



Stairway to Excellence (S2E)

Achieving better synergies between ESI Funds and other EU Funding Programmes

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26/03/2015

Background on Pilot "Synergy" Project

Fragmentation of innovation policies at EU level (SEG 2011)

- Sub-optimal coordination of R&I as well as CPs at European, national and regional level, both within and between these levels;
- Lack of common strategies related to Europe 2020;
- Lack of a coherent and interacting governance structure;
- Weak complementarities / compatibilities / interoperability of policies and programmes, particularly regarding the regional dimension in R&I policy and the R&I dimension in regional policy;
- Lack of instruments aimed at supporting the pooling of European and national funds;
- Poor communication, coordination and cooperation between actors and stakeholders at all levels.

Synergies as the alignment of and cooperation between policy frameworks, programmes and actions allowing more and better attainment of their objectives.



Rationale

Supporting synergies in the use of two EU funding sources (ESIF & Horizon 2020) may deliver additional gains in terms of:

- innovation results
- close the innovation gap in Europe
- promote economic growth

The overall political rationale of identifying synergies between ESIF, H2020 and other R+I programmes is to **maximize impact** and **efficiency of public funding**.

- Innovation funds increased under cohesion policy from 6% of the funds in the 2000-06 period to around 25% in the 2007-13 period
- Roughly 9% of the public spending on R&I in the EU came from the EU budget, divided almost equally between the 7th FP & the ESIFs

Objectives

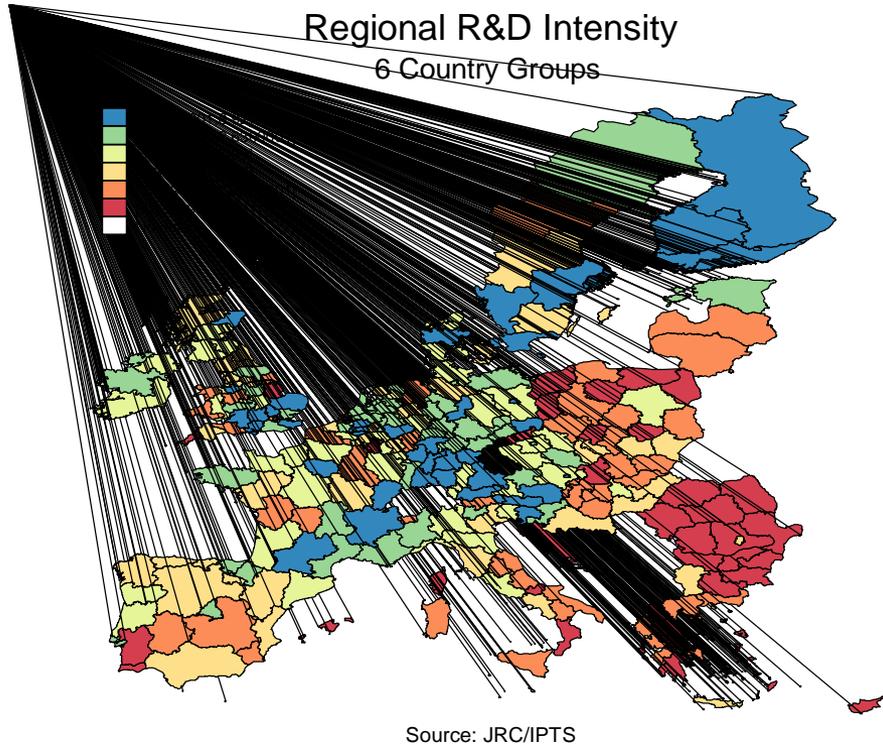
S3P supports MSs & Regions to design and upgrade their RIS3 by identifying a limited number of R&D and industrial activities with high innovation potential.

- This innovation potential may be further reinforced & developed by using ESIFs in order to make catching-up MSs & regions more competitive in spatially blind & excellence-based H2020 calls.
- Beyond a stronger innovation generation capacity, there is room for increasing the innovation absorption capacity by new MSs in the context of past FP projects.

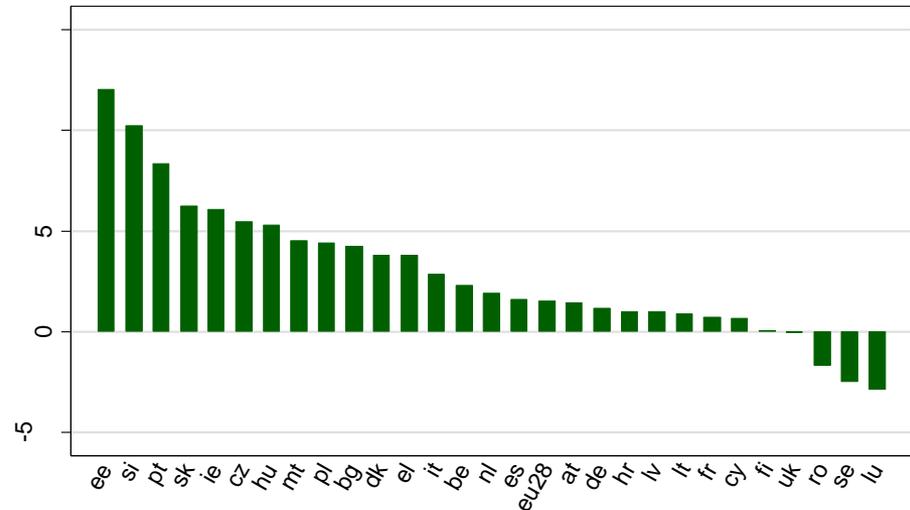
The project would have **two main objectives**, namely:

- The provision of assistance to EU13 to enhance the value of these two EU funding sources for R&I by promoting their combination;
- Stimulating the early and effective implementation of national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

R&D Investments



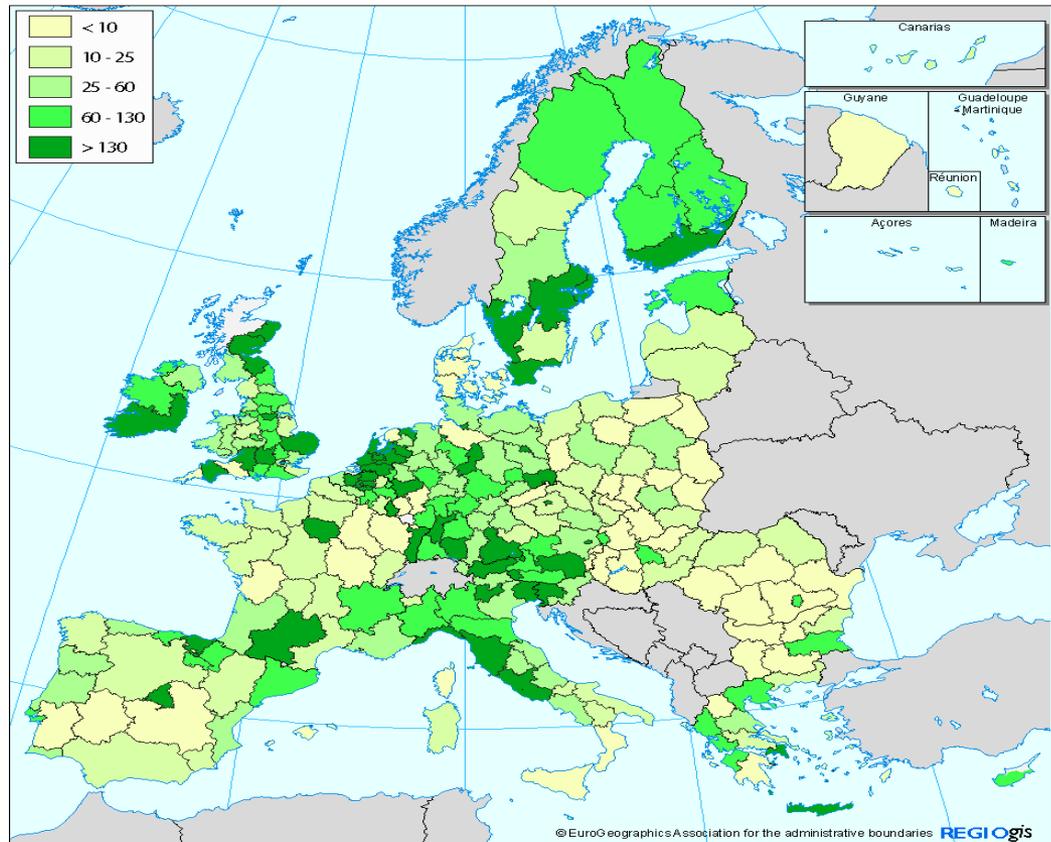
Difference - R&D & GDP Growth
2007-2012



Funding Distribution of 7th FP by Regions

7th Framework Programme, average funding per head

Index, EU27 = 100

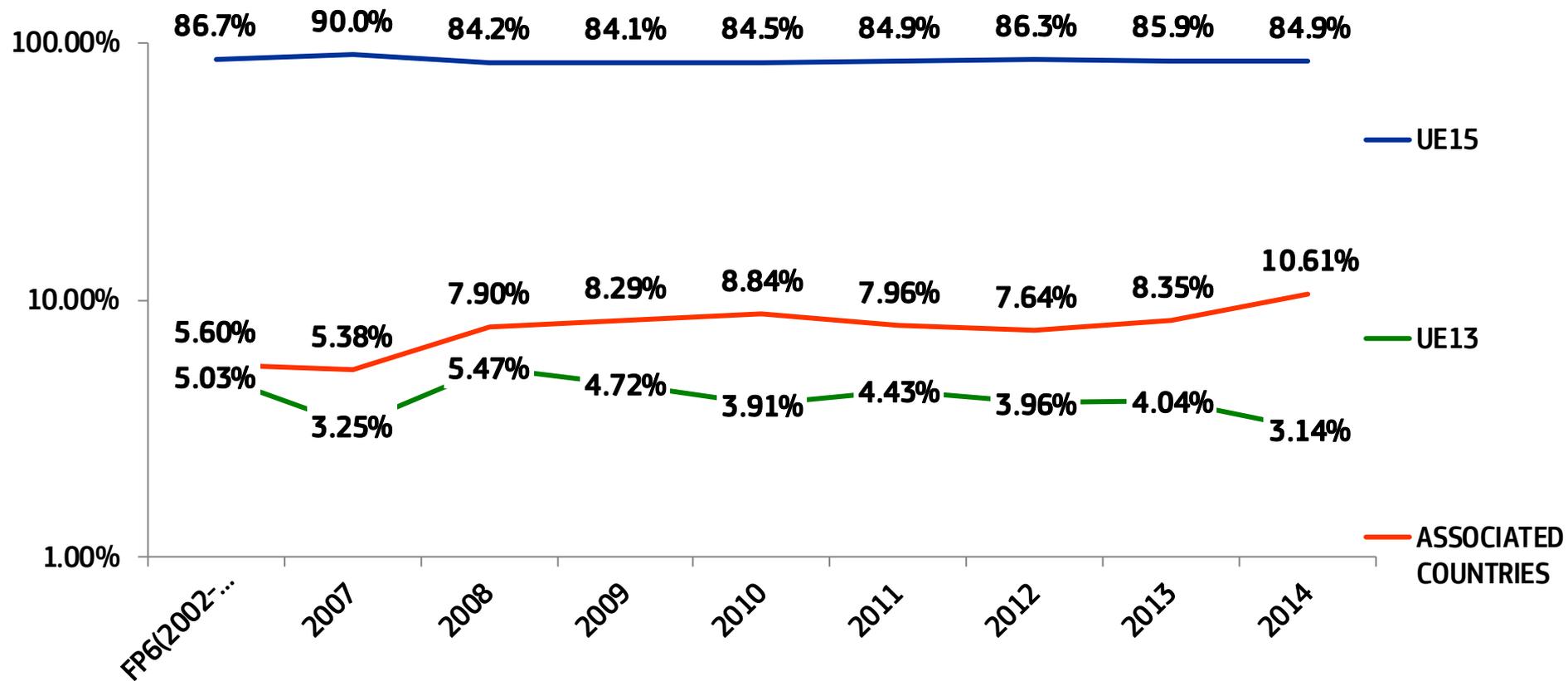


Recognizing the strong Territorial impact in space-blind policies

For instance, less developed regions are less successful as FPs funding recipients (Source: 5th Cohesion Report)

Where do we Stand?

Share of EC FP7 contribution received between 2007 and 2014 (starting from FP6)





Horizon 2020

(but also COSME, ERASMUS+, CREATIVE EUROPE)

DIFFERENCES:

- Non-territorial, mainly transnational approach based on excellence; Horizon 2020 does not take into account geographic specificities in allocating funding.
- Focus on individual R&I Projects tackling the whole cycle of innovation, taking into account strategic approaches at EU level, e.g. through European Innovation Partnerships and the Strategic Energy Technology plan (although some programmes are aimed at co-funding for research coordination like ERA-NETs, etc.)
- Centrally managed (EC) and awarded directly to final beneficiaries or managed by a multi-country entity;
- Competitive calls for proposals addressed to international groupings (including beyond the EU) without geographic pre-allocation (European Research Council and Marie Skłodowska-Curie as well as Erasmus+ actions for learning mobility also address individuals)

COMPLEMENTARITIES:

- Horizon 2020 will focus on industrial leadership and tackling major societal challenges, maximising the competitiveness impact of research and innovation and raising and spreading levels of excellence.
- Horizon 2020 includes actions to close the research and innovation divide: ERA Chairs, networks, teaming and twinning, research infrastructure development, etc.
- Horizon2020 has the objective of spreading excellence and widening participation compared to FP7.

European Structural and Investment Funds

- Place-based approach supporting economic and social cohesion
- Largely focused on improving the R&I capacities and R&I eco-systems with the objective of regional growth and place-based economic transformation towards higher added value and more knowledge-intensive activities (Smart Specialisation Strategies).
- Shared management with national and regional public intermediaries (managing authorities, implementing agencies and intermediate bodies) which define the implementation details and allocate the funding to final beneficiaries
- Policy-related prioritisation based on cohesion considerations and RIS3 priorities to individual firms/bodies and consortia within the territory covered by the operational programme (and only within the EU).
- Use of competitive attribution through calls and aid schemes based on project selection criteria is also increasingly used (depending on MS).
- Besides improving the innovation eco-systems, Cohesion policy will partly increase the capacity of regions and Member States to participate in Horizon 2020 ("Stairways to Excellence") and partly fund R&I activities in a MS/region that can build on FP7 and Horizon 2020 projects.
- In addition, ESIF/RIS3 can support to a limited extent cooperation with actors outside the operational programme territory.



Four potential cases of combined funding (2014 COM Guide on Synergies):

- 1. Joint or simultaneous funding:** Different funding sources in the same project e.g. H2020 money and ESIF used together to fund different cost items within a single project. ESIF could also be used for some "complementary" funding (cost items eligible under ESIF but not under H2020).
- 2. Sequential funding:** separate successive and legally/financially not linked projects with alternating H2020 or ESIF support. This is an easier way to combine funds with less risk of (involuntarily) creating double funding scenarios. Sequential funding can go in both directions: capacity building (e.g. raising readiness to participate in H2020) and/or innovation exploitation (e.g. exploitation of H2020 results, learning tools, cooperation models etc. developed in Erasmus+). Funding of one phase does not guarantee a funding of the subsequent phase.
- 3. Additional/parallel funding:** ESIF money is not directly linked to a H2020 project, but a regional/national authority decides to fund a project to enhance the impact of a H2020 R+I project or Erasmus+ or COSME in its region (i.e. skills development or capacity building or for amplifying the impact of Joint Technology Initiatives).
- 4. Alternative funding:** ESIF money could be used for project proposals with a positive evaluation under H2020 or Erasmus+ that could not be funded due to a lack of H2020 funds under the call (i.e. SME instrument projects from a single country / projects submitted under the Fast Track to Innovation pilot scheme). These proposals could be **reoriented** towards ESIF requirements and submitted at national/regional level, if this type and topic of project fits into the OPs of the concerned territories.

ACTION 1: Assistance to new MSs in closing the innovation gap, promote excellence in all regions and MSs of the EU

Launching "Upstream actions" to prepare regional R&I players to participate in Horizon 2020 through capacity mapping & capacity building.

- Mapping / providing new MSs & regions with analyses and evaluation of their past performance in FPs, strengths and weaknesses in terms of R&I capacity, institutional features, & alignment between public R&I and business innovation needs.
- Adapt the peer review & mutual learning methodology developed for assessing RIS3, to peer review the structures and instruments used by old & new MSs/regions to enhance participation to FPs & exploit synergies between H2020 and ESIF. As is the case for the RIS3 peer reviews, S2E peer reviews would be organised by MS/regions with the support of JRC.
- Communication & cooperation between Horizon 2020 national contact points & managing authorities of the ESIF shall be strengthened.
- New mandate of the S3P Mirror group of stakeholders in order to reinforce consultation and advice of stakeholders.

ACTION 2: Stimulating the early and effective implementation of national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies

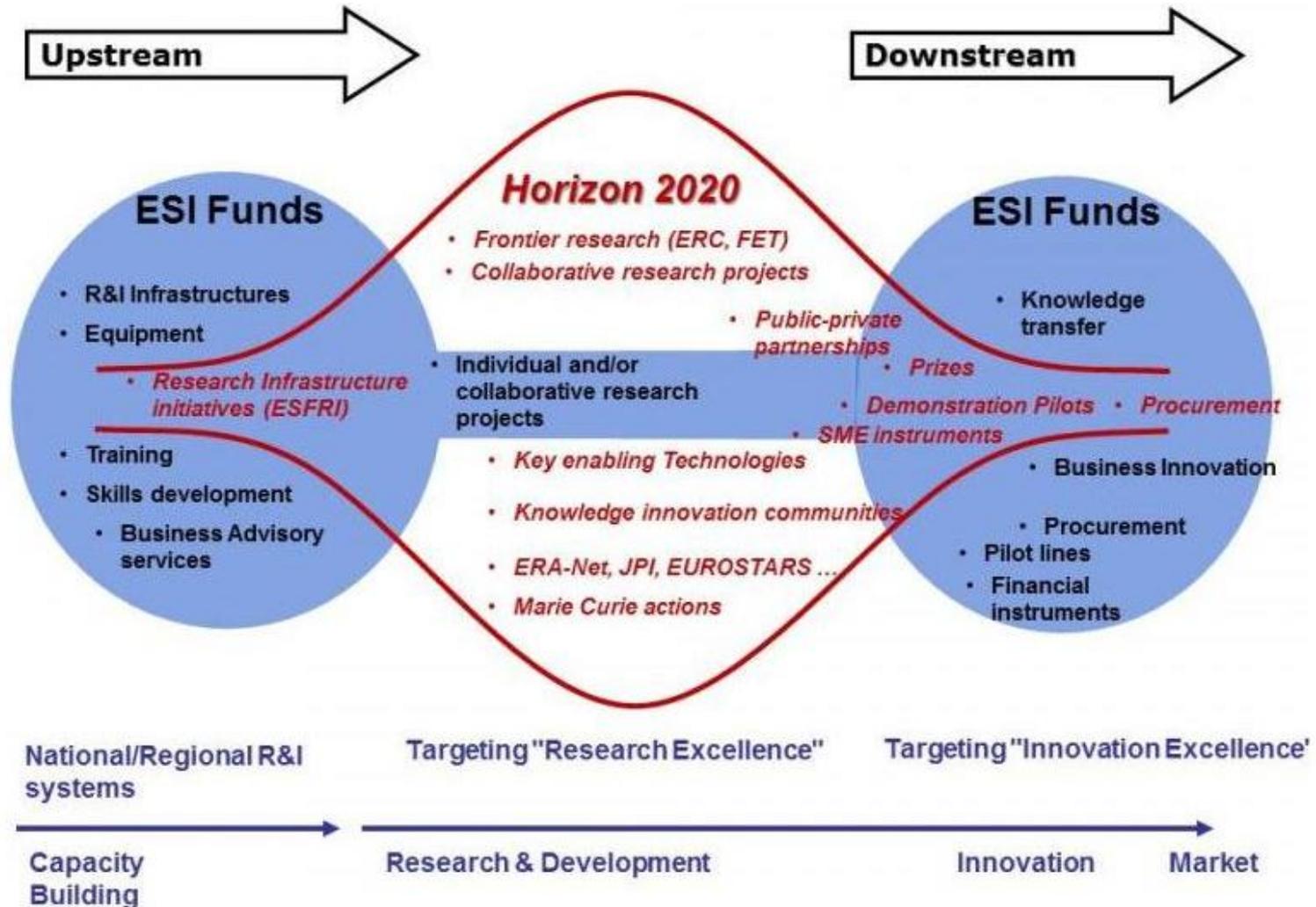
Launching "Downstream actions" to provide the means to exploit and diffuse R&I results, stemming from Horizon 2020 & preceding programmes, in line with priorities identified in the relevant S3.

Objective for 2015: develop/test some methodologies to do it effectively (full deployment of those methodologies in subsequent years).

Some *actions envisaged* in 2015 /2016 are:

- Identifying a limited number of common thematic priorities within RIS3 of several new MS/regions. Potential high impact from horizontal priorities such as Key Enabling Technologies (KET) and ICT.
- Assessing selected on-going or recently finalised Framework Programme projects in these areas.
- Events with project participants from leading countries, business, research community and policy makers from new MS/regions and stakeholders. These events may try different formats to see which one would be most effective for wide transmission of knowledge.

S2E Rationale & Case Studies



Forthcoming S2E Initiatives

- Regional / National Profiling
- Case studies: Concrete examples of synergies between EU funds / instruments
- National Events

<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/croatia-national-event>

Objectives:

- engaging with stakeholders via participation to future meetings and workshops.
- identifying any example of (1) success stories, (2) policy implementation, (3) any other governance issue which could help us enhancing the potential for synergies.



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Objectives of S2E

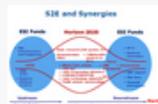
The **Stairway to Excellence (S2E)** project aims to support **post 2004 EU regions and countries** in developing and exploiting the synergies between Horizon 2020 (H2020) and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), and:

- Assist them in closing the innovation gap, in order to promote excellence in all regions and EU countries;
- Stimulate the early and effective implementation of national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Activities of S2E

[Background for the project](#)

[Activities of S2E](#)



Country & Region Information

[National and Regional Fact & Figures](#) are being made available for each of the post 2004 EU countries and regions. These "facts and figures" documents contain key messages only, based on the presented quantitative indicators, and provide as full a picture as possible of how and where European funding dedicated to R&I is spent in EU13 territories.



Cases Studies

Events & News

COMING EVENTS: S2E started to organize National Events to:

- Ease understanding of national and regional innovation ecosystems
- Raise awareness to enable synergies between EU funding programmes
- Share experiences in combining Structural Funds and Framework Programme to improve excellence
- Draw lessons for the future and identify follow-up actions to enhance potential synergies

Participation to those events is by invitation Only.

- 26 Mar 2015: [CROATIA National event](#)

- 15 Apr 2015: [LATVIA National event](#)

PAST EVENTS:

2-3 Oct 2014: [S2E Launching conference](#) in Prague

S2E Publications



[National and Regional Fact & Figures](#) are being made available for each of the [post 2004 EU countries and regions](#)



As an outcome of its Launching conference, S2E published the [Policy Brief 12/2014](#) in Dec 2014 : [Synergies between EU R&I Funding Programmes. Proceedings from the Launching Event of the Stairway to Excellence Project](#)

Related documents

National S2E Events

- **A better understanding of the specific national innovation ecosystem**
- **Raising awareness of the actions needed to enable synergies between different EU funding programmes**
- **Sharing experiences in combining different EU funds**

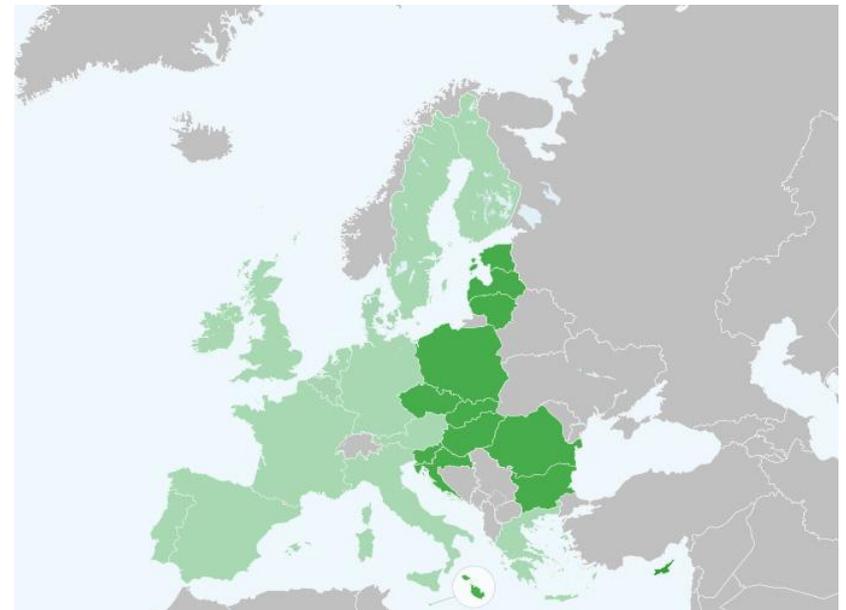
The events are open to national and regional MAs, NCPs, national authorities in charge of RIS3, selected experts and representatives from business and research organisations.

[Croatia](#) (March 2015)

[Latvia](#) (April 2015)

Forthcoming Events:

Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria



Thank you!



<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

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Issues for discussion

1. **Upstream Activities – Human Capital and Infrastructure**
2. **Downstream Activities – Exploitation Research Results**
3. **Incentives, Obstacles and Opportunities by stakeholders**

Open Issues

- 3 Bullet Points

Operational Suggestions (HOW?)

- 3 Bullet Points