



SKILLS FOR TOMORROW

Shaping a green and digital future



2021 European Social Innovation Competition officially launched

PRESS RELEASE

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The European Commission launches the 2021 European Social Innovation Competition with €150,000 of awards for three innovations to help shape a green and digital future

The European Commission is launching today the 2021 edition of the European Social Innovation Competition. This year's theme is *Skills for Tomorrow – Shaping a green and digital future*. Through this Competition, the European Commission is looking to incentivise, support and reward social innovations that will help people and organisations to identify, develop and strengthen the skills they will need to adapt and thrive in a changing world.

Supported by the European Innovation Council (EIC), the Competition is open to individuals, businesses and industries with innovative ideas from across the EU Member States and [Horizon Europe associated countries](#). The closing date for entries is 12 May 2021. An independent jury will select the three winning entries, which will each receive an award of €50,000 to develop their ideas. The winners will be announced at the end of the year.

“The Competition has a unique space in the landscape of social innovation in Europe. By welcoming early-stage ideas and providing training and support to its participants, it acts as a beacon for social innovators across Europe, employing a proven methodology and facilitating a network of radical innovators shaping our society for the better”, said Jean-David Malo, Director of the European Innovation Council and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Executive Agency (EISMEA).”

“The shift towards a green and digital future presents individuals, businesses and industries with exciting opportunities. To unlock these opportunities, we need to understand which skills are needed and how best to develop them, The European Social Innovation Competition will tap into the creative genius of European citizens and enterprises as social innovators to respond to these challenges.” said Valentina Superti - Director for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission.

The transition towards a green and digital economy is key to ensuring Europe's future sustainability and competitive edge in a rapidly changing world. The Commission is already taking a leadership role globally in this move and the European Social Innovation Competition is a further example of this commitment.



The 2021 edition of the European Social Innovation Competition will encourage and reward social innovations that contribute to job creation, growth and European competitiveness by identifying, developing and strengthening the skills needed to adapt and thrive in a changing world. In particular, the Competition is looking for scalable, early-stage ideas that tackle these needs in a range of different ways, including – but not limited to – training. Solutions can relate to the skills needed for the green future, the digital transition or both – but all solutions must consider their own environmental impact.

The Competition complements a number of other initiatives that the Commission is implementing to underpin the move towards a green economy that embraces the opportunities offered by digital technologies. These include the [European Digital Strategy](#) and the [European Green Deal](#) initiatives to become the first climate-neutral continent.

Endnotes:

Application deadline: 12 May 2021
Public Announcement of semi-finalists: 14 July
Announcement of winners: November / December 2021

Background information

European Innovation Council (EIC)

The [European Innovation Council \(EIC\)](#) is a one-stop-shop for high potential innovators with a budget of €10 billion for 2021-2027. It provides support from idea to market, from early-stage scientific research on breakthrough technologies, to transitioning research results into commercial opportunities, and the development and scaling up of innovative start-ups and SMEs. A key novelty of [Horizon Europe](#), it capitalises on the lessons learnt and achievements from the [pilot phase 2018-2021](#) under Horizon 2020, which supported over 5,000 SMEs and start-ups and over 330 research projects.

European Social Innovation Competition

The Competition was launched in 2013 in memory of social innovation pioneer [Diogo Vasconcelos](#). Each year, the European Commission awards three €50,000 prizes for the best socially innovative projects designed to change the world for the better.

Today's Competition launch will be followed by a series of post-launch webinars. Thirty semi-finalists will be invited to the European Social Innovation Academy in September, which will be held in a virtual format this year, where they will receive mentoring and training to structure their detailed development plans. A second round of judging will identify the 10 finalists. From these 10 finalists, three winners will be selected and awarded €50,000 to develop their ideas into solutions to power Europe's green and digital future.

For information on earlier editions and winning projects, visit: <https://eusic.challenges.org> and https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/innovation/social/competition_en
Questions about the Competition can be sent to: info@socialinnovationprize.eu
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