

Discussions on general topics of RIS3 in Mikkeli

How to reach target groups and mobilize stakeholders? How to keep stakeholders engaged in long-term?

The discussion started with one of the key issues - money. Money mobilizes stakeholders and for example in South Savo there is a thematic call for proposals twice a year and usually there are more proposals that can be funded. There was consensus among the attendants that companies are the most challenging group of stakeholders to reach and mobilize. There was a suggestion that one way to include companies is to make it compulsory for a research institution to have a company involved as well. Micro-sized companies usually do not have any extra resources which makes it more difficult to involve them.

Some challenges in reaching target groups are field or season specific, for example South Savo has noticed that farmers cannot attend projects during the summer period when they need to work a lot and therefore winter time is better when there is less work to be done.

It was pointed out by the Swedish partners that they involve the companies, which have already attended some projects, into the process of mobilizing stakeholders. By making them do “story-telling” and explaining some of the major benefits, it is easier to convince stakeholders. Also try to avoid using so called RIS3 words and try to use more practical ways to make the issue more understandable. There was also a comment that since RIS3 is a commission initiative, which means that it has been implemented from top-down, it makes it more difficult to explain to companies. But in order involve them one could have interesting and influential speakers in a conference for example so that the issues become more coherent.

Small regions or cities like Tartu found it easier to reach and mobilize stakeholders but found keeping them engaged in long-term more challenging. This is especially true with companies which usually work on different time span and therefore to say that funding will be available for example next year is not enough for them. Forming a trusting relationship was seen as one of the key issues in keeping stakeholders engaged in long-term.

There was an interesting example from Pori where they have organized camps for growth oriented CEOs. They like hearing from each other in order to learn and change information rapidly. Camps usually last for 1,5 days and they make up their own rules. It is usually small groups, for example five companies and several people from one company, and they meet three times altogether.