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STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION: EIT COMMUNITY – OPEN & INCLUSIVE

Budapest, February 2021

Stakeholder Consultation:
EIT Community – Open & Inclusive

This report includes a summary of responses by stakeholders, collected between October and November 2020, in the framework of a Public Online Stakeholder Consultation launched by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in 2020. The output expressed aims to inform the EIT about the consulted stakeholders' views concerning the deployment of further activities, without implying a policy position or expression of any opinion by the EIT, nor that all ideas presented will necessarily come to fruition. The analysis and summary of responses was prepared by Cecoforma, February 2021.

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of a Stakeholder Consultation on the openness and inclusiveness of the EIT and EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), carried out online between 1 October and 15 November 2020. The Stakeholder Consultation provided a platform for EIT stakeholders to express their views and contribute to impactful implementation of the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027.

Respondents came from **21 countries**, of which 16 were EU Member States (45 of 50 respondents). Non-EU respondents came from the United Kingdom (UK) (2) and 1 each from Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. The largest single group of respondents was from Germany (5) (including 2 EIT KICs). Greece, Spain, Finland and Sweden all accounted for 4 respondents.

The respondents fell into two groups, those who had already partnered with or been involved in EIT KICs' activities (35) (including EIT KICs themselves) or not (15). The questions to both groups covered the same ground but differed slightly in their wording to take this into account.

Of the **35 "partnered/involved" organisations**, higher education institutions slightly outnumbered research institutions (12 and 11 respondents respectively, representing 34% and 31%, i.e. 65% in total). The EIT KIC respondents were the third largest group (17%).

Of the **15 'not-"partnered/involved"' respondents**, the two identifiable categories that accounts for the largest number were the 3 each of corporate and 15 higher education institutions. The non-identifiable "Other" group of 4 was the largest in this category. The 2 start-up/scale-ups among the total respondents both fall into this category.

The quantitative and qualitative data from the survey and the comments suggest that there are areas for improvement in openness and inclusiveness. There were **particular strengths** according to the survey in the openness of strategic agenda revisions, clarity on how innovators, entrepreneurs and students can join in EIT KIC activities and on the dissemination of results. Views were very mixed on openness to non-partners and the transparency of selection procedures.

There was relative satisfaction with communication with the EIT KICs, but there were some **overriding concerns** about transparency, bureaucracy and communication, particularly when the respondents' comments are taken into account in addition to their responses.

Respondents advocated boosting the visibility of the EIT and EIT KICs, giving more publicity to calls, having more open calls, making the rules on participation in EIT KIC activities clearer, avoiding changes in the rules, more transparent selection processes and improving not only dissemination of results, but the depth of feedback on evaluations. There was a widely held view that the EIT could look to Horizon 2020 for good practice in how to be transparent and to communicate.

1 Introduction

The EIT was created to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate by uniting business, education and research in a dynamic innovation ecosystem. As Europe's largest innovation network made up of over 2 000 partners, the EIT appreciates the value of openness and inclusivity. To boost its impact under Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for 2021-2027, the EIT Community is seeking to further increase the openness and transparency of its activities and operations.

This Stakeholder Consultation was part of the 2020 EIT Stakeholder Forum, which is the annual forum for engaging with the EIT's varied stakeholders & partners. In 2020, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum combined online consultations with a series of digital sessions and meetings. The Stakeholder Consultation provided a platform for EIT stakeholders to express their views and contribute to impactful implementation of the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027[1].

Any stakeholder interested in the EIT Community's activities was invited to answer the questionnaire, regardless of whether they had previously been involved in its activities or not. The feedback received will inform the EIT's efforts to enhance the EIT Community's openness and inclusiveness.

The questions answered by the respondents depended on their familiarity with the EIT. The two questionnaires offered on this basis are available in Annex 1. The consultation was open in EUSurvey from 1 October to 15 November 2020. There were 50 respondents from a variety of countries and sectors, providing a range of opinions on the issues covered.

The respondents fell into two groups depending on who had already partnered with or been involved in EIT KICs EIT (Knowledge and Innovation Communities) (35) activities or not (15). The questions to both groups covered the same ground but differed slightly in their wording to take this into account. Of the 'partnered/involved' group, 6 were EIT KICs. Results without the EIT KICs are broken out separately where relevant. Similarly, the views of EIT KICs are differentiated from those of the rest, where relevant.

This report first discusses the profile by organisation type and location of the respondents (Section 2). It looks at whether there are significant differences in the location and profile when the respondents are split by whether or not they were currently a member of the EIT Community (EIT

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[1] On 28 January 2021, a political agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on the EIT Regulation and Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027. The publication of the entire legislative package in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJ) is expected in spring 2021.

KICs and their partners, EIT Alumni) (32) or not (18), and whether they were currently involved with the EIT KICs (35) or not (15).

The results for the group of "partners/involved" and the 'non-"partners/involved"' are then discussed separately (Sections 3 and 4) as the questions were slightly different depending which group respondents belonged to.

2 Profile of respondents by organisation type and location

2.1 Profile of respondents by organisation type

More than half (56%) the responses came from two categories, higher education institutions and research institutions. These two groups accounted for 30% (15 respondents) and 26% (13 respondents) respectively (Figure 1). EIT KICs were the next largest category with 12% (6 respondents).

Figure 1: Type of organisation for which respondents work

Type of organisation (n=50)

- Corporate/industry
- EIT KIC
- Higher education institution
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Other
- Research institution
- Start-up/scale-up
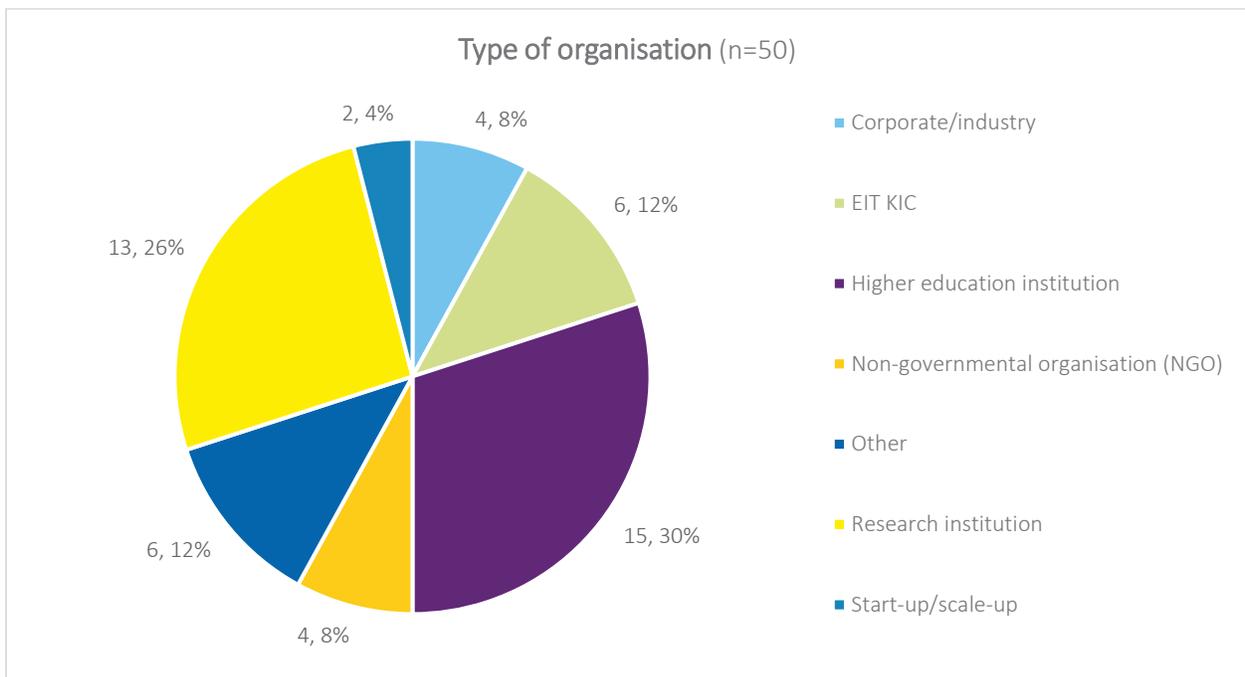
An important differentiator for this consultation was whether the respondents had already partnered with the EIT KICs or been involved in the activities of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), or not.

Of the 35 "partnered/involved" organisations, higher education institutions again slightly outnumbered research institutions (12 and 11 respondents respectively, representing 34% and 31%, i.e. 65% in total) (Figure 2). The 6 EIT KIC respondents were the third largest group (17%).

Of the 'non-"partnered/involved"' group of 15 respondents (Figure 3), the two identifiable categories that accounts for the largest number were the 3 each of corporate and 15 higher education institutions. The non-identifiable "Other" group of 4 was the largest in this category. The 2 start-up/scale-ups among the total respondents both fall into this category.

Figure 2: Type of organisations "partnered/involved" with the EIT Community

Type of organisation ("partnered/involved") (n=35)

- Higher Education Institution
- Research institution
- EIT KIC
- NGO
- Corporate/industry
- Other
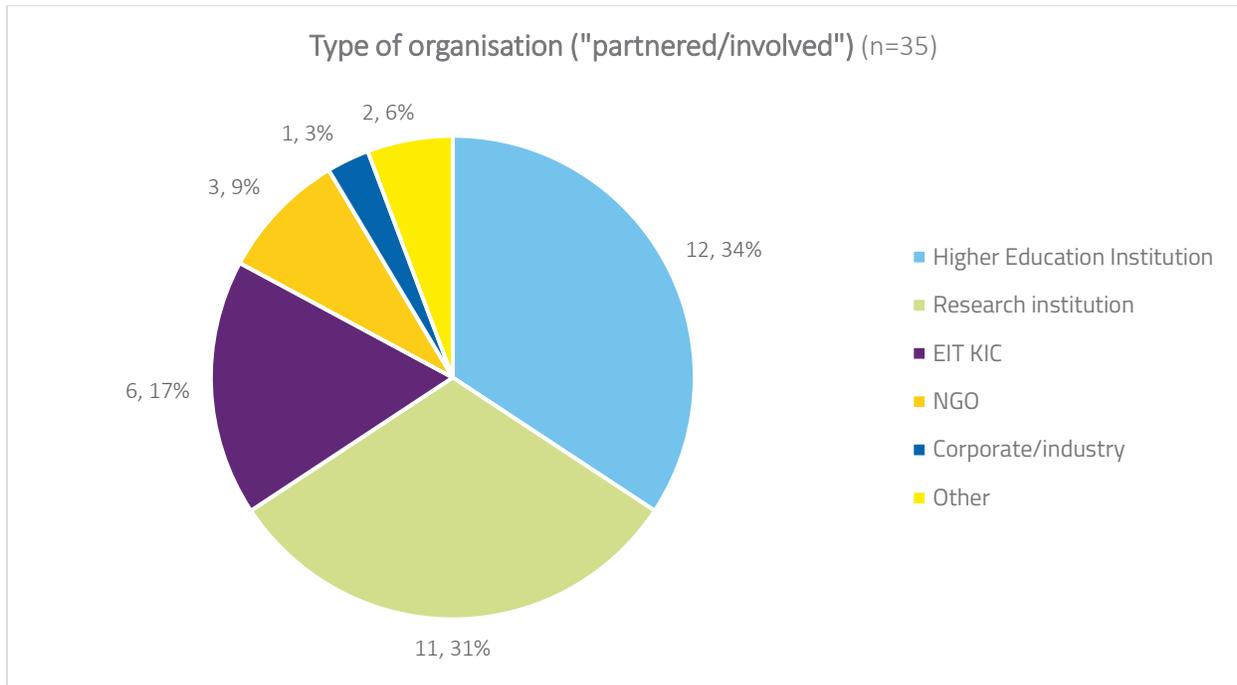
Figure 3: Type of organisations 'not "partnered/involved"' with the EIT Community

Type of organisation (not "partnered/involved") (n=15)

- Corporate/industry
- Higher education institution
- Start-up/scale-up
- Research institution
- NGO
- Other
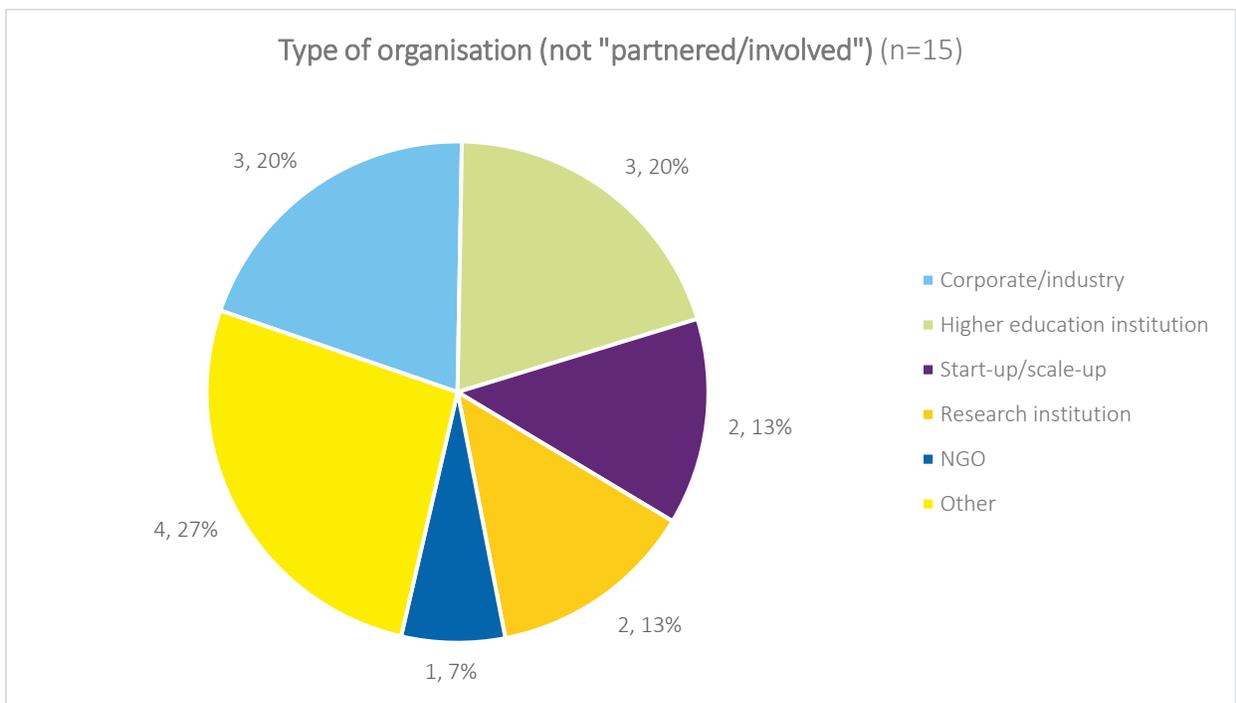
2.2 Profile of respondents by location and by type of engagement with the EIT and EIT KICs

Respondents came from 21 countries, of which 16 were EU Member States (45 of 50 respondents). Non-EU respondents came from the United Kingdom (UK) (2) and 1 each from Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. (Figure 4). The largest single group of respondents was from Germany (5). EIT KICs accounted for 6 respondents – 2 from Germany, 2 from Hungary and 1 each from Croatia and Italy. Without the EIT KICs, Greece, Spain, Finland and Sweden all have 4 respondents, and Germany and Hungary stand out less (3 respondents)[2].

Figure 4: Organisations' location[2]
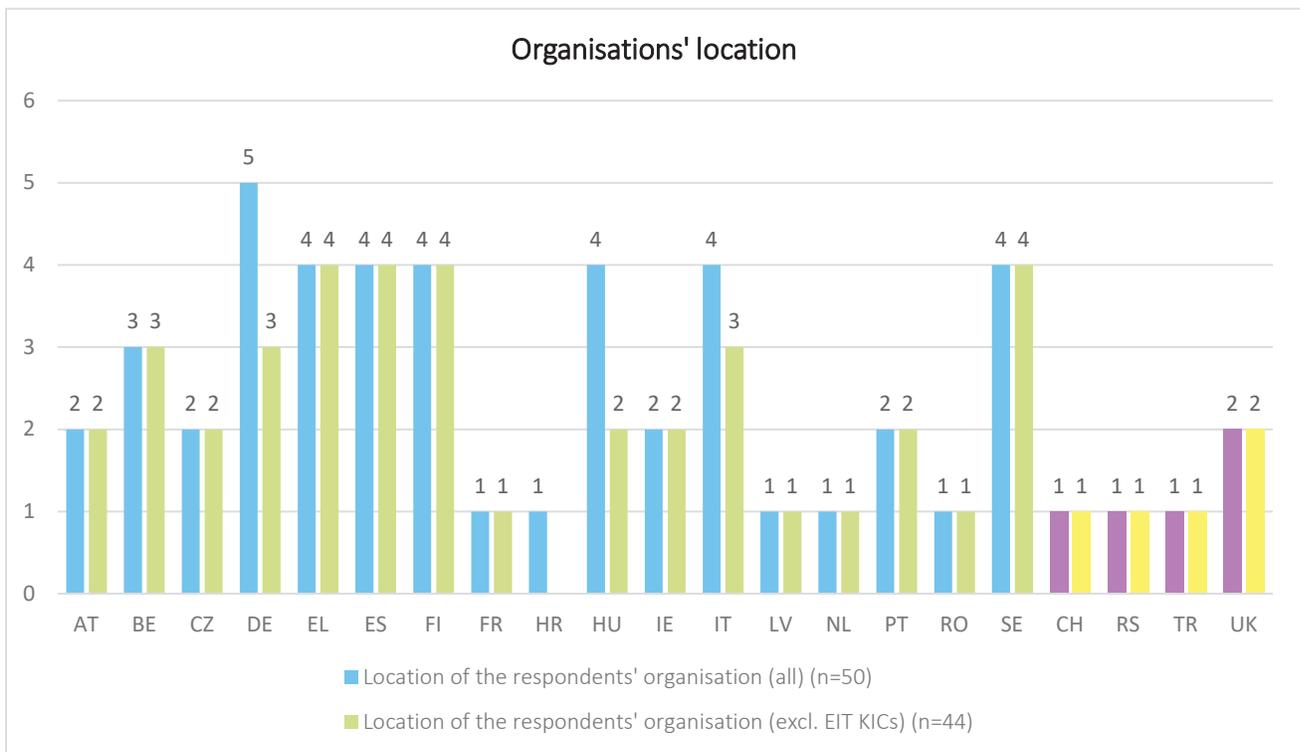
Respondents were asked about their level of engagement with the EIT KICs: i.e. were they a member of the EIT Community, i.e. an EIT KIC, an EIT KIC partners or an EIT alumnus; whether they had previously participated in an EIT activity and whether they had been partners of or been involved with an EIT KIC.

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[2] Non-EU countries are shown in lilac (all) and yellow (excl. EIT KICs)

Of the 50 respondents, 6 were EIT KICs who ipso facto are members of the EIT Community, had all participated in an EIT activity and were also not the target of the question on partnering or being involved with an EIT KIC. They have therefore not been included in Figure 5 which compares the levels of engagement of the 44 other respondents. Of these, 80% (35) had participated in an EIT activity, followed by 66% (29) who had partnered with or been involved in EIT KICs' activities. 60% (26) were part of the EIT Community.

The significant differences come from leaving out the 6 EIT KICs in Figure 5 (2 from Germany, 2 from Hungary, and 1 each from Croatia and Italy).

Figure 5: Are you currently a member of the EIT Community (EIT KICs and their partners, EIT Alumni)? Have you participated in an EIT activity before? Have you partnered with or been involved in the activities of the EIT KICs?
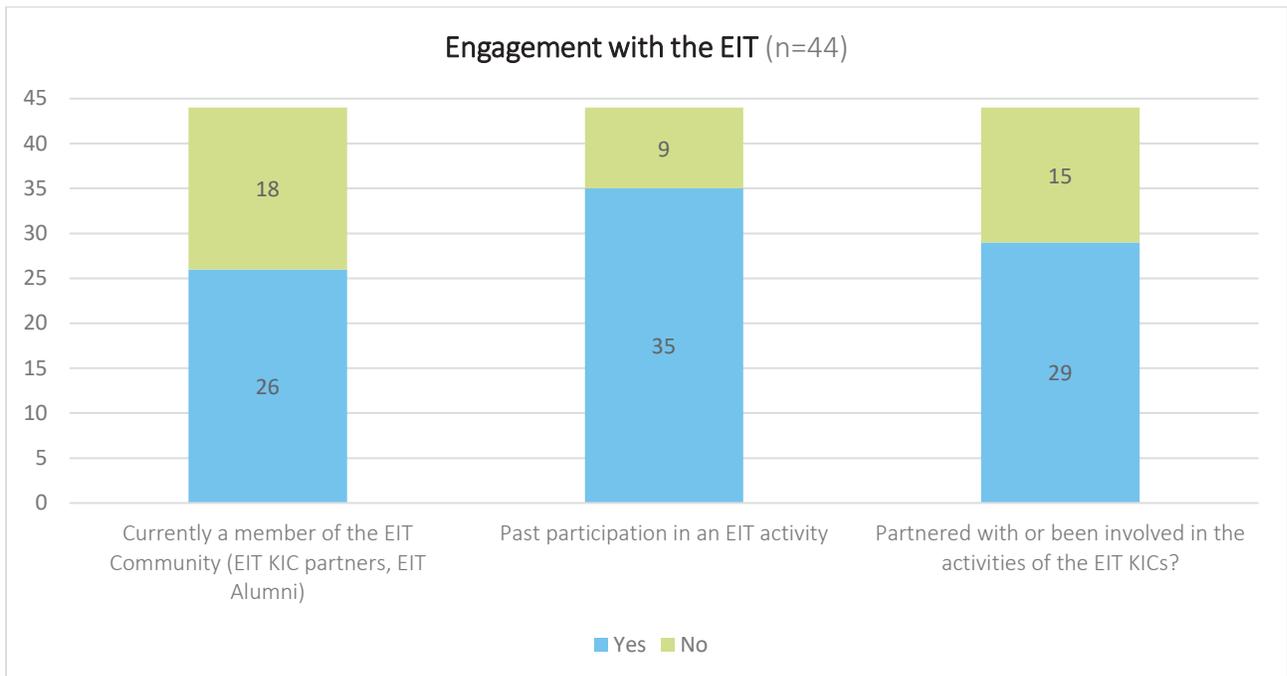
The following Figures (Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8) break the levels of engagement down by location, and in the case of the question on membership of the EIT Community (Figure 6) show the breakdown with and without EIT KICs.

There are no significant differences once the EIT KICs are taken out of the data on engagement with the EIT Community. Finland and Sweden stand out across the board for having four respondents in each category at each level of engagement.

The number of countries represented is slightly lower for the EIT Community (14 EU Member States and one non-Member State) than for participation in an EIT activity (16 Member States and four non-Member States) in the other two categories. Of the four non-EU-27 respondents, from Turkey, Serbia, Switzerland and the UK, only the UK had respondents who were members of the EIT Community.

Figure 6: Are you currently a member of the EIT Community (EIT KICs and their partners, EIT Alumni)? (by location, with and without EIT KICs)[2]

Members of the EIT Community by location

Legend:
- Currently a member of the EIT Community (EIT KICs and their partners, EIT Alumni) (n=32)
- Currently a member of the EIT Community (EIT KIC partners, EIT Alumni) (n=26)
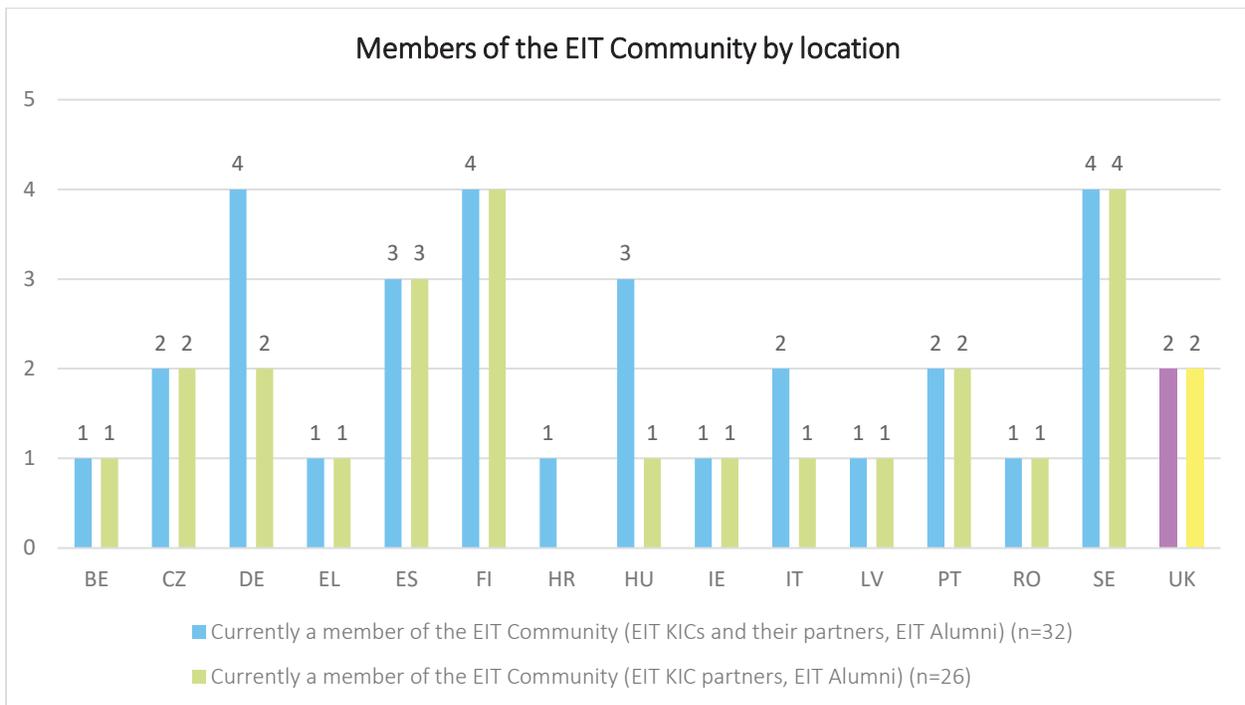
Figure 7: Have you participated in an EIT activity before? By location[2]

Participated in EIT activities (n=44)
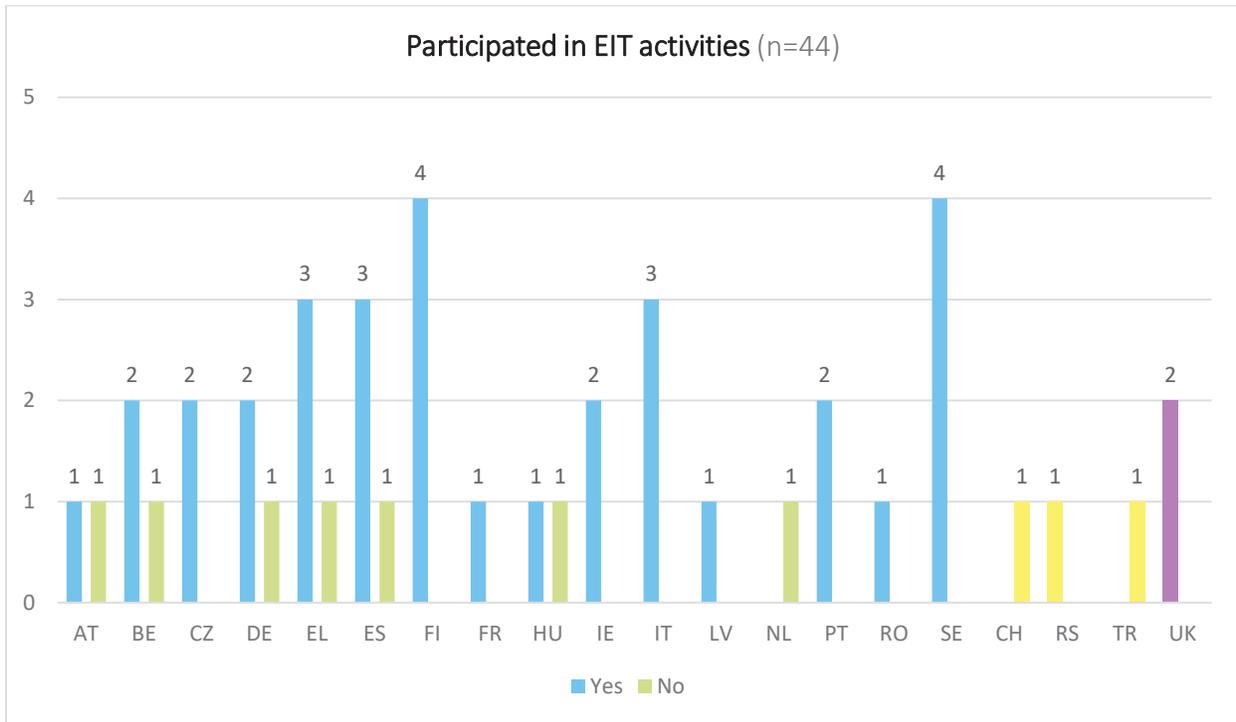
Figure 8: Have you partnered with or been involved in the activities of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)? By location[2]

"Partnered/involved"/'not "partnered/involved"' by location (n=44)
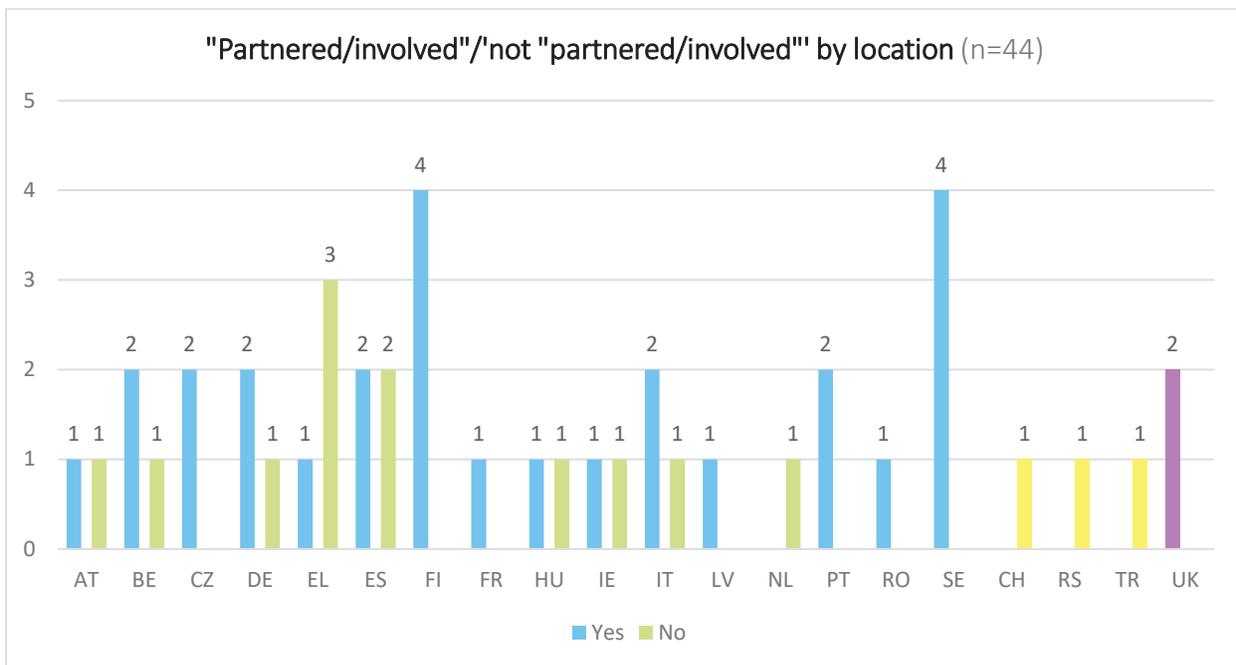
Figure 9 illustrates the type of activity in which respondents who had previously participated in an EIT activity had been involved. It is broken down between the "partnered/involved" and 'not "partnered/involved"' group. There were 119 total responses to this multiple-choice question, 100 from "partnered/involved" respondents and 19 from 'not "partnered/involved"' respondents. Overall, and in both groups, EIT Community events were the type of activity in which respondents were most likely to have participated.

Innovation projects and Education programmes were both cited 23 times, but with the difference that only "partners/involved" had participated in Innovation projects, whereas 2 'not "partnered/involved"' had participated in Education programmes. Venture support was mentioned only 11 times (10 times by partners and once by a non-partner). There was a large group of "Other" (i.e. 17 in total, 14 by partners and 3 by non-partners).

Four respondents mentioned all five categories, 1 EIT KIC in Germany, 1 Research institution in Czechia and 2 Higher education institutions in Finland and Sweden. It might have been anticipated that the 6 EIT KIC respondents would boost the numbers of those having participated in several or all events. This is not the case: 3 EIT KIC respondents only mentioned 1 type of activity, 1 mentioned 2, another mentioned 3, and 1 listed all 5 as indicated above.

Figure 9: Have you participated in an EIT activity before? By type of activity

Previous participation in an EIT activity
(n=119) (multiple choice)

	Other	Not yet	Venture Support	Education	Innovation project	EIT Community Event
Partners	14		10	21	23	32
Non-partners	3	9	1	2		4
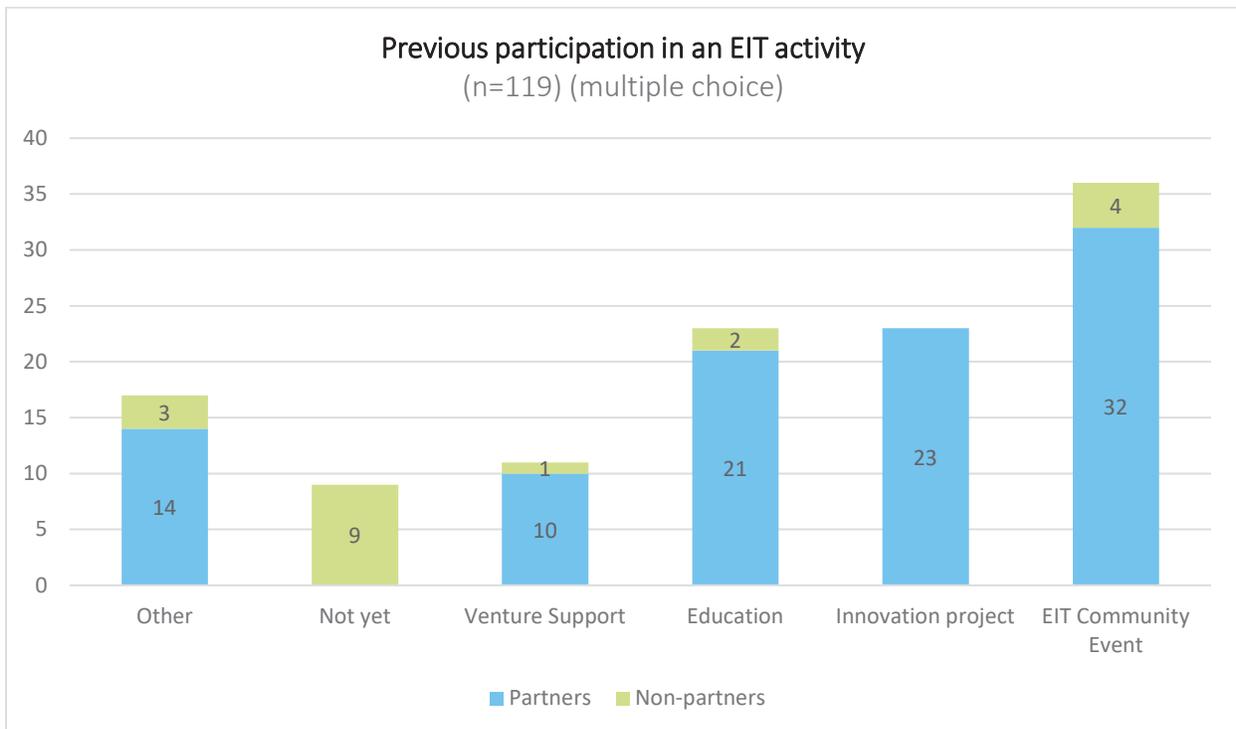
In another multiple-choice question on the main areas of interest (Figure 10), innovation-driven research activities were the clear leader, mentioned by 42 out of the 50 respondents (84%). This was followed by Ecosystem-building/Connectivity (36), Education and Training (29) and Business Support (22). The "partners/involved" and 'not "partners/involved" attached the same relative importance to each area.

The EIT KICs slightly distort this picture by understating the importance the non-EIT KIC attach to innovation-driven research, as only 2 of the 6 respondent EIT KICs (i.e. one-third) attached importance to this. The results also overstate the importance attached to Education & Training and Ecosystem-building/Connectivity, as these are areas of interest for 5 of the 6 EIT KIC.

Of the EIT KICs, only 2 attributed importance to Business Support. However, removing the EIT KICs would not change the relative positions of the areas of interest.

Figure 10: Which of the following areas are you most interested in?
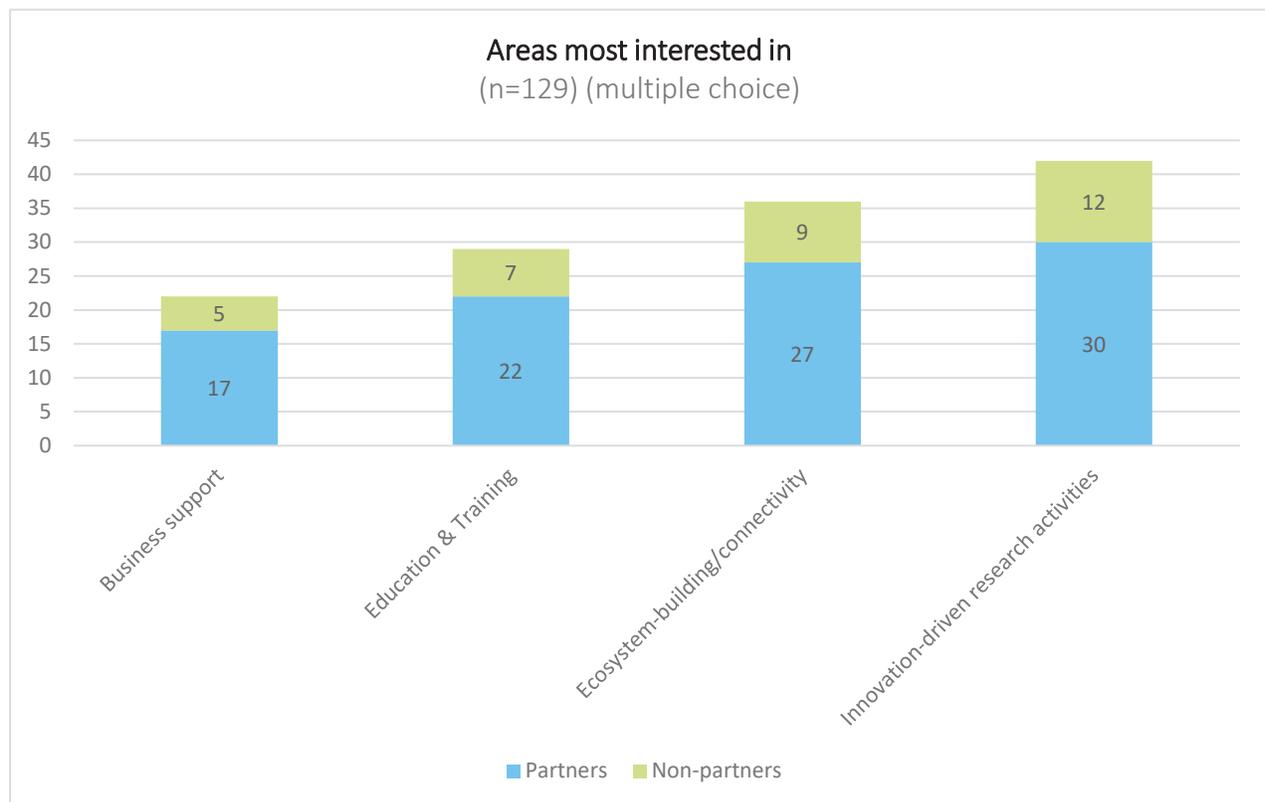
3 Responses from those who have already partnered with or been involved in the activities of an EIT KIC

This section deals only with the answers to the specific questions on openness and inclusiveness from those who said they have already partnered with or been involved in EIT KIC activities. In this group of 35 respondents, the 3 NGOs tended to be consistently positive in the ratings they gave, while the research institutions tended to be slightly more positive than the higher education institutions. There are no discernible patterns in the other groups.

3.1 Engagement with an EIT KIC

In answer to the multiple-choice question as to which EIT KICs the respondents had already engaged with, there were two which attracted the most number of responses: EIT Raw Materials and EIT Climate-KIC with 11 mentions each from the total of 60 replies (Figure 11), followed by EIT Digital (9 mentions), EIT Health and EIT Urban Mobility (7), and EIT InnoEnergy, EIT Food and EIT Manufacturing (5). The results are based on 44 responses by 29 respondents, as the EIT KIC responses have been left out for this section.

Figure 11: Which EIT KIC(s) have you engaged with?

EIT KIC(s) with which respondents have already engaged (n=60)
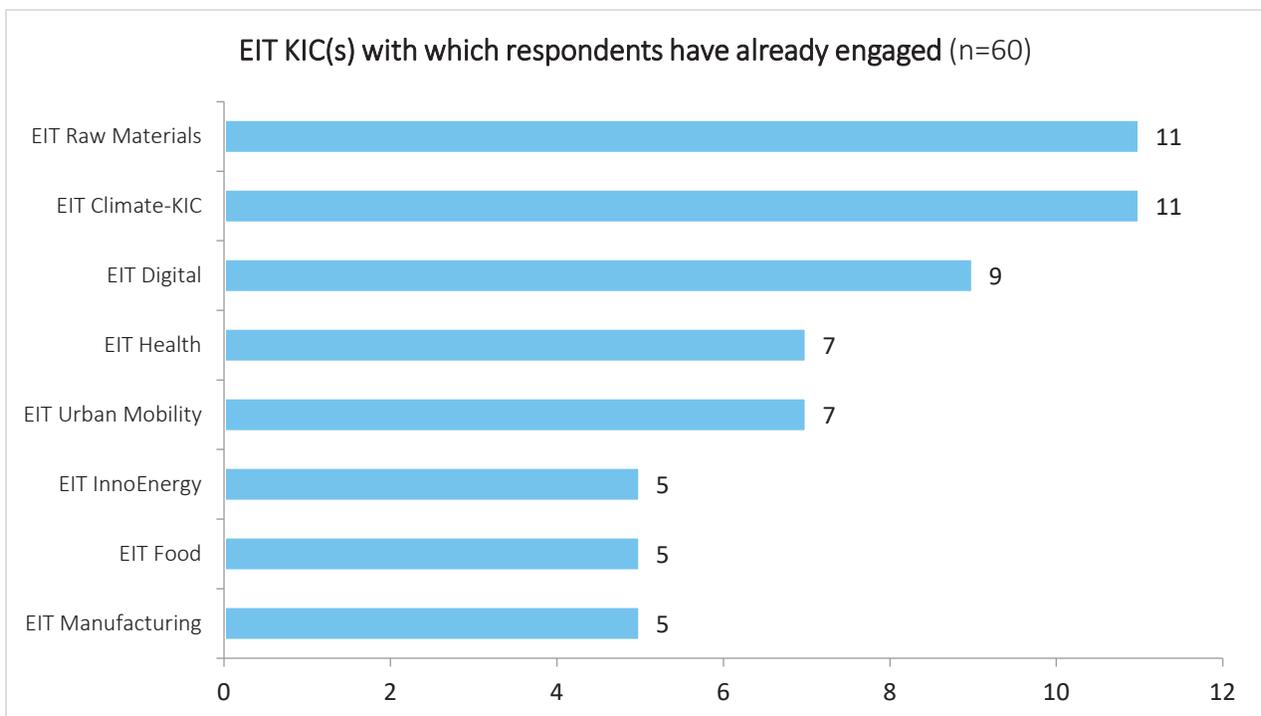
More than half (55%), i.e. 16 of the 29 respondents had only ever engaged with 1 EIT KIC. One university listed 6, while 2 higher education institutions and 1 "Other", an Impact Hub, listed 5. No respondent had engaged with four, while 3 had engaged with 5 and 2 with 4.

3.2 Openness and inclusiveness

In a series of questions about the openness and inclusiveness of the EIT KICs, respondents were generally positive about how clearly the EIT KICs communicate their vision, mission and strategy to non-EIT partners, but less so in terms of including them in their activities, and still less so regarding the EIT KICs' openness and inclusiveness to partners in the periodic revisions of their strategic agendas. In all the questions in this series, respondents were generally asked to give a score from one out of five to five out of five. Responses from the EIT KICs have not been included in the analysis where this was not relevant.

As Figure 12 shows, there was a generally positive view of the clarity with which EIT KICs' communicate their vision, mission and strategy, with 17 respondents (56%) giving this either a five out of five (9) or four out of five (8). A further 6 gave this a neutral three out of five. In the case of openness of EIT KICs' activities to non-KIC partners and the openness and inclusiveness to partners of periodic revisions of the strategic agenda, fewer than half (10 and 12 respectively of the 29 respondents) gave this one of the two top marks (four of five); in the case of openness of the EIT KICs' activities to non-KIC partners, the 11 low marks (i.e. one or two out of five 2) outnumber the 10 for the top two marks. While the top two marks do outnumber the bottom two marks for openness and inclusiveness of the periodic revisions, the fact that 6 respondents gave this only one out of five.

Figure 12: How clearly do the EIT KICs you work with communicate their vision, mission and strategy? How open are the EIT KICs' activities to non-EIT KIC partners? How open and inclusive to partners are the EIT KICs' periodic revisions of their strategic agendas?
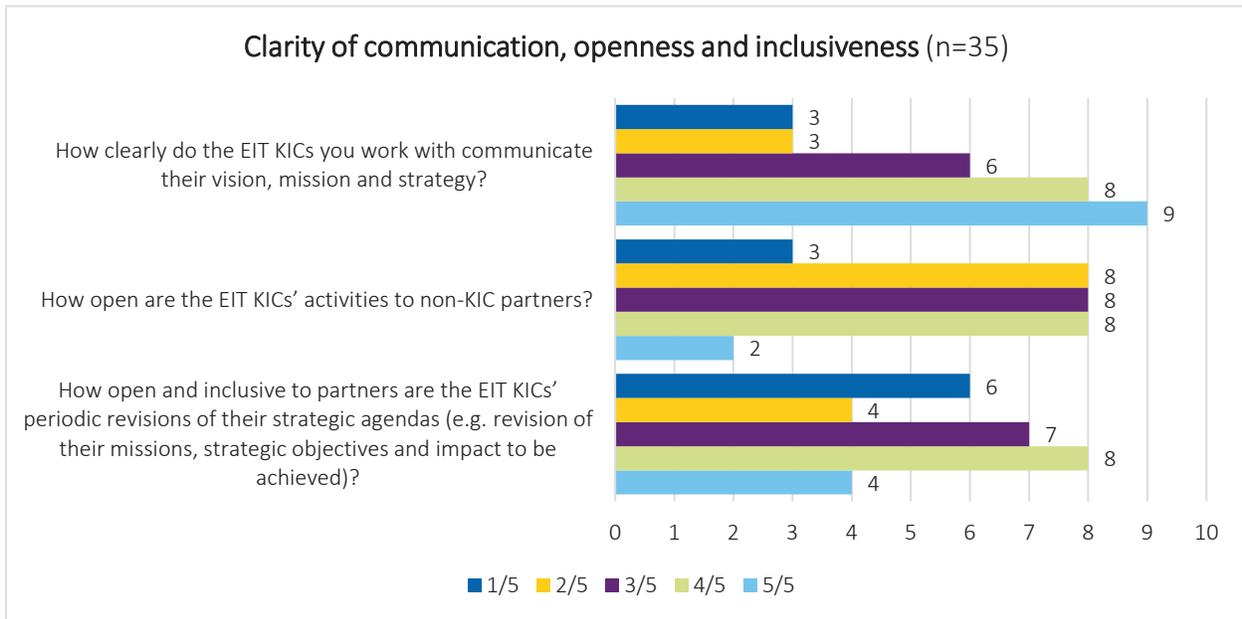
As an individual respondent may be engaged with more than one EIT KIC, those respondents are averaging out their score across several EIT KICs. It is not thus possible to analyse in response to these questions which EIT KICs might be garnering better perceptions than others, by non-EIT KIC respondents.

Answers to whether the EIT KICs consult citizens widely were divided. Only a narrow majority (18 to 17) thinks that citizens are consulted. Of these, only 3 believed citizens are consulted widely. The other respondents believe they are consulted "to some extent". Of the EIT KIC respondents, 3 believed that citizens are consulted to some extent and 3 three thought they are consulted widely. If the 6 EIT KIC respondents are not taken into account (since they introduce a positive bias), the view that citizens are not consulted prevails with a 17 to 12 ratio (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Are citizens consulted in the periodic revisions of EIT KICs' strategic agendas (e.g. revision of their missions, strategic objectives and impact to be achieved)?
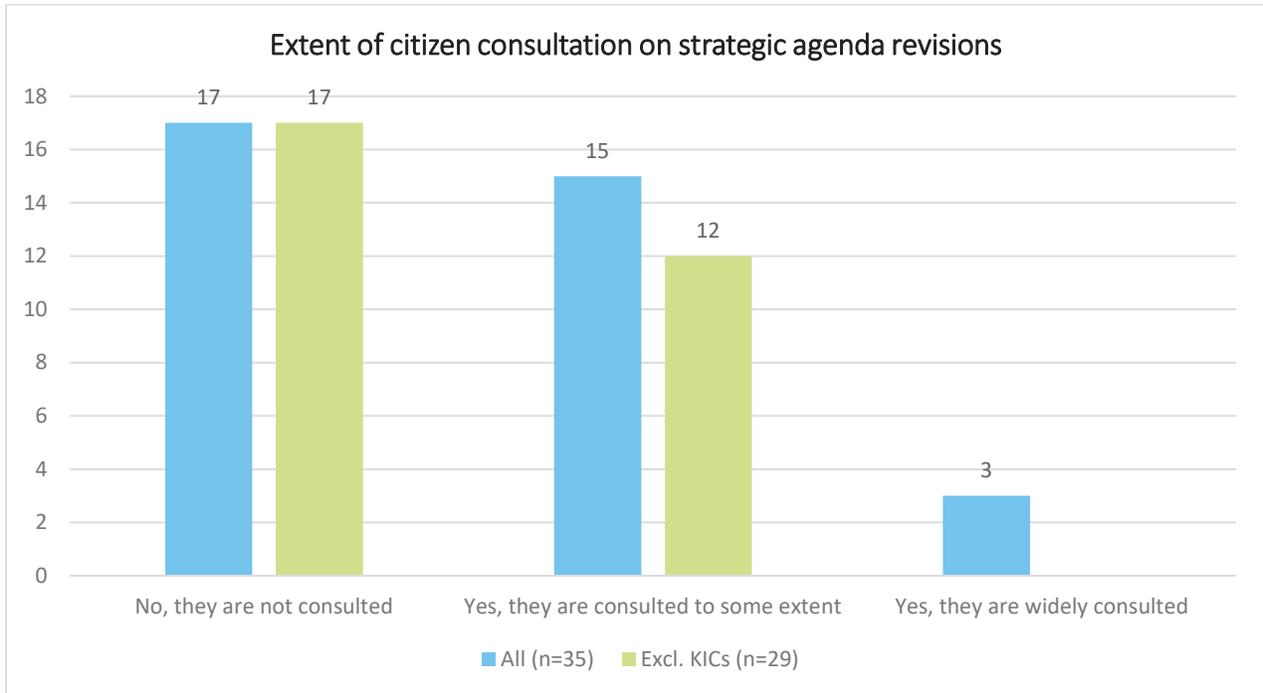
3.3 Transparency

The transparency of the selection procedures for EIT KIC activities was regarded as positive. Most respondents (16 of 35) gave a score of four out of five (10) or five out of five (6) (Figure 14). When the EIT KIC respondents are taken out, this drops to 7 scores of four out of five and 4 of five out of five. One EIT KIC respondent assigned a score of two out of five.

However, it is not possible to disaggregate answers related to specific EIT KICs. Where respondents had dealt with only one EIT KIC, opinions sometimes differed widely: one respondent who engages only with EIT Digital gave it a one out of five while another which only engages with the same EIT KIC assigned a five to EIT Digital.

Figure 14: How open and transparent are the selection procedures for EIT KIC activities?

Openness and transparency of selection procedures
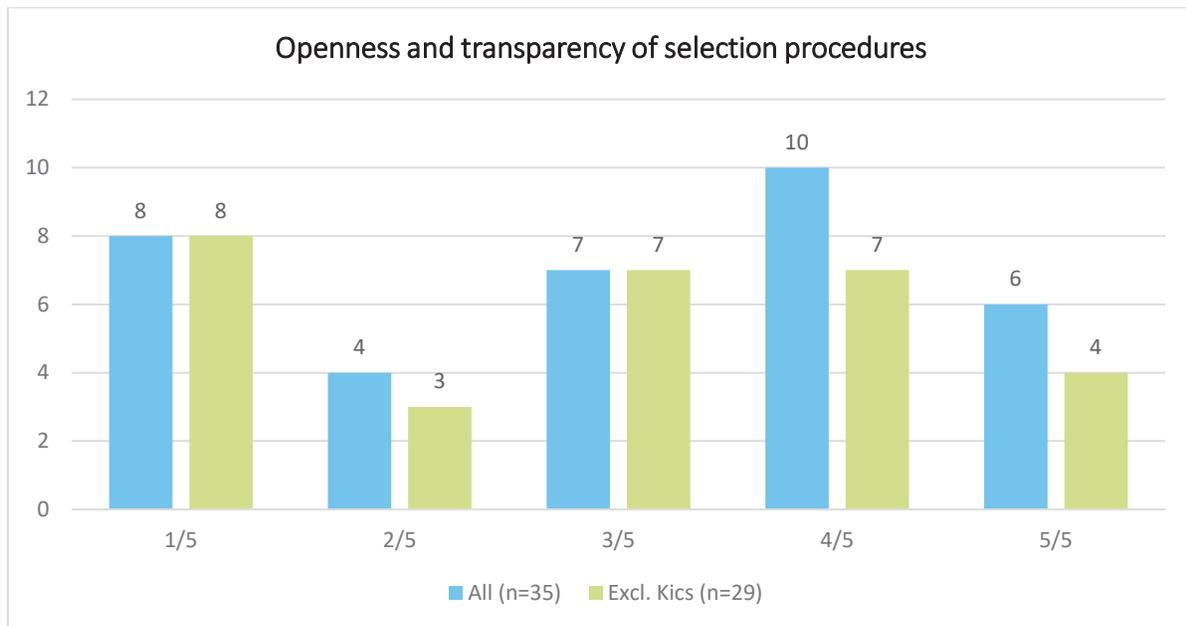
The 19 respondents who gave a score of one, two or three in answer to this question were given the opportunity to suggest improvements to selection procedures. There were 18 generally critical comments, consistent with the fact that only the neutral-to-negative were given the opportunity to comment.

These comments showed that respondents are looking for greater transparency in evaluation processes, results and evaluator backgrounds, better communication and feedback, consistent interpretation of the rules. In fact, transparency around evaluations was also a recurring theme throughout comments in this survey. Horizon 2020 was cited as an example of good practice by one respondent in answer to this question and a positive assessment of Horizon 2020 came up in comments on subsequent questions.

Respondents were more positive about whether it is clear how innovators, entrepreneurs and students can join and benefit from the EIT KICs' activities (Figure 15). While 16 respondents (out of 35) answered with a four out of five (9) or five out of five (7), 9 respondents nevertheless gave a score of one of two out five (4 and 5 respondents respectively). 10 gave this a neutral three out of five. There is a marginal positive distortion in the responses from the EIC KICs as 4 of the 6 gave this a score of three out of five, while 1 gave this a four and 1 gave it a five.

Figure 15: Is it clear how innovators, entrepreneurs and students can join and benefit from the EIT KICs' activities?
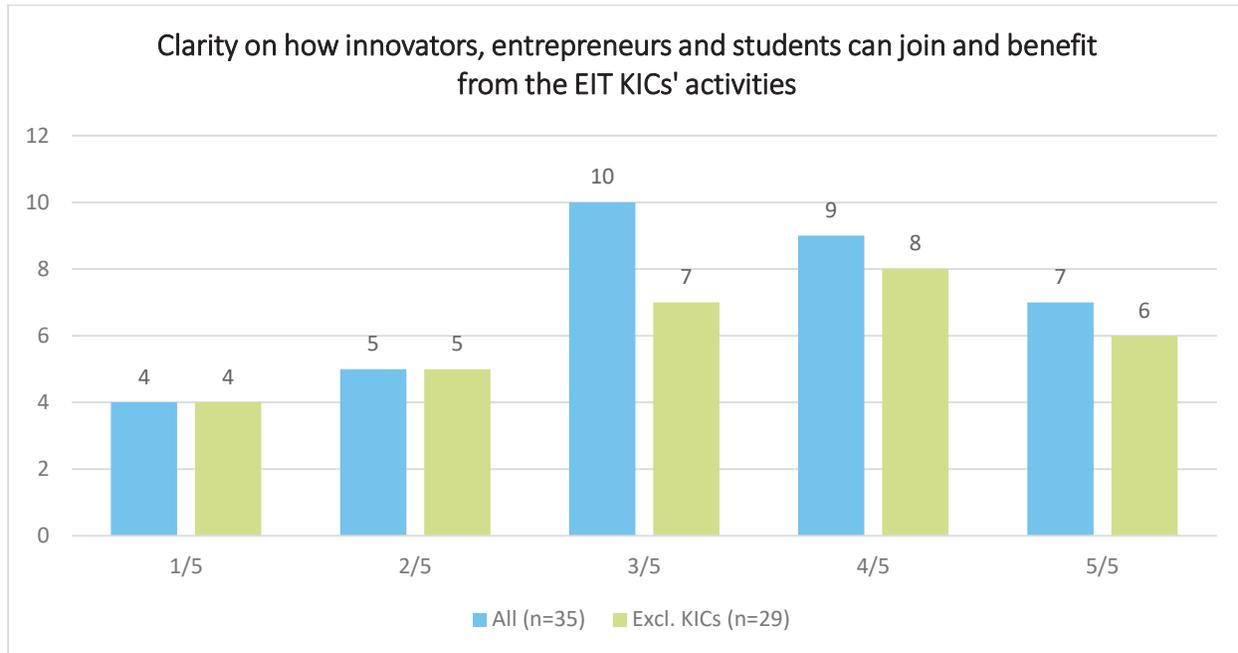
The 19 respondents, who had given scores of one, two or three out of five, were again given the chance to explain their replies. This resulted in 16 comments, representing mixed views. On the one hand, one respondent said this was "*one of the better areas of KICs in terms of vision and communication*" while another said: "*more customer-friendly communication needed*". The first respondent nevertheless believed that there are too many layers of bureaucracy, an issue pointed out by others too. Respondents also highlighted differences across the EIT KICs and a lack of feedback. Weak EIT KIC branding was raised as an issue, which came up in comments on other questions as well.

3.4 Satisfaction with communication and dissemination

Views on satisfaction with communication with the EIT KICs covered a broad spectrum, with equal numbers giving a score of one and five out of five. Four was the predominant score (). The total of 4/5 and 5/5 came to less than half of all respondents (16, or 46%) (Figure 16). There is a positive bias in these responses from the 6 EIT KICs, with two fours and a five, but there is also a one out of five from one EIT KIC respondent. Even without the EIT KIC responses, there is still an overall positive assessment.

Figure 16: How satisfied have you been with your communication with the EIT KICs?
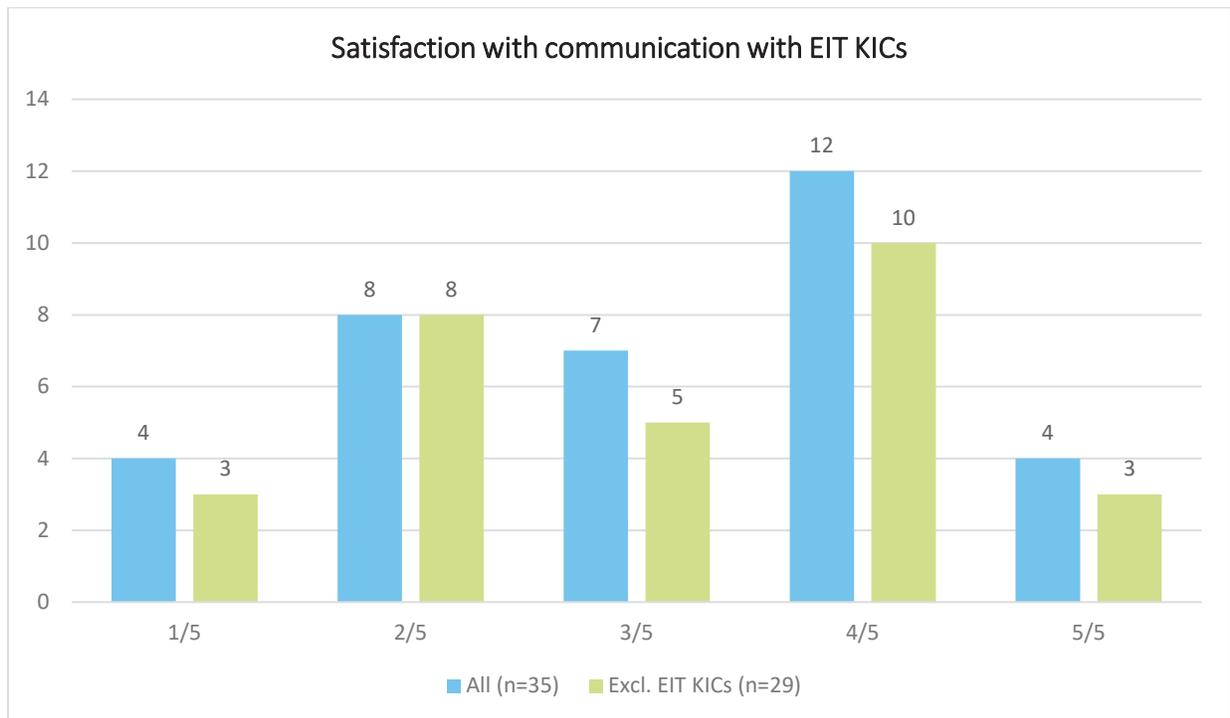
Satisfaction with the dissemination of EIT KICs' results was lower than with communication (Figure 17). While 11 respondents did give this four out of five, only one respondent gave this a five out of five while five gave it a one. There is moreover a slight positive bias from the EIT KICs themselves, since 3 gave a rating of four out five. However, they were not unreservedly positive as a group since two gave this a three and one gave it a two.

Including the EIT KIC results, the number of responses with the two top scores equals the number with the two bottom scores (though with more very negative than very positive scores). Taking the EIT KIC scores out would tips the balance towards the negative. There are then only 8 fours, though the number of two's comes down to 6.

Figure 17: How well are the EIT KICs' results disseminated?

Assessment of dissemination of EIT KICs' results

Rating	All (n=35)	Excl. EIT KICs (n=29)
1/5	5	5
2/5	7	6
3/5	11	9
4/5	11	8
5/5	1	1
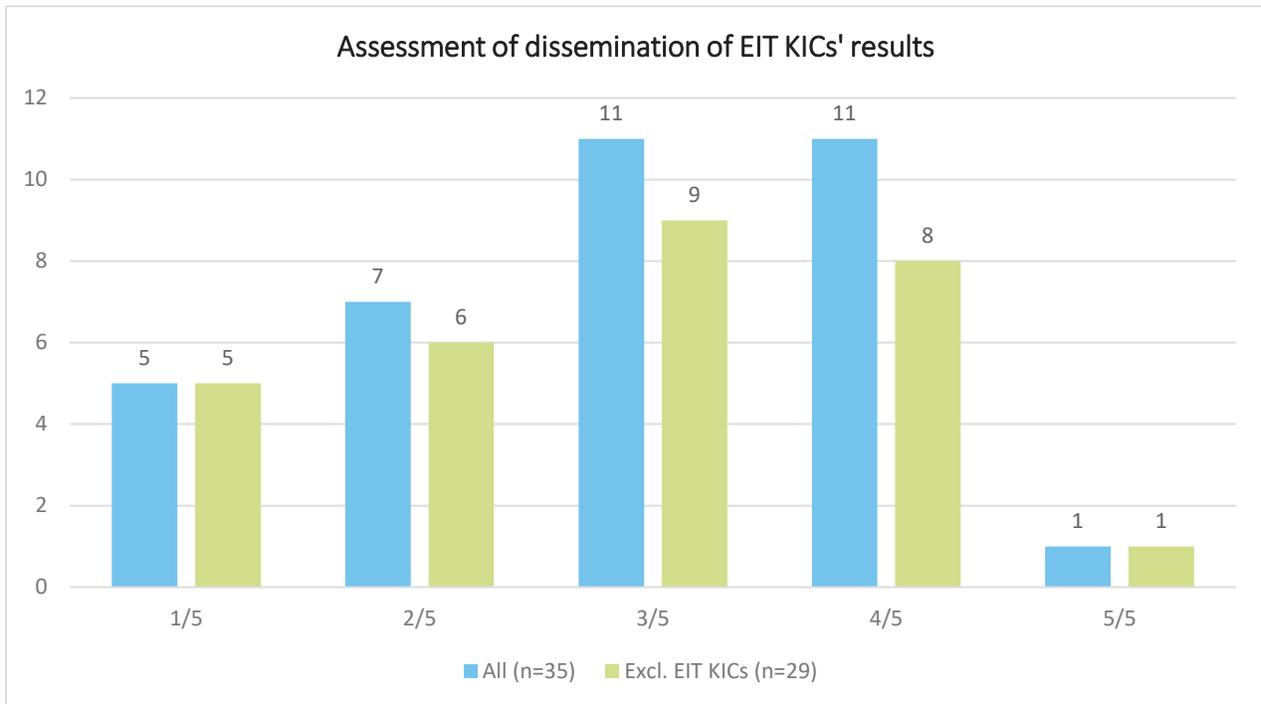
3.5 Areas for improvement

Respondents were next asked a series of questions about areas for improvement:

- *What information would you find useful in terms of EIT KIC results?*
- *Are there aspects of the EIT KICs' operations that you think should be better communicated to internal and external audiences?*
- *Please suggest ways in which the EIT KICs could improve their openness and transparency?*

The predominant sentiment on the **types of information that would be useful** related to receiving more qualitative information rather than just quantitative data (though there were some requests for more data as such). In terms of qualitative data, respondents wanted to see more on success and impact, with detailed information on pathways to success and to have more examples of good practice, but also lessons learnt. Some also wanted more conventional forms of information, e.g. fact sheets, newsletters, and emails. As previous comments had indicated, the information available was perceived to vary from one EIT KIC to another, with some EIT KICs being better at communication, and others perceived as not meeting the respondents' needs enough.

One of the requests in relation to **more information** was for rules not to change once a process is launched. This recurred also in answer to the following question on improvements to internal communication and related both to calls and business plans. Another issue in answer to the question on more information was the wanting more transparency about evaluation results (and scores), which was also commented on in response to the question on openness and transparency in selection procedures. A suggestion that there is too much emphasis on the positive (e.g. in presentation of results and impacts) surfaced in answer to this and other questions.

Similar themes arose in answer to the question on **improvements to external communication**: transparency, more information on what support is available and how to participate, more details on results and how the EIT ecosystem works. There were also suggestions that there should be more communication with the general public.

The issue of visibility, through better branding and communication, arose in answer to the next question on how to improve **openness and transparency**. The themes of bureaucracy, transparency, consistency of information and publication of results also came up again. In comments on the earlier questions, there were individual requests for improvements to the website (more information, easier navigation, web-based application processes) and the issue was raised again in comments on improvements. There was also a general demand for more events.H2020 was cited as an example of good practice in openness and transparency.

4 Responses from those who have never partnered with or been involved in the activities of an EIT KIC

This section summarises the responses from the 15 respondents who had never partnered with or been involved in the activities of the EIT. As indicated in the section on respondent profiles, this group share the same characteristics as the group who had partnered with or been involved in the activities of an EIT KIC in terms of the type of EIT activity they had already taken part in and the activities they were interested in. The main difference is that start-up/scale-ups are represented in this group and there are more corporate/industry respondents relative to the total.

In this group of respondents, the two research institutions consistently gave low scores (a one or two out of five, and occasionally a three out of five; the NGO's gave consistently neutral-to-high scores, but predominantly fours and fives, where five was the maximum. There were no discernible patterns in the other categories.

The extent to which this group had detailed knowledge of the EIT KICs was tested in a question as to whether they had been in contact with an EIT KIC and, if so, how satisfied they were with its communication. Only one third (5) had been in contact with an EIT KIC, and the degree of satisfaction was rather low, i.e. no one selected five out of five, 1 respondent gave this a 4, 2 gave it a three and 1e a five.

4.1 Openness and inclusiveness

In a series of three questions about the openness and inclusiveness of the EIT KICs, respondents largely gave neutral answers (i.e. three out of five. The three topics dealt with how clearly the EIT KICs communicate their vision, mission and strategy to non-EIT partners; whether EIT KICs are open to including non-KICs in their activities; and whether the EIT KICs are open and inclusive to partners in the periodic revisions of their strategic agendas (Figure 18).

Respondents views the EIT KICs' openness to including non-EIT KICs in their activities rather negatively, with only 1 rating of four and 1 of five. The respondents felt the EIT KICs score best on communicating their vision, mission and strategy clearly (2 fours and 2 threes out of five). There was a high degree of indecision as to whether EIT KICs are open and inclusive to partners in the periodic revisions of their strategic agendas as two-thirds of the respondents (10) gave this a three out of five. On balance, however, the responses were positive as the Figure shows.

Figure 18: How clearly do the EIT KICs communicate their vision, mission and strategy? How open are the EIT KICs' activities to non-EIT KIC partners? How open and inclusive to partners are the EIT KICs' periodic revisions of their strategic agendas?

Clarity of communication, openness and inclusiveness (n=15)
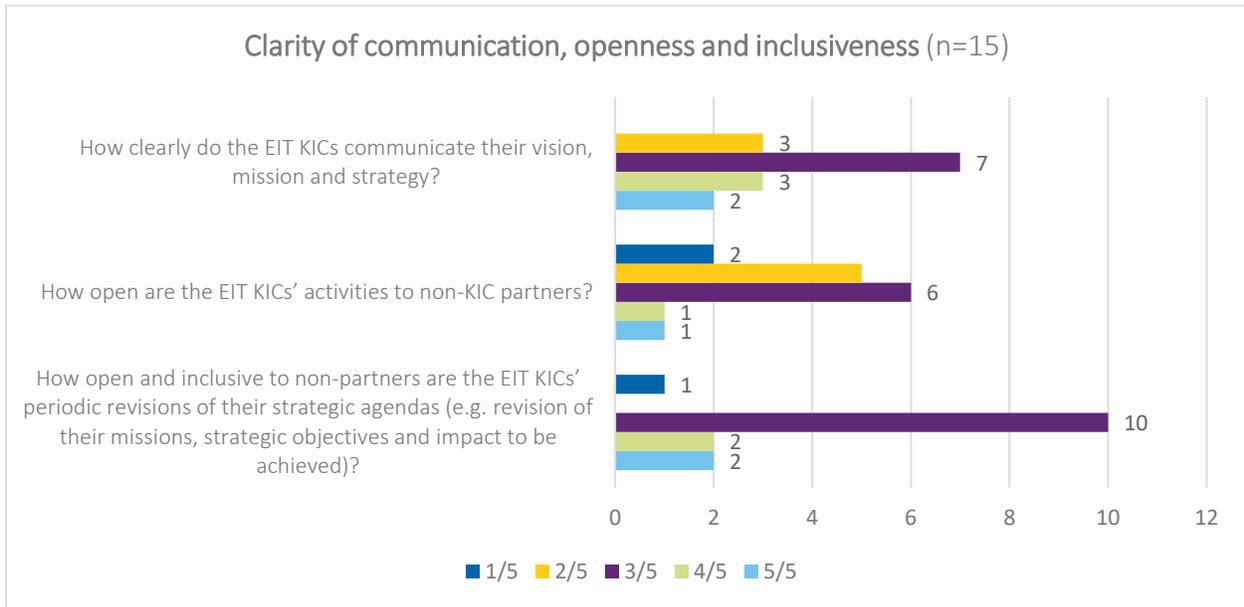
Those who gave a score of three out of five or less to the question on how open the EIT KICs' activities are to non-EIT KIC partners were asked about the barriers faced by non-EIT KIC partners. Of the 8 who answered, all cited access to information as a barrier, e.g. "*if you have never heard of EIT, you generally have very little information about what opportunities are offered, especially if you are a business.*"

4.2 Transparency

On the issue of the transparency of selection procedures, there was no clear view (Figure 19). As in the case of the previous questions, respondents most often (6 respondents) chose three out of five. Other views were split either side of this, with a slight tilt towards the negative.

Figure 19: How open and transparent are the selection procedures for EIT KIC activities?

Openness and transparency of selection procedures (n=15)
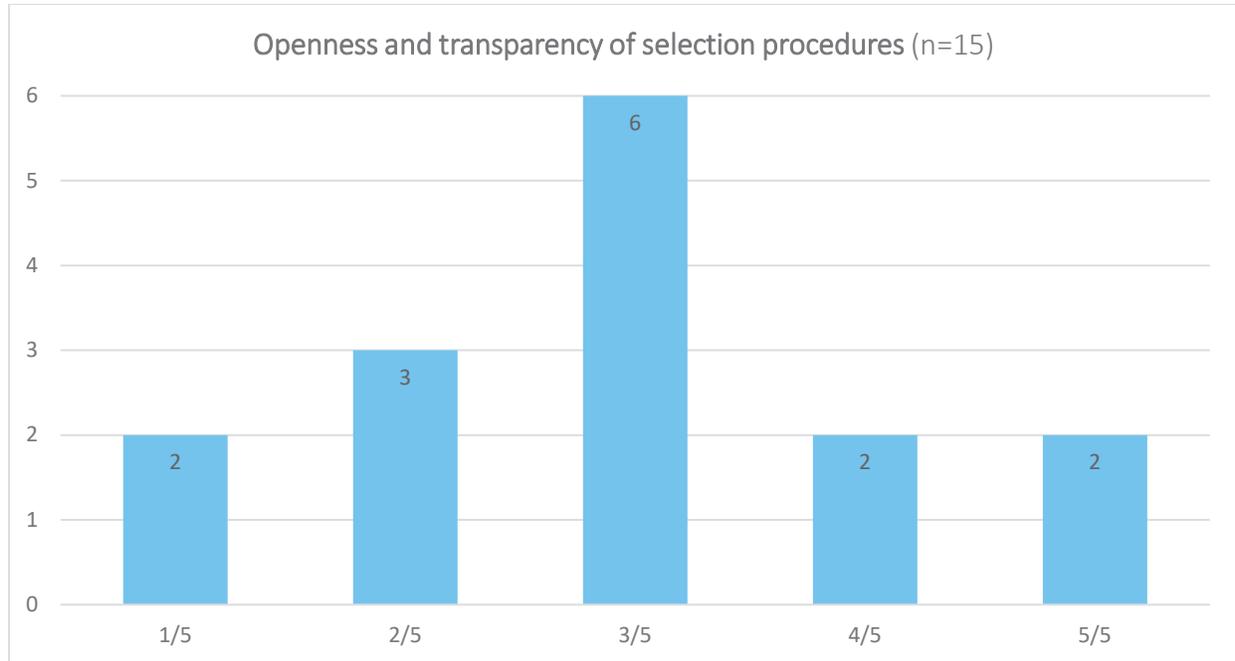
There was greater certainty and positivity (compared to the previous questions) on the clarity available for innovators, entrepreneurs and students (and others) on how to join and benefit from EIT KIC activities (Figure 20). While there was only 1 five out five, 4 selected four out of five, outnumbering the 4 who gave this a one or two out of five. However, of these, 3 gave the lowest mark, i.e. a one.

Figure 20: Is it clear how innovators, entrepreneurs and students (or other interested organisations and individuals) can join and benefit from EIT KIC activities?

Clarity on how innovators, entrepreneurs and students can join and benefit from EIT KIC activities (n=15)

Score	Count
1/5	3
2/5	1
3/5	5
4/5	5
5/5	1
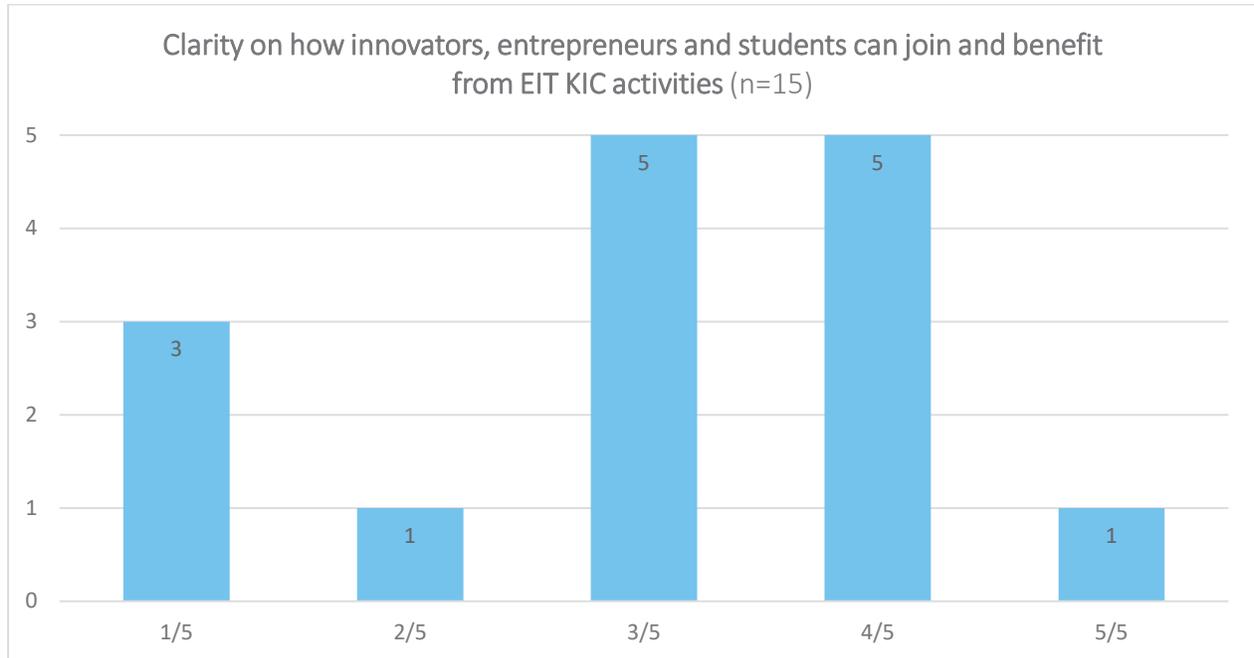
Those who had given a score of three or less in answer to the previous two questions were given the opportunity to comment. The 6 comments on the selection procedures and how they could be improved focused on a perceived lack of information and clarity about the procedures, which one respondent described as "*a bit blurry and full of buzzwords*".

 A perceived lack of transparency about how entrepreneurs and students (or other interested organisations) can join and benefit from EIT KIC activities was a common theme in comments on the extent to which there is clarity on joining procedures and benefits. The predominant message from the 5 who provided comments was that there is not enough upfront targeted information.

4.3 Satisfaction with dissemination

The respondents were positive about the ex-post dissemination of EIT KICs' results (Figure 21). While there was still the same high proportion of neutrals found in the previous questions (in this case 6 of the 15 gave a mark of three out of five), there were far more positives (6 marks of four and one of five) and only 2 negative scores of two out of five.

Figure 21: How well are the EIT KICs' results disseminated?

Assessment of dissemination of EIT KICs' results (n=15)
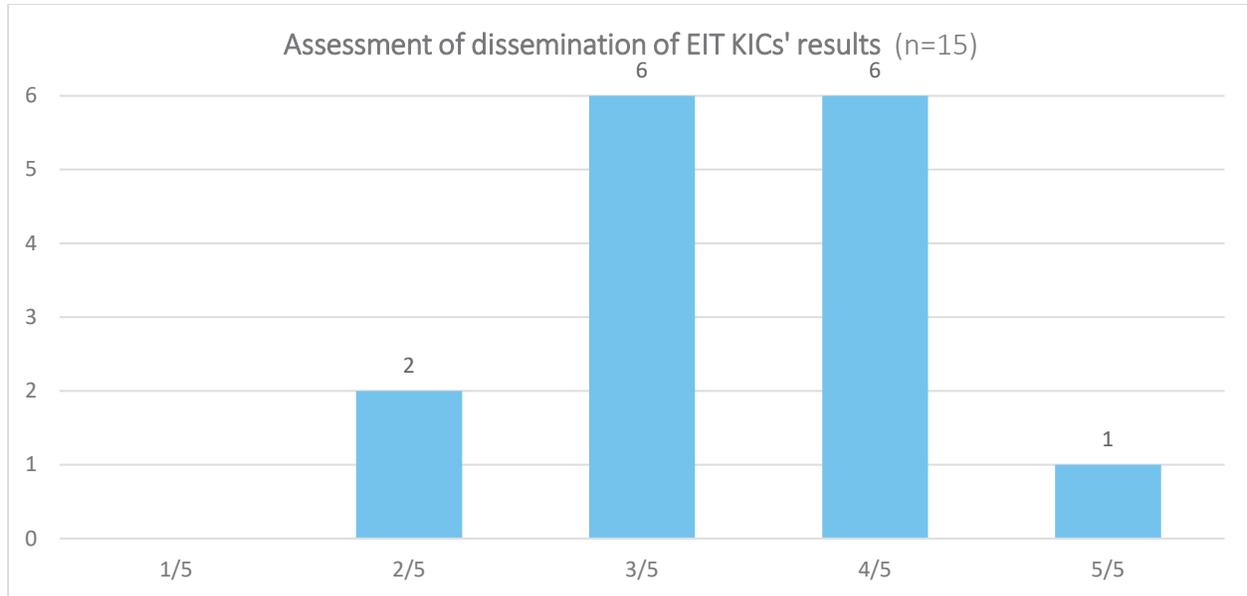
4.4 Areas for improvement

Respondents were next asked two questions about areas for improvement:

- *Are there aspects of the EIT KICs' operations that you think should be better communicated?*
- *Please suggest ways in which the EIT KICs could increase their openness and transparency*

Answers to the first question on **improving communication** (13 respondents) focused on transparency, communication and visibility as such, rather than specific operational aspects. Respondents felt that those outside the EIT KIC 'bubble' do not know how to take part in EIT KIC activities. Respondents advocated more events, more use of social media and digital channels, more publicity for calls, more transparent dissemination of results, and more success stories. The most positive comment was from a respondent in the "Other" category who gave a mark of 5/5 on every question and whose comment was "*No, everything's amazing*".

The replies on increasing **openness and transparency** made many similar points, with a particular emphasis on this case on more open calls and more publicity for the benefits of involvement with EIT KICs. Other points made were to look to Horizon 2020 as a model of openness and transparency and the need for more outreach to business. One response which summarised many of the elements of the 7 responses was: "*Publish all relevant opportunities, make info events*

highlighting the possibilities for outsiders, possibilities and benefits for insiders, the process of becoming member, how to initiate and get involved in the formulation of a new KIC, etc."

5 Conclusions

The quantitative and qualitative data from the survey and the open replies suggest that there are areas for improvement in openness and inclusiveness. There were **particular strengths** according to the survey in the openness of strategic agenda revisions, clarity on how innovators, entrepreneurs and students can join in EIT KIC activities and on the dissemination of results. Views were very mixed on openness to non-partners and the transparency of selection procedures.

There was relative satisfaction with communication with the EIT KICs, but some **overriding concerns** about transparency and communication in general, particularly when the respondents' comments are taken into account. There is a perception of bureaucracy. In addition, there were criticisms of both communication and dissemination.

Respondents advocated boosting the visibility of the EIT and EIT KICs, giving more publicity to calls, having more open calls, making the rules on participation in EIT KIC activities clearer, avoiding changes in the rules, more transparent selection processes and improving not only dissemination of results, but the depth of feedback on evaluations. There was a widely held view that the EIT could look to Horizon 2020 for good practice in how to be transparent and to communicate.

Annex 1: Consultation Questionnaire

Basic Questions

- Name and surname:
    - (free text)

- E-mail:
    - (free text)

- Name of organisation:
    - (free text)

- Type of organisation:
    - Higher education institution
    - Research institution
    - Corporate/industry
    - Start-up/scale-up
    - National authority (e.g. national ministry, science and innovation agency, parliament)
    - Intergovernmental organisation (IGO)
    - Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
    - European institution (European Commission, European Parliament, etc.)
    - EIT KIC (EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community)
    - Other

- Organisation's location:
    - Choose from a list of countries (all)

- Position in the organisation:
    - (free text)

- Have you participated in an EIT activity before? (multiple choice)
    - EIT Community event
    - Innovation project
    - Education programme
    - Venture support
    - Other

o   Not yet

- Are you currently a member of the EIT Community (EIT KICs and their partners, EIT Alumni)?
  o   Yes/No

- Which one of the following areas of activity are you most interested in?
  o   Business support
  o   Education & training
  o   Innovation-driven research activities
  o   Ecosystem-building/connectivity

- Publication privacy settings:
  o   Anonymous: Only your answers to the following - type of respondent, country of origin and contribution - will be published. All other personal details (name, organisation name etc.) will not be published.
  o   Public: Your personal details (name, organisation name etc.) will be published with your contribution.

Thematic Questions

- Have you partnered with or been involved in the activities of the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)?

  Yes/No

<u>Questions to organisations already involved in the KICs' activities (including partners)</u>

1. Which KIC(s) have you engaged with?

    Multiple choice (list of eight KICs)

2. How clearly do the EIT KICs you work with communicate their vision, mission and strategy?

    1-5 (very unclearly-very clearly)

3. How open are the EIT KICs' activities to non-KIC partners?

1-5 (very closed-very open)

4. How open and inclusive to partners are the KICs' periodic revisions of their strategic agendas (e.g. revision of their missions, strategic objectives and impact to be achieved)?

   1-5 (very closed-very open)

5. Are citizens consulted in the periodic revisions of KICs' strategic agendas (e.g. revision of their missions, strategic objectives and impact to be achieved)?

   Yes, they are widely consulted
   Yes, they are consulted to some extent
   No, they are not consulted

6. How open and transparent are the selection procedures for KIC activities?

   1-5 (very closed-very open)

7. (if 1-3) How could the selection procedures be improved?

   Free-form answer (optional)

8. Is it clear how innovators, entrepreneurs and students can join and benefit from the KICs' activities?

   1-5 (very unclear-very clear)

9. (if 1-3) How could this clarity be improved?

   Free-form answer (optional)

10. How satisfied have you been with your communication with the KICs?

    1-5 (very unsatisfied-very satisfied)

11. How well are the KICs' results disseminated?

    1-5 (very badly-very well)

12. What information would you find useful in terms of KIC results?

   Free-form answer (optional)

13. Are there aspects of the KICs' operations that you think should be better communicated to internal and external audiences?

   - Internal:
   - External:
   Table/Matrix

14. Please suggest ways in which the EIT KICs could improve their openness and transparency:

   Free-form answer (optional)

Questions to organisations not involved in the KICs' activities

1. How clearly do the EIT KICs communicate their vision, mission and strategy?

   1-5 (very unclearly-very clearly)

2. Have you been in direct contact with any KICs?

   Yes/No

3. (if yes) How satisfied have you been with the KICs' communication?

   1-5 (very unsatisfied-very satisfied)

4. How open are the KICs' activities to non-KIC partners?

   1-5 (very closed-very open)

5. (if 1-3) What do you think are the barriers faced by non-KIC partners?

   Free-form response

6. How open and transparent are the selection procedures for KIC activities?

   1-5 (very closed-very open)

7. (if 1-3) How could the selection procedures be improved?

   Free-form response

8. How open and inclusive to non-partners are the KICs' periodic revisions of their strategic agendas (e.g. revision of their missions, strategic objectives and impact to be achieved)?

   1-5 (very closed-very open)

9. Is it clear how innovators, entrepeneurs and students (or other interested organisations and individuals) can join and benefit from KIC activities?

   1-5 (very unclear-very clear)

10. (if 1-3) How could this clarity be improved?

    Free-form answer (optional)

11. How well are the KICs' results disseminated?

    1-5 (very badly-very well)

12. Are there aspects of the KICs' operations that you think should be better communicated?

    Free-form answer

13. Please suggest ways in which the EIT KICs could increase their openness and transparency:

    Free-form answer

Submission of Supporting Documents

If you wish to upload additional documents (e.g. Position Paper), please do so here:
⬆ (upload file here)

☐ I agree with the personal data protection provisions.

☐ I consent to being included in the EIT Stakeholder Database for future contacts.

Annex 2: Comments from respondents[3]

1 "Partners/involved"

The comments below are representative or make points put particularly cogently. They are clustered by the area covered by the comment, not the questions which they addressed. Communication and knowledge-sharing. Internal and external communication attracted by far the most comments. There was a thread about lack of transparency running through many of the comments not dealing directly with communication, some specifically about to transparency, and some in connection with perceived shortcomings in the calls and requirements procedures, and in the selection and evaluation procedures.

1.1. Transparency

"Clarity."

"Stop the urge to control through centralisation (CLCs are key to drive local agendas and need to be given more responsibilities), truth hurts but is necessary to drive openness and transparency in any democracy (so act as a democratic institution)."

"More transparency in the call procedures (Climate, InnoEnergy)."

"The system is not transparent at all. There are no clear protocols and they are not openly available. The communication is extremely poor and even when asked for it can very much depend both who asks and who is asked on what reply we get. (Comments apply to EIT Food in particular."

"EIT should check the transparency process; these processes (and calls) open a wide variety of interpretation and occasional decisions; decisions on KAVA projects to be funded are made like in a bazaar. Involvements / conflicts-of-interest between KIC managers and KIC partners grow over the years."

"The communication on the EIT KIC results should be more transparent and honest. Independent evaluations and research on EIC KICs is needed. Real sums (not artificial KCA's); real success of the start-ups (not just numbers of the created ones) should be communicated. Also not so successful stories should be shared. This would be the only way to actually develop something and go forward. Now it seems, that only praising is put out. It is not very constructive, as all this kind of

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[3] The selection of comments has been made by Cecoforma, which summarised the survey. They are not the responsibility of the EIT.

big and visionary collaborations have their toothing problems. It is not a shame, but an opportunity!"

"The KICs should be internally open and transparent to members and be open to the rest of the world with their results and how resources were used. But they should not be completely open about the details of their strategy and implementations. It should be up to EIT to judge the overall Business Plans and provide the funding as deemed appropriate. It is not for just anybody else to be involved, otherwise there would be no reason to be a partner taking the strategic responsibility."

"Responsiveness to suggestions and actions made to improve processes and improvement of feedback on collaboration."

"Sometimes new regulations are not communicated in time and not sufficiently transparent. As an example, we would like to refer to the EIT Health Business Plan 2020 which originally did not include the requirement for universities to provide co-funding. This was communicated briefly after the calls for proposals had been published, and it was hidden in a newsletter from the EIT Health headquarter which came at very short notice (very close to the deadline for proposals). It is essential that important information is communicated clearly and early!"

1.2. Calls and requirements

"EIT needs to provide some stability for the KICs with budget visibility, multi-annual funding and clear expectations regarding financial sustainability. Eligibility requirements should not be changed after calls are published and certainly not after evaluations have taken place and projects have begun."

"Web based procedure with clear process.»

"Uniform procedures as to calls, evaluations, etc., and conform to H2020/HEU procedures incl. F&T portal."

1.3. Selection and evaluation

"There is no standard operating procedure for selection processes, no clearly defined and visible criteria for selection, conflict in response from EIT and KICs due to parallel and unrelated processes between the organisations (replications and waste of public money therefore), taking too long, not legally binding and contractually agreed until too late to start any project in earnest on 1st January of each year."

"Visibility of selection processes including criteria for approval or rejection. It implies same standard operating procedures, no exception, stop the double processes between KICs and EIT, building trust between EIT and KICs."

"Clarify selection criteria and provide detailed evaluation score and feedback in each phase of the process."

"Internal checks to ensure consistency between reviewer comments and scores."

"The transition from a call evaluation ranking list to the final business plan should become more transparent in general."

"We need uniformity across KICs and to conform to H2020/HEU like MSCA, EIC,…"

1.4. Communication / knowledge-sharing

1.4.1. Internal

"The Communication with EC and EIT has been very variable and in times of transition between MFFs unacceptable. The EC /EIT seems not to understand that KICs are private entities without much own capital and therefore cannot survive interruptions or delays in the cash flow. At the same time EIT demands that the KIC LEs employ all senior KIC staff, thus forcing large monthly cash-outs. EC/EIT has already lost a lot of credibility with many partners due to this."

"Already, communication between lockdown was patchy but with lockdown and restriction in travelling, debates are becoming one sided, communication is too late too little. On time, visible and clear information is required."

"Standard procedures which are written and available to all."

"More transparent and in-time communication. »

"Simple, schematic procedures at the website. Clear targets, clear criteria on excellence, impact and relevance."

1.4.2. External

"The brand awareness is low, EIT KICs should focus on brand building. EIT KICs should provide more transparency and simplicity. The objectives are difficult to understand the programme structure is too complex, hardly understandable for externals."

"It is a lot of information and hard to find for some target groups. We need a easier way to find right information to the right target group in an easy way."

"Multi Level Marketing communication - 1) EIT focusing on brand and main messages + events, 2) Consortium partners engaged in day-2-day agenda, events, communication with reasonable freedom for the modifications and engaging with third level 3) community - start-ups, external partners, mentors."

"Simplified messages tailored to the target audiences. The receiver reads messages from the point of view "what is there for me". If that is not clear the message has no effect."

"It is hard to find information on the website. We need packaged information on PPTs etc. - both short and longer."

"Brief quick facts, information sheets on every project."

"Offers need to be packaged. It is hard to find info on the websites and then there are different websites for EIT Health and EIT Health Scandinavia etc."

(Communicate on) "available support and accessibility."

(Communicate on) "advantages of cooperation, objectives, perspectives, pathway."

"The information of the benefits and offering is not built from target audience point of view. You need to have huge amount of knowledge beforehand to be able to even look for the information. More customer friendly communication needed not only on KIC but also on EIT level."

"More communication to the wider society."

"(Communicate on) Events from other KICs, discussions with the Commission, influence worldwide, communication with citizens, open fora, sponsoring of citizen debates, not being afraid of the status quo and not there to please timid large corporations."

"More personal success stories and examples of the EIT's added value for the organizations/researchers joined to the activities. Societal impact of the projects is important to collect and share."

"Partnership database, overall data about KPIs, attracted investments etc."

"A searchable database with all start-ups, students, patents."

(Communicate on) "Outreach capacity: Number of organizations and individuals supported. Number of talents who have been transferred from Education Pillar to Business Creation pillar by establishing innovation teams / start-ups. Total value of investment, attracted by supported start-ups."

"The EIT education label is still not very strong. Marketing of the EIT-programs and summer schools etc. to students would be needed: Why and how? The programs are good and run by good universities, thus I am sure they benefit the students."

2 'Not-"partners/involved"'

The comments from this group were very similar to those of the "partners/involved" group. However, as noted in the main text, there was one respondent in this group who marked everything 5/5 and said "everything's amazing".

2.1 Transparency

"Closed shops"

"Lack of clear information on the possibilities…in combination with uncertainty about the rules. If information about the possibilities could be more closely linked with Horizon (use of funding and tenders?) at least for info, as with other third party calls) it might be easier."

"Complicated scheme of access and access fees. …Companies may be interested to develop activities on an ad hoc basis but there is no opening."

2.2 Calls and requirements

"Open calls are now more frequent, should still be promoted more with relevant target groups; if you have never heard of EIT you generally have very little information about what opportunities are offered, especially if you are a business."

"They are often a bit blurry and full of buzzwords."

"Timely publication to the research community."

"Open calls for participation, comprehensible selection of partners"

2.3 Communication / knowledge-sharing

"For outsiders there are only some news but they mainly report what activities took place and not focus on the joining opportunities."

"The information should be placed from the target group perspective i.e. if I am a business and in this area of operation I can get this service in this accelerator, I can get this training, I can get this financial support if I meet these criteria / succeed in an open call which is to be issued then..."

"Results and successes need more publicity."

"...use social media"