

EIT Health's Wild Card 2021: Innovators Invited



Eye and vision care and pain management are two areas that lack innovation and investment in Europe. This issue is being addressed with a new Wild Card programme launched today by EIT Health, a community of health innovators supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology ([EIT](#)), an EU body.

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Teams and individuals across Europe are invited to showcase their innovative ideas in these two areas to try and get support from EIT Health that for Wild Card 2021 have partnered with Essilor (eye and vision care) and Boston Scientific (pain management).

In 2017, vision impairment, including blindness, [was ranked](#) as the third leading cause of years lived with disability. At least in 80% of 2.2 billion people around the world with a vision impairment, it [could be](#) prevented or cured. The Wild Card eye and vision care challenge focusses on solutions to mitigate, prevent and cure eye conditions and vision impairment.

In turn, pain and pain-related diseases [were found](#) to be the leading cause of disability and disease burden in 2016, with about 20% of adults across the world [diagnosed](#) with chronic pain each year. Wild Card is seeking to support solutions that would allow for correct assessment and treatment of pain, and support of those living with chronic pain.

Successful applicant will be guided by the experts through forming and testing their teams, and developing their business models. Those who end up on the short list will have the chance to present their solutions to a panel of industry leaders. Two winners will be granted up to €1.5 million each over 24 months to establish their companies in 2022.

According to Jorge Juan Fernández García, Director of Innovation at EIT Health, Wild Card allows EIT Health to identify those innovators whose work addresses some of the greatest health challenges in Europe. *"We know that talent exists in all corners of the healthcare ecosystem, and our role is to find, coach and empower them to challenge the status quo and help us transform the lives of patients and citizens across Europe, and the world,"* he says noting that this year's programme is focussed on *"areas where a clear unmet need remains"*.

To find out more about the EIT Health Wild Card programme and apply, please visit wildcard.eithealth.eu.

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