



INTRA facilitates evidence-based policymaking on regional level by building on research findings and highlighting the importance of regional quadruple helix partnerships in research and design of new policy models for internationalisation of SMEs.

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E-newsletter 1



## Introduction

The 1<sup>st</sup> E-newsletter, prepared within the project INTRA “Internationalisation of regional SMEs”, is related to the 1<sup>st</sup> semester activities of the project.

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## Partnership

**MRA** - Maribor Development Agency (SI)

**RAPIV** - Regional agency for entrepreneurship and innovations - Varna (BG)

**FUNDECYT-PCTEX** - Foundation FUNDECYT Scientific and Technological Park of Extremadura (ES)

**CAPITANK** - Chemical And Pharmaceutical Innovation Tank – Limited Liability Consortium (IT)

**UALG** - University of Algarve (PT)

**CUE** - Coventry University Enterprises Limited (UK)





## 1 – Description of INTRA project

INTRA project focuses on the role of public authorities in creating internationalization services to support the competitiveness of the regional economies and thus contribute to the **Europe 2020 strategy**.

Developed by the project partners, it builds on internationalisation research findings as well as highlights the importance of regional quadruple helix partnerships to bring together universities, business, civil society and local authorities.

The stakeholders are central to: the research and design of new internationalisation policy models, the wider acceptance of the good practices (GP) identified within the INTRA regions and for the preparation of new project proposals to be funded under the respective national Cohesion policy 2014-2020.

In order to facilitate the evidence-based policy making on regional level the main objective of the INTRA is to better understand and address the internationalisation of SMEs, in particular the **European Regional Development Fund**. Policy instruments.

The objectives of INTRA are to provide comprehensive mapping, evaluation and benchmarking of various internationalisation services available across the regions, highlight good practices/gaps that promote/impede on SMEs at various stages of the internationalisation process.

Upon the selection of GP the viable strategies/instruments to enhance good practices and address gaps within the regional development programmes will be elaborated and described in the Policy recommendations .

They will then be implemented in the regional Action plans as to contribute to the internationalisation policies aligned to the needs of SMEs and gaps not filled by the existing instruments.



## 2 – INTRA Objectives

**Provide comprehensive mapping**, evaluation and comparison of various internationalisation services available, supported by the RD policies;

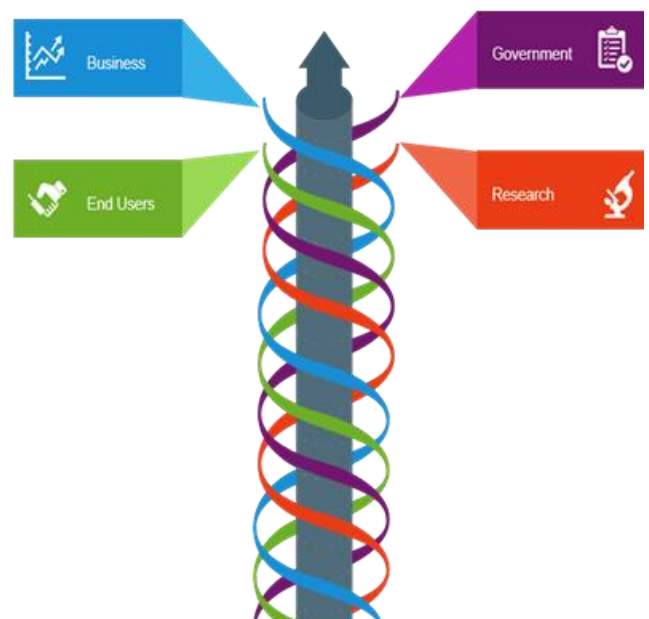
**Highlight good practices/gaps** that promote/impede on SMEs at various stages of the internationalisation process from the point of governmental services, business consultancy and foremost SMEs;

**Recommend viable strategies/instruments** to enhance good practices and address gaps within the regional development programmes;

**Enhance internationalization knowledge** in regional business environment, predominantly the PPs as well as their stakeholders;

**Transfer good practices** by viable regional Action plans as to contribute to the internationalization policies aligned to the needs of SMEs and gaps not filled by the existing instruments.

## Method of quadruple helix





### 3 – Kick Off Meeting Maribor (Slovenia)

The Kick-off meeting was held in the premises of Maribor Development Agency from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2016. Representatives of the **Interreg Europe programme**, *Mr. Benoît Dalbert and Mrs. Aleksandra Niechajowicz*, greeted the partnership via Skype and gave some advices on how the cooperation and respect on the deadline and rules are important as well as the achievement of the project's objectives. During the two-days working, project partners presented their organizations and goals within the project, with special emphasis on responsibilities each partner had about reaching certain project outputs and results. The main activities carried out were the: nominee of members of the project management team, to perform the functions of project manager, financial manager, exchange of experiences and communication/dissemination manager; future constitution of the Steering Committee; dates for project events; first draft documents to finalize within the 1<sup>st</sup> semester ; nr of GP to identify (54 in total), of which 5 or 6 will be presented during the Study visit round 1. In order to harmonise the project team and ensure a positive start of the project, **Team building exercises** were organized by MRA and followed the discussions. A video of the meetings was realized and is available on You tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cclitPbKDYCg>

### 4 – Regional Stakeholders Group

Each project partner is responsible to set up the **Regional Stakeholder Group** that is involved from the very beginning of the project to facilitate the learning process of the organisations involved in the policy-making process and its implementation in order to assure that the activities of the action plan are implemented later on.

**The Regional Stakeholder Groups validates the State of Affairs, Policy Recommendations and Action Plan and the results and outcomes of the study visits.**

#### Regional Stakeholders Group in Varna (BG)

Regional Stakeholders Group was held in Varna on July 2016, 7<sup>th</sup>. The participants in the Meeting were Ministry of Economy, Directorate Economic Promotion Policies; Deputy- Mayor of Municipality of Varna; SMEs, NGOs and organisations dealing with internationalisation; scientific community – University of Economics - Varna, previous and ongoing similar project and networks – EEN and staff of RAPIV. All participants in the RSG confirmed the understanding of the importance of their role in the project and expressed their desire to participate actively in the activities of the group.

#### #Con\_te Regional Stakeholders Group in Teramo (IT)

Regional Stakeholders Group was held in Abruzzo Region on July 2016, 18<sup>th</sup> with the occasion of an event organised by Confindustria (entrepreneurs association) and CapitanK (partner of INTRA) on the competitiveness of regional SMEs and strategies for the use of structural funds. Decision makers, Scientific Community, NGOs and Organisations dealing with internationalization and companies of the domains of regional smart specialisation actively participate at the event. Politicians and the scientific community representatives expressed a deep interest in the project and asked to be involved in the forthcoming activities.

#### Regional Stakeholders Group in Badajoz (ES)

The 1<sup>st</sup> RSG meeting was held in Badajoz, on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016. The meeting was attended by the most representatives stakeholders related to the internationalisation support policies in the region of Extremadura: Public Administration, Organisations / Agencies giving support to SMEs, SMEs representatives and Academia. The meeting started with a presentation of the INTERREG EUROPE. Afterwards the INTRA project was presented: description, objectives, expected outputs and results. Attention was paid to the role of stakeholders in the project. They express their availability for the interviews related with the State of Affairs as well as for the identification of Good Practices.

#### Regional Stakeholders Group in Coventry (EN)

The 1<sup>st</sup> RSG meeting was held at Coventry on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The meeting was hosted by CUE, the INTRA UK partner at Coventry University Technology Park. The meeting was attended by representatives from Coventry University Enterprises, Coventry City Council, Stratford on Avon District Council, the Growth Hub, West midlands Chambers of commerce, the UK Department for International Trade and EEN. All participants were very enthusiastic and agreed on a way to collaborate in the future to support the INTRA project. This stakeholder group will permit a better understanding of the region synergies in terms of international support and will benefit greatly a multitude of stakeholders including policy makers, support agencies, universities and regional SMEs.

#### Regional Stakeholders Group in Podravje (SI)

The LP of INTRA held the RSG meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Participants were national stakeholders from the Ministry of Economic Development, Technology and SPIRIT Slovenia and Technology, Economic Interest Grouping of Slovenian Regional Development Agencies, the University of Maribor and TechnoCenter, Styrian Technology Park, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska, Regional chambers of craft and small business, the Institute for Entrepreneurship Research Maribor and an Agency for Marketing of Areas. They all agreed that many of their activities are in a way overlapping but they can find great synergy during the preparation of joint pilot activities.



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## 6 – 2<sup>nd</sup> International event in Varna, 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2016

The 2<sup>nd</sup> International meeting of the project was held between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in Varna (Bulgaria). It consisted of:

- Dissemination event
- ITW Interregional Thematic workshop “Knowledge generation in internationalisation processes”
- Study Visits
- ITF Interregional Task Force
- Steering Committee

During the **Dissemination event**, held on 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2016, Dr. Dimitar Radev, Executive director of RAPIV, introduced to the media INTRA project, the subsequent events, hosted by RAPIV and expected results of project partners participation in them.

Project Partners (PPs) of INTRA project, external experts and regional stakeholder group members gathered at the **Interregional Thematic Workshop “Knowledge Generation in Internationalisation Processes”**, held on 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 at Graffiti Gallery Hotel, where categorisation of internationalisation measures, mapping existing policies, needs of SMEs, government initiatives were discussed and clarified.

After the conclusion the site tour during the **1<sup>st</sup> Study Visit**, the **1<sup>st</sup> Interregional Task Force Meeting** was held. It provided necessary inputs to guarantee high quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the policy learning exercise as well as generate new knowledge. As a result of the meeting it was highlighted all lessons learned and were exchanged different points of view .

The **1<sup>st</sup> Steering Committee Meeting** was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at the premises of RAPIV, where current issues and topics were discussed and clarified. PPs presented and approved the elaborated guidelines, rules and templates during the first project semester which are essential for the future work of the partnership under the project.

### Study Visits

The **1<sup>st</sup> Study Visit** was also held along with the other events. During the visit all PPs learnt about different Bulgarian GPs for internationalisation:

- Internationalisation of **MarCon Ltd** through technological partnership with international partner;
- Internationalisation of the Bulgarian enterprises through the organization of international events, trainings and providing of information services, proposed by **BSMEPA**;
- National Export Portal, proposed by **BSMEPA**;
- Internationalisation of the innovative start-up **Newmark Ltd**, through using the possibilities of OP “Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy 2007-2013”;
- Promotion of regional tourism related SMEs on international markets , proposed by **FIL Ltd**;
- Technology transfer of know-how in market-oriented products, by **Bulgarian Ship Hydrodynamics Centre (BSHC)**;
- Internationalisation of **Eldominvest Ltd** through the successful implementation of its Strategy for company development;
- Guarantee Agreement under COSME – support for business development, proposed by **CIBANK JSC**.

### Interregional task Force

ITF consists of delegated PPs staff , is responsible for the content management of **Exchange of Experiences Activity** and represents the knowledge based input for the Steering Committee as well as regional Stakeholder Groups.

Following sub-groups or themes in internationalisation are subject of ITF discussions:

- Leadership, organisation and management of internationalisation policies;
- Training, human resources needed for internationalisation;
- Financial resources for internationalisation.

### Interregional Thematic Workshop

The aim of Interregional Thematic Workshops is knowledge generation on themes like:

- categorisation of internationalization measures,
- mapping existing policies;
- needs of SMEs, Government Initiatives;
- selection of GPs or Policy Recommendations.

Project partners as well as international guest speakers and lecturers will actively contribute to knowledge generation