The Role of Higher Education institutions and Research Organisations: which synergies for a better research?

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Roles of HEIs and ROs

- Universally recognised teaching function
- Research role (production of new knowledge)
- Knowledge transfer (application and utilisation of existing knowledge in business and society as a whole)

DG RTD established an Expert Group

- to examine role of universities and research centres in RIS3 process
- to propose recommendations for policy makers
Role in the Innovation Chain

- to fully realise the knowledge and innovation potential of HEIs and ROs (including financial and regulatory measures).

- need to close the gaps in the innovation chain (bridging the “death valley”).
Synergies for a better research

To close the innovation gap, HEIs and ROs may use:

• existing EU initiatives for research and innovation capacity building (Research Infrastructures, Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs)

• potential synergies between cohesion and research funding

• ICT tools to further facilitate synergy between above initiatives and RIS3
Role in RIS3

- Centres of Excellence will attract talent, and therefore attract businesses and entrepreneurial activity (Technoparks, Science Parks, "Pôles de Compétitivité")

- Through research and international links, technological opportunities may emerge, as well as products, processes and standards (scaling-up from regional activities to inter/national environments)
How?

- **HEIs and ROs can contribute to the design phase of RIS3 by an evidence-based assessment of the region's knowledge capacity, including in own institutions and in local companies.**

- **HEIs and ROs can contribute to the implementation phase of RIS3 by focusing on adaptations/developments to contribute to RIS3 sustainability (long-term capacity).**
Characteristics for success

HEIs and ROs should:

- Be aware of the policy framework of RIS3 and its application at various levels
- Address regional development in their strategic development plans and include regional stakeholders
- Include regional aspects in their own assessment strategy
- Develop effective partnerships and appropriate infrastructures/processes to sustain effective communication with them
Constraints (1)

At national level:
- Centrally developed policies for higher education and research
- Focus on national and international excellence in research and education, regional involvement lacking or seen as a "third task"

At regional level:
- Poor understanding of the role of HEIs and ROs in regional development and insufficient communication
- Weak role of HEIs and ROs in regional governance structures and decision making processes
- Insufficient coordination between policies and funding instruments
The private sector

- Differences in corporate and academic culture and time horizons
- Regional economies often dominated by SMEs - low demand/absorption capacity for new knowledge and innovation due to an underinvestment in R&D
- Weak representative voice of SMEs
Constraints (3)

At institutional level:

- Limited institutional autonomy
- Lack of incentives to engage in regional development (at institutional and individual level)
- Limited management capacity and insufficient internal coordination and resources
- University technology transfer models disconnected from regional growth, insufficient support for developing ideas into products/services, IP issues
Recommendations (1)

To the European Commission:

- Enhance coordination across policy domains
- Rationalise application, funding and reporting procedures and align the timelines among different programmes
- Facilitate inter-regional links and scaling-up initiatives (establishing a central - EU or government controlled - Fund to support inter-regional spill-over effects)
- Link Horizon 2020 actions with RIS3 (Teaming, ERA Chairs)
Recommendations (2)

At national level:

- Develop strategies for capacity building, retaining and attracting talent
- Strengthen HEIs’ autonomy (human, financial and physical resources, responsibility over curriculum)
- Encourage collaborative research between HEIs and ROs and between HEIs/ROs and business
- Support Digital learning, invest in broadband, e-infrastructures and support integration of academic and industrial RDI infrastructures
- Support innovation and bridging the ‘death valley’ between proof of concept and commercialization
Recommendations (3)

At regional level:

- Establish a partnership structure of government between HEIs and ROs and public and private stakeholders to develop RIS3
- Invest jointly with HEIs and ROs in programmes that support RIS3 and bring wider benefits to regional businesses and community (translational research facilities, one-stop advisory services, mobility schemes)
- Promote the internationalisation of the region by tapping into HEIs and ROs global knowledge networks
- Support big projects having as a nucleus HEIs and ROs
Recommendations (4)

**At institutional level:**

- Seek an active role (lead organisation) in the development and implementation of RIS3
- Enhance the absorptive capacity of SMEs by providing training aligned to business growth
- Review recruitment and reward systems to encourage quality, impact and regional engagement
- Develop institutional strategies for capacity building and retaining and attracting talents
- Stimulate institutional reform based on ICT, i.e. Digital Science and Digital Learning models, support the implementation of “virtual mobility” as a means to reverse the ‘brain-drain’
Thank you for your attention!

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