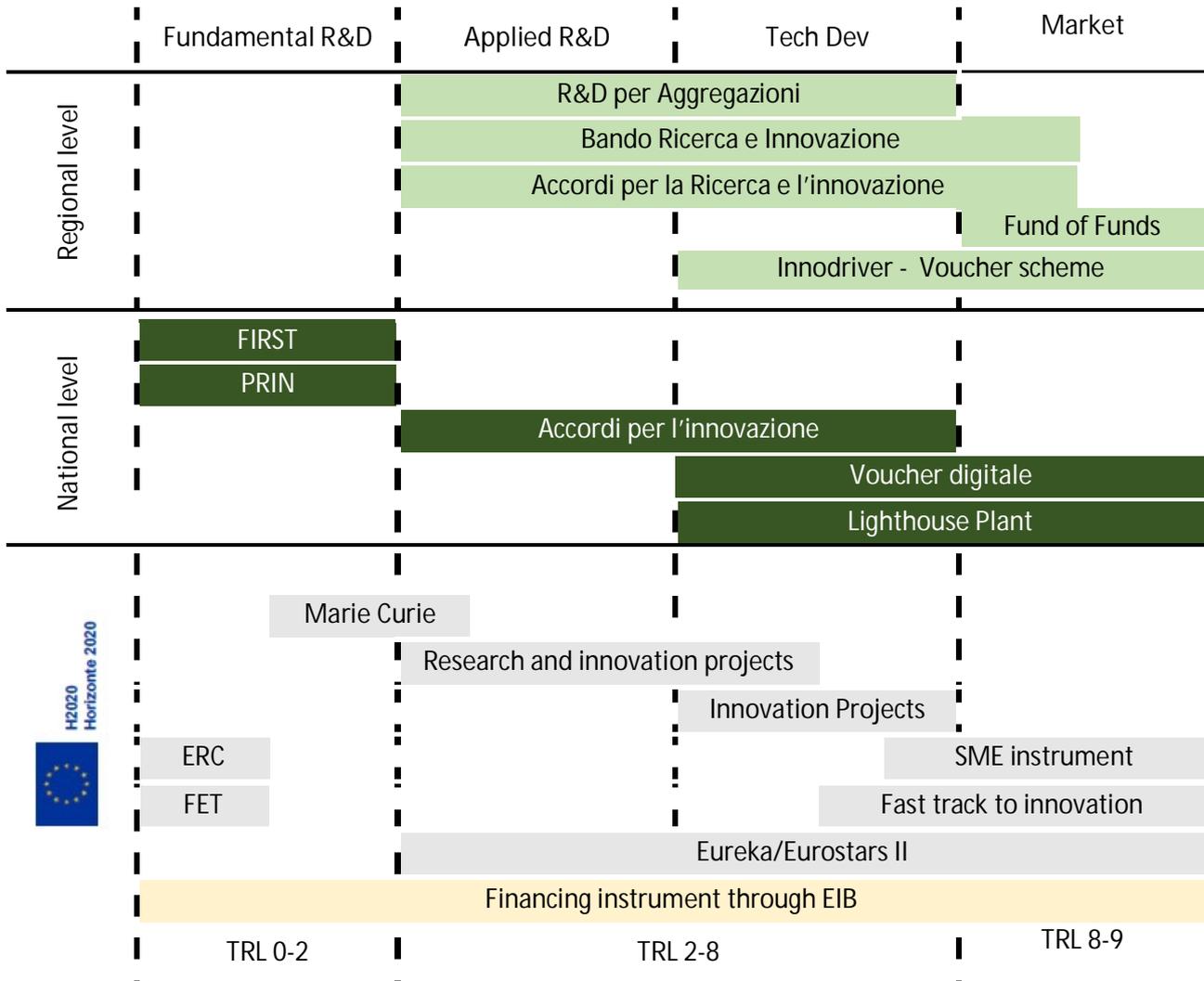


Policy Brief – Lombardy OSDD

Lombardy funding instruments scheme



Lombardy OSDD took place in Milan and Bergamo on the 27th, 28th and 29th of June 2017. 18 participants from 7 partner regions (Tampere, South Netherlands, Basque Country, Catalonia, Zuid Holland, Flanders and Scotland) attended the three-days meeting and each region succeed in mobilising 1-2 regional stakeholders (universities, regional development agencies, research centres...) to take part in Lombardy OSDD.

The event was thought to achieve multiple goals:

- To give the attending regions an overview of Lombardy innovation ecosystem with a focus on innovation policy, smart specialization strategy and the actors involved in the implementation of the regional strategy.

- To provide a deeper understanding of the mechanism designed and implemented by AFIL aimed at involving different regional actors in innovation activities. In particular, the example of Vanguard Initiative activities has been showcased during the OSDD.
- To set up structured discussion for the policy acceleration and co-creation sessions, focusing not only on the Region's policy instrument chosen for the project purpose, but also addressing other instruments that are relevant for interregional cooperation and Vanguard pilot development.

Advantages and opportunities of inter-regional cooperation deriving from the extension to other Regions of the instruments/tools/practices presented

- Learn from the Lombardy Region process established for the definition, implementation and update of RIS3 strategy. The procedure is very clear and it is structured in a way to involve clusters organisation in the process and align existing instruments to reinforce the dynamics.
- Update and upgrade the voucher instrument proposed by different Regions learning from diverse applications.
- Investigate the feasibility of expanding voucher scheme at interregional level to foster the cooperation among interregional stakeholders and promote the access to the network of existing pilot plants and research facilities.
- Export the model of "AlpGip" concept developed at EUSALP level as a potential financing platform for Vanguard Initiative.
- Exploit cluster level networking as an opportunity for Vanguard demo-cases empowerment and progress.
- Discuss the opportunity to launch "test calls" addressed to Vanguard projects taking Manunet as an example.

Barriers and difficulties to face for the introduction of new instruments/tools/practices in a coordinated and synergic way

- Manunet is not the proper instrument to cope with Vanguard financial needs. It covers layer-2 costs, but not the initial layer-1 investments.
- Regional and managing authorities need to have clear the return on investment when participating to Joint calls (i.e. MANUNET) and it is not always easy to demonstrate it.
- Need to deal with scarcity of resources and administrative bureaucratic issues in relation to regional regulations.
- Voucher scheme is not uniformly applied in the different regions. In some cases, it is instrument for educational/advisory activities in other cases it is meant to support innovation actions.

- Need to agree on standard criteria for the certification of foreign service providers and the designation of auditors and audit procedures
- The level of maturity and cohesion of clusters is variable. This makes common goal setting more Difficult considering that also the level of involvement and commitment of companies may vary among regions and even within regional groups.
- There are no particular eligibility barriers in using Fund of Funds instrument to support the development of Vanguard pilots, but the model is now designed for investments on specific companies, so it would be necessary to think about how to finance the Vanguard specific cases.

Recommendations and suggestions proposed to overcome such barriers and difficulties

- Improve synergies with other EU-level projects working on similar issues, for example, Innovoucher, Pilots4U, Smart Pilots or INNO_INFRA_SHARE
- Demonstrate the added value/ROI of each demo case for each potential investor. This could be done by creating specific (joint) actions for awareness-raising (at the level of MA/companies) and business plan development.
- To start implementing incremental solutions and improvement to the existing instruments, even though the resources available are limited and not all the Regions are engaged since the beginning.
- An “EU” or “Vanguard” label for voucher systems could create a common base for evaluating/certifying providers and companies. This would facilitate inter-regional spending of vouchers.
- Promote the discussion among experts on Fund of Funds and Vanguard Initiative representatives to evaluate the application of the scheme to Vanguard initiative.
- Once the critical mass of Regions and Member States supporting the initiatives has been reached, the consortium recognised the opportunity to act as lobby not only at Vanguard level but also for mobilising relevant players.