

Organizational Coaching Tool – Information Sharing at Regional Stakeholder Group

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia set up a local stakeholder group for the EmplInno project for information sharing and cooperation between local actors. During the project, the group had regular meetings, where various topics related to EmplInno project and Smart Specialization strategies in general were discussed. The objectives of creation of the group were:

- **To continuously present and inform the regional stakeholders about the process and activities of EmplInno project**
- **To keep regional stakeholders active concerning smart specialisation issues**
- **To create a way for interaction and information sharing between the RIS3 strategy owner, the intermediaries and other regional stakeholders**
- **To gain information for the Regional Council for the future work with the Smart Specialisation strategy**

Altogether 6 meetings were organized for stakeholders from the following local/regional organizations; business development organisations of Seinäjoki, as well as sub-regions Suupohja and Järvi-Pohjanmaa, South Ostrobothnia Chamber of Commerce, local federation of Finnish enterprises, University of Tampere, University Consortium of Seinäjoki, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, Ruralia-institute of University of Helsinki (located in South Ostrobothnia), South Ostrobothnia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia. On average 7-10 persons out of 15 attended each meeting. Organizations involved can be described as intermediaries.

In order to internally adapt the knowledge received from the stakeholder meetings, several persons from the regional council attended the stakeholder meetings. Those include, in addition to the project coordinator, director of international affairs and culture, manager of international affairs and regional development planning officer. Those are persons from two different teams inside the regional council, who internally arrange team meetings regularly

in order to distribute, among others, knowledge received from the local stakeholder meetings. Also, director of international affairs and culture sits in the management team of the regional council where information is provided for the whole management team.

Summary of the topics discussed in the stakeholder group meetings:

Date	No. of participants	Topics discussed
6.2.2017	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and purpose of the stakeholder group • The original process of creating the smart specialization strategy of South Ostrobothnia presented by the RIS3 expert • Idea and aims of EmplInno project • Overview of transnational projects in the region
18.5.2017	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current issues of EmplInno project • Lesson about using key persons on different specialization areas learned from region of Östergötland • Different international networks (ie. ERIAFF, European Regions for Innovations in Agriculture, Food and Forestry) where the region belongs and their benefits and challenges
23.11.2017	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned at the Energy delegation trip to Poland • Lesson about clusters as a part of regional specialization learned from Denmark • Information events on Erasmus+ and S3 platforms organized in the region • General challenges faced in implementing international projects
7.2.2018	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local activities planned as a part of EmplInno project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HEI workshops ○ Internationalization clinics ○ Questionnaire for local stakeholders for getting feedback on RIS3 strategy, its implementation, purpose and usage • Introduction to local ERDF funded project “Innovation and Growth to South Ostrobothnia” and its links to Smart Specialisation strategy
5.6.2018	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current issues of EmplInno project • Possibility to attend Food delegation trip to Kujawsko-Pomorskie in November 2018 • An update on international projects and their situation on the

		regional level
22.10.2018	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current issues of EmplInno project (partner meeting in Seinäjoki, Memorandum of Understanding and future cooperation among project partners) • The future of different European development funds • The complexity of RIS3 strategies and their implementation • Regional Feedback paper created in EmplInno project presented by the RIS3 expert • Results from the RIS3 questionnaire to local stakeholders • The future of RIS3 strategy of South Ostrobothnia

Conclusion on the discussions held at the EmplInno Regional Stakeholder Group meetings

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia as the RIS3 strategy owner received important input from the EmplInno stakeholder group on the following issues:

- on the status of implementing RIS3 in the region and the ways how stakeholders utilize the strategy
- information about the way intermediaries connect with the companies
- views on how progress could still be made in order to make the gap between companies and strategies smaller
- stakeholders' opinions on how the strategy could or should be developed in the future

The meetings also served as a way to coach intermediaries about the RIS3 of South Ostrobothnia and as a way to distribute information related to what have the RIS3 experts and the project coordinator learned and observed from other partner regions.

Future of the Organizational Coaching Tool – Case example: S3 core group

The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia wants to ensure the interaction on RIS3 issues with stakeholders also in the future. Lessons learned concerning the stakeholder involvement during EmplInno project will be adopted into other processes of the council, such as monitoring the implementation of the RIS3 strategy.

A concrete example of a future implementation base for the Organizational Coaching Tool is the involvement in the different S3 platforms, where the regional council or other organizations in South Ostrobothnia take part.

Different R&D organizations in South Ostrobothnia are involved in S3 platforms and the thematic networks under them, based on the smart specialization focus areas of the region. Some of the organizations hold a contract with the Regional Council in order to officially represent the region within the discussions and activities of the networks. This is the case for example with Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

To ensure the interaction and information sharing among the several organizations and experts participating in the work under different transnational S3 groups, Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia will establish a regional “S3 Core Group” in the beginning of 2019.

The objectives of the regional S3 Core Group will be:

- **to gather together regional experts as well as the Senior Adviser at West Finland European Office participating in thematic networks under S3 platforms**
- **to share information and knowledge relevant for the regional actors obtained within transnational S3 networks**
- **to follow and participate in the S3 platform events organized by the European Commission**
- **to strengthen the regional cooperation within transnational and international networks**
- **to share thoughts and discussions on regional focus areas and smart specialization, as well as utilizing the regional smart specialization strategy in everyday work**
- **to offer a regional platform for discussions between RIS3 strategy owner and intermediaries**

As the purposes and objectives of S3 platforms have a strong connection with smart specialisation, the S3 Core Group will offer a great possibility to continue the discussions about smart specialisation after EmplInno project. This way The Organisational Coaching Tool developed during EmplInno project will naturally be implemented as a part of the everyday work of the regional council in the future.