

2nd Plenary Meeting

INRIA – Paris

Friday, 11 March 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. However, during the meeting Taavi Madiberk proposed two additional points which were added after the point on widening countries. The minutes of the Ad Hoc meeting of 27 January 2022 were approved.

2. Overview of latest developments

Anna Panagopoulou presented the latest developments in innovation policy and related developments such as on energy security (REPowerEU) and measures to support Ukraine. She outlined the five broad action areas which have been identified from consultations on future innovation policy and where the Commission is working to prepare a new Innovation Agenda: access to finance, framework conditions, Europe's innovation ecosystem, talent and innovation cohesion.

Ms Panagopoulou explained that the role of the EIC Forum is to bring together Member State public authorities and bodies in charge of innovation policies and programmes, to promote coordination and dialogue on the EU's innovation ecosystem and the European Innovation Agenda. She invited the Board to be represented in the five Working Groups established: Innovation Policy, Innovation Procurement, Data, Plug In, and EIC Prizes alumni. Board members queried the nature and type of participants in the Forum and Ms Panagopoulou explained that it is not a decision making body but provides advice, and that membership is a mixture of ministries, agencies and other bodies in most cases at senior level.

Jean-David Malo presented the latest developments in EIC implementation, including recent call results and the recruitment of six new EIC Programme managers with a good gender and thematic balance (and thanking those Board members who participated in the final interview phase).

Follow up: Secretariat to circulate information about dates of EIC Forum WGs for members to express willingness and availability to participate.

3. EIC Fund

The Head of Department of the European Innovation Council and the Head of Unit for Innovation Policy and Access to Finance informed the Board that the EIC Fund transition phase is gradually being put in place (e.g. Investment Guidelines published) but that the Commission

EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL - EIC BOARD

Decision to restructure the Fund and enable it to operate is still pending. Board members expressed high concern about the delays which are undermining the reputation of the EIC and cautioned against linking the transition phase to the long-term solution.

Mark Ferguson recalled the EIC Board's statement of 9 February on the EIC Fund, and presented the statement prepared by the Working Group.

Decision: Board members unanimously approved the statement to be sent by the Chair to Commissioners Gabriel and Hahn.

4. Strategy discussion: EIC funding portfolio and KPIs

As scene setting, Mark Ferguson presented the Vision statement and KPIs defined by the previous EIC pilot Advisory Board and the Head of Unit for the EIC Board, Strategy and Feedback to Policy gave an overview of the EIC portfolio of projects and latest available data against KPIs. The Board divided in 3 breakout rooms (2 physical and 1 virtual) moderated by Marja Makarow, Francesco Perfume and Ana Maiques to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the EIC portfolio and the main KPIs Board members would like to see monitored, with the following potential KPIs proposed:

- Is the EIC the investor of choice for companies
- Is the EIC attractive for the best entrepreneurs (including female founders, those from widening countries, and repeat entrepreneurs)
- Market multiple achieved by co-investment and follow up investors (including who the co-investors are)
- Speed of decision making in terms of a) time-to-grant, b) time-to-term sheet c) time-to-money in bank
- Does the EIC bring in a pipeline from ERC, EIT and National programmes?
- EIC-supported unicorns share in Europe and the world
- Impact of EIC on sustainability
- Impact of EIC on creation of Jobs

This Board discussed the need to benchmark EIC impacts/ performance against market and/ or globally and against unfunded proposals, and to include KPIs on the Pathfinder. It was agreed to have monitoring KPIs reported to each Board meeting and strategic KPIs reported twice a year. The Board did not have major comments concerning the balance of funding or portfolio of the EIC.

Follow up: secretariat to prepare a proposal for reporting of KPIs. Next Board meeting to decide on the KPIs and set the level of ambition/ targets.

5. Strategy discussion: Improving participation from “widening countries”

EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL - EIC BOARD

Ana Barjasic, Taavi Madiberk, Liene Bride, Cristina Riesen, Radoslav Georgiev and Špela Stres presented data on underperformance of applicants from widening countries and the recommendations following the WG meetings.

The analysis showed a variety of situations of widening countries, but in the majority of cases there are relatively few applicants and below average success rates. The WG recommended an objective to increase both the level of applications and the success rate towards the EU average. Specific recommendations are:

- To conduct a pilot survey to assess potential biases of evaluators.
- For Board members to assess the specific situation of the countries (a template for Latvia was presented by Liene Briede) they know best and identify the key "gatekeepers" to promote the EIC.
- To include actions to be funded by the Widening part of Horizon Europe to support a pipeline of applicants.

Decision: the recommendations of the Working Group were endorsed by the Board.

6. AOB: specific budgets to support Ukraine and widening countries

Taavi Madiberk proposed to the Board a special allocation of funds (€50 million) for Ukrainian deep tech entrepreneurs; and a special allocation (€200 million) to widening countries in the context of the Ukrainian crisis.

Board members supported the need for specific actions for Ukraine with ideas including support to ecosystems to receive Ukrainian entrepreneur refugees, boot camps to train Ukrainian entrepreneurs and help them integrate, and support to enable Ukrainian start-ups to relocate. Jean-David Malo explained that any such measures would need to be included in the EIC Work Programme (amendment to 2022 or in 2023) and subject to approval by the Programme Committee of Member States, and the Head of Unit for the EIC Board, Strategy and Feedback to Policy added that geographical criteria are not possible for the allocation of EIC funding but there are possibilities under the widening part of Horizon Europe.

A special allocation to widening countries is not possible for the time being and would need to be further considered. This should be on the basis of a proposal from the Widening WG to be tabled sufficiently in advance.

Decision: In light of the Ukrainian crisis, there is an urgent need to support deep tech entrepreneurs in Ukraine, including to support teams to relocate, found new start-ups or joint existing teams and for ecosystems in Member States to support their arrival and integration. The Board urges the Commission to allocate additional funds of at least 50 million euro for this purpose.

7. Update from other Working Groups

EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL - EIC BOARD

- a. *Communication, branding & positioning WG – Bart Becks and Cristina Riesen*, A first meeting took place in February and discussed target groups, the 2022 EIC Summit, and the handling of the current delays in funding and investment. The WG will develop a Communication Strategy and recommendations to present at the next EIC board meeting.
- b. *Joint WG with the ERC Scientific Council - Mark Ferguson and Špela Stres*. The WG met with ERC Scientific Council members in February and reviewed the EIC Transition 2021 results and agreed follow up actions to organise a joint workshop on energy storage technologies, to collaborate on data analysis, a possible new innovation internship scheme, and on international tech transfer issues.
- c. *Joint WG with the EIT Governing Board - Marja Makarow and Vicky Kefalas*. The kick-off meeting on 2 March with the participation of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel agreed on terms of reference and priority actions to review implementation of the Fast Track scheme and the KIC pilot actions, and to develop joint communication materials to make it simple where to go for start-ups and SMES.

8. EIC Board Work Plan for 2022

The Head of Unit for the EIC Board, Strategy and Feedback to Policy presented a proposed EIC Board Work Plan for 2022 incorporating the priorities discussed at the Board's first meeting, and confirmed that the next meetings would take place on Friday 29 April in Brussels, and on Tuesday 7 June in Oslo, in each case with a Board dinner organised the night before.

Board members requested:

- A clearer agenda differentiating between discussion points and decision/recommendation points.
- That for routine items (e.g. reporting on implementation), the Secretariat should provide the notes sufficiently in advance (one week) and such points would not be discussed at Board unless specifically requested by a Member.
- That the Secretariat should report on the follow up of recommendations from previous meetings.

Follow up: Secretariat to prepare clearer agendas for future meetings and ensure documents for non-discussion points to be circulated in advance.
A doodle poll will be circulated to set dates for Board meetings in the autumn.

9. Wrap-up

Mark Ferguson and the other members of the Board thanked Kat and Bruno for their excellent support in organising and hosting the Paris meeting.

EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL - EIC BOARD

List of participants

Board members

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

[Apologies] - Jan GOETZ

European Commission - DG Research & Innovation

- Anna Panagopoulou - *Director – ERA & Innovation (Remote)*
- HoU 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 (remote)*
- *Head of Sector External Communications*
- *Assistant to the Director*
- *Policy Advisor – EIC Board*
- *Policy Advisor – EIC Board*