



European Institute of
Innovation & Technology



INNOVATION MODEL



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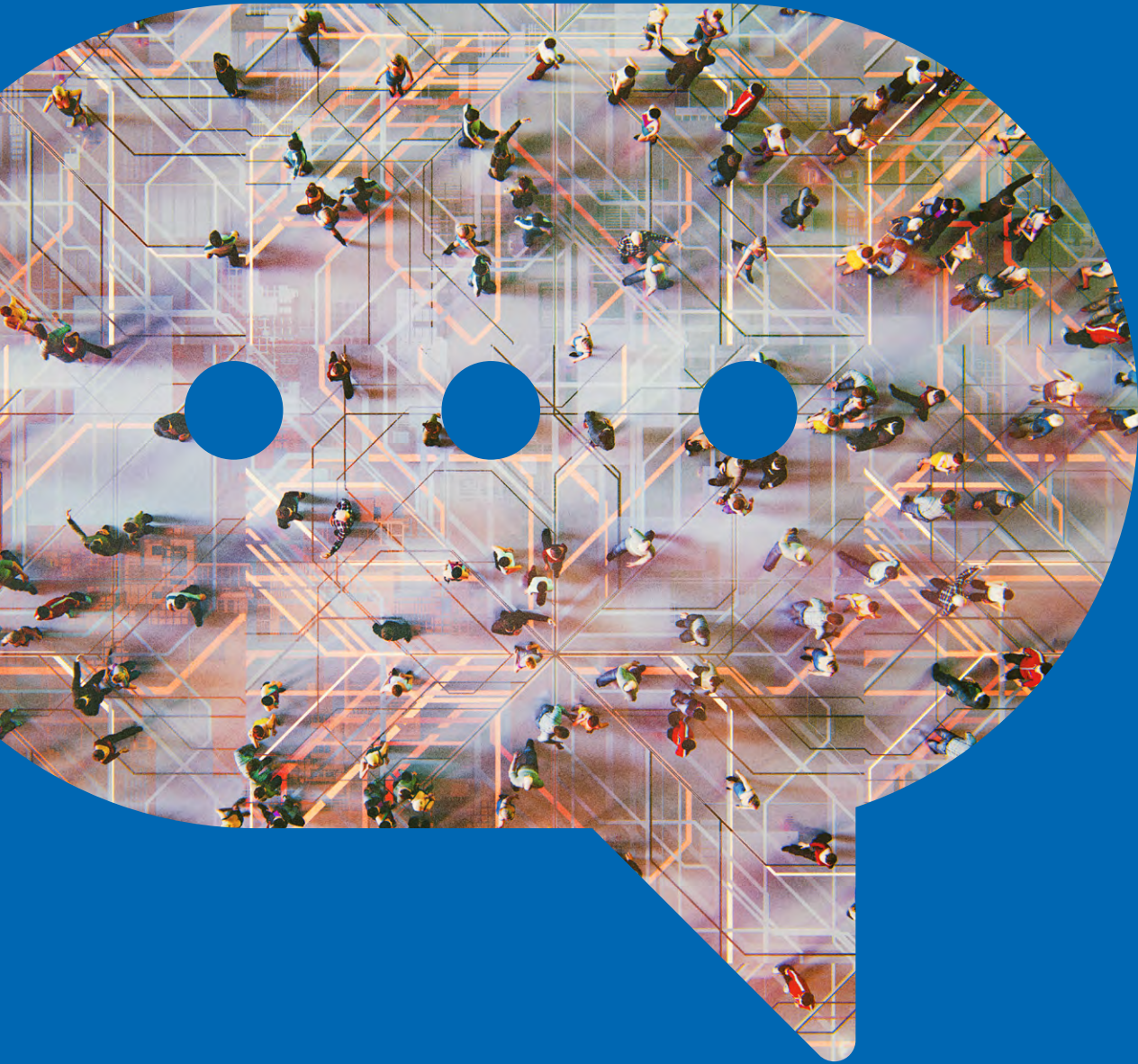
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INTRODUCTION

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an independent EU body that was created to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate. The institute is a unique initiative that drives innovation by bringing together organisations from the business, higher education and research sectors to find solutions to pressing global challenges.

The EIT Community, Europe's largest innovation ecosystem, has set up an environment that is conducive to powering innovation by connecting innovators with relevant organisations. In our ecosystem, we offer three main pillars of support: entrepreneurial education, developing innovative projects and business creation and acceleration. We support the development of dynamic, long-term European partnerships. These partnerships are called EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) and each is dedicated to finding solutions to a specific global challenge, from climate change and the need for sustainable energy sources to encouraging healthy living and sustainable food production.

UNDER HORIZON EUROPE THE EIT WILL ALSO EXPAND ITS ECOSYSTEM AND INNOVATION SUPPORT TO NEW SECTORS BY CREATING NEW EIT KICS

Since 2010 we have launched eight EIT KICs. We began with EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy in 2010, adding EIT Health and EIT RawMaterials in 2014 and EIT Food in 2016. In 2018, the two latest KICs were set up: EIT Manufacturing and EIT Urban Mobility.

Under Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, the EIT will also expand its ecosystem and innovation support to new sectors by creating new EIT KICs. One will be launched in the field of cultural and creative sectors and industries, with a Call for Proposals in 2021, and another one will be launched in the area of water, marine and maritime sectors and ecosystems.

Is this an opportunity for you as an innovator, with your partners, to work with or learn from us? In this document you will be provided with some helpful background information on the EIT and our activities and achievements, as well as insights into how a successful EIT KIC works.

Like any ecosystem in nature, we are susceptible to a variety of elements, and maintaining an ecosystem in an ever-changing world is not easy; we have to work hard, think big, plan, adjust and deliver results. The EIT Community is committed to taking our innovation ecosystem to the next level – to create an atmosphere where innovation flourishes across Europe and beyond. Come and join us and make innovation happen!



INNOVATING WITH THE EIT

Today we face major societal challenges that greatly concern citizens, such as global warming and the climate disruptions that follow from it, the need for a sustainable, green energy supply, opportunities and challenges brought by digital transformations and health risks such as pandemics and demographic change. When tackling these challenges, opportunities brought by innovation and entrepreneurship are part of the solution. The EIT boosts innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe with one simple idea: through diversity, there is strength.

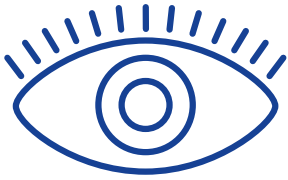
Europe is very well placed to grasp these opportunities, with its wealth of top universities, strong companies and excellent research organisations, along with a pool of well-educated and skilled individuals and highly innovative start-ups. However, translating this strong basis in terms of organisations and individuals into real solutions to societal challenges with a global impact requires a different kind of innovation, focused on inspiring one another and finding new ways to collaborate for common objectives – and that is where the EIT comes in.

The EIT Community is a rich and diverse innovation ecosystem, with a tried and tested innovation model that has delivered lasting results and solutions to some of the world's most difficult challenges. The EIT Community is ready to expand and grow its network to include more partners, enabling them to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of the EIT's proven innovation model.

WHAT IS THE EIT?

The EIT was created in 2008 to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT delivers a pipeline of cutting-edge solutions and talent and the supporting environment for innovation to thrive. Together with its multidisciplinary ecosystem with partners from business, education and research, the EIT Community provides opportunities for students, innovators and entrepreneurs across Europe. The EIT is an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

THE EIT COMMUNITY IS A RICH AND DIVERSE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM, WITH A TRIED AND TESTED INNOVATION MODEL



OUR VISION IS TO:

Become the leading European initiative that empowers innovators and entrepreneurs to develop world-class solutions to societal challenges and creates growth and skilled jobs.



OUR MISSION IS TO:

Increase Europe's competitiveness, its sustainable economic growth and job creation by promoting and strengthening cooperation among leading business, education and research organisations.

The EIT Community is characterised by a focus on results and an ambition to achieve a long-lasting impact in the way the EU approaches and manages innovation. It is therefore critical that its KICs are able to demonstrate substantial impacts at the socioeconomic level over time, and progress towards achieving their mission and objectives.

The EIT harvests intellectual, human, material and financial resources to create valuable outputs such as innovation communities, high-quality curricula, start-ups and innovative products, services and technologies, through which it develops and sustains value-added business and enhances the competences necessary for innovation and entrepreneurship and for developing solutions to major societal challenges.

The EIT, through its KICs, aims to create the following impacts:

- **technological/economic/innovation impacts**, by influencing the creation and growth of businesses and the creation of new innovative solutions to address global challenges, creating direct and indirect jobs and mobilising additional public and private investments;

- **scientific and educational impacts**, by strengthening human capital in research and innovation, enhancing innovative and entrepreneurial skills at both individual and organisational levels and fostering the creation and diffusion of knowledge and innovation openly within society;

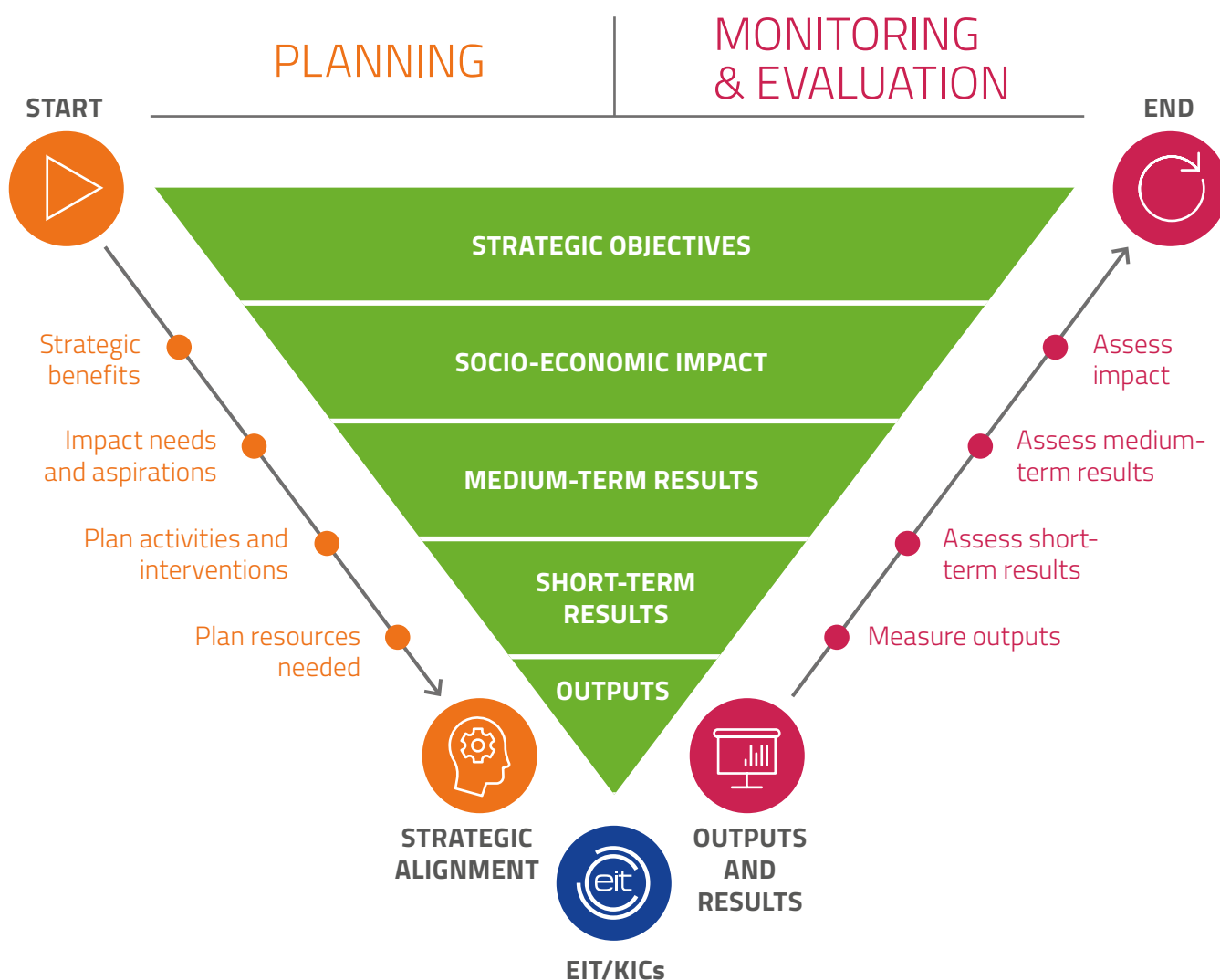
- **societal impacts**, including impacts derived from the delivery of systematic solutions within and beyond the EIT community, including through cross-KIC activities ⁽¹⁾, by addressing EU policy priorities in the fields of climate change (such as mitigation, adaptation and resilience), energy, raw materials, health, added value manufacturing, digital transformation, urban mobility, food, culture and creativity, and water, through innovative solutions, through engagement with citizens and end-users and by strengthening the uptake of innovative solutions in these areas in society.

This EIT approach to building a systemic impact is aligned with and contributes to the Horizon Europe impact pathways approach. Along with its inherent commitment to maximise impact, the EIT has developed an impact framework that is aligned with Horizon Europe's key impact pathways in order to further strengthen its impact-focused approach. The EIT's impact

1) These activities are aimed at enhancing cooperation and synergies between KICs, foster a more interdisciplinary approach and create a critical mass among KICs to tackle topics of common interest.

framework defines the socioeconomic impacts that the EIT and KICs will deliver by 2027 and demonstrates their strategic alignment with the EIT mission and high-level objectives. It underpins the [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021–2027](#) (EIT SIA 2021–2027) and is closely aligned with Horizon Europe’s societal and economic/ technological impact pathways. The EIT impact framework serves as a foundation for greater accountability, innovation and learning. It sets out a solid basis for performing impact evaluations in a systematic manner, supported by robust

evidence, as well as a basis for the EIT’s results-based investment approach. The impact framework also allows, through an accurate and credible process, the EIT’s contribution to innovation, knowledge triangle integration, economic development and societal challenges to be measured, thus demonstrating the impact of the EIT’s investment. This is particularly important in a context in which policymakers and EU citizens are demanding results and accountability from public investments.



Value of the EIT Impact Framework

The EIT impact framework serves the following critical functions.

- **Impact-led planning.** KICs define in their Strategic Agendas the societal and economic impacts they aim to create, underpinned by key performance indicators (KPIs) and respective sources of verification (as defined in the impact framework). Milestones based on the KPIs included in the impact framework are established during key phases of the KIC Strategic Agendas to ensure that progress against KIC strategic goals is clearly measured and, when needed, corrective actions are considered.
- **Performance monitoring.** Data is collected, analysed and monitored for each level in the impact pathway – that is, data on outputs, then short-term and medium-term results and, finally, impact data – to be able to assess and demonstrate the contribution of a particular intervention to systemic changes later on. The data is employed to assess whether the performance of the activity,

EIT and KIC is on track or whether changes/ interventions to the activity plan are needed to ensure that the envisaged systemic impact is achieved at a later stage. In addition, collecting data at each of the lower levels of the impact pathway (i.e. outputs, short-term/medium-term results) provides credible evidence on performance and, crucially, on whether a particular intervention has achieved or is achieving its desired outcomes.

- **Reviews and evaluations.** Data collected against impact indicators serves as the basis for evaluations and impact assessments. In addition, the impact framework ensures a linkage between impact created at the mature phase of the KICs, on the one hand, and their activities and interventions in earlier stages, on the other: the output and results data already collated provides supporting evidence for the impact achieved as a result of earlier activities. This also facilitates the assessment of impact attribution, although other attribution techniques are also applied.



EIT core impact KPIs

EIT Climate-KIC
Accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy

EIT Digital
Drive Europe's digital transformation

EIT Health
Give EU citizens greater opportunities for a healthy life

EIT Food
Lead a global revolution in food innovation and production

EIT Urban Mobility
Smart, green and integrated transport

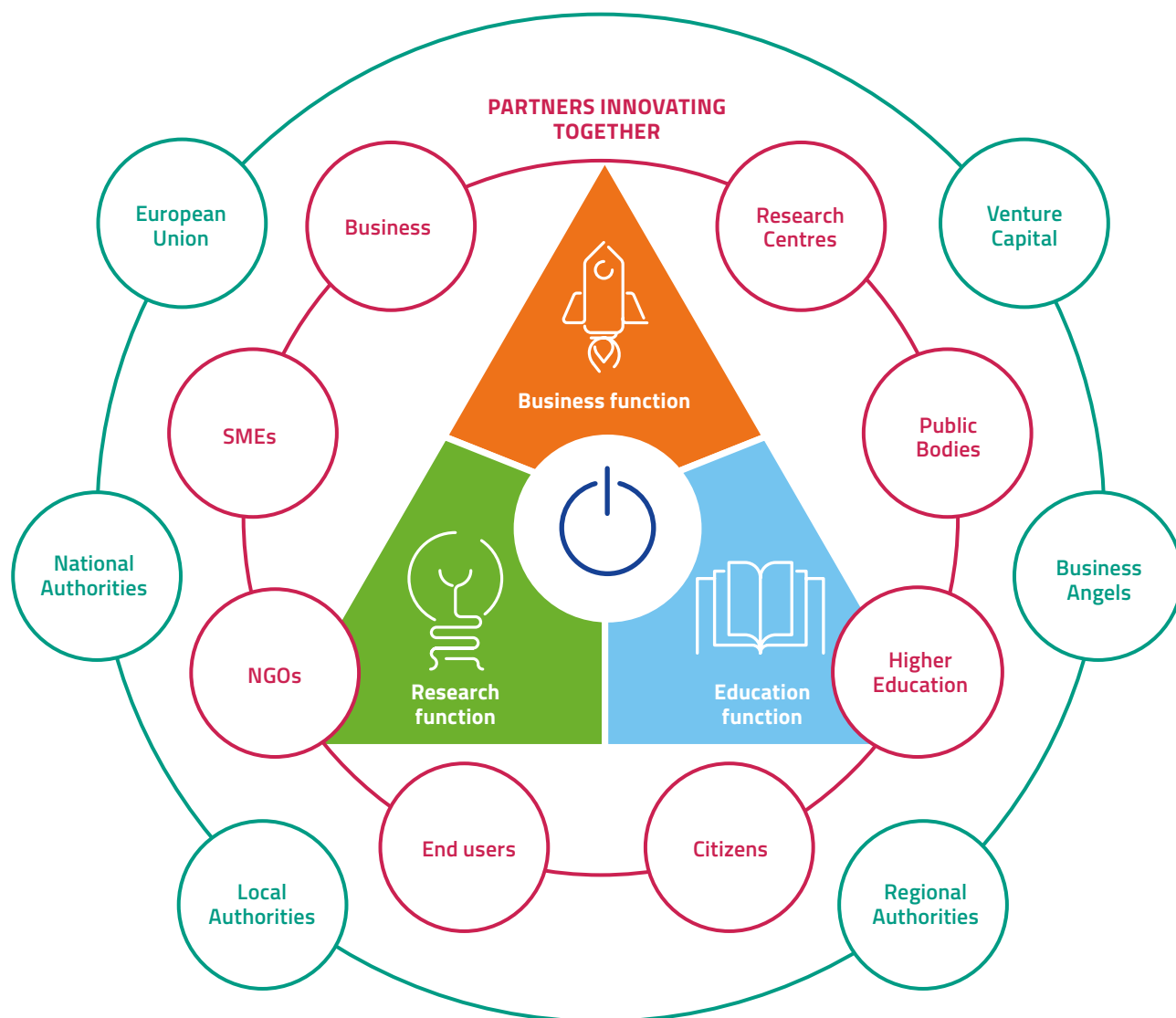
EIT RawMaterials
Develop raw materials into a major strength for Europe

EIT InnoEnergy
Achieve a sustainable energy future for Europe

EIT Manufacturing
Strengthen and increase the competitiveness of Europe's manufacturing industry

EIT Knowledge & Innovation Communities

ENABLING ECOSYSTEM



- **Results-based investment.** The KPIs related to results, an integral part of the impact framework, are used to inform the EIT Governing Board's decisions on future KIC financing allocations. This ensures alignment of the funding mechanism with the results achieved and the KICs' progress towards the long-term strategic targets (impact indicators). Thus, the EIT impact framework streamlines and informs the EIT results-based funding decisions.

The EIT governance model has two levels. The EIT Governing Board, consisting of leaders in business, research and education and an observer representative from the European Commission, provides the strategic direction for the entire EIT Community. It is independent and autonomous

in its decision-making and is responsible for the selection, evaluation and support of the EIT KICs. Under the leadership of the EIT Director, a central, small and efficient team at the EIT guides, monitors and supervises the largely autonomous KICs and manages the funding granted by the EU.

HOW DOES THE EIT WORK?

To strengthen Europe's ability to innovate, action is needed to overcome the fragmented European innovation landscape. The EIT supports multidisciplinary and pan-European partnerships – EIT KICs – that bring together at their core innovative companies, research centres and universities. Together with its leading partners, the EIT Community offers a wide range of education,

innovation and entrepreneurship activities across Europe to power students, innovators and entrepreneurs to turn their best ideas into innovative solutions and products and services that address the needs of citizens. Each KIC focuses on a different societal challenge, ranging from the development of sustainable energy sources to encouraging active ageing or sustainable food production. Each proposes its own strategy, business plan and governance structure. Each uses the central EIT funding as seed money to leverage existing investments and attract investors. Each holistically builds innovation ecosystems through a portfolio of activities addressing the identified societal challenges and integrates Europe's leading players in education, research and business. Ultimately, each delivers results and achieves impact while all activities are designed to become financially sustainable over time.

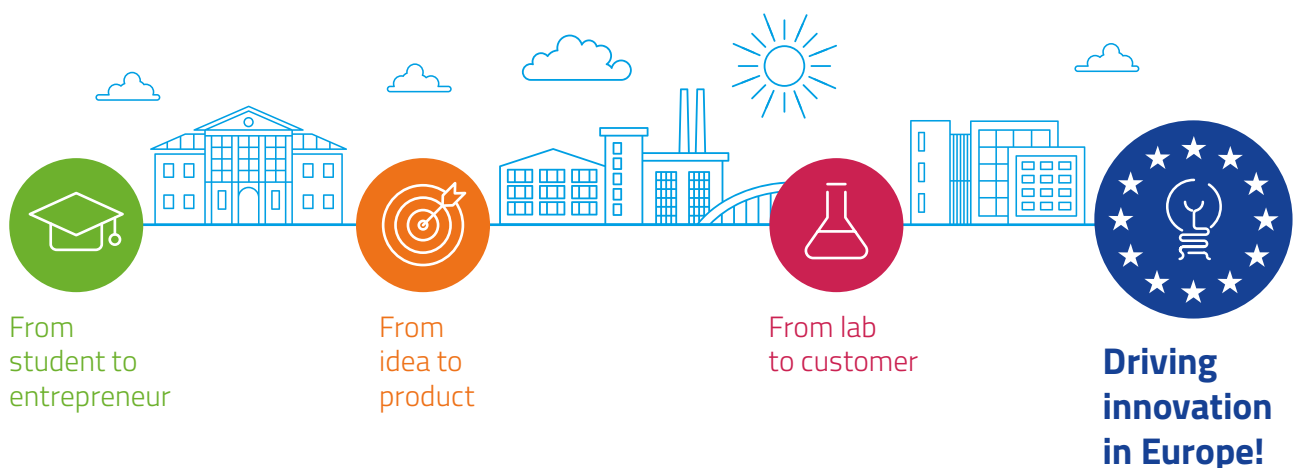
WHAT DOES THE EIT DO?

The EIT was created to drive innovation in Europe. It supports the KICs in becoming financially sustainable, which is a unique feature, aiming to create business- and results-oriented innovation communities. In that context, one aim of the KICs is to develop and implement revenue-creating strategies in order to maintain their innovation ecosystem and knowledge triangle activities beyond the period covered by the partnership agreement.

Thus, with its KICs, the EIT develops and tests new models of how innovation is managed, financed, delivered and sustained in Europe.

To do this, the EIT has created an environment in which innovation thrives, and has generated breakthroughs in the way in which business, higher education and research organisations collaborate. This approach helps in addressing the increasingly complex and interlinked societal challenges set out in Horizon Europe by combining sectoral and cross-sectoral innovation and bringing together people from different sectors, backgrounds and disciplines – who otherwise would not necessarily meet – to jointly find solutions to these challenges by developing innovation projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic and unfolding economic crisis have brought unprecedented changes and challenges to our societies. For its recovery Europe needs strong collaboration, to develop, identify and implement solutions. The EIT had a responsibility to answer these needs, with innovation at the heart of solutions for resolving the crisis. Through the rapid mobilisation of the EIT Community, the EIT delivered short-term innovation projects while pumping long-term investments into Europe's recovery by helping to secure critical funding for start-ups, scale-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that experienced significant difficulties during the pandemic, including loss of capital and customers.



EIT entrepreneurial education

The EIT is unique in that it makes higher education an integral component of a comprehensive innovation strategy. As such, the EIT fosters entrepreneurship in its higher education, research and innovation activities by promoting excellent entrepreneurial education and supporting the creation and acceleration of start-ups and spin-offs. EIT education and training activities at master's and doctoral levels, as well as professional training courses:

- address disciplines with the potential to meet future European socioeconomic needs and to expand the EU's talent base;
- promote the development and/or improvement of relevant innovation, entrepreneurial and leadership skills;
- encourage the mobility of researchers and students;
- foster knowledge-sharing, mentoring and networking among the recipients.

The EIT Community's higher education partners focus on building upon existing excellence in education to provide students, entrepreneurs and business innovators with the knowledge, competences and skills necessary for a knowledge economy and an entrepreneurial, digital and sustainable society. These innovative programmes are based on partnerships between higher education institutions, companies, public bodies, non-governmental organisations and research centres, which collaborate closely and provide transnational and cross-sectorial mobility experiences, as well as applied innovation and entrepreneurship education.

With these objectives in mind, the EIT has developed the [EIT label](#), a quality seal awarded to education programmes fulfilling several criteria covering innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership and creativity learning outcomes, skills and competences. These programmes are based on the principle of knowledge triangle integration, creating partnerships with companies and research centres and ensuring highly integrated and innovative learning-by-doing curricula. In the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) it is

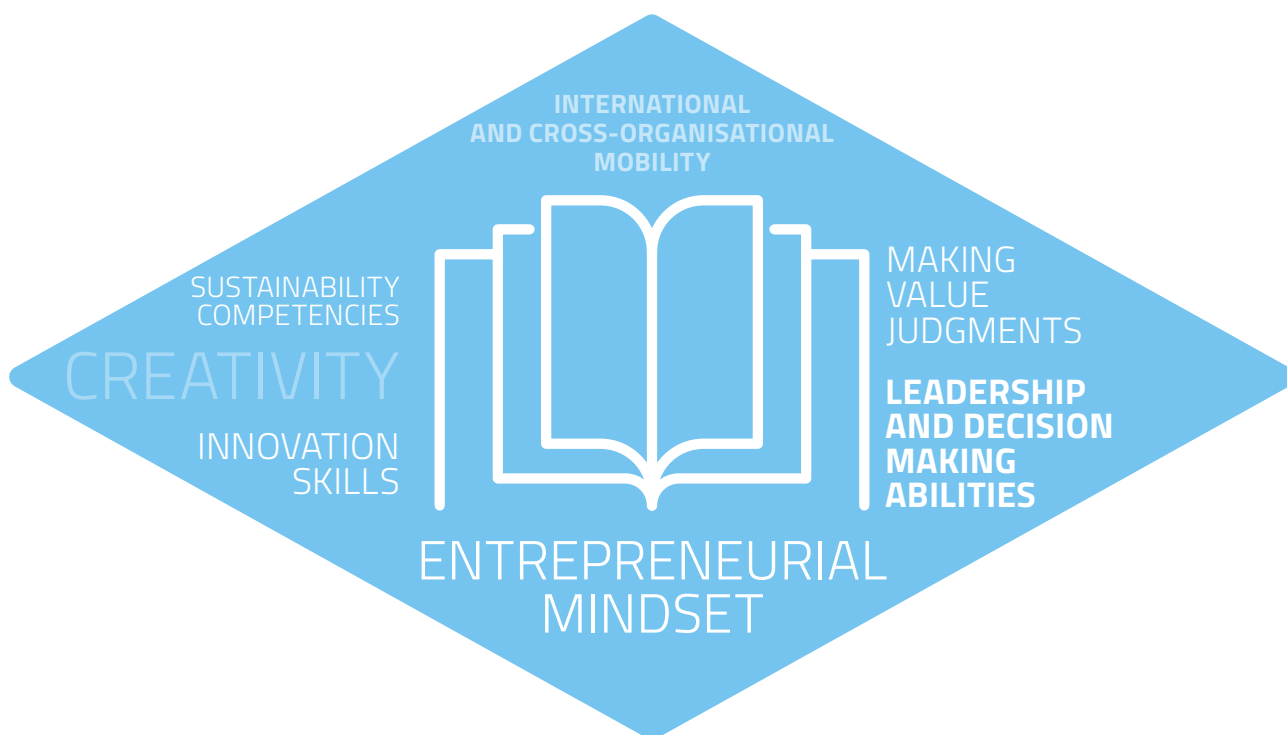
INNOVATION IN ACTION

Dora Palfi, co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of imagiLabs

Dora Palfi, EIT Digital Master School alumni and Women@EIT co-founder, discovered her entrepreneurial aspirations and learned about the practicalities of entrepreneurship during her time on the EIT Digital Master School programme on human computer interaction and design at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden. After completing her studies, Dora went on to develop her business idea and launched the award-winning start-up imagiLabs. Her start-up builds tools to inspire girls to take an interest in and educate them in creative coding.

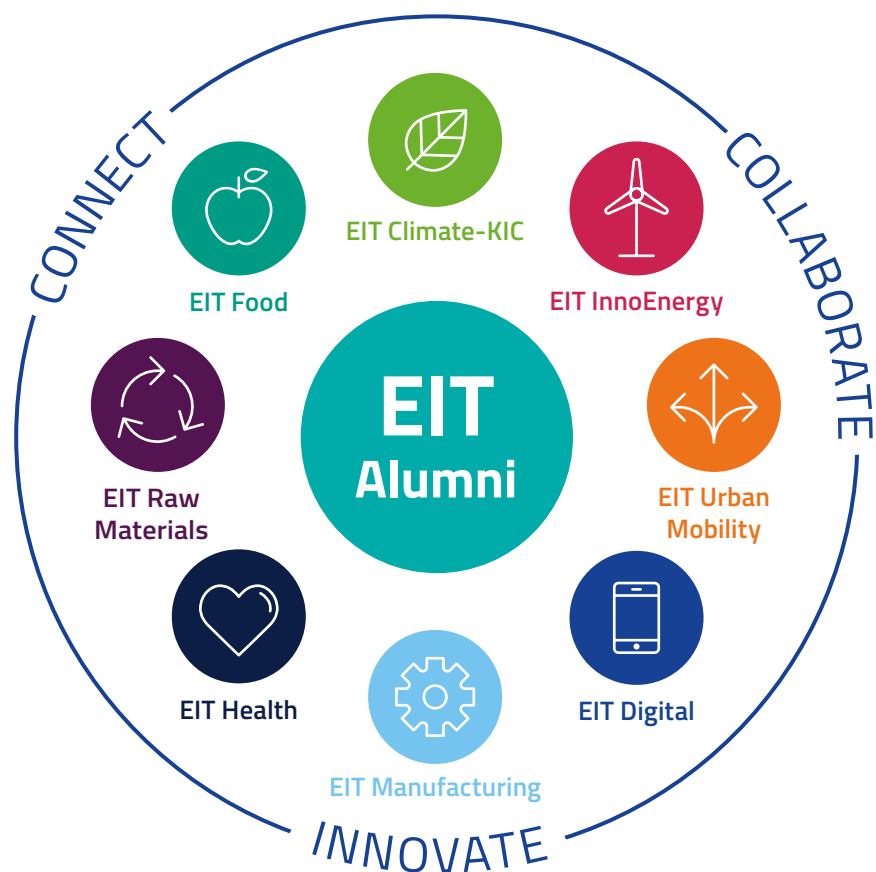
Kristaps Krafte, founder and CEO of Vigo Health

Kristaps Krafte, a graduate of the EIT Health master's programme on innovation in healthcare, and CEO and founder of Vigo Health, gained essential entrepreneurial knowledge while studying for his master's degree. He participated in pitch training, regulatory workshops and medical technology conferences and benefitted from professional experiences, which led him to launch Vigo Health and develop a digital rehabilitation programme for stroke victims. Since graduating, Kristaps has continued the development of his start-up and remained active in the EIT Health alumni network.



anticipated that the EIT label will be extended to lifelong learning activities, such as mentoring, vocational training, skilling, reskilling and upskilling programmes and online courses, involving and reaching out to a wider target group of students, adult learners and institutions, including vocational education and training institutions, beyond the KICs. The application of the EIT label beyond the EIT Community is expected to have a more structuring effect at all levels (individual, programme and institution).

To scale up and promote this positive effect, in 2021 the EIT launched a pilot initiative: 'Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education'. As part of the EIT SIA 2021–2027, it aims to increase the entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of higher education across Europe by promoting and supporting institutional change in higher education institutions and their integration into innovation ecosystems. More specifically, the initiative aims to encourage these institutions to critically assess their own practices and develop concrete actions based on a strategic approach to increase their impact on their respective ecosystems.



EIT Alumni

The EIT Alumni Community is an interdisciplinary and multicultural network of networks, bringing together professionals from different countries and sectors.

All graduates from the EIT Community's entrepreneurial education and business acceleration programmes benefit from being part of the EIT Alumni. This Community brings together entrepreneurs and innovation enthusiasts who share a common vision for creating positive societal impact through innovation and entrepreneurship.

Innovation projects

Innovation is at the heart of all the EIT's activities. From idea to product and service, from student and researcher to entrepreneur, from lab to the market, the EIT is triggering a change towards a more innovative and entrepreneurial mindset in Europe.

The KICs go beyond the basic administration of funding and the facilitation of the co-creation process, especially compared with existing initiatives at EU and Member State levels. They are also characterised by a unique ability to be adaptive and responsive to market and societal trends. The EIT's KICs have facilitation and networking competences that can accelerate the development of innovation, leading to effective commercialisation of research results. Through their pan-European approach, KICs can link innovation stakeholders from specific environments with others. They help spread the dynamics of established ecosystems across Europe, and link up otherwise isolated pockets of excellence in less central regions. The EIT model is well positioned to overcome fragmentation and to encourage activities that, for reasons of market, systems and orientation failures, would otherwise not have happened.

The individual KICs have been given a large degree of autonomy in defining their internal



organisation, composition, agendas and working methods, allowing them to choose the approach and range of activities that are best suited to meet their strategic innovation goals. EIT funding for innovation projects is aimed at supporting

the integration of the knowledge triangle (higher education, research and innovation) in specific innovation projects. These funded activities are, as a general rule, selected by the KICs through open calls.

INNOVATION IN ACTION

Alzheimer's disease prediction service

The Alzheimer's disease prediction service project united leading academic and industry partners from Dublin, Barcelona, Zurich, Lausanne and Amsterdam to develop and market a 10-minute smartphone-based test that can predict Alzheimer's disease before patients show symptoms. EIT Health accelerated the acceptance of the solution on the European market.

Hardt Hyperloop

EIT InnoEnergy supported Hardt Hyperloop in creating a new transport method. The hyperloop is an energy-efficient transport network whose goal is to provide commutable trip times for short- and long-distance travel and direct connections without transfers and intermediate stops, and which is cheaper to build and maintain than high-speed rail. EIT InnoEnergy introduced Hardt Hyperloop to potential partners and provided it with essential funding. Their support helped Hardt Hyperloop to fast-track the demonstration of Europe's first hyperloop test facility.

Business creation and acceleration

The EIT empowers entrepreneurs and innovators to turn their best ideas into products, services and jobs for Europe. Indeed, creating innovation and jobs through fast-growing, innovative firms is one of the EU's key innovation objectives. As such, a cornerstone of the EIT's activities is to support innovation in existing companies and also the creation of new business opportunities. The vital ingredients in fostering entrepreneurial activities are ensuring access to finance and access to new customers and markets and providing support for enhancing business skills.

One of the challenges in business creation and acceleration is how to achieve a shift in the perception and recognition of entrepreneurs in Europe. This is why encouraging entrepreneurs and companies to embrace innovation and take it to the market is among the EIT's top priorities. To this end, the EIT facilitates cross-learning meetings on entrepreneurship and acts as a gate opener as Europe's largest innovation network with

almost 3 000 partners. It has initiated a number of activities in support of the KICs' entrepreneurship activities, notably the [EIT Awards](#).

Through their business creation and acceleration programmes, all KICs offer a range of business support services that help entrepreneurs and innovators translate their ideas into successful, thriving ventures. These services focus on areas such as support for technology, market assessment, access to human resources, access to new markets and customers, mentoring and, last but not least, seed and venture capital through specific KIC innovation funds and investor networks.

The EIT Community's added value stems from supporting entrepreneurs, through the network of EIT innovation hubs and contacts, to develop a clear strategy towards the penetration of the European market (or beyond), breaking the existing fragmentation around national markets and overcoming entrepreneurs' fears of 'going European' or global at an early stage.

INNOVATION IN ACTION

Northvolt

Northvolt is a European supplier of sustainable, high-quality battery cells and systems. Northvolt is also an EIT-powered unicorn with EIT InnoEnergy support and investments totalling EUR 9.3 million. From an initial team of 25 in 2016, today Northvolt employs over 1 000 people and will soon open its third manufacturing facility and laboratory to bring more green batteries to the market and enable the European transition to a clean, carbon-neutral energy future.

Ÿnsect

Ÿnsect is a global leader in farming insects and turning them into premium, high-value ingredients. Founded in 2011, it aims to make insects a major, first-class ingredient in feed for pets, aquaculture and plants. The company offers a natural, long-term solution to the growing global demand for protein. Ÿnsect joined EIT Climate-KIC's accelerator programme in 2015, entering at stage 3 of the acceleration process. This stage allows businesses to get ready for launch by finding customers, development partners or investors. In this final stage, EIT Climate-KIC provided venture development services and EUR 50 000 in financial support.



EIT women entrepreneurship

Equality between men and women is one of the core values of the EU. Gender equality is also a matter of human rights and lies at the heart of the sustainable development agenda for 2030.

Although women are often early adopters of new technology, they are rarely involved in their inception. If technological developments are almost entirely conducted by men, then half of society is not represented in the development process. It is now widely recognised that a more diverse ecosystem leads to better products and services, grants access to new and different experiences, and significantly improves the work environment and company and talent productivity. In addition, young girls' interest and enthusiasm in digital entrepreneurship and leadership are often damaged over time by stereotyping, cultural discouragement, peer pressure and lack of inspiration and role models, resulting in insufficient confidence to engage with entrepreneurship, leadership and technology.

The EIT plays a significant role in supporting the EU's objectives on gender equality. To address the different challenges in this area, the EIT is supporting several initiatives, such as ['Girls Go Circular'](#), an online learning programme on the circular economy, and [Women@EIT](#), a community that aims to empower women in European innovation and entrepreneurship. This empowerment starts with the EIT Governing Board, which is gender balanced, and continues with a set of quotas for the KICs' supervisory boards, and is further addressed in the KICs' Strategic Agenda and dedicated KPIs.

In 2022, EIT KICs will launch a cross-KIC activity on gender entrepreneurship and innovation support. Its purpose is to further improve the gender balance within the EIT Community, to facilitate international growth and scale-up of women-led start-ups and build the future pipeline of women-led start-ups.

EIT Regional Innovation Scheme

Since its establishment in 2014, the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS), which is steered by the EIT and implemented by its KICs, has successfully led to a significant expansion of EIT Community activities to more countries and regions across Europe, contributing to a pan-European spread of EIT Community engagement opportunities and networks. In the upcoming years, the EIT RIS will be significantly enhanced in order to increase the regional impact of the KICs. The scheme is mandatory and an integral part of the KICs' multiannual strategies. EIT RIS activities will continue to support the innovation capacity of countries, and regions in those countries, that are classed as emerging and moderate innovation performers according to the European Innovation Scoreboard, as well as the Outermost Regions, to foster their integration into KICs ⁽²⁾. The EIT RIS will enjoy a significant increase in financial resources, with up to 15 % of the overall EIT funding for existing and new KICs to be invested in EIT RIS activities.

The EIT RIS implementation framework 2022–2027 provides guidance to the KICs on implementing the enhanced EIT RIS and fully delivering on the following objectives:

- improving the innovation capacities of the local ecosystem through capacity-building activities and closer interactions between the local knowledge triangle innovation actors (such as clusters, networks, regional public authorities, higher education institutions, research organisations, vocational education and training institutions, and SMEs) and their activities;
- attracting and facilitating the integration of potential new partners in the EIT KICs and

linking local innovation ecosystems to pan-European innovation ecosystems, including through the establishment of Co-Location Centres (CLCs) and RIS Hubs, as part of a 'place-based' innovation approach;

- using the EIT RIS as a bridge towards relevant national/regional research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3s ³⁾;
- leveraging additional private and public funding, with particular attention to European Structural and Investment Funds.

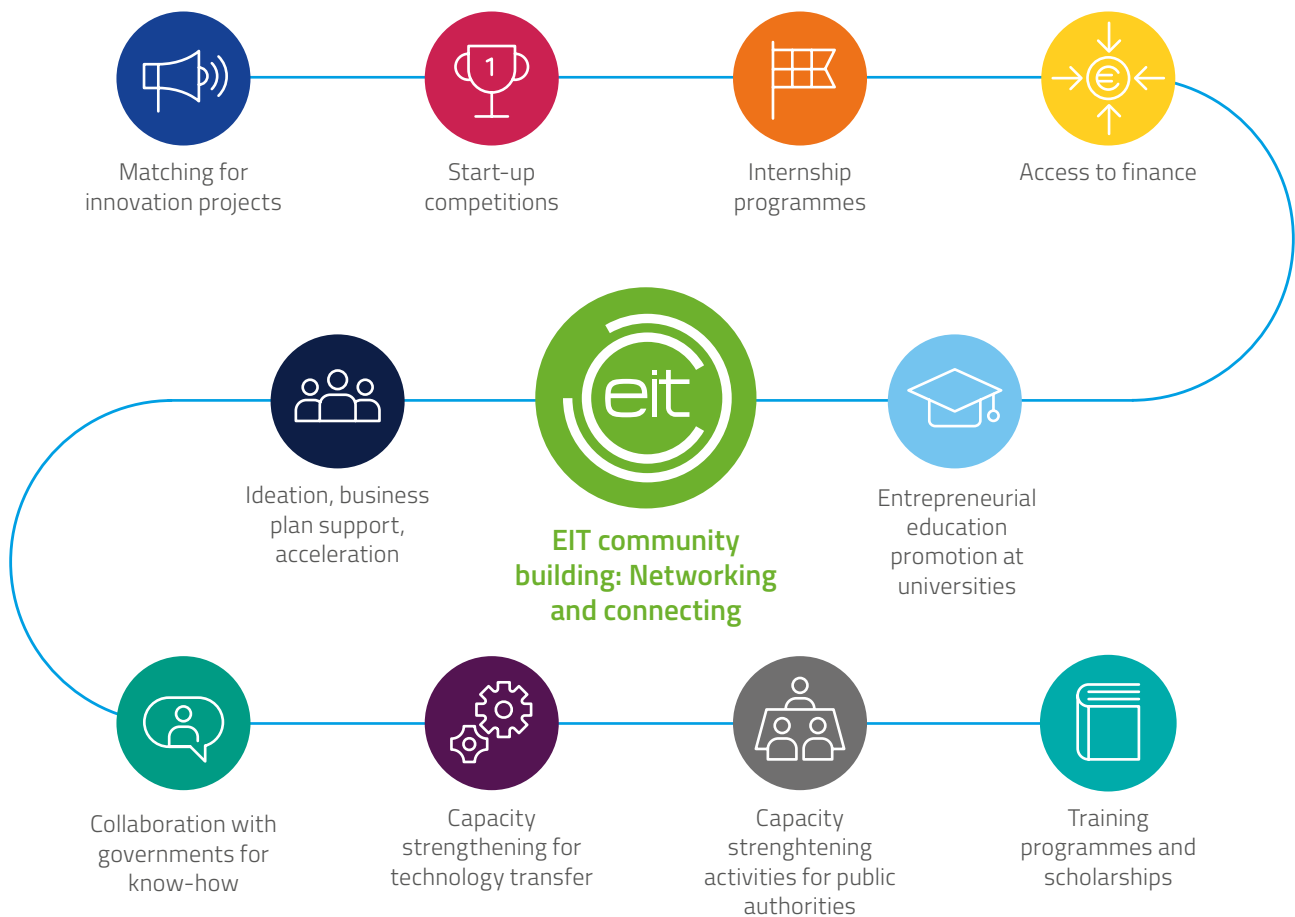
Overall, the implementation framework will ensure that by 2027 the EIT RIS will have contributed to the advancement of the innovation performance of the targeted countries and their regions by strengthening the capacity of their innovation enablers and actors and the linkages among them through the dissemination of the knowledge triangle integration approach. The implementation framework allows the KICs a certain degree of flexibility in designing their own EIT RIS activities that best fit with their multiannual strategies and priorities, as long as these result in the desired tangible deliverables and impact, especially in terms of widening participation in the KICs.

All KICs undertake a place-based innovation approach and engage local organisations to serve as EIT Hubs in EIT RIS countries and regions. Local organisations are selected through an open competitive selection process and are designated to function as EIT RIS Hub for specific KICs. The primary roles of EIT RIS Hubs are to ensure the visibility of the EIT Community, raise awareness of activities and cooperation opportunities for local players representing the areas of education,

2) Countries and regions eligible to participate in the EIT RIS are also fully eligible to participate in all other EIT KIC activities.

3) RISs are integrated, place-based economic transformation agendas that do five important things:

- they focus policy support and investments on key national/regional priorities, challenges and needs for knowledge-based development, including information and communications technology-related measures;
- they build on each country's/region's strengths, competitive advantages and potential for excellence;
- they support both technological and practice-based innovation and aim to stimulate private sector investment;
- they get stakeholders fully involved and encourage innovation and experimentation;
- they are evidence-based and include sound monitoring and evaluation systems.



EIT RIS building blocks

INNOVATION IN ACTION

EIT Health RIS Hub Romania

The Cluj-Napoca EIT Health RIS Hub in Romania, run by FreshBlood HealthTech, is capitalising on the intersections between information technology and healthcare. The EIT Health Hub is now one of the most visible hubs in Romania. It has become a reference partner in health innovation, which was recently confirmed by the Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Chișinău and the Transilvania University of Brașov expressing an interest in collaborating.

EIT Jumpstarter

EIT Jumpstarter is the flagship pre-accelerator programme for central-eastern and southern European countries run jointly by all EIT KICs. It is a highly acclaimed start-up creation programme, winning the award for the best association training initiative at the European Association Awards in 2019 and the young empowerment award at the Emerging Europe Awards in 2020.

business and research, and attract and facilitate the engagement of new participants in EIT KIC activities. EIT RIS Hubs also liaise with the relevant national, regional and local authorities and facilitate the sharing of EIT KIC expertise with them.

International cooperation and global outreach

In its international cooperation and global outreach activities, the EIT, in cooperation with the European Commission, focuses on tackling global challenges, contributing to relevant international initiatives and the United Nations sustainable development goals, and ensuring access to talent and an enhanced supply of and demand for innovative solutions. Thus, the EIT has the vision to become the leading European initiative that empowers innovators and entrepreneurs to develop world-class solutions to societal challenges and create growth and skilled jobs.

To contribute to competitiveness and to reinforce the international attractiveness of the European economy and its innovation capacity, the EIT and its KICs play a crucial role in attracting partner organisations, researchers and students from all over the world, as well as in cooperating with third-country organisations. In line with the EU's strategic priorities, the EIT Community wants to promote international cooperation in research and innovation by creating a strong European brand and forging relations with key partners from around the globe. This allows:

- the EIT to position its innovation model at international level, in alignment with existing EU and Member State initiatives;
- access to the latest knowledge and the best talent worldwide;
- global societal challenges to be tackled more effectively;
- business opportunities to be provided for innovators in new and emerging markets.

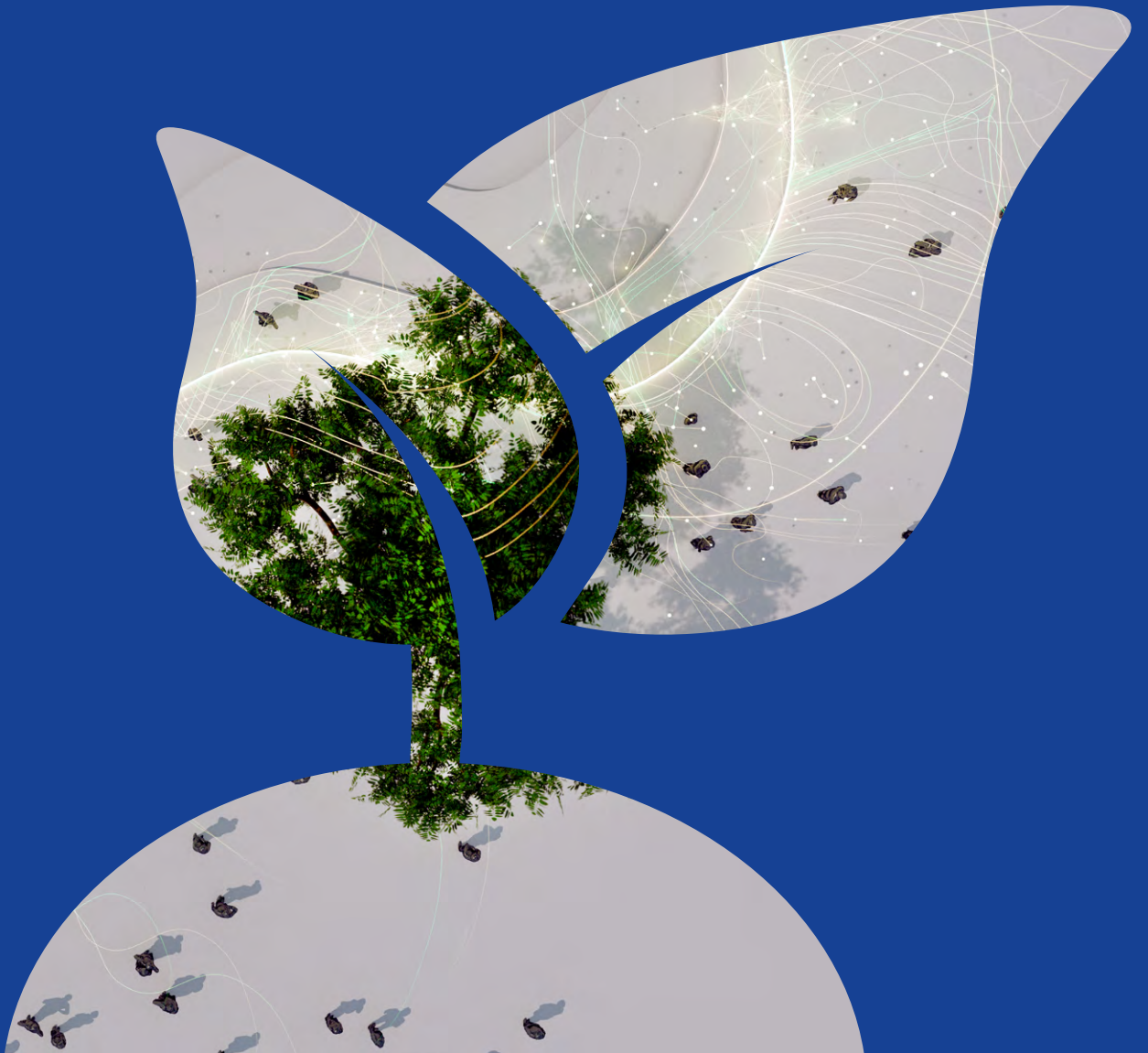
As a result of these global ambitions, two shared EIT Community Hubs have already been established in the United States (Silicon Valley) and Israel (Tel Aviv). The activities of the hubs are in alignment with the strategic framework for EIT Community global outreach activities and are expected to contribute to achieving the overall objectives of the EIT.

INNOVATION IN ACTION

'Disrupt me' programme

The EIT Hub Israel's 'Disrupt me' programme is the leading programme for European corporations that want to engage with disruptive Israeli start-ups. It provides a tailor-made technology scouting service for European corporates seeking to advance their companies with disruptive Israeli technologies and open innovation know-how, and expand their use of cross-sector technology such as artificial intelligence, deep learning and cybersecurity.





KEY FEATURES OF THE EIT MODEL

To strengthen Europe's ability to innovate, action is needed to overcome the fragmented European innovation landscape. This is where the EIT comes in as we bring together excellent organisations from business, education and research, the so-called 'knowledge triangle', to form sustainable, open and dynamic partnerships.

A LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding framework programme for research and innovation, with a budget of EUR 95.5 billion for 2021–2027. Its objectives are to tackle climate change, help achieve the UN's sustainable development goals and boost the EU's competitiveness and growth.

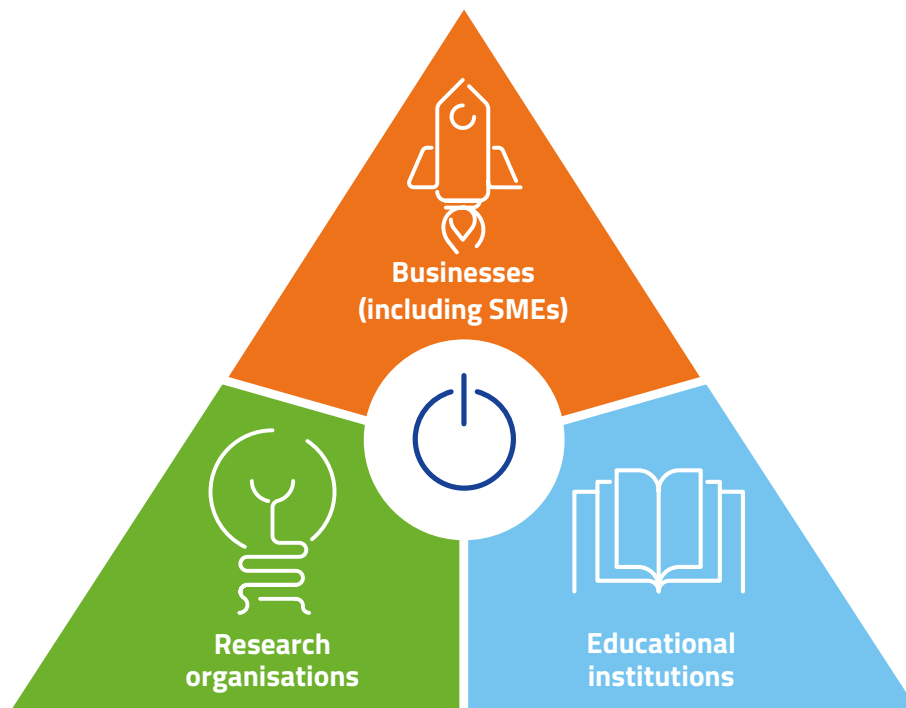
As part of Pillar 3 'Innovative Europe', the EIT contributes to achieving the general and specific objectives of Horizon Europe by:

- strengthening sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe;
- fostering the development of entrepreneurial and innovation skills in a lifelong learning perspective and supporting the entrepreneurial transformation of EU universities;
- bringing new solutions to global societal challenges to the market;
- creating synergies and added value within Horizon Europe.

The EIT's legal basis is the EIT Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2021/819), which sets out its mission, its key activities and the framework for its functioning. The EIT's strategy, priorities, objectives, key actions, activities, mode of operation and expected impacts are presented in the EIT SIA 2021–2027.

Partners in a KIC design a realistic, specific, measurable, achievable and time-dependent strategy to address the concrete challenges posed in their thematic field, accompanied by specific, relevant and measurable strategic objectives. This strategy must be aligned with the EIT's strategic objectives, cover at least 7 years and be based on the overriding principle of knowledge triangle integration, in terms of impact and excellence. It allows partners to commit for a long period of time and ensures that a KIC is able to focus on short-, medium- and long-term objectives, while remaining agile enough to adapt to emerging needs.

The objective of achieving financial sustainability in the long term is a unique feature of the EIT's innovation model, which focuses on a results-oriented and impact-driven approach. In this context, a KIC must develop and implement



a revenue-generating strategy to maintain its innovation ecosystem and activities beyond the period during which the EIT provides financial support through grant agreements.

In pursuing financial sustainability, the KIC should look to diversify its revenues and investment sources by mobilising funds from other public and private sources. The KIC should attract and engage the widest possible range of relevant new partners, while ensuring that the conditions of access to its partnership remain attractive to a wide range of potential partners. The KIC should aim to maximise the share of contributions from public and private sources and the share of income generated by its activities and to pursue and achieve financial sustainability at the latest before the expiry of the Partnership Agreement with the EIT. KICs should act as quasi-investors in, and not mere grant givers to, innovation activities that result in new services, products and start-ups/scale-ups in the market, leading to short- to medium-term revenues for the funding KICs.

KNOWLEDGE TRIANGLE INTEGRATION

The EIT pioneered the integration of the knowledge triangle (higher education, business

and research), and has gradually established itself as a unique instrument addressing societal challenges. The focus on societal challenges through the integration of the knowledge triangle is a distinctive feature of the EIT compared with other innovation instruments.

Knowledge triangle integration is a coordinated process in which the EIT Community inspires, facilitates and empowers innovators with diverse skills and competences to creatively:

- deliver new products, services and business models;
- equip students with the skills to become entrepreneurs;
- create start-ups and accelerate the scaling up of ventures.

Implementation of the knowledge triangle integration model requires representatives of the full spectrum of partners to enter a process of strategic thinking, resulting in a set of clear goals and objectives and pathways to achieve them. Partners need to be committed and willing to adjust their own operations to better integrate with the other sides of the knowledge triangle.





WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY?

A KIC is an integrated partnership, operating within the EIT Community, at the core of which are research organisations, educational institutions, businesses (including SMEs) and other innovation stakeholders such as public authorities or non-governmental organisations, united by the focus on a major global challenge.

Under a joint strategy, this partnership enables long-term collaboration and provides the benefits of a sustainable innovation ecosystem. The partnership focuses on developing innovative products, services and entrepreneurship education in a specific area of its KIC, taking targeted actions to help overcome key challenges in that field. Each KIC operates with its own management and legal structure – autonomously designed with the EIT's support – and has its own clear and measurable objectives defined in business plans to deliver value to citizens and society overall. A KIC is innovation in action. Its work is impact driven and covers the entire value chain from education to research, business creation, demonstration, start-up incubation and scaling up, through investments, marketing, communication and commercialisation. It is a living entity that connects people and organisations – a dynamic partnership that is flexible enough to adapt to the changing realities and innovation opportunities in its sector and the emerging needs and challenges of Europe. Yet it is clearly a part of, and a contributor to, the entire EIT community and embodies the EIT's core values: impact, excellence and partnership.

A successful EIT KIC has the following characteristics.

- **A diverse, open and dynamic partnership.** An open partnership is an essential feature of a KIC and a requirement of the EIT's aim to bring together players from across the knowledge triangle in a balanced and collaborative manner. A high degree of diversity and openness of the partnership enables the best ideas to be identified, these ideas to be quickly validated and those with the highest impact potential to be translated into innovations to be launched on the market for the benefit of citizens. This diversity of partners is also essential as no two companies, universities or research institutes are the same. The people within these bodies are also unique (in terms of their skills, gender, culture, age, experience, etc.). Each partner and individual sees the world differently and has a contribution to make. It is when they work together that the creative sparks of innovation can fly. The combined strength and complementary capabilities of the partners must be greater than the sum of the strengths of the individual partners.

A KIC is an autonomous, open and transparent partnership. The partnership is responsible for setting up the internal organisation and agreements and must be open to new partners by raising awareness among stakeholders and encouraging their participation, and by setting out transparent criteria for external organisations wishing to join the partnership during the lifetime of the KIC.

The size of the partnership may vary during the lifetime of the KIC, usually increasing dynamically after the start-up year. The initial set of partners has a crucial role in defining the core strategic elements of the KIC, successfully establishing its legal and operational readiness, developing the EIT identity and starting to implement its initial activities. To define this process together with the initial partners, each new KIC receives EIT support during the first year through a start-up grant agreement. As the volume and scope of activities grow in the following years, a KIC is expected to expand the partnership to strengthen and diversify, on the basis of excellence and innovation potential, in order to deliver on its strategy.

THE PARTNERSHIP MUST BE OPEN TO NEW PARTNERS BY RAISING AWARENESS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS AND ENCOURAGING THEIR PARTICIPATION

- **A legal entity suited to its needs.** The choice of an appropriate legal entity for a KIC is crucial. It integrates the partners and is the focal point for any interaction between the EIT and the partnership. It is the KIC Legal Entity (KIC LE) that, mandated by the KIC partnership, signs the Partnership Agreement and the annual or multiannual Grant Agreement with the EIT. The CEO is the legal representative of the legal entity.

The legal structure chosen by each KIC reflects the initial commitment of the various partners and its business model. But more importantly, it has a bearing on its performance and long-term commitment. In addition, the choice of legal entity determines the governance structures of the KIC. Whatever the structure, its leading principle must be business-like logic and flexibility to make quick decisions.

The legal entity's size must be proportionate to the size of the partnership, ensuring the smooth management and operation of the KIC in an effective and efficient way. The legal entity must act in the best interests of the KIC, safeguarding its goals, mission and identity independently from the particular interests of individual partners. Some KICs have decided to follow a membership fee model from the beginning, in order to secure other sources of funding. This gives them room for operational flexibility and mitigates cash liquidity risks.

The existing KICs have chosen different legal forms for their legal entity. For example, EIT InnoEnergy is registered as a *Societas Europaea* (SE), EIT Health is registered as an association under German law (eingetragener Verein (e.V.)), EIT RawMaterials and EIT Food are registered as international non-profit associations (the former under German law and the latter under Belgian law) and EIT Manufacturing has been registered as a not-for-profit association under French law (*Association sans but lucratif* – ASBL).

The KIC Legal Entity (LE) represents and manages the KIC and ensures that the KIC delivers and respects the objectives set out in the KIC Strategic Agenda. The KIC Legal Entity must ensure that the KIC partners endorse and implement the Partnership Agreement, cooperate in a coordinated and integrated way and work towards reaching the objectives set out in the KIC Strategic Agenda.

The KIC LE is, in particular, responsible for:

- the preparatory and conceptual work of the KIC (strategy, business plan, financial sustainability, cooperation and coordination, etc);
- monitoring of the partnership and all participants in the Grant Agreements;
- day-to-day coordination and management;
- grant management coordination;
- all communication with the EIT.

● **Top-quality governance and management.**

Bringing together many different partners requires strong governance. The governance and organisation of a KIC should be well thought out, taking the knowledge triangle integration process as a starting point. Within the EIT principles of good governance, a KIC is free to define its own internal organisation and management structure, but experience shows that a strong, lean and flexible management approach is needed to implement a KIC's strategy.

Governance and structure affect how the KIC works centrally, how activities in the field of education, innovation and entrepreneurship are shaped by knowledge triangle partners, and how the Innovation Hubs are integrated into the KIC's wider network.

The KIC should aim to develop a clear structure for collaboration among partners so that the mission of the EIT can be fully achieved. This governance will be the basis for the successful implementation of the strategy and future financial sustainability of the KIC. All KICs should have clear leadership, with a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), supported by an executive team consisting of top management positions such as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Operating Officer (COO). These officers have executive power over the management and finance of the KIC. Experience shows that independence, a clear mandate, and empowerment from the partners are all crucial to give the CEO and the executive

team enough room to manoeuvre. Core staff should have an entrepreneurial mindset and experience in impact investment.

The partners are typically represented in assemblies to strategically steer the partnership. The members of the governance structure must act in the best interests of the KIC, safeguarding its goals, mission and identity, in an independent way. Each KIC and its partners must have a code of good conduct, including a policy on conflicts of interest.

To emphasise best practices and ensure compliance with fundamental principles applicable to public funds, the EIT has set out **good governance principles** in the Partnership Agreement. In particular, the KIC governance and management structure must:

- ensure compliance with the Horizon Europe rules for partnerships, in particular regarding the criteria for the selection, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and phasing out of the partnership;
- reflect diversity, in particular about gender and geographical and professional background;
- reflect diversity in the composition of the KIC, in particular the balance within the knowledge triangle;
- separate ownership and membership from operational management;
- separate the supervisory functions from the operations;
- be of a size that allows the KIC to function in an effective and efficient way;
- separate the decisions on activities, KIC funding schemes and the distribution of funding from their implementation;
- ensure that at least half of the members – including the chairperson – of the body with supervisory functions are independent from the KIC partners;
- be composed of high-quality members who are selected in a transparent and competitive procedure;
- have effective supervision or ownership over the entities with a CLC role.

- **An integrated network of EIT Innovation Hubs (Co-location Centres) and EIT RIS Hubs.**

A KIC brings together organisations from different sectors, countries and disciplines. How is this done concretely? EIT Innovation Hubs or co-location centres are the main instrument for managing activities and knowledge flow.

A ‘**co-location centre**’ (CLC) is a physical hub, established in an open and transparent manner, that promotes links between and active collaboration among knowledge triangle actors. It acts as a focal point for knowledge exchange and enables a KIC’s partners to access local facilities and the expertise needed to pursue their common objectives there.

Each KIC usually has around 5–10 CLCs with partners in close proximity, which is essential to facilitate interaction among members of the regional community. CLCs are the focal points for the KICs’ activity within these areas of focus. These Innovation Hubs build on the existing laboratories, offices and campuses of some of the KICs’ core partners, which serve as clusters for a particular region, discipline

or task. There they bring together people and teams from across the knowledge triangle for ideation, projects and other initiatives.

An **EIT RIS Hub** is a physical hub, established by a KIC and forming part of its structure, in a Member State or in an associated country targeted by the RIS that serves as a focal point for the KIC’s activities and for the mobilisation and involvement of local knowledge triangle actors in the activities of the KIC.

RIS Hubs are a central element of the EIT RIS place-based innovation approach and a crucial tool in supporting the objectives of attracting and facilitating the integration of potential new partners in EIT KICs, addressing the local ecosystem needs in the EIT RIS countries and regions, and bridging the innovation gaps within Europe. RIS Hubs can have a single country focus, a regional focus or a multi-country focus. RIS Hubs may pave the way for the establishment of a CLC in the targeted region.

As part of a KIC’s strategy, which fundamentally includes synergies with other initiatives, the innovation capacity



Key functions of an Innovation Hub

and potential impact of all Innovation Hubs together must be greater than their individual strengths. They give the KIC critical mass on a European scale, forming a continent-spanning network that enables partners to tap into the best talent, ideas and resources. They also give visibility to the EIT brand and EU support. Each of the current KICs has chosen a hub model that is best suited to its strategy. However, the management structure of a hub should also conform to principles of good governance, in particular reflecting the diversity in the composition of the partners (ensuring a proper balance within the knowledge triangle), ensuring an open and high-quality decision-making process, and separating the supervisory function from the operations.

- **A focus on people and talent.** Whether relating to innovation, projects, entrepreneurial education courses or business creation, acceleration and coaching, a KIC puts people at the centre of all its activities. It provides talented individuals with the opportunity to start a company, design a product, launch a service, obtain another degree or advance their careers. It enables them to move – across national borders for new jobs, studies or tasks, or across the boundaries between industrial sectors or academic disciplines. Providing these opportunities is important and this should be reflected in the KIC's management model, its long-term strategy, its drive for excellence and its portfolio of activities.

The EIT can help innovators from the following groups.

Professionals in business, research and other organisations. An EIT KIC can help professionals advance their careers. A KIC partnership lets them develop their creativity, broaden their skills, stay up-to-date with the latest technologies, and network with other professionals from world-class organisations. A KIC provides insights into the latest innovation trends, creating new business

opportunities. Professionals can take part in entrepreneurship-driven courses to stay competitive, obtain business coaching, work across borders and disciplines, or bring their companies' innovation projects to fruition more quickly.

Working in a KIC can offer a creative blast – giving rise to new ideas and new partners and providing access to new facilities and disciplines and cultures. For researchers in universities, a KIC can grant access to corporate laboratories, applied research disciplines and ambitious entrepreneurs to turn ideas into concrete products and services. For researchers in companies, a KIC can broaden networks, bring out new ideas and draw on new disciplines to ensure that research results help bring solutions to the market, address the needs of citizens and make a societal impact.

Higher education institutions. An EIT KIC provides the opportunity for educators to learn how to teach differently, using new technologies, new types of learning through collaboration with business and research, and innovative learning environments. By bringing together education, research and business in the design of entrepreneurship courses, a KIC can help educators trigger the creativity of students. Educators can use the experience within the EIT Community to improve curricula, create new learning formulas and capitalise on the opportunities provided by innovation in order to equip students with the skills and capabilities to address societal challenges through innovation. Through the EIT, higher education institutions can become more entrepreneurial and innovation oriented, and participate in international networks and cooperation.

Entrepreneurs. The EIT Community attracts top entrepreneurial talent in innovation, including start-ups at different stages of maturity, from the early stages through

to seed funding and the scale-up stage. Entrepreneurs can learn from the best in their chosen field and market, and identify and connect with new business partners, investors and clients to turn ideas into sustainable and scalable start-ups. The KICs also offer direct access to the wider European marketplace and customers, to grow businesses internationally. The KICs also provide many high-quality services for entrepreneurs, including mentoring schemes, enhanced access to finance and, most of all, access to the know-how of EIT Community partners and pan-European networks, helping to accelerate the transfer of their ideas to the market.

Students and alumni. Students will find that the EIT Community is built around a new way of approaching innovation and business creation. Thanks to our broad partner base, students can meet professionals from companies, big and small, increasing their chances of landing a job or creating a company. Student training through the KICs reflects the multifaceted reality of innovation and learning by doing. In addition, students meet and are inspired by entrepreneurs, innovators and change agents by joining the EIT alumni community.

- **A sustainable business model and financial plan.** One of the EIT's key features is that each KIC must aim to become financially sustainable within a period of 7–15 years after its designation. From the start, a KIC is expected to have a strong business logic and mindset, with the aim of transforming knowledge and other resources into revenues. Financial sustainability means that a KIC has the capacity to finance its knowledge triangle activities independently of EIT contributions.

EIT funding must be replaced with other sources, both private and public (regional, national, European and international), in particular through

the generation of various revenue streams (return on investments, revenue sharing, licensing, equity stakes in start-ups, commercialising education programmes, selling services and consulting, etc.). Therefore, a KIC must decide what its unique selling proposition will be, what financial assets it can create, what value it can add to the industry sector and what business opportunities could make an impact on the societal challenge and facilitate financial sustainability in the medium term. A market analysis, including how and when to achieve a competitive position in the European and global marketplaces and how to use successful innovation to create revenues, is essential.

A KIC IS EXPECTED TO HAVE A STRONG BUSINESS LOGIC AND MINDSET, WITH THE AIM OF TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE AND OTHER RESOURCES INTO REVENUES

The KIC must also plan how to raise capital and attract financing and co-funding for its activities from its partners. As a KIC develops, its financial needs increase – and that has consequences for how the KIC attracts additional funding for its operations. Therefore, the commitment of partners, including financial support from the beginning, is crucial.

The EIT financial contribution is allocated so that it supports KICs' long-term strategies while rewarding their excellence, impact ambition and implementation in the medium term. As set out in the EIT Regulation, the EIT contribution to the KICs gradually decreases over time in compliance with the funding rates defined in the EIT SIA 2021–2027, as follows.

	Start-up	Ramp-up	Maturity	Exit from EIT grant
Years	1*-4	5-7	8-11	12-15
EIT funding rate	Up to 100%	Up to 80%	Up to 70%	50% at year 12, decreasing by 10 percentage points per annum

Some KIC activities, due to their specific nature, may need extra incentives to be performed. The EIT Governing Board may therefore decide to apply more favourable funding conditions for EIT RIS activities, the EIT's Higher Education Initiative and joint EIT Community activities (cross-KIC).

The EIT KICs and their partner organisations may apply for EU financial contributions, in particular in the framework of EU programmes and funds, in accordance with their respective rules. Such contributions must not cover activities that are already funded under other EU programmes. Contributions from partner organisations for the financing of KICs must be determined in accordance with the funding rates defined in the EIT SIA 2021–2027 and reflect a KIC's financial sustainability strategy.

- **A policy for intellectual property.** An EIT KIC will create valuable new ideas, which can be protected through patents, copyrights or trademarks. A KIC's intellectual property policy defines who owns the results of innovation activities and how they are protected. It also clarifies how successful innovations will contribute to sustain the KIC. KICs must follow the intellectual property (IP) rules laid down in the Horizon Europe Regulation and the relevant provisions included in the Partnership Agreement. These rules provide a flexible approach to the development of detailed rules for intellectual property rights within each KIC. KICs should therefore set their own intellectual property policy for management and exploitation in line with their specific

business models and thematic areas and the unique nature of their collaborations. They should also establish an Intellectual Property Board, responsible for the management of knowledge transfer and intellectual property-related issues. Trusted and easy-to-implement procedures, which are compliant with the legal framework, are essential.

- **Adopt the EIT Community brand.** The EIT Community is a growing, evolving and thriving community that brings together innovators and organisations from the EIT, its KICs and the EIT alumni. The EIT Community brand unites all who innovate with the EIT Community: innovators, entrepreneurs, students, organisations from business, education, research, civil society, authorities and, last but not least, citizens.

Our brand expresses our vision, mission and values, and helps to work towards our common goal of creating the future we want: green, digital, sustainable and healthy societies with a thriving entrepreneurial culture. As the EIT Community brings different members together, it is important that the entire community is consistent in its approach to branding and communication. Building our brand identity helps attract new partners, talented individuals and financial resources. Another way of promoting the EIT Community identity is by instilling its core values in all activities. The EIT Community visual guidelines that present the use of the logo, EU co-branding, brand visuals and brand tone can be viewed here.

- **A plan for communication and stakeholder relations.** If you are innovating with the EIT Community, it is clear that you are set to achieve great things. All great things must be shared! As EIT grants are financed by public funds, all EIT Community beneficiaries are expected to actively engage in communication activities, to promote the projects and to publicly acknowledge the EU support.

Each KIC therefore has a communication strategy in place and develops an annual communication plan focused on its unique way of approaching innovation and entrepreneurship. Communication should focus on what is being accomplished, while emphasising the benefits that the EIT Community brings to its partners, collaborators and citizens. The communication activities should strongly contribute to the development of the EIT Community brand, and the EIT works closely with KICs to coordinate communication activities.

Communication and stakeholder engagement activities of the EIT Community go hand in hand. The EIT model calls for multistakeholder collaboration across sectors. KICs develop stakeholder engagement strategies and annual stakeholder engagement plans to ensure the timely and targeted provision of information to all relevant stakeholders, using different tools and formats (e.g. events, meetings and special configurations), while also ensuring stakeholder buy-in where appropriate. In addition, the EIT

and the KICs work in a coordinated manner to ensure that regular information provision and efficient collaboration take place with several groups of stakeholders, such as the EU institutions, national authorities and EIT National Contact Points.

- **A plan for dissemination and exploitation of results.** To succeed, a KIC must put forward its results, products and companies, to the market and to society at large. Dissemination, exploitation and communication all aim to help maximise the impact of research and innovation actions. The objective of dissemination is to make the results available, that is, transfer knowledge and results with the aim of enabling others to use and take up these results. The objective of exploitation is to effectively use results through scientific, economic, political or societal exploitation routes, to turn research and innovation actions into concrete value and impact. To reach these objectives and to ensure an integrated approach together with communication activities, each KIC should

COMMUNICATION: PROMOTE YOUR ACTION AND RESULTS

Inform, promote and communicate your activities and actions



Reaching multiple audiences

Citizens, the media, stakeholders



How?

Publishing your results on:

- Having a well-designed strategy
- Conveying clear messages
- Using the right media channels



When?

From the start of the action until the end



Why?

- Engage with stakeholders
- Attract the best experts to your team
- Generate market demand
- Raise awareness of how public money is spent
- Show the success of European collaboration
- Legal obligation: Article 30.1 of the Grant Agreement

DISSEMINATION: MAKE YOUR RESULTS PUBLIC

Open Science: knowledge and results (free of charge) for others to use



Only to scientists?

Not only but also to others that can learn from the results: authorities, industry, policymakers, sectors of interest, civil society



When?

At any time, and as soon as the action has results



How?

Publishing your results on:

- Scientific magazines
- Scientific and/or targeted conferences
- Databases



Why?

- Maximise results' impact
- Allow other researchers to go a step forward
- Contribute to the advancement of the state of the art
- Make scientific results a common good

EXPLOITATION: MAKE CONCRETE USE OF RESULTS

Commercial, societal, political purposes



Only by researchers?

Not only but also:

- Industry including SMEs
- Those that can make good use of them: authorities, industrial authorities, policymakers, sectors of interest, civil society



When?

Towards the end and beyond, as soon as the action has exploitable results



How?

- Creating roadmaps, prototypes, software
- Sharing knowledge, skills, data



Why?

- Lead to new legislation or recommendations
- For the benefit of innovation, the economy and the society
- Help to tackle a problem and respond to an existing demand

define a dissemination strategy (in line with its intellectual property policy) and produce annual dissemination plans.

Moreover, by identifying, analysing and sharing good and novel innovation practices, the EIT Community ensures that knowledge generated within EIT Community activities is disseminated and capitalised upon for the benefit of people and organisations, including those not directly benefiting from working with the EIT Community.

- **A spirit of collaboration, including joint EIT Community collaboration.** Seeking collaboration at local, regional and national levels is an important element of a KIC's synergies portfolio, bringing more actors into the knowledge economy and giving a greater push to open innovation in the EU. A KIC, as a dynamic partnership itself, has a strong collaborative organisational culture. In its quest to learn new ways of doing things, it acknowledges the importance of working together with others. Each KIC has a strategy for synergies and a roadmap to achieve its objectives by identifying:
 - who** – with whom to work with,
 - what** – activities of mutual interest,
 - where** – in which areas/programmes/policies,
 - when** – the timeline for developing the collaboration,
 - why** – the added value of this collaboration.

In this way, a KIC gradually develops an extensive network of collaborating organisations at different dimensions and levels – thematic and horizontal, and strategic and operational. Furthermore, it works closely with the EIT, which fosters synergies and interactions between KICs and with other actors at institutional level. A KIC seeks to establish a structured dialogue with the relevant European Commission services, to provide input and feedback to the relevant fields of policymaking. Furthermore, it continuously seeks consistency with and

contributes to EU priorities, cooperates with other relevant EU programmes and stakeholders, and explores possibilities within new initiatives, through close interaction and consultative dialogues. In particular, KICs must strive for synergies with European Digital Innovation Hubs, Cohesion Funds, the InvestEU Advisory Hub, the Creative Europe Programme, Single Market Programme and the Enterprise Europe Network, etc.

The EIT is an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#), Europe's largest ever programme for research and innovation covering 2021–2027. Within its Pillar 3 'Innovative Europe', close cooperation with the European Innovation Council (EIC) is encouraged, particularly in supporting and accelerating innovative start-ups and scale-ups. The EIT and the EIC are complementary EU funding programmes and have concluded a [\(MoU\)](#) to ensure close cooperation. The EIT and the EIC collaborate for the benefit of innovative start-ups/scale-ups, to allow them to access EIC and EIT services, including finance opportunities with KIC investors and the EIC blended financing programme with the European Investment Bank. Furthermore, the EIT and the EIC cooperate to help research results become innovation opportunities, to facilitate market access for start-ups and SMEs, and to support women innovators and start-ups and SMEs from regions and countries that are emerging or moderate innovators.

Joint EIT Community (cross-KIC) activities enhance cooperation and synergies between KICs, foster more interdisciplinary approaches, and create a critical mass among KICs to tackle topics of common interest. The EIT regulation states that these activities can be funded up to 100 % by the EIT. It also recognises that, where several KICs already address common EU policy priorities and where no dedicated KICs exist, cross-KIC activities have higher potential. Currently, cross-KIC activities are clustered into the following three groups.

1. EIT Strategic Cross-KIC Activities are aimed at delivering more impact in key priority areas and enhancing the strength and visibility of the EIT KICs innovation ecosystem and its positioning among key stakeholders. These activities coordinate and/or drive joint thematic agendas. The strategic priority activities are based on the EIT SIA 2021–2027 and EU policy priorities, set by the EIT Governing Board after consultation with the European Commission. 'Access to Finance' (a collaboration with international financial institutions), strategic education activities (joint education initiatives such as 'Human capital' or 'Girls Go Circular'), activities on strategic synergies (the circular economy, 'New European Bauhaus', artificial intelligence joint activities, women entrepreneurship) and the regional innovation cross-KIC cluster are examples of EIT strategic cross-KIC activities.

2. EIT Thematic Innovations Cross-KIC activities are aimed at developing specific products and/or services (contributing to the EIT core KPIs) or new innovation-delivering mechanisms that demonstrate a clear cross-KIC value and address EU/EIT priorities. These are bottom-up initiatives, selected by the EIT on a competitive basis and endorsed by the EIT Governing Board as part of the funding allocation mechanism. Currently, the EIT is implementing three thematic innovations cross-KIC activities: combating child obesity, developing end-to-end digitalised production testbeds and alleviating water scarcity.

3. EIT Shared Services Cross-KIC activities require the participation of all KICs. The actions are aimed at the development of joint operational activities and the consolidation of KICs' operational processes to reduce administrative costs and overheads by pooling resources. Joint CLC locations, EIT House in Brussels and the development of joint IT systems are examples of EIT shared services activities



CONTRACTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EIT AND ITS KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITIES

Relations between the EIT and its KICs, as the beneficiaries of EIT grants, are laid down in different agreements that define their respective rights and obligations, ensure an adequate level of coordination and outline the mechanisms for reporting, payment and control arrangements, and monitoring and evaluating activities and outcomes.

Each new KIC may receive EIT support during the first year through a **Start-up Grant Agreement (SUGA)**. Upon the successful completion of the start-up phase (KIC Legal Entity established, Strategic Agenda adopted, CEO and permanent management team in place, interim progress report and solid business plan submitted for the next year, etc.), the EIT Governing Board will endorse the start-up phase and the EIT Director will sign a Partnership Agreement with the KIC.

Long-term cooperation between the EIT and the KIC is formalised in a 7-year Partnership Agreement laying down the general terms and conditions under which the KIC operates as an institutionalised European partnership. Subject to positive outcomes of the performance review, interim review and comprehensive assessment, the Partnership Agreement can be extended for another period of a maximum of 7 years.

The annual or multiannual **Grant Agreement (GA)** is the contractual instrument laying down the provisions concerning the implementation of the KIC's business plan, the EIT Higher Education

activities and cross-KIC activities through grants. The agreements are signed by the EIT Director as the EIT's legal representative and by the KIC's CEO as its legal representative.

LONG-TERM COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EIT AND THE KIC IS FORMALISED IN A 7-YEAR PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Internal arrangements between the KIC Legal Entity and each KIC partner are governed by internal agreements signed between the parties. KIC internal arrangements should comply with the principles of good governance. By signing these agreements, a KIC partner must agree to the rights and obligations stipulated in the Partnership Agreement and the Grant Agreement, which is a condition for benefiting from EIT grants channelled through the KIC Legal Entity. All KICs must apply sound financial management practices: principles of economy,

efficiency and effectiveness, including a lean and cost-efficient structure that keeps administrative and management costs to a minimum.

Subject to a positive outcome of the final review and before the expiry or termination of the Partnership Agreement, the EIT may conclude a **Memorandum of Cooperation** with a KIC with the aim of maintaining active cooperation, setting out the rights and obligations linked to the continuation of the knowledge triangle activities and access to these activities, and to the maintenance of the ecosystem and network.

WHAT IS AN (INSTITUTIONALISED) EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP?

EIT KICs are Institutionalised European Partnerships. European Partnerships are a key implementation tool of Horizon Europe and contribute significantly to achieving the EU's political priorities. By bringing private and public partners together, European Partnerships help to avoid the duplication of investments and contribute to reducing the fragmentation of the research and innovation landscape in the EU.

Institutionalised European Partnerships are partnerships in the field of research and innovation between the EU, EU Member States and/or industry. Institutionalised partnerships are implemented only when other parts of the Horizon Europe programme, including other types of partnership, would not achieve the desired objectives or expected impacts. KICs include a diversity of partners, ranging from start-up companies and SMEs to major universities, research centres and other stakeholders. Partnership is an essential feature of a KIC and a requirement of the EIT's aim to bring together players from across the knowledge triangle in a balanced and collaborative manner.

EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY LIFECYCLE

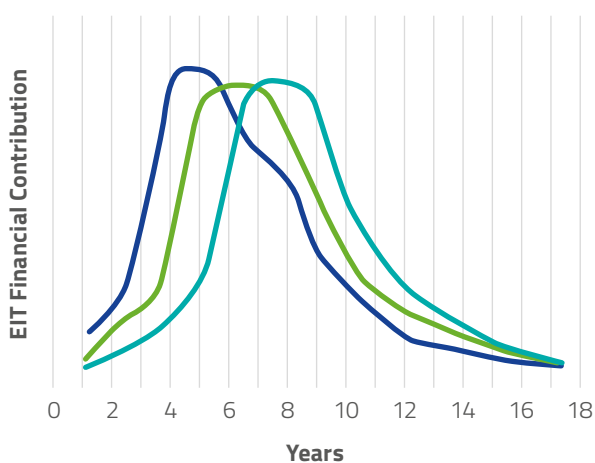
Upon being selected, for the first year a KIC receives a start-up grant to allow the consortium to set up the KIC and bring it up to speed in its first full operational year.

Upon successful completion of the start-up phase, the EIT Governing Board endorses the start-up phase and the EIT Director signs the 7-year Partnership Agreement with the KIC, which, subject to performance and positive outcomes of the interim review and of the comprehensive assessment of the KIC, may be extended for another period of up to 7 years.

EIT funding over this maximum 15-year period of EIT support follows a pattern: start-up, ramp-up, maturity and exit.

After 15 years, following an assessment by the EIT, a memorandum of cooperation may be signed between the EIT and a KIC, aimed at keeping the KIC as an active member of the EIT Community after the end date of the Partnership Agreement.

EIT investment in Innovation Communities Financial Sustainability



ACCOUNTABILITY

The KIC assumes responsibility for all decisions taken and activities implemented within the scope of the agreements signed between the EIT and the KIC, in line with the rights and obligations stipulated within them. The KIC is expected to set up a management and control system that functions in an efficient manner, ensuring compliance with the principles of sound financial management and providing a reasonable level of assurance. An integral element is that the costs of KIC activities must be determined and reported in accordance with the applicable provisions stipulated in the legal framework.

The Partnership Agreement, which establishes the general terms and conditions under which a KIC operates, and the Grant Agreement, which covers funding rules and other conditions relevant for the implementation of the grant, constitute the framework for grant assurance by the EIT. KICs are liable and bound by the rules and regulations defined within them.

Therefore, all KIC activities must be implemented in compliance with the provisions of the Partnership Agreement and the Grant Agreement (including all the obligations and terms and conditions they set out), the call conditions and all legal obligations under applicable EU and national law. The main contractual obligations relate to proper implementation (including reporting of costs incurred in line with applicable cost eligibility criteria and other reporting requirements), conflicts of interest, confidentiality and security, ethics, visibility, information, record-keeping, and any specific rules for carrying out the action. The EIT, European Commission, European Anti-Fraud Office, European Public Prosecutor's Office and European Court of Auditors may carry out checks, reviews and audits on the implementation of the action and compliance with the obligations under the Grant Agreement.

EIT FUNDING MODEL

The EIT is expected, through a lean and simplified funding model, to enhance the impact and contribution of KICs towards reaching the objectives of the EIT and the Horizon Europe programme as well as incentivise commitment from KIC partners. As the EIT is a European body that is fully integrated into the Horizon Europe programme, the funding implementation mechanisms, payment modalities and control strategy proposed are aligned with those of Horizon Europe. This ensures that the beneficiaries and stakeholders experience a consistent approach as regards eligibility rules and sound financial management practices.

THE EIT IS EXPECTED TO ENHANCE THE IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION OF KICS TOWARDS REACHING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EIT AND THE HORIZON EUROPE PROGRAMME

The EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021–2027 provides specific clarifications on the principles established in the EIT Regulation. Clear monitoring and evaluation provisions are defined, taking into account the Horizon Europe framework and the EIT's specificities. In particular, by integrating the existing excellence and investment in higher education, research and innovation, the EIT funding model supports its KICs in the commercialisation of innovation results, the development of innovative educational courses with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, and the creation of new start-ups. Furthermore, the [EIT Financing Principles](#) and procedures reflect the multiannual nature of KIC activities.

The criteria for the funding allocation follow a performance-based funding model. EIT funding

is directly linked to progress made in the areas defined in the EIT Regulation, including progress towards financial sustainability, cost-efficiency and openness to new members. The EIT takes corrective measures, in particular based on a KIC's individual performance, in order to ensure the highest level of impact. To this end, EIT funding may be reduced, modified or discontinued in case of underperformance. This performance-based allocation mechanism includes assessing a KIC's business plans and performance through continuous monitoring. The level of EIT financial contribution to each KIC is thus decided by the EIT on a multiannual basis, with the performance-based funding allocation taking into account progress made in the following areas:

EIT FUNDING IS DIRECTLY LINKED TO PROGRESS TOWARDS FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, COST-EFFICIENCY AND OPENNESS TO NEW MEMBERS

- implementation of the multiannual strategy, in particular:
 - progress in addressing the KIC's key strategic challenges and effectiveness in integrating the knowledge triangle;
 - progress towards the objectives and targets indicated in the multiannual strategy, such as impact, results and openness, including the number of partners and the establishment of new CLCs, and coordination and management of the KIC's ecosystem;
 - consistency with the strategic objectives of the EU, in particular Horizon Europe, and the KIC's contribution to achieving these goals;
 - alignment with good governance principles set out by the EIT;
 - cross-KIC collaboration and synergies with other programmes;

- results of the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS);

- progress towards financial sustainability, including the portfolio of financial assets each KIC is developing to reach financial sustainability, diversification of revenue/funding sources and quantitative metrics such as the financial sustainability coefficient defined in the principles of the KIC's financial sustainability;
- the effectiveness of operations and impact achieved as measured by KPIs defined as part of the EIT impact framework (e.g. EIT core KPIs in the areas of education, business creation, innovation and the EIT RIS);
- financial performance measured by KPIs defined as part of the EIT impact framework (e.g. EIT grant absorption, error rate in costs reported);
- non-financial performance measured through, for example, diversity and alignment with the EIT/EU co-branding provisions;
- clarity and pertinence of future ambitions in line with the EIT SIA 2021–2027 and KIC strategic agenda adopted and their reflection in the business plans.

To ensure comparability between KICs and allow for flexibility and adaptability, the specific assessment criteria for performance-based funding, the weightings and other precise modalities will be further specified by the EIT as part of future calls for funding.

By joining forces, the KICs should design and implement value added cross-KIC activities and shared services to explore potential synergies and economies of scale, valorise the innovation potential across KICs, develop new innovation delivery mechanisms, promote the EIT KIC model and increase EIT visibility, as defined in the EIT SIA 2021–2027. A genuine cross-KIC activity should allow all participating KICs to be involved in the

delivery of the actions, with clear objectives, milestones and achievements and a clear allocation of roles.

The EIT gradually reduces its funding rate for KIC added value activities to increase the levels of private and public investment other than revenues from KIC partners. The funding model is expected to facilitate the KICs in their gradual transition towards financial sustainability within the duration of the Partnership Agreements. The EIT SIA 2021–2027 lays down the applicable decreasing EIT funding rates for the KIC added value activities across the different phases of the KIC lifecycle (start-up, ramp-up, maturity and exit from the EIT grant).

Achieving financial sustainability is a unique feature of the KIC model, which aims to be a business- and results-oriented innovation instrument. In this context, KICs have to develop and implement revenue-creating strategies in order to maintain their innovation ecosystem and the knowledge triangle activities beyond the period over which the EIT provides financial support through Grant Agreements. The KICs should in particular aim to maximise the share of contributions from private sources and from income generated by their activities and to pursue and achieve financial sustainability before the expiry of the 15 years of EIT financial support at the latest. Not all activities of the EIT KICs can be expected to become fully self-sustainable, due to inherent market failures, stressing the importance of public funding in those areas. Thus, in accordance with what is established in the EIT SIA 2021–2027, certain KIC activities, due to their specific nature, might need extra incentives to be performed. To this aim, the EIT Governing Board may decide to apply more favourable funding conditions for specific activities.

To achieve financial sustainability, the following financing sources (revenues) of the KIC legal entity and its CLCs should be considered by KICs:

- contributions from partner organisations, forming a substantial source of funding,
- voluntary contributions from Member States, associated countries or third countries or public authorities within them,
- contributions from international bodies or institutions,
- revenue generated by the KICs' own assets and activities and royalties from intellectual property rights,
- capital endowments,
- bequests, donations and contributions from individuals, institutions, foundations or any other bodies established under national law,
- the financial contribution from the EIT,
- financial instruments, including those funded from the general budget of the EU.

In line with the EIT Regulation, the EIT organises continuous monitoring and periodic external evaluations of the output, results and impact of each KIC, including its progress towards financial sustainability, cost-efficiency and openness to new members. These evaluations should include interim reviews covering the first 3 years of the Partnership Agreement and the 3 years following any extension, comprehensive assessments conducted before the end of the seventh year of the Partnership Agreement, and final reviews conducted before the end of the Partnership Agreement. The Governing Board takes corrective measures when appropriate based on the outcomes of these reviews and assessments. The results of the interim reviews and evaluations are made publicly available, communicated to the European Parliament and to the Council of the European Union and reported as part of the strategic coordinating process for European Partnerships



TIPS FOR BECOMING PART OF THE EIT COMMUNITY

If you are reading this document, you might also want to make a real difference for citizens in Europe and maybe even beyond. We at the EIT together with our KICs proactively support such change and there are many different possibilities to join the EIT Community.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITIES

There are many opportunities to join the [EIT Community](#) and its wide range of innovation support activities across Europe: from training and education programmes to business incubators and accelerators and innovation-driven research projects. As part of the EIT Community, you can access new partners, facilities, disciplines, industries and cultures.

HOW TO JOIN AN EXISTING EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY AS A PARTNER

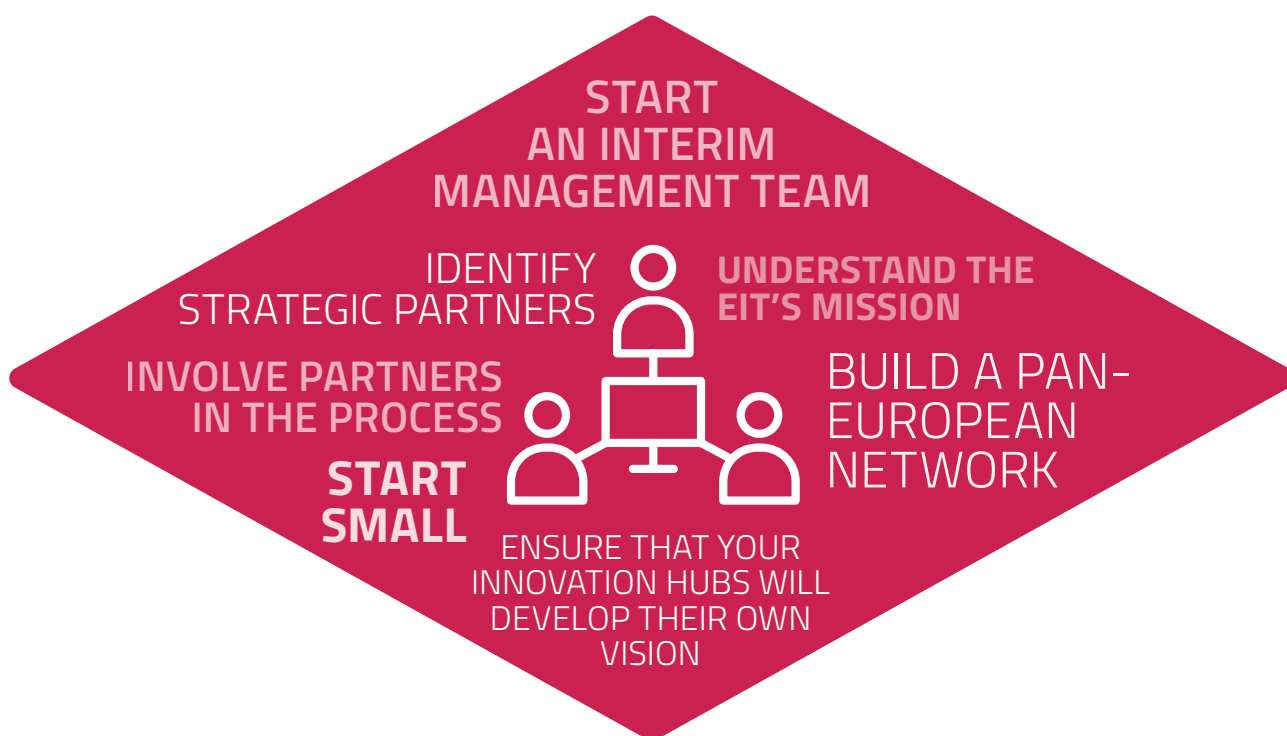
First, you must ask yourself what your added value will be to the respective KIC and what kind of partner you want to be. Each KIC legal entity has autonomy in defining the partnership internally, that is, to enter into or cease legal relationships and to define internal agreements with partner organisations, whether members, shareholders or other organisations. Thus, each KIC has different types of partners, each with their own selection criteria and rights and responsibilities.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A NEW EIT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY

Submitting a proposal to start an EIT KIC differs from applying to EU funding programmes, due to the partnership and the level of ambition in terms of the long-term impact expected. In your proposal you will need to outline a strategy that demonstrates your ambitious but pragmatic approach to find impactful solutions based on innovation potential; deliver successful innovative products, services and jobs; and make a lasting change in the way Europe thinks and acts on innovation and entrepreneurship in relation to a global challenge. KIC partners must also be committed to creating a sustainable innovation ecosystem and must understand the EIT's unique innovation model in line with the EIT's mission and specificities. An EIT KIC must be born of a strong desire to do things differently and must strengthen the EIT community spirit with like-minded people and organisations that are ready to experiment and operate at the boundaries of their innovation ecosystems. It must pioneer new solutions to society's biggest challenges. It must be run with business logic and an entrepreneurial mindset based on an investment logic to sustain itself in the long run. And most of all, it must continuously innovate.

If you decide to submit a proposal to start one of the EIT's new KICs, you will need to show that you are able to bring together a strong and coherent network of partners that are committed to developing and delivering your high-impact innovation strategy. A KIC works across the boundaries of education, research and business, developing activities within and across all three sectors. Its strategy must also be market

oriented and reflect its multidisciplinary nature, its approach to innovation and its preferred portfolio of activities. The EIT's SIA 2021–2027 includes factsheets on the societal challenges that future KICs will need to address. It is up to you, the expert in the field, to work with your partners and propose solutions to overcome these challenges.



Top tips

If you are designated as a KIC, the first year will be a critical but important period for reaching legal and operational readiness and setting up the EIT Community brand identity. Partnership arrangements must be finalised, the legal entity established and the permanent management team and staff recruited, and many details that were formerly theoretical become very real – such as intellectual property and conflict of interest policies. While it is primarily the responsibility of the designated partnership to ensure a good start, the EIT will incentivise and

support new KICs through a specific start-up grant awarded to the designated partnership. This can be used to:

- set up necessary governance and legal structures;
- recruit and appoint the CEO and other core staff;
- design and agree on practical modalities for the implementation of activities;
- implement the EIT Community brand identity;

- prepare an integrated portfolio of activities in the first business plan;
- prepare monitoring, reporting and evaluation functions for the legal entity;
- deliver an initial set of innovative activities (i.e. on education, innovation, business creation and communication).

The EIT will continuously monitor the implementation of all preparatory actions based on a set of objectives, deliverables and milestones included in the Start-up Grant Agreement. Upon designation, the EIT will provide the successful partnership with guidance for the start-up phase. The partnership will then be asked to provide a plan of start-up activities together with the estimated budget. A successfully completed start-up period will then result in the signing of the 7-year Partnership Agreement and the first Grant Agreement to implement it.

Of course, there is more to running an EIT KIC. But it is important not to lose sight of the big picture as you develop the details of your plan, which is that the EIT Community is bringing real and lasting change to the EU's innovation landscape – and this is your opportunity to get on board. If you have the inspiration, drive, talent, knowledge and skills to start and manage one of the EIT's newest KICs, we want to support you as you make vital contributions to solving some of the most pressing global challenges of our time

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