

**InnoBridge –
Bridging the innovation gap
through converting R&D results into
commercial success
in a more effective and efficient way**

Action Plan by

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1. Policy context

1.1 Aim of the Action Plan

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- X Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- € European Territorial Cooperation programme
- € Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Operational Programme Investment in Growth and Jobs, ERDF 2014-2020, Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South-Tyrol, Investment Priority 1 b)

1.2 SWOT Analysis of Policy Instrument tackled

The addressed policy instrument is the Operational Programme “Investment in Growth and Jobs” ERDF 2014–2020 of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South-Tyrol, Investment Priority 1 b), that is “promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies”.

The Operational Programme focuses on four Priority Axes, each corresponding to one of the thematic objectives set out in EU Reg. 1303/2013 and these are:

1. Research and innovation
 2. Digital context
 3. Sustainable environment
 4. Safe territory
- Besides, there is also technical assistance.

To the Priority Axis 1 - Research and Innovation - 32.789.088,00 Euros are allocated

for the 7-year period. The Axis is composed of two Investment Priorities, 1 a) and 1 b): the Peer Review of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano within the InnoBridge project focuses on the latter.

To guarantee the implementation of the programme and in order to support the Managing Authority (the Europe Department of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano), the Provincial Government decided to give specific tasks to the single provincial services competent for the subject matter of the various Axes. The Department for Innovation, Research and University is responsible for the implementation of the measures 1 a) and 1 b) of Axis 1 Research and Innovation. The tasks of the measure manager are manifold: define, together with the Managing Authority, the strategy concerning the interventions to finance, evaluate the projects within its competence, propose to the Management Committee the financing of the projects presented, evaluate the status and the results, assist (when requested) the competent authority in the administrative controls, inform the Surveillance Committee of the status of the Investment Priority, and assist the Managing Authority.

The measures within Axis 1 of the ERDF instrument are fully integrated in the regional strategy for research and innovation and in its operational system. ERDF funds for research and innovation complete the measures financed with local financial resources and regulated by the Provincial Law on research and innovation.

The reference of all the actions in R&D is the Smart Specialisation Strategy for the Autonomous Province of Bolzano (RIS3), which was decided upon agreement with all the relevant stakeholders and integrated with the ERDF Operational Programme.

For the Autonomous Province of Bolzano the following areas have been identified:

- a) Energy and environment;
- b) Agro-food technologies;
- c) Alpine technologies;
- d) Well-being and health technologies;
- e) ICT and automation;
- f) Creative industries.

(For more information on the Smart Specialisation Strategy and the documents related to it, please visit <http://www.provincia.bz.it/europa/it/finanziamenti-ue/documenti-normativa.asp>.)

Two measures within the policy instrument are addressed, each referring to one Specific Objective, and respectively:

- Specific Objective 1.1 "Increase innovation in the companies" – Measure 1.1.4 "Support to the cooperation activities of R&D to the development of new sustainable technologies, new products and services";

- Specific Objective 1.3 “Open new market for innovation” – Measure 1.3.3
“Interventions to the support of the qualification of the offer of knowledge-intensive and high technological value-added services”

In order to achieve the objective of the measures, calls for proposals have been launched. The calls for proposals opened until now within the ERDF instrument answered to the needs not covered by the other instruments and they address topics of both the innovation and the research fields.

(For more information please visit <http://www.provincia.bz.it/innovazione-ricerca/innovazione-ricerca-universita/>)

1.2.1 Measure 1: Specific Objective 1.1 "Increase innovation in the companies" – Measure 1.1.4 "Support to the cooperation activities of R&D to the development of new sustainable technologies, new products and services"

The objective of increasing innovation in the companies is very much related to the fostering of the cooperation between companies and other actors in carrying out innovation activities. In fact, the actions implemented within this Objective aim at facing some of the structural weaknesses of the local entrepreneurial context, namely the lack of cooperation between the business and the research fields, stemming from a resistance to it. This lack is occurring in a context characterised by a further structural weakness, which is the size of the companies, the majority being micro-enterprises, and by a low level of their investment in R&D. Furthermore, there is a prevalence of the traditional sectors. Hence, the ultimate goal is to increase the number of companies carrying out R&D activities in cooperation with other actors.

The aim of the measure is therefore to support projects carried out by enterprises in cooperation with other enterprises, with public and private bodies in the field of research and innovation. In order to achieve the objectives, within the measure one call for proposals, titled "Research and Innovation", was launched until now.

It was the first call for proposals of the programming period 2014-2020 related to Priority Axis 1 and it dealt with the topics of Investment Priority 1 a) and 1 b). The aim of the call was to promote actions to the support of scientific research and innovation. The Peer Review of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano focuses on the part of the call belonging to the Investment Priority 1 b), being the latter the measure aimed to be analysed within the InnoBridge project. In regard to innovation, the call aims at supporting the implementation of research, development and innovation projects carried out in cooperation among enterprises, or between enterprises and research and knowledge transfer organisations.

1.2.2 Measure 2: Specific Objective 1.3 "Open new market for innovation" – Measure 1.3.3 "Interventions to the support of the qualification of the offer of knowledge-intensive and high technological value-added services"

The objective of promoting new market for innovation comes from the aim to foster the capacity of the regional entrepreneurial context. The aim is to be achieved through the strengthening of the offer of knowledge-intensive and high technological value-added services, through the promotion of networks, clusters and open innovation, and new innovative instruments in the public policies.

The interventions to the support of the qualification of the offer of knowledge-intensive and high technological value-added services will be services and instruments offered to the productive system, in particular to foster new companies (start-ups) and promoting the innovation activities of the SMEs. Besides these,

services and instruments promoting innovative strategies are supported (e.g. patents).

Also within this measure a call for proposals was launched: the call for proposals "Services for innovation", which is, chronologically speaking, the second call within the Axis 1 "Research and Innovation" of the ERDF Programme.

The aim of the call was to support activities promoting the qualification of the offer of knowledge-intensive and high technological value-added services. The ultimate goal through this action is to offer services and instruments in order to foster the creation of businesses and create the conditions to develop the potential of the already existing businesses. This is carried out in connection with the activities provided for by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano and in synergy with the institutional stakeholders.

SWOT analyses:

For each of the two measures a SWOT analysis is reported. The first one is the result of the inputs received at the InnoBridge workshop in which the Autonomous Province of Bolzano presented the addressed policy instrument.

SWOT Measure 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>S1 Small territory + financial support + focused regional policy = good innovation ecosystem</p> <p>S2 Synergy with other instruments aimed at the support of research and innovation (complementarity of instruments)</p> <p>S3 Suitable for regional needs</p> <p>S4 Joint department for R&D and universities</p> <p>S5 Direct financing of enterprises and research centres</p> <p>S6 Premises for the cooperation between enterprises and enterprises and research centres</p> <p>S7 Calls for proposals that foster the cooperation between SMEs and R&D centres</p> <p>S8 Strong networking with local stakeholders</p> <p>S9 Reasonable bureaucratic effort</p> <p>S10 Digital platform to facilitate the submission of project proposals</p> <p>S11 Measurable outputs according to clear indicators (those set out by the RIS3)</p>	<p>W1 Instrument not enough known by the SMEs, which have a better knowledge of the instruments provided for by the Provincial Law</p> <p>W2 Lack of professional project management competences in the SMEs</p> <p>W3 Limited R&D organisations (1 university) → lack of competition</p> <p>W4 Local context characterised by a low level of R&D expenditures</p> <p>W5 Infrequent calls opening</p> <p>W6 Insufficient advertising of the call for proposal</p> <p>W7 Delay in monitoring system</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>O1 Involvement of the stakeholders</p> <p>O2 The support to innovative enterprises as ultimate goal</p> <p>O3 Participating in ERDF calls for proposals makes enterprises more capable of participating in EU projects</p> <p>O4 Promotion of the support service (ERDF call for proposals)</p> <p>O5 A means to promote R&D activities and to raise awareness on the subject matter</p> <p>O6 Collaboration among SMEs with the support of a project manager</p> <p>O7 Increasing cooperation</p> <p>O8 Research and innovation "integrated projects"</p> <p>O9 Cross-border innovation opportunities</p> <p>O10 International visibility and networking of R&D&I</p> <p>O11 Keep on funding OIP projects to attract professional project managers/service providers</p> <p>O12 Digital platform and its improvement</p> <p>O13 Increasing number of companies applying for R&D funds</p>	<p>T1 Bureaucracy and bureaucratization</p> <p>T2 Insufficient management and regulation of patents in order to protect innovation</p> <p>T3 Cooperation management displays some critical elements: acting with research partners or with the support of consultants helps to avoid them</p> <p>T4 Enterprises abandoning their projects</p> <p>T5 The setting out of indicators</p> <p>T6 Sustainability challenge</p> <p>T7 Limited number of applicants</p>

014 Take some risks to build something new and adventures policy tools as you have the autonomous position

015 Tap the full potential of innovation

The SWOT analysis of the first measure addressed presents some characteristics. What concerns the strengths, the importance of the system emerges, that is a good innovation ecosystem. The small territory, the financial support at disposal and the focused regional policy are contributing to such an ecosystem. Furthermore, the research and the innovation fields are well interlinked; in fact, the Department for Innovation, Research and University is in charge for both fields, thereby coordinating the design of the instruments supporting research and innovation. Furthermore, it can direct financing the enterprises and research centres.

In particular, in regard to the ERDF instruments to the support of research and innovation, they are designed to be in synergy with the other instruments, thereby creating a complementarity of instruments. The strong belief and the need for it by the context, lead to instruments aiming at supporting the cooperation between the two fields, research and innovation: through the call for proposals launched within the present measure, the ERDF instrument strongly supports the cooperation among enterprises and between enterprises and research centres with the so-called integrated projects.

Therefore, it is maintained that such a system and the related design of instruments well suits the regional needs.

Regarding the weaknesses, some aspects related to the context emerged: firstly, the SMEs do not know and use the ERDF instruments enough and internally they lack a professional project management. Secondly, on the territory there is a limited number of research centres (there is just one university), and hence a lack of competition; thirdly, the context is characterised by a low level of R&D expenditures.

Nevertheless, the opportunities for the context are many: to further involve the local stakeholders, with which the network is already mentioned as a positive aspect present in the system; to keep supporting the SMEs and the cooperation projects in order to reach a higher number of enterprises applying for R&D funds and to make SMEs collaborating with the support of a project manager. The ultimate goal is to improve the tools used until now and find new ones to tap the full potential of innovation in the territory.

The context shows also some threats, for instance the complex aspect of bureaucracy and bureaucratisation and the critical elements displayed by the management of cooperation projects. Moreover, a "culture" (an awareness) of working with indicators to measure in a clearer way the efficiency of projects' outputs is still lacking.

SWOT Measure 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
S1 Services address a broad target group S2 It indirectly addresses the SMEs S3 Activation of the multipliers S4 Territorial and sectorial coverage of the services offered S5 Involvement of the "territorial bodies" (e.g. the municipalities)	W1 Broad description of the project proposals W2 Lack of indicators in the project proposals W3 No focus of the call W4 Tight deadlines for the submission of the project proposals W5 No possibility provided for by the present call to submit projects of cooperation among organisations to offer services
Opportunities	Threats
O1 Broad focus O2 Achieving the know-how transfer O3 Allowing the growth of competitiveness O4 Offering new and improved services O5 Creation of start-ups O6 Cross-cutting opportunity for many actors, which can benefit from the aid as final users	T1 Low use of the offered services T2 Too many services offered T3 Sustainability of services T4 Administrative and accounting burden of the public administration

The SWOT analysis of the second measure and the call for proposals launched within the measure shows that among the strengths there is the aspect of the actors involved. The projects financed through the call are services which ultimately address a broad target group (the enterprises) and the service providers are manifold, act as multipliers and are also territorial bodies (e.g. the municipalities). The weaknesses are more specifically related to the call for proposals, which did not have a sufficient focus related to specific topics or types of services.

Also, for the second measure the opportunities are manifold: to further support and achieve the know-how transfer, to foster the growth of competitiveness, to create new start-ups and to offer new and improved services addressing the enterprises to ultimately achieve innovation.

The support services for enterprises in carrying out innovation display also some risks, e.g. their low use by the companies, the fact that they are many and the challenge to be sustainable in the future.



2. Actions: a brief overview

The Action Plan of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano contains actions which are of utmost importance for the current and future fostering of R&I in South Tyrol.

Some of the actions deal with some underlying aspects whereby it is possible to support R&D&I projects and activities. These are Action 1 – Update the Implementation Criteria and Action 4 – Design a concept for the updating of the S3 strategy. They seem broad actions and they are because they address instruments which are at the core of the R&I programming and they represent the basis on which the other measures are carried out. The first is very relevant for the province because they are the Implementation Criteria of the Law which provides for and sets up the support system of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano for research and innovation, namely the "Provincial Law 13th December 2006, n. 141 Research and Innovation" (original name: "*Legge provinciale 13 dicembre 2006, n. 141 Ricerca e Innovazione*"). The second action mentioned deals with the Smart Specialisation Strategy, which was an ex-ante condition for the 2014-2020 Programming period. We maintain that there is the need to update and redraft the S3 for the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol: it will thus be ready for the coming Programming period for the Managing Authority to have an updated programme on the focus on R&I in the Province. It will represent the new strategic programme for innovation and research for the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. During the InnoBridge exchange of experience the Smart Specialisation has always been a relevant topic in the discussions and new inputs came from the InnoBridge partners and from the workshops discussions. Both actions are relevant for the policy instrument addressed, because they regulate the R&I environment where the Operational Programme, its measures and its instruments work.

The other two actions – Actions 2 and 3 - are more closely related to the implementation of the OP: both actions have already been carried out through the ERDF policy instruments. These are the R&D projects carried out in cooperation between research centres and enterprises and the involvement of the municipalities in innovation activities. The debate held within the InnoBridge context, both at interregional level with the project partners and at local level with the local stakeholders, reinforced the idea that such actions are of utmost importance in supporting innovation. Thus, the decision to continue implementing them. As mentioned below, ERDF funds for Axis 1 – Research and Innovation at the disposal for the programming period 2014-2020 have been almost all used to finance projects through calls for proposals. Therefore, in the next two-year period the implementation of these two actions will take place in other forms (through for instance local funds) and their possible implementation will be monitored to be ready for their implementation in the next programming period.

3. Action 1: Update the Implementation criteria

3.1 The Background

Project proposals submitted under the ERDF calls for proposals within Axis 1 "Research and Innovation" are evaluated on the basis, among others, of the "Implementation criteria related to the promotion of innovation" issued by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. The ERDF calls for proposals under Axis 1 – Research and Innovation are launched also on the basis of the Provincial Law and the Implementation Criteria regarding Research and Innovation.

The Law which provides for and sets up the support system of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano for research and innovation is the "Provincial Law 13th December 2006, n. 141 Research and Innovation" (original name: "*Legge provinciale 13 dicembre 2006, n. 141 Ricerca e Innovazione*"). The Criteria implementing the law were issued in 2015: Provincial Decree 5th of May 2015, n. 511 "Research and Innovation – Provincial Law of 13.12.2006 n.14 – Approval of the implementation Criteria (original name: "*Delibera 5 maggio 2015, n. 511 Ricerca e innovazione - Legge provinciale del 13.12.2006. n. 14 - Approvazione dei criteri di attuazione*").

3.2 Action

The Implementation criteria have been updated and approved in May 2018. These have been updated with many inputs coming, among others, also from the exchange of experience with the InnoBridge partnership highlighted, first and foremost the concept that the whole phase from the innovative idea to the commercialisation of that idea needs to be supported for innovation to be effective, so that all the TRLs levels are covered. The Autonomous Province of Bolzano innovation support system is rich in measures at the support of innovation. However, in the discussion with the InnoBridge partners around the core topic of the project, that is the filling of the gap between R&D results and their commercialisation, it emerged that there was room for some new measures.

Thus, new measures, previously not provided for, were inserted in the updated Implementation Criteria.

The first new measure introduced is the support of the "Pre-phase of research and development projects" (original name: "*Fase preliminare di progetti di ricerca e sviluppo*"): these are aids aimed at supporting the evaluation of new ideas, the elaboration of a first draft of project proposal, the first tests and the evaluation of the feasibility of a project.

The second novelty is the support to digital transformation and industry 4.0, which aims, through the support to automation and digitalisation, at fostering the competitiveness of the enterprises.

The third new measure worth mentioning are the fundraising campaigns and crowd-funding, which are supported within the measure "Innovation advisory services and innovation support services".

In the future, the results that the abovementioned new measures will have in fostering new R&D projects by the enterprises will be observed.

Please find the Implementation criteria here:
[http://www.provincia.bz.it/innovazione-ricerca/innovazione-ricerca-universita/downloads/BollettinoUfficiale-Amtsblatt_dal-ab25.05.2018\(1\).pdf](http://www.provincia.bz.it/innovazione-ricerca/innovazione-ricerca-universita/downloads/BollettinoUfficiale-Amtsblatt_dal-ab25.05.2018(1).pdf)

3.3 Players involved

The Office of Innovation and Technology within the Department for Research, Innovation and University drafted the Criteria and then had meetings with the main regional actors (business association, regional development agency, the Chamber of Commerce) in the field of R&I to discuss it.

In the coming years, the possible beneficiaries will apply for aid on the basis of the new Criteria. Other players involved will be the business associations, which represent the enterprises. The Office of Innovation and Technology will monitor the trend of the applications in regard to all the measures provided for in the Criteria and mostly in regard to the new measures introduced.

3.4 Timeframe

The Implementation criteria have been approved by the Provincial Government in May 2018. Now that they are into force, the enterprises and the other actors involved in research and innovation in the Province apply for aid based on the Criteria; among others, they are now able to be supported on a wider spectrum of initiatives. Regarding the ERDF calls for proposals launched within Axis 1 Research and Innovation, these new Criteria will be applied.

The action implementation will be monitored through the following indicators:

1. Trend of the number of applications presented within the single measures for innovation
2. Trend of the investments by the enterprises within the single measures for innovation
3. Time of evaluation of the applications
4. Number of R&D projects presented after a consultancy by an external body

These indicators will be monitored on a yearly basis (for the timeframe see the table at the end of the report).

3.5 Costs

No costs for the update.

3.6 Funding sources

The funding sources for the measures provided for in the Criteria are provincial ones. Calls for proposals under Axis 1 – Research and Innovation have ERDF sources.

4. Action 2: Support R&D cooperation projects between research institutes and enterprises

4.1 The Background

From the SWOT analysis it emerged that R&D project carried out in cooperation among enterprises and/or between enterprises and research centres are positively evaluated because they were mentioned both as strengths and opportunities.

Fostering the cooperation among enterprises and between enterprises and research centres is considered a strength; besides, calls for proposals supporting these R&D cooperation projects are considered as premises for the cooperation between these subjects (see the Strengths (S) of the SWOT analysis: **S5** Direct financing of enterprises and research centres, **S6** Premises for the cooperation between enterprises and enterprises and research centres, **S7** Calls for proposals that foster the cooperation between SMEs and R&D centres).

Increasing cooperation is also regarded as an opportunity for the local context. The 1st call for proposal carried out is considered a means that promoted R&D activities and raised awareness of the subject matter. These type of projects, and specifically the so-called "integrated projects", could increase the participation of the local university and research institutes. Furthermore, with the participation of research centres also the project management capacity of the enterprises can increase, in that they have the support of a project manager; it is maintained in fact that, in most cases, research centres have better knowledge of project management. This latter aspect is considered also a threat because it is affirmed that cooperation management displays also some critical elements, given, as stated, the insufficient experience of enterprises in project management; the cooperation with research centres may in turn help overcoming those difficulties.

See the Opportunities (O) of the SWOT analysis: **O3** Participating in ERDF calls for proposals makes enterprises more capable of participating in EU projects, **O7** Increasing cooperation, **O8** Research and innovation "integrated projects", **O13** Increasing number of companies applying for R&D funds.

From the considerations made above, it is believed that it is of utmost importance to continue supporting R&D cooperation projects.

Both in the local stakeholder group meetings and during the Peer Review session there was an intense debate about R&D cooperation projects, which resulted in the SWOT analysis.

From the later discussions during the InnoBridge project meeting, the other regions' Peer Review sessions and Good Practices, the topic very frequently emerged. The importance of the collaboration between research institutes and the business sectors in doing innovation is regarded as a relevant development factor and seen as an essential way to foster innovation by many InnoBridge partner regions. Some regions

already display a good collaboration and networking among these actors, like in the Tampere region; other regions are launching specific initiatives to promote that cooperation: Castilla y León has launched the "Market-oriented Prototypes Programme" and the "University-Business Challenge Contest" and Hungary has implemented the "Excellent industry-academy cooperation" initiative. Such cooperation is also fostered through the creation of spaces, also physically meant, where actors of innovation can meet, know each other and start carrying out projects together: this is the role of the technology park set up in many regions: within the InnoBridge project we have visited those present in Sofia and Krakow and we have shown the NOI Technology Park in Bolzano to our project partners. Furthermore, all the approved projects which are under implementation, will be monitored in the coming 2 years.

The opportunity to compare and benchmark the different measures at the support of innovation and the awareness that cooperation between research centres and enterprises is a focus and a challenge in many partner regions, made us understand that the measure of the calls for proposals addressing R&D projects carried out in cooperation between research and enterprises are a priority in promoting innovation and fostering R&D results.

4.2 Action

An action already taken is the support of R&D&I projects carried out in cooperation between enterprises and research and knowledge transfer centres present in South-Tyrol by the 3rd ERDF call for proposals "Research and innovation", which closed in November 2017 and the 4th call which closed in July 2018. These are carried out within the Measure 1.1.4 "Support to the cooperation activities of R&D to the development of new sustainable technologies, new products and services". Both calls supported the implementation of research, development and innovation projects carried out in cooperation between enterprises and research and knowledge-dissemination organisations.

Please find the calls for proposal here:

3rd call for proposals: [www.provincia.bz.it/politica-diritto-relazioni-estere/europa/downloads/2017_FESR_BANDO_asse1_DEF\(1\).pdf](http://www.provincia.bz.it/politica-diritto-relazioni-estere/europa/downloads/2017_FESR_BANDO_asse1_DEF(1).pdf)

4th call for proposals: http://www.provincia.bz.it/politica-diritto-relazioni-estere/europa/downloads/2018_FESR_BANDO_4.pdf

The various initiatives organised within InnoBridge, in particular the Interregional Learning Workshops and the local stakeholder group meetings, provided the decisive elements to steer the 4th call for proposals towards the support of the cooperation between research centres and enterprises, rather than towards the support of scientific research. In the 4th call for proposals there was a large participation, thus contributing to boost the proactive cooperation between research centres and enterprises.

Given the importance of cooperation projects and the growing participation in the calls, we would like to support such initiatives also in the future similar initiatives will be also supported in the future.

4.3 Players involved

The players involved are the public bodies, the research centres and the enterprises. The calls for proposals are launched by the Managing Authority (Europe Department) with the consultancy of the Department for Innovation, Research and University, the measure manager for the initiatives under Axis 1 – Research and Innovation. Research centres and enterprises are then the leading actors of R&I in that they are designing and carrying out R&D projects.

4.4 Timeframe

The calls for proposals currently opened will finance projects which can have a duration of 3 years; therefore, their effects and impact will be assessed in the monitoring phase of InnoBridge. In that phase, the monitoring will be carried out by the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, and specifically by the two departments involved, the Europe Department and the Department for Innovation, Research and University.

Besides through the self-performance indicator, the present action implementation will be monitored through the following indicators:

1. Number of R&D cooperation projects between research institutes and enterprises.
2. Number of R&D cooperation project among enterprises.
3. Number of research institutes involved.
4. Number of enterprises involved.

These indicators will be monitored on a yearly basis (for the timeframe see the table at the end of the report).

4.5 Costs

The 3rd ERDF call for proposals “Research and innovation” provided for 3 Million Euros for R&D cooperation projects (Investment Priority 1 b) which financed the approved projects.

The 4th ERDF call for proposals “Research and innovation” provided for 4,5 Million Euros for R&D cooperation projects (Investment Priority 1 b) which financed the approved projects.

4.6 Funding sources

ERDF money of the budget of Axis 1 (total budget of Axis 1 for the period 2014-2020 is approximately 32 Million Euros).

5. Action 3: Involve municipalities in innovation activities

5.1 The Background

From the experience exchange with the InnoBridge partners it emerged that the activities which can be supported (and not just financially) and the subjects which can be active in the innovation activities are manifold. The local context of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano is characterised by a variety of actors in the economic and innovation fields, but still many others could be involved.

The experience of the Finnish colleagues of the Council of Tampere Region through the "Six Aika project" shows the potential of the municipalities in carrying out innovation activities and the positive results brought by the collaboration among municipalities and between municipalities and the other players of innovation.

The Sofia partners illustrated what can be realised at the city level in terms of innovation activities and projects and the strong role that a city can play in these (an example is the Good Practice presented - "Public and media outreach and promotion service at Sofia Fund for Innovations").

The Autonomous Province of Bolzano has also started in this direction. In the 2nd ERDF call for proposals "Services for innovation" within Axis 1 - Research and Innovation some projects submitted by the municipalities were financed. This shows that also the municipalities are considering themselves as actors and promoters of innovation. It seems that there is a positive trend towards the growing involvement of municipalities in the field of innovation. Moreover, through the involvement of the municipalities also the civil society is involved.

From the SWOT analysis, the involvement of the "territorial bodies" like the municipalities emerged as a strength of the local system to the support of innovation. Furthermore, the activation of the multipliers and the territorial coverage of the services offered are considered as strengths.

5.2 Action

The active role of the municipalities had already been present in the 2nd ERDF call for proposals "Services for innovation" within Axis 1 "Research and Innovation" (Investment Priority 1b – Measure 1.3.3), within which some projects of services were submitted by municipalities and were financed.

In the 3rd ERDF call for proposals "Research and Innovation" (Investment Priority 1a – Measure 1.5.1), the aim of involving and supporting municipalities in innovation activities was still promoted: in fact, potential beneficiaries could be public bodies in the Province of Bolzano. The financed initiatives were, among the infrastructures of laboratories at the NOI Techpark, infrastructures which are functional for the development of the provincial system for R&I to foster the setting up of new

innovative businesses, also through the creation of networks promoted by the public bodies.

The 4th ERDF call for proposals "Research and Innovation" (Investment Priority 1a – Measure 1.5.1), closed in July 2018, provided for the possibility for territorial units to submit projects regarding the setting up of infrastructures for the development of the provincial system of R&I to foster the creation of new innovative enterprises.

The last two mentioned calls for proposals were launched under Investment Priority 1a but they are worth illustrating here because they contributed to the involvement of municipalities in the promotion of innovation. Municipalities aimed at setting up a physical space where to allow persons and businesses present in their territory to carry out innovation activities.

In the last call the addressed beneficiaries are the municipalities with the exclusion of the municipality of Bolzano, the capital city of the Province. Bolzano, in fact, being the capital city of the Province, is the place where the majority of the initiatives concentrate; by giving precedence to the municipalities of the territory, the aim is also to develop the peripheries of the Province.

Synergies between companies which have specific competences in the field of Industry 4.0 and municipalities, can support those technologies to move in the direction of smart cities; this can take place for instance in the fields of open data, big data, monitoring systems, mobility and energy efficiency.

5.3 Players involved

The players involved in such action are first and foremost the municipalities themselves, which need to consider themselves as actors and promoters of innovation, the citizens, the enterprises and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano in continuing supporting the activities of the municipalities.

The calls for proposals are launched by the Managing Authority (Europe Department) with the consultancy of the Department for Innovation, Research and University, the measure manager for the initiatives under Axis 1 – Research and Innovation.

The Department of Innovation, Research and University will organise bilateral meetings and dissemination events to sensibiliser municipalities on their role in fostering innovation.

5.4 Timeframe

In the 2nd phase of InnoBridge the activity of monitoring the projects submitted and financed by the calls for proposals will be carried out. According to the calls, the financed projects have a 3 years period implementation; therefore, monitoring and assessment activity of the results will be carried out. Moreover, it will help for the thinking of the next programming period actions in Research and Innovation.

The action implementation will be monitored through the following indicator: Number of municipalities involved.

This indicator will be monitored on a yearly basis (for the timeframe see the table at the end of the report).

5.5 Costs

The budget for the 4th ERDF call for Investment Priority 1a was 1,5 Mio Euros.

5.6 Funding sources

ERDF money of the budget of Axis 1 (total budget of Axis 1 for the period 2014-2020 is approximately 32 Million Euros).

6. Action 4: Measures for the updating of the Smart Specialisation Strategy

6.1 The Background

The Smart Specialisation Strategy represents the basis for the whole ERDF programming. The current S3 of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol was issued on the 17th March 2015. After that, Yearly programmes for Research and Innovation have been issued. Now we are at the point to update the current S3 strategy to have a programme which mirrors the current context in relation to research and innovation and sets the goals for the coming years. As S3 strategy it will also be the basis for the next ERDF programming period. Needless to mention that the S3 strategy is of utmost importance for all the regions and all the Member states in Europe. During the discussions within the InnoBridge project we got to know many ways of conceiving the strategy and focus on different aspects, for instance some are putting attention on the long-term goals, others on the capabilities to foster, etc. The Good Practice Working Groups for Małopolska Smart Specialisation Strategy presented by the Małopolska region was very interesting in terms of organisation and tasks given to these groups.

During 2018 the Department started thinking of the aim to update the RIS3 Strategy. Internal meetings took place to start brainstorming on a possible way to carry out the updating process. Other regions' strategies were analysed in order to get insights into other ways of drafting it. Furthermore, internally the decision was taken to dedicate personnel to this activity.

The ultimate goal is to think of a programme and draft the related document, which will be the reference document for the whole strategy for research and innovation and a strategy which is referred to by the actors of innovation as a living and operative programme. Having a clear and updating strategy is also a need of the Managing Authority of the ERDF funds on our region in order to draft the new Operational Programme of the next Programming Period, on the basis of which the future measures (like calls for proposals) under Axis 1 – Research and Innovation will be launched.

6.2 Action

Many actions will be taken to carry out the updating process. First, a think tank for drafting the concept for the update will be set up. This will be first and foremost composed of internal staff, which will then also keep the Managing Authority updated. The think tank has the tasks to revise the RIS3 strategy, analyse other regions' strategies, stay updated with the national and European trends, and involve external expertise. Secondly, working groups will be set up to gather the opinion of the people who are daily involved in research and innovation activities.

6.3 Players involved

The current Smart Specialisation Strategy was the outcome of the working of the public authorities in charge of the S3 and the debate with and among the local stakeholders. The current strategy will follow the same path. Currently, the preparatory work for setting up the strategy and the modality whereby to carry out the whole process is going on. Then, the relevant stakeholders will be involved: the "Quadruple helix" model will be taken into consideration, thus the 4 different types of actors already involved or possibly involved in the research and innovation activities, will be invited to participate to the process.

6.4 Timeframe

For the timeframe and the indicators of the actions see the table below.

6.5 Costs

Personnel costs of staff of the Department for Innovation, Research and University, probably costs for external expert and for meetings organisation.

6.6 Funding sources

Provincial funds to carry out the designing of the concept and the final update of the strategy.

7. Indicators

Nr. of action	Action	Nr. of indicator	Indicator	Source	Target value (2021)	Unit
1.	Update the implementation criteria	1.1	Trend of the number of applications presented within the single measures for innovation	Office of Innovation and Technology	750	Nr.
		1.2	Trend of the investments presented by the enterprises within the single measures for innovation	Office of Innovation and Technology	75 €	Mio.
		1.3	Time of evaluation of the applications	Office of Innovation and Technology	4 months	Months
		1.4	Number of R&D projects presented after a consultancy by an external body	Office of Innovation and Technology and other actors (NOI, Chamber Of Commerce)	55%	%
2.	Support R&D cooperation projects between research institutes and enterprises	2.1	Number of R&D cooperation projects between research institutes and enterprises.	Office of Innovation and Technology	10	Nr.



		2.2	Number of R&D cooperation project among enterprises.	Office of Innovation and Technology	3	Nr.
		2.3	Number of research institutes involved in R&D projects.	Office of Innovation and Technology	12	Nr.
		2.4	Number of enterprises involved.	Office of Innovation and Technology	18	Nr.
3.	Involve municipalities in innovation activities	3.1	Municipalities involved.	Office of Innovation and Technology	4	Nr.
4.	Measures for the updating of the Smart Specialisation Strategy	4.1	Results of the activities of the think tank.	Office of Innovation and Technology	Milestones set	Nr.
		4.2.	Results of the working groups integrated into updated S3 by end of 2021.	Office of Innovation and Technology	Nr. And quality of inputs given.	Quantitative and qualitative.
		4.3	Scientific know-how given by the external expertise.	Office of Innovation and Technology	Nr. And quality of inputs given.	Quantitative and qualitative.



8. Timeframe for the implementation of the actions

Nr. of action	Action	Date	Milestone
1.	Update the implementation criteria	May 2018	Provincial Decree of approval of Implementation Criteria.
		Beginning 2019	Monitoring of applications submitted (on the basis on the updated Criteria) in 2018.
		Beginning 2020	Monitoring of applications submitted (on the basis on the updated Criteria) in 2019.
		Beginning 2021	Monitoring of applications submitted (on the basis on the updated Criteria) in 2020.
2.	Support R&D cooperation projects between research institutes and enterprises	November 2017	3 rd ERDF call for proposals "Research and innovation" closed.
		After project approval	Monitoring of project implementation.
		July 2018	4 th call for proposals "Research and innovation" closed.
		After project approval	Monitoring of project implementation.
		2019, 2020, 2021	Monitoring of all projects.



3.	Involve municipalities in innovation activities	July 2018	4 th ERDF call for proposals "Research and Innovation" closed.
		After project approval	Monitoring of project implementation.
4.	Measures for the updating of the Smart Specialisation Strategy	April 2019	Draft the concept for the process of updating the Strategy.
		Second half of 2019	Final draft of the concept for the update of the strategy (involvement of stakeholders, working groups workshops, support of external expert, etc).
		2020	Working groups workshops.
		2021	Final activities: sum up the results of the activities carried out (workshops, interviews, analyses, external contributions of experts, etc) and draft the strategic document.
		End of 2021	The new S3 should be ready.



9. Signature

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available):

The Action Plan will be signed by Franz Schöpf.