



Are you interested in the fields of Smart specialisation, transnational learning and triple-helix connectivity? This newsletter reports in a nutshell on the results and insights gained in the LARS project.

The project now moves towards its transnational learning phase. The partners are analyzing the stakeholder connectivity in the regions. Which stakeholder innovation partnerships exist and which are needed? The goal is to find ways for learning among regions.

Read about the Focus Group Meetings, Competence Brokering in Norway, how the stakeholder engagement in the quadruple helix is being analyzed and improved, and about the importance of Smart specialisation in the future cohesion policy.

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## What is the LARS Project?

**11** partners from **8** regions in **8** countries

**LARS helps the public sector lead  
Smart specialisation processes in their regions  
and connects innovation networks across regions**

**Project duration:  
October 2017 – September 2020**



**BSR STARS**  
Innovation in the Baltic Sea Region

### The six steps of LARS

1. Mapping of strategies in order to select the final intervention areas
2. Triple-helix gap analysis with the purpose of finding deficiencies and also good cases of innovation networks functioning
3. Matching partners in functioning transfer networks based on the “good” and “bad” practices
4. Learning on the transfers, essentially an innovation context analysis
5. Piloting new activities in the regions with the purpose of improving the innovation networks
6. Communicating the findings with a view on the wider implications of the project

### The LARS partners

**Regional Council of Ostrobothnia**, Finland  
**University of Vaasa**, Finland  
**Region Västerbotten**, Sweden  
**Regional Council of Päijät-Häme**, Finland  
**Hamburg University of Applied Sciences**, Germany  
**Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics**, Lithuania  
**Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development**, Latvia  
**Lithuanian Innovation Centre**, Lithuania  
**Oppland County Authority**, Norway

#### Associated partners

**CPMR Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions**  
**Office of the Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodship**, Poland

## Transnational Learning Seminar 3 Lillehammer, Norway



In the beginning of April, the LARS project held its third partner meeting and transnational learning seminar. This time the partners met in the beautiful city of Lillehammer, in the heart of Norway. The partner meeting was hosted by Oppland county authority.

In the third work package, the partners have held **regional focus group discussions** in order to present interview data on experiences and expectations of cooperation between different actors in the innovation ecosystem. The idea of the discussions has been to deepen the knowledge about **gaps and bottlenecks in the cooperation** and about **good practices existing**. Against this background, the purpose of the learning seminar was to present and compare the findings from the partners' triple-helix gap analysis and focus group discussions.

As the partners presented their results, it became clear that the method used, that is, the [Ostrobothnian Model of Smart Specialization](#), (See: Section 7.2 pp.127-132) also works in an international context to measure the connectivity of the innovation system. As a result, we can conclude that the model **can be a valuable approach for transnational learning which can be spread far beyond the project partners**.

### *Innovation driven by different actors*

During the meeting, University of Vaasa presented a comparative analysis of the findings. This analysis pointed out that quadruple helix actors at a regional level are perceived as most important innovation partners in all regions. However, there are also great differences between the partners in terms of how the regional innovation systems function and who drives innovation.

For example, regional NGOs have a strong role and influence in Hamburg. Moreover, in Lithuania, Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten regional universities are appreciated by all actors in the innovation system, whereas Latvia, Hamburg and Oppland have weaker connections between regional universities and companies.

Based on the comparative analysis of the findings, the project now moves into the fourth phase. Here, the purpose is to match partners based on identified needs to strengthen cooperation in the innovation ecosystem and existing good practices that can be transferred.

# Learning and Concluding on Focus Group Meetings in Ostrobothnia

**Jerker Johnson, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia**

**The novelty with Smart specialisation compared to previous policy approaches is the concept of Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP). Globalisation and fast changing regional innovation environments set strains on traditional ways on working. As a result, organisations need more than ever to engage in learning processes and conclude on new ways of working from the discoveries.**

This newsletter presents the conclusions on the third work package in the LARS project where a comparative analysis of the partner regions has been made. The analysis is based on cross-sectional data with quantitative information on partner relations in the regional innovation ecosystems. The method applied in the LARS project is building on a survey of partners innovation networks and quantifying partner “expectations” and “experiences” on a scale 1-10 and focus group seminars with the informants on the underlying reasons.

The previous newsletter contains an article comparing the development of partner relations in Ostrobothnia over time by reflecting on the results of the gap-analysis in 2013, 2015 and 2017.

We will in this text draw some methodologic conclusion and how the approach has evolved over a five-year period. The table below contains key methodological conclusions made based on gap-analysis and focus group meetings.

In concluding on this process there are two dimensions to consider: 1) What are the experiences of the process and; 2) What have we learned on the nature of the information provided by the respondents. In the table below, we present the conclusions

on the technicalities of the process during three rounds of triple-helix stakeholder engagement.

Turning to the focus-group meetings we have experienced that business-leaders elaborate on challenges and many times on dysfunctional legislation or policies. Conclusions on short-term actions or necessary projects may be drawn from these discussions.

## ***A company perspective***

The perspective is seen through the eye of the company and needs to be analysed and evaluated before brought into a political message - what is the root of the problem and may it be solved in the short- or long-run? Companies face different realities and do not agree among themselves apart from on a very superficial level. However, the perspectives particularly of the vertically well-integrated companies are very valuable and the message to the public sector comes with a high granularity.

An important part of the EDP is also to communicate on a regional level, the changes, new requirements and expectations and that arise alongside for example globalisation and industrial modernisation. The direct access to business leaders through the focus group seminars is pivotal for understanding the challenges and the underlying triple-helix network gap-analysis provide a common learning platform. This has also brought us to better understand the challenges we are facing e.g. in Industry 4.0. which has also been our “ticket” to new and exciting international partnerships.



## Gap-analysis and focus group meetings in Ostrobothnia

|             | <i>Stakeholder interviews</i>                         | <i>Focus-group discussions</i>  | <i>Observations</i>   | <i>Conclusions</i>   |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>2013</b> | Closed format interview guide with numerical value    | In Vaasa (energy, maritime solutions) and Jakobstad (boat-building, fur industry).  | The questionnaire lengthy but well understood by business less by public sector. Generally well received.<br>Valuable contact with stakeholder, focus group meeting good but demanding.<br>Companies hesitate to “open-up” with other companies, the cooperate and compete at the same time.  | Simplify the questionnaire, structural information may be omitted.<br>Focus group meetings may be complemented with other information gathering.<br>Companies speak among themselves.  |
| <b>2015</b> | Simplified questionnaire by e-mail                    | In Vaasa (energy, maritime solutions) and Jakobstad (boat-building, fur industry).  | E-mail questionnaire lacks the control of the interview situation.<br>Face-to-face interviews with company leaders build trust, works well but is resource demanding.<br>Findings confirms findings in 2013 larger focus group meetings would be desired companies participates in the survey but have difficulties in scheduling focus group meetings. | To pool 2013 and 2015 observations for more stable conclusions.<br>To elaborate the questionnaire to receive more information on issues considered important by stakeholders<br>To make an in-staff LFA-analysis for attributing “gaps” to policy measures.<br>To combine the most important questions of the closed questionnaire with semi-structured questions. |
| <b>2017</b> | Closed format and semi-structured personal interviews | In Vaasa (energy, maritime solutions) and Jakobstad (boat-building, fur industry)<br><br>Open communication of the results with different actors in the innovation network in order to anchor the strategic priorities and to find relevant development measures. | Well-received, semi-structured questions highlights findings on transfer to industry 4.0, the challenges faced and impact on partner relations in the regional innovation ecosystem.<br><br>Changes in the composition of the value added creation.   | Unclear whether this is a new trend or if the earlier dialogue did not sufficiently capture it.<br><br>Time and efforts need to be devoted toward, recording, transcribing and analyzing the primary data.   |

# Revealing the Innovation Potential in the Baltic Sea Region

EXTRACT FROM SUMMARY AND MAIN CONCLUSIONS FROM LARS WP 3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

**Åge Mariussen, Antti Mäenpää and Seija Virkkala, University of Vaasa**

**LARS is looking for improvements in public sector policies, supporting innovation. In this exploration, the LARS compass has four directions: importance, expectations, experiences and comparisons.**

The magnetic needle in our compass, which helps us discover our direction towards pilots, is the gaps.

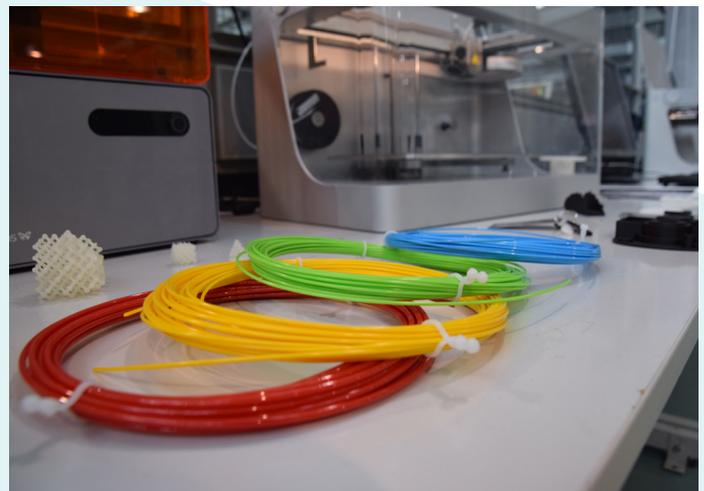
Gaps may be

1. differences between expectations and experience (frustrations) in specific relations inside a region.
2. differences between practices in different regions and countries, which may be translated into good practices and transferred to other regions as pilots.

All project partners have selected important or emerging value chains for their innovation strategies, analyzed the selected value chains and their relevant stakeholders, conducted surveys on connectivity and functioning of the innovation networks, and organized focus group meetings to verify and discuss findings through structured dialogues.

Measurements of importance, expectations and experiences start as assessment by our 141 informants, collected through interviews in 8 Baltic Sea regions and 6 countries, following a structured questionnaire. The bridge from these interviews to a strategy of policy innovation lies in the identification of gaps. Gaps are points of tension and frustrations, where actors may be willing and able to act, initiate pilots, and thus, close the gap. Informants in the same region may, for several good reasons, experience their position within their networks, their gaps and their region in very different ways.

After all, they have different positions. In moving from individ-



ual level data with a lot of variation to a more generalized understanding of the deeper patterns of frustrations, tensions and gaps in regions and networks, we use well known statistical methods reducing variation (means and factors) explained in the main report.

## ***What does a “region” do?***

The concept “region” has different meaning in different parts of the Baltic Sea. In Norway, Sweden and Finland, regions are institutionalized political-administrative entities covering large geographical areas, within the context of national states which are similar to a German Land. There is an on-going debate on reforms regarding the division of responsibilities and power between these levels.

Our partner in Germany, Hamburg, is a city region with a high level of autonomy, within the context of a large federal state, the German Federal Republic. The institutional arrangements defining these German relations are stable. Baltic countries are

autonomous states, with a rather weakly developed regional level. In this report, we are referring to these different units as “regions”, and we use comparisons between them in order to discover good practices and problems, driving policy innovations.

We refer to the fields where networks between and within different societal institutional areas develop as quadruple helixes<sup>1</sup>. Helixes follow different codes of conduct<sup>2</sup>. Quadruple helixes may be regional, national and international. Sometimes, innovation is done inside firms with no or limited external assistance.

However, well-functioning innovation processes relies on wide reaching networks of innovation. This is why connectivity between firms, universities, public sector institutions and NGOs is a precondition for well-functioning systems of innovation (ob-

served as high levels of expectations and experiences between and within helices) serving firms. This is documented in the figure below, based on data collected by LARS-project.

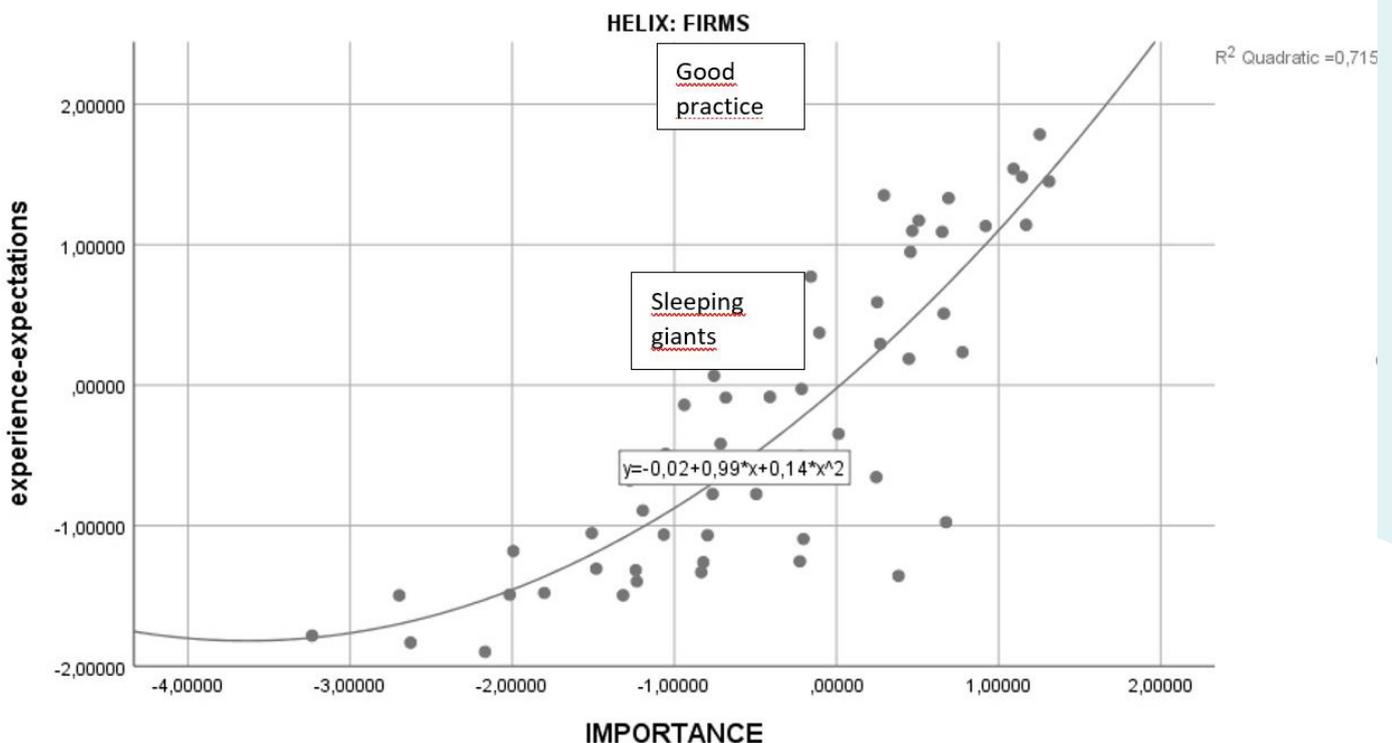
The figure shows quadruple helix integration, measured through the variable IMPORTANCE, based on sets of survey questions measuring the importance of the four helices in the regions according to several dimensions.

The other axis EXPERIENCE-EXPECTATIONS shows to what extent firms in our regions are satisfied with their innovation networks. A high score means that expectations and experiences are high. As we see this is correlated with a high degree of Q4 integration (IMPORTANCE). Here, expectations and experiences are high, in important relationships. A low score means that relations are not important.

1 The triple-helix (TH) model (Leydesdorff and Etzkowitz, 1998; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000, Virkkala 2017) is used to describe both dynamic interaction between universities, companies and public institutions and institutional continuity which functions in different ways. By adding the fourth helix, civil society, we refer to various types of NGOs.

2 Universities, as scientific systems, communicate and function in accordance with the code of true/false, companies in accordance with the code of profit/loss, and the public sector in accordance with the code of right/wrong. By adding the fourth helix, civil society, we refer to various types of NGOs.

Simple Scatter of experience-expectations by IMPORTANCE





The dots are interviews of informants in firms. Firms with well-connected Q4 relations (high IMPORTANCE) have higher expectations and better experiences in their innovation networks than firms in fragmented regions.

A high level of importance, expectations and experiences, with small gaps between expectations and experiences, indicates that the partner has a high connectivity a-good practice, from which other partners might learn.

Similarly, a generally low level across all indicators indicates a weakly integrated or fragmented regional helix (low connectivity).

A high level of importance, combined with low levels of expectation and experience indicate a potentially harmful relation between helices, with a deep gap or missing relation. This might

be indicative of “sleeping giants”, important actors who does not bother to engage.

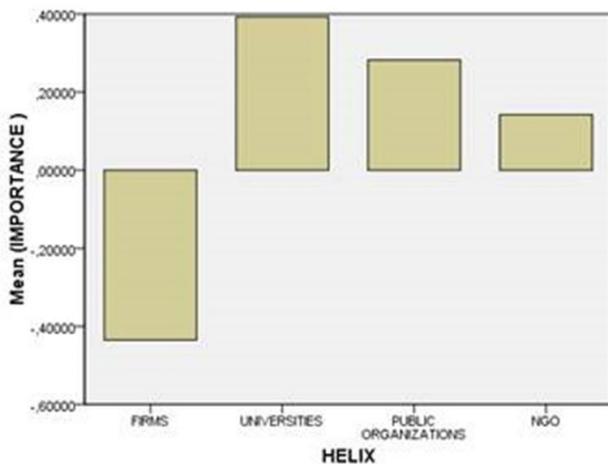
The figure below is based on interviews with informants in all four helices across our 8 partner regions/countries, not just firms, as in the plot above (N=141). It shows mean score of importance and mean score on gaps by helices<sup>3</sup>.

By using the mean, we exclude influence from “outliers” with extreme views and instead capture main-stream opinions by our informants. Our factors are based on comparisons within our total sample. That means that the factor scores are not absolute values, they indicate relative positions, measuring differences to others included in the comparison.

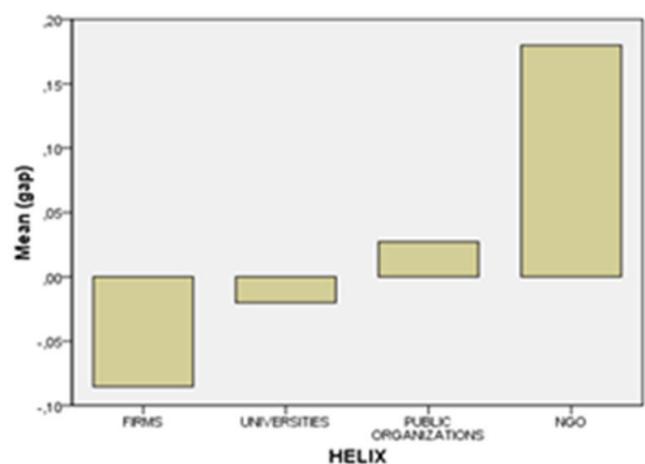
The figure of IMPORTANCE illustrates that universities and public

3 These scores are made by factors summarizing importance, expectations and experiences across several questions and dimensions in the survey.

**Mean score of IMPORTANCE by helices across 8 regions**



**Mean score of GAPS by helices across 8 regions**



sector organizations are important to Q4 integration supporting innovation networks<sup>4</sup>. Public sector was considered to play an important role of innovation enabler in several partner regions and universities are known to act as regional connectors through their research and development practices.

NGOs are relatively less important than universities and public sector organizations. But somewhat paradoxically, they have a high score on GAPS. If they are important, why not try to improve them, in other words, identify and work on gaps? There are several explanations to this. First, in some regions, some NGOs do have a potential for improvement. But there is another explanation. Public sector organizations and universities may be hard to maneuver. They are often locked into positions through the logic of their specific helices. NGOs, on the other hand, are more flexible. In some regions, NGOs are closely connected to universities and public sector authorities. They go in-between the helices and help connect them.

This means that NGOs is a good direction in looking for pilots, especially if public organisations or universities are unable to assume an enabling role for developing connectivity.

**This is part of a summary of a report from LARS WP3 published by the University of Vaasa. Mariussen, Mäenpää and Virkkala May 2019: Revealing the innovation potential in the Baltic Sea Region: Lars comparative analysis, which will be shortly available on the LARS website. There are important differences between regions in the underlying material, which are extensively mapped and analyzed in the report.**



<sup>4</sup> The GAP scale is based on the comparison. Compared to universities and public sector organizations, firms are seen as relatively less important. Never the less, many firms are important, as the previous plot showed. In some regions, certain big firms are seen as very important. Then they come in all kinds of sizes and forms, some are small and less important. In other regions firms may just be taken for granted, they are locked into positions in value chains and clusters which change slowly. In yet other regions, firms might be sleeping giants, sometimes even disruptive to innovation strategies.

# Smart Specialisation in the Future Cohesion Policy

**Åsa Bjering, Secretary General Baltic Sea Commission, CPMR**

**The Conference of Maritime Peripheral Region, CPMR, is participating as an associated organisation in the LARS project. The idea with the organisation's engagement in the project is that any finding of the project could be brought up for consideration by the decision makers.**

The project is now getting into the stage of deliveries in its work, but I will not comment on these but elaborate on what we know about the forthcoming program period that the CPMR is closely following with the regional interests in mind.

It is fair to say that the development goes toward strengthening the role of Smart specialisation as the central tool to achieve growth and inclusiveness. In the last programme period (2014-2020), new rules and legislation were introduced to govern the EU's cohesion policy investments. Within the framework of the new rules, there was a pre-condition (ex-ante) that member states and regions would have developed regional research and innovation strategies for Smart specialisation (RIS3) to be supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

## ***Budget negotiations coming up***

The European Parliament and the Council are to start negotiating on the EU budget and the Cohesion Policy package in the autumn. It is difficult to predict how quickly the two institutions will reach a deal at this stage: there are many divisions between Member States regarding the size of the EU budget and the volume of funds to be attributed to key EU policies.

The Council and the European Parliament will first need to reach a deal on the EU budget and the general framework of EU policies and programmes, before the negotiations on the more technical aspects of Cohesion Policy can be completed. In the best-case scenario, this may be achieved at the very end of the Finnish Presidency of the Council (end of 2019), but many are anticipating an agreement some time in 2020.

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*At the CPMR General Assembly in October 2018. Photo: CPMR*

have developed regional research and innovation strategies for Smart specialisation (RIS3) to be supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

The EU's next long-term budget is supposed to come into force on January 1, 2021 and apply until 2027. Prior to the next program period, the EU Commission has proposed that the pre-conditions be replaced by so-called necessary conditions. The necessary conditions have more detailed fulfilment criteria and more continuous and stricter follow-up than the ex-ante conditions have had in the current program period. Regarding the requirement for S3, for example, the condition changes from merely an existence of a national or regional strategy for smart specialization in the current program period, to a good governance of the strategy in the next program period.

### ***Interregional collaboration increasingly important***

The 'next wave' of the EU's policy framework for Smart specialisation is widely expected to focus on interregional collaboration through aligning regional S3 priorities and innovation investment efforts. Furthermore, a new EU instrument is being proposed which would accelerate industry investment in innovation, through aligning interregional funding efforts, the so-called 'Component 5' instrument. Early piloting activities are already showing positive signs that transnational efforts to 'join forces' in areas of related Smart specialisation can generate scaled up innovation efforts, accelerate cross-regional value chains, create stronger innovation investment and generate new market opportunities.

Although it is possible to see differences between Article 19 (2014–2020) and the proposed Article 11 (2021–2027), as well as between the now existing Annex XI and proposed Annex IV, the similarities are also great. Subject to the fact that the legislation is not negotiated and that there is also some scope for interpretation when implementing, some differences between 2014 and 2021 that may be of importance are:

- From "existence" to "good governance" of RIS3
- More continuous and stricter follow-up
- More detailed fulfilment criteria
- Shift from partnership agreement to program
- Shift of division of responsibility from national to regional level?
- Interregional cooperation and collaboration

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission is planning to adopt a political message regarding Smart specialisation and the interregional dimension at its General Assembly in Gdansk June 11, 2019.

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission Working Group for Energy and Climate is moreover arranging a seminar on June 12 at the 10th Annual Forum of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The seminar "Enhancing Business-Driven Circular Economy" is carried out together with the LARS partners and draws on the finding of the project.



# Research-based Innovation in the Regions (FORREGION)

**Stine Lien, Oppland County Authority**

**The project Research-based innovation in the regions (FORREGION) is a three-year project and a collaboration between Hedmark and Oppland county authorities and the Norwegian Research Council. This is an example of one of the good practices identified in Oppland.**

FORREGION promotes a greater focus on R&D activities in businesses with little or no R&D experience in order to increase their internal capacity to innovate, create value and their competitiveness.

By promoting research-based innovation and collaboration with researchers and scientists, we believe that the companies in the Inland region of Norway will enhance their innovation capacity and competitiveness by obtaining competence, knowledge

and skills that separates them from their competitors and brings them one-step ahead of the competition. The target group are SME's with little or no research experience. These companies might not be aware of the possibilities that lies in collaborating with a research partner or who need help getting started on a project.

Many companies have challenges or a research question they need help with, but does not know where to start. This is where the FORREGION-program has its greatest benefits and stands out compared to other programs with one of the main activities, competence brokering.

Simply put, competence brokering is help developing ideas and project. Competence brokers can discuss project ideas and possibilities

with companies and help finding the right re-



*Real-life competence brokering in Norway. Photo: Ola Rostad*

searchers and to develop grant applications. They visit companies, help developing ideas into research questions and to define whether it is a R&D project. They can identify and establish contact with R&D institutions and help structuring the research question. Finally, they also help navigate in the public support system. The competence brokers find relevant calls and grants for financing the projects, and help throughout the process of applying for funding.

Hedmark and Oppland county authorities have hired innovation companies in the region to do the competence brokering. This is considered one of the main success factors – the innovation companies have big networks in the region and have legitimacy amongst the companies. The competence brokers also know the R&D sector.

The innovation companies are chosen as competence brokers because of their knowledge of both the business world and R&D, they are able to identify the challenges of the companies and link with the compatible research institution.

FORREGION also offers grants for projects where SME's cooperate with R&D institutions to solve different challenges. We can offer funding for projects up to 200 000 NOK and a duration of maximum 12 months. There is no application deadline and we have continuous application processing. In order to get funding, the SME also has to contribute with 50 % funding.

**Less Bureaucracy**

We try to be as unbureaucratic as possible. The competence brokers contact the SME's and have a noncommittal dialogue where they map whether the SME's could benefit from cooperating with the R&D sector. If the dialogue uncovers a need for R&D, the competence broker help defining projects, finding and establishing contact with a R&D institution. After establishing contact, the competence broker helps the SME find and apply funding. They can help the companies throughout the entire process, the only thing they are not allowed is to write the application.

The application has to be written by the applicant, but the competence broker guides the company through this as well. In 2018 the competence brokers were visited over 200 companies in the Inland region. They were involved in 121 different projects. We do not know the outcome of all the projects and applications to different calls and grants, but we do know that FORREGION have funded 20 projects and that several applications have been sent to other parts to the public support systems.

We are very happy with the results and believe that the success is mainly due to the relatively informal dialogue between the competence brokers and the SME's and the unbureaucratic proceedings. This lowers the threshold into the R&D world and helps the SME's consider researchers and scientists as useful partners in innovation processes.

**The LARS Work Packages**

- 1. Project Management and Communication**
- 2. Mapping of Areas of Interventions and Stakeholders**
- 3. Innovation System Gap-Analysis**
- 4. Transnational Learning**
- 5. Policy Transfer**
- 6. Pilot Implementation**



# Stakeholder Engagement in Latvia

## Varis Putniņš, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

The Ministry of Regional Development is a partner in the LARS project. Our experience on the quadruple helix gap analysis is a very good approach to analyze and combine data from various stakeholders.

We have made the gap analysis based on interviews with relevant stakeholders and the same approach has been used by every LARS partner, so the results are comparable to other regions.

The network gap-analysis showed us that at national level quadruple helix gaps are big. A gap is defined as innovation partner "Expectations" less "Experiences" on a scale 1-10. The biggest gaps are from the perspective of NGOs.

It means that NGOs are willing to cooperate with all other stakeholders a lot and on a much bigger scale than at the moment. From the point of public institutions, everything looks more or less OK – they are satisfied with the current situation. But we cannot say the same about companies and universities. Companies see opportunities in cooperation with public institutions and NGOs whereas universities see potential with companies, public organizations, and NGOs.

Generally speaking, the gaps are bigger at an international level than at a national level. This is however not the case with companies. The explanation could be that the main stakeholders for companies are other companies and thus they are not so keen on cooperating with other stakeholders at international level.

Still, we can totally understand them as it is hard for e.g. a company in Latvia to find some benefit in cooperation with a NGO from Finland. For other stakeholders, the urgency to cooperate at international level is much higher (except when it comes to universities and cooperation with public organizations).

We can conclude that the main stakeholder is the company. If a company does not make a profit, create jobs, pay salaries, etc., there will not be a need for universities, NGOs, etc.



*Varis Putniņš working with stakeholder awareness in Latvia*

### ***A New Approach for Creating More Dialogue Between Stakeholders***

The results of the gap analysis as well as overall conclusions were presented in a focus group meeting which was held at the Rezekne Academy of Technologies. It was chosen as the meeting venue since the university is one of the stakeholders involved in the project and had been interviewed as well. In this way, we could establish a better connection with local stakeholders and get a good start for cooperation in the future.

The participants represented local companies working in the industry, the business support center operating in Latgale region, the university and LARS partners. As participants for the focus group we deliberately chose both stakeholders which had been interviewed and stakeholders which had not been interviewed, because we wanted to reflect on the results and conclusions for both groups.

It was interesting and useful to have participants which had not participated in the interviews because with this approach we could “test” our gaps on those stakeholders which are involved in the industry but are not directly involved in our project. During the focus group meeting, we verified our assumptions. Also, the participants expressed a desire to participate and to be involved in further activities.

### ***Understanding Smart Specialisation***

Concerning overall stakeholder engagement, the biggest challenge among all stakeholders seems to be the understanding of Smart specialisation and innovation policy. According to our conclusions, the biggest reason for limited connectivity and cooperation is not the lack of resources (as mentioned in some interviews) or some other obstacle but the willingness to cooperate. Stakeholders simply do not speak the same language.

With the help of projects like LARS, our goal is to raise awareness of Smart specialisation. In order to do that, we embrace the opportunity to learn from other LARS partners. How do they persuade the stakeholders (especially companies) that cooperation is very essential to stakeholders if they want to “be better”, and how can the stakeholders become more open to the benefits of

Smart specialization?

For companies, “to be better” means to get a bigger profit, for universities to improve their scientific and research work as well to attract more students, for public institutions to make and create a business-friendly environment and for NGOs to represent the interests of a bigger society.

### ***A New Mindset***

To raise awareness we need to change the mindset of the stakeholders. We think that the international experience from the other LARS regions is a very good tool for that. We can use the approach of transnational learning (involving other stakeholders) to show that the attitude can be different and positive. Maybe even we need to launch a social campaign on this?

One of the peculiarities we noticed is that stakeholders are afraid of the word “innovation”. They think that innovation is something complicated and that innovations can only take place in scientific laboratories. Clearly and actually it is not so – innovation and innovators can be found everywhere, also in the metal industry. We just need to help the stakeholders to figure that out.

**For more information about LARS, please visit**

**[www.lars-project.eu](http://www.lars-project.eu)**

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