



iBuy
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Development Fund

Introduction

Despite the need to promote structural reforms in all state operations nationwide, the state of play regarding public procurement remains in an embryonic state for the whole country. The recent national Law 4412/2016 on public procurement (Official Gazette A 147/08-08-2016) introduced the concept of e-procurement and this is considered as the most significant reform with respect to innovative public procurement by most experts.

However, the Region of Sterea Ellada is distinguished, as it has shown great commitment promoting public innovation and processes of added value for firms and citizens. The Center for Regional and Local Innovation (Ke.Pe.To.K), which was established by the decision No. 24/2015 of the Board of Directors of the Regional Development Fund of the Region of Sterea Ellada (http://www.pste.gov.gr/?page_id=9221) implements actions that aim to facilitate the public innovation (e.g. the electronic circulation of documents between the services of the Region, the use of an advanced digital signature by all the elected officials and employees of the Region, etc.). Moreover, in its founding aims, the dissemination of public innovation to the other Regions of the country and the Central State is mentioned, too.

A proper action plan will be developed in order to facilitate the attainment of the project objectives for the Region, through the specification and scheduling of the required activities.

Part 1. General information

Project	Fostering the role of public authorities as demanders of innovation through public procurement “iBuy”
Partner organization	Region of Sterea Ellada (Central Greece) Lithuania Innovation Centre – Lead Partner Foundation for Innovation and Technology in the Balearic Islands - Government of the Balearic Islands – Partner The Baltic Institute of Finland – Partner
Other partner organisations involved (if relevant)	Agency of Regional Development of Bucharest Ilfov – Partner Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia – Partner National Innovation Agency of Portugal – Partner
Country	Greece
NUTS2 region	EL64 - Στερεά Ελλάδα (Sterea Ellada)
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Part 2. Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

**1. Regional Operational Programme
Investment in Growth and Jobs, ERDF
2014- 2020**

**2. Smart Specialization Strategy for the
Region of Sterea Ellada**

The Region of Sterea Ellada is responsible for the design, implementation and valuation of its Regional Operative Programme 2014-2020 policies as the Managing Authority of the Programme. As such, the Region of Sterea Ellada is the owner of the respective policy instruments mentioned in the Programme. It has the overall control over programme specification and the allocation of financial resources, taking into consideration the provisions of European and national legislation. The Regional Operational Programme for 2014-2020 consists of priority axes associated with the actions that Region of Sterea Ellada wants to implement. Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Innovation Public Procurement programme under the Regional Operational Programme of Sterea Ellada 2014 – 2020, Priority Axis 01 “Strengthening research, technological development and innovation”, Investment Priority 1a

Activities under Investment Priority 1a are expected to strengthen the Innovation Public Procurement programme and foster the exploitation of economies of scale as well. Improving overall competitiveness, extroversion and employment refer to the main objectives of the priority.

One of the key identified problems for the public sector (local, regional or national level) is the exploitation of economies of scale, leading to reduced costs and increased productivity. On the contrary, as the experience of other countries shows, there can be partnerships and joint investments between Regions for vertical or horizontal cooperation schemes towards the joint creation and exploitation of economies of scale.



Part 3. The Local Action Plan

The Region of Sterea Ellada is characterized by a lack of the leverages required to involve highly trained and educated human resources in the Region's activities and as a result to retain such personnel within the regional workforces.

The Region of Sterea Ellada has identified public procurement innovation to represent a key player and a potential candidate to initiate or to heavily influence a spill-over effect that could help the Region achieve its objectives, as reflected by the stated investment priorities of the policy instrument addressed.

Within the iBuy project and with the current Local Action Plan, the Region of Sterea Ellada opts for a paradigm shift in the public procurement profile of the area by differentiating the final product and promoting innovation as tool to achieve smart sustainable and inclusive growth. Overall, the project will assist in changing the strategic focus of the policy instrument, towards particularizing the spill-over effect and growth dimensions of public innovation procurement and thus will improve the productivity, quality, sustainability and impact of the public sector.

3.1 Policy Need Addressed

The main objectives of the policy instrument addressed are:

- i) the foundation of new innovative procedures,
- ii) the promotion of product and procedures innovations and
- iii) fostering of collaborations between public sector and stakeholders for the emergence of economies of scale. Low competitiveness and productivity levels, reduced innovability and internationalization procedures and the non-existence of economies of scale represent the key reasons for the identification of the above objectives.

In the context of the economic and financial crisis of the previous years, the Region has identified the need for improving the above instrument towards better illustrating the forces that could leverage the emergence of economies of scale. Within such an environment of economic pressures, the innovative public procurement, due to its inherent characteristics, is recognized as a key player and a potential candidate to initiate or to heavily influence a spill-over effect that could help the Region achieve its objectives, as stated in the Priority Axis 01.

In this context, the Region with the current Local Action Plan is dedicated to work towards the improvement of the addressed policy instrument in the following ways:

- Positioning the innovation procurement at a central role within the regional competitiveness strategy
- Increasing the attractiveness of the Region and thus the capacity to retain local talented human resources and incentivize investors
- Incentivize public sector to perform cross-sectoral collaboration and to acknowledge the benefits of public procurement innovation in general.

3.2 Policy Improvement Overview

The Action Plan of the Region of Sterea Ellada will clearly support the enhancement of the targeted policy instrument with a dedicated approach and promote planned activities to a central position within the competitiveness strategy of the Region.

In more detail, the Action Plan will address the lack of practical know-how and vocational training of the civil servants on starting and maintaining innovative procurement activities. Moreover, the Local Action Plan will attempt to provide solutions to deal with the lack of regional structures and mechanisms in place for supporting IPP. Finally, the Action Plan will work towards the continuous support of the internal

cooperation in the public administration professionals and local stakeholders in participating in new value chains and internationalizing their products and services.

3.3 List of Actions in the Action Plan

ACTION 1 – DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATION SKILLS THROUGH CONSULTATION AND TRAINING

With this Action, the Region of Sterea Ellada is dedicated in supporting public sector in modernizing its operations, collaborating, standardizing and certifying their products, embracing innovative activities and internationalizing.

With the Action “Development of Innovation Skills through Consultation and Training” being in the center of each sub-activity, the selected Action will work towards:

- Improving public sector’s cross-sector collaborations
- Further developing the regional PPI ecosystem
- Capacity building within the public sector
- Capacity and awareness building in traditional sectors of the wider economy

Part 4. Action Details

Action 1 – Development of innovation skills through consultation and training.

4.1 The background

The Local Action Plan development process has started in the context of the Local Stakeholders Group Meetings, where we mainly discussed and analyzed the good practices of our Project Partners from other Regions. At the same time, we started to analyze the situation in our Region. The aim within the iBuy project for the Region of Sterea Ellada is to foster Innovation Public Procurement Programme under the Regional Operational Programme of Sterea Ellada 2014 – 2020, Priority Axis 01 “Strengthening research, technological development and innovation”, Investment Priority 1a.

With the current Local Action Plan, the Region of Sterea Ellada opts for a paradigm shift in the public procurement profile of the area by differentiating the final product and promoting innovation as tool to achieve smart sustainable and inclusive growth. Overall, the project will assist in changing the strategic focus of the policy instrument, towards particularizing the spill-over effect and growth dimensions of public innovation procurement and thus will improve the productivity, quality, sustainability and impact of the public sector.

In this context, the Region of Sterea Ellada considers that “*Consultations regarding innovative public procurement*” from Lithuania consist an example that inspired our Region for the implementation and elaboration of the Local action Plan, given the fact that its main aim is to provide to the public sector support and consultancy services regarding pre-commercial procurement. More precisely, the Region of Sterea Ellada participated in the Partnership Policy Learning Meeting which took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 05 and 06 February 2020. The main takeaways from the PPL Meeting in Vilnius are as follows:

- The methodology used in Lithuania for designing the strategy in the field of research and technological development.
- Strong institutional system supporting public sector in Local, Regional and National level.
- The strategy, design and structure in Vilnius are a good example which is used as an inspiration on how to provide support to the public sector by consulting, creating awareness, community building, and internationalization.

4.2 Action

The action aims to provide know-how and access to information for the public servants, through the organization of relevant training seminars. As aforementioned, the strategy, design and structure in Vilnius are the three pillars that the Region of Sterea Ellada will use as an example. The seminars will be designed, organized and implemented by the Regional Centre for Business Support (KYE) and the Center for Regional and Local Innovation (Ke.Pe.To.K), with the support of the Directorate of Development Planning of the Region of Sterea Ellada.

The mission of Regional Centre for Business Support and the Center for Regional and Local Innovation is the mobilization of the manpower of the Region of Central Greece through seminars, training courses and consulting practices for the utilization of resources, programs and policies related to business development, in order to ensure the maximum possible and sustainable benefit. The main themes are as follows:

- Information - consulting support
- Personalized support for the entrepreneur and the potential investor
- Utilization of financial tools
- Business support for export processes - international orientation

The goal of the Regional Centre for Business Support is to strengthen research, technological development and innovation community, by highlighting good practices and enhancing the involvement of businesses in innovation activities. Typically, the Centre works with the regional innovation ecosystem and the relevant producers. As such, the Regional Centre for Business Support will provide both the facilities and training staff as well as it will be responsible for producing the necessary training material.

Action 1 includes the following distinct activities:

- Raise awareness among policymakers.

There is a need to raise awareness among policymakers and equip civil servants with the necessary knowledge to handle innovative public procurement processes. Furthermore, it is necessary to apply innovative public procurement processes and identify any legal shortcomings that need to be overcome and assess the added value of the specific process for the entity applying it. By promoting innovation in public procurement, it is expected that local innovation will be triggered to provide innovative goods or services to the public authorities that will act as customers. In other words, it

is necessary to foster the demand of innovation and, through implementing innovation public procurement activities the region will be able to do so. In order to raise awareness among policymakers, we will create a Committee. This Committee will provide civil servants with the necessary knowledge in order to handle innovative public procurement processes, such as minimizing evaluation time. The activity will be financed by Investment Priority 1a: "Reinforcement of research, technological development and innovation" (ERDF – 2.92% of EU allocation): increase research potential and private investments in research and development, and provide support to increase investment of private RDI.

➤ Stakeholders match-making tools to enhance liaisons between public and private sector

The activity targets the support of the regional ecosystem for the interconnection or joint implementation of projects between entities of the public sector, with enterprises from other sectors (e.g., Agri-food, Tourism).

The support will take the form of an online repository which will document and map the whole regional ecosystem, that is existing different actors, such as entities of the film sector, professionals from other sectors and mainly the Agri-food and Tourism sectors (restaurants, hotels, open markets). This repository will cover the need for an organized and flexible interconnection between the local market and the public sector. All professionals in the area, interested in participating in this process, will be invited to register their business in order to facilitate the contacts of producers' agents with local suppliers.

The activity will assist entities to be actively involved in new value chains and become true catalysts for regional growth. The produced online repository will be hosted on the web site of the Regional Centre for Business Support and the respective stakeholder engagement campaign (advertising and official invitations) will be implemented by the Region of Sterea Ellada. The activity will be financed by Investment Priority 1a: "Reinforcement of research, technological development and innovation" (ERDF – 2.92% of EU allocation): increase research potential and private investments in research and development, and provide support to increase investment of private RDI.

4.3 Players involved

In order to achieve the objectives of its Action Plan, the Region of Sterea Ellada started from the 1st semester of the iBuy Project the procedure to involve as many local players and stakeholders. Until now, the wider public of our players involved consists of:

- Region of Sterea Ellada
- Business Support Centre of Sterea Ellada (K.Y.E.)
- Center for Regional and Local Innovation (Ke.Pe.To.K)

- Technical Educational Institute of Sterea Ellada (T.E.I.)
- Materials Industrial Research & Technology Center S.A. (E.V.E.T.A.M.)
- Regional Association of Municipalities (P.E.D.)
- Technical Chamber of Greece/Department of East Sterea
- SMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises)

Ke.Pe.To.K. is a regional entity that has amongst its aims the promotion of public innovation at national and regional level; T.E.I. of Sterea Ellada and E.V.E.T.A.M. are two of the main potential beneficiaries of the policy instrument addressed; The Regional Association of Municipalities represents the municipalities of the Region, which are beneficiaries in most of the Operational Programme budget lines. They regularly launch calls with the money allocated to them; The members of the Technical Chamber are chartered engineers, who in most cases act as the providers of the services demanded. Finally, the other experts gather knowledge and perspective on the role of the academia and the industry. The aforementioned players will be part of a membership in which the Region of Sterea Ellada will be the coordinator.

The two-day Partnership Policy Learning Meeting in Lithuania was an excellent opportunity for the Region of Sterea Ellada to take advantage of the methodology used in Lithuania for designing the strategy in the field of research and technological development. We were delighted to establish a relationship with the Lithuania Innovation Centre and we are sure that this will benefit us significantly because of their long experience in this type of activities. We are already in contact with the Lithuanian Partner, in order to take advantage of his inputs on how to provide support to the public sector by consulting, creating awareness, community building, and internationalization. After the Partnership Policy Learning Meeting in Lithuania, the representatives of the Region of Sterea Ellada and the Lithuania Innovation Centre are in contact in order to continue exchanging information regarding innovative public procurement.

4.4 Time frame

Expected start date of the action: November 2020

Expected end date of the action: November 2022

4.5 Costs

80.000 E

4.6 Funding sources

Regional Operational Program and Jobs ERDF 2014 – 2020

Date

Signature

Stamp of the organisation

