

Newsletter

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Regional Stakeholder Group Meetings

Contact

Lead Partner

Enrica Spotti
Municipality of Genoa
espotti@comune.genova.it

Mariagiovanna Laudini
mg@purecosmos.eu

Tim Cordy
tim@purecosmos.eu

Communication Responsible

Melinda Mátrai
Hajdú-Bihar County Government
melinda.matrai@hbmo.hu

Dear Reader,

"It is a great honour to introduce the first newsletter of PURE COSMOS. I am very pleased that the project has started; its main aim is to promote innovation policies and actions that will support the strategic goals of Europe 2020 through sharing and exchanging good practices and experiences.



'PURE COSMOS' is not only an abbreviation of the project's name (Public authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs) but it also shares a philosophical meaning representing an orderly and harmonious system. Our European cosmos is made up of different worlds: the world of public administration, the world of civil society and the world of enterprises. We should all strive for a harmonious system, in which we cooperate with shared intents in response to common challenges. For those of us who work in Public Authorities, improving regional policies through innovative projects means developing strategies that will benefit our citizens, communities and businesses. I am confident that PURE COSMOS will represent a great opportunity for mutual exchange and growth in tackling barriers to innovation.

As part of this project we will be involving a wide range of regional stakeholders and businesses and your engagement will be integral to the success of our project. On behalf of our partners, I would like to welcome you to PURE COSMOS and we look forward to collaborating with you to support the success of our work."

Enrica Spotti, Responsible Officer Revenue Municipality of Genoa and Financial Manager PURE COSMOS

What is PURE COSMOS?

PURE COSMOS – Public authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs – is one of the 64 successful applications in the first call for proposals of Interreg Europe Programme. The interregional cooperation project focuses on the role public authorities can play in enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs by making the business climate more transparent and reliable, supporting the needs of SMEs and promoting administrative modernisation of public services. PURE COSMOS aims to support the growth and development of SMEs by improving of the effectiveness of public-sector support and decreasing the administrative burden through selected policy instruments.

Regional policies will be improved through the involvement of stakeholders and regional experts to share common solutions, identify innovative new projects and enhance governance. This will be done by analysing partners' plans through Peer Reviews and identifying good practices that will improve these plans, exploring them further through studying them through study visits and importing them via special workshops and regional action plans.

It is expected that the project will advance services for SMEs, such as e-payment tools, one stop shop, "digital by default" models, and digital-skill support. Governance will be also improved through IT administrative solutions, regional legislation review, simplifying and launching of new business calls.

Why a Peer Review?

A Peer Review is when an expert in the subject area/field to be reviewed helps others that are responsible for similar areas to identify good practice, identifies ideas or solutions to problems and issues that are perceived or being experienced.

The PURE COSMOS project will organise a total of 8 Peer Reviews, one for each partner, to assess the problems and suggest relevant good practices. An assessment report will be prepared for each review.

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PURE COSMOS partnership

1. Lead partner: Municipality of Genoa – Genoa; Italy
2. Municipality of Florence – Firenze; Italy
3. Hajdú-Bihar County Government
4. Development Bank of Saxony-Anhalt – Magdeburg, Kreisfreie Stadt; Germany
5. Birmingham City Council – Birmingham; United Kingdom
6. Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's Local Authorities (ANATOLIKI SA) – Themi; Greece
7. Usti Region – Usti nad Labem; Czech Republic
8. Regional Government of Extremadura – Merida; Spain



The 1st Peer Review of the project

The 1st Peer Review will take place in Birmingham on 26-28th September 2016. The focus for Birmingham City Council is on improving the business support to SMEs, particularly associated with their digital capabilities, involvement in service delivery innovation and improving the governance of the council administration and other public sector agencies involved in economic growth. The Peer Review in Birmingham will bring together experts and representatives from different sectors and agencies to discuss the barriers and challenges that face the regional SMEs. The experts will also meet with local businesses to hear from them some of the barriers as well as explore their ideas to help enhance the business offer. The expert group will feedback to the Regional Stakeholder Group their findings and possible solutions addressing some of the questions below:

- How can the procurement process, city council systems and other services to SMEs in the region be streamlined and made more effective and efficient in order to enable public sector service innovation through greater involvement of entrepreneurs and SMEs?
- What is the best way to provide SMEs with the business and support they need to become competitive?
- What information do SMEs need and when do they need it in the Business Lifecycle?
- What is the best way to provide SMEs with the digital skills and capabilities that they need to become more competitive and agile?

Following the Peer Review a report will be produced that will identify the findings and propose solutions that will help shape the development of the Action Plan to implement change.

The **further Peer Reviews** of the project will be hosted by project partners as follows:

Host Region	Date of Peer Review
Birmingham	27-29th Sept 2016
Saxony-Anhalt	November 2016
USTI-Region	December 2016
Florence	January 2017
Anatoliki SA	January 2017
Extremadura	February 2017
Hajdú-Bihar	March 2017
Genoa	March 2017

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Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) Meetings

In Interreg Europe project a stakeholder group must be created for each policy instrument addressed. The stakeholder group ensures that interregional learning does not only take place at individual level, but also at organisational and stakeholder levels. In most cases, a single organisation cannot achieve changes in policy. Since the policy-making process is complex, with a variety of players involved, it is important that these stakeholders take part in the interregional learning process.

To increase the chance of achieving policy change, project partners should therefore actively involve relevant stakeholders from their region in the activities of the project.

The group is primarily constituted of organisations that are not directly partners in the cooperation. In particular, the stakeholder group is an opportunity to involve organisations that, though not eligible for Interreg Europe, are still important for the definition of public policy.

In PURE COSMOS the RSGs will meet quarterly during the project lifetime.

Interreg Europe Programme Manual, 19 January 2016 (version 2)

1st RSG Meeting in Florence



On 11th July twelve organizations participated in the 1st PURE COSMOS RSG meeting.

The meeting started with a brief presentation of the project by Lucia De Siervo, the project lead for Pure Cosmos in Florence. She explained the aims and objectives for the Municipality of Florence wants to achieve. In particular, participants were informed that the RSG would be permanently involved in the implementation of the actions related to the project and in the exchange of good practices on an international level.

All the organizations represented shown a great interest in the project.

The Department of Legal Sciences of the University of Florence put themselves forward to undertake the technical and juridical support for the project in the Municipality of Florence. In this role, it will work with the Department of Applied Geography, to organize some workshops on the main topics that are relevant to SMEs.

The participants also discussed the development of the final Action Plan and there was agreement that this should be a document that provides defined outcomes with SMART objectives.

Another interesting point made by Prof. Azzari, Geography Department of the University, was the need for enterprises to develop their own capabilities and innovation potential in order to address their business needs.

There were some questions about the challenge of comparing good practices from different entities, even if they deal with an apparently similar system. The reference was made to Birmingham and Florence: they both have a model of One Stop Shop, but they may differ from each other in many respects, for example the different governance, structures, agencies and regulations.

Prof. Simoncini, of the Legal Sciences Department of the University, suggested a comparison among different systems, in order to evaluate and import them. He also suggested a type of “nudging” function, to understand how other entities deal with certain kinds of problems, so that we can try to import the relevant behaviour.

The meeting ended with the agreement to work collaboratively and contribute to the aims of the project and the RSG was constituted by all the participants at the meeting.

www.interregeurope.eu/purecosmos

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1st RSG at ANATOLIKI SA



The first RSG Meeting of PURE COSMOS was held in Thessaloniki on 5th July 2016 at the Regional Authority offices of Central Macedonia.

Representatives of regional and local authorities, Chambers, Social Networks, incubators, Research and Academic

Institutions and Anatoliki SA were present and exchanged opinions and good practices. The meeting identified problems in the investment environment, such as the centralized module of government which leaves the regional and local authorities with little power, the lack of “open data” on SMEs licencing which doesn’t ensure transparency and fair competition, the bureaucracy and time-consuming procedures for licencing which discourage social partnerships and start-ups, the economic crisis which made SMEs more introvert and unwilling to participate in surveys or recording procedures and last but not least the immaturity of SMEs to incorporate academic research results.

The RSG showed interest in bringing about change but highlighted the difficulty in fighting the centralized procedures which are binding. The discussions also revealed digital good practices such as the digital commercial centre of municipalities, the electronic medical prescribing, the transparency site - <https://diavgeia.gov.gr/> (where every governmental /public cost must be uploaded) and the General Trade Register of the Chambers that serve several types of enterprises (apart from SA), in starting up procedures, in digital signing, in advice and issuing documents etc.

The meeting ended with the work plan of RSG and agreement of members to the on-going support of COSMOS with a follow up meeting in November.

1st RSG in Saxony Anhalt:

Interregional Project “PURE COSMOS” supports cutting red tape

On 21st June 2016 the first stakeholder meeting took place in Magdeburg. The group of stakeholders included a range of institutions connected to the development and implementation of the funding policy. This included representatives of the Ministry of Economy, Science and Digitization, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and also the Ministry of the Interior and Sport. In addition to the regional administration, the RSG also comprised representatives from the chambers of



Commerce and industry, municipalities and e-government experts.

The main task of this meeting was to identify the key challenges within the process chain of EU-funding implementation for SMEs. All participants had the opportunity to share their specific experiences and perspectives. Furthermore all stakeholders were called to provide concrete suggestions for improvement, which fall within their immediate area of responsibility.

The varied expertise that the RSG partners bring is recognised as being of utmost importance in securing a successful outcome. The next stakeholder meeting will take place in early September to discuss results of the survey conducted with the business community regarding challenges and potential improvements.

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