

Project summary

S3-4AlpClusters

INTERREG VB
Programme Espace Alpin



Work Package Management

How to foster the innovation processes within the clusters? How to increase the impact of Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) implemented by regional authorities? These both are the central questions that the « Smart Specialization Strategies to build an Innovation Model for Alp Clusters » project should address. Innosquare Clusters affiliated to the School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg (HES-SO HEIA-FR) manages this project as part of the INTERREG VB Programme. The project brings together 14 partners from 11 Alpine Space Regions (Piedmont, Lombardy, Autonomous Province of Trento, Venetia, Slovenia, Linz, Salzburg, Bavaria, Baden Wurtemberg, Franche-Comté, and the canton of Fribourg), their clusters and 9 observers. It aims to strengthen the impact of the regional economy policies on the enterprises by selecting and prioritizing through an entrepreneurial discover process and value chains within each region. The project is divided into 3 Working Packages: the first determines how to support the policy-makers to best implement S3; the second defines an innovation model at the cluster level; the third tests new services in pilot-clusters in order to better impact enterprises and to facilitate the trans-regional cooperation. An Advisory Board (AB) made up of 4 to 5 experts will ensure that the project stays on the line defined in the AF in compliance with the objectives of the Alpine Space Programme and in compliance with the clusters concept and the smart specialization concept. Strict quality procedures will allow for the project controlling.

Work Package 1

The objective of this work package is to get a deeper understanding of the S3, the related policy making, and implementation process through clusters within the partner regions. We first start at the policy level by conducting benchmarking and stress testing of the relevant policies and implementation approaches. The result is a better understanding of the partner regions' approaches and initiates mutual policy learning.

Based on the findings of the StressTesting exercises we will, as a second step, Identify Smart Specialisation Synergies between the partners' region. Not much is known about the other S3 within the Alpes region. A deeper knowledge of the partners' S3 will enable us to identify transregional synergies as well as to develop a synchronized call scheme. A synchronized Scheme is a transregional funding exercise, which is built on existing regional programmes. By aligning these programmes, transregional consortia can be supported through a joint Call for proposals, which is implemented according to regional funding procedures.

There will be two outcomes: Firstly, joint cluster action plan to improve transnational, cluster-based cooperation's along value chains and defines Alpine Space policy framework to facilitate innovation. Moreover, secondly the fully developed synchronized scheme among the PPs as a base promotes transregional.

Work Package 2

In WP T2 we will analyse existing regional and interregional processes and practices at a cluster level to create a basis for an innovation model for cluster development, applicable to all regions, and complemented with new prototypes of services to be tested at enterprise level. The innovation model will integrate regional smart specialisation strategies and will be built upon best practices already implemented in the regions.

The specific activities include the collection and analysis of best practices within existing clusters in the regions to produce a good practice report as well as the specifications of new cluster-based services. We will organise one cluster workshop per region to discuss how the transnational model can support the growth of regional companies.

Afterwards, on the basis of selected best practices and exploiting insights coming from regional cluster workshops, we will develop new ideas of services including for instance IP management, collaborative concepts, financial resources, market specificities, support to new entrepreneurship etc.

Finally, we will design training tools for the cluster managers regarding the model and the new services. The training tools will be publicly available for replication, adoption and take up of results.

Work Package 3

The aim of this work package is to test the applicability and benefit of new services on cluster level in differently developed regions. Based on the transregional synergies identified in work package task 1 "Cluster policy, S3 benchmarking and stress testing" we conduct the pilot testing of the newly developed cluster services of work package task 2 "S3 model based definition for cluster Innovation" in cross-regional and cross-sectoral manners, e.g. in the fields of eco-innovation, bio economy, circular economy, (connected) mobility or advanced manufacturing. At least 10 pilot clusters will be jointly selected by the project partners. These pilot clusters are ready to turn the new services into practice in order to facilitate the transregional cooperation of the clusters. Each region reports its pilot experiences as well as recommendations for improvement. The final recommendation report supports the applicability of the tested services, provides guidance to other Alpine Space regions on how to use them and takes into consideration the specificities of advanced, convergence and less advanced regions. After this pilot testing work package five new validated cluster services adaptable to region specific needs and changing situations are available. These services should facilitate bundling strengths of Alpine regions and SMEs towards smart innovation and new value chains.

Work Package Communication

The WP Communication targets are: business support organisations, International networks (TCI, EEN, ECCP, ...), clusters managers, companies, policy-makers and the EUSALP community.

S3-4AlpClusters Communication will

- Change behavior: promoting the project topics toward its targets both through traditional means (press release, policy memos, personal meetings) and innovative tools (interactive events, online tools, short films).
- Influence attitude: through the entrepreneurial workshops and all T3. A consistent promotional activity will rise awareness about the advantages of the new tools.
- Increase knowledge: our communication targets will be used to connect clusters at transnational level. Special effort will be made to link with EUSALP community. The “4th International Cluster Conference”, will attract participants from different countries to further spread results.

The project story and the tools developed will be collected in the final publication: a mix of written elements, interviews and links to additional online resources, helping in transferring tools and how to use them. It will be spread through digital and traditional channels and presented at the final conference.

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