



ONLINE S3 Consortium

Newsletter

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Jun-17

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Insights from the first dissemination event

The first Online S3 dissemination event was held on 23 March in Brussels and gathered more than 40 participants from regional administrations, EU institutions, research organisations, consultancies and other relevant stakeholder groups. The aim of the workshop was to showcase the findings of the EU wide mapping of methods used by regional and national partnerships to develop smart specialisation strategies. Further the participants explored the stakeholder needs for online tools that support S3 cycle from strategy design, through implementation, to effective investment in transformative

innovation that boosts regional development.

To recap, the ambition of the ONLINE S3 project is to:

- Make available advanced strategic planning methods in the design of Regional Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)
- Provide rich datasets guiding the design, implementation, and assessment of RIS3
- Standardise the RIS3 design and implementation based on the state of the art methodologies
- Make available Online S3 platform with multiple software applications that are open and accessible to all EU regions.



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Panel discussion

The panel discussion convened four experts representing their personal perspectives enriched through experience from three different European Commission Directorates (DG Regional Policy, DG Joint Research Centre, and DG Research and Innovation), and one EU region (Helsinki-Uusimaa, Finland). The panel discussion was moderated by Mr. Richard Tuffs from the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN). The aim of the panel discussion was to gather different viewpoints on what are the needs for S3 partnerships to enhance the RIS3 process. Also the panel members were asked to critically reflect on the project consortium ideas for online tools in support the ongoing entrepreneurial discovery process in EU regions.



Mr. Jan Larosse, seconded national expert at DG REGIO, stressed the new EC Smart Specialisation Communication in preparation and the **importance of the community of practice** that has been established in the EU around the S3 concept. He mentioned that different methods support this community of practice, and that it is very important to capitalise on the existing knowledge, and link Online S3 endeavours with other existing initiatives, including those from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME), the European Cluster Observatory, and the KETs Observatory. He highlighted the importance to find the best complementarities for all intelligence platforms that are currently available.

Mr. Larosse made a point that it is extremely important for the ONLINE S3 project to understand who will be the users of the ONLINE S3 platform to better identify their needs. He stressed that the focus should be on the diversity of users of the S3 community of practice. Also he mentioned that it is important that the **tools facilitate decision making among stakeholders**. In his view, one of the key questions for the project should be how the designed web-based functionalities can contribute to this process.

After the presentation of all proposed tools for the ONLINE S3 platform, Mr. Larosse said that strategic decision makers will not necessarily go through all the proposed tools, and hence ONLINE S3 will only be a part of the process. **Data, tools and methods are part of a governance process** and it will never be aside of it. ONLINE S3 should find a way to connect its tools with the governance of the region.

In relation to specific tools, Mr. Larosse underlined that **specific investment indicators as well as value chain indicators** would be very useful for regions and policymakers. Finally, he suggested that value chain analyses should not only look at competitors, but also at collaborators.

Jens Sorvik, researcher at the EC Joint Research Centre, commented that the results of the project on the mapping of methods are very interesting and useful. He expressed some concerns in relation to the data sources that will be used for the development of tools highlighting that it was necessary that the **tools were self-running and self-supporting for uptake and maintenance**. He also suggested to have a reduced amount of data on the ONLINE S3 Platform, and rather provide links to the existing sources.

Mr. Sorvik suggested the project should **make use of regional cohesion data from DG REGIO**, which is a very good source for benchmarking purposes. He also made the point that data is only part of the RIS3 process and it supports it, but what really matters is the people involved in the design of RIS3. He was unsure whether it is possible to involve all regional stakeholders in the process, and hence it was a priority to understand who should be involved and how.

Mr. Dimitri Corpakis, the former Head of Unit at DG Research and Innovation, started his intervention by saying that ONLINE S3 is a very interesting project. He warned that sometimes quantitative methods can be misleading, and hence he does not find surprising that EU regions used the simplest tools to develop their RIS3. He also questioned what would be the value of the research, and which are the **limits to the models proposed**.

Mr. Corpakis stressed that it is very important to think about the sustainability of the ONLINE S3 Platform. Streamlining some of the components presented for the tools is also necessary. In his view, **participatory platforms and forums will continue to drive the RIS3 design process**.

Ms. Krista Taipale, the Head of the EU office of Helsinki region, mentioned that she particularly liked the ONLINE S3 approach for stakeholder involvement. She said it was important to **involve citizens and end-users** in the implementation of S3 process. She pointed out that it is key to remember the citizens and how the inhabitants of the regions are benefiting from S3, as well as to increase the possibilities of dialogue among all relevant stakeholders.

In relation to the tools presented, Ms. Taipale mentioned the need for **professional training** of people to be able to use the tools themselves. She reminded the project partners that in many cases very little financial resources and a limited number of people are involved in the development of S3 strategies.



Moderated Q&As with the audience

Following the panel discussion, questions were taken from the audience. Several participants were keen to understand whether **RIS3 2.0 will be a reality for the next programming period** after 2020. Even though EC representatives were not able to answer this question with an official position, the panel of experts agreed that there is a strong feeling that the RIS3 approach will remain very relevant in the years to come.

Mr. Jan Larosse mentioned that regions are still very important and the impetus on RIS3 will most likely continue. Industrial policy is also likely to remain central in the agenda. RIS3 is indisputably a good approach of doing regional innovation policy.

Some members of the audience added that the RIS3 process is about making regional innovation policy overall, and thus Online S3 tools will remain relevant also after this programming period. Moreover, a point was made that the RIS3 process is also about achieving better regional performance.

The panel of experts agreed that **ONLINE S3 has a lot of potential to support the RIS3 2.0 process.**

Join the Online S3 Community

The open consultation on Medium will continue to run until the end of the project and we would be glad to hear your thoughts and opinions about the methods we have developed. Moreover, we will be presenting the results of the Online Consultation during the 10th International Conference for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Regional Development (Thessaloniki, 31st August - 1st September 2017). This is a great opportunity to join the Online S3 community, meet our team and discuss the development of Smart Specialisation Strategies across Europe.

ONLINE S3 project aims to develop an e-policy platform augmented with a toolbox of applications and online services, which will assist national and regional authorities in the EU in elaborating or revising their smart specialisation agenda, in terms of policies and strategy.

ONLINE S3 Project

<http://www.onlines3.eu>



Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union
Under Grant Agreement number: 710659 – ONLINE-S3