



The EIC Incubator

Policy Plan 2023 - 2026

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Purpose

The principal goal of the EIC Incubator is to strengthen & stimulate the landscape of independent European investigative journalism in the public interest.

The EIC Incubator aims to create a one-stop-shop for turnkey investigative collaborations with a primary focus on the Climate Collapse and Society, where big story ideas are given the resources of an R&D Lab.

The Incubator combines and connects independent newsroom knowledge with extra resources, time and tailored technology to create the European point of reference for fascinating in-depth stories on Climate Collapse and Society.

Organization

The EIC Incubator Stichting is a public interest, non-profit foundation (Stichting) under Dutch law, created at the beginning of the year 2023, at the initiative of members of the EIC.network, adhering to the Dutch ANBI-rules for non profit organizations.

In accordance with its Articles of Incorporation, the EIC Incubator works in the public interest and is independent from the EIC.network as well as from any donor.

To preserve its independence, individuals who hold managerial roles within any of the EIC.network newsrooms, can't be part of the executive team of the EIC Incubator.

Governance

The EIC Incubator Foundation is governed by a *Director*. The Director is responsible for the policies and management of the organization.

The EIC Incubator has a *Supervisory Board* responsible for supervising the Policy Plan of the Director, the general business of the foundation and its related organizational flows. The Supervisory Board offers counsel to the Director.

The initial Supervisory Board of three members will be enlarged by co-optation in stages, as follows: to five members, to seven members and finally to maximum nine members. The members of the Supervisory Board can serve for a term of *three* years, renewable maximum two times.

The maximum number of Supervisory Board members will be distributed as follows: two members representing EIC.network coordinators; two members representing EIC.network editors-in-chief; five members representing initiatives, groups and institutions outside the EIC.network.

The Supervisory Board members will publish a declaration of interest.

The Supervisory Board members are Karel Verhoeven, Micael Pereira, Liana Ganea.

Director is Ștefan Cîndea.

Roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies

The duties and responsibilities of the Director are:

- The Director shall represent the EIC Incubator. The authority to represent the Incubator will also vest in each person that is part of the Executive team
- The Director is responsible for appointing the Executive team and the permanent staff and deciding on their salaries, in accordance to industry standards. He is able to assign to the Executive team management related tasks.
- He is ensuring that all the incorporation and financial documents are up to date, transparent and accessible (eg. Articles of Association, Policy Plan, Annual Financial Reports).
- The Director has to sign off on all the annual financial reports and activity reports, as well as on the multiannual financial estimates

- The Director approves the shortlisted Incubator Fellows List and works together with the EIC newsroom coordinators towards selecting the final Fellows, based on an evaluation of the investigative research proposal in the context of social, political, and geographical aspects, institutional stability, local expertise, diversity, inclusiveness and long-term policy objectives.
- The Director is responsible for signing off on a yearly technological roadmap for the Incubator's technology efforts
- The Director will help solve or remedy any conflicts of interest or ethical matters, pointed out by the Supervisory Board or by the executive team
- The Director can be dismissed in the instances and cases provided by the Articles of Association
- The Director is authorized to dissolve the Incubator, with prior notice to the Supervisory Board and in accordance with the Articles of Association; The foundation will continue to exist after its dissolution, insofar as this permits, to conclude and honor all its previously contracted commitments.

The responsibilities of the Supervisory Board are defined as follows:

- Appointment and dismissal of members of the Supervisory Board, with majority rule and according to the provisions of the Articles of Association (co-optation)
- Provide and fill vacancies as soon as possible
- Annual review of the Incubator's financial reports and activity reports and offer counsel to the Director to amend or remedy or modify these as needed, in a timely manner, in the best interest of the Foundation and in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association
- Adoption of the Code of Ethics
- Flag to the Director any potential conflicts of interest and ethical matters
- Make recommendations and introductions to potential donors, aiding to the realization of the main objectives of the EIC Incubator

Supervisory Board meetings:

- The Supervisory Board meets at least *two times a year* and furthermore as often as a board member deems desirable. At least one of these meetings is a meeting attended in person by as many board members as possible.

Salaries

Remuneration of the Director is determined by the Supervisory Board, in accordance with industry standards.

Members of the Supervisory Board don't receive compensation for their work. Only expenses incurred while performing their duties can be reimbursed.

Annual Reports

Annual Accounts and Activity Reports will be presented to the Supervisory Board before the end of the fiscal year and will be made public online during the beginning of the following fiscal year.

Mission and Values

The EIC incubator has two main foci with the purpose to support and develop collaborations and knowledge sharing among journalists in Europe: (1) in-depth investigations primarily focused on climate collapse and its impact on society, and (2) the development of collaborative technologies, to service knowledge production during such investigations. Hence the Incubator's investigative efforts will gain strength through the collective knowledge and amplification effect of the EIC.network as well as through the technology facilitating these collaborations.

We believe in intersectionality and the necessity of harnessing the potential of collective knowledge emerging from different fields of expertise and backgrounds, generating a multiplier effect by connecting various groups, citizens and those in positions of authority, thus bridging existing gaps.

Activities

1. Investigative Fellowship Program

The EIC Incubator will operate a yearly call for Fellows, to attract Research Fellows to collaborate up to one year with at least one EIC.network newsroom, offering them a direct integration with the participant newsrooms, amplifying their stories at a European level and beyond. We come from a viewpoint of pooling collective resources and cutting costs, by combining transnational newsroom's investigative skills, marketing power and audience impact.

The Incubator focuses on journalists with great ideas and leads, substantiated by insightful data and solid preliminary research. These journalists will be temporarily relieved of their newsroom duties and will be provided with a meaningful fellowship grant, for up to one year, to deliver their dream research at a European level.

The stories we are after, start primarily in the realm of Climate Collapse and Society and reveal new and surprising implications for European societies. The stories will be richer than if done by a single newsroom, wider in approach, deeper in scope, European wide.

2. Developing and maintaining the Incubator's collaborative technologies

To support such collaborative work, we will develop and maintain independent cutting edge technology to facilitate investigative collaborations and collaborative knowledge production.

These tech capacities are created simultaneously, under the tech Liquid Lab, a cost effective and secure bundle of tools for collaborative knowledge production between concerned citizens, investigative journalists, media organizations, and research activists. This user-friendly app bundle allows for searching, sharing, collaborating and discovering information in real time.

Through this transformative approach we cultivate an interinstitutional pool of talent focused on journalistic research and development, resulting in profound and influential stories with in depth-coverage.

3. Events

Finally, the Incubator will generate high level events and dialogues about the direction of societal change, providing in-depth insight to support informed debates. Moreover, it will organize an annual 'EIC Incubator Day' summit. This exclusive event is a platform to bridge knowledge production professionals, foster valuable connections at the nexus of the journalistic and tech communities, and building the future networking of Fellows Alumni.

Organizational development

The EIC incubator was founded in 2023, and this document reflects the kick-off strategy for its foundational activities.

Most of the activities of the Incubator will be possible via flexible grants and the [Donor Membership Program](#) (see separate document) that the foundation is offering, via consultancy fees for technological aspects, as well as through the contributions of several donor foundations (organizational and content grants).

Starting with 2024 we look ahead to develop the Incubator into a sustainable organization. Organizational and financial sustainability will be the focus of the coming years.

Donation Policy

The EIC Incubator is entitled to receive gifts, donations and requests from individuals, legal entities and international organizations, but not from national governments. Any such gifts, donations and requests are made without any form of expected editorial influence in return.

The Incubator can receive donations which are tax-deductible as provided for under national laws to individuals and companies who contribute to causes of public interest, and notably those of the defense of freedoms and fundamental rights.

In order to better guarantee the independence and impartiality of our actions, we are committed to favoring private donations over those offered by institutional donors.

We do not accept donations from entities or individuals whose commitments run contrary to our mission and those who are involved in greenwashing. The EIC Incubator commits itself to providing the utmost transparency towards donors about the use that is made of their contribution.

The Incubator will refuse any donation that is subject to doubt over its legality, provenance or origin, and refuses any funding or donation that emanates from financial accounts in tax havens or uncooperative jurisdictions.

These different forms of contributions to the fulfillment of the objectives of the EIC Incubator cannot, in any manner nor to any degree, infringe upon or undermine the independence, the freedom of initiative and voice of the Foundation. The Foundation provides a tax receipt to donors.

By granting funds to the EIC Incubator, the donor is making the commitment that they will not seek to influence projects supported by the Foundation, with regard both to their contents and the actors that these projects may mobilize.

The editorial independence of journalists working with the Incubator is guaranteed.

Donating to EIC Incubator Stichting creates the implicit obligation for the donor to refrain from any attempts to influence the editorial independence of the Incubator's staff, board, fellows and any collaborative partners. Any attempt to influence the editorial independence of those mentioned above will be immediately communicated to both the Director as well as the Supervisory Board, who will decide if this attempt needs to be made public.

Donations received by the EIC Incubator are used exclusively for the requirements of its mission of public interest.

How we work

Community: The EIC Incubator's activities are directed towards the community of journalists wishing to collaborate across borders in Europe. We serve the journalistic community, while at the same time being part of it.

Networking and collaboration: People passionate about a given topic and who already compiled concrete documents and preliminary research will be best equipped to produce in-depth knowledge in the public interest. Their work will be bridged with existing investigative skills in the newsrooms and with existing systems of collaborative production and publication.

Respect: Effective networking and collaboration require valuing diversity. We are committed to implementing this approach within our team and across all facets of our work.

Pluralism and diversity: In Europe, we view diversity as an inherent aspect, and we regard pluralism as a fundamental component of democratic societies. We actively pursue these characteristics within our team and throughout our work. The Incubator aims to overcome any impediments to becoming a diverse and inclusive organization that reflects the societies in which it functions.