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BGI and EIT Food have up to €10,000 to support women entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector

- Applications are now open for the 2022 edition of “EWA”, a program funded by EIT Food, a European Commission body aimed at stimulating innovation and building a food system adapted to the future.
- The program is aimed at women entrepreneurs who have a startup or a business idea capable of improving the agri-food sector. The winner will receive a cash prize of up to €10,000.

Applications are now open for EWA (Empowering Women in Agrifood), an acceleration program funded by EIT Food, with the aim of helping highly motivated women entrepreneurs achieve and exceed their entrepreneurial aspirations through the provision of knowledge and support up to €10,000. Applications are open until June 13.

For the third consecutive year, the program is being organized by BGI and is aimed at Portuguese entrepreneurs in the agri-food area who are leading companies with less than 2 years, or who have innovative business projects/ideas and need the appropriate means to materialize them.

EWA was held for the first time in Portugal in 2020 and, since then, it has achieved good results in mapping, supporting and launching sustainable projects in the agri-food area, created by women. Through this program, 20 projects were accelerated, with a survival rate of 100%.

However, there are still several barriers encountered by women in the business world. According to The EIT Food Female Entrepreneurship report, 75% of women have faced negative gender bias as founders and CEOs. During an interview for the Start It Up
podcast, former EWA participant Débora Campos (CEO and founder of AgroGrIn Tech) highlights the difficulty women face in the world of entrepreneurship and in the agri-food sector. According to her, “It’s difficult to find people who believe in your idea as much as you do”. Also, Débora mentions the existing disbelief among female entrepreneurs in her field. “I saw that a lot of the ideas were aimed at children and families, and I think women in other areas don't believe so much that they can bring great ideas to market” - she says.

To address the gender gap in a sector where women are unlikely to occupy leadership positions, the program will offer participants funding opportunities, workshops and training, 6 months of personalized mentoring with experts in the field and access to various contacts from BGI and EIT Food’s international network.

The EWA program is expanding and will continue to grow in 2022 thanks to its results. According to The EIT Food Female Entrepreneurship survey, 50% of all respondents said that EIT Food's entrepreneurship programs have strengthened their confidence as entrepreneurs. Thus, the appeal to women extends to several other European countries - Spain, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Turkey, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic - where the program is being carried out by different local partners.

Press Kit

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