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# YEAR IN REVIEW 2020

January 2021



**ERRIN** European Regions  
Research and Innovation Network

# INTRODUCTION

This autumn, I celebrated my three-year anniversary at ERRIN. Even in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I look back at the previous period with pride of what we have been able to accomplish. We have been able to affirm ERRIN's place in the R&I landscape with revamped missions, structured activities, further coordinated working groups and active engagement in R&I policy. We have also strengthened ERRIN's involvement in projects, closely aligning project work with the missions and ensuring that processes are in place to guarantee that new projects further the network's objectives. This work has paid off in 2020 with the approval of five new strategic projects coupled with a revamped and diversified project development and facilitation process. All of this is a result of a great team effort.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of excellent research, innovation and education in Europe. Alongside public authorities, a variety of research and innovation actors are at the heart of the rapid [COVID-19 response](#) – spanning from Research and Technology Organisations, universities and industry, to start-ups, fablabs, and clusters – reinforcing the strategic importance of innovation ecosystems, partnerships and networks in driving both innovation and economic recovery.

The crucial role of innovation ecosystems is also becoming more visible in the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) through various new support schemes, such as European Innovation Ecosystems (Horizon Europe), Interregional Innovation Investments (Cohesion Policy), and Digital Innovation Hubs (Digital Europe). Through its mission-oriented approach and revamped European Partnerships, Horizon Europe will also be crucial to [boost ecosystem collaboration](#). Similarly, the relaunch of the European Research Area (ERA) offers the opportunity to further support the ecosystem approach, and to engage different stakeholders in its design and implementation.

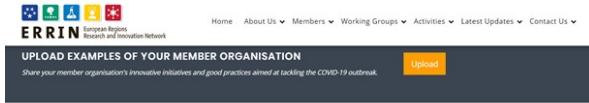
To enhance future funding opportunities for members, we have continued to follow up closely the Horizon Europe programme. ERRIN's focus has been on its new elements, and in particular the missions. It has been great to see that two out of the five mission areas, Climate-neutral and Smart Cities and Adaptation to climate change, will be implemented at local and regional levels.

Looking forward to another innovation-filled year!  
Pirita Lindholm  
Director

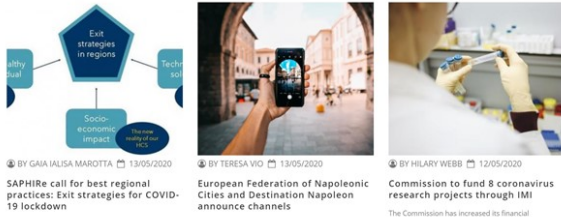


# TAKING STOCK OF THE YEAR

## IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



### COVID-19 Related News

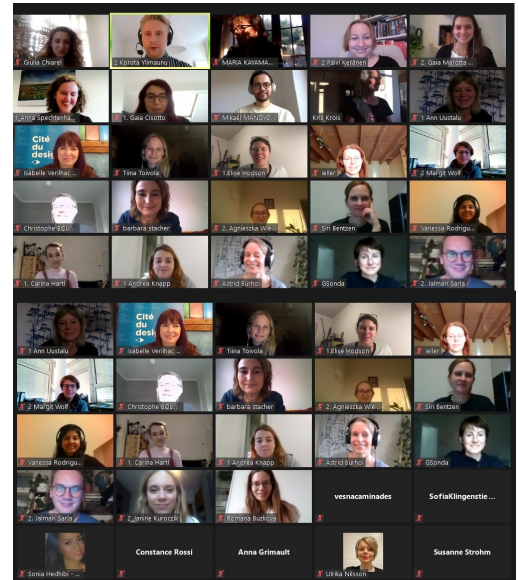


The COVID-19 pandemic brought ERRIN challenges but also many opportunities. The network has seen a significant increase in a number of people using ERRIN services. It has become easier to engage with the various experts and the different stakeholders at local and regional level, and to further cover the regional innovation ecosystems. At the same time there is a need to ensure the strong networking dimension of the organisation and keep the ERRIN community together.

Together with the Management Board, Working Group Leaders and the wider membership, the Secretariat have been assessing how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the network and its daily work, as well as exploring new solutions for serving members in the best possible way.

Key opportunities include:

- Regions and their ecosystems are taking a leading role in Europe's recovery process, which provides an opportunity for ERRIN and its members to use research and innovation as a driver to guide the investments needed for creating a more resilient society and economy.
- Exploiting the funding opportunities available for regional actors within the new MFF, among others, exploring how to further combine funding programmes as well as financing instruments and alternative financing.
- Tap into the growing appetite for project development and further use the growing expertise within project facilitation.



# ERRIN MEMBERS





## ERRIN COMMUNITY



ERRIN is steered by a [Management Board](#), which defines the strategic priorities of the network and provides guidance to the Secretariat. The Management Board is responsible for overseeing ERRIN's Annual Work Plan and the budget.

The Management Board consists of 15 representatives, who are elected from ERRIN's membership for a period of three years, with the possibility of an extension up to six years. The Management Board is led by a Chair and two Vice-Chairs who are elected by the board and confirmed by the Annual General Meeting. The ERRIN chairs have an important role in representing ERRIN externally, preparing the Management Board activities and working closely with the ERRIN Director.



ERRIN currently has 13 [Working Groups](#) (WGs), which are all led by members. The WGs are the cornerstone of its work and play a key role in delivering ERRIN's missions.

Each WG is led by a number of co-leaders. The WG co-leaders have an important role in designing the activities of the network and they develop the Annual Work Plans in collaboration with the wider membership. The co-leaders meet regularly to coordinate the activities of the WG, to plan upcoming meetings and events, and to share up-to-date information and benefit from the Secretariat's support.

# POLICY

## ENHANCING FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

In 2020, ERRIN's policy work has concentrated on the [European Research Area](#) (ERA) and the new elements of the new EU research and innovation programme, Horizon Europe.

The European Research Area (ERA) provides an opportunity to define a new policy framework for research and innovation reinforced with the on-going work on the European Education Area (EEA). The regional and local level play a more prominent role in the renewed ERA and the European Commission Communication highlights the importance of coherence and complementarities for setting R&I priorities at all governance levels as well as the promotion of synergies between different policies and instruments. ERRIN closely followed the development process of the Communication through a dedicated policy paper adopted in June 2020 and via active engagement in several events and meetings, for example during the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) and the Week of Innovative Regions (WIRE 2020).

ERRIN's members have also showed great interest in the [Horizon Europe missions](#). Two of the proposed mission areas: [Climate-neutral and Smart Cities](#) as well as the [Adaptation to climate change](#), will be implemented at local and regional levels. As part of ERRIN's work on the Horizon Europe missions, several input documents for both missions have been developed. In addition, the regional dimension of the Mission on Cancer has been emphasised in the statement developed jointly with EUREGHA. The ERRIN work on the missions was also very visible during the R&I Days with presentations in the respective sessions on both the Mission on Adaptation to climate change and Mission on Climate-neutral and Smart Cities. These missions will remain a priority for the network going forward, as the implementation plans and governance framework for the missions are currently under discussion.

ERRIN's thematic Working Groups have been actively shaping European policy, in particular related to the Green Deal with policy inputs and discussions for example on the [TEN-T Guidelines](#) and the [European Climate Pact](#). Support for Smart Specialisation has also been at the heart of ERRIN's work this year, having been actively contributing to the development process of the Interregional Innovation Investment Instrument.

The ERRIN website has been greatly enhanced with dedicated webpages and targeted information on various R&I policies, such as the ERA, Missions and the European Partnerships. Read about it [here](#).

# PROJECTS

## FACILITATION & DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, the ERRIN Secretariat established a new project facilitation process to ensure that new projects are even more closely aligned with ERRIN's core missions, bring increased benefits to all ERRIN members and boost the network's overall visibility towards the EU Institutions. This new project process is grounded in ERRIN principles, such as transparency, consistency and equity and has the interests of ERRIN members at its core. It both introduced new project tools, such as the noticeboard and brokerage events, and revamped existing ones across the ERRIN website, which was finetuned in terms of accessibility of information and increased user-friendliness.

Following the implementation of the new project process, the ERRIN Secretariat took a more active role in facilitating project opportunities directly with the experts in the 13 ERRIN Working Groups. This has resulted in over 20 project proposals being developed in 2020 in collaboration with over 200 stakeholders from across the ERRIN membership. Five of these proposals have been approved for funding and will start in the course of 2021, which is testament to both the important work of ERRIN Working Groups as well as the engagement of individual ERRIN Members. These five new projects not only involve a high number of member regions but they also support the overall strategic missions of the network, which ensures that the activities in these projects and the ultimate outcomes will be beneficial to ERRIN as a whole. A brief description of these new projects can be found on page 14, however, a more detailed profile can be accessed on the ERRIN [website](#).

60 +	30+	3	20	5
<b>NOTICEBOARD POSTS</b>	<b>PARTNER SEARCHES</b>	<b>ONLINE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>FACILITATED CONSORTIA</b>	<b>SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS</b>
Over 60 project opportunities have been shared with ERRIN members. This includes 20 developed by ERRIN.	Over 30 detailed partner search profiles have been submitted to the ERRIN website.	ERRIN WGs have hosted three online project development workshops on: - BBI JU - Farm to Fork - Erasmus +	The ERRIN team has facilitated over 20 consortia in 2020, including 10 that are currently under development.	ERRIN is a partner in five projects that have been approved by the European Commission. They will all start in early 2021.

# WORKING GROUPS

## STRATEGIC AND TRANSVERSAL



POLICY



SMART  
SPECIALISATION



SCIENCE & EDUCATION  
FOR SOCIETY



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



# PROJECTS

## STRATEGIC AND TRANSVERSAL



### MOSAIC

Mission-Oriented SwafS to Advance Innovation through Co-creation



### RIPEET

Responsible Research and Innovation Policy Experimentations for Energy Transition

### CHARTER

### CHARTER

Cultural Heritage Actions to Refine Education, Training and Roles

### BE.CULTOUR

### BE.CULTOUR

Beyond Cultural Tourism



### RECIPROCITY

Replication of innovative concepts for peri-urban, rural or inner-city mobility



### CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION

Sharing solutions in European cities and regions

## LOW CARBON ECONOMY



### UNALAB

Urban Nature Labs



### GREEN GROWTH

Mediterranean Cooperation and Innovation for a Green Economy



### MIREU

Mining and Metallurgy Regions of EU



### DIGITAL HEALTH EUROPE

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD

## HEALTH

## WORKING GROUPS

### HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020



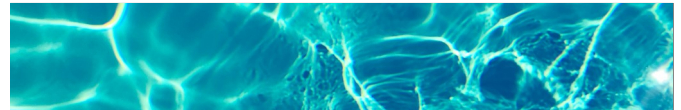
#### SMART CITIES

ERRIN has taken an active role in shaping the Mission on Climate Neutral and Smart Cities and is represented in the Mission Assembly. As the Smart Cities WG is closely following the work of the Mission Board, a contribution to the Board's work and an input document to the interim report and the Green Deal call 1.2 on socially innovative cities were published. Read more [here](#).



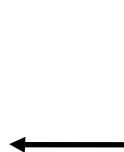
#### TOURISM & CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Cultural Heritage & Tourism WG activities focused primarily on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector and its recovery. The focal point of this process is a WG meeting organised at the end of May with the participation of the European Commission, the European Travel Commission, Necstour, and a panel of member regions and research institutions. Read more [here](#).



#### BLUE GROWTH

This WG has looked into the European Partnership on zero-emission waterborne transport. In June, a webinar focused on mission area on healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters was organised to discuss the development of the mission with the European Commission and a member of the Mission Board. Read more [here](#).



# WORKING GROUPS

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020



### TRANSPORT

The Transport WG, among other initiatives, has focused on the revision of Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines, which resulted in an opinion developed by the WG members. It focuses on the urban nodes as well as the research and innovation dimension of the TEN-T guidelines. The opinion emphasises the importance of urban nodes, the Green Deal, and the EU's COVID-19 recovery in TEN-T policy. Read more [here](#).



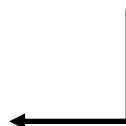
### SMART SPECIALISATION

In the framework of the Smart Specialisation WG, a taskforce comprising 14 members developed ERRIN's joint contribution to the consultation on the Interregional Innovation Investment instrument. The recommendations focus on ERRIN's views on the I3's design, governance and complementarities with other funding programmes. Read the document [here](#).



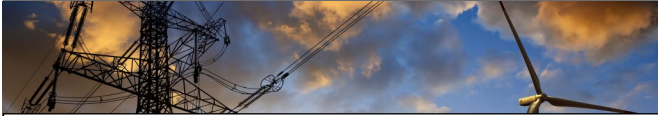
### BIOECONOMY

As part of its activities in 2020, the Bioeconomy WG organised an information session and a project facilitation workshop surrounding the European Green Deal call dedicated to Farm to Fork Strategy. As part of the event, regional case studies addressing specific challenges within food systems were presented and 12 project ideas were developed in breakout groups. Read more [here](#).



# WORKING GROUPS

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020



### ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

The European Climate Pact provides an opportunity for regions to propose local and regional Green Deals to the European initiative. Involving a broad range of members, ERRIN developed a contribution to the consultation on the Climate Pact, which sparked a fruitful dialogue with the European Commission. In the autumn, the ERRIN members met with the Cabinet of Frans Timmermans to present their local and regional Climate Pacts. This work will continue in 2021. Read more [here](#).



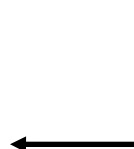
### INNOVATION & INVESTMENT

This year, the Innovation and Investment WG focused on the role of the private sector in regional innovation ecosystems and the different opportunities for SMEs in the new financial period. During a webinar in October, the European Partnership on Innovative SMEs in Horizon Europe was presented, along with the opportunities within InvestEU. Read more [here](#).



### POLICY

The ERRIN Policy WG has developed a set of concrete recommendations to the European Research Area (ERA) highlighting the role of regional innovation ecosystems in achieving more efficient and impactful ERA. The document underlines the importance of enlarging the scope to include innovation, creating a more coherent R&I system and calls for engagement of stakeholders and a framework that acknowledges the place-based innovation ecosystems. Read the recommendations [here](#).





# WORKING GROUPS

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020



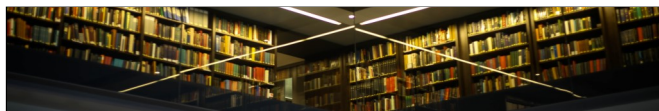
### HEALTH

ERRIN and the network of European Regional and Local Health Authorities (EUREGHA) have jointly released a statement on the Horizon Europe Mission on Cancer. The statement follows [meeting](#) of the Health WG, where Mission Board member Tomi Makela presented the development process. You can read the joint statement [here](#).



### DESIGN & CREATIVITY

This years' edition of EU Design Days took place online and gathered numerous policymakers, designers and European stakeholders who discussed co-creation and civic engagement in design. The panels and workshops looked at how to engage with different actors in order to create sustainable solutions for citizens. Read more about EU Design Days [here](#).



### SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR SOCIETY

In November 2020, the SEFS WG organised an Erasmus+ Project Development Workshop focusing on the topic of 'Education for Global Competences' with presentations from the Commission, the OECD and UNESCO. As part of the workshop, 13 project ideas were selected and developed among potential partners brought together by a dedicated taskforce. Read more [here](#).



### ICT

The ICT WG organised a joint webinar with the Cultural Heritage and Tourism WG focusing on digitising Cultural Heritage. The meeting looked at the digital EU policy for Cultural Heritage. The project 'Time Machine' was presented, which combines a European wide network of experts and competences with regional or local projects. The meeting was a starting point for a further exploration amongst ERRIN members interested in this topic. Read about the meeting [here](#).

## NEW ERRIN PROJECTS



The **MOSAIC project** explores a new Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) approach to open innovation, translating the involvement of quadruple helix stakeholders. The project will implement this approach in a chosen open innovation ecosystem, in this case, a mission-like environment focused on climate-neutral and smart cities. Pilot actions in the cities of Brussels and Milan will test the MOSAIC methodology and research actions throughout the project.

The **RIPEET project** will support Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) policy experimentations for energy transition in three European territories. These territories will become the real-life settings for Transition Labs, which will create collective stewardship of the energy transition by offering participatory instruments and an overall framework to envision sustainable energy futures.



**RECIPROCITY** aims to support the EU's efforts to transform cities into climate-resilient, connected multimodal nodes for smart and clean mobility. RECIPROCITY will launch replication projects in at least 20 cities and municipalities across Europe, varying in size, location, degree of urbanisation and mobility demand.

**CHARTER**, the European cultural heritage skills alliance, will develop and implement European sector-wide strategies and vocational training solutions to support the overall growth strategy of the sector, linking it to the green and digital transitions. The project will explore how major trends are likely to affect job and skills needs, with the aim of bridging the skills gap between the supply and demand of education and training in the cultural heritage sector.

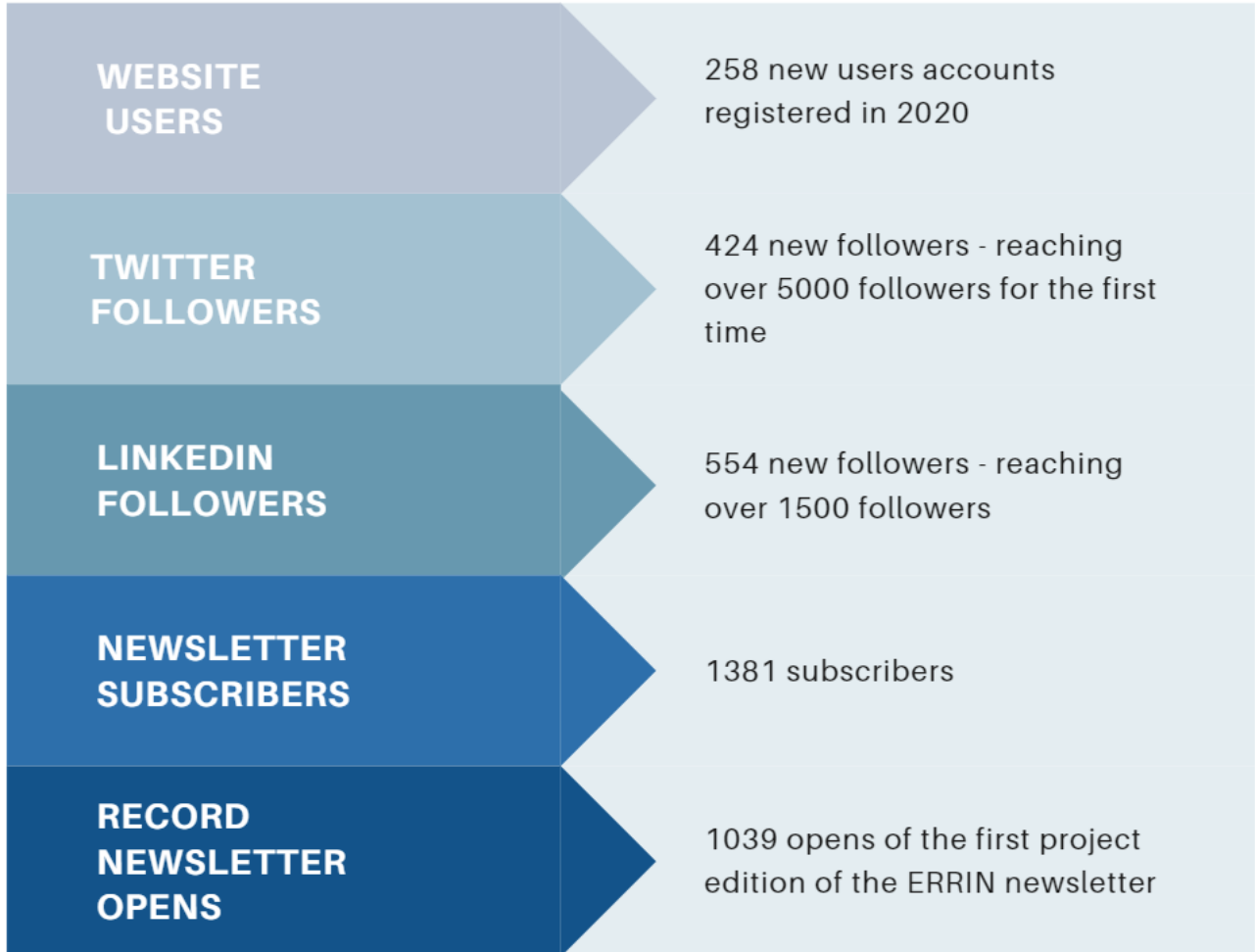
**CHARTER**

### **BE.CULTOUR**

**BE.CULTOUR** will develop strategies to promote an understanding of cultural tourism, which moves away from a "stop-and-go" consumer-oriented approach towards one that puts humans and circular economy models at its centre, paying attention to nature, communities and cultural diversity.

# ERRIN COMMUNICATIONS

## IN FIGURES



## LOOKING AHEAD

2021 marks a start of the new EU financial framework that comes with new programmes, instruments and actions. Taking full advantage of those opportunities for regions and regional innovation ecosystems continues to be a priority to ERRIN. The network's objective is to closely follow the R&I funding landscape and provide members with tailor-made project facilitation activities across various programmes supporting research and innovation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that policy coordination and complementarities between government levels is more important than ever. Regional innovation ecosystems have taken a leading role in the recovery, which provides an opportunity for both ERRIN and its members going forward. ERRIN will continue to actively engage in a green and sustainable recovery, seek to reinforce coordination between government levels and explore how Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS3) can be used as a tool to steer priorities in this process.

Horizon Europe remains a key priority for ERRIN and we will continue to shape elements of the new programme, such as the missions. In addition, the European Partnerships and the new European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) action will be closely followed as we continue to advocate for a strong role for local and regional innovation ecosystems in research and innovation.

In 2021, the ERRIN Secretariat will continue to reinforce the ERRIN community and keep nurturing a strong Brussels-based core group with active members, Working Group leaders and Management Board members. At the same time, the network aims to open up new opportunities for a wide range of regional stakeholders, enrich network's activities and uplift the engagement of different actors within regional innovation ecosystems. As the UK embarks on a new relationship with the European Union, ERRIN will support its British Members in building bridges with partners from across Europe. Finally, ERRIN aims to tap into underutilised R&I potentials via dedicated activities to deepen and widen member engagement across Europe.

Join us in  
celebrating 20  
years of ERRIN in  
2021! Write your  
celebration  
message here.





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