

## ANNUAL PLAN 2024 - SUMMER UPDATE S3 WORKING GROUP

### STRATEGIC CLUSTER

#### 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. The goal is to strengthen the regional perspective in the wider smart specialisation agenda and facilitate the interregional cooperation. The WG actively engages in the debate around shaping the cohesion policy post-2027 and the future of S3. It also follows different interregional collaboration instruments for innovation, their state of play and upcoming opportunities.

#### CONTEXT

##### Main long-term priority for the Working Group:

- Future of S3 and R&I dimension in cohesion policy post-2027

The key EU-level priorities and strategies that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2024:

##### Key EU processes to follow

- Partnerships for Regional Innovation – new Pilot
- Interregional collaboration instruments for innovation (Interregional Innovation Investments Instrument, Regional Innovation Valleys)
- S3 Community of Practice: Working Groups, Expert Group, targeted assignments, S3 Partnerships and links to ERRIN WGs
- Interreg Europe peer reviews

## OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTPUTS IN ERRIN PROJECTS

### Projects of strategic interest to the Working Group:

- [Smart Specialisation Community of Practice \(S3 CoP\)](#) – central node on guidance, networking, support and peer-learning on S3, covering its conceptual development and implementation. S3 CoP is open to all S3 stakeholders across regions in EU Member States, including practitioners, policymakers, researchers, businesses, governmental bodies in charge of S3 implementation, industry associations, and civil society organisations. From 2023-2025, support for the management of the S3 CoP will be provided by the S3 CoP Secretariat – a consortium of eleven partners, including ERRIN, led by Technopolis Group.

### Opportunities in S3 CoP in 2024:

- Following further development of S3 Observatory
- Following activities of Working Groups on Interregional Cooperation, Innovation Diffusion, and Industrial Transformation
- [Call for EoI in Targeted Support Assignments](#)
- Call for EoI in joining the pool of experts for Targeted Support Assignments
- Support for Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnerships
- [S3 Conference](#) on 11-12 December in Rimini

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### **Future of cohesion policy in support to R&I**

**Date: 22 October 2024 (TBC)**

As the debate around the future cohesion policy post-2027 is in full swing, with the [report](#) of the Commission's Group of High-level Specialists on the Future of Cohesion Policy published in February, the [9th Cohesion Report](#) released in March, and important concerns from regions related to talks about possible centralisation of the cohesion funds management, this meeting will continue reflections on the topic, taking the specific angle of how cohesion policy can support R&I going forward.

### **Regional Innovation Scoreboard – towards more impact**

**Date: 28 November 2024**

The Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) is a regional extension of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), offering a comparative assessment of the innovation performance of European regions on a limited number of indicators. It is also used as a reference criterion for eligibility in the Horizon Europe EIE sub-programme calls. However, concerns are raised that RIS doesn't reflect the actual innovation performance level of territories and its indicators could be optimised. This Policy WG meeting will examine how RIS could be improved and provide greater value to policymakers.

### **Issues/topics to be monitored further:**

- New European Innovation Agenda and Regional Innovation Valleys developments
- Future of S3 in MFF post-2027
- Interregional collaboration instruments for innovation (I3 Instrument, Thematic S3 Partnerships, Regional Innovation Valleys, PRI, Interreg)

## **PAST 2024 ACTIVITIES**

### **Process for developing cohesion policy post-2027**

**Date: 15 January 2024**

This informal meeting between ERRIN S3 WG leaders and representatives of DG REGIO was used to discuss the process of developing the future cohesion policy post-2027 and its timeline. The meeting served as reference for the planning process of S3 WG activities around the topic across 2024.

### **Future of cohesion policy and impact of RRF**

**Date: 12 March 2024**

During this internal exchange, ERRIN S3 WG leaders and representatives of the Regions for EU Recovery (R4EUR) initiative discussed the future of cohesion policy and impact of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). As both the R4EUR initiative and ERRIN network work on this topic advocating key role of regions, the aim of the meeting was to explore possibilities for cooperation as the debate on the future of cohesion policy accelerates and the mid-term review takes stock of the RRF implementation to date.

### **STEP – regional perspective**

**Date: 10 April 2024**

Following the formal establishment of the [Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform](#) (STEP) as the common European action to support EU industry and boost investments in critical technologies in Europe the action in February 2024, this online meeting allowed ERRIN members in Brussels and back home to gain understanding of STEP from a general and regional perspective, looking also at integrating STEP to the national and regional cohesion policy programmes such as the European Regional Development Fund or the European Social Fund+.

### **Widening in FP10 and impact on cohesion policy post-2027**

**Date: 22 May 2024**

This joint Policy and Smart Specialisation WGs meeting, organised in the context of ERRIN's work around FP10, focused on the future of widening – ways to improve the sub-programme and its measures – and coherence with cohesion policy post-2027. Following interventions from European Commission's DG RTD and DG REGIO, members engaged in an interactive exchange to discuss the different ideas and offer suggestions. The points raised during the event fed into shaping ERRIN's messages on cohesion policy post-2027 and into the development of ERRIN's paper on Widening in FP10.

### [Supporting the Joint Letter of European Regions on the Future of Cohesion Policy](#)

**Date: 23 May 2024**

ERRIN supported an initiative launched by the Regions of Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France) and Emilia-Romagna (Italy) to defend the future of Cohesion Policy, by endorsing the Joint Letter of European Regions on the Future of Cohesion Policy, addressed to Ursula von der Leyen and signed by over 110 regions.

### [S3 and PRI – the way ahead](#)

**Date: 25 June 2024**

During this online meeting, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission publicly presented for the first time the [new European Union Preparatory Action \(PA\) on innovation for place-based transformations](#), based on the experience of the Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) initiative. The event also featured Ostrobothnia and Navarra insights from the PRI Pilot held in 2022-2023 and an interactive discussion. Members were given first-hand info about the PA and the call for EoI expected to launch in October 2024. An opportunity to share ideas and suggestions to help define the PA process was also presented.