



Title of the session:

Evaluating Smart Specialisation: early evidence on policy implementation and economic transformation

Co-organisers:

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Almost five years have now passed since *Smart Specialisation Strategies* (RIS3) officially entered European policy. This approach to territorial development through the promotion of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth represents a unique opportunity in contemporary policy for territorial development. For the first time, national and regional authorities across an area of more than five hundred million inhabitants are crafting and implementing their innovation policy according to a common set of principles and methodologies.

Despite the conspicuous debate on such policy experience, both among researchers and practitioners, and the great deal of expectations smart specialisation has generated in EU territories and beyond, the evidence available on the actual implementation of RIS3 and its impact has been quite limited until very recently. This special session contributes to close this gap by presenting selected contributions dealing with early evaluations of the smart specialisation policy based on original policy implementation data.

The session will on the one side provide conceptual frameworks according to which the advancement and impact smart specialisation can be measured; on the other side it will apply those frameworks to original data and derive robust empirical conclusions. In particular, the session will cover three complementary areas of research: (i) the actual developments of RIS3 in terms of policy implementations and their coherence with the conceptual framework of smart specialisation, (ii) the consistency of the policy implementation choices with the characteristics and assets of each territory, and (iii) the evaluation of the impacts of the policy in terms of structural transformations triggered.