



► Pilot actions

Taking smart specialisation to the next step to strengthen innovation in Europe's regions



"Globalisation and the impact of new technologies on society and jobs have profound implications for Europeans' daily lives in each and every one of our regions, cities and rural areas.

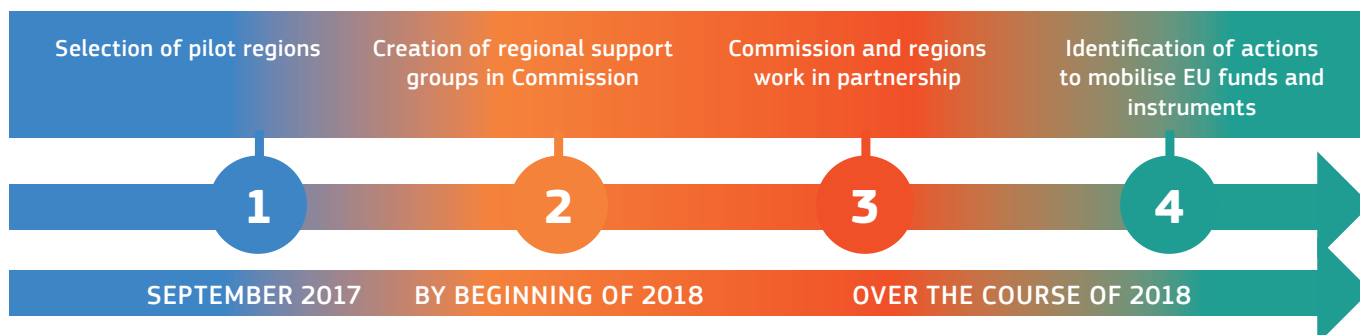
But we can harness these transformations so as to protect and defend our fellow citizens, especially the most vulnerable ones, from their negative effects and at the same time benefit from the new opportunities they will undoubtedly bring. [...]

What we call smart specialisation strategies enable regions to hold their own by developing their assets and helping their local businesses access global supply chains, particularly in industry."

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, 27 June 2017

Pilot action 1: Boosting innovation capacity in industrial transition regions

Industrial transition regions will benefit from tailored assistance to accelerate innovation uptake, remove investment barriers, facilitate reskilling and prepare for industrial and societal change, including energy transition, on the basis of their smart specialisation strategies.



1

Call for expression of interest launched by the Commission. Industrial transition regions have identified their weaknesses, as well as competitive assets they wish to develop and partnerships they want to deepen within their regional economies.

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The selected regions work closely with Commission experts from several departments, organised in special "regional teams", to strengthen their competitiveness and innovation capacity. Regional teams provide support on the use of EU instruments for industrial transition.

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By the end of 2018, each partnership has defined action plans to foster economic transformation and identified funding opportunities at EU, national and regional level.

Next steps:

In early 2019 lessons learnt from this pilot will feed into the reflection on smart specialisation after 2020, on improving cooperation between the Commission and regions and addressing industrial transition in other regions in need of the same competitiveness boost.

Budget:

EUR 1 million from the ERDF to develop these partnerships in a number of test regions.

Pilot action 2: Interregional partnerships for innovative projects

A second EU-funded pilot action will initiate **interregional, thematic partnerships** closely involving public authorities, business and researchers at regional level. The aim of this pilot project is to identify and scale-up 'bankable' interregional projects that can create European value chains in priority sectors such as big data, bioeconomy, resource efficiency, connected mobility or advanced manufacturing.

Timeline:

September 2017: call for expression of interest. Regions who want to work together on a specific priority area and create a pipeline of projects submit joint applications.

March 2018: Thematic interregional partnerships are implemented under the thematic smart specialisation platforms, which act as coordinating structures. Experts from several Commission departments form teams to provide additional, tailored support to these

partnerships and identify opportunities for public and private funding at EU, national and regional level.

2018 – 2019: progress is being monitored by the thematic smart specialisation platforms.

Next steps:

In early 2019 conclusions drawn from this pilot will feed the reflection on how to best support interregional partnerships and projects, especially in the post 2020 framework.

Budget:

EUR 1 million from the ERDF to develop five to ten thematic partnerships.

