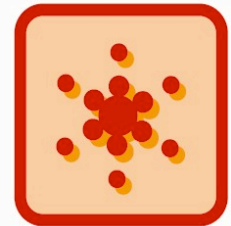




**ERRIN** European Regions  
Research and Innovation Network

**THE ERRIN AGENDA 2009-2011**

***LISBON AND BEYOND***



## I. Introduction

Successful research and innovation policies are the foundations for a competitive knowledge-based economy. Regional and local policy-makers and actors have a key role to play in designing and implementing these policies.

Regions are close to the users and have the capacity to design tailor-made solutions for innovation support and technology transfer reflecting their specific regional challenges and opportunities. They act as facilitators, catalysts and enablers of triple-helix interactions, on which innovation is increasingly based.

However, regions also face the challenge of a complex innovation and research landscape with a multitude of decision-makers that requires deep understanding and continuous learning to design and implement effective policies.

The European Union with its large array of initiatives and programmes harbours great opportunities for regions to improve their understanding of today's knowledge based society and to upgrade their research and innovation support schemes.

Such support is very welcome, as it allows regional actors to upgrade their capacities and create critical mass in leading-edge technologies through cooperation across Europe. However, it is often challenging for them to find their way through the maze of funding regulations and to design successful project proposals and find the reliable and competent project partners needed to complete successful cooperation projects.

As an effective answer to these challenges we founded the ERRIN network in 2001. Today, ERRIN unites more than 70 dynamic EU regions and their Brussels representation offices.

ERRIN acts on two fronts: Firstly it aims to improve the capacity of its regions to participate in and benefit fully from the EU's funding opportunities and, secondly, it addresses the need for systematic knowledge sharing and joint project development among its members, with a strong emphasis on involving and reaching out to practitioner communities in the regions.

ERRIN also aspires to influence EU policies in order to make them respond better to the needs of European regions and regional actors and engages in debate with the EU institutions and other European networks active in the field of research and innovation to promote the regional dimension.

With our long-term strategy for 2009-2011 and its practical implementation through the 2009 Work programme ERRIN aims to enhance the full potential of the network and its members.

As Chair of ERRIN I look forward to continuing our successful mission of "joining forces for regional innovation".

*Anthony van de Ven, Head of Office, Eindhoven-Brainport European Office*

## II. THE ERRIN VISION

The European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) was established in 2001 as a platform for Brussels-based regional representation offices and their home audiences to engage with the evolving European Research Area (ERA). After a period of co-financing by the European Commission, in the framework of a “Regions of Knowledge” action, it is now established as an independent membership-based association.

By improving communication, and coordination among Brussels regional representations, ERRIN strengthens cooperation and synergies between regions and regional actors across Europe and promotes cutting-edge local and regional research and innovation agendas.

Working via Brussels regional representations, ERRIN brings together regional decision makers, practitioners and the EU institutions to engage in a collective effort to make the knowledge economy a reality in our regions.

## III. LISBON AND BEYOND

The ERRIN strategic agenda is a coordinated response of Europe’s regions and regional actors participating in the ERRIN network to the raft of important European initiatives, which recognise the central place of research and innovation in Europe’s social, economic and environmental development now and in the future.

Research and Innovation are recognised as key pillars of the renewed Lisbon Agenda for Growth and Jobs. Key strategic documents such as the 2006 Aho report on “creating an innovative Europe” and, more recently, the 2008 Spring Council conclusions recognise the role of regions in delivering growth and jobs and in creating favourable framework conditions for stimulating research and innovation.

In April 2008, nearly ten years after the ERA concept was launched, EU countries and the Commission also agreed to launch the so-called Ljubljana process, or ERA vision 2020, which aims at overcoming the fragmentation of research programmes, policies and activities across Europe focusing, among others, on reinforcing the synergies at regional, national and European level.

Highlighting the importance of a broad innovation agenda, 2009 has been designated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. The aim of this European Year is to raise awareness on creating the right local environments favourable to research, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. It will encourage information campaigns and policy debates on a broad range of subjects within key policy domains such as education, research, enterprise and social and regional policy.

ERRIN, with its practical focus on facilitating successful cooperation among regions to enhance research and innovation capacities is well-placed to contribute to, and capitalize on, this renewed political emphasis, while intensifying its own efforts to

build a strong knowledge base and cooperation platform for its members creating true partnerships for growth.

The ERRIN Agenda “Lisbon and beyond” is geared towards harnessing the voice of Europe’s regions and offering an effective contribution at policy and practitioner levels to the Europe-wide ambitions for a strong, competitive and sustainable Europe carried forward by an innovative knowledge-based society and economy.

## **IV. THE ERRIN AGENDA**

The strategy is delivered mainly by focusing on three activity areas:

### **1. Sharing knowledge**

Sharing knowledge is a core objective of ERRIN. ERRIN helps members to exchange knowledge in a systematic manner, to screen and identify the EU’s policy and project opportunities and to explore jointly and match the themes and issues relevant to developing research and innovation in their regions. ERRIN provides a critical mass to facilitate access to the EU institutions and to EU decision-makers. It also helps its members to learn about the innovation structures, policies and practices of partner regions in the network through its thematic working groups and through the development of regional research and innovation profiles.

### **2. Building partnerships**

Another core activity of ERRIN is to enhance the capacities of its members to engage successfully in European projects, to build competitive project consortia and to develop high quality project submissions. ERRIN provides quick access to thematic and technological expertise in its member regions and facilitates the building of successful, trust-based partnerships. ERRIN provides intelligence on upcoming calls, organises briefing sessions to highlight key call requirements and organises project development sessions and trainings. Capacity building also extends to regional practitioners, which are assisted in their professional development, project design and consortia building.

### **3. Engaging in debate**

ERRIN aspires to be a privileged dialogue partner for the European Institutions providing a regional input into policy development. To this end ERRIN seeks to engage in policy debate with the EU institutions and other key stakeholders on key horizontal policies as well as on the specific policies and programmes relevant for regional research and innovation. By raising awareness on critical policy issues, ERRIN provides the opportunity and enhances the ability of its members to develop common positions and to intervene more forcefully in EU policy development.