

WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT

“Promoting Open Innovation in the EUSALP macro-region: experiences and lessons learned from the Alpine Regions”

Date: 21st November 2018, 11:15-13:00

Panelists:

- *Mr. Jean-Pierre Halkin, DG Regional and Urban Policy – Head of Unit D.1*
- *Prof. Anna Giorgi, Action Group 1 Leader, Italy*
- *Prof. Margherita Russo, Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), Italy*
- *Mr. Angelo Gatto, Lombardy Region – Finlombarda, Italy*
- *Mr. Fabrizio Rovatti, AREA Science Park Trieste, Italy*
- *Prof. Markus Rhomberg, Boden Seehoch Schule, Switzerland*
- *Prof. Anna Giorgi and Mr. Pietro Guinea, Action Group 1 Leader, Italy*
- *Mr. Stefano Sala, UNIMONT – University of Milan, Italy*

Chair - Mr. Guido Piccoli, Action Group 1 Leader Staff, Italy

Session summary

The workshop “Promoting Open Innovation in the EUSALP macro-region: experiences and lessons learned from the Alpine Regions” focused on solutions, ideas and vision to create the conditions for mutual learning and for the development of Smart Specialization Strategies at a transnational level, within the Alpine area. In particular, it highlighted the importance of Open Innovation platforms as groundbreaking vehicles to foster synergies and to connect all the entities influencing open innovation dynamics, i.e. companies, local/regional government and governance, education and research system, research intermediaries and wider framework conditions.

The workshop left space to discuss key initiatives within the EUSALP macro-region, providing instruments to interpret and organize the complexity of factors that influence innovation at regional, national and international levels. It was kicked-off by Prof. Anna Giorgi, AG1 activities Leader, who tackled the importance and benefits of developing an effective research and innovation ecosystem, through promotion of networking and collaboration among R&I institutions upon strategic assets for the Alps, such as transnational collaboration, capitalization of existing resources and harmonization of models and strategies. In the following, project presentations set the focus i.a. onto the pivotal role of systems (and people) interoperability, competence mapping, valorization of research results to unlock the innovation potential and competitiveness of the Alpine region as a whole, supporting the creation of innovation networks beyond borders.

Key messages and lessons learnt

1) Mr. Jean-Pierre Halkin, DG Regional and Urban Policy – Head of Unit D.1

Opening: Introduction

The main objective of policy-makers is to develop more evidence-based policies. Mr. Halkin therefore expressed his appreciation for EUSALP willingness to provide concrete evidence of problems and gaps that still need to be addressed. He left the audience with three key suggestions to improve and strengthen EUSALP strategies:

- Agitate: to keep providing different perspectives, valorizing diversity and regions' experiences
- Consolidate: as EUSALP program is part of a vast area of actions, participants need to build strong relations and partnerships to keep focused on their final goal
- Communicate, upward and downward. It is innovators and citizens' interest to make their voice heard by policy-makers.

2) Prof. Anna Giorgi, Mr. Guido Piccoli (AG1 Leader)

Opening: welcome speech and presentation of the speakers

Prof. Giorgi, Leader of AG1, initiated the debate upon Open Innovation putting a spotlight on the process of identification, facilitation and support of regional, national and international strategic relations within the framework of EUSALP AG1 activities, strengthening the relations among Triple Helix actors, i.e. Public Administrations, Research Centers/Universities, and Industries. The ultimate aim of Open Innovation platforms and tools is to develop evidence-based policies that can effectively support R&I, but can also produce valuable metrics to measure Innovation outputs and to speed up their 'on-field' application.

3) Prof. Margherita Russo (Ministry of Education, University and Research)

Open Innovation: Development paths emerging from RIS3 in the Alpine regions

Prof. Russo presented the work done in collaboration with the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, as part of AG1 activities. They started mapping Innovation ecosystems within EUSALP regions by means of exploratory multidimensional analyses, which led to the identification of geographical clusters sharing specific socio-economic features, later classified according to RIS3's priorities (e.g. Agrifood, Health and Life Sciences, Bio-economy and Energy, etc.). This analysis highlighted the need for a better-integrated territorial strategy on Open Innovation, where regions and countries can learn from each other's best –and worst– practices, capitalizing on open data available.

4) Mr. Angelo Gatto (Lombardy Region – Finlombarda)

Open Innovation Platform, Lombardy

Mr. Gatto's speech aimed to display the results achieved through the Open Innovation Platform of Lombardy Region, a collaborative platform built upon the Responsible Research and Innovation paradigm. Launched in 2015, it gathers today over 9,000 professionals and citizens. Its goal is to promote collaboration and interoperability with other initiatives and regions, thanks also to a multilingual interface. In particular, this Platform has dedicated "plug-ins" to map competences,

project/results of interest for the regional innovation ecosystem, and it is equipped with an automatic matching tool to disseminate partnership proposals.

**5) Mr. Fabrizio Rovatti (AREA Science Park, Trieste)
Open Innovation in FVG: best practices**

Mr. Rovatti introduced to the public a clear example of best practice serving Open Innovation in Friuli Venezia Giulia region, i.e. the OIS (Open Innovation System), an integrated system with local support offices, common methodologies and activity, expert support (assessment, technical assistance, feasibility check, project planning, mentoring) to address customized companies' needs. This led to the development of ARGO, a structured system of private enterprises and public operators that has been designed to valorize and interconnect territory's excellences, optimize the assets and accelerate advanced performance thanks to a 'Hub&Spoke' model.

**6) Prof. Markus Rhomberg (Boden Seehoch Schule)
Promoting Innovation in the Lake Constance Region: How Science-Industry-Interfaces Connecting Stakeholders from Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and Switzerland**

According to Prof. Rhomberg, promoting an active transnational network among universities is of pivotal importance to enhance synergies and connect research potential with regional challenges. The presentation focused on the role of universities as effective Science-Industry interfaces, which foster knowledge & technology transfer between academia and SMEs.

**7) Prof. Anna Giorgi and Mr. Pietro Guinea (AG1 Leader)
AlpGov Platform of Knowledge POK**

Action Group 1, with the support of their technical staff, presented the main features of an excellent instrument to strengthen collaboration among international stakeholders, harmonization of strategies and capitalization of existing information. The POK (Platform of Knowledge) is a web-based tool that promises to improve information exchange and targeted networking for Open Innovation enhancement in the Alpine area. A key feature of this platform is the ability to collect a huge amount of data retrieved from multiple datasets and deliver them through user-friendly visualization maps and infographics. An entire section dedicated to EU, national and regional funding opportunities is available too.

**8) Mr. Stefano Sala (UNIMONT – University of Milan), IT
RE-Search ALPS, INEA CEF-TELECOM Project**

Mr. Sala presented to the audience the work he has been doing within a CEF-TELECOM project, which aims to gather, consolidate, harmonize and make available data about laboratories and research & innovation centers, which are active in the 7 Countries of the Alpine area. The platform will facilitate the R&D process by forecasting what the laboratories do and where they are located; mentioning where excellence emerge and the researchers working in a center; representing a scheme of the existing network of relations.

Open Innovation Talk, moderated by Mr. Guido Piccoli

During the round-table session, Mr. Piccoli stimulated the debate upon Open Innovation challenges, seizing the occasion to address innovators' concerns to Mr. Jean-Pierre Halkin, Head of D.1 Unit (Regional and Urban Policy) at the European Commission. Panelists provided the audience with interesting insights, which can be summarized as follows:

- There exists a clear value chain connecting the different processes of innovation, where *Education*, *Research* and *Innovation* that creates *Competitiveness* represent the main flow of actions to follow. In particular, universities must play the role of “translators” for stakeholders, thanks to their natural ability to bridge different “languages” and logics.
- Policy-makers and policy-planning agents must look at Open Innovation as the dawn of a new age in policy design. Different ways of thinking and acting throughout EUSALP regions should be seen as important opportunities for mutual learning, that have to be fostered through active dialogue and inter-regional cooperation. Best-practices have to be studied and analyzed, in order to discover key enabling factors that could be mixed and rearranged to effectively make them work within different territorial frameworks.
- Metrics are of pivotal importance, and their definition is essential to get measurable results, especially to assess the efficacy of Open Innovation programs and activities. The possibility to attribute specific values to impacts will help to find out the right “formula” to scale up good practices and foster transnational cooperation on a broader level.
- Cooperation among public authorities, business sector, universities and R&I institutions must be deepened in order to speed up the policy development process. Indeed, R&I policies are too often implemented when they are already old, and do not address present needs anymore. Innovators feel the need to dig out a fast-track channel, breaking one of the weakest link in the innovation value-chain and facilitating communication with decision makers.
- Data access is another obstacle within the innovation process: we must consider that open data are to revolutionize the way policies and strategies are designed, as they can directly inform decision makers upon territories' real needs, socio-economic strengths and weaknesses.