



EFFECTIVE SME SUPPORT

ACTION PLAN FOR CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE

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PART I – GENERAL INFORMATION

Project: PGI00087 ESSPO; Efficient support services portfolios for SMEs

Partner : DEV'UP Centre Val de Loire

Territory concerned:

Country: FRANCE

NUTS2 region: Centre-Val de Loire

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PART II – POLICY CONTEXT

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(s) addressed:

ERDF-ESF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE 2014-2020 IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENT (DOMO).

Axis 1 « Knowledge society ».

Specific Objective 1.B.1: Increase by 50 % the number of innovative enterprises in Centre-Val de Loire region

ACTION 3 - Actions aimed at providing an environment favorable to companies in their innovation approaches

The Axis 1 of the ERDF OP addresses both SME competitiveness and the capacities of the region in RDI. It is also closely linked to the S3 objectives (which are also considered under ERDF OP's TO3), and to the Regional Economic Development Strategy for innovation & internationalization (SRDEII).

The policy mix of this instrument aims to

- Develop a structured network with tailor-made services that also cover the promotion and internationalisation of public research and the dissemination of scientific and technical culture
- Pursue efforts to acculturate to the innovation approach through services and to the economy of functionality through awareness-raising and training actions for economic actors

These are precisely the targets of the actions presented before.

Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instruments:

We plan to change the management of the policy instrument, especially the action 3 of the ERDF OP related to the innovation support.

We intend to improve the range of services that the innovation ecosystem delivers and facilitate the innovation initiatives through the Economic Development Support Ecosystem's offer (called RDECVL) according to the SMEs needs.

In particular, we hope to enhance the efficiency of the ecosystem through the needs identification and the solutions provided.

In particular, we intend to enhance the efficiency of the ecosystem through

- the need identification by the rationalization of the diagnostic tool and methodology (action 1)
- the solutions provided by building with the involved stakeholders the relevant support, the "client journey" (action2) according to the needs identified from the targeted companies.

The rationale behind this actions plan is to improve the service quality provided by the economic development intermediaries towards the companies in order to develop of the concept of "no wrong door" towards the companies. It implies

1) to identify their needs and stakes (action1)

2) to provide the most relevant and efficient support to the companies to answer to the needs identified in order to help the them to achieve their economic and social development (action2)

3) to coordinate the ecosystem support through a relevant governance

PART III – DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED

ACTION 1: Rationalization of diagnostic tools provided by different intermediaries

THE POLICY LEARNING PROCESS THAT LED TO THE ACTION

Dev'up had a strong experience in dealing with the innovation diagnosis, as they coordinated the implementation of this approach 8 years ago on behalf of the Region and the State in Centre-Val de Loire. Indeed, they created at that time a unique “diagnosis” tool to assess not only the innovation project of a company but also its overall situation (capacity of the team, strategy of the enterprise, SWOT analysis) and also propose some recommendations (that could be linking with the adequate resources, but also action plan) to help the company into their projects.

Nevertheless, since several years, some new support initiatives emerged in Centre-Val de Loire such as industry 4.0, digitalization, internationalization.... And each of them was accompanied by a set of tools such as diagnosis. This led to the chaos in the way the economic development ecosystem detects, assesses and finally provides a support to the companies.

In parallel, the policy makers became aware of the key role of the high growth SMEs for the regional economy and the necessity to consider their specific needs and stake. It is the reason why, Dev'up launched a survey in 2017 to collect their needs.

Finally, by sharing the results of this survey with the main stakeholders, and observing that the ecosystem has become chaotic in its detection of needs and corporate projects, the policy makers agreed:

- the necessity to align the diagnosis of the companies' needs
- the principle of rationalizing methodologies and diagnostic tools in the Centre-Val de Loire region.

They commissioned Dev'up during a meeting of the agency's board of directors (which brings together all the stakeholders in regional economic development) to propose a new diagnostic model likely to take into account the needs and challenges of companies and include the identified support angles (innovation, internationalisation, digitalisation, industrial transition, HR skills).

ESSPO LESSONS LEARNT APPLIED IN THE ACTION

From several years, through the interregional learning activities organised as part of the Interreg Europe Project ESSPO, we had the opportunities to share our concerns and our good practices with our counterparts.

In particular, we face the challenges that our innovation ecosystem, even if it is well structured is not sufficient to help our regional companies to compete internationally.

In order to adjust diagnostics on the companies' needs analysis to the real business needs and stake encountered by our innovative companies we intend to get inspiration from the work done by Eurada. Indeed, as part of the ESSPO project, Eurada designed and proposed to the project members to test a

questionnaire towards the SMEs in orders to collect their needs. This tool (particularly exhaustive) will be used as inspiration in order to detect the enterprise's needs and propose them dedicated “development journey”.

Indeed, Eurada proposed an exhaustive questionnaire to the project members in order to help them to collect the company needs.

It was articulated around several stakes:

- Enterprise strategy: achievements and plans
- Overall concerns and challenges
- Specific challenges
 - Human capital
 - R&D+I
 - Production
 - Sales and marketing
 - Access to external funding sources
 - Connections with regional stakeholders

We need to adapt this questionnaire to our regional context. It will to help us to build a simplified diagnosis tool. But above all, it will probably be the base of an interview guide.

NATURE OF THE ACTION

We plan to change the management of the policy instrument in order to improve the range of services that the innovation ecosystem delivers and facilitate the innovation initiatives through the Economic Development Support Ecosystem's (called REDCVL) offer according to the SMEs needs. In particular, we intend to enhance the efficiency of the ecosystem through the need's identification through a dedicated and a unique diagnosis tool.

During the next 2 years, we intend to engage with intermediaries to build a consensus of their real knowledge of SMEs needs by the rationalization of the diagnostic tool and methodology (action 1).

The impact expected for improving the Action 3 of the ERDF OP (Actions aimed at providing an environment favorable to companies in their innovation approaches) is to provide a relevant tool that enable the economic development intermediaries to collect the needs and stakes of the entrepreneurs.

The rationale behind this measure is not only to structure the way (through the diagnosis) that intermediaries counselors identifies the stakes and the needs of the regional companies, but also to give them the good reflex to identify the main bottlenecks in the company development projects and provide the most relevant solutions.

This action fully contributes to the "logic of improving and adapting the range of services provided to businesses, and of mobilizing all the actors in charge of economic development, innovation, technology transfer and research" as described in measure 3 of the ERDF Operational Implementation Document.

STEPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION

In order to answer their expectations, we elaborated these set of actions.

- To carry out an inventory of the existing diagnosis used toward the regional companies.
- To conduct a business need survey in order to identify the main points to focus
- To propose to the actors of the support ecosystem to determine the common base to analyse the company needs.
- To design a common diagnosis with a panel of RDECVL members
- To test the common diagnostic base on a sample of companies
- To draw lessons from the pilot experience
- To deploy the new diagnosis as a common reference tool (policy instrument implementation indicator)

The results of this rationalization will make it possible to develop a common tool and process for identifying company needs (action1). Once this tool is deployed, the needs of companies can be collected, analysed and, above all, shared between all intermediaries.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

We aim to involve the main intermediaries (members of the RDECVL) in the determination of the common base of analysis of the companies' needs and the design of a common base diagnosis, that are:

- We aim to involve the main intermediaries (members of the RDECVL) in the determination of the common base of analysis of the companies' needs and the design of a common base diagnosis, that are:
- DEV'UP Centre-Val de Loire, the Regional economic development agency: in charge of the overall communication, monitoring and evaluation of the RIS3, of the management of the Innovation steering committee and as well as of the regional economic development network (RDECVL). The Unit "Territorial Animation" coordinates the ecosystem providing innovation and economic development services to the regional companies. The Unit "European Policies" is animating the steering committee, responsible for the RIS3 monitoring and evaluation and participating to the assessment of the ROP. Furthermore, through Enterprise Europe Network, it provides free-of-charge internationalisation services to SME. It will be involved in the improvement of the economic development policy as the project manager.
- The Region Centre-Val de Loire, which is the managing authorities of the economic development public policies: ERDF OP (European Level) as well as the CPER (national level) and SREDEII (regional level). It will be involved in the improvement of the economic development policy as the project owner, in collaboration with the French State services.
- The French State services which participate to the co-building of the economic development public policies: ERDF OP (European Level) and SREDEII (regional level) and it is the co-managing authority the CPER (national level).
- The Regional Chamber of commerce and industry of Centre-Val de Loire, which represents the 6 territorial Chambers of Commerce and Industry. CCI Centre-Val de Loire defends the interests of

trade, industry and services companies with the public authorities. It works to facilitate relations between businesses and administrations, and to ensure that their interests are considered in the development of public policies. It coordinates the daily support of companies, from their creation to their transfer, to help them in their reflection and in the concretization of their decisions in legal, fiscal, social, commercial, strategic matters, etc. It informs them in the economic and legal fields as a resource centre and economic documentation at the service of companies. It will be involved in the improvement of the economic development policy as a main operator.

- The clusters:
 - Cosmetic Valley: perfumery and cosmetics, skin knowledge and plant molecules
 - DREAM: Sustainability of Water Resources Associated with Environments
 - Elastopôle
 - S2E2: power electronics, components
 - Végépolys: competitiveness cluster in the specialized plant sector
 - Aerocentre: aeronautics industry
 - AREA, Regional Association of Food Companies of Centre-Val de Loire
 - Nekoé: innovation through services
 - Pôlepharma: pharmaceutical production
 - Shop Expert Valley: shop fitting sector
- BpiFrance, the French public investment bank, a financing and business development organisation, and more and more accompanying in a non- financial way the development of the companies. They will be associated to the policy improvement approach and they will be involved in economic development policy as a main operator.

Of course, in a lesser degree, the other intermediaries will be involved in the company needs analysis and the coordination of the support:

- 2 regional Universities:
- Tech transfer units
- Incubators, Accelerators,
- The community of municipalities (which since the law also has an economic competence)

TIMEFRAME

Activity number	Activity description	Implementation time line
1	To carry out an inventory of existing diagnoses used toward the regional companies.	Q1-Q2 2019
2	To conduct a business need survey in order to identify the main points to focus	Q1-Q2 2019

3	To propose to the actors of the support ecosystem to determine the common base to analyze the company needs.	Q2 2019
4	To design a common diagnosis with a panel of RDECVL members	Q3 2019
5	To test the common diagnostic base on a sample of companies	Q4 2019-Q1 2020
6	To draw lessons from the pilot experience	Q2 2020
7	To deploy the new diagnosis as a common reference tool (policy instrument implementation indicator)	Q3-Q4 2020

COSTS

Similarly, as the detection of innovation or economic development projects is an integral part of their mission, they are already funded for this purpose. Therefore, there should be no significant additional cost for this approach.

According to the current status, the design and the implementation of a common basis diagnosis will not incur additional costs. The implementation of the diagnosis will be carried out by the respective promoters.

FUNDING SOURCES

Not applicable

ACTION 2: Design of “client journeys” with the involved stakeholders (from the economic developer network) in order to support SMEs in their development (with a focus on industrial transition, innovation and internationalization)

THE POLICY LEARNING PROCESS THAT LED TO THE ACTION

The diagnosis rationalisation process conducted in accordance with the various intermediaries, members of the economic development network constitutes the first action of the action plan.

Once this tool is deployed, the needs of companies can be collected, analysed and, above all, shared between all intermediaries.

This will be the starting point for the design of client journeys, better adapted to the needs of companies. These ones will be able to use them on an “à la carte” basis, to solve their problems.

Indeed, the public decision-makers intend to offer "marked" client journeys to companies based on the needs of companies identified through diagnostics and on the skills of the network of economic developers. They intend to define with the ecosystem stakeholders, some customer paths (with a focus on industrial transition and internationalization).

If necessary, the skills of the network of economic developers will be updated or strengthened through the university of economic developers led by Dev'up.

These client journeys could be seen as an individual support process tailored to each SME based on some predefined support processes provided by different intermediaries making integrated process ending with impacts for the supported company.

ESSPO LESSONS LEARNT APPLIED IN THE ACTION

In order to build customer paths adapted to the needs detected thanks to diagnostics, we would like to take the inspiration from the good practice Eleven Ventures from Sofia (Bulgaria) (a good practice presented as part of the taskforce 3 during meeting in Hameln on 24/10/2017). Eleven is an accelerator and venture capital fund for early-stage investments. It could inspire one of the client journeys in the Centre-Val de Loire region: which one “scaling up journey” dedicated to entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs with growth potential and international ambitions. More particularly, the evaluation procedure could inspire the "scaling up journey" selection committee, that is the way of the high potential companies are selected to participate in the scaling-up journey.

The second inspiring good practice is the presentation of IMPROVE from the Improve Academy (made during the taskforce workshop held in Hameln on 24/10/2017). IMPROVE helps public and private clients to enhance innovation management practices for growth. Emerged from the European Commission’s flagship program “IMP³rove”, it is now a company that serves as an international knowledge hub for better innovation management support services. We would like to get inspiration from IMP³rove Assessment the SMEs’ innovation management capacities to design our “innovation management journey”. The IMP³rove

Assessment helps companies to understand the key success factors of innovation management in 5 innovation management dimensions, namely innovation strategy, innovation organisation and culture, innovation life-cycle management, innovation enabling factors and innovation results. It is offered as an online questionnaire comprising 47 questions.

Finally, we will get the inspiration of the governance of the REIDI (Entrepreneurship and Innovation Network of Castilla y León) which has been valorised as a good practice by our counterpart of Castilla y León, Technalia. In particular, we will take the inspiration of the 3 working groups which were constituted in 2017 (Entrepreneurship, Industry 4.0 and Bioeconomy), and particularly on their governance and their modalities of moderation) to constitute similar working groups with the relevant stakeholders in order to build the "client journeys".

NATURE OF THE ACTION

We plan to change the management of the policy instrument in order to improve the range of services that the innovation ecosystem delivers and facilitate the innovation initiatives through the Economic Development Support Ecosystem's (called RDECVL) offer according to the SMEs needs. In particular, we intend to enhance the efficiency of the ecosystem through the need's identification through a dedicated and a unique diagnosis tool.

During the next 2 years, we intend to engage with intermediaries to build a common vision to improve the quality of services and their articulation towards the regional companies by building relevant supports, "client journeys" (action2) with the involved stakeholders according to the needs identified of the targeted companies (through the diagnosis built in action1).

These client journeys could be seen as an individual support process tailored to each SME based on some predefined support processes provided by different intermediaries. They lead to an integrated process ending with impacts for the supported company.

So, from the main needs and stakes detected among the companies interviewed,

- we will make a cartography of the main supports provided by the regional intermediaries (with a focus on industrial transition, innovation and internationalization), and
- we will build several client journeys in cooperation with our counterparts of the other intermediaries of the ecosystem.
- Then, we will start to test the client journeys towards a panel of companies before deploying them more widely.

The impact expected for improving the Action 3 of the ERDF OP (Actions aimed at providing an environment favorable to companies in their innovation approaches) is to foster the articulation between the supports provided by the regional intermediaries (and eventually develop new types of supports) in order to provide the qualified, personalized "client journey" that will support the regional companies in their development.

The rationale behind this measure is to adapt and articulate the supports from the different intermediaries and foster the coordination and collaboration between these intermediaries in order to be able to provide to the regional companies an overall solution to their needs and not a simple juxtaposition of different “off-the-shelf solution” that not correspond really to their needs.

This action fully contributes to the "logic of improving and adapting the range of services provided to businesses, and of mobilizing all the actors in charge of economic development, innovation, technology transfer and research" as described in measure 3 of the ERDF Operational Implementation Document.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

As in the first part of our action plan, the mains intermediaries of the ecosystems are involved.

- DEV'UP Centre-Val de Loire,
- The Region Centre-Val de Loire,
- The French State services
- The Regional Chamber of commerce and industry of Centre-Val de Loire, which represents the 6 territorial Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- The clusters:
 - Cosmetic Valley, DREAM, Elastopole, S2E2, Végépolys
 - Aerocentre, AREA, Nekoé, Pôlepharma, Shop Expert Valley
- BpiFrance, the French public investment bank,
- Of course, in a lesser degree, the other intermediaries will be involved in the company needs analysis and the coordination of the support: 2 regional Universities, Tech transfer units, Incubators, Accelerators, ...

We will commit them according to the specific client journey we intend to build with them. Of course, Dev'up doesn't intend not to act in a hegemonic way and capture all the “client journeys” but to act more as a coordinator and promote the best offer towards the company. Dev'up would propose an offer only if this support is not proposed by an actor of the ecosystem or to sustain an existing offer.

We will capitalize on the existing offers and competence, and if needed we will increase the competence of the intermediary's members through the Economic Developer University. So, the training of the RDECVL members will be allocated on the Economic Developer University Budget.

Finally, if needed, and according to the needs, we will promote private offers.

TIMEFRAME

Activity number	Activity description	Implementation time line
8	Make a cartography of the mains supports provided by the regional intermediaries (with a focus on industrial transition, innovation and internationalization)	Q4 2019-Q12020
9	Define with the ecosystem stakeholders of the client journeys (with a focus on industrial transition and internationalization), based on the results of the diagnostics	Q2 2020
10	Test client journeys with a company panel	Q3-Q4 2020

COSTS

According to the current status, the design and the implementation of the “client journeys” will not incur additional costs. The implementation of the diagnosis will be carried out by the respective promoters.

FUNDING SOURCES

Not applicable

POLITICAL ENDORSEMENT

Since, the detection of the needs and projects of the companies is a mission of the economic developer network members, we're going to rely on them to design a diagnosis and a methodology and to implement these two tools. Dev'up is in charge to coordinate this network.

The Regional Economic Development Network (RDECVL) coordinated by Dev'up is involved at 2 levels:

- The strategic one (Executives of the intermediaries)
- The operational one (Enterprise advisers, members of the network)

More directly, all the executives of the main intermediaries or the regional stakeholders are members of the board of Dev'up. Thus, the agency operational programs (including the ESSPO action plan) are designed by the regional stakeholder for the regional stakeholders. So, there is also a retroacting boucle that commit much more the intermediaries. By the way, the decision to rationalize the company needs diagnosis was made by the member of the Dev'up Board during a steering committee of Dev'up.

Furthermore, Dev'up has the capacity to work closely with the managing authority that is the Region on the improvement of the policy instrument that is the ERDF OP. Indeed, the President of the Regional Council is also President of Dev'up and its director of Economy, research and higher education is also the director of Dev'up.

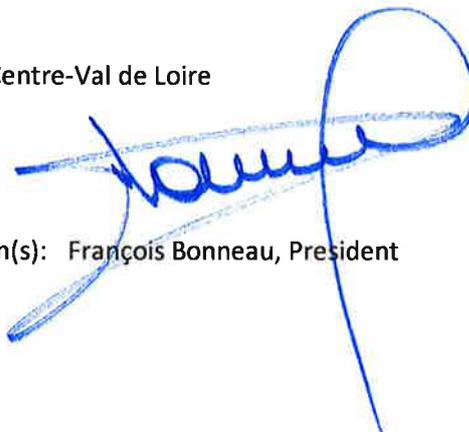
Finally, at the operational level, Dev'up is consulted for the evolution of the ERDF OP, as it has been the case early this year. Consequently, the agency has the opportunity to suggest improvement in line with the support provided to the SMES (through a unified diagnosis tools and client journeys, for example) and in line with the animation of the intermediary support ecosystem.

COMMITMENT

This Action plan has been developed by Dev'up, who commit themselves implement the actions envisioned within their respective capabilities

Date: 11/03/2019

Name of the organisation(s): Dev'up Centre-Val de Loire



Signatures of the relevant organisation(s): François Bonneau, President