

# VET Excellence as a pillar for Smart Specialisation and regional development strategies

John Edwards

Joint Research Centre  
European Commission



# Territorial dimension of CoVEs

“Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) bring together a wide range of **local partners**, such as providers of vocational education and training, employers, research centres, development agencies, and employment services (among others), to develop “skills **ecosystems**” that contribute to **regional**, economic and social development, innovation, and **smart specialisation** strategies.”

European Commission Website

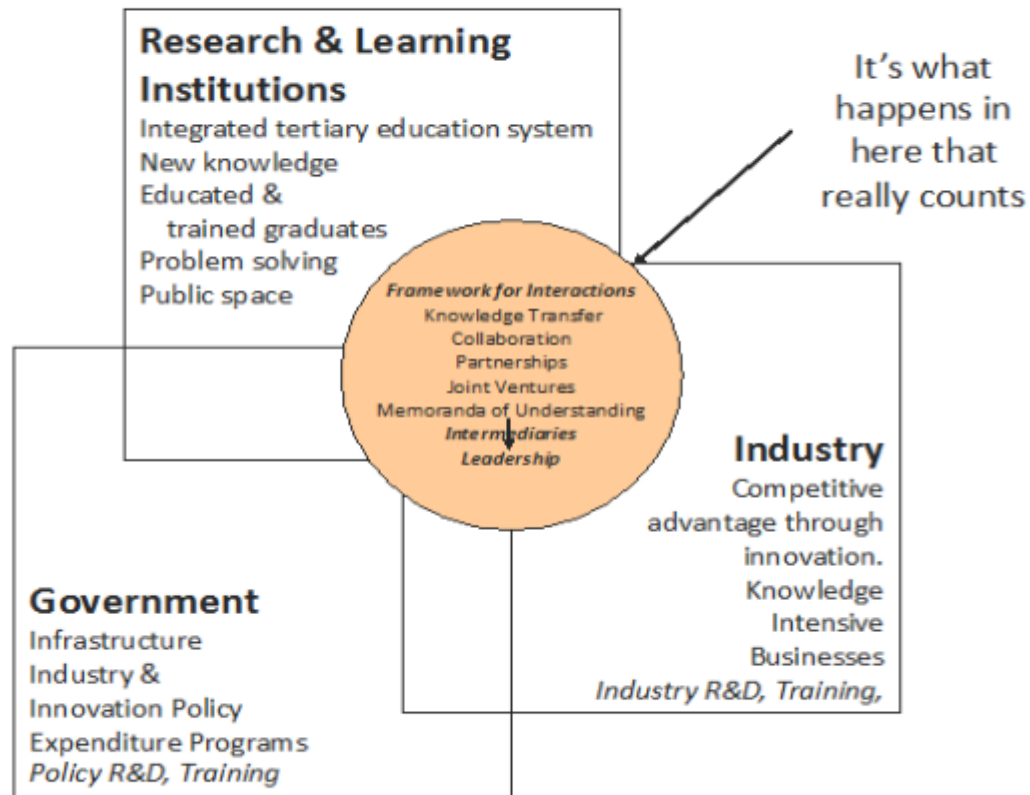
(Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion)

# Territorial dimension of CoVEs: FOUR THEMES

1. Regional Innovation (Eco)systems
2. Regional Transitions
3. Smart Specialisation
4. Localising the Sustainable Development Goals

# Regional Innovation (Eco-) systems

## Contemporary dynamics of the Regional Innovation System



Source: Australia 2030: Prosperity through innovation



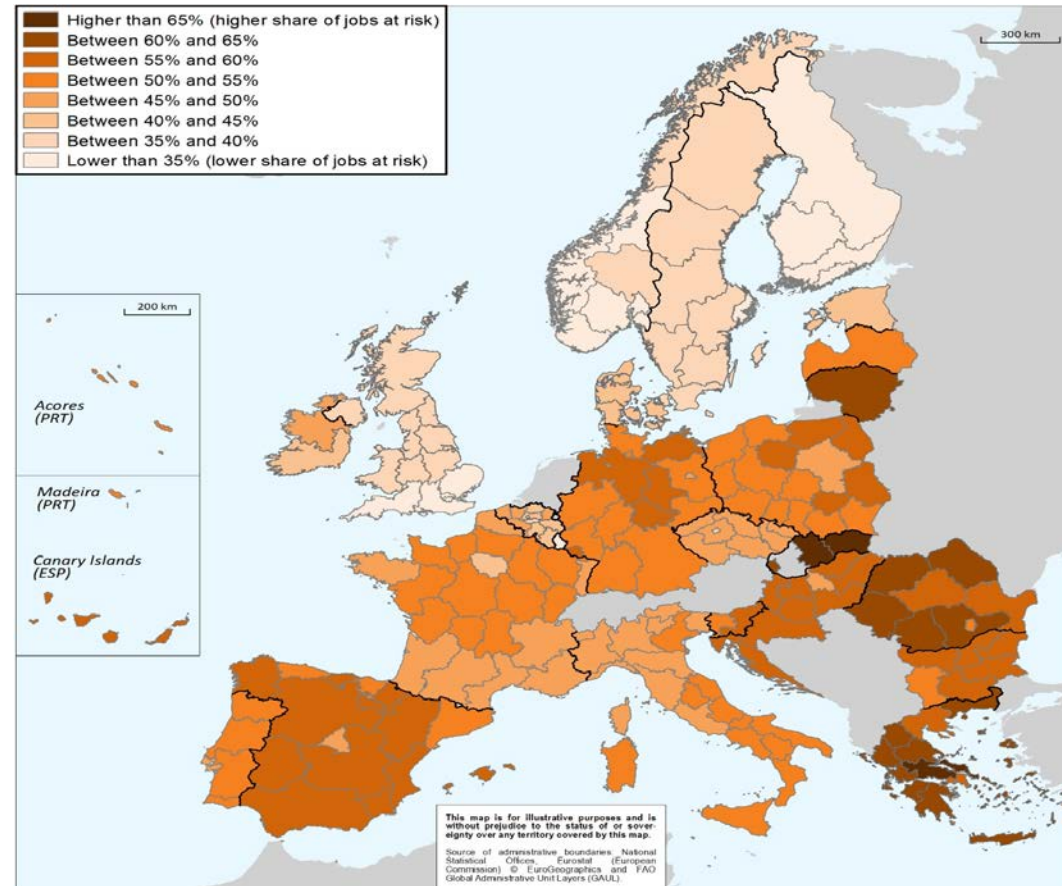
# Regional Transitions

Rapidly evolving technologies around digitalisation and automation, a shrinking labour force, and increased territorial disparities mean that regional labour markets in European and OECD regions will inevitably undergo major transformations in the coming years and decades.

Based on their capacities and accumulated knowledge in existing industries, regions in industrial transition have a strong potential to capture the benefits of the future of work by pursuing innovation, new technological pathways and industrial renewal.

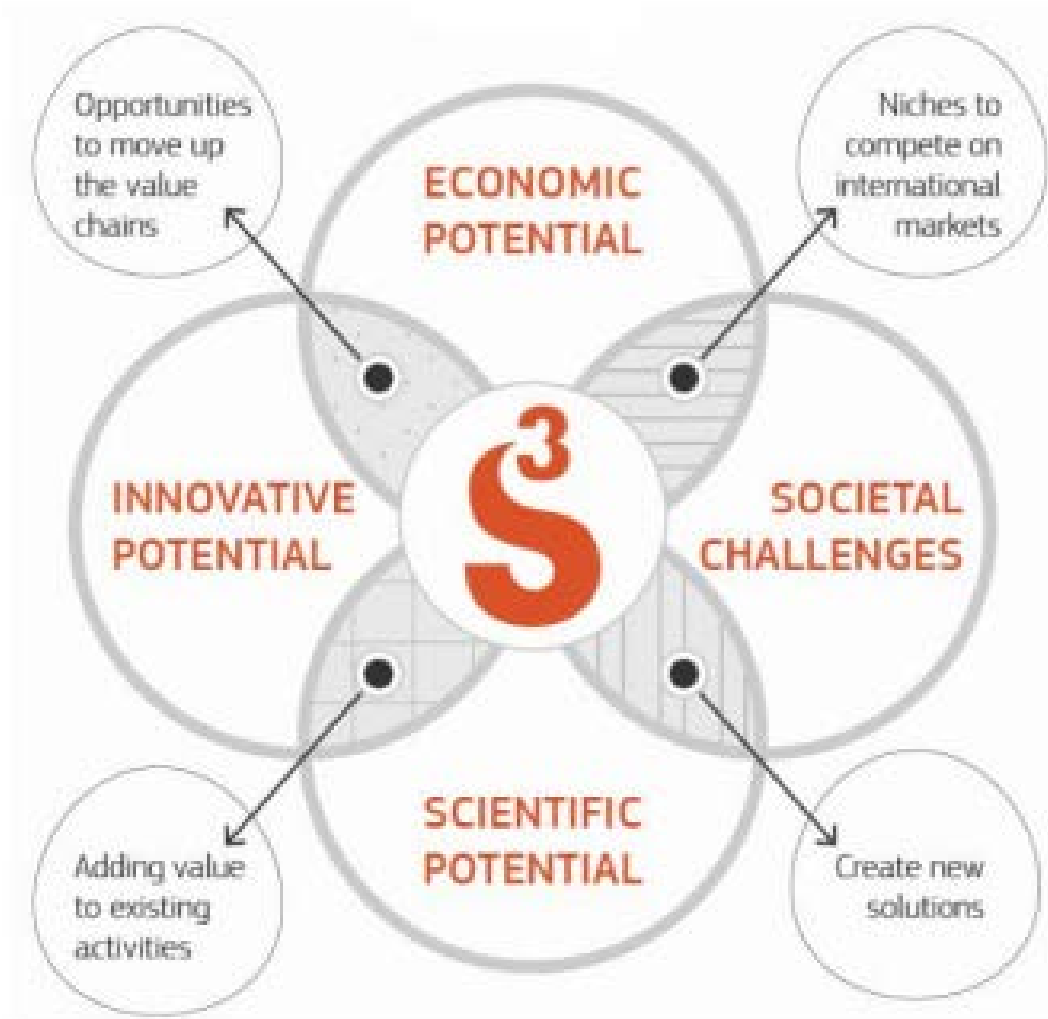
At the same time, the adoption and successful integration of new technologies and the development of new business models can be constrained by skills and investment barriers.

An integrated and locally tailored approach to policies promoting quality job creation, skills and participation is fundamental for regions in industrial transition if they are to make structural adjustments and achieve employment and productivity objectives.



Source: OECD (2019)

# Smart Specialisation



# Industrial Modernisation Platform: Thematic Partnerships



**Advanced manufacturing for  
energy applications**



**3D Printing**



**Innovative use of non-  
food biomass**



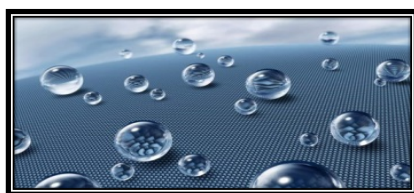
**Efficient & Sustainable  
Manufacturing**



**Nano-Enabled  
Products**



**Industry 4.0**



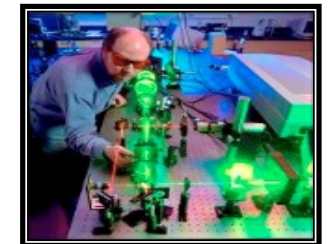
**Textile  
Innovation**



**Medical  
Technology**



**Sports  
Innovation**



**Photonics**

# Importance of different policy areas for the implementation of S3

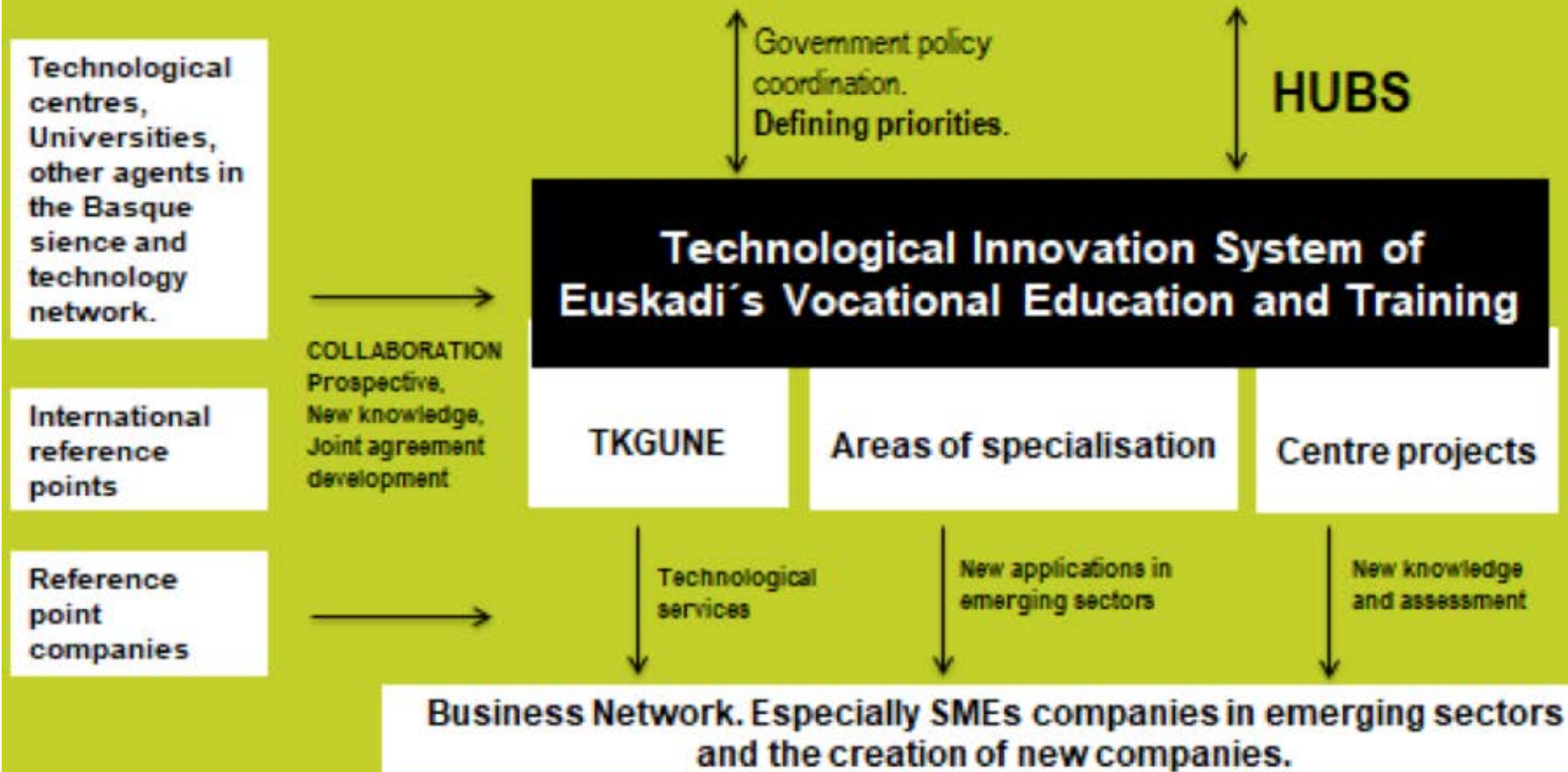
(% of respondents who gave a score of six or seven out of seven)

Policy area	All	More developed regions	Less developed regions	North West Europe	Southern Europe	Central & Eastern Europe
Higher Education	16.20	11.50	25.00	8.00	20.00	24.20
Vocational training	12.50	8.20	17.10	6.00	12.20	23.50
Research and science	42.80	37.70	47.20	41.20	36.00	55.90
Innovation in firms	66.70	65.60	69.40	64.70	66.00	70.60
Infrastructure investments	13.80	13.10	19.40	7.80	14.00	20.60
Social innovation	15.30	14.30	25.70	7.80	28.00	9.10

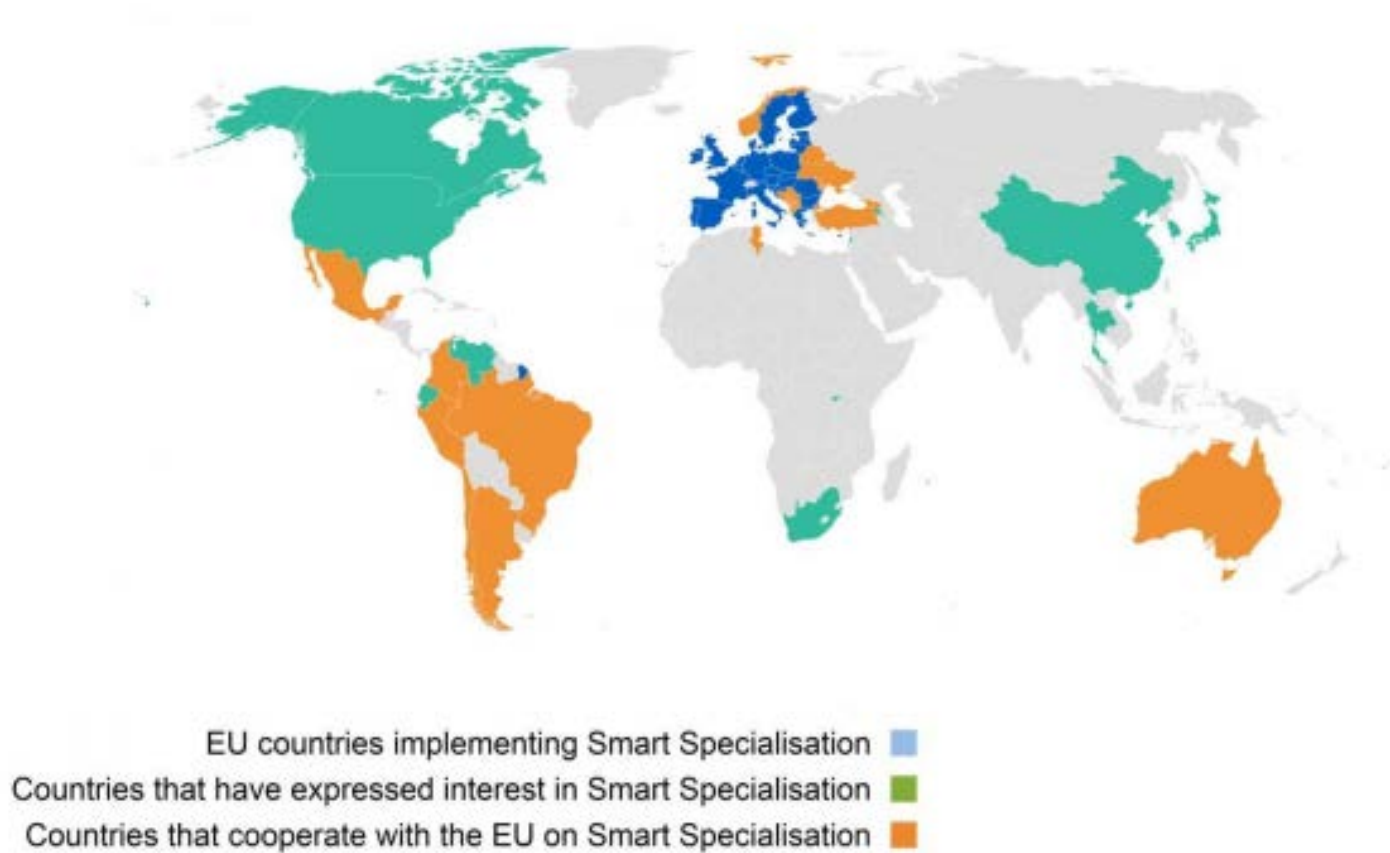
Source: Edwards et al (2017): Higher Education for Smart Specialisation: Towards Strategic Partnerships for Innovation, JRC Scientific Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union



## Smart Specialisation Strategy. Basque Government.



# Smart Specialisation around the world



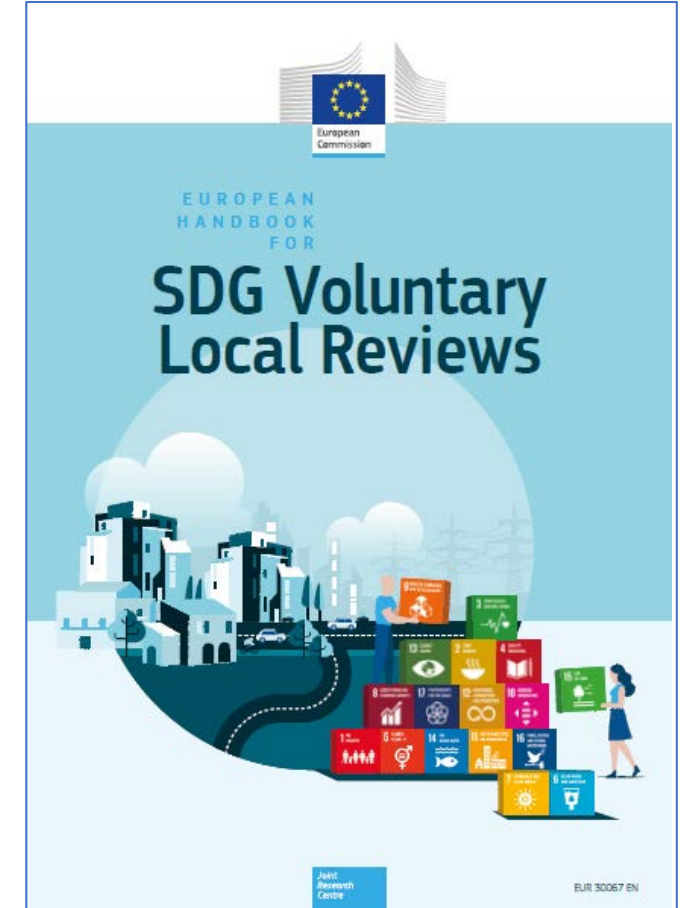
Source: Joint Research Centre, Smart Specialisation Platform

# Localising the sustainable development goals



Localization refers to the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving **global, national and subnational sustainable development goals and targets.**

*(UN Development Group 2014, 6–7)*





# Any questions?

You can find me at [John.Edwards@ec.europa.eu](mailto:John.Edwards@ec.europa.eu)

<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu>



[@s3platform](#)  
[@johnhuw](#)