

**Regional Innovation Strategies
under the
European Regional Development Fund
Innovative Actions 2000-2002**

**European Commission
DG Regional Policy
2002**

Leonardo da Vinci, "**Archimedes screw**". Atlantic code, f. 26 v.

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We wish to sincerely thank the Department of Economic Development of the Tuscany Region for its helpful collaboration in providing the drawing of Leonardo da Vinci.

Archimedes invented the water screw, a device for raising water using an encased screw open at both ends. The screw is set an angle, and as the screw turns, water fills the air pockets and is transported upwards. [Archimedes' screws](#) lifted water from streams providing a ready supply for drinking and washing. The Archimedes screw is still in use today.

"Leonardo developed a unique new attitude about machines. He reasoned that by understanding how each separate machine part worked, he could modify them and combine them in different ways to improve existing machines or create inventions no one had ever seen before. Leonardo set out to write the first systematic explanations of how machines work and how the elements of machines can be combined". (<http://www.mos.org/sln/Leonardo/InventorsWorkshop.html>).

"I think, if this screw instrument is well made, that means from linen starched (to block its pores) and is turned rapidly, then this said screw will find its female in the air and climb upwards."

Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo was an innovator who "contributed to the sciences of mechanics and mathematics, to astronomy, physical geography, botany, chemistry and anatomy" ("Leonardo: art and Science" Giunti Gruppo Editoriale, Firenze, 2000. , pag. 96). His creativity and genius, as well as his versatility and willingness to learn and explore, together his disposition to apply his knowledge to respond to the challenges that confronted the society he lived in provide today inspiration for all those that try to build a competitive European Union's economy and society based on knowledge and innovation.

"La sperienza, interprete in fra l'artifiziosa natura e la umana spezie, ne insegna ciò che essa natura in fra' mortali adopera da necessità costretta, e non altrimenti oprar si possa che la ragione, suo timone, oprare ne insegni"

Leonardo da Vinci

"Experience, which balances the creativity of nature and the human species, teaches us that nature itself forces upon mortals the rules dictated by necessity, and that man cannot act otherwise than by reason, which is his true guide".

Leonardo da Vinci

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Introduction

By Commissioner Michel Barnier

A Lisbonne en mars 2000, les chefs d'Etat ou de gouvernement ont décidé d'engager tous les efforts nécessaires pour préparer la transition des économies européennes vers une économie fondée sur la connaissance. Les moteurs d'un tel changement sont l'innovation, l'entrepreneuriat et la valorisation du capital humain.

C'est pour cette raison que j'ai décidé, pour la nouvelle génération des programmes européens de développement régional 2000-2006, de mettre un accent particulier sur la promotion de l'innovation. L'enjeu est double : renforcer la compétitivité de l'économie européenne dans son ensemble et réduire le risque d'une "fracture numérique" entre les régions. J'ai insisté pour que chaque programme régional comporte des mesures en faveur du développement de la société de l'information. A titre d'exemple, entre 5 et 6 milliards d'euro seront consacrés à cette priorité dans les régions les moins développées.

L'Union dispose par ailleurs d'un instrument spécifique, les programmes d'actions innovatrices, qui permet aux régions de développer des pratiques innovantes. Ces programmes fonctionnent comme une sorte de laboratoire, offrant aux régions la possibilité de prendre des risques et d'expérimenter des approches nouvelles dans trois domaines : l'économie de la connaissance, la société de l'information, la promotion de l'identité régionale.

Ces programmes bénéficient de l'expérience acquise depuis 1994, notamment au travers des projets pilotes du *fonds européen de développement régional*. Grâce à ces projets, les régions concernées ont encouragé le développement d'une culture de l'innovation, notamment dans les petites et moyennes entreprises, et une méthode de travail qui fait appel au partenariat public-privé. Cette politique a fait ses preuves et démontre bien, de manière originale, la valeur ajoutée des interventions communautaires lorsqu'elles sont bien ciblées.

Je suis convaincu que cet effort doit se poursuivre à l'avenir. L'Union doit avoir la volonté et la capacité de faire face aux nouveaux défis et de répondre aux attentes de ses citoyens.



Michel BARNIER
EU Commissioner for
Regional Policy

Good Practice Lessons from the RIS+ projects (2000-2002)

By Mr. Guy Crauser, Director General DG Regional Policy

1. NEW REGIONAL POLICY CHALLENGES: INNOVATION AS A RESPONSE

In January 2001, we published a Communication called “The regions and the new economy : guidelines for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) innovative actions for the period 2000-2006”. It is not by chance or fashion that we selected this title. We wanted to inform the regions about a radically new economic environment in the making, so that they could explore, with the help of the ERDF innovative actions, new policy avenues to face up to the challenges ahead.

This new economic environment is generated by the combined effects of an ever increasing globalisation process, a profound and accelerating technological change affecting the markets and the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union. In this new context many of the traditional regional policy recipes no longer apply.

This new economic environment, over and above current debates about the future of “dotcoms” or the extent of its novelty, strongly suggests that regional prosperity has to be built on a new set of competitive factors which require new regional policy approaches.

The key to success in the old economy was 'costs' and 'scale'. In the new economy the organisation of production is becoming more flexible, products are becoming weightless and 'non-cost' factor competition is essential. 'Intangibles' such as speed of response to market demands, innovation, reductions in the life cycle of products, quality, design, differentiation/customisation of products to niche markets, after sales servicing, new management methods and business organisation, the capacity to co-operate in inter-firm business networks are the key to firms competitiveness in the global economy.

Moreover, in this new economic environment subject to accelerated technological change, the key sources of regional wealth creation are directly related to the regional capacity to translate information and knowledge, in the form of intellectual capital, into economic opportunity. Knowledge creation, dissemination and adoption through innovation are replacing natural resources endowment, location and the efficiency of physical labour as regional competitive factors. More than ever, availability of quality human capital (and lifelong education and training) is the key to regional innovation and competitiveness. Rapid technological change is opening up new opportunities (e.g. biotechnology, new materials, etc.) and pumping up new trends through the increased use of Information and Communications Technologies at the core of business processes and market relations.

This is why less favoured regions and their firms cannot afford not to be properly connected into this knowledge-based networked economy. It follows that regional policy also has to cope with the new challenge of the so-called ‘digital divide’ between those regions that are ‘connected’ and have the ICT skills, infrastructures and access to sources of innovation, and those that have not.

In general, regional advantage will go to those places which can attract and quickly mobilise the best people ('knowledge workers'), resources and capabilities required to

turn knowledge into new business ideas and commercial products and processes through innovation.

This is precisely why we need a policy response with innovation promotion at its heart, if regions are to be successful in meeting these challenges.

RIS/RIS+ (Regional Innovation Strategies), and the RITTS projects (Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Initiatives financed by our colleagues in DG Enterprise), together with the Innovating Regions in Europe (IRE) network have been a unique regional experiment in which the European Commission, in a direct link with the regions, has attempted at providing a response to this regional need. The pages that follow are a summary of the lessons learnt from this first initiative which will be further pursued under the new generation of ERDF Innovative Actions until 2006.

2. THE RIS/RIS+ EXPERIMENT: OBJECTIVES AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Between 2000 and 2002, nearly one in five European regions (30 in total) have received financing under the ERDF Innovative Actions for the development of a RIS/RIS+ (500.000 € co-financed at 50% by the European Commission and the region).

RIS/RIS+ had four key methodological principles.

- First, RIS should be based on public-private partnership and consensus (the private sector and the key regional R&TDI players should be closely associated in the development of the strategy and its implementation);
- Second, RIS should be demand-led (focusing on firms' innovation needs, SMEs in particular) and bottom-up (with a broad involvement of R&TDI regional actors) in their elaboration.
- Third, RIS should be action-oriented (at the end of the process new innovation projects in firms and/or new innovation policy schemes);
- Finally, regions participating in RIS should exploit the European dimension through engaging in inter-regional co-operation and benchmarking of policies and methods.

The Commission did not try to promote one standard methodology to be applied religiously in all the regions partaking in RIS projects. In view of the sheer diversity of regional productive environments and their different institutional frameworks, and on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, the Commission proposed broad guidelines and a flexible methodological approach to regions participating in RIS, which includes:

1. Raising awareness about innovation and building a regional consensus among key regional actors;
2. Analysis of the regional innovation system (its actors and their interaction), including technology and market trends assessment, technology foresight and benchmarking with other regions ;
3. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of regional firms: assessment of regional demand for innovation services, including technology audits (in SMEs in particular) and surveys regarding firms' needs and capacities, including management, finance, technology, training, marketing, etc.;
4. Assessment of the regional innovation support infrastructures and policy schemes;
5. Definition of a strategic framework – including a detailed action plan and the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system. The action plan may involve

pilot actions and feasibility studies as well as concrete projects that might be financed under existing structural funds operational programmes.

It was expected that a broad spectrum of local political, economic and academic actors were involved in this process by actively participating in the Steering Committee responsible for RIS as well as through working groups, seminars, interviews, audits and surveys.

3. IMPACT OF RIS AND RIS+ PROJECTS

External evaluations of the Regional Technology Plans (RTP), Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) and Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Initiatives (RITTS) projects as well as the current analysis of RIS+ projects, provide some insight on the impact of such projects. They are mainly related to regional policy making and to the improvement of business support instruments.

(1) Contribution to changes in regional policy making

Introducing innovation into the economic development agenda of less favoured regions.

These projects contributed to raise awareness and enlarge the scope of the concept of innovation as well as to integrate it within their regional economic development strategies as a priority task. In many RIS/RIS+ regions, it went from a narrowly defined “economic exploitation of research results” and technology transfer, to « profitable change » and “the successful economic exploitation of new ideas”. This broader concept of innovation includes not only research and technological efforts but a broader, more integrated approach involving organisational, financial, managerial, training, and marketing considerations.

RIS/RIS+ strengthened the position of innovation in regional strategies. This has even induced several regions such as Niederösterreich, Limburg, Strathclyde or Overijssel to establish deadlines in order to become one of the « most innovative regions » in Europe, in line with the Lisbon objectives.

Others have set up ambitious political objectives in this field. In Shannon for example the key objective of the RIS is to double the level of innovation by having at least 20% of all enterprises introducing some new product, process or service in the previous two years, by the year 2003. In West Midlands one of the objectives of RIS was to "Increase the proportion of innovating firms from the current figure of 60% to 90% by 2004 in the region by focusing in particular on the ability to increase innovative activity within these firms through stimulating networking amongst business and organizations across the region" and to "Increase the investment in R&D, fixed capital equipment and education and training to, at least, the UK average by 2004". In Castilla y León they had the complementary objectives of increasing R&D expenditure to reach 1% of regional GDP and to raise R&D in companies to 50% of the total by 2001.

Raising awareness of entrepreneurs and even the general public about innovation has also been supported by around 40% of all the RIS/RIS+ regions, both in less favoured regions and in more advanced ones. An innovation promotion Minimovie was produced in Western Scotland to raise awareness for entrepreneurs, the Da Vinci TV programme in Overijssel is already a success for several years, and the Innovation

week organised in Thessaly was a good communication event on innovation. The Canary islands have also launched radiobroadcast programmes on innovation and Aragon ran a successful press campaign on the benefits of innovation.

In all, we can safely say that RIS/RIS+ have certainly raised political awareness about the need to act in this field on the basis of public-private cooperation and a sound assessment of firms innovation needs and capabilities.

Mainstreaming into the Structural Funds for increasing the quality of public expenditure

Most RIS/RIS+ projects have managed to guarantee a good mainstreaming of their priority actions into the Operational Programmes for objective 1 or 2 areas by providing new project ideas and identifying partnerships to implement them. Several regions have been able to provide precise figures on budgets allocated to innovation in the structural funds or in either regional or national programmes after their RIS. They all show a significant increase in the quantity and the quality of innovation support.

In regions such as Niederösterreich, Halle-Leipzig-Dessau, Yorkshire and the Humber, Limburg, Calabria, Shannon, Castilla y León, Central Macedonia, Thessaly, Sterea and Western Scotland, many of the measures proposed under the new generation of Operational Programmes can clearly be traced back to the RIS activities.

An institutional framework for a more efficient use of public and private funds

One of the unexpected conclusions of the evaluation of these projects was that their « policy » dimension contributed to improve the institutional capacity of regional administrations in charge of innovation. The RIS and RIS+ have often contributed to a better co-ordination of public financiers of innovation. In the Canary Islands RIS+ prepared a “Quality charter” for technology transfer offices in universities. In Wallonia a new decree for technological centres, detailing approval conditions for these centres, including a charter on prices for services they offer. In Overijssel, a new official convention was signed by the regional development agency, the regional government and the regional office of the national agency for innovation (Syntens) for the promotion of innovation. Weser-Ems has created a number of sectoral competence centres in strategic fields for the regional economy.

Moreover, half of the participating regions designed new policy tools for supporting the creation of new technology based firms, start-ups or spin-offs from universities often through incubator-type activities.

(2) Improvement of business support instruments and processes

Promotion of public and private partnerships and business networks

This is one of the most visible results of the RIS/RIS+. All 30 regions decided to support clusters and business networks in their actions plans as a result of the RIS/RIS+ exercise. For example, in Wallonia, 5 pilot clusters led by firms in collaboration with research centres and sectoral association were developed under RIS. In Yorkshire & Humber, 15 sectoral business networks were all animated by entrepreneurs and directly integrated into the activities of the newly created regional

development agency. In Northern EU (Finland and Sweden), cross-border business meetings among firms of the two countries took place in order to operationalise the 'multipolis' concept. In Tuscany they developed a cultural heritage cluster which has been recently pointed out as an example of good practice by the European Parliament's STOA Office. Finally in Halle-Leipzig-Dessau, a public-private dialogue in the chemical sector developed into co-operation between big firms and regional SMEs and the establishment of a network of 50 firms in the plastic sector, preparing the creation of a Technological institute for polymers.

Currently, RIS+ strategic reflections throughout the Union show that the provision of a regional framework for inter-firm cooperation is of paramount importance for the promotion of innovation in SMEs. Innovation flows through the formal and informal regional networks created. These networks help translate knowledge (codified or tacit) into economic opportunity, while at the same time build up the necessary bonds and linkages among persons and institutions so as to exploit the synergies that catalyse regional innovation.

Internal coherence of the regional innovation system through a better match between the RDTI supply and demand from firms

Within RIS/RIS+, hundreds of SMEs have been audited from the technological point of view and hundreds more have been involved in the process of identification of innovation business needs through participation in working groups and all sorts of surveys. On the supply side, most regions have undertaken a thorough critical analysis of their current innovation policies and the contribution of their R&TDI institutions to regional development, including universities and technology centres in particular.

In this sense, following the RIS/RIS+, several regions such as Niederösterreich, Canarias and Algarve/ Huelva are planning the creation of regional agencies for innovation, playing an interface role. Others such as Central Macedonia, Wales and the West Midlands are establishing regional innovation observatories to update and monitor the innovation needs analysis. Finally others like Castilla y Leon are aiming at 'one stop shop' by labelling a network of regional innovation support organisation in order to make the R&TD resources available more transparent and accessible.

Improvement of innovation support tools by exchanges between regions

Finally it is important to note that interregional exchanges of good practice, which was one of the objectives of RIS+ projects, have been quite frequent among regions with 90% of all regions involved in study visits, working groups and other means of communication. This has clearly brought a European value added to these projects, which will be of even greater importance with the future enlargement. The new regions will need to have access to knowledge and experience already developed by other regions, keeping in mind that there is no universal magic formula or best practices, only good practice from which lessons can, in certain cases, be learned and adapted to suit the specific situation in each region.

4. CONCLUSIONS

To date, in the less-developed regions, the Structural Funds have been mainly directed towards creating the physical infrastructures which are a necessary pre-condition for sustaining a process of economic development: roads, airports, water-treatment plants,

energy, railways, etc. However, intangibles are gradually becoming a priority for regional policy in those less-developed regions that are successfully overcoming their shortage of infrastructures. The emphasis is therefore increasingly being placed on those conditions which will most directly and immediately affect the capacity of businesses, particularly SMEs, to develop new job-creating activities. This necessarily involves policies for the promotion of innovation, that are more regionalised as the RIS/RIS+ experience has clearly shown.

These policies go well beyond tax incentives, training programmes, aid for basic research or the provision of R&TD physical infrastructures. They require new policy delivery systems, including financial engineering, and should be based on close cooperation with the private sector through new forms of public-private partnership. They are fundamentally aimed at increasing the capacity of businesses to innovate as a principal source of regional competitiveness.

They should also try to promote entrepreneurship and provide 'real business services', that respond to an aggregated demand by business networks and clusters. They contrast with public subsidies to individual businesses through horizontal and automatic programmes of public aid. In this sense, they should help reduce the barriers that (new) businesses have to overcome to enter markets, stimulating and supporting (existing and potential) entrepreneurs in all phases of the business creation process.

At the 'regional' level, these policies should aim at establishing an efficient regional innovation system: an economic and institutional environment that promotes the creation, dissemination and adaptation/adoption of knowledge that increases the competitiveness and the attractiveness of the regional economy. Collective learning and the spreading of knowledge is central to such a policy. RIS/RIS+ and the new generation of Innovative Actions 2000-2006 are a first step in this right direction.



Guy Crauser
Director General,
DG Regional Policy

A new generation of Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions

by Dr Elisabeth Helander - Director DG Regional Policy

The Commission adopted its new guidelines for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) innovative actions in January 2001. For the first time, under this new system, regions have been invited to propose programmes directly to the European Commission.

The regions have responded enthusiastically and have taken advantage of this opportunity. Two out of three regions made an application in 2001. The maximum ERDF contribution is 3 m€ for a regional programme of innovative actions focusing on one or more of the following strategic themes:

- *Regional economies based on Knowledge and Technological Innovation*
- *e-Europe Regio: the information society at the service of regional development*
- *Regional Identity and Sustainable Development*

Programmes should be based on a regional strategy to boost innovation which takes account of the relative circumstances of the region and include a number of actions and accompanying pilot projects to be selected by the regional partnership responsible. The objective is to increase and improve the quality of spending on innovation in the mainstream EU Objective 1 and Objective 2 programmes as well as influence the content of other regional development programmes. The focus will be on the modernisation of SMEs.

The budget for innovative actions in each year until 2006 is 0.4% of the annual ERDF budget which means approximately 400 m€ over the entire period.

103 regions applied for a regional programme in 2001. Each application was examined by DG Regional Policy and other relevant DGs in accordance with the selection criteria laid-down in the guidelines.

Most regions opted to include a number of actions covering at least two of the three eligible themes, others opted for all three themes while a few opted for just a single theme.

Given the limited budget available, the Commission had to select the best qualified applications for co-financing but had to turn down some applications even though their quality was relatively good. In these cases, the regions were informed why their application did not score sufficiently highly and were invited to make an improved application in another year: many of them accepted the Commission's offer to discuss their initial applications bilaterally.

In all, 81 of the 103 applications received were able to be awarded ERDF co-financing from the budget available. The total ERDF amount for the approved programmes is approximately 206 m€ and their total value is approximately 393 m€.

Thematic overview of the approved programmes

An overview of the approved programmes by theme shows the following:

- *Theme 1: Regional economies based on Knowledge and Technological Innovation*
60 programmes include actions classified under this theme. These actions account for 43 % of the total ERDF allocation for all the programmes and for 43% of the total value of all programmes.

Approximately half of these regions will be using their Regional Programme of Innovative Actions to continue previous efforts under the RIS projects developed in these regions, in particular the more innovative and risky aspects of their RIS Action Plan.

The actions can be grouped under the following categories :

- SMEs innovation projects with universities and technology centres
- Cluster and business networks
- Business advisory services
- Shared business services : incubator units and creation of new technology based firms
- Innovation financial engineering
- Research, technological development and innovation infrastructure
- Other research, technological development and innovation projects

- *Theme 2: e-Europe Regio: the information society at the service of regional development*

61 programmes include actions classified under this theme. These actions account for 39 % of the total ERDF allocation for all the programmes and for 41 % of the total value of all programmes.

The groups of actions which are in the programmes cover the following categories:

- Services and applications for SMEs
- New business processes for SMEs through ICT
- Services and applications for the citizen
- Testing of advanced ICT for spatial development
- Other Information Society projects

- *Theme 3: Regional Identity and Sustainable Development*

31 programmes include actions classified under this theme. These actions account for 12 % of the total ERDF allocation for all the programmes and for 11 % of the total value of all programmes.

The groups of actions which are in the programmes cover the following categories:

- ❑ Ecological tourism
- ❑ Cultural heritage and tourism
- ❑ Environmental technologies
- ❑ Waste disposal and recycling
- ❑ Energy applications and management
- ❑ Transport applications
- ❑ Public and private partnerships in new forms of local services
- ❑ Other regional identity and sustainable development projects

In addition to the three major themes, limited co-financing is also provided for technical assistance and accompanying measures such as networking activities. Technical assistance and accompanying measures account for 6 % of the total ERDF allocation for all the programmes and for 5 % of the total value of all programmes.

Management and implementation arrangements

In keeping with the guidelines, applications were submitted to the Commission by the competent public authorities in the region on behalf of a wider regional partnership including the private sector and research and education bodies.

Overall responsibility for each programme rests with the authorities in the regions themselves.

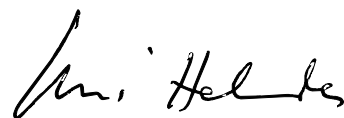
The programmes are approved by a Commission decision addressed to each region accompanied by a financial agreement which sets out the terms and conditions of the grant.

Next steps

All regions covered in whole or in part by Objective 1 and or Objective 2 are eligible to apply. Regions may apply by 31 May each year until May 2005. The maximum duration for a programme is 2 years and a second application may only be submitted once the Commission has received and approved the financial and final reports for the first programme.

Conclusions

The successful launch of the new Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions shows that the regions in Europe are fully prepared to rise to the challenges of the knowledge society. Their readiness to create programmes for technological innovation, information society and sustainable development has been extremely encouraging. The regions have welcomed the opportunity to use these programmes as laboratories for truly innovative experimentation in concrete projects and working methods.



Dr Elisabeth Helander
Director DG Regional Policy

RIS+ projects ¹

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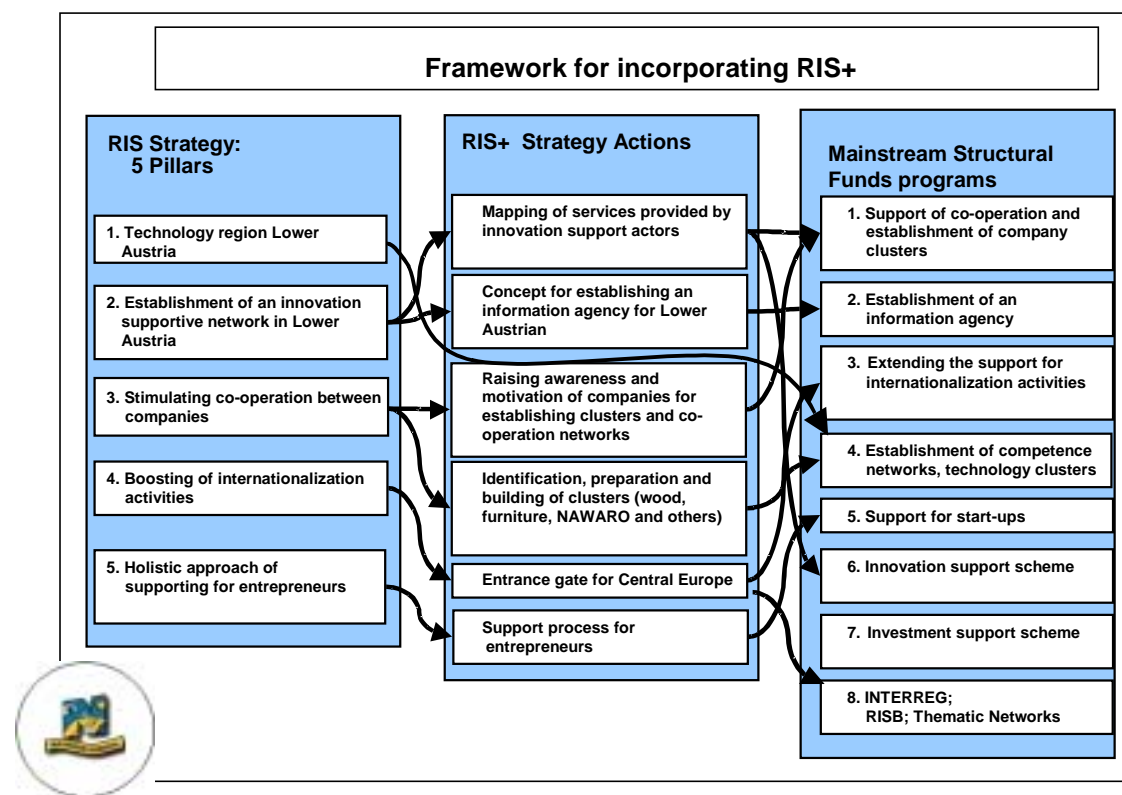
¹ The information presented in this publication is mainly based on three types of sources : reports prepared by project managers (final, interim and progress reports), meetings with key regional actors directly involved in the projects and visits on site. All summaries were given to project managers for approval. All quotes come from the projects' reports.

RIS+ Niederösterreich (A)

Goal of the project

The region has set a global goal for innovation : *“The long term objective of [the] strategy: to establish Lower Austria as one of the top ten innovation regions in Europe”*. The RIS+ project is perceived as one step to reach this goal.

At the end of the RIS (97-99), five priority actions (“pillars”) were selected (see table below) : technology, innovation, co-operation, internationalisation and mobilisation of start-ups. The RIS+ contributes to four of them and is itself linked to several actions supported by the new structural funds programmes. A TRIP project was also launched, called PEP, as well as two thematic networks, all supported by DG Enterprise.



Methodology

- **Creation of an Information agency** for innovation in October 2000
- Creation of an **initiative for start-ups** (GENIUS), as a follow-up of a RIS action
- **1 feasibility study** for the establishment of an innovation support network in the region : design of a common platform for displaying and accessing the technology offers of firms and R&D organisations (www.infinoe.at).
- **5 Pilot projects** :
 - Entrepreneurship roundtable (see below e/ stimulation of entrepreneurship)
 - Information agency for innovation (see a/ innovation support network)
 - Innovation supporting network (see a/ innovation support network)
 - Stimulation of companies network in the field of industrial use of renewable resources (test ground for the co-operation tool-box)
 - Co-operation tool-box (see c/ stimulation of company co-operation)

- **Communication** activities : publication of the RIS strategy for 2001-2003 to more than 4000 entrepreneurs and political decision-makers in the region. Regular newsletters are also sent in English and German (1500 copies).

2/3 of the budget was attributed for studies and expertise to consultants hired for this project (already involved in the RIS and local consultants).

Activities

5 fields of activities have been developed related to the RIS action plan. For each of them, a working group has been set up during the project.

- **Innovation support network :**

Creation of an information agency for innovation to improve current access to technologies for SMEs. For its preparation, a workshop was organised with a similar agency (ADIT) in Strasbourg. An information system available on internet, called Infinö, was also created.

- **Technology :**

Creation of an Office for technology for the government of Niederösterreich, with a brand name for its activities ("TecNetArea - Technology Location Lower Austria").

In the framework of the national programme supporting co-operation between firms and research organisations, called "K+ competence centre programme", the Centre for applied chemistry (Echem) has been established in Niederösterreich. 2 other centres in Austria include firms and research organisations from the region.

- **Stimulation of company co-operation :**

A platform / roundtable on collaboration has been created with the chamber of commerce, the development agency (ECOPLUS) and the regional administration for economic development. The aim has been to enhance the transparency on the companies' potential for collaboration and on the various support schemes but also to raise awareness at the policy level of the importance of firms collaboration. The following activities were launched : a pilot project in the field of renewable resources, the creation of a network in the wood sector, workshops to raise awareness, success stories, check lists, a pool of consultants. Also, a co-ordinated support scheme was created to support firms and research organisations to co-operate (from the preparation to the establishment of partnerships) and a web site was launched (www.kooperationen.net), with the support of the new objective 2 programme.

- **Internationalisation :**

This issue is important for this region which has developed strong and long-term relationships with its neighbours in Slovakia and Hungary. The three Austrian areas around Vienna (Burgenland, Niederösterreich and Vienna) jointly created a brand name ("the Vienna region") to improve their visibility towards other regions. A bundle of more than ten Interreg and DG Enterprise co-funded projects have been set up in order to achieve in the mid-term the positioning of Lower Austria as a turntable for Central Europe. A support scheme for the opening up of new markets has also been set up. In the specific field of innovation, Niederösterreich plays the role of partner and model in the RIS Western Slovakia.

Most activities for internationalisation have been developed with the support of INTERREG IIIA.

- **Stimulation of entrepreneurship :**

In the RIS, a round table for business founders was created. It evolves into an initiative for start-ups called GENIUS. Business plans competitions are organised to identify potential start-ups. A team of “Technology scouts” from university and consultants discuss their feasibility with the potential founders. This initiative GENIUS will be continued in the objective 2 programme.

Most interesting activities / results

- An improvement of the access to better and up to date information on innovation in the region through the creation of the information agency for innovation and the internet based information system (infinoe).
- Support to firms networks and lessons learned from the pilot project on renewable resources (*“Due to the lack of process support and (professional) moderation from a neutral third party, the increase of transparency has not lead to the exploitation of business opportunities and further opening-up of niche markets”*).
- Crossborder networking, with neighbouring accessing countries (to become a *“turntable for Central Europe”*).
- Mainstreaming with objective 2 and links with other EU-funded projects. The region gave a presentation on this issue in Saarbrücken (IQ-net meeting) with 20 objective 2 regions.

Comments and future activities

- The RIS+ was an interesting follow-up of the RIS, taking the strategic dimension on board. The embedding of the RIS, followed by the RIS+, into regional policy is visible.
- The region Niederösterreich has been very active in supporting innovation policy through public support schemes since the RIS in 1999. Along with the RIS+ project, a TRIP, 2 thematic networks and a European region of excellence project (PAXIS) were also launched, without mentioning the objective 2 programme and INTERREG. This is positive because complementary activities are developed and funds are made available to implement the strategies of the RIS and RIS+. The challenge of coherence is primarily solved by clearly assigning activities to the five strategic corner pillars respectively. A good element is the fact that a joint steering committee was set up for the RIS+ and TRIP project, on the basis of the former RIS steering Committee.
- Concerning the mainstreaming through the objective 2, the issue of coherence does not seem to be a difficulty (see figure 1). The link with INTERREG IIIA (with Slovakia and Moravia) is also secured since all of the interregional projects (Euregio-Weinviertel, South Moravia, West Slovakia, Lance network) belong to the same corner pillar *“Turntable for Central Europe”*.
- The new Regional Programme of Innovative Action (PRAI) for Niederösterreich clearly refers to the RIS and RIS+ projects. The wish is to include companies even more in the ongoing strategy process, to stimulate them to innovate more and to achieve leverage effects on the implementation of objective 2. The support to start-ups at a pre-seed stage is one of the main activities envisaged, to which 1/3 of the total budget would be allocated.
- Niederösterreich, having such a sound experience of regional innovation policy, can play a *“mentoring”* role for regions in the accessing countries willing to initiate an innovation strategy.

RIS+ Toscana (I)

Goal of the project

The goal of the project is *“To start a process for the development of technology in the specific sector of cultural heritage”*. The RIS+ Toscana is a technology and sector oriented project. The idea is to create products and services in this field, using the technology developed in Tuscany, that can emerge on regional, national and even international levels.

At the end of the RITTS (97-99), three objectives were selected :

- Support of SMEs in traditional sectors
- Creation of innovative clusters
- Support to the creation and strengthening of high tech firms

The RIS+ is linked to the second priority : creation of innovative clusters. The choice of the sector of cultural heritage is based on the fact that there is a concentration of competence in this technological field in the region : several national research institutes, linked to the Ministry of culture and the National Research Centre, and a group of SMEs active in the field of diagnosis and conservation of cultural heritage, some of which are very specialised.

Methodology

- **Survey** to identify potential partners / participants to the project (60 organisations, research centres and companies)
- Creation of a **technological equipment** (a small core of new opto-electronic equipment)
- Creation of a **catalogue of technologies** (opto-electronic technologies that can be applied to cultural heritage)
- Production of **4 prototypes** for demonstration
- Creation of **5 diagnostic work sites** (in Pisa, in Firenze but also in Spain)
- **Training course** for technicians specialised in the use of technology for cultural heritage
- **Promotion activities** (participation or organisation of 19 conferences and exhibitions, publications)

More than half of the budget was attributed for studies and expertise to consultants hired for this project (a process consultant, 2 technological consultants and a consultant for market research).

Activities

6 activities have been developed. In terms of budget, the priority was given to the 4 prototypes which received 40% of the total RIS+ budget. But this was not enough and covered only 40% of the total cost of the prototypes which is more than 520 000 euros. Research centres and firms also contributed financially, for the remaining 60%.

- **Institutional action**

The co-ordination between the Toscana region, national ministries - research, culture and foreign affairs - and national research organisations led to the

diffusion of results of the project within these organisations but also to new funding opportunities to carry research for firms and research centres involved in the RIS+.

- **Creation of 4 demonstration prototypes : 3D scanner, colour and IR reflectography unit, laser system for cleaning metal artworks, automatic environmental conditions measurer**

This was the priority of the project. It concretely contributed to the creation of a network in the field of cultural heritage, including public and private organisations from the research and the business sides.

- **Pilot diagnostic research sites**

Four sites are located in Pisa (Piazza dei Miracoli and San Frediano church), Firenze (Palazzio Vecchio) and Toledo (Cathedral). The fifth site consists of paintings from Masaccio and Masolino and is the only one directly funded by the RIS+ project, the others being funded by the partners (research centres and firms). They are not entirely linked to the demonstration prototypes since the technologies tested are larger than the ones of the prototypes (radar, infrared-based, sonic/ultra-sonic and laser technologies). The aim is to check how these technologies provide a valid support to conservation activities and a reference protocol for future activities based on partners' complementary skills.

- **Training**

A course has been created and managed by the Professional building school of Firenze to train technicians specialised in the use of technology for the cultural heritage. This course is aimed at young school and university graduates in the sector of diagnostics, either as self-employed or employee in restoration and technological services firms. Lasting one year, it consists of theory, laboratory and on-site experience in the 5 pilot sites, covering the four technologies tested on the sites. The funding of this course is covered by the regional professional training system (with a likely European Social Fund support) and not by the RIS+.

- **Promotion**

Presentations of the technology available and developed in Toscana have been made at the main specialised exhibitions in Italy and abroad (Firenze, Leipzig, Valladolid, Ferrara). Study days, technical meetings and seminars have also been organised or attended to reach a more specialised audience. This contributed to create new contacts and open market opportunities. It also allowed a comparison with other organisations/regions and led to a better understanding of the comparative advantage of Toscana in the field of cultural heritage. This advantage is significant because of the "cluster" approach (concentration of technology and grouping of the main players), the high-tech level of the technology and the commitment of the companies.

- **Market and partnership opportunities**

A market study has been carried out on the market's current and potential size and the most suitable promotional methods. Contacts have been made with public and private partners in Italy, France, Spain and Germany.

Most interesting activities / results

- **In terms of partnership :**
 - The project led to more contacts and more interest from public and private organisations than expected. They made a significant financial contribution to the project.
 - This contributed to the fact that various actors in the field of cultural heritage have started to work together (companies producing machinery and restoration service, working with technology suppliers). At one of the most important specialised exhibition (Restauro 2001), all participants from Toscana agreed that *“collaboration offers common advantages and that the RIS+ Tuscany pilot scheme offers the right instrument for best exploiting this opportunity.”*
 - For the future, all the actors believe that the *“networking experience started with the pilot project has to be considered as a priority for future development of any initiative.”*
 - The partnership with national authorities and national research centres has been also constructive since cultural heritage is partly a national competence.
- **In terms of mainstreaming :**
 - In the DOCUP objective 2, three measures are linked to innovation. One of them (“Innovation transfer to SME”) clearly mentions the former RITTS and the RIS+ project. This measure aims to support the creation or strengthening of networks among firms, public and private research centres and intermediaries in several sectors including the cultural heritage sector.
- **In technological terms :**
 - 4 prototypes have been created and tested

<p style="text-align: center;">Creation of a laser system for cleaning metal artworks</p> <p>This modified laser, coupled with fibre optic system, is more efficient than existing systems . It optimises the duration of the laser impulse by extending the duration and reducing the maximum power. It can be used for « cleaning » metal objects of archaeological and artistic interest.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Automatic environmental conditions measurer</p> <p>An instrument has been created for museums to continuously monitor the effects of environmental conditions on paintings. This instrument includes signal in time when threshold conditions, which would alter the colours of paintings, are being reached.</p>
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- The main technologies used for diagnosis in the cultural heritage sector have been tested on five pilot sites
- A course has been created to train technicians in the field
- **In terms of market :**
 - The promotion of the technologies developed in Toscana in exhibitions and seminars led to new contacts with potential partners in other countries.
 - It reinforced the understanding of the competitive advantage of Tuscany in the sector by the Toscan partners themselves, this advantage being linked to their grouping in a cluster.

Comments and future activities

- This project is very successful because it contributed to create a cluster of firms and research centres in the field of cultural heritage, with a real commitment from the business side, visible through the private partners’ financial commitment to the project. It also offers very concrete outputs on a specific market and specific technologies, on which Toscana has a clear international competitive advantage.

- In its new Regional Programme of Innovative Actions (PRAI), there will be some follow-up of this project. Tuscany mentions the RITTS and RIS+² and suggests that some pilot projects in the cultural heritage sector will be supported. But most of all, the network approach, which is one of the success factors of the RIS+, will be implemented for several sectors : fashion, biotechnology and opto-electronic (in which the cultural heritage sector will be covered).

² *“The programme is a tool for experimenting in Tuscany new technologies of intervention of the regional government in the field of innovation and for designing an innovative system, coherent with the results of RITTS and RIS+ Toscana projects.”*

RIS+ Castilla y León (E)

Goal of the project

The goals of the project called INNORED are to create a regional network of innovation support organisations, and to raise awareness and innovation demand in the least favoured areas of the region (Avila, Zamora y Salamanca). The economic situation of these three areas is characterised by a very low level of entrepreneurship, co-operation between firms and innovation. All firms are SMEs and almost all have less than 10 employees.

A Regional Technology Plan (RTP) project was launched in 1994. Its follow up after 1997 was managed by the regional development agency of Castilla y Leon (ADE) and had a very positive impact on the regional innovation policy on qualitative terms (how to “do” an innovation policy, improvement of the technology centres system, change in mentality) and on quantitative terms (the public investments for innovation were 3 times higher than expected before the RTP). The RIS+ project is a direct continuation of the RTP and its follow-up in the years after.

A co-ordination Committee was created with intermediary organisations such as chambers of commerce, technology park, technology centres, university, regional entrepreneurial associations and was co-ordinated by ADE with the support of a Spanish consultant.

Methodology

- 55 visits to intermediary organisations supporting innovation in the entire region
- In the three least favoured areas of the region :
 - creation of a pilot co-ordination committee for these areas
 - postal questionnaire sent to 300 firms with a response rate of 53%
 - innovation (including information technologies) diagnostics in 22 firms
 - organisation of seminars and workshops with firms

Activities

11 actions were developed :

- **Technological diagnostics** in non innovative firms : 20 diagnostics were carried out by technology centres and action plans were designed in 17 firms, of which one will be introduced for Interreg III support.
- **Seminars** to present the **supply** for innovation available in the region to firms, organised by the university of Salamanca, in collaboration with the Technological Park of Castilla y Leon, with 36 firms.
- 3 **Working groups on supply-demand** with technology centres, university of Salamanca and firms on concrete topics on which firms had expressed in interest in the diagnostic phase :
 - tools for design, prototypes, organisation of production and IT tools (8 firms and 4 intermediaries)
 - building materials (7 firms and 5 intermediaries)
 - use of laser technology in textile sector
- **Seminar** to help firms use opportunities for **external trade**
- **Working days for entrepreneurs** in the 3 priority areas on :
 - Marketing and commercialisation (with more than 50 entrepreneurs, of which 14 received individual advice)
 - Exportation consortiums in sector of machines for agriculture

- Innovation and financing in the sector of ornamental stones (with 12 firms)
- **Individual analysis** of the opportunities offered by **information technologies for 20 firms**, provide by a specialist consultant with the Chambers of commerce and industry.
- **Workshop** on how to include **information technologies in traditional careers** (mathematics, languages, fine arts)
- Launch of an **interactive portal** for the network of RTDI intermediary organisations.
- **Seminar on fiscal incentives** for RDTI and creation of a practical guide for SMEs by the Technological park
- Support activities for **transnational technology transfer**, in particular through the Innovation Relay Centers (animated by the Technological park with support from the University of Salamanca): 23 audits of firms in agrofood, machine-tools, chiminal-pharmaceutics, automotive, textile, energy, services, building and wood-furniture sectors. This was the first time that technology transfer requests were expressed in these areas.
- **Seminar on universities and research** : with 53 participants from university, regional authorities and national ministry for science and technology.

In terms of interregional activities, a visit to the Swedish Institute of Production Engineering research in Western Sweden (IVF) was organised : the objectives were to carry out a benchmarking analysis between the two regions, to reinforce the relationship between both regions at the highest political level, support collaboration between the networks developed in each region, etc.

Most interesting activities / results

- 300 firms were contacted in these three areas through a questionnaire. The high level of response (more than 50%) showed that a new process of contacts between firms and intermediaries has been launched.
- Direct work with firms : 22 diagnostics, seminars and workshops with entrepreneurs on various themes.
- Network of support organisations called "Innored" established.

Comments and future activities

- The project was designed as a follow-up of the RTP launched in 1994.
- Unfortunately, the mainstreaming of the RIS+ was not really possible because of bad timing (results not available at the time of preparation of OP objective 1).
- The new Regional Programme of Innovative Actions, called LEGITE, aims to generalise the innovation processes in all companies in the region, in particular in the less innovative SMEs in depressed areas. It clearly mentions the RTP and RIS+ projects as strengths for the region in the SWOT analysis. The two main objectives of the PRAI are :
 - to transfer the successful results obtained to date in the region's more dynamic areas to the rest of the region and to other traditional sectors.
 - To test the real potential of other sectors identified as key sectors for the future, such as the digital contents sector.
- The "territorial" approach of this project is clearly related to the geographic specificity of this region : it is three times bigger than Belgium and faces a

geographic unbalance between urban and more peripheral areas, such as the three targeted here.

- This approach led to the fact that the RIS+ focused on very small SMEs in under populated areas, in traditional sectors, for which "innovation" means simply change (in the way firms sell, their openness to external markets, their use of ICT, etc.) and rarely technology. The activities launched in this RIS+ are well adapted to the needs of this type of firms.

RIS+ Limburg (NL)

Goal of the project

The RIS + is a follow up of a Regional Technology Plan (RTP) launched in 1994. The RIS+ is designed as a continuation of a strategic thinking on innovation policy, without focusing on specific sectors or technologies. It has three aims :

- To further elaborate and implement a strategic approach with regard to the Province's regional innovation strategy
- To continue and extend the partnership between regional partners
- To strengthen the relationship with European funded programmes and projects in the Province of Limburg.

Methodology

4 measures :

- Expanding and intensifying the **partnerships** created since the RTP (quality of the partnership, database on projects PROVOS, mainstreaming with structural funds, database on companies BEVOS)
- **4 feasibility studies** : Toolkit (preparation of the toolkit instrument), introduction of new technologies (technology foresight study), upgrading of supply structure (study and seminar to support supply chain co-operation), web technology (study on the impact on business activities of ICT and web technology in particular).
- **3 Pilot projects** : vision strategy (to support SMEs in their strategic business environment), P* (to encourage close knowledge-based collaboration between firms of the manufacturing industry and their suppliers) and Triz (to help define innovation strategies in SMEs).
- **Networking with other regions** : transfer of the know-how of Limburg to other regions and identification of future partner regions.

Activities

In order of budget share, the most important activities are the following ones :

- The **BEVOS database** (Business monitoring system) – almost a fourth of the budget. The aim of the BEVOS project was to develop an information system that generates information which the Province of Limburg can use to determine its policy and to measure the impact of innovation promotion measures. The information is an aggregation of individual company information collected by Syntens (regional office of the national innovation agency) and LIOF (regional development agency). BEVOS consisted of 3 phases: 1) analysis of indicators (35 innovation indicators), 2) design of the system (excel application) and 3) execution/implementation (information on 100 companies that participated to the RTP activities).
- The pilot project **Vision strategy** was inspired by the fact that SMEs do not have a clear vision of the future, nor do they have a solid strategy for meeting that future with success. This project aimed to investigate the strategy development process and which instruments could be used in this process. A manual was compiled to provide a practical outline of the techniques used by consultants (Delphi, road mapping, Porter, SWOT, benchmarking, etc.).

- The **TRIZ** pilot project was inspired by the TRIZ technique which is a Russian acronym for "Theory of Inventive Problem Solving", a methodology for finding solutions to innovation problems. This project showed that this methodology is relevant for stimulating innovation in SMEs and for higher education. It is envisaged in the future to combine the use of TRIZ with a « voucher system ». Also the creation of a TRIZ expertise centre in Limburg is discussed.
- **P*** (collaboration between firms and suppliers). The P* project focuses on strengthening the manufacturing industry in the south of the Netherlands by reinforcing the contribution of suppliers to the production chain, particularly in a qualitative sense.
- **Toolkit** : 3 workshops were organised by consultants between July and December 2000 with the key regional partners : Syntens, LIOF and other intermediary organisations (Chamber of commerce, etc.). The purpose was to exchange about the tools used by each of these organisations to promote technology transfer and innovation in SMEs. The toolkit has proved to be a useful instrument to strengthen and stimulate co-operation between regional organisations (also others than the primary RTP-partners). According to the manager of the project, « *the threshold to 'look in each others kitchen' is lowered and the win/win situation acknowledged* ».
- The integration of **new technologies** in firms (Technology foresight study and dissemination of results among SMEs). This resulted in a list of the top 15 technologies for the region. Not only “new technologies” were highlighted but also more traditional technologies. The most important conclusions in terms of policy recommendations were:
 - to invest in business activity related to: medical technology, developing production & composites, energy-saving technology and knowledge-based technology;
 - to invest in a knowledge infrastructure related to: technology for interactive & multimedia applications, web technology, software engineering, data & knowledge systems, mobile telephony;
 - *not* to invest more in: deformation technology and equipment engineering.
- Study on the use of **Web technology** in the region.
- **PROVOS database** (Projects monitoring system). The objective was to create a Project Monitoring System (PROVOS) that can be used to evaluate projects developed under the RTP to determine their effectiveness. PROVOS is not intended to be used to monitor projects while they are under way, but looks instead at their end effects. PROVOS is closely linked to BEVOS (Company Monitoring System, measure I) and INNOVOS. BEVOS measures the effects at company level, while INNOVOS looks at effects at regional level, some of them attributable to RTP efforts and others to external developments. The 3 monitoring systems contribute to set out an effective and efficient policy of innovation.
- Study to select **collaboration partners**. 17 regions were selected and a closer relationship was developed with Strathclyde. 2 visits took place during which various topics were considered for future collaboration: benchmarking & measuring instruments, new technologies, project evaluation and upgrading of suppliers.

Most Interesting activities / results

- In terms of **partnership** : « *The RIS programme has resulted in an even stronger co-operation amongst the regional partners in the field of regional innovation strategy.* » A common activity programme has been prepared between the Provincial Government and the two intermediary organisations LIOF and Syntens. This so called « Joint Annual Activity Programme Plan » is supposed to define and streamline all regional activities in this field from 2001 onwards.
- The creation of **monitoring tools** such as the PROVOS database, to monitor public funded projects, and the BEVOS database to monitor information on firms available in the various intermediaries. Workshops have also been organised for intermediaries and suppliers to help them create and use these databases and the Toolkit. According to the region, « *with this result, the main aim of the RIS + programme has been reached* ». Also, the toolkit contributed to an intensified co-operation by providing the regional partners a common set of consultancy instruments.

The Company Monitoring System (BEVOS)

To build this monitoring system, 35 indicators have been selected in such a way that they:

- assist Syntens and LIOF consultants in advising companies and offer the possibility of tracking developments in a company over time;
 - provide a benchmark of this company when compared to a group average, which can then be presented as a score for each operational management aspect and a total score;
 - help to clarify the impact of individual and group projects;
 - offer insights into the trends and developments of the entire group of companies advised by Syntens and LIOF.
- Because of the importance and promising results, the Province granted an extra 60 000 euro after the RIS+ period. It is considered that BEVOS contributed to improve project development (by identifying and meeting requirements) and should be an important building brick for future policy.

- Mainstreaming into structural funds
- Foresight activities
- TRIZ technique to stimulate innovation capacity of SMEs.
- A state of the art in the use of web technology in Limburg, with recommendations for improvement in the near future

Comments and future activities

- The RIS+ is well embedded in the regional innovation policy. This project clearly focused on the strategic dimension and the necessity to work on regional partnership. This is facilitated by the fact that the Province has a clear vision on its innovation policy ambitions and the functioning of its regional innovation system.
- The three main regional institutional partners (Province of Limburg, development agency LIOF and Regional office of the national innovation agency Syntens) recently completed a new strategy document on innovation policy, called "RISLIMBURG.nl 2002-2004", which will be used as the framework for activities in the coming years.
- In May 2002, an Innovative Action programme will be proposed. It will focus on a limited number of major issues, including, amongst others: ICT, life sciences, micro technology, knowledge transfer, start-ups of innovative high knowledge entrepreneurs and the (RTP-) partnership.

RIS+ Wales (UK)

Goal of the project

The global goal of the project was to implement the priorities set at the end of the previous Regional Technology Plan (RTP) project which ended in 1996 and was reviewed in 1998.

During the RTP, the following actions were recommended :

- Communicating the importance of innovation
- Increased company investment in R&D
- Improved business support for innovation
- The formulation of sub-regional innovation strategies for Wales
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the Wales RTP.

The RIS+ project was run by the Welsh Development Agency which faced an important turnover for this project. The regional partnership was broad and built on the previous RTP Steering Committee.

Methodology

- **A communication strategy** for innovation in Wales based on a report prepared by consultants
- A report on the **Evaluation of the Wales RTP**, done by consultants
- **20 Case studies** of projects that have been developed since 1995 within the RTP framework, selected by consultants
- **Innovation reviews of 26 SMEs**, done by consultants

Activities

9 projects were developed :

- **A high profile launch event** in December 1999 : 200 people including a large industry representation, participated to it.
- A **communications strategy** for raising awareness of innovation : Prepared by consultants, this communication campaign recommends the targeting of 3 audiences : SMEs, young people entering the job market and politicians. The overall objective is to create widespread understanding and use of innovative ways of working, doing business and learning.
- An independent **evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the Wales RTP** (see box below).
- Development of **monitoring indicators** for innovation : the objective is to assess the current level of innovation culture in the region and benchmark it against those of similar profile in the UK, Europe and beyond.
- Innovation **reviews of SMEs** in Wales with the further opportunity for half of them to participate in innovation management development programmes : The objective was to analyse the barriers to the adoption of an innovation culture and good innovation management practice. It was difficult to find SMEs interested

and the planned target of 90 SMEs could not be reached. Only 26 SMEs reviews were actually done. This demonstrates that an awareness raising exercise needs to be directed at SMEs before a similar project can be undertaken.

- A revised and updated **directory of innovation and technology support services**: In 1998, a first directory had been published, presenting 218 organisations providing support services to SMEs. The updated version now covers 256 organisations and offers an A-Z listing of innovation and technology programmes schemes and support services.
- Improved **integration of innovation and technology counsellors of Business Connect** : The number of Innovation Technology counsellors has been multiplied by two (16 instead of 8 before). A seminar was organised to co-ordinate them better. A policy review was also launched to evaluate the extent to which the service has met its aims and to consider its relevance to current business needs, as well as its effectiveness and value for money.
- Promotion of **technology foresight**, in relation with the National Foresight exercise and the FOREN project : a project manager was appointed to manage foresight activities in the region in June 2001. Workshops for SMEs are planned.
- **Networking with other regions** : Exchanges took place with the Austrian Tirol region, also with the TRIP project called TRESP involving Ireland and Wales (UK) and focusing on innovation in services. Representatives from Wales also attended several conferences on regional innovation organised in the UK and abroad.

Most interesting activities / results

- Assessment of the RTP, six years after its start.

Evaluation of the RTP

The overall conclusion is that the RTP has been successful in developing a consensus on a strategy and in developing a framework for public policy and resource allocation towards innovation in the region. It has been less successful in actually encouraging firms to use the infrastructure. The conclusions and recommendations were taken into account for the monitoring indicators, the communication strategy and the new objective 1 and 2 programmes for Wales.

- Focus on communication as a tool to stimulate the awareness of firms on the RTP and the support services available in the region : a successful launch event was organised, an overall communication strategy was prepared, lessons were learned from the innovation reviews and case studies were diffused to give evidence on the efficiency of support services.
- Strong interest for foresight activities

Comments and future activities

- The project was designed as a follow-up of the RTP launched in 1994. It contributed to carry out an evaluation of the RTP and to develop communication activities to raise awareness on innovation support in the region.
- A limited number of concrete activities were planned for supporting innovation in SMEs. The co-ordination of Innovation Technology Counsellors was reinforced. Innovation reviews were also carried out but they happened to be the least successful aspect of the project because of a low interest of SMEs (less than a third compared to what was expected).
- When we look at the new Regional Programme of Innovative Action, both the RTP and the RIS+ projects are mentioned, as well as a RISI project. One of the actions proposed builds on technology foresight activities in the RTP and RIS+. It focuses on key future technologies, and in particular on the following question : "how can we create a regional competence in key future technologies that is sustainable over the long term and welcomed by the citizens of the region ?". The idea is to look at 2-3 traditional sectors as well as to embryonic sectors in the region.

RIS+ Halle-Leipzig-Dessau (D)

Goal of the project

The RIS + project in Halle-Leipzig-Dessau, which was taking place in two different Länder (Sachsen and Sachsen-Anhalt), was divided into three actions :

- Network of plastic producers in central Germany
- Creation of an association to promote Innovation location
- Industrial and commercial park management system

It is a follow-up of a first Regional Technology Plan (RTP) project in 1994, followed by a RIS launched in 1996 in which the need for support to the network of plastic producers was already identified.

The project was managed by the Institute for structural policy and economic development (ISW), on behalf of the regional government. Contacts were developed with two other projects launched during the same period in the region : a RIS "RAHM" in the Northern part and an ECOS-OUVERTURE project "Interprise" in collaboration with the Dutch Province of Limburg aiming to diffuse the RIS methodology to two regions in the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Methodology

- **2 working groups** : on chemical park management (all key chemical industry locations in the region are members of this working group) and on innovation location (with support from cities, universities and private sector).
- **feasibility studies** : For the first topic, the studies contributed to the elaboration of a position paper for the chemical industry, for an improved dialogue with regional policy makers. They also clarified the potential of plastic industry in Central Germany and contributed to the internationalisation of the already existing association of European chemical regions towards Poland and the Czech Republic. For the second topic, studies led to suggestions on possible synergies between science parks and incubators. For the last topic, 5 studies were used to convince the steering committee of the project as well as the two regional governments to support chemical parks. They also contributed to the preparation of a conference.
- **7 pilot actions** were launched all related to issues discussed in the working groups. 5 of the 7 pilot actions are related to the first topic on plastic industry and the two other ones are related to the two other topics (see example in the box below).
- **networking activities with** Eastern European regions with the objective of creating an association of central and eastern European chemical regions which include the regions of Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Masuria and Bohemia. Some exchanges took place also through the Interprise project with Limburg, a Czech and a Hungarian region.

Activities

Several activities tackled specific issues of the chemical sector, which used to be and remains a key sector for this area. The most important activities are the following ones:

- The **network of plastic producers in Central Germany** was supported by both the private sector (BSL-Olefinverbund and Dow chemicals for instance) and the public sector (cities of Halle and Merseburg). Around 50 companies and institutions are co-operating in this network which is co-ordinated by the Plastic centre in Leipzig. Its main result is the preparation of the creation of an institute for polymer synthesis. Also, it contributed to the activities of the European chemical regions association which represents the interests of the chemical industry vis-à-vis European and national bodies, with the participation of Catalonia, West Sweden, North England, Matopotiki, Limburg and Sachsen-Anhalt.
- An association was created on the topic of **innovative companies and start-ups location** to improve synergies between existing science parks and incubators in the region and to attract more firms. A database was set up and accessible through internet (www.innovationstandorte.de) as a pilot action, to exchange information on the various locations (services they provide and firms and institutions they host). Some suggestions were made for future joint activities such as marketing, using the results of feasibility studies.
- The topic of **commercial and industrial park management** is linked to the previous one but with a particular focus on chemical industry and also special consideration of Central and Eastern European regions. 5 studies were carried out and a European conference was organised in May 2001 on the specific issue of chemical park management systems with more than 130 representatives.

Most Interesting activities and results

- Some **mainstreaming** into the region's objective 1 programme has been possible. Two "Land initiatives" called REGIO and most of all LIST (Land Innovation Strategy), linked to the activities developed in the RIS+, have been integrated in the structural funds programme.
- **Networking activities** with Limburg, Polish, Czech and Hungarian regions through the chemical regions association and through the Ecos-Ouverture project.
- Networking and **public-private dialogue in the chemical sector**. Two examples of actions are presented below :

Creation of a centre for polymer synthesis

This project was initiated by companies and research organisations, in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft. This centre will contribute to improve competitiveness in the chemical sector by filling the gap between research and technical testing. The implementation of this project has already been agreed upon and a 30 million Euros budget has been foreseen. But some difficulties remain concerning the final implementation.

« Strategy conversations chemistry »

The network of plastic producers in Central Germany has launched an intensive dialogue between the chemical industry, universities and the regional government of Sachsen-Anhalt. Policy papers were prepared by the network and at the end of 2000, a meeting took place with the regional representative who agreed to support co-operation with other chemical regions, to coordinate with the network for its chemical policy and to examine innovative approaches to environment and construction laws in order to attract new firms. In August 2001, thanks to this dialogue, a presentation of the « central German Chemical Triangle » was made to the German Federal Chancellor.

- Also, co-operation between big firms (like Dow Chemicals) and regional SMEs in the chemical sector has been developed through the project.

Comments and future activities

- Dialogue with regional policy makers in both Länder has been improved through this project, through the participation of public authorities (cities, regional

ministries) to working groups and associations. But the fact that this project covers two Länder remains a difficulty, in particular when financing is concerned. As mentioned in the final report, "*project approaches, which go beyond the borders of the länder and their implementation, were made very difficult, partially they were also prevented.*"

- Stable regional partnerships (on specific issues such as chemical sector) have been strengthened through this project as well as increased interregional contacts.
- A Regional Programme for Innovative Action is being launched in each of the Länder of the project. Both are related to the RIS and RIS+ projects. In Sachsen-Anhalt, a focus is put on clusters in the most important regional sectors, including plastic and chemical sectors. In Sachsen, the priority will be put on 5 less favoured areas in the region.

RIS+ Yorkshire and the Humber (UK)

Goal of the project

The overall aim of the RIS+ was to support business to create wealth and provide secure employment in the region through a collaboration between private and public sectors.

The Yorkshire & the Humber RIS+ is sector oriented. Its key objectives were :

- To build on the strategic reviews undertaken by the RIS sector groups
- To secure the implementation process through a combination of “sector defined” flagship projects and closer links between business and existing business support provision
- To provide an effective regional networking activity through the RIS project team
- To facilitate cross-sector links and the exchange of good practice
- To maximise synergy both within the region and with other UK and European regions and initiatives.

The project is closely linked to the earlier RIS developed between 1996 and 1999. It focused on refining and implementing the strategy and ideas arising from the RIS in a new context: a regional development agency had been created by UK Government (called Yorkshire Forward) and the number of business sectors networks created had grown to 15 (in the RIS, there were only 9 sectors).

The RIS+ was managed by the Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Technology Network on behalf of the Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber. But progressively, the regional development agency became responsible for the project and incorporated the RIS outputs into its policy under the name of “Yorkshire Forward Cluster Network”.

Methodology

This project had precisely defined objectives and methodology. An effort was made to clarify the terminology to involve the private sector as much as possible. It was recognised that “innovation” is not a word commonly used by the business community. In RIS+ innovation was defined as: “profitable change” and “the successful exploitation of ideas”. Also, the role of “champions” was recognised and preferred to a committee approach.

The main focus of the project was the work on sectors identified as vital to the regional economy, had the greatest potential for growth and/or required some short term defensive activity to enable them to restructure and diversify. For each of these 15 sectors, a business network (or cluster) was created whose first task was to identify the critical factors that need to be addressed to improve competitiveness. Each of these networks was led by a businessman from the sector who played the role of “champion” for innovation in the region. The sectors were :

Automotive industry
Bio-science industry
Construction industry
Design
Chemical industry
Electronics industry
Environmental industry

*Engineering materials and
 manufacturing*
Financial services
Food industry
Freight industry
Medical equipment

Multimedia and publishing
Printing and printed packaging
Textiles and clothing

The RIS approach can be summarised by the following elements :

The RIS approach in Yorkshire & the Humber

- RIS has developed as a series of **strategies for key business sectors**.
- RIS brings together **all stakeholders in a Business sector** innovation network to include manufacturers, suppliers, academics, customers and support organisations.
- Each business sector is led by a **business champion**.
- The outcome of the project is to put in place **a strategy and working support structure for each business sector**.
- RIS **benchmarks** the Yorkshire & Humber business support infrastructure, in target sectors, against the best in Europe. Deficiencies become priority areas for public funding.

Activities

In total, more than 80 million euros have been invested both by the private and public sectors in projects related to the RIS and RIS+.

The most important activities are the following ones :

- Activities in the **clusters** : for all clusters, web sites and newsletters have been created to exchange information, conferences have also been organised on issues of interest for the sector. Some clusters have developed or strengthened research and training activities. Some risk capital funds have also been launched, such as for the engineering, materials and manufacturing cluster and by the financial cluster. New product ideas have been developed, 140 in the medical cluster for instance. Some sub-sector clusters have also been created, a good example is the “ethnic food forum”, within the food sector, which aims to help ethnic food producers in the region to access wider markets and to address specific supply chain issues. Below are two examples of cluster activities :

The RIS Textile and Clothing network

The sector has over 1000 companies with 40 000 employees in the region and 170 000 in its supply chain. The network established 4 sub-groups on:

- Business support
- Marketing and supply chain
- Product / process development
- People

The **network 's strategy and action plan** focuses on encouraging improvements in :

- Better, faster, less costly responses to retailers' demands
- Improved training provision at all levels
- Best practice in environmental discharge and energy management systems
- ICT systems for better supply chain management.

A **web site** was created containing a list of companies, advice on industry issues and links to other support organisations. The network supported the **new textile centre of excellence** which provides training, testing, monitoring and conference services. This network has also been the catalyst behind **trade events** that strengthened links between designers, producers and retailers.

The RIS electronic industries network

The sector has over 400 companies with 20 000 employees. This network has created **the brand “Electronics Yorkshire”** as its delivery arm. Under this brand, a range of initiatives have been developed, some for direct delivery, others based on co-ordinating the activities of existing service deliverers.

A **regional association** of electronic companies has been created to act as a focal point. A **database** was developed to offer information on technical matters, equipment and electronic industry support facilities, consultancy and technical support and information about R&D resources and facilities in the region.

RIS+ supported the creation of the **Electronics Yorkshire Centre of Excellence**, with structural fund support, which provides companies with skills and product development tools. The electronic industries network led the development of a **higher level skills for industry** programme for several sectors : electronic, engineering, multimedia, automotive and medical industries. Its training material is being developed to facilitate distance learning techniques wherever possible and provide a special emphasis on engineering mathematics.

- **Networking activities** : 8 presentations of the project have been made in other regions (Hamburg, Mainz, Brussels, Uppsala, North Brabant, Tyrol, West Midlands, Magdeburg). Aragon, Puglia, Wallonia and North Brabant visited Yorkshire & the Humber to exchange good practice.

- **Communication activities** : 9 RIS newsletters were published during the project (22 in total since the beginning of the RIS) and diffused to more than 1200 people. Several web sites contributed to diffuse information : a general one (www.rtn.co.uk) and 12 sector web sites. Several conferences were organised (Innovation Forums), together with a final conference during the summer of 2000 to discuss the results of the project with all sector chairmen and representatives of regional public support organisations. This informed the work of the regional development agency "Yorkshire Forward" in the field of sector and cluster support. Eventually, as stated by the project manager, "*the structures and principles developed through the RIS+ have been adopted as mainstream policy by the regional development agency*".

Most interesting activities / results

- The main output of this project is **the mainstreaming into the regional development agency's economic strategy**. The overall RIS is integrated as a key element of this regional strategy as well as each individual cluster strategy. As stated by the UK Ministry for the regions, Richard Caborn, during the RIS : "*The innovation strategy will play a major part in the regional development agency. I think that what Yorkshire has done in its development of an innovation strategy is by far the best I have seen in the country.*"³
- The mainstreaming of the previous RIS was already noteworthy. As an example, the Centre of Excellence for Electronics Industry, which was a priority in the RIS action plan, was created in 2000 with a total budget of 3.3 millions Euro. It received 1.4 millions Euro from Objective 2 programme and additional support from the European Social Fund for training activities. The Centre of Excellence for Chemical Industry, CIRCE, is also a good illustration : it not only received support from Objective 2 (1 million euro for a total budget of 4.7 million) but it illustrates the leverage effect of the RIS on the private sector. "*The support from the RIS Chemical Board was essential to encourage the private sector sponsor, Hickson Int. plc, to support the project.*" This company contributed more than 50% of the total budget and provided essential technical support to CIRCE.
- Other outputs of the RIS + are :
 - **Long term development of business sectors** in the region, organised in networks.
 - Sector **strategies** through a combination of sector specific flagship projects and closer links with existing support organisations.
 - Development of cross-sector working and sharing of **best practice**.
 - Development of close **links with support organisations**.
 - Development of **benchmark** indicators within the sectors, at a regional cross sector level and at national level.
 - Close **networking with other European regions**

Comments and future activities

- The RIS+ in Yorkshire & The Humber is a successful project, with visible results and good mainstreaming. One of its main success factors is its business-led sector orientation, based on the earlier RIS model. This type of approach requires strong support from private sector businesses, which is not as easy in every regional context. It demonstrates that business, the primary target of National & European Innovation policy will respond when approached in a positive and business

³ Innovation forum held on 20 November 1998.

focussed way. Another success factor is the integration of RIS+ with the “policy opportunity” created by the implementation of the new regional development agency.

- A Regional Programme of Innovative Action is currently being developed by Yorkshire Forward on behalf of the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber. The main objective is to establish a regional information and analysis service to firms and support organisations, in the form of an e-portal. The rationale of the PRAI is linked to the recent creation of the regional development agency which provides for the first time a single agency with a comprehensive remit to support economic development. But according to the PRAI managers, *“the risk is that the operational nature of the current funding streams and the short term pressure on business support agencies (...) will prevent this regional knowledge infrastructure being established quickly enough. This will result in the full benefits of the RIS and the related business support investments not being fully realised (...).”*

RIS+ Umbria (I)

Goal of the project

The objectives of the RIS+ were threefold :

- Valorisation of research results in particular from the University of Perugia, spin-off creation from big industries and research poles and training activities
- Pilot project in the sustainable building sector
- Networking

This project is a follow-up of one of the first RITTS (1994-1996), that highlighted the following weaknesses :

- Lack of technology based firms in the region and scarce relevance of the regional university in the business creation process
- Strengthening of the building sector by the utilisation of new materials and techniques with can contribute to improve local competencies and to create a new image of the region. This issue was reinforced after the earthquake of 1997.
- Weakness of institutional international relationships and peripheral position with regards to development.

A TRIP (Transregional innovation project) called Applicom was developed after the RITTS, to improve access to relevant information in the fields of finance, technology, management information, management of technology transfer. The partner regions were : Hamburg, Dorset & Hampshire and Tuscany. More recently, Umbria is also co-ordinating a thematic network on R&D valorisation and scouting (SCONE). It is also involved in two RIS projects with Hungarian and Slovenian regions.

The RIS+ was managed by the regional government of Umbria with the support of Dutch and Italian consultants. The Technological park of Umbria was part of the regional partnership, along with the municipalities of Terni and Foligno and the University of Perugia. Almost 100 SMEs were involved in a way or another in the project.

Methodology

- Technological audits
- Market studies for selected technologies (PVC, waste water treatment, noise control, grape cultivation).
- Consultancy in technology transfer, business negotiation, financing, IP protection for firms, universities and intermediaries
- 1 pilot project in the building sector, which consisted mostly of studies providing guidelines for the design of prototypes for residential and tertiary buildings.

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- Concerning the **R&D valorisation projects**, the purpose was to increase innovation investments in SMEs. Two types of activities were launched :

- “scouting” : the key objectives of this action were :
 - to introduce a methodology for “scouting and valorisation” of new technologies
 - to select the most promising technologies for spin-off creation or licensing
 - to define the exploitation strategy
 - to verify spin-off support schemes and possibilities to create new ventures from research results.

Analyses were carried out by consultants through audits of the University departments, research institutes and SMEs. They contributed to identify, for a limited number of selected sectors, the regional technological potential, possible competitors, regulations, potential strategic alliances, etc. This led to market studies (ex: market study for a new technology linked to the recycling of waste water used in the olive oil sector, market research on the potential for a PVC product in the toys industry, developed by the universities of Perugia and Alicante) and to technology studies (ex: Active noise control, Grape cultivation innovation pole).

- Spin-off support

These activities will be continued through the SCONE network and the new Innovative Actions programme (see below).

- Pilot project in the sustainable building sector to develop **new concepts for competitive buildings**. This action responds to a specific need in parts of the region (including Terni and Foligno), after the 1997 earthquake. A feasibility study was carried out on a building prototype which integrates the issues of “future city”, security and quality of living. Housing prototypes were developed for two types of users : residential housing for young people and tertiary housing for service sector businesses. Best practice cases developed elsewhere were identified and a needs analysis was carried out (see box below).
- **Networking activities with other European regions**.
The exchanges with other regions during the RIS+ led to the preparation of several interregional projects : 2 with regions from candidate countries and a thematic network on one issue of the RIS+ (valorisation of R&D results). This networking was important for the region since Umbria launched its RITTS at a time when the IRE network was not yet as developed as now.

Most Interesting activities / results

- The **pilot project** on “new concepts for competitive buildings” was developed with an interdisciplinary approach. The region is in the process of embedding the main findings in a new regulation.

Pilot project on new concepts for competitive buildings

The studies carried out in this pilot project provided some insight on the following key issues :

- teleworking : 58% of young people under 40 in the region claim they want to work at home.
- life cycle cost analysis (LCCA) : the application of this method to the building sector allows to evaluate project sustainability by taking into consideration not only construction costs but also management costs and the impact of technical preferences aiming at reducing water and power consumption.
- housing comfort : amount of light, internal control systems of temperature, use of environmental friendly material
- energy and water-saving systems : isolation, passive solar systems, recovery of rain water, recycling for non quality use of water, etc. Users are willing to pay 10-20% on construction costs to reduce manage costs.
- new technology and smart-houses: The use of ITC devices in houses contributes to increase quality standards for health and safety, environmental comfort, communication and technical management. It also help dependant people (elderly, handicapped, ill) to become more self-supporting.
- management cost/maintenance estimation : this plays an important role to preserve the total quality of a building.
- new forms of work organisation : this leads to a bigger need for flexible / modular spaces with connection possibilities (ISDN lines, PC connections, etc).
- new housing models : Young users expressed an increased need for working within households which requires connection possibilities but also internal quality arrangements (ex : 2 bathroom dwellings, flexible space in the day areas to use as multi-usage rooms for various activities).

The results of the studies showed, among other things, that it is possible to recuperate major construction costs thanks to the introduction of some technologies to reduce water and power consumption. According to these findings, the region of Umbria decided to prepare a new regulation for housing and building. Also some users associations are considering new design concepts.

- Some **mainstreaming** has been possible for actions to foster entrepreneurial spirit at regional level in the objective 2. Also, the Social fund, through the objective 3 supports the improvement of human resources in technological R&D, in particular for spin off creation.
- Exchange of **good practice** with other regions on scouting methodologies through the new SCONE network.

Comments and future activities

- The project faced some delay for its implementation, due to a lengthy procedure for external contract assignment. Also, according to the managers of the project, *“some time had to be invested to re-built consensus after the political elections”*. Additional meetings had to be organised both at local and transregional levels.
- The private sector did not play an important role in this project, apart from the participation of firms to the scouting activities. The main actors were consultants, regional and city civil servants as well as researchers from university and technology centres.
- A new Innovative Actions Programme has been presented in 2001. It focuses on information society issues such as collective access to internet, integration of practices in schools, creation of an healthcare network, but also the valorisation of knowledge assets (in particular from the university). For the latter, the results of the actions launched in the RITTS and RIS + projects, such as the scouting, are mentioned.

RIS+ Pais Vasco (E)

Goal of the project

The aims of the RIS+ were:

- To prepare “strategic research programmes” linked to the regional plan for science, technology and innovation for 2001-2004.
- To improve SMEs use of information society opportunities

This project is one element among others in a larger policy-making process for technology, industry and information society matters. It is a follow-up of a previous RIS, developed in 1998-1999, which contributed to the Plan for science, technology and innovation developed by the region every 4 to 6 years. The activities developed in the RIS+ were already mentioned in the RIS action plan.

The RIS+ was managed by the regional government (Department of industry, trade and tourism), just as the RIS was. The Regional Development Agency, called SPRI, was also involved in the management of the project. It was supported by a Spanish consultant. The existing technology expert group for the Basque Country (GETE) and the forum for the information society also contributed to the discussion during the project.

Methodology

- The preparation of the strategic research programmes was based on consultant’s documents and consultation with regional actors of the innovation system, such as technology centres, universities, development agencies, existing clusters, etc. 50 meetings were organised, involving almost one thousand people. A discussion forum was also launched on internet.
- Numerous visits were made in other regions in Europe but also to the United States, Cuba and Australia to analyse good practices.
- A delegation from Calabria (Italy) came to Bilbao to visit the RIS+ Pais Vasco and to discuss issues such as enterprise and information society policies.

Activities

The most important activities are the following :

- Concerning the **strategic research programmes**, the idea was to define the concept and methodology for launching and supporting these programmes. The objective of the regional government is to identify areas of research that will have a great importance in the future, besides basic research and technological development that are already supported. Five priority areas were selected : quality of life, competitiveness, environment and energy, life sciences, information society. Each area was divided in more specific programmes for which, some of the activities foreseen are : the development of new products, creation of new firms, training, elaboration of evaluation systems, etc. During the RIS+, a common methodological guide was elaborated for the selection process. 18 proposals eventually emerged. Two specific programmes (wireless and linguistic info-engineering) have been thoroughly prepared.
- Concerning **information society**, the activities consisted of :
 - creating a website for the promotion of products from the small tinned can food sector.

- Supporting electronic data interchange (EDI) for the port authority of Bilbao
- Implementating an EDI system between 8 SMEs in the furniture sector and the joint sales office
- Implementating an information system to support design and engineering for firms producing structural tubes (internet discussion forum, training course for the users).
- Implementating an extranet for firms in the Electro-domestics cluster
- Implementating an extranet for firms in the paper cluster
- Implementating an extranet for firms in the machine-tools cluster
- Implementating a database of jobs, accessible through internet, for all clusters

Most Interesting activities / results

- The information society concrete activities respond to the needs of existing clusters (some of them exist for already 10 years) and contribute to the exchange of information within and between clusters.

Extranet for machine-tools sector (www.afm.es)

The objectives of this pilot project is to develop an extranet for firms associated in the sector of machine-tools in order to offer access and exchange of information of interest for the cluster. The public part of this extranet provides information on the firms and news in the sector. In the « members only » part, news on the member firms are available, as well as a regular newsletter and short updated information (150 each year). Forms for events and training courses can also be filled in through this extranet.

- The strong and direct link between the various regional plans for industry, technological innovation and information society, the RIS and the RIS+, as well as the new programme for innovative actions;

Comments and future activities

- The Basque region has been developing its regional policy for science, technology and industry for almost 20 years. Its has elaborated its own cluster policy for the last 10 years. The RIS came after the first regional plan and contributed to its evaluation and to the preparation of the next one. The RIS+ provided the opportunity to think through the concept of “strategic research” and to test concrete actions for clusters using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) tools. In such a context, the RIS and RIS+ contributed to reinforce an existing policy-making process that was already putting innovation high on the regional agenda.
- The new Innovative Actions Programme for 2000-2006 will be managed by another section of the regional government (Economy and planning). It focuses on information society issues but it intends also to support the creation of activities in the biotechnology sector (Biobask), which is new for the region. This Biobask programme is linked to several areas identified in the strategic research programmes, which was part of the RIS+.

RIS+ Canarias (E)

Goal of the project

The overall aims of the RIS+ were:

- To develop innovative activity in firms through the development of financial support instruments
- To develop co-operation between the elements of the regional innovation system, through the development of relevant technological resources
- Increase regional capacity to create innovative firms
- Increase co-ordination between administrative institutions of the regions, responsible for supporting innovation.

This project is a clear follow-up of a RITTS called PEINCA developed between 1997 and 1999. The action plan of the RITTS was quite precise and listed 8 priorities:

- Improvement of financial support to innovative firms
- Strengthening of intermediary mechanisms
- Actions to develop technological resources
- Support to specific sectors : tourism, telecommunications and information technologies, renewable energies, water treatment, agriculture and aquaculture, wood industries.
- Support to the creation of new technology based firms
- Development of entrepreneurship culture and innovation spirit in the society
- Attraction of technological investments from abroad
- Co-ordination of policies and public resources for innovation

The overall objective was to increase the gross added value of the region of 1% and the investment in R&D of firms to 120%, by 2006.

Several pilot actions of the RIS+ were already mentioned in the PEINCA.

The RIS+ was managed by the regional government of the Canary Islands, just like the PEINCA. It was planned that a regional council for innovation would be created, linked to the Presidency of the region, playing the role of steering committee of the PEINCA. Also, a regional innovation agency was intended to manage the project, under the authority of the regional council of innovation. In reality, this did not take place. Several working groups were also involved actively in the project since June 2000. The Technological Institute of the Canary Islands (ITC) has been managing 4 of the 5 actions of the RIS+.

The project faced some difficulties due to changes in the regional administrative institution responsible for the project. At first, the project was developed under the authority of the Dir. Gal for planning and industrial development. In January 2001, it was then turned over to the newly created Viceconsejería for industrial development and technological innovation, which gathers competencies at the political level, in the fields of industrial planning, technological innovation and ICTs.

Methodology

- 2 feasibility studies for the creation of two technological centres
- working groups to discuss foreseen activities

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- Support to the **diffusion and marketing of technology centres and university research departments** (linked to action 2 of PEINCA). For this activity, the 3 offices of technology transfer of the region (OTRIs from the University of La Laguna, the Institute of Astro-physics and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) were involved, as well as the Technological Institute (ITC) and the Foundation of the ITC. First, it consisted in improving the diffusion of RDTI supply available in these organisations by creating a database and diffusing 3000 CD-ROM. A practical guide on the tax system for RDTI was also carried out (called "Inovacion : mejor en Canarias"), for firms to explore the opportunities of fiscal incentives. Third, a quality charter was prepared for the OTRIs to improve their capability. A toolkit, in the form of a software called Caronte, was elaborated as well as a training course on management capacities in these organisations. Fourth, the innovation portal of Canarias was prepared, both in terms of content and functionality. Also, two training courses were organised on commercial and marketing strategy for the staff of OTRIs and other supply organisations. Finally, 6 programmes were diffused on the regional radio to present good commercial examples produced recently by supply organisations.
- Viability, design of business plans, integration of private/public funding for the **creation of new technology based firms (NTBF)** (linked to action 5 of PEINCA).

Support to the creation of new technology based firms

This action was managed by the ITC with the support of consultants. First, a diagnosis was made on the current situation of spin-offs and spin-outs in the region, in comparison with other regions, showing that most of the RDTI in the Canary Islands is done by public research organisations and universities which have done little to support NTBF creation. Some incubating activities already exist in the ICT sector. Then a model of support to NTBF in the region was suggested. In total, 3 reports were produced. An expert panel was also organised on 26 November 2001 as well as several meetings organised with representatives of the universities and research organisations, and of the regional administration. This activity has not reached all the expectations.

- Information system and **support to entrepreneurial innovation through internet**. This action was managed by the ITC and aimed at preparing the creation of a portal for innovation. The design of the portal, its content and a draft database were prepared but it is not yet available on the internet.
- Feasibility study and preparation of the project of the **centre of integrated manufacturing** in view of its integration in the mainstream structural funds. This was carried out by the ITC, in collaboration with the University Foundation of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.
- Feasibility study and preparation of the project of **the technological centre for the furniture industry** in view of its integration in the mainstream structural funds. This was also carried out by the ITC, in collaboration with the University Foundation of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Most Interesting activities and results

- At the end of the RITTS, a clear action plan was elaborated, with precise indicators of success. This contributed to prepare a well-defined RIS+. Its implementation has been more difficult.
- The quality charter prepared for technology transfer offices in universities and research centres has raised some interest in these organisations. It contributes to

position them clearly according to the services they provide and to their commitment to quality.

- The practical guide on the tax system for RDTI activities, which includes critical views on national incentives and recommendations, could be easily diffused and adapted in other Spanish regions through some interregional exchanges.

Comments and future activities

- The project faced major administrative difficulties which led to an important delay.
- Some diffusion activities are still planned in the year 2002, for instance seminars to present the results of action 1 on the marketing of OTRIs. Also, final recommendations will be done for action 2 on the support to the creation of NTBF.
- The New Innovative Actions Programme for 2000-2006 for the Canary Islands will be managed by the same new Viceconsejería for industrial development and technological innovation as for the RIS+.
- This PRAI focuses on information society issues such as creating an electronic platform of integrated services for innovation, public access points to internet, use of smart cards for the regional transport system, internet access in rural areas, etc. The portal designed in the RIS+ will be further developed in the PRAI.

RIS+ Thessaly (GR)

Goal of the project

The region of Thessaly aims to become the third development pole in Greece. In this context, the overall objective of the RIS+ was to establish a coherent and demand driven strategic framework for innovation in the region.

More specifically, the RIS+ focused on three main aims :

- promoting an innovation culture in the region
- improving a business environment favourable to innovation
- strengthening the innovative capacity of businesses

This project is a direct follow-up of a previous RIS developed in the region between 1996 and 1998. Another RITTS was also launched in 1994 in the Prefecture of Magnesia. At the end of the RIS, 10 actions were suggested, among which : links between business and academic communities, development of innovative capacity of farmers and wine producers, participation to EU and national R&D projects, accreditation of laboratories, training seminars on innovation.

Two other projects were developed on the same issue of innovation. A Recite project, Innoregio, in collaboration with Central Macedonia, Crete, Norte, Pais Vasco and Wales on innovation management techniques. 100 technology audits and 12 specialised seminars were carried out in Thessalian SMEs, which led to an easier acceptance of RIS+ actions. In total, 25 pilot applications of innovation management techniques were tested under the Innoregio umbrella. Thessaly benefited from this knowledge and used it for some of the RIS+ pilot projects. The other project was a TRIP (Transregional Innovation Project) with Auvergne, Lorraine, Madrid and Yorkshire & the Humber on economic intelligence.

This RIS+, just like the RIS, was managed by the regional development fund for Thessaly in collaboration with the University of Thessaly and with the support of consultants. The Steering Committee was formed on the basis of the RIS committee and met every six months. Each main activity was assigned to one specific member of the Steering Committee to secure their commitment to the project. The Chairman of the RIS+ Steering committee was also the chairman of the Structural Funds monitoring committee in the region.

Methodology

- 2 feasibility studies : on an innovation and entrepreneurship contest and on an innovation measurement system
- Some working groups were launched during the course of the project and led to the establishment of four interregional learning networks in the sectors of food, wood-furniture, clothes-textiles and "smart" building.
- 6 pilot projects
- Interregional exchanges within the Greek RIS network and with other European regions.

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- An “**Innovation and entrepreneurship contest**” was designed through a feasibility study and organised during the RIS+. This contest allowed the evaluation of innovation performance and the benchmarking of best practice of companies in the region. Firms were evaluated in 7 categories : product innovation, systematic and sustained innovative efforts, process innovation, innovative entrepreneurship and strategic perfection, environmental and social responsibility, quality management systems, human resources management and development. In total, 44 firms participated with some geographical unbalance, reflecting the regional productive structure. 19 companies were awarded by the National Minister of Development in the form of technological assistance, support to participation in national RDT programmes or international exhibition. 2 companies received a special prize for their performance.

- An “**Innovation measurement system**” was elaborated, through a feasibility study. The objective was to identify basic guidelines to build innovation indicators, with the final aim to assess the regional innovation system. This tool has been adopted by the Regional development fund for Thessaly, with the idea also to co-ordinate this tool with the one used in Central Macedonia. 5 categories of indicators have been selected so far : research, development and commercialisation, technology transfer, interaction (between demand and supply) and sustainable development.

- To create **awareness concerning innovation** and to strengthen the **links between business and academic community**, an “innovation week” was organised in Larissa and Volos, with representatives from the national level, the European Commission and regional actors (development agencies, industry associations, chambers of commerce, regional authorities, etc). For more details, see the box in the next section.

- A pilot project was launched on **integrated production and distribution agreement** or protocol in agriculture. Managed by the Karditsa development agency, this pilot action targeted local farmers to help them produce certified and quality agricultural products. Several meetings were organised with 81 farmers who agreed to hire an expert to implement and monitor the management system. The lessons learnt from this are that efforts to change mentality, establish trust and introduce new production methods take time and must be based on practices conceived by farmers themselves. This project finally led to the creation of an experimental co-operative farm in a specific area with the idea to develop an organisational model for the entire region.

- The pilot project for the **promotion of HACCP (Hazard analysis – Critical Control Points)** in the wine sector was included in the RIS action plan. The rationale behind this action is that HACCP principles are part of the Greek legislation and are very common in the EU but most of the regional food industries are not aware of such methods. 6 firms volunteered to participate to this action. Data was collected through a questionnaire, audits of firms were carried out, a one-day seminar was organised and the publication of a HACCP guide manual for the food sector was prepared. 2 out of the 6 audited firms agreed to implement HACCP in the near future.

- To stimulate **the participation of firms to national and European RTD projects**, the association of industries of Thessaly and Central Greece developed a monitoring system for new calls of proposals and diffused information on these. A guide for submission was elaborated and meetings were organised. Also, technology audits were performed in 25 firms in order to help them self-assess their innovative capabilities among which 5 submitted proposals to national R&D programmes by the end of the project. It allowed a better understanding by entrepreneurs of the possibilities to participate in such programmes and to collaborate with others. Also, the technology audits provided significant findings on innovation capabilities of firms as well as on self-assessment techniques.
- The pilot project on the **accreditation of laboratories** followed one of the conclusions of the RIS. The aim was to develop, standardise and promote their services and finally to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to firms. 220 laboratories were identified and their activities were described in a database. A accreditation guide was prepared and diffused to them. 15 of them expressed a strong interest and finally 3 laboratories went through the accreditation procedure. Many more are expected to proceed to their accreditation in the future, considering the interest shown.
- **Seminars** and business missions were organised by the Chamber of Larissa, which is also a Business Innovation Centre, to respond to the need expressed by firms in the RIS concerning training on innovation issues. The objective was to diffuse information on innovation and technology management to local firms and research institutes. All activities took place during the Innovation week. They consisted in : a seminar on innovation financing tools (60 SMEs and regional research institutes), a seminar on energy policy (more than 100 firms, university, regional and national representatives), a seminar on the metallurgy sector (50 firms) and a series of seminars in Larissa on innovation tools and spin-offs in various sectors (food, textile).

Also, some **diffusion and promotion activities** were developed : Information on the project was made available on an existing web site (www.innothessaly.gr), as well as brochures, leaflets and folders both in Greek and English (1800 copies in total). The project benefited from a good media coverage, in particular during the innovation week. Finally, 45 local meetings were organised in total between local partners.

In terms of interregional activities, Thessaly took part in several meetings of the active Hellenic network of regional innovation strategies. The three main activities of this national network are : co-ordination of RIS/RITTS exercises, diffusion of best practice on innovation management techniques and development of a digital innovation environment (ex: database on available services to SMEs : technology supply, technology transfer, finance, business intelligence, networking, etc.). Also, some sub-group meetings of the IRE network were attended and exchanges were developed with Bulgaria and the German region around Magdeburg.

Most Interesting activities and results

- According to the project managers, "*the Innovation week can be considered as the most meaningful event of the RIS+.*" A new innovation week is planned for September 2002.

The Innovation week

This event was organised in co-operation with the regional development fund, the university of Thessaly and the Chamber of Larissa. The same week, the first annual industry/academia meeting was launched with the University of Thessaly and the regional association of industries.

Around these two events, numerous activities took place : an award ceremony presented the results of the innovation contest, an incubator was inaugurated and a technology brokerage event was organised. Also, several discussions took place on financing tools, intellectual property rights, support to SMEs, Spin-offs, food and textile sectors as well as a meeting on the energy sector. Some international experts were invited to evaluate the regional innovation efforts and to draw useful conclusions and suggestions for the future.

This week was the conclusion of several actions taken during the project and allowed a good communication among actors on the common vision of innovation. The concrete outcomes of this week were :

- Achievement of an active involvement of all partners (at national, regional and local level, from public and private sectors, university and industry)
- Close co-operation between these actors, including an important number of firms
- Consensus on the formulation of the regional innovation strategy
- Stimulation of the interest of national authorities and European Committee of the regions
- Benchmarking of the regional innovation potential and sharing experience with other regions
- Awareness raising of entrepreneurs, in particular through the awards of excellence
- Improved links between industry and academia. Support to learning networks involving firms and research centres as well as mentoring schemes of SMEs by larger firms were discussed.

Comments and future activities

- Since 1997, the region has been involved in initiatives promoting innovation and technological development. But some difficulties remain, such as the lack of connection between research institutions and firms as well as the lack of systematic practices promoting product innovation and development.
- According to the management team of the project, the next step forward is the synchronisation of regional innovation resources. This can be done through :
 - Retooling the innovation process with on-line tools
 - Upgrade the human resources in the region
 - Empower the innovation process inside SMEs with pilot actions
- As a result of the RIS+ and in order to reduce the lack of product development in the region, a new Innovative Actions Programme for 2000-2006 has been selected by the Commission. Called INVENT (Innovative Ventures in Thessaly), this programme is currently being developed with a similar steering committee as for the RIS and RIS+. This project aims to encourage innovative actions directed toward new product development in the sectors of manufacturing, services, tourism and agriculture (creation of 10 high tech start-ups, 1 quality standard for tourist services, 4 sustainable tourism new products, 4 traditional trade-mark regional products, 1 innovative model for agricultural cultivation and farming). Regional support structures will be created to promote innovation and development of products (1 regional innovation support centre called RISC and 1 industrial design centre). Also, dissemination activities will be launched, for instance through the creation of 5 interregional learning networks between academia and business, the development of 10 mentoring schemes, etc. If successful, similar practices will be developed in the Objective 1 Regional operational programme.

RIS+ Castilla-La Mancha (E)

Goal of the project

The aims of the RIS+ were:

- To promote thinking on the feasibility of a number of projects under the Regional Innovation Plan for 2000-2003 (PRIMACAN) and to analyse their possible integration in the ERDF operational programme for 2000-2006.
- To preserve and strengthen the social consensus achieved in the PRIMACAN.

This project is a follow-up of a previous RIS called PRICAMAN which led to the Regional Plan for Innovation. In this project, more than 300 firms did some innovation audits. The two priorities of at the end of the project were :

- Stimulating co-operation and co-ordination of the regional innovation system
- Promoting innovative capacity in Castilla-La-Mancha.

The region has also developed several similar “industrial pacts” which provide more generally a broad framework for economic and innovation policies.

The RIS+ was managed by the Directorate General for research and innovation, linked to the regional ministry for science and technology. The Steering Committee gathered representatives from the regional administration, the employer’s federation, trade unions, the University, the federation of towns and provinces, the BIC of Ciudad Real, financial institutions, regional technology centres and local economic promotion and innovation centres (CLIPES). For each of the four actions of the RIS+, a working group was created with representatives of organisations present in the Steering Committee as well as experts from other Spanish regions (Aragon, Canary Islands, Madrid and Castilla-leon). Their tasks were to monitor the activities, to validate results and studies, to discuss proposals arising from the pilot actions and to promote actions within the sphere of the organisation that each member of the group represents.

Methodology

- 1 Feasibility study for the setting up of a Regional Innovation Agency
- 3 pilot actions on : the optimisation of the region’s innovation and technology offer from the point of view of firms needs, the stimulation of the creation of technology-based innovative companies and the integration strategy for members of the regional innovation system.
- 4 working groups, on each of the 3 pilot actions and one on the feasibility study.

Activities

The most important activities are the following :

- **Feasibility study for the setting up of a Regional Innovation Agency**, including a strategic planning for the next four years : an interesting benchmarking analysis was carried out to learn from five existing agencies in Europe (Shannon development in Ireland, LIOF in Limburg, ADE in Castilla y Leon, IMPIVA en Valencia, Scottish Enterprise). As a result of the various analyses, it was decided that the Agency would focus on a limited number of horizontal services. Its specific tasks would be the following :-

- Generating and co-ordinating a network of the different actors in the field of innovation
- non-financial support to companies (advice, information, awareness raising)
- promoting economic activity in Castilla-La Mancha (promotion of information society, fostering firms co-operation in the field of RDTI and promotion of technology based firms)
- **Pilot action to optimise the regional offer** of innovation and technology transfer. The objectives were to define the strategic lines of activity for 5 existing technology centres in Castilla-La Mancha and to carry out feasibility studies for 2 new centres : one for design production in Cuenca and a BIC for new innovative enterprises in Albacete.
- **Pilot action to stimulate the creation of technology-based innovative firms** (Promotor): It contributed to launch five business projects that received training and technical assistance to facilitate their start up with a maximum guarantee of survival.
- **Pilot action to develop a strategy for the integration of all members of the regional innovation system.** Some desk research was carried out, with a comparative analysis with 9 other regions, to detect the best mechanisms for connecting and articulating the components of a regional innovation system. This analysis showed the importance of the public sector in encouraging, channelling and facilitating relations within the system. Five sectors were identified for potential clusters : energy, food-beverage, textiles-leather-footwear, non-metallic mineral-construction materials, wood-cork-furniture. 26 interviews with public and private representatives were organised, as well as 2 working groups meetings. The following actions were proposed for the future : creation of a website, monitoring system, creation of a technical working group within the regional government (the ministry of science and technology), creation of working groups for technology transfer, commercialisation, new products / niche markets. Some specific suggestions were made to increase firms' participation to the innovation system : a network could be created for innovation process firms with two levels :
 - A network of interface organisations (for instance the 5 local centres for innovation and economic promotion)
 - A network of innovation service providers (university, 5 technology centres, financial organisations, etc.)

Some diffusion and communication activities also took place : 6 seminars in different places around the region.

Interregional activities of the project focused on the Iberian network.

Most Interesting activities and results

- According to the managers of the project, the working groups largely contributed to strengthen, publicise and even increase the consensus and partnerships created during the RIS and RIS+ in the region.
- The pilot action for the creation of new technology based firms was one of the most successful and concrete activities in the RIS + :

PROMOTOR : to stimulate the creation of technology based innovative firms

The various steps of this pilot project were the following :

- Selection and motivation of regional actors involved in the issue of innovative firms creation
- Identification of the most promising areas, information of the key actors on these areas
- Elaboration of a training and consulting plan for entrepreneurs in the region
- Design and launch of a call for tenders
- Selection of 15 “technology results owners” and training of these people to become “technology entrepreneurs”
- Selection of 5 projects for tutoring
- Identification of the most promising mechanisms for funding this type of business initiatives.

Finally, this pilot actions resulted in the following outcomes :

- 21 project ideas replied to the call for project.
- 15 projects selected for the training phase
- 5 business projects at the end

In the future, it was suggested that some stimulation activities should be more directly targeted at university departments to stimulate individual initiatives of researchers or to enable the University to launch its own projects.

According to the project managers, *“having completed the Promotor pilot project, we now have a framework of action for the medium-term to promote the creation of technology based companies and to define adequate promotion and funding schemes.”*

Comments and future activities

- The project faced some delay at the very beginning due to regional elections in June 1999. The top administrative management responsible in the Regional Government for the project changed three times (from “Industrial development” to “Business promotion and development” and eventually to “Research and innovation”). The four selected consultants began to work on the project only in February 2000. But, fortunately, the team managing the project on a day-to-day basis was stable and even had previous experience thanks to the previous RIS.
- According to the General Director for research and innovation of the Government of Castilla-La Mancha, the RIS+ “helped us to decide whether or not to start some activities and has also informed us on how to continue. “
- The region applied for a Regional Innovative Actions Programme in 2001, which was selected by the European Commission. Four priority actions will be developed :
 - Web site on innovation in the region : to improve access of firms to innovation support services, pilot activities for craftsmanship traditional sectors (ceramics, cutlery)
 - Electronic commerce platforms
 - Teaching digital literacy : training courses, innovation awareness raising, innovation plans in companies (this action concentrates 50 % of the total budget of the programme)
 - Excellence centres of internet

RIS+ Calabria (I)

Goal of the project

The main objectives of the RIS+ Calabria can be summarised as follows:

- To update constantly the regional strategies for innovation through a continuous relationship with the entire regional system, coherently with national and EU indications;
- To identify and demonstrate the feasibility (by means of analysis, feasibility studies and pilot projects, realised in a participated manner with the contribution of regional actors) of the strategic actions for the development of regional innovation strategies;
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions, carried out at regional level, for the implementation of the regional innovation strategies.

The project is a follow-up of a first RIS exercise carried out in 1997-1999 that has developed the 1st Regional Innovation Plan for Calabria. Its main distinguishing feature relies in the strong integration with the Regional Structural Funds: the RIS+ project has been used to “guide” the implementation of the innovative action lines included in the Regional Operational Programme 2000-2006 (POR Calabria).

The project has been managed directly by the Regional Department in charge of Planning, Economic Development and EU Affairs with the technical support of a small stable technical group and the collaboration of a large network of regional experts and actors that was built by the first RIS project.

The POR Calabria assigned the functions of the RIS Steering Committee to the “*Consulta Regionale per la Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica*”: a regional consultative organism for coordinating and programming R&D policies in Calabria that has been created by the POR. Regional Universities, main Associations of Entrepreneurs and the Regional Administration compose such a body.

Methodology

- A choice was made to use the RIS+ project to prepare the innovation part of the operational programme. The first action was dedicated to the coordination, technical assistance for the management of the first regional action plan for innovation and the preparation of the second plan.
- 12 Pilot projects and 12 feasibility studies were foreseen at first. Since the First regional action plan was included in the POR, these activities were oriented towards more specific and in-depth analyses, concertation processes, cooperation among local actors, experimental actions, useful for the implementation of the POR in the field of innovation. These activities have been carried out with the support of the bodies involved in the Steering Committee as well as with individual SMEs.

Activities

The project has been engaged in the following four main action lines to provide/develop:

- **Methodological assistance** to the Regional Administration Departments for the elaboration of innovative action lines within the Regional Operational Programme

and its Complements. Such a support has been provided for all axes of the POR Calabria.

- A specific **technical assistance** to the Research Department of the Regional Administration for the integration and implementation of the specific measures of the 1st Regional Innovation Plan into the Measure 3.16 “Regional system for research and innovation” of the Regional Operational Programme. Such activities include the assistance to the “*Consulta Regionale per la Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica*” for the elaboration of the regional regime aid for RTDI and the first regional call for cooperative RTDI. The project has also realised a “*Guide to Policies and Tools for Research and Innovation in Calabria*” (printed in 3000 copies) and a stable telematic newsletter with hundreds of subscribers.
- **Three feasibility studies** on benchmarking services, technology audit, One-Stop-Shop that were intended to provide indication to the “*Consulta Regionale per la Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica*” for the elaboration of the public calls on the related actions of the POR.
- **Two pilot projects** on Liaison Offices and Technology Laboratories with the direct involvement of interested local actors, as a preliminary step to the actual “full-scale” implementation through calls of the POR.
- **Networking activities** within the National and European network of Innovative Regions: visits to Madrid, Castilla y Leon, Pais Vasco; participation to workshops and conferences organized by the IRC-IRE network; promotion of the Italian Network of Innovating Regions; participation to thematic network projects on innovation issues (i.e. SCONE – SCOuting knowledge NETwork).

Most interesting activities and results

Mainstreaming : As a result of the combined action of the RIS and RIS+ Calabria projects, the POR Calabria includes almost integrally the 1st Regional Innovation Plan (mainly within POR Measure 3.16 “Regional system for research and innovation”) and, to a lesser extent, in other measures for Local Development.

RIS Liaison Offices

The project has promoted the construction of RIS liaison offices in the regional universities - totally absent up to now - through demonstration activities (newsletter, seminars, etc.) and networking with associations of entrepreneurs. Goal Oriented Project Planning workshops with relevant actors have been used for the definition of the specific functions organisation of each office. The University of Calabria is now going to support the activities with its own funds.

Technological Laboratories

A pilot project has been developed with a Working Group on product/process innovation in electro-mechanical and construction sectors. University departments and SMEs were directly involved in the identification of the specific demand as well as in the definition of the mission, function and organisation of the laboratories. The activities were concluded with two plenary workshops conducted with the Goal Oriented Project Planning methodology (GOPP).

Comments and future activities

- The project faced some delay at the beginning, due to the contribution of the RIS+ staff to the preparation of the POR.
- On the other hand, this allowed the project to achieve a strong integration with Structural Funds by:
 - Ensuring the implementation of the 1st Regional Innovation Plan within the Regional Operational Programme
 - Providing technical assistance to the implementation of the 1st Regional Innovation Plan through studies, pilot projects and other technical activities
- The maintenance of the RTDI policies in Calabria is to be supported in the future with the contribution of the “*Consulta Regionale per la Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica*”, which is going to release the 2nd Regional Innovation Plan. After the

conclusion of the RIS+ project, such a committee will be supported by a specific technical assistance.

- The Regional Administration has just started the ILSRE (Iniziative Locali per lo Sviluppo Regionale), a € 4,48 million Programme recently approved by the European Commission within the Regional Innovative Action Programme. ILSRE includes the introduction of new methods for innovative local development in Calabria in the field of regional identity and sustainable development. There are no technological innovation activities in this programme.

RIS+ Northern EU (Finland and Sweden)

Goal of the project

The global goal of the project is to keep and attract highly-qualified people in the Northern EU region which covers the northern parts of Finland and Sweden and to strengthen the cross-border co-operation of technology centres, regional organisations and companies.

During the previous RIS project (97-99), 3 elements were analysed :

- the needs for human resources
- status and needs for international benchmarking
- possibilities to create and catalyse cross-border projects

The concept of the cross-border Multipolis network was also designed to link the technology centres of the area.

The RIS+ project is run by two technology centres based in Oulu (Finland) and Lulea (Sweden).

Methodology

- Study based on survey and interviews to estimate the needs of human resources in high technologies
- Targeted cross-border business meetings and seminars
- Information campaign to disseminate information on job opportunities in the area
- A grants programme to attract young university technology graduates from outside the region
- Support to cross-border projects (Y2K prize for the best projects)
- Benchmarking and networking with other regions
- Creation of a model for European hi-tech job market

Activities

- **Estimation of the needs of human resources for 2000-2006:** surveys and interviews were carried out in both Northern Finland and Sweden with 125 students and 46 experts from companies, educational institutes and technology parks. On the basis of these interviews, a list of expected skills in the fields of IT and electronics was elaborated. The role of the 2 universities (Oulu and Lulea) was emphasised for maintaining activities in the area.
- **Information campaign :** It was organised to diffuse information on job opportunities in the area to several universities in Europe, to the network of technology centres in both Northern Finland and Northern Sweden and to key firms in the area. A CD-Rom was produced and a common website was launched for the RIS+, the TRIP and another cross-border project called Radwat (www.Hitechnorth.com). A newsletter on the RIS+ project was also diffused.
- **Grants :** This aimed to attract qualified people to the area by offering to young experts coming from outside to join technology projects. 7 grants were offered to students coming from Lyon, München, Glasgow, Maastricht, Konstanz, Lund and Lulea for a total budget of 70 000 euros.

- **Y2K innovation prize** : Two cross-border projects submitted by SMEs received a Y2K prize with 10 000 euros : one in the field of film and video production and the other in the field of measurement technology applied to mining industries.
- **Cross-border business meetings** : They were organised with companies and firms associations in the fields of IT and electronics, as well as with the technology centres of the Multipolis network and regional authorities. Also, cross-border co-operation was developed through contacts with the other projects in the area : the RIS+ North Sweden and the TRIP Northern EU, which covered the same two regions and aimed to develop the use of high-tech business resources in both regions. Two other initiatives were also linked to the project : the internet Bay (launched by the IT industry) and the Bothnian Arc.
- **Networking with other regions** : This was a clear priority of the project. The idea was to create a network on "high tech job market" with other regions, using the tools and experience developed in the RIS+ (study on human resources needs, grants programme) as well as other studies. A meeting was organised to compare models and practices to attract qualified people in a region with Tuscany (I) and Castilla y Leon (E). But only two regions clearly mentioned in their RIS or RITTS action plans a student placement scheme (Milan and the North of Portugal). A conference on this issue should be organised in April 2002 in Oulu. Also, an application was submitted for Interreg III. But the recent slow down in the IT market makes this project difficult to achieve.
Exchanges took place also with the TRIP project TRESP involving Ireland and Wales (UK) and focusing on innovation in services.

Most interesting activities / results

- Support to cross-border co-operation between firms and between key innovation players (technology centres, universities, regional authority, etc.) in the fields of IT and electronics
- Focus on qualified human resources (needs analysis, tools to attract qualified personnel, creation of a network with other regions on this issue)
- Thinking on interregional co-operation, in particular on the selection of partner regions focusing on the same priority : high tech jobs.

Comments and questions

- The results of this project might be slightly different in each of the two regions. For instance, the grant scheme was more used in Finland (5 students all coming from foreign universities) than in Sweden (2 students coming from Sweden, even from the region). Also, the number of firms which expressed an interest for co-operation was higher in Finland than Sweden.
- In the final report of the RIS+, both regions expressed their wish to continue working on the issue of human resource in high tech sectors. They suggested to create a human resource bank and to test their model of EU high tech jobs market in other regions.
- When we look at the future PRAIs, the link between the RIS+ and future innovation policy is not obvious. A PRAI has been presented for the Finnish side but it does not mention any RIS, RIS+ or TRIP project, even though the Regional Council has signed both the PRAI proposal and the RIS+ contract. Only the Multipolis network is mentioned. The issue of human resource for high tech

sectors is not a priority. On the Swedish side, 2 PRAI cover this area, and in both cases, a link is made with the previous RITTS project and the RIS+ implemented in Northern Sweden and even RISI projects, but not the RIS+ Northern EU as such. In the Mellersta Norrland proposal, one of the three actions indicated will focus on the regional job market and suggests to test the possibility of commuting skilled immigrants from Southern Sweden to Northern Sweden.

RIS+ Overijssel (NL)

Goal of the project

The RIS+ in the Province of Overijssel, also known as 'Innovation Strategy Overijssel' is a follow up of two previous projects : a Regional Technology Plan (RTP) in the area of Twente (1994-1996) and a RITTS developed between 1996 and 1998 in the entire province. The objectives of the Overijssel Innovation Strategy are:

- more innovation in both products and services;
- cleaner, lower-cost production;
- higher input of knowledge and skills in Overijssel industry;
- exploit knowledge as a business location factor.

In a country, which has the size of a single European region, the added value of a "regional" innovation policy was discussed. Finally, it was agreed that :

- concerning the geographical dimension of innovation: most product and process innovations are developed by a combination of people in companies and other organisations on a small geographical scale.
- concerning the human factor: the acquisition, transfer and application of knowledge pre-eminently is a human activity. A collection of activity and knowledge infrastructure produces a specific knowledge base which constantly needs to be updated and expanded. Active local networks assist this process.
- concerning the knowledge supply: regional accents determine the demand for labour and knowledge. A regional approach fits in most closely with the experiences of the business world.

Methodology

On the basis of their share of employment, these sectors were selected in the RITTS :

food products industry;	plastics processing industry;
metal products industry;	graphics and media industry;
machine and equipment engineering industry ;	(road) transport industry.

In RIS+ the focus was on the same sectors. With respect to the industrial structure, two different regions were discerned: Twente and Salland/IJssel-Vecht. Projects were developed according to seven priorities :

- **Innovation resources:** in the context of innovation in Overijssel, extra attention needs to be paid to consciousness raising and the translation of innovation into strategy.
- **Clusters and networks:** working towards stable clusters of product, market and/or technology-focused cooperative relationships within each of the larger sectors of Overijssel industry. This will facilitate the development of a structural knowledge network comprising businesses and institutions.
- **Information and communication technology:** an active ICT cluster of businesses and institutions in Twente. Also, stimulation of both cooperation between Overijssel and foreign ICT regions and participation in national projects.
- **Human potential:** achieving a higher educational level in small and medium-sized industrial enterprises. Transparency and continuity in the supply of education is an important item here.
- **Twente as a knowledge-intensive region:** expanding Twente's knowledge-intensive image and exploiting it to attract new activity.

- **Knowledge transfer:** building a permanent structure for the transfer of knowledge existing within the business world and knowledge institutions.
- **Monitoring, policy development and evaluation:** further framing of innovation policy on the local and regional scale. It is also desirable and necessary to present the results of the Innovation Strategy to the target group.

Activities

The activities implemented in connection with the themes are discussed below.

- **Innovation resources**
 - The '**Market-orientated Innovation**' programme was developed by Syntens in mid-2000. By thus supporting small and medium-sized enterprises within a strategic framework, Syntens hopes to take a demonstrable step forward in market orientated operations. The added value of the project lies in the programmatic and therefore integral approach to the innovation path within a company. The programme is constructed using the 'Lego concept'. Attention is paid not only to the technical side of innovation, but also to the strategic, market and organisational side. Depending upon the specific problem formulation within a company, an innovation path can be supported through one or a combination of advisory paths. The target group in Overijssel matches the six spearhead sectors from the Overijssel Innovation Strategy.
- **Clusters and networks**
 - The **PLATO** project is a management development programme which brings together executives of regional small and medium-sized enterprises from a range of sectors for a period of two years. The knowledge exchange among the participants is linked to the expertise of the so-called coach companies. These often large regional companies provide advice. The project has proved highly successful, and this convinced the province of Overijssel to support the project again during the 2000 - 2002 period.
 - Within the framework of RIS+, in early 2000 the province of Overijssel carried out a study into the operation of the various network initiatives in the region. '**On the way to a durable network strategy for the province of Overijssel**', the report produced from this study, showed that Overijssel has a number of highly successful networks. The report discussed a total of 18 networks, six of which were very extensive. An important lesson from the networks is the fact that a coherent and multi-stage approach is a successful approach for a durable network development. It also showed that independent third parties play a positive role in cooperative relationships (see box below). Ultimately, the results of this study were used in the development of the 2002 - 2006 Overijssel Innovation Strategy in general and in a strategy for network support in particular.
- **Information and communication technology**
 - At the end of 1999, the province of Overijssel concluded that there was a need among various sector organisations for the development of a 'virtual' forum, a meeting place in which the sector associations can communicate with their members. This forum, also known as a '**community platform**', should also include transaction facilities for companies wishing to do business with each other. There is a lack of knowledge and tools among the sector organisations. The feasibility of such a community platform was investigated with the assistance of financial resources from RIS+.

- **Human potential**

- An exploratory survey on behalf of the province of Overijssel was carried out on the role of the province in human potential policy. The results of the survey have been integrated into the report on '**Human potential in Overijssel**'. This report concludes that the human potential policy is, in the narrow sense, orientated towards in-service training and retraining for existing employees. However, at the same time there are areas of overlap with policy orientated towards the promotion of recruitment, coordination of the education and employment markets and training of difficult target groups. In addition to the province, the companies themselves, educational and training institutions, sector organisations, intermediaries and other bodies are also involved in the aforementioned activities. With respect to the role of the province of Overijssel, the researchers recommend operating primarily as a lubricant. Projects should fit in with or arise from existing networks. The province can then make financial resources available.
- The recommendations emerging from the aforementioned study led the province of Overijssel to take a number of measures, including developing and supporting the '**Innovating through people and knowledge**' pilot programme. 'Innovating through people and knowledge' should result in an upward shift of personnel administration and planning to personnel policy, Human Resource Management and Human Talent Management. The programme is being managed by Syntens. Six companies were able to participate and the pilot finished at the end of November 2001. The results are currently undergoing detailed analysis.

- **Twente as a knowledge-intensive region**

An important line of action in profiling Twente as a knowledge-intensive region is the promotion of model projects and companies. The province of Overijssel has used part of the financial resources of RIS+ to support initiatives which contributed towards this line of action. A brief discussion of the initiatives is given below.

- **Neuro Fuzzy World.** During the EXPO 2000 world exhibition, Twente profiled itself both as a high-tech region and in the field of neuro fuzzy technology.
- **High Technology Small Firms (HTSF) conference.** In cooperation with Manchester Business School, the University of Twente organised the eighth HTSF conference in May 2000. The aim of the conference was to promote intensive cooperation between researchers and practitioners.
- **ICT in Business.** An award for 'the most innovative starter in Twente' was presented on 13 March 2001 during the 'ICT in Business' trade fair. The award was created by the regional development agency (OOM) and the province of Overijssel with the objective of stimulating and supporting regional ICT entrepreneurship.
- **Young Planners Workshop.** Prior to the 37th International ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners) conference, the Telematics Institute, in cooperation with a number of regional parties (OOM, Enschede municipality, Ericsson, the University of Twente, ITC, Axis and the Twente Technology Circle) held a Young Planners Workshop. Some twenty professional Young Planners from various parts of the globe were brought together to give them an opportunity to develop a project in the field of urban and regional planning as a team.

- **Knowledge transfer**

- **NEW Triangle** forms an excellent basis for the development of cooperation between the universities in Nijmegen, Enschede and Wageningen. Research has shown that the knowledge present within the universities in the Nijmegen

- Enschede - Wageningen triangle can be combined extremely effectively. The combinations of knowledge available rank at the highest international level, and these combinations are highly relevant to the expansion of the potential for industrial and social innovation. A total of 17 new combinations among ICT, life sciences, alpha and gamma sciences (combination areas) were identified as offering strong opportunities and potentially contributing to the further development of the East Netherlands region. Subsequently business plans for three selected combination areas were developed and a linked plan for the further development of NEW Triangle was drawn up. Ultimately, the project should be transformed into a structural process.

- A decentralised model of knowledge transfer has been developed in the project **KnowledgeLink**, present network of knowledge suppliers and intermediaries, each of which remains based on sufficient face-to-face contact. Decentralised means working in their own clientele. Face-to-face means that services should not only be given in the form of virtual platforms (such as websites), but also that true service depends greatly on trusted personal contact. This scenario was given the title of "*Broodje Vertrouwen*" (Confidence Concept).

The principle of 'broodje vertrouwen' is that entrepreneurs working in small and medium-sized enterprises are currently deluged by impersonal media and untargeted information. Typically, this includes mail shots, websites and e-mails. Therefore a concrete, tangible means of reaching entrepreneurs working in small and medium-sized enterprises effectively must be found. The key words here are personal contact, customisation and trust. The knowledge offered to the entrepreneur can originate from any source: knowledge institutions and/or companies. The model needs to be linked with R&D, which means that the three technical colleges and the university must also be involved in the process. The most pressing problem approached via KnowledgeLink is the entrepreneur's question of "*Where can I go to ask my question? Who can offer me the right help that will give me true value for my money?*". It was agreed with the KnowledgeLink participants that the STODT and Syntens 'Sector programme' project would be used as a pilot for the further implementation of the model.

- **Monitoring, policy development and evaluation**

- A well-attended **Innovation day** was organised on 19 November 1999. To round off the RIS+ programme, the province of Overijssel organised a further Innovation conference on 15 November 2001. Both conferences (1999 and 2001) were used to expand the basis for innovation in the region. A conference also offers excellent opportunities to share the knowledge and experience gained with respect to implementation with European partners from the IRE network. A live presentation of the 'Innovation Award' was organised at the end of the conference.
- The province of Overijssel in cooperation with regional partners developed a **new operating procedure for implementation of the innovation policy**. The core of the new approach is for intermediaries to be responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of a theme of the Innovation Strategy. The final result is a good management system, which can be used to steer and adjust the outlines. Results-based commitments are entered into between the province of Overijssel and the implementing intermediary.

Most Interesting activities and results

- Initiation and supporting (the content of) projects played a central role in the activities of the Province of Overijssel. **Awareness of innovation** has been increased within the business world as a result of these activities (large number of projects). Increasing awareness has probably also led to more innovation efforts.
- **Support to networks and clusters**, which was already experimented in the RTP and RITTS, is also worth noticing. A list of principles were defined with respect to networks and clusters :

Principles for networks and clusters

- Place networks in a cluster framework to generate a bigger synergetic effect and a better long-term perspective.
- Set up a "teaching route" in which existing initiatives are included and which takes into account the target group and the objectives
- when evaluating a proposal or a network, see how it fits with the cluster policy.
- Do not subsidize network participation but only the management and guidance of networks for a short period of time (1-2 years)
- Invest in pre-conditions for network formation, such as training of intermediaries, demonstration projects and communication
- formulate clear objectives and set up an evaluation plan

- The **province** believes that it has not been able to give sufficient attention to **its role of "producer of the innovation policy"**. Six sectors were selected in the Overijssel Innovation Strategy and seven themes were defined. In practice, this means that six times seven = 42 cross-linkages were possible.. As a consequence of the focus on projects and the large flow of project ideas, the 'policy content activities' had come under pressure. The various internal changes had also resulted in the attention becoming distracted. In short, there were a number of reasons why the Province of Overijssel decided in late 2000 to carry out a critical analysis of the operating procedure used until then. It was concluded that more focus was necessary with respect to the implementation and organisation of the innovation policy. A number of questions were formulated in this context and used as a guide in the development of the 2002 - 2006 Innovation Strategy.

Comments and future activities

- The RIS+ is well embedded in the regional innovation policy. This project clearly focused on the strategic dimension and the necessity to work on regional partnership. This is facilitated by the fact that the Province has a clear vision on its innovation policy ambitions and the functioning of its regional innovation system.
- The three main regional institutional partners (Province of Overijssel, development agency OOM and Regional office of the national innovation agency Syntens) activated the new approach to be responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of a theme of the Innovation Strategy.
- In May 2002, an Innovative Action programme will be proposed. It will focus on a limited number of major issues, including, amongst others: ICT, Technostarters and Innovation resources.

RIS+ Sterea Ellada (GR)

Objective of the project

The overall aim of the RIS+ project was to incorporate innovative thinking and activities in the functioning of the economy of Sterea Ellada.

The key objectives of the project can be summarised as follows:

- Creation of educational and training programmes for businessmen and managers of enterprises in matters related to innovative actions and promotion of a 'learning network' in the region.
- Support to local enterprises through the creation of a Database of all enterprises in the region and a web-page for entrepreneurial and business activity.
- Promotion of Organic Farming mainly through the proposal for the creation of a Model Organic Farm and a Laboratory for Quality Testing of Organic Agricultural Products.
- Technical and research support to the secondary sector and in the field of environmental management and especially for the creation of a Laboratory for Industrial Waste Management.
- Promotion of services and network creation for enterprises of the tourism sector mainly through the promotion of cultural tourism.

Methodology

An Integrated Innovation Strategy was elaborated, which included the completion of **four feasibility studies** and **four pilot programmes**. The following tools were used to achieve the programme's goals:

- Information campaign using publications, press conferences and news-briefs in the local media to emphasise the necessity of innovation for local and regional development.
- Fifteen sessions of the thematic working groups with approximately 30 participants each and five conferences with 80-120 participants, that included local entrepreneurs, representatives of national, regional and local authorities, as well as Greek and international experts.
- Creation of a database and a web-page (www.ipa.panteion.gr/RIS+_SITE/) in order to provide access to information regarding the development characteristics and enterprises of the region Sterea Ellada.
- Creation and running of a training program for entrepreneurs on innovation management techniques.
- Publication of five brochures each presenting a separate cultural and alternative tourism theme, with the relevant maps, widely disseminated among the tourist enterprises of the region in order to increase awareness and facilitate the interactions with the local tourism industry actors.
- Interregional networking, in particular with the Hellenic Network for Regional Innovation Strategy as well as with other European regions.

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- **Local Networks for integrated cultural tourism services**

Two main strategies were used for the development of cultural tourism in the Sterea Ellada region:

- the establishment of new cultural and tourism resources : Five new establishments were proposed:
 - a thematic spa- park for leisure, education and information on thermalism at Edipsos,
 - an innovative museum which will recreate the ancient battle at Thermopyles using exclusively multimedia techniques,
 - two educational and cultural centres, one to promote the natural resources and ecotourism activities in Evritania, and another to provide a suitable venue for conferences and cultural activities at Amphissa,
 - an information centre, located at the entrance to the region from the south (Schimatari) to provide visitors with maps, guidebooks, pamphlets etc. as well as multimedia presentations on the region' s main cultural attractions and especially on the alternative forms of tourism available.

- the creation of networks of tourism destinations (cultural itineraries) which integrate the region tourist attractions in thematic packages.
Cultural itineraries were proposed to connect the region' s sites, according to criteria such as historical relevance, thematic purposes, etc. The two main themes chosen are the itineraries of battles (with visits to archaeological and historical sites, museums etc.) and the itineraries of water, which include industrial sites, ancient and contemporary spas, sacred springs etc.

All the above mentioned proposals were presented in five separate brochures, including maps and pictures, distributed to a variety of tourist firms and other organisations (Local Administrative Bodies, Mass Media, etc.). Approximately 250 sets of brochures were sent. At the same time, a questionnaire on the same issues was also sent to 82 of these tourist enterprises, including all the main travel agents and hotels in the region as well as the major national travel agents. The 72 replies to the questionnaire were enthusiastic for the prospect of the implementation of all of these proposals.

- **Improvement of organisational and technological capabilities of regional SMEs.**

The actions covered are:

- Training of managers and executives of the Region's SMEs on issues related to the strengthening of their organizational and production capabilities.
- Promotion of quality assurance in local manufacturing and mobilization of the local players.
- Study for the creation of an office for the promotion of exports.

- **Pilot Development and testing of an 'entrepreneurial' web site**

The pilot web site (www.ipa.panteion.gr/RIS+ SITE/) contains the following components:

- Industrial, technological and socio-economic data for each prefecture of the Region.
- Presentation of the RIS + programme.
- Data on regional enterprises, that can be grouped using multiple criteria.

- **Promotion of the creation of laboratories and model facilities**
 - Upgrading of the environmental protection infrastructure through the carrying out of the necessary activities for the creation of a laboratory for industrial waste management.
 - Dissemination of organic farming practices through the undertaking of studies for the creation of a Model Organic Farm and a Laboratory for the Quality Control of Organic Agricultural Products.

Most Interesting activities and results

This project benefited from a good mainstreaming since several of these RIS+ proposals have been integrated into the programmes funded by the Third Community Support Framework for Greece. Most actions will be further developed within regional or local policies :

- Training schemes on innovation management techniques have been adopted by the region.
- The RIS proposal for the creation of the innovative University of Sterea Ellada has been approved by the Ministry of Education.
- The Laboratory for Industrial Waste Management will possibly be hosted by existing local infrastructures.
- The development and testing of the 'entrepreneurial' web site has been carried out.
- The actions for alternative tourism have been promoted: a marketing project has been set up including a Visitor Center at Schimatari, information bureaus or info kiosks across the region, Guide Books and Maps for alternative forms of tourism, and the promotion of Package tours on the basis of two themes: a) the ancient battles and b) the cultural heritage of water.

The study on the creation of a Model Organic Farm in Sterea Ellada

The first part of the study described the current situation of the organic farming in Greece. Emphasis was given to the constraints observed, the difficulties that a potential organic farmer could face, as well as the factors influencing the growth of organic farming along with the pre-conditions for successful and widespread conversion. The conclusion of that first part was that a Model Organic Farm would greatly promote the use of organic farming in the region.

The second part described the structure of the farm. The Model Organic Farm, in order to constitute a prototype for the development of other such farms in the region, ought to incorporate all the necessary agricultural activities. It has to be an active integrated productive system where farmers could practise organic cultivated methods. On the other hand, it must be supported by activities concerning standardisation, marketing, research and training, etc.

Fully developed, the farm should give farmers the opportunity to:

- Produce plant and animal products, along with the necessary inputs (organic fertilisers, etc.)
- Arrange its marketing activities either on its own or in co-operation with others, even if they are only at a demonstrative level
- Carry-out research and provide technical assistance and training
- Schedule meetings with other farmers, scientific events, even entertainment and leisure services for consumers that would like to be informed on alternative farming methods.

The main point of the operation of the farm will be to foster participatory procedures and help participants develop skills that they could then use for the dissemination of organic farming.

It is crucial of course to operate the farm in economically viable conditions. On the other hand its products must be representative of the flora and fauna of the region. It would be most welcome if its operational future complies with the needs of the farmers and preserves native crop and animal species.

Comments and future activities

- All actions developed in the RIS+ will be adopted by the new Regional Plan for Sterea Ellada, and will be performed under the 3rd Community Support Framework.

- A new Innovation Action Programme has already been approved which will focus on information society activities : promotion of cultural tourism with the use of new technologies, creation of information networks and SMEs support for innovative activities related to new technologies. A network of environmental research centres and firms will also be established for the development of environmental management systems. Moreover, through the continued networking with other Greek and European Regions, innovation policy for Sterea Ellada will integrate many different approaches.
- Finally, the consensus already achieved and the smooth co-operation of public and private sector bodies and enterprises is expected to increase the effectiveness of the actions already performed and those that are under way. The use of open dialogue, meetings and electronic forms of communication is expected to further strengthen the commitment of the actors involved in the innovation process.

RIS+ Central Macedonia (GR)

Goal of the project

The main objective of the RIS+ in Central Macedonia was to fund the experimental phase of 9 selected projects proposed in the previous RTP (Regional Technology Project) Action plan of Central Macedonia.

This RTP was developed in 1995-1997. It was a collective effort to support innovation in the Region, through the promotion of applied research, co-operation between research institutions and industry, technology transfer, entrepreneurial capabilities, new production processes and effective competition in the global market. Due to the development of the RTP, innovation became part of the regional planning agenda. *“The continuous incorporation of innovative actions in the regional planning mechanisms during the development of RIS+ constitutes the biggest achievement of the programme in Central Macedonia.”*

The overall aims of the RIS+ were:

- Establishment of mechanisms facilitating access to funding for technology and innovation.
- Promotion of technological co-operation and networking between businesses.
- Technology training.
- Reinforcement of the technological supply system.
- Dissemination of best practice and continuous update of the RTP action plan.

The RIS+ was managed by the research unit URENIO of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. A joint steering committee, chaired by the Secretary General of the region Central Macedonia, was created for both the RIS+ and the RISI+ (in the field of information society) developed in the region. It was composed of 15 people, representatives from the national government, regional industrial associations, regional chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, regional development agency and universities.

Methodology

- Feasibility study on foreign direct investment
- Pilot projects on the creation of a wine cluster, the creation of a BIC (Business Innovation Centre) in the city of Thessaloniki, on the promotion of agro-technologies, etc.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the RTP and RIS+ activities through an “innovation observatory in Central Macedonia”.
- Networking activities

Activities

The most important activities and achievements are the following ones:

- **Creation of an R&D Support unit in the Technology park of Thessaloniki.** During this action for “Funding businesses from European R&D programmes”, 3 events were organised to present European R&D programmes, as well as consultations to 25 businesses for the preparation of R&D proposals, and joint preparation of 3 R&D proposals.

- **Feasibility study on Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and international technological co-operation.** This study provided a critical evaluation of FDI services in Scotland and Ireland, which were considered as best practice, and examined their organisational structure, mission, services and motives for potential entrepreneurs. Based on a analysis of the productive environment in Central Macedonia, the infrastructure and the favourable geographical position of the Region, the feasibility study proposed the legal status, the organisation and the services that will be provided by the FDI Unit in the region, together with a web-based promotion plan of regional assets.
- **Wine SMEs Network.** This pilot project investigated the scope of existing intra-regional technological co-operation between wine producers, as well as the opportunity to introduce innovative production and marketing methods. The project focused on two major fields: ecological wine production and on-line wine marketplaces. Among the project's major accomplishments were a methodological guide for the conversion of traditional viticultures to ecological ones, a master plan for the wine industry in Northern Greece and a study that examined the economical conditions for creating a regional wine cluster of producers.
- **Technology co-operation and modernisation of industrial estates.** This project was designed to develop the technological co-operation among industries established within Industrial Estates. The idea was to support the regional industrial system so that economies of scale appear in the form of business partnerships, new financing tools, innovation relay centres and mobility of highly skilled personnel. The secondary objective was the enhancement and integration of the localised, within the Industrial Estates, industrial system and the promotion of new structures that would lead to the formation of high technology and innovative clusters. The project's main finding was that the most urgent priorities for establishing an inter-entrepreneurial support system are raising awareness and supplying real services with concrete sectoral focus.
- **Risk management for investments in South-East Europe.** This project aimed to support regional businesses to expand their activities in the Balkan area, through better information and understanding of the investment environment and provide training on management and investment methods in a risky business environment. The project's pilot phase was focused on the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) the most prominent neighbouring country in terms of Greek investments. Three business meetings were organised, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Associations of Industries of Northern Greece and FYROM and producing an investors guide for FYROM.
- **Innovation and Information Technology Centre in Central Macedonia.** The aim of this pilot project was to prepare the establishment of a Business Innovation and Information Technology Centre in the city of Thessaloniki. It should be noted that, during the past few years, several attempts had been made by the Region of Central Macedonia to create a BIC, but these remained unsuccessful. The aim of the centre would be to support technology and management services for business and the regional productive system, and to diffuse innovation and decentralise the regional technology system of Central Macedonia.
- **Promotion of Agro-Technologies.** The objective of this project was to promote agro-technologies, demonstrate best practice applications to businesses and the

public sector, and to contribute to the creation of a regional pole of excellence in this field. It created associations between technology providers and users for the application of agro-technologies: improvement of plant varieties, plant diseases, ecological agriculture, hydro-production technologies, genetic improvement of animal breeds, and biotechnology applications.

- **New premises for R&D University Institutes.** New established institutions in the field of research, technology, and technology transfer have created an important demand for location premises. The lack of adequate premises for such activities has become a major barrier for the development of research and technology activities. The objective of the project was to examine, and possibly open-up new areas, for the location of public-private associations for technology supply, research institutes of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and technology transfer institutions.
- **Innovation observatory in Central Macedonia.** The project's objective is to monitor and evaluate the RTP/RIS+ and the follow-up actions and to collect, process and disseminate information on innovation issues in the Region of Central Macedonia. The main project achievements include:
 - The creation of a bi-lingual portal for R&D and innovation in Central Macedonia, including 700 regional organisations, and accessible through the Internet at <http://portal.urenio.org/>
 - The development of a set of indicators for assessing the regional innovation system in Central Macedonia, and the publication of the first Annual Innovation Report (*Innovation Index: Central Macedonia*), available to the public at http://www.urenio.org/innovation_index.htm.

Most interesting conclusions and results

- The **mainstreaming** of the actions developed within the RIS+ in the mainstream structural funds will be made possible through the strong links with the structural funds monitoring committees. As an example, the R&D support unit in the Technological park of Thessaloniki will be further developed and extended through the mainstream structural funds, at the regional and national levels.
- In terms of **interregional networking**, this region is particularly active in the Hellenic network of RIS and RITTS projects. It has also developed contacts with many other European regions.
- A thorough analysis of the results of the RIS+ actions was carried out and led to the following conclusions:

Successful projects with...	
...problematic follow-up:	...promising follow-up:
<p>FDI and international technological co-operation: In this case, regional follow-up is not achievable since, until today, motivation for FDI is designed and executed by the national government. In addition, the regional administration has not shown yet strong commitment for developing localized 'after care' services.</p>	<p>Funding businesses from European R&D projects: The establishment and operation of a support unit within Thessaloniki Technology Park has shown promising results in terms of providing help and guidance to regional innovative companies.</p>
<p>Technology co-operation and modernization of industrial estates: The generalization of the project's outcomes and their application to other industrial estates in Central Macedonia is problematic due to the variety of companies located in industrial estates, their entrepreneurial objectives, co-operation culture and technological needs.</p>	<p>Wine SMEs Network: The developments from the Wine SMEs Network have shown a strong interest in joint promotion and marketing activities; however, no links were established among the participants in terms of design of innovative product development.</p>
<p>Promotion of agro-technologies: Currently, the public opinion is strongly against genetically modified products, thus eliminating any interest towards new ventures in this field. There is only considerable interest in quality assurance for guaranteeing that a product is not genetically modified.</p>	<p>Risk management for investments in S.E. Europe: The project was a success, highlighting new approaches for establishing business links to other Balkan countries that could be fully exploited in the near future.</p>
	<p>New premises for R&D Institutes: The project results became the basis for a funding proposal in the framework of the 3rd CSF. This new project is fully supported by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Region of Central Macedonia.</p>
	<p>Innovation Observatory in Central Macedonia: The developments that were initiated in the framework of this seed project will be enhanced and upgraded since additional funding was found and a strong commitment is expressed by the Regional Authorities.</p>
	<p>Update of the Action Plan: The work and the results of this project became the core of a successful proposal in the framework of "Innovative Actions" and help towards the development of the Regional Innovation Strategy, part of the Regional Operational Programme 2000-2006.</p>

Comments and future activities

- The creation of a “network for quality in Central Macedonia” was planned but eventually had to be stopped because of difficulties in promoting collaborative activities between the various agents involved in quality assurance and certification issues.
- On the other hand, two new activities were added in the course of the project: “Innovation and Information Technology centre in Central Macedonia” and “location premises for R&D university institutes”.
- One of the most important objectives of this project was the update of the RTP action plan and the elaboration of a revised strategy for the regional innovation. Based on all the lessons learnt from the RIS+ project, the **new Action Plan for the region of Central Macedonia** codifies a revised strategy for regional innovation and development based on three major pillars:
 - The first pillar is "high tech clusters". The focus point for the revised action plan is now turned from the individual firm to the cluster and especially the knowledge-based clusters as a key element in changing the regional production structure.
 - The second pillar is the concentrated effort to improve the co-ordination between technological supply and demand through the enhancement of the regional technology transfer system.
 - The third pillar is experimentation with and exposure to new technological tools to increase regional technology intelligence such as: technology clinics, e-learning, e-networking, new products development in the clusters.
- A programme of **Innovative Actions Programme** based on the above revised action plan has been approved by the European Commission in Central Macedonia. It focuses on support to innovation, with the RTP and RIS+ experience, with the following goal: *“to make companies and technology intermediary organisations of the region familiar with the latest, on a world scale, advances in business, technological, production and manufacturing practices.”* The 4 priority actions of the programme are :
 - To increase regional technology intelligence and the understanding of emerging features in innovation and technology
 - To sustain the development of knowledge-based clusters (including a food cluster on which activities were developed in the RIS+)
 - To disseminate business excellence and world class manufacturing principles
 - To help the region in defining, monitoring, evaluating and restructuring a comprehensive regional development policy, based primarily on innovation and secondly on sustainability. Activities of the regional innovation observatory will be further developed.

RIS+ Weser-Ems (D)

Goal of the project

The RIS + project in Weser-Ems (which is part of the Land of Niedersachsen) contributed to the practical implementation of the RIS developed in 1997 and 1998.

The overall goal of the RIS was to support regional development and competitiveness, and to create employment in the region. At the end of the project in 1998, it was decided to focus on four sectors of activity :

- New services / new media
- Agriculture and food industry with future potential
- Environmentally friendly integrated production
- Tourism

Consequently, 8 priorities were selected :

- Creation of spin-offs from universities and colleges
- Improvement of regional government procedures in the field of innovation
- Creation of a fund for innovation in the region
- Creation of a competence centre for the food industry (NICE-food)
- Support to tourism activities (central booking system and quality)
- Creation of jobs in the service sector, in particular using ICT tools
- Creation of a competence centre for environmentally friendly products and processes
- Support to the good traffic logistics sector

In this context, the RIS+ focused on three main action lines :

- Creation and management of **thematic competence centres** to provide wide, qualified, and useful innovative services for regional firms.
- Strengthening of the **regional consensus**, based on a good partnership model gathering key players from the business, science, and administration spheres.
- Connecting the RIS activities with **National and European Structural Funds** mechanisms in the region.

The RIS+ was managed in a similar way as the previous RIS, by the regional government for Weser-Ems, through a specific office for the RIS ("Geschäftsstelle der Regionalen Innovationsstrategie Weser-Ems»). The Steering committee included representatives of industry, science, local administration, trade unions and regional government organisations (at the level of the Land and the lower level of Bezirksregierung).

Weser-Ems participated to other related projects developed at the same time, such as SESAMES (a Transregional innovation project) and a RIS in the Polish region of Ermland-Masuren.

Methodology

- Feasibility studies for the creation of new competence centres (in the fields of biotechnology, renewable resources and logistics). This preparation phase was based also on the organisation of 3 "innovation forums", where all key regional actors were invited for each field.
- 5 pilot competence centres first created with the idea of creating other ones.

- Interregional co-operation and exchange of experience through the participation to projects (TRIP, RIS in Poland, Interreg, etc.)

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- Creation of a regional **competence centre for the food industry** "KompZ Ernährungswirtschaft" - NICE food : This centre has had a successful pilot phase. Through the RIS+, help could be provided to firms facing problems in times of the BSE (mad cow) crisis and other challenges such as global market, consumer's protection or ecological issues. This has strengthened the position of this centre within and even around the region Weser-Ems. Some of the results already visible are : the expansion of activities to the whole Land of Lower Saxony and the willingness of the companies to participate in the financing of this competence centre for the next 5 years.
- Creation of a regional **competence centre for tourism** "KompZ Tourismus"
- Creation of a regional **competence centre for maritime combination industry** "KompZ Mariko.ris"
- Creation of a regional **competence centre for information and communication technologies** "KompZ it.net" (see box below)
- Creation of a **RIS transfer unit for the production integrated environment protection** "RISTUS"
- 3 **innovation forum** were organised to identify the regional potential in biotechnology, traffic logistics and renewable resources. This led to the creation of networks in these three sectors. In the longer term, the idea is to create competence centres in two out of the three fields : traffic logistics and renewable resources.
- Communication and **promotion activities**. A regular newsletter and a web site (German and English) are used to diffuse updated information on the RIS and RIS+ (www.ris-weser-ems.de).

Most Interesting activities and results

- The RIS+ has contributed to stabilise and even strengthen the dialogue between key regional actors from the business, R&D and administration sectors on innovation issues. A visible result of this **strong consensus** is the agreement of these actors, including the Land, to contribute financially to the continuation of the RIS+ until 2005.
- Moreover, the Land of Lower Saxony decided to promote innovative activities through its own programme, using the RIS as a model.
- The creation of "**competence centres**" in specific sectors, with an customer-orientation, is well perceived in the region, in particular by SMEs. These centres play the role of "activators" for innovation in enterprises.

It.net competence centre (www.ris-it.net)

It.net is a project aiming to help regional companies in the use of new technologies. But companies will not be the only beneficiaries : public institutions and future entrepreneurs looking for advice will also be targeted.

The project consists first in an awareness raising phase using a newsletter, seminars and consultancies. Then, solutions to current business problems will be tackled, mainly through demonstrations and software evaluations.

Working in a pre-competitive way, as an independent support agency, it.net will complement rather than replace existing ITC services in the region. Also, key sectors such as agriculture, will benefit from it : a pilot internet platform allowing orders and marketing through the web will be experimented.

Comments and future activities

- After the RIS, no mainstreaming was possible because of a bad timing for the objective 2. The RIS+ was the only way to finance some implementation of the RIS. *“Without any external help, the regional dynamic might not have expanded like it did or a stagnation of the implementation process might have happened.”*
- Now, the project benefits from the support of various regional actors, both from the public and private sector. This contributes to guarantee some continuity to the regional innovation strategy launched in 1997. The fact that the regional actors will co-finance and contribute to the RIS process until 2005 is a very positive result of the project. The team built around the RIS has been very active in initiating the future integration of the RIS into national and European support programmes and in promoting interregional contacts.

RIS+ Shannon (IRL)

Goal of the project

The Shannon region is a small and rural area with 400 000 inhabitants benefiting from a high regional innovation profile, with R&D investments higher than the national average.

In Shannon, the aims of the RIS+ were to secure a partnership for innovation shared by the key regional actors, with support from the private sector, the higher education institutions and the development agencies.

This project is a follow-up from a previous RIS finalised in 1999. Six priorities were selected at the end of this RIS :

- innovation infrastructure
- education and training
- mobilising the higher education sector
- promoting innovation
- sectoral strategies - networks
- finance for innovation

The Shannon RIS was also pursued within the framework of the national RITTS for the whole of Ireland, 1994-96.

The project was managed by the same team as for the RIS, the regional development agency called Shannon Development. The steering committee, chaired by an entrepreneur, includes representatives from regional and national support agencies (Enterprise Ireland, FAS training agency, Forfas, IDA Ireland, etc.), private sector organisations including chambers of commerce, higher education organisations, R&D and technology centres and the Mid-West regional authority.

Shannon was involved at the same time in other related projects, in particular a Trans-regional Innovation Project called TRESP with the Welsh development agency on the issue of innovation in the services sector, in particular in knowledge-based sectors of software, multimedia, virtual logistics and IT consultancy. Shannon has also been active in the industrial regions group of the IRE network.

Methodology

- 6 pilot projects : design network, information for innovators, technical mentoring, regional enterprise fund, food innovation network and education.
- 6 working groups for each of the pilot projects.
- Specific studies for some of the pilot projects.

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- A **Design network** has been established to stimulate the use of design by firms. This network includes representatives of the private sector, higher education and development agencies. It has contributed to strengthen activities in the field of design, such as : design awareness, product and industrial design and the development of more formal policies in specific sectors such as electronic, manufacturing, materials and mechanical engineering, software, fashion and clothing, precision engineering, rural areas, etc. (see box below).

- An innovation **network for food and natural resources** was created to provide technology support, such as technology transfer, R&D, in particular on natural resources, training in quality and laboratory techniques, exploitation of research, etc. The objective of this network is to enrich innovation in SMEs of this sector (considering that expenditure in RDTI is heavily concentrated in a few large companies), with a focus on dissemination, communication and building of capability among firms. Activities in this network cover the sectors of agriculture (22 000 people), food processing (5 000 employees in 100 enterprises) and food and drink catering (hotels-restaurants, with 5 000 employees).
- **Venture capital** has been supported by strengthening access to finance and the creation of a network gathering development agencies, private sector and higher education institutions. A feasibility study was carried out on a potential regional enterprise fund and concluded that there was some demand for funding but less than expected for the type of firms and finance analysed, and more in the form of secured loans rather than equity. The focus of this pilot project shifted from the role of public sector supporting the supply of finance to strengthening skills in finance, with a proposal for a “venture capital network” in the region.
- **Information** : A regional innovation web site was created to provide information on innovation at a local level (www.shannoninnovation.ie). It appeared that local information exchange, mostly based on “word of mouth”, has lagged behind international information in exploiting potential for innovation. The web site was designed as some type of “one-stop-shop”, including details of academic staff with their experience and expertise as well as on public support programmes.
- **Education and training** : at the end of the RIS, a review meeting was organised with representatives of higher education organisations. This emphasised the role of education and training for innovation and led to the establishment of a working group to tackle this issue. Among the activities developed, a 12-month pilot project developed a training programme for owner-managers (on risk management, project development, promoting change, etc.). Also, a survey was carried out on the conditions affecting business start-ups in the region, such as the entrepreneur’s occupational history, his educational level, perception of the support system, role of new technology, motivation of entrepreneurs, location (urban or rural), markets and exports, sectoral patterns, etc.
- **Technical mentoring** : in the RIS, “cultural” factors were identified as leading barriers to innovation. Partnership issues between higher education institutions and enterprises came to the fore. The technical mentoring project was designed to tackle this issue. The approach was that the development agencies identify potential target companies and higher education institutions nominate “technical mentors” who serve as interface with company. The role of these mentors, compared to previous advisory mechanisms, was shifted from advising and informing to listening and understanding. Exploratory work was initiated with a sample of companies. Then, the new Operational programme for productive investment for 2000-2006 included this pilot technical mentoring project and modified it. The challenge is now how to integrate higher education institutions with the programmes currently emerging and to complement private sector services.

Most Interesting activities and results

- In terms of mainstreaming, this project has succeeded in being integrated into the Irish National Development Plan for 2000-2006. The plan promotes the development of regional innovation systems, in order to encourage regions in Ireland to bring together elements of the local innovation system.
- More generally, the Minister for science, technology and commerce stated that *“the regional innovation strategy for the Shannon region has set a headline for national policy”* and acknowledged *“[its] contribution in pioneering national policy in this area and in setting an admirable standard for regional innovation action in other parts of Ireland in the years ahead.”*
- The design network is an interesting initiative :

The « Design Shannon » network

Several studies showed how design in Ireland needed to be strengthened in terms of image, infrastructure, competence and integration with industry needs. In the Shannon region, 70% of enterprises do not consciously use design at all. This is due to barriers such as the small size of firms in the region, an inadequate support system, a poor response from higher education institutions, a narrow use of design in firms.

2 workshops were organised in 1999 confirming the low level of awareness on the importance of design at that time. Later, the creation of a network was suggested with the following objectives :

- Provide showcases of design excellence
- Improve the awareness among general public
- Secure a regional design identity
- Increase the use of design by industry
- Improve design education and training for students and SMEs

A coordinator was engaged part-time to animate the network, organise workshops, diffuse information, promote local awards, etc.

« Design Shannon » has been conceived as an umbrella for a co-operative of design centres, with each centre providing design support reflecting its own specific strengths, such as for example :

- University of Limerick for electronic, manufacturing, materials and mechanical engineering, software
- Limerick Institute of Technology for fashion and clothing
- Institute of Technology Tralee for precision engineering, built environment
- Tipperary Institute for rural areas.
- County Enterprise Boards (local animation)
- Shannon Development

Comments and future activities

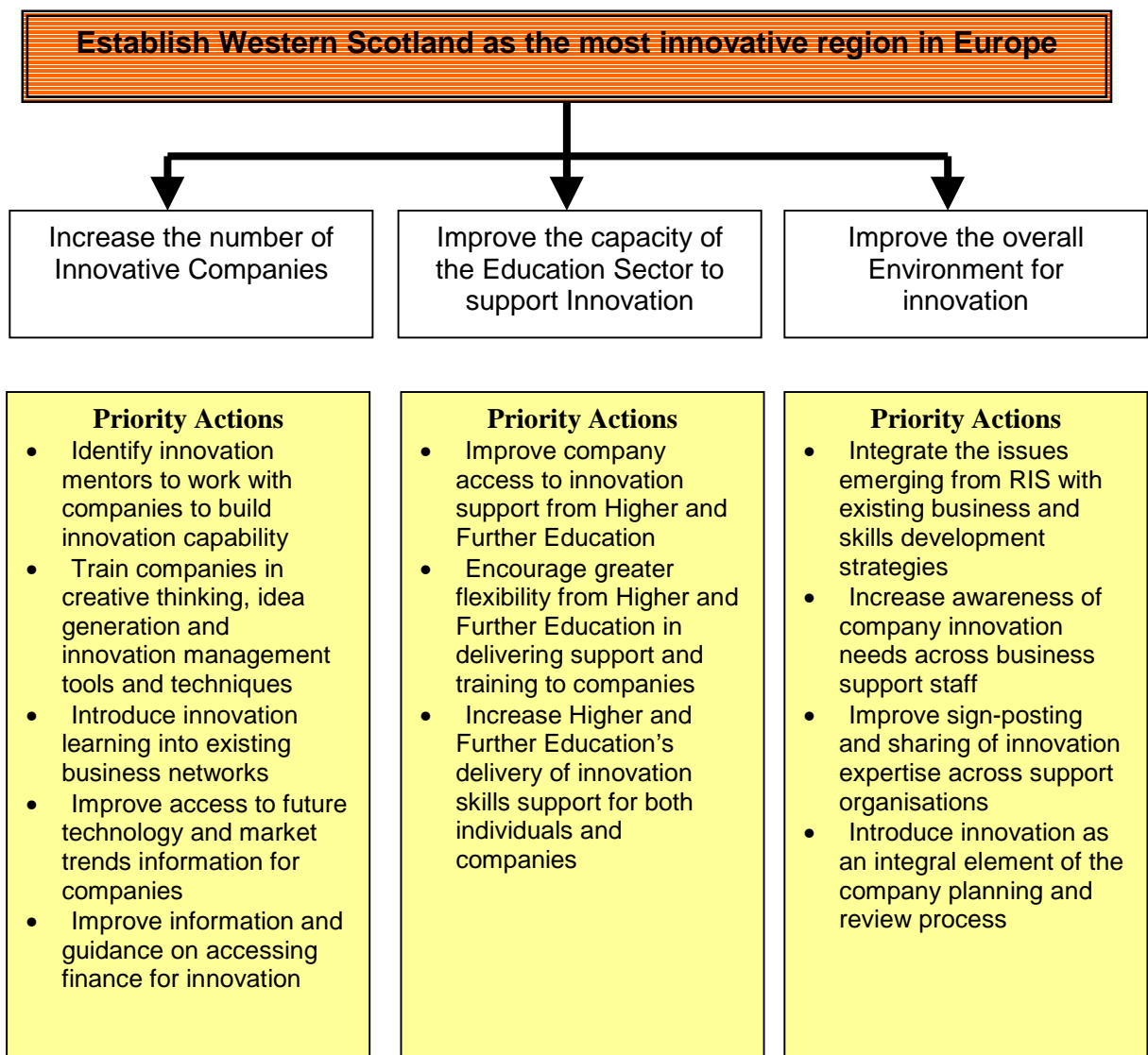
- Attention in 2002+ is now focused on a limited set of priority outcomes, particularly in design and knowledge transfer.
- The mainstreaming of the RIS and RIS+ Shannon within national policy has been successful and should contribute to guarantee some continuity in the future.
- The RIS was vital in reforming strategic innovation policy in the region: the RIS focused the minds of policy-makers on regional innovation issues, especially building the public/private partnership for innovation (now a permanent feature of the regional institutional system) and animated the higher education institutions to interface with SMEs.
- The Shannon RIS team are lead partners in the new Innovative Action Programme for the Southern & Eastern Region, which covers a larger territory than the RIS+.
- According to this team, a *“key lesson is that regional partnerships for innovation represent a central strategy for building economic competitiveness, but that building these partnerships demands care, courtesy and patience!”*

RIS+ Western Scotland (UK)

Goal of the project

The Western Scotland RIS+ was built on the RIS action plan developed between March 1997 - October 1998 and provided the opportunity for key individuals within the public and private sectors to deliver a set of actions to enhance the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the region. The project aimed to make a significant contribution to the future prosperity of the region. Working closely with the key support organisations in the region, the project was implemented through collaboration and co-operation.

The aim and 3 objectives of the RIS+ were:



Within the next four years a significant increase in the number of innovative companies in Western Scotland is expected. This will be achieved by improving innovation services to businesses and by raising businesses' awareness of the benefits of innovation. A better understanding of business demand and educational supply will lead to an improved performance of the companies and an improved level of innovation support from the universities and colleges. Through the RIS+ project,

innovation has been embedded into the business support infrastructure. The strategies and operating plans of the key business support organisations now all have innovation as a key driver for economic development.

The RIS+ was managed by Strathclyde European Partnership Ltd, the programme executive for Structural Funds in Western Scotland. This arrangement proved very effective in terms of linkages and mainstreaming the RIS approach into the Structural Fund Programme and in terms of creating a strong implementation partnership. Five of the RIS+ pilots received ERDF support, this also demonstrated one of the advantages of the close link with the Objective 2 programme in the region. Key economic development agencies and policy makers have adopted ideas arising from RIS+.

Methodology

RIS+ was set out to address the 12 priority actions identified during the RIS development phase. Learning has been a key driving force in the methodology of RIS+. In order to ensure efficient learning, resources and time have been allocated to: doing (pilots); reflection and interpretation (learning) and communication & dissemination (knowledge).

- **Pilots**

On the basis of the RIS action plan, eight priority projects were developed and implemented. Each of the pilots were managed by a project team representing both public and private sector players. By involving companies throughout the whole process from the project design stage to implementation, right through to final evaluation, it was made sure that the projects were relevant to companies and brought maximum benefit. Each project was experimental and involved employees who would not normally have had the opportunity to benefit from participation in mainstream business support programmes.

Six of the eight RIS pilot projects adopted a mentoring approach to working with individuals to transfer skills and techniques in creativity. A wide range of 'innovation' mentors have been employed ranging from organisational behaviour experts to skills development consultants. Five pilots focussed on Innovation Culture, one on Innovation Skills, one on networking and one on access to finance.

- **Learning**

Exchange workshops with all members of the project teams ensured that the lessons and experiences from the different pilots were shared and enabled project teams to continuously adopt lessons into their own projects. A formal review and evaluation gave insight into the strength and weaknesses of the applied methodology.

The transfer of the know-how from Western Scotland to other regions and vice versa has been achieved through inter-regional networking and participation at network subgroups, such as the industrial regions subgroup and the subgroup on interregional collaboration. This networking activity also provided an opportunity to identify partners for future work such as joint training sessions and an Interreg IIIc proposal on innovation.

- **Knowledge**

The Western Scotland RIS+ adopted four vehicles to assure that its knowledge was disseminated and shared.

- Client management, a system whereby the RIS management team systematically communicated with all partners and stakeholders
- Dissemination workshops, interactive workshops with the key innovation players in Western Scotland
- Innovation Observatory, a website that enables visitors to connect to innovation and learn about RIS+ activities, [innovationworks.uk.net]
- RIS MiniMovie, an innovative communication vehicle designed to stimulate demand for innovation by SMEs.

Activities

The most important activities were:

- **Innovation Culture Pilots**

The innovation culture pilots were the first attempt in the region to try to develop innovation culture in businesses. Culture is an essential ingredient that drives innovation. However culture is difficult to define, measure and change as it deals with values, principles and behaviour. An innovation culture pilot project in each of the Local Enterprise Company areas was developed. Each project involved working with a small group of businesses to develop an innovation culture and innovation management and creativity skills in key individuals. A small project team comprising individuals from the public and private sector was established in each area to design the project and oversee the implementation and each project involved skilled innovation mentors working with businesses. Although each project addressed the same issue, each took a different route and a range of learning points were captured from the different approaches. The projects have produced a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with everyone interested in innovation. A detailed review and evaluation was conducted which provides both practical project and policy lessons.

- **Innovation Skills Development**

Shortage of people with high levels of creativity and problem solving skills is often quoted as a barrier to innovation. The team developed a project to assess the impact on SMEs of providing personal creativity and problem solving training skills. The project worked with groups of students, Modern Apprentices and company employees, providing training on creativity and innovation tools to enable them to complete a business task. These tasks challenged those taking part to demonstrate the power of the creativity and innovation tools, working both individually and in groups. The project allowed to evaluate the effectiveness of different training delivery methods and to establish differences between groups in terms of delivery requirements.

- **Access to Finance**

Access to finance for innovation is often a major barrier to innovation. One of the pilots developed an information system for businesses and business support staff that improves efficiency in securing appropriate finance. Using the internet, the project guides businesses and business development organisations to the optimum finance solution for their project. This prototype website aims to provide information and guidance to companies in Western Scotland.

- **Networking**

Knowledge on innovation travels with great difficulty and therefore the process of sharing innovation ideas and experiences with other companies in the workgroup environment is very beneficial. This activity identified the development of networking activity and partnerships as a key opportunity to encourage and support future innovation activity. The pilot aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of network mechanisms delivered across the target groups. Part of the evaluation process was to examine which mechanisms worked and why, and with which types of networks and companies. The project was able to raise awareness, securing senior management commitment and transfer of expertise across members of existing company networks in Western Scotland.

- **Interregional Collaboration**

Linkages with other RIS/RITTS regions in Europe have been important in creating learning and opportunities for the region. A strong asset of the RIS initiative has been the opportunity to create inter-regional links. These links have been used to connect people to people, connect companies to companies and connect regions to regions.

- **Communication and Dissemination**

Communications and networking have been key activities throughout the RIS initiative. These activities included :

- Communication subgroup of the Steering group
- RIS@WORK newsletter, Newspaper features
- Website [innovationworks.uk.net]
- Client management
- Participation at Higher Education course modules
- Training activity Structural Fund Programme managers
- Partner workshops and exchanges

Most Interesting activities and results

- RIS as a policy instrument has been a powerful tool to influence the use of Structural Funds. RIS thinking now features strongly in the 2000-2006 Structural Fund programme. Innovation has been mainstreamed into the Objective 2 programme for Western Scotland. It has been identified as a horizontal theme and as one of the priorities. In order to support innovation in the programme, an innovation policy group has been established comprising key experts from the partnership. The RIS team has worked in close collaboration with Strathclyde European Partnership in the preparation of the programme, developing guidance notes and scoring criteria and providing training for programme managers and advisory groups.
- The RIS activities have provided a set of lessons on project implementation and policy development, which have been incorporated by the main development partners. An overview of both policy lessons and project lessons can be found on www.innovationworks.uk.net.
- In terms of partnership, the RIS activities have created a local network of committed individuals from both the support network and the private sector to drive the innovation agenda in the region.

- MiniMovie

MiniMovie Communication tool

The minimovie is an innovative multi media product, designed to communicate with SMEs. The minimovie introduces a number of cartoon type characters that educate its viewers and entice a drive for innovation. The first minimovie aims to popularise the characters and subsequent movies will be developed to engage with the SME sector. The minimovie provides :

- An interesting journey towards innovation
- Messages from respected innovative companies
- Case studies, innovation test and quiz
- Sign-posting for further support

Comments and future activities

- Overall the RIS has been a positive experience for the region. The project has succeeded in putting innovation on the policy agenda of the main actors in the business support network and raised awareness amongst SMEs.
- The support network in Scotland has now adopted a large number of RIS-piloted activities. In addition, the successful mainstreaming of RIS into the Structural Fund programme has created opportunities to build new projects based on the lessons of RIS.
- In May 2002, an Innovative Action programme will be proposed to the Commission. This programme will cover the whole of Scotland and is built on the experience of RIS. It will be an innovative programme with a focus on creating demand for innovation, enhance access to knowledge and innovative market entry.

RIS+ Galicia (E)

Goal of the project

The original objectives of the RIS+ Project were to:

- Evaluate the present capabilities of technology supply organisations and identify the needs of companies in terms of support services;
- Create and develop a programme of expertise and assistance, to improve innovation performances of SMEs;
- Develop a Galician network of Interface in order to improve the capacity of the administration to answer the entrepreneurs' needs and to spread the innovation culture in Galician enterprises.

The previous RIS project, by achieving its objectives in the diffusion of strategic information on innovation to Galician SMEs through the creation of a Technological Observatory and of the Galician Network of RTDI Interface organisations, broadly contributed to the preparation of this RIS+.

The Steering Committee was made up of three organisations including the regional Government (Department of Industry, Secretary of Research & Development, and Institute of Economic Development, IGAPE), Consultant companies, as well as of other public, associative and private partners.

Methodology

With the dual purpose of promoting the RIS+ project and of gathering immediate feedback about the project progress itself, the RIS+ partners envisaged three planning stages:

- Setting up of working groups for the implementation of a regional innovation strategy, with a clear definition of priorities for the future;
- Identification and selection of the necessary human resources, and the benefiting companies;
- Promote networking among Interface organisations in order to foster these actions and use a real regional synergy.

The strong implication of the regional Government, by strengthening local partnership between local political leaders, intermediary representatives and beneficiary companies, has sought to add value to the RIS+ project. The identification of current and future R&TDI enterprise needs, triggered by political actions, made possible the transfer of good practices to SMEs, as well as the adaptation of the productive sector to technological changes.

Activities

The main activities were the following:

- Identification and analysis (external and internal diagnosis, SWOT) of 12 support organisations;
- Training of the staff in the technology organisations, designed to transmit the methodologies and the strategic business plans for supporting SMEs;

- Selection of the Human resources for the implementation of the RIS+ project: external consultants, innovation technical managers, interface organisation advisers;
- Selection of the 12 beneficiary companies and analysis of the innovation opportunities in products, processes, internal management and merchandising;
- Elaboration of technological plans for every company, in order to help them reach the competitiveness objectives defined by their global strategy;
- Identification of the resources (needs and abilities) available for the Galician network of interface organisations;
- Elaboration of an external communication strategy and organisation of an internal co-operation between participants within the RIS+.

Most interesting activities and results

- Improvement of the supply and support infrastructure :

Improvement of the supply and support infrastructure

For about 18 months, the existing supply in the field of innovation and technology was completely identified, as well as real needs of several Galician companies in this field.

- A series of 12 regional technology supply organisations benefited from the innovation check-up, based on questionnaires about technology demand, their innovation activities (launching of projects and operational actions), and their future expectations;
- Comparisons were made with other organisations of similar characteristics; an analysis was also carried out on the segmentation of the business services potential market;

Conclusions were integrated in the regional innovation strategy, by regional consensus, in the Department of industry and Commerce plan, through the three actions of the RIS+: adaptation of Support infrastructures, Action plan for company innovation, Network of Interface organisations.

- A Website (in Spanish, English and Galician) provides information about the project and the co-operation arrangements between partners within Galicia; thanks to the *Galician Technological Park* where this website is located, information about technological supply was accessible for SMEs;
- Since the IRE plenary meeting (June 2000), many contacts have been established, mainly with North Portugal (Euroregion, Virtual Net of the Technological Centers / Interreg II, but also within the Western Iberian area (*Galactea* project, with Cantabria, Castilla y Leon and Asturias), the second Innovation meeting of Asturias (RITTS Asturias), and the consideration of the creation of the Iberian Network of Regional Innovation (Spain and Portugal).

Comments and future activities

This RIS+ project has strongly contributed to strengthen the capacities of the Support infrastructures and Interface organisations, in order to improve their awareness of enterprise needs, their responses to address technological issues and to develop cause-effect models for future planning.

- The initial demand patterns largely reflected short-term needs and the additional support offered by the RIS+ project was necessary to encourage SMEs to think of technological innovations as integral to their business.
- A set of technology transfer pilot actions took place, trying to match industrial SMEs demand with regional public policy objectives.

- A significant commitment was required by the support organisations and other intermediaries to bridge the gap between the R&TDI supply and business demand.
- Using a “top-down” approach, rather than a participative “bottom-up” methodology, due to the strong implication of the regional public authorities, the RIS+ project has eventually sought to add value by strengthening local partnership between local political leaders, intermediary representatives and beneficiary companies.
- A *Regional Programme of Innovative Actions* started being developed in the region for 2001-2003 and seems to be inspired by this RIS+ actions. However, with this same pattern of dissemination of technological knowledge to SMEs as well as education and training of entrepreneurs, the accent thus is focused on the internalisation of the production and the co-operation networking.

RIS+ Aragon (E)

Goal of the project

This RIS+ project aimed to implement a number of pilot projects identified in a previous RIS. The overall goal was to improve the competitiveness of regional firms by making a significant change in the innovation culture in business sectors, by promoting a structural technological change in SMEs, but also by strengthening the innovative capacity of the regional Administration. The RIS+ had four main objectives:

- Preparation of a first step aiming at diffusing, transferring and creating the innovation culture, by helping SMEs manage internal changes and investing in innovation infrastructures, as essential factors for the achievement or the maintenance of their competitiveness;
- Innovation awareness of SMEs, in helping their capacity and promoting the new economic activities in emerging sectors, in order to adapt them to technological changes;
- The role of public authorities in promoting new skill, knowledge and potential human resources, by identifying the training needs in enterprises of the region and embedding it in the innovation process.
- Making a benchmark model to facilitate the integration of rural areas in Aragón in an European model for development with full opportunities for people and local communities.

The project was managed by the Technological Institute of Aragon, with the support of the regional Government, the most active Entrepreneurial associations, with the cooperation of the Universidad de Zaragoza and some local consultants have been actively involved in the RIS+. Aragon through ITA has been participating at the same time in a Transregional Innovation Project, focused in the automotive sector, titled *AUTOCHAIN*. Also in *ALIMEDA*, agrofood sector, *ELEC-FARM*, small manufacturers of agrofood machinery, *HASVIDEO*, multimedia platform, *FULPEC*, life prediction in elastic materials, etc. In relation with networks, Aragón belongs to *Innovation Relay Centre network* and is supporting other networks such as women entrepreneurship, the industrial regions subgroup of the IRE and the Red Iberica.

Methodology

The project RIS+ contributed to promote sectoral workgroups (metal-mechanical industry, agro-food, logistics-transport-distribution industries), and to provide SMEs with tools in the matter of innovation and the imbedding of ICT through the e-business:

- Consolidation of 3 workgroups in the fields of metal-mechanical industry, agro-food, logistics-transport-distribution industries;
- Up-dating of the previous RIS strategy;
- Setting-up of the models of Information Society, in particular within the SMEs, as well as launching of an interregional benchmarking campaign in this scope.

In addition there was a complete field work, diagnostic, analysis and development of a pilot center to approach Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and its applications in rural areas.

Activities

RIS+ achievements have been obtained through seven actions and four pilot projects (3 in rural areas and 1 for the administration) :

- **Consolidation of existing RIS workgroups**

- In the previous RIS project, the following fields of activity were identified as priorities : finance, automotive/vehicle, rural, electronics, metal-mechanics, agro-food, transport/logistic, and Administration. In the RIS+, the opportunities of networks, strategic alliances and inter-company co-operation in these fields were analysed.
- **Tools of technological self-diagnosis:** in order to improve SMEs knowledge on their own innovation activities, a self-diagnosis tool was developed; using Internet. A web site has been created to provide comparative information on SMEs to let them have an objective analysis of their R&D effort relative positioning, giving recommendations and pointing out critical issues.
- **Environmentally friendly system in the metallurgy sector:** a handbook was prepared to enable SMEs to appreciate the impact of the regional policy regarding their environment, using a wide Distance Learning programme on Internet that define and gives key environmental indicators to measure and control, and some available international examples to study.
- **Innovation in the regional Administration and its relationships with business activity:** the objective is to streamline and improve the administrative management in the scope of assistance to SMEs; particularly in this pilot oriented to small industries, facilitating on line information, eliminating bureaucracy through the application of new ITC tools in a reengineering implemented process.

- **Information and awareness raising of SMEs in key sectors**

This pilot project has been elaborated with the communication Cabinet of the Regional Ministry of Presidency for promoting the innovation culture in the Region:

- **Innovation culture for Aragonese entrepreneurs,** through a series of conferences, seminars and publications, as well as a Web site. This action is intended to make entrepreneurs aware of the importance of Innovation in their systems of production and marketing; with emphasis in facilitating the access to current channels of co-operation through the existing offer of services for SME innovative initiatives and projects.
- **e-GUIDECOM,** an electronic handbook, has been elaborated to improve entrepreneurs' access to e-trade; this will eventually include the whole range of services available in the region to support SMEs in R&D projects;

- **Exploitation of the advantages offered by ICT to improve human capital capacity in rural areas**

A " *White Paper on the introduction of the Information society in a rural environment*" is available in electronic format to explain the best technical solutions to introduce information technologies in rural areas; a Pilot Centre of Local Services was created in Matarraña, to be extrapolated to the other ones.

- **Innovation in the administration and its relationship with the business community**

By introducing and using ICT, reducing bureaucracy and improving relations with the companies, an operational model for administrative services dealing with SMEs was created for simplification of procedures to SMEs and citizens.

A communication campaign is on-going to maintain RIS+ effect in the culture of innovation, in co-operation with the most relevant graphic mass media in Aragón, using as platform the regular tuesday meeting on technology and innovation.

Most interesting activities and results

- This RIS+ put some emphasis on innovation process of companies. 5 projects were carried out on this issue: Self-Diagnosis Tool, Environmental Use Handbook, e-trade Guide, Distance Learning in the Food sector and the New Technologies Guide in the Transport sector;
- The self-diagnosis tool, based on an easy-handed software and accessible through Internet, is an interesting output; this allows companies to carry out their own technological diagnosis and it provides a database with continuous and comparative feedback, with an entirely guaranteed privacy of information;
- The focus on human capital in rural areas seems to effectively and efficiently respond to a specific need of this region; being part of an on going advance through implemented policies of Aragón Government .
- A close co-operation process took place between the public authorities and the private sector, mainly with the management team of the RIS+ Project, by associating companies and the university; this collaboration constitutes the first steps of a Regional Programme of Innovative Actions for Aragon in the 2001-2003 period.

Comments and future activities

This RIS+, launched at the initiative of the regional Government, actively involved the private sector, which, provided human and material resources to the project. This is a clear asset and a success of the project. Companies, in collaboration with entrepreneurs associations, have withdrawn direct benefits, through the exchange of good practices and training opportunities for SMEs. This partnership was also extended to the academic institutions and Research Centres:

- A genuine benchmarking approach, at an international level, contributed to strengthen the innovation culture, and thus, the social and economic promotion of Aragon, both in rural and urban areas.
- A Regional Programme of Innovative Actions is currently being developed in the region for 2002-2003. Both the RIS and RIS+ experiences have inspired most of the actions proposed. One of these actions aims at co-ordinating better the actors of the regional innovation system. Some R&D and innovation projects in firms will be supported, new technology-based firms will be created and new support organisations will be established. Support to clusters is an additional priority, as well as the use of ICT in rural areas.

RIS+ West Midlands (UK)

Goal of the project

The initial phase of the West Midlands Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) was set up in June 1996 with co-funding from the European Regional Development Fund. The overall aim was to help improve living standards in the region by promoting innovation and strengthening the region's economic base.

The project was developed by a broad partnership of public and private organisations. It sought to provide baseline data upon the levels of innovation within the region's business sectors and make a series of strategic recommendations designed to help increase regional innovation activity and close the gap in productivity with the UK and European average.

In October 1999, the Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands), in common with all the UK Regional Development Agencies (RDA), published its Economic Strategy (WMES) setting out a policy framework for improving the West Midlands competitiveness. The RIS played an important part in the development of the Innovation content of this economic strategy.

The strategy was set out in a 20 point Action Plan based upon four inter-related cornerstones designed to:

- Exploit and improve regional capability via on-going review of sectors, research and technology;
- Catalyse collaborative innovation activity via business networks and networking between the science base and industry;
- Increase investment in research, development and design; equipment; skills and training;
- Enhance innovation culture and spread good practice.

To begin the implementation of the RIS recommendations, and the 20 point Action Plan, the second phase of the strategy, RIS+, was developed.

Each of the twenty actions were geared towards increasing regional economic growth in a number of different ways, including developing innovative businesses through networks, linking industry to education, supporting businesses, increasing skills and enabling access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The strategic objectives of West Midlands RIS+ were:

- To begin the implementation of RIS recommendations and set up pilot projects and pilot networks
- To continue the study of sectorial needs and trends and economic/innovation analysis in the region
- To share and exchange ideas and good practice with comparable RIS/RITTS regions elsewhere

The RIS Steering and Operational Groups were reformed following the launch of the RIS, the remit being to steer implementation and development of the RIS. The RIS Steering Group accepted the responsibility for the delivery of the Innovation & ICT elements of the Economic Strategy. The ICT Steering Group chaired by the RIS+ Project Manager with membership reflecting regional partners, reports through the

RIS Steering Group. This placing of the RIS Groups ensures mainstreaming of RIS activity throughout delivery of the region's economic strategy.

The Midlands Innovation Relay Centre acts as an operating arm of the RIS and aids delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.

The Government Office for the West Midlands agreed that the RIS Steering Group will have responsibility for steering bid approval for Innovation & ICT elements in the European Structural Funds Objective 2 Programme (2000-2006) with the aid of the Innovation Programming Complement (which aims to develop an innovation culture across the European Social Fund programme in the region).

Methodology

- research into the sectorial needs and trends within the region
- delivery of pilot projects aimed at improving the innovation capabilities within the regions SME base
- 8 working groups called "business growth task groups"
- exchange of best practice with comparable regions (particularly with Finnish and Swedish regions)

Activities and Results

- Set up pilot projects and networks :

Coventry & Warwickshire Enterprise Fellowship Scheme

The Scheme aim was to establish 21 Fellowships over the next two years to increase the formation of spin off companies particularly from the academic knowledge base. Additional funding was secured to roll out the programme to the whole of the West Midlands in 2002 as a result of the successful pilot.

13 fellows, 31 jobs created, 8 start up companies created

Environmental Products and Services Unit and Network

The establishment of an Environmental Products and Services Unit and Network in the West Midlands for WM businesses.

Business Growth Task Group formed, exploring and promoting global market opportunities to WM businesses

WM Investment Fund (Advantage Technology Fund)

The establishment of a funding mechanism to make available relatively small amounts of capital investment to stimulate the creation of innovative, technology based, high growth potential SMEs within the region.

8 deals completed, £4.9m invested, 30 jobs forecast

The Mercia Fund

The creation of a fund that, by utilising University Challenge funds and ERDF support, the participating university institutions will be able to commercialise invention and innovation

6 start up companies created, £1.29m invested

Regional Innovation and Competitiveness Observatory (see box below)

The Observatory is a dedicated knowledge resource to inform regional policy makers by providing well researched and documented information about innovation and innovation processes in the region

5 research reports, 2 sector studies, 1 major innovation survey

Regional Foresight (FORENSIC)

The creation of a new approach for West Midlands SMEs to anticipate and prepare for the future and stay ahead of the competition. (Regional Foresight is directly concerned with Scenario Planning and developing visions of the future in the regions key economic sectors). Offering non-discriminatory access to the foresight process for small and large companies alike.

2256 SMEs assisted, 384 SMEs at seminars, 61 SMEs improved

WM e-business offensive

Create a step improvement in the performance of WM regional business advisors in the area of e-business. The project was extended into a 2nd phase. It currently has links into a regional Expert Centre for the Support of Electronic Commerce and Mobile Technologies Programme.

340 business advisors trained

CW2000

Enhance the competitiveness of SMEs by accelerating their adoption of ICT in general, and broadband network services in particular (in the Coventry/Warwickshire sub-region).

16 jobs created, 470 SMEs assisted

WM Regional ePortal

The e-Portal provides an electronic open door for the region. The portal supports the task of developing regional SME networks and partnerships. The second phase will concentrate on added functionality, showcasing new technology and developing further links with other initiatives in WM.

250 SMEs advised, 5 jobs created, 3-4000 hits per month

MONTAGE

The projects aim: To provide coherence to the identification of and support for innovation within the SME industrial base in the West Midlands objective 2 area(s).

258 jobs created (calculated figure -permanent and temporary), 584 SMEs assisted, 43 grants approved, 42 products developed, 44 new processes developed

- Study sectorial needs and trends (see box below) :
The WM regional innovation survey of business : 7 research reports completed.
- Share and exchange ideas and good practice :
The exchange of ideas and good practice has been achieved through:
Presentations at various UK and European seminars, Study tours to exceptional innovative regions to exchange ideas. A senior group of West Midlands partners, lead by the Regional Director of the Government Office, visited Finland and Sweden for one week to exchange best practice. The RIS+ Manager and the Midlands IRC Director attended the Innovating Regions in Europe Plenary meeting in Madrid. Currently, the West Midlands are leading the thematic network SAIL, which focuses on good practice exchanges on academic and industrial co-operation.

Most Interesting activities and results

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- Integration of the RIS with the regional development agency strategy.
 - Major **mainstreaming** of the RIS action plan was made possible into the complement of the objective 2 programme for the West Midlands. For instance,

the West Midlands investment fund, to stimulate the creation of innovative technology based, high growth potential SMEs in the region, is partly funded by the objective 2.

- Building a business model to help medium sized firms is an interesting idea, as well as the regional observatory :

<p>InnovCo</p> <p>The objective of InnovCo is to help groups of businesses enhance their productivity by improving all aspects of their business activities from new product development to improvement in organisation, purchasing, marketing and sales. It is built around a supply-chain type-manufacturing model where small enterprises supply components to medium sized enterprises that produce finished products. With the support of a consultant, the InnovCo model was tested with the automotive sector.</p>	<p>Regional innovation and competitiveness observatory</p> <p>It is designed as a dedicated resource to inform regional policy makers by providing well-researched and documented information about innovation and innovation processes in the region. It should assist the regional development agency in implementing its economic strategy. The University of Birmingham is responsible for this activity and hosts this observatory. Two researchers have been appointed.</p> <p>7 research reports have already been completed :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developments in the automotive industry 2000-2015 ▪ The e-commerce revolution and its impact on firms, premises and location in the West Midlands ▪ The development of nanotechnology ▪ Innovation in the medical devices/supplies industry ▪ Urban-rural interdependencies, policy and innovation - an explorative study of opportunities in the new objective 2 programme ▪ A baseline study on e-business in the region ▪ A study of « techno » based entertainment and tourism <p>A major innovation survey is also under way. It is a follow-up of the original survey conducted in the RIS. A postal questionnaire, designed with the UK Trade and Industry statistics unit and taking into account the latest EU community Innovation survey (CIS), was sent to 6000 businesses. Finally, two other reports have been completed for regional partners in the automotive sector, following the BMW's sale and break up of the Rover group.</p>
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Comments and future activities

- The RIS in the West Midlands was a successful project and provided to the newly created regional development agency (RDA) a sound basis for the elaboration of the new regional economic strategy. In that way, the **mainstreaming** of the RIS has been complete. Many actions recommended have been successfully launched or already implemented, often with an active participation of the private sector .
- Also, the **consensus** built in the RIS has also been maintained, in particular with the regional organisations, universities, national level, etc.
- Concerning the RIS+, it is important to appreciate the scale of change that the creation of the RDA and the development of the regional economic strategy have had on regional economic development structures and strategies. The RIS+ has been able to contribute positively to that period of change and has been itself influenced by the new opportunities opened up by this and other new government funding streams in particular in the higher education sector.
- Today, innovation remains a cornerstone of both the regional economic strategy and the ESF Objective 2 programme and delivery of actions identified in the RIS and RIS+ will continue as part of their ongoing rollout.
- In this context, the RIS+ has contributed to the implementation of the RIS, among several other support programmes, which makes the visibility on the RIS+ specific outputs more complex. For instance, the activities launched in this project have been dissolved in the larger scope of the RDA daily work. Also, many of the staff involved in key RIS projects have gone on into new development areas related to the innovation agenda, where the experience and knowledge that they gained can inform the development and delivery of the new programmes.
- The Innovation Strategy and the RIS+ implementation for the region will be critically evaluated by May 2002 by an external consultant.

- The success of the RIS and RIS+ approach so far has been in its ability to engage all sections of the business, business support and knowledge base. Extending this further into voluntary and community partnerships will be a priority for the future.
- Currently being developed is a proposal for the Regional Innovative Action Programme.

RIS+ Northern Sweden (S)

Goal of the project

The aims of the RIS+ were:

- Increase transparency of the innovation support infrastructure
- Further the development of networks and clusters of SMEs
- Exchange of knowledge and dissemination with other RITTS and RIS regions

This project is a follow-up of a previous RITTS project, launched in 1995. According to the region, it provided a clear and well structured analysis and definition of challenges to increase growth and improve competitiveness of SMEs.

The main recommendations of the RITTS were the following :

- increase SMEs awareness and knowledge concerning regional innovation support infrastructure
- implement a scheme to co-finance SME use of consultants for innovation support
- support SMEs to recruit a person with a bachelor or graduate diploma
- creation of networks and clusters with the purpose to increase interaction with support providers, particularly the universities and technology institutes
- increase the transparency and efficiency of the support infrastructure

It contributed to the planning process of the structural funds in northern Sweden, as well as the design and launch of several Business Innovation Centres and Innovation Relay Centres.

Originally, the project was led by the same partnership as in the RITTS, that is the four northern counties of Sweden (Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Västernorrland and Jämtland) which belong to the regions of Övre Norrland and Mellersta Norrland.

The County of Västerbotten was managing the project for this partnership. In the previous RITTS project, NUTEK (national board for technological development) used to be the co-ordinator. In the RIS+, managed by the Business Innovation Center (BIC), representatives from NUTEK and from the RIS+ project in Northern EU (covering both the north of Sweden and Finland) were invited to the steering committee. Two consultants also supported the project. In the course of the project, the Steering committee opened itself to representatives of universities and chambers of commerce, achieving a strong consensus.

Methodology

- 4 **working groups**, one in each of the four counties to create direct links, co-ordinate and identify synergies with local businesses, universities, public sector organisations and innovation support organisations.
- Several **pilot projects** were launched in the cluster effort, involving some 250 SMEs in three industries 1) Information technology, 2) Hydraulics and 3) small SME consultancies.
- A **feasibility study** in the field of venture capital was carried out. The results will be followed up by regional venture capital operators in a study visit in Luxembourg at the European Investment Fund in 2002.
- On several occasions the regions developed **the relationships with other EU regions** in Spain, France and England as well as with the accession countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Activities

The most important activities are the following ones :

- Several **study trips** to other regions in Europe, bringing home valuable best practice and subjects to discuss.
- Several **work-shops and seminars** to raise the visibility and increase the commitment of major stakeholder in the regional innovation system.
- The co-operation and elaboration of several “**trans-regional**” **clusters** in several industries.
- An interesting **follow-up study** from the RITTS indicated that there are major obstacles to achieve a high level of transparency in the regional innovation system.

Most Interesting activities and results

- **Good partnership** among four subregions, which allows a good mainstreaming into the structural funds, since the members of the steering committee are responsible for these funds in the region. As stated by the managing team, “*the RIS+ is a formidable platform for exchange of information knowledge and best practices within the regional framework.*”
- **Development of strategic skills working in the regional innovation system** was shown in the project, as the stakeholders in innovation and regional development increased their co-operation.
- **An increased regional ability** to evaluate
- Some **mainstreaming** of this project is visible through several project proposals to the Objective 1 and other regional initiatives.

The importance of exchanging with other regions

The most important result was the exchange of knowledge and co-operation with other EU regions and the following study trips :

12 study trips were carried out and some 95 persons from the region participated. Reports from the study trips were disseminated in the region in several work shops. The need for intelligence and exchange with other regions remain an important issue.

Comments and future activities

- The public partnership has been an asset for the project and for its mainstreaming into the structural funds. Since the collaboration with the private sector was too limited, it was decided to enlarge the steering committee to universities and chambers of commerce.
- The project faced difficulties due to some changes in the management. The BIC, which was managing daily the project, had to close its offices in Umea, which eventually led to reduce the RIS+ team to only one person.
- The following fields are regarded as important for future development. The development of schemes for spin-out and spin-off from companies, the development of the region as a testbed for internet services and products and finally the increased efforts to promote business intelligence and technology intelligence in SMEs.
- After the RIS+, the region will continue to contribute to the Innovating regions in Europe network and is also launching a program in the New Innovative Actions Programme (RIS++) for 2001-2003.

RIS+ West Macedonia (GR)

Goal of the project

The main purpose of the RIS+ project of the Region of West Macedonia was the strengthening of the regional Innovation process, through the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Innovation, developed during the RIS exercise. The RIS+ project translated the “experiment” of RIS into an applied project, in which specific and concrete actions followed the previous theoretical analysis.

While the Project maintained the five main priorities of the RIS (see below), the actions and pilot projects have been reviewed, in order to follow the recent evolutions in the regional socio-economic activities.

The RIS priorities were :

- Increase the technological capacity of firms
- Reinforce innovation financing
- Increase the endogenous technology supply
- Increase the technology transfer capability
- Support the system of technological information

Regarding the follow-up of the implementation of the 36 RIS priority actions, which were selected and approved by the end of 1998:

- 12 actions have been implemented through the RIS+ Project, either as originally described, or modified, in order to keep-up with evolutions. 8 out of these actions have actually been “assisted” by RIS+, in order to receive further funding via the 3rd Regional Operational Program (ROP).
- 3 actions have been implemented mainly via the 2nd Regional Operational Program, but also via the Local Development Fund of Kozani. This latter is a unique fund donated by the Public Power Corporation (PPC) to the Prefecture of Kozani, in order to strengthen the development potential of the local economy.
- 21 actions are “pending” for appropriate calls for tenders for their implementation. The foreseen relevant financial mechanisms include the 3rd R.O.P., the Innovative Actions, the Local Development Fund of Kozani, the LEADER+ Initiative, e.t.c.

Methodology

The following actions summarize the methodology undertaken to achieve the Project’s objectives:

- 8 feasibility studies
- 7 pilot actions
- networking and lobbying with regional actors and SME’s
- lobbying with the Management Authorities of the 3rd Regional Operational Program
- communication activities (newsletter, leaflet, website)
- networking with other Innovative Regions, namely the neighboring Regions of Central Macedonia and Thessaly

In terms of pilot actions and projects (see below), a mixed approach of horizontal interventions and cluster – type actions has been selected, reflecting the structure of the Regional economy.

Activities

The following specific pilot actions – studies have been undertaken:

- Pilot Plantation of aromatic Plants
Cooperative of Aromatic Plants (10 entrepreneurs – producers, assisted by 3 experts) did the plantation + Regional Development Agency assisted in future perspectives
- Master Plan for the creation of Marble Residue Management Scheme
The Regional Dev. Agency, the Management Authorities of 3rd R.O.P. had meetings with approx. 15 marble SME's and Mayor of Marble producing area and concluded with the Master Plan
- Diffusion and promotion of information upon subcontracting
Following contacts with P.P.C. and with 10 S.M.E.'s, already operating in the field of sub-contracting, a Database was developed with data on specific sub-contracting procurements.
- Promotion of the use of solid ash residue in S.M.E.'s of the Construction Sector
Two S.M.E.'s of the construction sector developed products, containing solid ash residue, in various proportions, with the assistance of Univ. Laboratories (based in Thessaloniki)
- Networking of Wood sector S.M.E.'s – establishment of relevant Website – Business Plan for the establishment of Wood Products' Quality Laboratory
Approx. 15 S.M.E.'s of the Wood sector were contacted, to give their contact details and contribute to the brainstorming activity, which led to the development of the B.P. Further, a technical and feasibility analysis was carried out for its inclusion in the 3rd R.O.P., as well as the sub-Web-site
- Study on potential of promoting agro tourism – networking among S.M.E.'s
25 agrotourism units were “assessed” by the tourism expert, who gave his overall view of the situation, along with proposals for future interventions
- Technology audit – transfer of know-how
One manufacturing S.M.E. participated to a Technology Audit.
- Demonstration of operational potential for the Regional Innovation Office
50 S.M.E.'s contacted, 22 replied and filled in the questionnaire, via personal interviews. A thorough analysis was produced and included in the 3rd R.O.P.
- New clusters
3 existing clusters (the only existing clusters in the Region: fur, metal, wood-metal) were conducted and gave their view. Further, theoretical analysis has focused on emerging clusters.
- New financial products
The Euro Info Centre, the Management Authorities of 3rd R.O.P., the European Commission, national financial tools, were engaged in this survey.
- Transfer of know-how on waste disposal recycling potential
The recycling agency communicated with more than 900 enterprises, either directly, or via their representative bodies. With the assistance of experts, it drew conclusions upon future scheme.
- Feasibility Study for the creation of Seed Capital in West Macedonia
The Chambers of Economy, the Cooperative Bank, as well as few (3) private Banks gave their overall view on Venture Capital and Seed Capital, along with some 30 S.M.E. (the most important of the Region, in terms of assets, turnover, management, e.t.c.)
- Feasibility Study for the Establishment of a Regional Quality & Measurements Laboratory : Some 20 manufacturing S.M.E.'s gave their input on their needs and a Feasibility Study was included in the 3rd R.O.P.

- Feasibility Study for the Establishment of a Regional Dairy Products' Quality Laboratory : Some 200 dairy S.M.E.'s were present in the four meetings (in each Prefecture), held by the Technical Educational Institute of Florina, assisted by the management team of RIS+.
- Potential of Industrial Automation in West Macedonia
The Region of Central Macedonia and the Dev. Agency of Central Macedonia gave their experience upon its implementation in Central Macedonia. Local firms (approx. 25 manufacturing) provided their view on the issue and the Actor in charge, with the assistance of one consulting company that drew a general analysis for its inclusion in the 3rd R.O.P.

Most interesting activities / results

- A substantial acceleration of the process to incorporate Innovation within the regional mentality, as many regional actors, stakeholders and SME's has taken place in the Project
- A significant filling of the Innovation gap, with the establishment and / or improvement of relevant support structures
- A strong interaction between the Innovation Projects and the Structural Funds, which has led to some remarkable results, such as the incorporation in the 3rd Regional Operation Program of the Regional Innovation Office, the Wood Products' Quality Laboratory, specific measures to support the technology audits and the industrial automation, etc.
- Interregional networking, both with more Innovative Regions, as well as with less innovative Regions, such as the neighboring Regions of Korce (Albania) and Bitola (F.Y.R.O.M.).

Comments and future activities

- The RIS+ has significantly altered the overall regional mentality on Innovation and Development issues. The regional Innovation perspective is now - more than ever - realistic and visible and the actors involved are determined in achieving the global strategic target of turning the Region of West Macedonia into an "Innovation Society".
- In this sense, the combination of RIS and RIS+ is innovative in itself, due to its well-balanced mix of analytical work and empirical action. The RIS+ Project has also strengthened the local consensus building among actors of the region. Thus, representatives from the public and private sector, as well as academics, continued to cooperate to further increase the added value from the project and to maximize the benefits from the experience gained over the years.
- The actors involved are now committed into submitting a proposal in the framework of Innovative Actions for May 2002, aiming at fostering the development of Innovation in the Region. To this end, the twin approach of horizontal actions and cluster interventions, successfully tested during the RIS+ Project, will serve as the basis for the development of this proposal.

RIS projects⁴

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⁴ The information presented in this publication is based on three types of sources : reports prepared by project managers (final, interim and progress reports), some meetings with key regional actors of the projects and some visits on site. All summaries were given to project managers for approval.

RIS Wallonie (B)

Goal of the project

Called Prométhée, with reference to Prométhée who gave fire to men after stealing it from the gods, this project aims to help the region manage the future technological challenges.

The three objectives of the project were :

- A better knowledge of the innovation potential of the region (SWOT and mapping of innovation in the region, including technology forecasting)
- Stimulate partnerships and synergies to launch clusters
- Organise a supply network to respond to firms needs and create a favourable environment for innovation in the region

The project was managed by the Région Wallonne (DGTRE, Directorate General for technology, research and energy) with the support of several Belgian and international consultants. 2/3 of the budget was dedicated to strategic planning through studies and experts. Around 200 people have been actively involved in this project, mainly through working groups. The Steering Committee, composed of both private and public sector representatives, was chaired by a private sector leader.

Methodology

- **Study** on 40 key technologies for the region
- **Study** on the regional potential for these technologies
- **Cluster pilot programme** to build 5 clusters in some of the 40 key technologies.
- 3 **Working groups** to tackle the issues of : the creation of a network of support organisations, valorisation of research and financing of innovation.

Activities

The following activities were developed :

- Studies on the **40 key technologies** for the region for the next 5 to 10 years and the regional potential. Carried out by consultants, these studies showed the emergence of specific competence poles organised around key actors in five sectors : information technologies, material/chemistry, equipment goods, biotechnology, environment/energy/transport/logistics/building/cities.
- Support to 5 **clusters** : This included an awareness phase, a strategic analysis of emerging clusters and the definition of projects in the clusters.
- Organisation of the **supply network** and a **favourable environment** for innovation: In this network, 4 types of actors are involved:
 - universities and higher education institutes
 - support organisations
 - financial and accompanying organisations
 - administration

Three working groups were created to discuss the following issues :

- organisation of the network of support organisations. This group focused its analysis and discussion on non or low innovative firms. It decided to work on 4 actions : improve the knowledge on existing support organisations, set up a financial framework for technological organisations, improve the visibility on competencies of the support organisations, evaluate the relevance of public innovation support schemes.

- valorisation of university research results through technology transfer to existing firms or spin-offs.
 - access to risk capital for innovative projects, in particular seed and start up capital. It was considered that the role of the existing BIC should be reinforced
- **Information and dissemination activities** : through the working groups, 200 key regional actors in the innovation field were involved. Two major conferences were organised with 300 participants to present the results and the regional strategy. A newsletter was also diffused to 400 people. The web site of the DGTRE presents the project and all related documents.
 - **Exchange of experience with other regions** : Members of the management unit participated to an IRE seminar on the analysis of SMEs needs. Contacts were developed with the Dutch region of Limburg. Also, a visit was organised in Leeds (Yorkshire and Humberside) to discuss their RIS experience and in particular the creation of clusters.

Most interesting activities / results

- The 40 key technologies have become **a tool for the regional authorities** to prepare their support programmes and select the fields they want to support in priority. It contributed to promote the technological potential and is used as a show window. Some regional actors had difficulties with the results of this study oriented on short/medium term technological development. Notably, universities feared that basic research support was affected. Scientific and industrial actors developing activities in other technological fields feared also to be excluded from financing programmes. These issues were addressed by a communication work detailing how authorities would use this tool. They also emphasised the utility of a similar work focusing on medium/long term oriented research. A benchmarking dimension will be also added, to compare Wallonia with 13 other European regions.
- The organisation of the support network led to a **new regional decree** which created an approval procedure **for technological centres** (including a Charter for fixing the price of services to firms provided by research organisations) as well as terms of reference for the creation of a web site playing the role of a portal for innovation support in the region.
- A **working group of university rectors** has been created for the valorisation of research. This field of activity will need to be further developed in the future.
- The first **fair for risk capital** in Belgium was created in 2000 thanks to the work of the third working group. A second fair was organised the following year, on a much larger scale thanks to the Belgian presidency of the European union in the second semester of 2001.

- The **process of creation of the five clusters** is interesting :

Cluster policy in Wallonia

After having analysed what was done elsewhere and the current literature on this issue, a **call for project** was launched by the regional authority which was successful : 15 projects involving almost 100 partners were proposed, all with a private sector leadership. 5 were selected, 3 of which in the Information and communications field, one in the material/chemistry field and the last one in the field of equipment goods.

Each cluster receives the **support of an expert** (selected by the cluster itself and paid by the regional authority) to set up the cluster, identify the partners, analyse the market, the technical challenges and the needs and prepare concrete projects. Public support lasts one year.

The **expected results** of each cluster are :

- A detailed analysis of the needs and hindering factors and clarification of the objectives
- The elaboration of an action plan focused on improving the level of innovation in firms and on innovative projects
- Creation of co-ordination, management and financing mechanisms for the cluster to work on a long term basis.

Considering the success of this initiative, a second call for project will be launched. Also, the five pilot clusters will receive some support for another year.

- At the end of the project, 4 **priorities were set for future** regional initiatives in the field of R&D and innovation policy :
 - Implementation of a strategic approach of research at all levels (demand-led research with a clear valorisation dimension)
 - Concentration of public funding on specific targets to create a good R&D infrastructure and to support sectors with a good potential
 - Networking of actors to stimulate exchange of experience, to reach the critical mass, to avoid overlapping and to promote a specialisation based on excellence.
 - Reinforcing the role of public sector in animating and accompanying the innovation process

Comments and future activities

- In this project, the focus has been on the **technological** dimension of innovation. A choice was made to work on technologies and not sectors, partly to avoid dealing with sectoral interests defence mechanisms. The foresight exercise focused on 40 key technologies, around which the experimental clusters should be created. This could have led to a particular emphasis on the **supply side** of innovation (universities and research centres) but the clusters programme, in which firms had to take the lead in each of the 5 clusters, contributed to balance the project by allowing an active participation of the demand side. Also, the working groups discussed the issue of how to stimulate innovation in firms, including non or low innovative firms.
- In terms of **methodology**, this RIS covered all key issues of a "traditional" RIS (consensus building, analysis, strategy and action plan elaboration) but using an interesting pattern. They decided to carry out a regional foresight exercise within which they did a SWOT analysis and then on a pilot programme on clusters, both being key issues for regional development. To tackle some specific problems of the innovation system (creation of a supply network, valorisation of university research results and lack of financing possibilities), they decided to work with working groups, one for each issue. This seems a quite pragmatic approach, adapted to the local context, and in which lessons from previous experiences have been taken into account.

RIS Epirus (GR)

Goal of the project

The RIS Epirus is one of the last RIS projects launched in 1998.

The overall aims of this project were:

- To give an immediate answer to the question of “how can effective co-operation among SMEs, local authorities and organisations providing services to firms be promoted”
- To elaborate a “formula for answering firms’ innovation needs, with the support of public and private sectors.

It was managed by the Business Innovation Centre (BIC) of Epirus with the General Secretariat of the region and the University of Ioannina. In the Steering Committee, representatives from the four prefectures, the four chambers of commerce and the technical college were also present. Unfortunately, a change of project manager occurred 6 months before the end of the project.

Methodology

The project followed closely the traditional RIS methodology. It was organised in three phases :

- Preparation of the work programme and information gathering
- Analysis of the current situation (demand and supply analysis) and launch of 5 pilot projects
- Establishment of priorities, implementation and evaluation of the action plan.

The analysis and strategic reflection focused on 6 sectors : ecological tourism, fish farming, silver craft, dairy products, non –metal minerals, local agricultural products. Working groups were created for each of these sectors. 6 local working meetings were also organised to reach stakeholders in the various parts of the region.

In total, 11 studies were carried out.

Activities

The most important activities are the following :

- In the **first phase**, the steering committee was established, as well as the management unit, the working groups and the consultants were selected. Existing studies were collected and analysed. A Geographical Information System database of local firms was created as a tool for identifying firms’ needs and facilitating policy discussions. Carried out by the University of Ioannina, this GIS database includes 2500 firms. Promotion activities were also launched through brochures, press releases and the organisation of the first Innovation forum in July 1999, with 40 participants.
- In the **second phase**, the selection of the 6 sectors was made. For these sectors, some desk research was carried out to identify the main sectoral and technological trends with the support of experts and the working groups. The supply and demand of innovation services for firms were also analysed. 350 face-to-face interviews were carried out. **5 pilot projects** were also launched :
 - ❑ a directory of 170 manufacturing SMEs in Epirus was published in English and Greek (the first ever published in the region)
 - ❑ a competition was organised for new and innovative business plans
 - ❑ an ecotourism web site and booklet were created

- several training seminars were organised on innovation issues
- a workshop and a study were organised on the issue of clusters, with the expertise of EBN.
- The **third phase** consisted in preparing and launching the action plan. An international expert panel was organised to discuss the Plan with the regional actors, in May 2001. Eventually, this plan mainly focused on 5 issues detailed into 41 actions:
 - The technological restructuring of the production, the strengthening of local firms efforts for innovation, the improvement of business management and activities, the guarantee of products' quality and their promotion, the development of RTDI infrastructures.
 - The development of R&D services and of support organisations
 - The improvement of the knowledge potential and the innovation culture of human resources in the region
 - The financial support for the development of technology and innovation
 - The evaluation and redefinition of the strategy.

Some complementary activities were carried out to identify financing opportunities for innovative activities in the regional structural funds. 11 millions euros are available for "development and promotion of innovation" in the measure 3 of objective 1 programme.

The project was promoted through a press conference at the beginning of the project, local TV and radio coverage as well as brochures and leaflets (6000 copies). A web site was created to present the project (www.bicepirus.gr/ris).

Networking activities were also developed with several European regions, in particular through the "Interregional cooperation subgroup" which met 3 times during the course of the project. Networking took place also within the Greek RIS/RITTS network. The main consultant was involved in the RIS Thessaly.

Most Interesting activities and results

- The working groups were launched during the first year, as a pilot phase. They contributed to raise the regional awareness on innovation as they involved around 120 participants. Their tasks were to examine each sector's present condition, discuss innovative ideas and projects and suggest future innovative actions. They met three times but unfortunately, their activity was more limited after this first year.

The Ecotourism working group

First group to be launched, the ecotourism group was used as a model for the organisation of working groups in the RIS. The group leader was selected from an international pool of experts. He came from the University of Sheffield Hallam in the UK and had already working experience in Greece. The other members were representatives from the private and public sector. A call for experts interested to participate was published in January 2000. The main output of this group is a SWOT analysis of the sector on the basis of which, after several meetings, an initial report was drafted by the leader and evaluated by the group. During the following meetings, several actions were identified to be included in the mainstream structural funds :

- creation of a manual for foreign tour operators ("Ecotourim travel trade manual") in May 2000
- creation of a ecotourim web site also for tour operators (www.ecotour-epirus.gr)
- visits to other European destinations to meet tour operators, promote the region in order to be included in the yearbook of ecotourism travel destinations.

The two first actions were implemented in 2000 and the funds for the third action were earmarked.

- The GIS database and the business directory which were new in the region.

Comments and future activities

- The action plan seems to have taken into account the results of the analysis phase but it seems to have had a rather limited policy dimension. No timetable or budget were foreseen for its implementation.
- The most positive result of this project might be more related to its process : i.e. awareness raising on innovation of firms and public sector, lessons learned for the consensus building and management of the project. The sectoral working groups have contributed to raising the regional awareness but their activities seem to have slowed down after the first year.
- These limitations might be linked to the late change in the management of the project.

RIS Algarve (P) - Huelva (E)

Goal of the project

This project, called "ETTIRSE" (Strategy of technology transfer and innovation for the south-west regions of Europe) is one of the very few cross-border RIS. It took place in the Province of Huelva (in the region of Andalusia, Spain) and the most southern Portuguese region : Algarve.

Proposed by the Algarve region (Coordinating Commission of the Algarve Region), and supported by its Spanish partner region (Diputacion Provincial de Huelva), this project had the following aim: *"To create 2 regional innovation and technology transfer strategies, for the Algarve region and the Province of Huelva, with strong linkages and interchange of added value."*

The specific objectives of the project were :

- To analyse of the various initiatives and support structures for innovation
- To work out a co-ordination strategy based upon the outcomes of this analysis
- To promote the creation of innovation and technology transfer centres
- To present a list of actions targeted at the satisfaction of firms' needs
- To promote cross-border co-operation, exchange of experiences and technology transfer.

The management of this cross-border project was complex by nature (see section on activities below). The contact organisation for the European Commission was the Coordinating Commission of the Algarve Region.

Methodology

This project followed the traditional RIS methodology quite closely but with the particularity of having two regions. It consisted of three phases :

- **Phase 0** : organisation of the management, consensus building, selection of priority sectors and promotion activities
- **Phase 1** : Analysis of the supply and demand of innovation, selection of pilot projects, discussion on the establishment of a permanent regional and trans-regional innovation system for both regions
- **Phase 2** : Preparation of the pilot projects' execution, preparation of the permanent regional and trans-regional innovation system.

Activities

The most important activities are the following :

- **Phase 0** lasted a year and consisted of the launch of the organisation structure of the project, particularly complex given the participation of two different regions. A general Steering committee was created along with two regional steering committees. The management was also divided between one central management unit and two regional management units.
To stimulate consensus building, a specific workshop was organised in June 1999 using the GOPP methodology (Goal Oriented Project Planning). It led to a consensus on the overall goal of the project, mentioned above.

The selection of sectors of economic activity took into account already identified sectors for the mainstream structural funds in both areas as well as sectors of special interest for both regions. Eventually, three types of sectors were selected :

- Sectors of global interest and with a cross-border dimension : tourism and leisure, food sector, environment and renewable energies
 - Sectors of special interest for the Algarve region : materials technology and building technological processes
 - Sectors of special interest for the Huelva province : food industry
- Data and documentation on these sectors, with regional and cross-border scope, were gathered during this phase. Finally, a logo was also designed for the project.

- **Phase 1** lasted also a year and was based mainly on consultants work. On the one hand, the analysis of supply and demand of innovation led to the building of a matrix of supply and demand for innovation in each region and a comparison between the two regions. The analysis was based on a mail questionnaire and face-to-face interviews, involving 400 companies in Huelva and 450 in Algarve. The results (which confirmed, among other things, the absence of a network or regional innovation “system” in each of the two regions) were discussed in the general steering committee in September 2000.

On the other hand, pilot projects were selected by the management unit, according to their interest for the regions and their critical mass to benefit from existing experiences. 4 Sectoral working groups (for agro-food, tourism, environment/renewable energies and building) which met in both regions (7 meetings in total) also contributed to this selection. Finally, the pilot projects were:

In Algarve

- Promotion of renewable energy
- Marketing strategy for regional food products
- Increase in value of tourism/Leisure (creation of an Algarve-Huelva electronic platform for tourism)
- Setting up of a technological development centre for building construction
- Restructuring of the regional laboratories network
- Regional forum of innovation and technology

In Huelva

- Setting up a transborder Institute of Energy
- commercialisation of quality labelled products (“Onubense”)
- Information society (including a GIS system)
- Plan for emergencies and prevention of transborder risks
- Setting up of a transborder bureau of innovation and quality

In phase 1 also, discussions were animated by the consultants on “the more adequate and efficient creation of regional innovation systems”. Meetings were organised with the suppliers in one side and actors from the demand side on the other. Then, a joint meeting allowed exchanges between both types of actors. A web site was also created during this phase (www.ettirse-ris.com).

- **Phase 2** lasted five months and resulted in the preparation of the pilot projects’ execution and the preparation of a “permanent regional and trans-regional innovation system”. At this stage, there was some concern about deepening the cross-border dimension of the project and the solution found was to use the pilot projects to provide concrete results. Finally, at the end of the project, another

GOPP seminar was held to reinforce the consensus building. Some strategic guidelines were elaborated for the innovation policy in both regions as well as broad suggestions to improve co-operation within and between the two regions.

Most Interesting activities and results

- Good follow-up of the RIS through the new Innovative Actions programme in Algarve (see section on future activities below). The Algarve region intends to continue with the following pilot projects :
 - Promotion of renewable energy
 - Marketing strategy for food products of Algarve
 - Increase in value of tourism and leisure in the region
 - Technological development center for building construction
 - Restructuring of the regional laboratory network
 - Regional centre for innovation (including also activities for the Permanent regional and transregional innovation system)
 - On the other hand, Huelva will pursue the following pilot projects through the Interreg III programme with Alentejo, Algarve and Andalucia :
 - Transborder institute of energy
 - Commercialisation of quality products
 - Information society : digital Huelva and Algarve
 - Plan for emergencies and prevention of cross-border risks
 - Transborder bureau of innovation and quality

Comments and future activities

- In this specific project, the added value of carrying out a regional innovation strategy in two neighbouring regions at the same time is not very clear. It has made both the management (with three steering committees) and the process (two supply and demand analyses) of the RIS more complicated. How far can a real consensus building process be possible in two regions at the same time, even if they use some interesting techniques such as GOPP ? Building a regional innovation strategy already seems a complex and ambitious exercise in a single region.
- Some cross-border activities might be easier and more relevant in the future, once each region has clarified its own innovation context.
- Both regions will receive some funding through the new Regional Programmes of Innovative Actions for 2000-2006. The programme in the Algarve, also managed by the Coordinating Commission of the Algarve Region, clearly presents the PRAI as a follow-up of the RIS, with a special focus on tourism activities (in a broad sense, covering also building sector, agro-food products, etc.). The biggest action of this programme will be the creation of a regional Centre of innovation (25% of the total budget). On the other part of the border, the region of Andalucia will develop a PRAI more focused on information society issues, such as public access to internet in rural areas and support to regional cultural heritage and traditions. In this PRAI, the legacy of the RIS is less visible.
- The preparation by the Province of Huelva of a proposal for an Interreg IIIA programme was also mentioned in the RIS final report.

RIS Cantabria (E)

Goal of the project

The overall goal of this project was to create a favourable environment for innovation by elaborating a Regional Innovation Strategy suitable to the regional needs and agreed by all the actors involved in the innovation process.

The specific objectives of the RIS were:

- To promote an innovative culture among firms in the region
- To increase investment in RDTI in order to improve the regional technological capacity, especially for SMEs
- To co-ordinate actions developed by existing innovative support structures by taking into account firms' needs
- To increase the financing and assistance for innovative enterprises

It was managed by the regional development agency (SODERCAN) for the regional ministry for industry, work and technological development of the Government of Cantabria. SODERCAN is also in charge of the actions related to innovation in the regional operational programme. The Steering committee had 30 members, including members with high responsibilities in the regional government (President of the region, general director of the regional administration, president of the association of entrepreneurs, vice-rector of the university, etc.) among which almost half represented the private sector. Trades unions and financial organisations were also active. A smaller executive committee co-ordinated the work with the support of Spanish consultants, from the region itself and from other Spanish regions.

Methodology

- 40 face-to-face interviews with entrepreneurs
- 350 companies contacted by mail to assess their main needs for innovation with 120 positive replies (34%)
- 20 technological audits from which 12 projects arose
- Postal questionnaire sent to 17 departments of the University and 40 face-to-face interviews with key supply organisations in the region
- 6 sectoral workshops in key sectors with the participation of more than 70 companies : food, metal working, chemical, electrical components / machinery and mechanical equipment, building materials, textile and clothing industries.
- SWOT analysis of the region
- 3 study visits to other European regions (Wallonie, Dutch Limburg and Shannon).

Activities

The project was organised in three stages :

- **Stage 0** : Project organisation, documentation, design and public presentation of the project, elaboration of the work plan. An analysis of the regional economy was carried out (using a SWOT approach) and the sectors/clusters were selected according to their importance in the regional GDP. Also, a sample of firms were selected for the analysis of demand.
- **Stage 1** : Three different studies were carried out : on the innovation demand in the region, on the innovation supply and last a demand/supply integration analysis. Six sectoral workshops were also organised with more than 70

companies participating. According to the managers of the RIS, these workshops were *“an important element of mobilisation, social participation and consensus building an on the identification of innovation and entrepreneurial technological demand, the regional technological offer, the relevant national and international industrial and technological trends.”* Following the 20 technological audits, 12 innovation projects were prepared and presented for funding at the National Centre for Industrial Technological Development (CDTI), which gave a positive opinion on 8 out of the 12.

- **Stage 2** : Strategic goals and objectives were set during this phase. This led to the definition of the action plan. Finally, the RIS plan was elaborated. The final objective of the strategy was *“to improve the innovation capacity of the regional industrial fabric as key factor for competitiveness and for employment creation and sustainable growth.”*

Some **dissemination and promotion activities** were also launched : The RIS benefited from a wide media coverage in the regional press. A specific seminar on “Introduction to innovation policies” was organised for journalists. A web site (<http://www.cantabria.org/ris>) and a CD-ROM were also developed. The final action plan was largely diffused.. All these activities largely contributed to promote the project and raise awareness on innovation in Cantabria.

In terms of **interregional learning**, three study visits were organised to Wallonie (B), Limburg (NL) and Shannon (IRL). The delegation of Cantabria consisted of 6-7 people from the executive committee (Director general of the regional administration, director of the association of entrepreneurs, secretary general of the university, director of the development agency, etc.). The main lessons learnt dealt with cluster development (identification of clusters by technologies and not by industrial sectors - Wallonie), the use of “parenthood” of large companies for SMEs (in the PLATO project - Dutch Limburg), information society (Shannon) and incubating activities (University of Limerick and Shannon Development Agency). But these visits were also very fruitful for consensus building within the delegation of Cantabria itself.

Finally, 3 strategic areas were identified and 10 action lines selected :

- **Encouragement of innovation culture and technological innovation :**
 - Support to the generation of entrepreneurial innovation projects and the creation of new technology-based firms
 - Support to the creation of stable structures of innovation in firms
 - Support to the information and communication technologies implementation in the management of firms
 - Promotion of new technology incorporation and modernisation by means of technology transfer
- **Promotion of technology supply :**
 - Reinforcement of the technological collaboration between the university of Cantabria and firms
 - Encouragement of the technological offer
 - Support to the improvement and qualification of human resources of the firms
- **Promotion of complementary policies :**
 - Development of quality integrated systems
 - Support to the improvement of the environmental management in specific sectors
 - Promotion of collective actions of sectoral character

Precise evaluation indicators were identified for all 10 action lines.

Most Interesting activities and results

- The RIS contributed to build a **good dialogue** between the actors involved in regional innovation policy. The active participation of organisations representing the private sector is also an asset.
- For the Government in particular, and the regional development agency, the RIS created a **new policy framework for innovation**, which improved its ability to budget innovation support actions. It also improved its visibility towards the other regional actors (university, association of entrepreneurs, chamber of commerce and industry, etc.).
- No real **mainstreaming** was possible in the current objective 1 framework because the RIS finished only recently, despite the fact that the organisation managing the RIS was also in charge of the innovation activities of the operational programme.
- But the PRAI came at the **good moment** to implement some of the actions of the RIS with the aim of facilitating their transposition at a later date in the objective 1 operational programme.
- The good media coverage and the dissemination activities are quite positive for the RIS in Cantabria.

Comments and future activities

- This RIS, which is one of the latest, eventually came at the right moment for the region. A good dialogue evolved during the project and can be continued in the new Regional Programme of Innovative Actions.
- As a result of the RIS, a Technology Park of Cantabria will be created, as well as an Observatory for the ICT sector, with national support.
- The new Regional Programme of Innovative Actions for 2000-2006, accepted by the Commission will include the following activities related to the RIS :
 - Inter-firms co-operation to create a new culture of “co-opetition”, to help firms reach a critical mass and contribute to the development of specialised innovation support services.
 - Development of a decentralised network to stimulate innovation in local areas.
 - Fostering the creation of new e-firms
 - Updating the innovation strategy of Cantabria
 - Participating in interregional networks

RIS Altmark, Harz and Magdeburg (D)

Goal of the project

This German RIS, called RAHM (Region of Altmark, Harz and Magdeburg), covers the three areas (regions for planning) of Altmark, Harz and Magdeburg within the Land of Sachsen-Anhalt.

The aims of the RIS were:

- Building a strong long-term consensus among all parties involved in the innovation process in the region and ability to focus on promising topics
- Identification of the demand for innovation, particularly among SMEs
- Identification of the offer of innovation, particularly to SMEs
- Definition of a strategy and priority measures for the implementation of the RIS
- Cross-sectoral networking and co-operation with the RIS+ Halle-Leipzig-Dessau
- Launch of the implementation and assessment

The project was managed by the innovation agency tti Magdeburg GmbH, which is also partner of the Innovation Relay Centre Niedersachsen/Sachsen-Anhalt, located in Magdeburg on behalf of the the Regional council Magdeburg. The Steering committee was composed of 30 members from firms, universities, R&D organisations, the three regional administrations, Land administration, finance institutions, chambers of commerce and associations of entrepreneurs, firms as well as regional and international experts. It was chaired by the President of the regional council and the deputy president was the president of the chamber of commerce and industry. It met four times during the project. A smaller executive group steered the project on a more regular basis.

Numerous exchanges took place with the neighbouring RIS+ launched in Halle-Leipzig-Dessau which focused on supporting activities in the chemical and plastic industry. Also, the region collaborated with Bulgarian and Greek partners in a RIS NAC (new associated countries).

Methodology

- This project followed the **traditional RIS methodology** with a definition phase, an analysis phase and an implementation phase.
- But a first pilot project was already ready for implementation at an early stage of the project, during the definition phase.
- In the course of the project, the German **InnoRegio initiative** was incorporated in the RIS process. Thematic groups were further developed accordingly (a new tourism group) and the implementation phase was greatly influenced by this competition. 5 pilot projects were successful in the Innoregio competition.
- Finally **7 Thematic groups** were created, with 5 to 15 members, to carry out activities within the RIS (discussions on the results of analyses, preparation of projects, Innoregio competition, 5 workshops organised, etc.):

- Innovative services
- Implementation of the information society
- Innovative environmental technology
- Medical and pharmaceutical technology
- Plants as resources
- Mechanical and plant engineering
- Tourism

- 250 **interviews** were carried out during the analysis phase with firms.
- In total, 350 enterprises, 12 Universities and research organisations, 10 innovation providers and 10 chambers, associations, clubs and administrations participated directly to the RIS.

Activities

In the action plan, four “strategic cornerstones” were detailed into action lines :

Strategic cornerstones	Action lines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altmark-Harz-Magdeburg region as location for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical and plant engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Plants as resources <input type="checkbox"/> Medical technology <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative environmental technology <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of the information society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic co-operation to develop creativity potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic networks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation supporting environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support and financing of innovations <input type="checkbox"/> Development of demand-oriented human resources <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation promoting service providers <input type="checkbox"/> Product development and innovation centres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outward representation and internationalisation of the RAHM region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Location marketing <input type="checkbox"/> International networks <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism

25 pilot projects were developed in line with these priorities. Examples are:

- Virtual development and training centre (VDTC) providing training and coaching activities for SMEs (product development and innovation centre for mechanical and plant engineering)
- Creation of a competence centre for construction, computation, tool and prototype construction in which machines are used in a co-operative way
- Creation of a biotechnology network involving R&D organisations and seed growing and industrial firms
- Creation of an innovation network for automotive sector MAHREG
- Scrap car recycling / total car recycling
- Development of technology centres for renewable
- Series of International Innovation Seminars in Magdeburg on several topics of the innovation strategy

In terms of **dissemination and communication**, many presentations of the project were given in conferences and meetings, in particular in the InnoRegio context and for the preparation of new structural funds programmes. Also, three international conferences on innovation were organised in the region, with 150-200 participants, including more than 50 firms each time. These events were mentioned in the regional press and radio.

Most Interesting activities and results

- The elaboration of the RIS occurred at the same time as the preparation of the new objective 1 operational programme, which contributed to a **good mainstreaming** of the project. For instance, the RIS team was involved in the discussion on the Land Sachsen-Anhalt initiative called LIST (Land Innovation Strategy). *“With RIS RAHM, as a platform, the enterprises and research institutions have been and still are, given opportunities to prepare high quality co-operation projects.”* In another regional initiative on the Land , called REGIO, some pilot projects of the RIS have been integrated: for mechanical engineering, biotechnology and renewable raw materials.
- Great advantage was taken of the German **InnoRegio** initiative which came at a perfect time for the RIS. More than 30 presentations of the RIS RAHM were given to promote and discuss the RIS. 5 pilot projects were eventually selected.
- The **wide participation of actors** in the RIS process is an asset for the project: 350 firms, 12 Universities and research organisations, 10 innovation service providers, etc. 80 firms directly expressed an interest in co-operating in the thematic project groups. Through the working groups, a good dialogue was initiated or strengthened, sometimes even in difficult contexts. For instance, in the tourism sector, consensus building and co-operation was more difficult than in others. This is due to the limited influence and “sphere of thoughts” of the actors involved, according to the management team. *“Tourism in the region does not extend to the entire region but is limited by political districts. RIS RAHM offers very good approaches and opportunities to open this view and develop it in a wider area.”*
- **Networking** with other regions was perceived as positive for the project. The region participated to the sub-group on “Best practice in innovation policy” and had exchanges with Limburg (NL), Lower Austria (A), Ireland and the Midlands (UK). Also, use was made of the Innovation Relay Centre network, to which belongs the organisation managing the RIS RAHM.

Virtual Development and Training Center (VDTC)

objective: improving the competitiveness of SMEs through 3D computer visualisation, better access to high technology

strategic focuses: innovation promoting service providers

regional integration: RIS RAHM, InnoRegio, REGIO project, Regional action plan Magdeburg

effects on the economy and labour market: concentration of regional competencies, efficiently placing the SMEs in the market, increasing the attractiveness of the region, consolidation of new workplaces, creation of new, lasting workplaces

financing (12.000.000 €): own resources, structural funds EU/state and federal funds (InnoRegio)

actors: 45 enterprises, 6 research institutions; 8 innovation promoting service providers; 7 chambers, associations, clubs

period of realisation: 2000 - 2004

Comments and future activities

- The project received a good political backing from the regional authorities, allowing some continuity to the regional innovation strategy elaborated in this RIS. The project benefited from a good mainstreaming into the structural funds and the InnoRegio competition.
- But, still, the project is now facing the classic issue of how to finance implementation after the RIS. According to the RIS team, *“the greatest obstacle in the implementation has been, and still is, the limited financial force of enterprises involved in*

the projects.” Actually the government will support the monitoring and realisation of RIS projects.

- An Innovative Actions Programme has been launched for 2002-2003 in the entire Land of Sachsen-Anhalt. It was prepared jointly by the two teams of the RIS RAHM and RIS+ in Halle-Leipzig-Dessau. It focuses on support to innovation clusters identified by the RIS- in the most important sectors in the region including chemical and plastic industry which was one of the priorities in the RIS+ Halle-Leipzig-Dessau.

Main tools developed by the regions in RIS / RIS+ projects

Monitoring, benchmarking tools, observatories	Limburg, Wales, Thessaly, Galicia, West Midlands, Central Macedonia
Technology and ICT audits	Cantabria, Castilla y Leon, Wales, Thessaly, Galicia, Aragon
Foster innovation capacity in firms	Limburg, Thessaly, Aragon, Overijssel, Sterea Ellada
Cross-border cooperation	Algarve-Huelva, Northern EU, West Macedonia, Central Macedonia, Niederösterreich
Financing of innovation	North Sweden, Castilla y Leon, Canarias, Central Macedonia, Shannon, West Midlands, Yorkshire & the Humber
Networking of support organisations	Wallonie, Castilla y Leon, Niederösterreich, Canarias, Castilla la Mancha, Galicia
Cluster policy	Wallonie, North Sweden, Weser-Ems, Toscana, Halle-Leipzig-Dessau, Yorkshire & the Humber, Pais Vasco, Overijssel, Central Macedonia
Mainstreaming into structural funds	Niederösterreich, Toscana, Limburg, Castilla la Mancha, Castilla y Leon, Yorkshire & the Humber, Calabria, Sterea Ellada, Weser-Ems, West Scotland, West Midlands, North Sweden, Altmark-Harz-Magdeburg, Epirus
Mainstreaming into regional and national policies	Halle-Leipzig-Dessau, Yorkshire & the Humber, Niederösterreich, Toscana, Limburg, Castilla y Leon, Calabria, Sterea Ellada, Weser-Ems, West Midlands, Altmark-Harz-Magdeburg, Shannon, Wallonie
Start-ups support	Niederösterreich, Halle-Leipzig-Dessau, Umbria, Canarias, Castilla la Mancha
Foresight activities	Limburg, Wallonie, Wales, West Midlands
Innovation awareness in firms	Wales, Western Scotland, Thessaly
Valorisation of university research	Umbria, Canarias, Thessaly, Calabria, Castilla la Mancha, Overijssel
Support to spin-offs	Umbria, Canarias, Castilla la Mancha, West Midlands
Information society opportunities	Pais Vasco, Canarias, Overijssel, Aragon, West Midlands
Human resources for innovation	Northern EU, Overijssel, Central Macedonia, Aragon
Agro-food sector	Thessaly, Sterea Ellada, Central Macedonia, West Macedonia, Weser-Ems, Shannon, Yorkshire & the Humber
Tourism sector	Sterea Ellada, Weser-Ems
Plastic / chemical sector	Halle-Leipzig-Dessau
Cultural heritage sector	Toscana

Regional participation and commitment :

Examples of steering committees of RIS and RIS+ projects

Steering Committee of RIS Wallonie (B)

President : Jean Stéphane, UWE (Association of Entrepreneurs)
 Maurice Benoît, AGORIA
 Pino Carlino, CESRW (consultative regional socio-economic committee)
 Michel Charlier, DGTRE (Regional administration)
 Marcel Crochet, UCL (university of Leuven)
 Claude Deroanne, FSAGX
 Philippe Deville, SRIW (Regional Development agency)
 Jules Dubois, ADISIF
 Michel Morant, Ulg (University of Liège)
 Vincent Lepage, MRW-DGEE (Regional administration)
 Didier Paquot, UWE (Association of Entrepreneurs)
 Anne-Marie Straus, Cabinet of regional ministry Mr. S.Kubla
 Luc Simar, CSC (Trade union)
 Luc Van Den Noortgate, UCRC (Trade union)
 Marc Vandercammen, FGTB (Trade union)

Steering Committee of RIS of Epirus (GR)

President: Ilias Liakopoulos, General Secretary of the Region of Epirus
 Nikolaos Zarbalas, Prefecture of Ioannina
 Nikolaos Tsonis, Prefecture of Thesprotia

Dimitris Tsoumanis, Prefecture of Preveza

Lambros Rizos, Prefecture of Arta
 Spyridon Kitsatis, Chamber of Ioannina
 Ioannis Spyrou, Chamber of Arta
 Fotis Lainas, Chamber of Preveza
 Vassilis Lolos, Chamber of Thesprotia
 Christos Massalas, University of Ioannina
 George Manos, TEI of EPIRUS (Technical Education Institute)
 Katerina Filippou-Keramida, BIC of EPIRUS (Business Innovation Centre)

Steering Committee of RIS ETTIRSE (P and E)

Presidents : João Pinto Guerreiro, CCRAIg (Regional Administration - Algarve)
 Antonio Albarracín Hernández, Diputación Provincial de Huelva (Regional Administration - Huelva)

Maria Clara Santos, D.R.Economia (Regional Administration - Algarve)
 David Mousinho, D.R.Agricultura (Regional Administration - Algarve)
 Valentina Calixto, D.R.Ambiente (Regional Administration - Algarve)
 Carlos Martins / Armando Inverno, University of Algarve
 Carlos Vilchez / Sita Cuevas, University of Huelva
 Pedro Borges de Almeida / Dário Dias, BIC Algarve-Huelva (Business Innovation Centre)
 Michel Quévit / Pascale Van Doren, RIDER II (Process Consultant)
 Catarina Selada / Luís Reis, INTELI (Process Consultant)
 João Faustino / Miguel Arroso, ANAS (Local Administration Association Algarve-Andaluzia)
 João Rodrigues, IAPMEI (Institute to support SMEs - Algarve)
 José Manuel Torrado, IFA (Institute to support SMEs - Andaluzia)
 João Vargues, Globalgarve (Regional Development Agency - Algarve)
 Ana Lúcia Guerreiro, Eurogabinete (Euro Info Centre - Algarve)
 José Barradas, AHETA (Association of Entrepreneurs - Algarve)
 Carlos Monteiro, CEAL (Association of Entrepreneurs - Algarve)
 Rafael Garcia, FOE (Association of Entrepreneurs - Huelva)
 Eduardo Gonzalez / Felipe Rosa, INTA, (Association of Entrepreneurs - Huelva)
 Francisco Antunes, CERA (Association of Entrepreneurs - Algarve)
 José Graça, NERA (Association of Entrepreneurs - Algarve)
 Maria Dolores Robles, Camara Com. Industr. y Naveg. (Association of Entrepreneurs - Huelva)
 Isabel Romero, CCOO (Association of Entrepreneurs - Huelva)
 Cavaco Trindade, CGTP (Workers Union - Algarve)
 João Charrão, UGT (Workers Union - Algarve)
 Alfonso Banda, UGT (Workers Union - Huelva)
 Luís Serpa Santos, ZEMBE (Entrepreneur - Algarve)
 Nuno Martins, Qualigénese (Entrepreneur - Algarve)

Steering Committee of RIS+ Castilla y León (E)

President:	Jesús Ignacio Sesé Sánchez - Vicepresident of Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León (Regional Development Agency)
Juan Casado Canales	Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León (Regional Development Agency)
Wim Martens	Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León (Regional Development Agency)
Juan Ignacio Pérez-Tabernero	Salamanca branch, Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León (Reg. Dev. Agency)
Fernando Manuel Alonso Ruiz	Zamora branch, Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León (Reg.Dev.Agency)
Belén Carrasco	Ávila branch, Agencia de Desarrollo Económico de Castilla y León (Reg.Dev.Agency)
Alberto Pazos	Oficina de Dinamización de Béjar (Local Development Office)
Valentín Fernández Soto	Consejo Regional de Cámaras de Comercio (Chambers of Commerce Regional Council)
Francisco Isaac Pérez de Pablo	Cámara de Comercio de Avila (Chamber of Commerce)
Jesús Macho	Cámara de Comercio de Arévalo (Chamber of Commerce)
Manuel García	Cámara de Comercio de Salamanca (Chamber of Commerce)
Eduardo Miralles Soria	Cámara de Comercio de Béjar (Chamber of Commerce)
Francisco Javier Díaz Rincón	Cámara de Comercio de Zamora (Chamber of Commerce)
Luis Gutiérrez	Confederación de Organizaciones Empresariales de Castilla y León (Fed. of Entrepreneurial Assoc.)
Bernabé Gascón Nogales	Confederación de Organizaciones de Empresarios Salmantinos, (Entrepreneurial Association)
Carlos Galindo	Confederación Abulense de Empresarios (Entrepreneurial Association)
Susana Sánchez	Fundación General de la Universidad de Salamanca (Gal Foundation Salamanca University)
Maite Fernández	Consortium of Technology Centres INTENEC
Alfredo Sandovar	Fundación para la Investigación y Desarrollo en Automoción -CIDAUT (Technology Centre)
Juan José García	Centro de Automatización, Robótica, Tecnologías de la Información y de la Fabricación - CARTIF (Technology Centre)
Luis Villaverde	Centro Tecnológico de Miranda de Ebro - CTM (Technology Centre)
Maria Angeles Pérez	Instituto Tecnológico de Castilla y León - ITCL (Technology Centre)
Ana Núñez	Centro para el Desarrollo de las Telecomunicaciones de Castilla y León - CEDETEL (Technology Centre)
	Parque Tecnológico de Boecillo (Technology Park)

Steering Committee of RIS+ Thessaly (GR)

President :	Karatziotis Ioannis, (Region of Thessaly)
	Pappis Anastasios, (Regional Fund for Development of Thessaly)
	Martinos Vartholomeos, (Ministry of National Economy)
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- Austrian Trade Union (ÖGB) section Lower Austria
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- Austrian Labour Market Service "AMS" (Objective-3 programme administrator)
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- Regional Managements of all sub-regions
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Glossary of Acronyms

BIC	Business Innovation Centre
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
GIS	Geographical Information System
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IRC	Innovation Relay Centre
IRE	Innovating Regions in Europe network
OP	Operational Programmes of the Structural Funds
POR	Regional Operational Programme
PRAI	Regional Programme of Innovative Actions
RITTS	Regional Innovation Technology Transfer Strategies
RIS	Regional Innovation Strategy
RIS+	Regional Innovation Strategy implementation phase
RISI	Regional Information Society Initiative
RTP	Regional Technology Plans
TRIP	Trans Regional Innovation Project

Interesting websites

www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/

www.innovating-regions.org

www.rinno.com