

Paper Summary

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Title: Facilitation of Entrepreneurial Discovery Processes by Policymakers: An Actionable Definition of Roles

Authors: Miren Estensoro, Miren Larrea

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-022-00906-1>

Year: 2023

Publication Type: Journal

Discipline/Domain: Regional Development / Innovation Policy

Subdomain/Topic: Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3/S4), Entrepreneurial Discovery Processes (EDP),

Eligibility: Eligible

Overall Relevance Score: 92

Operationalization Score: 95

Contains Definition of Actionability: Yes (explicit and implicit)

Contains Systematic Features/Dimensions: Yes

Contains Explainability: Partial

Contains Interpretability: No

Contains Framework/Model: Yes (Six Roles of Facilitative Policymakers)

Operationalization Present: Yes

Primary Methodology: Action Research

Study Context: Bilbao Next Lab, urban S3 strategy with EDP facilitation in Bilbao, Spain

Geographic/Institutional Context: Bilbao City Council, Bilbao Ekintza (city development agency), Basque

Target Users/Stakeholders: Policymakers, entrepreneurs, researchers, quadruple helix actors

Primary Contribution Type: Conceptual framework with operationalization

CL: Yes

CR: Yes

FE: Yes

TI: Partial

EX: Partial

GA: Yes

Reason if Not Eligible: N/A

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****Publication Type:**** Journal

****Discipline/Domain:**** Regional Development / Innovation Policy

****Subdomain/Topic:**** Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3/S4), Entrepreneurial Discovery Processes (EDPs)

****Contextual Background:**** Focuses on how policymakers can operationally facilitate EDPs within S3/S4

****Geographic/Institutional Context:**** Bilbao City Council and Bilbao Ekintza, Basque Country, Spain.

****Target Users/Stakeholders:**** Policymakers, entrepreneurs, quadruple helix actors, researchers.

****Primary Methodology:**** Action Research

****Primary Contribution Type:**** Actionable conceptual framework.

General Summary of the Paper

The paper develops and tests an actionable framework for the roles of policymakers in facilitating Entrepreneurial Discovery Processes (EDPs).

Eligibility

Eligible for inclusion: ****Yes****

How Actionability is Understood

Actionability is framed as the ability for policymakers' roles in EDPs to be ****directly implementable**** in practice.

> “Our contribution is oriented... not exclusively in the theoretical... but also in how they can address its complexity.”

> “We connect... the roles with the dilemmas, efforts, tensions, needs, power issues, challenges, risks...”

What Makes Something Actionable

- Roles are ****linked to concrete actions****, decisions, and facilitation techniques.
- Grounded in ****real-world dilemmas**** and capacity gaps policymakers face.
- Context-specific learning integrated into process design.
- Inclusion of ****both substance knowledge**** (technical field) and ****process knowledge**** (trust, shared vision).
- Built-in ****monitoring and systematisation**** for ongoing improvement.

How Actionability is Achieved / Operationalized

- ****Framework/Approach Name(s):**** Six Roles of Facilitative Policymakers in EDPs.
- ****Methods/Levers:**** Action research co-generation; facilitation techniques; collaborative governance; stakeholder engagement.
- ****Operational Steps / Workflow:****

1. Choose field to explore
2. Learn about the field
3. Engage stakeholders

4. Attract outside knowledge

5. Develop shared vision

6. Monitor, evaluate, systematise

- **Data & Measures:** Process indicators, documentation of lessons learned, stakeholder engagement

- **Implementation Context:** Bilbao's Futurable pilot EDP on wearable technologies.

> "Participants considered that the first step... was to have a clear definition of their roles..." (p. 1332)

> "Monitoring systems should include process indicators... and systematisation of experiences..." (p. 1333)

Dimensions and Attributes of Actionability (Authors' Perspective)

- **CL (Clarity):** Yes — clear role definitions and functions.

- **CR (Contextual Relevance):** Yes — tailored to Bilbao's specific EDP context.

- **FE (Feasibility):** Yes — tested in practice with policymakers.

- **TI (Timeliness):** Partial — emphasis on continuous adaptation but less on strict time-bound delivery.

- **EX (Explainability):** Partial — roles explained, but mechanisms sometimes implicit.

- **GA (Goal Alignment):** Yes — aligned with S3/S4 innovation and collaborative governance goals.

- **Other Dimensions Named by Authors:** Trust-building, conflict management, integration of external knowledge

Theoretical or Conceptual Foundations

- Smart Specialisation and EDP literature (Foray et al., 2012; Lepore & Spigarelli, 2018)

- Facilitation theory (Costamagna & Larrea, 2018)

- Collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008)

- Action research methodology.

Indicators or Metrics for Actionability

- Process indicators (number of workshops, participant diversity)

- Evidence of stakeholder collaboration

- Recorded lessons learned and systematisation outputs.

Barriers and Enablers to Actionability

- **Barriers:** Lack of policymaker facilitation skills; limited knowledge of technical domains; power-sharing

- **Enablers:** Embedded capability-building; action research support; proactive stakeholder engagement

Relation to Existing Literature

Positions itself as filling the gap between conceptual EDP role descriptions and practical operationalisation

Summary

This paper operationalises the facilitation role of policymakers in Entrepreneurial Discovery Processes with

Scores

- **Overall Relevance Score:** 92 — Strong conceptual clarity on actionability, fully integrated with operationalization
- **Operationalization Score:** 95 — Detailed, field-tested workflow with concrete, replicable steps and clear indicators

Supporting Quotes from the Paper

- “We connect... the roles with the dilemmas, efforts, tensions, needs... which increase their actionability.” (p. 1331)
- “Participants considered that the first step... was to have a clear definition of their roles...” (p. 1332)
- “Monitoring systems should include process indicators... and systematisation of experiences...” (p. 1333)
- “The knowledge... has a more actionable nature than the theoretical concepts...” (p. 1338)

Actionability References to Other Papers

- Foray et al. (2012); Lepore & Spigarelli (2018); Costamagna & Larrea (2018); Ansell & Gash (2008); Perreault & Gauthier (2018)