

Enhancing regional RTD and Innovation development

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The integration and co-ordination between private and public RTD investment, and appropriate support through RTD policy and infrastructure is essential in enabling the economic progress of the European Research Area, but also in the establishment of the social and other economic structures in European regions.

In the project "Regional Economic RTD Policy through Foresight & Mentoring" (REFORM) the regions of Zurich (Switzerland), West Midlands (England), Galilee (Israel), Lower Silesia (Poland), Bucharest (Romania) and South-East Ireland have come together to collectively develop foresight and mentoring mechanisms to influence RTD policy, investment and activity.

More information about the project and their partners is available on www.re4m.eu.

Objectives of REFORM

The REFORM project aims to develop, support and implement a variety of measures and activities which will enable regions to understand their particular needs to enable increased RTD activity and investment in the future. Through mechanisms such as Foresight – with Scenario Workshops in all partner regions – and a new Mentoring Programme, the project will develop a number of individual Action Plans for partners, which will provide the infrastructure for new RTD policy and its implementation, and thus increase the economic growth of the EU as a whole.

Target Group

The REFORM project has a clear opportunity to contribute directly to policy development at regional, national and international level. Activities include the bringing together of regional policy and financial influencers, with SMEs and other organisations directly involved in the development and delivery of RTD (both strategic and delivery).

For the partner regions in this project, the impact will be direct and marked. Each region will be able to work closely with their own actors, but also interact directly with those in other partner regions, understanding the issues, options, and impact of frameworks, identifying the demands and opportunities within their region and, through the continuous mentoring element of the project, be supported through the development, implementation and, potentially, evaluation of RTD policies.

An essential aspect of this project is the support and mentoring of those regions who are in the developmental stage in terms of establishing the means to support the appropriate levels of investment in RTD. By providing hands on support and advice, it is hoped that this project will help increase the pace of the transfer of good practice. Through this support, developing regions will be placed in a position where they are able to learn at a much faster rate, with the mentor regions able to provide information relating to the potential issues and factors affecting RTD policy development, implementation and investment.

Cycle of Events

Actions, including study visits, workshops and conferences will support the transfer of good practice and knowledge to those regions in the developmental stages of increasing RTD investment, increasing the rate of transfer through hands on support, promotion and participation. The regional study tours will take representatives from both the public and private sector, who have been involved in the development and delivery of successful initiatives, to visit partner regions. The tours will involve a substantial amount of information exchange in a fairly short period of time. They will include highly intensive knowledge transfer about successful actions, policy development and areas of increased RTD activity and investment. The project will host formal conferences dealing with the broad theme of RTD and innovation policy, especially focussing on RTD policy implementation, technology transfer, industry clusters and Regional Innovation Strategies.