

Better policy
instruments for
high innovation
projects in the
European Regions

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The HIGHER Project

The HIGHER project is addressed to achieve innovative models of public private partnerships suitable to mobilize investment in related smart specialization areas and fostering an entrepreneurial discovery process in driving innovation process of the policy instruments.

This will be achieved through the analysis of nine policy instruments from one of each region involved in the project to promote the innovation projects under public private partnerships. The partners of the project are evaluating these instruments and trying to identify which are their main weaknesses, developing a learning process to overcome the main obstacles around them and enhancing a better and more efficient implementation. The different regions will exchange the experiences and good practices for the future improvement of the policy instruments of each region.

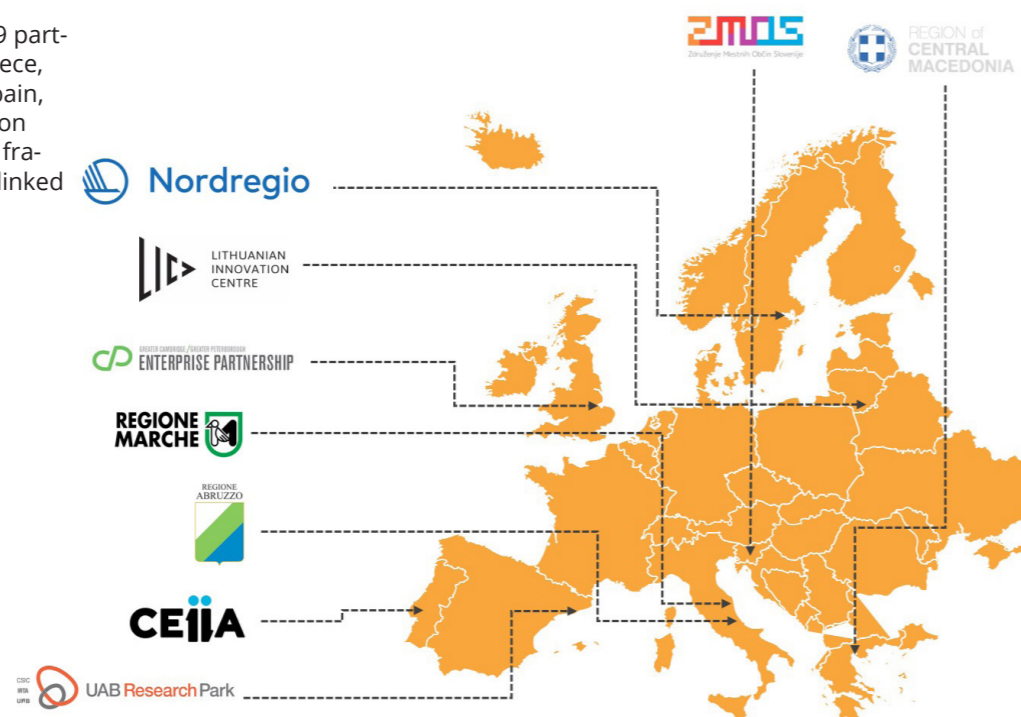
The role of the public authorities as innovation drivers will be enhanced, in the process, as well as their position as "innovation demand hub" in the knowledge driven economy.



An interregional cooperation project for improving innovation delivery policies

Partners

The HIGHER project brings together 9 partners from 8 European countries (Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK) engaged in the promotion and development of Cohesion Policy framework, smart specialization (RIS3) linked to both, public and private sector.



The HIGHER Good Practice Collection of Smart Specialisation

Tackling common challenges in smart specialisation processes

The concept of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) has emerged as an important approach in Europe and beyond for delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth through the adaptation of innovation policies to the regional context. Smart specialisation is based on identifying the unique characteristics, assets and competitive advantages of each region, and bringing regional stakeholders and resources together to promote innovation, to commercialise research and to tackle societal challenges.

The development and implementation of smart specialisation strategies can be a complex process; the HIGHER Good Practice Collection on Smart Specialisation is, therefore, designed to provide innovation stakeholders with an overview of good practices in the design and implementation of smart specialisation. The aim of the Collection is to showcase different good practice examples from the HIGHER Partnership and other European regions, focusing on how to overcome some of the most common challenges faced when facilitating the smart specialisation process under four key themes:

1: THE ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCOVERY PROCESS

Entrepreneurial discovery is an inclusive process involving a wide range of regional stakeholders, designed to identify local innovation capabilities, new market opportunities and prioritise investment areas. No one-size-fits-all entrepreneurial discovery process has been developed and used in the formulation of smart specialisation strategies, with regions adopting different kinds of participatory models and evidence-based practices in the identification of areas of regional innovation specialisation. In relation to entrepreneurial discovery processes, the Good Practice Collection addresses key issues, including how to:

- ▶ Create the conditions for an effective and efficient discovery process.
- ▶ Ensure the sustainability of the S3 process.
- ▶ Prioritise key themes and projects.
- ▶ Refine projects and calls that best help cultivate regional innovation potential.

Practical examples of good entrepreneurial discovery processes are provided from the UK as well as the regions of Catalonia and Stockholm.

2: GOOD GOVERNANCE

While a multitude of stakeholders are involved in smart specialisation processes, public authorities play a crucial role in creating the frameworks and infrastructures for facilitating stakeholder mobilisation in the design and implementation of smart specialisation. In terms of Good Governance, the Collection gives tips on how to:

- ▶ Create effective regional and local governance structures for smart specialisation.
- ▶ Ensure inclusive and democratic S3 governance.
- ▶ Increase the involvement of businesses in S3 processes.
- ▶ Work with interest groups and strong lobbies.

Concrete cases of good S3 governance are provided from Slovenia, the Finnish Lapland and the region of Värmland in Sweden.

3: TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND VALUE CHAINS

Transnational cooperation is a key element of smart specialisation involving the sharing of knowledge, developing synergies and coordinating innovation initiatives with other countries and regions. Transnational cooperation is instrumental in the emergence of new innovations, as collaborating across borders provides access to business and knowledge networks; enhances research capacity; grants access to new markets and business opportunities; helps join global value chains; and potentially generates economic growth. In terms of transnational cooperation, the HIGHER Good Practice Collection reflects on questions such as how to:

- ▶ Link S3 and international value chains.
- ▶ Consider international aspects of S3 and joint learning.
- ▶ Create transnational S3 strategies.

Practical examples of good S3 transnational collaboration and value chains are provided from the Portuguese-Spanish border region, the Baltic Sea Region and the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion.

4: MONITORING AND EVALUATING SMART SPECIALISATION STRATEGIES

Monitoring and evaluation is a strategic management tool created together with key stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation and assessment of smart specialisation processes. The monitoring and evaluation process helps policymakers to examine if they are meeting the goals and objectives of their strategy, potentially reevaluate and readjust the focus and direction of their strategies and learn lessons from successful and unsuccessful strategies. In relation to monitoring and evaluation, the HIGHER Collection provides insights on how to:

- ▶ Monitor and evaluate the implementation of S3?
- ▶ Choose and implement meaningful monitoring activities and indicators for the complex S3 process.

Examples of good S3 monitoring and evaluation processes are drawn from Wielkopolska, Emilia Romagna and Catalonia.

Read more and explore the cases at HIGHER webpage:

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