EmpoWomen Open Call #2

Open Call Summary

OPENING: 1st of October 2024
CLOSING: 2nd of December 2024 at 17:00 CET

Project Website: www.empowomen.eu

Open Call platform: Apply here

V1.0

1/10/2024

Open Call Summary

Project Acronym	EmpoWomen
Full name of the EU funded project	Acceleration programme empowering women-led deep tech startups in Widening Area countries.
GA number	101120693
Topic	HORIZON-EIC-2022-STARTUPEU-01-01
Programme	Horizon Europe (HORIZON)
Abbreviation	EmpoWomen_OC#2
Call title	EmpoWomen Open Call #2
Call objective	The purpose of EmpoWomen_OC#2 is to actively involve women-led digital and deep tech startups in the widening area region. This call seeks to identify and choose promising startups to participate in a customised acceleration programme. The overarching goal is to offer support that nurtures the development and investment potential of these startups, with the ultimate aim of cultivating them into leading female figures in deep tech innovation within Europe.
Opening date	*1st October 2024*
Call deadline	2nd December 2024
Total funding available	662,500 EUR
Nº of startups to be funded	14
Support channel	For any question about the process there is a general email address available at helpdesk@empowomen.eu

1. Open call 2 (OC#2) relevant dates

- 2ⁿᵈ Open call launch: **1ˢᵗ October 2024**

- Open call support channel: **1ˢᵗ October 2024 to 2ⁿᵈ December 2024**

- Deadline for submission: **2ⁿᵈ December 2024**

- Evaluation of proposals: **December 2024 – January 2025**

- Remote Interviews: **Mid-January 2025**

- Communication of results to applicants: **February 2025**

- Legal validation and Sub-grant agreement preparation: **February 2025**

- Start of the programme: **March 2025**

2. Eligibility criteria

EmpoWomen focuses on supporting **women-led, deep-tech startups in Widening Areas, particularly at the early stages**:

Startup	A 'startup' should be understood as an SME, according to the EU definition of SMEs within the meaning of [Article 2 and 3 of the Annex to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC.](#)
Early-stage	Companies with +2 months of existence by submission, and that have been established and operating for not more than 6 years counting backwards from submission date **AND**; Companies that have raised limited funding (up to 1 M EUR).
Women Leadership Criterion	EmpoWomen supports women in all their diversity, including cisgender and transgender women legally recognized as such. To meet the female founder or co-founder requirement, women applicants must provide evidence of being legally acknowledged as founders or co-founders of the company applying from an eligible country/region. Additionally, EmpoWomen requires substantial female leadership within the startup, with at least one woman holding a key role—whether as a co-founder, core management team member, or a board director. However, having women on the board alone is not sufficient; these board members must demonstrate a significant connection to the project or founding team, rather than simply representing incubators, accelerators, or VC firms
Eligible Countries (companies established in)	▪ **Widening Area Countries:** Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. ▪ **Associated countries:** Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

	▪ **Outermost regions:** Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France) and the Canary Islands (Spain).
Deep-tech	According to the EU regulation: "Deep-tech is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. 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 technologies". The following list outlines the key technologies of interest for the second open call: • Advanced Computing / Quantum Computing • Advanced Manufacturing • Advanced Materials • Aerospace, Automotive and Remote Sensing • Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML) • Biotechnology and Life Sciences • Communications and Networks, including 5G • Cybersecurity and Data Protection • Electronics and Photonics • Internet of Things, W3C, Semantic Web • Robotics • Semiconductors (microchips) • Sustainable Energy and Clean Technologies • VR, AR, Metaverse • Web 3.0, including Blockchain, Distributed Ledgers, NFTs

3. Financial Support

Total funding available	662,500 EUR
Nº of startups to be funded	14
Max. Funding per startup	45,000 EUR, conditioned to achievement of KPIs and participation in programme activities
Type of funding	Flat-rate
Prizes (demoday)	**Prize#1:** €15,000 **Prize#2:** €11,500 **Prize#3:** €6,000

Vouchers	**Voucher 1. Access to Events:** Covering expenses for attending EU tech summits. Valued at €5,000 per startup.
	Voucher 2. Business Angels Investment Readiness Programme: Dedicated programme on business angels' investment provided directly by real angel investors. Valued at €2,400 per startup.
	Voucher 3. Mentoring: up to 16 sessions of a dedicated mentor for the company. Valued at €5,000 per startup.

4. Proposal submission process

Submissions will be done **ONLY** via the Sploro platform LINK, and it will be the unique entry point for all application submissions. Applications submitted by any other means will not be considered nor evaluated.

The application reception will close on **02.12.2024, 17:00 CET.**

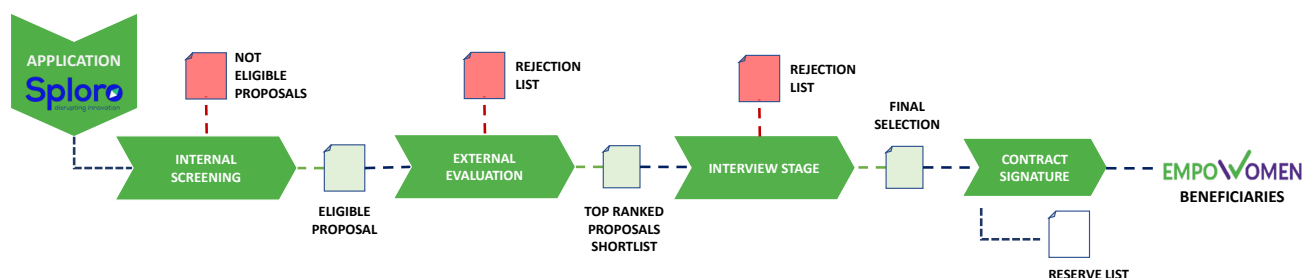### 4.1 Documents to be submitted

A complete proposal comprises **3 components:**

- **Application form:** an online form divided in different sections: 1) Legal and Contact Information; 2) Company Description; 3) Excellence; 4) Impact; 5) Implementation; 6) Declarations.
- **CV** of the woman founder/co-founder.
- **Investors Pitch Deck:** PDF document containing information about the company. It must have the following sections: 1) Problem; 2) Company Purpose; 3) Solution; 4) Market Potential; 5) Competition; 6) Business Model; 7) Road map; 8) Team; 9) Investment; 10) Need for EmpoWomen Support. A template is provided through the Sploro platform.

5. Proposal Evaluation and Selection Process

5.1 Evaluation process

The evaluation process to be followed during the selection of the applicants is shown in the following figure.

- **Eligibility criteria:** An automatic filtering to discard non-eligible proposals will follow the shortlist below.

- **Experts' remote evaluation:** The proposals that pass the eligibility check will move to the remote evaluation stage. Applications will be assessed by a group of external and independent evaluators with an entrepreneurial, investment or innovation background. Proposals will be evaluated by 2 independent evaluators. The evaluators will assess the proposals based on 3 different evaluation criteria (Excellence, Impact and Implementation).

- **Normalisation:** Process to ensure a more balanced distribution of scores and reduce the possibility of biases and distortions.

- **Interview stage:** Top-ranked projects from the external remote evaluation will be invited to participate in an online interview to gain a deeper understanding of the project concepts and the team's skills and competence.

- **Final Selection:** At the end of the evaluation process all proposals will be ranked based on their scores, and the best proposals will be invited to sign the sub-grant agreement and participate in the programme.

Prior to contracting to the top ranked applicants, the consortium will ask for the approval of the European Commission, and the list of selected projects will be submitted to the European Commission for final screening.