

Prof. Dr. Nicos Komninos

Director, URENIO Research

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 54 124 Thessaloniki, GR

Phone: +30 2310 995581 - Fax: +30 2310 995583

Website: www.urenio.org/komninos

Email: komninos@urenio.org

COMMENTS ON THE REVISED RIS3 OF WEST MACEDONIA

This document examines the changes introduced into the RIS3 of West Macedonia (version 30 April 2015) with respect to the comments made on the RIS3 version of February 2015. The left-side column presents the comments on the previous version and the right-side column the changes introduced into the revised RIS3 document submitted on April 2015.

Comments on RIS3 V.- February 2015	Changes introduced into RIS3 V.- 30 April 2015
<p>01. The draft RIS3 of West Macedonia submitted (March 2015) comprises three files: the extended summary (33 pages), the RIS3 document (8 sections, 178 pages) and the Annexes with documentation (205 pages). Overall, the RIS3 of West Macedonia is presented in an extended document of 417 pages, which should be reduced substantially to make the main messages clear to the relevant regional, national and EU authorities.</p>	<p>The size of document (RIS3 and Annex) is the same.</p> <p>The main messages of the strategy and intervention logic should be made clearer to stakeholders.</p> <p>The extended summary somehow covers the need for a shorter version to be easily read by the stakeholders.</p>
<p>SWOT AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES</p> <p>1.2 In the setting of production priorities for RIS3 it is not clear which sectors and activities are at the centre of the RIS3. The documents submitted make reference at many sectors and activities (pp. 40/73, and 60-62/73), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary sector, agricultural products, saffron, and cattle breeding • Energy, lignite production, renewable energy, tele-heating • Traditional manufacturing sectors (fur industry, transformation of agricultural products, agrofood, and beverage, metal products) • Tourism • Intelligent transport systems • ICT for energy, health, industry, and tourism • Integrated management of waste and recycling. <p>Are all these sectors and activities the priority areas for RIS3 of West Macedonia? This should be made quite clear and the selection to be justified by data.</p>	<p>The ambiguity on the proposed sectors of priority for smart specialisation remains.</p> <p>On page 13/218 as priority sectors are mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Energy and renewable energy, -Traditional manufacturing sectors with priority to fur industry, -Tourism, and -Agro-livestock products. <p>On page 114/218 are mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Energy / RES, Tele-heating -Integrated management of waste -The traditional sectors of agriculture and manufacturing: (1) breeding of fur-bearing animals and fur products, (2) transformation - standardization of agriculture products, (3) food and beverage and (4) metal construction -Tourism <p>On page 137/218 are added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intelligent transportation systems - Energy and environment - Smart grid and smart-metering

	<p>- Health</p> <p>-Broadband infrastructure and services</p>
<p>1.3 Equally important is the identification of regional knowledge resources, skills, and research activities that can support the productive differentiation of the region and the rise of new sectors of economic activity in areas such as renewable energy, ICT, transport, biomass, and other emerging activities.</p>	<p>No further information is given.</p> <p>Agencies and organisations supporting entrepreneurship, research and innovation are described in the RIS3 document (p. 75-81) and Annex (p.5-8), but regionally available research and innovation skills and competences capable of supporting the sectors of priority are not described.</p>
<p>1.4 The chapter of analysis should conclude with the clear definition of priority sectors and activities for the RIS3, taking into account the existing critical mass, exports, and emerging innovative activities.</p>	<p>This comment is still valid.</p> <p>I have not found information about the profile (critical mass, specialisation, exports, industry structure, etc.) and challenges of the proposed priority sectors.</p>
<p>ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCOVERY</p> <p>2.2. Information on the entrepreneurial discovery processes and consultation is missing. The RIS3 document and annexes do not describe activities relating to consultation with regional stakeholders, the academic, and business community. Consultation would contribute to bringing up business and innovation opportunities in technologies, products, and new markets to the benefit of the regional economy.</p>	<p>This comment is still valid.</p> <p>No further information is provided.</p>
<p>2.4 Entrepreneurial discovery should be realised for each of the RIS3 priority sectors. Conclusions can be codified in SWOT tables per mature or emerging RIS3 sector or activity.</p>	<p>This comment is still valid.</p> <p>No further information is provided in the revised document.</p>
<p>OBJECTIVES AND INTERVENTION LOGIC</p> <p>3.2. The text does states clearly the RIS3 objectives. Initially, nine thematic fields and 33 objectives are described (TF1-4 objectives, TF2-3 objectives, TF3-6 objectives, TF4-2 objectives, etc.), but it is not clear whether these all objectives are adopted by the RIS3 of West Macedonia.</p> <p>Then, the Vision for the Region is described making reference to two set of policies: the upskilling of human capital, enhancing the links to global value chains, and the strengthening of knowledge absorption by companies. Again, it is not clear which objectives are set for the RWM.</p>	<p>The comment is still valid.</p> <p>Reading again the Chapter 4 of the RIS3 (p. 108-129) I cannot identify a coherent presentation of the RIS3 objectives.</p> <p>The 9 thematic fields and 33 objectives mentioned are policy instruments than modernisation objectives. They do not define what should be pursuit in each priority sector.</p> <p>I would suggest setting the main objectives per priority sector and then describe the intervention logic (strategy) to meet these objectives in the sector.</p>

<p>3.3. The intervention logic, including the assessment of policy instruments used in the past, is described on pages 14-31/73. Again the text does not make clear what is literature and what is adopted by the RIS3 of West Macedonia. The intervention logic should make clear how the objectives set will be achieved.</p>	<p>The comment is still valid.</p> <p>SWOT, objectives, and intervention logic per priority sector should make a coherent approach leading from analysis to strategy and actions.</p>
<p>3.4. The flow from SWOT to objectives to intervention logic to actions should be given for each sector of priority taking into account the detailed SWOT analysis and entrepreneurial discovery for the sector.</p>	<p>As the previous comment.</p>
<p>3.5. Objectives should be qualitative and quantitative, defining - where feasible - the progress that should be expected from the RIS3 and the indicators that can capture this progress.</p>	<p>No further information is given in the revised text.</p>
<p>ACTION PLAN</p> <p>4.2. The action plan of WM RIS3 is well designed and extensively presented (pp. 57-73/73, 3-25/71, 46-205 annex 3). The allocation of the 34 actions per Thematic Objective, Investment Priority, and OPs is provided. The budget of each action has been estimated and clearly the actions have been designed in consultation with stakeholders. All these are well described.</p> <p>What is missing is a sectoral perspective and how the proposed actions contribute to the differentiation / modernisation of each priority sector selected. Seeds of this intervention logic are given on pages 57-62/73, but it needs to be further developed.</p>	<p>The sectoral perspective of the action plan is not provided: how the proposed actions will contribute to productive differentiation / modernisation and export orientation of the priority sectors.</p>
<p>4.3. Each action -to be included into the action plan- should be assessed with respect to criteria of (1) alignment to the objectives and features of the priority sectors, (2) innovation expected by each action, (3) the potential of the action to leverage private investment, and (4) the expected impact the action in the differentiation / modernisation of the priority sectors. This ex-ante assessment exercise might be done by a group of experts or by the members of the regional innovation council.</p>	<p>No change is made to the action plan.</p> <p>To my view, many actions, such as those under no 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 22, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, would have a very low impact on the productive diversification / modernisation of the selected priority sectors and their inclusion into the RIS3 action plan should be reconsidered or better justified.</p>