



Input for the Revision of the EIT Regulation and of the Strategic Innovation Agenda

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1. Innovation ecosystems, knowledge triangle and market impact

Eurochambres broadly agrees with the challenges identified. Europe needs to get better at turning its strong research and knowledge base into innovation, market uptake and economic value.

The knowledge triangle (education, research and business) is a key strength of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and should remain at its core. But businesses, particularly SMEs, need a stronger role in shaping priorities, identifying skills and market needs, and testing and deploying solutions. The focus should extend beyond start-ups and breakthrough technologies. Innovation uptake by the wider SME base matters just as much, including the adoption and commercialisation of new technologies, products, services and business models.

The EIT should remain technology-open and responsive to market developments, with meaningful opportunities for SMEs across all Member States to participate in European innovation networks and value chains.

2. Talent, innovators and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship should remain a central part of the EIT's mission. Europe needs not only to generate knowledge and ideas, but also people with the skills and opportunities to turn them into businesses and grow them in Europe. This requires more than entrepreneurship courses or start-up support. Financial literacy, mentoring, networks, practical experience, access to finance and markets all matter, as does support from early-stage development through to commercialisation and scale-up.

Skills activities should be driven by labour-market and business needs, including in areas such as AI, digitalisation, cybersecurity, engineering and green technologies. Chambers and other regional actors can contribute the business intelligence needed to identify these needs.

The EIT should also look beyond universities. Innovation requires VET and technical skills, as well as continuous upskilling and reskilling, alongside higher education and research. Specific support for women entrepreneurs and young founders should also be strengthened.

3. Complementarity with other EU programmes

For businesses, the priority is a clearer and easier innovation and investment journey: from research and early-stage innovation to commercialisation, market uptake and scale-up. The EIT needs a clear place in this landscape. Its strengths in ecosystem-building, entrepreneurship, skills and early-stage innovation should complement Horizon Europe, the EIC and the ECF, with clear pathways towards later-stage investment and scaling. It could

also provide a more accessible entry point for SMEs and first-time participants into European innovation ecosystems.

Above all, coordination between programmes needs to make things simpler for beneficiaries. As Eurochambres has stressed in its [ECF position](#), “simplification at institutional level does not automatically translate into easier access for businesses.” More consistent rules, templates and procedures across instruments would be a concrete improvement.

The EIT should also make greater use of territorial and sectoral intermediaries, including chambers, as multipliers to reach the much larger pool of SMEs that are unlikely to participate directly in KIC structures.

4. Funding, implementation and governance

The future framework needs to be simpler and genuinely accessible to SMEs. Application, participation, reporting and auditing requirements should be proportionate to their capacity.

The KIC participation model also needs attention. Membership fees and different arrangements across KICs should not prevent companies from participating. More flexible, project-based participation and greater consistency across KICs would help open the system to a wider range of businesses. The financial sustainability model of KICs should also be carefully assessed, including how self-financing requirements affect their ability to engage with the wider SME community.

Impact matters more than activity. The focus should be on innovations reaching the market, SME innovation uptake, start-ups progressing towards scale-up, private investment and sustained cooperation between business, education and research. Quantitative indicators should be complemented by qualitative measures where appropriate, particularly for education and ecosystem-building.

Conclusion

The revised EIT should retain what makes it distinctive (the knowledge triangle, entrepreneurship and ecosystem-building) while becoming simpler, more open and more accessible to businesses across Europe. Its added value should ultimately be practical: helping turn knowledge and skills into innovation, entrepreneurship and market impact, and helping more European companies move from innovation to commercialisation and scale-up.

Input

Eurochambres – the association of European chambers of commerce and industry – represents over 20 million businesses via its network of national chambers across Europe. Chambers' member businesses – of which around 93% are SMEs - collectively employ over 120 million people.

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