

Policy Brief

Innovating Culture and Creative Industries: The European Institute of Innovation and Technology opening doors to a new consortium

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Contents

Introduction 1

Culture and creative industries to innovate Europe..... 1

Culture KIC: Objectives and timelines..... 1

Priorities and partners 2

Mobilizing the creatives of Europe 2



May
2021

Introduction

2020 was a difficult year for many industries across Europe. Few of them, however, have been more profoundly affected than culture. From performing arts to art production and design, artists, facilitators and audiences were directly affected by the public health situation and the restrictive pandemic measures. While some artists and creatives continued to work remotely amid the social distancing requirements, many did not find ways – or had opportunities – to adapt sufficiently or quickly enough.

As a result, the cultural and creative sector across Europe has reported an average of 30 percent decrease in revenues compared to the pre-pandemic levels. Some areas of arts performance and production have lost as much as 90 percent of income, with the entire sector taking a hard hit throughout 2020, as reported by Catherine Magnan, the Head of [Unit Cultural Policy of the European Commission](#).

Culture and creative industries to innovate Europe

With the lockdowns finally easing in some EU countries, along with the progressing vaccination, artists and creatives are eager to get back on track. One of the most promising initiatives on the EU level to help them do so is connected to the EIT innovation ecosystem which was discussed in the [EUROPEUM Horizon Innovation series](#) in the past weeks. The [European Institute of Innovation and Technology](#)

(EIT) has recently announced its plans to **launch a major innovation hub for culture and creative industries**. As the [9th Knowledge and Innovation Community \(KIC\)](#) to be established under EIT, it will serve as an innovation network for startups, SMEs, universities, NGOs and research organizations across Europe.

Importantly, the [Culture and Creative Sectors and Industries KIC](#) will be integrated in the existing ecosystem of the existing 2000-partners network of EIT, leveraging the connections and expertise from all EU member and the Horizon-associated countries. This provides an enormous foundation on which to build a strong innovation community, which is supposed to bring together three key components: business, research and innovation in the European culture and creative arena.

Culture KIC: Objectives and timelines

Following the launch of the [information initiative](#) to establish the Culture KIC, the objective is to invite calls for consortia of partner organizations to establish the KIC on Culture and Creative Industries as an independent legal entity. The KIC will receive funding from EIT, while it is supposed to become financially independent in a long term. The geographical location of the KIC is supposed to reflect the proximity of organizations, campuses and laboratories that will form the consortium, and which come up with the strongest innovation strategy, outlining concrete challenges they seek to address, and impactful ways to do so.



May
2021

In order to **identify and mobilize suitable partner organizations to build a consortium**, the EIT has launched a [website](#) for eligible entities to register. The portal will be active until spring of 2022, containing information about nearly 200 organizations from over 30 countries at this stage.

The [timeline for launching the new KIC](#) is the following:

- Summer 2021: publication of the specific criteria and KPIs for the consortium
 - the preparation stage is underway for organizations seeking to form the consortium
- Fall 2021: opening the call for proposals (through a dedicated Horizon website)
- Spring 2022: deadline for proposals, evaluation.

According to [Martin Kern](#), the EIT Director, the selected consortium will have demonstrated the largest **innovation potential** in addressing the **current challenges in the European cultural and creative sector**. In other words, it is key to identify the difficulties and needs of the sector, and come up with an innovation strategy which involves private companies, NGOs, associations or universities which can make the strongest impact.

Priorities and partners

The EIT Director argues that the new KIC call will be deliberately broad in an effort to motivate the applicant organizations to come up with their own strategies and priorities. In contrast with strictly outlining the expected proposals, creativity will be

one of the key prerequisites to build the most promising innovation hub for culture and creative industries in Europe.

One of the overarching priorities that will indeed be considered is the business viability demonstrated by the selected consortium. The **economic and social impact** needs to be explicit in the proposal, as noted by the Head of Strategy and Impact Unit of EIT, [Márton Herczeg](#). The EIT expects less focus on the operational and legal readiness at the application stage, while explaining the strategy and impact is considered to be key. Current challenges in the European cultural and creative sector must be addressed, presenting a workable strategy to do so and assembling a suitable network of **relevant partners**.

Mobilizing the creatives of Europe

The launch of the Knowledge and Innovation Community of Culture and Creative Industries will be one of the most significant institutional novelties in the EU innovation arena next year. Not only will it broaden the EIT innovation ecosystem, benefitting hundreds of companies and organizations. It also comes as a much-needed boost for the cultural and creative sector currently recovering from a year of great difficulty. It symbolically and institutionally places culture among the economic and social priorities in the broader network of KICs focused on climate, food or urban mobility.

Cross-sectoral in its nature and impact, culture brings out synergies between different areas,



**May
2021**

inspiring and mobilizing innovation. Its impact reaches far beyond the 7,5 million people professionally involved in cultural and creative fields across the EU. Creative industries are an important part of the entire European project, keeping the younger generations connected across the continent, and actively involved in shaping the latter.



May
2021

About the series

This EUROPEUM series addresses the transformative momentum of Europe which is met by the beginning of the 2021-2027 Horizon funding cycle. The latter gives Europe a unique opportunity to address the societal and environmental challenges ahead.

This series of articles introduces some of the key components and programs of Horizon's innovation pillar. For this purpose, it discusses the trends, objectives and specific program calls, focusing predominantly on areas of private-public collaboration, capacity building and higher education.

[More about the series](#)

About the author

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