

CLAY

Action Plan on the ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia region for the period 2021-2025

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1 Introduction

The project "Cross Sector support for Innovative and Competitive Artistic Ceramic SMEs" with the acronym CLAY was financed within the INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020 program - call no. 3 (2017). It started on June 1, 2018 for a period of five years, comprising 2 distinct phases, respectively phase I (2018-2021) and phase II (2021-2023). This project is the result of the joint action of a multinational partnership carried out by the following organizations:

1. Umbria Region (Umbria Regional Government, Italy) - Project leader
2. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Cities of Ceramics, EGTC limited (AEuCC) - (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Ceramic Cities, Spain)
3. South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, Romania
4. Etelä-Pohjanmaan liitto (Southern Ostrobothnia Regional Council, Finland)
5. CTCV: Centro Tecnológico da Cerâmica e do Vidro (CTCV: Technological Center for Ceramics and Glass, Portugal)
6. Association for the Development and Promotion of the European Ceramics Pole (Association for the Development and Promotion of the European Ceramics Pole, France)

The project aims to meet the needs identified in the traditional ceramics sector, in order to adapt to the current economic climate.

PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, the organization that represents Romania in this project, is a non-governmental organization (NGO), non-profit, of public utility, established on February 28, 1999. South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency is part of the set of financial, regional and national bodies and instruments established to allow Romania to absorb community funds in the pre- and post-accession period. Its mission is to facilitate and promote the development of Oltenia, by implementing the Regional Development Plan assumed by the Council for Regional Development and regional partners. The main objective is to attract resources from outside the region in conjunction with intensifying the use of local resources, in order to achieve social cohesion of local communities in the Oltenia Region, improve quality of life and increase the competitiveness of the regional economy.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Agency for Regional Development South-West Oltenia, in partnership with local public administrative institutions and other relevant institutions in the South-West Oltenia Region, carries out the following main activities:

- Implementation of regional programs and projects: technical services for the implementation of regional development programs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Development and

Public Administration or with other Ministries that have delegated program management responsibilities;

- Regional programming: by developing the Regional Development Plan and by contributing to the development of the Regional Operational Program, but also by coordinating the implementation of other strategies and studies at regional level (Regional Innovation Strategy, Study on regional mobility, etc.), or participate in elaboration of local and sectoral strategies;

- Own initiatives and projects of the Agency for Regional Development South-West Oltenia. Several initiatives have been undertaken to develop key sectors identified at the regional level, such as: tourism, health, automotive, agriculture. The CLAY project joins other actions in which the Agency for Regional Development South-West Oltenia comes in support of the ceramics sector, a representative craft for the Oltenia Region.

- Regional marketing and investment promotion: elaboration of brochures and promotional materials, economic missions for entrepreneurs, advice for potential investors.

The South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, the organization that represents Romania in this project, was actively involved in the implementation of the CLAY project. This was directly stimulated by the fact that Oltenia is the most important region nationally in terms of number of currently active ceramic centers (8 ceramic centers, with representation in each county in the region, compared to 29 active ceramic centers existing at national level, of which 16 members of the Romanian Association of Ceramic Centers).

LOCALITATI CENTRE DE CERAMICA DIN ROMANIA MEMBRE ArCC



LOCALITIES CERAMIC CENTERS FROM ROMANIA, MEMBERS OF ArCC

The actions proposed within the project refer to the identification of policy measures that promote transversal and intersectoral initiatives for:

1. promoting innovation in the production process of artistic ceramics: advances in IT and automation could contribute to reducing costs and time related to the way SMEs active in the field of ceramics are managed;
2. promoting innovation in the design process and in the final product;
3. promoting innovation in the marketing and sale of artistic ceramic products.

Starting with 2018, the South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency has assumed a role of catalyst for efforts to consolidate the clay civilization in Oltenia but also in Romania. This craft is consolidated by a widely recognized tradition, ready to welcome contemporary creation, nourished by the past and reinterpreted in the spirit of today's times.

The South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency starts from the reality that pottery is recognized and appreciated both nationally and internationally as an economic and cultural side that existed and developed throughout the evolution of humanity. However, at this time, in Romania, it fails to adapt adequately to current economic realities. This is due to stagnation in tradition and ancestral, unequal competition with consumer or disposable products or, even worse, unfair competition with consumer products series, of dubious origin and imitating authentic ceramics. The mission we assume is to achieve a superior economic value of a traditional craft activity by developing production lines with a high standard of efficiency and quality and applying appropriate marketing and merchandising principles. Through the CLAY project, the South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency aims at both the progress of the craft, but also of those who want to work in the field of ceramics. Association, specialization, cooperation of the potters in view of the planned development of this economic activity are essential for the vitalization of Romanian ceramics. The local ceramic centers in Romania rediscover together this vein of local development. The actions developed within the project, the five interregional learning events (Interregional Learning Event) held so far and the quarterly workshops aimed to develop this craft on the coordinates of the real economy using the foundation of traditional elements. We anticipate that the CLAY project will be a vector for maintaining and developing, promoting and sustaining the craft of pottery and will conclusively contribute to the evolution of other horizontal sectors of local development (tourism, public catering, souvenirs, trade fairs, etc.) in the South-West Oltenia Region.

The organizations involved in this project, and the stakeholders who have the opportunity to contribute, have worked in a team, to exchange knowledge and skills and to develop new collaborations. As such, they have strengthened the capacity of their own organizations.



The phenomenon of Romanian folk pottery has risen and declined, due to changes in society. The most dramatic consequences of these changes are the extinction of pottery centers in Romania by the disappearance of local craftsmen, lack of motivation for their descendants to continue this craft, lack of adaptation to the requirements of the profile market and last but not least the disregard of this ancestral occupation.

However, there are many arguments to encourage and support artists at the beginning of their careers and favors the perpetuation of Romanian ceramics. These include a superior appreciation of ceramics in general by bringing it to the attention of the informed public or simply the artistic spirit, the presentation of pottery and its spectacularity and the widest possibilities to promote products and crafts. In addition, interdisciplinarity is becoming more and more necessary, new uses of ceramic materials in technical, medical, construction materials, etc. generating the need for collaborations between economic agents from various fields of activity.

Ceramics is an important landmark in Romanian culture. Influenced by technological progress, by historical and economic evolution, ceramics still preserves that balance between ethnographic and artistic, between utilitarian and aesthetic, the ceramic product being always an object of art but also of civilization. Romanian ceramics preserves in form, ornamentation and chromatics ancient traditions that are also found in other cultures' ceramics. It also has elements that individualize it and recommend it in the landscape of European and world ceramics. This comes from the strong conservation of traditional elements, which evolve in succession. Craftsmen and the environment in which it develops, maintains unaltered the specific Romanian creative vein.

General information

Project: CLAY "Cross Sector support for Innovative and Competitive Artistic Ceramic SMEs"

Partner organization: South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency

Country: ROMANIA

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2 Policy context

The development of the ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia Region, requires a multi-annual strategic planning that includes an infusion of resources necessary for the dynamization of the actions of this action plan. In the current programming period, these resources will be able to be provided (within the limits of budget availabilities, generated by the degree of absorption afferent to each targeted Operational Program), through the following programs:

Operational program	Class of targeted activities
Human Capital Operational Program **	Vocational training, job creation, education, promotion
Regional Operational Program ***	Creation / development of economic entities in the field of ceramics, development of marketing of ceramic products
National Program for Rural Development ****	Development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas
National programs	Infrastructure development, endowment, entrepreneurial support, promotion, event organization and event participation

** The Human Capital Operational Program establishes the investment priorities, objectives and actions assumed by Romania in the field of human resources, continuing the investments made by the ESF in the period 2007-2013 and contributing to achieving the general objective of the PA 2014-2020, which is to reduce disparities of economic and social development between Romania and the EU MS.

Based on the needs and challenges, as well as the priorities proposed for funding at PA level 2014-2020, in accordance with the provisions of the CCS and the Position Paper of the EC services, the Human Capital Operational Program is developed in close correlation with relevant strategic documents at European and national level.

The strategy of the Human Capital Operational Program aims at integrating the needs of human resources development in all public programs and policies of Romania, as the EU MS and considers the valorization of human capital, as a resource for sustainable development in the future.

With planned integrated interventions in the field of employment, social inclusion and education, the Human Capital Operational Program works as a means of stimulating economic growth and cohesion



and supports the achievement of objectives set in other development challenges - competitiveness, infrastructure, administration and governance - thus contributing to the fulfillment of the objectives assumed by Romania in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

*** The Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 is the successor of the Regional Operational Program 2007-2013 and one of the programs through which Romania will be able to access the European structural and investment funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in the period 2014-2020.

The Regional Operational Program (ROP) 2014-2020, managed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration as Managing Authority, was adopted by the European Commission (EC) on June 23, 2015.

The strategic vision regarding the development needs that the ROP 2014-2020 must meet is based on the analysis of the economic and social situation of the Romanian regions (in the National Strategy for Regional Development 2014-2020), which led to the identification of the main problems:

- Research and development, and innovation: limited transfer of market research results and low level of assimilation of innovation in firms,
- SME: underdeveloped SME sector, with a negative impact on the competitiveness of regional economies. The main weaknesses of the SME sector, in the national strategic programming documents, are:
 - low degree of entrepreneurial culture - reflected in the relatively low density of business in all regions,
 - low resilience of new businesses - 2/3 of new businesses disappear from the market in the first year of life.
- Energy efficiency: unsustainable energy consumption and high savings potential in public infrastructure, including public buildings and residential buildings.
- Environment: high level of pollution in urban areas.
- Urban development: urban areas degraded, vacant or not used properly in Romanian cities.
- Heritage resources: valuable resources of poorly capitalized cultural heritage.



- Tourism: valuable, balanced tourist potential distributed territorially - an alternative for the revitalization of less developed / isolated areas.
- Road infrastructure: the low degree of accessibility of certain areas of the country, which results in low attractiveness and extremely low investment.
- Social and educational infrastructure: undersized educational, health and social services infrastructures impede social inclusion and human capital development.
- Cadastre: low level of cadastral records, which affects the implementation of policies on the socio-economic development of local communities.
- Administrative capacity: the need to strengthen the administrative capacity of the ROP Managing Authority, the ROP Implementing Bodies and the beneficiaries, for a good ROP implementation.

These directions of action have been linked to the strategic directions of action mentioned by the European Commission regarding the financing from the European Structural and Investment Funds, through the European Regional Development Fund in the period 2014-2020:

- Innovation and research;
- Digital agenda;
- Support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- Low carbon economy.

ROP 2014–2020 aims as a general objective to increase economic competitiveness and improve the living conditions of local and regional communities, by supporting the development of business environment, infrastructure and services, for the sustainable development of regions, so that they can manage effectively resources and realize its potential for innovation and assimilation of technological progress.

These objectives are translated into 11 priority axes (plus a technical assistance axis), which have a total allocation of € 8.25 billion, of which € 6.7 billion is EU support, through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and 1.5 billion euros - the national contribution. Among the priority axes we consider of interest for the development of the ceramics sector:

Priority Axis 1: Promoting technology transfer

Priority Axis 2: Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises

Priority Axis 3: Supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy

Priority Axis 5: Improving the urban environment and preserving, protecting and sustaining the cultural heritage

Priority Axis 7: Diversification of local economies through sustainable development of tourism

Priority Axis 9: Supporting the economic and social regeneration of disadvantaged communities in urban areas.

SW Oltenia RDA as the intermediate body for the ROP 2014-2020 at regional level coordinated and elaborated the Regional Development Plan and contributed to the elaboration of the ROP. South West Oltenia Regional Development Agency is the Intermediate Body for Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020, and is funding programs dedicated to SMEs.

SW Oltenia RDA coordinated the "Research Development and Innovation and Economic Competitiveness" Working Group, which contributed to the elaboration of the Regional Development Plan and the RIS3 Strategy.

Through ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises Investment priority 2.1 - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new businesses, including through business incubators, 2.1 A Micro-enterprises there were financed at least 9 projects in the field of dentistry (dental laboratories) .

Through ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment priority 2.2 - Support the creation and expansion of advanced production capacity and service development there is a project under evaluation that aims to extend the production capacity of the company by modernizing the manufacturing line of ceramic products.

The Investment priorities 2.1 and 2.2 supports Investment intangible assets and tangible assets, including modernisation for production/services areas. It also covers procurement of technological equipment and investments in development of online sale instruments for applicant's own products/services. These types of investments are a good foundation for the type of innovation that CLAY wishes to consider for the ceramics and related sectors.

**** The National Rural Development Program 2014 - 2020 (PNDR 2020) is the Program through which non-reimbursable funds are granted from the European Union and the Government of Romania for the economic-social development of the rural space in Romania. The technical and financial implementation is ensured by the Agency for the Financing of Rural Investments (AFIR). Farmers, processors, entrepreneurs and local public authorities have at their disposal approximately 9 billion euros, non-reimbursable European funds to make investments at European standards, efficient and profitable.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE FINANCIAL PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2014-2020 that can generate support for the development of the ceramics sector in rural localities and small towns:

- Development of basic rural infrastructure as a precondition for attracting investments in rural areas and creating new jobs and implicitly for the development of rural areas.
- Encourage the diversification of the rural economy by promoting the creation and development of SMEs in non-agricultural sectors in rural areas;
- Encourage local development placed in the responsibility of the community through the LEADER approach. LEADER's cross-cutting competence improves competitiveness, quality of life and diversification of the rural economy, as well as combating poverty and social exclusion.

For the next programming period (2021-2027) within the Cohesion Policy (PC) 2021-2027 and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the following programs are targeted:

Operational program	Class of targeted activities
Sustainable Development Operational Program (PODD)*	Research and innovation in the field of ceramics
Education and Employment Operational Program (POEO)**	Vocational training, job creation, education, promotion
Regional Operational Program***	Creation / development of economic entities in the field of ceramics
National Program for Rural Development	Development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas

National programs	National programs Infrastructure development, endowment, entrepreneurial support, promotion, event organization and event participation
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* The Sustainable Development Operational Program is part of the Policy Objective 2 (OP 2), which has an allocation of approximately € 8.2 billion (€ 7.135 billion from the ERDF + € 1.087 billion from the CF). The PODD will have an allocation of EUR 4.62 billion (EUR 3.05 billion - ERDF, EUR 837 million - CF and EUR 692 million - State budget). With four priority axes, the Sustainable Development Operational Program can provide resources to support the ceramics sector by stimulating research and innovation in the field of ceramics.

** Education and Employment Operational Program (POEO) - The general objective of the POEO is to contribute to the creation of a more social Romania with equal access to sustainable, quality employment, to an education system relevant to the labor market and stimulating for lifelong learning.

Specific objectives:

Education

- improving accessibility, quality and affordability, in terms of costs, education and care of preschool children, including related infrastructure;
- prevention of early school leaving, by introducing a student-centered approach, for children at risk, flexible "Second Chance" programs, but also relevant counseling and career guidance services, while improving teachers' skills, so that they can pay the necessary attention to children from vulnerable / disadvantaged groups;
- improving the quality of vocational education and training, so as to adapt to developments in the labor market, including the necessary training and the provision of specific equipment;
- supporting the development of innovative and effective teaching methods and techniques.

Occupancy

- integration of young people on the labor market;
- ensuring access to employment for vulnerable groups, including increasing women's employment;
- development of entrepreneurial culture, support of entrepreneurship and social economy;
- developing mechanisms for anticipating skills and monitoring active employment policies;
- developing the social dialogue and involving the social partners in the implementation of employment policies, including by increasing their capacity;

- ensuring a safe and healthy work environment and promoting active aging;
- increase participation in lifelong learning to ensure labor market transitions and employee mobility.

Investment priorities to be financed under the Sustainable Development Operational Program:

1. Capitalizing on the potential of young people on the labor market;
2. Preventing early school leaving and increasing access to and participation of disadvantaged groups in education and training
3. Increasing the quality of education and training to ensure the fairness of the system and better adapt to the dynamics of the labor market and the challenges of innovation and technological progress.
4. Increasing the accessibility, attractiveness and quality of vocational and technical education
5. Increasing access to the labor market for all
6. Entrepreneurship and social economy
7. Supporting labor market reforms in line with labor market dynamics
8. Strengthening population participation in lifelong learning to facilitate labor market transitions and mobility
9. Technical assistance to facilitate and streamline the management of the Program.

The estimated budget of the program: 5.775 billion Euros.

*** The Regional Operational Program will be managed by the Regional Development Agencies, as managing authorities.

Priority axis	Policy objective / Specific objective
1 - Competitiveness through innovation and dynamic enterprises	PO 1 / SO 1 Development of research and innovation capacities and adoption of advanced technologies
	PO 1 / SO 3 Boosting the growth and competitiveness of SMEs
6 - Modern and inclusive education	PO 4/ SO 2 Improving access to quality and inclusive services in education, training and lifelong learning through infrastructure development
	PO d(v) Strengthening the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation

<p><i>7 - Sustainable territorial development</i></p>	<p><i>PO 5/ SO 1 Fostering integrated social, economic and environmental development at local level and cultural heritage, tourism and security in urban areas</i></p>
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At national level, there is a need to revitalize initiatives that can stimulate the development, conservation and development of crafts in general and ceramics in particular. Support is required for a re-evaluation of crafts in new economic and social contexts and a consolidation of their vitality in new contexts (economic recession generated by the COVID 19 pandemic, unbalanced non-EU trade, etc.). Thus, an active intervention at the level of national sectoral policies (culture, education, economic development, social protection) is necessary to respond to the needs identified in the ceramics sector, to stimulate innovation and research in this field.

At regional level, the Development Strategy of the South-West Oltenia Region will include distinct actions and measures that will support the development of the ceramics sector in Oltenia. We will also recommend that county and local strategies include measures and strategic guidelines to ensure the perpetuation of their development and their development in the context of their contribution to local economies and national and world cultural heritage.

Interesting Policy Developments setting the framework for our Action Plan

This sets are really important framework for our action because it has inserted ceramics as a priority section.

The support offered within the Human Capital Operational Program refers to the following areas: vocational training, job creation, education, promotion for maintaining the craft, increasing the degree of professionalization and specialization, increasing the economic efficiency of activities in the field of ceramics, revitalizing the labor market.

PP3 - SW Oltenia RDA has influenced the policy instrument initially through a change in strategic focus. The ceramic sector was inserted as a priority sector in a funding scheme that SW Oltenia RDA implements within the Human Capital Operational Program for social enterprises.

The general objective of funding scheme is to develop entrepreneurial competences in the field of social economy by informing, training, advising and supporting self-employment among the persons who intend to set social enterprises in the urban and / or rural area of South-West Oltenia region. Applications for new social enterprises (at least 21) receive funding to develop a business plan to

subsidise the network and they receive the above described support services. The call also creates a network between the funded social enterprises.

The aim to introduce the ceramic sector as a priority sector within the financing scheme was achieved, the documents were improved. An evaluation grid was included with an additional score for the artistic ceramics field, referring to the following NACE codes: 2341 Manufacture of ceramic household and ornamental articles; 2349 Manufacture of other ceramic products; 4644 Wholesale of ceramic products, glassware, and maintenance products.

We consider that the CLAY project is a vector for maintaining and developing, promoting and sustaining the craft of pottery and, also, conclusively contribute to the evolution of other horizontal sectors of local development (tourism, public catering, souvenirs, trade fairs, etc.) in the South-West Oltenia Region. The use of ceramics in other economic sectors aims to make this traditional craft more flexible to adapt to current market requirements and provide feasible solutions for the development and diversification of other related economic sectors or potentially related. This new aspect of the funding scheme is designed to support implementation of such cross-sector initiatives.

The financing scheme was developed for the first time, SW Oltenia RDA wrote the selection methodology, being a new measure. As administrator of the funding scheme and in the CLAY context, SW Oltenia inserted in the evaluation grid an additional score for the artistic ceramics field.

As administrator of the financing scheme, SW Oltenia RDA developed the business plan selection methodology, which is a kind of financing guide. At the time of drawing up the methodology, the list of eligible fields of activity was also drawn up, which also includes the NACE ceramic codes. In the evaluation grid, it was planned to award an additional score for the field of ceramics.

Through the CLAY project, regional stakeholders - local and regional public authorities, non-governmental organizations became aware of the needs in the ceramic sector and understood the need to support this sector.

The regional analysis carried out within CLAY, in which the regional stakeholders were also involved, highlighted the need to find concrete measures to support this sector.

Pottery, recognized and appreciated both nationally and internationally as an economic and cultural treasure, is at a stage in which it fails to adapt adequately to current economic realities. This is due to stagnation in tradition and ancestral, unequal competition with consumer or disposable products or, even worse, unfair competition with products of dubious origin and imitating authentic ceramics.

Activities carried-out within CLAY focused on the progress of the craft and on those who want to work in the field of ceramics. The common direction addressed by regional stakeholders involved in the

project refers to the importance of association, specialization, cooperation of the potters in order to develop economic activities. This is essential for the vitalization of ceramics sector at regional level. Lessons learned from the project that were at the origin of this change were the GP from Italy – Ceramica Made in Umbria. This GP was launched by the Region of Umbria to support innovation among ceramic companies, building on the strong regional ceramics heritage, boosting process and product innovation and triggering a change in the mind-sets of ceramists. This GP particularly encouraged cooperation between SMEs, a concept that is central to the funding scheme and to work to promote ceramics. Further input came from the GP from Finland regarding the Ceramic Education, referring to the Adult Education Center. The applicants for the financing scheme had the opportunity to participate first in a series of trainings related to the development of business plans. From this perspective the concept of self-development is reached.

The policy change began when local decision-makers discussed and understood the problems and needs faced by representatives of ceramic enterprises . This discussion included a large number of stakeholders: City Halls of Horezu and Râmnicu Vâlcea, Mehedinți , Vâlcea and Dolj County Councils, Horezu Micro-region Local Action Group, Association for the promotion of authentic heritage Horezu, Vâlcea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Depresiunea Horezu Association, Constantin Brâncoveanu Foundation, Horezu Resource Center for Social Economy Association (CRES), Horezu Popular Ceramics Gallery, Horezu Ceramics Association. CLAY activities carried out so far - stakeholder meetings and collaboration between them for regional analysis have had an impact in terms of their awareness and capacity to provide support for the development of the ceramics sector.

During the Regional Stakeholders Group Meetings, which we have organized so far within the project (in September 2018, April and November 2019, May and November 2020), the stakeholders expressed a special interest on measures to revitalize the ceramic sector in the region and on proposals to improve policies on funds allocated to the ceramic sector. Also, within the meetings were organized debates on the SWOT analysis of the ceramic sector carried out within the project (April 2019); on innovation needs and solutions in the ceramic sector in the South-West Oltenia Region (November 2019); on policy instrument targeting the CLAY project and on the elaboration of the action plan (May 2019); on the development needs of the actors in the field of ceramics (November 2020). The stakeholders involved in this project have had the opportunity to have worked in a team, to exchange knowledge and skills and to develop new collaborations, as such, they have strengthened their own business.

3 List of Actions

Name of the action	Brief description
Action 1 – Supporting cross sector collaboration through promoting the SMEs competitiveness that operate in ceramics and related sectors	The action aims to prioritize the projects in the ceramics sector through interventions on the evaluation and selection criteria in a favorable way for the projects in the ceramics field.
Action 2 - Monitoring the implementation of funded projects related with the ceramics sector, funded by ROP 2014-2020	The action will highlight the effectiveness of the support intervention carried out through European funding, will provide information on the real needs of the ceramics sector, will identify future support directions and policies at which new interventions are needed;
Action 3 - Stimulating the involvement of local public organizations and authorities in supporting the development projects of the ceramics sector	The action envisages the inclusion in the local strategies of a prioritization of the financiers granted to the ceramics sector and of the actions related to the conservation, development and promotion of this sector.

4 Details of the Actions Envisaged

Title of the action

Action 1 – Supporting cross sector collaboration through promoting the SMEs competitiveness that operate in ceramics and related sectors

Policy Need Addressed

At present, the economic sector of ceramics in Romania and implicitly in the South-West Oltenia Development Region has a negative inertia due to the lack of a conclusive evolution, being limited to the production of traditional ceramics, made according to manufacturing processes and raw materials. similar to those of 50 years ago. With a fragile demand-supply balance, often affected by national economic and political evolution, Romanian ceramics is in a marked process of extinction, due in particular to:

- the loss of traditional markets, in front of modern products - cheaper, more practical, more reliable;



- reduction of the offer and the inability to take over some orders due to the limitations generated by the lack of production capacity, decrease of qualification and lack of professional improvements, lack of experience working with new raw materials, adapted to current requirements;
- lack of qualified labor force, due to reduced activities for young people - there are no labor qualification structures, the qualification period is long (> 2 years), the vast majority of pottery companies in Oltenia are developed at the level of individual or small workshops with 3-4 employees with a low degree of profitability, do not provide job stability. The direct consequence: every year the number of qualified potters decreases.

One of the main causes of this situation is the lack of adequate concern of national, regional and local decision-makers for the creation of a legislative framework to support the ceramics sector. A good example is the lack of effective national legislation to regulate and support traditional occupations (there was a legislative initiative to promote a Craft Law in 2017-2019, but it failed objectively due to the poor quality of the legislative proposal). To achieve immediate results, the solution is an effective intervention on existing policies.

The regional analysis of CLAY, which also involved regional stakeholders, highlighted the need to find concrete measures to support this sector. Through the CLAY project, regional stakeholders - local and regional public authorities, non-governmental organizations became aware of the needs of the ceramics sector and understood the need to support this sector. The policy change began when local decision-makers discussed and understood the problems and needs faced by representatives of ceramic enterprises. This discussion included a large number of stakeholders: Horezu and Râmnicu Vâlcea City Halls, Mehedinți, Vâlcea and Dolj County Councils, Horezu Microregion Local Action Group, Horezu Association for the Promotion of Authentic Heritage, Vâlcea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Constantin Brâncoveanu Foundation, Horezu Resource Center Association for the Social Economy Association (CRES), Horezu Popular Ceramics Gallery, Horezu Ceramics Association. CLAY activities carried out so far - meetings with stakeholders and collaboration between them for regional analyzes have had an impact in terms of their awareness and ability to provide support for the development of the ceramics sector. At the regional stakeholder group meetings we have organized in the project so far, stakeholders expressed special interest in measures to revitalize the region's ceramics sector and proposals for improving funding policies. allocated to the ceramics sector. Also, during the meetings, debates were organized on the SWOT analysis of the ceramics sector carried out within the project (April 2019); on the needs and solutions of innovation in the ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia region (November 2019); on the policy instrument for the CLAY project and the development of the action plan (May 2019); on the development needs of actors in the field of ceramics (November 2020). Stakeholders involved in this project had the opportunity to work in a team, to exchange knowledge and skills and to develop new collaborations. We consider that the CLAY project has acted as a vector for the maintenance and development, promotion and support of the craft of pottery and also contributes conclusively to the evolution of other horizontal sectors of local development (tourism, public catering, souvenirs, fairs, etc.) in the Region. Southwest Oltenia. The use of ceramics in other economic sectors aims to make this traditional craft more flexible to adapt to current market requirements and provide feasible solutions for the development and diversification of other related or potentially related economic sectors. This innovative approach for the South-West



Oltenia Region is designed to support the implementation of cross-sectoral initiatives. Stimulating research and innovation in the field of ceramics creates interdisciplinary and multisectoral connections, with an impact on increasing the level of capitalization of material, human and cultural resources available to the ceramic sector in Romania.

The conclusion of all these actions was that the ceramics sector must be prioritized in policies to support economic sectors with national and regional impact and the foundations must be laid for cross-sectoral collaboration by promoting the competitiveness of SMEs operating in ceramics and related sectors.

Overview of the Policy Improvement that this Action refers to

PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency implements within the Human Capital Operational Program a financing scheme for social enterprises. The general objective of the financing scheme is to develop entrepreneurial skills in the field of social economy by informing, training, advising and supporting self-employment among people who intend to set up social enterprises in urban and / or rural areas in the southwest of Oltenia. The support offered within the Human Capital Operational Program refers to the following areas: vocational training, job creation, education, promotion for craft maintenance, increasing the degree of professionalism and specialization, increasing the economic efficiency of ceramics activities, revitalizing the labor market. Applications for new social enterprises (at least 21) receive funding for the development of a business plan to subsidize the network and receive the support services described above. The call also creates a network between the funded social enterprises. PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency initially influenced the political instrument through a change of strategic focus. The ceramics sector has been inserted as a priority sector within this financing scheme. The objective of introducing the ceramics sector as a priority sector in the financing scheme has been achieved, the documents have been improved. An evaluation grid with an additional score for the field of artistic ceramics was included, referring to various NACE codes from the sector.

Background

Activities carried-out within CLAY focused on the progress of the craft and on those who want to work in the field of ceramics. The common direction addressed by regional stakeholders involved in the project refers to the importance of association, specialization, cooperation of the potters in order to develop economic activities. This is essential for the vitalization of ceramics sector at regional level.

Lessons learned from the project that were at the origin of this change were the GP from Italy - Ceramica Made in Umbria. This GP was launched by the Region of Umbria to support innovation among ceramic companies, building on the strong regional ceramics heritage, boosting process and product innovation and triggering a change in the mind-sets of ceramists. This GP particularly encouraged cooperation between SMEs, a concept that is central to the funding scheme and to work to promote ceramics.

Further input came from the GP from Finland regarding the Ceramic Education, referring to the Adult Education Center. The applicants for the financing scheme had the opportunity to participate first in

a series of trainings related to the development of business plans. From this perspective the concept of self-development is reached.

This information was disseminated during meetings with stakeholders involved in the CLAY project. Together we made an objective analysis of the current situation of the ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia Region and to what extent the GPs presented can be replicated in our territory. Although in the South-West Oltenia Region there are eight consecrated pottery centers, with centuries of antiquity, at the level of the Region there are no educational structures to train future potters. We have identified two locations in the city of Horezu (PALOS Pension and CONACUL LUI MALDAR Pension) where initiation courses in ceramics are occasionally organized (1-2 days, 2-4 hours / day), especially for tourist purposes or team-building activities. In this context, the study visit to Seinäjoki - Finland provided an excellent example by presenting the Adult Education Centers - Länsi-Suomi where we had the opportunity to learn about the operation of an educational objective over 120 years old that ensures the continuity of local and regional pottery. We highlighted the realistic and modern approach of both the educational act and the attraction of students and their stimulation and education for the development of their own economic activities in the field of ceramics. It is an example of good practice replicable and adaptable to the specific conditions of the South-West Oltenia Region. In the field of integrated research for the development of technologies and materials used in the field of ceramics, at the level of the South-West Oltenia Region there is a huge gap compared to the level reached by some partner Regions in the CLAY project. Initial steps are needed that can be supported by experiences provided by the Center for Technology Transfers in Ceramics CTTC - France, the Technological Center for Ceramics and Glass - Portugal, which have shown openness to dialogue during the meetings. These meetings and certainly others in the future can lay the foundations for collaborations, both at the level of knowledge transfer but, why not, and at important economic collaborations.

The conclusion of these discussions was that the future of ceramics in Romania requires conclusive and efficient interventions at the level of national, regional and local policies to consolidate this economic sector. People, SMEs operating in the field of ceramics in the South-West Oltenia Region, especially those in the production area, need a rapid change of approach, they want it and they want to cooperate with other economic sectors, they want technology and progress, they want to evolve to other markets. This process can be accelerated through a priority access to support resources provided through national and European funding, but also through a professional and entrepreneurial education superior to the current one. The CLAY project is a first step in providing elements of knowledge and research that will broaden the horizon of action of the ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia Development Region and in Romania. The PP3 initiative - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency to introduce the ceramics sector as a priority sector within the financing scheme of the Human Capital Operational Program, presented above, is a first concrete action in support of the ceramics sector.

Input from interregional exchange in CLAY



Lessons learnt	Elements to be transferred for my policy improvement	Exchange process
<p>Ceramics Made in Umbria / Regional Law no. 4 of 13/02/2013, the Consolidated Crafts Law offers the Region the possible intervention in favor of crafts; This GP was launched by the Umbria Region to support innovation among pottery companies, building on the strong regional pottery heritage, stimulating process and product innovation and triggering a change in the mindsets of potters. This GP especially encouraged cooperation between SMEs, a concept that is essential for the funding scheme and for working to promote ceramics.</p>	<p>Involvement of the Regional Authority in supporting the craft of ceramics through national or European financing mechanisms for obtaining major results, with regional impact.</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the first interregional learning event organized within the CLAY Umbertide, Italia, June 26-29, 2018</p>
<p>Training in ceramic skills through courses at Adult Education Centers - Länsi-Suomi, Finland (Suomi) - a modern and high-performance education institution that works efficiently with local and regional support- Creation and operationalization of at least one professional training center in the field of ceramics;</p> <p>- Ensuring the sustainability of the professional training center in the field of</p>	<p>Inter-institutional collaboration in all segments - functioning, professional training, artistic development, support for the opening of economic activities, under the coordination of the local authority</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the third interregional learning event organized within the CLAY Seinäjoki project, Finland, September 11-12, 2019</p>

<p>ceramics through inter-institutional collaboration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The inclusion in the teaching staff of some ceramic artists with local / regional / national prestige. - creation of structures that allow the schooling of all age categories; - supporting school graduates to open economic activities in the field of ceramics. 		
<p>Regional / Local input, including input from CLAY Stakeholder Groups</p>		
<p>The CLAY project offers an important opportunity for the partners involved by providing a complete and realistic picture of the ceramic sector in the partner countries. Approaching the cultural, artistic, economic, environmental, employment, impact on the life of communities in local workshops extrapolated through joint analysis of partners, conducted both at the level of experts working on the project and in common dialogue in interregional learning sessions allow a planned and efficient action for the development of the ceramic sector at the level of each participating Region. Planned and ongoing exchanges of experience bring together stakeholders with common concerns, who gain experience and can prepare for future collaborations. The examples of good practices provide solutions for solving some needs identified in the territories involved in the project.</p> <p>For the partner South-West Oltenia Region, the activities of the CLAY project generated a qualitatively superior approach to the conservation and development of the ceramic sector, by including in the list of priorities additional elements to the traditional ones, opening a door to increase the competitiveness of production. Ceramics using innovative methods, specific to this sector, are already successfully applied in the other partner countries in the project.</p>		

Specific Activities and Timeframe

<p>July 2018</p>	<p>Preparation of the submission of a financing application within the Human Capital Operational Program entitled "Establishment of social enterprises in the South-West Oltenia region". Establishing a partnership with the CRONO Association - Resource Center for Non-Profit Organizations in Oltenia</p>
<p>September 2019</p>	<p>Approval of financing</p>
<p>January 2020</p>	<p>The ceramics sector has been inserted as a priority sector within this financing scheme. An evaluation grid with an additional score for the field of artistic ceramics was included, referring to the following NACE codes: 2341 Manufacture of ceramic household and ornamental articles; 2349 Manufacture of</p>



	other ceramic products; Wholesale of ceramics, glassware and maintenance products.
February 2020 - September 2020	Elaboration of business plans by selected participants, evaluation of business plans, conclusion of grant contracts
October 2020 - August 2022	Providing social entrepreneurship counseling services, setting up and operating social enterprises, setting up a network of social enterprises

Stakeholders involved

Name of Organisation	Role in Action Plan
South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency	Coordinator of the subsidy program realized through the project "Establishment of social enterprises in the South-West Oltenia region"
CRONO Association - Resource Center for non-profit organizations in Oltenia	Provider of information services, training, counseling, self-employment support
The ceramic center localities from Dolj, Olt, Gorj, Mehedinti, Valcea counties	Supplier of people from the target group, potential beneficiary of the available employment actions, potential beneficiary of the local economic development through the establishment of new social enterprises
People who want to develop new economic activities in the field of ceramics	Potential beneficiaries of the subsidy provided by the project and invested in their own business, with social character, potential beneficiaries of the services provided by the project in the field of entrepreneurship
Economic units that sell or use ceramic products	Potential beneficiaries of the products and services provided through the project "Establishment of social enterprises in the South-West Oltenia region"

Costs and Funding Sources

Costs	Funding Sources
Total value of financing: 11,606,366.76 Lei (2,281,275 Euro)	Human Capital Operational Program (ESF + Government of Romania)

Risk and Contingency Plans

Description of Risk	Level of probability (High, Medium, Low)	Description of Contingency Plan
Reduction or cessation of funding	Low risk	- Resizing the subsidy program through an evaluation of the implementation stage of the subsidized business plans and eliminating those with implementation difficulties.
Abandonment of some organizations admitted to the subsidy	Low risk	Recovering the grant and co-opting a new organization from the reserve list

Monitoring

Self-defined Performance Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of evaluation processes improved	1	Documents related to the project "Establishment of social enterprises in the South West Oltenia region", financed by Human Capital Operational Program 2014-2020
Output Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of projects on ceramics (referring to projects submitted under calls of Human Capital Operational Program for the	1	Documents related to the projects submitted under calls of Human Capital Operational Program for

next programming period or referring to other programmes)		the next programming period or referring to other programmes
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Title of the action

Action 2 – Monitoring the implementation of funded projects related with the ceramics sector, funded by ROP 2014-2020

Policy Need Addressed

The ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia Region and in Romania is in full process of evolution, a process imposed by the market tendencies, the technological evolution, the appearance of some related fields. Ceramics is closely linked to other economic fields, the needs of the ceramics sector being in many cases similar to other fields. In the field of ceramics and other fields that intertwine with ceramics, actions are carried out in the field of professional training, increasing the degree of professionalism and specialization, increasing the economic efficiency of activities in the field of ceramics by reducing energy consumption and use of ecological raw materials. Also, the ceramics sector brings its own contribution to the local economies by creating jobs and revitalizing the labor market in the ceramic center localities and the localities around them. Enterprises in the ceramics sector need a planned development, a stimulating rate of return, an increase in the share of the ceramics sector in local and implicitly regional and national economies. During the presentation GP from Italy - Ceramics Made in Umbria, we found that the results of this project were based on research conducted in collaboration with the Faculty of Economics of the University of Perugia which aimed to identify representative companies capable of developing an innovative idea of relaunch and promotion of ceramics. Also, the study-visit carried out at the Center for Technology Transfers in Ceramics CTTC - Limoges, France highlighted the real possibility of developing collaborative research - industry activities in the ceramics field, the result being a multi-domain insertion of ceramics in top economic sectors.

In Romania, ceramics and its related sectors implement development projects financed from European and national sources. In these conditions, it is time for an evaluation of these projects, a monitoring of their implementation, which will highlight the effectiveness of the support intervention achieved through European funding, provide information on the real needs of the ceramics sector, identify future support directions and policies. the level at which new interventions are needed.

Overview of the Policy Improvement that this Action refers to

As an Intermediate Body in relation to the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Program (ERDF), PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency is responsible for monitoring the implementation of projects funded under Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises, Priority 2.1 - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new enterprises, including



through business incubators and 2.2 - Supporting the creation and expansion of advanced production capacities and the development of services.

South West Oltenia Regional Development Agency is the Intermediate Body for Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020, and is funding programs dedicated to SMEs.

Initially, South West Oltenia Regional Development Agency had decided that the policy instrument influenced by the project should be ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises Investment priority 2.1 - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new businesses, including through business incubators and ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment priority 2.2 - Support the creation and expansion of advanced production capacity and service development.

Taking into consideration that SW Oltenia RDA has knowledge of all regional economic sectors and has experience in designing and supporting initiatives to promote competitiveness and innovation in these sectors and that during the implementation of the project, there was the opportunity to influence the measure to support social enterprises, by prioritizing projects whose object of activity is the processing of ceramics, decided to change the policy instrument, managing to introduce this advantage in the score grid.

However, the project team closely followed the axes 2.1 and 2.2, and, given that were submitted many projects proposing the use of ceramics in their finite products, it decided to continue to monitor the process of implementation of these projects and the results they have at the regional level.

Given the fact that ceramics can have multiple uses, the team proposed to follow two sectors that use ceramics: dentistry and manufacturing ceramic sanitary ware.

The dental technician fabricates dentures, partials, metal or porcelain crowns, and bridges. Technicians use specialized hand instruments and equipment and also work with various dental materials, one of the most popular being dental ceramics (porcelain). Dental technician are a modern kind of ceramic crafters.

Through ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises Investment priority 2.1 - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new businesses, including through business incubators, 2.1 A Micro-enterprises there were financed at least 8 projects in the field of dentistry (dental laboratories) .

Furthermore, through ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment priority 2.2 - Support the creation and expansion of advanced production capacity and service development the team has identified the fact that there is a project that proposed to extend the production capacity of the company by modernizing the manufacturing line of ceramic products.

Thus, South West Oltenia Regional Development Agency intends to monitor the following project:

Nr crt	Project title	Beneficiary	SMIS code	County	Total value (RON)	Amount requested (RON)	Amount requested (EURO)	Implementation stage
1	Acquisition of technological equipment for the development of the G.M. TEHNICAL DENT SRL	G.M. TEHNICAL DENT SRL	103725	Dolj	384306,32	342032,62	69504,7	In implementation
2	'Increasing the competitiveness of GET YOUR PRINT SRL by approaching a new field of activity'	GET YOUR PRINT SRL	134100	Dolj	780918,25	624734,6	126952,77	In implementation
3	Establishment of LAKIS DENTAL TECHNIQUE laboratory	LAKIS TEETH SRL	110853	Dolj	591061,98	531896,69	108087,11	In implementation
4	Development SC DENTTEAM SRL	DENTTEAM S.R.L.	103240	Vâlcea	315392,18	251998,35	53452,45	In implementation
5	Diversification of sc GUSTIDENT SRL ACTIVITY, through performing investments in the field of dental technique	GUSTIDENT SRL	104964	Gorj	154290,35	123432,28	25082,76	In implementation
6	Establishment of a new production unit for dental prostheses and crowns	OLTGIP DENT SRL	130978	Vâlcea	1201163,02	940510,64	191121,85	In implementation
7	Acquisition of equipment for activity	GELOREY S.R.L.	112523	Dolj	734605,65	587684,52	119423,8	In implementation

	development SC GELOREY SRL							
8	Acquisition of equipment for the development of the company IA DENTAL LABORATORY SRL-D	I A DENTAL LABORATORY SRL-D	134349	Dolj	613838	485838	98727,49	In implementation
9	Development of the production capacity of SC MACOFIL SA by modernizing the manufacturing line of ceramic products	MACOFIL SA	111866	Gorj	12369072,01	7792780,97	1608915,24	in the process of contracting
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED							2401268,17	

Background

The experience of the previous programming period and of the current stage of implementation of the operational programs highlighted the fact that, although at the level of strategic planning of directions and intervention priorities correct analyzes are made, the results of their implementation have a low degree of sustainability compared to initial expectations. The causes are in many situations objective, generated by national realities but also by the fact that in the conception of the selection procedures and the processes themselves the emphasis continues to focus on achievements and on the absorption of funds rather than on results. The impact of these inadvertencies is directly reflected in the difficulties encountered by the beneficiaries during the sustainability period and their reluctance to generate projects with a major economic impact in the medium or long term. Such a project was known during the exchange of experience made during the fourth interregional learning event organized within the CLAY project in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal, February 19-20, 2020. We had the opportunity to know an economic structure with major activities to increase the quality level of ceramic production using scientific methods and certification of ceramic production. This enterprise represented for us an example of a pragmatic vision for the development of the ceramics sector in fields with common applicability (brick, ceramic plywood, sanitary installations) but also in the field of special constructions. This economic unit has another very important functionality, that of certification of ceramic products, thus serving hundreds of producers with whom it collaborates to ensure a quality corresponding to current requirements.

Input from interregional exchange in CLAY		
Lessons learnt	Elements to be transferred for my policy improvement	Exchange process
<p>Ceramics Made in Umbria / Regional Law no. 4 of 13/02/2013, the Consolidated Crafts Law offers the Region the possible intervention in favor of crafts; This GP was launched by the Umbria Region to support innovation among pottery companies, building on the strong regional pottery heritage, stimulating process and product innovation and triggering a change in the mindsets of potters. This GP especially encouraged cooperation between SMEs, a concept that is essential for the funding scheme and for working to promote ceramics.</p>	<p>Analysis of the current situation of enterprises in the ceramics sector and their availability to participate in a regional effort.</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the first interregional learning event organized within the CLAY Umbertide, Italy, June 26-29, 2018</p>
<p>Center for Technology Transfers in Ceramics CTTC - an integrated approach, beneficial for the ceramics sector</p>	<p>Development of collaborative research-industry activities in the field of ceramics, which should enhance the economic field of ceramics in step with current requirements and prepare it for the future.</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the second interregional learning event organized within the CLAY project, Limoges, France, February 6-7, 2019</p>
<p>Technological Center for Ceramics and Glass - an initiative that ensures permanent technological progress and the improvement of quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation of a domain certification structure for ceramic production; - increasing the quality level of ceramic production using scientific methods 	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the fourth interregional learning event organized within the CLAY project</p>



indicators of ceramic products, especially those in the construction materials industry		Caldas da Rainha, Portugal, 19 - 20 February 2020
Regional / Local input, including input from CLAY Stakeholder Groups		
<p>PP3 - The South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, as presented in the introductory sections of this document, has in its current activities activities to monitor the implementation of projects within the Regional Operational Program. The agency has a special expertise and staff specialized in this type of actions. Projects in the ceramics sector or related sectors identified and funded under Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment Priorities 2.1 - "Promoting entrepreneurship, especially by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new enterprises, including through business incubators "and 2.2 -" Supporting the creation and expansion of advanced production capacities and development of services ", are included in the monitoring process of PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency.</p>		

Specific Activities and Timeframe

June 2021 – May 2023	Monitoring the projects funded through ROP 2014-2020 , Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises Investment priority 2.1 - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new businesses, including through business incubators and Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment priority 2.2 - Support the creation and expansion of advanced production capacity and service development (the projects presented above)
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Stakeholders involved

Name of Organisation	Role in Action Plan
South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency	Responsible with the monitoring process, as Intermediate Body for Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020

Costs and Funding Sources

SW Oltenia RDA, as Intermediate Body for Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 is responsible for monitoring the projects (the agency has specialized staff in this regard) related to Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment priority 2.1 - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and encouraging the creation of new businesses, including through business incubators and Priority Axis 2 - Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, Investment priority 2.2 - Support the creation and expansion of advanced production capacity and service development.

The financing source for this activity is represented by the technical assistance contracts for the management of the program. Even if the CLAY project implementation team will carry out a similar activity, no specific costs are associated to this action.

Risk and Contingency Plans

Description of Risk	Level of probability (High, Medium, Low)	Description of Contingency Plan
Reducing the total value of contracted projects	Low risk	The reducing of the total value of contracted projects can lead to situations in which the projects cannot be implemented. In order to avoid the occurrence of such cases, we will closely monitor, adequately, the 9 projects through regular correspondence with the beneficiaries of the projects (by e-mail, by phone, etc).

Monitoring

Self-defined Performance Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of monitoring projects that are in implementation	9	Documents related to the implemented projects
Output Indicators		

Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of companies supported in order to develop the activity	9 enterprises	Documents related to the implemented projects

Title of the action

Action 3 – Stimulating the involvement of local public organizations and authorities in supporting the development projects of the ceramics sector

Policy Need Addressed

The South-West Oltenia Region is the Region in Romania with the most active ceramics centers (8 ceramics centers). The localities that have ceramics have a very strong national and international notoriety due to this craft. This notoriety generated a local economic development superior to other localities, both due to the ceramic enterprises and the labor force employed in this sector, but also due to the development of horizontal economic sectors (tourism, restaurants, local products, other crafts), as ceramics added a note of traditionality that generated added value for the economic life of these localities. The decline registered by the ceramics sector in Romania, mainly due to the change of the daily habits of using ceramics in the current life and the lack of technological progress of this craft already has repercussions on the local and implicitly regional economies. This is the reason why the ceramics sector in these localities has become a priority. Unfortunately, this prioritization is not always found in the programmatic documents of the local ceramic centers or of the organizations that manage financial, European or national resources. Under these conditions, the ceramics sector is in unequal competition with other economic sectors, more dynamic and better prepared to absorb European or national funds. It is a common situation, the reduced economic force and the capacity to adapt to the limited market requirements of the economic agents in the field of ceramics being a discouraging element for development. The main danger is the abandonment of the activity in the field of ceramics by the real potters and the extinction of the pottery craft, an irreparable loss, with huge economic, cultural and identity consequences.

Following the meetings with the stakeholders from the locality, ceramic centers realized through the CLAY project, the lack of a major and sustained support of the local public authorities was identified, corroborated with a reduced and inefficient national intervention for this sector. A lack of competitiveness of the enterprises in the field of ceramics in competition with other enterprises, from different economic fields, for accessing European financing was identified. This lack of competitiveness is generated by the reduced economic force (most companies in the ceramics sector in the South-West Oltenia Region have 1-5 employees, employed almost exclusively in production), in conclusion they have little information on support opportunities for their companies and they are not able to pay for quality consulting for project writing and implementation. This created a state of discouragement that significantly reduces the capacity and desire of economic agents in the field of

ceramics to use European funds as a viable solution for the development of their activities, for technology, for professional training, for economic collaborations with other sectors of activity.

A solution stated after these meetings was the creation of more favorable conditions for accessing European funds for the ceramics sector by introducing facilities in European funding schemes at the local level. The effect of such an intervention is dual:

- It can support simple projects, with low funding and easy to manage, which can generate experience and trust for larger and more important future projects;
- It can create a more friendly and encouraging framework in approaching European funding for economic agents in the field of ceramics.

A potential financing scheme has been identified that can be approached by enterprises in the ceramics sector, managed by the LAG Horezu Microregion Association.

Overview of the Policy Improvement that this Action refers to

Following the discussions between the representatives of PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency and of the LAG Horezu Microregion Association, a financing measure was identified within the Local Development Strategy of the LAG Horezu Microregion Association (Measure M4 / 6A "Increasing living standards the superior capitalization of the local non-agricultural potential") which can also finance the endowment activities of the ceramic enterprises. Funding is provided through the National Rural Development Program, the LEADER measure. The value of the financing that can be granted: 5,000 - 40,000 Euro. Following the request of PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency, the LAG Horezu Microregion Association revised the Local Development Strategy and through the General Assembly of the Association in April 2021 approved the modification of this Strategy, of the M4 / 6A Measure Sheet "Increasing living standards through the superior capitalization of the local non-agricultural potential", of the Evaluation Grid and of the Evaluation Sheet, introducing a special score for the projects submitted by economic agents in the field of ceramics. The financing measure is available for the territory of 10 localities from the north of the South-West Oltenia Region, out of which 2 localities for ceramic centers. The amount allocated for this measure is 54,838 Euro, which can be increased by reallocations depending on the degree of interest of the applicants.

Background

The intervention presented above was generated by a series of factors that indicated the need to involve the local public environment in providing timely and rapid support for the support and development of the craft of ceramics and related economic sectors. We used the experience of local stakeholders who obtained European and national funding by developing smaller projects, but who ensured continuity or even innovation in the field of ceramics (e.g. S.C 3D SYSTEMS SRL - ornamental ceramics made with 3D printers). We have taken into account the support of public authorities to support activities in the field of ceramics found in all regions participating in the CLAY project,

especially Adult Education Centers in Länsi-Suomi, Finland (Suomi) - a modern and high-performance education institution that operates efficiently with the local and regional support. The La Ceramica Made in Umbria (Italy) project demonstrated the strength of a regional intervention materialized in a real conservation action but also the capitalization of an identity brand. The visit to Ceramiche Rometti (Italy) provided an argument for tradition and continuity in ceramics, with both artistic, cultural and economic benefits. PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency capitalized on the intense collaboration with local stakeholders, supporting the ideas and solutions discovered in the projects of the other partners in the CLAY project. Consequently, he initiated and developed this action, which may be the basis for future local collaborations, of a higher amplitude.

Input from interregional exchange in CLAY		
Lessons learnt	Elements to be transferred for my policy improvement	Exchange process
<p>Ceramics Made in Umbria / Regional Law no. 4 of 13/02/2013, the Consolidated Crafts Law offers the Region the possible intervention in favor of crafts; This GP was launched by the Umbria Region to support innovation among pottery companies, building on the strong regional pottery heritage, stimulating process and product innovation and triggering a change in the mindsets of potters. This GP especially encouraged cooperation between SMEs, a concept that is essential for the funding scheme and for working to promote ceramics.</p>	<p>Actions planned at regional level to promote ceramics</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the first interregional learning event organized within the CLAY Umbertide, Italy, June 26-29, 2018</p>
<p>Training in ceramic skills through courses at Adult Education Centers - Länsi-Suomi, Finland (Suomi) - a</p>	<p>Collaboration with training centers in the field of ceramics to identify young potters who</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the third interregional learning event</p>



<p>modern and high-performance education institution that works efficiently with local and regional support- Creation and operationalization of at least one professional training center in the field of ceramics;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring the sustainability of the professional training center in the field of ceramics through inter-institutional collaboration; - The inclusion in the teaching staff of some ceramic artists with local / regional / national prestige. - creation of structures that allow the schooling of all age categories; -supporting school graduates to open economic activities in the field of ceramics. 	<p>need support through financing schemes for the development of businesses in the field of ceramics.</p>	<p>organized within the CLAY project Seinäjoki, Finland, September 11-12, 2019</p>
<p>Ceramiche Rometti - a living history of artistic ceramics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symbiosis between art, craft, industrial production - adapting the traditional to the contemporary vision - collaboration with big brands in the field of clothing and furniture accessories 	<p>The superior valorization of the traditional elements, of the consecrated values of the ceramics, for a more complete and relevant image of the ceramics within the national, European and universal culture</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the first interregional learning event organized within the CLAY Umbertide, Italy, June 26-29, 2018</p>
<p>SC 3D SYSTEMS SRL - innovation combined with the preservation of traditional elements</p>	<p>Stimulating innovation and diversification of ceramic production</p>	<p>The exchange of experience took place on the occasion of the fifth event organized within the CLAY project</p> <p>Horezu, Romania, October 13, 2020</p>
<p>Regional / Local input, including input from CLAY Stakeholder Groups</p>		

In order to carry out this action, PP3 - South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency capitalized on the collaboration relations, both within the CLAY project and on the occasion of other projects, with the Horezu City Territorial Administrative Unit and the LAG Horezu Microregion Association. This collaboration is based on a common concern in the field of supporting the craft of ceramics in the South-West Oltenia Region. The city of Horezu is the most important ceramics center in Romania, activating intensely in the field of conservation and development of the pottery craft, one of the most important achievements being the inclusion of the Horezu ceramics technique in UNESCO intangible heritage. The LAG Horezu Microregion Association, a LEADER type non-governmental organization, is a promoter of local development in the northwest of Valcea County, managing to finance through its Strategy over 80 projects with a value of over 5,000,000 Euros. The interconnection of these three organizations - regional, micro-regional and local level - has led to a concrete measure to support the ceramics sector.

Specific Activities and Timeframe

2019 - August 2020	Identifying the causes that generate a reduced access of European funds by economic agents in the field of ceramics (working meetings with local stakeholders organized within the CLAY project)
August 2020	Initiation of the dialogue with the LAG Horezu Microregion Association regarding the opportunity to create encouraging conditions for accessing funds managed through the LEADER Measure
February 2021	Finalizing the proposal to modify the Local Development Strategy of the LAG Horezu Microregion Association
April 2021	Approval by the General Assembly of the Local Development Strategy of the LAG Horezu Microregion Association
August 2021	Launch of the call for projects for measure M4 / 6B.

Stakeholders involved

Name of Organisation	Role in Action Plan
South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency	Initiator and promoter of measures to support the ceramics sector by intervening on local public policies
Horezu town, Slatioara commune - ceramic centers, other neighboring localities	Potential locations for investments financed by the Local Development Strategy of the LAG Horezu Microregion Association

LAG Horezu Microregion Association	Organization that adapts its Local Development Strategy to the identified territorial needs
Economic enterprises from the ceramic sector from the territory of the LAG Association Horezu Microregion	Potential beneficiaries of support measures and changes in public policy.

Costs and Funding Sources

Costs	Funding Sources
Total value of financing the action: 54,838 Euro, with possibilities to increase	The National Rural Development Program, LEADER Measure)

Risk and Contingency Plans

Description of Risk	Level of probability (High, Medium, Low)	Description of Contingency Plan
The total value of eligible applications higher than the budget allocated to Measure M4 / 6B	Medium risk	Eligible projects with a lower score than those financed directly will be placed on a reserve list and will be financed when remaining funds are available for other financing measures

Monitoring

Self-defined Performance Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of improved evaluation processes with a special focus on SMEs operating in the ceramics sector.	1	Evaluation grid of business plans entered in the competition

Output Indicators		
Indicator	Target	Means of Verification
Number of project calls launched	1	Documentation for appeal approved by the Board of Directors of the LAG Horezu Microregion Association

5 Signature

Institution: South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency

Name of Signatory: Marilena BOGHEANU

Position: General Director

General Manager – CLAY Project

Date: 30.06.2021

Stamp (if available)

Signature



Institution: South-West Oltenia Regional Development Agency

Name of Signatory: Mihaela LUPĂNCESCU

Position: Activities implementation Manager – CLAY Project

Date: 30.06.2021

Stamp (if available)

Signature

