The Third Edition of the EWA Program in Czechia is at the End

On Wednesday, November 20, 2024, the curtain fell on another inspiring chapter of the Empowering Women in Agrifood (EWA) project, an initiative designed to foster innovation, sustainability, and empowerment among women entrepreneurs in the agrifood sector. The grand finale marked the culmination of six months of dedication, creativity, and hard work by ten selected participants who embarked on a transformative journey to turn their innovative ideas into actionable and impactful business ventures.

Launched by EIT Food, EWA has been a cornerstone for championing gender equality in the agrifood sector, providing a comprehensive support system for women entrepreneurs. The program offered participants a robust platform to refine their ideas through mentoring, workshops, and networking opportunities. Over half a year, these trailblazing women not only enhanced their business acumen but also gained invaluable insights into market trends, sustainability practices, and the latest technological innovations shaping the future of agrifood.

# EWA 2024 Accelerator Celebrates Outstanding Female-Led Agrifood Innovations

The EWA 2024 Accelerator, an initiative by EIT Food designed to empower women in the agrifood sector, concluded its latest edition by honoring exceptional female entrepreneurs dedicated to sustainable and innovative solutions. The final event showcased groundbreaking projects addressing pressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable practices. The jury for the final event included **Lukáš Sedláček (ELAI), Zuzana Zděnková (Nadace Tipsport), and Katarína Klamková (CARE ČR)**.

**First Place: Šárka Márová's Fungi Pack**

Šárka Márová secured the top position with her innovative project, **Fungi Pack**, which develops sustainable packaging materials derived from fungi. This approach offers a biodegradable alternative to traditional plastics, aligning with the growing demand for eco-friendly packaging solutions. The global sustainable packaging market is projected to reach $470 billion by 2027, up from an estimated $305 billion in 2020, reflecting a significant shift towards environmentally conscious materials.

**Second Place: Martina Zelenáková's Shupka**

Martina Zelenáková earned second place with [**Shupka**](https://shupka.com/), a venture that transforms coffee roasting byproducts into flavorful syrups. This innovative use of coffee waste addresses environmental concerns associated with the substantial byproducts generated during coffee processing. Research indicates that coffee production increased from about 8.5 million tonnes in 2008 to 10.7 million tonnes in 2020, leading to significant amounts of waste.

**Audience Choice Award: Eliška Nováková's 'Zde domov můj'**

The audience recognized **Eliška Nováková** for her project, **'**[**Zde domov můj**](https://www.instagram.com/zde_domov_muj/)**'**, which focuses on ecological, hand-harvested herbal teas. This initiative emphasizes sustainable agriculture and the preservation of traditional harvesting methods, offering consumers natural and environmentally friendly tea options. The award was presented by **Lenka Bennerová** ([Vaše zahradnice](https://www.vasezahradnice.net/)), an alumna of the EWA program, highlighting the supportive community fostered by the accelerator.

**Special Recognition: Lenka Simerská's Kopřiva Boost**

Family brewery [**Zichovec**](https://pivovarzichovec.cz/) honored **Lenka Simerská** for her project, [**Kopřiva Boost**](https://www.instagram.com/koprivaboost/), which involves brewing a nettle-infused IPA. This innovative beverage combines traditional brewing techniques with sustainable foraging practices, introducing a unique product to the craft beer market.

The journey of EWA 2024 didn’t end with the final event. The exceptional EWA innovators and their groundbreaking projects were proudly presented at the prestigious [**Seed Summit**](https://seedsummit.cz/), a platform that gathers key players, innovators, and thought leaders in the agrifood sector. Their participation not only highlighted the incredible potential of women-led ventures but also underscored the importance of fostering gender diversity and innovation in addressing global food and environmental challenges.

By showcasing their achievements at such a high-profile event, the EWA innovators reinforced their role as trailblazers, inspiring the broader agrifood community to embrace sustainable and inclusive practices. Their stories serve as a testament to the transformative power of collaboration, mentorship, and determination, leaving a lasting impact on the future of the agrifood sector.

# All projects accelerated in 2024

* **Adriana Slováčková** was presented non-stop self-service store, "[**Mezi poli**](https://mezipoli.cz/)", featuring products from her farm and other local farmers, offering a wide range of healthy, local products in one convenient location.
* **Aneta Blažková** introduced her innovative project, **"**[**Květinec**](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61563674285495)**"** a service dedicated to harvesting and managing home gardens while fostering sustainable herb production. Květnice offers a comprehensive solution for cultivating, harvesting, and processing herbs, flowers, fruits, and vegetables, including wild-growing plants. By providing a hands-on approach to managing gardens, the project aims to reduce waste, promote sustainability, and support local communities through the efficient use of homegrown crops.
* **Eliška Nováková** showcased her project, “[**Zde domov můj**](https://www.instagram.com/zde_domov_muj/)”, specializing in herbal products sourced locally for syrups, teas, and ice creams as natural and healthy alternatives.
* **Hana Hrstková** introduced “**Pure Bites**”, aimed at transforming the restaurant industry through eco-friendly practices and sustainable vegan and vegetarian meals.
* **Lenka Simerská** highlighted the nettle seed project “[**Kopřiva Boost**](https://www.instagram.com/koprivaboost/)”, aiming to introduce this local superfood to the Czech market from organic sources.
* **Lucie Mokrá** aims to enrich the coffee market with high-quality decaf options that are natural and caffeine-free [**Reseedo**](https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18059229580630794/).
* **Lucie Rien** presented “[**SOMA Vision**](https://www.soma.vision/vvv)”, focusing on bee health through bee bread production and fungal extracts.
* **Martina Zelenaková** founded [**Shupka**](https://shupka.com/) - transforms coffee roasting byproducts into flavorful syrups.
* **Šárka Márová** explores mycelium for packaging, aiming to replace plastic with compostable alternatives - **Fungi Pack**.
* **Tereza Dostálová** operates a small-scale quail farm “[**Křepelky Třemešná**](https://www.instagram.com/krepelka_tremesna/)”, championing the nutritional and health benefits of quail eggs. In addition to producing high-quality eggs, she provides a specialized service to help others establish their own quail farms, sharing her expertise and promoting sustainable, small-scale farming practices.

Over the next 6 months, these participants were supported by:

* **Magdaléna Prunerová** (MgC Group) - entrepreneurship and sustainability
* **Karolína Pumprová** (HerbaFabrica) - entrepreneurship
* **Petra Sýkorová** (LitoHUB) - entrepreneurship and sustainability
* **Martina Pěkná** (EWA Alumnae) - entrepreneurship and business strategy
* **Jitka Hvězdová** (Plastenco) - entrepreneurship and business strategy
* **Alena Líškay Králíková** (SITA) - sustainability and business strategy
* **Jakub Štogr** (Reframe Circle) - business strategy
* **Markéta Vinkelhoferová** (Fair & Bio roastery) - entrepreneurship
* **Radmila Svobodová** (Sonnetor) - entrepreneurship in the herb business
* **Petra Kubálková** - business strategy and marketing

The program concluded with experience sharing, mentor meetings, and discussions about the ongoing journey. Participants also had the opportunity to further develop their startup ideas during the networking evening.

We are grateful for their invaluable support!

About CATS2CATS

[CATS2CATS](https://cats2cats.org/) is a non-profit organization focused on supporting and developing women entrepreneurs in agriculture and the food industry. Founded in 2011, the organization aims to create a strong community of women who embrace challenges and seek to develop their entrepreneurial skills. CATS2CATS organizes regular meetups, workshops, and mentoring programs that provide women with valuable knowledge, contacts, and inspiration for their entrepreneurial journey. The organization also collaborates closely with other entities and platforms in agriculture and food to facilitate new business opportunities and expand their entrepreneurial networks for women. Through its activities, CATS2CATS aims to motivate more women to fearlessly pursue their entrepreneurial ideas in these dynamic sectors.

About EIT Food

EIT Food is the world's largest and most dynamic food innovation community. We accelerate innovation to build a future-fit food system that delivers healthy and sustainable food for all. Supported by the [European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)](https://www.eitfood.eu/), a body of the European Union, we invest in projects, organizations, and individuals who share our goals and vision for a healthy and sustainable food system.

We unlock innovation potential in businesses and universities, create and scale agrifood startups, and bring new technologies and products to market. We equip entrepreneurs and professionals with the skills needed to transform the food system, placing consumers at the heart of our work by helping rebuild trust and reconnecting them with the origins of their food.

We are one of nine innovation communities established by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), an independent EU body founded in 2008 to foster innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.