

**PROJECT: Monitoring of the progress of the implementation of
National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation
(RIS3) 2014-2020**

**DELIVERABLE: 4th Progress report of the “National Research and
Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) for 2020**

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

The 4th Progress report of the “National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) 2014-2020” includes the basic information on the progress of the RIS3 strategy implementation developed by the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (GSRI) until 2020 and more specifically:

- a. The overall progress of the RIS3 strategy during the period until 2020.
- b. The interaction of the RIS3 strategy with other national, regional, European, etc. policies.
- c. The progress regarding the achievement of the objectives and indicators for monitoring the RIS3 strategy.
- d. Proposals for amendments and acceleration of the implementation of the RIS3 strategy

The strategic objective of the Operational Programme (OP) “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” is the contribution to the proposed shift in the growth model of the Greek economy from non-tradable into tradable sectors, and cluster development of innovative and out turned sectors with a sustainable competitive advantage. A crucial aspect of the OP is its articulation with the Regional OPs regarding the support of priorities identified through national/regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) at the appropriate level. **The national RIS3 strategy is implemented through the OP**, and its purpose is the focused productive reconstruction of Greece underpinned chiefly by research, technological development, and innovation to redress regional inequalities and to foster sustainable employment with respect to humans and society, the environment and culture. Moreover, the RIS3 strategy is expected to contribute to the creation of stable employment relationships and, generally, in creating suitable conditions for the efficient use of national human resources.

For the OP, the Thematic Objective 1 "Strengthening research, technological development and innovation" and the Investment Priorities 1a¹ and 1b² are those directly linked to the implementation of the RIS3 strategy, in which case they are monitored to assess the implementation of this strategy. The following Priority Axes of the OP are related to the above Investment Priorities:

- **PA1:** “Entrepreneurship development with sectoral priorities”,
- **PA1S:** “Entrepreneurship development with sectoral priorities (Central Greece, South Aegean)”,
- **PA3:** “Development of mechanisms to support entrepreneurship”,
- **PA3S:** “Development of mechanisms to support entrepreneurship (Central Greece, South Aegean)”,

and include the Specific Objectives **1.1** “*Enhancement of business initiatives and partnerships for the development of innovative entrepreneurship in accordance with the National RIS3*” and **3.1** “*Upgrading and/or Development of research and innovation infrastructures for the development of the country's innovative capacity to support entrepreneurship*”.

Regarding **Investment Priority 1a, until 31.12.2020, 4 calls for proposals** were published: a) *Reinforcement of the Research and Innovation Infrastructure (1st and 2nd Cycle)*, b) *Action for the Strategic Development of the Research and Technological Sectors*, and c) *Regional Excellence in R&D Infrastructures*. The total budget

¹ 1a “Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centers of competence, in particular those of European interest”.

² 1b “Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centers and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies”.

of the above calls amounted to € 212.02 mil. More than half of the budget is distributed to the less developed regions, that is 51.11%, while 27% is distributed to the regions in transition, and 21.89% to the more developed regions. The total budget of the projects selected for co-funding amounts to € 208.83 mil., that is 98.50% of the total budget of the calls, thus considered very satisfactory. The percentage distribution of the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding among the less developed regions, the regions in transition and the more developed regions, is 41.22%, 26.60%, and 32.18% respectively. In detail, the relevant regional budgets of the projects selected for co-funding are led by Attica with € 64,38 mil., Ipeiros with 26.25 mil., Crete with € 20.87 mil., Central Macedonia with € 18.14 mil., and Western Greece with € 7.72 mil. For the regions of South Aegean and Central Greece, there are not selected projects for co-funding.

The projects selected for co-funding in the context of the above calls for proposals, are in accordance with the horizontal components of the RIS3 strategy referring to the creation of research and innovation infrastructures which facilitate the development of innovative products and services, the production of New Knowledge, the interconnection of science with society and international cooperation. Also, these projects correspond to the Strategic Choice 1 “*Investing in creating and disseminating New Knowledge*” of RIS3 strategy³.

Regarding the public expenditure under Investment Priority 1a, the percentage of the public expenditure of the Special Account for Research Grants (SARG) to the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding amounts to 48.43%, or € 101.15 mil. The percentage distribution of the public expenditure (SARG) among the less developed regions, the regions in transition and the more developed regions is 27.70%, 19.95%, and 52.35% respectively, while the percentage distribution between the actions under Investment Priority 1a, that is the *Reinforcement of the Research and Innovation Infrastructure (1st and 2nd Cycle)* and *the Strategic Development of the Research and Technological Sectors*, is 71.29% and 28.71% (There has not yet been registered any public expenditure for the action *Regional Excellence in R&D Infrastructures*). In more detail, the regions with the highest percentage of public expenditure (SAGR) to the total budget of the regional projects selected for co-funding are Thessaly with 98.28%, Crete with 87.54%, Attica with 82.24%, Western Greece with 82.23%, and Central Macedonia with 77.62%.

Concerning the registered public expenditure in the Monitoring Information System (MIS) under Investment Priority 1a, the percentage of the public expenditure (MIS) to the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding amounts to 3.92%, or € 8.20 mil. The percentage distribution of the public expenditure (MIS) among the less developed regions, the regions in transition and the more developed regions, is 25.93%, 18.10%, and 55.97% respectively, while the percentage distribution between the actions under Investment Priority 1a, that is the *Reinforcement of the Research and Innovation Infrastructure (1st and 2nd Cycle)* and *the Strategic Development of the Research and Technological Sectors*, is 24.85% and 75.15% (There has not yet been registered any public expenditure (MIS) for the action *Regional Excellence in R&D Infrastructures*). More specifically, the regions with the highest percentage of public expenditure (MIS) to the total budget of the regional projects selected for co-funding are Central Macedonia with 7.17%, Attica with 7.11%, Crete with 6.88%, and Western Greece with 6.04%.

Regarding **Investment Priority 1b, until 31.12.2020, 16 calls for proposals** were published: a) *Action “Research – Create – Innovate” (2 calls for proposals)*, b) *Grant Act of Greek bodies that have participated successfully in joint calls for proposals of the European ERA NETS Networks (4 calls for proposals)*, c) *Action Bilateral, Multilateral and Regional S&T Cooperation between Greece and Germany, Russia, Israel and China (5 calls for proposals)*, d) *Specific actions in the fields of Aquaculture, Industrial Materials and Open Innovation in Culture*, e) *Action Innovation Clusters – 1st Call: “Facilitator”*, f) *Action Cooperative Innovation*

³ It is noted that except for the call for proposals “Regional Excellence in R&D Infrastructures”, in the context of the other three calls for proposals, there was no reference to sectors of the RIS3 strategy.

Formations – 2nd Invitation: “Invitation to enterprises”, g) Action Competence Centres, h) Action Clean Sky 2 JU – Greek bodies that have participated successfully in joint calls for proposals of the European ERA NETS Networks, as well as other actions of joint planning and implementation of the Single Research Area-EXE. Furthermore, one pre-publication was published for the Action Support for Start-ups of the National Register “Elevate Greece” in the Current COVID-19 Outbreak, and the Action for the “Technology Transfer Offices” has been designed and prepared to be published in 2021.

The total budget of the above calls amounted to € 679.08 mil. Almost half of the budget is distributed to the less developed regions, that is 48.40%, while 16.08% is distributed to the regions in transition, and 35.52% to the more developed regions. The total budget of the projects selected for co-funding amounts to € 619.13 mil., that is 91.17% of the total budget of the calls, thus considered very satisfactory. The percentage distribution of the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding among the RIS3 priority sectors, that is “Agro-food”, “Biosciences / Health and Pharmaceuticals”, “Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)”, “Culture, Tourism and Creative industries”, “Environment and Sustainable Development”, “Materials and Construction”, “Energy”, “Transport and Logistics”, is 18.85%, 17.51%, 16.91%, 14.10%, 9.74%, 8.82%, 7.89%, and 5.67% respectively. The percentage regional distribution of the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding among the less developed regions, the regions in transition and the more developed regions, is 50.09%, 15.67%, and 34.24% respectively. In detail, the relevant regional budgets of the projects selected for co-funding are led by Attica with € 209.48 mil., Central Macedonia with € 166.98 mil., Western Greece with € 56.19 mil., and Crete with € 54.02 mil.

The projects that were submitted and selected for co-funding in the above calls for proposals, are in accordance with the horizontal components of the RIS3 strategy referring to the development of innovative products and services, the exploitation of the opportunities offered by emerging technological sectors, the production of New Knowledge, excellence, research. Also, these projects correspond to the Strategic Choice 1 “Investing in creating and disseminating New Knowledge” and Strategic Choice 2 “Investing in Research and Innovation” of RIS3 strategy.

Regarding the public expenditure under Investment Priority 1b, the percentage of the public expenditure of the Special Account for Research Grants (SARG) to the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding amounts to 48.43%, or € 201.02 mil. The percentage distribution of the public expenditure (SARG) among the less developed regions, the regions in transition and the more developed regions is 51.75%, 15.98%, and 32.27% respectively. In particular, the regions with the highest percentage of public expenditure (SARG) to the total regional budget of the projects selected for co-funding are Western Macedonia with 41.74%, Crete with 38.81%, Thessaly with 36.05%, Central Macedonia with 33.51%, and Western Greece with 32.71%.

Concerning the registered expenditure in the Monitoring Information System (MIS) under Investment Priority 1b, the percentage of the public expenditure (MIS) to the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding amounts to 13.38%, or € 82.86 mil. The percentage distribution of the public expenditure (MIS) among the less developed regions, the regions in transition and the more developed regions is 52.08%, 14.96%, and 32.96% respectively. In detail, the regions with the highest percentage of public expenditure (MIS) to the total regional budget of the projects selected for co-funding are Western Macedonia with 22.27%, South Aegean with 15.61%, Central Greece with 15.42%, and Central Macedonia with 14.32%.

It is important to mention that the progress of the implementation of Investment Priority 1b’s projects depends to a large extent on the Action “Research-Create-Innovate”, as the percentage of the Action’s projects constitute 88.14% of the total budget of Investment Priority 1b’s projects selected for co-funding. It is natural to assume that the same rationale extends to the public expenditure (SARG) and the registered public expenditure (MIS), where the percentage of the Action “Research-Create-Innovate” constitutes 90.06% and 96.32% respectively.

Moreover, during the reference period there are **flagship initiatives** undertaken by the *Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs* which are connected to the implementation of the RIS3 strategy, the management, and the monitoring of which are under the GSRT. In this context, national networks are being implemented in the fields of a) *Genetic Neurodegenerative Diseases Research*, b) *Research on Genetic Cardiovascular Diseases and Prevention of Juvenile Sudden Death*, c) *Agri-food, for the promotion of the qualitative characteristics of traditional products (olive, vine, bee)*, d) *Climate change, for the study and the valid information in tackling extreme natural phenomena*, e) *Quantum technologies*, f) actions for the *Research in the Agri-Food Sector of Crete and Research in the Agri-food of the islands of the North Aegean region*. During 2020, an additional flagship research action on SARS-CoV-2 in Greece was launched, which produced the first Greek rapid antigen test.

Furthermore, in 2020, there has been designed and approved an international public tender under the competitive dialogue procedure for the award of a partnership contract for the project “*Creating an Innovation Centre in Athens via PPP*”. The total budget of this emblematic initiative under the *Ministry of Development and Investments*, is estimated around € 60.00 mil. and the purpose of the project is the utilization of an abandoned -for many decades- property, with an area of 17,893 sq.m., on Piraeus Street and more specifically in the old warehouses of CHROPEI. The Innovation Centre “Politeia” will develop a natural area of innovation that is expected to breathe new life into entrepreneurship and creation, hosting business research and development departments, start-ups, researchers, and academia, creating synergies between them.

Over the period 2014-2020, four actions – coherent to the scope of RIS3 strategy – were implemented by the **Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (HFRI-ELIDEK)** funded by the European Investment Bank. A call for proposals was published by the GSRI in 2016, regarding grant scholarships to doctoral candidates for the elaboration of their doctoral thesis in universities and/or in research centres collaborating with universities in Greece, with a total budget amounting to € 8.5 mil. A total number of 582 projects were approved for co-funding with a total budget of € 12.14 mil., that is 43% more than the budget of the call for proposals. During 2020, the public expenditure amounted to € 181,200.00. The second call for proposals was published in 2018, with a total budget amounting to € 10.00 mil. A total number of 369 projects were approved for co-funding of € 10.9 mil. budget, that is 9.4% more than the budget of the call for proposals. A third call for proposals was published late in 2020, with a budget of € 8.00 mil.

Additionally, in 2017, a call for proposals was launched, with a budget of € 9.0 mil. aiming to support the implementation of selected research projects of high scientific quality in which scientific managers are postdoctoral researchers. A total number of 190 projects were selected for co-funding, with total budget of € 12.14 mil., that is considerably higher compared to the initial budget of the call for proposals. During 2020, the expenditure relating to the call amounted to € 11.19 mil. The second call for proposals was published in 2018, with a budget of € 16.58 mil. A total number of 105 projects were selected for co-funding with a budget of € 16.28 mil. A third call was published during 2020, with a budget of € 8.0 mil. The results of the evaluation of the submitted proposals are expected within the first months of 2021.

Regarding **other sources of funding that contribute to achieving the RIS3** objectives, except for the OP “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation”, are mentioned the following programmes:

- The **Horizon 2020** program: In total, 2,677 projects with Greek participation in the H2020 projects. The European participation in these projects were up to € 1,529.00 mil. The total number of the Greek participants is 4,948. H2020 program attracts high-level participants from higher education, research, and private sector and from a wide range of fields and subject areas. The main beneficiaries of Horizon 2020 for 2020, are higher education and research organizations, which together received 65.00% of Greece's funding, while the private sector received 31,3% (that is

2.2% more compared to the period 2014 – 2018, and 1,6% more than compared to the period 2014 – 2019).

- **The Operational Program "Development of Human Resources Education and Lifelong Learning"** (OP ANAD EDBM): The State Scholarship Foundation, under the Operational Program “*Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning*” (NSRF 2014-2020) with priority axes 6, 8, 9, co-financed by the European Social Fund, implements subprojects on three (3) scientific fields (Natural Sciences and Engineering Sciences, Life Sciences, Social and Humanities) for the purpose of doctoral dissertation and postdoctoral research in Greece. A total of 3,345 valid applications were submitted in the three scientific fields, out of which 1,401 were funded. The results of the 2nd call for proposals for the postdoctoral research, with a total budget of € 15.87 mil. for 601 individual grants, are expected.
- **LIFE Program:** In 2020, there were no new calls to the LIFE program. In total and until 2019, the approved projects with Greek participation amount to 71, of which 36 have a Greek coordinating body. 147 Greek different entities participate in these projects, receiving a total budget of € 44.57 mil.
- **URBACT Initiative:** In 2020, there were no new calls for proposals with the URBACT Initiative program. In total for the period 2014-2019, the Greek participations in URBACT III in 20 approved projects, amounted to 23, with a total budget of € 1.37 mil. The connection of the URBACT Initiative with the RIS3 stems from the fact that the RIS3 approach aims in addressing and responding to global challenges, being open to all research and innovation actors, such as cities and regions, which could act as “innovation workshops/hubs” to implement new ideas and concepts. A substantial percentage of the URBACT Initiative projects, that is 46%, are directly related to RIS3 priorities and more specifically, in the fields of urban transport, agri-food, culture, energy, ICT. The circular economy is the most representative field in the approved projects of 2019.

The analysis of the findings of participants in the other sources of funding are in fact less entrepreneurial than initially envisaged. With limited exceptions, most projects are led by universities and research organisations rather than local business firms, leave alone subsidiaries of large multinational corporations. Furthermore, civil society organisations are underrepresented. In general terms though, the findings demonstrate a link of Horizon 2020 project proposals and projects funded by the other initiatives with the relevant RIS3 priorities, as required.

As far as it concerns the **strategy output indicators**, there is already a significant overlap of target values for the majority of the programme's indicators. For the support of investments, the percentage coverage of the target value of the indicators referring to the number of companies receiving support (CO01) or grants (CO02), and to the number of new start-ups (CO05) is 286%, 308% and 233% respectively. For the reinforcement of the research and innovation, the percentage coverage of the target value of the indicators referring to the number of new researchers in supported entities (CO24), the number of researchers working on improved research infrastructure facilities (CO25) and the number of companies collaborating with research institutes (CO26), is 156%, 262% and 200% respectively. Furthermore, the percentage coverage of the target value of the “Research Infrastructure Reinforced” indicator (T4225 / SO033) is 260%. In contrast to the high percentage coverage of the preceding indicators’ target values, the percentage coverage of the target value of the indicator relating to the number of joint R&D projects with other countries (with or without EU coordination) (T4204) is lower, namely 49%, and the percentage coverage of the target value of the indicator relating to private investments combined with public funding in innovation or in research and development projects (CO27) is 42%.

For the **strategy outcome indicators**, the expenditure on innovative business activities with product innovation and/or process (as a percentage of GDP), as well as the intensity of Research & Development costs (as a percentage of GDP) increased from 2014 to 2018 by 0.55% and 0.37% respectively. The gross value added in high value-added industries, indicates a gradual decline during the period 2014 – 2016, and a steady expansion thereof with an average growth rate of 1.06% until 2020. The number of scientific publications in international journals are relatively steady between 2014 – 2018 with 11.126 average publications per year, while the average citations per publication of Greek researchers has gradually increased between the periods of 2010-2014, 2011-2015, 2012-2016, 2013-2017, 2014-2018 with an average growth rate of 7.22%.

Based on the **Innovation Union Scoreboard (IUS)**, Greece ranks 5th among the 27 countries in the European Union (EU) in terms of innovation growth in the period 2012-2019. Greece has improved its performance in innovation but has taken the 20th place in the EU in terms of innovation performance, according to new data from the European Innovation Scoreboard 2020, published by the European Commission. Greece is a moderate innovator. Innovators and Linkages are the strongest innovation dimensions where Greece performs above the EU average. The performance is particularly well on Innovative SMEs collaborating with others, SMEs innovating inhouse, SMEs with marketing or /organizational innovations and Sales of new-to-market and new-to-firm innovations. Intellectual assets, Innovation-friendly environment, and Employment impacts are the weakest innovation dimensions. The lowest indicator scores are for foreign doctorate students, Medium and high-tech product exports, Design applications, and Venture capital expenditures.

Finally, the current report provides some **critical success factors for the successful implementation of the RIS3 strategy's Actions**. The main challenges and ways of dealing with them include management issues and quality aspects of the implementation of the comparative actions. It should be mentioned that although the institutional environment in which the RIS3 Strategy is implemented has not changed dramatically in 2020 and the challenges that existed in the previous year remain almost entirely, the comparison between the data of 2018, 2019 and 2020 highlights the substantial progress achieved.

In 2020, under Investment Priority 1a no new call for proposal has been programmed to be published, whereas under Investment Priority 1b three (3) new calls for proposals have been published and one (1) pre-publication. The total number of calls for proposals from the beginning of the programming period until the end of 2020, is four (4) for Investment Priority 1a, and seventeen (17) for Investment Priority 1b (16 calls for proposals and one pre-publication). Comparing the current year, 2020, with the previous one, 2019, we observe that for Investment Priority 1a, the total budget of the calls for proposals has increased by 24.82% (after a substantial increase in the total budget of the call for proposals “*Regional Excellence in R&D Infrastructures*”), the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding has increased by 77.43%, and there has been a 55.88% increase in public expenditure (SAGR). Concerning Investment Priority 1b, the total budget of the calls for proposals has increased by 9.22%, due to the new calls that have been published in 2020, the total budget of the projects selected for co-funding has increased by 68.54%, and there has been a substantial 107.81% increase in public expenditure (SAGR), and a massive 311.98% increase in public expenditure (MIS).

These results can be attributed to the experience gained by the Intermediate Bodies in the management of the calls for proposals but also to the maturation of the relevant actions. In any case, though, they remain the result of the hard work of the GSRI and the EPANEK staff which have transferred to the Public Sector the results-based management culture. However, it should be noted that the outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020 caused an unprecedented economic and social crisis on a global scale that certainly impeded the substantial realised progress.

Concisely, some indicative challenges analysed follow:

- The current economic environment and the lack of liquidity impede the beneficiaries to pre-finance their projects. The pandemic further aggravated the issue.
- The operational capacity of the two Intermediate Bodies to manage a multitude of actions that will increase in the future, together with the number of beneficiaries-enterprises to be supported in project monitoring.
- The operational capacity of the beneficiaries, especially of SME’s, to meet the management obligations specified in the financing decisions and the Management and Controlling System.
- The challenge of adequate GSRI staffing remains relevant. Furthermore, the transfer of the GSRI from the *Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs* to the *Ministry of Development and Investments* in 2019, and renaming the Secretariat to GSRI (General Secretariat of Research and Innovation) underlines the emphasis placed on linking research with innovation and business to enhance the competitiveness and productivity of the Greek economy, while promoting the need to strengthen the communication of the GSRI with other relevant bodies, which will cooperate for this purpose.
- The proper scheduling for launching relevant calls so that there is no overlapping with similar “competing” actions that have been announced or have being implemented, which would discourage potential beneficiaries from participating.
- The implementation of a proper monitoring mechanism that will guide the adaptation of corrective actions at both target and process level for the development and implementation of RIS3.
- The EDP, which played a critical role in the identification of priority areas throughout the programming period, has been successfully completed. The challenge is to use this process in the preparation of the RIS3 Strategy of the next programming period, improved in terms of the participation of representatives from the civil society sector and considering the developments in the wider socio-economic environment.
- The cooperation between those involved in the innovation value chain can be significantly improved. This issue does not allow the very good performance of Greek researchers to be turned into economically beneficial solutions.

Aiming at the encountering of the challenges identified above but also at making some recommendations, the following points are underlined:

- The strengthening of the staff of the GSRI both in number and in specialties is crucial in order to meet the requirements of the increasing workload and of the integration – implementation of actions related to the most current technological developments, effectively.
- The close cooperation of the GSRI with other General Secretariats, Services and bodies that will contribute to the preparation of the RIS3 strategy of the new programming period in order to achieve the effective planning. The GSRI can contribute substantially and decisively with its experience and know – how at all stages of planning and implementing the RIS3 strategy of the new programming period (planning, consulting, EDP, strategy implementation, strategy monitoring).
- The monitoring and evaluation system of the RIS3 strategy is proposed to include indicators for monitoring the management competence of the bodies responsible for monitoring and evaluating the RIS3.
- The proper scheduling of invitations and the avoidance of duplication of similar proposals by the Regional Operational Programmes will enable candidates who do not have the management competence to submit many proposals and to better structure the objectives, the concept of their project and optimally manage their resources while preparing.

- The call for proposals texts and the implementation guides should be “lighter” focusing on the achievement of the objectives and the allocation of funds.
- Clarity / Appropriateness of strategy regarding the needs and challenges in the fields of environment, employment, social protection, and welfare – Relevance to policies at European level. The RIS3 strategy should include special sectors that have been included as priorities in European programs in which there is Greek participation.
- The design of a smart tool for strategy development will provide an overview of the strategy's priorities enabling other key stakeholders (SMEs, start-ups, researchers) to be placed and look for potential partners for cooperation, to promote innovative product players, to allow comparisons of RIS3 priorities across Europe, in order to better understand how other regions and countries develop their innovation strategies.
- The design of a methodological framework for monitoring and governing RIS3 – at the national level by the GSRI and at the regional level by the respective Regions / EYD – will strengthen the RIS3 strategy in terms of its implementation but mainly in terms of its recognition as a development tool.
- The effective motivation of bodies that make up regional innovation systems (Regions, Municipalities, Universities, and Research Centres) to get further involved in the design and implementation of RIS3. For example, through the introduction and promotion of innovation intermediaries (innovation support services) that will connect innovation bodies (SMEs, researchers, NGOs, etc.) to an idea that can be turned into innovation. They could assist in the identification and refinement of innovative ideas, finding suitable partners and funding tools, and identifying potential roles for each partner. Another case could be initiatives to enhance the interactions between Universities and Research Institutes in European research networks, or the establishment of innovation hubs in major cities of the country, similar to the Innovation District “Politeia” that is underway.