



ERA FABRIC

Press Release: Advancing European Research & Innovation: ERA FABRIC's Vision for Stronger Knowledge Ecosystems

Brussels, March 2025

The ERA FABRIC Project is setting new benchmarks for the European Research Area (ERA) by defining, structuring, and validating the concept of interconnected knowledge ecosystems across partner regions in Europe. As part of the Horizon Europe-funded initiative, ERA FABRIC aims to analyze and enhance regional research and innovation (R&I) ecosystems, aligning them with the emerging 'ideal type' of ERA Hubs.

A Comparative Approach to Regional Innovation Performance

The ERA FABRIC project undertakes a comprehensive regional profiling process to assess the performance of partner regions against a benchmarked ERA Hub model. Using a data-driven approach, the project compares survey results and R&I ecosystem characteristics to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for growth. The key focus areas of this assessment include:

- **Access to Research & Innovation Infrastructure and Services**
- **Policy Support & Governance Processes**
- **Collaboration & Knowledge Transfer**

This evaluation process has led to the development of a composite index ranking partner regions based on their conformity with the ERA Hub model. The regions studied offer a diverse representation of European innovation systems, allowing ERA FABRIC to extract valuable insights applicable across different socio-economic and political landscapes.

The Role of ERA Hubs in Strengthening Regional R&I Ecosystems

ERA Hubs serve as dynamic multi-stakeholder platforms that foster collaboration between research institutions, policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs. Through a structured methodology, ERA FABRIC enables regions to enhance their innovation potential by focusing on:

- **Inclusive and transparent governance structures** to align research priorities with industry needs.
- **Encouraging cross-sector collaboration** for knowledge transfer and commercialization of research outputs.
- **Long-term policy and financial support mechanisms** to sustain innovation-led regional development.



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The partner regions of ERA FABRIC—spanning Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain—exemplify diverse innovation landscapes. By analyzing their unique profiles, the project highlights best practices and areas for improvement in R&I policies at regional and multi-regional levels. Each region has been assessed in terms of strengths and weaknesses, offering a tailored strategy for improvement based on the ERA Hub model.

Key Findings and Strategic Implications

The assessment of regional profiles indicates several critical insights:

- **Strong innovation ecosystems thrive on collaboration.** Regions with high-performing R&I infrastructure benefit from joint strategies between public and private actors, as seen in regions like Catalonia and Emilia-Romagna.
- **Governance and policy support play a crucial role.** Effective governance models and long-term funding opportunities are essential for sustaining innovation, as demonstrated in Lower Austria and South Moravia.
- **Barriers to knowledge transfer and commercialization must be addressed.** Some regions still face regulatory hurdles and lack incentives for industry-academia collaboration, which hinders their full innovation potential.
- **Regional ecosystems require diversified funding sources.** Ensuring a balanced mix of private and public investments can help foster sustainable innovation models and reduce reliance on short-term funding schemes.

These findings reinforce the need for a **cohesive and adaptable policy framework** that supports regional R&I ecosystems, ensuring their alignment with the broader European Research Area goals. The insights also offer an opportunity for policymakers to refine their approaches, enabling regional actors to leverage the potential of innovation networks more effectively.

The Future of ERA FABRIC: Next Steps

ERA FABRIC's next phase involves refining its methodology to further support partner regions in enhancing their innovation landscapes. By continuing to validate the ERA Hub model and engaging with policymakers, research institutions, and industry representatives, the project aims to ensure that **Europe's research and innovation ecosystems remain competitive, inclusive, and sustainable.**

In addition to refining assessment models, the ERA FABRIC initiative will facilitate increased networking between regions to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Through dedicated workshops, regional meetings, and thematic events, stakeholders will be encouraged to exchange best practices and co-develop strategies that align with the ERA Hub principles.



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Moreover, ERA FABRIC aims to address the skill gaps within regional innovation ecosystems by fostering educational initiatives and training programs. Ensuring that researchers, entrepreneurs, and industry professionals have access to relevant knowledge and skills will be key to strengthening the capacity of ERA Hubs. The project will also explore new financial models to ensure that funding structures remain resilient, addressing the long-term sustainability of innovation networks.

Call to Action: Collaboration for a Stronger ERA

As ERA FABRIC moves forward, it welcomes collaboration from additional regional stakeholders, policymakers, and innovation leaders who wish to contribute to the shaping of a more interconnected European Research Area. Interested parties are encouraged to engage with the project and explore opportunities for cooperation through ERA FABRIC's dedicated communication channels.

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The initiative will also focus on enhancing cross-border cooperation among innovation actors, fostering stronger partnerships between research institutions, industry leaders, and policy makers. This will be achieved by establishing structured collaboration frameworks and policy dialogues that facilitate knowledge exchange and the development of joint innovation strategies. Additionally, ERA FABRIC aims to support the alignment of regional policies with European strategic priorities, ensuring that innovation efforts contribute to broader EU objectives in sustainability, digital transformation, and technological sovereignty.

Through these coordinated efforts, ERA FABRIC aspires to create a more integrated, resilient, and future-ready European Research Area, where knowledge ecosystems can thrive and contribute to economic and societal progress on a broad scale.



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About ERA FABRIC

ERA FABRIC is a Horizon Europe-funded initiative designed to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems by developing interconnected knowledge spaces across European regions. Through a data-driven and collaborative approach, the project aims to define and implement the 'ideal type' of ERA Hubs, ensuring the advancement of regional and multi-regional innovation strategies.



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