S3 Targeted Support – Horizontal Activities: Summary of the Introductory Workshop and Guidelines on S3 Review

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

This report presents the summary of the First Horizontal Activities Workshop organized under the LAGREG2 project, which took place in Madrid (Hotel Miguel Angel) on 12 December 2018 and under the light of the discussion, proposes guidelines for S3 mid-term reviews.

II. SUMMARY OF THE FIRST HORIZONTAL ACTIVITIES WORKSHOP

In addition to the introductory and closing sessions, the first horizontal activities workshop was organised around four main themes:

- a debate on the need for S3 reviews (45 min);

- a session providing examples and methodological insights on S3 reviews (60 min);

- two participatory exercises, one on taking stock regarding S3 reviews (50 min) and one on learning from mistakes throughout the S3 policy cycle (55 min); and finally

- a planning session for LAGREG2 horizontal activities in 2019 (45 min).

All sessions were delivered as planned and the sections that follow summarise the main outcomes.

II.A DEBATE ON THE NEED FOR A S3 REVIEW

Ruslan Stefanov and Yannis Tolias argued in favour and against, respectively, of the notion "*we should review the S3 now*" in a very vivid manner that captured the attention of the audience and helped break the ice, thus creating a comfortable environment for engagement into the rest of the day's agenda.

The main arguments in favour and against the motion are listed below:

Arguments in favour:

What gets measured gets done;

The review is an essential process getting the support of the public by highlighting achievements;

The review is a critical component of forming coherent practice and stimulating knowledge spillovers;

Arguments against:

There is no legal or regulatory requirement for a S3 review;

Most stakeholders, except from a small cycle of S3 practitioners, do not really care for the outcomes of a S3 review. They are interested in implementation and a review is considered as a delay;

The review is an opportunity to challenge all S3-related assumptions, choices and processes.	The extend of change expected to be achieved by a S3 review is very limited (mainly on S3, the OPs supporting the S3 won't change!) and therefore, the cost of deciding what must change cannot justify the benefits of such minor changes.

The main issues raised during the discussion that followed the debate can be summarised as follows:

- When it comes to public money, everything should be monitored. However, it is not easy to monitor something that is not organised in its entirety at the regional level (i.e., the multi-funded S3). Also, although we're in the middle of the policy cycle, the timing of the review is not favourable since there are only few aspects of the S3 that can be reviewed (Central Macedonia, GR).

- There is a big gap between promises, plans and reality in terms of S3. We should be critical in the choice of indicators. Time is critical in terms of reviews and evaluations in the sense that they should be available in time to inform planning (HR).

- It is important to consider why we are doing all this. A S3 review should produce evidence, should be feasible and useful for the practitioners (North-East, RO)

- We should be concerned by the bounded rationality of the reviews. Bad timing and thus incomplete information might lead to bad decisions (Centru, RO).

- We should not confuse an interim review with an evaluation; the key challenge is how a review can lead to real policy changes (HU).

- We're doing the review because we want to learn more about S3, which is not an easy exercise (Helsinki, FI).

From the above, timing, which was mentioned three times, seems to be the main concern for the participants. This implies that although we're in the middle of the policy cycle, due to the delayed start of S3 implementation in many of the participating regions/member states, the participants feel that the evidence they have in hand is not adequate to initiate a mid-term review.

II.B EXAMPLES AND METHODOLOGICAL INSIGHTS ON S3 REVIEWS

This session consisted of three presentations covering aspects and methodological insights on S3 reviews. Tatiana Fernandez, representing the Regional Government of Catalunya, after briefly describing RIS3 Catalunya and the monitoring system the region has already deployed, emphasised that S3 monitoring and reviews should have a dynamic nature, adapting to the strategy cycle. In the early stages the key question should be "what needs to happen?", followed by "how well is it working?" in the middle of the cycle and finally "what difference did it make?" at the end. In this sense, given that we are in the middle of the policy cycle, Dr Fernandez asserted that the S3 review is not about results, but about the S3 process itself. Policy instruments should be the focus of scrutiny within the S3 mid-term review, and if needed, new instruments should be introduced.

Lauri Kuukasjävi, representing the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, presented the timeline of the evolution of the regional development strategy and the main policy instruments that were used since the 1980s. Then, he briefly described the regional S3, with serves as an intermediary platform that links together existing fast-growing industries, enabling knowledge, regional innovation policy and funding instruments to support four RIS3 focus areas. According to Mr Kuukasjävi, Helsinki-Uusimaa benchmarks itself against four other medium-sized European metropolises with similar resources and challenges (Stockholm, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Amsterdam) and plans to organise a S3 review in 2019 with the purpose of learning more about S3 in the region and in the other 4 peers and for preparing for 2021-2027. Since Helsinki-

Uusimaa has very limited ERDF funding for R&D&I, their S3 review is expected to address how to make things simpler, and how to redefine the smart specialisation focus areas.

Federica Bertamino, representing the Italian National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (NATC), started her presentation by discussing the hybrid setting of S3 in Italy, which consists of a national and 21 regional S3s that are not in synchronisation in their implementation since they were approved between 2014 and 2017. Although all the Italian regions have planned for a mid-term review in 2018-19, only three have concluded this process and three others are currently active in reviewing their S3s. Then, Dr Bertamino presented a set of guidelines prepared by the NATC to provide methodological support with respect to carrying out a revision of their S3s. In a nutshell, the guidelines require a functioning governance system and a functioning monitoring system as enablers of the review process. A gap analysis is an essential first step to assess both, and in light of the results, the regions have to implement all necessary changes before engaging themselves with the S3 review process[1]. The revision of S3 itself uses three streams of information (assessment of S3 implementation—including analysis of evaluation results, updated analysis of regional positioning—including an iteration of EDP, and a review of the EU provisional regulations and strategy documents for the next programming period) to identify the necessary changes in all six "chapters" of the S3. NATC plans to introduce the guidelines, which so far were pilot tested in Sicily (still working on the enabling conditions) and Umbria, in all Italian regions.

II.C PARTICIPATORY EXERCISE 1: TAKING STOCK OF S3 REVIEWS

The aim of the first participatory exercise was to gain insights on the regions' perspectives with respect to the S3 mid-term reviews. The moderators were asked to guide the discussions around five attributes of the mid-term reviews:

- *Are regions prepared for S3 review?* What are they reviewing? Instruments? Priorities? Governance system? Monitoring System?

- *Why is the review being organised?* To meet the needs of this programming period? To prepare for the next programming period?

- *Why do you think you need to organise a review?* In particular to get ready for the new programming period? Do they have sufficient data? Are the governance structures adequate? Will stakeholders be engaged? To what extent?

- *Do you have what you need to conduct such review?* (Resources / Funds / Skills)

- *What is the relationship between the Mid-term review of the S3 and the final evaluation?* Do you plan to hold a S3 ex-post evaluation or not? If so, when? will this ex-post evaluation be included in the evaluation(s) of the OPs or will it be independent?

The results are summarised below.

II.C.i Are regions preparing for S3 review? What are they reviewing?

All the participants have indicated that they consider carrying out a S3 mid-term review.

Centro (PT) and Extremadura (ES) have already carried out theirs in 2017 by following different approaches. These two mid-term reviews resulted in changes in their S3 priorities based on actual stakeholder interest in some of the calls they have launched (Extremadura) or that were available at the national level (Centro).

For the rest of the regions/member states participating in this exercise, the considerably different stages of development of their S3 seems to influence both the scheduling of their S3 reviews and their scope. Many Romanian regions that were rather late in developing their S3s consider the mid-term review as a good

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[1] Although it is not clear how the future state is defined in terms of monitoring, the element of mapping information flows and decision-making processes (authorisations) seems to be a very good approach to define the desired state with respect to governance.

opportunity to enrich the 'Concept Notes' they produced with contextual data and EDP results, while more advanced ones S3-wise, such as North-East RO, aim for an internal (i.e., region-wide) reflection to capitalise on the lessons learnt and the tacit knowledge gained through the S3 experience so that they restructure the S3 objectives and ensure that their action plan can be funded.

Underperforming or missing governance structures were reported as key bottlenecks to S3 reviews in cases where implementation has started (Central Macedonia & Eastern Macedonia-Thraki, GR, Croatia) together with monitoring systems that are still missing (GR, Helsinki-Uusimaa, FI, HR, BG) or not fully deployed (PT, HU, RO). However, the lack of monitoring can sometimes be compensated either by consulting the stakeholders (PT) or by using OP-collected information to assess demand and priorities (National Greek S3, Campania, IT). Croatia reported an attempt for running an unofficial S3 review with no solid evidence to support the process.

The scope of the S3 mid-term reviews ranges from updating priorities in regions that started late, to assessing policy instruments and revising monitoring systems for those that are more mature. Interestingly, there was no explicit mention regarding improving governance systems, although they were characterized as one of the major bottlenecks.

Most regions that were late in developing their S3s are scheduling the mid-term review for 2019, and they seem to be concerned with the timing since at the same year they will have to start their preparations for reviewing their S3s for the new programming period.

II.C.ii Why is the review being organised?

It was clear from the discussion that since the publication of the proposed regulations for the new programming period in May 2018, and especially the new enabling conditions for Smart Growth, regions and member states consider the mid-term review as a good opportunity to prepare for 2021. This perspective is shared by most of regions/member-states that were late in developing their S3s. On the other hand, regions that have reached a good level of implementation explicitly mentioned that they will use the outcomes to finetune their approach in this programming period.

Centre-Portugal, Campania and Romanian regions are organising the review both to meet the need of this programming period and to prepare for the next one. However, Extremadura's review is organised mainly to prepare the current period.

It is necessary to point that Centre Portugal and Extremadura also carried out their review process because "they felt they need it". Representatives from both regions indicated that the quantitative indicators envisaged did not provided enough information, being necessary to complement them with a more qualitative approach to review their S3. The representative from Central Macedonia indicated that capacity building and promoting evaluation culture was important in order to be prepared for the next programming period.

II.C.iii Why do you think you need to organise a review?

Regarding the motives behind the S3 mid-term reviews, two regions (Centro, PT & Extremadura ES) mentioned that "*they felt they needed it*" while Helsinki-Uusimaa (FI) mentioned the need to "*further understand the S3 process*".

To have enough data was generally considered as the biggest challenge, especially in the cases of centralised OP management where various ministries or agencies are involved (RO, BG, HR).

The adequacy of governance structures with respect to managing the S3 mid-term review was not explicitly commented upon.

Except Helsinki-Uusimaa (FI) that is considering keeping a low profile with stakeholder engagement in this process and the Greek National S3 who plan to keep it internal, all the regions plan to engage stakeholders (or have already engaged them) in the various steps of the S3 mid-term review.

II.C.iv Do you have what you need to conduct such review?

Resources and funding seem to be the most serious concern in Romania and Bulgaria, while the lack of skills is overcome by external assistance by the European Commission. Two Greek regions expressed their concern regarding their capacity to mobilise stakeholders.

The representatives of Centre Portugal and Extremadura considered that they had enough resources and funds for S3 evaluation. Romanian regions are also supported in the review task through an EC project. However, the general view was that skills were necessary and important, not only for the S3 management teams but also for the Managing Authorities to understand the process.

II.C.v What is the relationship between the Mid-term review of the S3 and the final evaluation?

The status regarding the participants' plans for an ex-post evaluation of their S3s is rather unclear, and thus the relationship between the mid-term review and the ex-post evaluation cannot be defined in a concrete manner[2].

The Greek National S3 has definite plans and has earmarked budget for rigorous ex post evaluation, aiming to capitalise on all the information that will be available by 2022 and probe as deep as possible. They consider this as a continuous, on-going process and therefore they do not care about timing; they'll be happy to have the results in 2023 and use them for the mid-term review of the National S3 2021-2027.

In Croatia, according to the evaluation plan of the OPCC 2014-2020 issued by the Managing Authority in November 2017, there is a list of 15 different evaluations planned. Apart from several horizontal evaluations envisaged that are in progress, specifically, for the Priority Axis 1 Strengthening the Economy through Application of Research and Innovation which comprises the majority of S3 instruments in the country, a thematic evaluation was scheduled in the period March 2018 – March 2019. The objective of this evaluation is to assess effects of support within PA1 in relation to objectives set for 2023. Evaluation is mid-term, operational and directed towards effects of the support. The focus is on efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability. Evaluation questions: (1) Which effects are achieved through the research and innovation support under PA1?; (2) Will PA1 objectives will be achieved by the end of 2023?; (3) Will the planned financial progress be fulfilled until the end of 2023?; (4) Are effects of implemented PA1 projects sustainable?; (5) How do selected projects contribute to commercialization of the public sector institutions' research results?; (6) To what extent do selected projects contribute to S3?

Centro (PT), Extremadura (ES) and Central Macedonia (GR) are planning to hold a S3 ex-post evaluation. In fact, Centro is also planning to do a new review.

Romanian regions pointed the need to have a stable framework within the OPs, Croatia has an ex-post evaluation planned but no money has been earmarked and Latvia is still undecided.

II.D PARTICIPATORY EXERCISE 2: ABILITY TO LEARN FROM MISTAKES

The second participatory exercise of the day had to do with the participants' ability to learn from mistakes, that is, understanding what does not work and why and exploring alternative paths to achieve their intended objectives. Eight inputs were received prior to the event, which are summarized in Table 1.

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[2] In preparation of this event, participants were asked to share, the evaluation plans of the OPs that support their S3s and, if existing, the evaluation plans of their S3s. No such inputs were collected only for Croatia.

TABLE 1 SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND LESSONS LEARNED REPORTED PRIOR TO THE EVENT.

GEO	Issues Reported	Lessons Learned
Bulgaria	Poor communication among triple helix upon conducting the EDP;	Intense communication campaigns needed so that all stakeholders are in the same page wrt S3;
	Inadequate knowledge exchange between research and enterprise;	S3 governance should integrate the relevant government agencies from day one and assign clear roles and responsibilities;
	Poor inter-ministerial coordination during and after the elaboration of the national S3.	EDP might be the answer to building bridges among triple helix organisations.
Croatia	Poor inter-ministerial coordination, no clear roles and responsibilities, "no man's land" issues when initiatives had to be taken;	A "S3 champion" is needed within the Government to take ownership of the strategy;
	Inefficient use of locally available expertise in the system;	The champion should use all skilled resources available in the national innovation system irrespective of institutional affiliations to maintain continuity and stability.
Extremadura, ES	At the early stages of S3 development, overconfident stakeholders overextended the scope of the strategy to cover all regional development challenges.	The next revision of the Strategy should be limited and circumscribe the strategy to the field of R & D & I and, of course, coordinate it with other strategies, but each one with its well-defined scope of action and with those responsible for well-defined actions in the R & D framework.
Central Macedonia, GR	The delayed establishment of the Regional Council for Research and Innovation	The steering / oversight structure of the regional S3 governance system should be in place on the first day.
North-East, RO	Follow-up to EDP (aka 'Project Development Lab' process) must be improved	Reform the project fiche template; require more relevant data; require institutional support and commitment from proposers; ask proposals only on most convincing specialisation areas harvested from EDP;
		Organize workshops to prepare the applicants to write the project fiches;
		Create a system to eliminate proposals which fail to deliver quality information;
		Seek for preliminary agreement with the Managing Authorities on specific calls dedicated to S3 before the PDL.
Centro, PT	RIS3 process is not yet sufficiently embedded in the management of the regional operational programme.	Engage MAs early in the process and seek for a multilevel approach so that the national level is also involved. This done, promote much more 'micro EDPs' to boost the emergence of strategic projects. (We are calling micro EDPs those that refer to a specific domain which is how we can engage companies);
		Work with clusters and other intermediary organisations to reach out the regional businesses.
Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, GR	Poor response rates by potential beneficiaries to (most) of the calls that were launched.	More targeted communication (publicity, interaction, etc) with prospect applicants, training for the MA, etc.
West, RO	Stakeholder engagement motivated only the "usual suspects".	n)a

During the event, the participants re-iterated the topics listed in Table 1 and a few new ones which are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND LESSONS LEARNED REPORTED DURING THE EVENT.

GEO	Issues Reported	Lessons Learned
Greece (National S3)	Big delays in implementation, first payments were made in 2018, 5 yrs into the programming period. This was a failure in the design of implementation. Maintaining conformance with State-aid regulations complicated the situation even more.	S3, OPs and governance should be elaborated in parallel; Inter-ministerial collaboration should be ensured.
South-Muntenia, RO	Small interest of the business environment. Many SMEs which do not understand RIS3 concept, not motivated. Their planning horizon is for the short-term.	Promote the concept of S3.
Centru, RO	The strategy was elaborated without involving a governance structure and thus relevant stakeholders in the process. The S3 document was the only purpose of the process, instead of looking at the strategy as an instrument for reaching clear objectives.	Governance structure needs to be made functional and stable in order to start making the strategy functional relying on stakeholder involvement
North-West, RO	Overlapping members in the two high-level governance structures and non-operational third level.	n)a

II.E PLANNING FOR 2019

Elisabetta Marinelli presented JRC's proposal for the foreseen activities for 2019 that cover three distinctive topics (governance, monitoring and evaluation) and a draft schedule for five meetings to cover these. The participants agreed on a tentative schedule for these activities.

Yannis Tolias presented some initial thoughts on S3 evaluation (why are they needed, who needs them, what type of support do regions/member states need and some open issues that must be addressed in drafting guidelines for S3 evaluations). All of these will be elaborated in detail during the meetings scheduled for 2019 so that a set of concrete guidelines will be ready by the end of 2019.

Jitka Vocaskova (DG Regio) provided a summary of DG REGIO's plans to support regions and member states for the new programming period. Her key points were:

- Big support activities to help with preparation ahead of 2021. Enabling condition will have a continuous character. Launch of assessment of support by Commission to stakeholders. Support via EMI experts. DG Regio has a framework of collaboration with JRC aiming to learn what is working and what is not working.

- An assessment of how prioritisation was done for all S3s will be carried out in 2019 to verify whether the priorities selected reflect what is happening on the ground.

- Two new pilots will be launched, one on industrial transition, sustainability and industry 4.0 and another on interregional investments on innovation.

- EC in cooperation with the World Bank will develop a more experimental way of monitoring and evaluation, different from traditional methods, so that more readily available evidence on whether S3 is delivering or not is obtained in quasi-real-time.

- A pilot developing a comprehensive framework for countries on how to increase their participation on Global Value Chains.

III. GUIDELINES ON S3 REVIEW

III.A CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FIRST HORIZONTAL ACTIVITIES WORKSHOP

Lajos Nyiri, in his report on the First Horizontal Activities workshop[3], provides a thorough description of the challenges faced by the participating regions in incorporating the mid-term reviews in their respective S3 policy cycles (section 3) and the lessons drawn (section 4) from the first workshop. His main arguments are summarised as follows:

- There are still large differences among the participating regions in the project with respect to the status of their S3 implementation that have clear repercussions in what can really be monitored, reviewed and, later, evaluated.

- S3 mid-term reviews should be considered as a learning process and the experience gained would be essential input for driving change, both during the current programming period and in preparing for the next one.

- The S3 reviews should be as inclusive as possible since one of the S3 indirect objectives is to support policy learning and improve the regional capacity in R&D&I strategy-making.

- Most of the participating regions/member states are facing major challenges in running their mid-term review exercises. Although the necessary competencies might be—more or less—in place, the key challenge of operationalising the review results is highly questionable. Thus, there is a real danger that superficial review reports will be elaborated with no real value.

The author fully subscribes to this diagnosis.

Two options of addressing the above were presented during the first workshop:

- The case of Catalunya, that specifically tried to understand what is really happening on the ground by compiling a list of projects, irrespective of the source of funding, and link them to their S3 priorities without mentioning, so far, any result indicators or trying to make a linkage with result indicators; and

- The case of the Italian NATC that provided regions with a framework on how to hold a *thorough* review of their S3. By considering the effort and the breadth of information that must be examined and processed, it is clear that NATC's approach is oriented towards preparing for the new programming period.

In the light of this evidence, in the section that follows the author proposes a process that can lead to a bare-bones S3 mid-term review that can be applied to all participating regions and satisfy the constraints of "*producing evidence, being feasible and useful for the practitioners*" that was explicitly mentioned in the discussion (see p.2, third bullet).

III.B THE MINIMAL S3 MID-TERM REVIEW PROCESS

The minimal S3 mid-term review process should include three steps:

1. Collect and analyse evidence on what is happening on the ground and draw initial conclusions;

2. Discuss both the evidence and the initial conclusions within the governance structure, finalise conclusions and propose corrective action;

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[3] Lajos Nyiri, D1a: Country Report (Hungary) on first horizontal activities workshop, 18 Dec 2018.

3. Decide on corrective action.

The recommended practice on how to proceed with these three steps are discussed in detail in the sections that follow. The entire process will need from 11 to 20 weeks, depending on the competencies of the territorial S3 governance system and the availability of data.

III.B.i Collect and analyse evidence on what is happening on the ground and draw initial conclusions

Rationale	No review can happen without evidence and therefore a clear description on what is happening on the ground; therefore such evidence is needed to initiate the mid-term review process. If properly elaborated, the description itself can lead to interesting questions that cover all the aspects of the S3.
Prerequisites	(Essential) The S3 document drafted according to the EC Guidelines.
	(Essential) A functioning S3 management unit.
	(Nice to have) A S3 monitoring system.
Inputs	(Essential) List of R&D&I projects active in the territory, irrespective of the funding source.
	(Nice to have) Statistics of demand (i.e. project applications) submitted for funding by the relevant actors in the territory, irrespective of the funding source.
	(Nice to have) Quality statistics on calls (i.e., mean time between call and contract, proposal rejection rates, etc)
	(Nice to have) All of the above for peer territories having similar structural characteristics (hint: http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/regional-benchmarking)
	(Essential) A list of changes in the context of the territory that affect the territorial innovation system.
	(Nice to have) Statistics on the evolution of the key R&D&I context indicators in the territory (i.e., R&D spending, headcount/FTE of researchers, patents, publications, ideally linked to the territorial priority domains).
Process	The inputs above are processed and mapped to the territorial S3 priority areas. (Demand and) Performance (number of projects and budgets) per priority area is assessed and cross-checked versus the baseline set in the S3 document.
	(Nice to have) The processed results are cross-checked versus the data provided by the monitoring system.
	Emerging risks and opportunities are assessed and reported.
	(Nice to have) (Demand and Key Context Indictors and) Performance is benchmarked versus peer territories.
	Initial conclusions and recommendations are drawn for all the above.
Responsibilities	This is a desk research to be carried out by the S3 management unit (2nd level of the territorial S3 governance structure).
Estimated duration	1-2 months depending on the maturity of the monitoring system and the availability of data
Output	A publicly available report that summarises the evidence and draws initial conclusions and recommendations using language that is easily understandable.

III.B.ii Discuss both the evidence and the conclusions within the governance structure, finalise conclusions and propose corrective action

Rationale	The territorial S3 governance structure that has the experience, the skills and the legitimacy of oversighting the S3 should review, validate or amend the conclusions and recommendations of the management unit and authorise the elaboration of a plan to implement corrective action.
Prerequisites	(Essential) A functioning Steering Group.
	(Essential) A functioning S3 management unit.
	(Nice to have) Functioning Working Groups.
Inputs	The output of step 1.
Process	The territorial S3 Steering Group reviews the report of Step 1, validates or amends the conclusions and the recommendations, and authorises the elaboration of a plan to implement corrective action.
	(Nice to have) The Steering Group consults the Working Groups in making its decisions on issues related to the authorities that have been delegated to them.
	The Management Unit finalises the report of Step 1 and appends the plan for corrective action.
Responsibilities	The Steering Group (1st level of the governance structure) is responsible for the review of the initial report and accountable for accepting its final version.
	The Management Unit (2nd level of the governance structure) is responsible for drafting the updated version of the report (conclusions and recommendations) and for elaborating the plan for corrective action.
	The Working Groups (3rd level of the governance structure), if applicable, are consulted before the Steering Group reaches its review decisions.
Estimated duration	Review of the draft: 1-3 weeks
	Corrective action plan: 1-3 weeks.
Output	A publicly available provisional S3 mid-term review report that summarises the evidence and provides conclusions and an action plan for corrective action using language that is easily understandable.

III.B.iii Decide on corrective action

Rationale	Initiate and stimulate an inclusive public debate to ensure that the draft S3 mid-term review is scrutinised by the stakeholders to promote collective ownership, mutual trust, accountability, transparency and most critically, understanding the concept of S3 by a wider base of constituents. Moreover, exploit the collective wisdom of the stakeholders in defining corrective action.
Prerequisites	(Essential) A functioning Steering Group.

(Essential) A functioning S3 management unit.

(Essential) A mechanism to facilitate public consultations (i.e., a web-based system)

(Nice to have) A group of S3 practitioners from peer territories wishing to act as peer reviewers.

Inputs	The provisional S3 mid-term review report (output of Step 2).
Process	The provisional S3 mid-term review report is published and a request for comments and suggestions by the general public is issued.
	(Nice to have) The provisional S3 mid-term review report is forwarded for peer review to 2-4 S3 practitioners from peer territories.
	The inputs of both the above are collected, processed and accepted or rejected with justification that is made public.
	The provisional S3 mid-term review report is updated so that it contains the comments and suggestions that were approved.
	The updated version is made publicly available.
Responsibilities	The Management Unit is responsible for organising the consultation and for processing the consultation results and proposing acceptance / rejection of comments. It is also responsible for releasing the final document.
	The Steering Group is responsible for reviewing the processed consultation results and approving the final document.
Estimated duration	1 month for the public consultation (and nice to have peer review).
	1-2 weeks for reviewing the inputs and reporting decisions made with justification.
Output	The final S3 mid-term review document.

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