

RIS3 in Greece: Consolidating Governance and Raising Ambition

Event Report

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

This report was commissioned by European Commission, DG Joint Research Centre (JRC) in the framework of the “Support to the Implementation of smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) in Greece” project that has been launched in 2018. One of the main goals of the project is to contribute *to the implementation of specific activities developed by the JRC (dissemination, peer meetings, EDPs focus groups, conferences, surveys, interviews) in the field of RIS3 implementation.*

The first workshop took place in Thessaloniki on 13 February 2019 and brought together peers from all Greek regions and National Bodies contributing to the implementation of RIS3. It is considered as the logical continuation of the first peer review workshop held in Chania on 2018 which was well appreciated by stakeholders. The central theme of the Thessaloniki workshop was the RIS3 Governance since it has been proved to be the most important drawback resulting to the delay of implementation of regional and national strategies in Greece. Moreover, it is stated as one of the seven enabling conditions of the new Programming Period. The workshop provided useful technical support for the specific topic by introducing an alternative methodology for re-thinking regional governance structures.

The report is aiming at summarising the outcomes of the parallel table exercise and the relevant discussions and it is based on the notes taken by the moderators during the event.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology developed and implemented during the exercise was based in the concept of considering processes that happen within the 6 steps of RIS3 development and implementation and then try to assign responsibilities to the governing bodies associated with the management of the strategy. The basic principles of the methodology have been taken by PMI¹ and adapted to RIS3 context. According to those principles, the governance framework consists of four governance domains, which are complementary groupings of related functions that uniquely characterise and differentiate the processes or activities found in one governance domain from another. The four domains can be described as governance Alignment, Risk, Performance and Communication domains. All 6 steps of RIS3 include processes that can be categorized in one of the four domains. Each of the key processes is shown in the domain in which most of the process takes place; however, activities may

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¹ Project Management Institute, 2016. Governance of Portfolios, Programs, and Projects : A Practice Guide. Newtown The Square (PA): Project Management Institute.

be iterative and span across areas. The next logical step is the assignment of responsibilities by the bodies within the governance system that are Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed during their execution (RACI classification²). It is used to illustrate the connections between governance action/decision areas and governance roles, thus being a useful communications tool to ensure clear divisions of roles, expectations, and decision-making authorities

The methodology applied included two distinctive stages:

During the first one, regions were invited to discuss and nominate key processes in each of the 5 steps (governance excluded) they followed for the design and implementation of their regional strategies. They used Table 1 to illustrate their preferences.

During the second stage, for every process they have identified they were asked to think and decide on the different roles and responsibilities of the different bodies (existent or not) of their governance structure. Their inputs were used to develop stage 2 of the exercise.

² Project Management Institute, 2016. Governance of Portfolios, Programs, and Projects : A Practice Guide. Newtown The Square (PA): Project Management Institute.

TABLE 1: GOVERNANCE-RELATED PROCESSES BY DOMAINS AND RIS3 DEVELOPMENT STEPS

	Analysis of regional context	Vision	Identification of priorities	Policy mix and action plan	Monitoring & Evaluation
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN					
Alignment					
Risk					
Performance					
Communication					

TABLE 2: GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY ASSIGNMENT MATRIX

	REGIONAL ASSEMBLY	Regional Council for Research and Innovation	RIS3 TECHNICAL OFFICE	MA ROP	THEMATIC PLATFORMS	NATIONAL AUTHORITIES	OTHER BODIES
Alignment							
Risk							
Performance							
Communication							

The ground rules set in the beginning of the exercise were the following:

- The exercise aimed at the governance structures within the regional level only.
- The participant regions were divided into three different tables.
- In each table regions with different competencies and varying readiness levels (as earlier determined in our survey and interviews) were allocated.
- Representatives from national bodies were welcome to contribute and comment but not take the central role during the process.

The final objective of the exercise was to give regional bodies the opportunity to consider an alternative design of their region’s structure and disseminate it to their peers within their regions.

Below we summarise the discussions and report the key points emerging from each of the parallel sessions by trying to assess the following issues:

- 1) Was there enough time for the exercise to be completed?
- 2) Were there different views / conflicts within the same region?
- 3) Were there different views / conflicts among different regions?

3 PARALLEL SESSIONS

3.1 TABLE A

Moderator: Michalis Metaxas

Composition

	<i>Crete</i>	<i>Epirus</i>	<i>EMTh</i>	<i>Central Greece</i>	<i>Peloponnese</i>	Total
MA ROP	2	2	4	1	2	11
Regional Authority	2	1				3
RCRI	1		2	1		4
Other			1			1
Total Regions	5	3	7	2	2	19
National Authorities	5					
International	1					
Other	1					
Total participation						26

Key points on the process

- The first part of the exercise could not be concluded. Time was consumed initially to explain the methodology of the exercise. Even so, some of the participants were still not clear on the process. Fortunately, representatives from a region started to identify processes from step 1 of RIS3 (analysis of regional context) and gradually all regions contributed to the recording of 16 processes within the specific step³.

³ For more details on the processes identified go to Table 3 of the Annex.

- No conflicts by representatives within the same regions have been recorded.
- However, differences among different regions were recorded. This can be explained by the different governance models they implement or differences on the readiness level they are.
- During the second part of the exercise (roles and responsibilities) all processes identified during the previous exercise were discussed and mapped.
- Again, different views on the several levels of responsibilities were expressed. Representatives from RCRI seem not to have a clear view of their role within the governance structure.

3.2 TABLE B

Moderator: Effie Amanatidou

Composition

	<i>Central Macedonia</i>	<i>Ionian Islands</i>	<i>South Aegean</i>	<i>Western Greece</i>	Total
MA ROP	2	1	2	2	7
Regional Authority	1	1		1	3
RCRI				1	1
Other	4				4
Total Regions	11	2	2	4	15
National Authorities	11				
International	5				
Other	1				
Total participation					32

Key points on the process

- The first part of the exercise (identification of governance processes) was implemented in a rather different way. Certain activities were discussed and recorded under all 5 RIS3 steps but not corresponding to all the governance domains⁴. Characteristically not much was recorded under the domain related to risk management. Most of the comments made had to do with the actual risks that are possible to encounter rather than the actual activities that need to be carried out in order to set up a risk management mechanism.
- No conflicts by representatives within the same regions have been recorded.
- Absence of conflicts among different regions was also obvious. The most active region in the discussion was Central Macedonia without however jeopardizing the ability of the others to take part in the discussion.
- There was disagreement about the possibility for RCRI to suggest changes to the evaluation criteria for proposals as a remedy mechanism to increase the attractiveness of the calls for proposals.
- During the second part of the exercise (roles and responsibilities) roles were attributed to almost all the activities recorded under the ‘alignment’ domain.

3.3 TABLE C

⁴ For more details on the processes identified go to Table 4 of the Annex

Moderator: Yannis Toliás

Composition

	<i>Western Macedonia</i>	<i>Thessaly</i>	<i>North Aegean</i>	<i>Attiki</i>	Total
MA ROP	2	2	4	2	10
Regional Authority			1		1
RCRI		1	1	1	3
Other					0
Total Regions	2	3	6	3	14
National Authorities	6				
International	2				
Total participation					22

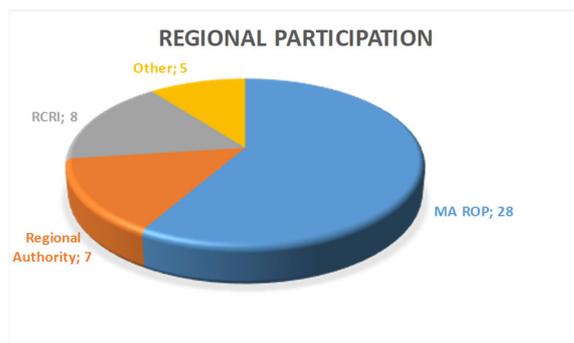
Key points on the process

- The first part of the exercise could not be concluded; time allocated for this part of the exercise was not enough. Some of the participants confused processes with process outcomes (and reported the latter) thus dragging the pace of execution. At the end, very few processes were recorded, all of them belonging to step 1 of the S3 formulation process⁵.
- No conflicts by representatives within the same regions have been recorded.
- Given the confusion reported earlier, representatives from two of the participating regions used their experience to enlighten the others by explaining processes and recalling their experience in executing them.
- During the second part of the exercise (roles and responsibilities) 4 out of 7 processes identified during the previous exercise were discussed and mapped. A very vivid debate on the role of the three levels of S3 governance and their responsibilities was held upon discussing each one of the 4 processes. One region specifically argued that at the end of the day the Regional Council and/or the Governor decides about every aspect of the strategy (even its details); this deducts responsibilities from other bodies of RIS3 governance. Another example of exchange of completely different opinions was the issue of the assignment of budget within strategic priorities.
- The RCRI participants from two regions defended RCRI's role as a consulting body to the governance system and thus rejected the idea of being marked as responsible for any of the processes discussed.
- The final allocation of R/A/C/I roles marked on the table has been agreed by all participants. A single disagreement on whether regional stakeholders should be consulted upon the execution of the baseline analysis is recorded.

4 COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall impact from the workshop was positive; a high number of participants (80 excluding moderators) representing all 13 Greek Regional and Management Authorities, National Authorities and international experts, exchanged views and raised issues on RIS3 governance structures in regional level. The participants enjoyed the process and expressed very positive comments.

⁵ For more details on the processes identified go to Table 5of the Annex



From the 80 participants, 48 came from the regions. However, only 6 regions were represented by their regional authorities and 7 by members of their RCRI. This proves the necessity of setting-up solid organisational structures involving all regional resources and not only Management Authorities.

Some general comments and recommendations:

1. An obvious drawback of the process was that a longer time slot would be more useful for the exercise. In none of the parallel tables the whole process was reached a stage close to completion. However, the participants considered the exercise as a starting point for re-thinking on designing RIS3 governance structure and expressed their will to continue the process in their own means.
2. It was evident that there is a considerable variability in the Regions' capacity to understand S³ as a set of interconnected processes and formulate the jobs-to-be-done in designing and running an S³.
3. Identifying and managing risks was the governance domain which was the most unfamiliar to most participants.
4. The activities recorded under the Communication domain mostly had to do with consultation (i.e. informing and consulting stakeholders before an activity/decision is finalized) rather than communication after an activity or decision if finalized.
5. The processes table does not specifically refer to but should also invite the recording of activities about the interaction of the regional with the national level and this is relevant for all governance domains.
6. While mapping responsibilities, the limitations of the RCRI set by legislation became evident. Moreover, a clear pattern of Managing Authorities trying to dis-engage themselves from the S³ process was also evident.
7. Overall, the mapping the S³ processes seems to be an urgent necessity in helping regions to prepare their governance arrangements in the light of the next programming period and the enabling conditions that have to be fulfilled.
8. A common understanding needs to be established about the terms used in the matrices before they are filled in. In this respect it may be useful to send the regions the examples of activities per domain.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX: TABLES OF PARALLEL SESSIONS

TABLE 3: PROCESSES IDENTIFIED IN PARALLEL TABLE A

GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: ALIGNMENT
Techno-economic analysis in macro context
Elaboration of basic strategy document; presentation and consultation
Evaluation of former interventions on regional innovation topics/issues
Evaluation of past strategy (RIS3 V.1.0)
SWOT Analysis
Mapping of specific needs of industry, HR and quadruple helix in general
Formation of a team dedicated to the development of step 1 of the RIS3 Guide (Analysis of regional context)
Aggregation of data aiming at acquiring key macro indicators used in the expression of the regional vision (step 2 of the RIS3 Guide)
Infusion of know-how by RIS3 experts
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: RISK
Filtration of issues and needs expressed in analysis; ranking by importance
Risk identification and risk management plan
Identification of obstacles imposed by negative factors of the external environment
Appraisal of HR capacity that will support the whole S3 planning and implementation cycle
Confrontation with established perceptions (localities, bad past experiences, etc.)
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: PERFORMANCE
Definition of baseline values of the regional innovation eco-system
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: COMMUNICATION
Communication strategy and dissemination plan to regional stakeholders and to society in general

TABLE 4: PROCESSES IDENTIFIED IN PARALLEL TABLE B

GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: ALIGNMENT
Trends review - analysis
Identification of RIS3 bodies (included above)
RIS3 network (experts, stakeholders)
SWOT (included above)

Vision formulation
Priority setting as a result of EDP
Decisions on how much should each priority should be funded with
Definition of variables for priority setting (included above)
Establishing compatibility with OP actions (included above)
Identification of finance sources (help from national documentation centre)
Call launching
EDP
Report preparation
Approval of RIS3 from monitoring committee
Brainstorming for action plans
Setting up of M&E committee
Annual monitoring report
RIS3 evaluation (OP actions)
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: RISK
RIS3 network of experts, stakeholders
Risk identification
Adoption of vision by political leaders
Deviation in targets with other sources of funds
Ensuring enough time between pre-launch and launch of call
Decreased interest in call participation
Inability to cover own funding needed (set up of fund)
RIS3 communication strategy
Contribution of regional funds to central funds to help cover own funding
Revision of proposal evaluation criteria
Alertness of supporting mechanism for alternative sources of funds
Incompatibility of data (NDC, OP, etc.)
Annual monitoring report
Lack of RIS3-specific indicators
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: PERFORMANCE
Establish synergies between different data indicators

Set up M&E network with regional actors and beneficiaries
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: COMMUNICATION
RIS3 communication
Consultation for vision formulation
Bottom up approach - communication of consultation results
Communication about priorities
Meeting of all RCRI's
Advertisement of calls
Ensuring enough time between pre-launch and launch of call

TABLE 5: PROCESSES IDENTIFIED IN PARALLEL TABLE C

GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: ALIGNMENT
Baseline data collection and analysis for QH
Assessment of changes in the external environment
Budget allocation across S3 priorities
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: RISK
Identification of risks
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: PERFORMANCE
Integrated performance evaluation (2014-2020)
GOVERNANCE DOMAIN: COMMUNICATION
Review of communication strategy
Stakeholder satisfaction survey