

REPORT

EIT Seminar on "Shaping the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) - Future Information and Communication Society" Budapest, 23 January 2009

Chaired by Prof. Yrjö Neuvo, Member of the EIT Governing Board and Executive Committee, this EIT seminar focused on one of the thematic areas designated for the first two to three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs): The Future Information and Communication Society.

1) Seminar facts

Having generated high interest from across Europe and beyond with a 98% turnout rate and more than 190 participants, the EIT seminar on "Shaping the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) – Future Information and Communication Society" stimulated an active discussion among interested parties. Attendance was well balanced from all sides of the "knowledge triangle", including a very active participation from the business community (approximately 1/3 of all participants) – thereby effectively reflecting the EIT's objective of bringing together all parts of the innovation chain. Moreover, approximately half of the participants indicated their organisation was currently actively preparing for participation in a KIC.

2) Key outcomes

The need for an innovation-friendly context

For the first part of the seminar, the EIT had invited several keynote speakers, representing various sectors and organisms, in order to spark discussion and provide different angles on the subject matter:

Nick Wainwright, Director of Open Innovation Europe, Hewlett Packard Laboratories

Sergio Bandinelli, R&D Area Director, European Software Institute

Josef Affenzeller, Director Research Coordination, AVL LIST GmbH

Lutz Heuser (unable to attend), Vice President SAP Research and Chief Development Architect, SAP

All presentations highlighted the necessity of creating a more innovation friendly context in Europe; and speakers also stressed the importance of exploring and intensifying ways of collaboration among innovation players – both of which are core elements of the EIT's mission. All presentations can be viewed via the EIT website at http://ec.europa.eu/eit/seminars_en.htm .

Preparing for KICs

In a second part, an open discussion between EIT Governing Board Members (chair: Prof. Yrjö Neuvo, co-chairs: Mr. Giovanni Colombo, Prof. Anders Flodström, and Mr. Linnar Viik) and the audience was centred on a number of questions (Annex). The aim was to address key features of KICs, as presented by Prof. Neuvo earlier on. The presentation can be downloaded from the EIT website at http://ec.europa.eu/eit/pastseminars_en.htm .

Discussions were very lively and constructive, showing the high and active level of interest of many participants in the EIT – and in interaction with the Governing Board for that matter. Contributions from the audience clearly showed that there was a broad acceptance and appreciation of the KIC concept, and that efforts were now geared towards putting forward proposals for the first KICs.

The concept of 'co-location centres', as established by the Governing Board as one of the central defining features of a KIC, was equally very well received.

Some participants highlighted the cross-cutting nature of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), stressing that ICT will also have a role to play in those KICs addressing primarily sustainable energy and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Getting it right: key features of the EIT

Moreover, the discussion also helped to clarify a number of conceptual and practical questions amongst the audience, notably regarding financial issues and the organisation of the call for KICs. Members of the Governing Board particularly stressed the following points:

- Funding: The EIT is not just another funding mechanism. Unlike other EU programmes, participants in a KIC will have more freedom, but also more responsibilities, notably in terms of mobilising funding.
- Future KICs: By January 2010, the first 2-3 KICs will be chosen. The next call for KICs will, according to the EIT regulation, be launched in 2013.
- KICs selection procedure: The call for proposals for the first KICs will be launched in April 2009, with the deadline for submissions in August 2009. The proposals will be evaluated by independent experts, and in January 2010 the Governing Board will select and designate the first 2-3 KICs.

Staying informed: next steps

Information given by the Governing Board was highly appreciated, and the EIT is committed to providing a maximum level of information, as the process for establishment of the first KICs develops. Among others, two further seminars on each of the other KIC themes will be held:

- EIT seminar on "Shaping the KICs – Sustainable Energy", Vienna, 16 February
- EIT seminar on "Shaping the KICs – Climate change mitigation and adaptation", Madrid, 16 March

3) Conclusions

The seminar was perceived as a very timely initiative both by participants and Governing Board members. Apart from fruitful discussions, the meeting also provided a much utilised opportunity for networking and partnering activities in view of the formation of future KICs.

Annex:

Questions for discussion

- How can the KICs contribute to optimizing the innovation chain within the ICT sector?
- How to address open innovation, public domain, open source, and IPR control issues?
- How will the co-location centres and the question of co-locating people apply in the ICT field?
- What kind of entrepreneurial education is needed in the ICT sector?
- What are the most attractive areas for investment in the area of the Future Information and Communication Society? And what are the most likely sources for such investment?
- What are the challenges for building the Future Information and Communication Society?
- How to achieve cross-fertilization with the other two KIC themes, i.e. sustainable energy and climate change mitigation and adaptation?