



UPPER SILESIAN AGENCY FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT (GAPR)

**Improving innovation capacities of SMEs in Upper Silesia
by increasing the flow of knowledge from Silesian
universities and research units towards regional SMEs**

FOLLOW-UP NOTE

POLICY LEARNING PLATFORM MATCHMAKING SESSION

DATE: MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2021 – 14:00-16:00 CET

BENEFICIARY: UPPER SILESIAN AGENCY FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT (GAPR)

TOPICS: COMMERCIALIZATION, SME AND UNIVERSITY/RESEARCH COLLABORATION, INTERNATIONALIZATION, INNOVATION VOUCHERS

PARTICIPANTS

Hosts

- Monika Ptak-Kruszelnicka, Manager of Regional Innovation Strategy Department, Marshal Office of the Silesian Voivodeship
- Paweł Lejman, Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development
- Izabella Czeremcha, Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development
- Alicja Michalik, Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development

Peers and Experts

- Stephen Seawright, Manager of Wisar Lab, one of Enterprise Ireland's Technology Gateways (Ireland)
- Jukka Reunavuori, Business Tampere Business Advisor, Tampere City Region Economic Development & Project Manager, Innovation Voucher (Finland)
- Jari Strandman, CEO, Helsinki Innovation Services (Finland)

Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform

- Mart Veliste, Interreg Europe PLP Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness
- Rene Tönnesson, Interreg Europe PLP Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness

- Luc Schmerber, Interreg Europe PLP Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness
- Elena Ferrario, Interreg Europe Thematic Manager

OBJECTIVES OF MEETING

GAPR is looking for advice in setting up support measures and services that would boost SME and university/R&D collaboration and in turn would help to promote, commercialize, and internationalize innovative ideas. They have identified a number of barriers (low innovation, dialogue problems, etc) that hinder or even prevent the transfer of knowledge to business, especially SMEs, in their region. They want to apply the advice from the matchmaking session in a project focused on the promotion, commercialization and internationalization of the Healthcare and Welfare industry, but in the long run they also want to develop new procedures for other industries - industrial automation, IT, environmental protection and others.

SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In Ireland’s Technology Gateways experience the term “engineers-scientists” has worked better than “researchers” when approaching SMEs.
- Innovation Vouchers could be also considered for individuals if the purpose is to encourage entrepreneurship.
- Innovation support services have a proven track record in increasing turnover, export sales and FTE.
- Creating a digital platform for the voucher scheme helps to minimize manual work and makes the scheme more efficient, as was proven by Tampere Innovation Voucher.
- To minimize administrative costs, it is advisable to make the selection process / granting of vouchers by applying order or by lottery.
- Commercialization funding is crucial for success. There is gap between an idea and reaching the market. Some intermediary organization needs to carry the initial risk.
- An intermediary between science and business, such as the Helsinki Innovation Services, works as an “interpreter” for both sides. Such an interpreter is important for solving dialogue problems.
- For a university affiliated innovation centre, there are two important elements for success. 1.) University management needs to be supportive and committed 2.) At the same time, the organisation should be independent from broader university bureaucracy to remain agile.

SOME KEY PRACTICES IDENTIFIED

Interreg Europe projects and their good practices:

- DEVISE: [Technology Gateways](#)
- InnoBridge: [Tampere Region Innovation Voucher](#)
- BRIDGES: [Spin-out and entrepreneurial process of Helsinki Innovation Services](#)

Several relevant good practices on voucher can also be found in the Policy Brief “[Vouchers for the competitiveness of SMEs](#)”

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

Contact details and slides of experts were shared with the host region.

The host region is encouraged to submit a peer review application to get even more input from international peers. Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform [peer review](#) service was also promoted to experts as all European regions are eligible to apply.

Note circulation: All attendees.