



How the project S3-4AlpClusters supports the implementation of S3 in the region of Salzburg



How the project S3-4AlpClusters supports the implementation of S3 in the region of Salzburg Science and innovation in Salzburg is based on a very well-developed, yet heterogeneous and fragmented, regional research landscape. This is attributable to the region-specific industry structures in non-technology areas and to the large number of small business enterprises.

The scientific areas in Salzburg with recognisable potential for business (e.g. wood, construction, materials research, ICT, life-sciences, medicine, etc.) do not find themselves to be accompanied by large leading industries as is the case in other industrial regions. The knowledge transfer into the heterogeneous and small-structured business sectors requires a regionally-adapted approach.

It is precisely the smallness of Salzburg's structures that requires a high degree of networking and cooperation both internally and externally, in order to attain critical sizes, capacities and competences as well as creating an unmistakably distinctive profile for this region, focusing on the principle of further consolidating the strengths.

In keeping with the concept of smart specialisation, the goal of the regional strategy is firstly to build up nationally

and internationally visible critical masses in Salzburg, and secondly to gear itself towards the needs of local business and society. This analysis gives rise to five areas for a smart specialisation of Salzburg. These are: Life Sciences, Information and Communication Technologies, Smart Materials, Intelligent Building and Settlement Systems as well as Creative Industries and Services Innovations.

The government of Salzburg and ITG Salzburg (the State of Salzburg's agency for transfer of innovation and technology) operate as a task force to develop, accompany and carry through the measures of implementation. The active participation of ITG in the S3-4AlpClusters project can be seen as a crucial and important aspect for strengthening Salzburg's international orientation and expansion of coordination and cooperation activities.

Many regions focus their S3 on similar industries but fail to gain critical industrial mass. Current implementation of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) is often limited to the definition of broad priority areas and confined within strict regional borders. The project S3-4AlpClusters overcomes this by facilitating framework conditions for cross-sectoral and interregional cooperation and increases effectiveness in long-term Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) implementation.

The project's innovative approach is its focus on the interplay between the concepts of clusters and S3. This interplay implies a two-way relationship between the two concepts. As suggested by the overall title of the project „Smart Specialization Strategies to build an Innovation Model for AlpClusters“, a first way to study the interdependency is to



look at how S3 can be used to foster innovation processes and spark entrepreneurship within clusters. Turning the relationship on its head, existing clusters can also be used as a tool in the implementation of S3.

The project introduces a systematic process, the S3 innovation model, which relies on the involvement of clusters for the identification and development of transformative activities. Tools are provided for each phase of the process: StressTests and Synergy-Diamonds (a tool that facilitates the identification of Transformative Activities) are used as innovative ways of depicting existing capacities and detecting opportunities for structural transformation, both within and across regions. Entrepreneurial discovery workshops (EDW) build on this base of evidence in order to identify real transformative activities. Action development workshops (ADW) allow working out concrete actions - such as R&D projects, networking or development of critical skills - in order to gain critical mass for the identified transformative activities. The implementation of these actions is supported by a collection of best practices of cluster services covering transversal fields such as education, technology, growth, research or collaboration. The partnership puts particular focus on facilitating the cross-regional implementation of actions, with the initiation of an interregional cooperation scheme (Alpine Cluster Innovation Express – ACIE) jointly funded by existing regional programmes. The intention is to align existing funding schemes and launch joint calls for the implementation of cross-regional actions. Finally, the S3 innovation model also includes a methodology for evaluation and monitoring of the process. The entire process will be tested in pilot clusters and will result in a full training tool kit for cluster managers and regions by the end of the project.

The project is still in the implementation phase. Salzburg (ITG) is leading the development of the training tool kit as well as the methodology for the evaluation and monitoring process of this innovation model.

The added value of the project for the implementation of S3 in the Salzburg region can be summarized as follows:

- The project calls for an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the different aspects and levels of the S3 topics

in the course of a continuous dialogue with science and industry

- The logic behind the S3 as well as the Synergy Diamonds helps the Salzburg region to create a distinctive profile as well as bundle existing competencies and capacities interdisciplinarily to better identify development potentials
- The tools and methodologies developed within the project help the region to identify competence gaps and explore ways to bridge / close them via similar processes in partner regions, thus opening up new cooperation potentials
- The exchange of best practices between regions of different sizes and approaches with regards to RTI policies and cluster systems encourages mutual learning
- Within the context of this project specific tools and methodologies are developed and tested which will be adopted and implemented in the cluster activities | RTI policy | regional development strategy of the Salzburg region
- Salzburg intends to participate in the joint call of ACIE in order to allow the implementation of cross-regional actions.
- Entrepreneurial Discovery Workshops, Synergy Diamonds and the corresponding Action Development Workshops in the thematic fields of Life Sciences as well as Intelligent Building and Settlement System & Energy identify the most relevant transformative activities and actions for the region of Salzburg
- Stakeholder dialogues inform relevant actors about the progress as well as first results and findings throughout the project
- The stress test report for the region of Salzburg illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of the regional approach and provided recommendations for improving actions

Further information:

www.alpine-space.eu/projects/s3-4alpclusters/en/home

www.salzburg.gv.at/wirtschaft_/Documents/WISS-2025-english.pdf