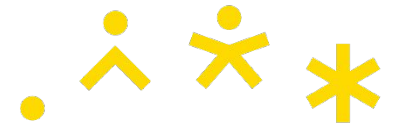


ERA FABRIC



EURASHE

European Association for the Applied Sciences
in Higher Education

Connectivity of Regional Innovation Ecosystems

Webinar on “ERA Hubs Theory of Change”

ERA FABRIC Project

3rd April 2025

John Edwards PhD

EURASHE Secretary General

EURASHE

European Association for the Applied Sciences in Higher Education



- Formed in 1990
- Secretariat office in Brussels
- **84 members:**
 - 57 Full Members
 - 12 national associations
 - 45 individual HEIs
 - 13 Affiliate Members outside the EHEA
 - 14 Associate Members
- +500 HEIs represented in 34 countries



Main argument

- ERA Hubs strongly meet the criteria for EU funding programmes – namely they provide something that **cannot be provided by Member States acting on their own**, similar to collaborative R&I projects funded by the Framework Programmes.
- Without ERA Hubs **there is no part of the Horizon Europe Programme that links regional innovation ecosystems.**
- Unless regions are connected according to strengths then less developed regions will suffer at the expense of stronger ones because of centrifugal forces.
- Cohesion Policy (I3/INTERREG) addresses the issue from the perspective of regions, and an **instrument that is led by the R&I community can be complementary.**

Key Messages

1. New push for a “Fifth Freedom” of the Single Market brings back question of fragmentation of European research and innovation
2. European and global value chains + common challenges including digital and green transitions require cooperation
3. Hubs and spokes – How to reconcile excellence with cohesion
4. ERA hubs should play an important role in synergies between different types of R&I investments – but more clarity needed on relationship with S3.
5. New ERA Policy Agenda lacks a convincing approach to ERA hubs or the geographical dimension of R&I

Fifth Freedom

“Fragmentation prevents Europe from fulfilling its research and innovation potential, at a huge cost to Europeans as taxpayers, consumers, and citizens”
European Commission Green Paper on the European Research Area (2007)

Logic of the single market – Specialisation becomes necessary to complete

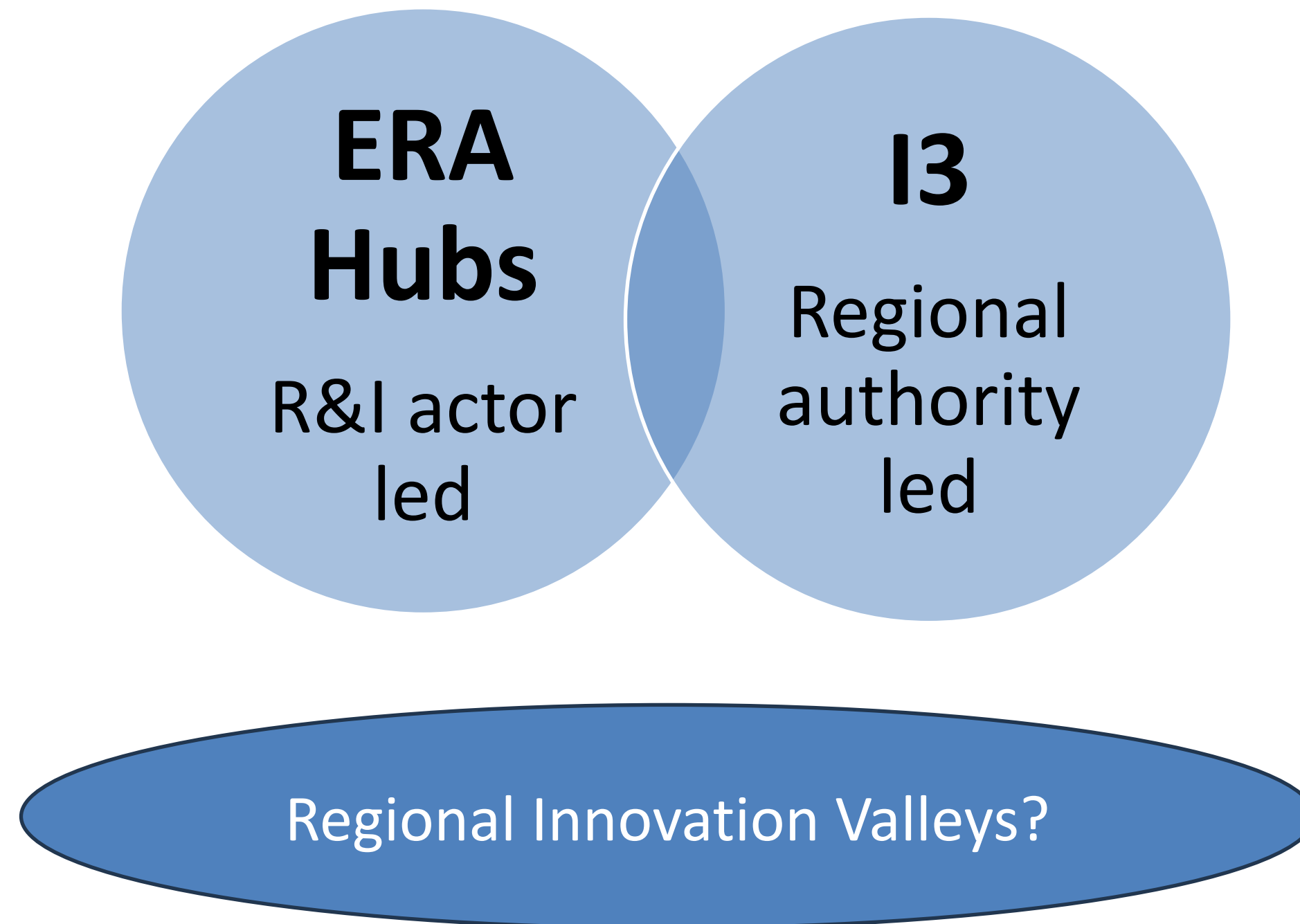
Smart specialisation was originally developed as part of the discussions around the ERA! Knowledge for Growth Expert Group.

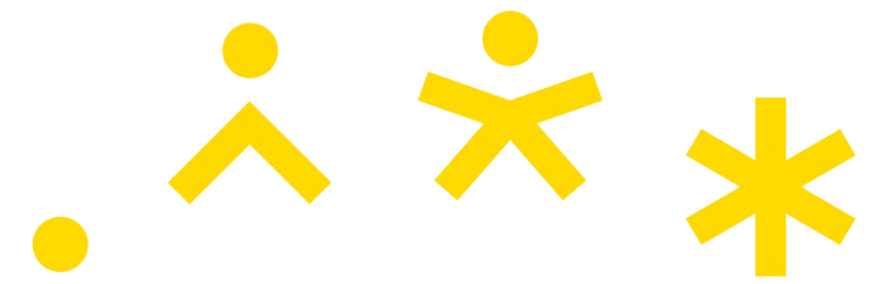
Freedom to stay – ERA hubs contributing to a balanced distribution of the knowledge economy

If ERA hubs are created based on Excellence, how can we link other researchers and places to them?



ERA hubs and interregional cooperation for innovation





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