

ICT CLUSTER

ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2026

CLUSTER DESCRIPTION AND KEY PRIORITIES

The main objective of the [ICT Working 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 Working Group 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.

The ICT Working Group will closely follow key digital policy dossiers and funding streams in 2026, with particular attention to priorities such as **advancing trustworthy and human-centred AI, strengthening Europe's Quantum capacities, supporting data-driven innovation within the public sector and the impact of digitalisation in key areas such as manufacturing and healthcare**. This monitoring will extend across **Horizon Europe Cluster 4, the Digital Europe Programme** and other emerging instruments, tracking updates to work programmes, proposed regulations and upcoming calls that shape Europe's technological competitiveness. Through continuous intelligence-gathering, engagement with EU institutions and structured exchanges within the network, the Working Group will equip regions with timely insights to position themselves strategically and mobilise opportunities linked to Europe's evolving digital priorities. Finally, particular attention will be given to ICT-related topic embedded or contributing to large-scale transversal topics in EU-level policy such as resilience, competitiveness and strategic autonomy.

Additionally, the ERRIN projects [Go Li.EU](#) and [RESIST](#) support the members in their digital policies for digital transformation and climate adaptation. Both projects will provide opportunities for ERRIN members to get involved and learn from the projects results and activities. ERRIN's engagement with the [Preparatory Action 'Innovation for place-based transformation'](#) also allows members to benefit from the experimental outcomes in place-based innovation that may arise from the Experimentation Journeys and Capacity Building activities of the project.

More details about the Working Group and the projects can be found at the end of this file.

CLUSTER CALENDAR

Date	Topic	Responsible
23 April	AI and Public Administration	ICT
23 September	Digitalisation in industry: The future of Manufacturing in the Regions	ICT and Low Carbon Clusters
22 October	Upcoming Quantum Act and what it means for the Regions	ICT
4 November	AI in Healthcare	ICT and Health Clusters

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Regular meetings with EU Institutions on key digital-related topics for shaping the future of digital policies

Date and timeslot: Throughout 2026

ICT WG

Responsible co-leaders: All co-leaders – depending on the institutional contact

In-person (for the Working Group Leaders)

In 2026, the ICT Working Group will organise dedicated discussions with key institutional contacts in the field of digital policies. Those meetings will be organised for the Working Group leaders, but each ERRIN member is welcome to provide information, questions or inputs to feed the discussion and put forward some key challenges or opportunities they face in the digital sector. Other Working Groups leaders may be invited to join, depending on topics.

Key topics of interests to monitor for the 1st semester of 2026:

- Cloud and AI Development Act
- Review of the Chips Act
- Cybersecurity Act
- Digital Omnibus Package

Digitalisation in industry: The future of Manufacturing in the Regions

23 September

ICT WG, supported by Low Carbon Cluster

Responsible co-leader: Joni Rauhansalo

Hybrid

Digitalisation is reshaping the future of European industry and plays a crucial role in strengthening the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of regional manufacturing ecosystems. As global competition intensifies and supply chains become more complex, digital technologies such as automation, AI, data-driven production and smart manufacturing are no longer optional but essential for Europe's industrial base.

Digital leadership is one of the four policy windows planned for the Competitiveness Fund of the next MFF and digitalisation in industry should be one of its key cornerstones. For regions, digitalisation offers significant opportunities to modernise traditional industries, support SMEs, increase productivity and accelerate the green transition in line with EU climate and industrial policy objectives.

This session will explore the current EU policy landscape on industrial digitalisation, including key legislative initiatives and financial instruments. In addition, a central objective of the meeting is to showcase best practices from the regions by sharing concrete examples of successful digitalisation projects, strategies and partnerships. This way, ERRIN members can have insights from other regions and find suitable practices for their own ecosystems. In this regard, alignment will be sought between ERRIN and other key presences within the broader EU landscape of digital manufacturing. This meeting will also serve as the platform to align ERRIN's ongoing work regarding the industrial ECF priorities and

investment needs, our ongoing work on the Industrial Acceleration Act and our existing alignment with ESRA and the regional semiconductor industry more broadly.

The Quantum Act and what it means for the Regions

22 October

ICT WG

Responsible co-leader: Leila Kylliäinen

Hybrid

Quantum technologies are moving rapidly from fundamental research into early-stage deployment, with significant implications for Europe's technological sovereignty, industrial competitiveness and digital infrastructure. The forthcoming EU Quantum Act is expected to provide a strategic framework to scale up quantum research, strengthen industrial uptake and coordinate investments across the quantum value chain, including computing, communication, sensing and enabling technologies. For regions and cities, quantum represents both a long-term opportunity and an immediate policy challenge, requiring early positioning within a fast-evolving and highly specialised field.

From the perspective of the ICT Working Group, the regional dimension of the Quantum Act is particularly critical. Regions host key research organisations, testbeds, start-ups and industrial users that will underpin Europe's quantum ecosystem. At the same time, successful regional engagement will depend on access to skills, digital infrastructure and complementary technologies such as high-performance computing, advanced semiconductors, and secure digital networks. Ensuring that quantum strategies are aligned with regional innovation ecosystems, smart specialisation priorities and digital transition agendas will be essential to avoid fragmentation and maximise impact.

This session aims to support ICT WG members in understanding and engaging with the Quantum Act by:

- exploring the objectives and policy direction of the EU Quantum Act and their relevance for regions and cities,
- showcasing regional initiatives, infrastructures, and innovation ecosystems active in quantum and related ICT domains,
- identifying funding, collaboration, and capacity-building opportunities that enable regions to participate effectively in Europe's emerging quantum landscape.

AI in Healthcare

4 November

ICT WG & Health WG

Responsible co-leaders: Louise Årebäck, Romain Wascot

Hybrid meeting

The digital transformation of health and care services is of central interest to a significant portion of ERRIN members. In particular, the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is accelerating at a faster pace than ever, expanding into the health and care sector with initiatives such as telehealth and precision medicine. The advancements in AI technology present unprecedented opportunities to revolutionise healthcare, making it more effective, accessible and economically sustainable.

AI can facilitate the efficient allocation of healthcare resources. Predictive modelling can forecast patient admissions and optimise the use of hospital beds, staff and equipment. AI also has the potential to tackle some of the most pressing challenges in healthcare, such as rising costs, inefficiencies, and the demand for higher-quality care. However, the integration of AI into the health and care sector is not without challenges. Advancing AI in the health sector requires several critical components, such as trust building and acceptance of AI as well as its deployment in clinical practice. Access to high-quality health data, measures to foster AI innovation and ensuring that AI systems used in medicine are both safe and trustworthy are essential to successfully unlock the potential of AI in health.

Given the intertwined nature of health and ICT, this session is designed to foster the exchange of best practices between the health and ICT working group members. The session will aim to:

- showcase innovative practices from regions and cities that can serve as inspiration for others,
- explore the policy landscape surrounding digital health and the integration of AI,
- provide insights into digital funding opportunities for cities and regions within this context.

PAST ACTIVITIES

AI and Public Administration

23 April

ICT WG

Responsible co-leaders: Wim De Kinderen, Romain Wascot

Hybrid

Artificial Intelligence is fundamentally disrupting all workflows, including the public sector. This session will look at consequences, both in terms of potential added value as well as identifying possible security threats and pitfalls, of the introduction and use of AI as for public administrations. The session will cover modifications regarding internal processes as well as changes in service provision towards external partners, our citizens in the first place.

Specifically highlighting the latest developments within the regulatory framework on the EU level, and touching on topics such as trust and transparency, (cyber)security, digital infrastructure and the skills gap, this session will be facilitating the sharing of best practises and lessons learnt from the ERRIN membership base. Another key focus of the session will be a critical reflection on the pre-existing efforts in public sector and regional digitalisation, specifically the Living-in.EU movement, and its future in the current EU digital policy and funding environment.

Any further EU funding opportunities which are open at the time of the organisation of the session will be highlighted and can form the basis for follow up action.

This event will be complemented with two events under the Low Carbon Cluster on the uptake and application of Artificial Intelligence and other key digital services by regional and municipal stakeholders. Namely an event organised by the Transport Working Group on the deployment of AI in the transport sector and the Smart Cities Working Group on AI and digital tools for the implementation of municipal policies in sectoral areas, taking stock of the various European regulations that City practitioners must navigate.

OTHER ISSUES/TOPICS TO BE MONITORED:

- **ICT WG will coordinate with the other ERRIN clusters that are organising events related to AI from a sectorial perspective.** This will include the Low Carbon Cluster meetings on AI in Transport and Smart Cities WG on Digital Services in Cities as well as Culture and Creativity Cluster on CCI and AI: Risks, Opportunities, Skills needs and Resilience.
- **Chips Alliance:** The topic of semi-conductors and chips has been put forward as relevant by several ERRIN members, active in different regional initiatives at EU level. In 2026, the ICT Working Group will explore opportunity to collaborate with dedicated network active in the field (notably ESRA, the ‘European Semiconductor Regions Alliance’) to better understand how ERRIN members could be informed and supported for future development. This topic is strongly linked to the workstream on competitiveness put forward in ERRIN Strategic Cluster.
- **CEPS Apply AI Task Force on AI in Public Administration:** ERRIN’s ICT WG will be participating within the **CEPS Apply AI Task Force**, specifically covering track 3 on **AI in Public Administration**. The Task Force runs from June 2026 to February 2027, structured around nine sector-specific working sessions running June through December, followed by a drafting and member review phase, and a Final Report launch in February 2027.
- **Skills and question of retaining talents in ICT-related topics**

OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTPUTS FROM ERRIN PROJECTS

[Go Li.EU](#)

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 in order 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 is also supporting the work of the ‘Monitoring and Measuring Working group’, aiming at developing a solid and unique framework for measuring and monitoring sustainable digital transformation processes.

In 2026, the Living-in.EU project is entering its final year of operation and hence focus will be heavily oriented towards the long-term sustainability plan of the movement and assets that arose during the project’s activity.

RESIST

The [RESIST](#) project supports twelve EU regions in building resilience to climate change by testing tailored adaptation solutions based on local needs, including innovative digital tools. Moreover, each of the twelve regions involved in the RESIST project is developing a Graphical Digital Twin. Within the RESIT project, Graphical Digital Twins will be used to simulate climate scenarios to develop targeted, effective, and financially sound climate adaptation strategies, optimise the solutions, raise awareness and foster engagement.

Preparatory Action: Innovation for Place-based Transformation

The EU Preparatory Action 'Innovation for place-based transformation' aims to empower territories to support policy practitioners through awareness raising, building capacities, and engaging in policy experimentation activities. This initiative is dedicated to advancing innovation and policy development across EU regions and beyond. The action will take place from 2024 to 2026, with a focus on addressing complex local and global challenges through transformative innovation approaches. The action will involve a combination of capacity building, experimentation journeys, and policy discussions to create a sustainable innovation loop.

ERRIN, as part of a broader consortium, is taking a leading role the execution of the project and the ERRIN ICT Working Group in particular is heavily engaged in supporting the Capacity Building and Experimentation Journey streams tied to 'Digital Citizen Services and healthcare'.

MORE INFORMATION: LEADERS AND PROJECTS

LEADERS

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PROJECTS

[Go Li.EU](#), [RESIST](#), [Preparatory Action: Innovation for Place-based Transformation](#)

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ICT CLUSTER 2026 TIMELINE



