

3rd Plenary Meeting

Brussels

Friday, 29 April 2022 | 9:00 – 16:00 (CET)

Minutes

1. Welcome and approval of minutes

Mark Ferguson, the EIC Board Interim Chair, welcomed all members of the Board, European Commission (EC) and EIC & SMEs Executive Agency representatives.

The agenda was adopted and the minutes of the 2nd meeting, 11 March 2022 were approved.

The Interim Chair debriefed in particular to members that were not present on the discussion held at the dinner with Commission Director Generals Jean-Eric Paquet, Kirsten Jorna, and Isidro Laso Ballesteros from Commissioner Gabriel Cabinet.

2. Overview of latest developments

The HoU Innovation Policy & Access to Finance presented the latest developments in the ongoing work on the new European Innovation Policy. He outlined the five Flagship Actions areas where the Commission is working to prepare the new Innovation Agenda: access to finance, European experimentation space for innovation, innovation ecosystem, better innovation policy making and retaining talents in Europe. The feedback from stakeholders is expected until May 10 and adoption in July 2022.

He also explained that the EIC Forum is a platform for dialogue on the development of the Union's innovation ecosystem, and first deliverable was the endorsement of policy orientations. Following the March EIC Board meeting, members were identified and invited to meetings of the WGs on innovation policy and data.

Carsten Dreher, Špela Stres and Anita Traaseth provided feedback on their participation in the EIC Forum WGs on Innovation policy. Carsten proposed a Board input highlighting the lack of agility in innovation policy making and administration, and the need for further action on public procurement and scale up financing, etc. The Board supported the messages proposed by Carsten discussed how to interface the scale up financing, including the interface with regional funds, ecosystems and talent, which should take account of entrepreneurial skills and research skills in different regions. Mr Isidro Laso Ballesteros informed the Board that the Partnerships for Regional Innovation are a complementary approach, which builds on positive experiences with smart specialisation strategies. The chosen territories will be announced in May and an official launch event is scheduled for 17 May.

Špela Stres noted that the EIC Forum WG on data has not yet met and requested another Board member to join her in this group.

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Follow up:

Vicky Kefalas to join Špela Stres to participation in EIC Forum WG on data.

Carsten to revise input to EIC Forum WG on Innovation policy based on discussion and submit to the Commission.

Secretariat to set up a meeting with Scale up Fund (FR presidency initiative) to discuss interface with EIC Fund.

Jean-David Malo presented the latest developments in EIC implementation. He announced that following the Board's recommendation at the March meeting, a substantial action to support Ukrainian startups has been prepared and was strongly supported by the Programme Committee of Member States.

The Board welcomed the progress on Ukraine and thanked the Agency and Commission for immediate follow up on Ukraine and for all Board members to communicate about this around the launch in end May/ early June.

The Board enquired how they can access the work done by Programme Managers and help/support them. The HoU for the EIC Board & Strategy informed that the Board will have the opportunity to discuss the experience with PM in Oslo and to meet them in the September meeting in Brussels

Follow up:

Secretariat to organise the discussion to review the experience with Programme Managers for the June meeting in Oslo.

Secretariat to inform about the actions to support Ukraine launch.

3. EIC Fund

The HoD European Innovation Council and the HoU Innovation Policy & Access to Finance informed the Board that the Commission Decision on the restructuring of the EIC Fund was adopted (21 April). The EIB is working on urgent cases (ongoing rounds) and advancing the preparatory work. The full transition solution will be presented by 30 June and there will be a progressive move to a long term solution until end of 2022

Mark Ferguson informed the Board members of the discussions held in the EIC Fund working group the day before and at the dinner with the DGs. He recalled that the Board is not responsible to negotiate the contract but to advise.

Board members expressed concerns about the day to day management of investments, where clear responsibilities and rapid decision making are needed. The experience from the pilot and from the market shows that this will be a critical aspect of the agreement with the EIB and Fund manager.

The Board requested that the terms and responsibilities for the EIB and the Fund manager be carefully drawn up and circulated to the extent possible to the Board for input /or advice. The Board emphasised that fees should be market facing and consistent with the responsibilities

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assigned. The Board advised that some simple questions are used to test if potential proposals are fit for purpose, e.g. how many approval steps and time are required between application and money released?; what are the total overhead costs of all the actors?; who is responsible for the day to day management/monitoring and decision making? who decides on follow on investments?, etc.

The Board also expressed serious concerns about the slow decision making for funding companies selected by the EIC in 2021 which is disadvantaging the companies and damaging the EIC reputation. The Board highlighted serious concerns about the further bureaucratic hurdles being encountered such as the need for all blended finance decisions to be proposed and decided at the level of the College of Commissioners in the transition phase, which is not consistent with fast, agile decision making and unnecessary as such decisions do not represent political choices. Not only would this introduce further delays but is also inconsistent with the Commission's desire for "hands off" management of the fund and its decisions. Finally, the Board emphasised again that the EIC Fund must operate on timelines and practices that are consistent with the VC market, which is currently far from the case. As a result, the Board expressed its extreme frustration that the success of the Accelerator pilot is being undone

The Chair invited the EIC Fund WG to advise on key KPIs for the EIB and EIC Fund manager.

Decision or conclusion:

Commission/ secretariat to provide further information about the main elements and responsibilities being considered for the EIB and the Fund manager for input and advise before they are finalised

The EIC Fund WG to advise on key terms/ KPIs for EIB and EIC Fund manager

4. EIC funding strategy and 2023 EIC Work Programme

The HoU for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) presented an overview, key orientations, priorities, processes and next steps on the 2023 EIC Work Programme. He highlighted that the Board has a pivotal role to advise on the Work Programme and existing Board discussions and WGs were already taken into account for the proposed orientations. Further work of these groups will feed into the Work Programme and the Board's advice on other new elements, such as the internships scheme, a potential new procurement scheme, and the simplification of applications/ one stop shop approach would be very important.

Board members discussed in-depth the proposed orientations for the EIC WP 2023. The Board discussed the proposed approach to identifying EIC Challenges and supported the need for more focused challenges, stressing that technology sovereignty considerations should be taken fully into account.

Board members recommended improving the user interface and an approach based on the journey of a start-up, identifying which schemes and support are relevant at different stages, including synergies with other programmes like ESFRI.

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The Board stressed the need for more pro-activity to encourage women innovators, and to target applicants from widening countries. Members put forward a number of ideas around public procurement.

Recommendation and Decision:

The Board agreed the creation of a new Working Group on procurement to feed into the 2023 EIC Work Programme.

The Board supported the proposed orientations and the more focused strategy for EIC challenges. The Board is ready to advise on one-stop-shop, improvements to applications/ user interface.

Board members will further identify aspects where advice, e.g. through Working Groups, could develop more specific recommendations.

5. EIC Board strategy – KPIs

As a follow-up of the discussions held at the Paris meeting, Mark Ferguson presented the overall KPIs proposed to be monitored. The Board supported the 6 strategic goals proposed but asked for further reflections on KPIs relating to technological sovereignty and the EIC Fund.

The specific targets for individual KPIs were discussed which identified a number where further work is needed on definitions and to define the appropriate level of ambition.

The Board requested the Secretariat to propose a publishable document capturing the main strategic goals and mature KPIs. Furthermore, reporting on KPIs should be part of the 2022 EIC Impact Report.

Decision:

The Board endorsed the six strategic goals and the set of KPIs, subject to further inputs on technological sovereignty and the EIC fund.

Several members (Lars Frølund, Bruno Sportisse, Hermann Hauser, Anita Traaseth, and others) were invited to propose KPI's for technological sovereignty (taking account of previous Board's work).

The EIC fund WG to reflect on any additional KPIs.

The Secretariat to prepare a document to be published on the strategic goals and some of the targets/ objectives for the KPIs for the next Board meeting, and a first reporting on strategic goals for the September meeting.

6. EIC - Communication strategy

The Head of Communication sector at the EIC and SMEs executive agency, provided an overview of activities since the EIC launch in March 2021. Bart Becks and Cristina Riesen then presented the ambition of the proposed EIC Communication Strategy that aims by 2025 the

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EIC will be well-known by all its major audiences and will be perceived to be Europe's most important programme supporting the best deep-tech innovators. A list of important events was presented as an annex of the strategy.

The Board strongly welcomed the strategy and proposed reusing relevant KPIs from the overall strategic goals. Marja Makarow reported on an event with Finnish university rectors and proposed a stronger outreach to universities. Ana Barjasic updated on the work of the "widening countries" where members have engaged with National Contact Points (NCPs) and will follow up with country specific engagement.

Board members discussed that the current delays in implementation of the EIC Fund create a significant reputational problem, and rapid communications may be needed on this and it was recommended that a crises playbook be developed. As a consequence, the general advice is to relaunch proactive communication activities once investments can be announced, but in the meantime to continue communicating on other successful developments (for example the Ukraine action, the EIC Scaleup 100, successful companies from pilot, etc).

Decisions:

The main priorities of the EIC Communication strategy were endorsed by the Board, with a number of additional ideas proposed (events with main university associations, targeted outreach to widening countries, crises playbook).

Communication WG members to work with the EIC Communication team to implement the strategy. The approach to communicating on the EIC fund to be reviewed at the next meeting in light of developments.

Secretariat to circulate table for members to volunteer to be proposed as key speakers at major events.

7. Update from other Working Groups

Ana Barjasic highlighted that the main items from the report of the widening WG that had been circulated. Mark Ferguson reported that the next meeting of the Joint WG with the ERC Scientific Council is planned for 10 May. The next meeting of the Joint WG with the EIT Governing Board is being scheduled for June.

8. Wrap-up and conclusions

Anita Traaseth outlined the arrangements for the next Board meeting on 7 June, including a dinner on 6 June.

The Secretariat confirmed the following meeting would be 7 September in Brussels, including a meeting with Commissioner Gabriel and with the EIC Programme Managers.

The date of the final meeting of the year, is still to be scheduled pending confirmation of the date of the EIC Summit.

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The Board welcomed the more structured format of the meeting's agenda and acknowledged the quality of the documents received and the support from the EIC Board secretariat, and other staff from the European Commission (EC) and EIC & SMEs Executive Agency.

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List of participants

Board members

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

European Commission

Cabinet of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

- Isidro Laso Ballesteros - *Cabinet Expert*

DG Research & Innovation

- *HoU Innovation Policy & Access to Finance*
- *Policy Officer - Innovation Policy, Investment Agendas & Access to Finance*

EIC & SME Executive Agency (EISMEA)

- Jean-David Malo – *Director*
- *Head of Department European Innovation Council (remote)*
- *Head of Unit EIC Board, Strategy and Feedback to Policy*
- Heads of Unit: EIC Pathfinder, Transition, Accelerator
- *Head of Sector External Communications (remote)*
- *Policy Advisor – EIC Board*
- *Policy Advisor – EIC Board*