

## Discussions on general topics of RIS3 in Tartu

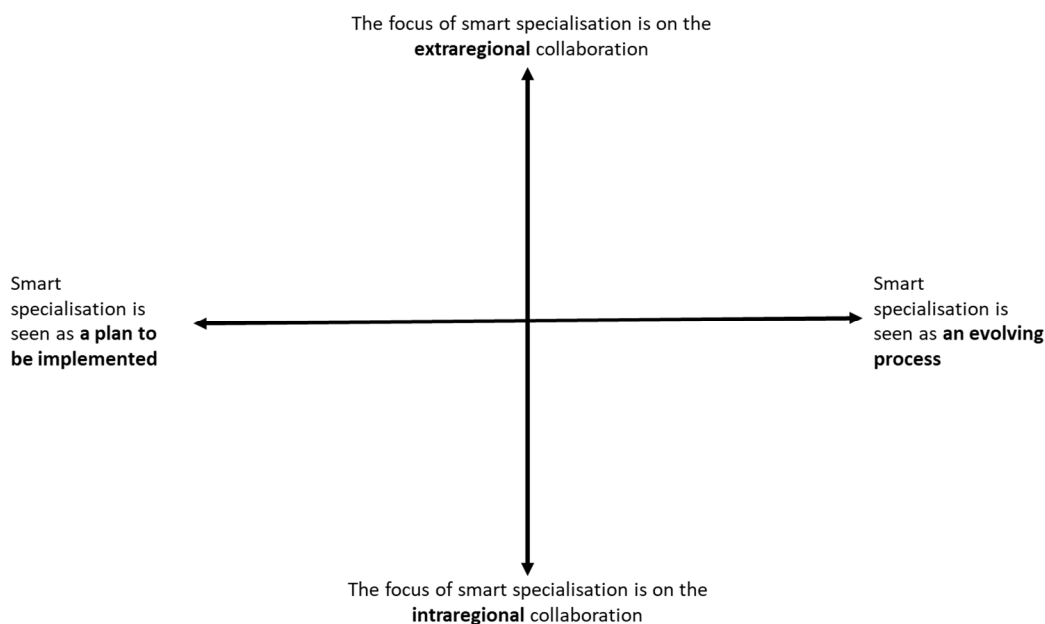
### Different roles of regional strategies in the partner regions.

Topic of the discussion in Tartu was the different roles of a regional smart specialisation strategy. The external RIS3 expert Jari Kolehmainen presented some Finnish notions to inspire the debate. He concluded that there are **different ways the RIS3 is seen and the contexts are different as well. Strategy owners and implementers need to be aware of this aspect as well.** Regional strategies have different potential roles:

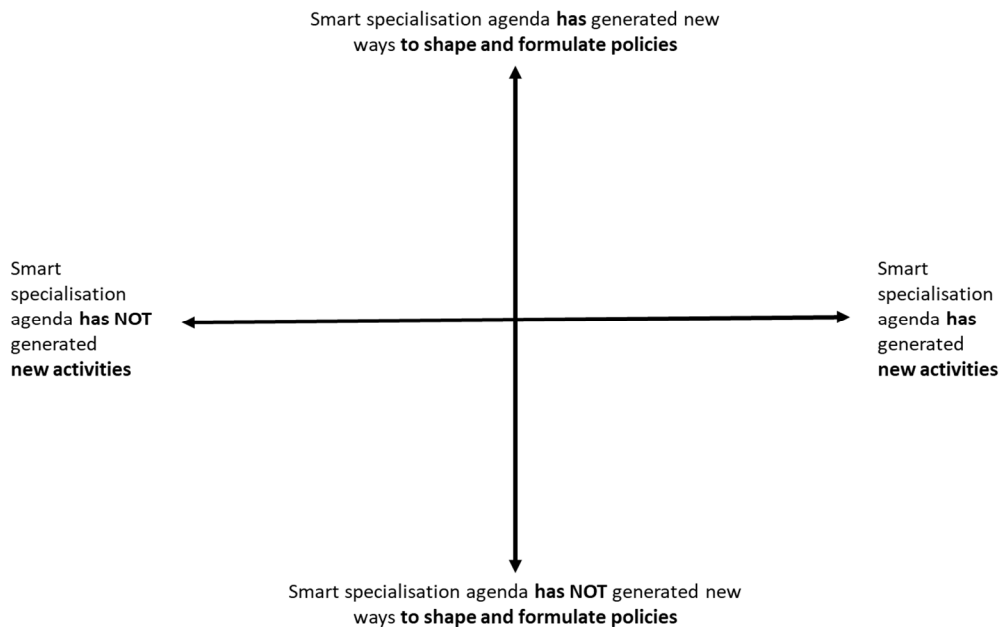
- as a plan to be implemented as such
- as a forum for public debate and collaboration, where then the process is extremely important and integrating different views
- as a vehicle for mobilising actors and resources
- as a tool to foster public awareness.

Lots of guidance is available from the Commission and although regional innovation strategies have been familiar, RIS3 still somehow changes how priorities are set. Traditionally it has been an evidence based RIS3-process more than a vision based. In the future it could and **should be more a vision based strategic process. RIS3 has sharpened the view** and new ways have risen to renew these strategies. He also referred to the value-added of RIS3 in Finland and presented the categories “no/low value-added”, “priority-setting and implementation”, “collaboration”, and “future and foresight”.

In a first group work project partners were asked to place their region into a table according to whether their RIS3 is seen with a focus on intraregional or extra-regional collaboration and whether RIS3 is seen as a plan to be implemented or a continuous process.



There were differences according to the participants. It was said that first the region should focus on intraregional collaboration in order to secure the system and then start to look for increasing value from the extra-regional collaboration. It was seen as a **journey from intraregional towards extra-regional collaboration**. Many times, the RIS3 was seen as a continuing working process. However, there is also a challenge if RIS3 remains a continuous process, and it's questionable whether anything gets done if you are changing it all the time. **It is about balancing and finding proper collaboration**. A region can be seen in many places as well depending on the particular perspective. In some of the countries, diminishing structural funds are pushing the strategic orientation towards extra-regional collaboration. The second group work let partners think whether RIS3 has generated new activities or changes in ways how to shape and formulate policies. What is the value added of RIS3?



There was discussion about the influence and possibilities towards new policies. The partners discussed **whether all innovation intermediaries would have influence on a regional strategic process**. Sometimes it was seen **difficult to formulate proofs of causal/impact relations of policy interventions for the strategic adaptations** to the top management, which needs facts and data to back up decisions. In some cases, RIS3 has not substituted any regional strategy, but is complementary. In addition, new activities have been put in place. There is seen competition with different actors and need to enhance collaboration. Developing partner tables where actors of the same focus area come together and think more broadly was seen as a good solution. RIS3 has shaped and formulated new policies. It was also seen as an **evolving system** and it is important to **follow weak signals in order to see what is maybe more important in the future**.

There was discussion whether activities are driving policies or policies driving activities? Connected to the previous question about evolving process as well. What are new activities? It is sometimes fuzzy, and things happen so that one does not know whether it is reason or cause?

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