

ANNUAL PLAN 2024 ICT WORKING GROUP

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OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the ICT Work Group is to act as a platform to discuss and share information on ICT-related initiatives and funding opportunities in relation to the European Commission's policy priority "A Europe fit for the digital age". Especially highlighting the regional dimension of the ICT-field, the WG aims to create opportunities for interregional cooperation in the field of ICT by linking with other areas and sectors such as smart cities, energy, transport, health or culture.

CONTEXT

The key EU-level priorities, strategies, events, work programmes, and priorities call for proposals that the Working Group aims to follow up on in 2024. In the past few years, the ICT WG has developed many activities around EU initiatives that can foster the digital transition in our regional ecosystems. This will remain a priority for 2024.

That is why the key EU-level priorities and strategies that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2024:

- Further development of the AI Act
- EU Chips Act
- Europe's Digital Decade
- Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs
- The current development on digital topics such as digital twins, data spaces and the European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC)
- Research & Innovation Week in March 2024

The WG's activities are related to several partnerships funded through Horizon Europe, such as: European High Performance Computing (EuroHPC JU), Chips JU, Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking (SNS JU), PHOTONICS PPP, AI, Data and Robotics Partnership.

OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTPUTS IN ERRIN PROJECTS

Related to the ICT Working Group, ERRIN has been involved in the [Go Li.EU](#) project. It supports the governance of the Living-in.EU movement to foster digital transformation in cities, regions and communities. In this project, ERRIN is responsible for measuring the impact of the project and the Living-in.eu initiative at local, regional and European levels. ERRIN also supports the 'Monitoring and Measuring Working Group' work, aiming to develop a solid and unique framework for measuring and monitoring sustainable digital transformation processes.

In 2024, two main activities of the project can be of interest to members of the ICT Working Group but also to ERRIN members in general:

- ERRIN will organise the project's annual event, the Digital Assembly, a high-level political event aiming at engaging dialogue between regional authorities and the European Commission on ICT-related topics.
- Opportunities for funding and/or technical support on ICT-related topics curated by the Living-in.EU movement, such as support for the development of local digital twins or for the deployment of data spaces.

ACTIVITIES

Digital Innovation Hubs for Public Authorities

Date: Q1

The 1st series of European Digital Innovation Hubs started activities last year. While most of them target SMEs, many EDIHs (also) support public authorities in their digitalisation. This ICT WG meeting will showcase the opportunities and benefits EDIHs can offer. Special attention will be given to tools measuring digital maturity and relevant projects such as Living-in.EU.

Representatives of the European Commission and the Digital Transformation Accelerator for the network of EDIHs might be invited to take the floor.

AI act and regional AI strategies

Date: Q2

In December 2023, the Council and the European Parliament reached a political agreement on the AI Act, setting out rules for the development and usage of AI in Europe. The aim of the event is to explore how regional actors can benefit from generative AI whilst protecting privacy and facilitate discussions on how regions and cities can benefit from AI, for example, through regional AI strategies. Representatives of DG CNECT and regions with AI policies and/or strategies might be invited to take the floor.

New developments related to digital and health

Date: Q3

Link with the Health WG

In 2022, the ICT and the Health WG co-organised a meeting on the question of health data. In the current European agenda, a legislative process is engaged on the European Health Data Space and is expected to close during the Belgian presidency.

The ICT and Health Working Group will use this finalised regulation and context to explore new digital and health developments and possible relevant topics for regional and local authorities.

Digital Transformation and Sustainability

Date: Q4

Link with the Smart Cities WG

The Digital transition is often addressed in the green transition. This ICT WG meeting will focus on the contribution of digital tools and technologies to our common sustainability ambitions. Still, it will also take a closer look at initiatives and projects that aim at greening the ICT sector (reducing the ecological footprint of data centres, for instance).

Links will be made with relevant initiatives and projects, especially with the Smart Cities Working Group. A meeting will be organised to share information on topical EU initiatives and projects linked to developing digital tools for smart cities.

Further discussion will be engaged to define the objective of such a meeting better, which could lead to different sessions' organisation.