

SMART SPECIALISATION WORKING GROUP

ANNUAL PLAN 2022

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OBJECTIVES

The Smart Specialisation Working Group aims to monitor and contribute to key policy developments related to S3 by enhancing dialogue with relevant EU institutions and stakeholders, such as DG REGIO, EISMEA, the S3 Platform and S3 Thematic Partnerships, the European Parliament, and the Committee of the Regions. The goal is to strengthen the regional perspective in the wider smart specialisation agenda and facilitate the interregional cooperation. The WG also aims to provide support and visibility to working group members through the regional snapshots, and to act as support for other ERRIN working groups – such as Policy and Innovation & Investment – on S3 related issues.

CONTEXT

The key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2022 are:

- The Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (I3) - its implementation and funding opportunities
- Development of the Smart Specialisation for Sustainability (S4) concept and implementation of the regional pilots
- Synergies between S3 and other EU programmes and initiatives, including HE Missions and Partnerships
- S3 and the skills dimension
- Territorial dimension of S3

The funding programmes important for the Working Group include:

- ERDF/Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (I3) - 2nd call (deadline: 18th Oct 2022)
- Horizon Europe: missions, partnerships, European Innovation Ecosystems



- NextGenerationEU
- Euroclusters

Support partnership building (e.g. S3 partnerships) and collaboration with other European organisations or networks:

The Smart Specialisation WG promotes S3 partnerships and pilot actions in WG meetings and will in 2022 have a project development session for the 2nd I3 call with a potential collaboration with the Vanguard Initiative and/or S3 partnerships. Other possible collaboration opportunities with networks such as the Vanguard Initiative, EARTO and CPMR will be exploited.

ACTIVITIES

Development of the S4 concept and implementation of pilot projects

16 March – dialogue (online)

The aim of the meeting is to further explore the concept of Smart Specialisation for Sustainability developed by the JRC and look into possibilities for ERRIN members to become the S4 regional pilots. The pilot initiative was jointly launched by the JRC and the CoR in 2021 and the call to select pilot regions will be open as of February 2022. It will consist of a voluntary upgrade of the Smart Specialisation Strategies.

A speaker from the JRC and possibly from the Committee of the Regions will be invited to this WG meeting. They will be able to present the latest developments on the S4 concept, as well as the call for pilot regions and the way their work will contribute to the general thinking around S4.

I3 project development session

May (TBC)

This session will explore interest and present opportunities for ERRIN members to build project consortiums for the 2nd call of the Interregional Innovation Investment instrument (deadline: 18th Oct 2022). The call consists of two strands: 1) Financial and advisory support for investments in interregional innovation projects and 2a) Financial and advisory support to the development of value chains in less developed regions.

The session might be organised in collaboration with S3 partnerships and/or the Vanguard Initiative. We are also looking to invite applicants that submitted their proposal for the first cut-off date to share their experiences and point out the benefits and disadvantages of the process.

The meeting will also be organised in cooperation with ERRIN I&I WG.

Synergies between S3 and other EU programmes and initiatives

Date TBC – information session / active discussion

This WG meeting aims to explore synergies and complementarities between S3 and Horizon Europe Missions and Partnerships. It will also look into the links with the renewed ERA and the ERA Hubs in



particular. It could also explore the interlinkages between S3 and the ecosystem programmes supported by EISMEA (Unit of Fabienne Gautier) (European Innovation Ecosystems, I3, Euroclusters).

The skills dimension of S3

Date TBC – information session

This WG meeting will investigate the role of S3 in the Pact for Skills, its regional roll-out as well as the skills partnerships which are being launched by DG GROW and DG EMPL on different industrial ecosystems. It also aims to explore how centres of vocational excellence are linked with S3. A spin-off activity of this meeting could be a presentation of the [Erasmus + call](#) “Partnerships for Excellence – Centres of Vocational Excellence”.

Possibility to link with the ERRIN project Charter that focuses on the blueprint of sectoral skills and the regional roll out on skills in the area of cultural heritage, and look at how S3 can be linked to the blueprints.

Territorial dimension of S3

Date TBC - active discussion

This WG meeting will be an opportunity to take a look at S3 from the territorial perspective in wide policy context including the ESIF Policy Objective 5 (Europe closer to citizens) and its tools for integrated development, the Long-term vision for rural areas, urban programmes and initiatives as well as the S4 pilot initiative.