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IMPLEMENTATION OF SMART SPECIALIZATION AT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY LEVEL: DIGITAL CASE OF THE PROGRAM

In today's Ukrainian realities, the concept of smart specialization, within which the government, business, science and society determine the strengths of the region, is very relevant.

As defined in the National Smart Specialization Strategy For Innovation-2022-2027 [1], smart specialization is an innovation policy concept developed by the European Commission that aims to stimulate regional innovation, promoting growth and prosperity by helping regions focus on their strengths (Fig. 1).

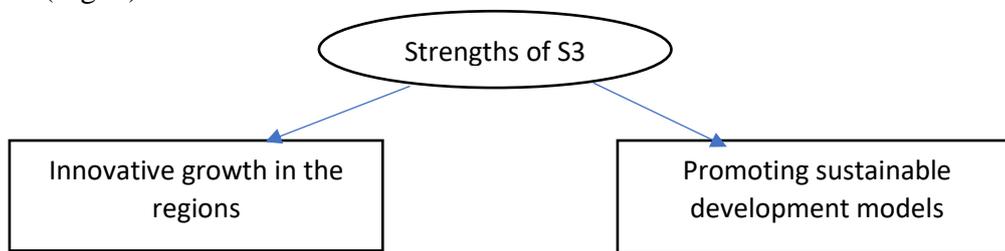


Figure 1. **Strengths according to the strategy of smart specialization in the regions**
Source: proposed by the author based on [1]

For Ukraine, the development and implementation of the S3 is a priority during the war and post-war reconstruction period, as it involves the “Entrepreneurial Discovery Process” - a type of consultation process that ensures inclusive and active involvement of all stakeholders [1].

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Between 2014 and 2020, only 5 regions of Ukraine registered on the Smart Specialization Platform (S3P). However, today, in 2024, despite the war, 16 regions of Ukraine are registered on the S3P (Fig.2) [2].

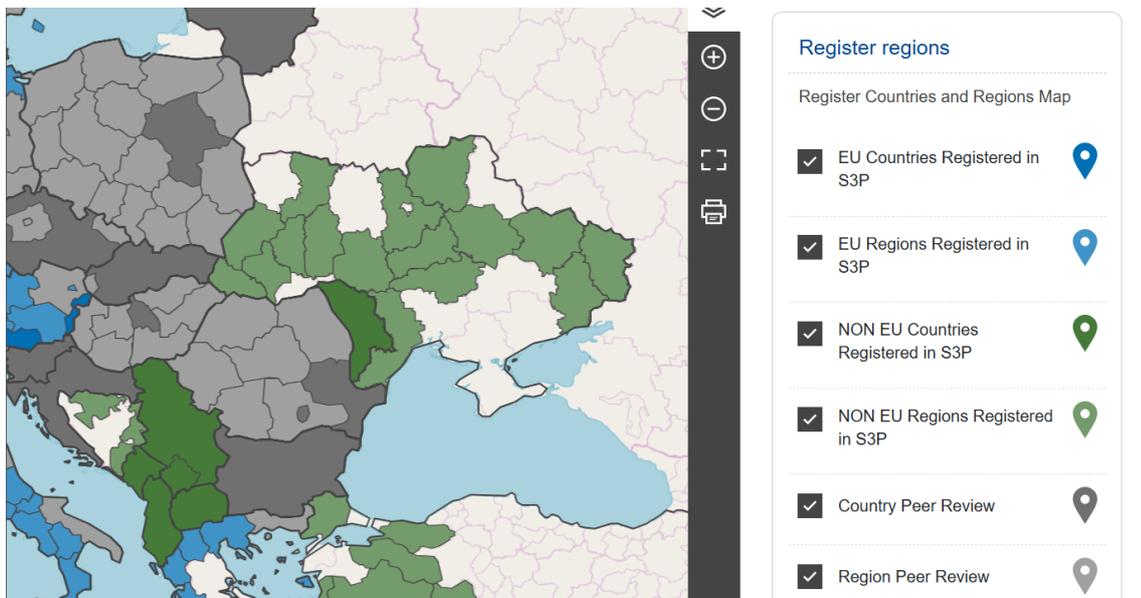


Figure 2. **Registered regions of Ukraine in the S3 Platform**

Source: compiled by the author based on [2]

However, even though so many regions are registered on the S3 platform, no region of Ukraine is represented on the map of Participation in Partnerships for Regional Investment (Fig. 3) [3].

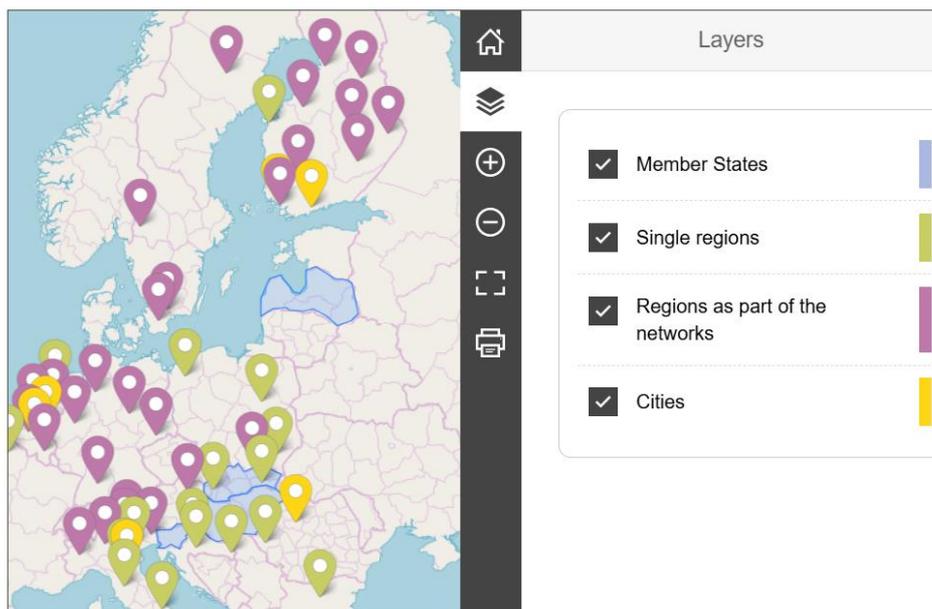


Figure 3. **Map of participation in the Partnerships for Regional Innovation**

Source: compiled by the author based on [3]

European countries have clearly learned from the experience of the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a network of 200 European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) is planned to be deployed by 2027 with EU and national funds [4]. These centers should become a network support (formed by research and technology organizations, universities, clusters, industry associations, chambers of commerce, incubators/accelerators, regional development agencies and governments) that helps companies in the regions become more competitive by improving their business processes/production processes and products using digital technologies.

Therefore, implementing the EU experience in Ukraine, it is also necessary to create information and advisory regional centers as a powerful policy tool whose mission is to help SMEs in the regions of the country in the digitalization of their business on a free basis. In the future, this will help support regional and national policies in Ukraine in implementing an innovative smart specialization strategy and contribute to the rapid recovery of the national economy.

References:

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