

Contract nr: KNOW-REG-2-CT-2005-030095

Acronym: NOVAREGIO

Title: InNOVative Network for coordinated actions on RTD policies at REGIONal level

Instrument: COORDINATION ACTION

Thematic Priority: INTEGRATING AND STENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Publishable Final Activity Report

Period covered: 1st January 2006 - 31st December 2007

Date of preparation: January 2007

Start date of project: 1st January 2006

Duration: 24 months

Project coordinator name: Ing. Marcello Guaiana

Project coordinator organization name: Consorzio per l'AREA di Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica di Trieste

Revision Final 1

1. Project execution

NOVAREGIO Goals

The Lisbon European Council set the combined goal of strengthening social cohesion *and* becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. The open method of co-ordination is “*the means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals.*”

There exists a great disparity of RTD efforts within European regions, no dedicated coordination actions and no concerted policies in the RTD sector between Peripheral Maritime and Central East regions, “*the gap of networking activities among the regions within the EU can be demonstrated by the significant difference regarding innovation performances of the Member States*”.

The **project NOVAREGIO of AREA Science Park** aimed at enhancing the **interaction between national policy design and regional implementation** to foster **networking and provide guidance to RTD policy makers** through mutual learning, coordination and collaboration between **two major European Organizations**: the “Science and Technology Network of the “CEI - Central European Initiative” and the “CPMR - Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe” with the goal to ensure **more efficient use of Structural Funds in supporting RTD investment**, enhancing interaction between national policy design and regional implementation, thus fostering networking and providing guidance to policy makers in RTD matters.



NOVAREGIO has been structured in **3 main phases**:

- in **Phase 1 a Virtual “Centre”**, a repository of knowledge and experience to ensure long-term sustainability, will be created and will be driven by an international board called **SSC-Strategic Steering Committee**;
- in **Phase 2** actions dealing with the **development of national and regional capabilities** will be set out, through a benchmarking analysis of successful RTD policies within the regions: NOVAREGIO partners will be **supported by their regional authorities**; out of identified **25 RTD Best Practice Policies, 10 will be benchmarked** so to produce a **benchmarking Practice Manual** for knowledge transfer actions;
- In **Phase 3** benchmarks will be transferred among NOVAREGIO partners into their regions through **3 workshops and 3 seminars** to establish a collaborative working environment and personnel exchange within networks; following a spill-over effect those practices will be spread into farther regions.

NOVAREGIO partners were:

- Consorzio per l’AREA di Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica di Trieste (Italy) -Coordinator;
- Innova SpA (Italy);
- SFG-Steiermärkische Forschungs- und Entwicklungsförderungs-ges.m.b.H.(Austria);
- Public Agency for Technology of the Republic of Slovenia (Slovenia);
- Foundation For Research&Technology Hellas (Greece);
- Instituto Tecnológico de Canarias, S.A. (Spain);
- Länsteknikcentrum i Jönköpings län AB (Sweden);
- South-Transdanubian Regional Development Agency (Hungary).

NOVAREGIO is a project co-financed by the EC in the frame of the 6th FP, under the specific programme ‘Integrating and Strengthening the European Research Area’.

NOVAREGIO Activities

After the set up of a repository of knowledge and experience to ensure long-term sustainability, driven by the **SSC**, a **European panel of regional officers and innovation practitioners** carried out a benchmarking analysis of successful RTD policies within the regions: **out of the identified 25 RTD Best Practice Policies, 11 have been benchmarked** in order to produce a benchmarking Practice Manual for knowledge transfer actions. The RTD Regional Policies have been studied by using an innovative methodology, the **IVEM Benchmarking methodology**, which was developed some years ago by one of the NOVAREGIO partners. The methodology is structured in four phases and precisely: the *Identification* of the RTD policies in each region, the *Validation* of the information collected, the *Engineering* of the process flow of each good practice and the *Monitoring* of the practices selected as benchmarks.

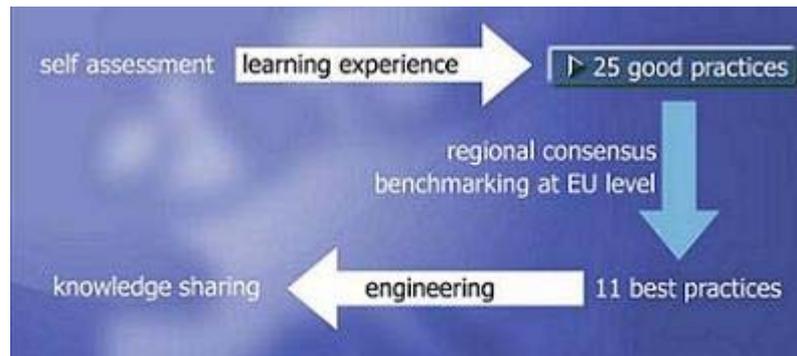


Figure: the "NOVAREGIO BPs selection" workflow

On **12 and 13 June 2007**, the Swedish town of Jonkoping hosted the **first seminar and workshop round** which were **attended by around 20 participants of the 7 European concerned Regions**. The six out of the eleven best practices presented during the seminar were the following:

- "SMED Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Development" (Småland med öarna Region)
- "HCTA - Health Care Technology Alliance" (Halland Region)
- "Innovation Network" and "Sister" (Friuli Venezia Giulia Region)
- "Skills Development of Qualified Employees" (Styria)
- "Baross Programme - Support of the innovation developments of small and medium-sized enterprises in South Transdanubia" (South Transdanubian Region)



Among the main outcomes, it is worth mentioning the interest, shown by STRDA partner, to replicate the “Health Care Technology Alliance” best practice in the South Transdanubian Region. So a concrete spill over effect seems to be possible among one of the most innovative region in Europe (according to the European Innovation Scoreboard 2007) and another one which needs to develop further in terms of innovation efforts.

The second round of orientation and training events on innovation policies has been organised in Tenerife, Canary Islands on 4th and 5th October 2007 at the ITC premises.



Around 30 participants of the 7 European concerned Regions shared the remaining five out 11 best practices which were presented during the seminar session, namely:

- "PANCRETA DEVELOPMENT FUND" (Crete)
- "UNISTEP" (Crete)
- "BIC CANARIAS" (Canary Islands)
- "A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE" (Slovenia)
- "START-UP ENTREPRENEURS" (Styria)

Nr.5 personnel staff exchanges were performed in the period June-December 2007, mostly in connection with the workshops and seminars held in the same period **involving 12 regional policy makers and practitioners of 5 European Regions**

2. Dissemination and use

RTD Policies and Practices benchmarked

THE BENCHMARKING EXERCISE

The project partners, supported by their regional authorities, carried out a benchmarking analysis of successful RTD policies within the regions: the exercise contributed to identify implemented regional RTD and innovation policies, to analyse the key areas of interest the regions are focusing on, and to let emerge the best policy practices in the different fields of interest.



The intention was to emphasise those regional policies whose inherent knowledge and underlying processes resulted to be the most effective ones. The RTD Regional Policies have been studied by using an innovative methodology, the IVEM Benchmarking methodology, which was developed by INNOVA S.p.A., one of the NOVAREGIO partners.

The methodology is structured in four phases and precisely:

- Identification of the RTD policies in each region,
- Validation of the information collected,
- Engineering of the process flow of each good practice
- Monitoring of the practices selected as benchmarks.

The RTD policies have been examined and evaluated ex-post taking in consideration several performance parameters such as: involvement of key actors (stakeholders), quality of the outcomes, territorial impact, connections with the regional regulatory framework, value for money, long term sustainability. In total, the exercise comprised the selection of 25 RTD and innovation policies showing interesting policy contents and considered as promising for improving regional development. 11 of them have been jointly selected by 7 regional panels of regional policy makers and further important regional stakeholders involved in policy management and financing, as valuable and critical for moving towards knowledge based economies. Moreover, these 11 best practices have been deeply studied in order to produce a benchmarking Practice Manual (“Regional RTD and Innovation Policies and Practices”) for knowledge transfer actions.



THE 11 NOVAREGIO BEST PRACTICES

- 1) The **SISTER** project aims at increasing technology transfer activities in the region Friuli Venezia Giulia by enhancing the economic value of research results accomplished by the Public Research Organisations (PROs) located in the region. Through the adoption of a new valorisation process, those research results are brought to the market that are representing high potential for being applied and successfully exploited by industry.
- 2) **Innovation Network**TM is an initiative sustaining also technology transfer activities in Friuli Venezia Giulia but through the improvement on the industry side by enhancing technology demand. The initiative established a Network of specialised Competence Centres for the different production areas of the region, aiming at boosting the spreading of new technologies at regional level and offering enterprises innovation services of added value.
- 3) The **Baross Gabor Programme** aims to improve the local innovation potential in the region South Transdanubia, addressed specifically to the small and medium-sized enterprises in the region. The programme is executed through a Call for Proposals tailored to the specific regional needs, objectives and the six core sectors of the region.
- 4) The programme **Skills Development for Qualified Employees** supports an efficient and goal-oriented training in the region Styria in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the local companies and the competences of their personnel. The programme is addressed to different kinds of employees and provides financial assistance for high-quality training schemes with an innovative concept going beyond standard courses and seminars.
- 5) **Start-up Entrepreneurs** is a programme of the region Styria that provides support to a new establishment or the starting-up of an activity that contributes to a fundamental change in product management or production. The

programme offers a tailor-made approach to different kinds of entrepreneurs and supports in particular those projects that improve the potential fields of strengths identified by the region.

6) The **Centre of Excellence** is a programme set up in Slovenia, bringing together key players from the scientific-research sector and the economy environment. The programme supports technology transfer activities through facilitating the implementation of innovative projects in the region, focalised on selected technology areas. The establishment of a Centre of Excellence underlies strict requirements as regards the partnership and the financial liquidity of the participants.

7) **UNISTEP – University Students Entrepreneurship Programme** – is an initiative implemented in the region Crete and aimed at counteracting the brain drain existing in the region by creating a positive environment for cultivating entrepreneurship among university students. The programme includes a theoretical and practical part. Trainings on entrepreneurship are offered and laboratories are made available for the creation, development and testing of prototypes which could be later exploited on the market through a new technology based enterprise.

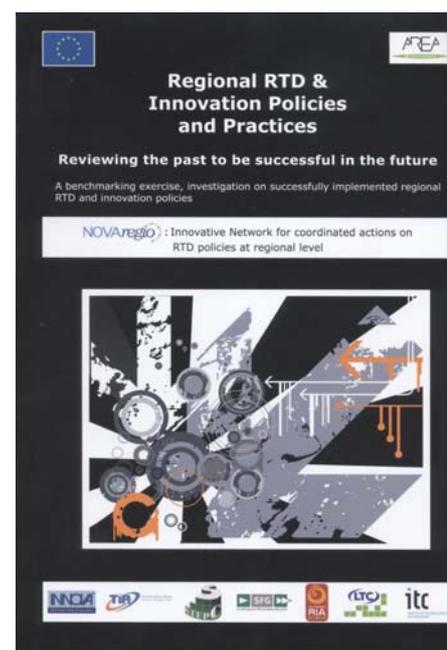
8) The **PanCretan Venture Capital Fund** is a funding source for high-risk entrepreneurial incentives, completing the financial instruments existing in the region Crete. The fund provides in particular support to SMEs and new initiatives set up by entrepreneurs, focusing mainly on high-tech activities, innovative ideas particularly with regard to tourism development and the exploitation of local resources.

9) **BIC Canarias** is an initiative set up in the Canary Islands and aimed at integrating organisations and resources in order to provide services to the entrepreneurs in four selected islands. On each of these four islands, a Business Promotion Unit (BUP) is established, supporting innovative business ideas of local entrepreneurs. The activities of BIC Canarias include a pre-incubation phase in which extensive project search activities are carried out and an incubation phase in which direct services are offered to selected companies.

10) **SMED – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Development** – develops big ideas in small companies in the region Småland med öarna so as to let more innovators reach the market and stimulate new product development for increasing the existence of competitive companies in the region. The programme informs companies about financing possibilities and focuses on product development, product innovation and product design.

11) The **HCTA – Healthcare Technology Alliance** is an initiative supporting the development of new products and services in healthcare technology in the region West Sweden. HCTA functions as a network and encompasses a large number of companies, organisations and research and development institutions working in the healthcare technology field. The alliance is a good opportunity to set up development projects and thus to strengthen the regional innovation system for healthcare technology.

As already mentioned, the 11 best practices were included in a printed version of the benchmarking manual which was officially presented and distributed **on 9 October 2007**, when the NOVAREGIO results have been showcased in a **Press Conference held Bruxelles within within the Open Days-European Week of Regions and Cities Event**.



THE WEB SITE

Updated information about the NOVAREGIO activities and results can be obtained from the NOVAREGIO official website: www.novaregio.net. In particular, in the home page you can download a complimentary copy of the NOVAREGIO benchmarking handbook

NOVAREGIO

The project in a nutshell

The Lisbon European Council set the combined goal of strengthening social cohesion and becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. The open method of co-ordination is *“the means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals.”*

There exists a great disparity of RTD efforts within European regions, no dedicated coordination actions and no concerted policies in the RTD sector between Peripheral Maritime and Central East regions, *“the gap of networking activities among the regions within the EU can be demonstrated by the significant difference regarding innovation performances of the Member States”.*

The project NOVAREGIO of AREA Science Park will enhance the interaction between national policy design and regional implementation to foster networking and provide guidance to RTD policy makers through mutual learning, coordination and collaboration between two major European Organizations: the “CEI - Central European Initiative” (*) and the “CPMR - Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe” with the goal to ensure more efficient use of Structural Funds in supporting RTD investment, enhancing interaction between national policy design and regional implementation, thus fostering networking and providing guidance to policy makers in RTD matters.

NOVAREGIO is structured in 3 main phases:

- in Phase 1 a Virtual “Centre”, a repository of knowledge and experience to ensure long-term sustainability, will be created and will be driven by an international board called SSC-Strategic Steering Committee;
- in Phase 2 actions dealing with the development of national and regional

NOVAREGIO final event in Brussels

More than 50 representatives coming from over 40 European Regions met on 21st November in Brussels to participate in the international conference “Strengthening Innovation in the European Maritime Sector”, organized by AREA Science Park in cooperation with the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region’s Liaison Office in the frame of the NOVAREGIO final dissemination event.



Regional delegates attending the meeting

The main topic of the day was the chance to agree at European regions' level on actions capable of developing the sector of marine engineering and yachting, since these are going to be areas of strong economic interest both today and in the future. Presently, the sector sells products for over €1 billion, features 150 shipyards and employs 400,000 people.

Useful cues on how to find out new strategies and implement effective policies for the enhancement of the existing strong points were offered by the results obtained within the EC project known as NOVAREGIO.



the Speakers

Gabriele Gatti, Head of Institutional Relations and Networks of AREA Science Park, underlined that “NOVAREgio (www.novaregio.net), by carrying out studies and preparing technical publications, has contributed to enrich at European level the wide debate on the role of regions as driving forces for innovation”. The meeting hosted the presentation of a manual comparing regional innovation policies. The manual contains 11 paths already experimented on the basis of their high-value territorial impact and of the possibility to repeat them in other contexts.



the NOVAREGIO Partners with the EC Project Officer

“Among the results produced by NOVAREgio – as **Gabriele Gatti** highlighted – the development of a new project idea needs mentioning. The project will begin in the near future and its purpose will be connecting three territorial areas: Slovenia, the County of Rijeka and the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, to activate a maritime mega-cluster of research centres, manufacturing companies, public administration and innovation promoters, with the aim of making up a common research agenda equipped with an joint action plan, well supported by both national and European financing. The idea fits perfectly into the orientations recently established by the EC with its October 2007 communication launching the blue paper “An Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU”.

The meeting ended with the presentation of the financing opportunities offered by the EC for the year 2008 within the “Regions of Knowledge” programme of the 7th Framework Programme. **Brigitte Fellahi**, call coordinator of the Regions of Knowledge Programme, stated that “the EC will make available for tenders at least €10 Million by the end of 2007 to support the creation of a European culture of research-driven clusters, e.g. agglomerations of companies, research centres and regional administrations, capable of reaching the ambitious Lisbon targets more easily, by implementing actions targeted at increasing investments in R&D and innovation and improving the use of structural funds dedicated to innovation transfer at regional level, which almost reach €50 Billion (this amount can be compared to the entire 7 EFP)”.