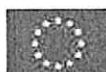




CAMERA DI COMMERCIO
DEL MOLISE



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

INNOGROW
Interreg Europe

INNOGROW

“Regional policies for innovation driven competitiveness
and growth of rural SMEs”

ACTION PLAN

MOLISE (ITALY)

Chamber of Commerce of Molise

A.I.D. - 01/09/2019/160 del 16-09-2019
Servizio proponente: DP.A1.02.11.01
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**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO
DEL MOLISE**



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

INNOGROW
Interreg Europe

Part I – General information

Project: INNOGROW

Partner organization: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF MOLISE

Other partner organizations involved (if relevant): _____

Country: ITALY

NUTS2 region: MOLISE

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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

Investment for Growth and Jobs programme	X
European Territorial Cooperation programme	
Other regional development policy instrument	
Name of the policy instrument addressed:	
ERDF 2014/2020 ESF 2014/2020	
RDP 2014/2020	

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

Strategic development pathway (please describe the shortages of the policy instrument, the aims of the policy measures included and the lessons learnt from the project that constitute their basis)

The present Action Plan is produced by Chamber of Commerce of Molise within the Innogrow Project. This document provides details on how the lessons learnt, from the cooperation with Innogrow partners, will be implemented in order to improve the main policy instrument identified and addressed: the Molise Regional Operation Programme 2014-2020 financed by ERDF-ESF.

The Innogrow project is financed within Interreg Europe Programme on Priority axis 2 “Competitiveness of SMEs” and on Specific Objective 2.1 “Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, supporting SMEs in all stages of their life cycle to develop, achieve growth and engage in innovation”. The Interreg Europe Programme promotes the exchange of experience on specific thematic objectives among partners throughout the European Union and the identification and dissemination of good practices to be used as source of inspiration in order to improve partners policy instruments.

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In the specific Molise is the youngest region in Italy born from the separation with the Abruzzo region and it is located in southern Italy. Molise is one of the less extensive Italian regions with an area of 4438 kmq, equal to 1.47% of the Italian territory. It is subdivided into 136 municipalities, many of which are small and with a considerable territorial dispersion. Molise population was equal to only 310,449 inhabitants in 2017, with a population density of 70 inhabitants/kmq population, well below the national average. About territory, more than half of its surface is occupied by the mountain and the rest from the hill, while the plain is quantitatively insignificant, limited to a very narrow coastal strip and to some low valleys of rivers.

With reference to regional economy, in Molise there is a substantial preponderance of the agricultural enterprises, which represent about 33% of the total, followed by the companies active in the wholesale and retail trade (22, 85%) and buildings (12, 76%). Manufacturing companies account for about 6, 6% and those connected to tourism 6.57%. The cross-sectional value of the craft enterprises is also significant, equal to 22.7% of the active companies. According to a scheme proposed by the OECD, Molise can be classified as "Non S&T driven regional system", i.e. as a territory characterized in general by a low industrial profile, by an agricultural vocation and by a good importance of the service sector. The regional production system is characterized by the substantial absence of large companies. There are basically small and medium-sized companies, characterized by less structured legal forms and mostly engaged in the proximity market. As consequence, the process of commercial internationalization is quite limited. With only 400 million export in 2017 and a trade balance in liabilities, the economy of Molise it is mainly characterized by the importance of the internal and proximity market.

With regard to the themes of innovation, research and the development of technologies, the RIS 3 - Smart Specialization Strategy shows a regional picture of weakness: Molise in fact does not stand out in any ranking that compares European territories with similar characteristics, and this situation also appear evident in relation to the national system. According to the "Innovation Union Scoreboard 2014" edition, Molise is part of the European regions defined as "moderate innovator". This grouping is characterized by a performance, compared to all indicators, below the European average. In particular, there is a low level of private R&D spending and poor patent applications at the EPO. Companies operating in these regions innovate above all through the adoption of technologies and innovations developed elsewhere, rather than through innovations internally implemented.

As reference to topics addressed by Innogrow, in Molise Region several initiatives have been implemented in favor innovation adoption by companies. Above all, with regard to the previous ERDF operational programs, various instruments and measures have been implemented to support business innovation. The innovation and knowledge transfer themes play a strategic role in the new 2014-2020 programming, in a more incisive way respect to the 2007-2014 programs. In particular, allocated financial resources have increased over the years, confirming the recognition by policy makers of the importance of promoting innovation. Moreover within Molise Region ERDF ROP 2014-2020 we have to highlight the following funding priorities:

- research, technological development and innovation improvement and promotion (Axis 1);
- the promotion of the production system competitiveness (Axis 3).



Despite this background, SMEs in rural areas have shown several difficulties in approaching innovation-oriented paths. The experience and results recorded have clearly shown that for this SMEs category a dedicated path is necessary, to be modulated in consideration of their specific difficulties and challenges usually faced.

Following the emerged needs for the rural SMEs in Molise Region area, Chamber of Commerce of Molise, in order to overcome those highlighted situations, decided to join the Innogrow project, in fact Innogrow Project aims to improve partners' policies on Rural Economy SMEs competitiveness as regards the integration of new production technologies and business models leading to innovative products. The project will promote the adoption of innovation by rural economy SMEs, through sharing practices/experiences between regions and actors relevant to rural economy SMEs competitiveness and integrating lessons learnt into regional policies and action plans.

The theme of the diffusion of innovation towards rural enterprises and rural Italian territories has become one of the most debated issues on every table and in every event that concerns the rural sector.

The Europe 2020 document and the new regulation on rural development policies 2014/2020 brought to the forefront a question that had been left in the shadows for too many years: innovation was finally recognized as the most important lever to accompany companies towards competitiveness, growth and sustainability.

Innovation is a key word linked to change which means progress, improvement of the existing situation, progress, development. In the rural field, innovation is strongly linked not only to the development of the primary sector but becomes a determining factor for the development of rural areas. The objective of the Action Plan is to improve competitiveness, the efficient management of resources and the economic and environmental performance of rural economic systems.

Innovation is therefore a fundamental lever for the development of Rural Economy. It follows that the new Rural Development Policies must set higher objectives than innovation, providing adequate financial resources, devising new tools to stimulate innovation and allow - another key development factor - the circulation and dissemination of innovations experience.

Therefore, following the lessons learned during all the project phases of the INNOGROW Project, all the critical issues emerged and the possible policies that could be activated to stimulate the development of the Rural Economies within the Molise Region were assessed.

Starting from these experiences, have been produced recommendations, proposals for ad hoc calls and proposals of law in order to use all the best practices learned and the know-how acquired during the project.



ACTION N. 1 – SUPPORTING MEASURES AND PROGRAMS PROVIDING RURAL SME'S WITH DIGITALIZATION SERVICES.

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

Lessons learned: digital technologies represent important opportunities for innovation and development for rural SMEs. However, tools must be provided for companies to be able to use and exploit these technologies. In this sense, the regional policy, also in collaboration with other bodies, can move on a double track:

- 1) On the one hand, creating a technological support environment, also through the implementation of institutional networks, able to accelerate the time required to fulfill the bureaucratic procedures connected with the company's activity, so improving its competitiveness. (SUAP and OPEN DATABASE);
- 2) On the other hand promote the dissemination of digital culture and practices of companies through the intervention, financial or otherwise, of other organizations.

Source of inspiration: Activity A3.3 "Interregional workshop on stimulating innovative products development" – Stara Zagora (Bulgaria), 6th – 8th June 2017; Action A3.4 - Study visits to transfer experiences on innovative production processes - Mantova (Italy) 22nd - 23rd February 2018; Activity A1.4 "Investigating the factors that influence rural economy SMEs to adopt innovation".

In particular, we learned that since last 20 years in the Mantova context it is possible to highlight a large alliance (among institutions, Chambers of Commerce, public and private foundations, private enterprises, public and private educational and research actors, NGOs but also citizens groups) supporting a crosscutting forces for renovation in a strategic vision to improve the local economy (all sectors) competitiveness. In this terms the networking and partnerships among different actors and sectors emerges as central (positive) factor of success.

During the interactive session of the Workshop held in Stara Zagora we discussed about "challenges, barriers and drivers hindering or fostering SMEs innovation. During the discussion emerged that common problems and issues for partners are the following:

- bureaucratic and administrative delays damage companies
- the most representative form of innovation nowadays is DIGITALIZATION and it could solve this gap.

Managing Activity A1.4 "Investigating the factors that influence rural economy SMEs to adopt innovation" we also learned that the technological innovation that is implemented through digitalization allows companies to accelerate their performance by taking less time away from the administrative and bureaucratic procedures from which they are devoured every day and dedicating more time to the development of the company so as to also improve their competitiveness in domestic markets and external.

2. Action (please list and describe the action to be implemented).

With reference to the aforementioned lessons learned, the two following projects are proposed:

1. Associate SUAP - One-Stop Shop for Productive Activities.
2. MOSEM- Integrated Information System for the management of investment project in Molise.



Both the project will be implemented in the frame of the Policy Instrument addressed.

In particular, the Molise Region through Axis 2 "Digital Agenda" of the POR FESR FSE Molise 2014-2020 pursues the objective of promoting the digitalization of administrative processes and the dissemination of digital services fully interoperable and to generate a condition of greater and easier interaction between administrations, citizens and businesses.

Specifically, Action 2.1.1 is aimed at implementing the Molise Digital Agenda strategy which supports the implementation of applications and IT systems concerning services related to E-government, open data and simplification through the implementation of the Molise Open Date database and implementation of applications and IT systems necessary for the operation of the One Stop Shop for Productive Activities, so-called associated SUAP.

In the implementation of the purposes referred to Action 2.1.1, Molise Region will cooperate with Chamber of Commerce of Molise in order to optimize the mission synergies between the two bodies and to commit the respective pluses of specialization in policy implementation, acting a shared and unified governance system in compliance with the so-called "public-public cooperation" rule.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECTS:

- **Project 1 - Associate SUAP- One-Stop Shop for Productive Activities.** It foresees the "realization of an ICT platform able to rationalize and homogenize the procedures of the Unique Molise Desk" so as to constitute a single regional web access point to the municipal desks and able to allow the integration of the single platform with the back offices municipalities. The objective is the simplification of the bureaucratic and administrative aspects connected with business activities and the improvement of the relationship between enterprises and PP.AA. by spreading the use of the same platform in order to accelerate time of productivity and foster their competitiveness.

WHAT IS SUAP? It should be specified that the One-Stop Shop Production Activity - SUAP, is the only local public reference subject for all the proceedings concerning the exercise of productive activities and provision of services. It is present in all Italian Municipalities, it is the fundamental point of contact between companies and public institutions to attend to all the procedures related to the opening and management of the company. In fact, it allows companies to have a single public contact point for all the procedures they have to attend. The Suap works in a completely telematic mode, and solves any practice relating to business management, even working as a bureaucratic window, a place for consulting, a simplification of obligations. So that a practice that requires different obligations can be carried out entirely at the Single Desk, which then takes care of forwarding the various documents to the agencies and offices of destination (Provinces, Municipalities, Local Health Authorities and so on).

The competence to manage the SUAP lies with each Municipality, which can act alone or in association with other municipalities and which must be accredited by the MISE (Economic Development Ministry). In case of insufficient degree of computerization, the Municipality is obliged to make use of the IT infrastructure of the Chambers of Commerce (with functions relating to the creation and management of the company file), which serve as therefore by "IT delegate" on behalf of the municipal SUAP and its users, also towards of other Public Administrations.



WHEN WAS SUAP BORN? In order to implement the Services Directive of 12 December 2006 of the European Parliament and the Council (2006/123 / CE), implemented with Legislative Decree 59/2010, the Chamber System in collaboration with ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) created the portal <http://www.impresainungiorno.gov.it/> (hereinafter "Portal"), which:

- constitutes the SPC, the Single Point of Contact at national level to allow users to access the SUAP services;
- offers a unique interface for EU companies to obtain information on obligations related to the start-up of an economic activity in Italy and to carry out any proceeding expected;
- manages some business services provided by central government administrations.

To date, the current organizational framework requires to companies the knowledge of different IT platforms and forms for starting up the same activity if destined for the different SUAPs of the regional territory, being 136 the Municipalities of the Molise Region.

IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THESE ADMINISTRATIVE DELAYS, WE THEREFORE PROPOSE THE ASSOCIATED SUAP PROJECT WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE MOLISE REGION AND THE MOLISE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

So thanks to INNOGROW Project and the hard work made with the main relevant local stakeholders (in large part representative of the entrepreneurial Associations) in December 2018 it was outlined a protocol between the Molise Region and the Chamber of Commerce for the start of this collaboration.

The present project idea is placed in a wide development plan that intends to support the entrepreneurial and professional fabric in order to overcome the discrepancies present on the regional territory for the start of the same activity due to the different operations of the SUAPs in the territory.

The PRIMARY OBJECTIVE of the project is therefore to simplify the related bureaucratic and administrative aspects to the performance of business activities and improve the relationship between the company and the PP.AA. spreading the use of same platform and contributing to changes also through digitalization.

The project will then carry out a survey of the procedures and end-processes and a sampling of those today different.

The project must be carried out pursuing the following expected results:

- creation of an ICT platform capable of rationalizing and standardizing the procedures of the One Stop Shop of the Molise Region, representing the unique a single point of regional web access to the municipal branches, single or associated;
- integration of the unique platform with municipal back-offices, in order to guarantee the automatic exchange of information from and to the front office;
- homogenization and standardization of procedures in use at municipal back-offices;
- assistance to users for starting up the system and the related operating procedures aimed at the complete activation of the unique Regional SUAP platform on the whole territory.

The ICT platform must be able to integrate the procedures of the Regional One-Stop-Shop with the initiatives of simplification activated by public entities operating in the regional territory.



CONTENT OF THE PROJECT. The activities that will be carried out to pursue the final objectives are:

- mapping of procedures that foreseen non-compliant procedures between the various SUAPs of the territory in order to simplify and rationalize the start-up procedure;
- unique information portal for accessing the Region's SUAPs, including an area dedicated to training (e-learning modules, tutorials);
- monitoring tool available to the Region able to collect telematic information flows from the single regional front office;
- Survey for correct information of the Company File. All the information can be used both by the entrepreneurs who presented them during the administrative SUAP procedure (through the "impresa.italia.it" service created by the Chamber System) and by the Public Administrations.

IMPLEMENTATION MODES. With regard to the implementation methods of the contents that are intended to be developed in the project, the following actions and activities are identified.

- Mapping of proceeding and proceeding procedures: a permanent work table is set up, operating also in digital mode with tools content sharing and online interaction,
- Information portal: it is implemented, managed and updated with the sharing of contents within the work table
- Monitoring tools: it will available and illustrated first in the context of the Working Table and, subsequently, in the offices interested parties of the Regions and other administrations involved, in order to have a tool of programming support, control, study of the evolution of economic activity and business of the Molise Region. The organization of training / information session and of a final event to promote it is possible.
- Reconnaissance for correct feeding of the Company: for the recognition of the state of implementation of the Company's file, will be organized specific meetings of the Working Table, extended to Responsible of the Register of enterprises at the Chamber of Commerce, in order to identify the state of the art, the actions and the measures to be taken.

Time frame 2019/2020

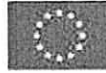
Cost of the Project: € 599,988.34

- **Project 2 - MOSEM.** It consists in the integration of the Molise Open data database of the Molise Region with the data from of the Enterprises Register of the Molise Chamber of Commerce and with the National Aid Register. The objective is the creation of an ICT platform capable of organizing and making the information concerning companies aggregable and usable.

WHA IS MOSEM? Mosem application is the information system for the management of investment projects in the Molise region.

This tool can be integrated with:

- features that improve performance in terms of managing of requests sent by companies which intend to participate in the tenders proposed by the Region;



- functionalities that make it possible to make certain mandatory commitments more efficient at the Registry National Aid (following RNA), such as registration and activities modification of individual aid.

With reference to the first point, the MOSEM allows managing, through a front end, the phase of acceptance of applications by companies that intend to request participation in a call promoted by the Region. This therefore presupposes that there are some web-form modules within the MOSEM that must be filled in by the company with the information necessary for participation in the call.

This information can, for the most part, be taken from the Enterprises Register.

Currently this information must be entered manually by the company or its consultant delegate for the compilation of the file; this assumes that there may be an incorrect entry of the information, both for errors in the typing phase and for obsolete information filled in the file.

This means that in the preliminary investigation phase of the case presented by the company, the official of the Region must request a company registered certificate (at the C. of C.) to check all the information entered step by step by the company, thus providing a considerable commitment in terms of time and attention.

For this reason it is proposed the realization of automated services that can be called up by MOSEM in the application compilation phase and that access the data of the Companies in real time. In this way it is possible to acquire certified information at the source, without check it in followed during the preliminary investigation phase.

The acquisition of these data, when filling out the application form, would also inhibit the sending of the application from those companies that do not have the necessary requisites for participation (for example they are in a state of bankruptcy or do not have locations in a given territory).

As regards the second point, the MOSEM, as an instrument adopted by the Molise Region for the Funding management, necessarily requires the implementation of services that allow the cooperation with the Registry forecasted by the legislator to comply with the transparency requirements of State Aid, the "National Aid Registry - (RNA)".

The RNA is set up at the Directorate General for Incentives to the companies of the Ministry of Economic Development, from the European Law 2014 in force since 18 August 2015, is operational from 12 August 2017.

The Registry responds to the need to provide the country with an agile and effective tool to verify that the public subsidies are granted in compliance with the provisions of the Community legislation, especially in order to avoid the accumulation of benefits and, in the case of de minimis aid, the overcoming of the maximum aid limit imposed by the European Union.

In addition to information regarding the aid measures in force in the country and the concessions made by the administrations in favor of businesses, the Register also contains the list of companies required to return the received aid after the European Commission's recovery decision (so-called Deggendorf list).

From the entry into operation of the Register, each provision (that provides for the granting of aid to a company) in order to be effective must include identification codes issued by the Registry.



Therefore, the PRIMARY OBJECTIVE of the project is:

- to offer advanced services for accessing the data of the Enterprises Register which allow to support the users of the MOSEM system in the preliminary inquiry phases of the loan applications, simplifying and making the mandatory controls usually performed in manual mode more efficient;
- to offer support to the Molise Region in order to integrate - in its IT system for the management of public investment projects financed with European, National and / or Regional resources, the services of applicative cooperation made available by the National Registry of Aid to enable the applicative exchange between systems.

In relation to what is illustrated in point 1 regarding advanced services for accessing data from CofC Register, it is proposed to create web services that can be referenced by the MOSEM during the application compilation phase and which access the data of the Companies in real time. In this way, certified information would be obtained at the source, without having to check it later in the preliminary investigation phase.

Also for point 2 we propose the realization of a web service for the return of the outcomes and of any expected outputs at the end of each processing.

Time frame 2019/2020

Cost of the Project: € 200.811,20

With reference to the two projects described, it should be noted that the common aim is the process innovation through the digitalization of services functional to bureaucratic and administrative simplification.

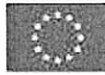
The final result is the acceleration of company procedures and the improvement of their performance and competitiveness as well as the improvement of relations with the PA.

However, this improvement is completed where, again by virtue of the cooperation between Entities, the political instrument addressed (POR FESR FSE Molise 2014/20) is integrated as it is insufficient or no longer sufficiently available financially.

Therefore this Action 2, in the subsequent activity described below, is based on the cross operation between the POR FESR FSE Molise 2014/20 and the Chamber of Commerce of Molise activities in name of collaboration between bodies as a means of facilitating innovation and competitiveness of businesses such as specified in the introduction and following the lessons learned during the project.

Of such that all the interventions of the present Action ARE COMPLEMENTARY both in terms of different activities and in terms of different sources of funding (POR FESR REGIONE MOLISE + CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FUNDS).

Given this, with the activities described below it is intended to COMPLETE the digitization interventions in favor of rural SMEs by providing ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING ACTIONS.



The latter find inspiration in particular in the activity Action A3.4 - Study visits to transfer experiences on innovative production processes - Mantova 22 e 23 febbraio 2018.

One of the objectives of the Study Visit was the collection and exchange of experiences from different regions regarding the investment and adoption of new technologies. Furthermore the Activity A1.4 "Investigating the factors that influence rural economy SMEs to adopt innovation, enabling partners to realize the policy obstacles concerned", was object of discussion in Mantova, as the result of the survey and the related report underlined some policy-making priority areas to promote innovative production. Conclusions were: higher qualifications and levels of education are required with particular emphasis on ICT and interest-based skills; Policy Makers should consider how to improve access to new financial resources and capital, since this factor plays a determining role in the way a business will grow and expand; digital transformation represents a competitive lever for small businesses, an opportunity to fill a productivity gap that has always penalized especially the smaller companies.

Also during the 5th Stakeholders Meeting held on 26.09.18 it was outlined the importance of the digitalization as the first step to SMEs innovation in the rural area and that the new digital tax obligations eg. (electronic invoicing) represent in this sense an opportunity to bring new technologies to the smaller rural realities to allow them to exploit the best potential offered by digital transformation.

The goal is to make it easier for SMEs, even for small enterprises in rural areas, to access digital by using new technologies. Starting from here, companies can progressively switch to different digital systems that simplify the management of activities and new their legal obligations (from receipts management, to systems for intelligent accounting management, to digital signatures, to digital preservation, to de materialization of the archives).

Digital technologies represent important tools to overcome geographical distances, a typical challenge of rural area, and to ensure a better SMEs operational efficiency.

At the same time, digital innovation is possible if other conditions are met. In particular, these technologies requires two key prerequisites:

- an entrepreneurial culture oriented to digitalization, aware of related uses and benefits;
- the availability of skills and expertise in order to apply and integrate innovation in their business.

However on the basis of the analysis carried out during the A1.4, the lack of financial support for investments is the main obstacle to the adoption of innovation by SMEs of rural area. Rural SMEs revealed an urgent need to face significant financial challenges related to the adoption of innovative investments for increasing their business performance in terms of competitiveness.

So, with reference to digital innovation, policy makers have to establish a supporting environment well structured, based both on targeted financial measures and on mechanism giving access to education, training, coaching and mentoring services. well-skilled employees and expertise often not employed in enterprises. Rural SMEs often complain about the difficulties in accessing to knowledge , technical expertise, training, recruiting tech-savvy personnel, funding and application procedures support, as well as effective collaboration platforms.

Therefore, in order to follow up the lessons learned, a series of measures have been forecasted trough the Project named **PID (Point Digital Enterprise)**. It is a sort of container of financial, training, coaching and tutoring programs and initiatives that support rural SMEs in the digital innovation path.

They are detailed below.



1. **Call for digital vouchers I4.0 year 2019** for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME), in every economic sector, based in the Molise region, in order to promote the use by the same of services and / or solutions focused on new digital skills and technologies, implementing the "Enterprise 4.0" strategy defined at national level.

The Call aims to:

- the diffusion of the "digital culture" among the MMS of the territorial chamber of commerce;
- the raising of the awareness of the enterprises on the possible solutions offered by the digital and on its benefits;
- the economic support to the digitalization initiatives in the Imagery 4.01 perspective implemented by the enterprises of the territory in parallel with the services offered by PID.

Specifically, with the initiative "Call for digital voucher I4.0 - Year 2019" are proposed two Measures

- Measure A (Projects aimed at introducing I4.0 and complementary enabling technologies, whose objectives and implementation methods are shared by several companies (from 3 to 20 companies) and Measure B (Projects presented by individual companies) - which meet the following complementary objectives:

- Develop the ability to collaborate between MPIMs and between them and highly subjects qualified in the field of the use of I4.0 technologies, through the realization of projects able to highlight the advantages obtainable through the new paradigm technological and productive;
- Promote the use, by the WMDs of the territorial chamber of commerce, of services or solutions focused on new digital skills and technologies being implemented of the strategy defined in the National Business Plan 4.0;
- Stimulate the demand by the MSMEs of the Chamber of Commerce territory, of services for transferring technological solutions and / or making innovations technological and / or implement business models deriving from the application of I4.0 technologies.

The total resources allocated by the Chamber of Commerce available to the Beneficiaries amount to € 50,000.00 and are divided as follows:

- Measure A, € 30,000.00;
- Measure B, € 20,000.00;

2. The concessions will be granted in the form of vouchers.
3. The vouchers will have a maximum unitary amount of € 10,000.00.
4. The maximum amount of the subsidy may not exceed 70% of eligible expenses.

The Call has already been published and it is expiring.

2. **SelfI4.0 Digital Assessment: Find out how digital you are!**

The 4.0 technological transformation of a company begins with knowing its digital maturity level (digital maturity assessment). To accompany companies on this path, a model to map them to digital maturity the has been created.

The assessment is a survey methodology useful for analyzing, through the analysis of internal processes, the state of digital maturity of a company and its ability to implement enabling technologies and organizational innovations to modify, efficiently, its business model. The



assessment model is specifically designed to detect the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises in different productive sectors (manufacturing, services, agriculture, etc.).

After SELF4.0, enterprises can contact one of the PID MOLISE Digital Promoter to carry out the guided assessment (ZOOM 4.0) and evaluate in more depth the digitization level of their business. So that entrepreneurs will be able to get some guidance on innovation paths in a 4.0 way and finally a personalized orientation service towards more specialized technological structures.

3. **Top Of The Pid:** it is a reward for companies that have implemented digital projects, products or services. The 4.0 digitization project must be implemented in one of the following areas:

- Circular economy (sustainability, sustainable energy, circular economy, sustainable products, etc.);
- Intelligent and Advanced Manufacturing (interconnected machinery, 3D printing, digital fabrication, etc.);
- Social (health, biotechnology, culture, services and products to support the development of smart cities, security and inclusion, etc.);
- Services, Commerce, Distribution and Tourism (advanced digital solutions for marketing and / or customer care, logistics, cultural heritage, etc.);
- New business models 4.0 (redesign of the organizational processes of the company).

4. **Training activities.** The training activities will be organized taking into account the need of the enterprises and the following technological fields:

- advanced manufacturing solutions
- additive manufacturing
- technological solutions for immersive, interactive and participatory navigation of the real environment and in the real environment (augmented reality, virtual reality and 3D reconstructions)
- simulation
- vertical and horizontal integration
- Industrial Internet and IoT
- Cloud
- cybersecurity and business continuity
- big data and analytics
- digital technological solutions of the supply chain aimed at optimizing supply chain management and managing relations with the various actors (eg systems that enable Drop Shipping solutions of warehouse "and" just in time ")
- software, platforms and digital applications for the management and coordination of logistics with high integration features of service activities (intra-company communication, enterprise-field with on-line device integration -field and gods mobile devices, online performance detection and on-field device failures; including activities related to information and management systems - eg ERP, MES, PLM, SCM, CRM, etc.- and design and use of tracking technologies, eg RFID, barcode, etc.



The two latter initiatives are supported by the Molise Region in the frame of the Axis 2 "Digital Agenda" of the POR FESR FSE Molise 2014-20 but totally financed by the Chamber of Commerce of Molise.

Thanks to this cooperation, as deeply pointed out in the previous paragraphs, the regional interventions related to the digitalization could be considerate complementary and complete.

4. Timeframe

2019/2020

5. Costs (if relevant): € 850.000,799.54

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

Regional Operative Program/European Regional Development Found MOLISE 2017/2020:

Axis 2 "Digital agenda, in particular Action 2.1.1" Technological solutions for the realization of interoperable, integrated e-Government services (joined-up services) and designed with citizens and businesses, integrated solutions for smart cities and communities (not included in the OT4) "- Interventions:

- Associated SUAP (€ 599.988,34)
- MOSEM Open data - part companies (€ 200.811,20)

Molise Chamber of Commerce Funds (50.000,00)

ACTION N. 2 - SMEs INTERNATIONALIZATION IN RURAL AREAS

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

Lesson learnt: support the design and implementation of innovative strategies/business models by SMEs of rural area as successful formula able to increase their viability and competitiveness. For instance provide services able to sustain internationalization of SMEs.

Source of inspiration: Action A3.1 Interregional workshop on innovation support centers for rural SMEs, Workshop in Lecco 2nd and 3rd of March 2017: to compete on international markets could be hard for small size companies. However, strongly export-oriented districts have the ability to reach different markets and niches; the "Vini Mantovani consortium", a network of wineries in the Mantova area, created to protect and enhance the wine production excellences, specifically 6 PDOs and PGIs. The Consortium is engaged in the promotion and launch, especially on international market, of its high-quality products, as well as in sponsoring territory values (Workshops on sustainable development of the rural territory and innovation for rural SMEs, Mantova 22nd February 2018); Regional Stakeholders Meetings.

Internationalization enhances competitiveness, reinforces growth and supports the long-term performance and sustainability of small medium enterprises. Several studies produced by European Union state that internationally active SMEs have an employment growth of 7% compared to 1% of the firms only



active in national markets. Exporting SMEs generally outperform their non-exporting peers. The ability of SMEs to export is an indication of their competitiveness in global markets. It exposes firms to international best practice and strengthens the possibility of adding value through innovation by improving products, production processes and business models.

Internationalization then is a key enabler for growth of SMEs of Rural Areas, for this reason Chamber of Commerce of Molise has proposed the following policy recommendation, in order to foster internationalization for the firms located in rural areas in Molise.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

This action, suggested by the activities carried out during the first phase of Innogrow, aims to guarantee consistent growth in Italian exports and greater international exposure of our companies increasing the number of exporting companies turning them from occasionally and potentially exporters into regular.

To achieve this goal it is necessary to join forces and create a network of actors already in charge, at national (ICE- Italian Trade Agency) and regional level (Molise Region and Chamber of Commerce) so that coordinated interventions can be implemented and strengthening and accelerating the process of internationalization of companies, especially small businesses in the rural area that alone do not have the right economic strength to look out onto new markets, thus avoiding the overlap of actions.

Therefore, starting from a Framework Agreement between ICE Italian Trade Agency (National Institute for Foreign Trade) and the Molise Region, which is also functionally based on improving the POR MOLISE FESR FSE-2014-2020, with particular reference to AXIS 3 "Competitiveness of the production system ", ACTION 3.3.1" Export promotion projects for companies and their aggregate forms identified on a territorial sectorial basis ", the parties intend to implement a collaborative relationship to strengthen the process of internationalization of companies and the production system Molise, which provides for the implementation of actions, activities, programs and projects to penetrate companies in foreign markets.

The Framework Agreement was signed on January 14, 2019 following the approval of the Regional Council n. 561 of 14 December 2018.

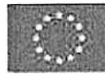
The Molise Chamber of Commerce, which will contribute to the realization of the project, is expected to take part in the program, under the Innogrow project, providing information activities, organizational support and assistance to SMEs darà giving even more vigor to the policy instrument addressed POR MOLISE FESR FSE- 2014-2020, with reference to the aforementioned AXIS 3 and ACTION 3.3.1. The Chamber of Commerce of Molise will have a relevant commitment in achieving the described actions thanks to recognized role of the Italian Chamber system on the subject of promotion abroad which includes competences to support internationalization above all through information, assistance and training services.

The aforementioned activities will be achieved thanks the competence of Export Promoters who will provide the activation of a series of free services for businesses that are "potential "or" occasional "exporters.

Companies can receive the following direct support:

1. Territorial Scouting

Identification and profiling, through a real scouting action, of occasionally or potentially exporting companies, in order to start or strengthen their presence on foreign markets by proposing tools and



specific internationalization paths. This activity will be carried out with the tools available to the Molise Chamber of Commerce (Register of enterprises, CRM and other databases) and crossing the currently available data of companies active on foreign markets.

2. Analysis of needs and assessment of market opportunities

Actions aimed at identifying the markets that are potentially best suited to the profiles of the target companies will be proposed. Between these:

- (a) operational comparison with companies (through door-to-door activities or for small groups) for a first assessment of the constraints, needs, orientations and potential for foreign projection;
- (b) analysis of the interchange relative to the main targets of the identified companies, by type of product and highlighting the potential countries of interest;
- (c) exchange of best practices - also in other territories - that have already developed specific skills and experience (with reference to a product sector or a destination country).

3. Initiatives of assessment and orientation to companies

The Export Promoter will develop activities of orientation / sensitization of the companies, evaluation of the interest and of the actual capacities / potentialities of presence abroad (assessment), so as to set specific intervention programs. Further activities may be envisaged to support companies intending to expand market outlets, with attention to the functions of the various actors for the promotion abroad (ICE, Molise Region) as well as the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad.

4. Assistance to companies for the use of services aimed at initiating or strengthening their presence abroad

Preparation of dedicated paths and initiatives for companies that have successfully achieved the company check-up operations and correct preparation of the company profile (tailor-made actions for companies).

For all the companies involved, "export kick-off" plans will be prepared containing:

- an analysis for the selection of markets with greater potential for the reference product;
- an analysis to identify the ideal distribution channels for the selected markets;
- a detailed analysis of national and foreign competition of reference;
- a first analysis of the company's positioning with respect to the reference competitors;
- the development of a strategy;
- an action plan.

A mentoring service will also be identified, to enhance and expand the network of Italian professionals abroad to be made available - completely free of charge - to companies thanks to the CCIE, taking into account the organizational methods of collaboration with the various actors of the public system for promotion abroad (ICE, SIMEST, SACE).

5. Promotion and communication

Communication activities on the objectives expected at the territorial level aimed at the business reality and the local economic and institutional world. Furthermore, it intends to support the realization of seminars at territorial level in order to promote the integration between the services offered by the chamber system and the activities of the ICE and the Molise Region, the promotion of Italian economic and commercial relations with foreign countries.

It is worth to point out that the aforementioned activities are linked not only to the POR FESR FSE 2014-2020 but also to the Internationalization Measure of the Operative Complementary Program - POC, ROP parallel Program (within which the ICE-Molise Region Framework Agreement was included and in relation



to which it will be the cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce is foreseen), and to the Programme of activities 2019 of the Molise Chamber of Commerce.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- Molise Region that through the Competitiveness and Internationalization of SMEs Department is the main actor for the Internationalization. In addition Molise Region will program and manage all the policy instruments able to play as leverage and incentive for a performing regional system;
- ICE Italian Trade Agency, as ICE is the Governmental agency that supports the business development of our companies abroad and promotes the attraction of foreign investment in Italy;
- Sviluppo Italia Molise;
- Chamber of Commerce of Molise that will play as further public body providing its institutional commitment in supporting local SMEs active in exporting abroad.
Furthermore the Chamber of Commerce can play a multiple role: member of the regional governance; entity able to represent main challenges and needs complained by enterprises even through statistical evidences and, last but not least, it can help Molise region in performing some measure and actions.
- Further national and regional actors could be involved in the implementation of these actions, such as: Ministries, Associations and Firms, Consortia.

4. Timeframe

2019/2020

5. Costs (if relevant)

6. Funding sources (if relevant): No funds are foreseen to be charged of the POR FESR FSE 2014 2020.

ACTION N. 3 - TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

Lesson learnt: forecast more financial possibilities for rural economy SMEs. In particular policy makers have to run specific financial schemes/instruments able to support SMEs of the touristic sector oriented towards innovative paths.

Source of inspiration: Fund "Seed Money" co-financed by the Autonomous Province of Trento and Europe (ERDF), aimed at promoting the dissemination of business initiatives in innovative or high-tech sectors; (Interregional Workshop on Innovation Hubs – Lecco, 2nd and 3rd March 2017); Activity A1.1 "Methodology to gather data on new disruptive technologies' impact on rural economy SMEs' competitiveness and productivity".

The tourism industry in rural Areas represents a strategic asset for the economic and social stability of our region. Tourism is also an essential component of national policy and not just a side aspect, allows the promotion of economic growth, employment and development and it is therefore a crucial sector.



Tourism is strictly related to the concept of the market and it is governed by the logic of supply and demand, in fact, we must not forget that it is based on resources and attractions that need services and accessories. Ultimately, tourism is competitiveness and competition, and it is precisely the growth of competitiveness and competition that has brought about profound change. Today it is not possible to talk about economic growth and development without talking about tourism, especially in rural areas.

Nowadays tourism is very different from the past, increased availability of time, the growth of the economy and individual incomes, the improvement of mobility, the new communication and transport technologies have had a profound effect on it and, above all, on the behavior of travelers. Consistent with the changes in individual needs and with the emergence of new trends and styles of consumption it is essential to look for innovative solutions that relate to the relationship with the rural context, the accessibility of the structures, the multidimensionality and multi-sectoriality of the regional system, and the development of a real culture of hospitality, the essence of the tourist experience. For the expressed reasons rural tourism needs also specific soft skills in ICT as today most of the tourism market is on internet.

It is therefore essential that the regional government and the private sector explore ways of sustainable growth and plan initiatives to promote the tourism sector, initiatives that are able to attract an increasing number of visitors and that are able to extend the average length of stay. Through concrete actions we must try to develop more and more a stopover tourism that is disconnected from seasonality, a tourism that is free from the logics of hiking attractiveness and that can be effectively proposed not only on the Italian market but also on international markets.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

- Tourism has been recognized as a key enablers for growth for SMEs of Rural Areas, for this reason Chamber of Commerce of Molise would like to propose a **Pluriannual strategic plan for Tourism** that foresees the following main actions lines (or part of them) for several sub measures to be financed:
 1. **Training and support** for micro-businesses to grow: rural tourism businesses are often micro enterprises, often building on farms or occasional bed and breakfast accommodation. Enterprises like these often lack of the formal skills and access to capital that are critical if they are to innovate and expand beyond the stage of family businesses;
 2. **Specific support in developing** social skills and competencies: the importance of the service encounter in rural tourism requires appropriate training for the tourism workforce. Both technical and social skills and competencies are essential in providing quality tourism services. In order to come forward to the companies in rural areas, innovative ways to deliver training may be needed, this could involve on-line learning or flexible local delivery of training;
 3. **Fostering co-operation** amongst enterprises: companies need to cooperate given the composite nature of the rural tourism experience. Above all, it is important to develop trust amongst firms that provide different but complementary elements of the tourism experience, such as hotels, bus companies, restaurants and tourism attractions;
 4. **Provide more training** and research into rural-specific ICT applications: Tourism enterprises need support to utilize ICT innovations more fully, which may require accompanying organizational innovations. This is critical in an information-rich sector such as tourism. Consumers are becoming more reliant on technology to access information. Rural Tourism products can be brought alive using new interpretation techniques to attract and meet the expectations of new and existing



audiences. In this context specific ICT training has to be provided for entrepreneurs working in Tourism.

5. Invest in new, efficient and sustainable transport in order to stimulate Rural Tourism SMEs must be also considered new and more innovative ways of providing access to and amongst tourism businesses in rural areas. The Tourism businesses must be more easily connected with the main traffic routes such national train line or airports and ferries via busses and or other connections. Furthermore it could be stimulated by regional government support to free or reduced transportation tickets for tourists reaching specific regional touristic areas.

6. Valorization, dissemination and usability of tourism heritage. Develop existing and new visitor activities and experiences that are less season dependent, appeal to visitors throughout the year in order to have a constant flow of presences.

Increase the promotion of Molise's rural products and experiences trough the promotions nationally and internationally and using new media and viral marketing techniques to engage also younger audiences. Identify target markets with a propensity to purchase rural tourism products and target them through marketing communications.

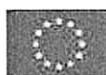
7. Financial support to the realization of "Short stays" and small structures (rooms rentals)

Promote and qualify the development of sustainable tourism in Molise through the financing and promoting of projects aimed at strengthening, improving and upgrading the tourist-accommodation offer, strengthening and consolidating the services supporting the "diffused hotel system", rural tourism and micro-accommodation; increase the competitiveness of the reception structures to which the Action is directed; complete the functionality of the widespread hotel system and the reception in the villages, in order also to not rely on the season and enrich the tourist offer.

- Related to the latter point it must be highlighted the Molise Region Call "Entrepreneurs of the Widespread Hotel System referred to Regional Law N. 7/2014, of rural tourism and owners of micro-receptive structures, houses and apartments for holidays and renting rooms". The Action aims to promote and qualify the development of sustainable tourism in Molise through the funding of projects aimed at strengthening, improving and upgrading the tourist-accommodation offer; it concerns the entrepreneurs of the widespread hotel system and the holders of micro structures.

INNOGROW Project influenced this measure.

- Creation of a Public Regional Portal, as a driving force for a new digital strategy able to promote the tourism products and create a digital environment reserved to companies (food and wine, brokerage, incoming...). The Portal will work in the following way:
 - PUBLIC AREA for the promotion of tourism products
 - o Public reference portal for the regional tourism offer
 - o Valorisation of the Molise territory
 - o Enhancement of tourism businesses and related supply chains (production-agro-food - craft)
 - o Promotion of tourism products, businesses, events, tourist itineraries
 - PRIVATE AREA for companies
 - o Business environment for commercial exchange (agreements - interactions)
 - o Virtual market between operators distinguished by sectors (tourist accommodation, restaurants, producers, breeders)



- o Reinforcement of the cooperation between companies and creation of entrepreneurial networks.

As main actor of the regional touristic promotion Chamber of Commerce will have a relevant role in managing the last activity.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organizations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Actors involved in the implementation of these actions are:

- Molise Region that through the Tourism Department and Competitiveness of SMEs Department are the main actors for this Tourism Action. In addition Molise Region will program and manage all the policy instruments able to play as leverage and incentive for a performing regional system;
- Chamber of Commerce of Molise that will play as further public body providing its institutional commitment in promoting local SMEs active in Tourism business. The Chamber of Commerce can play a multiple role: member of the regional governance; entity able to represent main challenges and needs complained by enterprises even through statistical evidences and, last but not least, it can help Molise region in performing some measure and actions.
- UNIMOL- University of Molise, Sciences of Tourism Faculty.
- ISNART Scpa company in-house for the Chamber system, carries out studies and publications on tourism, surveys and feasibility projects, data processing, constitution and supply of databases and observatories.
- Associations and Firms Consortia operating in tourism, Local Pro Locos, Provinces of Campobasso and Isernia.

4. Timeframe

2019/2020

5. Costs (if relevant): € 425.000

6. Funding sources (if relevant): Molise Chamber of Commerce Funds

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organization (if available): _____

