From Research to Market: EIT Opportunities for Technology, Innovation and Sustainable Growth



*The journey **from lab to market** is rarely straightforward. Transforming research results and technological solutions into innovations with real market and societal impact requires more than excellent research: it requires validation, access to knowledge and partners, entrepreneurial capabilities, funding, and pathways to market.*

*This presentation will explore **what it takes to move from research to market and how the European Union supports this journey through the EIT Community**. It will introduce the EIT innovation ecosystem and relevant opportunities for researchers, innovators, startups and companies in the areas of **innovation development, entrepreneurship, education, international collaboration and access to European networks**.*

*Particular attention will be given to how EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities connect **research, industry and education**, helping bridge the gap between technological development and market uptake. Practical examples and current opportunities will illustrate how researchers and innovators can use the EIT ecosystem to advance technologies towards commercialisation, international collaboration and sustainable impact.*

Dr **Miro Hegedić** is an innovation, entrepreneurship and ecosystem-development professional based in Croatia. Miro is co-founder of Smion - an innovation agency that is developing practical tools and provides consulting and strategic support to startups from idea validation to market entry and investment readiness. He is also co-founder of Startup Drill, an international programme for structured early-stage venture development.

Miro is EIT Community Officer Croatia and Manager of the EIT Community Hub Croatia. His work focuses on strengthening links between Croatian innovators, entrepreneurs, universities, public institutions, companies and the opportunities offered by the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities. He represents EIT in Croatia, promotes its programmes and connects national actors with European innovation networks.

He holds a PhD in Industrial Engineering and Management from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture. His doctoral work examined a manufacturing-management model integrating Lean and Green management. His professional background spans production management, project management, innovation methodology, entrepreneurship education, sustainable manufacturing and applied ecosystem development. From 2011 to 2024, he held different roles at the University of Zagreb's Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture serving as an assistant professor from 2019 to 2024.

Miro has led or contributed to a wide range of European, national and regional innovation programmes. These include EIT Food Hub Croatia, EIT Food Educators, EIT Food EWA, EIT Manufacturing Hub Croatia, GROWit Investment Readiness Programme, StartIT Startup Academy, GTECH Green Tech Entrepreneurship Challenge Hub for Work-Based Learning and the Evalu8 app

project. His work has supported entrepreneurship education, innovation methodology, investment readiness, digital tools for startup programmes and regional ecosystem development.

He is a published researcher and named co-inventor of a Croatian patent application. His publications address Lean and Green management, Industry 4.0 readiness, Lean product development and work-based learning. Miro has delivered invited lectures and served as a panelist at international conferences in Croatia and abroad, speaking on entrepreneurship, sustainable manufacturing, food-system innovation, digitalisation and regional innovation ecosystems.