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Part I – General information	
Project	**PURE COSMOS**
Partner organisation	**MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE**
Country	**ITALY**
NUTS2 region	**NUTS 1 CENTRO NUTS 2 TOSCANA**
Contact person	**Veronica Nenci** email address: **veronica.nenci@comune.fi.it** phone number: **00390553559**

Part II – Policy context	

The Action Plan aims to impact:	[X] Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
	[ ] European Territorial Cooperation programme
	[ ] **Other regional development policy instrument**

Name of the policy instrument addressed:	ERDF ROP TUSCANY 2014-2020, PRIORITY AXIS 3, "Promote the competitivness of SMEs" – Specific Action 3.5, "Creation and development of SMEs", now integrated with another line of policy, specifically entailing the governance of the simplification of administrative procedures.

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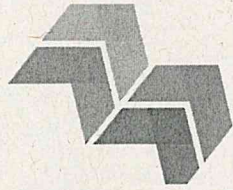European Union | European Regional Development Fund

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The system of support to Tuscan Smes (the subject of the ROP) will benefit of the general use of the STAR platform by the Florentine entreprises. The Tuscan ROP will be implemented by public announcements, to which the Florentine entreprises can apply. By using an unique regional platform (STAR), all the entreprises will be able to realize which are the benefits of this common instrument and it would be easier and natural for them to apply to the previous announcements.

Part III – Details of the action envisaged

1. The background

Akin the obstacles that makes the creation of new SMEs difficult, **bureaucratic burdens** occupy a place of honour. During the conversations with stakeholders this evidence has come to light particularly with regard to accessing credit and public services, as well as regarding the compliance with legal rules.

First of all, SMEs are not facilitated in knowing and accessing all credit lines made available from banks and public bodies. Secondarily, public administrations often ask a considerable pile of documents and information to start a business and to manage all the other economic activities (e.g. authorizations, licenses, etc.), eventually loading SMEs of excessive burdens. Thirdly, the entrepreneurs must consult many public offices and different public administrations to obtain a single authorization, due to the high fragmentation of the administrative organization, which is not tailored to user's needs.

Apart from some virtuous examples, public administrations are often perceived not flexible or efficient, and lacking dynamism in delivering services for businesses. As a general principle, public administrations should avoid duplications in data gathering towards citizens and enterprises (once-only-principle). There is also a lack in the diffusion of digital technologies inside public administrations. In addition, the highly fragmented picture of Italian Municipalities facilitates inequalities and impedes the circulation of best practices.

During the meetings with stakeholders and the exchange of experience with partners of PURE COSMOS all people involved **asked for increasing simplification** of regulation, administrative processes, and relationships between users and public sector. These objectives should be pursued with long-term and widespread policies.
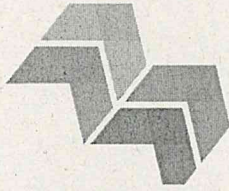
In Italy, entrepreneurs get in touch with public administration through the **One Stop Shop (OSS)**, a public office instituted by a national law, that delivers services affecting the whole lifecycle of an enterprise, from its establishment to its closing down. The advantage is that the involved person doesn't have to address different public offices, because OSS collects all requests and forward them to the different administrative bodies concerned.

Despite all the potentialities of OSS in terms of simplification for the life of citizens, **every Municipality manages its own OSS in a such independent way**, creating an administrative geography in which compares virtuous examples, as the twenty-year experience of Municipality of Florence shows, but also examples of backwardness and maladministration.

The exchange of experience with the partners of PURE COSMOS has revealed an assorted landscape, where the OSSs inside the countries of the partners involved in the project have different competences. In particular, the mission of the Italian OSS is specifically directed at dealing with the **whole lifecycle of the SMEs**, from the cradle to the grave. This peculiarity contributes to create a great complexity inside the legal system.

Nevertheless, the project's activities have also contributed to the definition of some policies implemented by the actions enlisted in this RAP, in highlighting, on the one hand, background and needs, and on the other hand, opportunities and actions required to tackle the principal challenges.

Firstly, the **Birmingham Peer Review** (27 - 28 September 2016) has highlighted the importance to improve entrepreneur's support by public administrations to enable SMEs to be more competitive. The observation and exchange of best practices (especially Good Practice 28 "GROWTH HUB – One Stop Shop for Business" in Register of Good Practice) has helped to conceive specific solutions to tackle public sector reforms and service innovations by streamlining and digitisation of local authority processes. In particular, the GROWTH HUB (One Stop Shop for Business), with the creation of a business support ecosystem to coordinate provision and make it easier for businesses to access and navigate public support, emphasized the key role of web services as source of growth and support for SMEs. The observation of this experience persuaded Municipality of Florence to improve web and IT solution able to involve a larger breadth of public and private actors (*see Sub-Action I*), but also to implement services designed to share documents and information "by default" and to facilitate the access to digital services (*see Sub-Action IV*).

The **Study Visit in Magdeburg** (17 May 2017) has been dedicated to study the models for SME funding through the services offered by regional development banks (Good Practice 21 "Models for SME funding in a regional development bank" in Register of Good Practice). In particular, from the
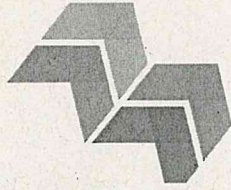
comparison with the experience of the Deutsch partner, committed in provision of information on public funding possibilities for SMEs, emerged the opportunity that Municipality of Florence could provide consultancy to SMEs about their needs, including funding opportunities. In this direction, RAP is going to realise a deeper integration between services offered by the Municipality of Florence and specifically by Chamber of Commerce, which is one of the principal consultants for SMEs (*see Sub-Action I*).

This objective has been confirmed also by the **Peer Review held in Florence**, which has been focused on the access to credit and public funds for SMEs (18 – 19 January 2017). The discussion with partners of Municipality of Genova, Ústecky region, Development Bank of Saxony-Anhalt, experts and representatives from different sectors and agencies, has dealt with barriers and challenges that the regional SME financial and credit system is facing, and namely with the role of reduction of bureaucratic burdens on SMEs that public and private intermediaries are playing in this context. Some innovative solutions have been mentioned, as the creation of a SMEs database where the entrepreneur can upload all the data and information that are usually required, e.g. how to apply for public funding.

The **Study visit in Barcelona** (16 March 2018), instead, has helped to appreciate and to compare with a similar experience of Municipality of Florence and Tuscany Region (Good Practice 25 "one stop shop" in Register of Good Practice). It has definitely given the motivation to Municipality of Florence for addressing the Action of this RAP to the structuring of a supra-municipal single point of access, suitable to guarantee homogeneity in managing the procedures.

Consequently, the Import **Workshop in Florence** (10 October 2018) has given the opportunity to organize a follow up meeting with partners of Generalitat de Catalunya and, in particular, it has offered a complementary discussion to go in-depth with the implementation of a regional network of OSSs. The comparison with this partner and its constitutional and legal framework has allowed to work to several issues, such as, in particular, the aspects that can be transferred to our legal system without resort to legal reforms, in a voluntary way between the Municipality and the Region (*see Sub-Action II and Sub-Action III*).

Definitely, the exchanges of experiences, and in particular the example of the **Catalonian partner** (*more detail in Table 1*), have been crucial, on the one hand, to design innovative solution suitable for tackling some of the problematics emerged in managing OSSs and, on the other hand, to improve several policies that Municipality of Florence and other territorial levels of government have already started a few years ago.
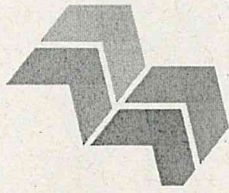
Table 1

INTERLOCUTIONS WITH CATALOGNA	DATA
Study visit in Florence	18-19 January 2017
⬇	
Study visit in Barcelona	16 March 2018
⬇	
Import workshop in Florence	10 October 2018
⬇	

According to these purpose, PURE COSMOS has persuaded the Municipality of Florence to strengthen the collaboration with Tuscany Region in the following direction.

• First of all, Tuscany Region has adopted, as conformed to the regional laws, a **standardised set of forms for public services** approved by National Government and then has shared them with all the OSSs of the Region. Consequently, every OSS belonging to a Municipality inside the Region shows the same "template", in which they ask similar fulfilments to SMEs, thus facilitating the relationship between entrepreneurs and municipal administrations. The awareness developed inside Pure Cosmos has encouraged the Municipality of Florence not to transpose the set of forms approved by National Government directly in its own system, but instead to make them usable from the SMEs on the regional front-end.

• Secondarily, Tuscany Region has also created a **common IT infrastructure called "Sistema Telematico di Accettazione Regionale" (STAR)** to connect the municipal OSSs in a network at regional scale. There are many advantage to join STAR.

   - OSSs offer the entrepreneurs the same web interface.

   - The entrepreneurs that submit an administrative paperwork have to carry out the same operations regardless of the specific Municipality in charge.

   - STAR offers a coordination to municipal OSSs only at a technological and digital level while
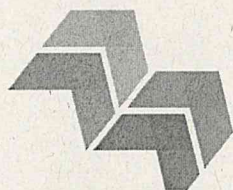
respecting the legal distribution of competences. Indeed, STAR does not interfere with the competences and responsibilities of Municipalities in managing administrative functions through the OSS.

The **Municipality of Florence** has decided to join to STAR since 23th July 2017, according to a formal agreement with Tuscany Region. This has guaranteed also a more homogeneous employment of the standardised set of forms and made it possible to renew the discussion with Tuscany Region through the participation to the working group of technical cooperation provided by the regional law 40/2009. In this context, Municipality of Florence has been giving a determining contribution to propose innovative solutions to implement STAR.

However, the best practices observed in occasion of the exchanges of experiences within PURE COSMOS, as above-mentioned, have suggested **a way to take advantage of all the potentialities offered by STAR**, intervening on the following four issues with the Action and the detailed Sub-Action shown below.

➢ STAR suffers from a <u>stiffness in the exchange of information</u> and documents between OSSs and other actors involved in the administrative procedures. In particular, all materials have to be forwarded by Certified E-Mail (so called PEC) and not using digital technologies.

➢ The Municipality of Florence has enjoyed STAR <u>only for several administrative procedures</u> in a limited amount of topics (as commerce, the supply of food and drink, constructions).

➢ Users can upload on STAR documents and information <u>without undergoing any filter or control</u>.

➢ Finally, STAR is structured <u>as a linear decision-making process</u>, where all the information and documents have to be forwarded by entrepreneurs to OSS and the same, in turn, has to sort it to all public bodies / administrations in charge.

To give a quantitative indicator of the digital accesses, by the enterprises, through the digital services of the Municipality of Florence, in the year 2014 the situation was as follows:
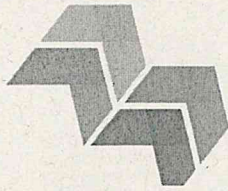
YEAR	ON LINE OF MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE PLATFORM	PEC	STAR TUSCANY REGION
2014	37%	63%	—

2. Action: The Florentine OSS Upgrade

During the activities of research and the exchange of good practices within PURE COSMOS, the Municipality of Florence realised that the reaching of the predetermined objectives requires **the integration of the former policy instrument** with another line of policy, specifically entailing the governance of the simplification of administrative procedures.

Therefore, the RAP is focused not only on creation and development of SMEs through the services delivered by municipal OSSs, but also on the best solutions to enhance the governance of municipal OSSs, so to improve the simplification of administrative procedures, the reduction of administrative burdens, the responsibility of OSSs to offer entrepreneurs tailor-made services.

Definitively, RAP pursues the objective, on the one hand, to foster creation and development of SMEs through the services delivered by municipal OSSs (*original policy*), and, on the other hand, to implement some instrumental assets related to the management of OSSs on a wider area than the municipal level, producing positive returns on entrepreneurs (*supplementary policy*).

These objectives are realised through several administrative simplification policies, starting from **the strongest integration between the Municipal OSS of Florence and the regional IT infrastructure STAR**. The RAP expresses the commitment of Municipality Florence and Tuscany Region to implement STAR toward four linked sub-actions, namely:

- the involvement of new public actors and stakeholders;
- the provision of new services;
- the provision of administrative functions;
- the research of new technological solutions.

The aim is to enhance the administrative simplification at the service of SMEs, in line with the European "eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020" and the vision to make public administrations and
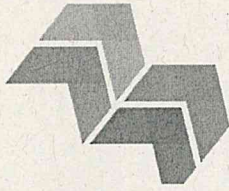
public institutions in the EU open, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalized, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services to all citizens and businesses.

I. Growth of STAR actors

Fist sub-action deals with the **enlargement of public and private actors** involved in STAR.

In particular, RAP will create the conditions to let also the Chamber of Commerce enjoy the services delivered by the regional IT infrastructure and be integrated into the network of OSSs. After a first phase of experimentation, other bodies/administrations that usually participate to administrative procedures managed by OSS will be also involved.

RAP will open STAR to Chamber of Commerce, in way that the entrepreneur could be able to forward the documents directly to STAR, and these documents would be forwarded to OSS or Chamber of Commerce, depending on the body in charge.

The strongest involvement of the Chamber of Commerce will produce a deeper integration between services offered by OSSs and one of the principal "facilitator" of SMEs, promoting the access of the entrepreneurs to the business consulting offered by Chamber of Commerce.

Steps of the Sub-Action I:
- ✓ Organization of meetings and working groups of technical cooperation with representatives of public and private actors to be involved.
- ✓ Joining STAR of Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Joining STAR of other public actors, as Provinces, Customs, Police Headquarters.

II. Growth of STAR functions

Second sub-action deals with the **enlargement of administrative procedures** that Municipal OSS of Florence can manage through STAR, even more than procedures in which OSSs have to make use of the standardised set of forms spread by Tuscany Region.

RAP aims to integrate STAR with administrative procedures and fulfilments required for business in tourist and accommodating structures.

Steps of the Sub-Action II:
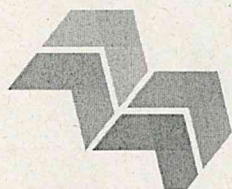
✓ Legal analysis of administrative burdens required the the whole lifecycle of SMEs in topics of tourist and accommodating structures.

✓ Specific design of technological and informatics solutions to adapt the regional IT infrastructure STAR.

✓ Adaptation of Municipal OSS back-office to the modification of STAR.

III. Growth of STAR services

Third sub-action deals with the growth of services delivered by STAR.

The regional IT infrastructure will deliver also **an automatic regulatory control** of all the documents uploaded, certifying that these documents are compliant with all the requirements imposed by legal rules. STAR should also give a receipt to the entrepreneur to certify the upload of correct documents.

From this point of view, RAP aims also to simplify administrative procedures. This kind of automatic regulatory control will avoid, on the one hand, that the entrepreneur could upload on STAR an incomplete documentation, and, on the other hand, that single OSSs in charge should carry out these kinds of checks. Through this new service, the OSSs will receive from STAR a complete and compliant documentation, streamlining and speeding up the administrative procedures.

On the legal level, the OSSs will remain in charge and responsible of the administrative procedure that involve many offices or different administrations.

Steps of the Sub-Action III:

✓ Supplying by OSSs to Tuscany Region of a check list that specifies all the legal requirements to be satisfied with the automatic regulatory control, as digital signature, technical annexes, specific compulsory forms.

✓ Design by Tuscany Region of an automatic IT system capable to accept the documentation compliant with law and to reject the documentation not compliant with law according to the above-mentioned check list.

✓ Design by Tuscany Region of an automatic system for forwarding the documentation to the public actors in charge involved in the specific administrative procedure.
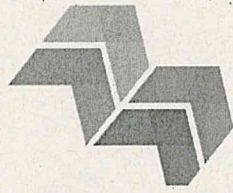
IV. Growth of STAR system

The forth sub-action deals with an enhancement of the whole STAR system, reaching an upgrade of the concept of OSS in itself.

This sub-action represents the most cutting-edge part of the RAP. Getting inspired by the experience of the Catalonian partner of PURE COSMOS, the RAP will upgrade STAR from a linear decision-making process to **a networked decision-making process**, where all private and public actors are put in relation, under the supervision and the coordination of OSS.

From this perspective, the RAP provides for the creation of a common virtual room managed by Municipal OSS, accessible to all public bodies / administrations involved in the single administrative procedure (local healthcare agencies, fire services, civil engineering departments, etc.), but also to the entrepreneur interested. According to this innovation, the entrepreneur has to upload to this virtual room all the documents, applications, notices of commencement, and all the attachments. All the public bodies / administrations involved could view these documentations at the same time, and in turn they will have to upload to the virtual room all the documents and measures to be taken.

The documentation uploaded in STAR has to pass the automatic regulatory control mentioned at the third action.

The advantages of this action are several:

- a tighter relationship between actors involved. For example, whether a public body requires an addiction to the documents forwarded by entrepreneur, the public body could directly turn to the entrepreneur and not to the OSS, avoiding the intermediation of this last one;

- an opener and more transparent public administration, allowing a more marked control of entrepreneur, which could view all public documents made available inside the virtual room. For this reason, STAR should establish the necessary restrictions to the access of information covered by privacy or trademarks;

- a reduction of administrative burdens. Once the documents are uploaded to the virtual room, public bodies / administrations could find the information without asking them to the citizen. According to once-only-principle, public administrations should ensure that entrepreneurs supply the same information only once to them, with an internal re-use of data also for other administrative
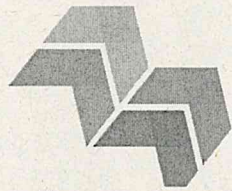
procedures that interest the same citizen. Public administration will share information and data also between themselves;

- a respect of legal jurisdictions between different public actors. The OSSs will maintain the role of responsible for administrative procedures that involve many public bodies / administrations, carrying the entrepreneur until the end of procedure and the satisfaction of his needs. Conversely, the Region should maintain a role of coordination and management of the IT infrastructure.

Steps of the Sub-Action IV:

✓ Municipal OSSs will make several public service agreements with Tuscany Region to discipline, for example, the regime of accountability of the different public actors involved, the decision-making processes, the rules to ensure the respect of legal deadline, technical standards, etc.

✓ The growth of STAR system will benefit, and the implementation will be facilitated by the use of another regional IT infrastructure employed for the Administrative Asynchronous Decision-making Conference (Conferenza dei servizi). The latter is a virtual conference created by Tuscany Region to simplify the decision-making process that involves a plurality of different administrations. The RAP will extend this concept and technology also to the specific decision-making process of each OSS.

✓ Experimentation of the new STAR system to a limited range of administrative procedures, especially for requirement of authorizations in large sales structures.
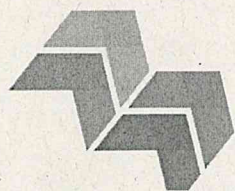
3. State of art

This is the "state of art" of the digital accesses, by the enterprises, through the digital services of the Municipality of Florence, after the actions put into practice thanks to the interregional learning activities: see table 2 and 3. We can notice a decisive increase of the practices received, by the Municipality of Florence, through the STAR platform and a decrease of the practices received through other channels.

Table 2

YEAR	ON LINE MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE	PEC MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE	STAR TUSCANY REGION
2014	37%	63%	—
2015	57%	43%	—
2016	76%	24%	—
2017	69%	22%	9%
2018	55%	19%	26%

Table 3

FULFILLMENTS AND PROCEEDING MANAGED THROUGH STAR		
Proceeding/fulfillment	2017	2018
automated	1292	2568
ordinary	80	703
communications	–	1303
total	1372	4574

4. Players involved

1.   **Tuscany Region Department of infrastructures and technologies for the development of**
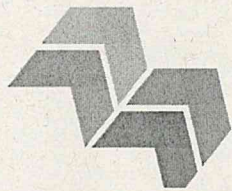
The player will be involved in fostering even more the IT infrastructure STAR; in choosing the more suitable digital and technological solutions; in organizing professional trainings on digital technologies for municipal public officers employed in OSSs.

2. **Managing Authority from Tuscany Region, Department of Economic Activities, responsible for Priority Axis 3 - Action 3.5.1 ERDF ROP Tuscany).**

The player will be involved in intermediating between Region and SMEs to make STAR implemented in a more user-friendly way; in illustrating to entrepreneurs the advantages and opportunities of the new functions of STAR.

Tuscany Region will approve Action Plan wit an Act of the responsible Manager and they will sign it, actually once definitevely approved by JS. Tuscany Region will coordinate and implement technologically in STAR the solutoins required from the Actions, such as the forma regulatory control of practices.

3. **Municipality of Florence - Department of Economic Development – responsible for administrative functions and services related to economic development and tourism.**
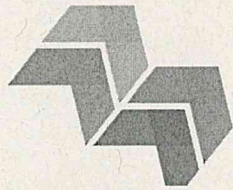
The player will be involved in supervising and cooperating to implement the RAP, in close contact with Regional players.

4. **OSS Representatives**

The players will be involved in representing the state of art of municipal OSSs, so as to understand lacks and potentialities inside public administrations, and in intervening with most appropriated measures for the aims of the RAP.

5. **University of Florence – Department of Law.**

The player will be involved in making available know-how and expertise to collaborate and to give

scientific supervision to the RAP implementation and simplification policies.

6.   University of Florence – Department of History, Archeology, Geography, Art and Entertainment.

The player will be involved in analysing and elaborating statistical data and in producing computerized cartography.

5. Timeframe

| Project's activities	Project End Date
Growth of STAR actors	30/09/2019
Growth of STAR functions	30/09/2019
Growth of STAR services	31/03/2020
Growth of STAR system	30/09/2020

6. Costs

Action is in implementation and costs are covered by the municipal Administration, as well as by Tuscany Region.

As the monitoring and application costs are concerned, they are estimated in 5.000€ for year and they will be covered by the municipal Administration, because the action will continue to live also after the end of the project.

7. Funding sources

The technological development and the services provided are financed by Tuscany Region
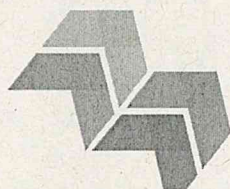
Source of inspiration from the project(initiative/activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Action	Subactions	Stakeholders involved	Costs	Financing sources	Timeframe
Study visit in Florence	The Florentine OSS Upgrade	I Growth of STAR actors	Municipal Policy of Florence, Tuscany Region, Chamber of Commerce, Health Authority, University of Florence, Fire Fighters.	Costs are those referred to the human and instrumental resources of the Direction Economic Activities of the Municipality of Florence and the Digital Department of Tuscany Region, that integrate, in their daily work, the activities required by the Subactions over the 5.000 euros for year. from the municipal budget	The technological development and the services provided are financed by Tuscany Region	30/09/2019
Study visit in Barcelona	The Florentine OSS Upgrade	II Growth of STAR functions	Tuscany Region			30/09/2019
5th International EPSA Knowledge-Transfer Conference	The Florentine OSS Upgrade	III Growth of STAR services	Tuscany Region			31/03/2020
Import Workshop in Florence	The Florentine OSS Upgrade	IV Growth of STAR system	Tuscany Region, Chamber of Commerce, University of Florence.			30/09/2020
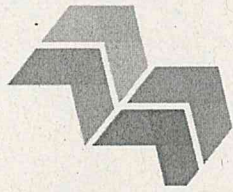
8. Monitoring of the Action

The Action will be monitored using the following quantitative and qualitative indicators.

	QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS	QUALITATIVE INDICATORS
COMPULSORY CRITERIA	• Number of the digital accesses on the total. • Number of the digital accesses through the online procedure of the Municipality of Florence. • Number of the digital accesses through Star.	• Entrepreneurs satisfaction, to be tested with surveys administered to entrepreneurs at the end of the submitting practice process. The main question will be if they are satisfied with the new functions. • Thematic workshop and focus groups.
COMPLEMENTARY CRITERIA	Meetings with companies and/or Third Entities.	

The meetings among Municipality of Florence, Tuscany Region and Stakeholders will be focused on implementation and improvement both of STAR and of the ROP announcements. These meetings will enable all the participants to face both the two "worlds" and try to bring them closer.

Date: 29/01/2020

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____