

Beyond EDP Final Conference



Scoping paper: Beyond EDP¹

“Achieving a powerful RIS3 through EDP”

1. Introduction

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth has put a high premium on innovation policies. European regions play an important role in this respect as they are seen to provide territories with the space for innovation networks. More precisely, regions are strongly encouraged to develop regional innovation smart specialisation strategies (RIS3s) to foster endogenous development. Within RIS3, “Entrepreneurial Discovery Processes” (EDP) are key to place-based innovation by bringing together public authorities, knowledge institutes, business, and civil society for creating new ideas and practices. The 2014 reform of the EU cohesion policy has made RIS3 a strong political tool, linking the absorption of structural funds to the elaboration of regional priorities.

The Interreg project “Beyond EDP”, launched in 2016 with 11 partners from 9 European countries, seeks to take stock of the experiences European regions have gained in entrepreneurial discovery. In a collaborative endeavour, the consortium partners have been analysing the design and implementation of EDP in different regional contexts. In a nutshell, the project is about good EDP management practices. Within Beyond EDP, the consortium presents its common vision on EDP management in the various phases of the policy cycle. The final objective of Beyond EDP is to provide the most efficient methodologies and practices to policy makers across Europe to enable them to implement effective RIS3 for their own region.

The arguments presented derive from both a review of the existing theoretical literature and the experiences of the partner regions. The conceptual elaboration is enriched by a “view from below”, which presents EDP governance structures and innovation practices in the partner regions. In doing so, we are able to identify the implementation of EDP but also point to potential shortcomings and bottlenecks in the process. This scoping paper aims to structure debates and to provide a stepping stone for the analysis of the reality of EDP in European regions.

2. The emergence of Smart Specialisation and RIS3 in the EU

The academic *concept of smart specialisation* has made a rapid political career within a short period of time. There can be little doubt that the Great Recession that has crashed economic expectations in many countries and regions signalled the need for new policy ideas. The original concept was developed by a group of academic advisers to the European Commission, the “Knowledge for Growth Expert Group” (K4G), who bemoaned the productivity gap between the USA and Europe. This gap was seen as resulting from the national fragmentation of innovation efforts and constituting a barrier to growth in the European Union. The expert group recommended to “encourage investment in programs that will complement the country’s other productive assets to create future domestic capability and interregional comparative advantage.

Only a few years later, the EU adopted the concept of smart specialisation as key to its Europe 2020 innovation strategy for promoting economic competitiveness and high levels of employment. Underpinned by seven flagship initiatives, economic production should become more closely linked to knowledge-based research and development (smart growth), industrial production more strongly oriented towards a resource efficient and low carbon economy (sustainable growth), and political and social efforts strengthened to deal with the problems of unemployment, poverty, and exclusion (inclusive growth). The member states of the EU agreed to develop national reform programmes in implementing the Europe 2020 strategy, highlighting the role of regions and regional stakeholders in the process.

As a pre-condition for funding innovation-oriented projects, the smart specialisation approach became firmly entrenched in the reformed EU cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period. Regions were

¹ Based on the Beyond EDP Framework document written by Klaus Detterbeck

legally obliged to devise and implement RIS3 as an ex ante-conditionality for structural fund attribution in some of the operational programmes. With the stronger inclusion of local expertise in innovation strategies, the EU hoped to make cohesion policy more effective and to give additional legitimacy to the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). From the outset, the European Commission has promoted the bottom-up logic of RIS3.

3. The Objectives of EDP

Entrepreneurial discoveries are among the main defining features of smart specialisation strategies. In many ways, the quality of RIS3 depends on an efficient understanding and implementation of EDP. As a bottom-up process, EDP implies a clear break from centralised planning in innovation policies. Governments and public administrations still play an important moderating role in EDP, but they engage more thoroughly with regional stakeholders. The guiding idea is that for the identification of knowledge-intensive areas for potential growth, a “self-discovery process” has to be set in place. Only then will all the available information on given resources and assets, market potentials and weaknesses be collected and aggregated to inform the choice of priorities in research and innovation. The political logic of EDP is that of an inclusive and interactive learning process in regional development with participants from different backgrounds, which commonly constitute the so-called “Quadruple Helix” (QH) of policymakers, business, academia and civil society. Seen from a governance perspective, EDP thus constitutes a modern form of collaborative decision-making in innovation policies.

4. The “View from Below”: EDP in the Partner Regions – the Methodologies used

Broad participation of QH stakeholders is the hallmark of EDP. For most of our partner regions, there has been a longer tradition of elaborating innovation policies within the regional ecosystem, bringing together experts from the spheres of science, technology, and business with political and administrative bodies responsible for delivering regional planning. Among the methods used, the establishment of advisory councils (reporting to regional government departments), working group meetings, surveys, and interviews were quite common. For this reason, there has been quite a natural evolution from these practices and experiences to the methodologies of smart specialisation.

For the design phase of RIS3, profound analyses of regional economic profiles, technological capacities and strategic comparative advantages but also of scientific potentials and societal challenges, in the region and beyond, were carried out in a first step, following the methodology proposed by the European Commission’s Smart Specialisation Platform. In some places, this was done with the help of external experts, in other places, regional government agencies conducted the innovation analyses. Whatever the approach was, the task was to decipher the “regional DNA”. In a **second step**, a QH participatory process for RIS3 elaboration was established. Here we can find a subtle yet interesting difference between the partner regions, concerning the coordinating role of regional governments and its innovation agencies. In a majority of cases, the EDP process was kept quite close to the political level and dynamics were steered by the body or department responsible for the RIS3. In some cases, however, the political level was kept away from the ‘driver seat’. By purpose, some distance from politics was sought in order to allow for a more inclusive deliberation and decision-making process on which path to follow in setting priorities for research and innovation. Hence, this seems to suggest that there still is room for controversy around the issue of the political management of economic development in European regions. In general, the processes around the next steps of smart specialisation – the development of a shared vision of regional development among the stakeholders (third step), the identification of horizontal objectives and thematic priorities for the region (fourth step), and the definition of an action plan with a coherent policy mix (fifth step) – looked rather similar across the cases. Regions followed a focus group methodology. It consisted of open surveys, political meetings, working group meetings, and round-table talks. The designed strategy was presented to the broader public at innovation conferences. Quite often, stakeholder engagement started out in smaller circles to get activities started and to create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. In lowering the constraints of publicity, an easier exchange of opinions was facilitated. Over time, the body of stakeholders active in the process enlarged. As a main weapon to fight the “usual suspects” syndrome, openness to new entrants, and evidence-based

mechanisms to test arguments on comparative advantages and critical mass were employed by the regions.

The sixth and final step of the RIS3 methodology is the establishment of a more permanent participatory governance structure, the allocation of European, national and regional funding for innovation policies, and the creation of a monitoring and evaluation system for the targeted priority areas and horizontal objectives. Hence, we are talking about the **implementation phase of RIS3**, where the questions of keeping the momentum in stakeholder participation, finding the right policy instruments and policy mixes for transforming thematic priorities into real transformative activities, monitoring and evaluating innovation policies have become relevant issues and learning processes in all of the partner regions in the consortium.

Seen from a **governance perspective**, the regions in our consortium have opted for a flexible combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. In managing the regional ecosystems of innovation, structures for a coherent and effective coordination of activities have to be established and combined with the necessities of an open and interactive process in the QH format, in which hierarchical leadership is to be replaced by collaborative leadership.

Most regions have developed a three-tiered governance structure for managing the implementation phase of RIS3:

- Steering Groups, responsible for strategic decision-making and the integration of RIS3 activities, including monitoring and assessment. These bodies are close to the regional government but also include representatives from the wider QH;
- Management Teams, which coordinate activities and provide most of the day-to-day work in implementing RIS3. The management teams, often associated with regional innovation agencies, are also involved in the drafting of reports and the exchange with the European Commission, national authorities and other regional innovation agencies;
- Innovation Environments, providing the room for a continuous interaction between stakeholders in the QH within and across the priority areas. At a working level, their input and discoveries serve to uphold regional consensus on innovation policies but also to realise specific projects and programmes.

5. Good Practices in RIS3 Implementation: A Typology

At the working level, regions have pursued quite different ways in making use of EDP in bringing about smart specialisation. This reflects the place-based approach that is inherent in the concept. In the RIS3 implementation phase, we can identify three broad patterns:

- At the macro-level of innovation environments, broad umbrella organisations have been established that are responsible for all sectors and stakeholders interested in innovation within the regional context;
- At the meso-level of innovation environments, specific cluster organizations, collaborative structures of interested partners or thematic working groups in a specific field have developed;
- At the micro-level of innovation environments, hubs, living laboratories and innovation parks have been created, in which entrepreneurial agents come together for specific projects and lines of development.

European regions have either concentrated on one of these three types of innovation environments or have mixed several of them. In some sense, the EDP working level in a region has developed from traditions and opportunities for cooperation that have been in that territory for some time. Yet, there is also the deliberate choice that is learning from other regions and their good practices, and sometimes an element of chance that has been driving the establishment of innovation environments. Structures that have worked well, or that have become strongly entrenched and supported by powerful players in the region have continued and grown while other structures have withered away over time.

6. Outcomes of EDP

As expected, the outcomes from the EDP can benefit the regions at different scales:

- At the decision-aid level, the information on the value of RIS3 priority, the feedback on the RIS3 implementation and on the needs of the entrepreneurs allows policymakers to better target their innovation priorities, as well as to better implement their innovation strategy by adjusting the policy mix to the entrepreneur's stakes and needs.
- At the operational level, EDP allows the regional entrepreneurs to discover new emerging markets and new topics, as well as encourage them to explore these opportunities. It secures the innovative project pipeline with regard to the regional assets (in the RIS3 priorities). This is showcased by the increasing number of projects and of collaborations within the RIS3 priorities.

This emulation also benefits the dynamics within the ecosystems of the RIS3 priorities. It improves not only the coordination of the support ecosystem but also the quality of the support provided to the entrepreneurs.

- By extension, EDP increases the awareness of the entrepreneurs about participative governance and on innovation policy management.
- This also pushes the innovation support bodies to consider the entrepreneurs needs and observations and to improve the quality of their supports.

Finally, EDP provides a fertile environment for enabling entrepreneurs to take advantages of these opportunities and participates in the economic and social development of the territory.

7. List of Good Practices by Partner Region

| Region | Name of the GP (link) | Short description |
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| Macro-level innovation environments | | |
| Östergötland | East Sweden Business Region (ESBR) | The ESBR, in collaboration with all of Östergötland's actors within the area of growth, come together to create attractive, competitive industries with high growth potential. The ESBR focuses on regional strengths from which all industries and branches can benefit. |
| Centre-Val de Loire | Six Platforms for the Innovation, Valorisation and Optimisation of Environmental Technologies | Six innovation platforms were created to bring together public and private stakeholders in the region. The aim is to improve the monitoring and understanding of the state of the environment, and to develop and validate new technologies for the remediation of degraded environments. |
| Northern Netherlands | Regional Cooperative of Westerkwartier | This cooperative, established in late 2013, seeks to support and encourage entrepreneurs in taking risks, when innovating their businesses and building a new regional value chain. |
| Meso-level innovation environments | | |
| Extremadura | RIS3 Thematic Working Groups | Five working groups were created as part of the RIS3 governance model, as an instrument of promotion, participation and empowerment of the key players of the region in each area of specialisation. |
| Umbria | RIS3 Thematic Working Groups | Five thematic working groups have been activated as part of the Umbria RIS3 governance system linked to smart factory, energy, green chemistry, life sciences and agro-food. Trans-regional clusters of agro-food and green chemistry were created to promote the sharing and transfer of knowledge and |

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| | | expertise between the various players in the industrial system and in research institutes. |
| Lodzkie | <u>ICT Polska Centralna Klaster</u> | This cluster aims to strengthen the supply of a skilled ICT workforce in the region, sharing knowledge for innovation, becoming active in international projects, and promoting the interests of the different partners in the cluster. |
| Northern Netherlands | <u>Innovation Cluster Drachten (ICD)</u> | Innovation Cluster Drachten, a regional alliance of high-tech companies, aims to boost innovation, manufacturing, and competition power. ICD represents the highest concentration of R&D activities in the north of the Netherlands. |
| Castilla y León | <u>Vitartis</u> | The Vitartis cluster represents the food industry sector, one of the most important economic pillars in Castilla y León. It aims to achieve higher competitiveness, stronger representation of sectoral interests, and a more vibrant emphasis on R&D activities in the region. |
| Centre-Val de Loire | <u>Smart Electricity Cluster (S2e2)</u> | The S2e2 is a large network for smart electricity technologies in western France. As a competitive cluster for managing electric and thermal energies, it aims for innovation by stimulating collaboration between companies and laboratories in the form of R&D projects, whose spin-offs are growth drivers for these companies on the market. |
| Saxony-Anhalt | <u>MAHREG Automotive Cluster</u> | The MAHREG automotive network was founded as a network of excellence for the industry where service providers, equipment suppliers, research institutes, and universities cooperate. The network is in regular contact with its hundreds of partners and takes care of the close interconnection between industry and science. |
| Micro-level innovation environments | | |
| Northern Netherlands | <u>Water Campus, Leeuwarden</u> | Water Campus encourages cooperation between (inter)national and regional businesses, universities, and research centres, educational institutes and governments within the water technology sector in order to create synergy for world class innovation, education and entrepreneurship. |
| Northern Netherlands | <u>Dairy Campus</u> | At Dairy Campus, innovative projects and activities are carried out in order to generate new information and knowledge to drive innovation in the dairy chain. |
| Northern Netherlands | <u>Healthy Ageing Campus Netherlands</u> | This is the organisational umbrella that brings together all the facilities, enterprises, and researchers in and connected to the University Medical Centre Groningen in the healthy ageing research areas of food & (e)health, biomedical technology, and pharma. |
| Saxony-Anhalt | <u>Magdeburg Science Port</u> | The Magdeburg Science Port was established in 2007 as a centre for innovation and technology transfer. Among the key aims of the project is the encouragement of communication among the firms based in the area to generate synergy. |
| Saxony-Anhalt | <u>Research Campus STIMULATE, Magdeburg</u> | The focus of STIMULATE are technologies for image guided minimally invasive methods in medicine. The main goal is to develop new patient-friendly, high-quality and specifically required diagnostic and therapeutic procedures for socially highly relevant disease patterns. |
| Centru | <u>Life Tech City, Tirgu Mures</u> | Life Tech City aims at supporting and financing R&D projects at the intersection of medicine and the ICT sector. It facilitates cooperation within and beyond its network. |
| Östergötland | <u>Visual Sweden</u> | Visual Sweden is a part of the region's strategy for smart specialisation, where visualisation and simulation is among the prioritised areas. The initiative aims at stimulating innovation and regional growth with focus on visualisation, image analysis and simulation. |
| Centre-Val de Loire | <u>Bio³ Institute, Tours</u> | The Bio ³ Institute is dedicated to research and training for the pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and biotechnology industries. The mission is to bridge the applied sciences of bio-technologies |

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| | | with their focus on health and well-being and the industrial production in the field. |
| Centre-Val de Loire | <u>Intelligence des Patrimoines (IHE-PAT)</u> | The initiative aims at the preservation and future development of the natural and cultural heritage in the region. The synergy effects between heritage preservation and the creation of jobs and wealth drive its efforts. |
| Lodzkie | <u>Business Innovation Centres (CIB), Lodz</u> | The CIB aim to support and engage entrepreneurs in the region on the local, national and international level. Among their tasks is to advise on possibilities for obtaining funding or engaging in cooperation. |

8. Smart Specialisation in Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020

Five main objectives will drive EU investments in 2021-2027:

1. **Smarter Europe**, through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation, and support to small and medium-sized businesses;
2. a greener, carbon-free Europe, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change;
3. a more Connected Europe, with strategic transport and digital networks;
4. a more Social Europe, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare;
5. a Europe closer to citizens, by supporting locally-led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

Regional development investments will strongly focus on objectives 1 and 2. 65% to 85% of ERDF and Cohesion Fund resources will be allocated to these priorities, depending on Member States' relative wealth. The **'enabling conditions'** continue the approach of the ex-ante conditionalities introduced for the 2014-2020 funding period. There are some 20 conditions proposed, which correspond to roughly half of the number of conditionalities in the previous period. They cover similar thematic areas to those in 2014-2020, such as energy efficiency, and still **include smart specialisation strategies** to guide investments in research and innovation. Having S3 in place as an enabling condition means that smart specialisation strategies shall be supported through:

- up-to-date analysis of bottlenecks for innovation diffusion, including digitalisation;
- the existence of competent regional / national institutions or bodies responsible for the management of the smart specialisation strategy;
- monitoring and evaluation tools to measure performance towards the objectives of the strategy;
- effective functioning of the entrepreneurial discovery process;
- actions necessary to improve national or regional research and innovation systems;
- actions to manage industrial transition;
- measures for international collaboration will be an enabling condition for smart specialisation.

In addition to the new possibility for regions to develop joint projects together under their own programmes, the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy rules create the **'Interregional Innovation Investments'**, a tool inspired by the success of the Vanguard initiative and the 2014-2020 pilot action on Interregional innovation partnerships. Regions with matching 'smart specialisation' assets will be given more financial support to work together and involve further policymakers, researchers, businesses, and other innovation actors. The aim is to scale up 'bankable' interregional projects that can create European value chains in priority sectors such as big data, bioeconomy, resource efficiency, connected mobility or advanced manufacturing.

9. Conclusion

The rapid success of EDP from an academic concept to a political tool in the EU has proved the potential of the idea of smart specialisation, a concept that will continue to increase in significance throughout the next programming period. At the same time, however, the transfer into political practice has led to a permanent evolution of EDP which raises a series of questions, both in theoretical and in practical terms. Many of the challenges driving the current debate concern the management of EDP, the continuity of stakeholder involvement, and the measurement of its impact on regional development. How does it work, how can it be managed effectively, and how can its success be monitored and measured? Beyond EDP intends to provide new answers to this set of questions arising from the experiences made in the regions.

The Beyond EDP consortium considers EDP a continuous process, from agenda-setting to policy-formulation, decision-making, and implementation, as well as to subsequent assessment and evaluation of chosen policy practices. The role of individual actors throughout the entire process may well vary across the different stages of EDP. Designing EDP governance structures thus must ensure continuity of interaction but also flexibility in working together. A shared vision of regional development among stakeholders, a clear understanding of the potential for cooperation, and the promotion of EDP practices are vital for stimulating continued participation and commitment to regions. Regions will have to find a flexible combination of top-down and bottom-up processes in EDP. The consortium will continue to study the management of RIS3 in European regions – and in particular the use of EDP practices for designing priorities, implementing strategies, and monitoring effects – in more depth over the next years to come. Taskforces on EDP management, policy mixes, and stakeholder involvement, as well as peer review events in the different partner regions, will be among the main instruments and methods for gaining further insight into EDP as the new paradigm of innovation policy.

10. References

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Beyond EDP ONLINE Final Conference

A second generation of Smart Specialisation Strategies to foster economic
recovery

10th of December 2020, from 10h00 to 12h30, [Online Webinar](#)

Scope of the conference

Seven years of implementing smart specialisation strategies have demonstrated that EDP is the cornerstone of efficiently implemented strategies. Considering the need for actions for economic recovery, with the new operational programming period in mind, the conference will analyse in detail how to develop better strategies to accomplish the enabling conditions. It will provide helpful operative outcomes that could be replicated in other territories. The conference will provide practical lessons to improve the entrepreneurial discovery process. Special emphasis will be given to governance of regional innovation ecosystems to involve all regional economic stakeholders to mobilise all the resources for the economic recovery after the Covid-19 crisis.

Content

The conference has a practical content oriented to provide useful advice to regional economic practitioners. Avoiding giving too much information, it will provide just three practical lessons learnt co-created by the participants in the following aspects of regional innovation strategies:

- Continuous entrepreneurial discovery process
- Role of the Governance
- Stakeholder involvement
- Transnational territorial cooperation

Regions are the engines of Europe's economy and play a crucial role in economic recovery. Participants will come to know of the practical lessons learnt through Beyond EDP from qualified experts working in regional governments, development agencies, universities, and other regional representatives.

Beyond EDP project

Financed by the Interreg Europe programme, the aim of the project was to provide substance, guidance and practical support to operationalise the concept of entrepreneurial discovery process. It did so through a mix of external experts combined with the mutual learning of several regions to share the practice-orientated activities guided by several peer reviews. The project developed valuable results that are useful to actors in different regional contexts. It did this by strengthening the analytical underpinnings of the entrepreneurial discovery process and valuable advice for policymakers that is to be communicated in the final conference of the project.

AGENDA

Venue: Zoom // Registration: [Online Webinar](#)

| | | | |
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| 9h30 - 10h00 | Virtual welcome coffee for registration | | |
| 10:00-10:40 | Welcome and opening of the conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • François Bonneau. President Région Centre-Val de Loire (video recording) • Mikel Landabaso. Director. JRC. European Commission • Erwin Siweris. Interreg Europe Programme Director • Q&A session Moderator: Richard Tuffs. Friends of Smart Specialisation | | |
| 10:40 -11:00 | Lessons learnt from BeyondEDP project: Matrix governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mattias Flodström. Östergötland Region • Luc Hulsman. SNN. North Netherlands Provinces | | |
| 11:00 -11:10 | Task force outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathalie Boulanger. Dev'Up. Centre-Val de Loire | | |
| 11:10 - 11:55 | Workshop: Continuous Entrepreneurial Discovery Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruno Checcucci. Umbria region • Gabriel Bednarczyk. Marshal office. Lodzkie region Moderator: Mattias Flodström. Östergötland Region | Workshop: Role of higher education institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nelly Verstraeten. Région Bourgogne-Franche-Comté • Pilar Garcés. Viceconsejera de Universidades e Investigación de la Junta de Castilla y León. Moderator: Dr. Karsten Steinmetz - Universität Magdeburg | Workshop: Role of intermediaries' organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmen Sánchez Ruano. FUNDECYT. Extremadura • Ioan Levitchi. Head of Office. ADR Centru Moderator: Christian Saublen – Former Director of EURADA |
| 11:55-12:10 | Recap / feedback from the workshops Presented by selected pitches for each of the workshops on continuous entrepreneurial discovery process, industrial transition, governance, stakeholders' involvement and transnational territorial cooperation) | | |
| 12:10-12:30 | Conclusions: the way forward. Questions and answers from participants Final remarks Esteban Pelayo – Director of EURADA | | |

SPEAKERS

RICHARD TUFFS – FRIENDS OF SMART SPECIALISATION



Richard is a strategic thinker and expert on EU affairs, particularly in research and innovation policy, regional policy, smart specialisation and regional economic development. Richard has worked in higher education and for English regional offices in Brussels and was formerly the director of ERRIN. Richard is a founding member of the Friends of Smart Specialisation - an informal group of independent experts promoting strategic thinking around the concept of smart specialisation. Richard is often requested to moderate events and play a role as a rapporteur in groups and conferences. He was the rapporteur for the EU's Advisory Group for Science with and for Society (SwafS) 2014-2016 and was also the rapporteur for the Commission report on the now established and successful Capital of Innovation prize. Richard was honoured in May 2017 with the European Regional Development Agencies Association – EURADA's "Christiane Bom Award" for services to fostering regional economic development.



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FRANÇOIS BONNEAU – PRESIDENT REGION CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE



François Bonneau began his professional career as a guidance counsellor, after obtaining a DEA in modern literature in Orléans. He was a Principal of a secondary school and for nine years ran a secondary school in a priority education zone. In terms of political responsibilities, he is currently President of the Centre-Val de Loire Regional Council (since 2007), re-elected in 2010 and at the last elections in December 2015. He is also Deputy Vice-President of the Association of French Regions (ARF), Chairman of the ARF Education Commission, and was appointed Deputy Chairman of the ARF on 26th December 2009.



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MIKEL LANDABASO – JRC DIRECTOR AT EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Dr Mikel Landabaso is Director for Growth and Innovation at the Joint Research Centre, managing the Seville site. Previously he was Director for Strategy and Corporate Communication at DG COMM under the President's Cabinet. He has also worked as Head of Cabinet of Regional Policy Commissioner and Head of Unit in several Units, including as responsible for Smart and Sustainable Growth and the Structural Funds for Spain, as well as assistant to the Director General of DG Regio. These jobs covered both, policy design and policy implementation. He has also worked part time as lecturer at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Belgium (2001-2007), University of North Carolina (USA) (2000), Deusto University and the public University of the Basque Country in Spain (1987-1990). He was given the 2004 "Christiane Bom Award"

for his contribution to innovation in European Regional policy by the European Regional Development Agencies Association – EURADA.

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ERWIN SIWERIS – INTERREG EUROPE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR



Erwin is responsible for the overall programme management and relation to the programme governance institutions (the Partner States, the Hauts-de-France Region as managing authority, the European Commission etc.). He is also in charge of managing the secretariat's team of 28 members. He has experience in managing finances for the transnational programmes INTERREG IIC and IIB Baltic Sea Region in Rostock, Germany; and two years with the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel, Germany, advising SMEs about EU funding schemes. Erwin was Deputy Programme Manager in the INTERREG IIIC West and the INTERREG IVC Programme. He holds a diploma in Political Economics and Banking and has worked as a consultant in political economics.

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LUC HULSMAN AT SNN – NORTH NETHERLANDS PROVINCES



Luc has been dedicated to 'the Northern-Netherlands case' for 15 years now. Since joining as a trainee immediately after obtaining his master's degree in Economics at the University of Groningen, he contributed to SNN in various positions. In his current position, his main occupation is the Northern Netherlands' Smart Specialisation Strategy. In this respect improvements in the innovation ecosystem and support structure are major themes. Luc is a member of several working groups and networks related to S3 and structural funds management, at the national and European level.

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NATHALIE BOULANGER – DEV'UP CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE



Nathalie is the head of European policies in the Regional Development Agency of Centre-Val de Loire (Dev'Up). She is a recognised expert on smart specialisation strategies, leading the operational implementation of the strategy in her region and coordinating the Interreg Europe project Beyond EDP. Nathalie also manages, for the Dev'up agency, five other European projects related to the smart specialisation strategy. She supports the economic actors of her region to seize the opportunities offered by European programmes and coordinates the node of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). Nathalie has an important activity on widening the use of strategic intelligence and information-seeking methods, strategic analysis, within private companies and organisation from the region Centre-Val de Loire. Nathalie holds an industrial applied PhD on

strategical information. She has a bachelor's degree on technology watch and transfer. Dev'Up is a member of EURADA.

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CHRISTIAN SAUBLENS – FORMER DIRECTOR OF EURADA



Christian is commercial engineer and has been for more than 30 years a leading representative of regional interest in Brussels, giving the innovative views of the regions to EU institutions and participating in a continuous dialogue and exchange of ideas for economic development. He founded the European Association of Regional Development Agencies (EURADA) in 1991, before he was working in a European association of local and regional authorities and started his career as lobbyist in the European association of glass manufacturing industry. Christian promoted the creation of the European Business Angels Network (EBAN), promoting the stimulation of informal venture capital at regional or national level. Christian has written several papers regarding the impact of EU regulations on regional development and the role of development agencies in Europe.

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Professionally, Gabriel coordinates activities in the area of creating and monitoring innovation policy in the Łódzkie Region, providing the authorities with the information necessary to make the right strategic decisions. Since 2015, he has been representing the region at various events devoted to supporting the development of innovation organised at different levels of administration, both in Poland and abroad. Moreover, he participates in scientific conferences devoted to the economy of innovation and carries out teaching activities. In the field of innovation policy, he is fascinated by identifying the determinants of the effectiveness of the EDP and the possibilities of measuring it.

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BRUNO CHECCUCCI – UMBRIA REGION



Bruno Checcucci received his B.Sc. in Computer Science and Master from Perugia University in Italy. He is presently responsible for the Electronic Service Laboratory, Italian National Institute of Nuclear Physics (INFN) and Physics – Geology Department, of Perugia University. From 1997 to 2010, he was an Assistant Professor with the Computer Science Department in Perugia University. He is the author of two books, and more than 160 articles. His teaching and research interests focus on fibre-optic data acquisition systems, high-density low-noise electronics, computer data networks, protocols and medical data acquisition systems. Since 1992, he has been a Scientific Associate at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva. At CERN, in the framework of the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS)

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Dr. Karsten Steinmetz is a research associate at the Otto von Guericke university in the administrative Department of Research Funding Advice/EU-University Network. Through his doctoral dissertation concerning "The use of scientific knowledge in political decisions" he is well aware of the pitfalls and challenges that policy recommendations and the networking of stakeholders can entail. He has studied in different countries and made practical experiences in different areas of society.

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Ioan Levitchi started his professional life as a journalist before joining ADR Centru's team as a communication expert in 2003, becoming Head of communication for the Agency one year later. Between 2007 and 2013 he held various management positions in large manufacturing companies and consultancy firms. In 2013 he came back to the ADR Centru and coordinated project evaluation, contracting and monitoring processes for the Sectoral Operational Program Competitivity 2007-2013. In 2016 he became Head of the Business Promotion and Investment Unit of ADR Centru and, also, the coordinator of the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Region Centru. ADR Centru is a member of EURADA.

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Esteban Pelayo joined EURADA in 2015 as director. He started his professional career in 1996 within the Enterprise Europe Network (IRC network during that time), helping companies to establish transnational technology transfer agreements in the University of Alicante. In 2000, he moved to the Regional Development Agency of Murcia to manage the EEN, provide IPR advice to companies and manage a programme using ERDF funds to coordinate the regional network of technology centres. In 2011 he moved to the EU office of the Region of Murcia in Brussels (2011-2015) to assist companies to successfully participate in EU programs. Esteban graduated as an agriculture engineer, holds a postgraduate degree in innovation management and is a certified Spanish patent and trademark attorney.

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