



## SMARTER 2020 Third Conference on Smart Specialisation and Territorial Development: Connecting grand societal challenges with local goals in place-based innovation policy

Co-organised by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and RSA Europe

CaixaForum, Seville, Spain, 9th-11th December 2020

Increasingly, innovation policies are framed around grand societal challenges and sustainable transformation. More traditional objectives of productivity enhancement, job creation and international competitiveness are accompanied by the search for solutions to environmental and social needs in line with the European Green Deal priority and the accomplishments of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, to be achieved through the mobilisation of science, technology and innovation. This transformation is also gaining momentum in local and regional policy making, raising a number of issues in relation to the capacity of place-based industrial innovation policies to meet these goals. What are the implications of this shift for place-based policy and instruments? What does the alignment of solutions to social and environmental problems with more traditional growth objectives imply? How can potential contradictions between different goals and dimensions (social, environmental and economic) can be resolved? Can we expect territorial policies to deliver on broad societal challenges, by providing solutions to those needs that are locally relevant?

At the time of writing, a terrible pandemic is sweeping the planet causing dramatic health, social and economic consequences. We need coordinated policy initiatives at international, national and regional level to mitigate the COVID-19 economic crisis and promote a swift recovery. How can place-based policies play a role in tackling the severe socio-economic impacts of COVID-19? How can they help territories discover new opportunities for more sustainable and inclusive economies?

This conference is a forum for debating those issues.

Smart Specialisation provides a unique entry point for such debate. Smart Specialisation is a place-based EU policy promoting economic transformation by designing targeted investment in research and innovation. Building on a growing interest in this policy, the main principles and mechanisms of Smart Specialisation are travelling fast, attracting attention outside the European Union. At the same time, the Smart Specialisation approach is evolving, incorporating evidence on what worked and what did not, embracing a larger policy scope than just research and innovation and enriching its policy toolbox.

The conference will provide a comprehensive picture of the Smart Specialisation policy experience, including an evaluation of its results and an account of its recent developments both conceptually and empirically. Particular attention will be given to the intervention logic, implementation challenges and ways to address them, as well as methodologies for monitoring and evaluation.

The conference also offers an opportunity to discuss and compare different territorial development approaches, exploring how they engage with the European Commission's priorities for 2019-2024 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We welcome contributions on the local dimension of grand societal challenges.

The conference offers to a limited number of participants from academia, territorial authorities and institutions a unique opportunity to discuss and define the scope and main avenues for future research and policy making, and to address the challenges confronting policy makers and practitioners. In addition to academic submissions, papers by practitioners or co-authored by academics and practitioners are welcome.

Themes of interest to the conference include:

- Smart Specialisation: evidence, lessons, challenges and opportunities
- Smart Specialisation on the move: the evolution of a policy approach
- Science, technology and innovation policy for Sustainable Development Goals
- Smart Specialisation and Cohesion Policy: Aligning Policy for 'left behind' places
- The COVID-19 crisis: socio-economic impacts and the role of territorial policies for recovery
- Innovation policy for sustainable and inclusive growth



- Innovation policy and Inclusive growth
- Tools and methodologies for territorial analyses in support of development policies
- Evaluation of territorial innovation policies
- Global value chains, innovation and local development
- Urban challenges and strategies for innovation-led development
- Models of regional and multi-level governance and stakeholder involvement
- The actors of territorial development: research organisations, businesses, public actors, civil society groups
- Regional Governance, capacities and resources for place-based policy

### **Submission of complete special session proposals**

We invite proposals for complete special sessions on specific themes/areas within the scope of the conference. Proposals including the list of 3-4 speakers with their affiliations and their abstracts should be submitted by the prospective organizer(s) who will commit to promoting the paper submission process of their special session and chair or co-chair the session during the conference. Proposals will be considered by the Conference Programming Committee against the criteria of originality, interest and subject balance. The papers submitted to special sessions will be also individually reviewed by the Conference Committee.

Prospective organizers of special sessions should submit proposals indicating:

- Title of the session.
- Name(s) of organizer(s).
- Affiliation of the organizer(s).
- Email of main contact person.
- Description of the Special Session (in the form of a 500 word outline highlighting the motivation and relevance to smart specialisation).
- Potential participants (name, affiliation, title of the contributions and abstracts when available).
- Long abstracts of each proposed paper (500 words, text only, no pictures, graphs or tables, structured in the following sections: Motivation/objectives; Main research question(s); Methodology; Results; Implications and discussion; Resources/references).

Please email your proposals to Lesa Reynolds: [lesa.reynolds@regionalstudies.org](mailto:lesa.reynolds@regionalstudies.org)

### **General Submission of papers**

Please submit proposals for papers in the form of a long abstract (500 words, text only, no pictures, graphs or tables) structured in the following sections:

- Motivation/objectives;
- Main research question(s);
- Methodology;
- Results;
- Implications and discussion;
- Resources/references.

Paper proposals will be reviewed and selected by the Conference Programming Committee against the criteria of originality, interest and subject balance.

### **Important details**

Paper proposals should be sent through the Regional Studies Association online portal at <https://members.regionalstudies.org/lounge/Meetings/Meeting?ID=271> by Friday **17th July 2020**. You will be notified of acceptance by **Wednesday 30th September 2020**.

Participant numbers for this “free to attend” conference are limited, travel & accommodation must be covered by the participant). Only one author per selected abstract will be invited to attend this conference. Please do not book your travel and accommodation until you have received an invitation. Only invited participants will be able to attend the conference.

### **RSA Europe Organiser:**

Please contact Lesa Reynolds at [lesa.reynolds@regionalstudies.org](mailto:lesa.reynolds@regionalstudies.org) for further details and questions regarding abstract submission.

For conference updates, please visit: <https://rsaeeurope.org/event/2020-smarter-conference/>