

Newsletter

Summary

PURE COSMOS
peer reviews

Barcelona

Birmingham

PURE COSMOS
study visits

Magdeburg

Birmingham

Wales

European Public
Sector Award

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Dear Reader,

The 3rd period was really busy for PURE COSMOS project. 45 good practices have been already identified by the different project partners to meet the learning needs of them. In April two Peer Reviews were organised by the Government of Catalonia and the Hajdú-Bihar County Government and hosted them in Debrecen and Barcelona. Partners' experts visited Magdeburg, Birmingham and Myrthyr Tydfil to study the good practices on public funding possibilities for SMEs, Growth Hub and E-Compliance System. Read here in details what happened in the last 6 months.

Peer review in Barcelona – making procedures more business friendly

The 7th PURE COSMOS peer review was organised in Barcelona on 4-5th April 2017. Barcelona wanted to improve the digital services One Stop Shop (OSS) platform offer to entrepreneurs, therefore they wanted good practices on implemented OSS systems where the entrepreneurs can find all the information related to the formalities and procedures to start and manage their activities. They wanted to learn from experiences, where coordination exists between different levels of administration in order that enterprises only have to give their basic data once. Greater visibility of OSS services by entrepreneurs was also needed.



Peer review in Debrecen – digital skills and services

At the last PURE COSMOS peer review held in Hungary on 11-12th April 2017 the Hajdú-Bihar County Government wanted to improve communication between SMEs and regional/national public authorities, digital skills of business actors, rate of ICT tools applied by SMEs and widening the scope of e-government/improving digital services. The experts from Genova, Magdeburg and Barcelona heard several presentations about the strong and weak points of regional economy, the regional issues of public administration, the Modern Enterprises Programmes, the history and current structure of Government Windows, achievements so far and the developments of the National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary: new approaches applied, services provided, results so far. The roundtable was also really useful and efficient with an overview provided by the Head Notary of the County, the



Entrepreneurship Development Foundation of Hajdú-Bihar County, the representative of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hajdú-Bihar County. At the end of the review the host had the opportunity to have some really motivating examples and thought-provoking comments by our peers keeping in mind that all of us are obliged to move forward the implementation of the EU Digital Agenda.

Summary

Study Visit in Magdeburg – Models for SME funding in a regional development bank



How to develop a funding scheme into a product? How to provide sufficient information about public funding possibilities for SMEs? How to turn project ideas in tailored financing solutions? These key questions were answered during the Study Visit hosted by Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt (IB, Development Bank of Saxony-Anhalt) on 17th May 2017.

The Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt presented funding and financing models for SMEs specifically focussing on its role acting as an interface between public authorities and SMEs. Project partners from Spain, Italy, Greece, Czech Republic and Hungary used the opportunity to discover the perspectives of the bank and of a public authority. They also visited an SME to discuss experiences of practical

implementation of funding with a local entrepreneur.

In many European regions funding services are offered by a variety of institutions. For a project in need of funding, loans and securities, a company very often encounters not only one but three different points of contact.

In this context, Enrica Spotti from the city of Genova who is lead partner in the project PURE COSMOS admired the solutions found in Saxony-Anhalt: "With the development bank Saxony-Anhalt, the state offers a central contact for a substantial number of the available economic development programs. Companies learn from a single source how to utilize various funding blocks in addition to their local bank's financing solutions. This approach saves time and therefore money."

Study visit in Birmingham - Growth Hub, Procurement and General Data Protection

On 19th September Birmingham City Council and the regional Growth Hub hosted three good practices: the Growth Hub, different electronic procurement portals – FinditinBirmingham, Intend, Gov Portal – and General Data Protection Regulations.

The strength of the approach of the Growth Hub is to recognize that a SME has a variety of problems to face and not only at the initial phases. The Hub itself does not necessarily have all the knowledge that an SME needs but aims to connect the SME to the partners or actors that can give operative help and provide the solutions needed. Of particular value was the "Assist Diagnostic Form" that standardizes the way of approaching requests. The integrated scale up offer (support from idea to growth) and the development of an effective angel and VC network were also seen as valuable ideas for the visitors.

The session about Access to Finance was also interesting indeed as the description about the support available at the GBSLEP Growth Hub and the adopted KPI's was very exhaustive.



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Study Visit in Wales – Experiences on digital customer processes

On 20-21st September a study visit in Wales took place which focused on the Welsh government's e-cohesion compliant IT system across ESI funds. Gerd Osterloh, head of department for organization, administration, IT, and reporting at the Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt (IB, Development Bank of Saxony-Anhalt) attended the study visit and reports on his experiences:

What were your expectations regarding the visit in Wales and what is the aim of the Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt within Pure Cosmos?

G.O.: Our main objective is to reduce the obstacles in funding processes for SMEs by using IT solutions. In order to ensure simplification, transparency, and harmonization with EU regulations, we want to establish electronic communication as a prime source of information using paper only when no other option is available. Therefore, we need to implement an IT system to exchange information with key authorities and final beneficiaries like small and medium sized enterprises.

The Welsh European Funding Office runs an electronic system which allows a secure data exchange with beneficiaries. We wanted to discover the systems and procedures especially regarding the communication with beneficiaries, i.e. how does the data exchange work? Which information is captured and how is it kept up-to-date?

What were your findings and experiences in Wales? Which aspect did you find most useful?

G.O.: WEFO is the managing authority for ERDF and ESF in Wales. Here, funds take an indirect route over intermediate bodies and lead partners who apply for large pool projects and then forward the money to the final beneficiaries. Thus, WEFO only needs to manage the roughly 300 pool projects with their IT system. For this reason, WEFO's IT methods and processes cannot be directly translated as the IB itself is an intermediate body which appropriates funds to thousands of final beneficiaries. Nevertheless, we benefited greatly from the exchange of experience. Software engineering, structure and tools are largely similar to our structure in Saxony-Anhalt. I was especially impressed with the fact that the entire funding process works solely with digital information from beneficiaries and intermediate bodies. At WEFO, no info whatsoever is recorded in analogue form. All data is uploaded as .csv files and automatically transmitted to the PPIMS (Program and Project Information Management System). In order to assure and control quality, project managers of intermediate bodies and final beneficiaries are looked after intensively and trained on a regular basis.

We experienced how the communication works: The beneficiary sends all project information in one data file and uploads relevant annexes. Since the editor only documents the process, the effort for data collection was reduced. Nevertheless, the communication with a beneficiary via the portal is complemented by phone, email, and personal communication. There are helpdesks and periodic trainings for beneficiaries.

How are you going to use the knowledge? What are the next steps?

G.O.: Especially the processes associated with WEFO online, which is the online portal for up- and downloads and which has the technical helpdesk, advice section and trainings, as well as the decision to exclusively work with digital information offer important insights for the development of our own methods. All of these experiences were already intensively discussed with Christoph Wagener, a representative from the ERDF/ESF managing authority in Saxony-Anhalt who took part in the study visit, and will be taken into consideration when implementing the e-cohesion portal in 2017 and developing the regional action plan in 2018.

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European Public Sector Award for the One Stop Shop of the Government of Catalonia

The One Stop Shop of the Government of Catalonia was recognized as a European Good Practice and finalist for the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) 2017, awards that were delivered to Maastricht on 20 and 22 November 2017.



The EPSA 2017 edition was looking for innovative and inspiring cases across Europe that found new solutions to tackle the complex challenges faced by public administrations at all levels.

One Stop Shop (OSS) promoted by the Business Management Office (OGE), of the Ministry of Business and Knowledge, as a reference point for entrepreneurs, corporations and intermediaries when dealing with government bodies. The OSS incorporates all the procedures and services involved in running a business throughout its lifecycle, regardless of the level of government involved.

EPSA is an important learning area for knowledge transfer on how public administrations across Europe can innovate and at the same time increase their effectiveness and efficiency. EPSA cases are being used in EIPA's capacity building activities as inspiring examples for building innovation capacities in the public sector.

The 145 applications received underwent first an online evaluation by external and independent evaluators (academics, practitioners or PA consultants). Then these evaluators met in Maastricht to reach a consensus on the project they had assessed and to identify those cases submitted to EPSA 2017 that would be awarded a Best Practice Certificate (BPC).

Catalonian One Stop Shop and 33 other projects were identified as being a best practice and thus deserving a Best Practice Certificate. These 34 excellent public achievements have found new solutions to a range of complex challenges such as: economic uncertainty, low economic growth, high unemployment, and unparalleled levels of migration, lack of trust in government, security and climate change, among others. They come from 18 European countries and 3 EU institutions/agencies.

See the detailed list of Best Practice Certificate recipients for the [European/National](#) administrative category, the [Regional](#) administrative category and the [Supra-local/Local](#) administrative category.

A number of projects were shortlisted for validation onsite visits, this was the second step of the evaluation process. The projects qualifying for the onsite were contacted by the EPSA Team, Catalonian OSS was among them. The Catalonian One Stop Shop was designed for the Jury as a finalist at the regional category, with other three projects.

Finally, on 22nd November at the Provincial Government House in Maastricht, where the famous Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992, the EPSA Team at European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) gave the **three EPSA 2017 awards** to:

- Supra-local and Local administrative category: "**Nordwärts**", submitted by the City of Dortmund (DE)
- Regional administrative category: "**Open.Heart Project**", submitted by the Ombudsoffice for Children and Youths Salzburg (AT)
- European and National administrative category: "**The Co-operation Fund**", submitted by the European Union Intellectual Property Office.