



# EIT HEI INITIATIVE Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education

Fostering Knowledge Transfer from  
Universities to Business –  
Innovation to Unicorn

UNicorn



## Participating partners

Tallinn University of  
Technology (Lead partner)

ESTONIA

Stockholm School of Economics in Riga

LATVIA

Tallinn University

ESTONIA

TECNALIA Research & Innovation

SPAIN

University of Tartu

ESTONIA

Vilnius University

LITHUANIA



Max. funding Phase 1

**€400,000**

Max. funding Phase 2

**€800,000**

## Project description

UNicorn aims to strengthen the consortium universities' capacity and governance of research commercialisation and innovation. The wider objective is to strengthen the Baltic region's capacity in research commercialisation, technology transfer, and entrepreneurial education. The project activities address the role of higher education institutions (HEIs), which has changed over the last 10 years: universities are not just educational and research institutions anymore – they are increasingly expected to produce research to solve societal challenges.

The Unicorn project has four main objectives:

- develop and strengthen technology transfer processes in participating HEIs;
- enhance entrepreneurial education;
- strengthen technology transfer partnerships;
- improve the impact framework of technology transfer and entrepreneurial education.

Three Unicorn universities already have functioning technology transfer offices, there are a number of pre-incubation programmes in place, entrepreneurial education is provided across all disciplines, and the societal impact of entrepreneurship and innovation is already measured to some extent. During the project implementation, these activities will be addressed more deeply to make them more systematic and organised. There is a high-level commitment and strategic objectives in place at every university in the consortium to become more entrepreneurial and

innovative. The project is expected to bring about an institutional change through:

- raising awareness on entrepreneurship and innovation among academic staff and students;
- introducing new entrepreneurship teaching modules;
- strengthening knowledge and technology transfer processes and increasing their capacity;
- measuring the societal impact in a more systematic way at every consortium university.

Furthermore, the project aims to change research career approaches, where entrepreneurship and innovation have a clear role.

The project will be implemented by a consortium of five Baltic universities. The consortium is supported by the research and technology organisation Tecnalia, which brings competences on research commercialisation and ties with entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Project activities involve a number of knowledge-sharing events with entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders – companies, investors, private and public venture capital funds, public innovation agencies, industry clusters, and start-up communes. To bring research into the market as quickly as possible, it is necessary to have strong ties with the entrepreneurship ecosystem stakeholders – strengthening these ties is one of the core objectives of the project.

### Pilot Call Timeline



### About the EIT's HEI Initiative

The EIT's HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education was launched by the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT) and is led by EIT RawMaterials – one of the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities.

The initiative is part of the EIT's [2021–2027 EIT Strategy](#), and it aims to help higher education institutions to build the capacity to innovate and to teach innovation and entrepreneurship. More specifically, the initiative aims to encourage these institutions to look at their own practices and develop concrete actions to increase their impact on their ecosystems.

In March 2020, the HEI Initiative launched a Pilot Call for Proposals, inviting higher education institutions to design activities that will improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity. We are pleased to announce the results of this Pilot Call. To stay updated on the latest developments, visit the initiative website (<https://www.eit-hei.eu/>) and subscribe to our newsletter.