

The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process

The case of Catalonia (Spain):

Multidisciplinary associations as core players for Catalan S3

Research and Innovation Strategy for the Smart Specialisation of Catalonia (RIS3CAT) was adopted by the Catalan Government in order to establish a framework for research and innovation (R&I) actions and programmes in 2014-2020. **RIS3CAT communities** are an essential and innovative element in realising the targets of the Catalan Smart Specialisation Strategy and stimulating the regional entrepreneurial discovery processes.

RIS3CAT communities are voluntary associations of companies and stakeholders in the Catalan R&I system that work in coincident sectors and cooperate to incorporate R&I into production activities. Their **multidisciplinary profile and bottom-up focus** make them core players in entrepreneurial discovery processes that lead to increasing specialisation, as they identify and generate projects related to specific topics in the leading sectors. As active stakeholders in the Catalan innovation ecosystem, these communities ensure the participation of companies and stakeholders in defining, monitoring and evaluating the priorities for R&I programmes.

RIS3CAT Communities are aiming to:

- Group together R&D&I companies and stakeholders working in Catalonia in coinciding sectors or technological spheres in order to establish the RIS3CAT process of progressive specialisation;
- Establish agendas for economic transformation by integrating R&I into production activities in the leading sectors;
- Promote medium- and long-term action programmes to develop joint R&I projects based on the detection of common opportunities and needs that are key to the economic transformation of the production fabric;
- Generate new economic and job creation opportunities.

In order to form a RIS3CAT community, at least eight members are required, including stakeholders from the private sector and R&I system. RIS3CAT Communities stakeholders include: companies, business associations, cluster organisations, universities, research centres, technology centres, foundations and institutions linked to R&I, associations and other organisations that are users of technology. It is essential for stakeholders to have an operational base in Catalonia.

University involvement is an integral element of RIS3CAT, implemented through the entrepreneurial discovery process. Involving the universities outside the metropolitan area of Barcelona has been essential for ensuring that the discovery process for smart specialisation stretches across the entire Catalonia. With this purpose in mind, the University of Girona has been developing the so-called “**Campus Sectorials**”. These are teams aimed at increasing the social and economic impact of the university by acting as bridges between the academy, the local productive sector, the institutions and society. They act as demand-led knowledge brokers between researchers and business and aim at

aligning the needs of the two in order to achieve local knowledge based development and stimulate entrepreneurial discovery processes.

Funding for RIS3CAT Communities comes from Government of Catalonia, European funds and other public/private sources of finance.

Read more:

Catalonian case in the S3 Implementation Handbook: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-implementation-handbook> (Gianelle, C., D. Kyriakou, C. Cohen and M. Przeor (eds) (2016), Implementing Smart Specialisation: A Handbook, Brussels: European Commission, EUR 28053 EN, doi:10.2791/53569)

JRC Science for Policy Report: Marinelli, E., Elena-Perez, S., Alias, J. (2016); Universities and RIS3: the case of Catalonia and the RIS3CAT Communities, Smart Specialisation Policy Brief No. 18/2016; EUR 27893 EN; doi:10.2791/444386. Available at: <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/154989/Universities+and+RIS3+-+the+case+of+Catalonia+and+the+RIS3CAT+Communities/50e790a3-25a4-4b4c-9f00-f2219fb14927>