

Project Partners kicked-off the 4th Project Semester in Barcelona

S3Chem project was presented to a larger audience at the Expoquimia

The partner regions of the S3Chem project successfully participated in the exhibition Expoquimia in Barcelona on 4th to 6th October 2017. The project team was represented at the fair with a stand providing various brochures and promotional materials to inform interested visitors about the project and funding instruments available in the partner regions.

On 4th of October the project partners and regional stakeholders have taken part in several networking activities. In the framework of the Investment and Attraction Area of the fair, representatives from regional public authorities, chemical industry and Clusters had the opportunity to introduce their industrial locations and to present their competitive advantages of investing in the partner regions.



Highlights of the event were the key lecture moderated by Dr. Julià Sempere and the panel discussion organised by the S3Chem project, in which researchers and scientists, representatives of chemical companies and cluster initiatives from partner regions participated in exciting discussions on the latest developments in chemistry. The event was opened by Dr. Jürgen Ude, the State Secretary at the Ministry of Economy, Science and Digitalisation Saxony-Anhalt and Ms. Marionna Sanz, Business Innovation Director of ACCIÓ Catalonia. In their welcome speech they emphasized the importance of the chemical sector in their regions and the European economy. After this, Mr. Otto Linher, Deputy Head of Unit European Commission and DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurships and SMEs explained present developments in the chemical policy in Europe. Mr.

Juan Antonio Labat, Director General FEIQUE continued with an introduction on current trends and challenges of the chemical sector. The discussion panel focused on important issues such as existing barriers for the development of the chemical sector, the role of regional, national and European administrations and their instruments to further boost the chemical sector as well as the environment for the development and the role of the availability of resources and innovation.

Participants of the event were also invited to participate in several guided site visits to the fair to pass different company stands and met several exhibitors. The event closed with a meeting with Antón Valero, president of the fair and of Dow Chemicals in Spain and state secretary Dr. Jürgen Ude for signing in the fair book.



Start of the 4th thematic analysis on funding instruments

During the 7th Interregional Working Group meeting (IWG) on 5th of October 2017 the S3Chem project partners agreed the common structure of the upcoming thematic study. In the 4th semester the S3Chem partners will exchange experiences of ERDF funding measures and instruments related to the Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS). In their analysis they will look particularly at the questions of: What funding instruments are used to promote innovation funding? How are the funding instruments working and how can they be improved? For that purpose, the 4th thematic study includes an analysis of the availability of financial instruments, the implementation of the innovation funding process and the experiences with innovation funding in general. In close collaboration with regional stakeholder groups and based on interviews of managing bodies and funding beneficiaries of innovation funding, information on experiences with the application procedures, the existing budget, thematic and administrative requirements are gathered and integrated in the thematic study. The main aim of this investigation is to identify strengths and weaknesses of funding instruments and to conclude with recommendations for improvements of innovation funding. The results of the thematic analysis and regional experiences on funding measures will be exchanged during the next IWG meeting on 20th to 21st February 2018 in Venlo (NL).

Catalonia: Brief overview of funding programs

The Catalonia 2020 Strategy (ECAT 2020) aligned with the Europe 2020 Strategy has defined the Research and Innovation Strategy for the Smart Specialization of Catalonia (RIS3CAT). Within this strategy, 7 sectors have been identified, including the chemical industry, which should lead to an economic transformation towards the 2020 targets. In order to deploy the RIS3CAT, the Government launched a roadmap for relaunching the economy and reorienting the production sector towards a smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive economic model. The RIS3CAT tools are basically guided by the following principles: (i) R&I as a driver for economic growth, (ii) Quadruple helix public-private cooperation, (iii) Critical mass. - International competitive advantage and (iv) by- sectoral or technological commitment. The implementation of the instrument is closely linked to the Operational Programs of the European funds. In the framework of the ERDF Operational Program 2014-2020 different financial instruments have been designed to ensure the implementation of the industrial policy and of the RIS3 Strategy. The funding programmes include in particular Comunitats RIS3CAT, Nuclis, Cupons a la innovació and TECNIOspring plus.

The **RIS3CAT Communities** are one essential element of the funding structure. These are consortiums of companies and stakeholders from the Catalan R&I system that work in coincident sectors and cooperate to incorporate R&I into production activities in the leading sectors. Groups of companies, agents of R&D organisations and cluster initiatives in support of the company belonging to a RIS3CAT Community, which plans to promote activities in the field of research, development and innovation within the defined RIS3CAT areas. For these activities they receive accreditation from the Government of Catalonia through a competitive process that allows them to obtain grants from the ERDF OP to co-finance their action plans. As active stakeholders in the Catalan innovation ecosystem, they ensure the participation of companies and stakeholders from the system in defining, monitoring and evaluating the priorities for R&I programs. Their multidisciplinary profile and bottom-up focus lead to increasing specialization as they identify and generate projects related to specific topics in the leading sectors. Within the sectors they represent, the members of the communities must generate critical mass and be representative and multidisciplinary, as well as featuring considerable private sector involvement.

Nuclis are R&D cooperation projects that belong to the Industrial Research and Experimental Development Program which is co-financed by ERDF. The objective is to encourage the realization of R&D carried out in Catalonia with high differential impact on the territory and businesses. The objective of the collaborative R&D projects is to ensure that frontier research carried out by research bodies is made available to Catalan business fabric. Thus, the Catalan businesses benefit from the experience and know-how generated by the network of clients of technology centres and network of innovation centres. The transfer of scientific knowledge to the industrial sector is promoted by effective public-private cooperation between companies (local or international consortia) and scientific stakeholders. This generates new products and services with high added value that represent a substantial technological challenge and are unlikely to be completed exclusively in the private sector due to the high technology risk associated. Consortia in which technology stakeholders participate ensure that the challenges posed by a given critical mass can be met, because they share risks and can undertake larger projects than a company would be willing to embark on alone, as well as fostering the transfer of results from research work to the business fabric.

In addition to that, **Innovation Voucher** (Cupons a la innovació) is a financing tool that is faster, more agile and flexible and therefore particularly interesting to smaller companies with less financial capacity for innovation activities. It may meet their needs in innovation through a direct discount on the bill from the knowledge provider. There are Innovation Vouchers, Technology Vouchers and Eco-innovation Vouchers.

TECNIOspring plus, ACCIÓ's fellowship programme, provides financial support to individual mobility proposals presented by experienced researchers in liaison with a host entity. Fellows are offered 2-year employment contracts in order to develop applied research projects at any R&D entity around the world. Host entities may be entities of the industrial sector -companies based in Catalonia - or entities recognised with the TECNIO accreditation. The programme will involve industry in several ways: first, as said above, companies involved in research and technology transfer processes are eligible host organisations; and fellows hosted by research organisation may be seconded to a company (cross-sectoral secondments) or spend some time there (short visits). It is co-financed by the H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions of the European Union (Link: <http://catalonia.com/en/innovate-in-catalonia/tecniospringplus/index.jsp>)

More information on Catalan funding programs: <http://accio.gencat.cat/ca/serveis/innovacio/innovacio-empresarial-ir/>

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