

ITI Limburg – Targeting Economic Recovery

The ITI Limburg covers the whole province of Limburg in the North East of Belgium. Following the announcement of the closure of a Ford car manufacturing plant in Genk in October 2012, the region is facing renewed pressures in terms of job creation and economic prosperity. As the region's largest employer the closure of Ford Genk will have a major impact on the economic fabric and social structures in Limburg. The closure provided an impetus for immediate action, but the economic challenges of the region are deeper rooted. In response, the Flemish Government established an expert council to draft a strategic action plan for the region (*Strategisch Actieplan voor Limburg in het Kwadraat* – SALK). The plan was presented to the Flemish Parliament in February 2013. At the following EU Council meeting, it was announced that EU funding would contribute to fund the action plan for the region.

In 2014-20, the Flanders region will implement ERDF and ESF programmes, benefitting from €173.6 million of ERDF and €393.9 million of ESF.

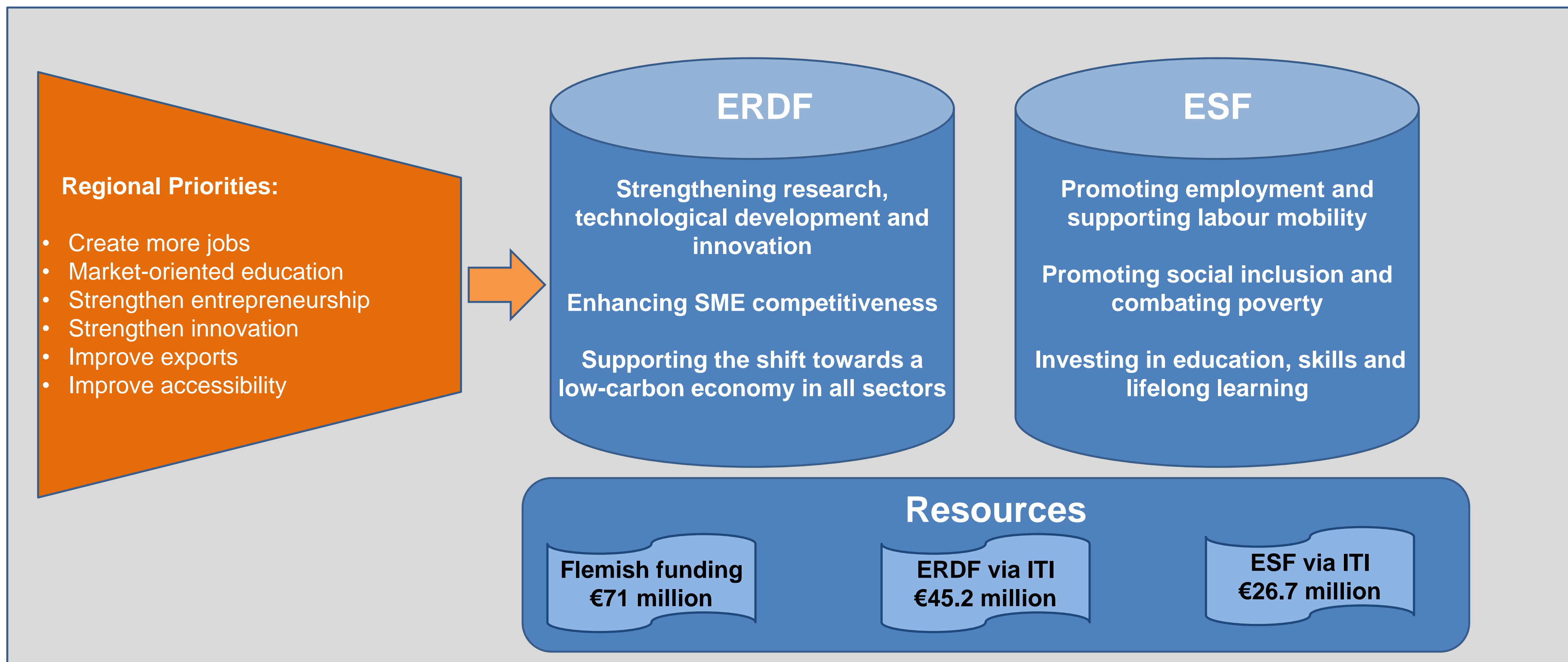
Main principles of the approach

Interregional cooperation – Limburg is best able to develop in cooperation with other regions.

Community formation – Policy needs to focus on creating linkages between people: growth is stimulated by bringing together business, knowledge institutions and government.



Flemish ERDF and ESF contribution to Strategic Action Plan Limburg (ITI)



Governance

High-level coordination meeting		
Coordination between ERDF and ESF Managing Authorities will take place via an annual high-level forum that includes all partners.	Managing Authority	
	Application submission and selection will follow mainstream OP procedures. The Managing Authority will liaise with local actors.	ITI The Provincial Technical Committee Limburg will, in corporation with actors from Taskforce Limburg, prepare, implement and monitor projects within the SALK framework.

Challenges and learning

Capacity and scale – The Flemish ERDF OP is relatively small and a large proportion of its funds will be channelled through ITIs. Together with the innovative nature of the approach this has raised concerns about administrative capacity.

Snowballing – The introduction of the ITI in Limburg has led to other regions expressing an interest in establishing an ITI. These regions did not have the benefit of the strategic preparation that was undertaken by SALK.

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Background information

Strategisch Actieplan voor Limburg in het Kwadraat: http://www.vlaamsparlament.be/vp/pdf/20122013/salkrapport_080213.pdf

Partnership Agreement: http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/agreements/index_nl.htm