



## SHORT REPORT

### **WORKSHOP 25 NOVEMBER 2019**

DG RTD, European Innovation Council (EIC), Innovation Ecosystems - Task Force II

*"A Robust Innovation Ecosystem for the Future of Europe"*

*Venue: Covent Garden, COVE A2 01/15- Auditorium, Place Rogier 16, 1210, Brussels*

#### **Context:**

European "Innovation Ecosystems" is a specific part of Pillar III of the Horizon Europe (HEU) proposal, with a proposed budget of 500 million €, that aims to **inter-connect** regional and national innovation actors at EU level by supporting **joint transnational and inter-regional innovation programmes** by the EU Member States, regions and Associated Countries<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Scope:**

The workshop was dedicated to EU regions and aims to get input on the regions' needs, priorities, challenges, bottlenecks, ongoing and planned initiatives, as well as to gather suggestions on how the "Innovation Ecosystems" programme under Horizon Europe (2021-2027) can support these activities to maximise the EU added value and impact (open approach).

#### **Participants:**

- **Regions:** 60 participants from 21 MS, out of which 10 participants from 7 EU-13 MS
- **3 Networks representatives:** ERRIN, EURADA, SERN
- **EC DG RTD** staff representatives

#### **Introduction – DG RTD.EIC.TF2 "Innovation Ecosystems":**

- Opening and welcome by Fabienne Gautier (Head of Unit)
- Presentation of the Innovation Ecosystems by Isidro Laso Balesteros (Deputy HoU)
- Moderation of the discussions by Christina Nanou, Jekaterina Novikova

#### **PART A:**

#### **Main\_Challenges, pressing needs, priorities and bottlenecks identified in relation to the Innovation Ecosystems in EU regions**

*What (bottlenecks / needs / challenges)?*

#### *Bottlenecks*

- ✓ **fragmentation of ecosystems, funding**
- ✓ **lack of Private – Public cooperation**
- ✓ **lack of regulations** on disruptive innovation
- ✓ **lack of coordination** in EU, national, regional programmes and tools
- ✓ **different terminology** among MS/regions: use "common language" on "Innovation" and "Innovation Ecosystems" how we monitor innovation (definition, KPIs)
- ✓ **different cultures, languages** across EU

<sup>1</sup> see Annex I, Pillar III, Section 2 of the Horizon Europe Decision Proposal on Innovation Ecosystems.

### *Needs / challenges*

- ✓ inter-regional / cross-border cooperation programmes interlinking Innovation Ecosystems on: **infrastructure** (“open” infrastructure), **academia – business**, actions to tackle the **lack of human capital, digitalisation**
- ✓ **involvement of all innovation actors: not just startups** and the usual suspects, also small ones
- ✓ **maturity difference** among regional Innovation Ecosystems: programmes to consider this important bottleneck
- ✓ motivation of **more advanced ecosystems to work with less advanced**
- ✓ **scaling up; SME support** to de-risk investments; **SME Instrument – Phase I** – how to continue
- ✓ **link with S3 actors**; entrepreneurial discovery process & cluster policy
- ✓ **synergies** between programmes – regulations (EU/national),
- ✓ **sustainable projects** (e.g. avoid short term projects with no continuation)
- ✓ **stability** and **quick implementation**: need for EC tools and mechanisms to be valid for support for longer time (and not to change regularly); speed up collaboration mechanisms
- ✓ **public procurement** quality improvement (not focused on budget); also more tech-oriented
- ✓ **mapping** of ecosystems ; data exchange
- ✓ **monitoring**: joint ways to monitor innovation (common KPIs)
- ✓ support **thematic feasibility studies** from different regions
- ✓ sharing of **best practices**
- ✓ **links with S3 priorities** (creation of critical mass of actors at EU)
- ✓ **awareness** on how to use optimally the different EC instruments
- ✓ **Skills** – link with Education/Universities – need for qualified workforce;
- ✓ **National vs regional innovation + EU challenge**
- ✓ **Trust** between actors

### **PART B:**

#### **What support and concrete actions regions need from “Innovation Ecosystems” programme - Horizon Europe**

Many ideas for actions (what) and ways to be implemented (how) are presented below. Some of them voiced by several groups so of importance to many regions.

#### *What (concrete actions)?*

- ✓ **Inter-regional Cooperation**: need for solution-focused **cross-border, interregional and cross-sectorial/interdisciplinary approach** (value chain), **interlinking**: a) **different** innovation ecosystems across EU (to complement each other), b) **similar** ecosystem/links (to strengthen each other, exchange info); c) **local** ecosystems maintaining the same trust capacity
- ✓ **Open access hubs** networking
- ✓ **Less developed regions**: connect “excellent” with “less developed” innovation ecosystems
- ✓ **Thematic focus**: actions towards supporting EU priorities, e.g. digitalisation, defence research
- ✓ **Scaling up**: involve EU “champions” e.g. creating European Cyber valleys creating different models of cooperation: action plan: mapping skills, scaling of services
- ✓ **New Markets creation**: for **early-stage startups and SMEs** at EU level (for more and less mature companies); potential verticals and thematic-focused e.g. DIH; technology pull/technology push; **SME Instrument – Phase I**
- ✓ **Building on S3 thematic platforms/partnerships** – complementing their actions: ideas for COFUND actions (in synergy with Cohesion funds – Component 5) to support: a) business innovation, b) ecosystems/cases, c) collaboration in sub(thematic) areas; include representatives of other EU regions that are not part of a S3 platform (use of EEN model to create ecosystems)
- ✓ **Joint public procurements**
- ✓ **Voucher system** on innovation and mobility, using for testing in other sectors/environments (synergies with COSME program that connects clusters)
- ✓ **Experimentation**: actions/tool (like cascade funding) that involve **rural actors**
- ✓ **Financial instruments** at transnational level targeted to challenge-based breakthrough technologies
- ✓ **Best practices** identification and dissemination
- ✓ **Mentoring and training** tools/actions
- ✓ **Existing networks collaboration** among innovation to support ecosystems; fund **orchestrators** of ecosystems

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- ✓ **Internationalisation:** actions that are going from regional/national/EU to global level;
- ✓ **Mapping / Benchmarking / Matchmaking tool:** for different **maturity stages** of innovation ecosystems (link with JRC on RIS3), with specific intervention needs /instruments and identify weak points; **Platform** for “ecosystem” specific information – similar to DIH; European landscape of innovation **infrastructure**; map technological offer/demand per region to facilitate cooperation; **Thematic feasibility studies** by different regions with similar needs;

#### How?

- ✓ **Cooperation objectives:** need for **clear objectives** of cooperation (market reasons, technology); **internal capacity** and good **governance** are catalyzers to enable cooperation of innovation ecosystems
- ✓ **Synergies and complementarities** between HE and other EU programmes/instruments: Cohesion Funds (ERDF, Component 5), public/regional/national programmes, Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH), vision of EU DARPA complementarity; Involve EEN in the program design
- ✓ **Implementation mechanisms:** stay away from project-specific support; homogenisation of funding rules; longer term simplified models (avoiding different regional rates);
- ✓ CoFUND with the EU at least 50% funding rate (100% for thematic feasibility studies on similar/complementary needs);
- ✓ **EU guidance:** Q&A chat on EU ecosystems; Guidelines on the possible COFUND actions and on how to use on an optimal way the instrument
- ✓ **Orchestrators:** Involve actors who have an overview of the ecosystems needs as liaisons/orchestrators of ecosystem
- ✓ **Communication / coordination with Managing Authorities:** particularly in respect of design of the programmes/OP/regulations
- ✓ **Regulation:** Need for disruptive regulation (technology pull/technology push)

#### **PART C:**

#### **Pitches of regions – presentation of existing or planned programmes/initiatives interlinking regions and ecosystems**

- North East Romania (RO), Centre-Val de Loire (FR), Sisak Moslavina county (HR), Emilia Romagna (IT) , Oulou (FI, did not attend the workshop)

#### **Workshop wrap up / conclusions:**

- The regions’ presented their suggestions on their **needs, challenges and bottlenecks** they are facing, in a very open and co-creative spirit.
- The **inter-regional connectedness and cooperation** at EU level appears to be one of the most pressing challenges for the EU MS regions.
- There was an attempt to translate some of the identified needs into concrete actions by the participants. The proposed **actions** could be considered in the future “innovation ecosystems” programme under Horizon Europe (what & how) to achieve more impact and EU added value.
- The **pitches** demonstrated the great potential that exist in regional innovation ecosystems and showcased useful inspirational examples, validating also that sharing best practices and information is a top-priority for regions.

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**ANNEX:**

**AGENDA:**

11:30 – 12:00	Welcome (5 min) - <i>Fabienne Gautier, Head of Unit “Innovation Ecosystems”</i> Workshop objectives - Innovation Ecosystems (15 min) - <i>Isidro Laso Ballesteros, Deputy Head of Unit</i> Tour de table (10 min)
12:00 - 12:50	<u>PART A:</u> Challenges, needs, priorities and bottlenecks in relation to the Innovation Ecosystems in EU regions (20 min) - <i>Round table discussions &amp; short presentations (30 min)</i>
12:50 – 13:30	<i>LUNCH BREAK</i>
13:30 – 14:30	<u>PART B:</u> Support from “Innovation Ecosystems” programme - Horizon Europe - <i>Round table discussions &amp; short presentations</i>
14:30 – 15:20	<u>PART C:</u> Pitches of regions – presentation of existing or planned programmes/initiatives interlinking regions and ecosystems
15:20 – 15:30	Closing remarks on the sessions by participants

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