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First year of Compete In – what has happened?

#competein

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Upcoming Activities

March Selection of Good Practices in all regions, presentation on web conference

April Partner meeting in Poland, 19-20 of April

May Final selection of Good Practices

June Study visits begin!



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Competitive territories through internationalisation

Seven partners around Europe, working together to strengthen the support to Small and Medium-sized companies in their attempt to go global!

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises competitiveness in globalised regions

COMPETE IN tackles SMEs' internationalization: a key issue for SMEs growth at global scale that still presents weaknesses.

The project deploys a new methodology: approaching internationalization not by addressing uniquely SMEs, but by addressing the regional systems' of distinctive competences, always bearing in mind that the final objective is to support SMEs internationalization.

This entails a brand new shift towards a completely different approach that considers regions and cities as facilitator of internationalization processes.



The first Project Partner meeting took place in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in June 2016



+ Kick off meeting and Opening Thematic Seminar

On the 21st and 23rd of June, the Municipality of Reggio Emilia hosted the project Kick Off Meeting. It represented the official start of Compete In and the occasion for partners to meet for the first time and to plan the activities to be realised together during the whole project.

In parallel, on June 22nd, the Lead Partner organised an Opening Thematic Seminar involving project partners and addressed to companies, cooperatives, research actors and stakeholders active in the promotion of the territory and in international development.

Speakers came from relevant organizations such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the European Commission DG for International Cooperation, EURADA – The European Association of Development Agencies, the European House Ambrosetti, Modena and Reggio

Emilia University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Unicredit International Centre Italy.

Moreover, the members of the local stakeholder group took part in the seminar: Chamber of Commerce, CNA, Unindustria, Legacoop Emilia Ovest, Modena and Reggio Emilia University, CRPA, Reggio Children and E35 Foundation for International Projects.

Case studies and theoretical references presented during the seminar promoted internationalization culture as a factor of competitiveness and innovation. Through this event, project partners and local stakeholders had the opportunity to reflect upon approaches and strategies and to start the exchange of experience process.

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Reggio Emilia:
innovators by tradition. A front-
runner community in export
and production quality



Focus: Reggio Emilia, Italy

Reggio Emilia, at the heart of the Italian Food Valley, it's a city of innovators by tradition. It is an industrious and inventive community with a natural predisposition for international relations and dialogue. Well known for its high quality of life and services, Reggio Emilia is a booming center renowned for its food and wine products, its enterprises and the early childhood educational services. With an entrepreneurial capacity of 15Bln € GDP/year, 60.000 enterprises, a 60% export propensity rate, it is at the center of the Italian productive system and it's linked with all main EU and Italian cities.

Ranking among the top Italian exporters, the city's economic ecosystem focuses its efforts on high quality in industrial production of its leading sectors: mechatronics, agriculture and agricultural machinery, textiles and green economy. The export and research oriented economics make Reggio Emilia a dynamic reality.

The welfare model that focuses on people and their needs, exploiting the resources of the entire community, a cooperative commitment and an open approach to intercultural exchanges, make it a welcoming, solidarity-based and responsible city.



Reggio Emilia Local Stakeholder Group meeting

A new LSG meeting was held in Reggio Emilia on February the 3rd to discuss the Good Practices for the internationalization of the territory and for SME competitiveness carried on by the different local actors. The group worked fruitfully and

successfully on a further and deeper analysis of good practices selected: strong partnerships with international players, supporting SMEs in whole process of approaching new markets, fostering worldwide the territorial best skills, academic and business cooperation.

The group took advantage of the results of the Interregional meeting, that took place in Wakefield in December 2016, basing their efforts on the criteria and guidelines developed on that occasion with the project partners.



”Three of our Good Practices have already been identified.”

Local Stakeholder Group in Emilia-Romagna, Bologna presents six regional Good Practices

Which are in the Emilia-Romagna region the best practices in supporting the internationalization of SMEs, attracting resources and investments, and building international partnership?

ERVET and Emilia-Romagna Region together with regional stakeholders agreed to analyze and present to COMPETE-IN project's partners six regional good practices. Three of them have already been identified and are policy measures developed by the Regional Government: [the](#)

[measure 4.1 of the three-year Plan of the Productive Activities, Emilia-Romagna GO GLOBAL, INVEST IN Emilia-Romagna.](#)

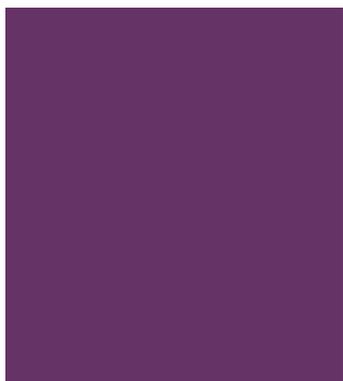
It was also agreed that the remaining good practices will be selected among those implemented over the regional territory autonomously by business associations, consortia, research centers, agencies, having SMEs as main beneficiary.

The focus will be on multi-year initiatives, possibly highlighting any improvement over time introduced.

By the end of February 2017, a new stakeholders meeting is foreseen to finally select the six experiences to be offered to project partners as significant practices of internationalization of the Emilia-Romagna regional system.

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”Good Practice” – how and why?

Interview with Paul Hayes,
Policy Manager, Wakefield Council

Wakefield is a partner in the COMPETE IN project. Why does Wakefield want to be a part of this project?

Wakefield has traditionally been a District with a low number of businesses engaged in export, especially in terms of small and medium size enterprises within our district. However, our local economy is restructuring, and rapidly. We want to develop not only a wider culture of export awareness and opportunities amongst local employers, but also improve skills and make new partnerships with both public and private partners within and beyond Europe. Participation in COMPETE IN is a fantastic opportunity for Wakefield to achieve all of the above.

Wakefield is responsible for one of the most important parts of the project - the collection of Good Practices. What does that mean?

COMPETE IN is looking to identify what works across all partner cities in terms of developing international partnerships and promoting innovation and success in export. The Wakefield role in COMPETE IN is to develop key lines of enquiry and templates to ensure partners across all of the cities in the project can capture and report examples of good practice. Our role is to then gather and disseminate key learnings and themes from the good practices and work with partner cities to

(to be continued)



” The enthusiasm and ideas already being delivered by partners across Europe is already influencing how we support exporting businesses and business wanting to export in Wakefield!”

/ Paul Hayes, Policy Manager
Wakefield Council

identify common themes and opportunities, hopefully to be taken forward through new transnational partnerships. Gathering good practice in a structured way will also help both public and private sectors across all the partner cities identify learning and business opportunities for their own regional or local sectors and businesses.

What kind of examples of Good Practice are you hoping will be presented in the project?

We are looking for a variety of good practices to overcome identified barriers in export success. These include how to overcome potential cultural and bureaucratic barriers to exports, how cultural partnerships can assist exports. We are also hoping to identify good practices in terms of international marketing and sectoral innovation, as well as securing finance and other capacity support to help local firms export and local agencies better support their local exporting businesses.

What will happen with the gathered examples of Good Practice?

Good practices identified will be analysed across all COMPETE IN partners to identify themes and opportunities. We also want to disseminate the learning from COMPETE IN as widely as possible. All our research, analysis and findings will be published and disseminated as widely as possible. All of the partners in the programme are committed to making sure our learnings benefit as many places and businesses as possible, both within and beyond the participating cities and regions.

What do you find most exciting about the Compete In-project?

What excites myself most around COMPETE IN is the opportunity to learn from others. The enthusiasm and ideas already being delivered by partners across Europe is already influencing how we support exporting businesses and business wanting to export in Wakefield. The partnerships and ideas that COMPETE IN is developing will not only go on to benefit Wakefield, but also benefit every partner region and city in the programme.

Project Meeting in Wakefield, UK



On December 13th – 14th 2016 all Project Partners met in Wakefield District, UK.

The program included discussion and exchange of experience to focus on Best Practice Self-Assessment Prompt Criteria, and also a first draft presentation and discussions on International Good Practice Review.

Each partner also presented some proposals of Good Practices from its own territory.

Next meeting will take place in Wielkopolska, Poland, in April.



“Economic export potential of the region is also determined through international exchange of technology”

Information Day on European Territorial Cooperation programs in Silesia, Poland

Upper Silesian Agency for Entrepreneurship and Development (GAPR) in Poland invited regional stakeholders to cooperate in the project through active participation in the Local Stakeholder Group (LSG).

LSG consists of representatives of Marshal Office (main beneficiary of the project), Silesian Centre for Investor and Exporter Service, Regional Chambers of Commerce, Silesian Centre for Entrepreneurship, School of Business and other important representatives of the region and SMEs.

On 14th of October 2016 the first meeting was held to present the project objectives and to plan the selection of Good Practices related to internationalization.

On 25th November 2016 an Information Day on European Territorial Cooperation programs was held in Silesia. It was organized in order to disseminate knowledge about ETC programs, which are available for applicants from our region. During the meeting, representatives of the Ministry of Development and Joint Secretariats cross-border programs presented the possibilities of the Interreg programs: Europe, Central Europe, Baltic Sea Region and Interreg V-A Czech Republic - Poland and Interreg Poland - Slovakia.

In the second part of the meeting Silesian institutions presented the implementation of projects approved for funding in the current 2014-2020 term, including GAPR with the Compete In Project.

Through cooperation with business in the science sector, GAPR made contact with the Central Mining Institute, Silesian University of Technology and other units of Research & Development sector.

It was considered that economic export potential of the region is also determined through international exchange of technology. This could be performed through exchange of academic staff or by presenting and promoting the scientific and economy potential by region authorities.

To identify potential activities of Research & Development, the Silesian Region will take an active role in events such as Expo 2017 in Kazakhstan.



"Team Gävleborg" brings stakeholders together

A group of stakeholders promoting and supporting SME export in Gävle/Gävleborg named "TEAM GÄVLEBORG" started to meet during 2015, in order to increase collaboration, make service delivery more efficient and easy accessible for companies. The group has met several times in order to get to know each other's organisations, their purpose and activities better. This process started at the same time as the discussions about the Compete In project started and this group is the core delivery team for the Compete In project!

The participating stakeholders are:

- Enterprise Europe Network
- The Chamber of Commerce of Central Sweden
- Business Sweden
- Almi Business Partner
- Svensk Exportkredit (SEK) - Swedish Export Credit

- Exportkreditnämnden (EKN) - Board of Export Credit
- University of Gävle
- Cluster organisations (Future Position X and Fiber Optic Valley)
- Region Gävleborg
- Municipality of Gävle

Team Gävleborg met in Gävle end of August 2016 to discuss and work through PROBLEMS, GOALS and ACTIVITIES to reach goals.

The next step is for all stakeholders to verify and discuss findings within their respective organisation, and if needed adjust and/or add information/suggestions. Furthermore, we will develop a matrix for services provided by all organisations. This will form the basis of discussion of the next working group meeting. At this meeting we will also discuss Good practices to share with Compete In partners and what we would like to learn from others as well as the "online dialogue platform".

Swedish Local Business Breakfast Meeting on Export

The Trade and Industry Unit of the municipality of Gävle in Sweden promoted Internationalisation & Export at its Business Breakfast Meeting end of August 2016.

Approximately 150 representatives of SMEs joined the meeting and had the opportunity to learn from Cargo Beacon and BGA Video, two SMEs sharing their experiences of going for new markets.

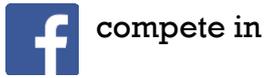
Cargo Beacon, is a newly established tech company that has had the opportunity to

participate in the "Born Global programme" of Chalmers University and Vinnova. BGA Video is a family company that started in 1993, transferring film to VHS. They have today 9 shops in Sweden and have diversified their business offer to include web shops (frames etc) that have taken them to other markets and significantly increased company turnover.

Compete In stakeholders - the Chamber of Commerce of Central Sweden and Business Sweden presented the situation of exports

in Gävle and the region - the need for more SMEs to go for new markets - and together with other export promoting stakeholders they shared information on support available.

"The SMEs present were also asked to give their say via a web poll 'Could your company go for export?', and the result was a staggering 40% who answered 'Yes, bring it on!' That is promising for the future", says Annika Lundqvist, Head of the International Office of Gävle Municipality.



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"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."

/ Maya Angelou



Project Partners

