

## ANNUAL PLAN 2024

### BIOECONOMY WORKING GROUP

#### NATURAL RESOURCES AND FOOD CLUSTER

#### WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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#### OBJECTIVES

The Working Group focuses on increasing the influence of regions and their stakeholders in shaping the European circular bioeconomy while also focusing on the Horizon Europe Mission Soil. The group covers the bioeconomy in the widest sense, tackling issues related to topics such as food systems, soil health, forestry, bioenergy, biowaste, bio-based products, among other things. Seeing the growing role of the bioeconomy in decarbonisation efforts, the group also concentrates on the ecological sustainability of these solutions (e.g. nature-based solutions, green and blue solutions for carbon capture). The group develops contacts with European policymakers to increase cooperation and projects between European regions in bioeconomy, with a particular focus on Horizon Europe and the Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership.

#### CONTEXT

The long-term priority: EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe' (Soil Mission).

The Soil Mission is a key priority of ERRIN's Bioeconomy Working Group, which has established a trusty relationship with the Mission Soil Secretariat over the past years. In 2023, ERRIN successfully launched the Mission Soil Manifesto, in a joint event with the Mission Soil Secretariat from the European Commission. The working group will keep a close eye on the implementation of the Horizon Europe Soil Mission. The results of the first Soil Mission calls are of interest and the working group will take the opportunity to exchange with the membership and support information sharing towards the second wave of Mission calls. Also, the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative is of interest, particularly looking at the role of cities and regions in the circular transition, and how this is linked to the EU Cities Mission and the CBE JU partnership.

Key EU-level priorities, strategies, events, work programmes and priority calls for proposals that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2024:

- Horizon Europe Programme
  - Project development around the Mission Soil calls
  - Horizon Europe Cluster 6
  - FP10 Development – Looking ahead towards FP10
  
- Partnerships
  - Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking, including BIC
  - European partnership for Agroecology
  - European Partnership for Safe and Sustainable Food Systems
  - EIT Food
  
- Events
  - R&I Week (18-21 March 2024)
  - European Circular Stakeholder Conference (15 – 17 April)
  - European Green Week
  - CCRI related events
  - European Week of Regions and Cities
  - European Mission Soil Week

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTPUTS IN ERRIN PROJECTS**

ERRIN projects:

- SOILL START UP:
  - Topic: support project for the Soil Mission’s living labs and lighthouses
  - Benefits for ERRIN members: network, support of potential applicants for future Soil Mission calls, project development opportunities; framework for soil health monitoring, guidance for setting up local and regional healthy soil living labs
  
- Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI):
  - Topic: circular economy in cities and regions
  - Benefits: influence the 2025-2027 HEU Work programme by participating in Multi-Stakeholders Dialogues:
    - Circular Electronics - 13 March
    - Circular Plastics - 25 March
    - Additional Dialogue about Textiles - 5 or 6 March
  - Influence the 2025-2027 HEU Work programme for Textiles, Bioeconomy, by expression your interest for a bilateral exchange to CCRI project manager Astrid Hannes (ERRIN Secretariat)
  - Knowledge sharing (webinars) and support materials for cities and regions implementing systemic circular economy solutions

Other relevant and member-driven projects:

- HUMUS
  - Topic: Healthy Municipal Soils (HuMUS), supporting municipalities and regions to protect and restore soil health
  - Benefits for ERRIN members: Open Cascade funding opportunity for 20 pilots: deadline call is 29 February 2024; Bioeconomy WG leaders are in the projects External Advisory Board
  - Member driven Regional Innovation Valleys with a focus on circular economy and bioeconomy

## ACTIVITIES

### **Breakfast meeting Natural Resources & Food Cluster: kicking-off 2024**

**Date: February 2024 | 9:00-11:00**

**Cluster Activity: with Blueconomy WG and Climate Adaptation Task Force**

This informal coffee meeting will offer an opportunity for all ERRIN members of the Natural Resources and Food Cluster to come together to network and jointly kick off the activities of the Bioeconomy Working Group, the Blue Economy Working Group and the Adaptation Task Force for 2024.

The Head of the Food Systems and Bioeconomy Unit, DG RTD, will present the European Commission's ongoing and planned initiatives for 2024. The Working Group and the Task Force leaders will present the annual work plans for 2024, providing an opportunity for members to familiarise themselves with the planned activities and discuss their potential involvement in the planned work. Furthermore, the ERRIN Secretariat will present the new ERRIN project development tool as well as updates on the implementation of the EU Missions of interest to this cluster: the Soil Mission, the Ocean and Waters Mission and the Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change.

### **Joint project development session on the new Soil Mission, Adaptation Mission and Ocean Mission calls**

**Date: April**

**Cluster Activity: with Blueconomy WG and Climate Adaptation Task Force**

The Working Groups and Task Force of the Natural Resources and Food Cluster – Bioeconomy, Blue Economy, Adaptation are planning a joint project development session on the new Missions calls of interest for the cluster.

The Cluster kick-off meeting in February will start the process by presenting the new ERRIN project development tool, which will guide the workstream for the project development activities to support ERRIN members. Depending on the members' needs, the co-leaders of the Natural Resources and Food Cluster would consider supporting the organisation of a matchmaking and project development session in April with a focus on the relevant new Soil, Ocean and Adaptation Mission Calls.

### **EU Soil Mission's implementation: supporting ERRIN members to get involved**

**Date: May/June**

This meeting aims to set up an in-depth exchange with the membership about the EU Soil Mission in which we will exchange about lessons learnt and support opportunities members can benefit from to get involved. What can we learn from the results of the first Mission's calls? How did ERRIN members use the Soil Manifesto to mobilise their stakeholders for a more long-term commitment to healthy soils? What kind of support is needed for a successful implementation of the Soil Mission at local and regional levels?

We will invite the Mission Soil Secretariat to present the outcomes of the first calls and the timeline for the forthcoming calls, along with the ERRIN members whose proposal was granted. We will also present the new ERRIN project SOILL-StartUp (2024-2025) and explain its opportunities to the membership for networking, capacity building and project development assistance. During the meeting, ERRIN members will be invited to contribute to SOILL-StartUp stakeholder mapping of potential future applicants for the next Mission calls express their support needs, which will allow the SOILL-StartUp consortium to better tailor targeted support actions.

We also invite the member-driven HuMUS project led by ANCI Toscana (Tuscany Region), to share with us the results from the cascade funding call (open until 29 February 2024) and learn about the focus of the 20 selected Pilot projects, consisting of local and regional Soil living labs.

### **Sustainable Food Production: what funding instruments and collaboration opportunities does 2024 bring?**

**Date: Autumn**

In this information session, we will learn about funding instruments and collaboration opportunities offered at the European level. The session should notably focus on the the EIT Food, and the two new Horizon Europe Partnership for Sustainable Food systems and Agroecology.

The aim of the meeting is to provide the members with an overview of the forthcoming opportunities and the conditionalities of these instruments, and exchange within the network what members are planning to explore them and facilitate consortium building.

### **Issues/topics to be monitored further:**

Financing and Investments schemes for Circular Economy at local and regional level. The Bioeconomy WG will keep an eye on and monitor new opportunity for the network on the existing European financing, investing and project development schemes with regards Circular Economy from a regional perspective.