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### **Presentations & Transfer Workshops summary**

In this issue you can read in-depth presentations from the partners Valencia, ERVET and Gävle. We have just completed an exciting phase in the project. Project Partners had the chance to select 2 of the 21 Good Practices presented to organize Transfer Workshops and proceed in the exchange of experiences via a peer to peer dialogue. Learn more about the transfer workshops!

### **Next step - Local Action Plans**

In the next phase of this project, partners will work with adaptation of Local Action Plans. Each Partner designs its own action plan as the document providing details on how the lessons learnt from the cooperation and the exchange of experiences.

### **Upcoming activities**

13-14 March 2019  
International Exchange Seminar  
in Reggio Emilia, Italy

April 2019  
Start of phase 2 - implementation  
and monitoring of LAPs



## Presentation: IVACE

The Valencia Autonomous Community is the 4th Spanish region in terms of GDP (10% of the total) and population over 5 million inhabitants. It is of key importance to the Spanish economy due to some industries, such as tourism, the motor sector, plastics, chemicals and food and agriculture. With 3.3% GDP increase in 2017, it is the second fastest growing area in Spain. It stands out as one of the most stable destinations in legal, political and social terms. It lies at the centre of the Mediterranean Arc, a key element in the European logistics network. It is a perfect port for freight traffic from Spain and Southern Europe to Africa, Asia and US. Its capital, Valencia has full-modal transport integration (sea, airport, motorways, railways), each with global connectivity. We have a modern and well-equipped Infrastructure: the remarkable Valencia Port. The largest commercial port in Spain and the Mediterranean, the 5th-largest in Europe and the 31st-largest in the world in terms of the number of containers handled.

The Valencia region is clearly focusing on international markets and its openness to foreign trade is above the WTO average (46%). It is one of the top 3 exporting regions in the country. Exports have grown at the fastest rates (9.7% each year since 2012) mainly due to the diversity of target markets, with growing share among emerging economies rather than the EU. Valencia is fostering the specialisation of its exporting sectors (motor industry, ceramic products, fruit and vegetables). Total sales reached 29,300 million euros in 2017. The Valencia's export base includes over 22,000 companies (>6% of Valencian companies). The relative sales share to emerging economies (BRICS and Next-11) is higher than those of Spain to these destinations, which are more focused on the EU, and includes an increasing proportion of medium-high technology products.

It is not only foreign markets that are driving the region's economy forward: the increase in domestic demand is also benefiting from greater economic certainty, stabilisation of the property market, a resurgence of private consumption, an increase in financial wealth and falling unemployment. The Valencian Region offers economic and geostrategic factors, infrastructure and quality of life, among other aspects, which have attracted foreign investment into the region over the years. More than 11,000 foreign companies have set up in the Valencian Region, 800 of which are industrial companies wholly-owned by foreign investors. Ford, UBE Industries, CETCO Spain, Vossloh, BP Oil, IKEA, ArcelorMittal, Roquette, Plastic Omnium, Hasbro, Mediterranean Shipping Company and Hewlett-Packard are just some of the for-

eign countries that have placed their trust in our region rather than others in Spain and Europe.

The largest investor countries in order of size in the region are: Germany, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Switzerland. There are 11 universities (6 private and 5 public, which in turn have 5 science parks), providing a fertile environment for training human capital in the Valencian Region. 160,000 university students are currently enrolled, and 85,700 students are doing vocational training. RDI is one of the main tools to strengthen the region's economy. The Valencian Region is committed to RDI innovation policies that help companies improve their productivity, competitiveness and excellence. This effort can be seen in the firm institutional support for innovative projects, as well as the creation of various RDI networks: The Network of 11 Technology Institutes, the Network of Scientific Research Centres and the universities' own research centres. The Network mainly supplies services to the existing sectors of the Valencian Region and emerging horizontal technologies. The Technology Institutes work for 12.000 companies annually.

The Valencia enterprise competitiveness Institute IVACE is the Regional Government body in charge of encouraging the Region's economic development, and the competitiveness through support to Valencia's private sector internationalization, innovation, financing, energy and attraction of foreign investments.

IVACE manages programmes for strengthening Valencia's innovativeness. The programmes have different specialisms and cover several areas of society and industries. Some involve funding of research, which is important for renewal of industry. In other cases, it involves companies applying for funds for their development projects. Some of the programmes require actors to merge to jointly manage large and long-term projects. The Agency's mission is to promote the development of the energy system, so that it will become ecologically and economically sustainable. Trade and investment promotion aim at encouraging growth, full employment and development by promoting exports. IVACE designs and implements technical assistance programs, services and funds aimed at the internationalization of the Valencia businesses. IVACE offers financing that companies need for investments that will make them more efficient and profitable.



## Presentation: ERVET

ERVET - Emilia-Romagna Economic Development Territory SpA - is a territorial Development Agency of the Emilia-Romagna Region. The European Union, Territorial and International Cooperation, Social Inclusion Unit supports the internationalization of the Region System through various types of intervention including the implementation of projects co-financed by European / national / international programs, the participation / implementation of European Territorial Cooperation programs, the construction and participation in transnational cooperation networks, communication and information activities on EU policies and funds, as well as international territorial marketing through tools, analysis and network activities for the promotion of investments in the Region.

ERVET and the Emilia-Romagna Region, Department of Productive Activities - General Management of Knowledge, Labor and Business as Managing Authority of POR FESR - promote a closer collaboration between companies, trade associations, universities, research centers, chambers of commerce, local authorities.

The contribution of Compete In will improve the implementation of the priorities of the Regional Operational Program - European Regional Development Fund dedicated to the internationalization and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enter-

prises, identifying paths targeted to the needs of the production system, promoting a closer collaboration between the Local Stakeholders Group: Confindustria Emilia Romagna; CNA Emilia Romagna; Confartigianato Imprese Emilia-Romagna; Confcooperative Emilia-Romagna; Irecoop Emilia-Romagna; Legacoop Emilia-Romagna; Unioncamere Emilia-Romagna; ASTER.

The initiative is part of the activities and programs already implemented by the Region starting from Emilia-Romagna Go Global 2016-2020, the multi-annual program of internationalization of the production system approved by the Export & Internationalization Committee and coordinated by the Sprint-ER Service; REGIONAL LAW n. 14/2014 for the promotion of investments that provides incentives for companies to implement investment programs of high strategic value, consistent with the lines of development outlined by the Smart Specialization Strategy - S3 and of which ERVET is a regional contact point for foreign investors; the MEASURE 4.2, tool of the Regional Program for productive activities 2012-2015 with which the Region supports both the participation in fairs by SMEs or aggregations of SMEs and the internationalization of the companies presented by the Consortiums.



## Presentation: Gävle

Compete In partner nr 6, Gävle, is situated by the Baltic Sea, 160 km north of Stockholm, and has been a city for over 500 years. It is one of Sweden's oldest commercial cities with a long tradition of international trade, today a modern and vibrant coastal city of 100 000 inhabitants.

The city is the logistic hub for central Sweden with a good transport and communications infrastructure. Besides having the largest container port on the east coast of Sweden, it also has major rail and motorway links, and Stockholm Arlanda airport is just one hour away.

Gävle has a diverse economy based on a long industrial tradition in forestry and steel. As administrative centre of the region, Gävle has a large public and service sector.

The University of Gävle, established in 1977, has 17 000 students and Gävle was elected Student City of the Year in 2017. Its research areas are the built environment and health in working life. Gävle has a long history in the development of mobile internet, smart home and geographical information systems and is home to Future Position X, Europe's leading geographical information cluster and the regional incubator Movexum.

Gävle is a green city with strong environmental ambitions. Awarded Second Best Sustainable City in Sweden for the second year in 2018. It has a flourishing cultural life and offers a wide range of leisure activities. An inclusive city, winner of the Swedish Accessibility Award 2017.

The Compete In project is supporting a regional process of internationalisation with a specific focus to increase the number of companies exporting goods and services from today's 750 to 1000 within the coming years. The knowledge and experiences of the Compete In partners is bringing added value to the work.



## Interview: Dr Martina Topić

**Interview on International Best Practice review report Dr Martina Topić**

Small and medium-sized enterprises can benefit greatly from internationalisation, as shown by a new report led by Dr Martina Topić, Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University's Leeds Business School.

The report, which is funded by the EU as part of the Compete In project, highlights available opportunities abroad to show how businesses can internationalise, increase their profits, and engage with the global community.

Martina said: "The benefit of the project is that some countries offer incentives, support and advice for companies to do business with them." "With the upcoming Brexit negotiations, this is something for UK businesses to look at; but even if the UK never left the EU this would still be useful as the "With the upcoming Brexit negotiations, this is something for UK businesses to look at; but even if the UK never left the EU this would still be useful as there are countries that are trying to attract foreign investors."

"These countries are so eager to do so that they offer financial incentives and all sorts of help. It needs to be emphasised that these countries are very open to foreign capital and immigration, so this would be a positive working environment for British SMEs."

According to the report, countries such as Mexico, Canada and Brazil offer initiatives to encourage internationalisation of SMEs. Most of these initiatives focus on creating resources for potential entrepreneurs, offering mentorship and business advice, organising business seminars and workshops, conducting market analysis and intelligence gathering, offering start-up acceleration programmes, international business expansion programmes, and participating in trade mission. Compete In project partners, as well as SMEs, will be able to learn

from these practices by taking their business overseas.

The report provides a narrative of what is in the world in regard to internationalisation, and how successful cases manage attracting investments and/or increasing exporting. The analysis considers 10 cases selected from Canada (Ottawa), China (Chengdu), Brasil (national initiative), USA (Boston), Australia (Queensland), Canada (Quebec), USA (California Silicon Valley), Mexico (ProMexico), UAE (Smart Dubai), and USA (Florida). Analysis by COMPETE IN partners has also been conducted. Analysis shows a variety of initiatives being offered by international organizations with a range from business mentorship and support to establishing collaboration with universities and research centres, all the way to offering incentives to potential investors. COMPETE IN partners offer similar services, and thus public authorities in Europe (as main enablers) lead on internationalisation and development, in line with academic literature.

COMPETE IN partners fully match international best practice such as business seminars, training, materials, advice, and support with mentorship. In addition, some partners also follow international best practice such as working with universities and research centres. Moreover, it is important to be emphasized that COMPETE IN project highlights the role public authorities can have in leading on internationalization, whereas elsewhere in the world there is a large presence of non-governmental sector and national governments.

It is hoped that also businesses and educational system will find the report particularly useful as it can be disseminated across the university, so the findings can be used for teaching, especially among Business and Management courses whose students can learn a lot about entrepreneurship and potential opportunities should they start a business upon graduation.



Dr Martina Topić

## Introducing: Transfer Workshops

The Compete In project has just finished an exciting phase. After the Study visit program held in 2017, the Project Partners got the chance to choose two out of the 21 Good Practices (GP) to organize Transfer Workshops and proceed in the exchange of experiences via a peer to peer dialogue.

But, how did it work?

Each Partner developed and implemented a transfer workshop on its territory with the Good Practice (GP) provider to ensure a thorough understanding and engagement with the "nuts and bolts" of the GP and discussed the ways of acquiring and adapting the GP in each territory. The workshops allowed partners to have a direct discussion with "experts" from the provider region (actors involved in the GP and entities responsible for it) and the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG) at local level.

To max out the exchange, each Partner and its LSG also prepared a background briefing for the GP providing Partner, who needed a clear picture of the current situation, key issues, opportunities, problems, main goals and scopes of the territory of the "importing" Partner. Both partners involved in the transfer workshop agreed on a date, format (public, invitational, round table meeting, peer to peer interviews, etc.) and agenda. After that the workshops took place in two rounds, one in mid-April and one in mid-June.

In this issue you can read all about the transfer workshops and their results. Happy reading!



## First Transfer Workshop in Bologna!

ERVET hosted the first project transfer workshop - in Bologna, experts from Valencia supported by IVACE discussed with ERVET's stakeholders to deepen their knowledge on the SMEs' internationalization programs "Xpande, Xpande Digital and Sicomex". On March 27th-28th, IVACE, the Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Valencia, Arvet Association, Reggio-Emilia Municipality, Emilia-Romagna Region, ERVET spent two days together in Bologna to discuss about the programs Xpande, Xpande Digital and Sicomex and how these good practices can inspire local policy instruments supporting SMEs' internationalization.

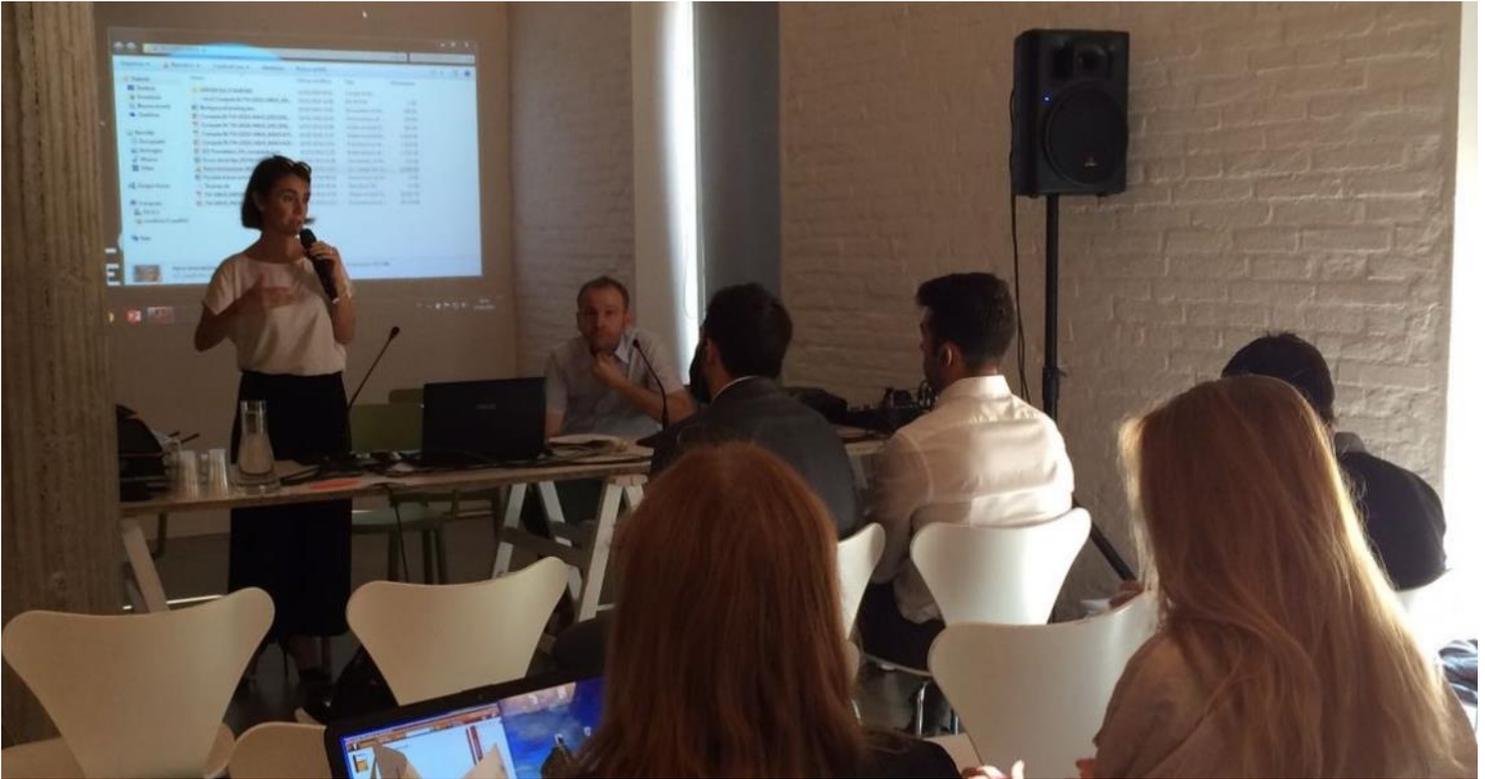
In the first day, Valencia Chamber of Commerce's speakers presented Xpande and Xpande Digital programs, highlighting the administrative - financial aspects and the success factors at local level, due to the technical assistance and consultancy provided and the development of a specific export plan, 6,000 SMEs started their internationalization from 1996 to 2006 in Spain. This followed with participants contributions leading to an interactive and fruitful working session.

The second day was dedicated to Sicomex: a deeper introduction to the program highlighted aspects regarding its main goals and working principles; including the challenges and problems faced, administrative and financial issues, such as the annual and the success fees covered by the participants. Questions were distributed in advance and gave a strong foundation for a lively and inclusive discussion mainly focusing on the interaction between the agent, Arvet and the company.

Xpande and Xpande Digital are managed by the Chamber of Commerce of Valencia and are aimed at new SME exporters. Both programs are structured in two phases: the first offers assistance and advice for the definition of a specific "export plan" (Xpande) or "digital marketing plan" (Xpande Digital). In the second phase, the activities planned on the chosen foreign market are carried out and the company receives 50% coverage of the costs incurred thanks to ERDF resources.

Sicomex is designed and managed by ARVET, a private association of exporting companies operating in 4 sectors. The program facilitates and promotes SMEs export to foreign markets through the support of a commercial agent made available to groups of 6 companies never competitors. The agent is native of the place to which it is intended to export and selected by ARVET on the basis of experience and knowledge of the market. He offers to each one a commercial entry service in the sector of interest, based on the company's capabilities, products and resources, identifying customers/distributors and supporting the company in all the actions necessary for the penetration of the market. The advantage is based on the sharing of costs and risks of entry on foreign markets by the companies involved. The goal is to stabilize the company's presence on the chosen market within a year.

## Reggio Emilia and IVACE improve attractiveness



The Municipality of Reggio Emilia has hosted a Transfer Workshop on VIT Emprede, presented by IVACE as a good practice during the study visit in Valencia in December 2017. A network of innovative entrepreneurs launched by the Municipality, VIT Emprede aims to improve the ecosystem of start-ups, through strategies and programs for the attraction of talents, companies and investors, with the aim of promoting the economy of Valencia, in synergy with the Valencian Association of Start-ups.

The City of Valencia is investing on a new economic model based on knowledge and talents relying on an entrepreneurial mentality, transport and connections, quality way of life and an industry committed to the city. Public-private collaboration at all levels (local, regional, state) and a multi-system connections system are pivotal, so as the collaboration with Universities and the creation of a specific area dedicated to innovation. Since Reggio Emilia is facing similar challenges, the TW was designed as an opportunity of exchange and mutual learning and the contribution and the commitment of the experts to illustrate their BP in accordance with local needs and gaps was very useful.

The workshop, organized by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia in collaboration with the E35 Foundation, saw the participation of the Reggio players belonging to the world of business, research and innovation (Unindustria, Legacoop, Cna, Crpa, Reggio Children, Unimore, Stu Reggiane, REI, Aster, Food Innovation Program, Impact Hub).

The meeting was a unique opportunity for a concrete and participatory process of confrontation among the actors of the territory on future actions to be carried out, in the light of suggestions and examples illustrated by the Spanish experts.



Local policy makers were also involved in a round table with VIT Emprede representatives to discuss challenges and opportunities of attractiveness activities and strategies based on start-ups and innovation. The Municipality of Reggio Emilia presented its distinctive competencies and policies with a focus on the Innovation Park and analysed with the Valencian guests the nuts and bolts of innovative ecosystems as lever to attract talents and competences.



## Reggio Emilia works with LBU on the bondholder project



In May, Leeds Beckett University and representatives from the Wakefield Bondholder Scheme were welcomed to the Municipality of Reggio Emilia to discuss the Bondholder project, its origins, and its focus now and into the future. Prior to visit, Leeds Beckett University and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia had exchanged provided a background briefing papers highlighting regarding the broader context of the Wakefield Bondholder Scheme's origins, its relationship to place-based partnerships on one side and an in-depth presentation of Reggio Emilia issues and current situation on the other side and to help the British experts to focus and fine-tune their contributions. A long list of questions, drafted on the basis of interests and issues presented by the LSG, was also shared with the British Partner. key questions for Reggio Emilia to consider in the transfer process of this good practice.

The two-day trip TW was divided into presentation session, networking and a site visit to the Reggio Emilia Technopole and a roundtable discussion on the transferability of the scheme, its activities and the potential for similar developments and undertakings within Reggio Emilia. Thanks to an interactive approach, the Wakefield Bondholder Scheme and the place-based partnerships became an opportunity to read the local territory from a new angle, to share different perspectives, bring out gaps and opportunities. The Municipality of Reggio Emilia presented its distinctive competencies, strategies and policies with a focus on the Innovation Park as a lever and a catalyst within Compete In project's objectives in order to provide a discussion framework among local actors and British experts to analyse possible actions and projects.

The presentation TW sessions whereas attended by 30+ delegates from regional and local authorities, the LSG, business organisations as well as individual firms, research centers and the university sectors to learn about the Wakefield District, the role and focus of the Wakefield Bondholder Scheme and how they could learn take lessons from any problems, solutions and its successes. Advantages and opportunities for local actors and for businesses that a Bondholder system can bring, with a focus on commitment, branding, place marketing and various sector perspectives were deeply discussed.

Leeds Beckett University and the Bondholder representatives were impressed with the setting, organisation and content of transfer workshop, the engagement and interest from participants, as well as the context within which the good practice from Wakefield could be transferred.

The outline proposals and ideas that Reggio Emilia had around a local bondholder initiative to create a business innovation week were particularly interesting and stimulating. Wakefield Bondholder Scheme colleagues are now considering organising a similar initiative in Wakefield.

The mutual learning and information exchange in the Transfer Workshop were innovative and very practical and Leeds Beckett University and Wakefield Bondholder Scheme colleagues will look to build on these further via continuing contact with Reggio Emilia colleagues.

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## Conference on TRIIP between Wielkopolska and FPX

On September 14th a transfer workshop on good practice TRIIP (The Regional Innovation Internalization Project) from Sweden took place. Participants gathered in the Marshal Office in Poznań, Poland connected via Skype with speakers in Gävle, Sweden. During the conference attendees were acquainted with cluster Future Position X activities. Special session was devoted to TRIIP project: its background, statistics, offer, target group, staff/resources needed, methodology and learning/success factors.

Employees of the Marshal Office's Department of Economy and representatives of 8 stakeholder organisations from Wielkopolska Region participated in the conference in Poznań while 2 FPX experts joined the event in Gävle. TRIIP was chosen by Wielkopolska Region authorities as one of good practices to be implemented within transfer workshops. The practice seemed particularly interesting for Wielkopolska Region policy actors as a tool designated only for microenterprises. It was considered worth checking the possibility of using a similar measure on the Wielkopolska's ground.

The workshop consisted of 2 parts: session on FPX activities and session on TRIIP project. The participants were acquainted with PowerPoint presentations and promotional films. Experts answered on questions from Poznań after each session.



Participants gathered in the Seat of Marshall Office in Poznań were able to learn more on projects in the fields of internationalisation and innovativeness run in North Central Sweden. Thanks to TRIIP presentation it was possible to better understand main assumptions of the project: target group, staff/resources needed, methodology and learning/success factors. It was particularly interesting for Polish counterpart of the workshop to see how new technological trends can be included in the projects which make the regional policy in Gävle, Gävleborg and North Central Sweden.

Some elements of TRIIP project can be included in the recommendation concerning support instruments for internationalisation of microenterprises within Wielkopolska's ERDF Regional Operational Programme for the future programming period.

## Best Practices of Valencia visited Katowice!



On 4th of June two best practices of Valencia visited Katowice. 9 representatives of institutions acting in the field of internationalization met to discuss and present the best solutions for enterprises during the process of their internationalization.

For a particular enterprise the expansion of business abroad is a huge challenge. Small and medium enterprises meet various barriers in this field. Substantial contribution is needed and no efficiency granted - they often do not feel strong enough to cope with the whole process themselves.

In order to support our regional companies in their expansion Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development invited IVACE from Valencia to present their best practices of support SMEs. Xpande is managed by Camara – Valencia Chamber of Commerce and Sicomex - by Arvet Association.



Both programmes would not be so successful without cooperation with their other partners.

It was a great opportunity to learn how to work with enterprises in this field, what kind of actions can be taken and what kind of funding they offer. Programmes presented gave us a wide range of information – from objectives, recruitment process, steps to be taken, the whole implementation phase, up to the final financial clearance. The speakers provided comprehensive information about operative details in each programme. It will help our regional institutions while supporting our enterprises in the process of internationalization.

The workshop was very interesting and successful. Thank you, Valencia!



# Leeds Beckett University & FPX discusses the TRIIP project



In June, the Enterprise Team welcomed two visitors from the Swedish cluster Future Position X to take part in a Transfer Workshop as part of our Compete In Project.

The full day Transfer Workshop invited 17 delegates from across the University, business community and our partners to listen to the work “Future Position X” are doing and learn about the TRIIP project they are delivering.

The workshop provided speakers from Leeds Beckett University, “Future Position X” and University Business Centers an opportunity to introduce their projects, take questions from the audience and begin to explore how we could learn from each other’s projects. Discussions and questions focused on learning about how projects have been implemented, any barriers to success and solutions that have been introduced to enable projects that support SME businesses to be successful.

Delegates also learnt in great detail about the TRIIP project which helps SME to export and grow sales through providing consultancy support through a diagnostic analysis and development plan on a direct one-to-one basis as well as via a web platform that is accessible 24/7.

Leeds Beckett University are now working on taking the information forward identifying tasks and actions it can implement within local projects in Wakefield, Leeds and Halifax and particularly around the transfer of the TRIIP methodology and lessons to improve SMEs’ successful development of internationalisation strategies. The Project Stakeholder Group will identify and assist in the development of additional activities between the West Yorkshire region and Gävle partners.





## Successful Transfer Workshops in Gävle

The summer brought two very successful Transfer Workshops to Gävle – on the 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> of June the Valencia Good Practices of VIT *Emprende* and Valencia Start-up Association and on the 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> of August the Reggio Emilia GPs of Higher education support to the internationalization process of SMEs.

A core group of representatives of the Local Support Group in Gävle participated and engaged in interesting learning and discussions with Javier Mateo and Diego Moya from Valencia in June. The *VIT Emprende programme* is of great interest to Gävle and our region. Especially interesting for transfer and implementation in our LAP is the creation and continuous development of the ecosystem community, using digital and social media for communication, bringing in new stakeholders, “sharing is caring”, connect, facilitate and boost network and internationalization.

On this theme, Javier and Diego together with Gävle project leader Annika Lundqvist, visited Stockholm and met with Stockholm Business Region for an introduction to the innovation ecosystem and support to internationalization in the Swedish capital and visited [EpiCenter](#), for a presentation on their innovation community.

Many similarities in the work in progress in Valencia/Gävle and ideas that we would like to take further. We hope to be able to conduct a Deep delegation visit to Valencia in the beginning of 2019.

End of August a large group of representatives from the Local Support Group and the University of Gävle met with Giovanna

Galli and Marcello Tedeschi from University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE), Giovanni Mattioli from the Reggio Emilia Chamber of Commerce, Claudia Larrichia from the Future Food Institute, Saverio Serri from the municipality of Reggio Emilia and Sabrina Rosati from the E35 Foundation.

As members of [Eurotowns](#), network for medium sized cities, Gävle and Reggio Emilia are familiar to each other and happy to enlarge the cooperation to the field of business development through the Compete In-project!

The good practice *Higher education support to SME internationalization* of UNIMORE and the cooperation with the municipality of Reggio Emilia is interesting to us in several ways. First, they have been able not only to involve but to get companies to drive processes of internationalization forward, i.e. the Food Innovation Programme and secondly, use the strength of the municipality, i.e. in child education, to contribute to the internationalization of the city, businesses and organisations. We are looking to include both of these aspects in our LAP. Furthermore, we are interested in Reggio Emilia Chamber of Commerce work with Incoming delegations and are looking at possibilities to introduce this practice to our region. This was discussed at a separate meeting with the Chamber of Commerce of the Mid Central Sweden and will hopefully result in a Deep delegation to Reggio Emilia in 2019.



## IVACE works with ERGO for internationalisation

Internationalization phenomenon has significantly changed the landscape for most business resulting to a very dynamic market situation with severe competition for the companies. In order to provide a more efficient support to the private sector, IVACE has selected two best practices aimed at incorporating a broader perspective on internationalization strategy formulation and execution and a focused approach to entrepreneurship. The overall objective is to have a stronger impact on the internationalization of the Valencia Region.

The first one is the Emilia Romagna Go Global Strategy ERGO. Emilia Romagna is performing very well in the international arena, one of the leading export areas in Europe with a very competitive industrial sector and an export-based economy. The aim of IVACE, selecting the ERGO best practice, is to evaluate the feasibility of a more comprehensive Internationalization strategy in the Valencia Region not only focusing on the exporters needs but for the region. One of our targets relates to further and more efficient coordination of entities related to SMEs in the region of Valencia.

We are designing a new framework of cooperation with the sector associations representing the needs of their associated companies. There will be calls for proposals, and the different organizations will select specific activities, strategies and markets, so they will compete to provide the best assistance for the companies.

Regarding the TRIIP programme, the Valencia region has traditionally been exporting consumer goods, building materials and agrifood products. The services and export programmes originally designed for the needs of traditional exporters have been adapted to the new innovative sectors.

The profile of the firms demanding IVACE services, funds, promotional activities abroad and assistance from us has changed for the past 5 years. Companies are asking for a different approach, with very limited resources, and going international from the very beginning.

IVACE started cooperating with the business incubators, created new tools for start-ups and designed promotional activities for these new companies recently. There is a lot of room for improvement.

The best practice proposed by Gävle in Sweden, is very relevant. The new profile of the innovative companies, start-ups, creative industries going global from the very beginning, requires a new approach. This approach will be provided by the TRIIP program and the experience of the Swedish regions in working within a network and assisting entrepreneurs to consolidate and export their services and products.

## Wielkopolska does a TW on XPANDE and SICOMEX



During the workshop experts from Spain briefly presented their institutions, generally introduced to implemented programmes, shew examples of beneficiaries, discussed problematic issues and answered on questions of other participants.

The workshop tackled Spanish instruments reflecting Wielkopolska's ERDF Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020, Priority axis 1: Innovative and competitive economy; Objective 1.4: Internationalization of regional economy. The workshop focussed on good practices from Spain: programmes XPANDE and SICOMEX, which were discussed by foreign experts: Maria de Los Angeles Montesinos Bonet from Cámara Valencia and Thais Rodríguez Pérez from ARVET. Participants of the workshop actively took part in the event through preparing issues to be discussed by the experts (developed during Local Stakeholders Group meeting) and asking questions during TW.

Both programmes were presented on examples of beneficiaries, so participants of the workshop could learn of 'life stories' of specific companies, interested in foreign expansion, which were involved in the programmes.

Apart from professional PowerPoint presentations TW participants could watch promotional movies produced in the framework of the programmes, were acquainted with applications forms, online platforms and other documentation of the programmes. Provided Spanish to Polish translation enabled to tackle the issues on a very detailed level.

The most important conclusions of are following:

- any support programme for internalization of SMEs should be very complex – include various stages of foreign involvement of enterprise: from an idea of 'going outside' to the beginnings of activities on a foreign market;
- programmes should be at least co-organised by local business environment institutions (like LSG members) as they have an experience and a network of contacts;
- programmes should be co-financed by the participants (an example of SICOMEX GP shows that it is even possible to run successful programme without any support of European or local funds – 100% financed by the entrepreneurs);
- SMEs representing same sector of local economy may cooperate on foreign markets as their offers more often complement each other than they compete with each other;
- due to limited funds for support programmes foreign markets for the expansion of local companies should be chosen first of all on a basis economical, historical and cultural ties.

Some elements of presented GPs and TW conclusions can be included in the recommendation concerning support instruments within Wielkopolska's ERDF Regional Operational Programme for the future programming period.



## Compete In at the ERWC in Brussels

Within the European Week of Regions and Cities 2018, 6 Partners, each involved in an Interreg Project, organized the Workshop “Internationalization of SMEs – Interreg Europe projects highlight their impact” to share their Projects’ perspective on the subject of internationalization of SMEs and interregional learning processes.

On the 9th of October 2018, at the Abruzzo Regional Office in Brussels, Southern England (UK), Donegal County Council (Ireland), Koprivnica (Croatia), Lubelskie Region (Poland), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Zala County (Hungary) illustrated to a wide audience in a sold-out event, their findings and shared their experiences about what has worked well and what could work better in their projects [EIS](#), [Compete In](#), [UpGrade SME](#), and [Clusters3](#).

After an introduction by moderator John Fitzgibbon, Head of Southern England Local Partners Brussels Office, a Keynote Speech was provided by Christophe Guichard, Team Leader – Cluster Internationalization at DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs who presented a range of EC supported initiatives consistent with the topic of the workshop. Several speakers gave their overview on what has been achieved to date and how the projects will make a difference. For EIS Project, Michael Tunney from Donegal County Council’s Local Enterprise Office reported on the extensive peer review process among Project partners leading to the identification of 16 good practices; Mateja Horvat Senior EU Expert from Koprivnicki Poduzetnik, Croatia, presented the recently developed GlobalEIStool and discussed on how to influence the design of business support within the ESIF programme in Croatia for 2021-27.

Andrea Enyingi-Kurucz, Lead Partner, Pannon Business Network, Zala County and Dr. Rita Szép-Tüske, Head of Depart-

ment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Foreign Trade Development Department illustrated UpGrade SME Project and interviews to 328 SMEs across six Member States and 24 policy-makers about support for SME internationalization. The major points tackled were promotion, training, economic diplomacy and financing. For the Compete In project, Serena Foracchia, Deputy Mayor for International Affairs of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia highlighted the need for an ecosystem of business support excellence based on a territorial approach that should not just leave it to the SMEs individually to tackle internationalization but to the whole territory to act as a facilitator of internationalization processes. Anna Kepa, Regional Coordinator of CLUSTERS3, highlighted the benefits of inserting SMEs in global value chains and the development of tailor-made instruments to support SMEs.

The workshop produced clear outputs, as reported to the Committee of the Regions:

- interregional collaboration: it is highly valuable for regions to share best practices and approaches to common problems and this must continue under the 2021-27 Multi-annual Financial Framework.
- towards a culture of internationalization: a greater prospect for success is offered by the development of an ecosystem within a whole-region approach to ensure more SMEs are aware of what support is available and are helped along the way in their pursuit of internationalization.
- innovation is synonymous with internationalization: SMEs that internationalize are by nature innovative in their thinking and, in most cases, their actions.



## Next step of the Project - Local Action Plans

Partners are about to complete Phase 1 of the Compete In Project, after the Transfer Workshops, the next step is adoption of the Local action plans.

Each Partner is going to design its own action plan as the document providing details on how the lessons learnt from the cooperation and the exchange of experiences within Compete In will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument addressed as starting point on each territory for the participation in the Project.

The LAP specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their time-frame, the players involved, the costs (if any) and funding sources (if any), it illustrates policy instrument, local context and background, challenges at local level and how they will be tackled.

The action plan indicates concrete measures, to be realized in cooperation with the relevant actors, in order to respond to the needs of each territory, transforming inputs from Partners' good practices and Transfer workshops' activities into actions. The Partners, together with their local stakeholders will then test on the ground the actions designed in a two-year second phase of the Project.

LAPs will be presented in the final Interregional Seminar in Reggio Emilia and their abstracts will be published on the Project website.

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## Project Partners

