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## PART I - GENERAL INFORMATION

Project: **ALICE**

Partner organisation(s) concerned: **WALLIMAGE**

Country: BELGIUM

NUTS2 region: WALLONIE

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## PART II - BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY INSTRUMENT

The Action Plan aims to impact:  Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

European Territorial Cooperation programme

Smart Specialisation Strategy and the investment and employment promotion policy of the Walloon audiovisual cluster (Wallimage)

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed: 3

Wallimage's internal rules of intervention in terms of co-production financing

ERDF Programming 2021-2027: Measures for Wallonia

Smart specialisation strategy 2021-2027 for Wallonia

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

### A. CONTEXT OF WALLIMAGE'S INTERVENTION

- By its nature as a limited company acting under public law, Wallimage, which is 100% owned by Wallonia and which, with its three departments Co-productions, Enterprises and Filming, constitutes the **Walloon Audiovisual Pole**, is the tool of the Walloon Region's policy in this field.
- It intervenes with a view to creating jobs through the development and perennialization of an audiovisual industry in Wallonia.



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- Its Coproductions department is endowed each year by the Walloon Region with a budget of EUROS 6.5 million to invest in co-productions of audiovisual works, a significant part of which is devoted to animation.
- It has recently established a fund to support works in development with the support of the EIF through its guarantee facility for the cultural and creative industries sector.
- Any change in Wallimage's investment policies and the valorisation of the professional skills of its territory, as envisaged in actions n°1 and n°2 and n°3, will have a direct impact on the **employment and growth policy developed by the Region in the framework of the ERDF**;

#### **B. ERDF PROGRAMMING 2021-2027**

We believe that the adoption of the ERDF 2021-2027 plan, in particular through its SO1: "A smarter and more competitive Europe" as well as its SO4 "A more inclusive and social Europe", is better aligned than the previous programme with the challenges facing the animation sector, in particular in the context of the health crisis.

Indeed, the emphasis in these SOs on innovation, the use of cutting-edge technologies, skills development in relation to smart specialisation and social inclusion are all pillars on which the animation sector can build a resilient and sustainable business.

It is also easier to integrate the S3 dimension in a cross-cutting way through factors such as skills, digitalisation and the green transition.

That is why we want to be part of the 2021-2027 programme to implement our action plan.

#### **C. PRIORITIES OR MEASURES CONCERNED (WALLOON REGION PROGRAMME)**

The proposed actions are inspired by the following objectives/measures:

Specific objective 1.3: "Strengthening the growth, sustainable competitiveness and job creation of SMEs, including through productive investment (ACTION 1).

Measure 5: Financial instruments (SMEs) (ACTION 2).

Specific objective 4.2: "To improve equitable access to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning through the development of accessible infrastructure, including support for resilient online and distance learning (ACTION 3).

In relation to the initial objective of ALICE, which was "to *make the eligibility rules compatible in order to facilitate co-productions by giving the necessary impetus to the revision of the financial support measures for the animation sector put in place by its partners, and to examine the possibilities of improving them, both in terms of eligibility rules and the introduction of new lines of support...*", ACTIONS 1 and 2 meet this objective.

Indeed, ACTION 1 aims to facilitate co-productions by allowing potential partners to identify talent that could be integrated into their productions, while ACTION 2 participates in the same objective through a new funding mechanism that goes up the production value chain by integrating the development phase.

Its implementation requires adapted eligibility rules as well as new lines of support from partners willing to participate jointly in this action.

The action plan may also have an impact on different levels of the "Strategic Innovation Areas" of the Walloon S3 plan, which recommends in its second axis "to strengthen the support to the CCI sector as a driver of a more creative economy, on the one hand by supporting the crossover between the CCI sector and digital technologies and on the other hand, by maintaining a funding scheme for innovative CCI projects".



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The S3 plan indicates that "there is considerable room for improvement in order to develop a real policy for the development of talent that meets the challenges of innovation in Wallonia. A better articulation with measures related to skills (ESF in particular) should be sought".

ACTION 3, which aims to achieve certified training within a European framework that can be eligible for ESF+ support measures for training, is an expression of this.

#### D. CREATIVE EUROPE MEDIA

Overall, the action plan proposed by Wallimage is in line with the priorities of the Creative Europe MEDIA programme managed by DG COMM with regard to its focus on aid for project development and its encouragement of networking between training centers.

The very constructive dialogue with the person in charge of the latter, Ms Lucia Recalde, during the MIFA (Market of the International Animation Festival of Annecy), leads us to believe that we can continue this exchange during the implementation phase of our action plan.

## PART III - VISION OF THE ACTION PLAN

### CONTEXT

Wallimage was led to co-lead the "**Financing & Legal**" working group by the fact that it is one of the only two public funds specialised in the audiovisual sector present within ALICE and that its interventions in animation projects fall within one of its strategic axes.

This sector has a strong potential for economic spin-offs and structuring effects, provided that local talent can be retained, and ALICE territories made sufficiently attractive for international co-productions.

This means removing the obstacles to:

- the **portability of rights**, i.e., to make possible the cohabitation of the regulations of the various partners involved as regards to the management of the rights of audiovisual productions.
- the **portability of talent**, i.e., to allow the making of audiovisual productions by involving various A.L.I.C.E. partners.

An initial cross-border case study between Wallonia and the Hauts-de-France region highlighted the knots linked to these **obstacles**, such as the tax domicile of employees, the disparity of labour law rules in Europe and, more broadly, the disparity of salaries in certain Member States.

From these initial discussions, it became clear that the creation of a **stable local ecosystem** required measures that could be adopted in the short term, in a shorter timeframe than a possible change in national or supranational legislation.

The answers to a survey on the animation industry that the WG1 sent to the partners as well as the exchanges which continued on this basis showed sufficiently the disparity of the current legal and financial contexts of the different members of A.L.I.C.E. and the respective cultural policies of each of its members.



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In consultation with the law firm Taylor Wessing, we therefore thought it wise to propose a two-stage solution called **WONDERLAND**, which can be put into practice in a **short period of time** with **measurable effects**:

- a **SMART DIRECTORY** intended initially to list animation professionals in a dynamic way with the aim of eventually allowing the grouping and collaboration of animation actors from several regions beyond national borders under a common umbrella,

- a financial tool called **WHITE MARKETING RABBIT** aimed at supporting upstream cooperation between producers and/or animation studios, right from the development of projects.

Joining the SMART DIRECTORY will be **the first essential step** in inter-regional cooperation which, depending on the cultural policy of each region and its financial means (ACTION 1), **can be completed by the second step**, the WHITE MARKETING RABBIT, a bilateral financial tool for financial participation in the preparation of projects (ACTION 2).

If it is important to keep talents in the territories, it is also necessary to be able to **train** them on the basis of a **certification approved** by them and valid at European level. This is the purpose of ACTION 3.

## PART 4: ACTIONS

### ACTION 1

Action name: **WONDERLAND - SMART DIRECTORY**

- **Relating to the implementation of a new project**
- **Aims to improve the Policy Instrument by contributing to market transparency through the identification of sector actors according to objective criteria**

1. **Nature of the action** (*please describe precisely the content of action 1. What are the specific activities to be implemented*)

The final concept of WONDERLAND, and in particular its SMART DIRECTORY component, was the subject of a "bottom-up" consultation within ALICE, with feedback from the stakeholders to the partners, and then to the WG1.

Its guiding principles were validated in December 2020 at a WG1 meeting.

The SMART DIRECTORY currently consists of an extremely detailed form that is intended to establish a precise mapping of the skills and technical resources that are present in a territory, both in terms of its animation studios and the freelancers working there.

Besides the feedback on the WONDERLAND concept from the partners to the WG1, the design of the SMART DIRECTORY has been done following the MAPPING methodology of the animation sector related to value chains established by our Catalan partner (ProA).

It has been established by defining the **value chain for the creation and production of content** in a specific way that is adapted to WONDERLAND's objectives.

The condition for a territory wishing to receive the WONDERLAND label is to push all the animation studios present on its territory to fill in a SMART DIRECTORY in order to allow a precise inventory of the artistic and technical skills it offers.

It is indeed essential for a producer in setting up a co-production to be able to quickly identify the skills of a given territory which will enable him to set up a coherent and complementary production team.



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Once several territories have joined the SMART DIRECTORY, it will be essential to move on to a dynamic phase that will allow **the data to be updated**. This point is all the more crucial as the animation sector employs many free lancers who are very mobile.

The first step will be to get territories to join this approach. ALICE partners will certainly do so (*this point was discussed at IRM 3*).

In order to perpetuate this initiative, Wallimage is considering creating either an aisbl (an international non-profit association under Belgian law based on the CINE-REGIO model) which would operate on the basis of its members' contributions, or to resort to a more direct model of subsidization.

2. **Stakeholders involved** (*please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action1 and explain their role*)

- **The Walloon Region**
- **All Walloon professionals, including animation studios**
- **ALICE partners** directly or **through some of their stakeholders**
- Other external partners such as the **Audiovisual Cluster of Navarre**.

3. **Timeframe** (*please specify the timing envisaged for action 2*)

- Membership of the first partners in SMART DIRECTORY up to a critical mass of ten (first 3 months)
- Budgeting for the development of a SMART DIRECTORY database
- Discussion between partners on the sustainability of this Smart Directory, its updating, its form of financing (contributions, subsidies) and the legal form of the organisation in charge of its management.
- Promotion of SMART DIRECTORY at major animation markets (Cartoon, MIFA, ...) and through the professional press
- After 9 months: 1<sup>st</sup> assessment of the adhesion to the concept
- Evaluation of the territories which, beyond the SMART DIRECTORY, have initiated WHITE MARKETING RABBIT co-financing mechanisms at their level, to which the WONDERLAND label is the access key.

4. **Costs** (*please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 2*)

Creation of the database: 35,000 € + maintenance and updating of the database (to be evaluated)

5. **Sources of funding** (*please describe how action 2 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II*):

**SMART DIRECTORY partner territories**

**ACTION 2:**

Action name: **WONDERLAND - WHITE MARKETING RABBIT FINANCIAL MECHANISM**

- **Modification of the internal rules of Wallimage**
- **New project through the launch of new calls for projects**

The financial mechanism put in place aims to meet one of ALICE's objectives, namely to facilitate co-productions through the establishment of new support mechanisms.

The first WG1 meetings were based on a cross-border case study between Wallonia and the Hauts-de-France region. The producers involved in this case study highlighted the barriers they faced in building a sustainable relationship between them.

It became clear that one way to help them was through financial intervention at the development level. Once this basis for work was established, exchanges on this subject with the ALICE partners and their stakeholders continued on an ongoing basis, leading to the final concept.



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In parallel, the legal study resulted in the drafting of two model contracts for the WHITE MARKETING RABBIT funding tool, the first between two partner regions and the second between them and the beneficiaries.

- **Nature of the action** (*please describe precisely the content of action 1. What are the specific activities to be implemented?*)

The idea behind the White Marketing Rabbit development finance tool is to **secure the employment of talent during periods of production slumps** (e.g., between series) and to help companies retain that talent during those periods when they may be financially fragile and have time to focus on developing new projects.

This is mainly done through **financial support at the project preparation stage**.

The philosophy of the WHITE MARKETING RABBIT mechanism is to invest in the **development of the marketing presentation package** of an animation project in order to introduce the project to potential funding partners and to facilitate co-productions.

In view of the risks involved in investing in projects under development and in order to set up sustainable collaborations in the framework of international co-productions, this mechanism will be set up in at **least two territories** via a **partnership agreement**.

This agreement will ensure that **a global balance of investments is maintained in the 2 territories that will have been previously labelled WONDERLAND by their membership of the Smart Directory**.

**Once** the development is complete, the territories will commit to investing in the production of the work. This provision allows for **effective support to producers and increases the structuring effect of the territories' action in the long term**.

- **Stakeholder involvement** (*please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action1 and explain their role*)

The stakeholders involved will be for Wallonia:

- Animation studios established in the Walloon Region as beneficiaries as service providers and possibly co-producers
- Producers established on Belgian territory

The same criteria will apply in the partner territory.

- **Implementation steps** (*please specify the timing envisaged for action 1*) :

- Validation of the financial mechanism by the Wallimage Board of Directors
- Identification of a first partner to set up the mechanism (6 months)
- Setting up of the joint selection committee for the two territories
- 1<sup>st</sup> call for projects launched (6 - 9 months)
- Project selection (10 - 12 months)

- **Costs** (*please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 1*) :

- 200,000 euros

- **Sources of funding** (*please describe how action 1 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II*):

- Wallimage's own funds



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### **ACTION 3**

Name of the action:

#### **Certification and implementation of professional training in the field of animation**

- **Implementation of new training programmes**

1. **Nature of the action** (*please describe precisely the content of action 1. What are the specific activities to be implemented*)

The work of the WG2 leader, the Puglia region, which has collected a lot of data on the skills available in the ALICE territories thanks to the contribution and exchanges with the partners, means that we now have an instrument in hand which opens the way to a **European Certification of training courses** which could be implemented at the level of the territories.

The survey work that led to this study, addressing educational centers, institutions and production companies, was very useful in this respect for the **MAPPING** carried out by ProA, as it allowed for the establishment of certain variables and indicators concerning the **training value chain**.

The ALICE partners therefore have **coherent instruments to set up training programmes and to proceed with their certification**.

They will thus be able to **benefit Wallonia** which, **both at private and public level**, wishes, through this action plan, to make its stakeholders benefit from the work of ALICE and to develop them according to its strategic programme of support for SMEs and employment.

This is the case of a new company, **K6 Animation Institute**, which has requested the support of Wallimage Entreprises to set up training cycles in the animation professions.

For its part, the **Pôle Image de Liège**, which, with its experience in setting up training modules with private studios, according to their needs in terms of personnel, intends to strengthen this axis.

In addition to these two field actors, the dialogue was also opened with the FOREM Directorate, the employment promotion body in Wallonia.

Setting up training cycles through public/private partnerships that can benefit from a certification eligible to the ESF.

The first phase of the action will be to provide a common framework for training modules that could benefit from such certification.

This framework relates on the one hand to the establishment of a nomenclature of professional profiles of animation technicians which will be taken up by Wallonia on the basis of the work of ALICE (WG2 study as well as MAPPING), and on the other hand, to the forms that public-private partnerships could take.

This will also benefit from the work resulting from the collaboration agreement signed in December 2020 with the region of Navarra in the field of animation, particularly in the field of training. Navarre has in fact set up training qualifications for animation technicians and wishes to join ALICE's SMART DIRECTORY, which will make it easier to determine the strengths and weaknesses of both territories.

It will then be necessary to determine the fields of training envisaged and their form in terms of duration, level of skills required, etc.

The final step will be to find the means to finance them through public/private partnerships.

2. **Stakeholders involved** (*please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action1 and explain their role*)

- **Pôle Image de Liège (P.I.L.):** the objectives of action 3 meet its own, so it will certainly be one of the driving forces contributing to the realisation of the action



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- **K6 Animation Institute:** its objectives meet those of the Pôle Image de Liège, which makes it a partner of choice to participate in action n°3 by bringing both its expertise in the field and as a future partner in training
  - **Technifutur:** this is the training center that emanates from FOREM (the organisation that deals with training in Wallonia) with which the P.I.L. is currently partnering in the setting up of training courses for job seekers.
  - **Other training centers in Wallonia such as TechnoCité (already connected with K6 Animation Institute)**
  - **The Walloon Region**
  - **Creative Europe MEDIA**
- 3. Timeframe** (*please specify the timing envisaged for action 2*)  
6 to 9 months to establish the basis for the certification and the modules that will be covered by it  
9 - 12 months: implementation of the first training courses
- 4. Costs** (*please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 2*)  
To be determined
- 5. Sources of funding** (*please describe how action 2 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II*):  
For training: ESF, Walloon Region, private sources