Good Governance Infrastructures

The case of Lapland (Finland):
Arctic Smartness: Clustering for critical mass, innovation and internationalisation

The Smart Specialisation Programme of Lapland recognises the role of Lapland as an Arctic sparsely-populated living environment, in which **development efforts are constantly pursued in close interaction with inhabitants and the Arctic nature**.

The following development cornerstones have been identified in the preparation of Lapland's Arctic Specialisation Programme: **accessibility, the sustainable utilisation of natural resources and natural conditions, increasing the local value added, making more efficient use of the expertise already accumulated in Lapland, and Arctic pride**. Although Lapland's Arctic Specialisation Programme focuses on specific sectors, it also challenges others to innovate new, strong spearhead sectors.

The key objective of the programme is to identify and develop Arctic fields of business whose sustainable utilisation will offer Lapland opportunities to exploit its commercial potential in the short, medium and long term. Another aim is to fight the regional unemployment and provide companies with preconditions for new business.

Besides the regional strategies and programmes, **clustering approach** has emerged as a core instrument for advancing regional innovation and governing the regional smart specialisation process. To promote the Arctic Specialisation Programme, **new regional clusters were created in Lapland to stimulate multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary cooperation between regional actors**, focusing particularly on the RDI sector and small and medium-sized enterprises. In 2014, five clusters were created as means to implement and enhance the regional S3 approach:

- Arctic Industry and Circular Economy
- Arctic Smart Rural Community
- Arctic Design
- Arctic Safety and Security
- Arctic Development Environments

These Arctic Smartness Clusters form the backbone for Lapland's sustainable development and regional innovation system. The cluster governance advocates for multi-sectoral and synergic approach which aims to look beyond boundaries and **help the region to overcome its lack of critical mass for innovation and to integrate Lapland's businesses into global value chains**. The core actors in the clusters are the University of Lapland, Lapland University of Applied Sciences, Geological Survey of Finland, Rovaniemi Regional Development Agency, ProAgria Lappi (agricultural and rural expert organisation), the Regional Council of Lapland, Digipolis Technology Park and Natural Resources Institute Finland.

In 2014, Lapland was chosen as one of Europe's model regions in cluster development, and consequently the five regional clusters could create individual strategies with concrete objectives with the help of European Cluster Observatory.

To support the clusters and their stakeholders in reaching the targets of Lapland's smart specialisation strategy, the core cluster actors and regional authorities have implemented additional regional development projects. Arctic Smartness Excellence (ASE) project carries out activities related to the Regional Smart Specialisation Strategy of Lapland.

The ASE project, launched in 2016, plans to carry out actions that are concentrated on developing and supporting the consolidation and development of the five regional clusters with entrepreneurial thinking driving them forward. The project aims at improved and more internationalised cluster cooperation and impact and supports the clusters' ambitions toward internationalisation and tapping into further funding. The new Lappish Innovation platform, Center of Arctic Smartness Excellence, will be created to support clusters' needs and to feed innovations and ideas and work as a booster for innovations according to adequate regional technological readiness levels.

Read more:
Lapland in Smart stories: http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/-/smart-use-of-arctic-natural-resources-and-conditions?inheritRedirect=true

Lapland's Arctic Specialisation Programme: http://luotsi.lappi.fi/arcticsmartness

Lapland's case in the S3 Implementation Handbook: http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-implementation-handbook (Gianelle, C., D. Kyriakou, C. Cohen and M. Przeor (eds) (2016), Implementing Smart Specialisation: A Handbook, Brussels: European Commission, EUR 28053 EN, doi:10.2791/53569)