ERRIN European Regions Research and Innovation Network

ERRIN's response to the Open Public Consultation for the new European climate resilience framework:

Strengthening Mission-Oriented, Place-Based and Competitive Climate Resilience in Europe

Climate Resilience as a Structural Pillar of European Competitiveness

Europe is entering a decisive decade in which climate resilience will shape not only environmental sustainability, but also economic security, social cohesion and global competitiveness. **Climate resilience cannot be treated as a mere complementary environmental objective. It must become a structural pillar of Europe's long-term competitiveness and territorial cohesion.**

The forthcoming European Climate Resilience Framework provides a unique opportunity to shift from reactive crisis management towards a proactive, anticipatory and systemic approach. Climate resilience must be embedded by design across EU legislation, funding instruments and governance structures, ensuring that future climate conditions are systematically integrated into policy-making, investment planning and territorial development strategies.

ERRIN supports a **mission-oriented, place-based approach** that connects EU strategic objectives with regional and local implementation, recognising resilience as both a risk management necessity and a driver of innovation and market creation.

Institutionalising the Mission Approach

The EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change has demonstrated that mission-oriented governance effectively translates EU ambition into territorial action. It has:

- Strengthened multi-level coordination and local ecosystem building
- Embedded climate risk into planning and investment decisions
- Supported experimentation and scaling of innovative solutions
- Enhanced regional implementation capacity

Beyond risk reduction, the Mission contributes directly to competitiveness. Enabling public authorities to act as first movers creates a stable demand for resilience solutions and strengthens territorial innovation ecosystems.

The Climate Resilience Framework must structurally integrate and scale up the Mission approach. Sustained funding and strong alignment with post-2027 instruments, including the future European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), are essential to ensure a clear investment journey from research and piloting to large-scale deployment.

Regions as Co-Designers and Strategic Actors

Climate risks vary significantly across territories and affect social groups differently depending on exposure, vulnerability and adaptive capacity. Effective adaptation requires structured multi-level governance and a strong place-based approach.

Regions and cities must be formally recognised as **co-designers and co-implementers** of adaptation strategies, with a clear division of responsibilities and adequate financial and technical support.

Resilience objectives should be embedded across EU legislation, national climate and energy planning frameworks, and territorial development policies, including:

- EU and national climate and energy governance frameworks (such as National Energy and Climate Plans and their upcoming revision), ensuring stronger alignment between mitigation, adaptation and resilience objectives
- Spatial and regional planning
- Infrastructure investment
- Smart Specialisation strategies
- Territorial innovation ecosystems

Climate risk management responsibilities assigned to regional and local authorities must be accompanied by adequate administrative capacity and predictable financial resources. Without sufficient support, less-resourced or highly exposed territories may face greater difficulties in implementation, potentially widening territorial disparities.

Climate Resilience by Design Across EU Policies and Legislation

The principle of **climate resilience by design** must be systematically embedded across:

- Research and innovation programmes (Horizon Europe and the upcoming Framework Programmes)
- The European Competitiveness Fund
- Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy and the planned National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)
- Infrastructure, energy and urban development legislation (aligning with the revision of the Governance Regulation on the Energy Union and Climate Action)

Forward-looking climate risk assessments must guide major public investments under the next MFF, while simplification and harmonisation should prevent disproportionate administrative burdens, particularly for smaller municipalities.

From Innovation to Deployment: Linking Resilience and Competitiveness

Climate resilience opens new markets in areas such as water management, regenerative agriculture, resilient infrastructure, climate services, insurance products and nature-based solutions. To unlock this potential, Europe needs a coherent investment pathway that ensures continuity from research and demonstration to territorial piloting, large-scale deployment and market uptake.

ERRIN calls for:

- Structural links between mission-oriented innovation and post-2027 competitiveness instruments
- Support within the ECF for deployment and scaling of adaptation solutions designed, and implemented under Horizon Europe and in particular Mission projects
- Enabling public authorities to act as coordinated first movers and buyers
- Stronger support for project preparation and development of bankable adaptation pipelines
- Recognising resilience as a strategic investment, strengthening Europe's economic security and long-term competitiveness.

Strengthening Climate Resilience Finance and Insurance

Scaling adaptation requires overcoming fragmented funding, limited administrative capacity, high upfront costs and market uncertainty. **Climate resilience investments should be treated as strategic preventive expenditure rather than reactive crisis spending.** ERRIN supports stronger coherence across EU, national, and regional instruments, greater flexibility for anticipatory investments, improved support for project preparation, and risk-sharing mechanisms to address insurance protection gaps.

Monitoring, Learning and Territorial Intelligence

Monitoring should rely on a limited number of outcome-based resilience indicators, jointly developed with regional and local authorities. Indicators should measure reductions in exposure and vulnerability, while remaining adaptable to territorial contexts. Improved methodologies to assess avoided losses, co-benefits and long-term economic returns are essential to strengthen the investment case for prevention.

The proposed EU climate risk information tool should prioritise harmonisation, interoperability and alignment with existing regional platforms. Rather than creating parallel systems, the EU should build a coherent **European climate intelligence architecture** that empowers regions as co-designers of resilience solutions.

Conclusion: Embedding Resilience in Europe's Competitiveness Architecture

Climate resilience is not only a risk-management exercise. It represents a broader societal transformation that combines innovation, governance reform, financial restructuring, and territorial development.

The European Climate Resilience Framework should:

- Institutionalise the mission-oriented approach
- Strengthen structured multi-level governance
- Embed resilience by design across EU policies and funding instruments
- Ensure coherent support framework with the post-2027 MFF, including through the European Competitiveness Fund
- Align with the revision of the Governance Regulation on the Energy Union and Climate Action

By structurally integrating resilience into Europe's competitiveness architecture, the EU can reduce long-term economic losses, enhance social cohesion, protect health and well-being, and position itself as a global leader in climate resilience innovation.

About ERRIN

ERRIN is a Brussels-based platform that brings together around 120 regional organisations from more than 20 European countries. Since 2001, it has served as a bridge between regions, EU institutions and stakeholders, thereby strengthening the regional and local dimensions of EU research and innovation policy. ERRIN supports collaboration and knowledge exchange through 15 Working Groups, ensuring that regional ecosystems are represented in EU-level initiatives and debates. Its place-based approach enables bottom-up innovation that is tailored, scalable and impactful.

ERRIN has been closely involved in the Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change since its inception, contributing to the Mission Charter, preparing input papers and facilitating dialogue with the Mission Secretariat. Through its Climate Adaptation and Resilience Working Group, ERRIN provides a platform for members to exchange on policy developments, access opportunities and engage in EU projects.

Evidence from ERRIN Projects

ERRIN and its members are actively involved in several Horizon Europe projects that directly contribute to climate resilience.
These initiatives demonstrate how regional ecosystems can co-create, test and scale adaptation solutions through mission-oriented, multi-level governance approaches:

- **RESIST** shows how regions can deploy and replicate science-based adaptation solutions across Europe through digital tools, participatory governance and cross-regional cooperation.
- **Pathways2Resilience** supports 100 regions and cities in developing systemic adaptation pathways and investment plans, linking governance reform with financial planning and project pipeline development.
- **AdaptationHubs** strengthens national coordination by establishing 27 National Adaptation Hubs, fostering peer learning, alignment of methodologies and improved access to EU climate tools.

Together, these experiences demonstrate the added value of structurally integrating mission-based approaches into the future European Climate Resilience Framework and scaling up territorial innovation ecosystems across Europe.

For more information on the input, please contact:

Gaia Marotta, ERRIN Project and Policy Manager, gaia.marotta@errin.eu