

Sharing Experiences on Regional Project Generation Processes

6th Working Group Meeting and the presentation of two major industrial projects in Liège

The 6th S3Chem Interregional Working Group meeting was held in Walloon city Liège on 12th and 13th September. The event was opened by Mr. Daniel Collet who emphasized the importance of the exchange of experiences and the mutual learning in the framework of the S3Chem project for the Walloon region and all European partners. The project partners were pleased to welcome the ECRN director, Ms. Renatka Krcova, who participated in the working group meeting and was thus able to gain insights into the work of the S3Chem project.



The focus of the first part of the internal meeting was the presentation of organisational and management topics, followed by the communication report for the last project periods. The second part of the IWG meeting was dedicated to the thematic discussion about the results of partners' analyses on the question how to promote the generation of project ideas and the development of project applications for RIS innovation funding. For this purpose, all partners organized regional innovation stakeholder meetings (RISG) during the 3rd project semester in order to discuss this issue and to get feedback from stakeholders' perspectives. These stakeholder meetings allow the project partners to gather the information needed to evaluate the current situation of RIS implementation. The results from the analysis which focus on strengths and weaknesses of the project generation

process were presented at the meeting. In addition, all project partners have introduced case studies from their region to evaluate the region-specific processes and to better understand the needs for improvements in project generation. In order to compare the results from the thematic analyses and to find commonalities between the regions, all project partners will elaborate a matrix predefined by the S3Chem policy advisory partner isw.

Introduction to innovative projects in Wallonia

Another important component of the partner meeting was the introduction to two innovative concepts from the Walloon chemical industry. All attendants had the opportunity to learn more about the mission and activities of the "Reverse Metallurgy" project and the "Verdir" initiative. Both projects are already financed by the Walloon government with funds from ERDF in the framework of RIS benefiting several actors from academic and industrial environment.



Site visit to GeMMe's laboratory



Presentation of the "Verdir" project

Metallurgy has a long lasting industrial tradition in Wallonia. In the framework of the Marshall Plan, about € 41.5 million are invested on the **"Reverse Metallurgy" project**. The project is bringing together different Walloon partners from different fields working together in order to develop techniques that allow better recycling of metals. The GeMMe Group of the University of Liège and the Comet Treatment and Citius Engineering in particular collaborate on the development of an acquisition bench that is intended to the characterization of metallic shredder residues for recycling purposes. These measures will allow a real-time high speed classification of different metallic items identified by the sensors of a running machine.

Get more information about the project: <http://www.gemme.ulg.ac.be/>

The innovative concept of the **“Verdir” project**, conducted by the University of Liège, addresses future structural challenges like economic and ecological crises as well as population growth by the means of intelligent and creative rehabilitation of brownfields. In particular, the project involves innovative bioengineering techniques which are applied in the project's first pilot plant for aquaculture plants mainly for pharmaceutical uses. This is an ecological urban agriculture project coupled recovery heat and CO₂ produced at the nearby Intradel waste treatment plant. Further “Verdir” projects will be supported by funds of ERDF in order to establish an algae production system for the pharma sector as well.

Get more information about the project: https://www.ulg.ac.be/cms/c_2636766/fr/verdir-projet-pilote

Project Generation in Wallonia - Best Practice Example



The smart specialisation strategy, core of the Walloon 3rd Marshall Plan, relies on a competitiveness poles policy aiming to strengthen the Walloon industrial innovation policy. The process by which Walloon actors can set up and finance their projects is included in that competitive poles policy. The policy of the competitiveness clusters in Wallonia finances projects on 5 domains including innovation and research. One of the innovative and collaborative projects approved under RIS in the field of chemistry is the Minerve project. The Minerve project is a good practice example emphasized by the Walloon partner at the IWG meeting in Liège, which is financed by and embedded in the framework of the “competitiveness cluster” Greenwin containing multinational and middle-sized, specialised companies and several research entities working together to reduce the overall environmental footprint. The project received a total funding of € 5 million. The aim of the Minerve project is to shorten the life cycle of the buried waste and to exploit the resources. In addition, the project is at the mid-point and objectives have already been successfully achieved so far. Due the fact that project generation process and especially the consortium agreements can be tedious and time consuming, large companies as Shanks have several advantages because of their significant human and financial resources. Further, due to the support by Greenwin and the Walloon region, administrative aspects were carried out with success. One of the benefits of the project was to bring several actors concerned by the theme around the table. The results are multiplied and this allows subsequent partnerships to be established on other projects. In addition, stakeholders from the Greenwin cluster are heavily involved in the stakeholder interregional learning processes through stakeholder workshops organized by the Walloon partners. This involvement of Walloon stakeholders around the S3Chem project has allowed the partner region to identify strengths, weaknesses and improvements of the project generation process in Wallonia from the stakeholder point of view. The most important strengths identified refer to the fact that experimental practices are less burdensome through poles, partnerships can be better stimulated because players are able to combine strengths and thus increase their potential to build strong and innovative projects. But there are still some weaknesses, which need to be addressed by Walloon policy. This refers to the funding process that is largely based on government funding. Hence, cluster projects and companies as major innovation drivers could leave the region in case of a lack in public support. Especially companies that develop risky projects face administrative burden on access to funding. These points are connecting factors for further improvements. Thus, the access to finance, especially for SMEs, need to be improved by extending the developed support measures and facilitating access to external sources of financing. The region also needs to focus limited public funding available in domains with high potential for the region. In order to position the regional cluster internationally and to further strengthen the clusters' capacities in terms of R&D and innovation, a more intensive interconnection of clusters by the development of inter-cluster projects and the orientation towards green chemistry are mentioned as important needs.

Upcoming Events

From 4th to 6th October 2017 the second dissemination event of S3Chem will take place in the framework of the international chemistry exhibition EXPOQUIMIA in Barcelona. The S3Chem partners will also organize a panel on trends and challenges for innovation development in the chemical industry. Interested Stakeholders from the chemical industry are invited to join the event and visit the exhibition.

Contact:

- ✉ Project coordinator: andre.mangelsdorf@mw.sachsen-anhalt.de
- ✉ Communication manager: claudia.geyer@mw.sachsen-anhalt.de

-  facebook.com/S3Chem
-  [Linkedin/S3Chem](https://LinkedIn/S3Chem)