

European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)

Definition and Context

The European Commission announced European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) in its Innovation Communication of 6 October 2010¹ to overcome fragmentation of efforts and slow pace of change in the establishment of Innovation Union². Therefore, the pilot of European Innovation Partnerships on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA) was launched in 2011³ and both the European Council⁴ and the Parliament⁵ have welcomed the objectives of EIPs and supported the launch of the pilot to test the concept. Since then, the Partnerships have turned into one of the important initiatives to European research and innovation landscape owing to their different nature; precisely, the Partnerships are more 'challenge-driven' and focusing on societal benefits, a rapid modernisation of the associated sectors and markets. In this way, the EIPs do not supersede or replace other existing initiatives and platforms, nor are they a substitute for existing institutional decision-making mechanisms. They mainly reinforce the coherence of European research and innovation priorities and accelerate the uptake of innovations⁶.

The EIPS are launched in areas where combining European, national and regional efforts in R&I would achieve the target; namely,

- EIP on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA): aims to identify and remove persisting barriers to innovation across the health and care delivery chain, through interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches.
- EIP Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI): works to foster competitive and sustainable farming and forestry in order to ensure a steady supply of food, feed and biomaterials.
- EIP on Smart Cities and Communities (EIP-SCC): works to improve urban life through more sustainable integrated solutions, including applied innovation, better planning, a more participatory approach, higher energy efficiency, better transport solutions, intelligent use of information and communication technologies (ICT), etc.
- EIP on Water (EIP Water): facilitates the development of innovative solutions to address major European and global water challenges. Also, the Partnership supports the creation of market opportunities for these innovations, both inside and outside of Europe.
- EIP on Raw Materials (EIP Raw Materials): contributes to the security of a sustainable supply of the raw materials to the European economy whilst increasing benefits for society as a whole. Also the Partnership aims to help raise industry's contribution to the EU GDP.

The EIPs have a strong link to Europe 2020 flagship of Innovation Union in relation of "*bringing together all relevant stakeholders across policies, across sectors and across borders to speed up innovations that address a major societal challenge, and gain competitive advantages for growth and job creation in Europe*"⁷. The EIPs have brings together all these stakeholders, from those committed to basic research to the final users, or –in different words– from conception to implementation. This also implies that the achievements of EIPs depend on the stakeholders' commitment; namely, their

¹ [COM\(2010\) 546, 06.10.2010](#) (accessed January 13th, 2015)

² See also http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm

³ There is strong involvement of Parliament, Council, Commission and stakeholders throughout the different stages of a partnership, reflecting a high level of commitment to deliver at both levels, national and regional (for more information see [EC_SEC\(2011\) 1028 final](#), accessed January 14th, 2015).

⁴ European Council of 4.2.2011; Competitiveness Council conclusions on 26.10.2010 and 9.3.2011

⁵ European Parliament resolution of 11.11.2010 and report of 11.5.2011

⁶ [EC_COM\(2011\) 849 final](#) (accessed January 14th, 2015)

⁷ See http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm.

willingness of working together and their ability for mobilisation and flexibility. There are three main tasks required to articulate these stakeholder profiles⁸.

- Define a common vision and mobilise resources to achieve breakthroughs more rapidly: *involves putting realistic targets, inventing new ways of working, using modern means of communication and working together across policy areas and disciplines, with the fully agreed stakeholder commitment.*
- Considerably reduce time-to-market of research and innovation breakthroughs: *requires better coordination of public and private actions and involvement of different actors in the whole innovation chain, from ideas to market.*
- Make it easier for all to achieve scalable results by overcoming fragmentation of efforts and by reducing complexity: *includes better coordination of different EU instruments and optimisation of diverging national market regulations.*

The scope of EIPs spreads out a large variety of action areas as there are different problems and barriers in terms of establishing Innovation Union; notably, i) under-investment in knowledge generation and diffusion, ii) framework conditions which are not innovation-friendly, iii) fragmentation and duplication of efforts, iv) low involvement of users, and v) insufficient alignment of public actions. Furthermore, some of the EITs have macro specific targets; i.e. the EIT AHA aims to increase by 2 the average number of healthy life years in the EU by 2020. To address all these issues require articulated activities in many different fields and well-organised platform providing recommendations rather than decision-making for specific issues with strong stakeholder involvement.

Implementation

The activities of EIPs spread out the whole research and innovation chain and aims at bringing together all relevant stakeholders at both scales, national and regional. The main goal of the Partnerships is to design and implement innovation-based activities to cut lead times, with particular emphases on;⁹

1. stepping up research and development efforts;
2. coordinating investments in demonstration and pilots;
3. anticipating and fast-tracking any necessary regulation and standards;
4. mobilising 'demand' in particular through better coordinated public procurement to ensure that any breakthroughs are quickly brought to market.

The important characteristic that makes EIPs different is the attempt to coordinate existing instruments and initiatives and complement them with new actions where necessary. In other words, the EIPs can be seen as an integration tool to develop a single coherent policy framework by means of helping the existing initiatives to achieve better and faster results.

All EIPs have already prepared and published the Strategic Implementation Plans (SIPs), which outline a set of priority areas including key actions for immediate implementation. These actions operate over a limited timeframe, with first measurable outcomes within 1-3 years, and with a headline target to be achieved within 5-8 years after its establishment¹⁰. The SIPs are neither a new funding programme nor instrument nor a legal entity. They serve as the key reference document for the implementation of each EIP. This does even not restrict the other types of activities. The EIPs are open for new insights, demands and any dynamics in the working fields.

The EIPs seek innovation solutions that meet the needs of specific action areas, such as ageing population, agricultural sustainability, smart cities, water protection, sustainable industrial

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/eip_faq_december_2010.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none (accessed January 22nd, 2015)

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=eip (accessed January 14th, 2015)

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/eip_faq_may_2012.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none, pp. 2 (accessed January 30th).

development and so on. Each EIP undertakes the variety of activities in their action areas, from planning the innovation service to setting up a system for change, also including monitoring, evaluation and dissemination. Moreover, their activities are not limited to their priority areas as horizontal actions have also been undertaken by the partners to address framework conditions and promote connections between the different priority areas¹¹. These activities mostly focus on horizontal issues such as regulatory and standardisation conditions, effective funding, repository for innovation and marketplace to facilitate cooperation among various stakeholders.

Possible Synergies

The EIPs aim to increase the impact of actions funded under H2020 by linking them to a broader strategy. Parallel to the annual Work Programmes of Horizon 2020¹², specific priorities related to the Societal Challenges are supported by the EIPs and seek to contribute for achieving the goals of the specific EIP by providing knowledge and dialogue opportunities and establishing the follow-up mechanisms¹³. Moreover, partnerships do not themselves receive, or attract financial contributions nor they manage funds. They provide a platform for the definition and monitoring of action.

The partnerships can establish particular funding needs, not only from EU funding sources such as Horizon 2020 (or the European Investment Bank) but also from Member States (e.g. from national and regional funding schemes, including the ESIF and/or the private sector e.g. through Public Private Partnerships). However, the necessary commitments and implementation will need to take place in accordance with the rules in force.

By reason of the fact that the EIPs do not provide direct fund for the projects, the Partnerships turn this situation into an advantage. They undertake the activities on aligning of strategic priorities, leveraging investments and forming future partnerships. This is a good way to creating a neutral vehicle to bring partners together with a view to aligning priorities –including smart specialisation priorities–, leveraging existing investments and forming future partnerships. This also makes the combination of different funding programmes necessary for the EIP activities in order to achieve successful outputs¹⁴ as the Partnerships ensure accessing financial support. Hence, the EIT Partnerships have already gained experience to access and combine various funding sources, including European, national, regional, local, private etc.; i.e. a combination of public and private funds realised in *Regions of Ile-de-France, Pays de la Loire and Northern Netherlands*¹⁵. They, at the end, are able to support their stakeholders in a large spectrum as the fact that not many European institution and platforms have achieved this broad view.

To sum up, the partnership's targets reach well beyond the R&D components and funding schemes. The key aim is to address the whole RDI chain – from R&D all the way to market deployment – in one single, coherent framework. In this respect, each EIP gives specific reference to combine different EU, national and regional funds; e.g. Horizon 2020, ERDF, LIFE fund, COSME and so on. They also put effort to formulate suggestions on how access to EU and national programmes can be simplified or optimised and their leverage effect on private sector contributions enhanced.

To access the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) web pages:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=eip

¹¹ [Strategic Implementation Plan for the EIT AHA](#) (2011), pp. 7 (accessed January 20th, 2015).

¹² Also see <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/h2020-sections> (accessed February 25th, 2015)

¹³ In the Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 in the Societal Challenge of 'Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing' activities are developed in the context of the EIP on 'Active and Health Ageing'. Other challenges also have clear links to the related EIP and its activities. For more information, please see http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/eip_faq_may_2012.pdf (accessed January 10th, 2015)

¹⁴ See the European Commission (2014) "*Outriders for European*

Competitiveness", Brussels; available at [Report of the Independent Expert Group](#), pp. 10-11.

¹⁵ EIP-AHA (2014), [European Scaling-up Strategy in Active and Healthy Ageing](#), pp. 16.