



POLICY BRIEF FOR THE 2021-2025 Strategic Plan Burgos Rural (PEBUR)

Written by:

- Juan Carlos Martínez. P5 – European Business and Innovation Centre of Burgos (CEEI-Burgos)
- Beatriz García. P9 – Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR)

Executive statement

Outline your main message – what do you want to say and to whom (max: 500 characters)

This Policy Brief is addressed to the Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR) as policy owner and main responsible of drafting the new Strategic Plan Burgos Rural 2021 - 2025.

Thus, the important message is that – according to the needs detected within the previous local Strategy - companies placed in the rural areas of the province of Burgos are requiring new ways of support to improve their internationalization processes. On these grounds, this Policy Brief includes two recommendations to solve this issue: inclusion of new projects aimed at promoting the internationalisation of rural companies under the perspective of the current economic situation due to the pandemic COVID-19, with the special attention to provide appropriate financial schemes as well as dedicated training programmes.

About the project

A brief outline of the aims of the project Inter Ventures and description of what you did to address the problem within this project (max: 1000 characters)

As Inter Ventures' main objective aims at promoting SMEs internationalization in EU border regions, the actions developed during the implementation phase of the project will be focused on ensuring the achievement of this goal within Burgos province. In accordance with this, and following the recommendations of the regional situation analysis already produced, along with the GPs selected, the policy owner, SODEBUR, has started the definition process of the new programming period of the instrument addressed, counting on the RSG collaboration for this purpose.

Further to this, the on-going Strategic Plan has only co-funded sporadic internationalization actions for SMEs. The internationalization support policy for SMEs requires intervention on all strategic levels: from the objectives (structural problems) to the programmes and relevant SMEs support projects, and a long-term framework to structure the actions to be implemented.

Context

Outline the problem and any relevant contextual information and political background. State why the problem is urgent and important. Use evidence and infographics to support your argument (max: 2000 characters)

As a result of the Regional Situation Analysis, the following gaps or points requiring reinforcement to enhance internationalization for companies in Burgos were detected:

- Creation of import and export plans for SMEs. Although a high number of companies already produce them (62%), this is a rate that needs to be improved.
- More visible promotional websites of the companies and SMEs aiming at internationalization processes in order to properly target their prospects.
- Scarce human resources with specific knowledge and expertise in internationalization.
- Additional networking options: the possibility of contacting prospects or potential customers abroad or identifying business opportunities.

Taking these needs into consideration, the Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR), which aims to promote the economic and social development of the province of Burgos and its municipalities, is developing several lines of work such as advice, financing or internationalization actions in order to support the international expansion of companies in rural areas.

The Strategic Plan Burgos Rural (PEBUR) for the programming period 2015-2020, the selected policy to be influenced, 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.

PEBUR has five main strategic axes:

- 1) economic,
- 2) connectivity,
- 3) quality of life,
- 4) human capital
- 5) image and tourism.

The validity of this policy instrument is just coming to the end but it won't be expired till the next Strategic Plan for the programming period 2021-2025 takes effect (mid 2021). Actually, SODEBUR is just half way through the defining process of the services and activities to underpin this Strategy. Thus, the preparation of this document will take place during the six first months of 2021.

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 is also possible and feasible.

Results, conclusions and recommendations

1. **Describe what you want your audience to do about the problem using evidence from the project to back up your recommendations. Make sure the recommendations are (max: 2000 characters)**

It has been demonstrated due to a carefully revision of the document that the previous strategy (Strategic Plan Burgos Rural) for the period 2015-2020 didn't include any direct reference to implement projects related to the improvement of internationalisation processes in a rural environment.

Also, the need of developing and locally implementing new initiatives related to this topic (and with this aim) has been clearly demonstrated due to the comments and feedback from agents included on the Regional Stakeholders Group constituted within INTER VENTURES framework.

In addition, and apart from considering the need of including new projects linked to this topic in the new Strategy for the period 2021-2025, it is also necessary considering during the drafting's process of this new policy instrument, the current economic context at both global and local level due to the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, this Policy Brief is aiming at transferring the knowledge gained from INTER VENTURES project to encourage the Society for the Development of the Province of Burgos (SODEBUR), considering the recommendations detailed below dealing with the improvement of internationalization processes in rural areas in the new Strategic Plan for the period 2021 – 2025.

2. Please describe each of your recommendation in detail:

Recommendation 1 (max: 1500 characters): inclusion of new projects aimed at promoting the internationalisation of rural companies under the perspective of the current economic situation due to the pandemic COVID-19.

The global pandemic has disrupted business activities worldwide. But the economic impact of COVID-19 has varied across regions and the consequences have been largely dependent on a region's economic position. Thus, for instance, preliminary last year's results show that both internationalisation processes and export have considerably decreased (compared with previous years' data).

On these grounds, and considering the need and local interest to include projects to promote rural internalisation, these new initiatives mentioned below (training and mentoring, financing or business digitalization) must be drafted being aware of the current situation as well as the global recommendations and forecasts for next scenarios.

Being aware of the initial comments emerging from the Regional Stakeholders Group, these new projects suggested to be developed within the new Strategic Plan 2021-2025, should be initially aimed at:

- Preparing dedicated training and mentoring (knowledge pills for beginners),
- Launching a specific line of financing for internationalization or
- Developing a program of business digitalization (promoting e-commerce), taking advantage of the new methods of work due to COVID-19 in order to maximize the participation at commercial fairs or trade missions

Recommendation 2 (max: 1500 characters)

As it was stated in the Burgos Situation Analysis Report, one of the main barriers for SMEs internationalization, is the limited financial resources available 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 should be addressing both the lack of funding and training directly aiming at internationalization activities. Financial schemes like SODEBUR micro



credits are to be considered for working capital and investments (logistics, market research, tailor made assessment etc), along with specific measures supporting staff training and hiring of specialised staff.

These actions are expected to be included in the new programming period (2021 – 2025) of the policy instrument.

References

Only include maximum of four sources where readers can find further information. Give the web addresses of publications and dates for when they were last accessed if possible.

- INTER VENTURES' project
[INTER VENTURES | Interreg Europe](#)
- Strategic Plan Burgos Rural (PEBUR) 2015-2020
[Pebur \(pebur1520.org\)](#)
- Burgos Situation Analysis report (Interventures)