DIALOGUE DAYS
Policy Brief 2.0

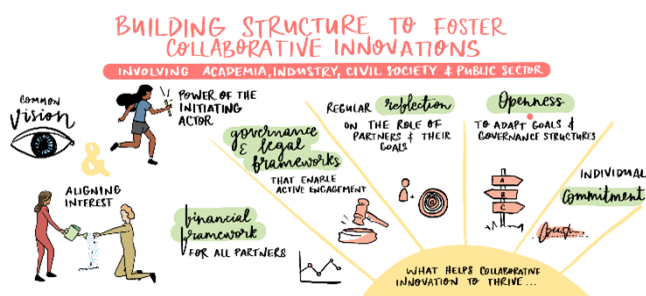Reconfiguring Research and Innovation Constellations

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DIALOGUE DAYS

Policy Brief 2.0

In an inclusive online workshop, researchers, innovation policy makers and practitioners co-created this policy brief. The recommendations for policy on EU and national level are (1) Providing funds for collaborative innovation that support civil society actors with more flexible ways to contribute, (2) raising awareness and promoting good practice examples of Quadruple Helix Innovation and (3) offering policy instruments that support training and mutual understanding amongst the different actors.

Introduction

Quadruple Helix Innovation (QHI)[1] promotes cooperation of actors from (a) the public sector, (b) academia & research, (c) industry & business, as well as (d) civil society. There is today little knowledge about the drivers and barriers for these collaborative models in innovation practice. The RiConfigure[2] project thus empirically investigates cross-sector and QHI cases, across Europe and South America, and aims at experimenting with new research and innovation constellations in a Social Lab process[3].

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1   Carayannis, E. G., & Campbell, D. F. (2009). 'Mode 3'and'Quadruple Helix': toward a 21st century fractal innovation ecosystem. International journal of technology management, 46(3/4), 201-234.

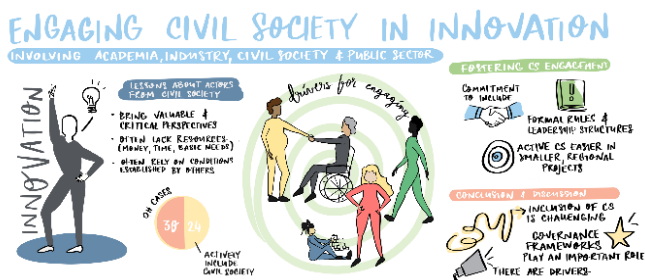2   http://riconfigure.eu/

3   Timmermans , J., Vincent Blok, Robert Braun, Renate Wesselink & Rasmus Øjvind Nielsen (2020): Social labs as an inclusive methodology to implement and study social change: the case of responsible research and innovation, Journal of Responsible Innovation (https://irihs.ihs.ac.at/id/eprint/5391/1/timmermans-blok-braun-et-al-2020-social-labs-responsible-research.pdf)

Background Information

This second policy brief is based on an online co-creation process, the Dialogue Days , held in early July 2020 on an online platform including more than 60 practitioners and policy makers to discuss issues of building appropriate collaborative structures, engaging civil society and QHI governance. The online event was designed taking into consideration responsible online research and innovation (RoRI) principles . Participants co-created the input for this policy brief using interactive online tools such as Slack, Miro and Zoom. In a final round table (see image) experts from all four helices linked QHI with the current COVID-19 crisis.

Recommendations for innovation policy at EU and national level

1. Providing funds for collaborative innovation that
   o include novel modes of resource allocation like lump sums or flexible frameworks, allowing adaption, failure and experimentation
   o foster civil society engagement and make it an evaluation framework for learning
   o support learning communities and infrastructure for collaborative innovation
2. Raising awareness and promoting good practice examples of
   o benefits and challenges of Quadruple Helix collaborations
   o democratic and transparent internal decision-making processes
   o training, collaboration methods and tools for reflection
3. Offering policy instruments
   o to change the dominance of business-oriented innovation (policy)
   o to acknowledge various civil society groups: from CSOs, NGOs to interest groups and less privileged publics
   o for training programs, science communication and support infrastructure for innovation collaborations

Dialogue Days - Findings

Participants discussed external factors that support collaborative innovation. Key aspects included (1) the need for innovation funding that privileges collaborations with civil society and translates this into its evaluation criteria; (2) policies that offer possibilities to experiment with less pressure for 'tangible output' and that enable participants to enter collaborations by reducing organizational or legal barriers; (3) the provision of social infrastructure that support collaborative innovation, e.g. by strengthening regional ties or by launching cross-sector events that foster (informal) ties among diverse stakeholders; and (4) increasing awareness of and capability in problem solving and creative skills by social science, citizens and other actors.
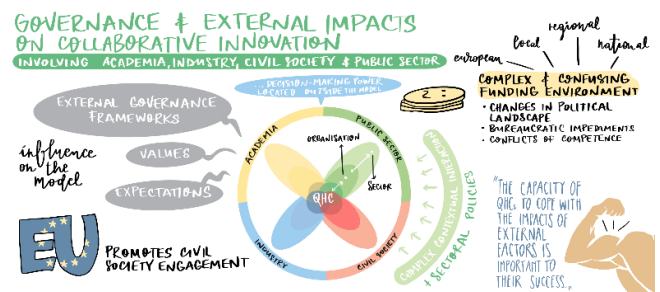
Discussing internal structures to support engagement of all partners in a collaboration, participants pointed to (1) formalized and democratic decision-making processes, as decision making usually privileges majorities and powerful actors, that do not pay attention to minority or marginalised perspectives; (2) open reflection on the common values and trust building among the participants; and (3) added (societal) value as part of the internal reflection for aligning shared interests. Enhanced, two-way communication is critical for success in all of these areas, ensuring that all participants are able to engage on an equal basis

In respect to civil society engagement, participants pointed to different (power) resources and perceptions of citizens and other actors, naming examples such as different 'language', budgets or availability times.

Furthermore, communication networks exist mainly among actors from industry, academia and public sector and thus often need to be established in QHI.

In order to better support civil society engagement, dedicated funding was named together with the idea to include citizens in funding decisions. There are also physical (e.g., poor transport links) or virtual (e.g., poor broadband connectivity) access barriers for citizen participation.

In discussing policy instruments that foster the engagement of diverse actors, participants argued that more transparency is to be advanced in QH constellations and policy making should follow co-creating and citizen engagement principles. Participants noted the lack of policy instruments to help establish a more level playing field between actors with varying degrees of power in such collaborations. They also pointed to existing examples from national funding instruments that fund and assist such collaborations and suggested regional level policy instruments as being the most effective in fostering QH constellations. Inclusive community involvement has thus the potential to reduce social exclusion at different levels. Respective policy and funding instruments need to entail the involvement of diverse actors across all aspects of its envisioned research and innovation actions.

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Research Reconfiguring and Innovation Constellations

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