

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: ESTABLISHING IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In a first stage, the project team is formed and tasks are assigned to each of project team's members. The project team will establish the methodology for cooperation and communication. The procedures for the procurement of services and equipments will be established and the procedures initiated. The implementation, monitoring, intermediary and final evaluation of project's activities will be realised according to the approved schedule and work methodologies.

Activity 2: CREATING VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES – CROSS-BORDER VIRTUAL STOCK EXCHANGE FOR SERVICES, TECHNOLOGIES AND BROKERAGE

The activity supposes the elaboration of *Stock Exchange software* and a *training programme* for two technician operators for virtual stock exchange (1 from ARIES Oltenia Subsidiary and 1 from National Centre for Information Service – Pleven), as well the functioning and operating of the new infrastructure. Competent personnel will administrate the virtual infrastructure and provide high quality assistance to clients.

The virtual infrastructure, created for promoting cross-border innovative services and technologies and for impelling business contacts and transactions, will contribute to accelerating economic development on both sides of the border. Not only it brings together offer and request, but it also means lower costs for sellers (in what concerns the marketing of the products, the distribution etc.) and for buyers (in what concerns searching the needed technologies or services and even their prices).

Activity 3: PREPARING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SUPPORTING THE QUALITY OF CROSS-BORDER PRODUCTS – FEASIBILITY STUDY, TECHNICAL PROJECT AND EXECUTION DETAILS FOR FUTURE CONSTRUCTION OF A CROSS-BORDER LABORATORY FOR TESTING AGRICULTURAL AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS.

This activity consists in contracting, elaborating and monitoring of the execution of the feasibility study, technical project and execution details for creating physical infrastructure for improving quality of agricultural and animal products from Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area.

The succes of the future investment project – Cross-border Laboratory for testing agricultural and animal products in Pleven, Bulgaria - is related to the quality of specific documentation. Therefore, the Responsible for Procurement procedures (RO) and Accountant (BG) will identify proper procurement procedures, proceed to the procurement of the above-mentioned services and will monitor, together with the Project Manager, the execution of the contract, in line with Bulgarian legislation on public procurement and Programme's specifications.

Activity 4: ORGANISING AND UNFOLDING TRAININGS FOR TARGETED-GROUPS, FOR USING THE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING QUALITY AND INNOVATION

In order to prepare business representatives for using the virtual and physical infrastructure supporting quality, 2 training courses on the following topics will be organised:

a) *Training for virtual stock exchange functioning in the advantage of economic actors* – the training will familiarize participants with stock exchanges specific terminology, as well with the functioning of the virtual infrastructure: how to post an offer or to search for an offer of innovative services and technologies, virtual transaction steps and procedures, how to ask for assistance from Romanian and Bulgarian operators of the virtual stock exchange

b) *Quality identification and maintenance for agricultural and animal products* – the economic agents operating in agriculture, agricultural and animal food processing will be informed on the importance of analysing products' quality, on

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

specific legislation and quality standards, and trained on the specific procedures for testing their products quality in specialised laboratories

Activity 5: EXCHANGES OF EXPERIENCE/WORK GROUPS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF TT AND RDI ENTITIES, INNOVATIVE SMES

A necessary step in supporting a coherent strategy for increasing cross-border cooperation and shaping directions of development and action plan, in order to promote high quality of products, services and technologies through innovation and technology transfer/TT, consists in knowing realities from the border area, the progress registered by each side and pointing out best experiences and possible work methods. Taking into consideration these aspects, *2 exchanges of experience/work groups* will be unfolded on both sides of the border (1 in RO, 1 in BG) and gather representatives of R&D and innovation/RDI and TT entities, innovative SMEs. The Applicant and its partners are responsible for ensuring commitment from the participants across Dolj, Olt, Plevén, Vidin, as well from other counties/districts that were previously comprised in the “Cross-border Innovation Strategy” (Mehedinti, Montana) or towards which the Strategy is being extended (Vratsa).

Activity 6: RESEARCH ACTIVITY ON CROSS-BORDER INNOVATIVE COMPANIES AND ELABORATION OF A DATABASE WITH THE COMPANIES ALLOCATING FUNDS FOR INNOVATION

During the implementation period of the project, 3 months will be allocated to a complex research activity in Dolj-Olt-Plevén-Vidin cross-border area, as well in Mehedinti, Montana and Vratsa, in order to identify the innovative companies in the region, operating in most representative sectors of the economy. The team designated for this activity is composed of Coordinator for innovation and strategic planning (Business Centre of CCI Olt) and Responsible for research and strategic planning (NCI Plevén), but all the other partners will bring their contribution, providing information on the companies in their area. The coordinator for this activity will make sure that the Bulgarian Responsible and all other partners accomplish their tasks according to established schedule, correlating and verifying information. Based on the research activity, a database of companies allocating funds for innovation, which will be posted on project’s web site.

Activity 7: ELABORATING A DATABASE ON THE OFFER OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, CORRELATED WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CROSS-BORDER ECONOMY, AND OF BROCHURE AND CD “THE OFFER ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR COMPANIES IN CROSS-BORDER AREA”.

For the elaboration of the database and brochure “The Offer on innovative technologies for companies in the cross-border area”, Romanian and Bulgarian market experts will cooperate, identifying most representative technologies for the cross-border area. The brochure and CD, multiplied both in Romanian and Bulgarian, will be distributed to stakeholders participating to the Brokerage events with exhibitions of new products, technologies and inventions.

Activity 8: UPDATING, EXTENDING AND CORRELATING „THE CROSS-BORDER STRATEGY FOR INNOVATION” WITH EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR INNOVATION, ELABORATING DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLAN, AS WELL A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR AN INNOVATIVE AND COMPETITIVE REGION.

At new partners’ request, The Cross-border Strategy for innovation, previously elaborated within the project “Pole of competitiveness through Innovation and Technology Transfer for sustainable economic development of cross border region Danube 21, Dolj, Olt, Mehedinti, Vidin, Montana”, implemented by the Lead Partner, will be updated and extended to other 2 regions, Plevén and Vratsa. The updated strategy, comprising this neighbourhood counties and districts, together with the new elaborated directions of development and action plan, will harmonise political and economic measures for enhancing innovation and quality, and increasing competitiveness of enterprises, universities, RDI, TT entities. Project team members will participate to 4 working meetings (2 in Dolj, 2 in Plevén), together with local authorities, in order to correlate information and establish coherent actions.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 9: ORGANIZING AND UNFOLDING THE CONFERENCE AND DEBATES “AN INNOVATIVE REGION”

The event reunites representatives of public authorities, business environment, universities, RDI centres, TT entities, business and technology incubators. The most important moment of the Conference is represented by the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding for an innovative and competitive region, by the presidents of Dolj, Olt, Mehedinti County Councils, and governors of Vidin, Pleven, Montana, Vratsa districts, underlining their commitment for implementing a joint Strategy for innovation. As well, 3 debates with the following themes will put face to face and invite to dialog most important actors in innovation and business fields:

“Correlating innovation activities with companies request and needs, and promoting new products and services”

“Increasing the involvement of national RDI institutes in developing and implementing cross-border Strategy and action plan for innovation”

“The role of business and technology incubators in implementing the Cross-border Strategy for innovation – the relation universities – RDI institutes – development of innovative start-ups”

Activity 10: ELABORATING, WITHIN A CROSS-BORDER WORK GROUP, OF LEGAL GUIDELINES ON INNOVATION AND TT AND PROPOSING PROGRAMS AND MEASURES FOR STIMULATING INNOVATION IN THE REGION

The Legal guideline is elaborated by legal experts on both sides of the boundary, under the coordination of a designed project team member. Based on the analyse of Romanian and Bulgarian legal provisions on innovation and technology transfer/TT, and on the structuring of main legal aspects on this issue, they will identify and propose measures that could be taken by projects partners, local authorities in the field of innovation and technology transfer, as well in transnational technology transfer/TTT. In order to ensure equal access of cross-border stakeholders to the Legal guidelines, it will be elaborated in both Romanian and Bulgarian.

Activity 11: ORGANISING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “THE ROLE OF INNOVATION IN COMPETITIVENESS DEVELOPMENT FOR COMPANIES – PRODUCTS AND SERVICES”.

At the International Conference, hosting also the launching of the Legal guidelines on innovation and TT, participants will benefit from the experience of 3 international experts on: international innovation practices; entrepreneurial training and transnational transfer practices. The international experts will also provide support to the joint Romanian-Bulgarian team preparing working methodologies for a cross-border network in the benefit of innovative enterprises.

Activity 12: ELABORATION OF COMMON WORK METHODOLOGIES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR BUSINESS SECTOR, HARMONISED WITH EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ONES – “ETHICS CODE FOR INCUBATION, NETWORKING, SIGNPOSTING” AND “INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GUIDE”.

Business and technology incubators are innovative “instruments” of prime importance in supporting start-up enterprises. Although such infrastructure has been created in the cross-border area, and business representatives are becoming more and more interested to develop their business in an incubator, few of them have knowledge on the working procedures. Because this situation often creates obstacles not only for new enterprises, but also for the incubators, and the universities, RDI centres working with the incubator and incubated SMEs, it is important for each of these entities to have access to complete information on the working methodologies. Taking into consideration these aspects, project partners’ intention is to develop common work methodologies, correlated with European and international ones, respectively “Ethics Code for incubation, networking, signposting” and “Intellectual Property Guide”.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 13: CREATING A CROSS-BORDER NETWORK OF BUSINESS AND TT CENTRES IN THE BENEFIT OF INNOVATIVE COMPANIES AND ELABORATION OF WORK METHODOLOGIES AND UNIFORM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – “CLASSIFIED LIST OF INNOVATIVE SERVICES FOR ROMANIAN-BULGARIAN CROSS-BORDER REGION AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS” AND “OPERATIONAL MANUAL FOR WORKING ACTIVITY IN INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER”.

The cross-border network of business and TT centres will provide specific services to innovative companies in the area, supporting their development. In order to provide high quality services, experts on innovation and TT, will identify and elaborate selection procedures of the future network members, working methodologies and performance indicators within the network – *Operational Manual for working activity in innovation and technology transfer; Classified list of innovative services for Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region and service performance indicators*. For correlating methodologies and indicators with European ones, international experts will support project team’s activity, ensuring information and providing assistance in their areas of competence.

Activity 14: ORGANISING 4 WORKSHOPS DEDICATED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF SMES, UNIVERSITIES, RDI CENTRES, TT ENTITIES

The workshops will address the following topics:

- ▶ *“Programmes and policies in innovation”*
- ▶ *“Match-making between offer and request for RDI, TT in Romania and Bulgaria”*
- ▶ *“The role of networking and signposting in developing competitiveness for SMes through RDI and TT”*
- ▶ *“Setting-up and developing innovative companies”, aiming to increase the level of information of target groups and to stimulate cooperation between cross-border SMEs, universities, RDI centres, TT entities.*

The informational support for the workshops will be elaborated by Romanian and Bulgarian experts, and printed in both languages.

Activity 15: E-LEARNING - ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING COURSE “THE QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT THROUGH INNOVATION”

The Entrepreneurial training course “The quality of Management through innovation” will be available in 2 forms: e-learning and in-class.

A software and an informational support in Romanian and Bulgarian for on-line course and will be elaborated, increasing access of all entrepreneurs in the cross-border area to information and contributing to quality improvement of business processes. The informational support will be structured on the following themes/modules:

- ▶ *“Entrepreneurship. Starting business – innovative start-ups. Business development and marketing”*
- ▶ *“Elaborating and implementing a business plan”*
- ▶ *“Accessing European funds”*
- ▶ *“Implementation of management systems in companies – quality, environmental, food safety, occupational health and safety”*

Activity 16: IN-CLASS LEARNING - ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING COURSE “THE QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT THROUGH INNOVATION”

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Cross-border entrepreneurs with limited access to internet infrastructure, or those interested to interact “face to face”, will have the opportunity to participate to direct presentations of the entrepreneurial training course. Trainings will be unfolded in 5 different locations in the cross-border area (one location for each topic – Craiova, Slatina, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Plevne, Vratsa), in order to ensure participation of entrepreneurs across all cross-border area comprised within the Strategy.

Activity 17: ORGANISING 2 BROKERAGE EVENTS WITH EXHIBITION OF NEW PRODUCTS, TECHNOLOGIES AND INVENTIONS

Another important step in supporting the joint strategy for promoting quality through innovation and TT is represented by the brokerage events with exhibition of new products, technologies and inventions. Cross-border providers will have the opportunity to promote their products and establish direct contacts with possible investors or clients. The Romanian and Bulgarian partners will select most innovative technologies, inventions, products to be presented during the events and coordinate their efforts towards attracting possible clients and foreign investors to the exhibitions.

Activity 18: ORGANIZING, IN ROMANIA, OF ANNUAL EVENT “TOP OF INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISES”

The event is a result of previous research activity and database on the companies allocating funds for innovation, and of whole activities’ progress and impact on the companies in the cross-border area (Dolj, Olt, Plevne, Vidin, Mehedinți, Montana, Vratsa) during the implementation period. During the event which will be unfolded in Dolj county, the nominated companies will be awarded with the distinction “*Innovative Enterprise*” in the following domains: *agro-alimentary, environment, energy, trade*. The event is, therefore, meant to recognise the efforts of Romanian and Bulgarian enterprises towards quality assurance and increasing their competitiveness, as well to stimulate other companies to invest in R&D and innovation.

Activity 19: ELABORATION OF WEEKLY “NEWSLETTER ON INNOVATION”

The newsletter elaborated by project team members will provide permanently updated, useful information regarding regional, national and international events in the fields of innovation, protection of intellectual property; support actions for SMEs – training courses, European and national policies, offers/requests of innovative products, services, technologies etc. Interested SMEs representatives or those of RDI centres, universities, TT entities, business and technology incubators will be able to subscribe to the Newsletter on innovation, by filling out a request form on project’s web page.

Activity 20: VISIBILITY AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

In order to ensure project visibility and promotion, and disseminate results, the following activities will be undertaken across the border area: organizing and unfolding 5 press-conferences out of which 4 in Romania (launching the project, brokerage event and exhibition, Top of innovative enterprises, project closure) and 1 in Bulgaria (brokerage event and exhibition), elaborating and publication of 18 media announcements (11 in Romania, 7 in Bulgaria); 5000 flyers, out of which 2500 will be distributed to target-groups in Romania and 2500 to target groups in Bulgaria); 300 posters (150 in Romania, 150 in Bulgaria); 2 banners; web site supporting also the e-learning facility developed. Project team designated members will elaborate the text of the materials and ensure the dissemination of the materials along the border area.