



EUROPEAN UNION

December 2021

S3 Couple Net: A new crossborder initiative aiming at synergies of regional smart specialisation strategies

Smart specialisation strategies (*further S3*) play an important role within both national and regional innovation systems and set priorities in order to build competitive advantage by developing and matching research and innovation own strengths to business needs as well as to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner. S3 Couple Net (*further S3CN*) is a new crossborder project between two key actors, Business Upper Austria and South Bohemian Science and Technology Park, focused on finding new cooperational potential within both regional smart specialisation strategies.

The European Commission introduced the S3 concept in the EU Cohesion Policy 2014 - 2020 as an 'ex-ante conditionality' for European regions to obtain funding for research and innovation from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). S3 is a place-based innovation policy concept to support regional prioritisation in innovative sectors, fields or technologies through the 'entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP)', a bottom-up approach to reveal what a region does best in terms of its scientific and technological endowments.

"S3 requires regions to have a comprehensive understanding of their regional institutional contexts to identify their strongest research, innovation and entrepreneurial assets so that they can select a limited number of priorities where they can build critical mass in areas of comparative advantage", says Miroslav Kotoun, regional S3 manager from South Bohemia as well as member of S3CN project team. *"Now having the similar methodology across all EU regions creates unique opportunities especially for exploring further synergies between crossborder regions that cooperates in many ways naturally and by default",* ads.

"We expect that based on the comparison of both strategies in the regional context we will learn more about specific aspects of both border-regions and thus uncover areas for mutual cooperation. According to our experience the identified cooperation potential needs to be completed by the the relevant network of potential cooperation partners. This is exactly what the project intends: Setting up the S3CoupleNet, facilitating exchange and initiating cooperation", says Werner Pamminer, CEO of Business Upper Austria – the Upper Austrian government's location agency.

The goal of the project is not only comparing S3 documents but also to create a network of key actors and stakeholders that would be maintained in order to react quickly to any further cooperation challenge.

The project will run for a total of 16 months and will end in December 2022.