

EIS – Everywhere International SMEs

Action Plan by

Partner organisation	Pomerania Development Agency Co
Other partners / players involved (if relevant)	Pomerania Marshal Office – Regional Authorities Partners of Pomerania Export Broker Project: Regional Chamber of Commerce of Pomerania, Gdansk Business Foundation, Pomeranian Science and Technology Park , Association Free Entrepreneurship (EEN), Invest GDA
Country	Poland
NUTS2 region	PL6 North region
Contact person	Katarzyna Matuszak
email address	katarzyna.matuszak@arp.gda.pl
phone number	+48 58 32 33 135

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- Increased volume of export in the region - 6% of SMEs benefiting from the instrument that have increased their export turnover for period 2019-2020 (indicator for Export Broker as part of the OP): 6%
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1. Policy context

1.1 Aim of the Action Plan

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme**
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **Regional Operational Programme of the Voivodeship of Pomorskie 2014-2020**

Priority 2 "Enterprises" (linked to the Thematic objective 3 "Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises")

Even though we are not directly responsible for the policy instrument Regional Operational Programme of the Voivodeship of Pomorskie 2014-2020, we were involved in the consultation process for establishing Priority 2 of the PROP and defining its content.

We also developed the specific content of the Pomerania Export Broker project (PEB), we were chosen as the operator of this action in the region and we are responsible for building an effective export system in Pomorskie.

Therefore we can have a substantial influence on this policy instrument. It is very important that due to our tasks and previous experience in the implementation of structural funds for SMEs, the Marshal Office of the Pomorskie Region treats us as the important partner in consulting processes of economic policy instruments.

During the duration of phase 1 of EIS project, the representatives of Marshal Office, Economic Department were strongly involved in EIS activities: they took part in partner meetings in Gdansk, they went with us to Donegal to see and listen how other partners have developed their export programs, they were also speakers and panelists in our Midterm conference. They were the most important stakeholder in our part of EIS project.

We have identified three actions and all of them are addressed to improve the policy instrument mention in the application form

Action 1 – as the regional operator of PEB project, we introduce this Action to improve Activity 2.3 using the results of all project Partners. We have direct impact on introducing this Action to 2.3 activity of Regional Operational Programme of the Voivodeship of Pomorskie 2014-2020

Activity 2 – is the result of Peer Review, we introduce this Action to improve the export support system in the region by showing the importance of 2.4.1, activity of Regional Operational Programme of the Voivodeship of Pomorskie 2014-2020. This activity was not mention in the application form but we believe that realization of this activity will strongly influence and fill in the missing point of the whole export support

system in the region. We have not direct impact on decisions concerning the 2.4.1 final shape but we actively cooperate with the Marshall Office, different Departments to show the importance of this activity for the whole Priority 2 of the PROP. We have the support of other stakeholders on that process.

Action 3 – is influencing the results and measures described both in 2.3 and 2.4.1 actions of the PROP. We are fully supported by the Marshall Office in this Action, one of the examples of this support is the letter signed by Marshall himself addressed to the new stakeholders we are approaching in the region with this Action.

1.2 Peer Review Summary of reviewed measure

Poland was one of the fastest-growing economies worldwide pre-crisis and has been the fastest-growing economy in post-crisis Europe.

The Polish GDP is growing dynamically(5,2% I q of 2018), but it is still far behind the world strongest economies .

Pomorskie is one of the 16 regions in Poland. It is developing very fast in the area of: the number of new jobs created, salary increase, industrial production concentration and the extent of the qualified services sector. The Polish market is big enough and many Pomeranian SMEs decide it is sufficient for their needs. But the export potential of SMEs is still to be discovered and supported.

The biggest contributors to the Pomorskie export market are companies operating in the maritime, fuel industry, mechanical engineering, food processing, clothing, automotive, electronic equipment manufacturing, woodworking, furniture industry and amber jewellery.

The top export markets for Pomeranian companies were: Germany, Norway, Netherlands and Sweden. As EU market will still continue to be the most popular destination for Polish exporters, it is very important to support SMEs in introducing them also to less known markets with high export potentials.

The business and export support programs are organised on two levels in Poland.

1. National – realised by Ministries and national Agencies
2. Regional – realised by Marshall Offices and regional business support organisations

SMEs can use regional but also national programmes. There is unfortunately no system of organised coordination between them. There were some attempts of coordination from Ministry of Development but never finished. The cooperation is based on good will relations and single actions (Ministry and regions, region and other region)

Reviewed Measure : Pomerania Export Broker

This regional export supporting programme is financed from Regional Operational Programme of the Voivodeship of Pomerania 2014-2020 (The ERDF budget : 15 718 292 EUR, 85% ERDF support)

The owner of the measure is the Regional authority responsible for ERDF – The Marshall Office.

Pomerania Export Broker is the export support program offering wide range of services and actions for SMEs. It is realised by 6 partners consortium. All stakeholders – partners of the Pomerania Export Broker are service providers.

The consortium of stakeholders consists of:

- Pomerania Development Agency, – leader of the project, involved in organising all types of services for internationalisation of SMEs.
- Regional Chamber of Commerce – responsible for Local Export Brokers and seminars for SMEs, B2B events
- Pomerania Science and Technology Park – responsible for organising trade fairs missions
- InvestGda – responsible for B2B events especially dedicated USA market
- Enterprise Europe Network/Free Entrepreneurship Association – responsible for long term export courses for SMEs and seminars
- Starter Incubator – responsible for business missions organisation and special export events for startups.

The content of the reviewed measure is to create a complex system of supporting SMEs in export activities. Main services offered by Pomerania Export Broker are:

- Local Export Brokers
- B2B events, business missions in and out, trade fairs with regional stand
- Seminars and export courses
- Foreign Export Brokers
- Grants for internationalisation

However the range of services is very attractive, it is not covering the consulting services (missing in the Six Step Model of Pomorskie). The consulting services are needed by companies at the different stages of internationalisation process.

The Program is open for all Pomeranian SMEs, but it is focused primarily on Pomorskie Smart Specialisations :Off-shore, port and logistics technologies; Interactive technologies in an information-saturated environment ; Eco-effective technologies and Medical technologies in the area of civilization and ageing-associated diseases.

One of the risk identified in realisation of the Program is connected with public procurement law. Public procurement tenders are not effective for projects based on market know how and market contacts.

The SWOT analyses show the following areas to focus on:

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>S1 Engagement of Stakeholders</p> <p>S2 Programme run by consortium, each partner responsible for its task</p> <p>S3 Fit nearly all steps in the six step model</p>	<p>WEAKNESSESS</p> <p>W1 Advanced consulting services missing</p> <p>W2 Slow and difficult public procurement procedures, not adequate for knowledge projects</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>O1 Explore opportunities to cooperate on national level</p> <p>O2 Learn from other countries</p> <p>O3 Resolve procurement problems by cooperation with other Polish regions</p> <p>O4 Develop strong advisory services</p> <p>O5 Explore new markets</p> <p>O6 Identify new exporters in the region</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>T1 Large internal market causing lack of export willingness by SMEs</p> <p>T2 Destabilisation of the world economy</p>

Based on Peer Reviewed and work of all the EIS Partners the areas of improvement were identified:

1. Add Advisory Services to the 6 Step Model
2. Improve the coordination between different levels (local, regional and

national)

3. Improve the measurement and monitoring of outputs and outcomes
4. Develop a regional response based on assessment of the needs of regional firms

2. Action 1 : Scanning export potentials in SMEs

2.1 The Background

One of facts identified in our Peer Review was the limited capability of many SMEs to go internationally (SMEs not exporting so far) or the limited capability of many SMEs to go to the less known markets (SMEs experienced in exporting). Various reports presenting the results from the market survey on internationalisation barriers prove that not the finances of the company are the main stopper of their development. We can identify the following factors that block the companies and their management from acting on international markets:

- Poland is big enough country so SMEs don't feel the pressure to diversify their markets
- Management is afraid of different kind of risks connected with international trade (language barriers, cultural barriers, currency changes)
- Many SMEs have very limited resources such as market and technical knowledge, staff skills, time, money and management time – they are not well organised within the organisation to start exporting
- Companies are not ambitious enough to try direct activities on the new less known markets even if perspectives of income are much higher than if using intermediaries from the neighbouring countries such as Germany or Netherlands
- Companies are not aware that their products can be attractive to foreign clients, they don't know where to search for information and how to establish business contacts.

From the other side we experienced from previous export projects addressed to SMEs in the region (Passport to Export, Grants for trade fairs) that many SMEs start exporting without any preparation or export strategy, as the ad hoc activity rather. And very often they failed.

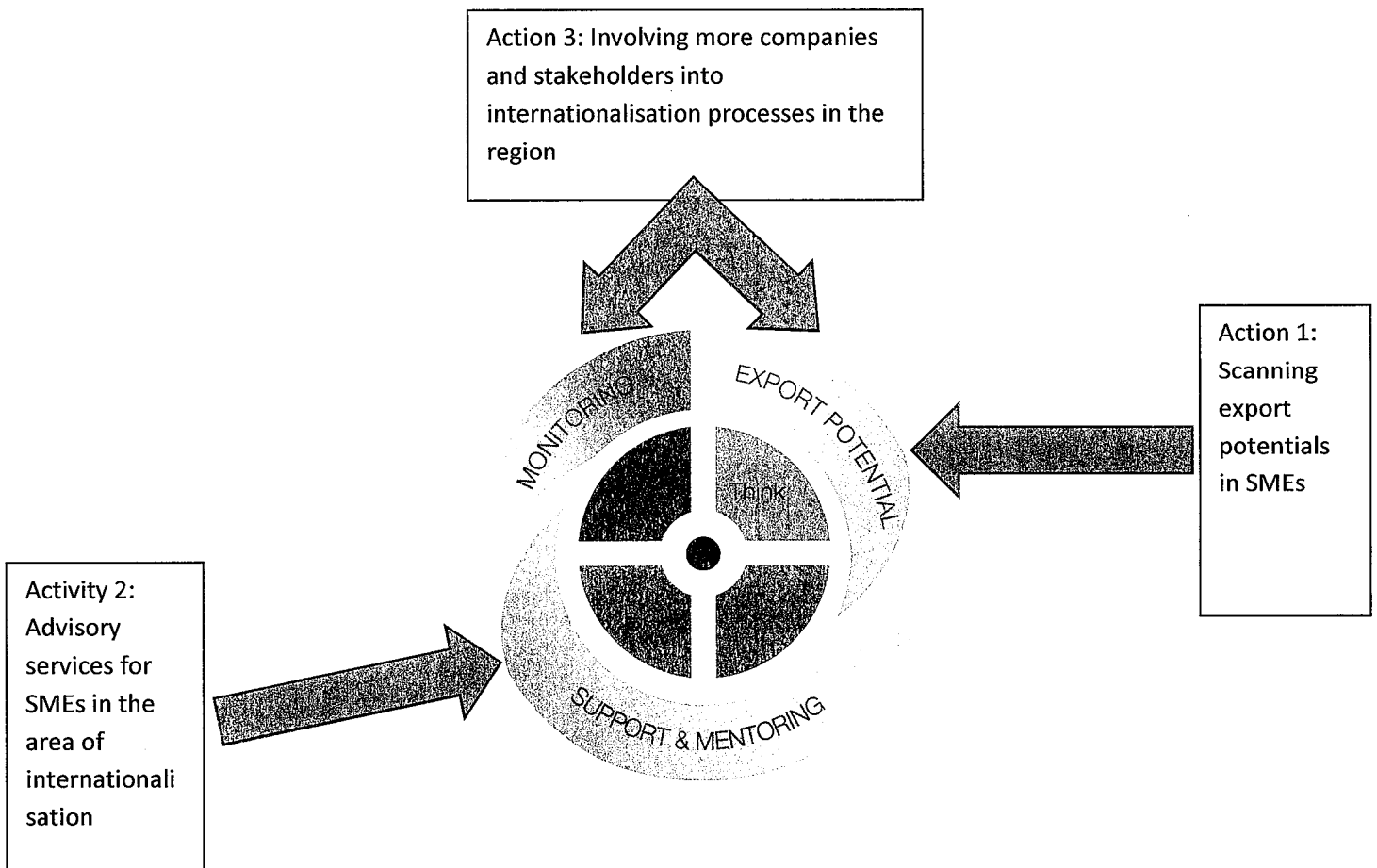
Our objectives are:

- To help SMEs be prepared for exporting
- To bring SMEs tailor made complex services

We are convinced that concentrating on these two goals will bring to our region concrete results in exports volume (our indicator in EIS project) and will guarantee that the public money will be spent more effectively in the long term.

Therefore we see a strong need to get a complete scan of the competencies and potential of the SMEs as future beneficiaries of the public support system in internationalisation.

We have decided to use GlobalEIS Tool as the result of partners work in the project JOINT ACTION.



This 4 Step GlobalEIS Tool with the overview over the support services can be used as a guideline for SMEs and intermediaries, where to find the proper support service for a specific demand of an individual SME as well as to identify the right service providers with complementary competencies and services. This structured and process oriented approach fosters the transparency of the support system and the collaboration among the service providers through a coordinated approach.

We decided to concentrate mainly on the research we call scanning of SMEs potential - EXPORT POTENTIAL. Diagnostic template of the EIS JOINT ACTION will developed the already existing research tool in Pomorskie region. The research

starts from a broad perspective of the SME and will then focus on internationalisation issues in a second step. We noticed it is a key factor for further planning of public support services. It will give us a prove what kind of support we should plan and which companies are ready to use it.

For the estimation of the SME's internationalisation potential the scoring approach of the Global EIS Diagnostic tool will be used.

We plan to complement and integrate the 4 Step Model , including the Global EIS diagnostic tool with the already existing system in our region.

Network of Export Brokers – this network will be used to test and finally adapt The Global EIS diagnostic tool. The network consists of 10-12 export experts working in the Pomorskie Export Broker project. The idea of the network was to create an effective way of promoting, recruiting and working with companies. The Export Brokers are employees of various Partners in the project, but they meet regularly, they exchange information, they are coordinated on daily basis and they work according to the standardised rules and services developed in the project. Their tasks can be divided into two main services:

- Finding potential exporters in the region
- Taking care of the exporters by contacting them, collecting information and inviting to projects activities – building the relation with SMEs

More details are presented in the Good Practise from Pomorskie

ProExport Research tool – it is the existing scanning tool used by Export Brokers in the face-to-face interview with the company owner or manager. It consists of the short description of the research aim, description of the project, the questionnaire, and the summary prepared by the Export Broker (score of points, conclusions, and recommendations)

2.2 Action

Improving ProExport Research Tool - the scanning tool already used in the regional export programme

2.2.1 Objectives

To scan the capability and export awareness of regional SMEs interested in internationalisation activities

- to know more about the internationalisation competencies and potential of individual SMEs before offering concrete public support
- to offer tailored made services to SMEs needs
- to bring together SMEs with similar export ideas for further support services.

2.2.2 Target group

Pomeranian SMEs with export potential and willing to act internationally (both beginners and those who want to discover new markets)

2.2.3 Content

The scanning process is the first step for each company interested in export public support. It is done by export brokers – export specialists and it starts from a broad perspective of the SME and will then focus on internationalisation issues in a second step.

The information collected during the interview are presented in the form of report for each scanned company with the general suggestions of action to improve preparation for internationalisation before going to actions.

We will realise the Action Plan in the following order:

- Comparing the existing scanning tool with GLOBAL EIS tool
- Introducing changes to existing tool ProExport Research Tool
- Training the Export Brokers on a renewed tool
- Testing new tool on 10 companies
- Discussing the results among the Partners and Export Brokers - decision on introducing any extra changes
- GLOBAL EIS tool integrated with ProExport Research tool

2.3 Partners/Players involved

The business support organisations involved in the regional export programme, especially in the task dedicated to identifying export potential of SMEs.

- Pomerania Development Agency, – leader of the project, involved in organising all types of services for internationalisation of SMEs.
- Regional Chamber of Commerce – responsible for Local Export Brokers and seminars for SMEs, B2B events
- Pomerania Science and Technology Park – responsible for organising trade fairs missions
- Enterprise Europe Network/Free Entrepreneurship Association – responsible for long term export courses for SMEs and seminars

- Starter Incubator – responsible for business missions organisation and special export events for startups.

2.4 Timeframe

Comparing the existing scanning tool with GOING GLOBAL tool	Jan 2019
Introducing changes to existing tool	Feb 2019
Training the export brokers on a renewed tool	Feb 2019- March 2019
Testing new tool on 10 companies	March -May 2019
Discussing the results among the Partners and Export Brokers decision on introducing any extra changes	May 2019
GLOBAL EIS tool being integrated with ProExport tool and included in the IT platform	June 2019

End: until Export project is available (December 2022)

2.5 Costs

The budget dedicated to this tool is mainly connected with the work of Export Brokers in the region. The budget is 0,5 mln eur.

2.6 Funding sources

ERDF Regional Programme – Pomorskie Export Broker Programme

2.7 Impact expected

Action 3 will have impact on the whole regional export programme Pomorskie Export Broker - budget of 15 mln eur ERDF

Increased number of SMEs in Pomerania ready for export: 10% of 600 companies benefiting from the instrument start export activities by end of 2020

Increased volume of export in the region - 6% of SMEs benefiting from the instrument that have increased their export turnover for period 2019-2020 (indicator for Export Broker as part of the OP)

3. Action 2: Advisory services for SMEs in the area of internationalisation

3.1 The Background

As the result of the Peer Review we got clear information that we are missing one important step in the 6 Step model. All other areas are covered with services.

It is not covering the consulting services which we understand as Step number Five HOW. The consulting services are needed by companies at the different stages of internationalisation process. They receive information, logistic support, export survey results, market knowledge on general level, possibilities of participation in B2B events. But more advanced tailor's made support for individual company is defined as advisory services which we are not able to offer within this Program or any other regional action supported by EU funds.

However there is a complementary action in the regional Operational Programme called Advanced Consulting Services for SMEs (2.4.1 Action). It is described in the Program as services supporting internationalisation and innovation processes in companies. Originally the Program was planned to be open at the same time as 2.3 Action in which Pomerania Export Broker has been started.

The action offer consulting support services of internationalisation. The Marshall Office announced the call for proposal but it was cancelled(unclear terms) due to lack of offers. So the complementary measure is still not available for SMEs.

When the call will be announced we will consider running for the Advanced Consulting Services as the administrative body of the action (the Operator). But in that case we won't be able to offer direct consultant services, we will just organise the system and monitor the service providers quality.

If we don't run for being the Operator because ,we will wait until the Operator will be chosen, so we can offer advisory services with EU funds support.

If we apply for the call, but don't win, we will wait until the Operator will be chosen, so we can offer advisory services with EU funds support.

The measure together with the existing complementary policy instrument/measures) is covering the full Six Step Model but some services (mainly financial support for innovation investment) are limited only to companies that identify themselves in Pomorskie Smart Specialisations. It means that other SMEs from other sectors don't have access to full 6 Step Model but at the same time may have better export potentials (good and ready to export products, better export knowledge, etc)Unfortunately after two years of realisation of export project, the Advanced Advisory Support project has not started yet.

3.2 Action

Remodelling the action in Regional Operational Programme

3.2.1 Objectives

Create a system of advanced advisory services for SMEs in the area of internationalisation

3.2.2 Target group

Pomeranian SMEs willing to act internationally or to develop innovative products/services.

3.2.3 Content

The remodelling of the Action will be realised by the following steps:

- European Commission decision on approving changes to the Regional Operational Programme
- Marshal decision of implementation of changes
- Call for proposal -the updated model and budget of the advisory support project
- Operator chosen in the call for proposal
- Advanced Advisory Services available to the SMEs with 50% support

The Marshal Office decided not to change the budget allocation for this activity but it will introduce the following changes to 2.4.1:

Instead of one operator – maximum three operators will be possible

Each of them will have to guarantee advisory services to minimum 150 SMEs

Each of them will have minimum budget of 15 mln PLN (3,3 mln Eur)

The operators will be responsible for identifying advisory needs in SMEs, and checking the reliability and quality of advisory bodies

As the 2.4.1 is part of export support system, the Marshal Office will introduce the general frame of the system of advisory services, the potential operators will have to describe the details of their ideas in the application form but within the frame designed by the Marshal Office

The services will not be defined by the Marshal Office, it will be an open catalogue as the Marshal Office does not want to limit the scope of SMEs' needs. But even though the potential operator will have to provide information relating to the basic list of services in the application form, the evaluator for the Marshal Office can determine whether they are advanced advisory services.

The list of services has to include two areas: services dedicated to internationalisation processes of SMEs and services dedicated to the innovation processes. The Marshal Office declined to separate these two areas even though they often have the same objective, and international companies are also innovative companies.

Further details will be announced when the call 2.4.1 will be opened.

The system of advisory services that will be created and will complete the export support system will be probably continued in the next EU Regional Programme.

We hope that the results of 2.4.1 will be positive showing also to the Marshal Office that it should be one activity combined with export support programme.

3.3 Partners/Players involved

Regional authority as an owner of the project deciding about finances resources

Operator – BSO responsible for creating and managing the advisory project, acting as an intermediary between Regional government and BSOs

BSOs – realising the services

SMEs – buying the services with the support of ERDF

3.4 Timeframe

Remodelling the actions in Regional Operational Programme	Jan – June 2019
European Commission decision on accepting the changes in the Programme	June 2019
Marshal decision of implementation of changes	July- August 2019
Call for proposal	Sept – October 2019
Operator of services chosen	Oct- Nov. 2019
Services available to SMEs	From January 2020 on

End: until Export project is available (December 2022)

3.5 Costs

The budget foreseen for Advanced Advisory Services in the Regional Operational Programme was 10 mln eur.

As this action is already delayed almost three years, we see the risk that the market will not consume the whole allocation of the budget that was designed for a longer period of time.

3.6 Funding sources

ERDF Regional Programme – 2.4.1 Action – 50%

Pomeranian SMEs – 50 % - own contribution

3.7 Impact expected

Increased number of SMEs in Pomerania ready for export for the first time ever or for the new markets.

Increased volume of export in the region - 6% of SMEs benefiting from the instrument that have increased their export turnover for period 2019-2020 (indicator for Export Broker as part of the OP): 6%

The impact will be lower if the delay of starting the Advanced Advisory Services will grow.

4. Action 3: Involving more companies and stakeholders into internationalisation processes in the region

4.1 The Background

Pomorskie has 200 000 companies and 5th place in Poland concerning export volume, mainly because of big companies. The potential of SMEs is still not discovered enough.

One of the objectives of regional export programme is to increase number of SMEs going international. That is why we built the network of Export Brokers to help us search interesting companies throughout the region.

Naturally the project so far attract companies from Gdansk agglomeration area, because they have easier access to events organised by partners.

The Staff Exchange in Alentejo gave us different perspective to the collaboration with smaller communities and local stakeholders. We could see good results of such cooperation.

After analysing the Alentejo experience we decided to strengthen the activities towards increasing the number of SMEs identified as the potential ones for export development but located in the smaller communities.

We are aware that SMEs managers have limited time to spend on searching for information or travelling for seminars. That is why we thought that the network of Export Brokers visiting them will be effective way of bringing SMEs to the project. And it is, but after 2 years we noticed that the flow of new companies coming to the project is slowing down.

One of the reasons is simple. There is no data base of "potential export companies", so cooperating with local BSO's and local authorities will give us better picture whom the Export Brokers should contact.

Local stakeholders will be much more effective in inviting SMEs for meetings and events.

Finally we hope to use the broader chain of stakeholders for future actions for SMEs in different areas .

To encourage potential local stakeholders to work with us we intend to ask The Marshall of Pomorskie for support of this action.

This Action will help us also to monitor the changing situation in the region and to control if the companies located in smaller communities have equal access to export public support activities.

4.2 Action

Attracting more SMEs and more new stakeholders that are not located in Gdansk city agglomeration

4.2.1 Objectives

Identifying more SMEs with export potential

- More SMEs informed about the export benefits and about the export support tools in the region
- New local stakeholders involved in export support

4.2.2 Target group

Pomeranian SMEs with export potential that are located outside the cities area.

4.2.3 Content

- Mapping the counties in the region.
- Planning the events, information campaign, information meetings outside Gdansk agglomeration
- Dividing the counties activities among the Partners
- Signing stakeholders intention letters.
- Continuing the export activities with the collaboration of new stakeholders
- Evaluating the Programme – checking the number of SMEs from outside the city

The Action will be realised by dividing the region among Export Brokers who are responsible for promotion and recruitment tasks in the 2.3 activity (PBE). Each of them receives the area he/she will be responsible for. Their job will be to arrange meetings with potential stakeholders in that area (local business organisations, business clubs, local clusters, local authorities – all kind of bodies that are closer to local SMEs and can help in reaching them)

With those organisations that will be willing to sign the intention letters of cooperation, the Export Brokers will discuss plans of common actions. The common actions can be for example: meetings with groups of producers, individual meetings, presentations during the local events, meetings with local SMEs, information on local websites, other forms of promotion that are adequate to the target group.

The main objective is to inform and prepare SMEs to export activities by giving them detailed information on 2.3 project and in the future also 2.4.1 project.

The Export Brokers will build the relations in their responsible areas, regularly visit and motivate stakeholders to be more active in building local SMEs economic potential, providing them with useful market and services information.

4.3 Partners/Players involved

- Partners of the Pomerania Export Broker

- Local BSOs located outside the main city of the region
- Local authorities

4.4 Timeframe

Mapping the counties in the region	Jan - 2019
Planning the events, information campaign, information meetings outside Gdansk agglomeration	Feb – March 2019
Dividing the counties activities among the Partners	Jan- 2019
Signing stakeholders intention letters	Feb – December – ongoing since 2019
Continuing the export activities with the collaboration of new stakeholders	From March 2019 until Dec 2020
Evaluating the Programme – checking the number of SMEs from outside the cities	Nov- Dec 2020

4.5 Costs

Organising of the events in the region App. 6 000 eur

Visits and meetings with new stakeholders 2 000 eur

4.6 Funding sources

- Regional Operational Programme Pomorskie Export Broker ERDF Funds

4.7 Impact expected

Action 3 will have impact on the whole regional export programme Pomorskie Export Broker - budget of 15 mln eur ERDF

- More companies informed about the export benefits – 400 SMEs located outside the city , The awareness will be raised of regional support program 2.4.1 among companies from smaller communities.
- More stakeholders involved in export support activities – 10 new stakeholders, at least 10 letters of intent signed, 30 events and meetings organised outside city areas

- **At least 20% of SMEs participating in 2.3 and 2.4.1 activity will be from smaller communities** Increased volume of export in the region - 6% of SMEs benefiting from the instrument that have increased their export turnover for period 2019-2020 (indicator for Export Broker as part of the OP): 6%

5. Timeframe overviewm - Action Plan - Pomorskie Phase 2

	2019												2020											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Action 1: Scanning export potentials in SMEs																								
Comparing the existing scanning tool with GOING GLOBAL tool																								
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Evaluating the Programme – checking the number of SMEs from outside the cities																								

Agencja Rozwoju Pomorza S.A.



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

6. Signature (optional)

Date:

19.06.2019

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Choromański', written over a horizontal line.

Stamp of the organisation (if available):

AGENCJA
ROZWOJU POMORZA S.A.
80-309 Gdańsk, Al. Grunwaldzka 472 D
tel. 58 32 33 100 fax 58 32 33 200
NIP 583 000 20 02 REGON 190044538

Marek Choromański
Z-ca Dyrektora
Działu Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości