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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) ON THE EIT MODEL AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EIT COMMUNITY

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## Introduction

This document collects the most frequently asked questions about the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

It aims to complement more in depth the questions already included on the [EIT's website](#) and to support the EIT National Contact Points' (NCPs) work in providing information and on-the-ground advice to potential applicants and beneficiaries of the EIT's multiple activities, opportunities and calls for action. It additionally aims to support the Member States Representatives Group (MSRG) in their strategic and advisory role to the EIT Governing Board.

## 1. About the EIT Community

### 1.1. What is the EIT?

The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#) (EIT) is an independent EU body and an integral part of Horizon Europe, the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation in 2021-27. The EIT has been strengthening Europe's ability to innovate since its creation in 2008, by fostering innovation, powering solutions to pressing global challenges, and nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs across Europe and beyond.

The EIT's approach (Innovation Model) is the only EU programme that fully integrates business, research and education together. This has been done via the set-up of 9 dynamic pan-European partnerships: the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). Through the EIT KICs, that together form the EIT Community, the EIT works along the entire innovation chain to deliver: (1) educational programmes that combine technical and entrepreneurial skills; (2) innovative research projects; (3) business creation and acceleration services.

Today, EIT is the largest innovation ecosystem in Europe with almost 3.000 partners, including leading European business companies, research organisations and higher education institutes.

### 1.2. What is the governance model of EIT?

To ensure the right balance of flexibility and accountability, the EIT has adopted a [two-level structure](#), which combines an efficient governance (EIT Governing Board) with a management team at the EIT Headquarters in Budapest, and a decentralised operational array of partnerships (the EIT KICs) drawing upon Europe's most excellent innovators.



The [Governing Board \(GB\)](#) is the EIT's principal governing body, entrusted with the strategic leadership of the Institute and the overall direction of the operational activities implemented by the EIT Headquarters. It is independent and autonomous in its decision-making, and responsible for the selection, evaluation and supervision of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities. The GB is composed of 15 high calibre members, appointed by the European Commission, balancing prominent expertise from higher education, research, business, innovation.

In accordance with the [EIT Regulation](#), a representative of the Commission participates in the meetings of the Governing Board as observer, without the right to vote, but with his or her required agreement in certain strategic decisions. Currently, the representative of the Commission is the Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC). At the operational level, the cooperation between the EIT and DG EAC is regulated by a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the working modalities.

The EIT is located in Budapest (HU), structured in [6 operational and administrative units](#), managed by approximately 70 statutory and non-statutory staff members<sup>1</sup>. In 2018, the EIT Liaison Office was also established in Brussels to increase the EIT Community's visibility and outreach. It is part of the [EIT House](#), where representatives from almost all EIT KICs are co-located to ensure synergies between the EIT Community and alignment towards stakeholders in Brussels.

Managing a total of EUR 2.9 billion under the [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda \(SIA\) 2021-2027](#) (compared to EUR 2.4 billion in 2014-2020), the EIT HQ is efficient and impactful. It uses less than 2%<sup>2</sup> of the EIT budget for administrative purposes, while 98% is dedicated to grants to the KICs.

As an independent EU body, the EIT is neither a part of the European Commission, nor an Executive Agency. As such, it functions differently from most other decentralised EU Agencies.

### 1.3. What is an EIT KIC?

The EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities (EIT KICs) are thematic partnerships that bring together several organisations from business, research, education and beyond. There are currently [8 fully operational EIT KICs](#) and [1 EIT KIC established in June 2022](#), currently in its start-up phase. Each one focuses on a specific global societal challenge. EIT KICs are created and supported by EIT for a period of up to 15 years (1 start-up year & two 7-year periods), after which they are expected to become financially sustainable.

Each EIT KIC is set up as an independent legal entity, gathering from 50 to over 300 partners, and is managed in a business-like manner by a CEO, supervised by an independent board. The EIT KICs have a great degree of

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<sup>1</sup> Following the Reorganisation of the EIT as of 1 July 2022, the new organigramme will be available soon.

<sup>2</sup> Administrative costs stood at 1.14% of the 2020 total budget, well below the average for Horizon 2020.



autonomy and flexibility to define their legal status, internal organisation and working methods, something that allows them to react in an effective and flexible way to new challenges and changing environments.

Another unique feature of the EIT KICs is that each of them delivers its activities through 5-8 regional [Co-location Centers](#), with partners in close proximity. The Co-location Centers (also called Innovation Hubs) aim to leverage on existing capacities (e.g. labs, offices, campuses), to provide the space for co-creation and co-design of activities and programmes and most importantly to enable the transfer of knowledge and connection of local innovation ecosystems, building thereby pan-European networks at local and regional levels.

EIT KICs follow the EIT Principles of Good Governance, at both central (HQ) and Co-location Centre level. They are embedded in the Partnership Agreements between the EIT and each KIC.

Each EIT KIC works towards the objectives of a 7-year strategy, which is implemented through Multi-annual Business Plans<sup>3</sup>, including projects and activities, whose results and impact are clearly measurable. Through their Business Plans, the EIT KICs offer a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities, education courses that combine technical and entrepreneurial skills, business creation and acceleration services, and innovation driven research projects.

The EIT KICs work to:

- *accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon economy ([EIT Climate-KIC](#)),*
- *transform Europe's Cultural & Creative Sectors and Industries ([EIT Culture & Creativity](#))*
- *drive Europe's digital transformation ([EIT Digital](#)),*
- *lead the global revolution in food innovation and production ([EIT Food](#)),*
- *give EU citizens greater opportunities to lead a healthy life ([EIT Health](#)),*
- *achieve a sustainable energy future for Europe ([EIT InnoEnergy](#)),*
- *strengthen the competitiveness of Europe's manufacturing industry ([EIT Manufacturing](#)),*
- *develop raw materials into a major strength for Europe ([EIT RawMaterials](#)),*
- *solve the mobility challenges of our cities ([EIT Urban Mobility](#)),*

The most recent partnership, EIT Culture & Creativity, was designated on 22 June 2022 by the EIT Governing Board. Under the EIT [Strategic Innovation Agenda for 2021-27](#), it was also decided that a second EIT KIC on Water, Marine and Maritime Sectors will be launched in 2026.

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<sup>3</sup> As of 2022 EIT KICs will work on the basis of multi-annual business plans. The first call for a multiannual Business Plan was launched in 2021, covering the years 2021-2022.



#### 1.4. Do the EIT KICs have the same maturity?

No. The EIT was established in 2008 and became operational in 2010 with the establishment of the first three EIT KICs. The other EIT KICs were launched gradually during the past decade and can be categorised into 5 separate waves, according to their year of creation:

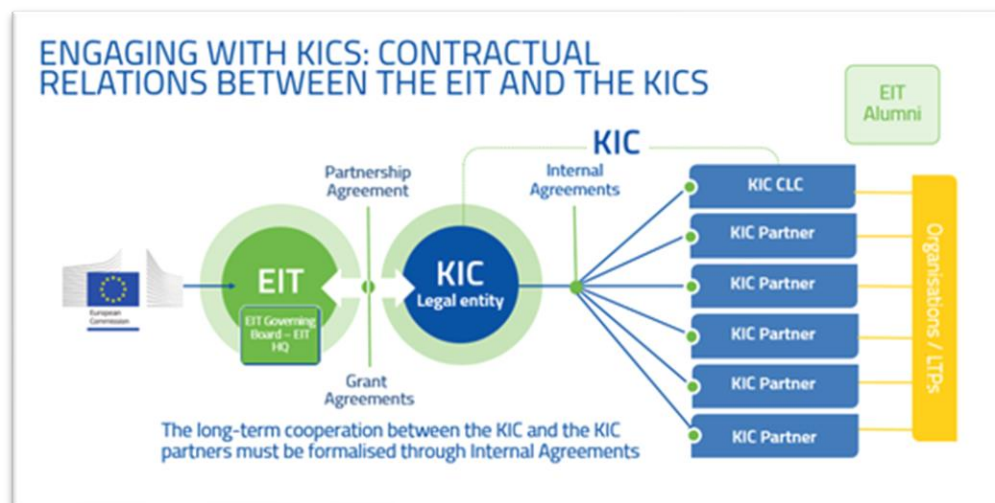
- 2010 - First wave: EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy;
- 2014 - Second wave: EIT Health and EIT RawMaterials;
- 2016 - Third wave: EIT Food;
- 2018 - Fourth wave: EIT Manufacturing and EIT Urban Mobility;
- 2022 – Fifth wave: EIT Culture & Creativity.

Launching its KICs in waves allows the EIT, and subsequently the KICs themselves, to continuously improve and upgrade their innovation models, based on the learnings and experience brought in the Community by each member. In this way the EIT approach remains relevant and up to date with the changing environment and true needs of European innovators and entrepreneurs.

More information on the EIT Innovation Model is available in chapter 2 below.

#### 1.5. How does the relation between the EIT and its KICs work?

The relations between the EIT and each KIC are laid down in the Partnership Agreement (PA) and Model Grant Agreement (MGA), which set out their respective rights and obligations, ensure an adequate level of coordination and outline the mechanism for monitoring and evaluating a KIC's portfolios and outcomes.





Given the long-term partnership between the EIT and its KICs, the contractual agreements are defined in a long-term cooperation between the EIT and each KIC, formalised within a seven-year PA, laying down the general terms and conditions under which the KIC operates as an Institutionalised European Partnership. Subject to positive performance, interim review and comprehensive assessment of the KIC, the PA can be extended for another period of seven years.

The model grant agreement (MGA) is the contractual instrument laying down the provisions concerning the implementation of the KIC Business Plan through grants, on a multi-annual (3 years) basis.

Both agreements reflect the integrated structure of a KIC. The KIC Legal Entity (KIC LE) must be empowered by the appropriate KIC governance body (e.g., Supervisory Board, Assembly, etc.) to conclude agreements with the EIT. These are signed between the EIT and the KIC LE.

Internal arrangements between the KIC LE and each KIC partner are governed by internal agreements signed between the parties. Internal arrangements should comply with the principles of good governance. By signing these agreements, a KIC partner shall agree to the rights and obligations stipulated in the PA/MGA, which is a condition for benefitting from grants channelled through the KIC LE by the EIT.

Subject to a positive outcome of the final review and before the expiry or termination of the PA, 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 as well as maintenance of the KIC's ecosystem and network.





## 2. The EIT Innovation Model (Knowledge and Innovation Communities)

### 2.1. How does the Knowledge Triangle Integration (KTI) work?

The EIT is the only EU instrument that integrates business-research-education actors in its activities. It provides a systemic approach and a strong pan-European platform to accelerate innovation covering the entire value chain from education to the market and across sectors. The EIT Community partners contribute to this innovation process by working together across the KTI to bringing new products, services, business models and educational offerings to the market:

- Research can be conducted through cooperative partnerships between public research organisations, higher education institutions, large corporations and SMEs.
- Learning programmes can be delivered by education institutions together with businesses. The curricula can be a result of industry - academia collaboration, taking into account future needs.
- In the development of new products and services, all actors may play a role.

The EIT aims this way to inspire, facilitate and empower innovation actors, to combine their knowledge, skills, competences, experience and creativity in thematic communities, and to create novel solutions jointly. Through the EIT's innovation ecosystem, innovators can gain access to the support they need throughout their entire journey, from education to the market.

### 2.2. What type of activities does the EIT Community deliver?

The EIT KICs, as the operational arms of the EIT, deliver activities under three main pillars: *Education – Entrepreneurship – Innovation*.

#### Education:

One of the main added values of the EIT's unique innovation model is the integration of the education dimension into the innovation web, as it has often been absent from the more traditional research-business partnerships. The EIT educates the next generation of entrepreneurs and supports the development of entrepreneurship, digital, leadership, creativity, and visionary skills, through the EIT Label Master and PhD programmes, executive programmes and post-doctoral courses, trainings, learning modules and summer schools. The education activities can have the traditional face-to-face format, online and blended courses, MOOCs or short focused videos for wider audiences as well.

More information is available [here](#).



### Innovation and Research:

The EIT Community's innovation activities drive research into commercially viable products, processes, and services for the benefit of European citizens. Our Innovation Communities set up transdisciplinary and multicultural teams, made up by leading industrial partners, SMEs and researchers, which work together on concrete solutions to some of our greatest societal challenges. In other words, the EIT innovation projects bridge the world of science with the world of business. Furthermore, they often include PhD students, contributing with new perspectives.

Access to the EIT funded innovation activities is also open to non-KIC partners. Each project should have a pan-European dimension (partners from at least two countries) and result on delivering new products and services to be launched on the market. Each innovation project should have an embedded financial sustainability mechanism ensuring returns to a KIC.

More on the EIT KICs' models for innovation is available [here](#).

### Entrepreneurship / Business Creation:

The EIT powers entrepreneurs and innovators to turn their best ideas into products, services and jobs for Europe. The vital ingredients in fostering entrepreneurial activities are ensuring access to finance, new customers and new markets, as well as providing support for enhancing business skills. Through their business creation and acceleration programmes, all EIT KICs offer a range of business support and creation services. These services focus on areas such as support for technology, market assessment, access to human resources, access to new markets and customers, mentoring and access to seed, growth, and venture capital.

More information on the EIT KICs' activity offers is available [here](#).

### Delivering the ecosystem:

In addition to the above, the EIT KICs run activities, which are necessary to manage their ecosystem and ensure the high level of impact in accordance with their Strategic Agendas. This includes KIC administration, management and other activities such as strategic planning, dissemination, awareness raising, communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies.

Physical presence is also ensured under this type of activities: each KIC manages its headquarters and decentralised offices, as well a network of Co-location Centers and RIS Hubs across Europe.



### 2.3. Do EIT KICs deliver joint activities?

Yes. In spite of the EIT KICs being autonomous legal entities with their own governance structures, Business Plans and operation frameworks, cross-KIC cooperation is encouraged by EIT and funded on top of the individual KIC grant allocation in areas that are of common interest and impact.

As of 2021, according to the new EIT Regulation, cross-KIC activities can be funded up to 100% by the EIT (i.e. no co-funding by the KICs is foreseen for cross-KIC activities considered as strategic or as a shared service).

A cross-KIC activity foresees collaboration ranging from delivering activities under the umbrella of one shared office roof to joint innovation projects and strategic initiatives. Cross-KIC activities aim at enhancing the cooperation and synergies between KICs, fostering a more inter-disciplinary approach, and creating a critical mass among KICs to tackle topics of common interest. According to the new SIA, the EIT might allocate up to 7% of its total grant allocation into cross-KIC activities.

Currently cross-KIC activities are grouped in six thematic clusters:

- **Shared Services** cross-KIC cluster, aimed at increasing the EIT Community efficiency and effectiveness of operations through development of joint operational and administrative activities, including such activities as integration and harmonization of the KICs IT systems with the EC IT tools, KICs joint communication and dissemination activities, operation of the EIT House in Brussels, financing of KICs joint locations;
- **Regional Innovations** cross-KIC cluster, aimed at strengthening the impact of EIT through the EIT KICs' presence, outreach and coordination in the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme area as well as other priority countries and regions;
- **Strategic Education** cross-KIC cluster, aimed at increasing the impact of the EIT education agenda and the KICs EIT Alumni organisations as well as contributing to the Digital Education Action Plan implementation;
- **Strategic Synergies** cross-KIC cluster, to elevate the EIT Community impact in key strategic areas through cooperation and/or alignment with other programmes (for example the new European Bauhaus) and coordination of joint thematic and the key EIT's strategic agendas according to the EIT SIA 2021-2027 and EU policy priorities, with the participation of the majority of KICs (such as Circular Economy or Artificial Intelligence);
- **Strategic Outreach** cross-KIC cluster, aimed at multiplying and maximising the EIT Community impact and help deliver on the KICs' impact pathways, transfer/ outreach the KTI EIT model, contribute to the KICs' financial sustainability through its global presence, and foster international knowledge



exchange and reciprocity. The activity finances the KICs joint offices outside the EU (for example in Silicon Valley or in Israel);

- **Access to Finance** cross-KIC cluster, aimed at developing synergies with EIC, EIF and EIB to facilitate investments to the KICs ventures or projects and contribute to the KICs' financial sustainability.

The EIT launches calls for cross-KIC Thematic Innovations projects, with the goal of bringing different KICs together to deliver new products and services responding to specific challenges. Such calls are for grants defined for activities under a specific multiannual period (2023-2025).

#### 2.4. What is RIS? How is the EIT contributing to closing the innovation gap in Europe?

One of our highest priority objectives is to boost innovation across the whole of Europe, by strengthening linkages among key innovation actors, and as a result, contribute towards addressing the persisting regional disparities in innovation performance in Europe. Since 2014, we have been doing this through the [EIT Regional Innovation Scheme \(EIT RIS\)](#), which offers tailored support to countries and regions that are considered modest or moderate innovators<sup>4</sup>.

The EIT RIS is designed to circulate good practices and widen participation in the EIT KICs' activities by attracting and integrating new partners. The EIT KICs work with local organisations to create 'RIS hubs' in eligible countries and regions. There are currently around 80 RIS hubs, which serve as entry points to the EIT Community and mobilise local innovation ecosystems.

Under the [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027](#) (SIA), the EIT is further strengthening the EIT Community's regional impact through the EIT RIS, with eligibility extended to the [EU outermost regions](#). The implementation of the EIT RIS will be guided through a dedicated Implementation Framework which is accessible here.

As of 2021, the EIT RIS became a mandatory and integral part of the EIT KICs' multi-annual strategies aiming to link with and integrate national, regional and local innovation actors, including SMEs, into their activities, as well as establish links with Smart Specialisation Strategies and with the activities of thematic platforms and interregional initiatives, including with the ESIF.

A "place-based" innovation approach is integrated within the KIC's multi-annual strategies through the EIT CLCs and RIS Hubs and is included in the monitoring activities by the EIT.

At least 10% and maximum 15% of the overall EIT funding will be devoted to implementing EIT RIS activities between 2021 and 2027, thereby increasing the number of KIC partners from targeted regions. This increase

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<sup>4</sup> According to the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#).



corresponds to at least a six-fold increase in budget for the EIT RIS compared to the 2014-2020 period. Additionally, the EIT KICs may choose to use their annual EIT RIS dedicated budget allocation to finance EIT RIS activities co-funded up to 100%, as they consider it most appropriate, in line with their strategy and priorities to deliver tangible deliverables including widening participation in the KICs from EIT RIS countries and regions.

The eligibility of EIT RIS is outlined in Article 2 of EIT Regulation and the EIT SIA. Countries and regions eligible for EIT RIS activities are those countries and the regions in those countries identified as either “moderate” or “modest” innovator in at least one of the three European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) annual reports issued in 2018, 2019 and 2020 for the period 2021-2024 and those identified as either “moderate” or “modest” innovator in at least one of the three EIS annual reports issued in 2021, 2022 and 2023 for the period 2025-2027, as well as Outermost Regions as defined in Article 349 TFEU.

## 2.5. Has the EIT RIS contributed to widening the participation to the EIT KICs?

The involvement of EIT KIC partners coming from EIT RIS eligible countries has been steadily increasing over the past decade. Between 2014, when the EIT RIS was established, and 2020, a total of 844 organisations from the EIT RIS countries joined the EIT Community and contributed to the implementation of activities (KAVAs<sup>5</sup>) in the KICs’ Business Plans. During 2017-2020 more than 1 300 early-stage start-up teams from EIT RIS countries were coached by the KICs and prepared to enter accelerators.

Overall, the scheme significantly helped changing the geographical spread of the EIT KICs’ networks. Averaging to 4% of the total EIT funding across the years 2016-2020, the EIT RIS increased the KICs’ presence in the EIT RIS countries and increased the number of partners and other beneficiaries from the EIT RIS countries. In 2014-2020, the number of partners from the EIT RIS countries has reached 1.031, increasing by 758 % compared to 2013 baseline. The EIT funding to partner organisations from EIT RIS countries has three-folded to attain € 686.69 million.

By 2027 the EIT wants to achieve that 15% of all its core activities will be in EIT RIS countries/regions. This will be measured based on the EIT's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and dedicated EIT RIS sub-KPIs. For example, under the *KPI Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) involved in EIT and KIC activities*, the sub-KPI will measure how many of these Universities come from EIT RIS countries. It is also foreseen that the EIT budget devoted to implementing EIT RIS activities, in the 2021-2027 period, will be at least 10% and maximum 15% of the overall EIT funding for existing and new KICs.

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<sup>5</sup> KIC Added-Value Activities. Please see section 3.5 for more information on KAVAs



## 2.6. What is an EIT Co-location Centre (Innovation Hub)?

The EIT KICs' activities are coordinated mainly through regional branches, the Co-Location Centers (CLCs), or Innovation Hubs, which are one of the EIT Community's primary characteristics to ensure capillarity in its impact. Each EIT KIC has 5 to 8 such CLCs, with partners in close proximity which is essential to facilitate interaction among members of the regional community.

A Co-location Centre is a physical hub, established in an open and transparent manner, which promotes linkages and active collaboration among knowledge triangle actors and acts as a focal point for knowledge exchange through which KICs' partners can access facilities and the expertise needed to pursue their common objectives. As such, CLCs are where EIT KIC partners work closely together on a daily basis for ideation, projects and initiatives.

There are over 60 EIT CLCs in Europe, building on existing centers of excellence and having three key functions: Connectivity, Knowledge Management and Activity Management.

Each KIC must ensure a proper connectivity among the CLC within and beyond its network to elevate the EIT Community's impact. A map of the EIT Community across Europe is available [here](#) and contact details for every CLC are available in the EIT NCP Extranet.

## 2.7. What is a RIS Hub?

The [EIT Regional Innovation Scheme](#) (RIS) was launched in 2014 to close Europe's innovation gaps. The EIT RIS helps local innovators access the EIT Community's activities, creates linkages among key regional innovation actors, and offers tailor-made programmes to support vibrant innovation ecosystems in countries with lower innovation performance.

RIS Hubs are physical hubs, established by the EIT KICs in the Member States or Associated Countries targeted by the EIT RIS. There are currently 80 RIS Hubs, as integral parts of the structure of the EIT KICs and serving as focal points for the KIC's activities and for the mobilisation and involvement of local knowledge triangle actors in the KIC's activities, as well as supporting efforts in sharing good practices and experiences and in widening participation to the EIT KICs in countries with a modest or moderate innovation performance.

EIT Hubs are local organisations, selected by EIT KICs via an open competitive process. These organisations might differ in nature (e.g., University lab, NGO, SME, research organisation etc.), but all share the objective of implementing the EIT RIS activities at local level and facilitating the EIT Community's efforts in fostering collaboration with local innovation ecosystems.



The EIT Hubs can be thematic or encompass several linked themes, such as climate change, energy, circular economy, etc. A map of the RIS Hubs is available [here](#) and contact details for every RIS Hubs are available in the EIT NCP Extranet.

## 2.8. What about EIT's international presence?

Strengthening Europe's global leadership in innovation is one of the EIT's key priorities. In June 2018, the EIT Governing Board adopted the [Strategic Framework on EIT Global Outreach Activities](#). The framework provides a roadmap for the EIT and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (EIT KICs) to implement activities in third countries that are both Associated and non-Associated to Horizon Europe. It guides such activities to make sure they are consistent with, and add value to, the EU's policy priorities.

In the same year, 2018, the EIT launched the [Global Outreach \(GO\) Programme](#), a cross-KIC collaboration closely coordinated with EIT that led to the opening of EIT Hubs in Silicon Valley (USA) and Tel Aviv (Israel). The GO Programme builds on EIT's signature Knowledge Triangle Integration (KTI) model, linking business, research and education to create relationships and market opportunities in key locations outside Europe – enabling the EIT Community to develop world-class solutions to societal challenges, and to create jobs and deliver sustainable economic growth opportunities for Europe.

The programme aims to provide the missing bridge to connect and the shop window to show-case Europe's innovation ecosystem with innovation hot spots worldwide, supporting European leadership and enhancing its impact in addressing key global societal challenges. Through the GO Hubs the KICs can position the innovation model internationally in alignment with other EU and national initiatives, as well as gain access to the best knowledge and talent worldwide, creating business opportunities in new markets and using science diplomacy as external policy instrument.

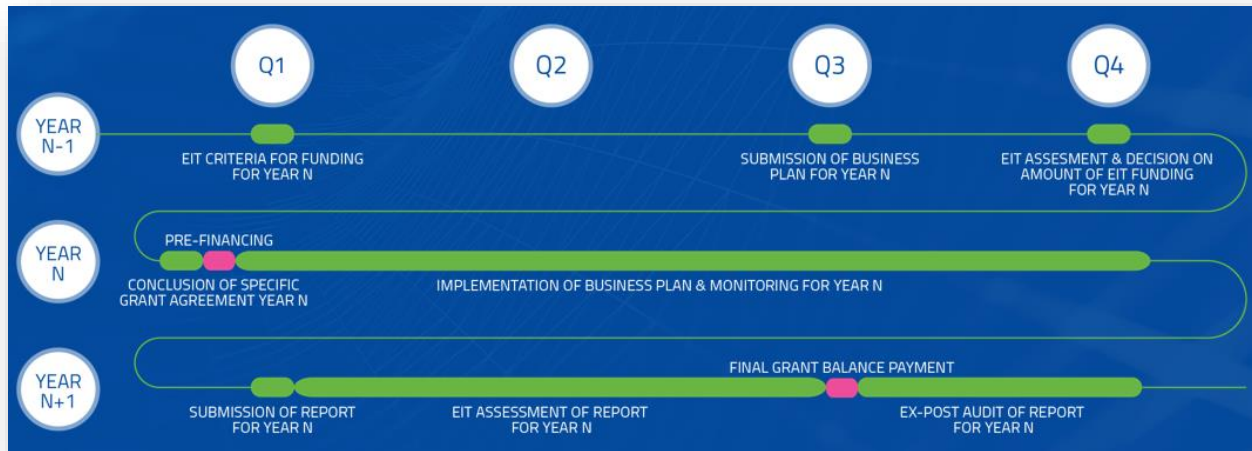


### 3. Funding Model and Specificities

#### 3.1. How has the EIT simplified its Annual Grant Cycle?

The EIT has a results-oriented and impact-driven approach to monitoring and assessment activities throughout the year. The EIT KICs operate according to business logic and based on Business Plans that implement their multiannual strategies and activity portfolios.

Until 2020, according to the EIT grant cycle, each EIT KIC submitted an annual business plan (September each year/ year n-1), which was assessed by EIT with support from external experts and via the EIT Governing Board (GB) hearings. An EIT GB decision defined the grant allocation per KIC, normally in November (each year/ year n-1), allowing for a smooth implementation of the business plans as of the beginning of the following year (n). The EIT grant cycle also included the annual grant reporting (March each year/ year n+1), where the performance of each KIC was assessed based on implementation of the business plan during the previous year (n).



Due to potential mismatches between the duration of business plans and the duration of individual projects/activities supported by EIT KICs, and to further reduce the administrative burden of the EIT Community, the EIT has been working on a new operational model and grant cycle, which will become multi-annual. As a result, the EIT introduced 2-year multiannual grant agreements for 2021-2022, and will move to standard 3-year grant agreement cycles as of 2023. The exact modalities are under definition, together with the European Commission. EIT KICs are regularly consulted on the implication of the new model too.





### 3.2. Does the EIT provide direct funding to organisations or research projects?

No. The EIT does not provide funding directly to individual organisations, but rather to the EIT KICs, as pan-European consortia of organisations. The EIT funding directed to the EIT KICs is distributed internally to different partners, based on the activities included in the Business Plans.

### 3.3. What is the funding model of an EIT KIC?

The [EIT's funding model](#) is based on a performance and competitive criteria and the funding is provided in the form of grants for action to the EIT KICs. The grants are based on the KICs' multi-annual Business Plans, on the Reporting criteria, and under continuous monitoring activities.

The EIT financial contribution is allocated so that it balances the requirement to support the KICs' long-term strategy while rewarding its excellence, impact ambition and implementation in the mid-term. The pattern of the EIT funding is a bell-shaped curve over the 15-years lifecycle of the EIT KICs. It starts with approximately 6 MEUR start-up grant, then a ramp up phase reaching a maturity peak of around 70-75 MEUR annually, and finally a phasing out of the EIT grant.

During this last phase, it is expected that the EIT KIC replaces the EIT funding with other funding sources, in the spirit of the financial sustainability principle. In addition, the EIT funding is performance-based, which means that it is within the discretion of the EIT Governing Board to decide on the annual grants based on the performance of each KIC.

As of 2023-2025 (call launched in Q2 2022), this model turned from annual into multiannual, taking into account the KICs' progress in:

- the implementation of their multiannual strategies (addressing KIC-specific challenges, reaching impact, results and openness targets, aligning with the EIT's good governance principles and the EU's strategic objectives, delivering cross-KIC and EIT RIS activities);
- progress towards financial sustainability and performance;
- effectiveness of operation and impact achieved as measured by KPIs;
- non-financial performance measured inter alia through diversity and alignment with the EIT/EU co-branding provisions.

In order to ensure comparability between KICs and allow flexibility and adaptability, the specific assessment criteria for performance-based funding, the weightings and other precise modalities are further specified by the EIT as part of the [most recent](#) and future calls for grants.

### 3.4. How much is the total funding of an EIT KIC?

Our historical data shows that the EIT funding for the first wave EIT KICs during the first 11 years of their operation was approximately 620 MEUR in average. Considering that these EIT KICs will still receive EIT funding until 2024 and that the grant amount will decline in favour of other sources of income in the last phase, a good estimation of the total funding received during the 15-year lifecycle of an EIT KIC is 720 MEUR.

### 3.5. What is a KAVA?

KIC Added-Value Activities (KAVAs) are activities carried out by partner organisations in accordance with the EIT KIC's Business Plan, contributing to the integration of the knowledge triangle of higher education, research and innovation, including the establishment, administrative and coordination activities of the KICs, and contributing to the overall objectives of the EIT.

Some examples include education, business creation, research & innovation, EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) and KIC ecosystem building activities, which are set out in the Business Plans and reported in EIT KIC Reports, grouped in segments and areas.

### 3.6. What do you mean by financial sustainability of the EIT KICs? Why is it needed?

Financial sustainability is the capacity of EIT KICs to finance their knowledge triangle activities and ecosystems independently from the EIT funding, after the 15 years (max.) period of EIT Funding.

The obligation for the KICs to become financially sustainable is a unique feature of the EIT Model that aims at a long-term, business and result oriented innovation instrument. In this context, KICs shall develop revenue, implementing financing strategies that maintain their knowledge triangle and ecosystems activities beyond the period covered by EIT financial support through the grant agreements. The EIT's Governing Board adopted the [new principles of financial sustainability for 2021-2027](#), which provide the framework for KICs to achieve the objective of reaching financial sustainability.

As set in the EIT Regulation regarding the revised EIT funding model, the EIT contribution to the KICs shall gradually decrease over time in compliance with the co-funding rates defined in the SIA 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, during years 13-15

*\*Year 1 is for the start-up grant, provided in the first set-up year in a KIC's lifecycle.*

Some KIC activities, due to their specific nature, might need extra incentives to be performed. To this aim, the EIT Governing Board might decide to apply more favourable funding conditions for Cross-KIC activities, EIT RIS activities and the pilot higher education initiative.

The KIC Legal Entity (LE) and its co-location centres shall be financed, in particular, from 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 Union.

The KICs or their partner organisations may apply for Union financial contribution, in particular in the framework of Union programmes and funds, in accordance with their respective rules. In that case, such contribution shall not cover the same activity already funded under another Union programme. Contributions from partner organisations to the financing of the KICs shall be determined in accordance with the co-funding rates defined in the SIA and reflect the KIC's strategy for financial sustainability.

### 3.7. What is the difference between financial sustainability and co-funding?

The [Principles of Financial Sustainability](#) (FS) and co-funding of projects, at the EIT KIC level, are interlinked, but not the same concept. FS is much broader and concerns the revenue generating capacity and financial backflow mechanism to a KIC Legal Entity and related entities, such as Co-location Centers, in order to be able to sustain activities once the EIT grant starts decreasing.

Co-funding is about covering a proportion of eligible costs of activities of KICs during the implementation period from other sources than the EIT. The principle of co-funding is laid down clearly in the EU Financial



Regulation and the Horizon Europe Regulation, applicable in general to all EU funding schemes, and has strict pre-defined co-funding level requirements.

As from 2021 the EIT formalized its new funding model to strengthen the KICs ability to comply with the financial sustainability principles by providing a clear framework to implement KIC Added Values Activities (KAVAs) without EIT funding.

### **3.8. Where do the co-funding sources of an EIT KIC come from?**

The EIT KIC co-funding (non-EIT funding) includes KIC Partners' own contribution, as well as national or regional sources, private funding and funding from other sources. As an example, if an industrial partner contributes to an activity with co-funding, this will be private; if a public university does so, then the co-funding will be public. Over 90% of the co-funding is contributed by EIT KIC Partners, depending on their partnership status.

### **3.9. How do you assess the EIT and KICs' Impact?**

The EIT has developed an Impact Framework, aligned with the Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways, which defines the socio-economic 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 SIA 2021 – 2027 and is closely aligned with the Horizon Europe societal and economic/technological impact pathways.

The EIT Impact Framework sets up a solid basis for performing impact evaluations in a systematic manner, supported by robust evidence, as well as a basis for the EIT's result-based investment approach. The Impact Framework will also allow measuring, through an accurate and credible process, the EIT contribution to innovation, knowledge triangle integration, economic development and societal challenges, and thus demonstrating impact of the EIT investment. This is particularly important in a context in which policy makers and EU citizens are demanding results and accountability from public investments.

In line with Article 11(2) of the EIT Regulation, the EIT, under the supervision of the Governing Board, conducts interim reviews of the performance and activities of the KICs covering their first three years of the Partnership Agreement. Furthermore, with the support of external experts, the EIT conducts comprehensive assessment of the KICs before the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of their Partnership Agreement, as well as to a final review before its end in case of extension.

Based on the first assessment, the EIT Governing Board will decide on whether to extend the Partnership Agreement beyond the first 7 years, decide to either continue the financial contribution to a KIC, to modify



or to discontinue it (thus not extending the Partnership Agreement with that KIC) and reallocate the resources to better performing activities.

In addition, the EIT will conduct an impact study around 2024 with the support of external experts to assess the progress made by all KICs, together and separately. The study will measure the EIT Community's societal and economic impact as defined in the EIT SIA (2021-2027), the EIT Impact Framework, and the EIT KICs' Strategic Agendas. Ultimately, it will measure the EIT's contribution to Horizon Europe's Key Impact Pathways.

## 4. Participation in the EIT Community and its activities

### 4.1. Do I need to be a partner to get involved and benefit from the EIT KICs' activities?

No, you do not. There are different ways to be involved in the EIT's activities, as an individual or an organisation, partner or no-partner. Some examples:

- By joining as a partner, according to the partnership schemes and conditions offered by each EIT KIC. More information is available [here](#).
- By working jointly with one of the EIT KIC partners on the implementation of innovation projects and receiving EIT financial support through it. In this case, a sub-grantee contractual agreement can be signed with an EIT KIC. Although the EIT does not have a direct legal or contractual relationship with sub-grantees, the organisation still benefits from EIT financial support and is considered part of the extended EIT innovation network.
- By applying to one of the several Education, Entrepreneurship and Innovation programmes implemented across Europe by the EIT's KICs. Available opportunities are published [here](#). For example:
  - as a start-up or a scale-up, you can receive direct financial support from the EIT KICs or support in services (mentoring, first customers, access to financial, business model development, training) through the business support and acceleration programmes;
  - as a student, you can participate in Master, Doctoral or online courses;
  - as a professional you can benefit from professional educational programmes (e.g. MOOCs)
  - In case you are a researcher or have an innovative idea that fits to the EIT Community's themes, you can benefit from access to our network's infrastructure, or services provided by our incubators or even team up with our partners to develop further your idea.



- Through the [EIT Regional Innovation Scheme](#) (EIT RIS). If you are from an EIT RIS eligible country, you can be involved and benefit from activities and programmes designed especially for your country, such as EIT RIS scholarships for EIT labelled education programmes, pre-acceleration programmes and bootcamps, the EIT RIS Executive Academy and more.

For more information, it is advised to get in touch with the closest Co-location Center or RIS Hub. Check [here](#) to know their locations, or contact us directly.

#### 4.2. What is the benefit of engaging with the EIT Community?

It is pretty simple. The EIT is Europe's largest innovation network with almost 3.000 partners spanning in over 60 Co-location Centres. No other body or instrument in the EU fully integrates the knowledge triangle of business, research and education, has the size and diversity of the EIT Community, nor its pan-European nature and long-term, business driven approach.

By choosing to become a partner in one (or more) of the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities you join a major player that drives change, by breaking barriers to innovation and creates impact globally. Moreover, you enter a long-term partnership that allows you to come closer to professionals and organisations along the entire value chain, accompanying you all the way to success. Finally, as a partner you have a say in the strategic decisions of the partnership, something that offers you the opportunity to make a difference in the largest public-private partnership in the EU, and become a decision-maker in how to support innovators across Europe.

#### 4.3. I am an SME/ Research Centre/ University, can I become an EIT partner?

EIT does not offer direct partnerships, but rather develops and provides strategic guidance and funding to the EIT KICs. In their turn, EIT KICs deliver activities all across Europe. Therefore:

- If you are interested in delivering activities on the ground that contribute to tackling any of the global challenges addressed by the EIT Community, you shall consider working with one or more EIT KICs, as a partner, by contacting your closest Co-location Center.
- If you are interested about our activities and want raise awareness about available opportunities offered by the EIT KICs in your country and network, you can get in contact with the EIT, the EIT KICs or the dedicated EIT National Contact Points in your country.
- You can also sign up [here](#) for the EIT Newsletter, which periodically provides information on upcoming funding and engagement opportunities offered by the EIT Community.



#### 4.4. Do the EIT KICs offer only one partnership type? Under which conditions, fees?

As business-oriented, independent legal entities, EIT KICs develop their unique proposition regarding partnership types and conditions, according to the specificities of their sector. For example, core and associated partnerships are typical for EIT Health, while memberships are used for EIT Manufacturing. Each EIT KIC sets up the procedures to become a partner, fees and obligations, but also benefits and voting rights. Please access the dedicated pages [here](#) for more.

An overview of the KIC Memberships is available on the EIT NCP Extranet.

#### 4.5. What changes with the reinforced openness requirement for non-partners?

Ensuring openness and transparency is one of the key principles of the EIT. As of 2021, openness has become a legal requirement of the EIT KICs. This is reflected in the Partnership Agreements between EIT and KICs and it will be included in the monitoring activities carried out by the EIT.

The openness obligation requires published calls to be open to everyone, regardless of geographical location and partnership status, and encourages the EIT KICs to adopt operational models for openness towards new partner organisations. In concrete terms, each EIT KIC must:

- be open to new partners by raising awareness among stakeholders and encouraging their participation, and remain open during its lifetime;
- ensure a high degree of openness when managing KIC funding schemes, including openness of calls for projects to non-KIC partners;
- be transparent, by publishing on its website key documents and information such as
  - KIC Strategic Agenda;
  - a KIC set-up and governance including the KIC LE and the entities with a CLC role: KIC governance and management bodies, decision-making process, the articles of association and other documents laying down the legal structure of the KIC, KIC Code of Conduct;
  - KIC partnership: partner categories, names, partner entry and exit criteria, application process for becoming a KIC partner and redress procedure;
  - final KIC Business Plans, annual progress reports, information on ongoing activities, outcome and results;



- procedure for the preparation of the KIC Business Plans, including the identification of priorities, the selection of activities (e.g. the calls for proposals and other funding schemes managed by KIC), list of selected activities and allocation of funds, and the redress procedures;
- calls for tenders (i.e. procurement) of the KIC LE and entities with a CLC role;
- calls for EIT RIS hubs;
- open, transparent selection and recruitment in KIC LEs and entities with CLC role;
- KIC IP Policy;
- publish its funding schemes on the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) under Horizon Europe.

#### 4.6. Can a national or regional public body become an EIT KIC Partner?

Yes. The involvement of national institutions (e.g. Ministries, Chambers of Commerce, National Research Centres, etc.) greatly depends on specific national priorities and in terms of action coordination at EU level. For example, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce works with EIT Climate-KIC, coordinating the RIS Hub in the country together with other entities. The operational collaboration is only one layer, as there are also framework agreements for advisory services towards national innovation institutes and other national authorities. See an example [here](#).

#### 4.7. Can third countries participate in the EIT's activities?

EIT is an integral part of Horizon Europe, therefore fully aligned with the Horizon Europe rules regarding participation of Associated Countries. This means that Associated Countries are eligible to participate in our activities as per their association agreement under Horizon Europe.

Partners from [prospective](#) associated countries will be eligible to receive funding from EIT as of the date of the conclusion of the country's association agreement to Horizon. In certain cases, as per the agreed rules of association, the eligibility of funding will apply retroactively.

Taking the above into account, and considering that the EIT is one of the first Horizon Europe programmes signing grant agreements with beneficiaries, the following approach agreed with the European Commission, is taking place in those cases where there is no association agreement at the time of the grant signature with the EIT KICs:

1. KICs can keep the entities from third countries that expect to associate in their Business Plans, allocating them tasks, but without EIT funding. *Note: KICs cannot indicate EIT funding in their*





*Business Plans as these entities are not eligible for funding. The relevant third countries or the KICs can fund the activities involving these countries exclusively through non-EIT funds (e.g. own, national).*

2. An amendment to the grant agreement could be possible when the association agreements enter into force to change the status of the entities and the available budget, depending however on the provisions of the association agreements concerned.
3. If the third country concerned will not associate to the Programme, the KICs will have to bear their costs themselves (without EU funding) or they will be borne by the relevant third countries through national contributions.

Apart from the three possibilities described above, for those cases of EIT activities where the participation of entities from non-associated countries is deemed essential, Article [19(2)(b)] of the HE Regulation could be used. However, it needs to be carefully noted that under that Article, the possibility to provide funding to entities from non-associated countries (other than low to middle income) is i) exceptional and ii) must be justified based on the concrete action (the participation of a given entity must be essential in that action).

All currently negotiated association agreements are available [here](#).



## 5. Opportunities and Activities by the EIT KICs

### 5.1. Where can I find information about the EIT KICs' activities and open calls?

You have several options:

- You can find opportunities in entrepreneurial education, business creation and acceleration, innovation, EIT RIS, global outreach and citizen engagement activities run by the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities on our website [here](#) and on the Funding & Tenders Portal under Horizon Europe [here](#).
- EIT KICs Business Creation activities and opportunities catalogue is available [here](#).
- Information about events organised by the EIT Community or with participation of EIT or KIC representatives can be found [here](#).
- For KIC-specific information you can visit the [KIC dedicated websites](#) or you can contact your [closest Co-Location Centre or RIS Hub](#).
- You might want to subscribe to the EIT's newsletter [here](#).

### 5.2. What types of calls are offered by the EIT Community?

We offer three different levels of calls:

1. **EIT Calls for new partnerships**, covering calls for a new Knowledge and Innovation Community, are managed by the EIT (e.g. EIT Culture & Creativity was set up in June 2022) and foreseen in the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda. Consortia can apply in line with the conditions laid down in the calls for proposal. As a result of a competitive selection, a new KIC is designated by the EIT. The next call is foreseen to be launched in 2025 for the creation of a new KIC in the area of the marine and maritime sectors.
2. **EIT Calls for grants** aim to select the portfolio of activities that will be delivered by the KICs, via the multi-annual Business Plans. Calls are launched under different KIC-specific or cross-KIC topics, clustered under different themes, as well as target the EIT's strategic initiative on capacity building of Higher Education Institutes (HEI). Already designated KIC Legal Entities and their associated entities can submit proposals to these calls.
3. **EIT KIC opportunities** target organisations (i.e. partners, third parties, etc.), students, innovators, entrepreneurs and other potential end-beneficiaries to implement activities foreseen in the KICs' Business Plans (e.g. accelerators, education programmes etc.). These opportunities can be in the areas of education, innovation, business creation and support or be implemented under the EIT RIS



(e.g. EIT Jumpstarter programme) and cross-KIC activities (e.g. the Global Outreach programme *Disrupt Me* offered by the EIT Hub in Israel). KIC Legal Entities organise and manage these calls, laying down specific conditions to participate and selecting proposals for funding. The EIT monitors the Calls.

### 5.3. Which are the different EIT KICs Business Creation programmes?

Each EIT KIC organises its programmes independently. Entrepreneurship offers are available in the relevant sub-pages on the EIT website [here](#). In case of specific interest, we advise contacting the EIT KICs directly. For the KIC-specific Business Creation programmes, you can also see page 38-39 of the EIT KICs BC catalogue [here](#).

### 5.4. How does investor outreach work, within the EIT Community?

Connecting start-ups / scaleups with external investors (angels, VCs, institutional etc.) is part of the Business Creation activities at EIT KIC level. It is also linked to the financial sustainability requirement for all EIT KICs, measurable via reported achievements against KPIs (e.g. number of ventures supported in which KICs have equity share in; amount of external investment attracted by the supported start-ups/ scaleups; part of the revenues generated by new products/services/processes launched on the market etc.) You can find an example of public-private co-investment programme by EIT Health launched with EIF [here](#).

### 5.5. What is the current EIT educational offer?

There is a wide range of [educational activities offered by EIT/ KICs and their education partners](#): from degree education (including the EIT labelled Master and PhD programmes), to lifelong learning, summer schools, professional training and executive education. EIT and KICs also offer long list of and online (or blended) courses.

The [EIT Label](#) is a certificate of quality awarded only to excellent educational programmes. Programmes, modules and courses that have the EIT Label build on five groups of quality criteria: the EIT Overarching Learning Outcomes (EIT OLOs); robust entrepreneurship education; highly integrated, innovative ‘learning-by-doing’ curricula; mobility, the European dimension and openness to the world; and outreach strategy and access policy. Available [Master](#) and [PhD](#) programmes are listed on the EIT website.

EIT online courses are provided in cooperation with leading global online education platforms, such as Coursera, Learnify and FutureLearn, targeting a range of learners, including university students and



professionals. The topics are variegated and related to the societal challenges covered by the EIT KICs. Some courses are developed by more KICs. More information is [here](#).

In addition, the education portfolios of the EIT KICs come as a variety of building blocks in many additional formats: free online courses for kids, young adults, EIT labelled university degree programmes and executive education. Please find below an overview of reference:

Who	"ACADEMY", referring either to whole education portfolio and/or degree programmes	Executive education	Online provisions
EIT Climate-KIC	<a href="https://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/education/">https://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/education/</a>  <a href="https://masterschool.climate-kic.org/">https://masterschool.climate-kic.org/</a>	<a href="https://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/education/#professional-education">https://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/education/#professional-education</a>	<a href="https://store.climate-kic.org/">https://store.climate-kic.org/</a>
EIT Digital	<a href="https://www.eitdigital.eu/eit-digital-academy/">https://www.eitdigital.eu/eit-digital-academy/</a>	<a href="https://professionalschool.eitdigital.eu/">https://professionalschool.eitdigital.eu/</a>	<a href="https://www.eitdigital.eu/online-education/">https://www.eitdigital.eu/online-education/</a>
EIT InnoEnergy	<a href="https://www.innoenergy.com/for-students-learners/">https://www.innoenergy.com/for-students-learners/</a>  <a href="https://www.innoenergy.com/for-students-learners/master-school/">https://www.innoenergy.com/for-students-learners/master-school/</a>	<a href="https://www.eba250.com/eba-academy/">https://www.eba250.com/eba-academy/</a>	N/A
EIT RawMaterials	<a href="https://eitrawmaterials.eu/eit-rm-academy/">https://eitrawmaterials.eu/eit-rm-academy/</a>	<a href="https://eitrawmaterials.eu/eit-rm-academy/lifelonglearning/">https://eitrawmaterials.eu/eit-rm-academy/lifelonglearning/</a>	<a href="https://eitrawmaterials.eu/eit-rm-academy/online-learning/">https://eitrawmaterials.eu/eit-rm-academy/online-learning/</a>
EIT Health	<a href="https://eithealth.eu/what-we-">https://eithealth.eu/what-we-</a>	<a href="https://eithealth.eu/what-we-do/education/(filter%20by%20health">https://eithealth.eu/what-we-do/education/ (filter by health</a>	<a href="https://eithealth.eu/what-we-">https://eithealth.eu/what-we-</a>



	<a href="#">do/education/</a>	<a href="#">professionals &amp; executives)</a>	<a href="#">do/education/</a>
EIT Food	<a href="https://www.eitfood.eu/education">https://www.eitfood.eu/education</a>	<a href="https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/eit-food-government-executive-academy">https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/eit-food-government-executive-academy</a>	<a href="https://www.eitfood.eu/education">https://www.eitfood.eu/education</a>
EIT Urban Mobility	<a href="https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/academy/">https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/academy/</a>  <a href="https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/masterschool/">https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/masterschool/</a>	<a href="https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/competence-hub/">https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/competence-hub/</a>	<a href="https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/competence-hub/e-learning-courses-competence-hub/">https://www.eiturbanmobility.eu/competence-hub/e-learning-courses-competence-hub/</a>
EIT Manufacturing	<a href="https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/education/">https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/education/</a>  <a href="https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/education/education-programmes/empower-programme/master-school/">https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/education/education-programmes/empower-programme/master-school/</a>	<a href="https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/education/education-programmes/transform-and-connect-programmes/">https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/education/education-programmes/transform-and-connect-programmes/</a>	<a href="https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/calls-and-opportunities/">https://www.eitmanufacturing.eu/what-we-do/calls-and-opportunities/</a>

## 5.6. What is the “HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education”?

Higher education institutions (HEIs) need to be innovative and entrepreneurial in their approach to education, research and engagement with businesses and the innovation ecosystem, in the most inclusive and gender balanced way. The [new Action on boosting the innovation capacity of HEIs](#) aims to broaden participation of universities, particularly from EIT RIS eligible countries.



The EIT launched a pilot initiative to support the development of innovation and entrepreneurial capacity in HEIs through the KICs, starting in 2021. The impact of the EIT is crucially extended to non-KIC partners, through open and transparent calls. The first call funded 24 pilot projects to be implemented in 2021–2023. A second call supports 26 new projects, selected in June 2022.

The pilot's activities address primarily the capacity development of HEIs, including (1) the exchange and implementation of best practices in the knowledge triangle integration (organisational learning, training for upskilling and reskilling, coaching and mentoring); (2) the development of innovation vision action plans on how to address identified needs in areas such as innovation management, start-up creation and development, technology transfer, sustainability and climate neutrality by design, integration of gender approaches in innovation.

The EIT will also strengthen and widen the scope of the EIT Label beyond the KICs to include the HEIs participating in the action, as well as extend the EIT Label to lifelong learning activities, e.g. mentoring, vocational training, skilling and re-skilling programmes, MOOCs, involving and reaching out to a wider target group of students, adult learners and institutions, beyond the KICs.

### 5.7. What is the EIT's contribution to the New European Bauhaus?

Throughout 2021, the EIT Community has leveraged its large network to support the design phase of the [New European Bauhaus Initiative \(NEB\)](#). As a result, a joint EIT Community New European Bauhaus initiative was deployed to combine aesthetics, sustainability, and inclusion to increase citizen engagement and involve communities in the co-design of sustainable public spaces while delivering on the goals of the European Green Deal.

The EIT Community NEB initiative, led by EIT Climate-KIC and including EIT Digital, EIT Food, EIT Manufacturing and EIT Urban Mobility, supports sustainable ventures and brings science, technology, arts and culture together in the fight against climate change.

With a budget of EUR 5 million for 2021-2022, the initiative specifically aims to (1) provide acceleration services to New European Bauhaus-related entrepreneurs, innovators and ventures; (2) create and mobilise bottom-up citizen driven initiatives; (3) offer entrepreneurial training activities and education resources in upskilling and lifelong learning.

This will be done through three streams of support:

- **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT:** 16 projects in 2021 (EUR 375K total grant) for innovative and collaborative models of local initiatives that increase the engagement of citizens, communities and local stakeholders in the design of sustainable public spaces that yield high impact for community



members. On 28 March 2022, the EIT Community New European Bauhaus [Call for proposals for Co-Creation of public space through citizen engagement](#) and [Call for proposals for Citizen Engagement Activities](#) were launched. In response to this call around 120 proposals for citizen engagement activities and 140 on co-creation of public space through citizen engagement applications were submitted. The evaluation process is currently ongoing (July 2022).

- **BUSINESS BOOSTER:** 20 grants to innovative companies (EUR 50K each) combined with business support to grow their business and become international gamechangers and to secure high-impact solutions combining innovation with design and inclusivity. This builds on the previous success of its pilot phase which has already supported 13 NEB-related ventures with a total of EUR 650K.
- **JUMPSTARTER:** the award-winning pre-accelerator programme drives innovation and entrepreneurship within Central and Eastern Europe by validating innovative solutions that break down boundaries between science and technology, art, culture and social inclusion. 2021 saw the inclusion of a New European Bauhaus category into the Jumpstarter programme, resulting in the participation of 20 shortlisted teams in 11 online bootcamps to get fundamental entrepreneurial skills and pitch training. At the final ceremony, the winning team will be awarded with EUR 10K.

### 5.8. What is the EIT's Unique Selling Point vis-à-vis other innovation support services?

The strength of the EIT Community lays in its ecosystem, the largest European innovation network. KICs facilitate structuring and support implementation of innovation activities providing a direct link with the clients/customers (business partners, industry), business support organisations and when relevant regional authorities already in the development phase of an innovation project, as these businesses are KIC partners or are parts of the KICs ecosystems.

The KICs are also unique due to their pan-European dimension, supporting collaboration across countries and different sectors. Finally, the KICs are very responsive to the new challenges and are capable to quickly, through open calls, provide support for the impactful initiatives.

The EIT monitors the quality and performance of its KICs through regular evaluations, assessments and annual reviews of business plans and reports with the help of external experts. Moreover, supported start-ups and entrepreneurs are surveyed by the EIT KICs on the quality of the acceleration services they receive, with the aim of further improving the delivered services.



### 5.9. Are there specific support programmes for women?

The EIT is committed to creating an inclusive innovation landscape, which means empowering entrepreneurial women. We help young women develop digital and entrepreneurial skills, connect women leaders across Europe and celebrate their innovative achievements. In fact, powering innovation is more than simply financing innovators: a pipeline of ideas, talent, and the supporting environment/ecosystem – that is tailor-made – needs early support.

The EIT acknowledges that gender equality is a fundamental human right and lies at the heart of the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 of the EU. Therefore, the EIT contributes also to the EU Gender Equality Strategy, with a gender equality process started in 2015.

In 2018, the EIT introduced a new [EIT Women Leadership Awards](#) category for women innovators, which recognises the outstanding achievements of women entrepreneurs in the EIT Community.

In 2020, we adopted an EIT Gender Action Plan to educate our staff, take stock of major challenges, and chart a path for greater gender equality across our community. Furthermore, the EIT supports [Women@EIT](#), a network of over 700 female students and alumni across all the EIT KICs. Their aim is to inspire next generations, promote women's leadership across all EIT KICs and empower women to become role models in innovation, business, entrepreneurship, technology.

The EIT [Girls Go Circular](#) initiative equips 50 000 schoolgirls aged 14-18 across Europe with digital and entrepreneurial skills by 2027, through an online learning programme about the circular economy. Under the coordination of EIT RawMaterials, the project is contributing to reducing the digital gender gap in Southern and Eastern Europe since 2017.

The EIT will also promote the EIT Women leaders via a structured collaboration with the European Innovation Council and concretely its [Leadership Programme](#). The EIT will additionally provide EIT Community mentors and take several other actions to strengthen the diversity in innovation and tech and to support the creation of women led start-ups.

### 5.10. What is the EIT Alumni?

The [EIT Alumni](#) is a “network of networks”, primarily bringing together the members of the growing Alumni Communities at EIT KIC level. While the three youngest EIT KICs' Alumni communities are under structuring, the already existing and operative communities include:

- [EIT Digital Alumni](#);
- [The CommUnity by EIT InnoEnergy](#);





- [EIT Climate-KIC Alumni](#);
- [EIT Health Alumni](#);
- [EIT RawMaterials Alumni](#);
- [EIT Food Alumni](#).

The members of these communities are individuals who have successfully completed one of the EIT KICs' educational programmes or business accelerator programmes. Membership can also be awarded to 'associate members' and former employees, depending on the Alumni community. Rules for membership vary and are set up by each EIT KIC independently.

The EIT Alumni is therefore a community of entrepreneurs, innovators and change agents with a multidisciplinary background. The community develops activities for innovation and business creation with/for its members, including networking and matchmaking; stimulates an entrepreneurial mind-set in Europe and beyond; and represents the interests of the EIT Alumni Community vis-à-vis the EIT, the KICs and other relevant European and global stakeholders.

## 6. Synergies with other EU programmes and initiatives

### 6.1. What does the EIT-EIC cooperation entitle?

The EIT and EIC share the same mission to foster innovation in Europe. However, they have different, complementary profiles:

- The EIT provides a community, guiding innovators across the entire innovation journey, while the EIC provides direct financing for high-risk, high-potential individual ventures.
- While the EIT builds innovation ecosystems and unites research, business, education, the EIC helps individual researchers and start-ups enter markets and scale up.
- The EIT embraces all types of innovation and integrates education activities into its model, while the EIC focuses on disruptive deep-tech innovations.
- Both make an important contribution to address the challenges posed by COVID and support Europe's recovery, as well as to the delivery of the green and digital transition.

In early 2020, a joint task force of the EIT Governing Board and the EIC Advisory Board was set up to develop a strategic framework for structured cooperation. In September 2020, three EIT KICs (EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy) signed a Letter of Intent with the EIC, outlining their shared commitment to close cooperation. In January 2021, the EIT and EIC signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) to seal their synergetic cooperation for the years to come: the two organisations agreed to harmonise their support for



ventures, ensure mutual access to each other's networks and share information on projects and impact assessments, among others.

As of October 2021, KICs have a pilot Fast-Track mechanism in place for the EIC Accelerator, and from March 2022 a fully-fledged Fast-Track mechanism has been in place. Also, four KICs (EIT InnoEnergy, EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Health and EIT Digital) have signed pilot Common Support Actions (CSA) grant agreements with EIC to provide support to EIC beneficiaries for one year.

The EIC and EIT continue to build a structured collaboration in several areas beyond the Fast-Track to the EIT Accelerator, such as joint activities to support women innovators and entrepreneurs, facilitating access of beneficiaries of the EIC Pathfinder and Transition programmes to the EIT Community and supporting start-ups in widening countries. The collaboration is overseen by a joint working group of the EIC Board and the EIT Governing Board, which meets three-four times a year.

As regards 2022 collaboration, some specific priorities for 2022 have been agreed, including:

- Access to relevant advisory services for all EIC and EIT-supported start-ups;
- Reinforced collaboration to support female entrepreneurs;
- Reviewing the experience of the ongoing pilot actions;
- Joint communication materials and events;

Furthermore, there is a strong and developing collaboration between EIT Alumni and the EIC Bootcamps where EIT Alumni members serve as mentors to the EIC Bootcamps participants.

## 6.2. How does EIT synergise with other EU instruments and programmes?

Synergies are at the heart of the EIT's activities. While located in Pillar 3 of Horizon Europe (Innovative Europe), the EIT is well equipped to support both Pillar 1 (Excellent Science) and Pillar 2 (Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness). The EIT also complements other key EU programmes (e.g. Cohesion Policy, European Structural and Investment Funds, Erasmus+).

The EIT strongly encourages synergies with other EU, national and regional programmes and initiatives. EIT KICs identify and exploit synergies based on their Strategic Objectives and activities, with the aim to increase the effectiveness of their work and impact in their respective areas. It is worth noting that the identification of synergies is a key criterion which is assessed and scored during the assessment of proposals for a new EIT KIC.

The EIT has requested all KICs to systematically map and address potential synergies with other EU, national and regional initiatives. Currently, there are several relevant examples, some of which are listed below:



- EIT InnoEnergy manages the industrial development programme of the [European Battery Alliance](#), bringing together 400+ industrial and innovation actors to strengthen Europe's battery industry.
- EIT Raw Materials plays a leading role in the [European Raw Materials Alliance](#), a key initiative of the new EU Industrial Strategy that will bring together Europe's entire raw materials value chain.
- EIT Health and EIT Food have set up **Policy Advisory Boards** that include high-level Commission representatives to ensure their complementarity with EU objectives.
- See point 6.1. for details of the EIT-EIC cooperation.
- The EIT is actively working on identifying synergies with DG RTD and DG EAC regarding the potential involvement of the EIT KICs in **Horizon Europe's Missions**, particularly on Cancer, Adaptation to Climate Change, Climate Neutral and Smart Cities, and Soil Health and Food. EIT Climate-KIC is the coordinator of the NetZero project, a central piece of the Cities Mission actively contributing to the goals of the European Green Deal, by supporting European cities in drastically cutting down greenhouse gas emissions.
- The EIT KICs and their partners could be providers of entrepreneurship and innovation skills in pan-European research networks, such as the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)**. In addition, the EIT plans to link up with **Erasmus+** to allow Erasmus students participating in higher education institutions partnered with the EIT KICs to access the KICs' summer schools, training activities, and alumni networks; to train academic staff in curricula that integrate entrepreneurship and innovation; and to support the testing, adoption and scaling up of innovative practices developed within Erasmus networks (e.g. the Knowledge Alliances between higher education institutions and businesses). Erasmus is already a source of supplementary funding for mobility, EIT train-the-trainer activities and the development of an EIT Competence Certification model.
- EIT and EIF signed a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on Sep 17, 2021, ensuring continued cooperation** between the two organizations. The MoC is in the field of **financial instruments for innovative startups / scaleups** (on the model of the EIT Health – EIF Venture Center of Excellence, but for other verticals, such as Agritech / BioEconomy), and also cooperation in the field of Education and Regional Development (via EIT RIS), to be developed in 2022. Also, the EIT Climate-KIC, EIT Manufacturing, EIT Health, EIT Digital, EIT RawMaterials, and EIT Food are discussing cooperation with the **European Investment Fund (EIF) Mandate Team** under Invest EU/Next Generation EU, in the following areas: access to finance for innovative ventures, Green Deal and Digitalisation priorities, EIT Community initiatives in emerging technologies, education, and support for EIT Regional Innovation Scheme countries.
- The EIT can offer a pipeline of investment opportunities supported by the EIT KICs (e.g., scaleups with unicorn potential, innovation projects with strong market potential at the EU-level). In this



context, the EIT plans to present 5-10 innovative opportunities annually to the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** and its financial intermediaries and stakeholders.

- EIT is actively working to ensure synergies between its activities and **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**. This follows the publication of a joint [JRC-EIT Science for Policy Report](#), which elaborates on the potential for cooperation between the EIT KICs and the Managing Authorities of the ESIF in the context of Smart Specialisation Strategies.
- The EIT also plans to actively contribute to **Digital Europe**. The EIT KICs' co-location centres intend to work with the European Digital Innovation Hubs to support the digital transition of European industry and the public sector. The EIT Community will also explore the possibility of using the Digital Education Plan's capacity and infrastructure (e.g., data resources, algorithms, computing competence centres) in education & training and for testing and demonstration in innovation projects.
- The **European Patent Office (EPO)** and the EIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 5th May 2022, to strengthen collaboration on a broad range of intellectual property matters, increase support and expertise to European innovators and SMEs. The two organisations have already enjoyed a fruitful collaboration since 2018, with the EPO participating in the EIT Innovation Communities' working group on IP, "Innovation Panel" meetings to provide tailor-made training on IP issues and additional targeted training offered to different parts of the EIT Community. The KICs were also introduced to the "PATLIB network" to find synergies with the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme. With the signed MoU, the EPO and EIT have agreed to develop specific activities, projects and programmes, and to support innovators and entrepreneurs across Europe in turning their ideas into products and services. As such, EIT and EPO together create highly skilled jobs and economic growth and promote a modern IP culture in Europe among researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs by improving their access to the European IP system.
- The EIT and the [European Union Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#) signed [an agreement in 2020](#) that brings together innovation and intellectual property (IP) for the benefit of European small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). This has proved to be an excellent opportunity for the EIT KICs, to increase SME and the KICs innovation activities and knowledge on IP. By joining forces on IP management, the EIT has established links between EUIPO and KIC programmes (e.g. [EIT Health Jumpstarter](#) and [InnoStars](#), [Skills for the Future](#) and [Girls Go Circular](#)) and started structurally embedding IP into the EIT and KICs' activities, through which over 800 participants have benefited since 2021. For more details, please visit the factsheet [here](#).