

## "Made in the EU" Smart Specialisation inspires the world

The EU's approach to regional economic development through Smart Specialisation is gaining a world-wide following. The JRC organises the first global meeting of Smart Specialisation experts from five continents to discuss this participatory approach to economic transformation.

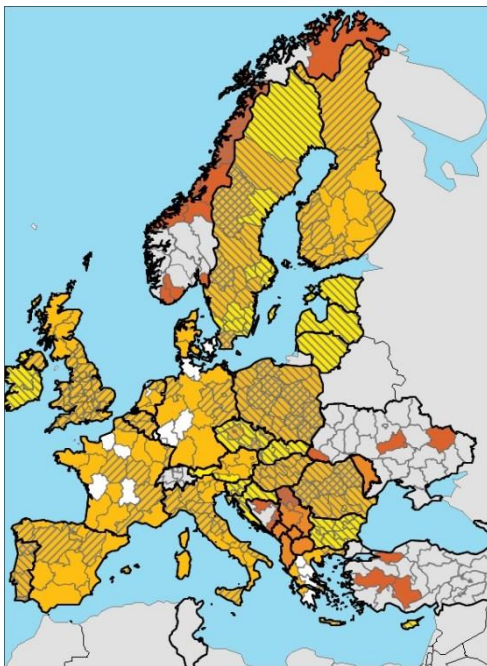
### Smart Specialisation delivers in the EU

Over the past five years, more than 120 Smart Specialisation Strategies have been developed across Europe, with more than 67 billion EUR available to support these strategies, under the European Regional Development Fund (2014-2020 programming period), together with national and regional funding. Smart Specialisation also promotes interregional and cross-border partnerships in areas such as industrial modernisation, digitalisation, the energy transition, and agri-food.

Expected achievements by 2020 include bringing 15,000 new products to market, and creating 140,000 new start-ups and 350,000 new jobs.

### ... and beyond

Smart Specialisation is increasingly gaining traction as a model for decentralised and innovation-led territorial development policies in several countries and regions around the world. Next to 18 EU countries and 177 EU regions, there are six non-EU countries and 16 non-EU regions already registered in the [Smart Specialisation Platform](#) developed by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy and the Joint Research Centre.



Since 2016, the Joint Research Centre has been working with Serbia, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia and Tunisia to help these countries develop their Smart Specialisation strategies. Smart Specialisation contributes not only to building knowledge-based competitive advantages, but also to more democratic and transparent policy-making, resilience and finding innovative answers to societal challenges.

Beyond the countries under the EU Neighbourhood and Enlargement Policy, Smart Specialisation is present in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Norway and Peru, and is gaining interest in China, the United States of America, Canada and Africa, among others.

Concrete achievements of Smart Specialisation beyond EU borders include: consolidating clusters with innovative projects in biotechnology, robotics and photonics in the Bogota region (Colombia); identifying links between science and industry in the automotive sector of the Pernambuco region (Brazil). Australia has been one of the earliest adopters of Smart Specialisation, with the Hunter Valley region being the first one to develop a Smart Specialisation strategy in 2015, directly inspired by the methodology developed in the EU. Recently, a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on Smart Specialisation was launched in Australia.

## **The workshop "Smart Specialisation from the EU to the world"**

For the first time, the **workshop "[Smart Specialisation from the EU to the world](#)"**, taking place in Seville on 25 September 2018, brings together around 100 Smart Specialisation actors and experts (policy-makers, researchers, representatives from international organisations and practitioners) from the five continents. This event sheds light on the far-reaching power of influence of Smart Specialisation beyond European borders, in countries where it is already applied, or where it could be implemented in the near future. The workshop is also an opportunity to show the role of Smart Specialisation in the international agenda, as a possible vehicle for the achievement of the United Nations 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **The 2018 SMARTER Conference**

[The 2018 SMARTER Conference](#) on Smart Specialisation and Territorial Development, co-organised with the Regional Studies Association European Foundation offers a comprehensive picture of the Smart Specialisation policy experience, including an evaluation of its early results, and highlights recent developments. Particular attention will be given to implementation challenges and ways to address them. In addition, the conference will explore how Smart Specialisation engages with global value chains and production networks, and how firms, regions and cities can benefit from relationships across borders. By gathering around 150 participants, including researchers, policy makers and practitioners from Europe and beyond, the Conference will provide a unique and lively setting to explore the current status and future perspective of the Smart Specialisation policy concept.

## **Background**

Smart Specialisation advocates focusing investment on research, development and innovation on a few, carefully chosen priorities, where the impact can be greatest. It is strongly linked with the particular conditions of a given region, promoting participatory approach to economic transformation, and building on the assets and resources available to regions and Member States.

Smart Specialisation was introduced to make research and innovation investment relevant to the local conditions. For the financial period 2014-2020, regions and Member States needed to develop a Research and Innovation strategy for Smart Specialisation to set a limited number of priorities which can be financed from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This is going to be continued in the next programming period 2021-2027.