

Triple Helix Actors, Governance and the Region (THARG)

CALL for MEMBERS

If you would like to join this Thematic Research Group in its collaboration activities, please e-mail a request to both Irina Pavlova, iapav@mail.ru and mlaura.fornaci@triplehelixassociation.org

We invite all THA members and other interested scholars and practitioners – to join this new Thematic research group on *TH Actors, Governance and the Region*. Our group aims to accelerate in research, publications and training of triple helix actors, enabling them to develop enhanced multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms for value co-creation and regional development.

The mission of this professional group is to become a leading resource for knowledge and advice for evidence-driven policy-making decisions at regional level and for their practical implementation; for the engagement of universities and other stakeholders in regional social and economic development; for the mobilisation of clusters, science parks and other regional concentrations of capabilities in economic development projects; and for the establishment of new governance models for sustainable triple helix interactions.

Agenda and Vision

We are witnessing at present an institutional transformation of the triple helix actors due to numerous economic and societal challenges. Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth can be achieved through innovations at global, national, regional and local levels with a greater focus on the regional dimension. According to the European Guide for Connecting Universities to Regional Growth:

- Regions are seen as *«important sites for innovation because of the opportunities they provide for interaction between businesses, public authorities and civil societies...»*
- *«Universities and other higher education institutions have a key role to play in knowledge creation and its translation into innovative products and public and private services, a process that can engage the creative arts and social sciences as well as scientists and technologists...»*
- *«Activities may vary across regions according to the priorities and rules implemented by the managing authorities... The key agenda for today is how to enable public authorities to promote the active engagement of universities and other higher education institutions in regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation, in cooperation with research centres, businesses and other partners in the civil society. It is also important for academic and economic*

partners to explore the benefits they can expect from working together for regional development».

To facilitate the knowledge and innovations creation and translation processes, a range of mechanisms are available including: advice and services to SMEs, placement of graduates in businesses, incubating spin-offs in science and technology parks, facilitating networks in business clusters and meeting the skills needs of the local labour market.

The rise of entrepreneurial universities implies the necessity of regional governments of use the potential of such institutions to the fullest extent. The university third mission, which is fully articulated and integrated into official policy agenda, enhances a more responsible university role to meet current societal challenges. Despite the increasing role of entrepreneurial universities (Etzkowitz, 2008), the third generation universities (Wissema, 2009) and the globalisation of knowledge production, their operational role is within the region. Regional innovation and socio-economic strategies have to incorporate in the official documents the responsibility of the triple helix actors to cooperate in the creation of public goods. At the same time, the authorities are tasked to design the policy framework, offer a platform for a dialogue within the consensus space (Etzkowitz & Ranga, 2010). At the VIII Triple Helix Conference, Madrid, a new set of cooperation mechanisms were proposed for the triple helix actors' engagement in the regional development with the focus on the universities as the locus of talents, knowledge, technologies, ideas.

Among the research questions that this group aims to address are:

- What kind of policy and mechanisms do we need to design in order to encourage and enable triple helix partners for an ongoing and dynamic value co-creation within regions and territories?
- What kind of activities and cooperation between triple helix actors through networks and clusters are the most beneficial for the regions?
- What are the projects, policies, programs and initiatives which (1) make financial resources and investments more accessible for the triple helix actors in the region; (2) encourage mobility of professionals and talents, attract and retain them in the region; (3) stimulate university-business cooperation and co-creation including both high-tech, knowledge-intensive, innovation and socially-oriented companies?
- How can the university evolution and transformation currently contribute to the regional smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?
- Which university roles and functions in regional innovation systems are the most efficient for triggering societal development?
- What are the university interactions mechanisms with other stakeholders/actors within the regional dimension to better serve the needs of the regions and territories? How to create, sustain and strengthen them?

- What kind of conditions are necessary for university and business participation in regional governance?
- What are the case-specific and region-specific university models which manifest contribution to regional sustainable development? What are the patterns of interaction with other triple helix actors in these models?
- What kind of performance indicators of university engagement in regional development processes can we use in order to adequately monitor and assess this process?
- How to enhance the role of Academics – undertaking assessment and also paying attention to the policy development process?
- What and who are the role models, regional champions and cornerstones in the regions and territories?
- What are the factors which contribute to or hinder the successful triple helix actors co-creation within the regional dimension?
- How to improve the triple helix actors and specifically university engagement in economic and social activities in the regions and territories?
- How to generate synergies and coherence of action by the triple helix actors?
- What should be the programmes and training for the development of other triple helix actors in the region?
- How the government support can reinforce and made it possible for the region to become a world innovation hub, attracting and circulating talent and technology, internationally?

Who should join?

We welcome individuals and teams who would be willing to participate in such a project, who can share experiences and solidify knowledge in the academia and society. **Our work falls within the dual scope of academic-driven as well as practice-oriented scholarly work. The group, especially, welcomes professional, academics and practitioners** with the following knowledge, expertise and/or experience in:

- working with tertiary education establishments and organizations, all-level governments, business, clusters, regional associations, etc.;
- monitoring and assessing the university performance and its impact for regions and territories;
- designing and building regional collaboration channels and mechanisms to initiate, sustain and spur university regional engagement through interaction with businesses and clusters.

The group will enhance discussion, debate and cross-fertilization on the above listed topics by mean of special events, workshops and webinars; and will foster theoretical developments and practical achievements by mean of research and implementation projects.

References and Publications on the topic:

Etzkowitz, H. (2008). *The triple helix: university-industry-government innovation in action*. Routledge.

Etzkowitz, H., & Ranga, M. (2010, October). A Triple Helix System for knowledge-based regional development: From “Spheres” to “Spaces”. In *VIII Triple Helix Conference, Madrid, October*.

European Union (2011), Connecting Universities to Regional Growth: A Practical Guide. URL:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/universities2011/universities2011_en.pdf

Wissema, J. G. (2009). *Towards the third generation university: Managing the university in transition*. Edward Elgar Publishing.