

Monitoring and Evaluation

The case of Catalonia (Spain): Monitoring process for Smart Specialisation Communities

RIS3CAT communities are an essential and innovative element in realising the Research and Innovation Strategy for the Smart Specialisation of Catalonia (RIS3CAT) 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.

The RIS3CAT monitoring process is structured into several levels: projects and instruments; smart specialisation process; and impact. The sources to obtain information for each level of analysis have two dimensions: **quantitative and qualitative**.

The first source of data – quantitative – is the package of indicators established in the RIS3CAT Action Plan as well as those linked to the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) Operational Programme (OP) for Catalonia, when the instruments of implementation are embedded in the Programme. The second source is a package of qualitative surveys and content analysis that will be applied on the stakeholders for each innovation policy instrument and project, in order to complete the vision about the development and impact of the strategy.

The analysis in four levels allows **assessing the performance as well as the global impact of the strategy on the economic sectors of Catalonia and its research and innovation system**.

Indicators of the RIS3CAT

The RIS3CAT has a complete set of indicators developed in order to assess the **performance** of the projects, its **results** and the **impact** derived. To achieve such a level of assessment, the indicators are linked to the execution of operations and activities within the projects and to the overall execution of the instruments, as an aggregation of projects within them.

The **indicators for the performance of the projects** are common to all of them, irrespective of the instrument. They have three different categories:

1. **Innovation and knowledge**, focused on the improvement of the innovation system, the development of *emerging technologies* companies, valorisation and internationalisation.
2. **Sustainable growth**, focused on competitiveness, business trends and efficiency.
3. **Smart specialisation**, as the result of the aggregation of the aforementioned two categories. They are the axis of the sector and the technology as their references for it.

RIS3CAT monitoring process

The monitoring process implies working on three levels: projects and instruments (both using the same system and tools); smart specialisation process; impact. Those different levels have their phases and mechanisms in order to obtain and analyse the information and data:

- Projects and instruments: data and information are directly linked to the Information Systems (IS) used by the different managing bodies of the RIS3CAT instruments for monitoring and tracking projects and performance of the instrument. That includes the IS for the ERDF regional OP, meaning that each time information is fed regarding the execution of the projects (i.e. certification of expenses, evaluation or monitoring, etc.), the RIS3CAT indicators and its scorecard (as a summary of all the information gathered) are also fed. That gives a real-time feedback of all the activities and tasks related to the RIS3CAT, also easing the analysis of the information within the context of each instrument and project.
- Smart specialisation process: this includes a close watch and analysis of the entrepreneurial discovery process, focusing also on two key elements such as leading sectoral areas and emerging activities. To apply an effective methodology, especially over the emerging activities, the monitoring process uses an approach based on tech and market surveillance and continuous feedback with the stakeholders. The means applied are, besides the ones for projects and instruments, specific questionnaires for those operators closer to the market, such as clusters or business organizations. The periodicity varies depending on the instrument and the density of operators around an economic sector.
- Overall impact of the RIS3CAT: the process is linked basically to the ERDF regional OP and implies the analysis of those variables related to the impact of the public policies funded by the ERDF and the role played by the RIS3CAT in it. Part of the tools are still being developed in coordination with the managing body of the regional OP, especially regarding the impact of the RIS3CAT on priority areas of the OP. The final goal is to relate the analysis of the RIS3CAT's impact with the overall transformation of the Catalanian economic fabric due to the public policies applied in the 2014-2020 period.

There is a specialised team working in the monitoring process, in charge of producing information and deliverables as well as reporting to the Steering Committee of the strategy.

RIS3CAT monitoring process and governance

By design there is a **close relationship between the monitoring process and the governance** in the RIS3CAT. The main goal is to provide up-to-date and high quality information to the managing bodies of the instruments in order to attune the execution and continuously improve their performance. At least once a year there is a revision of the Action Plan of the RIS3CAT as well as a following of the measures applied by each managing body using the information generated in the monitoring process.