

## Regional Policy Recommendation Template POLAND

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Project:</b>	<b>Policies to promote the internationalization of SMEs for more competitive regional ecosystems in border areas of the EU (acronym: INTER VENTURES)</b>
<b>Partner organisation:</b>	Rzeszow Regional Development Agency
<b>Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):</b>	Marshal Office of the Podkarpackie region Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland

### 2. POLICY CONTEXT

<b>A. Main features and envisaged improvement of the policy instrument</b>	
<b>Policy instrument addressed</b>	<b>Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 of Podkarpackie Region</b>
<b>Body responsible for addressed policy</b>	<b>Marshal's Office of Podkarpackie Voivodeship</b>
<b>What influence does your organization have over the targeted Policy Instrument?</b>	
<p>RRDA was established by Marshall Office of Podkarpackie Region (Managing Authority of Policy Instrument - Regional Operational Programme of the Podkarpackie Region for the years 2014 – 2020 (<b>RPO WP 2014-2020</b>)). RRDA, Marshal's Office and local authorities participated in the development and consultations of many important strategic documents at regional and trans-regional level in the framework of the UE perspective 2014-2020, i.e. in the creation of the final version of operational programs and regional strategies. RRDA has a direct impact on the RPO WP 2014-2020, thanks to the involvement of its specialized staff in the work of many expert groups created for the purpose of the implementation and evaluation of the RPO WP.</p> <p>The ACEP supports institutions and environments from the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in the field of international cooperation at the cross-border and EU level. It represents Polish Carpathian Euroregion, bringing together 61 local governments and natural persons representing scientific, non-governmental, entrepreneurial entities. The ACEP is a member of an international working cooperation group for the implementation of cross-border programmes. <b>It fosters cooperation with regional actors such as RRDA and the Marshall Office.</b> The ACEP promotes the improvements in the RPO WP to foster SME internationalization with cross-border relevance. <b>The ACEP co-works with RRDA on the policy recommendations regarding calls for proposals to increase support of cross-border initiatives for the rest of the programming period.</b></p>	
<b>Evaluation of the current operation of the policy</b>	
<p>The current policy regarding development of entrepreneurial activity has been affected by the CoVid-19. The majority of RPO WP 2014-2020 funds are run out and those saved have been shifted to provide assistance and support to enterprises affected by CoVid-19 crisis. The current situation regarding the SME cross-border cooperation, promotion and network building is hardly detectable</p>	

despite the border location of the region. Enhancing/triggering SME internationalization is especially crucial in the light of PL-SK CBC and PL-BY-UK Programmes that lack SME competitiveness priorities. The trends/thoughts regarding the 2021-2027 programming period: more emphasis will be put on refundable forms of entrepreneurship development. Additionally, increasing/encouraging the cross-border cooperation within the realization of **PL-SK CBC and PL-BY-UK Programmes** is of high priority.

***What kind of change do you want to achieve in the addressed Policy Instrument? How would influence/improve the targeted Policy Instrument?***

The changes desired to be achieved are: to put more emphasis on the support and encouragement and as a result promotion and development of entrepreneurial transnational cooperation between SMEs of the Podkarpackie region and those of cross-border regions. The Policy change will refer to the development of new project inspired by INTEVER VENTURES GP practice. It was submitted in September 2020 and already accepted. It will be implemented under **Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020 (POWER) and co-financed from European Social Fund. In order to meet the requirement of policy change the PI - RPO WP 2014-2020 will be changed.** The action is desired to encourage/increase/achieve greater cross-border cooperation between SME of Podkarpackie region and neighbouring countries. This improvement is necessary to trigger activities that will make Podkarpackie region visible on the international market. More details about the changes/actions can be found in the 3<sup>rd</sup> section - Planned Actions.

Putting more emphasis on general SMEs internationalization as well as on the realization of **PL-BY-UA and PL-SK CBC Programmes** for years 2021-2027 is the goal of the next programming period. Furthermore, it is planned to conduct consultations/meetings with the PI authority in order to develop actions of the next 2021-2027 programming period.

***If you would like to change your original Policy Instrument, please explain the reasons behind the modification! Please justify why the initial policy instrument can no longer be influenced!***

The development of the new project inspired by INTER VENTURE good practices required the change of Policy Instrument. The project will be implemented under **Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020 (POWER) co-financed from European Social Fund.** The reasons behind the original Policy Instrument change are:

- **no possibilities of improving the original PI so that it would contribute to policy change. No calls for projects that would enable the incorporation of INTER VENTURES good practice,**
- **due to COVID-19 many projects were addressed to provide only financial assistance to the sectors/entrepreneurs most affected by the pandemic,**
- **the PI change enabled to transfer some elements of INTER VENTURES practice and change policy.**

## PLANNED ACTIONS

### Action 1

<b>Action title:</b>	Young people working on their own account
<b>Nature of the action</b>	
<p>“Young people working on their own account” project will be implemented by RRDA under <b>Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020 (POWER) and co-financed from the European Social Fund</b>. It aims at improving the entrepreneurial competences of 48 professionally inactive young people aged 18-29, including disabled people living in the Podkarpackie Region who have lost employment after March 1, 2020 as well as improving the labor market situation of 40 people who will start a business by June 30, 2023. 40 out of 48 project participants <b>will be granted non-returnable funds</b> to start business activity, plus a <b>small amount distributed each month for the period of 6 months to cover the business management costs</b>. These actions will contribute to the increase of the number of enterprises and as a result the development of the Podkarpackie region. The Policy Instrument is to be changed in order to transfer/introduce some elements of INTER VENTURES good practices.</p> <p>The project provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support to young people in setting up and running their own business by providing non-returnable aid (subsidies) - 40 project participants</li> <li>- training support in the field of running a business – 48 project participants</li> <li>- bridging support - 40 project participants.</li> </ul> <p>The target group: 48 professionally passive persons aged 18-29, including disabled people that lost employment after March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. At least 50% of them will be inhabiting medium-sized towns or cities of Podkarpackie region. <b>The project gives women greater opportunity to initiate business activity, women are given greater opportunity to take part in the project, more of them will be able to start up a business (receive grants). Additionally, during the recruiting process women are awarded additional points for their sex.</b></p>	
<b>Interregional exchange of experience</b>	
<p><b>ACTION 1</b> presented above has been inspired by 2 Hungarian good practice. The 1<sup>st</sup> one is „<b>Fostering value added business cooperation between SMEs operating on different sides of the Hungary-Croatia border</b>”. It aims at providing <b>non-refundable grants for consortia</b> of at least two SMEs, at least one from each country, to develop joint product, technology or service, processes and productive capacities or carry out common marketing activities. A two-step selection process is being operated. It also promotes the scheme and carries out specific B2B consultations to identify the potential SMEs and develop project concepts. Separate project development and management support is also given for partners receiving funding. <b>The non-refundable grants is the element that has been incorporated in Action 1, although in Poland in comparison to Hungarian GP the grants will be distributed to individual SMEs not to consortia.</b></p> <p>The 2<sup>nd</sup> Hungarian GP by which <b>ACTION 1</b> has been inspired is “<b>Promoting women entrepreneurship within project “Partnership for all 2”</b>” that aims at promoting and supporting self-employment, especially women entrepreneurship in the Koprivnica Križevci County. That includes encouraging entrepreneurship through educational and promotional activities of unemployed people and encouraging of entrepreneurship through offering support for self-employment by awarding small value amounts as support. Among the activities are: adjusted training programs for unemployed</p>	

groups, empowerment and motivation of vulnerable groups for activating entrepreneurship. Some elements of the GP have been transferred into the “Young people working on their own account” project. These are: the idea to encourage women entrepreneurship and providing trainings in the field of starting/managing entrepreneurial activity. The project will give women advantage over man in recruiting process. More women than man will be allowed to qualify for the project giving women advantage over man in starting their own business.

According the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) in the first quarter of 2020, almost 120,000 jobs were liquidated in Poland, 25% of which are due to the pandemic. **Professionally active women are especially affected by the COVID-19 crisis. This risks further deepen gender inequalities in the labor market. Globally, almost 40% of all employed women work in sectors facing difficulties related to with pandemic. It’s important to emphasize that over 70% of women are employed in sectors directly affected by the pandemic.**

## Action 2

<b>Action title:</b>	<b>Podkarpackie Business Park</b>
<b>Nature of the action</b>	
<p>The “Podkarpackie Business Park” project of RRDA has received subsidy from the funds of the Regional Operational Program of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship for 2014 – 2020. Implemented by RRDA, the project aims at putting up a new business-oriented centre that will support and promote the development of the Podkarpackie region. The installed Business Park will serve as a centre to create conditions for the development of a dozen new business entities and implement an extended portfolio of services and their active sale among entrepreneurs. Building awareness among entrepreneurs and companies about the scope of possible services provided by the Business Park in order to build lasting relationships with customers will be also of great importance. The Business Park, through an individual approach to each client, will strive to offer a wide range of services. RRDA is planning to extend the activities related to cross-border cooperation between SMEs that will be the result of INTER VENTURES project implementation. The new project will be developed with the implementation of INTER VENTURES GP, will enhance the competitiveness of the region, foster and promote SME cross-border cooperation and SME network building. This is especially crucial in the light of cooperation with neighboring countries.</p>	
<b>Interregional exchange of experience</b>	
<p>The Italian GP <b>Attract/ Invest in Lombardy</b> aims at gathering and promoting Lombardy and its local investment opportunities abroad, assisting foreign companies and local public administrations on the field. In order to attract investors the Italian GP foresees a direct cooperation with Lombard Municipalities, with the central aims of reducing bureaucracy by building a clear, transparent and favourable economic context, as well as offering concrete actions to facilitate investments, such as fiscal incentives by reducing local taxes. It also includes: the creation of a database of thousands of potential investors interested in investing in Lombardy, tailor-made offline and online campaigns for target-companies, also through specific events participation, organization of workshops to promote and foster the participation of the regional Municipalities, after care services for existing foreign companies in Lombardy through dedicated round tables and one-to-one meetings during the year. <b>The project has also developed a platform to map ready-to-use investment opportunities. The services offered on the platform are to facilitate investment in Lombardy. They are: selection of the most appropriate real estate opportunities for investment, assistance in</b></p>	



**finding information and functional data to create a business plan, support in obtaining authorisation from local and national institutions to launch your business, support with bureaucratic practices.** The above activities are being considered to be transferred into the Podkarpackie Business Park project in order to initiate/support/promote and encourage foreign investments in the Podkarpackie region. Additionally, providing assistance in establishing B2B cross-border cooperation and assisting in setting up/ running an enterprise are among the transferable elements. The planned actions will contribute not only to the development of the region but they also may initiate SMEs internationalization – hopefully a long-lasting cross-border cooperation between Poland and its neighbouring countries.