



DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN (RAP) FOR THE MAZOWIECKIE VOIVODESHIP

Warsaw, April 2021



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1. Part I – General information

Project name:

Integrating the territorial dimension for cohesive S3. COHES3ION

Project subject:

The subject of the Regional Action Plan is to define activities that will contribute to closing the gaps in the multi-level management process of the Mazovia RIS strategy identified during the development of the Intelligent Territorial Map (IMT).

Project objective:

The aim of the Regional Action Plan is to identify activities that will contribute to the improvement of communication between stakeholders in the region, with particular emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders who have direct contact with the places where innovation is created.

Partner organization: The Office of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw

Other partner organizations involved (if applicable):

Country: Polska

Region NUTS1¹: PL12, Mazowieckie Voivodeship

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2. Part II – Policy context

The Action plan is intended to have an impact on:

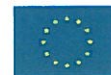
Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme
European Territorial Cooperation Programme

Other Regional Development Policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument that the project involves:

RIS- Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2020.

¹ The template of the document requires reference to NUTS2 and at the time of joining the Cohes3ion project the Mazowieckie Voivodeship was a NUTS2 unit, however, since 1 January 2018 after the new statistical division of Mazovia, the voivodeship is a NUTS1 macro-region - hence the notation corresponds to the current division.



2.1 Cohesion policy

The implementation of the European Union's cohesion policy has, among its objectives, the enhancement of cooperation between its different areas through the implementation of programs under the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). Its task is to solve problems that transcend national borders and require joint action. The ETC is a catalyst for the development of socio-economically diverse areas. This development largely depends on achieving a sufficient level of development in the field of innovation, understood as the ability to efficiently introduce modern technical and organisational solutions.

The instrument that supports the regions of the European Union are programs concerning regional innovation strategies. These strategies operate in more than 150 regions of the EU and form the basis for the use of Structural and Cohesion Funds for innovative activities. They assist regional authorities in creating sustainable structures for the development of innovation in the region. They also contribute to the identification of development priorities, defining directions for innovation policy and ways of better utilizing regional infrastructure. Moreover, they support innovativeness, especially with regard to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

2.2 Policy instrument

The policy instrument addressed in the following document is the Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2020. It was developed in 2015 in line with the Smart Specialization strategy guidelines. This meant strengthening the role of stakeholders in programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The Sejmik of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship adopted the new Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 in March 2021. The Strategy updating was also based on the conclusions coming from the participation in the Cohes3ion project so far. Thus, they influenced the final shape of the document adopted by the Sejmik of voivodeship. The modification of the Strategy included, inter alia, the strengthening of the territorial dimension, and increased emphasis on multi-level governance issues. The introduction of these changes is crucial for further activities within the Cohes3ion project, since it had a direct impact on the achievement of the assumed indicator. The indicator defined in the application form pointed out the need to expand Mazovia's RIS by territorial dimension in the context of Smart Specialization in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. In connection with achieving the assumed indicator, while designing the activities described in RAP, the focus was put on implementation aspects of the strategy, which at the same time will contribute to increasing the importance of territorial dimension and multi-level management. The actions described in the following document therefore already concern the strategy implementation stage.

The Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 was developed with the significant participation of the Regional Stakeholder Group representatives. The document was formulated on the basis of information on local needs and conditions. "The main objective of RIS is to achieve by the Mazowieckie Voivodeship the position of one of the leaders of innovativeness in Central and Eastern Europe by the year 2030. The main difference in comparison to RIS valid until 2020 is the vision and the method of achieving it. For the first time the contents of the strategy were created in direct

cooperation with the stakeholders. They helped to define, inter alia, a new set of strategic objectives. According to the stakeholders, i.e. based on the knowledge of the most interested market players, the strategic objectives for Mazovia are:

- Increasing innovation activity in Mazovia,
- Strong and effectively operating value chains linking businesses,
- Effective ecosystem for creating and supporting innovations,
- Increase in the internationalization of the Mazovian innovation ecosystem¹².

The discussed strategy is also well connected with other strategic documents of Mazowieckie Voivodeship and these links are described in appendix no. 3 to the Strategy document.

Integration of territorial dimension for S3 smart specialization strategies cohesion should be based on analysis of conditions of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship area. Thus, the RIS Mazovia 2030 refers to territorial dependencies by:

- "taking into account the statistical division in the vision and SWOT analysis,
- counteracting negative effects of development disproportions as one of the priorities for Smart Specialization,
- action dedicated to the Mazowieckie Voivodeship - increasing activity of BEIs in terms of providing professional services supporting innovativeness,
- emphasizing, in the actions, the need for development of cooperative relations between entities from the capital Warsaw and the Mazovia region, as well as implementation of new solutions in traditional branches of industry and agriculture,
- implementation of actions activating regional/subregional Animators of Economic Development in the process of entrepreneurial discovery,
- implementation of actions involving representatives of local government units (LGU) (primarily sub-regional cities) to include Smart Specialization in strategic documents of LGUs of various levels."³

Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2020 was valid until the end of 2020. At the same time, the implementation of the Cohes3ion project takes place from August 1, 2019 to July 30, 2022. Therefore, we have developed a new document, Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 in March 2021, in which we introduced the conclusions coming from the participation in the Cohes3ion project so far. From the point of view of the correct implementation of the effects developed in the Cohes3ion project, they could not be included in a document that had just expired. The Sejmik of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship adopted the new Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 in March 2021 and this document is an extension of the previously applicable Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2020.

To integrate the lessons learnt from the cooperation in Cohes3ion project we introduced modification in new Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 in March 2021. The modification included, inter alia, the strengthening of the territorial dimension, and increased emphasis on multi-level governance issues. The representatives of self-government authorities of the

² Based on „Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Mazowsza do 2030 roku”, <https://innowacyjni.mazovia.pl/download/2310/>, (April 30, 2021)

³ Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Mazowsza do 2030 roku”, p.17



Mazowieckie Voivodeship want to strengthen the cooperation with the NUTS3 regions, for this purpose it was planned to expand the composition of the Mazovian Innovation Council by the representatives of the cities of Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Warsaw and Żyrardów, Wołomin and Piaseczno. The first meeting of the Mazovian Innovation Council in the extended composition was hold on November 8, 2021.

Additionally the Marshal Office of Mazovia Voivodeship in Warsaw decided to strengthen the activities supporting the economic development of the region and announced a competition in the project Regional Animators of Economic Development. At the same time, Regional Animators of Economic Development are already carrying out their activities aimed at supporting the development of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship.

2.3 Mazovia's Smart Specialization areas

An integral element of the strategy, enabling to direct the implementation of activities towards development niches defined during the entrepreneurial discovery, became the Smart Specialization. "Similarly as in the previous RIS, Smart Specialization of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship is based on four interdisciplinary thematic areas. The activities carried out during the entrepreneurial discovery process are based on them. This process leads to the identification of challenges and creation of support tools. Smart Specialization areas were reviewed and updated based on the experience of the implementation of the previous RIS edition. The current areas of Smart Specialization of Mazovia are:

- Safe food (*Polish abbr. BEZY*),
- Smart systems in industry and infrastructure (*Polish abbr. INSPI*),
- Modern business ecosystem (*Polish abbr. NEKO*),
- High quality of life (*Polish abbr. WOJAŻ*)."⁴

To summarize the assumptions of Smart Specialization, it is "an approach that promotes the efficient, effective and synergistic use of public money with the aim of building innovative competitiveness of regions".⁵ An important role in the efficient and synergistic use of public funds ensuring increased efficiency in the production of goods and services, while taking care of the environment, is the exchange of knowledge between organizations from different regions, which use similar resources and provide value to similar groups of recipients.

⁴ K.Milewska, announcement „Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Mazowsza do 2030 roku przyjęta”, <https://www.mazovia.pl/komunikaty--konsultacje-spoeczne/komunikaty/art,2979,regionalna-strategia-innowacji-dla-mazowsza-do-2030-roku-przyjeta.html>, (April 30, 2021).

⁵ Based on A.Kucharczyk „Kierunek: inteligentne specjalizacje – priorytety wspierania rozwoju gospodarczego Unii Europejskiej w latach 2014-2020”, EDS Report, , <https://alebanc.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/eds.2014.024-041.pdf> (April 30, 2021).

2.4 Stakeholders – development and integration based on knowledge sharing

The successful implementation of the Cohes3ion project is possible, inter alia, through the improvement of communication between the management levels of the public administrations and the effective sharing of knowledge and experiences. The necessity of knowledge sharing is emphasized in many sections of the Cohes3ion project.

Having the above information in mind the Office of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw decided to release the potential of the minds of people most involved in the implementation of strategic plans, as they can provide the deepest insights regarding the needs, opportunities, regional and sectoral conditions. Moreover, they can continuously verify theses using their own knowledge and experience, as well as using the potential they manage, or the environment they operate in. In order to gather the widest range of views and examples of good practice it was decided to involve a Regional Stakeholder Group.

To the Regional Stakeholder Group the following were invited:

- representatives of working groups on Smart Specialization,
- regional / local level institutions, such as: The Mazovian Unit for the Implementation of European Union Programs, The Mazovian Office for Regional Planning in Warsaw, The Mazovia Development Agency S.A., and several dozen of universities, as well as scientific and research institutions,
- other entities from the Mazowieckie Voivodeship which represent interests of economic spheres take such as Mazowiecki Regionalny Fundusz Pożyczkowy Sp. z o.o., Mazowiecki Fundusz Poręczeń Kredytowych Sp. z o.o., Mazowiecka Agencja Energetyczna Sp. z o. o., Business Centre Club, The Polish Chamber of Commerce, The Polish Bank Association.⁶

This group was invited to attend meetings and travels as well as participated actively in the implementation of improvements in local policies. Individuals participating in the Regional Stakeholder Group were involved at every stage of the project, especially at the Smart Territorial Map stage. They co-created the TOR (Terms of reference of the strategic thinking proces) document describing the gaps requiring complementary actions and, equally important, they preliminarily identified the actions that are feasible to implement. Once the actions collected in this document have been refined, its draft will be submitted to the Regional Stakeholder Group for consultation. Thus, it is a good example of building solutions based on possessed, widely collected and accumulated knowledge.

Especially, the need for collaboration of stakeholders within the public administration was very well and strongly emphasized during the project meeting on October 5, 2020. Among the most relevant information, it is worth mentioning that:

- national and regional governments cannot develop RIS3 strategies effectively on their own unless cooperation mechanisms which integrate regional administrations with their counterparts at regional level and central - national level are implemented,

⁶ Based on Cohes3ion project presentation on 16.01.2020 in Warsaw and MRI composition available at <https://innowacyjni.mazovia.pl/dzialania/mri-mazowiecka-rada-innowacyjnosci/sklad-mri.html> (12 May, 2021)

- units of national and regional government, although competent to develop RIS3, very often lack the capacity to be present where opportunities for Smart Specialisation arise (e.g. among SMEs or the population),
- efficient multi-level governance affects the effective implementation of the five main principles of RIS3: specificity, entrepreneurial discovery, new strategies, inclusive strategies, experimentation and evaluation.⁷

From the conducted activities, the Basque Country project partner drew the following valuable insights:

- multilevel governance is constructed with centrifugal and centripetal strategies (well communication, commitment and division of tasks are important),
- Relevant issues for multi-level administrative management include:
 - breaking down mental and administrative barriers to collaboration and experimentation,
 - multi-level coordination can be particularly important in reaching SMEs and integrating them into the RIS3 objectives,
 - the role of city representatives is very essential,
- a learning orientation and academic context can support the development of a common vision and the levelling of knowledge between public administrations.⁸

The combination of multiple points of view and broad experience has unlocked the potential of stakeholders needed for a precise diagnosis of the conditions and methods for implementing the RIS3 innovation strategy. Based on the potential of the Regional Stakeholder Group, the Smart Territorial Map was created.

2.5 Smart Territorial Map

A key project activity within Cohes3ion was the preparation of the Intelligent Territorial Map (IMT). As a result of its preparation, gaps in the multi-level management process of the RIS Mazovia strategy were identified. Mentioned gaps were described in the document "Terms of Reference for the Strategic Thinking Process", which was subject to discussion and subsequent approval by project stakeholders. The following gaps were identified:

- "Enhanced cooperation with representatives of local government units,
- Stronger linking of RIS3 Mazovia objectives with strategies of local government units
- Involving new actors in the process of multi-level management of RIS3 Mazovia,
- Strengthening of clustering in Mazovia and closer cooperation with clusters - a new partner in the process of entrepreneurial discovery".⁹

One of the conclusions of the Smart Territorial Map is the necessity to strengthen and further develop multi-level management, in particular to establish co-operation between the voivodeship (NUTS1) and the remaining local government units (NUTS3), among which the representatives of the cities of Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Warsaw and Żyrardów as well as Wołomin and

⁷ Based on presentation „Thematic Workshop 4, Multilevel governance pillars” p.10, 5.10.2020,

⁸ Based on the good practice presentation "Case study. The multi-institutional RIS3 learning process: Contributing to multi-level governance for Smart Specialisation from a University context" presented on October 9, 2020 in Bilbao.

⁹ Elaboration based on project documentation "Cohes3ion, Terms of reference of the strategic thinking process, Mazowieckie Voivodeship".

Piaseczno could be the examples. Moreover, the Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw will strive not only for a better promotion of the RIS3 Mazovia objectives among other units of local government, but also for the territorial instruments, directed for particular sub-regions, to take into account the implementation of those objectives.

In response to the gap related to the necessity of including new entities such as business entities, regional action groups, business organisations in the process of multi-level management of RIS3 Mazovia, it was decided to include representatives of the local government units that will be involved in the activities of e.g. working groups for the Smart Specialisation.¹⁰

The last, but not the least important gap is low level of cooperation between clusters in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. To fill it, the Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw will strive to create a special financial instrument for clusters. Moreover, what complements other similar activities and fits well with broadening the experience base in the region, the representatives of clusters will be included in working groups for Smart Specialisation areas.

Summarizing the results of the Smart Territorial Map creation, it is clear that there is a necessity to improve communication between stakeholders in the region, with particular emphasis on the involvement of stakeholders who have direct contact with the places where innovations emerge. This applies, among others, to representatives of local government and representatives of organizations operating in clusters. During the study visits of the Cohes3ion project representatives of the Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw were therefore particularly interested in information, examples and conclusions about solutions to improve communication and vertical integration of local government units.

3. Action (1) – Mazovian Innovation Council expansion

3.1 Context of action – insufficient information flow

Having in mind the conclusions after the elaboration of the Smart Territorial Map, the representatives of self-government authorities of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship want to strengthen the cooperation with the NUTS3 regions, for this purpose it is planned to expand the composition of the Mazovian Innovation Council by the representatives of the cities of Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Warsaw and Żyrardów, Wołomin and Piaseczno. Thus, during the analysis of good practice examples from the partners of the Cohes3ion project special attention was paid to the way of integrating and improving multi-level governance. The following are examples of good practices from the project partners that have inspired the action which became part of the Regional Action Plan (RAP).

¹⁰ Op. cit.

3.1.1 Inspiration from Italian partner

Inspiration from the experience exchange with representatives of the Calabria region from Italy concerns the advisability of broadening the composition of advisory bodies. The existing FinCalabria organization focuses on supporting local small and medium-sized enterprises operating in innovative industrial areas. This entity implements the guidelines of the Regional Operational Programme for the funding of entrepreneurship development. In addition to activities focused around three axes, which are; actions for development and research, broadly defined digitalization and increasing competitiveness, FinCalabria supports the management of the implementation of the Smart Specialization Strategy. Organization achieves this by analyzing the needs expressed by SMEs, running thematic data exchange platforms and an entrepreneurial discovery process. Although the activities of FinCalabria can be considered the same as the activities of the existing since 2005 The Mazovia Regional Development Agency S. A., the scope of FinCalabria's activities and the involvement of individuals working close to business on the local level has been an inspiration to decisively strengthening the territorial dimension in the process of multi-level management of the Regional Innovation Strategy RIS3 Mazovia. Communication and cooperation from bottom-up to central direction is one of the assumed characteristics of cooperation between organisations involved in the RIS3 Mazovia implementation. Therefore, an idea of widening the circle of actors co-operating in the implementation of the Strategy for Mazovia, by joining representatives of administrative units from the local - regional level, has appeared. This will contribute to better addressing the needs reported by SMEs.¹¹

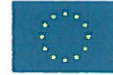
3.1.2 Inspirations from Romanian partner

Another example of the rightness to strengthen the gathering of information through the lowest level of administration was the presentation of the INNO Internet platform (www.inno.ro), run by the Regional Development Agency of North-Western Romania. Although at the moment in Mazovia, there is no possibility to create a similar, expanded platform, the knowledge gained confirmed the thesis on the necessity of closer involvement of the local administration representatives.

The process of developing and updating the RIS3 strategy presented by the Romanian partner may constitute an inspiration for the next update of the strategy. "It is worth noting precisely that the Smart Specialisation is identified from the bottom up. It involves representatives of local authorities (NUTS 3 and LAU 2 units), universities, research institutions, medical centers, clusters, local chambers of industry. The Romanian partner has ensured that different territorial levels are involved in the process. The presented case study encourages the Mazovian partner to include new actors in the RIS3 Mazovia multi-level governance process. This aspiration fits very well with the conclusions reached during the preparation of the Smart Territorial Map".¹²

¹¹ Based on the Cohes3ion project document "Learnings in Peer Review Sessions" from the Calabria region of Italy, June 3, 2020.

¹² Cohes3ion project document entitled "Learnings in Peer Review Sessions" from the North-West Region, Romania, June 25, 2020.



3.1.3 Inspirations from Welsh partner

Another support of the thesis about the necessity of greater involvement of all levels of public administration management is the example of the Welsh partner. Similarly to Mazovia, a strategic advisory group operates there, in the case of Wales called "The Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group". It consists of representatives of universities, business and the public sector.

The group has the competencies to identify and analyze promising innovative projects that are worth funding and would contribute to the implementation of the region's priority activities, such as the development of Smart Specialization areas. It is worth noting that the activities of the Strategic Advisory Group Tech Valleys confirm how essential is the cooperation of all levels of management in creating effective action programs, and how important is the involvement of a wide cross-section of stakeholders in this process. This is a very significant practice for Mazovia.¹³

3.2 Action description

The first and key action of the Cohes3ion project will therefore be to strengthen multi-level governance through better, closer cooperation between the central administration of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship and the local government units.

The Mazowieckie Voivodeship being a NUTS 1 unit wants to establish closer cooperation with representatives of NUTS 3 units, the main cities of the voivodeship: Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Warsaw, Żyrardów, Wołomin and Piaseczno. Possibilities of establishing closer cooperation with other key gminas in the voivodeship will also be examined. In order to realize this assumption it is planned to expand the Mazovian Innovation Council with the representatives of sub-regional towns.

The Mazovian Innovation Council is an opinion-giving and advisory body for the Marshal Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw with regard to policy on innovation, entrepreneurship and new technologies. The Mazovian Innovation Council actively participates in the implementation of RIS3 Mazovia cooperating with other institutions and the dependence structure is shown on the figure below.

¹³ Based on the Cohes3ion Project document "Learnings in Peer Review Sessions" from the Wales Region, June 3, 2020.

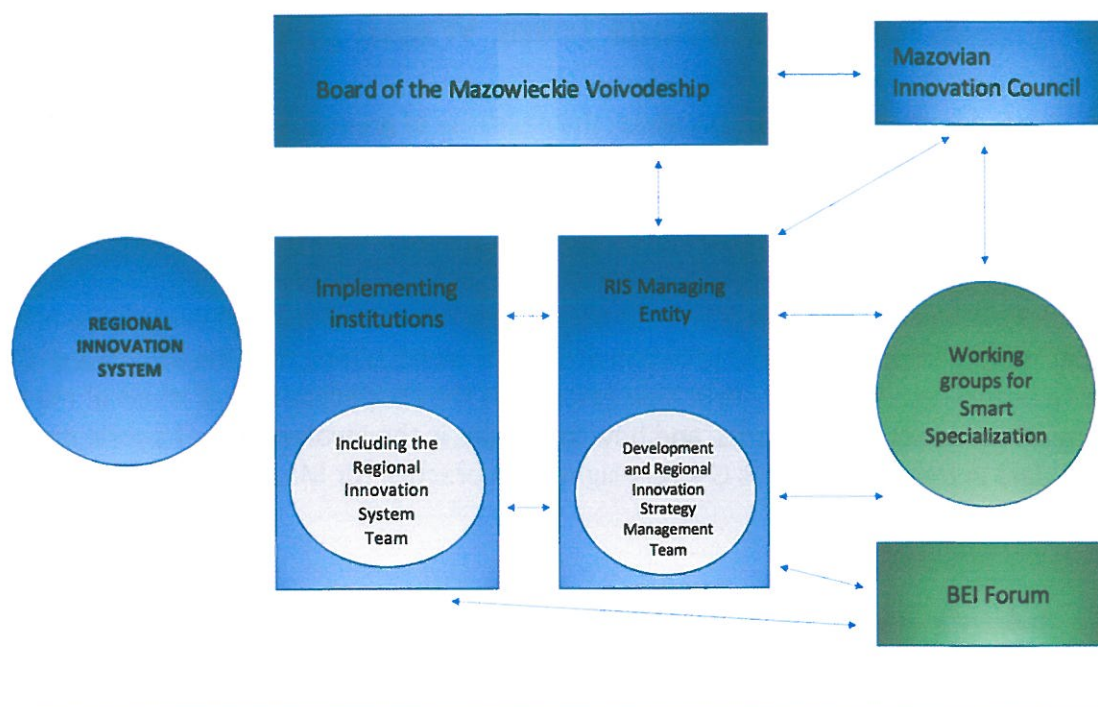


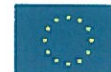
Figure 1. Organizations forming the regional innovation system – own elaboration based on: document "Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazowsze up to 2030 (current version), <https://innowacyjni.mazovia.pl/download/2310/>

The Council is an advisory organization currently composed of representatives of the regional environment: business entities, scientific institutions and public administration. The latter, however, to a limited extent. Institutionalized involvement in permanent advisory bodies will provide opportunities to identify other joint activities. The Council performs tasks consisting in:

- evaluation and opinion of the innovation policy of the region, including RIS,
- evaluation of the status of RIS implementation on the basis of innovativeness data coming from the system of monitoring and evaluation of the strategy,
- participation in the development of RIS implementation programmes,
- Giving an opinion on risk analysis,
- Giving an opinion on the RIS evaluation plan,
- Giving an opinion on the RIS communication plan.¹⁴

The incorporation of the representatives of regional self-governments from sub-regions into the Mazovian Innovation Council is intended to facilitate the transfer of information from MIC to local self-governments and, at the same time, to enable the acquisition and presentation of information gathered from bottom-up. It is assumed that it will result in receiving quicker feedback on the activities implemented by the Mazovian Innovation Council. The expected effect is also to increase the involvement of the local level representatives in the implementation of the Regional Innovation

¹⁴ „Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Mazowsza do 2030 roku.” p.55, <https://innowacyjni.mazovia.pl/upload/pages/2238/2238-0.pdf>, (April 30, 2021).



Strategy. The Mazovian Innovation Council members, by participating in Council meetings, have a direct impact on the innovation policy in the region, including the shape of the Regional Innovation Strategy, implementation documents for the Strategy and projects that are initiated and then implemented for the purposes of the strategy. Local governments, whose representatives were included in the Mazovian Innovation Council, joined the preparation of the implementation program and also indicated their projects, the goals of which achieve the goals indicated in the Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030. In addition, the Mazowieckie Voivodeship has graphically mapped the complementarity of the strategies of these local governments with the new Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030, which was also reflected in the implementation program.

The expansion of the Mazovian Innovation Council composition formally depends on the approval given by the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship - the Chairman of the Mazovia Innovation Council as well as on inviting the representatives of the indicated institutions. After the Marshal's ordinance on the personal composition of the Mazovian Innovation Council and the regulations on the Council's functioning is updated, the Council members were appointed at the sitting on November 8, 2021.

3.2.1 Entities involved

The main entity involved in the implementation of this action will be the Mazovian Innovation Council. Apart from it, from sub-regions level, the representatives of the following cities will be involved: Ciechanów, Ostrołęka, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Warsaw, Żyrardów, Wołomin and Piaseczno.

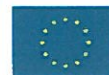
The role of each local partner will be to actively participate in the work of the Mazovian Innovation Council. It is also worth mentioning the involvement in the creation of the Smart Territorial Map and the TOR as well as suggesting activities to fill the gaps and consulting activities described in the RAP. Active participation is understood as involvement in the work of the Council, providing in a concise and clear way the feedback obtained from market participants of the represented area. This activity should also manifest itself in direct communication of the results of the Board's work in the environment from which the stakeholders come. Particular emphasis should be placed on the administration personnel from the local level as well as representatives of interested organizations working for the development of Smart Specialization on the territory of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship.

3.2.2 Timeframe

Actions to expand the Mazovian Innovation Council will be taken in 2021.

3.2.3 Costs

Estimated costs of expanding the Council can be considered insignificant from the point of view of the Cohes3ion project costs. The action will be implemented within the current activity of the Office of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw.



3.2.4 Funding sources

This activity does not require additional funding and will be carried out within the current activities of the Office of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw.

It is worth noting that the realization of this operation is supposed to bring more efficient implementation of the instrument which is the Regional Innovation Strategy.

4. Action (2) – Regional Animators of Economic Development

4.1 Context – low level of entrepreneurship in Mazovia's regions

One of the region's challenges is the limitations of knowledge transfer to the economy related to, inter alia, a small number of institutions supporting entrepreneurship. "There were 76 innovation and entrepreneurship centers in Mazovia in 2017, of which only 12 such centers were located in the Mazovia regional region. Concentration of innovation and entrepreneurship centers in the capital Warsaw region results in difficult access to services of such entities in the regional Mazovia region."¹⁵ In contrast to the central part of Mazovia, where there are leading Polish universities, universities located in the peripheral part of the voivodeship have too low influence on the level of innovativeness. Consequently, it results in a low potential of knowledge adaptation and implementation of innovative solutions in the regional part of Mazovia.

A barrier to the growth of innovativeness in the voivodeship is ineffective communication between authorities, science, industry and society. [...] It is connected with a low level of social capital and resulting lowered readiness for systematic cooperation. Low inclination of Mazovian companies to cooperate with scientific units is also an obstacle.¹⁶

Bearing in mind the gaps defined during the creation of the Smart Territorial Map, which indicate the necessity of:

- strengthening cooperation with representatives of local government units,
- joining new entities to the process of multi-level management of RIS3 Mazovia,

The representatives of the Marshal Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw looked for examples of good practices of such solutions, which broaden the group of stakeholders by widely involving partners and not only the representatives of the central administration.

4.1.1 Inspirations from Spanish partner

An interesting solution that will help overcome the discussed barrier to innovation growth was identified during a visit to the partner in Bilbao in Bizkaia region. There, the Bizkaia Orkean public aid initiative addressed to support local organizations and entrepreneurship development in seven

¹⁵ „Regionalna Strategia Innowacji dla Mazowsza do 2030 roku”, p. 32.

¹⁶ „Regionalnej Strategii Innowacji dla Mazowsza do 2030 roku”, p. 33.



urban districts was planned and implemented. Bizkaia Orkean brings together more than 60 individuals from 30 different organizations.

One of these organizations from the so-called third sector is the Azaro Foundation. This organization works in the Lea-Artibai district region and focuses on entrepreneurship development among local companies. Azaro Foundation works very closely with the Bizkaia Regional Council. It acts as a kind of "antenna" that transmits - provides support in innovation and entrepreneurship to the lowest level of the suburban districts. The Foundation simultaneously participates as a member in the teams of Innobasque (Basque Innovation Agency) and the Basque Science and Technology Network. Both of these organizations are supported by the Government of the Basque Country.¹⁷

The Azaro Foundation, being the driving force behind the RIS3 effort in Lea-Artibai County, engaged community members along with a wide range of knowledge providing organizations in addition to the administration and businesses. Among them were a training center, a high school, and schools and organizations teaching vocational skills. Sharing knowledge and involving educational partners in such a broad way has produced very interesting results, among which selected ones are:

- Gaining trust among actors and different levels of government, which led to the configuration of working teams involved in projects and collaborating in initiatives,
- Formal communication channels, a forum to share entrepreneurial concerns.¹⁸

Observing the results of the Bizkaia partners' extensive activities became an inspiration for Mazovia to activate non-governmental organizations that can share knowledge with local communities. This gave rise to the idea of organizing an instrument to support called "Regional Animators of Economic Development".

4.2 Action description

Relying on the conclusions and inspirations from the actions of Azaro Foundation and Bizkaia region, the Marshal Office of Mazovia Voivodeship in Warsaw decided to strengthen the activities supporting the economic development of the region and announced a competition in the project Regional Animators of Economic Development. It is a part of a public task of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in the area of "Activities supporting economic development, including the development of entrepreneurship".

The project Regional Animators of Economic Development began with a pilot competition for non-governmental organizations and other entities (listed in Article 3, paragraph 3 of the Law adopted 24 April 2003 on Public Benefit Activity and Voluntarism). It will be realized within the framework of public tasks in the area of "Activities supporting economic development, including entrepreneurship development", task - "Strengthening the role of Mazovia's Regional Animators of Economic Development in the process of entrepreneurial discovery".

"The annual program of co-operation of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship with non-governmental organizations and entities mentioned in the art. 3 section 3 of the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism" - The overriding goal of the cooperation between the Voivodeship and

¹⁷ Based on the presentation "AZARO Foundation. Case Study," Kick-Off Meeting, October 8-10, 2019, Bilbao.

¹⁸ Based on the presentation "CASE STUDY Bizkaia Orekan - Biscay at Balance," Kick-Off Meeting, October 8-10, 2019, Bilbao.



non-governmental organizations is better satisfaction needs and raising the standard of living of the region's inhabitants as well as supporting sustainable development Voivodeships, in accordance with the Development Strategy of the Mazowieckie Voivodship until 2030 Innovative Mazovia. Tasks carried out by the voivodeship in cooperation with non-governmental organizations also arise from the content of strategic and sectoral documents, such as Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030. Task „Strengthening the role of regional animators of Mazovia's economic development in the proces entrepreneurial discovery” aims to improve the strategic process related to the implementation of the concept of smart specialization by decentralizing the process of entrepreneurial discovery. This will be achieved thanks to the use of resources and experience of regional economic development animators - organizations specializing in cooperation with entrepreneurs and providing services supporting business development. The selection of animators is expected to contribute to strengthening the RIS implementation process by reaching entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs directly with the knowledge about RIS and stimulating their interest and involvement in the process of entrepreneurial discovery as well as in acting for the development of the Smart Specialization area. The project should contribute to strengthening the implementation process of the Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030. At the same time, the Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 is not a financial instrument but a strategic document of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. For this document, various sources of financing have been defined for the goals and activities described in the strategy and Annual Program of cooperation with non-governmental organizations is one from them. The source of these funds is the own funds of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. The Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2030 identifies directly the need to implement this type of activities (measure 3.4 Building and supporting cooperation networks with the participation of innovative companies, incl. through clusters, industry organizations, centers of excellence and other animators economic development). At the same time, Regional Innovation Strategy for Mazovia until 2020 was not a financial instrument, but a strategic document for which equal sources of financing were also provided.

The competition for proposals in the area of supporting activities that assist entrepreneurship and economic development, aims to improve the strategic process associated with the implementation of the concept of Smart Specialization through decentralization of the entrepreneurial discovery process. The competition is carried out within the task "Strengthening the role of Mazovia's regional economic development animators in the process of entrepreneurial discovery". This is suppose to be achieved by using the resources of organizations specializing in cooperation with entrepreneurs and providing services to support business development. These organizations have been named Regional Animators of Economic Development. It is significant that the launch of this new type of competition is in line with the "Guide to the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS3)" regarding the experimentation process.

The selection of animators is expected to contribute to strengthening the RIS implementation process by reaching entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs directly with the knowledge about RIS and stimulating their interest and involvement in the process of entrepreneurial discovery as well as in acting for the development of the Smart Specialization area.

The aim of the task realization is:

- a) selection of up to 7 actions strengthening cooperation between non-governmental organizations supporting economic development of the Mazovian Voivodeship (animators) and entrepreneurs from the Mazovian area in the areas of regional Smart Specialization;



- b) decentralization of the entrepreneurial discovery process through the use of knowledge and experience of Regional Animators of Economic Development for the benefit of entrepreneurs' involvement in particular sub-regions of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship;
- c) increase the involvement of entrepreneurs in the process of entrepreneurial discovery.¹⁹

Animators will organize at least 3 encounters with local entrepreneurs whose activity is part of the Mazovia's Smart Specialization. Animators will also be responsible for planning, organizing and moderating meetings with entrepreneurs in the form of workshops or panel discussions. The meetings are to focus on challenges, trends and barriers to development identified by entrepreneurs, with particular emphasis on the specificity of the region/sub-region concerned, and lead to the development of recommendations for the RIS Managing Entity together with entrepreneurs.²⁰

4.2.1 Entities involved

The Marshal's Office of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw is fully responsible for the activity consisting in running the competition for Regional Animators of Economic Development; however, members of the Regional Stakeholder Group actively participated in the preparation of the competition's assumptions. A special role was played by the Warsaw University of Technology whose representatives will conduct an evaluation of the competition for Regional Animators of Economic Development in 2021.

Seven bidders who meet the substantive requirements of the competition were invited to take part in the pilot stage of the competition. Conclusions from the evaluation of the pilot study will contribute to the improvement of the competition, which will be announced in the first quarter of 2022 r.²¹

4.2.2 Timeframe

In 2021, the selection of organizations to participate in the pilot project began. On April 27, 2021 a group of organizations which will act as Regional Animators of Economic Development on the territory of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship was selected. Activities implemented under this task will take place until December 31, 2021. After the end of the pilot program an evaluation will be conducted. Conclusions will allow to improve the original assumptions of the competition and adjust the planned activities to the actual needs of the Regional Animators of Economic Development. The next call is planned for the first quarter of 2022.

¹⁹ A fragment describing the objectives of the competition included in Appendix No. 1 to the Resolution No. 173/204/21 of the Board of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship of February 2, 2021,

https://www.mazovia.pl/downloadStat/gfx/mazovia/pl/defaultaktualnosci/136/370/1/2021_02_03_rf_wcag_wersja-2-zal_1_ogloszenie_konkursowe_2021_anim_region_akcept_rf_zmbiuradialogu_2_akcp_rp_zml_-_kopia.docx

²⁰ Op. Cit.

²¹ Annex to Resolution No. 594/224/21 of the Board of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship of April 27, 2021, https://www.mazovia.pl/downloadStat/gfx/mazovia/pl/defaultaktualnosci/136/423/1/zalacznik_do_uchwaly_rozstrzyga_jacej_konkurs_animatory_27.04.2021.pdf, (May 10, 2021).



4.2.3 Costs

For the described task the amount of PLN 315,000.00 (approx. EUR 80,000) has been planned. It is allowed to modify the budget after analysis of the results and recommendations from the pilot study, which will be carried out in cooperation with the representatives of the Regional Stakeholder Group. The amount of the grant awarded to the bidders in the pilot competition is 223.544,54 PLN²²

4.2.4 Funding sources

The task will be financed from the budget of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship in accordance with "The annual program of co-operation of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship with non-governmental organizations and entities mentioned in the art. 3 section 3 of the Law on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism".

Date: 9.12.2021

Signature:

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²² Op. Cit.

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