

INVESTMENT & INNOVATION WORKING GROUP

ANNUAL PLAN 2022

WORKING GROUP LEADERS

Wim De Kinderen, Brainport Eindhoven (NL), w.dekinderen@brainportdevelopment.nl

Siri Raahede Bentzen, South Denmark (DK), srb@southdenmark.be

Gabriele Pedrini, Autonomous Province of Trento (IT), gabriele.pedrini@provincia.tn.it

Marie Vaugeois, Occitanie Europe (FR), marie.vaugeois@occitanie-europe.eu

Loles Vidal, Generalitat Valenciana (ES), lvidal@delcomval.be

OBJECTIVES

The Innovation & Investment Working Group aims to monitor the main initiatives put in place by the European institutions under the priority ‘an economy that works for the people’ and more specifically targeting SMEs. The Working Group monitors developments in the areas of industrial and cluster policy and promotes instruments that support innovative financing (e.g., cascade funding, financial instruments) and innovation in procurement. With a view to foster and facilitate entrepreneurship, the WG takes a broad perspective in innovation, including social innovation and the development of new business models within the framework of social economy.

CONTEXT

- Key EU level priorities, strategies and events that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2022
 - Industrial strategy
 - Strategic autonomy
 - EU Industry Days (8-11 February 2022)
 - Social economy action plan
 - WIRE - Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (11-13 May 2022)
 - Industry 5.0
- Funding programmes important for the Working Group, facilitation of project development
 - Horizon Europe – EIC and the European Innovation Ecosystems
 - Single Market Programme - Euroclusters (follow-up on winning projects)
 - ERDF - Interregional Innovation Investments (I3)
 - InvestEU (potentially via a cross WG event regarding the different InvestEU windows together with the Blue Economy, Energy and Climate Change, Smart Cities and Transport WGs)
- Partnership building and collaboration

- European Cluster Collaboration Platform
 - Industrial Forum
 - Long-Term investments and competitive EU industry Intergroup of the EP
- Topics and tailored activities for less active regions
 - Some of the activities, for example on cascade funding, could provide an opportunity for less active regions

ACTIVITIES

Green financing - EU taxonomy and the Innovation Fund

8 March, morning – information session (online)

With green investments and projects at the top of the agenda, we take stock of two EU newcomers on the scene: the common classification system for sustainable economic activities, known as the 'EU taxonomy'; and the Innovation Fund - one of the world's largest funding programmes for the demonstration of innovative low-carbon technologies. One of the pillars of the Green Deal, the EU taxonomy Regulation has been adopted in 2020. As the first Delegated Act (on Climate) has just entered into force in January 2022, ERRIN wants to offer its members an overview of the issues at stake for sustainable finance at the local level.

The event will be an info session, including presentations from the European Commission representatives and a beneficiary of the Innovation Fund.

EU Action Plan on social economy

TBC – information session

Last December the European Commission adopted an Action Plan to help the European social economy thrive, tapping into its economic and job-creation potential, as well as its contribution to a fair and inclusive recovery, and the green and digital transitions. The Action Plan announces a number of key actions to support social economy that could be relevant for regional ecosystems.

The objective of this session is to provide information on the policy initiative, as well as potential upcoming funding opportunities (InvestEU's Social Investments and Skills window/EaSI, etc.).

Project development session on I3

May (TBC)

Members will be invited to present project ideas related to the new I3 instrument, and to learn from the first successful I3 project applicants. This activity is led by the S3 working group.

Cascade funding in Horizon Europe and beyond

September – information session

This WG event will be an information session on a mechanism frequently used by Horizon Europe and other EU programmes: cascade funding (also known as 'financial support to third parties'). It is designed to ease the access for SMEs to EU funds and networks through EU-projects. The event aims

to provide an overview of available cascade funding opportunities as well as focus on upcoming calls that include a cascade funding element. Organisations handling cascade funding could also be invited to present and provide insights on the cascade funding and the application process.

Launch of InvestEU

End of the year

This information session is planned to accompany the launch of InvestEU. Its aim will be to present up-to-date information on the scheme, give more details on the new windows and on the involvement of National Promotional Banks and Institutions (NPBIs). Depending on their availability, the meeting could be co-organised with the European Parliament intergroup on ‘Sustainable, Long-term Investments and Competitive EU industry’.

Other topics to be explored

A new industrial policy: is it really working?

This WG activity will focus on the Industrial Forum, the new transition pathways and the state aid rules applicable to Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI). This policy discussion will help participants to better understand EU policies impacting regional investments.

The EIC: where are we?

To maintain and expand our relations with EISMEA on the EIC, ERRIN I&I WG will pursue an informal dialogue to understand possible synergies and to stay up to date on the progress of core features of the EIC (EIC Fund, Artificial Intelligence powered application system, Business Acceleration Services-BAS and initiatives for women-led companies etc.). The event will be a meeting between the I&I WG leadership, the ERRIN secretariat and EISMEA.