



An Overview of Smart Specialization Strategy in Helsinki-Uusimaa region, Finland



Describing the RIS3 of Helsinki-Uusimaa Region

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Finnish Smart specialisation strategies are regional

In Finland the smart specialisation strategies are made regionally. Each of the 18 regions have a smart specialisation strategy which is either linked to the regional programme or an individual strategy. All the regions are members of the S3 Platform and many of them are partners also in different S3 thematic platforms. The specialists working with smart specialization in regional councils meet regularly in Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. This exchange of experiences and peer learning has proven to be very useful.

At the moment the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland is preparing a national RDI-roadmap, which will give some guidelines for regional smart specialization strategies.

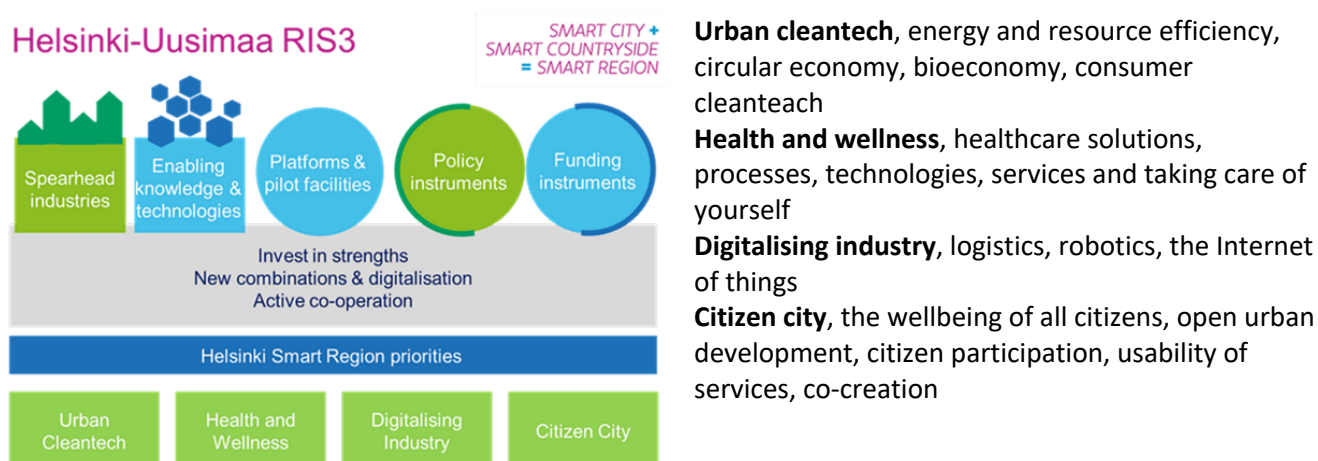
The developing of the RIS3 in Helsinki-Uusimaa

Helsinki-Uusimaa joined S3 Platform in 2012 and began to prepare its first RIS3 strategy. Analysing the strategies of the regions municipalities and connecting the results with the regional competences gave us our first RIS3 themes: “Technological solutions and services”, “wellness technology and services” and “Cleantech”. At the end of 2014 a new and more extensive smart specialisation strategy was prepared together with the Aalto university. It set a framework for working on concrete goals and projects through the co-operation of the actors in the region and had five main priorities and related priority portfolios.

- Urban Cleantech - The Cleantech metropolis platform
- Human Health Tech - Human-centred health and well-being solutions
- Welfare City - Everyday wellbeing in the city
- Digitalising Industry - The digital renewal of industries
- Smart Citizen - Citizens of the internet era

The experiences of implementing the strategy and the response from regional stakeholders led to an update of the strategy in late 2017. At that point it was wise to combine the priorities of Welfare city and Smart citizen into a single priority called Citizen City.

Updated Smart Specialisation strategy 2018-2020, Helsinki-Uusimaa



Preparing a new RIS3 of Helsinki-Uusimaa Region

Before the new financing period it was time to look the smart specialization strategy and its implementation in more detail. We had made some strategy updates during the implementation, but we wanted to know if there was a need for bigger changes. To guide the work we used the steps of the RIS3 Assessment Wheel.

Future scenarios and SWOT

Work for new RIS3 of Helsinki-Uusimaa Region started with a SWOT workshop of our Regional Management Committee MYR. Participants of the workshop evaluated the region against five different future scenarios. One key finding from the workshop was the importance of education in the region. It is a strength and a possibility for the region, and it needs to be invested in.

Analysis of previous RIS3

The next step was to investigate the learnings and experiences of the RIS3 implementation. The main findings were that we have succeeded in connecting actors and building up networks. The projects implementing the strategy have been successful in multidisciplinary cooperation, which is important for creating new qualitative innovations. On the other hand, we could have done more on international cooperation. Our projects for smart specialisation should have had a stronger international dimension.

Studies and statistics

To get a better picture of the innovation environment of Helsinki-Uusimaa we collected different studies and statistics. The data from our research and statistics team shows that the big companies in Helsinki-Uusimaa region represent trade and manufacturing whereas the scientific and technical companies often have less than 10 employees. Considering the spending on R&D the financing has begun to rise and is now 3,5% of the GDP but we are still behind the top year of 2011 and 4,2%.

From the EU point of view, our office in Brussels compiled a report of recent and future developments. And to analyse the regional innovation potential we had an analysis made.

Benchmarking Big Five

To benchmark our region internationally we made an “Big Five, Analysis of the Regional Research and Innovation Strategy for the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and its Cooperation with the Peer Regions”. This report compared the Helsinki-Uusimaa with other four regions on the innovation policies, performance of the regions in specific indicators and sectors. It suggested that Helsinki-Uusimaa region should put efforts on connecting the regional specialization and sectors with the global market and supply chain.

EU strategies and Sustainable development goals

The aim of EU is sustainable growth. During the process of preparing our new smart specialization strategy sustainable development has become more and more important. And the Green Deal sets important goals to our region as well.

From the UN sustainable development goals we have chosen six most important for us at the moment. These are 1. No poverty, 4 Quality education, 9 Industry, Innovation and infrastructure, 11 Sustainable cities and communities, 13 Climate action and 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.

Workshops

To discuss and shape the potential and expectations we organized regional workshops. As background we used the results of regional analyses. The participants came from a wide range of organisations and in the workshop we all were asked to identify the possible priorities of the region together, keeping in mind the global megatrends. Participants also discussed the operational models for implementing the strategy. It is important to keep the strategy human centered and pay attention to education, know-how and skills. In different themes we also need to foster experimenting and support piloting.

New perspective and priorities

All the analysis, EU-strategies and national programmes together with the OECD sustainable development goals and Green Deal lead us to stress wise use of resources – economical, environmental and social resources Under

the umbrella of resource wisdom we will have three priorities: one supporting the goal of carbon neutrality, one supporting urban development, smooth everyday life and wellbeing and one supporting industrial modernisation. An important element in all three priorities is competences, skills and education.

One of the learnings when implementing the previous strategy was that developing new seldom fits under a single priority. On the contrary. New openings and innovations arise from the interfaces. There needs to be room for new combinations and new technologies. We also need to refrain from narrow assumptions on how the markets or technologies will develop. That is why we haven't made silos under our new strategic priorities but enable cross-sectional co-operation and projects.

Implementing smart specialisation

We have supported the implementation of our smart specialization strategy by promoting and financing co-operation between different regional actors. For this we have used regional funding. We have got good results on health sector, technology industries and smart citizen themes. In cleantech theme a key player has been the Smart & Clean foundation. It joins together cities, businesses, researchers and financing for joint developing.

Innovation platforms and development environments play a key role in the regional innovation ecosystems. They offer a possibility for piloting or demonstration of new technologies and innovations.

In recent years we have supported actions in the spearhead themes by Regional innovations and experimentations (AIKO) -financing. These have been more specific projects to experiment new solutions. financing, projects, co-operation.

ERDF financing has been and will be the most important instrument in the smart specialization implementation.

Monitoring smart specialisation

Monitoring is done in several levels. To help us with building up a good monitoring system we participated the JRC PXL session of monitoring in the Smart-up BSR Aarhus innovation camp. One of the learnings was that monitoring doesn't necessarily mean numbers. One of the recommendations for us was to use storytelling as well. For the monitoring of our strategy we will use our previous experience and PXL learnings together with the latest knowledge from S3 platform.

The plans for monitoring the coming new strategy include following and publishing the statistics of regional development in our Finnish website e.g. figures about R&D, company profiles, education. On project financing level we plan to follow the amount of financing we provide and evaluate the outcomes of the financed projects. Concrete cases of our smart specialization implementation will be presented under the HelsinkiSmart brand.

Next steps

In the spring 2020 we will finalise our new smart specialization strategy. It will be officially accepted by the Regional board. In addition to the strategy paper there is a need for more detailed description of the priorities and the plans for implementing the strategy. These together with other supporting materials will be made in the spring.

We will also translate the new strategy into English and update the Helsinki Smart brand to reflect the new strategy.