

YEAR IN REVIEW

2019

EUROPEAN REGIONS RESEARCH & INNOVATION NETWORK

Your Brussels-based network supporting regional and local stakeholders to develop their innovation ecosystems and to enhance research and innovation capacities.

[Find out more](#)



ERRIN European Regions
Research and Innovation Network



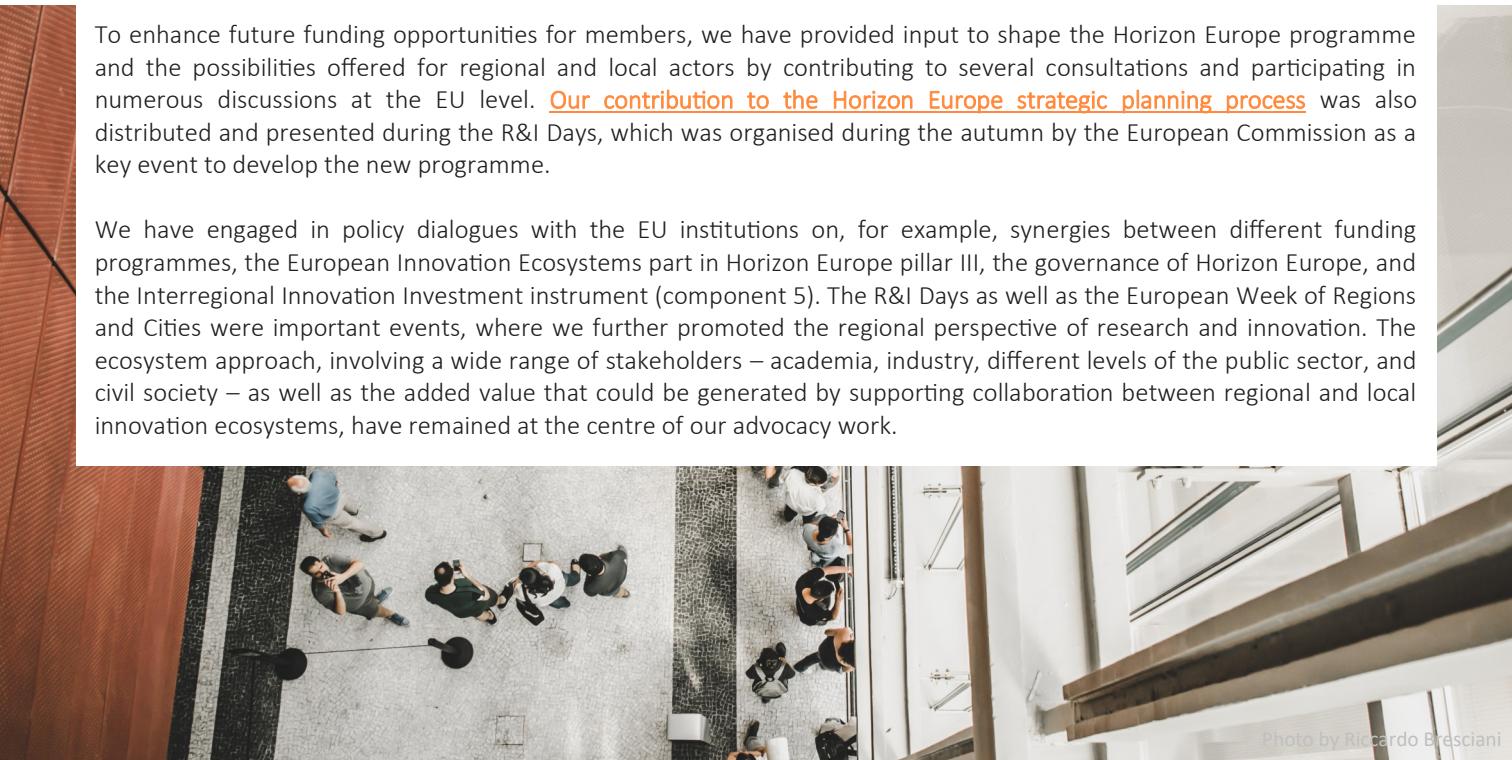
INTRODUCTION

Building on the internal strategy work carried out last year, we have this year concentrated on implementing our new and updated processes and services, all with the objective to deliver even better support to members. One such process is our [project facilitation](#) strategy, where our aim has been to further increase project opportunities for members. We have introduced new tools and revamped our existing ones such as the [partner search tool](#) and the [noticeboard](#). Our website with its new and improved interface is also part of this development, as it is more informative and offers the possibility for members to tailor the information they receive.

Our Working Groups have continued to work according to our clusters which reflect the Horizon Europe programme. We have already seen an increased cross-sectoral awareness and collaboration between the Working Groups. During the year our Working Groups have been key to connect members and to create partnerships, a couple of Working Groups have organised brokerage and project development events and we have followed the development of the S3 Partnerships on *Safe and Sustainable Mobility*, *Hydrogen Valleys*, and *Water Smart Territories*. Our Working Groups have organised over 40 different activities on topics ranging from the application of artificial intelligence in health care and positive energy districts to marine litter and the experience economy. Our members have also represented ERRIN across Europe, sharing their experiences and expertise. It is through this bottom-up approach that we can successfully position regional interests in the European research and innovation landscape.

To enhance future funding opportunities for members, we have provided input to shape the Horizon Europe programme and the possibilities offered for regional and local actors by contributing to several consultations and participating in numerous discussions at the EU level. [Our contribution to the Horizon Europe strategic planning process](#) was also distributed and presented during the R&I Days, which was organised during the autumn by the European Commission as a key event to develop the new programme.

We have engaged in policy dialogues with the EU institutions on, for example, synergies between different funding programmes, the European Innovation Ecosystems part in Horizon Europe pillar III, the governance of Horizon Europe, and the Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (component 5). The R&I Days as well as the European Week of Regions and Cities were important events, where we further promoted the regional perspective of research and innovation. The ecosystem approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders – academia, industry, different levels of the public sector, and civil society – as well as the added value that could be generated by supporting collaboration between regional and local innovation ecosystems, have remained at the centre of our advocacy work.





ERRIN'S MISSIONS

BRINGING A PLACE-BASED PERSPECTIVE

ERRIN brings a bottom-up place-based perspective to European research and innovation policy and funding programmes. Through our member-driven Working Groups ERRIN strengthens EU policy development via the promotion of a regional innovation ecosystems approach and Smart Specialisation.

MAKING CONNECTIONS AND FACILITATING EU ENGAGEMENT

ERRIN builds close informal relationships between member regions, EU institutions, and other partners and works as a bridge between them. We facilitate access to people, knowledge, and ideas and encourage members to pool resources to more effectively respond to these opportunities.

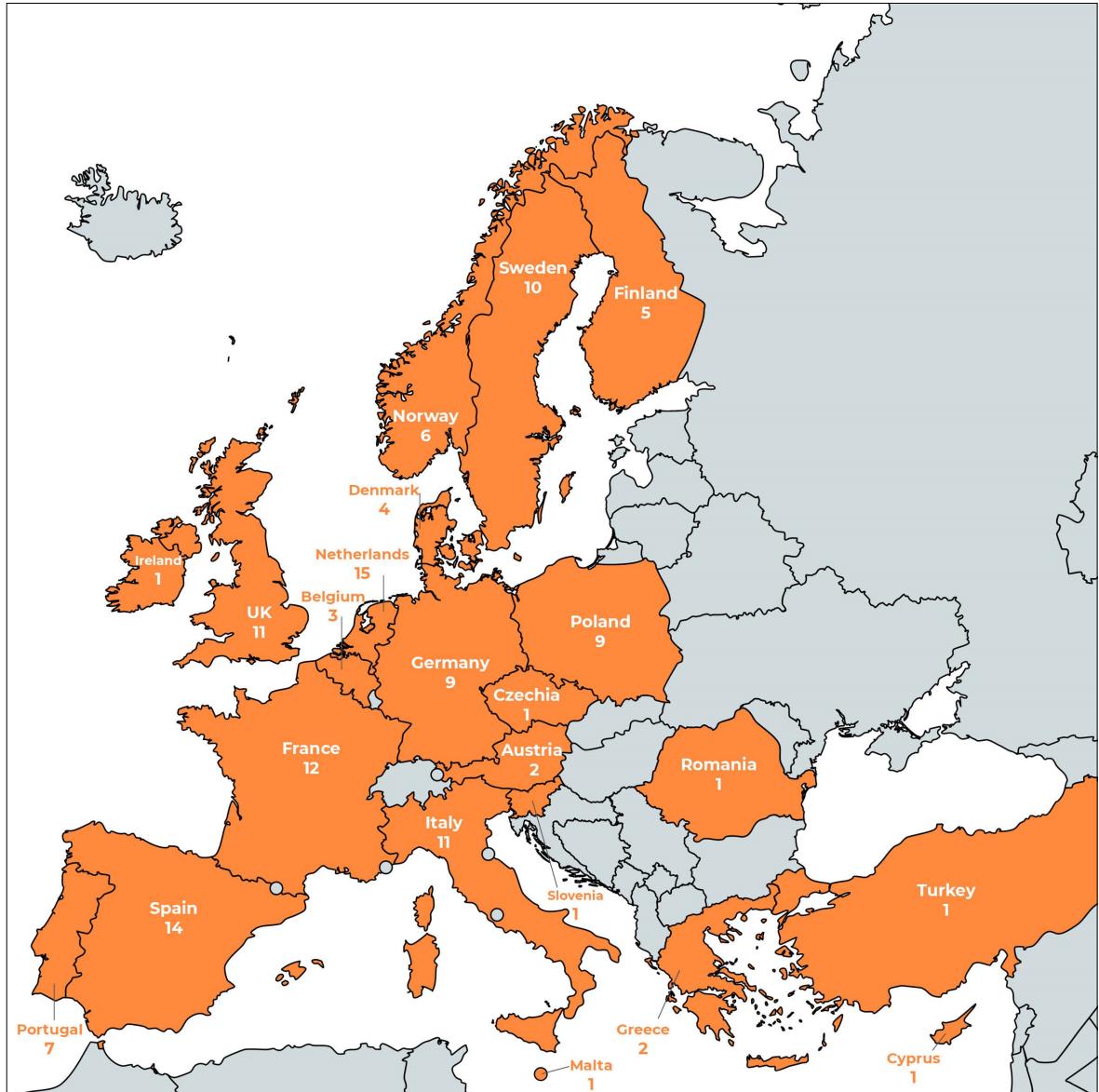
INCREASING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS

ERRIN supports regional collaboration and project development by providing networking opportunities for members to share project ideas, best practices, and personal contacts. We develop and participate in projects that further members' and the wider network's interests.

POSITIONING REGIONAL INTERESTS IN THE R&I LANDSCAPE

ERRIN supports EU policy development through the promotion of regional experience and expertise. We create platforms and participate in events to share members' knowledge, further ERRIN's reputation, and enhance the understanding of regional perspectives. This activity is essential to successful delivery of the other ERRIN missions.

MEMBERS



STRATEGIC WORKSTREAMS

In 2019, ERRIN's work has been guided by four strategic workstreams established by the Management Board:

Strengthening and connecting regional innovation ecosystems

Reinforcing and connecting regional innovation ecosystems has been one of our key messages regarding Horizon Europe and its strategic planning process as well as a connecting thread running through many of our activities, for example related to Digital Innovation Hubs.

The future of Smart Specialisation, S3 Platforms and S3 Partnerships

Smart Specialisation, lessons learned and the new legal requirements have been on our overall agenda for 2019, and especially monitored by our S3 Working Group. Many ERRIN members have established new S3 Partnerships and have advocated for more structured support to implement them. In dialogue with DG REGIO we have also closely followed the developments of the Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (component 5).

Challenge-driven innovation

Challenge-driven innovation and new models of co-creation are key elements for place-based innovation. Via the inDemand project, ERRIN has been part of developing a new co-creation model for shaping and procuring innovative solutions, products and services. ERRIN has also been following and provided input on the mission-oriented policy approach in Horizon Europe.

Procurement of innovation

Transforming public procurement processes to be more innovative remains an important challenge for public authorities to open up markets for innovations. Procurement has a huge potential but is, at the same time, a complex and challenging area to tackle. In addition to the activities carried out in the inDemand project, the Innovation & Investment Working Group has been looking into the current innovation procurement models.



POLICY

ENHANCING FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

From a policy perspective, our focus has been on Horizon Europe and to actively shape the strategic planning process. Jointly with our members, including via a dedicated taskforce in our Policy Working Group, we have prepared input to the public consultations on the Horizon Europe programme. [Our contribution to the Horizon Europe strategic planning process](#) was also distributed and presented during the R&I Days, which can be considered a key moment in the development of the new programme.

We have engaged in policy dialogues with the EU institutions on several different topics, for example we discussed synergies between different funding programmes by organising an event with the Romanian and Finnish Council presidencies as well as representatives from permanent representations. We also had several debates on exploring synergies between S3 Partnerships and the European Partnerships in Horizon Europe.

We have advocated for further support for place-based innovation ecosystems throughout Horizon Europe, for example, through the new European Innovation Ecosystems part in pillar III. A workshop was organised in collaboration with the European Commission, EURADA, and Start-up Europe Regions Network, where regional stakeholders were invited to provide their input and suggestions for specific actions that could be carried out as part of the European Innovation Ecosystems.

In short, ERRIN advocates for a place-based perspective built on excellence and collaboration between a range of stakeholders as this is needed to develop sustainable and impactful innovations with a wide public acceptance. We bring a bottom-up and place-based perspective to European research and innovation policy and programmes. Our strength lies in our members and our ability to bring practical examples based on regional and local expertise and experiences. You can read more about our policy work [here](#).



PROJECTS

FACILITATING PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Increasing project opportunities for members in the field of research and innovation is one of ERRIN's missions. In addition, the ERRIN secretariat is involved in projects that are aligned with our missions and that further the aims and interests of the network. For current projects this means to ensure an added value for members and to increase synergies between them and the Working Groups. For future projects, it translates into aligning the projects with our priorities, ensuring the outcomes are relevant for and bring benefits to members, and that the projects contribute to increasing our visibility towards the EU institutions.

The renewed [project process](#) reflects core values such as transparency, consistency, and equity, while ensuring the best opportunities for our members. It sets forth a series of tools, which can be either restricted to members or used in order to facilitate partnerships with third parties. We have both introduced new tools and revamped existing ones to further enhance the project development support. The tools used – partner searches, noticeboard, brokerage events and targeted email updates – have already proven very useful. We will also continue building an extensive database of experts working across all areas of research and innovation.

Through the Working Groups, we provide targeted information on future EU funding programmes and related calls for proposals, while also providing a space for members to build consortia to apply for these calls. This involvement can range from formal brokerage events and project development sessions to ad-hoc opportunities for informal pairings of common interests.

WG CLUSTERS

The Working Groups form the core of ERRIN's work. All Working Groups are led by three to five members. This means that the Working Group leaders have an instrumental role in defining thematic priorities as well as steering our work in these areas. Building on the existing activities, the clusters coordinate activities in the different thematic areas and ensure synergies between the Working Groups and our work in European collaborative projects. The Working Group clusters correspond to the thematic clusters in Horizon Europe. Working in this way has given us opportunities to make concrete recommendations during the planning processes of the new programme. With this approach we also aim to maximise future funding opportunities by being ready to address new and emerging themes.

WORKING GROUPS

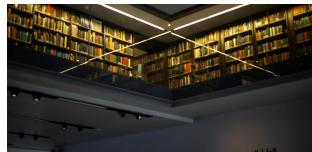
STRATEGIC AND TRANSVERSAL



POLICY



S3



OPENING SCIENCE



INNOVATION & INVESTMENT

NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD



BIOECONOMY



BLUE GROWTH



SMART CITIES



TRANSPORT

CROSS-CUTTING



ICT



ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE



TOURISM & CULTURAL HERITAGE



DESIGN & CREATIVITY



HEALTH

CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

HEALTH

STRATEGIC AND TRANSVERSAL



POLICY

Closely followed the development of Horizon Europe to monitor the policy changes and opportunities in the next Multiannual Financial Framework and coordinated the work to develop ERRIN's response to the Horizon Europe strategic planning process consultation. The Working Group also investigated synergies with other programmes, organised a dialogue with the Council presidencies, and tackled elements of Horizon Europe such as the EIC extended pilot and European Partnerships.



OPENING SCIENCE

The Working Group has been going through a shift in terms of focus towards working on the place-based university, education, and skills. The launch of the European Universities Initiative has been of great interest to the group and during the year a meeting was organised to further explore the regional development dimension of the initiative where one successful alliance from the first call presented their ideas and plans. The European Universities Initiative will remain a priority in 2020.



INNOVATION & INVESTMENT

Organised meetings to explore topics such as innovation procurement, research infrastructures, and future plans related to innovation infrastructures. The Working Group also organised a meeting on supporting innovation within SMEs, focusing on the Single Market Programme and relevant initiatives for SMEs. Further opportunities related to the Commission's Innovation Radar and the potential interest among ERRIN members were also assessed.



S3

Organised a discussion on and advocated for keeping the Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (component 5). The Working Group also focused on the lessons learnt and new requirements for Smart Specialisation as well as on the role of universities and cities in Smart Specialisation in collaboration with among others the Joint Research Centre.



ESPON

After running for four years, the ESPON Transnational Outreach Programme came to an end this year. Together with INOVA+, ERRIN's role in the programme was to provide strategic guidance to the ESPON European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation on the implementation of innovative and targeted outreach activities at the transnational, national, and regional level. Through the work in the ESPON programme, ERRIN has developed its expertise in fostering better integration of research in policymaking. Building on our capacity to bring a place-based perspective to EU policies and programmes, ERRIN also contributed by reaching out to new stakeholders and reinforced the ecosystem thinking of spatial planners. More information [here](#).

NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD



BIOECONOMY

The focus this year was on circular bioeconomy and waste management, with meetings addressing sustainable business models in the circular bioeconomy, exploiting the potential of urban biowaste in line with the EU Bioeconomy Strategy action plan, and opportunities for waste from the agri-food sector, the latter one organised together with the Energy & Climate Change Working Group. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy together with the Green Deal will continue to set the priorities for 2020.



MIREU PROJECT

The MIREU project is establishing a network of mining and metallurgy regions across Europe. The project is mapping synergies between these regions by looking at raw materials value chains, market conditions, economic benefits, and funding. In 2019, MIREU closely collaborated with the Interreg project REMIX and the OECD to address some of the important topics relevant to today's mining and metallurgy regions in Europe. In addition, the project is working on establishing operational synergies between R&I investments (public and private) and the European Structural and Investment Funds. After completing a series of three Social License to Operate (SLO) workshops in June 2019, the project is now using the input from the workshops to develop EU level SLO Guidelines and an accompanying toolkit. More information [here](#).



BLUE GROWTH

The Working Group organised a stakeholder workshop during European Maritime Day in Lisbon, focusing on how investments in blue growth have a positive cross-sectorial impact on the entire regional innovation ecosystem. During the autumn the Working Group organised a meeting on innovative solutions to prevent marine litter with the goal to share best practices and better understand the European policy framework. The research and innovation aspects of the European blue economy will remain the main priority of the group and it will closely follow the new Commission's blue initiatives as well as opportunities in Horizon Europe in the coming year.



PILOTS4U PROJECT

The aim of the Pilots4U project was to tackle bioeconomy innovation challenges in Europe and to provide solutions that will support the development of innovations into products. The project set up a database of open access pilot and multipurpose demonstration infrastructures for the European bioeconomy containing 451 entries from 82 organisations from 20 countries. The project also developed three business cases for further investment in pilot/demo infrastructure and associated expertise, as well as policy recommendations with the aim to strengthen the European landscape of open access infrastructures. The project finished in August 2019, but the Pilots4U Network and Database will continue with a new governance structure and financial model. More information [here](#).

LOW CARBON ECONOMY



SMART CITIES

Focused on the new Smart Cities Lighthouse projects, the SET-Plan, the positive energy districts action, and facilitated consortia building for a couple of Horizon 2020 calls. Towards the end of the year the mission on climate-neutral and smart cities was defined as a priority action for the group and it will continue to be so going into 2020. First views were collected from the members on the mission area and shared with the Mission Board.



UNALAB PROJECT

The UNaLab project is contributing to the development of smarter, more inclusive, more resilient, and more sustainable urban communities through the implementation of nature-based solutions (NBS), which are co-created with and for local stakeholders and citizens. The three front-runner cities - Eindhoven, Tampere, and Genova – have established Urban Living Lab demonstration areas. The implementation of the different NBS was initiated in 2019 and will continue in 2020, when the performance monitoring of the solutions also starts. The co-creation tools and methods have been gathered in a co-creation toolkit, which was launched in December. Through a series of workshops and on-site assessments, the cities have - in 2019 - moved from establishing the status quo and their ambition for NBS and climate change adaptation, to creating a vision for 2050 and finally creating a roadmap with goals and potential projects to realise the vision. More information [here](#).



TRANSPORT

Followed the topic of integration of new emerging mobility services in public transport, which was the focus of a session organised during the European Week of Regions and Cities. The Working Group also organised a meeting on new innovative services related to drones with a specific focus on the role of regions and cities in the development and regulation of such services. Together with Polis, the Working Group organised a meeting on financing the future of mobility to identify funding opportunities for clean, sustainable, and innovative transport projects. The Working Group also facilitated a meeting on the transport calls in Horizon 2020 and will continue to closely monitor opportunities for transport in Horizon Europe during 2020.



ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Focused on opportunities for regions in S3 Partnerships by organising information sessions on batteries to explore the role of regional actors in energy storage and battery technologies, and on hydrogen regarding the opportunity to join the newly formed partnership. The Working Group organised a brokerage event bringing members together around a selection of Horizon 2020 calls. As part of the European Sustainable Energy Week, the group organised a workshop jointly with the Transport and Smart Cities Working Groups showcasing a place-based approach demonstrating the role of regions in achieving the EU decarbonisation targets.

HEALTH



HEALTH

Organised thematic meetings focusing on how to develop and implement personalised medicine in regions and on projects and applications funded by the European Commission in the health sector on Artificial Intelligence and its future evolution. The Working Group also tackled the challenge of the skills and training needed to fully embrace new technologies in the health sector. A recurring element in the meetings was the invitation for members to at the end of each meeting pitch their profiles and/or project ideas, this is something that will continue in 2020.



INDEMAND PROJECT

The inDemand project demonstrates how challenge-driven innovation can support the emergence of regional innovation ecosystems and explores the possible complementarities between Horizon 2020 funds and other funding sources. This year, 10 members of the inDemand community kicked off the implementation of the demand-driven innovation model, which supports the identification of digital health solutions co-created closely between healthcare professionals and entrepreneurs. During a face-to-face meeting, the so-called challengers, solvers, and supporters exchanged on the variety of implementation pathways which can be adopted. In 2020 a final event is planned at the European Committee of the Regions which will showcase the implementation of the model in the different regions, discuss co-creation, innovation procurement, and partnerships. More information [here](#).



WE4AHA PROJECT

WE4AHA is a Horizon 2020 Coordination and Support Action in the service of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP on AHA) where numerous ERRIN regions are Reference Sites. The project is a tool to provide assistance to and facilitate the exchange of practitioners on the ground innovating their health and care systems. Various funded tools are at the regions' disposal to exchange and scale-up innovative practices cross-border, such as thematic workshops and twinnings. ERRIN has been pursuing common actions with the Active and Assisted Living Programme (AAL) and the More Years Better Lives Joint Programming Initiative in this regard to create a common vision and post-2020 agenda in order to transform health and care systems. More information [here](#).



DIGITAL HEALTH EUROPE PROJECT

The DigitalHealthEurope (DHE) project promotes the implementation of the European Commission's communication on the digital transformation of health and care and its three priorities: securing access to healthcare data, better data for secondary use, empowering citizens. The project is creating online stakeholder communities around these three priorities where ERRIN regions can take an active role. These communities give input to the recommendations that the project will deliver to the European Commission. DHE also provides interested stakeholders with funded twinning opportunities to transfer knowledge and/or concrete digital health technologies between organisations and/or regions that ERRIN members can apply for. More information [here](#).

CULTURE AND CREATIVITY



DESIGN & CREATIVITY

Focused on emerging creative industries as well as support measures for cultural and creative industries (CCI). In addition, the Working Group looked into the new partnership on culture and cultural heritage in the Urban Agenda. Throughout the year emphasis was put on the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) on CCI funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, with a specific focus on the opportunities for regions. The 8th edition of the Working Group's flagship event – EU Design Days – was organised during the autumn focusing on sustainability and circular economy. The event provided a platform for different actors meet to discuss the solutions for sustainable future: representatives from local/regional authorities and from the European institutions, but also researchers and designers from private enterprises.



TOURISM & CULTURAL HERITAGE

Organised a partner event during the European Green Week on knowledge-building for innovative and sustainable tourism in regions. Building on the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the Working Group has expressed an interest to enlarge its scope to cultural heritage-related issues in addition to continuing the activities in the tourism sector. To this end, the Working Group organised an informative session on the Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills in cultural heritage, picking up on one of the actions of the New Skills Agenda for the EU.

CROSS-CUTTING



ICT

Seeing the cross-cutting nature of ICT, the Working Group has focused its efforts on digital skills and the application of ICT tools across other sectors by organising meetings on artificial intelligence in the health sector and on digital and gamified learning. The Working Group followed the development of the Digital Europe programme and analysed its impact on regions and the role of regions in Digital Innovation Hubs. In 2020, the group will continue to closely follow issues such as cybersecurity, digital skills, green ICT, and the digital economy.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT OUR WORKING GROUPS?

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

ERRIN'S YEAR IN NUMBERS



COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

WEBSITE

25,450

Page views on the new website in its first full month

TWITTER

437

New followers on Twitter

LINKEDIN

363

New followers on LinkedIn

NEWSLETTER

25

Newsletters sent

WORKING GROUPS

13



WORKING GROUP LEADERS

48



ERRIN MEETINGS

58



PARTNER SEARCHES

59



**WANT TO HEAR FROM US
MORE OFTEN?**

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

@ERRINNetwork

Data collected from January - December 2019

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2019, our activities were guided by four strategic streams. During 2020 the work around those strategic workstreams will continue. **Horizon Europe** will remain as a key priority as well as **promoting ecosystem thinking** throughout the programme and its pillars. Great emphasis will be put on ecosystem thinking which envisages academia, industry, public authorities, and citizens collaborating in order to enhance regional and local research and innovation capacities and to foster sustainable and inclusive growth in all regions.

In addition to Horizon Europe, other programmes that support market uptake and wide implementation of research and innovation at the regional and local level will be closely followed with the aim to maximise funding opportunities for ERRIN members in these programmes post-2020. Understanding the wider **research and innovation funding landscape** is essential to accelerate the development and uptake of innovations at the local and regional level.

We will also draw from the priorities set by the new European Commission that took office at the end of 2019. The agenda of President Ursula von der Leyen strives strongly towards a green transition and emphasises digitalisation. The **Green Deal** sets out to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 and will serve as the new European growth strategy – which will impact research and innovation policy and funding. The Green Deal will also look to bring together existing policies, initiatives, and funding programmes dedicated to addressing sustainability and climate change thus creating further policy coherence. In addition, it includes a variety of new proposals, such as the climate pact, that could be an interesting opportunity for boosting place-based innovation. Even though the research and innovation dimension of the proposal is fairly limited, the Green Deal has been identified as a major priority for several ERRIN Working Groups.

A Europe fit for the digital age is another interesting priority that fits well with ERRIN's ambitions. Working on better understanding the opportunities coming from digitalisation, ERRIN will put a strong focus on digital skills, artificial intelligence, and data protection, as well as using digital technology to foster for example health, education, and environmental solutions.

Our thirteen **Working Groups** will implement a variety of activities that ensure the creation of long-lasting and strategic partnerships and a multitude of opportunities for the wider membership. The ERRIN secretariat will continue to actively listen to members' needs and develop a strategy for widening its membership. In line with the new portfolio of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, education will also be more directly integrated in the Working Group structure.

During 2019 work has been carried out to further strengthen ERRIN's involvement in projects, aligning project work with our missions and ensuring that processes are in place to guarantee that projects further the network's objectives. This **strategic project work** will continue in 2020. New projects will start in the fields of green growth and cultural tourism, reflecting the importance of the green transition and our enhanced work in the field of culture and creativity.

INTERESTED IN OUR ACTIVITIES?

TO FIND OUT MORE, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AND GET IN TOUCH WITH US.

WWW.ERRIN.EU



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