

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) – Europe's flagship for excellence in research, education and innovation

What is the EIT?

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a new initiative which is intended as one way to address the EU's relative weakness in its capacity to convert knowledge outputs into commercial benefits.

The EIT will integrate effectively the three sides of the 'knowledge triangle', education, research and innovation, performing its activities through partnerships between the private sector, research organisations and higher education institutions. These would be known as Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

The EIT will focus on strategic priority areas where given the nature and scale of the innovation challenge, action at European level could generate the 'critical mass', which could not be achieved by Member States alone.

The EIT will be fairly small scale in the initial period until 2013 - just two or three "KICs" (thematic areas not yet defined, but may encompass energy efficiency/renewable energy and next generation of ICT).

How will the EIT operate?

The EIT will have a relatively small central support staff of up to 60 people, centrally located in an administrative hub. Budapest in Hungary has been chosen as the administrative headquarters of the EIT.

An independent Governing Board, which would include high-level representation from academia and industry, would set the strategic objectives of the EIT, including the definition of the areas in which KICs would be established, the selection of specific KICs and overall co-ordination and evaluation of their activities.

The operational arm of the EIT will be the KICs (networks of partner organisations from industry education and research) which will undertake cutting edge and innovation driven research and education and training activities.

KICs will be contracted to the EIT and will consist of at least 3 partner organisations located in at least 2 Member States.

How will the EIT be Funded?

The EIT will be funded through a number of sources including direct community funding, structural funds, bidding on a **competitive** basis for relevant Framework programme funding, business and private contributions and revenue generated through the EIT's own activities such as Intellectual Property.

The selection of KICs will be based on the partnership's capacity to ensure sustainable and long term self financing, including from the private sector.

If successful the EIT will generate revenue through successful commercial exploitation of the activities of the KICs, leading to start-ups, spin-offs and new SME's.

Why should UK organisations participate in the EIT?

The KICs will be centres of excellence attracting the best researchers and academics.

It will provide an opportunity to increase knowledge transfer and innovation capacity and improve the way in which businesses, higher education and research institutions work together.

Education will become an integral part of the innovation process with new education programmes integrating entrepreneurship, innovation and risk management as core modules.

Businesses will be given fresh opportunities to commercialise the most up-to-date and relevant research findings, potentially giving Europe first-mover advantage in the latest technological fields.

Key stages for the EIT becoming operational

The appointment of the 18 person Governing Board is expected to be announced by the end of July 2008.

By the end of 2008, the Governing Board will publish detailed criteria for the selection of the KICs.

By September 2009 the EIT will launch its calls for proposals.

The designation and selection of the first KICs will take place by March 2010.

Where to find out more information

1. The Innovation pages of the DIUS website will update you with important EIT developments such as confirmation of the Governing Board and publication of the selection criteria.

For further information on the EIT please contact

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2. The European Commission EIT website with all the latest news can be found at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eit/>

3. The Technology Strategy Board is a business-focused non-departmental public body dedicated to promoting technology-enabled innovation across the UK. It has a network of National Contact Points (NCP) to help UK companies participate in the European Programmes. Details of the TSB can be found at:

www.innovateuk.org/ contact Graham Mobbs - Graham.Mobbs@tsb.gov.uk

4. Your local Regional Development Agency or Devolved Administration will have a contact to advise you on the EIT. Details of contacts can be found at:

Scotland

Isabell Donnelly
Policy Executive
Scottish Government
Tel: 0141 242 0187
Email: ceu@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Northern Ireland

For university enquiries:

Boyd McDowell
Higher Education Division
Department for Employment and Learning
Tel 028-9025-7749
boyd.mcdowell@delni.gov.uk

For business enquiries:

Andrew Millar
Enterprise Europe Network NI
Invest Northern Ireland
Tel 028-9069-8824
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Wales

To be confirmed

Regional Development Agencies

To be confirmed