

ANNUAL PLAN 2024 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

Key EU-level priorities, strategies, events, as well as work programmes and priority calls for proposals that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2024:

- 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 the S3 Observatory
- Following activities of Working Groups on Innovation Diffusion, Industrial Transformation, and Interregional Cooperation
- Eol in Targeted Support Assignments
- Eol in joining pool of experts for Targeted Support Assignments
- S3 Conference in autumn (date TBC)

ACTIVITIES

Kick-starting 2024: Towards R&I and cohesion policies post-2027

Date: January

Cluster Activity: *with the Innovation and Investment WG, Science and Education for Society WG & Policy WG*

Organised by the Policy WG, the meeting will also serve to learn more about the planned activities for 2024 of the ERRIN strategic cluster working groups: Policy, Smart Specialisation, Innovation & Investment and Science & Education for Society.

This meeting will invite representatives of Commission's high-level groups on Horizon and on the future of cohesion policy to discuss the regional dimension in R&I policy, and R&I dimension in cohesion policy post-2027, as well as the state of play of the process of developing both policies – as some of the main topics of interest emphasised by members in the Annual Member Survey.

It will also be a chance to talk about coherence between the policies at a time when we are awaiting the report with recommendations of the high-level group on cohesion, while the group focusing on Horizon started its activities only in December.

Partnerships for Regional Innovation – the Way Ahead

Date: March

Over 45 ERRIN members participated in the first one-year PRI Pilot, which ended in May 2023. With the aim of PRI to facilitate innovation for place-based transformations, the Smart Specialisation Working Group has been supporting the initiative by facilitating mutual learning with network members and engaging in discussions about its future.

In 2024, a new PRI Pilot is expected. In January, a new PRI Playbook was published as an Action Book, featuring an updated toolbox for regions and case studies from territories, aiming for a more practical, hands-on approach to facilitate innovation for place-based transformations.

This meeting will invite a representative of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission to present the latest and upcoming developments and opportunities about the initiative. With the new developments thoroughly explained, the event will be used to explore how ERRIN member regions can use PRI to develop their S3 ambitions in light of current and future challenges.

Sneak peek of NEIA report and new Regional Innovation Valleys

Date: March

Link with the Policy WG

With the European R&I Days planned on 20-21 March, this meeting will aim to offer a sneak peek of the outcomes of the first Regional Innovation Valleys calls for EoI & proposals from 2023 and selected territories, and insights into findings of the report on the implementation of the New European Innovation Agenda.

Future of cohesion policy post-2027

Date: Q2

The specific content and timing of the meeting will be decided based on developments in the process of shaping the future cohesion policy and earlier informal exchanges between the S3 WG leaders and DG REGIO.

Interregional collaboration instruments for innovation – a look forward

Date: Q3/4

This meeting will look at the future perspectives for interregional collaboration instruments for innovation, including e.g. Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument, Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI).