Roadmap to foster co-operation between universities, research and business in Spain

This project aims to enhance collaboration between universities, public research organisations and businesses in Spain. Building on extensive expert and stakeholder engagement, it will identify current obstacles to effective collaboration as well as opportunities for reform, leveraging lessons from relevant national and international practices. The project is funded by the European Union via its Structural Reform Support Programme and undertaken by the OECD in collaboration with the European Commission and Spain’s Ministries of Science and Innovation and Universities.

Why this project?

Spain’s scientific capabilities are widely recognised among the world’s best. However, several national and international diagnoses of Spain’s innovation system coincide in pointing to structural weaknesses in the mechanisms that are meant to enable existing expertise and the new knowledge generated in universities and in public research organisations to contribute to the generation of new economic opportunities and improvements in societal wellbeing. On several metrics, Spain lags its peers in terms of innovation and productivity performance. Increased engagement and collaboration between the worlds of science and business is critical for Spain’s innovation system to rise to the challenges its society currently faces.

In this context, the upcoming Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (2021-2027) includes knowledge transfer and promoting research and innovation in the Spanish business sector as two main strategic objectives. This project will contribute to the design and implementation of measures for consideration by the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Universities.

Main objectives

- Reach a shared and evidence-based understanding of the current state of public research – business collaboration, identifying key obstacles to effective co-operation and priorities for policy reform.
- Develop a policy implementation roadmap with concrete, evidence-based and actionable policy measures to enhance collaborative research and innovation, tailored to the Spanish context.

An open, participative project

The engagement of all relevant national and regional stakeholders is a key pillar of the project, instrumental towards identifying, prioritising and designing reform proposals that can be put in place. It will engage representatives from different government ministries and agencies, regional administrations, universities, public research institutions, business associations, trade unions and professional organisations in building an in-depth diagnosis and reform agenda. Stakeholders will be engaged through:

- Bilateral consultation through interviews conducted in the first phase of the project
- Workshops and events to exchange perspectives and build consensus for reform.
- Working groups organised to develop specific policy proposals.

Why the OECD?

The OECD is an international organisation that works with governments and civil society to establish evidence-based international standards and find solutions to today’s social, economic and environmental challenges. The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) helps EU Member States carry out reforms to stimulate job creation and sustainable growth. Upon request from EU Member States, it delivers support in the form of tailor-made expertise. As the world-leading forum for policy advice on science, innovation and entrepreneurship, the OECD has been asked by DG REFORM to support the Spanish Government in its long-standing efforts to translate its reform strategic objectives into effective, implementable measures, drawing on OECD’s evidence building and advisory experience.

The OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation and the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities have joined forces to implement this project.
Key project activities

1. Analysing the current state of public research-business collaboration in Spain

The first phase of the project will explore the current state of science-business collaboration in Spain, including the policy, regulatory and administrative landscape, with the objective of identifying the current obstacles to effective cooperation and the areas of improvement. Such diagnosis, captured in a short report, will build on primary data collected by the OECD as well as interviews with all relevant stakeholders.

2. Drawing lessons from relevant European and international policy practices

Policy initiatives and regulatory schemes implemented in different European countries to foster public research-business collaboration will be analysed, focusing on lessons from success practices that help inform the Spanish case. Study visits will provide critical insights on those experiences.

3. Stakeholder workshop and working groups to develop concrete policy reform options

A workshop to be held in Madrid around February 2021 will gather stakeholders to share provisional findings and build consensus on areas for policy reform. Over the following months, expert working groups convened by the OECD will develop reform options for each of the identified priority areas identified.

4. Developing a policy roadmap to improve public research-business collaboration

The roadmap resulting from previous activities will contain concrete and actionable measures to improve public research-business collaboration in Spain, as well as a range of indicators to monitor and evaluate its implementation. These will be proposed for implementation within the action plan for Spain’s Science and Innovation Strategy 2021-27.

How can you find out more & get involved?

- Express your interest in joining the project’s kick-off online meeting by writing to: [roadmap_innova_es@oecd.org](mailto:roadmap_innova_es@oecd.org)
- Participate and encourage participation in the fact-finding surveys.
- Share your experiences and research by contacting us.

Project timeline and milestones

1. Kick-off online meeting (Sept. 2020)
2. Report on current state of science-business collaboration (Nov. 2020)
4. Stakeholder workshop to identify priority reform areas (Feb. 2021)
5. Working groups to develop specific reform options (March-July 2021)
6. Compile and release implementation roadmap and launch of final report (June – Nov. 2021)

CONTACT


European Commission – Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support: [Patricia.Perez-Gomez@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Patricia.Perez-Gomez@ec.europa.eu)

Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation: [Elisa.Rivera@ciencia.gob.es](mailto:Elisa.Rivera@ciencia.gob.es)

Spanish Ministry of Universities: [Manuel.Gonzalez@universidades.gob.es](mailto:Manuel.Gonzalez@universidades.gob.es)