



STEINBEIS - EUROPA - ZENTRUM
Innovation Relay Centre Stuttgart-Erfurt-Zürich



Supporting Strategic Knowledge Generation at the Regional Level: Combining Foresight with other Strategic Policy Intelligence Tools

Workshop: Foresight and Knowledge Management Methods (2)
Fri 9 June, 9.15-11.30

Sabine Hafner-Zimmermann
Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum Stuttgart, Germany
hafner@steinbeis-europa.de
www.regstrat.net

Turku, 09 June 2006

1. Background

Challenges for Europe's Regions:

- **Struggle for competitiveness in the global economy**
- **Still high social and economic discrepancies between Europe's regions (efficiency, quality of life)**
- **Transition towards knowledge-based society (beyond RTDI)**
- **Enhancing cooperation, communication and mobility**
- **Need to further approach the Barcelona 3% benchmark for RTDI investments**
- **Foster innovation and innovativeness on the regional level**

⇒ **Growing complexity of regional policy-making**

Thus...

... Policy-makers and regional stakeholders need to respond to these challenges and the growing complexity of policy-making...

... and counter them by using more systemic, integrated and interrelated approaches to decision-making.

But...

... often, regional actors lack the comprehensive knowledge-base and the broad stakeholder involvement necessary to take informed and well-founded decisions.

Consequently...

... The **RegStrat-project aims to bring together the dispersed knowledge for policy support to support regional decision-makers and thus improve regional RTDI policies.**

2. The RegStrat-project

RegStrat:

Strategic Policy Intelligence Tools for Better Science & Technology Investment Strategies in Europe's Regions

With partners from 6 European Regions:

- Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum (SEZ), **Baden-Württemberg**, Germany (co-ordinator);
- the Regional Institute for Research of **Lombardy (IReR)**, Italy;
- the National Policy Advisory Board for Enterprise, Trade, Science, Technology and Innovation (**Forfás**), **Ireland**;
- the Foundation for the Development of **Extremadura (Fundecyt)**, Spain;
- Wroclaw University of Technology (WUT), **Lower Silesia**, Poland; and
- the Institute of Baltic Studies (IBS), **Tartu Region**, Estonia.



STEINBEIS - EUROPA - ZENTRUM
Innovation Relay Centre Stuttgart-Erfurt-Zürich



RegStrat Partners and Regions



Objectives

Generating positive impacts on regional RTDI investments by:

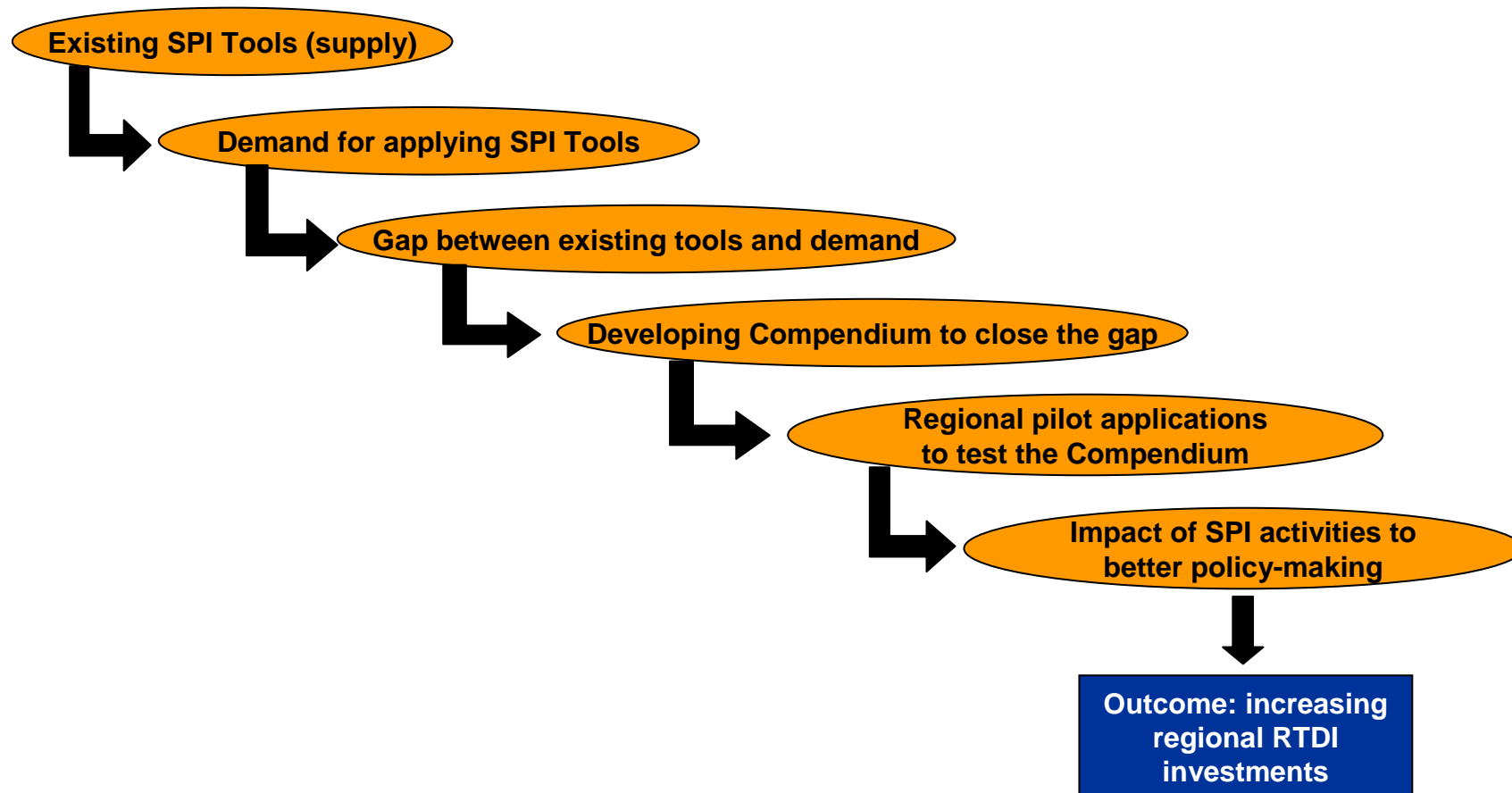
- improving regional RTDI policies and governance structures by enabling regional actors to identify the optimum strategic intelligence infrastructure, and
- stimulating coherent and mutually reinforcing regional innovation activities leading to an overall improvement of knowledge, productivity and competitiveness in the region.

Definition

Strategic Policy Intelligence (SPI) is

- The set of activities to search, process, diffuse & protect information in order to make it available to the right persons at the right time in order to take the right decisions.
- SPI includes such policy support instruments as
 - foresight,
 - strategic evaluation,
 - benchmarking,
 - regional innovation auditing,
 - technology assessment and
 - monitoring.

Project Structure



First Phase

'SPI Offer' synthesized from policy research and practice

Examination on which SPI tools and activities are on offer and how these can be structured, combined and applied.

Discussion with policy-makers, researchers and SPI practitioners during high-level conference.

Main objectives:

- Share knowledge between the different research and professional communities regarding the 'state of the art' of SPI tools, their combination and application.
- Increase understanding by regional innovation actors of the relevance of these tools.

⇒ **First input to RegStrat Compendium and Guidelines**

First Phase (2)

High-level conference in Stuttgart

- International audience: ~80 participants from 20 countries and 40 regions
- Policy researchers, practitioners and regional policy-makers
- Great interest and active participation by regional decision-makers and programme managers
- Back-up from regional (B-W) authorities for the event
- High-level presentations on theory, methodology and practice of SPI tools
- Broad exchange of experience and discussions between policy-makers applying SPI tools and policy researchers supporting implementation

Second Phase

‘SPI demand’ articulated by regional actors, and gap analysis

Inquiry of the potential demand for SPI in regional decision-making.
Questionnaires and workshop with high-level regional policy-makers.

Main objectives:

- Discuss with regional policy-makers on policy preparation and support mechanisms currently in use, and use of SPI tools therein;
- Identify limitations and success factors for SPI approaches in use;
- Identify potential contributions of SPI tools to the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of regional policies.

⇒ **Analysis of offer and demand, and conclusions regarding gaps between existing tools and the needs of regional policy-makers.**

Second Phase (2)

Outcome of questionnaires

- 22 questionnaires completed by regional decision-makers from 8 countries (regional/local governments, funding agencies, research institutes, intermediaries)

- **Main questions:**
 - Is there regional RTDI policies and how are they designed?
 - Are SPI tools known to regional policy-makers?
 - Have SPI tools been used to design RTDI policies?
 - In which way have SPI outcomes been used?

Second Phase (2)

Outcomes of questionnaires (2)

➤ Main outcomes:

- In 17 cases SPI tools have been used for policy-making: foresight, benchmarking, SWOT analysis, (seldom: TA, scenarios, roadmapping)
- Usually, only one method was applied
- No deep understanding of theoretical and operational requirements of tools
- Often, SPI tools were used for policy-making but use was not made explicit
- Only 2 organizations were not acquainted with SPI tools at all
- Most respondents have not used SPI tools themselves but are willing to make use of them in the future if they are able to acquire the competences necessary and the trust from their host organizations and the political sphere

Second Phase (3) – outcomes of workshop

Use of SPI tools:

- Difficult to understand SPI applications and benefits thereof
- Decision-making is based on regional/personal vision but not well founded
- Mainly benchmarking and SWOT analysis used: emphasis on past and present drivers ⇔ foresight and scenario analysis
- SPI applications to be tailored to regional needs but also networking and exchange of experiences between regions
- Need for capacity-building, networking on SPI tools and continuity of SPI application to keep knowledge within the system/organization
- Capacity to be properly positioned in an organization: trade-off between autonomy from policy design (objectivity) and integration in the policy-process (commitment, involvement)

Second Phase (3)

Outcomes of workshop (2)

Relationship between SPI tools and RTDI policy:

- No direct, straightforward transfer of SPI outputs into RTDI policies, only decision-base pointing to present obstacles to overcome and future options for the region
 - Decision itself is taken in the political process
 - SPI application is no substitute for decision-process
 - But: more participation, transparency and commitment by all actors

Spreading the use of SPI tools for RTDI policy design:

- Experience by policy-makers shows that SPI application can be successful
- Discussion between users and non-users of SPI tools fruitful and effective for knowledge exchange
- Pilot actions a good means for transferring experience, capacities and support to less knowledgeable regions

What's next?

- **Developing Compendium and Guidelines:** comprehensive overview of existing SPI tools and activities, and practical suggestions on how to implement a regional SPI exercise.
- **Validating Compendium and Guidelines:** pilot applications for SPI tools tailored to concrete regional situations; workshops with regional actors to test the usability, appropriateness and robustness of the Compendium and Guidelines.
- **Dissemination and Final Conference:** ongoing dissemination and final event in Brussels; policy recommendations.

Conclusions

- Regional policy-making can make a difference with regard to achieving higher growth, competitiveness and investments
- Need for longer-term, strategic thinking and better-founded regional decision-making in a globalised economy
- Need for comprehensive knowledge and structured support to regional decision-making
- Need for broad-based capacity building and exchange of experiences on SPI tools among regional decision-makers
- Tools are there but they are not widely known and applied, especially as regards less formalised methods, e.g. foresight
- Useful for both less and more advanced regions, to build up decision support and to break conventional decision structures



STEINBEIS - EUROPA - ZENTRUM
Innovation Relay Centre Stuttgart-Erfurt-Zürich



Thank you for your attention!

Sabine Hafner-Zimmermann

hafner@steinbeis-europa.de

www.regstrat.net