

## Questionnaire layout

### Identifying the priorities of the region

- Is innovation a top priority for the region?
- Do you consider that the region is an innovative region?
- In which types of innovation is the region specialized?
- Which are considered to be the strengths of the region that should be developed?
- Are you satisfied with the innovative performance of the region so far?
- The economic crisis has strengthened or weakened the interest of the region for innovation?

### Planning

- Is there strategic planning at the district regional level for innovation? (Since when, what kind, etc.)
- Is the regions autonomous in the planning or affected (and to what extent) by the European Union and the national innovation system?
- Is there mechanism for collecting data connected to innovation indicators?
- How “informed” are the regional actors for the effects of innovation on economic growth?

### Governance

- Which are the actors dealing with innovation in the region (public, private, universities, etc.)?
- Is there cooperation between them?
- Is there cooperation between different levels of government in innovation? (Local, national, European)
- Are there synergies between public and private sector in the region for innovation?
- Are there procedures for the participation of private actors (business) or citizens in the decision-making process for innovation policies?
- Is there any strategic cooperation with other regions within and outside the country? Do you consider them partners or competitors?
- Do you consider that the Regionalization process contribute to the development of more coherent policies for the development of the region?

### Management

- Which are the main problems that the region faces and serve as barriers to the development of innovative policies?
- Are there sufficient resources (administrative financial, etc.), in order to: a) develop innovation policies b) to implement them?
- Are there systems that take advantage of the knowledge produced in the region creating surplus value?
- Are there systems to monitor international developments and inform local agencies for investment opportunities and ways to benefit from new technology and know-how?

## EU influence

- How important is the EU funding for innovation and research, disbursed through ERDF and other sources to the region?
- The involvement of local authorities in the design of operational programs benefited the region or caused problems?
- Which are the challenges set by the SmSp regional innovation strategy?
- How aware are the actors in the region for the availability of EU funds and how ready are they to absorb them?

## Interview's transcripts

**Main points from the Interview with Laurent Lecoer:** European projects officer at MIRIADE (Mission régionale pour l'innovation et l'action de développement économique) agency for Innovation & business development in Basse-Normandie.

“BN is small region and it is not so industrialized, there are 5 pillars of competitiveness but the economy is not as big as other French regions. “

“MIRIADE is the regional agency for innovation, the specificity here is that MIRIADE is part of the region and it is the only case in France that it is incorporated in the body of the region. It is created in March 2007 to promote innovation. The funding to start was partially from Europe and still part of the finance comes from European Funds by various programmes. The idea is to help companies and attract companies to locate in the region. We help companies to get finance for their projects. In the European office we work with companies that want to develop European projects. We collaborate with them.”

“The idea of this agency is to help the companies to get access to the EU funds through programs that lunched by the commission. We contact them, visit them and present them the available opportunities. There are many possibilities for funding through EU but someone has to inform the companies of the procedures and the opportunities.”

“We help the companies to create innovative projects during the process from the idea to the market.”

“Promote the territory and companies want to invest here and attract investment funds.”

“Partnership in INTERREG programs and other projects. Take part or manage these projects because of the big knowledge and experience in organizing meetings and workshops.”

“There are 3 department agencies for each department that works in innovation and we cooperate with them but not with the national agency.”

“Mostly the region have influence in MIRIADE, it supports and have a role to play in the decision making.”

“We cooperate with other regions, we have partnerships for some projects with other regions in France and Europe. Of course, there are also competitive relationships. We cooperate up to a point but then there is competition.”

“There is a department that works on non-technological innovation but only one person works there. It is what we call social-innovation.”

“I think if the company today with the crisis wants to survive has to be innovative. We are here to develop the innovative performance of these actors. The competition is high, but these actors have to do something by themselves to.”

“There is emigration problem, young people leave the region, because it is difficult to find employment. But also it is also a problem with their ambition because the companies here don't offer competitive packages to convince people to stay.”

“There is no evaluation process, not from us, maybe the chamber of commerce makes some kind of innovation evaluation for the enterprises in the region.”

“I think that the crisis enhanced the interest towards innovation. Surprisingly the region responded well in the crisis. The attractiveness increased and that shows that we perform better than other French regions. The companies of course had more problems in development than the public agencies. The region supported innovation during the crisis and maintained the funding for innovation.”

“The start-ups incubator that works in BN is very efficient. There is a selection process for projects. And the most innovative ones especially from the university hosted in the incubator. So that helps the creation of new companies which exploit the knowledge produced.”

“There is cooperation with other actors, university departments, economic agencies and the authorities and cooperation is a key to succeed and become more competitive.”

“For the next programming period there is the SmSp strategy. The Commission asked all the regions to make this plan, we have 5 innovative sectors in the region that were identified.”

“There was an agency before MIRIADE but it was another innovation agency but it was not well structured. MIRIADE created from the beginning as innovation and regional development agency at the same time.”

“Most of the economic actors of the region participate in the innovation strategy creation and of course MIRIADE that leads and knows which are the thematic that need more attention.”

**Main points from the Interview with Rachel Gandon:** Head of European affairs and territorial cooperation for the region Basse-Normandie.

“This department works mainly with INTERREG programmes and European projects like horizon 2020 and so on. But we are well connected with colleagues that work in European fund and for the new programming period share topics and responsibilities with them.”

“On the 2007-2013 programming period there was the French state that had the dominant responsible for the drafting documents and design strategies. For the new period the region will be responsible, and that is a revolution for the French polity reality because the state used to be too centralized but also it is a bit dangerous. This is a big change and I am not sure that we are ready. It is a big responsibility, if there are problems there will be very difficult to manage.”

“It is the French state’s decision because the member states decides how they want to work.”

“In the previous period We have a small delegation and a small part of the money but now we have the whole responsibility for the money of the ERDF fund and a small part of the social cohesion fund.”

“As it comes to innovation policies for the last period there was an advising delegation from the state but the region council there was responsible for the specific measures of innovation. The regional council has the legal competencies when it comes to innovation strategy. So in France for the innovation policies the local level of governance has the responsibility and the does the planning.”

“Regional council has the competence of innovation in French organization system and now that we have also the competence to create the operational programmes we will change the way that we spend the money. Before we had always to give a reference to the state but now the region is more autonomous.”

“The main actors that take part in the decision making process for innovation policy is first of all the French state through the local representatives, the regional agency for innovation MIRIADE which is responsible for the innovation strategy, the different departments of regional council, the university, there are stakeholders for research like various university laboratories or private R&D actors. For example, in the marine renewable energy sector there is SPL which has a strange structure where local authorities and enterprises made a partnership working together creating innovative policies for this special topic.”

“In general we don’t associate so much with enterprises there is the regional agency which have a representative that discuss and works with enterprises. There are Economic organizations called pole de

competitiveness. There are associations of the enterprises which have a representative that takes part in the decision making. “

“Innovation is a priority and innovation strategy is an interesting tool. Now we have 5 topics which the regions focus on to create economic development opportunities. And there was a big discussion to identify these topics.”

“This is a tool for us for the department because we know to which direction we have to work on.”

“There are connections with French regions . For the renewable energy with Bretagne, and the pays de la Loire, and some connections with the Paris region for transportation issues. During the INTERREG we cooperate with innovation issues and there is also a publication with all the INTERREG programmes that the region was involved in.”

“There competitive relationships with some of the partner regions. This is sometimes the problem, there is a project for the MRE which called Atlantic cluster and the objective of this project is to create a European cluster about MRE but the competitive issues between territories make it difficult to be finalized. Now the idea is an Atlantic network to be established to share knowledge and transfer technology between them. The cooperation stops when they enter the market.”

“There is a problem with the education level of young people and also the educated young people don't stay in the region and leaving to others, like Paris. We are welcoming more older people that choose BN to stay for their retirement.”

“When it comes to social innovation there are many social enterprises especial for biological products and also some ones that help elderly people.”

“In the previous programming period we did not collect data for innovation but for the following there is an effort to establish indicators for innovation.”

“The region started before the EU initiatives to thing towards innovation because it understand the importance of innovation, but the EU funds and policies acted as a tool to help enhance this interest and copy good practices from other territories. It was developed within the European framework and during these two periods, the previous and next one, the steps are bigger because the innovation is more focus and precise and we have gained experience.”

“EU is one of the actors; there are state funds and policies. The regional funds are the most important, after that European and then national. The EU funding for innovation is important and especially now that Basse-Normandie become a transition region is more and more important.”

“There was political intervention. BN lobbied successfully about that. The funding tools are not enough, there were not enough regional categories and it was not precise for BN to be in the developed regions. Now it is in a better position and can attract more funds.”

“When it comes to quantitative targets to test the innovation performance we had also in the past but now there are more and more precise since EU asked for that.”

“The crisis boosted the region’s interest towards innovation and it was one of the reasons that BN became a transition region. Now innovation is targeted more since is a tool to create more jobs.”

“There is cooperation between the regional actors that take part in innovation strategy design. We must work together we cannot do nothing alone. We must work with university and MIRIADE. This is how we design the Strategy.”

“The strategy design is a legal competence of the region but we share this work with other stakeholders in the region. That happens to have greater impact. Since the strategy is the main element that directs funding and if the stakeholders ask for funding they have to be aligned with the strategy. That’s why they take part in the design.”

“The local stakeholders are informed mostly for the regional funds and ERDF funds but not for other opportunities like interreg programs or the ones that are on “Horizon 2020”. We try to make them more conscious on these programs so they can target these funds. It is one of the new priorities, especially for enterprises. And there are many research programs in “Horizon 2020” and the region has to be part of that and try to attract some of them.”

“We have results from the exploitation of knowledge produced here but of course we use mostly knowledge attracted from the rest of the world.”

**Main points from the Interview with Zoe Buyle-Bodin:** Project manager in the regional representation of Basse-Normandie in Brussels.

“Innovation is definitely a priority for the region. You can see that from the fact that the local elective representatives in the region are divided in committees with different responsibilities and for the research and innovation responsible is the president of the region so there is strong evidence that the regions authorities are very interested in innovation.”

"I think that Basse-Normandie is an innovative region but it is a small region. Sometimes it is difficult to find the critical mass to develop innovative activities. So that's why we have links with other regions in France to cooperate. Like Brittany, Pays de la Loire, Upper Normandy"

"I think in general Basse-Normandie is a knowledge follower region in general. Trying to absorb knowledge created elsewhere accumulate and adjust it in the region environment. But in some areas the region is very innovative, like the cancer treatment research. So in some specific sectors the region is very innovative."

"The innovative sector of specialization there is medicine and especially due to the fact that there are new nuclear power plants and infrastructures in the region, there is a close cooperation where new applications of nuclear medicine are being tested trying to produce cancer-treatment methods. There is renewable energy, especially renewable marine energy, tidal and wind parks. The silver economy is also very important. Innovative material applications, where bio-products like cereals are used to create everyday products."

"There is a strategy and for the 2014-2020 period the region develops SmSp strategy that will replace the existing regional innovation strategy. Of course this was mandated by the European Commission. The effort was to identify those sectors that the last years perform better, so the majority of funding channeled towards those."

"Is it very difficult to judge now if the innovation performance is satisfying. The region is investing money to long term projects so it is very difficult now to assess the performance at this point."

"For other innovative actors in the regions, there is the university of course. But there are many other innovative actors like the engineering school ENSICAEN which is very good. The regional innovation agency called La MIRIADE. The clusters called "pole de compétitivité" in the region there are 4 poles de compétitivité which are all part of the innovative "ecosystem". Also some individual firms that are working for example in renewable tidal energy are key actors in this process."

"There are some links between the regional authorities and authorities in other administrative tiers but it depends on the topic. For example in the topic of silver economy there is close cooperation with the government and national authorities. For renewable energy the cooperation is with the department and some individual municipalities."

"For some topics the region has competences and it is autonomous to decide what it is going to do (regional economic development for example). But for the topics where the region is not competent it is more complicated and has to negotiate with all the different actors."

"The people working in the regional authorities are very competent and in the whole territory there are people with skills. So it is not a problem of capacity in administrative authorities. It is more a problem of

financial means. For example if you want to develop faster you need some skills and want to recruit someone which is top specialist in his field but the resources are limited. That is capacity problem.”

“At this moment due to the new programming period there is an effort to bring together all the actors and create special links between the university and the companies. In the university there is a department that dedicated on technology transfer and helps people start their own company. Also ENSICAEN has an incubator so when someone has an idea and wants to develop and apply it, trying to build a company. There is also the region that tries to help these kinds of start ups. But in general there is knowledge that diffuses from the region. Not all the knowledge that created here is used. But also the opposite happens as I mention in medical research where the researcher attract knowledge from other resources incorporating it in their research. “

“The other regions are both partners and competitors. For example with Bretagne that we work together for marine renewable energy on the one hand there are partners, the universities and testing sites work together and from the other hand they are competitors because we try to attract companies and investment and they try to do the same so..”

“There was the before a regional innovation strategy and now the new SmSp strategy document is being produced.”

“Well the ERDF helps BN. For the next period the region is going to get 188M. A big part of this is going to research and innovation activities so that’s an important amount of money channeled to the region.”

“The people of the region are not aware of the EU help. Now we are preparing a guide for all EU programmes so people in BN can use and find in formations. The regional innovation agency and other actors can help people that have ideas try to find funding. And those will be the connector with EU.”

“There are not specific figures right now but there is no a problem with the funding absorbance. The people in charge are experienced and work with EU projects many years so they manage to absorb all the available funds.”

“For projects that has to do with innovation the department in charge for R&D innovation along with the department of European affairs exams the projects and decide. It is always two departments that decide together.”

“I think it strengthen the the financial crisis interest for innovation. The regions understood that they can’t do business as usual anymore and they had to be more innovative in order to create jobs.”

“Actually this office was really involved in the discussion and lobbying procedures with EU and paved the way for the change of the regions’ status to transition. It was not a crisis effect. But it is based also in some

facts; BN is not a wealth region but not a poor one too. So BN is in a middle situation. But obviously it was more a political choice.”

“We are working on social innovation, there is a department that works on social economy and in MIRIADE there is someone that works on non-technological innovation projects.”

“I think usual it is top-down approach but in many cases the actors come in the region and express their ideas. There is a net work of stakeholders that participates in the decision making.”

“There is a lot of talking about innovation but the problem is to define what innovation is. There is a gap between scientific research and introducing the idea on the market. This is really an issue. All regions have this kind of problem. It is not a competition but the regions have to define what they want to do. They have to define what innovation is for them and set their goals. And of course all the regions cannot be innovative but they have to find a way to live anyway. All the regions try to be innovative and many regions have the same field of specialization and promote the same type of activities for example IT, silver economy etc...”

“The marine renewable energy it can't be copied or relocated because there are the resources. For the tourist attractions also is the same so we need to develop more the tourist industry and of course the Basse-Normandie is a rural region so we promote agricultural products agro-food and so on.”

**Main points from the Interview with Ioannis Tolia:** Development consultant, member of the design team for the RIS3 strategy in Thessaly.

“Well innovation is a top priority for the region if you read and hear their targets, yes but is more talking than actually acting.”

“It is both due to weakness and indifference. The authorities realize that something must be done for the innovation in Thessaly but they cannot take initiatives. Nobody knows what goals ones need to set. They have a picture, they know that it's good but they don't operationalize this perception. An open and serious public debate has not been done yet.”

“We use the OECD typology for regional innovation policy. We identify ourselves as a primary sector intensive region with low potential influence of the framework conditions. We try to create a “Catching up” strategy. Try to follow the developments, not to copy but to enter the innovation game somehow.”

“The University is the most important innovative actor. The “Technological Educational Institute”. The “Center for research and technology Thessaly”, which merged with the one in Thessaloniki and renamed to “Institute of research and technology Thessaly”. There is only a small number of researchers employed there

but with significant results. There are also some research structures set up by the ministry of agricultural development, but the last years due to funding problems they have been marginalized. But there are no intermediaries to support and link these processes.”

“When it comes to the design of the innovation policies there is development planning sector in each region but is not properly staffed, thus it is not operate effectively. Hence, the managing authorities that design the Operational Programs do the biggest part of the job. But so far the operational programs were assigned to external agencies. They produced reports that were send to Brussels to be approved. Nobody cared if what was written was right or wrong, it had the right policy mix or not. The only thing that interested them was to have a good mechanism to absorb the money of the regional O.P. Now the new logic of RIS3 changed that and the authorities have to think all by themselves to set quantitative targets. The most difficult on that is to find data. The RIS3 logic is an application of the north-European model in the Southern Europe particularities.”

“For example with the RIS3 process, until this moment the regional authorities struggling to be part of that. We set up a team, mainly formed from people working on the private sector or the university and prepare it ourselves. It is a totally bottom-up process. The regional innovation council was the impetus to start this work and where this network of people started. We work for them and a lot of people do it on a voluntary basis.”

“The cooperation between the regional actors is problematic. For example for the RIS3 design we talk directly with the Prefect and the managing authority but there are difficulties in the communication. They consider that the RIS3 is an obligation that must be done so the O.P. to be accepted by the DG Regio and unlock the European funds. It's like a duty and nothing more. From the university several professors participate on a voluntary basis, more as independent rather than as an institution. The association of Industries in Thessaly participates actively and also contributes with resources on this process. It is the contrary to what happens in other Greek regions where there issues with rest stakeholders but the regional government is more active.”

“There are only limited links between the regional authorities and authorities in other administrative tiers end only in typical matter with the EU level.”

“Thessaly works on non technological innovation, mostly marketing innovation, there is a dissapointing product innovation performance. Because of the economic structure which is based in traditional economic sectors and there is a conservative, risk averse culture. The same patterns more over can be identified in other 8 Greek regions, apart from the capital region and the islands.”

“In Thessaly there was a tradition in innovation and had started from an old innovation program in 2000 called “invent”. After the “innovation pole” created during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework but lasted

until 2005-2006. They had a governance structure that is similar to the Regional Innovation Systems but they were dependent on funding. When the funding ceased all mechanisms that had been created stopped immediately.”

“It is totally depended to design the innovative strategy. It does not have the capacity to do otherwise. But there are other problems. For example in the agro-food sector. There is a big gap between what the local business want, what the universities offers in terms of research and which are the goals set by the national strategy. We are concerned to make a proper system of governance which will deal to make links in spatial and organizational level.”

“The main challenge is to make innovation diffusion. In the region there is limited innovative culture and the people have to convinced to be more innovative and learn how and what to do. There is a very low percentage of the private sector that spends money on R&D.”

“There are problems in the administrative structure. A refusal on the part of the management authority to implement small institutional innovations. The funding problems because apart from the structural funds there are no other resources. The national investment program stopped remains on the fridge.”

“There are a lot of people and business that individually try but there is not a structure to support innovation. The crisis also created a positive impact, more a more young people come back to the region from the large Urban centers and start to revitalize the local economy especially on the primary sector. The problem in this sector is the large land owners that are usually old and it is not easy to change their attitude.”

“The regionalization creates structures for design regional policies like innovation. Although, the major issue is that most of the things that affect the framework conditions are designed or implemented on national level. There are no legislative responsibilities on the regions so the expectations for integrated policies are low.”

“So far the involvement of local authorities in the design is not that big. As I mention this is a top down process. They make some consultations without asking the proper questions.”

“There is a problem with the limited commercialization of the university research. There is not such culture. The knowledge produced from the universities and exploited by the local market is limited and there are no efforts to export this knowledge. Another problem is the local market attitude that does not want to by the know-how but readymade solutions.”

“The EU’s support to innovation at Thessaly is very important, it is the only financial resource now. For the forthcoming period it is not clear yet the level of investment on from the region operational program or the

ministries sectoral ones. The problem is that still the majority of the structural funds go to hard infrastructure.”

“Absorption of funds is satisfactory but the point is in what kind of projects the money are invested.”

“We faced a double effect with the financial crisis. It strengthens the interest of the region’s actor towards innovation but worsen the environment, the framework conditions and more specific the funding. It highlight the necessity for innovation but limited the resources.”

**Main points from the Interview with Dimitris Kouretas:** President of the Regional Innovation Council/ Vice president of university of Thessaly.

“The Regional Innovation Council (RIC) was created in April last year and we were one of the first regions in the country that organized a council such that. The work done was very good and this year is taught as a “best practice” in the National School of Public Administration. It is also, perhaps the only case, where the innovation council was organized from the region. In other cases the responsibility for the establishment was appointed in external private partners. In this case it was done by personal initiative, I am a member of the regional council and I was selected as the president of the new Regional Innovation Council.”

“However, serious efforts must be done and the RIC receive proper treatment from the regional authorities in order to continue to operate efficiently.”

“It is my fear that the RIC will be marginalized and the opportunity from another NSRF will be lost. The funds are not absorbed appropriate with sustainable developmental perspective. Now the SmSp presupposes on new things, one must convince for the utility of an investment, is the principle of conditionality. We have made recommendations and we hope that the administration will implement them.”

“The regional innovation pole was substantially a failure; it worked for about two years but did not left anything behind.”

“There people concerned about innovation but the point is that authority must create an appropriate management unit to drive the processes.”

“As the situation in the region is now, we cannot continue to operate and carry out the work for a Regional Innovation Strategy. We have to entrust to someone in management. This could be in the region the office of mediation that the university have and was the one coordinated the RIS3 so far. But officially, because so far the work done was voluntarily.”

“There are not other resources besides the EU funds. And even those for the new programming period are in stake. The private sector does not know much and a proper consultation has not been done. It is evident from the R&D data that they do not invest in research.”

“I do not think the crisis has changed the behavior of the region’s authorities, it is as if nothing had happened. Even the reason for recent developments with the creation of the RIC is the European programs that enforce them.”

“Innovation has been recognized as a priority but that is not essentially truth. It should be supported in practice. It can boost the development process, create jobs and connect the academic resources with economical outcomes. Universities should be more involved in this process.”

“There is an entrepreneurship hub that records what the University provides as services to the business world. It is one of the few cases in Greece with such a system.”

“The regionalization in theory can enhance the production of coherent development policies. It can enable the region in a process to do a stand-alone development design. But in this economic environment we need to take advantage of our advantages, to work on the disadvantages, to create our strategies and promote the region like running a private company. If you do not do it this way you will fail. And I am not optimistic at the moment.”