



East Slovenia

ACTION PLAN

INTRA
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

M R A
MARIBORSKA RAZVOJNA AGENCIJA

INTRA
Internationalisation of regional SMEs

This document has been prepared by the INTRA consortium within the framework of the exchange of experiences activities. Therefore, it only reflects the authors' views and the programme authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information.

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project: INTRA (PGI01464)

Partner organisation: Maribor Development Agency

Other partner organisations involved: **Ministry of Economic Development and Technology**
(Acting on behalf of Managing Authority as Intermediate Body)

Country: **Slovenia**

NUTS2 region: **East Slovenia**

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The Action Plan aims to impact: ✓ **Investment for Growth and Jobs programme**
European Territorial Cooperation programme
Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014 – 2020 (CCI 2014SI16MAOP001)**, Investment priority: Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. INTRA Project: Internationalisation of regional SMEs

INTRA project focuses on the role of public authorities in creating internationalisation services to support the competitiveness of the regional economies and thus contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy.

Developed by the project partners, it builds on internationalisation research findings as well as highlights the importance of regional quadruple helix partnerships to bring together universities, business, civil society and local authorities as the main stakeholders in research and design of new internationalisation policy models, wider acceptance of the good practices identified within the INTRA regions and preparation of new project proposals to be funded under the respective national Cohesion policy 2014 - 2020.

Figure 1: INTRA regions



INTRA partners exchange, explore and disseminate good practices in ways to promote internationalisation and improve the competitiveness of the respective regions involved. INTRA has 6 partners from six different EU28 member states: Maribor Development Agency (SI), Regional Agency for entrepreneurship and innovations – Varna (BG), Foundation FUNDECYT Scientific and Technological Park of Extremadura (ES), University of Algarve (PT), Coventry University Enterprises Limited (UK), CAPITANK (IT) and is supported by the Managing Authorities for ERDF and represent the active stakeholders in internationalisation.



INTRA PROJECT PARTNERS



Lead Partner - Maribor Development Agency



PP2 Regional agency for entrepreneurship and innovations - Varna (RAPIV)



PP3 Foundation FUNDECYT Scientific and Technological Park of Extremadura (FUNDECYT-PCTEX)



PP4 University of Algarve

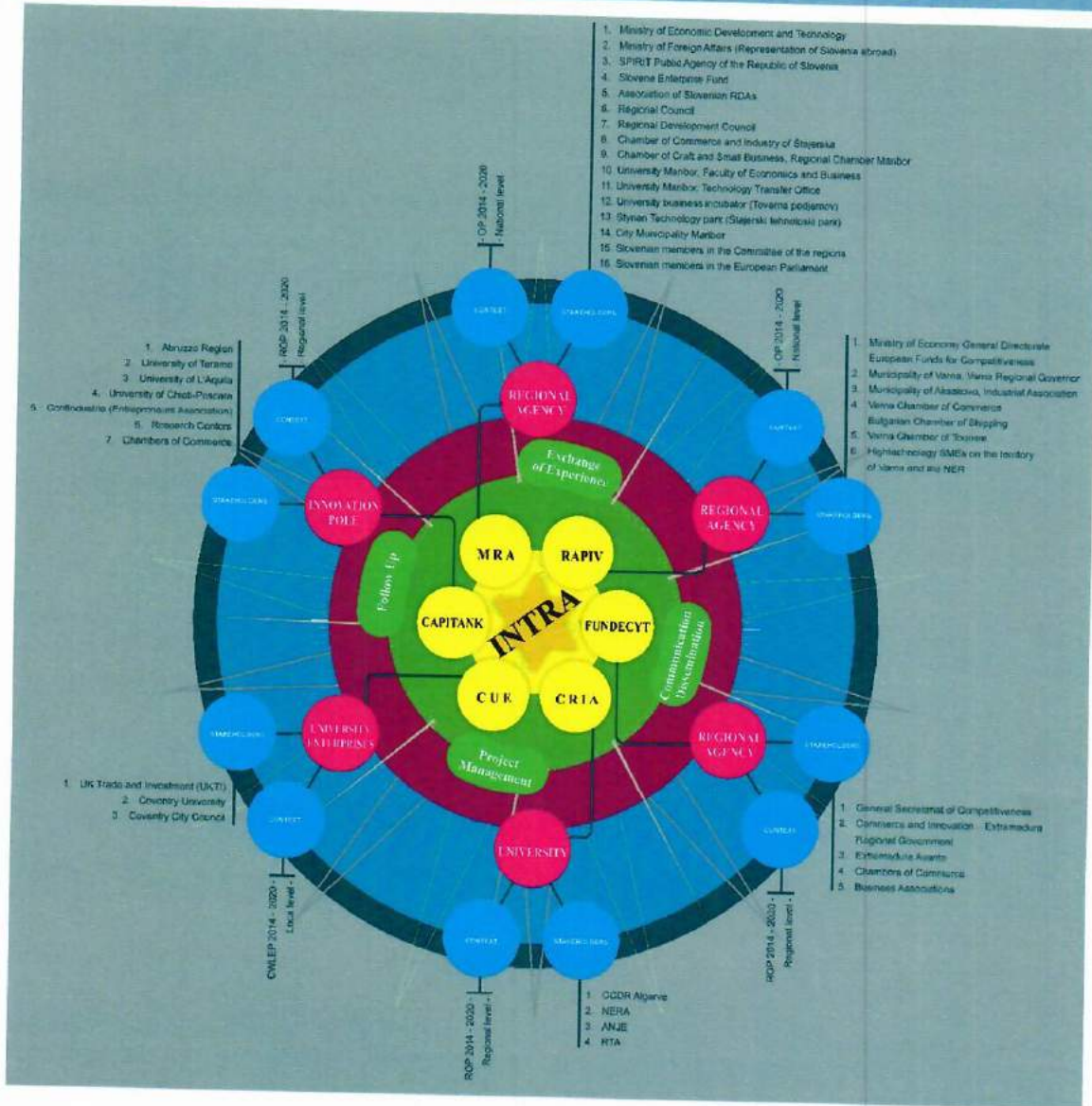


PP5 Coventry University Enterprises Ltd



PP6 CAPITASK - Chemical and Pharmaceutical Innovation - (Limited Liability Consortium)

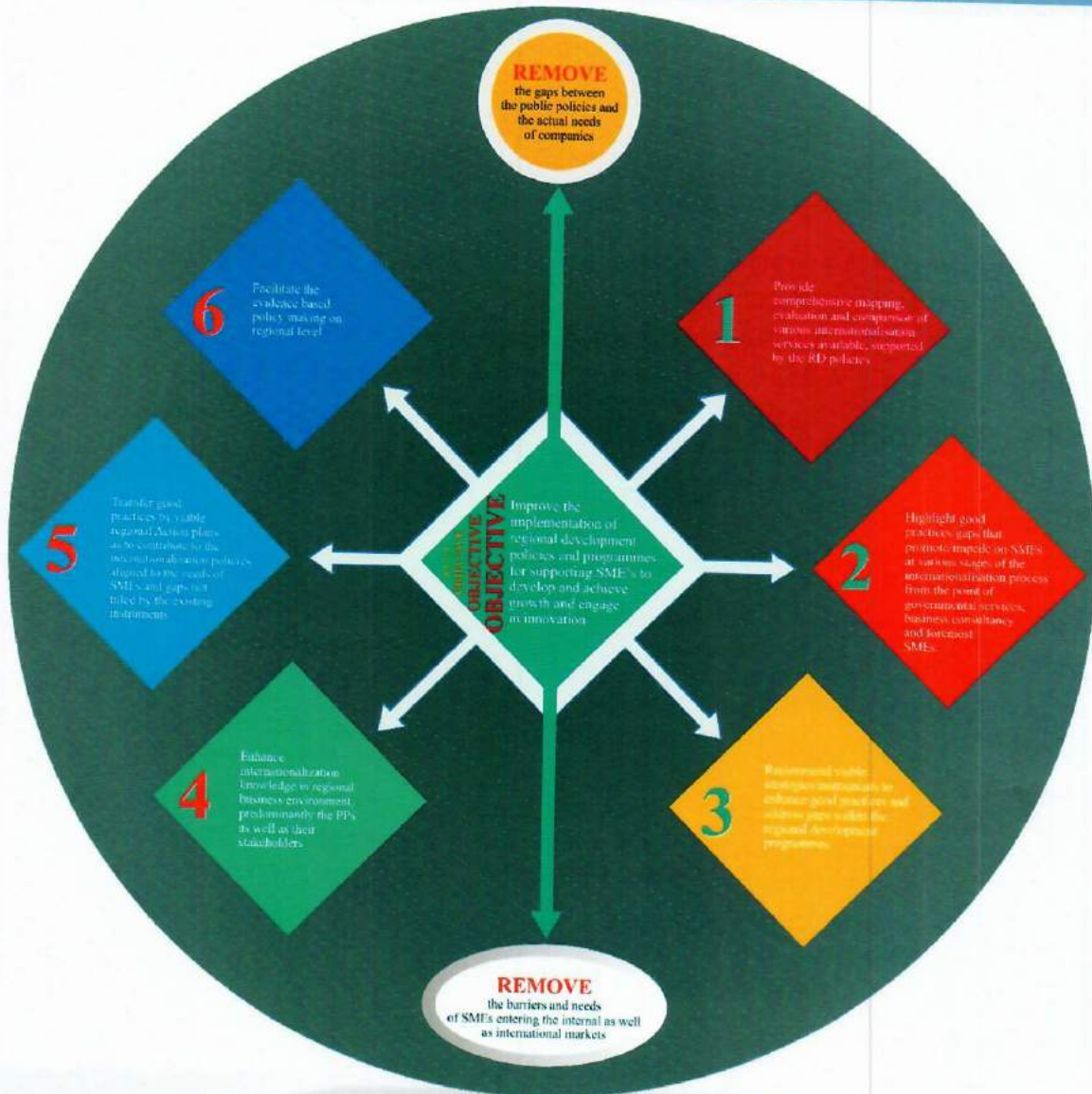
Figure 2: INTRA stakeholders



The objectives of INTRA are to provide comprehensive mapping, evaluation and benchmarking of various internationalisation services available across the regions, highlight good practices/gaps that promote/impede on SMEs at various stages of the internationalisation process.

Upon the selection of good practices, the viable strategies/instruments to enhance good practices and address gaps within the regional development programmes were elaborated and described in the Policy recommendations and will be implemented in the regional Action plans as to contribute to the internationalisation policies aligned to the needs of SMEs and gaps not filled by the existing instruments.

Figure 3: INTRA objectives

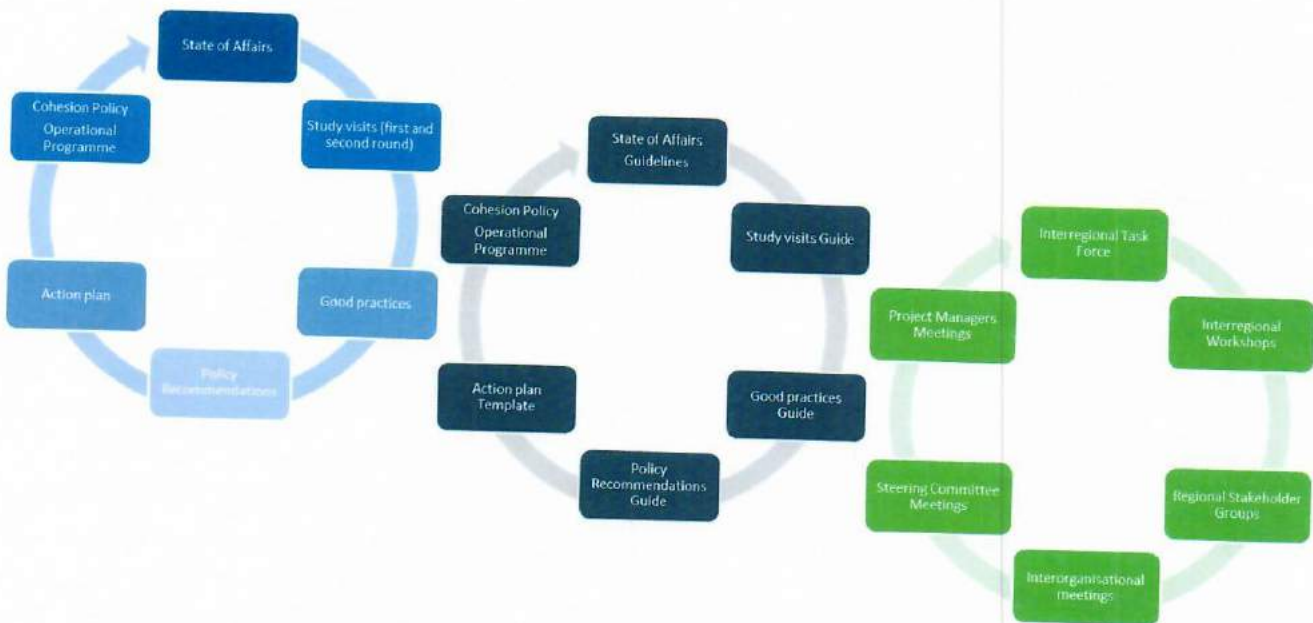


2.2 Regional Action plans

Produced by each region, the action plan is a document providing details on how the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be implemented in order to improve the policy instrument that is addressed within their region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs and funding sources.

The Knowledge Sharing Strategy was prepared to facilitate a process of knowledge transfer and dialogue between internal and external stakeholders, as well as facilitate the active involvement of regional stakeholders (meetings, workshops, interviews), resulting in solutions that contribute to the internationalisation of regional SMEs within each of project partner regions, and beyond. INTRA followed the logic described in the INTRA Knowledge Sharing Cycle as depicted in Figure 4: circle 1 represents the main deliverables; circle 2 the supporting documents for the facilitation of the process; circle 3 the forms of cooperation within INTRA project.

Figure 4: INTRA Knowledge Sharing Cycles



In terms of results, cooperation can influence policy instruments in various ways and may take different forms (see figure 5 below), which can sometimes be interconnected.

Figure 5: Type of policy improvements

Type 1: implementation of new projects

Type 1 implies that the policy instrument provides funding as is the case with Structural Funds programmes. Thanks to interregional cooperation, managing authorities and other relevant bodies can find inspiration in other regions and import new projects to be financed within their programmes. This type of impact requires the availability of funding in the programme.



Type 2: change in the management of the policy instrument

Interregional cooperation can also influence the way policy instruments are managed.

New approaches can be adopted thanks to lessons learnt in other regions. For instance, a new methodology for monitoring or evaluating a measure can be developed within the policy instrument. A managing authority or any other relevant body can also improve the way thematic calls are organised or the way projects are selected. The governance of the programme may also refer to the way environmental issues are integrated into the different measures of the operational programmes.



Type 3: change in the strategic focus of the policy instrument

The third type is the most challenging since it requires a change in the operational programme. To integrate the lessons learnt from the cooperation, some managing authorities can modify existing measures or even create new measures in their programme.



During phase 2 of INTRA Project (starting April 2019 - March 2021) the project partners will closely monitor the implementation of the Action plan, will regularly check the extent to which the measures described in the Action plan are implemented on the ground, evaluating the results of these measures and gathering evidence of success to be reported on to the programme. During phase 2, the project partners will continue to learn from each other and will exchange and build on the success achieved or on the difficulties encountered.

3. Description of Slovenia`s Cohesion regions

3.1 Cohesion regions in Slovenia

Figure 6: Cohesion regions NUTS II (East and West Slovenia), NUTS III (12 regions, Podravje...)

Republic of Slovenia is divided into two NUTS 2 (East and West Slovenia/Vzhodna in Zahodna Slovenija) regions and 12 NUTS III regions (Podravje, Pomurje, Koroška, Savinjska, Zasavje, Posavje, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Primorsko-notranjska, Goriška, Obalno-kraška) and 212 municipalities (LAU 2), of which 11 are city municipalities (Maribor, Ljubljana, Celje, Murska Sobota, Kranj, Koper, Slovenj Gradec, Velenje, Ptuj, Novo mesto, Nova Gorica). Maribor is the second largest city in Slovenia and the centre of *Podravje region in East Slovenia*.

Source: SURS, 2019

The Slovenian, East Slovenia, Podravje and Municipality Maribor ID are represented in table 1 on the next page.

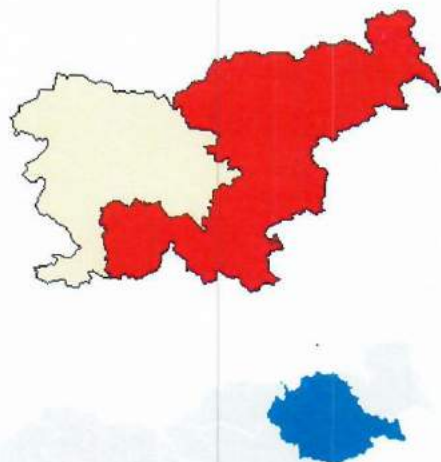


Table 1: Slovenian Economy in brief

	SLOVENIA	EAST SLOVENIA	PODRAVJE	MARIBOR	MEASURE	PERIOD
Surface	20.273	12.433	2170	148	Km ²	01.01.2017
Population	2.065.895	1.091.159	322.545	111.750	Number	01.01.2017
Population growth	0,6	-1,2	-2,5	-4,6	%	31.12.2015
Population density	101,9	87,8	149	753,1	Number/km ²	01.01.2017
Agriculture	2,4	3,7	2,6	-	%	2015
Industry	27,3	35,4	26,8	-	%	2015
Construction	5,5	6,5	6,8	-	%	2015
Services	64,9	54,4	63,8	-	%	2015
GDP real annual change	2,5	1,9	-	-	%	2016
Nominal GDP	3.8570	16.930	4.986	-	Million EUR	2016
GDP per capita	18.693	15.493	15456	-	EUR	2015
Industrial production annual change	7,8	-	-	-	%	April, 2017
Total employment	817.209	377.990	115.213	38.667	Number	2016
Unemployment rate	10,8	12,7	12,3	15,6	%	July – Dec. 2016
Annual inflation rate	1,5	-	-	-	%	May, 2017
Revenue	43,5	-	-	-	%GDP	2016
Surplus/deficit	-1,5	-	-	-	%GDP	2016
Debt	79,7	-	-	-	%GDP	31.12.2016
BOP current account	2.719	-	-	-	million EUR	2016
Trade balance	1.537	-	-	-	million EUR	2016
Gross foreign debt	44.100	-	-	-	million EUR	30.4.2017
Net foreign debt	9.850	-	-	-	million EUR	30.4.2017

Source: Bank of Slovenia, 2016, SURS, 2017

3.2 Export competitiveness of the Slovenian economy

The export competitiveness of the Slovenian economy has improved considerably in the last few years and the export market share exceeds the pre-crisis levels on the key geographic markets. The greatest increases in market shares have been on the largest export markets (Germany, Italy, Austria and Croatia). In addition to the consolidation of position on traditional markets, the fast growth on less important export markets in the EU indicates the diversification of exports within the European Single Market. In terms of product composition, the market share of high-technology-intensive products has reached the pre-crisis level, and since 2012, when industrial production in the EU recovered, the shares of medium- and low-technology-intensive products, which are usually intermediate products in the global supply chains, have also been increasing.

The growth of export market share is the result of the improved factors in the domestic economic environment as well as of the relatively fast growth on the product and geographic markets important for Slovenian exports. In recent years, the cost and price factors of competitiveness have improved in the domestic environment and the burden of corporate debt level has been lessened substantially. The resulting higher profitability, together with the improved access to financing sources for companies, contributed to the gradual growth in the investments of the corporate sector. Since 2013, foreign direct investments inflows have also increased substantially. In addition to these factors, which affect competitiveness at the level of companies, the structure of exports also had a positive impact on the growth of aggregate market share after 2012. The import demand on the markets important for the Slovenian exports (the EU market in particular) has been increasing faster than in less important markets. The composition of Slovenian exports has also changed since the onset of the crisis. The share of less competitive labour-intensive products has decreased, while the share of technology-intensive products has increased, although it is still much smaller than in the EU as a whole. The positive effect of the geographic and product composition of exports on the market share growth was relatively strong in 2013–2015, after being strongly negative in the first years of the crisis.

In the period 1995 – 2008, the trade balance was negative; Slovenia was importing more goods and services as exporting¹. Due to the financial and economic crisis, in 2009 in real terms exports of goods declined over those in 2007 by 17.7% and imports of goods by 18.4%. However, the first positive trade balance was achieved in 2009 (675,9 million EUR, current prices) and continued to 2016 (3832,5 million EUR, current prices) and is as well prognosed for the year 2019.



¹ Exports and imports cover the treatment of goods for processing as the exports or imports of the processing service without the value of goods. The export value of goods is calculated by FOB and the import value of goods is reduced from CIF to FOB according to data provided by the Bank of Slovenia. Exports and imports of services are taken from the balance of payments according to data and methodology of the Bank of Slovenia (Source: SURS)

4. Policy tackled



Table 2: OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020 (CCI number: 2014SI16MAOP001)

<p>Policy/Strategy</p>	<p>OP for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020 (CCI number: 2014SI16MAOP001).</p> <p>Investment priority: Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation</p>
<p>Brief Description</p>	<p>Slovenian export-oriented enterprises are currently out-performed in terms of cost and organisational competitiveness, the shift of the export structure to products and services of higher added value remaining far too slow. In entering foreign markets Slovenian enterprises by and large do not avail themselves of most advanced business models, processes and approaches nor cooperate with each other and with various institutions, they also fail to actively use demonstration and pilot projects.</p> <p>The indicator monitoring the level of integration of enterprises shows that only 7% of enterprises are integrated into groups and that only 20% of enterprises are residential in nature (SORS). Enterprises should thus be encouraged to integrate in order to enhance their competence and knowledge. Furthermore, neither the support nor the business environment is fully developed to help Slovenian enterprises integrate into international economic flows or to provide support for export-oriented enterprises. The KOF indicator (SORS) shows that the globalisation index is still on the decrease (2007 = 78.8 and 2010 = 76.9 index value) which means Slovenia ranks among the EU Member States with the poorest results in terms of the globalisation index. The crucial step is, thus, to improve the conditions for networking and integration of enterprises to help them successfully penetrate tough foreign markets and integrate into global value chains. Slovenian enterprises that wish to expand their activity beyond the national borders or seek to enter additional new foreign markets will benefit from support under this</p>

	<p>investment priority. The indicator monitoring net turnover from sales in foreign markets shows that the share of SME has decreased over the past few years (2009 = 33.3%, 2012 = 31.1%, Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services), which indicates that international business activities should be encouraged and promoted. Actions under this thematic objective will support enterprises, including enterprises in the field of tourism that wish to expand their activity to international markets or seek to diversify their presence in emerging foreign markets.</p> <p>The expected results under this specific objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased capacity of enterprises to integrate into global value chains; • increased export-intensity of enterprises; • increased export of services.
Managing Entity	Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
Scope	National
Target group	SMEs, especially those that wish to go international and already established SMEs wishing to diversify their business activity into new products and/or enter new foreign markets or expand their activities in foreign markets.
Budget Available	The total budget available for the measures is ca. 50 M EUR in the period 2014 - 2020.
Indicators	SMEs' net turnover from sales in foreign markets (baseline in 2013: 34.4), targeted value: 38.4.

4.1 Policy Recommendations (Slovenia specific)

The absence of governance on NUTS II level does impact the design and implementation of ESIF (only the arbitrary division of funds and co-financing of them can be observed in the OP for the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020, CCI number: 2014SI16MAOP001).



Based on the exchange of experience within INTRA project the recommendations for stakeholders were agreed among them as well as the recommendations for measures to overcome Internal as well as the External Barriers in SMEs as well as for their first internationalisation activities.

Recommendations for stakeholders

1. National stakeholder group for internationalisation should be set-up and meet regularly to monitor and steer the implementation of the public funds for internationalisation;
2. The national agency for internationalisation should have its offices abroad, especially in priority markets (outside EU);
3. The policy instruments should be elaborated according to the markets (internal EU market and beyond the EU);
4. The internationalisation measures should be aligned to the needs of SME and stimulate those sectors that have the growth potential (prioritisation of only one sector, namely wood, is according to the main exporting sectors, not enough);
5. The internationalisation measures should differentiate beneficiaries according to their internationalisation maturity (and different needs);
6. Financial institutions should be clearly involved in all steps of internationalisation policy (design, implementation, evaluation);
7. The public calls should be aligned to the strategy as well as Action plans for internationalisation; the links should be revealed in the call itself;
8. The implementation of the Act on balanced regional development, especially in setting up the Regional stakeholder group for internationalisation should be respected (also beyond the INTRA project);
9. The national, as well as regional stakeholders, should be profiled according to the services provided (there should be clear avoidance of duplication of services).

Recommendations for measures to overcome the Internal barriers

1. Shortage of working capital to finance export: Providing more companies with access to working capital through schemes of the SID Bank and Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF). Companies still suffer from the credit crunch as particularly small businesses and certain groups of companies have very limited access to quick financing of ongoing operations. Strengthening microloans would enable

access to sources of financing working capital. For the internationalisation a special pot should be set up;

2. Lack of managerial time to deal with internationalisation and shortage of HR for export activities: A special measure should be put in place to enable SME to acquire/employ staff for internationalisation/export activities (co-financing of the working place). Other regions such as Extremadura have more than 20 year's experiences in the implementation of such measures.

Recommendations for the measure to overcome External Barriers

1. Ability to overcome strong local competitors: call for competition research; strategy for improvement; alignment of the processes/production/management;
2. Obtaining reliable foreign representation: the network of business representations (at least in targeted new markets) should be set up by SPIRIT Slovenia (Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology) and financed by the government;
3. Finding strategic information to locate/analyse markets: the one-stop-shop should cover the lack of strategic information and information concerning specific markets as well as the products/goods & services;
4. Ability to contact overseas customers: training (communication, negotiation) should be conducted for specific markets, including webinars, online assistance...;
5. IPR Protection: targeted call (e.g. justification to be closely linked with the requirements of the market) ;
6. Transportation costs: call for design, packaging, co-financing of transportation costs.

Recommendations for first internationalisation activities

1. Foreign representation: availability of the services provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be promoted; in addition, the business support in foreign countries should be provided by SPIRIT Slovenia offices;
2. Websites accustomed to foreign customers: call for e-marketing abroad;
3. Scouting for funding opportunities: one-stop-shop should provide all relevant info, where, by whom, under which conditions etc.;
4. Joint communication and promo services: call for cooperation between micro/small companies in going abroad;
5. Distribution channels: list of distributors should be available by the one-stop-shop;
6. The organisation of networking and B2B activities in a foreign country: ongoing call, giving the priority to micro and small companies that were not subsidised before.

The Policy Recommendations were elaborated by the RSG members and validated in its final form of Joint Policy Recommendations in February 2019.

5. Exchange of Experiences: the transformative potentials of interregional cooperation

The main activity in INTRA project, Exchange of Experiences was focused on Study visits, the interregional learning events that include: study visit with observation of good practices, Interregional task force meetings with evaluation and discussion about observed good practices and Interregional workshops in which knowledge about the internationalisation of SMEs was generated. The main reason and decision for the preparation of INTRA project in East Slovenia was the absence of regional support structure for SMEs internationalization foreseen and no specific actions for the East and West Cohesion Region. The institutional framework for the implementation of the actions is not described as well as the cooperation between different stakeholders is not defined although the beneficiaries are: SMEs, institutions, chambers, associations, NGOs, networks, Regional development institutions, public institutes. Therefore, the main challenge, which was addressed is the stakeholder cooperation in the internationalisation of Slovenian SMEs that will result in the Action Plan and the preparation of joint programme/project on a national/regional level. The development within Regional Stakeholder Group and participation of regional representatives in Interregional Task Force as well as at the Interregional Workshop would not be feasible without the implementation of INTRA project. The whole process led to the preparation of the Action "Vouchers for internationalisation", which demonstrates a new instrument with simplified processes and procedures within Operational Programme tackled.

The RSoA revealed that the existing policy measures, in particular, calls for internationalisation, published on behalf of MA/IB are from the perspective of participating SMEs highly demanding in terms of documents to be provided regardless the purpose and amount of co-financing requested by the applicants. The same model was used for the calls up to 10.000,00 EUR of the total amount and those above. Due to this, especially in the East Slovenian Cohesion region, not all funds were contracted. The policy recommendations stated that the internal barriers of SMEs (e.g. shortage of working capital) should be overcome by the provision of the financial schemes by SID Bank and Slovene Enterprise Fund. The policy recommendations that inter alia stated also that the SMEs are facing a shortage of HR, were validated by RSG, including MA/IB. To overcome these shortcomings of Slovenian internationalisation policy, the RSG members were scrutinising all observed GPs during the 1st round of Study Visits to find the most suitable good practices to be transferred into the Operational Programme tackled.

The Interregional Task Force elaborated the GP Evaluation Cards, which were filled in for the joint discussion, evaluation and validation of the GPs by the RSG as well as the INTRA partnership, taking into account the transferability potential of them. The proposal for the implementation of different topics under the Internationalisation Vouchers, including the possibility to obtain the IPR and translate the necessary documentation to the languages of the targeted markets and support the start-ups in their internationalisation activities, was prepared by the LP and communicated to the MA/IB in written in July 2018.

During the task force meetings in Coventry (December 2017) and in Algarve (May 2018) in which participated the project partners and external experts, the discussion of the SME needs versus the instruments offered was discussed and in particular the importance of simplification of procedures. In December 2018 the PPs during the IFT in Maribor discussed in details the Policy recommendations and the transferability of the good practices into the Action plan. The project partners confirmed the

transferred elements from the Order 31/2014 and the West Midlands Internationalisation Grants to the Slovenian Internationalisation Vouchers (Action).

5.1 Good Practices observed: transformative potentials

In the context of Interreg Europe Project INTRA, a good practice is a national, regional or local initiative aimed at supporting SMEs to internationalise. The whole process of interregional learning was focused on lessons to be learned during the selection of good practices, their presentations and observations, evaluation and validation by project partners – staff members as their respective external experts and foremost by the Regional Stakeholder Groups, in charge for the implementation of the internationalisation policy and/or shaping internationalisation support environment.

INTRA understood good practice as a policy, a measure, a programme, a project, or a process or a tool or even a technique, which has some evidence of success in reaching its objectives and in the specific case of INTRA – in the internationalisation of SMEs. Moreover, good practice has the potential to be transferred to other geographic areas through regional strategy and policy. The total number of 98 good

practices were listed under the project INTRA.

In the whole phase 1 the selection, evaluation and validation process was done that resulted in 84 listed good practices.

The whole process is depicted in Figure 8. The 84 good practices can be observed at:

www.interreg.europe/intra project website.

Good practices observed have been collected in the *Good Practice Guide on SME Internationalisation*.

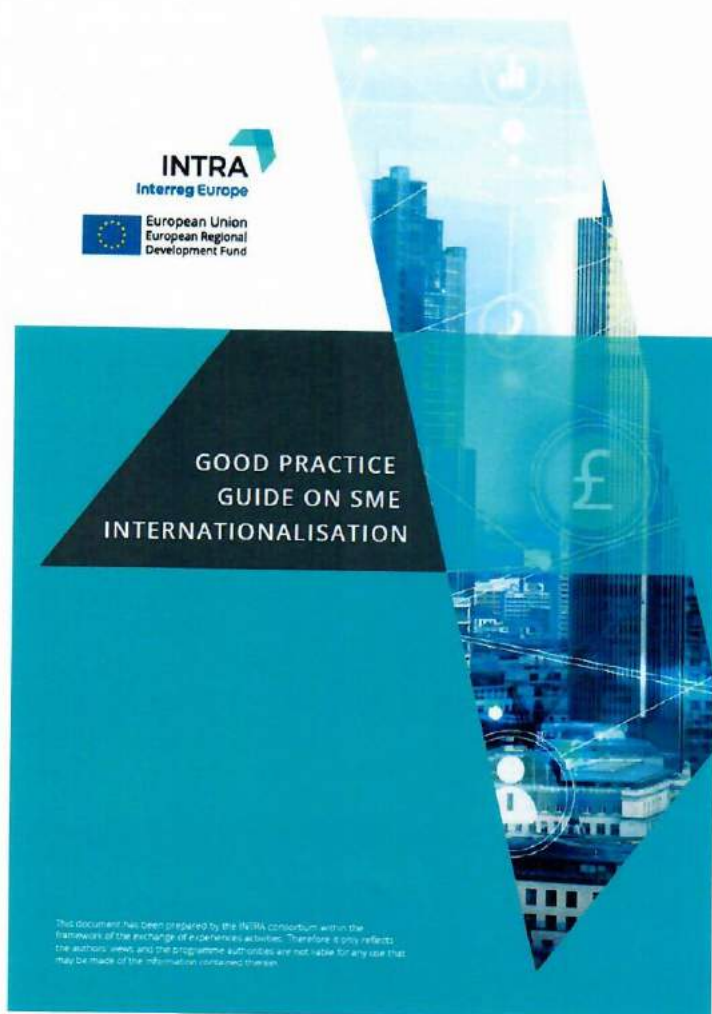
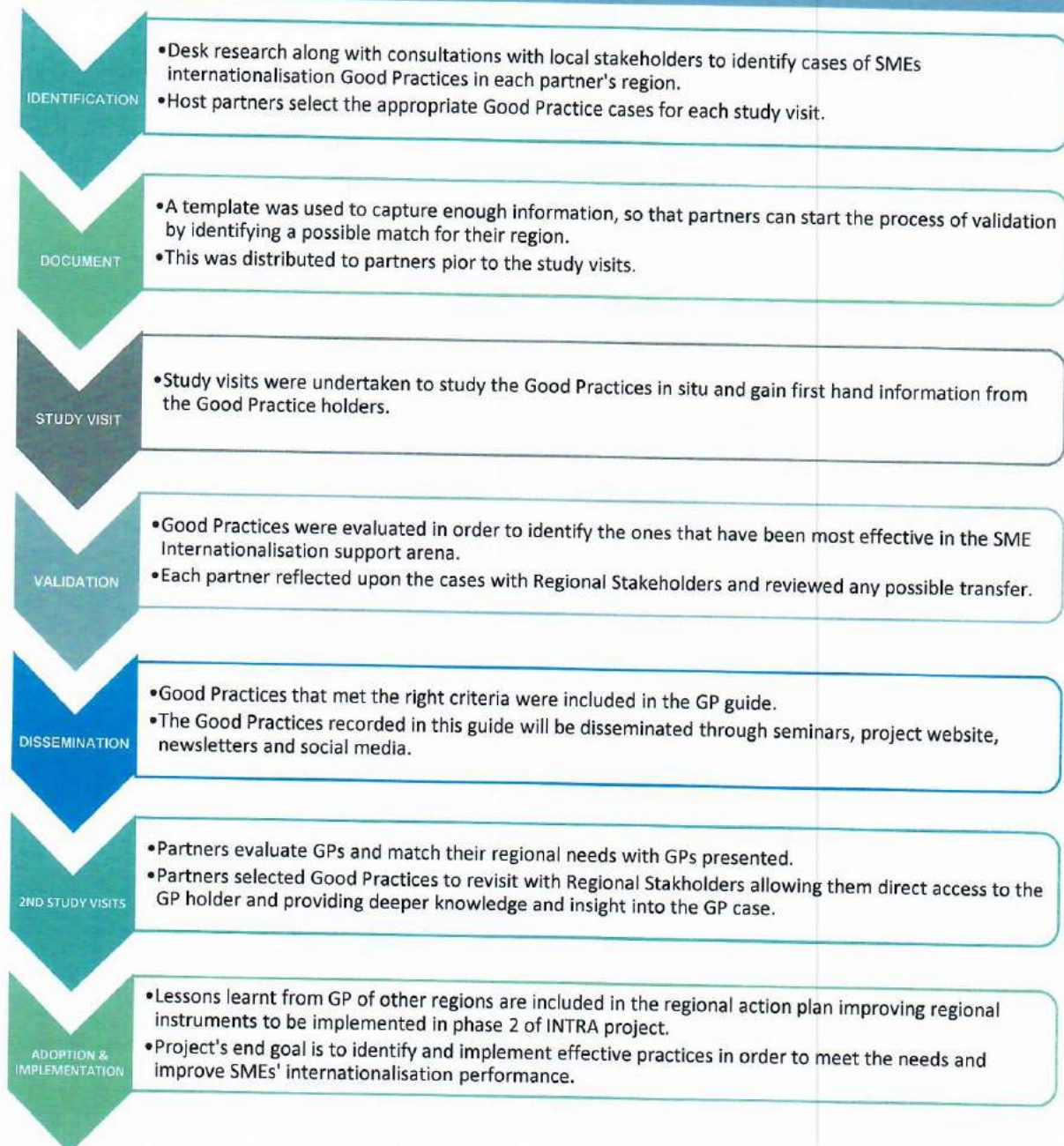


Figure 7: Good Practice Guide on SME Internationalisation.

Figure 8: Good Practice process within INTRA project



5.1.1 Good practices: Transferability Elements and Impact on Internationalisation Vouchers (Action)

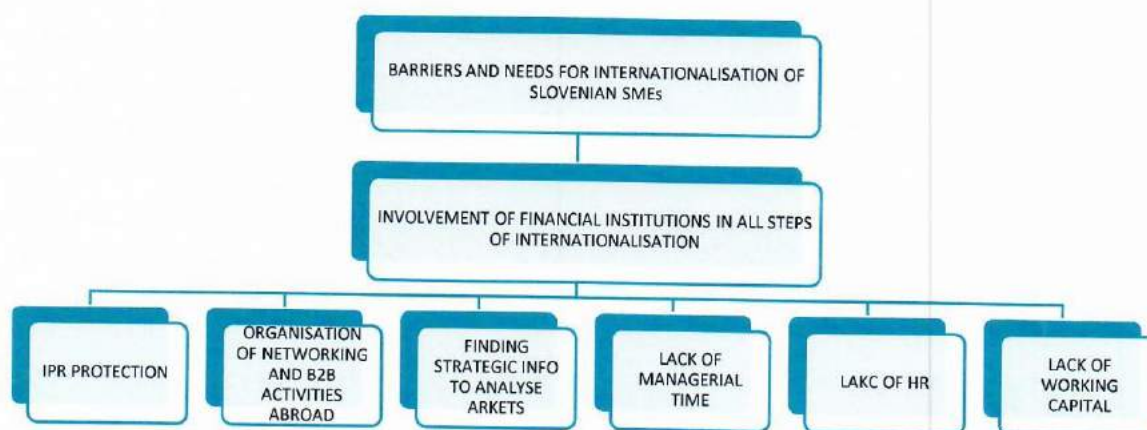
Good Practices that contributed to the Action to be implemented in phase 2 in Slovenia/East Slovenia (NUTS II) are those observed in the first and second round of study visit in Extremadura (Spain) and West-Midlands (UK).

In figure 10 are depicted the main barriers and needs for internationalisation of Slovenian SMEs that are tackled with the Internationalisation vouchers:

- Financial institutions should be clearly involved in all steps of internationalisation policy (design, implementation, evaluation);
- Shortage of working capital to finance export;
- Lack of managerial time to deal with internationalisation and shortage of HR for export activities;
- Finding strategic information to locate/analyse markets;
- IPR Protection;
- The organisation of networking and B2B activities in the foreign country, ongoing call;
- Long selection procedures of public calls

which can be overcome by the implementation of the Action "Internationalisation Vouchers".

Figure 9: Barriers and needs for internationalisation of Slovenian SMEs



The barriers and needs will be overcome gradually by providing services and know-how gained and developed within the INTRA project.

5.1.1.1 Process of introducing elements of the observed GPs to the Slovenian Cohesion Policy

The LP observed the good practices during the 1st round of study visits in Extremadura in December 2016 and presented them at the 2nd RSG meeting in February 2017. The possibility for the transfer of GPs was further discussed via skype between the LP and the Avante (SMEs support agency from Extremadura) and Chamber of Commerce of Badajoz. During the online meetings in 2017 (6th and 8th March) the LP received the necessary information for further implementation of the internationalisation measures. The

special interest was placed on the Order 31/2014, which is the measure that boosts the internationalisation of SMEs in Extremadura. In order to entirely comprehend the mechanism, the decision of the 4th RSG meeting was that the MA/IB shall accompany the LP in the 2nd round of Study visit in Extremadura as well as in West-Midlands. The evaluation of the observed good practices was duly prepared by LP and MA/IB and shared with the host and discussed during the Interregional Task Force meeting in December 2018.

The Order covers the following pillars of assistance:

1. Helpline for the internationalization of Extremadura enterprises;
 - a) Access to foreign markets; b) International tender; c) Prospective and trade missions; d) Participation in fairs and trade shows; e) Advertising and promotional actions abroad.
2. Helpline for hiring technicians in foreign trade.
3. Helpline for the support of the expenses of the common management structure of the commercialisation partnerships.

Beneficiaries are companies and their groups, including consortia, clusters, commercialisation partnership, economic interest groups and temporary joint ventures, as well as the public University.

AID INTENSITY: Grant of **40%** of eligible expenses (**minimum investment €2,000**), with a **maximum amount of €25,000 aid per call**. Aid covered by *minimis* regime.

The grant covers following eligible activities:

- 1. Access to foreign markets:** a) Prospecting and research expenses of destination markets; b) Implementation costs in destination markets; c) Regulatory adaptation, homologation and protection costs in destination markets; d) Interpretation and certified translation expenses.
- 2. International Tender:** a) External and specialized consulting expenses in the strategic preparation of companies towards the tender market; b) Travel, accommodation and maintenance expenses; c) Expenses for preparing, presenting and monitoring the technical offer in international tenders; d) Interpretation and certified translation expenses.
- 3. Prospective, direct and inverse trade missions**
 - 3.1 Prospective and direct trade missions costs:
 - a) Costs of renting work rooms/ spaces; b) Travel, accommodation and maintenance costs; c) Hiring costs for other services (hostesses, translation and interpretation); d) Costs of renting audiovisual equipment; e) Costs for organizing agendas; f) Costs for samples transportation.
 - 3.2. Inverse trade missions costs:
 - a) Costs of renting work rooms/ spaces; b) Travel, accommodation and maintenance costs; c) Hiring costs for other services (hostesses, translation and interpretation); d) Costs of renting audiovisual equipment; e) Self-consumption expenses for tasting, as well as catering.
- 4. Participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions :** a) Registration fees; b) Rental expenses for the exhibition area, as well as other mandatory contracting concepts; c) Trade fair services of exclusive contract with the organizer of the event; d) Assembly and disassembly costs; e) Complementary fair services; f) Hostesses and auxiliary personnel services, translation and interpretation; g) Costs of transporting the goods; h) Self-consumption and tasting expenses; i) Travel, accommodation and maintenance costs.

5. Advertising and promotional actions abroad

a) Advertising campaigns in the media of the destination markets; b) Presentations, demonstrations and tastings of products, parades, technical demonstrations, live workshops and other promotional actions at the point of sale in the destination markets; c) Adaptation, modification and improvement of the company's website to the destination market; d) Specific promotional material for the objective foreign markets.

Based on the 2nd round of Study visit organised by the host PP3 FUNDECYT-PCTEX and the presentation and discussions held with the representatives of Regional Government of Extremadura in Merida on June 6th 2018 the whole day workshop was held on July 20th 2018 between MA/IB and LP in Maribor/Slovenia, discussing in depths the whole set of GPs observed in Extremadura. The Order 31/2014 matches the gaps/needs highlighted in the Regional State of Affairs: limited firm resources and shortage of HR to export are critical constraints to MSME and SMEs internationalisation. The gaps in the institutional environment revealed the low user-level perception of public sector support programs that calls for the modelling of the process so that the specific support programs can be introduced. The variety of activities that are supported under the Order 31/2014 were discussed and it was agreed that the LP prepares additional inputs for the Internationalisation Vouchers that are under preparation by the MA/IB. The LP sent the additional inputs to the MA/IB in written on July 23rd 2018, proposing additional vouchers for the IPR and translation of documents needed for export as well as for start-ups. The proposals were accepted by the MA/IB and can be observed under the description of Action in this document.

During the presentation of the internationalisation environment in the UK and in particular in West-Midlands in September 2018, the Slovenian delegation was interested in several good practices (from e-commerce to the DIT working with universities, cultural advisors etc.) but found from the implementation point highly interesting the simplified procedure in WM Internationalisation Grants: short, simplified application that has the potential to boost internationalisation of micro and small companies. The Grant funding application form is 4 pages long, of which the app. 70% is to tick the boxes, accompanied by detailed guidelines for International Trade Adviser and Project delivery management. All these inspired the preparation of a new instrument "Voucher for internationalisation" that will be implemented in the period 2019 - 2023 in Slovenia, with the easy to be filled in application pack. The Application pack received in West-Midlands was handed over to the MA/IB and also to the Slovenian Enterprise Fund, who will implement the Internationalisation Vouchers. The Public Fund of Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship or shortly The Slovene Enterprise Fund (the Fund or SEF) was established in 1992, based on the Small Business Development Act (OJ no. 18/1991) with purpose of improving the access to financial resources for different development – business investments of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) including with financial resources for SMEs start-up and micro-financing in the Republic of Slovenia. The Fund is offering proper financial solutions for business projects in Slovenian entrepreneurial sector via financial engineering, which is majorly based on financial instruments with refundable means (loans, guarantees for loans, subsidised interest rates, venture capital) which allows combining of financial resources of different financial institutions (financial lever).

Both good practices, Internationalisation grants and Order 31/2014 have two specifics taken into account by Slovenian Internationalisation Vouchers: calls under which the small amount of managerial/HR time is needed to prepare the application pack and calls extended beyond the budgetary yearly planning. In table 4 the reference to the GPs and their transferability elements is made.

Table 4: Transferability elements of GPs from UK and ES for preparation of Internationalisation Vouchers

No.	Good practice title	Link to the GP	Transferability elements
1	West-Midlands SME Internationalisation grants	https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/471/west-midlands-sme-internationalisation-grants/	<p>Availability of funding in a broad range (from 1.000 to 30.000) covering 50% of costs; Instruments aim to overcome the fund's commitment procedure (shortened and simplified application).</p> <p>The application form is simplified on three pages that can be easily filled in by the SMEs. If necessary, the DIT assist SMEs in elaborating their plans.</p> <p>Transferred: Based on this simplified procedure the grants up to 10.000,00 EUR were prepared in the form of Internationalisation Vouchers. The application pack is simplified, clear and can be filled in by SMEs and in case they need the assistance the SPOT Consulting (a network of selected One-stop-shops on a regional level) can support them.</p>
2	Order 31/2014	https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/201/order-31-2014-aids-addressed-to-the-internationalisation-of-the-extremadura-economic-activity/	<p>Order is an example of a legal framework to boost the creation and consolidation of regional SMEs, foremost in internationalisation.</p> <p>Transferred: open call for proposals for the duration that extends the budgetary yearly planning (the Internationalisation Vouchers will be opened until the end of March 2023).</p> <p>As per Order 31/2014, the different activities can be financed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to foreign markets 2. International Tender 3. Prospective, direct and inverse trade missions 4. Participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions 5. Advertising and promotional actions abroad <p>Please note that the part of the Order 31/2014, which finance the employment of technicians in internationalization was not transferable due to the ERDF/ESF restrictions as implemented by MA/IB in Slovenia. However, the Internationalisation Vouchers enables the engagement of the external experts for different internationalization task in the form of a service contract.</p>

The details of the Action Internationalisation Vouchers are described in details in the next section.

6. ACTION: INTERNATIONALISATION VOUCHERS

6.1 Background for Action Internationalisation Vouchers

Based on the suggestions, derived from the Regional State of Affairs, meetings and workshops with Regional Stakeholder Group and the Study visits conducted, Interregional Task Force Meetings, Interregional Thematic Workshops, bilateral discussions with different good practice holders (e.g. follow up activities under the conductive Study visits via Skype), participation at Policy Learning Events organised by Joint Secretariat of Interreg Europe and other External Events, the MRA INTRA team proposed simplification procedures for implementation of internationalisation measures in Slovenia, in particular implementation of Internationalisation Vouchers.



Within project INTRA the Regional Stakeholder Group (further RSG) was set up consisting of: national representatives (Ministry of Economic Development and Technology; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SPIRIT Slovenia, SID Bank, Slovene Enterprise Fund, RRA giz), regional and local representatives (Regional Council of Podravje region, Regional Development Council, University of Maribor – Faculty of Economics and Business, Technology

transfer office, Institute for Entrepreneurship Research – Uni Incubator, Technology Park Štajerska, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Štajerska, Chamber of Crafts Maribor, Municipality Maribor) as well as public and private companies.

The members of RSG were involved in the preparation of Regional State of Affairs, which they validated before launching it for the wider interesting public. During the preparation of the Regional State of Affairs, the interviews were conducted with the national, regional as well as local stakeholders that constitute the internationalisation supporting environment. A survey among SMEs was launched in order to compare the existing measures for internationalisation and the needs and barriers the SMEs are facing. The Regional State of Affairs revealed that the supporting environment clearly sees the needs for the implementation of One-Stop-Shop on national level, enhancing the coordination as well as implementation of joint activities among different ministries (Economy, Foreign Affairs, Government, House of Parliament, Office of the President of the RS) and their implementation bodies (SPIRIT Slovenia) and funds such as SID Bank and Slovenian Enterprise Fund, public service providers (regional agencies) as well as the associations acting on behalf of the SMEs (chambers).

The Exchange of Experiences was conducted throughout the whole Phase 1 within the "Study visits", which incorporated the observation of Good Practices of the hosting regions, their evaluations during the Interregional Task Force, discussion of important internationalisation topics during the Interregional Workshops (knowledge generation: categorisation of internationalisation measures, mapping of existing policies, needs of SMEs, governmental initiatives, selection of good practices and policy recommendations, role of the industrial poles, networks and clusters in internationalisation policies for

SMEs and the role of R&D&I for internationalisation of SMEs; role of governmental foreign offices and trade advisors abroad; transferability; fundraising and financial instruments needed for internationalisation) as well as the validation and selection of particularly interesting good practices for the region, observed from the point of its transferability elements to the receiving region.

The Study visits were organised in which the project partners observed the good practices in the internationalisation policies, collected by respective project partners. Based on the presentation of the good practices the joint decision of Regional Stakeholder Group was made, which of the GPs should be analysed in depth during the 2nd round of Study visits. The first round was reserved solely for the project partners, whereas in the second, the project partners were accompanied by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, responsible for the implementation of the Investment priority Developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation (priority financed through ERDF). Based on the Study visit in Extremadura, the workshop was held among representative of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and Maribor Development Agency - INTRA Team on July 20th, 2018. It was agreed that the Maribor Development Agency, LP of INTRA project, should prepare the inputs for the new measure, which will incorporate several small-scale interventions (up to 10.000,00 EUR per company) in the form of a voucher.

Based on the conclusions of the whole day workshop organised between MRA and the MA/IB the written recommendations for the elaboration of internationalisation vouchers were prepared by the LP on July 23rd, 2018 and submitted to the MA/IB. The proposal for inclusion of the IPR protection, translation of the documents and support of start-ups in internationalisation activities was further discussed at the 5th RSG Meeting on 26th September 2019 and in its final form during the 6th RSG Meeting on December 7th 2018, where also the modifications for the simplification of the application procedure were presented by the MA/IB.

The final decision was taken by the MA/IB in January 2019 and the Internationalisation Vouchers were recognised as the measure to be implemented and monitored during the 2nd INTRA phase.

The Action plan was unanimously agreed and validated by the RSG members on February 28th, 2019.

The Internationalisation Vouchers represent a novelty in terms of:

- 1) shortened procedure (the applicants will be notified within 15 days from the submission date) as observed in the ;
- 2) instead of yearly publishing calls, one ongoing procedure (2019-2023) as observed in Order 31/2014;
- 3) reduced time to prepare the application due to the simplification of the templates and requested data as already observed in other participating regions, foremost in West-Midlands.

The foreseen action Internationalisation Vouchers is a new measure under the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014 - 2020 (CCI number: 2014SI16MAOP001) introduced by MA/IB in Slovenia.

6.2 INTERNATIONALISATION VOUCHERS

Based on the SoA, reports on the implementation of Interregional Task Groups, Interregional Workshops conducted by INTRA partnership, the presentation and evaluation of good practices and decision taken to observe in details the GPs of Extremadura and the West-Midlands, the Regional Stakeholder Group on its 6th Meeting in December 2018 took the final decision that the Internationalisation Vouchers in the

proposed form by LP and MA/IB should be implemented and monitored during the second phase of INTRA project. The decision was confirmed by MA/IB in January 2019 by validation of the Action plan. The Action plan as presented here was validated by the Regional Stakeholder Group on 28th February 2019.

6.2.1 Action INTERNATIONALISATION VOUCHERS description

The Internationalisation Vouchers, new policy measure for internationalisation of SMEs will be implemented in the period from 2019 – 2023 under the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014-2020 (CCI number: 2014SI16MAOP001) in the following fields:

A voucher for obtaining an international, European or Slovenian Quality Certificate

A voucher for a patent application or registration of trademark/design

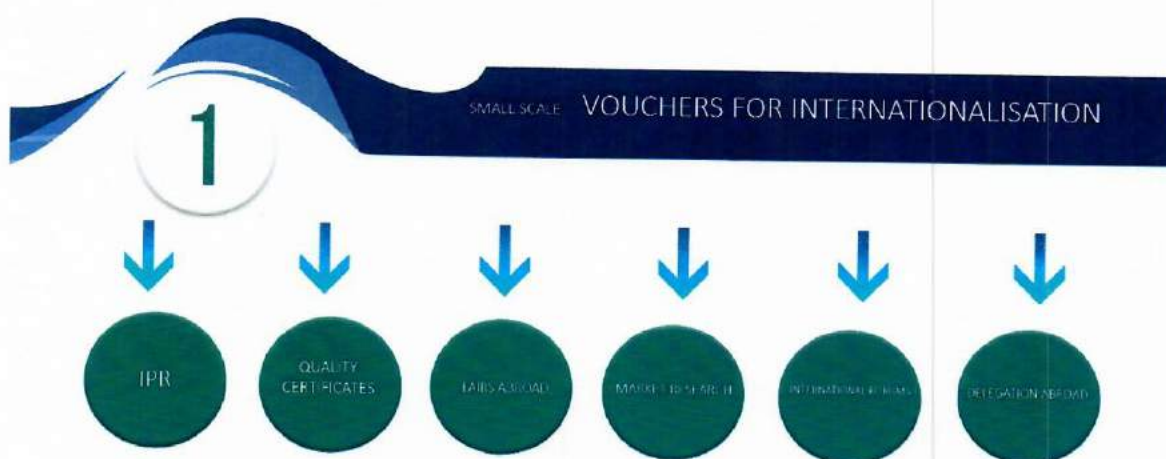
A voucher for market research on the foreign markets

A voucher for participation at an economic delegation abroad

A voucher for participants at international forums

A voucher for group participation of Slovenian economy at fairs abroad

Figure 11: Internationalisation Vouchers



The details of the vouchers are described in the following sections.

6.2.1.1 *A voucher for obtaining an international, European or Slovenian Quality Certificate*

Purpose, aim and subject of the Voucher for obtaining an international, European or Slovenian Quality Certificate

The purpose and aim of the Voucher for obtaining an international, European or Slovenian Quality Certificate is to encourage SMEs (including independent entrepreneurs and cooperatives) to obtain and renew certification for quality management systems or products. This will contribute to the

competitiveness of SMEs, strengthen the possibilities of expansion to foreign markets, raise the quality of business and/or products and increase the added value and/or income from sales.

The subject of the call is co-financing eligible costs of obtaining or renewal of certification for Quality management systems or products, that are issued based on international, European or equal Slovenian national standards (ISO, IATF, IEC in ITU, CEN, CENELEC in ETSI, EMAS, ECOLABEL).

Available funding

The amount of funding available for the public call in the period of 2019 – 2023 is 1.500.000,00 EUR. The call is funded by the national funds of the Republic of Slovenia, allocated within the budget of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

Eligible costs and the maximum amount of subsidy

Within this call the costs eligible for co-financing are:

- Costs of preparation for certification (costs of external expert),
- Costs of certification for obtaining or renewal of certification for quality management systems, products and validation of environmental statement issued based on international, European or equal Slovenian national standards (ISO, IATF, IEC in ITU, CEN, CENELEC in ETSI, EMAS, ECOLABEL).

Obtaining certificates is a procedure conducted with the assistance of an accredited organisation. The accredited organisation must have accreditation by a national accreditation that is a signatory of the European Accreditation: <https://european-accreditation.org/ea-members/directory-of-ea-members-and-mla-signatories/>. ECOLABEL is issued by the Slovenian Environment Agency.

A minimal amount of co-financing is 1.000,00 EUR and the maximal 9.999,99 EUR. Value added tax (VAT) is not an eligible cost.

6.2.1.2 A voucher for a patent application or registration of trademark/design

Purpose, aim and subject of the Voucher for a patent application or registration of trademark/design

The purpose and aim of the call are to encourage SMEs (including independent entrepreneurs and cooperatives) to protect their intellectual property. This will contribute to the growth and reputation of an SME's, thus strengthening their competitiveness and their market position.

Under this call, the following costs are considered eligible:

- Preparation of patent application, registration of design or trademark,
- Application and/or renewal and/or expanding the protection of intellectual property abroad,
- Translation of the application.

Available funding

The amount of funding available for the public call in the period of 2019 – 2023 is 1.500.000,00 EUR. The funding is provided from the European Regional Development Funds. The ration between the EU cohesion funding and Slovenian cofunding for funding projects is 70 %: 30% for the program area of the

cohesion region of West Slovenia and 75% - 25% for the program area of the cohesion region of East Slovenia. The funds are granted under the de minimis rule.

Eligible costs and the maximum amount of subsidy

Within this call the costs eligible for co-financing are:

- The costs of the preparation of documentation to apply and/or renew and/or expanding abroad the patent, model design, trademark. This includes the costs of an expert for the preparation of documentation with all included activities up to the point of registration of intellectual property.
- The costs of the application and/or renewal and/or expanding abroad the patent, model design, trademark with Slovenian Intellectual Property Office (SIPO), foreign patent offices or European Patent Office (EPO). This includes costs of individual fee applications, registration, renewal, search report with an expert opinion on patentability.
- the cost of the translation of application (if it is connected to application abroad or validation at individual Patent Offices), that is connected to the costs for which the co-financing under this call will be claimed.

A minimal amount of co-financing: 1.000,00 EUR.

The maximal amount of co-financing:

- 5.000,00 EUR – does not include the search report with an expert opinion on patentability,
- 9.999,99 EUR – includes the search report with an expert opinion on patentability.

Value added tax (VAT) is not an eligible cost.

6.2.1.3 A voucher for market research on the foreign markets

Purpose, aim and subject of the Voucher for market research on the foreign markets

The purpose and aim of the Voucher for market research on the foreign markets is to encourage SMEs (including independent entrepreneurs and cooperatives) to prepare market research of foreign markets², with the purpose to assess their opportunities to place new or existing products/services to a foreign market, expand or diversify their business on foreign markets and thus strengthening their competitiveness, raising their added value or income from sales.

The subject of the call is co-financing eligible costs of market research.

For the purposes of this call, market research is defined as a process of systematically collecting and processing data gained from mostly primary sources (surveys, interviews, observation studies, focus groups, and similar) with the goal of:

- Identification and assessment of applicant's opportunities for placement of a new product/service or entering a new market,

² All countries except Slovenia

- Assessing how appropriate it is for the applicant to place a product or service to a foreign market,
- Preparation of a plan to adopt a product or service of the applicant to the needs of the foreign market,
- Identification of appropriate sale channels the applicant will use on the foreign market.

The result of the market research is a structured overview of data on a foreign market and the competitors already present there.

Available funding

The amount of funding available for the public call in the period of 2019 – 2023 is 1.000.000,00 EUR. The call is funded by the national funds of the Republic of Slovenia, allocated within the budget of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

Eligible costs and the maximum amount of subsidy

Within this call the costs eligible for co-financing are:

- Costs of preparation of market research (costs of external expert).

A minimal amount of co-financing is 1.000,00 EUR, the maximal is 5.000,00 EUR. Value added tax (VAT) is not an eligible cost.

6.2.1.4 A voucher for participation at an economic delegation abroad

Purpose, aim and subject of Voucher for participation at an economic delegation abroad

The purpose and aim of this public call is to encourage SMEs (including independent entrepreneurs and cooperatives) to participate in outgoing economic delegations (including bilateral meetings with companies – B2B), in order to prospect potential business partners and search for new business opportunities, with the aim of increasing the possibilities to gain visibility and obtain experience at presentation and conducting business on foreign markets. These activities will have a positive effect on the competitiveness of beneficiary enterprises.

The subject of the public call is co-financing of eligible costs for participation at outgoing economic delegation and bilateral meetings with companies (B2B).

Participation at economic delegations abroad must not be completed before submitting the application if the participants will start after the call was published. In cases of participation at delegation between January 1st, 2019 and the date when the call was published, this restriction does not apply and an application can be submitted after the participation was concluded.

The costs of external experts are not eligible if:

- the external expert is a related company under as defined in the law regulating companies; or if
- the expert is a representative of a family member of the applicant:
 - involved as a manager, board member or legal representative of the external expert,
 - directly or through other connected legal entities owns more than 25% of legal rights or finances of the external expert.

Available funding

The amount of funding available for the public call in the period of 2019 – 2023 is 3.000.000,00 EUR. The call is funded by the national funds of the Republic of Slovenia, allocated within the budget of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

Eligible costs and the maximum amount of subsidy

This public call co-finances the eligible costs of the applicant, who participated at the economic delegation abroad, which was organized by Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and regional chambers, Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia and regional chambers of craft and small business, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic and consular missions abroad, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, SPIRIT Slovenia - Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology, Slovene Enterprise Fund, Business clubs, European Enterprise Network, SID Bank, Subjects of innovative environment, Slovenian Tourist Board and chambers of commerce active in Slovenia and organizing delegations for Slovenian companies (further defined in the documentation).

Eligible costs are:

- Participation fees for economic delegations abroad,
- Transport costs – costs of transfer (by airplane, train, bus or company car) between the countries, for a participant; in case of company car, the reimbursement by distance in kilometres above 150km is calculated in accordance with the Decree on the tax treatment of reimbursement of costs and other income from employment),
- Costs of accommodation – eligible are only costs of an overnight stay with breakfast; eligible are only costs for the duration of the delegation/B2B event, with possible two additional overnight stays (arrival on the day before the event; departure on the day after the event);
- B2B costs – B2B costs can be eligible only if they occurred during the delegation and are not included within the costs specified in line 1 of this article (participation fees).

Only costs of one participant per SME can be eligible and only if the participant is the owner or legal representative of the company.

Minimal possible cofounding is 500,00 EUR, the maximal possible co-financing is 5.000,00 EUR. Value added tax (VAT) is not an eligible cost.

For all vouchers de minimis rule apply according to which the beneficiaries can max obtain 200.000 EUR in the last three years. The company can request a min. 1000 EUR of co-financing and max 9.999 EUR.

6.2.1.5 A voucher for participants at international forums

Purpose, aim and subject of the Voucher for participants at international forums

The purpose and aim of the Voucher for participants at international forums is to encourage SMEs to actively participate at international forums abroad for raising the recognisability of the SME, their achievements, products/services, with the goal of reaching new potential business partners on foreign markets, thus strengthening their competitiveness, raising their added value or income from sales.

The subject of the public call is co-financing eligible costs of active participation at international forums.

Conditions for projects:

1. The project must be in line with the purpose and subject of the public call.
2. In the application, the beneficiary must name the international forum, the organizer of the forum and the date of the forum for which it applies for cofinancing.
3. The beneficiary must choose the external experts economically and obtain the service for a price comparable on the market.
5. Participation at the international forum must not be completed before submitting the application if the participation will start after the call was published. In cases of participation at delegation between January 1st, 2019 and the date when the call was published, this restriction does not apply and an application can be submitted after the participation was concluded.

Available funding

The amount of funding available for the public call in the period of 2019 – 2023 is 500.000,00 EUR. The call is funded by the national funds of the Republic of Slovenia.

Eligible costs and the maximum amount of subsidy

Within this call the co-financing is eligible for two participants at the international forum (on behalf of the SME), namely:

- Costs of active participation of the applicant at the international forum: participation fees, entrance in the catalogue, B2B meetings, public presentation, presentation, exhibition space and other possible costs included in the offer or price list of the organizer of the international forum;
- Travel costs: costs of plane, train or bus fare for each participant;
- Accommodation costs: eligible are only costs of an overnight stay with breakfast; eligible are only costs for the duration of the delegation/B2B event, with possible two additional overnight stays (arrival on the day before the event; departure on the day after the event).

The costs can be claimed for two participants per SME (the owner or legal representative and an employee).

Minimal co-financing amount is 500,00 EUR, the maximal is 5.000,00 EUR. Value added tax (VAT) is not an eligible cost.

Within this call, an international forum is defined as international professional forum, conference or congress in the field of the applicant's activities.

International fairs abroad and events organized within the international fairs do not count as international forums abroad.

Within this call, active participation is defined as beneficiaries activities that present the foreign business and professional target group the achievements, products or services of the SME at a stand, exhibition space, lecture, demonstration or as a part of a panel/round table.

6.2.1.6 A voucher for group participation of Slovenian economy at fairs abroad

Purpose, aim and subject of the Voucher for group participation of Slovenian economy at fairs abroad

The purpose of the voucher is to encourage SMEs to participate at organized group presentation of Slovenian economy abroad, where they present their products/services, establish new business contacts, prospect their business opportunities and get to meet the competition and trends within their field, thus strengthening their competitiveness, raising their added value or income from sales.

The subject of the call is co-financing eligible costs at organized group presentation of Slovenian economy at fairs abroad, organized by SPIRIT Slovenia.

Conditions for projects:

1. The project must be in line with the purpose and subject of the public call.
2. In the application, the beneficiary must name the international forum, the organizer of the forum and the date of the forum for which it applies for cofinancing.
3. The beneficiary must choose the external experts economically and obtain the service for a price comparable on the market.

Available funding

The amount of funding available for the public call in the period of 2019 – 2023 is 1.000.000,00 EUR. The call is funded by the national funds of the Republic of Slovenia.

Eligible costs and the maximum amount of subsidy

Within this call the co-financing is eligible for two participants at the international forum (on behalf of the SME), namely:

Eligible costs for external experts for setting up the joint exhibition place for SMEs that included:

- Design of exhibition stand (design and preparation of renders),
- Setting up of exhibition stand (construction for fair, graphical design, equipment, audio-video equipment, installation, de-installation of fair's construction),
- Transport of exhibits/logistics.

The eligible fairs are only those confirmed by the SPIRIT Slovenia, who is in charge of the joint exhibitions abroad. The applicant has to obtain prior to the submission of the application the proof that he/she is included among the joint exhibitors that represent Slovenian economy. The list of those fairs is published by SPIRIT Slovenia on their webpage together with the corresponding public call. The costs, covered by SPIRIT Slovenia are the costs of the exhibition space, renting of technical equipment and inscription into the catalogue that is not eligible under this voucher.

Minimal co-financing amount is 1.000,00 EUR, the maximum is 3.000,00 EUR. Value added tax (VAT) is not an eligible cost.

Valid for all Internationalisation vouchers

The deadline for submission of applications is March 31st, 2023, and the final deadline for submitting claims for reimbursements is September 30th, 2023. The call will be open until the available budget is spent. Applicants will receive notification about receiving the voucher within 15 work days after submitting the application to the Slovenian Enterprise Fund. Approved applicants will sign an agreement with the SEF.

The results of the public call are of public nature and will be published on the website of the SEF <http://www.podjetniskisklad.si/>.

Applicants can get free information and assistance with preparation of the application at the Slovenian business points SPOT. Locations and contact of all Slovenian SPOT points are available at <http://evem.gov.si/info/spot-tocke-in-notarji/seznam-tock-spot-svetovanje-spirit-slovenija/>.

6.3 Players involved

The voucher will be implemented on the national scale:

Contracting Authority:	Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
Implementing Authority on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology:	Slovene Enterprise Fund (public fund)

6.4 Timeframe

The voucher will be implemented in the years
2019 - 2023

6.5 Costs

8.500.000,00 EUR (sum of the available funds for Internationalisation Vouchers)

6.6 Funding sources:

The total amount of vouchers for internationalisation is 8.500.000,00 EUR of ERDF and national co-financing
Co-financing rate by SMEs: 50-70%.

6.7 Monitoring of the Action plan implementation

The monitoring of the implementation of the proposed action will be performed by the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology on a regular basis. The monitoring results will be shared with the Regional stakeholder group, based on the foreseen meetings in 2019 and 2020. The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology will use the high political event within INTRA to demonstrate the impact of the voucher on the internationalisation of regional SMEs and as such on the internationalisation policy in Slovenia.

Ref. no.:	525/2019
Date:	01-08-2019
Signature:	Mr. Mihael Leskovar 
Function:	CEO
Organisation:	Maribor Development Agency
Stamp of the organisation:	 MARIBORSKA KAZNOVNA AGENCIJA p.o. Pobreška cesta 20, 8000 Maribor

Ref. no.:	305-2/2017/11
Date:	26-08-2019
Signature:	Mr. Jernej Tovšak 
Function:	General Director
Organisation:	Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Directorate for internationalisation, entrepreneurship and technology (Intermediate Body)
Stamp of the organisation:	

