
REGION OF STEREA ELLADA (CENTRAL GREECE)

LOCAL ACTION PLAN

INTERREG EUROPE

REGIONAL CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ALLIANCE

From European recommendations
to better regional CCI policies
for a more competitive economy

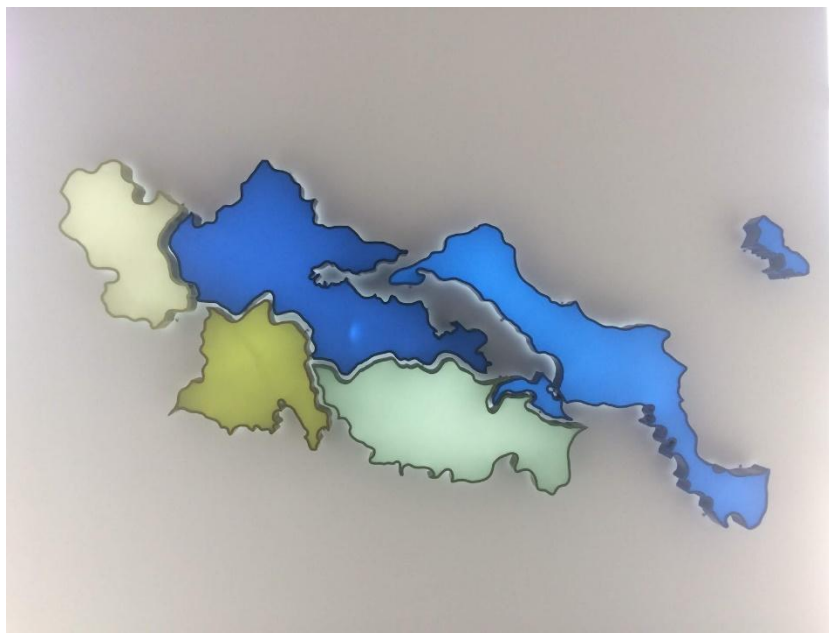


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1 General Information

Project:	Regional Creative Industries Alliance (RCIA) – From European recommendations to better regional CCI policies for a more competitive economy
Partner organisation:	Region of Sterea Ellada (Central Greece)
Other partner organisations involved:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft mbH – Lead Partner • Public Service of Wallonia – Partner • Creative Business Cup Foundation – Partner • The North-West Regional Development Agency – Partner • Joint Stock Company ‘Development Finance Institution Altum’ – Partner • IDM Südtirol/Alto Adige – Partner • City of Lublin – Partner • Barcelona Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Services and Navigation – Partner
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2 Policy Context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- 1 Regional Operational Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs, ERDF 2014-2020
- 2 Smart Specialization Strategy for Region of Sterea Ellada



The Region of Sterea Ellada is responsible for the design, implementation and valuation of its Regional Operative Programme 2014-2020 policies as the Managing Authority of the Programme. As such, the Region of Sterea Ellada is the owner of the respective policy instruments mentioned in the Programme. It has the overall control over programme specification and the allocation of financial resources, taking into consideration the provisions of European and national legislation. The Regional Operational Programme for 2014-2020 consists of priority axes associated with the actions that Region of Sterea Ellada wants to implement.

2.1 Policy Instrument Addressed

Within the RCIA project the priority axis connected with the actions that the Region wants to implement is axis 3: “Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises” and the respective investment priorities are the following:

Investment Priority 3c: Supporting the creation and the extension of advanced capacities for products and service development within RIS3 industries

Organized support for existing enterprises, especially in RIS3 sectors, is deemed necessary in order for these entities to increase their capacity to produce new or diversified products and services and to improve and certify their quality. Activities under this priority are expected to have multidisciplinary positive effects such as the augmentation of private investment, the acquisition of a diversified identity for goods and services produced and the improvement of accessibility to new and demanding markets and thus an increase in businesses’ turnover, productivity and employment as well in growth rates of the regional economy as a whole.

In the highly competitive national and international landscape, the further development of businesses depends highly on their ability to produce quality and certified products and services at competitive prices. As a result, Investment Priority 3c was selected for the Regional Operative Programme 2014-2020, in order for regional companies to increase their capacity and expertise in the production of new products, the diversification of existing ones as well as the continuous upgrading of quality and certified production. It is considered to be a safe pathway for regional products and services to be able to gain a diversified identity and access to new markets. In this direction, the integration of advanced technologies for SMEs operating in the core specialization sectors according to the regional RIS3 strategy is of particular importance, without neglecting other non-technological factors of competitiveness which need to be improved.

Investment Priority 3d: Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes

Activities under priority 3d are expected to strengthen the integration of enterprises into hyper-local and international production and distribution networks of products and services, as well as the exploitation of economies of scale. Improving overall competitiveness, extroversion and employment refer to the main objectives of the priority.

One of the key identified problems for regional SMEs is the exploitation of economies of scale, leading to reduced costs and increased productivity. In addition, regional SMEs are generally unable to invest significant amounts in production and distribution systems in dominant or international markets. On the contrary, as the experience of other countries shows, there can be partnerships and joint investments between SMEs for vertical or horizontal cooperation schemes towards the joint creation and exploitation of economies of scale.

3 Local Action Plan

The increasingly competitive international environment calls for measures to be enforced for achieving sustainable growth of current and new SMEs. Moreover, local SMEs face strong barriers in investing in internationalization, mainly due to capacity insufficiency and financial pressures. Lastly, the Region is characterized by a lack of the leverages required to involve highly trained and educated human resources in SME activities and as a result to retain such personnel within the regional SME workforces.

The Region of Sterea Ellada has identified Cultural and Creative Industries to represent a key player and a potential candidate to initiate or to heavily influence a spill-over effect that could help the Region achieve its objectives, as reflected by the stated investment priorities of the policy instrument addressed.

Indeed, Cultural and Creative Industries refer to fundamental pillar of the regional but also the Greek economy. The overall outlook of the cultural and creative industries in Greece shows that despite the enormous downfall they have experienced since 2008, in 2014 they record signs of recovery for the first time after six years. It should be noted that the adverse change (2008-2014) in most figures was much more intense than the recession in the Greek economy as a whole. That is to say, CCIs were affected by the recession more intensely than the Greek economy. On the other hand, it appears that for some CCIs growth also seems (to increase intensely. Data of the annual turnover indicator for the last years, show that the aforementioned upward trend will continue in the sectors of software publishing, specialized design, architecture, and libraries-museums. A stabilizing trend is expected for the sectors of advertising, printing-manufacturing-handicrafts, arts and audiovisual, publishing and radio and TV.

More particularly, one the region's major assets and competitive advantages refers to its cultural heritage. The Region of Sterea Ellada has a significant wealth in diverse natural and cultural travel destinations and entities, such consisting of historical sites and monuments (Delphi, Thermopylae, Thebes Eretria, Castles of Amfissa, Lamia, Chalkida etc.), folklore richness, cultural facilities and museums, galleries) and actively customs and various inter-cultural events. Most notably, two monuments are listed on UNESCO's World Heritage Sites: a) The Archaeological site of Delphi and b) the Osios Loukas monastery. Moreover, the region has a unique and largely intact, natural environment, which shows excellent diversity: mountains, woodland, coastal areas, islands, traditional villages and urban areas.

To this end, the rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Sterea Ellada Region provides the foundation for the SMEs' development and thus comprises a strong driving force for achieving sustainable development and growth of sub-regions within Sterea Ellada and especially of remote areas with limited development alternatives.

Within the RCIA project and with the current Local Action Plan, the Region of Sterea Ellada opts for a paradigm shift in the SME profile of the area by differentiating their production base and promoting CCI entrepreneurship as tool to achieve smart sustainable and inclusive growth. Overall, the project and the

Action Plan will assist in changing the strategic focus of the policy instrument, towards particularizing the spill-over effect and growth dimensions of CCI entrepreneurship and thus will provide the required tools to accordingly adapt its SME competitiveness objectives.

The designed Local Action Plan is centered around the Regional Film Office of Sterea Ellada. The Film Office is an initiative of the Region with its main objective to attract foreign and Greek audiovisual productions. The Film Office is a one stop shop for the needs of any audiovisual production. The Region of Central Greece, with an impressive variety of natural and urban environments, can be an ideal place to host cinematographic productions. The proximity to Athens and the international airport, the very good and constantly improving road network, its unparalleled natural environment but also special interest sites such as the largest industrial area of the country are only a few hours apart. The Film Office mediates between the various governments bodies that are necessary either to secure relevant filming licenses or to assist them in the production process. In order to provide incentives for the attraction of cinematographic productions, the Film Office has a special aid program under the name Hospitality Fund.

The Regional Film Office, already in its early operational and productive steps, is considered to provide the proper vehicle for the Region in refining and improving the instrument and also materializing the positive impacts of this improvement, as an entity operating inline with the objectives of the two selected investment priorities, bringing together different and diverse stakeholders of Cultural and Creative Industries and hence being in position to inducing unique CCI features to the instrument.

3.1 Policy Need Addressed

The main objectives of the policy instrument addressed are: i) the foundation of new innovative businesses, ii) the promotion of product and procedures innovations and iii) fostering of SME collaborations for the emergence of economies of scale. Low SME competitiveness and productivity levels, reduced SME innovability and internationalization procedures and the non-existence of economies of scale represent the key reasons for the identification of the above objectives.

In the context of the previous financial crisis, the Region has identified the need for improving the above instrument towards better illustrating the forces that could leverage the emergence of economies of scale. Within such an environment of economic pressures, the Cultural and Creative Industries, due to their inherent characteristics, are recognized as a key player and a potential candidate to initiate or to heavily influence a spill-over effect that could help the Region achieve its objectives, as stated in the Priority Axis 3.

However, the Cultural and Creative Industries are not particularly addressed in the targeted investment priorities, thus handling their unique characteristics in an horizontal approach which prescribes generic measures and which does not envision differentiated competitiveness enhancement actions for different sectors. In that respect, goal of the Region is to improve the instrument, through positioning Cultural and Creative Industries activities in the core of its measures to accomplish higher SME competitiveness levels.

In this context, the Region with the current Local Action Plan is dedicated to work towards the improvement of the addressed policy instrument in the following ways:

- Positioning the CCI sector at a central role within the regional SME competitiveness strategy
- Increasing the attractiveness of the Region and thus the capacity to retain local CCI talented human resources and incentivize CCI investors
- Incentivize CCI SMEs to perform cross-sectoral collaboration and traditional SMEs of the wider economy to embrace CCI methodologies and to acknowledge the benefits of CCI sector in general

3.2 Policy Improvement Overview

The Action Plan will clearly support the enhancement of the targeted policy instrument in addressing CCI particularities with a dedicated approach and in promoting CCI activities to a central position within its SME competitiveness strategy.

In more detail, the Action Plan will address the lack of practical know-how and vocational training on starting and maintaining CCI entrepreneurial activity, which highlights the lack of practical guidance on starting up a company. Moreover, the Plan will attempt to provide solutions to deal with the lack of regional structures and mechanisms in place for supporting CCI activities. Finally, the Action Plan will work towards the continuous support of CCI professionals in participating in new value chains and internationalizing their products and services.

3.3 List of Actions in the Action Plan

ACTION 1 – FILM OFFICE OF REGION OF STEREA ELLADA

With this Action, the Region is dedicated in supporting regional SMEs in the film sector in modernizing their operations, collaborating, standardizing and certifying their products, embracing innovative activities and internationalizing.

With the Regional Film Office of Sterea Ellada being in the center of each sub-activity, the selected Action will work towards:

- Improving CCI cross-sector collaborations
- Further developing the regional CCI ecosystem
- Capacity building within the CCI sector
- Capacity and awareness building in traditional SMES of the wider economy

Indicative sub-activities and tasks, which will be also analyzed in later sections target the regional film sector ecosystem mapping, the identification of funding opportunities, the support of stakeholders' matchmaking for cross-domain collaborations, business setup consultation and digital innovation training, among others.

4 Action Details

ACTION 1 – FILM OFFICE OF REGION OF STEREA ELLADA

4.1 The background

The Local Action Plan development process has started in the context of the Local Stakeholders Group Meetings, where we mainly discussed and analyzed the good practices of our partners from other Regions. At the same time, we started to analyze the situation in our Region. The aim within the RCIA project for the Region of Sterea Ellada is to foster and promote SME's competitiveness, as expected in the Regional Operational Programme and Jobs ERDF 2014 – 2020, Regional (ERDF) Priority Axis 3: "Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises". With the current Local Action Plan, the Region of Sterea Ellada opts for a paradigm shift in the SME profile of the area by differentiating their production base and promoting CCI entrepreneurship as tool to achieve smart sustainable and inclusive growth.

In this context, the Region of Sterea Ellada considers that "IDM Film Fund and Commission" from Italy and "Lublin Film Fund" from Poland consist some examples that inspired our Region for the implementation and elaboration of the Local action Plan, given the fact that its main aim is to provide support to creative entrepreneurs by consulting, creating awareness, community building, and internationalization. More precisely, the Region of Sterea Ellada participated in the Staff Exchange which took place in Bolzano, Italy, on 16 and 17 April 2019. The main take aways from the Staff exchange in Bolzano are as follows:

The methodology used in South Tyrol for designing the CCI strategy

HUBs and co-working spaces

Strong institutional system supporting CCI in Local, Regional and National level.

The CCI strategy, design and structure in South Tyrol are a good example which is used as an inspiration on how to set up a regional film fund in Sterea Ellada.

4.2 The idea of the present action plan is the creation of strong liaisons in the Region of Sterea Ellada and the enforcement of synergies between regional producers, professionals and businesses which will lead to more effective, long-term and sustainable growth results, compared to individual efforts. The aim is to foster the creation of innovative cultural products of distinct character and dynamic, developed around the rich cultural heritage of the Region of Sterea Ellada.Actions

Action 1 includes the following distinct activities:

- Development of innovation skills through consultation and training.
This activity aims to provide know-how and access to information for CCI professionals that are interested in starting a company or expanding their existing production base in the film sector, through the organization of relevant training seminars.

The training seminars will provide prospective CCI entrepreneurs, movie makers, artists and regional CCI stakeholders with valuable tools for setting up a company in the film sector, including the development of a relative business plan.

As aforementioned, the CCI strategy, design and structure in South Tyrol are the three pillars that the Region of Sterea Ellada will use as an example. The aim is the creation of sustainable jobs in the Region of Sterea Ellada.

The seminars will be designed, organized and implemented by the Regional Centre for Business Support, with the support of the regional Film Office and the Directorate of Development Planning of the Region of Sterea Ellada. The goal of the Regional Centre for Business Support is to strengthen research, technological development and innovation community, by highlighting good practices and enhancing the involvement of businesses in innovation activities. Typically, the Centre works with the regional innovation ecosystem and the relevant producers. As such, the Regional Centre for Business Support will provide both the facilities and training staff as well as it will be responsible for producing the necessary training material.

The activity will be financed by investment priority 3c.

➤ Stakeholders match-making tools to enhance liaisons between CCI entities

The activity targets the support of the regional ecosystem for the interconnection or joint implementation of projects between entities of the film sector, with Cultural and Creative Industries enterprises and enterprises from other sectors (e.g. Agri-food, Tourism).

The support will take the form of an online repository which will document and map the whole regional CCI ecosystem, that is existing CCI actors, entities of the film sector, professionals from other sectors and mainly the Agri-food and Tourism sectors, such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, open markets. This repository will cover the need for an organized and flexible interconnection between audiovisual productions and the local market. All professionals in the area, interested in participating in this process, will be invited to register their business in order to facilitate the contacts of producers' agents with local suppliers.

The activity will assist CCI entities to be actively involved in new value chains and become true catalysts for regional growth. The produced online repository will be hosted on the web site of the regional Film Office and the respective stakeholder engagement campaign (advertising and official invitations) will be implemented by the Region of Sterea Ellada.

The activity will be financed by investment priority 3d.

➤ Supporting and intensifying the operation of the regional Film Office

The goal of the activity is to support the Film Office of Sterea Ellada in attracting foreign and Greek audiovisual productions and further meeting the needs of producers interested in filming in regional sites. In order to do so, the activity will perform an exhaustive identification and documentation of funding opportunities around the globe that could be leveraged in order to support any potential audiovisual productions in the geographic boundaries of the region of Sterea Ellada. The funding sources material will be updated regularly in order to provide an almost real time depiction of available funding opportunities. Additionally, the activity will produce an online repository of possible filming locations of the Region in order to facilitate Greek line producers and location scouts. The results of the aforementioned activities, which will be run by the Film Office with the support of the Directorate of Tourism of the Region of Sterea Ellada, will be published and hosted online on the official web site of the Film Office of Sterea Ellada.

The activity will be financed by investment priority 3c.

4.3 Players involved

In order to achieve the objectives of its Action Plan, the Region of Sterea Ellada started from the 1st semester of the RCIA Project the procedure to involve as many local players and stakeholders. Until now, the wider public of our players involved consists of:

- Region of Sterea Ellada
- Film Office of Central Greece (Sterea Ellada).
- Greek Film Center
- Business Support Centre of Sterea Ellada
- SMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises)
- Companies and businesses interested in the CCI Cluster

The aforementioned players will be part of a membership in which the Region of Sterea Ellada will be the coordinator.

The two-day Staff Exchange meeting in Italy was an excellent opportunity for the Film Office of Central Greece to showcase an example of how the development of the Creative Industry can have an immediate effect in local communities and the economy of the region. We showed that the first movie that was shot in the region brought a direct investment of 350.000 Euros, while the total direct investment in the Region is around 700.000 Euros in less than a year. (This mainly concerns the hospitality and catering industry). We were delighted to establish a relationship with the IDM film fund and we are sure that this will benefit us significantly because of their long experience in this type of activities.

We are already in contact with the Italian Partner from South Tyrol (IDM), in order to take advantage of his inputs on how to set up a regional Film Fund in Greece. After the Staff Exchange in Italy, the representative of the Film Office and IDM are in contact in order to continue exchanging information regarding IDM Film Fund & Commission.

4.4 Timeframe

Expected start date of the action: July 2019

Expected end date of the action: December 2021

4.5 Costs

EUR 100.000

4.6 Funding sources

Region of Sterea Ellada (Regional Operational Programme and Jobs ERDF 2014 – 2020)

Date:

7/9/2020

Signature:

Stamp of the Organization (if available):

