



# ACTION PLAN

ACSELL

ACCELERATING SME INNOVATION CAPACITIES WITH A LIVING LAB APPROACH

**FLANDERS**

Flanders Innovation and Entrepreneurship  
Koning Albertlaan II-35 bus 10, B-1030 BRUSSELS

---

# Table of Content

<b>PART I – GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PART II – POLICY CONTEXT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PART III – DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED</b>	<b>4</b>
ACTION 1: INTRODUCTION OF SERVICES FOR CLUSTER MANAGEMENT ORGANISATIONS	4

---

## Part I – General information

Project: **ACSELL - ACcelerating SmE innovation capacities with a Living Lab approach**

Partner organization: Flanders Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Country: Belgium

NUTS1 region: BE2 : Flemish Region

Contact person: Alain Thielemans /Annie Renders

Email address: [alain.thielemans@vlaio.be](mailto:alain.thielemans@vlaio.be) , [annie.renders@vlaio.be](mailto:annie.renders@vlaio.be)

Phone number: +32 492 150 705

## Part II – Policy context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
  - European Territorial Cooperation programme
  - Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

**Flanders Cluster Support Programme**

### INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Flanders Cluster Support Programme is to generate economic added value and increase competitiveness of Flemish enterprises by improved collaboration between enterprises, knowledge institutes and government (triple helix). The cluster program provides funding for cluster organizations based on a long term competitiveness program. The cluster organization can thus organize activities for the member companies to generate collaborative activities and projects – from R&D to demonstration and pilot projects, from idea generation to roadmapping and development of the cluster strategy. Furthermore the cluster program provides funding for collaborative cluster projects through specific calls tailored to foster collaboration between the enterprises in these clusters. Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO) is the management Authority of the policy instrument in Flanders.

The cluster support of VLAIO is based on a competitiveness program, with active involvement of the companies, and is followed up based on Key Performance Indicators representing the results of their actions and the generated impact for the cluster members. The government is committed to support the cluster organizations and to support the activities of the cluster as described in their competitiveness program.

---

With the ACSELL project VLAIO wants to investigate how the cluster management can be adapted in order to facilitate generation of the abovementioned collaborative projects. The initial focus was on the new cluster Flandershealth. In the meantime VLAIO has guided the cluster FlandersHealth towards the strategic “spearhead cluster” FlandersHealthTech, which was finally decided by the Flemish government on 18/6/2021 and legally established in August 2021. This spearhead cluster is embedded in a larger programme, the “Impulsprogramma Innovatie in de zorg en gezondheid” (impulse programme on innovation for health and care). This programme consists of three pillars: academic research (low TRL), industry driven R&D (mid TRL) and implementation and scale-up (high TRL), each having an own governance body. The whole is guided by an overarching advisory and steering committee under secretariat of VLAIO.

---

## Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

### **ACTION 1: Integration of the SCIROCCO tool in Flanders**

#### **1. The background**

One of the key project activities was to map the current state of art of demand-driven innovation in all involved regions. This was done using an online self-assessment tool (OSAT) based on the SCIROCCO Exchange Tool to Assess Readiness for Demand-Driven Innovation – a GP from partner NHS Scotland.

Different Flemish stakeholders were invited to provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current state of play of demand driven innovation within the Flemish health and care system. The objective of this exercise was to:

- Assess the maturity of Flemish health and social care system in the adoption of demand-driven innovation and identify future potential areas of improvement which can be addressed by the activities in the ACSELL-project.
- Facilitate the exchange of experience and learning and exchange in implementing demand-driven innovation with local stakeholders in Flanders.
- Test the adapted SCIROCCO Exchange tool developed for the maturity assessment of demand-driven innovation in the ACSELL project, and inform its further refinement and improvement.

The outcomes were documented in a OSAT report and where used throughout the ACSELL project to identify areas for interregional learning and knowledge transfer activities, both regional and project level. As such the OSAT report provided the fundament for all subsequent Regional stakeholder meetings and interregional learning and exchange activities.

The tool proved to be very useful and was positively perceived by Flemish stakeholders. We learnt from this tool that it can be used at different levels, both in individual organisations and at global system level. The consensus workshops facilitated the conversation between stakeholders to reach a common assessment.

VLAIO perceives the SCIROCCO tool as a valuable instrument to be used at policy level within the Flanders Cluster Support Program. It can provide co concrete and actionable input to VLAIO and to the governance bodies within the “Impulsprogramma Innovatie in de zorg en gezondheid”, like the overarching advisory and steering committee, the board of the spearhead cluster flanders.healthTech and the steering committee of Flanders’ Care. This will help to improve cluster management and specifically to optimise calls for collaborative cluster projects.

#### **2. Description of Action**

Steps to be taken:

- Inform relevant stakeholders about potential
- Evaluate need for adaptation to the local context or policy instrument context
- Agree with GP-owner (Scottish government) on modalities to adapt the tool, IPR, processing of results..

- Decide on partners for adaptation tool
- Conduct pilot action: execute a maturity test exercise using the adapted tool, with a limited number of participants (ca. 10). The participants would preferably be a balanced mix of regional stakeholders that already participated the OSAT earlier in the ACSELL project and some new stakeholders that can contribute with a fresh view on things. The aim will be to validate the adapted and provide recommendation for further improvement. The outcome can also be used to promote usage of the tool.
- Implement tool in policy context

This is a type 2 action: change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance)

This action bears similarities with the action “Evaluation model for the innovation on Active and Healthy Ageing with a living lab approach” of project partner CEI-ES (Friuli Venezia Giulia) and there may be potential for exchange and cooperation. Alongside with above steps VLAIO will closely follow the evolution of the action by CEI-ES.

### 3. Players involved

The advisory and steering steering committee of the impulse programma is currently being established. It will have a quadruple helix composition bringing together high level representatives from

- Government: cross policy domains economy, innovation, science, health & care
- For profit and not for profit enterprises
- Academia & research organisations
- Citizens representation

The members of this committee will be the primary stakeholders.

The spearhead cluster Flanders.HealthTech is the central pillar of the impulse program and is governed by its own board composed of companies, university hospitals, research organisations. This board will be another key stakeholder.

### 4. Timeframe

<b>Preparatory work in S6</b>	
<i>Inform relevant stakeholders about potential of SCIROCCO tool for Flemish context</i>	<i>April-May 2022</i>
<i>Agree with GP-owner (Scottish government) on modalities to adapt the tool, IPR agreement, processing of results...</i>	<i>May-June 2022</i>
<b>Action plan execution</b>	
Evaluate the current SCIROCCO tool with stakeholders: need for adaptation to the local context   Flanders?	Autumn 2022
Decide on partners for adaptation of tool	December 2022

Conduct pilot action	February-April 2023
Implement tool for continuous usage at Flemish level	May-June 2023

## 5. Costs

An extra FTE is being hired for the new tasks that the impulse programme entails, this FTE should also be sufficient to cover the effort required for this action. An additional budget might be necessary to adapt and implement the tool, e.g. for external expertise. IPR to be discussed with GP-owner NHS Scotland.

## 6. Funding sources:

Relevant government agencies/departments: VLAIO (agency, entrepreneurship and innovation), EWI (dept. economy, science and innovation), WVG (dept. wellbeing, health and family)

## **ACTION 2: (common action) trans-regional learning community**

### 1. The background

Regions are increasingly realizing the value of effective multi-stakeholder and specifically user-centered approaches, as well as strategies to match different kinds of organization, such as SMEs with academic institutions, to expand their reach and foster their growth within open innovation ecosystems and networks.

The living lab approach allows 1) a better understanding of the actual demands and needs of end users, 2) a better match of demand and supply and 3) an increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the innovation process. This approach will not only inspire policy makers to apply a similar collaborative approach in developing policy, but also help them better understand the innovation process as such. In this way, policy decision-makers will be able to provide better framework conditions inter alia to SMEs. Within the ACSELL project, several partners are considering integrating the development of a living lab in their policy instrument.

With this joint action we want to support this plan. In essence, the pilot action was the perfect preparation for this joint action to where the direct knowledge gained by two partners in a smaller scale will be shared with and transferred to the other regions. For setting up a living lab or an open innovation ecosystem, it is on the one hand essential to have access to a trusted network of stakeholders, and on the other hand have a profound expertise of living lab methods and methodologies.

While both requirements will be initiated through this action, the ACSELL partnership would like to see this exchange continue beyond the lifespan of the project.

---

Link to local Policy Instrument actions: this common action aligns well with the aim of VLAIO to optimize our calls for collaborative cluster projects by include living lab methodologies, capitalizing on our expertise in living lab support.

## **2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)**

VLAIO will participate the trans-regional learning community on how to set up a living lab (lead by Baden-Württemberg).

Activities:

— Workshop on establishing a learning community at the ENOLL OLLD and sharing pilot action experience (20-23 September 2022, Turino IT)

— 2-day workshop on operationalising pilot action results paper on how to set up a LL / each ACSELL partner will conduct landscaping & next steps to set up LL will be defined.

(October 2022, Edinburgh?)

— Identification of additional contributors / benefactors from, e.g., NWE.CHANCE Interreg project and Vitalize project (<https://vitalise-project.eu>)

(October-December 2022)

(e.g., DHI will work with ASCELL partners to explore potential for adaptation of the Living Lab Innovation Hub that was developed for the NWE-CHANCE Interreg project.)

— 2-day workshop: status update on implementation & sharing of successes and challenges

(March 2022, Aalborg?)

— 1-day workshop on defining continued frame for learning, network mode of operation before the final high—profile dissemination event in Brussels

(May 2022, Brussels)

This is a Type 2 action: Improved governance.

## **3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)**

All ACSELL-Partners with their specific regional ecosystems will be involved in this action.

In Flanders this will involve in first instance the spearhead cluster Flanders.HealthTech as well as the stakeholders involved in the impulse programma on innovation for health and care.



---

**4. Timeframe**

August 2022-July 2023

**5. Costs (if relevant)**

Participation in meeting/workshop: Travel Costs of approx. 1000 Euro / person (transport & hotel) / event.

**6. Funding sources (if relevant):**

Own sources

**Date:** july 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Stamp of the organisation (if available):** \_\_\_\_\_