



COUNCIL OF TAMPERE REGION



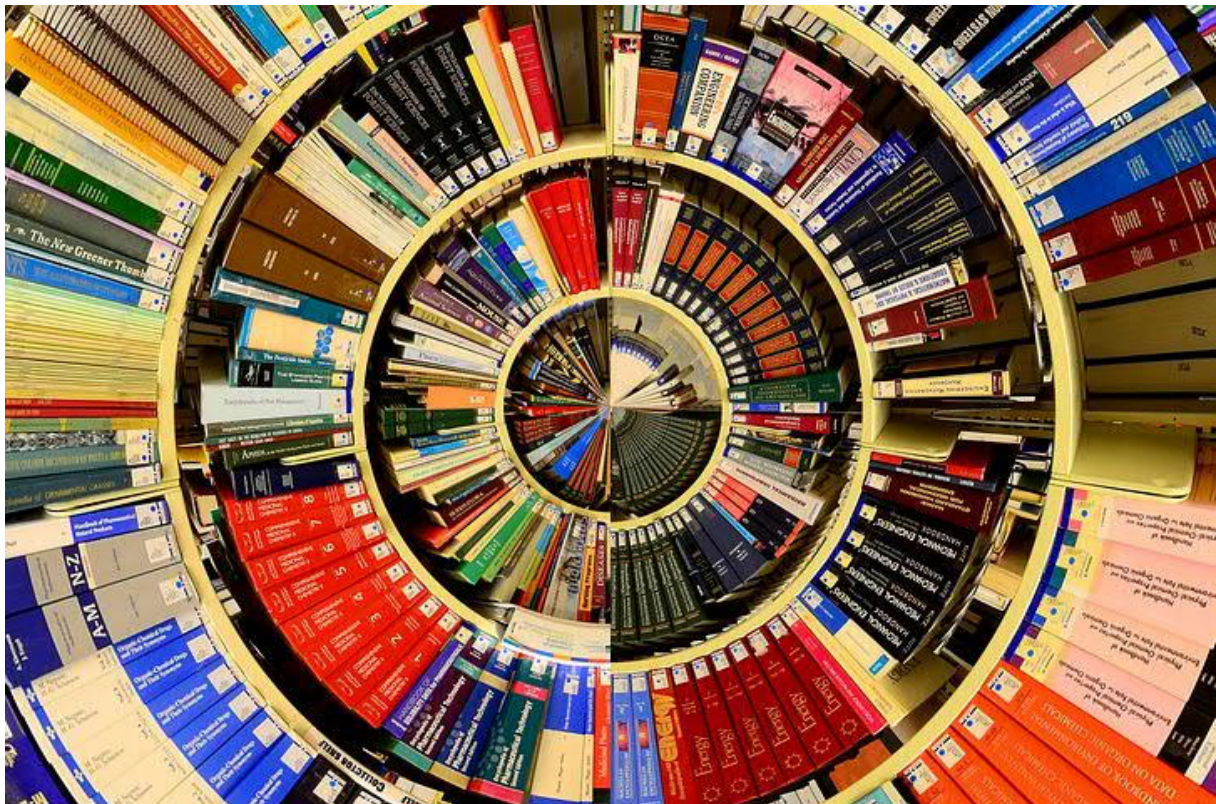
THE BALTIC INSTITUTE OF FINLAND

TraCS3
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN TRACS3 TAMPERE REGION



Research &
innovation

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/tracs3/>



Part I – General information

Project:	TraCS3
Partner organisation:	The Baltic Institute of Finland (PP6)
Country:	Finland
NUTS2 region:	Western Finland
NUTS3 region:	Tampere Region
Contact person:	Johanna Vannes
Email address:	johanna.vannes@tampere.fi
Phone number:	+358 50 322 5923

Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:	x	Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
		European Territorial Cooperation programme
		Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Sustainable growth and jobs 2014-2020;

Priority axis 2: Producing and using new information and knowledge;

Specific objective: Development of the centres of research, expertise and innovation on the basis of regional strengths

The Managing Authority (MA) of the policy instrument is the Council of Tampere Region, who has been actively participating in the TraCS3 project activities with the Baltic Institute of Finland. The two organisations have designed and developed the Regional Action Plan (RAP) together, and they will also see to the implementation and the monitoring of the RAP jointly.

The policy instrument aims to expand the innovation base and to grow R&D investments in the region taking into account the respective smart specialisation strategies. Innovation ecosystems will be improved and thus, new ways of producing innovations will be discovered and industrial value chains will be renewed considering interregional opportunities.

Funding may be granted for

- research, development and innovation activities in infrastructure improvements that promote regional economies
- the development of centres of research, expertise and innovation, RDI environments and development platforms
- the promotion of international RDI co-operation among universities, higher education institutions, research institutions, vocational institutions, general government actors and enterprises.
- SME product, service and production method development, piloting, commercialisation and adoption of new technologies



- the development of applied research supporting the national economy as well as the development of operating, service and commercialisation processes

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1: Mentioning interregional cooperation and ecosystem development in ERDF call texts

Background

Already in the preparation phase of TraCS3, it was clear that the ERDF OP should emphasise the importance of interregional cooperation, networking and ecosystems. Together with the Council of Tampere Region, i.e. the Managing Authority (MA) of the Policy Instrument, the Baltic Institute of Finland set as an aim for the project to strengthen the role of ecosystem development and the importance of international connections in the ERDF calls of the Finnish Operational Programme 2014–2020.

In the Tampere Regional Strategy for Research and Innovation for Smart Specialisation (RIS3), there are four priority sectors: digital manufacturing, bio and circular economy, smart city solutions, and well-being and health services and systems. The last two priorities were chosen for TraCS3. In addition to the RIS3 sectors, the strategy also highlights international co-learning and investments, as well as innovation and development platforms and services. Smart specialisation in Tampere region wants to create new understanding, new ways of working together and proactive, resilient models for regional development. This is clearly linked with the need of related ERDF funding, too.

The MA is also actively involved in the preparation of the new EU programming period 2021-2027 on national level, and is eager to find new ways for more systematic regional and interregional cooperation in terms of ERDF-funded projects. This was also brought up in the discussions with the Tampere Regional Stakeholder Group of TraCS3; the regional policy instruments are an important means for supporting innovative approaches for international collaboration.

The mapping and gap analysis conducted in Tampere region as part of the TraCS3 activities underlined the lack of funding and the weak knowledge of the regional ecosystems and their assets. In the partner meeting in Bruges in February 2019, project partners presented the first findings of the regional mapping and gap analysis, which was followed by an intensive world café session. The considerations and conclusions of the world café include e.g. the following:

The managers and owners of the innovation ecosystems do not fully understand the market and know their own players, and long-term management strategies are generally missing. The service offering of an ecosystem should be co-designed by all relevant actors, and for that to happen, we need to know the ecosystem thoroughly and be able to analyse the innovation ecosystem internally. Many potential users are not aware of innovation ecosystem and its service offer, which calls for continuous awareness raising and marketing; making innovation ecosystems more visible is crucial. In order to make innovation ecosystems function interregionally, we have to be able to find complementarities among the ecosystems of partner regions. We should identify which policy measures on which level (local, regional, national, EU) are the most relevant for making innovation ecosystems usable interregionally, and what can be done on the level of national OPs by the respective MAs. Plenty of information is only in national languages, and we have to produce information in English or visualise the ecosystems to display the actors for everybody also outside our own region.



In the partner meeting in Tampere in October 2019, we organised another world café to continue the discussion on the possibilities of making our regional innovation ecosystems active interregionally. Again, one finding was that we need to use ERDF funding in a systematic way to boost innovation ecosystems and support their internationalisation. And as a prerequisite, we need to know what we have before we can link anyone to interregional value chains.

As we proceeded with project activities, it became even more evident, that we want and need to support projects that aim in developing and internationalising our regional ecosystems. The demand for funding for projects with the aspect of interregional cooperation and ecosystem development is clear.

Action

In 2020, the MA launched two ERDF calls as a part of the Finnish Operational Programme 2014–2020. When preparing the calls, the MA and the Baltic Institute of Finland discussed the content and formulation of the call texts in order to emphasise the role of ecosystem development and the importance of international connections.

The themes of the first call were a) application and utilisation of artificial intelligence, and b) development of regional innovation capacity and ecosystems. The call was closed 9 March 2020 with seventeen applications, out of which seven were approved for funding.

In the second call, there was funding available for projects under the priority axis 2: *Producing and using new information and knowledge*. The requirement was that all projects need to manifest a clear link to the regional programme and support the Tampere RIS3 strategy (including international co-learning and investments, and innovation and development platforms and services). Nine applications were submitted prior to the closing of the call 2 October 2020. Two projects were approved for funding.

Players involved

The action involved staff members of the Council of Tampere Region and the Baltic Institute of Finland.

Timeframe

The first call was closed 9 March 2020, and the second call 2 October 2020. The financed projects will be monitored during the second phase of TraCS3.

Costs

No additional costs were needed. The amount of funds to be allocated to projects funded in the first call was 1,9 M€ and in the second call 1 M€ from the Finnish Operational Programme.

Funding sources

No additional costs were needed. The amount of funds affected by the calls was 2,9 M€.

ACTION 2: Better governance of regional innovation ecosystems and enhancing their interregional and international connectivity

Background

The mapping and gap analysis models launched by the TraCS3 partnership as project tools were very useful. Visualising the data collected made us realise that our ecosystems are somewhat



dispersed and especially our conception of the various ecosystems in our region is incomplete. Based on the indicators of the gap analysis, we carried out interviews in the chosen ecosystems (smart city and health & well-being) in 2019. The results of the interviews highlighted the need for systematic development of our infrastructure and more comprehensive ecosystem management.

Gap analysis revealed, for instance, that the core processes should support the usage of the innovation infrastructure more clearly. The will of the owner of the infrastructure and the right ways to function should be established. Some university-owned infrastructures have no external users, because the university cannot invest in anything other than its own activities. The use of public funding and how far the financial support is stretched, is another restriction. In relation to the amount of potential, we in the Tampere region generate too few innovations and inventions in general. The gap between university services and establishing a company is visible, and a service concept is needed to foster smoother cooperation. The new Tampere university is building an innovation ecosystem with the goal to generate required activity.

As an improvement in connectivity and cooperation, the university finds it important to break the silos between different units and departments. Sharing should be increased on national as well as on international level; more exchange of information, good practices and contacts, standardising processes, strengthening business contacts and investor networks. Overcoming mental barriers and changing the mindset is difficult and there are no incentives, as only degrees and publications are rewarded, not collaboration. Innovation capacity seems to lack from some levels, and a more systematic way to develop the infrastructures is required to replace the prevailing short-term policy.

What comes to the financial aspect, the focus is on public financing, but private funding, more flexible funding tools and development of partnerships is desperately needed for different purposes. For many infrastructures, basic financing comes from universities, and ERDF has been used in some cases, but that means projects and continuation is missing. The funding instruments of the Finnish Academy have changed four times in ten years, which makes it difficult to comprehend. The Industrial Research Fund of Flanders is an interesting model, in which the universities can internally decide how they use the funding. In Finland, the structural problem is that all universities compete for the same funding, and university networks are also challenging, because it is not clear how partner universities are selected.

At the time of the interviews, models and methods for sustainability were missing; no processes were in place, and no commercial technologies were available. In addition, the actors saw the poor information flow within the owner organisation as a potential restriction. They considered learning in the city/public organisations time-consuming. Regarding social and health care services, it was clear that the university is an anchor organisation in the region; it creates new and supports renewal.

An understanding of the influence and conditions of the RDI infrastructure services on the surrounding society should be better (planning processes, flexibility, cooperation, procurement capability etc.). What should be changed? Opening our infrastructure to foreign companies and securing Finnish companies' access to foreign infrastructure must be developed, and Finnish companies should be encouraged to enter international markets. Tampere, Tampere region or even Finland could be a good-sized testbed for some international companies, e.g. the Finnish basic education or maternity and child care clinic system through which everyone passes, or the Finnish biobank system. Even at the time of the interviews in 2019, the lack of internationality is obvious in these otherwise fine systems.



In the partner meeting in Bruges in February 2019, the partnership and stakeholder concluded again that the owners of the innovation ecosystems do not fully understand the market and know their players, and long-term management strategies are generally missing. The service offering of an ecosystem should be co-designed by all relevant actors, and for that to happen, we need to know the ecosystem thoroughly. Many potential users are not aware of innovation ecosystems and their service offer, which calls for continuous awareness-raising and marketing. We also have to be able to find complementarities among the ecosystems of partner regions and identify the most relevant policy measures for making innovation ecosystems usable internationally. In the partner meeting in Bremen in May 2019, we were impressed by the seemingly effective and systematic way how the local ministry of economic affairs run their innovation ecosystems and how well they have all relevant players covered. How to be able to do the same in Tampere region, know our ecosystems better and use that information more efficiently in regional development and in obtaining more diversified funding?

Covid-19 has changed ways of working permanently. Regional recovery plans have highlighted the green and digital transition of the economy; RDI infrastructures and ecosystems could offer services in hybrid or completely virtual mode in the future. It is interesting to see what the infrastructure of European data economy with its thematical areas, operating environments, industrial economy platforms and data spaces will allow. Needless to say, European rules of the game must be established for the movement of data. All this would clearly lead to science having a more significant impact on society.

These are the main gaps identified when collecting results of our own gap analysis and the gap analyses of other partners.

Action

In order to bridge the identified gaps, we can best contribute to the targeted ERDF instrument and to the implementation of the regional innovation ecosystem by participating in the ongoing preparation of the regional strategy and associated smart specialisation strategy (RIS3/4) for 2022–2025. The projects to be funded must support the implementation of these strategic documents.

From spring to autumn 2021, RIS3/4 will be developed in connection with the preparation of the regional strategy in an inclusive multi-stage process. RIS3/4 responds to the broader development goals and missions identified in the regional strategy. The monitoring model of the programme is envisaged to include three steps: the targeted benefits of each mission, necessary measures, and relevant indicators.

Already the first drafts of the new RIS3/4 draft have emphasised the need to coordinate funded actions with national and European measures, and to focus investment on activities that also allow for international funding and learning through international networks and activities. During the starting program period it will be even more important in the allocation of funding to coordinate cooperation also between different sectors and ecosystems. High level infrastructure attracts researchers, RDI professionals and funding and investments from abroad. The aim will be to stimulate new openings for cross-sectoral and cross-ecosystem cooperation.

One of the key operational models in the RIS3/4 draft is the *Research as a Service* thinking, which requires the following: defining the rules of the game, opening infrastructures, communication, taking over and standardising data access/ exploitation/ sharing, responsible and sustainable long-term development, and dynamism.



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Players involved

The Baltic Institute of Finland and regional TraCS3 stakeholders have participated in the S3 elaboration work, which was organised and coordinated by the Council of Tampere Region.

Timeframe

Spring–autumn 2021

Costs

Working time of the Council of Tampere Region and the Baltic Institute of Finland staff, as well as the input from stakeholders.

Funding sources

The main sources of public funding for the S3 are European Union structural funds, key funding programmes for research and innovation, Business Finland funding and other national funding. Investments by municipalities and companies as well as tangible and intangible investments by universities and research institutes are essential. Public-private funding can also act as a resource for large-scale implementations.

Date

Tampere, 2 December 2021

Signature

Päivi Myllykangas

Director, Regional Development

Stamp of the organisation (if available)

