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ERA-LEARN Networking Event 2026

Bridging European Partnerships:

Connecting, Sharing, Growing

Tech Gate | Vienna

18 Nov. 2026

Parallel Workshops

B2 From Research to Policy and Society

Turning research into societal and policy impact incl. SSH, stakeholder engagement, capacity building and policy uptake

Welcome and Introduction

- The goals of the workshop will be to discuss:
  - specific approaches to policy and societal impact that have been applied by partnerships in their respective domains, and
  - the role of SSH, capacity building and stakeholder engagement in enhancing such impacts that the partnerships have/can generate, spanning the policy, and social realms.

- Set up: an introductory presentation by ERA-LEARN followed by a panel discussion and then an open discussion – some Slido breaks in between.

- Everybody is welcome to contribute to the session verbally !

ERA-LEARN Presentation

- The Demand-side in Pathways to impact: the Regional dimension in the Clean Hydrogen JU'|

  Dimitri Gagliardi, University of Manchester, ERA-LEARN

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WS B2
The Demand-side in Pathways to Impact: the Regional dimension in the Clean Hydrogen JU’

Dimitri Gagliardi

Manchester Institute of Innovation Research

AMBS – The University of Manchester

18/11/26

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The Demand-side in Pathways to Impact





Research article ● Full text access Get rights and content ↗

Public procurement and innovation—Resurrecting the demand side

Jakob Edler, Luke Georghiou

PREST/Manchester Institute of Innovation Research, Manchester Business School, University of Manchester,



Research Policy

Date: September 2007

Pages: 949-963

Volume: Volume 36, Issue 7

It is now over 20 years that the debate on the demand-side of innovation policy is lively and producing an important series of contributions both in the academic and policy domain, including implementation.

The main focus remains **procurement for innovation**… but other avenues are important too

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The Demand-side in Pathways to Impact

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Translational Research into Innovation. The case of Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking: pathways to innovation and the regional dimension

Dimitri Gagliardi

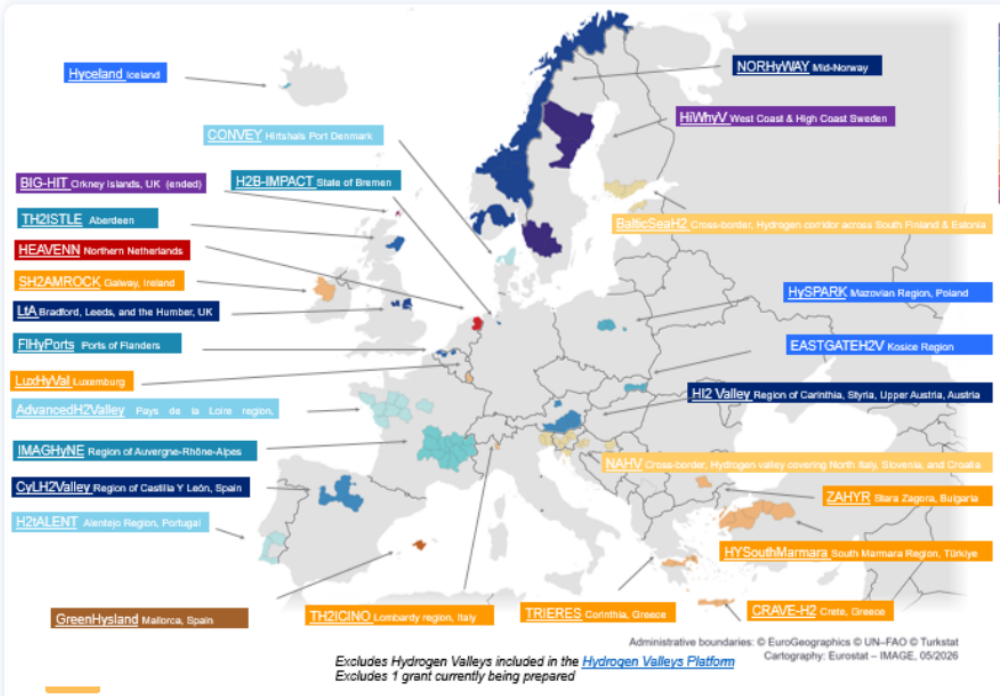
November 2026

A Hydrogen Valley is a localised socio-technical ecosystem where a substantial hydrogen value chain – from research to market application/innovation - is deployed within bounded regions.

Clean Hydrogen Partnership

There are currently 27 Hydrogen Valleys (H2V)

The target is 50 H2V by 2030



Hydrogen Valleys supported by the Clean Hydrogen Partnership

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The Demand-side in Pathways to Impact

Operating across TRL 4 to 8, Valleys compress supply-side engineering validation with real-world end-user demand environments.

H2V can be seen as "**Socio-Techical *Gyms***" -> Central R&I funding pushes TRLs forward

but

"*translating lab solutions into street assets is a cyclical, non-linear process*" (quote).

Without regional demand-side instruments, supply-side capacity remains bottled up in unhedged commercial off-take risks.

Regional operators view H2V as "***nucleation points of ecosystem building***" (term used by one of our contributors).

They are set out to translating high-level European climate directives into local industrial assets, regional energy security and employment opportunities for regions.

MOREOVER, important is the formation of **multi-regional corridors** such as the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valleys, and the Ebro Hydrogen Corridor etc.

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Examples of Demand-side innovation policies – In our context

The main reference to Demand-Side Innovation Policy is Procurement but other important instruments include Regulation and Standard setting, Ad-hoc support measures and Systemic and user-led measures (OECD, 2011)

- **Public Procurement for Innovation** – Regional/Local Governments act as lead customers or buyers of innovative goods and services not yet widely available, reducing supplier risk and creating guaranteed markets
- **Regulation and Standards** - Rules, mandates and technical standards which push markets toward cleaner, safer or more efficient technologies when enforced properly. There is a view that overly rigid rules risk locking in older designs
- **Ad-Hoc support/measures** - Subsidies, grants, tax incentives for **buyers** and renewable energy incentives (such as feed-in tariffs) lower adoption costs for households and firms
- **Systemic and User-led Measures** - Awareness campaigns, information sharing, user training and prizes help buyers **articulate needs** and **adopt new technologies**

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Innovation Procurement

Direct public sector intervention to purchase goods or services in bulk or act as a guaranteed primary buyer.

Local and municipal authorities act as guarantors and high-volume purchasers of hydrogen technologies to create predictable baseline demand, de-risking private investment.

- Public procurement of municipal hydrogen bus fleets.
- Breaks the "waiting game" standoff where hauliers await stations and fuel suppliers await trucks.
- Unlocks private capital for refuelling stations and production facilities.

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Regulation and Standards

Legally binding supranational or national regulatory requirements that mandate alternative fuel infrastructure deployment across transport networks.

Valleys act as bottom-up "market nucleation points" that aggregate baseline fleet demand to meet legal rollout targets along trans-European freight routes

- Fulfilling the **Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR, Reg. EU 2023/1804)**, which mandates hydrogen refuelling stations at regular intervals along TEN-T corridors and in urban nodes.
    - This affects mobility (cars and vans) and transportation (heavy-duty vehicles, maritime and aviation)
- Strategic regulatory quotas - **European Hydrogen Bank Sourcing Rules**
    - Regional bodies and intermediaries integrate local firms and resources into the H2 value chain
- Supports/link the pan-European European Hydrogen Backbone (ehb.eu).

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The Demand-side in Pathways to Impact

Ad-Hoc Measures – for example capacity building and training

Coordinated education, reskilling, and public administrative training programs funded through regional cohesion mechanisms

Train technicians, mechanics, and public officials to ensure the operational capacity and administrative competency required to deploy and maintain technologies.

Provide direct support and coaching for regional ecosystems building

- Hydrogen Valley Facility (H2V Facility)
- Aligning **ERDF** and **European Social Fund (ESF)** resources (with e.g. regional skills desks).
- Links with **Green Skills for Hydrogen:** Vocational training for field mechanics and operators in hydrogen safety, pipeline management, and fuel cell powertrains.
- Funding of corporate-tied PhD tracks directly using SME manufacturing dataAn important Ad

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The Demand-side in Pathways to Impact

Systemic Measures – Guarantee/Equity

Pooled legal, technical, and regulatory compliance services provided by regional cluster organisations and intermediary bodies

Intermediaries act as collective legal buffers, lowering market entry barriers and permitting costs for smaller market participants

Public authorities taking formal **ownership stakes** or holding equity shares in key operational entities and infrastructure projects.

Regional councils **co-invest** public capital directly into strategic energy distribution and storage nodes to absorb initial capital and off-take risks

- Country-wide cluster organisations (e.g., coordinating corporate, legal, and academic members) pool resources to draft compliance briefs.
- Enables regional SMEs and university spin-offs to navigate complex safety classifications and environmental permitting without being crushed by multinational rivals
- Regional/Local Authorities investing as shareholders in regional hydrogen distribution companies and public-private partnerships for electrolysis and storage.

Conclusion

Analysing the regional dimension of the Clean Hydrogen JU highlights two very important points:

1) that the demand side of innovation policy should part of the impact creation strategy and
2) that, together with the supply-side of innovation policy (the R&I aspect of Research and technology development), demand side instruments and actions can be deployed to create systemic effects towards the creation of the European Hydrogen Economy

In other words, it would be difficult to achieve any type of energy transitions through centralised, top-down funding or supply-side technology push alone.

Technological feasibility in the lab only achieves real-world socio-technical impact when regional ecosystems construct and de-risk the demand side. Instruments such as **Procurement**, **Public Equity** co-investment, spatial aggregation **corridors** and **Academic Scientific and Vocational capacity building**, break market deadlocks and build a resilient, self-sustaining hydrogen economy.

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Panellists



- Raisa Simoes, Policy Officer for the European Rare Diseases Research Alliance (ERDERA) coordinated by INSERM, with nearly 180 public/private organizations across 37 countries that support health R&I for the well-being of 30 million people with a rare disease in Europe.
- Johannes PETERSEIL, Team Lead, Ecosystem Research and Environmental Information at the Environment Agency Austria, partner in Biodiversa+, supporting collaboration between science, policy, and practice to improve biodiversity knowledge and monitoring across Europe.
- Mariachiara Esposito, member of the Coordination Team of the Resilient Cultural Heritage Partnership (RCH), first ever European co-funded partnership on SSH disciplines supporting cultural heritage research at the interface with climate change and sustainability goals, led by Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine, France.
- Inês, Moura Martins, Stakeholders Relationship and Communication Officer at Clean Hydrogen Partnership, which supports cutting-edge research and innovation (R&I) to strengthen the hydrogen value chain and contribute to the EU's climate neutrality goals for 2050.
- Ute Gunsenheimer, Secretary General of EOSC since Nov. 2021. Since then, she has overseen the rapid development of the EOSC Association from four founding members to roughly 250 organisations across 38 countries.

ERDERA: 180 partners/37 countries/€380 million

Informing policy through research evidence, practical expertise, stakeholder and end-user engagement

Bring evidence into policy

The Policy Think Tank combines research evidence and stakeholder expertise to keep rare diseases on the agenda.

Turn proposals into action

Start within ERDERA, extend through national networks (e.g. Governing Board and NMGs), and reach the research community rapidly.

The challenge

Reach public policy positioning that represents diverse voice of ERDERA stakeholders and is useful for end-users of its outputs (patients, researchers, etc.)



2 policy briefs released

European Biotech Act
Data & Registries

EU policy visibility

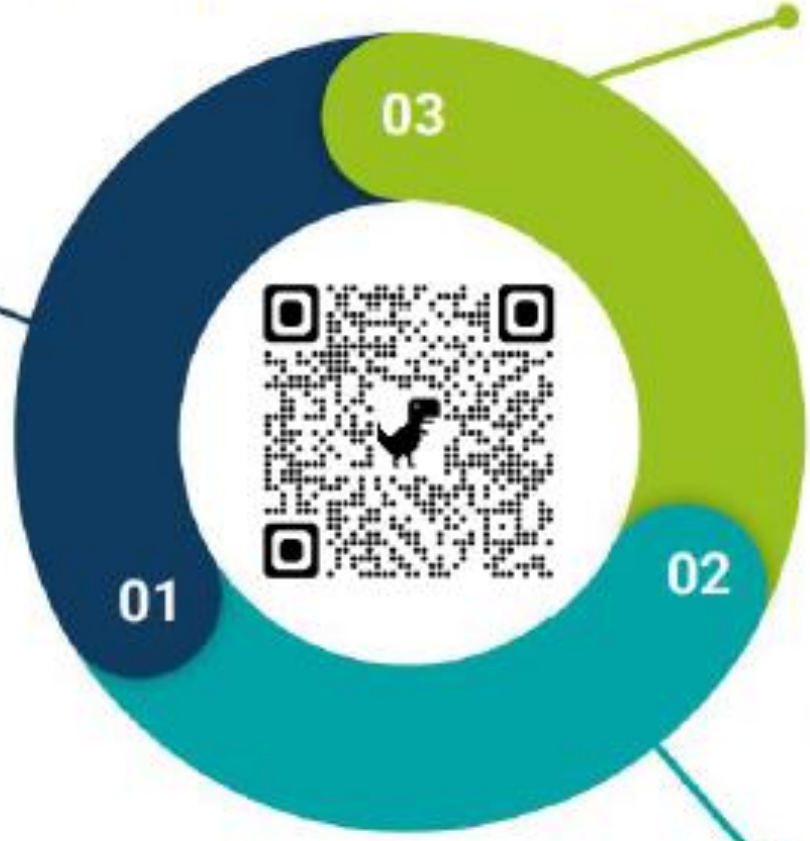
References to ERDERA in the amendments to Biotech Act and European Commission recommendations on the Life Sciences Strategy, and responses published to EC Call for Evidence and Public Consultation on Partnerships

Link between science and policymaking

1. Before producing knowledge

> Co-identify and refine research needs through:

- Consultations/ dialogue events with decision makers, practitioners and stakeholders
- Knowledge synthesis / desk studies



3. Once knowledge is available

> Feed decision making design and implementation through:

- Production of tools for decision makers
- Identification, analysis and valorisation of (policy briefs / policy products/ success stories) case studies and successful science-policy interface

2. During the production of knowledge

> Develop research, policies and practitioners collaborations:

- Set-up community of practice, science policy fora, capacity building
- Cooperation with the EC "Science Service" and other science-policy platforms
- Setting up knowledge Hubs for evidence based support (New)

biodiversa+
European Biodiversity Partnership

www.biodiversa.eu

Mariachiara Esposito, RCH Partnership coordination team,
Fondation des sciences du patrimoine (France)
Deputy to the Head of International Projects

RCH in a nutshell: *JTCs and the additional activities – how to make the most out of them?*

- Large-scale initiative gathering the European Commission and 90+ partners from 30 countries, with a budget of **216 M€.**
- The Grant Agreement was signed on 15.07.2026 for a **10-year duration**.
- The thematic scope of the RCH Partnership approaches the following **two core challenges**:
  - The limited research and evidence regarding adaptation strategies and the impact of climate and environmental change on cultural heritage
  - The need for enhanced understanding, use and recognition of how cultural heritage can inform policies and guide implementation measures, including the role of traditional and local knowledge

Mapping activities: of ecosystems (regional/national/transnational), research & professional communities, best practices and infrastructure services → collaboration opportunities.

Capacity building: better referencing and implementing a dedicated programme of training opportunities for researchers & professionals.

Living Labs: mapping, testing, upscaling and creating a sustainable network of Living Labs as a complementary way to implement research and accelerate transfer to policy and society.

Foresight & international collaboration: analysis of future R&I CH challenges and update of the SRIA; unlocking international funding opportunities in Europe and beyond, enlarging the Partnership network and aligning with global policies.

Monitoring: evaluating results and impact assessment activities.

Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication: community engagement, bridging CH with Climate research communities, and harnessing the potential of GLAMs, CCIs and heritage sites.

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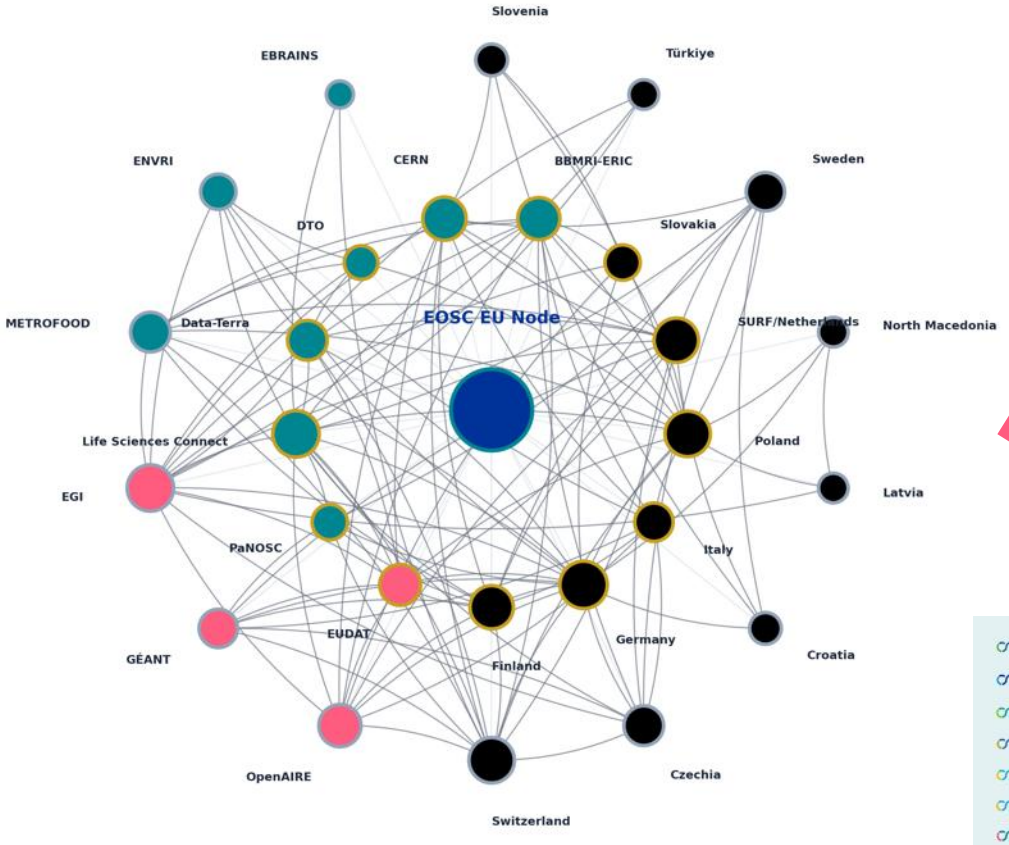
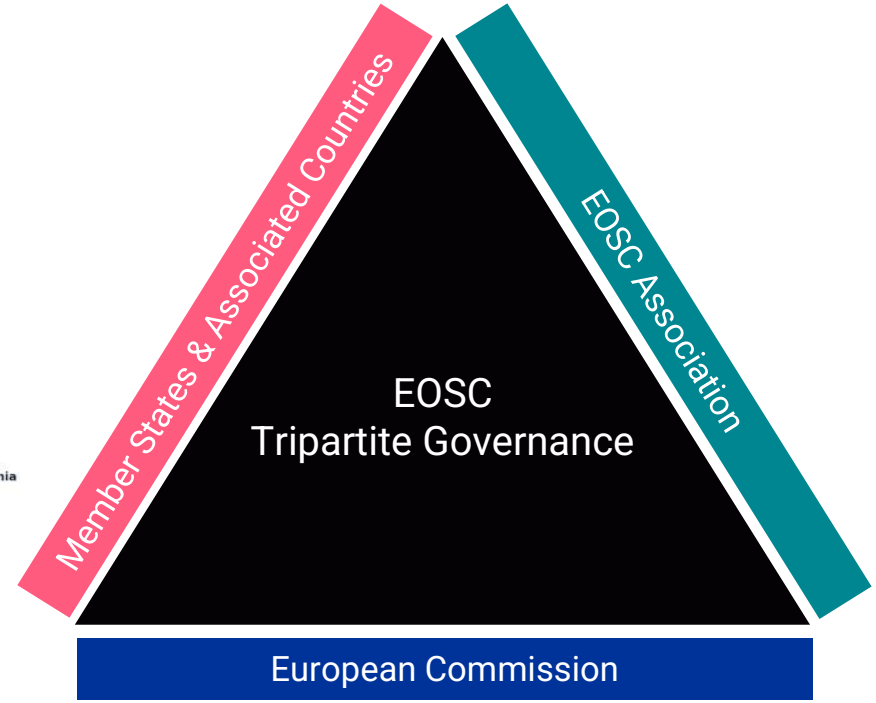
Horizon Europe co-programmed EOSC Partnership

Investing into EOSC Nodes





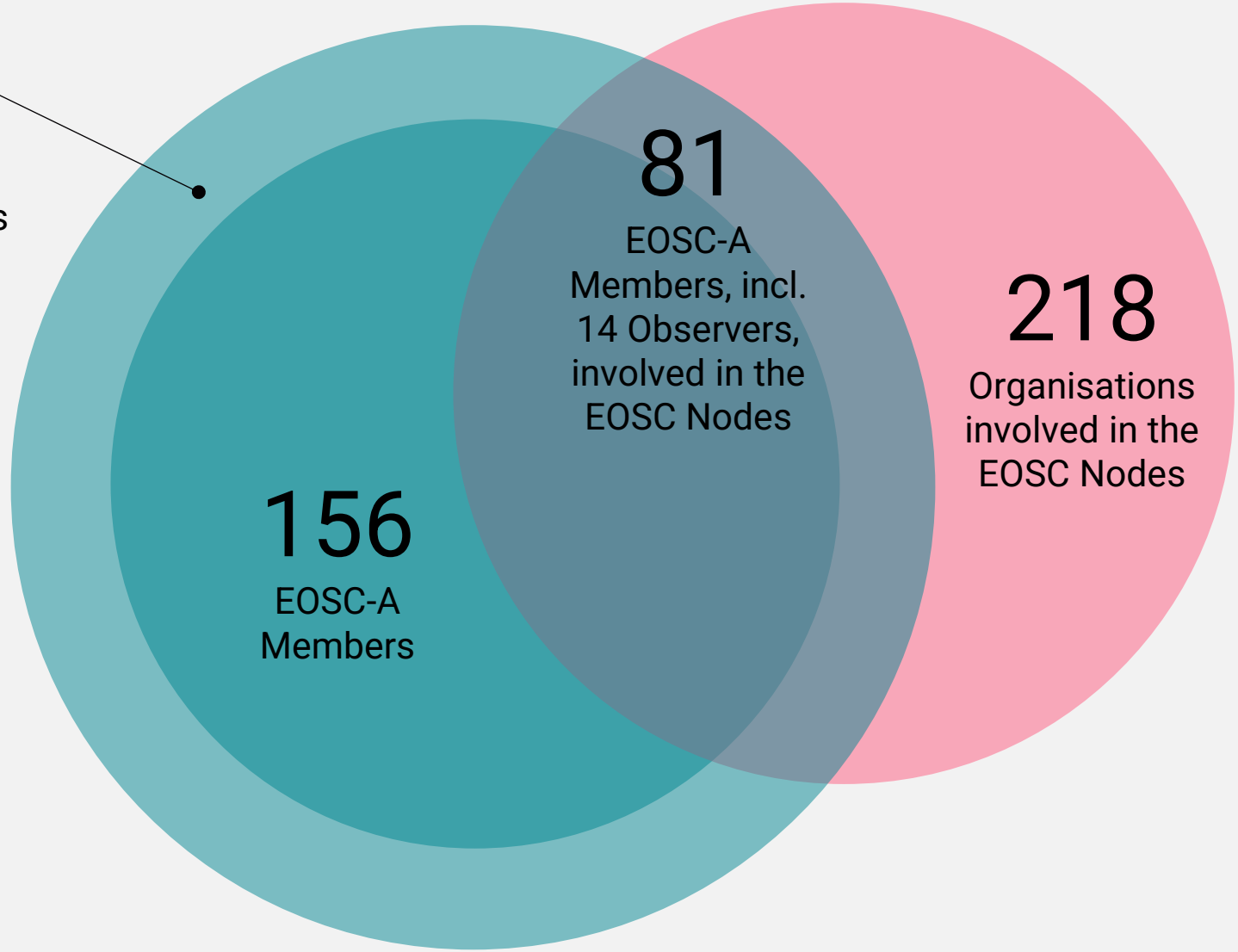
Investing into INFRAEOSC projects

AquaINFRA	TITAN	DATA COMMONS	Connect
Blue-Cloud2026	OSCARS	FIDELIS	Marine
FAIR-EASE	Lumen	RAISE	GenAI4Earth
EuroScienceGateway	DataGEMS	RAISE	FLUID-AI
FAIRCORE4EOSC	FAIR2Adapt	ARENA	ClimateAdapt
FAIR-IMPACT	BEYOND	EOSC4ALL	CDIF 4
Focus	EVERSE	MESH	AI4
RAISE	cancer	United	CRAFT-OA, TIGER
ENTRUST	GRAVITY	EDEN	STARDAST
SIESTA	AI4SOCIAL+	RenAI	AISSISTANT

Serving as the connecting link



Overlap between EOSC Association Members and Organisations of the EOSC Federation



43%
of EOSC-A Members are involved in the EOSC Federation

Panel discussion

- ERDERA: Building policy positions through stakeholder and end-user engagement in large partnerships, Raisa Simoes.
- Biodiversa+: Promoting policy uptake of research results. Johannes Peterseil.
- RCH: Building capacity and establishing interdisciplinarity as key factors to achieving societal impact: activities and methodologies. Mariachiara Esposito.
- Clean Hydrogen JU: a tool and a shaper of public policies; the role of cross-cutting activities, including skills, PNR, safety and sustainability, in the development of social acceptance and building impact, Inês Moura Martins.
- EOSC: Promoting policy uptake and encouraging national investments in infrastructures and people, Ute Gunsenheimer.

Open discussion

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Thank you!