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## **Innovation boost to tackle Climate Change**

**Budapest, December 16, 2009. While Heads of State are negotiating to reach a substantial climate agreement in Copenhagen, the EU is stepping forward to take the lead in developing innovations to tackle climate change. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) has launched a groundbreaking new research, innovation and education initiative that aims to answer the various challenges of climate change. A pan-European consortium encompassing sixteen world class partners from academia, and from the private and public sectors, will implement this new and unique network.**

The new “Climate Knowledge and Innovation Community (Climate-KIC)” is a major initiative the EIT has announced today in Budapest (see box). The Climate-KIC program brings together the expertise of world class partners in a shared effort to make a step-change in Europe’s innovation capacity to meet the climate change challenge in the years to come and to prepare for a new low-carbon society. In responding to this challenge, we need to bring about changes to how we produce, distribute, and consume goods, and to how we meet our requirements for energy, food, and water in the context of protecting the environment.

### **Major investments – high profile partners**

With €120 million requested from the EIT, the partners themselves planned to contribute roughly five times that amount so that eventually a total of up to €750 million would be spent over the next four years on a range of innovation and education programs. The detailed numbers that finally will be approved by the EIT have however not been communicated yet and are subject to negotiation. It is the first time that companies from various sectors and scientific experts will work together in a large integrated initiative in the area of climate change. «We are very pleased to have been selected for this important initiative that will equip the next generation of entrepreneurs and technologists with innovative tools and which will pioneer new thinking and practice », says Prof. Bert Van der Zwaan, as interim CEO on behalf of the partners of the Climate-KIC. The Climate-KIC was selected at the end of a one year process.

Among the sixteen core partners are universities, companies and public sector organizations. From academia, the core partners of the consortium are: ETH Zurich (Switzerland), Imperial College London (UK), a French consortium consisting of Paris area campus (IPSL, CEA, ParisTech, UVSQ, INRA, MeteoFR, Advancity), a German consortium led by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (including TU Berlin, TU Munich and GFZ), as well as a Dutch consortium consisting among others of Utrecht University, Delft University of Technology and Wageningen University and Research Center. The partner companies are: Bayer, Beluga Shipping GmbH, Cisco, DSM, EDF, SAP, Schiphol, Shell, Solar Valley, and

Thales. Climate KIC also brings together an association of six major European regions which will test, develop and facilitate the real-world application of new eco-innovations.

### **Educate a new generation**

The Climate-KIC will foster interactions between European research, education and business innovation. The aim is to create a generation of climate change entrepreneurs who will have the multidisciplinary skills to develop economically, environmentally and socially sustainable approaches to coping with the effects of global warming. Furthermore, roadmaps with short- and long-term goals will be developed to elaborate investment strategies and to support innovation in small and medium sized enterprises. The research and educational projects are to be conducted at five co-location centers in Berlin/Potsdam, London, Paris area, Utrecht and Zurich, places where the partners will come together to work on the projects.

### **Pioneering research and innovation projects**

The Climate-KIC will focus on strategic research and innovation projects that are expected to have the greatest impact in terms of enabling regions to mitigate against climate change, and adapt to its effects. Four themes are of particular interest: Assessing climate change and managing its drivers, Transitioning to resilient low carbon cities, Adaptive water management, and Zero carbon production systems.

For example, among the numerous challenges European societies are facing with regard to the climate change, one is the question of how to monitor, assess and certify the effective CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on a local level, to establish a fair market where CO<sub>2</sub> certificates are to be traded. This requires new collaborations between companies engaged in the development of sensor/observation technologies, and those involved in modeling and accounting. Using such cross-fertilization of the partners' expertise, one of the many projects aims to develop tools and mechanisms to account and verify emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> from the level of companies and cities to the globe.

Other projects will develop new tools for urban planning, for water management, new adaptive agricultural processes or low-carbon emission manufacturing in various sectors.

«A strength of the KIC initiative is that with sixteen partners from various sectors we will be able to develop solutions that integrate well in the whole value chain», says Prof. Bert Van der Zwaan.

#### **Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)**

The Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) are an initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). Their main goals are to create a vision for a sustainable future with strong impact on European society and to transfer higher education, research and innovation activities to the business context and their commercial application by creating e.g. spin-offs and start-ups. The KICs are financially supported by the European Union, which has pledged initial funding of over 300 million Euros, and by corporate partners joining particular KICs. The KICs will be established for periods of up to fifteen years to guarantee mid- to long-term perspectives to the chosen partnerships. In an initial round the EIT has launched three KICs in the fields of climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable energy and future information and communication society.

#### **For further information:**

[www.eit.eurpopa.eu](http://www.eit.eurpopa.eu)

[www.climate-kic-proposal.org/](http://www.climate-kic-proposal.org/) (including information on the Climate-KIC partners)

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