



Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and DG Research and Innovation

A- Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding

- The Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), established by Regulation (EC) No 294/2008¹ and represented by the Chair, Mrs Gioia Ghezzi.
- The European Innovation Council pilot Advisory Board, represented by its Chair, Professor Mark Ferguson.
- The Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission, represented by Mr. Jean-David Malo in his function as Director of the European Innovation Council (EIC) Taskforce.
- The EIT, represented by its Director, Mr. Martin Kern.

B- Whereas:

- Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) is taking on responsibilities as partner DG regarding the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) as Party to this Memorandum of Understanding;
- The EIT was established as an independent European Union body in 2008, while the EIC pilot was launched in 2018 and the EIC becomes a fully-fledged programme under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme as from 2021;
- The EIT and the EIC are jointly part of the overarching EU innovation policy, as well as the EU policy aiming at building the European Research and Innovation Area(ERA), as proposed by the Communication on a new European Research Area for Research and Innovation² adopted on 30 September 2020;
- The in-depth cooperation between the EIT and the EIC is subject to the Horizon Europe Framework

¹Regulation (EC) No 294/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2008 establishing the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (OJ L 097, 9.4.2008, p. 1).

² COM(2020) 628 final.

- Programme (2021-2027) legislation, which includes both a regulation and a decision on its specific programme;
- The EIT Regulation and the Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) which supplements it are being revised in particular to be made compatible and aligned with the Horizon Europe Regulation, including in particular the Article 5.1 (a) of the EIT Regulation establishing the EIT Governing Board;
 - The Commission decision of 27 June 2019 established the Advisory Board of the EIC enhanced pilot, which will be superseded by the EIC Board to be established under the Horizon Europe legislation;
 - The (forthcoming) Commission decision intends to set out the coordinated implementation of Horizon Europe and the operating rules for the Common Policy Centre and the Common Implementation Centre for Horizon Europe;
 - The Letter of Intent (LoI) signed on 24 September 2020 between the EIT's first wave of three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy) of the EIT and the EIC Task Force defines the collaboration between the EIC and the relevant KICs;
 - Four pilot actions are funded by the EIC pilot through its 2020 Work Programme and are carried out by EIT KICs (EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital, EIT InnoEnergy and EIT Health) during 2021.
 - The respective decisions of the EIT Governing Board and of the EIC Advisory Board establishing EIC-EIT Joint Working Group on synergies between the EIC and the EIT and the position paper of the EIT Governing Board on complementarities and synergies with EIC³.

C- Scope and objectives

The EIC and the EIT share a common objective to increase the innovation performance and innovation potential of the European Union, thereby contributing to the creation of high-quality jobs and inclusive growth for Europe, and to develop and rapidly scale up innovative solutions for sustainability and welfare in line with European goals and values.

To this end, the EIC and the EIT intend to work together to design and implement a fully-fledged systemic and structural cooperation, at both strategic and operational levels, whereby European innovators, innovative SMEs and startups, higher education institutions and research organisations should receive high-level support and services in order to deploy and scale their innovations faster and with greater impact.

Such collaboration is expected to contribute to the joint impact of these two programmes and to the whole impact of Horizon Europe.

D- Complementarities and areas for strengthened collaboration

³https://eit.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eit_position_paper_horizon_europe_eit_eic_0.pdf

In the context of Horizon Europe's third pillar, the activities of the EIC and the EIT need to be complementary, while avoiding gaps or duplications.

Regarding complementarities:

- The EIT supports institutions in Knowledge Triangle (research, business, education) to build ecosystems and innovation capacity;
- The EIC intends to support individual start-ups/SMEs to scale up innovations and innovative research teams (universities, research organisations, industry) to develop emerging technologies;
- The EIT KICs have thematic focus and cover any forms of innovation;
- EIC will follow a mainly bottom up approach, funding any technology/application area, with a focus on disruptive deep tech innovations.

Regarding areas for collaboration:

- *Support to innovative startups and SMEs.* The EIC and EIT will work collectively to identify and promote innovative startups and SMEs to scale up in Europe:
 - The EIT intends to collaborate with EIC to develop methods to identify start-ups/SMEs that comply with the requirements for EIC Accelerator funding and to support these start-ups/SMEs to apply, including with regard to the implementation of the “FastTrack” process⁴ for the EIC Accelerator set out in Horizon Europe. The EIT intends to support the KICs in this process. and monitor the quality of the proposals submitted for support
 - The EIC intends to collaborate with the EIT to help implement the FastTrack process and to provide feedback on the relative success of EIT backed startups/SMEs applying to the EIC Accelerator.
- *Access to advisory services and networks.* The EIT and EIC intend ensuring mutual and reciprocal access to advisory services and networks which are relevant to the startups and SMEs which they are supporting.
 - The EIT and EIC intend to map out their respective advisory services and networks and should endeavour to put in place arrangements to avoid overlaps and ensure sufficient mutual access to each other's networks and services.
- *Investments in innovative start-ups and SMEs.* While preserving business confidentiality where necessary, the EIT KICs and the EIC intend cooperating jointly with investor communities and proactively seek opportunities for co-investments into start-ups/SMEs:
 - The EIC, through its EIC Fund, intends to communicate with the EIT and relevant EIT KICs on investment opportunities and where relevant include EIT KICs and KIC partners with investment capacities, in its platform for co-investors.

⁴ Under Horizon Europe legislation, the FastTrack process enables funding bodies implementing Horizon Europe (including EIT KICs) to directly submit proposals to the EIC Accelerator evaluation, based on a project review assessing the proposal against criteria for EIC Accelerator funding detailed in the EIC Work Programme.

- The EIT intends to encourage EIT KICs to promote co-investment opportunities in EIC backed start-ups and SMEs to their investment communities and where they have investment capabilities to establish ways to co-invest with the EIC Fund.
- *Specific attention to women innovators:* The EIT and EIC intend to collaborate and exchange experiences and good practices on supporting Start-ups and SMEs led by women as well as integrating the gender perspective in their respective processes.
- *Support for innovators from widening countries:* The EIT and EIC intend to collaborate to support start-ups and SMEs located in regions and countries with modest or moderate innovation capacity, in particular Widening countries as defined by Horizon Europe.
- *Transition from research results to innovation.* The EIC and EIT intend to collaborate to support results from research projects, notably those from the EIC Pathfinder and EIT KIC research driven projects, to become innovation opportunities including through collaborations with business, licensing and spinouts. Such collaboration should include EIC Transition activities and EIT innovation and entrepreneurship activities.
- *Market access for innovative start-ups and SMEs.* The EIT and EIC intend to collaborate in order to maximise market opportunities for the start-ups and SMEs they support. This includes access to corporates, including corporates represented in KIC partnerships, relevant events with corporates and procurers, and expertise on regulatory requirements across the Single Market.
- *Sharing of data/ experience and reporting.* The EIC and EIT intend to put in place arrangements to share data and jointly report on innovative startups and SMEs they support and the KPIs and other measures of impacts achieved. In particular, common datasets of supported companies should be developed.
- *Identifying new opportunities for collaboration and synergies:* the EIC, EIT and its KICs, should continuously search for additional areas and modalities of cooperation in order to enhance overall impacts, for example in Prizes. Where possible, pilot actions should be designed and swiftly implemented to test new forms of collaboration.

E- Modalities of Cooperation

In application or in addition to the principles listed in part D of this MoU, cooperation between the EIT and the EIC intends to follow the following guidelines:

- Cooperation between the EIT Governing Board and the EIC Advisory Board:

The two Boards intend to establish a permanent joint Working Group composed of at least three members of each Board with mandate to oversee implementation of complementarities, identify opportunities for stronger cooperation, and report to both Boards. At least once per year, a joint meeting at the level of the Presidents/

Chairs is envisaged. Each Board should provide advice regarding strategy and implementation to reinforce synergies and complementarities.

In case of disagreements at operational level, the joint Working Group and ultimately Presidents/Chairs of Boards should propose a common solution in line with the respective objectives, instruments and decision making processes. The relevant DGs should be kept informed.

The two Boards intend also to interact and collaborate regarding their respective roles in the EIC Forum, to be established under Horizon Europe, the EIT Stakeholder Forum and relations with Member States.

- Cooperation between the EIT, EIT KICs and the EIC:

In its role in assessing the EIT KIC business plans, the EIT intends encouraging KICs to collaborate with the EIC and expect KICs to include collaborative actions with EIC in their business plans, including cross-KIC cooperation mechanisms.

A cooperation mechanism should be set up between the EIT, the EIC Taskforce/future Executive Agency responsible for the EIC, DG RTD and DG EAC at Director's level to cover the full range of operational tasks requiring cooperation as indicated above. This mechanism could set up adequate working groups requiring more in depth cooperation. Moreover, the EIC representatives should be regularly (at least twice a year) invited to the EIT KIC Forum consisting of the EIT Director, EIT KICs' CEOs and the European Commission observer (DG EAC).

Additional mechanisms should be based on the arrangements provided for under the Letter of Intent (LoI) signed on 24 September 2020 between the first wave of three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy) of the EIT and the EIC Task Force. Such arrangements should be extended as soon as possible to all EIT KICs. The EIT should ensure coordinated inputs and feedbacks from KICs and encourage the other KICs to enter in a similar arrangement with the EIC.

The EIC should ensure that its Programme Managers interact with the EIT and the KICs, which are relevant for their portfolios, in support of the objectives and areas of collaboration foreseen in this Memorandum.

- Cooperation between the EIT, the EIC Taskforce/Executive Agency and other Commission services (in particular DG EAC and DG RTD):

The EIT and the EIC Taskforce/ Executive Agency supporting the EIT Governing Board and EIC Advisory Board should prepare and implement decisions taken in the context of the agreed cooperation mechanisms. The secretariats should also ensure close cooperation between the respective communication teams and operational

structures of the EIC and EIT. The Commission competent services, in particular DG EAC and DG RTD, should be consulted and kept informed.

F- Joint Communication

The EIC and EIT Boards intend to develop and keep updated a vision for the cooperation between EIC and EIT and its KICs within Pillar III of Horizon Europe, in order to show the complementary support they offer to stakeholders.

This vision should be promoted by all members of the respective Boards, including in cross participation in EIC and EIT sponsored events and conferences.

Specific information material should be prepared to communicate to innovators across Europe about the opportunities available to them from the EIC and EIT and to support their decision making in applying for funding or other support. Such communication should be innovation friendly and position the support along the different stages of innovation and business development.

G- Implementation

Both Boards should be regularly updated on implementation of this Memorandum. This includes the implementation of the pilot actions, funded under the EIC Work Programme 2018-20, for grants to four EIT KICs to test new collaboration mechanisms between the EIT KICs and the Enhanced EIC Pilot in support of the Green Deal and other Union policy priorities. This also concerns activities developed under cooperation agreements/ Letters of Intent between KICs and the EIC.

The activities under this Memorandum should be funded through the respective budgets of the EIC and EIT in line with their respective objectives and decision making processes, while avoiding double funding.

Coordination should be ensured with the “Innovation Ecosystems” part of the “Innovative Europe” pillar of Horizon Europe, with other parts of Horizon Europe, and with other EU programmes.

H- Period of validity and Reviews

This Memorandum of Understanding should be valid for the duration of Horizon Europe Framework Programme (2021-2027). It should be reviewed by the end of 2021, taking notably into account the entry into force of the Horizon Europe and EIT legislation and the establishment of the full EIC Board, and at regular periods thereafter.

As a legally non-binding document, this Memorandum of Understanding is subject to the overall EU legal framework, in particular Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council,

the future Framework Programme Regulation and the future EIT Regulation. Consequently, nothing in this Memorandum can be interpreted in a way that is contrary to these legislations.

Signatures

In the presence and under the leadership of Commissioner Mariya GABRIEL, EC Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

In the presence of Ms Signe RATSO, Deputy Director General of DG Research and Innovation and Ms Viviane HOFFMAN, Deputy Director General of DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture.

In Brussels, the 8th of January 2021.

Gioia GHEZZI



**EIT Governing
Board
Chair**

Martin KERN



**EIT
Director**

Mark FERGUSON



**EIC Advisory
Board Chair**

Jean-David MALO



**EIC – Task Force
Director**