

# OMEN PROJECT

optimal practices, development policies  
and predictive models for regions in an enlarged EU

For innovation stakeholders, who wish to enhance regional innovation policy, OMEN is an EU project that will compare and carry out benchmarking activities in six European regions. Unlike other purely investigative initiatives, OMEN will produce validated, pragmatic policy recommendations and address key regional policy makers in the European Union.

## OMEN CONTACT DETAILS

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## THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF OMEN ARE TO

- Understand the factors that hinder the processes of regional innovation;
- Bring these problems to the attention of the regional authorities that manage and implement innovation strategy;
- Bring together public officers and the most important innovators in order to discuss specific issues of interest;
- Transform suggestions, comments and identified problems into concrete proposals for the development of regional policies favouring innovation.

## BENCHMARKING

Innovation policy benchmarking at the national level has been carried out in many countries; however, a regional approach to benchmarking is characterised by the peculiar features deriving from the regional dimension.

OMEN addresses this issue in order to devise a **new benchmarking tool** via the following activities:

- Catalogue of traditional and "avant-garde" indicators;
- Survey of data availability;
- Identification of a Regional Information System;
- Definition of a set of indicators for a Regional Innovation benchmarking tool to allow transregional comparisons.

Regional innovation benchmarking will take the following two aspects into consideration:

- Adequate innovation indicators must be developed and applied to reflect the determinants of regional innovation potential and activities;
- Constraints in terms of data availability and data collection costs have to be taken into account.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- **Analysis of existing policies** - a thorough investigation of the supply side of the innovation from the point of view of the policy makers.
- **Analysis of the needs of innovation** - a thorough investigation of the demand side of innovation from the point of view of the users.
- **Matching between existing policies and needs** - analysis of the existing problems coming from the lack of communication and misunderstanding between the previously identified groups. A White Paper will be produced.
- **A White paper on innovation policies** - will provide guidelines on how to better plan, use and understand innovation strategies.

## REGIONAL ROUND TABLES

One of the key activities of OMEN is the organisation of Regional Round Tables (RRTs) to guarantee the exchange and expression of ideas and needs amongst key regional innovation actors. In particular, the RRTs are devised to bring together **Innovation Policy drivers** (mainly regional development agencies), **makers** (regional government authorities) and **users** (enterprises, industrial associations, universities, research centres, scientific parks, etc.) to discuss the current status of regional innovation, understand how to improve innovation policy, and analyse existing benchmarking indicators.

## OMEN IS CURRENTLY AT THE END OF ITS FIRST 10 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY

• **The first round of Regional Round Tables** were held in each participating region. **Over 200 representatives from nearly 150 stakeholders of regional innovation processes** and policies participated in the first round of RRTs, which were successfully held between October and November 2005.

- Saxony-Anhalt (Germany) - October 14 and November 9, 2005
- Podkarpackie (Poland) - October 28, 2005
- Lazio (Italy) - November 4, 2005
- Cyprus - November 7, 2005
- Andalusia (Spain) - November 15, 2005
- Prague region (Czech Republic) - November 24, 2005

- **Out of nearly 200 participating stakeholders 80 questionnaires were compiled, which analysed 48 Benchmarking Indicators and 18 innovation impact areas** to provide partners with a perceived hierarchy of the most important statistical indicators as well as the first concrete suggestions for new benchmarking parameters.
- **The data collected** by the project partners during the first round of Regional Round Tables, **has been analysed and processed** by the consortium's scientific experts obtaining an initial direction for the benchmarking analysis.
- Thanks to the collaboration between the OMEN consortium and ISTAT (the Statistical National Institute), the **Impact Assessment Methodology** and the new **Benchmarking Indicators are now being developed and will be presented in September 2006 at the next OMEN dissemination event.**
- Initial dissemination activities on data collection and analysis methodology were held at the **Exaudio - to Listen to Achieve** event organized by the EU representation in Italy, Regione Lazio and Filas in January 2006. The conference lasted two days with over 100 participants and 20 speakers.