

MESSAGES FOR HORIZON EUROPE MISSIONS WORK PROGRAMMES 2023 – 2024

4th May 2022

As the Horizon Europe Work Programmes for 2023-2024 are currently underway, ERRIN is pleased to share its messages and recommendations on the Horizon Europe Missions Work Programmes for the coming period.

ERRIN's Policy Working Group organised an internal coordination meeting to analyse the current Mission Work Programmes and to collect inputs and recommendation to the upcoming Work Programme 2023-2024. As most of the EU Missions will be largely implemented at local and regional level, this should also be taken into account in the future mission support allowing further engagement of regional actors.

Common messages

Before outlining messages related to each Mission specifically, we would like to present a number of common messages for all of the EU Missions.

Since the Missions address challenges of great importance to Europe, it is unsurprising that there are related calls in other clusters of Horizon Europe. Any links between these calls in the cluster work packages and the Missions work packages that share similar objectives should be made clear, as well as the best ways to reach a portfolio approach. As you will read in the mission-specific remarks that follow, there is a need to establish, define and facilitate synergies between different missions and between the mission work programmes and other clusters of Horizon Europe and European Partnerships. To name some examples, there is a clear connection between the Adaptation Mission and the Ocean and Waters Mission; there are links to be explored between the Ocean and Waters Mission and the Horizon Europe calls on offshore wind energy; and opportunities remain for synergies for example between the Cities Mission and the Driving Urban Transitions Partnership.

Throughout all five EU Missions, research and innovation activities require the development and strengthening of skills and competences, this cross-cutting issue should be included in all of the work programmes as well as translated into ERASMUS+ programme.

Whereas ERRIN is very pleased with the calls emphasising the quadruple helix approach and the strong collaboration between stakeholders, the Mission Work Programmes could also include some targeted calls to strengthen public sector innovation and the vital role of regional administrations in the implementation of the Missions. In this vein, stakeholder and citizen engagement remains an area that can always benefit from more support. Each EU Mission explicitly aims to engage stakeholders and citizens, whether its cancer patients and their families; citizen scientists collecting soil samples; citizens living in transforming cities or otherwise, more should be done to support regional and local authorities in engaging these stakeholders in new, innovative ways that they may not have tried before. Support from other actors in regional ecosystems, industry for example, could be encouraged by specific calls to provide such guidance and knowledge exchange to local authorities.

Cities Mission

More than mobility

The Cities Mission calls in the previous work programme had a strong focus on mobility. This is indeed one of the areas where greenhouse gas emissions are not reducing sufficiently, and more comprehensive solutions are needed. Nevertheless, other priority areas should also be tackled such as the energy transition (how to source and develop renewable energy in highly populated areas); circular (bio)economy; carbon capture; carbon-neutral manufacturing; 6G systems; spatial planning; the transformation of unused public spaces (e.g. industrial abandoned sites) and increased emphasis on the smart cities element of the Mission.

100 cities and counting

The Cities Mission has raised great interest among European cities as demonstrated by the 377 Expressions of Interest submitted. This significant number raises the question: how will all interested cities continue to be engaged in working towards their climate neutrality goals by 2030 when only 100 have been selected to be part of the Cities Mission? One potential solution for this could be new and/or enhanced national support mechanisms. A national coordination project should start shortly. However, could national and/or regional support mechanisms be further encouraged for example via dedicated call.

Quadruple helix approach

In the current work programme, the Adaptation Mission demonstration call (HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-04) is interesting because it has adopted a real partnership approach and requires engagement of all key local stakeholders i.e. quadruple helix approach. A similar approach could be proposed under other missions as well, for example targeting the Climate City Contracts.

Investment Plans

A call specifically targeting a requirement of Investment Plans would be welcomed by the cities. One of the key elements of the Climate City Contract is the Investment Plan – a plan that will provide the financial overview of each city's climate neutrality roadmap mirroring the more technical action plan. An investment plan is a new concept for cities and will require new skills as well as enhanced collaboration with finance stakeholders. A dedicated call would allow further focus on the investment plans as well as tailored support and training for the development and implementation of such plans.

Upscaling

Replication and up-scaling could also be targeted in a specific call. This call could, for example, look at replicability of solutions from past H2020 projects or UIA relevant solutions. Such a call would require dedicated funding to adapt the developed solutions to the new local and regional contexts and ensure financial means to truly implement the solutions that work.

Synergies

There is a clear need to establish and define synergies between the Missions but also further synergies with the EU Missions and European Partnerships, such as the Cities Mission and the Driving Urban

Transitions Partnership. These synergies could be ensured via common calls, but also through the portfolio approach by linking up projects funded by different programmes.

Co-creation

ERRIN welcomes the focus on co-creation and citizen engagement (e.g. HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-05). A similar call could be replicated in the future, or also integrated in other calls e.g. a call dedicated to Climate City Contract, which is based on strong quadruple helix collaboration.

Adaptation Mission

Quadruple helix approach

In the current work programme, the adaptation mission demonstration call (HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-04) is interesting because it requires a real partnership approach with local stakeholders i.e. quadruple helix approach. A similar call could also be replicated in the upcoming Work Programme.

Cascade funding

We encourage further calls such as the adaptation call (HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-02) that will provide cascade funding for regions to help them to develop and implement their adaptation pathways. This is an important tool for regions, who do not need to be part of the consortium but can still benefit from expertise and funding later. Cascade funding can also help to bring in new organisations that might be wary of joining a project consortium bid as a co-beneficiary because they have no experience of Horizon Europe. Cascade funding could bring in these new entrants who may then progress to joining other Horizon projects. ERRIN could play an important role here as a platform between Horizon Europe and the regions.

Agriculture & synergies

Further calls should focus on the adaptation of agriculture to climate change. As these issues closely relate to soil and water management, synergies with the Ocean and Soil Missions should be encouraged.

Inclusive & interdisciplinary approach

Emphasis could be put on ensuring an inclusive and inter/transdisciplinary approach. Social-ecological systems and interactions, the role of cultural resources and heritage in emerging and institutionalising stemming processes, biodiversity actions under changing climate and social innovations and solutions at the local level are of great importance for the success of the Adaptation Mission.

Soil Mission

Public sector innovation

Targeted calls for public authorities could be useful to put emphasis on public sector innovation and the crucial role for regional administrations in the mission implementation. 2023 should be the year where the living-labs are launched and so a focus on the role of local and regional authorities (in terms of governance) would be welcome.

Synergies

Synergies would be welcome between the Soil, Cities and Adaptation Missions to provide collaborative opportunities on the creation of a living-lab dedicated to urban soils (and their role for carbon sequestration among others) and living-labs on forest and agricultural soils, with a concern on climate adaptation challenges (linked to pollution, water management and nutrients, for example).

Are there any links between the Soil Mission and the EJP-Soil? Could there be common calls organised in the future?

Sustainable & climate-smart management of organic soils

The Soil mission should concentrate on the sustainable and climate-smart management of organic soils. This is because areas with high amounts of organic soils cover large regions in Northern, Western and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. The management of organic soils contributes remarkably to the emission of greenhouse gases. An update and development of organic soil management methods are needed to halt emissions and maintain the production capacity of these soils. This action promotes simultaneously the mitigation of climate change, food security and development of alternative utilisation of organic soils.

Grass-root tools & services

The Mission should support the development of grass-root level tools and services through which new knowledge is transferred to practical actors and practices throughout Europe. In addition, there is a need to develop advisory services through which the public funded and market-based contract solutions are developed to better meet the demands of actors operating in the field.

Ocean and waters Mission

Opportunities to remove limitations and barriers

In its previous input to the Ocean and Waters Mission Implementation Charter, ERRIN has raised concerns over the rigid and narrow thematic basins in the Ocean and Waters Mission. We continue to press this issue, both in terms of scope but also in terms of the types of regional actors that can get involved in the Mission. Our members see the division of the Mission into different sea basins, each with specific and narrow priorities to be a barrier to their involvement. Some of the priorities for the North Sea, for instance, could also be useful for the Atlantic and vice versa. A more flexible approach would be welcome.

The Baltic Sea could be more visible as it currently referred to only in the Lighthouse proposal together with the North Sea. Our members would propose a more specific Baltic Sea related topic, such as the Baltic Sea as a pilot or lighthouse area for climate change. Other members would also be in favour of a stronger land-water continuum and catchment area approach with the present topics. Such as a need for a wider call to describe the aquatic impacts of agriculture and forestry, including the microplastic effects. This could also be addressed through the development of synergies between Mission areas.

As the mission is a declination of Horizon Europe that is focused on Research and Development (R&D), it may be too restrictive in its effects and its objectives. On coastal areas, for example, it is important

to address the entire chain of key actors. It would be necessary, within the framework of this Mission, to allow a wider partnership than usually found in Horizon Europe, especially with regard to public actors such as communities. One of the strengths of the mission approach lies in new and 'out of the silo' collaboration models. The financial envelope is small, and the conditions of eligibility are rather constrained on strong subjects, with important stakes that sometimes require a more global structuring.

Cancer Mission

Differentiation

So far, the Cancer Mission calls look like the regular calls from the Health Cluster. The emphasis on citizen participation and collaborative governance should be made clearer.

Clarity on regional involvement

The regional dimension of the Cancer Mission remains unclear or small. There should be a stronger focus on the role of regional ecosystems in the Mission, such as a call to create local hubs (not just national) and scope to develop and upscale regional solutions with counterparts across Europe, as seen in other Missions.

Synergies

The Cancer Mission is intended as a tool to deliver on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan but will it also contribute to other initiatives, such as the European Health Data Space? Any existing links are currently unclear. As with other Missions, we would also be pleased to see increased synergies with the other EU Missions and other elements of Horizon Europe, such as European Partnerships.

Co-creation

The value of peer support as well as the experiences of cancer patients and their family and friends should be highlighted further in order to ensure the development of high-quality care services. This could be done through targeted service design and co-creation actions.

Skills & digital tools for care

The development of appropriate skills for the care of cancer patients, such as highly specialised clinical skills and psychological and emotional skills (palliative care) should be included and prioritised in the calls.

Digital tools as enablers of more effective interaction between patients and medical specialists, this could lead to more tailored and preventative treatment paths.

ERRIN (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) is a Brussels-based platform that gathers around 120 regional organisations in more than 20 European countries. ERRIN aims to strengthen the regional and local dimension in EU Research and Innovation policy and programmes. ERRIN supports members to enhance their regional and local research and innovation capacities and further develop their research and innovation ecosystems.

The ERRIN members primarily collaborate through 13 Working Groups (WG), covering both thematic areas and overarching policy issues. The Working Groups are based on members' priorities and current funding opportunities. The WG meetings are at the heart of ERRIN's activities, as this is where our members meet regularly to exchange information, present regional examples, build new partnerships, develop joint projects, network and much more.

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