



*[Draft - Version 29 June 2022]*

4<sup>th</sup> plenary Meeting - 7 June 2022 –Norway

## EIC Board - 5<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

6-7 September – Brussels

### Meeting document N.02

#### 1. Welcome and approval of minutes

Mark Ferguson, the EIC Board Interim Chair, welcomed all members of the Board present (apologies from Bruno Sportisse), and the European Commission and EIC & SMEs Executive Agency representatives.

The agenda was adopted and the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, 29 April 2022 were approved.

The Chair debriefed on his call with Commissioner Gabriel and on the request from MEP Ehler for input for the European Parliament report on EIC.

The Chair invited the secretariat to remind Board members about the Conflict of Interest requirements and to update their declarations on new appointments/ roles.

#### **Decisions/ Follow up:**

It was agreed that the Working Group on the EIC Fund would meet to provide an input to MEP Ehler (Secretariat to organise meeting).

All Board members to update the Secretariat on any new appointments/ roles.

#### 2. Overview of latest developments

Anna Panagopoulou, Director DG R&I presented the latest developments in the ongoing work on the new European Innovation Policy. She summarised the feedback received from around 100 stakeholders and welcomed the role of the Board's inputs and ongoing support for the policy development. She informed that the expected date of adoption by the College is 5 July 2022 and thanked the availability of members of the Board (Kinga, Bart) to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> party

validation event, planned for 6 July in Brussels. She also welcomed the participation of Board members in the working groups of the EIC Forum.

Members of the board asked about the role of innovation procurement in the new European Innovation Policy, as it was not mentioned in media reporting. Ms Panagopoulou informed members that the policy was still under development and so media reports are not accurate.

Vicky Kefalas, Carsten Dreher, Špela Stres, Anita Traaseth commented on their participation in the EIC Forum WGs, and the Board confirmed its continued support and participation in the EIC Forum WGs meetings and suggested that the EIC Forum could play a more significant role in the general innovation policy advice given.

Jean-David Malo presented the latest developments in the EIC implementation, in particular the Fast track and Plugin schemes. The Board welcomed the progress, but highlighted the need for greater participation of widening countries in the Plug In.

Radoslav Georgiev presented his assessment of recent developments in VC financing where there is a wide consensus that the current downturn in investments and valuations of deep tech companies is likely to be severe and prolonged. Board members broadly agreed with this assessment and highlighted that this will mean that EIC funding and particularly equity is more important than ever. It was proposed that the EIC should launch a communication campaign in September, linked also to the EIC Fund becoming fully operational.

**Follow up:**

Secretariat to circulate information when available about the new innovation agenda communication and the third party validation event (to which all Board members are welcome to participate).

Working Group on communications to propose communication actions to position the EIC in the context of the investment downturn, for discussion at the September Board meeting.

Working Group on widening to discuss increasing participation in the Plug In scheme. Secretariat to circulate the list of programmes certified for Plug In so far.

### **3. EIC Fund**

Head of Unit for Innovation Policy and Access to Finance informed the Board on the EIC Fund latest developments, including the first meeting of the EIC fund board under the new rules, the new advisory agreement with the EIB who are now contacting all the companies selected in 2021 to undertake the due diligence process, and progress in appointing a Fund Manager. In advance of this appointment, the Commission can authorise investment decisions if there is a high urgency, and the first such investment decision is expected in the coming days.

Head of Unit for Innovation Policy and Access to Finance highlighted the different roles that the Fund manager, the EIC fund and the EIB will play, including the investment committee, a potential advisory committee with specialised expertise, and appointment of representatives on the Boards of some of the companies where the EIC fund invests. The arrangements still needs to be finalised by a new Commission Decision for the transition phase, and the discussion of the long term solution structure is still ongoing.

Board members continued to have high concerns about delays in funding for the 2021 cohort of companies and asked about precise dates for the first investments. Mr Inotai informed that the first investment will happen in the coming days with other investments to follow quickly once the Fund Manager is appointed and the EIB completes the due diligence.

The Board welcomed the proposal for an Advisory Committee which should include members with specialist expertise in early stage, deep tech investments. The Board recommended 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.

**Follow up:**

Secretariat to provide timely information when available on implementation of the transition for the EIC Fund and timelines for investments.

Working Group on the EIC fund to further discuss and advise on the long term solution, including the role of a potential advisory committee and links to the EIC Board and executive to ensure coordination of Grant + Equity, i.e. on stop shop.

#### **4. Development of EIC Work Programme 2023**

Following the orientations endorsed at the previous Board meeting, the Head of Unit for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) presented an overview of the identification process of challenges for EIC funding, as well as progress in developing other novelties: the innovation internship scheme (including discussion with ERC and EIT joint working groups), the options for EIC public procurement scheme (following an ad-hoc meeting with Board members) and a revised approach of Business Acceleration Services (BAS).

Board members discussed in-depth the proposed new elements for the EIC WP 2023. The Board supported the need for more focused challenges, stressing that technology sovereignty considerations should be taken fully into account.

The Board discussed and recommended that the internship scheme should focus on doctoral/postdocs, and could be supplemented by a scheme managed by EIT focusing on masters/students; to consider a longer duration (flexibility up to 6 months rather than 3 for more meaningful experience); to ensure startups offer a meaningful experience (e.g. working with CTO); and the need to support startups to prepare the internship and onboard the intern. It was highlighted that IP issues need to be resolved in advance, with one option to have a simple rule that IP generated rests with the company. In addition, there is a need to market the scheme to universities, and to consider renaming as a 'talent' scheme rather than 'internship'.

The members of the Board discussed possible EIC actions on procurement. It was stressed that procurement can be critical to company growth, that lessons can be learnt from national schemes (e.g. Swedish I capital network and new Norwegian innovative procurement schemes). The different proposals were all supported, together with the possibility to combine ideas in a single scheme/approach (e.g. to offer direct funding to implement innovation for a contracting authority, to provide a certification to facilitate uptake by other procurers, and to link to challenges).

The Board welcomed the proposed more decentralised approach to Business Acceleration Service. It was recommended that this new approach should be designed to empower the user (the startup) and allow more flexibility in selecting coaches (not just from their own country).

The Members of the Board endorsed the approach taken for the selection of challenges. However, further work is needed on how challenges are defined, not just for selecting thematic areas but specific goals that will be different in nature in pathfinder, transition, and accelerator.

#### **Decision and Follow-up**

The Board broadly supported the proposed Innovation internship scheme. This will be discussed further in the EIC-EIT WG.

The members of the Board gave strong support for EIC action on procurement and to the new approach to BAS.

The Board gave broad support for the approach taken in the challenges selection. The Secretariat will circulate a full slide set on potential challenges for possible comment.

The September Board meeting will discuss outstanding points for the 2023 EIC Work Programme including the selection of challenges and budgets. To prepare for this the Secretariat will prepare an overview of the EIC instruments and budgets.

### **5. EIC Board strategy – KPIs**

As a follow-up of the discussions held at the Paris (March) and Brussels (April) meetings, Mark Ferguson presented a proposed publishable document capturing the main strategic goals and mature KPIs. The document was agreed, subject to agreed amendments on the KPIs for market leverage, and timelines for investment decisions.

#### **Decision and Follow-up**

The Board approved the document for publication with minor changes.

The Secretariat to prepare first reporting on strategic goals and KPIs for the September meeting.

### **6. Recommendations on widening participation**

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. Together with other members of the group, the state of play of the different WG tasks and next steps were presented.

Board members welcomed the progress and supported the recommendations for next steps, in particular to engage further to assess possibilities with the Structural Funds. A meeting with the relevant DG staff for structural funds would be explored.

The Board also called for a significant simplification of the full application stage for the EIC Accelerator, for example by setting a target for a major reduction in the number of pages.

**Follow-up:**

The Widening WG to follow up on the recommendations, including on synergies with Structural Funds, and to present to the next meeting.

Secretariat to follow-up on the simplification of application forms.

**7. Experience so far EIC Programme Managers**

Jean-David Malo and Head of Unit for the EIC Board & Strategy (EISMEA) presented, the experience so far with Programme Managers covering their roles in: strategic intelligence and identifying future challenges, selection and management of projects funded under EIC challenges, proactive management of ongoing projects and portfolios, outreach and visibility.

The Board recognised the progress made in recruiting and defining the roles of PMs. Members advised that Programme Managers need to be widely networked and “go to” person for their areas. Members also advised that programme manager positions should lead to high level career paths after they leave, and that a more attractive title than “programme manager” should be considered. Members noted some areas which lack a Programme Manager, including FemTech/female health and crypto/Web 3.

**Decision and Follow-up**

The Board will meet with Programme Managers for a full discussion at the September meeting in Brussels.

**8. Wrap-up and conclusions**

The Secretariat, outlined the arrangements for the next Board meeting on 7 September, including a dinner on 6 September, a meeting with Commissioner Gabriel and with the EIC Programme Managers. The date of the final meeting of the year, back to back with the EIC Summit, will take place on 9 December.

The chair and Board members thanked Anita Traaseth for hosting the meeting and the networking dinner with Norwegian EU/EIC stakeholders

## List of participants

### Board members

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

### *Apologies:*

- Bruno SPORTISSE

### European Commission - DG Research & Innovation

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

### 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)
- *Policy Advisor – EIC Board* (Remote)
- *Policy Advisor – EIC Board*
- *Policy Advisor*