Empowering for innovation and growth in medium sized cities and region

→ The project fosters the implementation and improvement of research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (so called RIS3) in medium sized cities and regions in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Smart specialisation is an EU policy concept for priority-setting, where a region can benefit from specialising in a particular area of science and technology and place-based strengths. Regional development and growth become knowledge- and innovation-driven and thereby stimulate structural change.

Summary

Successful implementation of smart specialisation strategies depends on the capacity of innovation intermediaries to work with the policy. In reality, they often lack resources and experiences and/or competences and thus, potential for innovation and growth remains unused. Still, in many regions the RIS3 are communicated insufficiently or are unknown to innovation actors. But for regional authorities as “RIS3 owners” to support innovation adequately, it is crucial that the implementation works properly and all relevant actors are aware of it.

Across Europe authorities face common problems and obstacles in the process of managing, delivering and monitoring their strategies. The project exploits the experience and competences of the partnership to discuss and mutually learn from the RIS3 processes of each partner region. The partnership involves the operative as well as the strategic level to guarantee that the project results lead to a change in the RIS3 processes.

Priority area: Innovation
Specific objective: Smart Specialisation
Project acronym: EmpInno
Lead Partner: Rostock Business and Technology Development GmbH, Germany
Project partners: 3 FI, 3 PL, 2 DK, 2 EE, 2 SE, 1 DE, 1 LT, 1 LV
Project budget*: Total EUR 3,8 MM
*preliminary figures before contract signature
The project aims to enhance the organisational capacities of innovation intermediaries to utilize the strategies and to enhance the capacities of regional authorities for upgrading and improving their RIS3 implementation processes. Compared to metropolises, medium sized cities and regions have on average a smaller critical mass for innovation and growth and the local economic actors are less outward oriented. The project therefore aims to exploit mutual learning and joint networking in common priorities.

There are six priorities, which are recurrently targeted and are also overlapping in the partners’ RIS3: ICT, Health & Life, Science & Biotech, Maritime Industries, Food, Energy, and Materials. In these six priorities transnational empowering takes place via pooling activities by conducting delegation trips with roundtables and matchmaking events for SMEs and stakeholders (e.g. cluster organisations), thus enabling cooperation and offering business opportunities. Hence, six transnational networks of business and experts are developed. Furthermore, innovation and growth is enhanced via developing new solutions for R&D transfer workshops as well as for upgrading workshops and networking activities for SMEs based on the exchange and adaptation of good practices. RIS3 specialists will mobilize SMEs and other innovation actors by networking, disseminating and working on concrete project ideas for the respective action plan that accompanies each RIS3. This raises the regional innovation capacity and competitiveness of SMEs. To capture and promote the project results and learning processes beyond the partnership, recommendations and results will be elaborated for relevant stakeholders (e.g. innovation actors and responsible authorities).