



## EIC Board - 6<sup>th</sup> plenary Meeting 9 December 2022 – Brussels

### 1. Welcome and approval of minutes

Mark Ferguson, the EIC Board Interim Chair, welcomed the members of the Board present (apologies from Kat Borlongan), Gustav Kalbe acting Director of Digital Excellence and Science Infrastructure in DG CNECT and the other European Commission / EIC & SMEs Executive Agency representatives.

The agenda was adopted and the minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting (6 September 2022) were approved.

### 2. EIC implementation

Jean-David Malo updated the Board on recent developments in the implementation of EIC activities, alongside the new collaborations and partnerships with the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (JU), the European Patent Office (EPO) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). He also updated on the state of play of the EIC Ukrainian initiative, the gender and diversity innovation index, the EIC Scaleup 100 actions and the pathfinder, transition and accelerator schemes. The 2 new Programme Managers and the new EIC Ambassadors' appointments were also presented to the Board.

The Head of Unit for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) summarised progress against the Strategic and Operational KPIs (detailed paper circulated) and the 2022 Impact Report. He highlighted good progress in KPIs on crowding in investment, scaling companies and in increasing operational efficiency on the time to grant, while noting that KPIs were not currently achieved on attracting excellent female led enterprises and innovators from widening countries; in improving the pipeline from other programmes; and in time to investment. He thanked the Board for comments on the Impact Report and underlined how they had been taken into account considering the target audiences.

The Board welcomed the update on the KPIs and discussed the participation of female innovators and innovators from widening countries, including the need for more specific targets and actions (in line with the principle of excellence in allocating funding), improving the application process, selection of relevant challenge topics, and the need to build capacity nationally (as identified in a recent report of the Court of Auditors). The Board approved an action aimed at improving success of widening countries, namely to replicate the previous actions to improve success of female teams namely to invite a percentage of applicants from widening countries to interview stage. The final decision would always be on excellence, but inviting applicants to interview may increase their chance of success, overcome any unconscious bias and be educational for the applicants.

**Follow up:**

Secretariat to provide more information on EIC Scaling Up pilot, the predecessor of EIC Scale up 100. Management to implement action on inviting widening country applicants to interview.

Working Group (WG) on participation of widening countries to develop more specific metrics and action plan to increase the participation of women and widening countries. Some challenge topics, e.g. Femtech may result in more applicants from female and widening countries, and the WG (+ relevant Programme Managers) were asked to propose such topics.

### **3. Overview of innovation policy latest developments**

Anna Panagopoulou, Director DG R&I presented the role of the EIC in taking forward the New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA) including through the new WP 2023. She urged Board members to advocate key actions in their respective countries and explained the role of the Coalition of the Willing in the implementation of the NEIA actions. She thanked members for their participation in the EIC Forum Working Groups and invited further participation, including the new group on stock options.

The innovation aspects of the reform of the research assessment exercise and associated actions were presented alongside the EU TalentOn event that took place in Leiden, September 2022 involving Anita Traaseth, who endorsed the event and encouraged Board members to participate in future editions.

Members noted that:

- In the absence of a uniform company form in the EU, a modernised European version of a Delaware company corporation should be explored in the discussions on IPO's and stock options.
- Access to world class facilities to facilitate early-stage prototyping in application domains such as cities or hospitals should be explored in the group on procurement.

Finally, Ms Panagopoulou requested suggestions and help from the Board for organising a European innovation day in Silicon Valley in March 2023, as requested by Commissioner Gabriel. Members urged the Commission to define a clear purpose for the event, and to involve top class companies/ investors (depending on the purpose), tapping into the network of Europeans based in Silicon Valley. The Board also suggested making a reciprocal interaction re inviting top Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and investors to a European based EIC evening or EIC Forum. The success of a recent Scale up event ('Masters of Scale') in Silicon Valley was highlighted and a similar event in Europe would be useful to aid EIC founded scaling companies.

**Follow up and actions**

Secretariat to follow up on EIC Board membership of EIC forum WGs.

The EIC Board WG on Pathfinder, Transition and ERC under Spela's lead to discuss and advise on the reform of research assessment.

Secretariat to draw on individual Board members to advise (participate) in the upcoming Silicon Valley events.

**4. EIC Fund**

The HoU Innovation Policy, Investment Agendas & Access to Finance, updated the Board on the implementation of the transition solution where the investment process is now functioning effectively. He also informed the Board that Lars Frølund is due to be appointed as one of the 'A Directors' of the EIC Fund Board following its restructuring, with Hermann Hauser retaining his role and Anna Panagopoulou participating as an observer in the future. The Chair updated on the exchanges with MEP Ehler following the publication of the EP report on implementation of the EIC.

In discussion, the Board highlighted the need for:

- A clear flow chart on the decision-making process for the EIC Fund.
- Clarification that it is possible, in specific limited/exceptional circumstances, for the EIC Fund to invest alone and that therefore there is not substantive disagreement with the EP report on this matter.
- A strategy on follow-on investments and exits, taking into account also budget constraints.
- Clarify the respective roles of the EIC Fund Board and the EIC Board, and subject to this clarification for the Fund Board to take over the Fund specific discussions from the current Fund WG.

**Follow up:**

Secretariat to prepare a draft response to the Ehler report, clarifying the point on investments.

Secretariat to organise an EIC Fund WG in January 2023 to discuss the strategy for follow-on investments and exits, and to 'handover' future responsibilities to the Fund Board.

Commission to clarify the respective mandates of the EIC Board and EIC Fund Board

**5. Working Groups – updates and discussion**

The Chair introduced the discussion as an opportunity to highlight major developments and plans.

Bart Becks summarised work in the WG on Communication (campaigns in countries and for academia, advice on the EIC summit). The Chair proposed a full agenda point at the February meeting. The Board congratulated the team organising a successful EIC summit. Any feedback should be sent to the secretariat.

Kinga Stanislawska provided an overview of the first discussion on the simplification of Accelerator applications in the EIC Accelerator and Fund WG, underlining the urgent need for a substantial and timely reform informed by user testing. It was agreed that a roadmap should be developed with clear targets and KPIs to support the delivery of a new application platform (e.g. reduction in time to complete, feedback from applicants, dates for introducing new platform, etc.).

Ana Barjasic outlined progress on the Code of Conduct for consultants and presented the results of the survey on evaluation bias organised by the Widening countries WG. Ms Barjasic explained that the outputs of the survey demonstrated no detectable bias against women led companies but pointed to some unconscious bias against some, but not all, widening countries. In discussion, it was noted that approaches such as mandatory training of assessors prior to accessing projects had proven useful in reducing unconscious bias. The Board also insisted on its earlier decision to extend the access to interviews strategy which has been successful for women, to widening countries and this might help eliminate any unconscious bias against certain widening countries. Progress on a Code of conduct for consultants was welcomed, and it was suggested that this could start as a voluntary code.

Špela Stres presented the approach on IP as discussed in the EIC Pathfinder, Transition and ERC WG. It was agreed that more clarity was required on the IP provisions and that the Board WG should meet *asap* with key stakeholder associations to assess their concerns. And involve them in constructive solutions. The founder's choice programme (as implemented by Imperial College) was highlighted.

Marja Makarow updated the Board on the collaboration with the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT), where a range of ambitions for future partnership were explored. It was agreed that these options should be considered in the context of a wider discussion to inform the mid-term review of Horizon Europe.

**Decision and Follow up:**

The secretariat to circulate the draft code of conduct, updated analysis of participation of widening countries, and the report of the EIC summit.

Secretariat to organise meeting of WG with associations on IP rules.

EISMEA to review the briefing experts receive on unconscious bias, and to share this with the Board.

Communication to be an agenda item for February 2023 Board meeting.

## 6. Review the experience and future priorities for the EIC Board

The Head of Unit for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) presented the follow up of previous Board recommendations, the results of the feedback survey of Board members, and some initial priorities proposed by the secretariat. Board members welcomed the survey, discussed and identified areas for improvement in the Board's functioning (e.g. greater focus on strategic issues).

All board members indicated their top 2-3 proposed priorities for the Board to address in 2023 as a basis for preparing a Board work plan and agendas for 2023. There was a considerable consensus and overlap in the individual Board Member's priorities. The Chair proposed a new WG on the long term strategy for the EIC, including inputs to the mid-term review of Horizon Europe. This proposal was welcomed.

### Decision and follow-up

The secretariat to circulate the Rules of procedure for the Board, for all members to comment on potential areas to improve or clarify (to be revised at next meeting as needed).

The secretariat will group the priorities presented by the EIC Board members and prepare a work plan and topics for discussion at Board meetings in 2023 to be endorsed at February meeting.

Secretariat in collaboration with the Chair to establish a new working group on the long term future of the EIC; members to volunteer if they wish to be included. Carsten Dreher volunteered to produce and initial scoping paper.

## 7. EIC Programme Managers Priorities

Anne-Marie Sassen, head of the Programme Managers Unit in EISMEA, outlined the PM's priorities following the discussion at the previous Board and proposed options for a more structured interaction with the Board. Members of the Board welcomed the presentation and noted that the PMs should:

- Engage with the widening countries WG to help support efforts to increase their participation
- Work with the Board to both define and support the case for future Challenges and thereby facilitate discussions with policy DGs and Member States
- Help drive communication efforts and contribute to the Communication WG meetings
- Join EIT WG meetings for specific points relating to PMs
- Work with members of the Board in developing strong ecosystems especially involving VCs and corporates.
- Joined up challenges to important but underserved opportunities. The chair asked the PM's to always consider how they add value and make important things happen that would not have happened if the PM's were not there.

### Follow up:

The Board endorsed the priorities for PMs to identify visions/ EIC challenge areas, and to proactively manage projects and portfolios

The Board endorsed the proposals to interact with PMs for the identification of challenge areas, both in the relevant Working Groups, and the plenary, and to have an annual exchange with all PMs

The Secretariat to organise the participation of PMs in the different WGs as appropriate.

## **8. Wrap-up, conclusions, arrangements for next meetings**

The secretariat informed Board members about arrangements for the new EIC Ambassadors. Francesco Profumo informed the Board about arrangements for the Turin meeting on 28 February 2023.

The Head of Unit for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) informed the Board about potential agenda points for the 28 February 2023 meeting and future meetings in 2023:

- 28 April, in Brussels
- July, in Riga
- September, in Brussels
- November/December, in Athens

He also informed the Board about a planned Swedish presidency event on 1 and 2 June 2023, which may be like a 'mini' EIC Summit.

### **Follow up:**

The secretariat will prepare a Doodle poll to set the dates of September and Nov/Dec 2023 meetings.

## List of participants

### Members of the Board

- Ana BARJASIC
- Bart BECKS
- Liene BRIEDE (*Remote*)
- Carsten DREHER
- Mark FERGUSON
- Lars FRØLUND
- Radoslav GEORGIEV
- Jan GOETZ
- Hermann HAUSER
- Vicky KEFALAS (*Remote*)
- Taavi MADIBERK (*Remote*)
- Marja MAKAROW
- Ana MAIQUES VALLS (*Remote*)
- Francesco PROFUMO
- Cristina RIESEN
- Bruno SPORTISSE
- Kinga STANISŁAWSKA
- Anita TRAASETH

#### *Apologies:*

- Kat BORLONGAN

### European Commission

#### DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology

- Gustav Kalbe - *acting Director of Digital Excellence and Science Infrastructure (Remote)*

#### DG Research & Innovation

- Anna Panagopoulou - *Director – ERA & Innovation*
- *HoU Innovation Policy & Access to Finance*
- *Policy Officer, Innovation Policy, Investment Agendas & Access to Finance (Remote)*

#### EIC & SME Executive Agency

- Jean-David Malo – *Director*
- *Head of Department European Innovation Council*
- *Head of Unit EIC Board, Strategy and Feedback to Policy*
- *Head of Unit EIC Programme Managers' Office*
- *Head of Unit EIC Pathfinder*
- *Head of Unit EIC Transition and Business Acceleration Services*
- *Head of Unit EIC Accelerator*
- *Policy Adviser – EIC Board*
- *Policy Adviser*

#### EIC Programme Managers

- Programme Manager Health and biotechnology
- Programme Manager for quantum tech and electronics
- Programme Manager for construction & AI