

## S3 PLATFORM NEWS

### NEW COUNTRIES AND REGIONS REGISTERED

152 EU regions, 15 EU countries and 2 non-EU regions are now registered in the S3 Platform. Latest newcomers to register: BULGARIA and Slaskie (PL). **Welcome!** More info [here](#).

### INVESTMENTS IN ICT FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

The S3 Platform is happy to announce its next "Digital Growth" workshop entitled **Investments in ICT for Regional Growth** that will take place in Lodz (Poland) on **17 and 18 September 2014**. The purpose of the event is to present examples of how digital growth strategies are being developed at regional and national levels including specific policy tools and measures. The event also provides for an opportunity to network and discuss specific issues related to digital growth with policy-makers, experts and representatives of the European Commission.

There will be specific examples of ICT measures from Italian, Spanish, Lithuanian, Polish and Bulgarian regions, and a peer review of the Lodzkie regional strategy. Also, the event aims to share knowledge on:

- the use of ICT as an enabling technology, focusing on broadband in rural areas;
- ICT as a specialisation;
- the use of appropriate policy measures;
- connections between RIS3 and digital growth strategies.

This event should be of interest of those who are involved or interested in the digital growth aspects of regional and national Digital Growth Strategies / Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). Further information and the registration form (available shortly) can be found [here](#).



### PEER-REVIEW WORKSHOP: MOVING FORWARD AND LOOKING OUTWARD: DUBLIN, IRELAND

#### LAST MINUTE – REGISTRATION STILL OPEN:

**LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER:** The Smart Specialisation Platform together with the Irish authorities is organising a national peer review on the **3-4th of July in Dublin**.

The event will focus on the outward looking dimension of RIS3 that is discovering the possibilities of one of the major novelty of the smart specialisation approach as regards to making its strategic decisions taking into account its position relative to other regions / Member States of Europe. Five national level RIS3 strategies will be peer reviewed: **Bulgaria, Ireland, Poland, Romania and Slovakia**. To learn more and registration [here](#).

### FINANCIAL DESIGN OF TRANS-NATIONAL R&I PROJECTS: VIENNA, AUSTRIA

#### LAST MINUTE - REGISTRATION STILL OPEN:

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission is organising on **25 June** in Vienna (AT) a high level event and a series of specific thematic workshops back-to-back with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. In this context the S3 Platform is proposing a workshop on the "Financial design of transnational R&I projects in the Danube macro-region" in the morning and consecutively a thematic Round Table discussion in the afternoon. The workshop is mainly targeted at national/regional innovation managers and ESI Funds managing authorities, and wishes to tackle the main bottlenecks to a more streamlined and efficient funding of trans-national R&I projects and likely to link to common smart specialisation priorities across regions and countries. More information and registration [here](#).

### S3 GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP ON THE ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCOVERY PROCESS: PISA, ITALY

#### REGISTRATION OPEN:

On **24-25 September 2014** the Smart Specialisation Platform (S3P) together with the region of Tuscany is organising a workshop in Pisa (Italy) on the 'Entrepreneurial discovery process' (EDP). The event will explore what are the key elements for an efficient and dynamic EDP; who the key actors in a region are; how should these actors be mobilised and engaged in the designing of the regional policy; and how should the EDP be institutionalised. Draft agenda and information about the venue, transport, hotels and Pisa at: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-governance> . You can register [here](#).

## S3 EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

### THE WORKSHOP “CONNECTING RIS 3 IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: TRANS REGIONAL COLLABORATION WITHIN RIS3” HAS BEEN MOVED TO OCTOBER 2014.

The event will explore cooperation opportunities within smart specialisation across the BSR, both vertically in specific areas as e-Health, food technology, open innovation platforms etc. and horizontally related to funding mechanisms and synergies with H2020. The event is a follow up to the Malmö conference in November 2013 and organised in Tallinn together with Estonian authorities. Further information [here](#).

### DIGITAL AGENDA TOOLBOX – COPIES ON WEBPAGE

The Digital Agenda Toolbox provides support to regional and national authorities to develop a thorough understanding of the digital growth potential stemming from the Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE). On the Digital Agenda page of our website, there are regular updates of information concerning Digital Agenda issues and digital copies can be downloaded [here](#).

### BENCH LEARNING CONFERENCE – FULLY BOOKED

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Committee of the Regions, the S3 Platform and the Helsinki-Uusimaa, Province of Utrecht and Valencia regions organise a one-day Bench-Learning conference to examine concrete possibilities for European partnerships and offer an interactive participatory platform for regions and cities to explore relevant collaboration methodologies and important thematic issues.

The event is fully booked with more than 200 participants.

Please find more information and the programme [here](#)

### S3 PLATFORM ON TWITTER – FOLLOW US!



### DIGITAL AGENDA “TRAINING OF TRAINERS” WORKSHOP ON BENCHMARKING – PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE

The S3 Platform and DG CONNECT organised a workshop to train experts on how to evaluate strategic and operational documents such as Digital Growth Strategies, and address possible challenges and barriers associated with this work. The **Training of Trainers Workshop** took place in Brussels on 4 April 2014. It was a participatory event, where there were presentations from DG CONNECT representatives and the S3 Platform (available at <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/mutual-learning>).

In addition, there were presentations from experts that have been assessing regional work so far and what they have identified as challenging in supporting the regions. This was intertwined with two participatory sessions. In the first one the participants discussed around challenges in assessing PAs and OPs, and different ways to improve the procedure and suggestions for improvements of the tools being offered. During the afternoon session, participants discussed issues related to the work of informal assessors of Digital Growth strategies in the regions.

The specific issues discussed were: the digital agenda assistance assessment grid, the digital agenda toolbox, next generation networks assessment, digital growth assessment, the role of experts and their job description, governance – local vs. national – European levels, how to raise awareness of the digital agenda for Europe (DAE). Discussions and proposals for improvements have been summarised in the **Training of Trainers Workshop Report** that is now available at our [website](#).

### NEW S3 PUBLICATION

#### REGIONAL BENCHMARKING IN THE SMART SPECIALISATION PROCESS: IDENTIFICATION OF REFERENCE REGIONS BASED ON STRUCTURAL SIMILARITY

*S3 Working Paper Series No. 03/2014*

One of the most basic conditions required for drawing lessons from regional benchmarking is to compare homogeneous regions and learn from equivalents. This condition is not met when regions for comparison are chosen based on their high performance, overlooking their regional context or structural conditions. This paper is an outcome of collaboration between the S3 Platform, Orkestra – The Basque Institute of Competitiveness - and Deusto Business School.

It aims at providing a new methodology for the identification of homogeneous regions for regional benchmarking; identifying groups of homogeneous regions using variables that are similar in nature; focusing solely on structural conditions, thereby overcoming the flaws produced by mixing variables of a different nature (comparing structural indicators with performance and / or behavioural indicators). Thus, regional benchmarking can be of great help in making strategic decisions within the process of the design and implementation of regional RIS3.

Following the RIS3 approach of looking beyond the regional administrative boundaries, benchmarking based on structural similarity enables the region to identify its competitive advantages through systematic comparisons with other regions or to map the national and international context in search of examples to learn from, or to mark a difference with.

You can download the paper [here](#).

Check out the latest publications in the [S3 Policy Briefs and Working Papers](#) section of the S3 Platform web site.