

## HORIZON EUROPE INTERIM EVALUATION – KEY MESSAGES

29 July 2022

The following reflections are resulting from ERRIN’s work so far related to various elements of Horizon Europe. Emphasis is put on the EU Missions as a very interesting new instrument to further mobilising local and regional research and innovation actors within Horizon Europe.

### EU Missions

EU Missions are an extremely useful tool for further engaging local and regional stakeholders in research and innovation activities. They allow - and encourage - a bottom-up approach to solving the most pressing global and societal challenges of our time. The EU Missions also set ambitious targets and encourage new and innovative approaches to collaboration and accelerated efforts in finding solutions together with various actors.

ERRIN members have been closely following the development of the EU Missions since the launch of the Mission Boards in 2019. They subsequently played an active role in shaping the mission development processes of both the **Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission** and the **Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change**. To date, each Horizon Europe Mission is followed by a dedicated ERRIN Working Group, which is testament to the network’s in-depth engagement.

When it comes to the further development of the Mission governance processes, notably the re-organisation and new compositions of the respective Mission Boards, ERRIN advocates for the involvement of a **broader and more diverse group of stakeholders**. Due to its unique role as a Brussels-based network with strong ties to regional and local stakeholders from across Europe, ERRIN is ideally placed to take on a more active role in the Mission governance processes. In particular, the network can provide insights and highlight needs and challenges experienced on the ground. As a partner in key EU-funded projects with close links to the Cities Mission, [NetZeroCities](#) and [MOSAIC](#), ERRIN brings additional expertise related to ongoing work in the areas of green transition and climate neutrality.

Further information on ERRIN’s work on the EU Missions can be found here: <https://errin.eu/RI-Policy/missions>

ERRIN’s input document on the upcoming [EU Mission Work Programmes](#)

### European Partnerships

The landscape of the European Partnerships is still rather complex and further synergies with other Horizon Europe initiatives, such as EU Missions, Ecosystems for recovery and regional smart specialisation Partnerships could be further strengthened.

When it comes to **co-funded Partnerships**, which are covering a wide range of thematic priorities, there is a clear sense that regional and local stakeholders see the added value of engaging. Several ERRIN member regions are eager to join and become full partners in one or more of the current co-

funded Partnerships. In particular, there is an interest in exploring and piloting the use of Regional Development and Investment Funds as co-funding .

A number of **co-programmed Partnerships**, such as the Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility Partnership (CCAM), have opted for a governance model composing of multiple stakeholders. This approach has resulted in calls for proposals that are relevant for a larger group of stakeholders, thus broadening the scope and increasing the potential to impact beyond the initial framework of the Partnership.

Further information on ERRIN's work on European Partnerships is available at <https://errin.eu/RI-Policy/european-partnerships>

## Innovation (Pillar III)

ERRIN members welcome the **New European Innovation Agenda**, adopted on 5 July 2022 as a highly anticipated step in bridging the research and innovation dimensions, while significantly strengthening the innovation aspect.

The establishment of effective European research and innovation policy is largely dependent on strong, interconnected research and innovation ecosystems in all corners of the European Union (EU) that are deeply embedded in their localities, regions and cities. The current multiannual financial framework (2021-2027) places increasing importance on the place-based dimension of research and innovation policy. There are several programmes and dedicated instruments that have been developed around the idea of **ecosystem thinking**, requiring the engagement of multiple stakeholders and advancing **quadruple helix or quintuple helix collaboration**. In addition to European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) Action under Horizon Europe, synergetic instruments have also been implemented under other programmes, such as Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Euroclusters within the Single Market Programme. Therefore, it is necessary to look beyond the Horizon Europe programme, when evaluating the overall impact of the EIE action.

ERRIN's [contribution to call for evidence for the new European Innovation Agenda](#)

## ERA and widening

Bridging the innovation divide between regions is crucial for taking advantage of the full potential of the European R&I ecosystem. In 2021, ERRIN established a Management Board Task Force on widening and deepening engagement with the objective of increasing diversity in regional research and innovation activities as well as deepening engagement in areas where collaboration between different stakeholders needs to be further intensified.

One of the key challenges the European R&I ecosystem currently faces is the low engagement of stakeholders from the widening countries – researchers as well as other quadruple helix actors – in the Horizon Europe programme. It is essential to investigate the reasons for this limited involvement, in order to realise the full potential of European Research Area (ERA). Such research may provide insights for designing calls that could further encourage widening actors to apply and allow them to

improve the regional and local R&I capacities. Reasons for this low engagement appear to be largely systemic. This means that there is a need for introducing further support measures or revising the support measures currently in place. Specific barriers for their involvement include factors such as: underdeveloped support offices, insufficient support in the project preparation phase (need for experienced support staff and additional well-tailored funding), relatively slow decision-making processes compared to the flexibility and short reaction time often required in projects, and the focus on a few big actors instead of wider ecosystem.

Further information available in [ERRIN's input document to the WIDERA Work Programme 2023-2024](#).

Further information on ERRIN's work on the European Research Area (ERA) at <https://errin.eu/RI-Policy/european-research-area>

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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