



## **Letter of Intent**

### **to strengthen the commitment in ERIAFF Network and its activities**

The undersigned,

#### **Considering the following:**

- a. The European Region for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ERIAFF) network was constituted as an informal partnership at the initiative of a core group of 17 European Regions, led by the Minister of Agriculture of Regional Government of Tuscany, which met on September 20th 2012 in Florence. In this first Conference the joint declaration constitutive of ERIAFF was launched with the support from 24 European Regions.
- b. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013 in Brussels, during the second ERIAFF Conference, the Regions reiterated their engagement to continue their action to facilitate the integration of European policies in favour of innovation in agriculture, food and forestry areas.
- c. The European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and other European Institutions and Organizations consider ERIAFF to be a relevant and useful network.
- d. ERIAFF has allowed its partners to work on themes of common interest, reaching the aggregation of 92 Regions from 20 European Countries.
- e. ERIAFF can provide a considerable contribution to the Smart Specialization Strategy (S3) Agrifood Platform created and managed by the European Commission.
- f. After several years of activity, there is a common desire to guarantee the future of the ERIAFF network by renewing the commitment, particularly in terms of a governance model that can ease the coordination of a consistent amount of partners and answer more efficiently to the rising number of actions of common interest.



By renewing its commitment within the ERIAFF Network, the undersigned agrees on the following collaboration and functioning principles:

## 1. Core principles

The targets agreed with the Florence joint declaration of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012 are confirmed, reiterating the aim of identifying the needs and the priorities of innovation, as well as sharing the best practices and respective programmes and projects, in order to ease synergies between actors of the territory and improve the participation in projects and European initiatives.

ERIAFF network is kept as an informal partnership, which remains open to new adhesions based on two different levels:

- Member: Regions (or other regional institutions whereas there is no government at regional level) that participate to the Network with a formal adhesion letter.
- Observer: Regions that ask for entering the ERIAFF mailing list without sending an adhesion letter.

The network coordination and its activities are sustained through a **Coordination Committee (CC)**.

Network activities are organized in thematic working groups, led by at least one member region.

## 2. Partnership

ERIAFF network partnership is composed by Regional Governmental Bodies. In Countries without regionalised governmental bodies, the partnership can be joined by other Local Governments (at least NUT3 level) or national governmental structures which are equivalent (e.g. Governmental Agencies, Territorial Development Authorities, etc.).

ERIAFF partners, divided in members and observers, can suggest actors of their own territory to be added in the contact list and various activities, including a delegation to represent the partner in network activities.



### **3. Governance**

ERIAFF Network is a non-statutory partnership, nevertheless partners discuss and make decision about common initiatives and collaboration with third parties (eg. other organizations, projects, etc.). In order to allow a coordinate and shared representation of the common interest, a Coordination Committee (CC) is established as an informal decisional body of the network. It meets at least once a year and is composed by all the signatory partner regions.

Ministry of Agriculture of Tuscany Region holds *pro-tempore* the role of CC coordinator and facilitator.

Working Groups lead partners assure their presence to the CC meetings.

The CC decides about the inception of new working groups and the annual work programme. It can establish specific task forces in order to analyse relevant themes for the partnership and the functionality of the network.

### **4. Working groups**

ERIAFF Network works through working groups which coordination is assured by at least one partner region. Working groups can be started at the proposal of a member, with assessment and approval of the Coordination Committee.

They can be ended any time upon communication of the coordinator to the Coordination Committee.

ERIAFF partners can join every working group on a voluntary basis by informing the WG and Network coordinators.

The working groups, and their respective coordinators, are identified in a specific annex, which can be revised by the CC whenever required by the coordinator or a ERIAFF member.



## **5. Sharing of resources**

The Regions involved in the CC may also support ERIAFF joint activities by allocating administrative and organizational workforce in the following areas:

- Communication efforts and daily management of website contents and social media tools;
- Policy officers for following up technical and political dossiers;
- Logistic support for event and meetings in Brussels and, if necessary, in other EU Countries;
- Event manager for supporting organization of ERIAFF events;
- Trainees interested in sectors relevant for the Network.

## **6. Renewal of the governance**

ERIAFF organizational model can be modified at the proposal of the CC and following approval at the next closest Annual Conference on the basis of a written answer from ERIAFF members.


### **The undersigned declare to:**

- be an active partner of the Coordination Committee of the network of the European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry and will do the utmost to build an European network that has an important function as a platform and will act as an authority on research and innovation aspects in agriculture, food and forestry at European level.
- provide the necessary administrative and organizing workforce to support joint and interregional activities and projects;
- represent the ERIAFF network, with written and personal dedication, when asked for by the member regions or by the European Union;
- commit to further develop ERIAFF Network and interregional activities through the establishment of relevant ERIAFF working groups.



This letter of intents has no deadline. Each signatory may decide to withdraw by express written communication to the coordinator.

Thus agreed at the Annual ERIAFF conference in Thessaloniki on June 14, 2022.

Logo	The region and its representative	Technical contact persons Additional endorsed responsibilities
 provincie Zuid-Holland	Region: Provincie Zuid-Holland Name and function: M. Stolk  Regional Minister  Signature:	<input data-bbox="954 804 1114 835" type="text"/> <i>Policy Officer – Horticulture Innovation &amp; International Affairs (EU)</i> <input data-bbox="954 904 1259 936" type="text"/> <input data-bbox="954 943 1102 974" type="text"/>  <input data-bbox="954 1010 1114 1041" type="text"/> <i>EU Affairs</i> <input data-bbox="954 1077 1184 1108" type="text"/>  <input data-bbox="954 1144 1056 1176" type="text"/> <i>EU Affairs</i> <input data-bbox="954 1211 1139 1243" type="text"/> @pzh.nl



## **ANNEX to the ERIAFF Letter of Intent**

### List of ERIAFF Working Groups and correspondent leadership

- **Plants**, Zuid-Holland & Noord-Holland
- **European Forested Regions Network**, North Karelia and Castilla y Leon
- **S3 High Tech Farming Partnership**, Tuscany
- **Social Innovation in Rural Areas**, Marche
- **S3 Consumer Involvement in Agrofood Innovation Partnership**, Ostergötland
- **Bioregions**, Catalonia
- **Communication and Website Management**, Extremadura
- **Agroecology**, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano (SouthTyrol)
- **Plant-based Proteins**, Pays de la Loire
- **Food Systems**, South Ostrobothnia