Focus Group - Pilot 3

Challenges and opportunities in R&I funding promotion for RIS3 implementation

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Pilot 3

Issues raised by the Working Group

- National Contact Points (NCPs) in H2020 have a particular focus on the national level. The understanding of the regional issues is often limited, as well as the experience in dealing with local/regional authorities.
- The idea of regional contact points was suggested as a way to address regional concerns. Having regional RIS3 contact points was proposed as an option to have a more complete vision of the set of instruments, focusing not only on chasing the money but also on being able to connect regional stakeholders.
- Additional context:
  - ICT NCPs from the IDEAL-IST network had a discussion with 4 managing authorities on 12 Nov 2018 in JRC Seville (Wales, Centro/Portugal, Extremadura, France). Lessons from this discussion are brought into this pilot proposal.
  - Under S2E II an event with NCPs has been organised

Objectives and context of this pilot

Pilot Objectives

- Increase the understanding of rationales, opportunities and bottlenecks for collaboration between funding promotors
- Design alternative options for such collaboration in different contexts and territories
- Prepare for the next programming period
- Initial focus on ESIF and Horizon Europe
- Possible extension to other 'contact points': LIFE Contact Points, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Contact Points, etc.

Earlier findings: Rationales for closer collaboration

- **3.1 A multi-level governance component:**
  - Lack of awareness of regional R&I strengths
  - Lack of understanding regional structures
  - Low involvement from NCPs in the RIS3 development processes at regional level
  - NCPs as a gateway for regions to be more visible in international networks/interregional collaboration
  - More regional involvement in FP
  - Widening needs outside EU13, lagging regions in advanced countries
  - Increase NCP knowledge of FP information relevant for the territory (JUs, EIT KICs,…)

Earlier findings: Rationales for closer collaboration

- **3.2 An innovation component:**
  - bottlenecks on the interface between fundamental research, applied research, market uptake
  - Role of NCPs in bridging these interfaces upstream and downstream?

- **3.3 A multi-funding component:**
  - Opportunities to promote funding opportunities also outside H2020 (ESIF, national, other)

- **3.4 A strategy component:**
  - An integrated vision and strategy for the territory
  - Highlight alignment with the European challenges/priorities
  - Communicating this strategy actively
  - Where do NCPs fit?
  - Role of NCPs as influencers in new programme design

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Earlier findings: Bottlenecks with regard to collaborations

- Capacity to engage (on both sides): budgetary and human resources limitations
- Divergence of the legal framework and timelines at regional (and national) and EU levels on RDI funding
- Available information: How to increase and coordinate the information available on different funding options?
- Competition versus collaboration: MSs and regions are collaborating ánd competing on their RIS3 priorities
- Misconceptions and lack of understanding:
  - NCPs perceiving ESIF as bureaucratic and RIS3 priorities as very generic
  - ESIF managers knowing little about FP
- Structures of national NCP networks: Territorial specialisation versus thematic specialisation

Earlier findings: Possible activity areas for addressing the issues identified (1)

- National NCP networks can train regional support teams/clusters/regional innovation agencies
- Better division of labour between regional and national level
- Role of NCPs in interregional/international networks
- Role for NCPs in designing local tools and programmes which are in line with European tools
- Possibility for regions to transfer up to 5% of their Cohesion Policy resources to another EU fund (with NCP guidance)
- Role of NCPs in uptake of FP research results (for developing pilots or demonstration projects with ESIF)
- Better developed guidance for applicants about all kinds of funding instruments
- Develop a structured two-way communication (national/regional, NCPs/MAs) through a network

Earlier findings: Possible activity areas for addressing the issues identified (2)

- Suggestions to resolve the bottlenecks
- Establish regional contact points that mirror NCPs to improve the reach of contact points
- Make smart use also of NCPs of third countries
- Support in establishing alliances with EU wide initiatives and platforms in chosen specialisation areas
- EU wide improvement of information among NCP concerning RIS3, ESIF, thematic interregional partnerships
- Using ERDF to strengthen H2020 participation particularly for writing and preparing proposals (in collaboration with NCPs)
- Support NCPs to allow them to help stakeholders either upstream or downstream to make the most of all the instruments at their disposal.
- Similarly regional authorities should also have similar integrated view and this empowerment can happen through training the trainer.

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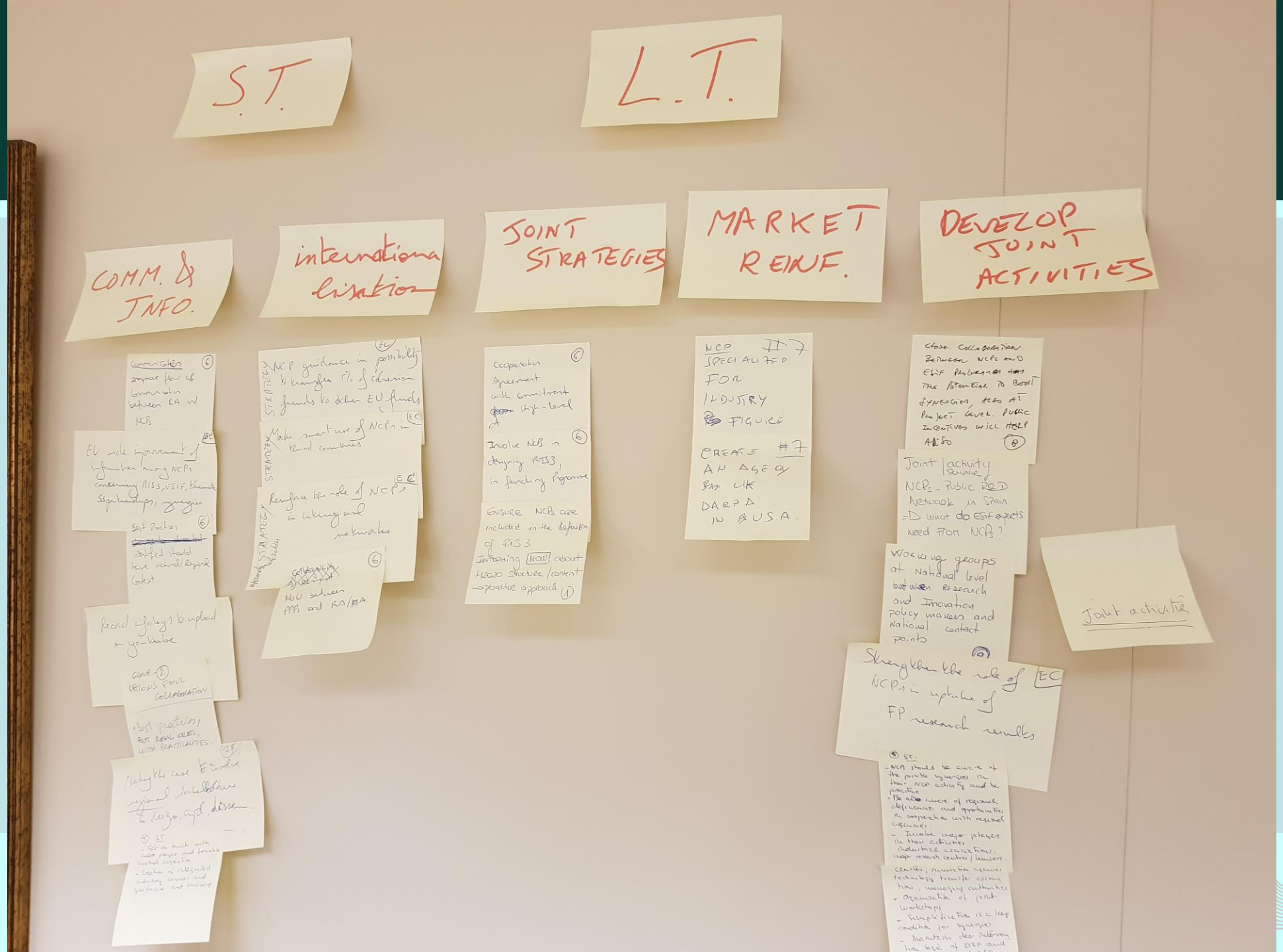
Methodology of the Focus Group

- Learning Lab with NCPs: How do different territories make use of NCPs?
- Pilot for increased collaboration in one particular territory (Ms/region), focused on a limited number of activity areas
- Mapping potential roles of NCPs or regional contact points in a territory, starting from a particular RIS3



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Options for next steps

- Interest in online and physical info sessions (ES, NCP.WIDE NET,…)
- Wider Focus Group involving stakeholders/beneficiaries and NPCs of other funding and financing sources
- Working paper on funding promotion