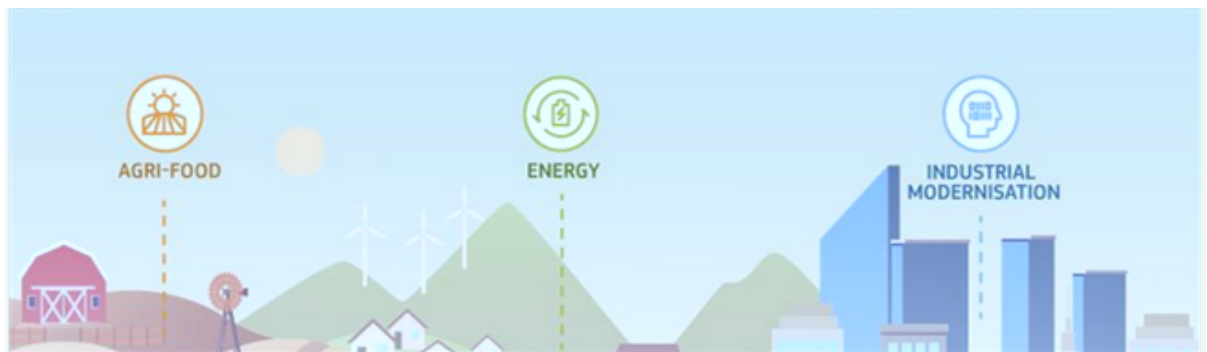


# Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms Monitoring Progress Report

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.



## Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnership Monitoring Progress Report

This report is presented to the relevant Working/Steering Committee.

The report is updated every six months.

### Confidentiality:

The management report (section I) and progress report (section II) will be made available to the public via your Partnership's web page.

The part on self-assessment is confidential.

Based on the monitoring results, the European Commission will decide on the following term's support.

### \* Reporting period

July - December 2020

### \* Please select the name of your partnership

BERRY+

**\* Start date of your partnership**

17.11.2020

**\* Partnership's webpage**

the webpage is under construction

**I. Management report****\* Please provide the executive summary and the objectives of your partnership**

BERRY+ is a smart specialisation, industrial modernisation partnership. It was approved on 17.11.2020. It has two key objectives:

- (1) to reach interregional investments & integrate partner regions' innovations into existing and / or emerging European Value Chains (EVC) and
- (2) to establish and register with the ECCP an interregional cluster as a way for constructing added value at regional and interregional levels in the long run.

BERRY+ is dealing with the processing of renewable natural resources, ingredients and sideflows towards high added value products. It is addressed to regions with relevant RIS3, existing or emerging innovation interests & to regions with significant market segments in the relevant domains.

The partnership has been set up so that it brings added value for each partner-region & all of them together, by the potential for (i) selectively exploring renewable natural resource & sideflows research-based opportunities; (ii) accessing strong consumer markets; (iii) investing in and developing new specialisation paths & breaking away from lock-ins; (iv) confronting enterprise challenges related to value chains and upgrading them accordingly. Implementing these sub objectives contributes to industrial modernisation based on circular economy solutions and digital transformation applications as part of value chains.

During the preparation period we focused on two issues:

- (i) understanding the economic, research and innovation infrastructure in the regions.
  - a. BERRY+ regions have strong research and relatively strong innovation infrastructure bases.
  - b. A primary diversification base was identified, bringing together the economic and research bases of the BERRY+ regions. This exercise resulted in a wide range of potential value chain collaborations: renewable natural resources (cultivated & wild berries, grapes, apples, forest fruits, cereals, dairy, herbs, forest industry side flows); research & research applications (e.g. anti-microbial compounds replacing synthetic preservatives, bioprocessing of berries by enzymes and fermentation, scaling up to bio reactors and downstream processing, measurement technology, functional foods). Value chains we plan to investigate & specify for project and investment initiatives include (i) food processing value chains (functional foods, vegetable- or dairy-based proteins, herbs applications,...), (ii) regenerative cosmetics and (iii) forest-industries sideflows-based products replacing current, non-sustainable and non-renewable products (such as plastics) and raw materials (oil, chemicals etc.) in various industries.

- (ii) methodological aspects of value chain collaboration. An extensive, value chain methodology analysis was undertaken. It led to 7 different EVC themes, of potential interregional complementarities, as follows:

List 1 Value chain priorities (themes) of the BERRY+ partnership

- (1) Grasping immediate commercial opportunities (Existing or new value chain)
- (2) Substitution of value chain elements with better products (Existing value chain)
- (3) Design, development and testing (DDT) investments (Existing value chain or new branch of existing value chain)
- (4) Anticipatory, research-based product & product line development/ additional research priorities

(where relevant research “is going” in the next 5 years) (New value chain)

- (5) Optimal localisation of industries aiming at added value components reshoring of value chains in the regions (reshoring) (Existing or new value chain)
- (6) Ensuring horizontal compliance to related recent Directives and adoption of standards (Existing or new value chain)
- (7) Learning and scaling up interregionally the production process, joint applications of data analytics and Industry 4.0 solutions when needed (Existing or new value chain)

The benefits from these themes include, for example:

List 2 Anticipated and prioritised results of the BERRY+ partnership

- (1) Increased exports; profits
- (2) Profits & productivity; SME upgrading; competence building of the cluster management unit
- (3) New applied research lines; diversification of applied research services; competence building of the cluster management unit.
- (4) Research-to-research projects.
- (5) Diversification and extension of the research and knowledge base; interactions between and among research units; access to state-of-the-art research; access of research units to new end-users.
- (6) Better populating the regional and national economic base, optimising value chains; SME upgrading
- (7) Uptake of voluntary standards (required ones are enforced); competitiveness of clusters, SME upgrading; innovation systems scaling up; sustainable development impact reinforced
- (8) Uptake of digital transformation solutions; data analytics solutions to primary and secondary sector businesses; competitiveness of clusters; innovation systems reinforced with data analytics applications uptake & development.

**\* Please provide the list of leading regions**

The administrative responsible is the Regional Council of Kainuu.

The BERRY+ implementation is organised into three themes:

- 1.- INTERREGIONAL INVESTMENTS (leading region: Regional Council of Kainuu)
- 2.- INTERREGIONAL PROJECTS (leading region: Region of Western Greece)
- 3.- REGIONAL & NATIONAL INITIATIVES SUPPORTING INTERREGIONAL INVESTMENTS. (leading region: currently under negotiation).
- 4.- COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION, transversal activity. (leading region: Region of Western Macedonia).

**\* Please provide the list of participating regions.**

*If possible, please follow this format: "Name of the region in English (Country abbreviation), NUTS code".*

*e.g.: Lapland (FI), FI1D7*

Organisation	MS	NUTS
Regional Council of Kainuu	FI	NUTS3: FI1D4
Helsinki – Uusimaa Regional Council	FI	NUTS2: FI1B. and NUTS3: FI1B1
Region of Western Greece	GR	NUTS2: EL63
Regional of Western Macedonia	GR	NUTS2: EL53
Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia	IT	NUTS2: ITH4
Lombardy Region	IT	NUTS2: ITC4
Centro Region	PT	NUTS2: PT16
ACCIO on behalf of the Region of Catalonia	ES	NUTS2: ES51

**Please provide the list of interested regions or other entities** (other than national /regional authorities)

The regions of Lapland and North Savo (both in Finland), including the respective regional innovation systems have expressed interest. We are proceeding with discussions with the regional authorities, designated clusters and relevant research & education institutions, with the purpose of including the new regions. The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) has also expressed interest, in the sense of a transversal partner, contributing to the digital transformation component of industrial modernisation through the services provided by the Agricultural EDIH, coordinated by AUA.

Please provide an overview of the **working areas** of your partnership

	Working area	Region in charge	Involved regions	Other actors
1	ACTION PLAN STRUCTURE			
2	Component 1: Interregional investments	Regional Council of Kainuu	all regions	
3	Component 2: Interregional projects	Region of Western Greece	all regions	Governance groups (MAs/IBs, Cluster units, Research & Education, Businesses); additional actors from across the EU
4	Component 3: Regional and national initiatives supporting interregional investments	currently under negotiation	all regions	MAs/IBs as initiators, national level actors as counterparts of initiated options, and as implementers, MAs/IBs, cluster units, research & education, businesses.
5	Component 4: Communication and dissemination	Region of Western Macedonia	all regions	All regions, all governance groups, national level dissemination actors and receivers of information, dissemination channels, EU networks.
6	VALUE CHAIN WORKING AREAS  Agrifood value chains			
7	Agrifood value chains	not yet; the value chain will be specified into concrete types of industries.	all regions	Cluster management units, research, businesses.

*8	Regenerative cosmetics value chains	not yet; the value chain will be specified into concrete types of industries.	Catalonia, Lombardy, Helsinki-Uusimaa, Kainuu	Cluster management units, research, businesses.
*9	Forest industry side flow value chains replacing replacing current, non-sustainable and non-renewable products (such as plastics) and raw materials (oil, chemicals etc.)	specific value chains are currently discussed among and between the partners	Friuli Venezia Giulia, Centro, Kainuu, Helsinki-Uusimaa	Cluster management units, research, businesses.
*10	We expect that this list will be updated and adjusted in the coming period. We need to specify the three general value chain working areas into specific value chains.	clarifications will be made in the forthcoming period	clarifications will be made in the forthcoming period	clarifications will be made in the forthcoming period

Please provide information regarding past meetings, workshops and dissemination activities (six months prior to filling out the survey)

	Event	Date	Place	Any other information
1	Bilateral discussions, stage I	February & March 2020: multiple meetings between and among Kainuu, Helsinki -Uusimaa, Western Macedonia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Western Greece.	online	PLANNING MEETINGS The first group partners includes three regions from the BRIDGES project (IE Europe) partnership and two regions that have from beyond the BRIDGES project partnership.
2	Bilateral discussions, stage II	June-September 2020: Introductory meetings with Centro, Lombardy, Catalonia: these regions joined the BERRY+ platform; enhancement meetings with all of the stage I partners; fact finding meetings with Germany (Brandenburg), Poland (Lodz), Slovenia, France (Centre).	online	DATA COLLECTION & CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION; PARTNER RECRUITMENT MEETINGS
3	Bilateral discussions and collaboration following the approval of BERRY+	Bilateral meetings Kainuu-each one of the partners to go deeper into the regional expectations and the partnership; also as a way of preparing the kick off meeting (1st plenary session)	online	Reviewing regional diversification base with the partners, jointly considering possible challenges and discussing complementarity indications.

4	Discussions with regions to join the partnership after the approval of BERRY+	Lapland region (FI), Athens University of Agriculture (AUA), North Savo region (FI), Hungary, introductory discussions with Poland (Krakow).	online	INFORMATION & DISSEMINATION MEETINGS; partner recruitment clarifications; working together and discussing BERRY+ in the content of the new partners' priorities.
5	1st PLENARY meeting	22.1.2021	online	Partnership consolidation and discussion.
6	Multilateral and bilateral meetings with the partners regarding implementation and any other BERRY+ issues.	January 2021- end March 2021	online	Steering Group, scoping document, partnership agreement, first profiled complementarities
7				
8				
9				
10				



**Please provide information regarding planned future meetings, workshops and dissemination activities**

	Event	Date	Place	Any other information
1	Finalisation of the partnership agreement (PA)	end February 2021	online (e mail exchanges)	PA has been formulated, partners are currently reviewing it.
2	Finalisation of the scoping note document	end March 2021 within the partnership end April 2021 to the JRC	online (e-mail exchanges)	Scoping note document is progressing, however, we need quantified inputs from the regions.
3	Opening up of the four action plan components	February - March 2021	online (e-mail exchanges)	
4	Progress of early-stage interregional complementarities	January 2021 - end March 2021	online (e-mail exchanges, and complementarity groups' meetings)	
5	Plenary session 2	end March - beginning of April	online meeting	
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

## II. Progress report

### Innovative results

Please describe innovative results and achievements that could be attributed to the partnership (specific examples of results vs. objectives)

At this early stage of the BERRY+ partnership, we have concentrated on ensuring the preconditions, the context for identifying, developing and benefitting from interregional complementarities.

These preconditions include:

(1) Establishing the partnership space and consolidating our way of communications: frequent online exchanges are part of our joint development, beyond the more formal plenary sessions. It is important to establish an atmosphere of trust and allow deeper understanding of regional interests and potential.

(2) Branding of the BERRY+: two of the BERRY+ partner regions, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Lombardy proposed project logos; we are all currently discussing the key words (tags) of the partnership.

(3) Defining the governance of the partnership: the governance of the partnership has been defined, comprising a management and coordination level, and an implementation level.

a. The management and coordination relies on four governance working groups, MAs/IBs; Cluster management units, Research & Education, and Businesses. These four groups form, horizontally, the regional partnership base; they form, vertically, the exchange space between and among similar types of institutions and a natural matching space for the interregional Business working group; and, “diagonally” the space where interregional complementarities of all types, reflecting value chain priorities will be identified, organised, and implemented. The co-lead principle is adopted for the action plan Components and eventually also for the industrial domains in focus.

b. Partnership agreement (PA). The purpose is to set a level playing field for all the partners and transparent, controllable steps for the implementation of the BERRY+ objectives. The PA sets a consensus-based decision-making process and partner involvement including the governance working groups; it clarifies the steps for new regions willing to join the BERRY+ partnership; it clarifies the expectations from the partners’ involvement; it ensures inclusiveness of the partnership into new projects and, at the same time, collaboration of BERRY+ with more networks.

(4) Formulating the action plan (AP) and addressing the BERRY+ objectives. The AP includes four Components, and the leadership is shared among the partners. Co-leading partners are expected to formulate workplans for each one of the components, coordinate their implementation, and ensure all partners’ involvement. The four action plan Components are summarised below:

COMPONENT I Interregional innovation investments. It aims at participating in forthcoming I3 calls. It focuses more on themes 1,2,3 of the value chain List 1 (Grasping immediate commercial opportunities (Existing or new value chain); substitution of value chain elements with better products (Existing value chain), design, development and testing (DDT) investments (Existing value chain or new branch of existing value chain)).

COMPONENT II Other interregional projects. Component II initiatives refer to Horizon, Interreg, RRF, and so on. Component II builds on interregional complementarities, focusing more on themes 4,5, and 7 of the value chain List 1 (Anticipatory, research-based product & product line development/ additional research priorities (where relevant research “is going” in the next 5 years) (New value chain); Optimal localisation of industries aiming at added value components reshoring of value chains in the regions (reshoring) (Existing or new value chain); Learning and scaling up interregionally the production process, joint applications of data analytics and Industry 4.0 solutions when needed (Existing or new value chain)).

COMPONENT III Regional and national initiatives supporting interregional innovation investments. It aims at consolidating the options of interregional investments with regional and national level supportive initiatives. Component III is introduced following the experience of the partner regions from (a) national innovation

systems as key enablers for regional innovations, (b) possible discontinuities between regional and national innovation objectives, and (c) potential for innovative pilots and renewed funding rationales, e.g. based on synergies between rural and structural funds. The BERRY+ value-chain working areas investments & improvements we are aiming at, might imply overlaps between Rural and ERD funds, especially innovation (RIS3). In such cases, the two funds could collaborate to support innovation processes and industries defined within RIS3. Component III contributes to themes 3,4,5,6 and 7 of the value chain List 1.

COMPONENT IV. Communication and Dissemination. The purpose is to diffuse knowledge from and information about the BERRY+ partnership to regional and national actors, other S3 partnerships, and the wider public.

- (5) Starting to fill in the Scoping note document: the process is on-going.
- (6) Organising the first plenary session meeting: it was organised on 22.1.2021.

Tangible short- and medium-term socio-economic impacts achieved or expected (specific examples)

It would not be realistic to claim any impact yet.

## Inter-regional and inter-partnership collaborative results

Additional results obtained from working with other partnerships under the thematic S3 Platforms (specific examples)

At this early stage of the BERRY+ partnership, we have not been able to introduce this activity yet. We look forward to such collaborations.

Evaluation of the involvement of relevant business sector (clusters, SMEs, business associations, chambers of commerce, Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs), etcetera) in the Partnership activities (specific examples)

During the preparation phase, we have involved actively regional authorities, cluster management units and research units. The business community has been involved passively, indirectly, in terms of mapping the economy. Partners will make the regional opening meetings of BERRY+ and involve the relevant businesses in this next period.

In terms of DIH:s we are currently negotiating with the Athens University of Agriculture (AUA) to join the partnership and benefit from their Agricultural EDIH coordination role; we also plan to liaise with relevant EDIHs (once approved at least at national level) in the BERRY+ regions, for example the Advanced Manufacturing EDIH in Finland, EDIH:s in Portugal through Centro, and others of course.

Evaluation of whether the level of inter-regional cooperation is sufficient to potentially provide practical and relevant socio-economic impacts (specific examples)

We feel very confident about this possibility. We have been working for the last 10 years (since 2011) in various Baltic Sea Region (BSR), and since 2003 in Interreg IV C and then Interreg Europe (IE) projects on understanding the probability and feasibility of joint development options and we came to the conclusion that such options are both possible and very probable. This is why we set up BERRY+ in the first place.

Moreover, as we have started the Component I implementation, we see that there is collaboration interest expressed between and among a few regions, while, in another case we have identified how to spot interregional synergies through interregional EDP sessions. We have also understood the need for adopting both short term and medium term practices in the implementation of the BERRY+, as there is generally felt need in the regions to speed up results, also as a way to go beyond the COVID19 impacts and uncertainties.

## New activities

Involvement of regions from EU13 Member States in the Partnership, in particular with respect to scoping, mapping and/or matchmaking. In addition, justification should be provided if no EU13 regions are involved

The BERRY+ partnership has persistently sought to link with, alphabetically Hungary, Poland (3 regions), and Slovenia (two sub-regions). We have held bilateral meetings and exchanges during the preparation of stage I application (February and March 2020) as well as during the preparation of stage II application (June-September 2020), and also after the approval of BERRY+ (17.11.2020 onwards). In the case of Slovenia, two sub regions have been invited, were interested to join, and have been named as associated partners in the approved AF. In all other cases, regions or central administrations have been rather hesitant to join. Negotiations are still on-going.

We feel that, in all cases, the co-ordination costs of the BERRY+ partnership, i.s. the scoping, mapping, and matchmaking have been an issue (and not only for EU13 MS). We anticipate that the possibility to link explicitly BERRY+ to interregional investments as well as the new Structural Funds (SF) Policy Objective 1 (PO1) Enabling condition, criterion 7 Measures for interregional collaboration, will be a positive influence for regions to join BERRY+. On our side, we are trying to make the partnership as result-oriented and as far as we hope this to function as one more attractiveness factor. However, we need to acknowledge that coordination funding for all partner regions is very important.

We are happy to discuss with more EU13 regions.

Involvement of regions/countries from outside of EU28 Countries. (Number of participants from non-EU countries (specify their contribution))

Following the BERRY+ presentation on 18.12.2020 JRC event Moldova are discussing with us.

We are happy to discuss with more non-EU regions.

Advancement and promotion of the Partnership through publications and other communication/outreach activities (number of outreach activities that resulted from the partnership)

We have received considerable support from the JRC directly. Further than that, the approval of the BERRY+ has been disseminated through the Interreg Europe site, BRIDGES project, as BERRY+ implements Action 2 of the Kainuu action plan. There has been dissemination also through the web sites of Kainuu, Helsinki - Uusimaa, Centro (<http://ris3.ccdrc.pt/index.php/iniciativas/106-plataformas-tematicas-europeias-da-s3/158-regiao-centro-participa-na-recentemente-aprovada-parceria-s3-berry-2>), Western Macedonia.

The first comprehensive wave of dissemination is expected once the branding has been made. The responsibility for the Communication & Dissemination activities is shared out through the co-leadership option (Western Macedonia).

Activities and projects with partnerships working under other S3 Thematic Platforms (AgriFood, Energy and Industrial Modernisation)

We very much look forward to developing such options.







### Your Partnership and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The EU has a strong position when it comes to sustainable development and is also fully committed to be a frontrunner in implementing the UN's 2030 Agenda, together with its member countries and regions. Many interregional partnerships under the thematic S3 Platforms contribute strongly to the attainment of these 17 goals.

**Please indicate to which Sustainable Development Goals and to what extent your thematic Partnership contributes?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition & promote sustainable agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives & promote well-being for all at all ages	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality & empower all women and girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment & decent work for all	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation & foster innovation	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 11. Make cities & human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption & production patterns	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas & marine resources for sustainable development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Goal 16. Promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels						
Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	