



► Pilot actions

Taking smart specialisation to the next step to strengthen innovation in Europe's regions



"Globalisation and the impact of new technologies on society and jobs have profound implications for Europeans' daily lives in each and every one of our regions, cities and rural areas.

But we can harness these transformations so as to protect and defend our fellow citizens, especially the most vulnerable ones, from their negative effects and at the same time benefit from the new opportunities they will undoubtedly bring. [...]

What we call smart specialisation strategies enable regions to hold their own by developing their assets and helping their local businesses access global supply chains, particularly in industry."

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, 27 June 2017

Pilot action 1: Boosting innovation capacity in industrial transition regions

Industrial transition regions will benefit from tailored assistance to accelerate innovation uptake, remove investment barriers, develop skills and prepare for industrial and societal change, including automation, digitalisation, energy transition, on the basis of their smart specialisation strategies.



- 1 Call for expression of interest launched by the Commission. Regions have identified the challenges they face, including investment barriers, priority areas to develop and partnerships to build with local research centres and businesses.
- 2 5 to 10 regions will benefit from advisory services to develop comprehensive strategies for regional economic transformation.
- 3 The selected regions work closely with teams of Commission experts. Up to €200,000 per region from the ERDF is set aside to hire external experts. Regions also receive support from the European observatory for clusters and industrial change.
- 4
- 5 By the end of 2018, each region has defined a strategy to foster economic transformation and identified funding opportunities at EU, national and regional level.

Next steps:

In early 2019 lessons learnt from this pilot will feed into the reflection on smart specialisation after 2020.

Budget:

A total of €1 million from the ERDF to help develop regional strategies. Regions can also receive up to €300,000 from the ERDF to support the implementation of their strategies in 2019.

Pilot action 2: Interregional partnerships for innovative projects

A second EU-funded pilot action will develop **interregional partnerships** involving public authorities, businesses and researchers from at least 4 different EU countries. The aim is to commercialise and scale-up 'bankable' interregional projects that can create or reshape European value chains in priority areas such as big data, renewable energy, connected mobility, health or cybersecurity

Timeline:

September 2017: launch of the call for expression of interest. Regions from at least 4 different countries who want to work together on a specific priority area and create a pipeline of projects submit joint applications.

In the course of 2018: Experts from several Commission departments and external experts provide tailored support and help identify opportunities for funding at EU, national and regional level for 5 to 10 selected partnerships.

2018 – 2019: By the end of 2018, each partnership has drawn up an action plan to undertake the commercialisation and scale-up of its projects. This includes having identified obstacles to overcome and other EU programmes to tap into (COSME, H2020...).

Next steps:

In early 2019 conclusions drawn from this pilot will feed into the reflection on how to best support interregional partnerships and projects, especially in the post 2020 framework.

Budget:

A total of €1 million from the ERDF to develop five to ten thematic partnerships.

