



# **The ERIK Network**

*A tool for achieving the Lisbon Strategy?*

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## Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions (RPIA) 2000-2006



“laboratories for ideas”



ERIK Network Regional economies based on knowledge and technological innovation

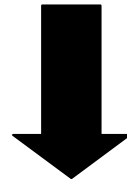
- 1st phase 2003 to 2005: 13 partners lead by Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna; 26 associate members
- 2nd phase 2005 to 2007: 13 partners lead by Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna; 33 associate members; 5 observer members





## 4 Thematic Working Groups established:

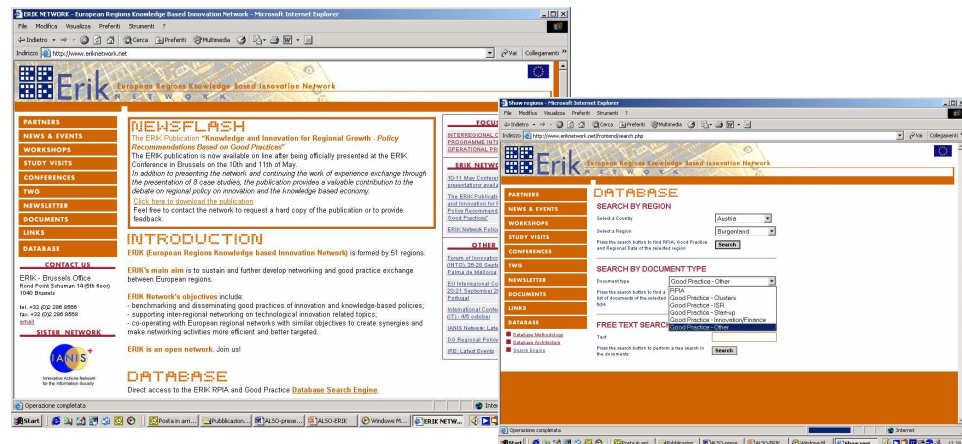
- Industry Science Relations led by Regione Emilia-Romagna
- Support for Start-Ups and Spin-offs led by Niederösterreich
- Clusters and Business Networks led by West Midlands
- Innovation Finance led by Småland med Öarna



11 Study visits, 8 Workshops and 3 International Conferences involving more than 1,000 regional innovation actors



- **Web-site** with around 57,000 visitors per year
- **Database** containing over 50 good practices – presented as critical analysis including factors such as regional participation, levels of innovation, sustainability and transferability
- **ERIK publications** - Contribution to the debate on regional policy on the theme of innovation and the knowledge based economy



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The Commissioner for Regional Policy, Hübner, states that:

- key drivers of economic growth are active at sub-national level, where businesses interact with one another and with centres of learning and technology
- regional policies on innovation and research have their own specificities and, in this, are complementary to national and European initiatives
- Regional policies increase the effectiveness of research and innovation and can play a real part in facilitating the achievement of the renewed Lisbon agenda





- ERIK was created within a context which recognises ever more the regional importance in the European framework for innovation and knowledge
- ERIK addressed issues facing regions in innovating and building a knowledge-based society
- ERIK created an extensive network of regions bringing practitioners together and exchanging knowledge, learning, identifying effective solutions and measures

***Philosophy:*** *By working together and sharing experiences, regions can help themselves and each other, learn from innovation “masters”, boost common knowledge and help reduce disparities*





### Strengths

Collaboration and exchange among regions

**Focus on real, pressing, long-term challenge**

Dynamic and flexible structure

**Long operation time with variety of activities and skill transfer**

TWGs: clear goals but allow flexibility

### Weaknesses

**Lack of complementary concrete actions**

Organisational, work distribution + communication challenges

Several other EU policy study networks exist

**No tool to ensure participation and commitment from regional policy makers**

### Opportunities

Recent EU enlargement and new EU programming period

**Experience in large network experiments**

**Knowledge repository accelerate experience and GP transfer**

Dynamism and adaptability allows evolution and expansion of ERIK Network in new form

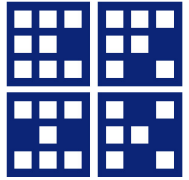
### Threats

Possible EU policy changes and budget limitations

**Changes or differences in national strategies can impede regional freedom/commitment**

Human/organisational changes in regional structures can impact policy lines and priorities



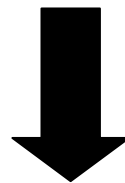


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## A tool for the Lisbon Strategy? *Fundamental Features of Networks*



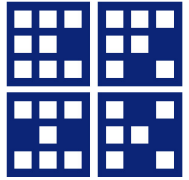
- Learning from excellence and from mistakes in pro active environments
  - Ensuring basic services to members
  - Moving towards concrete actions
    - Ensuring growth
    - Ensuring a future



# **CAPITALISATION**

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## The future of Networks as a tool for the Lisbon Strategy?



- Use EU funding to kick start initiatives but **help regional actors to stand on their own feet**
- Spend effort throughout a network lifespan on ensuring **sustainability**
- Ensure that work does not remain at a theoretical level but **moves towards exchange for precise, well-defined purposes and concrete actions**
- **Mainstream** innovative programmes and experimentation of innovative approaches

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For more information:

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