European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): strategic innovation agenda 2021-2027

2019/0152(COD) - 11/07/2019 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to propose a new strategic innovation programme for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology for the period 2021 to 2027.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the European Institute of Innovation and Technology was established in 2008 by Regulation (EC) No 294/2008, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1292/2013. Its overall mission is to stimulate sustainable European economic growth and competitiveness by strengthening the innovative capacity of Member States and the Union.

The EIT achieves these objectives mainly through its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which bring together more than 1 200 partners from business, research and education.

The EIT is an integral part of the Commission's proposal for the Horizon Europe Programme (2021-2027), and more particularly the Open Innovation pillar of this programme, but it has a separate legal basis (the EIT Regulation).

This initiative aims to make the EIT Regulation compatible with Horizon Europe and to improve the functioning of the EIT, taking into account the lessons learned in recent years. It also aims to propose a new Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIP) setting out the EIT's strategy and priorities for the period 2021-2027, as well as its objectives, key actions, expected results and resource requirements.

For the period 2021-2027, the SIA should ensure consistency with Horizon Europe's objectives and the programme's requirements for multiannual strategic planning, monitoring and other activities, and promote synergies with other relevant programmes.

This proposal for a new EIT SIA for the period 2021-2027 is therefore presented in parallel to the proposal to recast the EIT Regulation.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the chosen option is based on the baseline scenario (continuation of the EIT's activities in their current form, with the necessary adjustments to bring the EIT into line with the Horizon Europe proposal). In addition, it adopts a number of technical measures to enhance the functioning of the EIT and proposes a new action to foster entrepreneurial education across Europe.

CONTENT: the proposed EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) for the period 2021-2027 defines the EIT's priority areas, strategy and financial needs for this period and sets out how the EIT will contribute to the achievement of Horizon Europe's objectives.

Main improvements

The SIA clarifies the role of the EIT in the Horizon Europe programme and sets out its complementarity to the various parts of Horizon Europe, notably also the European Innovation Council. It includes a

number of improvements to the existing EIT model. They concern: (i) the alignment with the European partnerships under Horizon Europe and their governing rules, (ii) the improvement of the current funding model as recommended by the European Court of Auditors and, (iii) the inclusion of the possibility for the EIT to conclude memoranda of cooperation with KICs to keep former KICs as active members of the EIT Community after the termination of their framework partnership agreement.

Clear monitoring and evaluation provisions are defined taking into account the Horizon Europe framework and the EIT's specificities.

Support to KICs

The EIT will consolidate the eight existing KICs, fostering their growth and impact, and accompany their transition to financial sustainability. In particular, this will concern the first wave of three KICs launched in 2009 (EIT Climate, EIT Digital and EIT InnoEnergy) whose framework partnership agreements will terminate after 2024.

The EIT will also launch two new KICs in specific thematic areas in order to tackle future emerging global societal challenges and needs. The SIA identifies Cultural and Creative Industries as a priority field for a new KIC with a call to be launched in 2021. A second call for a new KIC is foreseen in 2024 to add new priority fields.

EIT-coordinated activities

The EIT will support 750 higher education institutions through funding, expertise and mentoring, enabling them to develop economic activities in their field of interest and to better integrate into local innovation ecosystems. The EIT Label will be part of the EIT's reinforced focus on education.

The EIT will put a strong emphasis on cross-cutting actions such as communication, identification, codification and dissemination of good practices, and international cooperation. Another key area of action for the EIT will be the expansion and strengthening of its regional outreach through the Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS). RIS will offer in particular opportunities to Member States with low innovation performance and enhance their access to the EIT KICs.

BUDGETARY IMPACT: the impact on expenditure is estimated at EUR 3 billion for the period 2021-2027. The impact on administrative appropriations is estimated at EUR 75 million.