



Towards Regional spECialisation for Smart growth spirit



Newsletter No. 5

Apéritif:

Dear Readers,

Part of smart specialization process is strengthening research and innovation capacity in regions, including research infrastructure (e.g. in universities, competence centers), innovation infrastructure and equipment (e.g. Living Labs, Creative Factories, advanced manufacturing capabilities, science and technology parks) and skills. Not only skills of scientists but also creative thinking, design or e-commerce.

The TR3S project is building up and strengthening capacity in partner regions through meetings and events for innovation policy stakeholders. Innovation Morning Coffee and Morning Tea sessions were held in each region to introduce the idea of open innovation and user driven innovation as new trends in innovation policy. Several Living Kitchen sessions were organized by Partners to bring together stakeholders and representatives of different sectors to discuss regional development and smart specialization process. More than 15 good practices were collected from TR3S regions and shared with each other. All this to strengthen the understanding of partner regions – not only partners in the network but also entrepreneurs and organizations in these regions.

International cooperation is the major driver of innovation. It can help developed regions to transfer their technology and help developing regions to improve their capabilities. It can also promote the communication between different nations and regions. TR3S partners are invited to proactively transfer new and improving good practices in innovation and SME support to their regions. Innovation is beyond the borders.

Bon Appétit!

Valga County Government



The TR3S project is funded by the EU's European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVC programme

Fifth Steering Committee Meeting 14-16.5.2014 / Glasgow, Scotland

The fifth Steering Committee meeting for TRES was held in Glasgow, Scotland and hosted by the Scottish project partner, Scottish Enterprise. The three day programme (14–16 May 2014) included a Pressure Pot Meeting, a Cooking session and Study Visits.

Day one (May 14) kicked off with the Steering Committee meeting that included updates and discussion on general project management, project budget, communication activities and overall project progress. This was then followed by a “Pressure Pot” Meeting where all partners shared their experiences and learning from the first “Living Kitchen” sessions organised in their regions. The partners had the opportunity to get feedback from the Living Lab expert, Consulta Europa, on their approach and methodology. The day finished off with a discussion and summary of next steps for the project.



The group were then given a flavour of Scotland's Tourism offering (and one of its four Good Practices) at a social dinner held at the 'House for an Art Lover' which is based on the design by one of Scotland's most famous architects and designers, Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The delegates were given a brief talk on the history of the House and Mackintosh's lasting influence on and contribution to the world of art, design and architecture. The dinner was followed by a small whisky tasting session that included a brief overview of the history, characteristics and the process behind the creation and increasing popularity of whisky – Scotland's second biggest export product and also a key element of its tourism offering.

Day two (May 15) started off with the “Cooking Session” where all partners shared their experiences and feedback from delivering the Innovation Morning Tea/Afternoon Coffee sessions. Scottish Enterprise provided an overview of their own approach to supporting Innovation and the use of public procurement as a driver for market driven innovation. The group were also given an overview of Scottish Enterprise's refreshed Innovation Strategy and the various tools and support (example – Innovation Grants, Innovation Specialist advisors and expert support) available to help innovative businesses realize their ideas and turn them into profitable products/services.

The group were then given an overview of two of Scotland's four Good Practices submitted as part of TRES – Tourism Innovation Programme and Food and Drink Health Innovation. For the second session, the venue of the meeting changed to Inovo – a new Scottish Enterprise supported hub for industry and academic collaboration to support Renewable Energy. It sits within Glasgow's International Technology and Renewable Energy Zone (ITREZ). At Inovo, the group were given the opportunity to learn more about the remaining two of Scotland's four Good Practices – Interface and Renewable Energy.

On the evening of the second day the group was introduced to the West End of Glasgow, a popular tourist area, over dinner and were given a walking tour of the University of Glasgow – the fourth oldest university in the English speaking world and a world leading research centre with £181m of annual earnings for research.

Day three (May 16) of the programme was focussed on exchange of experiences and mutual learning (“Study Visits”). The project partners from Tampere who had indicated an interest in SE's Tourism Good Practice were given a brief tour of Loch Lomond – a destination supported by Scottish Enterprise as an important part of Scotland's Tourism sector. Along with partners from Valga they were given an overview of the Destination Development approach being taken by Scottish Enterprise to support the Tourism industry. Glasgow is one of the key destinations supported as part of the destination development programme.

The partners from Valga, Bucharest-Ifov and Basque region were provided with more detailed insight into Scottish Enterprise's strategy and support for the growth of the renewable industry, using energy fore-sighting and the specific mechanisms designed to support the offshore wind sector in Scotland.

To date the feedback from the partners on the structure, organisation and delivery of the whole 3 day programme has been extremely positive. Discussions are already underway with selected partners to progress a number of points that emerged from the discussions and exchange of experiences during the visit.

Study Visit – Innovation and smart city cooperation between Tampere and Bilbao (24-25.6.2014 / Bilbao, Spain)

Representatives of key innovation policy and smart city stakeholders from Tampere visited Bilbao and Basque Country. The study visit was organized by TECNALIA Research & Innovation Foundation, and partnered by BIF, Bilbao / Basque Country excellence in innovation and cluster policies and in innovation performance, as well as in smart city related development, is well-known in Tampere. In connection with the TR3S study visit, the Tampere delegation learned about smart city and innovation policies and projects in Basque Country, and discussed smart city and innovation related EU cooperation opportunities with Bilbao partners.

Smart city development is a key S3 priority for Tampere region. In the Finnish national innovation programme INKA 2014-2020, Tampere is the leader of the smart city and renewing industry sub-programme. The City of Tampere is actively preparing projects for the coming EU calls on smart cities. In connection with the preparation process, Tampere is now mapping and benchmarking most interesting partner cities and regions in Europe.

There are interesting earlier and new connections and cooperation experiences between Bilbao and Tampere. Tampere-based open innovation platform Demola is about to expand its European network by opening Demola Basque Country in September this year, in cooperation with its local partner Denokinn.

Further as background information, cities of Bilbao and Tampere have recent cooperation experience in connection with the EIPA study “In Search of Local Public Management Excellence – Seven Journeys to Success”, initiated and funded by the City of Bilbao. Tampere was one of seven case cities in the study. The Baltic Institute of Finland was coordinating the preparation of the study in Tampere.

Basque Country and Tampere had earlier cooperation experience also in eCitizen II eGovernment project (Interreg IVC) coordinated by BIF. Finally, strong involvement of VTT in Tampere's smart city development, and strong and long-term VTT-Tecnalia partnership, also provide an excellent platform for Bilbao – Tampere cooperation in smart city and other topics.

Plat principaux:

Good Practices from...

Packaging Excellence Center (PEC) – Stuttgart Region

The Stuttgart Region is a leading centre for mechanical engineering, which plays an important role also for the automotive sector as well as in new sectors, like environmental technology. Together with sector related engineering services, research institutes, networks and regional competence centers the sector forms a globally leading production technology cluster. In figures the sector has grown in importance over the last years with a turnover of 17.9 bn Euros in 2010, making up 10% of total German turnover in this sector. In the Stuttgart Region 62% of this turnover is generated abroad, with 84,000 persons directly employed in the sector (2010), accounting for 28% of total employment in the industrial sector.

Next to the production technology cluster as a whole, the Stuttgart Region is home to a unique concentration of companies in the field of packaging and automation technology that has developed since the second half of the 19th century. Many of today's companies have its seeds in only one big enterprise founded in 1861 in the region, which is now part of the Robert Bosch GmbH – the world market leader in the field of packaging technology. To secure the future development of this cluster it was obvious to establish a support structure in the form of a moderated cooperation platform. This platform intends to strengthen and link the existing potential in this sector.

After one year of preparatory work the Packaging Excellence Center (PEC) was founded in 2007 as a registered association. The 36 founding members – companies and public institutions – voted for the City of Waiblingen as location for the branch office. That illustrates the bottom-up approach of the initiative, even if the conceptual framework was developed and the implementation was supervised by the Stuttgart Region Economic Development Corporation (WRS). Today the association has 55 members. It is open to new members, in particular for companies from the sector, universities and research institutions. The PEC has its own code of conduct that constitutes basic modes of behaviour regarding the internal as well as external acting of the members and the association's organs. The branch office has two employees.

The PEC can be regarded as active business development as it supports its members in securing and expanding their market share. To reach its goals the PEC acts as intersection between the companies, science and politics and networks the packaging technology sector across the whole value chain. The activities can be grouped in three pillars: technology, marketing and qualification. With its regularly organised activities (workshops, seminars, forum, and competence teams) the PEC offers its members the possibility to engage in intensive dialogue between industry and research – and to take a look 'beyond one's own nose'. This admits the optimization of processes, the creation of networks or the exploitation of 7 new technologies.

To build relationships outside the region the PEC organises joint trade fair stands and looks for other sector networks or cluster initiatives (national as well as international) willing to cooperate.

As responsible body for the Competence Center Initiative of the Stuttgart Region, the WRS offers coaching and supports the competence centers in matters of organisation, management or strategy. In addition the WRS incorporates the centers in its activities, such as EU-funded projects or joint events. It is also possible for the centers to apply for project-oriented funding with new project ideas.

In terms of smart specialisation the sector of mechanical engineering as a whole and packaging and automation technology in particular is seen as one of the core sectors for the future economic development of the Stuttgart Region. The economic relevance has been described above and is also recognised in the economic development strategy of the Stuttgart Region by 2020. One of the main instruments in the field of innovation is the Competence Center Initiative that has been launched in the year 2000 by the WRS – and turned out to be quite successful. The first implementation concept for the regional strategy, adopted by the Regional Assembly in 2007, contained the PEC as new project to support the companies in the mechanical engineering sector. The implementation of the PEC can therefore be regarded as a result of a continuously further developed strategy of innovation support in the Stuttgart Region.

Dessert:

Must try...

Regional Innovation Policy in practice: training session for Policy Makers and Practitioners (1-2.4.2014 / Bilbao, Spain)

The KNOW-HUB project in collaboration with TR3S, organized a Training Session for Policy Makers and Practitioners with the aim of showing in practice Regional Innovation Policies. The session was split into 3 sequential blocks of content: Policies, tools and instruments to implement Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation, RIS3; Business needs, clusters and support systems for SMEs; Monitoring and assessing RIS3 and Regional Innovation Policies.

More info: <http://know-hub.eu>

How to Develop your RIS3 Priorities (1-2.4.2014 / Norrköping, Sweden)

Thematic workshop organised in Norrköping where four regions presented their work with developing their prioritised areas: East Sweden (SE), Scotland (UK), Lower Austria (AT) and Flanders (BE).

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Peer review workshop for regional RIS3 (10-11.4.2014 / Novi Sad, Serbia)

This peer review, the first that took place in a non-EU region, aimed at discussing key elements and challenges in the design of regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3). The aims of the workshop were: to allow regions from both EU and accession/candidate countries to meet their peers, European Commission staff, academic experts and others to discuss common issues related to smart specialisation; to allow regions and countries to peer-review and discuss each other's work on RIS3 and to better understand how to incorporate transnational cooperation in RIS3.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Digital Innovation for Regional Growth (29.4.2014 / Thessaloniki, Greece)

The S3 platform together with DG CONNECT and the regional government of Macedonia, Greece arranged one-day event consisted of presentations and interactive workshops discussed with the European Commission, the S3 Platform, European regions and local stakeholders, on Innovation Procurement and Innovation Vouchers and their application in boosting regional digital growth.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Dessert:

Peer-review workshop of the National RIS3 strategies (15-16.5.2014 / Portoroz, Slovenia)

Workshop organized by the S3 platform and the Government office for Development and European Cohesion Policy of the Republic of Slovenia. During the workshop, the national research and innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation of the three EU countries Croatia, Cyprus and Slovenia were presented and peer-reviewed.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Smart Specialisation and Sparsely Populated Regions (17-18.6.2014 / Rovaniemi, Finland)

The Smart Specialisation Platform (S3P) together with the region of Lapland arranged a workshop on the topic of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (S3) in Sparsely Populated Regions. The event explored what challenges are in developing RIS3 strategies in sparsely populated areas and especially in the sustainable management of natural resources both for the purpose of identifying and documenting good practises and challenges, and to create the ground for learning between regions.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Mobilising Universities for Smart Specialisation (20.6.2014 / Brussels, Belgium)

The S3 Platform together with DG REGIO and the European University Association organised a high level conference on the role of universities in smart specialisation. At the meeting, there were discussed four cases studies of university-regional partnerships in the development of Smart Specialisation Strategies, as well as presentations on EU support by the Director Generals for Regional Policy, Research and Education

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Peer Review workshop – Moving Forward and Looking Outward (3-4.7.2014 / Dublin, Ireland)

This high-level event was co-organised by the S3 Platform and the Irish Authorities (Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation). During this workshop, five countries: Bulgaria, Ireland, Romania, Poland and Slovakia presented their current work on RIS3. The rest of workshop participants acted as 'critical friends' and discussed the strategies of the countries under review.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Not to miss...

TR3S Steering Group meeting and 6th Cooking Session (9-11.9.2014 / Tampere, Finland)

The partners of the TR3S meeting come together to discuss project issues and also take part in individual study visits in the Tampere region

More info: <http://tr3s-project.eu>

Digital Growth & Smart Specialisation (17-18.9.2014 / Lodz, Poland)

The purpose of the event is to present examples of how digital growth strategies are developed and interesting cases of policy measures in different thematic areas being deployed in European regions and states.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Cohesion Policy and the Synergies with the Research and Innovation (2-3.10.2014 / Prague, Czech Republic)

The principal objectives of this conference are to launch the project and explain its rationale, objectives and roadmap; to raise awareness of the actions needed to enable synergies between different EU funding programmes for research and innovation; to share experiences in combining Structural Funds and Framework Programme to improve excellence in R&I systems; draw lessons for the future.

More info: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Partners:

Lead partner:

Tecnalia Research & Innovation Foundation (Basque Country, ES)
Contact: Ms Ezekiela Arrizabalaga (ezekiela.arrizabalaga@tecnalia.com)
www.tecnalia.com

SPRI S.A. (Basque Country, ES)
Contact: Mr Txomin Olabarri (tolabarri@spri.es)

Pannon Business Network Association (Nyugat-Dunantul, HU)
Contact: Ms Regina Pethő (regina.petho@pbn.hu)

Scottish Enterprise (Scotland, UK)
Contact: Mr Ian McCoull (Ian.McCoull@scotent.co.uk)

Valga County Government (Eesti, EE)
Contact: Ms Sille Roomets (sille.roomets@valgamv.ee)

Regione Piemonte (Piemonte, IT)
Contact: Ms Stefania Crotta (stefania.crotta@regione.piemonte.it)

Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (Bucuresti-Ilfov, RO)
Contact: Mr Daniel Popescu (daniel.popescu@adrbi.ro)

Lubelskie Voivodeship (Lubelskie, PL)
Contact: Ms Ewa Paszkiewicz-Tomasiak (ewa.paszkiwicz@lubelskie.pl)

The Baltic Institute of Finland (Pirkanmaa, FI)
Contact: Mr Esa Kokkonen (esa.kokkonen@tampere.fi)

Stuttgart Region Economic Development Corporation (Stuttgart, DE)
Contact: Ms Stephanie Fleischmann (stephanie.fleischmann@region-stuttgart.de)

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