

THEME 3: Entrepreneurial discovery process in Baltic Sea macro-region smart specialization

Challenge 3: How to boost entrepreneurship and start-ups in Baltic Sea Region? How does the entrepreneurial discovery process create value in Baltic Sea Region?

Sub-questions:

- How to boost entrepreneurship in different sectors, like maritime and logistics industry?

Background / Context

For Schumpeter (1883-1950), the entrepreneurship has a role of “creative destruction” – launching innovations that destroy old industries, but bringing in new industries and approaches. Although entrepreneurship is typically associated with small start-ups, the entrepreneurial behavior can be seen in any organization, including non-profit sector. Already in 2000s usage of the term "entrepreneurship" expanded to include how and why some individuals (or teams) identify opportunities, evaluate them as viable, and then decide to exploit them.

Entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) is one of the key features of RIS3 strategy. In a broader sense, the concept “entrepreneurial” describes cooperation between different stakeholders (entrepreneurs/ companies, higher education institutions, researchers, development companies, citizens associations etc.). Companies have a critical role in e.g. scanning the operating environment, existing knowledge and know-how, and comparing them to market potential and current competitive situation. Acknowledging the importance of companies in RIS3 it is imperative to find out new ways to increase entrepreneurship and start-ups in BSR. The entrepreneurial knowledge involves more than knowledge of science and technology: it includes knowledge of market growth potential and innovation needs.

In terms of economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurial potential – SMEs have been established as the key actors in regional development. At the same time, they are highly dependent on their regional environment and need help in accessing necessary outside resources, and innovation support services to cope with the new forms of competition in the global economy. SMEs are representative of their region and possess deep knowledge about regional opportunities, problems and processes. It is essential to support their participation in the knowledge exchange, and more active interaction with other regional stakeholders. Governments are usually expected to facilitate SME participation, which is increasingly enabled by ICT and new ways of interaction for stakeholders.

One of the major obstacles in stakeholder interaction is overcoming the “cultural” gap, for e.g. between academic institutions and firms, understanding and establishing sufficient trust to each other for more straightforward collaboration. The shared agenda of smart specialisation in regional and macro-regional development can serve as a collaboration platform for building up trust and experimenting with acquiring ideas, knowledge and capabilities through systematic stakeholder interaction.

The role of cities and regions is perceived as creating favourable conditions for supporting the EDP, so that regional innovation priorities can emerge through EDP, without being forced on the region.

Objectives

- Mapping building blocks for entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial organizations
- Boosting the entrepreneurial activities in Baltic Sea regions, including existing initiatives
- Building the vision, strategy and concrete actions for Baltic Sea Region entrepreneurial activities
- Identifying and creating the favorable conditions, processes and tools for cities and regions to support the entrepreneurial discovery process (interaction with start-ups and SMEs with other stakeholders -citizens, academic institutions, municipalities)