

## ZÁPIS: IGLO Innovation WG – novelties related to EIC, with particular focus on EIC Pathfinder

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On 18 January 2024, the CZELO office participated in a meeting of the IGLO Innovation Working Group. During the meeting, representative from the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), presented information and novelties related to European Innovation Council (EIC), with particular focus on EIC Pathfinder.

The presentation started with a general overview of [EIC Pathfinder](#), which combines research and acceleration support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), startups, and scaleups. It enhances the European Innovation Ecosystem through partnerships with the European Research Council (ERC), European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), etc. The Fourth [Work Programme](#) of EIC (2024) adopted on 12 December 2023, allocates €1.2 billion for the year 2024, representing a reduction from the previous years' Next Generation EU budget utilization.

After the general introduction, the highlights of the [EIC Impact Report 2022](#) were presented:

### 1. Growing Support to Startups & SMEs:

- 1600 entities supported since 2014.
- 410 selected for blended finance with proposed equity of €2.18 billion.
- Notable increase in startups led by female CEOs.

### 2. Crowding in Other Investments:

- €10 billion in follow-up investments to EIC-supported companies.
- Leverage effect: 2.6 times private co-investment on EIC Fund investments.
- 12 unicorns valued at €1 billion+ and 112 centaurs valued at €100 million+.

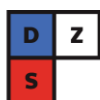
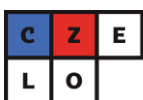
### 3. Pipeline of Breakthrough Technologies:

- 400 research projects.
- 800 innovations tracked.
- Pilot of Transition funding to convert research results into applications.

The EIC Impact Report is published annually, and the report covering the period of 2023 is expected to be completed by the EIC Summit in March 2024.

The EIC has outlined calls and its deadlines for application for the year 2024: [EIC Accelerator Open and Challenges](#): cut-offs on **13 March 2024** and **3 October 2024**, [EIC Pathfinder Open and Challenges](#): **7 March 2024** and **16 October 2024** and [EIC Transition Open](#): **18 September 2024**.

The EIC Pathfinder funds research to develop the scientific basis for breakthrough technologies, supporting early-stage scientific, technological, or deep tech R&D. It aims to disrupt fields and markets or create new opportunities, with two schemes: EIC Pathfinder Open (bottom-up approach) and EIC Pathfinder Challenges (predefined thematic areas). As for the statistics, EIC Pathfinder Open has a success rate of approximately 7.5%. EIC Pathfinder Challenges have a success rate of around 10.8%. Due to reduced funding for 2024, success rates are not expected to increase.



Before submitting proposals, according to the European Commission, applicants shall comply with "gatekeepers":

- Convincing, long-term vision of a radically new technology.
- Concrete, novel, and ambitious science towards technology breakthrough.
- High-risk, high-gain research approach with plausible objectives.

Expected outputs include proof of principle, top-level scientific publications, and measures for future uptake. Encouragement is given for diverse teams, involvement of key actors, and gender balance. There are additional opportunities for EIC Pathfinder. EIC Pathfinder projects are eligible to receive EIC Booster grants (up to €50,000), submit an EIC Transition proposal, submit an EIC Accelerator proposal via the Fast Track scheme and participate in the Next Generation Innovation Talents scheme that will be launched in 2024.

The Challenge Guide for EIC Pathfinder Challenges will be published on the EIC website in early 2024. In 2024, pilot rebuttal will not continue in the Pathfinder Open; for Pathfinder Challenges, there will be lump sums.

The EIC Transition scheme was briefly introduced at the conclusion of the meeting. According to the European Commission, the scheme has achieved significant success. For the year 2024, the range of eligible applicants has been expanded, including projects: limited to TRL3/4, excluding IA/ERAnets, Pathfinder & H2020 FET, ERC PoC, H2020 SC&LEIT+HE Pillar II, and EDF (PADR).

