

## SMART SPECIALISATION WORKING GROUP

### ANNUAL PLAN 2023

#### WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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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 its S3 Thematic Partnerships, the European Parliament, and the European 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 2023:

- Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument – its design, implementation and funding opportunities
- Partnerships for Regional Innovation – development of the Pilot, testing and implementation among interested members
- Synergies between S3 and other EU programmes and initiatives, including EU Missions and European Partnerships
- S3 and the skills dimension
- S3 Community of Practice
- Swedish presidency – events organised on PRI and deep tech in May/June 2023
- New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA) – Regional Innovation Valleys
- Preparation of Cohesion Policy post-2027

Funding programmes important for the Working Group:

- Horizon Europe – with emphasis on work package 10 (European Innovation Ecosystems – EIE), especially the Regional Innovation Valleys call, and work package 11 (Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area).
- Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument
- Erasmus+ Innovation Alliances
- European Structural and Investment Funds

How does the group support partnership building and collaborate with other European organisations or networks?

- Participation in the I3 Expert Group
- Linkages with the S3 Community of Practice
- Close cooperation with the CoR
- Linkages with the Vanguard Initiative

## ACTIVITIES

### **PRI Pilot Working Groups going forward**

**27 January**

Informal meeting between ERRIN members leading the PRI WGs and a representative of the JRC to discuss cooperation, expectations for the Pilot and steer the PRI policy debate.

### **Coffee meeting on I3 Instrument Strand 2b call**

**2 February**

Following the official info day on the I3 Instrument – Strand 2b Capacity Building in Less Developed Regions organised by EISMEA on 19 January, this session will give an opportunity to ERRIN members to present their regional priorities and any project ideas related to the call before its closing on 16 March 2023, to start discussing possible future initiatives and collaborations.

### **Steering PRI – expectations and future directions**

**14 March**

Before the large political debate planned during the PRI Pilot plenary on 28 March, this WG meeting will allow ERRIN members who are involved in or interested in the concept of PRI to engage in discussion with JRC, CoR and DG REGIO. The aim of the event will be to give ERRIN members a chance to present their specific expectations with regard to the initiative and propose a direction for the policy debate.

The specific angle of the event will be developed based on discussions held during informal meetings organised by the S3 WG leaders with the JRC in January and February.

### **R&I in cohesion policy post-2027**

**27 September 2023 (TBC)**

The aim of this meeting will be to discuss potential research and innovation elements and links in the new cohesion policy framework after 2027, before the adoption of the [CoR opinion](#) on the future of cohesion policy later in the year and as the work of the [European Commission's high level group](#) on the future of cohesion policy is underway, with its strategic conclusions and recommendations expected in early 2024.

Co-rapporteur of the CoR opinion and a representative of the high level group will be invited to present their proposals and engage in a discussion with members. PRI will be mentioned as a concept to use for strengthening the link between R&I and cohesion policies, with the new Pilot expected to be launched in 2024.

### **Addressing capacity challenges in interregional collaboration**

**9 November 2023 (TBC)**

The Smart Specialisation Community of Practice (S3 CoP) is DG REGIO's main source of support and knowledge sharing on the implementation of S3, with ERRIN as part of the S3 CoP secretariat. S3 CoP activities involve among others a Working Group on Interregional Collaboration (IC WG). Members of the IC WG will discuss challenges relating to this topic as one of the fulfilment criteria of the S3 enabling condition, starting with capacity on 29 September.

In this frame, this S3 WG meeting will serve to examine and comment on the proposed solutions and recommendations regarding different capacity issues identified during the September S3 CoP IC WG meeting in the context of interregional collaboration. ERRIN members will have a chance to learn from good practices and exchange views to impact the work of the S3 CoP. The findings from the event would be presented at the next S3 CoP IC WG meeting on 29 November.

The content of the meeting might still be subject to change depending on S3 CoP developments.

### **Topics to be monitored further:**

- **Skills dimension of S3**

A meeting on this topic could discuss what skills are and show different frameworks for skills in the context of S3. It will also 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 could also aim to explore how centres of vocational excellence are linked with S3. A spin-off activity of this meeting could be a presentation of a relevant Erasmus+ call.

Possible 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.

Possible joint event with the Science and Education for Society Working Group.

- **Societal innovation and deep tech dimension**

Learn about different regions work in societal innovation, how the European Commission interprets deep tech innovation. Will this also influence EIC funding?

Possible joint event with the Innovation and Investment Working Group.