

The S3 Community of Practice

Working group on Interregional Cooperation



The Working Groups (WGs) developed within the S3 Community of Practice (S3 CoP) aim to create a learning loop of **knowledge generation, knowledge capitalisation** and through **stakeholder engagement, action and peer learning**.

Throughout their activities, the WGs envision to follow a bottom-up, iterative and collaborative approach to facilitate exchanges of experience among regional stakeholders.



The main purpose of each Working Group is to...

- Collect and document existing knowledge and good practices
- Identify common needs, problems and challenges
- Co-develop with the regions potential solutions
- Create a process of successful implementation of those solutions tailored to the particularities of each region

The Working Group on Interregional Cooperation will design its activities based on the analysis of interregional partnerships, corresponding to different needs and challenges amongst them.

Interregional cooperation means that, building on the priorities set out in each S3, regions should seek for opportunities for international collaboration between research actors, innovation actors, private companies and civil society. This collaboration should focus on similar areas and leverage the mapping of complementarities between regions. To facilitate this cooperation, measures should be taken to engage regional stakeholders (universities, research organisations, companies, clusters, civil society), in participating and contributing to innovation-driven collaboration networks, and other relevant initiatives.

Benefits of interregional cooperation for...

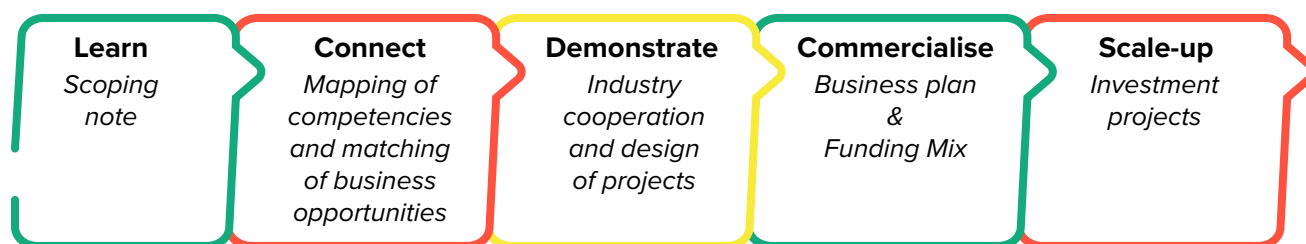
Regional Innovation Actors:

- Access to complementary resources, skills, knowledge, capabilities and lead users; hence generate critical mass
- Speed up demonstration, deployment and scaling up of technologies

Regional Policies:

- Foster 'outward-looking' approach
Stimulate better alignment of Smart Specialisation Strategies
- Identify and exploit funding synergies

A possible framework to support, monitor and assess interregional cooperation...



Interregional cooperation amongst EU regions can take different forms and follow different paths. The steps identified in the framework above should not be seen as linear or predictive: some feedback loops may be necessary at some points (e.g. revising the scoping of cooperation, mapping and identifying additional patterns for a full scale up etc.). Also, each step requires different (funding) support in view of the further development of the cooperation. While Interreg projects may explore the initial conditions for a successful cooperation, Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnerships usually support the Scoping, Mapping and Demonstration steps of the cooperation. Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) projects, subsequently, are important to further deploy the cooperation towards commercialisation and full scale-up. Regional commitment and regional schemes remain important, however, at each step of the cooperation.

Conclusion and next steps

The Working Group on Interregional Cooperation will function as ‘test-bed’ for any region (or regional actor) interested to initiate (or further develop) interregional cooperation, by exploring or co-developing new solutions or approaches, based on the identification of the regions’ main challenges.

During the kick-off meeting held on 8 June 2023, Working Group Members were asked to identify and rank the main challenges to which they are confronted when initiating interregional cooperation. Amongst 6 main ‘clusters’ of challenges, they indicated the challenge of building capacity for interregional cooperation (i.e. inadequate capacity, insufficient time and resources) as the most critical one. A second one grouping the difficulties in aligning regional and individual priorities and synchronising goals and strategies on the one hand (“aligning ecosystems”), and providing consistent and continued funding beyond projects on the other hand (“funding”), was identified.

In 2024 a detailed analysis was produced of what domestic funding mechanisms are in place in the 11 participating regions. This analysis includes barriers and success conditions for implementation of funding mechanisms in favour of interregional collaboration. A Pilot Action was launched to identify operational modalities for implementation, results from evaluations or feasibility studies and other elements that are relevant to align domestic funding with the benefits of IC.



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