

# Action Plan of the Interreg Europe Project KISS ME EGTC Pyrénées-Méditerranée

Knowledge and Innovation Strategies involving SMEs  
in the context of Interreg



## Content

<b>1. PREFACE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. GENERAL INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4. POLICY CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>5. ACTIONS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
5.1. ACTION 1: PILOT CALL FOR EURO-REGIONAL R+I PROJECTS .....	8
5.2. ACTION 2: BARRIERS TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION .....	12
5.3. ACTION 3: EGTC EUROREGION PYRENEES-MEDITERRANEAN RIS3 .....	14
<b>6. CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## 1. Preface

From 1 January 2017 until the end of June 2019 the Euregio Rhine-Waal, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean, HAMAG-BICRO, Hedmark County Council and Värmland County Administrative Board have worked together in the first phase of the Interreg Europe project “KISS ME”. **KISS ME**, which stands for “Knowledge and Innovation Strategies involving SMEs”, aims to **improve the innovation capacity and competitiveness of SMEs in European border regions by comparing and sharing approaches**. At times in which various challenges threaten the solidarity and unity among the EU-member states, it is of special importance to set examples proving that we can achieve more if we work together.

Representing around 99% of all enterprises within the EU, SMEs deserve special attention. They are paramount contributors to European prosperity but can only survive in a competitive market if they keep generating innovative products and services. However, due to their size and limited resources, they often face a number of challenges in this process.

Especially in European border regions, the situation for SMEs is two-fold: on the one hand, border regions offer great opportunities, because there are markets of two or more countries in easy reach. On the other hand, borders still possess a barrier effect, although physically invisible. In order to make sure that **SMEs can fully exploit the border regions’ potential**, it is essential for governments and public authorities to provide **adequate support through tailored policy instruments**. Unfortunately, as so often, this is easier said than done.

Thus, the partners of the KISS ME project have worked together for the last 2.5 years within the framework of the EU interregional cooperation programme Interreg Europe to **identify ways to improve the supporting policy instruments for SMEs and better engage them in these schemes**. Closely working together with other European border regions and the different stakeholders therein and being open to share experience and best practices is what made the KISS ME project successful. It was primarily designed to improve knowledge and innovation strategies for SMEs in our European border regions, but it also set a great example for the importance of European cooperation and solidarity in practice.

This Action Plan presents part of the work done in the first phase of the project and contains concrete measures for the GTC Euroregion Pyrenees- Mediterranean. The second phase of the project will be coined by effectively implementing these measures in our region.

## 2. Executive Summary

With its participation in the KISS ME project since 2017, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean has had the unique opportunity to share experiences and good practices with other three cross-border regions. Gathered insights should serve improving the Euroregional Innovation Strategy responding to SMEs' needs, which ultimately should contribute to increasing its cross-border innovation capacities and boosting its regional competitiveness.

In this learning process, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean has identified three aspects in which there is room for improvement and for which short- and mid-term actions can be designed and deployed to affect the SMEs innovation capacities and cross-border collaborative exchanges:

Aspects to address	Actions Envisioned	Ultimate Objective
1. Limited funding schemes with low SMEs' participation	Action 1. Euro-regional Call for Proposals	Foster SME innovation capacities through cooperation
2. Existing barriers to cross-border innovative collaboration	Action 2. Best-practice – identification of barriers to cross-borders collaboration	Foster SME participation in cross-border funding instruments
3. Alignment of the Innovation Strategies at the regional level and of the innovation labelled funds	Action 3. New Euro-regional RIS3 (Updating the Euroregional Innovation Strategy)	Improve the participation and the innovation of the SMEs at the regional level

The present document details the objectives and actions envisioned and their potential impact for the euroregion.

## 3. General Information

<b>Project</b>	<i>KISS ME</i>
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	<i>EGTC Pyrénées-Méditerranée</i>
<b>Other partner organisations</b>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Country</b>	<i>France</i>
<b>NUTS2 region</b>	
<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Tanit Mir</i>
	<a href="mailto:tanit.mirpamies@euroregio-epm.eu">tanit.mirpamies@euroregio-epm.eu</a>
	<i>+33 4 48 22 22 34</i>
	<a href="http://www.euroregio.eu/">http://www.euroregio.eu/</a>

## 4. Policy Context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:**
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
  - European Territorial Cooperation programme
  - Other regional development policy instrument

**Name of the policy instrument addressed:** *Euroregional Innovation Strategy*

The policy instrument we are working with is the **Euroregional Innovation Strategy (EIS)**, a territorial diagnosis elaborated in 2013 with the aim to deepen cooperation between regions in three areas of specialization: water, ehealth and agri-food sector. This strategy defines two operational objectives aimed at creating conditions that favour the development of a euroregional innovation ecosystem: foster shared knowledge of Euroregional actors and launch pilot projects.

To launch pilot projects the following concrete actions should be implemented:

- focus on priority areas of specialization;
- harness and enhance existing collaboration between actors;
- ensure that actions are linked to funding opportunities (Euroregional funds, or mobilization of other funds) to facilitate the emergence of cooperation projects that are ambitious enough to seek EU funding under programs such as Horizon 2020, MED, etc..

Since 2014, the EGTC Pyrenees- Mediterranean has started to implement the Euroregional Innovation Strategy with calls of interest and the creation of different pilot projects. However, this policy instrument is fairly new and needs to be improved in implementations to strengthen the cross-border relationships and make the cooperation more durable in the future specially regarding the SMEs.

Precisely, in the course of the KISS ME project, we have realized that, at the time of the elaboration of the territorial diagnosis, the 3 regions were just beginning to prepare their smart specialization strategies for the period 2014-2020 and, therefore, there is no real link between them (but instead with the preceding Regional Innovation strategies).

The first action we have identified to be implemented during phase 2 of the project is the development of a “new Euroregional RIS3”. This action will allow us to update the 2014 Euroregional Innovation Strategy linked to the RIS3 strategies and identify the common key priorities in the three regions and, subsequently, the topics of the future Euroregional calls. Developing an integrated territorial strategy will help us to better responding to the needs of the actors (especially SMEs) and to achieve a greater impact on the territory. The action will rely on the good practice presented by the Innovation and Research GD of the Balearic Islands Government on the development of their RIS3. The process went through different phases that promoted the participation of stakeholders from different fields and levels: policy makers, companies/SMEs, academy, research, etc. To carry out the renovation of the strategy the Euroregion will

take advantage of the fact that by 2020 all regions must update their RIS3 and a special Task Force with one representative per region has been created.

The modification of this policy instrument will allow us to concentrate our knowledge and resources in the sectors that best fit the areas with a common potential and which are aligned to the RIS3 strategies and the thematic concentration of the FEDER Funds in the three regions (related to funding opportunities).

The other two actions identified in the Action Plan will improve the two operational objectives of the Euroregional Innovation Strategy: “fostering shared knowledge” and “launching pilot programs”. The guide with the main barriers to cross-border cooperation pretends to anticipate the most common problems SMEs face when cooperating, helping the actors to be more prepared, to cope with the obstacles, and to develop collaborative projects successfully. The resulting guide will be presented each time a Euroregional call is launched.

The action “call for R&I collaborative projects”, in alignment with the new European Innovative Ecosystems of the Horizon Europe funding scheme, will allow us to obtain more information on the Euroregional innovation ecosystem. It will foster innovation and will allow us to implement the new Horizon Europe policy in a specific territory as a pilot program creating synergies between funds.

## 5. Actions

The overall 2-year action plan for the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees- Mediterranean has three incremental actions that tackle 3 specific and complementary objectives, aligned with the overall KISS ME project objectives and responding to identified areas of improvement. The ultimate goal is to **create long-lasting sustainable instruments aimed at improving the participation of SMEs in cooperative cross-border innovation actions**. The specific objectives defined are:

1. Foster SME innovation capacities through cooperation
2. Foster SME participation in cross-border funding instruments
3. Capitalize on the knowledge and best practices exchange occurring in the KISS ME project to improve the participation and the innovation of the SMEs at the regional level.

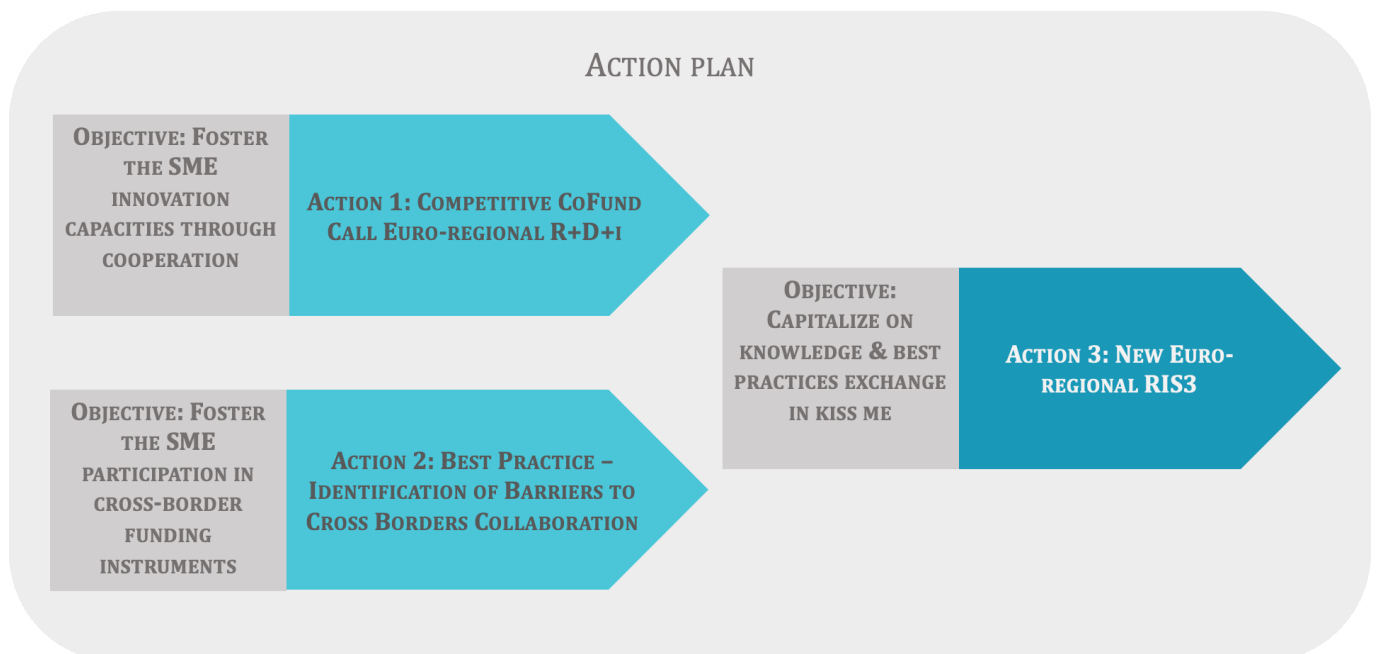
Associated proposed actions are:

Action 1. First Euro-regional Call for Proposals

Action 2. Best-practice – identification of barriers to cross-borders collaboration

Action 3. New Euro-regional RIS3

**Actions are complementary and jointly build the foundation of the future euro-regional RIS3, our policy instrument improved**, that in the broader funding framework of the Horizon Europe should enable targeted SME-funding for cross-border innovation initiatives aligned with the regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation.



## 5.1. Action 1: CALL FOR EURO-REGIONAL R+I PROJECTS

### 5.1.1. Background

Many different policy instruments have been developed and implemented over the last decade to foster the innovation capacity of SMEs across Europe. However, it appears to be challenging for SMEs to access and benefit the regional instruments and funds, especially in cross-border regions.

In the 2014-2020 period, SME-targeted actions were included in the regional cooperation programmes POCFETA, SUDOE and MED. However, from the studies undertaken by the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean in the context of the KISS ME project in early 2018, it is apparent that in spite of all efforts those infrastructural instruments do not sufficiently reach cross-border SMEs<sup>1</sup>.

Analysis undertaken concluded that there are several barriers that prevent SMEs from participating in the abovementioned euro-regional funding mechanisms, including: (1) eligibility requirements that greatly limit the participation of SMEs or that exclude their options to take on a leading role; (2) reduced funding schemes when compared with other types of participating entities from the same region (such as FEDER contribution limited to 50% for SMEs); or (3) prevention to establish public-private collaborative initiatives due to different work dynamics.

The results of the Interreg initiative are in contrast with the participation of the regional SMEs in the H2020 programmes, in which SMEs can take leading roles, receive same funding percentages, and have targeted actions. Participation of regional SMEs can reach up to a 60% in H2020 funded projects.

In light of the future Horizon Europe funding programme launching and the associated restructuring, efforts at the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean should be made in the framework of the European Innovation Ecosystems and should focus on better targeting SMEs with innovation labelled funds at the cross border and regional level.

### 5.1.2. Action Description

This action will serve to design the first EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean RIS3 COFUND call for R&I projects, to be launched in 2021, in alignment with the novel European Innovative Ecosystems of the Horizon Europe funding scheme and Action 3, the New Euro-regional RIS3. The goal of the call is to act as a catalyser of the collaboration amongst regional businesses and with regional public entities, opening a targeted funding action that makes available innovation-related labelled resources.

The definition of the action is undertaken at the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean with the active contribution of all its regions representatives by means of participative actions including all quadruple helix stakeholders.

<sup>1</sup> Promoció de la cooperació entre Pimes en l'àmbit de la innovació. Anàlisi dels projectes de cooperació territorial amb impacte en el territori euroregional. Programes SUDOE i MED Períodes 2007- 2013 i 2014-2020. Kiss Me Project. Informe Euroregió Març 2018



## SCOPE

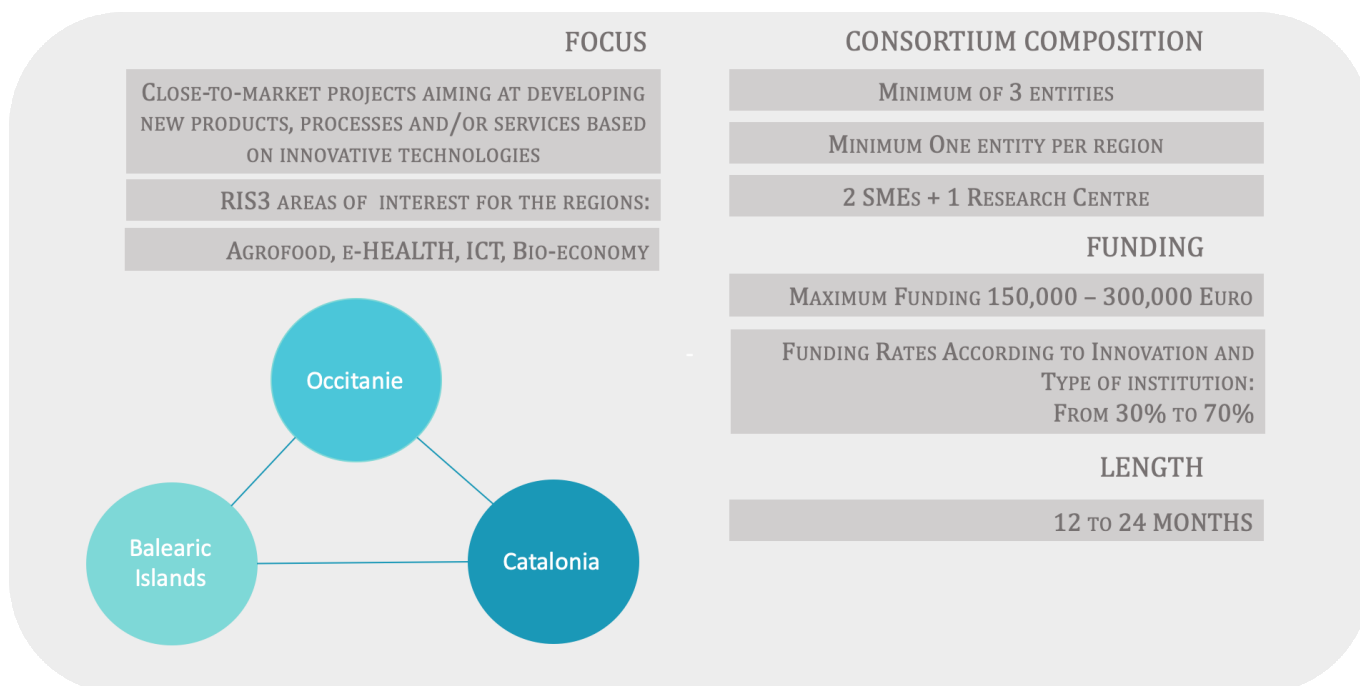
The preliminary scope of the call defined is aimed at funding innovation actions aligned with the RIS3 areas of interest of the Pyrenees- Mediterranean regions. However, this is a broad definition and the action will require devoting efforts to further characterise and specify this scope, considering regional needs and differences as well as the updates arising from the new Euro-regional RIS3 programme under development. This will be done with a collaborative effort amongst the regions involving the principal stakeholders, considering the feedback of the European Commission on suitability and alignment with overall Horizon Europe scheme and its European Innovation Ecosystems, as well as having exchanges with other regional initiatives across Europe that point in the same direction. Preliminary discussions include the possibility of mimicking at the regional level the funding scheme offered by the SME instruments phase II in H2020, the objective of creating an Innovative Hub, or the organization in different call phases (one for knowledge generation and one for R&I projects).

## PRELIMINARY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND FOCUS

Eligibility criteria has been preliminary outlined by the Euroregion as a starting point for the participative design efforts that will be undertaken in the action.

The action will aim at better characterising the focus (with a starting point of the current RIS3 areas of interest for the regions, but incorporating arising insights of the novel Euro-regional RIS3 areas of interest under development in Action 3), the TLRs the projects should have as a starting point and to which ones should aim for at the end, and to validate the suitability of the remaining criteria.

Discussions will also consider if the proposed funding actions adequately cover the SMEs needs in the regions, whether they are more in the mentoring, coaching and guiding aspects or more on the financing, generation of critical mass or provision of specific services.



## EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The proposal reception and evaluation would be centralized by the Agency for Management of University and Research Grants of the Catalan Government (AGAUR, for its Catalan name).

Upon reception of the proposal within deadline and eligibility criteria validation, the evaluation process will entail two phases:

- (1) An initial remote evaluation by international experts. Evaluators will be selected from the vast experts database from AGAUR, excluding those who might have conflicts of interest. Each proposal will be evaluated by three different experts who provide a scoring and written feedback.
- (2) A second evaluation undertaken by a selection panel, formed with one expert representative from each of the EGTC regions, that collate all first remote evaluation feedback, agree on final scoring and assessment and generate the final ranking of proposals.

Approved projects will be assessed via a “Euro-regional quality stamp” which in addition to the access to public funding will be a promotional element, recognizing the technological level of the projects/consortia.

## COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

The EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean will capitalize on the **Open Innovation Forum**, a program that allows companies share their innovation challenges and get proposals from research groups and centres. The Forum is organized by several organizations of the Catalan territory and aims at transforming science and technology into regional economic growth as well as social impact.

The Forum annual meeting allows companies to arrange for B2B meetings to discuss business opportunities and potential project collaborations, thus it is the perfect fora for presenting the call and generating targeted interactions that foster participation and facilitate the incorporation of relevant feedback.

### 5.1.3. Players involved

The action will be designed and implemented by the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean in close communication with the European Commission; with the support of AGAUR for the submission and evaluation process, of the Open Innovation Forum for the communication, and of the regional representatives and principal stakeholders by means of ensuring (as in the case of action 3) the participation of the quadruple helix stakeholders (policy makers and regional government representatives, businesses -specially SMEs-, research and education centres, and civil society) with regular meetings, workshops, think tanks, dissemination actions and events.

### 5.1.4. Timeframe

We've presented the action focused in two phases, which would allow us to start the action by 2020 (taking advantage of available funds from DG Research and leaving us time to better prepare the program in the framework of European Innovation Ecosystems) and launch the final call in 2021 (ensuring that the 3 regions can schedule a budget for the pilot program and have facilities when creating synergies between funds within the Horizon Europe framework).

More specifically, the program will be divided into:

- A first wider stage of knowledge generation on the ecosystem, which would begin in 2020. This phase would also focus on two stages: compilation of information on the actors of the euroregional innovation ecosystem, and then training of SMEs and research centres with a view to prepare them for the call.

Regular meetings with the members of the Innovation Commission and the task force we have created for this action will take place. Sectoral workshops with the participation of the innovation actors will be organised. It's also preview to have meetings with the representatives of the European Innovation Ecosystems to have their feedback on the program.

- A second stage dedicated to the preparation of R+ I projects between companies and research centres for the 2021 call, in parallel to the new framework program, in the priority sectors of the new euroregional RIS3.

The call will be launched in 2021 and fund projects active for a period of a maximum of two years. The goal is to have it as a first call of the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean RIS3 actions in the framework of the funding programme Horizon Europe and the European Innovation Ecosystems.

Even though the first results of the call will be available once the KISS ME project will be closed, we are committed to share them with the KISS ME project partners and the Interreg Europe program.

### 5.1.5. Costs and Funding Source

If the pilot program is approved by the representatives of the DG Research and Innovation, the proposed call should follow a COFUND scheme, with 50% of the total call budget coming from the regional authorities (including European Regional Development Funds, European Territorial Cooperation Funds, and regional funds) and the remaining 50% contributed by the European Commission. The initial goal is set to open a call with a total funding of 2.5 million Euro.

### 5.1.6. Expected impact / Potential for improvement

If the action is approved, it will be using structural funds alongside other EC funds to implement R&D innovation projects at the regional level, with the leadership of SMEs and the participation of public entities. Thus, it will be a first attempt of the new Horizon Europe Euro-regional RIS3, aligned with the European Innovation Ecosystems to be implemented. It is expected to improve the participation of SMEs in regional actions, to foster collaboration amongst cross-border businesses, to contribute to the innovation capacity of the regions with a better knowledge and technology transfer between the R&D involved actors, and to boost the regional capabilities in the identified RIS3 areas of interest.

## 5.2. Action 2: BEST PRACTICE - identification of barriers to cross-borders collaboration

### 5.2.1. Background

The participation in the KISS ME project has fostered the knowledge and experiences exchange amongst participating regions, allowing the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean to identify best practices of interest. One with relevance for the present action plan is the analysis that the INTERREG-programme Sweden-Norway conducted on the mental barriers to cross-border collaborations<sup>2</sup>. This analysis adds to the findings concerning the legal and administrative, cultural and SME-specific challenges that different border regions share and that was included in the Euregio Rhine-Waal Report from June 2018<sup>3</sup>.

Conducting a comprehensive analysis that brings together the above two studies is of interest for the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean to further understand factors preventing cross-border collaboration amongst SMEs in targeted funding actions and to be able to address them effectively to boost participation and cooperation.

The action would be complementary and aligned with ongoing efforts of the European Commission to establish mechanisms to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in the cross-border context (European Cross-Border Commitment and European Cross-Border Statements) as part of the 2018 resolution on Boosting Growth and Cohesion in the EU Border regions<sup>4</sup>.

### 5.2.2. Action Description

Building on the two KISS ME participating regions, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean will conduct a holistic analysis on the existing barriers to cross-border collaboration between its regions, integrating the scrutiny of the potential mental barriers to the administrative, legal, cultural and social barriers. The holistic approach is intended to offer useful information for the regional authorities and funding agencies, for the SMEs and for other innovation actors of the regions.

The resulting document will be presented each time a Euroregional call is launched. This guide pretends to anticipate the most common problems SMEs face when cooperating, helping the actors to be more prepared, to cope with the obstacles, and to develop collaborative projects successfully.

In parallel, the Euroregion will support the proposal for a new mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context. The Euroregion is participating in the expertise group of the DG Regio in that item as well as in the EGTC platform bringing ideas and its experience in that field. Namely, in September 2019, we have organized together with the COTER of the Committee of the Regions the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the EGTC platform where this issue will be discussed.

<sup>2</sup> The study "Mental Border Obstacles", conducted by the Øresund Institute, identify the main obstacles that impede people and businesses from working across the border based on in-depth interviews with SME- entrepreneurs and border- and business organisations along the Norwegian-Swedish border. Find more information and all KISS ME best practices here: [www.interregeurope.eu/kissme/good-practices](http://www.interregeurope.eu/kissme/good-practices)

<sup>3</sup> JOINT ANALYSIS FOR THE PROJECT "KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION STRATEGIES INVOLVING SMES" (KISS ME). Euregio Rhine-Waal Report. June 2018

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0327\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0327_EN.html)

### 5.2.3. Players involved

The action will be designed and implemented by the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean. It will capitalize on the regional connections with each of the regions business networks to communicate and engage the participating SMEs.

### 5.2.4. Timeframe

The action will be designed and implemented starting the second half of 2019. More specifically, the action will entail:

- the screening of existing regional SME registries for the identification of potential participants in the analysis (second semester 2019);
- the contact and engagement of a sample of up to a maximum of 50 representatives per region, that should be significant and representative of the existing regional SME diversity (first semester 2020)
- the data collection by means of online surveys, targeted questionnaires and/or personal interviews to the sample of regional SMEs, including closed-ended and open-ended questions (first semester 2020);
- the subsequent results analysis (second semester 2020).

### 5.2.5. Costs and Funding Source

The action will be entirely funded by the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean, which will contribute with its own human and financial resources.

### 5.2.6. Expected impact / Potential for improvement

The outcome will guide the development of future regional actions to help SMEs overcome barriers to cross-border collaboration, including:

- (1) contributing to the identification of novel cross-border collaborative innovation opportunities and interests to inform the renewal process of the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean Innovation Strategy;
- (2) the refinement of the future EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean RIS3 call requirements (Action 3), adjusting those that can play a role in facilitating participation and fostering collaboration; and
- (3) the implementation of targeted dissemination and communication actions aimed at making visible those barriers to SMEs and at explaining mechanisms that help overcome them.

## 5.3. Action 3: EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean RIS3

### 5.3.1. Background

The Interregional meetings of the KISS ME project enabled us to invite the General Director of Innovation of the Balearic Islands who presented the elaboration process and the results of the RIS3 in the Balearic Islands as a good practice. The process that was used (Entrepreneurial discovery process) generated a productive dialogue between public administration and business sectors and promoted the interrelation between companies and knowledge generating organisations by identifying the needs and expectations of the SMEs.

Aware that the Euroregional Innovation Strategy was elaborated in 2013 (based on the pre-RIS3 strategies) and needs to be updated regularly, we proposed to the members of the Innovation Commission of the Euroregion in charge of the KISS ME project, the possibility to update the Euroregional Innovation Strategy based on the process presented and they all agreed.

In addition, is essential that the Euroregional Innovation Strategy is more aligned with the RIS3 Strategies which the three governments are going to update during 2020 (RIS3 are an ex-ante condition to access Structural & Investment Funds). Alongside the Innovation Strategy, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean aims at releasing an RIS3 associated funding scheme that should be put into practice with the starting of the Horizon Europe funding scheme in 2021, and of which action 1 would be the first step.

### 5.3.2. Action Description

Actions 1 and 2 are to set the foundation of the further implementation of the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean RIS3 funding scheme. The ultimate aim is to release targeted funds for the development of innovative cross-border collaborations aligned with the economic activities of interest in the regions as identified by the renewed Innovation Strategy, and more accessible and attractive for regional SMEs.

Based on and in alignment with the insights generated by action 1 and with relevant inputs from action 2, the Euro-regional RIS3 funding scheme will be defined, reproducing and broadening the eligibility criteria, evaluation process and implementation actions established.

The identification of the broader key priorities per region and the definition of the future call topics will be implemented with the participation of the quadruple helix stakeholders (policy makers and regional government representatives, businesses -specially SMEs-, research and education centres, and civil society) in parallel to the development of the new Innovation Strategy, by means of:

- Setting a common methodology and a roadmap, using the experience with action 1 as a starting point.
- Establishing an open and continuous communication with the different actors:
  - Regular meetings with policy makers and authorities responsible for the elaboration of the RIS3;
  - Regional Entrepreneurial Discovery Process events where SMEs can contribute to the identification of emerging sectors of interest and transformative projects for the regional economy;

- A Euro-regional strategic thinking workshop with all quadruple helix actors, to agree on the focus of the Euro-regional strategic plan in alignment with the scientific know-how.
- Consolidating outputs obtained from all the above activities and elaborating the Euro-regional RIS3, considering in the final design the insights gained from action 2.
- Disseminating the results appropriately, over the last part of the KISS ME project implementation.

### 5.3.3. Players involved

The action will be designed and implemented by the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean RIS3 with an ongoing dialogue and collaboration with the regional policy makers and authorities, the regional businesses, SMEs, academia and civil society.

### 5.3.4. Timeframe

There will be an initial period of 6 months (second half of 2019) in which the methodology and roadmap will be defined. The roadmap deployment and assessment will be happening in 2020 in the context of the renewal of the Innovation Strategy. Over the last 6 months of the KISS ME project (early 2021), a major effort will be devoted to the dissemination and communication of the outcomes and the proposed Euro-regional RIS3 programme.

### 5.3.5. Expected impact / Potential for improvement

This action will result in a renewed Innovation Strategy and an associated funding scheme, better targeting regional priorities and innovation capacities, and offering specifically labelled resources aimed at enhancing participation of innovation actors in the regions and boosting cross-border collaborations.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the first 2 years and a half of the KISS ME project, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean has engaged in a policy learning process by sharing experiences, ideas and approaches with other three European regions. The process has allowed not only to get interesting insights into the methods and workings of other cross-border policy instruments, but also to self-assess its regional policy instruments targeting SMEs and their potential areas of improvement.

As a result, the EGTC Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean has defined an action plan with three interrelated and incremental actions, aimed at: improving the understanding of the SME regional networks, their interests and their preventions to collaboration; fostering the participation rates of SMEs in regional funding schemes; and ultimately better aligning the regional strategic agenda and its associated policy instruments.

The three EGTC regions are very much engaged in the development and implementation of the actions proposed, understanding its relevance and its potential impact in the regional SMEs competitiveness and innovation capacity, capital for all three regions present and future economic development.

Date: 19/07/2019

Signature:



Stamp of the organisation

EUROREGION PYRENEES-MEDITERRANEE  
GECT  
El Centre del món  
35 Boulevard Saint-Assisele  
CS 323032  
66011 PERPIGNAN CEDEX  
SIRET 130 007 511 00038