



RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
**SMART SPECIALIZATION  
STRATEGY**

OF

THE AUTONOMOUS REGION  
OF MADEIRA

**SUMMARY**  
ENGLISH



# TECHNICAL DATA

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REGIONAL SMART SPECIALIZATION STRATEGY OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF MADEIRA  
(Summary)

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## GENERAL COORDINATION

Rui Caldeira

## LEGAL SUPPORT

Sara Relvas

## TECHNICAL TEAM

Alberto Grilo  
Ana Rola  
Bruno Coelho  
Clemente Aguiar  
Eduarda Ramalho  
Lúcio Quintal  
Mário Rui Silva

## DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Image and Protocol Office (GIP)

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Pedro Tranquada

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# 1 Presentation

The new Regional Smart Specialization Strategy (EREI) proposes, for the 2021–2027 framework, a significant increase in total R&D expenditure as a percentage of the RAM's GDP, aiming to capitalize on the experience gained during the previous RIS3 Framework Program (2014–2020).

This logic of continuity is justified by the Region's positive performance in the transfer of knowledge to the economy, which saw an increase of 16.3 points between 2011 and 2019.

In continuing this transfer process, it is important to consider the high additional costs arising from insularity and outermost region status, the demographic limitations in creating critical mass, and the dominance of the Tourism sector in the economy.

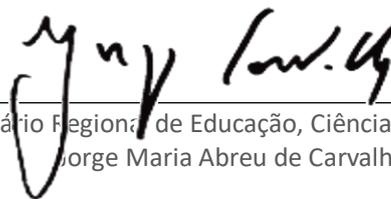
Given these conditions, it is essential to enable smart diversification through the creation of platforms that facilitate collaborative practices and an increase in capitalization instruments for R&D+I activities.

Thus, the 2021–2027 EREI is based on a three-dimensional logic that integrates Assets, Business Conditions, and Demand Dynamics, while ensuring alignment between the Regional Strategy and the National Smart Specialization Strategy (ENEI).

Within this framework, the implementation of the EREI will propose lines of action with entrepreneurial discovery plans and processes, as well as permanent monitoring systems that comply with the policy mix foreseen in national and European funding programs.

In short, the challenge of Smart Specialization requires the alignment of the EREI with the ENEI, coherence with the regional Operational Program, and intelligent diversification of R&D activities, aiming to generate value-added solutions.

The EREI will be fully supported by public incentives for its implementation.



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Secretário Regional de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia  
Jorge Maria Abreu de Carvalho

## 2 Introduction

The Regional Smart Specialization Strategy of the Autonomous Region of Madeira (EREI RAM 2021–2027) is the result of a detailed analysis of the Region's economic context and its Regional Innovation System (RIS), as well as a thorough evaluation of the thematic priorities defined for the previous programming period (EREI RAM 2014–2020).

This document presents a summary of the Strategy focusing essentially on the new Strategic Domains, the Governance Model and the Monitoring and Evaluation System.

For more detailed information, consult the official documentation available at:

<https://www.madeira.gov.pt/gsre/Estrutura/GSRE/ctl/Read/mid/10265/Informacaoid/147403/UnidadeOrganicaId/19>.

# 3 Challenges of the Regional Innovation System

## 3.1 The economic context

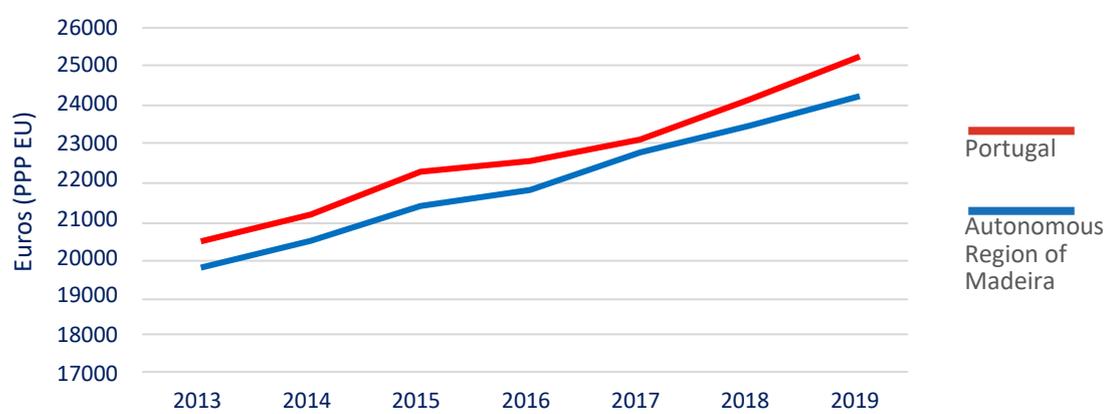
Taking the period from 2013 (the last year of the QREN programming period) to the last year with available information as a time reference, there has been sustained growth in the Autonomous Region of Madeira's GDP since 2014, roughly in line with that of the country as a whole, albeit with fluctuations that are not entirely synchronized (in 2017, the Autonomous Region of Madeira grew at a much faster rate than the country, with the opposite occurring in 2018 and 2019).

GDP per capita in PPP (EU) in RAM reached €24,266 in 2019, compared to €25,222 for Portugal, with no convergence or divergence observed relative to Portugal during the 2013-2019 period. Among the Portuguese regions, RAM has a GDP per capita close to that of Portugal as a whole, being on the border of the convergence regions (i.e., with a GDP per capita very close to 75% of the EU average).

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Portuguese GDP fell sharply in 2020 and picked up again in the second quarter of 2021. According to the Bank of Portugal's October 2021 Economic Bulletin, there is an estimated drop of -8.4% in 2020 and a forecast of +4.8% in 2021, in both cases lower than the Euro Area (-6.5% and +5.0% respectively). Regional data is not yet available.

All in all, EREI-RAM for 2021 - 2027 is set against the backdrop of a strong global challenge for both Madeira and Portugal, aimed at the dynamics of growth and convergence at European level.

**Graph 3.1: Portugal and RAM - GDP per capita evolution**



Source: INE, Regional Economic Accounts

## 3.2 Global Vision of the Regional Innovation System

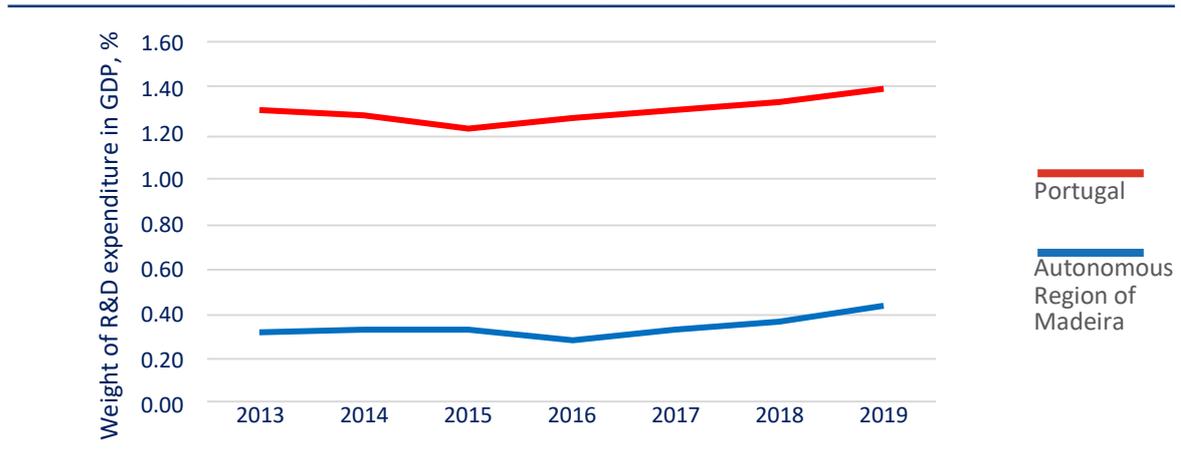
Taking the weight of total expenditure on R&D in GDP as a usual indicator of its own technological effort, the Autonomous Region of Madeira still has a low figure (0.44% in 2019). In 2019, the value of this indicator is one of the lowest among the 7 Portuguese regions, close to that of the Algarve (0.41%) and the ARA (0.30%) but well below that of Portugal (1.40%) or the regions with more consolidated innovation systems (North: 1.53%; Centre: 1.36%; AML: 1.69%).

Nevertheless, there was a positive evolution between 2013 and 2019, with an increase of 0.10 p.p. in this

indicator. Even so, this evolution fell short of the goals set out in the PIDTI (Action Plan for Research, Technological Development and Innovation of RAM) and the EREI program document for the 2014-2020 period. In the latter, it was considered that ‘... RAM should reach RTD+I intensity values of around 0.58% of GDP and around 700 people involved in R&D activities by 2020’ (Madeira 2020, 2015, p.10).

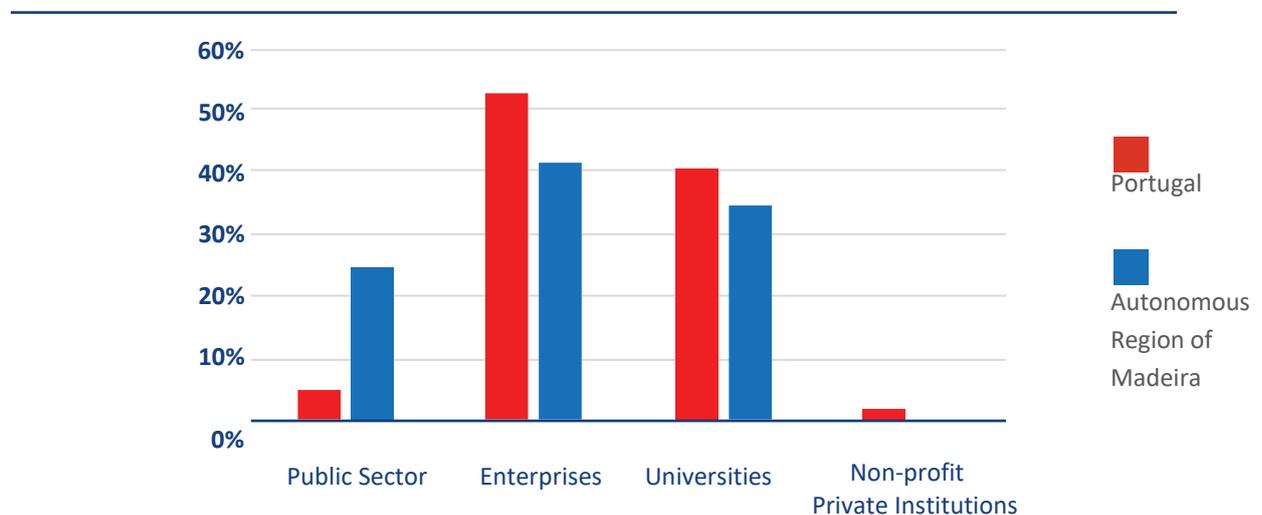
In terms of the execution sector, RAM observes a somewhat specific pattern in the national panorama, being of far the region in which the relative weight of the State sector is greater (24.5% in 2019). Between 2013 and 2019, a very positive evolution to be highlighted is related to the increase in the absolute and relative weight of the Companies sector, passing in 3.8 M€ for 9.2 M€ and 26.9% for 41.2% of total R&D at the period referred.

**Graph 3.2: Portugal and RAM - Proportion of R&D Expenditure in GDP**



Source: INE, DGEEC

**Graph 3.3: Breakdown of R&D expenditure by institutional sector of implementation**



Source: DGEEC

## 4 EREI 2021-2027 of the Autonomous Region of Madeira

The definition of the EREI 2021-2027 for RAM is based centrally on the diagnosis made of the Regional Innovation System and on capitalizing on past experience, particularly with regard to the evaluation of the EREI 2014-2020 Priority Domains.

In addition, the methodology for defining the Priority Domains followed a rational in which, in the logic of intelligent specialization, a set of 1st level criteria aggregated into 3 dimensions were considered: 'Assets', 'Business Conditions' and 'Demand's Dynamics', with the addition, with great relevance, of a criterion of 'Articulation with the Regional Strategy' and another of 'Articulation with the National Strategy for Intelligent Specialization (ENEI).

The operationalization of the Priority Domains is also being considered from the outset, with the initial formulation of the EREI having to include an initial specification, by domain, of the opportunities for transformative activities, the lines of action and the policy mix.

All this information is part of the official EREI RAM 2021-2027 document. This summary document only gives a brief presentation of each of the defined Priority Domains

### 4.1 Priority Domains

The domains of **Tourism and Marine Resources and Technologies** remain indisputable areas of specialization, for the reasons already stated in the justification for their selection in the EREI 2014–2020, which have now been updated. It should be noted that, in Marine Resources and Technologies, the innovation ecosystem was strengthened during the 2014–2020 period, particularly with the creation of the Madeira Ocean Observatory.

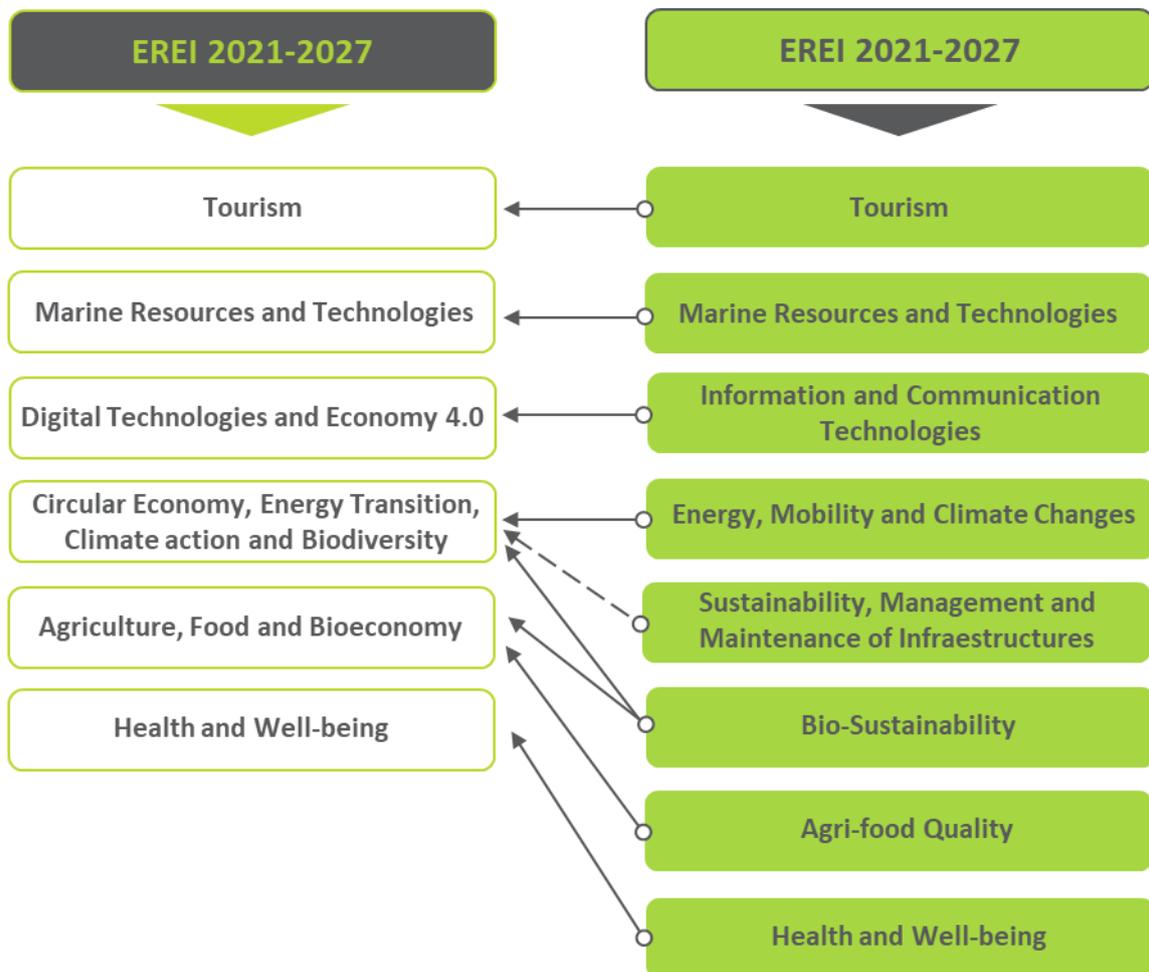
The domain of Information and Communication Technologies was characterized by a high level of achievements, notably through the activities of the former M-ITI, but also with entrepreneurship projects supported by the Madeira 14-20 OP. It is therefore considered a domain called **Digital Technologies and Economy 4.0**, referring both to the development and production of digital technologies and to their application in a wide range of sectors (first and foremost Tourism and the Sea, but also Agriculture, Health, Mobility, Creative Industries, etc.).

A domain is chosen: **Circular Economy, Energy Transition, Climate Action and Biodiversity**, associated with sustainability and the efficient use of resources, encompassing sub-dimensions such as the circular economy, renewable energy and efficient energy use, sustainable mobility, climate action and biodiversity. Compared to the EREI 2014-2020 domains, this new Priority Domain welcomes the scope considered in Energy, Mobility and Climate Change and in Bio-sustainability and, partially, in Sustainability, Maintenance and Management of Infrastructures (the latter no longer exists).

Another retained domain is **Agriculture, Food and Bioeconomy**, which brings together the former Quality Agro-Food domain and relevant components from the previous Bio-sustainability domain.

Finally, in continuity with the previous period, considering the public and private investments carried out during EREI 2014-2020 and those planned in the meantime (namely the construction of the new hospital and the opening of at least one additional private healthcare unit)—alongside the strong commitment to the full establishment of the Medicine Course at the University of Madeira, as well as, the critical mass and results presented by this domain during the referenced period, the commitment to the Health and Well-Being domain is maintained and reinforced, the focus on the domain **Health and Wellness** is maintained and reinforced.

Figure 4.1: EREI 2021-2027 – Domains Priorities and correspondence with The EREI 2014-2020



#### 4.1.1 Tourism

The vision for this priority area should take into account the challenges of the Economic and Social Development Plan for the Autonomous Region of Madeira 2030 - PDES Wood 2030:

- Consolidate the strategic positioning of "Destination Madeira", firstly by attracting international demand in the post-pandemic, establishing its image as a safe and quality destination, in alignment with the supply capacity and consumption trends of priority and emerging markets;
- Stimulate the increase in tourist spending and increase the profitability of the sector throughout its value chain;
- Promote innovation, the qualification of human resources and the sustainability (economic, social and environmental) of tourist enterprises;
- Contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the natural, landscape, historical and cultural heritage, as differentiating and structuring elements of "Destination Madeira".

The Tourism Priority Domain aims to reinforce the reputation of RAM as a reference tourist destination, through the valorization of the symbolic capital associated with it, through a more effective and sophisticated promotion, attracting and retaining national and international tourists, and through a more robust, diversified and qualified offer. It aims to invest more in the offer and practice of tourist activities, particularly those linked to Nature Tourism and Nautical Tourism, positioning them as products of excellence. It covers

the rehabilitation of the main tourist areas, thus enhancing the practice of differentiated Cultural Tourism and allowing a shift of tourist flows to this segment, with consequences for the reduction of seasonality and the geographical concentration of tourism in Funchal. This domain also encompasses Accessibilities and Mobility through smart land management (Smart Cities), aligning with European trends and aiming to achieve the European Union's goal of climate neutrality by 2050. It also includes strengthening the connection between Tourism and Well-being. It takes into account collaboration and coordination among the various agents in the sector, from representatives of tourist developments to operators, agents, and tourism entertainers, as well as public and private agencies and institutions. It is also intended to qualify human resources in this sector.

#### **4.1.2 Marine Resources and Technologies**

The delimitation of this priority domain becomes challenging, first due to the transversality of the Economy of the Sea theme. However, we can point to a set of different value chains that use the Sea and marine resources as central elements of their activity. These value chains display different levels of maturity, establish a different level of relationship with each other and cover a very diverse range of products and services, according to very different processes and using a wide range of technologies and skills.

Adopting the criteria used in the Satellite Account for the Economy of the Sea, also known as Ocean Satellite Account or Marine Economy Satellite Account (OSA), the “Established Activities” comprise a set of mature activities, namely the fish sector, which includes fishing, aquaculture, fish conservation and processing, the maritime transport sector, ports and logistics, the naval industries and tourism (nautical and cruises), the infrastructures and maritime works. In addition to these mature activities, OSA defines a set of “Emerging Activities”, namely marine renewable energies, marine biotechnologies and mining. These emerging activities benefit from the development and combination of a set of technologies (underwater robotics, sensors, blockchain, drones, communications, new materials, artificial intelligence, ...) applied to the valorization of marine resources. These activities are still in the affirmation phase, which are based, above all, on the action of RTD centers and some companies, mostly technological start-ups, with difficulties in scaling their businesses.

Based on the above, one way of structuring the priority domain is to take into account three sectors:

- Living marine resources (fish and marine biotechnologies);
- Non-living marine resources (marine renewable energies, mining and ocean technologies); and
- Maritime industries and services (naval industries, ports and maritime transport).

With the Priority Domain "Resources and Technologies of Sea", RAM intends to meet the conditions to consolidate and expand the Blue Economy Value Chain.

RAM is committed to policies that contribute to the preservation of marine biodiversity (guaranteeing its sustainable exploitation) and increase the added value of fishing. It also involves diversifying the economic base, by increasing the scale of fish production in aquaculture, with zero environmental impact, innovation in the fish processing and conservation sector and the biotechnological exploitation of non-traditional living marine organisms and the development of high technological grade products and services for several sectoral markets. It also includes the modernization of ports, adopting a smart port perspective, and the revitalization of the naval industry. Finally, it includes the transformation of RAM into a reference observatory for the environmental state of the Atlantic Ocean and the deep sea and the mapping and characterization of the marine mineral resources.

#### **4.1.3 Digital Technologies and Economy 4.0**

This Domain Priority accommodates the European and National commitment to digital transformation, including transformations in the value chains and business models of companies, but also the development of digital technologies that enable and enhance this transformation movement.

It therefore assumes a cross-cutting nature, as it encompasses sectors related to production and the development of technologies (information technology, electronics and communications, as well as

production technologies incorporating digital), but it also has an incidence on a wide range of user sectors, in the case of RAM, tourism, nautical activities and the sea, mobility, and agri-food, but also all social services such as health and education.

The scope of this priority domain therefore encompasses two perspectives:

- End-user companies, which will correspond to actions aimed at transforming their business models and processes, both in the internal dimension and in their external value chain, namely in their relationship with customers and suppliers, through the adoption of innovative based on digital technologies;
- Companies that develop and trade these innovative solutions, which will correspond to actions that aim to create new products, processes or services that enhance digital transformation of their clients through the use of key digital technologies. The scope could be more ambitious and include the creation and consolidation of a row of companies dedicated to the development of key digital technologies (examples include Big Data and data analysis, augmented reality, mobile communications, systems integration and interoperability, artificial intelligence, social networks, cloud technologies, data and edge computing, blockchain, internet of things, cybersecurity, high-performance computing, quantum computing, modelling and simulation, robotics and automation systems, additive manufacturing), seeking to retain more added value at RAM.

The Priority Domain “Digital Technologies and Economy 4.0” has, therefore, a vision of a strategy of transversal intervention for all the remaining Domains, aiming to retain at RAM a significant part of the economic and social impact of the ongoing digital transformation process, namely through the creation of more added value, more qualified employment, more R&IDT capacity, more technology-based companies, as well as reducing technological dependence on external sources.

It should be noted that the current pandemic context has accelerated the digital transformation process, namely through the development of new business models, based on the combined use of digital technologies, some of which are already mature and others which are emerging as a result of recent investments in R&D.

It follows that this priority domain aims to: accelerate the digital transformation of companies in the user sectors, making them more competitive and closer to their suppliers and customers; the adoption of digital KET by companies supplying technological solutions, in order to reinforce and create new offers; and empowerment for the creation and development of a digital technology sector.

#### **4.1.4 Circular Economy, Energy Transition, Climate Action and Biodiversity**

This Priority Domain refers to sustainability and the efficient use of resources, including sub-dimensions such as the circular economy, renewable energy and the efficient use of energy, sustainable mobility, climate action and biodiversity.

Within the framework of this Domain, RAM has recent sectoral planning instruments and others in the completion phase (Integrated Strategic Transport Plan, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, Regional Agenda for the Economy Circular, CLIMATE-Madeira Strategy, Sustainable Energy, Waste Management Plan) that identify priorities and specific measures for action, which should be taken into account in the EREI.

The vision of the ‘Circular Economy, Energy Transition, Climate Action and Biodiversity’ Priority Domain is the transition to a more sustainable, viable and equitable model in socio-economic terms, in which the use of resources (natural, technical and technological, energy and human) is optimized and the application of existing and potential actives (materials, components, products, services, networks, systems and knowledge) is managed in such way to preserve their value, usefulness, efficiency and security for as long as possible, in line with the strategic reference framework at National and European level.

The achievement of this vision will assume a proactive approach aiming the Energy Transition, Climate Change and Sustainability, demanding a set of changes to the model of productive specialization that potentiates adequate conditions for circularity, focusing on the good management of natural resources, modernization and productive efficiency, the sustainability of materials and the territory, and in energy efficiency and

security.

#### **4.1.5 Agriculture, Food and Bioeconomy**

This Thematic Domain encompasses the primary activity associated with agriculture and industrial food activities (except for industry associated with fish), considering the relevant technological and environmental issues.

The Domain is mainly based on agricultural products with a strong regional character, produced with endogenous agricultural resources. RAM has five products with a Protected Designation of Origin – Anona from Madeira, Sweet Potato, Onion, and Madeira Wine — and three products with Protected Geographical Indication — *Poncha* of Madeira, Cider and Madeira Rum.

In addition to other products with expression in this Thematic Domain, it is worth highlighting the reinforcement that has been assisted in subtropical fruit crops with supra-regional market perspectives, namely, in the cases of cherimoya, avocado, and passion fruit. However, there is a need to increase the production of regional products for the local market and to supply the tourism sector, as a way of increasing the region's sustainability and food security. There has also been some diversification of processed production, with various types of agricultural rum, table wine, jams, liqueurs, dairy products and bakery and confectionery products emerging and developing.

But RAM still has great potential to add value to other products, taking advantage of the opportunity created by the tourist potential of the Region, as well as the growing awareness around eating healthy and safe. In this regard, the “Thematic Research and Innovation Agenda in Agrifood, Forests and Biodiversity” (from FCT) states that ‘the current increase in awareness of the role of food in health and quality of life has stimulated research into genetic resources with added nutritional value, including endogenous and underexploited national resources, and encouraged the creation of new functional food solutions with a positive impact on consumer health’. The same document also states that ‘it is also important to promote a healthier diet based on minimally processed products, preferably of national and regional origin, given the food insecurity that affects the most vulnerable sectors of Portuguese society’ and the ‘importance of agro-diversity and genetic resources for agriculture and food and other under-exploited bioresources’.

This thematic domain is also guided by the European Green Deal (EEP), according to which the European Union aims to reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the food system (primary production and processing), strengthen its resilience (resistance), and ensure the safety of the food chain (sustainability, ‘sovereignty’, security) in the face of (global) climate change and biodiversity loss.

Thus, the Priority Domain ‘Agriculture, Food and Bioeconomy’ aims to adapt agriculture and, downstream, the agri-food industries to climate change and the resulting shifts in demand, which are becoming increasingly demanding and environmentally conscious. It also seeks to strengthen R&I capacity in this area.

It aims to develop innovative areas of high added value, with a sustainable and circular bioeconomy, based on regional resources.

It also aims to attract new entrepreneurs, increase the skills of the workforce, certify the distinctive quality of products, improve the conditions of access and competition in the markets, as well as guarantee consumers the highest levels of food protection and safety, along with products of excellence.

#### **4.1.6 Health and Well-being**

Health and well-being play an important role in the economic development of RAM, and the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized how critical this sector is for countries and regions, both in terms of prevention, health services and underlying therapies, as well as research.

Generically, and according to Madeira's Economic and Social Development Plan - PDES 2030, the main challenges facing the health sector in the 2030 horizon refer to the observance of a set of management and service delivery assumptions:

- Sustainability (improvement of the financial resources allocation model);
- Efficiency (improvement of internal management and decision-making and planning and control processes, with special relevance in the pandemic context);
- Transparency and rigor in information (planning and monitoring in the field of information systems and technologies within health systems);
- Quality and access (improvement of access to healthcare services, through the reinforcement of processes progressively focused on the patient);
- Human Resources (valuing culture and reinforcement of existing skills, promoting knowledge sharing and the level of employee satisfaction); and
- Digital Health (evolution towards models that involve the component of digital technologies, maximizing resources).

The Priority Domain Health and Well-being, essentially aims to increase the effectiveness and efficiency with which SESARAM provides its care and, at the same time, stimulates the production and supply of goods and services (private and public) related to the health value chain. To this end, the link with the scientific potential of the University of Madeira (UMa) should be strengthened, and efforts should be made to foster the creation of companies that act as specialized suppliers to healthcare and well-being providers, thereby reinforcing the logic of clustering.

The high level of specialization of Madeira's economy in tourism should be leveraged to strongly invest in health tourism niches, particularly in the well-being segment, which is enhanced, among other factors, by the natural conditions of the archipelago.

The insularity of RAM also suggests a strong commitment to the widespread and integrated use of digital technologies, giving rise to Digital Health, which will significantly improve the population's access to healthcare and contribute to greater efficiency in service delivery, while also enhancing convenience for patients and their potential caregivers

# 5 Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

## 5.1 Governance Model

The implementation of the Smart Specialization Strategy must be ensured by a governance structure, and its design should be based on core principles, namely:

- Ensure the involvement and participation of the various regional stakeholders, based on the quadruple helix model, which drives the entrepreneurial discovery process
- Ensure “collaborative leadership”, implying a sufficiently flexible decision-making process that allows each stakeholder to play a proactive role, taking the lead in certain projects or thematic areas, in line with their expertise and knowledge; and
- Avoid the multiplication of bodies, which tends to increase the transaction costs of policies, thereby reducing their effectiveness and efficiency.

Thus, the EREI Governance Model 2021-2027 has the following bodies:

- Regional Innovation Council;
- Executive Board (Mission Unit);
- Advisory Council;
- Smart Specialization Regional Platforms.

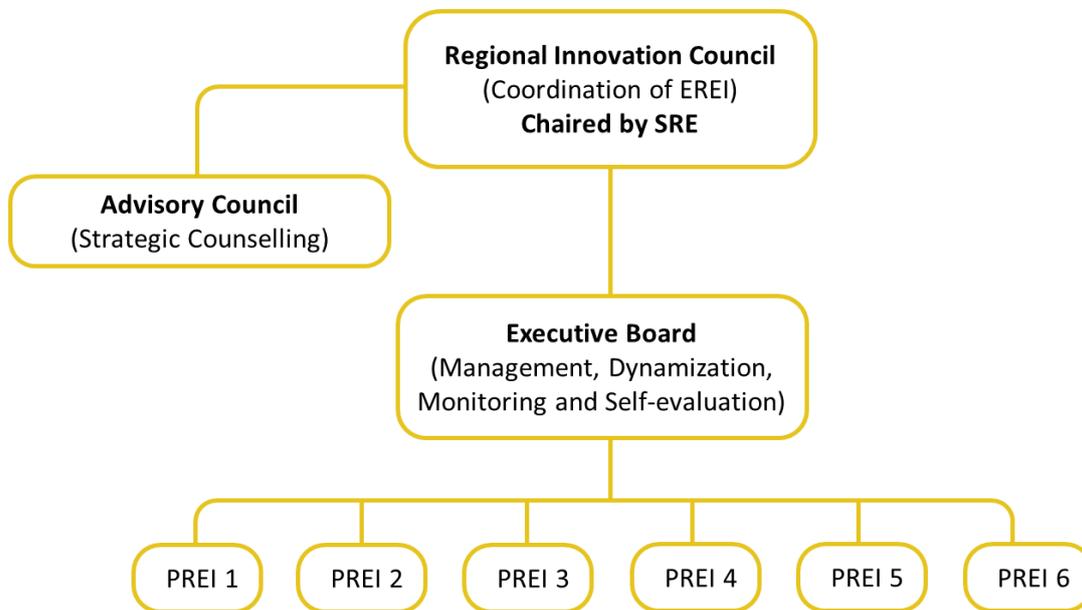
The Regional Innovation Council is the coordinating entity of the EREI, responsible for discussing and proposing its main implementation guidelines. Within the scope of its competences, the Regional Innovation Council supervises the implementation of the EREI, assesses and approves the recommendations and proposals for lines of action of the regional specialization platforms, promoting the coordination of actions and the articulation with the Managing Authorities of the relevant Operational Programs. The Regional Innovation Council is now chaired by the Regional Secretariat for Education, Science and Technology.

In order to ensure effective day-to-day management, the Presidency of the Regional Innovation Council has a permanent team assigned to the EREI, constituting a Mission Unit with the nature of an Executive Board. In addition to day-to-day management, this Executive Board will be responsible for promoting the implementation of the EREI, namely by coordinating its activity with those of the different Smart Specialization Regional Platforms. The Executive Board is also the appropriate body for monitoring the implementation of the EREI, preparing annual monitoring reports that include a self-assessment component, to be submitted to the Regional Innovation Council for appreciation.

The Governance Model maintains the Regional Smart Specialization Platforms as a component of utmost importance, one per priority domain, responsible for permanently monitoring the implementation of the strategy in the respective domain, interacting with the Executive Board in terms of suggestions and recommendations regarding the necessary actions and, above all, to permanently dynamize the process of entrepreneurial discovery.

The Advisory Council, in its role as an advisory body, pronounces on the implementation of the EREI as a whole and/or in specific aspects, whenever called upon to do so by the Regional Innovation Council. In particular, it should assess monitoring reports, thus being the first instance of external evaluation. Its composition will remain centered on a group of personalities of recognized technical, scientific or business merit in the different thematic areas of specialization, being desirable to mobilize experts from outside the RAM, but also being able to integrate experts from the Region.

Figure 5.1: Structure of the EREI Governance Model 2021-2027



## 5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation System

EREI-RAM 2021-2027 aims to have an improved monitoring and evaluation model, taking into account the governance model.

Thus, the Executive Committee, directly dependent on the Regional Innovation Council, but maintaining a regular operation with a management team nature, will be the main structure responsible for monitoring and self-evaluation. This body will be responsible, among other tasks, for collecting information that allows for the measurement and follow-up the indicators, as well as analyzing the fulfilment of the proposed objectives and targets (especially in the context of achievement indicators). It should produce periodic (annual) monitoring reports on the follow-up of the proposed actions, their grade of execution and the results achieved. In addition, these reports should present eventual problems, difficulties and challenges in achieving the results, and may also indicate any corrective measures (in terms of indicators, actions or even strategy), which will be assessed by the Regional Innovation Council and the Advisory Council.

The functions and composition of the Advisory Council ensure a first instance of external and independent evaluation. This dimension of the evaluation would benefit from being completed and harmonized at national level, regardless of whether the management of each EREI decides to use external entities for more global evaluations or on more specific dimensions.