

Guideline for the ONLINE S3 toolbox application: 5.2 RIS3 action plan co-design

ONLINE S3 – 710659 – Guidelines for the pilot experimentation phase



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HISTORY OF CHANGES

Version	Date	Contributing partner	Summary of changes
Version 0.1	2016-10-07	RIM	Structure of the document, elaboration of required information as a template for all tools
Version 1	2017-06-15	URENIO	Filling of the template with information regarding the 5.2. RIS3 action plan co-design

DISCLAIMER

The opinion stated in this report reflects the opinion of the ONLINE S3 consortium and not the opinion of the European Commission.

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BACKGROUND AND RATIONAL

Co-design is a method for the creative practice, and is also known as participatory co-creation and open design process. This method goes beyond consultation by creating and deepening collaboration among citizens attempting to resolve a challenge. The e-democracy concept – a web-based concept for co-creation, intended to support democratic decision making, has been discussed more and more over the last ten years for various reasons (Macintosh, 2004). Many citizens are questioning traditional forms of democracy and thus want the policy-making processes to be more innovative and “co-design-driven”. Moreover, the demand for being more intensively involved appears to be on the rise. Additionally, it is vital to encourage democratic societies to share different views and opinions of active citizenship by direct involvement and engagement via co-designing (Tuzzi et al., 2007).

Co-design can result in receiving more feedback and ideas from the public for a better RIS3 result. Furthermore, additional (entrepreneurial) information on the region is also gained. As a result, the stakeholders and citizens of the region or nation feel more involved in the RIS processes since they are able to add their opinions in the co-design process of RIS3. This approach also encourages “quiet” individuals to share their feedback as every opinion is weighted equally. Additionally, this method and tool should be easy to use from everywhere, at any time. Many cities and countries have implemented existing tools such as D-Cent and have gained much more information on specific topics. Nevertheless, particular effort has to be taken to inform stakeholders of the possibilities for becoming part within the design of RIS3.

This tool is focused on supporting a participatory process for the design of the RIS3 Action Plan. As Foray et al. (2012) define it, the RIS3 Action Plan is “a way of detailing and organising all the rules and tools a region needs in order to reach the prioritised goals”, providing for comprehensive and consistent information regarding each action and its specific characteristics. The current application provides a framework for regional authorities willing to engage citizens and stakeholders in the decision-making process of RIS3. Through different ways to express their opinion (e.g. voting, commenting, assessing etc), regional authorities can update the RIS3 action plan so that the overall strategy is better adjusted to citizen’s needs.

Step 1. Publish the RIS3 Action Plan

- The RIS3 Action Plan is a set of actions and each action is defined by certain characteristics including: (i) *region and country*, (ii) *thematic objective or challenge addressed*, (iii) *investment priority under which the action is placed*, (iv) *short description of the action*, (v) *delivery mechanism(s)*, (vi) *target groups/beneficiaries*, (vii) *actors involved*, (viii) *measurable targets*, (ix) *timeframes*, (x) *funding source(s)* and (xii) *budget*.

Step 2. Receive feedback from citizens

- Citizens are able to express their opinion regarding each action of the RIS3 plan and its specific details through commenting, voting and assessing them.

Step 3. Update the RIS3 Action Plan according to citizens' contribution

- After receiving feedback from users, regional authorities can update the Action Plan in order to meet users' needs and priorities and achieve the desirable outcomes.

Figure 1 Rational behind this ONLINE S3 application

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Action Plan Co-Design is an application that permits regional authorities publish their RIS3 Action Plan in order to receive feedback and ideas from the public. The overall objective of this application is to provide a framework that facilitates citizens' involvement in the design of the RIS3 Action Plan, so that it is better adjusted to their needs and priorities. The co-design of the RIS3 Action Plan can significantly contribute to maximize the successful implementation of the overall RIS3 strategy.

The functionality of this application differs depending on the user's role, which means there are different features for public authorities and for citizens. Following the application architecture described in previous steps, the information flows within the application are given in **Figure 2**, below.

A. Public authorities can:

- **Create an Action Plan**, providing a short description and defining the consultation period.
- **Add Actions to an Action Plan**, providing specific details for each action separately that include (i) region and country, (ii) thematic objective or challenge addressed, (iii) investment priority under which the action is placed, (iv) short description of the action, (v) delivery mechanism(s), (vi) target groups/beneficiaries, (vii) actors involved, (viii) measurable targets, (ix) timeframes, (x) funding source(s) and (xii) budget.
- **Receive feedback from citizens**, considering the overall voting and comments on each action.
- **Update the Action Plan**, so that it addresses more adequately citizens' needs and priorities.

B. Citizens can:

- **Find an Action Plan for their region/country**, searching by its name and/or consultation status.
- **Comment and rate an action**, answering some short and predetermined questions using a 5-star rating scale.

The main output of this process is a co-designed Action Plan, where citizens' opinion regarding specific details for each action of the RIS3 strategy has been considered. An additional feature of the application is that all actions are saved in the platform and users can search and browse actions based on their thematic objectives/investment priorities, their beneficiaries, their involved actors as well as their funding sources.

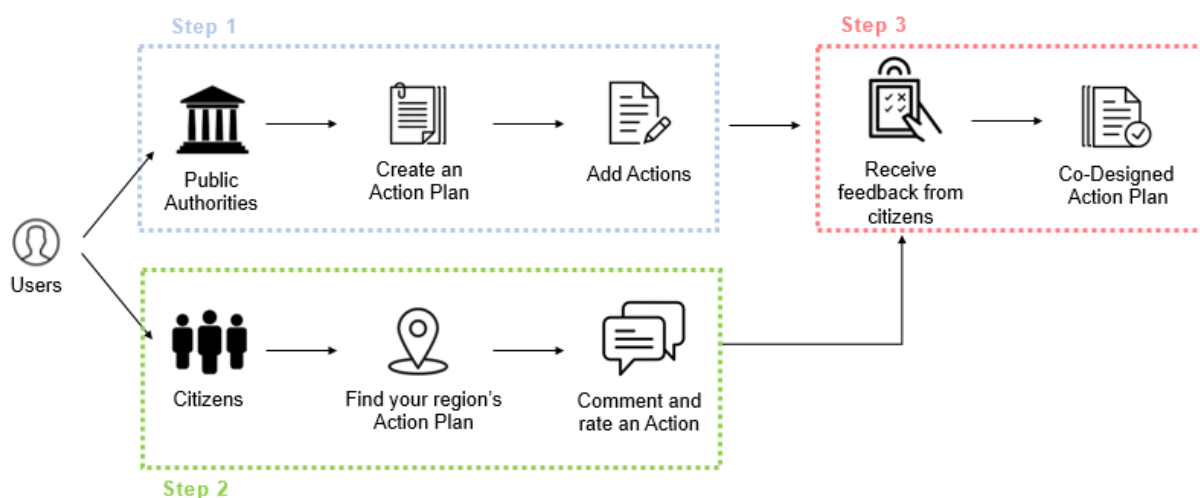


Figure 2 Overview of the information flows within the Action Plan Co-Design application

BENEFITS TO KEY ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The *Action Plan Co-Design* application introduces three crucial benefits to the users, referring to both public authorities and citizens, which are related to the general principles of the co-design methodology. These include: i) a comprehensive and structured way for public authorities to present the RIS3 Action Plan to citizens, ii) a user-friendly environment for consultation on a web-based dashboard and iii) an easy way to receive feedback from citizens through comments and rating (**Figure 3**).

First, the application provides a comprehensive and structured framework that works as a basis for the design of a coherent Action Plan. The templates for the Action Plans as well as for the Actions are built upon the requirements defined by Foray et al. (2012). In this way, it is easy for citizens to understand not only the overall structure of an Action Plan, but also the specific characteristics and internal relations among Actions.

Second, the application provides a user-friendly environment that encourages users to participate in the design of an Action Plan. Through an easy-to-use interface and an intuitive search menu, users can rapidly navigate in the application and find more than one Action or Action Plan related to their region or country.

Finally, this application facilitates the process of receiving feedback from citizens regarding each Action separately. More specifically, through a set of short and clear, predetermined questions and a 5-star rating system, citizens' opinions can be easily collected and assessed. Additionally, citizens can more freely express their opinions regarding each Action through posting comments, which are then evaluated by the public authorities responsible for the co-design process.

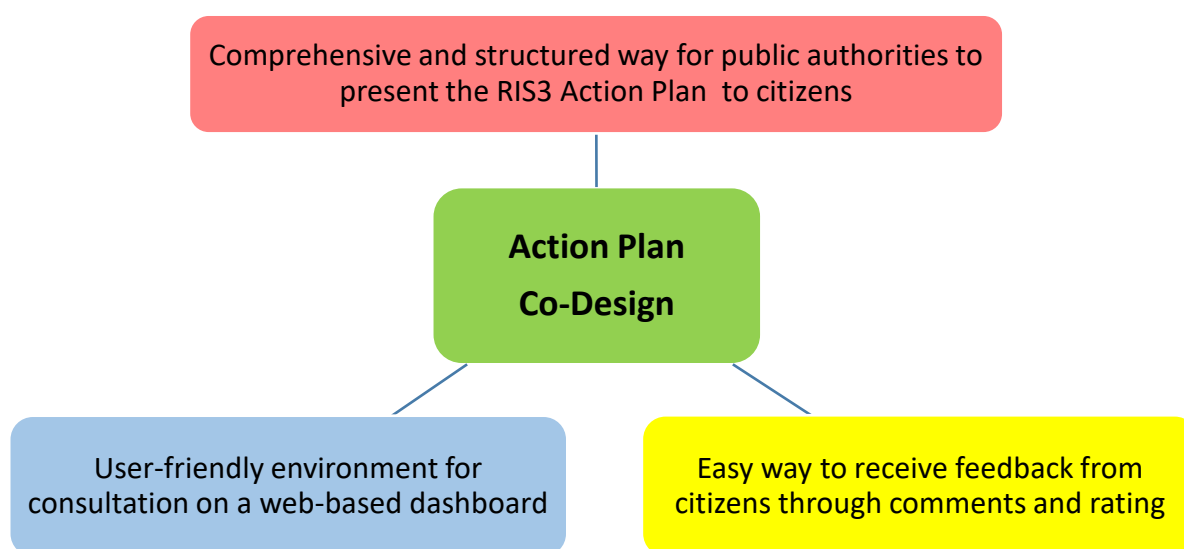


Figure 3 Benefits to stakeholders when using the Action Plan Co-Design application

KEY ISSUES AND REQUIREMENTS

The *Action Plan Co-Design* tool provides a comprehensive framework for providing an overview of a region's Action Plan and supports the participation of citizens in the design of the RIS3 Action Plan. The key issues regarding this application are illustrated in **Figure 4**, presented according to the step they are associated to.

Regarding the first step, there is one key issue that should be taken into consideration. More specifically, the co-design process can be meaningful only if sufficient information is provided for the Action Plan as a whole and for each Action separately. It is highly recommended that all fields provided by this application are filled adequately in order to provide a better understanding of the RIS3 Action Plan.

As far as the second step is concerned, the main issues that have been identified are related to the dissemination and the accessibility of the co-design process. The current application is a tool that aims to support the co-design process, but further activities have to be considered to inform citizens about the process. At the same time, it is public authorities' responsibility to ensure that all citizens are able to participate in this process, regardless of their age, level of education and other personal details.

Finally, regarding the final step of the application, the main issue that has been identified is related to final outcome of this process. Public authorities responsible for updating the Action Plan should consider citizens' feedback before writing the final version of the Action Plan. It has to be clear that this application supports the co-design process but cannot ensure that public authorities will incorporate citizens' input in the Action Plan. In this context, public authorities should keep citizens informed about the improvements and changes that have been incorporated once the co-design process is over, as well as about future updates related to the RIS3 Co-Designed Action Plan.

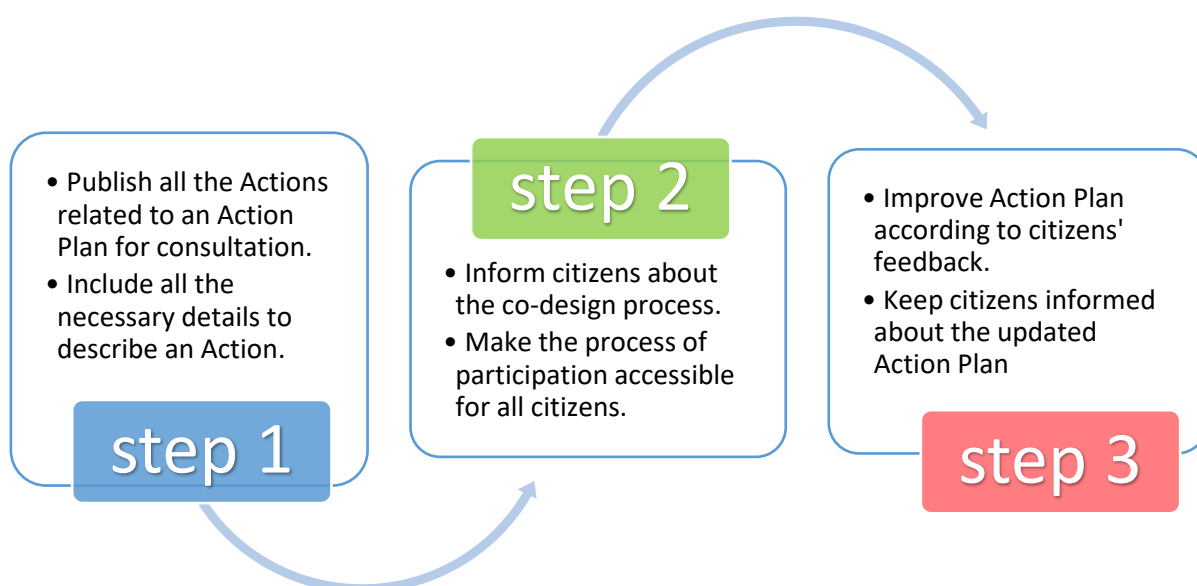


Figure 4 Key issues when using the Action Plan Co-Design application

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

How to use this application step-by-step?

The use of this application differs depending on the user's role, which means there are different features for public authorities and for citizens.

A. For public authorities

Step 1 - Setup a RIS3 Action Plan Co-Design Process

When accessing the initial page of the application, users willing to use the application for starting a RIS3 Action Plan Co-Design process should select the corresponding link in the left part of their screen.

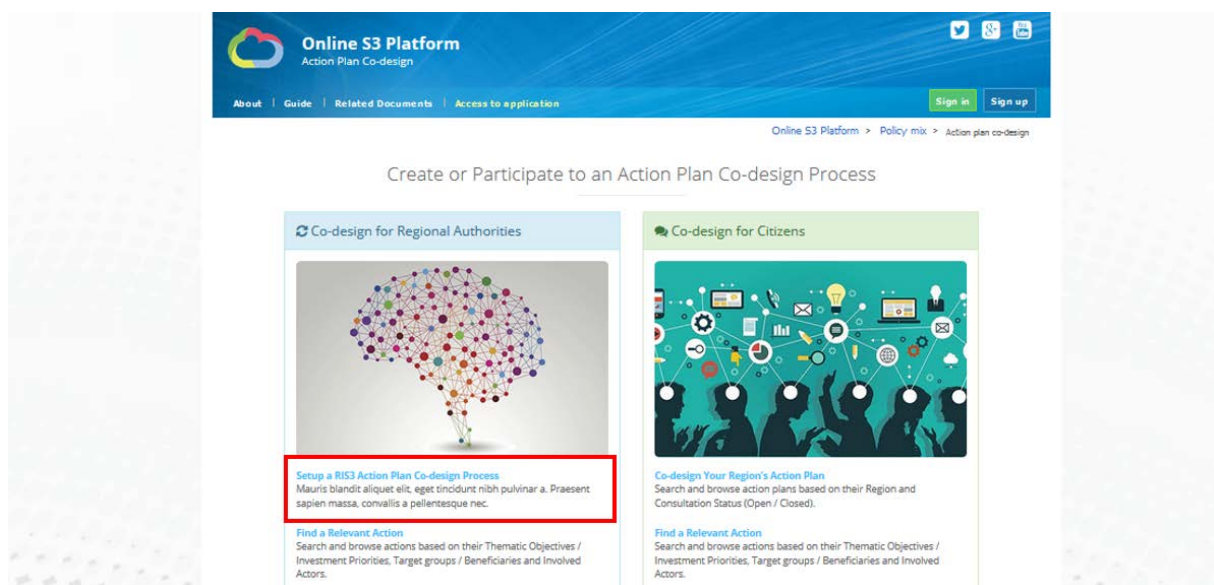


Figure 5 Step 1 for using this ONLINE S3 application

- i. **Create a new Action Plan:** Using the menu on the left, the user has to select the *Add New* option under the Action Plan submenu.

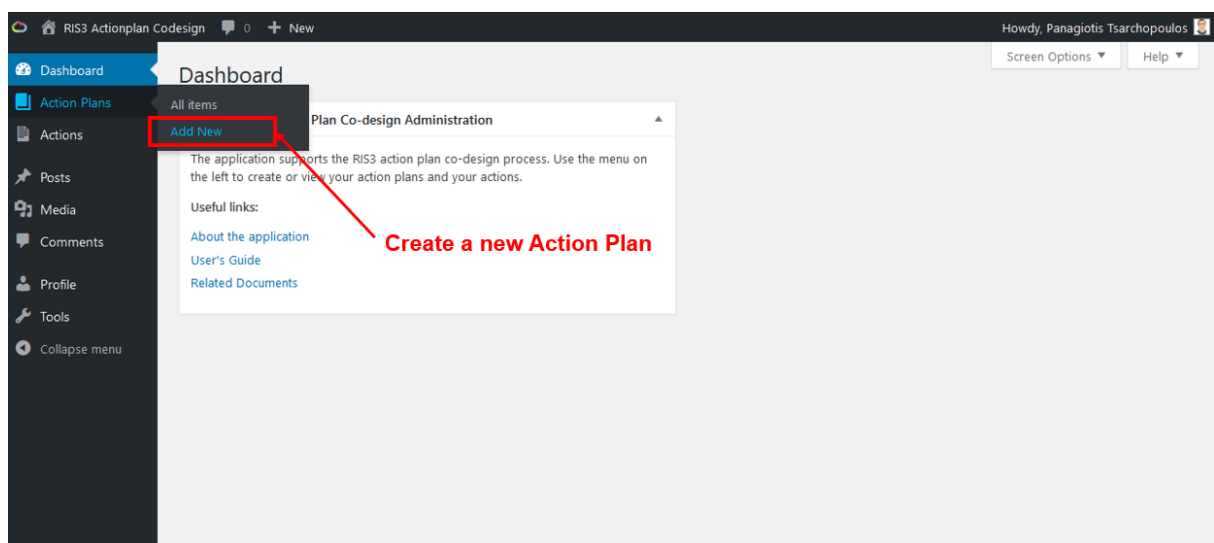
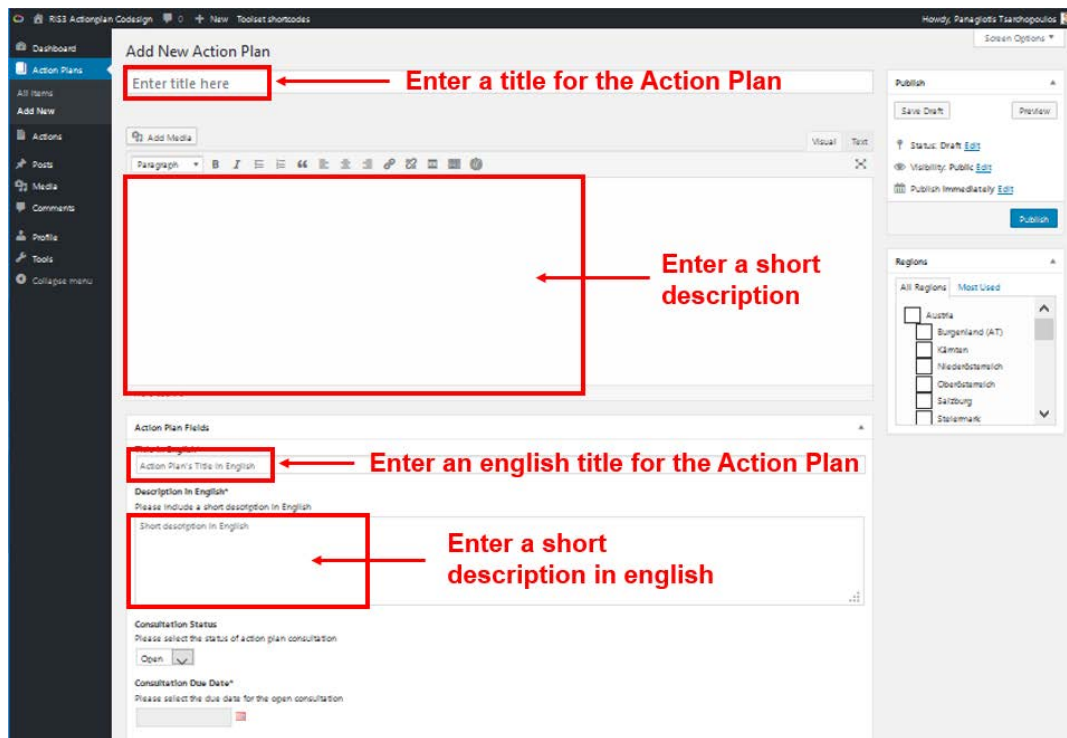


Figure 6 Create a new Action Plan

- ii. **Enter Action Plan's details:** A title and a short description in your language and in English is mandatory in order to create an Action Plan.



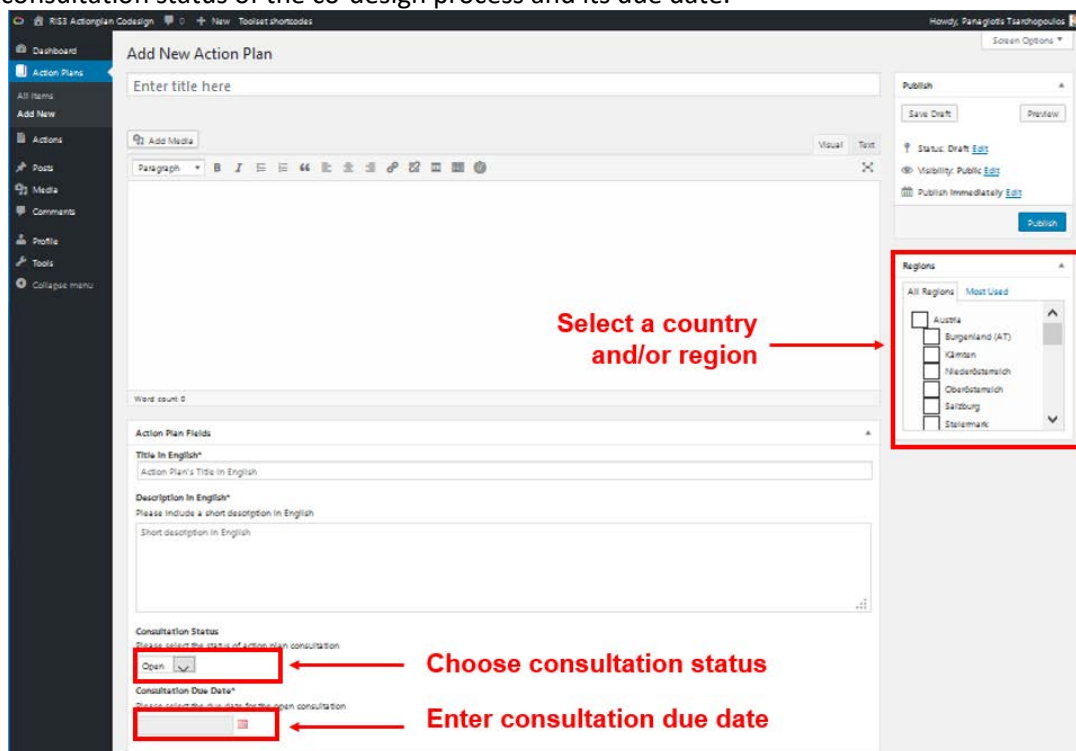
The screenshot shows the 'Add New Action Plan' form. Red boxes and arrows highlight the following fields:

- Enter title here:** A text input field at the top, with a red arrow pointing to it and the text 'Enter a title for the Action Plan'.
- Enter a short description:** A large text area below the title, with a red arrow pointing to it and the text 'Enter a short description'.
- Enter an english title for the Action Plan:** A text input field labeled 'Action Plan's Title in English', with a red arrow pointing to it and the text 'Enter an english title for the Action Plan'.
- Enter a short description in english:** A text area labeled 'Short description in English', with a red arrow pointing to it and the text 'Enter a short description in english'.

Other visible fields include 'Consultation Status' (with a dropdown menu) and 'Consultation Due Date' (with a date picker).

Figure 7 Enter Action Plan's details

- iii. **Define region and consultation process:** A list with all the European regions and countries can be found on the right. At the bottom of the page, users can add information about the consultation status of the co-design process and its due date.



The screenshot shows the 'Add New Action Plan' form with additional red annotations:

- Select a country and/or region:** A red box highlights the 'Regions' list on the right side of the form, which includes options like Austria, Burgenland (AT), Kärnten, Niederösterreich, Oberösterreich, Salzburg, and Steiermark. A red arrow points from the text to this box.
- Choose consultation status:** A red box highlights the 'Consultation Status' dropdown menu, which is currently set to 'Open'. A red arrow points from the text to this box.
- Enter consultation due date:** A red box highlights the 'Consultation Due Date' date picker. A red arrow points from the text to this box.

Figure 8 Define region and consultation process

- iv. **Publish the Action Plan:** Before proceeding in adding Actions in the Action Plan, the user has to publish the new Action Plan using the *Publish* button on the right.

Figure 9 Publish the Action Plan

- v. **Add actions:** At the bottom of the page, the user can add the actions corresponding to this Action Plan, entering its title in both the desired language and English. All actions created at this point are immediately associated with this Action Plan and adopt its properties, which means the name of the region and country assigned.

Figure 10 Add Actions to an Action Plan

- vi. **Edit an action:** There are two different ways to add more information related to each action. The first is clicking on the *Edit* button at the bottom of the Action Plan page, and the second one is clicking on *All items* from the *Actions* menu in the left sidebar of the application.

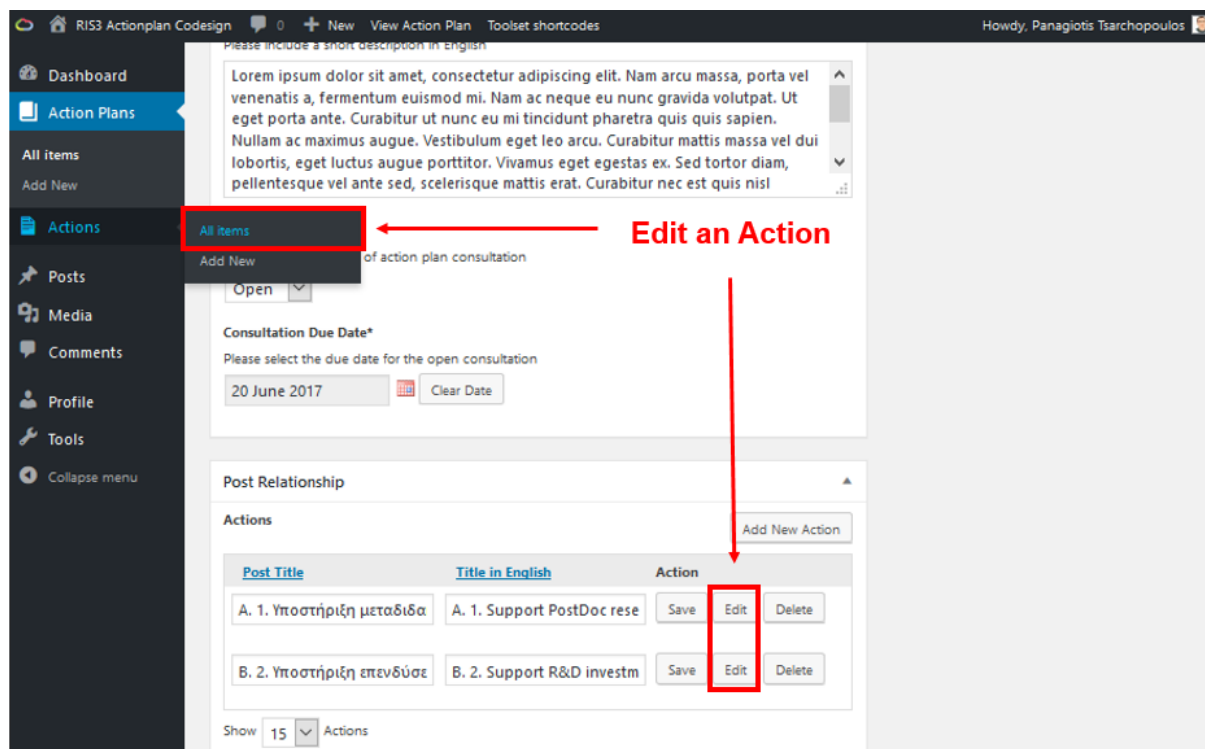


Figure 11 Edit an Action

- vii. **Enter details about each action:** To edit an action, the user has to fill in a template with all the necessary information related to it. In order to provide a good quality Action Plan, it is highly recommended that all the fields are adequately completed.

Figure 12 Template for an Action

Figure 13 Template for an Action (part 2)

Step 2 - Receive feedback from citizens

Once the consultation period is over, public authorities have to collect citizens' comments as well as rating results for each action of the Action Plan separately. This information is the feedback used as input of the following and last step of the application.

Figure 14 Step 2 for using this ONLINE S3 application

Step 3 – Update the Action Plan

Considering both the comments and the overall rating submitted by the citizens, the Action Plan is updated in order to be better adapted to their needs and priorities.

B. For citizens

When accessing the initial page of the application, users willing to use the application for participating in a RIS3 Action Plan Co-Design process should select the corresponding link in the right part of their screen.

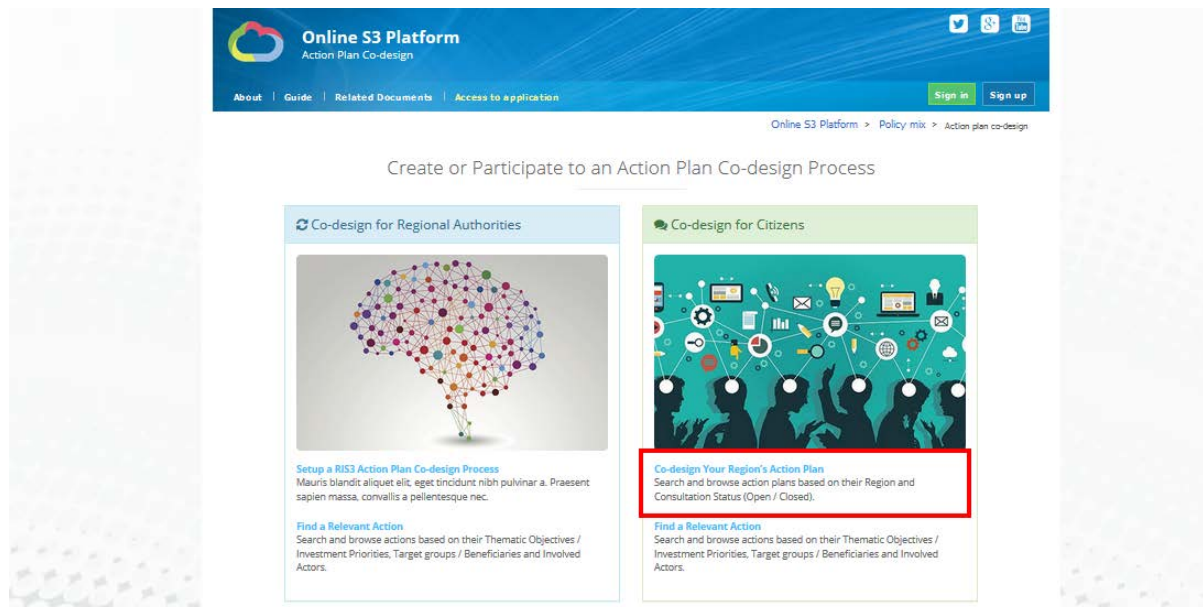


Figure 15 How citizens can use this ONLINE S3 application

- i. **Find an Action Plan for your region/country:** Users are able to search for an Action Plan based on its name, the associated regions and/or its consultation status.

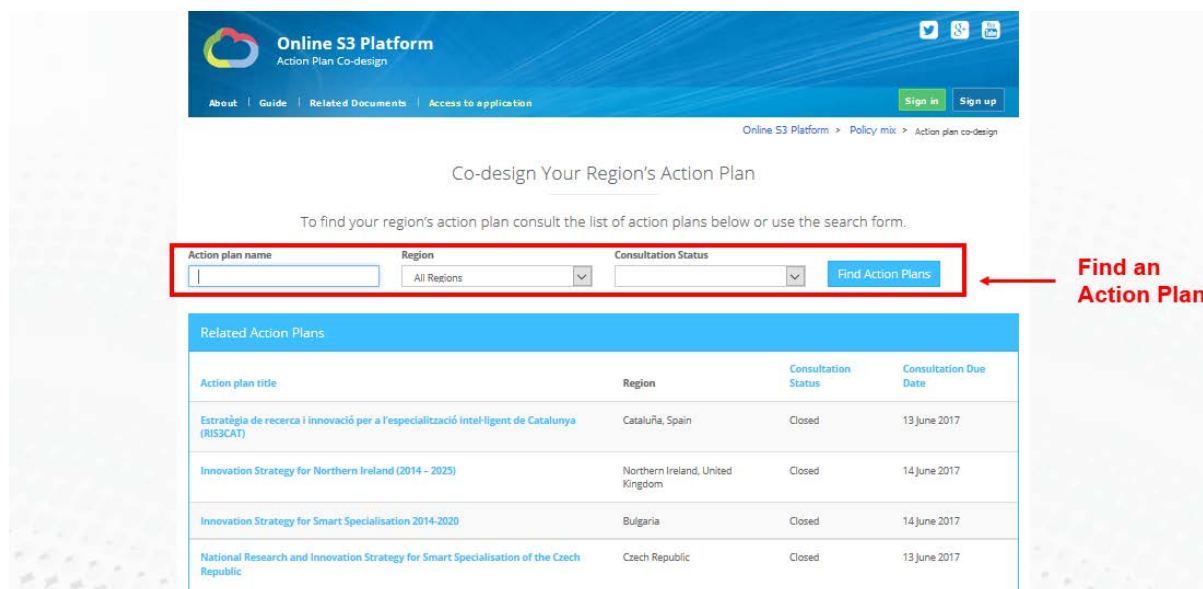


Figure 16 Find an Action Plan for your region/country

- ii. **Choose an Action:** Once an Action Plan is selected from the list, a new page appears, including a short description of the plan, its consultation status and a list of actions associated to it. Clicking on each one of the actions on the right, more details about it will appear.

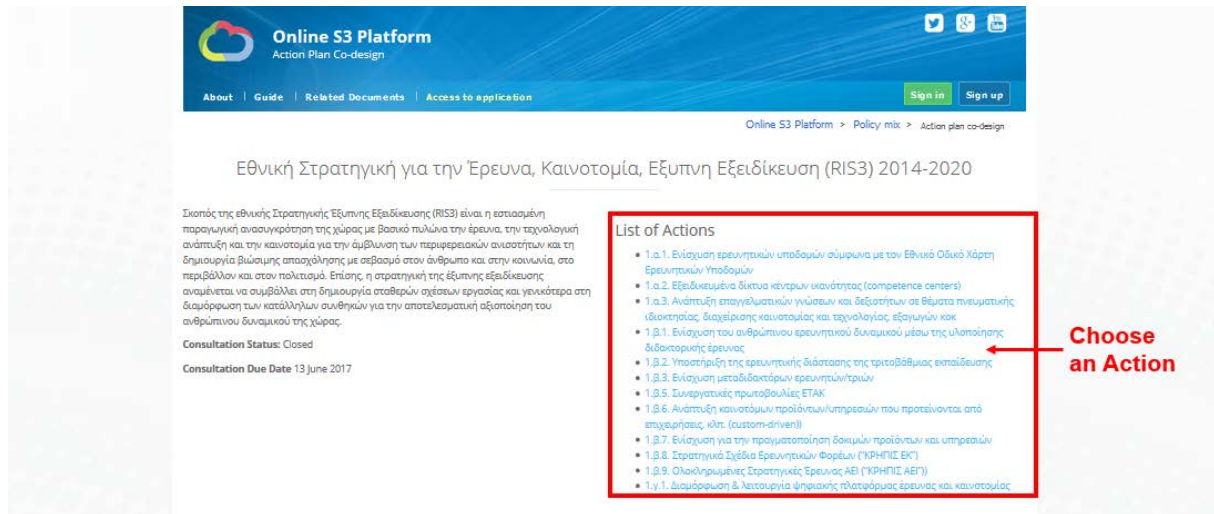


Figure 17 Choose an Action from a specific Action Plan

- iii. **Comment and rate an action:** At the bottom of the Action's page, users can find some short and predetermined questions regarding the completeness, maturity, popularity and other characteristics. These questions are answered using a 5-star rating scale and a comment field is also available. The participation process is completed by publishing a comment.

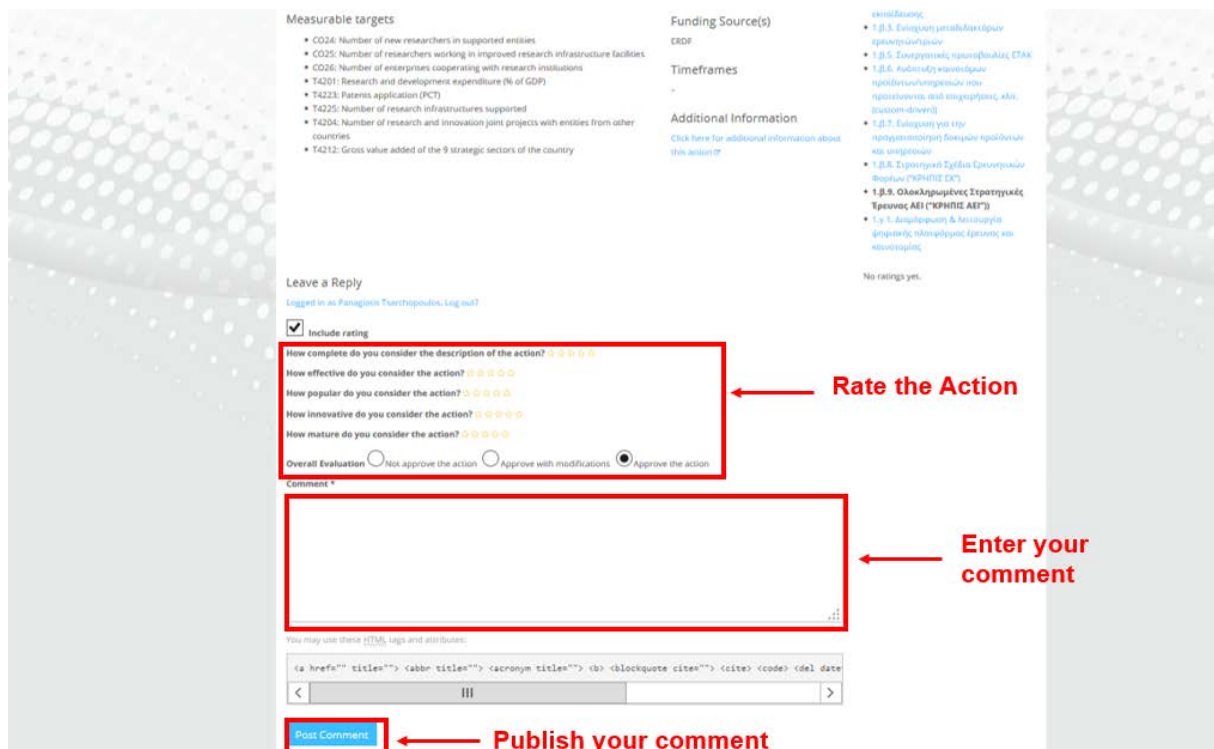


Figure 18 Comment and rate an Action

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information regarding the description of the method can be found on the site of the Online-S3 project (www.onlines3.eu).

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