

Drastic Change in Submission Process for EIC Accelerator Application

EAIC Reaction

The European Association of Innovation Consultants (EAIC), representing 50+ Innovation Consulting Companies and 5000+ professionals, supporting hundreds of promising start-ups and innovative companies across Europe, issues this statement in response to the recent significant change introduced by the European Commission in the submission process for EIC Accelerator application.

Since 2021, the European Association of Innovation Consultants, as well as other engaged stakeholders, have consistently raised concerns regarding the complexity of the EIC Accelerator application format. We commend the European Commission for demonstrating its willingness to undertake action in response to these concerns. However, the new templates fail to bring the needed simplification, since they still require most of the information that was previously requested on the EIC platform.

Regardless of the reasons for this abrupt change, it is crucial to emphasize that it will have a significant impact on the start-up community, adding confusion to the pre-existing uncertainty (caused by issues with equity implementation or the EIC budget decrease). For example, the new financial template is still undergoing live changes whereas the applicants are already working on previous versions released on 2 June 2023.

EAIC urges the European Commission to tackle the most pressing issues arising from the new submission process. We believe that implementing these measures will help streamline the application process and provide a more supportive environment for start-up companies:

- Relax the page limit requirement for the 21 June deadline, where applicants have now to convert an existing +100-page online application into a 50-page offline business plan,
- Remove all references to “coordinators” and “participants” to avoid any confusion with collaborative calls,
- Stabilize the current template early enough before the postponed June cut-off date so that applicants have sufficient time to address all questions & implement any further modifications after the June next cut-off,
- Ensure that the evaluators are adequately trained on the new format, in particular with regards to the fact that certain parts of the proposal are now solely focusing on the grant component (for example, cost tables, deliverable tables, etc.).

In addition, EAIC recommends that, in the future, there should be a protocol in place to accompany such drastic changes. By establishing clear guidelines for consultation, communication and gradual implementation, potential disruptions can be minimized; applicants and future beneficiaries can be better prepared for any modifications to the submission process. This would help in safeguarding one of the key assets of the framework programmes, i.e., the consistency of the submission and evaluation processes, and in maintaining the applicants' confidence in the system.

EAIC remains committed to supporting both the European Commission and the start-up community during these challenging times. By working together, we can address the immediate concerns and lay the foundation for EIC operational excellence.

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