**ROUND TABLE WG1 REPORT**

First Meeting of the RIS3 Monitoring Working Group, Barcelona, 16 FEB 2017

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Experts and Critical Friends: Nerea Anacabe, Ken Guy, Roberta Dallolio, Mariana Ofioncel

Group composition is considered adequate since:

* there were representatives from 4 regions with rather common characteristics in terms of autonomy level and links with national RIS3 strategies;
* three experts (rapporteur included) and two critical friends.

**Topics Discussed & Main Findings**

#### Shared understanding of monitoring (how do regions perceive monitoring, which issues arise as most relevant? What is the reaction of the working table to seeing monitoring as a management tool and to balancing horizontal and priority-specific indicators?)

A first round of conversation was initiated so the participants (and especially regions’ representatives) t0 express their current status on RIS3 monitoring and to comment on issues raised during the plenary session. The main points expressed by region are the following ones.

Centro-PT

* 4 initial horizontal priorities have been identified in the planning process.
* Regional RIS3 action plan is part of ROP and has common ground with national OPs regarding entrepreneurship and RTDI.
* After the launch of the first CFP, data from applications were used to analyze different factors for the further refinement and implementation of the strategy.
* This will serve as a means to align or complement with national RIS3 strategic objectives.
* Monitoring system for RIS3 is not established. However there is a monitoring system for ROP closely linked with the national monitoring system (investment priorities based system).

 North East-RO

* Logic of intervention has been developed within RIS3 strategy.
* There are close relations between regional RIS3 priorities and national OPs.
* There is a strong need for stakeholders to take ownership of the strategic priorities.
* So far national CFPs that have been launched are the main financial aid for the stakeholders.
* Within current revision of RIS3 a solid monitoring system is expected to be developed and implemented.

Gabrovo- BG

* Bulgaria has developed a national RIS3 strategy. Municipality of Gabrovo has developed its own implementation plan that is part of the general economic development plan.
* The main issue that had to be tackled is how to incorporate local companies’ needs in a centrally designed OP?
* Moreover a need to bridge innovation gaps has been identified due to the lack of understanding specific needs of the stakeholders and especially the business sector.
* In terms of monitoring system experience has proved that there is a rather low availability of data which are often outdated.

REMTh-GR

* Although there was an intervention logic included in the initial RIS3 development the monitoring system was not equally developed.
* Currently a specific set of indicators applicable for RIS3 priorities has been proposed by the Ministry of Development and all Greek regions have to use them for reporting purposes.
* The above set of indicators is not considered to be enough for giving the whole picture, therefore the system has to be enriched with additional ‘smart’ indicators.
* The region feels the need for benchmarking of monitoring systems applied by other regions and adjust to REMTh needs.
* The regional system should be controlled regionally.
* There is not a clear understanding of the specifications of a typical RIS3 monitoring system that is required from the EC as it is for OPs respectively.
* Due to the complexity of the system there is a discussion if it should be developed in-house versus outsourcing it.
* Finally, as the business sector has been an important part of the EDP process, maybe the region could use their expertise in designing the monitoring system.

**Comments of experts & critical friends**

* Monitoring is not (only) a control tool; it is rather a learning one. Experts could help building it but ownership by regional authorities has to be realised.
* Role of exchange of knowledge and expertise in the specific topic is very important.
* In a more centrally structured system it is not easy to follow the core methodology.
* All the regions that were present in WG1 have to optimise synergies between regional and national level in order for the monitoring system to be effective. In some cases those synergies have to be present among different MAs as well.
* In many cased due to the strong interdependencies of national OPs and regional RIS3 funding instruments, regions might promote locally of funding opportunities at a national revel.
* Existing funding limitations prevent planners changing monitoring systems at will.
* The most convenient way to get data (especially for outputs) is to get them from final beneficiaries. Who gets the data and when is an issue that has to be faced and resolved from the beginning.

#### To what extent and/or in which phases or the policy cycles are the issues discussed relevant?

The first part of the discussion of that topic was dedicated to general remarks and views:

* Among participants there was a common understanding that monitoring is a vital part of the strategic framework of RIS3, therefore strategy and monitoring should be developed together.
* Monitoring resembles to gold dust. It serves to management authorities for ex-ante evaluation, it can optimise strategic planning, provides common understanding among stakeholders and might unfolds useful digging policies.
* The issue of duplication of actions was raised. Although bad at first site, duplication might prove beneficial since it reinforces something that is presents high demand and produces good results.
* There is a strong link between monitoring and taking adjusted actions.
* Finally design of an effective monitoring system is considered as a learning exercise for all the stakeholders that participate in the process.

The second part was absorbed to thoughts on the matrix “RIS3 priorities associated with specific objectives” presented earlier in the plenary. The main points that were reported are the following:

* In the case where RIS3 priorities are more generic/horizontal then the proposed matrix is workable. However there might be the case of having two or more indicators associated to one specific objective that could lead to more complex monitoring process.
* Perhaps a hybrid system could be more practical to design (integrate) and implement.
* The system might identify problems in the initial design (for example disconnected priorities to specific objectives).
* Result level could be similar for the horizontal (specific objectives) and vertical (RIS3 priorities) level where as for output level is more likely to be very different.
* Since many companies apply monitoring systems very efficiently, it would be helpful to take advice on how they set up their systems respectively.
* Timely data and combination difficult to produce solid evidence (especially when one objective) comes to more than one indicator.
* Finally in some cases RIS3 strategies include too wide priorities that is hard to specify one or two specific objectives.

#### What are the main obstacles to developing a monitoring system with such characteristics (i.e. monitoring as an integrated management tool and a balanced between horizontal and priority-specific indicators)?

Issues regarding ‘data’ have been reported as the main obstacle for the effectiveness of a sound monitoring system. Such issues include availability, timing of collection, quality of metadata, cost of handling, etc.

Other issues that can be considered obstacles and have been discussed in WG1 are:

1. Elaboration of a complex (‘baroque’) system.
2. Lack of stakeholders’ involvement during the development of the system.
3. System might not rate innovation gaps.
4. Lack of ownership.
5. Importance of multilevel governance not reflected in the design of the system.
6. Low efforts that lead to inadequate design of the system.

#### What do we need for a monitoring system with the two afore-mentioned characteristics? (Please discuss among the others, the issue of analytical capacities and HR/staff, communication between different departments, etc.)

The specific topic was not discussed explicitly due to time constraints. However from the overall discussion the following points can be reported:

* In terms of HR, practically all regions face the challenge to design and implement a system that should differ from the usual ROP monitoring system. This call for capacity building.
* Following the previous point, there is a higher demand for communication among different government levels and different Management Authorities.
* From past experience there are big time gaps for data collection from different sources that lead to difficulties in the production of the suitable results.
* Digital alienation and poor quality of metadata is associated with the previous point.