A European Institute of Technology? Public Consultation on the possible missions, objectives, added-value and structure of an EIT

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Question 1: Mission of the EIT

1.1 What should be the main objective of the EIT? Please select one of these options. In the next question you will be asked to provide us with the reasons for your choice.	primary focus on research and research training

1.2 Please provide detailed reasons for your choice in 1.1 (including, if desired, your comments on the possible training of Masters students, doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers).
The focus of the EIT should be research, and the training by research (including doctoral candidates) that naturally comes with it. The aim should be to foster interactions between top research units and create large (virtual) centres of excellence, flexible and thematic. Additional emphasis should be on on teaching some of the best undergraduate and post-graduate students drawn from across Europe's and the world's universities. As part of this focus, the EIT should be viewed as an opportunity to attract and retain some of the best research scientists and research engineers into a European academic framework. Many European institutions still remain parochial in their recruitment of students and faculty. Bringing together in a European structure some of the world's best students, graduate and undergraduate, and some of the world's best researchers, irrespective of nationality and origin, into a European structure, will provide Europe with the best chance of success in science and technology. We believe that commercial exploitation will follow naturally for good ideas, and does not need a specially-crafted institute to flourish. Initiatives where industry and academia are forced together by "grant chasing" tend to be less effective than those where partnerships arise from strong ideas and results, and from a common vision. That is why we do not think that "commercial exploitation" and "technology transfer" should be declared primary objectives of the EIT, but should come as consequences of a well-implemented EIT.

Question 2: Added Value of the EIT

2.1 How can the EIT best contribute above and beyond current provision in this area? Please identify the main potential contribution you see the EIT as offering. You may select up to two options. In the next question you will be asked to further explain your views on the kind of added value brought by the EIT.	networking between higher education institutions and increasing the cross-fertilisation of knowledge providing a model of excellence to disseminate best practice

2.2 Please explain your views on the benefits and challenges of creating the kind of added value you identified in question 2.1 to supplement existing provision at EU, national and regional levels.
Europe has very many good research centres, but few that are in the top five or so in the world. Thus, rather than creating new ones, it seems convenient to strengthen and empower those we have. This means to provide selected institutions with extra resources and the help they need to link together and deploy concerted attacks on research

challenges that could not be tackled in isolation, as well as the prestige to attract the best people in the world into all areas of the EIT. A key contribution for the EIT would be to help identify such challenges and help research networks to get together in order to focus on specific themes. At the same time, the EIT should keep a watching brief for the progress of science itself, identifying areas where progress can be accelerated and technologies whose time is approaching ripeness.

Question 3: Structure of the EIT

3.1 Which type of institutional format would best allow the EIT to achieve these goals? Please select the most suitable option. In the next question you will be asked to describe in detail why you support this organisational structure for the EIT.	Other / None [please specify briefly below]

Other, please describe briefly
EIT label/brand, additional funds, and the legal structures to recruit top scientists in an internationally competitive manner, awarded to a few individual departments/ faculties in selected institutions).

3.2 Please describe in detail how you think the organisational structure chosen in question 3.1 would support the EIT to achieve its mission and offer added value.

The EIT should craft itself as the enabler of research carried out in networks of institutions gathering around large research challenges. The temptation must be resisted to exercise tight control on the way the work is carried out, or to impose additional structures or constraints on participating institutions. In particular, if the initiative is to succeed, the EIT will have to avoid the pitfall of excessive administrative and bureaucratic overhead that currently mars EU Framework Programmes. Furthermore, most European academic institutions suffer from structural handicaps of legal or regulatory nature, or from an attachment to traditional processes, that seriously hamper their ability to act effectively in the highly competitive international arena. The EIT's ability to allow selected institutions to escape from this downward spiral and demonstrate best practice, will be a major contribution that will be imitated through the changes that are required in the laws that regulate universities in many European countries. For these reasons, we believe that a virtual institute linking existing strong research centres is the only possible way forward for the EIT. In particular, we explicitly object to the idea of a physical research institute -- one such proposal with base in Strasbourg is currently being ventilated by COMETIS, a group of MEPs. Similar initiatives (e.g., in the IT area) have failed in the past.

Question 4: Research Priorities of the EIT

4.1 How should the EIT organise its teaching/research/transfer activities? Please select your preferred option. In the next question you will be asked to discuss the benefits and problems of the approach chosen.	Other / None [please specify briefly below]

Other, please describe briefly
SCIENCE-DRIVEN (Information, Biosciences, Nanotechnology, Limits of Physics, Frontiers in Mathematics), ISSUE-DRIVEN (problem-oriented, as e.g.: wind power generation, avian influenza, low-fuel vehicles, urban rejuvenation projects) and THEMATICALLY-ORGANISED (e.g. trans/interdisciplinary fields such as green energy, environment and health, sustainable transport, sustainable communities, etc)

4.2 Please discuss the benefits and problems of the approach chosen in question 4.1.

Research priorities will have to be either science-driven, issue-driven or thematic, with an explicit model of funding among these approaches, as these models help focus the research of loosely-connected participating institutions. An exclusively thematic approach would make the EIT little reactive to emerging, potentially high-priority issues (e.g., avian flu). On the other hand, a purely issue-oriented approach would deprive the research community of its freedom to select specific objectives (within broad research themes), which we believe would eventually be detrimental for the vitality of the community. A challenge for the EIT will be to set priorities so as to support also issues that transcend the `five-year plan' and actually go beyond the current event horizon.

Your details

Are you replying:	On behalf of an organisation

Name of organisation
UK Computing Research Committee

Acronym of organisation	
UKCRC	

Full postal address	
UKCRC Att. Prof. Vladimiro Sassone Dept Informatics, University of Sussex Brighton BN1 9QH United Kingdom	

In which country is your organisation based?	UK - United Kingdom

Website [optional]	
http://www.ukcrc.org.uk/	

In which countries or regions does your organisation conduct significant activity?	UK - United Kingdom

What is your organisation's primary field of activity?	Public sector or not-for-profit organisation

Type of organisation	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Main area of activities (you may select more than one option)	Education Research

Thank you!

If you wish to receive an acknowledgement, please enter your email address here:
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If you wish to be added to our mailing list on further developments concerning the EIT discussions, please enter your email address here: