

EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL (EIC): A NEW TOOL TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

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In less than a year, "Horizon Europe", the new European Union Framework Program for Research and Innovation, will be launched; a budget of 100 Billion Euros for the period 2021-2027

There will be continuity with the current program (Horizon 2020) and Brussels keeps repeating that there will be an “evolution rather than a revolution”. A new feature is the tool designed to support innovation, i.e. the EIC ([European Innovation Council](#)) which will be one of the pillars to access funding for research applied to business. This tool will be mainly dedicated to so-called “disruptive” innovation aimed at creating products, processes and business models capable of generating new markets.

The **EIC Pilot** aims to support European innovators, start-ups, SMEs and researchers by supporting the development of their brightest ideas. Ideas that radically differ from existing products, services or business models, which involve a high risk and which have a high scale up potential in international markets. EIC therefore focuses its attention on **researchers and innovators who are able to develop innovations that can create new markets and promote new jobs, growth and prosperity in Europe**

The EIC tool was conceived as a mix of grants and financial measures (blended finance), addressing primarily the needs of start-ups and innovative SMEs and their growth prospects in the European market. The EIC will therefore constitute a challenge for our country system, characterized by a large number of so-called “traditional” small and medium-sized enterprises or focused on incremental innovation processes. It will also represent a new opportunity for the growing number of highly innovative companies always looking for resources to help them develop and establish themselves on the market. Let us not forget that high competition at European level will still have to be faced in order to access funding.

In March 2020, the [new draft of the European Work Program](#) (WP) on the EIC was released that contains, in addition to tools already present in previous years, some new elements,

aimed at facilitating the transition from basic research to demonstration and validation in a real environment and to the marketing of the results of the research and innovation projects themselves, following the value chain given by the TRL (Technology Readiness Level) in the single EIC tools.

One of the new features of the WP is the “**Green deal**” proposal presented by the European Commission within the “Accelerator” (former SME Instrument) which is laying the foundations for a period of greater ambition towards sustainable development. It aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent and leader in the circular economy and clean technologies.

It should be recalled that these tools, mainly dedicated to companies, provide for, as an added value for the project proposals, **the presence of research organizations**, such as **Fondazione Bruno Kessler**, which receives 100% research funding and **can support, as a project partner, innovative business proposals**.

For this reason, FBK promotes and shares the research results and the internal skills of the Foundation, thus directly stimulating collaboration with companies in order to support their competitiveness and innovation capacity, also supporting them in writing these projects.

Finally, over the years, **FBK has built up a strong network of collaborations** with **universities, institutes and companies at an international level** and can therefore support companies in building international partnerships.

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