

PUGLIA REGION ACTION PLAN

PROJECT: **ALICE**

PARTNER: **PUGLIA REGION – DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, ECONOMY OF
CULTURE AND VALORIZATION OF TERRITORY**

COUNTRY: **ITALY**

NUTS2 REGION: **PUGLIA**

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POLICY CONTEXT

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020

The policy instrument addressed is the Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020, Thematic Objective 3; Investment Priority 3.b) Develop and implement new business models for SMEs, especially for internationalisation, Specific Objective: RA 3.3 Consolidate, modernise and diversify the local production systems, Action 3.4 Support for SMEs in the cultural, touristic, creative and performing arts. Before ALICE project, the work carried out to draw attention to the cultural sectors had not taken into account the CCIs' strategic sectors, such as the animation one. The animation sector is one of the key sectors identified by the Apulia Region as a factor of economic growth with high added value and carrying an inclusive youth employment policy potential. The animation industry is much more relevant and strategic than what it has been considered in the past, currently positioning as the audiovisual sector with a better growth forecast. The animation industry could give a territory enormous economic, employment, cultural, educational and technological assets. The present action plan is based on the lessons learnt from the ALICE cooperation and, in terms of results, will improve the Programme thanks to the **implementation of new projects and activities**. As a matter of fact, the plan contains actions that will be funded with the Structural Funds of the ROP with the aim to improve this policy instrument in line with the objectives of the aforementioned Action 3.4 and direct it towards a greater openness to the animation and digital sector through:

- Increasing the competitiveness of Apulian sector's ability at international level (Action 1, Action 4 and Action 5);
- Encouraging the growth of Apulian SMEs and professionals working in the animation field (Action 1, Action 4 and Action 5);

- Boosting access to funding (Action 2 and Action 3).

ACTION 1: ANIMATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING COURSES

1. Relevance to the project

During the first meeting with the regional stakeholders realized by Puglia Region within ALICE, held in Bari on 31.01.2020, a strong need for specialized training in the field of animation emerged, since the existing courses available at regional level are mainly devoted to beginners, resulting also in lack of skilled craftsmanship on the territory. Thus the need for a specialized and high-level training for animation professionals at regional level emerged thanks to ALICE, and pushed the Apulian policy makers to take action in this concern. Moreover, these needs were highlighted in the frame of WG2 – Entrepreneurship & Training, led by Puglia Region itself. As a matter of fact, the first step of WG2 methodology foresaw the administration of surveys in terms of educational needs to all partners' stakeholders for their consequent analysis and research. Also in this case, the same necessities emerged at project level: the lack of training activities in the field of digital animation resulted one of the main problems that all involved territories have been facing. On the basis of these findings, Puglia Region, realized an in-depth report on entrepreneurship and training, outlining the programme and structure for training courses destined to animation technicians and animation managers, replicable at European Level. Finally, the learning outcomes of the two webinars organized with French animation experts always in the frame of WG2 (which took place in online form on 02.07.2020 and 10.07.2020) thanks to the support of Wallimage, were very inspiring: these interregional exchanges of experiences and discussions about short-term and long-term training schemes in such a fast-change technology environment contributed to raise more awareness among Apulian policy makers and reflect on the existence of different training perspectives and models.

2. Nature of the action

Puglia Region intends to implement a program of training courses in the field of animation on the basis of the methodology realized thanks to ALICE project in the frame of WG2. The aim is to fill in the huge gap between the curricula delivered and the qualifications the local industry most desires, thus creating a match between demand and supply and making the Apulian animation sector more competitive at

national and international level. Particularly, the steps necessary to carry out this action will be:

- Review of the training programs and methodology developed in the frame of WG2 and adaptation to the regional context
- Identification of regional training institutions and trainers
- Involvement of local stakeholders
- Organization of training courses

3. Stakeholders involved

The main players involved are:

- Puglia Region – Department of Tourism, Economy of Culture and Valorization of Territory (policy maker)
- Apulia Film Commission (policy maker and coordinator of the activity)
- Apulian animation operators (addressees)
- Local training institutions and schools (service provider)

4. Timeframe

From the 2nd semester 2021, depending on the available funds. The main preliminary steps would take about 7 months, in particular:

- Review of the training programs and methodology developed in the frame of WG2 and adaptation to the regional context (3 months)
- Identification of regional training institutions and trainers (3 months)
- Involvement of local stakeholders (1 month)
- Organization of training courses (cyclical programs)

5. Costs

€ 25.000,00 per year

6. Funding sources:

Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020 and AFC's own funds

ACTION 2: APULIA FILM FUND 2020 – CATEGORY D

1. Relevance to the project

During the first local stakeholders meeting of ALICE project held by Puglia Region in collaboration with Apulia Film Commission Foundation, stakeholders expressed the need for more funding for the operators working in such a niche and specialized sector like the animation. On the same occasion, Apulian stakeholders underlined that it is important that Puglia Region adopts further measures guaranteeing more financial resources to operators in terms of funds. The Apulia Film Fund 2020 – Category D represents a concrete answer to the stakeholders' needs expressed during the stakeholders meeting organized within ALICE project. As a matter of fact, the meeting and its follow up (e.g minutes that participants themselves contributed to draft) contributed to raise more awareness among the regional policy makers about the support to this category in terms of funds. Also, ALICE meeting pushed policy makers to consider and treat the animation category differently from the general audiovisual category in the frame of tenders.

2. Nature of the action

Apulia Film Commission, in-house company of Puglia Region, launched Apulia Film Fund 2020 (still open) in July 2020. Particularly, for the first time, an entire category of the AFF (Category D) is totally devoted to animation sector, with ad-hoc rules specific for this category. AFF has a total budget of € 5 millions and aims to support micro, small or middle enterprises (ATECO code 59.11) in the production phase of their audiovisual works. Particularly, Category D supports the production phases of audiovisual works such as animated feature films with the minimum length of 52 minutes or animated TV series with the minimum length 24 minutes. As concerns the financial coverage, the amount of aid for each beneficiary company relating to category D starts from a minimum of € 300.000,00 up to a maximum of € 700.000,00. This funding tool results of major importance also to face the difficulties of Covid-19 pandemic. As a matter of fact, the Apulia Film Fund has been concretely supporting in terms of funds the Apulian operators working in the animation sector. Particularly, the steps necessary to carry out this action are:

- Launch of the public call for funds

- Evaluation phase
- Selection phase
- Production phase

3. Stakeholders involved

The main players involved are:

- Puglia Region – Department of Tourism, Economy of Culture and Valorization of Territory (policy maker)
- Apulia Film Commission (policy maker and responsible for the launch, management and implementation of the fund)
- Apulian animation operators (addressees of the fund)

4. Timeframe

July 2020 – at least July 2022. The steps necessary to carry out the action would take at least 1 year, in particular:

- Launch of the public call for funds (activity concluded in July 2020)
- Evaluation phase (in progress, the application phase has no deadline but is available until budget is exhausted)
- Selection phase (in progress, the application phase has no deadline but is available until budget is exhausted)
- Production phase (in progress for those already selected), ending at least in July 2022

5. Costs

€ 1.000.000,00 - AFF has a total budget of € 5 millions and has no deadline but is available until budget is exhausted. Involving the Apulia Film Fund 5 categories, the above estimated amount was calculated by dividing the total budget per 5 categories, being the Category D the subject of this action.

6. Funding sources

Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020

ACTION 3: APULIA SHORT & DIGITAL PRODUCTION FUND

1. Relevance to the project

ALICE project can be considered a main driver in the implementation of the Apulia Short & Digital Production Fund, divided into three parts (animation, gaming and short movies), each with its own funding tender. The decision to dedicate an entire part of the Fund to the animation was taken and approved in the first months of 2020 while the Short & Digital Production Fund was launched in August 2020. The main steps leading to this decision were mainly: the growing importance and rise of the animation sector (as well as gaming) all over Europe, the need to boost the Apulian animation industry and the awareness raised thanks to Puglia Region's participation in ALICE project. Particularly, during the first local stakeholders meeting organized in the frame of ALICE at the premises of Apulia Film Commission Foundation, participants (animation freelance and companies, representatives of Puglia Region and Apulia Film Commission) discussed about the need for more funding for the operators working in such a niche and specialized sector like the animation. On the same occasion, Apulian stakeholders underlined that it is important that Puglia Region adopts measures guaranteeing more financial resources to operators in terms of funds. This meeting and its follow up (e.g minutes that participants contributed to draft) contributed to raise more awareness among the regional policy makers about the need to give more support to this category in terms of funds. Also, ALICE meetings pushed policy makers to consider and treat the animation category differently from the general audiovisual category, with ad-hoc rules and characteristics. This is also why, policy makers decided to devote an entire part of the Short & Digital Production Fund to the animation sector, specifically tailored on its characteristics.

2. Nature of the action

Launched in August 2020, the Apulia Short&Digital Production Fund (S&DF) is divided into three parts (animation, gaming and short movies), each with its own funding tender. In particular, the animation tender will support the executive production of short animation works on the topics of environment, memory and health with a budget of about € 40.000,00 per funded work. This innovative fund was never published before in Puglia and is focused on the new trends of the audiovisual, particularly animation and gaming. Particularly, the steps necessary to carry out this action are:

- Launch of the public call for funds
- Evaluation phase
- Selection phase
- Production phase

3. Stakeholders involved

The main players involved are:

- Puglia Region - Department of Tourism, Economy of Culture and Valorization of Territory (policy maker)
- Apulia Film Commission (policy maker and responsible for the launch, management and implementation of the fund)
- Apulian animation operators (addressees of the fund)

4. Timeframe

August 2020 – at least 2022 (at least). The steps necessary to carry out the action would take at least 1 year, in particular:

- Launch of the public call for funds (activity concluded in August 2020)
- Evaluation phase (in progress)
- Selection phase (2021-2022)
- Production phase (2022)

5. Costs

€ 400.000,00 out of which € 120.000,00 destined to the animation tender

6. Funding sources

Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020

ACTION 4: "IL POLO DEL DIGITALE"

1. Relevance to the project

During the first local stakeholders meeting organized by Puglia Region in the frame of ALICE project at the premises of Apulia Film Commission Foundation, animation operators gathered for the first time and discussed about the need for a stronger cooperation among them. Particularly, they expressed the need of a regional reference structure devoted to the animation and digital sector, bringing together the Apulian operators and strengthening their cooperation, in order to make the regional sector more competitive and innovative. Also the examples provided by ALICE project partners in this concern, for example the experience shared by Wallimage during the IRM1 in Mons on 2-3 September 2019 was very important since Apulian participants had the opportunity to be shown how the Wallimage stakeholders cooperate, contributing to raise more awareness among the Apulian stakeholders on the importance of the local cooperation, essential element to build a solid and competitive sector at European level. Finally, the cluster study that is about to be created in the frame of WG4 will certainly further inspire the realization of the hub in terms of methodology and good practices developed by the other partners (the study is still in progress).

2. Nature of the action

The "Polo del Digitale" intends to be the Apulian hub for the local companies and freelance workers specialized in the digital sector, especially animation, gaming, cross-media, virtual effects and postproduction. The hub will be located in the "Sala Levante" of Apulia Film House, the cinema and audiovisual house with strong international vocation born in Bari from the will of Puglia Region and Apulia Film Commission Foundation. The big room that will host the Polo Digitale will contain desks and workstations as well as a small projection room for the private vision of showreel, videos and projects in progress. The Polo intends to be a space where all the local digital professional categories can converge and cooperate, therefore a place where and through which a stronger network can be created at regional level. This increased cooperation will undoubtedly improve the development and competitiveness of the regional digital sector, including the animation. Particularly, the steps necessary to carry out this action are:

- Equipment of Sala Levante of Apulia Film House in Bari
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Launch of the project
- Start of activities

3. Stakeholders involved

The main players involved are:

- Puglia Region – Department of Tourism, Economy of Culture and Valorization of Territory (policy maker)
- Apulia Film Commission (promoter)
- Apulian digital audiovisual operators (addressees and players)

4. Timeframe

2021-2022. The steps necessary to carry out the action would respect the following timeframe:

- Equipment of Sala Levante of Apulia Film House (in progress)
- Involvement of stakeholders (in progress)
- Launch of the project (July 2021)
- Activities implementation (from July 2021 onwards)

5. Costs

€ 100.000,00

6. Funding sources

Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020 and AFC's own funds

ACTION 5: ANIMATION CLUSTER IN PUGLIA

1. Relevance to the project

During the first local stakeholders meeting organized by Puglia Region in the frame of ALICE project at the premises of Apulia Film Commission Foundation, animation operators gathered for the first time and discussed about the need for a stronger cooperation among them. Particularly, they expressed the need for the creation of a regional network/cluster in order to work together, share skills, best practices and knowledge, synchronize the production and put the results at the service of the interregional exchange of experience, resulting in the development the regional sector. In addition, in the frame of WG4 – Cluster/Smart Specialization led by Rzeszow Regional Development Agency in cooperation with Puglia Region, partners answered to a questionnaire related to their clustering experiences on whose basis the final WG4 will be drafted (still in progress). The cluster study that is about to be created in the frame of WG4 will contribute to the implementation of the cluster in terms of methodology and good practices developed by the other partners. The examples provided by ALICE project partners in this concern will certainly inspire the Apulian stakeholders and raise more awareness about the importance of the local cooperation, essential element to build a solid and competitive sector at European level.

2. Nature of the action

An Apulian animation and digital cluster will be implemented with the aim to favour the interregional exchange, cooperation and dialogue, build strategic business partnerships and ecosystems, plan innovative business model and sharing new ideas, share best skills, know how and networking relations, work together for the creation of new products and the openness to new opportunities. Particularly, the steps necessary to carry out this action are:

- Review of the final report developed in the frame of WG4 and adaptation to the regional context
- Involvement of stakeholders
- Team-building
- Creation of the cluster at legal level

- Launch and promotion of the cluster
- Activities implementation

3. Stakeholders involved

The main players involved are:

- Puglia Region (policy maker)
- Apulia Film Commission (coordinator)
- Apulian digital audiovisual operators (addressees and players)

4. Timeframe

2021-2022. The steps necessary to carry out the action would respect the following timeframe:

- Involvement of stakeholders (in progress)
- Team-building (in progress)
- Legal creation of the cluster (June 2021)
- Launch and promotion of the cluster (July 2021)
- Activities implementation (starting from July 2021)

5. Costs

€ 50.000,00

6. Funding sources

Regional Operational Programme ERDF/ESF Puglia 2014/2020 and AFC's own funds