



UpGradeSME

Interreg Europe



UpGradeSME aims at improving the export performance of SMEs by exchanging on internationalisation policy instruments and tools increasing SME ability to export, gain new know-how and improve competitiveness.

www.interregeurope.eu/upgradesme

Policy Instrument Fact Sheet **PORTUGAL – North Region**

An interregional cooperation project for improving SME competitiveness policies

Project Partners

Steinbeis Innovation gGmbH (DE)
San Sebastian Socio-Economic Development Agency Ltd. (ES)
Ministry for National Economy (HU)
Pannon Business Network Association (HU)
Business Development Friesland Foundation (NL)
Municipality of Leeuwarden (NL)
ADRAVE – Regional Development Agency of Vale do Ave (PT)
South Muntenia Regional Development Agency (RO)



Policy Instrument Fact Sheet PORTUGAL – North Region



POLICY INSTRUMENT

Development and implementation of new business models in SME, especially in what refers to internationalization

(Investment Priority 3b of the Regional Operational Programme NORTE2020, specific objective 2.2.1)

MAIN FEATURES

The main goal of the whole policy instrument is **to strengthen the business internationalization in the region**, and **to increase the export intensity** up to levels close to the leading European exporting regions.

The **internationalization of SMEs** is one of the investment priorities under the Competitiveness of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises axis, which has the largest share of the operational program budget (37,4%). Priority investment 3b aims at increasing companies' competitiveness, with a positive impact on exports and on the visibility of the North Portugal Region as a NUTS II region, and as the most export-intensive in the country. The program intends to increase the share of external markets in the SME total turnover from 15.6% to 22%-25%.

To achieve this goal, the policy instrument **offers especially financial aid**, but companies need also **consultancy services adapted to the special needs** of each one of the applicant. Furthermore the **online tool** allows a simple application process.

MANAGING AUTHORITY

CCDRN
Coordination and Regional Development Commission for the North Region

COOPERATING BODIES

Public Authorities
Enterprises' Associations
SME's

STAKEHOLDERS

- CCDRN/Managing Authority NORTE2020
- Portugal Foods – National Cluster for the Agrofood Industry
- Town Hall of V.N. de Famalicão - Famalicão MADEIN
- Town Hall of Guimarães – Economic Development Department
- Town Hall of Santo Tirso - Invest Santo Tirso – Economic Development Department
- Town Hall of Braga
- ATP – Textile and Clothing Association of Portugal
- Minho University – Economics and Management School
- - AIMMAP – Association of Metallurgical, Metal-mechanic and Related Industries of Portugal

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UpGradeSME partners involved

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Regional Development Agency of Vale do Ave (PT)

1st Improvements proposed

Improvement suggestions for the Policy Instrument mainly include the **reduction of bureaucracy for the application process** and **accelerate the decision-making process**.

One possibility can be the **installation of a “special unit” that informs SMEs about the support possibilities** and offers **advisory services** during the application process. These **“commissioner for internationalization”** could enhance and empower regional or local networking.

Special incentives for a successful internationalization should be implemented, e.g. increasing advance payments or other kinds of financial facilities.

Another important point is **to include SMEs that operate in the service sector**. The current program only foresees support for exportation of goods, not services.

Further the instrument could include a program that is dedicated to **support the employment possibilities for young graduates**, to improve the opportunities of qualified employment.

Contact

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