



PANTERA
***Pan European Technology Energy Research
Approach***

Work Package 7

Deliverable D7.5

Report on Preliminary Business Development Activities

Grant Agreement No: **824389**
Funding Instrument: **Coordination and Support Action (CSA)**
Funded under: **H2020 LC-SC3-ES-7-2018: Pan-European Forum for R&I on Smart
Grids, flexibility and Local Energy Networks**
Starting date of project: **01.01.2019**
Project Duration: **48 months**

Contractual delivery date: **31.06.2023**
Actual delivery date: **27.06.2023**
Lead beneficiary **Suite5**

Deliverable Type: **Report (R)**
Dissemination level: **Public**
Revision / Status: **Final**

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Coordination and Support Action Programme under Grant Agreement No. 824389

Document Information

Document Version: **1**
Revision / Status: **Final**
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Document History

Revision	Content / Changes	Resp. Partner	Date
[1]	Deliverable Structure	Suite5	18.05.2020
[2]	Deliverable 1st draft	Suite5	19.06.2023
[3]	Deliverable Consolidated Version	Suite5	26.06.2023
[4]	Ready for Submission Version	Suite5	26.06.2023

Document Approval

Final Approval	Name	Resp. Partner	Date
Review on WP Level	Giorgos Papadopoulos	Suite5	19.06.2023
Review on Executive Board Level	Venizelos Efthymiou	FOSS	27.06.2023

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Abbreviations

Acronym	Full name
CETPartnership	Clean Energy Transition Partnership
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service
D	Deliverable
DG ENER	Directorate General for Energy (DG ENER)
EC	European Commission
EERA	European Energy Research Alliance
EIRIE	European Interconnection for Research Innovation & Entrepreneurship
ETIP SNET	European Technology and Innovation Platform for Smart Networks for Energy Transition
EU	European Union
EUSEW	EUropean Sustainable Energy Week
H2020	Horizon 2020
JRC	Joint Research Center
MI	Mission Innovation
PANTERA	Pan European Technology Energy Research Approach
RD	Regional Desks
R&D	Research & Development
R&I	Research & Innovation
SET Plan	Strategic Energy Technology Plan
SES	Smart Energy Systems
SPRING	Service contract of DG Ener in support of ETIP SNET and BRIDGE and entrusted with taking over the EIRIE platform from PANTERA
TRIs	Transition Initiatives
WG	Working Group
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

Deliverable D7.5 - "Report on Preliminary Business Development Activities," focuses on the proactive planning and implementation of essential measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of the PANTERA project. Its primary objective is to outline specific business development activities that have been undertaken by the project partners for securing the required funding, towards continuing regional activities of the project and subsequently expanding the regional stakeholder network and fostering their increased participation in collaborative R&I activities.

To achieve these objectives, a thorough research and analysis was emphasized throughout the deliverable. In the context of D7.3 [1], the consortium partners conducted comprehensive assessments of funding instruments at pan-European, regional, and national levels. These assessments aimed to document the necessary prerequisites, requirements, and competencies/qualifications for securing resources beyond the project's official conclusion. The focus was particularly on identifying EU-wide funding programs relevant to PANTERA and exploring potential opportunities for the consortium or individual partners to apply for funding.

Additionally, the leaders of the PANTERA Regional Desks engaged in activities to identify relevant national and regional research and development programs aligned with the Smart Energy Systems/Smart Grids domain. These efforts aimed to uncover potential funding opportunities that would support the post-project continuation of specific PANTERA regional activities that have not been fully covered by the resources invested by DG ENER, ETIP-SNET and SPRING for the sustainable operation of the EIRIE platform.

In the context of D7.4 [2], an important step towards ensuring the project's long-term sustainability was the cost breakdown analysis performed by the PANTERA consortium. This analysis estimated the resources required for the continued maintenance, expansion, promotion, and content population of the EIRIE platform over the next three years. The goal was to identify the necessary resources to sustain the platform and ensure uninterrupted regional activities.

In Deliverable D7.5, regional desk leaders were asked to summarize their business development activities towards this direction. The information received, served as a tool for documenting their participation in submitted proposals and outlining their plans for upcoming proposals. Its purpose was to facilitate the organization and documentation of their efforts in securing funding for the post-project activities of PANTERA. By using the spreadsheet, regional desk leaders could showcase their involvement, indicate their priorities and interests, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project.

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of the Deliverable

Deliverable D7.5, "Report on Preliminary Business Development Activities," provides an overview and detailed report of the activities undertaken by the PANTERA consortium to holistically ensure the long-lasting sustainability of EIRIE and all related activities around the platform, by securing the required funding and resources through the utilization of funding instruments available at EU, regional, and national level. It builds upon the prioritization exercise conducted in D7.3 [1], where the consortium identified key topics and calls for future funding applications, aligning them with the project's objectives.

D7.5 focuses on providing a comprehensive report on the business development activities carried out by the regional desk leaders. The primary objective is to delineate the way for securing the necessary funds and resources to sustain PANTERA beyond its official conclusion. The report outlines the consortium's efforts and plans to submit applications for relevant funding opportunities, as identified in D7.3 [1], aiming to leverage these opportunities for the project's long-term continuity.

1.2 Structure of the Deliverable

Chapter 2 outlines the cost breakdown analysis conducted by the PANTERA consortium to estimate the resources required for the continued maintenance, expansion, and content creation of the EIRIE platform.

Chapter 3 of Deliverable D7.5 presents an overview of the funding mechanisms assessed by the consortium partners and Regional Desk leaders. The objective was to identify suitable financing sources that would enable the seamless continuation of all project activities beyond the conclusion of the PANTERA project.

Chapter 4 provides, with the assistance of a spreadsheet, an overview of the activities performed by each Regional Desk Leader towards securing adequate funding for the post-project activities of PANTERA. By using the spreadsheet, regional desk leaders could showcase their involvement, indicate their priorities and interests, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project activities.

Chapter 5 concludes the report and provides an overview of what was covered in the previous chapters.

2 Identification of post-project costs towards the development of the EIRIE Platform Sustainability and Business Plan

The PANTERA consortium aimed to secure the long-term sustainability of the EIRIE platform by exploring hosting, operation, and maintenance options with various stakeholders. In Deliverable D7.1 [3], different alternatives were evaluated, including a) hosting the platform in DERlab's infrastructure, b) transferring responsibility to the Governance Board of ETIP-SNET, or c) hosting it in the SES infrastructure under the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission and DG ENER.

The most challenging option for the consortium was to convince JRC and DG ENER to host the platform on their servers and offer it as a one-stop-shop service through the europa.eu domain, despite the stringent requirements set by JRC for applications and platforms operating under that domain. The consortium engaged in extensive communication and discussions with the European Commission and platform owners to promote the EIRIE platform's concept and gain their support for hosting and operating it under the auspices of JRC and the europa.eu domain.

After intense negotiations and meetings, an agreement was finally reached. To ensure the EIRIE platform's financial sustainability, a tailored service contract was established under the governance of DG ENER. As part of this agreement, the overall maintenance, extension, and content population of the EIRIE platform would be transferred to the SPRING project, which also supports the operation of ETIP-SNET and BRIDGE.

This agreement ensured the long-term viability of the EIRIE platform, with the necessary hosting, operation, and maintenance being taken care of under the governance of DG ENER and the SPRING project, providing a reliable and sustainable service for stakeholders involved in the energy sector.

Cost Category	JRC	DG ENER	SPRING	PANTERA Consortium
Pan-European Workshops Hosting/ Participation		√	√	
Regional Workshops Hosting/ Participation			√	√
Platform Hosting	√			
Content Population			√	√
News/ Newsletter Update			√	
Moderation			√	
Domain Name	√			

SSL Certificate	√			
Tech Support	√		√	
Website Design			√	
Bug fixing and Fine-tuning			√	
SEO			√	
Social Media Handling			√	
Event Participation/ Platform Promotion	√		√	√
Integration with other Platforms			√	
Collaboration with EU Initiatives		√	√	√
Service Enrichment		√	√	

Table 1 Post-project cost categories involvement

2.1 EIRIE Platform visibility and stakeholder engagement costs

2.1.1 Regional Workshops hosting and participation

Continuing to organize workshops is essential for effectively engaging R&I stakeholders in the EIRIE platform, particularly at the regional level. The PANTERA consortium recognizes the importance of ongoing participation in workshops even after the project's completion to expand stakeholder engagement and advance the R&I status quo in the smart grid field. Active participation in these workshops allows the consortium to analyze the current situation, develop detailed plans for low R&I spending countries, and increase local stakeholders' involvement in EU R&I activities.

Based on the past workshops organized under the PANTERA project, we can estimate the cost of hosting future workshops. We anticipate holding three workshops per year, with an average cost of €4,000 per workshop. Thus, the annual expense for workshops would amount to €12,000. Please note that this estimation is based on historical data and may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances or evolving workshop requirements.

Additionally, considering the consortium's participation in similar events, we can estimate the cost of attending future workshops. With an assumed average of three PANTERA consortium partners participating in each workshop, the average cost per individual participation is estimated at €1,000 per workshop. Consequently, the total expense for attending these workshops, assuming three workshops per year, would be €9,000 annually.

2.2 EIRIE Platform operating costs

2.2.1 Content Population

Populating content on the EIRIE platform is a meticulous process that requires careful planning, organization, refinement, and review. It is crucial to allocate adequate resources and personnel to define procedures and mechanisms for integrating the platform with other sources and platforms across the EU, ensuring continuous updates to EIRIE.

Content population involves tasks such as organizing and maintaining content, integrating it into the platform, and providing various services like converting existing pages, uploading files and images, editing page layouts, setting up menus and links, and formatting typography.

Considering the substantial effort involved in content population, we have estimated the associated cost for updates within the EIRIE platform. It is anticipated that 0.5 person months per year will be required for this task. The average cost of a person month is estimated at €4,000. Therefore, the annual expense for content population is estimated to be 0.5 times €4,000, resulting in a total cost of €2,000 per year.

2.3 EIRIE Platform Promotion costs

2.3.1 European events participation for Platform outreach

To enhance the visibility of the EIRIE platform and expand its user base, the PANTERA Consortium plans to participate in major events like ENLIT, EUSEW, MEDPOWER, EERA, BRIDGE annual assembly, ETIP SNET regional workshops, and other pan-European selected events. By engaging with new R&I stakeholders and fostering collaborations, the consortium aims to strengthen R&I activities across the EU and promote the benefits of EIRIE.

Based on previous participation in such events by PANTERA Consortium partners, we can estimate the associated costs. It is assumed that there will be three event participations per year, with an average of three consortium partners attending each event. The estimated cost per individual participation is €1,000 per event. Therefore, the annual expense for participation per partner is 3 times €1,000, resulting in a partner participation expense of €3,000. Consequently, the total expense for all three participating partners attending an event is 3 times €3,000, resulting in an annual participation expense of €9,000.

In terms of promotional material for the EIRIE platform during these events, it is anticipated that there will be three major events with participation from PANTERA Consortium partners. The estimated cost for flyers, brochures, and other printed material per event is €150 on average. Hence, the total expense for promotional material per year is 3 times €150, resulting in an annual promotional expense of €450.

It is important to note that the majority of the promotional material for the EIRIE platform will be in electronic format. The mentioned costs for promotion primarily account for reaching a small percentage (5%-10%) of participants in each event through traditional printed materials.

2.4 EIRIE Platform Expansion costs

2.4.1 Recruitment and commitment obtainment of Key R&I Stakeholders

The EIRIE platform aims to enhance its visibility and expand its user base by participating in major events and establishing collaborations with key stakeholders. Collaborations have already been established with BRIDGE, ETIP-SNET, and other initiatives related to the Clean Energy Transition Partnership and digitalization of the energy system.

To integrate content into EIRIE, the PANTERA team has engaged with various stakeholders and platform owners, including CORDIS, DERlab, ASSET project, ERA-NET Smart Energy Systems, Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), BRIDGE Working Group on Data Management, Mission Innovation Platform, ETIP-SNET, and ERIGRID2.0 Project. These integrations ensure seamless data exchange and content enrichment on the platform.

In terms of costs, the estimated expense for participating in three events per year is €9,000, considering three consortium partners attending each event with an average cost of €1,000 per individual participation. Additionally, the cost for promotional material per year is estimated at €450, primarily targeting a small percentage of participants through printed material.

The integration activities with external platforms and data sources involve collaboration with CORDIS for project and organization database population, DERlab for standards and regulation database migration, ASSET project for training material population, BRIDGE Working Group for data collection population, EXPERA platform for policy briefs, and ongoing integration with the Mission Innovation Platform.

During the post-project period, the PANTERA consortium aims to continue collaboration work with ERIGRID2.0, integrate with the EPRI Repository, streamline integration with CORDIS, collaborate with projects using EIRIE as a data repository, and migrate regional and national R&I project databases. These activities require resources estimated at 0.5 person months per year, resulting in an annual expense of €2,000.

It's important to note that the majority of integration costs will be addressed by SPRING and other service contracts promoted by DG ENER, while the PANTERA consortium will mainly cover managerial costs associated with establishing collaborations and promoting agreements.

Overall, these activities and collaborations aim to enhance the EIRIE platform's capabilities, extend its outreach, and position it as a valuable resource in the Smart Energy Systems R&I community.

Post- project cost categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Regional Workshop Hosting	12,000	12,600	13,230
Regional Workshop Participation	9,000	9,450	9,923
EIRIE content population	2,000	2,100	2,205
European events participation for Platform outreach	9,000	9,450	9,923
Promotional Material	450	472.5	496.1
Collaboration activities under Regional Desks areas in Confluence	2,000	2,100	2,205
Total Annual anticipated costs	34,450	36,173	37,982
Total Post Project anticipated costs			108,605

Table 2 Post-project costs and cost projections

The post-project expenses and estimated costs are intended to be financed through EU-wide funding programs that align with the project's objectives. The PANTERA consortium has conducted a prioritization of relevant topics and calls, outlined in D7.3 [1], and plans to submit applications to secure the necessary funds and resources for sustaining PANTERA's operations. The activities performed by the Regional Desk leaders, related to securing adequate funding, are reported in chapter 4.

In cases where the acquired funding is insufficient, most of the expenses will be covered by the internal budgets of the SPRING project and the new contract to be launched by the EC to support EIRIE's operation. In certain instances, if available, a small portion of these expenses may be covered by the internal budgets of partners involved in EIRIE-related tasks.

3 Targeted Funding Mechanisms for the continuation of PANTERA Activities: European, Regional, and National Perspectives.

3.1 Overview of the funding mechanisms investigated to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the EIRIE Platform in European Level

3.1.1 Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe [4] is the European Union's program that supports research and innovation by promoting collaboration among universities, scientific communities, industry, and citizens. It aims to bridge gaps between different regions and generations, with a particular focus on the needs of young people. The program provides funding for projects that align with the European Commission's major goals and encourages international cooperation through multilateralism and openness.

Cluster 5 within the Horizon Europe Work Programme focuses on harmonizing efforts at national, European, and global levels in research and innovation related to renewable energy and sustainable decarbonization. It promotes innovation in renewable energy through initiatives like Mission Innovation and encourages collaboration with major emitting countries in line with the Paris Agreement. The cluster aligns with the Key Strategic Orientations of the EU's Strategic Plan and strives to make Europe a circular, climate-neutral, and sustainable digital economy.

By driving the twin green and digital revolutions, Cluster 5 contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. It aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and enhance the competitiveness and resilience of the energy and transportation sectors. Research and innovation play a crucial role in implementing the necessary transitions towards climate neutrality and ensuring the competitiveness of European sectors in the global market.

The success of European research and innovation initiatives in developing and commercializing innovative solutions will have a significant impact on the EU's future competitiveness. Cluster 5 actively supports the strategic goals of the EU through specific actions outlined in the work program and collaborations through various types of European partnerships.

3.1.1.1 Missions

EU Missions [5] are focused on addressing pressing societal issues through specific objectives. The Horizon Europe Regulation defines five mission areas, including Adaptation to Climate Change, Cancer, Healthy Ocean, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters, Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, and Soil Health and Food. Each mission has a detailed execution plan with specific actions, investment plans, goals, and performance measures.

The implementation of EU Missions began after a planning phase in 2021, and all five missions are now in full swing. They aim to achieve their objectives by utilizing the reuse and reproducibility of research outcomes, such as FAIR research data and open access to scientific papers. The missions also prioritize citizen involvement throughout their duration to ensure societal impact and demonstrate

the value added by the EU. In the context of the investigation conducted within D7.3, we focused on the mission of achieving 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030.

3.1.1.2 Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

The Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 focuses on two main components: widening participation [6] and strengthening the European Research Area (ERA). The widening component aims to bridge the innovation gap and create a more integrated European research and innovation ecosystem. Policy reforms and closer collaboration between research and innovation are essential to address the gaps between leading and underperforming countries. Less advanced countries can upgrade their systems by connecting to larger networks of excellence.

The Horizon Europe regulation identifies the eligible countries for hosting the coordinator of widening actions, including several European Union member states, associated countries, and outermost regions. The second component focuses on establishing a new European Research Area for Research and Innovation in collaboration with member states. The aim is to improve the research and innovation landscape, accelerate the transition to climate neutrality and digital leadership, aid in recovery from the coronavirus crisis, and strengthen resilience.

The ERA envisions a borderless market for research, innovation, and technology across the EU, emphasizing competitiveness, openness, and talent-driven research. It aims to enhance cross-border cooperation, critical mass, and continental competition by coordinating research policies and programs among member states. This component of the Horizon Europe Work Programme supports the strategic orientations outlined in the strategic plan and key policy objectives of the European Commission, such as the European Green Deal and the digital strategy.

The work programme addresses the four strands of the ERA communication: expanding access to excellence, attracting and mobilizing top talent, reforming and upgrading the EU R&I system, and translating research discoveries into economic value. It emphasizes cooperation between universities, scientific communities, industry, small and medium enterprises, citizens, and their representatives to bridge gaps between territories, generations, and regional cultures. Synergies with national, regional, and other European programs, including cohesion policy, enhance the impact of actions under this work programme. In the context of the investigation conducted within D7.3, we focused on the destination of reforming and enhancing the EU research and innovation system.

3.1.2 Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETP)

The Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETPartnership) [7] is a strategic and multilateral partnership between national and regional research, development, and innovation programs in EU/EEA Member States and non-EU/EEA Partner Countries. It aims to support the implementation of the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan) and contribute to achieving a climate-neutral society by 2050. The CETPartnership aligns with European policy goals, including the EU's 2030 Climate Ambitions, the New European Research Area, A Clean Planet for All, and the European Green Deal.

Building on previous SET Plan activities, the CETPartnership seeks synergies with National Energy and Climate Plans and the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Its objectives include saving energy, creating clean energy, diversifying Europe's energy suppliers, and making clean energy value chains more sustainable. The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) of the CETPartnership serves as a guide for international collaboration and outlines the common vision and objectives shared

by the partnership's members. The SRIA adopts a challenge-driven and transdisciplinary approach to drive transformative research, development, and innovation.

The CETPartnership aims to empower the clean energy transition and position Europe as a leader in clean energy innovation and implementation. It brings together funding organizations from within and outside Europe to expand the impact of climate neutrality globally. The partnership is organized around seven Transition Initiatives (TRIs), which address various technology and system aspects related to the clean energy transition. The TRIs cover a range of topics, including energy conversion and storage, carbon treatment and sinks, storage technologies, variable demand solutions, power-to-x technologies, efficient heating and cooling solutions, integrated regional energy systems, integrated industrial energy systems, and integration in the built environment.

3.1.3 LIFE Programme

The LIFE Programme [8] is an EU program dedicated to Environment and Climate Action, and it plays a crucial role in supporting the European Green Deal. The European Green Deal aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society with a resource-efficient and competitive economy, achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and protecting the environment and citizens' well-being.

LIFE contributes to these goals through its four sub-programmes, which focus on various aspects of environmental and climate action. These sub-programmes are designed to boost the implementation of EU policy objectives, support the transition to a circular economy, protect and enhance natural resources, facilitate the achievement of energy and climate targets, and promote energy efficiency and small-scale renewables.

Under the Environment field, the sub-programme "Nature and Biodiversity" aims to halt and reverse the loss of wildlife habitats and species across all sectors. The sub-programme "Circular Economy and Quality of Life" focuses on the transition to a circular economy and the protection and improvement of the EU's natural resources, such as air, soil, and water.

Within the Climate Action field, the sub-programme "Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation" supports the implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework, the EU's objective of climate neutrality by 2050, and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change. The sub-programme "Clean Energy Transition" aims to build capacity, stimulate investments, and support policies focused on energy efficiency and small-scale renewables. In the context of the investigation conducted within D7.3, we focused on the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition of the Climate Action field.

3.1.4 DIGITAL EUROPE

The Digital Europe Programme [9] is aimed at expanding the digital capabilities of the European Union to meet the evolving needs of society and the economy. It recognizes the importance of digital infrastructures, skills, and innovation in our daily lives and the reliance on them. The program is aligned with the European Data Strategy and focuses on creating European Data Spaces and trustworthy cloud-to-edge infrastructures.

Through the Digital Europe Programme, the EU aims to protect fundamental rights, establish a level playing field, and foster innovation, growth, and competitiveness in the digital sector. It plays a crucial role in accelerating the economic recovery and digital transformation of Europe, supporting the digital transition of industrial ecosystems, and upskilling the workforce in cutting-edge digital technologies.

The program focuses on strategically important technologies for Europe's future, such as data, AI, cloud, and quantum communication infrastructure [10]. It aims to unleash the potential of data, promote trustworthy AI technologies, and address societal challenges like climate change and healthcare. The program also emphasizes the deployment of secure quantum communication infrastructure and the implementation of specialized master's programs in digital technologies.

Furthermore, the Digital Europe Programme addresses key societal challenges by accelerating the adoption of blockchain, enabling interoperable digital public services, and promoting an inclusive and trustworthy digital space. It aims to support the Union's digital open strategic autonomy by co-investing with member states in high-end infrastructures.

3.2 Overview of the funding mechanisms investigated to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the EIRIE Platform in Regional and National Level

3.2.1 Regional Desk 1

The regional desk has identified and analyzed various instruments and financing mechanisms for regional cooperation and development. Two major funding schemes are the EEA Grants and the Norway Grants, which aim to contribute to a more equal Europe and strengthen relations between the donor countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and the beneficiary countries in Europe. These grants cover a wide range of areas, from climate change and energy to cultural cooperation and human rights promotion.

Under the EEA and Norway Grants, there is a specific Baltic Research Programme that focuses on strengthening multilateral relations between research institutions in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, as well as the donor countries. The program promotes sustainable cooperation in research, capacity building, and future collaboration in research projects at the EU and regional levels.

Interreg is another significant instrument for cross-border cooperation. The Interreg V-A Estonia-Latvia program aims to strengthen cooperation among regions across the borders of Estonia and Latvia. The Interreg VI-A Estonia-Latvia program for 2021-2027 focuses on better governance, smarter Europe, greener Europe, and a more social Europe. The program provides support for project proposals in these priority areas.

Similarly, the Interreg VI-A Latvia-Lithuania program for 2021-2027 aims to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the regions by enhancing their competitiveness and attractiveness. The program focuses on capacity building, green and resilient development, fair and inclusive society, and the economic potential of tourism and heritage.

The Central Baltic Programme is an EU cross-border cooperation program that funds projects in Finland (including Åland), Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden. The program aims to address common challenges across borders and has priorities in innovative business development, improved environmental and resource use, improved employment opportunities, and improved public services.

Lastly, the Interreg Baltic Sea Region program [11] covers nine countries in the Baltic Sea region and focuses on innovative societies, water-smart societies, climate-neutral societies, and cooperation governance. The program encourages the submission of project idea forms for both small and core projects.

3.2.1.1 National Level

In Latvia, there are several national funding opportunities available for research and innovation projects. These funding programs are coordinated by various organizations, including the Latvian Council of Science, the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, and the Central Finance and Contracting Agency of Latvia. Here is a summary of these funding programs:

- **Latvian Council of Science:** The Latvian Council of Science [12] is responsible for implementing the state science and technology development policy. They provide funding for research programs and projects through national programs such as the Fundamental and Applied Research program, National Research Programs initiated by sectoral ministries, and Postdoctoral research grants. The Fundamental and Applied Research program aims to create new knowledge and technological know-how across all Fields of Science and has an annual budget of around 10 million EUR.
- **Investment and Development Agency of Latvia:** The Investment and Development Agency of Latvia [13] focuses on increasing the export and competitiveness of Latvian companies, attracting foreign investment, and implementing tourism development and innovation policies. They coordinate and oversee national business-oriented instruments such as innovation motivation programs, business incubators, support programs for innovative SMEs, and support programs for commercializing research results. These programs aim to support the development and growth of Latvian businesses.
- **Central Finance and Contracting Agency of Latvia:** The Central Finance and Contracting Agency of Latvia [14] organizes calls for the applied research program, which is focused on industry-oriented research projects aligned with Latvia's Smart Specialization strategy. The funding for this program is provided by the European Regional Development Fund. The program is open to project proposals from research institutions and companies registered in Latvia.

These funding opportunities provide support for a wide range of research and innovation activities in Latvia, including fundamental research, sector-specific research programs, postdoctoral research, and industry-oriented projects.

3.2.2 Regional Desk 2

The Interreg Europe program, co-funded by the European Union, aims to reduce disparities in regional development across Europe and promote regional cooperation. In the 2021-2027 programming period, there are several research and innovation topics related to Smart Grids, Storage, and Local Energy Systems. The program provides opportunities for the development and expansion of research and innovation capacities, as well as digitization and digital connectivity under the "Smarter Europe" theme. Additionally, research activities and projects focused on Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Smart Energy Systems, Climate Change, and Zero-carbon Urban Mobility can be considered under the "Greener Europe" theme.

In Bulgaria, the Interreg program is represented by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. However, due to the unstable political situation and frequent changes in the government, there may be challenges for stakeholders in research and innovation who wish to participate in this program.

Apart from the Interreg program, the Bulgarian National Science Fund, under the Ministry of Education and Science, offers initiatives that focus on the regional level and stimulate research and innovation collaboration with neighboring countries. Some of these initiatives allow for the consideration of topics related to Smart Grids, Energy Storage, and Local Energy Systems.

3.2.2.1 National Level

In Bulgaria, there are funding opportunities available for research and innovation projects related to smart grid and energy sector challenges. These opportunities are provided through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the Bulgarian National Science Fund. Here is a summary of these funding sources:

- **National Recovery and Resilience Plan:** Bulgaria's National Recovery and Resilience Plan [15] aims to provide funding for research and innovation activities, particularly in areas such as smart grids, coal phase-out, renewable energy sources and storage, e-mobility, promotion of zero-emission vehicles, increased public charging points, and the introduction of low-emission zones in polluted cities. This plan is designed to support the green transition and address key challenges in the energy sector. It offers opportunities for innovative SMEs, research organizations, and higher-education institutions to tackle these issues.
- **Bulgarian National Science Fund:** The Bulgarian National Science Fund [16], under the Ministry of Education and Science, offers funding options for research and innovation projects. While specific details about smart grid and storage-related activities are not provided, the Network of Research Universities and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan are mentioned as promising avenues for funding in this area. Researchers and institutions can explore opportunities within these initiatives to receive support for their projects.

These funding sources provide avenues for researchers, innovative SMEs, and institutions in Bulgaria to pursue research and innovation projects related to smart grid technologies, energy sector reforms, and the transition to a greener and more sustainable future.

3.2.3 Regional Desk 3

In the Mediterranean region, three financial instruments provide funding for cooperation and development:

- **Interreg MED:** The Interreg Euro-MED Programme supports collaboration across Mediterranean borders and funds projects initiated and managed by public administrations, universities, private organizations, and civil society groups. Its objective is to create a climate-neutral and resilient society for the benefit of citizens in 14 countries from the Northern shore of the Mediterranean. The programme aims to make the region smarter, greener, and improve governance among stakeholders. The budget for the 2021-2027 period is approximately 294 million euros.
- **ENI CBC (European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross-Border Cooperation) Med:** This initiative, implemented by the EU, is the largest Cross-Border Cooperation program under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) in the Mediterranean region for the 2014-2020 period. It brings together the coastal territories of 14 countries to foster fair and equitable development on both sides of the Mediterranean. ENI CBC Med finances cooperation projects that contribute to a more competitive, innovative, inclusive, and sustainable Mediterranean area. The program is based on four thematic objectives and eleven priorities addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges in the region.

These two regional programs, Interreg MED and ENI CBC Med, promote cooperation, development, and address common challenges in the Mediterranean region. Additionally, there may be national funding mechanisms specific to each country in the region that contribute to regional development and cooperation.

3.2.3.1 National Level

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) of Cyprus is the national authority responsible for supporting and promoting research, technological development, and innovation in the country. It plays a crucial role in developing the research and innovation ecosystem in Cyprus and contributing to the country's productivity growth and prosperity.

The RIF was established in 1996 as the Research Promotion Foundation (RPF) following an initiative by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. It is a private legal entity structured as a non-profit organization and is registered as an Institution under the Societies and Institutions Laws. The foundation was founded based on the recognition of the significant role of scientific research in socio-economic development and the need to enhance research activities and infrastructure in Cyprus.

Over the years, the RIF has been actively engaged in various activities at the national, European, and international levels. It has focused on the development of national research programs and represented Cyprus in European and international programs and organizations. In 2007, the Foundation's scope expanded to include support and advancement of innovation in Cyprus.

In October 2018, following a decision by the Council of Ministers, the Research and Innovation Foundation underwent an overall restructuring of the Research, Technological Development, and Innovation System in Cyprus. As a result, the Foundation was renamed as the Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) [17] and assumed the role of the executive arm of this system.

The RIF's main objective is to foster research, technological development, and innovation in Cyprus by providing support, coordination, and funding opportunities. It serves as a key facilitator in advancing the research and innovation landscape of the country and promoting collaboration and participation in national and international research and innovation initiatives.

3.2.4 Regional Desk 4

The Cross-Border Renewable Energy (CB RES) [18] Projects, launched by the EU in September 2022, aim to facilitate the cost-effective implementation of renewable energy projects across borders. These projects focus on the generation of renewable energy from sources such as on- and offshore wind, solar energy, sustainable biomass, ocean energy, geothermal energy, or their combinations. They also involve connecting the generated energy to the grid and may include additional elements like storage or conversion facilities. CB RES projects are not limited to the electricity sector and can encompass other energy carriers and potential sector coupling, such as heating and cooling, power-to-gas, storage, and transport.

The European Commission announced the first CB RES project list, which comprises three projects involving seven European countries. One of these projects is a district heating network project between Germany and Poland. This presents opportunities for Germany-Poland and Germany-Czech Republic cooperation in obtaining funding to support activities related to the PANTERA initiative under the CB RES projects scheme.

It's important to note that the CB RES call is focused on engineering and construction projects that promote the cross-border deployment of renewable energy generation, rather than research and development (R&D) programs.

3.2.4.1 National Level

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) in Germany is responsible for national and international cooperation and funding in the fields of energy and climate change. The

ministry has been actively initiating funding opportunities related to the green energy transition, decarbonization, and smart grids. One such funding program is the "Development of Digital Technologies" (2022 to 2026).

The aim of the "Development of Digital Technologies" funding program is to address current thematic priorities and challenges in a timely and flexible manner through funding calls. The program is aligned with technological trends, digital policy priorities, available budgets, and market-oriented implementation timeframes. It focuses on three priority areas: "Technologies," "Applications," and "Ecosystems," which form the technical framework for the projects. The projects should be based on findings from basic research, utilizing technologies that have already been scientifically examined.

The funding program aims to determine the economic potential of new digital technologies and explore avenues for economic exploitation, particularly in Germany, Switzerland, or the European Economic Area (EEA). The application domains for the program cover various sectors, including digital production and logistics, trade, smart living, mobility, agriculture, energy industry, healthcare, construction and housing industry, civil protection, environment and climate protection, forestry, and the maritime economy.

3.2.5 Regional Desk 5

Hungary, Croatia, and Italy participate in the ERA-Net Smart Energy system [19] financing mechanism, with each country represented by different institutions. The successor to ERA-Net is the CETPartnership, which covers a wide range of energy system innovations and recently issued a joint call for projects. PANTERA partners will monitor future call modules related to smart grids within the CETPartnership.

Interreg is another funding mechanism that supports cross-border cooperation, addressing various topics such as health, environment, research, education, transport, and sustainable energy. Relevant Interreg programs for the Desk 5 countries include Interreg ESPON 2020, Interreg Europe, and ITERact, which focus on research, policy development, and learning events. While no calls are currently open for these programs, they could still be valuable for PANTERA activities.

The Interreg ADRION program's priority axis 1 aligns well with PANTERA project, although no calls are presently open. Additionally, Italian and Croatian organizations can participate in the Alpine Space program for cooperation in the Alpine region, while Hungary, Italy, and Croatia can collaborate through Interreg Central Europe calls to enhance regional development in innovation, carbon dioxide reduction, and more. However, these programs have recently closed calls or have no current open calls. Monitoring upcoming calls under Interreg Euromed and Interreg Danube transnational programs is recommended for potential support in smart grids and energy system-related activities.

It's important to note that Interreg programs often have a regional focus, limiting participation to specific parts of a country. For example, in the Interreg Alpine Space program, only organizations from the northern part of Italy can participate.

3.2.5.1 National Level

In Italy, there are national and regional funding programs that can be explored to support the continuation of the PANTERA project.

Regional Program European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) - The Emilia Romagna and Lombardia regions, where RSE (PANTERA partner) has offices and laboratories, offer several open calls that address various priorities:

- Research, innovation, and competitiveness: These calls aim to support the innovative and intelligent transformation of the regional territory, promote digital transformation, and enhance the competitiveness of the production system.
- Sustainability, decarbonisation, biodiversity, and resilience: The focus here is on increasing the security and resilience of the territory, adapting to climate change, and promoting circular economy practices.
- Sustainable mobility and air quality: This priority focuses on promoting soft and cycle-pedestrian mobility, intelligent mobility systems, and the installation of electric recharging points.
- Attractiveness, cohesion, and territorial development: These calls aim to combat territorial inequalities, promote the attractiveness and sustainability of territories, and strengthen essential services.

Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan:

The Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan, established at the EU level to support the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and increase competitiveness, provides funding opportunities for smart grid and energy system-related activities. The plan covers a broad spectrum of fields, including renewable energy and energy storage.

These funding programs and instruments can be leveraged to support activities related to smart grids and energy systems within the PANTERA project.

3.2.6 Regional Desk 6

The INTERREG Atlantic Area program offers funding opportunities for transnational cooperation projects in 37 Atlantic regions across Ireland, Portugal, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The program aims to address regional challenges in the areas of innovation, resource efficiency, environment, and cultural assets, promoting economic, social, and territorial cohesion.

Since 2016, there have been three funding calls under the program, with a significant number of projects approved. The first call accounted for 66% of the overall budget, with 45 projects approved and €12.226 million in ERDF grant aid allocated to 90 Irish partners involved in 42 of the approved projects.

A wide range of organizations, including public bodies, universities, research organizations, private institutions (not-for-profit), and international organizations, acting under national law, are eligible to apply as potential beneficiaries of the ERDF. The lead partner must be located in the INTERREG Atlantic eligible area, and applications should be submitted through the SIGI platform.

The Atlantic Area program consists of four priority axes, each with specific objectives. Projects must align with these categories to be considered eligible for funding. The priority axes include stimulating innovation and competitiveness, fostering resource efficiency (including renewable energies and energy efficiency), strengthening resilience to natural, climate, and human risks, and enhancing biodiversity, natural/cultural assets, and economic development.

3.2.6.1 National Level

In Ireland, there are national research and innovation funding calls that support smart grids and energy transition, as well as mechanisms to commercialize and exploit research outputs. Here are the main funding opportunities:

SEAI National Energy RD&D Calls:

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) [20] provides funding through its Research Development and Demonstration (RD&D) Funding Programme. This program supports innovative energy RD&D projects that contribute to Ireland's transition to a clean and secure energy future. The program forms a co-funding partnership with organizations such as the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and others. The objectives of this program align with various national policies and plans related to climate action, energy, and technology development. The priorities of the SEAI National Energy RD&D calls emphasize stakeholder collaboration, multidisciplinary approaches, and developing Ireland's research capacity.

SFI Research Frontiers Programme:

The Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) [21] Frontiers for the Future Programme provides opportunities for independent investigators to conduct highly innovative and collaborative research with the potential for economic and societal impact. The program includes two streams: Projects and Awards. The Projects stream supports high-risk, high-reward research, while the Awards stream provides larger-scale funding for innovative and collaborative research programs. The SFI Frontiers Programme aims to build research capacity, facilitate partnerships, and support the growth of research capacity in the technological university and institute of technology sector.

Additionally, researchers in Ireland can seek support for commercialization and access short-term project funding through mechanisms like Enterprise Ireland. Enterprise Ireland provides assistance to researchers with commercialization efforts, and they also offer minor research funding opportunities through their Grant Offers. These funding programs and mechanisms play a crucial role in supporting research and innovation activities related to smart grids and energy transition in Ireland.

3.3 Prioritization of most relevant topics

The following table lists the topics with the highest importance in relation to the PANTERA operations, together with the relevant funding programme, as per the analysis conducted within D7.3.

Funding Programme	Topics
HORIZON Europe - Cluster 5	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-01-10: Supporting the development of a digital twin to improve management, operations and resilience of the EU Electricity System in support to REPowerEU
	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-01-15: Supporting the green and digital transformation of the energy ecosystem and enhancing its resilience through the development and piloting of AI-IoT Edge-cloud and platform solutions
	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-01-16: Support action to the SET Plan IWG on HVDC & DC Technologies
	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-02-14: Digital twin for forecasting of power production to wind energy demand

	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-03-03: System approach for grid planning and upgrade in support of a dominant electric mobility (vehicles and vessels) using AI tools
	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-03-04: Digital tools for enhancing the uptake of digital services in the energy market
HORIZON Europe - Missions	HORIZON-MISS-2023-CIT-01-02: Positive clean energy district (PED) digital twins – from modelling to creating climate neutral Cities
HORIZON Europe - WIDERA	HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-02: A strong European R&I Foresight Community to better inform R&I policy decisions in the European Research Area about potential futures
	HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ERA-01-03: Experimentation and exchange of good practices for value creation
FUSION R&I: Research Excellence Programme	Financial support for the early-stage development of innovative projects, through a bottom-up approach.
Eurostars: joint transnational call	Support innovative SMEs and project partners (large companies, universities, research organisations and other types of organisations) by funding international collaborative R&D and innovation projects.
Open call for Network projects	Eases collaboration between organisations in Eureka countries
ERDF	Industrial research projects aimed at the priority areas of the Smart Specialization Strategy 2023-2024
SEAI National Energy RD&D programme	Utilising spatial analysis and AI to determine future EV charging requirements
SEAI National Energy RD&D programme	Green hydrogen in the Irish energy sector
SEAI National Energy RD&D programme	Bioeconomy renewable energy
SEAI National Energy RD&D programme	Demonstration to address dispatch down of renewable generation

SEAI Energy programme	National RD&D	Investigation of residential electricity use and the opportunities to optimise solar PV renewable electricity for self-consumption
SEAI Energy programme	National RD&D	Investigating ecological preservation while maximising Ireland's clean energy transition
SEAI Energy programme	National RD&D	Investigating innovation to impact frameworks to achieve Ireland's clean energy transition

Table 3 High Priority topics per funding programme

4 Regional Desks Leaders activities for securing adequate funding

In the context of Deliverable D7.3, the consortium partners conducted comprehensive assessments of funding instruments at pan-European, regional, and national levels. The table presented below summarizes the business development activities undertaken by each Regional Desk Leader to secure the necessary funding for the ongoing post-project activities of PANTERA.

Regional Desk Leader	Call	Topic	Call/Topic Submission Deadline	Submission of Proposal (If more than one, add an extra row)	Expected Results Timeframe	Estimated Budget (Portion of the partner budget allocated to activities relevant to PANTERA sustainability - e.g, Communication,Dissemination, Networking, Regional Studies, Participation in Events, Workshop Organization etc.,)
DERlab	HORIZON INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01	HORIZON INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01: Research Infrastructure Services to Enable R&I Addressing Main Challenges and EU Priorities	09.03.2023	Yes	Sep-23	20,000.00 €
FOSS	CETPartners hip Joint Call 2022	TRI1 - Integrated Net-zero-emissions Energy System	27.03.2023	Yes	27.8.2023	80,000.00 €
FOSS	Horizon- INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01	Research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing main challenges and EU priorities	09.03.2023	Yes	9.8.2023	38,000.00 €

FOSS	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-01	federated data and intelligence Orchestration & sharing for the Digital Energy transition	09.03.2023	Yes	9.8.2023	55,000.00 €
RSE	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-01-10	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-01-10: Supporting the development of a digital twin to improve management, operations and resilience of the EU Electricity System in support to REPowerEU	30.03.2023	Yes	Aug-23	60,000.00 €
TUS	Horizon-INFRA-2023-SERV-01-01	Research infrastructure services to enable R&I addressing main challenges and EU priorities	09.03.2023	Yes	09.08.2023	7,000.00 €
TUS	HORIZON-CL5-2022-D3-03	Sustainable, secure and competitive energy supply	30.03.2023	Yes	30.09.2023	15,000.00 €
TUS	HORIZON-CL5-2022-D4-02	HORIZON-AG Efficient, sustainable and inclusive energy use	24.01.2023	Yes	24.06.2023	15,000.00 €
UCD	HORIZON-CL5-2022-D3-01-13	HORIZON-CL5-2022-D3-01-13	11.05.2022	Yes	Funded	11,718.75 €
UCD	ERC-2021-AdG	ERC-2021-AdG	20.05.2021	Yes	Funded	12,500.00 €
UCD	Horizon Europe Green Deal	Horizon Europe Green Deal	2022	Yes	Funded	9,250.00 €
UCD	HORIZON-MSCA-2022-DN-01	HORIZON-MSCA-2022-DN-01	11.05.2022	Yes	11.09.2023	8,594.64 €
UCD	Horizon Europe CL5-2021-D5-01-03	Horizon Europe CL5-2021-D5-01-03	16.06.2021	Yes	Funded	6,985.50 €

Table 4 Overview of Regional Desk leaders business development activities

Using the provided spreadsheet, the Regional Desk leaders had the opportunity to fill in specific details regarding their involvement in proposals. They could indicate whether they have already submitted a proposal or, as depicted in the following table, if they plan to participate in future proposals for relevant calls and topics. Multiple entries could be added to capture participation in more than one proposal.

Regional Desk Leader	Call	Topic	Plan of Submission	Planned Submission Date	Expected Results Period	Estimated Budget (Portion of the partner budget allocated to activities relevant to PANTERA sustainability - e.g, Communication,Dissemination, Networking, Regional Studies, Participation in Events, Workshop Organization etc.,)
DERlab	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-17	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-17: Development and integration of advanced software tools in SCADA systems for High, Medium and Low voltage AC/DC hybrid systems	Yes	16.01.2024	Jun-24	20,000.00 €
FOSS	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-12	Energy Management Systems for flexibility services	Yes	16.01.2024	16.06.2024	60,000.00 €
FOSS	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D5-01-01	Smart, low-cost pervasive stationary slow charging and bi-directional solutions synergic with the grid for EV mass deployment (2ZERO Partnership)	Yes	18.04.2024	18.09.2024	50,000.00 €
RSE	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D5-01-01	Smart, low-cost pervasive stationary slow charging and bi-directional solutions synergic with the grid for EV mass deployment (2ZERO Partnership)	Yes	18.04.2024	18.09.2024	80,000.00 €
RSE	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-12	Energy Management Systems for flexibility services	Yes	16.01.2024	16.06.2024	50,000.00 €

TUS	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-12	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-12: Energy Management Systems for flexibility services	Yes	16.01.2024	16.06.2024	10,000.00 €
TUS	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-13	DC and AC/DC hybrid transmission and distribution systems	Yes	16.01.2024	16.06.2024	15,000.00 €
TUS	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-02	Low-power PV	Yes	16.01.2024	16.06.2024	15,000.00 €
TUS	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-02	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-02-13: Operation, Performance and Maintenance of PV Systems	Yes	03.09.2023	03.02.2024	17,000.00 €
IPE	HORIZON-CL5-2023-D3-03-05	Creation of a standardised and open-source peer-to-peer energy sharing platform architecture for the energy sector	Yes	10.10.2023	Mar-24	20,000.00 €
IPE	HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-01-13	DC and AC/DC hybrid transmission and distribution systems	Yes	16.01.2024	16.06.2024	20,000.00 €

Table 5 Overview of future/planned Regional Desk leaders business development activities

Furthermore, the spreadsheet allowed the Regional Desk leaders to outline their priorities and interests, even if their participation in a specific proposal had not yet been confirmed. This encouraged proactive engagement facilitates a comprehensive overview of the participants' business development activities, contributing to the sustainability of the PANTERA project.

5 Conclusions

Deliverable D7.5 aimed to outline crucial business development activities for securing stable funding, expanding the stakeholder network, and fostering international cooperation. It included a cost breakdown analysis for platform maintenance and expansion. Thorough assessments of funding instruments at various levels identified stable funding sources, including EU-wide programs and national/regional research and development initiatives in the Smart Energy Systems/Smart Grids domain.

As demonstrated in the consolidated report provided by the different regional desk leaders, the PANTERA partners are highly committed in further supporting the operation, content population and regional promotion of the EIRIE platform, since the number of proposals submitted, and funding required to this end can effectively cover the needs identified in D7.4 for the next 3 years after the project ends.

Thus, this report captures the short-term activities performed by the PANTERA consortium, which are expected to flourish in the years to come and ensure that promotion and sustainability of the EIRIE platform will be further reinforced in the years to come.

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