

RAPIDE NEWS

Issue 7

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RAPIDE

Spring is in the air RAPIDE is on the Fast-Track

"RAPIDE is one of the European pioneer networks which were capable of demonstrating in practice that learning regions exist.

We, in the Commission, have been able to confirm the high degree of commitment, intelligence and goodwill developed through the RAPIDE process.

In this sense, RAPIDE is an example on how institutions can learn from each other by cooperating across countries and beyond cultural barriers throughout the Union.

Moreover, RAPIDE has concentrated on critically important themes for European regional policy, including innovation finance, entrepreneurship, pre-commercial procurement, partnership for innovation, cluster, etc, which are also key for the future in terms of the new EU 2020 vision.

In short, RAPIDE has demonstrated that regional policy learning through intelligent dialogue across regions in the Union can be translated into practical action inside operational programmes.

In this sense, it offers both the Commission and the Cohesion policy managing authorities' food for thought on the future shape of European regional policy."



Mikel Landabaso
DG REGIO – Head of Unit
thematic coordination,
innovation



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional
Development Fund



RAPIDE in Action

DG REGIO and the RAPIDE network combined forces to organise the RAPIDE in Action conference on 24th March 2010. Its purpose was to ensure the engagement of all regional and European stakeholders in the implementation of the RAPIDE Action Plans.

The Commission's direct involvement in RAPIDE gave partners a unique opportunity to develop a true dialogue between the European Commission and the respective regional players.

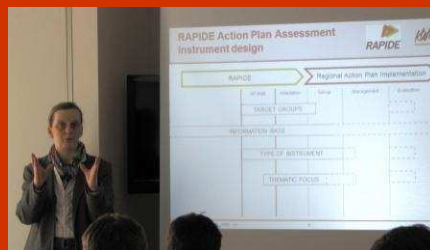
The RAPIDE partners had the possibility of presenting the regional interests and regional RAPIDE actions to the EC. Practically all the partner's **Managing Authority** had the opportunity to meet with the respective **geographical unit** desk officers to discuss their Action Plan, setting out concrete actions in their region for commercialising innovation more quickly

Rudolf Niessler, DG REGIO/ Director Policy Coordination and **Reinhard Büscher**, DG ENTR – Head of Unit – Support for Innovation, emphasised the EC expectations and experiences with Fast Track networks.

The conference was also used to learn more from the commission about the interlinkages of public procurement and innovation promotion on regional level. **Keith Sequeira**, DG ENTR – Innovation Policy Development Unit gave a presentation on how much potential lies in the innovative use of public procurement.

In the afternoon of the same day the RAPIDE partners concentrated on the final peer review of their Action Plans. The basis for these final peer discussions was the preceding external assessment of almost all drafted plans.

The review was done in four separated thematic groups to the subjects of; Innovation Vouchers, Innovation Partnerships, Innovative Procurement and Effective Funding. An overall assessment of the consulting firm **KWI Consultants Ltd.** showed that all Action Plans are feasible and partly include very innovative and new ideas.



The final Action Plans will be presented at the Regions for Economic Change conference on 20th and 21st May 2010.



RAPIDE disseminates its ideas

The RAPIDE project developed within the last 20 months from a loose partnership to an effective peer group supporting each other's efforts to bring innovation to the market. These experiences and new ideas are worth to be shared on a regional and international level.

Below you find the next dissemination events and tools.

1. Regions for Economic Change Conference 20 – 21 May 2010.

Commissioner Hahn will discuss with RAPIDE representatives the action plans. Press conference included.

2. RAPIDE final conference 15 – 16 June 2010

The final conference will host the official signing ceremony to promote the RAPIDE activities.

3. Open Days 2010 4 – 7 October 2010

Despite the ending of the RAPIDE project in August 2010 it will be presented at the Open Days to show the sustainability of the RAPIDE actions.

4. RAPIDE promotion tools

Six RAPIDE MMS for each RAPIDE theme. They can be used to bring regional and European opinion leaders to RAPIDE.

One RAPIDE movie to promote the entire network together.

RAPIDE goes into Action

The RAPIDE partners are more active than expected. The 12 RAPIDE regions intend to implement 17 Actions from six different thematic fields.

1. Innovation Voucher

> RAPIDE implements a serious of new designed Innovation Voucher schemes to bring Innovators to the Market

2. Pre-Commercial Procurement

> RAPIDE gives regional innovation a boost by new ways of public procurement. Public procurement has the power to bring innovation to the market.

3. Business Angel

> RAPIDE supports Business Angels. Private networks bring Innovators to the market

4. Assessment tool for innovative start-ups

> RAPIDE goes a new way. Banks normally assess the history of companies, but start-ups do not have a history. Thus the new tool evaluates the future performance of a company

5. Innovation Partnerships

> Regional Innovation only works if all stakeholders work together. RAPIDE brings them together.

6. Digital Story Telling to bring innovators to finance

> The first access to public funding is always via written application forms. WHY? RAPIDE accepts new ways of communication and shows new methodologies of online pitching to bring innovation faster to funding!

First examples will be presented at the RAPIDE final conference on 15th to 16th June 2010.

RAPIDE and beyond

New project ideas of RAPIDE

After a Fast Track project stands the implementation of the discussed and designed actions. But what to do with the new, premature ideas which arise out of such an innovative network

RAPIDE's partnership has currently three innovative ideas with high potential to bring innovation faster to the market. However their implementation is still premature and therefore they need their own follow up in a future project.

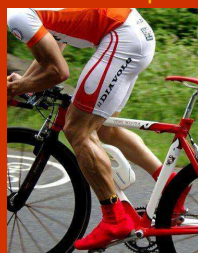
- > Mainstreaming Pre-Commercial procurement
- > Digital storytelling to bring innovators to finance
- > Intelligent Specialization of Regions

All these subjects will be discussed at the RAPIDE final conference on 15th to 16th June 2010.

For more information on RAPIDE Actions or this Newsletter please contact

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RAPIDE Actions



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