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# AN EIT STRATEGY TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

Budapest, February 2024



## INTRODUCTION

The [European Institute of Innovation & Technology \(EIT\)](#) is an independent body of the European Union (EU) set up in 2008 to accelerate Europe's capacity to innovate, by powering entrepreneurs and innovators to turn their best ideas into cutting-edge products and services, create new jobs, and accelerate sustainable economic growth. The EIT and its [Knowledge and Innovation Communities \(KICs\)](#), form Europe's largest innovation ecosystem, bringing together more than 2,400 leading partners across the business, higher education and research sectors.

Against the backdrop of persisting disparities in innovation performance across Europe, the EIT launched the [Regional Innovation Scheme \(EIT RIS\)](#) in 2014 to widen its regional outreach and to boost the innovation performance of countries with moderate or modest innovation scores as defined by the [European Innovation Scoreboard](#). Since its establishment, the EIT RIS has successfully expanded the length and breadth of EIT Community activities to more countries and regions across Europe. Any entity from an RIS-eligible country or region<sup>1</sup> can participate in EIT RIS activities which offers them an additional level of support, complimenting the EIT Community's vast portfolio of opportunities. In addition, the [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda \(SIA\) 2021-2027](#) prioritised enhancing the regional impact of the EIT KICs, including through an enhanced EIT RIS with an reinforced mandate, preferential conditions and increased financial resources, for which the EU Outermost Regions (OR) would be eligible for the entire programming period.

As enshrined in Article 349 of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union \(TFEU\)](#):

*“the European Union (EU) has nine ‘Outermost Regions’ (ORs): Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion and Saint Martin (France), the Canary Islands (Spain) and the Azores and Madeira (Portugal). The ORs are an integral part of the EU and must apply its laws and obligations”.*

Since 2004, several dedicated European Strategies have been drawn up to support the ORs in exploiting all opportunities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth based on their assets and endogenous potential; ensure that European policy frameworks contribute to reducing obstacles specific to the ORs' full integration into the single market; and increase recognition of the ORs as an asset, as well as of the need to consider their specificities and challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> RIS Eligible countries and regions 2021-2024: EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia. Horizon Europe Associated Countries: Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine. Outermost Regions: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain). From 2025, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Israel are expected to become RIS eligible.



The most recent of these is the [Communication of 3 May 2022](#), which reinforces the EU's commitment towards the ORs including in the research, innovation and smart specialisation fields. The Commission wholly recognises that boosting research and innovation can help the ORs capitalise on their assets and their fully integration into the [European Research Area \(ERA\)](#). The European Commission recognises that the ORs present great value assets and as a result, the [Horizon Europe Legislative Framework](#) takes into account the specific characteristics of the ORs. In turn, the ORs have updated and further developed their Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS<sup>3</sup>) for 2021-2027 to promote innovation in promising sectors such as agri-food, bio economy, sustainable blue economy, space, tourism or creative industries. With appropriate development strategies, reforms and investment, the gap with the rest of the EU can therefore be narrowed in the future.

The EIT recognises that the ORs hold immense and unique innovation assets, potential, fully aligned with the thematic fields covered by the EIT KICs, but also faces significant challenges and realities as highlighted in Annex I of this document. The EIT was especially established to address and overcome the various difficulties European innovators face. In the ORs the challenges faced by local innovators can often be even more outstanding. Using its unique place-based approach, the EIT Community is ideally placed to support the ORs by keeping talents in the Regions and allow them to grow there by tapping into the EIT's vast innovation network.

In this regard, this document presents a Strategy towards boosting the EIT Community's outreach and impact in the ORs during the current programming period. This Strategy will aim to contribute to the European Commission's goal to improve the ORs' access to excellence and overcome the innovation divide, help the OR capitalise on their assets and integrate them into the ERA. The Strategy is fully aligned with [EIT RIS Implementation Framework 2022-2027](#) and the mandate of the EIT SIA 2021-2027, together with the general EU provisions on the ORs, and in full complementary with the other EU-funded innovation capacity building initiatives for the ORs.

## EIT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

In 2023, the EIT conducted a mapping exercise of the EIT Community's activities and projects taking place in the EU ORs, the key findings of which are contained in Annex II of this document. The mapping demonstrated that, while the EIT Community currently has some strong activities in the EU ORs, there is ample room for improvement to better realise the territories' innovation potential by enhancing and expanding these activities, together with launching new ones. In general, the level of EIT engagement with the EU ORs has been rather unbalanced with some OR having benefitted strongly from the large array of opportunities offered by the EIT Community (especially the Canary Islands, Azores and Madeira), whilst others remain well below ambition. In this context, the EIT is strongly committed to boost its outreach to the EU ORs by building on and scaling up its current activities targeting their innovation ecosystems.



Whilst all EIT activities are open to OR participants, including highly relevant initiatives such as the [Deep Tech Talent Initiative](#), the [Girls Go Circular](#) and the [EIT Campus](#), in particular, the EIT aims to make best use of the following tools to achieve this goal: the enhanced EIT RIS, the Cross-KIC Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster and the post-pilot EIT Action to Support the Innovation Capacity of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

1. *EIT RIS*: Utilising a unique, place-based approach, which tailors activities to meet the local needs, the EIT RIS is ideally placed to foster the integration of a growing number of OR participants in the EIT KICs' activities. Through a bespoke set of instruments, the EIT RIS helps to strengthen the relationship with national, regional, and local innovation actors, including policymakers and SMEs, as well as establish links with RIS<sup>3</sup>s and with the activities of thematic platforms and inter-regional initiatives, including with European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Managing Authorities. The EIT KIC are encouraged to consider the ORs' unique characteristics and specificities and, based on this, establish new or widen existing RIS activities, specifically tailored or highly relevant to the ORs, include initiatives such as:
  - innovation support programmes for early-stage development as well as innovation projects with lead and participation of the entities from the ORs, support a growing number of start-ups and innovators from the EU ORs to effectively scale-up and elevate the outputs and outcomes of their innovation activities on the pan-European level;
  - programmes supporting human capital through the development of innovation and entrepreneurial skills, facilitating transfer of good practices demonstrating development and implementation of new innovation delivery mechanism and innovation ecosystems;
  - offering preferential conditions for OR Universities or other HEIs, research organisations, and businesses, including start-ups, to boost the number of OR-based partners in the EIT Community;
  - supporting the access to scientific outcomes and strengthening technology transfer capacities in OR-based research organisations and universities so as to enable research results to lead to marketable innovative products and services;
  - tailored fund-raising programme to ensure access to finance for start-ups from the ORs;
  - initiatives to overcome barriers to student recruitment and joint programming in the OR as well as preparing the pipeline to higher education and high value jobs and start-ups, by enhancing the appeal of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) with a special focus on gender balanced participation;
  - activities which help enhance primary and secondary education workers with upskilling and reskilling programmes;
  - instruments which ensure more balanced gender representation among the beneficiaries of the EIT programmes, not least to attract OR-based women to areas



where they are still underrepresented such as ICT, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, as well as, closing the entrepreneurial gender gap.

2. *Cross-KIC Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster*: Working together as an EIT Community, the 9 EIT KICs participating in the Cross-KIC Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster already offer a plethora of opportunities to OR innovators. Top amongst these is the [EIT Jumpstarter](#). The EIT Jumpstarter supports early-stage idea holders from across the EIT RIS-eligible geographic area, including the ORs, to turn their research results into commercially viable products and services and start their DeepTech venture. Through the EIT Jumpstarter, ventures are offered tailored trainings and mentoring which help them to validate their business model and prepare them for the next steps in their entrepreneurial journey. At the end of the programme, there is a Grand Final, in the form of a pitch contest, with the first-place winners receiving a €10,000 prize. The potential of the EIT Jumpstarter to support the OR was evidenced by the fact that during the EIT Jumpstarter Grand Final held on 30 November 2023, [DeepWaves](#), from Réunion, won second prize (worth €5,000) in the EIT RawMaterials category. The Cluster is encouraged to rolled-out a dedicated pre-Jumpstarter support initiative for the ORs to help provide potential applicants from the Regions with an additional level of support. The Cluster should also consider new or widening existing EIT Community activities aimed at supporting a growing number of OR innovators, including a dedicated OR section on its website which is due to be launched in February 2024.
3. *EIT Action to Support the Innovation Capacity of HEIs*: This Action, which was launched in 2021, aims to support European HEIs' need to be innovative and entrepreneurial. Through the Action, the EIT will support HEIs with funding, expertise and coaching to develop economic activities. It will build on successful initiatives like HEInnovate and Regional Innovation Impact Assessment Framework and will design and launch activities in countries with lower innovation capacity, including all Western Balkan economies. The Action exploits the EIT model and the EIT KICs' knowledge base and know-how. Projects are selected through open calls. With the level of OR HEI engagement with the EIT Community remaining below potential and given that most of the funding under this Action will go to HEIs which are not currently partners of the EIT KIC, this tool is especially well adapted at supporting HEIs based in the ORs.

The EIT will closely monitor the ORs' participation in EIT activities in the years ahead and will also study the outcome of the planned mid-term evaluation of the EIT RIS which will take place in the first half of 2024, with a view to providing additional strategic guidance to the EIT KIC with a view to boosting engagement with the ORs, including through additional tools apart from those listed above. In addition, the EIT seeks to utilise the momentum created by the publication of this Strategy to, firstly, work towards a strengthened dialogue with the local authorities in the EU ORs themselves which, in turn, leads to a stronger presence of the EIT Community in these territories, facilitates greater participation of ORs residents in the EIT KICs programmes and, resultingly, supports the enhancement of local innovation ecosystems in these territories, which fully complements and is synergetic with the ORs regional and local level priorities.



## **ACTION LINES / IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH FOR STRENGTHENED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS**

The EIT KICs should work with local Knowledge Triangle (KT) stakeholders at national and regional level, including financial and public institutions, as well as citizens, to better coordinate their relations and raise awareness and share best practise from the KTI model. The EIT KICs on-the-ground offices covering France, Spain and Portugal, including the new EIT Community RIS Hubs, will play an important role on the OR EIT Awareness efforts. By exhibiting a portfolio of good practices and success stories, the EIT KICs can demonstrate to local authorities that they can capitalise on the EIT Community expertise, network, market access and funding opportunities in the field of education, business, and innovation. In this context, the EIT KICs should identify and initiate joint projects and pilots with local KT stakeholders based on the EIT's unique KT Integration approach.

In implementing this Strategy, the EIT KICs are invited to develop activities within the following four action lines aimed at increased outreach with the EU ORs and achieving the objectives of the Strategy. The following action lines are interlinked and should not be considered in isolation. Close coordination with the EIT Headquarters is essential in developing these activities.

### **1. AWARENESS RAISING AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**

To ensure wide participation of the EU ORs in the EIT RIS, it is essential to increase its visibility and raise awareness and interest of the EIT Community among relevant stakeholders on the ground. In particular, the EIT Community should increase the visibility of the EIT RIS among higher education institutions, research institutions and enterprises in the ORs not yet working directly with the EIT Community, as well as to other relevant stakeholders such as OR local and regional authorities , together with national authorities of France, Portugal and Spain, since these they are the main entry point of information about EU funding opportunities for potential beneficiaries on the ground.

In this regard, the following action points shall be considered by all members of the EIT Community in better engaging with the ORs: participate in joint awareness days in interested the ORs as part of cross-KIC EIT RIS activities, in cooperation with the EIT and the EIT NCPs. Participate in workshops, conferences, events, etc. organised by other EU programmes and organisations, to raise awareness of the EIT RIS. Participation in workshops, conferences and events organised by local R&I authorities and local organisations. Organisation of an EIT roadshow specifically targeting the EU ORs to increase awareness of the EIT Community, and the opportunities offered. Provide info sessions about the EIT Community to the local authorities and R&I institutions to further disseminate EIT Community opportunities and act as multipliers.



In addition, the EIT KICs may wish to consider supporting the networking and building of strategic partnerships between local KT actors, innovation ecosystems and between entities from EIT RIS countries and regions.

## 2. CENTRALISED EIT POINTS OF INFORMATION FOR THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

By the end 2025, at the latest, EIT Community RIS Hubs will be established in France, Spain and Portugal, respectively. The EIT Community RIS Hubs in Spain and Portugal will aim to integrate the EIT KICs' on-the-ground presence in these countries and will also be responsible for engagement with the Spanish and Portuguese ORs respectively. A dedicated EIT Community RIS Hub will also be established in France to engage with the French ORs. These EIT Community RIS Hubs will serve as:

- i. a centralised source of information on all services and opportunities provided by the entire EIT Community, both locally and more widely;
- ii. a gateway to all EIT KICs, attracting and engaging an increasing number of participants into EIT Community activities;
- iii. spearhead for the EIT Community's engagement with local authorities, including providing policy support and expertise as required.

The EIT Community RIS Hubs shall also serve to:

- identify local sectorial challenges, in line with KIC thematic areas, to address these, building on the EIT KICs' different programmes and initiatives;
- identify local innovation ecosystems strengths and opportunities, that can be of EIT KIC interest with a view to spearhead engagement;
- roll-out, tailored, joint EIT Community capacity building and outreach activities, tapping into the unique potential of each OR;
- bridge the EIT Community to other countries and regions neighbouring the OR, as appropriate, and in line with the EIT's [Global Outreach Programme](#).

## 3. FOSTER EIT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND CROSS-KIC SYNERGIES

In implementing the EIT Strategy for the EU ORs, efforts should be made to establish synergies between the EIT KICs, and relevant EIT Community initiatives and programmes. To drive this, the Cross-KIC Strategic Regional Innovation Cluster should function as a platform for KIC interaction and coordination of EIT OR support activities to ensure efficiency and avoid fragmentation of efforts among KIC activities. Furthermore, the Cluster, with support from the EIT should facilitate the process of reaching out to OR stakeholders in a joint and coordinated manner, based on the common KTI approach, and thereby ensure the coherent representation of the EIT Community in the EU ORs.



In addition, the EIT KICs must develop mechanisms to integrate those from the EU ORs who benefited from business creation, education, namely graduates from EIT Label Programmes and innovation activities to join their respective Alumni communities and, as a result, enable them to become part of their interdisciplinary and multicultural network bringing together professionals from different EU ORs and sectors. The EIT KICs may wish to liaise with Alumni from the EU ORs to inspire other participants of these regions and show the added value of participating in EIT Community activities.

#### **4. SYNERGIES WITHIN HORIZON EUROPE AND OTHER EU, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL PROGRAMMES**

In implementing the present Strategy, efforts should be made to establish synergies between the EIT KICs, and relevant initiatives, programmes, and instruments at EU, national, regional, and local levels. In this context, the EIT KICs should, in coordination with the EIT, strive to increase the use of existing EU information networks (including the [Enterprise Europe Network](#)) with the aim of ensuring the provision of better advice and guidance to potential partners. The KICs are also encouraged to approach relevant authorities in the EU ORs, in coordination with the EIT, and where appropriate using the knowledge present in the EIT Community / RIS Hubs, with a view to strengthening links with RIS<sup>3</sup>, leverage ESIF and establish possible synergies with national or regional initiatives. In addition, exploring ways to establish synergies with other Horizon Europe initiatives, such as [COST](#), to pool resources and deliver a higher level of impact in the EU ORs is encouraged. A Cross-KIC approach is also highly recommended in this regard. The EIT will facilitate the process, when requested, through its contact with the European Commission at institutional level, as well as, through other direct contacts as relevant.

#### **5. ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY OUTERMOST REGIONS POLITICAL STAKEHOLDERS**

With support from the EIT Liaison Office in Brussels and, as necessary, in coordination with the European Commission, efforts will be made to, as appropriate, outreach and better engage with key representatives of the ORs in Brussels including Members of the European Parliament from the ORs and the ORs Attachés at the Permanent Representations of France, Portugal and Spain to the EU, with a view to raise awareness, foster engagement and further fine-tune the EIT's tailored offerings to the ORs. Efforts will also be made to engage with the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions (CPRUP), as appropriate. Engagement with the French, Portuguese and Spanish [national authorities](#), including on OR-related matters, will also continue via the EIT National Contact Point network and the EIT Member States Representative Group.

## **CONCLUSION**

The OR enjoy a unique set of assets, fully in line with the thematic priorities of the EIT KICs, ripe for unlocking. At the same time, due to their geographic location, remoteness, insularity, small size, vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events and, at times, a perceived general lack of





awareness of European Funds available for them, the OR face very specific but permanent constraints to their development. The ORs also harbour the EU's highest unemployment rates and lowest Gross Domestic Product.

By means of this Strategy, which is fully in line with the EU's and the EIT's own strategic priorities, the EIT is concretely demonstrating its commitment to contribute towards the ORs seizing their potential, as well as support them in overcoming the challenges and realities they face – a role the EIT is uniquely and exceptionally well-placed to fulfil. Considering the common challenges faced by the ORs, the EIT has gone for a multi-dimensional approach utilising the most effective instruments in its toolbox. This approach will aim to not only tackle specific obstacles but also cultivate a culture of innovation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing within the ORs. The EIT is confident that by strategically supporting the OR in addressing their challenges, the ORs can harness their considerable potential and make substantial contributions to European research and innovation endeavours.

The implementation of this Strategy will be monitored by the EIT via its now well-established EIT monitoring and evaluation methodology of Business Plan assessment, EIT KIC Reporting, annual EIT KIC monitoring and punctual intervention whenever an issue is identified at any point during the cycle. The EIT will consider updating and / or integrating this Strategy within the revised EIT RIS Implementation Framework in 2024, to reflect any findings from the 2024 EIT RIS mid-term evaluation.

## ANNEXES

- **Annex 1:** Overview of the EU Outermost Regions Innovation Ecosystems
- **Annex 2:** Mapping of EIT Community Activities in the EU Outermost regions



## THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS' INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS<sup>1</sup>

The European Union (EU) Outermost regions (ORs) are a diverse and dynamic part of the EU, each characterised by unique demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic realities. The ORs vary in terms of their demographic weight within the EU, socio-economic development, and geographical proximity to the European continent, as recognised in the Commission Communication “Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU’s outermost regions” ([COM\(2022\) 198](#)) and also in the September 2022 [European Parliamentary Research Service Briefing on the OR](#). In 2023, the EIT conducted an exploratory consultation in the form of a survey with different local OR actors from across the Knowledge Triangle, to better understand the current status of the EU ORs innovation ecosystems.

Based on the results of the survey, as well as on additional desk research, the EIT shared the conclusions of the H2020-Forward project and Outermost Regions' research and innovation experts<sup>2</sup>

1. The Outermost Regions Research and Innovation ecosystems differs in aspects such as the number of existing research groups and organisations in each Region, the percentage of active population in the fields of research and technology, the number of Higher Education students, and percentage of population that have attained tertiary education, as well as number of private organisations involved in Research and Innovation activities. For example, the Portuguese ORs have demonstrated impressive EU contribution per capita for Research and Innovation projects, despite lower percentages of tertiary education attainment and fewer research groups.
2. The participation of the ORs in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, some ORs have obtained more in Horizon 2020 – expressed in global contribution or EU contribution per capita – than other EU regions with similar characteristics, challenging the notion that geographic or socioeconomic conditions hinder participation. In this sense, the main barriers for ORs' participation in EU Research and Innovation programmes are of political and strategic nature, such as lack of connection to major European Research and Innovation networks, limited support by EU, national and regional public policies, and limited numbers of regional organisations which actively participate in EU Funded Research and Innovation activities.

<sup>1</sup> This annex presents the analysis developed by La Réunion Europe Office, Nexa.

<sup>2</sup> Holstein Philippe, & Tarnus Evelyne. Outermost regions in the European Research Area. (2023) <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8098707>.



3. Regarding the OR's key fields of expertise in research and innovation production, these encompass health, applied medical technologies, diagnostics, and therapies; social sciences and social innovation; Earth, space, and universe sciences, including space technologies; information and communications technology; climate change and energy transition; agriculture, fisheries, applied life sciences, biotechnology, and biosystems engineering; biodiversity conservation and restoration, marine sciences and technologies, manufacturing and aerospace, and IT applied to tourism among others. These strengths are based on their natural assets and small-economy features, such as such as human capital, sector specialization, biodiversity, renewable energy potential or the existence of extensive maritime economic zones, which is indicative of the EU ORs capacity to develop research and innovation activities building their assets and competitive advantages.
4. Since 2014, the ORs have also been designing, implementing and updating their respective RIS3s, which aim at concentrating regional resources on a number of innovation priorities to reach a critical mass and build competitive advantages, that will contribute to the transformation of the economy and the development of new, diversified sources of prosperity and jobs. These strategies are complemented by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and other EU funding mechanisms, national and regional funds reinforcing research, innovation, and entrepreneurship efforts. Furthermore, the public sector has played a significant role in driving innovation by facilitating collaboration among academia, industry, and government in the ORs.
5. Whilst the ORs are not homogeneous, some common challenges among the EU ORs are evidently present. These include limited and heterogeneous research and innovation systems, a need for greater attention to knowledge-based economies or limited participation in EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. Their geographic location offers opportunities such as rich natural resources, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, but simultaneously presents vulnerabilities tied to climate change and environmental sustainability. Efforts at EU, national, and regional level are essential to address these challenges, facilitate EU ORs' participation in EU Research and Innovation activities and networks, and capitalize on their unique assets and Research and Innovation capacity areas. These fields underscore the diverse and evolving nature of the ORs' innovation ecosystems, offering opportunities for growth, collaboration, and specialization.



# EIT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

MAPPING

Budapest | 2023

## EIT RAWMATERIALS

EIT RawMaterials currently doesn't have specific activities focused on the Outermost Regions, but they have some activities ongoing with Canary Islands.

- La Palma Research Centre, a think-tank on geosciences, is a partner of EIT RawMaterials. They have been involved in several project with the KIC, these are listed in the table below.

Project Title	Project Type	Partner
Encouraging Girls to Study Geosciences and Engineering	Wide Society Learning	La Palma Research Centre
MOBI-US: structured mobilities for ESEE raw materials master programs	RIS Capacity Building	La Palma Research Centre
UNEXMIN Upscaling	Upscaling	La Palma Research Centre
TIMREX - T-Shaped Master Programme for Innovative Mineral Resource Exploration	Master Education	La Palma Research Centre
Raw Materials Value Chain	Master Education	La Palma Research Centre



## EIT INNOENERGY

KIC InnoEnergy SE	Project Description	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start- finish date)
<p><b>[Cross KIC HEI Initiative]</b> <b>INCORE Project</b></p>	<p>INCORE is one of the selected projects of the HEI Initiative. INCORE boosts innovation and entrepreneurial capacity in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Europe's Outermost Regions (ORs) by seizing region-specific contextual and business opportunities. INCORE's Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP) will expand the ability of HEIs to innovate and better integrate with their regional innovation ecosystems. INCORE has a specific focus on Europe's ORs, and its mission is to trigger a fundamental transformation of the region's entrepreneurial and innovation capacity on all levels.</p> <p>Central to the INCORE IVAP is the need to improve the framework conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs, in particular high-tech start-ups) and HEIs to co-create new value, businesses, products, and services. A key objective of the INCORE IVAP is to transform the ways start-ups/SMEs and HEIs interact with each other via cooperation and co-creation. Our aim is to introduce a new set of sweeping measures and actions that will substantially increase entrepreneurial capacity of the participating HEIs at the institutional level. The pathway laid out by the INCORE IVAP will trigger systemic, transformational change, strengthening the integration and contribution of higher education institutions to the entire innovation ecosystem of their regions.</p>	<p><b>France:</b> Reunion Island</p> <p><b>Portugal:</b> Madeira and Azores Islands</p> <p><b>Spain:</b> Canary Islands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LPRC</li> <li>● Trisolaris</li> <li>● UEC</li> <li>● UMA</li> <li>● U. Réunion</li> </ul>	<p>From: 01-07-2021</p> <p>To: 30-06-2023</p>

Future activities (2023 onwards)

Name of KIC here	Project Name	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start-finish date)
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[Cross KIC HEI Initiative] INCORE Project	The HEI INCORE project runs until June 2023.	<b>France:</b> Reunion Island  <b>Portugal:</b> Madeira and Azores Islands  <b>Spain:</b> Canary Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LPRC</li> <li>• Trisolaris</li> <li>• UEC</li> <li>• UMA</li> <li>• U. Réunion</li> </ul>	From: 01-07-2021  To: 30-06-2023
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## EIT CLIMATE-KIC

EIT Climate-KIC	Project Description	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start-finish date)
<b>InnoFinRES: Innovative financial models to support a transition to renewable energy sources</b>	<p>The aim of this project is to create a novel financing model to facilitate the transition to renewable energy sources (RES). The model will be based on best practices for community financing and impact investing for local government. By retrofitting a kindergarten with PVT hybrid collectors, the viability of the novel technology will be demonstrated by showing actualized savings over a period of time. The project will enable local government to approach retrofit and decentralized energy from a new financial perspective by offsetting the costs of such interventions through crowdsourcing and similar partnerships and using the effectuated savings to push further the transition to RES. Scalability will be ensured by offering the process for creating the model as a product to other</p>	Gran Canaria	P545 - SmartUp – Social Innovation Lab Skopje P648 - KLIK, energetska zadruga P735 - Macedonian Solar Energy Association, Solar Macedonia <b>P736 - Consejo Insular De La Energía De Gran Canaria</b> PX740 - Municipality Of Ilinden PX744 - Korimako	01-09-2022 till 31-12-2022



	local governments and similar entities.			
<b>EnerBuild: Democratise the process of energy consumption optimization by means of smart building technologies and industrial IoT.</b>	<p>The project aims to mitigate climate change by optimizing energy consumption by means of smart building technologies and industrial IoT, as well as by monitoring the environment and air quality in the building for compliance with standards. The project envisages combined deployment of the industrial IoT platform HiPerWare by BPS International (Germany) and the intelligent maintenance management platform ('IMMP') by Infraspak (Portugal) at a pilot building provided by the Cabildo de Gran Canaria (Spain). The combined solution will track and analyze utility systems of the pilot building by collecting Big Data on their operation, with the creation of a live digital twin, detecting abnormal behavior and providing data-based optimization recommendations. These recommendations will be managed by the innovative IMMP by Infraspak, leading to significant improvement in energy consumption, reduction of equipment downtime, and optimizing operational performance.</p>	Gran Canaria	<p><b>P736 - Consejo Insular De La Energía De Gran Canaria</b> P545 - SmartUp – Social Innovation Lab Skopje P560 - Finnova Foundation P733 BPS International GmbH - BPS International GmbH P734 - Infraspak, S.A.</p>	15-08-2022 till 31-12-2022



## EIT HEALTH

### Plans for future activities

Currently, EIT Health RIS has no activities or active partners on the ORs, however, there is potential in expanding some of their programmes to the ORs.

Name of KIC here	Project Name	ORs Region(s) covered	Programming Period (start-finish date)
EIT Health InnoStars	RIS Investment Track	Madeira The Azores Canary Islands	04.2023 – 30.11.2023
EIT Health InnoStars	RIS Validation Track	Madeira The Azores Canary Islands	02.2024 – 30.11.2024
EIT Health InnoStars	DRIVE training for local health accelerators	Madeira The Azores Canary Islands	10.04.2023 – 29.11.2023





## EIT FOOD

EIT Food	Project Description	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start-finish date)
EIT Food Startup Awareness Events 2020, 2021, 2022	<p>Event conferences and workshops were held in five EIT RIS countries without EIT Food Hub representation. Organizations developing these activities were chosen through an open and transparent selection open call process. The main goal of the events was to introduce EIT Food programs and activities to and innovation ecosystem the local agrifood and scout for potential participants of EIT Food entrepreneurship programs.</p> <p>The events also aim to bring together the members of the local agrifood ecosystem and initiate the discussion about the current state and challenges of the ecosystem in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship, including representatives of business, academia and public authorities.</p> <p>During the workshops participants developed a set of skills including the Entrepreneurship and Problem Solving from EIT Food Competency Framework. They learned about main elements of entrepreneurial and startup building processes, identified major challenges to turn them into business ideas, developed the ideas regarding various marketing related tasks and pitched them to potential investors.</p>	<p>Martinique</p> <p>(the coverage of the call included the possibility to develop the event in countries where EIT Food does not have a Hub established, for these reason activities ere also organized in Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Ukraine, Cyprus, Malta)</p>	<p>All activities were developed under a subcontracting agreement with the following organizations:</p> <p>Village by CA Martinique-Guyane, from Martinique-Guyane</p> <p>Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje – Institute of Agriculture from North Macedonia</p> <p>NVO Zeleni dom – Green Home from Montenegro</p> <p>BD-SS Way Forward for Cyprus Innovation (CyprusInno), from Cyprus</p>	<p>September – November 2020 - 2021-2022</p>

### Future activities

Name of KIC here	Project Name	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start-finish date)
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<p>EIT Food Startup Awareness Events</p>	<p>An open and transparent process will be open to select organizations to develop awareness startups events along 2023. The main goal of the events will be to introduce EIT Food programs and activities to and innovation ecosystem the local agrifood and scout for potential participants of EIT Food entrepreneurship programs. The events will also aim to bring together the members of the local agrifood ecosystem and initiate 3 4 the discussion about the current state and challenges of the ecosystem in relation to innovation and entrepreneurship. The selection process is implemented as an open call managed by EIT Food, Co-Location Centres NorthEast and South, using clear and transparent selection criteria.</p>	<p><b>Outermost regions:</b> <b>Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain)</b></p>	<p>The call for organizations will be open to partners and non partners. <b>(The objective is having organizations form at least 2 different Outermost regions developing these events in 2023)</b></p>	<p>September – November 2023</p>
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## THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS' INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS<sup>1</sup>

The European Union (EU) Outermost regions (ORs) are a diverse and dynamic part of the EU, each characterised by unique demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic realities. The ORs vary in terms of their demographic weight within the EU, socio-economic development, and geographical proximity to the European continent, as recognised in the Commission Communication “Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU’s outermost regions” ([COM\(2022\) 198](#)) and also in the September 2022 [European Parliamentary Research Service Briefing on the OR](#). In 2023, the EIT conducted an exploratory consultation in the form of a survey with different local OR actors from across the Knowledge Triangle, to better understand the current status of the EU ORs innovation ecosystems.

Based on the results of the survey, as well as on additional desk research, the EIT shared the conclusions of the [H2020-Forward project](#) and Outermost Regions' research and innovation experts<sup>2</sup>

1. The Outermost Regions Research and Innovation ecosystems differs in aspects such as the number of existing research groups and organisations in each Region, the percentage of active population in the fields of research and technology, the number of Higher Education students, and percentage of population that have attained tertiary education, as well as number of private organisations involved in Research and Innovation activities. For example, the Portuguese ORs have demonstrated impressive EU contribution per capita for Research and Innovation projects, despite lower percentages of tertiary education attainment and fewer research groups.
2. The participation of the ORs in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation, some ORs have obtained more in Horizon 2020 – expressed in global contribution or EU contribution per capita – than other EU regions with similar characteristics, challenging the notion that geographic or socioeconomic conditions hinder participation. In this sense, the main barriers for ORs' participation in EU Research and Innovation programmes are of political and strategic nature, such as lack of connection to major European Research and Innovation networks, limited support by EU, national and regional public policies, and limited numbers of regional organisations which actively participate in EU Funded Research and Innovation activities.

<sup>1</sup> This annex presents the analysis developed by La Réunion Europe Office, Nexa.

<sup>2</sup> Holstein Philippe, & Tarnus Evelyne. Outermost regions in the European Research Area. (2023) <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8098707>.



3. Regarding the OR's key fields of expertise in research and innovation production, these encompass health, applied medical technologies, diagnostics, and therapies; social sciences and social innovation; Earth, space, and universe sciences, including space technologies; information and communications technology; climate change and energy transition; agriculture, fisheries, applied life sciences, biotechnology, and biosystems engineering; biodiversity conservation and restoration, marine sciences and technologies, manufacturing and aerospace, and IT applied to tourism among others. These strengths are based on their natural assets and small-economy features, such as such as human capital, sector specialization, biodiversity, renewable energy potential or the existence of extensive maritime economic zones, which is indicative of the EU ORs capacity to develop research and innovation activities building their assets and competitive advantages.
4. Since 2014, the ORs have also been designing, implementing and updating their respective RIS3s, which aim at concentrating regional resources on a number of innovation priorities to reach a critical mass and build competitive advantages, that will contribute to the transformation of the economy and the development of new, diversified sources of prosperity and jobs. These strategies are complemented by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and other EU funding mechanisms, national and regional funds reinforcing research, innovation, and entrepreneurship efforts. Furthermore, the public sector has played a significant role in driving innovation by facilitating collaboration among academia, industry, and government in the ORs.
5. Whilst the ORs are not homogeneous, some common challenges among the EU ORs are evidently present. These include limited and heterogeneous research and innovation systems, a need for greater attention to knowledge-based economies or limited participation in EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. Their geographic location offers opportunities such as rich natural resources, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, but simultaneously presents vulnerabilities tied to climate change and environmental sustainability. Efforts at EU, national, and regional level are essential to address these challenges, facilitate EU ORs' participation in EU Research and Innovation activities and networks, and capitalize on their unique assets and Research and Innovation capacity areas. These fields underscore the diverse and evolving nature of the ORs' innovation ecosystems, offering opportunities for growth, collaboration, and specialization.



# EIT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN THE EU OUTERMOST REGIONS

MAPPING

Budapest | 2023

## EIT RAWMATERIALS

EIT RawMaterials currently doesn't have specific activities focused on the Outermost Regions, but they have some activities ongoing with Canary Islands.

- La Palma Research Centre, a think-tank on geosciences, is a partner of EIT RawMaterials. They have been involved in several project with the KIC, these are listed in the table below.

Project Title	Project Type	Partner
Encouraging Girls to Study Geosciences and Engineering	Wide Society Learning	La Palma Research Centre
MOBI-US: structured mobilities for ESEE raw materials master programs	RIS Capacity Building	La Palma Research Centre
UNEXMIN Upscaling	Upscaling	La Palma Research Centre
TIMREX - T-Shaped Master Programme for Innovative Mineral Resource Exploration	Master Education	La Palma Research Centre
Raw Materials Value Chain	Master Education	La Palma Research Centre



## EIT INNOENERGY

KIC InnoEnergy SE	Project Description	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start- finish date)
<p><b>[Cross KIC HEI Initiative]</b> <b>INCORE Project</b></p>	<p>INCORE is one of the selected projects of the HEI Initiative. INCORE boosts innovation and entrepreneurial capacity in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Europe's Outermost Regions (ORs) by seizing region-specific contextual and business opportunities. INCORE's Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP) will expand the ability of HEIs to innovate and better integrate with their regional innovation ecosystems. INCORE has a specific focus on Europe's ORs, and its mission is to trigger a fundamental transformation of the region's entrepreneurial and innovation capacity on all levels.</p> <p>Central to the INCORE IVAP is the need to improve the framework conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs, in particular high-tech start-ups) and HEIs to co-create new value, businesses, products, and services. A key objective of the INCORE IVAP is to transform the ways start-ups/SMEs and HEIs interact with each other via cooperation and co-creation. Our aim is to introduce a new set of sweeping measures and actions that will substantially increase entrepreneurial capacity of the participating HEIs at the institutional level. The pathway laid out by the INCORE IVAP will trigger systemic, transformational change, strengthening the integration and contribution of higher education institutions to the entire innovation ecosystem of their regions.</p>	<p><b>France:</b> Reunion Island</p> <p><b>Portugal:</b> Madeira and Azores Islands</p> <p><b>Spain:</b> Canary Islands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LPRC</li> <li>● Trisolaris</li> <li>● UEC</li> <li>● UMA</li> <li>● U. Réunion</li> </ul>	<p>From: 01-07-2021</p> <p>To: 30-06-2023</p>

Future activities (2023 onwards)

Name of KIC here	Project Name	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start-finish date)
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[Cross KIC HEI Initiative] INCORE Project	The HEI INCORE project runs until June 2023.	<b>France:</b> Reunion Island  <b>Portugal:</b> Madeira and Azores Islands  <b>Spain:</b> Canary Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LPRC</li> <li>• Trisolaris</li> <li>• UEC</li> <li>• UMA</li> <li>• U. Réunion</li> </ul>	From: 01-07-2021  To: 30-06-2023
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## EIT CLIMATE-KIC

EIT Climate-KIC	Project Description	ORs Region(s) covered	Partners	Programming Period (start-finish date)
<b>InnoFinRES: Innovative financial models to support a transition to renewable energy sources</b>	<p>The aim of this project is to create a novel financing model to facilitate the transition to renewable energy sources (RES). The model will be based on best practices for community financing and impact investing for local government. By retrofitting a kindergarten with PVT hybrid collectors, the viability of the novel technology will be demonstrated by showing actualized savings over a period of time. The project will enable local government to approach retrofit and decentralized energy from a new financial perspective by offsetting the costs of such interventions through crowdsourcing and similar partnerships and using the effectuated savings to push further the transition to RES. Scalability will be ensured by offering the process for creating the model as a product to other</p>	Gran Canaria	P545 - SmartUp – Social Innovation Lab Skopje P648 - KLIK, energetska zadruga P735 - Macedonian Solar Energy Association, Solar Macedonia <b>P736 - Consejo Insular De La Energía De Gran Canaria</b> PX740 - Municipality Of Ilinden PX744 - Korimako	01-09-2022 till 31-12-2022



	local governments and similar entities.			
<b>EnerBuild: Democratise the process of energy consumption optimization by means of smart building technologies and industrial IoT.</b>	<p>The project aims to mitigate climate change by optimizing energy consumption by means of smart building technologies and industrial IoT, as well as by monitoring the environment and air quality in the building for compliance with standards. The project envisages combined deployment of the industrial IoT platform HiPerWare by BPS International (Germany) and the intelligent maintenance management platform ('IMMP') by Infraspak (Portugal) at a pilot building provided by the Cabildo de Gran Canaria (Spain). The combined solution will track and analyze utility systems of the pilot building by collecting Big Data on their operation, with the creation of a live digital twin, detecting abnormal behavior and providing data-based optimization recommendations. These recommendations will be managed by the innovative IMMP by Infraspak, leading to significant improvement in energy consumption, reduction of equipment downtime, and optimizing operational performance.</p>	Gran Canaria	<p><b>P736 - Consejo Insular De La Energía De Gran Canaria</b> P545 - SmartUp – Social Innovation Lab Skopje P560 - Finnova Foundation P733 BPS International GmbH - BPS International GmbH P734 - Infraspak, S.A.</p>	15-08-2022 till 31-12-2022





## EIT HEALTH

### Plans for future activities

Currently, EIT Health RIS has no activities or active partners on the ORs, however, there is potential in expanding some of their programmes to the ORs.

Name of KIC here	Project Name	ORs Region(s) covered	Programming Period (start-finish date)
EIT Health InnoStars	RIS Investment Track	Madeira The Azores Canary Islands	04.2023 – 30.11.2023
EIT Health InnoStars	RIS Validation Track	Madeira The Azores Canary Islands	02.2024 – 30.11.2024
EIT Health InnoStars	DRIVE training for local health accelerators	Madeira The Azores Canary Islands	10.04.2023 – 29.11.2023



## EIT FOOD

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### Future activities

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