

Digital Agenda

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for Europe

Smart Specialisation Strategies

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What is Smart Specialisation ?



“An entrepreneurial process of discovery, identifying where a region can benefit from specializing in a particular area of science and technology”

Dominique Foray

Science and Technology, Issue 02,
www.publicservice.co.uk

What is Smart Specialisation ?



- Knowledge for Growth' expert group (DG RTD) launched concept in the framework of ERA;
- **Problem:** fragmentation/imitation/duplication of public R&D investments;
- **Stresses role for all regions in the knowledge economy**, if they can identify comparative advantages in specific R & I domains/clusters (not just winning sectors);
- **Challenges:** Smart specialisation has to embrace the concept of open innovation, not only investment in (basic) research.



- It is more profitable to focus efforts on a few areas than spreading resources over many;
- The majority of regions look at the same sectorial priorities even when they do not have the necessary assets (competences);
- Three strategies can be developed: technological leadership, catching-up strategies and preventive strategies.

How?



- Define where the region wants to go, vision – competitiveness through innovation and make choices;
- Develop a number of thematic or cross sectoral innovation priorities in each region and use all available resources there;
- Identify competitive factors (critical mass) and possible bottlenecks, enabling General Purpose Technologies **AND CONCENTRATE** resources on key priorities;



THE AIM IS NOT TO WASTE AND DISPERCE EFFORTS

Some regions might already been developing such plans (should be reviewed), others need to adjust and update their strategies in view of the Communication.

The EU set up a 'Smart Specialisation Platform' to provide assistance and run pilots with interested regions. Latest count 20 regions already joined.



Concentrate resources on the most promising areas of comparative advantage such as

Clusters

Existing sectors

Cross-sectoral activities

Eco-innovation

High value added markets

Specific research areas



Regional innovation strategy focused on competitive advantage and green growth with strong stakeholder involvement

- Positioning region in global context: International differentiation strategy and specialised technology diversification
- Supports the integration and exploitation of all sorts of R&I assets
- Promotes 'related variety' by focusing on cross-sectoral linkages
- Focus on private R&I investments, SMEs in particular, but include social innovation
- Top-down setting of objectives (EU2020, Innovation Union) and bottom-up processes of entrepreneurial discovery
- Involving experts, businesses, research centres, universities and other knowledge-creating institutions and stakeholders: builds on triple-helix partnership
- Sound SWOT analysis, identification of competitiveness factors, enabling technologies and concentrating resources on key priorities



Regions need to identify the obstacles which need to be removed in order to be successful.

Regions with similar assets should or could construct a similar ecosystem.

A Smart Specialisation Strategy is the road to support a successful growth agenda and quality development.



Governance of RIS³ as a collective social endeavour

- Set up a dedicated Steering Group/Knowledge Leadership Group, a Management Team and Working groups...and flagship projects
- Process needs to be interactive, regionally driven and consensus-based
- Collaborative leadership: know what, know who and know how.
- New demand-side perspectives given prominence: not just usual public suspects but businesses in the driving seat
- Embrace social as well as ecological innovation
- Involve boundary spanners brokering new connections across sectors, disciplines and institutions in order to explore « related-variety »
- Link national, regional and EU funds: involve stakeholders operating both outside and in the region



- The platform is **established at the Joint Research Centre (IPTS) in Seville** and covers a three-year period.
- It will act as a facilitator in bringing together the relevant policy support activities in research, regional, enterprise, innovation, information society, education and sustainable policies.
- Will inform and communicate on related funding opportunities under the relevant EU funding programmes.
- It will include the facilities to provide direct feed-back and information to regions, Member States and its intermediate bodies.
- Provides methodological support, expert advice, training, information on good practice, etc.
- ***Do you want to peer review your Strategy – starting 2012?***
Mirror Group of International experts:
<http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/research-and-innovation/documents/listofmembersofMG.pdf>



Thank you!

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