

THE EIT

Why a European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)?

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology will give a much needed boost to Europe's innovation capacity and to its readiness for the knowledge society. It responds to the particular situation in Europe, where excellent higher education, research and innovative business are still too often fragmented, thereby hindering a free flow of knowledge. By facilitating knowledge sharing and innovation processes, the EIT will make a decisive impact on the European innovation landscape and help to ensure that the best ideas are being brought to the best use of economy and society.

What is the place of the EIT in the European Union's innovation strategy?

Innovation and knowledge have been identified as key drivers in the EU's recently launched vision for the future of Europe, the EU2020 strategy. The EIT's mission therefore clearly responds to the ambition for Europe to lead, compete and prosper as a knowledge-based, connected, greener and more inclusive economy.

What is new about the EIT?

The EIT is a new 'experiment' in many ways. Not only has it been given unprecedented independence and autonomy in decision-making, but this excellence-driven body is also the first European initiative bringing together all three sides of the knowledge triangle (higher education, research and innovation) with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education. In doing so, the EIT will deliver new ways of tackling major societal challenges, thereby inspiring others to emulate them and contributing to a change in mindset across the innovation web.

In order to be successful in this endeavour, the EIT operates on a strategic, longer-term horizon, with Knowledge and Innovation Communities having a life-span of 7-15 years. The focused leadership of KICs, their funding model, as well as their bottom-up approach equally make the EIT a test-bed for exploring new ways of innovation.

What is the EIT's governance structure?

An innovative governance structure was conceived for the EIT to enable it to meet its objectives. It caters for the need for coordination and strategic orientation through the EIT Governing Board, while providing for maximum autonomy in the delivery through the KICs.

Who is responsible for the strategic orientation of the EIT?

The Governing Board is the principal driving force behind EIT governance issues and is independent and autonomous in its decision-making. It is entrusted with the role of strategic leadership and coordination of the EIT's activities and is responsible for the selection, evaluation and support of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The Governing Board brings together 18 high-calibre members balancing prominent expertise from the higher education, research, business and innovation fields.

What is the role of the EIT Director?

The Director of the EIT is responsible for turning the strategic decisions taken by the Governing Board into a reality and for the day-to-day management of the EIT Headquarters in Budapest. He is accountable to the Governing Board and reports to the Board on an ongoing basis.

What are the next steps for the EIT?

The EIT's activities for 2010 are driven by three main objectives: delivering the KICs; developing the Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA); and the establishment of the headquarters in Budapest (spring 2010). Next steps will include the start of the first KICs, marked by the conclusion of Framework Agreements between the EIT and the KICs, which cover a strategic horizon of seven years and are implemented on an annual basis. Moreover, the EIT will launch a series of KIC support activities and consultations in preparation for the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda.

What is the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA)?

The first EIT SIA will set out the direction for the EIT's long-term development. It will have far-reaching implications for virtually all aspects of the EIT – including governance and relationships, identification and prioritisation of themes for KICs, budgets and finance, and the role and contribution of the EIT to the European innovation landscape. The lessons learned from the KICs will significantly shape the Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) which the EIT will present in summer 2011.



When are the headquarters in Budapest becoming operational? What is the role of the Commission during the interim period?

European member states unanimously decided on the 18th of June 2008 that the EIT headquarters would be located in Budapest, Hungary. It is expected that the EIT building will be finished and operational in spring 2010. The new EIT Director, in place since 1st November, is fully backed by the Commission during the interim period. However, the aim is that the EIT becomes financially and operationally autonomous as soon as possible. The EIT team is currently being recruited and Commission support will gradually phase out as EIT staff starts working from the new EIT Headquarters in Budapest by early spring 2010.

MORE INFORMATION: <http://eit.europa.eu>

