

CROSS BORDER LIVING LABS (PRE-COMMERCIAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT FOR INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS & SERVICES)

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1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

▪ Overview & Aims.

To create and develop a culture of partnership between innovative companies located on the Alpine borders. Responding to a tender aimed at 'driving innovation to ensure sustainable, high-quality public services in Europe' the 'cross border living lab' was set up in March 2012 to:

- ✓ Develop a culture of partnership between innovative companies located on the Italian/French borders to improve their innovation capacity, productivity and international competitiveness.
- ✓ Encourage the prototyping and testing of innovative products and services not yet existing on the market in economic and socially strategic sectors.

Living Labs are an ecosystem of open innovation based on the development of partnership between enterprises, research centre's, universities, public sector and end-users. Their main purpose is to promote and sustain the active role of users, through live testing of innovative products and services responding to emerging market needs.

The programme aims to:

- ✓ Support the innovative enterprises in the phase of prototyping and industrialisation of new products and services.
- ✓ Reduce the risks and time to market for the introduction of innovative solutions in the market.
- ✓ Provide the regional and local public authorities with innovative technologies able to satisfy societal needs.
- ✓ Encourage and support experimentation, testing and validation of new products and services in real life conditions.

▪ Key Resources.

– Key Partners

Region Aosta Valley - partner of the Alcotra Innovation Interreg project and regional public authority hosting the Living Lab;

Regions of Piedmont and Liguria in Italy, Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur in France – regional public authorities and partners of the Alcotra Innovation Interreg project

Universities and research centres collaborating with private companies on R&D / market testing.

[The Aosta Valley Lab has now also joined the European Network of Living Labs]

- **Funding:** €1.2M - EU Interreg Programme
Eligible SMEs were invited to tender for R & D projects with SMEs receiving an average of 80%, to a maximum of €137,500 of the investment needed.
- **Eligibility Criteria.**
Innovative SMEs with R & D activities in the target sectors specified in the tender; smart energies (alternative energy sources, energy efficiency) and intelligent mobility (car, transport and logistics sectors, territorial monitoring).
- **Terms & Conditions.**
SMEs must have the capacity to complete all elements of the programme within 12 months (Six months for the first phase of R&D and prototyping and a further six months for the second phase of end-user live testing in cross border 'Living Lab' conditions)

2. IMPLEMENTATION

Taking place from March 2012 until December 2013 the programme involves four phases of activity set out in specified timeframes:

PHASE	ACTIVITY	TIMESCALE
INITIAL PHASE	Mapping	
STEP 1	Problem Solving/Dialogue for solution of problem	2 months
STEP 2	R&D and Prototyping	6 months
STEP 3	End user live testing in cross border 'Living Lab' conditions	6 months

The products and services developed by the enterprises involved in the project must meet precise public administration requirements and involve individual end users or groups of end users during the test phase across several regions of the French/Italian cross-border territory.

Five SMEs signed contracts in October. Two smart energy projects; eco-innovative hydrogen storage system and smart metering on energy consumption and three intelligent mobility projects; monitoring system for safety and traffic and two mobile smartphone applications for integrated travel planning and bike sharing.

- **Key Stats** - Results to date

KEY MEASURE	2012
Applications Submitted	9
Applications Accepted	5
Funding Granted to SMEs	€750K
SME Investment in R&D and prototyping	Approx. €1M
Jobs Created (to be assessed on completion)	TBA*

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Early indicators/successes.**

Although the programme is in its initial pilot phase the project is on track. Empirical evidence to date suggests that it is an innovative methodology of financing R & D services and satisfying public needs.

- **Legacy Benefits.**

Long term aims i.e. sustainable benefits for the enterprises involved are expected to include improvements in their innovation capacity, productivity and international competitiveness.

- **Key learning points.**

With no former practice to draw on and the first Italian pre-commercial public procurement programme of its type, the project uncovered totally new problems and issues including the management of Intellectual Property issues.

- **Transferability**

The partner considers that the programme is a business model that can be replicated in other regions and countries with similar 'smart specialisation' strategy.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

You Tube - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H0FpFMKWco>

Pre-commercial Public Procurement Tender COM (2007) - http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/com_2007_799.pdf

The European Network of Living Labs - <http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/>

Interreg Project Alcotra Innovation official web site: <http://www.alcotra-innovazione.eu>