

## POLICY WORKING GROUP

### ANNUAL PLAN 2023

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#### OBJECTIVES

The Policy Working Group works closely with the Management Board and the leaders of the other WGs to position ERRIN on cross-cutting policy issues. The WG follows closely overall research and innovation policy, in particular the Horizon Europe framework programme, from an overarching perspective and ensuring coordination of horizontal programme aspects. The WG also focuses on the implementation of the European Research Area (ERA) as the renewed policy framework and agenda for research and innovation, as well as on the New European Innovation Agenda, especially the ecosystem approach and the new “Regional Innovation Valleys” related activities.

#### CONTEXT

The key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2023:

- New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA) – Flagship 3 implementation
- Governance and practical implementation of the European Research Area (ERA)
  - Understand the regional perspective of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 and the next steps of the ERA Forum for Transition
  - Focus on the four actions related to ERRIN activities: ERA for future work; ERA & Missions; ERA & improving excellence (link with widening); ERA Hubs (when officially launched)
- Horizontal aspects of Horizon Europe
  - European Partnerships (overview and governance)
  - EU Missions: implementation plans/governance/portfolio approach (in collaboration with Health, Energy & Climate, Bioeconomy, Blue Economy and Smart Cities WGs)
  - Understanding evaluations and impact: What does it take to be successful in Horizon Europe?
- Strategic foresight

- Horizon consultation
- Funding synergies – R&I and cohesion, recovery

Funding programmes important for the Working Group and ways to facilitate project development:

- Horizon Europe
  - E.g. European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) CONNECT calls such as [HORIZON-EIE-2023-CONNECT-03-01](#): Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys
- Improving overall understanding of the R&I funding landscape

## ACTIVITIES

### [ERRIN input to Horizon consultation](#)

**24 January**

Given the opening of the European Commission’s largest so far public consultation on the past, present and future of the Horizon programmes 2014-2027 in December 2022, the first Policy WG meeting in 2023 will concentrate on discussing ERRIN’s input. The meeting will feed into the process of developing ERRIN’s response to the consultation, led by the dedicated drafting group composed of the interested ERRIN members within the Policy WG. The drafting group’s work will continue until the deadline for submitting replies to the Horizon consultation on 23 February 2023.

### [New European Innovation Agenda – Flagship 3 – state of play and what’s coming](#)

**21 March**

During this meeting, a European Commission representative will present new developments with regard to Flagship 3 of the New European Innovation Agenda, including on the innovation divide and regional innovation valleys. The event will also serve to prepare the ground for the next Policy WG meeting which will focus specifically on one of the calls that could be of particular interest for ERRIN members – “Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys”.

### [Regional Innovation Valleys call for proposals under Horizon Europe](#)

**25 April**

This meeting will focus on the upcoming call for proposals “Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys” ([HORIZON-EIE-2023-CONNECT-03-01](#)), featuring a discussion around key elements of the call and a matchmaking activity. The call will be open from 17 May to 17 October 2023 and refers to one of the key initiatives under the Flagship 3 of the New European Innovation Agenda.

### [European Network of Innovative Higher Education Institutions \(ENIHEI\) helping drive regional innovation forward](#)

**30 May**

This joint meeting with the Science and Education for Society WG will focus on how ENIHEI can help support regional innovation. It will feature inputs from university and respective regional administration representatives, allowing them to showcase together how they align to coherently advance regional innovation. We will also discuss with the European Commission and the members of the ENIHEI network on how it can contribute to the goals of the New European Innovation Agenda, e.g. the Regional Innovation Valleys.

### [Funding synergies – from theory to practice](#)

**8 June**

This joint meeting with the Driving Urban Transitions Partnership will focus on the implementation of funding synergies and the associated barriers. The event will be joined by officials from DG REGIO and DG RTD who will present the state of play, as well as representatives of two European Partnerships – CETP and DUT – who will offer practical insights, leading to an open discussion with the audience on operationalising funding synergies and ways to overcome related challenges.

### [Regional Innovation Valleys call under Horizon Europe – dealing with co-funding](#)

**29 June**

This meeting will address the challenges and doubts around the 50% co-funding requirement under the Regional Innovation Valleys call under Horizon Europe, to further support ERRIN members in applying for the call. It will offer a chance for all interested colleagues to discuss together the different approaches to fulfil the requirement, encountered obstacles and (ideas for) solutions. The aim is to facilitate mutual learning as well as sharing and identifying practices which could possibly be implemented in different regions and streamlined based on exchange of views.

### [ERA Policy Agenda going forward](#)

**18 September**

The first Policy WG meeting after the summer break will offer a chance to hear about the state of play and future perspectives for the European Research Area. Following a short introduction from the ERRIN side, a representative of the European Commission will be asked to introduce the ERA policy agenda 2022-2024, the current developments as well as perspectives on the future. The interventions will be followed by an open discussion with the meeting participants. The event will allow to gain a better understanding of the ERA as well foster further engagement of various stakeholders in the ERA actions.

**Please note that depending on the timeline of the Spanish Presidency's work, topics of the Policy WG meetings planned in October and November 2023 might change.**

### **Horizon 2025-2027 and beyond / Spanish Presidency priority**

#### **19 October**

During this session, the developments with regard to the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025-2027 will be presented, next to the European Commission's analysis of the outcomes of the Horizon 2014-2027 consultation.

The meeting may also refer to one of the priorities of the current Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU. One of Presidency's aims in the area of research and innovation is to develop Council Conclusions on strengthening the role and impact of R&I in the policy making process in democratic societies. One of the three main pillars to be addressed in this respect will be the role of regional and local innovation ecosystems in improving cooperation and territorial cohesion through R&I.

### **ERA Hubs: Defining the concept**

#### **17 November**

The ERA action 15 on "ERA Hubs" aims to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems at national and regional level, looking both at multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder engagement. With this action currently on hold in the ERA Forum, the event will offer insights from two projects testing and piloting the ERA Hubs concept: COOPERATE and ERA\_FABRIC. European Commission will also be invited to outline the next steps related to ERA action 15.

### **Topics to be monitored further:**

- Closing of the Regional Innovation Valleys calls for EoI & proposals – looking at the interest and applicants' experiences
- Various kinds of support provided to Horizon Europe applicants in regions – exchange of practices
- Organising a regional innovation ecosystem – different approaches and mutual learning