



EIT GOVERNING BOARD UNVEILS ITS FUTURE VISION FOR A COMPETITIVE EUROPE

Budapest, 26 February 2025 – The Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) today unveiled its vision, positioning the EIT as a driving force for a competitive Europe. The EIT's results in areas such as innovation, skill development and start-up creation and support, contribute to the EU's long-term strategy to boost innovation and increase its competitiveness and growth. The EIT has strengthened Europe's innovation ecosystems by building the continent's largest innovation network and adopting new approaches to skills development and entrepreneurial learning. These efforts align with the EU's goal of establishing a Union of Skills and delivering on a Strategic Plan for STEM Education. Over the past 15 years, the EIT's business creation and innovation programmes have resulted in the launch of disruptive products and services. The EIT has been especially successful in recent years in ensuring strong participation of widening countries in its activities under its Regional Innovation Scheme with hubs on the ground across the EU and beyond. Building on this strong foundation, the Board's vision sets out a distinct role for the EIT in three key areas for the future of Europe: closing the innovation divide, closing the skills gap and simplification with stronger synergies between EU instruments.

The European Commission's political priorities for 2024 - 2029, particularly sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, reaffirm the EIT's crucial role in driving innovation and skills development. The EIT is well-positioned to contribute to key initiatives such as the upcoming Union of Skills, the Clean Industrial Deal and the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy. Additionally, its extensive network of partners from business, education and research enables it to provide policy input to other initiatives such as the European Innovation Act and to continue contributing to the EU's enlargement policy. The EIT Governing Board's vision paper highlights the impact and added value that the EIT, as an independent agency, has delivered over 15 years to Europe's innovators, entrepreneurs, and learners across its pan-European network. In addition to creating and supervising ten European partnerships, the EIT has supported the launch of over 2 400 new products and services on the market, directly assisting over 9 900 companies, and training over 880 000 learners in new skills. These companies have raised close to €10 billion in external funding, resulting in the creation of start-ups worth over €71 billion today.

Stefan Dobrev, Chairperson of the EIT Governing Board, said: *"Innovation is recognised as a key driver to Europe's future, as most recently highlighted by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the Competitiveness Compass. In this context, it becomes clear that the EIT is needed now more than ever. As the only EU instrument dedicated towards connecting business, higher education and research, the EIT's role must be strengthened. Its work in commercialising research and nurturing the future generation of entrepreneurs needs to be continued. The EIT should be dedicated to sourcing the most promising European ideas, funneling a pipeline of sustainable innovations and start-ups to some of Europe's most pressing challenges, and nurturing the skills needed for Europe's future."*

FUTURE EIT VISION:



The EIT Governing Board stressed the unique role of the EIT as Europe's largest innovation network, integrating education and skills into the innovation pipeline while working to close the regional innovation divide. The EIT also boasts one of the highest participation rates in Horizon Europe among moderate and emerging innovator countries.

Their vision for the EIT's role in the EU's future builds on the integrated nature of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which can break down fragmentation and holistically support entire ecosystems and value chains. This vision aligns with key policy priorities such as the Net Zero Industries Act, the EU Start-up and Scale-up Strategy, and the Clean Industrial Deal.

The EIT Governing Board's vision for the EIT's role in the EU's long-term innovation strategy includes:

- **Continuing to steer and monitor EIT KICs towards maximum impact and financial sustainability.** Three of the soon-to-be ten KICs have reached full maturity and are financially sustainable. The EIT Governing Board has highlighted that the EIT should continue steering its innovation communities with performance-based funding, building on the success of its first three KICs.
- **Continuing to grow its unique model and focus on fields where the EIT model can provide added value such as: Security, AI and Robotics, Space & Aerospace, Rural Innovation and Bio-Based Industries.** These fields remain a challenge for Europe in terms of their fragmentation but can also be harnessed as an opportunity to boost pan-European innovation with the EIT model focussed on innovation, skills and start-up creation.
- **Strengthening its efforts in closing the innovation gap, by launching an enhanced Regional Innovation Booster.** Building on the success of the Regional Innovation Scheme with its EIT Community hubs on the ground in Member States helping to close the innovation divide, the EIT should evolve its efforts and leverage the high participation of moderate and modest innovator countries by facilitating matchmaking for investors. This will help boost the creation of more new start-ups coming from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe.
- **Strengthening its efforts in closing the skills gap by launching the EIT Innovation Campus – uniting and simplifying participation in all EIT education and skilling programmes.** Having amassed an impressive portfolio of skilling programmes thanks to the EIT's proximity to industry needs and education providers, the EIT should continue its unique role in preparing the future workforce of Europe and nurturing researchers to become entrepreneurs. It will continue to focus in particular on women entrepreneurs as cross-cutting priority at the EIT level.
- **The EIT Governing Board has also called for strengthened synergies and a common framework across EU innovation instruments.** This includes setting up a pipeline of support between knowledge creation (through the European Research Council), knowledge commercialisation and start-up creation (through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology) and start-up scaling (through the European Innovation Council).



In addition to its core mission of delivering education and skills, innovation, and business creation activities, the EIT Governing Board also recognises the Institute's role as a reliable partner in implementing EU policy priorities. This is evident through the development of several dedicated EIT initiatives, mandated by the European Commission to address the growing industrial needs for skills development. These include the EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative, the EIT Higher Education Initiative, and the Net-Zero Academies: the European Solar Academy, the Raw Materials Academy, the Advanced Materials Academy, and the European Battery Academy.

A PROVEN INNOVATION MODEL

The impact and added value of the EIT have been recently highlighted in key publications by the European Commission. Its findings include recognition of the EIT for:

- Generating one of the highest leverage effects of public funding under Horizon Europe – turning every €1 into up to €8 in investment (individually per KIC) and €1 to €5.60 (on average).
- Implementing high efficiency with its performance-based funding and agility with its time to grant figures up to twice as fast as the average for Horizon Europe.
- Tailoring education activities to align closely with industry needs, which is highly relevant given the shortage of skilled workers in high-tech and deep-tech sectors in the EU.
- Unifying and integrating the Knowledge Triangle (business, education and research), while supporting the development of long-term pan-European innovation ecosystems.

As recently as December 2024, the EIT was recognised as the [top performing investor](#) behind Europe's fastest-growing startups in the Financial Times backed Sifted ranking. In January 2025, the European Patent Office identified the EIT among Europe's [top 5 investors](#) in its 'Mapping Europe's Investors' report. The EIT Governing Board is the highest decision-making body of the Institute, consisting of 15 independent and high-level experts from education, business, and research-driven innovation.

BACKGROUND: EIT- MAKING INNOVATION HAPPEN!

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (EIT)

The EIT strengthens Europe's ability to innovate by powering solutions to pressing global challenges and by nurturing entrepreneurial talent to create sustainable growth and skilled jobs in Europe. The EIT is an EU body and an integral part of [Horizon Europe](#), the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The Institute supports dynamic pan-European partnerships and EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities among leading companies, research labs and universities. Currently nine EIT Knowledge & Innovation Communities are supported: [EIT Climate-KIC](#), [EIT Digital](#), [EIT InnoEnergy](#), [EIT Health](#), [EIT RawMaterials](#), [EIT Food](#), [EIT Manufacturing](#), [EIT Urban Mobility](#) and [EIT Culture & Creativity](#). Together with their leading partners, the EIT Community offers a wide range of innovation and entrepreneurship activities across Europe: entrepreneurial education courses, business creation and acceleration services and innovation driven research projects.

