

Policy Working Group

ANNUAL PLAN 2021

WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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In a process of recruiting new co-leads

OBJECTIVES

The Policy Working Group works closely with the Management Board and the leaders of the other WGs to develop ERRIN's positions on cross-cutting policy issues. The WG follows closely overall Research and Innovation Policy and focuses on the Horizon Europe programme. Also the European Research Area (ERA) as the renewed policy framework for research and innovation will be closely followed up by the group.

CONTEXT

Key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow

- Governance and practical implementation of the European Research Area (ERA)
 - Including synergies with the European Education Area (work led by SEFS WG)
 - Exploring the potential development of a European Innovation Area
- Horizon Europe – new elements of the programme
 - European Partnerships (overview and governance)
 - European Innovation Ecosystems (in collaboration with I&I WG)
 - Mission implementation plans (overview of the progress of the missions)
- Funding synergies – R&I and cohesion, recovery (in collaboration with S3)

Key funding programmes for the Working Group

- Horizon Europe
- Overall understanding of the R&I funding landscape

How does the group support partnership building and collaborate with other European organisations or networks?

- The WG will identify key networks & organisations relevant for collaboration related to ERA and Horizon Europe novelties

ACTIVITIES

Bi-monthly meetings

The Policy Working group organises regular internal meetings that are designed to exchange information, exchange on intelligence and further define the issues to be tackled in the group. The WG also serves as a place where members, and in particular Working Group Leaders, can inform the group about on-going policy related activities within other WGs as well as or encourage collaboration with other organisations.

Thematic meetings and events

Regional dimension of ERA

19 January

At the end of September, the European Commission published the Communication outlining the future plans related to the European Research Area (ERA). The regional and local level plays a more prominent role in the renewed ERA and the document highlights the importance of coherence and complementarities for setting R&I priorities at regional, national, and European level as well as promoting synergies between policies and instruments.

In practice the plans include boosting synergies between cohesion policy funds and the Framework Programme but also establishing structures to support the reform of R&I systems, link Smart Specialisation strategies to ERA, and build on successful initiatives such as the Knowledge Exchange Platform. In addition ERAHubs are proposed as an initiative that will foster interconnected innovation hubs across the EU to achieve better coordination, strengthen excellence and enhance the production, circulation and use of knowledge.

Regional dimension of ERA in practice – internal meeting

23 February

Exchange views on the ERA Hubs and the ERA Forum for transition and explore how the regional dimension could (in practice) be embedded into those proposed initiatives.

Our objective is to pull together the questions, ideas and proposals to a document that we can share with the Cabinet of Mariya Gabriel and the DG R&I.

European Partnerships – Internal meeting

23 March

Horizon Europe aims to simplify the landscape of the European Partnerships and to introduce a more strategic, coherent and impact-driven approach when it comes to the partnerships. All partnerships will be divided under the three categories: co-funded, co-programmed, and institutional. And they should fulfil similar objectives that include strategic orientation, common conditions of directionality through Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs) and ensuring long term commitment and resources to the partnerships.

At the same time, a large number of partnerships (49) are under development. The three types of partnerships will come with various governance models, structures and also different types of calls. During our meeting we aim to collect your open questions related to the European Partnerships and exchange views on what we know about them. The outcomes of the discussion will also serve as preparation for the next Policy Working Group meeting on the same topic with external speakers

European Partnerships in Horizon Europe - How can regional and local actors engage in practice?

22 April

Building on the internal meeting, the conversation on the different ways that regional and local authorities as well as their ecosystems can engage in European Partnerships continues. Together with the European Commission and two ERRIN members involved in one co-programmed (CCAM) and one co-funded (Water4All) partnership we will discuss the benefits of engaging in a partnership, how to best prepare the involvement but also more practical aspects such as where opportunities and activities will be published and how the partnerships will interact with other existing structures such as a the JPIs.

Synergies between Horizon Europe and structural funds - How do we make synergies operational?

25 May

Horizon Europe aims to increase opportunities for synergies with European regional and development fund programmes to further increase the impact of research and innovation funding. Whilst at political and strategic programming level synergies are enabled, many questions still remain on how to make those synergies operational.

During this meeting we continue to address synergies by engaging in a dialogue with the European Commission on what is possible and how the funding synergies could be further encouraged in practice. We will then zoom in on two national examples on how to get prepared for synergies in practice. The Czech and Italian examples will present concrete cases on synergies with a focus on the European Innovation Council (EIC) - Seal of Excellence, sequential funding.

Upcoming meetings and themes (Autumn 2021)

Tentative meeting dates are

- 14 October
- 9 November

The European Commission has adopted its proposal for ['A Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe'](#) on 16 July. The pact supports the implementation of national European Research Area (ERA) policies. Foundations for a new ERA are being laid with the Pact for Research and Innovation, while the entire framework of ERA governance is still to be defined. Council conclusions are being prepared by the Slovenian presidency in this context. ERRIN continues to follow up the developments related to the

ERA governance and the ERA policy initiatives, such as the ERA Hubs and plans to organise a meeting to provide contributions to the Council Conclusions under development.

The place-based dimension of the Horizon Europe missions has become more clear during the past months and four out of the five missions are proposing implementation mechanisms that put regions and cities – and their R&I ecosystems – at their centre. Following a series of meetings and events organised by the ERRIN Working Groups tackling the individual missions, the Policy WG now plans to look into how regional level can participate in the upcoming implementation phase of the Horizon Europe missions.