

ANNUAL PLAN 2024

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

LOW CARBON CLUSTER

WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the Energy & Climate Change Working Group is to act as a platform to discuss and share information on energy-related policies and funding programmes, especially looking at the Green Deal and REPowerEU, the Green Industrial Plan, the Hydrogen Valleys, the energy storage and batteries (with reference to S3 Partnership on batteries) and Horizon Europe. The priority areas also feature climate change issues (such as climate adaptation), nature-based solutions and natural resources.

The WG is set to explore links and synergies with other areas in which energy and climate change play central role and cooperate with other ERRIN Working Groups, namely the Transport, Smart Cities, SEFS and S3 Working Groups, as well as the ERRIN Task Forces on climate adaptation and on the New European Bauhaus.

CONTEXT

The key EU-level priorities and strategies that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2024:

- European Roadmap on Hydrogen Valleys
- European Wind Power Package
- Net Zero Industry Act
- Smart and sustainable buildings

Funding programmes:

- Horizon Europe, notably Cluster 5 “Climate, Energy and Mobility”, Mission Adaptation to Climate Change, Mission Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, New European Bauhaus.
- Clean Hydrogen Partnership
- Built4People Partnership
- BATT4EU Partnership
- Innovation Fund

Events:

- European Week of Regions and Cities
- European Sustainable Energy Week (11-13 June, Brussels)
- European Hydrogen Week
- SET Plan Conference

OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTPUTS IN ERRIN PROJECTS

RIPEET: The project aimed at supporting local and regional authorities' commitment to energy transition. With a dedicated methodology, the Transition Lab, the project fostered a collaborative ecosystem approach, mobilising local stakeholders from academia, civil society, energy providers, the private sector and public administration. This approach was implemented and tested in the three pilot territories, all ERRIN members: the Outer Hebrides (UK), Ostrobothnia (FI) and Extremadura (ES). ERRIN's role was to create a Community of Practice of six additional "mirror ecosystems" in Andalucia (ES), Lithuania, The Aran Islands, Galway (IE), La Réunion (FR), Eigersund (NO) and Silesia (PL).

As the project ended in January 2024, the results and findings of the RIPEET project are of relevance to the Energy and Climate Working Group, and could be followed-up with:

- Building up capacities for transformation – Linking with other ERRIN projects and activities, such as the MOSAIC project, EU Missions, Regional Innovation Valleys or Hydrogen Valleys, provide tools to ERRIN members for co-creation and multi-stakeholders dialogues, emphasising the importance of citizen engagement and open transformations for inclusive and more sustainable societies across different sectors.
- Provide good practices and learnings on cascade funding – Small-scale cascade and the selection of local solution providers led to community-based social innovations that tackled the needs identified in each territory. This experience could be showcased and reused in different context, projects and Working Groups.
 - Identification of potential pilots for in project development – RIPEET territorial partners and mirror ecosystems demonstrated their commitment toward energy transition and integrated innovation processes to ensure a collaborative ecosystem approach. Their experience could be useful to showcase and/or reused in the frame of project development activities conducted for ERRIN members.

ACTIVITIES

Low Carbon Cluster project facilitation session: Cities Mission calls

Date: 23 January | 15:00-17:00 (In person meeting)

Cluster Activity: with Energy & Climate Change and Smart Cities WG

The draft Cities Mission calls for 2024 present the opportunity to develop and apply diverse solutions, including mobility and energy solutions, in cities to support them on their journey towards climate neutrality. To better understand ERRIN members' interests in the proposed calls, the Smart Cities Working Group will, together with the two other Working Groups of the Low Carbon Cluster – Transport and Energy & Climate Change, organise a project facilitation session.

The aim of the project facilitation session is to map ERRIN members' interests in the draft calls and to understand what skills and expertise members' regional ecosystems can bring to potential project proposals. This session will be followed up with a second session later in June to continue the project facilitation process.

European Wind Power Package and Net Zero Industry Act

14 March 2024 (hybrid meeting)

ERRIN members and their regional stakeholders will receive a comprehensive update on two initiatives shaping the future of the European energy landscape: the European Wind Power Package and the Net Zero Industry Act. The information session will dive into the Wind Power Package, unveiled in October 2023 by the European Commission, which aims to support the expansion of wind energy across Europe and strengthen the competitiveness of EU's wind energy manufacturing sector. With Europe's energy strategy REPowerEU targeting 420 GW of wind energy by 2030, this session will provide crucial insights into key elements of the Wind Power Package.

Additionally, we will follow up on the Net Zero Industry Act meeting that took place on 16 June 2023 (Joint I&I and Energy & Climate Change WG: The Net-Zero Industry Act for regional and local authorities). The Act, currently under negotiations (trialogues) between the European Parliament and the Council, focuses on enhancing the manufacturing of clean technologies, with a goal to achieve at least 40% of the Union's net-zero technologies manufacturing capacity by 2030. This will be the occasion for EU institutions to provide crucial insights into the negotiation progress.

Hydrogen Valleys: series of events

**Date: June - Policy Conference at the European Sustainable Energy Week (TBC)
October/November 2024 – Meeting on Hydrogen valleys**

A joint policy conference in partnership with Hydrogen Europe's regional pillar and the S3 Hydrogen Valleys Partnership is under consideration. The focus would be on "Scaling-up Hydrogen Valleys to foster regional development" and is proposed to take place as part of the European Sustainable Energy Week in June.

Further activities in 2024 will be tailored based on the evolving context, with a dedicated activity planned in Q3. ERRIN Energy and Climate Change leaders will continue in engaging in bilateral dialogues with the European Commission, addressing the specific requirements of members related to Hydrogen Valleys as outlined in the 2023 input paper on the topic.

Smart and sustainable buildings

Date: September

The topic of a sustainable built environment could be interesting to look at from a neighbourhood perspective. This approach allows for the integration of funding opportunities for local energy grids and energy communities, emphasising energy efficiency in buildings, zero-emission construction sites and energy-plus buildings.

The principles and funding opportunities within the New European Bauhaus (NEB) should definitely be included, in order to encourage projects that contribute to a sustainable, inclusive and aesthetically pleasing built environment. Establishing a connection with the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Task Force, particularly concerning the activities and work program in 2024, is recommended.

In addition, by fully exploring the possibilities of the Built4People Partnership, the WG will support the advancement of smart and sustainable building practices that benefit the local and regional communities.

Issues/topics to be monitored further:

- TEN-T – Contribution of Harbours to Energy Transition

Monitoring the role of harbours within the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) as contributors to the energy transition. A potential activity involves organizing a joint session with the Transport and Blue Economy Working Groups specifically addressing the pivotal role of ports in sustainable energy practices.

- Regulatory Sandboxes

After the Energy and Climate Change WG meeting on the topic in 2023 ([Regulatory sandboxes in the energy sector | ERRIN Website](#)), the WG will continue to monitor it. Furthermore, a connection can be established with the [Smart Cities WG](#) (Cities Mission) and the [NetZeroCities project](#), where ERRIN is a partner. Regulatory sandboxes will play a pivotal role in fostering innovation and testing new approaches in a controlled environment within the realm of urban sustainability and the transition to net-zero emissions.

- Innovation Fund

The objective is to raise awareness about the targeted projects in the Innovation Fund in order to facilitate applications from relevant projects, and specifically to gain a better understanding of how to determine whether a project is a good match with the Fund. A meeting could be organised as an information session, online and in person, in collaboration with the Innovation & Investment (I&I) WG.