

## PRESS RELEASE

### Financial access SMEs in innovative programmes improved

September 2014

DIFASS, an EU project enabling 26 regions from all over Europe to exchange good practises regarding support measures for innovative SMEs, reports an improvement of access to finance by innovative SMEs over the period 2012-2014. A comparison of the results of the Ex-ante and Ex-post surveys carried out among the participating regions of the DIFASS project shows this. Lubina Kowar, researcher and project manager of DIFASS states that representatives of the participating regions report improved conditions of innovative SMEs in their region in terms of access to finance and policy adaption. This is remarkable because the DIFASS project only stimulated policy exchange and was not even focused on the direct use of innovative financing by SMEs.

The DIFASS project facilitates access to finance for enterprises by exchanging innovative business support measures with emphasis on the development and implementation of non-grant based financial support instruments. The project partners share so-called Good Practices – innovative business support measures implemented or funded by (semi-) public bodies in the partner regions.

On 23 and 24 September 2014 the final conference of the project took place in Budapest, Hungary. The top 8 best practises identified during 8 DIFASS workshops were introduced to a wider audience. In order to show the added value of the examples, partners that had transferred an instrument or method to their region or were planning to do so were questioned by Lennard Drogendijk of BDF to demonstrate their successful use of the partners' project and explain the policy change and impact in their region.

The 100 people in the audience were asked to brainstorm about the most important change of policy means they could think of. Despite the strongly appreciated value of social media, people still think that personal meetings are the best way to influence policy makers to evoke change in the region. Either calling upon working groups or use 'story telling' as a way of communication were mentioned most.

DIFASS has an interactive [www.difass.eu](http://www.difass.eu) website with videos of all Good Practice presentations from all workshops and Twitter news feeds.

The project is supported by the INTERREG IVC Programme. The overall objective of the programme is to improve the effectiveness of regional policies and instruments. INTERREG IVC provides funding for interregional cooperation across Europe. It is implemented under the European Community's territorial co-operation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

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Not for publication:

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