



## Minutes of meeting

<b>Meeting</b>	"ATM for SMEs" project 2 <sup>nd</sup> partner meeting
<b>Date</b>	24 February 2022

Video recording of the meeting is available on the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14VU5NDo5DcQlbYetYnuz8yKyZ1wmt0-6>

The Lead Partner welcomes the participants. Out of 9 partners, 8 participated at the event, total number of participants: 19.

### Agenda of the meeting:

- Administrative info
- State of art – project implementation, outputs
- Policy change
- Regional initiatives – partners' presentations
- Discussion

### Administrative updates:

At the moment, there are no actual tasks regarding the project administration. The latest application form can be found on iOLF in the "Document center". The next reporting is due in September 2022. The partner roles were changed by the LP in iOLF – they were assigned "partner rights" instead of "full admin rights".

PP2 has a new contact person – Viktor Bárdi.

### State of the art – project implementation, outputs

Currently, there is no shared folder (private cloud) for sharing the project's outputs, but the LP is working on this solution. The templates and other outputs should be sent to the e-mail address: [fiedler.agnes@rvagroup.hu](mailto:fiedler.agnes@rvagroup.hu)

The LP prepared an overview on the status of the regional initiative templates, which can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16W-TyNW0j6KxZPvTM\\_6OcM3LLHejLzFFGrib6vwEWC8/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16W-TyNW0j6KxZPvTM_6OcM3LLHejLzFFGrib6vwEWC8/edit#gid=0)

The partners together reviewed the initiatives and made the categorization according to the thematic areas in the Application Form.



### **Policy change**

The LP presented about the policy improvements – commitments in the Application Form and what kind of documentation would be required during the reporting.

The policy instruments tackled in the AF are mostly referring to the recent programming period, 2021-2017 – with one exception: ISIF for Autonomous Region of Sardinia, which is an add-on to the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020.

During the application phase, the “new” policies were mostly in draft phase, and the new calls were not launched yet. The partners should now check the status of the policies, if the calls were opened in the meantime, and start the “improvement” process based on the project findings.

The partners should also keep in mind the type of policy change we proposed during the application: new project generated / improved governance / structural change.

Recommendations to partners by the LP to successfully achieve and document the policy change:

- Get in touch with stakeholders including the policy responsible body
- Start to identify the "learning points" (How the project has contributed to this change...?)
- Draft your preferred outcome and the formal manifestation

The LP highlighted that the regional initiatives mapped by the partners and discussed during the project meetings are important part in the exchange of experiences process, which leads to policy improvement – which is the most important outcome of the project.

### **Regional initiatives – partners’ presentations**

The regional partners presented the local initiatives – responses to the COVID-19 situation, in the field of MSME support. The presented initiatives all included a crisis recovery services and/or financial instruments – typically a loan product with simplified conditions and easier access.

The following initiatives were presented – further information is available in the ppt slides attached, and regional mapping templates filled out by the partners.

LP: Survey among SME clients regarding COVID-19 impact

PP4: COVID-19 Support Instruments – New Start Aid

PP6: FEIS - Fondo di Emergenza Imprese Sardegna (Sardinian Enterprises Emergency Fund)

PP7: Measures of the Croatian Employment Service to preserve and retain jobs



PP9: Vouchers for the purchase of specialist consultancy for SMEs

### **EMN's presentation**

EMN presented the findings and proposals of some very recent European policies which can be relevant for the project's focus.

### **Missing entrepreneurs report** (Nov 2021, by the European Commission and OECD)

The report provides an overview on inclusive entrepreneurship policies in EU member states. Main finding: without the difficulties to access finance, skill gaps, under-developed networks and institutional barriers, 9 million people would start or manage a new business in the EU.

General recommendations:

- finance: increase funding to start-ups, particularly microfinance designed for vulnerable groups
- skills: entrepreneurs need better skills programmes including financial literacy, digital skills and business
- tailored support: to entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups

### **Social Economy Action Plan (Dec 2021):**

The objective of the document is to increase financial inclusion and support social economy actors and social enterprises

Relevant actions which match the ATM for SME's project focus:

- EU Social Economy Gateway
- Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy
- European Competence Center for Social Innovation

The Action Plan also tackles the issue of access to finance and promoting some actions in this field: new financial products under the InvestEU programme (e.g. guarantees to enable access to credit for social enterprises and micro entrepreneurs)

Following the presentations, the partners discussed the main points, similarities and differences between the financial instruments and the possibilities of combining them with other business support services.