

Call for expression of interest for research

Study field: unconscious gender investment bias in early-stage entrepreneurship finance

Scope European Union

1. Background

In 2022 EIT has launched the pilot year of the cross-KIC programme EIT Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership (Supernovas) executed jointly by EIT Food, EIT Manufacturing and EIT Urban Mobility. SUPERNOVAS comprises different activities seeking to: support women-led startups to scale, facilitate work in a startup as a sound career option for women taking their first career steps, bring more women into the early-stage funding industry, and the programme will provide mentoring. We believe that a more gender-balanced entrepreneurial and investment ecosystem will facilitate access to finance for women-led startups.

EIT wants to lead a game changing initiative to bring more women into the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem. Delivering novel research in the field is of utmost importance to analyse the state of the art, bring down stereotypes, facilitate data-based policy making or disseminate relevant results. To date, Supernovas has carried out two major studies, covering female-led scaleups and deeptech-based startups.

To support EIT in this pursuit, this request seeks a service provider to support EIT in identifying relevant and novel issues regarding the so called “unconscious gender investment bias”. That is implicit discrimination that investors might carry in the back of their minds due to societal or experiences that affect the perspective of different groups, ideologies, and individuals, resulting in women-led startups being negatively affected.

This specific call for offers is managed directly by EIT Food, as contracting entity.

2. Objectives

EIT Food is seeking support from a research / consulting expert, those can be entities (private or public) or individuals to investigate and present the situation of women-led startups or women entrepreneurs in Europe and more specifically challenges they face in access to finance. The experts can propose their own research approach, methodology and database.

We are looking for:

- Unexplored topics producing new findings as opposed to knowledge already proven by research;



- Solid research proposals including objectives, strong methodology and clearly justified;
- Experienced academic team in the field or assimilable areas;
- Novel approaches in terms of methodology, databases used or untapped segments is welcome;
- Research results oriented to deliver useful insights from practitioners in the market, for policy makers and targeting non-academic readers.

Topics might cover any aspects within the spectrum:

- Unconscious bias related to a subset population
- Sources of biased
- Tackling and overcoming assumptions bias
- Impact of bias (at micro or macro level in returns, growth ...)
- Differences regarding sectors, technologies
- Welcome: results leading to actionable recommendations to fight unconscious bias.

3. Activities to be carried out

For proposals selected, the researchers must:

- Identify and secure access to the database or target population subject of the research (EIT might contribute to share a survey, facilitate access to internal data, however, by no means this is a commitment, and the researcher is the ultimate responsible for data collection or gathering).
- Perform the work in a maximum of 7 months from end to end.
- Deliver ready a to publish (excluding visual editing for adaptation to EIT visual image) document with master tables and graphs.

Budget available:

- Total funding available depending on scope of study and justified requirements.
Some indications:
 - o For studies using secondary data already available: 15.000 euros max.
 - o For studies curating data available through platforms: 25.000 euros max.
 - o For studies collecting primary data through surveys / interviews: 50.000 max.
- Expected use of funding:
 - o One single study (if use of funds is justified, i.e. expensive database or primary data collection).
 - o More than one study, until internal funding available is allocated.

4. Expected deliverables and outputs

As a result of work carried out the researcher is expected to:

- Deliver a full report to be published as above;
- Share the analysis performed (raw and analysed data).

5. Eligibility requirements

Eligibility requirements are the following:

- Individuals or organizations (companies, research organisations, consultancy company, incubators or accelerators, higher education institutes, research institutes, non-governmental organisations etc.).
- Experienced in conducting international studies and interviews.
- Experienced in delivering analysis of the aforementioned research topics.
- Fluent in English, any additional language capabilities are welcome.

6. Expression of interest

Interested candidates are invited to submit a short proposal outlining the following:

- A justification of the novelty of the research question based on existing gaps in current literature / bibliography in the field.
- An overview of how you might approach the work with a clear task description, execution, deliverables and timeline.
- The service provider's experience in the field. Please shortly describe other similar work that you have conducted. Please provide links or references where possible.
- A brief budget breakdown according to:
 - a. Staff dedication
 - b. Other costs if any (databases etc).

Please submit proposal by September 15th at midnight CET. EIT Food will then review the offers, decide on the contractor and enter into a contract with the successful party.

Please email completed proposals to amparo.sanjose@eitfood.eu

7. Selection criteria and process

All proposals will be evaluated considering the following criteria, related to the applicant organisation:

1. Experience in conducting international research work.
2. Experience in research in the field.
3. Approach to the study design, methodology.
4. Novelty of the research question
5. Cost of work by applicant.

Criteria 1-3 will be evaluated on a 0-15 scale: 0 – not satisfactory; 5 – satisfactory; 10 – good and 15 – excellent. EIT Food reserves the right to offer cooperation to the applicant that demonstrates the highest score in the evaluation process.

The evaluation team will be composed by experts within EIT.

8. Timeline

Stage	Date
Application deadline	15 th September 2024
Announcement of partner chosen by EIT Food	25 th September 2024
Activity launch	1st October 2024

9. Application form

There is not a fixed application form , the tenderer should present a document covering the following aspects in the proposal:

- Team.
- Previous experience in gender & entrepreneurship research.
- Research plan to carry out the work.
- Budget.
- Other relevant issues to be considered.

Application document length should not exceed 4.000 words (excluding researcher and team bios, previous experience or bibliography review), with an overall limit of 8 pages.