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## Lubelskie Action Plan for CLUSTERS3 – Leveraging Cluster Policies for successful implementation of RIS3

### Part I – General information

Project: CLUSTERS3

Partner organisation: Lubelskie Voivodeship

Country: Poland

NUTS2 region: Lubelskie

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### Part II – Policy context

- |                                 |                                     |  |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| The Action Plan aims to impact: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Investment for Growth and Jobs programme     |
|                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            | European Territorial Cooperation programme   |
|                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other regional development policy instrument |

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Regional Innovation Strategy for the Lubelskie Voivodeship 2020



In Lubelskie there is no specific cluster policy/strategy at regional level. Cluster policy in Poland evolved from a completely centralised system (with special instruments dedicated to clusters at national level<sup>1</sup>) to a more flexible one (central government offers support for key innovative clusters<sup>2</sup>, support at the regional level is focused on less developed, emerging initiatives).

One of the weaknesses of economic, scientific, technological and institutional potential of the region is relatively low level of cooperation between entrepreneurs and between enterprises and research institutions. This phenomenon is noticeable both in the region as well as nationwide.

In the same time, there are a few examples in Lubelskie of cluster initiatives and cluster organisations, with a potential to create new paths of development for the region thanks to their involvement in combining local knowledge, identifying new needs and solutions, interregional and international cooperation.

According to contemporary theories of innovation various forms of cooperation (e.g. associations, clusters, networks) play a vital role in raising the level of innovation, and thus competitiveness, of companies and regions. For these reasons, support for different cooperation initiatives, especially in their early development phases, is underlined in Regional Development Strategy for Lubelskie Voivodeship. Also Regional Innovation Strategy of Lubelskie Voivodeship under Priority 1 *Increasing the ability of business entities to create and absorb knowledge and implement innovations* defines course of action focusing on stimulation and development network cooperation between business entities, and between companies and R&D sector.

**Part III – Details of the actions envisaged**

**ACTION 1. INTRODUCTION OF PROGRAMME FOR MOBILISATION OF COOPERATION NETWORKS**

**1. The background**

In Lubelskie 96% of companies are micro and small firms, most of them have limited potential to

<sup>1</sup> The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) played a key role in funding activities from the 2007-2013 Programming Period, initially assigning subsidies to cluster organisations that fulfilled the administrative criteria defined based on the EU Commission’s guidelines.

<sup>2</sup> Key innovative clusters are selected in an open competition, organized by ministry in charge of economy. At present there are 16 KNC supported (2 of which are located in Lubelskie)



monitor new market and technology trends or to implement innovative solutions. Another weak point of SME sector is low level of trust and propensity for cooperation. Many entrepreneurs do not see benefits derived from cooperation, or sometimes do not really believe, that being a member of a network can help to strengthen competitiveness of their business. In the past most of the instruments for SMEs were dedicated to support single company. There was very limited offer for clusters or cooperation initiatives, especially those at initial stage of development. Moreover, this support in Poland was implemented from national level, according to top-down approach (distribution of subsidies to cover basic operational costs).

Observations from CLUSTERS3 international meetings and recommendations from peer-review show that effective cluster policy should rely more on bottom-up approach. Public support should not be limited to financial one, but focus more on bringing competitive intelligence that can be used by cluster companies and institutions to set up strategic directions. Some cluster organisations, though quite active, are not yet strong enough, to offer such services to their members.

Good inspiration for that kind of support were different types of technical assistance within *Cluster Support Programme* in Basque Country and *Clustering for Growth Programme* in Northern Ireland.

## **2. Action**

- 2.1. Introducing a series of information/training meetings and workshops for facilitators of clusters and cooperation initiatives (emerging or at early stage of development) to deliver skills defined by those facilitators (e.g. how to develop stronger relationships within the network, how to define priorities and build common strategy of the network,
- 2.2. Introducing mentoring sessions for group of entrepreneurs interested in building local partnership. The aim is to discover the potential of the group, to help organize the idea, to propose and enable contact with institutions that can assist (R&D institutions, business support institutions), to analyze possible sources of finance.

## **3. Players involved**

Department for the Economy and International Cooperation as responsible body for promoting entrepreneurship and implementation of Regional Innovation Strategy in Lubelskie Voivodeship. Business support institutions and academia as a source of expertise.

## **4. Timeframe**

Meetings of action 2.1. will be organised periodically, depending on the needs of potential recipients. In 2018, it is planned to organise 1 meeting to test the most effective formula. Action 2.2. will be implemented on an ongoing basis, depending on the needs reported.

## **5. Funding sources**

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The main source of financing will be the funds of the voivodeship. In the case of some of the topics, it will be possible to finance it from the *Economic Marketing of the Lubelskie Voivodeship II* project, implemented under the ROP WL 2014-2020

## **ACTION 2. IMPROVING OF POLICY MIX OF INSTRUMENTS FOR INTERNATIONALISATION OF REGIONAL COMPANIES**

### **1. The background**

Growth and development of regional economy depend on ability of the companies to sell goods or to offer services. Therefore, for several years regional authorities of Lubelskie Voivodeship undertook a range of activities to promote export of SMEs. But for many companies, especially micro and small ones, internationalization is still a challenge, especially in terms of getting in contact with potential international partners.

The experiences of CLUSTERS3 partners, presented at international meetings show, that these problems can be limited if companies work together in networks. In this way they gain better visibility and credibility and critical mass. Moreover, close cooperation of clusters with regional authorities can make public support for internationalization more focused and efficient, but also can exploit contacts, prestige and trust that public administration has.

SPRI in Basque Country organized reversed trade mission for members of one of the clusters, and this way helped to get relevant contacts in UK. To solve the problem with finding new potential international partners regional authorities in Haidu Bihar established an informal network of contacts in institutions responsible for internationalization in Hungary. Those good practices were particularly relevant for actions proposed below.

### **2. Action**

2.1. Modification of decision making process on international missions organised by regional authorities. Cluster coordinators will have the possibility to recommend destination, scope and agenda of the mission - based on the needs of members of the cluster and regional policy on internationalisation and RIS3 domains.

2.2. Introducing the possibility for cluster coordinators to co-organise inbound missions hosted by regional authorities. This way the contacts that the Marshal Office has with embassies, Polish commercial representation abroad, partner regions, etc. will be more effectively used for supporting internationalization activities of companies.



### 3. Players involved

Department for the Economy and International Cooperation - as responsible body for promoting entrepreneurship and implementation of Regional Innovation Strategy in Lubelskie Voivodeship. Polish commercial representation offices abroad, embassies of different countries, European Network of Enterprises, business support institutions – as contact points.

### 4. Timeframe

Continuous activities.

### 5. Funding sources

- Main source of financing: *Economic Marketing of the Lubelskie Voivodeship II* project, implemented under the ROP LV 2014-2020.
- Funding from duration period of *Investor and Exporter Service Centre* project for organisation of inbound missions under the *Network of Investor and Exporter Service Centers* project co-financed by EU under the “Innovative economy” Operational Programme 2007-2013.

## ACTION 3. NEW ACTIVITIES FOR STRENGTHENING CLUSTER ORGANISATIONS AND CLUSTER'S COORDINATORS

### 1. The background

Strong cooperation and involvement of clusters into strategic thinking on region's development, and especially on promotion of innovation, is still a challenge. Moreover, knowledge transfer within the cluster and between clusters is still limited, although the R&D institutions are cluster members. In the past years the top-down approach cluster policy, focusing mainly on financial support, has led to the situation, where many cluster organisations have lost their initial focus on strategic reflection, competitive intelligence, advanced public-private dialogue, etc.

During international meetings all partners highlighted that good manager is crucial for success of the cluster. It is important, that manager (or manager team) have a range of soft skills to see new opportunities and propose new directions to cluster members. Such people are open to cooperation, new ideas and sharing experiences, and this way they can provide services that cluster members need to improve (e.g. competitiveness). To build these competences and skills partners of CLUSTERS3 project introduced many types of activities. In particular, in Basque Country and Northern Ireland, different workshops, meetings, forums, masterclasses for cluster facilitators are organised.

## 2. Action

2.1. Introduction of trainings and information meetings for cluster managers to develop their soft skills.

2.2. Organisation of seminars for clusters, to enable exchange of experiences, good and bad practices, information.

2.3. Introduction of constant channel of information flow between Marshal Office and cluster managers by indicating contact persons (MO employees).

## 3. Players involved

Department for the Economy and International Cooperation as responsible body for promoting entrepreneurship and implementation of Regional Innovation Strategy in Lubelskie Voivodeship. Strong clusters, regional key clusters - to define their needs and to share experiences.

## 4. Timeframe

Continuous activities.

## 5. Funding sources

Most of activities do not require high costs. The main source of financing will be the funds of the voivodeship.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*2 July 2018*

WARSZĄLEK WOJEWÓDZTWA

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Sławomir Sosnowski*

Stamp of the organisation: \_\_\_\_\_