Regional Innovation Pole of Western Greece

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DLA SEMINAR, Santiago de Compostela
March 3, 2011

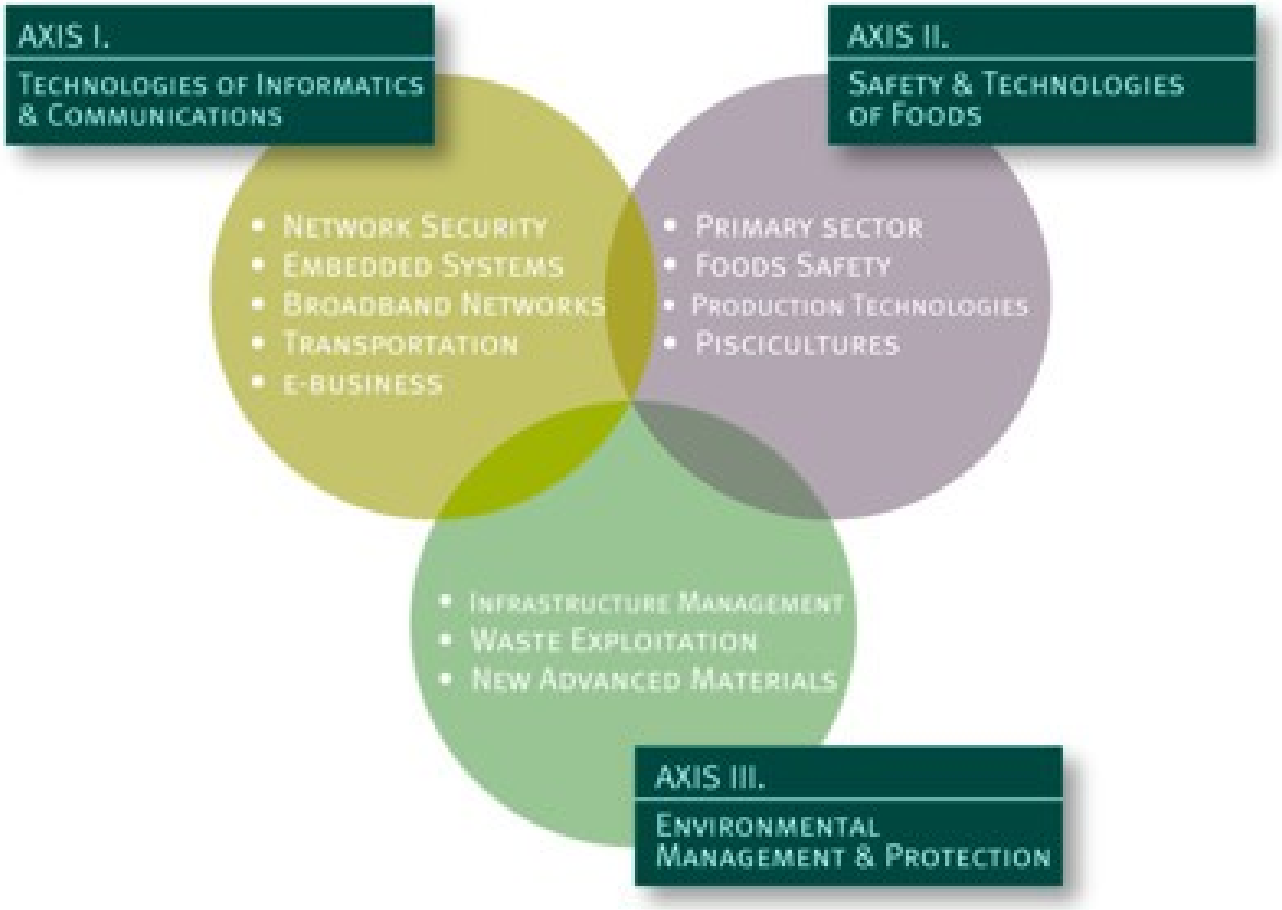
Introduction

- **Innovation** is one of the most important factors of **competitiveness** for the **enterprises**.
- **"Creation of Regional Innovation Poles"** aims at the aid of **technological dexterity** and **distinction** in important **Regional technological nodes.**

ISSUE TACKLED BY THE PRACTICE

- To **organize and strengthen the bonds between the Research/Technological and Enterprise Institutions of the Region of Western Greece (RWG)** by initiating and implementing activities that will enhance the technological and innovation performance of the RWG and the SMEs of the Region will become more competitive.
- Region of Western Greece include well known **scientific, research and technological entities**, with many innovative organizations, Knowledge Producing Organizations, such as the **University of Patras**, **Greek Open University**, **Research Institutes** (RACTI, FORTH/ICEHT, ISI) and **Technological Education Institutions**.
- The participating institutes that collaborate to execute the RIP-WG targets represent the critical mass of the RWG's technological potential.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE



OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

- ***Axis I. Technologies of Computing and Communications***
- Computing-Telecommunications: **Security** of calculating systems and networks. **Incorporated calculating**, **telecommunications** and **controlling systems**. Interactive services for the public. Computing and telecommunications (broadband networks).
- **Transports**: International combined transports.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

- ***Axis II. Safety and Technologies of Foods***
- **Certification** of major competitive agriculture, livestock, and piscatorial products.
- **Technologies** and **quality** of foods: Quality of agricultural products and piscicultures.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE

- ***Axis III. Environmental Management and Protection***
- **Clean** and **renewable** forms of **energy**.
- **Energy-saving** technologies in buildings.
- **Economizing** on natural resources with the use of new **advanced materials**.
- Management of **infrastructures** and **environmental repercussions**.
- Management and exploitation of **waste**

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

- The creation of a Regional Innovation Pole aims to the **strengthening of the bonds between regional research, technological and business partners**. The strengthening of their links, together with the further development of the infrastructure and activities concerning innovation and applied research, may lead to an important expansion of knowledge-based businesses.

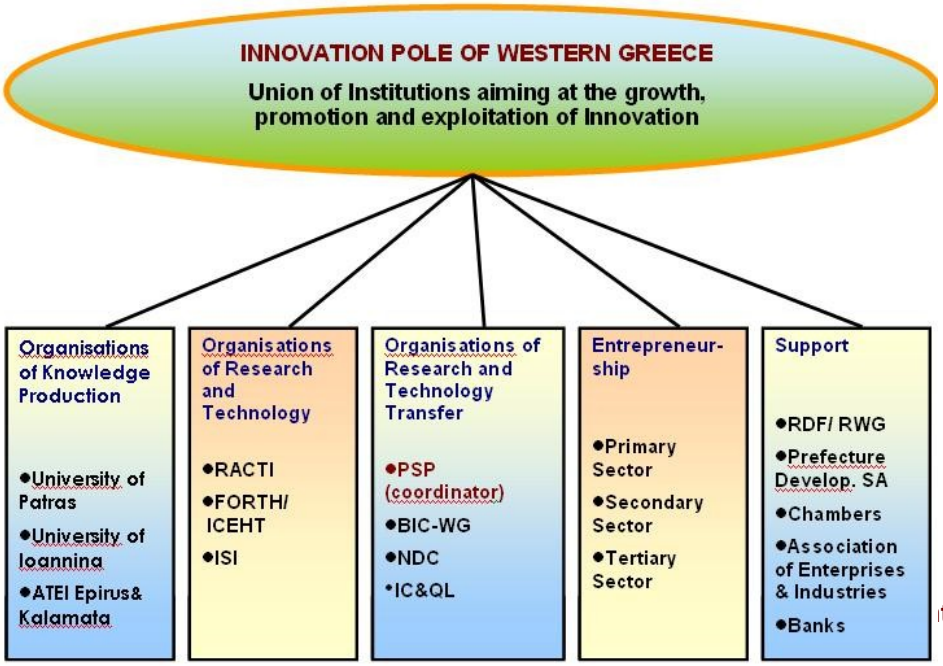
- Regional Innovation Pole of Western Greece (RIP-WG) created under the supervising authority General Secretariat for Research & Technology, Ministry of Development. RIP-WG played an intermediate and facilitator role between the research institutions of the region and the SMEs, to **transfer the existing knowledge and innovation from the Institutes to the enterprises of the region.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

- Despite the internationalization of business activities and the development of international partnerships, **innovation and R&T continue to a great extent to de developed locally through the cooperation between SMEs and research institutes**. These collaborations tend to be more effective when the partners who develop them cooperate in such a way that **their joint actions and international recognizability are used wisely, thus acquiring an important technological and commercial feature**.
- The theoretical background for the creation of Regional Innovation Poles based on the cross-correlation of **two basic notions for the development and improvement of business dexterity of SMEs**: **the networks of innovation** (**clusters**) and the **cooperative networks (networking).** These two notions are focused in effective learning and in the disposal of all types of knowledge (tacit knowledge, coded, scientific or empiric) in different territorial or organizational structures.

Bodies involved

- Small and Medium Enterprises of Western Greece
- Research Institutes
- Universities
- Technological Educational Institutes
- Regional Authorities
- Chambers of Commerce
- Organizations that promote innovation to SMEs



Target of the practice

- The targets set by the creation of RIP-WG are :

1. **Unifying the forces of businesses, research centers and educational partners** in order to develop activities dedicated to common final research or technological goals or to tackling common problems in a certain field.

2. **Attributing, in the mid-run, a determining role to the private sector in terms of the development and competitiveness of the country**. It should bear in mind the severe challenges faced in this sector, as to technological innovations, the speed with which they spread and the cost of application, as well as the level of competition which rises to a European and International standard.

3. **Demonstrating, in the mid-run, the particular competitive advantages of the RWG and a long-term reduction of inequalities between regions**. The present work aimed to support technological skills and distinctions in the major regional technological centers. This would lead to stimulate regional competitiveness, through enhancement of research, technological and innovation activities of the area, as well as relating activities of organizations and businesses which play an important role in these fields.

Detailed content of the practice

- Research & technological development consortium in priority areas for the Region
- Strengthening the infrastructures of public research and technological organizations
- Activities in preparation of assistance to research units in connection with the standardization and commercial exploitation of research results
- Creation of Regional Technological Platforms
- Education – Training
- Horizontal Activities (HA)

Horizontal Activities of the project

- The Identification of the entity of Regional Innovation Pole of Western Greece
- Creation of a dynamic Developmental Plan of the project
- Networking with Region and authorities
- Internationalization of the Pole and regional business
- Strengthening of technological innovation and competitiveness of regional enterprises
- Strategic Options Development Plan of RIP

Legal framework

- Consortium of stakeholders of the Region
- *Important productive organizations, with absolute emphasis on SMEs (participation of 60 businesses), among them:*
  - Dynacomp SA, Infonet Ltd, E-codes SA, Ioniki Techn. Ltd, Sigma Shipping SA, Traction Transport Ltd, OLPA SA, Achaia Clauss SA, Kepenou Mills SA, Parthenon SA, Agrino Pistiolas SA, SAO SA, ADVENT Techn. SA, HELBIO SA, Blue Dev. Ltd, Inacces Networks SA, Triaina SA, Metalloplastiki Agriniou SA, PAVIPLAST SA, UNISOL SA, IQ Res. Dev, Aratos SA, Syrmet Ltd, Achaiki Corrab. Bank, etc.
- *ALL the institutions of production of knowledge, research and technology.*
  - (University of Patras, Hellenic Open University, Research Institutes: RACTI, FORTH/ICEHT, ISI and Technological Institutions: TEI of Patras and Mesolonghi),
- *ALL existing structures of transfer of research, technology and innovation.*
  - (Patras Science Park-PSP, Business Innovation Center -BIC) and other institutions (Regional Development Fund- RDF of RWG, Regional Association of Enterprises and Industries, Prefecture Enterprises for Development, etc.).

Financial framework

TOTAL BUDGET	4.392.662.54 euro
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	3.266.964,57 euro
PRIVATE PARTICIPATION	1.125.698 euro

Return of investment

- **The direct savings that resulted from the project are:**
  - Collaborations between enterprises and research institutions of Western Greece, in order to exploit the synergies between them and encourage their recognisability in international level acquiring an important technological and commercial stain.
  - Reducing the innovative gap between the Regions in Greece and the European countries and promoting their competitive efforts internationally.
  - Reducing Regional inequalities and elevating particular Regional competitive advantages.
  - The decisive role of the private sector to the country's growth and competitiveness.
  - The decisive role of Regions in the effective support of policies for innovation.
  - The accumulation of the strength of enterprises, research centres and educational institutions, in order to develop activities dedicated in common final research or technological aims.

EVALUATION

Main strengths (success factors)

- Participation of all Research and Technological Institutions of RWG.
- Collaboration with Leaders of the Private Sector.
- Unifying role held by the Patras Science Park.
- Building the future upon the major competitive advantages of RWG.
- Demonstration of people's dexterities and abilities.
- Creation of infrastructures.
- The role of the Region in the management of innovation is strengthened.

EVALUATION

- Main weaknesses
  - Lack of cooperation- understanding: Development and promotion of broad cooperation among authorities, researchers, entrepreneurs
  - Individualism-bad attitudes
- Difficulties encountered
  - Because of the great number of participants there was much bureaucracy
- Lessons learned from the practice
  - SMEs have to be more "open-minded" in new directions, and scientists more available in transferring their knowledge.
- Recommendations for improvement
  - Less bureaucracy and more projects that will join different entities under the same target.