

ROADMAP			
TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Smart Specialisation: a fresh approach to the European growth and jobs through regional research and innovation strategies		
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT – AP NUMBER	REGIO – G1 COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR SMART AND SUSTAINABLE GROW; JRC; RDI	DATE OF ROADMAP	20/12/2016
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Communication		
INDICATIVE PLANNING	2nd quarter 2017		
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<p>Smart Specialisation is an approach to develop the EU, national and regional economies through innovation which takes place in a specific territory. It is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creating a regulatory and institutional environment to encourage innovation - encouraging measures which accelerate commercialisation of innovation ideas - facilitating continuous collaboration between business, research and higher education institutions, civil society and public administration, to discover and exploit market opportunities 		
<p>This Roadmap aims to inform stakeholders about the Commission's work in order to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to make available any relevant information that they may have. The Roadmap is provided for information purposes only and its content may change. This Roadmap does not prejudge the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content.</p>			

A. Context, Problem definition and Subsidiarity Check
<p>Context</p> <p>Smart Specialisation is an innovation policy concept that aims to boost national and regional innovation, contributing to growth and prosperity by helping and enabling member states and regions to focus on their strengths. Innovation is central to Europe's ability to generate new jobs and economic growth in the coming years and to tackle major challenges that society is facing including sustainability, climate change, the health of aging populations, energy and food security. As stated in the Commission Work Programme 2017, it is through innovation and the right investment in our economies that companies create jobs. We will work to create the right climate for innovation in Europe, to help create new industries and jobs, tackle societal and environmental challenges and improve people's lives. By mainstreaming innovation across all Union policies and targeting our research and development and Structural Funds effectively, we aim to make Europe a leader in new technologies and business methods, including through Smart Specialisation.</p> <p><u>Over 120 regions and countries</u> have prepared "smart specialisation strategies". These are to guide investments in the context of the <u>"Innovation Union" Europe 2020 flagship initiative</u> and priorities of EU Cohesion policy 2014-20. These strategies are cross-cutting and silo-breaking ensuring a prioritisation and focus of Research & Innovation (R&I) investment on key topics where a region and its business can gain competitive advantage. Their effect and stakeholder involvement reaches beyond Cohesion Policy and the European Structural Investment Funds. They integrate policies like energy, digital economy, single market, industry, research, education and skills policies to serve the economic development of their EU territories. Smart specialisation strategies can deliver most effectively on their jobs and growth potential in all regions of the European Union (EU) (including the less developed</p>

ones), if implemented and monitored continuously in cooperation between research, industry, public Research & Innovation (R&I) support structures and civil society.

The European Parliament expressed its support for smart specialisation in a [Resolution of 8 September 2016](#), and proposed additional actions by the European Commission and Member States to make smart specialisation work. It also noted in its [Resolution of 6 July 2016](#) that synergies for innovation between Structural Funds and Horizon 2020 and other policies and instruments must be further enhanced in order to maximise the impact of investments.

The [Council, in its Conclusions of 24 June 2016](#), called on "a more R&I friendly, smart and simple Cohesion Policy and the European Structural and Investment Funds more generally" , and recognised that "smart specialisation strategies could be powerful instruments for contributing to tackling societal challenges, and boosting innovation, investment and competitiveness, based on socio-economic and territorial specificities". It called on the European Commission "to give continued support to Member States and regions when developing and implementing Smart Specialisation Strategies".

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

The EU needs to spur all forms of innovation and to commercialise better its research results by translating research and innovation into growth and jobs and to promote synergies in terms of actions and investments. If this is well done, a more inclusive society could be built – with more and better-quality job opportunities. We can also be more sustainable – through new environmentally-friendly products and services (better materials, smart appliances). The European Union's competitiveness and well-being is at stake. The key is to speed up the cycle whereby research results get to market.

Actually, business has not been sufficiently involved in exploiting the research potential of the EU, and in defining its research agenda. They need to maximise the use of financial instruments to boost private sector investments in business and regions in innovation. The issue is particularly evident in member states of Central and Eastern Europe, which has led to a persistent innovation gap.

Smart specialisation is a driver to change this. It works within Member States and regions, by identifying their potential strengths in a discussion with the principal stakeholders: large and small enterprises/SME intermediaries, clusters, universities and research institutes/ civil society like Non-Governmental Organisations and local/regional and national public authorities. Left alone the market does not always provide the support business needs and access to human capital, to test new ideas, pilot new products and services and gain critical mass. Top-down planning does not build on the particular strengths of regions. Smart Specialisation addresses these points by involving local stakeholders working on the potentials identified within the specific regions themselves.

Subsidiarity check

Legal basis: Articles 173 (1), 174 and 176 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

The EU added value of the Communication is that the concept of Smart Specialisation combines a bottom-up approach, tailored to the specific potentials and needs of regions and countries, but also with a clear cross-border and interregional dimension, with an EU wide policy-frame (EU's policy agenda for Jobs, Growth and Investment, Innovation Union, Digital Single Market, New Skills Agenda, Industrial Policy, the Investment Plan for Europe and Cohesion Policy) and EU investment power (in particular the European Structural Investment Funds).

This combines the necessary information, contacts, funding and communication with other relevant policy and regulatory EU actions (e.g. the Innovation Deals, Intellectual Property Rights, State Aid, etc.). This also encourages solving problems more efficiently / effectively at EU level in cooperation between countries and regions. Without EU action, in particular, lagging regions will fall back even more, brain-drain will aggravate, and regional innovation eco-systems will stay in their silos and miss out on opportunities to become more competitive by teaming up with other regions.

B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how [max 25 lines]

The Communication and accompanying Staff Working Document will recall the [Commission Communication "Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020"](#). It will:

- showcase key achievements of EU policies in implementing the [Europe 2020 strategy](#), in the area of smart growth;

- highlight the lessons learned from the implementation of research and innovation measures in the 2007-13 period;
- actively examine 2014-20 programming and project successes to date, with a view to reinforce the key orientations and practical work needed through 2020 to ensure the planned results and impact.

Building on this analysis, the Communication will recommend support activities for further work to:

- reinforce political commitment and governance, including in less-developed regions;
- disseminate good practice, in strategic approach, in partnership process, and in concrete implementation. It will also advise on improved, feedback-oriented monitoring and evaluation including performance indicators;
- facilitate effective collaboration e.g. through creation of networking opportunities, platforms and cross-sectoral work together, and through macro/interregional cooperation to build EU-wide regional link-ups, and to maximise the growth of EU-wide value chains.

The aim of this Communication is to deliver on the ambitions of the smart specialisation strategies within EU programmes' specific objectives as regards smart growth investments, including more innovations successfully introduced into the market, shift to higher added value exports from less developed lagging regions, more connectivity among regional innovation eco-systems, less brain-drain, more start-ups, etc.

C. Better regulation

Consultation strategy

The Commission has already engaged in extensive dialogue with stakeholders. This feeds into the development of the Communication on Smart Specialisation alongside the results of this survey. The S3Platform <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/> is an important instrument for stakeholder involvement in the shaping of the actions to be proposed in the Communication.

The actions to be proposed in the Communication will draw on expert advice, studies, seminars, workshops and conferences which took place or are upcoming:

- **1-2 June 2016**
[Smart Regions Conference \(Brussels\)](#)
- **8-10 June 2016**
[The Week of Innovative Regions in Europe \(WIRE\) 2016 Eindhoven \(NL\)](#)
- **19-20 September 2016**
[Be Smart, Think Blue](#)
[Brokerage events for regions interested in Blue economy Gdansk \(PL\)](#)
- **28-30 September 2016**
[1st SMARTER Conference on Smart Specialisation and Territorial Development Seville \(ES\)](#)
- **10-13 October 2016**
[European Week of Regions and Cities Brussels \(BE\)](#)
- **18-19 October 2016**
[Thematic University – Business Forum, building Euroregional Ecosystem San Sebastián \(SP\)](#)
- **20 October 2016**
[Digitising European Industry Working group meetings on Digital Innovation Hubs \(BE\)](#)
- **8-9 November 2016**
Smart Specialisation workshop at [7th Strategic Forum for the EUSBSR Stockholm \(SE\)](#)
- **30 November - 2 December 2016**
[The European Cluster Conference Brussels \(BE\)](#)

- [Q1/2017 Public Online Consultation on Smart Specialisation Strategies](#) **launched by the European Commission**
- **31 January/1February 2017**
[Stakeholder event in Essen \(DE\)](#)
- **March 2017**
Industrial Modernisation Conference (Brussels)
- **8 March 2017**
Stairways to Excellence (Brussels)
- **6-7 April 2017**
University – Business Forum (Brussels)
- [KEP – Knowledge Exchange Platform](#)
- [Innovation Camps:](#)
2016
30 May 2016 – Amsterdam; 6-7 July 2016 Bratislava and 1-2 October 2016 Gabrovo (Bulgaria)

2017
[Second-half of the year: 2 possible innovation camps](#) (September 2017 & November 2017 – tbc) in Thessaloniki (GR) and Katowice (PL).
- European Committee of the Regions (CoR) opinion on "Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3): impact for regions and inter-regional cooperation":
- 15 December 2016 – [CoR stakeholder consultation and an exchange of views on "Smart Specialisation Strategies \(RIS3\): impact for regions and inter-regional cooperation"](#)- 31 January 2017 – Discussion and adoption in the [SEDEC Commission](#)
- 22-23 March 2017 – Discussion and adoption in CoR plenary

It will also draw on the experiences gathered in the EP pilot projects "[Stairway to Excellence](#)", Smart Specialisation support in [Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace](#) and in [lagging regions](#) and a series of [various seminars, conferences, workshops organised across Europe on Smart Specialisation](#).

Impact assessment

A formal Impact Assessment will not be carried out as the Communication will not have direct new significant impacts and will also not establish new political commitments for the European Commission. The Communication will be complemented by an analytical Staff Working Document presenting the relevant evidence bases.

Evaluations and fitness checks [max 5 lines]

An independent survey on Smart Specialisation was conducted by the [Fraunhofer Institute](#), as well as surveys for instance on synergies between Horizon 2020 and ESI Funds, will feed into the drafting of the Communication.

- S3Platform web-site: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>),
- Cohesion Policy: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/
- Synergies of ESI Funds with Horizon 2020 (link to explanations on synergies: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/synergies-examples>)
- Survey on how to improve Horizon 2020 (open until 15 January 2017): http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/interim_h2020_2016/consultation_en.htm
- Public stakeholder consultation – Interim evaluation of Joint Undertakings operating under Horizon 2020 (open until 10 March 2017): http://ec.europa.eu/research/consultations/interim_joint-undertakings_h2020/consultation_en.htm