

EN

EN

EN



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 26.10.2009
C(2009)8078 final

COMMISSION OPINION

of 26.10.2009

**The draft 2010-2012 Triennial Work Programme of the European Institute of
Innovation and Technology (EIT)**

COMMISSION OPINION

of 26.10.2009

The draft 2010-2012 Triennial Work Programme of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

Background

- (1) On 11th March 2008, by virtue of Regulation (EC) No 294/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹(hereinafter "the Regulation"), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (hereinafter "EIT") was established.
- (2) The objective of this new Community Body, as defined in Article 3 of the Regulation, is "[...] to contribute to sustainable European economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing the innovation capacity of the Member States and the Community. It shall do this by promoting and integrating higher education, research and innovation of the highest standards."
- (3) In accordance with Recital 21 and in particular Articles 15(a) and 18(1) of the Regulation, the EIT transmitted on 15th July, within 12 months of its creation, its first draft rolling Triennial Work Programme 2010-2012 (hereinafter "TWP") to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission for their respective opinions. The latter must formulate their opinions on the draft within 3 months of its reception, by 15th October 2009 at the latest. Upon reception, the EIT Governing Board itself has 3 months to reply, indicating any adjustments to its priorities and planned activities.
- (4) In accordance with Article 20(5) of the EIT Regulation, the draft EIT 2011-2013 TWP, accompanied by a draft budget estimate and draft establishment plan, will be transmitted to the Commission by 31st March 2010.

Comments

Overall approach

- (5) The Commission welcomes the first Triennial Work Programme established by the EIT as the first body at Community level to focus on the promotion of innovation by developing interactions between actors of the "knowledge triangle" (higher education, research, business). The emphasis placed by the EIT on promoting multidisciplinary education and in particular entrepreneurship as a key linking factor between the various strands of the triangle is fully supported; the extent to which entrepreneurship interacts with and reinforces the other strands should however be made somewhat more explicit. The Commission also notes with interest the concept of "co-location centres" as facilitators of day-to-day interaction between the diverse partners within Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), so that such centres can facilitate the creation, sharing and transfer of knowledge. The Commission also welcomes the

¹ OJ L 97, 9.4.2008, p1

emphasis put on simplicity of procedures, leadership and accountability to ensure world class delivery and impact.

Prioritising the consolidation of the KICs

- (6) The Commission supports the EIT's intention to consolidate the establishment of the first KICs once they are operational, notably via a series of initiatives outlined in the EIT Annual Plan 2010 (chapter 6). These include for example the "EIT Academy for Entrepreneurship" (p9, p13) and an "interactive Communication strategy" (p9), itself encompassing a number of sub-actions (summer schools, newsletters, website...) While estimated delivery dates for the above activities are generally indicated, the TWP should indicate more concretely: i) How these actions are to be prioritized in relation to each other, ii) What financial and human resources are to be made available, iii) How they are to be implemented in operational terms and iv) How their added value and impact is to be assessed and quantified.
- (7) The next EIT rolling triennial work programme, due by 31 March 2010, should provide further clarifications on elements outlined above and their implementation in the period 2011-2013.

Ensuring complementarity and cross-fertilization with other EU bodies and initiatives

- (8) The Commission underlines the importance of the EIT's ambition to "capitalize upon and promote strong bonds with existing and forthcoming EU initiatives" (chapter 2) and the aim that KICs, on various levels (innovation-driven research, knowledge management and transfer, mobility, skills development and human resources management, responsible approaches to public-private funding...), should feed into the objectives of related EU strategies: ERA, EHEA, upcoming Innovation Plan and strategies related to the thematic areas of the KICs.
- (9) The Commission highlights in particular the need for continuous exchanges and co-operation with the EIT and relevant Commission services in order to avoid duplication and promote synergies at all levels(e.g. multidisciplinary knowledge resources in the fields of climate change adaptation –clearinghouse- and eco-innovation -the Europe Innova Eco-Innovation Observatory-). Discussions with relevant Commission services should be further pursued once the first 2 or 3 KICs are selected, to seek ways to promote cross-fertilization on a more operational basis.
- (10) The EIT should strive to build as much as possible on existing benchmarks and indicators as regards the development of the "KIC Performance Scorecard" (chapter 2), the development of a "world-class education benchmark" for KICs (p7) and the proposed EIT "benchmark analysis and report on knowledge transfer and innovation" (p8).

Mobilizing adequate funding for KICs' long-term sustainability

- (11) The Commission appreciates, as the TWP states in chapter 4, the fact that the EIT will rely heavily on the strong commitment of partner institutions and that it must, draw on various sources of public and private funding, at regional, national and Community levels. Access to Community funding, including under Cohesion policy, should follow established rules and procedures. However, the TWP should explain in more detail how the KICs are to draw on and assimilate these various sources and what further

concrete actions (timetable, budget, impact...) the EIT intends to undertake in order to fully mobilise all potential financial resources for innovation, notably from the private sector: business community, venture capital funds, investment banks and so forth. The Commission perceives a certain lack of focus on the specific participation of the business community, notably with respect to the more targeted and detailed chapters on education and entrepreneurship: incentives for such participation, essential for the success of the initiative, should be more strongly underlined. Finally, the Commission encourages the EIT in its proposed development of an EIT Foundation (p11) - thus making full use of potential resources offered in the EIT Regulation (Art. 5.2) - as a practical instrument for receiving additional funds and for financing EIT activities. The Commission offers its full support in making this operational.

KICs as role models and SIA

- (12) The Commission welcomes the EIT's proposal that approaches and mechanisms pioneered in the development of KICs should be used as the basis for dissemination of good practice (chapter 5) However, the TWP should better underline how KICs are to share new innovation models and other best practice so as to serve clearly as role models for existing and forthcoming EU initiatives, for the greater benefit of the EU as a whole.
- (13) The Commission welcomes the development of KICs as the first operational "knowledge and innovation" entities to integrate the higher education dimension at the transnational level, with a particular focus on upgrading multidisciplinary and entrepreneurial skills. The development of new labelled EIT degrees and diploma awarded by participating higher education institutions within KICs is thus supported, as are references to existing frameworks and initiatives such as the Bologna Process or the Erasmus Mundus programme (p7).
- (14) The Commission underlines its willingness to continue its full support to the EIT all through the final stages of its establishment and looks forward to working hand-in-hand with the Governing Board from the outset, especially as regards the orientations of the first EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) in 2011 at the latest, to be adopted by the Commission.

Done at Brussels, 26.10.2009.

For the Commission
Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ
Member of the Commission

