

Regional Policy Recommendation

SPAIN

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project:	INTER VENTURES. Policies to promote the internationalisation of SMEs for more competitive regional ecosystems in border areas of the EU
Partner organisation:	P9 – Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR)
Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):	P5 – European Business and Innovation Centre of Burgos (CEEI-Burgos)

2. POLICY CONTEXT

A. Main features and envisaged improvement of the policy instrument	
Policy instrument addressed	Plan Estratégico Burgos Rural (PEBUR) 2015-2020 - <i>Strategic Plan Burgos Rural (PEBUR) 2015-2020</i>
Body responsible for addressed policy	P9 – Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR)
What influence does your organization have over the targeted Policy Instrument?	
<p>P9 – Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR) is the responsible body (OWNER) of the addressed policy instrument. Thus it is entitled to prepare, amend and monitor the Strategy in partnership with other organizations (RSG members).</p> <p>On these grounds, SODEBUR is the fully autonomous entity responsible for internationalisation policies as part of the Strategic Line aimed at economic development.</p> <p>In addition, P5 - CEEI Burgos is member of SODEBUR's Board of Directors.</p>	
Evaluation of the current operation of the policy	
<p>Strategic Plan Burgos Rural (PEBUR) for the programming period 2015-2020 is the main planning document in the province of Burgos (Spain) to encourage economic activity, enhancing quality of life, valorising human capital and boosting territorial image.</p> <p>PEBUR has five main strategic axes: 1) economic, 2) connectivity, 3) quality of life, 4) human capital and 5) image and tourism and 2 Horizontal Lines of Competitiveness: 6) Participatory Management and 7) Territorial Sustainability.</p> <p>The validity of this policy instrument is just coming to the end but it won't expire till the next Strategic Plan for the programming period 2021-2025 takes effect (mid 2021). In fact, SODEBUR is just in the middle of the hiring process of the services to draft this Strategy. Thus, the preparation of this document will take place during the six first months of 2021.</p> <p>On these grounds and depending on the situation when the Action Plan for the province of Burgos starts to be drafted, influencing this new policy instrument will be also possible.</p> <p>Thus, we must be aware that the on-going Strategic Plan has only co-funded SPORADIC INTERNATIONALIZATION ACTIONS for SMEs. The internationalisation support policy for SMEs in the provincial strategy requires intervention on all strategic levels: from the objectives (structural problems) to the programmes and relevant SMEs support projects.</p>	

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

The objective is implementing new projects – within Strategic Plan umbrella - thanks to the lessons learnt and knowledge gained due to interregional cooperation and leading to improve internationalisation processes among rural companies.

It will require the availability of funding in this policy instrument for the time when the Action Plan will be implemented.

This change (implementing new projects) is the most suitable one to improve SMEs internationalisation in the framework of the targeted Policy Instrument.

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!

Depending on when the provincial Action Plan will be drafted, it will be possible influencing the new Strategic Plan for the programming period 2021-2025.

3. PLANNED ACTIONS

Action 1

Action title:	Dedicated training programme to improve rural SMEs internationalisation
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Nature of the action

Considering the results of the Regional Situation Analysis developed by P5 – CEEI Burgos in the province of Burgos, one of the main challenges in the territory is the lack of qualified staff.

This action is lead to improve the capacities of the staff working on rural SMEs to promote and facilitate the participation of these companies in internationalisation processes. This training programme will be mainly dedicated to those potential companies “starting” or with the “intention” to internationalise.

The format of this training will be studied depending on the evolution of COVID-19 pandemic. Nowadays, initiation online seminars (knowledge pills) are foreseen to be developed covering the main relevant information and capacities needed to involve the company in an internationalisation process: entities offering support for internationalisation at local/regional/national level (and offered services), lines of financing, how to start exporting, how to improve the knowledge of potential foreign markets...

This training should directly influence the capacities of participant companies to work in international markets.

In addition, the possibility of counting on the support of an external mentor during the “practical” process for all participants will be studied.

Being aware that the tackled policy instrument considers internationalisation in a very residual way and not specifically as a way to improve competitiveness, this action will contribute to plan a new project (included and being financing under this provincial Strategy) to reach this goal from the basis of gaining more competences and capacities among the staff dedicated to these issues.

Interregional exchange of experience

The inspiration for this action comes from the good practice named “ADELANTE” from the partner “Rzeszow Regional Development Agency” (Poland).

This good practice aims at providing training and counselling support regarding internationalisation in the field of renewable energy.

The structure and main content of this good practice will be partially transferred to the province of Burgos (Spain) but without restrictions in the economic sector of the participant companies. Thus, not only SMEs from the field of renewable energy will be accepted but also all companies placed in rural areas interesting in improving their knowledge and capacities to export will have the possibility to take part on this programme.

As far as the polish experience provides solutions to 1) lack of models related to the development, management, promotion and internationalization of SMEs' activities in the field of renewable energy branch and 2) low level of competences of managerial personnel in the field of renewable energy, the foreseen action in the province of Burgos (Spain) will adapt the methodology used combining training and mentoring for participants (without limiting the economic sector they belong to).

Action 2

Action title:	Financial scheme to improve rural SMEs internationalization
Nature of the action	
As it was highlighted in the Burgos Situation Analysis report, there is a clear scarce and limited financial resources since there is a long list of requirements to comply with in order to access some of the existing internationalization supporting programmes regardless of the Administration level. Besides, there is also a lack of specifically trained personnel. Although there is widespread opinion that this barrier is becoming smaller, there continues to be a language barrier.	
In accordance with this, the action to be designed will be addressing both the lack of funding and training directly aiming at internationalization activities. Financial schemes like SODEBUR micro credits to be considered for working capital and investments (Logistics, market research, tailor made assessment...), along with specific measures supporting staff training and hiring of specialised staff. This action is expected to be included in the new programming period of the policy instrument.	
Interregional exchange of experience	
Different features from several Good Practices has been taking into account. Namely:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering value added business cooperation between SMEs operating on different sides of the Hungary-Croatia border (Hungary): 75% co-financing schemes and two stages of implementation in order to facilitate the applying process. - Regional Operative Programme Lombardia (2014 – 2020), 2019 call (Italy): Loans up to 80% or the total investment. - PROMOS (Italy): Training and tailor-made assessment pre and post the disbursement. Networking services. 	
Those valuable aspects, along with other GPs and previous experiences will be the pillars of the action. The above described features will be structuring the action/measure (Financial scheme to improve rural SMEs internationalization) to be included in the Action Plan. A proper adaptation in terms of funding limits, terms and conditions will be carried out taking into account the particular circumstances and needs of Burgos province ecosystem.	