

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) launches first call for proposals for Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is quickly moving towards reaching full operational status. Today, it published the call for proposals for its first two to three Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which are to be selected by the end of January 2010. The KICs are highly integrated public-private partnerships between higher education, research, business and entrepreneurial actors and will be the operational engine of the EIT.

"This is a major step towards a fully operational EIT", says the Chairman of the EIT Governing Board, Dr. Martin Schuurmans. "With the KICs we have the unique opportunity to bring innovation in Europe to new levels. This is why we are looking forward to really novel and attractive proposals that convincingly strike new paths in collaboration between academic and business partners."

The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Mr Ján Figel', explained that *"at this time of unprecedented economic crisis, the longer-term strategy of bringing the worlds of academia, research and business innovation together in new ways is exactly what Europe needs for a successful, sustainable recovery. The EIT is a key mover and shaker in this regard."*

The EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities will build the operational base of the EIT and aim at capitalising on Europe's innovation potential by adopting new ways of working between higher education, research, business and entrepreneurship. They will be innovative and highly integrated webs of excellence, driving effective new interactions between partners in terms of ideas, technology, culture, business and design models. In doing so, KICs should create new business for existing industry, including SMEs, and for new endeavours alike. A strong component of the KICs' innovation strategies will be to educate and foster the development of entrepreneurial people working across traditional borders, sectors and disciplines. The KICs will operate in areas of key societal challenges, as reflected in the themes for this first call for proposals: sustainable energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the future information and communication society.

The Knowledge and Innovation Communities will be a cornerstone of the EIT, whose mission is to significantly improve Europe's innovation capacity and radically enhance its positive impact on the economy and on society.

To find out more:

The full call text including information on how to submit a proposal is available on the EIT website:

<http://eit.europa.eu>.