



Better Monitoring, Evaluating, and Designing RIS3

A Policy Learning Platform event

Wednesday 25 September 2019

EURADA; Brussels, Belgium

Summary. The thematic workshop looked at tools and approaches to better monitor, evaluate, and design research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3). The thematic workshop attracted 49 participants and was organised back-to-back with the European Research and Innovation Days. High-level speakers from **DG Regio**, **S3 Platform**, and **Utrecht University** along with leading regions presented the latest tools and experiences in monitoring, evaluating, and designing RIS3.





Highlights

The concept of research and innovation strategy for smart specialisation (RIS3) is at the centre of the European Union cohesion policy strategy. For the Commissioner for Regional policy Corina Crețu, 'smart specialisation will be **more important than ever in the post-2020 period**' ([European Commission, 2018](#)).

The workshop provided the latest tools for better monitoring, evaluating, and designing RIS3 in order to achieve greater innovation outcomes and build on the lessons learned over the previous programming period. Some highlights and key messages from the workshop are:

- **RIS3 governance** and the participation of RIS3 stakeholders from the quadruple helix are fundamental to monitor, evaluate, and design RIS3 strategies. The next programming period 2021-2027 will stress the importance of governance, especially for less-advanced regions.
- Aimed at building synergies and complementarities, RIS3 can use international collaboration to build extra-regional linkages responding to missing **regional innovation capacities**.
- The RIS3 needs to be a **living document** where new priorities emerge from monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation exercises must include the right **level of granularity**.
- **Monitoring RIS3** must include qualitative and quantitative indicators, which should be useful and available when possible to the quadruple helix stakeholders.
- **Quadruple helix stakeholders** should be involved in the selection of indicators to ensure full ownership of the S3 monitoring.
- The monitoring system should be flexible to detect **emerging regional priorities**. A clear framework must be put into place to guide policymakers in selecting the most relevant indicators.
- Policymakers must take time to define **what to evaluate**. Evaluation should accompany the entire cycle of policy implementation (from ex-ante to ex-post).
- Regions are keen to share **evaluation and impact results** concerning the different approaches regarding the **granularity of smart specialisation domains**. One recurring evaluation question is: do more focused and targeted choices create better outcomes/impacts than more broadly defined specialisation choices?
- **Designing RIS3** must combine **evidence-based approaches such as economic relatedness, location quotients, etc...** with more contextual regional elements to respond to societal challenges. Changing the input and basis for discussion, **evidence-based decision-making** is crucial to overcome functional, cognitive, and political lock-ins.
- Regions need to understand their unique **regional institutional contexts (peripheral, metropolitan, old industrial)** to select related or unrelated diversification.
- **Peripheral regions** should not underestimate their **hidden potentials for growth and specialisation**. However, to avoid the often-dominant focus on agro-food and tourism, the RIS3 needs to commit to an open and continuous discovery process, active stakeholder involvement and an outward-looking perspective with extra-regional linkages.
- As highlighted by DG Regio, the European Commission is preparing guidance notes to support regions in responding to the fulfilment criteria for the **7 enabling conditions** for the next programming period 2021-2027.

Available tools from the Joint Research Centre S3 Platform in Seville were presented such as the [MOOC on Monitoring RIS3](#) and the [S3 Platform viewer](#), a tool to provide a consistent picture of the territorial level.



Good practices

Three good practices on **monitoring, evaluating, and designing RIS3** were featured during the workshop. The Interreg Europe projects that were featured are:

For **monitoring RIS3**, **Paulo Santos**, Norte Regional Coordination and Development Commission (Portugal), from the Interreg Europe project **MONITORIS3**, presented the good practice on the **Norte RIS3 methodological approach for monitoring regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3)**. Monitoring RIS3 should be comprehensive and indicators associated to the priority domains are the nodal point of the monitoring model. One example of such indicator is ‘the number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions, by RIS3 priority domain (output)’.


For **evaluating RIS3**, **Frédéric Pinna**, Dev’up Centre-Val de Loire (France), from the Interreg Europe project **BEYOND EDP**, presented the experience of Region Centre-Val de Loire and the methodologies identified in **BEYOND EDP** to better evaluate RIS3. In evaluating RIS3, policymakers should select at the beginning of the process a panel of companies to monitor for formative and summative evaluation exercises.

For **designing RIS3**, **Ioannis Spandos**, the Region of Central Macedonia, from the Interreg Europe project, **HIGHER**, presented the experience of the Region of Central Macedonia and the methodologies identified in **HIGHER** to better design RIS3. Designing RIS3 should include foresight activities, motivate regional stakeholders to develop long-term strategies, boost internal capacity in all RIS3 stages, and have national authorities invest in gathering evidence for strategic evaluation.



Policy Change – One Stop Liaison Office ‘OSLO’


In **HIGHER**, the **One Stop Liaison Office ‘OSLO’** is a mechanism to support quadruple helix collaboration through public-private collaboration to foster a continuous entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP). The inspiration came from **Abruzzo Region** that is performing continuous EDP, meanwhile the **Cross-Border Smart Specialization Strategy of Galicia & Northern Portugal (RIS3T)** inspired Central Macedonia on how to capitalise on interregional partnership experiences, and the **RIS3CAT Catalanian RIS3 Monitoring System** demonstrated how to involve the quadruple helix into the monitoring RIS3 process.



Karen Coughlan from the Southern Regional Assembly (Ireland) presented during the session ‘Tools to better designing RIS3’, **tools identified** in the Interreg Europe project, **MARIE**, such as:

- the **Enterprise Survey**, which can be used to gather the Responsible and Research Innovation experiences of companies on the ground.
- **Maturity mapping exercises** that can be used to map the level of Responsible Innovation in the region against selected MoRRI indicator results.

The methodologies developed with these tools could support **more inclusive quadruple helix decision-making processes**.





Next steps

Monitoring, evaluating, and designing RIS3 are complex activities. The place-based approach that must be taken to find effective policy solutions on monitoring, evaluating, and designing RIS3 makes Interreg Europe projects the ideal space for policy learning.



Future Policy Learning Platform activities

Several follow-up activities were discussed with the participants:

- Regions that are interested in improving some aspects of their Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) can consider applying for a [Peer Review](#) from the Policy Learning Platform. **The next call will be launched on Wednesday 9 October 2019.**
- The Policy Learning Platform will hold a webinar on the topic of **Better RIS3 Governance** on **Tuesday 22 October 2019** (10:30-12:00 CET) complementing well the topics discussed in the workshop on Better Monitoring, Evaluating, and Designing RIS3. You can register to the webinar [here](#).

Other useful materials

- Interreg Europe [Good Practices database](#) and respective projects webpages
- Interreg Europe [article](#) on [insights for evaluating Smart Specialisation Strategies \(S3\)](#)
- Interreg Europe [policy brief](#) on [Industry 4.0](#)
- [Sign up](#) to our **Policy Digest** in Research and Innovation.

For more information related to the workshop and the presentations, please visit the [conclusions page](#), where you will find photos, attendee lists, and all of the presentations, etc.

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