

## EAIC reply to the call for evidence on the New European Innovation Agenda

We, the European Association of Innovation Consultants welcome the consultation on the new European Innovation Agenda.

Please find below our feed-back on the proposed actions related to the call for evidence

- **Access to finance: scale-up gap.**

Support to innovation at various steps is essential, as an example the following graph shows the various gaps faced by Cleantech technologies:

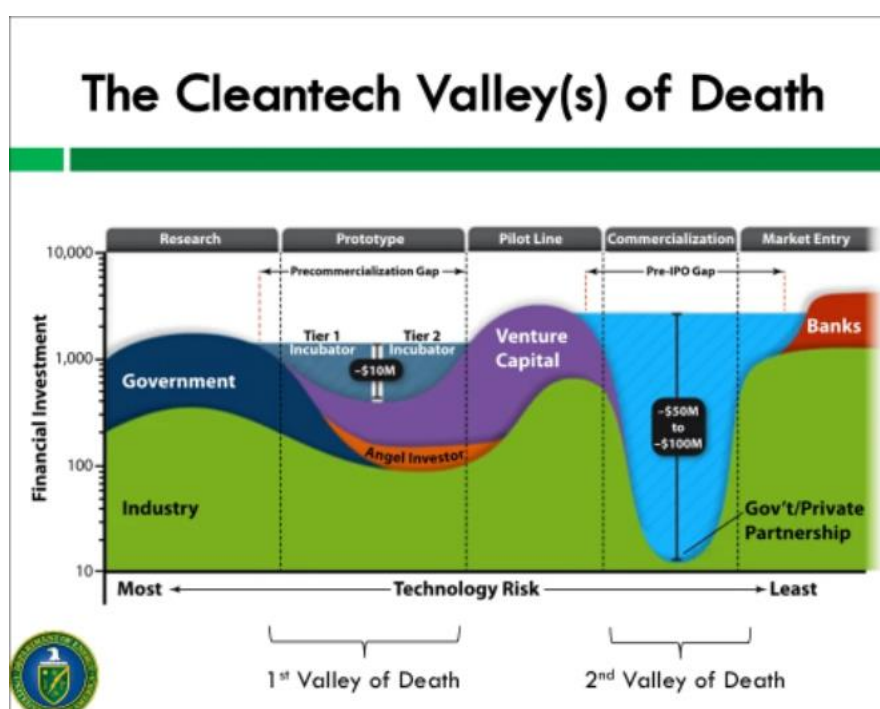


Figure 1 - The Cleantech Valleys of Death, Keneth Alston, Special Advisor to Secretary U.S. Department of Energy – 2016 [https://www.slideshare.net/OECD\\_ENV/oced-giff-2016-kenneth-alston](https://www.slideshare.net/OECD_ENV/oced-giff-2016-kenneth-alston)

Support to start-ups during those gaps is essential and should be managed at EU level by an agile organisation, able to mitigate the risks from Venture Capitalist firstly at pre-commercialisation stage and at a later stage when going for IPO when aiming to commercialise and roll-out their products.

The EU has started to address these gaps with the creation of the EIC Accelerator. It is today the most impactful and coveted funding instrument that the EC has at its disposal to fund high-risk deep-tech innovation. The funding decisions made by the EIC in the coming years will durably shape the future of European deeptech, with €7bn allocated to the EIC Accelerator, which will fuel the next European champions in strategic domains such as quantum, bioinformatics, high performance computing, cybersecurity, cleantech, healthcare, etc. This instrument needs to still deliver its promise.

Grants are being delivered, however **the equity part of the instrument still needs to prove to be successful**. Strong delays in the allocation of EIC equity funds runs the risk to undermine the image of the EIC Accelerator and its effectiveness. We encourage the European Commission to consider the **set up of a European sovereign investment mechanism**, as initially foreseen when the EIC Accelerator was designed. The European Commission should remain the single decision-maker with regards to equity funding. The EIC Fund should only be responsible for the investment implementation modalities and exit strategy.

We consider that the **governance** of the current EIC Fund should be opened to stakeholders such as impact investment funds, corporate funds, entrepreneur funds and business angels, in addition to venture capital funds. Finally, the EIC should add considerable resources to actively manage investments and match them with these investors.

- **Framework conditions, including legislation- *Developing and attracting entrepreneurial talent, encouraging diversity*** : The use of regulatory sand-boxes and any new approach to test new regulations favourable to the adoption of innovation is certainly a step in the right direction. We gathered expertise in this field and have been sharing it in a guide on Next Generation EU where we synthesize the content of recovery plans from across the EU and about ongoing or planned calls in each member States. This report can be downloaded [here](#).

- **Fragmentation of the EU innovation ecosystem- *need to strengthen and better connect innovation ecosystems mobilising different funding instruments*** : We fully agree that synergies between mechanisms and funding instruments to support R&I (such as cohesion policy, Horizon Europe, Recovery and Resilience Facility, Innovation Fund) should be fully exploited. Our members have comprehensive knowledge of the variety of EU funding instruments, we can be a great support to the Commission to explore these synergies. Our members have also a large and diverse experience on Public Procurement of Innovation across Europe and can provide their support in developing further this mechanism.

- **Innovation performance**: We fully agree that *differences* among EU regions should be addressed. EAIC is present in all EU member states, including in Widening countries, we have expertise and strong knowledge of the local innovation ecosystems, a deep understanding of the framework conditions existing in each Member States and regions. We would like to offer our support to the Commission in addressing this innovation gap across Europe as we see it as one of the most important challenges the EU has to face to set a stable long term and sustainable recovery.

The new European Innovation Ecosystem Work programme included in Horizon Europe is a right step in that direction. The lessons learnt and recommendations from the projects funded under the EIE topics should be considered carefully. We are planning to apply to some calls and use this opportunity to provide our recommendations.

- **Talent: *Developing and attracting entrepreneurial talent, encouraging diversity*** – We fully agree that *better attracting talents is of strategic importance to the EU*. We fully support the new scheme WomenTech EU aimed at encouraging woman entrepreneurship. Our members have dedicated time to communicate on this new initiative and supported projects. Moreover, we support the EU policies regarding the knowledge square, to encourage collaborations between higher education, research, innovation and civil society actors.

# Consultation Reply

9 May 2022



## **About EAIC:**

The European Association of Innovation Consultants (EAIC) gathers 50 active Innovation Consultants and 2 National associations in the field of European research and innovation projects. Altogether they employ over 5400 professional consultants in Europe. The association aims to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practices among its members, as well as to promote professional skills and expertise in European R&I Projects.

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