

September 2017

## Regional Actions To Innovate Operational Programmes

The third newsletter of Ratio Project covers the activities and progress of the partners in the project, from April 2017 to September 2017

### Project Partners

Regional Development Agency of Ustio Region, PLC (CZ)

Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH (DE)

**Aragonese Federation of Municipalities, Regions and Provinces, FAMCP (ES)**

Business Confederation of Aragon, CREA (ES)

Cork Chamber of Commerce (IE)

Regional Association of Lazio Municipalities—ANCI Lazio (IT)

Vidzeme Planning Region (LV)

Foundation in Support of Local Democracy Malopolska Institute of Local Government and Administration (PL)

Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar (PT)



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## RATIO - Regional Actions To Innovate Operational Programmes

The «Regional Actions To Innovate Operational Programmes» RATIO project, approved by the Monitoring Committee of the European territorial cooperation programme Interreg Europe in February 2016, is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project started on the 1st of April 2016 and will last for two years in the first phase and other two years in the second phase.

RATIO assembles 9 partners from 8 EU Member States to improve the regional innovation policies in European rural areas.

The overall objective of RATIO project is to improve regional policies and programmes supporting the delivery of innovation, and their implementation. This must be done by creating effective Ecosystems of innovation through the real transfer of the best practices identified, and thanks to the multidimensional aspect of learning (from individual/organisational exchange to a regional and EU level learning approach). The exchange of

experiences among regional actors will be followed by the transfer of the lesson learned to the regional programmes. Important is to mention that the target group are the politicians, public officials dealing with innovation managements and regional business supporting organizations, and as direct beneficiaries of the project are staff and the organizations of RATIO who are involved in designing and delivering the mentioned policies.

As a result the citizens and groups impacted by those policies will benefit from improved policies implementation and better governance.

Ratio understands the importance of the learning outcomes that need to be more effectively transferred and embedded in each partner region in order to lead to policy change, as well as put more emphasis on the demand (SMEs) side to clearly identify the real needs of potential end users.



### Step 1

- Analysis of different partners' situation and identification of valuable experiences and practices



### Step 2

- Interregional Policy learning.



### Step 3:

- ACTION PLANS: transfer of knowledge and practices strategy for improving regional innovation delivery policies.

## EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE EVENT + STUDY VISIT TO SAXONY (DE)

The RATIO Exchange of Experience Event in Leipzig at the beginning of April shed light on insights gained from firms located in the partner's rural areas. These firms are a group of the project's stakeholders giving insights on the challenges they face with innovation. Even though the project partner's regions are quite different in terms of size, population and economic power some of the needs detected in the various regions are the same. The most in common mentioned challenges are the lack of financial resources for the creation of innovation, the lack of qualified employees and the lack of sufficient internet connection. Each project partner selected two firms, at least, from its region being considered as a Good Practice. These Good Practices stand out in the way how they deal with the challenges characteristic for rural areas. The presentation of those Good Practices was meant to showcase the other project partners the selected firms' approach. The overarching goal is to prove the transferability of the Good Practices' approach to other rural areas. One of the Good Practices presented by the Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH is the firm Agri Con GmbH, which offers innovative solutions for precision farming. According to the participants' feedback the study visit at the Agri Con GmbH was one of the highlights of the Exchange of Experience Event.

Another highlight was the visit of "terratec" trade fair in Leipzig. The topics were waste management and environmental service, use of resources and environmental technology. Several stakeholders, for example a Latvian cereal producer, took advantage of this fair and became acquainted with promising business partners.

### Study visit to Agri Con GmbH

The eight European partners of the Interreg Europe project RATIO chose Agri Con GmbH as a best practice for innovation capability. The exchange of experience event in Leipzig gave a good chance to make a study visit at this company to see what makes Agri Con GmbH that innovative.

First of all, they introduced their company. The partners got informed about Agri Con's innovation strategy and how they revolutionize farming. Doing so, they combine traditional farming with the latest digital technology for innovative plant cultivation solutions. Following, the partners got an introduction in the software, which shows how the fields are tilled using Agri Con's precision farming solutions. Therefore, they presented interactive maps, which visualized the GPS-tracking data collected with on-site sensors. The visit was finished with a discussion round and the opportunity for questions and answers.



## EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE EVENT + STUDY VISIT TO LAZIO REGION (IT)

On 30th of May ANCI Lazio has organized in Viterbo the 4th Exchange of Experience meeting within RATIO project in order to investigate new support measures to deliver innovation in SMEs located in rural areas.

The event has been hosted in Federlazio offices, an important association with more of 3.000 associated SMEs, and organized with the support of CeFAS. Both organizations are actively involved in RATIO project as main stakeholders operative with SMEs in the Province of Viterbo. The meeting has been planned within the project learning process in order to transfer to the European local stakeholders the proper knowledge on the good practices selected by project partners.

The RATIO project learning process has the focus to increase the information on European local policies in Innovation sector creating a cross fertilization among the experiences of the different partners to improve the sectorial regional policies. During the meeting has been analysed in detail the two selected good practices coming from Lazio Region.

First presentation has been focused on the good practice Creativity applied to innovation through improvement of human resources capacities in SMEs developed by CeFAS – Special Agency of the Viterbo Chamber of Commerce. It has been the occasion for participants to better understand the results and the organization model developed by CeFAS and real benefits for the involved SMEs. Second presentation has been focused on the good practice Call for proposals - Support to the competitive repositioning of local entrepreneurial systems developed by Lazio Region ROP 2014-2020 Management Authority.

During the discussion among participants, particular attention has been paid on the replication of those instruments in other regions and countries and the benefits that can be obtained by Region Authorities supporting SMEs in rural areas.

The learning process has been concluded with a general overview made by all partners on the use of vouchers in each region. It has been the occasion to know different methodologies applied to use the same instrument in different regions and analyze the different results obtained.

In the afternoon has been organised the study visit at Sergio Mottura, a biological wine producer, to show innovative methodologies used in the wine production and better understand the benefits achieved by the SME during the participation at the training courses organized by CeFAS discussed during the morning. Sergio Mottura is an innovative biological SME that produce a wine grantees with the Three glasses award by Gambero Rosso (the most important worldwide award for a wine).



The study visit has the aim to show the innovative technologies and methodologies developed by Rural SMEs giving to participants not only a Governance vision but even a business approach to the Innovation through the experiences and good practices developed by rural SMEs. The visit at Sergio Mottura has explained all the steps necessary for wine production: from the vineyard to the wine production; from the cellars to the marketing strategies.

In particular the owner, Mr. Sergio Mottura, has shown to participants the biological methodologies applied and how link innovation and tradition on this particular field. Participants have paid particular attention to the instruments used by the SME to support its innovation process and the difficulties incurred.

The study visit has been organised in order to be even an opportunity for the stakeholder of each partner to compare the local innovative technologies and to create the opportunities of future business cooperation.

The study visit has been concluded with a tasting of the different types of wine produced by Sergio Mottura.



## INTERREGIONAL EVENT FOR EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE IN ÚSTÍ REGION (CZ)

With the participation of partners and stakeholders, an interregional workshop of the RATIO project, organized by the Regional Development Agency of Ústí Region, took place on 18 and 19 July 2017. On the first day, the participants participated in the Pyramida hotel in Prague, where they learned the experience of the Ústí Region with the establishment and operation of the Information Center of Ústí Region and the use of regional innovation vouchers to support innovative SME activities.

The number of questions and the rich discussion after the presentation of information on both instruments used by the Ústí region in practice indicates that the two themes were interesting and inspiring for the participants.

During the negotiations, conclusions were drawn from the use of the Innovation Health Check Tool in the participating regions, and then the partners presented each other their prepared Political Recommendations for Regional Innovation Delivery in each region.



### Shared experience of the Usti Region:

On 19 July 2017 a visit was held at HENNLICH, s.r.o. in Litoměřice in Ústí Region, where partners and stakeholders of the project learned about the use of innovative vouchers (both regional and national) and other supporting tools for the development of innovative activities of SMEs from the point of view of the company. The participants surveyed the new premises of a modernly managed company in the Ústí Region. The visit was very interesting and useful for the participants. Finally, the participants in Litoměřice visited an exhibition about the history of wine growing in this agricultural area and in Bohemia.



## STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETINGS IN PARTNER REGIONS



### PORTUGAL

The stakeholders were invited for a meeting on the 7th June 2017, held in the Municipal Library of Vila Pouca de Aguiar. The agenda of this meeting was:

- Discussion and elaboration of recommendations to improve policies supporting innovation, within the Operational Programme COMPETE;
- Guidelines to implement and ensure the transference of Good Practices identified within the project RATIO;
- Presentation of the funding measure “S2E”, to promote entrepreneurship and employment.

Representatives of Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar (PP7), Managing Authority of COMPETE (Policy Instrument addressed by PP7), Corgo Commercial Association (AECORGO), Forest and Environmental Association (Aguiarfloresta), GOBAR, Development Association of Alto Tâmega’s Region (ADRAT) met at the meeting.

There was a general discussion about the type of influence can be introduced in public policies, aiming the improvement of innovation on SME, as well as, what is the present context in terms of public funds that SME can apply to get financial support to innovation investments.

Within the recommendations gathered, it can be referred the need to analyze and compare the various supporting systems running. That can help in verifying the possible existing gaps to some economic sectors or type of eligible investments or beneficiaries in the Alto Tâmega’s Region.



### LATVIA

The stakeholder meeting „Product development in cooperation with the scientists and researchers” took place on 25 August 2017 in Valmiera with participation of more than 40 participants from SMEs, R&D institutions, universities and municipalities .

Through number of interesting presentations and discussions participants have gained a knowledge and information about the innovation support instruments in Latvia, good cooperation experiences between R&D and businesses and opportunities to test their products and ideas, exciting stories of innovative SMEs on their way to success.





## IRELAND

The 3rd Stakeholder Group meeting took place at the Cork Chamber of Commerce on August 23, 2017. The agenda was as follows:

1. Overview of project objectives & format;
2. Update of project work to date (analysis of innovation supports, exchange of experience and good practices—including a report of the latest visits to Leipzig (Germany), Lazio (Italy) and Usti (Czech Rep.);
3. Focus for policy recommendations;
4. Next steps—Project Action Plan;
5. Upcoming Project Activity—study visit to Cork on October 3-4.



## GERMANY

The RATIO project Stakeholder Group Meeting in Semester 3 was held on June 6, 2017 at the Studio 3 of the Leipzig TV, Friedrich-Listplatz 1. Big role players of the energy sector which are all part of innovative organisations in the region were invited.

At the beginning, the Aufbauwerk and new participants were briefly presented. Next, Prof. Jens Schneider from Fraunhofer-Center für Silizium-PV Halle (Saale) gave an overview of the development of photovoltaics in Germany and in Europe. He described the chances which this technology brings. The next presentation was held by Dr. Kersten Roselt from JENA-GEOS Ingenieurbüro GmbH. It was about heat anomalies in the underground. These are often underestimated as an energy source. So, the potential behind it is often not recognized, but it offers many opportunities.

After a short break, the project Ratio were introduced to the participants by Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH. Therefore, the aims and activities of the project and the possibilities for the organisations were introduced. The aims are mainly the analysis of innovations of SME in rural areas, city and surrounding countryside's, exchange of experience with organisations for a better economic promotion and development of recommendations for the innovation strategy of Saxony 2020. Subsequently the innovation strategy of Saxony 2020 and the innovation health check tool were presented getting an overview what they mean for the project. The project is declared as a solution for many problems especially for a better economic promotion to support innovative SME.

The meeting was concluded with a final discussion about the themes in the solar team. All participants had the possibility to make suggestions and to express opinions.





## NEW FLYER FOR ENHANCEMENT OF PROMOTION IN THE PROJECT PARTNER REGIONS



**9 PARTNERS FROM 8 EU MEMBER STATES**

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**RATIO**  
Interreg Europe

Project RATIO website is a part of the Interreg Europe site. On the [www.interregeurope.eu/ratio](http://www.interregeurope.eu/ratio) you can find information about the RATIO: description of the project, information and reports on events of the project. On the address [www.interregeurope.eu](http://www.interregeurope.eu) you can find information about other projects of the Interreg Europe programme as well.

Are you a small or medium-sized Enterprise (SME) located in a rural area? Probably you will wonder how RATIO project will support SMEs in rural areas in the innovation of its own products and services.

Visit our website, log in through contacts on the site and participate in the project as a member of the network RATIO.

- 1 You will receive available newsletters about the progress of the project and its main results
- 2 It provides useful information on how to strengthen the innovation potential of SMEs in rural areas
- 3 You can get in contact with partners in the EU

Visit our website and join us  
[www.interregeurope.eu/ratio](http://www.interregeurope.eu/ratio)  
@InterregRatio

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**  
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**RATIO**  
Interreg Europe

**RATIO**  
Regional Actions to Innovate  
Operational Programmes



An interregional cooperation project for improving innovation delivery policies

This project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund by the Interreg Europe Programme



Ratio has focused its activities on how to make innovation a reality in rural areas, and find the way to improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes (Investment for Growth and Jobs) that support the delivery of innovation by key players in the areas of Smart Specialisation

**MOTIVE**  
In the current European context, SMEs located far from urban areas meet the challenge not only to grow but also to survive. The improvement of their innovation capacity is essential to promote the regional economical development and to fight against rural exodus. By helping rural SMEs to consolidate themselves to overcome the barriers to their growth and competitiveness is a challenge for the regional innovation policies.  
RATIO aims to identify the innovative potential of these companies and help them to grow and expand their activities through a learning process to implement and manage innovation

**TRANSFER**  
This Exchange of experiences among regional actors will be followed by the transfer of the lessons learnt to the regional programmes.

**PROJECT APPROACH**


Ratio understands the importance of the learning outcomes that need to be more effectively transferred and embedded in each partner region in order to lead to policy change, as well as put more emphasis on the demand (SMEs) side to clearly identify the real needs of potential end users

**STEP 1**  
Analysis of different partners' situation and identification of valuable experiences and good practices in each participating region

**STEP 2**  
Interregional Policy learning. This step is focused on the policy learning approach giving the point in the interregional Exchange of experiences and the study visits. In this step the partners have already identified the GPs but they will learn how to transfer them to their regional policies in order to improve the policy instrument and the innovation delivery


**STEP 3**  
ACTION PLANS: transfer of knowledge and practices strategy for improving regional innovation delivery policies. This is the shortest stage as the challenge of this step is to create the regional action plans that will transfer the knowledge acquired and the GPs to transfer in a real strategy

**4 Study visits**




**Spain**

Exchange of Experience event Spain




**Latvia**

Interregional event in Usti Region




**Poland**

Exchange of Experience event Poland



**Italy**

Exchange of Experience event Spain



**Ireland**

Exchange of Experience event Spain

**Events**

**UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTERREG EUROPE COOPERATION:**



**RATIO Project**  
**Study visit and ISC to**  
**Ireland**

**3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**4<sup>TH</sup> Interregional Steering Committee ISC**



**Cork**  
**CHAMBER**  
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

## EXPLORE GPs - INTERREG EUROPE POLICY LEARNING PLATFORM

**October 10, 2017**

One of the Interreg Europe activities during the EU Regions Week in Brussels will be the event "Explore good practices with the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform". Registered participants will have a chance to:

- Meet experts, explore the online database and see if the solutions could work also in your region;
- Discover good practices from 30 European countries on: research & innovation, SME competitiveness, low-carbon economy, and environment & resource efficiency;
- Pitch their good practices in the storytelling studio.

The RATIO project will be represented at the event by Mr. Andrea Vignoli of Italy.



## RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT - SME COMPETITIVENESS EVENT

**October 19-20, 2017**

Joint event on Research and Development and SME competitiveness welcomes Interreg Europe, where project partners, representatives of the management of Structural funds programmes and other policy actors will meet.

During these two days participants will:

- meet colleagues working with research and innovation and SME competitiveness
- hear about the latest EU - wide developments in the sectors
- have an opportunity to share experience, learn more from each other and collaborate
- test the services of the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform

On October 19th, the agenda focuses on Research and Development and on October 20th, the agenda will be focused on SMEs competitiveness. The RATIO project will be represented at the event by Mr. Ivan McCutcheon of Ireland.





**Kindly invited to visit  
RATIO project website**

[www.interregeurope.eu/ratio](http://www.interregeurope.eu/ratio)