

EARTO Inputs to the New ERA Policy Agenda

31 January 2024

In the context of the current update of the ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027, EARTO would like to bring some key issues to the attention of the Member States and the European Commission.

First, we would like to point out that EARTO Members are actively discussing with their national ministries and funding agencies at different levels the various actions from the ERA Forum-linked Policy Agenda. In some Member States, the European Commission's consultation is very well organised while in some others, this orchestrating is lagging. The Member States and the European Commission should make sure they have created a wider community of stakeholders around the ERA Actions committed to representing the voices and views of the country in question.

Second, EARTO would like to recommend that any new ERA Action should aim to build upon and orchestrate the different initiatives existing at European, national, and regional levels, using a strategic directionality approach targeting the green and digital transition, and avoiding duplication of efforts. Today, we see duplication of some ERA Actions with other activities already running within the current EU Framework Programme (FP), Horizon Europe. This requires rethinking and refocusing on the new Policy Agenda. Consequently, Member States should carefully monitor and evaluate the future ERA Policy Agenda's development to ensure that it does not conflict with the elaboration of Horizon Europe's Strategic Planning and Work Programming taking place according to the FP's own comitology. The various fora, including the ERA Forum, the ERA Actions' sub-groups and the FP's own comitology and activities have different roles. Therefore, the responsibilities of these fora should not be mixed for the sake of transparency and to avoid duplication and stakeholders' fatigue.

Third, the new ERA Policy Agenda should embrace the whole RD&I spectrum in a balanced way, from basic research to technology maturation to innovation scale-up/deployment. Today, many of the ERA Actions are too academic-focused with little understanding of the functioning of Research Performing Organisations (RPOs, which include RTOs), and their relations with the industry. We also noted that when the various groups of RPOs bring comments, those are often set aside. Knowledge on RPOs, in general, seems lacking among the owners of some of the ERA Actions and within the ERA Forum community. RPOs have different operating and business models that require specific attention. In addition, their expertise could be used more efficiently in the context of shaping and developing the directionality of future EU RD&I policy. For example, we see this issue clearly raised when discussing topics linked to the career of researchers, research security, etc. To avoid creating ERA Actions simply focused on academics, turning the ERA into another European Education Area, requires a renewed thinking on:

- How to adapt the ERA governance to render the discussions more relevant and consequently attractive for RPOs and industry?
- How to attract the participation of different national ministries and funding organisations (i.e. not only ministries of science and education) to bring in further capabilities that are key to the actions linking RD&I policy to other industrial and sectorial policies (i.e. in topics and actions related to the digital and green transition, technology roadmaps, technology infrastructures, etc.)?

Finally, EARTO calls on the Member States and the European Commission to refocus the next ERA Policy Agenda on a much more limited set of actions, avoiding creating new actions and replacing some of the actions at the level where they would be better managed (i.e. within Horizon Europe for many).

In this context, EARTO would like to point out the following key ERA Actions for the next ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027:

1. Set up a concrete roadmap to achieve the 3% EU GDP R&D investment target with a clear impact-driven approach promoting national RD&I investments. See our recent [Open Letter on Investing more in RD&I as a strategic move for Europe's future prosperity done in collaboration with EUA and Science Europe](#).
2. Support the European Commission services to develop a New Communication on Technology Infrastructures (TIs) in 2025 by defining now new pilots on TIs during the second half of Horizon Europe following the examples of the first pilot done in aeronautics, of the TEFs under Digital Europe Programme and of different national programmes. Efforts are supported by the currently running CSA project RITIFI and the European Commission to-be-soon-launched Expert Group on TIs as well as by the activities of the current ERA Action 12, such as the study on TIs creating an overview at EU level for support mechanisms and initiatives on national levels.

3. Co-create Common Industrial Technology Roadmaps with key stakeholders like RTOs, building upon existing knowledge, and deploy them at EU, national, and regional levels.
4. Develop and exploit effective synergies between EU, national, and regional Programmes to leverage technologies, exploitable solutions and maximise the impact of RD&I investments. Here, we would like to point out the Danish example where the ESIF national authorities matched their rules for participation to those national RD&I programmes: such best practices should be advertised within Member States.
5. Support the European Commission efforts to make research careers in Europe more attractive and sustainable. These efforts should represent the way to assess researchers outside of academia and should not limit intersectoral mobility and career development. A structured approach is therefore needed to ensure the good functioning of research careers across industries and RTOs, not only in academic institutions. See our recent [Inputs for a European Framework for Research Careers](#).

EARTO remains ready to provide additional inputs on those key issues to ensure the successful development of the upcoming new ERA Policy Agenda 2025-2027.

Latest EARTO papers on ERA Actions:

- [EARTO Inputs for a European Framework for Research Careers \(Comments to Technical Document\)](#)
- [EARTO Position Paper on Research Security - Inputs to the EC Call for Evidence for EC proposal for a Council Recommendation](#)

EARTO - European Association of Research and Technology Organisations

Founded in 1999, EARTO promotes RTOs and represents their interest in Europe. EARTO network counts over 350 RTOs in more than 31 countries. EARTO members represent 150,000 highly-skilled researchers and engineers managing a wide range of innovation infrastructures.

RTOs - Research and Technology Organisations

From the lab to your everyday life. RTOs innovate to improve your health and well-being, your safety and security, your mobility and connectivity. RTOs' technologies cover all scientific fields. Their work ranges from basic research to new products and services' development. RTOs are non-profit organisations whose core mission is to produce, combine and bridge various types of knowledge, skills and infrastructures to deliver a range of research and development activities in collaboration with public and industrial partners of all sizes. These activities aim to result in technological and social innovations and system solutions that contribute to and mutually reinforce their economic, societal and policy impacts.

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