S3 Community of Practice

S3 High Level Expert Group meeting

26.09.2023

European Commission

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Agenda (I)

Time	Topic	Speaker
8.30-9.00	Arrival and coffee	
9.00 -9.10	Welcome	Chair & Commission
9.10 - 920	Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting	All
9.20 – 9.30	Adoption of the agenda	All
9.30-10.00	Presentation of News and Topics from the CoP	Contractor: Elisabetta Martinelli European Commission : Silvia Alvarez Santos
10.00-10.45	Presentation of ad hoc analytical assignment: *"Implementing smart specialisation in practice with the support of synergic funding"*	Authors/members in charge Kristiina Jokeleinen, Policy Expert, Founder of SmarthNorth Lrd, Finland Antonio Novo Guerrero, Policy expert, President of the European Cluster Alliance, Spain
10.45-11.15	Coffee Break	

Agenda (II)

11.15-12.30	Policy Discussion on Synergies - *The policy lessons* - *Best way to reach the CoP*	All
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break	
13.30-14.45	Ideas on Future Assignments	Suggestions by EG members
14.45-15.45	The Future of the S3 Concept and Implementation • The way forward • Decisions on future Group assignments	Contractor and Chair All
15.45-16.00	Coffee break	
16.00-16.30	Continuation of the discussion, Administrative Issues, Wrap Up and AoB	Contractor
16.30	Closure of the meeting	

S3 Community of Practice
State of the play

S3 High Level Expert Group meeting

26.09.2023

Elisabetta Marinelli

European Commission

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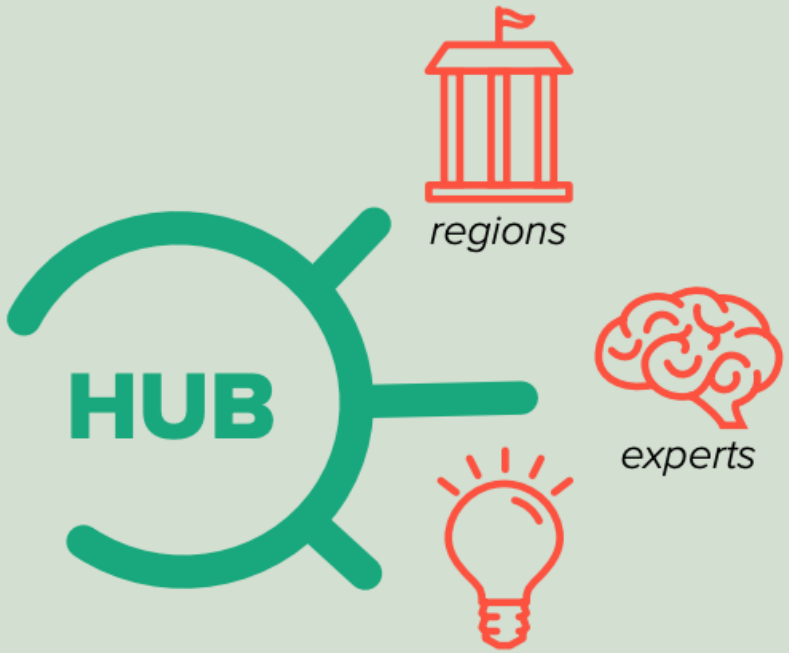
The S3 Community of Practice in a nutshell



The **Smart Specialisation Community of Practice** (S3 CoP) is the central node on guidance, networking, support and peer-learning on Smart Specialisation Strategies, covering its conceptual development and its implementation.

Services

S3 Expert Group

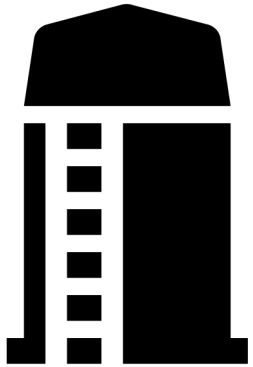
Working Groups

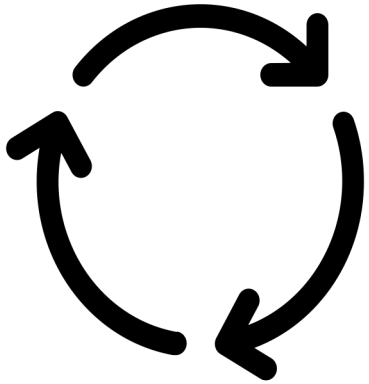
Targeted support to regions

Thematic Platform and Partnerships

S3 Events

S3 CoP Website





Expert group

Meetings

Feb/Sept 2023

Twice per year

Assignments

Policy instruments

Synergies

Governance ftc

Policy briefs

Key lessons from EG activities

Working Groups: purposes

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

Working Groups: challenges

Interregional Collaboration

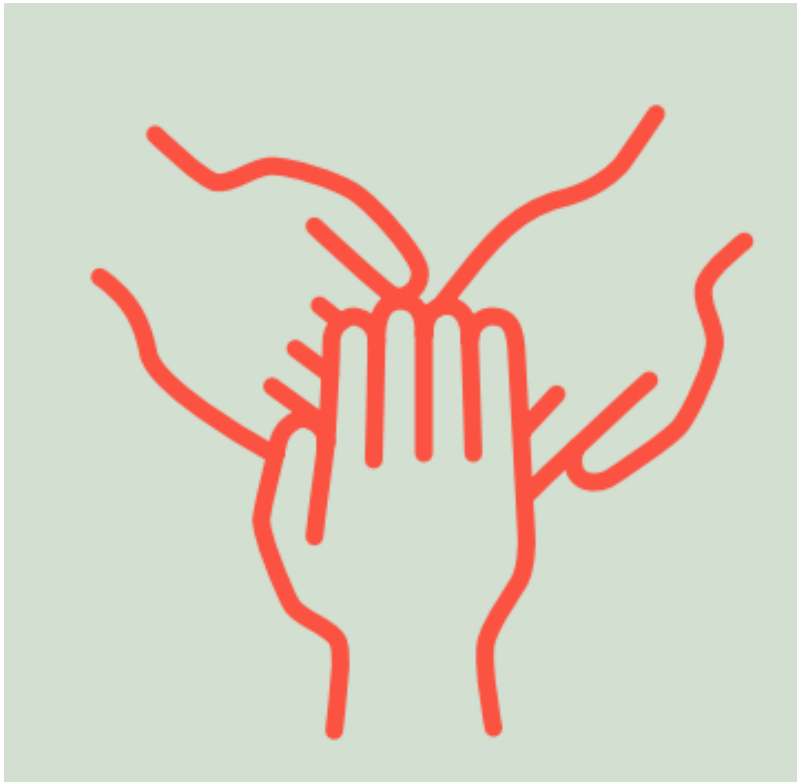
- **Building capacity for interregional cooperation**

Innovation Diffusion:

- **Lack of a systemic approach**
- **Weak articulation of demand for innovation by SMEs**

Industrial Transition:

- **Understanding and managing systemic change**
- **Inclusive industrial transition: leave no region behind**



Targeted Support

Ad-hoc expert support

30 assignments

3 publications

Flexible and demand-led

Support in articulating needs

Matching expert from EU wide pool

Focus on implementation:

Visits to the region

Meetings/Workshops with stakeholders

Analysis of the situation

Recommendations and guidelines

Targeted Support

Currently:

- Evaluating first batch of applications
- Mobilising further regions

Tentative Examples

Support to Entrepreneurial Discovery Process

Action-research projects on policy instruments

Foresight scenario development in a particular value chain

Integration of higher education and vocational education in the S3 process

Support to the development of synergies with national instruments in a specific priority area

Support to the integration of clusters in Smart Specialisation

Support to S3 Thematic Platforms and Partnerships

Coordination and cross-cutting analysis

- Identification of needs
- Steering committees

Support to new partnerships

- Blue-Economy

Support to existing partnerships

- Stock-taking
- Monitoring system
- Launch of new services.

Conferences and Forum

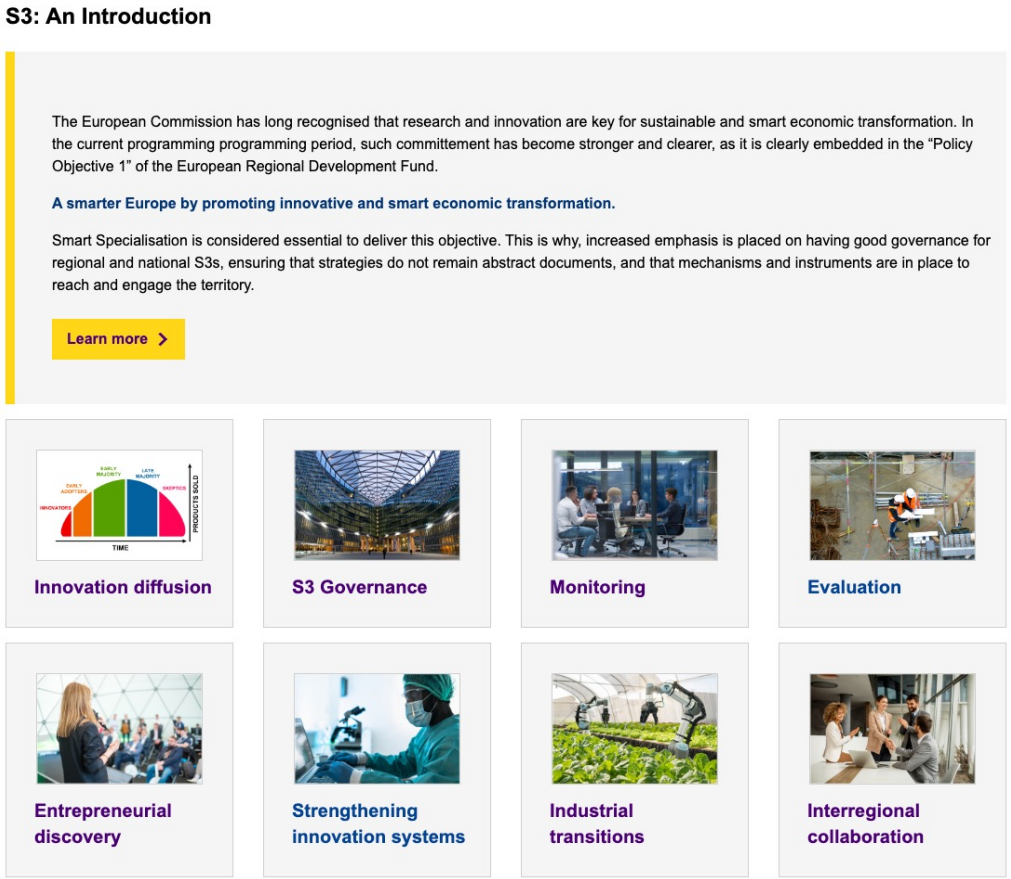
S3 Conference March 2023

- More than 1000 registered participant:
- high-level panel, national and regional practitioners, EC and OECD members
- Launch of the S3CoP
- Presentation of S3 CoP services

S3 Forum- 28th November 2023 (on going)

- Sponsorship from Generalitat de Catalunya
- Focus on regional speakers (not exclusively)
- Focus on implementation/Peer learning dimension
- Side events: TSSP Steering Committee; Event on Shared Agendas and the Catalan S3

Website and communication



Services: classification by objective

- Policy reflection
  - S3 Expert Group
  - Working Groups
- Policy support
  - Targeted support to regions
  - Thematic Platform and Partnerships
- Community engagement
  - S3 Events
  - S3 CoP Website

S3CoP: The forest and the tree

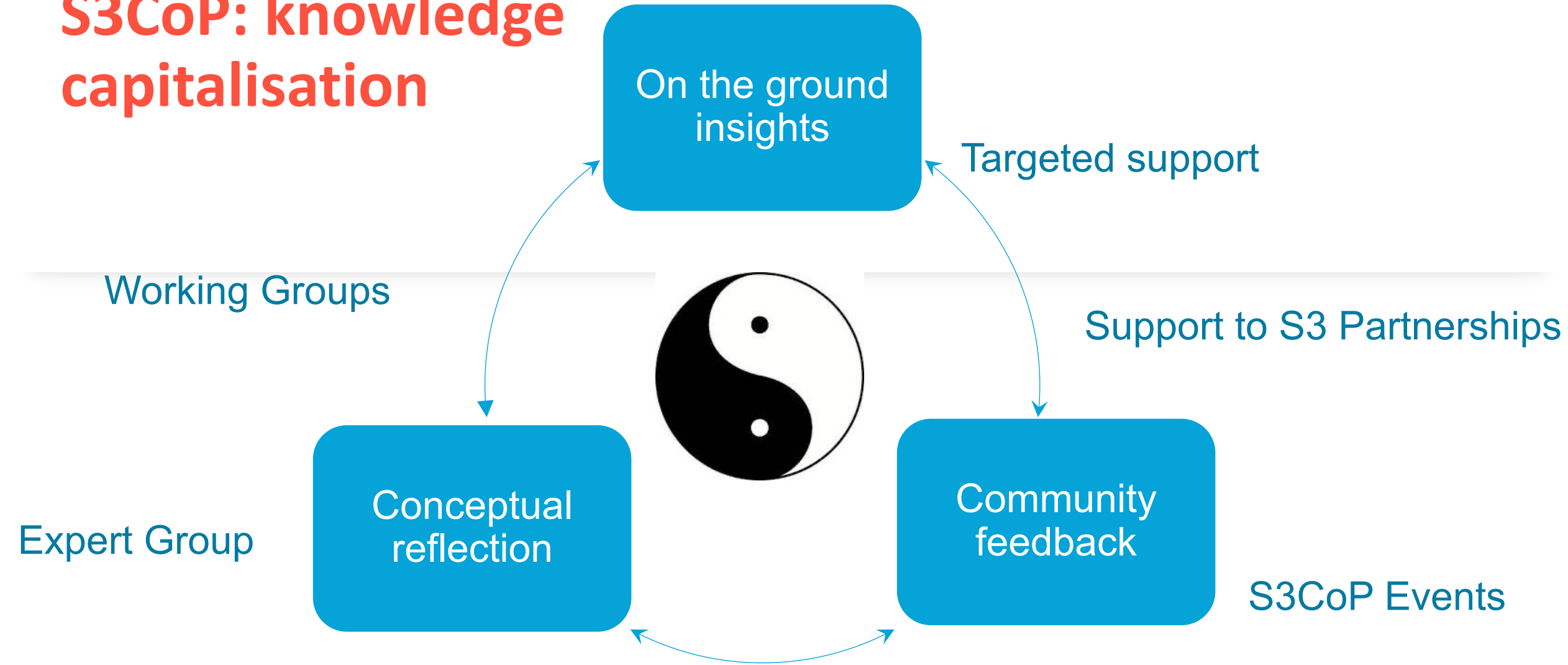
Expert Group

S3Conference; S3Forum

Working Groups
S3 Partnerships

Targeted support

S3CoP: knowledge capitalisation



Knowledge capitalisation in action

- Expert-group videos
- Recording room: “**REGIO ROOM CSM1 000/052 Project zone**”
- Fifteen videos recording for expected 3 minutes videos

Thanks!

How to get in touch?

Website

- https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/S3-cop (Operational in March)

S3 CoP Secretariat helpdesk

- The S3 CoP Secretariat can be reached for all other inquiries via email: contact@s3-cop.eu

Twitter

- @S3Cop_EU
- https://twitter.com/S3Cop_EU

Process for the next assignments

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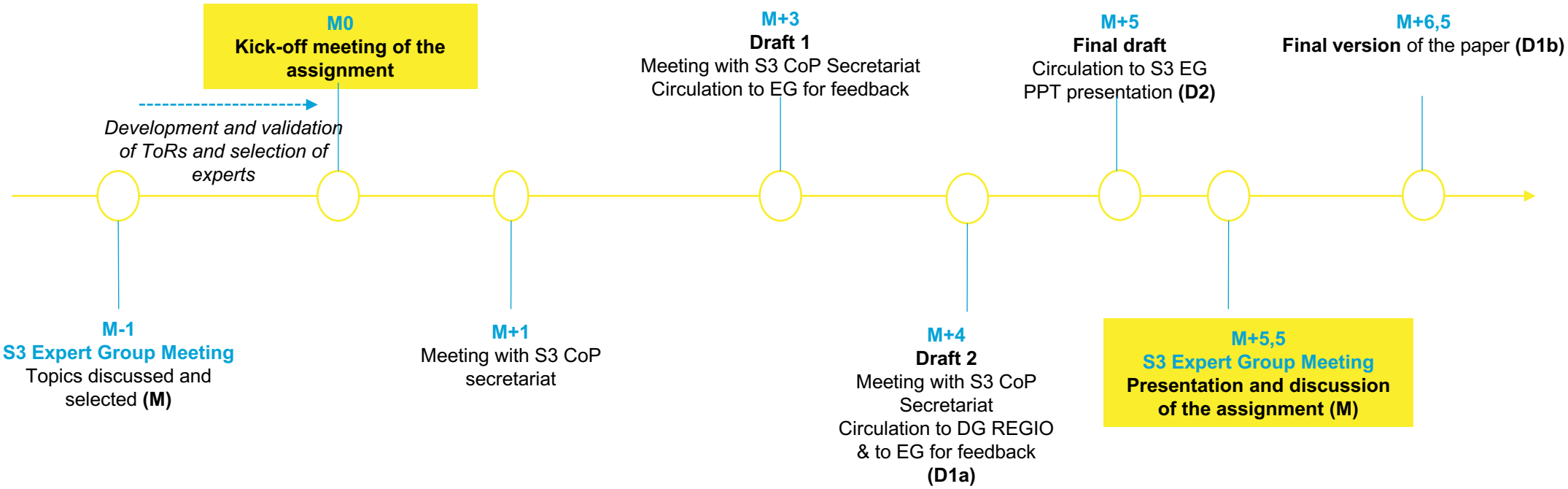
Process for the assignment #4 and next ones

- **Topics** are discussed during the **S3 Expert Group Meeting**, refined and **validated by DG REGIO**
- **ToRs** are defined by the S3 CoP and shared first with DG REGIO, then with S3 Expert Group for feedback and expression of interest
  - Final **approval by DG REGIO**
- **S3 Experts are selected** within the S3 Expert Group or outside if no volunteers
- **Kick-off meeting** of the assignment with S3 CoP and the S3 Experts:
  - ToRs are presented and discussed, brainstorm on the outline plan of the paper
- **Meeting with S3 CoP Secretariat and the Experts**:
  - Discussion on the structure of the paper, information gaps, remediation measures
- **Draft 1**
  - Meeting with S3 CoP Secretariat
  - Circulation of the draft paper to EG members for comments and questions
- **Draft 2**
  - Meeting with S3 CoP Secretariat
  - Circulation of Draft 2 for DG REGIO and EG members' feedback
- **Final Draft**
  - Circulation to the EG members
- Presentation of the paper at the **S3 Expert Group Meeting**
  - PPT presentation: 1 week before the S3 Expert Group Meeting
- **Final version** of the paper: 1 month after the Expert Group Meeting

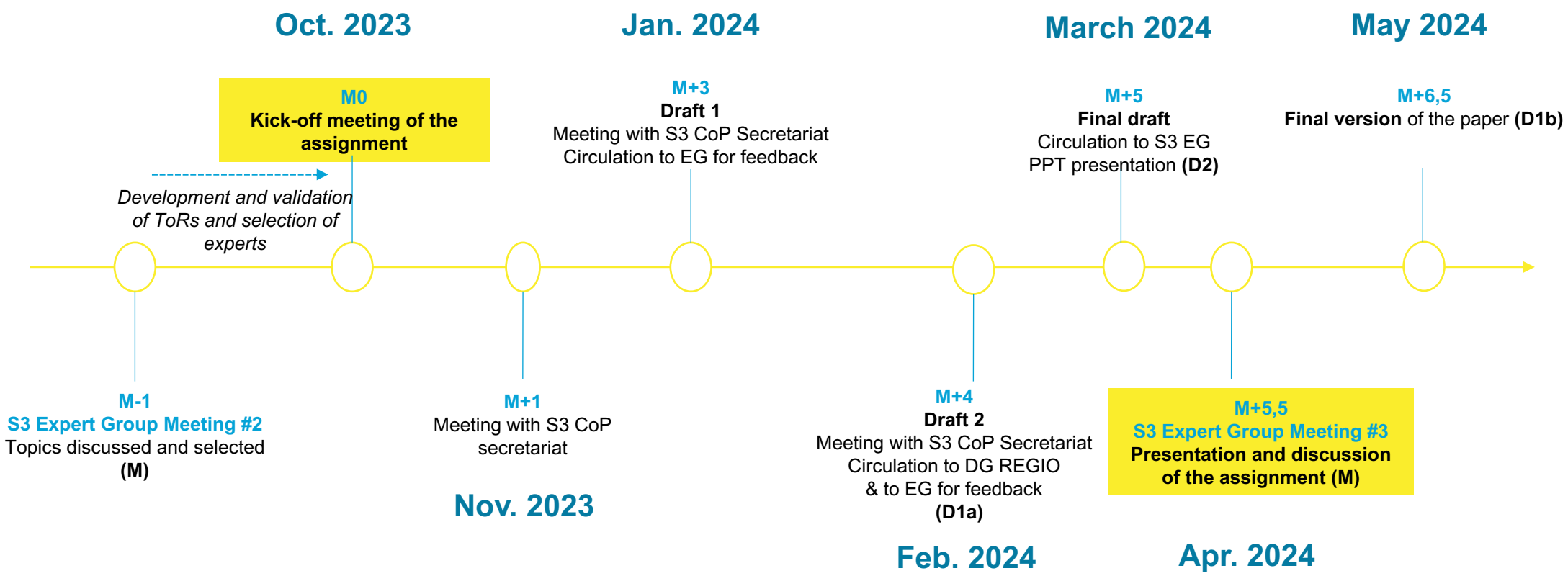
Timing of the next assignments delivery

- **Ideal cycle** of the delivering of an assignment**: 6 months** (*modulo public holidays*)



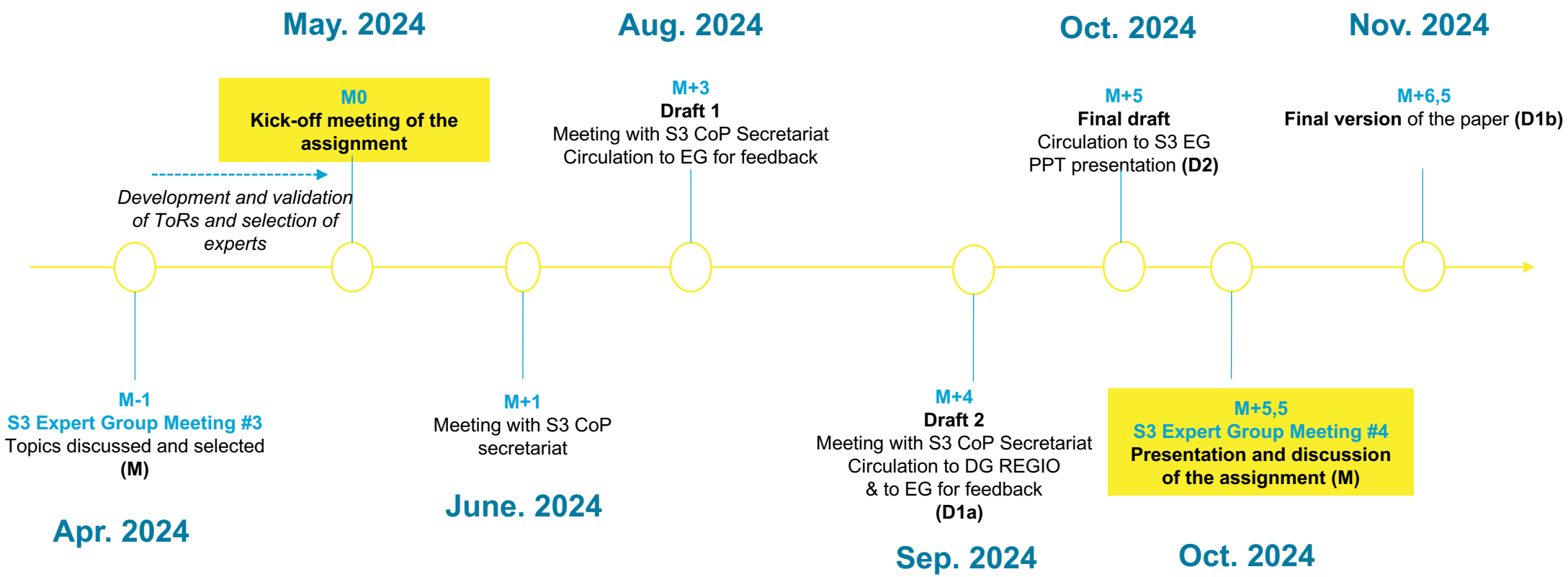
Timing of the assignments #4

Meeting #3
April. 2024



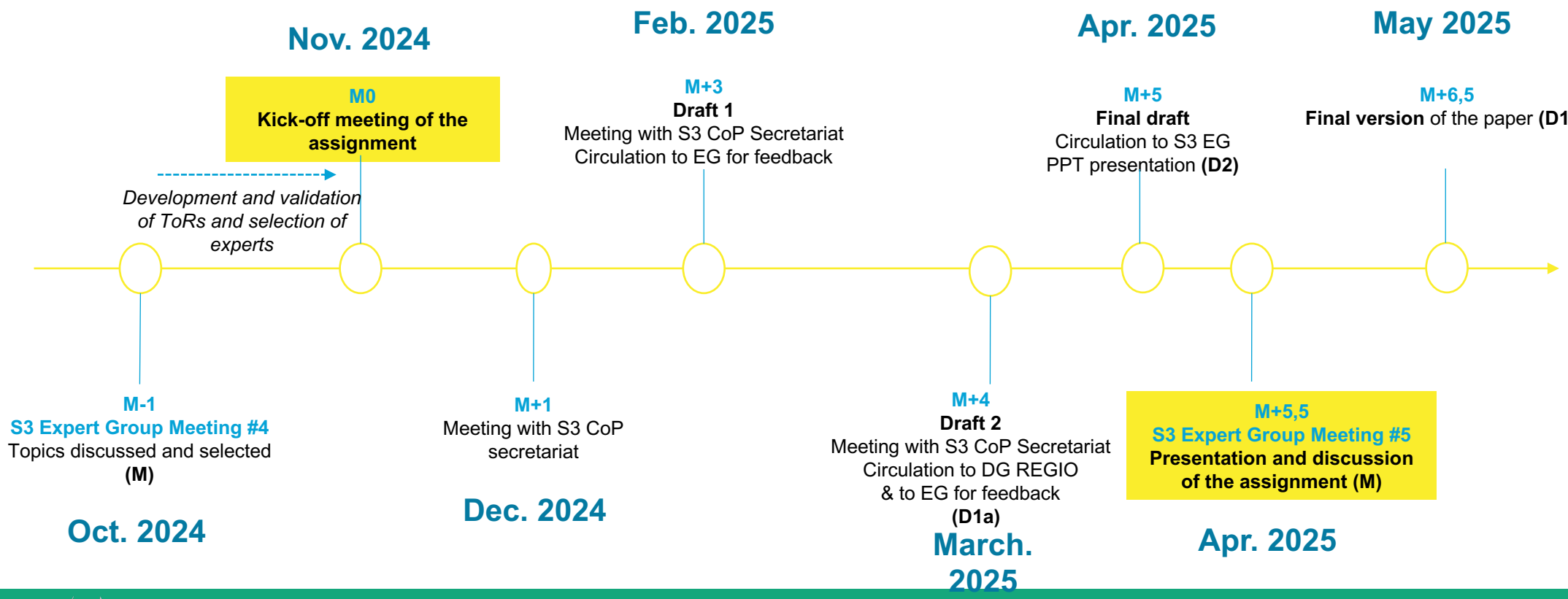
Timing of the assignments #5

Meeting #4
Oct. 2024



Timing of the assignments #6

Meeting #5
April 2025



Implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategies into the practice with the support of the Synergic Funding

IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT TO IMPROVE THE SYNERGIES BETWEEN STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND DIRECT FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

CASE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) AND HORIZON EUROPE (HE)

European Commission S3 Expert Group Members:
Kristiina Jokelainen, Founder SmartNorth
Antonio Novo Guerrero, President of the European Clusters Alliance

European Commission

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Goal

This report examines the challenges of achieving synergies between EU policy instruments, focusing on Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) and their role in regional frameworks.

It includes recent discussions, guidelines, case studies and interviews, in addition to the authors' expertise.

Implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategies into the practice with the support of the Synergic Funding

TRANSFERRING THE LESSONS LEARNED IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT TO IMPROVE THE SYNERGIES BETWEEN STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND DIRECT FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

CASE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) AND HORIZON EUROPE (HE)

21 September 2023

Kristiina Jokelainen

Antonio Novo Guerrero

S3 Community of Practice

1. Introduction

This report provides

- ❑**Up-to-date knowledge** of synergy mechanisms
- ❑**Critical assessment** of the dimensions across which synergies can and cannot be envisaged and achieved
- ❑**Practical examples** of the combination of the funds or programmes
- ❑**Main enabling and blocking factors** and **best practices** pursuing synergies
- ❑**Lessons learned and recommendations** for the follow-up actions to enhance synergies contributing to the better implementation of the EU cohesion policy.

Synergies' definition

To support the process, the EC has simplified regulations and fosters the development of synergies involving two or more EU programmes interacting to produce a greater effect.

Synergies can take different forms and should be developed to maximise the quantity, quality, and impact of RDI investments towards sustainable growth and jobs in the context of socio-economic and environmental transformation and twin transition.

The role of the Smart Specialisation Strategies

- ❑S3 has central role in strengthening regional innovation ecosystems
- ❑Provide the framework for ERDF support for research and innovation and could act as bridge between regional and innovation ecosystems
- ❑S3 is as an enabling condition for the Cohesion Policy's Objective 1 Smarter Europe
- ❑The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) priorities investments built on an inclusive and evidence-based process engaging all relevant quadruple helix stakeholders.

2. Strengthening synergies, the drive towards greater S3 impact

2.1 The evolution of S3 and synergic funding

2.2 The synergies with ERDF and HE at the heart of S3 implementation

2.3 Overview of the debate and documentation about synergic funding and S3

2.1 The evolution of S3 and synergic funding

EC COMMUNICATION: Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: Strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth

EC COMMUNICATION: Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020

Guidance - Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes

Higher Education for Smart Specialisation, A Handbook

EC COMMUNICATION: New European Innovation Agenda, EC NOTICE: Synergies between Horizon Europe and ERDF programmes

ECA: Synergies between H2020 and ESIF - Not yet used to full potential

Smart Specialisation Community of Practice – S3 CoP

2010 - 2013

2014 -2020

2021

2022

2023

Launching Smart Specialisation Platform 2011 – S3 Platform

The project Stairway to Excellence (S2E) 2014-2020: Synergies between Research and Innovation Funding Programmes

Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms 2015 – Agri-Food, Energy, Industrial Transition and Blue Economy (2021)

RIS3 in Lagging Regions 2016 - 2028

ERDF: Launching the Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument

PRI: Partnerships for Regional Innovation

RIMA: R&I and Cohesion Managing Authorities' Network

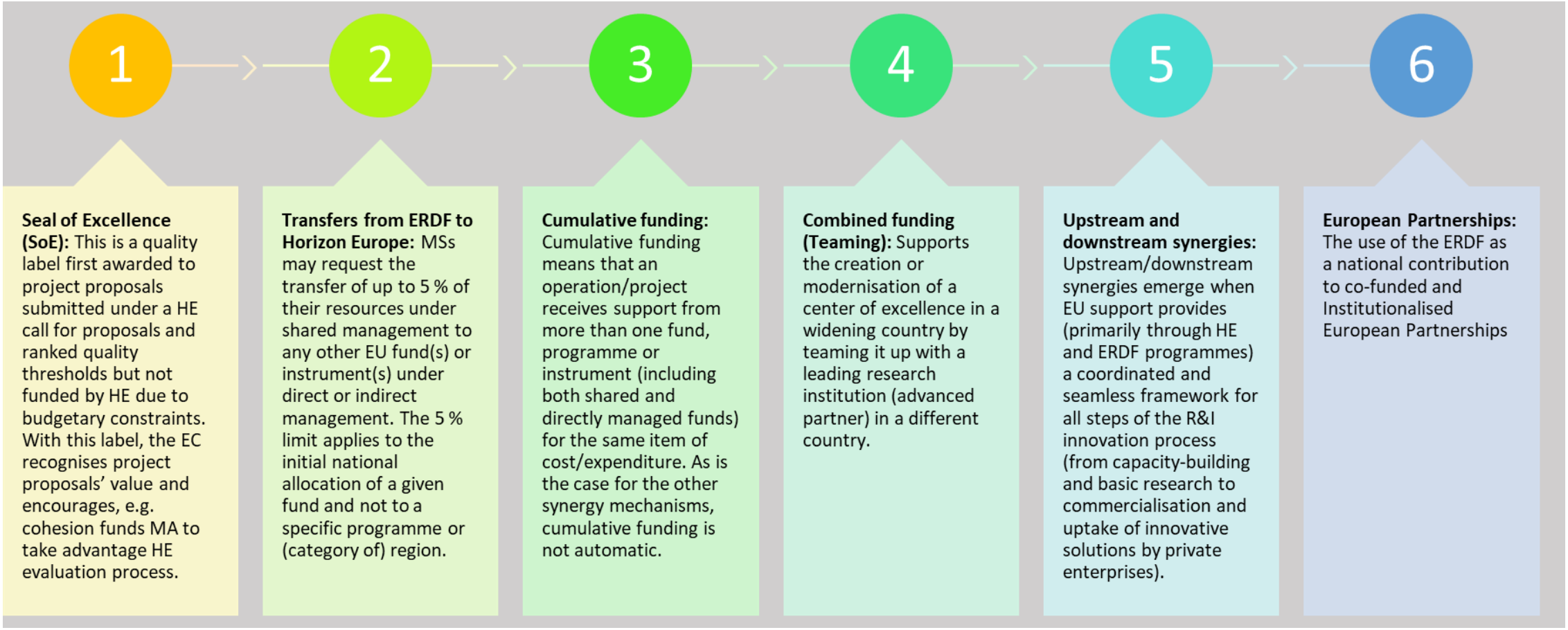
HE & ERDF: European Innovation Ecosystem Work Programme – Regional Innovation Valleys & Interregional Innovation Investments (I3)

HE: Widening participation and strengthening ERA-Pathways to Synergies

EC core initiatives, programmes and projects

2.2 The synergies with ERDF and HE at the heart of S3 implementation

2.2 The synergies with ERDF and HE at the heart of S3 implementation



2.3 Overview of the debate and documentation about synergic funding and S3

Despite the push for integration and the inception of tools to boost regional innovation, **challenges remain in fully harnessing synergies** between various EU funding instruments.

The European Court of Auditors noted that the potential synergies weren't maximised, and **actions at both EC and MS (member state) levels should be taken** to improve the situation.

Obstacles like differing management structures, language disparities, and the absence of an integrated monitoring system continue to impede the realisation of complete synergic funding potential. Strategic thinking is often missing at the MSs and regional levels.

3. Experiences in implementing the synergies in the practice supporting the S3

3.1 The practical side of synergies between funding programmes

3.2 Common findings and experiences implementing synergies

3.1 The practical side of synergies between funding programmes

- **Silesian Voivodeship** focuses on strengthening its regional innovation ecosystem. They've adopted a Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS WSL 2030+) and are keen on developing funding synergies, despite facing challenges like the absence of a unified resource mapping.
- **Andalusia** boasts a vibrant regional innovation environment with S4Andalucia as its bedrock. Though they've faced administrative complexities, their efforts are directed towards embracing European collaborations and funding synergies.
- **East and North Finland** (ENF) emphasises collaboration through their joint S3 to fortify common growth sectors. They've recognised the importance of clusters and EU partnerships, but the implementation of synergies remains inconsistent across regions.

3.2 Common findings and experiences implementing synergies

- **Program Logic Discrepancies**: programs like HE focus on boosting the EU's global innovation and research, while cohesion programs target economic disparities, job creation, and regional development, often with different project cycles and adaptability.
- **Process Complexity**: implementing synergies is intricate and demands an understanding of program structures and funding needs, plus a team properly capacitated.
- **Coordinated Funding**: some regions and organisations develop strategies to align resources from different funding programs, enhancing the funding impact. Silesia, for example, plans a fund for research infrastructures to gain complementary funding from HE.
- **Networking and Exchange**: synergies benefit from networking and knowledge sharing. Clusters and other EU networks play a significant role in driving success, linking resources, and establishing partnerships. More support is needed for broader knowledge exchange.

4. Gleaning insights from the implementation of synergic funding

4.1 What are the main challenges in establishing synergies?

4.2 What makes the synergies work in practice?

4.1 What are the main challenges in establishing synergies?

1. **Alignment of policy aims:** Different programs have unique objectives that might not always align, challenging finding common grounds for collaboration.
2. **Complexity and silos**: Programs like ERDF and HE have differing implementation logics, administrative practices, and governance practices, causing a disconnect between Mas and intermediaries.
3. **Disparate rules and procedures**: Different programs have distinct legal and financial rules and performance indicators. A lack of common indicators makes synergy assessment difficult.
4. **Lack of knowledge and understanding of the different funding programmes**: There's a need for clear mapping and understanding. Capacity-building efforts, including training programs and knowledge-sharing platforms, are required.
5. **Funding and Resource constraints**: Implementing synergies often needs additional resources, and budget constraints can hinder realising their full potential.

4.2 What makes synergies work in practice?

1. **Strategic approaches**: A comprehensive approach is essential that considers objectives of various programs. Identifying funding concentration profiles helps highlight potential synergy areas.
2. **Coordination and collaboration**: Improved regional, national, and European coordination is crucial. Dedicated mechanisms, like working groups or task forces, facilitate collaboration.
3. **Role of intermediary organisations**: Entities like clusters, eDIHs, or international partnerships are pivotal in bridging gaps and facilitating collaboration between multiple stakeholders.
4. **Knowledge exchange and dissemination**: Sharing information about funding opportunities, requirements, and outcomes provides clarity and encourages the development of synergies.

5. Recommendations to make synergies leveraging S3 implementation

5.1 To strengthen coordination and collaboration

5.2 To increase knowledge and capacity to exploit the synergies

5.3 To reinforce the upstream and downstream synergies

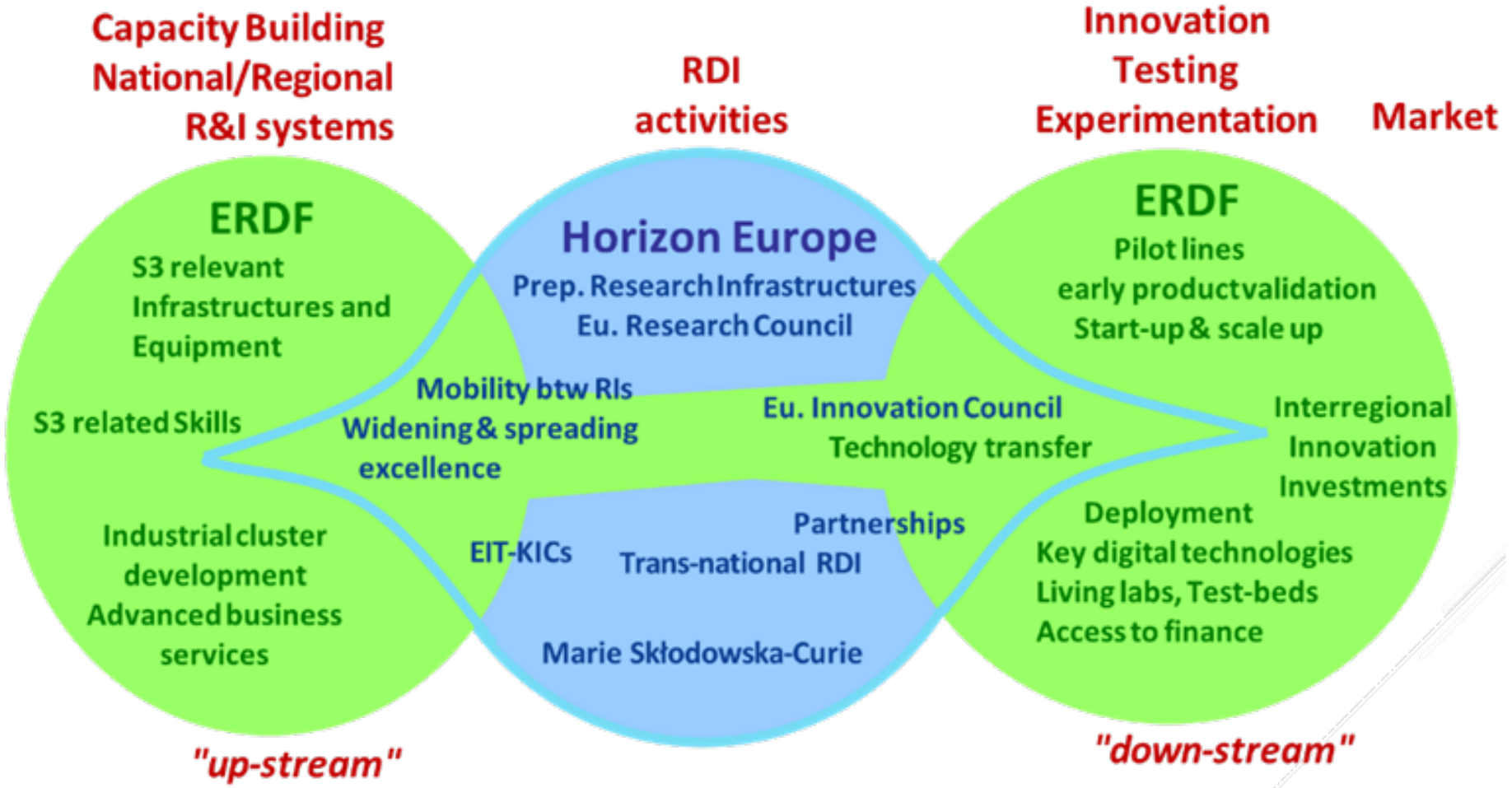
5.4 To support EU innovation ecosystem to work together - Clusters, EDIHs and TSSPs

5.5 To develop S3 robust monitoring frameworks at the regional level

5. Recommendations to make synergies leveraging S3 implementation

- ❑ Key proposals include simplifying the understanding of synergies, strengthening collaboration and communication among various authorities, harmonising program implementations (NOTE!) at the regional level, and fostering the role of innovation-support organisations.
- ❑ The importance of reinforcing both upstream and downstream synergies, promoting the sharing of best practices, increasing knowledge capacity, and establishing robust S3 monitoring frameworks at the regional level is also emphasised.
- ❑ Better use of the existing collaboration, such as clusters, eDIHs, and Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnerships (TSSP), as key instruments in leveraging funding synergies.
- ➢ They offer platforms for training, capacity-building, and data-driven decision-making, and their alignment with S3 objectives can facilitate more effective utilisation of synergies.
- ❑ A comprehensive monitoring system that evaluates the outcomes and impacts of these synergies at the regional level as part of the S3 monitoring, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability – (NOTE!) at the regional level.

5.3 To reinforce the upstream and downstream synergies



*"**Smart specialisation strategies** shall include:*
(a) "Up-stream actions" to prepare regional R&I players to participate in Horizon Europe
(b) "Down-stream actions" to provide the means to exploit and diffuse R&I results, stemming from Horizon Europe"

5. Recommendations to make synergies leveraging S3 implementation

- Funding synergies should not be a goal itself but a tool to provide the needed boost for the regional specialisation and the growth of their main domains
- Fostering synergies is not rocket science, but it requires strategic thinking – we can make it simple.
- Such strategic thinking requires to raise awareness and build a common understanding among stakeholders – in all layers
- Finally, for synergies to be implemented in practice on the field, it requires building capacity to practice the different ways of combining fundings – *in reality, the stakeholders are somehow implementing the synergies but not because of the synergies but because of the need for funding*.

Thank you !

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