

Rural SME - Policies to develop entrepreneurship and innovative SMEs in rural areas

Action plan

Ave Intermunicipal Community – CIM Ave

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1. General information

Project: Rural SME - Policies to develop entrepreneurship and innovative SMEs in rural areas

Partner organisation: Ave Intermunicipal Community – CIM Ave

Country: Portugal

NUTS2 region: Norte

Contact person:

Vera Soares

email address: vera.soares@cim-ave.pt

phone number: +351 253 422 400

1.1. Ave region

Ave province is located in the Northern region of Portugal and covers an area of 1.541 km². This region is formed by 8 municipalities.



Figure 1: Ave region municipalities.

With a population of 415.671 inhabitants (year 2016), the territory has a population density of about 269 hab./Km² (year 2016), which places the region as the most populous territory in the North Region, just after the Porto metropolitan area. Figure 2 shows the distribution of Ave region population, by municipality, highlighting the differences in the territory in terms of population distribution.

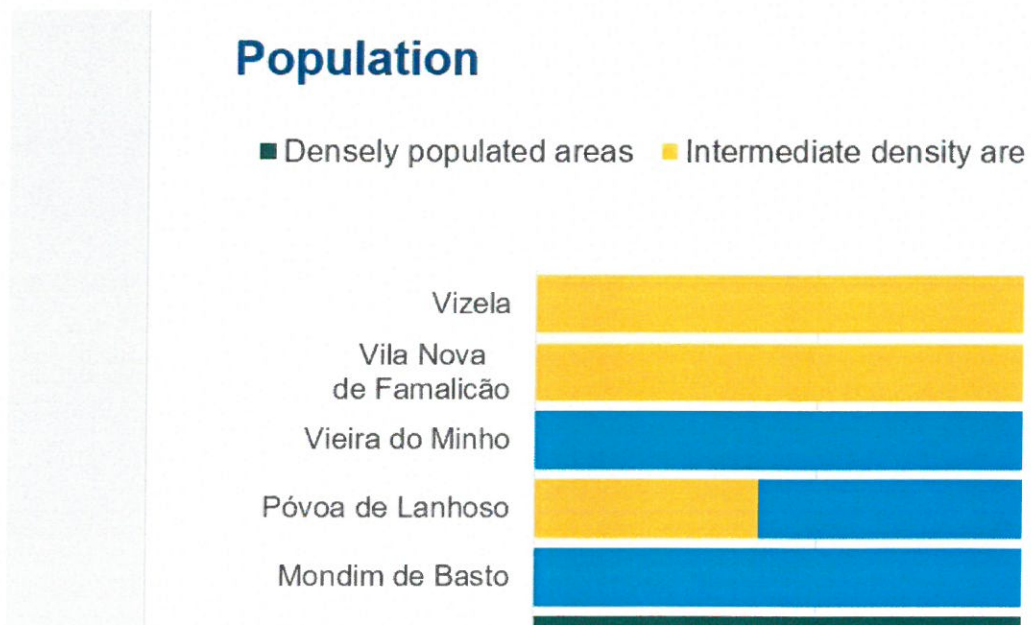


Figure 2: Total number of inhabitants in Ave region, by municipality (census 2011).



The Ave Region is faced with enormous employment challenges:

- there is an urgent need to reverse the trend of job losses that have been occurring over the last few years, especially in the manufacturing industries;
- it is necessary to increase the qualifications of human resources and to adapt them to the needs of the territory in order to increase their employability;
- it is essential to boost the social economy sector by protecting the most fragile groups in society and with social inclusion difficulties.

Since 2013 the 8 municipalities integrating CIM Ave signed an agreement where the support to entrepreneurship and employability reinforcement is established. This agreement originated a policy instrument that is operated under CIM Ave responsibility, the Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan (Pacto Territorial para a Empregabilidade do Ave).

The main objective of the policy instrument is to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises, and to strengthen the region competitiveness by promoting the investment in innovation, R&D and diversifying and strengthening SMEs, with the aim of increasing participation in the processes of growth and innovation.

As SMEs are the most important part of the economy and represent a significant percentage of all the businesses. The challenges for SMEs in rural areas are the need to promote the attractiveness of rural areas, the need for the creation and development of business practices, market orientation and the implementation of new integrated strategies that allow the rejuvenation of the business sectors, the support to innovation and business development and the valuing of productive processes. Also the needs to the conservation of natural values and landscape associated to rural areas, the created systems and the durability of agroforestry systems will promote the need to invest in new adapted and innovative energy efficiency measures, the promotion and enhancement of new and innovative environmental services, encourage initiatives that integrate economy and environment, creative solutions in order to promote local social projects, support for the diversification for economic activities that are complementary to agriculture, among others.

It is essential support the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new enterprises (mainly in Energy, Environment, Eco-industries, ICT and social innovation). It includes by means of business incubators, developed and applying new business models for SMEs, grant support to the creation and expansion of advanced product development capabilities and services.

1.2. Rural SMEs

RURAL SME - Policies to develop entrepreneurship and innovative SMEs in rural areas project aims at improving the policies on regional support systems for entrepreneurs through the exchange of experiences and the identification of good practices, implementing the lessons learnt in regional action plans to increase the creation of innovative SMEs in rural areas but also supporting those which are already established to introduce innovation in their daily activity.

To achieve this goal this project envisages the identification, transfer and adoption of projects, measures and policies that would contribute to find out solutions to key challenges that face business development in less populated areas, which will be compiled into an action plan.

1.2.1. Action plan

The development of the Ave region action plan will have reference the lesson learnt from Rural SMEs cooperation (figure 3) and its exploitation, with the objective of improve the policy instrument tackled within CIM AVE region.



Figure 3: Ave region action plan inputs from Rural SMEs cooperation.

The elaboration of the action plan and its actions and sub actions were also worked with the main stakeholders in the region, by the implementation of a process of participation and involvement of the local community.

It was intended, therefore, that the proposed actions correspond, in fact, to the real needs identified for the region and, thus, it is expected that local authorities formally adopt the plan of action.



2. Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Pacto Territorial para a Empregabilidade do Ave (Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan)

2.1. Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan

Ave region action plan will address the policy instrument Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan (Pacto Territorial para a Empregabilidade do Ave).

The main objective of Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan is to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises, and to strengthen the region competitiveness by promoting the investment in innovation, R&D and diversifying and strengthening SMEs, with the aim of increasing participation in the processes of growth and innovation.

2.1.1. Priorities and their specific objectives

The Ave Region Employability Pact focuses mainly in increase employability, concerning the adjustment between the human capital profile and the needs of businesses and the territory.

considering the following four priorities and their specific objectives:

1. Qualifying people for employability by:
 - (i) strengthening participation in training by young and adult population;
 - (ii) reducing school dropout and failure and increasing the schooling rate in all education cycles;
2. To promote sustainable and quality employability by:
 - (i) promoting the integration of unemployed young people into the labour market;



- (ii) promoting the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market;
 - (iii) readjusting employment for strategic professions;
 - (iv) stimulating self-employment and entrepreneurship;
3. Strengthen articulation and institutional coordination mechanisms:
- (i) ensuring more strategic and coordinated cross-cutting interventions among the various regional actors;
 - (ii) developing anchor actions to stimulation and orientation of Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan;
 - (iii) increasing training offers in the areas with most labour market deficiencies in Ave Region and publicizing the most sought-after recruitment areas.
4. To stimulate employability in the main consolidated or emerging regional clusters in the Ave Region, mobilizing networks of consultation for employability in the areas:
- (i) of Tourism and Cultural Heritage;
 - (ii) the Metal-Mechanical Industry;
 - (iii) Chemical Industry;
 - (iv) Design and Fashion;
 - (v) Trade and Civil Construction.

The strategic priority "qualifying people for employability" encompasses a set of actions that promote the qualifications of the inhabitants in the Ave Region. In general, the actions aim to contribute to the schooling of the population, reduction of school dropout and the increase of training actions.

The strategic priority "to promote sustainable and quality employability" comprises a set of actions that allow the professional insertion of unemployed assets and other groups at risk in the labour market and the mobility of human resources.

The strategic priority "to reinforce the mechanisms of articulation and institutional coordination" incorporates the actions that promote the regulation of training activities and education with the real needs of the territory.

The strategic priority "to disseminate employability in the main clusters of the Ave Region" is substantiated in a range of actions, aimed at adjusting the specific factors of employability in the key ranks to the new contracts of education and training.

2.2. RURAL SME contributions

RURAL SMEs developed a SWOT analysis about the real situation in Ave territory. This tool considered a complex research of economic, technical, sociological, legal and managerial activities and summarizes the actual situation of Ave region, namely its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, supporting the definition of additional actions to improve Ave Region Growth and Jobs Territorial Plan.

2.2.1. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>There are an important and relevant business culture, in which the entrepreneurship and innovation are encouraged;</p> <p>Policies to promote entrepreneurship are being implemented and useful and coherent strategies were defined;</p> <p>The support needed to new business creation is provided, particularly for young and innovative enterprises, with main focus on clarification of information and business improvement suggestions.</p>	<p>Insufficient and/or inefficient tools and support for business consolidation, in order to increase innovation and internationalization;</p> <p>Lack of support resources for data protection;</p> <p>Low availability of innovation programs that include training to increase skills related to innovation.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>In the short term</p> <p>Take advantage of the existing incentives for disadvantaged rural areas (in particular business) to develop a technology cluster and support innovation and internationalization;</p> <p>Promote and facilitate the dynamics between large companies, already consolidated in the local business fabric, with young labour and young entrepreneurs in order to take advantage to their academic knowledge, determination, energy and enthusiasm;</p> <p>Strengthen and improve local business networks through an efficient business association that is focused on developing business relationships between companies in the region and other markets;</p> <p>Fostering <i>innovation</i> training and education and lifelong learning programs.</p>	<p>Limited resources, especially financial resources and international contacts, and managerial knowledge about internationalization are critical constraints to SME internationalization.</p>
<p>In the medium - long term</p> <p>Strengthen and improve local business networks through an efficient business association that is focused on developing business relationships between companies in the region and other markets.</p>	

The Ave Region is a territory with a strong presence of manufacturing industry, with an important and relevant business culture, but also with a large number of companies in the agricultural sector and small services.

The analysis performed identified the main specific needs of the territory in order to promote economic and social cohesion and to overcome barriers to development.

Support to increase business financial resources and knowledge in order to promote innovation and internationalization are one of the main constraints SME consolidation and growth. Developing strategies should provide additional support to help local enterprises to take advantage of the existing incentives dedicated to rural and business development

More and better business networks and associations can contribute for expansion of local business knowledge and to attain new contacts, essential to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and internationalization.

Fostering innovation training and education and lifelong learning programs should also be promoted, in order to support human resource development and increase labour productivity. Dynamics between large companies and young labour and young entrepreneurs should also be encouraged.

It was also identified that the province has an economy highly import-dependent, with a coverage rate of imports by exports. Diversification of economic activities, supporting entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable exploitation of local resources can also benefit AVE province economy, reducing risks associated to economy changes and increasing employment and competitiveness.

3. Good practices selected and lessons learnt

This action plan was based on the reflection on the information gathered through the various activities carried out in phase 1 of the Rural SMEs project, which allowed the structuring of important lessons and recommendations.

The analysis of the following good practices through Rural SMEs were identified as the most appropriate for replication in Ave region:

1. Entrepreneurship Networking Platform of Achaia
2. Development of local innovative products
3. Developing entrepreneurial/managerial skills of young entrepreneurs for businesses generation
4. Student Enterprise Awards Programme ran by Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Tipperary

3.1. Entrepreneurship Networking Platform of Achaia

3.1.1. Website

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/885/entrepreneurship-networking-platform-of-achaia/>

3.1.2. Location

Greece

3.1.3. Specific objective:

The good practice aims to support regional businesses interfacing with greater Public Administration, Chambers, Academic - Research community and productive actors.



3.1.4. Information on the practice

The Entrepreneurship Networking Platform of Achaia creates the appropriate framework to develop tools that provide services to businesses and all involved stakeholders.

The interconnection of micro/SMEs and professionals with each other and the use of innovative tools and methods (crowdsourcing, tele-education, teleconferencing, data sharing, etc.) creates dynamics in the business profile of our region, enhancing the region's competitiveness and extroversion. Similarly, academics and research institutions participate in the overall system, ensuring technological transfer in the business world, while public administration bodies, entrepreneurial actors and productive actors shape better growth conditions for the business community.

3.1.5. Resources needed

The practice required the collaboration of the stakeholders (micro/SMEs, professionals, academia, research community, public administration, chambers & productive sector) which was already taking place within an initiative of the Region of Western Greece "Alliance of Entrepreneurship & Development in Western Greece".

3.1.6. Lessons learned

This good practice depends of a strong involvement of human resources both from the entity responsible and stakeholders. Only a true and strong motivational communication and a strong sense of membership will enable the alignment of interests and full involvement of all the stakeholders. This good practice shows how extremely relevant is to have the stakeholders on board and the importance of listening to the field agents when identifying strengths and weaknesses of a region and also as way to reinforce the decision-making process and the creativity, in order to generate new solutions and new ideas.

Additionally, this good practice shows that results can be achieved with limited resources.



3.2. Development of local innovative products

3.2.1. Website

www.bohinj.si

3.2.2. Location

Slovenia

3.2.3. Specific objective

The main objective is to develop a good program, with individual support and work on quality, including creative industry, based on clear strategy to develop local brand with high quality products.

3.2.4. Information on the practice

The challenge of this good practice is empowered especially young to stay in the area (stop brain drain) and how to retain traditional knowledge and transfer of old to new generation (traditional products with creative approach – new products from traditional materials), development of innovative services connected to tourism.

The area is in vicinity of National park and within national park, with very limited access to employment, rather traditional structure of SME.s, brain drain, possibilities for development of entrepreneurship mostly in services connected to tourism and farming and traditional craft, no long-term support mechanisms for start-ups and SME-s in place. There is lack of innovation in existing SME.s, lack of rural start-ups. Based on the local strategy for tourism the idea was born that higher income for inhabitants and SME-s in farming and services can be reached only if support mechanism was started with innovative approach that would cover start-up knowledge, innovation and connection to creative industry.

3.2.5. Resources needed

The practice required one coordinator, played by tourism office, and external support. The practice was financed with the help of the Tourism office funds. Very low financial resources were needed.

3.2.6. Lessons learned

Also, in this good practice a strategic communication is a focal point. Nevertheless, it was showed that it was very hard to reach rural start-ups and SME.s due to the fact that it took a lot of time to gain their trust. Some strategic actions need to be taken in consideration in order to support young entrepreneurs and new and innovative forms of support must be developed. This support can be in the form of new support products in order to obtain financing for the early stages of the businesses among others. The structural challenge is to help to innovate and this good practice shows that results can be achieved with limited resources.

3.3. Developing entrepreneurial/managerial skills of young entrepreneurs for businesses generation

3.3.1. Website

<http://newbiz.ase.ro/>

3.3.2. Location

Romania

3.3.3. Specific objective:

This good practice had several specific objectives:



- Developing entrepreneurship and managerial skills of students and young entrepreneurs through integrated support services for starting a business (counselling, assistance, post-assistance, support for business initiation and self-employment, training in the field of development and consolidation of new areas of employment and entrepreneurship);
- Awareness of the existing opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment and promoting a positive attitude towards entrepreneurial culture through an integrated communication campaign;
- Development and implementation of aid scheme and incentives for supporting the entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- Promoting entrepreneurial culture and self-employment through innovative activities.

3.3.4. Information on the practice

This good practice was financed within the minimis scheme "Support for entrepreneurs" Sectoral Operational Program Development of Human Resources 2007-2013, PA 3 "Development of the adaptability of workers and enterprises "DMI 3.1 "Promotion of the entrepreneurial culture".

The beneficiaries of the project (eligible target group) were persons over 18 willing to initiate an independent activity, residing in the counties of the 2 regions of implementation and the financing conditions were the creation of at least 2 jobs, maintained for at least 6 months after the finalization of the project.

For this good practice were made several activities, such as:

- Creation of a one-stop-shop information portal comprising informative materials;
- Access to 4 centres of support for the initiation of businesses in Cluj Napoca and Timisoara (2 in North-West region);
- Elaboration of 500 guides for self-occupation and their dissemination;
- Establishment of 43 new businesses, at least 2 in each county of the implementation regions, respectively Bucharest (out of which 31 in the North-West region);
- Creation of at least 86 jobs (2 for each business), out of which 62 in the North-West region;
- Creation of an Online Regional Information Portal (ORIP);

- Creation of a platform for e-learning and an online digital library comprising resources in entrepreneurship;
- Elaboration of an interactive guide for supporting the initiation of new businesses.

3.3.5. Resources needed:

The resource needed for this good practice was 8643683.30 LEI (ESF - POSDRU).

3.3.6. Lessons learned:

Through this good practice it was possible to verify a positive role in changing the entrepreneurial culture even though some difficulties occurred in the short implementation period: change of the rules during the implementation, late payment of the minimis aid (3 days before the conclusion of the project), difficult conditions for the administrator of the minimis scheme. As lessons learned we can highlight the need to include some innovative communication and the urge to adjust the offer with new needs in terms of communication platforms. Also, a specific programme like this can have some constraints in what regards the implementation, due to that a contingency plan is necessary in order to overcome the difficulties. Also, this programme needs some relevant financing and that enhances the need for structured planning.

3.4. Student Enterprise Awards Programme ran by Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Tipperary

3.4.1. Website

www.studententerprise.ie

3.4.2. Location

Ireland



3.4.3. Specific objective:

This good practice had several specific objectives, these being:

- To engage students in Secondary schools to explore the world of enterprise;
- To 'fit in with and compliment' the existing school curriculum;
- To support Students in all aspects of their business;
- To Co Ordinate school finals and County Final;
- To help students learn about social media use in their business;
- To encourage students to consider business as both a subject in college and in future life.

3.4.4. Information on the practice

The good practice "Student Enterprise Programme" was introduced with the aim of encouraging second-level students aged 12 to 18 years to come forward with a business idea and in a safe, supported environment discover how viable their idea is, and hopefully to see their idea grow to an actual operational business on a very small scale. In doing so, the hope is that further down the line, these students will consider opening their own business, instead of settling for a 9 to 5 job, as has become the norm.

With the support of teachers and a designated County Student Enterprise Coordinator who is on had to offer support for the duration of the programme, the students are free to engage in this experience.

Some have returned as a young adult after college to meet with Business Advisors in LEO Tipperary to discuss new business ideas.

3.4.5. Resources needed:

The necessary resources for the elaboration of this good practice were:

- Coordinator, who engages with teachers/students in 29 schools in Co. Tipperary;
- €35,000 approximate to fund programme at County level;
- Volunteer Judges for both school finals & County Final who have an excellent understanding of what it takes to run a business;



- Suitable venue to host County Final.

3.4.6. Lessons learned:

The lessons learned from this good practice were related to:

- The necessity to have and keep all schools involved;
- The fact that social media is not always suitable for all the students.

Also, this good practice shows that some difficulties exist, because the results can be too focused in only one national final winner, as opposed to acknowledging the very basic business idea which, is actually carried out to perfection. Also, in this good practice a strategic communication is a focal point and this communication must be developed in order to emphasize all the good ideas and not just the winner. Also, some support after the contest phase, must be given to the best ideas in order to promote the entrepreneurship among young people.

The structural challenge is to help to innovate and this good practice also shows that results can be achieved with limited resources since some work is made by volunteers.



4. Details of the actions envisaged

Action 1: Development of a tool for obtaining technical support and for dissemination of financing opportunities.

Action 2: Creation of a dedicated service to support entrepreneurs and follow-up of entrepreneurship projects in rural areas.

Action 3: Elaboration of Roadmap for reinforcement of mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation in rural areas.

4.1. Action 1: Development of a tool for obtaining technical support and for dissemination of financing opportunities.

This action aims to develop a tool, available to companies and entrepreneurs, to support the identification of the existing and more appropriated financing sources adjusted to their specific needs, as well as the identification of the technical requirements and financial conditions of each financing source.

This action aims to address the following weaknesses identified in the region:

- 1) Insufficient tools/support for business consolidation, in order to increase innovation and internationalization
- 2) Procedures for financing support are complex, exhaustive and prolonged;
- 3) Financing entities as banks too focused on supporting entrepreneurs / companies with economic capacity in case of bankrupt instead of support projects with good business plans;

4.1.1. The background

This action was developed took as reference the lessons learnt from Rural SMEs cooperation. Several good practices were taken as inspiration, highlighting the good practice “Entrepreneurship Networking Platform of Achaia”, which aimed to support regional businesses through a dedicated platform.

4.1.2. Action

This action aims to develop a tool that compiles the main public and private financing sources, both traditional and new mechanisms, for the companies in Ave region. It will detail the most relevant technical and financial matters of each financing source, as well order those financing sources, prioritising the ones more appropriated for the company and/or his Project. It will also be developed a label available to entities that provide services of entrepreneurship and funding support, that meet a set of quality requirements, previously defined.

The activities to be implemented are identified below:

- 1) Identification of main public and private financing sources (traditional and new mechanisms);
- 2) Identification of technical requirements of each financing source;
- 3) Identification of financial conditions of each financing source;
- 4) Identification of company’s characterization parameters;
- 5) Identification of project’s characterization parameters;
- 6) Identification of financing sources prioritising parameters;
- 7) Identification of quality requirements for services of entrepreneurship and funding support
- 8) Elaboration of the label and specification of attribution conditions;
- 9) Development of the tool;
- 10) Dissemination of new tool.

This action will contribute for the improvement of the policy instrument by the support that will be available for the implementation of new projects. With this action, a set of activities will be carried out

with the ultimate objective of defining concrete guidelines for the implementation of mechanisms for assessing the degree and nature of innovation of projects applying for support measures.

4.1.3. Players involved

The organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of this action are:

- 1) CIM AVE: Coordination of the action implementation;
- 2) Local companies and entrepreneurs, business associations: Identification of main financing needs (type of projects/investments with more financing needs, type of companies and entrepreneurs with more financing difficulties) and support the label development and application;
- 3) Financing entities (banks, business angels, etc.): Identification of available financing sources, including technical requirements and financial conditions;
- 4) Local authorities: Identification of available financing sources, including technical requirements and financial conditions.

4.1.4. Timeframe

02.01.2020 – 31-12-2020 (1 year)

Activities / Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Identification of main public and private financing sources (traditional and new mechanisms)												
Identification of technical requirements of each financing source												
Identification of financial conditions of each financing source												
Identification of company's characterization parameters												
Identification of project's characterization parameters												
Identification of financing sources prioritising parameters												
Identification of quality requirements for services of entrepreneurship and funding support												
Elaboration of the label and specification of attribution conditions												

Development of the too														
Dissemination of new tool														

4.1.5. Costs

9.000 €

4.1.6. Funding sources

Financing programme – NORTE 2020, COMPETE 2020 or similar - and own resources

4.2. Action 2: Creation of a dedicated network for entrepreneurship in rural areas.

This action aims at creating a support network for entrepreneurship, involving the existent services, and others, to promote business networking actions and to support entrepreneurs and follow-up of entrepreneurship projects in rural areas. This service should arrange networking activities. It will also spread information regarding market trends and good practices, and information to break “investments myths”, as well as give technical advice on the elaboration of company’s sales memorandum and business plans, providing entrepreneurs with technical support and capacitation for the development and implementation of innovative projects with potential to create jobs and stimulate employability. A regional brand/label (Ave Region) should also be created and promoted.

This action aims to addressed the following weaknesses identified in the region:

- 1) The territory has a large number of companies with more support needs related to innovation and internationalization;
- 2) Large number of local companies with reduced capacity for internationalization.



4.2.1. The background

This action was developed taking as reference the lessons learnt from Rural SMEs cooperation. Several good practices were taken as inspiration, highlighting the good practice “Development of local innovative products” and “Developing entrepreneurial/managerial skills of young entrepreneurs for businesses generation”, which aimed to support regional businesses through integrated support services.

4.2.2. Action

This action aims to provide a service designed to support entrepreneurs to start and/or improve their projects. This service will create opportunities to establish new business contacts and share business experiences, provide information regarding market trends and good practices and to break “investments myths”, as well as provide technical advice on the elaboration of company’s sales memorandum and business plans. A regional brand/label should also be created and promoted.

This service will also work closely with the financing entities, in order to promote the support of entrepreneurs/companies with good business plans as well as to reduce the complexity and time of the decision making on financing processes.

The activities to be implemented are identified below:

- 1) Creation a dedicated network for entrepreneurship, involving the existent services, and others;
- 2) Identification of market trends and good practices regarding business in rural areas;
- 3) Develop a networking plan, including information sessions;
- 4) Creation of Ave region brand/label;
- 5) Identification of main technical needs to start and improve business projects;
- 6) Development of guidelines/manuals on the elaboration of company’s sales memorandum;
- 7) Development of guidelines/manuals on the elaboration of business plans;
- 8) Implementation of dedicated service to support entrepreneurs and follow-up of entrepreneurship projects.
- 9) Dissemination of new service;

10) Implementation of the networking plan.

This action will contribute for the improvement of the policy instrument by the support that will be available for the implementation of new projects

4.2.3. Players involved

The organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of this action are:

- 1) CIM AVE: Coordination of the action implementation and support the implementation of the networking plan;
- 2) Local companies and entrepreneurs, business associations: Support the creation of the dedicated network for entrepreneurship and its activities; Identification of main technical needs to start and improve business projects;
- 3) Financing entities (banks, business angels, local authorities, etc.): Support the creation of the dedicated network for entrepreneurship and its activities; Cooperation to support entrepreneurs/companies with good business plans, as well as to reduce the complexity and time of the decision making on financing processes;
- 4) Local authorities and business associations: provision of technical support.

4.2.4. Timeframe

02.01.2020 – 31-12-2020 (1 year)

Activities / Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Creation a dedicated network for entrepreneurship, involving the existent services, and others;												
Identification of market trends and good practices regarding business in rural areas;												
Develop a networking plan, including information sessions;												
Creation of Ave region brand/label;												
Identification of main technical needs to start and improve business projects;												

Development of guidelines/manuals on the elaboration of company's sales memorandum;														
Development of guidelines/manuals on the elaboration of business plans;														
Implementation of dedicated service to support entrepreneurs and follow-up of entrepreneurship projects.														
Dissemination of new service;														
Implementation of the networking plan.														

4.2.5. Costs

9.500 €

4.2.6. Funding sources

Financing programme – NORTE 2020, COMPETE 2020 or similar - and own resources

4.3. Action 3: Elaboration of Roadmap for reinforcement of mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation in rural areas.

This action aims to produce a roadmap for the reinforcement of the mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation of entrepreneurs and/or employees in rural areas, as well as to promote lifelong learning and education programs, mainly in small businesses.

This action aims to address the following weaknesses identified in the region:

- 1) Small companies with less perception of the benefits of education and lifelong learning programs;
- 2) Large number of local companies with reduced capacity in keeping up with the fast pace of technological evolution;

- 3) Poor communication between entities and lack of common strategies;
- 4) Low involvement of companies/entrepreneurs (often by their size) and commercial, industrial and cooperative associations in municipal/regional initiatives for entrepreneurship and business dynamism.

4.3.1. The background

This action was developed took as reference the lessons learnt from Rural SMEs cooperation. Several good practices were taken as inspiration, highlighting the good practice “Student Enterprise Awards Programme ran by Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Tipperary”, which aimed to support regional businesses through the reinforcement of education, training, qualification and capacitation.

4.3.2. Action

This action will produce a roadmap for the reinforcement of the mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation of entrepreneurs and/or employees in rural areas, especially to provide companies in these territories with more and better information regarding business management, business innovation, internationalization, circular economy and other key themes.

Will also promote awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning and education programs, mainly with small businesses.

The activities to be implemented are identified below:

- 1) Identification and analyses of entrepreneurs and employees training, qualification and capacitation needs in rural areas;
- 2) Identification and analyses of available entrepreneurs and employees training, qualification and capacitation offer in Ave region;
- 3) Elaboration of a strategy for reinforcement of mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation in Ave rural areas;
- 4) Elaboration of the operational plan/roadmap for reinforcement of mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation in Ave rural areas.
- 5) Dissemination of the roadmap.

This action will contribute for the improvement of the policy instrument by the support that will be available for the implementation of new projects.

4.3.3. Players involved

The organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of this action are:

- 5) CIM AVE: Coordination of the action implementation;
- 6) Local companies and entrepreneurs, business associations: Identification of entrepreneurs and employees training, qualification and capacitation needs in rural areas;
- 7) Universities and other educational and capacitation entities: Identification of available entrepreneurs and employees training, qualification and capacitation offer and cooperation in the elaboration of the operational plan/roadmap.

4.3.4. Timeframe

02.01.2020 – 31-06-2020 (6 months)

Activities / Month	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identification and analyses of entrepreneurs and employees training, qualification and capacitation needs in rural areas						
Identification and analyses of available entrepreneurs and employees training, qualification and capacitation offer in Ave region						
Elaboration of a strategy for reinforcement of mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation in Ave rural areas						
Elaboration of the operational plan/roadmap for reinforcement of mechanisms of training, qualification and capacitation in Ave rural areas						
Dissemination of the roadmap						

4.3.5. Costs

9.500 €



4.3.6. Funding sources

Financing programme – NORTE 2020, COMPETE 2020 or similar - and own resources

Date:

Signature: *José do Sousa de Almeida Mendes*

Stamp of the organisation (if available):

