



FEEDBACK REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

31
January
2019

Peer eXchange & Learning Workshop
Linköping (Sweden)

Representatives from Östergötland (SE), North Karelia (FI) and Nord-Vest (RO) presented their current experience and work on Governance of the Smart Specialisation Strategies in a Peer eXchange & Learning Workshop in Linköping (SE). The workshop was organised by the Smart Specialisation Platform (S3 Platform) of JRC in collaboration with Region Östergötland. The presentations and following peer discussions provided the basis for this report.

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PART 1 | WORKSHOP FINDINGS AND KEY LESSONS

KEY LESSONS

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- **Increase the voice and ownership of stakeholders** is a central objective of Smart Specialisation. When actors have a greater voice and can provide inputs, they develop a greater sense of ownership. Engaging different groups helps build consensus and increase commitment to reaching the expected results. Greater participation also tends to reinforce trust between actors.
- **Clear objectives** for public-private collaboration, **effective communication, transparency** in the process and **experimentation** of pilot initiatives are essential elements in supporting greater stakeholder involvement and trust building.
- **Share information to build and reinforce trust between actors.** Information should always be communicated using language that is easily understandable and in a format accessible to all.
- **Face to face meetings are essential for strengthening relations and trust between actors.** They should be promoted more actively.
- It is absolutely necessary to **build capabilities on Smart Specialisation and policy processes** (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) among stakeholders to enhance their level of engagement. Many actors are not particularly familiar with S3 and, more in general, with participation in policy making. They might be willing to participate but are unable to do so because they do not have the required skills and capabilities. Specific measures should be implemented to overcome these obstacles and facilitate their participation.
- **An effective system of intermediary organisations** (business associations, cluster organisations, research and technology transfer centres, etc.) **is central for sustaining the S3 process and building trust between different actors.** These organisations should know from the outset what their role in the process is. They should also clearly see the benefits of participation in the process. To this end, it might be useful to design an "incentive structure" that actively promotes their greater engagement. Better mechanisms and channels of communication and greater transparency in the process are also highly recommended in order to increase the level of participation. It is also essential to build capacities in these organisations with respect to Smart Specialisation and policy processes (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) to enhance their level of engagement.
- It is crucial to **involve end-users** in projects to support co-creation, co-design and co-production processes and promote greater engagement of different actors in S3. Particularly inspiring are the initiatives (experimented in Scotland) in which small groups of different actors work together to design solutions for specific problems in targeted areas (e.g. health, etc.).
- **The engagement of strong enterprises in the S3 process can induce other companies to participate,** so it is important to get them involved.
- It is crucial to **build consensus on the policy so that politicians, public administrations, companies and stakeholder organisations support and speak for the policy over time.**

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COORDINATION

- **Regardless of differences in State organisation and governance structures, failures in horizontal and vertical coordination are fairly common across Europe.** It is essential to keep on improving coordination mechanisms in order to enhance policy effectiveness in the next programming period.
- **Clear coordination mechanisms** (horizontal and vertical) need to be established at the outset of the strategy design to avoid coordination failure problems and overlapping actions in the implementation phase, which would undermine the efficiency and effectiveness of public action.
- Smart Specialisation requires the **establishment of institutional spaces** (such as central State-Regions committees) where the cooperation among different levels of government is continuously nurtured.
- Where regional strategies exist, **the national level needs to acknowledge and strengthen the coordination of functions assigned to regional bodies.**
- Where relevant to the effectiveness of the policy, **local needs and objectives should be adequately represented in Smart Specialisation Strategies** designed at regional level. Regional authorities should enhance the role of sub-regional actors such as municipalities and other local organisations in Smart Specialisation and provide them with opportunities to influence the strategy (see examples from the Basque region in Spain, Flanders in Belgium and the six-city project in Finland) ¹. This could certainly help to develop a greater **sense of ownership** and commitment to the strategy on the part of local authorities and actors.
- It is important to promote a **continuous Entrepreneurial Discovery Process as a way to nurture collaboration between actors placed at different territorial levels.**
- The **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) should be used more extensively to promote international cooperation.**

CAPABILITIES

- Smart Specialisation requires **pockets of administrative excellence**. If they are not available, it is crucial to develop them. Adequate capabilities in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are required, both at national and regional level. If necessary, Structural Funds should be used to develop such capabilities.
- The **national level** should support the regional level and act **as competence centre** for sub-national authorities, providing expertise and methodological support on the different phases of the policy cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Capacity building measures along with actions to strengthen the links between actors are fundamental to **promote regional innovation systems in which learning is an essential component of the policy making process.**

¹ For an account of these experiences see: 2018, PXL Feed-back report on Multi-level governance (Bilbao), available at <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/267084/PXL+-+Multi-level+governance+-+Bilbao+-+April+2018.pdf/b7950366-4914-4da7-83cf-70286516901e>

This report summarises the debate and outcomes of the PXL workshop on governance for Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) held in Linköping, on 31 January 2019.

There is a wealth of empirical literature showing how the prosperity of countries and regions depends on the quality of government and governance arrangements. Good government and institutions together with the collaborative nature of public-private relations are the backbone of long-term economic development.

Governance is at the centre of the Smart Specialisation policy concept. The creation of good institutions along with the inclusion of a wide array of actors in decision making processes and the enhancement of vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms are important objectives of the policy. In the Smart Specialisation context, governance deals with: "how the whole process and design and implementing RIS3 is governed, who is involved, the structures that are put in place and how decision are taken" (Edwards *et al.*, 2016: p.37)².

Governance refers to: the steering, facilitating and overseeing role of government; the rules and mechanisms designed to promote stakeholder engagement, collective action and decision making processes based on deliberation; and the distribution of responsibilities and coordination arrangements among actors placed at different territorial scales (European, national, regional and local).

These different issues were addressed in the workshop through the experiences of Östergötland (Sweden), North Karelia (Finland) and Nord-Vest (Romania)³.

Before the peer-review sessions, presentations were given by the JRC team and an external expert. These talks provided some conceptual and empirical insights that helped to frame the "Governance for RIS3" topic.

Fabrizio Guzzo (Territorial Development Unit, JRC, European Commission) presented the results of a recent survey on the Smart Specialisation experience across European regions and countries carried out by JRC. According to the survey's results, significant improvements could be detected by respondents in relation to different RIS3 governance aspects: more specifically, stakeholder engagement, level of trust among stakeholders and between them and the government, and prioritisation process for public action. Furthermore, in the medium-long term, the strategies are expected to have a substantial impact on the structure and functioning of the territorial innovation ecosystem. Overall, nearly three quarters of respondents anticipate that such impact will be strong or very strong. Certainly, such expectations can be valued positively. Building better institutions along with improving coordination among actors and promoting collective action are in fact important underlying objectives of Smart Specialisation. At the same time, the survey showed that governance represents the second most challenging of the six steps of the RIS3 design process, after the integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Clearly more efforts and work are required to enhance its effectiveness. There is a need to further strengthen strategic

² Edwards J., M. Pertoldi and K. Morgan (2016), "Good Governance: principles and challenges", in Gianelle, C., D. Kyriakou, C. Cohen and M. Przeor (eds), *Implementing Smart Specialisation: A Handbook*, Brussels: European Commission, EUR 28053 EN, doi:10.2791/53569.

³ The presentations and background documents are available at: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/-/pxl-workshop-on-skills-for-s3-policy-makers?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2Fs3-implementation-pxl>

and management functions of RIS3 governing bodies as well as the skills and capabilities for RIS3 design and implementation (namely in less developed regions). Moreover, there are several problems and challenges associated to the reality of the multi-level governance dimension of the policy, such as: ineffective coordination mechanisms; lack of trust among authorities and actors placed at different territorial scales; and duplications of support actions and/or implementation of contradictory measures. Finally, even though participation has increased, some types of actors are still less represented than others in the decision making process. The engagement of some stakeholders, namely SMEs and civil society groups, has proven to be particularly difficult to achieve.

In his presentation, Nils Gabrielsson (RIS3 advisor for Region Östergötland) provided a comprehensive picture of the national and regional innovation eco-systems in Sweden, emphasising their strengths and potential (high level of public and private investments in R&DI, presence of a large number of multinational enterprises and their contribution to innovation processes, etc.). The role of policies, governmental agencies and programmes in promoting innovation were also illustrated. The presentation also highlighted some of the issues that need to be tackled to improve RIS3 effectiveness in Sweden: national-regional coordination mechanisms, international dimension, transparency in policy design and implementation and capacity building in public administrations, intermediary bodies and other groups of stakeholders.

Finally, Inmaculada Periañez Forte (Territorial Development Unit, JRC, European Commission) presented the PXL methodology and the organisation of the peer-review sessions. This helped to frame the following discussions.

Several problems and challenges in relation to governance for RIS3 emerged during the peer-review sessions: difficulties in engaging relevant actors (technology transfer centres, companies and civil society groups) in the policy process; unclear distribution of power and responsibilities between different territorial levels of government; uncertainties associated to the reforming process of the State and the distribution of its functions across different geographical units (national, regional and local); ineffective vertical coordination mechanisms and communication channels; lack of trust among different authorities and actors; difficulties in developing common visions that combine the different needs, agendas and expectations of the different territorial levels; and overlap of responsibilities and initiatives.

Besides these challenges, the peer-review sessions provided an interesting account of some initiatives launched by regional authorities to enhance the quality of governance. Of particular interest is the action undertaken by the Region Östergötland to improve the quality and effectiveness of horizontal coordination mechanisms through the creation of Innovation Empowerment Groups for each of the priority areas identified in the strategy. Bringing together representatives of the government, academia and business sector, these platforms represent an important space where RIS3 issues are discussed and agreed upon. Improving the quality and intensity of interactions and increasing trust between different groups of actors are considered to be two important outcomes of this initiative.

Similar objectives and results are currently being pursued by the other two regions under review. In North Karelia, new governance arrangements have recently been introduced; and the participation of different groups of stakeholders in policy design, implementation and monitoring is strongly encouraged through

the setting-up of specific platforms (quadruple helix cluster groups and smart growth fora). In North-West Region (Romania), working groups composed of actors from the quadruple helix, have been set up to support the development of specific priority areas. These groups design and implement action plans to achieve the objectives related to a specific priority area.

Interesting experiences on the engagement of young people in innovation policies and processes were also discussed: open innovation platforms and living labs (e.g. INNO platform in Nord-Vest Romania), competitions for student to solve Agenda 2030 challenges (Sweden), set-up of multi-disciplinary teams of students to tackle specific industry and societal challenges (IN Genius and Demola initiatives in Sweden), young entrepreneur and internship programmes.

Finally, noteworthy are the initiatives supported by the European Commission (DG REGIO) – and carried out by JRC and the World Bank – in Nord-Vest Region to build capacity and strengthen RIS3 governance in public and private institutions at regional level.

It is important to note that all the above examples represent a significant attempt at creating and nurturing regional systems in which learning is an essential component of the policy making process.

The issues/questions posed by the representatives Östergötland (Sweden), North Karelia (Finland) and Nord-Vest (Romania) fostered a lively debate in the smaller group discussions. Specific recommendations and lessons learnt for each question are presented in detail in Part 2 of this report.

PART 2 | PXL QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

[ÖSTERGÖTLAND]

Questions/issues posed by the country for peer discussion

QUESTION 1	How to establish Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) presence and integrate such assets in RIS3 implementation?
QUESTION 2	How to motivate and involve local level administrations in RIS3 implementation?
QUESTION 3	How to boost RIS3 through international cooperation?

During peer discussions, participants were divided in three groups/tables, all of which had representatives from various EU Member States and regions. A facilitator from JRC was present to steer the work of each table. Each table was offered to choose one of the questions prepared by the representatives. A summary of these discussions is presented below.

EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 1

QUESTION	How to establish Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) presence and integrate such assets in RIS3 implementation?
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RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) should know from the outset what their role in the process is. They should also clearly see the benefits of participation in the process. To this end, it might be useful to design an "incentive structure" that actively promotes their greater engagement. Better mechanisms and channels of communication and greater transparency in the process are also highly recommended in order to increase the level of participation.</p> <p>Experiment pilot initiatives aiming at nurturing the interaction between RTOs (innovation offer) and the world of production (innovation demand) (e.g. World Bank initiative carried out in Nord Vest Region Romania).</p> <p>Build capabilities in RTOs (and other stakeholder groups) with respect to Smart Specialisation and policy processes (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) to enhance their level of engagement. These organisations are not particularly familiar with RIS3 and, more in general, with participation in policy making. They might be willing to participate but are unable to do so because they do not have the required skills and capabilities. So, specific measures should be implemented to overcome these obstacles and facilitate their participation.</p> <p>Promote more focused discussions (e.g. specific themes, etc.) to gain RTOs interests and engagement.</p>
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LESSONS LEARNT	<p>Restructuring the RIS3 debate around specific themes, challenges and possible solutions may promote greater stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Clear objectives for public-private collaboration, effective communication, transparency in the process and experimentation of pilot initiatives are essential elements in supporting greater stakeholder involvement and trust building.</p>
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EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 2

QUESTION	How to motivate and involve local level administrations in RIS3 implementation?
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RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Be a good strategy owner. This requires promoting trust among participants at different territorial levels and across organisations. For example, promote more face-to-face meetings (rather than virtual interactions) since they are more effective in strengthening relations and trust between actors.</p> <p>Work through relevant local intermediary organisations in each place – not only with local governments. Sometimes, it is easier to reach a wider spectrum of actors through local well-established organisations.</p> <p>Promote the participation of different groups of local actors in the strategy's</p>
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	<p>design and implementation. The regional government should encourage different municipalities to work together, while making them the owner of the strategy at local level.</p> <p>Create regional structures with local involvement where local actors have the opportunity to express their interests and feel represented (e.g. steering committees).</p> <p>Reinforce the international perspective by involving international actors in local processes.</p> <p>Adopt a more business oriented approach in the innovation services offered by public administration.</p>
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LESSONS LEARNT	<p>It is important to include local representatives in strategies' steering group.</p> <p>Where relevant to the effectiveness of the policy, local needs and objectives should be adequately represented in Smart Specialisation Strategies designed at regional level. Specific action plans could also be implemented at sub-regional level if they bring added value.</p> <p>Ownership of the process by local stakeholders is crucial.</p> <p>Identify and use leaders at local level as symbols for the strategy.</p> <p>Share information to build and reinforce trust between actors. Information should always be communicated using language that is easily understandable and in a format accessible to all.</p>
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EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 3

QUESTION	How to boost RIS3 through international cooperation?
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RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Invite SMEs and cover their participation costs for international exhibitions, fairs, etc.</p> <p>Provide easy access to international contacts.</p> <p>Gain a better understanding of companies' needs and challenges in order to provide relevant support and international contacts.</p> <p>Build knowledge on different economic sectors' capacities and opportunities to correctly address cooperation options.</p>
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LESSONS LEARNT	<p>Public administrations can play a fundamental role in promoting awareness on the benefits of international cooperation.</p> <p>The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) should be used more extensively to promote international cooperation.</p> <p>Cooperation among small and large companies relies on an in-depth analysis of the corresponding needs and a clear incentive structure for cooperation for both partners.</p>
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DRAFT

[NORTH KARELIA]

Questions/issues posed by the region for peer discussion

QUESTION 1	What kind of governance tools are needed to maintain RIS3 development motivation among actors at the time of governance structural change (regional reform) that brings uncertainties both to RIS3 owner and its implementer (tasks, resources)?
QUESTION 2	How to engage new actors from specific target groups (e.g. young people)?
QUESTION 3	Multilevel governance of RIS3. How to improve the relationship between the different levels of government in RIS3?

During peer discussions, participants were divided in three groups/tables, all of which had representatives from various EU Member States and regions. A facilitator from JRC was present to steer the work of each table. Each table was offered to choose one of the questions prepared by the representatives. A summary of these discussions is presented below.

EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 1

QUESTION	What kind of governance tools are needed to maintain RIS3 development motivation among actors at the time of governance structural change (regional reform) that brings uncertainties both to RIS3 owner and its implementer (tasks, resources)?
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RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Keep on developing a sense of ownership of the policy. Engage all relevant actors and give them the opportunities to make their voice heard. Involving different groups helps build consensus on the strategy. It can also help to maintain politicians' commitment to policy (see the example of the Swedish State reform).</p> <p>Build a narrative around what has been achieved so far by Smart Specialisation.</p> <p>Promote lobbying activities to provide inputs and influence the reform process.</p>
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Explore the potential of the reform to strengthen the RIS3 process and its underlying institutions and practices.



LESSONS LEARNT

It is important to take care of RIS3 key people. They are essential to keep the process going. In the context of reforms and changes, they can certainly be transferred, however they bring with them knowledge and networks of relations that can be used in new institutions and organisations to move Smart Specialisation forward.

It is crucial to build consensus on the policy so that politicians, public administrations, companies and stakeholder organisations support and speak for the policy over time.

To strengthen RIS3, it is important to go beyond EU Cohesion Policy funds, trying to commit other (national and regional) financial resources to the policy scheme.

EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 2

QUESTION

How to engage new actors from specific target groups (e.g. young people)?



RECOMMENDATIONS

Invite young people to participate in different events/activities such as: Open innovation platforms and living labs (examples from Sweden: competitions for students to solve Agenda 2030 challenges, coding contests, etc.; and, from Nord-Vest Romania – INNO platform – inno.ro).

Establish young entrepreneur or internship programmes (school/graduate programmes).

Promote cross-disciplinary interactions through the promotion of specific initiatives (such as InGenius and Demola) in which university students form multi-disciplinary teams to solve problems posed by companies and public actors.



LESSONS LEARNT

It is essential to involve end-users in projects to support co-creation, co-design and co-production processes and promote greater engagement of different actors in RIS3. Particularly inspiring are the initiatives (experimented in Scotland) in which small groups of different actors work together to design solutions for specific problems in targeted areas (e.g. health, etc.). Results are then shared and adopted in different contexts.

Public actors should develop an effective and broad communication strategy. Keeping stakeholders informed about findings and how their feedback is being used certainly helps to maintain their interest and involvement and

raise awareness.

EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 3

QUESTION

Multilevel governance of RIS3. How to improve the relationship between the different levels of government in RIS3?



RECOMMENDATIONS

Design joint funding schemes with other bodies by combining Cohesion Policy funds and national financial resources.

Promote inter-regional cooperation to support development process in Finnish lagging regions.

Work towards the creation of the necessary conditions and spaces for a better alignment of national needs and objectives with regional ones (example of the Spanish experience).



LESSONS LEARNT

The national level should support the regional level and act as competence centre for sub-national authorities, providing expertise and methodological support on the different phases of the policy cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

Adequate capabilities in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are required, both at national and regional level. If necessary, Structural Funds should be used to develop such capabilities.

Promote continuous Entrepreneurial Discovery Process as a way to nurture collaboration between actors placed at different territorial levels.

[NORD-VEST ROMANIA]

Questions/issues posed by the region for peer discussion

QUESTION 1	How to motivate and involve the private sector more effectively in the S3 implementation phase?
QUESTION 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 (EU Cohesion Policy) Operational Programmes are centralised?
QUESTION 3	How to better inter-connect overlapping initiatives concerning Smart Specialisation?

During peer discussions, participants were divided in three groups/tables, all of which had representatives from various EU Member States and regions. A facilitator from JRC was present to steer the work of each table. Each table was offered to choose one of the questions prepared by the representatives. A summary of these discussions is presented below.

EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 1

QUESTION	How to motivate and involve the private sector more effectively in the S3 implementation phase?
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>Use locomotive (leader) companies. The participation of strong enterprises in the RIS3 process can induce other companies to participate.</p> <p>Build capacity in intermediary organisations to better support companies in the RIS3 process.</p> <p>Increase the presence of intermediaries and rely on them to facilitate knowledge sharing across organisations and promote innovation.</p> <p>Involve and engage companies from representative sectors of the regional economy in RIS3 steering group and committees.</p>

LESSONS LEARNT	<p>An effective system of intermediary organisations is central for sustaining the RIS3 process and building trust between different actors.</p> <p>When companies are on board and feel owners of the process, they are more willing to invest.</p>
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EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 2

QUESTION	<p>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 (EU Cohesion Policy) Operational Programmes are centralised?</p>
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RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>The national level should acknowledge the value of the work done on Smart Specialisation by the Regional Development Agency.</p> <p>Engage the EU level to enhance the relevance of the regional dimension of Smart Specialisation in Romania.</p> <p>Better communicate the results of your activity (for example the important work done in relation to the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process).</p> <p>Build competences for effective governance.</p> <p>"Good governance of national or regional Smart Specialisation Strategy" is the title of the new enabling condition – included in the proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation for the forthcoming EU Cohesion Policy (2021-2027) – to access funds regarding the policy objective: <i>A smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation</i>. Use this as a political leverage to promote new governance arrangements, characterised by clearer vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms.</p>
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LESSONS LEARNT	<p>Regardless of differences in State organisation and governance structures, failures in horizontal and vertical coordination are fairly common across Europe. It is essential to keep on improving coordination mechanisms in order to enhance policy effectiveness in the next programming period.</p>
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EVOLUTION OF QUESTION 3

QUESTION	How to better inter-connect overlapping initiatives concerning Smart Specialisation?
	
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>The regional coordination function of the Regional Development Agency needs to be recognised to avoid the proliferation of strategies and overlapping initiatives promoted by different organisations. Lobby for political support at national and European level.</p> <p>Use the "card" of the new enabling condition ("good governance of national or regional Smart Specialisation Strategy) – included in the proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation for the forthcoming EU Cohesion Policy (2021-2027) – to open a debate on the need to have a clear and more effective RIS3 governance structure in Romania.</p> <p>Instead of designing additional (overlapping) strategies, clusters and other organisations could play an important role in the implementation of specific action plans aimed at implementing a single (common) regional strategy (examples from Sweden to avoid the overlap of different initiatives: establishment of platforms with common action plans, etc.).</p>
	
LESSONS LEARNT	<p>Clear coordination mechanisms (horizontal and vertical) need to be established at the outset of the strategy design to avoid coordination failure problems and overlapping actions in the implementation phase.</p> <p>Smart Specialisation requires the establishment of institutional spaces where the cooperation among different levels of government is continuously nurtured.</p> <p>Where regional strategies exist, the national level needs to acknowledge and strengthen the coordination functions assigned to regional bodies.</p>

ANNEX | PEER EXCHANGE & LEARNING – PXL

[ABOUT THIS REPORT]

PXL Methodology

Peer eXchange and Learning (PXL) is a methodology for reviewing specific elements of innovation strategies for Smart Specialisation (S3) and territorial development strategies and tackling the associated implementation challenges. It is an important instrument currently offered by the S3 Platform of the European Commission to EU Member States and regions.

PXL builds on the well-established peer-review approach of the S3 Platform. It supports transnational learning by bringing together regions and countries for an exchange of knowledge and experience, mutual learning and the exploration of ways in which innovation and development strategies can be effectively implemented, adjusted and revised.

PXL creates an open and trusted learning environment where practical and conceptual issues can be discussed and explored through the experience of individual regions and countries. It engages peers and experts in focused discussions on important issues that the regions and countries under review raised and guides them to distil a range of collective suggestions and lessons into a coherent picture.

PXL especially aims to tackle the challenges emerging during the transition from strategy design to implementation. It does so by: (1) focusing the discussion among regional and country representatives, experts and European Commission staff around a *thematic frame* which is typically a single theme, process or element of the strategy; (2) preferentially targeting a community of policy makers and practitioners who are at the stage of transforming planned objectives into results through concrete actions.

PXL Workshop

A PXL workshop has a single thematic frame (e.g. governance settings, priority definition, monitoring, policy mix, etc.). It runs over one full day and includes peer review of two to four regions and/or countries. Individual PXL sessions focus on one region or country and last around one and a half hour.

The workshop is opened by one or more expert presentations and a debate around the framing topic. This opening session should set the scene and provide a broad set of views, approaches and insights for the individual PXL sessions. The debate can take the form of a dialogue between experts who will alternately provide arguments in support of and against common practices or believed-to-be-good practices in the field defined by the workshop's framing topic. This type of dialogue would help to stimulate the following discussion to go beyond traditional formulations of problems and solutions.

The workshop continues with individual PXL sessions. A presentation of each region or country's current work on the thematic frame is generally followed by a Q&A session. Specific issues identified by the regions and countries under review are then discussed at individual tables in two iterations, which ensure

that participants can: *work together* to understand the actual problems; *propose solutions* to these problems by discussing what worked well and what did not work; and *learn together* how to deal with new policy issues in new contexts.

An S3 Platform team member facilitates each PXL session in line with the participatory leadership approach. Such a participative approach encourages all participants to share or participate in the discussion and to identify key messages. It allows engaging participants in a dynamic and creative discussion, which benefits both the regions and countries under review and their peers.

PXL sessions are followed by a final session during which all participants (experts, representatives of the regions and countries under review, peers, and European Commission staff) summarise the results of the sessions, and discuss individually and mutually lessons learnt. At this point, the regions and countries under review have the opportunity to respond to any feedback collected throughout the workshop. Finally, they share their main insights with peers and may mention any short- to mid-term plans to apply them.

Building on the general structure described above, the format of the workshops is tailored according to the topic's requirements and needs expressed by regions and countries.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Regions and countries volunteer to be reviewed in an attempt to source both critical and well-timed advice addressing specific issues they are currently facing in the implementation of innovation and development strategies. Regional and national policy makers may also view PXL workshops as a good opportunity to build their networks of counterparts across Europe.

PXL sessions aim to achieve the following outcomes: (i) to better *understand* the thematic frame of the whole PXL workshop; (ii) to *provide* general feedback to each region and country under review; (iii) to *examine* the specific issues presented by each region and country under review and propose how they could be tackled or solved; and (iv) to *build up* awareness and knowledge about problems that are common across Europe.

During the workshop, the S3 Platform team collects any relevant information and data covering different elements of each PXL exercise. A brief summary/feedback report will be drafted and circulated by the S3 Platform team as a final output of the workshop.