

Supporting the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development

- Regional coordinators' meeting
3-5 Oct 2005 Karlstad

Education Management and
Infrastructure Division

Background

- Higher education identified as a major engine for economic, cultural and social development
- Initiatives across OECD countries to mobilise higher education in support of regional development
 - the rise of the Third Role
- Growing recognition that the Third Role must be integrated with learning and research functions
- Need to systematise this experience e.g. in order to guide future investment decisions

Aims of the Project

- Compare and evaluate efficiency & effectiveness of regional initiatives and partnerships
- Provide an opportunity for dialogue between HEIs and regional stakeholders (regional authorities, business etc)
- Assist with identification of role and responsibilities of stakeholders
- Provide policy advice at national level on the impact of special funding initiatives at a regional and institutional level
- Lay the foundations of an int'l network for further exchange of ideas and good practice

Building a Learning Region

- The focus is on collaborative working btw HEIs and their regional partners
- The programme is designed to be a learning and capacity building project

Participants (Oct 2005)

- 12 regions across 10 countries including one cross border region
 - Denmark (Jutland-Funen)
 - Finland (Jyväskylä)
 - United Kingdom (the North East)
 - Spain (two regions: Valencia and the Canary Islands)
 - Sweden (Värmland)
 - The Netherlands (Twente)
 - Norway (Mid-Norwegian Region)
 - Australia (Sunshine Coast)
 - Korea (Busan)
 - Mexico (Nuevo León)
 - Denmark-Sweden (The øresund region)

Methodology and Schedule

- Comprehensive literature review (Jan to Dec 2005)
- Self-evaluation reports based on stakeholder process by regional consortia using OECD guidelines (during 2005)
- Site visits by international review teams (Oct 2005 to Apr 2006) followed by regional reports
- Final synthesis report (early 2007)

Dissemination

- International seminar on the role of higher education institutions in regional development, Karlstad University, Sweden, 3-5 Oct 2005
- Dissemination conference for the project partners Oct/Nov 2006
- Launch Event: early 2007
- Country related dissemination seminars

Milestones (Oct 05)

- 12 regions committed to the review project: 9 teams fixed in terms of team members and review dates
- The first self-evaluation report available and disseminated to other regions (North East UK): review in Oct
- Change in the IMHE project management carried out in Aug
- The first international conference associated with the project (Karlstad)
- Links with the OECD territorial review and OECD tertiary education review
- > OECD involvement is a wake up call to the regional stakeholders to try to understand each other: buy in of stakeholders

Review Process: Challenges 1

- Geographical boundaries: Cross-border matters
- Boundaries btw HEIs: HEIs and other tiers of education, the long established HEIs and the new ones
- The role of formal and informal associations managing inter-institutional cooperation
- Multiple agendas with HEIs and their regional stakeholders
- Evaluation fatigue and parallel reviews with similar focus
- Regional development a contested terrain in many countries, e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Interior (FIN)

Review Process: Challenges 2

- Leadership issues: Changes of key people and difficulties to motivate them (Partnerships involve busy, mobile boundary spanners); Their authority to speak on behalf of their organisations
- The overlaps btw teaching research and the third strand (template with overlaps): Need to highlight the interconnections between learning and research
- The project as a change agent: Need to identify the situation before, during and after the project

Key challenge

- Diverse set of regions, countries and HEI systems
- Generalisations made out of commonalities in the partnership process

Self-evaluation Process: practical issues

- SER is a coherent, self-contained analytical document, NOT a descriptive list of responses to the individual topics (supporting material is welcome: hard data on spin-offs etc)
- SER provides the OECD with a single, integrated response, STILL different views of stakeholders should be clearly articulated
- Review process is mobilising partners. Identify the initial stage, the impact of the review process and the next steps to be taken -> Document the process
- SWOT: highlight the visions and the challenges
- NOTE. *SER will be published on the OECD website: final version no later than three weeks after the peer review visit*

Peer Review: Practicalities

- Peer review process is run by the OECD Team Leader.
- Local coordinators need to make sure that the regional partners' contribution during the interviews is managed in order to avoid chaotic meetings and "lecturing" to the review team.
- Large meetings with many participators may hinder free communication. It is advisable to minimise the number of big mass meetings.
- Possible media contacts during the peer review should be managed so that the review process will not be compromised: It is advisable to highlight the OECD project, the review process etc, not the results of the review.

Expectations from the project (by regional coordinators)

- To enhance regional engagement
- To improve relationship, interaction and cooperation btw HEIs and stakeholders (to diversify HEI funding through collaboration)
- To facilitate learning process, partnership building and the organisation of region building (to set up a permanent forum)
- To benchmark with other regions; to identify best practices and new opportunities; to identify what works, what not; to look for specific benchmarking partners for future cooperation
- To clarify and/or redefine the roles and responsibilities of HEIs and/or stakeholders incl. intermediaries in the region building
- To test the feasibility of the current outreach activities and their success
- To increase the awareness of HEIs' activities and contribution
- To legitimize public spending on HE; to increase the accountability of HEIs
- To influence national/regional policy; to disseminate the results to the rest of the country
- To facilitate the creation of stronger culture in evaluation

Thank you

For more info see

www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment

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