

Markku Markkula & Hank Kune:

Orchestrating an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process

The Flow of Targeted Activities as Parallel Processes

In this article we review the entrepreneurial discovery process as an active driver of open innovation ecosystems, and specifically consider what is required for orchestrating the ecosystem as a set of emerging parallel processes. Our arguments are based on the newly published book *Orchestrating Regional Innovation Ecosystems: Espoo Innovation Garden*, as well as the ongoing work of Finland's Energizing Urban Ecosystems (EUE) research programme. Our focus is exploring how orchestration works in practice. Open Innovation 2.0, entrepreneurial discovery, and societal innovation are key processes in this work, and need to be orchestrated and supported in diverse ways.

Traditional management is often organised around meetings, planning sessions and workshops. However, when meetings, workshops and other events are organised without a support structure for follow-through, the capacity for the effective realisation of plans and decisions is limited. Orchestration is needed to take ideas, proposals and decisions much further.

We take the following statement from the EU Committee of the Region's (CoR) Smart Specialisation Strategies conference on 18 June 2014 as a starting point for our article:

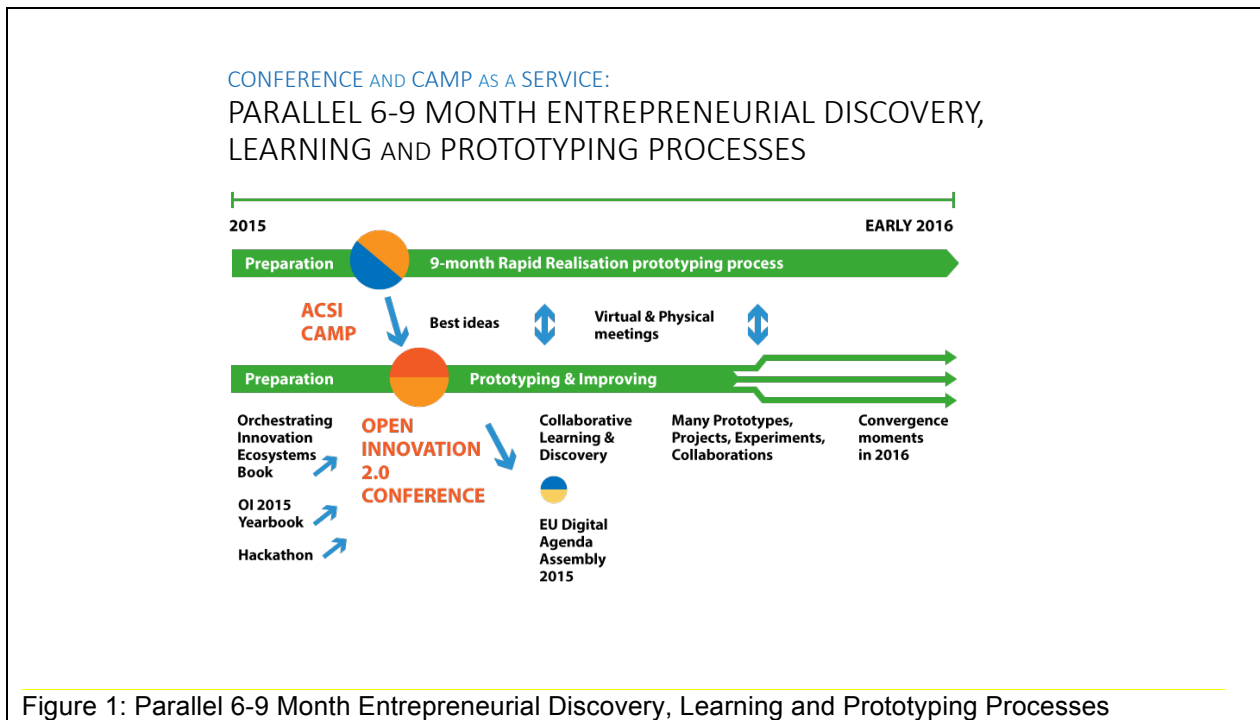
New ways of thinking are needed for dealing with these challenges: more ecosystem thinking, more creative thinking, more synthesis, more thinking about outcomes and impacts, more attention to pattern recognition and awareness of weak signals. More thinking about solutions and less focus on problems. We have to practice thinking together, synthesizing, and comprehending: collective and distributed thinking about societal change, real challenges, contributing relevant support, building renewal capital. [1]

This is in fact calling for a 'thinking renaissance' in Europe. Some important mind-set changes are needed, and new skill-sets must be acquired and mastered for this to become common practice. It is important to do this, but not easy; capacity building is required. In the spirit of Open Innovation 2.0 and entrepreneurial discovery, learning-by-doing will certainly be key. Skills and mentality can be learned in real-time, through coached practiced while working in renewal projects, workshops, innovation camps, and conferences.

Ecosystem thinking impacts how we think about and organise our renewal activities. Our premise is that interactive activities like workshops, innovation camps, and conferences are discovery learning processes – not simply events – and should be orchestrated as many parallel interactive processes extending well beyond the duration of the events themselves. In June 2015 two major activities will be organised in Espoo, Finland, together with the Energizing Urban Ecosystems (EUE) research programme, local government authorities and the European Commission: the 8th ACSI societal learning camp and the 3rd EU Open Innovation 2.0 Conference. Both are concrete examples of 'events' framed as entrepreneurial discovery processes, created in parallel and supported by an orchestrated follow-through. Both Camp and Conference are also part of a larger innovation process begun in 2013 and conceptualised as continuing through 2016 and 2017.

This article describes the larger context of these events-as-process, and the role entrepreneurial discovery, open innovation ecosystems, orchestration, prototyping and experimenting play in co-creative collaborative innovation. It emphasizes the close integration of Camp and Conference, the interdependence and synergetic working of the diverse concepts, and how open innovation and ecosystem thinking require going beyond 'events' to support the realisation of good ideas in practice. These are crucial concepts for achieving the mental changes Europe needs.

In this way, the two 2015 discovery processes will be capable of scaling well beyond the borders of Espoo, to provide inspiration and learning to other regions throughout the world involved in similar processes.



A Systemic Renewal Process Needs Integrated Instruments

Many Societal Challenges are clearly connected to financial recovery and good possibilities for employment, just as societal welfare depends to a large extent on economic development, jobs for people, and new opportunities for industry. The issues are often complex, and must be understood in a systemic way, and addressed in challenge innovation ecosystems. Unfortunately they are all too often still seen through the lens of limited responsibility as separate issues, problems, silos and entities. Policy as well tends to remain too long at the level of talk and good intentions. Europe and its actors need a systemic renewal process. There is a lot to do, and although a lot is already going on, excellent activities often miss the connection to complementary activities they could leverage for synergy, and greater societal benefit. Renewal capital can only be built by having a better understanding of the overall challenge, the processes involved, the diverse projects in progress and proposed, targeting joint actions based on that.

Part of the renewal process is the mentality needed to function effectively the spirit of enterprise and the mindset of entrepreneurial discovery need to be embraced by large portions of society; citizen and third sector engagement are essential for making new things happen. Nothing will happen without sufficient curiosity, creativity and courage. A start-up mentality, both in the economic sphere and for society as a whole, and voluntary activities are important ways to contribute to society, and together they are becoming crucial success factors.

Of course, all these joint actions and new enterprises need to be financed. There are diverse European instruments for this, but they too are often independent of each other, and not well connected for supporting the challenge innovation ecosystem. Some excellent sources of financial support stand out: industrial and other private investments are one source of financing, national, regional and local public actions are another, and a third one is EU level policy with its financing instruments. The focus of EU policy needs to encourage more bottom-up movements and concrete actions at the regional and local level, and in the last few years the Commission has launched new mega-level initiatives. These include:

- better and more targeted use of cohesion funding (around 350 billion euros in the 7-year programme period 2014-2020) with the help of regional innovation strategies based on Smart Specialisation
- renewing European level research and innovation policy framework through Horizon 2020 funding (around 80 billion euros in 2014-2020), and most recently

- the new Juncker-Katainen investment package (315 billion euros within the next few years).

These EU level financial instruments need to be used in an integrated way to better promote the mindset changes needed for increasing entrepreneurial discovery, the spirit of innovativeness, and Open Innovation 2.0 activity throughout society. There is a clear need to stimulate and support regions to practice the effective cross-fertilization of ideas. An integrated funding resource of this kind, supporting excellence in implementing regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3), cutting-edge research, innovative practical projects and other activities targeted to tackle societal challenges, would go a long way in helping to achieve shared European objectives and create renewal Europe needs.

Challenges of the Knowledge Economy

It is abundantly clear that working in this way in the coming years call us to action. Despite the abundance of good intentions, excellent ideas and (often) visionary proposals for renewing the innovative capacity of Europe, there have been too many discussions without conclusions, conferences without follow-through, plans without realisation, and realisation without achieving the intended impact. We have to move faster than ever before towards smarter regions, smarter solutions, and open processes, which enable citizens to take a more active role in addressing the social and societal challenges they face. There are only a few easy answers, off-the-rack interventions or readymade solutions, and that is why exploring, experimenting, prototyping, discovery and learning have become essential societal processes. Europe and the entire world are facing great challenges, and recent advances in digitalisation and globalisation have added both additional stress to our systems and powerful resources for dealing with it.

We need to marshal our resources: Europe has enormous expertise in its regions, intelligence and talent in its citizens, and diverse new and existing technologies, methodologies and instruments – promising potential *and* proven practice – for realising innovation in practice. There are many ways to engage stakeholders at all levels to participate in and actively contribute to these processes. We need new ways to orchestrate ecosystems so that they are invited to do so. We have to move faster and more effectively from thinking and talking to discovering, doing and learning.

This is the practice we call entrepreneurial discovery. It is the key mind-set defining the new knowledge economy.

There are many ways to create value and many ways for stakeholders and citizens to contribute, but there are also diverse challenges along the way. Horizon 2020 invites us to Integrate Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership, and Societal Challenges, but not how do this in practice? RIS3 asks us to identify what we do well and find appropriate partners to help us excel, but how to deal with the dynamics of power, status, and entrenched interests on the one hand, and blind spots, short-termism and multiple distractions of thinking-in-the-present on the other?

Demographics, digital literacy and generational values influence jobs and work, and software substitution may soon make more than 50% of current jobs obsolete. Knowledge workers especially will be under pressure, and perhaps even more jobs in knowledge sectors may disappear. Many of the major institutions we use to organise society are out-dated and obsolete. And current practice does little to alleviate the situation: we work with quick fixes that ignore real systemic shortcomings. New societal contracts are needed, new ways to thinking about societal inclusion and participation, new ways for framing employability, connectivity, intellectual property, openness and co-creation. We must accept and embrace disruptiveness in all its forms, including both disruptive technology and disruptive thinking.

In the face of such challenges, Open Innovation 2.0 and its basic tenets – the “20 snapshots” [2] – provide a framework for thinking and acting. The entrepreneurial discovery process is relevant here.

Entrepreneurial Discovery as a Process

Entrepreneurial discovery is one of the key concepts underpinning Europe’s Smart Specialisation policy. Described in different ways by different authors, entrepreneurial discovery is essentially a process by which entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial regions, and entrepreneurial citizens become aware of

new opportunities for business and social innovation and leverage resources to take advantage of them. It is both a mind-set and a skill-set; it entails a way of interacting with the world with certain skills for making sense of the world around you, seeing things which are there (and not there), interpreting the bigger context and understanding the consequences of action or inaction. It calls for the spirit of entrepreneurship: curiosity, creativity, and courage (for calculated risk-taking). It requires the capacity to act. It comes naturally to some people, other come to it in the course of their lives. Moreover, it can be coached, practised and learned.

Israel Kirzner coined the expression 'entrepreneurial discovery' in 1997 to describe "the process of systematically scanning for technological, political, and regulatory, social, and demographic changes to discover opportunities to produce new goods and services." Kirzner focused on entrepreneurship as a process of discovery, in which the entrepreneur looks for previously unnoticed profit opportunities, after which he/she initiates a process in which these newly discovered opportunities are acted on in the marketplace.

Of course, opportunity discovery for enhancing societal value is an entrepreneurial process as well. The Financial Times Lexicon tells us that "Entrepreneurship involves creating or discovering new ideas or opportunities for the purpose of creating value, whether economic, social, or even political – and forming a new organization to do so. [3]

Dominique Foray, one of the conceptual founding fathers of smart specialisation, describes entrepreneurial discovery as the "discovery and exploration of a new space of opportunities, which is likely to generate many innovations and the development of a new activity" [4]

It is a process at the core of renewing Europe's capacity for renewal. As the Committee of the Regions wrote in its 2013 Opinion on *Closing the Innovation Divide*:

As many phenomena of the digital society have already demonstrated, significant transformation takes place from the bottom up, and a pervasive mind-set of 'entrepreneurial discovery' is critical. The term 'entrepreneur' is inadequate here because it is often interpreted rather narrowly. Discovery also means more than innovation. It is rather a new activity — exploring, experimenting and learning what should be done in the relevant industry or subsystem in terms of research, development and innovation to improve its situation. Entrepreneurial discovery means experimentation, risk-taking, and also failing. It means individuals often working together with others in networks, assessing alternatives, setting goals and creating innovations in an open-minded way. This development also requires that citizens, communities and businesses be given the opportunity to have their say, as traditionally they have often felt that they do not have a voice. [5]

We recognise the importance of these definitions, distinctions and statements; at the same time we understand the dilemmas of putting them into practice. The processes are difficult, the obstacles diverse, and while the calls to action inspire enthusiasm in some people, they activate fear of change and anxiety about the unknown in others. Too many initiatives, left to themselves, bog down and often do not get beyond their good intentions. Good processes are required, with adequate support where needed. The people and organisations are part of ecosystems, and open innovation ecosystems work at their best when their core processes are understood, respected and orchestrated.

Actualizing the Dublin Declaration

The Dublin Declaration was an output of the first Open Innovation 2.0 Conference, held in May 2013 in Dublin. During this international conference, which brought together more than 350 decision makers, leading innovation experts and entrepreneurial practitioners from around the world, participants co-created a document about using Open Innovation 2.0 to help achieve a sustainable economy and society, and pave the way for future innovation policies. Conference participants ratified this declaration at the end of the second day.

Mission: Develop widespread innovation literacy in Europe.

Vision: Open Innovation 2.0 – The next new Official Language of the European Union.

The intention is to implement this by the following actions:

- Action No 1: [Develop a new business model for the European Union](#)
- Action No 2: [Design for a new end state](#)
- Action No 3: [Create an EU Innovation Strategy](#)
- Action No 4: [Move from European Research Area to European Innovation Ecosystem](#)
- Action No 5: [Create a European Innovation System and Capability](#)
- Action No 6: [Quadruple Helix Innovation](#)
- Action No 7: [Focus on Innovation – Adoption Matters](#)
- Action No 8: [Create incentives to encourage Openness to Innovation and Experimentation](#)
- Action No 9: [Stimulate High Expectation Entrepreneurship](#)
- Action No 10: [Drive Intersectional Innovation](#)
- Action No 11: [Promote Successful Innovators and entrepreneurs as Hero's](#) [6]

The 2014 OI2 conference enriched the discussion of these actions points with powerful examples of OI2 solutions in practice, and new approaches to innovation adoption based on open business models.

The realisation of action points like these on a European-wide scale is no easy matter. Obstacles arise at every step, and each action point has its own unique set of issues that must be dealt with. Despite some good examples, a concerted effort and orchestrated approach are needed. Isolated examples and good intentions are not enough. As the Foreword to the European Commission High Level Group's 2013 report on *Innovation Policy Management* states,

Innovation is a paradoxical process, which requires a leap into the unknown and at the same time complex management processes and efforts for rigorous planning. How can we support innovative companies, both large and small, across all business sectors in Europe? How can we innovate our own governance structures? How can we create a culture of innovation and a permanent ecology of innovation? These are the challenges and questions that Europe urgently needs to address. [7]

This requires an attitude where action, experimentation, discovery learning, accepting the uncertain and willingness to embrace change are essential. The High Level Group's final report, *Inspiring and Completing European Innovation Ecosystems* (2014), strongly emphasises this. The report outlines ideas and recommendations for moving towards the actualisation of an inspiring innovation ecosystem. Diverse actions are required:

In addition to removing all European and national, even regional, legalistic obstacles to innovation and modernizing governance methods and tools for an open innovation approach, the completion of the European innovation ecosystems demands evidence-based policy making and transparency in order to encourage public acceptance and support. This approach finds support in the Dublin Declaration on Innovation (2013). It highlighted how modern innovation and technology can help turn research into profits and tackle unemployment in Europe. The Declaration calls for stimulating collaboration between citizens, businesses, universities and governments and for moving from the ERA towards European innovation ecosystems. [8]

The Dublin Declaration is clearly of value, but evidence and examples are essential to move the process forward. That is why the 2015 OI2 Conference will be orchestrated with the explicit intention of taking the Declaration action points further. Specific steps that are needed to implement the Declaration across Europe will be discussed in the light of the recommendations of the High Level Group's final report, *Inspiring and Completing European Innovation Ecosystems*. Conference participants will have an opportunity to propose concrete activities to translate each of the action points into practice in their own real-world environments, and develop plans to work together on realising these proposals. And an orchestrated process will be put in place to support their activities in the six months after the Conference.

We need a clear action plan – and an action process – to carry this out. The Dublin Declaration and the High Level Group reports provide the contours of what to do. Based on insights in orchestrating innovation ecosystems in Espoo and the Helsinki Region, the Conference will provide the Action Process to move the many parallel project proposals forward.

The Importance of Orchestration

As the authors wrote in their 2013 Yearbook article, “Orchestration is not the same as management. In an innovation ecosystem it is not possible to *manage* many aspects of the innovation process. Orchestration is needed; this relates to both:

1. The capacity to create conditions where the diverse parties can work together with the right balance of inner and outer focus, and thus reinforcing both their own work and benefiting the ecosystem as a whole; and
2. The provision of supporting service infrastructure to help sustain effective operation within the system.

One needs to know how to organize the right methods, tools and facilitation processes for helping projects and partners achieve their objectives. The methods may range from tools and technologies for creative-problem-solving, user-centred co-creation, building synergies and breaking silos, to finding ways to deal with resistance to change and create breakthroughs in stuck situations. In addition, a systemic learning infrastructure is needed to ensure effective learning, and to facilitate entrepreneurial learning – the rapid application of lessons learned within the ecosystem so that projects and players can systematically benefit from each other’s experience and expertise. Processes for benchmarking (accessing and applying relevant and inspiring lessons and good practice from diverse sources around the world) and bench-learning (a collaborative, symmetric learning process based on peer-to-peer exchange) are also essential. ... In practice, this refers to diverse skill-sets, mentality issues, methodologies and tools, which need to be actively applied to orchestrate joint processes in the ecosystem. The processes, and especially those needed for building mutual understanding and trust, must be facilitated.” [9]

We must bear in mind that the ecosystem is a commons, and in the commons certain rules prevail. These are often unseen processes, unspoken conventions and customs. A healthy ecosystem needs diversity, and for diversity to thrive it must be recognised and treated as a resource. Ecosystem means interdependence: of the diverse actors, with their different aims, ambitions, purposes and needs. The commons needs requisite variety, and the capacity to leverage diversity as an opportunity. When this happens, the commons remains healthy. When it does not, the danger is that the ecosystem becomes unbalanced; new initiatives do not thrive, existing ones will sub-optimize, and individual profit trumps mutual gain. The commons knows their tragedies, and ecosystems do as well. Especially in the new, 21st century commons we must work hard to avoid tragedies of the new commons, and the factors of ecosystem failure.

A key danger of the new commons is that people do not know that they are actually part of an ecosystem. They do not understand that their actions and interventions affect all others in the system, just as the actions of others affect them. This lack of awareness is a blind spot that is every bit as dangerous to the healthy functioning of ecosystems as complacency, egocentricity, or unbridled desire to maximize profit.

For orchestrating open networks, learning is a key competence, and co-learning in networks and ecosystems is essential for maintaining healthy systems. But we should not take this too lightly: the capacity to learn as an individual, project team or a single organization is difficult enough; learning in a network or ecosystem is the real challenge, and diverse orchestration methods to create the right mindset, conditions and capabilities - from 'reflective practitioner' to U-process to creative dialogue can be used to support learning between organizations. Learning in networks and 'networked learning' are relevant concepts here.

A second danger is demanding that the ecosystem be purely self-organising. While it is true that a healthy ecosystem 'in flow' will self-organise around collective awareness, collective ambition, and shared resources, there are enough examples of systems failure to argue for the importance of an orchestrator process, and orchestrators who are alert to the larger context, about to recognise patterns and make interventions when required, supporting key processes with contributions that matter.

Open Innovation Ecosystems: the Example of EUE in Finland

Finland’s Energizing Urban Ecosystems programme is researching and pioneering ways of working in open innovation ecosystems. This 4-year programme – 20 million euros in research – is closely tied to the national innovation policy of Finland, as a significant part of implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy. Its general goal is to create a multidisciplinary centre of top expertise for city planning and

design. The conspicuousness of the Otaniemi-Keilaniemi-Tapiola area – known as the Espoo Innovation Garden – as the largest concentration of science and innovation resources and businesses in northern Europe provides a solid foundation for such a centre. The five square kilometre area is inhabited by 44,000 citizens and hosts an almost equal number of jobs, 16,000 of which are in ICT or ICT-intensive services sectors. 5,000 researchers and 16,000 students can also be found in the area. 200 of the local companies are foreign. 110 nationalities mix in the area. Internationally speaking, the region represents a true metropolitan area in Finland. The orchestrated activities of the programme focus on finding answers to questions on how to create new concepts and methods to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy by effective regional implementation, on how to turn the Espoo Innovation Garden into one of the leading and one of the most attractive innovation hubs and urban environments in the world by 2020, by enhancing the collaboration between the city, universities, research institutions and enterprises. Operating since 2012, EUE program has brought together a broad group of researchers, innovators, business interests and civil sector participants to pursue its ambitious objectives. Early results of this program have been described in 2012 and 2013 Yearbook articles.

Espoo Innovation Garden is the metaphor adopted for the area to symbolize the innovation ecosystem with its major players and activates. In transforming the Espoo Innovation Garden area, diverse challenges and opportunities are being addressed. Mega-endeavours like the West Metro, a major transportation infrastructure project with a capital investment of close to one billion euros as such, is one example of effective collaboration within the innovation ecosystem. Additional investments in housing and businesses in the West Metro corridor are tens of billions of euros in the next decades. These create growth and new jobs, and renew the city structures. Espoo Innovation Garden sees innovation as key to its further development, and its ability to create excellent quality of life within the ecosystem. This cannot succeed without good connections to similar European initiatives.



Figure 2: The West Metro Growth Corridor

For this reason, the city of Espoo – as part of the 2015 EUE activities, and in conjunction with the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region – is organising the 8th international ACSI camp in Espoo, and has invited the European Commission to hold its 2015 Open Innovation 2.0 Conference in the Espoo Innovation Garden in June 2015. These two activities in June will draw about 300 innovators – researchers, decision-makers and practitioners – to experience how the open innovation ecosystem works, learn

from the ideas and examples of global thought-leaders, address real world challenges, and take part in an entrepreneurial discovery process for prototyping, experimenting and ultimately the rapid realisation of open innovation projects throughout the region and the world.

The OI 2.0 Conference as Service: Defining a 6-month Prototyping Process

We know how to create exciting and inspiring conferences as events. We also know that after the event is over, it is not often that ideas get taken further. This is the syndrome of most workshops, training courses, and other off-site event: once back in the actual working life, there are too many too many fires to fight, too, many obstacles to other: colleagues, accumulating priorities, colleagues who haven't shared the experience.

This conference builds ecosystem support services into its design: support and facilitation for taking ideas further after the event is over. It is framed as a 6-month discovery learning, entrepreneurial prototyping process, in which good ideas and project proposals arising at the conference – and the groups that convene around these ideas and proposals – will be able to prototype them after the event itself ends.

The conference as a service is based on the idea that

- Innovation is a process, not an event
- Entrepreneurial discovery can be supported
- Orchestration of a discovery processes is important
- Some support is important, even for entrepreneurs
- Individual and group learning is enhanced by learning together

Running the OI2 Conference jointly with ACSI as parallel and interrelated prototyping processes for discovery learning is itself an experiment, and promises to be an enriching a learning experience.

ACSI as a Rapid Realisation Process

ACSI – the Aalto Camp for Societal Innovation – is an international instrument for addressing societal challenges in a powerful and effective way. It combines an entrepreneurial way of thinking and working with a concrete process for developing breakthrough ideas and insights, aiming at producing real-world impact. Participants from diverse countries and disciplines work together to discover and leverage in-and-out-of-the-box opportunities for creating breakthroughs in a process of collaborative solution seeking. ACSI increases our possibilities, opens new thinking, goes beyond the ordinary, and expands our insights into how to tackle societal innovation issues.

ACSI GENERIC PROGRAM:
RAPID REALIZATION PROTOTYPING PROCESS
 9-month prototyping process: from insight to realization

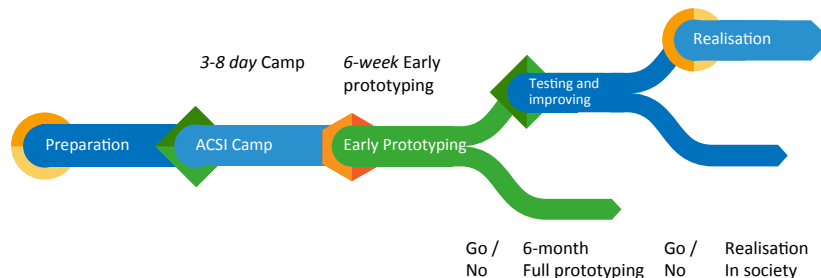


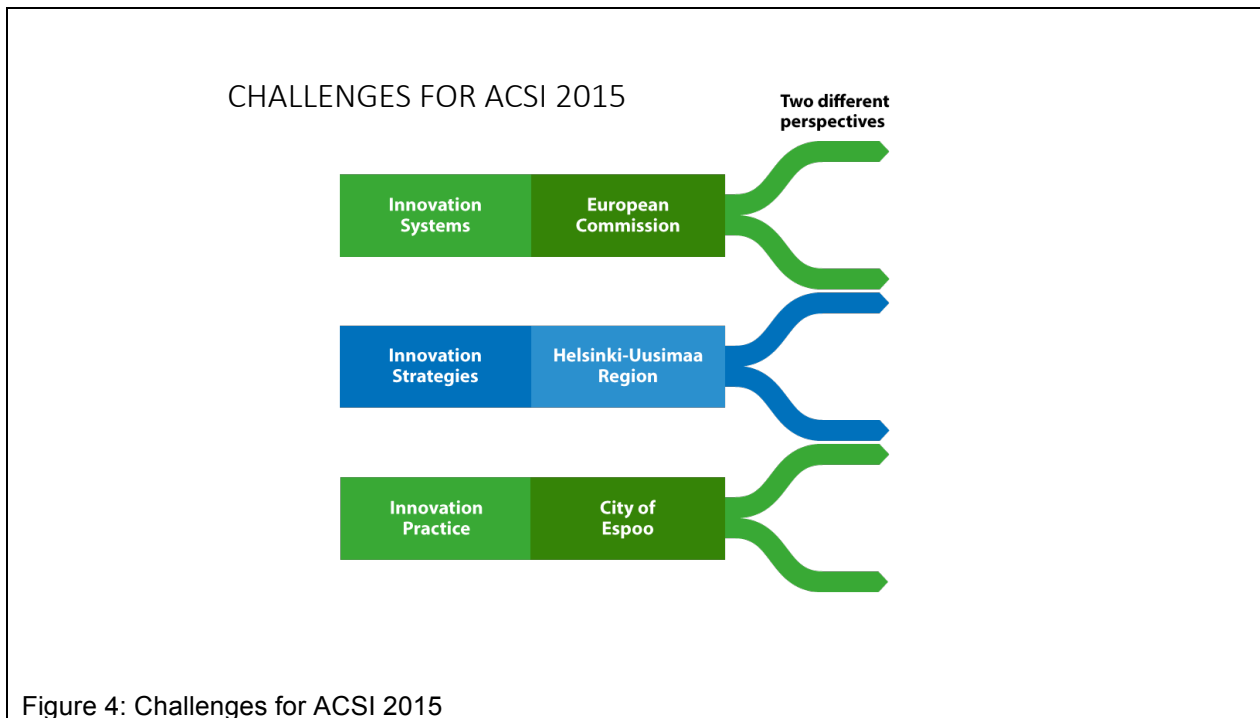
Figure 3: Rapid Realisation Prototyping Process

ACSI was co-developed by the New Club of Paris and Finland’s Aalto University. Supported by scientific research, ACSI has proven to be an effective instrument to understand how societal innovation works and to create perspectives that stimulate societal renewal. Since 2010 it has been run seven times, in different forms, in different cities in Finland, Sweden, and South Africa. ACSI challenges have addressed issues such as low carbon urban planning, realizing regional test-beds and demonstrators, renewing citizen-government engagement, and enhancing the innovativeness and inclusiveness of society. The process has been used to create breakthroughs in understanding complex issues and stuck situations, stimulate cross-border collaboration, explore opportunities for open innovation and help eliminate the obstacles that block it. During the Camp, multidisciplinary and international groups develop new ideas and perspectives on real-world challenges brought to the camp by cities, regions, business organisations, universities and NGO’s. After the Camp, prototypes of promising ideas are tested and improved at locations where the issues occur. This opens the process to encompass and engage all the stakeholders of the challenge innovation ecosystem, and supports parallel open, co-creative innovation processes in the real world, creating an entrepreneurial discovery framework not only for Camp participants but also for the entire challenge ecosystem.

ACSI is a human-centred process, which begins when key people commit to take the results further. The prototyping period after the Camp is an integral part of the ACSI process. Follow-through takes place at diverse and relevant locations, with direct stakeholder engagement, and orchestrated support from facilitators, coaches, and experts on different steps in the innovation process. Living labs and (urban) test-beds may be part of this co-creation process. This leads to more robust prototypes, to practical experiments, pilots and - with sufficient commitment - plans for fast-track realization. For ACSI, the prototyping after the camp is a 9-month journey to rapid realisation.

This year, ACSI will address three challenges, each formulated at a different level:

- At the level of innovation practice: the city (Espoo)
- At the level of innovation strategy: the region (Helsinki region)
- At the level of innovation systems: transnational governance (European Commission)



The Interconnectedness of ACSI and OI 2.0

ACSI and the Open Innovation 2.0 Conference are clearly connected in diverse ways. Both strive to support and enable societal innovation by stimulating processes of rethinking the basic assumptions of co-creation, collaborative action, and engaging people in open innovation. Both use real issues and concrete initiatives to engage people in the practice of societal renewal. Both emphasize the practice of rapid prototyping to go quickly from idea to experiment to practice.

This year's ACSI – aimed at the challenges of implementing RIS3 strategies on a practical level and enhancing the governance of open innovation ecosystems on a broader, European level – resonates fully with the underlying themes of this year's OI 2.0 Conference: stimulating experimenting and rapid prototyping, showcasing the Espoo Innovation Garden as a collaborative concept for energizing urban ecosystems, and implementing the Dublin Declaration.

Both are seen as starting points for a prototyping process: the ACSI is framed as the initial step of rapid realisation process for *taking ideas to implementation in 9-months*; the Conference is framed as the launching place for prototyping and improving participants' ideas during the following six months. The Conference is designed as a service for participants (and their networks): *the* place to be inspired by excellent practice and to create good ideas, to meet potential partners for taking the ideas forward, and to find support for actual prototyping in 2015. In this sense it is intended to be far more than the usual conference, where for many people learning stops when the conference does, and entrepreneurial practice is limited to the examples provided by work-in-progress and presented by speakers.

We see this Conference as continuing for 6-months after the participants leave Espoo, empowering people to translate their ideas into prototypes and test them in experiments, supported by peers, facilitators, and virtual working environments custom-made for this purpose. In this way, the spirit of ACSI resonates in the design and follow-through of the conference-as-process and conference-as-service.

Fed by inputs such as this Open Innovation 2015 Yearbook and the *Orchestrating Innovation Ecosystems* book (describing the activities of Espoo Innovation Garden), both ACSI and Conference participants are invited to reflect on, learn from, and actually use best practice from around the world. A hackathon will also be organised in parallel with the Conference, to enable the thinking-power and participation of people around the world to be part of the working process. The OI 2.0 Conference is a gathering place for innovation thought leaders, a showcase for innovative practice, and instrument for change. It functions to stimulate awareness and understanding of good practice, and enhance the

desire for concerted action. *ACSI* is a proactive hands-on instrument for addressing specific societal innovation challenges in an open, international and self-organising context. For Conference participants, it serves both as an effective example of how to address concrete issues and a stimulus to do so themselves. Both are programmes for entrepreneurial discovery, 'events' embedded in prototyping processes aimed at taking good ideas to practical realisation in society: *ACSI* as the starting-point for a longer rapid realisation process, and the *OI 2.0 Conference* framed as an discovery, learning and entrepreneurial prototyping process.

Together, the two complement and enhance each other: *ACSI* creates early prototypes and brings them to the immediate attention of a vastly larger audience of innovation specialists attending the Conference, who can help improve the ideas and take them further; and in addition inspires Conference participants to define good ideas of their own, find appropriate partners, and create and test prototypes in the weeks that follow. Together, they bring the spirit of entrepreneurial discovery and open innovation into the sphere of hands-on practice.

The events of June 2015 are also seen as part of a 3-year process of Entrepreneurial discovery in which participating people, cities and regions work together towards deepening understanding of how to implement Smart Specialisation Strategies and Open Innovation 2.0 in practice. Hands-on practice in the European innovation ecosystem is strengthened through a series of *ACSI* camps, *OI 2.0* conferences and other activities throughout 2015-17, and integrated steps towards an innovative Europe will be taken together.

Sketching the larger context: 2014-2017

The larger context of the *ACSI* and *OI 2.0* conference is an entrepreneurial discovery process which began for Helsinki Region at the Smart Specialisation Strategies partnering conference held at Committee of the Regions in June 2014. Helsinki Region, the region of Valencia, and the Province of Utrecht were three of the event's organisers. More than 200 people from across Europe used interactive work forms – bench-learning, purposeful conversations, and working with virtual worlds – to explore what RIS3 collaboration could mean for their regions, the importance of Open Innovation 2.0, the role of universities in entrepreneurial discovery, and issues like low carbon economy in urban planning, Europe's industrial renaissance, and e-health. Taking the best ideas, and introductions to potential partners, back home, the process moved further.

By the end of 2014 Helsinki Region had defined its Smart Specialisation Strategy in detail, and in February 2015 more than 60 people came together in Espoo to discuss options and opportunities for realising the strategy with a broad group of local and international stakeholders. At this three-day bench-learning conference seven collaboration projects – both new ones and others already in progress – were presented and worked on.

The *ACSI* Camp and *OI 2.0* Conference in June 2015 are the next activities in this process. While the camp and conference will lead to diverse prototypes and project proposals to be developed further in the coming months, directly afterwards the first work-in-progress results will be reported at the EU Digital Agenda Assembly in Riga. The story of entrepreneurial discovery will be taken further, and opened for more people, as well as regions and cities to join.

The intention is to hold more societal innovation camps later in 2015 and early 2016. An *ACSI* for Central and Eastern European countries has already been proposed. There will also be spin-off workshops and process labs planned to enhance the co-learning part of the discovery processes. Diverse EU organisations have expressed interest in processes like these, and the Committee of the Regions intends to work together with the European Commission to support practical steps for moving forward. The results of this larger process will impact Horizon 2020, Digital Agenda, and the practice of realising RIS3. The 9-month rapid realisation process prototyped here could be a model for implementing smart specialisation in cross-border and trans-regional partnerships.

Many of the European Entrepreneurial Regions will begin disseminating their best practice lessons this year. New *OI 2.0* activities in 2016 and 2017 will provide possibilities for learning and working together. And Finland celebrates 100 Years as an independent nation in 2017: an opportunity for its many pioneering innovation-based regions to organise open collaborative activities to engage the rest of Europe.

Once the EU succeeds in using its different financial instruments to focus on addressing societal challenges in an integrated and systemic way, the basis for building Europe's renewal capital will be laid.

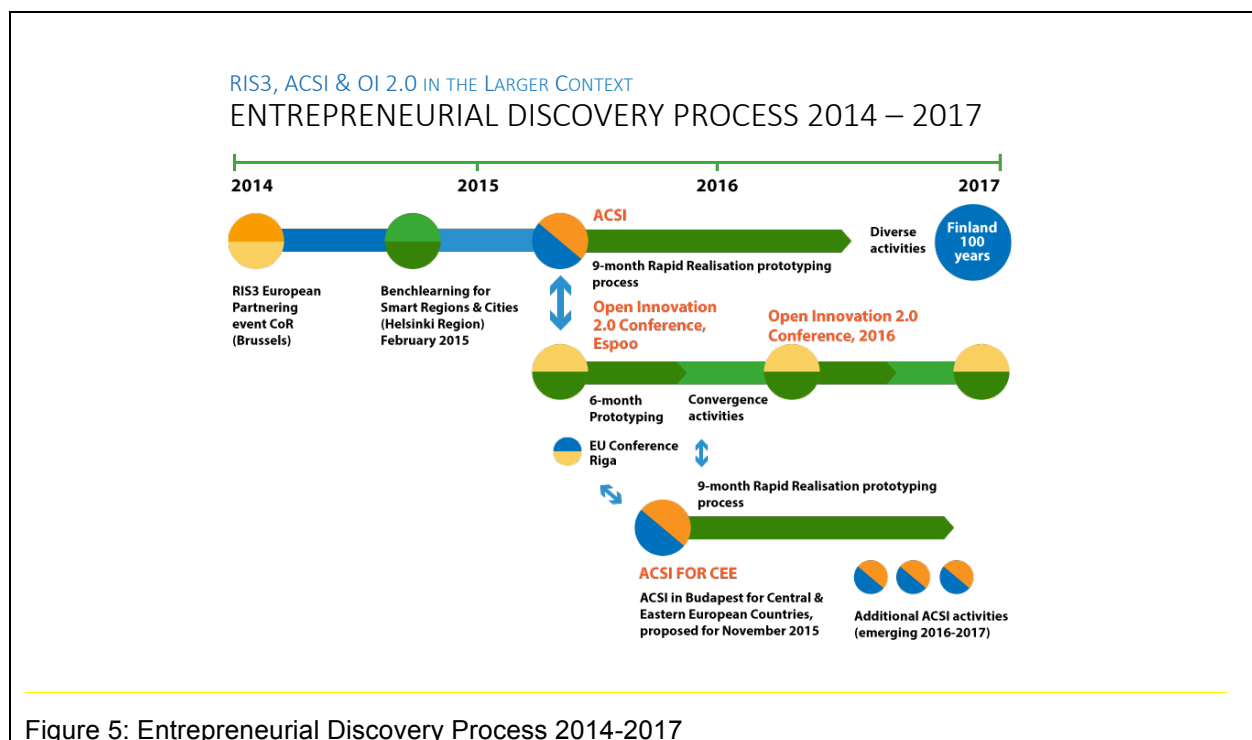


Figure 5: Entrepreneurial Discovery Process 2014-2017

Entrepreneurs have changed the world, and will continue to do so

What will these orchestrated processes mean for Espoo, for Helsinki Region, and for the European Commission?

The ACSI process will develop new perspectives, promising possible solutions and prototypes for testing in practice. The nine-month process of testing and improving the prototypes should lead to one or more ideas ready for realization. The entrepreneurial discovery process will engage hundreds of stakeholders, allowing their buy-in and broadening ownership of the results. They will make discoveries, and profit from what they learn. In the course of the nine months, they will practice new skills and develop new abilities, acting in the spirit of the new mentality, trying it out, making it their own. The experience will make the mindset more accessible to more people, more common good within the ecosystem.

People and their organisations will have the experience of prototyping, experimenting, thinking in new ways, working differently – faster than they have been used to – and moving promising ideas into practice. Some of this experience will be used again in the next projects. The learning will belong to both the individuals involved and to their organisations. The city, region and commission will be richer for it. And fitter for tackling new challenges the next time.

The actual results – the ideas put into practice – will be realised faster and have a running start at creating outcomes and impact that matter to people and make the ecosystem better. Some societal challenges, at least after a few years, will become less acute, and less challenging. And we will have learned more about how to stimulate and support societal innovation, more about how to orchestrate entrepreneurial discovery processes in the challenge innovation ecosystem, and how open innovation thinking can influence the world.

The conference will be a service to participants, their communities, networks, regions and countries. People will take their new insights and ideas away, and develop them further where they live and work. Not all of them will come to fruition, but some of them will, and here too it is the experience of their process – the new ways of thinking and acting, and the mentality that drives it – is an important part of

societal gains. We expect that the knock-on effect will be great. The baton will be passed from the policy makers, planners, and advisors to the practitioners, innovators, and ordinary citizens, and they will run with it, making innovation more practical, accessible and doable. Hundreds of people in diverse cities and regions across Europe will have experimented with putting the action points for Open Innovation 2.0 into practice, learning together what works in which situations and why.

Bold steps will be taken, and successful or not, in a year's time we will know more. There will be new projects and initiatives. More people will have the taste for co-creative collaborative and entrepreneurial discovery, and Europe will be several steps closer to developing widespread innovation literacy. The thinking renaissance will have begun. And ideally, conferences will never be the same.

It is clear that successful entrepreneurs have changed society throughout history, and they will continue to do so. Entrepreneurial discovery can be seen in the context of a societal innovation camp, or an open innovation conference, stimulating and supporting people to move forward together on the good ideas they have, prototyping quickly, failing early, learning constantly, and scaling broadly when they have something that works. These processes are powerful mechanisms to drive innovation, turning demand into supply and knowledge into value. The same is true in the realm of cities and regions and their smart specialisation strategies. It is the entrepreneurial discovery spirit that is capable of engaging Europeans from all regions, and all ages, in building a better world together.

At the Committee of the Regions Workshop on Innovation Union (held in November 2013), the conference conclusions state that ecosystems with a common vision are essential: they need shared vision, share values, self-knowledge.

Europe needs to support entrepreneurial spirit in its many forms: entrepreneurial discovery for people of all ages, [and] high-expectation start-ups in business and society... Innovation is about people [and] involving citizens is the key to innovation ... When people connect, ideas connect – and that's where innovation begins. [10]

The message is clear: Europe needs this pioneering spirit, and the skills and competences it requires. The mind-set can be learned and the skills improved by practice, as governments, businesses, universities and individuals learn to drive their own open entrepreneurial discovery processes.

This article gives an indication of how this will continue to emerge in the coming months. With small steps and bold steps we can develop the renewal capital that Europe calls for, and create the thinking renaissance and entrepreneurial spirit to maintain it. These are stepping-stones for co-creating the new European narratives for the next decade, and build a Europe of excellent opportunities, co-created by its own citizens.

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Contact

Markku Markkula

Advisor to the Aalto Presidents,
Aalto University,
President of the EU Committee of the Regions,
markku.markkula@cor.europa.eu

Hank Kune

Director, Innovation & Enterprise,
Educore,
Future Center Alliance, Founding Partner
hankkune@educore.nl