

The logo for AURIL (Association for University Research and Industry Links) features the word "auril" in a white, lowercase, cursive font. A small orange circle is positioned above the letter "i".

auril

Association for University
Research and Industry Links

AURIL 2016 Annual Conference

6 - 7 October, Edinburgh

Understanding Smart Specialisation and Research Impact in Local Economies

Entrepreneurial discovery of comparative advantage



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Formal Definition

- Seeks to ensure that proposed actions are based upon **sound evidence** that properly reflects the **comparative advantages** of the physical and human assets of **particular places in the global economy**.
- It emphasises the need to ensure that activities are fully integrated in the local economy and its supply and value chains.
- **It helps to build connections of ideas, finance and trade with similar activities elsewhere.**
- It promotes also the use of enabling technologies that can transfer and add value between related sectors.

**FINAL REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Encouraging a British
Invention Revolution: Sir
Andrew Witty's Review of
Universities and Growth**

OCTOBER 2013


Short definition

Smart Specialisation:

- Is inclusive
- Is evidence-based
- Informs and prioritises innovation investments
- Recognises the importance of place



How does it work?

- Target investment to a region's strongest sector or industry
 - Encourage and promote local innovation and economic growth
 - Promote collaboration between regions to fill skills gaps
 - Increase revenues and competitiveness of regions
- 
- A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide consists of several grey circles of varying sizes, arranged in a pattern that suggests movement or a cluster.

Important Concepts

•Embeddedness

- hard & soft assets,
- local supply chains,
- institutional frameworks

Connectedness

- globally aware value chains (trade, knowledge, finance, intelligence)

Relatedness

- building resilience through transfer of technologies across related sectors

Entrepreneurial

- process of discovery the triple / quadruple helix (state, academia, business and civil society)

Smart Specialisation Hub

Vision:

To be the authoritative source of expertise supporting Smart Specialisation in England

Mission:

To promote evidence based innovation investment and strategy

The Hub - Structure and Stakeholders

Delivery partners



Funders

The logo for Innovate UK features the text "Innovate UK" in a purple, sans-serif font.

Innovate UK



Structure and Stakeholders of the Hub

- Stakeholders:
 - Local decision makers (e.g. LEPs, Local Authorities, ESIF sub-committees, Devolution Regions, Universities and their mission groups, Business rep bodies)
 - National government (informing policy and investments)
- Impact:
 - Local growth – clusters/businesses

Smart Specialisation Hub - History

2013 Witty Review “Encouraging a British Invention Revolution”

- ‘understand local comparative advantage and sector strengths’

2014 NCUB Consultation Paper “Towards a Smart Specialisation Advisory Hub”

- Source of expert advice
- Observatory to provide evidence
- An enabling facility promoting collaboration

2015 (BIS) England Smart Specialisation Strategy approved by European Commission

2015 BIS, Innovate UK and HEFCE agree to support Advisory Hub

2016 DCLG (ERDF) agree to fund Advisory Hub

Why is this important?

- Smart Specialisation is a means of ensuring regions know where their strengths lie, builds evidence to inform decisions and seeks collaboration not competition
- Business benefits from more informed innovation investments
- Regions need to demonstrate compliance with Smart Specialisation as a requirement for ESIF innovation funding
- ESIF has been an important source of innovation funds locally
- However the methodology is not dependent on access to ESIF – prioritisation, collaboration, information vital in devising any investment strategy

The Smart Specialisation Hub's Objectives

- Inform better investment decisions based on trusted expertise and insight of comparative data sources
- Operate an Observatory of local innovation for translating evidence into intelligence for local decision making
- Mobilise collaborators across geographical boundaries and sectors
- Promote awareness and use of Smart Specialisation

Aligning Research Impact in Local Economies

- Smart Specialisation – built on alignment of research specialisms with local innovation assets; but what can happen when these do not easily align?
- What does Smart Specialisation prescribe?
- University as critical colleague and at heart of bottom-up discovery process as ‘neutral’ arbiter
- Cross-border collaborations, regional limitations and examples of regional clusters
- Remit and sense of place

Example: How does the Hub support local actors?

- Act as a 'critical friend' to local decision makers
- Operate as a catalyst, bringing relevant experience and expertise together
- Run workshops to help define comparative advantages
- Deliver an evidence framework for modelling local innovation strengths
- Help triangulate data sources (local, national and expert opinion)
- Support bids which fit with Smart Specialisation (ERDF)
- Share best practice and build case studies around Smart Specialisation concepts and methodologies

A Brave New World – What Now?

- June 23rd and the future of ESIF
- Where now for funding streams? The short term, synergies, and a possible national future...
- Smart Specialisation in a post-referendum world – what does it mean?
- How does the Hub fit in? What can we do to make sense of the landscape?
How can we help our stakeholders?
- UKR&I?

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