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

Review of the on-going RIS3 processes in the Region of Attica

Author: Alasdair Reid, expert appointed by DG REGIO to monitor the Greek smart specialisation process

Date: 30 August 2013

This short note summarises the principal observations and conclusions to be drawn from the Technical meeting, held in Athens on 17 July, 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 Attica.

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

The RIS3 process was still in an early stage in mid-July 2013 although some progress has been made since the organisation of the regional conference and the RIS3 workshop for the new programming period on 29 and 30 April[1]. The IMA submitted shortly on 16 July a draft analysis entitled "Preparation and roadmap for a smart specialisation strategy (RIS3) for the region of Attica 2014-2020". However, the presentation made by the Attica authorities during the meeting tended to confirm that there was still no structured process in place for consulting with stakeholders and notably the business sector on priorities.

The regional representative noted that S3 in Greece is viewed too narrowly as being about scientific specialisation (and in this context the role of the GSRT needs better definition). The Attica region sees "a threat that needs to become an opportunity", namely the vast research potential that keeps asking the State for funds. It was argued that there is a need to "introduce enterprises" into partnerships with research institutes to ensure that they make use of the state of the art technology installed in the centres.

Through the roadmap that is being drafted, the region is trying to map all possible options and revamp linkages between scientific potential and business sector. A number of specific initiatives were mentioned including major project (e.g. recording all genomes) or drawing on pilot actions funded through EU programmes such as Ecopol (http://www.ecopol-project.eu/).

In summary, it was acknowledged by the regional representative "we have to start running in Attica". He also suggested that there was a need to focus on specific projects with enterprises that are sufficiently mature and enlarge the range of companies participating to S3 by offering them quick-wins (e.g. support them to get into excellence projects).

The Commission should recommend:

(1) The Attica Region needs to accelerate the procedure of selection and implementation of the work of an external consultant, compiling and analysing data of regional performance, company needs analysis, quantitative and qualitative gaps in competitiveness and innovation.
(2) The RIS3 network should be mobilised in a much more structured manner so as to guide the work of the consultant and provide early feed-back on emerging priorities and possible pilot actions aimed at identifying and launching innovation platforms.

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

[1] See also the Regional Innovation Monitor visit report to Attica region: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/regional-innovation/monitor/?q=p.showFeed&t=news&n=17346

The Attica Region development strategy for 2014-2020 is structured around five "development areas ":

- " developmental resistance" in order to reduce , manage and address the impact of the economic and social crisis,
- the "recovery" regional competitiveness and ' reintegration ' of Attica in the European and international development and investment map
- development "renewal - change" of the development model in Attica ,
- "growth reorientation " of existing production structures,
- gradual "adaptation" of the Attica Region to new conditions and requirements of Europe 2020.

According to the RIM visit report, a tentative list of thematic priority includes:

- Key enabling technologies including ICT, and biotechnology and diffusion to the key sectors e.g. agro-food, tourism, health, culture etc.
- Technologies and activities related to the energy efficiency
- Food and beverages, bio-foods, organic and traditional products
- Creative industries
- Waste treatment and clean-tech technologies
- New products and services in tourism (e.g. booking and logistics, content industry, web-marketing, integrated promotion of Attiki)

In addition, the draft analysis (of 16 July) points to the metropolitan nature of Attica region resulting from the combination of activities and services, such as: Business Services, R&D-higher education-conferences; trade-exhibitions, art , cultural and creative sector, banking - financial services– insurance, etc. However, it underlined that the Attica "metropolitan" activities are weakened due to lack of openness, continuity and a business and investment 'friendly' environment. The draft analysis suggests that an open innovation approach could be adopted but this would require a much more detailed study and preparation.

The draft analysis document stated that the further specification of priorities would be carried out in two steps:

1. Mapping of regional advantages in specific sectoral and spatial priorities (Mapping Attica's Regional Assets). To be completed by mid-September 2013.
2. Creating 'S3 networks' to be consulted on the content of the strategy, in parallel to the design of regional development plan and operational programme for 2014-2020. The aim being to ensure an 'inclusive approach' allowing for the maturing of networks and their transformation into structured clusters. In conjunction, there is a need to develop procedures and management tools, and raise awareness and support in order for the strategy to be implemented effectively at regional level

iii) RIS3 and the GSRT role and synergies

The Attica Region and national authorities (GSRT, etc.) should agree on a 'division of labour' in terms of funding distinct types of actions involving public (GSRT) or academic research centres located in Attica. The regional operational programme funding should be focused exclusively on 'innovation platforms' involving partnerships with regional firms/public authorities. RTDI related equipment and infrastructure investments under the ROP should be solely directed to projects 'labelled' by the innovation platforms. In turn, the GSRT should ensure that investments planned in the framework of the Greek National Roadmap for Research Infrastructures are aligned, wherever possible, with regional development priorities and not only national considerations. Research infrastructures working under open door policy can offer a bridge between regional smart specialisation and national R&D.

iv) Conclusions of the seminar

The Attica region is unlikely to be able to achieve an effective mobilisation of stakeholders in time to submit a well-developed RIS3 strategy. From September to end 2013, the region should focus on mobilising a number of working groups analysing sub-sets of the regional innovation system in key sectors and cross-cutting technologies (e.g. ICT, environmental technologies, transport and logistics, maritime resources, etc.). There is a need to establish a

management structure for both the development of the RIS3 and for the corresponding measures of the regional operational programme. In order to avoid creating additional regional intermediary structures, given the budgetary crisis, this task could be contracted out to an existing regional agency

From a complementary telephone interview end August 2013, it appears that the selection of the consultant to prepare the mapping (step 1 above) has not been completed. This makes the conclusion that Attica can at best achieve a consensus on the main innovation platforms to be supported under the ROP within the time-frame for submission of programming documents to DG REGIO (early 2014).

We recommend that the Commission suggests to Attica region to submit a RIS3 setting out the broad fields for a limited number of innovation platforms, pre-identify a 'champion' and key organisations (public-private-academic-social) to be mobilised and management structures. The further definition and development

v) Suggested milestones and deliverables for Attica Region

In short term, three deliverables (D) at two milestones (M) would accelerate the work of RIS3:
(**D1**) Analysis of the regional innovation system, innovation gaps, SWOT, and balance scorecard based objectives to be prepared by the consultant, by end-October 2013 **(M1).**
(**D2**) Mobilisation of one or more RIS3 networks (e.g. thematically as the basis for developing innovation platforms, by 10 September 2013 **(M1).**
(**D3**) A first discussion in the Regional Council on the selected RIS3 priorities, delivery mechanisms and regional innovation support measures by end 2013 **(M2).**
(D4) On-going development of selected innovation platforms during 2014 – this could involve providing funding for feasibility studies, etc. from remaining 2007-13 resources in order to develop a solid foundation for 2014-20 implementation.