



# The EIC Incubator Policy Plan 2023 - 2026

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## Introduction

Dedicated to fostering independent European investigative journalism, the EIC Incubator operates with a steadfast commitment to transparency, collaboration, and the pursuit of public interest. By bridging the gap between investigative journalism, researchers, activists and technological innovation, the Incubator strives to catalyze impactful stories on pressing societal issues.

With a multi-year strategic plan, the Incubator outlines its goals, ranging from enhancing investigative capabilities to becoming a premier hub for turnkey investigative collaborations. These goals are underpinned by a robust framework of activities, governance structures, and financial transparency, ensuring accountability at every step. As we embark on this journey, the EIC Incubator invites researchers, journalists, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to join the efforts of keeping our societies just.

## 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.

## Purpose

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

Year	Goal(s)
2024	<p>Supporting and developing collaborations and knowledge sharing among journalists in Europe by combining and connecting 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, in the public interest.</p> <p>This goal will be achieved by launching two programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>EIC Incubator's Fellowship program</i>, offering Research Fellowships to researchers and journalists for up to one year. Integrated with EIC's investigative newsrooms, these Fellows will collaborate with the EIC.network media to produce stories in the public interest.</li><li>• <i>The Liquid Lab</i> will develop, maintain and publish free and open software to the general public, informed by investigative collaborations, so that any interested party can use it as a bundle of technologies supporting collaborative knowledge production.</li></ul>
2025	<p>Enhance the investigative capabilities of the Incubator by fostering intersectional collaboration across diverse fields of expertise and backgrounds. Harness the collective knowledge and the story amplification effect within the EIC network, while concurrently developing cutting-edge technologies to facilitate these collaborations.</p> <p>This goal will be achieved by focusing the Incubator's work on (1) in-depth investigations primarily centered on climate collapse and its impact on society, and</p>

	(2) the development of collaborative technologies, to service knowledge production during such investigations. This approach is dedicated to producing impactful investigative stories in the public interest.
<b>2026</b>	<p>Turning the EIC Incubator into 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&amp;D Lab, resulting in impactful investigations driven by public interest rather than financial gains.</p> <p>This goal will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the Incubator’s Fellowship program by growing the number of Fellows, having them concurrently collaborating with diverse EIC.network newsrooms on several investigations aligned with the public interest.</li> <li>• Developing open source collaborative technologies for knowledge production.</li> </ul>

**Activities**

The EIC incubator has three core activities, aiming to foster and cultivate collaborations and knowledge exchange among journalists in Europe, in the public interest. These are content production in the public interest via the Fellowship program, the advancement of collaborative technologies and networking events.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>2024</b>	<p><b>Launching the Investigative Fellowship Program</b></p> <p>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</p> <p>The focus is on researchers and journalists with great ideas and leads, substantiated by insightful data and solid preliminary research. These Fellows 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.</p> <p>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.</p>

	We envision to start with 5 Fellows and 5 in-depth investigations, as well as an inhouse research team
	<p><b>Technology</b> To support such collaborative work, we will strengthen the <i>LiquidLab</i>, which develops and maintains open tools for collaborative investigations</p> <p>This cost effective and secure bundle of tools for collaborative knowledge production between concerned citizens, investigative journalists, media organizations, and research activists, allows for searching, sharing, collaborating and discovering information in real time.</p>
	<p><b>Back office</b> Fundraising, Donor Membership Program, marketing and communication (including publication platform)</p>
<b>2025</b>	<p>Strengthening and growing the activities of Y1 + <b>Network events</b></p> <p>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 build the future networking of Fellows Alumni.</p>
<b>2026</b>	To be determined based on evaluating the results from Y2

**Finances**

Most of the activities of the Incubator will be possible via flexible grants and a Donor Membership Program that the foundation is offering, as well as through the contributions of several donor foundations (organizational and content grants).

<b>Estimated Income 2024</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>
Income Donor Members	400.000
Income from grants	100.000
Income from donations	10.000
Other income	To be determined
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>510.000</b>

<b>Estimated Expenses 2024</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>
Fellowships	300.000
Technology development & maintenance	60.000
Research Team	20.000
Staff costs (Fundraising, Project Management, Event Management)	100.000
Communication and Marketing and Travel	25.000
Financial expenses	5.000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>510.000</b>

<b>Estimated Income 2025</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>
Income Donor Members	800.000
Income from grants	200.000
Income from donations	20.000
Other income	To be determined
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1.020.000</b>

<b>Estimated Expenses 2025</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>
Fellowships	600.000
Technology development & maintenance	120.000
Research Team	40.000
Staff costs (Fundraising, Project Management, Event Management)	200.000
Communication and Marketing and Travel and TEvent	50.000

Financial expenses	10.000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1.020.000</b>

<b>Estimated Income 2026</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>
Income Donor Members	1.200.000
Income from grants	300.000
Income from donations	30.000
Other income	To be determined
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1.530.000</b>

<b>Estimated Expenses 2026</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>
Fellowships	900.000
Technology development & maintenance	180.000
Research Team	60.000
Staff costs (Fundraising, Project Management, Event Management)	300.000
Communication and Marketing and Travel and Event	75.000
Financial expenses	15.000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1.530.000</b>

### **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 (Chair), Liana Ganea (Treasurer) and Micael Pereira (Secretary).

Director is Ștefan Câdea.

### **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**

The remuneration of the Director is determined by the Supervisory Board, in accordance with the legal provisions.

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.

### **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 researchers and 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 researchers and 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.

## Conclusion

Dedicated to fortifying the landscape of independent investigative journalism in Europe, the EIC Incubator Stichting stands for collaboration, integrity, and commitment to the public good.

Committed to transparency and independence, the Incubator strives to foster a just ecosystem where journalists and researchers collaborate seamlessly to uncover truths that matter and to keep powers in check.

As we look ahead, the Incubator stays resolute in its mission to elevate the voices of investigative journalists, researchers, activists, pioneer innovative technologies for collaboration, and foster substantive conversations on critical societal matters. Through a dedication to pluralism, diversity, and respect, the Incubator aims to cultivate an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives converge to shape impactful narratives.

With the support of our community, donors, and partners, the EIC Incubator is poised to chart new frontiers in investigative journalism, driving positive change and advancing the public interest across Europe and beyond. Together, let us continue to uphold the values of integrity, collaboration, and transparency as we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of journalism and social justice.