizon Europe programme?

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.

For the call closing on 4th of August, the list of eligible non-EU countries is: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo,

[1] 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

Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

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 country is registered in Switzerland. Am I eligible to apply for the Women TechEU call?

For this open call, Switzerland is not eligible to apply.At the time of submission, The Commission's List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe states that Switzerland's eligibility is "(applicable to calls under the ERC Work Programme 2024 with opening date after 18 March 2024 and applicable to the entire Programme for award procedures implementing Union budget for the year 2025 and onwards)". Women TechEU as an EU-funded project receives its funding through the **2024** main Horizon Programme (Pillar III). While the cascade call is open in 2025, we are nonetheless distributing funding from the Union's 2024 budget, making Switzerland ineligible for this round. However, this will change in future Women TechEU calls when the next iteration of the Women TechEU project starts to issue its calls, expected from 2026 onwards.

1.5. Does being registered in a particular country increase our chances of winning the grant?

No, there is no advantage to being registered in a particular country. Eligibility is based on meeting the criteria outlined in the application guidelines. You should apply from the country where your company is legally registered.

1.6. 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.

1.7. 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.

1.8. Can a non-autonomous SME as defined in the 2003/361/EC Recommendation be eligible to the Women TechEU programme as long as it respects the SME definition as in the Recommendation and other eligibility criteria within Women TechEU call?

No, a partner or linked enterprise are not eligible to Women TechEU. The company data will be checked at the moment of the legal validation when the relevant information about the structure of the company and its group needs to be provided.

1.9. 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),

· before reaching high fidelity MVP (Minimum Viable Product). This means before reaching TRL7.

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

1.10. What is the concept of "Before reaching a high fidelity Minimum Viable Product"?

The concept refers to products that are still in the development phase and have not yet reached a fully refined and market-ready state. In other words, the programme aims to support startups that are still in the process of refining their product. A company will be seen as complying with this criteria if it has not yet reached TRL7.

1.11. 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.

1.12. What is the difference between equity and private funding?

Private equity refers to ownership stakes in a company, whereas private funding may not necessarily entail equity ownership.

1.13. 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.

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

Yes, since the less than 1 million € raised criteria does 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 or EIC Accelerator. Other grants from local, regional or European programmes are allowed.

1.15. What is understood by CEO, CTO, CSO or equivalent?

For the purpose of this call, we accept women founders holding a top management position that could be known as either a C-Level Executive (CEO, CTO, CSO etc) or an equivalent position in the company like Director, General Manager and similar. As long as the women founders currently have a decision making role in the company, then they are eligible.

1.16. 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 or Passport issued by the country of their nationality.

1.17. 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.

1.18. 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.

1.19. 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.

1.20. 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. In the Capitalization table, you will be asked to indicate all shareholders, starting with the lead applicant, the amount of shares they hold, and provide the gender of the individual (selecting N/A in cases where shares are held by an entity and not an individual).

1.21. 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. You will need to indicate the gender of the shareholders (where applicable). You will also need to list the name of the shareholder (instead of listing them as "shareholder 1", "shareholder 2"…).

1.22. 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 jointly 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.

1.23. Is it permissible for women to hold shares through a holding company?

Yes, this is permissible, as long as the holding company is fully owned by the women applicants.

1.24. 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.

A deep tech company must (a) be leveraging breakthroughs in scientific fields; (b) have their core technology based on recent scientific advancements or pushing boundaries in established fields; (c) have technology with the potential to disrupt the existing markets or create entirely new ones, and (d) have a solution that is genuinely innovative and not just an incremental improvement.

Ideally, the technology can also be scaled efficiently and reach a broad audience, although this is not a defining characteristic and a technology that is not easily scalable can still be deep tech.

1.25. 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 – e-learning 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

1.26. What are the minimum requirements concerning TRL levels in this programme? What TRL level should be completed at the time of submitting the proposal?

Women TechEU requires a minimum TRL 3 to apply for this call. The programme targets early-stage start-ups in their formative stage, so the focus is on innovations at lower TRL levels. The allowed TRL range is from TRL 3 to TRL 6.

1.27. Is there any flexibility to the eligibility criteria?

No, there is not, as the call needs to be fair and equitable for all applicants and this is why we have issued clear rules and eligibility issues. The criteria for the calls are fixed. The final decision on whether a certain situation fits with the criteria as defined always rests with the evaluators.

1.28. Could you comment on 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.

1.29. 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 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.

1.30. I made an error in my application form and accidentally selected the wrong information when doing my eligibility self-declaration. As a result, my company and application were declared non-eligible, when we actually are, and I can provide proof that we are eligible. Can my application be re-assessed since this was a human error?

Only the information that you provide at application stage will be assessed by the evaluators. Any mistake made by the applicant cannot, under any circumstance, be corrected after the call deadline. No additional documentation, information, or otherwise amendments to the application form as submitted can be made to your proposal. If you do submit them, they will be disregarded. The Women TechEU team will not consider any appeals on this matter.

We understand that this may be disappointing news. However, if you believe there was a misunderstanding, we encourage you to review the guidelines carefully and consider reapplying in future Women TechEU calls, ensuring all mandatory criteria are met and that the application form is filled in correctly.

1.31. Should I continue filling in the application if I do not fulfill any one of the eligibility criteria?

Not fulfilling any one of the eligibility criteria makes you automatically ineligible and therefore you should not proceed. Please note that applicants are required to ensure that all information provided in the eligibility self-declaration, is **accurate and truthful.** Should any false information be discovered, submitted with the intent of passing the eligibility criteria, the applicant will be automatically disqualified and blacklisted from the current and all future open calls in the Women TechEU project.

1.32. What is the points system mentioned in the guidelines and how does it work?

Women TechEU receives a very high number of applications and therefore, in order to optimise the selection process for the winners, after checking for eligibility, we also look at a number of criteria. These selection criteria vary according to the needs of the programme in order to ensure a better geographical spread, a better industry sector diversity and to make sure that we evaluate those companies which would benefit better from our programme. Each proposal is looked at by our partners and a count of all desirable criteria is kept for each. The proposals with a higher number of criteria will then move on to the step of evaluation by external experts.

2. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1. Where can I apply for the Women TechEU call?

The application process will be exclusively through the Sploro platform. Before you begin, we strongly 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.

2.2. 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. At the application stage, no legal documentation is required from applicants. It is only if selected for funding that an entity proceeds to the legal validation process. This 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).

At the same time, the **Financial Identification Form and bank account validation documents** will be requested:

- Financial Identification Form (FIF). Form identifying the account to which the funds will be transferred signed by the legal representative of the organisation
- and including a bank statement showing the ownership of the account.
- The coordinator of the consortium, EIT Manufacturing West, will also provide additional security measures to verify the ownership of the account at the moment of signature of the Sub-grantee agreement.

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

2.3. Which other documents must I submit with my application form?

You must submit the Europass CVs of the woman founder and the team, and the investors pitch deck, all in pdf format and all in English. You will also need to submit a 3-minute video pitch.

2.4. Is there a template for the pitch deck?

No, there is no specific pitch deck template. We want to see how you present yourself normally to investors.

2.5. My CV is not in Europass format, will this be accepted? Does this include the CVs of the team members as well?

When sending your application please note that the CVs are required to be in Europass format. This requirement also applies to the CVs of all team members. You can create and download your Europass CV from the Europass website: https://europass.europa.eu/en. This is an important requirement to allow for the standardisation of evaluation of all CVs submitted. No exceptions will be made and. failure to follow this instruction will mean less marks will be awarded to your application during evaluation.

2.6. 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. If the video is a pre-prepared corporate video, NOT showing the woman founder, the video will be considered ineligible and your application will be rejected based on it being incomplete.

2.7. 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.

2.8. Where should I upload the video pitch?

The three-minute video is compulsory to be uploaded into one of the platforms listed here: YouTube, Vimeo, Canva or Zoom recording and with settings on public. If the video is not viewable at the time of the eligibility check and to the evaluators at the moment of evaluation, your application will be rejected on the basis of it being incomplete. You will not be asked to re–submit the video.

2.9. What language may I submit my application in?

English is the only language permitted in your applications. Applications in any other language will be considered non-eligible. All information, pitch deck, CVs, and the video must be in English. Videos not in English but with English subtitles will be accepted. 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.

2.10. What is meant by the Green, Social and Digital Transition?

The mentioned transitions refer to established EU policies and strategies, namely The European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the digital age, and an economy that works for people. You may find more information here. Applicants are asked to define whether the company contributes to the green, digital and/or social transition as aimed for by the European Commission.

2.11. If our application is rejected, can we reapply to the next call?

Yes, you can reapply for the next call if you were not rejected based on a matter of ineligibility, but please ensure to read well the Evaluation Summary Report that you will have received and adjust the application accordingly. Note that re-applying does not give you any advance position as each cohort receives different set of applications, meaning that the competition may be different than in previous open calls. Independent evaluators also do not take any prior applications of information provided, into consideration.

2.12. What should I do if I encounter technical issues?

At the event that you encounter technical issues, please contact the helpdesk on helpdesk@womentecheurope.eu 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.

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.

2.13. I have a question or problem with my application. Who can I speak to?

The official and only designated support channel for Women TechEU is the Helpdesk: helpdesk@womentecheurope.eu.

Any email or communication received outside of the designated support channel will not be taken into account. 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.

2.14. Can exceptions be made to the deadline?

The call deadline is final. No exceptions of any kind will be made, regardless of any personal circumstance that may have affected you on the day of the deadline. The Women TechEU team and the Helpdesk will not re-open or amend your application, nor consider any extra information or documentation sent to it after the deadline. Applicants should plan their submission accordingly, allowing enough time before the deadline to avoid any unforeseen technical or personal problems arising that might affect submission (i.e., at least 2 working days).

The time of the deadline is at it says in the guidelines and is the only reference. Keep in mind that you might be in a different time zone. The platform time is automatically set to your local time zone, which might not coincide with the Brussels one. The platform also shows an internal timer or a countdown which may or may not be accurate so please do not rely on it. The only relevant deadline is the one stated in the guidelines. (In the case of Open call #4 it's 4th of August at 17:00 CEST (Brussels time).

3. EVALUATION

3.1. Who will assess my application?

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

3.2. 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:

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

3.3. When will I receive the results of my application?

The results of the Women TechEU call will be communicated around 25th of September 2025.

3.4. I received my results and I believe I have grounds for an appeal. What do I do?

The Women TechEU consortium has established a process that allows applicants to appeal the decision of the consortium in the event their proposal is not selected for funding. If an applicant believes that there has been a deficiency in how their proposal was assessed, which could potentially impact the final funding decision, or if they believe that the results of eligibility checks are incorrect and do not adhere to the Open Call rules, resulting in harm to their interests, applicants have SEVEN CALENDAR DAYS from the date of receiving the evaluation results to submit their appeal. This can ONLY be done through filling in the online form that will be made available for this purpose on the Women TechEU website. The appeal form will only be available during the appeal period. If you cannot find the appeal form, it means that the appeal window has closed.

4. PROGRAMME

4.1. 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.

4.2. Are the grants awarded to the woman-founder or to the company?

Grants will be awarded to the company.

4.3. 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 the 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 you're 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 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 CO2eq 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.

4.4. Will there be other calls?

During the Women TechEU project (2024 - 2026) there will be 4 open calls in total. This is therefore the 4th and last call.

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

4.6. 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 .