

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS CREATION

Location:

Hybrid, based in one of EIT Water's Regional Hub locations (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Spain, UK).

Candidates must reside in the European Union or UK, have the right to work in their country of employment and be willing to undertake regular European travel, including to EIT Water's Head Office in Aarhus.

Contract:

Fixed term, 3 years with the potential to extend for a further 3 years

Ideal Start Date:

November 1, 2026

How to Apply:

Send your CV and covering letter to recruitment@eitwater.eu

ABOUT EIT WATER

EIT Water brings together organisations across Europe's water, marine and maritime sectors to accelerate innovation, develop talent and create lasting impact. Through our European ecosystem of members, universities, businesses, public authorities and other partners, we connect knowledge, skills and innovation to address the sector's most pressing challenges.

THE ROLE

We are looking for an entrepreneurial and strategic Director of Business Creation to shape and lead a pan-European portfolio of programmes that help transform promising ideas, entrepreneurs and innovations into successful ventures.

This is a strategic leadership role for someone who can translate EIT Water's Strategic Agenda, Business Plan, market opportunities and regional intelligence into high-impact entrepreneurship, venture creation, startup, incubation, acceleration and scale-up programmes.

Reporting into the Chief Impact Officer, you will own and build the Business Creation portfolio, its budget, performance and strategic direction. You will connect the ecosystem and create the conditions for ventures to grow and scale across Europe.

YOUR IMPACT

You will:

- **Set the strategy and portfolio:** Ensure a coherent set of differentiated programmes that respond to the needs of entrepreneurs, startups and scale-ups in the water, marine and maritime sectors, while ensuring strong connections between Business Creation, Education and Innovation.
- **Turn strategy into execution:** Translate market trends, regional intelligence and ecosystem needs into programme priorities, calls, participant pathways, partnerships and measurable outcomes.
- **Build a strong European venture pipeline:** Attract and develop entrepreneurs, startups and scale-ups aligned with EIT Water's strategic priorities and creating pathways for them to progress as their maturity and growth needs evolve.
- **Orchestrate delivery through partners:** Work with EIT Water members, Regional Hubs and ecosystem partners rather than relying on direct delivery. You will ensure quality, performance, governance and strategic alignment across the portfolio.
- **Own financial sustainability:** Manage the portfolio budget while identifying opportunities for diversified funding, revenue generation, co-investment and other sustainable financing mechanisms.
- **Connect regions and markets:** Balance a common European programme architecture with appropriate regional adaptation and enable ventures to access cross-border opportunities and scale internationally.
- **Build the ecosystem:** Develop trusted relationships with investors, corporates, universities, innovation centres, accelerators, incubators and public-sector stakeholders. Position EIT Water as a credible player in the European innovation landscape.
- **Own quality, delivery and impact:** Work with Impact & Reporting to establish meaningful KPIs and using data and insight to continuously strengthen programme effectiveness, venture growth, investment attraction, ecosystem engagement and business impact.
- **Develop the team:** Lead and develop a high-performing Business Creation team, establish clear accountability and foster a collaborative, entrepreneurial and impact-focused culture.

You will lead a dedicated Business Creation team and work closely with the Directors of Education and Innovation and EIT Water's wider leadership community to create an integrated portfolio and strong pathways from entrepreneurial capability and venture creation through to demonstration, commercialisation and scale.

WHAT YOU BRING

We are looking for a senior leader with:

- Master's degree or equivalent professional experience in Business, Innovation Management, Entrepreneurship, Economics, Engineering, Public Policy, or a related discipline.
- 10+ years' experience in entrepreneurship, venture creation, startup acceleration, incubation, commercialisation or ecosystem development.
- Sector knowledge of the European water, marine and maritime sector and its sustainability challenges.
- Venture & investment expertise, including supporting startups/scale-ups with investment, customers, partnerships and market access.
- Programme portfolio leadership, with proven experience managing complex portfolios, budgets and financial sustainability.
- European ecosystem experience, ideally across multinational partnerships, innovation ecosystems or publicly funded programmes; EIT/KIC or EU programme experience is an advantage.
- Strategic impact delivery, translating priorities into measurable business and ecosystem outcomes.

SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Success in this role requires more than deep functional expertise. You will be a portfolio leader, ecosystem builder and strategic orchestrator who can move confidently between strategy and execution.

In particular, you will bring:

- **Strategic leadership:** the ability to turn organisational strategy into clear priorities, portfolios and programmes.
- **Programme design & scaling:** Design, launch and scale entrepreneurship, venture-support and commercialisation programmes.
- **Ecosystem leadership:** Develop strong European venture, investor and corporate networks.
- **Partnership building:** exceptional relationship-building skills and the ability to create trusted partnerships, connecting entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, universities and innovation organisations.
- **Stakeholder management:** confidence influencing senior stakeholders and building trusted relationships across sectors and cultures.
- **Financial management:** Manage budgets and identify opportunities for sustainable funding and co-investment.

-
- **People leadership:** a track record of building high-performing teams, creating accountability and developing people.
 - **Cross-cultural agility:** the ability to work effectively across different European countries, institutions, professional cultures and perspectives.

Fluency in English is essential, additional European languages are an advantage.

WHY JOIN EIT WATER?

If you are energised by the opportunity to turn strategy into ventures, connect ecosystems across Europe and accelerate innovation with measurable impact, we would like to hear from you.