



D5.9 Regional Smart Specialisation Info Card Deck

WP5 – Supporting Services to Beneficiaries

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Executive Summary

This document accompanies the deliverable “Regional Smart Specialisation Info Card Deck” which is a digital knowledge tool published on the PARSEC project’s website and constitutes an evolving section of the page. The Info Cards provide information for SMEs and start-ups of the PARSEC Ecosystem and beyond concerning the Smart Specialisation Strategies. The deck is published alongside a section dedicated to Case Studies and represents information specially catered to the needs of innovators and entrepreneurs to promote their possibilities and ways of involvement in defining their local Smart Specialisation strategies by directly or indirectly participating in the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process. The section becomes live as of M24 and will continue to evolve until the end of the project in M30.

This document provides an overview of the scope of the Smart Specialisation Info Card Deck and Case Studies, the methodology used for the task, and presents the elements of its technical implementation.

1 Smart Specialisation Info Card Deck

1.1 Overview

Smart Specialisation (RIS3) is a subject thoroughly and frequently discussed among and finetuned by European policymakers and academics. Yet information catered specially for entrepreneurs and innovators who represent a cornerstone of the policy through their potential involvement in the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process, is limited. Horizon 2020 synergies with the aims of Research & Development strategies at regional level can be therefore strengthened through informative bottom-up approach presented and hosted on the website of PARSEC (see Figure 1 below) for the use of the ecosystem of entrepreneurs and beneficiaries, as well as the general public.

In the framework of PARSEC, it has been chosen to use clear and well structured, visually attractive Info Cards as a digital knowledge tool ([link to the tool](#)) that presents the Smart Specialisation as a concept and policy method involving entrepreneurs. The first aim of the cards is to raise awareness of this process which affects the political priorities and, therefore, the available funding for local innovation activities of a chosen sector, while the secondary is to guide the entrepreneurs in how to be part of it. Therefore, these informative infographics allow for a quick and easy access to the basic knowledge of what is Smart Specialisation and answer such questions “how and why should I get involved as an entrepreneur”. Innovators and entrepreneurs do not need to obtain extensive knowledge of the policy process. However, the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process – consultations with entrepreneurs, clusters, academics, technology parks a.o. stakeholders working on innovative products or services in the region – is a cornerstone aspect of these strategies. Therefore, entrepreneurs should be informed of the potential benefits and ways of contributing to the innovation strategies that are being defined by their regions and which can directly affect their business.

To go further and make Smart Specialisation more concrete to the entrepreneurs, the info cards are complemented with more in-depth case studies. For instance, the first regional case informs entrepreneurs on how to get directly involved in consultations in Occitanie or join a regional cluster who can represent their interests and priorities in discussions with authorities.

The information on Smart Specialisation strategies complements other useful resources for start-ups and SMEs such as the PARSEC Insights section presenting results of the Market Trends Observatory (Task 2.3, Deliverables 2.6 and 2.7) and Technology Watch (Task 2.2, Deliverables 2.4 and 2.5).

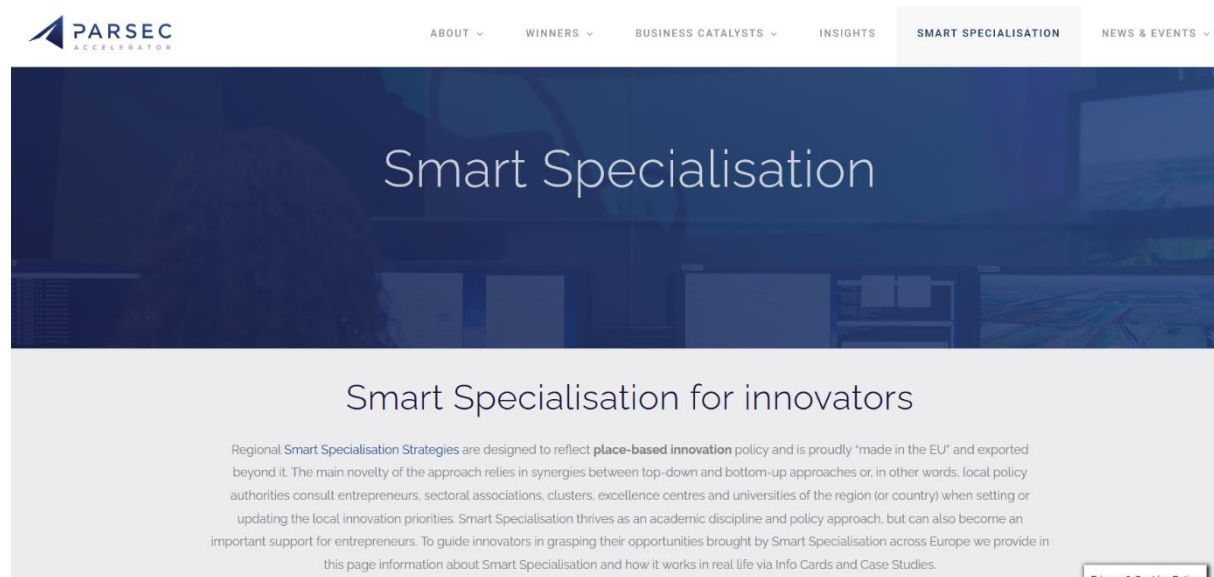


Figure 1. Smart Specialisation for innovators

1.2 Methodology

In order to find the best approach and methodology for this task, the task leader Evenflow held consultations with Smart Specialisation actors (Friends of Smart Specialisation, ERRIN). In the first months of 2021, a series of meetings was held with these organisations to discuss priorities and Smart Specialisation current stakes for entrepreneurship. Further collaboration opportunities have been highlighted to use this task to build bridges between policymakers and innovators “on the ground”. PARSEC project has decided to use their close connections with the entrepreneurial community and work on informing them about Smart Specialisation through the dedicated information presented in this document and published as an online knowledge tool. In addition, a common session bringing together entrepreneurs and policymakers or Smart Specialisation experts, to be organised by PARSEC in Autumn 2021, could further enhance these links. Moreover, it has been highlighted during these discussions that it is important to continue following the ongoing developments of RIS3.

Another important aspect when considering the methodology of the task was the consideration of current developments in the field of Smart Specialisation. Notably, it has been taken into account that the current timeframe (2020-2021) lies in between two RIS3 cohorts – the first cohort 2014-2020 ending and the new one (2021-2027) being defined and discussed. Further tendencies of RIS3 strategies, remarkably, the shift from RIS3 to RIS4 (adding the “sustainability”) has also been considered as an important aspect and motivation to strengthen the synergies between RIS3 or RIS4 and PARSEC as a Horizon 2020 project. Therefore, continued updates until the end of the PARSEC project are necessary. To be able to publish these updates, the Smart Specialisation section on the PARSEC website will evolve until the end of the project, closely following the developments of RIS and consulting the interests of the beneficiaries.

It must be noted that a few additional preparatory actions were undertaken by the project. First, in February 2020 alongside the launch of the Insights section and first output of articles drafted within the Work Package 2, a first article on Smart Specialisation ([link](#), text featured in the annex of the Deliverable 2.6 Market Trends Observatory wiki) was uploaded on the PARSEC website and draw quite some interest from the audience. Second, as a practical addition to the consultations, a poll concerning Smart Specialisation was launched on PARSEC social media channels in March 2021 and by directly contacting the ecosystem. The poll (screenshot of Social Media poll below in the Figure 2) asked the community whether they were aware of the Smart Specialisation and how it can help new, innovative businesses. While the poll was answered by a fraction of PARSEC followers, it provided an indicative confirmation of the usefulness to provide more information and resources to the PARSEC community of entrepreneurs.



Figure 2. Social media poll (LinkedIn on the left and Twitter on the right) on Smart Specialisation

At the moment of publication of the [Smart Specialisation section](#) in April 2021, the Info Card deck includes four Info Cards and answers the basic questions on what is RIS3, why is it relevant for entrepreneurs, how can they get involved and who is the responsible local authority. A case study on Occitanie, a French region both involving among its priorities PARSEC focus sectors and ensuring a transparent process of consulting entrepreneurs, is complementing this Info Card Deck as a concrete example illustrating Smart Specialisation in action. This region was specifically chosen as it shares many of the focus sectors of the PARSEC Accelerator, as well as a few PARSEC Second stage beneficiaries are based in this region.

Following this first release, further consultations will be held, and more content will be produced, considering the PARSEC Ecosystem and its needs and interests. For instance, following developments within regions who are either specialised in the PARSEC focus sectors (food, energy, environment, space), or where PARSEC beneficiaries are currently based. Similarly, the task leader will continue to follow the RIS3 trends in terms of RIS3 helping the post-COVID-19 recovery and improving sustainability, to be aware and inform entrepreneurs of any opportunities or considerations important for them. Currently it is foreseen that a common session fostering exchange between the PARSEC entrepreneur community and policy experts of Smart Specialisation could be organised in Autumn 2021 to further help innovators in grasping their opportunities. The session would also help Smart Specialisation experts to better understand the realities and the point of view “on the ground”. Any further developments and sessions organised will be reflected in the report presented at the end of the project, while some input from this task will also be reflected in the following deliverables due towards the end of the project: *D6.6 Sustainability plan* in M29; in *D6.9 Report on communication materials II*, and in *D5.11 Report on training programme for 2nd stage beneficiaries* due in M30.

1.3 Technical implementation

An electronic format of all described content has been chosen to improve both the discoverability and attractiveness of the information through its representation, therefore maximising the potential audience. Considering the technical and visual capabilities of the already existing PARSEC project website (specifications of the website have been further detailed in the Deliverables *D6.2 Website I* and *D6.8 Website II*), it was decided that the most appropriate technical implementation would be digital, using the *WordPress* format already developed in Work Package 6 and complementing it with interactive digital infographic tool *Infogram*. Furthermore, PARSEC visual identity and brand is being used to further enhance the attractiveness of the content and guarantee the coherence of the overall project and services to beneficiaries. An additional advantage in creating a specific section on the project website is that it allows to attract already existing audience which visits the site regularly (more on audience numbers in the *D6.3 Report on communication materials I*).

A dedicated subpage has been created to host this online knowledge tool and, similarly to the articles on the Insights section, the content of the subpage will be further promoted via other PARSEC official channels (social media, news alerts). The main structure of the [Smart Specialisation section](#) is as follows; each section heading is accompanied by a brief description of the content included therein:

SMART SPECIALISATION INFO CARD DECK

Smart Specialisation Info Card Deck is presented as a set of informative infographics developed with *Infogram*, one of the leading tools for interactive infographics (see Figure 3 below). Each Info Card presents one of the Smart Specialisation aspects and answers basic questions (“What is Smart Specialisation?”, “What are my benefits?”, “How can I get involved?”) useful for entrepreneurs and innovators for their understanding of why and how they can get involved and participate in defining local innovation policy priorities.

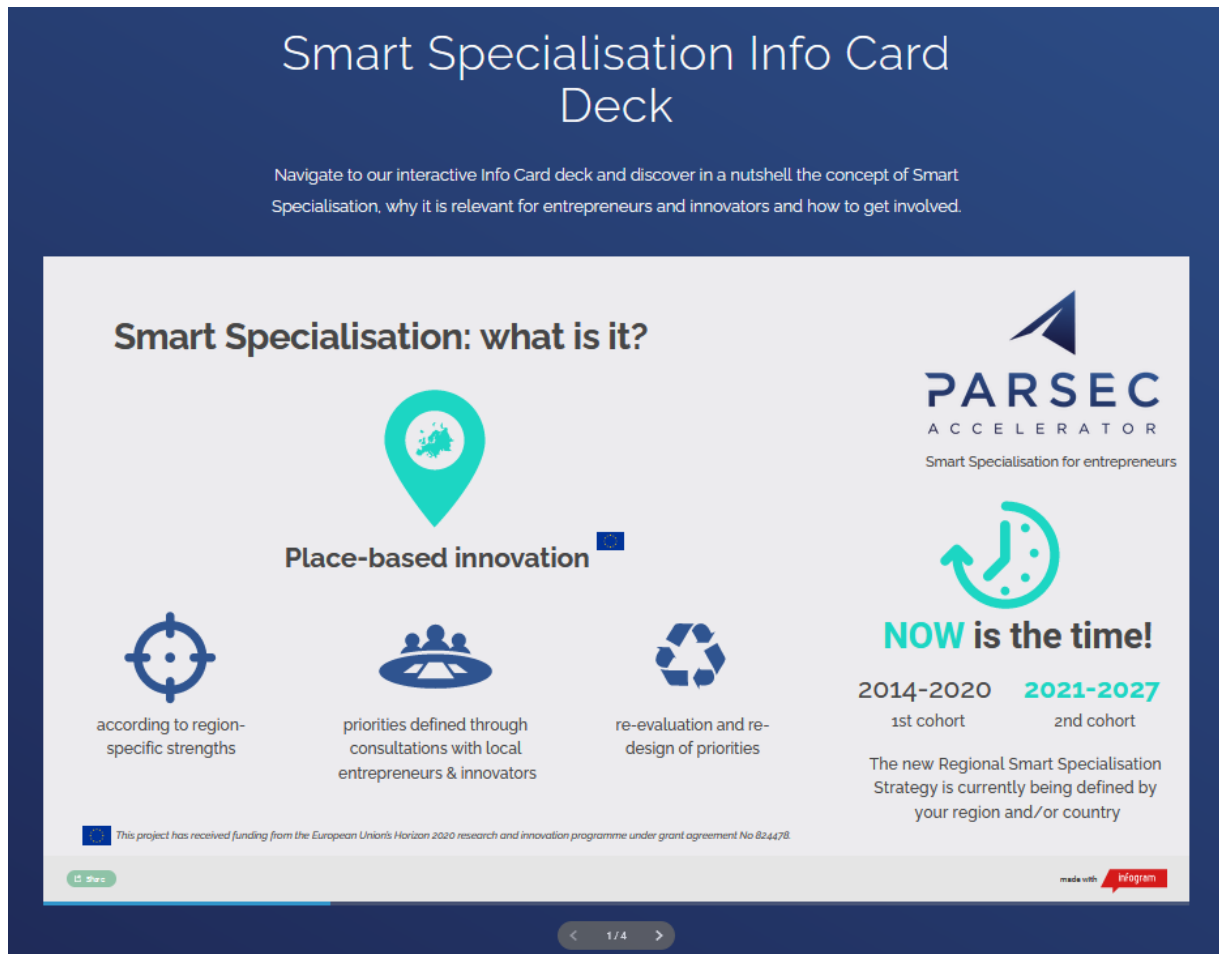


Figure 3. The Smart Specialisation Info Cards

CASE STUDIES

The second section provides more in-depth Case Studies (Figure 4 below shows the section on the website) which target the interests of the PARSEC community – regions where they are based in, clusters they might be interested to join or sectors they are active in. For the first Case Study, a French region has been chosen (*Occitanie*) both for its relevance in terms of its focus sectors which overlap with all PARSEC focus sectors (food, energy, environment, Earth Observation or, in this case, space). In addition, a few of current PARSEC beneficiaries are based in Occitanie. This case study explains the entrepreneurial consultation process and lists clusters that are involved in them, therefore allowing companies to get either directly involved in the working group or to join a cluster to ensure that their interests are represented. Further case studies will continue to develop the understanding through concrete examples of success stories on how the political and theoretical concept translates into real life examples and processes useful and motivational for all entrepreneurs.

Case Studies

Case Studies zoom into one of the aspects of the Smart Specialisation – a region, company or sector – and into how the political and theoretical concept translates into real life examples useful for the knowledge of entrepreneurs.



Smart Specialisation in Occitanie, France

French region Occitanie has all PARSEC focus sectors among their priorities and has a standard process of consulting entrepreneurs and other stakeholders.

[Read More >](#)

Figure 4. The Smart Specialisation Case Study example



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