




**EU-DRIVERS**  
European Drivers for a  
Regional Innovation Platform

**Nadine Burquel, ESMU Secretary-General**

**Moving the unmovable**  
*Transforming higher education institutions*

**OECD Conference “Higher Education in Cities and Regions  
For Stronger, Cleaner and Fairer Region”**

**Seville, 10-11 February 2011**




Lifelong Learning Programme




**EU-DRIVERS**  
European Drivers for a  
Regional Innovation Platform

## **EU and national policy contexts**

- EU policy context
  - The Lisbon Strategy - A strong Knowledge Society and a competitive economy
  - The EU2020 Strategy – Three priorities
    - Smart growth – Economy based on knowledge and innovation
    - Sustainable growth – Efficient, greener and competitive economy
    - Inclusive growth – Economy based on high employment and social cohesion
- National levels - Calls for universities to contribute to societal needs




Lifelong Learning Programme



## EU-DRIVERS – The Project background

- **Starting point**
  - Lack of strong entrepreneurial culture in universities and supporting structures
  - Mismatch university provision (education/research) and needs of society (labour needs, societal challenges)
- **Focus**
  - Working with deans of faculties, with and across disciplines
- **Drivers for regional innovation**
- **Stakeholders at three levels** (universities, business and local governments)
- **EU-Drivers 10 partners** (10 associations and universities)



## EU-DRIVERS – The Concept

- **Regional innovation platform** – awareness-raising and networking (community of practice)
- **Leadership & Institutional capacity building programme**
  - Within universities, enterprises, regional authorities
  - Jointly between these stakeholders within the region
  - Critical success factors
    - Commitment, Collaboration, Communication
    - Multi-level interactions
    - Sense of place and rooted identity – “The brand”
    - Sharing (creating a learning organisation)
    - Innovation across the spectrum



## Seven Pilot Regional Innovation Partnership Projects

Universities (deans), private companies and regional governments

- 'Showcase' projects, involving the 'triple helix'
- Basis for development of good practice guides
- A sustainable leadership development programme for relevant stakeholders at the regional level



## Seven Pilot Regional Innovation Partnership Projects (2)

- Malaga Knowledge Innovation Community (KIC) (ES)
- Turku Bioimaging (TBI) (FI)
- BrainsBusiness ICT North Denmark (DK)
- INOVIZ Platform (TK)
- Novell Environmental Whey at Thelassy (GR)
- C-Mine (BE)
- Leadership Academy (UK)

## Lessons learnt – Obstacles

- Internal University Barriers
  - Governance, management, complexity, disciplinary difference
- Business
  - Short/different timescales of operation than universities
  - Conflicts between academic values and business drivers
  - Poor articulation of the demand side (e.g. From SMEs)

## Lessons learnt – Obstacles (2)

- Local Authority Barriers
  - A client, source of funds or a partner?
  - Multiple roles – service provider, regulator, funder, place integrator
- ▶ Working through intermediaries (development agencies, innovations centres)
  - Less “threatening” than a local government
  - How do these work with university internal intermediaries (e.g. Technology transfer offices)?

## Common challenges

- Learning from other regions
  - The benefits of diverse regions and projects- Can a focused project be an exemplar for more generic programmes?
  - Overall development of the city region (Malaga)
  - Subject specific initiatives (Turku, Izmir)
  - Problem and solution focus (Thessaly)
  - The regeneration focus or skills (Genk, Surrey)
- How to measure success
- Win-win situation for all partners

## Common challenges (3)

- Emerging themes from EU-Drivers workshops
  - Network Building
  - Entrepreneurship needed
  - Need for positive and collaborative leadership
  - Marketing of partnerships
  - Showing universities as being able to provide solutions to problems
  - Economic difficulties for funding right now
  - Pillars of successful innovation :
    - A common vision
    - An agreed agenda
    - A common understanding (if not a common language)

### Common challenges (4)

- General and project specific barriers to establish financially sustainable partnerships
- Clarity of objectives (including time horizon and scale of the project)
- Diversity of firms, institutions, regions (including different 'language' and culture, internal allocation principles)
- Diversity of partnerships (strategic, established or new, trust, in danger,..)
- Framework conditions
  - Access to free funding and revolving funds
  - Regulations (public), national vs regional

### Further Information

- [www.eu-drivers.eu](http://www.eu-drivers.eu)
- Academic Leader: John Goddard, University of Newcastle
- Senior Expert: Ursula Kelly
- Project Director: Nadine Burquel, Secretary-General ESMU, [nadine.burquel@esmu.be](mailto:nadine.burquel@esmu.be)
- Project Officer: Inês Proença, ESMU Project Officer, [projects@esmu.be](mailto:projects@esmu.be)
- Tel.: + 32 2 513 86 22  
ESMU aisbl  
Rue Montoyer 31  
B-1000 Brussels