

## Consultation on the future of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme 2007-2013

ERRIN is a Brussels-based network whose aim is to improve regional capacities in research and innovation by exploiting European funding opportunities in research and innovation, developing projects amongst member regions, shaping research and innovation policy at the European level and raising the profile of regions in Europe.

Founded in 2001 as an informal network, ERRIN is now a dynamic and respected subscription based network comprising over 90 regions most having a representational office in Brussels. ERRIN members collaborate on a regular basis via nine thematic working groups led by regions and two working groups dealing with policy and projects.

### Ten points from the ERRIN Network<sup>i</sup>

Innovation Union<sup>1</sup> argues that Europe's future competitiveness and its social model depends on innovation. Innovation is thus rightly at the heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy and must involve a partnership at the European, member state, regional and sub-regional levels. This partnership should include all actors and regions in the innovation cycle. This innovation 'revolution' is not just for a few high-tech areas but for all regions in Europe.

Regions are key players in the innovation process because they are the places where innovation partnerships happen. Regions provide the institutional infrastructure and linkages to make 'triple helix' collaboration and innovation not just possible but effective. The Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) has supported these aims and ERRIN and its member regions has been very successful in building partnerships among regional partners to submit projects within the CIP. A recent Intelligent Energy brokerage session organised by the ERRIN Energy Working Group attracted over 70 regional practitioners. ERRIN therefore considers that the CIP has an EU added value and welcomes this opportunity to put forward for future improvement.

1. The architecture of the CIP should be improved to make it more accessible and transparent to potential beneficiaries from regions. CIP should develop a simple portal that directs beneficiaries to funding opportunities either within policy or projects. More clarity is required on calls especially within Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) and better National Contact Point support for regions should be encouraged. Administration for CIP needs to be proportional to the funding and the length of project and incorporating a degree of flexibility.
2. ERRIN supports a larger budget for CIP and increasing the EU funding in each project to over 50% to encourage SMEs to participate in the ICT PSP programme as there is evidence from regions that SMEs are more willing to engage with higher levels of funding. Some extra funding or bonus for SMEs engaging in their first EU or CIP project might also be considered as involvement in CIP can lead to further engagement in other EU programmes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union COM(2010)546 final 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010

3. ERRIN supports a clear regional dimension for the CIP so that the CIP is aimed at regional stakeholders such as clusters, SMEs, universities with an emphasis on interregional cooperation that provides a European added value. For example in the ICT PSP programme, more funding should be accorded to pilot B and thematic network activities.
4. ERRIN supports the need to select priority areas for the CIP such as ICT and intelligent energy. CIP might also expand this scope to key enabling technologies identified as essential for Europe's future competitiveness. However, there should be some initiatives for projects outside the scope of the priorities such as the former 'Innovative Actions' programme under the Structural Funds.
5. ERRIN supports the eco-innovation programme in the CIP but would support a widening of the topic areas within eco-innovation.
6. CIP needs to improve its synergies with the future FP7 programme and Structural Funds and with Entrepreneurship programmes. It is imperative to build a better bridge between FP7 and CIP to create a seamless connection between research, innovation and commercialisation both at the theoretical and practical level. CIP could also coordinate better with a strengthened Regions of Knowledge programme. CIP should also liaise more effectively with Structural Funds especially as more attention will be paid in future ERDF programmes to research and innovation. For example, regions may wish to support CIP projects that may have just missed out on CIP funding.
7. Regions have a strong role to play supporting demand-led innovation through pre-commercial procurement and sustainable procurement. More support for sharing knowledge and improving skills across regions in these domains would be welcomed. Innovative procurement also needs to be linked to standardisation especially across borders to enlarge potential markets for innovative products and services.
8. Regions can also play a role in encouraging the take up of FP7 and CIP projects in their region. Some regions are already developing models to help SMEs exploit unused patents. This would require more information being available to regions regarding CIP (and FP7) projects in their region.
9. CIP needs to communicate better its funding opportunities directly to the SMEs. SMEs are often unaware of funding and procedures. Region could have an active role in raising awareness about CIP Programme and other complementary Programmes and financial Instruments (FP7, IEB Instruments etc.) by promoting information and training campaigns with the support of CIP Programme. CIP also needs also to disseminate better its successes and outcomes especially at both the European and the regional level. CIP might wish to use regional networks such as ERRIN to disseminate outcomes and results. At the regional level, better monitoring and dissemination of projects might encourage more take up at the regional level.
10. CIP is a vital tool to support innovation across the EU and help internationalise SMEs and clusters and this aspect of EU added value must be retained and strengthened.