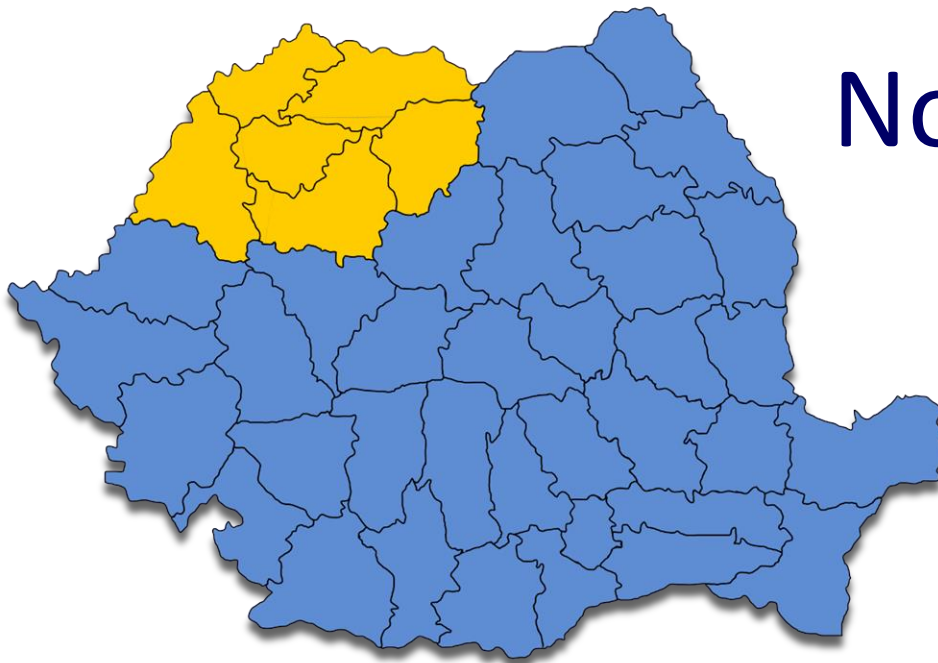


Governance of Smart Specialisation Strategies



North-West Region Romania

Linköping, 31 January 2019

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Main issues we would like to discuss?

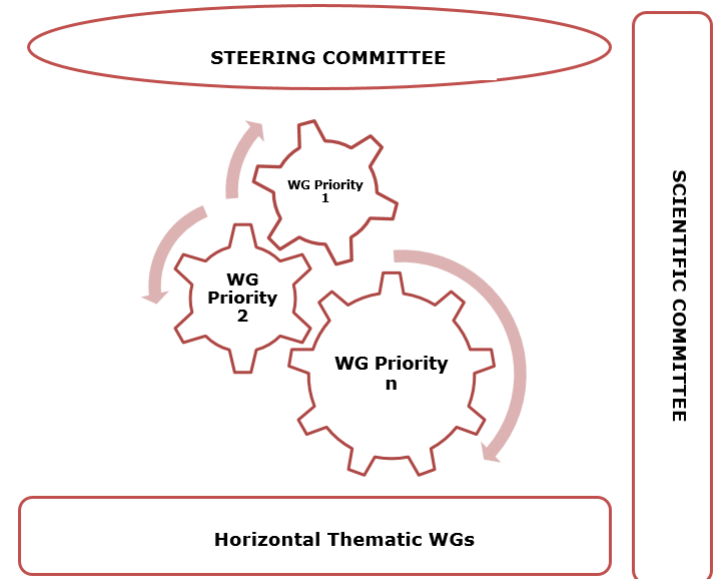
- Main successes and bottlenecks in the design and implementation of the governance for RIS3
- Questions you would like peers to discuss after your presentation:
 1. How to motivate and involve the private sector more effectively in the S3 implementation phase and increase the no. of submitted projects – introduce an implication indicator which impacts the score in case of submitted projects (keep up the interest of targeted companies taking part in S3 events)
 2. How to communicate more effectively with the national level (for taking regional needs into account) in a country where regions have no administrative power and OPs are centralized (OP guides consider input from RDAs, but evaluators are contracted at national level, no competences developed locally. Examine difference between planned and submitted projects – information block.
 3. How to better inter-connect overlapping initiatives concerning smart specialization, especially financing of projects (complementarity between parallel initiatives financing the same or similar activities) and financing of the same TO through different programmes

Overview of RIS3 governance - structure

!! *Framework Document* ↔ *Smart Specialization Strategy*

!! *Regional Innovation Consortium* ↔ *Steering Committee*

- **Scope** – create participation and ownership among all relevant actors of the quadruple helix structure within the governance structure for the RIS3, on all territorial levels, in activities related to the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Ensuring the capacity to absorb, generate and exchange knowledge and information quickly and efficiently
- **Inputs:** Lagging Regions Initiative, expert recommendations, strategic EU documents and regional specificities
- Elaboration and implementation of the strategy is the responsibility of the RDAs.



Overview of RIS3 governance – main actors

- **Steering Committee** - The highest level advisory body in the RIS3 process, having its own governing rules with a maximum of 15 members presided by the General Director of the RDA. The SC approves documents elaborated within the RIS3 process, is consulted in meetings or written procedures especially regarding the content of the S3, revision of priorities, monitoring and evaluation, promoting S3 and its results.
- **Scientific Committee** – a flexible structure involving specialists from research and academia, European expert groups, ensuring the link with European expert networks. Experts within the Scientific Committee are selected according to their field of expertise and collaborate closely with the management team for ensuring the quality of the Strategy. In different stages of the elaboration process, other experts can also be involved.
- **Working Groups in priority sectors** – these groups have the goal to support economic transformation through innovation in the fields of Smart Specialization, based on the quadruple helix model. These structures can have periodical or ad-hoc meetings, can organize bilateral consultations or workshops.
- **Working groups in horizontal activities** – their goal being to support the implementation of specific priorities defined in the Policy Mix section of the Strategy. Topics for WGs are selected by the Steering Committee or the JRC and are supported by the RDA management team (e.g. High Level Working Group for the Mobility of Human Resources).
- **RIS3 Management Team** - within the RDA (overseeing the implementation of activities, ensuring communication with EU and national level, secretariat and coordination)

Overview of our RIS3 priorities

PILLAR I
INNOVATION FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- AGRI-FOOD
- COSMETICS AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS
- HEALTH

PILLAR II
DEVELOPING EMERGING SECTORS

- NEW MATERIALS
- ADVANCED PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES

PILLAR III
*DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
(REGIONAL DIGITAL AGENDA)*

- ICT

RIS3 Governance (1)

Actors involved (role in designing and implementing RIS3)

- Research – universities and public research institutions represented in the SC, major role in EDPs and follow-up activities
- Private sector – companies, participating in EDPs, providing project ideas (clusters – involving their own members, passing on information, submitting own projects related to S3 and asking for support letters)
- Administration – somewhat less involved, less interested

Methods and processes to promote stakeholder engagement (e.g. *structures and processes* for the *Entrepreneurial Discovery Process*).

- EDP methodology provided by JRC, RIS3 Guide, methodology for the elaboration of the Framework Document for implementing RIS3, parallel process at national level (SNCDI)
- Thematic meetings (focus groups) asked by the private sector offering input on needs, correcting analyses, fine tuning directions (e.g. furniture)
- Filling in questionnaires before EDPs to see if proposed niches are OK
- Analysis of the TT gap done by Jonathan Loeffler
- Entrepreneurial universities done by Yannis Tolia et al. (Adrian Healy and Florin Bondar)

➔ Should be continuous processes – interested in suggestions on platforms or other methods to receive continuous feedback (fiches, Delphi method, etc.) to see fields of interest

RIS3 Governance (2)

Intermediary bodies/facilitating bodies, in charge of promoting/managing interactions among actors;

- Clusters helping to involve companies and providing data

Multi-level regulatory processes (distribution of powers and functions across different levels of government in your country; RIS3 policy coordination: are there regional coordination or policy mechanisms and institutions in place to coordinate research & innovation activities?)

- National RDI Strategy – developed at national level, responsibility of the Ministry dealing with research and innovation, leading to discrepancies and redundancies – implemented through a series of instruments, mainly through the National Research, Technological Development and Innovation Plan 2014-2020 and the Competitiveness Operational Programme – with research fields, validated by other research methods, no EDPs, complemented by other SIPOCA national projects to coordinate it with the regional RIS3s
- RIS3 at regional level – designed by the NW RDA in closer cooperation with the Ministry for Regional Development, the reference document for the implementation of the PA 1
- The approaches should have been similar and the delegated bodies should collaborate more
- There is a need for a competent regional institution or body, responsible for the management of the smart specialisation strategy and for the effective functioning of entrepreneurial discovery process.

RIS3 Governance (3)

Changes/innovations introduced in the governance structure at national, regional and/or local levels (e.g. new institutional actors, new spaces for dialogue and policy learning, new stakeholders involved in the policy process, etc.);

- Common initiatives like putting the basis of a regional Digital Innovation Hub
- Project implemented by the World Bank: “Supporting Innovation in Romanian Catching Up Regions”, financed by the EC for improving the capacities of RDAs to design and implement RDI support programs at regional level

Novel practices that mark a clear new working method for the public administration (e.g. e-governance, open forum discussion and citizen dialogue, etc.).

- Thematic working groups, like the one related to the development and mobility of human resources
- Creating the INNO platform, an online, dynamic ecosystem for identifying and generating development opportunities

RIS3 Governance (4)

Success/failures: what were the major elements for the success/failure of the RIS3 governance?
what are the main bottlenecks/challenges that still need to be overcome?

- Difficulties in the process of engaging the private sector – since they do not see any immediate material advantage, they realize too late that they have not contributed enough to see their needs in the strategic documents.
- The confusion created by having a separate Framework Document for implementing smart specialization and a Smart Specialization Strategy
- Still weak collaboration between academia, research and the private sector (using different language, having totally different objectives, national RDI financing which does not promote a dialogue between SMEs and research, state aid rules)
- Technology transfer gap – TT offer not adapted to the needs of the market, lack of training in the private sector.
- Activities for elaborating the S3 have not been constant, there was no clear vision at the beginning, lack of competences and information about financing, having an impact on the credibility of the process
- Lack of coordination between the national and regional levels, inside organization, centralized system, not all competences thought to be present in the RDAs
- JRC support has offered valuable input and expertise
- Some strategic projects developed during EDPs between different types of stakeholders were detailed and submitted to be funded under the ROP Axis 1

RIS3 revision (1)

Institutional setting: Are the current governance structures adequate?

- Engagement is still low, communication even within organizations is poor
- RDAs not involved in all relevant meetings at national level, difficult to obtain relevant data (e.g.. projects financed under mainstream OPs)
- Although RDPs are supposed to be the basis of ROP, there is no clear connection
- We will need to attribute a much bigger role to the Scientific Committee, identify a relevant expert in each priority field (even from other EU countries)
- RIS3 at regional level is responsibility of RDA, having a closer cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development. S3 at national level is the responsibility of the Ministry dealing with research and innovation, leading to discrepancies and redundancies. This overlap will have to be dealt with
- RDAs are not consulted regarding H2020 topics

Institutional capabilities: Are the existing institutional capabilities adequate to revise their RIS3?

- RDA RIS3 management team is still under-staffed
- Key competences are missing
- No working/tested monitoring system put into place yet

RIS3 revision (2)

Strategic planning: What elements/policies should be taken into account and how? (e.g. new enabling conditions, agenda 2030).

- Establish high level working groups on different field related to Smart Specialization
 - be in permanent contact with the EC and see if they organize events for regions identifying the same/similar fields of interest.

Synergies: What synergies/coherence should be ensured with other EU programmes, if any, (not directly addressing R&I policy).

- Transnational and interregional cooperation programmes for the exchange of experience
- Ensuring complementarity of the national funds with EU programmes financing innovation (no complementarities or synergy between mainstream ESIF programmes and H2020)

Summary & next steps

Conclusions

What are the main difficulties in terms of governance that still need to be overcome to design and implement successfully a RIS3?

- Monitoring system
- Better communication with the national level
- Involvement of the private sector and facilitating dialogue with RDI institutions

What are the main elements that you should take into account when revising the RIS3?

- Operationalizing working groups on the identified sectors
- Develop key competences at regional level

Question 1: How to motivate and involve the private sector more effectively in the S3 implementation phase



- **Why:** *the involvement of the private sector and the inclusion of their priorities is directly connected with the number of projects submitted, the quality of the proposals. (if the needs of the private sector are taken into consideration when elaborating calls for proposals, chances are the number of applications will be much higher). There is still a need to continuously animate stakeholders' dialogue and interactions (beyond EDPs).*
- **What has been done:** *Inviting companies to EDPs, involving them and informing them through sectoral clusters. Might be worth considering the introduction of an implication indicator which impacts the score in case of submitted projects (keep up the interest of targeted companies taking part in S3 events), and increase the no. of submitted projects. Stakeholders should be involved in policy implementation as it ensures actors' trust and commitment to the strategic objectives of the RIS3, as well as alignment of market needs and opportunities with policy intervention.*
- **What worked:** *telling companies there will be funding involved at some point.*
- **What did not work:** *talking about the importance of cooperating with RDI¹³ institutions, TT,*

Question 2: How to communicate more effectively with the national level in a country where regions have no administrative power and OPs are centralized



- **Why:** *calls within OPs consider input from RDAs, but evaluators are contracted at national level, so no competences are developed locally. Also, regional needs are not always considered at the elaboration of the Programmes at national level, there are multiple overlaps between financing programmes and responsible institutions*
- **What has been done:** *establishing a Steering Committee at national level for RIS3 coordination within the Lagging Regions initiative*
- **What worked:** *common actions organized in cooperation with the JRC*
- **What did not work:** *examining the difference between planned and submitted projects we can see an information block. When calls are finalized they do not always consider needs of the potential applicants, so the latter does not submit the project in the end*

Question 3: How to better interconnect overlapping initiatives concerning smart specialization, especially financing of projects



- **Why:** *there is an overlap between parallel initiatives financing the same or similar activities, existence of overlaps between different OPs financing the same TO through different programmes*
- **What has been done:** *The RDA has elaborated the RIS3 as well as the Framework document*
- **What worked:** *EDPs have offered a good insight regarding difficulties and market demands in certain selected priority sectors*
- **What did not work:** *having an RDI Strategy elaborated at national level (ex-ante conditionality) which should for the basis of regional innovation strategies. Having different S3 and Framework documents elaborated for the same Axis of the ROP, with different governance structures. There are also other initiatives for improving S3 without the involvement of the RDA*