RUNIN Seminar with Rogaland Region

Universities and Smart Specialization

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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

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<th>LILIANA FONSECA</th>
<th>LISA NIETH</th>
<th>MARIA SALOMA</th>
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HOME INSTITUTION

CASE STUDY REGIONS

- Aveiro (PT)
- Twente (NL)
- Lincolnshire (UK)
- Aalborg (DK)
- Satakunta (FIN)
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.

"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

Making the EDP effectual \( \rightarrow \) with set goals, but flexible in the approach \( \rightarrow \) 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

- 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, and advanced and diversified its action across the region.

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
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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