



European
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Council

EMPOWERING EUROPEAN INNOVATORS

Lessons from FET and its integration within the EIC

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Research and
Innovation



The ‘Future and Emerging Technologies’ (FET) Programme

- Operating very successfully for many years
- Supported High Risk, Low TRL projects & ideas, based on regular calls
- Several Components
 - **OPEN:** Bottom-up, consortium based, largely academic led, provided very early stage ‘signals’ of emerging clusters of research activity
 - **PROACTIVE:** Top-down, thematic, larger consortia, increased industry involvement
 - **TRANSITION:** To identify and develop FET projects ideas with significant market potential for downstream investment
 - **LAUNCHPAD:** Smaller awards to stimulate early initial transition actions for FET projects

The European Innovation Council

- **Integrates FET and the SME Instrument into a single entity**
- **Covers the entire innovation landscape from high-risk research through to product development and market success**
- **FET becomes ‘Pathfinder’; SME becomes ‘Accelerator’**

Great idea! But how to make it work!!

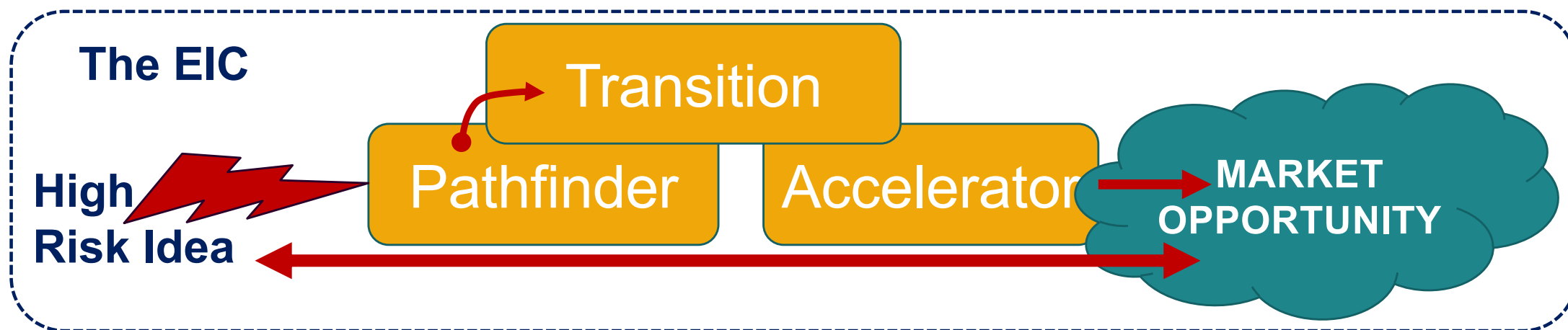
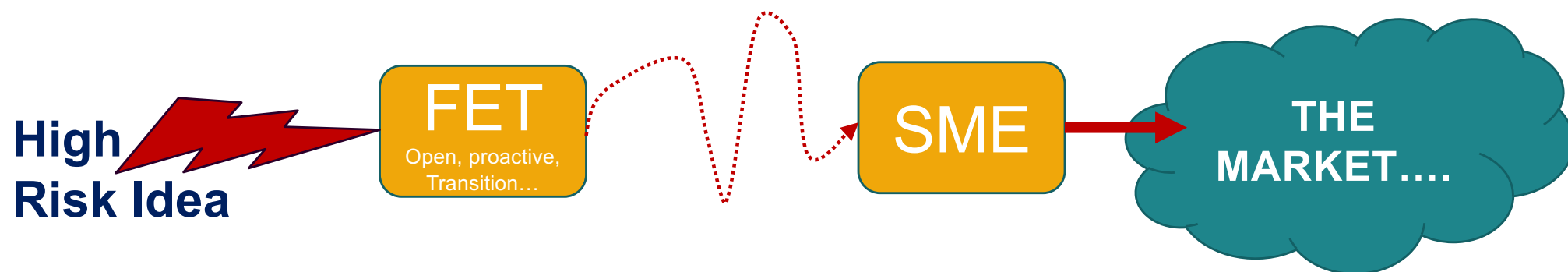
EIC Advisory Board and Working Groups

- **EIC Advisory Board (Pilot phase ->Fully fledged Summer 2021)**
 - Chaired by Mark Ferguson
 - Valeria Nicolosi (TCD)
 - https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-communities/eic-board_en#ecl-inpage-290
- **Creation of Working Groups (e.g.; Pathfinder)**
 - Valeria Nicolosi (serial winner of ERC grants!),
 - Fredrik Hörstedt (Vice President Utilisation and Collaboration, Chalmers University of Technology),
 - Anita Krohn Traaseth (Norwegian business executive, former CEO of Innovation Norway),
 - Jerzy Langer (Emeritus Professor, Institute of Physics, Polish Academy of Sciences),
 - Marja Makarow (director of Biocenter Finland),
 - Jo Bury (MD of VIB, the Flanders Institute for Biotechnology)

Why do this now?

- **The game is changing - Need to create a more effective process for supporting ideas through to commercial impact**
 - **Translation from lab to the market is happening much more quickly and efficiently;**
 - **Lessons of the COVID-19 Pandemic**
 - **Technology PUSH and Market PULL are CONVERGING**
 - **Impact of rapid prototyping – devices will increasingly follow commercialization approaches developed for software industry (e.g.; Microfluidics)**
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The EIC – Bringing Ideas and The Market together



Strategic Developments

- **FET Open and Proactive -> EIC Open, Challenge**
 - **Positioning of Pathfinder, Accelerator; expanded role for Transition**
 - **New players – Programme Managers**
 - **Creation and management of project ‘portfolios’ along the journey from initial idea to market success**
 - **Recruitment – relationship to topics/portfolios/experience**
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Where are we?

- **The EIC exists and has been formally launched**
 - **Commitment to continuous optimization of processes - regular evaluation and tuning to maximise efficiency and impact**
 - **Huge response to initial calls (Pathfinder & Accelerator)**
 - **Operational structure & Budget in place (2021 calls)**

EIC Scheme	Total Budget (€M)	Challenge Budget (€M)
Pathfinder	300	130
Transition	100	40
Accelerator	1,000	~500

Some of our Challenges...

- **Increase rate of Pathfinder Projects transferring to Accelerator**
- **Retain high-risk FET culture within the EIC**
- **Resist tendency to make Pathfinder more applied**
 - **EIC could lose its strong high-risk research ethos**
 - **Recreate a gap/silo between research (ERC) and Innovation (EIC)**
 - **Increase mutual awareness of market opportunities/needs and emerging disruptive technologies across the relevant communities**
 - **Identify fundamental scientific/technical barriers and emerging markets for targeted challenges -> importance of 'Early Intervention'**

Some of our Challenges (cont)...

- **Early intervention – how to manage?**
 - Promising project findings selected for additional supports
 - €50K top-ups available, Tech2Market Advisors...
 - Programme Manager involvement (portfolio relationship)
 - Circulation within a contained population of informed and experienced players (marketplace)
 - Close cooperation with local TTOs
 - Need to balance secrecy (IP Protection) with openness (publication, presentations)

Efficient and transparent decision making is the key

Concluding Thoughts & Messages

- **The creation of the EIC is an exciting and timely initiative that can unleash the pent-up energy and creativity of innovators across Europe**
 - **Transition plays a key role -> particularly appealing to university contract researchers**
 - **Strong encouragement for female leadership across the EIC measures including Pathfinder and Transition**
 - **Exploitation of synergies with other parts of Horizon Europe ERC, EIT**
 - **Enhanced roles for Citizens, communities and Government in innovation (targeted public procurement -> beachhead markets)**
 - **Commitment to building innovation competency across the member states**
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- **Ireland MUST be competitive in EIC calls**
 - **Success will open many doors for our researchers, innovators and Entrepreneurs**
 - **Mimic EIC strategy nationally - NOW!!**
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Thanks for the Invitation!

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