



EIT Climate-KIC Position Paper

EU Climate Pact – Consultation

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EU Climate Pact Consultation

Contribution by EIT Climate-KIC

Introduction

EIT Climate-KIC warmly welcomes the European Commission's recognition of the importance of social innovation and citizen activation in delivering the Green Deal and achieving a climate-neutral continent by 2050.

EIT Climate-KIC is the EU's principle innovation agency dedicated to tackling climate change, addressing both adaptation and mitigation. We have a 10-year track record of orchestrating innovation for climate change. Our mission is to catalyze systemic change through innovation in areas of activity that have a critical impact on GHG emissions and to create climate-resilient communities. Our Theory of Change is focused on empowering people to change systems to enable viable alternatives at scale.

We have developed an extensive and diverse network of innovation stakeholders (research, business, public bodies, community groups and start-ups) across Europe, and deliver collaborative action across a variety of areas of direct relevance to the EU Climate Pact. This short paper briefly sets out our insights that can help support the framing and delivery of the Pact.

Annex I provides an overview of our key programmes in this area.

Lessons from our work relevant for the Pact

Talking about climate change

1. ***Citizen activation - an unvalued option:*** The debate on how to achieve ambitious climate targets is often dominated by a technocratic discourse centered around developing new technologies as “solve-it-all”. Only a small minority of resources and attention goes towards those actors who have to live the new paradigm, citizens, and enable them to shape their own future. Through our [Talking Climate](#) series of Europe-wide local debates organised by alumni of our program The Journey, for example, citizens make each other aware of the untapped potential for action they have.
2. ***Beyond conversations:*** As we have learned from our community-driven program [Climathon](#), in order to truly activate citizens you need to offer them simple and easy-access formats to bring in their skills and expertise and get active *beyond* talking. Over 150 cities are now using



Climathon to engage their citizens in developing solutions specifically for their city's local challenges.

Triggering Action

3. ***Systems Innovation works.*** In our 10 years of experience we have learned that investing in empowering citizens to create isolated solutions can only lead to temporary local impact. Therefore, we shifted to a systems innovation approach where citizen and communities can act within larger and orchestrated transformations - an approach we call [Deep Demonstrations](#). By embedding the Pact in wider systems transformation activities, its impact and citizen participation can be increased exponentially (see examples below).
4. ***New skills development - Capability gap.*** In order for citizen action to be effective, people need to be equipped with future-proof skills. This is often not the case, and this capability gap means that many efforts start with good intentions but achieve insufficient outcomes. Therefore, upskilling activities should accompany the rest of citizen activation activities. Opportunities for new skills development should take place in traditional educational institutions as well as outside of this sphere, in and with communities where these skills are needed most. This is why we run four different education programs tackling the capability gap where and how it is most effective. [Young Innovators](#) works with educators, governments, schools and teachers to equip the "Fridays for the Future" generation (12-18) with the skills to go beyond protesting and develop meaningful projects. We educate 18-35 year old changemakers through [Master School](#) and [The Journey](#), both within the university context as well as in local communities. Finally, our programme [Pioneers](#) targets professionals, offering state-of-the-art further education.
5. ***Transform the way people learn.*** We intend to equip people with the vocational skills demanded by a net-zero emissions economy as early as possible which will accelerate transformation, but doing so quickly enough to effectively tackle the climate emergency will require innovation in the way people learn. The EIT Climate-KIC [Young Innovators](#) programme recognises there is a need for more complex problem solving and climate innovation in the curriculum and supports teachers, students and educators with improved systems thinking in and outside the classroom.
6. ***Resilient climate action:*** Many of the same skills and capabilities to weather the shock of COVID-19 are the same as those necessary to be resilient in the face of climate change: such as, coping with uncertainty, working in complexity, and transforming whole systems. Our educational



programmes, such as the [Journey](#) and [Pioneers into Practice](#), are focused on building these skills to create resilient climate action.

Working Together

7. ***Transformative governance:*** The EIT Climate-KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstration (HCC DD) focuses on cities which are critical to the transformation towards carbon neutrality by 2030. This mission-led approach brings expertise, capabilities and a systems innovation methodology in order to orchestrate the process. Through its HCC DD, EIT Climate-KIC is currently working with 15 cities in Europe to co-design portfolios of joined-up innovations capable of unlocking wholesale transformation across all city systems – from mobility to waste to energy to health and the built environment. Our work during the last 2 years has unveiled how critical new models of community collaboration and governance are to action on the climate emergency. Community empowerment is a priority for building trust and creating broad support for the required changes. The need to unlock private capital is crucial to unprecedented levels of transformation and jobs creation. Therefore, we would advocate for the European Climate Pact, while developing and growing, to address and support such topics as: systemic and portfolio-based approach, new models of transition governance and new financial mechanisms unlocking new sources of funding. (See examples of implementation in Annex).
8. ***Fragmentation in the “sector”:*** with many small actors each pushing their own agenda, the citizen activation sphere is deeply fragmented. This prevents impact at a systems level and raises the need for a “platform of platforms” to bring the fragmented pieces together. [Moments Matter](#) is a first-mover in this field of being a movement of movements, which is currently gaining traction. EIT Climate-KIC initiated Moments Matter, but intentionally gave it a neutral name and design to combat the fragmentation and allow others to develop a sense of ownership as well.
9. ***Expand the base:*** a core principle of an ambitious citizen activation programme should be to “expand the base”. This means including groups that currently are under-represented, or even part of a different side, in the debate. Only through radical inclusion and creative tools can energy from this new group of actors be set free. Successfully expanding the base is one of the main reasons for the “success” of the Climate Strike movements: they were able to engage the previously underrepresented group of youth through a credible purpose and the use of new technologies, and most sprung from there. EIT Climate-KIC set up a group of “Thinkers-in-Residence” from organisations as diverse as museums, football clubs and nightlife activists to



make sure Moments Matter also is inclusive to their base, and has started working with them on joint climate focused initiatives.

10. ***Purpose-led, not organisation led***: Few-to-none of the successful movements in history (e.g. Civil Rights in USA, end-Apartheid in South-Africa, Women's Suffrage in the western world...) have been led by an organisation or brand. They were led by a purpose with a diverse coalition of organisations united behind the purpose. For the EU Pact to be a success, the EU may explore how to bring together and empower a coalition of players to come together and build momentum focused on the purpose, rather than managing the Pact activities centrally.



Annex: EIT Climate-KIC's Capability to Help Deliver the European Climate Pact

EIT Climate-KIC is the EU's principal vehicle for achieving carbon neutrality and resilience to climate change effects through innovation. Our focus is on innovation in service of fundamental systemic change - broad based systems transitions, cohesive sustainable development and regenerative business, social and economic models. We offer funders, policy makers and municipal actors a framework for realising large-scale climate impact through collaborative investment and innovation.

Our strategy 2019-2022, Transformation in Time, calls for widespread systemic change to address the climate crisis and recognises the critical role of innovation in generating options to make that change possible.

We fully recognise the importance of citizen engagement and social activation for the achievement of our objectives and for the success of the European Green deal and post COVID-19 recovery plan. We have developed the following strategic assets to help achieve our aims.

€ **Transformative governance in cities (implemented together with 15 cities and Democratic Society)**

Citizen participation is often a point-intervention. A vote at an election every few years, a consultation process on a new town square, or a bypass, the occasional protest movement or letter to the mayor. Challenges on the societal scale, so dependent on personal behaviours, and with such huge impact on the life of individuals, cannot be handled in such a way. We need a longer-term, more conversational approach that allows for changes to be planned and delivered with people. We need an approach that strengthens the civic and democratic infrastructure that can allow that to happen, which in too many places has been thinned out rather than strengthened over the years. We need to make sure that everyone in Europe, not just the eloquent and the sharp-elbowed, can access those opportunities and that their voices are heard in a fair balance.

By fostering citizen engagement work, EIT Climate-KIC and the Democratic Society want to ensure that climate change is not a technocratic, but a democratic issue. Participation and engagement have different meanings in different contexts and are sometimes used interchangeably. The goal of

engagement activities is that authorities provide information and options to people to allow them to make decisions themselves. Too often, however, citizens are involved as an afterthought or a box-ticking exercise, whereas the changes needed require buy-in across society. Our approach, working across multiple Deep Demonstrations, including in our **Healthy Clean Cities Deep Demonstration**, seeks to bring the best citizen participation theory and practice and develop them further in the context of the essential role that public involvement has in solving climate change. By working in a way that responds to the individual needs of each Deep Demonstration, but also in connecting across them, we ensure that citizens' voices, ideas and action in the Deep Demonstrations can be accessed readily where required.

€ **Talking Climate**

Last year [#TalkingClimate project](#) explored how to have constructive conversations about climate change. The aim of the project was to equip people with the necessary tools to talk about the issues of the climate crisis to people surrounding them, and to spark action through successful connections with peers. The project brought together 550 people from 56 different countries and the [#TalkingClimate handbook](#) was created.

Following the success, #TalkingClimate Phase II aims to take the project to the next level. This year the #TalkingClimate project aims to provide structured training and resources to empower people from different communities to have constructive conversations about climate change. The idea is to recruit the pilot trainers who will be trained and supported to deliver the workshops in their own communities. The next stage will involve designing and testing a #TalkingClimate train-the-trainers workshop package, and in the process, supporting budding climate change communicators in sharing their engagement skills with wider communities across Europe as well as laying the groundwork for an ambitious expansion of the project in the future.

The #TalkingClimate approach is based on the following set of beliefs:

Peer to peer conversations are a crucial part of social and political change: As people we are profoundly affected by the behaviour and views of those around us, particularly people we respect and trust. Politicians also need proof of social consent in order to take action.

Every community matters: We cannot meet ambitious climate targets without universal engagement. Climate change conversations, therefore, need to be taking place across different parts of society, or climate policies will be rejected.

New activism requires new skills: Those engaged in climate activism need excellent communication skills in order to reach out to members of the public they encounter, persuade or inconvenience. If this skill is ignored, it has the potential to seriously

undermine public protest by prompting public opposition and resentment.

The project will create the infrastructure and support network, but will also be deliberately open and collaborative, allowing other actors to pick up and use the resources in ways that are relevant to their location and circumstances. It will be based on a spirit of generosity in order to maximise its reach and the number of people engaged in different parts of the world.

€ [Moments Matter](#)

Moments Matter wants to reach institutions that care about climate but haven't yet found their place in the conversation. We hope to unite groups that are either already taking action - or want to take action - to solve the most complex systemic challenge of our time.

Moments Matter exists in the space between politics and protest. Through our Thinkers in Residency network and our online open platform, our objective is to find connections between a range of initiatives that drive climate action in different ways. Current community members include representatives from major museums, and the media and nightlife industry, and our goal is to counter the increasing fear and anxiety around climate change by introducing inclusivity, positivity, lightness and creativity to the climate conversation.

€ [The Journey](#) (implemented together with +20 Partners, mostly Higher Education Institutions)

To solve the wickedly complex problem that is climate change, we need an agile, self-reflective workforce. We need leadership that questions the status quo, thinks systemically, adapts and understands complex environments. The next generation must prioritise transformative thinking and graduates must have the confidence and skillsets to lead us to a better future. There is a clear appetite for this among today's youth.

The Journey, Climate-KIC's signature summer school, takes Europe's top graduates on a four-week programme spanning three countries and hosted by top global universities. With over 400 participants, the programme partners with Europe's leading experts in climate change, innovation and business through a community activation approach. Through experiential learning, and immersing these talented young professionals in climate-focused learning experiences, The Journey creates the next generation of innovators, influencers and climate leaders.

€ [Young Innovators](#) (implemented together with +15 partners, particularly Innovation Education institutions)



The Young Innovators programme recognises there is a need for more complex problem solving and climate innovation in the curriculum.

Young Innovators supports teachers, students and educators with improved systems thinking and complex problem solving in the classroom. Through workshops, visual tools, challenge-based learning and a well-researched innovative methodology, the programme can help teachers and educators be part of the systemic change we need.

The programme offers teachers and students a pathway for problem solving and creativity in the face of climate change, and the opportunity to engage and mobilise their local community to collaborate on real-world climate challenges.

€ **Climathon (implemented together with +150 partners, in cooperation with their local city government)**

Climathon is a city-based programme that raises climate awareness and offers cities and citizens the opportunity to co-create local ideas to shared climate challenges.

At the core of the Climathon programme is an ideathon powered by local organisers, the people who know their cities and climate challenges the best.

On one day, over anything from 12 to 72 hours, in hundreds of cities across 6 continents and many timezones, Global Climathon Day brings together a diverse group of participants ranging from policymakers to youth, and business leaders to hackers.

The global Climathon movement comes together within their own community to build the foundations for tangible projects, impact-driven start-ups and long-lasting conversations with decision-makers around city plans and policies.

In the last four years, the Climathon movement has grown from 600 to 6000 participants worldwide.