Note to the European Commission, DG REGIO G5 - GREECE & CYPRUS

Review of the on-going RIS3 processes in the Region of Continental Greece

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This short note summarises the principal observations and conclusions to be drawn from the Technical meeting, held in Athens on 17 July 2013, between the Greek national and regional authorities and the Commission with a view to the preparation of the partnership agreement 2014-2020, and specifically the research innovation strategy for smart specialisation in the Region of Thessaly.

i) RIS3 processes adopted by the region. Weaknesses and structures to be modified

Following the organisation of the regional conference and the RIS3 workshop for the new programming period on 22 and 23 April, the Region of Continental Greece continued the activities related to the elaboration of RIS3. In particular,

- A survey was realised with a questionnaire sent to stakeholders, business community representatives, businesses, and members of the research community.
- Two working meetings took place with the Higher Education Institute of Central Greece and EVETAM, a technology company for applied research, technological development, laboratory testing, certification and quality to investigate collaboration in areas of their specialization.
- An exploratory meeting took also place with the GSRT to identify synergies between regional and national R&D and innovation policy.

Major difficulty reported is the involvement of entrepreneurs to RIS3 design. Their response to the survey was disapponting with 15 responses (from larger companies only) out of 500 recipients of the questionnaire.

At the organizational level, the Region has established five thematic groups for the design of the Operational Programme. Three of these groups on (1) Research-Technology-Innovation (2) Competitiveness and Environment, and (3) Climate Change will hold a series of thematic roundtables in areas of their interest involving key players from the business community and research organizations. The thematic sessions are planned to be completed by mid-September and detailed proposals will be consolidated by the end of September in a single strategy document which will fed the overall design of the Regional OP.

The Commission should recommend to continue the efforts for setting up of the Regional Innovation Council, which was announced during the RIS3 workshop of 22 April, and the organisation of the public consultation with collaboration between the external consulant and the Council. National authorities should also provide information about the overall architecture of sectoral and regional programmes 2014-2020.

ii) Promoting RIS3 in opposition to sectoral approach defended by some important stakeholders

Based on the findings of the first round of consultation and earlier efforts of regional innovation, the Region has decided prioritizing the following thematic areas:

- Modernization of the agro-food sector and development of linkages with other sectors
- Development and modernization of tourism
- Development of the productive complex of metal products
- Diffusion of ICT for modernizing the economy and improving services to citizens

- Diffusion of environmental technologies and energy-saving technologies to reduce the environmental footprint of manufacturing.

This initial selection of industries for specialisation corresponds to the profile of the Region and existing critical mass of activities (Table right).

We recommend, however, a strategy of smart specialisation that takes into account the diversified regional economy, and its various components, such as (1) the manufacturing complex in Boeotia, (2) the agro-tourism based island economies of Evia and Skyros, (3) the concentration of agricultural and extraction activities in Phocis, Fthiotida and Evritania. The Development Conference showed also that new products can be created at the intersection of different activities and sectors, i.e., herbs, beekeeping, combination of essential oils and wax products with export potential, supported by services of packaging, design, and export. Technology inputs in these activities should be offered in collaboration to technology and specialised providers located in Attica.

	Industry	Rank in Europe	Specialisation	Employment
1	Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats	1	12.35	882
2	Manufacture of tubes	1	10.76	1 427
3	Mining of non-ferrous metal ores, except uranium and thorium ores	2	29.86	1 437
4	Manufacture of cement, lime and plaster	3	15.33	1 511
5	Manufacture of articles of concrete, plaster and cement	3	3.76	2 012
6	Manufacture of grain mill products, starches and starch products	4	6.70	1 493
7	Manufacture of soap and detergents, cleaning and polishing preparations, perfumes and toilet preparations	5	4.62	1 352
8	Manufacture of basic precious and non-ferrous metals	5	6.52	1 656
9	Adult and other education	6	2.86	4 379
10	Manufacture of other food products	8	2.08	5 171
11	Repair of personal and household goods	8	2.63	766
12	Fishing, fish farming and related service activities	9	11.14	2 019
13	Site preparation	10	3.33	2 190
14	Bars	10	2.79	6 312
15	Growing of crops; market gardening; horticulture	11	8.14	28 946
16	Restaurants	12	1.88	9 147
17	Sea and coastal water transport	12	6.25	1 457
18	Farming of animals	16	3.97	4 453
19	Manufacture of structural metal products	18	2.00	3 006
20	Manufacture of builders' carpentry and joinery	19	2.57	1 872

iii) RIS3 and the GSRT role and synergies

During the Technical meeting, no mention was made on the outcomes the exploratory meeting between the Region and GSRT. Efforts for collaboration should continue and intensify and agreement about the kind of support the GRST should offer to the design and implementation of the regional smart specialisation strategy.

iv) Conclusions of the seminar

The Technical meeting showed that during the last three months a few steps were made in the elaboration of RIS3. The Region should intesify the efforts for setting-up the Regional Innovation Council, give active role to the Council, involve key members of the business community. The timetable for producing a draft RIS3 by the end of September is feasible, given the good support of the Region by the external consultant.

v) Milestones and deliverables by the Region of Continental Greece

In short term, the regional authority should work on the following three deliverables (D) and two milestones (M) in order to accelerate the work of RIS3:

(**D1**) Setting-up the Regional Innovation Council with a small number of key stakeholders and distinguished entrepreneurs, by mid September 2013 **(M1).**

(**D2**) Mapping and analysis of the regional innovation system, innovation gaps, SWOT, and balance scorecard based objectives, and options for smart specialisation, to be prepared by the thematic groups and the external consultant as planned by mid September 2013 **(M1).**

(**D2**) A first discussion of RIS3 in the Elected Regional Council of Continental Greece about objectives, innovation delivery mechanisms, specialisation choices, and draft strategic orientations for Continental Greece, by 30 September **(M2).**