

Project INTRA: 2nd Regional Stakeholder Meeting REPORT

Maribor Development Agency

1. Introduction

The second Slovenian RSG meeting was held on Friday, February 17th, 2017 in Maribor at the premises of MDA.

There were 17 participants present at the event (for more details see the full list attached).

The meeting featured the following agenda points:

1. Information about good practices of internationalization as part of the study visits in Varna (Bulgaria) and Extremadura (Spain). Introducing the cases, establishing a consolidated opinion of the stakeholders about the practices;
2. Preparatory activities for organization of the Slovenian good practices study visit in Maribor (on March 15th, 2017) were presented;
3. Workshop: Internationalization model.

2. Set up of the task

The participants at the meeting came from all four helixes of the quadruple helix approach, with, with representatives of:

- a) **Government** – Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT), Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology (SPIRIT Slovenia), The Public Fund of Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship (SPS);
- b) **Companies** – Slovenian Export and Development Bank (SID Bank), Post of Slovenia, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska (CCI Štajerska), Institute for Entrepreneurship Research (IRP), Multidisciplinary Research Institute Maribor (MRIMB), Styria Technology Park (ŠTP);
- c) **Academia** – TechnoCenter of the University of Maribor (with Raz:UM);
- d) **NGOs** – Association of Regional Development Agency of Slovenia (RRA GIZ).

Additionally, the participants were representing all three levels of impact MDA is influencing through the INTRA project:

- e) **Regional level:** CCI Štajerska, IRP, MRIMB, ŠTP, TechnoCenter (with Raz:UM);
- a) **National level:** MGRT, SPIRIT Slovenia, Post of Slovenia;
- b) **EU level:** SPS, SID Bank, RRA GIZ.

The meeting followed the agenda, with an additional presentation by the practices of the Post of Slovenia.

1) *Good practices of internationalization as part of the study visits:*

The lead partner's project manager, Ms. Amna Potočnik, presented the meaning of good practice identification within the framework of the Interreg Europe programme, as well as the process of good practice selection and evaluation within the framework of the INTRA project. Within the project, there were thus far two study visits conducted, and Potočnik presented a brief summary on all the cases, as follows:

Varna (September 2016)	Extremadura (December 2016)
Newmark Ltd.	PIMEX-FOMACOEX
SMEPA	Consolidation plan
National Export Portal	ALIMENTOS de Extremadura brand
FIL	Export consortiums
Eldominvest Ltg.	Programme for international tenders
BSHC	Transversal services
Marcon	International Promotion Plan (PIP)
CIBank	Xpande and Digital Xpande
	Innoxport
	IBEROEXPORT
	COCIPREX S.L.
	Senorio de Montanera

Furthermore, a comparison was drawn to the existing practice of internationalization support currently offered in Slovenia, where the stakeholders found many similarities between Bulgarian and Spanish cases – when compared to Slovenian practices – however, there were special features of Digital Xpande and Alimentos de Extremadura that were seen as those with high transferability to the Podravje region, or general Slovenian national area.

Apart from that the PIMEX-FOMACOEX was considered a very good example of following up activities, which seems to be lacking in Slovenia, and the logic of export consortiums was also recognised some time ago by Slovenian stakeholders, with no specific implementation yet.

During the discussion that followed the representative of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Ms. Ana Božičnik, points out that measures for supporting e-marketing are foreseen within the MI2017/2018 that is due to be confirmed by the Slovenian national government by the end of February. The deadlines for individual tenders for internationalization are not yet set.

From the presented good practise two were considered to bridge the gap between the currently offered support and the SME needs in Slovenia, as well as transferable already in 2017. Both identified practices are from the Spanish region of Extremadura, namely GP3: **ALIMENTOS de Extremadura** and GP9: **Digital Xpande**.

Following the study visits presentations, the Post of Slovenia presented their practical cases of how they are connected to the internationalization processes and which know-how they possess that could be beneficial to others, when entering the international market:

- a) Sending sensitive documents by crypted by e-mail,
- b) Simplification of custom protocols through international postal shipping,
- c) Possibilities and barriers with sending products to foreign markets.

On the initiative of the SID bank representative, Mr. Roman Rojc, the Post of Slovenia shares its promotional material with all attendants.

2) Organization of the Slovenian good practices study visit in Maribor

After the presentation of the cases seen during the study visits, the participants were presented the agenda for the study visit that will be held in Maribor, in order to confirm the practices that are to be presented.

The draft agenda for the first day of the study visit, organized for March 15th, was presented. An overview of the regional (Podravje) and national (Slovenian) good practices to be presented was made, to which the participant agreed that the practices are well chosen.

3) Workshop: Internationalization model

For the workshop, the support services on regional/national level was presented, based on the ongoing project activities - interviews with stakeholders, following the Questionnaire for investigating the SME internationalisation support measures – were the interviews with regional and national stakeholders were already conducted.

It was clearly shown, that out of the currently analysed organizations, there are still aspects of SME internationalization support, that none are covering. On the other hand, it was obvious that in other areas, there is an overlap of offer both horizontally (among regional stakeholders themselves) and vertically (overlap among services offered on national and on regional level).

This discrepancy was discussed and a conclusion was made that it is due to the irregular funding of support institutions that they must search for additional ways of funding and therefore partake in tasks and activities which drain their resources and cannot fully develop the originally foreseen role of their institution.

Furthermore, suggestions and challenges were discussed, with the clear need to set up a one-stop-shop for internationalization being agreed upon.

The participants realized that a thorough overview of activities of certain institutions providing quality service in their field must be prepared in order to identify how the demand is met in certain areas and better coverage is to be achieved in the areas where no support is offered (besides tax incentives also: trade centre's abroad, research centres and similar). Another aspect that was recognised as underutilized was the economic diplomacy, where there were calls for more bottom-up initiatives.

3. Evaluation of the task

As the present stakeholders were fairly similar to those of the 1st meeting, no special methods were needed to gain their motivation in cooperation on contribution. The main challenge, however, was still to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

The feedback gained was double: the validation of good practices presented during the study visits, and the confirmation of the agenda for the upcoming study practice in March.

The achievement with the greatest impact, though, is the formation of a consortia to implement the measures to support internationalization, more specifically, to implement the identified good practices GP3: **ALIMENTOS de Extremadura** and GP9: **Digital Xpande**.

4. Conclusion

Clear gaps were identified, especially the discrepancies between the SME needs and the offer of support mechanisms currently provided.

Suggestions provided were classified and a consolidation of the support environment as well as the logic of setting up a one-stop-shop were confirmed as necessary.

For the immediate action, following the RSG, a consortium agreement will be drafted and communicated to the stakeholders.

Further steps include the transfer and implementation of two identified good practices GP3: ALIMENTOS de Extremadura and GP9: Digital Xpande.

Next RSG meeting in person is to be held within next half a year, with online communication among the stakeholders in the between period.

5. Annexes

- Attendance sheet

LISTA PRISOTNOSTI

Zadeva:	Drugo srečanje deležnikov projekta INTRA			
Datum & ura:	17.02.2017 / 10:00			
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- Photos



- Media coverage web-links
NONE, the event was not open to media.

- News for the INTRA website

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17/02/2017
Second Regional Stakeholder Meeting in Podravje

In the framework of INTRA project the Lead Partner – Maribor Development Agency (MDA) - organized the second regional stakeholder meeting in Maribor, hosting representatives of: Ministry of Economic Development and Technology or the Republic of Slovenia, Venture Factory, Institute for Entrepreneurship Research, SID – Slovenska izvozna in razvojna banka, Post of Slovenia, The Public Fund of Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship, Economic Interest Grouping of Regional Development Agency of Slovenia, Styrian Chamber of Commerce, TechnoCenter of the University of Maribor (with Raz-UM), Maribor Innovation Process Institute Maribor, Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, SHARE

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