



The Role of Universities in Innovation and Regional Development

RUNIN Seminar with Rogaland Region

Universities and Smart Specialization

Liliana Fonseca (University of Aveiro) & Lisa Nieth (University of Twente & Regio Twente)

Monday 27th of January, Stavanger



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Overview

- I. About us - Working Package, Researchers, Regions
- II. Smart Specialization – A General Overview
- III. Key Theme I – Stakeholder Involvement – Our Experiences
- IV. Key Theme II – University Involvement – Our Experiences



About Us – Working Package Policies & Interventions

- Examines the **interaction of universities with public policy**, both as subjects of policy interventions and as participants in policy networks.
- A. **Universities as targets of public policy** → policy plays a large role in **determining how universities interact with firms and regions**, both through formal requirements and regulations and through monetary or other incentives for such interaction
- B. **Universities as input providers to public policy** → as an important **stakeholder** in the development of regional innovation programmes and source of knowledge and learning



About Us – Who are we?



Liliana Fonseca

Host Institution: University of Aveiro (PT)

PhD Title: The Role of Universities in Regional Innovation Policies and Practices



Lisa Nieth

Host Institution: Regio Twente & University of Twente (NL)

PhD Title: It takes both sides to build a bridge: Universities as institutional entrepreneurs in knowledge-based regional development






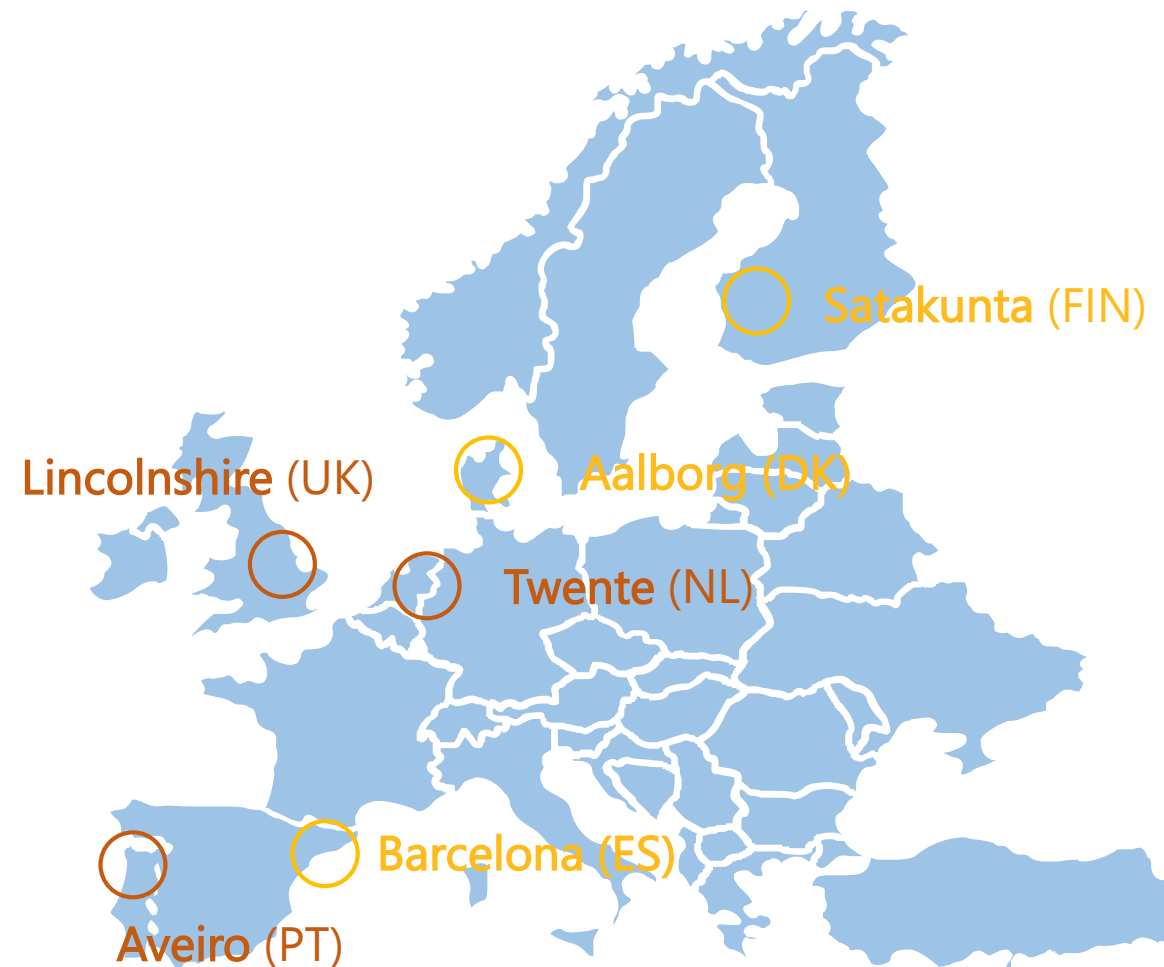
Maria Salomaa

Host Institution: University of Lincoln (UK)

PhD Title: Entrepreneurial universities, rural regions: A comparative analysis on university engagement through Structural Funds programmes in the UK, Finland and Portugal

About Us – ‘Our’ Regions

LILIANA FONSECA	LISA NIETH	MARIA SALOMA	
University of Aveiro	Regio & University of Twente	Lincoln University	HOME INSTITUTION
 universidade de aveiro	 UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.	 UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN	
Aveiro	Aveiro	Aveiro	CASE STUDY REGIONS
Barcelona	Aalborg	Lincolnshire, Satakunta	
Twente	Twente	Twente	



Smart Specialization – A General Overview

- **Place-based** approach characterized by the identification of **strategic areas for intervention** based on
 - the analysis of the strengths and potential of the economy;
 - an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) with wide stakeholder involvement
- Science, technology and business parks are essential stakeholders to be included in the governance framework
- Their input for the prioritization stage should be considered a key element in the process.



▶ SMART

Identify the region's own strengths and comparative assets



▶ SPECIALISED

Prioritise research and innovation investment in competitive area



▶ STRATEGIC

Define a shared vision for regional innovation

"Through its partnership and bottom-up approach, smart specialisation brings together local authorities, academia, business spheres and the civil society, working for the implementation of long-term growth strategies supported by EU funds" [European Commission]

Key Theme I - Stakeholder Involvement

Challenge → How to secure that many diverse institutions are present in the RIS3 design process and also integrate them in RIS3-implementation?

- EDP envisioned as a bottom-up process, with the governmental bodies steering discussion and providing space for development;
- **But** often diverse stakeholders are missing in the EDP Process (such as civic society, industry esp. SMEs), municipalities, different levels of academics, etc.)
- Often the Involved stakeholders are limited to existing contacts/networks of the governmental bodies (pre-filter)

Suggestion → Consider a wide mix of stakeholders to be represented in the EDP and the organizational setting/matrix that implements the strategy



Experiences from our Research - Stakeholder Involvement

Aveiro Region

- University assumed that municipalities include industry interests in the process / municipalities assumed university includes industry interests in the process



Twente Region (NL)

- Pre-filter done by regional VIPs (Twente Board) creating a regional focus on "high tech", but excluding other stakeholders of the region

Aveiro Region (PT)

- Municipalities aligned along a common challenge and defined a joint vision to solve it (pollution, water management)



Experiences from our Research - Stakeholder Involvement

Centro Region (PT)

- stakeholder involved in the EDP process from the beginning, also consultants
- 'Pre-filter' analysis done by university through forums



Planning Studies >

2018 - Issue 11: Regional innovation systems and entrepreneurial
ness

Enter keywords, authors, DOI, ORCID

Articles

Embedding entrepreneurial regional innovation ecosystems: reflecting on the role of effectual entrepreneurial discovery processes

L. Nieth , P. Benneworth , D. Charles , L. Fonseca , C. Rodrigues , M. Salomaa  & ...show all
Pages 2147-2166 | Received 10 Apr 2018, Accepted 21 Sep 2018, Published online: 05 Oct 2018

Download citation <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2018.1530144>

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[Full Article](#) [Figures & data](#) [References](#) [Citations](#) [Metrics](#) [Reprints & Permissions](#) [Get access](#)

Making the EDP effectual → with set goals, but flexible in the approach → continuous reorienting for long-term success

Key Theme II – University Involvement

Challenge → At which stages are universities involved in the RIS3 process? How (and why) do they get involved?

- Focus on senior management or star academics
- Missing communication/alignment between university leadership, operational departments and academics
- Active involvement of universities in early design stages associated with less-developed regions and/or regions with a less complex innovation ecosystem
- Dichotomy between formal and informal modes of involvement



Suggestion → Clarify the type of involvement required by the university, and suggest an integrated alignment at all levels of the organization (management, academics, technical staff)

Experiences from our Research - University Involvement

University of Aveiro and its RIS3

Chapter 14

Entrepreneurial Universities and Regional Innovation: Matching Smart Specialisation Strategies to Regional Needs?

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ABSTRACT

Universities are expected to play a leading role in the smart specialisation strategy process. However, a gap between discourse and practice is marking the RIS3-related regional development programmes, which can be extended to the involvement of universities in the process. A mismatch can be speculated between the expectations towards universities' roles in RIS3 implementation and actual practice, and its repercussions on a regional innovation ecosystem. This chapter addresses the extent to which the role played by universities in a region's innovation and entrepreneurial practice aligns with the smart specialisation strategic outline. As an in-depth case-study of the University of Aveiro (Portugal), it draws on both quantitative and qualitative data, with an analysis of RIS3 approved projects in the Portuguese NUTS II Centro region, and interviews with key actors within the university and the regional administration. Through this, it weighs the contribution of entrepreneurial universities to the RIS3 goals, drawing lessons for public policy and discussing the future of RIS3.

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- S3 framework and funding contributed to more directly link UA's research to regional needs;
- The university's local partnerships enabled it to effectively leverage the funding received, advanced and diversified its action across the region.



**hub
b30.** Brunchs
d'innovació


Circular Water

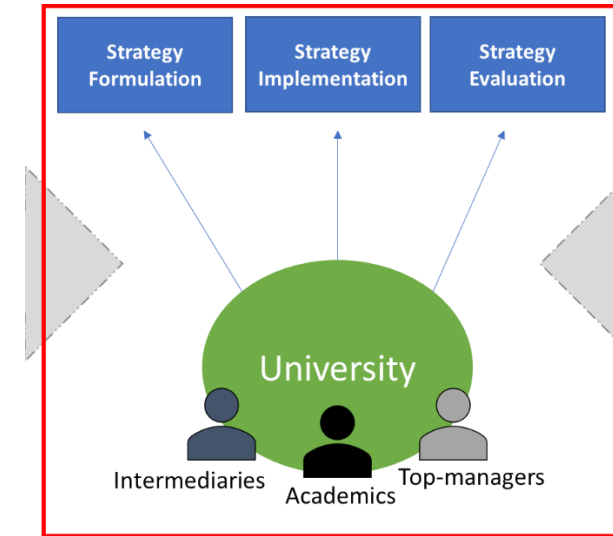
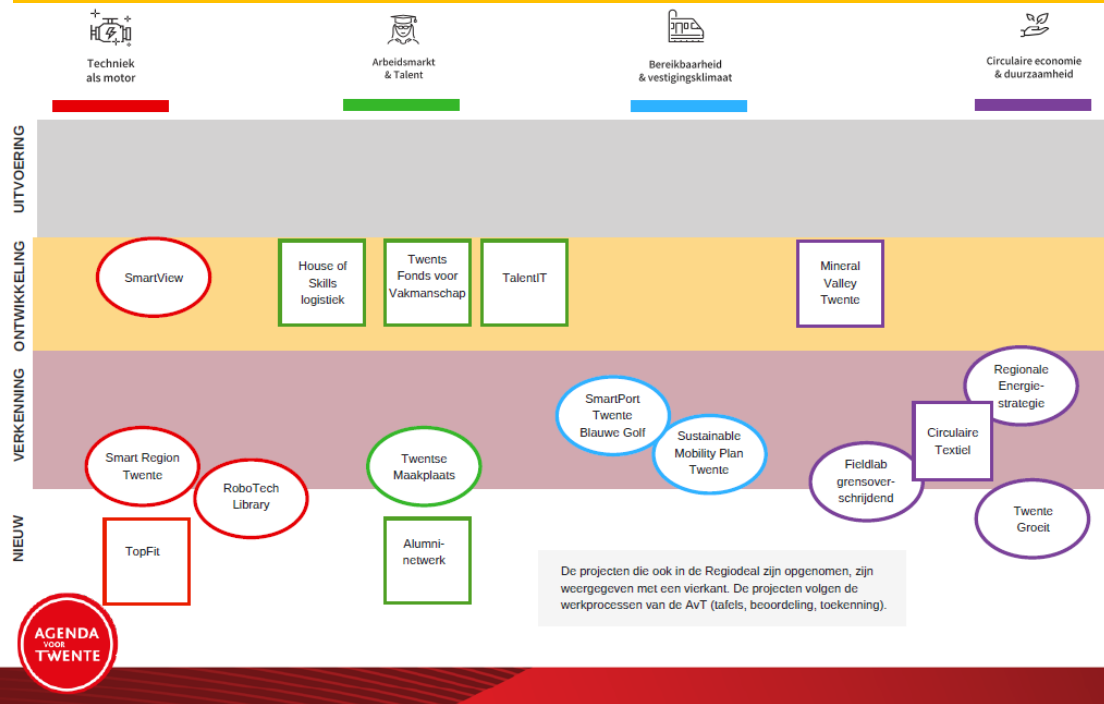
Catalonia Region (ES)

- Create hybrid spaces to discuss transversal topics with stakeholders not necessarily involved in the current process, often many societal actors included – Innovation Brunch @ Hub B30

Experiences from our Research - University Involvement

Twente Region (NL)

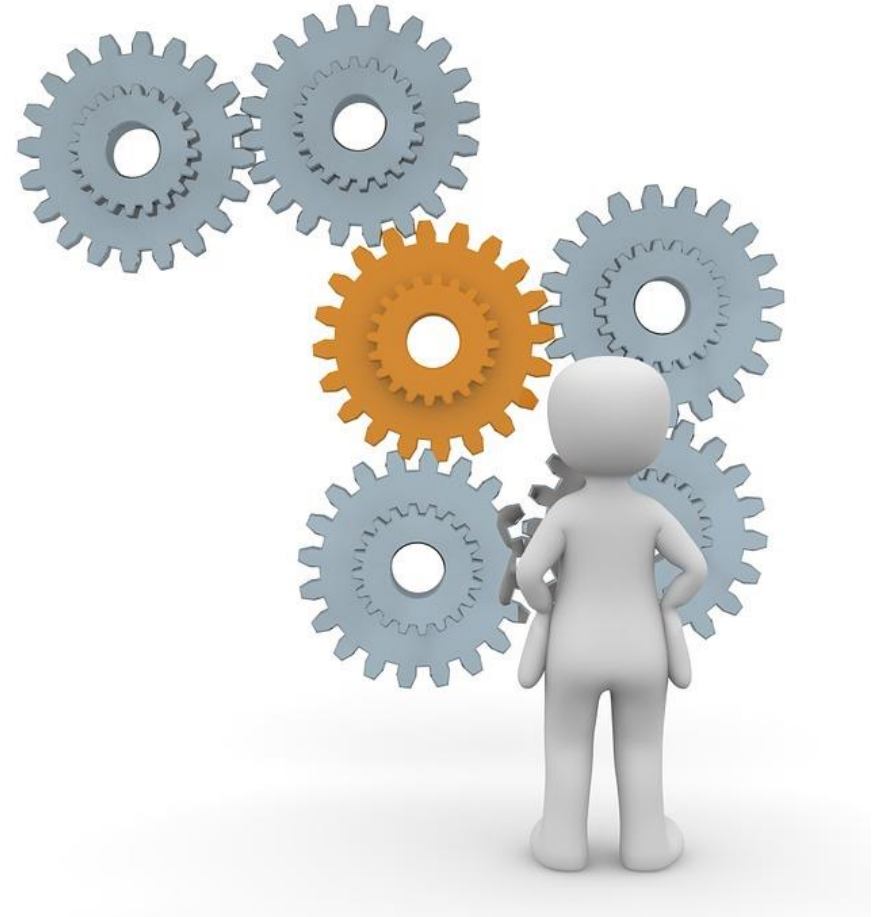
- Academic representatives in the priority areas are not just based on their "stardom", but on their networks, engagement in and knowledge about the region



- Examples of formal involvement in strategy process (Twente Board, CIRA) & informal involvement through individuals /academics in their specific areas
- Examples of involvement at different stages of the policy process (Aveiro "from the beginning", no roles (yet) in the evaluation/monitoring)

Key Points

- Consider a wide mix of stakeholders to be represented in the EDP and the organizational matrix that implements the strategy
- Clarify the type of involvement required by the university, and suggest an integrated alignment at all levels of the organization (management, academics, technical staff)
- Make use of existing knowledge assets to help support policy process and capacitate emerging trends





**The Role of
Universities in
Innovation and
Regional Development**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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