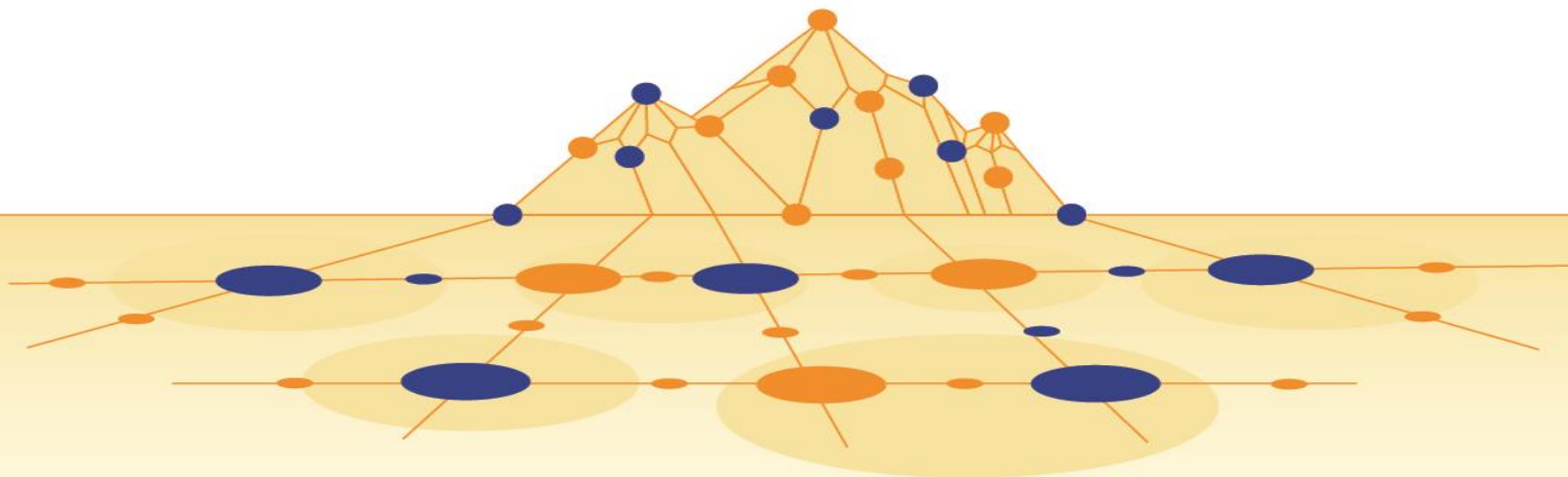


S3-4AlpClusters

Smart Specialisation with Smart Clusters
Synchronized Scheme:
Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)

Training Tool



Smart Specialisation with Smart Clusters

In the implementation of S3 three challenges have been identified:

- Lack of real Transformative Activities to support innovation and structural transformation
- Lack of cross-regional collaborations to gain critical mass
- Need to better integrate and collaborate with clusters in S3

Smart Specialisation with Smart Clusters proposes a **systematic process** that follows **5 Action Lines** to address these challenges:

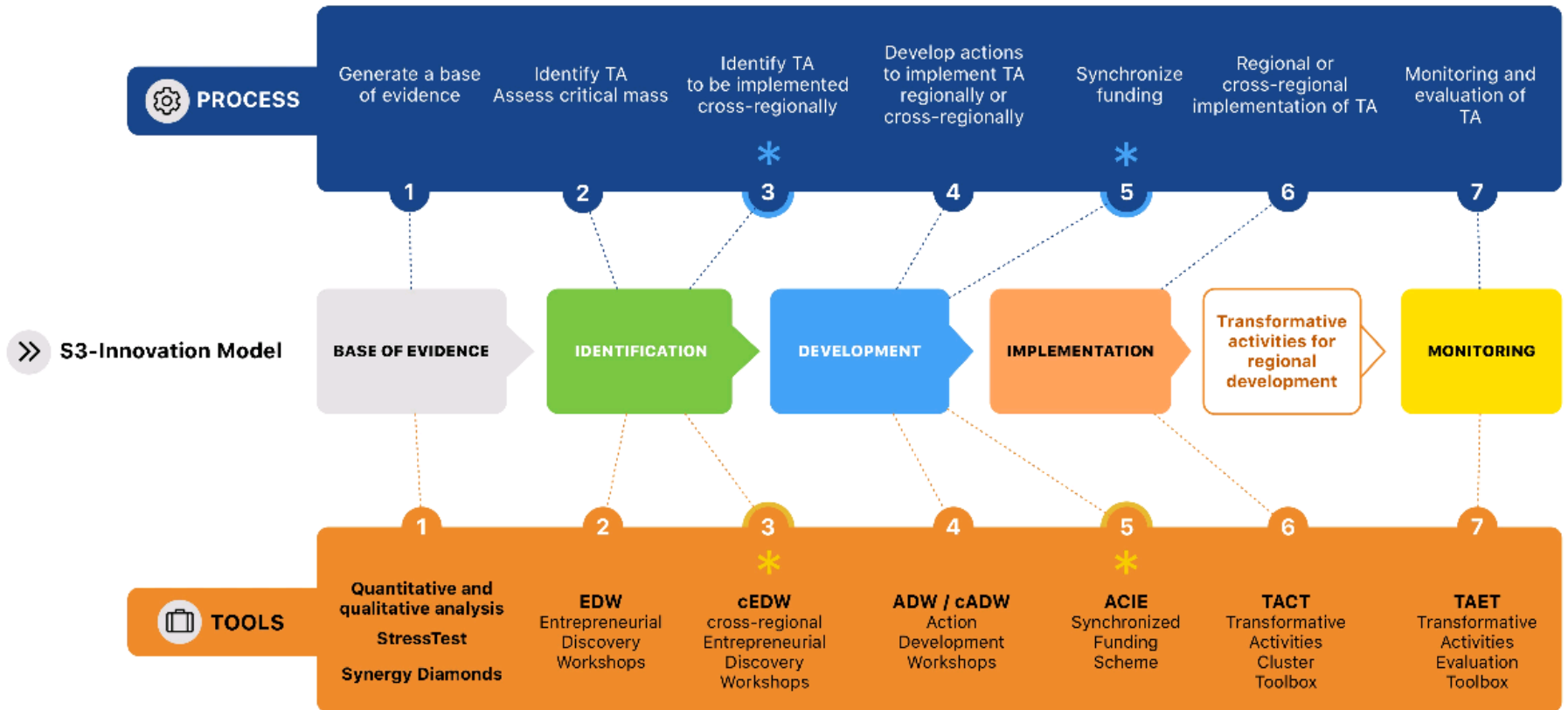
1. Provide a **Base of Evidence**
2. **Identification** of Transformative Activities
3. **Development** of actions
4. **Implementation** of Transformative Activities
5. **Monitoring**

To support the implementation of the individual process steps, **specific instruments and services** are developed. The **Training Tool Kit** provides guidance on how to implement the process and the instruments in a region.

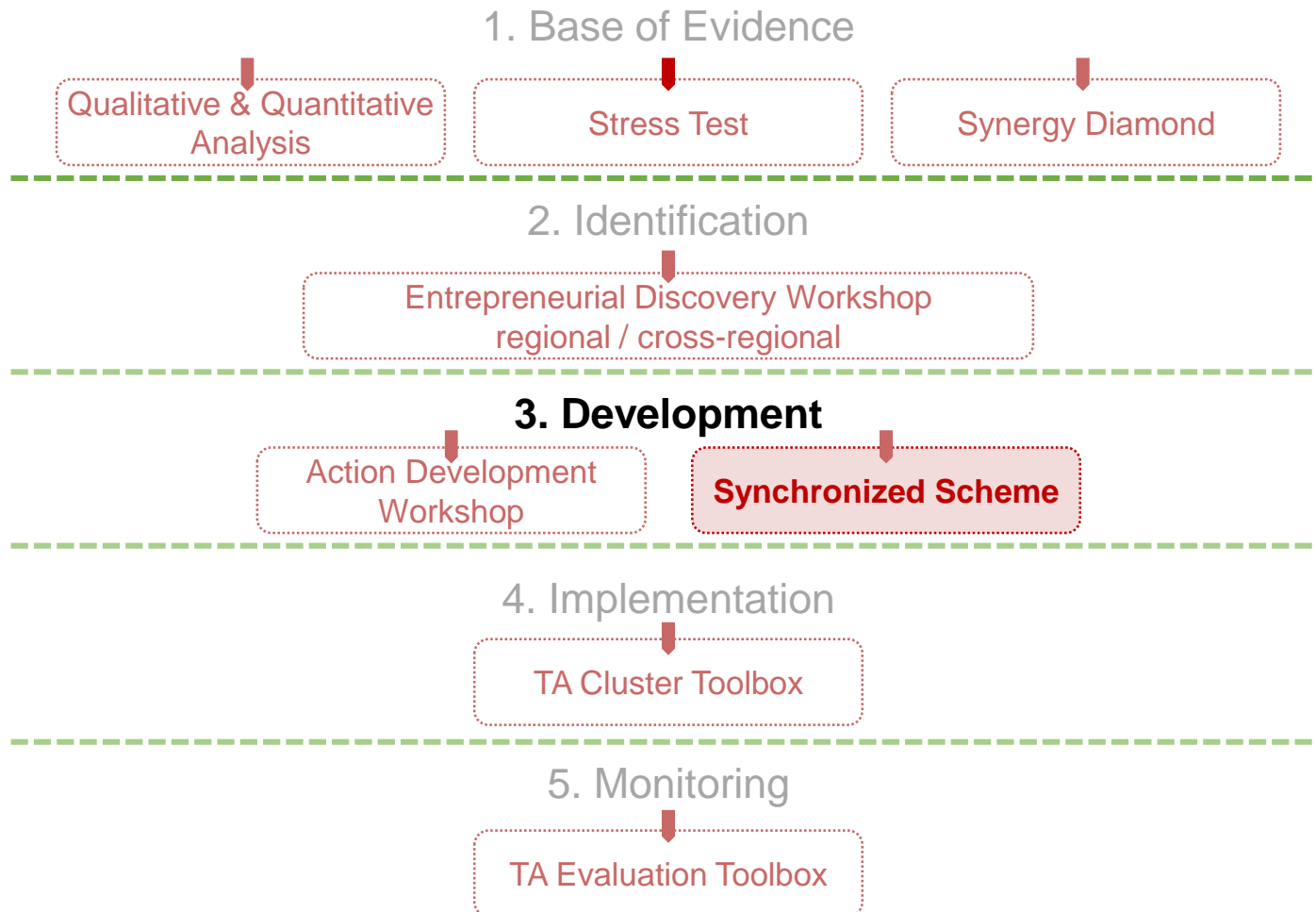


Smart specialisation with smart clusters

A new approach to generate Transformative Activities (TA)



Training Tool Kit – Smart Specialisation with Smart Clusters



Background

Synchronized Scheme

Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)



The role of cross-regional Cooperation in S3

S3 as a process aims at the transformation of economic structures of a region through the development of **Transformative Activities (TA)** by combining existing capacities with opportunities for structural transformations.

These Transformative Activities build on **existing regional structures**, to which **extra regional capacities can be added** to achieve a certain structural change.*

Therefore, **cross-regional cooperation** plays a promising role in the development of Transformative Activities to foster innovation within the Alpine Space:

- ⦿ Regions share **similar priority areas** and **Transformative Activities** related to challenges in the Alpine Space. These **capacities** can be **bundled** by cross-regional cooperation to jointly tackle these challenges.
- ⦿ If a region lacks sufficient activities and actors to implement necessary structural transformation on their own, cross-regional cooperation allows for tapping into external capacities to create a **critical mass**.
- ⦿ If a region is well positioned and equipped to develop a Transformative Activity, cross-regional cooperation with peer partner regions supports to **jointly enhance the leading position** e.g. by focusing on common R&D.



Lack of cross-regional Cooperation within the Alpine Space

The potential of cross-regional cooperation for S3-implementation in the Alpine Space is evident. However, an analysis conducted within the S3-4AlpClusters project revealed a **quasi-total absence of cross-regional cooperation** to exploit such synergy potentials in a need-based approach:

- ⦿ Business environments and **framework conditions** for cross-regional cooperation tend to be weak and neither S3 nor related policy instruments are aligned among Alpine Regions .
- ⦿ A persistent **funding gap** is perceived for actions that would allow actors from several Alpine regions to jointly explore Transformative Activities:
 - In existing programmes that support actors in cross-regional cooperation **regions** have little or **no influence** on their designs and scopes (e.g. Horizon 2020, ERA-NETS).
 - A **synchronization** of funding schemes across regions is missing that would support joint action for the development of cross-regional Transformative Activities.



Objective

Synchronized Scheme

Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)



Closing the Funding Gap for cross-regional development of TAs

The **Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)** proposes a **synchronization** of regional RDI calls into a cross-regional funding scheme to support the cross-regional development of similar Transformative Activities via **cluster initiatives**.

The Synchronized Scheme

- supports the cross-regional development of Transformative Activities with high relevance for the Alpine Space.
- promotes cross-regional cooperation between cluster initiatives and innovations among their related SMEs.
- facilitates cross-border learning, competence development and innovation creation.

ACIE significantly **improves framework conditions** for cross-regional innovation: It allows for **bundling of complementary regional competences**. Thus, by creating a critical mass, Transformative Activities across regions can be developed **faster and more efficiently** than if each region were acting separately.

To illustrate the generic approach of a Synchronized Scheme, a [draft ACIE Call](#) is available on the project website.



Methodological Approach

Synchronized Scheme

Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)



Synchronization of existing Regional Programmes

The Synchronized Scheme ACIE makes use of already existing regional programmes which **calls** are **synchronized**:

- ⊙ **Thematic scope:** Transformative Activities addressing major challenges in the alpine macro-region and with relevance for several regions.
- ⊙ **Supported activities:** Actions of cluster initiatives aiming at the cross-regional development of the Transformative Activities.
- ⊙ **Funding source:** ACIE calls are funded by already existing regional programmes and no additional funding is needed.
- ⊙ **Application procedure:** Each project partner applies at their regional/national funding organization. Regional funding does not cross borders and regional application procedures are applied.
- ⊙ **Evaluation of proposals:** Proposals are evaluated based on the selection criteria in the specific ACIE calls along with criteria from regional/national funding organizations.



Specifications for a Synchronized Call

Synchronized Scheme

Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)



Definition of the Thematic Scope: Transformative Activities

A Synchronized Scheme aims at supporting the cross-regional development of **Transformative Activities (TA)** that are of **relevance for several regions** within the Alpine Space.

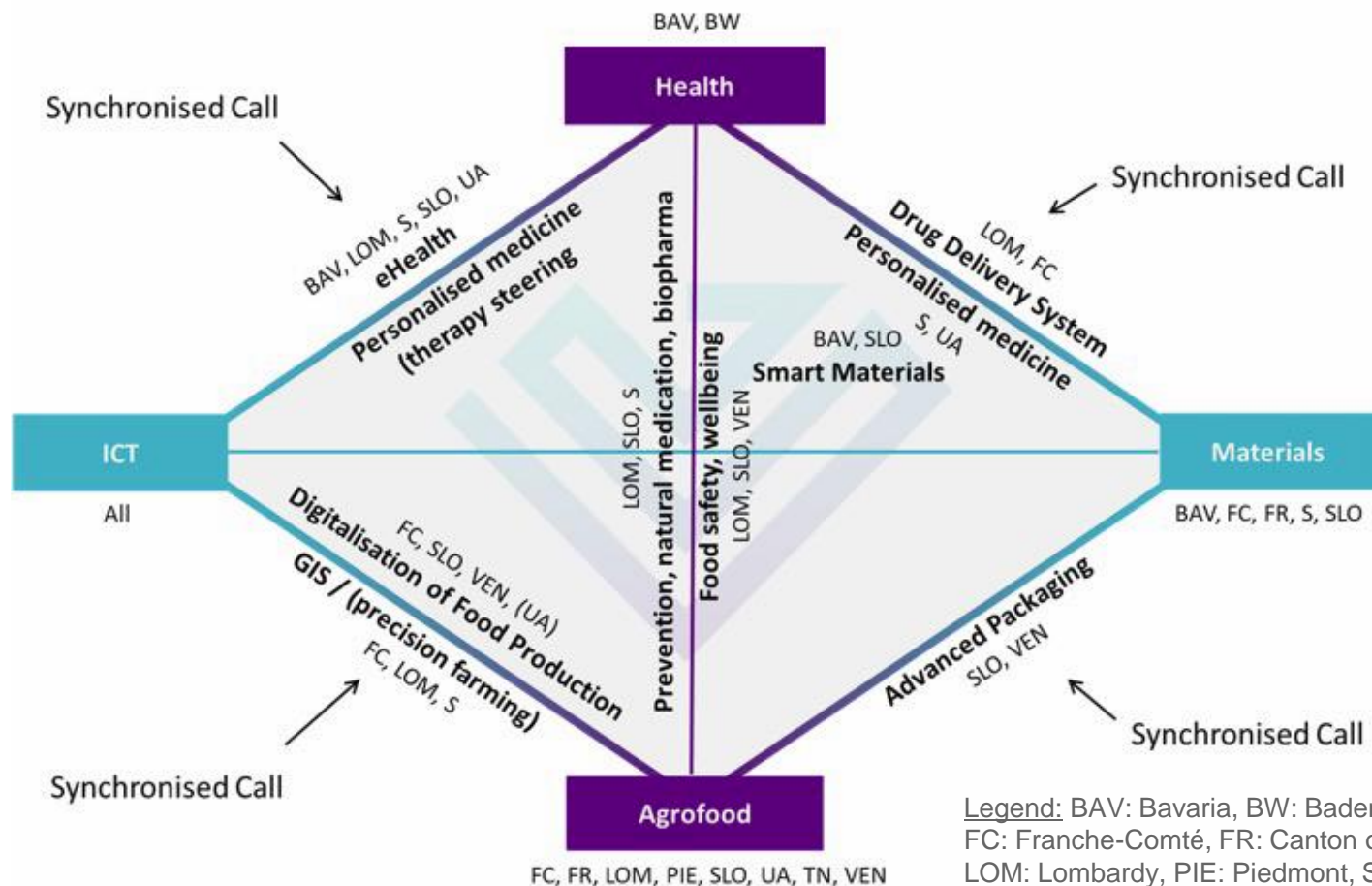
The **Synergy Diamond** is a helpful tool **to identify similar Transformative Activities across regions** (see Training Tool Synergy Diamond).

- Specific challenges of the Alpine Space (see EU Strategy for the Alpine Region - EUSALP) serve as a framework to select relevant priority areas of different regions that can contribute to tackle the challenge.
- Transformative Activities to be exploited across regions are identified along the linkages of the priority areas.
- A Synchronized Scheme can then focus on supporting actions that target the development of these TA on a cross-regional level.

The following example of a Synergy Diamond covers “Demographic Change” as a crucial issue in the Alpine Area.



Example: Cross-regional Synergy Diamond related to Demographic Change



Source: Dermastia, M. (Forthcoming). Based on S3-4AlpClusters



Eligible Projects

Funding partners of a Synchronized Scheme have to agree upon specific innovation activities that are to be supported.

ACIE builds on the promising role of **cluster initiatives** in S3-implementation and the cross-regional development of Transformative Activities. Proposals can be submitted by a cross-regional partnership of cluster initiatives in the participating regions.

Eligible projects address **cross-sectoral and cross-regional cooperation activities** in the context of the thematic scope. They are implemented by cluster initiatives and involve different groups of the regional innovation system, especially companies.

Potential activities are for example:

- Cross-regional workshop formats
- Networking activities
- Cross-regional analysis / mapping efforts
- Training and educational activities



Further eligible Criteria

Further aspects that need to be defined in the Synchronized Scheme include:

- ⊙ **Eligible project duration:** duration of ACIE funded projects
- ⊙ **Eligible costs and co-financing rate:** maximum eligible costs and funding amount, co-financing rate of the regional schemes applied
- ⊙ **Selection criteria:** criteria that are used to assess the submitted proposals
- ⊙ **Formal requirements** for the proposals: e.g. language, specific application forms, documents to prove the eligibility of project partners
- ⊙ **Timeframe** of the application process: deadlines for submission
- ⊙ Information regarding the **assessment and decision process**
- ⊙ **Contact of main coordinating body:** for questions regarding the ACIE-Call
- ⊙ **Contact of the specific regional ACIE funding partners:** for questions regarding specific rules of the involved regional schemes



ACIE Draft Call

Synchronized Scheme

Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)



ACIE - Draft Call Document

Within the S3-4AlpClusters-Project a **draft document** has been developed that illustrates the concept of a Synchronized Scheme*.

It presents the core outlines and elements of a potential call targeting Transformative Activities related to demographic change.

!!The draft document does not represent a real call!!

Therefore, it misses specific information which can only be provided in the frame of a specific call.

The draft document can be found on the project website: [Alpine cluster Innovation Express \(ACIE\): Proposal for a Cross-regional Scheme to Support the Development of Transformative Activities in the Alpine Space](#)



Synchronized Scheme / ACIE: Contribution to the Process

The ACIE contributes to the overall process by providing a funding scheme to support the cross-regional development of **Transformative Activities via clusters**.

Synchronized Scheme / ACIE Outputs:

Synchronized Call:

- Regions have coordinated targeted Transformative Activities and potential actions to be implemented jointly.
- Regional funding schemes are synchronized according their scope and procedures to support cross-regional innovation activities.
- Framework conditions for cross-regional cooperation are enhanced.
- Innovative policy approach for cross-regional alignment of instruments is implemented.

Input for:

4. Implementation



Contact and further Information

Synchronized Scheme

Alpine Cluster Innovation Express (ACIE)



Further Literature and Information

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- Meier zu Köcker, G., Dermastia, M., Keller, M., Bersier, J., (2018): Alpine cluster Innovation Express (ACIE); Proposal for a Cross-regional Scheme to Support the Development of Transformative Activities in the Alpine Space
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S3-4AlpClusters Partners

