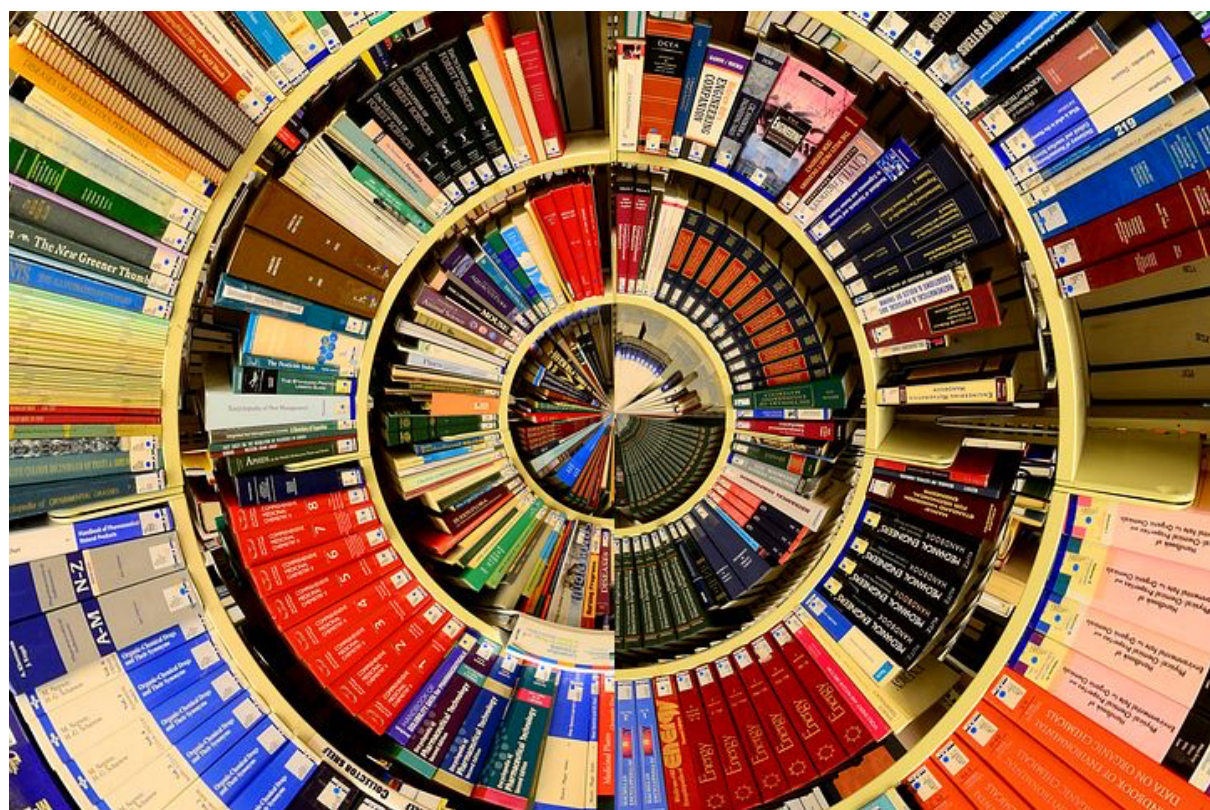


## Action Plan

# Hanze University of Applied Sciences

30.11.2021





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## Part I: General information

<b>Project:</b>	TraCS3
<b>Partner organisation:</b>	Hanze University of Applied Sciences
<b>Country:</b>	The Netherlands
<b>NUTS2 region:</b>	Groningen
<b>NUTS1 region:</b>	The Northern Netherlands (provinces Fryslan, Groningen, Drenthe)
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## Part II: Policy context

**The Action Plan aims to impact:** Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

**Name of the policy instrument addressed:** REACT EU in the Northern Netherlands

Policy owner is the Regional Development Agency & Managing Authority (SNN).

## Part III: Action envisaged

**MAIN AIM OF THE ACTION:** To strengthen the position of Education Institutes (EIs) as engaged partners in regional governance models for developing and maintaining effective regional innovation ecosystems.

### III.1 Background


The Policy instrument addressed is REACT EU, which intends to support recovery from the COVID-19 crisis in the first place. We also focus on the OP that will follow. This instrument serves as the current Operational Programme deployed by the Managing Authority SNN and the Northern Provinces to support stakeholders in the region to overcome major setbacks resulting from the crisis. The focus of TraCS3 is **to improve policy instruments supporting innovation and knowledge infrastructures.**

A recent study by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in a case study of the Northern Netherlands on the role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the design and implementation of the Smart Specialisation Strategy acknowledged the importance of HEIs in supporting collaborations within the regional innovation ecosystem and have an important position in the innovation ecosystem to connect, align, accelerate and integrate 'loose' SMEs into networks, evolving into local regional strengths. To support and streamline HEIs and related knowledge infrastructures (hubs, field labs, clusters, etc.), improvements in the regional innovation ecosystem governance is highly recommended. The JRC report has resulted in new dialogues between HEIs and the Managing Authority and the Provincial governments for inputs for developing calls for the current REACT EU programme for the next 2 years. An initial input from HEIs is to enhance existing innovation ecosystem governance to improve the current knowledge infrastructure in the region.

#### **Input from good practices from partner regions**

Good practices from West Flanders and Tampere have contributed to the Regional Action Plan (RAP) proposed for the Northern Netherlands region. Below are aspects of the good practices that have inspired this RAP.

From **Tampere's** health hub, the outreach and engagement with stakeholders outside of the hub facility, leveraging small scale local events and meetings, scouring for collaboration opportunities resulted in hundreds of stakeholders who would otherwise have not been in the



vizier of the innovation hub has reinforced the importance of active outreach and close to stakeholder's own communities and spaces. The additional novelty of this good practice was the impact despite the limited resources available.

From **West Flanders**, the active role taken by the province in facilitating optimal framework conditions, a hands-on approach, and embedded in innovation ecosystem, and examples of quadruple helix collaborations and good practices, including the close collaborations and interactions of the province with the other stakeholders in the ecosystem are an important inspiration for the proposed RAP.

## III.2 Details on the Action


### Regional action Plan – Northern Netherlands (N-NL)

The key focus of the RAP is on strengthening the governance structures in the regional innovation ecosystems to support effective deployment of REACT EU. Specifically, the RAP will focus on **improving the support of the position of the EIs**, as custodians of knowledge infrastructures, to explore how outreach to SMEs closer to their own communities (**increasing innovation capacities**) and spaces can be improved as well as reviewing current participation and engagement of provincial and local governments in innovation ecosystems.

To be short, the learning from phase 1 is twofold:

1. Shape the EIs' engagement in a quadruple helix structure and extend it beyond campus or hub limitations.
2. Strengthen the local authorities' ambitions and capacities in facilitating innovative quadruple helix cooperation.

Deriving from the partners' input, our action plan is directed towards support by SNN to establish a fine meshed network of innovation hubs throughout the region (Northern Netherlands), governed by a regional quadruple body of cooperative members of EIs'. This requires close, structural, trustful collaborations between regional partners. Such cooperation can only be successful if each partner is able to be flexible and collaborate jointly with well-articulated self-interests. This is what we call 'become ENGAGED'. By its nature, shaping and establishing such structure relies on the firm commitment and bottom-up cooperation of the quadruple partners. However, over the last years, the region has already seen a huge number of innovation support initiatives emerging, which now turn out not to be as effective as we previously might have expected. On the contrary, comprehensive research shows that innovation hubs are not used to their full potential and SMEs are unable to find them



and/or use them accordingly. There is a gap between the offerings and the claims made by the innovation hubs on the one hand and the way SME's reach and use them on the other<sup>1</sup>. Hence the two main actions we plan to realise through the Dutch TraCS3 Action Plan, each consisting of diverse steps.

## Sub-Action 1

Change the policy at the managing authority SNN, to make it possible in REACT EU to support a consortium of Els' to establish a densely rooted and connected **network of innovation spots and innovation capacity for SMEs**.

Outlook to actions lying ahead within phase 2 of TraCS3:

- Assist a consortium of Els' in making a proposal. The Hanze University is part of the consortium who will make the proposal. It will be submitted in the call: "Open innovatiekans Noord-Nederland", part of the REACT EU Policy. There is an open conversation with the MA. This consortium is especially created for this call as a result of the discussions with the MA. Now the call is asking for consortia which cover the whole of the Northern Netherlands and VET as well as Higher Education institutes. So the policy relevance of the consortium is very high and when the proposal reaches the right quality level it is very likely that the proposal will be granted.
- Financially support the consortium (collaboration between existing infrastructures) to improve the innovation infrastructure, to increase innovation capacities for SMEs and monitor impact on SMEs innovation capacities.

## Sub-Action 2

Improving the governance/management of the managing authority SNN, to improve the **optimal framework conditions for connecting SMEs to the innovation infrastructure (Els)**.

Outlook to actions lying ahead within phase 2 of TraCS3:


- Facilitate local and regional interaction between the consortium of Els and SMEs.
- Improve the governance of SNN to strengthen the ambition and capacity in facilitating the framework conditions.

Action 1 and action 2 are closely related to each other. Action one of the TraCS3 RAP is influencing the character (content/structure) of the call "OPEN INNOVATIEKANS NOORD-NEDERLAND", making it possible to create a Consortium, and to make a successful proposal.

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<sup>1</sup> Further reading: <https://www.hanze.nl/assets/kc-ondernemerschap/duurzaam-cooperatief-ondernemen/Documents/Public/Innovation%20in%20the%20Region%20-%20Connecting%20with%20SMEs%20PDF.pdf>





Action 2 of the TraCS3 RAP is focussing on improving the governance/management of the MA to improve interactions between the MA, consortium and SMEs as part of the policy instrument once the project is up and running. Also, TraCS3 will be (as it is the case now) in further contact with the MA to implement the necessary framework conditions.

### III.3 Players involved

The following players are involved:

- Education Institutes (EIs)
- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Cluster organizations
- Hubs
- (Innovation) Networks
- (Innovation) Environments
- Field Labs
- Business support & business development agencies
- Regional Development Agency & Managing Authority (SNN)
- University and University of Applied Sciences
- Regional VET institutions
- Provincial and local governments

### III.4 Timeframe

The actions are planned in Q4 of 2021 and Q1 until the end of Q3 in 2022.

### III.5 Costs

The Regional Action Plan requires:

SNN staff costs: € 50.000

SNN material costs: € 10.000

Total costs: € 60.000

### III.6 Funding sources

The costs will be funded by the managing authority SNN