

# step into innovation

Regional Development Fund of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

# newsletter

ISSUE #1 | JANUARY 2024

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Dear readers,

**The Regional Development Fund of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace** (hereinafter RDF EMTh) welcomes you to the **first of a series of quarterly Newsletters** aimed at providing you with continuous, valid, and appropriate information on the activities and results of the Regional Smart Specialization Strategy (RIS3) that is currently under development.

Smart Specialization is an innovative place-based approach of the European Union that analyses the strong points, competitive advantages, and potential of each Region. It identifies, interacts, and collaborates with the people of the region (Research Community, Business, Public and Civil Society – quadruple helix) that are the main actors in planning a long-term developmental strategy.

The **RDF EMTh** has been designated as the competent Regional body for the coordination and monitoring of the regional segment of the National Smart Specialization Strategy. Through the activities RDF EMTh implements, it supports the **Regional Council for Research and Innovation**, which is the counselling and advisory body for the smart Specialization strategy to the **Regional Governor** and the **Regional Council**.

The editorial team

*We wish you a happy new year,  
filled with innovation!*



## S3remth

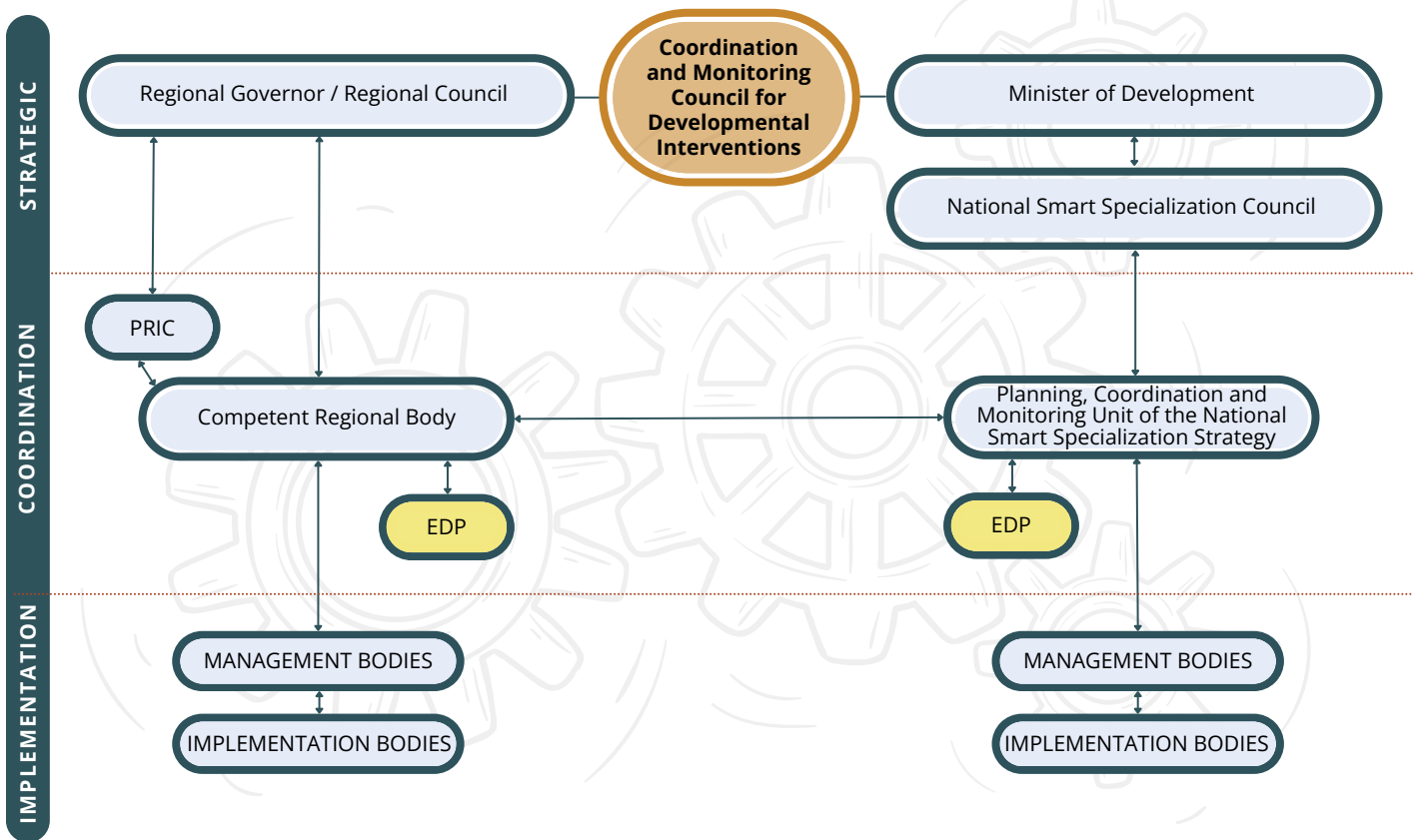
MANAGEMENT AND  
MONITORING MECHANISM  
OF THE SMART SPECIALIZATION STRATEGY  
FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
OF THE REGION  
OF EASTERN MACEDONIA-THRACE



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# Smart Specialization Strategy Governance System



## THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

The **Regional Council** and the **Regional Governor** approve the regional specialization of the Smart Specialization Strategy, are informed about its implementation progress, and give directions to the Competent Regional Body.

## THE COORDINATION LEVEL

The **Competent Regional Body for the Smart Specialization Strategy** that each Region defines, while it is also possible to utilize the Regional Research and Innovation Council (RRIC)

## THE IMPLEMENTATION & ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT LEVEL

**Management and implementation bodies** of the individual activities and projects.

## REGIONAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COUNCIL (RRIC)

- Statutory bodies of the Regions
- Advisory bodies supporting developmental activities for smart specialization as well as advisory bodies to the Regional Governor
- The Regional Council for Research and Innovation of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace was established by the decision of the Regional Governor of Eastern Macedonia - Thrace No. 371280/5162 /12-12-2022 (Government Gazette: 1173/Y.O.D.D/ 16-12-2022)

# Smart Specialization Strategy Governance System

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COMPETENT REGIONAL BODY / MONITORING BODY:

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE

- Monitoring and evaluation of the developmental and implementation progress of the Regional Smart Specialization Strategy.
- Stable cooperation and networking of the actors of the quadruple helix thus contributing to the activation of the regional ecosystem of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Administrative and scientific-technical support of RCIC and AWG.
- Facilitation of the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) workshops.
- Collection, processing, storage, and provision of data related to the Strategy and the component interventions.
- Submission of proposals for RIS3 revision and specialization.

### THE ADVISORY WORKING GROUPS

The Advisory Working Groups (AWGs), which are informal partnerships formed by the networking of distinguished members of the quadruple helix bodies, will form the core of the effort of forming the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy, as they will contribute to the identification, activation and mobilization of bodies and citizens in the Region to participate in the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP). The EDP is an interactive and participatory process that is going to be implemented and concerns the further specialization of the priorities of the Smart Specialization Strategy.

### THE MANAGEMENT BODY

The Special Management Unit of the Regional Program "Eastern Macedonia, Thrace", which reports directly to the Regional Governor of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, is responsible for managing the Regional Program, as an Administrative Authority within the NSRF 2021-2027.



ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ  
ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ «ΑΝΑΤΟΛΙΚΗ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ, ΘΡΑΚΗ»

### ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCOVERY PROCESS (EDP)

- ✓ It is the core of the consultation process at the Regional level.
- ✓ An interactive and participatory process applied to (further) specialize the priorities of the Smart Specialization Strategy.
- ✓ Representatives of the quadruple helix take part in the process: businesses, knowledge providers (universities and research centres), competent bodies of the wider public sector, representatives of civil society.
- ✓ Advisory Working Groups (AWGs) are established and participate (by thematic priority) in the process. AWGs are informal partnerships that can be formed from the networking of distinguished members of the bodies of the quadruple helix.
- ✓ The process is planned, coordinated and monitored by the Competent Regional Body and supported by the corresponding RCIC.

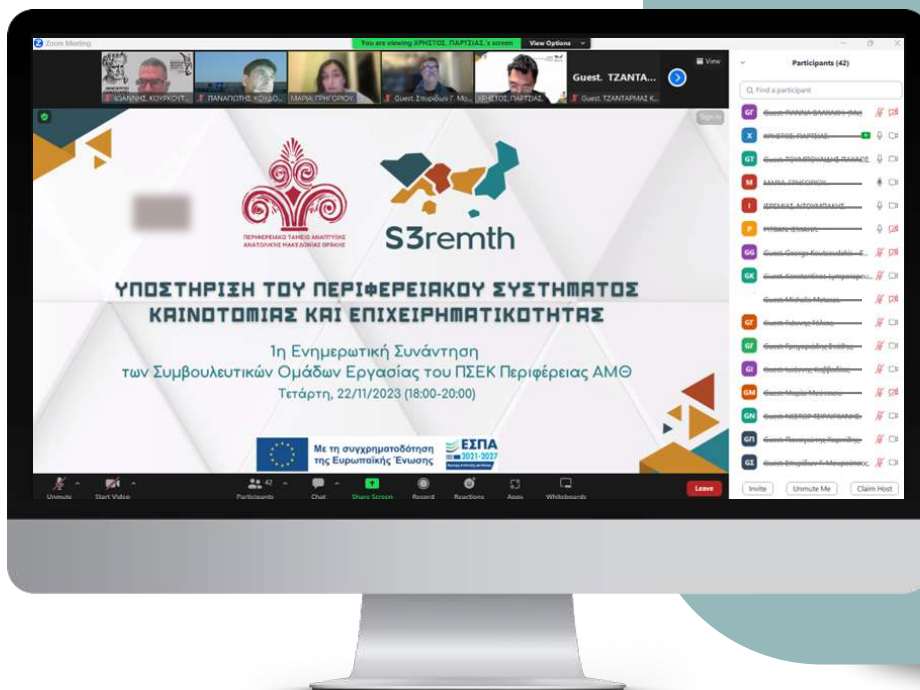
### WHAT'S THE PROGRESS SO FAR?

Along with the Advisory Working Groups for (i) Digital Technologies, (ii) Agri-Food Chain, (iii) Materials, Construction & Industry, (iv) Sustainable Energy, we have kicked off with the drafting of the BASE TEXT which will be the basic consultation text during the Entrepreneurial discovery process.

# 1<sup>st</sup> infoday

## ADVISORY WORKING GROUPS

The Regional Development Fund of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace, as part of its activities to support the Regional Research & Innovation System, **organised on Wednesday, November 22, 2023, the 1st Informative Meeting (Infoday) of the Advisory Working Groups of the Regional Council for Research & Innovation.**



The goal of the meeting was to inform the members of the Advisory Working Groups regarding the methodology to be followed, and to draw **the roadmap with specific steps and actions necessary for the effective implementation of the National and Regional Smart Specialization Strategy.**

*The Advisory Working Groups (informal partnerships formed by the networking of distinguished members of the quadruple helix bodies) will form the core of the effort, as they will contribute to the identification, activation and mobilization of bodies and citizens in the Region that will participate in the Process of Business Discovery, an interactive and participatory process that is going to be implemented and concerns the further specialization of the priorities of the Smart Specialization Strategy.*

The meeting was held online with representatives of the Region and the RDF of EMTh, Public organizations, Universities, Institutions and Research Bodies, and business representatives.

The event highlighted the importance of maintaining and strengthening networking, interaction, and establishment of partnerships, as well as targeted leveraging and utilization of resources.

In this direction, **the Regional Development Fund of EMTh invites the citizens of the Region to actively participate in the Regional Council for Research & Innovation**, through an open dialogue process to strengthen the development of the Region and its economic transformation.





# Smart Specialization Strategy Updates

## GREEN INVESTMENTS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE COHESION POLICY OBJECTIVES

“

The European Union is called upon to make important decisions regarding the Cohesion Policy for the present and the future of the European Regions.

”

At the **General Affairs Council of the European Union held in Brussels** last month, the member states were asked to **respond regarding the effective use of Cohesion resources in the constantly changing environment** that requires the reorientation of the Cohesion Policy goals and tools, but not its targeting.

European regions face new challenges, such as climate change, demographic stagnation, technological change, migration flows and maintaining their strategic autonomy.

The adaptation of the European regions to these challenges should be balanced. Moreover, although discussions are still premature, the Cohesion Policy is at the heart of targeting of those partners who are "net contributors" to the EU budget, that seek to finance new policies and needs through the reallocation of existing resources rather than through new funds.

In addition, the paradox is that even though the adequacy of Cohesion Policy funding is currently at the center of the relevant debate, the available resources are not being fully utilized, which comes to strengthen critics' arguments.

**The Programming period 2014-2020 has been completed with the total Community absorption rate being at 87% (at 96% for Greece), while the new Programming period 2021-2027 has not to date started strongly, as only six countries have made payments (Greece is in the second place).**

The need to ensure equal access of all member states and regions to the opportunities that are created was underlined by the **Greek Deputy Minister of National Economy, Nikos Papathanasis** when speaking at the Council of General Affairs of the European Union.

In addition, he emphasized that **green investments could help the strategy of achieving the goal of autonomy**, pointing out that "supporting smart specialization of industry in specific areas, can create new jobs and prosperity for all EU citizens can also help us achieve the goal of autonomy".

# Smart Specialization Strategy Updates

## THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S SMART SPECIALISATION (S3) FORUM 2023

The Smart Specialisation (S3) Forum 2023, organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy in collaboration with the Generalitat de Catalunya and the S3 Community of Practice Secretariat, concluded with resounding success on November 29, 2023.



This first edition of the S3 Forum brought together over 340 in-person participants including S3 practitioners, experts, policymakers, and key stakeholders from across various European regions for two days of insightful discussions, networking, and valuable knowledge exchange.

The event, held in Barcelona, Spain, provided a unique platform for participants to delve into S3 policy and implementation issues. Over the S3 Forum participants were briefed on the latest activities within the S3 CoP, including working groups, expert groups, and support to the Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnerships. The launch of the S3 Observatory was also announced as an important service that provides a central repository of information for S3s across the EU. Networking opportunities, policy updates and lessons learned were also discussed.

The S3 Forum allowed participants to engage in in-depth discussions on regional experiences and best practices. Over the S3 Forum participants were informed on the latest updates of the S3 Thematic Platforms and meetings of working groups on innovation diffusion, interregional collaboration, and industrial transition.

The Generalitat de Catalunya hosted a side event titled "Catalunya's S3 in action: Shared Agendas explained by their main players," where the regional government and key stakeholders detailed the creation and implementation of RIS3CAT Shared Agendas, recognized as good practices across the EU.

**The success of the Smart Specialisation (S3) Forum 2023 underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in advancing Regional Development across Europe through innovative policies and practices.**

# step into innovation

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## MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING MECHANISM OF THE SMART SPECIALIZATION STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OF THE REGION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE

PRIORITY AREAS



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
FUND OF EASTERN  
MACEDONIA AND THRACE



- Dimitriou Tsetine 7, 69132, Komotini
- +30 25310 83000
- s3remth@pta.gov.gr
- www.pta.gov.gr/s3remth
- s3remth



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