

ERRIN reflection

Mission orientation within Research and Innovation Policy and FP9

Call for feedback on missions

Introduction

The Mission oriented policy, especially when looking at transformative missions, will go beyond Research and Innovation policy remit. Linking Missions with Sustainable Development Goals tie the Missions with main challenges of our society and position Europe in the global context. At the same time, it is important that the Missions are adequately embedded in the priorities of the European Union (e.g. via Europe 2030, EC president's priorities, etc...). ERRIN considers the Mission approach as an opportunity to overcome policy fragmentation, break down silos and avoid short-term thinking. Missions could serve as a uniting force between various policy areas and funding programmes.

Mission design - mixing top down and bottom up

ERRIN is in favour of the strong alignment of missions to key national and regional priorities, especially smart specialisation strategies, to avoid duplication of effort, ensure complementarity as well as impact of research and innovation funding at all levels.

We agree that Mission objectives must be realistic and measurable. ERRIN emphasises that the missions should represent a framework that ensures alignment between different policy areas, such as Research & Innovation and Industrial policy, at the EU level. At regional level significant progress towards this direction has already been made thanks to the smart specialisation strategies.

ERRIN also agrees that the suggested models of Accelerator and Transformative missions are an innovative way of framing the challenges that need to be overcome. Any eventual missions should be considered a balanced mix of the proposed models:

- **Accelerator missions** – addressing a challenge which is potentially solvable and can therefore relatively easily be reduced to discrete goals with the fundamental nature of the mission being to accelerate change in a set direction;
- **Transformative missions** - where solutions are unknown and the problems are 'wicked' and escape simple definition. The fundamental nature of these missions is to transform an entire economic or socio-technical system and deals in large measure with cultural change.

We encourage that the European Commission considers carefully about the way in which mission objectives are set. We do not consent to the idea that missions would be entirely managed from a top-down perspective and suggest that mission objectives are at least partly crowd-sourced. The rationale for this stems from the necessity to ensure that missions, especially transformative ones, resonate with large cross-sections of European society (shared sense of urgency). In fact, this is also advocated by Marianna Mazzucato when she states that missions must be *"as open as possible and as bottom up as possible"*.

As ERRIN has highlighted in its recommendations to the FP9, the Mission Oriented Policy under the next framework programme should be flexible, allowing further bottom up solutions and support linking up regional innovation ecosystems from various parts of Europe. By changing the approach from prescriptive calls to mission orientation, should encourage involving new actors (also further representation of Social Sciences and Humanities) and open doors for a multitude of innovative solutions.

Public engagement

ERRIN supports the emphasis in the Mazzucato report on public engagement. Nevertheless, is crucial that the engagement is sought in a meaningful way. Cities and regions – and thus regional innovation ecosystems – are the right level to engage with the citizen. Citizens become the stakeholders in any such endeavour and therefore have an interest in playing an active role. When further elaborating on the mission-concept, ERRIN recommends that the term “citizens” should always be well-defined regarding the context (users, NGO’s etc.).

Missions should create the *“engagement of national and regional stakeholders”* ensuring proximity to the citizens and greater flexibility in creating ecosystems of different actors. Regional innovation ecosystems have a key role in bringing key stakeholders together (the quadruple helix), forming the basis for mission focused, globally orientated innovation networks. Missions should further encourage regional innovation ecosystems to come together and propose new “bottom-up” solutions.

ERRIN considers that local and regional governments are crucial in increasing citizen engagement. As a regional network, ERRIN sees enormous value in assigning local actors and regional governments as points of reference for missions. Excellent science is not implemented in a vacuum, it is implemented in cities - in places. Cities and regions have a long and rich experience in regularly engaging with local interest groups, businesses, community groups, the voluntary sector and individual citizens in varied formal and informal settings, such as town hall meetings, local consultative committees, neighbourhood-level public hearings and local consultation procedures, both online and face-to-face, to name just a few.

Simplified Governance

The governance of the Missions should be carefully considered - and be based on the objective of the mission (transformative vs. accelerator). ERRIN considers that certain components of a coordination instrument for the “Missions” already exist in the EU landscape, such as the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)¹ and Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI)².

ERRIN sees the EIPs and the JTIs as the extremes on the scale of potential governance models for the missions. EIPs could be a model for transformative missions as they are designed as

¹ Active and Healthy ageing, Agricultural sustainability and productivity, Smart Cities and Communities, Water and Raw Materials.

² Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI2), Clean Sky 2 (CS2), Fuel Cells and Hydrogen (FCH), Electronic Components and Systems for European Leadership (ECSEL), Bio-Based Industries (BBI).

platforms bringing together stakeholders within a specific topic area, and have a clear focus on societal challenges and cultural change. JTI focus more on aspects of technology acceleration, combining research and industry communities. ERRIN emphasises the need to learn from EIPs and JTIs, and whenever feasible, use existing instruments and structures.

One of the main objectives of the missions should be to eliminate silos. There is a need to create further coordination, coherence and synergy between the existing instruments (PPPs, FET flagships, etc.), structures and measures. Creating a coherent framework and simplifying the R&I landscape would ensure quicker and better results (accelerated innovation).

European leadership

The Mission approach should consider the Europe's competitive edge on the global stage. It is essential to identify poles of European excellence and their global competitiveness. This is to ensure that when we arrive at European solutions to global problems, they are adequately framed in the perspective of global leadership.

Global reach of the missions should be considered and allow access to the intellectual capacity of international R&I ecosystems. The European Commission should overcome administrative challenges to mainstream international participation in the framework programme and look to reform administrative issues that currently block their participation. Attracting top talents requires a global perspective, which includes not just technical or research skills, but also policy, regulatory and soft skills.

Impact vs. experimentation

Missions must allow a high degree of experimentation and might results in a failure. Any pilot, whether having a focus on technology acceleration or social impact, must be operationally focused to testing the characteristics of system effectiveness, suitability, and survivability. Moreover, Missions must ensure several competitive solutions are tested and applied to a given challenge (missions should be technologically neutral). Regions and cities provide an excellent platform for such experiments for example through public procurement of innovation.

About ERRIN

ERRIN ([European Regions Research and Innovation Network](#)) is a Brussels-based platform that gathers together more than 130 regional organisations in 24 European countries. ERRIN aims to strengthen the regional and local dimension in the EU Research and Innovation policy and programmes. ERRIN promotes knowledge exchange between its members, focusing on joint actions and strategic partnerships to strengthen regional research and innovation capacities and thereby foster sustainable and inclusive growth in regions.