e - newsletter

DECEMBER 2014

INTRODUCTION

We wish you a happy and prosperous New Year 2015 and pleasant reading of the 6th e-newsletter ClusterPoliSEE. More information about the ClusterPoliSEE project is available on the website: www.clusterpolisee.eu.

"Setting the basis for stronger collaboration and more effective cluster policies in SE Europe - ClusterPoliSEE project closure"

After a thirty-month period of constructive knowledge exchange and fruitful collaboration, the completion of the work streams of ClusterPoliSEE project was sealed by its **Final Conference** that took place in Venice - Italy on the 26th of November 2014. The aim of the conference was the dissemination and exchange of ideas for the capitalization of the main achievements of the ClusterPoliSEE project in the frame of the future Transnational Cooperation and other cluster related programmes. Approximately one hundred innovation policy makers were attracted and a number of important speakers of the European innovation ecosystem (JTS- SEE programme, Joint Research Centre - European Commission, Italian Ministry of Economic Development, etc.) were hosted by the conference.

All Project Partners, having effectively coordinated one of the project's main outcomes, the design and implementation of pilot actions for the improvement of cluster development and support policies in South East Europe, actively participated in the dialogue and contributed with its strong knowledge and experience towards the improvement of cluster policies and the empowerment of transnational cluster collaboration in the region of South East Europe.

During the conference, special emphasis was given to the need for **constant experimentation and systemic policy learning** in an international context, so that SEE countries are able to "learn", integrate and transfer elements of good practices to their regional cluster policies. Towards this direction, the **common societal challenges** tackled by the pilot actions (such as eco-innovation, cluster internationalization strategies, new skills' development, etc.) were also stressed, paving the way for the transferability of the project's results and offering various opportunities for strategic future synergies.

Mr. Mauro Terzoni, Head of European Policies Department of Marche region, stated: "Marche Region – European Policies Department – Managing Authority for ERDF and ESF – in quality of Lead partner of the strategic project "ClusterPoliSEE", financed by the SEE programme, set the basis for the design and implementation of more effective cluster policies for cluster development and support in South East Europe with the support of a high quality partnership. **The main achievement of the project was the definition and implementation of pilot actions** dealing with "Cluster Policy Learning Mechanism" and aiming at facilitating the transnational knowledge exchange and regional capacity building in support to cluster development. This activity was successfully carried out thanks to strong partnership competences and experiences, guaranteed the valuable and active participation of a wide transnational partnership towards the improvement of cluster policies in the future. **The transnational coordination and monitoring of the pilot actions, was a strong point in the ClusterPoliSEE project.** The partners had the possibility to let the "learning by doing" process emerge, and to make the achieved results clearly recognizable".

Results of pilot actions

P.U.L.S.E.

The Marche Region pilot action **P.U.L.S.E. – Pushing Policy Makers' Skills to Leverage Smart Economy",** realized in the framework of ClusterPoliSEE strategic project, aimed to enhance public managers' skills and abilities for cluster policy and smart specialization making and management giving further insight into regional development dynamics and challenges and providing approaches, strategies and tools for efficient clusters governance.
The pilot action, through a training path testing of 4 months, allowed to the selected participants to confront and analyse scenarios, case studies and best practices empowering public managers' approach to policy design to promote, develop, consolidate and manage clusters in transversal fields (industry, territorial economic specializations, human resources, R&D, innovation) and in transnational domain.

The gained main outputs are: **knowledge of many success factors for innovation policies** and the development of clusters; **awareness** of the important role of **clusters as innovation hubs**; **basis** to prepare the participants in facing challenges related with **innovation and competitiveness of SMEs at transnational level**; **highlights** of most important aspects of **clusters as a driver of innovation**, **collaboration between the production system and the scientific system** and **transfer of practical knowledge and skills in manufacturing processes**.

P.U.L.S.E. created the basis for a sustainable training structure transferable to other EU regions and gave the opportunity to come closer to the real situation of cluster policy making mechanisms and S3 strategies.
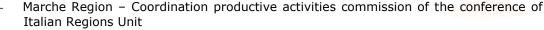The participants to the P.U.L.S.E. pilot actions were:
- Marche Region – Innovation, research and competitiveness of productive systems Unit

- Marche Region – Coordination productive activities commission of the conference of Italian Regions Unit
- Agency for the Territorial Cohesion – GD for Communitarian Unitarian Regional Policy
- Department for the Development and Economic Cohesion – Community Operational Programmes of Regions within the objective competitiveness and occupation
- Association e-Living (c/o Faculty of Engineering of the Polytechnic University of Marche)
- Emilia Romagna Region – Support to the activities of the promotion of industrial research and technological transfer
- Invitalia spa –Technological National Clusters and Smart Cities and Communities and Social Innovation Area;
- Veneto Region – Research and Innovation;
- University of Camerino;
- Ministry of Education, University and Research.

Region of Central Macedonia

The pilot action that the Region of Central Macedonia, Greece implemented in the context of ClusterPoliSEE had the title: "Preparatory actions for the establishment of a Precision Farming Cluster in Region of Central Macedonia". The specific objectives of the pilot action were:

1) To carry out all preparatory actions required for the establishment of a new cluster in Region of Central Macedonia.

2) To inform the rural population and all relevant stakeholders about the significance of clustering and precision farming.

3) To inform the rural population about the benefits of operating as a unit through an organised cluster, introducing cooperation, trust and the concept of eco-innovation.

4) To implement a Precision Farming demonstration project in the Region of Central Macedonia.

5) To set an example for future potential stakeholders that are interested in establishing a cluster.

The long term impact of the pilot action is planned to be the establishment of an agricultural cluster based on precision farming. This initiative will benefit all participating stakeholders and group of farmers (ultimate recipients of the cluster establishment benefits and precision farming benefits once applied to their crops).

The results of the preparatory actions for the establishment of an agricultural cluster based on precision farming in Region of Central Macedonia, were concrete, with the development of 2 studies, **a) Study on existing situation - Legal framework on clustering and b) Road map for the establishment of a cluster** which can be   very useful tools for Regional Policy makers, who need to have a consolidated reference on the legal framework for the establishment of a cluster on precision farming in Greece, as well as the basis for the roadmap for the cluster establishment.

Moreover, in the framework of the pilot action implementation there were organized 7 regional awareness events and 1 final closing event at the Region of Central Macedonia, for disseminating the cluster concept on precision farming to interesterd stakeholders. The participation to the events was satisfactory, depicting a high interest in Cluster policies and more specific in the establishment of an agricultural cluster based on precision farming in Region of Central Macedonia. Relevant questionnaires were collected by all 7 events, regarding the interest for participation in the cluster on precision farming, where more than 50% of the participants who answered the questionnaire, expressed their interest to participate in the cluster.

These results highlight the interest and turn towards eco-innovation policy and a will towards change, education, innovation and incorporation of new technology, beyond traditional Greek family methods used until now on agricultural works. Whether used appropriately, these results may lead to substantial changes in the way of thinking, towards an extroversion policy, that will increase profit and lead to the creation of new job positions.

The new RIS3 of RCM supports actions for innovative clusters within the new programming period 2014 - 2020.

Electronic Industry Networking in Central Europe

Trnava Self Governing Region, Slovakia completed the majority of the activities of a pilot that targeted the development of an international network for the enhancement of cooperation among clusters in the field of electronic industry. The main focus of the pilot action implemented by Trnava Self Governing Region was to create functional international network of cooperating subjects operating in the field of electronic industry and suppliers (i.e. plastic) in the area of Centrope region (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary) under the patronage of existing Electronic Cluster – Western Slovakia.

The pilot action of Clusterpolisee project specialized on electronic industry is related to current activities of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its Electronic section established lately by the biggest electronic companies in Slovakia including SAMSUNG and its vendors, AVEX, electronic research institute (EVPU), UMC, Foxconn and others.

Companies mostly understand the needs of the production sector in the field of education and innovation and the Electronic Cluster – Western Slovakia provides added value in the form of expertise in the field of preparation and execution of various projects as well as the management of newly created network composed by various types of stakeholders.

Working group Sustainability through Cluster Development & Pilot actions in Istria region

Indicative thematic priorities discussed by working group Sustainability through Cluster Development within the project managed by Istrian development agency were:
• clusters in eco-innovation industry in SEE area
• ecoinnovation and cluster policies on national and regional levels in SEE area
• existing initiatives and studies in the programme area in the field of sustainability through cluster development in eco-innovation industry
• potential role of clusters in mainstreaming eco-innovation
• development of new policy learning mechanisms: discussion and analyses of best practices on cluster policies, policy instruments, practical tools and incentives for area of sustainable development through clustering in eco-innovation industry
• definition of policy measures to be implemented - pilot activities.

As part of the project, several results, policy measures and trends have been identified. In accordance with emerging EU priorities, eco-innovation is becoming an extremely important aspect across SEE as well, in almost all industries. Still, the complexity of this phenomenon represents a challenge for policy makers. There are significant differences in how various countries deal with the challenges that emerge from accepting a sustainable development path. In this context, in more successful countries the population is more aware of the environmental challenges modern societies are facing. Therefore, enhancing awareness of contemporary problems is an effective instrument for successful policy framework for eco-innovation.

Europe's cluster policies aim to increase competitiveness and to accelerate innovation in established industry sectors. In countries where an established eco-industry exists, there is an interesting opportunity for addressing market failures that are still hindering the mainstreaming of eco-innovation in the eco-industries sector, as well as in greening traditional industries.

On a more general level, within the Croatian context, clustering has become an important topic within the economic field and it is represented as one of the mail pillars of economic development. This is due to the fact that they affect exports, entering new markets, employment and give a stable perspective for further development. This is especially true in the areas of innovation and research as part of inter-regional cooperation. However, as a country still at the initial phase of developing adequate cluster policies, Croatia is facing problems on high as well as on lower levels of implementation. Thus, the importance of such projects, especially in coordination with a potentially new stream of development (ecological food production) is very high.

For SMEs to be able to contribute to sustainable development, particularly through clusters, it is important to improve the following key factors:
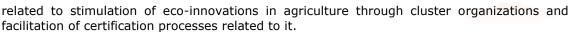• regulation: strong regulation is a strong driver for eco-innovation, and large companies in such industries often face regulatory demands and tend to respond to the stricter rules much faster than SMEs;
• prices and access to materials: limited access to materials and price increase provide an important incentive for sustainable development, particularly through joint initiatives;
• networks: SMEs mainly point to the need for good business partners and good access to external information and knowledge, including technology services.

Istrian development agency having identified opportunities in the field of eco-innovation in the Region of Istria, worked within the pilot action towards influencing the development of a favourable legal framework for the eco-production in the organic winemaking sector. The pilot action contributed to promotion and awareness-raising of sustainable and eco-innovative production techniques in a wine making sector of the Region of Istria. Numerous relevant stakeholders were reached by pilot action activities, either on level of wine producers or regional policy makers and it is expected that conclusions drawn so far will have its impact on development of new regional development strategy and priority measures

related to stimulation of eco-innovations in agriculture through cluster organizations and facilitation of certification processes related to it.

About the ClusterPoliSEE project

The ClusterPoliSEE project addresses the core objective of the SEE Programme for improving regional public administration ability and capacity to enhance, develop and implement effective regional cluster policy through transnational development of policy learning understanding and mechanisms.

The project is oriented to develop in the region of South East Europe smart specialization strategies for cluster improvement in priority areas such as innovation, R&D, sustainability, internationalisation, financial measures and training.

The composition of the partnership represents key stakeholders from eleven regions of the SEE, Albania | Austria | Bulgaria | Croatia| Greece | Hungary | Italy | Romania | Serbia | Slovakia | Slovenia, making up a typical cluster environment: Regional Development Agencies responsible for managing Cluster Programmes and Regional Innovation Strategies, National public institutions responsible for cluster promotion and regional economic development, National Research Institutions and Universities, Cluster Networks and Business associations.

Results

- One (01) on-line collaborative "SEE Cluster Policy Learning Platform" for policy & knowledge transfer (www.clusterpolisees3.eu);
- Eleven (11) Regional-based assessment reports & foresight exercises to identify the regional innovation potential;
- Six (06) new policy learning mechanisms and a set of policy measures-recommendations to support the development of successful cluster policies in SEE;
- A Joint Strategic Policy Plan and an Institutional agreement for the establishment of a SEE Cluster Initiative.

Join ClusterPoliSEE S3 platform

The platform aims at improving EU/SEE cluster policies through cooperative learning; policy transfer and information interchange between EU/SEE policy makers and stakeholders by supporting learning mechanism systems. ClusterPoliSEE S3 platform is available at the address http://www.clusterpolisees3.eu.

Editorial Information