

EmplInno Feedback Paper for the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia

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General part

1. Introduction

This feedback paper document is a set of recommendations that support the ongoing discussion on effective implementation of RIS3 in the region. It has been created as an output of EmplInno project (S3-Empowering for Innovation and Growth in Medium-Sized Cities and Regions) which is co-funded by the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020. EmplInno fosters the implementation and improvement of regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) in medium sized cities and regions in the Baltic Sea Region. Therefore, the three sub-objectives are:

1. To provide innovation intermediaries with the needed resources (experiences and competences) to work with the novel RIS3 approach within their organisations and apply this to their work with the end-users, SMEs and further innovation actors.
2. To evaluate and improve the implementation of the regional smart specialisation strategies by developing and providing feedback for the responsible regional authorities and by improving monitoring systems and the organisational set-up of delivery instruments.
3. To boost cooperation between innovation actors and SMEs as well as transnationally between SMEs and e.g. cluster managements, thus leveraging their innovativeness and competitiveness.

RIS3 experts and project coordinator have evaluated information received during the project and reflected it to the local situation. Objective of the feedback paper is to learn from other regions how to improve the implementation of RIS3 strategies. Producing the feedback paper has been a continuous process during the project. Feedback paper has been updated after each project meeting by the RIS3 experts and the project coordinator. Main target group is the regional council as the owner of the strategy, but it also provides the key stakeholders with meaningful information. Recommendations result from both international exchange and regional discussions and events carried within the EmplInno project.

2. Problems defined and recommendations of solutions

2.1. Description of current problems requiring innovative approaches in the region.

There are current barriers in the field of economic development and human capital of South Ostrobothnia that have been discovered also during the RIS3 process and defined in *South Ostrobothnia – Smart & Outstanding, Strategy for Smart Specialisation*. Companies are smaller than average, amount of growing companies is small and the turnover of the local company structure is low. Export as a proportion of production is under 10%, and there were only 381 companies that exported in 2012. South Ostrobothnia contributes a bit over 1% of the total export of Finland, so under its proportion of population. South Ostrobothnia has a bigger share of entrepreneurs of its population than any other region in Finland, but the number of new established companies has decreased. Region is relatively sparsely populated and it is challenging to create sufficient concentrations of skills and capital.

There is a need for renewal of industrial sector towards more digitalized processes. The stakeholders' capacity to utilize structural funds and other funding instruments should be elevated and the number of organisations applying these funds should be larger.

We also need to raise awareness and commitment concerning RIS3 among the regional stakeholders, as awareness is a precondition for the efficient implementation process. We should furthermore make South Ostrobothnia internationally known for our specialisation fields and know-how in food systems / food safety, smart and energy efficient systems and experience and service production. The co-operation networks in these fields should be made tighter and information sharing intensified. There is also a need to develop monitoring of smart specialisation strategy implementation to be able to respond to changes and making the strategy even sharper and internationally competitive.

The summary of main challenges:

1. Low number of growth companies
2. Low productivity of companies
3. Low export rate
4. Small concentration of skill and capital
5. Traditional processes in companies (e.g. need for digitalisation)
6. Low abilities to utilize funding sources
7. Increasing awareness of regions smart specialisation fields (inside and outside region)
8. Increasing co-operation networks within specialisation fields
9. Keeping smart specialisation strategy up to date

2.2. Present the lesson/s learnt or key finding/s acquired during the project realisation.

Several ways to raise awareness concerning RIS3 among the regional stakeholders were introduced over the project. Some ideas like regional innovation forums, learning camps, testing ideas, morning coffee events and finding inspiring place and space for discussions were mentioned.

Some specific R+D transfer workshops learned from other project regions were tested in South Ostrobothnia during the project. These include for example Shopa method used in Poland and Design method used in Denmark. The results were generally successful, and workshops could be seen a good

platform for cooperation, stakeholder interaction, empowerment and knowledge transfer. However, the general understanding was, that workshops alone are usually not enough. It would be beneficial, if there were also other activities following the initial workshops. The participants could be involved for example in consultative activities, such as follow-up meetings.

In discussions there have been many kinds of ideas about organizational coaching tools: leaflets, learning diaries, morning coffee events etc. Still, the general picture about coaching tools remained somewhat unstructured and quite different from the strategy owners and strategy implementers' point of views. In the case of South Ostrobothnia we have been looking at the coaching tool from the strategy owner's (Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia) perspective. In South Ostrobothnia a new practice has been a stakeholder group (university consortium, chamber of commerce, local entrepreneur association, university of applied science, regional development organisations etc.) that has been called together few times to discuss the current strategy implementation. Also EU funding info events and courses can be seen as organizational coaching tools arranged by regional council to improve consciousness about benefits of RIS3.

One presented idea was a thematic morning coffee event for certain business sector. This had been tested in Mikkeli. The huge challenge is to get the business people to attend. Especially reaching the busy key persons (CEOs and development directors) has been difficult. The idea of these meetings is to spread information about funding opportunities and also to show real life results from previous projects to motivate other actors. In discussions it was also mentioned that "coaching" is not just a separate activity but an integrated part of all normal daily operations when arranging any events or meeting people.

Instruments presented in Riga meeting were familiar from the Finnish perspective even though Demola and Incubator activities are not present in South Ostrobothnia at the moment in this form. Seinäjoki used to have a business incubator, but currently these activities are available as separate services in Into Seinäjoki, not as an incubator service package.

Demola is an interesting platform for developing (business) ideas and products. Demola is an international organization that facilitates co-creation projects between university students and companies, either locally or internationally. This requires a mass of university students which is the reason why this concept is not directly applicable in South Ostrobothnia as such. Seinäjoki University of Applied Science has created a service called FramiPro that has lot of similarities with Demola. In FramiPro projects the students are searching solutions for real life problems set by local enterprises or organisations. FramiPro does not have the idea of students owning the created solutions so that they could either sell them to the company or start their own business. It is more about working on commission and learning project working skills in a multidisciplinary team.

Östergötland had an inspiring way to demonstrate their specialisation in the field of visualization. In Norrköping Visualiseringcenter there is a science and technology exhibition that demonstrates local innovations in the field of visualisation. This exhibition gives a concrete and powerful way to get to know the local know-how by touching testing the equipment. Östergötland also has another interesting example. There is a "Vreta Cluster" – Agro Food innovation centre. Vreta cluster is a building, a meeting place and interdisciplinary development arena for technology and business development

within the green industry, and a contributor to the industry's development and growth. Focus areas are: food, animal welfare, Water management, smart farming, poultry and sustainability. These fields come very close to specialisation of South Ostrobothnia and there would probably be good chances to find partner to co-operation.

In South Denmark the youngest cluster is Design to innovate (D2i) which is six years old. D2i is promoting creative industries and its core idea is to create added value through design. It consists of 600 enterprises and 1200 people and a thin official cluster organization but lots of people involved through the network. The results have been very good: the companies participating D2i cluster activities have grown considerably faster than those creative business companies that are not participating.

The cluster organisations in South Denmark are financed by Innovation Networks Denmark (which sounds quite similar to former Finnish model of OSKE, Competence Centres), many projects are funded by structural funds following the RIS3 but there are also member fees. Member fees can be seen positive in this case, as they highlight the companies' commitment to their cluster. This also tells us that companies can see the benefits from cluster activities, as they are willing to pay for the membership.

The strategic "method of growth" used in South Denmark (Picture 1) is a framework of core activities needed to promote growth in selected business fields. An interesting point in this method is that it also considers demand side. Demand is often forgotten, and it is common to focus only on supply activation. Activating markets and demand for example by innovative public-private co-operation is also one of the European Union goals. PPI Fund (Public Private Innovation Fund) supports innovation collaboration between SMEs, public and knowledge institutions in Southern Denmark.



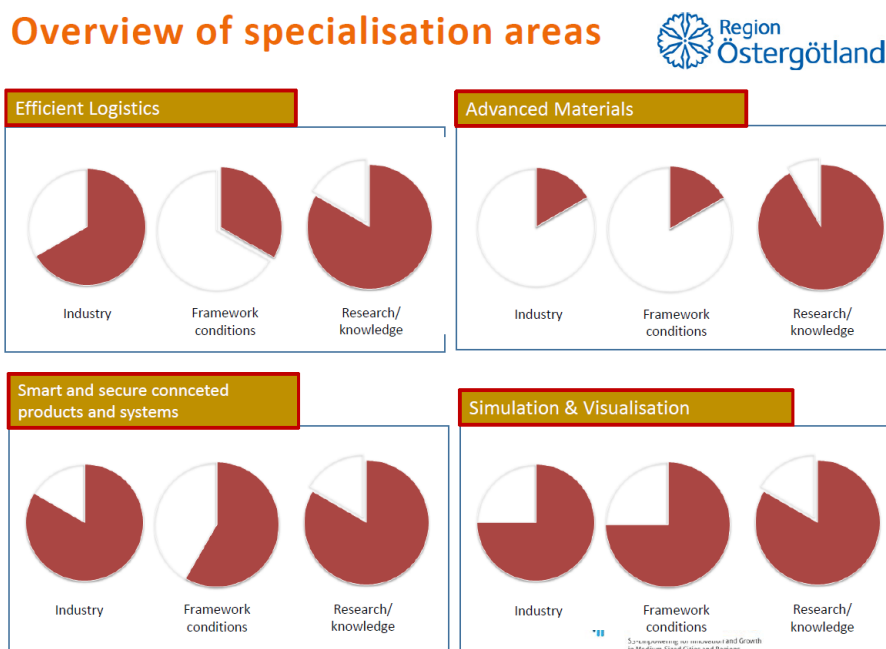
Picture 1. Presentation by Olav Søndervkov, The Southern Denmark

In Kaunas they have adopted concept of "Breakfast of innovators" (originally from Prizztech, Pori "Technolunch"). About 10-15 top players from certain field of industry are invited for breakfast into the science and technology park. Companies open up their challenges in brief pitches. They get instant feedback from other participants and there is a chance that new co-operation relationships occur.

In Tartu, Estonia, there SPARK Demo Centre is a place of collaboration. The key of that place is the permanent exhibition of key companies and their products and demos. Currently there are 41 companies present and there is room for 10-15 more. The companies are chosen by turnover, value-added, products and export potential. On the one hand, SPARK Demo Centre as an open visiting place increases the conspicuousness of the key companies of Southern Estonia. In this respect, it is noteworthy that it has hosted more than 3000 visitors from other companies, municipalities and business support organisations in two years. On the other hand, SPARK Demo Centre brings locally different parties together to collaborate and to create new ideas and solutions.

In the case of Latvia RIS3 is conducted at the national level, not the regional level. Latvian RIS3 emphasizes “Transformation of economy towards higher added value, productivity and more effective usage of resources” by 1) structural changes of production and export in the traditional sectors of the economy; 2) growth in sectors where there is or is likely to create products and services with high added value and 3) branches with significant horizontal impact and contribution to economic transformation. Idea is quite similar to the RIS3 of South Ostrobothnia. They have created a powerful monitoring system, an informative set of measurable indicators that describe the state of innovation activities in Latvia in micro and macro level. In South Ostrobothnia the monitoring of RIS3 was combined with the monitoring of the Regional Plan and Regional Strategic Programme and evaluation of its implementation. The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia has recently taken actions in developing methods for regional foresight and creating innovation indicators.

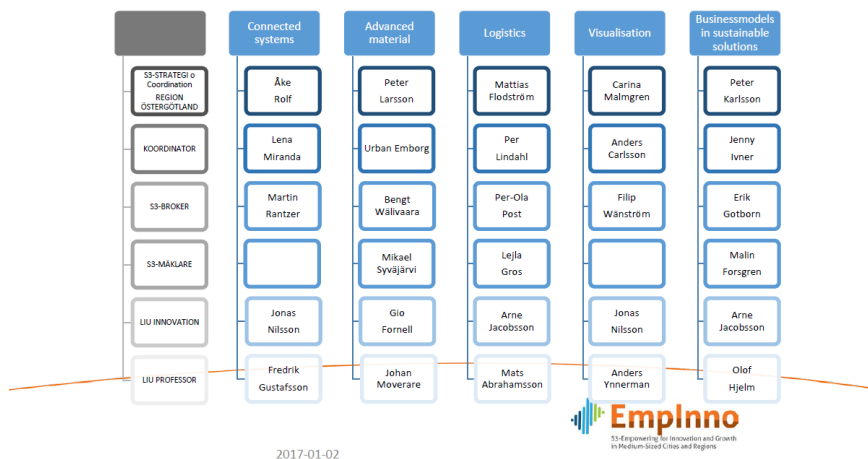
In the case of Östergötland the regional innovation policy was carefully planned and systematically conducted. They utilise simple and clear way to create and indicate the regional specialisation profile with three dimensions: extensiveness of certain industry, its framework activities and research linked to this industry (Picture 2).



Picture 2. Presentation by Peter Larsson, Region Östergötland.

Approach to the implementation in Östergötland was also interesting. It was not so much based on organisations and official positions but on people. The strategy was taken into practice from highest strategic level to the grass-root by naming the responsible people (Picture 3). They were the true core actors in the regional innovation system in selected themes and they have a personal dedication to facilitate these themes. These people are located in different organisations but they sign a contract and receive some compensation for the work they do to enhance the regional strategy.

Smart Specialisation in Östergötland key persons



Picture 3. Presentation by Peter Larsson, Region Östergötland.

The smart specialisation themes in Östergötland are cross-sectoral in nature. They are not certain industries but fields that can be applied in many industries (like logistics). In South Ostrobothnia we also have two cross-sectoral themes (smart and energy efficient systems and regeneration of service and experience production) and one industry based theme (food systems and bioeconomy). In Östergötland they emphasize that they really take RIS3 seriously and only support initiatives that follow the strategy. In cross-sectoral approach it is probably even more important to draw strict lines to maintain the integrity.

In South Denmark the Regional Business Development strategy plays a role as a RIS3 strategy. It has three main pillars: sustainable energy, health and social innovation and experience economy. These themes are rather large and general and as such they don't stand out from other European RIS3 strategies (e.g. South Ostrobothnia: energy efficiency and service and experience production). Still the basis for these choices in South Denmark are strong, probably much stronger than in many other regions. In South Denmark word "cluster" is still actively used to refer to these strategic pillars. In Finland there is a clear tendency that clusters have slowly but steadily been replaced by other expressions like "regional innovation (eco)systems", "thematic business sectors", "platforms" etc. But concept of cluster (geographic concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field) is not outdated and in case of Denmark these clusters certainly exist

and have been consciously developed in the long run. For example, the energy cluster is decades old. The consistency of terminology is positively reinforcing these Danish clusters.

The Lithuanian RIS3 includes six priority fields and 20 priorities within them. Now actual results show that all of these fields have not been growing as expected and critical mass is lacking. It seems that many of these priorities will be dropped off in the next stage based on evidence. It is good to be able to monitor development and if it is the case, also narrow down the selection (or select new priorities).

The RIS3 strategy process in South Estonia points out a couple of issues: Firstly, there were quite clear criteria for choosing the focal sectors. Those criteria were compressed in three aims / characteristics: 1) Ability to sell, 2) Ability to attract and 3) Ability to earn. This analysis was done in relation to Tallinn. So, the focal sectors of South Estonia are as follows: ICT & Electronics, Health services & biotechnology, Timber industry and Healthy & functional food. The second notion is related to the longer perspective of strategy formation: It started with EU project which followed the good practice of Brainport Development (Netherlands) and the second phase was a thorough analysis on competitiveness and focal sectors. The third phase of the process was the actual formulation of South Estonia Smart Specialisation Strategy. This notion highlights the fact that strategy processes should not be separate from other policy processes, but more like pieces in a longer continuum.

With regional strategies, there are always questions of strategy commitment and awareness among stakeholders. Strategies are not very binding in nature, but they are based on aligning the strategies and activities of different actors. They are just maps to guide us into same direction. So, we must make actors see the benefits like possibilities in subsidies and project funding, partners from abroad etc. We must show a reason why this organization should align their own strategy with the RIS3. Bringing RIS3 ideas into organizations own strategy processes and yearly planning cycles could be one forum to integrate RIS3 goals there.

Shared language is also a powerful tool. If we spread the information among the stakeholders about regions' strategic emphasis areas, we can create a shared vocabulary and make our message louder. For example if enterprises in different fields (agriculture machines, food cold chain technologies, recycling biomass etc.) in South Ostrobothnia learn to position themselves into the field "agrobioeconomy" we can all benefit. Message about regional cluster would be stronger, enterprises can see that they are a part of a larger business ecosystem and enterprises can access funding sources because they can show that their actions support the regional strategy goals.

It is important to recognize the large selection of innovation policy instruments to be able to create a suitable policy mix for each region. To help identifying what types of policy instruments each region is applying and what is possibly missing, there are some categories presented here:

General categories of public policy instruments:

- 1) regulatory, 2) economic/financial and 3) soft instruments.

Key activities in systems of innovation:

- Support services for innovating firms
 - o Incubation activities
 - o Financing of innovation processes and commercialization

- Provision of consultancy services relevant for innovation processes
- Demand-side activities
 - Formation of new product markets.
 - Articulation of new product quality requirements emanating from the demand side.
- Provision of knowledge inputs to the innovation process
 - Provision of R&D results and, thus, creation of new knowledge
 - Competence building, e.g. through individual learning (educating and training the labor force for innovation and R&D activities) and organizational learning.
- System-level development
 - Creating and changing organizations needed for developing new fields of innovation
 - Networking through markets and other mechanisms, including interactive learning
 - Creating and changing institutions – e.g., patent laws, tax laws, environment and safety regulations, R&D investment routines, cultural norms, etc.

In general discussion participants showed interest over the whole scale of these instruments. It is important to have the best practices examples from all kinds of different activities. In the case of South Ostrobothnia, actions have already been taken in all categories. It is still always relevant to take a look at the big picture and check if the policy mix is currently adjusted in an optimal way.

2.3 Recommended solutions/ideas/good practices, improving your RIS3 Recommendations.

1. Showroom / exhibition of innovations in the region

South Ostrobothnia could have a showroom type of exhibition about innovations in our region. This would make the regions' expertise more visible for domestic and especially foreign visitors, help South Ostrobothnian companies and R&D organisations to present their innovations and get to know the newest technologies they could implement. In Norrköping Visualiseringcenter there is a science and technology exhibition that demonstrates local innovations and a smaller exhibition in Kaunas Science and Technology Park. Also *SPARK Demo Centre* in Tartu and *Riga IT Demo Centre* have the idea of providing a demo area for innovations. Exhibition or showroom in South Ostrobothnia would demonstrate products developed in the region. It should be located in well accessible place where visitors can find it easily (Frami or near the railway station or in the railway station). Funding could be attained at least partially from companies that rent the exhibition space. Possible responsible organisations could be City of Seinäjoki (Into Seinäjoki), Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia, Entrepreneurs Association and Chamber of Commerce of South Ostrobothnia.

2. Business incubator 3.0.

At the moment there is no full service business incubator in Seinäjoki. The startup services are available as separate services. The number of new established companies has dropped in South Ostrobothnia. Especially we need R&D intensive new companies. It might be fruitful to have a discussion about start up companies' expectations. Would they like to have a new type of, "all inclusive" incubator (office space, coaching, networking etc.) or a collection of separate services where they can pick what they wish? Seinäjoki used to have a business incubator service and this concept is

still successfully utilised in many Science Parks over the Baltic Sea Region. The most relevant organisation would be Into Seinäjoki.

3. Internationalization clinics

As stated before, companies in South Ostrobothnia are not largely international or have a great share of exports. During the project internationalization clinics were organized in different parts of the region for small and medium sized companies. There were also follow-up sessions for the same companies after six months. Experiences and feedback from the companies was good. Continuous encouragement and offering of different kinds of internationalization clinics would serve the SMEs in different stages.

4. Method for growth – Strengthening also the demand side

South Ostrobothnia has a challenge to make its small and innovative enterprises grow. One way to promote growth is the strategic “method for growth” used in South Denmark. It is a framework of core activities: demand, supply, finance and research + education for selected fields. An interesting point in this method is that it also considers demand side. To make South Ostrobothnian innovative enterprises grow, strengthening demand side is essential. Innovative public-private companionships (e.g. innovative public procurement) can play a key role in encouraging companies to focus on R&D and getting new products to the market. Southern Denmark has a concept of *Public Private Innovation Fund (PPI Fund)* to support these activities. The coordination role for this fund could be on regional authorities, but implementation could be executed in co-operation with education institutions and regional development agencies.

5. Cluster member fees and improved cluster management

In South Ostrobothnia memberships and fees might be one way of intensifying the co-operation networks and commitment for example in the food sector. But this also obligates to arranging quality activities to support the network companies so that they feel that they get enough in return. Cluster member fees are used in South Denmark. Coordination and fees of the food network could happen under “Ruokaprovinsi” label which is at the moment coordinated by Into Seinäjoki.

6. Engaging core people

Strategy implementation could be based more on people than organisations and official positions. This way we could create commitment and increase different organisations capacity to implement strategy. In Östergötland the strategy was taken into practice from highest strategic level to the grass-root by naming the responsible people. Having the true core actors in the regional innovation system in selected themes guarantees dedication to facilitate these themes. These people could be located in different organisations but they receive some compensation for the work they do to enhance the regional strategy. The group would also see each other regularly to plan and coordinate common efforts. This system would involve people from all different levels: research, development agencies, companies, development authorities etc.

7. New forms of strategy communication

Strategy of smart specialisation needs visibility within the region and outside it. People are more and more used to getting brief and informative bulletins. Video materials on the Internet could provide a modern channel to spread information (e.g. Rostock business presentation video and small videos that

project partners made during the project). A video should be professionally made and regions central focus fields would be presented in an interesting way (quick looks into leading companies' achievements, research etc.). This video should be in English for marketing purposes to reach potential project partners (e.g. development organisations in Europe). Finnish more detailed version could also act as an information source for local actors (e.g. companies and public sector actors) where to contact if you want to apply for funding or join a specific network. Video could be provided by strategy owner Council of South Ostrobothnia but it could be made in co-operation with regional actors.

8. Improvement of monitoring system

South Ostrobothnia could still develop its monitoring in the field of innovation to make sure that we are taking right kind of steps in smart specialisation. For example in Latvia they have created a large set of measurable indicators that describe the state of innovation activities in micro and macro levels. In Östergötland the regional innovation policy is based on simple way to indicate the regional specialisation profile with three dimensions: extensiveness of certain industry, its framework activities and research linked to this industry. These ideas of monitoring could be applied in South Ostrobothnia as well when the "Situational Picture of Innovation" is developed further. The conducting organisation would be Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia.

9. Strategy focusing

With smart specialisation strategy, South Ostrobothnia aims to develop the core competence industries, but also show others what we can do. When comparing RIS3 presentations of project partners, the chosen fields are very much alike. Food, energy and welfare appear in almost all of them. South Ostrobothnia does have some effort to find focus areas inside these large themes but there is still a lot of clarifying to do in the next stage of strategy process. For example Östergötland has made one very strong and focused choice on a narrow theme of "simulation and visualization" and it has payed off as a world class cluster has emerged. Furthermore Kaunas has also chosen to cut the large variety of their specialisation fields. In South Ostrobothnia for example food safety and traceability could be real niche field where we could stand out. To find new interesting fields, strategy process should include new people outside the established co-operation network. Strategy owner Council of South Ostrobothnia has a strong role in search for these niche fields in co-operation with regional actors.

10. Clarifying the relationship between smart specialisation strategy and regional programme

In South Ostrobothnia smart specialisation strategy is a document of its own. There is also a traditional regional programme that is updated every four years. Smart specialisation strategy follows closely this programme. It raises questions if there should be two separate strategies. It is very important to make regional stakeholders to participate these processes but if there are too many co-existent processes it may reduce attendance. There is a possibility to include smart specialisation strategy into the regional programme when it is updated. On the other hand a separate smart specialisation strategy does have value as more specific document and having a more outward orientation than the regional programme. These aspects should be looked more closely when the strategy owner Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia is updating strategies.

Table 1. Challenges and recommendations to overcome them.

Challenge	Recommendation
1. Low number of growth companies	4. Method for growth – Strengthening also the demand side 2. Business incubator 3.0
2. Low productivity of companies	4. Method for growth – Strengthening also the demand side 2. Business incubator 3.0
3. Low export rate	3. Internationalization clinics 1. Showroom / exhibition of innovations in the region
4. Small concentration of skill and capital	4. Method for growth – Strengthening also the demand side
5. Traditional processes in companies (e.g. need for digitalisation)	1. Showroom / exhibition of innovations in the region
6. Low abilities to utilize funding sources	6. Engaging core people
7. Increasing awareness of regions smart specialisation fields (inside and outside region)	1. Showroom / exhibition of innovations in the region 6. Engaging core people 7. New forms of strategy communication
8. Increasing co-operation networks within specialisation fields	5. Cluster member fees and improved cluster management 6. Engaging core people
9. Keeping smart specialisation strategy up to date	8. Improvement of monitoring system 9. Strategy focusing 10. Clarifying the relationship between smart specialisation strategy and regional programme

Annex. Description of good practices proposed by Project Partners, chosen to implement

Implementation (applicable parts, not as such)

PPI Fund (Region of Southern Denmark) (recommendation 4.)

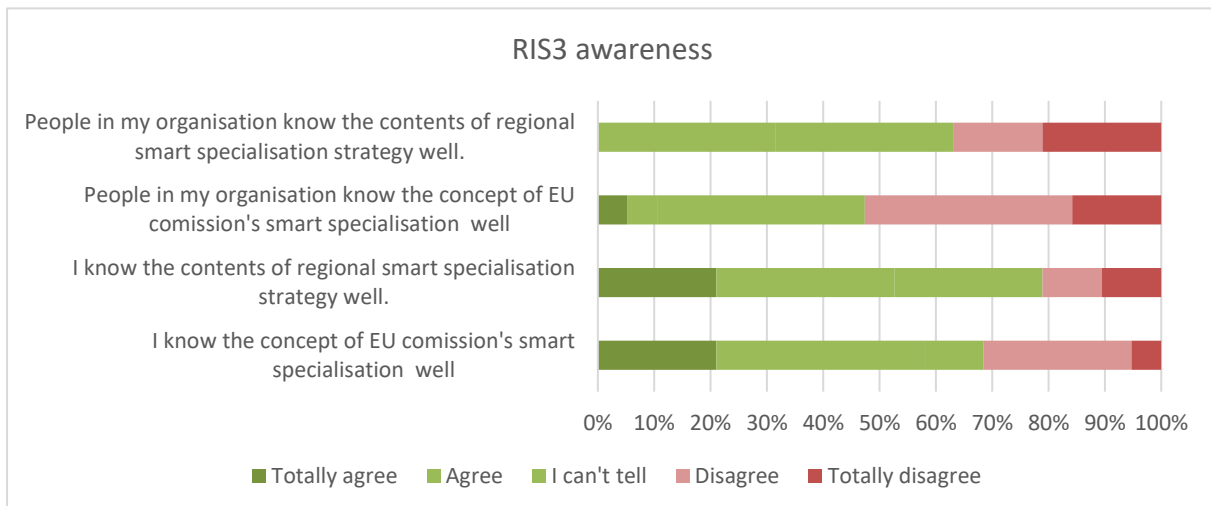
SPARK Demo center (Tartu Science Park) (recommendation 1.)

Latvian IT Cluster and Riga IT Demo centre (Riga Planning region) (recommendation 1.)

Specific part

A survey for regional stakeholders was conducted in September 2018. The aim of the web survey was to learn about the current views concerning the utilization and updating needs of the Smart Specialisation strategy of South Ostrobothnia. People answering the survey were mostly from regional development agencies, education institutions, municipalities and companies. The total number of answers was 27, which is not very high. On the other hand the number of organisations in a small region is quite limited and the answers do cover most of the relevant (public) stakeholders of the region. About half of the answerers had been involved in the strategy process somehow.

First there was a question concerning the awareness of the RIS3. Almost 80 % of the answerers thought that they know the regional smart specialisation strategy and 20 % of considered that they even know it very well. Of course there is work to be done as 1/4 did not know much of it. The answers about the strategy's familiarity among their own organisations personnel was estimated lower than their personal knowledge. The concept of smart specialisation at more general level was familiar for 2/3 answerers.



Picture 3. RIS3 awareness in South Ostrobothnia.

The ways of utilizing smart specialisation strategy provides valuable information to the strategy owner. In what purposes can the regional RIS3 support intermediaries work? The most important



function was to help in operating in the international networks. This function is very large in nature and we can't tell exactly what it means for each answerer but it can be seen as a general context to show outside the region what is our profile. This has also been a strong regional motive behind the strategy and evidently, it has been necessary. Naturally applying for the structural funds is also important. The usage of RIS3 strategy to formulate organisations own strategy is at the third place. This is very positive and tells about the close relationships and common goals of the South Ostrobothnian organisations. Three people had answered that they have not used the strategy at all, but 15 had skipped the question. It is possible that those who skipped the question had not utilized the strategy and jumped over for this reason. 44 % of the answerers have chosen some function in which way the strategy has been helpful for them. One question asked if the strategic emphasis of RIS3 has ever restricted their opportunities to get funding, but only one answerer had faced such a situation.

Picture 4. Utilizing of the RIS3 in South Ostrobothnia.

There was also a question about further development of the strategy. In general the strategy was considered to be up to date and good. Some adjustments were suggested though. Strategy could be a little sharper and find new opportunities within the fields of smart energy, digitalisation and welfare technology. Strategy focus could come even closer to enterprises and get deeper in the theme of internationalization. Separate RIS3 strategy was mostly considered to be a good thing.

The questionnaire showed positive results about the state of utilization of the smart specialisation strategy in South Ostrobothnia. The strategy was utilized in their work by 44 % of the answerers, especially in the international context. Even higher proportion (close to 80 %) reported to know the contents of regional RIS3. Of course, there is still work to do to improve strategy implementation. Generally the answerers were satisfied with the contents of the strategy and hoped for only minor adjustments.