INTRA
Interreg Europe

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE ON SME INTERNATIONALISATION

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INTRODUCTION

INTRA Interreg Europe project focuses on the role of public authorities in creating internationalisation services to support the competitiveness of the regional economies and thus contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy. The partnership has identified good practices, in the field of internationalization, originating from INTRA partner regions. It highlights the role of academia, business, civil society and local authorities (the regional quadruple helix partnership) as the main stakeholders in research and design of new internationalization policy models, who can achieve the wider acceptance of identified good practices into the preparation of new project proposals which are to be funded under the respective national Cohesion policy 2014 – 2020.

INTRA partners will exchange, explore and disseminate good practice in ways to promote internationalisation and improve competitiveness of the respective regions involved. INTRA has 6 partners from six different EU28 member states: Maribor Development Agency (SI), Regional Agency for entrepreneurship and innovations – Varna (BG), Foundation FUNDECYT Scientific and Technological Park of Extremadura (ES), University of Algarve (PT), Coventry University Enterprises Limited (UK), CAPITANK (IT) and is supported by the Managing Authorities for ERDF and represent the active stakeholders in internationalization.

The objectives of Interreg Europe Project 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 internationalization 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 and implemented in the regional Action plans as to contribute to the internationalization policies aligned to the needs of SMEs and gaps not filled by the existing instruments.

AIMS

This good practice guide comprises a collection of good practices selected among the identified and verified study cases presented in the course of Interreg Europe INTRA project. The guide aims to give policymakers, managing authorities and regional stakeholders, access to the international programmes, projects, other regional initiatives successfully put in place in other European regions.

The INTRA good practice guide, will provide a starting point with further information provided by contacting the specific practice holder or the corresponding project partner. Full version of each good practice description can be found on the INTRA website (http/:www.interregeurope.eu/intra). Each good practice card contains the summary information of the initiative and includes some initial information for a possible transfer.

GOOD PRACTICE DEFINITION

In the context of Interreg Europe Project INTRA, a good practice is a national, regional or local initiative aimed at supporting SMEs to internationalise. It can be for example a project, a process, a policy or a technique which has some evidence of success in reaching its objectives. Moreover, a good practice has the potential to be transferred to other geographic areas through regional strategy and policy.

Specifically as noted in the Interreg Europe Programme Manual, a good practice is defined as an initiative (e.g. project, project, process, technique) undertaken in one of the programme's priority axes which has proved to be successful in the region and which is of potential interest to other regions. In order to evaluate the practice as successful, it has to provide tangible and measurable results in achieving a specific objective. Although the Interreg Europe programme primarily refers to good practices, valuable knowledge is also gained from understanding the challenges and pitfalls of practices, where lessons learnt can be taken into consideration in the exchange of experience process.

For each of the good practices, presentations, discussions and debates were held during each study visit organised by the corresponding partner. Prior to each study visit, the host partner completed a good practice description adding valuable links and supporting reports when available. This preparatory documentation was sent to each partner at least a couple of weeks before travelling to the selected region. During each study visit, host partners organised for a presentation and sometimes a demonstration of the good practices by the GP holder. After each study visit, partners would discuss and exchange views with their regional stakeholders and evaluate each good practice case presented during the visits.

METHODOLOGY

A set of study visits were carried out during the first 19 months of the INTRA project which allowed each host partner the opportunity to present a selection of study cases from their particular region. A total of six study visits were organised in 6 different regions: Североизточен in Bulgaria, Vzhodna Slovenija region in Slovenia, Extremadura in Spain, Abruzzo in Italy, Algarve in Portugal and the West Midlands region in the UK.

The following flow chart illustrates the process taken at different stages of the Interreg Europe Project INTRA:

IDENTIFICATION

- Desk research along with consultations with local stakeholders to identify SMEs internationalisation good practices in each partners region.
- Host partners select the appropriate good practices for each study visit

DOCUMENT

- A template was used to capture enough information so that partners can start the process of validation identifying possible match for their region.
- This was distributed to partners pior to the Study Visits

STUDY VISIT

- Study visits were undertaken to see the good practice in situ and gain first hand information from the good practice holders

VALIDATION

- Good practices were evaluated in order to identify the ones that have been most effective in the SME Internationalisation support arena.
- Each partner reflected with Regional Stakeholders and review any possible transfer

DISSEMINATION

- Good practices that met the right criteria were included in the GP guide
- The good practices recorded in this guide will be disseminated through seminars, project website, newsletters and social media.

2ND STUDY VISITS

- Partners evaluate GPs and match their regional needs with GPs presented
- Partners selected good practices to revist with Regional Stakeholders allowing them direct access to the GP holder and providing deeper knowledge and insight into the GP case.

ADOPTION & IMPLEMENTATION

- Lessons learnt from GP from other regions are included in regional action plan improving regional instruments to be implemented in phase 2 of INTRA
- Project's end goal is to identify and implement effective practices in order to meet needs and improve SME internationalisation performance

During the first meeting, partners discussed the template for capturing the good practices and the criteria that should be followed in order to present a good practice during study visits. Protocols, processes and templates were all agreed and set up for partners to utilise and share for each study visit. This was very important for the identification and documentation phase, making sure that the quality but also the relevance of each good practice was followed by all partners.

During the study visit to Coventry, which was the last study visit organised within the first round, the consortium debated and discussed how the good practices from each region should be grouped for the validation stage. It was agreed to use the following four umbrella headings:

- **Financial support services for Internationalisation,**
- **Services for developing human resources/ managerial capacity,**
- **SME support structure and other non-financial services,**
- **Information provision services.**

Following this, each good practice was classify according to this denomination and gathered per section. The main argument was to make sure the information was presented in a logical way and for people who were not involved with the project, to be able to search and find the information easily. It is worth to mention that the location of the good practice still needs to be taken into consideration, but this will also be somehow reflected with similar good practices that are set up in different regions. In essence Good Practices' aims and objectives might be the same but their implementation, delivery and results would be affected also by their context. In parallel to the work of the good practices visits and to make sure the evaluation for each partner's region is appropriate, all partners developed a regional state of affairs. On one hand partners were able to describe their own situation based on the existing policy frameworks, explaining the current instruments available to support SMEs internationalisation and on the other hands partners were able to identify SMEs needs gathered through surveys but also through interviews conducted with regional stakeholders. A contemporary overview of each partner's region was made and summarised in a joint state of affairs report (online available https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/file_1520952745.pdf).

VALIDATION

Collecting the good practices was done in the first phase, while partners reviewed their own regional activities. The validation of the good practices was done in two steps. The first step was implemented directly after each study visit. Partners and stakeholders reviewed all GPs that were presented and commented on their relevance, effectiveness and possible learning exchanges based on their own experiences. The second step was fulfilled at the end of the first round of study visits, after all good practices have been presented in order to have a better overall understanding of the GPs. Group discussions occurred at regional level during regional stakeholders group meetings, at interregional level at partners' meetings and finally partners were able to select GPs for the second round of study visit, based on their regional needs and the knowledge of the GPs in other regions.

CATALOGUE

The following SME Internationalisation models have been carefully selected as 'good practices' for the topic :- Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to Internationalisation and the specific objective: to enhance international competitiveness of SMEs.

To ensure that all GPs collected were documented in a clear structured and consistent manner, a common Good Practice card was used based on the online policy platform developed on the Interreg Europe Programme website. Built on this approach, comparative analysis and evaluation of each case was provided.

A fuller version of the GP description can be downloaded from the INTRA website library at https://www.interregeurope.eu/intra/library/#folder=976 where the contact person for each GP can be found for more information.

SERVICES FOR DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES/ MANAGERIAL CAPACITY

SMEs and micro SMEs tend to have an intuitive approach when it comes to management. By this we mean that often smaller enterprises do not have the sufficient human capital and could lack the expertise needed to internationalise as opposed to larger companies. This would be easily illustrated by looking at the number of employees SMEs have. They can often be limited to a handful of entrepreneurs who have no other choice but to play a multitude of roles when it comes to internationalising their enterprise (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001). The development of human resources and managerial capacity in SMEs is a key area which needs attention. Value is created when a company is investing in education and skills to develop its staff. The human capital of the company is improved as the skills and capabilities of a person increases. This would in turn, not only grow the expertise of the staff but this would allow SMEs to feel more confident in their knowledge and create an international experience. Human capital is an important factor for economic growth (Novak & Bojnec,2005) .

Dedicated support is required to adapt to the SMEs style of management and take a very concise and sometimes basic approach, for different capabilities needed to internationalise. The good practices gathered in this section illustrate examples of European initiatives supporting the development of human resources and managerial capacities to internationalise. Human resource training and service offerings for SME internationalisation are key elements of these good practices and they include:

- **Training on internationalisation and new market entry strategy**
- **Training on smart mobility market trends and opportunities**
- **Language and cultural training**
- **Country-focused training (fiscal, legal, ...)**
- **Export forums**
- **Internationalisation/export academies**
- **International technology transfer**
- **Other**

	Training on internationalization and new market entry strategy	Training on smart mobility market trends and opportunities	Language and cultural training	Country-focused training (fiscal, legal, ...)	Internationalisation/ export academies	International technology transfer
HR1 SME INT New to export (West Midlands, UK)	X					
HR2 International Trade Management, Education Training (Slovenia)	X					
HR3 BSMEPA – Trainings on internationalisation (Bulgaria)	X					
HR4 Abruzzo 4 export (Abruzzo Italy)	X					
HR5 FORMACOEX (Extremadura Spain)		X				
HR6 Sinergie education (Abruzzo Italy)			X			
HR7 CC Adviser (West Midlands UK)				X		
HR8 Masterclasses (West Midlands UK)					X	
HR9 Internationalisation Business Bootcamp (Algarve Portugal)					X	
HR10 R & I global grant (Abruzzo Italy)						X
HR11 D'Annunzio University in Europe (Abruzzo Italy)						X
HR12 University of TE - internationalisation (Abruzzo Italy)						X
HR13 University of AQ - Innovation as driver (Abruzzo Italy)						X

HR1 West Midlands SME internationalisation - New to export

A package of exporting workshops and grant for supporting activities.

West Midlands SME Internationalisation – New to Export, was delivered under the banner of the West Midlands SME Internationalisation Project and was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Project was managed by Coventry University Enterprises Limited and jointly delivered by UK Trade & Investment and West Midlands Chambers of Commerce and aims to increase the number and competitiveness of eligible West Midlands SMEs operating internationally.

The package consisted of a one day introductory workshop on exporting and putting a "Next Step Action Plan" together, followed by either a two day visit to market or a one day workshop on a "high growth" market with a £500 grant for further export activity. Companies who attended the workshop could apply for a grant and were supported according to their action plan. It was not on a basis of a published call with a deadline but an ongoing open process. Companies were working on a one to one basis with an International Trade Adviser (specialist provided by DIT- UK Department for International Trade) to work on their action plan for internationalisation and applied for further support as appropriate.

More specifically grants were used towards various activities including market visits, attending exhibitions and trade fairs, internationalising websites, marketing, product testing.

Resources needed

- The cost of Trade Advisers (55k per year per adviser). The region has 34 currently
- The cost of support staff to complete administration, develop and prepare material for the workshops
- The cost of the venue hire and catering for each event
- The cost of the £500 grant awarded

Evidence of success

It provided a package of support to new to export/ inexperienced reactive companies which in three days provided them with the theoretical understanding of export and then allowed them to experience a visit to an overseas market or a workshop on high growth markets with funding. The most popular combination was export workshop and market visit.

This also generated a total of 516 SMEs assists. This figure is also linked to the non-financial support that was run in parallel with this grant scheme

Potential for learning or transfer

This support could be recreated within other regions using existing initiatives to combine theoretical plus practical support.

This was delivered in parallel with a grant giving scheme. It is important to understand from the SMEs viewpoint the potential full offering they can receive and what can complement other initiatives giving SMEs a full package of support.

HR2 International Trade Management, Education Training

Experienced export coaches turn theoretical knowledge into a practical export business plan and prepare participants for meeting with potential customers.

ITM Worldwide Concept is a vocational training program in trade, designed to build export competences of SMEs, providing expertise, knowledge and networks needed to help business grow internationally. It offers academic and practical training in a total of 14 days in 6 months. The program has three steps:

1. preparing for export: seminars in trade regulations, international market research, export coaching to implement an export business plan, focusing on export strategy
2. preparing for the market: export sales training and joint international seminars abroad, together with participants from other countries to enlarge the international network of colleagues and trade experts, seminars in cross-culture, managing change and international trade marketing
3. business meetings with potential customers, resulting in exportation

ITM concept is offered in partnership with ministries and trade councils worldwide. SPIRIT Slovenia is a local partner, and recruits participants (between 25 - 40 yrs. old employees, priority SMEs with min 5 employees and 10-35 % export in previous year, consulting companies not eligible), arranges local seminars in trade regulations and ITM Worldwide delivers the trade training locally and abroad. Participants are invited to apply through annual invitations published by SPIRIT Slovenia. Practice is organised under Programme for internationalisation 2015 – 2020 and its Action plans 2015-2016 and 2017-2017, and is in line with Priority Axis 3 of OP.

Resources needed

The allocated budget for this GP is 150.000 EUR, of which per participant 7000 EUR. The budget covers the costs of ITM and mentors within SPIRIT but does not include the 1000 EUR for seminar abroad to be borne by SME. In addition, the SME has to deposit 960 EUR for participation.

Evidence of success

ITM Worldwide has trained more than 1500 export managers and trainees in 27 countries in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean since 1994. Since 2006, 131 export trainees finished training in Slovenia (annual target for 2015 – 2020 is 15 trainees, 1 per company). First four generation companies show excellent results in international trade: in three to five years after participation in the program, 35 companies entered 63 new markets and increased their export on average for 40%.

Potential for learning or transfer

The training programme (methodology, training material, trainers) can be adopted to any national/regional situation.

HR3 Internationalisation of SMEs through organisation of trainings

Increasing the knowledge and capacity of the Bulgarian companies to export on international markets through basic, sectoral trainings and information seminars.

The export orientation of the SMEs is achieved through the participation of Bulgarian SMEs in trainings in export, information meetings focused on internationalisation and creation of sector-oriented export strategies. The good practice is realized by implementation of the activities under the project BG161 PO003-4.2.01-0001 „Promotion of the internationalisation of Bulgarian enterprises", funded by the ERDF and National budget. Increasing of knowledge is made through:

1) Basic trainings for defining export readiness of SMEs; development of business plan and foreign market analysis; planning for target market servicing; requirements in terms of business and activities; external and internal risks for the company; export action plan; export marketing – documentation.
2) Info seminars dedicated to commercial agreements and information resources of the EU; good practices in exporting to third and EU countries from Bulgarian producers and traders; export insurance and export financing opportunities.
3) Trainings specialized for different export oriented sectors as food and beverage, chemical and pharmaceutical products, textile, clothing, furniture, manufacture of machines, equipment, vehicle, etc.

BSMEPA is delivering its services in partnership with branch associations, chambers of commerce and industry as well as other local NGOs. BSMEPA maintains close relations with more than 50 foreign business and trade development organisations.

Resources needed

The total cost of the practice is 1 571 979 EUR and is part of the budget of the project BG161PO003 – 4.2.01-0001, "Promotion of the internationalisation of the Bulgarian SMEs".

Evidence of success

The quantitative indicators which measure the success of the good practice are:

- Introductory and info seminars held – 90;
- Specialized sectoral trainings held – 36;
- Number of enterprises participated in trainings, seminars, information meetings and/or consultations – 3500.

Potential for learning or transfer

Validation of the success of the GP is provided through additional funds from the state budget to guarantee implementation of the activities for the period after the closure of the Project (April 2015) until a similar project has started. Potentially for transfer are the approach of support as free of charge trainings for SMEs for raising capacity, promoting and developing export activity of companies.

HR4 Abruzzo4Export

Abruzzo4Export - Network for Internationalisation

Abruzzo4Export is a project fostered by the Abruzzo region (ROP – ESF 2007/2013) aimed at increasing and favoring opportunities, for local businesses, to enter International markets.

Abruzzo4Export was addressed to:

- The experimentation of training models aimed at acquiring and strengthening new and strategic professional skills for entrepreneurial and managerial growth.
- The creation of networks and training packages enhancing the collaborative relationships between businesses.

Abruzzo4Export has been addressed primarily to 4 industrial sectors: Agri-food, Energy Efficiency, Mechanical field, Fashion. Abruzzo4Export realized "Training Pacts" among the members of the network SMEs (Beneficiaries) Organizations (Support and Training) for:

- Training needs analysis.
- Development and / or enhancement of professional skills in starting and managing processes of internationalisation.
- Development of learning territorial communities which may facilitate the widespread of knowledge for the development of new competences on internationalisation.

Resources needed

Wide network of regional Stakeholders: Chambers of Commerce, Industrial Associations, Universities and aggregations like Poles of Innovation.Training involved teachers, business consultants and experts in the export sector.

Financial resources were about 1.400.000 provided by ROP – ESF 2007/2013

Evidence of success

- 300 companies involved
- 960 hours of free training according to the teaching model of "blended learning" - or mixed learning - with lessons and exercises in the classroom and e-learning through a dedicated web platform. The lessons covered managerial strategies for internationalisation.
- 6 seminars on business opportunities in emerging countries
- 6 companies from Abruzzo had the opportunity to participate for free in 4 foreign missions

Potential for learning or transfer

Abruzzo4export has shown a good potential for transferability, especially for the training model. The main element is the creation of horizontal learning communities: the collaboration between companies in the same technological domain and the organisations that provide support can facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices, making the traditional model of teaching more efficient.

HR5 Training for New Professionals in Foreign Trade – FORMACOEX

Support Program aimed at unemployed graduates with interest in foreign trade within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Financed by Regional Funds and European Social Funds (ESF), FORMACOEX is a Support Program based on training to future export professionals, giving them the skills and qualifications necessary for the performance of their future work. It is also a tool aimed at fostering the inclusion of Extremadura´ students into the labour market.

FORMACOEX provides:

- Theoretical Training for those interested in acquiring theoretical fundaments in the field of foreign trade. Along this training, face-to-face, aspects such as export in the regional SMEs, the selection of markets to export, international marketing, customs and international taxation will be attended. This training is carried out in person by specialised trainers in international operation and consultants with proven experience in this field.
- Practical Training aimed at those interested in putting into practice their previous theoretical knowledge in foreign trade operations and internationalisation during a period of approximately 6 months. During this period, participants perform tasks related to the implementation of a foreign trade department in a company adhered to the FORMACOEX program. A technical team of permanent tutoring/ monitoring will be created in order to guarantee the assimilation of contents and the fulfilment of tasks for the accomplishment of an international marketing plan simulation.

Students acquire skills and abilities that will help them to work in an autonomous way in the short/medium term.

Resources needed

- Technical staff support.
- The budget of FORMACOEX ascend to 82,000€ in 2016, comprising the theoretical course (120 students), monetary deliveries without compensation of the practical training (26 participants) and the complementary training activities to be performed during this period.

Evidence of success

- Around 500 participants have joined the practical training since 2002
- The satisfaction level obtained from the quality survey is around 8 points out of 10 in all editions
- A significant percentage of students have been inserted into the labour market, and on the other hand, an important number of companies ends up betting to strengthen their international strategy.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- The practical training contents that allow the attendees to acquire basic skills and abilities to better face the implementation of an internationalisation process.
- The fulfilment of expectations from companies and students. The objectives of professionalising SMEs in their international trade strategies on one side, and students trained as foreign trade technicians on the other side are widely achieved.

HR6 Sinergie Education - Training for internationalisation

Activities of internationalisation of research - Examples of excellence

Sinergie Education is a private company providing training services for companies. A special training was developed for managers of the regional companies, which are to a larger extent SMEs. The training of the managers was focused on legal and administrative aspects of international trade as well as on the specific rules in pre-selected markets.

The training provided:

- Business English for the internationalisation of SMEs
- Acquiring information to export and the rules of international trade
- Financial instruments and services for internationalisation
- The rules and principles of international trade
- The rules and principles of international trade and marketing.

The training is provided per company or per group of companies, depending on their needs.

Resources needed

Costs per hour: 165 EUR.

Evidence of success

250 participants to training courses

Potential for learning or transfer

Training is a cross-cutting policy of internationalisation strategies and programs and effective tool to support the internationalisation of SMEs because it helps to develop the skills of decision makers and to increase the human capital needed to invest in these processes, which require change and innovation.

Training is an effective response to overcoming obstacles in the internationalisation of SMEs.

Adaptability of the knowledge provider to the real needs of SMEs makes this good practice worthy of transfer. The transferability is not limited to specific country/region.

HR7 Communication and Culture Adviser

A Communication and culture adviser who provides advice and support to companies.

The importance of understanding potential customers, their language and culture and how to do business with them in their particular market is vital as significant business can be lost through lack of cultural awareness. The expertise and advice from a Communication and Culture adviser can add great value to a SMEs export strategy.

Specifically the Culture and Communication Adviser provides advice and support to companies, helping them overcome many of the perceived and real communication barriers experienced by new and established exporters. Culture and Communication Adviser service is accessed through a combination of referrals from International Trade Advisers and through market workshops and masterclasses.

The specialised regional workshops, called masterclasses were run free of charge for the companies to attend. Seven masterclasses – covering China, USA, Scandinavia, Germany, Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East and India, were a superb introduction to the markets, giving companies a true insight into doing business in their target countries, which is available to all businesses giving them an excellent reason to take advantage of the experts.

Resources needed

Cost of a skilled advisers who specialise in communication and culture £55K Per year.

Evidence of success

Seven master classes have been successfully delivered in the past years.

Assisted an increased number of successful exporters in the West Midlands resulted in 36 exports wins. Exports wins are the indicator that are reported by companies who have been supported and have evaluated the service they have received.

Potential for learning or transfer

There is potential for transferability of this good practice with the correct skilled culture and communication advisor which could either be delivered as a stand-alone service or could easily be an 'add on' to existing SME internationalisation support services.

HR8 Masterclasses & Workshops

The Department of International Trade (DIT) run a series of Masterclasses and Clinics to better inform potential Exporters.

Within internationalisation support there are a number of subject areas that are important for success or that are of particular interest to potential and actual exporters. In order to support as many companies as possible the Department for International Trade (DIT) runs a series of Masterclasses, Clinics and are looking at webinars.
The Department for International Trade (DIT) West Midlands runs both Masterclasses (1/2day or full day) and one-2-one clinics (approximately 40 minutes) which are free to attend. Companies become aware of them either by referral from their International Trade Adviser or through receipt of promotional literature.
Using Masterclasses and webinars means a larger number of companies are able to learn about topics that are most important to exporters whilst having the opportunity to network with other like-minded SME's. The Masterclasses and Clinics would then be followed up by an International Trade Adviser visit if required.

Resources needed
The resources required for this Good Practice would entail a budget to deliver regular workshops and tailored clinics along with personnel costs associated with delivering the programme of events.

Evidence of success
Increased the awareness and knowledge of companies in the principal areas related to exporting effectively and successfully with the aim of:
1) Increasing the number of exporters in the West Midlands
2) Increasing the exports of companies already currently exporting in the West Midlands

Potential for learning or transfer
This activity can be transferred to other regions where there is a demand for specific masterclasses, webinars and clinics. Access to experts in key SME internationalisation areas who are able to run masterclasses and workshops is key to successfully delivering this programme.

HR9 Internationalisation Business Bootcamp

Capacity building to create conditions for the enhancement of international position of SMEs.

This initiative constitutes an opportunity to entrepreneurs to gain knowledge about the internationalisation process and the tools available in order to develop/implement the company's internationalisation strategy. The costs for participating are between 30 - 50 euros and the program addresses the main factors that are considered when a company need to reach new markets.
The Internationalisation Business Bootcamp has occured every year since 2012 and is dedicated to entrepreneurs that are considering to reach new markets and to develop/implement an internationalisation strategy. This initiative consists of a full day program, lectured by experts in internationalisation, dedicated to analysing the following themes:

- Approach and Prospecting: Different Paths to Entering a Market.
- Brand Protection in export/internationalisation process.
- Key tools and banking operations to be used in international trade.- Steps to an internationalisation strategy.
- Internationalisation - risks and barriers.

Besides the lectures and roundtables, the program also contains networking moments.
Through the Internationalization Business Bootcamp, entrepreneurs gain knowledge on:

- Different approaches and strategies for internationalization;
- Identification of essential tools to enhance the success of international operations;
- Case-studies.

The practice is implemented in collaboration with the Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Resources needed
The practice is financed through the fees charged to participants (between 30€ and 50€ per participant).

Evidence of success
The implementation of the practice constitutes an opportunity to entrepreneurs gain knowledge about the internationalisation process and the tools available in order to develop/implement the company's internationalisation strategy. Since 2012, this initiative had the participation of 466 entrepreneurs as follows:
2012 – 90 participants
2013 – 117 participants
2014 – 82 participants
2015 – 54 participants
2016 – 62 participants
2017 – 61 participants

Potential for learning or transfer
The practice is focused on training entrepreneurs about the specific needs associated with the presence in new markets, more specifically:

- Identification of trends;
- Risk forecast;
- Preparation of internationalisation strategies.

The topics of the training, the tools used and the exchange of experts with other regions can be aspects to have in consideration regarding the transferability of the practice.

HR10 Global Grant "+ Research and innovation"

Global Grant "+ Research and innovation": Creation of knowledge community for entrepreneurial growth and regional development.

Global Grant "+ Research and innovation": (European Social Fund - objective Regional competitiveness and employment 2007-2013) aimed at creating knowledge community that contributed to entrepreneurial growth and regional development. It was promoted by Abruzzo Region to support interconnectivity between producers and academia, to achieve a true "chain of knowledge" in order to support the development and competitiveness of the regional economy.
One of the main activities concerned the international mobility of researchers.
Regional and/or transnational mobility include:

- Implementation of promotion and support actions for the development of mobility initiatives in Italy and abroad, through implementation of appropriate information and consultative tools and development of regional networking;
- Provision of mobility vouchers for industrial research initiatives, technology transfer and pre-competitive development.

Global Grant "+ Research and innovation" promoted a joint path of internationalization of research and SMEs. In fact, researchers through special vouchers have been able to carry out research and development activities within SMEs throughout Europe.

Resources needed
O.P. ESF Abruzzo 2007-2013, Multi-Axis Special Specific Objective 2.1.1: Qualify innovation in an innovative way by fostering the creation of networks between universities, research and technology centers, and the producers. Allocated funds for the measure were: 1,6 mln €.

Evidence of success
Funded research grants: 73
New innovative companies: 23
Voucher (work experience): 125 (78% Italy, 22% Europe)
Work grants: 58
Voucher (work experience in Abruzzo): 59

Potential for learning or transfer
The methodology for connecting different interregional and international SMEs through the involvement of young researchers promotes the exchange of knowledge and experiences on interregional and transnational basis among enterprises in order to enhance competitiveness and support development.

HR11 The "G. D'Annunzio University in Europe"

The "G. D'Annunzio" University for the William Harvey International Translational Research Academy (WHRI-ACADEMY).

The "G. D'Annunzio" University develops institutional activities related to training and education that envisage networking with other European universities. Particularly interesting is the project WHRI-ACADEMY (http://whri-academy.eu/). The "G. D'Annunzio" University serves as one of the Host Institutions for the William Harvey International Translational Research Academy (WHRI-ACADEMY).
This is a new fellowship programme, which will exploit the career development of the next generation of translational multidisciplinary researchers geared towards innovation across rapidly developing life sciences and health care disciplines.
The key aspects of the WHRI-ACADEMY programme are:

- Truly worldwide collaborative opportunities for fellows in both academic and industrial environments;
- A transnational inter-sectorial exchange dimension between academia and SMEs to enable academic research fellows try an SME working environment without a gap in their academic careers.

WHRI-ACADEMY programme makes the European Research Area (ERA) a reality by adding a new dimension of translational therapeutic innovation to the Mobility Strategy of the ERA in line with rapidly developing inter-sectorial, multi-, inter- and cross-disciplinary trends.

Resources needed
Many University and organizasions are involved in the WHRI-ACADEMY: Canada, France, Germany, India, Italia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, Netherland, Brazil, USA. WHRI-ACADEMY is a COFUND Marie Curie Actions. Its value is EUR 6.48 million, out of which 60% is financed from National sources.

Evidence of success
WHRI-ACADEMY offers 55 new post-doc fellowships spread between three different schemes (incoming, outgoing and reintegration) and a training programme, including workshops, dedicated training in complementary skills and industrial placement.

Potential for learning or transfer
The experience of D'Annunzio University within WHRI-ACADEMY is a good exemplification of collaborative (academia and SMEs) transnational research that has results in the emergence and development of start-ups and SMEs in an international context.
By introducing new technology and by developing sustainable SME-academia partnerships, thereby facilitating the translational research process.

HR12 Activities of internationalisation of research

Activities of internationalisation of research - Examples of excellence Internationalisation in higher education

University of Teramo activated three master degree study programmes in English specifically to enable specialist training in collaboration with European companies, the courses are described as follows:

1. Management and Corporate communication;
2. Reproductive Biotechnology;
3. Food Science and Technology.

The objectives are:

- To enhance job market of graduates;
- To improve internationalisation of industry and business;
- To attract foreign students.

Specifically, Master Degree in Food Science and Technology developed an Intensive Module on "New Product development" and a new teaching approach with seminars by scientists and industry representative (national/international) and students' project in collaboration with local companies.

Resources needed
Student, Phd, Professor

Evidence of success
In the field of internationalisation of research, University of Teramo is involved in several activities:

- FooD-STA Centre: A European alliance of industrial and university partners to enhance research and innovation (BOKU-AT, UniTE partner + other 6 universities + 7 food industry associations + 2 industries);
- SEA-ABT - South East Academy Beverage Technology;
- ISEKI-Food 4 (www.iseki-food.eu) Thematic Network, Towards the innovation of the food chain through the modernisation of Food Studies, 89 partners from 29 EU and no-EU countries.
- REP-BIOTECH, Joint Doctoral project, Research on the biology and technology of reproductive health;
- REP-EAT (http://repeat.unite.it/), Doctoral Programme (DP) in the interdisciplinary domain of food and healthy diet to deepen the impact of food quality on reproductive health (REP) and eating disorders (EAT).

More than a thousand students have been involved in the activities of the various projects.

Potential for learning or transfer
The framework for the internationalisation activities of the University of Teramo can be considered a good practice because it goes into two directions: conduction of collaborative innovation activities to reach the international markets, and also the growth and exchange of experiences Technology for the creation and implementation of skills capable of dealing with regional and international markets.

HR13 Università degli Studi dell'Aquila - Innovation as a driver for internationalisation

Università degli Studi dell'Aquila - Innovation as a driver for internationalisation

The practice concerns the training activity on internationalisation of Engineering Faculty at the University of L'Aquila.
The GP highlights the strong correlations between product, process, organization and marketing innovation and the process of internationalisation, namely to:

- Verify the influence of innovation strategies on firm's internationalisation process.
- Contribute to define the role of public authorities in creating internationalisation services to support the competitiveness of the regional economies.

Resources needed
Student, Phd, Professor.

Evidence of success
Ca. 60 students per year are training in internationalisation.

Potential for learning or transfer
It highlights the importance of training activity in advanced technological fields for innovation and collaborative innovation activities to reach the international markets, growth and exchange of experiences technology for the creation and implementation of skills capable of dealing with regional and international markets.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

SMEs internationalisation is only possible if the finance environment is right internally and externally. This means that enterprises need to have the sufficient finances or need specific international financial products available so that they could carry out their international activity. According to the INTRA joint state of affairs, the surveys with SMEs concluded that the biggest internal barrier to internationalise, is a lack of capital. It becomes a necessity that SMEs finances are addressed in different ways by support agencies and get the attention of regional initiatives. SMEs usually find it difficult to raise funds when it comes to develop new activities but it is even more difficult for them to deal with added risks that trading abroad could encounter such as complying with new markets tax requirements, dealing with exchange rates risks, understanding credit guarantees when dealing with overseas clients (EC, 2008). SMEs require a different level of knowledge and support in terms of specific internationalisation finances than they would usually require for day to day operations. Good practices gathered in this section, support SME Internationalisation through financial mechanisms or support offerings under these sub-headings:

- **Insurance solutions and risk management**
- **Financing short-term exports**
- **Pre-shipment financing and post-shipment financing**
- **Loans**
- **Credit guarantee scheme**
- **Tax preferences**
- **Funding/grants for recruitment of advisors, researchers, accountants**
- **Funding to attend international trade events and exhibitions**
- **Grants to support any stage of the internationalization activity**
- **Other**

	Insurance solutions and risk management	Loans	Credit guarantee scheme	Funding/grants for recruitment of advisors, researchers, accountants	Funding to attend international trade events and exhibitions	Grants to support any stage of the internationalisation activity	Other
FS1 Export Credit and Investment Insurance (Slovenia)	X						
FS2 Trade Finance Products (Slovenia)	X						
FS3 Funding of Foreign Subsidiaries (Slovenia)		X					
FS4 Financial Services for Exporters (Slovenia)		X					
FS5 Guarantee Agreement under COSME – support for business development (Bulgaria)			X				
FS6 SME INT Grant (west Midland UK)				X			
FS7 Internationalisation Voucher (Algarve Portugal)				X			
FS8 Order 31/2014 Extremadura Spain)				X			
FS9 Abruzzo Region (Abruzzo Italy)				X			
FS11 Individual Participation at Fairs (Slovenia)					X		
FS10 Market Research (Slovenia)						X	
FS12 Incentive to the internationalisation of SMEs - Individual projects (Algarve Portugal)						X	
FS13 Incentive to the internationalisation of SMEs - Joint projects (Algarve Portugal)						X	
FS14 Export Consortiums (Extremadura Spain)						X	
FS15 Aran world (Abruzzo Italy)						X	
FS16 Simul Taiprora (Abruzzo Italy)							X
FS17 Equity Financing in the form of Seed and Venture Capital (Slovenia)							Equity

FS1 Export Credit and Investments Insurance

As authorized export-credit agency, SID Bank provides insurance for international commercial transactions of Slovenian companies against non-marketable risks.

SID Bank, a promotional development and export bank, assists companies in insuring commercial and non-commercial export risks of the nature and level for which financial institutions and private reinsurance market are not willing or have limited capabilities to cover, in order to promote seizing of opportunities in international economic and development cooperation for Slovenian economy.
SID Bank offers following insurance services:

- Export credit ins. services (insurance of pre-delivery risks; insurance of post-delivery risks:
- Supplier credit insurance, foreign buyer/bank credit insurance).
- Insurance of bank guarantees/contractual bonds.
- Insurance of pre-export financing.
- Investments insurance.
- Reinsurance of receivables – support for SME.
- Project financing insurance.

Funds required for effective provision of insurance operations are provided by the Republic of. Slovenia in the form of contingency reserves that are used to settle liabilities to the insured entities and to cover losses deriving from such transactions. Contingency reserves are created from premiums, fees and commissions, recourse from paid claims and other revenues generated by SID Bank from insurance and reinsurance against non-marketable risks. If the claims incurred cannot be settled from the reserves, funds for the payout are provided by the Republic of Slovenia.

Resources needed
Republic Slovenia is sole shareholder of SID Bank with share capital of 300 million EUR. In 2016 Bank's contingency reserves serving as shield against direct claim settlement from government budget stood at 130 million EUR with 800 million EUR of planned volume of insurance per year in 2015-2020.

Evidence of success
With improving conditions for enterprises in foreign markets, practice contributes to Axis 3 objective Enhance international competitiveness of SMEs of Operational Program.
Between 2011 - 2016 over 1000 enterprises were supported with insurance services. SID Bank's services cover over 20% of Slovene exports, effects on Slovene economy in 2016 were: contribution to creation and maintenance of 17 thousand jobs; 7.3 bn EUR of additional sales, 3.5 bn EUR of additional export, 2.9 bn EUR of GDP.

Potential for learning or transfer
This practice is an example of an instrument of the trade policy of the Republic of Slovenia, providing for the economy suitable safety and the possibility to be competitive in foreign markets according to the internationally agreed rules and conditions. Market failure and market gaps caused by private market not being capable of assuming certain risks and providing insurances without guarantee from the State, are filled by the authorised institution that supplements the financial market in this way. Such role of SID Bank is envisaged in Slovene Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Action Plans 2015 - 2016, 2017 – 2018 prepared based on the Programme.
On operational level, practice offers specially designed products for SME's: easier and faster access, standardised documentation, costs (premia deposit) that can be transferred to other regions.

FS2 Trade Finance Products

Providing financing and insuring export as well as expert advice.

NLB Group, largest Slovene international financial group, 100% owned by Republic of Slovenia, provides support to facilitate export companies acquiring business in their key markets and, if required, insures or undertakes the risks of such business. NLB offers a range of trade finance products: irrevocable letter of credit, bank guarantee, documentary collection, bank payment obligation, buyer's credit.
Innovative Entrepreneurship Centre was created, to respond to needs of SMEs in all phases of operation, offering entrepreneurs banking products and entrepreneurial content (training and supporting environment for mutual socialising, meetings and exchange of ideas). Through single sales support unit centres all around Slovenia NLB provides assistance to SMEs and by taking over operational tasks, account managers can focus more intensively on soliciting customers' needs. NLB actively monitors and analyses business models, financials and growth of companies. They are able to provide their clients with creative, targeted solutions. NLB employs specialists with long-time experiences in the field of international trade. SMEs are advised to get in contact with bank as soon as possible prior to closing contracts with their international partners, to be consulted on financial structure of transaction, insurance risks and selection of foreign banks.

Resources needed
All operations are financed by NLB.

Evidence of success
In 2016 a very high loan growth, namely for EUR 302.3 million (+15.3%) on annual level was achieve in segment of key SMEs.
In 2016 Innovative Entrepreneurship Centre in Ljubljana organised 188 educational and business events with total of 5.895 participants. Centre was visited by over 9.000 visitors.

Potential for learning or transfer
Practice offers products for financing and insuring export as well as expert advice: SMEs can choose from a range of trade finance services helping them in internationalisation, and at the same time they can profit from advice of specialists with long-time experiences on field of international trade Innovative Entrepreneurship Centre showcases example of integrating targeted customers in an innovative way. Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process, specific tools and methodology for the involvement of the targeted stakeholders.

FS3 Funding of Foreign Subsidiaries

SID Bank provides long-term loans to Slovene companies for expansion of activities to foreign countries.

Slovene companies, including SMEs, contemplating the expansion of activities to foreign countries or with already active foreign subsidiaries pursuing investments, can receive SID Bank's long-term loans to fund the related costs. The loans can be extended either to the company in Slovenia to be used for establishment of an initial investment into a new foreign subsidiary or the recipient of the funding could be the subsidiary alone. SID Bank is pursuing following goal with implementing the practice:

- investments of Slovene companies abroad,
- development of internationalisation,
- development of small and medium size enterprises.

Resources needed
Loans have to be with tenors above two years while all other features are rather flexible and are defined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the borrower's needs.

Evidence of success
5 Slovene subsidiaries abroad were financed in last 5 years.

Potential for learning or transfer
Without a track record in a new county it is usually difficult for a newly established company to raise the funding from local banks. With financing arranged in the country of the majority owner, the subsidiary actually benefits from its financial position and positive business results. Practice, not limited to SMEs only, implemented in accordance with Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Priority Axis 3 of OP, is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process.

FS4 Financial Services for Exporters

Specialised financing services for SMEs in the field of internationalisation.

With help of various financial instruments SID Bank promotes projects companies with following objectives:

- Realization of international business transactions with financing of Slovene exporters or with financing of foreign buyers of Slovene goods/services and their banks
- Investments of Slovene companies abroad (e.g. founding or purchase of company, increase in capital)
- Development of internationalization

Majority of SID Bank's financing is available through commercial banks. In some cases, company may contact SID Bank directly. SID Bank provides following services for Slovene exporters and investors abroad:

a) Post-shipment financing of export transactions, and financing of outward investment
   - financing of domestic companies or exporters (supplier credit)
   - financing of foreign buyers of Slovene goods and services or their banks (buyer credit), including credit lines

b) On-lending via commercial banks - credit lines, that among others, finance internationalisation
   - financing of SMEs and MID-Caps
   - development of competitive economy and internationalisation

c) project financing:
   - a special form of financing of long-term projects, mainly from the area of traffic, municipal infrastructure, telecommunications, power supply, mining, paper industry, ecology, tourism.

SID Bank provides financing for remaining share of direct purpose lending to corporates and other clients, either within state aid schemes or by means of co-financing together with other banks.

Resources needed

Credit line Financing of SMEs and MID-Caps: approximately 100 million EUR.
Credit line Development of competitive economy and internationalisation: approximately 321 million EUR.

Evidence of success

SID Bank's services had following effects on Slovenian economy in 2016: contribution to the creation and maintenance of about 17 thousand jobs and regional representation in whole Slovenia; € 7.3 bn EUR of additional sales, 3.5 bn EUR of additional export, 2.9 bn EUR of GDP. SID bank group with its services covers over 20% of Slovenian exports.

Potential for learning or transfer

Practice implemented under Slovenian Export and Development Bank Act and in accordance with Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Priority Axis 3 of OP offers specialised financial services for exporting SMEs. Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process and specific tools. It offers specially designed products for SME's: easier and faster access, standardised documentation that can be transferred to other regions.

FS5 Guarantee Agreement under COSME – support for business development

The GP is a tool which offers financing for SMEs on advantageous terms such as attractive interest rates, a grace period suited to the needs of business.

CIBANK is a dynamically developing commercial bank with 20 years of experience in providing a full range of banking and financial services and products for individuals, corporate clients and SMEs. The synergies between CIBANK and the other entity of Group in Bulgaria, DZI, make possible the use of innovative approaches in the provision of bank assurance products and services which are new for the Bulgarian market.
CIBANK is the first bank in Bulgaria, which in 2015 officially signed an Agreement for the issuance of a guarantee to cover losses on debts with the European Investment Fund under the COSME Programme. The agreement was concluded with the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) through which the Investment Plan for Europe is implemented by EC and the EIB Group. The programme provides guarantee schemes in the form of partial collateral for new loans and bank guarantees; thus, it assists enterprises in accessing financing. Its goal is to access finance in all phases of the SMEs lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer. The purpose of loans is:

- Financing of investment projects, such as the purchase of FTAs;
- Financing of working capital needs of enterprises;
- Bank guarantees for tenders, performance, payment, etc.;

The borrowers can be micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, registered in the Republic of Bulgaria and meeting the criteria of the effective Law on SMEs.
The main partner is EFSI.

Resources needed

The Bank's portfolio for loans is 100 mln.euro per year.

Evidence of success

The goal of the GP is to access finance in all phases of the SMEs lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer. Thanks to Bank support, businesses have easier access to guarantees, loans and equity capital and it helps businesses to access markets in the EU and beyond.

The number of signed loan contracts for the period 2015 - 2016 is 200 for the amount of 36 mln. Euro.

Potential for learning or transfer

The GP is a specific tool which offers financing for SMEs on advantageous terms such as attractive interest rates, a grace period suited to the needs of businesses. By sharing the risk, the guarantees will allow the Bank to expand the range of SMEs and types of financial transactions they can support. These guarantees will help many SMEs to go or enlarge their presence on international markets who might otherwise not be able to obtain funding due to their perceived higher risk or a lack of sufficient collateral.

FS6 West Midlands SME Internationalisation Grants

West Midlands SME Internationalisation Grants from £1,000 to £30,000 (matched 50/50) to help companies develop new export activity.

West Midlands SME Internationalisation provides funding in the form of grants to help companies move forward with their export plan/strategy. Grants are available from £1,000 to £30,000 (matched 50/50) specifically for new export activity. New activity could be undertaking new activity in an overseas market or export consultancy for example.
The funding was given on the basis of a costed action plan put together by the company with the assistance of an International Trade Adviser which was agreed between the Department of International trade (UK government department) and company and "signed" by Coventry University Enterprises. Coventry University Enterprises then followed up with administration support. The support was on a basis of an open call for the duration of the initiative with no specific deadlines for company to apply. The grant model can be replicable to support internationalisation activities. It demonstrates the excellent collaboration between the government, chamber of commerce and the university.

Resources needed
There needs to be a network of International trade advisors or personnel skilled in this area able to support companies in this way. In addition the cost of the actual grants and the coordination of the programme.

Evidence of success
The programme enabled companies to carry out activity that they would not ordinarily be able to afford to move forward their export plan/strategy.

During the project a total of 354 grants were given which amounted to just above £1.7 Million

Potential for learning or transfer
The model of setting up a network of Trade Advisors with collaboration of different institutions such as chamber of Commerce and universities can be transferred to other regions.

FS7 Internationalisation Voucher

The practice constitutes a direct financial support of the Regional Operational Program to SMEs internationalisation activities based on a short-term approach.

The practice provides funding to simplified internationalisation projects aimed at promoting business diagnostics, identifying internationalisation opportunities at the level of products/services and associated markets, and appropriate marketing strategies, namely by enabling evolution in the value chain, including technical assistance to enable the immediate implementation of marketing decisions and initial exploration activities in external markets.
The expenditures considered eligible for the voucher are:
In the diagnostics of opportunities component, the services related to:

I. Identification of binomial products - services versus markets that represent internationalisation opportunities;
II. Product adjustment needs - services and business models (including distribution channels);
III. Diagnosis of opportunities of evolution of the company in the value chain;
IV. Need for adjustments of digital communication strategies.

In the technical assistance component for the implementation of short-term recommendations, services related to:

I. Prospecting visits and attracting new clients in foreign markets;
II. Prospecting visits to international fairs;
III. Invitations to importers' missions for supply knowledge.

The maximum support to be granted is € 15,000 per project and the funding rate is 75% of eligible expenses, a non-refundable allowance.

Resources needed
Each call allocates 250.000€, and during the Regional Operational Program implementation (2014-2017) it is foreseen the opening of one call per semester.

Evidence of success
The practice is a financing mechanism that derives and operationalises the Regional Operational Program, enabling SMEs to strengthen their internationalisation capacity and skills. Is an instrument fully dedicated to increase the SMEs capacity to reach new and foreign markets by providing a direct funding support. Within the period 2014-2017, the GP achieved the following results:

- 50 projects approved
- 700.000€ approved

Potential for learning or transfer
The short-term approach of the Internationalisation Voucher is the main aspect to underline. It provides the funding that SMEs need to acquire services dedicated to internationalisation, enabling SMEs to strengthen their capacity and skills in a short-term approach. Is an instrument fully dedicated to increase the SMEs capacity to gain knowledge about new markets and to reach them effectively.

FS8 Order 31/2014: Aids addressed to the Internationalisation of the Extremadura Economic Activity

Grant for the recruitment of a foreign trade technician for at least 3 years, run by the Regional Government of Extremadura.

Financed by Regional Funds and European Social Funds (ESF), the Order 31/2014 is a Call for grants to hire foreign trade technicians for a period of 3 years minimum, taking into account the following specific conditions:

a) The recruitment will respond to clearly defined objectives and to an internationalisation plan to be developed by the company.
b) The technician must have higher education (bachelor's degree) or higher vocational qualification in foreign trade and/or a minimum experience in that field of 6 months. He/ she must also prove knowledge of a foreign language (mother tongue or accredited with a B2 CEFR -Common European Framework of Reference for Languages- certificate or equivalent).
c) It will be an employment contract, full-time, for a minimum period of 3 years. In case the contract is rescinded, the beneficiary can still receive the aid to recruit another technician in replacement. In that case, the beneficiary must fill the vacancy within 3 months since the date the first contract is cancelled.

This aid is a 30.000€ direct grant to be paid in three years (15.000, 10.000 and 5.000 respectively) for the first, second and third year of contract. This aid is only one per beneficiary.

The Order starts with the publication of the Call and usually ends a year after or when the assigned credit finishes.

Resources needed

For the development of this Good Practice, the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support.
- For the 2017 annuity, the Order 31/2014 had a cost/ budget of 240,000€, and it will be of 160.000€ for 2018 and 80.000€ for 2019.

Evidence of success

- A total of 27 enterprises have been beneficiaries (16 in 2015 call and 11 in 2016 call) since 2014.
- The Order 31/2014 has become a boost to develop and consolidate the international activity of the SMEs in Extremadura Region (ES).

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- It provides SMEs with the support to build-up a professional staff to develop its international strategy.
- This direct grant offers SMEs the possibility of starting with the first steps in foreign markets.
- The Order comes directly from the Regional Government of Extremadura policy for the stimulation of the export activity in the region.

FS9 Network Contracts for Internationalisation

Network Contracts for Internationalisation of Regional SMEs

With resources of € 2.000.000, the "Call for Facilitation of Internationalisation of Network Contracts" was published in 2015, with which the Abruzzo Region intends to support the integration of businesses in order to support the processes of reorganising the chains and to increase the efficiency of the production systems, commercial business development and their innovative capacity.

The eligible costs of "promotional and organisational activities for aggregation - NETWORK CONTRACTS" are max. 150.000 EUR that represent 50% of the total eligible costs. The network contracts are set up between SMEs, operating in the same industry sector with the clear purpose to foster internationalisation processes.

SMEs that have joined network contracts have benefited from support for carrying out activities for internationalization process to improve their competitive positioning through the implementation of integrated services for the development of their products and services. In particular, the network cares for the internationalization of businesses, through commercial penetration actions in Target Countries, aimed at building and / or strengthening the positioning of companies both in terms of image and product.

Resources needed

The total amount of the call was 2.000.000 Euros (Abruzzo ROP ERDF). Eligible costs were related to hiring professional advisors, participation at trade fairs, staff expenses.

Evidence of success

Abruzzo Region that funded the Network Contracts achieved the results to aggregate SMEs in internationalisation processes reaching a deeper impact: 21 Networks were created in which almost 80 SMEs participated.

Potential for learning or transfer

The following elements can be transferred to other regions:

preparation of public call that stimulates the creation of networks in specific industry and their joint participation in internationalisation activities.

FS10 Market Research (Public tender)

Supporting SME market research to ease the decision and lower the costs of entrance to foreign markets.

Public tender for co-financing market research on foreign markets in 2016 and 2017 is implemented under Axis 3 of OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Republic of Slovenia 2014 – 2020, with aim to increase SMEs' international competitiveness.

Goal of a two-year public tender is to co-finance 100 - 111 SMEs' preparation of market research, to achieve a breakthrough with current products/services in new foreign market or support new products on existing or new foreign market and thus lower their costs of entering a new foreign market or lower their risk of placing a new product on a foreign market.

Market research, according to the tender, is a structured demonstration of data about the market and competition, gained mostly from primary sources, to achieve:

- Identification and benchmarking of new market/product opportunities,
- Evaluation of appropriateness of product according to the needs of a foreign market,
- Preparation of a plan to adapt products to the needs of foreign market,
- Identification of suitable sales channels on foreign market.

Grant covers maximum of 50% or 4.500,00 EUR per company. Market research must be conducted by contracted external experts, specialized for conducting market research.

The main partner of the tender is Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

Resources needed
The total amount of grants available through this public tender is 500.000,00 EUR (250.000 annually).

Evidence of success
Public tender had three deadlines for applications (first submission in August 2016, second in January 2017 and third submission in June 2017). 43 companies were granted 190.725 EUR in 2016 and 40 companies were granted 171.530 EUR in 2017.

Potential for learning or transfer
The measure is part of investment priority of the Operational programme which will result in higher export intensity of companies and more export in the field of services. Measure directly influences the planned result, as it addresses market research of a target market, that is the basis for a) deciding if the entrance on a foreign market is feasible or not, b) what risks does the company take with the selected product/service that it wants to place on a foreign market, c) saturation of the market; and similar.

The measure supports the achievements of indicators of increasing the pure profits of SMEs by sales on a foreign market, as the company directly influences this indicator by entering a foreign market. Consequentially the measure also supports the macroeconomic indicator of encouraging exports on national level.

FS11 Individual participation at fairs

Co-financing individual participations of enterprises in international trade fairs abroad.

Public tender for co-financing individual participations of companies in international trade fairs abroad is implemented under the framework of Axis 3 of OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Republic of Slovenia 2014 – 2020 by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology through its implementing agency SPIRIT Slovenia. Purpose of tender is to enhance the possibility of presenting products/services of companies at international fairs, increasing the possibility of business cooperation with foreign partners and raising the internationalisation level of companies.

Legal entities or natural persons conducting economic activities in the Republic of Slovenia who are entering a foreign market for the first time or are expanding and diversifying their business on foreign market are eligible for co-funding of rent costs of exhibition space, costs of arrangement and administration costs for exhibition space.

Eligible international fair has to be entered either in registry of fairs M+A ExpoDataBase or registry of fairs AUMA and has to feature at least 10% of exhibitions from abroad. Public tenders in 2015 and 2016 covered maximum of 60% or 8.000 EUR per presentation. Public tender for 2017 granted 8.762 EUR flat-rate per fair presentation.

Companies can use SPIRIT Slovenia online tool for planning activities and time plan of fair presentations (Sejemski vseved - fair know-it-all).

Resources needed

In 2014 and 2015 public tenders 400.000 EUR was made available annually, in 2016 440.000 EUR, all provided by national budget of Republic of Slovenia. In 2016 new, special tender for wood-processing industry allocated 150.000 EUR.

1.000.000 EUR ERDF funds were allocated to 2017 public tender.

Evidence of success

2014: 59 companies supported, average 85 new contacts and 5 new business deals per company.

2015: 62 companies supported, average 87 new contacts and 6 new business deals per company.

2016 General tender: 64 companies supported, average 87 new contacts and 6 new business deals per company.

2016 Wood-processing industry tender: 10 companies, average 58 new contacts and 9 new business deals per company.

2017: 64 companies supported.

Potential for learning or transfer

Practice is an example a direct measure of the OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Republic of Slovenia 2014 – 2020, with the aim to enhance internationalisation of SMEs, based on the public tender.

FS12 Incentive to the Internationalisation of SMEs – Individual projects

The Good Practice constitute a direct financial support of the Regional Operational Program to SMEs internationalisation activities.

Inserted in the Axis 2 of the Regional Operational Program "Supporting Internationalisation and Business Competitiveness and Qualified Entrepreneurship". In the context of the established RIS3 sectors, its main aim is to increase competitiveness and external awareness of products/services and to stimulate business investment. By contributing to open new export channels and strengthening the SMEs internationalisation, the practice intends to strengthen the competitiveness of enterprises, promote increased exports of high technology products and encourage more integration into international value chains, recognising their importance in creating more jobs and wealth.

Individual SME internationalisation projects targeting the following areas are susceptible to support: Knowledge of external markets; Presence on the web, through the digital economy; International development and promotion of trademarks; Prospecting and presence in international markets; International marketing; Introduction of a new method of organisation in commercial practices or external relations; Specific certifications for external markets.

The maximum incentive is 500.000€ (ERDF) and is calculated by applying a maximum rate of 45% to eligible expenditure (non-refundable). The following expenses are considered eligible:

- Acquisitions for application of new organisational methods;
- Participation in fairs and exhibitions abroad;
- Specialized consultancy services provided by external consultants.

Resources needed

Each call is allocated with 500.000€, and during the Regional Operational Program implementation (2014-2017) it is foreseen the opening of one call per semester.

Evidence of success

The practice is a financing mechanism that derives and operationalises the Regional Operational Program, enabling SMEs to strengthen their internationalization capacity and skills. It it an instrument fully dedicated to increase the SMEs capacity to reach new and foreign markets by providing a direct funding support.

Within the period 2014-2017, the GP achieved the following results:

- 61 projects approved;
- More than 7.000.000€ approved to internationalisation projects.

Potential for learning or transfer

The GP presents a regional call for tenders to support, financially, SMEs in expanding their export base, increasing the number of new SMEs exporting and increasing the volume of international sales companies that already export. The main aspect to underline in terms of transferability is the fact that the support is closely connected with the sectors established within the regional RIS3. In this sense, this instrument is one of the concrete tools that the Operational Program offer to support internationalisation of regional SMEs.

FS13 Incentive to the Internationalisation of SMEs – Joint projects

The practice constitute a direct financial support of the Regional Operational Program to support joint SMEs internationalisation activities.

Inserted in the Axis 2 of the Regional Operational Program has the main aim of increase competitiveness and external awareness of products/services and stimulate business investment. By contributing to open new export channels and to foster SMEs internationalisation, the practice intends to increase the competitiveness of enterprises, promote the exports of high technology products and encourage more integration into international value chains.

Joint SMEs internationalisation projects targeting the following areas are susceptible to support:

a) Knowledge of external markets;
b) Presence on the web, through the digital economy;
(c International development and promotion of trademarks;
d) Prospecting and presence in international markets;
e) International marketing;
(f) Introduction of a new method of organisation in commercial practices or external relations;
g) Specific certifications for external markets.

Expenditures considered eligible are:

- Acquisitions for application of new organisational methods;
- Participation in fairs and exhibitions abroad;
- Specialised consultancy services provided by external consultants;
- Obtaining, validating and defending patents and other industrial property registration costs.

The incentive is calculated by applying a maximum rate of 50% to eligible expenditure (non-refundable) to projects submitted by a consortium gathering at least 10 companies. The maximum incentive, per company, is 180.000€ (ERDF).

Resources needed

Each call is allocated with 500.000€, and during the Regional Operational Program implementation (2014-2017) it is foreseen the opening of one call per semester.

Evidence of success

The practice is a financing mechanism that derives and operationalises the Regional Operational Program, enabling SMEs to strengthen their internationalisation capacity and skills. Is a direct funding support fully dedicated to increase the cooperation between SMEs, promoting joint projects with capacity to reach new and foreign markets. Until 2017, the GP achieved the following results:

- 6 joint projects approved
- More than 1.000.000€ approved to joint internationalisation projects.

Potential for learning or transfer

The practice is an instrument fully dedicated to increase the SMEs cooperation and capacity to reach new and foreign markets, through funding directly joint internationalisation activities. The tender influences the value chains, set up of business networks for internationalisation and clusters.

FS14 Export Consortiums

Support Program to help SMEs to make the leap to foreign markets jointly with other partners, included in the regional Strategic Plan for Internationalisation.

Directly financed by the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3d, through Extremadura Avante (Public Agency),Export Consortiums is a tool to help SMEs from related sectors which have a common objective to work together in terms of Internationalisation.

In order to achieve the objectives of the program a series of possible actions are implemented: commercial trips, promotional material and specific promotion actions.

All actions carried out are directly related to the internationalisation of the Consortium and the necessary tools to assist it. The export consortia involve the creation of a business group responsible for the design of strategies and management of actions to achieve the general objective of improving the presence abroad of its members.

For the consortium to be created it is necessary to have at least three companies with a registered office in Extremadura and with their activity focused on manufacturing or processing, as well as companies whose final product is a service.

The program begins in the first quarter of the year (open call) and finishes on December 31st of the current year. It differentiates between:

- Initiation Consortiums, whose members have not yet developed promotion and internationalisation actions jointly.
- Consortiums in Development, between 1 & 3 years old since their establishment.
- Consolidated Consortiums with more than 3 years.

Resources needed

- Technical staff support: 3 experts from Extremadura Avante + external experts
- EXPORT CONSORTIUMS has a budget of up to 58.000€ per year, where Initiation Consortiums receive up to 8.000€, Consortiums in Development up to 5.000€ and Consolidated Consortiums up to 3.000€.

Evidence of success

- In 2016, 10 consortiums with a total of 31 companies participated in this GP:
  - 10 consortiums formed by 31 companies received technical and financial support.
  - 10 commercial/business missions/events.
  - 5 specialized consultancy services financed.
  - 6 marketing activities / merchandising production.
- Those 31 companies participated as follow in the different types of Consortiums: 13 in Initiation Consortiums, 12 in Consortiums in Development and 6 in Consolidated Consortiums.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- the participating companies receive a complete "package" of technical, training and external promotion actions support, that can be easily transferred to other regions (although with possible changes or adaptations)
- the working methodology of the program can also be transfer to other regions that seek helping their SMEs to face international markets jointly in order to make potential barriers easier and faster to save, by minimising costs and possible risks

FS15 "ARAN World" international activities

The internationalisation activities of Aran world are based on an integrated strategy that joints different aspects:

Brand building: Aran invests in Italy and abroad, setting-up planning carefully and choosing the most suitable media and magazine in order to strengthen brand identity and guaranteeing the recognition of the product. The strategy is a carefully planned communication policy, which sees the company involved in both trade publications and design, furnishing magazines.

Contracts: ARAN kitchens furnishes the apartments of the exclusive American skyscrapers: the Trump Grande Ocean Resort and the Residences in Miami; among the last important projects in 2015, all in New York: the 261 West and 25th Street building, the Wave Building, the 20 East and Avenue's building, and 432 Park Avenue's skyscraper, which today is the first tallest building in New York City and the third in the world.

Product innovation: Cover door is an innovative product that boasts a patent which protects its basic concept and design.

Resources needed

Private funding.

Evidence of success

ARAN World is the leader in Italy for exports and among the first Italian companies in design, production and distribution of kitchens. ARAN kitchens are the most bought Italian kitchens in the world.

With more than 39,000 kitchens sold each year, the company is now a solid and well-known reality.

The majority turnover is by the international market. The company is involved in establishing commercial channels, one brad-shops and showrooms all over the world.

Aran has 1.500 selling point abroad.

Potential for learning or transfer

The case study is not related to public policies for internationalization but, at the same time, is an example of how to effectively target resources.

Strategy that integrate, not only one, but several aspects: brand building (marketing), competitiveness strategy (contracts), product innovation. The good practice indicates all the different aspects that should not be underestimated in an internationalisation process.

FS16 Network Contracts for Internationalisation - Taiprora Simul Project

Network Contracts for Internationalisation.
The successful case of Taiprora: SIMUL project -
"Multitasking System for Industrial Automation"

Abruzzo ROP ERDF 2007-2013 funded an interesting call for proposals for internationalisation of Regional SMEs: NETWORK CONTRACTS - aggregations of SMEs operating in the same industry sector for internationalisation.

TAIPRORA, a high technological SME based in Pescara, with its partners created "SIMUL - Multitask System for Industrial Automation" a business network in industrial automation.

The measure funded at 50% the eligible costs for carrying out "promotional" and "organisational" activities for internationalisation process.

The purpose of companies belonging to the network is to improve their competitive positioning through the implementation of integrated services for the development of internationalisation activities of their products and services.

In particular, the network cares for the internationalisation of businesses, through commercial penetration actions in Target Countries, aimed at building and strengthening the positioning of companies both in terms of image and product.

The network has been oriented towards planning and implementing an internationalisation program aimed at "imposing" abroad the excellence of the entire Italian-style chain, among which the Smart Factory is of the utmost importance.

Resources needed

The total amount of the call was 2.000.000 Euros (Abruzzo ROP ERDF)

The total amount of Simul project was 300.000 Euros (Abruzzo ROP ERDF funded 50%).

Eligible costs were related to professional advisors, participation to trade fairs, staff expenses for the implementation of the project.

Evidence of success

The call reached important results: 21 Networks were created with the participation of almost 80 Smes.

In particular, SIMUL Network achieved the goal to create opportunities for all the members of the networks to reach abroad markets.

For example, thanks to the SIMUL network Taiprora acquired important international contracts in the automotive sector and settled two productive sites in India (Taiprora India) and in Kazakistan (Taingenia).

Potential for learning or transfer

The Simul network shows how the creation of horizontal clusters and networks can be a success factor for internationalisation.

This practice has a strong transfer potential: the action of Abruzzo Region that funded the Network Contracts achieved the results to aggregate SMEs in internationalisation processes reaching a deeper impact: 21 Networks were created with the participation of almost 80 Smes.

The total of eligible costs assigned was about 1.900.000 Euros.

Also the application pack is transferrable because it provided two possibilities to the applicants: internationalisation promotional activities (trade missions, fairs, etc.) and internationalisation organisational improvements.

FS17 Equity Financing in the form of Seed & Venture Capital

Providing effective financial incentives for internationalisation of SMEs.

Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF), public financial fund, owned by Republic of Slovenia, financially supports internationalisation of SMEs with seed capital and venture capital.

1. Seed capital is for young enterprises in second development phase (from MVP- Minimum Viable Product to market), with growth potential and potential of creating new jobs. Product is implemented in two forms:
   - convertible loan of € 75.000 for micro and small enterprises, existing minimum 6 months, with prototype or MVP, funds needed for further product development and testing (min 2-year grace period on loan repayment)
   - capital investment of € 200.000 for young enterprises with completed product on market, that want fast expansion and market growth (payment of the capital investment in four parts).

   In both cases recipients of funds receive financial and non-financial incentives. Non-financial incentives are organised in cooperation with initiative Start up Slovenia. Participation in start-up accelerator is obligatory. For obtaining seed capital the company has to apply to the public tender.
2. Support in form of venture capital included entry into the ownership structure and management of the enterprise in cooperation with capital investments from private investors (venture capital and mezzanine capital). Between 2010 and 2015 SEF, in collaboration with four supported venture capital companies, which had 49% of public and 51% of private funds, enabled young SME entering global markets.

Resources needed

Public tenders for 75K & 200K:

2016: €1.05mio of convertible loans and €800K of capital investments

2015: €1.5mio convertible loans and €1mio of capital investments

2014: (50K & 200K): €1 mio convertible loans & €400K of capital investments

Venture capital 2011 – 2015: €29,04mio

Evidence of success

Public tender for 75K and 200K:

2016: 18 projects, fostering implementation of investments in value of € 2.,9 mio.

2015: 25 projects, fostering implementation of investments in value of € 2,02 mio.

2014 (50K and 200K): 22 projects, fostering implementation of investments in value of € 2,8 mio.

Venture capital 2011 – 2015: 29 SMEs, 291 new employments (as of 31.12.2015)

Potential for learning or transfer

Practice, implemented under Priority Axis 3 of OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Republic of Slovenia 2014 – 2020, offers a combination of financial and non-financial incentives, tailored to the need of enterprise in different developmental phase, to support their internationalisation efforts. Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process and specific tools.

The total of eligible costs assigned was about 1.900.000 Euros.

Also the application pack is transferrable because it provided two possibilities to the applicants: internationalisation promotional activities (trade missions, fairs, etc.) and internationalisation organisational improvements.

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SMEs SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER NON-FINANCIAL SERVICES

SMEs being very small by nature, do not always have the expertise needed to internationalise, especially if they are new to the process. Some of the basic knowledge, will be acquired through time and with the experience of working internationally. For these reasons, SMEs could require a multitude of support that they would get through a more specialised infrastructure or consultancy that can provide very specific and targeted assistance. The question on how to internationalise, could be answered with support agencies by setting up an international strategy and by developing a possible implementation plan with the SMEs. Infrastructure such as business parks, technology parks for example would tend to give customised services and would facilitate such services. In particular these services will support SMEs to strengthen their internal capacity and operational procedures.

According to the INTRA Joint state of the affairs report, SMEs often need to receive advices and direction to overcome the perceived barriers to internationalise.

This section gathers good practices including non-financial services and support infrastructure for SME wishing to internationalisation in these sub-categories:

- **Market research support**
- **Export/Internationalisation observatory facilities**
- **IPR support**
- **Account management support**
- **Technology transfer, technology consultancy services**
- **Services tailored especially for start-ups, incubating services**
- **Services provided by business parks**
- **Specialized services provided by technology centers**
- **Consultancy support**
- **Other**

	Market research support	Export/Internationalization observatory facilities	IPR support	Technology transfer, technology consultancy services	Services tailored especially for start-ups, incubating services	Specialized services provided by technology centers
SS1 Sectoral Export Portal (Varna Bulgaria)	X					
SS2 Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation between China and the CEE Countries (Bulgaria)	X					
SS3 Trading platform for the promotion of agricultural products from CEE countries to China market (Bulgaria)	X					
SS4 Export Window (Slovenia)	X					
SS5 Country Risk Assessment and Other Analysis and Info Services for Exporters (Slovenia)		X				
SS6 IPAM (Coventry UK)			X			
SS7 Cross-Innovation Voucher (Vzhodna Slovenija, Slovenia)				X		
SS8) Sani (Abruzzo Italy)				X		
SS9 Go Global Slovenia (Maribor Slovenia)					X	
SS10 Regional Center for Technology Development and Start Together Hub (Vzhodna Slovenija, Slovenia)					X	
SS11 Nerve vision (Abruzzo Italy)					X	
SS12 Abruzzo region of sight (Abruzzo Italy					X	
SS13 Venture house (West Midlands UK)					X	
SS14 Pilot projects (Abruzzo Italy)						X

SMES SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER NON-FINANCIAL SERVICES

	Consultancy support	other
SS15 Info Days (Slovenia)	X	
SS16 Industrial Center of Bulgaria in Moscow (Bulgaria)	X	
SS17 PIMEX (Extremadura Spain)	X	
SS18 Consolidation Plan (Extremadura Spain)	X	
SS19 XPANDE (Extremadura Spain)	X	
SS20 Digital XPANDE (Extremadura Spain)	X	
SS21 PALM Market plan (Abruzzo Italy)	X	
SS22 G2 Global Growth (West Midlands UK)	X	
SS23 Abrex (Abruzzo Italy)		X
SS24 China made in Abruzzo (Abruzzo Italy)		X
SS25 Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub (West Midlands UK)		General support
SS27 CW Business Support (West Midlands UK)		General support
SS28 Working Universities (West Midlands UK)		Knowledge transfer

SS1 Sectoral Export Portal

The GP is a tool that provides to Chambers' members useful internationalisation information and works as a hub for offers and inquires for a specific sector.

The Bulgarian Branch Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry / BBCWFI / is a voluntary non-profit association whose mission is to protect and represent the interests of its members and the industry.

As a part of its internationalisation activities BBCWFI created and regularly updated a Sectoral Export Portal – a tool that provides to the chambers' members: information for foreign markets; guidelines for export and marketing on foreign markets; access to contact network of international organizations, commercial counsellors abroad, distributors and wholesalers, architects and designers ; trade representatives; inquiries and offers from foreign companies; foreign trade and economic statistics.

Through the portal BBCWFI contribute to the development and consolidation of sectors furniture and woodworking such as:

- Providing information on advanced materials, technology, equipment and innovations in the industry;
- Providing information on the state of international markets and opportunities to establish business relations and cooperation;
- Providing information on programs to support small and medium enterprises;
- Provide information on changes in the regulations of the activities in the sector.

The main involved partners are public institutions, business support organisations and SMEs. The beneficiaries are members of BBCWFI.

Resources needed

The financial resources needed for development and running the portal till 2017 are 10 000 euro.

Evidence of success

The main advantage of the GP is providing of a high quality sectoral focused internationalisation support with a high level rate of success thorough the members of the BBCWI.

Since launching of the portal, the number of enterprises using it as members is 319.

Potential for learning or transfer

As the portal provides all the necessary information for woodworking and furniture sector needed for SMEs for fostering their export activities, one or several of the provided services could be transferred in other region using similar instruments developed and proposed by public or private providers of SMEs support services.

SS2 Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation between China and the CEE Countries (APAC)

APAC works as an internationalisation central hub covering all CEE countries and promoting their trade on the Chinese market and vice versa.

In 2012, China approached the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) with a proposal concerning regional cooperation in the '16+1' format (16 CEE countries + China). Apart from opening the CEE region up for investments, the '16+1' format was intended to facilitate the shaping of relations between China and the EU and to become a tool in building a positive image for China and the CEE countries. The new cooperation was formalised through establishment of APAC - based at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Bulgaria.

The activities of APAC deepen and strengthen the cooperation in agriculture between China and the CEE countries on a mutually beneficial basis through sharing ideas, exchange of good practices and research for innovative solutions. Such cooperation broaden the horizons of the countries, helping them to find a sustainable model of agriculture, as well as to promote the development of trade in agricultural and food products between them. In order to promote the further development of trade relations in the agricultural sector between China and the CEE countries, APAC assists in opening of National Pavilions of CEE countries in the Shanghai Free-Trade Zone as a permanent trading platform.

The main stakeholders are Ministers of Agriculture of each CEE country. The main beneficiaries are SMEs in agriculture sector.

Resources needed

APAC is funded by the State budget. Its average annual budget is 106 177 euro. More than 50 mln. Euros were attracted as Chinese investments for the building of the first Logistic Hub & 16+1 Pavilion in Bulgaria providing a place to exhibit and sell products along with logistics and transport.

Evidence of success

More than 128 companies received a support from ACAP for reaching the China markets.

Concrete results after opening 2 Bulgarian Pavilions in China are:

- More than 60 SMEs presented their production on China markets;
- 13 contracts between companies were signed.

The first 16+1 Logistics hub and Pavilion for e-trade of agriculture products in CEE, where a complete package for China-CEEC logistics services are available, was inaugurated at Bulgaria's Trakia Economic Zone near Plovdiv.

Potential for learning or transfer

The GP presents a policy mechanism for supporting internationalisation of agricultural SMEs from 16 countries of Central Eastern Europe on Chinese market.

SS3 Trading platform for the promotion of agricultural products from CEE countries to China market

The GP facilitates internationalisation by providing a unified platform to seek markets, partners and investors.

The official website of the Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation between China and the CEE countries (APAC) provides a single database and is an efficient tool for searching and finding up-to-date investment projects, appropriate business partners, producers and traders from all the fields of the agricultural sector. It is developed as a part of the activities of APAC for deepen and strengthen the cooperation in agriculture between China and the CEE countries on a mutually beneficial basis through sharing ideas, exchange of good practices and research for innovative solutions. Through the single database, the contact points of the network of all 17 countries exchange information and disseminate offers for business cooperation. It is possible to find manufacturing, trade or financial partners in the offer bulletin. Until now it has more than 150 registered companies from China and the CEE countries. The products are from the agricultural and the service sector.

The single database helps encouraging trade in agricultural and food products by providing timely information about the trade fairs and agricultural exhibitions traditionally carried out in China and CEE countries.

Resources needed

The information in the platform is regularly updated by 2 members of the staff of APAC.

Budgeted resources for setting up and launching the platform include development and equipment costs. The amount is 121 780 euro.

Evidence of success

The quantitative indicators which measure the success of the good practice are:

- number of register users is 175 companies, investors, organisations dealing in agricultural sector;
- number of SMEs to which is provided access to international markets - 128.

Potential for learning or transfer

The portal supports and helps the enhancement of agricultural SMEs internationalisation by providing current and useful information for encouraging the export activities.

The practice helps by playing an intermediary function in finding partners and in offering products and services.

The practice supports the SMEs by maintaining data base with information about export-oriented Bulgarian companies in specific sector.

One or several of the services, proposed by the portal can be transferred, by alternative instruments developed and proposed by public or private providers of SMEs support services.

The activity of the Portal (or just a part of its activity) could be easily transferred in other countries or regions in the EU.

SS4 Export Window

Online portal provides useful up-to-date information, consultations and access to foreign databases to exporters in all phases of export trading.

Online portal Izvozno okno (export window) was developed under the programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 to enable efficient support environment for Slovene companies which would like to expand their operations to global markets. The tool is in line with the OP Priority Axis 3 "Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation". It ensures quality and regularly updated information about foreign markets, enables companies the access to foreign databases and offers consulting and training content:

- Web tools (export possibility test, model to help select and compare markets in 54 countries, comparison is based on 14 variables).
- International trade info (i.e. legal, financial aspects, custom procedures, origin of gods, standards).
- Detailed info about 53 countries (i.e. economic trends, industries, bilateral relationship with Slovenia, useful contacts, business opportunities).
- Info about most important industries for Slovenia.
- Access to market-analyses database.
- Business opportunity search engine (by country, type, industry).

Info for foreign companies:

- Portal for foreign buyers SloveniaPartner.
- Database of Slovenian exporters SloExport.

Partners involved in practice implementation: SPIRIT, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Agriculture, Slovenian business clubs abroad, SID bank, experts for foreign markets, consultants from abroad, Sector for customs – TARIC.

Resources needed

The costs for technical maintenance and upgrade as well as regular content updating of the Export Window is provided by SPIRIT Slovenia. In 2018 the planned budget amounts to 50.000 EUR of external costs. The annual budget may vary in different years of implementation.

Evidence of success

Outputs (in 2015):

- Companies receiving daily news (e-info): 2529
- Companies receiving consultancy services: 89
- A total of 644.000 clicks by 130.000 different visitors recorded.

In 2016 70% of clients found Export Window's services to be useful or very useful. 60% of respondents who in the past two years visited Export Window used information on business opportunities, which are available on the Export window.

Potential for learning or transfer

Online portal offers comprehensive information regarding all aspects of export activity, available free of charge and online, making it accessible to small businesses nationwide.

Its transferability potential to other regions:

- Simple tools for planning export activities for companies,
- Up-to-date information about countries, industries, etc.,
- Tools for exporters (such as: how to conduct a market research),
- Access to international databases.

SS5 Country Risk Assessment and other Analysis and Information Services for Exporters

Expert information and consultation services complementing financial and insurance service for internationalisation

SID Bank uses one-stop shop approach of providing services for SME internationalisation, ensuring financial and insurance services at one place. To complement its services, it also acts as a promoter of international development cooperation and provider of research and other advisory services. SID Bank and government established Centre for International Cooperation and Development (CMSR), independent non-profit research and advisory organisation. CMSR conducts fundamental and applied research, advisory, informative, documentational, promotional, educational, publishing and intermediary activities for international development cooperation. CMSR prepares different types of economic analyses and research, using its own methodology, medium- and short-term country risk for Slovenia and broader region. CMSR prepares other types of analyses that promote Slovene companies' internationalisation and are tailored to clients' needs: sector analyses, strategies for strengthening economic cooperation with a selected country or group of countries, strategies for entering a new market, identification of potential new markets, market research, export plans, feasibility studies, economic analyses and selection of locations for business representative offices abroad and other. CMSR issues promotional business publication Doing Business in Slovenia, which is regularly updated on Slovenian Business Portal, a single-entry point for information on the operating conditions in Slovenia.

Resources needed

4 staff members (full time employment) and the costs of obtaining information through the international network of experts abroad.

Evidence of success

SID Bank Group services had following effects on Slovenian economy in 2016: contribution to the creation and maintenance of about 17 thousand jobs and regional representation in whole Slovenia; € 7.3 bn EUR of additional sales, 3.5 bn EUR of additional export, 2.9 bn EUR of GDP. SID Bank group with its services covers over 20% of Slovenian exports.

Potential for learning or transfer

Expert information and consultation services of CMSR complement financial and insurance service for internationalisation of SMEs provided by SID Bank Group offers, thus making it a one-stop shop service for SMEs.

Practice, implemented under International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia Act and in accordance with Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Priority Axis 3 of OP is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process and specific tools.

SS6 IPAM – Intellectual Property Asset Management Programme

Intellectual Property Asset Management programme designed to raise awareness of the value of tangible/ intangible assets to enable them to enter new markets.

The Intellectual Property Asset Management programme is designed to raise awareness of the value of tangible and intangible intellectual assets within a business, and to help West Midlands SMEs improve their competitiveness and sustainability by identifying and unlocking their existing and potential assets to enable them to enter new markets.

This programme funded under ERDF previous programme was delivered by Coventry University Enterprises. Companies were supported in 2 phases:

Phase 1 a free company IPR audit

Phase 2 a grant to support IPR needs up to £7k to make sure the company protected their products/services before the entered new markets.

IPR audits were used in particular to identify potential infringement, possible areas of IP exploitation and to create alternative revenue streams. This meant to identify all relevant IP, where the ownership rights lie and the best methods of protection.

Once the needs are identified in phase 1, a possible grant for phase 2 and the filing or implementation of IPRs filing was carried out with the company.

Resources needed

Resources center on having the specialist team of IPR experts able to advise and guide companies in this area.

The cost of the IPR expert would depend on expertise but in the region of £60k. The team included 5 IPR auditors.

Grants of up to £7K were 50% funded by ERDF

Evidence of success

Out of the funded allocated £137500 was allocated to grant, about £600k was contributing towards staff time and £20k was used to prepare events and raise awareness.

The outputs included the following:

150 audits were conducted with companies

50 projects were created based on the audits

200 SMEs interactions during the lifetime of the project

Potential for learning or transfer

IPR is very valuable and quite often not considered by SMEs. The support offered through this Good Practice could be easily transferable into other regions given the availability of experts. It has the potential to add on to existing programmes and services for SMEs. The IPR Audit is a specific tool which could offer other regions potential to learn from.

SS7 Cross-Innovation Voucher

Cross-innovation voucher scheme to help SMEs purchase R&D services to support the development of innovative products and processes.

During Central Europe Programme project FORT, TechnoCenter of University of Maribor led a nine-partner consortium from five countries to design cross-innovation voucher scheme helping SMEs from Central Europe Region purchase R&D services in order to support the development of innovative products and processes.

Innovation Open House events let SMEs and public research organisations apply their business/innovative ideas, which were evaluated based on predetermined criteria. After pre-assessment, top 5 presented their ideas at events and received personal consultancy from experts. Best idea put forward at each Innovation Open House event was awarded a voucher worth € 5.000 to help the winner realise their innovative idea in one of project's other regions. Voucher was not awarded as grant, FORT project partners covered costs of services in the value of voucher. Voucher could be used for:

- Development of new product, prototype,
- Testing quality control and environmental comparability,
- Business plan development for innovative product,
- Improvement analysis of idea, product, business model,
- Development of feasibility studies, studies for problem solving,
- Product/service testing,
- Study visit,
- Personal coaching, mentoring, intensive coaching,
- Analysis of technology transfer potential.

Vouchers could not be used for standard training courses, software purchase, advertising materials, sales or legal services, material purchase, auditing or accounting.

Resources needed

In Slovenia approx. € 20.000 was invested for the implementation of the voucher process including warding two-cross innovation vouchers.

Evidence of success

Two cross-innovation vouchers were awarded in Slovenia. In total twelve Innovation Open House events were organized by FORT partners with almost 700 participants. The winners built twelve cooperations across Central Europe and invested € 60.000 to stimulate the transnational exchange and cross-border support. FORT provided help for the development of breakthrough innovations like controlled release fertilizer, mobile musical therapy, housing solution, breast milk yoghurt, etc.

Potential for learning or transfer

An online database of the ideas presented at these Innovation Open House events helped connect SMEs and public research organisations, bringing together parties who were seeking new research partners and new market opportunities.

Expert jury pre-assessed innovative ideas based on predetermined criteria, e.g. inovativeness of the idea, possibility of turning the idea into practice, level of development of the idea, level of knowledge and experience put into the development of the idea, etc.

Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process, specific tools and methodology for the involvement of the targeted stakeholders.

SS8 A market label for certifying the nutraceutical and carbon footprint of local human agri-food products

Progetto SANI (Saper Nutrire - Saper Nutrire) is an R&D project promoted by SAPERI LOCALI srl with the UNIVERSITY OF CHIETI-PESCARA and SINERGIE EDUCATION srl, and the technical-specialist support of CAPITANK scrl, Innovation Pole of the technological domain chemical-pharmaceutical.

The research and development project was developed to lay the foundations of an internationalization strategy for products supplied within the EU.

The SANI project aims to identify and qualify the nutraceutical properties and the ecological footprint of agro-foods produced by small local farms with the aim of creating a specific reference market model for naturally healthy products.

Particular attention has paid to environmental sustainability by promoting the purchase of zero-kilometer products, implementing the monitoring of the individual product during the production cycle and enhancing its qualification. Furthermore, an impulse to social sustainability has given through the cooperation between public and private companies through the realization of events whose purpose to bring the consumer to choose healthy foods and not replace them with the use of supplements.

The project is financed by the Abruzzo Region as part of the Public Notice for Supporting Innovation Projects of Large Enterprises and SMEs in the areas of specialization S3 - Agrifood, POR FESR Abruzzo 2014-2020, ASSE I - Research Technological Development and Innovation , Action Line 1.1.4: "Support for collaborative R & D activities for the development of new sustainable technologies, new products and services"

Resources needed

The total amount of SANI project is 150,000.00 Euros (Abruzzo ROP ERDF funds 50% eligible costs).

Evidence of success

Saperi locali has selected about 20 companies, present throughout the country, due to the type of products interesting for the project. Saperi locali is organizing a professional refresher course for physicians, nutritionists, dietitians and physiotherapists on issues of healthy eating and effects on human health. The event is being accredited by the Ministry of Health for 100 ECM members and 50 auditors.

Potential for learning or transfer

Innovation is inherent condition to market internationalisation. Healthy food and cosmetics are realistic increasing into the EU market and countries with high standard of wellness. To certify the nutraceutical quality of these products is the first and pre-condition element but it is not enough. The commercialisation to these products need to be compared with national law limits and not only with EU regulations. In this view, the marketing strategy must be developed step by step taken into consideration all the obstacles (administrative and legislative) standing in each national target market.

SS9 Go Global Slovenia

Programme providing all the support services start-up companies need to grow on global markets.

Go:Global Slovenia start-up accelerator offers companies that have already found their product-market fit, all elements they need to successfully embark on rapid global growth in the form of capital, know-how and international connections.

Pre-investment programme for interested companies:

- Promotional roadshow events.
- Intensive two-day investment readiness programme with experts (growth strategy, investment documentation and conditions, improving pitching skills).
- Demo day (presentation of company to the panel).

After first phase company enters tender of Slovene Enterprise Fund for €200,000 public equity investment, allowing the beginning of expansion to foreign markets and embarking on further product development.

Post-investment program for companies that obtained the investment:

- Educational support program: fundamental knowledge about fast global growth of company (i.e. winning additional financial and human resources, company organisation, entering foreign markets, managing its growth).
- Start-up mentor: individual help to the company with advice and contacts.
- Start-up expert council: guides company management.
- Administrative, financial and promotional help from experienced business consultant who helps with reports, national and international promotion.

-Hub helps in obtaining additional funding (private international, Slovene investors, venture capital funds) and further expansion to foreign markets (co-operating with 50 other global entrepreneurial hubs).

Resources needed

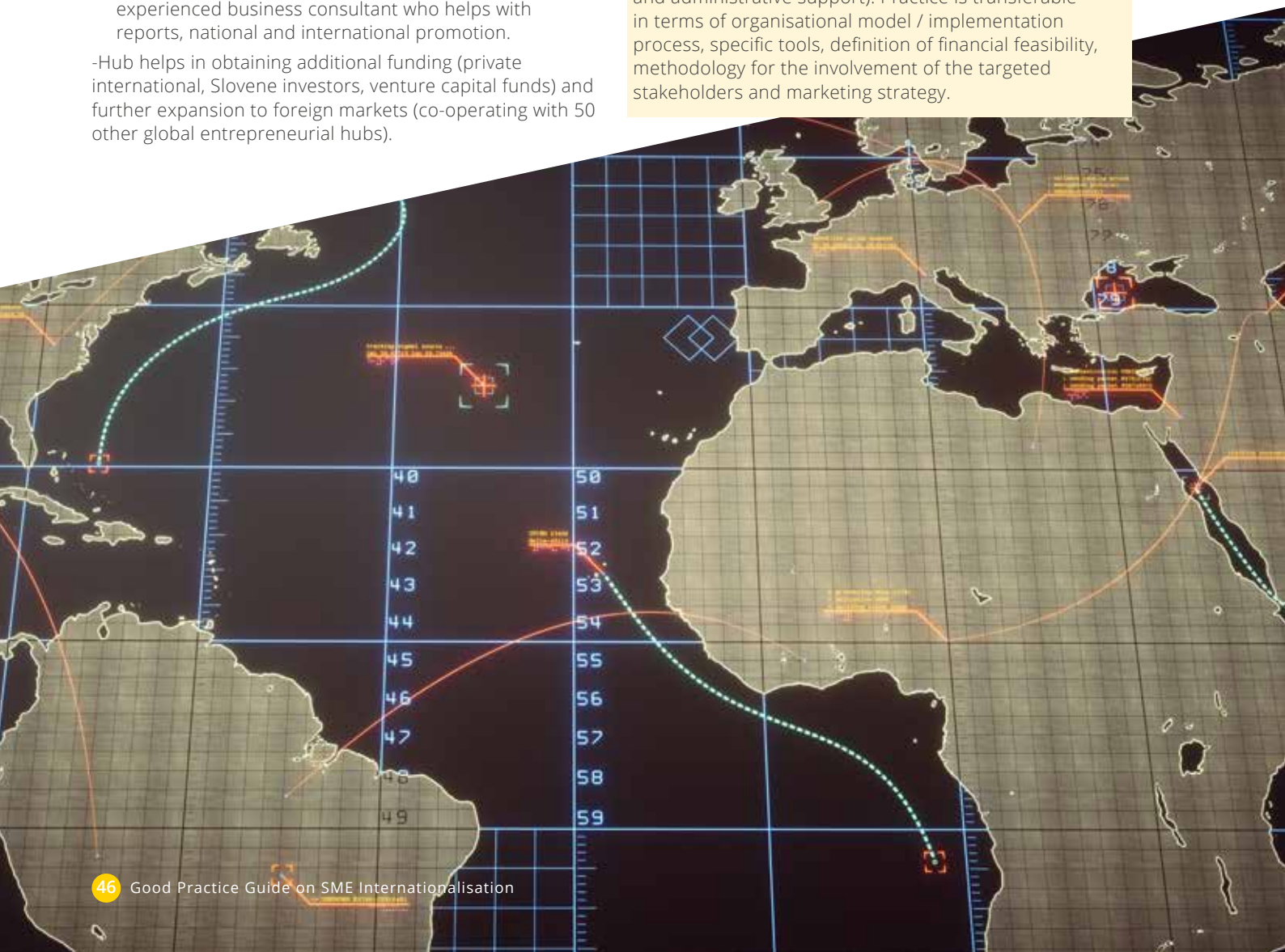
Go:Global is co-financed by ERDF; Ministry of Economic Development and Technology; and Slovene Enterprise Fund. Additionally, it has 6 private investors - Venture capital companies that offer funding in various ranges.

Evidence of success

In the years 2014 and 2017 eleven companies received Go:Global Slovenia accelerator programme and investment. Participants of the programme stated that they are satisfied with the results of the Go:Global programme because they get the right kind of information and skills from experienced managers and other experts.

Potential for learning or transfer

Practice, implemented under Priority Axis 3 of OP for Implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in Republic of Slovenia 2014 – 2020, showcases a simple process that optimizes energy investment of a funders at every step. At the same time practice, implemented in strategic partnership of Technology park Ljubljana, IRP (Venture Factory) and Slovene Enterprise Fund offers an incredible value added to companies - apart from assistance in preparation and submission of application and acquiring of seed capital, practice assures all the necessary elements for innovative companies' global growth (up to date information and knowledge, experienced mentors, additional private investors, international promotion, network of connections, infrastructural and administrative support). Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process, specific tools, definition of financial feasibility, methodology for the involvement of the targeted stakeholders and marketing strategy.



SS10 Regional Centre for Technology Development & Start Together Hub

Boosting regional entrepreneurial competitiveness and readiness of SMEs to go international.

Styrian Technology Park, daughter institution of Maribor Development Agency, pursues the goal to boost regional entrepreneurial competitiveness and readiness of SME internationalisation. It directly supports start-ups and new or restructuring SMEs. STP implements individual tailored support activities:

1) Business Support Centre & Accelerator, nationally certified business incubator, focused on provision of comprehensive support for SMEs, in different stages of their lifecycle.
2) Regional Centre for Technology Development, pursuing technology transfer, technological & innovative research and development sphere.

STP runs Innovation business centre StartTogether (collaboration with NLB bank), offering overall support to business through open innovation/living lab environment by identification, development, execution and marketing of products or services.

Services include:

- Tailor-made consulting.
- Networking.
- Interlinking with foreign SME support environments and networks.
- Informing SMEs about foreign business opportunities (through MDA EEN Office).
- Direct transnational business partnerships and other related institutions for creation of new joint innovative products and services.
- Interlinking SMEs with potential transnational financing (public and private).
- Foreign promotional activities (events, fairs, B2B).
- Strengthening and exchange of knowledge, skills and experience (R&D projects, national or EU supporting services – mentoring schemes, exchange programmes).

Resources needed

Staff costs: 3 FTE

Evidence of success

Regional Centre for Technology Development and Business Support: 200 companies supported.

Accelerator Start Together: 7 supported companies between 2014 and 2016

Potential for learning or transfer

STP Regional Center for Technology Development and Business Support Centre, and Accelerator StartTogether represents high-quality support services model for emerging companies and existing SMEs in phases of growth and development, supporting them with methods validated through long-term experiences in different industrial and business sectors.

STP business model are tailor-made support and activities, focused on the needs of SMEs, offered on daily basis during their incubation.

Practice, linked to Resolution on Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011-2020, National Action Plan for implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe, Slovenia's Smart Specialisation Strategy S4 and Slovenian Act on supportive environment for entrepreneurship, is transferable in terms of organisational model, implementation process, specific tools, definition of financial feasibility, methodology for assessment of problem to be address and marketing strategy.

SS11 Nerve Vision: a case of internationalising an innovation

Nerve Vision was established as a spin-off of NRGsys, which develops tailored healthcare software solutions.

Nerve Vision is using proprietary software developed by NRGsys, to run a post-processing software platform creating 3D reconstruction and segmentation of peripheral nerves from standard MRI acquisitions. The founder of NRGsys software (from Italy) created a spin-off together with the product developer and risk manager (from Canada), and thus the Italian technology took advantage of this collaboration through the technology incubator Jlabs in Toronto (owned by Johnson & Johnson), where they received support services for competitiveness and internationalisation also by public bodies (Ontario CIMTEC and MaRS).Additionally, the Government of Ontario has financed the participation in trade fairs of international importance.

Through the cooperation and establishing a spin-off, the Italian company NRGsys was able to access the Canadian support mechanisms for SMEs.

Resources needed

First round 2012-2015: 450k€.

Current round 2017-2020: 3.4M€.

Support organisations: CIMTEC – Ontario organisation for hardware and software innovation support; MaRS Innovation - early-stage seed investing for companies and technology emerging; Johnson& Johnson – Jlabs Innovation partner.

Evidence of success

During the first step the NerveVision project was funded with 450k€ by Jlabs.

The Nerve Vision project achieved an important result: it received the FDA 510k authorisation in 2012.

Potential for learning or transfer

This successful experience shows the importance of collaborating with foreign business partners and entering joint ventures, such as establishing a joint spin-off to reach international markets. The spin-off was therefore able to access the support mechanisms of Canada, which could also be transferred to EU on regional level.

SS12 Abruzzo Region of Sight

Centre of Excellence for research and innovation in the field of Ophthalmology named "Abruzzo Regione della Vista" (Abruzzo Region of Sight).

The project aims to create a Centre of Excellence for research and innovation in the field of Ophthalmology. The set of activities intends to encourage the creation of a positive environment to develop innovation, whose main actors are universities, SMEs and big enterprises placed in the region, which must increase their interactions with the "networks" of competences that actively operate in the sector at communitarian and international level.

In this sense, the project allows the researchers and start-ups to reach the potential international market through a process of stimulus, selection, and promotion.

One of main aims of the project is to attract researchers, start-ups and enterprises in international panorama, and realise a new approach in the cooperation among enterprises, universities and researchers beyond the national borders. The project is included in the Development Agreement arranged by the National and Regional Government together with local actors in order to single out a strategic project using National and European Funds.

As part of the project, the first step is represented by a recent call for proposals from the Abruzzo region, which activates the ESF for the internationalization of training courses and for the international attractiveness of university education institutions in international networks (as one of its measures).

Resources needed

The total amount is ca. 20 mln EUR. The first step amount 4,5 mln EUR funded at about 50% by ESF – ERDF Abruzzo 2014-2020.

The partnership:

Dompé farmaceutici: research activities.

University D'Annunzio: higher learning.

Capitank: promotion/financier of actions for the creation of Startups.

Evidence of success

The project is being implemented and will have significant territorial repercussions for the creation of new businesses with high technological content and new employment in the reference sector. "Abruzzo Region della Vista" contributes to the growth of the competitiveness of the health system of the Abruzzo Region.

Some indicators: Research on sight medicine, Creation of doctorate degrees, Launch of 5 – 10 new business (Start Up and Spin Off), Creation of 30 – 50 new jobs.

Potential for learning or transfer

The project implements systematic activities of research, development, training and business creation through a public-private partnership which is involved in the implementation.

About the internationalisation point of view, it is a positive example that takes place in both directions: attractiveness of researchers and innovative SMEs toward Abruzzo and support in disseminating and selling the result all over the world.

SS13 Venture House

Venture House is a 'one stop shop' for business support.

Venture house offers local businesses a 'one stop shop' for business support which is designed to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs and to help SMEs enter new markets.

It provides flexible and innovative co-working, office and meeting spaces to new and growing businesses. The centre aims to provide the type of facilities and services that entrepreneurs and new businesses just starting out want and need, as well as supporting homeworkers and micro-businesses that wish to grow and make their first move into commercial premises.

Situated close to the town centre and major road & rail networks, Venture House offers free Internationalisation business advice & support, a staffed reception, free on-site parking and a secure cycle shed, Wi-Fi, refreshment facilities, a Chill Zone and lockers.

The project is intended to be a blueprint for other similar projects in the Stratford District where market failure has been identified.

Resources needed

Resources centre on funding for a building to house the business support facility. (£450k funding to transform old building) with the addition of hot desks, offices, meeting space and business support. In addition to a budget to hold regular workshops, events and one-to-one sessions.

Evidence of success

Success and performance of activity at the centre is measured by growth in relation to the number of direct and indirect jobs created including apprenticeships.

Performance is reported quarterly to the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal Programme Delivery Board who have supported funding for the project.

The project has had 601 business engagements.

Potential for learning or transfer

This is easily replicable and showcases how different initiatives can be brought together under one roof.

SS14 Capitank Pilot Projects

Capitank Pilot Projects: joint activities of innovation as a model in Smart Specialisation Strategy

ROP ERDF Abruzzo 2007- 2013 funded the establishment of the Innovation Poles. Capitank is the Pole of innovation in the Chemical Pharmaceutical sector that currently comprises 59 members including large enterprises, SMEs, Spin-offs and the three Universities of Abruzzo region.

Capitank has developed a program focused on industrial research and experimental development that included the collaboration of companies with academia for successful technology transfer. In particular, during the 2014-2015 period, it has realized a collaborative R & D experience: Pilot Projects. Pilot Projects have increased the know-how and competitiveness of member companies through the sharing of the results object of experimentation, in the following sectors:

- Industrial automation,
- Personalized medicine / telemedicine,
- Environmental sustainability,
- Biotechnology,
- Health / safety.

The Pilot Projects have addressed the definition of the Regional Smart Strategy for the 2014-2020 programming period, that:

- Recognized life sciences as a mature technology sector on which to gather efforts for the future regional development;
- Identified the sector's evolution paths covering: personalized medicine, the effectiveness of products and processes pharmaceutical and environmental sustainability: they have been clearly defined by the experience of the Pilot Projects of Capitank.

The results of the Pilot Projects were presented at Expo 2015.

Resources needed

Total: 630.000 Euro (130.000 ROP ERDF Abruzzo). The selection procedure has admitted projects with expenditures of not less than € 50.000 and not exceeding EUR 200,000.00 and the eligible costs for the technical staff, specialist advisory services, tools, equipment, software and material.

Evidence of success

SMEs of Capitank involved in Pilot Projects achieved important results:

- 1 SME recently opened a new production plant in China.

- 2 SMEs have developed another business area connected to the item of experimentation, foreseeing an increase in the turnover of 15%.

- 2 SMEs developed new prototypes, already installed in regional pharmaceutical industries, hoping to export them to foreign industrial sites.

- 2 SMES are exploring the chance of creating innovative start-up on the basis of results.

Potential for learning or transfer

The methodology applied in the Capitank Pilot projects has transferability potential in the European regions.

The collaboration between companies and research organisations is an asset for the improvement of innovative products, exercising a fundamental incentive for competitiveness and increasing their internationalisations' activities. The pilot projects have stimulated the innovative activity, by promoting intensive interactions, the common use of facilities and exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as by contributing successfully at the technology transfer.

SS15 Info days

Support and encouragement of SMEs' internationalisation by providing essential and information about specific foreign markets.

Main goal of Info days for doing business in foreign countries, organised by Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska, is to give SMEs opportunity to come in direct contact with consultants for foreign market, so they do not have to search for them themselves.

Info days are organised as one-on-one 15-20 minute long consultations with consultants from foreign countries or with good knowledge of a foreign market. Focus of the consultation can vary, depending on the consultant:

- Doing business in a foreign country (general),
- How to open a company in a foreign country,
- Tax law in a foreign country,
- Business practices in a foreign country,
- Fairs in a foreign country,
- Legal-formal aspect of entering a foreign market,
- Specificities of certain industries on a foreign market.

For the implementation of the practice, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska co-operates with a wide range of consulting companies or individual consultants.

Resources needed

Financed through membership fee.

Evidence of success

Info days have been organised for several years, 2-4 times per year, the interest among companies is always high. Companies are very satisfied with the event and usually contact the consultants after the events. In the follow up activities partnerships with consultants are formed. Consultants offer support and guidance on a foreign market.

Potential for learning or transfer

The GP was developed based on the needs of companies – members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, constant high participation at the events testifies the need is still present. Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process.

SS16 Industrial Center of Bulgaria in Moscow

ICRB – Moscow provides international partnerships and thus facilitating and bringing closer the commercial activities of Bulgarian SMEs on Russian market.

ICRB – Moscow is a structure, governed by the Ministry of Economy. It is part of the work zone of the Republic of Bulgaria's embassy in Russia. The center assists and supports the Ministry in carrying out the country's policies with the focus to extend the economic, trade and technical relations between Bulgaria and Russia. The main goals are to promote the Bulgarian business presence on Russian market, increase of export, development of economic relationship on federal and regional level.

The ICRB-Moscow:

- Develops, maintains and provides current information for the economic opportunities and export potential, and the conditions to carry out business in the Russian Federation;
- Supports Bulgarian legal and physical entities to export produce and services on the Russian market;
- Provides information, assists in establishment of business contacts, organises meetings, fairs, business missions, business forums, presentations and other events;
- Provides for use, different premises and housing as well as provides services that create the necessary conditions for the successful carrying out of activities for Bulgarian legal and physical entities and their consortiums on the Russian market;
- Provides contacts to the public administration, the NGOs and business environment of Bulgaria and Russia for questions, connected to the activities implemented.

Some of the key partners are 15 Russian regions, 33 Russian regional business support organisations.

Resources needed

The cost of the practice has been estimated on yearly basis since 1986 and varies in accordance with the planned budget for the center. The average budgeted amount per year is 570,000 EURO. The required human resources for running of the GP are 11 people.

Evidence of success

The quantitative indicators which measure the success of the GP are:

- Organization of 19 business missions in Russia for the period 2013-2017;
- Support in national representation in more than 57 international exhibitions and promotional events for the last 5 years;
- Organization of more than 750 B2B meetings for the last 5 years;
- Elaboration of more than 80 product-oriented market research and analysis;
- Establishment of more than 64 successful partnerships for the last 10 years.

Potential for learning or transfer

This Good Practice presents an approach of esatblishment of a supporting infrastrucure on a specific external market which could provide internationalisation support to SMEs through various tools - organisation of events, trade missions, exhibitions, presentations, etc.

SS17 Internationalisation Plan for Extremadura's Enterprises (PIMEX)

Support Program to help SMEs to initiate/go forward in their internationalisation process within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Financed by Regional Funds and European Social Funds (ESF), PIMEX is a Support Program to help Extremadura companies to initiate and go forward in their internationalisation process. SMEs with motivation to internationalise their products and/ or services are reached and provided with the tools needed to achieve their objectives.

As for the specific support offered to the companies participating in PIMEX, it can be classified into technical, training and commercial support.

- Technical support: Technical staff of the International Area within Extremadura Avante supports the participating company in the development of the plan.
- Training support based on training pills regarding strategic planning and addressed to management or commercial director.
- Support in actions for external promotion: Actions and expenses valued at a maximum of 2,500€ per company are supported.

Participants in PIMEX commit themselves to participate in the following formative actions:

- Assistance to three face-to-face group training sessions.
- Assistance to three individual tutorials in the facilities of the participating company

After the training, companies participating in PIMEX will have a SWOT analysis as well as an action plan or international roadmap.

Resources needed

For the development of this Good Practice, the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support
- For the 2016 annuity, the PIMEX Plan has a cost/ budget of 88,280 euros (75,000 for actions + 5,000 for training + 8,280 € for consultancy)

Evidence of success

- Since 2002, more than 500 Extremadura companies have participated in this program and have received the adequate support to strengthen their foreign trade departments.
- In 2016, 30 SMEs participated in this program.
- The satisfaction level obtained from the quality survey is around 8 points out of 10 in all editions.
- Participating SMEs acquire skills and abilities to face internationalisation processes in an autonomous and stronger way, in the short / medium term.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- A close technical monitoring to each participating SME, by mean of a supporting team: technician (trainee working full time in-company) together with an external senior consultant advising upon request.
- A methodology for the implementation process: "Learning by doing" methodology and tools, supported by senior consultants
- Metrics for the evaluation of the program.

To sum up, PIMEX has been identified as a specific tool providing training, technical and commercial support for developing skills on internationalisation management.

SS18 Consolidation Plan in International Markets

Support Programme created to consolidate regional SMEs in the international market within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Financed by Regional Funds and European Social Funds (ESF), the Consolidation Plan is a Support Program created to help regional enterprises to consolidate not only their international sales, but also the export department and training in international marketing and strategy.

As for the specific support offered to the companies participating in this Good Practice it can be classified into technical, training and commercial support.

- Technical support: technicians of Extremadura Avante support the participant in the development of an internationalisation plan through a personalised monitoring.
- Training support: focus on the management team and foreign trade technician, the participants can take part in the following training activities:
  - General Training Plan: Attendance to three trainings in group .
  - Individual Training Plan: it consists in two individual classes, finishing with:

    Deliverable 1.- Action Plan including marketing and communication strategies to develop in the selected markets.

    Deliverable 2.- Design of an International Road Map including new sales channels in the selected markets.
- Support in promotion actions abroad: aid for activities and expenses for a maximum of 3.000€/company. Some of the possible activities are: commercial trips, promotional material, specialised consultancy or legal advice, among others.

The enterprises can apply to this programme for two years in a row.

Resources needed

For the development of this GP the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support.
- For the 2016 annuity, the Consolidation Plan has a cost/budget of 103.280€ (90.000€ for activities + 5.000€ for training + 8.280€ for consultancy) for the participation of 30 regional enterprises.

Evidence of success

- Since 2004 over 200 enterprises have participated in this programme and have received support to consolidate their foreign trade department (in 2016).
- In 2016, 30 enterprises participated in this program.
- The Consolidation Plan has become a boost to develop and consolidate the international activity of the SMEs.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- The support to the international strategy is facilitated through a close monitoring and advice given by a coordinated team: Extremadura Avante technicians and the foreign trade consultants.
- The proposals applying to the Consolidation Plan are registered through an on-line questionnaire in the website of Extremadura Avante.
- SMEs receive a complete package to develop their international activity: training, technical support and commercialization tools.

SS19 Support Program for the International Expansion of SMEs - XPANDE

Support Program offering SMEs with an individualised consultancy and advice, within the Chamber of Commerce´s Internationalisation Plan.

Directly financed by the National ERDF Operational Program of Spain under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3 (d), through the Chambers of Commerce, XPANDE is an individualised consultancy program aimed at companies with limited or no experience in international markets and/or those interested in starting exporting to certain foreign markets, that need advice to optimize their limited resources, following precise & assumable objectives.

XPANDE is developed in 2 phases:

- PHASE 1. Advice for the preparation of an Internationalisation Plan (100% subvention).
  - Phase 1a Selection of Markets: diagnosis of SME´s international potential, analysis of the business units, analysis of the business model and analysis and selection of markets.
  - Phase 1b Market Access: surrounding analysis, analysis of marketing & communication strategy, action plan and economic financial plan.
- PHASE 2. Aid for the development of the Process of Internationalisation of the company (maximum budget of up to 9,000€, Co-financing: 80% ERDF / 20% Company).
  - Set of tools to develop the promotion strategy in its target markets.

Eligible expenses under this GP:

- Investigation.
- Dissemination/ promotion materials.
- Advertising.
- Participation as exhibitor at fairs.
- Prospecting and commercial trips.
- Promotional actions.
- Registration of patents and trademarks/ certifications.
- Other.

Resources needed

- Technical staff support per company: Phase 1a = 6 sessions & 60 hrs of support, Phase 1b = 7 sessions & 68 hrs of support, Redaction of Participation Report: 15 hrs of work.
- The budget of XPANDE ascends to 353.811,04 € in 2017.

Evidence of success

- Between 2014 and 2015, 71 companies have received advice through the XPANDE Program.
- In 2017, 28 companies were beneficiaries of Phase I, and 16 companies of Phase II.
- In general, SMEs have a better knowledge of the market and are more mature in their internationalisation process.
- Increase of exporting companies and diversification of destination markets.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- Methodology that combines the counselling and minor investments by SMEs.
- Detection of the SMEs´ strengths and weaknesses based on a complete, systematic and objectively applied analysis.
- Provision of tools to strengthen SMEs in the target market, selecting and planning the most appropriate marketing actions based on their client, product, service and country.

SS20 Digital XPANDE Support Program

Support Program offering personalised advice to SMEs in the field of international digital marketing within the Chamber of Commerce´s Internationalisation Plan.

Financed by the National ERDF Operational Program under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3 (d), Digital XPANDE is a support program whose main objective is to help SMEs selling through internet thanks to an international online marketing strategy.

It is divided in 2 phases:

- Phase I Counselling: in which a detailed analysis of the company is carried out in order to develop a report of recommendations and an action plan regarding international digital marketing. It has a length between 1- 3 months with a minimum of 50+15 hours of counselling, and a budget up to 2.000€.
- Phase II Support for the implementation of the Action Plan: it consists of a set of supports aimed at strengthening the on-line positioning of the SME and its products/ services. It has a length of between 2-6 months with a budget up to 4,000€; Co-financing: 80% ERDF / 20% Company.

Digital XPANDE also includes a series of horizontal actions: publication in bulletins, publication of the call in press, organization of info events, forums, promotion, dissemination and recruitment of beneficiaries in the territory.

SMEs applying to Digital XPANDE have specific requirements:

- To have an operative web page.
- To have a product or service selected by the company.
- Having decided a target market to position its product or service already selected.

Resources needed

- Technical staff support per company: 3 sessions & 65 hrs of support plus 15 hrs of work for the preparation and redaction of the company´s Participation Report.
- The budget of Digital XPANDE ascends to 259.424,40€ in 2017.

Evidence of success

- In 2017, 33 companies had an International Digital Marketing Plan, and 30 companies moved to Phase II.
- In general, SMEs have a better knowledge of the market and are more mature in their internationalisation process.
- Increase of exporting companies and diversification of destination markets.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- methodology that combines the counselling and minor investments by SMEs.
- detection of the SMEs´ strengths and weaknesses based on a complete, systematic and objectively applied analysis.
- provision of tools to strengthen SMEs in the target market, selecting and planning the most appropriate digital marketing actions based on their client, product, service and country.

SS21 Palm Marketplan

International Marketing Plan for Abruzzo SMEs in Wood and Furniture sector.

Palm (Pole of Innovation of Wood and Furniture) is a consortium formed by independent companies in the field of Wood and Furniture of Abruzzo region. Palm performed its activities according with the strategy indicated by Abruzzo Regional Government and its activities have been part of the ROP ERDF 2007-2013.

Palm support its members in internationalisation processes. Palm studied an International Marketing Plan, as a tool available for the SMEs useful to take targeted, incisive and effectiveness decisions to enter foreign markets. It comes from the consciousness that the consortium is a set of entities completely different in terms of legal subjects, size, location, strategies and e business qualifications.

The Market Plan indicates to approach the destination markets through a methodological tool called CONTRACT.

Due to a very fragmented and small production system, this strategy is particularly suitable. It proposes to approach the market through an integrated offer of different subjects in the same sector and to create groups of companies able to provide a complete service to a foreign customer.

Resources needed

The action involved a total cost of 10.000 Euros, 5.000 thousand of which from POR FESR Abruzzo.

The plan involved: consultants specialized in marketing plans, the Palm board and the referrals of the companies and universities of the consortium.

Evidence of success

The objectives of the international market plan were:

- Define an internationalization strategy common to all PALM members with limited costs, quick launch times and simple structure.
- Strengthening of the shares of the foreign market.
- Identification of new national destinations.
- Identification of the most suitable forms and methods of internationalization for each company.

All 49 companies in the consortium were involved in the analysis and benefited from results.

Potential for learning or transfer

The strategy indicated by the Palm International Market Plan is transferable in those European regions rich in highly specialized SMEs in a specific production area.

The lesson learned is that in the processes of internationalisation, cooperation between subjects of different types and sizes is a winning factor.

The main result achieved is methodological: following the International Market Plan, the Palm Consortium companies have implemented common actions such as, for example, joint participation in international trade fairs and the development of product innovation projects in the form of aggregation of companies to face the international market.

SS22 Global Growth West Midlands (G2)

A tailored support package to support SMEs wishing to Internationalise delivered by consultants with a 50% funded grant.

Under the ERDF investment priority 2 of priority axis 3: 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes, the G2 pilot is aimed at SME's between £5m and £40m turnover that have either not exported before (but have the potential to do so), those that have lapsed or those that want to export more proactively. UK Department for International Trade (DIT) identified that these SMEs have the potential to export successfully and effectively with support – but for various reasons are not doing so.

SMEs that would have attended an event or get in touch with DIT for any support:

1) Go through a triage where International Trade Adviser (ITA) can assess the internationalisation experience.
2) SME would be either directed to basics workshops to learn understand more or sent to an ITA for a one to one.
3) SME get a full diagnostic with an ITA based at their local chamber of commerce and an action plan is agreed.
4) The team from the chamber of commerce would account manage the contracts and support the tender process to recruit the suppliers required. An external supplier would be selected to deliver the support needed.
5) The G2 pilot scheme will give SME a grant up to £7k to "buy in" service from an external consultant to implement their plan. DIT will fund 50% of the grant and the SME would have to either pay the other 50% or be able to match it through ERDF (according to the service).

Resources needed

£1M of funding was put aside to support up to 280 companies for the 1 year pilot. The grant fund is 50% from DIT and up to 50% private or/and ERDF.

The team of ITAs who deliver the scheme, are based at chamber of commerce's across the region. They are specialist advisers which cost about £50k/year.

Evidence of success

It is early days but the idea is to roll out this from 300 businesses to 10000 businesses of any sizes in England. This would roll out the regional pilot into a full scale national scheme.

Potential for learning or transfer

Something any region could use to boost the use of the private sector which will leverage the public investment. This initiative would engage with the private sector by funding 50% of the costs with companies (benefiting both the private sector and the supported SME). SME Internationalisation support would be supported by national/regional fund to a certain extent but also allowing to tap into to private sector expertise and encourage it.

The UK Department for International Trade has identified the high potential of a larger number of SMEs to be supported as International Trade Advisers would have less specialise work to deliver. ITAs would initially do the diagnostic but be able to direct the SME to external consultants. The support received by the SMEs would be very tailor made and unique to the SME needs.

SS23 ABREX: Circuito di Credito Commerciale

Trade credit as a tool for the internationalisation of local SMEs.

With the Abrex Commercial Credit Circuit, the very same companies are getting credit for themselves, reducing their financial risk exposure and mutually supporting each other during these critical times. By joining CircuitoAbrex.net, companies can make purchases and repay them over the period of a year by selling their goods and services to other members within the circuit. The amazing thing is that the circuit is interest free, therefore in order to repay the purchases, the sales price will have to be the same as the original purchasing price. In CircuitoAbrex.net every business has only one interest: to boost the local economy.

The purpose of the Circuit is to reconnect local businesses, provide high-value-added promotion services, and offer innovative complementary payment and credit instruments to match the traditional ones. Within the circuit, businesses are financed at a zero rate, local businesses and productions are privileged and wealth remains on the territory, thus stimulating sustainable development models. The most important feature of the Circuit is therefore to help our companies recover, maintain and/or acquire valuable market shares. In fact, Abrex does not replace their current market, but rather adds to it, offering them the opportunity to contribute to economic recovery, optimizing their production capacity and their appeal to the market.

Resources needed

Private funding

Evidence of success

In the first half of 2018 it marked another positive sign of growth with a +220% of local economy reaching 6.4 million euros in revenues generated by 665 members.

Potential for learning or transfer

The local commercial credit system can be used to facilitate access by local SMEs to services and advice for internationalisation.

The Abrex Commercial Credit Circuit enables companies to give an impulse back to affiliated businesses, if they are in a difficult economic situation, or starting, planning or making new investments thanks to liquidity savings (€) generated by sales and additional purchases made inside Abrex.

This extra market (compared to the € one), allows companies – in the long run – to focus their attention and spend their money on new forms of development on various markets, including foreign markets, or start programming, thanks to the circuit, strategic marketing activities capable of being known also in foreign markets.

SS24 China made in Abruzzo

China made in Abruzzo Football City Program: From Italy toward China along the Silk Road.

Proger is the 1st Italian engineering group and at the 85th place in the Top 225 International design firm. Proger design solutions in the field of: hydrogeological instability, renewable, environment, waste, water, healthcare, hospitality.

China is the world second economy with 1,37 billion of people, and the country across a crucial transformation phase. Among the strategic objectives, there is to become a world football power. In this framework, Proger designed the Football City Program, aggregating around the football item several Made in Italy excellences. The project was a synergic territorial work led by Proger together with the Pescara Municipality, Chamber of Pescara and the Pescara Calcio football team.

The project concerns a new «urban center» concept, starting from the football, being able to establish business platform for hundreds of companies representing, in an integrated and organic way, the best Italian supply according to the Chinese market desires, such as: culture, fashion, food, design, commerce, services.

Recently, the Mayor of Fuzhou (a Chinese-size medium city of 8 million on inhabitants), with the Mayor of Pescara, the CEO of Proger, the President of Pescara Calcio and the President of the Chamber of Pescara met together to kick-off the Agreement for the construction of the Football city tailored for 800k people and with a project cost of 600 Million €.

Resources needed

The practice is linked to New Silk Road that is a Chinese strategic programme for the Euroasiatic improvement of the connectivity and the cooperation. The first step of the project involves the realisation of a 600 Million Euro Football City.

Evidence of success

Recently, the Mayor of Fuzhou (a Chinese-size medium city of 8 million on inhabitants), with the Mayor of Pescara, the CEO of Proger, the President of Pescara Calcio and the President of the Chamber of Pescara met together to kick-off the Agreement for the construction of the Football city tailored for 800k people and with a project cost of 600 Million €.

Potential for learning or transfer

Abruzzo made in China is an example of regional integrated efforts for the realization of a stable framework to internationalise products and services. This practice can be an inspiration for SMEs in understanding how creating a unitary image can be more effective in establishing relationships and networks serving the cultural and commercial exchanges.

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SS25 Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub

Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub deliver bespoke advice and support on a range of key issues from a single point of contact.

Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub delivers bespoke advice and support on a range of key issues for business allowing them to cut through time-consuming bureaucracy and accessing a single point of contact.

The growth hub has a wealth of backing from professional bodies, support services and networks along with an array of resources at their fingertips.

The advisors are skilled at identifying the best initiatives for each unique business out of many complicated regional and national support services. Essentially the growth hub helps cut red tape while business owners get on with driving their business forward.

Whether a business want to raise capital, increase its workforce, ramp up production or identify export or supply chain opportunities, The growth hub provide tailored, commercially focused and joined-up advice that's free, impartial and delivered with one goal in mind: growing each businesses bottom line.

This measure is part funded through ERDF by Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Resources needed

Resources will entail funding a physical space and financed available to support specialist advisers to deliver the bespoke advice. Currently the team counts 6 specialist advisers and mentors looking after geographical sub-areas of the region. The costs should avg £300K inc support team per year.

Evidence of success

Funding was secured for a 1 year pilot which has continued for 4 years.

The goal of Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub is to simplify and rationalise business support by acting as a central source of information and advice within a defined local area. This support generated a blanket of better support in the region.

To date it created approximately 2400 jobs, added £89000 in gross value and secured more than £65M in private sector investment for companies they have supported.

Potential for learning or transfer

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SS27 Coventry & Warwickshire Business Support

Cohesive support package to address barriers to SMEs starting up and growing including support for internationalisation

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counts 6 specialist advisers and mentors looking after geographical sub-areas of the region. The costs should avg £300K inc support team per year.

Resources needed

The programme was funded by:-

£4.66m ERDF (Priority 3).

£13.8M Total investment (public and private sector match funds).

The support is delivered through chambers of commerce with the international trade advisors (ITA), costing £50k/ year.

Evidence of success

Builds on Enterprise & Business Growth programme from the last ERDF programme and it achieved so far:

- 609 SMEs assisted.
- 192 businesses created.
- 1,109 jobs created.

Potential for learning or transfer

The model involves a large scale partnership and it is essential to make sure that SMEs are cross-referred between agencies. Cooperation between different agencies and organisations is paramount for this programme to be successfully implemented within a region. The ITAs are delivering the support through the regional Chambers of commerce and need to be signed posted by others.

SS28 Department of International Trade (DIT) Working with Universities

The scheme allows companies to hire students to work on particular projects from researching new markets to developing international contacts.

Under the ERDF investment priority 2 of priority axis 3: 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes, Working with universities provides support for internationalisation to SMEs delivered by graduate placement..

SMEs that would have attended an event or get in touch with DIT for any support:

1) Go through a triage where International Trade Adviser (ITA) can assess the internationalisation experience.
2) SME would be either directed to basics workshops to learn understand more or sent to an ITA for a one to one.
3) SME get a full diagnostic with an ITA based at their local chamber of commerce and an action plan is agreed.
4) The team from the chamber of commerce would account manage the contracts and support the tender process to recruit the suppliers required. An external supplier would be selected to deliver the support needed.
5) The scheme allows companies to hire students to work on particular projects from researching new markets to developing international contacts. Placements, free for the SME, last from 4 weeks to 6 months. The selected student would be familiar with the country targeted by the companies. They would be able to communicate effectively with the right language skills and understand their ways of doing business.

The DIT team would help the SMEs write a job specification, and link to the university to interview and recruit the right candidate.

Resources needed

The resources required are for the personnel to administrate this programme while the student would be at no cost to the company.

Cost of staff to run the scheme (university staff to support the recruitment and the DIT team who recruit the company).

Evidence of success

The wealth of internationally reputable universities in the area makes the West Midlands the perfect location for such a programme, with large numbers of postgraduates with expertise in a range of languages, business and cultural knowledge.

5 placements have been successfully deployed in the 5 past years.

The student gains work experience while the SME will acquire specific skills free of charge and the university would be able to provide students with placements.

Potential for learning or transfer

The model can be replicated though specific attention needs to be given to whether the region has access to students and companies looking for additional help/ research in this area.

The support from the ITAs to understand the SMEs need and the support of the University to help recruit and select the right candidate.

INFORMATION PROVISION SERVICES

SMEs require to access information before they could take any decisions regarding internationalisation. The main purpose of obtaining the information is to increase their knowledge and reduce the level of risk before investing any time and funds in international activities. Information could relate to marketing, reports on foreign markets, on regulations and on possible foreign partners. Learning about possible business opportunities, developing their businesses and to increase their market share and growth, seems to directly be linked with internationalisation of SMEs (EC 2010). Several providers support SMEs with gathering the right intelligence and prepare for an eventual international activity. For example the match making with the adequate partner could considerably help SMEs to gain the local knowledge they need, local suppliers they could utilise or access to a network of businesses that would be supporting their activities. These information provision services would present valuable market information crucial to overcome barriers linked to the external environment, for SMEs to internationalise successfully.

The following section includes good practices on how information services in various forms offer support to SMEs wishing to Internationalise.

- **Export promotional activities/marketing**
- **Regularly updated analysis reports on foreign markets**
- **Information about administrative rules and regulations**
- **Trade missions, business forums and other promotional events**
- **Partner search services**
- **One stop customer service to assist SMEs exporters with foreign markets**
- **Trade centers abroad**
- **Market intelligence services**
- **Other**

	Export promotional activities/marketing	Information about administrative rules and regulations	Trade missions, business forums and other promotional events	Partner search services
IS1 Supply Chain (West Midlands UK)	x			
IS2 Promotional brands (Extremadura Spain)	x			
IS3 International Promotion Plan (Extremadura Spain)	x			
IS4 Legal Support on Austrian Market (Vzhodna Slovenija, Slovenia)		x		
IS5 Inward Missions (West Midlands UK)			x	
IS6 Trade Missions (West Midlands UK)			x	
IS7 Creation of Business Contacts and Partnerships (Slovenia)			x	
IS8 EEN Support for SMEs (Slovenia)			x	
IS9 Internationalisation through events (Bulgaria)			x	
IS10 Joint Participation at Fairs (Slovenia)			x	
IS11 Trade missions specialised for furniture sector (Bulgaria)			x	
IS12 Support Incentives to Collective Actions - Internationalisation (Algarve Portugal)			x	
IS13 Promotional actions abroad (Extremadura Spain)			x	
IS14 PALM Madeinit (Abruzzo Italy)			x	
IS15 Slovenian Business Clubs (Slovenia)				x
IS16 National Export Portal (Bulgaria)				x
IS17 Hosted Buyers Programme (Bulgaria)				x
IS18 B2B meetings (Bulgaria)				x

	One stop customer service to assist SMEs exporters with foreign markets	Trade centers abroad	Market intelligence services	Other
IS19 Set-up and maintenance of OSS (Slovenia)	X			
IS20 Extremadura Exports (Extremadura Spain)	X			
IS21 i-Export (Extremadura Spain)	X			
IS22 Commercial delegations (Extremadura Spain)	X			
IS23 Regional partnership (West Midlands UK)	X			
IS24 ITA (West Midlands UK)	X			
IS25 INTATRADE (West Midlands UK)	X			
IS26 E commerce (West Midlands UK)	X			
IS27 ITA Triage (West Midlands UK)	X			
IS28 Innovation Centre (West Midlands UK)	X			
IS29 Cooperation with Foreign Embassies and Trade Offices (Bulgaria)		X		
IS30 Remote Commercial Office (Bulgaria)		X		
IS31 Public Tender Programme (Extremadura Spain)			X	
IS32 Slovenia`s Economic Diplomacy (Slovenia)				Consultancy services

IS1 West Midlands Supply Chain

A proactive programme to promote the expertise of West Midlands companies in targeted sectors to overseas buyers.

The West Midlands has many industrial strengths in particular in:

Creativity/Digital Media.

Advanced Engineering.

Transport Technologies (aerospace/automotive).

Food and Drink.

Within these sectors are high performing, experienced companies (many are already in supply chains to the OEM's and this particular practice will highlight these companies to overseas buyers and encourage them to include west midlands companies in their supply chains.

Essentially companies will be identified and profiled and incorporated in a brochure which will be distributed to Overseas buyers.

Resources needed

Cost of design and print of brochure £10k.

Personnel costs of a network of advisers throughout key markets, along with personnel in the region to support SMEs who wish target overseas markets.

International trade advisers costs and support administration £55k/year each.

Evidence of success

The Good practice is currently in its development stage but it is expected that profiled companies will gain significant contracts through being profiled in this unique way.

Potential for learning or transfer

This practice relied heavily on an existing network of personnel through the world which were already in place through the department of trade and the foreign and Commonwealth Office. This network already had contacts with potential overseas buyers which enabled the promotion expertise of West Midlands companies to happen relatively easily. If a region has a similar network in place the introduction of a similar practice given there is sufficient funding available would be easily replicable.

IS2 Promotional Brands: "ALIMENTOS DE EXTREMADURA" (Foods from Extremadura)

Promotional Brand to value regional food production by offering a consolidated brand prestige, within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Financed by the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3 (d) "Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes", through Extremadura Avante (Public Agency), Alimentos de Extremadura is a seal of identity as well as a common element for the promotion/ marketing of the agricultural products of Extremadura.

"Alimentos de Extremadura" contains a comprehensive, rich and varied range of food products and drinks. One of its main objectives is to create awareness and perception of them among consumers at the time it increases their reputation.

Other objectives of this Good Practice are:

- Performed promotional activities at points of sale.
- Carried out joint advertising campaigns in media.
- Performed sponsorship of acts and events.
- Collaboration with other institutions.

This brand means an opportunity to promote the sector in a joint and coordinated manner, pooling efforts so that broader horizons can be undertaken at a promotional and advertising level, in which the main sales argument to be emphasised in will be the Extremadura origin.

Resources needed

For the development of this Good Practice, the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support: 5 experts from Extremadura Avante.
- ALIMENTOS DE EXTREMADURA has a cost/budget of 800.000€ approximately per year (entirely from the OP).

Evidence of success

- Nowadays, over 450 SMEs are registered under "Alimentos de Extremadura" brand
- In 2017 there were carried out the following actions:
  - 7 international point of sale promotions in 56 shop, with 70 participating companies & 294 products.
  - 4 product presentations.
  - 13 international sponsorships.
  - 14 international gastronomic events.
  - Other promotional activities.
- This GP has promoted the perception of regional agricultural products and increased their reputation.

Potential for learning or transfer

This tool has been available for SMEs since 2008 and it is a successful instrument to promote a given business sector in a joint and coordinated manner, pooling efforts so that broader horizons can be undertaken at a promotional and advertising level. The organisation and methodology carry out by the Public Agency in order to coordinate this instrument can be transferred to other regions with similar needs.

IS3 International Promotion Plan

Support Program offering SMEs instruments/ activities to support their internationalisation processes within the Chamber´s Internationalisation Plan.

Financed by the National ERDF Operational Program under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3 (d) "Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes", the International Promotion Plan (IPP) makes available to companies, by means of the cameral entities, a series of instruments and aids to support their internationalisation processes through the following action lines:

1. International Promotion.
   - Direct & Inverse Trade Missions.
   - Grouped Participation in Fairs.
   - Visits to Fairs.
2. Awareness & Information: Forums Organization, Info Days, Seminars, Workshops, information activities...
3. Special Actions.
   - Carrying out events for international promotion in a particular area.
   - Analysis of international competitors.
   - Other actions aimed at improve the international positioning of SMEs

its main objectives are:

- To foster the culture of internationalisation.
- To strengthen the training of human capital.
- To support SMEs competitiveness.
- To increase the Spanish export base

Some of the requirements to access to this support are:

- To be an SME or self-employed.
- Not having received aid from any Public Administration higher than 200,000€ in the last 3 years or 100,000€ in case of companies operating in the road transport sector.
- Having their registered office or productive centre in Extremadura.

Resources needed

- Technical staff support for:
  - International Promotion actions: 130 hrs + 8 hrs/ company for agenda preparation + 8 hrs/day accompaniment.
  - Awareness & Information: 200 hrs.
  - Special Actions: 130 + 8 hrs/company for agenda preparation.
- The budget of IPP ascends to 187.444,86€ in 2017.

Evidence of success

- During 2015, 31 foreign promotion actions were carried out: 11 professional visits to international fairs, 14 direct trade missions and 6 business cooperation meetings, with the participation of 173 companies.
- From 2013 to 2015 there has been an increase of 177% in terms of the program's budget.
- From 2013 to 2015 there has been an increase of 243% in terms of actions carried out by the program.

Potential for learning or transfer

The actions carried out stimulate the creation of an internationalisation culture within the company through a combination of International Promotion and Awareness & Information actions. This approach can be transferred to other regions whose SMEs have the same difficulties in accessing new markets.

IS4 Legal support on Austrian market

A one-stop- shop for providing advice to SMEs, especially focused on a single foreign market.

Maribor's regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business (RCCSB) offers a one-stop shop providing legal advice to its SME members, especially focused on neighbouring Austrian market. Support consists of:

- Legal and financial advice about doing business in Austria (not restricted to Austrian market only),
- Support in establishing first business contacts (entering fairs, B2B meetings, linguistic support),
- Providing pre-entry information,
- Updated news with tenders and business opportunities,
- Online services for their members, matching the demand and supply.

Service was developed on identified main problems of SMEs entering the Austrian market; namely, the lack of knowledge about the Austrian legislation regulating their fields of work. RCCSB started tracking the changes in Austrian legislation regulating the fields concerning its SME members and started keeping records of interpretations provided by work inspectors in different regions in Austria.

Key aspect of the practice is a follow-up of consultancies, following the impact of the legal and financial advice provided.

SME members of RCCSB have access to support on other markets as well, either directly or through another chamber within the network of national umbrella of Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (62 regional chambers).

Most active users of the services are SMEs from transport and construction sectors.

Resources needed

Main financial resources are staff cost for consulting, gathering and analysis of data. Staff is ensured, not to take financial risks deriving from possible unsuccessful consultation.

Service is primarily for chamber's members and is funded through membership fees. Membership is voluntary.

Evidence of success

On average, service supports 30 SMEs per month.

An important result is also collected knowledge on specific legislative on the Austrian market, gathered throughout the years of conducting the service.

Potential for learning or transfer

With various possible legal interpretations of existing legislative regulating specific sectors and occasional legislative changes and updates on foreign markets it is very difficult for SMEs to be up to date. RCCSB offers not only initial interpretations of the legislative, but also practical examples of their interpretation and implementation through precedent cases.

Practice is focused on SME entering a specific foreign market. EU. The same principle can be applied to any market, where local/regional SMEs have a strong presence and experience (either EU markets or non-EU markets).

Practice is transferable in terms of organisational model / implementation process and risk management strategy involved.

IS5 SME International Growth Programme – Inward Missions

Inward missions bringing in experts and buyers from overseas markets to enable companies to meet new contacts and to learn about new markets.

Inward Missions are an important vehicle in assisting companies develop their export activity. By bringing in experts and buyers from overseas markets it enables companies to meet new contacts, to learn about the market, make contacts within the market and potentially start on the process of making sales.

The Department of International Trade (DIT) West Midlands runs a programme of inward missions. The missions are usually focused around either markets/ regions or sectors. Previous markets have included groups from South East Asia, Central Europe, USA, Gulf, China, Japan and Hong Kong. The programme of activity can include one to one clinics, roadshow style workshops or site visits. Around 10 missions per year are planned with 5-30 people attending.

Grants up to £3000 are available 50% funded

Resources needed

Cost of meet the buyer events is £1k to cover room hire/ catering

Cost of 'New Year New Market' larger events £30k (But include a lot more delegates)

Personnel cost of UK advisors in addition to a network of teams based in over 100 countries around the world.

Evidence of success

The Good practice is in its infancy and as such has plans to deliver 9 inwards for 120 SMEs.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential of transfer this Good practice is possible but largely depends on whether the specific region has access to contacts in overseas markets in order to help facilitate the inward missions by bringing experts and buyers into the region and matching with potential regional buyers and suppliers.

IS6 Trade Missions

Department of International Trade (DIT) West Midlands run a programme of missions at various international markets and exhibitions.

Department of International Trade (DIT) West Midlands runs a programme of missions. The missions are aimed at different audiences (new to export and more experienced exporters) and are aimed at sectors and markets that offer the best opportunities for companies. Sometimes the missions can be based around a specific exhibition.

This is a proactive programme that assists companies to "get out there and visit the market". Testing an overseas market can only really be done by visiting it – ensuring they are prepared, have the support of trade advisers and funding to assist them.

The support packages includes the following:

- Pre-mission preparation - briefings on market/ identification of contacts.
- The Mission - in market briefings and activity, the benefits of travelling with a group of other business persons.
- Post mission activity - following up contacts you have met.

Resources needed

Cost of personnel to organise the logistics and administration of trade missions

The resources needed for this Good Practice centre around a network of teams based in over 100 countries around the word who have the potential to develop a meaningful trade mission to potential target markets.

Evidence of success

Currently there are 8 outward missions' planned to various places for 80 SMEs.

Potential for learning or transfer

Having an overseas network is important in order to cover all overseas markets, allowing companies to draw upon a bigger integrated pool of overseas support. Helping SMEs to better understand their target market by organising trade missions to meet potential buyers is transferable to other regions.

IS7 Creation of business contacts and partnerships

Assisting Slovene companies/exporters in establishment of new business contacts and partnerships and penetration or entrance to the international supply chains.

In accordance with Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Priority Axis 3 of OP, SPIRIT Slovenia implements complementary programmes for the Slovene companies in all phases of internationalisation activities that enable them to efficiently enlarge their business activities abroad. SPIRIT Slovenia provides following free-of charge services for potential and existing exporters to enable better conditions for the performance of Slovene companies abroad:

- Organisation of event Suppliers days, in particular in automotive and food-processing, ICT and wood-processing industry to enable entrance to the supply chains;
- Participation and implementation of B2B events in Slovenia and abroad to support establishment of business contacts / new business partners;
- Organisation of inward and outward economic delegations, presentations of Slovene industry/ companies, conferences and other business events.

Annual goals of the practice: min. 10 inward and 10 outward business delegations: increase of 2 to 3 new business contacts per participating company; at least 1 made business deal per business delegation; 70% satisfied participants in the delegation (survey at the end of the event); organisation of up to 3 Suppliers` days and 2 B2B events.

Partners: SPIRIT Slovenia, Office of President of Republic of Slovenia, Office of Prime Minister, Ministries and Governmental offices, chambers, business associations, clusters and other relevant subjects and groups of companies.

Resources needed

Annual budget of practice is 300.000 EUR, out of which 200.000 EUR is for delegations and 50.000 for supplier's days and 50.000 EUR for B2B events.

Evidence of success

Outputs (in 2015):

- 19 inward and 29 outward business delegations.
- 3 Suppliers events per year.
- 2 B2B events per year.

Potential for learning or transfer

Measure assists Slovene companies/exporters by creation of new business contacts and partnerships through seminars, in-and outward delegations, B2B events as well as implementation of Suppliers days.

Practice is transferable in terms of:

- Organisational model / implementation process.
- Specific tools
- Metrics for the evaluation of the implementation process.

IS8 MRA Enterprise Europe Network support for SMEs

Empowerment of SMEs for participation at international B2B events through EEN activities.

In past 2 years EEN Slovenian Consortium partner Maribor Development Agency organised 3 international B2B events in Slovenia and co-organised 43 events in different EU countries with participation of 231 Slovene SMEs. Almost all events have been combined with international fairs.

Organisation of B2B events with international participation of SMEs is usually challenging, as the most of them do not have the HR capacity to participate at international events. In order to empower SMEs for international business fairs, the following services have been provided:

- Training SMEs for participation at B2B events ,
- Coaching SME,
- Use of external experts to find additional contacts for participating foreign SMEs,
- Virtual meetings/Skype conferences,
- Representing SMEs on foreign B2B events.

Activities are based on the networking model with regional stakeholders (Regional Chamber of commerce and industry, Regional Chamber of craft, technology park) where a cooperation agreement between stakeholders has been signed, regular meetings are organised (on quarterly basis) and planning of internationalisation activities is done for 6 monthly periods. For successful implementation of activities standardised procedures have been defined and the MRA staff was adequately trained.

Resources needed

A work group of 5 employees is organising B2B events. Activities start 4 months before a B2B event with 1 person working permanently and others part time. Staff costs are € 28.000. Material costs (venue, promotion, other external costs) are app. € 9.000.

Evidence of success

With the introduction of additional services for B2B events the number of participants raised for nearly 30% (51 participants in 2014, 66 participants in 2017) and the number is continuously increasing. A positive impact is also evident through satisfactory interviews with participants and success rate of new business partnerships.

Through standardised procedures and well-trained staff, the amount of work on the project decreased by 20% and thus lowered the staff costs.

Potential for learning or transfer

This GP is part of the European Enterprise Network activities. Organisational procedures are the result of multiannual work of MRA on organisation of B2B events. The know-how and standardised procedures in organisation of events are transferable and can be transformed by training courses and mentoring services to institution - newcomers in the area of B2B events on local or international level. In particularly complementary services for SMEs participation at B2B events, coaching of them, use of external expert, virtual meetings/Skype conferences, representing SMEs on foreign B2B events are potential topic for the tranfer to less experienced partner institutions as their offer is not always present at international B2B events.

IS9 Internationalisation of SMEs through organisation of events and providing information services

Strengthening and enlarging the presence of the Bulgarian SMEs on the international markets and effectively using the advantages of the European market.

The good practice is realised by implementation of the activities under the project BG161 PO003-4.2.01-0001 „Promotion of the internationalisation of Bulgarian enterprises", funded by the ERDF, under the Operation 4.2. "Support for the successful promotion of Bulgarian enterprises on the international markets", within the OP "Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy" 2007-2013 and by the National budget. These activities are: Providing financial support for Bulgarian SMEs for participation in international exhibitions and trade missions; organisation of international events within international exhibitions, promotional events, business forums and information meetings on the territory of the country; free information and consultancy services for raising the export potential of SMEs, including through the development of sectoral strategies, analyses and policies for 18 export-oriented sectors, the development of more than 170 product-oriented marketing researches and analyses.

The practice uses a combination of various instruments for stimulating and sustainable developing the internationalisation of SMEs in Bulgaria.

Validation of the success of the GP is provided additional funds from the state budget for to guarantee implementation of the activities for the period after the closure of the Project (April 2015) until next project started.

Resources needed

The total cost of the practice is 12 165 150 EUR

Evidence of success

The number of enterprises received financial support for participation in international events and trade missions is 2195. The amount of the provided grant support is 9 637 933 EUR. For 5 years is reported a 40% raising of the export in SMEs as a result of international exhibitions, trade missions and delegations.

Potential for learning or transfer

Validation of the success of the GP is provided additional funds from the state budget to guarantee implementation of the activities for the period after the closure of the Project (April 2015) until next similar project has started. Potentially for transfer are the approach of support as direct grants for export-oriented Bulgarian SMEs, as well as non-financial support for raising the capacity, promoting and developing the export activity of the companies.

IS10 Joint trade fair participation

Organisation of joint participation of Slovene companies in international trade fairs abroad (Slovene Pavilion).

SPIRIT Slovenia, sole agency in Slovenia engaged in group fair presentations, organises presentations in key international fairs abroad for specific Slovene idustries/ branches/sectors. Practice, implemented in accordance with Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Priority Axis 3 of OP, eases the entrance or strengthens the presence of Slovene companies in specific foreign markets. Within joint fair presentations participants get to know products or services in their industries, check their competition, build new or renew old business contacts, and recognise trends in their respective fields.

Selection of companies is done through public call for expression of interest in joint presentations in international fairs. Based on received expressions program committee prepares a final selection of the fair presentations to be financially supported by SPIRIT Slovenia. The final programme of the fair is constructed in a way that ensures the heterogeneous representation of Slovene industries.

For joint presentations in wood industry international fairs, special calls for expression of interest are published. Depending on the shown interest and staff capacities, SPIRIT Slovenia may conduct additional group presentations of companies belonging to the wood industry at fairs abroad.

The annual goals are to achieve at least 15 group fair presentations per year, 20 new contacts per company at the participating fair, 1 new concrete business deal per joint exhibition.

Resources needed

The practice is financed through national public funds on an annual basis

through the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology. A joint budget of 1.050.000 EUR is available per year, of which 250.000 EUR is allocated for participation in wood-processing industry fairs.

Evidence of success

Results per year:

- 2016: 13 group fair presentations, total of 2.412m2 exhibition area, 140 companies, average 34 new contacts and 3 new business deals per company.
- 2015: 11 group fair presentations, total of 1.820m2 exhibition area, 87 companies, average 49 new contacts and 3 new business deals per company.
- In 2014: 13 group fair presentations, 138 companies, total of 3.381m2 exhibition area, average 45 new contacts and 2 new business deals per company.

Potential for learning or transfer

Practice gives practical examples of enhancement of networking between companies for the joint presentation at international fairs abroad through a special process of selecting fairs (public announcement and invitation; programme committee), involving also wood-processing industry as one of the priority sectors under the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Slovenia.

In this way, practice showcases a possibility how to to support priority sectors specified by regional/national internationalization / smart specialization strategy by supporting presence at international fairs.

IS11 Trade missions specialised for the Furniture sector

The practice provides specific high quality service for woodworking and furniture sector for successful participation in trade missions and b2b meetings.

The Bulgarian Branch Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry / BBCWFI / is a voluntary non-profit association whose mission is to protect and represent the interests of its members and the industry.

The main goals of the GP are:

- To encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship and the skills of the SMEs in the sector;
- To facilitate effective international partnerships for the chambers' members;
- To increase the export of the Bulgarian furniture industry;
- To promote the internationalization of Bulgarian Furniture SMEs.

The GP is related with organization of trade missions with b2b meetings for the members of the Chamber. The participants in the trade mission are Bulgarian furniture producers. The trade missions aim to investigate the possibilities of foreign market and to strengthen the existing Bulgarian furniture export networking. During the Trade missions the Chamber organises meetings with foreign designers, architects, contractors, agents, trade chains and distributors. Additionally, the participants on to the meetings have the opportunity to visit local businesses and get insights for the specifics of the visit.

The main stakeholders are business support organizations and Bulgarian trade counselors in the Bulgarian Embassies abroad. Beneficiaries are Bulgarian SMEs from furniture, woodworking, manufacturing and supply of equipment and materials for the woodworking and furniture sectors.

Resources needed

The total cost of the GP for the period from 2014 - 2017 is calculated on 110 000 euro for the all organized 13 missions. 5 members from the staff of BBCWFI are involved in setting up and running of the GP.

Evidence of success

The GP provides very specific high quality service for woodworking and furniture sector for successful participation in trade missions and b2b meetings. The success of the practice is due to the high level professional experts working in the BBCWI who are very familiar with the specific needs for SMEs for fostering their export activities and the exact ways how to present them during the events.

There are 13 missions organised for 2014-2017. The number of the participating companies is 156.

Potential for learning or transfer

The main advantage of the GP is providing of a high quality sectoral focused internationalisation support with a high level rate of success thorough the members of the BBCWI. The potential for transfer is the specific know-how in organisation and presentation of members of the organisation in such events.

IS12 Support Incentives to Collective Actions – Internationalisation

Instrument to intermediate entities in order to support SMEs in reaching new markets and to improve the performance of internationalisation collective actions.

Support Incentives to Collective Actions is complementary to the upstream and downstream of the incentive system that is directly oriented to companies and aims to boost their results and create or improve the surrounding conditions, with particular emphasis on those associated with intangible factors of competitiveness of collective nature, which materialize in the availability of collective or public goods capable of inducing drag effects on the economy. The projects covered by this instrument must, cumulatively, ensure the following conditions:

- To demonstrate a collective, comprehensive and non-discriminatory nature that can respond to the common risks and opportunities of a broad range of companies;
- Ensure the wide publicity of its results, complemented by demonstration and dissemination actions;
- Ensure the free and universal availability of all goods and services produced, without any particular benefit to any entity.

Are susceptible to support individual or cooperation projects that integrate the following typologies:

- Prospecting, knowledge and access to new markets;
- Collaborative processes of internationalization, knowledge sharing and training for internationalization;
- Integrated international promotion of goods and services.

The target of this measure is non-business entities (business associations; public entities and agencies; not for profit private entities), presenting individual projects or in consortium, with a maximum funding rate of 80%.

Resources needed

Each call is allocated with 500.000€, and during the Regional Operational Program implementation (2014-2017) it is foreseen the opening of one call per semester.

Evidence of success

The practice is an instrument that grants projects that intend to prospect new markets, to share knowledge and provide training for internationalization and to promote in an integrated approach goods and services. Within the period 2014-2017, the GP achieved the following results:

- 6 projects approved
- More than 2.000.000€ approved.

Potential for learning or transfer

The Support Incentives to Collective Actions – Internationalisation is the instrument to empower intermediate entities with funding to develop intangible tools and methodologies to support directly SMEs in the internationalisation process. In this way, it supports cooperation of public entities in internationalization activities of SMEs and contribute to set-up/enlarge the internationalization environment (set up public or non-business entities network) with co-financing of their activities.

IS13 Promotional Actions Abroad

Promotional actions to help SMEs to introduce/ consolidate their products/services in foreign markets, within regional Strategic Plan for Internationalisation.

Financed by the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3 (d) "Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes", through Extremadura Avante (Public Agency), Promotional Actions Abroad is a commercial tool fundamental for the introduction and consolidation of the products and services of Extremadura companies in international markets. There is an annual schedule of actions agreed with the business network and other support organisations of the region.

The different actions undertaken under this Good Practice are:

- Presence with stand at international fairs
- Direct Commercial Missions
- Reverse Trade Missions
- Professional visits to international fairs
- Assistance to International Business Meetings

These services are continuous and available throughout the year. Calls are made according to the different events that are being organised.

Resources needed

- Extremadura Avante has a team of 7 foreign trade advisors for this GP. They team with the commercial delegates and external consultants when needed.
- Costs of this Programme are included within the Regional budget bounded to support the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Evidence of success

- Although in the short term it is difficult to determine the success of the actions due to export is a mid-long term activity, Promotional Actions Abroad has helped Extremadura´s enterprises in terms of increasing exports: in 2017 exports has reached its historic maximum with 1.919,9 million € and a 14.1% increase regarding 2016.
- It has helped to detect business opportunities and generates marketing opportunities.

Potential for learning or transfer

This tool has been available for SMEs since 1999 and it has been proved to be a successful instrument for supporting companies in their internationalisation processes. The organisation and methodology carry out by the Public Agency in order to coordinate the Promotional Actions abroad can be transferred to other regions with similar needs.

IS14 Palm Médinit

Médinit - Made In Italy in Exhibition in Casablanca

Palm is the Innovation Pole in Wood and Furniture sector of Abruzzo Region. Currently, 49 entities have joined Palm (businesses, universities, research centres).

Palm supports its members in internationalisation processes.

Médinit Expo was an event realised in collaboration with the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Morocco with the target of accompanying the Italian Companies that wanted to deal with internationalisation processes in countries with a growing market and a socio-politic stability.

The Polo Palm showcased itself as a Consortium of companies from Abruzzo in the field of Décor Wood Furniture, able to meet the needs of contracts, building companies, engineers and architects, experimenting, with a first approach to internationalisation, the use of the contract under a common brand.

The contract methodology proposes to approach the market through an integrated offer of different subjects in the same sector and to create groups of companies able to provide a complete service to a foreign customer.

This was an effective example of how regional SMEs in a specific sector can share a path of internationalization towards a target country.

In fact, if any of the 49 PALM SMEs were presented individually at the event, their offer and ability to attract customers would have been weaker and, above all, the cost-benefit ratio would have been unfavorable.

Resources needed

The Pole Palm participated directly in the event representing all its members.

Financial resources needed were 22.000 € - 50% funded by Abruzzo ROP ERDF.

Evidence of success

PALM went to this important fair as an "aggregator" to represent a group of companies able to provide concrete responses to a varied and broad market. PALM presented itself as an UNICUM entity capable of attracting a contract meeting specific needs.

Results of the event:

- 147 Italian companies exhibitor.
- 2.200 qualified visitors.

Potential for learning or transfer

The methodology, strategy and its implementation process in setting up innovation pole can be adapted to the needs of other regions. The know-how, how to proceed in internationalisation of poles can be adapted to the regional circumstances, taking into account the requirements of foreign markets. The special tool is the organization of the international event abroad: the preparation and its implementation are also valued know-how that can be transferred.

IS15 Slovenian Business Clubs (A public call for tenders)

Public call for tenders to develop and maintain network of advisory services abroad to boost the internationalisation of Slovenian economy.

Management of internationalisation support environment is facilitated through public call for tenders which co-finances activities of Slovene business clubs abroad. Instrument, implemented under Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and line with Priority Axis 3 of OP improves the conditions for networking and integration of enterprises in foreign markets. Aim of public call for tenders is to create and maintain network of Slovenian business clubs registered abroad, and in cooperation with them intensify support of boosting internationalization of Slovene economy through following activities:

- Provide information and consulting to Slovene SMEs who want to make a global breakthrough in countries that feature a Slovene business club;
- Encourage regular formal and informal exchange of contacts and information among local companies, institutions and Slovene companies;
- Provide regular information about changes in business environment in which the business club operates;
- Provide regular updated business information on SPIRIT Slovenia portal Export Window;
- Organize events abroad and in Slovenia;
- Promote Slovene economy and business environment abroad.

First contact with Slovene business clubs abroad is free of charge for Slovene companies. Enhanced cooperation or specific help is offered only to companies and institutions that are members of business clubs.

Resources needed

Instrument is financed through national public funds on annual basis. In 2014 16 business clubs abroad received total of 270.000 EUR, in 2015 15 clubs received 261.000 EUR, in 2016 400.000 EUR were allocated to 13 clubs and in 2017 12 business clubs received 340.000 EUR.

Evidence of success

Planned goals of each public call were surpassed.

- 2014: 16 clubs, 107 business events for Slovene and foreign companies, 1017 Slovene companies aiming to reach foreign markets counselled, 417 business opportunities and news to be published at Export Window portal forwarded,
- 2015: 15 clubs, 98 business events, 815 companies counselled, 326 business opportunities and news forwarded,
- 2016: 13 clubs, 112 business events, 1010 companies counselled, 356 business opportunities and news forward.

Potential for learning or transfer

Established contacts that business clubs abroad have, are a valuable source of information to a specific market and an irreplaceable provider of advisory services in internationalisation. Practice provides organisational model / implementation process for implementation of such a network of advisory services, to successfully support of boosting internationalization of national economy.

IS16 National Export Portal

The National Export Portal is a tool for supporting the introduction and successful positioning of Bulgarian SMEs at international markets.

The portal is developed under the Project „Promotion of the internationalisation of the Bulgarian enterprises", Priority Axis 4 of the OP "Development of the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy" 2007-2013, under which BSMEPA is an institutional beneficiary. The portal is translated in Bulgarian and in English.

The maintenance of actual information in the different sections, finding offers, preparation of answers for requests received from the country and abroad, as well as consultations helping the business is realized by the expert team of the BSMEPA.

The Portal proposes the following services:

1) Maintenance of a data base with export-oriented Bulgarian enterprises;
2) Access to information and services:
   - Companies matchmaking;
   - Marketing researches, economic analyses and reports;
   - Actual trade and market information from the Bulgarian Commercial and economic offices abroad;
   - Promotional events organized under the Project;
   - Seminars and Info days;
   - Export strategies and policies for the priority economic sectors;
   - Funding sources
3) The registered users of the portal receive periodically an Electronic bulletin with information for forthcoming events, results from previous initiatives and information about the companies wishing to participate in trainings, trade missions, fairs, B2B forums. This bulletin saves time for the users, because they don't need to check the news all the time in the Portal.

Resources needed

The cost of the practise is 270 475 EUR.

Evidence of success

The quantitative indicators which measure the success of the good practice are:

- The number of registered users is 6496 for 3 years;
- The number of registered visits in the portal is 185 063 for 3 years;
- The number request received by foreign companies, searching for Bulgarian business partners is 138 for 3 years;
- For 2014 the market analyses and researches published in the portal is 70.

Potential for learning or transfer

The portal supports and helps enhance SMEs internationalisation by providing current and useful information for encouraging the export activities.

The practice helps by playing an intermediary function in finding partners and in offering products and services.

The practice supports the SMEs by maintaining data base with information about export-oriented Bulgarian companies.

One or several of the services, proposed by the Portal can be transferred, by alternative instruments developed and proposed by public or private providers of SMEs support services. The activity of the Portal (or just a part of its activity) could be easily transferred in other countries or regions in the EU.

IS17 Hosted Buyers Programme

The practice aims both to bring foreign investors in Bulgarian companies and to connect members with potential international buyers and partners.

The Bulgarian Branch Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry / BBCWFI / is a voluntary non-profit association whose mission is to protect and represent the interests of its members and the industry. BBCWFI is the only official representative of employers in the Furniture, Woodworking, Manufacturing and supply of equipment and materials for the woodworking and furniture sectors in Bulgaria.

BBCWFI organizes business meetings with Bulgarian and foreign partners within the annual international exhibitions organized in cooperation with BBCWFI Bulgarreklama "TECHNOMEBEL" and "World of Furniture.

The current practice aims to encourage foreign buyers, investors and partners to attend those exhibitions by arranging free trips to and from Sofia (location for the exhibitions), free 3-day hotel accommodations, transfers, free entrance cards, meetings with desired exhibitors for more in detail dealings and a year-round matchmaking assistance.

The main goal is to increase the number of foreign professional visitors and the effectiveness of the exhibitions in order the Bulgarian furniture producers to enlarge their export activities and find new markets.

Beneficieries of the practice are the SMEs operating in the Furniture, Woodworking, Manufacturing and supply of equipment and materials for the woodworking and furniture sectors.

Resources needed

The budget of the GP is 10 000 euro per year. The budget covers travel and accommodation costs of the foreign buyers, investors and partners who attend the sectoral exhibitions.

Evidence of success

The main advantage of the practice is the possibility to internationalize the companies through participation on the national exhibitions and fairs by attracting investors and companies from abroad on a reasonable price. As a positive result could be pointed out that for the last 4 years are attracted more than 150 participants through which are reached 40 countries.

Potential for learning or transfer

The cost effective approach for hosting of foreign investors in Bulgaria which ensures possibilities for much more companies to internationalise their activity.

IS18 B2B meeting

Organisation of international B2B meetings and participation in international fairs and exhibitions

International Economic Relation Center (IERC) implements the external economic priorities of the Bulgarian Industrial Association and support companies and organisations in their international activities through diplomatic representations as well as with the foreign embassies and trade offices in Bulgaria. Participate in the work of the relevant units at BUSINESSEUROPE, the International Trade Center Geneva, Horizon 2020, WG on Internationalisation to the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovations Brussels and EEN.

IERC has current External Economic Databases, World Trade Statistics and provides market analysis to assist with management decisions. The IERC website is the richest, free, international trade library in Bulgaria. International B2B meetings are key instrument for internationalisation helping business to find new partners and to go international through networking and matchmaking. Both are core requirements for successful internationalisation. The B2B meetings, exhibitions and fairs are facilitating those requirements and thus supporting the SME internationalisation. They often take place alongside international trade fairs and conferences.

The matchmaking itself is free of charge for all professional attendees.

Participants share their partnership offers or requests and schedule meetings in advance through online platform for event management. These meetings lead to many successful international partnerships.

Resources needed

For running of the GP are engaged 4 people - 1 Manager and 3 Business Consultants.

Evidence of success

Since the setting up of the GP, the number of supported enterprises is more than 300, and the number of technology agreements signed is more than 100.

The GP is implemented without any public financial support.

Potential for learning or transfer

These meeting lead to many successful international partnerships thanks to thorough preparation. Potentially for transfer are the methodology and know-how for organisation and holding of B2B meetings of that kind which the core requirements for successful internationalisation.

IS19 One-stop-shop for domestic exporters and foreign investors

Providing comprehensive support and individual treatment of individual exporters, potential investors and other interested entities.

Linked to OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy 2014 – 2020, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology is upgrading existing support system to companies, in order to:

- Provide comprehensive support and individual treatment of individual exporters and investors,
- Shorten procedure for acquisition of all required documents and information, and search for suitable interlocutors;
- Reduce operating costs for investors;
- Reduce risk of entering foreign markets for companies and investors.

Public agency SPIRIT Slovenia is holder of the practice, organised as a one-stop shop, with following areas of work:

- Support for exporters (first entry, expansion to new foreign markets);
- Support for investors (domestic, foreign, inward, outward).

Support will cover e.g. information, presentations, business consulting, offices abroad, tailor-made mentoring and training programmes in the field of international business activities, with the aim of enhancing the potentials that exist within enterprises.

The practice is directly linked to the Slovenian RIS3.

Resources needed

The foreseen budget for the duration of the programme 2018 – 2022 is 11,83 mio EUR, out which 3,26 mio EUR is for staff costs (21 employments), 0,87 mio EUR for costs related to the work, 0,35 mio EUR for equipment and 7,35 EUR for external costs and promotion.

Evidence of success

The need to set up the One-stop-shop for internationalisation was revealed in the State of Affairs, prepared within INTRA project. Practice was set in 2016 with an objective to support 5000 companies by 2022 with more transparent and easier accessible information and services concerning internationalisation beyond EU.

Potential for learning or transfer

Implementation mechanism (direct support) will provide combination of services in one place: support to exporters (first entry, expansion to new foreign markets) and support for investors (domestic, foreign, inward, outward).

Practice will be transferable in terms of:

- Organisational model / implementation process.
- Policy making process.
- Methodology for the assessment of the problem to be address.

IS20 Extremadura Exports

Wide range of services to boost internationalisation of SMEs at all stages, within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Directly financed by the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3 (d), through Extremadura Avante (Public Agency), Extremadura Exports intends to cater to the entire business network in Extremadura, regardless of the internationalisation phase of the company and includes all those training and awareness-raising actions related to the company's internationalisation strategy.

Under the umbrella of this free of charge program, the following actions are organised:

- Seminars and training workshops on international operations: customs management, logistics, incoterms, payments (among others).
- Activities related to languages, communication, or management of international sales platforms.
- How to solve specific questions about foreign trade operations.
- Generation of marketing opportunities.
- Advice about Foreign and Commercial trade.
- Detection of business opportunities.
- Design and development of business meetings.

Extremadura Export programme organised annually an event of integration for all the stakeholders related to foreign trade in the region, in which the relationship between them is favoured through talks and presentations, B2B, and spaces for the exposition of services to internationalisation.

These transversal service is continuous and available throughout the year. Calls are made according to the different events that are being organised.

Resources needed

For the development of this Good Practice, the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support: 1 expert from Extremadura Avante.
- For the 2016 annuity, the EXTREMADURA EXPORTS programme had a cost/budget of around 100.000€.

Evidence of success

- Actions undertaken under this Good Practice along 2017:
  - Info Days: 1.
  - Specific Training Seminars: 8.
  - International Strategic Training Program: 1.
- A total of 215 enterprises have participated in the different planned actions.
- This tool helps both, the international expansion and the SMEs´ competitiveness of the Extremadura´s business community by providing high quality training.

Potential for learning or transfer

As an efficient public support instrument for the internationalisation of SME´s, the wide range of services and advice provided by this program can be adapted to the needs of other regions or countries in order to ensure a proper transferability.

IS21 i-Export

Program to provide information and advice to SMEs to access to international markets, within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

i-EXPORT is a free program that provides information and advice to companies that demand support in the field of Foreign Trade, accompanying them in the "first steps" of exporting their products and services. It is implemented within the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3d. The program is delivered by Extremadura Avante (public agency) and it is open throughout the year so SMEs can access to it on demand.

The main i-Export objectives are:

- Unify the information provided to companies in matters of export consultations.
- Speed up the resolution of business inquiries regarding foreign trade.
- Inform on aid programs, grants and financing in terms of internationalisation.
- Offer a free simultaneous translation service.
- Maintain a direct contact with companies to know "first-hand" the most common problems.
- Create a record of all queries received and answered for appropriate monitoring and control.
- Support and advice companies in their first steps in exporting, internationalisation strategies, international markets, the procedures and base documentation to export, international contracting, taxation related to exports or internationalisation processes.

The requirements for enterprises to access to all aforementioned services are:

- To perform an economic activity in Extremadura or be in forecast of doing it.
- Be interested in internationalisation.

Resources needed

For the development of this Good Practice, the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support.
- The costs of i-Export programme are included within the Regional budget bounded to support the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Evidence of success

- Great number of queries have been served through i-export.
- A great number of actions have been undertaken under this Good Practice.
- Many Extremadura companies have participated in the different planned actions.

Potential for learning or transfer

As an efficient public support instrument for the internationalisation of SME´s, the wide range of services and advice provided by this program can be adapted to the needs of other regions or countries in order to ensure a proper transferability.

IS22 Commercial Delegation – External Network

International network that provides advice and personalised assistance abroad by experts, within the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Directly financed by the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3d, through Extremadura Avante (Public Agency), this Good Practice provides SMEs with the services offered by the Commercial Delegations abroad.

Germany, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the United States, Morocco, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal and the United Kingdom are part of the Extremadura Avante External Network, from where continued support (on demand) is provided to facilitate the promotion and commercialisation of Extremadura products and services.

Extremadura companies have at their disposal free of charge advice and personalised assistance of professional experts, both for prospecting and for consolidation and growth in the different foreign markets.

The services included under this Good Practice are:

- Resolution of queries.
- Advice on the market and documentation.
- On-time support as an interlocutor in the follow-up of business contacts.
- Providing business contacts at destination.
- Creation of individualised agendas at destination.

SMEs can access to these services on demand and free of charge, through Extremadura Avante.

Resources needed

For the development of this Good Practice, the resources needed are:

- Technical staff support.
- Costs of Promotional Actions Abroad programme are included within the Regional budget bounded to support the Strategic Plan for Internationalisation of Extremadura.

Evidence of success

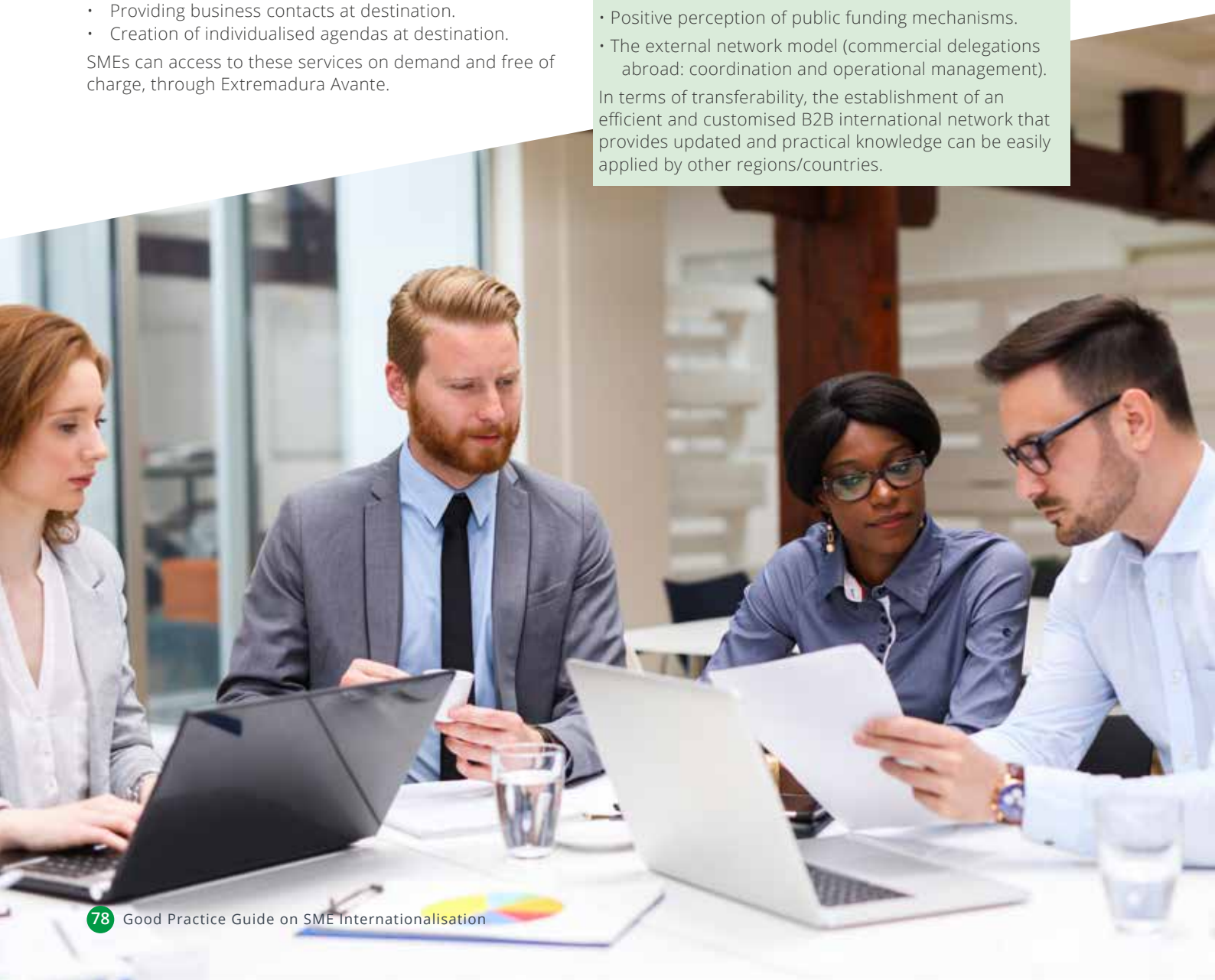
- Services offered/ attended by this Good Practice along 2017 have been: 299 inquiries, 78 databases of importers and distributors, 29 commercial reports, 97 business agendas, 43 importers attracted to the region, assistance in 7 promotional events, 11 meeting points organised in the region.
- This Good Practice has helped to increase the exports of Extremadura´s enterprises as they feel accompanied and supported in their internationalisation activities.

Potential for learning or transfer

The potential for learning of this Good Practice has been identified in relation to:

- Efficient public support instrument for the internationalisation of SME´s.
- Positive perception of public funding mechanisms.
- The external network model (commercial delegations abroad: coordination and operational management).

In terms of transferability, the establishment of an efficient and customised B2B international network that provides updated and practical knowledge can be easily applied by other regions/countries.



IS23 West Midlands Regional Partnerships

Partnerships working together throughout the region to raise awareness and importance of Internationalisation.

Under the ERDF investment priority 2 of priority axis 3: 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes, Regional Partnerships aims to support SMEs internationalising. UK Department for International Trade (DIT) identified that these SMEs have the potential to export successfully and effectively with support – but for various reasons are not doing so.

SMEs that would have attended an event or get in touch with DIT for any support:

1) Go through a triage where International Trade Adviser (ITA) can assess the internationalisation experience.
2) SME would be either directed to basics workshops to learn understand more or sent to an ITA for a one to one.
3) SME get a full diagnostic with an ITA based at their local chamber of commerce and an action plan is agreed.
4) The team from the chamber of commerce would account manage the contracts and support the tender process to recruit the suppliers required. An external supplier would be selected to deliver the support needed.
5) Regional Partnerships allows multiple agencies to work together. DIT works with other partners to raise awareness and importance of Internationalisation by finding synergy working together to maximise support. The regional partnerships meet regularly to agree to coordinate activities such as Joint promotional events, use of each other resources, exchange of ideas, sponsorship, webinars etc.

Resources needed

There will be the need of a Relationships manager to engage with regional/local partner and establish formal/ working relationships. Team of ITAs &relationship manager based at the chamber would cost each about £50k/year. Partners involved wish to support SMEs internationalisation &are not financed.

Evidence of success

DIT works with West Midlands Chambers of Commerce LLP, Universities, Legal firms (Solicitors/IP attorneys etc), Banks, Accountants Business Representative Groups (i.e.Trade Associations), Companies providing Internationalisation service (consultants/logistics/ insurance), and Local business delivery partners (councils/Growth Hubs/managing authorities). Some have formal partnerships with contracts but other have informal agreements. Currently there are 14 working partnerships.

Potential for learning or transfer

Multiple agencies working in this way to offer better structured coordinated support something any region could adopt. SMEs often complain they don't know where to go for internationalisation support and having organisations working together helps centralise the support for regional companies. The potential for transfer is therefore high if there is a will to coordinate support in the region.

IS24 International Trade Midlands

International Trade Advisers (ITA) provide a client management service to SME's looking to Internationalise in the Midlands.

Under the ERDF investment priority 2 of priority axis 3: 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes, ITAs support SME internationalisation journey. UK Department for International Trade (DIT) identified that these SMEs have the potential to export successfully and effectively with support – but for various reasons are not doing so.

SMEs that would have attended an event or get in touch with DIT for any support:

1) Go through a triage where International Trade Adviser (ITA) can assess the internationalisation experience
2) SME would be either directed to basics workshops to learn understand more or sent to an ITA for a one to one
3) SME get a full diagnostic with an ITA based at their local chamber of commerce and an action plan is agreed
4) International Trade Advisers provide a client management service to SME's looking to Internationalise proactively for the first time or to further develop their current internationalisation activities – e.g. entering new markets.

They provide:

Client management services.
Expert internationalisation advice.
Assistance in developing Business Strategy/Plan.
Facilitating the delivery of Department of International Trade (DIT)/West midlands Chamber of Commerce Limited Liability Partnership (WMCCLLP) internationalisation services.
Facilitating delivery of other Internationalisation services.
Signposting to other support organisations.

Resources needed

Cost of 34 Trade Advisers across the region £1,870,000 per year. The team of ITAs who deliver the scheme, are based at Chamber of commerce across the region.

Evidence of success

The Coventry and Warwickshire team have a team target of 201 Export Wins from April 2017 until March 2018 and are in line with their targets

An export win is defined as either:-

1. New to Export – New to Exporting or which did not win an Export order in the last 12 months.
2. Sustainable Exporter - Exports in the previous 12 months (min £25k win value in 5 year forecast)
3. Additional Export Wins - maximum of 2-3 wins after category 1 or 2

Potential for learning or transfer

Areas that could be transferred are specific areas of expertise that are delivered by International Trade advisors. The whole package of support that provides an International Trade Management service through a network of chamber of commerce. Individual advisers are able to meet on one to one basis, engage with companies and specifically direct them to the most appropriate colleague for further support if required. There is opportunity to apply this service in other regions with the right amount of regional/national funding and support.

IS25 INTRATRADE

A support service to companies looking to develop or use different routes to market.

Intatrade Advisers provide advice and support services to companies looking to develop or use different routes to market and also on international intellectual property.

Intatrade help companies from new to export to those that are already exporting to identify and maximise the benefits of the most appropriate routes to market.

Expert internationalisation advice (covering Agents and Distributors, Franchising, Licensing, Joint Ventures, setting up overseas and Intellectual Property) are offered.

Resources needed

In particular the need for well skilled advisors who specialise in particular markets or are specialist in a particular route to market are required in order to implement this Good Practice in another region.

Evidence of success

I71 export wins were reported to date. Exports wins are the indicator that are reported by companies who have been supported and evaluate the service they have received.

Potential for learning or transfer

Transferable to other regions who could use the package of tailored support through Intatrade advisors delivering in the region.

IS26 E-commerce advisers West Midlands

E-commerce advisers guide SMEs through their digital international marketing strategy to increase their overseas brand visibility & expand their digital footprint.

Under the ERDF investment priority 2 of priority axis 3: 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes, the E-commerce programme.

SMEs that would have attended an event or get in touch with DIT for any support:

1) Go through a triage where International Trade Adviser (ITA) can assess the internationalisation experience.
2) SME would be either directed to basics workshops to learn understand more or sent to an ITA for a one to one.
3) SME get a full diagnostic with an ITA based at their local chamber of commerce and an action plan is agreed.
4) The team from the chamber of commerce would account manage the contracts and support the tender process to recruit the suppliers required. An external supplier would be selected to deliver the support needed.
5) E-Commerce Advisers provide advice and support services to companies looking to develop their international online potential and in house digital skills and awareness.

The E-Commerce Adviser– is an expert on digital and e-commerce and they provide direct and tailored support to companies, as well as facilitating access to other related services – the "personal" touch.

The advisers have helped companies to exploit digital marketing to maximise global presence and optimise their ongoing marketing activity to reach new markets more quickly.

Resources needed

Essentially having an adviser skilled in ecommerce would be the key to delivering this Good practice and having the funds to support the personnel who deliver the offer.

Cost of one ecommerce adviser, based at the chamber of commerce is £50k/year.

Evidence of success

136 export wins have been reported to date. Exports wins are the indicator that are reported by companies who have been supported and evaluate the service they have received.

An export win is defined as either:-

1. New to Export – New to Exporting or which did not win an Export order in the last 12 months.
2. Sustainable Exporter - Exports in the previous 12 months (min £25k win value in 5 year forecast).
3. Additional Export Wins - maximum of 2-3 wins after category 1 or 2.

Potential for learning or transfer

Responding to the global growth of ecommerce Department for International Trade (DIT) launched the E-Exporting programme to help UK companies export their goods and services. Reacting to market changes is the key to this Good Practice. The potential to transfer is high as long as the region has skilled advisers experts in digital commerce matters ready to support companies as the digital business environment evolves.

IS27 International Trade Adviser Triage

The International Trade Advisor (ITA) – Triage provides advice and support services to companies at very early stages of their export journey.

Under the ERDF investment priority 2 of priority axis 3: 3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to engage in innovation processes, the triage allow a customised SME internationalisation journey.

SMEs that would have attended an event or get in touch with DIT for any support:

1) Go through a triage where International Trade Adviser (ITA) can assess the internationalisation experience.
2) SME would be either directed to basics workshops to learn understand more or sent to an ITA for a one to one.
3) SME get a full diagnostic with an ITA based at their local chamber of commerce and an action plan is agreed.
4) The team from the chamber of commerce would account manage the contracts and support the tender process to recruit the suppliers required. An external supplier would be selected to deliver the support needed.
5) Specifically the ITA – Triage provides advice and support services to companies at the very early stages of their export journey. Dealing with companies who are either brand new to export or have very little experience and are looking to be guided on their next best steps.

The service delivery is through a combination of telephone diagnostic, remote and face-to-face support and workshops.

This ensures that inexperienced SMEs looking to export are given timely& expert advice or support to enable them to take the next most appropriate next step. It is a personal tailored approach to SME internationalisation.

Resources needed

Cost of advisers who are able to help SMEs right at the beginning of their export journey and to have an online presence to assist in communication and support remotely.

The team of ITAs who deliver the scheme, are based at chamber of commences across the region. They are specialist advisers which cost about £50k/year.

Evidence of success

ITAs Triage ensure that all companies who are interested in exporting that approach West Midlands Chamber of Commerce Limited Liability Partnership (WMCCLLP)/ Department of Trade (DIT), directly or through referrals, are provided with the appropriate advice and support to help them either: develop exports, prepare them to be export ready or to enable them to make a decision as to whether exporting is for them.

The regional team have a target of 201 Export Wins. It contributes toward the target

Potential for learning or transfer

Potential areas for learning are focused on targeting support to SMEs at the very early stages of their export journey. Targeting support in this way offers SMEs the appropriate level of support for their stage in the Internationalisation process.

IS28 SME Internationalisation Innovation Centre

West Midlands SME Internationalisation Innovation Centre provided a 'one stop shop' to companies that were looking to internationalise.

WM SME Internationalisation – Internationalisation Innovation Centre provided a "one stop shop" to companies that were looking to internationalise who had a specific question/concern related to innovation – this could include intellectual property, licensing, product development and product design.

The service was delivered by Coventry University Enterprises Ltd (CUE Ltd) and Intatrade. Companies accessed the service through either their International Trade Adviser or attending a seminar/workshop.

The support was a one to one approach and giving very specific support especially on IPR, research and development, licensing, joint venture, legal issues and trademarks

Resources needed

The cost of developing a centre for SMEs to either call or attend for assistance would be the main costs along with specialist personnel who would deliver the service. The cost of an adviser is £55,000 per year.

Evidence of success

The project was part of the SME Internationalisation project but which provided the initial first point of contact for companies who had a SME Internationalisation related query. The success of the Good practice centered on signposting regional SMEs to the correct support and offering advice. 24 companies received dedicated support. This also generated a total of 516 SMEs assisted. This figure is also linked to the financial support that was run in parallel with this support scheme.

Potential for learning or transfer

This practice is transferrable and would only require specialist advisers and a budget for hosting workshops and seminars.

IS29 Cooperation with Foreign Embassies and Trade Offices

International Economic Relations Center (IERC) utilizes its network and position to facilitate easier access to international services for the enterprises.

International Economic Relation Center (IERC) implements the external economic priorities of the Bulgarian Industrial Association and support companies and organizations in their international activities. IERC assists the businesses in cooperation with foreign embassies and representative offices in Bulgaria. IERC also communicates with the BIA representatives abroad and cooperates for the implementation of services based on agreements with more than 70 business organisations from other countries. The goal is to support the ambition of the Bulgarian enterprises to go international and to find new markets.

This is a good practice in order to help the Bulgarian business to find support on operational level for to go abroad. IERC assists companies in communication with foreign embassies in Bulgaria and representatives abroad in order to:

- Look at company's needs and goals on the markets;
- Assess if the company is ready for international partnerships;
- Advise the company how to better prepare for internationalization;
- Identify the best way to find a partner that matches the needs of the company;
- Information about export requirements for export of goods and services;
- Search for partners.

Resources needed

For running of the GP are engaged 4 people - 1 Manager and 3 Business Consultants. The GP is implemented without any public financial support.

Evidence of success

Since 2008 the number of supported enterprises is more than 300, the number of fostered enterprises for export is more than 100; number of entrepreneurs involved in any overseas cooperation: 10+; number of technology agreements signed: 10+.

Potential for learning or transfer

The GP represents a type of a cooperation between business support organization and foreign embassies in Bulgaria in order to assist SMEs in interantionalisation - IERC communicates with the BIA representatives abroad and cooperates for the implementation of services based on agreements with more than 70 business organizations from other countries.

IS30 Remote Commercial Office

The good practice of IERC allows Bulgarian SMEs to have commercial offices without the need to maintain staff abroad.

International Economic Relation Center (IERC) implements the external economic priorities of the Bulgarian Industrial Association and support companies and organisations in their international activities.

The 'Remote commercial office' is a specific service provided by IERC to SMEs in order to easies their access to foreign markets, to facilitate effective international partnerships, to lower the costs for companies willing or in the process of internationalisation.

The practice supports and helps enhance the SME internalisation as it is:

- Allowing Bulgarian SMEs to have commercial offices without the need to maintain staff;
- Assuming almost all functions that fall under the responsibilities of the local representative of the company;
- Providing market information and market access, restrictions and specific features, contact details of potential partners in countries of choice, initial commercial communication, consultations on industrial property rights, consultations on European funding programs, organizing participation in business mission and exhibitions;
- Tracking and updating the opportunities for local and international exhibitions, establishing contacts and organising business meetings with clients;
- Preparing profiles (Business Cooperation Profiles) of Bulgarian companies and service users that are sent to potential foreign partners.

Resources needed

For running of the GP are engaged 4 people - 1 Manager and 3 Business Consultants at the office of IERC. More than 70 business support organizations in different countries are involved on a base of signed agreements for cooperation.

Evidence of success

Since the setting up of the GP, the number of supported enterprises is more than 20 per year.

The GP is implemented without any public financial support.

Potential for learning or transfer

Potentially for transfer are the methodology and know-how for facilitating effective international partnerships and providing to SMEs easier access to foreign markets on low price.

IS31 International Public Tender Programme

Support Programme to help SMEs that consider the international public tender market as a business opportunity, within the regional Strategic Plan.

Directly financed by the ERDF Operational Program of Extremadura under the priority Axes 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs", investment priority 3d, through Extremadura Avante (Public Agency), the International Public Tender Programme is oriented to facilitate the access and participation of the regional enterprises in international tenders published by multilateral public bodies and, in some cases, by national governments.

It aims to promote the identification and collaboration with potential partners and/or strategic experts, with the objective of increasing the internationalisation degree and the international presence of the regional enterprises participating in the programme. The conditions for participating are: to have their activity in Extremadura region and to be producers/providers of the goods/ services addressed to the international markets. SMEs can apply to the program during the first trimester of the year, and it finishes on the 31st December of the running year.

This Good Practice provides:

- Personalised advice in preparation of tender procedures and legal advice.
- Commercial travels.
- Personalised visits to each of the participating enterprises to develop a correct monitoring of the programme.
- On time information about conferences or events related to the programme.
- Organisation of training sessions related with the programme to allow the participant enterprises to improve their knowledge and qualification.

Resources needed

- Technical staff support: 3 experts from Extremadura Avante + external experts.
- Number of Consulting hrs:
  - 24 hrs of training.
  - 60 hrs of consulting (external experts).
  - 30 hrs of monitoring visits (Avante staff).
- This PROGRAMME has a budget of 20.000€ approximately per year.

Evidence of success

- In 2016, 10 enterprises participated in this Good Practice.
  - 10 companies received Alerts. Alerts include information about international/ multilateral tenders.
  - 3 companies applied in international tenders.
  - 2 projects awarded.
- Besides the personalised advice to each of the participating enterprises, this good practice has helped to improve the SMEs internationalisation in the region.

Potential for learning or transfer

Essential tool for regional enterprises, SMEs most of them, that not always have neither the necessary knowledge nor human resources to face a public tender. The programme tries to achieve an appropriate qualification in this field, through different working groups by activity sector. These working groups will analyse the more suitable methodology to successfully apply to multilateral tenders. The methodology of work (advice + specific training) can be transferred to other regions or countries with a business fabric with a high presence of micro and small companies that may need this king of support to increase the success rate in the awarding of public and private contracts.

IS32 Slovenia's economic diplomacy

Assistance and support to SMEs through a network of diplomatic missions and consular posts.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs protects and promotes interests of Slovene economy abroad through its network of diplomatic missions and consular posts. Activities are implemented under Foreign Affairs Act and in accordance with Programme for internationalisation 2015–2020 and Priority Axis 3 of OP. Goals of economic diplomacy are to provide assistance and support to Slovene companies that wish to do business globally. Network of 52 diplomatic missions and consular posts assists SMEs by offering:

- Assistance in establishing contacts with potential business partners (buyers, suppliers or subcontractors).
- Business information and concrete business opportunities.
- Assistance in solving problems in foreign markets.
- Organisation of, and participation in business meetings (of business delegations), presentations at fairs, seminars and conferences and other promotional events.
- Assistance and advice in establishing companies or subsidiaries abroad.
- Business offices for Slovene companies at Slovene representations abroad.
- Assistance in finding and hiring local experts or advisers.
- Providing general and current information on conditions for doing business in a particular country.

Ministry cooperates with other institutions dealing with internationalisation, especially with Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, SPIRIT Slovenia, Slovene Tourist Board, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Slovenia, Chamber of Craft and Small Business Slovenia, SID Bank.

Resources needed

Total budget for economic diplomacy activities in 2016 was 5.989.116 €, with 2.791.124 € for salaries of economic advisers at ministry and diplomatic missions. Programme for internationalisation 2015-2020 plan for economic projects of diplomatic network 2016-2020: 300.000 -330.000 € annually.

Evidence of success

22 economic advisers and more than 120 honorary consuls assists SMEs.

Potential for learning or transfer

As the diplomatic network is already set up and presents in various countries, this practice optimizes the existing network by upgrading it for the needs of the SMEs. Thus, the activities of economic diplomacy present a utilization of both infrastructure and human resources of the diplomatic network of Slovenian representatives abroad.

CONCLUSION

This document presented the catalogue of good practices supporting SMEs internationalisation. The methodology used for the identification, the selection, the validation and the classification of the good practices for the INTRA project was also described in this document. The catalogue includes the good practices that were presented through the multiple study visits hosted by the partner regions in the first round and second round of study visits.

This guide is not an exhaustive list of all the existing good practices in the partners' countries and only represent the available initiatives at the time they were collected. This catalogue would constitute a useful tool for policy makers, managing authorities and stakeholders interested to support businesses internationalise who wish to have a first glance at possible good practices existing in Europe.

The INTRA consortium has been working in close collaboration with regional stakeholders to present these good practices in each region and country. The good practice catalogue together with the regional state of the art report constitute the starting point for the development of policy recommendations and regional action plan that partners will develop in the phase 2 of the INTRA project.

Further information about INTRA activities will be found on the INTRA website on **http://www.interregeurope.eu/intra**

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