Bridging the gap between researchers and entrepreneurs

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Dr Venizelos Efthymiou from the FOSS Research Centre at the University of Cyprus discusses the vision of partnership for researchers and entrepreneurs in the EIRIE platform

Europe is taking significant steps towards achieving emissions neutrality by 2050 to combat climate change. The goal is to stay within the scientifically-proven limit of a 1.5°C rise in temperature compared to pre-industrial levels. This objective is at the heart of the European Green Deal [1] and in line with the EU's commitment to global climate action under the Paris Agreement – which cannot be achieved without the work of researchers and entrepreneurs. [2]

In parallel, an important objective that comes through the future-looking Green Deal is the smart objective of "Leave no one behind – Just transition". According to the "Smart Grids Project Outlook of 2017" [3] report by JRC, it is unfortunate that the EU15 countries spend more than 95% of their annual budget on research and innovation in smart grids, storage, and systems, while the EU13 countries are left behind in this area.

This is further confirmed by the work done through the Horizon 2020 project SUPEERA [4] which falls within the work of the EERA AISBL [5] association representing 250 European research organisations. The findings of this project confirm the disheartening figures presented in the table.

To help change these unpleasant realities in EU13 widening countries, the PANTERA [6] coordination and support action project was financed by Horizon 2020 with the promise to act in building processes that will help these low-activity countries to raise the status and bridge the gap between researchers and entrepreneurs in support of the energy transition.

With a vision in mind, the PANTERA consortium has given through its activities the birth of the multifunctional interactive platform "EIRIE". [7]

Sample	Organisations involved in H2020 projects	Organisations involved in H2020 projects (% of EU total)	H2020 net EU contribution (in million €)	H2020 net EU contribution (% of EU total)
EU total	151.718	100%	€59.590	100%
EU13 total	14.640	9.65%	€3.470	5.82%
EU15 total	137.078	90.35%	€56.120	94.18%

What is EIRIE platform?

The EIRIE platform – the European Interconnection for Research Innovation & Entrepreneurship – has been developed as a sustainable multifunctional platform and a single point of reference for the EU research and innovation community in smart energy systems and technologies, supporting the energy transition and the low-carbon economy.

It is not aiming to replace all existing platforms or sources of information, data and knowledge, but offer interoperable connectivity that can be by-directional.

Furthermore, EIRIE is complementing the objective of setting up a European forum composed of research and innovation stakeholders, including policymakers, standardisation bodies and experts, representing the EU energy system.

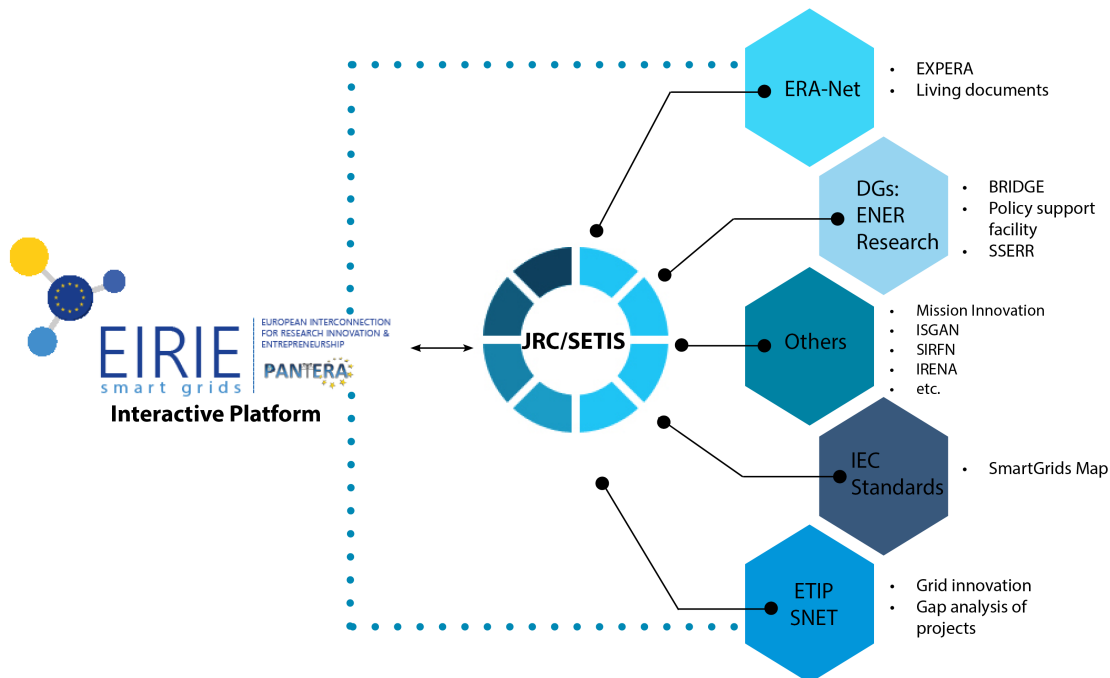## What benefits can EIRIE offer?

- EIRIE will help bridge the gaps between researchers and entrepreneurs in the energy field, and between Member States in Europe, by bringing together and promoting successful national, regional or European partnerships.
- EIRIE serves as the central hub for individuals and organisations involved in the research and development of smart grids, storage, and local energy systems across Europe. It will contribute to the achievement of the envisioned carbon-free system of 2050.

What are EIRIE's key functionalities?

Data area, with search and linking functions:

- Projects data collection (results and outcomes, best practices, use cases, white papers, scientific papers, reports and deliverables, etc.);
- Standards and regulations; and
- Common repository of research infrastructure in Europe in support of the R&I endeavours of stakeholders.
- Information area, with search and linking functions:

- Project-related information through integration with JRC, ETIP SNET, BRIDGE, Mission Innovation, CORDIS and many more.
- Knowledge area, with search and linking functions:
- Living documents

A dynamic and versatile platform has been created to unite Europe's smart grid, storage, and local energy systems community. This interactive hub brings together key stakeholders in the sector to collaborate and promote research and innovation

Benefits of using the platform – a bridge for knowledge sharing across Europe

- Easy access to information on potential funding and consortium building, useful for all actors of the research and innovation community in Europe, be it researchers, industrial parties, academia or SMEs;
- A central point for collaborating on the issues relevant to the energy sector in general, particularly the decarbonisation of the European energy system; and
- Taking an active role in the community and providing input to European policies to better reflect national needs.

How do representative stakeholders of the EU reflect on these achievements?

"The EIRIE platform is a much-needed crucial step to make the low-carbon sustainable future as envisioned by the European Commission, a reality. What makes EIRIE different from other platforms? EIRIE facilitates connectivity with all sources (platforms, initiatives,

etc.) of data/information/knowledge, making it the single point of reference for the related R&I community, enriching the original content that it generates." Mario Dionisio, DG Energy – European Commission.

"The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), as the science and knowledge service of the European Commission, will support the development, hosting and knowledge management of EIRIE, based on its experience in the analysis of digital energy projects and the regular issue of the Smart Grid Outlook Report." Marcelo Masera, Head of Unit, Joint Research Centre – European Commission.

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References

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