Recommendations for developers and implementers of Lithuanian Smart Specialization strategy

Many discussions have taken place how successfully implement all 7 priorities defined in the Smart specialization strategy for Lithuania since beginning of its preparation in 2012. During this period many suggestions by various interest groups were proposed how to achieve better results. Participants of the INTERREG Baltic Sea region programme 2014–2020 project "Learning among regions on Smart Specialization" representing seven countries of the Baltic Sea Region, also would like to propose some identified measures to support the implementation of the smart specialization strategy for Lithuania.

During project implementation in 2018–2020 research and focus group meetings on assessment of cooperation between four quadruple helix members for implementation one of the seven top priorities of smart specialization strategy for Lithuania 'Energy and sustainable environment' were organized. Results have demonstrated than only small part of potential of Lithuanian's smart specialization is used. One of the identified barriers is lack of cooperation between different stakeholders of quadruple helix. The results of the research have demonstrated that, despite willingness of all types of institutions to cooperate, cooperation is slow. In many cases various discussions are dominating, unfortunately there is insignificant number of real cooperation action with focus on creation of innovations.

Increased cooperation could significantly accelerate the implementation of innovations in all seven priorities of smart specialization selected by Lithuania for smart specialization strategy. Based on the results of the project, the following steps were identified for Lithuania:

1. Encouragement cooperation and new working practices/procedures connecting *all actors of the Quadruple helix* involved in the smart specialization process: private companies, academia, public authorities and NGOs. Results of research and practical experience of many Baltic countries in these areas, such as Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, demonstrate that it is important to develop cooperation not only between private companies, but also between other members of society who are willing and able to influence smart specialization processes. In Finland, for example, it is a prerequisite for the implementation of certain projects that the project team consists of specified groups of Quadruple helix members involved in the smart specialization process (eg private companies and universities or private companies and NGOs, etc.). New

cooperation in many cases is not ending with implementation of the project but continues with new initiatives and projects, even by attracting more participants. Priority should be given to projects submitted by consortia of cooperating organizations involving all stakeholders of Quadruple helix.

2. Encouragement of *new learning methods* based on *international cooperation* and *good practices*. Although the concept of smart specialization is focused on the development of selected region, the successful implementation of the chosen specialization in the region may lack some knowledge or other resources. Institutions responsible for implementation of smart specialization strategy in Lithuania should encourage use of new learning methods based on international cooperation and good practices in the development of priorities of smart specialization that were selected for the country. New learning methods based on international cooperation experiences and good practices can provide new knowledge or offer the necessary solutions for implementation of defined practices in the field of smart specialization. Examples of Sweden, Norway and Finland have shown that applying of new learning methods from neighboring countries, based on international cooperation and implementation of good practices, is very effective tool (eg cooperation projects funded by the Swedish Institute). Involvement of experienced institutions or experts from other countries can contribute to a more efficient implementation of the smart specialization process. Support of the development of international innovation networks could also be of great benefit.
3. Implementation of innovative *networking tools* that help the development of smart specialization. In particular, this should take the form of organizational and financial support for the creation and operation of national innovation network, thus creating the infrastructure needed for the development of innovation. The practice of Lithuania and other countries has shown that focus should not be on the use of information technologies, but on the network management model, because without qualified management, virtual economic cooperation networks quickly lose their viability. It would be worthwhile to analyze the content of the existing platforms promoting cooperation between network participants, identifying what additional information is needed to establish new contacts between participants within the country and with participants from other countries (eg the Open R&D Lithuania platform).
4. *Individual learning and development of own competencies*. The development and implementation of new innovations in any chosen field of specialization requires constant deepening of knowledge, learning, and development of new ideas, based on individual learning or participation in events, conferences or seminars on this topic. The experience of the project participants shows that cooperation between stakeholders of

Quadruple helix involved in the smart specialization process, participation in various national and international networks and cooperation tools (platforms) helps to acquire new knowledge, obtain information about ongoing training (distanced and local), exchange newest information.

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More information:

More information about LARS project you can find in this link: http://projects.interreg-baltic.eu/projects/lars-93.html

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