

The Smart Specialisation Strategies and its impact on the Missions

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Smart Soils: Smart Specialization
meets EU Soil Mission
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Overview

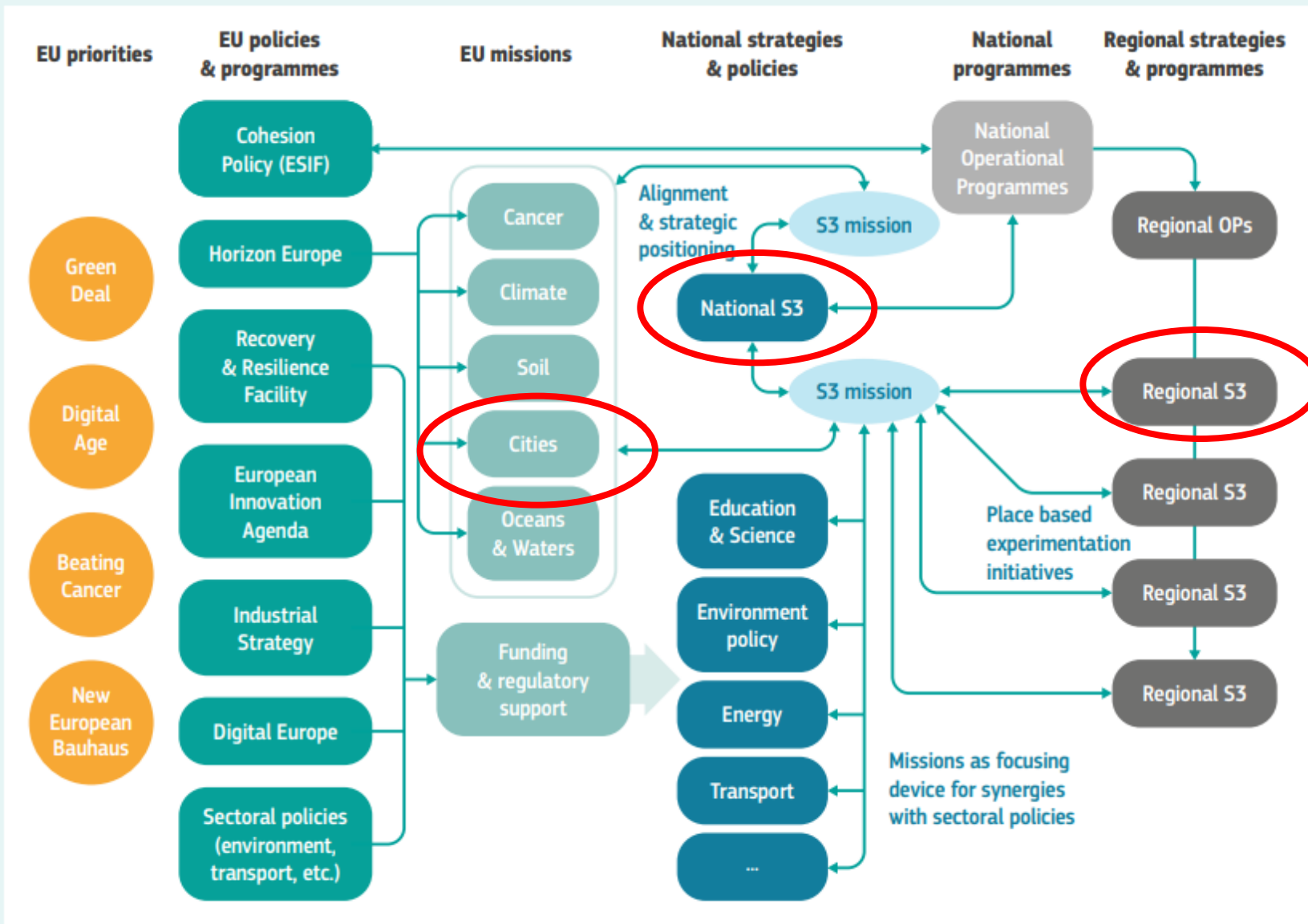
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Introduction

- Countries and regions in Europe increasingly engage in new approaches to research and innovation (R&I) policies aiming to address societal challenges and ambitious sustainability goals.
- **EU Missions** are a new way to bring concrete solutions to some of our greatest challenges - the **Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'** aims to establish 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030.
- **Smart specialisation strategies (S3)** have emerged as an important testing ground for new generations of challenge-oriented R&I policies.
- National and regional governments use S3 as a **policy space to experiment with and implement new approaches** to support transformative innovation and leverage system change towards sustainability.

How to embed EU missions in the S3 process?



Multi-level governance and policy context of EU Missions and S3

Source: Reid et al. (2023, p.51)



EU missions can strengthen the directionality and transformative ambition in smart specialisation



Smart specialisation can foster policy experimentation and learning



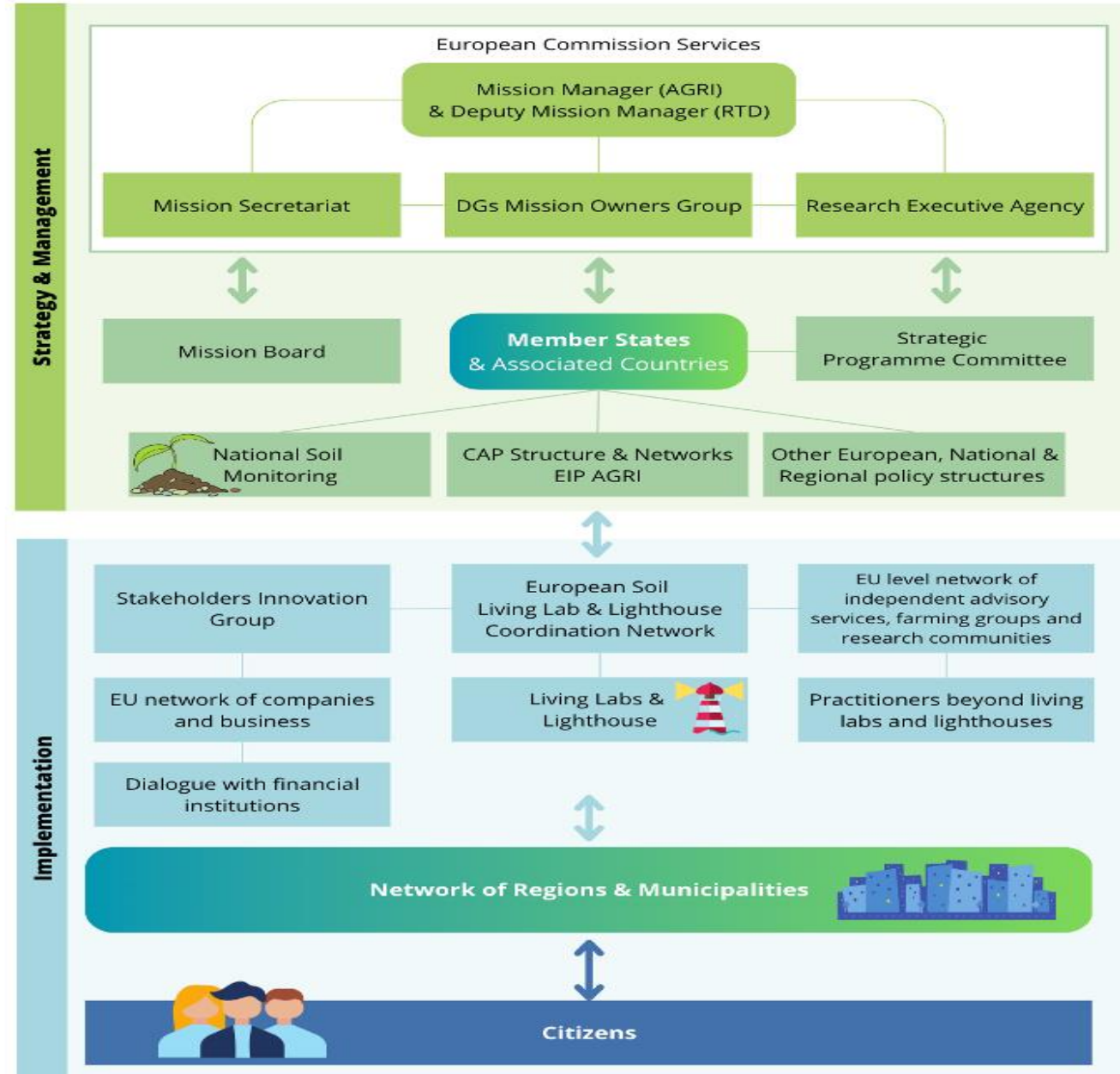
Soil mission: quick review

Assessment of selection process and scope:

- The Mission Soil has a clearly defined **vision and goal and relevant objectives** to address major soil health challenges.
- After years of little progress in EU policies, soil health is now **increasingly being recognised as a pressing topic**.
- A strength of the mission is that it builds on a **coherent R&I strategy linked to LLs and LHs which favour experimentation** with new and existing soil management practices.
- The mission **promotes place-specific solutions** adapted to varying soils, soil usage, economic and institutional (land-owners and managers) landscapes.

Assessment of the governance structure

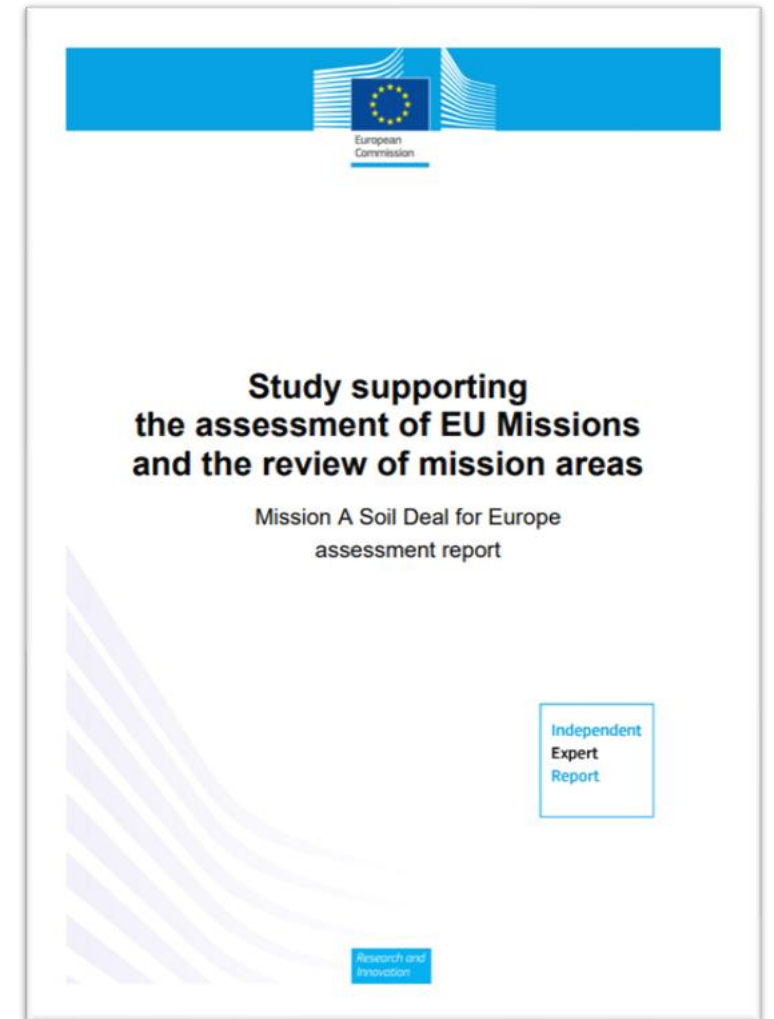
- The governance arrangements have enhanced **policy coordination** across a core set of EC DGs and **fostered synergies** with related EC environmental and climate related policies.
- The **success of the governance** approach is reflected in the integration of the Mission Soil in more than a dozen Green Deal strategies as well as in 18 out of 28 national Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic plans.
- However, many **policymakers at the (sub)national level**, especially officials outside the domain of R&I policy, are still insufficiently aware of the mission.



Conclusions from the Study “Supporting the assessment of EU Missions and the review of mission areas. Mission A Soil Deal for Europe assessment report”

- The mission is both a **needed and suitable start** for initiating, mobilising and aligning EU and national/regional policy efforts for counteracting soil degradation.
- The design of the mission goes **beyond R&I programming toward a more impact-oriented direction**: improving soil health across Europe is the leitmotiv, and all policy actions have a logical place in the strategy for achieving that goal.
- Solid **mechanisms** have been put in place to interconnect various players in the Commission, the Member States and soil and land managers as well as to link R&I with many other policy and funding initiatives.

- **Awareness** about the mission in Member States is still rather low. Improving commitment from the national/regional level deserves more attention as a mechanism for leveraging the well-targeted outputs of the mission’s “core” policy actions.
- The **portfolio of policy actions** is extensive yet coherent, with many reinforcing linkages across them. Progress towards mission goals is proceeding as planned or has been even accelerated.



Smart Specialisation Strategies and S3CoP

- Smart Specialisation is a **place-based approach** characterised by the identification of strategic areas for intervention based both on the analysis of the strengths and potential of the economy and on an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) with wide stakeholder involvement.
- The Smart Specialisation Community of Practice (S3 CoP) is the central node on guidance, networking, support and peer-learning on S3, covering its conceptual development and its implementation.



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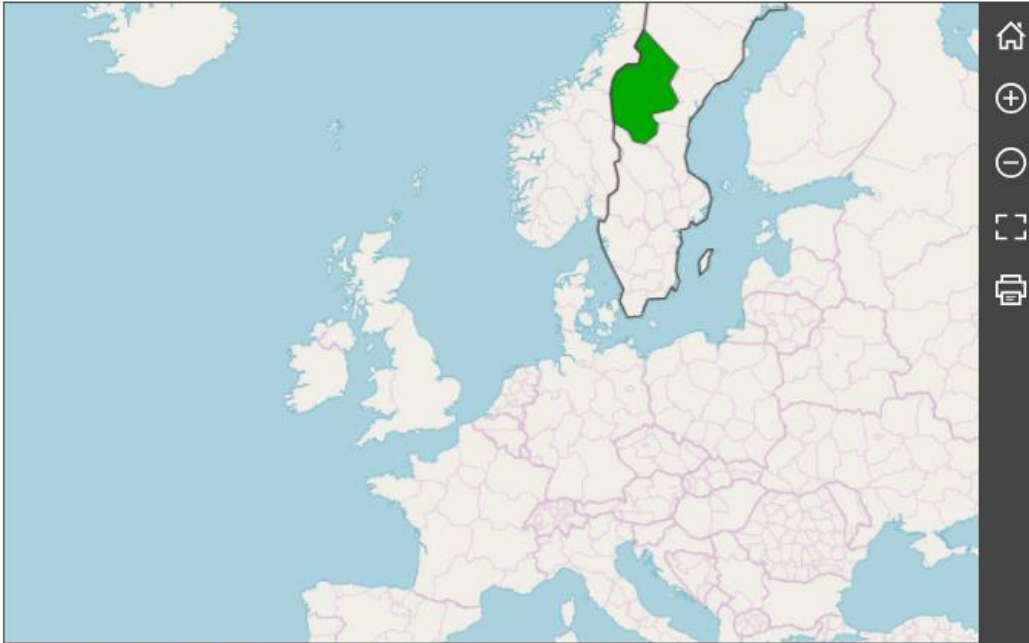
Keywords

Territorial level

Economic classification

Scientific classification

European Industrial Ecosystem

Webtools + @ EC-GISCO + Leaflet | @ OpenStreetMap © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO for the administrative boundaries | [Disclaimer](#)

S3 CoP Observatory

Learn more here:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/assets/s3-observatory/index_en.html

Region name (NUTS ID)	Priority	Strategy
+ Jämtland County (SE322)	Soil, Forests, and Water (Soil, forests, water, agricultural sector, forestry sector, carbon sink, biodiversity, climate impact, food production, local food processing)	Program for Smart Specialisation in Jämtland Härjedalen. Approved by: Regional Council

EU regional and urban development

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Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms

S3 Thematic Platforms and Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnerships

Starting in 2015, the European Commission has launched four dedicated S3 Thematic Platforms.

About

Starting in 2015, the European Commission has launched four dedicated S3 Thematic Platforms related to Agri-Food, Energy, Industrial Modernisation and since March 2022 a new platform on the Sustainable Blue Economy.

S3 Thematic Platforms and Thematic Smart Specialisation Partnerships

Learn more here:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/communities-and-networks/s3-community-of-practice/thematic_platforms_en



Aligning S3 and EU missions: concluding remarks

- Mission-oriented innovation policy are an important element in the implementation of S3.
- By applying entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) we will improve place-based linkages of missions and S3 priorities within specific regions and also to develop the governance, monitoring and evaluation.
- Transformative EU missions are systemic policy instruments that give S3 a stronger strategic direction, and help orchestrate and implement policy instruments and project portfolios mobilised by S3 (mission-oriented roadmapping framework).



However...

- S3 needs to extend its focus from supporting predominantly technological innovation towards a variety of innovations driving wider economic, environmental and social transitions.
- S3 governance has limited capacity to orchestrate and mediate alignment and tensions between bottom-up experimental approaches and top-down priorities such as the ambitions and targets set up in the EU Missions.
- Governance and EDP rarely include civil society and citizens or reach out to vulnerable groups impacted, or likely to be impacted, by transitions.
- Policy mix of S3 is limited mainly to supply side instruments supporting R&D and innovation.



In conclusion...

- **Complementarities** with S3 need to be identified, to help bridge the innovation divide between Member States and regions.
- There is a need to establish **multi-level governance mechanisms** to orchestrate bottom up and top-down mechanisms of prioritisation of R&I policy.
- It is important to **ensuring alignment between S3 priorities and EU missions** (and/or relevant partnerships) and coordinating a strategic positioning of national players in participating in EU missions.



Thank you !

