Smart Specialisation Platform

Greece

Main features of territorial research and innovation system

Universities and public research institutes are the main R&D performers (EKT, 2019a). Although business R&D intensity has almost doubled in the past decade, the national innovation system is still not business-driven. Government funding, particularly from the EU, and publicly-performed research dominate the national R&D effort.
Despite the grave impact of the economic crisis on Greek economy and society, R&D expenditures have increased over the past decade in both absolute and relative terms. Universities and public research institutes produce high-quality research, as reflected in the high and rising citation (since 2013 above the EU and OECD averages) impact of their scientific publication output (Sachini et al., 2018). According to the latest Community Innovation Survey (CIS 2017) a majority of Greek businesses (57%) report engaging in innovation that is at least new to the firm. A comparatively high 18% of innovating firms reported collaboration with universities and public research institutes (EKT, 2019b). There are however large territorial disparities in income levels and innovation capacities. For instance, the region of Attica (including the capital city Athens) accounted for more R&D expenditures (EUR 966m) in 2015 than all the other Greek regions put together (EKT, 2018).

Challenges for the territory to which RIS3 should respond

Greece has emerged from a major economic crisis which cost it about a quarter of its national output. Economic growth remains subdued (EC, 2019) and unemployment at 19.3% (2018 figure; Eurostat, 2019). Dynamism has been particularly affected by the loss of physical and human capital due to low investment and the emigration of skilled workers over the past decade (EC, 2019).
A persistent long-term issue has been the inability to develop the parts of the economy that thrive on knowledge and the attendant low innovation capabilities in the business sector and sluggish productivity growth. Greece exhibits a high reliance on tourism, which is a major national strength but can also be a source of vulnerability to volatile international demand, especially in the absence of innovation. Greece's specialisation on non-internationally-tradable services and the lack of productive capabilities in tradables sectors more generally were painfully exposed during the crisis, and underscore the need for structural change. In addition to economic challenges, in the form of persistently high unemployment, the country also faces social challenges notably an ageing population and has been particularly affected by the refugee crisis. Large parts of Greece are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
There are however encouraging signs that the recovery is more knowledge-intensive, as business R&D intensity increased considerably and now accounts for 0.55% of GDP (2017 figure, versus 0.27% in 2013) (EKT, 2019a).

Description of RIS3 in Greece

Greece has a hybrid RIS3 with a centrally-administered national strategy (overseen by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology) and 13 regional strategies (overseen by regional authorities and coordinated by the Ministry of Development). The total amount of

funds allocated from ERDF to thematic objective 1 ("Strengthening research, technological development and innovation") is EUR 935m, of which 87% is attributed to national Operational Programmes (OPs) and the rest to all 13 Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs). The national RIS3 Strategy (available here: https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/223684/GR_RIS3_201508_Final.pdf/c06bd75d-49c4-43e1-bf77-39351c41f245) identifies eight priorities: 1. Agri Food; 2. Health-Biosciences; 3. ICT; 4. Energy; 5. Environment & Sustainable Development; 6. Transport & Logistics; 7. Materials & Construction; 8. Tourism, Culture & Creative Industries.

JRC expert work (Metaxas, 2018; 2019) has shown that Greece has made strides in putting in place the governance framework required for RIS3 but that major challenges remain. Regional administrations do not have the required capabilities or innovation policy experience. Co-ordination between national and regional RIS3 has not been adequate resulting to overlaps of national vs regional policy priorities and measures and lack of diffusion of know-how to the regions. There is no common governance model across regions and staff shortages have led to delays in the implementation of RIS3. Indicatively, as of December 2018 only 3 regions had established a RIS3 Technical Office and only one was operating. In most cases regional S3s have been *de facto* handed to Managing Authorities which tend to treat them as just another OP, preventing accumulation of innovation-specific policy capabilities within the regional administration. As a result of initial delays and continuing gaps in the governance of RIS3, activation across regions is uneven and slow (e.g. no objective 1 payments had been made to businesses by Dec. 2018). Despite notable examples of good EDP practice in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Crete and Western Greece, the long-term continuity of EDP is still a challenge. Regional Research and Innovation Councils are dominated by academics and monitoring is not always according to the logic of RIS3.

However, having acquired experience with the first round of RIS3 and all stages of its lifecycle, national and regional authorities are well-positioned for a more effective strategic planning in the forthcoming Programming Period. The shift of executing more effectively is apparent if we examine KPIs before and after 2015-2018. They have acknowledged the increased significance of solid governance schemes and the difference between planning a ROP and a smart specialisation strategy.

Focus of our activities in this phase of the project

- Support to RIS3 implementation by way of intelligence gathering and interregional learning workshops.
- Support to the preparation of Greek national and regional authorities for the next programming period, with a particular focus on RIS3 governance and monitoring.
- Review of industrial transition of Greece.

References

ΕΚΤ (2019a), "Βασικοί Δείκτες Έρευνας και Ανάπτυξης για δαπάνες και προσωπικό το 2017 στην Ελλάδα", Εθνικό Κέντρο Τεκμηρίωσης, https://metrics.ekt.gr/sites/metrics-ekt/files/ekdoseis-pdf/2019/RDstatistics_2017final_Greece_el_3.pdf

ΕΚΤ (2019b), Καινοτομία στις ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις, 2014-2016, Αθήνα: Εθνικό Κέντρο Τεκμηρίωσης, https://metrics.ekt.gr/publications/346

ΕΚΤ (2018), "Περιφερειακή διάσταση των δραστηριοτήτων έντασης γνώσης στην Ελλάδα, Επισκόπηση 2017", Αθήνα: Εθνικό Κέντρο Τεκμηρίωσης. https://metrics.ekt.gr/publications/133

European Commission (2019), "Country Report Greece 2019 ,Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances", COM(2019) 150 final, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-greece_en.pdf

Eurostat (2019), "Total Unemployment Rate", https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00203/default/table?lang=en

Metaxas, M. (2018), "Summary Report on RIS3 implementation status in Greece. 2018 Edition"

Metaxas, M. (2019), "Summary Report on RIS3 implementation status in Greece. 2019 Edition"

Sachini E., Malliou N., Chrysomallidis Ch., Karampekios N. (2018), "Greek Scientific Publications 2002-2016: A Bibliometric Analysis of Greek Publications in International Scientific Journals", National Documentation Center,