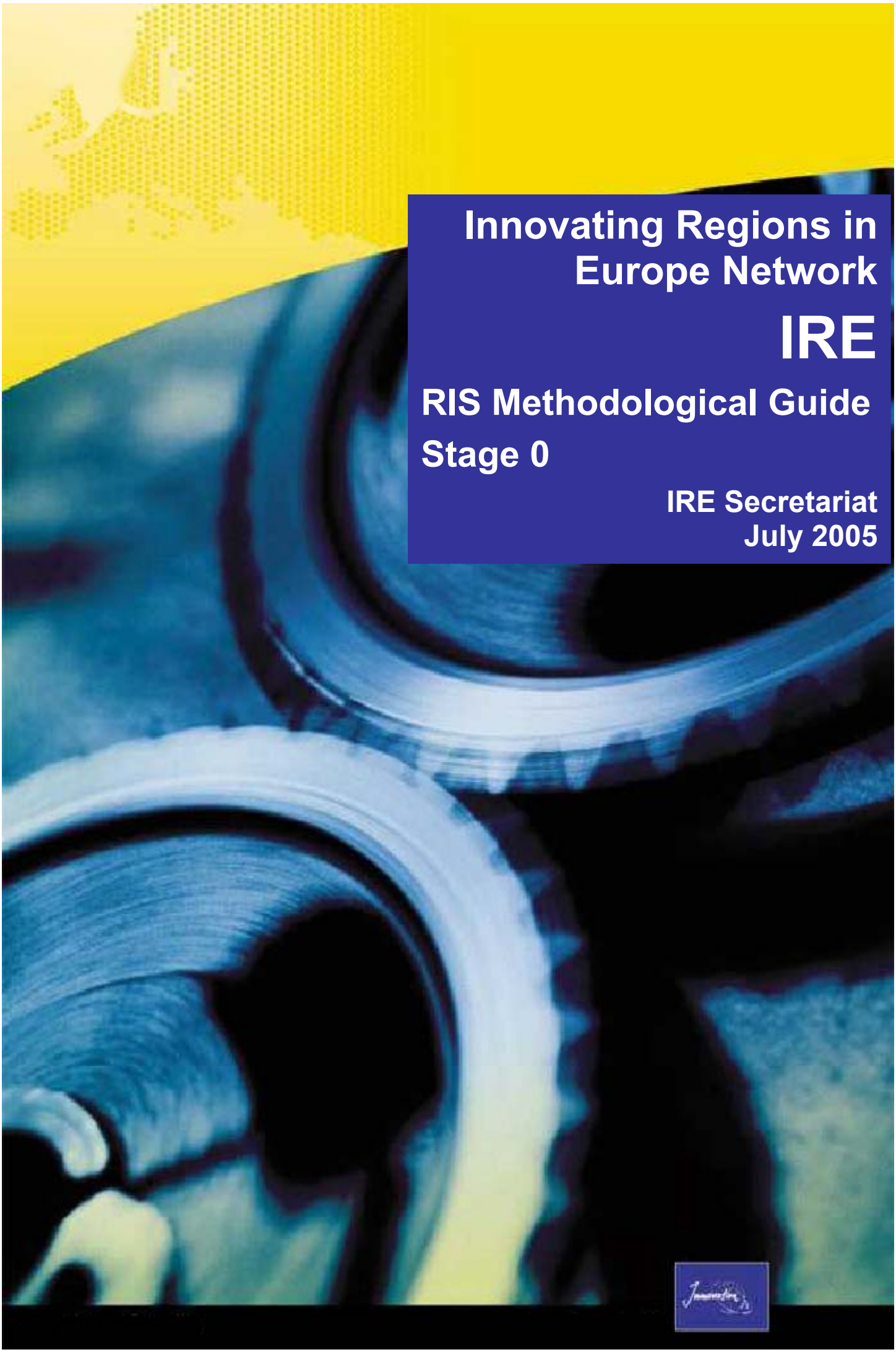


Innovating Regions in Europe Network

IRE

RIS Methodological Guide

Stage 0

IRE Secretariat

July 2005

Management of a RIS project:

-Lessons from 10 years' experience-

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OUTLINE OF THE METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

The aim of a Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) project is to develop an innovation strategy which, by taking into account the specific conditions of the region it covers, contributes to enhancing the region's innovation capabilities and competitiveness. In order for this to happen, the strategy needs to have political and institutional backing for its implementation, and be accompanied by an action plan with concrete measures to be launched in the region.

The RIS project will comprise three stages:

- Stage 0 – Definition;
- Stage 1 – Analysis;
- Stage 2 – Strategy definition, evaluation, monitoring and implementation mechanisms, pilot projects.

In order to have successful outcomes of the project, the RIS project management needs to orient each stage and each activity so that they contribute to the final objective – the development of an innovation strategy that can make a difference in the region. This guide explains how to make a successful stage 0 with this ambition in mind. Similar guides will be provided for the following project stages.

This guide has drawn upon the experiences of the RIS projects that have been undertaken during the last ten years, and aims to assist project managers and other people involved in the RIS process to properly plan and implement activities important for the success of the project, as well as to help them avoid pitfalls along the way. [1]

The success in the context of the RIS programmes must take into account the differences between regions in terms of existing regional assets, the level of innovation maturity, and the current level of co-operation and interaction between the diverse agents (businesses, R&D and policy makers) in the system. In this respect it is the relative success that is important and therefore the assessment of the outcomes and results should take into account the region's starting-point.

---

[1] The guide is based on existing information, mainly from the following sources:

Interviews with project managers of the first RIS NAC projects, made by the IRE Secretariat, 2005 (no published document).

The PARTNER Methodological Guide Stage 0, IRE Secretariat, 2002 (PARTNER was a Thematic Network project that provided support and opportunities of exchange of experience to regions that carried out Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) projects in Associated States during the period 2001 – 2003.)

"Ex-post evaluation of the RIS, RTTs and RISI ERDF innovative actions for the period 1994-99", Socintec and inno-group, 2004

"Assessment of the Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategies and Infrastructures (RITTS) scheme – Final evaluation report", CURDS (The University of Newcastle) and MERIT (The University of Maastricht), August 2000

"The evaluation of pre pilot actions under article 10: innovation measures regarding regional technology plans", Technopolis and University of Athens, June 1998

"**A guide to regional innovation strategies - working draft**", DG Regio and DG Enterprise, October 1999

"Training sessions for RITTS/RIS managers – lessons learned from 5 training sessions", Merit, May 1997

The documents mentioned above are published on the IRE website: http://www.innovating-regions.org/services/pub_library/index.cfm?level=3&name1=AFB&cat_id=39&navbar=true

Stage 0 should take approximately 12 months. The most important task in stage 0 is **consensus building**. The main outcome of the project is the creation of concrete actions to be implemented (innovation strategy action plan). In order to do so it is essential to include and **commit all key regional actors** in the field of innovation from the very beginning of the exercise. The project shall therefore put a lot of emphasis on achieving the regional consensus among these key actors.

In the beginning of the process, projects should achieve consensus on the objectives and expected outcomes of the project, the long-term vision of the regional process launched with the project, on the way to proceed, on the data to be collected and on the widening and systematizing of the available information. If consensus can be achieved on these basic issues, the main task of the project, that is **to achieve consensus on the results of the exercise**, will be less difficult, since the decision process has already been made more transparent. The building of consensus is an **on-going process** during and after the project.

A management unit will have to be created. It is expected that the main resources to carry out the work will come from the participating regions. However additional regional experts (external to the contractor's staff) will need to be involved and further external / international experts will bring valuable European experience to the project. The selection of such expertise should happen in Stage 0. Furthermore a Steering Committee in the implementing region must be established where the main actors of the regions are represented. This Committee will supervise the whole process.

Experience from previous RIS projects further show the importance of raising awareness of the vision and objectives of the project before setting out to initiate concrete actions. All relevant actors for innovation in the region, especially the entrepreneurs, need to be mobilized, on the one hand in order to make them more aware of the value of innovation and to get them to participate in the project, on the other hand to get their opinion and to understand their situation. The region will also have to draw up a communication plan which will accompany the project implementation covering public events, press releases etc.

The following three chapters provide the actual guide to a successful RIS implementation in its early stages. These three sections are:

- Securing a Relevant Project;
- Securing a Good Project Delivery Organisation;
- Raising Awareness and Gaining Broad Commitment.

It is, of course, not possible to present a methodology that will assure the success of every RIS project. This guide provides examples and experiences from previous RIS projects, but one should bear in mind that it is rarely possible to simply copy a model that has worked elsewhere. The specific policy and strategy environment of each region must be taken into account. There also need to be a reflection with regional key actors on the uniqueness and specificities of the region in order to set up the right innovation strategy and ensure success through a good implementation of the project and through an efficient project management.

2. SECURING A RELEVANT PROJECT

A relevant RIS project should have cohesion between the objectives of the project and the needs and resources of the region. The success of a RIS project deployed in a region is preconditioned by the extent to which the project organisation have correctly identified societal and company needs at the outset, as well as the resources that can be marshalled to implement them.

From an effectiveness point of view, it is most important that the regional innovation strategy should leave a permanent legacy of widening the concept of innovation (from the narrow and linear view of research and development investment leading to new products and processes) and putting innovation support higher on the policy agenda, broadening its scope and logic.

Innovation success in a region calls for a creation of consensus between all involved actors at an early stage. This can only be achieved as the result of effective and functional cooperation patterns and mutual learning rather than a linear process. It is not the performance of individual agents, but how these agents interact as integrated parts of an innovation system. In this way, a consensus-building process on objectives and a holistic approach to strategy development provides a solid platform for the initiation of new pilot projects, the revision of existing activities and on on-going progress of the innovation system at large.

2.1 HOW TO CREATE CONSENSUS ON OBJECTIVES

RIS is about building a common vision of innovation, consensus on priorities, and commitment to actions in the region. It is therefore important in this situation to create consensus with all actors and groups in the region that are related to the economic development of the region through an interactive process.

RIS exercises should achieve results for the region which are clearly identifiable – such as new policies or strategies, increased lines of funding, new innovative SMEs etc. In the same way, the pilot projects[2] that will be launched within the RIS project should, in order to be capable of evaluation and wider promotion, target clear and identifiable outcomes. Outcomes may range from new innovation management techniques introduced into firms, to new sectoral networks or technology centres created and launched.

One of the big problems with regional innovation systems is that it for many companies looks like a “support infrastructure jungle” with an abundance of support agencies, rules and regulations etc that for many reasons seems to be unable to act as a common and user-friendly unit. RIS exercises on consensus building not only help the project strategy development, but also provide and ideal opportunity to show a united front. However, the process needs to be open in every respect, e.g. the inclusion of what could be seen as “opponents” to the objectives.

The process of reaching consensus through building solid partnerships is a powerful operational success factor[3], which contributes to the effectiveness of the project in many ways:

- Reaches a wider **audience:** it “opens ears”;

[2] See Methodological Guide Stage 2.

[3] See 4.3 on delivery mechanisms, below.

- **Communicates** the benefits of innovation in terms that are understood by the diverse regional interest groups: it raises understanding;
- **Anchors** the interests of the region with the interests of its stakeholders;
- **Optimises implementation** by using existing assets and avoiding duplication;
- Provides a **foundation for the future** as it sows the seeds of co-operation that can bear fruit over the long-term.

Objectives and strategies that are anchored in the regional economy will outlive political changes and will not be dependant on the continued support of a single person. This may seem at odds with previous evaluations that confirm the need for a strong regional project manager. In fact, a leading figure can be invaluable in marshalling initial resources, but long- term effectiveness is better achieved by involving a range of stakeholders that represent the key forces in the regional innovation scene. The role of the project manager becomes one of a "connector" of relevant regional resources and a "communicator" of the vision for the region.

The project manager has to organise the consensus building, step by step, trying to get the balance right between progress and consensus. As mentioned in chapter 3, the appropriate membership of the Steering Committee should itself help to develop a regional consensus on the priorities for action. Consensus building is not a process that ends at a certain stage in the project; rather it is an on-going process throughout the whole project period and continuing into the future. However, the process is especially important in the early stages of the project.

At the beginning, it may be unwise to present a ready set of objectives to a large audience at once, e.g. at the launch conference. Rather, the way to a successful public presentation needs to be paved by a number of individual consensus-building meetings and workshops with regional stakeholders from all actor groups relevant to regional innovation. The initial number of partners to involve in such a process can be limited to the frontrunners of each important sector, e.g. the public sector, research organisations, enterprise organisations, individual SMEs and large companies in the innovation field etc. However, as the project evolves as concrete actions become clearer, so should also the number of involved actors in the process.

Those who are involved in the early stages however need concrete explanations of why they should be involved, and what benefits they could derive. Consequently, the project vision and initial objectives need to be packaged in a way that it is attractive and understandable to all involved actors.

In the region of Wielkopolska, the biggest success of the phase 0 was strong involvement of strategic players of the region and general public support. This is reflected by the large number of participants in Working Groups, conferences and Steering Committee. The most tangible sign of the regional consensus achieved was ***"Wielkopolska Innovation Memorandum"*** *signed by the most prominent representatives of the key region institutions at conference summing up the phase 0. The social capital mobilized turned out to be bigger that the expectations and posed a challenge for the project to utilize and streamline in the next phase, as it required bigger than planned involvement of WG members in the phase 1 activities.*

To assure the continuation of the consensus building, encouraging wider involvement of actors in pilot projects can attract new active participants to the process and help introduce additional funding. It can also help to ensure that the most appropriate

support actors provide inputs – experience and expertise – to a particular project. The first pilot projects must be a success in the short term. Pilot projects should not be supervised and managed by only one organisation but allow a partnership.

As a consequence of bringing in many different actors, the consensus building process run the risk of coming out too wide, loosing focus of the initial vision and incorporating too many objectives. In order to keep track of all inputs from meetings, workshops, seminars etc. and to keep the time frame of the project in the initial stage, the consensus building process needs a strong and coherent planning tool. Below is one approach introduced, a tool that is widely used in complex processes, such as the RIS project. However, there are many more approaches to project planning and the project manager should of course choose a method and tool that he/she feels comfortable with.

2.1.1 The GOPP-approach (Goal oriented project planning)

Goal-Oriented Project Planning, short GOPP is a project planning and management instrument[4]. Originally developed in the context of encouraging co-operation, GOPP is today used all over the world in diverse sectors and by different players – state institutions, economic enterprises, associations, international organisations etc. The European Commission has often used GOPP in the development phases of new programmes and fosters the utilisation of the method in many current projects.

In theory, GOPP is very well suited to master the complexity of planning and implementation during the whole RIS project. The primary reason to use GOPP in the early stages of the RIS project is the possibility to streamline this complexity of integrating many different actors in the process to a level that is manageable. In particular, GOPP is a valuable planning tool because a RIS project:

- Involves a large number of individuals and organisations each with their own agendas and expectations;
- Is long term. This holds true both with respect to the formal duration of the project and to the time needed to achieve changes in thinking and behaviour of the involved players;
- Aims at influencing intangible assets of the regional innovation system. This means that many achievements will be hard to measure and that it can become difficult to trace causes and effects.

A GOPP project plan is a sketch reaching into the future where the activities and performances are defined that is necessary to reach the targeted objective. The actors participating in the project process need to reach a consensus concerning the essential elements of the plan if it is to fulfil its purpose as a common action orientation. GOPP is to be understood as a process in which such a joint understanding of all participants will be developed, in particular regarding the following aspects:

- From which situation do we start? (starting situation)
- Which objectives do we aim at? (goals)
- How do we want to achieve the change? (project concept)

[4] The GOPP-concept was developed in the 80's by the German „Gesellschaft für Technologische Zusammenarbeit". GOPP is a much-developed version of the Logical Framework Approach.

- Who is responsible for what? (roles and responsibilities)
- Who introduces which resources?

In the realisation of the plan different quality criteria have to be considered. These quality criteria are at the same time also characteristic elements of GOPP:

- Planning should always be made in a participative process in which all concerned by the identified problem situation as well as all other important players should be actively involved. This allows for deducting goals and project concepts from their points of view;
- Planning requires an iterative proceeding in which the insights gained during the project implementation are always re-integrated into the plan so that it can be continuously updated;
- The GOPP approach does not prescribe which methods are best suited for the single analysis and planning steps. This methodological openness is useful, in particular since the actual selection often depends on the social or cultural content of the respective project. However, various methods and techniques are available for each analysis step;
- All important processes and decisions in the planning (and later implementation) of projects are to be made transparent so that all participants can understand them. This will be safeguarded among others through a continuous documentation of the planning and decision steps.

The communication and co-ordination processes of the participants should be supported by workshops and preferably the use of special moderations forms and visualisation techniques, where everyone takes part in the process of arriving at a consensus.[5] Workshops are a suited forum for exchange and understanding among the project participants. If the moderation is carried out by neutral third parties this helps to identify different positions and interests, to keep discussions on factual level and to find common solutions together with the participants. The use of visualisation techniques makes the discussion process transparent and allows for including and presenting positions that otherwise would be lost.

2.1.2 Involvement of SMEs in the RIS process

It is important to have networking between all relevant actors. Above all, it is hard to involve SMEs in an active participation in the RIS process. SMEs need to be involved, either they need active support or they lack awareness of existing innovation opportunities. In any case, they are for many reasons an important element in regional economies:

- SMEs normally employ a large proportion of the total work force in the region and provide an important risk diversion to the labour market;
- A vivid and innovative SME-culture strengthens the entrepreneurial spirit of the population which is important when the regional economy is weak and the

[5] There are several examples of such forms and techniques important to GOPP that have been implemented by different organisations. For further information please check the following web-site: www.gopp.org For a concrete example of GOPP visualisation methods check the following web-site: www.unssc.org/web1/services/downloads/VIPP%20UNICEF%20Bangladesh.pdf

unemployment is increasing, as well as when it is good and spin-offs and economic growth in small businesses should be stimulated;

- SMEs are an important factor for renewal within the industry as they often end up in smaller niche markets where they can assess new ideas and product concepts;
- SMEs play an important role as suppliers to large companies;

There are also several reasons to why SMEs need innovation support:

- SMEs are confronting an ever increasing demand on product- and production development from their customers;
- SMEs lack own resources, competences and to develop in a required quality, pace and magnitude;
- SMEs need to participate in innovation networks with other actors in order to get access to external resources.

The encouragement of more efficient innovation systems, with several and strong co-operations between businesses (with a clear participation of SMEs) and research players are therefore important for the development of SMEs in particular and for the industrial development in general.

SMEs, which are positive to innovation and are ready to participate, are normally the target audience for concrete technology transfer projects, while SMEs not yet aware of the importance of innovation for their own firm are rather target audience for awareness raising campaigns and activities aiming at stimulating innovation than concrete technology transfer activities.

Involving firms that yet are unaware of the importance of innovation in the RIS process is, however, not an easy task. Their lack of interest in innovation issues will in many cases prevent them even from noticing many of the efforts aimed at improving their awareness. So, when sessions for SMEs are organised, the firms which will voluntarily show up will most probably be the firms which are already aware and active in this field. A special initiative that aims at awareness raising at a very basic level, could be a good start if those companies should be reached.[6]

An important idea to keep in mind is that SMEs will only participate if they see a clear and concrete benefit for themselves in the RIS project. However, when SMEs can see the benefit of an activity, they are often vivid and optimistic participants. There are two general approaches to convincing SMEs, of course these approaches work well for other actors as well, that are reluctant to participate of the potential benefits of participation:

- The *"promise of gain"* approach (if you WILL participate, you HAVE the potential of establishing important contacts with experts on innovation and with potential customers and partners, and your views WILL be represented in the regional strategy plan for the future);
- The *"fear of loss"* approach: (if you do NOT participate, you have NOT the potential of establishing important contacts with experts on innovation and with potential customers and partners, and your views will NOT be represented in the regional strategy plan for the future).

[6] Evidence from different initiatives in Eurpoe shows that a very good way of reaching the "unaware" SMEs are through direct contacts, where people from the innovation support field visit the companies at their site to tell about innovation support. This could well be made in conjunction with the need analysis in stage 1.

The motivation to participate in the RIS process, whether it is in the steering committee, in need analyses or in concrete activities, is not only depending on the objectives and benefits visible at the beginning of the project. It will prove wise for the project manager to call in more SMEs than actually "needed" to participate in the initial planning period, since some SMEs will fall out as the process evolves and they loose interest.

Knowing that, different means can be used to actively involve as many SMEs as possible in the process from an early stage:

- Organisation of ***workshops***: SMEs can be invited to a workshop for discussing the results of the study on their needs. The same can be done with organisations from the supply side;
- Organisation of ***sectoral meetings***:

In the Castilla y Leon RIS exercise; the sectoral meetings, two per each selected sectors, that took place were pointed out as an excellent opportunity to create a vision, exchange views in a focused environment and forge consensus.

Probably the most common bottleneck for SMEs to participate in the RIS process is time. In many cases, SME personnel lack time off from their daily production to engage in other matters. Due to this, it is important that meetings and activities are set on a proper time and at an acceptable location. SMEs that are residing in the same geographical area as the RIS secretariat normally have the potential to meet spontaneously at lunch etc.

Involvement of large companies in RIS projects:

Large companies should be involved in the project for several reasons:

- They are important players in the infrastructure and important local actors;

- They are important in promoting innovation among SMEs;

- They can sometimes function as technology suppliers;

- They generally have a good overview of the business community in the region.

Most important is to introduce in the RIS project a reflection on how to embed multinational firms in the regional tissue, by favouring high value added linkages with regional SMEs and other regional actors. In this case, regions regard large companies as a "tool" in the study and actions rather than an "object" to aim policy at.

2.1.3 Check List

☐ Have you defined a clear vision of the project and possibly defined objectives that everybody can understand?

☐ Have you settled on a broad body of actors with whom to involve in the consensus making process (not only the project management unit and steering committee)?

☐ Does the main body of actors include sufficient number of SMEs

☐ Have you decided on a project planning-tool to aid in the consensus making process, e.g. the GOPP-approach?

☐ Have you decided on how to interact with the different actors, e.g. seminars, personal meetings etc?

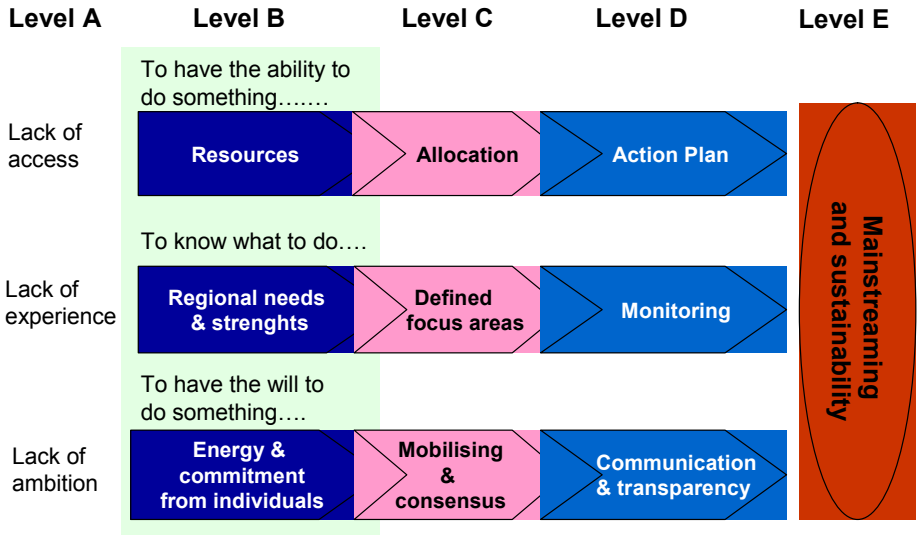
2.2 HOW TO MAP THE 0-STAGE SITUATION IN THE REGION

The RIS project should start with a solid stage 0 definition, from which the detailed objectives and questions to be solved by the RIS can be discussed and detailed. Clear objectives, which are easily communicable, are an overarching and critical success factor of RIS projects as they provide them with a direction. Objectives should be written down in words and phrases that everyone can understand. Having at least one mission statement, a very clear one, is advisable. This could even take the shape of a feasibility phase for the whole project. On the following page, an example of a clear goal-hierarchy of RIS Latvia is illustrated.

To aid the assessment of the 0-stage situation, regions can be placed within a scheme representing broad development levels.

- Level A: Regions have no previous innovation strategies. They may not have the political competence to act, resources may not be accessible for innovation, or there may be no political will to act.
- Level B: Regions have the competence to act, the political will to aim for increased innovation in the regions and an idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the region.
- Level C: Regions have allocated their resources, priority or focus action areas have been defined and the regional actors have been identified and mobilised.
- Level D: Regions have put their resources to achieve concrete results through action plans, activity is monitored in order to ensure that needs are fulfilled and there is communication between innovation agents and transparency in the system. Everyone is aware of their role and responsibilities.
- Level E: Mainstreaming. The culture of innovation is embedded in the region and innovation is part of most spheres of activity. The need for a specific innovation department may even be superseded, or its aim may be redirected towards a co-ordination, rather than lead, role. The move has been made from project to system.

As illustrated below, the 0-stage can be mapped from a level of no capacity or political will for innovation, to a level where innovation is mainstreamed and part of the system, rather than undertaken on a project-by-project basis. When setting out to determine the 0-stage situation, beginning RIS regions will generally fit in on the levels A-B in the following scheme:



Example: Goal hierarchy of RIS Latvia

Overall goal

The main goal describes the superior strategic orientation or basic orientation of the project which is usually determined before the beginning of the project planning and sets the frame in which the project can be planned (reasons for the relevance of the project).

The overall goal of RIS Latvia as stated in the contract with the Commission and as expressed by the participating players is:

- Improved economic well-being of Latvian citizens

This is the ultimate goal of RIS Latvia; all other goals can be considered to be sub-goals to this.

Development goal

The development goal describes which improvement of the target groups' situation is to be achieved as a consequence of the project (benefit of the project for the target groups). There must be an understandable connection between the identified problems and the situation described in the *development goal*. There are several development goals of the project, these are:

- Increased innovation-based competitiveness of Latvian enterprises. This includes e.g. the reindustrialisation of natural resources-based industries with low costs as major competitive advantage;
- New knowledge-based, internationally competitive Latvian companies;
- Optimised innovation infrastructures and regional innovation policies;
- Contribute to the integration of Latvia in Europe.

Project goals

The project goal describes which changes in the behaviour of the project's performance receivers are to be achieved so that the intended benefit may occur for the target groups (direct impact of the project measures). The project goals are:

- Increased innovation rate among target group companies. This includes traditional industries integrating new knowledge and innovative technologies;
- The Latvian society is characterised by an innovation culture and by innovative thinking;
- There is a profound knowledge of the quality, way of delivery and need-orientation of innovation supporting services in Latvia. This includes in-depth knowledge of the organisations of the innovation system;
- Decision makers and high level civil servants are integrating a knowledge-based way of thinking;
- Players of the Latvian innovation system share consensus on how to foster innovation;
- Improved transparency and need-orientation of the Latvian innovation system;
- Companies engage in technological development projects with innovation-fostering players;
- Latvian organisations are collaborating with colleagues in Western Europe, in particular in Sweden and Germany.

Results

In the terminology of GOPP, results are understood as those products and services yielded by the project which are necessary for the achievement of the project goal. The results of RIS Latvia are:

- Creation of a national network of innovation fostering players and individuals;
- Design and implementation of pilot projects;
- Analysis of SMEs' needs for innovation support;
- Analysis of the supply of innovation fostering services;
- Development of a national innovation strategy as well as an action-relevant implementation plan.

A region can be placed on several places along this scheme, e.g. in terms of available resources, it can be a level B but in terms of consensus and commitment it can be a level A etc. Be careful about assuming what you know before you go through the process. Use the first few months to understand where the region is now in qualitative and quantitative terms. Defining objectives, doing research and gaining knowledge are actually three factors which are interlinked and which can follow upon each other in an interactive process in which objectives become increasingly better defined and measurable. The question whether they all have to be measurable is a political one.

The degree of relevance of objectives must be determined with reference to the specific development level of the region. It is important that the region has a clear benchmark of the 0-stage situation, later on, progress can be measured according to the deviations from that situation.

Progress is not necessarily linear and the move to "mainstreamed status" is likely to take a number of years. This requires ambition and maintaining constant and consistent governmental support at the highest level for the goals to be achieved. The EU provision of a long-term framework to encourage innovation in the regions has clearly been an aid to the process of developing relevant and coherent strategies.[7] The aim for all regions, however, is to move to mainstreaming.

As you might expect, there are several methods to determining the 0 situation in the region. In the following, one proven method is briefly explained, namely the SWAT-analysis.

2.2.1 The SWOT-analysis[8]

The SWOT-analysis is a strong decision-support method, which should be seen as part of an overall learning process. SWOT stands for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. In short:

- A strength is a resource or capacity the region has and which it can use effectively to achieve its vision. Actions and a strategy should aim to build on strengths;
- A weakness is a limitation, fault or defect in the region that will keep it from achieving its vision. Actions and a strategy should aim to eliminate weaknesses;
- An opportunity is any favourable situation in the region's environment. Actions and a strategy should aim to exploit opportunities;
- A threat is any unfavourable situation in the region's environment that is potentially damaging to its strategy. Actions and a strategy should aim to mitigate the effect of threats.

The aim of SWOT analysis is to incorporate into the reflections on a socio economic programme, as the RIS-project, both the intrinsic characteristics of the region concerned and the determining factors in the environment in which the programme will be implemented. The tool is intended to reduce the areas of uncertainty related to the implementation of a project or measure applicable to the relevant region. It enables the definition of strategy relevant to the context in which the action is to take place. The purposes of the tool are:

---

[7] The role of the EU is also examined at 4.4.3, Building strategic capabilities and 4.5 European Added Value. The typology relating to the stage of development will be revisited at section 4.3: Impact.

[8] The text on SWOT-analysis is mainly adopted from the homepage of the DG Regional Policy initiative "Evaluation of Socio Economic Development". http://www.evalsed.info/

- To highlight the dominant and determining factors, both within and outside of the region, likely to influence the success of the project; and
- To produce relevant strategic guidelines by linking the project to its environment.

Circumstances in which it is applied

Developed about twenty years ago by specialists of private sector management, strategic decision-making tools such as SWOT are now used in the strategic reflection of public policy. Originally constructed in terms of products, customers, markets and competitive advantages, their use has now spread to towns, cities and regions, where the policies of these territories are aimed at creating competitive advantages. The notions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats may apply to a regional economy in the framework of national, EU and global competition.

SWOT analysis helps identify the most relevant strategic guidelines in relation to socio-economic development. Use of the tool is therefore particularly helpful in the planning of a RIS project and during its evaluation where it can help to improve the integration of the project in its context.

SWOT analysis may also serve as a management tool for assessing the relevance of a strategy during the implementation in stage 2. Where SWOT analyses have been used at the project formulation stage it is appropriate to revisit them on an ongoing basis and particularly at the mid term review stage to take account of the latest available data and to ensure that the strategic guidelines remain relevant.

The main steps involved

The implementation of a strategic approach such as SWOT analysis involves six steps, whereas step 1-4 is relevant for a stage-0 analysis:

Step 1	A "scan" of the environment of the RIS project	This step enables the detection the major trends and problems likely to affect the future of the region under consideration. Use should be made of socio-demographic, economic, political and physical indicators. Indicators of regional disparities and benchmarks are particularly useful for revealing opportunities and threats. This step should not be exhaustive as the aim is to obtain an overall picture to illustrate the key issues that the community in question will have to face.
Step 2	The preparation of an inventory of possible actions	The step involves the identification of possible actions, formulated in general terms in relation to the main problems identified.
Step 3	The external analysis of opportunities and threats	This step consists of listing the parameters of the environment which are not under the direct control of the public authorities and which, it is assumed, will strongly influence socio-economic development.
Step 4	Internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses	This step involves making an inventory of the factors which are at least partly under the control of the public authority, and which may either promote or hinder development.
Step	Classification of possible	This step is aimed at highlighting those actions (strategic guidelines) most likely to reduce development problems by

5	actions	focusing on the strengths and reducing or even eliminating the weaknesses, with a view to maximising opportunities and minimising threats.
Step 6.	Evaluation of a strategy	This optional step may be included if it is appropriate for judging the relevance of a strategy already being implemented or being planned. The step may be designed on the basis of a "portfolio of activities" analysis. Like a firm with its products and markets, a RIS project contains a set of interventions some of which build on strengths and opportunities while others try to compensate for weaknesses or to warn of threats. The evaluator should place interventions on a plane with two axes: (1) internal feasibility, strengths and weaknesses, and (2) external environment, opportunities and threats. The discussion of the map thus produced can be used to judge the relevance of strategy being evaluated.

In conclusion:

- SWOT analysis applied to a RIS project could be applied to search for the 0-stage situation, but can also be used to define specific actions, to develop effective strategies and in project evaluations (Stage1 and 2);
- The matrix tool is derived from management theories that are already old and are often criticised for being simplistic. This limitation should be kept in mind in its transposition to public management, so as to avoid restricting the analysis to a simplistic framework;
- SWOT analysis, as an evaluation tool, serves to make a simple classification of activities in terms of their relevance. Its main weakness derives from the often subjective procedure used by the evaluation team to classify the activities. The involvement of partners in this classification is a way of enhancing the credibility and usefulness of the analysis;
- SWOT analysis requires a deliberate intention, on the part of the different actors participating in its application, to reach a consensus. The process of formulating strategic guidelines is only of value under this condition. Otherwise, this model may tend to produce an erroneous and/or inapplicable diagnosis.

2.2.2 Check List

☐ Have you defined clear objectives of the project that everybody can understand?

☐ Have you sanctioned the objectives and the aim to conduct an analysis of the 0 stage situation with the main body of actors (project management unit and steering committee)?

☐ Have you decided to conduct a SWOT-analysis or any other kind of analysis to determine the 0 stage of the region?

☐ Have you appointed a working group for this mission?

2.3 HOW TO DEFINE THE METHODOLOGY OF THE INNOVATION RELATED ANALYSES

Perhaps the main work undertaken in a RIS project is the deep analysis of the so-called need and supply, i.e. the needs of companies regarding innovation-related support and the supply of innovation-related services of regional organisations. Now, the actual analyses are carried out in Stage 1 of the project (see "Methodological Guide - Stage 1" for a thorough guide to this activity), but a clear understanding of what to be done should be reached already in Stage 0, as well as the methodologies to be used.

A deep analysis of the regional preconditions should consist of several distinct modules, where at least the two first modules are carried out:

1. Analysis of the innovation-related needs of regional companies (Need analysis);
2. Analysis of the supply of innovation supporting services (Supply analysis).

In some RIS projects such as in Latvia and in Bohemia further analyse were carried out as well, e.g.

- Analysis of the innovation financing organisations (Innovation Financing analysis);
- Analysis of the innovation capacity of regional knowledge resources (Capacity analysis);
- Analysis of the efficiency of government R&D-spending (Efficiency analysis).

Each analysis is a stand-alone action that will throw a light on a specific element of the innovation-fostering process in the region and profoundly describe the current situation. However, the analyses are also interlinked in many ways, mainly in terms of transparency, e.g. the close connection between the need- and the supply analyses. In the need analysis the companies' views of the innovation-supporting system will be examined and in the supply analysis, the organisations providing support are examined.

A thorough analysis with, if not all, the majority of actors from different groups need to be undertaken in the different modules. Of course, the exercises concerning "consensus building" and "stage 0 identification" involves elements that can well be used as inputs to the deep analysis as well (e.g. meetings with regional need and supply side actors).

There are several methods to collect and analyse information for the analyses. The most widely used methods are desk researches, large scale questionnaires (web-based or surveys), personal interviews (done face-to face, over telephone, or in working groups) and more recently foresight-related exercises. These methods provide different results but also imply different expenditures and time frames; consequently, they are used for different purposes. Two extremes can be identified:

1. Relaying solely on quantitative methods, i.e. desk research and questionnaire surveys;
2. Relying solely on qualitative methods, i.e. interviews, working groups etc.

As good as all RIS –projects combine the two extremes. The balance chosen must be made taking the regional context under consideration.

In Sweden many of the RITTS projects used large scale questionnaire surveys to gather statistically workable information. This was possible because of the high response rate to such surveys in Sweden, normally approx. 30 %.

In other countries, response rate are very low and consequently other methods must be used. In RIS West Region Romania 57 companies from 12 selected fields of activity were interviewed and 28 companies participated in a technological audit.

Normally, at the preparatory stage (i.e. the desk research) it becomes clear what method should be used. If, for example, the mapping activity reveal a very large number of actors, a questionnaire is perhaps necessary. Also, if the interview guideline is very complex, with a lot of "free space" answers, face-to-face- or telephone interviews are necessary.

In the following, different methods are briefly described. If a more thorough elaboration and description on the respective methods is needed, please turn to the "Stage 1-guide".

2.3.1 Desk research

Actually, before any activities are carried out in stage 1, an initial desk research need to be carried out to prevent duplication of work that is already carried out in the region and to know the actual 0 stage of the analysis. Of course, the desk research and the 0 stage analysis can be undertaken at the same time (see the chapter above). Consequently, it is wise to start thinking about the innovation related analysis in stage 1 when carrying out the stage 0 analysis in order to get essential understanding of the specific topics within respective module. The outcome from such an analysis may be a material in project meetings to discuss the preparation of the stage 1, to make the analysis of that stage more focused. For example, decisions may be made about which areas (e.g. sectors) that should be examined. Also, a list of hypotheses that should be checked may be agreed upon.

Desk researches can be made in many forms e.g. internet research, reports or evaluations from other RIS regions, annual reports and strategy papers of players and fosterers, documentation of comments and positions from pressure groups (e.g. the employers' organisation). The material will be systematically analysed and used for identifying key topics of interest for the analyses and to find key actors for the respective modules.

The desk research should also lead to necessary information in order for the analysis team to prepare:

- A mapping of all relevant actors in the respective modules; and
- A design and validation of the interview guidelines.

The outcome of the desk research (or 0-stage analysis) should provide essential information in the decision on what qualitative and quantitative methods to use in the stage 1.

2.3.2 Large scale questionnaire

A standardised questionnaire can be designed and developed to cover the specific objectives of the module and the regional characteristics that go along with it. A large scale questionnaire is normally carried out for the need analyses, since it can be distributed to a vast amount of companies.

A web-based version has the advantage of distribution to a vast number of companies at no cost. Also the statistical handling of information is both more secure and less costly than a survey. A survey on the other hand has a definite advantage in countries where the internet penetration- and maturity levels are low.

The design should draw upon the experiences made in other RIS- and RITTS-regions as many elements are more or less similar for all regions. This also makes it possible to allow systematic comparisons of the situations to other European regions.

The questionnaire is the back-bone of the analyses. Besides providing a quantitative set of data for the statistical analyses it also serves other purposes, e.g.:

- To provide selection criteria for the selection of individual cases for face-to face interviews;
- To give input for further innovation topics around the open questions;
- To disseminate information on the RIS project in the region.

2.3.3 Personal interviews

Whereas the questionnaire provides descriptive information on the actors, personal interviews, either they are performed face-to-face, via the telephone, or in working groups are necessary to explain and understand the casual linkages between their situation and the other modules, e.g. the transparency issues.

The personal interviews help to get behind the statistical data and anonymous surface of an actor and make it possible to validate or reject trends discovered in the questionnaire analysis and to possibly give the actor direct assistance on urgent topics. Many actors, e.g. company managers, are also more prepared to provide in-depth and sensible, or what they consider as sensible information, on a one-on-one basis than in written form even if confidentiality is guaranteed.

2.3.4 Foresight exercises

Foresight is a means to think the future, a means of debating the future and primarily a means to shape the future. It is not a prognosis instrument to guess the future. The foresight exercise should also be able to leave behind knowledge and practical experiences around the method as a tool for regional development.

Following the definition employed by Destatte and Van Doren (2004, p. 4)[9] "Foresight is an independent, participatory, interactive and systematic process,[10] developed with collective and cross-disciplinary methods. Foresight is used to highlight the questions of the present and of the future by on the one hand considering them in their holistic, systemic and complex framework, and, on the other hand, by inserting them in

[9] Destatte, P. and van Doren, P. (2004): "Transvision. Bridging historically and culturally close neighbouring regions separated by national borders", in: Series Blueprints for Foresight Actions in the Regions, edited by the European Commission, DG Research.

[10] Foresight is not a laissez faire style waiting for a bottom up movement and it is not a hierarchically controlled implementation process either. A foresight process is characterised by systematic initiation, stimulation and fostering of bottom up processes. It is thus both top down *and* bottom up.

temporality." In this context foresight could be a powerful tool for putting strategic RIS objectives into action.

In doing so, foresight is a means to create:

- That a sustainable joint vision and consensus for the objectives of the project and the innovation system at large is developed and that the key players are committed to the vision and a roadmap that outlines its implementation;
- A further development of the strategy process and start one or several concrete working areas according to the objectives;
- That the key players in an innovation system increase their individual need orientation and overcome the denial of major threats. Foresight is an early wake-up call. In particular, foresight secures systematic assessment of trends outside the system in question (e.g. technology watch and technology screening activities);
- That the key players in an innovation system become increasingly connected, thus ensuring:
  - that the transparency of the system towards both system members and system outsiders is increased,
  - that synergy potentials can be realised,
  - that critical mass is reached.
- An inventory of, value and present profile shaping competences and to identify driving persons within the different actor groups. The purpose is to visualize unique competences and operators that should participate in the future development of the project.

An informal reference group should initially be created for the foresight assignment, e.g. the project management unit, the steering committee and other relevant actors. Within this group the methodology and work process will be discussed in more detail in order to reach a consensus about most suitable approach. Based on the outcomes from the discussions in the reference group a more detailed project plan is elaborated.

2.3.5 Check List

☐ Have you defined the types of analyses to be included?

☐ Have you defined Terms of Reference for the analyses?

☐ Have you considered which method for gathering information that is most suited for the selected analyses?

☐ Depending on the method(s) chosen have you checked that the project team have the necessary competence to carry out the work?

☐ Have you considered what the international partners and/or external experts can contribute with?

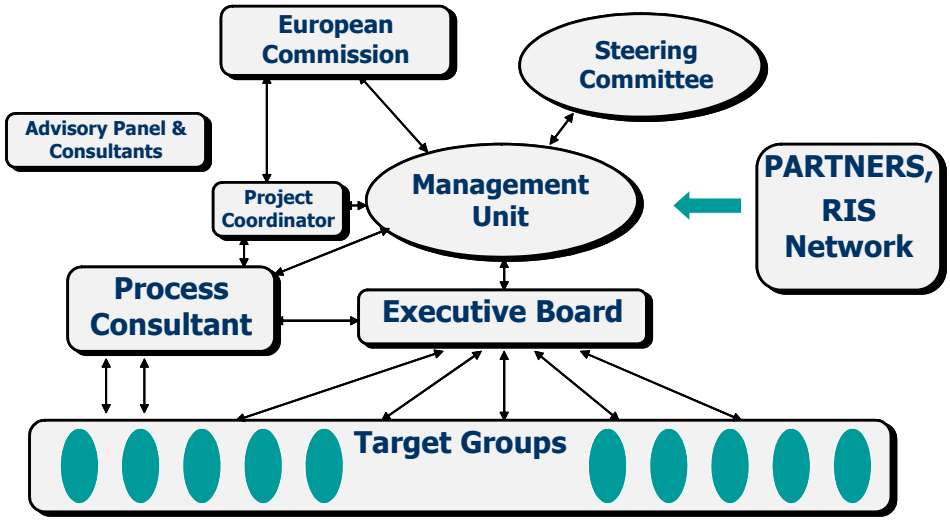
3. SECURING A GOOD PROJECT ORGANISATION

The project organisation is comprised by the steering committee, the project management team, consultants and channels that can contribute to achieving project aims (working groups).

The organisation set up to manage RIS projects, although unique to the context in which they operate, generally share the same basic structures. In almost all cases the project contractor selects a *project manager* and establishes a small team to manage the day-to-day co-ordination of the project – *the management team or unit.* For the good functioning of the exercise, this management team should be permanent, experienced and work full-time for the whole life of the project.

RIS projects are normally overseen by a *steering committee* that comprises key (innovation) stakeholders of the region. A specific characteristic of the RIS projects in the new member states is the close relations with international partners as part of the project organisations.

Often RIS projects employ specialist *consultants* and/or *other experts* on a short or long-term basis. Many projects also establish *working groups* to support the *project management team* and to assist in the formation of strategies and proposal actions. These working groups are not mandatory but they were often promoted by Commission officials in former RIS projects as an adequate means to secure regional participation. Below is an example of the organisational structure of RIS Latvia



This section of the guide is dedicated to providing advice on how to form and manage a good project delivery organisation. References will be made to each of the elements of this organisation but first we would like to draw your attention to some golden rules of project management:

1. Since resources are scarce, they must be treated with consideration, i.e. the project's resources must be allocated according to the difficulty of the tasks to be carried out and according to outcome;

2. The overall project organisation must be transparent, e.g. roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and delegated internally;

3. Project objectives and their relationship to existing regional initiatives must be clear to all and communicated to the stakeholders (see chapter 2.1).

3.1 THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT

The project management unit is responsible for achieving the results expected of the project. The management unit is normally seen as the driving force behind the project. The choice of individuals, their skills and commitment to the project clearly influence the success of both strategy development and implementation processes. Their role is not limited to managing operations but clearly involves the strategic development of the initiatives.

The choice of the project management unit is crucial for the success of the project. The main actor in the team is the project manager. He / she should be either a regional policy maker himself/herself or from a neutral agency enjoying lasting and solid policy support from the regional authority. As a manager, he or she has to deal a lot with people, and not their institutions. Therefore knowing how to deal with people is probably the most important success factor next to a good and executable working plan. Finally, a large part of the successful management of a RIS is dependent on his personal commitment.

The identification and final choice of manager/managers is decisive both for strategic development and for the implementation phase and its outcomes and impacts. In addition to management skills and motivation, the project managers should possess the following traits:

- Be familiar with the local/regional community;
- Be familiar with geographical differences with the region;
- Be respected by businesses and may have particular sector knowledge;
- Have long-term engagement and commitment.

The crucial management decisions the project manager has to take for achieving the best results in the RIS are:

- Political backing at early stage and throughout the project;
- Sound management of the international partners and consultants;
- Choice of project leaders with high legitimacy and capacity;
- Intense bottom-up involvement of regional innovation stakeholders in the projects.

3.2 THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee is the critical co-developer to the project management team. It assures involvement and responsibility for concrete tasks and is responsible for the overall performance of the RIS project.

3.2.1 Main tasks and roles of the steering committee

Before composing the steering committee, it has to be decided on what its role should be in the project. There are two overall functions of the steering committee to consider:

1. Steering the project;
2. Strategically guiding and protecting the project.

Several regions have found that a better term for steering committee would be in fact advisory committee. If the management unit is to proceed effectively, it cannot be hampered by the need to validate each step with the steering committee, and to make formal requests every time money has to be spent or a piece of work commissioned. Thus, as observed in former RIS exercises, the primary role of the steering committee was to give strategic direction to the study and secure political support.

This was the case e.g. in the RIS project in Bohemia as well as that of Latvia. The steering committee did not involve in day-to-day business but concentrated on providing input when the project was facing a particularly important milestone.

As a strategic guide of the RIS project the steering committee can have one or more of the following sub-roles:

- **Mentor of the project;**

  E.g. by guiding the project management group, by participation in and support the work of various task/working groups and pilot projects that are established throughout the various stages in the development of the RIS.

- **Protector of the project;**

  E.g. by promotion and political safeguarding of the project and by obtain support for the RIS project throughout the business and organisational sectors and networks they represent.

- **Marketer of the project;**

  E.g. by raising awareness, by disseminating information and by building international partnerships.

The main tasks of the Steering group typically include:

- Definition of objectives and monitoring of activities (including approval of reports);
- Political and institutional support;
- Liaison with the European Commission;
- Creating and ensuring consensus in the region/country;
- Evaluation of intermediate results and (if necessary) redirection and adjustment of targets;
- Bench-marking and building up international co-operation in the field of regional innovation strategies and policies;
- Co-responsibility towards the region reg. the outcomes of the project.

The steering committees' main role relates to the provision of a forum to discuss and communicate, in order to build consensus on how innovation should be integrated into plans for regional development. The steering committee will therefore have a diminishing importance as the project goes on. The need for the strategic support is much lower after the implementation phase. In other words, the need for strategic resources decreases as projects become more operative. There are two points to take into account in relation to this transition:

- CHANGE IN ROLES: Where the transition is not managed, the progression from strategy to implementation may to de-motivation and a lower involvement of the steering committee during the second phase of the project;
- CLARITY OF OBJECTIVES AT EACH STAGE: Also related to the transitional stage, the terms of reference for the steering committee should change to reflect and encourage their roles in the activity and policy development after the project formally ends. To maintain members active and their roles relevant, the objectives of the project should be repeated during the whole process.

The project manager will certainly need good skills in human resource management in order to get the most out of the steering committee. A guide like this can not provide solutions to every possible situation that might occur. However, based on the experiences of the RITTS project in Stockholm and the RIS project in Latvia, there should if possible be proposed a Code of Conduct for the steering committee members' engagement in the project. Such a code facilitates the work of the project manager.

The steering committee of RITTS Stockholm agreed on the following points:

Steering committee membership is personal and covers the whole project period

Steering committee members are not necessarily replaced – even if changing professional position

Steering committee members must be involved in the issues at stake and believe in the project

Steering committee members should open doors and give legitimacy to the project and its actions

The Code of Conduct can be even more formalised. After chapter 3.2.3 an example of statutes for a RIS steering committee can be found.

3.2.2 Setting up the steering committee

The appropriate membership of the steering group is a key to the success of all RIS projects. Members should confer credibility on the project, provide the management team with the authority to do their job and help make linkages between the RIS project and the wider innovation milieu. The composition of the steering group should itself help to develop a regional consensus on the priorities for action.

To determine who can be part of this committee, you can select the persons who answer positively to the following questions:

- Do you bring added value to the exercise? (the question would rather be put "what is your added value in the exercise"?)
- Are you able to act as a representative of your institution?
- Are you willing to carry out discussions within this group and not outside?

Furthermore, the steering committee members should be clear about that, as an important part of the RIS project, they must:

- Engage in win-win situations - the steering committee must not be a platform for safeguarding self-interest;
- Be accessible and don't shut out other members - the steering committee shall live also outside of meetings;

- Be reliable - don‘t promise what you can‘t deliver;
- Represent the interest of your organisation or group (be selfish) -as long as it is not at the expense of another steering committee member;
- Be open to compromise and change -that is the only way to achieve progress.

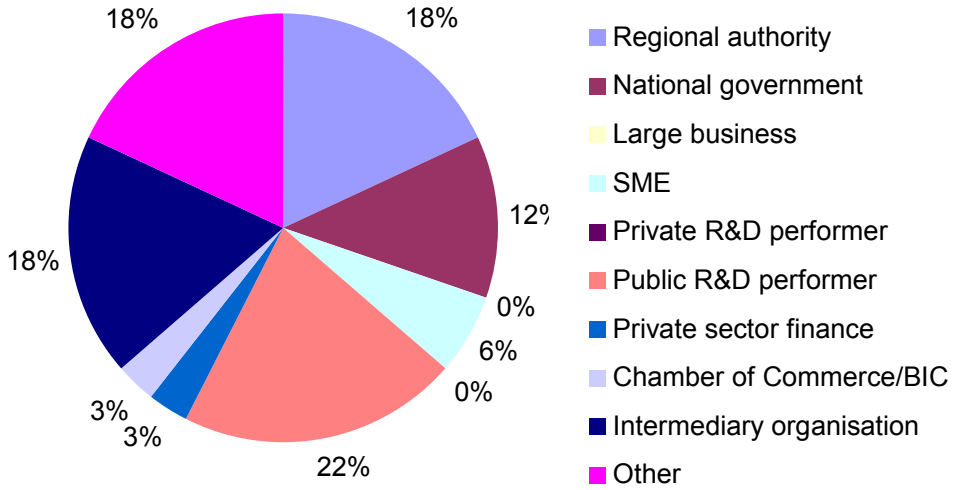
Steering committees members should be chosen for their ability to provide legitimacy and political support to the project, rather than for their ability to actively contribute to the project. To put it another way, their intrinsic characteristics are significantly more important than their contribution to the implementation tasks.

A strong mandate for implementation seems to be facilitated by engaging steering committee representatives in the planning process that can take part in the implementation phase. The ultimate effectiveness is dependent on the extent to which project targets and processes have gained a strong political support that is not truncated before the strategy can be properly implemented. By extension, an understanding and strong mandate from regional politicians also favours sustainability.

The period between the submission of the RIS proposal to the Commission and the effective start of the project always tends to take far longer than anticipated. For that reason, the region must not set up a steering committee too early, as some members (especially the representatives from the business community) might have lost faith and interest during that period.

3.2.3 Composition of the steering committee

The composition of the steering committee should be broad to enable building consensus and anchoring the project in the region. Membership is usually drawn from regional authorities, trade associations, educational organisations, trade unions, representatives of the business community etc. By involving these actors in the discussions and the decision-making process, projects are more firmly anchored in the local community and accepted within the region. The following picture illustrates the composition of the steering committees in the RIS projects between 94 and 99.[11]



[11] Ex-post evaluation of the RIS, RTTs and RISI ERDF innovative actions for the period 1994-99

For each of these organisations, the representative should have enough internal power to commit the organisation to reach consensus within the steering committee. Their different objectives and ambitions should be recognised, as well as their different sector and technology life cycles. Indeed, their individual project may be different to the objectives behind the RIS and one must keep in mind that different industries are at different stages of "being ready to be innovative".

Through the building of the steering committee, you should ensure the representation of the geographic, sector as well as thematic diversity in your region. In many regions, subregional differences should be taken into account when building the management structure and deciding upon actions to be undertaken. This leads to, at least, a good representation of the various subregions in the management bodies, but also to differences in approaches in the definition of the main objectives and main methods to be used for the analysis in the various parts of the region. Some regions have followed the strategy to concentrate first on subareas where the potential for commitment and consensus is greater, extending the result to the whole region in a second step.

It is necessary that the financier of innovation policy has a strong representation in the steering committee: you will need its support when the action plan is to be transformed into budget lines. Opinion leaders and project champions are useful as members of the steering committee.

It is good to involve early on government organisations, unions, private sector, academic institutions since commitment has to be made from the outset. Universities are particularly important actors to involve because they will afterwards have to be involved in the implementation of pilot projects.

Involving SMEs in a Steering Committee may not be realistic in many regions whereas some RIS projects have given greater emphasis to private sector membership and leadership of the Steering group. Finally, be aware that it is sometimes wiser to involve some organisations only later on in the project in order to prevent them holding up the start and that these different actors can be made responsible for parts of the work.

The size of the steering committee has to be limited; too many members and meetings become unwieldy. However, all relevant people have to be involved. On the practical side, a number of approximately 10 to 25 participants reflect the critical size for working in parties in a RIS exercise. That way, we can expect them to meet every two or three months. If all interested parties cause the steering committee to reach an unmanageable size, it can be transformed into a "Regional Council on Innovation", which will meet perhaps only twice in the course of the project (at the beginning and at the end). It is then necessary to define a subset of this body to act as a real Steering Committee, with the ability to monitor effectively the project, take decisions on its orientations, and approve the strategy and action plan.

RIS Rhone Alps for example had some thirty organisations represented on its steering committee, although there was a more important informal steering committee limited to the five key regional stakeholders, i.e. the four main policy organisations and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

RIS Latvia's steering committee comprised 25 persons. This fairly big steering committee still managed to meet three times a year with good participation.

The leader of the steering committee has to be recognised by the innovation community. Ideally, he/she should be well known at the regional level, such as a senior businessman, academic, public servant or political figure, who can contribute to the

institutional legitimacy of the project. That way, he/she can also command respect and ensure the participation of key figures from other agencies.

Presidency of the steering committee can be co-shared by a businessman and a public representative. Very often, a large administrative body can allocate more staff to an RIS project than most intermediaries or private organisations could do. There are also disadvantages involved in having a RIS managed by the Regional Government. Indeed, government agencies are usually not the “natural” partner for the business community. The RIS can be used to increase credibility for these public-private partnerships. However, it will take more effort to obtain and sustain business support to the RIS if managed by the government administration. The fact that there is no guarantee of funding of projects put forward by the business community could eventually damage this still fresh public-private partnership. Another danger is that intermediaries and supply organisations do not enter the RIS process with conviction but feel obliged to participate for fear of losing funding.

Example: Steering Committee statutes

§ 1 Preamble

1.1 The prime task of the steering Committee is the securing of a successful project implementation.

1.2 The Steering Committee members serve as ambassadors of the project in their home organisations and in their networks and must be committed to serve as champions for specific measures.

§ 2 Participation

2.1 Steering Committee members participate primarily as individuals and secondly as representatives of their respective organisations.

2.2 New members will be accepted (all criteria to be fulfilled):

- Their participation will have a significant positive effect on the development of the project;
- A positive two-third majority voting.

2.3 Members may be discharged if:

- They fail to show up at three consecutive steering committee meetings;
- They act in contradiction to these statues.

2.4 Discharging a member demands a two-third majority voting.

§ 3 Chair and deputy chair

3.1 The chairperson of the Steering Committee is appointed by the RIS project co-ordinator.

3.2 A deputy chairperson should be appointed by the project co-ordinator.

§ 4 Rights and duties

4.1 All Steering Committee members shall have the possibility to influence all project-relevant decisions.

4.2 All Steering Committee members shall be informed about project-relevant decisions.

4.3 All Steering Committee members have the right to take part of all project-relevant information.

4.4 All Steering Committee members shall actively contribute to the development of the project.

§ 5 Modes of decision

5.1 If necessary, decisions by the Steering Committee may be decided by voting.

5.2 Unless stated by these statues, all voting will be decided by ordinary majority decisions.

5.3 Important voting-dependent decisions must be announced in advance. Non-participating Steering Committee members may in such cases vote in advance.

5.4 In case of a draw, the chairperson has a double vote.

§ 6 Steering Committee meetings

6.1 *Invitation* : The project management unit invites to meetings not later than four weeks in advance via e-mail. Draft agenda to be send via e-mail one week before meeting.

6.2 *Preparation* : All steering committee members should prepare for meeting according to the outcomes of the previous meeting.

6.3 *Participation* : If a Steering Committee member is not able to participate in a meeting, no substitute may be sent.

6.4 *Feed back* : The Management Unit will document the meetings and provide minutes within a week after the meeting. The Steering Committee members should provide feedback on the minutes to the Management Unit within one week of their submission.

§ 7 Other obligations

7.1 All Steering Committee members should strive to create trust, openness and creativity in the Committee by:

- Informing about conflicts of interest;
- Being open to change;
- Not pursuing hidden agendas.

7.2 Any comments or objections on the activities of the Steering Committee by a Steering Committee member shall be discussed on a bilateral basis with the chairperson.

7.3 All Steering Committee members are obliged to treat the topics discussed within meetings and the information disseminated with discretion.

Example: List of Steering Committee members in RIS Latvia

RIS project Steering Committee		
	Member	**Position**
1	Mr. Jānis Krūmiņš	Vice-president of Baltic Holdings
2	Mr. Indriķis Muižnieks	Vice rector, Dean of faculty of Biology, University of Latvia
3	Mr. Leonīds Ribickis	Vice Rector Riga Technical University
4	Mr. Richard Berug	Vice rector, Vidzeme University College
5	Mr. Andris Deniņš	Director of auditing company “Invest-Riga”
6	Mrs. Baiba Rivža	Chairman, Council of Higher Education
7	Mr. Maris Ēlerts	Director General of Latvian Development Agency
8	Mr. Jānis Stabulnieks	Director of Latvian Technological Centre
9	Mr. Uldis Osis	President, consultancy company Konsorts
10	Mr. Kārlis Cerbulis	Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Sidrabe; Representative - Baltic States, NCH
11	Mr. Viktors Kulbergs	Chairman of the Council of National Economy
12	Mr. Edgars Zalāns	Mayor, Kuldiga city Council
13	Mrs. Inga Goldberga	Director, Latgale Region Development Agency
14	Mr.Valdis Egle	Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Science
15	Mrs. Vita Liberte	Deloitte &Touch
16	Ivars Godmanis	Former Member of Parliament
17	Kaspars Gerhards	State Secretary of Ministry of Economy
18	Andris Ameriks	Chairman of Development Committee of the Riga City Council
19	Inesis Feiferis	President, Latvian mortgage bank
20	Andris Vilks	Director of National Library
21	Valdis Lokenbahs	President of IT company “Dati”
22	Ivars Kalviņš	Vice Director of Institute of Organic Synthesis, Member of Latvian Academy of Sciences, Professor
23	Lolita Bemhema	President, company Spilva
24	Tālis Tisenkopfs	Dean, LU Faculty of Sociology
25	Ilmārs Osmanis	President, company Hansa Elektronika
Associated member		
26	Mr. Thomas Schwing	Managing Director, IMG Innovations-Management GmbH, Germany
27	Mrs. Barbro Berg	Stockholm city Development Agency, Sweden

3.3 THE ROLES AND TASKS OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS AND CONSULTANTS

3.3.1 International partners

A key asset to the RIS projects is the international partners. However, the international partners must be managed well otherwise their potential can not be utilised to full extent. This "management" process starts very early, i.e. in stage 0. The project's operational team should work out a clear strategy for how to best profit from the partners. The starting point of this strategy is to create an understanding of what the partners can provide in terms of support. A review of the first round of RIS projects in the new member states allows defining a simple typology of the role of the international partners in these projects.

Sometimes the partner regions find it difficult to retain memories on the details of the different steps of the RIS process, it happened for RIS NACs generations that expectation of detailed methodological support could not be fulfilled. On the other hand the partner regions were able to play important role in the process. Some regions had a frank discussion what were their expectations, if and how they could be answered in order to agree realistically on an activity plan.

Naturally, the role of the partners is never as clear-cut as this typology suggests but it can nevertheless be useful for working out the strategy for the partners:

- Role 1 Providing "Proof of concept"

Many RIS projects have used the international partners as evidence of that innovation is important and that an innovation strategy is a crucial instrument for regional economic development. The partners have participated in seminars, workshops etc. giving presentations on the work carried out in the own region and providing good-practice examples. In many regions study visits were organised that demonstrated specific measures working "on the spot", that was important to convince particular regional stakeholders that the activities are feasible and beneficial.

A RIS project that focused much on this role of the partners was the RIS of Prague and Pilsen. The partners were London (UK), Aachen (DE) and Rotterdam (NL). Existing RIS strategies were translated and disseminated to stakeholders.

- Role 2 Providing Process support

In several RIS projects the international partners helped in certain phases of the project process. In particular, however, this assistance seems to be more frequent in Stage 1 and 2 - in particular regarding methodologies for performing the different analyses and when designing the strategy document.

In RIS Tartu and Southern Estonia the international partners provided valuable input when the innovation strategy was formulated and finalised. The input concerned e.g. the prioritisation of measures and the structure of the strategy.

- Role 3 Being a "Door opener"

Although not as common as the two previous roles there are examples of RIS projects that have had a pronounced strategy of developing further joint co-operation activities

with the partner regions. In these projects the international partners have been engaged in a dialogue on how further joint projects can be detected and developed.

RIS South Great Plains had Kent (UK) and inno-TSD as partners. The international partners were asked to map out the opportunities for networking, both nationally and internationally that might prove useful in developing concrete actions or projects in the medium and long-term and raising the image of the region amongst European innovation actors.

- Role 4 Transferring methodologies

The transfer of methodologies is a topic both for the project implementation and the definition of pilot actions of Stage 2.

The international partners have in some cases provided quite detailed concepts for how to carry out the different analyses but also for how to establish consensus on project objectives and goals.[12] In stage 2, when pilot projects are defined, further transfer of methods have been observed now regarding specific innovation-supporting schemes and programmes.

In RIS Latvia the German partner IMG of Rheinland-Pfalz soon realised that they shared a common challenge with Latvia; the closing of military sites such as airports. IMG organised a study trip for the RIS management unit and provided advice on how to develop counter-measures for handling the negative consequences of such closures.

3.3.2 External consultants

The intervention of national and international consultants is a crucial aspect of the RIS programme. Generally speaking, international consultants and experts might be best use for introducing a broader vision or undertaking analysis on main industrial and technology trends in a specific area of interest to your region. They also allow the actors of the region to renew their practices according to best practices experimented elsewhere.

National consultants are more fitted to talk to enterprises (they will share their culture), take actions on the communication side, and act as process consultants because they have to be always very close to the project manager. They will also help to ensure that your regional exercise is coherent with the national policy lines. As process consultants they have to deal with methodological questions and give permanent feedback.

In earlier RIS projects, and in particular in the RITTS-projects, there was strong representation of independent international consultants. Bringing in external consultants in policy design is a good idea, provided they are managed carefully. RIS should therefore include a more explicit concern for the “legacy” of consultants in the regions in terms of method and skills. Consultants should be well embedded in the RIS process, rather than seen as “neutral” evaluators.

[12] It is seldom possible to transfer an approach without adaptations from one context to another. Therefore RIS project managers should be careful with copying the methods for analyses without carefully considering the situation in the own region.

Evaluations showed that consultants should not be seen as bringing "best practice" from elsewhere into a region or applying standard methodological tools, but rather as catalysers of existing knowledge in the region and facilitators, coaches in the design of innovation policies.

In addition to the experts and the members of the project team, an international expert panel, composed of specialists in the questions of interest for the region and with no link to the project, may also be convened at some critical point of the exercise:

- At the start, to explain the exercise to the steering committee;
- At the end of phase I, to help defining the strategy, or later on, for the definition of specific actions in order to implement the strategy.

It is important that the management team (from the region) spends some time to manage and co-ordinate the consultants as past experience has shown that it is not always safe to trust the consultants to manage other consultants. Organising regular meetings between your international and national experts is a must and should serve at the same time the purpose of clarifying your expectations and requirements from them.

Consultants and experts are very valuable for your project. They can deal better with "hot potatoes" thanks to their external position. Concerning reports, they should never be responsible for the entire writing of the RIS reports since this is a project for your region, not for consultants. Part of their work is saying the "truth", but then you, as a representative of the Regional Authority, will have most probably to "smooth the truth" in order to make it compatible with the collective regional interest and prepare for finding solutions to the problems identified.

The use of external expertise can boost project management and dismantle regional "box-thinking" by contributing with external ideas and approaches. Consultants are normally used either for short-term or one-off activities such as market surveys etc., or for more long-term in process support. Echoing the findings of previous evaluations, the fieldwork shows that:

- Long-term consultancy generates higher value for the regional governments;
- Consultants can bring new ideas and approaches.

The regions tend to be more satisfied with consultancy services that have been contracted for longer periods. Whether the engagement are long- or short-term, the most important motive for bringing in consultants is the need to access external expertise and new ideas, dismantling limitations in traditional regional methods and approaches.

3.4 INPUT FROM AND COVERAGE OF SECTOR AND HORIZONTAL WORKING GROUPS

Working groups are a useful mechanism to help build regional consensus, they may be sector orientated or thematic, depending upon the approach adopted. They should be given specific terms of reference or timetable for delivery of results. It is useful to include a member of the steering group in each working group together with a member of the management team. The conclusions of the different working groups, coordinated by the project manager should be the basis of strategic discussions in the steering group.

In former RIS projects, most regions established working groups. Typically, there were four roles assigned to the working groups:

1. Information and diffusion of research results;
2. Validation and discussion, deepening of these research results;
3. Gathering of ideas for strategy development;
4. Gathering of ideas for project and measures development;

The emphasis put on those four objectives varied across regions.

In some regions such as the East Midlands where the consultants left the region with only very general strategic pointers, the working groups have played a crucial role in identifying and gaining support for proposed strategic actions.

Working groups are a valuable channel to raise awareness amongst the target audience. Given that a requirement for both regional innovation and information society strategy development processes was to ensure a bottom up approach, inviting companies to become members of working groups is a direct way of achieving this. The groups can reveal the crucial factors that should be considered when developing the strategies, including the potential impact of policies and actions.

Working groups can either be sectoral or horizontal. Sectoral working groups are normally industry sector focused, such as automotive or electronics. Some RIS projects themselves have been constructed around sectors, each of which had a steering committee, a sector champion and a senior secretariat. The importance of demand-led and bottom-up processes and industrial engagement has been outlined above. Sector groups, as central organisational project units, are important conduits through which industrial priorities and knowledge are channelled. The more successful projects use them not only as an instrument for anchoring the project in the community but also to deliver pilot actions and implement strategies. Involving industry in the implementation phase will enable stakeholders to perceive the direct industrial relevance and benefits more clearly. This in turn will lead to stronger engagement and commitment from business sectors.

The make up of horizontal working groups are in general more varied. Some projects may use working groups to address key issues for the region, such as role definition of key actors, logistics and communication, rurality, or equality. The use of horizontal working groups is normally not as widespread as the use of sector groups. By their nature, it is probably more difficult to identify the individuals with the specific skills to actively contribute to these issues. The added value should derive from checking the implications of the strategies and actions as they develop on non sector-specific issues. In this way, an objective to increase technological skills in an area would also be addressed from the point of view of how the centres of learning can be accessed from remote rural areas, how women can be encouraged to acquire skills that are traditionally male, etc.

3.5 CHECK LIST

- ☐ Have you set up a relevant project management unit?
- ☐ Have you defined their tasks and roles?
- ☐ Have you set up a relevant steering committee?
- ☐ Have you defined their tasks and roles?

- ☐ Have you settled on what consultants to use?
- ☐ Have you defined the tasks and roles of each consultant?
- ☐ Have you appointed working groups to aid in specific analyses or actions?
- ☐ Have you defined tasks and roles of each working group?

4. RAISING AWARENESS AND GAINING BROAD COMMITMENT

The importance of communication with project stakeholders cannot be overstated and project managers cannot afford to undermine the importance of a good communication strategy. Communication within the project team and open communication among the team members is also very important and can even be considered as the prerequisite for a successful project. It avoids misunderstanding and facilitates an efficient management. The same can be said about the steering committee. Both groups play a key role in maintaining effective communication with the rest of the regional actors involved in the project. A number of means are open to undertake the "communication" part of the RIS exercise and build a positive image of such an exercise. This section provides detailed advice on how to design and carry out a RIS communication plan. It mainly addresses the issue of external communication, i.e. communicating with stakeholders outside of the steering committee or of the management unit.

4.1 THE ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The core elements of the communication plan should be:

- Definition of goals;
- A general description of the stakeholder groups and their motivation, communication tasks and the expected results for the work with target groups;
- Methods for involvement of the stakeholder groups and providing publicity;
- An elaborated plan for involvement of stakeholder groups and ensuring publicity (necessary measures, goal of the event, importance of the event for the project implementation, target audience, possible implementation time, responsible person, notes);
- Time-table for the involvement of stakeholder groups and ensuring publicity.

4.2 GOALS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The following is a suggestion for goals of the communication strategy:

- To position the RIS project in a national and European context and to establish an attractive image for the target group of the project;
- To identify and to involve a potentially wider audience connected with the development of business and the development of innovation;
- To promote the improvement of information, understanding and education on the issues, which could support the development of innovation processes?
- To purposefully inform the public opinion about the necessity to support the development of knowledge based business in the region.

Unless already stated in the project work plan you should also define quantitative goals for the communication plan, e.g. number of participants in seminars, etc.

4.3 TARGET GROUPS OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

The target group may look very different from one RIS project to another; however, there is a basic set of organisations or stakeholders that is bound to be similar in all regions. These should be given particular attention when carrying out communication activities.

1. **Companies (mainly SMEs)**

SMEs are the centre of attention of the RIS project. SMEs that are innovation- and new technology oriented companies (e.g. technology-based, electronics- and IT-companies) are of special interest. These companies should be integrated in the project on the earliest stages for providing support and need orientation. The companies and firms must be motivated in order to be involved in the innovation process.

2. **EU Commission**

The EU Commission is a co-founder in the RIS project's realization. Consequently they are stakeholders in the project, for whom it is necessary to implement project results on a European level. The bigger the gain from project realization on the EU level, the bigger the gain for the region. It is necessary to regularly inform the EC about the project's realization process and about results. Informing the EC also reduces the own effort as the time for aligning the financial- and other reports is reduced.

3. **International partners**

Collaboration with international partners can open the way for new knowledge and for new market possibilities to the region. It can be wise for the region to have an on-going communication with some international partners, e.g. those that have already implemented RIS projects, and let them to act as mentors to provide important knowledge and information to the process.

4. **Innovation supporting institutions and organizations**

There are several organizations that provide companies with different innovation related services, e.g. research institutions, universities, innovation agencies etc. It is necessary to involve these organisations in the project at an early stage and to set up a two-way communication process, e.g. through regular meetings and workshops.

5. **Politicians**

It is important to involve politicians from different levels – from local, regional and national level. Politicians can be members of the steering committee but need nevertheless to receive special attention in the communication strategy.

6. **Mass Media – TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, internet-based news agencies etc.**

Media is an important target group and need to be approached regularly. It is necessary to improve the level of understanding about the project among the different mass media in order to create a social opinion forming process. Cooperation with some of the mass media representatives should be closer than with others.

4.4 METHODS AND ACTIONS FOR THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROJECT

There are numerous different tools for communication. They can be divided in passive and active tools. A general advice is to use a person with communication skills to manage the communication activities.

4.4.1 Passive tools

- **Name and logo**

This might be the very first task of the entire project. Find an own name and design your own logo, specific to the RIS but integrating the regional identity.

- **Web pages / New technologies**

Using the Internet to provide a communication entry point to the project is very common. Virtually all RIS projects have homepage on which essential information can be found and downloaded. In some cases the homepage is also used as management tool. On the IRE homepage (www.innovating-regions.org) it is possible to find the web addresses of earlier RIS projects.

Video-conferencing could be used, particularly in regions which cover large geographic areas, or on an inter-regional basis.

- **The preparation and the dissemination of newsletters and leaflets**

As good as all RIS projects have issued newsletters on a regular basis. An extract of a RIS Newsletter is shown on the next page.

- **The preparation and the dissemination of brochures**

Different types of publications can be used at the launching or throughout the entire life of the project:

- Pamphlets;
- Small paragraphs in existing publications / newsletters;
- Issue papers.

The Steering Committee should be fed regularly with short issues papers on particular topics, asking them to reach conclusions, and regular progress reports.

- **Materials for the seminars and conferences**

This is typically the material needed to facilitate conferences and other project meetings. Such material may be summaries of analyses, good practice examples from the international partners etc. An example of an agenda for a RIS launch conference is provided on the second following page.

- **Press campaign (information for the mass media, articles for the target groups in appropriate mass media, participation in the Steering Committee in TV and radio broadcasts, work with the press claims)**

It can be very useful as having journalists from daily newspapers involved in the RIS project from a very early stage. This allows frequent coverage in the press. If the region does not have a journalist or media-type person on their steering committee, then a dedicated person should be appointed as responsible for communications throughout the lifetime of the exercise, ensuring consistency and timeliness. It is also useful to have advertisements and / or interviews in regional and national press, on the local radio and even, if possible on television.

- **Press releases**

An example of a RIS press release is provided on the second following page.

- **Pilot projects**

Pilot projects can be labelled as marketing tools. AS mentioned earlier It is important to organise the RIS process to get early deliverables and to communicate on these first successes. IRE promotion tools could strengthen communication activities in a region. They show that the project is not carried out in isolation, they emphasise European context and by successful example of different regions can help to convince that involvement in RIS brings important results.

Example: Extract of a RIS Newsletter

Newsletter No.1 – May 2002

Basic information on the BRIS Project

The main objective of the BRIS Project, which is supported by the European Commission, is to design and implement innovation strategy for the region of Prague.

The Project focuses particularly on use of the strong research base in Prague for the benefit of setting up and developing of small- and medium-size enterprises, the products of which are of a high added value.

The Project is also anticipated to result in established direct cooperation between small innovative enterprises from Prague and EU partner regions.

The Project´s results will contribute to the realization of the strategic priority "Prague – Centre of Innovation and Qualified Workforce" as included in the Strategic Plan of the Capital Prague.
The Project is supported by the European Commission and the Prague City Hall.

Detailed information on the Project are available at www.bris.cz

Main expected results of the Project

- favourable conditions for innovative start-ups and their development
- setting up of high-tech business incubators is initiated
- cooperation between small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and the science and research base is supported
- a positive impact on the growth of high-tech enterprises
- cooperation with a Science Park Project in Prague
- creation of new research spin-offs is supported
- increase in export-oriented activities
- contribution to the job creation
- fostering of European orientation of Czech SMEs
- application of the experience from BRIS in other regions in the Czech Republic

Project partners

The BRIS Project is conducted by a group of three local partners in the region of Prague:

- Technology Centre AS CR (Project coordinator)
- Prague City Hall, City Development Authority
- Centre for Regional Development CR – EIC Prague

Example: RIS press release:

The project Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) is a project bringing together all relevant organisations in the region in a joint effort to enhance the national innovation system. The project is co-funded by the European Commission.

The overall goal of RIS is to facilitate the creation of a national innovation system. This includes the tasks of identifying key factors and obstacles limiting growth of innovative enterprises, the design of an action plan to achieve high output and impact in respect to innovation in prioritised sectors, the creation of supportive innovation environment, the upgrading of the national innovation strategy and action plan as well as the establishment of a performance monitoring system.

The project is carried out in three stages, beginning in xx 2005 and ending in xx 2008. Stage 0 is dedicated to preparatory work, Stage 1 to extensive information gathering and analyses and Stage 2 to the carrying out of pilot actions.

At present time Stage 0 is coming to its end and first results are ready to be presented to a wide audience. The coming stages of the project will focus on SMEs' needs and situation with regards to innovation, the public sector supply of innovation-supporting services, the innovation capacity of the R&D-sector and finally on the access to finance for innovative SMEs.

The results of Stage 0 indicate that the region is up to serious challenges in the process of developing the national innovation system. Pre-analyses shows e.g. that the links between the R&D-sector and industry are very weak, the commercial potential of the research performed in the R&D-system is low and the companies' awareness and utilisation of the service provided by innovation-supporting organisations are low as well. Moreover is the entire concept of innovation and its fundamental importance in all modern economies not sufficiently anchored in industry, the R&D-sector or in public administration.

The findings of the analyses will provide valuable input to policy discussions and will also provide the basis for the design and implementation of pilot activities to be carried out in the coming stages of the RIS project. With the end of RIS the work with regional innovation is not concluded however, on the contrary, it has only begun.

Example : Launch conference

"European Community Programme "Regional Innovation Strategies" Latvia

REVAL Hotel Latvija, Elizabetes iela 55, Rīga May 23, 2002

PROGRAMME

14:00-14:45 Press Conference, Hall Gamma 2

14:30-15:00 Hall Beta 1

Registration

15:00-16:30 Hall Beta 1

- Address, Minister of Economy A.Kalvītis (to be confirmed)

Presentation of the Project:

- Minister of Special Assignments for Public and Municipal Reform Affairs J.Krūmiņš
- Project Co-ordinator V.Avotiņš, Latvian Development Agency
- Project Consultant J.Maier, Inno AG, Germany
- Project Partner B.Berg, The City of Stockholm Economic Development Agency, Sweden
- Project Partner T. Schwing, IMG Innovations-Management GmbH, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany

16:30-18:00

Discussions, coffee, snacks

4.4.2 Active tools

Active tools mainly include pro-active activities such as targeted visits to stakeholders or concerted workshops and seminars. Examples of active tools are:

- Visiting the sites, marketing of the participants to the project;
- Press conferences (various with different scenarios);
- Round table discussions;
- Meetings with local and regional politicians;
- Conferences and seminars.

Many RIS projects carry out a launch conferences during Stage 0. The adequate moment to hold a wide information meeting on the RIS project in your region, is not easy to determine. People involved in previous exercises think that that kind of event, gathering over 100 people in one's region, is necessary. Holding it at the start of the process can ease the awareness and stimulate the participation of the actors to the exercise, but it is not easy to decide on the content of the message to be passed on. Having it organised in the middle of the process is handy for stimulating the participation of regional actors to the construction of the strategy and the validation of the study's results as well, but it might be difficult to manage such a large audience. An end conference is probably necessary since all stakeholders in the region are supposed to adhere to the strategy and implement it in its own area.

Below is an example of the relation between target groups and the different communication tools and activities:

Tool/Activity	Type	Frequency	Target group
Newsletters	Active	Quarterly	• Companies • Policy makers • Innovation supporting organisations • International partners • Steering Committee
Homepage	Passive	Continuous updates	• All stakeholders
Seminars/Workshops	Active	Bi-monthly, depending on project stages	• Companies • Policy makers • Innovation supporting organisations • International partners • Steering Committee
Press releases	Passive	Bi-monthly	• All stakeholders
Information brochure	Passive	Once during every project stage	• All stakeholders
Visits to key-companies	Active	Continuous	• Companies
Press conferences	Active	Once during every project stage	• All stakeholders

4.5 EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION

#	*Stakeholder group*	*Expected results*
1.	Companies (small and medium size enterprises-)	• Information of the project • Awareness of the project • Participation in the SME analyses
2.	EU Commission, representatives of this Commission in the region	• Positive attitude to the project • Participation in the key project events • Support to the preparation the projects concerning IT
3.	Regional Development Council, Regional Development agencies, representatives from other regional institutions	• Awareness of the project • Participation in the project events • Awareness of the necessity for the resources for the strategy implementation • Participation in the pilot projects
4.	Politicians on the national, regional, municipal level	• Awareness of the project • Participation in the project activities • Agreement on the resource
5.	Media	• Increase of the information of the project • Awareness of the project • Create favourable conditions/feeling for the project
6.	Innovation supporting organisation	• Awareness of the project • Agreement of the resources and participation in the supply-side analyses
7.	International partners/companies	• Awareness of the project • Information and understanding of companies in he region, their competence and co-operation possibilities • Support from the international partners
8.	Members of the Steering Committee	• Overview of the project implementation • Positive attitude to the project
9.	Representatives of the research institutions	• Participation in the development of the innovation project development, support to the implementation of the implementation innovation technology and procedures

4.6 CHECK LIST

☐ Have you designed a project logotype and reserved an Internet domain?

☐ Is the person in charge of the plan skilled in communication strategies and tools?

☐ Have you identified (and described) all relevant stakeholders of the project?

☐ Have you quantified the goals of the communication plan and defined indicators?

☐ Have you decided on the key communication channels, e.g. seminars?

☐ Have you allocated resources to implementing the communication plan?

☐ Have you designed a timetable for communication activities?

☐ Finally, is there consensus in the project organisation on the plan?