

ERRIN CONTRIBUTION TO THE MISSION AREA: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE INCLUDING SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

Established in 2001, ERRIN promotes the regional and local dimension in European research and innovation policies and programmes. The network gathers over 120 members who primarily collaborate through 13 Working Groups, covering both thematic areas and overarching policy issues. ERRIN supports project development and knowledge exchange between members to enhance regional and local research and innovation capacities, with the aim to foster sustainable and inclusive growth in all regions.

Further information:

Pirita Lindholm, pirita.lindholm@errin.eu

Heidi Johansson, heidi.johansson@errin.eu

Agnieszka Wieczorek Jetha, agnieszka.wieczorek@errin.eu

1. INTRODUCTION

ERRIN, representing over 120 regional and local stakeholders active in research and innovation from across Europe, strongly supports the development and implementation of the missions in Horizon Europe. We particularly welcome the missions' bottom-up nature, flexibility, and the clear involvement of citizens.

One of the five mission areas is adaptation to climate change including societal transformation. This mission aims to turn the urgent challenge of adapting to climate change into an opportunity to make Europe more resilient, climate prepared and fair, through a three-layered approach. The mission places regions and communities in its centre with the objective of preparing all citizens for climate disruptions, building resilience and upscaling solutions through 100 demonstrators, and accelerating the transition in 200 pilot regions and communities. Following a webinar organised by the Smart Cities and Energy & Climate Change working groups around this mission on 2 July, ERRIN members expressed interest to provide inputs and recommendations related to this mission.

The mission interim report, published on 25 June, identifies the objectives and approach of the Mission. At this stage it is 'a concept' that should, as the next step, be operationalised. This step is likely to require further support beyond the Mission Board, programming committees and the European Commission. Therefore, other experts, practitioners and multipliers, such as the Mission Assembly members, could be further involved in this step of "HOW" and "WHAT" should be done more concretely. As regions and communities are at the centre of this mission, a group of local and regional practitioners could also be gathered to support this process.

2. APPROACH OF THE MISSION

The interim report underlines a strong need to support regions in co-designing innovative solutions. Bringing all relevant actors to work together and to establish a long-term collaboration to achieve those solutions and to accelerate adaptive capacities, should be considered as an important innovation of this mission. At the same time, the focus of the key performance criteria listed in Annex 3 are focusing on technical innovations and not considering aspects of social innovation. A wider set of indications also covering social and systemic innovations, including aspects of long-term collaboration, should be considered.

Currently, the mission report highlights rural areas and the urban dimension of adaptation is less considered. The text does not capture urban challenges such as the heat island effect, urban sprawl, etc. If these challenges are not considered in the adaptation mission, they should be tackled elsewhere. Synergies and complementarities with the Driving Urban Transitions Partnership as well as with the Mission on Climate Neutral and Smart Cities could be explored in this context. At the same time the role of adaptation measures in the 'City mission' (for example in terms of potentially offsetting carbon emissions) should be clarified.

As outlined in the interim report, shared learning will be facilitated by providing opportunities to collaborate and exchange insights and lessons learned amongst the participating regions and communities. ERRIN considers structured collaboration as an essential element to achieve the necessary impact of the mission at EU level. Therefore, we suggest to cluster regions and communities

based on their strengths and/or challenges, identified through an in-depth profiling, with a view to enhance the potential impact and the possibility to scale up solutions. The profiling should result in identifying areas where a region/community is doing well and has expertise ('mentoring'), while other areas will surface where further learning, investment and/or research is needed ('learning'). Based on profiling and common challenges, the regions and communities can be divided into 'clusters' (for example using the identified five key community systems).

Such profiling could be part of the selection process in order to ensure that different types of communities and regions would be part of the deep demonstrators and transition accelerators. Thus, ensuring diversity of regions and communities taking part in the mission.

3. GOVERNANCE

Governance is a key element of the mission throughout its design, implementation and monitoring:

- Vertical / multilevel governance: not only implementation but also other steps of the mission should be developed together with all governance levels from local to European.
- Horizontal governance: Achieving the ambitious climate vision cannot be done by governments alone. Engagement of all relevant actors in local society (administrations, private sector, knowledge providers, civil society) is essential to ensure shared objectives and a broad ownership of the mission.
- Governance of the mission's support system will be crucial to ensure balanced and fit-for-purpose support for the mission.

The interim report underlines the dependence of the success of the mission on the engagement of different stakeholders. A broad support base within society, citizens, NGOs, the knowledge providers, and the private sector must be ensured through continuous engagement. Such an ecosystem approach is crucial for creating new knowledge, as well as more relevant and broadly accepted innovations.

Citizen engagement is a key for all missions. Citizen engagement however requires a sound methodology and rigorous planning. Too often terms such as co-design and co-creation are used for coordination and consultation. Taking citizen engagement seriously requires a real change in the way public administrations work, and when designed and executed well, a real public sector innovation is needed.

To maximise the impact of the mission, using a 'contract' or a 'pact', as proposed in the context of the city mission, could be considered. Regional adaptation pact could serve to facilitate both vertical and horizontal governance. At regional level it could help to gain political awareness and support, engage various actors in the mission as well as to pull together resources of the various stakeholders (both public and private). It could also support better coordination between the levels of governance as well as foresee support measures and improve policy frameworks both at national and European levels.

4. Selecting regions and communities

Definition of a community is rather open in the Interim Report. However, this might not be negative as the competences of the local and regional level of governance varies considerably depending on

countries. The most suitable level - or community - might therefore also vary. It is important to allow certain flexibility in order to ensure a diversity of participating regions/communities.

The selection of the 100 deep demonstrators and the 200 European regions and communities should be based on solid criteria taking into account elements such as:

Ambition and commitment: A strong framework (such as already existing strategy to tackle climate adaptation) and political commitment at local/regional level.

Geographical coverage: It is important to select deep demonstrators in all Member States, including EU 13. Context is relevant when it comes to peer learning and engaging larger number of communities and regions in adaptation actions (scaling up). At the same time quotas i.e. selecting a specific number of regions or communities per member state should be avoided. Excellence should remain as a key criterion in the mission.

Capacity and diversity: the region will have to demonstrate capacity to be able to deliver (strategy, roadmap, robustness of the approach). Nevertheless, the support should not be given only to the largest and the strongest. Small and medium-sized regions and communities should also be considered. Finally, including regions and communities with a variety of strengths and challenges should be considered. (See point 2 on profiling and clustering regions and communities based on challenges/strengths).

5. Role of Horizon Europe vs. mainstreaming the mission objectives into other policy areas

Bridging between the excellence and relevance will be a key challenge when it comes to missions. Horizon Europe should support activities which answer to the criterion of excellence. At the same time missions should be relevant to the daily lives of the European citizen. Therefore, priorities must be set of which activities supporting the mission will be funded through the Horizon Europe and which ones through other European funding programmes and instruments.

The coordination and support for the mission should be funded through Horizon Europe, similarly to R&I activities such as building resilience and upscaling solutions through 100 deep demonstrators. However, activities such as the regeneration of community and social infrastructure and the restoration of land, ecosystems and habitats, would require funding for infrastructure (such as ERDF or InvestEU) and for wide implementation of known solutions (such as LIFE). In addition to traditional funding sources, such as national and local funding and EU support, there should be a broad move to consider innovative financing mechanisms such as climate bonds. New ways of private sector financing should also be considered.

In order to create further interest on the missions at the regional level further information should be provided to the Regional/Managing Authorities on how to use regional funding (such as ERDF) in synergy with Horizon Europe funding. If a clear linkage between regional and European funding is created, there will be greater incentive for regions to integrate missions to their regional smart specialisation strategies. Having some of the Horizon Europe mission calls and criteria referring to smart specialisation would further support such synergy and complementarity. In this way, the

European Commission would also highlight the important role of regions and communities in the missions.

Finally, ERRIN suggests that the mission could take on the role of a ‘super CSA’ or ‘EIT-like partnership’, developing a one-stop-shop platform that would collect information and provide the necessary technical, regulatory, financial and socio-economic expertise as well as assistance to regions and communities, including open calls for funding.