







Action Plan for West Pomerania

Szczecin, March 2018









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1. General information

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THE REGION'S CONDITIONS

West Pomerania is the westernmost and fifth largest region of Poland (with an area of 23,000 km2), situated in the north-west part of Poland. The region's unique location at the junction of international transport routes, coupled with direct access to the European motorways system, the Szczecin and Świnoujście seaports, and the vicinity of the Berlin airport, additionally increases the transport accessibility of the area and constitutes its unquestionable asset.

The Westpomeranian border with the Baltic Sea and Germany accounts for nearly 40% of the entire regional border, which contributes to its strongly diversified and cosmopolitan character. Szczecin, the capital city of West Pomerania, along with the surrounding metropolitan area, is inhabited by nearly 650,000 people who account for approximately 40% of the Westpomeranian population (1,7 million). West Pomerania is the fifth largest region of Poland, comprising 65 towns and cities in 18 districts.

The Westpomeranian Region is characterised by a very convenient location with respect to European markets and Baltic countries, while most of the Westpomeranian economic potential is concentrated in the capital city of the region.

The major assets of the Region include:

- a convenient location providing access to diversified means of transport, including water, rail, air and road transport, which can be used for business purposes,
- long-standing traditions connected with maritime economy (ship-building, fishing, coastal and maritime tourism)
- investment prospects and the growth potential of the agri-food sector (agricultural land covers over 50% of the Westpomeranian area)
- unique natural and investment assets fostering tourism development (the Baltic Sea, and the Wałeckie and Drawskie Lake Districts)









- significant opportunities to produce renewable energy (energy crops and wind farms) which, jointly with tourism development, could make the Westpomeranian Region a symbol of sustainable development¹.

Until recently the Westpomeranian Region was mainly associated with ship-building and agricultural industries whereas now it has come to develop various sectors of the economy, including especially those connected with the implementation of cutting-edge technologies. It has also made an increasing use of renewable energy sources, which is reflected in the growing number of wind or thermal power plants.

Vast parts of the Westpomeranian area display exceptional natural assets. Beautiful, wide and sandy beaches, together with the surrounding Baltic Sea and sand dunes, create wonderful conditions for tourism taking both recreational and active forms. The Westpomeranian water bodies provide diversified opportunities to those who love sailing, kayaking, diving, windsurfing or kite surfing. Forests and national parks feature numerous cycling, horse-riding and walking paths, and seem ideal for practising the increasingly popular Nordic Walking. The region also displays unique health-resort qualities, with its well-developed network of Wellness & SPA facilities.

West Pomerania holds a prominent place in Polish, European and world's history. This is where the fate of many countries was decided, which contributed to the current shape of Europe. Relics of the turbulent times can be found in virtually any part of the region, with numerous monuments providing an unquestionable testimony to its rich history. The separateness and uniqueness of West Pomerania is also reflected in the large number of castles, fortifications, monasteries and churches.

19 higher education institutions play a vital role when it comes to the human capital development potential. They jointly educate 48,000 students who account for 3.4% of all academic students in Poland.

In 2014, the Westpomeranian Region generated 3.7% of the Polish Gross Domestic Product, corresponding to PLN 37,461 per capita, with Poland's average of PLN 44,686. These figures placed the region on the 9th position in the country. The Westpomeranian GDP growth dynamics between 2004 and 2014 reached 173%, as compared to Poland's average of 181%. In relation to other regions in Poland, the employment structure in West Pomerania is characterised by a relatively high share of the service sector (62.2%), whereas agriculture and industry account for 7.6% and 30.2% of employees, respectively².

The regional development strategy defines the so-called strategic sectors, including maritime economy, industrial economy, tourism, developed commercial and virtual services, information sector, computer industry, telecommunications, computer and information services, biotechnologies, genetic technologies, consulting services, knowledge-sharing services and telemetry development.

Moreover, the so-called regional specialisations have been identified, including:

- bioeconomy (based on the natural resources available in the region, along with its economic, scientific and research potential)
- maritime activity and logistics (including maritime technology)

¹ Investment attractiveness of regions 2016, Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIZ), Warsaw 2016, p. 5

² Investment attractiveness of regions 2016, Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIZ), Warsaw 2016, p. 7









- machinery and metal industry,
- services of the future (ICT, IT, KPO, creative industries),
- tourism and health (the use of natural resources and cultural achievements).

These sectors, considering their potential, provide significant development prospects and may be effectively promoted among both domestic and foreign investors. In the coming years, they may also prove vital to the development of the Westpomeranian Region. Enterprises operating within the regional specialisation areas generate most of the Westpomeranian revenue, especially in exports. However, their share in the value of sold industrial output reveals that, except for a few areas, the development potential is still hugely untapped.

In addition, the Szczecin metropolitan area is ranked high as far as investment attractiveness is concerned. The region can be of particular interest for technologically advanced enterprises. Favourable conditions for high-tech activities result from, i.a., thriving economic activity and a high level of social participation. In addition to the transport hub and the proximity of the western border, the factors which are of great significance to the region include a wide selection of available areas in Special Economic Zones, a large number of business environment institutions and the presence of numerous companies with foreign capital participation³.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

In recent years, the Westpomeranian Region has been struggling with the diminishing working-age population. It also displays a fairly low population density. Świnoujście (with a population of 41,115 people) is a town with district rights with the lowest population density in Poland, while being one of the largest towns in the region (209 inhabitants per 1 km2).

The population structure shows that persons aged 15-64 are the most dominant group. The percentage of children and teenagers is very low. The prospects for the number of households also indicate that their number is expected to reduce both in cities and in villages.

Although the Westpomeranian Region is currently inhabited by a large group of working-age persons, there is an insufficient number of young pre-working age people, and an outflow of residents across regions was noted. The most popular destinations for young residents were regions in the vicinity of the Westpomeranian region, i.e. Wielkopolskie and Pomorskie regions, as well as Mazowieckie Region where the capital city is situated.

The Westpomeranian Region has been a beneficiary of EU Funds over the recent years. In 2015, the resources accounted as income in the region's budget, and which were allocated for financing and co-financing of EU programmes and projects, amounted to PLN 263 million. The grants are a considerable part of the budget and exceed the Region's own income. The past programming period can be characterised not only by considerable EU co-financing amounts but also by a high total value of implemented projects.

³ Draft Area Development Plan for the Westpomeranian Region. Conditions for shaping the land-use policy, the Westpomeranian Region Land Management Office in Szczecin, Szczecin 2017, p. 153









The economic trend was evaluated as optimistic by Westpomeranian companies in 2017, especially by entities operating in the hospitality and restaurant sector, and in the ICT sector. However, the assessment of the economic trend was not as favourable in companies operating in the industrial processing sector, wholesale and retail trade, transport and warehouse management, and the construction industry⁴.

Employment costs and the considerable burden on budgets are barriers which are the most frequently listed by entities running their operations in all the sectors subject to assessment. The barrier related to the shortage of staff in businesses operating in the wholesale sector was one of the most notable ones last year, while companies operating in the service sector were faced with a shortage of qualified staff ⁵.

As far as the economic growth level is concerned, West Pomerania can be classified as a region with moderately developed economy. Nearly 60% of GDP is generated in the Szczecin agglomeration and the Szczecin subregion. The largest share in the structure of gross value added can be attributed to the service sector (37.4 billion; 65.5 %), followed by industry and construction (PLN 17.1 billion; 31.1 %). Agriculture, forestry, hunting and fisheries account for PLN 2 billion (3.7 %) of GVA, with a considerable surplus of the workforce (9.8 % of all employed people)⁶. Expenditures on R&D in the Regions GDP are lower than the national average, amounting only to 0.28% of GDP, which ranks the region 14th in this respect⁷.

Between 2007 and 2012, the value of foreign investment in the region increased by nearly 60 %. The largest number of businesses with foreign capital participation (40 %) are based in Szczecin⁸. which is followed by Koszalin, and Goleniowski, Gryfiński and Stargardzki Districts. The largest number of staff employed by the above-mentioned entities live in Szczecin, followed by Goleniowski and Stargardzki districts. Investors from Germany, Denmark, the UK, and the Netherlands were in a group of countries with the largest share in foreign capital (among all entities with foreign capital participation in 2012). According to the calculations made by the Investors' Assistance Centre, Scandinavian investments account for nearly a half of foreign investments in the Westpomeranian Region, and most of it can be attributed to Denmark⁹.

As per the end of December 2015, 220,615 entities were entered in the REGON¹⁰ business registry (excluding persons running agricultural farms individually). As compared to December 2014, the number of business entities increased by 1209, i.e. by 0.6 %, and constituted 5.3 % of the total number of entities registered in Poland. There were 1286 companies per each 10 thousand of population, which is higher than the national

http://szczecin.stat.gov.pl/opracowania-biezace/opracowania-sygnalne/podmioty-gospodarcze/koniunkturagospodarcza-w-wojewodztwie-zachodniopomorskim-w-maju-2017-r-,2,49.html

http://szczecin.stat.gov.pl/opracowania-biezace/opracowania-sygnalne/podmioty-gospodarcze/koniunkturagospodarcza-w-wojewodztwie-zachodniopomorskim-w-maju-2017-r-,2,49.html

⁶ Draft Area Development Plan for the Westpomeranian Region. Conditions for shaping the land-use policy, the Westpomeranian Region Land Management Office in Szczecin, Szczecin 2017, p. 144

⁷ Ibidem, p. 132.

⁸ The analysis of foreign investment attractiveness of the Westpomeranian Region, published by: Investor and Exporter Assistance Centre, Entrepreneurship Support Office, Warsaw 2014

⁹ Draft Area Development Plan for the Westpomeranian Region. Conditions for shaping the land-use policy, the Westpomeranian Region Land Management Office in Szczecin, Szczecin 2017, p. 149

¹⁰ The National Official Register of Business Entities









indicator¹¹. Service sector entities operating in construction and commerce have the largest share in the structure of enterprises.

As regards the division of economic entities by size, small enterprises which employ up to 9 people have had the largest share in the Westpomeranian Region for several years now, accounting for approximately 96.4 % of all the registered entities¹².

Szczecin, the capital of the region, is also an academic centre, where the city's residents study together with hundreds of students coming from the entire region area, neighbouring regions or even from other countries. University students account for nearly 30 % of students attending all higher education institutions.

It has been found that the labour force participation rate in the region (working-age population) amounts to 71.2 %, as compared to 74.5 % for Poland. Thus, approximately three quarters of people ready to take up employment are actually working.

The unemployment rate has been decreasing over the last years, and currently amounts to 7 % in Szczecin. However, the unemployment rate in the region can reach 25.5 % in the Białogardzki District. There are also significant differences in unemployment rate within one year, due to seasonal work related with, for example, tourist industry which plays a significant part in the region.

Graduates can easily find employment in commerce (50.3 % entities operate within this sector) and construction industry (27.7 % entities). Industrial processing accounts for 17.8 % of all the entities, whereas entities providing specialist services, or operating in the technical and scientific sectors account for 17.5 % of all entities.

The data confirms that Western Pomerania is primarily a region of service sector companies. The vast majority of the entities can be classified as SMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) and provide basic services. In order to increase the innovation level of the Regions, the authorities place emphasis on specialising services and developing advanced services, including BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) and KPO (Knowledge Process Outsourcing). Szczecin is becoming one of the most popular locations for BPO, SSC (Shared Service Centre) and ITO (Information Technology Offshoring) centres. The sector employs approx. 4000 specialists in Szczecin, and the growth plans for the coming years involve a continuous increase in employment¹³.

Taking into account the current situation of the region and its economic growth vision, West Pomerania is bound to face numerous substantial challenges in the years to come. The work of the Region's authorities will primarily revolve around the development of smart specialisations. It is aimed at fostering international cooperation and internationalising the activities of enterprises, thus improving the region's competitive position. Improving the position of Western Pomerania on international markets is an aspect of particular

¹¹ Structural changes of the national economy entities' groups in the REGON register in the Westpomeranian Region in 2015, GUS, Szczecin, p. 17

¹² Structural changes of the national economy entities' groups in the REGON register in the Westpomeranian Region in 2015, GUS, Szczecin, p. 21

¹³ http://www.outsourcingportal.eu/pl/sektor-bpo-ssc-zatrudnia-w-szczecinie









importance here. It is expected that the defined smart specialisations, as areas of high growth potential, will attract newly-established companies.

In the years to come, it will be crucial to strengthen and foster cross-regional cooperation between market players who are aware of the need to exchange experience and become involved in the most recent technological achievements. It is also anticipated that the joint activities of universities and companies, both in the field of education and R&D, will play a major role in the economic specialisation process.

The goals which were set in the context of the region's growth include:

- providing the companies with the access to tools for financing innovative undertakings,
- improving the innovation attractiveness of the region,
- disseminating innovative solutions in less developed parts of the region,
- strengthening human capital,
- developing the scientific potential, as the key element of innovative economy,
- improving the structure of business networking and business environment institutions.

West Pomerania has the Regional Smart Specialisation Development Strategy of the Westpomeranian Region which was approved in 2016. However, no initiatives addressed to enterprises in the region are currently undertaken on the basis of this strategy.

There are two principal methods of financing business growth in West Pomerania. First, there are instruments based on public funds - from regional and EU Funds. The second method includes private funds, for example resources brought in by private investors or the enterprises' own resources. As far as Polish and Westpomeranian companies are concerned, it should be noted that despite the wide accessibility of EU Funds, the enterprises' own resources are still the main source of financing innovation.

The business awareness of young people is improving. It is the outcome of searching for self-employment forms and avoiding the problem of unemployment. Moreover, it can be noticed that the Region's authorities have reflected a growing understanding of the support for entrepreneurship. It also translates into the development of a number of initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship, commercialisation at higher-education institutions, and initiatives of non-governmental organisations. Thus, it can be observed that the business support environment is developing in West Pomerania. Nonetheless, the synergy effect arising from the operations of various organisations is still not noticeable.

Initiatives for entrepreneurship development have been supported politically by the region's authorities and strategic documents (such as, for example the 2020+ Regional Smart Specialisations Development Strategy for the Westpomeranian Region).

The aspect which is crucial for West Pomerania is the support for R&D activities and technology transfer, in particular highly innovative technologies produced in the Region.

The aspects related with the geographical and economic conditions of West Pomerania, and the regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations have been taken into account in selecting and describing the assumptions behind the activities which are included in this action plan.









As part of the project entitled "Boosting innovative Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Regions for young entrepreneurs (iEER)", two main types of work are carried out:

- Stage 1: The exchange of knowledge and experience between the regions and the development of local action plans;
- Stage 2: The monitoring and implementation of action plans and recommendations on the regional policy.

This document, entitled "The Action Plan for West Pomerania", is one of the studies which close Stage 1 and define the action plan for the support of entrepreneurship in the region.

iEER is a flagship project, funded under the Interreg Europe programme and participated in by 10 regions from all over Europe¹⁴. The iEER, put in place by most of the regions which received the European Enterprise Award, is aimed at setting out smart courses of action and devising solutions which will allow the partners to stimulate the growth of regional entrepreneurship ecosystems for young entrepreneurs and place them under adequate control. The project puts special emphasis on the role which might be played in the creation of a favourable entrepreneurship ecosystem by the European structural funds and regional authorities. Therefore, this Action Plan for West Pomerania may contribute to a more efficient use of the funds available under the 2014-2020 Regional Operational Programme of the Westpomeranian Region.

In the years 2016-2017, the participants in the iEER project exchanged good practices, knowledge and experience in order to determine how to develop effective measures and regional strategies with a view to streamlining regional entrepreneurship ecosystems through quad-helix-based cooperation between universities, the private and public sectors, and target users in the partner regions.

Based on the partners' collected experience, best practices from respective regions could be selected in cooperation with experts and leaders in the following thematic areas:

- 1. TF 1 Entrepreneurial Mindset and Competence,
- 2. TF 2 Entrepreneurial Support and Acceleration,
- 3. TF 3 Pathways in Outlying Areas,
- 4. TF 4 RIS3 / Smart Specialisation (Implementation of RIS3 in the context of the needs of young entrepreneurs).

¹⁴ The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and the Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Helsinki-Uusimaa), the Institute of Technology Tralee (Kerry County), the University of Applied Sciences in Brandenburg, the Regional Council of Marche, North France Innovation Development (Hauts-de-France), the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, the Region of Southern Denmark, the Regional Government of Valencia, Westpomeranian Region, and West Romania Region







Out of the areas listed above, the representatives of the Westpomeranian Region have chosen good practices which were implemented in the region and produced measurable outcomes not only for the organisations themselves but also for wider stakeholder groups, including the local community.

Supporting business competence and developing entrepreneurial and business-oriented approach (TF 1) constitutes a substantial aspect of supporting entrepreneurship in the Westpomeranian Region. The institution to have been merited for including good practices in its activities was the Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer (RCITT). The Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer operates within the structures of the Westpomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, established on 1 January 2009 by joining the University of Agriculture and the Szczecin University of Technology. The Centre was established in 2008 on the basis of the International Programme Office in operation since 1999.

Support for new enterprises, start-ups and business acceleration (TF 2) is an equally important aspect of supporting entrepreneurship as training or consulting services. Nevertheless, at this stage it is necessary that other tools are used and more target-oriented problem solutions are employed. Again, it was noted that institution which included good practices in this respect in its activity is the Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer in the context of the Academic Business Incubator run by this institution. The services of the Academic Business Incubator are aimed at supporting entrepreneurs in the pre-incubation, incubation and acceleration stage.

The situation of young entrepreneurs in outlying areas (TF 3) tends to be rather complex and business undertakings do not always turn out successful. The "Hobbit Village" is a prime example of how good practices can be implemented, in a way that shows the methods of counteracting unemployment in areas which are not attractive for investors and where new jobs are rarely created. The Village's creators, the Hobbiton Association, organises a number of theme-specific events, a field role paying game, Cistersian workshops, and Christmas workshops, to the active engagement of all locals, actively counteracting unemployment and boosting entrepreneurship.

The implementation of RIS3 in the context of young entrepreneurs' needs (TF 4) touches on the issues of young entrepreneurship, although the focus is indirect. The good practice was visible in the role of the Westpomeranian Agency for Regional Development (ZARR S.A.) in the Implementation of RIS3. The West Pomeranian Agency for Regional Development was established in 1994 as a joint-stock company, in which the Westpomeranian Regional Government is the main stockholder. The statutory goals of the Agency include comprehensive promotion of the region, boosting economic activity, and assisting SMEs in their operations. ZARR S.A. is registered as the Centre for the National SME's Service Network and is part of the Business Cooperation Network (BC-NET)¹⁵.

The following figure shows actions developed for West Pomerania, divided into thematic fields defined by the iEER project.

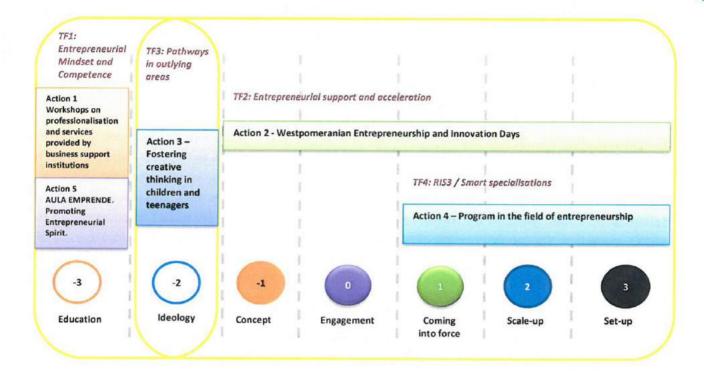
¹⁵ http://www.zarr.com.pl/pl/o-agencji



















On the basis of the analysed best practices implemented by other iEER project partner regions, and opinions of experts from West Pomerania and other regions, three pilot actions were selected for inclusion in the Action Plan for West Pomerania.

WORKSHOPS ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTIONS

An important element of the economic environment are efficient and mutually cooperating business environment institutions, which are able to provide specialist services tailored to the ever-changing needs of businesses. Cooperation with business environment institutions helps boost competitiveness and innovativeness as well as it promotes entrepreneurial attitudes and fosters their continued growth. The Regional government, acting as the leader and coordinator of actions in the process of improvement of the region's innovation and competitiveness, should become a driving force for comprehensive measures in this area. Given the role to be played by business environment institutions in the development of the regional economy, it is necessary that their competence be improved in order to tighten cooperation with businesses and offer them innovative services. Periodic workshops addressed to local institutions will become a stimulus for broadening the portfolio of BEIs' services provided to the West Pomeranian businesses. They will also start the further professionalisation of their activities in response to the actual needs of other actors of the regional innovation system.

The areas covered by the action: TF 1 – Entrepreneurial Mindset and Competence, TF 4 – RIS3 / Smart Specialisation - Implementation of RIS-3 in the context of young entrepreneurs' needs.

Aspects related to the geographical and economic conditions of the Westpomeranian Region, the assumptions of regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations were taken into consideration in the choice of an action consisting in workshops on the professionalisation of services provided by business environment institutions. Nevertheless, the suggested good practices of other regions were also taken into account, as inspiration was drawn from good practices implemented in Valencia (Aula Emprende) which include the development of competencies in the field of entrepreneurship, not only among young people but also among entrepreneurship teachers, as well as from good practices from Brandenburg (Servicestelle Schülerfirmen) consisting in the broadly-understood activities in the field of establishing student companies. Experience drawn from good practices will be used by West Pomerania and are due to become a vital inspiration for the organisers of workshops on the professionalisation of services provided by business environment institutions. The Valencia region is extremely inspiring in respect of the introduced creative changes, and therefore the Westpomeranian Region has the opportunity to draw from several original solutions. Brandenburg, though located in the proximity of West Pomerania, is a region characterised with different dynamics in terms of entrepreneurship, and for that reason incorporating Brandenburg's actions might constitute a new challenge and set new development directions for West Pomerania.







WEST POMERANIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION DAYS

Given the region's needs in respect of disseminating knowledge and conducting dialogue in the field of entrepreneurship, innovation and financing the region's economic growth, we have planned to organise three consecutive events devoted to the subject matter presented above. As part of the undertaking, we are planning to consolidate the existing and planned economic events organised or co-organised by the Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region. The common idea behind the events is the development of innovative economy.

The current concept of the undertaking involves the organisation of three events in one week:

- Start-up Day & Innovation Forum (as one conference),
- West Pomerania Day of Financial Engineering Instruments, and
- an export seminar

The three events will be given one collective name of West Pomerania Entrepreneurship and Innovation Days. It has been assumed that this week-long meeting will initiate a new periodic event in West Pomerania.

The fact that the above meetings are to be held in one week will allow the organisers to reach potential participants of individual events, at the same time providing them with a chance to attend a wide selection of presentations, workshops and discussions.

The main objective of the undertaking is to streamline the innovation and entrepreneurship support system in the region, by broadening knowledge on the most recent solutions in the field, exchanging opinions and experience between the actors of the regional innovations system, start-ups and financial circles.

Detailed objectives include:

- supporting the start-up initiatives in the region,
- consolidating the circle of entities making up the regional innovation ecosystem,
- creating a platform for exchanging thoughts and views on supporting entrepreneurship and innovation,
- broadening knowledge and raising competence of local Business Environment Institutions,
- promoting financial products implemented as part of the 2014- 2020 Regional Operational Programme of the Westpomeranian Region.
- fostering cooperation between business and science,
- raising the competence of Westpomeranian companies reaching international markets.

The Westpomeranian Innovation Forum was planned within the 2020+ Regional Strategy for Smart Specialisations of the Westpomeranian Region, as a platform for exchanging opinions, knowledge, experience and cooperation with a view to searching for ideas and solutions for improving the innovativeness and competitiveness of the region.

It was assumed that the annual Forum will assume the form of a conference during which the participants will present the issues concerning the most recent solutions in the field of research, development, innovation, and the continuation of the entrepreneurial process leading to the discovery of further smart specialisations in







West Pomerania. The event will be organised with a view to exchanging knowledge, experience and fostering cooperation between the most prominent actors of the regional innovation system.

Start-Up Day, being one of the tasks implemented as part of the project entitled "Strengthening the position of regional economy. West Pomerania - Innovation Ahead" within the 2014-2020 Regional Operational Programme of the Westpomeranian Region, will become a meeting of representatives of the business ecosystem (BEIs, entrepreneurs, investors, start-ups, people wishing to start a company). It will mostly consist in lectures and Q&A sessions featuring experts, as well as presentations of talks with investors. In addition, as part of the undertaking the representatives of business environment institutions will have a chance to attend a series of workshops tailored to their needs, with a view to integrating the Region's business environment institutions which are dispersed in their operations, raising qualifications and improving the conditions and the quality of provided services.

The Westpomeranian Region is the main organiser of the event, and business environment institutions supporting the regional business ecosystem will also be invited to cooperate, including creative sector institutions (inventors representing scientific institutions, technological start-ups, designers), business institutions from various industries and sectors (e.g. biotechnology, nanotechnology, robotics, IT, industrial design etc.) and financial market institutions (VC funds, Incubators, Business Angels). The action is due to contribute to promoting the potential of the innovation and entrepreneurship sector in the region.

The reason for joining the Innovation Forum and Start-up Day (a new event initiated during the IEER project local stakeholders' meetings) is the fact that both events are characterised by a similar idea and target group. Their primary objective is to encourage closer cooperation between BEIs and enterprises. In addition, such approach might stir up the interest of potential participants and networking.

In turn, the "West Pomerania Financial Engineering Instruments Day" conference, aimed at presenting financial instruments and business financing opportunities within available programmes and initiatives, will constitute an excellent supplement of the content from the perspective of the entire undertaking. The conference will mostly be addressed to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, and persons who wish to start a business, as well as to financial institutions, private investors who can be final beneficiaries and act as financial intermediaries providing repayable instruments within JEREMIE and JEREMIE 2 initiatives. Similarly to previous years, the conference will feature experts and practitioners in such fields as economics, financing investments and capital support. Moreover, the participants will have the opportunity to attend theme-specific workshops and benefit from consulting services rendered by financial intermediaries operating within JEREMIE and JEREMIE 2 initiatives, available in special stands during the event.

The conference agenda will include speeches and presentations by people recognisable in the region and across Poland, including practitioners having in-depth knowledge and experience in implementing innovations co-created by science and business circles (e.g. innovators, scientists, businessmen and journalists), in activating start-up circles, efficient use of the potential of BEIs in regions etc. Furthermore, experts with international experience have been invited to run workshops and discussion panels. Thanks to such an







approach, the participants will be able to use the experience of practitioners who are acquainted with the domestic situation and are renowned specialists in their respective fields.

The West Pomerania Entrepreneurship and Innovation Days will be concluded with an export seminar for small and medium-sized enterprises from the Westpomeranian Region. During the seminar, participants will gain practical knowledge on how to present the objects of their activities, as a part of communication process which is necessary to arouse the interest of business partners and start further potential cooperation. The training session is part of a series of theme-specific export seminars addressed to entrepreneurs operating in the region, with a view to raising their competence in the field of skills vital in international markets.

In the future, the West Pomerania Entrepreneurship and Innovation Days are due to become an international event, covering issues related to developing companies abroad, with particular focus on the Polish and German borderland.

The areas covered by the action: Start-up support and acceleration (TF 2 - Entrepreneurial Support and Acceleration).

Aspects related to the geographical and economic conditions of the Westpomeranian Region, the assumptions of regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations were taken into consideration in the choice of an action consisting in organising an undertaking aimed at improving the innovation and entrepreneurship support system in the region. Nonetheless, the vast experience of other iEER regions was also taken into account, such as the good practices implemented in the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region (Slush). The practice involved the organisation of an extensive conference for start-up companies, open to a large group of international stakeholders. The Helsinki- Uusimaa Region is an inspiring area in terms of the introduced creative changes, and a region characterised with a high level of innovation. What is more, the region is focusing on marketing technological and non-technological innovative solutions, and West Pomerania can draw from its original solutions.

FOSTERING CREATIVE THINKING IN CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

In the planned intervention, it is necessary to include activities associated with the fostering of creative and innovative skills in children and young people in order to effectively respond to the growth of knowledge-based society. An important role in the action is played by activities aimed at encouraging students' participation in practical classes, in particular those spanning natural and technical sciences, which are run by scientists specialising in various fields of knowledge, artists and entrepreneurs. They are designed to popularise knowledge among children from an early age.

It is also crucial to develop children's interest in science and acquaint them with the functioning mechanisms of the surrounding world through interesting classes. The undertaken activities will result in stimulating creativity, developing creative and innovative attitudes, fostering a proactive attitude towards reality, and creating key 21st century skills which will increase their chances at the successive educational stages and on the labour







market. Over time, the practices and events initiated by the regional government should turn into initiatives financed by other stakeholders, including in particular medium-sized and large businesses.

Sub-actions:

- 1.1. Support for "children's universities"
- 1.2. Design Thinking Workshops
- 1.3. Laboratory and workshop classes

The areas covered by the action: TF 1 - Entrepreneurial Mindset and Competence and TF 3 - Pathways in Outlying Areas.

Aspects related to the geographical and economic conditions of the Westpomeranian Region, the assumptions of regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations were taken into consideration in the choice of action consisting in: Fostering creative thinking in children and teenagers. Nevertheless, the suggested good practices of other regions, such as the ones implemented in Valencia (Aula Empende) which include the development of competencies in the field of entrepreneurship, not only among young people but also among entrepreneurship teachers, as well as from good practices in Brandenburg consisting in activities in the field of business incubators (Grunderwerkstatt). The experience drawn from good practices will be used by the Westpomeranian Region, also constituting an important model for developing actions in the field of fostering creative thinking in children and teenagers. The Valencia region is extremely inspiring in respect of the introduced creative solutions supporting the region's policy, and therefore the Westpomeranian Region has the opportunity to draw from its original solutions. As far as Brandenburg Region is concerned, it should be noted that although it is not located far from West Pomerania, it is characterised by different dynamics in terms of entrepreneurship. Therefore, the Westpomeranian Region can be inspired by the bold changes introduced by its neighbours.

PROGRAM IN THE FIELD OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Actions involving the organisation of workshops on the professionalisation of services provided by business environment institutions (1), West Pomerania Entrepreneurship and Innovation Days (2) and classes aimed at fostering creative thinking in children and teenagers (3) are pilot actions. The actions are combined together, constituting one larger entity and a plan for a long-term entrepreneurship support system in West Pomerania. Actions involving the development of program in the field of entrepreneurship will consist in drawing up strategic documents with a view to directing the regional policy toward entrepreneurship support, in particular support for young entrepreneurs, and the implementation of several dozen tasks in this field. The action is strategic and related to regional policy.

The areas covered by the action: Implementation of RIS3 in the context of the needs of young entrepreneurs (TF 4 - RIS3 / Smart Specialisation).







4. Detailed actions

WORKSHOPS ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTIONS		
1. Policy context	Investments for growth and employment	
2. Background	Aspects related with the geographical and economic conditions of the Westpomeranian Region, and the assumptions of regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations were taken into consideration in the choice of an action consisting in workshops on the professionalisation of services provided by business support institutions. Nevertheless, the suggested good practices of other regions were also taken into account, as inspiration was drawn from the experience of Valencia (Aula Emprende) which includes the development of competencies in the field of entrepreneurship, not only among young people but also among entrepreneurship teachers, as well as from practices from Brandenburg (Servicestelle Schülerfirmen) consisting in the broadly-understood activities in the field of establishing student companies. The practices were also ranked high by the Westpomeranian Region's experts.	
	Education is a vital aspect in the region and for that reason it has been decided that it is crucial to develop the competencies of not only entrepreneurs but also of institutions providing support to entrepreneurs.	
3. Action	A series of networking workshops aimed at improving the knowledge and competences of local business environment institutions, so that they can provide more specialised services tailored to the needs of businesses from the region. Workshops will focus, among other things, on issues related to commercialising knowledge, fostering creativity, searching for methods which support the concept design process, designing development strategies, etc.	
4. Grounds for implementing the tool	Improving the local competences of business environment institutions and progressing their services are a necessity resulting from the evolving needs of businesses which seek out professional partners able to support their growth. Focused on networking, the workshops will contribute to maintaining close contacts, exchanging information, and establishing long-lasting relations. Since the innovativeness of enterprises is determined by the existence, in and around businesses, of innovation culture, it is crucial that conditions be provided for the	







	development of innovation-oriented attitudes not only among those businesses, but also among BEIs, universities and local-government units.
5. Players involved	Business Environment Institutions
6. Timeframe	2018-2019 (time for implementing the pilot action)
7. Cost	EUR 20,000 per year (Funds allocated for implementing the pilot action)
8. Funding source	Own budget of the Westpomeranian Region
9. Expected impacts (KPI)	KPI 1: the number of organised workshops KPI 2: the number of workshop participants KPI 3: the number of business environment institutions

ST POMERANIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP	AND INNOVATION DAYS
1. Policy context	Investments for growth and employment
2. Background	Aspects related to the geographical and economic conditions of the Westpomeranian Region, and the assumptions of regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations were taken into consideration in the choice of action consisting in: Startup Day and the West Pomerania Innovation Forum. Nonetheless, the suggested good practices of other regions were taken into consideration, as inspiration was drawn from good practices implemented in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region. The practice involved the organisation of an extensive conference for start-up companies, open to a wide ground international stakeholders. This practice was also ranked high by our region?







	conference. According to the experts, the development of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, networking and broadly-understood cooperation should be implemented in the Westpomeranian Region. A similar conference is being planned in the region, which is aimed at fostering cooperation between entrepreneurs and business stakeholders.
3. Action	The annual meetings, held as a conference presenting issues related to the development of start-ups in West Pomerania and the effective utilisation of the potential of business environment institutions. The event will be organised with a view to exchanging knowledge, experience and fostering cooperation between the most prominent actors of the regional entrepreneurship system.
4. Grounds for implementing the tool	The conference is meant to be an excellent way to discuss everything of relevance to the region's problems, in addition to searching for new paths of development and consulting ideas and suggested solutions with a broad audience. It will also provide an opportunity to exchange experience and views regarding broadly understood entrepreneurship, and to build joint plans for the future. An active and extensive participation of socio-economic circles will ensure the inclusion of various groups of entities in the process of co-deciding on the directions in which the region should develop, and will also optimise the manner in which the resources at hand and competences are used in the region.
5. Players involved	Business Environment Institutions, higher-education institutions, enterprises, start-ups
6. Time frame	2018-2019 (time for implementing the pilot action)
7. Cost	EUR 30,000 per year (funds allocated for implementing the pilot action)
8. Funding source	Own budget of the Westpomeranian Region







9. Expected impacts (KPI)

KPI 1: the number of participants

KPI 2: the number of pieces of information published in the media (media coverage)

OSTERING CREATIVE THINKING IN CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS		
Aspects related to the geographical and economic conditions of the Westpomeranian Region, assumptions of regional policy defining regional and smart specialisations were taken into consideration in the choice of action consisting in fostering creative thinking in children and teenagers. The suggested practices implemented by the partner regions were also taken into consideration. Inspiration was drawn from the experience of Valencia which includes the development of competencies in the field of entrepreneurship, not only among young people but also among entrepreneurship teachers, as well as from good practices from the Brandenburg Region in respect of business incubators. Shaping creative thinking in children and teenagers is a vital aspect in West Pomerania, as it allows for the preparation of the next generations for entering the demanding and changeable market. The Grunderwerkstatic incubator for young enterprises is a practice which could be inspiring in the field of teaching the youngest ones of what entrepreneurship and business conditions are.		
3.1. Support for "children's universities" Children's universities are a popular form of regular extracurricular classes addressed to school-aged children and run by experts and academic staff. The provide the possibility for young students to develop their interests an knowledge through play, workshops and meetings with people of science, also from other regions, who excel or are well known in their respective fields. Some of the classes are also open to parents. A children's university offers a unique		







3.2 Design Thinking Workshops

Design workshops for children and young people aimed at fostering their creativity and skills in applied arts. The participants, under the supervision of experts and authors, will be working on their own projects in architecture, design of everyday objects, graphic design and fashion. The duration of the classes depends on the age of each group.

3.3 Laboratory and workshop classes

Workshop classes for the students of Westpomeranian schools, held at the premises of companies, clusters, BEIs, universities, etc. provide a source of inspiration and a chance to seek non-standard solutions. Depending on the place and the age group, the laboratory classes will take various forms, but will all be characterised by focus on practice and the possibility of engaging directly in research and experiments. This action can be supplemented with presentations for children and young people delivered at schools in the form of scientific shows entitled "There is still so much to be discovered" and run by scientists and science communicators who talk about exciting discoveries and areas with a potential for further research.

3.1

Children's universities are an excellent way to convince children that science can become a true passion. If run well, such classes should succeed in making children interested in the surrounding world and encouraging them to learn more about its inherent phenomena. Through practical classes, children and young people can grow into passionate adults, which can have a positive influence on their decisions and openness to new technologies and solutions. The long experience gained in running classes of this type in the region suggests that there are still needs to be met in this respect; hence, more children from the Westpomeranian Region should be given the opportunity to participate.

 Grounds for implementing the tool

3.2

One of the fundamental factors which affect innovation-oriented attitudes in society is making the general public aware of how important and necessary innovations are, and that such attitudes should be encouraged in every aspect of life. Interest in the world and searching for new solutions should be encouraged from an early age, because the youngest audience are naturally curious of what surrounds them as well as more likely to display an individual approach to life and explore new directions. The organisation of workshops will contribute to stronger manual skills, sensitivity to the surrounding world and the ability of







	teamwork among children and young people.
	3.3
	Workshops organised on company premises will acquaint children and young people with manufacturing processes or the provision of services, and will offer them the opportunity to test the latest technological developments, learn more about the company's sector, and put their skills to test in tasks prepared by the personnel of the company, cluster or BEI. As regards classes organised a universities, this will aid the promotion of technical majors and serve as a addition to "University of the Young Explorer", a programme by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, increasing the number of students from the region participating in workshop classes.
5. Players involved	children, young people, higher education institutions, business-environment institutions
6. Time frame	2018-2019
	(time for implementing the pilot action)
7. Cost	EUR 25,000 per year (funds allocated for implementing the pilot action)
8. Funding source	Own budget of the Westpomeranian Region
9. Expected impacts (KPI)	KPI 1: the number of workshops / classes for children and teenagers KPI 2: the number of participants
	KPI 3: the number of pieces of information published in the media (media coverage)







1.	Policy context	Investments for growth and employment		
2.	Background	Action involving the development of program in the field of entrepreneurship will consist in drawing up strategic documents with a view to directing the regional policy toward entrepreneurship support, in particular support fo young entrepreneurs. Thus, the preceding activities are pilot actions aimed at progressing works in the field of supporting entrepreneurship, while Action 4 can be referred as a strategic action related with regional policy. The areas covered by the action: Implementation of RIS3 in the context of the needs of young entrepreneurs (TF 4 - RIS3 / Smart Specialisation).		
3.	Action	The action will include the summary of preceding actions (1-3 and 5), and the development of strategic guidelines in the scope of supporting entrepreneurship in the region.		
4.	Grounds for implementing the tool	Action involving the development of program in the field of entrepreneurship will allow for revising previous actions with a view to supporting regional policy in the field of entrepreneurship by developing strategic guidelines in respect of policy development.		
5.	Players involved	regional government, Business Environment Institutions, higher-education institutions, enterprises, start-ups		
6.	Time frame	2020-2021		
7.	Cost	none		
3.	Funding source	none		
9.	Expected impacts (KPI)	KPI: the number of strategic documents		









AULA EMPRENDE - PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

A mindset to tackle challenges, determination to overcome hurdles and ability to think out of box and finding solution are key characters of a successful entrepreneur. The iEER pilot action aims to support nine iEER regions in replicating the good practice Aula Emprende Program to activate the professors and teachers to take an active role in natural entrepreneurial competence of young people in the classroom.

Aula Emprende, initiated in Valencia region in 2009, is one of the iEER outstanding good practices which is recognised for its impacts and results in enhancing entrepreneurial competence and mindset of the young people in the regions. This pilot action will be led by Valencia Regional Government and Valencia University and participated by the regions of Hauts-de-France, Kerry, Northern Ireland, Marche, Brandenburg, West Pomerania, Southern Denmark and Helsinki-Uusimaa. In one and half years, partners will learn the model of train the trainers (professors and teachers) and pilot the model in training students to be entrepreneurial in the classrooms of higher education institutions.

To successful implement the pilot, each region will involve a local partnership of public authorities and higher education institutions to learn and introduce the practice in the higher education institutions (HEIs). This will be done by

- mapping and understanding the circumstance for the incept of Aula Emprende in the regions,
- standardisation of teaching approach by Valencia
- joining the "Train the trainer pilot International Conference/the Trainers' camp" in Valencia,
- organisation of 1-2 summer camps for train the trainers in the regions
- applying and testing the learned methods in the classroom of the HEIs in the respective regions.
- 1st European Awards "Entrepreneurship at Class"
- validation of the results and roll-out plan for the continuity in the respective regions

During the iEER phase one, the regions have reviewed different funding schemes and support for both the entrepreneurs and operational organisations supporting entrepreneurship and business development. Due to the rigidity of the budget which is often assigned to running programmes, this pilot action will provide us the possibility to initiate, pilot and validate the Aula Emprende programme and thus provide us evidence to roll-out this initiatives in the later stage. The positive result will be guaranteed by the adaptation of the tool for its implementation in the regions and the definition of standards to ensure the quality and homogeneity of the process in each region. Furthermore, the experience will be present and shared with the authorities as inputs to further refine the related policy instrument for the support of the similar action in the region.

Furthermore, the creation of a network of regions using similar methods to promote entrepreneurial spirit for university alumni, sharing efforts, defining a method to ensure quality (certification) and using a common set of







indicators will have a European added value for this good practice. This project could later end with the 1st EU Awards for Teachers Teaching Entrepreneurship.

The main beneficiaries of the pilot action are the students participating in the program, as well as the university teachers and researchers. The Aula Emprende Program facilitates the connection of the education and R&D&I system of all areas of knowledge of the universities with the entrepreneurship ecosystem, and hence promotes the entrepreneurial culture at all levels of the universities and the future entrepreneurial success in the regions.

Action 5 AULA EMPRENDE - PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT		
	iEER worked with 11 partners and 10 regions. The regions are already highly supporting entrepreneurial activities. Within the visits many regions showed their great examples and Brandenburg and the other partners will use this gained experience to further collaboration on support services.	
2. Background	The goal was to define an action that the majority of partners will be working on collaboratively. The one that most partners could agree on is the outstanding good practice "Aula Emprende" from the Valencia region. This will provide better entrepreneurship mindsets and education within professors but also students.	
3. Action	 Support nine iEER regions in replicating the good practice Aula Emprende Program Activate the professors and teachers to take an active role in natural entrepreneurial competence of young people in the classroom Partners will learn the model of train the trainers (professors and teachers) and pilot the model in training students of HEIs 	
	 Each region will involve a local partnership of public authorities and higher education institutions to learn and introduce practice Tasks in the iEER pilot action: mapping and understanding the circumstance for the incept of Aula Emprende 	
	 by regions standardization of teaching approach by Valencia joining the "Train the trainer pilot International Conference/the Trainers 	







	camp" in Valencia, applying and testing the learned methods in regions
	 1st European Awards "Entrepreneurship at Class" validation of the results and roll-out plan for the continuity in the respective regions
4. Players involved	Universities, in particular, West Pomeranian University of Technology and University of Szczecin
	Participants of the pilot project: Hauts-de-France, Kerry, Northern Ireland, Marche, Brandenburg, West Pomerania, Southern Denmark and Helsinki-Uusimaa
5. Time frame	2018-2020
	(time for implementing the pilot action)
6. Cost	EUR 6,000
	(funds allocated for implementing the pilot action)
7. Funding source	85% Interreg Europe
	15% own budget of the Westpomeranian Region
8. Expected impacts	KPI 1: Number of professors participating
(KPI)	KPI 2: Number of students participating
	KPI 3: Number of classes
	KPI 4:Number of events / participants per event
	KPI 5: Awards received
	KPI 6: Visibility of entrepreneurship
	KPI 7: Interest in program and topic Ebook publication

6. Monitoring and impacts of the action plan

Incorporating each of the action fields in individual thematic fields of the IEER project ensures a comprehensive approach to developing a sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem in West Pomerania, and sustainable implementation of actions which would be useful in achieving the goal.

The completion of the task is due to be monitored and measured by way of indicators. Indicators suggested for the action "Workshops on the professionalisation of services provided by business support institutions" include

· KPI 1: the number of organised workshops,







- · KPI 2: the number of workshop participants,
- KPI 3: the number of business environment institutions.

Indicators suggested for the action "West Pomerania Entrepreneurship and Innovation Days" include

- KPI 1: the number of participants,
- KPI 2: the number of pieces of information published in the media (media coverage).

Indicators suggested for the action "Fostering creative thinking in children and teenagers" include

- · KPI 1: the number of workshops / classes for children and teenagers,
- · KPI 2: the number of participants,
- KPI 3: the number of pieces of information published in the media (media coverage).

The indicator suggested for the action "Program in the field of entrepreneurship" is

· KPI: the number of strategic documents.

The indicator suggested for the action "AULA EMPRENDE - promoting entrepreneurial spirit" is

KPI 1: Number of professors participating

KPI 2: Number of students participating

KPI 3: Number of classes

KPI 4:Number of events / participants per event

KPI 5: Awards received

KPI 6: Visibility of entrepreneurship

KPI 7: Interest in program and topic Ebook publication

By implementing the above actions, it will be possible to involve various stakeholder groups in the young entrepreneurship ecosystem. It will facilitate a systemic and long-term approach to the issue of young entrepreneurship.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN INDICATORS FOR THE WESTPOMERANIAN REGION

PA		Indicator	How	Who
	Workshops on the professionalisation of services provided	KPI 1: the number of organised workshops	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	by business environment	KPI 2: the number of workshop participants	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region







institutions	KPI 3: the number of business environment institutions.	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of th Westpomeranian Region
2. West Pomerania Entrepreneurship and Innovation Days	KPI 1: the number of participants	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of th Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 2: the number of pieces of information published in the media (media coverage)	Administrative data in the scope of communication	The Marshal's Office of th Westpomeranian Region
3. Fostering creative thinking in children and teenagers	KPI 1: the number of workshops / classes for children and teenagers	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 2: the number of participants	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 3: the number of pieces of information published in the media (media coverage)	Administrative data in the scope of communication	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
4. Program in the field of entrepreneurship	KPI: the number of	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
5. AULA EMPRENDE - Promoting Entrepreneurial Spirit	KPI 1: Number of professors participating	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 2: Number of students participating	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 3: Number of classes KPI 4:Number of events / participants per event	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 5: Awards received	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
	KPI 6: Visibility of entrepreneurship	Administrative data	The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region









The Marshal's Office of the Westpomeranian Region
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The action plan is open and may be subject to modification during implementation.

This action plan will be implemented and monitored by Westpomeranian Region.

Name Surname _____ Position Signature: Date:

Stamp of the organisation

