

Cluster PolisEE

Smarter Cluster Policies for South East Europe

Priority Axis: Facilitation of innovation and entrepreneurship

Area of Intervention: Develop technology & innovation networks in specific fields

Terms of Reference: Policy Learning Mechanisms in Support of Cluster Development

- ❑ Strong regional disparities, in terms of economic performance, different institutional structures and missing or lacking innovation strategies characterize the SEE area, at present. Some regions have figures comparable to EU standards but the majority of them have only low levels of - innovative activity, inefficient regulations and institutional capacities - and as a result, low level of competitiveness.
- ❑ Regional innovation policies have often demonstrated a lack of efficiency in identifying the priorities for RDI promotion and forms of practical collaboration across the regional borders, leading to a wasteful use of public resources, hampering, or delaying, the realization of potential benefits for all the territories involved.

- Many cluster policies and initiatives exist now in the SEE area, leading to the necessity of prioritization and concentration of the different actions towards creating World Class Clusters in order to fulfil EU2020's competitiveness objectives. Thus, policy makers need to better assess impact of clusters on competitiveness and innovation. This can lead the SEE regions to become innovation hubs and their clusters can be powerful catalysts in this process.

- ❑ **Cluster PolisEE Project**, funded under the 3rd Strategic Call for Proposals, involved 25 partners, covering 11 different countries of SEE area (8 Member States: Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and 3 IPA: Albania, Croatia, Serbia), with the goal to develop smart cluster policies supporting territorial cohesion, to work on research and development, strengthen the innovation system in the area, to encourage transnational cluster cooperation between strong performing regions and underdeveloped regions.

- ❑ Different level of experience allows a mutual enrichment and smooth implementation removing barriers for cooperation within SEE area. In order to accomplish this goal, a selection of partners was made, covering a wide area of **stakeholders** related to **cluster activities** or **policy making**, such as:
 - ✓ Regional and National Public Institutions responsible for cluster policy development and implementation;
 - ✓ Regional Development Agencies responsible for the management of Cluster Programmes and Regional Innovation strategies;
 - ✓ National Research Institutes and Universities;
 - ✓ Innovation promotion bodies and Cluster Networks.

- ❑ Cluster PoliSEE partnership follows a bottom-up approach (i.e. vertical representation of players) involving several competences necessary for policies design, facilitating interaction of all relevant stakeholders, creating a mutual vision for - all innovation ecosystem actors/policy makers, innovation promotion agencies, businesses, research centres and cluster managers - maximizing cluster innovation impact and push for the creation of emerging hub in specialized sector of technological convergence supported by Educational Programmes from Universities involved. Cluster PoliSEE institutional partnership can also enhance and improve the competences and ability of policy makers through an appropriate learning process by using a reflective policy making perspective.

- ❑ The project's work plan runs through a matrix approach where several cross cluster development areas are analysed and tested. Among these:
 - ✓ Development of innovative clusters
 - ✓ Research and development
 - ✓ Development of Cluster Organization
 - ✓ Sustainability of Cluster Development
 - ✓ International cooperation and networking of clusters
 - ✓ Financial framework for improvement (Funding the cluster)
 - ✓ Clusters and regional specialization
 - ✓ New skills and creation of new jobs

- The project duration is 30 months, from May 2012 to November 2014.
- In terms of short-term impact, ClusterPoliSEE identifies and collects data and information enabling the analysis of framework conditions by a learning process for reflective policy making (content of **WP4**), thus allowing the development and testing of new policy learning mechanisms (content of **WP5**) in specific priority areas as contribution to the setting up of evidence based cluster policies in the SEE regions.

- In terms of long-term impact, the project will improve the framework conditions supporting cluster development in the SEE area by providing a joint policy plan and Initiative (content of **WP6**) based on mutual policy learning and evidence from pilot actions. This will define measures paving the way for further development of a SEE cluster initiatives, as organized efforts to improve growth and competitiveness of clusters.

- A proposed ICT platform and collaborative learning mechanisms (deliverables of **WP3**) will support result-oriented transnational good practice exchange among policy makers and stakeholders engaged on regional cluster promotion and funding initiatives. Creating/reinforcing strategic linkages between proximity SEE regions by: leveraging their complementary assets and capabilities; enhancing business cooperation on selected technology roadmaps and innovation pathways.

- ❑ Capitalizing and sharing knowledge in a open and freely accessible environment foster the attraction and participation of non-partner organisations/countries and a prompter, durable integration of the project into existing cluster support initiatives at broader EU level.
- ❑ Content wise, the full acknowledgment of territorial needs and diversities is coupled with a long-term perspective (namely the “smart specialisation”) that is of growing relevance for EU cohesion, R&D and competitiveness policies, and which will be pilot experimented in the SEE regions as a contribution to its wider deployment.

Thank you for your attention!

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