

## MODES OF COOPERATION



### Operational collaboration:

A collaboration could include the creation of synergies at strategic level e.g. by alignment of research agendas and Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) priorities to make them more specific and market-oriented.

Another type of operational collaboration is through the creation of synergies by using ESIF funds complementarily to S2R, for example by implementing support and training activities and the infrastructure necessary for the JU or by supporting testing and demonstration activities.

### Strategic collaboration:



**A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is a strategic instrument to **enhance cooperation** with Member States and Regions, as well as to facilitate synergies with ESIF. It follows the **Research and Innovation S3** and the applicable ESIF regional funding instruments which can identify thematic objectives or align regional funding instruments to support possible pilot projects.

### How to sign an MoU?

In order to promote the signing of MoUs<sup>1</sup>, S2R JU is **engaging in bilateral meetings** with regions and MS (ESIF Managing Authorities) in order to exchange views about regional capabilities and Research and Innovation S3 and to explore synergies and ways to complement and leverage S2R technical content with further actions funded by ESIF at national or regional level.

**ESIF Managing Authorities** can play a crucial role in creating the necessary “incentive effect” and by encouraging stakeholders already participating in their funding instruments to propose activities linking to S2R.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that the signature of a MoU with a MS or region aims to set the scene for an agreement on the general framework of cooperation without going into details. Signing a MoU does not constitute an essential condition for developing synergies with S2R and does not confer any sort of competitive advantage in the calls launched by the S2R JU to any regional stakeholder.

## COLLABORATION OF S2R JU AND ESIF IN A RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SMART SPECIALISATION STRATEGY CONTEXT

The Europe 2020 strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth will make a significant progress by building upon synergies between the cohesion policy (European Structural and Investment Funds/ESIF) and the excellence objectives of Horizon 2020. The fostering of synergies between the two policy instruments aims at maximising the quantity and quality of investments, and thus ensuring a higher impact of the funds. The ESIF will invest approximately **€100 billion in Research & Innovation (R&I) during the period 2014-2020**.

The increase of innovation and competitiveness budgets under EU cohesion policy over the past decade is of the utmost importance as it maximises the impact and efficiency of public funding and ensures optimal synergies between both funds given the growing pressure from global competition. The European Parliament and the Council have clearly stated that this approach is no longer a “nice to have” but a “need to implement”.

The Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (S2R JU) is encouraging synergies with ESIF, for example by promoting complementary ESIF activities with S2R activities in the implementation phase of the programme. Complementary activities with the S2R Multi-Annual Action Plan can be undertaken by broadening their primary scope, adding parallel activities or continuing S2R co-funded activities through ESIF support. ESIF funds can also be used to build and enhance local capabilities and skills in fields related to the S2R programme in order to enhance the competitiveness level of European stakeholders in rail areas, and to align research activities and Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) priorities. Furthermore, Member States have the possibility to transfer up to 5% of Cohesion Policy resources to another EU instrument to fund projects. In this case, the rules of the latter instrument apply.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND OBJECTIVES



**Strengthen R&I investments and innovation capacity** through collaboration with leading global players in the field of railway innovation.



**Enhance the European dimension of the regions** in railways, that can take a leading role in their country/region in building the railway system of the future.



**Identify areas of technical cooperation** which could complement the S2R programme and support its overall objectives, e.g. by developing demonstration activities in a given region/MS territory based on the latest technology.



Achieve an **overall leverage effect** from synergies between ESIF, S2R funding, and other national and regional funding.

## WHY COLLABORATE

JUs have a focus on a specific area of R&I, a wide international network of public and private stakeholders and their own established European research agenda within the context of the relevant EU policy. Therefore, collaboration between managing (national/regional) authorities of ESIF and the S2R JU could have the benefit of improving **internationalisation and business engagement** in S3 implementation in transport, railways and correlated areas through:

- 1 Access to active **international networks** through the JU, including research institutes and leading businesses;
- 2 Access (e.g. for SMEs) to an important **critical mass** from the private sector;
- 3 Cooperation with S2R JU projects that are closer to the market and have **higher Technology Readiness Level (TRL)**;
- 4 Critical mass to **attract the scientific community** at large, which JUs also provide even if their research fields are closer to market uptake;
- 5 Easier **deployment of the JUs R&I results** as regions and MS would be better informed of the progress achieved, e.g. by being involved in previous demonstration phases;
- 6 Room for **more disruptive proposals** as JUs are independent to set up their own research agenda, within the relevant Union policy.

## SYNERGY SCENARIOS APPROACH FOR FUNDING RELATED OPERATIONAL COLLABORATION



Different scenarios that outline the appropriate and possible mechanisms for cooperation have been identified. These scenarios should be adapted to each regional funding scheme envisaged under the Operational Programmes, rules and processes while complying with the rules of S2R and its calls.



**Upstream support:** ESIF support for developing capabilities, skills and infrastructures in support of local stakeholders, aiming to enhance regional capabilities in railways R&I and any eventual participation in S2R

**Sequential funding / downstream support:** S2R beneficiaries may propose a continuation, spin-off or amplification of their activities with ESIF support.

**Thematic approach:** ESIF support to complement S2R funding through relevant R&I thematic calls. R&I topics shall be agreed with S2R, be consistent with Research and Innovation S3 priorities and contribute to the overall objectives of S2R but are not specifically addressed in S2R.

**'Seal of excellence':** If technically appropriate, top-ranked proposals in a S2R call (highly scored but not retained for funding) could be supported by S2R with a synergy label for ESIF funding.