



S3Chem
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S3Chem – Action plan for the promotion of smart specialisation strategies in the chemistry and bioeconomy sector

General Information:

Project: S3Chem – Smart Chemistry Specialisation Strategies

Partner Organisation: Public Service of Wallonia

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NUTS2 region: Wallonia

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1. Introduction

From 2016 onwards the chemical regions Saxony-Anhalt, Limburg, Catalonia, Asturias, Lombardy, Wallonia and Masovia have cooperated in the Interreg Europe Project S3Chem to strengthen smart specialisation strategies in the chemical and bioeconomy sector. All regions have given special priority to this sector in their Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) due to the economic importance of the chemical industry.

The RIS provides the basis for the regional innovation funding in the framework of the ERDF. In this context, the S3Chem project has looked at different dimensions for the improvement of these policy instruments: better involvement of regional stakeholders and governance, project generation, funding instruments and evaluation and monitoring. Based on good practices identified in several regions an interregional learning process has been initiated. After three years of intensive exchange of experience, the partners have developed an Action Plan, which describes further concrete actions to improve their policy instruments for the promotion of innovation in the chemical and bioeconomy sector. The Action Plan will reinforce the impact and sustainability of project results for the implementation of measures in the ongoing structural funds period 2014-2020.

Wallonia wants to focus its future actions on the improvement of governance of S3 in the current ERDF programme by Communication on innovation projects financed by the ERDF in Axis 2 with the organization of a thematic event, extending S3 section of the current Annual Report template and assist beneficiaries to be more specific in their annual reports on this topic and introducing the S3 and Chemistry thematic areas in the evaluation of the ERDF Axis Innovation 2020. Finally, Wallonia plans to develop a platform of knowledge, able to identify a value chain and put Walloon stakeholders active in the sector of chemistry / bioeconomy in relation.

The implementation of the Action Plan will be coordinated by the Ministry of Economy of Wallonia, which is the owner of the Policy Instrument. Clusters, Sowalfin, ERDF Managing authority and other sectoral actors of chemical and bioeconomy are intensively involved and support the activities.

2. Description of Regional Action Plan

Policy Context:

Name of Policy Instrument addressed: Strategy for Intelligent Specialisation of Wallonia with focus on ERDF Axis 2: INNOVATION 2020, Increase regional innovation through increased collaboration between public research organizations, universities and innovative companies.

The **objective** is to strengthen research, technological development and innovation by promoting business investment in R&D and by developing links and synergies between stakeholders **active in the chemical sector**: companies, research and development centers, higher education sector and competitiveness clusters. The Walloon regional policy statement has clearly identified innovation as a cornerstone of industrial development in the Region.

To achieve this, this instrument supports R&D, with a focus on:

- **innovation and marketing;**
- **non-technological innovation;**
- **eco-innovation ;**
- **Key Enabling technologies (KET).**

This instrument includes measures aiming to **link SMEs and research centers in the field of chemistry**, strengthening capacities of intervention centers in the areas useful for medium- and long-term SMEs. **Industrial development projects on research and innovation** are underlined, either through efficient valuation tools or access to finance improved.

2.1. Action 1 : Improvement of the governance of S3 within the current ERDF programme

This action will be declined in 3 parts. Part A will strengthen and feeds parts B and C.

- A.** Communication on innovation projects financed by the ERDF in Axis 2 with the organization of a thematic event
- B.** Extend S3 section of the current Annual Report template and assist beneficiaries to be more specific in their annual reports on this topic
- C.** Introduce the S3 and Chemistry thematic areas in the evaluation of the ERDF Axis Innovation 2020

2.1.1. Relevance to the project

Since the beginning of the S3Chem project and the successive analyzes we have conducted, we have realized that the Walloon beneficiaries active in the chemical sector did not have a clear idea of the S3 concept. Therefore, this first action focuses on the governance of S3 and how we can improve stakeholder's ownership of the S3 concept.

- A.** In the context of meetings organized since 2016 with the S3Chem consortium, we learned that Lombardy has organized large-scale events to inform ERDF beneficiaries and discuss the results of ERDF projects. As for Asturias and Limburg regions, they regularly make presentation of ERDF projects. We will take inspiration from the formats of these events to increase participation and impact.
- B.** In the framework of the S3Chem project, we studied how the S3 was taken into account in the selected projects and more specifically: how the S3 guides the ERDF reporting, the work of the Department of Structural Funds and functional administrations programming, from the selection to the end of the projects. Therefore, we have captured when the S3 appears at the level of the annual reports. We concluded that S3 was not always well integrated by the beneficiaries. Indeed, it turns out that S3 elements were not only present in the section provided for this purpose but were also diluted throughout the activity reports of the portfolios analyzed. The objective of this sub-action is then to help the beneficiaries to be more specific in their annual reports about it.
We will rely on the partners of the S3Chem consortium and their good practices to improve our monitoring of funded projects from the S3 perspective.
- C.** As in Wallonia, most regions have started evaluating their ERDF programming. The evaluation of Axis 2 in Wallonia was planned at mid-term in order for projects to be more advanced. Several good practices have been noted by Wallonia:

- Saxony-Anhalt has set up workshops based on the Delphi method and validation workshops;
- Lombardy Region has developed significant involvement of public and private actors in the evaluation, with the launch of horizontal governance.

To draw inspiration from these evaluation methods, we will rely on the specifications developed by the ERDF evaluations of the Lombardy and Saxony-Anhalt Regions.

2.1.2. Nature of Action

A. Communication on innovation projects financed by the ERDF in Axis 2 with the organization of a thematic event

The objective is to communicate about innovative projects financed by the ERDF in Axis 2 with the organization of a thematic side event. Indeed, each year, the Department of Structural Funds organizes a large event intended for the ERDF beneficiaries of axis 2. The department provides administrative information and the beneficiaries present the results of their ongoing projects.

We would like to organize a side event bringing together the stakeholders regarding axis 2 Innovation 2020 to discuss the impact of ERDF funding on the different S3 domains. There will be a special focus on the chemical sector and will be companies oriented. The DGO6 will invite experts from European networks (ECRN, European platforms related to Vanguard Initiative, etc.) to work on the concept of S3 and openness to Europe. The European S3Chem consortium will also be invited in order to exchange on this thematic.

This event will help nourish sub-action B and C. Indeed this event will help to formulate questions of evaluation and improve monitoring of ERDF projects. This event will also allow stakeholders (universities, research centers, poles of competitiveness, companies) to better understand the concept of S3.

B. Extend S3 section of the current Annual Report template and assist beneficiaries to be more specific in their annual reports on this topic

For this purpose we would like to collaborate with functional directories of DGO6 to clarify the questionnaire concerning S3 in project monitoring.

There will be 5 successive phases:

1. selection of pilot projects that will respond to a modified questionnaire
2. organization of an information session for the beneficiaries upstream (leaders of the portfolios)

3. preparation of a synthetic document for the beneficiaries (leaders of the portfolios)
4. modified questionnaire analysis
5. Collect feedback from beneficiaries

C. Introduce the S3 and Chemistry thematic areas in the evaluation of the ERDF Axis Innovation 2020

For this subsection, the value chain study on chemistry sector performed by the Directory of political economic will be used in order to guide the evaluation.

The objective of this action is to prepare some evaluation questions in collaboration with the evaluator mandated by the Structural Funds Department. The results will be used to improve monitoring of ongoing projects and current programming.

2.1.3. Players involved

please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action 1 and explain their role:

Organisation	Role
DGO6	The Political economic directory will collaborate to the action. The functional administrations from DGO6 will be consulted regarding the sub action B and the portfolios they follow.
Department of Structural Funds – Public Service of Wallonia	They will organize a large event and collaborate with the DGO6 regarding the organization of the thematic side - event (A) and the programming evaluation (C)
Iweps	Will assist the DGO6 regarding the programming evaluation(C)
Greenwin	will participate as an expert at the side-event (A)
Essenscia	will participate as an expert at the side-event (A)
Valbiom	will participate as an expert at the side-event (A)
Plastiwin	will participate as an expert at the side-event (A)
Leaders of the relevant ERDF portfolios	they will collaborate with us to improve their activity report

2.1.4. Timeframe

- A. Organization of an event in late 2019 / early 2020.
- B. Next annual reports will be tabled by March 15, 2020.

C. Regarding the evaluation, the launch of the market will be in September 2019. The work will start from January 2020 and will be completed in February 2021.

2.1.5. Costs

The costs for the described activities are included in staff costs of employees in the Walloon Administration. We estimate those costs at an amount of 10.000€.

Hard costs that will have to be taken into account will be those related to the organization of the side event (Sub-action A). We estimate those costs at an amount varying between 3.000€ and 5.000€.

2.1.6. Funding Sources

Funding for the activities comes from own resources of the Walloon Government.

2.2. Action 2: Develop a platform of knowledge, able to identify a value chain and put Walloon stakeholders active in the sector of chemistry / bioeconomy in relation

2.2.1. Relevance to the project

Lombardy has a similar platform (Open Innovation Platform) that has already demonstrated its constant utility in partnership building. Lombardy has developed this platform in an open source way and has expressed its willingness to share its knowledge and the system put in place with Walloon region.

The objective is to renew the process of entrepreneurial discovery at the base entrusted to competitiveness clusters.

2.2.2. Nature of Action

Wallonia aims to develop a knowledge platform able to identify a value chain and put Walloon stakeholders active in the sector of chemistry / bioeconomy in relation

The objectives of the platform are:

- Valuing the socio-economic data of a territory;
- Connection of innovation domains: compilation of studies and cartographies (value chains), feeding of intermediary actors or development of directories allowing the precise identification of technological competences;
- Data Mutualization: Providing up-to-date, reliable and shareable data, in order to allow the partners to develop projects within and between territories and within and between sectors-This action is directly connected to action 2 of this plan. Indeed, the chosen theme of this platform will be the one that will emerge from the "Horizon Europe" working groups in the field of chemistry / bioeconomy and which will be relayed by Wallonia in order to specify its involvement in the platforms related to the Vanguard initiative.

This tool aims to be more integrative, so as not to be the fact of a particular pole.

Wallonia will search inspiration in the open source model developed by Lombardy region and explore how to adapt optionally it to its environment, or a new system will be developed using similar functionalities as the Open Innovation Platform.

2.2.3. Players involved

Organisation	Role
DGO6	catalyst to the Development of the platform
Sowalfin	Development of the platform
Essenscia	contribute to the development of the platform
Valbiom	contribute to the development of the platform
Plastiwin	contribute to the development of the platform
Greenwin	contribute to the development of the platform
Centers of research, universities, compagnies	contribute to the development of the platform

2.2.4. Timeframe

This action will be developed during the entire monitoring phase of the project, until the first year of 2021.

2.2.5. Costs

The costs for the described activities are included in staff costs of employees in the Walloon Administration and Sowalfin (Walloon Economic Agency). We estimate those costs at an amount of 10.000€.

2.2.6. Funding Sources

Funding for the activities comes from own resources of the Walloon Government.

Thanks to all project partners



isw

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Mazovia.
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Regione
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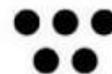
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