



**EU PRIZE
FOR WOMEN
INNOVATORS 2021**

supported by the **EIC**

Apply by **30 June 2021**

European
Innovation
Council



#WiPrizeEU



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Horizon Europe

Call for a prize — Rules of Contest EU Prize for Women Innovators 2021

Call ID: HORIZON-EIC-2021-WomenInnovatorsPrize

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HISTORY OF CHANGES			
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1.0	18.03.2021	▪ Initial version	
2.0	22.04.2021	▪ Amended to reflect the European Commission’s LGBTIQ Strategy and use of gender-inclusive language in all communication.	6

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS – RULES OF CONTEST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction	4
1. Background	4
2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities— Expected results	5
Objectives	5
Expected results	5
3. Available budget.....	5
4. Timetables and deadlines	5
5. Admissibility	5
6. Eligibility	6
Eligible participants (eligible countries).....	6
Eligible activities.....	7
Ethics and values.....	7
Security	7
7. Exclusion	8
8. Evaluation and award procedure.....	8
9. Award criteria	9
10. Other conditions	10
Payment arrangements	10
Communication — Dissemination — Visibility of funding	10
IPR — Rights of use	11
Checks, audits and investigations	11
Withdrawal of the prize — Recovery of undue amounts	12
11. How to submit an application	12
12. Help	13
13. Important	14

0. Introduction

This is a call (contest)¹ for the EU Prize for Women Innovators, supported by the research and innovation framework programme Horizon Europe.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (Horizon Europe Regulation²)

The call is launched in accordance with the European Innovation Council (EIC) 2021 Work Programme³ and will be managed by the **European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency** ('Agency').

We invite you to read the **call documentation** on the Funding & Tenders Portal Topic page carefully, and in particular these Rules of Contest and the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) (Rules of Contest) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - available budget and timetable (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility, eligibility and criteria for exclusion (sections 5, 6 and 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - other conditions (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the procedures to register and submit applications online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal').

You are also encouraged to visit the [Prize website](#) to consult the list of prizes funded previously.

1. Background

The opportunities created by novel technologies and disruptive innovations promise to deliver the fair and sustainable recovery Europe needs. But Europe risks missing out on these opportunities if half its population is overlooked as a source of innovation and creative talent.

¹ For ease of reference and consistency on the Funding & Tenders Portal, the terms 'call', 'project' and 'participant' are used as equivalent to 'contest', 'application' or 'contestants/applicants'.

² Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 for the period 2021-2027 (soon to be adopted).

³ European Commission Decision C(2021) 1510 of 17 March 2021 concerning the adoption of the EIC work programme 2021 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Horizon Europe programme.

2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities— Expected results

Objectives

The EU Prize for Women Innovators celebrates the women entrepreneurs behind game-changing innovations. In doing so, the EU seeks to raise awareness of the need for more women innovators, and create role models for women and girls everywhere.

The Prize is awarded to up to four women innovators in total (including one young 'Rising Innovator') who have created the largest impact on the innovation ecosystem by transforming ideas into new and advanced products and/or services for the benefit and wealth of European citizens.

Expected results

The prizes will boost public awareness of the potential, importance and contribution of women to the innovation ecosystem, and create role models to inspire other women to become innovators themselves.

3. Available budget

In the main category, three prizes of EUR 100 000 each are awarded to the three highest-ranked applications.

In the second category, one prize of EUR 50 000 is awarded to the highest-ranked application from a 'Rising Innovator', aged 30 or younger.

4. Timetables and deadlines

<u>Timetable and deadlines</u>	
Call opening:	18 March 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	30 June 2021 – 17:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	July-October 2021
Information on evaluation results/award:	October-November 2021

5. Admissibility

Applications must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 3*).

Applications must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Applications must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the applicant organisations (*to be filled in directly online*)

EU Prizes: Call document EU Prize for Women Innovators 2021 (Rules of Contest): V2.0 – 22.04.2021

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the application (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded as PDF in the system*)
- mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*to be uploaded as PDF files/included in Part B*):
 - Applicants must support their application with an inspiring video message about themselves and their achievements, lasting no more than 90 seconds (Part B must include a link to the video).

Your application must be **readable, accessible, printable**.

Applications are limited to **10 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, all applicants must be:

- a woman⁴
- an ordinary resident⁵ in an EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories, OCTs) or a country associated to Horizon Europe
- founder or co-founder of an active innovative company registered at least two years before the submission deadline⁶

In addition to the above, those applying for the Rising Innovator category must be aged 30 or younger at the start of the call year⁷. There is no age limit to apply for the main category, though applicants eligible for both prize categories can only apply to one.

In both categories, two or more women co-founders of a single company may submit a joint application, competing for one single prize.

All applicants must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before the call deadline — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, you will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Specific cases

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) cannot apply.

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and*

⁴ This Prize celebrates women in all their diversity. The word 'woman' equates to a cis woman, or a transgender woman who is legally defined as a woman.

⁵ A person is ordinarily resident in a given country, if she is recognised as resident under national law in that country, and proof of such recognition can be provided upon request to fulfil the eligibility criteria.

⁶ The company must be registered on or before 30 June 2019.

⁷ Those applying for the Rising Innovator prize must be born on or after 1 January 1990.

Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)⁸ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)⁹). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Ethics and values

Activities must comply with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles.

Moreover, they must respect basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities).

The activities must comply with:

- ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
- applicable international, EU and national law

and may not:

- aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed), or
- intend to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Moreover activities must have an exclusive focus on civil applications and no prize can be awarded for activities carried out outside the EU, if they are prohibited in all Member States.

Applications involving ethics issues will have to undergo an ethics review to authorise funding and may be made subject to specific ethics requirements.

Security

Applications involving EU classified information must comply with Decision [2015/444](#)¹⁰. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be awarded a prize.

⁸ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

⁹ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

7. Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate¹¹:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct¹² (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹³:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

Applications will be subject to a formal evaluation by an independent expert **jury**. The jury will evaluate all eligible applications against the award criteria.

For applications with the same score, the pre-selection panel/jury will determine a **priority order** according to the following approach: The score for the criterion No 1 will be given a weight of 1.5 and the score for criterion No 3 will be given a weight of 2. If

¹¹ See Articles 136 and 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹² Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

¹³ See Article 141(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

two or more applications still tie for any rank or category, the prize will be equally divided and awarded to all applications with the same score.

Up to 20 shortlisted candidates will be invited to a hearing with the jury. This hearing may take place remotely, or at the Agency premises in Brussels.

On the basis of the evaluation by the jury (and after the mandatory checks: ethics review, security scrutiny, legal entity validation, non-exclusion, double funding and plagiarism, etc), the awarding authority will decide on the award of the prize.

All applications will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful applications will be awarded the prize; unsuccessful applications will be rejected.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications are deemed to have been accessed (and received) 10 days after sending and that deadlines will be counted from then (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)).

9. Award criteria

If admissible and eligible, all eligible applications will be evaluated and ranked against the following **award criteria**:

- **Breakthrough innovation** – the company founded or co-founded by the applicant provides a truly innovative product or service. In presenting her innovation, the applicant will clearly demonstrate what makes this product or service innovative, describing its added value and viability, particularly in relation to other existing solutions.
- **Impact** – the product or service addresses a specific societal need or challenge, with significant benefits to citizens and to the economy. The applicant should describe the specific need addressed, and demonstrate the benefit of their product or service for society. She should demonstrate that the product or service contributes to the creation of jobs and growth in Europe. The applicant should also demonstrate her company's positive contribution to the broader innovation ecosystem.

The applicant will support her reply with quantifiable information on the economic impact in particular, including countries where the product or service is commercialised, turnover (in EUR), jobs created, and any other direct or indirect impact. The applicant should also detail the medium- and long-term development strategy for the company.

- **Inspiration** – the applicant has shown active leadership and has played a pivotal role in the success of the company. The applicant is a strong role model who has the potential to inspire others within her company and beyond.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Breakthrough innovation	4	7
Impact	4	7

Inspiration	4	7
Overall (pass) scores	12	21

Maximum points: 21 points.

Individual thresholds: 4/7 points.

Overall threshold: 12 points.

Applications must pass both the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold. The prize will be awarded to the three applications in the main category and one in the second category with the best scores. Other applications will be rejected.

10. Other conditions

Payment arrangements

The prize money will be paid to the prize winners after the award ceremony, provided all the requested documents have been submitted. In case of a group of winners, the payment will be made to the lead applicant.

Communication — Dissemination — Visibility of funding

Prize winners must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner.

Communication activities related to the prize (*including media interviews, press statements, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.*), must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate):



Funded by the European Union



Co-funded by the European Union



Funded by the European Union



Co-funded by the European Union

The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text.

Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support.

When displayed in association with other logos (*e.g. of winners or sponsors*), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of these obligations, the winners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from the awarding authority. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

Any communication or dissemination activity related to the prize must use factually accurate information.

Moreover, it must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

“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 European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency]. Neither the European Union nor the awarding authority can be held responsible for them.”

IPR — Rights of use

The awarding authority does not obtain ownership of the results produced in the context of the prize.

The awarding authority has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the prize and materials and documents received from the winners (*such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form*) for information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes.

Photos and videos taken by the awarding authority either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of the awarding authority.

Checks, audits and investigations

The awarding authority, the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) may carry out checks, audits and investigations in relation to the prize.¹⁴

¹⁴ For the powers of OLAF, EPPO and ECA, see Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 (OJ L 248, 18/09/2013, p. 1), Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/1996 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests

Withdrawal of the prize — Recovery of undue amounts

The awarding authority may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- the prize winners were not eligible or should have been excluded or
- the prize winners are in serious breach of their obligations under these Rules of Contest.

11. How to submit an application

All applications must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

You can access the Portal [here](#), or by clicking 'Apply now' on the [official prize webpage](#).

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EULogin user account](#).


Once you have an EULogin account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the application

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section.

Submit your application in 2 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations . Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the application. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file

 Applicants must support their application with an **inspiring video message**, lasting no more than 90 seconds. To be admissible, the submission must consist of a complete application (Part A and Part B), and Part B must include a link to the video.

The application must keep to the **page limits** (see *section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the application might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The application must be submitted **before the call deadline** (see *section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and applications can no longer be submitted.

Once the application is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your application has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the application (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

Additional information can be found:

- [Online Manual](#)
- [Prize website](#)
- [Prize FAQs](#)
- [FAQ Portal](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: EISMEA-WIP@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see *cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all applicants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all applicants must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per applicant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Joint applications** — Joint applications by a group of applicants are admitted. In this case, you must appoint a lead applicant (coordinator) to submit the application and represent you towards the awarding authority. All applicants will be jointly responsible and must all fulfil and respect the conditions set out in these Rules of Contest.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget. Applications that have already received an EU prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.
- **Resubmission** — Applications may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission. For first past the post prizes with cut-off dates, applications can be changed and re-submitted until the cut-off date; the re-submission may however let you use your position as first in place.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in these Rules of Contest (and the documents they refer to). Applications that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire application will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — The awarding authority may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize — without any obligation to compensate participants (*e.g. no applications, jury cannot determine winner, winner is not eligible or must be excluded, objectives have already been achieved, etc.*). In this case, you will be informed via a call update.
- **Language** — You can submit your application in any official EU language. However, for reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU prizes awarded and the winners (name, address and amount awarded) is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — Any processing of personal data in the context of this prize will be done in accordance with Regulation [2018/1725](#). It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your application (and subsequent management of your prize and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication). Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).

By submitting the application, all applicants accept that the awarding authority will publish information on the finalists and winners.