



Regional Development Agency of Western Macedonia – ANKO, PP5 (GR)



*Bridging competence infrastructure gaps and speeding up growth and
jobs delivery in regions - BRIDGES*

POLICY LEARNING IN THE REGION OF WESTERN MACEDONIA, GREECE

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W. Macedonia profile

The region of West Macedonia is the only landlocked in Greece

Area

9.451 km²

(7,2% of the total country)

Population

282.120 inh.

(2,6% of the total country)

Administrative devision

4 Regional units (Grevena,, Kastoria, Kozani, Florina) with capital the city of Kozani

Economy

- GDP per capita: 15,000 € (85% of country's average, 2012)
- GVA: 6,3% primary sector, 41% secondary mainly through energy production from lignite mines, 52,7% services, 2012)
- Unemployment: 30% (2015)



RIS3 General Profile of the Region

RIS3 in W. Macedonia stimulates traditional sectors (Energy / RES, Waste Management, Tourism, Rural Development and Products' Processing) as prioritized , while ROP stimulates support and promotion of RIS 3 through investments in research and excellence mainly in these sectors. These Investment Priorities are “Enhancement of infrastructures for research and innovation and of competences for excellence development in research and innovation”, “Promotion of business investments in research and innovation” and “Development and implementation of new business models for SMEs”.

In W. Macedonia the implementation of RIS3 is insufficient according to the lack of relevant institutional structures and procedures. Region faces weak absorptiveness of research excellence, including the not sufficient impact of RIS3 in its economy with absence of Centre of Excellence and restricted critical mass requiring networked development models. Additionally to the former, RIS3 points out as basic priority for the region the creation of structures supporting SMEs in all sectors, along with a Regional Structure for the Development of Entrepreneurship and Certification of products.

RIS3 and Bio-economy in the Region

Crucial is the need for effectiveness of innovation management, including RIS3 implementation and growth of bio-economy industries in order to benefit from dynamic entrepreneurial discovery process in unexplored current or related variety activities and opportunities, excellence-based. In these terms, W. Macedonia will focus on the agro-food sector and on improving products through localized, as much as possible, productive chains.

According to RIS3 Regional Assessment for W. Macedonia, report from Expert Team to the European Commission, Directorate General for Regional Policy, SMEs in food and beverages may improve their profit margins and boost their sales by better branding and advertising, using new-generation ERP and CRM tools, along with e-commerce and procurement platforms.

The Industry of «Retail sale of food, beverages and tobacco specialized stores» in W. Macedonia employs more than 2.000 people, ranking in the 17th place of relative regional specialization in Europe with the rate 2.04.

Q1. Is there a project pipeline agreed for the bio-economy development niche?

Bio-economy development runs through funding projects and actions under the main regional policy paper / funding instrument that is the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 of W. Macedonia, co-funded by ESIF and National funds. RIS3 Strategy focuses in prioritized sectors and actions for funding under ROP.

The Regional Council for Innovation is supervising RIS3 policy while the ROP Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of both ROP and RIS3 Strategy and will proceed in an open call for selecting the Intermediate Managing Body of ROP actions funding SMEs and entrepreneurship generally and innovative actions specifically, according to the Thematic Objectives of the ROP.

The selective Intermediate Managing Body will be responsible for Information, Assessment, Evaluation, Monitoring and Certification procedures for funding projects and all this work will be specified in the relative Implementation Guide that must be prepared by IMB.

Q2. Are there criteria for funding/co-funding RIS3 business projects? If yes, what are they? What type of investments do they prioritize?

In relevance to the former the selected Intermediate Managing Body will define such criteria and also prioritized types of investments in the Implementation Guide for funding RIS3 projects funded by ROP.

Q3. Do the criteria for funding/co-funding RIS3 projects include eligibility of innovation partnerships (R2B or B2B or R2R)?

As criteria are up to be defined the intention is not positive for R2R instead of R2B and B2B and mainly Clusters that can be also funded by the Rural Development Programme of Greece, also co-funded by ESIF, using specified money from ROP. An open call is foreseen for funding Clusters in Metal (existing as a network actually) and Agro-food sectors (to be formed).

Q4. What type of related investments and innovation partnerships have already been funded / co-funded? Are there some results already?

During the Programme Period 2000-2006 a regional action concerning “Knowledge clusters” was funded by ERDF under the Regional Innovative Actions Programme of W. Macedonia, supporting the implementation of relative innovative projects by SMES funding business plans in specific sectors in order relevant clusters to be formed.

At the same programme period the project “Regional Innovative Pole in W. Macedonia” that was funded under the Operational Programme “Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship” focused specifically in the energy sector and especially in clustering aimed to new technologies . Both initiatives had no concrete results because of lack of interest in regional level, while there was not (until today also) institutional and legislative framework for the formulation of clusters.

Q5. Is there any innovation infrastructure already assigned with supporting the RIS3 implementation? If yes, are there performance criteria set to this structure?

There is no such a specific infrastructure, instead of structures. In National level the RIS3 policy is being produced and supervised by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology. Generally the relative performance criteria are defined in accordance with EU policy papers for RIS3 but have not been specialized in regional level.

Good practices from W. Macedonia

Concerning bio-economy in agro-food sector ANKO can contribute its continuous planning and administrative experience in Rural Development programmes (i.e. LEADER Initiative) promoting entrepreneurship. Another Good Practice is “W. Macedonia’s Basket of rural Products”, identifying at regional level, among other issues, local products with potentials for promotion to the markets, being funded by the Greek Programme of Rural Development 2007 – 2013. Finally, LocFood/INTERREG IVC Project run in the Region developing a tool in order to improve and facilitate entrepreneurship in local food sector and specifically in SMEs (13 partners from 9 EU Regions). The main goal of the project was to facilitate the formulation of strategies bringing together knowledge concerning food experience and culture, local identity and social context leading to the improvement of regional policies and strategies enhancing entrepreneurship, business development, competitiveness and economic growth.

ANKO Profile and Role in BRIDGES Project (PP5)

Regional Development Agency of W. Macedonia , located in Kozani, NW Greece.

Intermediate public equivalent body, governed under public law.

Est. in 1986, with 60 members of staff, having as stakeholders regional and local authorities and actors, working in 2 main Directories (technical studies, national / european programmes and projects).

In BRIDGES project ANKO is in charge for influence in Policy Instrument 4 (RIS3 Strategy in the Region as part of the Regional Operational Programme of W. Macedonia 2014 – 2020) and Co-ordinator of Semester 4 (Action Plans Introduction & Structuring) and Semester 5 (Action Plans Formulation & Peer Review).

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