



UNICREDS

University Collaboration in Regional Development Spaces

Summary of key objectives

- Transform regions with underperforming economies through the creation of a new model for economic development
- Share experience to identify good practices in collaboration between universities, SMEs and larger business and the public sector
- Develop these good practices into a transferable model for regional economic development
- Integrate the model into regional, national and European policy

UNICREDS partners

Cornwall, UK

Cornwall Council: www.cornwall.gov.uk
Combined Universities in Cornwall:
www.cuc.ac.uk

Hajdú Bihar, Hungary

University of Debrecen Centre for Environmental Management and Policy:
www.envm.unideb.hu

Hajdú Bihar Regional Authority:
www.hbmo.hu

North Central Region, Bulgaria

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works: www.mrrb.government.bg
Sofia University: www.uni-sofia.bg

Northern Sweden

Council of Skellefteå: www.skelleftea.se
Regional Council of Västerbotten:
www.regionvasterbotten.se
Akademi Norr Association of Municipalities: www.akademinorr.se

Scotland, UK

University of Highlands & Islands
Millennium Institute: www.uhi.ac.uk

Seinäjoki, Finland

City of Seinäjoki: www.seinajoki.fi
University Consortium of Seinäjoki:
www.ucs.fi
Seinäjoki Technology Centre Ltd:
www.stoy.fi/en

South Bohemia, Czech Republic

University of South Bohemia: www.jcu.cz
South Bohemian Regional Authority:
www.kraj-jihocesky.cz



Nurturing an innovative business culture and reaching isolated groups

Tuesday 17 January 2012

South Bohemian Regional Offices,
České Budějovice, Czech Republic



The University of South Bohemia and the South Bohemian Region are delighted to host the next UNICREDS conference.

The conference, organised by the University of the Highlands and Islands, will bring together partners from seven regions of Europe to discuss the theme of nurturing an innovative business culture and reaching isolated groups.

Keynote speakers include Frank Rennie, Professor of Sustainable Development and Head of Research and Post-Graduate Development at Lews Castle College, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. There will also be an opportunity to see and discuss the work carried out on this theme by each of the project's partner regions in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Sweden and the UK.

Register online at www.unicreds.eu.

CUC Brussels reception

Representatives of the Combined Universities in Cornwall and the University of the Highlands and Islands recently visited Brussels to host an event at the EU Open Days. Entitled "Universities and Smart Specialisation: Driving Growth in Lagging Regions", the CUC Brussels Reception on 11 October was attended by around 50 guests including MEPS, European Commission officials, education and regional stakeholders and presented the Cornish and Scottish experience of using Higher Education to drive the knowledge economy.

Oversubscribed and full to capacity, the evening reception included a contribution from former EU Commissioner Danuta Hübner MEP and a lively debate about how universities can contribute to regional growth and what other European regions can learn from Cornwall and Scotland's experience.

Representatives from the University of Exeter, Plymouth University, the European Centre for the Environment and Human



Chris Pomfret (Chair of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP), Dr Sue Brownlow (Director of CUC) and reception speakers Marion Dewar (Cabinet Member of EU Commissioner for Research and Innovation) and Mikel Landabaso (Head of Unit for Thematic coordination and innovation, DG Regional Policy)

Health and the CUC Partnership Office were joined by colleagues from the University of the Highlands and Islands in their visit to the Brussels Open Days to host the CUC Reception and while in Brussels took the opportunity to hold meetings to discuss and better understand how Higher Education institutions can make a contribution to future EU policy and programmes.

Early results from UNICREDS show that partnership working is vital to a successful regional economy

The results from our work on geographic and community 'fit' and partnership development were published in June. As the UNICREDS model begins to take shape it is clear that the themes chosen by the project are closely interlinked and will bear updating as the project progresses. Early results show that the ways that universities operate are changing in response to the needs of students and to regional economic drivers. Innovative partnerships between multiple universities and further education institutions, local government and industry

are building a new type of university, based on a common drive to build a competitive knowledge economy.

These universities offer flexible, accessible higher education for students, delivered through a blend of class-based and distance learning, supported by local learning centres where students can work alongside their peers – overcoming many of the geographical and social boundaries to education.

Partnership with regional government can help to reduce rural depopulation and regenerate local businesses through the provision of skilled graduates to support essential regional requirements in areas like healthcare and engineering. Courses developed in partnership with local businesses help to ensure employable graduates with the skills that businesses need and relevant continuing professional development for existing staff.



The economic benefits from the vital connection between university research and innovative businesses can be maximised through smart specialisation into research areas that build on the region's existing assets, supported by strategic policy decisions by local government. These are just a taster of some of the work covered so far. The complete reports and good practices identified during Work Packages 1 and 2 are available for download on the project website at www.unicreds.eu/documents.

Open Space working at the Baltic Sea Region Setting Sails conference



Professor Juha Alarinta at the Baltic Sea Region Setting Sails conference

The Baltic Sea Region Setting Sails for co-creative multi-level governance took place in Turku, Finland in October 2011. Nearly 200 guests met to discuss topical themes of multilevel governance and EU 2020 Strategy, using the open space working method. UNICREDS hosted one pre-arranged session with another Finnish project, under

the combined name "Distinctive mark of success – Triple Helix". Representatives of the University Consortium of Seinäjoki and Frami Ltd planned the programme and material for the session.

The aim was to produce action plans on selected topics. Among the conclusions drawn were that co-creative multi-level governance needs social capital: trust between people, for organizations and between organizations, informal interactions, and a feeling of belonging/sense of togetherness. We need head, heart and feet for actual cooperation. A new culture for cooperation is important. It includes adequate, but simple and flexible structures and also leadership.

One practical experience was encouraging. In open session conferences people may wander between different sessions. Visual roll-ups help to stop participants so that they can hear the key message, even if they arrive at different times.

UHI good practice at the Committee of the Regions Forum

One of the good practices identified by the University of the Highlands and Islands as part of the UNICREDS project has been selected for presentation at the EU's Committee of the Regions Forum on Research and Innovation in December 2011.

The good practice highlights UHI's work in bringing economic benefit to remote communities through specialist teaching and research hubs in specific remote geographical areas, for example marine renewables are focused around UHI's Orkney and Caithness partners, fisheries is concentrated in UHI in Shetland and environmental sciences in Oban. UHI has a decentralised model for teaching, research and knowledge transfer which allows remote rural communities to access innovative opportunities and enables them to remain economically viable.

Trivia: where are the innovators?

Patent applications to the European Patent Office per million inhabitants in the UNICREDS partner regions. Data from 2007. Source: ec.europa.eu/eurostat




Region	Patent applications per million inhabitants
Severen tsentralen, Bulgaria	266
Észak-Alföld, Hungary	8,818
Jihozápad, Czech Republic	10,004
Highlands and Islands, Scotland	19,213
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, UK	39,431
Ovre Norrland, Sweden	142,384
Länsi-Suomi, Finland	194,022


UNICREDS

For more information: www.unicreds.eu

Contact the UNICREDS Project Office
e: info@unicreds.eu t: +44 1209 721 071

 Join us on LinkedIn

 **INTERREG IVC**
INNOVATION & ENVIRONMENT
REGIONS OF EUROPE SHARING SOLUTIONS



European Union
European Regional Development Fund