



## **S3P Agri-Food**

### **Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data”**

## **Governance and Management Framework**

**Approved on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**

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## 1. Introduction

The governance framework aims at paving the way for a swift implementation and a proper operation of the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data” for the EU agri-food value chain (SMARTFOOD) within the S3 Agri-Food Platform. In particular, the Governance and Management Framework specifies the relations between the partnership and its members and allows a more flexible and effective implementation of tasks and high-quality results.

The governance architecture of the Thematic Partnership is based on different levels for decision-making and monitoring of partnership strategy.

This document makes proper provision for the approach to partnership working and helps all members to strengthen accountability, manage risks and rationalise working arrangements. It sets out key governance principles for members who are involved, but may also benefit those already considering entering into the partnership.

While underlining that there can be no 'one-size-fit-all' governance and management model, this framework emphasises the key functions to be performed and the key objectives to be pursued at the different levels. However, it does not aim at providing a detailed, exhaustive description of the functions and tasks to be performed by all members.

**Therefore, this document establishes a framework for the regulation of decision making and operation of the Interregional Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data”, as well as the roles and responsibilities of partners.**

The information in this document will be reviewed and updated as the Thematic Partnership evolves.

## 2. Definitions

**Governance** concerns the structures, functions, processes, and organisational practices that have been put in place within the interregional partnership to ensure that it is run in such a way that it achieves its objectives in an effective and transparent manner.

It is the framework within which the partnership makes decisions, and leads and controls its functions in order to achieve the objectives that have been set.

Good governance adds value by improving the performance of the partnership through more efficient management, more strategic and equitable resource allocation and service provision. All of this leads to improved outcomes and impacts and at the same time it ensures the ethical and effective implementation of its core functions.

**Management** concerns the day-to-day operation of the partnership within the context of the strategies, policies, processes, and procedures that have been established by the Governing Board.

## 3. Overall context

### The S3 Platform and the three Thematic Platforms

The S3 Platform assists EU countries and regions to develop, implement and review their Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). The S3 Platform is managed by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

With the aim to offer hands-on support to regions to foster interregional cooperation based on matching smart specialisation priorities, the European Commission set up in 2015 the first thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on Energy. And in June 2016, the European Commission launched two additional Smart Specialisation Platforms for Industrial Modernisation and Agri-Food.

The aim of these Thematic Platforms is to provide a framework to guide public policy decisions towards innovation and to create an investment pipeline of projects in new growth areas across the EU, by providing tailored advice and helping regions establish links with the business and research communities.

### The S3 Platform and the three Thematic Platforms

The Smart Specialisation Platform for Agri-Food (S3P Agri-Food) aims to promote the development of joint investment projects by encouraging and supporting interregional cooperation in thematic areas based on smart specialisation priorities defined by regional and national governments linked to agriculture and food.

Through the S3P Agri-Food, EU regions and Member States are able to implement more efficiently their smart specialisation strategies, and regional stakeholders benefit from the new cooperation opportunities with partners from other regions.

### The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data”

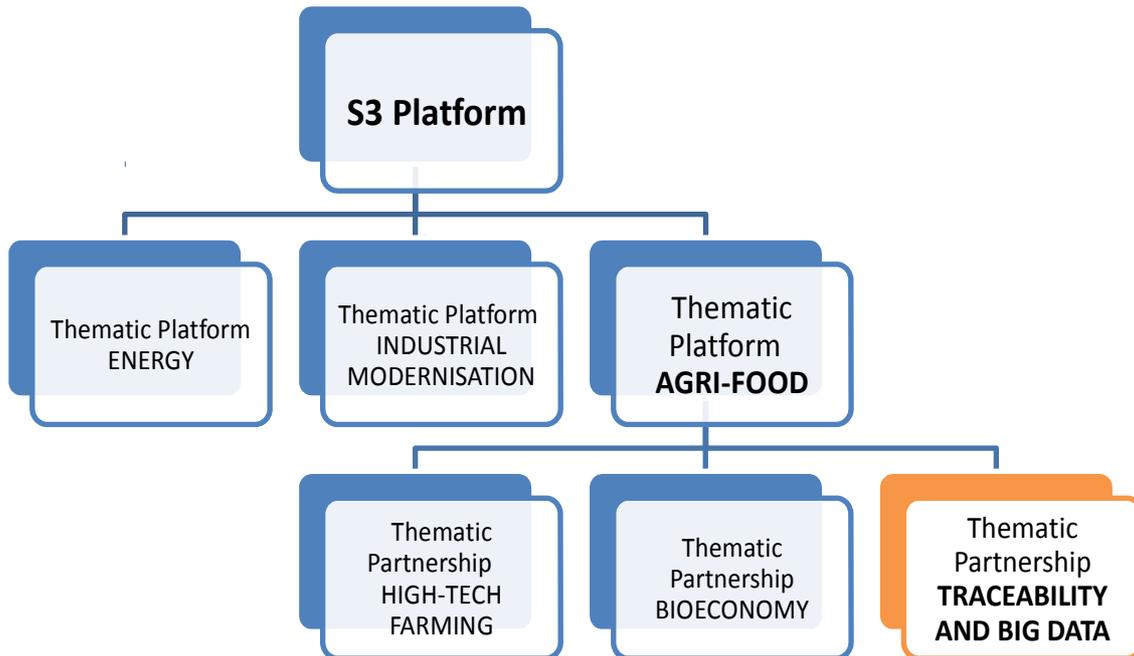
The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data” arises from the proposal submitted in June 2016 by Andalusia Region to an open call of the European Commission for Expressions of Interest.

After its approval, the DG Regio entrusted Andalusia the task to initiate and coordinate a Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data”.

Subsequently, during the kick-off event of S3P-Agri-Food that took place on the 6-7 December 2016 in Florence (Italy), Andalusia coordinated a parallel session to the S3P Agri-Food which was focused on the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data”.

This meeting resulted in agreed working arrangements such as topics and next steps, including the implementation of a partnership or regions (additionally each region has to set up a node or cluster of institutions in its territory), and also a governance and management framework for the Thematic Partnership.

The S3P Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data” brings together public and private stakeholders for traceability and Big Data in different EU regions at the level of public administrations, universities and technology centres, as well as private companies from the ICT and agri-food sectors and civil society organisations (consumers’ associations, foundations, among others).



#### 4. Mission and objectives

The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data” mission is to set-up a successful partnership framework towards digitisation of agri-food value chain using digital technologies and additionally, to generate value out of data and bring more efficiency, a better balance and transparency to agri-food value chains. Digital technologies include simulation, visualisation, Big data, data analytics, cyber-physical systems, laser-based manufacturing, 3D printing, robotics, sensor technology, Internet of Things, predictive models, decision making systems, etc.

All of it will contribute to promote interregional cooperation with the aim to adopt data-driven business models and reinforce competitiveness and more balanced agri-food value chains in Europe.

To that end, the partnership will encourage smart specialisation investments in joint demonstration projects to increase public and private funding in this area by promoting new interregional agri-food value chains.

The Partnership’s primary objectives are:

- Improving the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of the agri-food sector.
- Achieving a transparent, collaborative and balanced agri-food value chain and promoting an economy of shared value.

## Thematic Partnership on “Traceability &amp; Big Data”

- Accelerating the adoption of ICT, improved data management and interoperability in the agri-food sector.
- Fostering exponential innovation in all stages of the agri-food value chain.
- Developing new business models and market opportunities, including but not limited to quality job creation.
- Establishing creative designs for decision-making based on data management and the creation of decision support systems and ecosystems.
- Ensuring the inclusive governance of data and knowledge flows.
- Improving the synergies between public institutions, knowledge agents, civil society entities, farmers and companies.
- Sharing best practices and developing standards and benchmarking in relation to agri-food value chain developments based on the digital economy.
- Promoting cooperation between different disciplines and areas, as well as between regions taking advantage of common interests and market opportunity niches.
- Promoting the incorporation of the agri-food sector into ICTs and the digital economy.
- Facilitating the development of the economy linked to "open data" and learning and support for the same.
- Improving coherence and strategic alliance with the objectives of the Commission on the strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

**The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data” will encourage the creation of an ecosystem to support innovation and digitisation of the agri-food sector in Europe.**

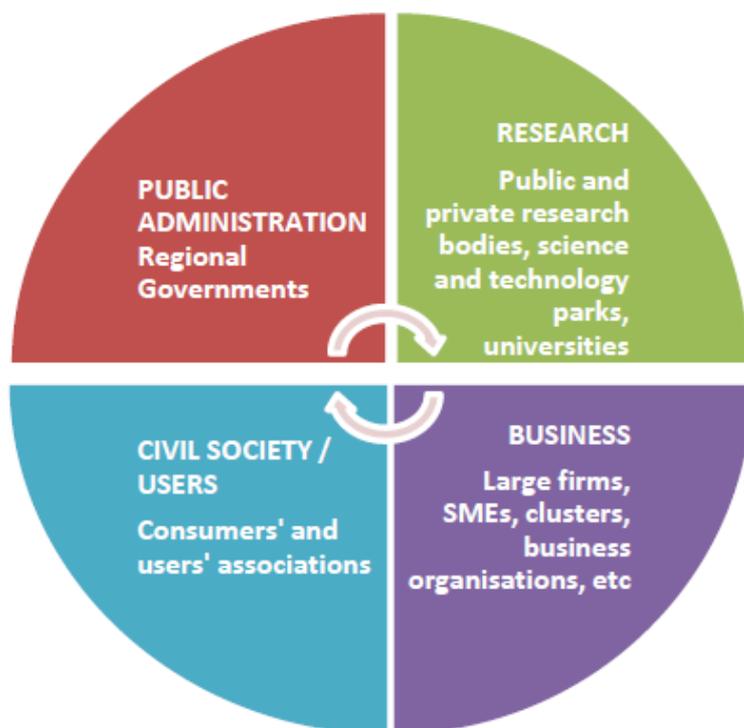
## 5. Composition of the Thematic Partnership

The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data” has a three-level structure.

These three levels are:

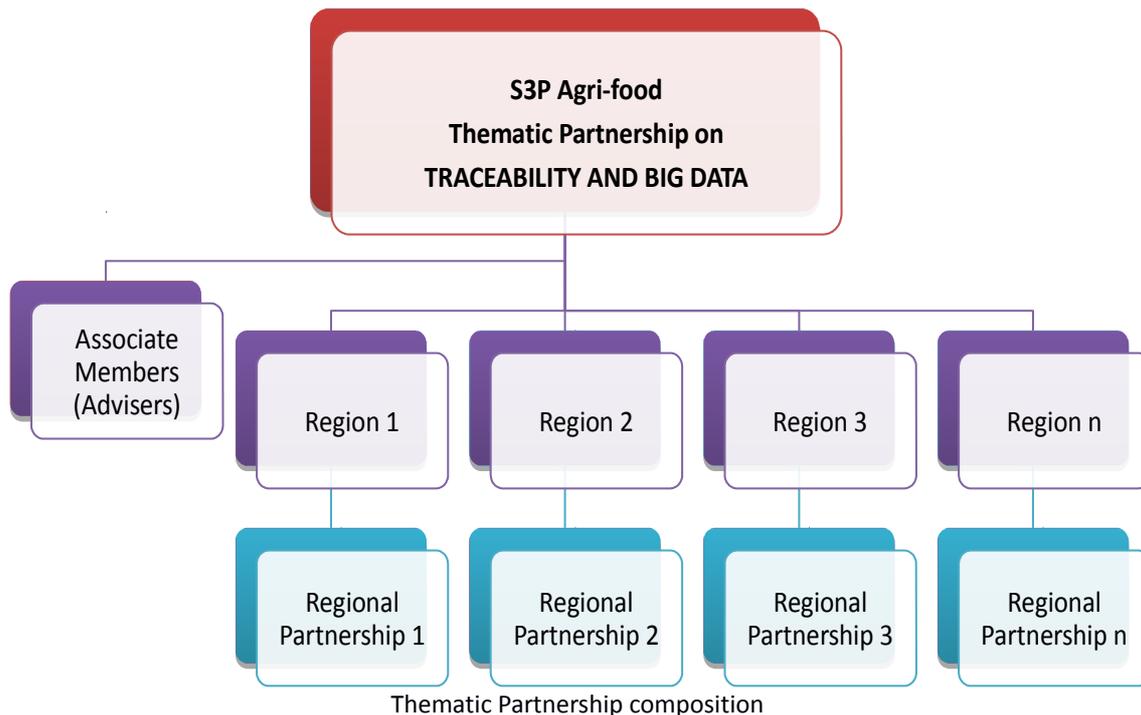
- A network of regions represented by their provincial, regional or national governments.
- Regional partnerships. Regional authorities must set-up regional partnerships in such form as deemed adequate (node, cluster, DIH-Digital Innovation Hub, association, etc).

Regional partnerships will include, in addition to regional governments, companies from the ICT and agri-food sectors, technology centres, universities and research centres, agricultural organisations, consumers’ and users’ associations, among others. These partnerships will play the role of regional ecosystems towards digitisation and the sharing of needs and solutions for the agri-food sector. Additionally, it will be an enabling environment for capacity mapping and for new projects and technology solutions.



Composition of regional partnership

- Associate Members from the field of knowledge which are not included in any regional partnership. The aim is to involve those centres of expertise, technology transfer and research which are not members of any regional partnership because their regional authorities have not yet joined the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data” but whose know-how and experience would have a clear added value as advisers of the partnership.



## 6. Guidelines and governing principles

Common guidelines for a data-driven agri-food chain are:

- More and better-quality information available for consumers.
- Smart information systems for companies and public administrations.
- Regional cooperation as the basis for transferring technology and research results between experts and researchers, and also between companies, in those regions which share an interest in the same thematic area.
- Shared value. Generating added value for all points of the chain, making it possible to have an impact on the rest of the value chain as well as the society at large and regions.
- Improving companies’ competitiveness and creating new businesses.

The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data” governing principles will be:

- Strategic vision. Members of the partnership are in a position to take a strategic overview and to influence decision making at regional, national and European level.
- Open and inclusive approach. It will be a partnership actively involving all the key players in different EU regions at the level of public administrations, clusters and other intermediaries, universities and technology centres, value chain networks, companies and business and consumers associations.
- Transparency, trust and loyalty. Partners will work together in a spirit of mutual trust and assumed good intent. Openness and clarity of communication, shared efforts and responsibilities will contribute to attain common goals, although the methodology and rationale may differ across the partnership.
- Outcome-focused. The partnership will adopt common priorities together with agreed actions and milestones that will lead to demonstrable improvements against and achieve the commitments and targets set within the partnership.
- Mutual respect. All partners’ competences, capabilities, working culture and environment shall be taken into account, understood and respected to attain the partnership’s goals.
- Equality-focused. The thematic partnership shall implement actions that contribute to ensure and promote equality and must avoid any direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and remove any discriminatory obstacles to equality.
- Reliability and responsibility. All partners shall be responsible for the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken. A periodic review will take place to evaluate the progress based on goals, objectives and terms agreed by all partners.
- Participatory methodology. The activities shall be carried out taking into account all partners’ collaboration and inputs.

## 7. Role of members

- Promoter region. Andalusia, as the region that has initiated conceptually the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data”, shall undertake the role of promoter region. Therefore, Andalusia assumes the commitment to keep up

the spirit that has prevailed during the setting-up stage throughout the partnership’s life.

- Lead region. Andalusia has been entrusted by the European Commission with the responsibility of leading initially the Thematic Partnership. For a period of two years, that may be extended by another two years, Andalusia shall perform the following functions:
  - To represent the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data” at S3P Steering Group which is composed of leading DGs and Lead Regions (representing the thematic partnerships of the S3P Agri-food) aiming at:
    - Monitoring progress of the partnership and problem solving in the partnership funding.
    - Managing synergies with other initiatives.
    - Structured dialogue EC- committed regions.
    - Co-organising joint events and cross-partnership learning.
  - To be informed about any application to be submitted under EU Calls for project funding in relation to this thematic issue.
  - To represent the Thematic Partnership in dissemination and awareness raising about activities carried out and results in all the relevant EU and interregional fora. The Lead Region may delegate this task to other members of the partnership where appropriate for effectively management of resources and capacities.
  - To undertake the Thematic Partnership work, meetings and events with its own resources or project-funded.
- Co-lead regions

Co-lead Regions are those regions that will co-lead with the Lead Region, both the Thematic Partnership on a cross-cutting basis and the existing Task Groups and those to be set-up.

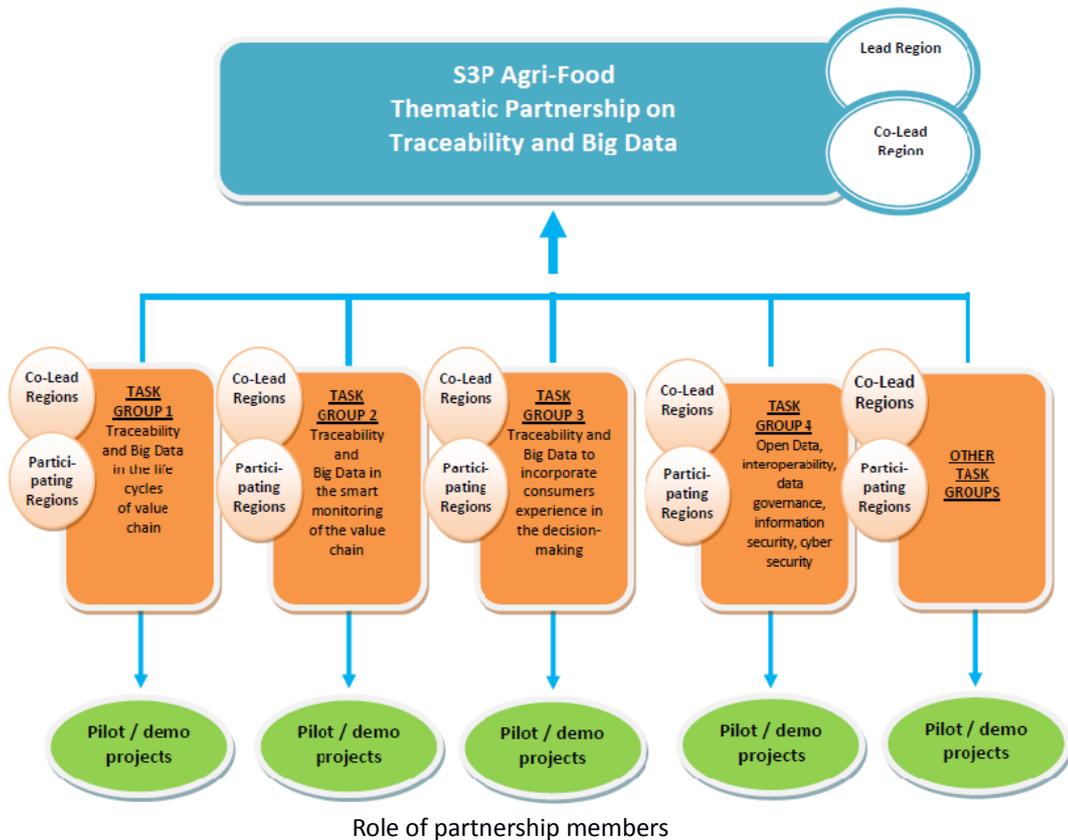
Each Task Group may be co-led by several partner regions.

Co-lead regions will undertake the Task Groups work, events and meetings with its own resources or project-funded.

- Partner regions

Each partner region shall:

- Participate actively in designing and developing the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data” following a four-step process (learn, connect, demonstrate and commercialisation). It will be done both cooperatively and through the development of regional/European initiatives and events as appropriate.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of the Work Plan approved by the Governing Board.
- Set-up a regional partnership in such form as deemed adequate (node, cluster, association or any other organisation with or without legal status or legal personality) to bring together the ‘quadruple helix’ of actors involved at different stages in the food value chain.
- Participate in the management, coordination and concrete implementation of actions entrusted to them within the partnership and any pilot or demonstration project that might be approved.
- Supply the Governing Board with all information and/or documents required in connection with the partnership and related activities such as pilot or demonstration actions.
- Communicate any relevant information which has to be given to the Governing Board, Technical Secretariat and/or the Co-Lead Region of the Task Group or the pilot project co-ordinator.
- Perform the tasks assigned in the partnership Work Plan and promptly make available rights and information to other partners in accordance with the terms and conditions set out.
- Represent its regional partnership and the Thematic Partnership, where appropriate and by delegation of the Lead Region, in dissemination and awareness raising about activities carried out and results in relevant fora. Regions shall promote multiplier actions in their environments to ensure efficiency in dissemination.
- Represent all regional partnership/node members at the Governing Board.



## 8. Organisation of the Thematic Partnership

The organisation described below provides a framework for good governance and for transparent and effective decision-making by all partners, and lays down the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress and commitments.

### a) General Assembly

- Aim. To ensure a common vision for all partners, and to allow an opportunity for presentation of the work and results and discussion on future orientations.
- It is an advisory body whose main functions are:
  - To preserve and revitalise the spirit which has inspired the creation of this Thematic Partnership.
  - To be informed by the Chair of the Governing Board and the Technical Secretariat about progress made with regard to the Work Plan, the partnership and projects and demonstration actions to be carried out.
  - To propose new initiatives and/or projects in the field of the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data”.

- To propose the creation of new Task Groups and/or thematic priorities.
- To take part in the development of working methodologies. The activities of the partnership will be carried out taking into consideration all partners’ inputs and collaboration.
- Decisions are adopted by simple majority and the chairman has a casting vote.
- Members. The General Assembly is the forum for all members of the Thematic Partnership, that is, all regional partnerships members as well as the associate partners. The latter will have a voice but no voting rights.

It will meet every two years.

The General Assembly shall be chaired by the Governing Board Chairman.

The General Assembly will be organised in a conference and workshop format, to ensure opportunities for networking and information exchange. It might also be possible to invite non-member institutions where appropriate.

Extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly might be convened where necessary, and they may be internet-based organised.

b) The Governing Board (GB)

- Aim. The aim of the Partnership Governing Board is to steer and support the work of the partnership and partnership groups and identify and agree overarching priorities for the involved regions to deliver the shared objectives.
- Functions shall include:
  - Organisation. To approve the Thematic Partnership Work Plan after identification of shared priorities for the partnership.
  - Thematic priorities. To approve the setting of new thematic priorities or new Task Groups.
  - Consistency. The Governing Board shall authorize any project, initiative and/or programme of any partner relating to the field of traceability and Big Data in the agri-food chain before submission to ensure that the objectives of the Work Plan are achieved. Authorisation may be obtained by means of written procedure.
  - Quality assurance. To ensure effective use of joint work to the benefit of all, based on a common approach to involve all relevant regional actors and to

agree common actions for improved outcomes, and where necessary, to represent and inform the partnership about key issues-

- Information. To be accountable to the General Assembly for the delivery of objectives and actions in the Work Plan.
- Recommendations. Periodic reports together with position papers, opinions, and recommendations as necessary will be communicated to all relevant institutions.
- Communication. To agree on common systems and procedures for an efficient and collaborative exchange of information and to approve a communication strategy.
- Cooperation. To collaborate with other relevant international partnerships and platforms.
- Monitoring. Regularly review progress on partnership activities and outcomes, identifying strengths and weaknesses from both technical and financial points of view.
- Membership. The Governing Board is composed of one representative from each partner Region holding signatory power in their organisations and/or being authorised to commit her/his organisation to the decisions. It will be chaired by the Lead Region and will have a co-chair hold by the Co-Lead region of the S3P Agri-food thematic partnership on Traceability and Big Data.

Each region will notify the Chair of the Governing Board the name of its representative and alternate, and of any change thereto.

Each representative may be accompanied to Governing Board meetings by up to two advisers or experts, as additional delegates.

The chairmanship and vice-chairmanship will be open for rotation every two years. This period that may be extended by another two years.

The Governing Board will convene an annual meeting in regular session. Extraordinary meetings of the Governing Board might be convened where necessary, and they may be internet-based organised. Decisions may also be taken by written procedure.

The Governing Board has a quorum when two third of the representatives are present and the Chairman. Decisions are expected to be taken by a majority

vote. In voting, each partner shall have a single vote. In the event of tie, the vote of the Chair will decide.

The Governing Board is non-statutory and has no independent legal status.

The Governing Board can appoint special advisors/experts in exceptional cases, as needed. A special advisor/expert may be someone with certain skills that add to those of the Governing Board members to support the Board with a particular issue or project. They have no voting rights within the Governing Board and have no decision-making power.

c) The Technical Secretariat (TS)

- Aim. The Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data” will set up a Technical Secretariat to support the Governing Board in its mission, to monitor and steer on a daily basis the activities of the different Task Groups of the Thematic Partnership and to ensure the effective implementation of activities.
- Functions. The region chairing the Governing Board shall also take charge of the Technical Secretariat of the Interregional Thematic Partnership, through its own capabilities or projects.

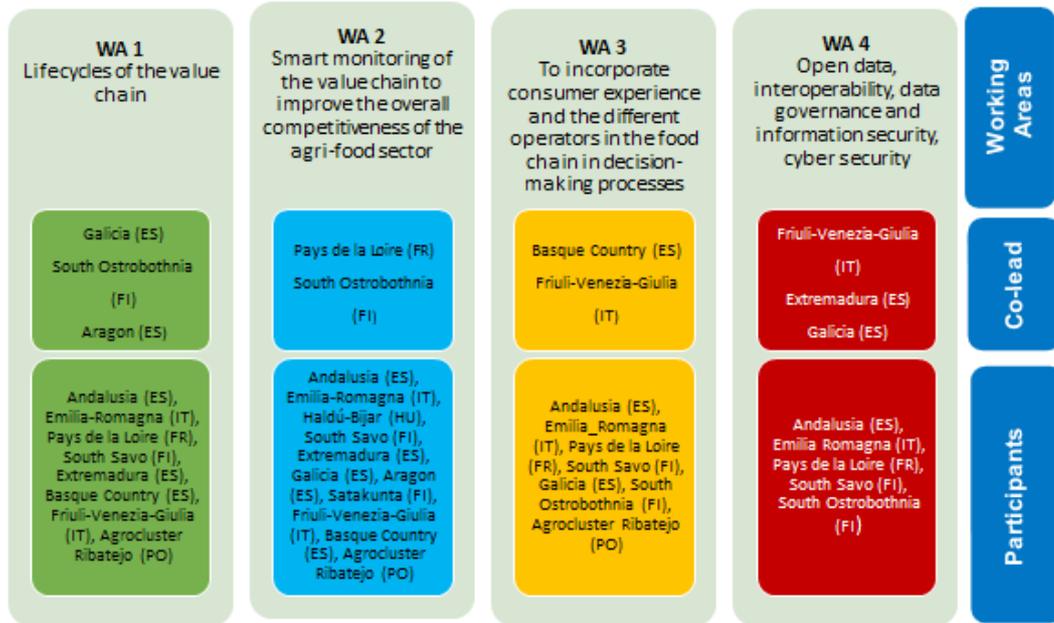
The Thematic Partnership Secretariat shall perform the following tasks:

- To provide organisational support to the General Assembly, the Governing Board and Task Groups: convene notice for meetings, keep electronic diaries, organise meetings, receive and distribute documents, prepare minutes and progress reports, etc.
- To provide support to the Governing Board in decision-making.
- To support the organisation of Task Groups by collecting and disseminating their reports. However, Task Groups have to be self-supporting in terms of scheduling and organising meetings and in work development.
- To support information and communication actions of the Thematic Partnership, including updating information in the S3P Agri-food web-site. The Secretariat will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Thematic Partnership Communication Strategy.

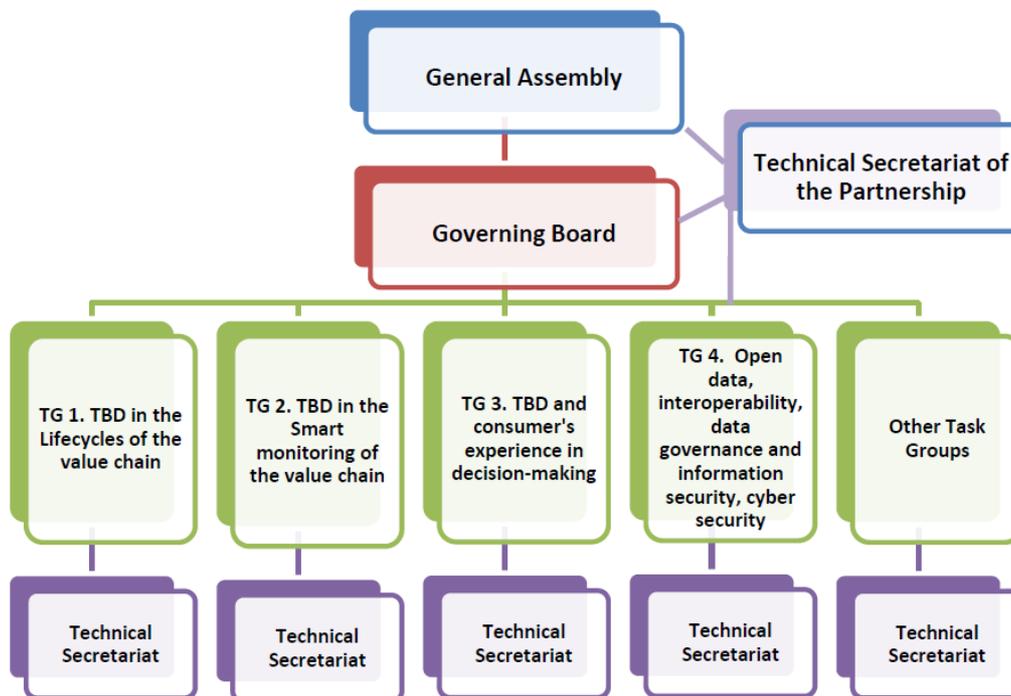
d) Task Groups (TG)

- Four Task Groups have been set up in the following thematic areas:
  - Traceability and Big Data in the “Lifecycles of the value chain”.
  - Traceability and Big Data in the “Smart monitoring of the value chain (agricultural production, agri-food industry, logistics, distribution and consumers) to improve the overall competitiveness of the agri-food sector”.
  - Traceability and Big Data to “incorporate consumer experience and the different operators in the food chain in decision-making processes”.
  - Open data, interoperability, data governance and information security, cyber security.
- Aim. These groups shall take responsibility for the detailed work defined in the Work Plan of the Thematic Partnership on “Traceability and Big Data”, which includes among others: identification and submission of pilot projects or demonstration actions to apply for funding, development of approved projects and activities, monitoring and evaluation reports for the General Assembly and the Governing Board.
- These Task Groups shall report to the Governing Board via Technical Secretariat.
- Task Groups shall be organised in such a way as to involve a large representation of the members of the Thematic Partnership (beyond the organisations of the General Assembly and the Governing Board) while ensuring the maximum efficiency.
- Task Groups shall meet when the Co-Lead Regions find it necessary, at least every four months.
- New Task Groups might be created for specific thematic issues following the approval of the Governing Board.
- Each Task Group will have a Technical Secretariat funded with its own resources or project-funded. They shall keep the Technical Secretariat of the interregional Thematic Partnership constantly up to date.
- Regions co-leading Task Groups shall take the initiative of these groups, and also bear the costs for developing their work, meetings and events with their own resources or project-funded.

Thematic Partnership on “Traceability & Big Data”



Organisation of Working Areas of the Interregional Thematic Partnership



Organisation of the Thematic Partnership

## 9. Code of conduct

Partners are bound, particularly public authorities, to their own codes of conduct within their organisation, but additionally they must consider the following issues:

- Clarity about each partner’s roles and responsibilities in the partnership.
- Being open about the constraints under which each party is operating.
- Publicly disclosing any other personal and institutional relationships and collaborations that might influence the partnership.
- Partners’ independence should not be compromised because of being member of the partnership.
- Acknowledging each partner’s role and contributions when reporting progress made in the partnership.
- Showing that their resources have been used appropriately in the interest of the smooth progress of the partnership.
- No partner should seek to gain competitive advantage/or use confidential information from the partnership for its own gain.
- Loyalty of all partners to the Thematic Partnership and all its members with regards to the submission of initiatives, programmes, projects, participation in forums and events within the scope of the partnership.

## 10. Conflicts of interest

- Members are required to take all measures to prevent any situation where the implementation of any action is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest (‘conflict of interests’).
- Partners must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered. They must, as soon as possible, declare the nature of the interest at a meeting or must formally notify in writing addressed to the chair of the Governing Board. A record of the declaration is to be made in the minutes of the meeting.
- The relevant member must not be present during any deliberation and must not vote on the matter.

## **11. Dissemination and exploitation of results**

Activities serving the dissemination and exploitation of results of the Thematic Partnership are a way to showcase the work that has been done. Sharing results, lessons learned and outcomes and findings beyond the members of the partnership will enable more entities to benefit from them.

With that aim, the Thematic Partnership will have its own Communication Plan to set out and lay down provisions about objectives, responsible partners, target groups, messages, tools and communication channels, exploitation of results inside and outside the partnership, intellectual property rights, among other issues.

## **12. Thematic Partnership funding**

Each region will carry out, through its own capabilities, the assigned activities within the scope of the Work Plan of the Thematic Partnership on "Traceability and Big Data" or, as the case may be, through externally funded projects.