

Press Release: ERA_FABRIC Survey Reveals Crucial Insights into European Research and Innovation Ecosystems

The ERA_FABRIC project, financed by the Horizon Europe program, has unveiled the comprehensive findings of its EU-wide stakeholder survey, shedding light on the recurrent characteristics of knowledge ecosystems. This survey, integral to the project's mission of implementing the ERA Hubs Concept, received responses from 169 stakeholders across Europe.

Survey Overview and Objectives

The primary objective of this survey was to gather insights from European stakeholders on the success factors of their regional research and innovation (R&I) ecosystems. The survey, meticulously designed through a multi-stage process, incorporated feedback and criteria from prior studies within the ERA_FABRIC project, notably the 'Testing of the ERA Hub Concept - Pilot Phase'. Conducted from January 29, 2024, to March 15, 2024, the survey received robust participation from the nine ERA_FABRIC partner regions.

The survey's structure was divided into four key parts:

1. Stakeholder Typology: Understanding the background and regional affiliation of respondents.
2. Access to R&I Infrastructure and Services: Evaluating availability and transparency of infrastructure and services.
3. Policy Support and Governance Processes: Assessing effectiveness and inclusiveness of governance.
4. Collaboration and Knowledge Transfer: Examining extent and quality of collaboration within and between regions.

Key Findings

1. Collaboration and Inclusivity

- Collaboration and inclusivity across sectors are vital to maximize the impact of ERA Hub knowledge ecosystems on regional innovation and development.
- Promoting and encouraging collaborations at regional and territorial levels remains challenging, particularly among actors involved in innovative processes.

2. Policy and Governance

- While European-level measures actively include civil society, retain talent, and foster collaboration, these measures are less prevalent at regional levels.



ERA FABRIC

- Aligning research and innovation policies with the evolving needs and aspirations of stakeholders across Europe is paramount.

3. Research and Innovation Infrastructure

- Regional R&I infrastructure is available, but more intra-regional collaboration is needed to enhance territorial focus.

- Professional services facilitate systematic collaboration among actors, but require incentives, transparency, and training.

4. Civil Society Involvement

- Despite well-balanced multi-level governance processes, civil society involvement is lacking, and regulatory hurdles are numerous.

5. Environmental Sustainability

- There is a common focus on the environmental sustainability of innovation processes across regions.

6. Funding and Incentives

- Funding availability promotes interregional collaboration, although alignment between public policies and private actors needs improvement.

Detailed Analysis and Regional Insights

The survey results offer a nuanced understanding of regional disparities and commonalities within European R&I ecosystems. Data visualization and analysis provided insights into access to R&I infrastructure and services, policy support and governance processes, and collaboration and knowledge transfer.

- **European Overview:** The analysis included thematic areas, including clean renewable energy, sustainable manufacturing, and bio-based circular economy.

- **Regional Comparison:** Highlighted differences and similarities in stakeholder perceptions across various European regions.

- **Stakeholder Type Analysis:** Provided a breakdown of responses based on stakeholder types, including governance bodies, academia and research institutions, businesses, intermediaries, civil society, and finance.

For instance, stakeholders from regions such as Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Mazowieckie (Poland), and Nord-Vest (Romania) offered significant input, revealing both strengths and areas for improvement in their respective ecosystems. The survey found that regions classified as Innovation Leaders and Strong Innovators generally had better-developed collaboration cultures and governance processes compared to Moderate and Emerging Innovators.



ERA FABRIC

In-depth Regional Insights

The survey delved deeper into specific regions, uncovering unique challenges and opportunities within each ecosystem. For example, in Emilia-Romagna, the alignment of research priorities with industry needs was highly praised, but the region still faced issues with transparency in accessing R&I infrastructure. Similarly, Mazowieckie was noted for its strong innovation culture but struggled with retaining young researchers due to insufficient incentives and resources.

In Nord-Vest Romania, respondents highlighted the need for better management of shared resources and more robust engagement of civil society. This regional specificity allows for targeted recommendations and strategies that can address the unique needs of each ecosystem, fostering a more inclusive and effective innovation environment across Europe.

Future Implications and Recommendations

To harness the full potential of this study, the ERA_FABRIC project recommends further assessment of these results in future research activities. The findings suggest several areas for improvement:

- Enhanced management of shared resources.
- Increased engagement of civil society.
- Improved researcher mobility and commercialization of research outcomes.

Additionally, future surveys and associated research can benefit from more concise questions and targeted support for specific sectors where stakeholders have expressed a need for improvement.

The survey highlighted the necessity of more transparent and accessible R&I infrastructures. Stakeholders across regions consistently pointed out the need for clearer communication channels and streamlined processes to ensure that all actors can effectively utilize available resources. This transparency is crucial for fostering trust and collaboration among different stakeholders, which is essential for the success of the ERA Hubs Concept.

Stakeholder Feedback and Future Directions

Respondents from various sectors, including academia, industry and governance bodies, expressed a need for more integrated approaches to innovation. There is consensus on the importance of systematic interactions among actors within the ecosystem, yet practical implementation often falls short due to insufficient incentives and a lack of structured frameworks for collaboration.

The ERA_FABRIC project acknowledges the diversity in regional innovation capacities and the necessity for tailored strategies to address specific regional challenges. For example, regions with emerging innovation ecosystems might benefit from focused capacity-building initiatives, whereas regions with established infrastructures could leverage advanced collaboration models to further enhance their innovation outputs.

The survey results also point towards the need for a balanced approach in public and private sector engagement. While public strategies and funding play a crucial role in supporting innovation, the needs and perspectives of private actors must be adequately addressed to ensure a holistic and sustainable ecosystem.



ERA FABRIC

Moreover, the survey has revealed that while there is a strong alignment between research priorities and industry needs, the modalities for accessing R&I infrastructure often lack transparency. This calls for more open and clear communication channels to ensure all stakeholders can benefit from available resources. Enhanced management of shared resources and better engagement of civil society are also critical areas that require attention to build a cohesive and effective innovation ecosystem.

Conclusion

The ERA_FABRIC project's stakeholder survey has provided valuable insights into the current state of European R&I ecosystems. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering collaboration, aligning policies with stakeholder needs, and ensuring sustainable innovation practices. These insights will inform future activities within the ERA_FABRIC project, contributing to the successful implementation of the ERA Hubs Concept across Europe.

The survey has illuminated the critical need for more effective management of shared resources, enhanced engagement of civil society, and improved mobility and commercialization of research. These elements are crucial for developing a cohesive and robust innovation ecosystem that can thrive on both regional and European levels.

For more information on the ERA_FABRIC project and to access the full report, please visit

<https://www.erafabric.eu>

About ERA FABRIC

ERA_FABRIC is a Horizon Europe funded project aimed at enhancing research and innovation ecosystems across Europe. By implementing the ERA Hubs Concept, ERA_FABRIC seeks to create a more collaborative and inclusive environment for regional and territorial innovation.

Contact Information:

Press Office: ERA_FABRIC

Email: media@erafabric.eu

Phone: +48 500 693 504

Website: <https://www.erafabric.eu>