

## EIT Conference YOUTH & ENTREPRENEURSHIP- DRIVERS OF INNOVATION

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### The EIT - A driver of European innovation

#### EIT - European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The EIT aims to give Europe's innovation capacity a much needed boost. Its overall goal is to create a new European way of delivering essential economic growth and societal benefits through innovation.

The EIT responds to Europe's particular situation, where the three sides of the knowledge triangle (higher education, research and business) often find themselves still fragmented, thus hindering a free flow of knowledge. The mission of the EIT is to grow and capitalise on the innovation capacity of partners from the knowledge triangle from the EU and beyond, notably via highly integrated Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

#### KICs - Knowledge and Innovation Communities

- ✓ KICs are the EIT's operational base. They are highly integrated, creative and excellence-driven partnerships, which bring together the fields of education, technology, research, business and entrepreneurship in order to create new innovations and new innovation models that will inspire others to emulate them. KICs are active in areas of long-term societal challenges, offering new opportunities for innovation in Europe and generating real impact in terms of new business creation and societal benefit. They are forming strong innovation cultures and identities, driven by common visions and goals; and are building innovative "webs of excellence" through co-location centres.
- ✓ The relationship between the KICs and the EIT is organised on a contractual basis, leaving a great degree of autonomy to the KICs to define their own legal status, internal organisation and working methods. The EIT's focus on impact is reflected in the strong focus on the leadership of KICs, simple approaches and the strong emphasis on entrepreneurship.
- ✓ The first three KICs were selected on a competitive basis in December 2009: Climate-KIC (climate change mitigation and adaptation), KIC InnoEnergy (sustainable energy) and EIT ICT Labs (the future of the information and communication society).

#### EIT Impacts

- ✓ Addressing key societal challenges: the KICs combine expertise from across disciplines to ensure innovative and global responses to complex societal challenges.
- ✓ Setting a clear business-friendly framework: turning new ideas into tangible new products, services or business opportunities will be the main benchmark of the EIT's and the KICs' success.
- ✓ Enhancing the free flow of knowledge through co-location: KICs are organised around co-location centres - geographical locations where most or the whole innovation chain is in close proximity. The emphasis is on people from diverse backgrounds (industry, SMEs, academia, nationality, gender, discipline...) working together with face-to-face contact, thus leading to great mobility of knowledge.
- ✓ Creating a new generation of entrepreneurs: people with an entrepreneurial mindset are the drivers of innovation, thereby keeping our economies and societies moving. The EIT promotes entrepreneurship education as a key feature of KICs' Masters and doctoral programmes by shifting the emphasis from „learning about“ to „learning by doing“. The Master and PhD programmes will provide students with the entrepreneurial skills they need to succeed in the knowledge economy.

## Financing the EIT: An entrepreneurial approach

The EIT is being set up following an incremental growth path. An initial contribution from the EU budget (Euro 308.7 million) is helping to launch the EIT and the KICs during the 2009-2013 period and is providing the support structure and the conditions necessary for knowledge transfer and networking.

- ✓ KICs draw on a variety of sources in order to ensure a sound financial base:
- ✓ National/Regional funding – e.g. grants from National educational or research councils
- ✓ Community (non-EIT) funding - e.g. FP7 research grant or structural funding
- ✓ Private funding – e.g. grant from a private foundation or contribution from private business
- ✓ The participant's own resources - e.g. cash from the participant's own treasury or in-kind contributions such as the use of buildings (teaching facilities, laboratories, offices) or staff that the partners place at the disposal of the KIC without charge
- ✓ EIT funding - the EIT grant to the KIC

This EU contribution will act as leverage. The EIT annual grant may be used to fund KIC added value actions within the KIC programme up to 100%. KIC added value actions are the activities that “make a KIC a KIC” and, for example, may include:

- ✓ The establishment, administration and coordination of the KIC
- ✓ Provision of EIT branded master, doctorate and post doctorate programmes within a KIC
- ✓ Mobility schemes within the KIC
- ✓ KIC specific IP activities
- ✓ Incubation of KIC start-ups and spin-offs

Through their strong business component, the KICs are to become increasingly attractive targets for investment from the private sector. As the initiative is likely to generate considerable returns, businesses will be expected to lead the way in unleashing Europe's innovation potential by buying into and shaping the KICs with human and financial resources.

To attract private sector investment the EIT established the EIT Foundation with the objective of promoting and supporting its activities.

## The EIT – Open to the world

The EIT is an EU body with an international vision. Participation of excellent institutions and innovative companies from third countries in a KIC is clearly possible and desirable if they bring added value to the KIC. Participation of third country partners will be subject to the approval of the EIT Governing Board.

## Next steps

The EIT has presented its Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) to the European Commission on 15 June 2011. Subsequently, on a proposal from the European Commission to be submitted at the end of 2011, the SIA will be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

The Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) is the strategic policy document that outlines the EIT's direction for its long-term development and shapes our strategic vision for the years to come. It will have far-reaching implications for virtually all aspects of the EIT – including governance and relationships, identification and prioritisation of future KIC themes, budgets and finance, as well as the role and contribution of the EIT to the European innovation landscape.