

CERTH
CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY
HELLAS

ClusterFY
Interreg Europe

Interreg Europe



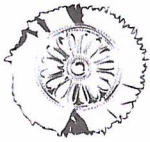
European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

ClusterFY
Interreg Europe

ACTION PLAN
REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA
2020–2023

PREPARED BY:

TEAM OF CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY HELLAS
WITH SUPPORT OF PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN
THE CLUSTERFY PROJECT MEETINGS



Part I – General information

Project: Fostering Clusters' Interregional Collaboration and Integration into International Value Chains-«ClusterFY»

Partner organisation: Centre for Research & Technology Hellas-CERTH

Other organisations involved: Partners and stakeholders participating in ClusterFY project meetings

Country: Greece

NUTS2 region: EL 52

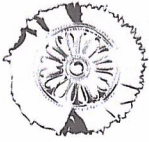
Contact persons: Nikos Katsiadakis, Katerina Papadopoulou
email address: nicolas@certh.gr , kpap@certh.gr
phone number: +30 2310 498204, +30 2310 498206

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 addressed: Operational Programme of Central Macedonia 2014-2020 Thematic Aim 01 "Strengthening research, technological development and innovation" Investment priority 1b2: *Creation of permanent cluster mechanisms between research and business and among business to promote applied research and for the knowledge and technology transfer.*

More specifically under the above mentioned policy instrument, the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) created a specific organisational unit (One Stop Liaison Office) to support among others all regional innovation policy axes, RIS3 strategy as well as regional clustering mechanisms.



Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

1. The background

CERTH team participated in all project meetings, interregional seminars and study visits that took place in the ClusterFY project's phase A. There are several cases and contexts where there was an active knowledge flow among partners including formal (seminars, conferences, presentations) as well as informal (discussions, briefings, questions and answers session) learning cases and are listed below:

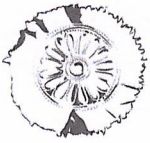
1. Peer learning meetings and discussions during interregional workshops and study visits
2. Exchange of experience during the regional stakeholders' meeting in Thessaloniki expanded with the participation of partners and experts from Sweden, the Netherlands and Lithuania (3/2018)
3. Working meetings with the RCM managing authority to know the state of play
4. Interviews with regional experts involved in the preparation of RIS3
5. Interviews with regional experts involved in cluster projects preparation

Regional Policy for innovation/clusters in RCM (current structure and new developments)

In the Region of Central Macedonia, the main policy design unit for innovation including clusters support, is the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Directorate of RCM (IED/RCM). Currently (2020) a corporate project is coordinated by (IED/RCM) and implemented with the help of consultants and has been named as ***One Stop Liaison Office-OSLO. OSLO is being funded from the addressed policy instrument Thematic Aim 01 "Strengthening research, technological development and innovation" Investment priority 1b2: Creation of permanent cluster mechanisms between research and business and among business to promote applied research and for the knowledge and technology transfer***

This decision from RCM is strategic since OSLO aims to bring together all ecosystem actors and to act as a point of cooperation and co-creation within and outside of the region. Through the OSLO services all innovation ecosystem actors with RCM staff will be able to define common aims and strategies in a systemic way. Therefore, it has been decided OSLO to ***undertake and implement the RIS3*** strategy to better align all innovation support actions with the RIS3 framework (better coordination without intermediaries).

RIS3 brief history in the Region of Central Macedonia (local lessons learned)



Economies, innovation theories and clusters has changed in a dramatic way and the local challenges as well. Innovation potential isn't related only to one sector but to a combination of knowledge, infrastructure, business as well as other socioeconomic factors and their dynamics/linkages.

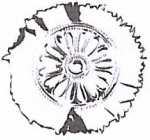
The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) process implemented past years to form the RIS3 strategies for all European regions and the Region of Central Macedonia as well need update and customization to effectively address the local context and innovation dynamics. Although during Smart Specialization formation, the EDP process in RCM revealed "champion business sectors", the *real innovation challenges* in local level have not been addressed effectively. Therefore in RCM there is a need for a new *philosophy* and *methods* to identify local needs and opportunities for innovative business clusters.

Clusters support history (local lessons learned)

In Greece most of the existing clusters are clusters or networks of SMEs that received public funding by national mainly programs (top down national policy measures). The regional dimension in cluster policy started recently with the call of 2018-2019. The Managing Authority (M.A) of RCM that published and managed this *cluster call* faced new challenges without having past experience in such typology of projects (i.e proper eligibility criteria, cluster facilitator profile, score marks, etc.). Several difficulties and delays in the proposal evaluation process showed that there is a need for *new frameworks and methods*, in RCM staff to analyze how mature and how sustainable a cluster case/proposal is.

Specific sources of inspiration from the project (ClusterFY main lesson learned)

- 1) The North Netherlands region, SNN. The bottom up approach of Dutch partners (PP2) with the *Open Calls* and the higher "degrees of freedom" in their *philosophy* of policy formation impressed the Greek delegation (CERTH staff, RCM executives and M.A staff) for its conception and creativity. The most important lessons for RCM from this policy practice are:
 - The *open call* doesn't define actions in advance and gives priorities to objectives and challenges rather than to activities. The same philosophy can be adopted for several other actions aimed to support clusters support or networks of SMEs in other regions like RCM. All regions with a cluster strategy need to know how to create common objectives as priori knowledge to be used in future cluster policy measures (preparing the call, identifying and maturing the clusters stakeholders for better participation in the call, describing different eligibility criteria to include the required stakeholders, etc)
 - Compared to SNN, most E.U regions seem to have "fall in the trap" to propose few business sectors during their EDP process and use these sectors as eligibility criteria for the respective measures (conditionality). However, most of these measures (calls, etc) support mainly specific *activities* from specific business sectors and they don't necessarily serve specific objectives (i.e local based cluster, etc.). SNN



approached EDP *more creatively* and in a not directive way by investigating local challenges first instead of specific predefined sectoral activities.

- 2) Explicit need expressed by *RCM MA staff* as well for the call publication and management (project meetings and briefings in Thessaloniki, Greece)

2. The Action

The proposed action refers to a *“Method for Identifying clusters potential (needs and opportunities) in the Region of Central Macedonia (methodology and pilot survey)”*

Explanation

The region of Central Macedonia has one metropolitan unit (Thessaloniki) and six (6) regional entities with a broad spectrum of economic activities, economic history, research organisations, business infrastructures and combinations of these. In addition, some of these regional entities are considered marginal in terms of access to innovation funds. Several past economic studies suggest that RCM is more or less a “miniature” of the whole Greek economy in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary sector participation to the regional GDP. The size of the region and this heterogeneity *creates extra difficulties for RCM* to form a *suitable* framework and *predefined* policy measure for clusters support. The collaborative innovation potential might come from many areas, sectors and actors in RCM and a more open, more flexible and less top-down policy approach with the proper method and tools for identifying this potential is suggested for the region of Central Macedonia and the OSLO team.

It should also be noted that the OSLO team is a new team in a new administrative structure with a new mission for the region of Central Macedonia. Therefore, in order the OSLO team to be able to better analyse and identify innovation potential like mature clusters *new tools and methods are required to be used in several OSLO future services*. In the following paragraphs the strategy of OSLO is briefly presented to justify the relation and appropriateness of the *suggested method* with the OSLO strategy.

Brief OSLO description (taken from the OSLO strategic plan)

The following three (3) strategic platforms of OSLO include: the focus of OSLO resources, the mapping and its continuous contact and cooperation with the innovation ecosystem and more important the establishment of OSLO as a strategic contact point of the regional innovation ecosystem.

1. Strategic Platform 1 (SP1): Establishment of OSLO as Strategic Contact Point

Strategic contact point (internally and externally to the region) through the development of structured actions to support innovation, promotion and networking.

Action Plan for SP1

-
- Support of innovation policy design



- Promotion of best practices from the region

2. **Strategic Platform 2 (SP2): Empowerment of the innovation ecosystem of RCM**

Empowerment of the ecosystem mainly by strengthening of the relations among research/innovation and market communities.

Action Plan for SP2

-
- Mapping of innovative companies and startups with the overall aim to create new synergies
-

3. **Strategic Platform 3 (SP3): Skills development**

Capacity Building through strengthening of actions like RIS3 platforms, creation of new innovation hubs, innovation procurement, etc and empowerment of OSLO staff through enrichment of systemic knowledge.

Action Plan for SP3

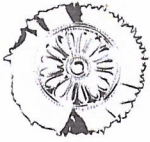
-
- Continuous training and capacity building of OSLO staff and executives
-

Link with the best practice

The best practice presented in the course of ClusterFY and selected as suitable to address these needs of RCM and specifically of OSLO team is the *Open Innovation Call from the Northern Netherlands (SNN)*. The proposed *method for identifying needs and opportunities for clusters* will increase the chances for discoveries (mature clusters) in all RCM regional entities in an open, flexible and creative way. Since it will be a horizontal tool for identifying mature clusters it is going to have a catalytic role for many future OSLO services and tools. (The explicit impact of the action to the policy instrument (OSLO services) is demonstrated through the nature of the indicative actions included in the action plans of the three strategic priorities of OSLO, given in the previous paragraph). Here it must be explained that although the *Open Innovation Call* in SNN was used as a funding tool, in the regional policy context of RCM, the Greek Region will use selected experiences and know-how of the Open Innovation Call to develop the method for identifying needs and opportunities for clusters and not for funding clusters since there is not such a decision for this programming period.

3. Suggested activities and milestones for the action

- 1st meeting in RCM with all stakeholders (definition of requirements and specifications)
Date: End of March 2020
- Organisation of several skypes of CERTH team (PP8) with the SNN (PP2) and the required stakeholders for a better know-how transfer among the two regions Period: April 2020,
work months: 0,5



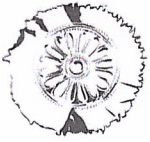
- Development of the draft method for identifying needs and opportunities for clusters. Desk top research is required along with some meetings with OSLO staff and OSLO consultants
- **Period:** April-May 2020, **work months:** 1,2
- 2nd meeting in RCM for presenting the tool (method) and collecting corrective feedback
- **Date:** End of May 2020, **work months:** 0,3
- Pilot run of the method (survey for clusters needs and opportunities in specific regional entities suggested by the RCM/case study, travels to the regional entities of RCM are required for meetings with local chambers)
- **Period:** June-mid of July 2020, **work months:** 0,5
- Final version of the method with all documentation required (steps, way of working, annexes, etc). Final presentation of the method to the OSLO team.
- **Date:** End of July 2020, **work months:** 0,5
- **Monitoring of the action.** Since the survey and the method will create new knowledge and ways to identify cluster needs and opportunities in RCM they are considered horizontal tools. The OSLO will use this knowledge to form (preparatory actions during policy design) **several policy measures for innovation and clusters** in the current and possibly in the next programming period region. Based on that, the monitoring will be done on ad hoc basis depending the needs and decisions of RCM and OSLO.
- **Period:** August 2020-December 2021, **work months estimation:** 1

Total work months: 0,5+1,2+0,3+0,5+0,5+1=4

This method will be incorporated into/ added to the Thematic Aim 01 "Strengthening research, technological development and innovation" Investment priority 1b2: Creation of permanent cluster mechanisms between research and business and among business to promote applied research and for the knowledge and technology transfer. Permanent cluster mechanism is the OSLO structure and its services.

4. Players involved

- The **One Stop Liaison Office-OSLO** team (staff of RCM and external experts). The OSLO team will express the specific needs of the staff and will give the main specifications of the methodology (Where, when and how the methodology will be used in the future?) What are the desired results and the expectations from a tool (methodology) to support a regional policy for clusters?
- The **Managing Authority of RCM** (staff involved in cluster measures/calls). The M.A staff managed the regional call for clusters support during 2019. They were responsible to give answers to interested parties to prepare and submit a proposal for clusters. Therefore M.A staff has gathered crucial knowledge and experience about the call eligibility rules and all the problems/barriers potential clusters from all regional entities faced during proposal preparation. This crucial knowledge must be taken into account during the methodology



development for identifying clusters potential. They will be involved in several meetings and they will be interviewed from CERTH team (PP8).

- **ClusterFY partner** (PP8 Centre for Research & Technology Hellas) will support all actions suggested in cooperation with the RCM, the M.A and other stakeholders when needed. The main role for CERTH team will be the selection of particular areas and elements of the Open Call from the Northern Netherlands region (SNN) that should be transferred to the Region of Central Macedonia in the form of methodology for identifying clusters potential. CERTH team (PP8) will also run the pilot survey and present the results to the OSLO team before finalising the methodology and its required documentation.

5. Timeframe

- 2020-2021

6. Costs

- **Staff costs analysis:** 4 work months X 2.850€=**11.400€** (2.850€ is the monthly cost for two people)
- **Travel costs:** 600€ is foreseen for local travels to the seven regional entities of RCM
- **Total: 12.000€**

7. Funding sources

- ERDF and own (CERTH) resources

Center for Research & Technology

Extroversion Unit

Nikos Katsiadakis

Project Scientific Responsible

Region of Central Macedonia

Directorate of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Support

Konstantinos Michailidis



Director