



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES
Maritime Policy and Blue Economy
Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security

Brussels
MARE.A.3/IV

TO SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY (SBE) STAKEHOLDERS

Subject: Smart Specialisation Community of Practice (S3 CoP) official launch and presentation of services

Dear Sir / Madam,

As announced at our last S3 brokerage events, we are very pleased to inform you of the launch of the Smart Specialisation Community of Practice (S3 CoP), the European Commission's main source of support and knowledge sharing on the implementation of Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Under the lead of DG REGIO, the **S3 CoP will be officially launched at the S3 Conference 2023 on 30 March 2023 (online)**. We therefore warmly invite you to register for the event at <https://s3-conference.regio-events.eu/>.

More information on the draft agenda, programme and speakers can be found here: <https://s3-conference.regio-events.eu/en/programme>.

The work of the S3 CoP will build on the experience of existing S3 partnerships, whilst at the same time supporting aspiring new S3 partnerships. The S3 CoP will carry out a wide range of activities and services to **support the S3 Thematic Platform for Sustainable Blue Economy**, founded in March 2022, such as:

- an up-to-date website on the overall activities of the platform and partnerships,
- support to new partnerships including: training on interregional collaboration, securing regional commitment and capacity building, mapping support to identify common interests, and scoping to target the right level of granularity for collaboration topics.

To facilitate your planning and engagement we offer a tentative (non-exhaustive) timeline with the key foreseen activities for 2023:

• **30 March 2023:** launch of the S3 Community of Practice featuring the support services to be provided to existing and aspiring/new S3 partnerships. The new call for expression of interest (EoI) to new S3 partnerships will be launched at this occasion.

- **April 2023:** first deadline for call for the Expression of Interest for new S3 partnerships.
- **May/June 2023:** first Steering Committee meeting, together with Interregional Cooperation Working Group meeting. This may be an occasion for aspiring lead regions of new S3 partnerships to participate as observers.
- **September 2023:** second deadline for call for the Expression of Interest for new partnerships.
- **November 2023:** second Steering Committee meeting.

In terms of process, the S3 CoP will also host **the Expression of Interest (EoI)** for regions and stakeholders to start a new partnership for interregional collaboration. The **EoI will be open continuously**, with two cut-off dates per year. In 2023, the first cut-off date will be in April, whilst the second will take place in September.

Following each cut-off date, an expert evaluation will take place within 3 months and, dependent on its outcome, new selected S3 partnerships will be able to kick-off their activities soon afterwards.

Once new S3 partnerships are initiated, the S3CoP will keep providing:

- guidance for all stages of collaborations.
- tailored service provisions (e.g. support for governance models, search for funding assistance, support for demonstration, support for scale-up).
- peer learning opportunities and cross-cutting analyses.

The work of the S3 CoP will build on the experiences of existing partnerships in different thematic areas, drawing lessons from the past to address emerging and future needs of regions and stakeholders. **All the above aspects will be discussed during the online S3 Conference 2023 on 30 March 2023.**

DG REGIO is assisted by the S3 CoP Secretariat for the running of the S3 Community of Practice. Within this context, IDEA Consult will contact you in relation to your engagement in **new S3 partnerships under the S3 Thematic Platform for Sustainable Blue Economy.**

The approach of the S3CoP will be **participatory** and **bottom-up**, so we warmly invite you to engage in all the activities relevant for your region or organisation and contact **the S3CoP secretariat at contact@s3-cop.eu, with MARE-S3-SBE@ec.europa.eu in cc**, for any clarification you may need. You can also follow the S3 CoP latest news on twitter: S3 CoP (@S3Cop_EU) / Twitter and very shortly on a new dedicated website.

We are looking forward to your participation in the Smart Specialisation Community of Practice and your active engagement under the S3 Thematic Platform for Sustainable Blue Economy.

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)
Christos ECONOMOU
Head of Unit