

How will public authorities enhance the competitiveness of SMEs?

The kick-off meeting of PURE COSMOS (Public authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs) project, co-financed by the European Union Regional Development Funds and made possible by the Interreg Europe Cooperation Programme, was held on 19-21/04/2016 in Genoa, Italy. With the cooperation of 8 organisations from 7 different EU countries the project aims to increase and develop SMEs with the improvement of the effectiveness of public-sector support and with the decreasing of administrative burdens through selected policy instruments. The project will exchange good practices on the role that public authorities can play in enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs by making the business climate more transparent and reliable.

Interreg Europe Programme helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. By creating an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions, the Programme aims to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place. To achieve this goal, Interreg Europe offers opportunities for regional and local public authorities across Europe to share ideas and experience on public policy in practice, therefore improving strategies for their citizens and communities.

On 10/02/2016 the monitoring committee has approved 64 projects out of 261 applications received in the first call for proposals. PURE COSMOS (Public authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs) is one of the successful applications and the implementation started with the 63 other projects on 01/04/2016. The project will last till 31/03/2021 and will be implemented with 8 organisations from 7 different EU countries with the leading of the Municipality of Genoa (IT).

The partner organisations of the project are the following:

1. Lead partner: Municipality of Genoa – Genoa; Italy
2. Municipality of Florence – Firenze; Italy
3. Hajdu-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

PURE COSMOS aims to increase and develop SMEs with the improvement of the effectiveness of public-sector support and with the decreasing of administrative burdens through selected policy instruments. The project will exchange good practices on the role that public authorities can play in enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs by making the business climate more transparent and reliable. It will therefore focus on policies that support the needs of SMEs, and promote the administrative modernisation of the public services.

Regional policies will be improved through innovative new projects and by improving governance so that the different stakeholders can agree common solutions. This will be done by analysing partners' plans through peer reviews and identifying good practices that will improve these plans, studying them through study visits, importing them via special workshops and regional action plans.

Due to the implementation of the project mainly advances services will be implemented 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.

The kick-off meeting of the project was hold in Genoa on 19-21/04/2016. The leadership team – consisted on the partners responsible for the main activities like overall project management, communication, interregional learning – and the project management group – that ensures strategic direction and accountability – were set up successfully and they agreed on the working and financial arrangements for the project.

The 1st peer review will be organised by the leader of the exchange of experiences, Birmingham City Council in September 2016 in Birmingham together with the 2nd project management group meeting.

