



REGIONAL ACTION PLAN
for the
REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA –GREECE

In the context of
PURE COSMOS Project-
Public Authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs

March 2019

Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's
Local Authorities- ANATOLIKI SA



REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA,
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TO:

Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's Local
Authorities- ANATOLIKI SA

SUBJECT: Approval of the REGIONAL ACTION PLAN for the REGION OF CENTRAL MACEDONIA –GREECE in the context of PURE COSMOS Project-“Public Authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs”

Dear All

With this letter we would like to confirm

- that we were informed about the progress of the Pure Cosmos project throughout its phase 1,
- that we were in regular contact with the project partner regarding the influence of the policy instrument and the elaboration of the action plan,
- that the activities described in the action plan are in line with the priorities of the axis 1 of the ROP of Central Macedonia,
- that we acknowledge its contribution to the expected results and impact on the ROP and specifically on the mechanism for supporting innovation and entrepreneurship of the Region of Central Macedonia,
- that we will support the implementation of the Action Plan during phase 2 of the project.

Mr Michailides Constantinos

Head of Directorate of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support

General information

Project: PURE COSMOS - Public Authorities Role Enhancing Competitiveness of SMEs

Partner organisation: Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's Local Authorities - ANATOLIKI SA

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): Region of Central Macedonia (through letter of Support)

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Part II – 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: Regional Operational Program of Region of Central Macedonia 2014-2020

This Regional Action Plan (RAP) implemented by ANATOLIKI SA capitalizes the findings of the survey, the PEER REVIEW and the Good Practices Registered in the context of PURE COSMOS Project. The Good Practices studied during the first phase of INTERREG EUROPE PURE COSMOS Project, were proved to be an incentive and a lever for the incorporation of practices into a Regional Action Plan that aims at reducing administrative burdens of public services and also serving businesses in a more transparent and efficient way.

ABBREVIATIONS:

RAP: Regional Action Plan

RCM: Region of Central Macedonia

ROP: Regional Operational Program

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

SMEs: Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GP: Good Practice

RTDI: Research, Technological Development and Innovation

RIS3: Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialization

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies

IB: Investitionsbank Saxony-Anhalt

OSS: One Stop Shop

OSLO: One Stop Liaison Office

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A) Background

The Region of Central Macedonia is one of the thirteen regions of Greece. It is the second largest and most populated Region of Greece after Attica, with a population of almost 1.9 million (Census 2011).

In Macroeconomic view, the Region bears a diminishing GDP per capita in the last years, keeping in mind that the whole country is going through economic crisis with severe effects on entrepreneurial sector. The slight improvement in the unemployment rate in the region is an encouraging stimulus.

Main macroeconomic data of the Region of Central Macedonia					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP*	25,807	24,172	23,771	23,716	n.a.
GDP per capita**	13,458	12,669	12,520	12,557	n.a.
Gross fixed capital formation*	4,490	3,193	3,026	3,009	n.a.
Unemployment Rate (%)	26.2	30.2	28.75	26.0	24.5

*In million euros

**In euros

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (<http://www.statistics.gr>)

According to the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020, the Region of Central Macedonia addresses critical issues of competitiveness and entrepreneurship and a series of structural weaknesses. In the last years there has been a contraction of regional GDP and divergence from the national and European average. Because of economic crisis, investment is reduced, many businesses transfer their activity abroad and the productive businesses tend to reduce in total number. The region suffers from a timeless retreat in manufacturing industries, agriculture and construction sector while, domestic investment is being reduced. The backbone of the Regional Economy is mainly based on

SMEs, but they are mainly deriving from traditional sectors with low levels of productivity, innovation and competitiveness. The degree of production and knowledge-intensive services are particularly low.

Because of the economic crisis, the structural problems of SMEs have grown, such as difficulties in raising external capital, in the development of RTDI activities and in their expansion to new markets. Establishing new businesses on new basis, ideas and reorientation is considered necessary to tackle the recession and also to change the productive model of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM).

A new productive model for the Region should be based on 4 sectors of High Regional Interest, as they are highlighted in RIS3 Strategy. The 4 specialization sectors participate decisively in the Gross Added Value of the region, employing a significant number of workers, maintaining critical mass and exhibiting intrinsic dynamics and extroversion. The sectors designated as “Champion Sectors” in the Region of Central Macedonia are a) Agro-food, b) Construction Materials, c) Textile & Clothing and d) Tourism. Respectively, another 4 technological sectors have been identified, with particularly decisive role in the activation of the economic advantages of the Region towards innovation, competitiveness and extroversion. The technological sectors act as catalysts for absorbing innovation, identified as “Horizontal Support Sectors” and are the following: a) Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) b) Energy Technologies, c) Environmental Technologies and d) Transport and Logistics Technologies.

Enhancing RIS3 Strategy and bearing in mind that the Region holds intrinsic strengths, the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 focuses on the enhancement of Entrepreneurship, through Priority Axis 03 "Improving Competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises" which is a strategic choice of the Region. The ROP 2014-2020 promotes SMEs competitiveness by providing financial support of approximately € 97,6 million (100% public expenditure).

Priority Axis 3 is fully aligned with the Thematic Objective 3 as described in NSRF 2014-2020 and more specifically with 3a, 3c and 3d:

3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating economic activity exploiting new ideas and supporting the creation of new business and business incubators

3c - Supporting the creation and expansion of advanced skills for the product and service development

3d - Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets and to participate in innovation processes.

In the context of PURE COSMOS Project, the Investment Priority chosen to promote SMEs entrepreneurship was 3c, as pointed out in the Application Form.

Apart from funding SMEs, administrative progress should be made. To help SMEs start-up, advance and grow the Region of Central Macedonia has realized the need to overcome red tape and administrative burdens. In the Approved Strategic Regional Plan for RCM 2015-2019¹, the SWOT Analysis clearly points out the weaknesses of the Regional Authority as an Organization that need to be solved. Some weaknesses - relevant to PURE COSMOS Objectives- are the following:

- Absence of quality management systems implementation and weak standardization in operating procedures
- Bureaucratic and dysfunctional way of moving or signing documents
- Presence of co-responsibilities at various administrative levels
- Interregional inequality at the organizational level of different Regional Services
- Heterogeneous organizational culture and weakness to develop partnerships between different regional services

¹ Approved Strategic Regional Plan for RCM 2015-2019, SWOT Analysis pages:118-123

- Unreasonable service charges between the Services due to the regulatory framework
- Incomplete implementation of risk management systems
- Smart communication between central government and local/regional government
- Inadequate legislative framework create time-consuming procedures, bureaucracy and waste of resources
- Fragmented use of the backoffice electronic platform that results in weak integrated monitoring of projects financed by different financial sources
- Lag in adopting digital systems and digital circulation of documents

The SWOT Analysis also identifies some important strengths within the Public Services of the Regional Authority that can satisfy the objectives of PURE COSMOS, for more business friendly services, transparency and reduced bureaucracy. The strengths pointed out in the Strategic Regional Plan 2015-2019 are the following:

- Applied Digital Signature through “ermis” system
- Simplified administrative procedures during the stage of competence transfer and authorized signatory
- Supply of "NOMOTELIA" electronic law database tool to be used by all Services in the context of dealing with the multiplicity of law and continuous modifications of legislative framework
- Digitalized files and folders
- Reorganized way of collaboration between regional headquarters and the Regional Unit across Central Macedonia for best service of citizens
- Strengthened role of Internal Control Unit to improve the efficiency of the Regional Authority in terms of legitimacy compliance and management rationalization
- Upgrade and wider use of electronic applications (eg back-office Applications) throughout the Organization of the Regional Authority)
- Wider use of digital tools (Law database, databases of others operators etc) new forms of electronic communication and cooperation (e.g. teleconference, e-commerce platform)

- Free wi-fi coverage in Regional Organisations to serve citizens and traders in priority
- New applications developed that focus on Information Management Systems for decision making (M.I.S.)

Based on the abovementioned strengths and weaknesses, **the Regional Strategy** for the internal development of the Regional Authority as an Organization, aims at the

“Use of Information & Communication Technology tools and innovative management tools to simplify administrative procedures and improve the quality of the provided services”

The regional strategy is in compliance with PURE COSMOS objective to improve the effectiveness of Public Sector by improved governance. The regional strategy for wider use of ICT tools and simplified public services is directed not only to citizens but to entrepreneurs as well. Improved governance through IT administrative solutions, regional legislation review and simplified services are considered the basis for speeding up economic activity and for launching new business calls.

This Action Plan was prepared to address this challenge and was drafted after close cooperation with the Regional Authority. The road map for developing this Action Plan, was tracked by the Baseline Survey implemented in the first semester, the Peer Review findings, the Study Visits attended regarding Good Practices recognized in PURE COSMOS and last but not least the exchange of experience with SMEs and Stakeholders.

B) The Baseline Survey

In order PURE COSMOS to evaluate the situation in which enterprises were in the beginning of the project, ANATOLIKI SA with the essential help of Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry reached the SMEs in the region by conducting a local survey, in which 102 SMEs participated after reaching more than 4500 SMEs. The low participation in the survey shows the reluctance of SMEs to participate in surveys of economic or organisational content since they are bombarded by such initiatives due to

economic crisis. Additionally, it shows little faith in entrepreneurial environment change in the near future.

The survey objective was to listen to SMEs needs and also to provide a baseline for the current situation of SMEs, in order to evaluate the progress made during the implementation of PURE COSMOS project and after the activation of the Regional Action Plan.

Since ANATOLIKI SA and RCM chose to positively influence the indicator “improved governance” by 10% within PURE COSMOS implementation, the baseline survey was considered necessary to determine point zero.

The survey is going to be repeated at the last semester of the project life (phase 2), as a questionnaire distributed to SMEs in order to reply on their satisfaction by the Actions implemented. Questionnaires will again be distributed by Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry through its CRM system, which is considered as the most efficient and reliable way to reach SMEs.

The most important outcomes of the baseline survey are presented in the RAP to provide a holistic view of what the SMEs need and wish to see changed in the near future. The SMEs needs and the PEER REVIEW findings (see next chapter) influenced the drafting of this Action Plan and became the basis of dialogue between ANATOLIKI SA and the Regional Authority of Central Macedonia, when investigating which actions would better promote Public Sector efficiency and entrepreneurship enhancement.

Basic results of the baseline survey are summarized in the following bullets:

- 40.2% of the businesses in the Region are one-man enterprises (a business that is operated by just one person)
- 74.3% of the businesses are considered as micro-business employing 1 to 9 employees. 22.8% are considered small enterprises employing 10-49 employees and only 3% are businesses that employ 50 to 249 employees.
- 43.6% of businesses show lower annual turnover than a year ago, but 41.6% of businesses wish to expand in the next 2-3 years.

- Most Enterprises consider themselves as very capable (45.8%) or quite capable (46.9%) in Business Planning, quite capable (45.3%) in decision making on law and tax issues, very capable (46.21%) in introducing new products and services but they are feeling weaker in entering new markets.
- When comparing 2014 to 2016, most of businesses show a great progress in developing innovative products, services and procedures. More and more businesses pay more attention on staff training to follow the new era and to find a way out of economic crisis.
- Most important burdens that the businesses pointed out were economic crisis, taxes and bureaucracy. Digital skills were not considered as burden.
- Most companies don't provide the Public Sector with their services due to 5 reasons:
 - The small turnover does not meet the minimum preconditions for contracting with local authorities (68.8% of SMEs)
 - The services / products offered are not relevant to Public Sector needs (67,5% of SMEs)
 - There is little knowledge on how to approach the public sector in order to offer innovative products/services (58,3% of SMEs)
 - There are no accepted ways of paying
 - There is lack of time & transparency
 - Great delays in payments by the Public Sector is a deterrent factor, especially for small businesses
- SMEs tend to offer their services/products to other SMEs (82.4% of SMEs) or other big companies.
- In order to achieve their sustainability over time, SMEs declare that the problems they have to deal with are primarily limited financial resources (66%), legislation and bureaucracy (40.2%) and the lack of time (22.7%).

Specifically for bureaucracy and legislation, SMEs replied :

- *"Initiatives for growth and expansion are hampered by bureaucracy and multi-legislation"*

- *"Legislation imposes payment of high amounts and often poses unfeasible conditions for issuing licenses"*
- *"Especially for Social Enterprises, there is no clear tax framework"*
- *"Multiple documents, that cannot be submitted electronically, are required to start-up or modify a business"*
- *"The ambiguities of the law, the constant changes in the tax and insurance regime, the time-consuming procedures, the delays in payments by the public Sector and finally the lack of transparency are a major problem"*

In conclusion, SMEs are the backbone of the Regional Economy. The survey has shown that engaging with the Public Sector is largely not seen as a strong business move by the SMEs. SMEs recognize that there is a lack of demand for their services by the public. Tax, legislation and lack of transparency hinder entrepreneurial development or starting-up. Non extensive digital applications offered to SMEs create time-consuming procedures. Businesses find themselves as capable to obtain digital skills, and show a moderate optimism in expanding their activities next years.

C) The Peer Review Findings

The Peer Review was organized by ANATOLIKI SA in Semester 2, on 31st January & 1st February 2017. It was considered a very successful step for exchange of Experience and promotion of interregionality. Five Experts from Genoa, Florence, Saxony-Anhalt, Birmingham and Usti Region evaluated the environment of Enterprises and their interaction with the Public Sector in the Region of Central Macedonia after being informed about the current situation and the survey results. The Peer Review was organised on two pillars: existing SMEs and Start-ups. For both pillars Experts assessed common regional practices, suggested actions to be taken and pointed out European Good Practices to overcome local problems. Experts' recommendations are summed up in the following tables.

Experts' Recommendations for start-ups

From research to	1. Work on flexible procedures, provide infrastructure and opportunities, set
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Entrepreneurship:	<p>standards of performance and then let the start up free to test and to scale = to develop organically! Starting-up is not a linear process</p> <p>2. Link and connect the key actors: Universities, Research Centers and Enterprises.</p> <p>3. Focus on the expected result and not on the process. Find a market and clients for the product/service. Start a business following organic process</p> <p>4. Start entrepreneurial training/ motivational events during university years, showing the "business option" among the other career choices</p> <p>5. Provide shared spaces and increase intersectoral, international, multidisciplinary connections</p> <p>6. Disseminate "Business Fails stories" –Fail is part of the final success</p>
Funding:	<p>1. Provide a mix of grants, loans, guarantees, crowdfunding</p> <p>2. Train the start-uppers on the financial aspects</p> <p>3. "Funnel" financing in Proof of Concept/pre seed, bottom up approach based on shared services- Clusterization</p> <p>4. Multistage evaluation and P2P financing platform</p>
Networking:	<p>1. Experience international relationships and develop a strong network of contacts</p> <p>2. Get advantage of creative spaces like pubs and coffee bars where young and creative minds meet.</p> <p>3. Use networking expats, migrants or create program for young people like Go and Go Back Share labs during "winter schools" for startups/scientists</p>

Recommendations for existing SMEs

Funding services &	<p>1. Create a one-and single OSS- not many smaller OSSs</p> <p>2. Public organizations should only fill in where there are gaps of support that the private sector can't provide- there isn't much public money and should not be wasted</p> <p>3. "Start & Growth" online applications</p> <p>4. Requalify a neighbourhood-Incentivise traditional activities to revive local entrepreneurship</p> <p>5. Focus on the allocation of non-repayable funds without bank guarantees but only on the basis of a guarantee linked to the assessment of the idea made by a public, or private-public body.</p> <p>6. Simplify and digitalise public funding (electronic file, transparency)</p> <p>7. Research of private funds and microcredit should be done by the private sector</p>
Public Procurement	<p>1. Strike a balance between fairness and evaluating local impact – add a "social value" or "social impact" measure or criterion</p> <p>2. Use "Pre commercial public procurement" (PCP) tool. https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/pre-commercial-procurement</p> <p>3. Streamline relationship of enterprises with the Public Administration through online procedures, e-payment</p>

Main expert recommendations, which this Regional Action Plan took into account, was the creation of one and only One-Stop-Shop, the streamlining of the relationship between enterprises and the Public Services through online procedures, the creation of shared spaces to host start-ups and the suggestion to link and connect the key actors: Universities, Research Centers and Enterprises. Besides, the activation of the triple Helix is a strategic choice of RIS3 for the Region of Central Macedonia.

D) Good practices Imported

PURE COSMOS created a Good Practice Register with all partners contributing. Some of the practices were really of great interest for the Region of Central Macedonia, providing solutions and ideas to be adopted to solve local weaknesses. ANATOLIKI's staff, and local stakeholders had the chance to visit the relevant organizations- good practice owners- to examine if and how it can be imported to the Regional Action Plan of RCM.

The Good practices that have emerged to be good examples for introduction into the administrative procedures of the RCM were the **One-Stop-Shop of Catalonia Government** and the **Innovation Ecosystems / incubating services offered by Catalonia and Birmingham**.

The Study Visit in the Catalan Government was very inspiring for the Region of Central Macedonia. The lessons learnt were the organisation and the efficiency of the Catalanian OSS. Political will was stressed by the Catalan Partners, in order simplification law to be put into force. The steps of the Catalan Good Practice were analysed.

The Catalonian One Stop Shop (OSS) works as a reference point for entrepreneurs, corporations and intermediaries in dealing with the public administration. It incorporates all procedures and services that businesses have to follow to start, operate and modify a business throughout its lifecycle, regardless of the public Administration level involved. The OSS front-office is a website that includes all services and procedures that enterprises need for developing their activity. This website works as a very useful tool with "Guided search of procedures", which poses interactive questions to the enterprises

about their activity, localization, municipality. The tool guides the user according to respective answers, thus informing him about all the procedures and the order in which they have to be done. For an expert-to-expert cooperation ANATOLIKI SA, in collaboration with the Regional Authority, organised an import workshop on the OSS Good practice, as a learning and introductory procedure, on 27th April 2018. The Catalonian Good Practice was fully presented and explained during the Import Workshop, A representative of the Catalan Government presented the steps for organizing the OSS, the laws necessary to be activated (Catalonian “simplification Law 16/2015”, “article 10: Reduction of administrative burdens and barriers to access economic activity”), the key actors to be involved and the official website of the Catalan digital OSS. The Import Workshop was considered as successful. Questions were posed to the Catalonian Expert by the Administrative staff of RCM, ICT department, Innovation Support department, Standardization Department, Internal Control Department. The questions regarded many fields in the organization of OSS. The answers were written by the Regional Authority to solve in advance problems that may occur during the formulation of the regional OSS and the opening of forthcoming calls.

Some of the questions	ANSWERS-findings
How early did the Government of Catalunya “hear” on SMEs needs? Which way?	SMEs are not experts in public procedures. They have little knowledge on how to open or modify a business. Multiple public actors and Heterogeneity in the treatment of economic activities kept SMEs in uncertainty.
Which were the first steps in the early years?	Catalan government realized that a new relationship between companies and Public administration should be established. The electronic way would be the most homogenous platform for wide information
Was it a political choice to create the OSS?	Strong political will was very important in order to abandon old procedures and adopt the electronic ones. Additionally, the political will was extremely decisive when legislating the “simplification law”.

How does the Government get feedback on how the platform works for SMEs? Is it user friendly?	The platform generates reports
How often does the Government draft a strategic/operational plan?	Every 3 years the Government reforms its operation program and expands the OSS with new services, after assessment of previous years (test, assess, improve, expand procedure)
Has the online platform totally replaced human service?	By law, it was decided that all SMEs/citizens should apply only online. Public servants stopped serving people in person but they implement the back office work which is also very demanding
How did they cope with elderly people that are not familiar with digital applications?	A servant is always available to help in person the elderly apply online, through the guided search tool, in the governmental offices (central or regional).
How were some ICT problems encountered	The Catalonian Expert answered some details but for the rest enabled the networking and exchange of information with the Government ICT department.

A discussion was held between the executives of the RCM and the representatives of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Municipality of Thessaloniki, which provide services to businesses. Both the Catalonian Expert and Greek Members recognised the OSS as a driving force of new relationship between SMEs and public sector. The Catalan Good Practice can be transferred because it operates through an electronic channel that can also be produced in RCM. Moreover, the creation of the Regional OSS is strongly reinforced by the political will of the Regional Governor Mr Tzitzikostas, who wishes to transform the Region of Central Macedonia into a prototype entrepreneurial Region in Greece.

Moreover, ANATOLIKI SA had the chance to visit the Florentine Good Practice of a Municipal OSS. The Study Visit showed the back-office and front-office procedures for services that are served through the OSS, the coordination of public sector competences

and the legal framework that supports the operation of the OSS. The Florentine study visit, included examples of what procedures are needed to be followed when opening specific business (for example hair salon or a restaurant). All competent Public Services presented administrative steps and how they are speeded-up by the Municipal OSS.

Regarding the Good Practices on Innovation Ecosystem & Start-ups Incubation, ANATOLIKI SA had the chance to attend Innovation Birmingham campus and the Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness- ACCIÓ. Both Study visits offered knowledge on how to help start-ups begin and grow (through mentoring and counseling), how to accelerate their services or products and how the public sector can collaborate with the private sector to offer shared spaces for ideas to thrive.

Innovation Birmingham is a digital and technology campus providing office suites, meeting and conference facilities and co-working opportunities for innovators, entrepreneurs and investors looking to develop or fund innovative digital start-ups with high growth potential. Catalan ACCIÓ is the Agency for Business Competitiveness. ACCIÓ's different programmes promote internationalization and innovation of businesses. It serves 24,000 companies a year. It connects businesses to the key strategic sectors, by promoting internationalization and innovation. It helps Catalan businesses and start-ups boost their competitiveness and helps international companies connect with local businesses. ACCIÓ advises on funding options and connects start-ups with innovation clusters and new markets.

The Good Practices Registered in PURE COSMOS were inspirational for Central Macedonia. The abovementioned good practices were of great importance because the Region had the chance to see how OSS and what environment can be formulated to let business ideas grow at a regional or local level.

E) Policy Instrument addressed through this Regional Action Plan

The Policy Instrument chosen in PURE COSMOS Application Form for the Region of Central Macedonia is the **Regional Operational Program of Central Macedonia 2014-2020**. More specifically, priority axis 3 “Enhancing the competitiveness of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises” is addressed through Investment Priority 3c: “Supporting the creation and the extension of advanced capacities for products and services development”.

This instrument was chosen to improve public policy towards SMEs by proposing alternative, business friendly and transparent methods to support the effectiveness of Priority Axis 3. In The Regional Operation Program of Central Macedonia (RCM) the only Specific Objective given for 3c, is “3c1 – Increasing the introduction rate of new innovative products/services of SMEs” which includes the SMEs as beneficiaries. It targets at enhancing the competitiveness of SMES and their skills through funding innovation included in SMEs business plans.

Through this policy instrument the Regional Authority of Central Macedonia sought to adopt new approaches and to integrate lessons learnt into actions for the SMEs’ support. Initial proposals made to improve the policy instrument were: reorganization of public administration, improvement of services offered to businesses, simplification of procedures and promotion of certified electronic payments between the public sector and businesses. The improvement of policy is expected to be achieved through 10% IMPROVED GOVERNANCE by 2020.

To improve policy, the RCM Regional Action Plan includes actions that satisfy the abovementioned. Since the Regional Authority is not a PURE COSMOS partner, ANATOLIKI SA received a letter of Support to implement in fruitful collaboration PURE COSMOS Regional Action Plan. Besides, the Regional Authority of Central Macedonia is the major shareholder of ANATOLIKI SA, and they have been working together since 1995, on a number of fields such as Entrepreneurship, Innovation, SME support, Environmental Strategies etc.

F) Actions

The RAP for the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) has taken into consideration a) the PEER REVIEW organised in RCM, b) the Study Visits attended, c) the good practices registered by the project and d) the Import Workshop outcome (expert-to-expert meeting) organized on OSS organization model.

Bearing in mind the suggestions of the Experts, the Region of Central Macedonia included in this Regional Action Plan, actions that support both start-ups and existing SMEs in the Region to boost entrepreneurship and to create an attractive environment, as a way out of economic crisis.

The RAP was built after consultation with the Regional Authority and with local Stakeholders that attend LSG Meetings. During the last semester of PHASE 1 (Semester 6), the RAP was reformed after consultation with the Lead Partner and the Regional Authority to include a pilot action. ANATOLIKI SA decided to include a pilot Action in order to test a new approach in supportive mechanisms for new entrepreneurs so that they start up or modify their business.

The final actions decided to be included in RCM Action Plan are the following two:

(1) Digital Service System for Citizens & Businesses- Services to optimize and digitize business processes. (OSS)

1.1 Pilot Action: Central Macedonia Office for micro & small Enterprises (CeMaO-misme)

(2) Innovation Ecosystem: Creation / Operation of incubators

At this point, it should be mentioned that in the RAP-map that was drafted during consultation with the Regional Authority, a third action was initially included. It regarded “Innovation Vouchers for SMES”. This action was initially included to influence funding out of the policy addressed in the Application Form, which is investment priority 3c “Supporting the creation and extension of advanced capacities for products and services development”. As mentioned before, the only Specific Objective given for 3c, is “3c1 –

Increasing the introduction rate of new innovative products/services of SMEs” which includes as beneficiaries only SMEs. It can fund innovation included in SMEs business plans, but it has nothing to do with digital advance of the Public Sector, e-governance, digital service etc.

During continuous consultation with the Regional Authority, the situation changed, when the Authority announced that innovation vouchers would finally be funded through the Greek Central State Aid Program. Since Innovation Vouchers are to be included in another funding scheme other than the Regional Operational Program of RCM 2014-2020, it was decided to exclude the action from PURE COSMOS Action Plan, as irrelevant.

The two actions finally chosen for the Regional Action Plan are expected to influence ERDF funds out of the Regional Operational Program of Central Macedonia 2014-2020. This means that the policy instrument still remains relevant in general, but priority axes finally change, because the two actions included in the RAP are addressed to priority axes 1 and 2. This is in total compliance with the regional planning and the Managing Authority is fully aware of it.

Action 1. Digital Service System for Citizens & Businesses- Services to optimize and digitize business processes. (OSS)

Description:

The action regards the creation of a regional digitalised system to serve entrepreneurs when starting up a business, while operating it and when shutting it down. The system will simplify back office and front office procedures. The OSS will collaborate with all respective Authorities digitally to serve citizens and businessmen fast and efficiently. SMEs licensing deriving from the Regional Authorization is expected to be done digitally, as a first step of the OSS operation. The OSS will digitalise the public procedures/paper work and will offer it online. The online tracking of the application will be available.

The Catalan OSS is the PURE COSMOS good practice that influenced the Regional Authority in creating the first Regional OSS in a centralised country.

A study Visit in Barcelona was attended by ANATOLIKI SA on 29th -30th November 2017. During the two-day study visit, ANATOLIKI SA on behalf of the Regional Authority spotted Good Practices that were of great importance so that to be possibly imported in the Region of Central Macedonia. The GD were ACCIÓ, Internationalization Vouchers Programme for SMEs, Alternative Financing Catalogue (AFC), Fostering specialized techno-start-ups, Esprint Plan from the Start-Up Catalonia Program, Catalanian OSS model, Simplification Law and “Article 10” reduction administrative burdens. The Catalan Good Practices were then presented in the local stakeholders Meeting on 16th Jan 2018, with the presence of representatives from the Region of Central Macedonia and other local bodies. The Region, taking advantage of the advanced perception of Catalanian government in supporting Start-Ups, providing specialized help to boost their financial feasibility and enhance their competitiveness internationally, communicated the good practices to the Head of the Entrepreneurship Directorate and the Governor. The OSS Good Practice (GP24) was of great interest to be imported and also met the Governor’s pre-election commitment.

Inspired by the Catalan OSS the Regional Authority set out the criteria of creating a regional OSS and drafted a call on the creation of “Innovation and Entrepreneurship Eco-System Support Mechanism” which includes the creation of a “One stop liaison office in RCM”. The inspiring elements for RCM liaison office were the Catalanian user friendly platform, the new philosophy of approaching SMEs needs, the interoperability of electronic services and the different ways to inform the SMEs (through guided search tool, through Alternative Financing Catalogue “hanging” on the platform). The call is already announced.

The announcement of call includes

- (1) the creation of a RIS3 Strategy Monitoring Mechanism
- (2) Evaluation and updating of RIS3 strategy for RCM and
- (3) The development and operation of a One Stop Liaison Office

The One Stop Liaison Office will provide:

1. **information** on the whole innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem

a. research initiatives, cooperation possibilities, mature research results ready for entrepreneurial use, available grants and funds, business angels, available incubators, accelerators

2. **Good Practices and Studies Data base** with interactive possibility of stakeholders to enrich the OSS with information such as new startups, events, mentoring opportunities, meetups, hackathons, etc

3. a web platform also accessible by disabled (WCAG 2.0.)

The mechanism announced will be a liaison office between market, researchers and the final beneficiaries of RIS3, (SMEs).

After the creation of the web platform by the abovementioned call, the Regional Authority intends to support the OSS procedures through another call that is announced to open in the near future. The call regards the “development / Upgrading of ICT Provided by Public Bodies”.

The action concerns the creation of a set of services, just like the Catalan OSS, based on the principles of e-Government, interoperability of services and information system of the RCM, that will promote the transparency, faster service of businesses / public services, increased traceability of case and support of decision-makers.

The project concerns the procurement, design, implementation, installation, configuration and operation of a digital service system for citizens and businesses and synergy of public services. This system will be located at the headquarters of the Central Macedonia Region and will serve the entire RCM on the premises of its units in all seven Regional Units.

From this call, 2 subsystems are expected to derive:

a) a **Digital Services Platform**, serving businessmen and citizens

b) an **Electronic Document Flows System**, serving the authorities internally

The Digital Services Platform is inspired by the Interregional Exchange of experience with the Catalan OSS. Apart from being a mechanism for RIS 3 monitoring, the RCM One stop liaison office vision is to expand just like the Catalan one in order to inform SMEs, interconnect them with research institutes, funding opportunities and internationalisation opportunities, though a single communication channel (the web platform). Additionally, the digital service System will offer the opportunity to export reports on the regional performance on innovation indicators, outputs, results, extroversion, etc just like the Catalan OSS.

Diagrammatic depiction of services offered today and after OSS implementation. Similarities and inspiration by PURE COSMOS Good practices

Before One stop liaison office	After One stop liaison office	Catalan OSS
Applications made by hand. Documents available online should often be printed	On line Applications, easy tracking of applications	Applications on platform (canalempresa.gencat.cat) GP 25 "Guided search of procedures" to help users find the respective documents
No connection of SMEs with Research results	RIS3 monitoring and real activation of triple helix Innovative results reach SMEs	Connects businesses with Empren Network, which also include universities
Bureaucracy and time-consuming back office procedures	Interoperability of public services	Interoperability of public services
Paper documents	Digital Documents	Digital Documents, digital signatures
Reports based on surveys	Reports on regional performance (innovation indicators, outputs, results, extroversion)	export of thematic reports (maps, awarded bidders, headquarters - GP 33,34,35,36)
Dispersed information	Concentrated information on research & innovation ecosystem, entrepreneurial events, available spaces in incubators, financing catalogue	Concentrated information on Services, Events, Alternative Financing Catalogue (GP30).
Players involved		
The Region of Central Macedonia,		

the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020,
Municipalities of Central Macedonia
Chambers, Business Associations
Public Services
Development Agencies
Business Associations
Universities and Research Institutes

The Regional Authority and the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 will be the policy owners managing the call and implementing the One Stop Liaison Office.

The Chambers, Business Associations and Public Services will have to contribute and get connected to the internal system of the OSS in order to achieve interoperability.

Universities and Research Institutes along with the support of the Regional Authority will be the main vectors for assessing and update RIS3 and suggest direction of money towards investment of high value.

Timeframe

1st December 2018 – 31st May 2023 for the upgrade of RIS3 and the creation of the One stop liaison Office

1st Jan 2019- 28th Feb 2020 for the development of the Digital Platform and the Electronic Document Flows System

1st March 2020 - .. operation of OSS

Costs

- a) “Innovation and Entrepreneurship Eco-System Support Mechanism” is estimated aprox **1 million €**

<p>b) “Development / Upgrading of ICT Provided by Public Bodies approximately 700.000 €</p>
<p>Funding sources</p>
<p>ERDF through Central Macedonia Regional Operation Program 2014-2020</p> <p>More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of the One stop liaison office (OSLO) basis will be funded under the call “Innovation and Entrepreneurship Eco-System Support Mechanism” <p>by Investment priority 1b “Promote business investment in research and innovation, develop links and synergies between businesses, research and development centers”</p> <p>Specific objective 1b2: Establishment of permanent cooperative mechanisms between research and enterprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The digitalization of procedures and documents will be obtained through the Regional Operation Program Action “Development / Upgrading of ICT Provided by Public Bodies” <p>By Investment priority 2c “Strengthening ICT applications in the field of e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health ”</p> <p>Specific Objective 2c1 “Enhancing the supply of ICT services by Regional Authorities on a regional scale”</p>

Action 1.1 Pilot Action: Central Macedonia Office for micro & small Enterprises (CeMaO-misme)

Description

The Pilot Action regards the Creation of an Office for Entrepreneurial support of small and micro Enterprises of Central Macedonia Region, that constitute the backbone of the regional economy. CeMaO will be a Supporting Hub on Innovation, interpreted as a space supporting micro and small Enterprises in their digital transformation and promoting them to microcredit. It will be designed as a central contact point where companies, not only from Thessaloniki but also throughout the Region of Central Macedonia, can go to when they need advice and support concerning digitalization.

There are many entrepreneurs or citizens with a good business idea that search different ways to get support on how to create a strong product/service but bureaucracy and multi-channelled information blocks their actions. CeMAO aims at supporting especially micro and small Enterprises of the Region, using digital applications and innovation in order to start a business or to modify an existing business that at the moment lacks in digital applications. Through CEMaO, an entrepreneur can gain knowledge on the first steps, (before using the One Stop Liaison Office-OSLO): what is the most suitable business type for his business, what legal procedures are needed (tax registration, chamber registration, Social Insurance registration), how to draft an effective business plan, how to exchange knowledge and experience with people of the market already running a relative business etc).

CeMaO Hub is believed that will concentrate information, will guide entrepreneurs and will make them mature enough before they address an application to the One Stop Liaison Office that the Region of Central Macedonia organizes. That way new businesses to apply digitally to the One stop liaison Office will be digitally more skilled, will already have a wider perspective on what digital transformation is needed for their company and will apply on a more stable basis in terms of business sustainability. So the work undertaken by the One Stop Shop afterwards will be to license businesses with higher potential success factor, leveraging local development.

The pilot Action is considered that it can contribute in the Growth and Jobs, as a supportive mechanism towards the creation/modification of SMEs, thus addressing the same target of the OSS (action 1) which is to support SMEs. It will be tested during PURE COSMOS phase 2. In case it is successful and has a reflection on entrepreneurs, then it can be sustained and financed beyond the pilot phase.

The One Stop Liaison Office is a new initiative undertaken by the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM), so an adjustment period for SMEs will be needed. CeMaO is expected to smooth the transition.

ANATOLIKI SA will act as a basis and an "antenna" for the support of SMEs in the Region of Central Macedonia .

The pilot Action is based on 2 axes:

A. Knowledge on Procedures and on Digitalisation advantages

Objective:

Provide knowledge during starting-up or business expanding and provide a better understanding of what are the opportunities and the benefits of digital transformation/technologies for SMEs, improve the culture/background of the digital within the company.

Activities:

A.1 SELECT ENTREPRENEURS

Entrepreneurs will be selected based on assessment criteria. A public procurement will be published and interested companies/entrepreneurs will fill in an Application form. All interested participants will accompany their Application Form with a brief presentation of the business idea or the new investment (for existing businesses), according to a template. Statement of intent to participate in training workshops will be needed. After setting up a committee, the candidates will be interviewed using a properly structured questionnaire. 9 companies (or business ideas) will be then selected and their entrepreneurs trained in 3 workshops. Each company may include max 3 people. The companies will attend training workshops in PP6 headquarters.

A.2 RUN TRAINING LABORATORIES

Three workshops will be organized with the following topics:

- a) how to start-up a successful business,
- b) how to reach digital innovation for SMEs,
- c) orient SMEs towards financial instruments.

The workshops, will focus both on the legal and procedural aspects of start up and on digital innovation (marketing, e-commerce, internal organization of a company, digital solutions etc) as well as on the financial aspects of the companies. Trainers will include both ANATOLIKI's staff and experts on the field. After the basic training of the 9 companies, ANATOLIKI SA will be able to support each one of the enterprises own

specific needs though personal counseling which will follow (what specific type of company is most suitable for the entrepreneur, what procedures should be followed to inscribe in the Tax office, Social Insurance office, how to develop the brief business canvas/business plan etc).

A.3 STORY-TELLING AND KNOWLEDGE OF POSSIBLE FAILURES

Two events will be organized to broaden the horizon of entrepreneurs and involve the selected enterprises/entrepreneurs:

- 1 fuck-up night events where three to four selected people get up in front of a room full of strangers to share their own professional fuckup (ie the stories of the business that crashes and burns, the partnership deal that goes sour, the product that has to be recalled, and so on). Fuck up night events was a practice suggested to ANATOLIKI by a Czech Peer (PP7) who actively participated in the PEER REVIEW organized in Thessaloniki 31st Jan 2017. The good practice aims at advancing the experience of companies on failures already faced and can be foreseen. Starting-up is an organic procedure and failure is an intermediate step to lead you to success.

- 1 World café event, designed as a structured conversational process for knowledge sharing in which entrepreneurs and experts will meet and discuss a topic at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and getting introduced to the previous discussion at their new table by a "table host". It can include success stories of relevant companies.

Expected results

- 3 Training Workshops
- 9 trained companies/entrepreneurs (with an improved and structured understanding of what digitalization means and how digital innovation can bring for the company competitiveness and performance).
- 2 story telling events (1 fuck-up night and 1 World café event)

B. Coach SMEs in their digital innovation process Consultation and mentoring

Objective

Supporting the SMEs to define their strategic activities to growth and competitiveness.

Activities

B.1 PERSONAL COUNSELING

Personal counseling will be offered to entrepreneurs by PP6 inhouse consultants/staff. This means person to person advice on subjects like tax registration issues, chamber registration, financial management, social insurance legislative framework, social economy legislative framework etc. Each entrepreneur can attend 4 personal counseling sessions. Personal counseling sessions will include guidance on the business plan development of each company. ANATOLIKI SA will consult on weak points in order the companies to develop a strong business plan and a sustainable business.

B.2 MENTORING

Apart from counseling sessions, entrepreneurs can receive mentoring sessions with specialized mentors (experts-staff of successful businesses from the market) so that they receive advice on digital applications/tools that cover their special needs. This means that entrepreneurs working successfully on a business will pass their experience and consult the new entrepreneur in a business- to- business model. ANATOLIKI SA will be responsible to find the mentors suitable so that Entrepreneurs/Companies could get support on

- the development of products and services to better answer to the customer needs (e.g, digitalization of products, personalized product, user driven product)

- the development of new business models: for instance new digital products and services, new value chain, new adaptation to the market

- the development of organization system. This means a) digitization of internal processes by using new technologies, enabling digital transformation (data analytics, sales management, softwares) and b) better decision and communication processes to develop the competence.

CeMao intends to be a parallel mechanism supporting SMEs, checking if they have a sustainable plan and guiding them to start their business (using the digital applications of the One Stop Liaison Office of RCM).

Results

- 4 personal counseling sessions per entrepreneur/company
- 9 mentoring support organized by CeMaO on global strategy of the company and in particular its own digital innovation strategy
- 9 brief business plans will be drafted as concrete results of the training and mentoring programme

Interregionality:

The pilot action is well inspired by PURE COSMOS project. As part of the Interregional Learning, each PP hosted a peer review. In the Review in RCM, the five Experts offered suggestions for improving the business environment in the Region of Central Macedonia.

The Peers' suggestions were:

1. To support both start-ups and existing businesses in the digitalisation of their skills and processes.
2. To provide a mix of loans, grants and non-repayable funds without bank guarantees to SMEs in order they advance their products/services.
3. To offer alternative forms of networking and socialisation. Fuck up night events were made known to PURE COSMOS partners by PP7 -Usti Region, who suggested to ANATOLIKI to take advantage of such practices in order to attract and inform SMEs locally. Specifically the Good Practice suggested to ANATOLIKI SA by PP7 is "Business Fails stories" originated in Mexico and started also in Prague (<http://fuckupnights.com/>)

Keeping in mind the Peers' suggestion on the one hand, and the low digital skills of businesses on the other hand (especially when it comes to micro and small enterprises that constitute the vast majority of enterprises in RCM), the Pilot Project aims at fostering digital transformation of Businesses.

Digital transformation of SMEs means use of digital technologies to create smartness to deliver better products, services and methods. It is not only an external approach dealing with acquiring new digital technologies (Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, Big Data, Data Analytics, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Robotics, 3D Printing, Block Chain),

but also a strategy for internal organization. The Supporting Hub on Innovation CeMaO will constitute a structure to highlight and support businesses who are interested in advancing their digital skills and developing business initiatives till they reach microcredits.

The interregional character of the pilot Action derives also from the import of GP40 – “CENTER OF EXPERTISE 4.0 FOR SMES” introduced to PURE COSMOS Project by PP4-Investitionsbank Saxony-Anhalt. The pilot project seeks to build on the experience of IB, which provides support to SMEs to reform weak business plans rejected by commercial banks so that they become recipients of their banking product, be it a loan or a grant. IB also operates the Center of Expertise 4.0, which supports Small and Medium Enterprises when it comes to digital solutions. This is especially useful for small businesses without an IT department. The main focus of the Center 4.0 is to improve the digital skills of Businesses through their familiarization with good practices, the organization of thematic workshops and the counseling for better internal organization. Additionally, the center supports expanding into new business activities.

During the implementation of the Pilot Action, PP4 Investitionsbank Saxony-Anhalt will have an active advisory role thus fostering additional interregionality. What PP6 will import by PP4 are PP4 practices on

- how PP4 collaborates interdisciplinary with different partners (ministries, chambers, institutes etc), how it works with multipliers (associations, networks)
- How to provide effectively information about digitalization potentials (so that thematic workshops, counseling and mentoring sessions are aptly, a self-assessment written on canvas)
- How to enable SMEs to make use of digital solutions
- How to facilitate the experience of digitalization
- How to better communicate to SMEs the need of entering digital networks and standardizing internal processes
- How to reach microcredit

Additionality of the Action:

At the moment, there is no ROP measure open to finance such an action, in order to support SMEs from the idea to credit system, through information and training. Mentors,

with specialized knowledge on entrepreneurship and Regional economic characteristics, will help the SMEs start and grow. Microcredits will offer an integrated support (from the idea to its funding) to complete the entrepreneurial circle. Additionally, the action is likely to be financed, after a testing period to prove its maturity and its effectiveness.

It is essential that the action is tested, so that it proves its feasibility. Only after a successful testing phase may the action be strongly justified to be included in the regional policy instruments, let alone the national programs that for sure need maturity and feasibility of actions before they are financed. Regarding local funds, operational programs include only one municipality, which is not the case in this pilot, since it wishes to have a larger impact. Additionally, local authorities usually allocate their funds in really urgent works and projects and not in testing ones. Local Authorities in Greece get growing competences over the years, not getting respective increase in their funds, that way operating in a financially non equilibrated way, leaving actions of low priority or of unsure outcome out of their operational program.

Players involved

The Pilot Action addresses to

- Young entrepreneurs
- Existing micro and small businesses
- Individuals or groups interested in developing business initiatives

In total it will include as beneficiaries 9 companies (or business ideas).

Stakeholder involved will be:

The Region of Central Macedonia is the main stakeholder involved because it is the Policy Owner.

Moreover, Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) is a stakeholder that will contribute in reaching SMEs .

Stakeholders of PP4 will travel to Greece to participate in the 2 Open Events. Travel and accommodation costs of stakeholders will be undertaken by PP4.

Policy relevance and durability

The Pilot Action is considered as a supplementary action, that will improve the policy instrument addressed. It will contribute to the reduction of bureaucracy through the information and training of entrepreneurs, and through their guidance in licensing procedures. The more the steps of starting-up or modifying a business are well-known to the businessman in advance, the more secure he will feel with procedures and his institutional obligations, saving his energy for productive activities on business field.

The pilot action is addressed on the Investment for Growth and Jobs, so it addresses the Regional Operational Program of Central Macedonia. The ultimate goal is to disburse micro-credit from the Employment and Social innovation Program , to the benefit of Central Macedonia's SMEs. The action piloted is tested in order to be up-scaled after pilot phase, so that more micro and small Enterprises are offered counseling, more are directed to microcredit and more SMEs get digitally transformed in order to meet the regional Authority's strategy for digital service of citizens. The more SMEs improve their digital skills, the more use will make of regional OSS, the more digital push they give so that Regional Services become more effective. It is a feedback cycle, that works as a lever towards local development. If the tested action proves to be successful having influence on local economy and SMEs skills, then it can claim funding by the Regional Operational Program (policy instrument). **Durability:** In case the pilot action tested within PURE COSMOS context is successful and has a reflection on entrepreneurs, then the Regional Authority will be able to justify such an action and include its funding into the Regional Operation Program for further financing beyond the pilot phase, offering services to more businessmen. ANATOLIKI SA will act as a basis and an "antenna" for the support of SMEs. ANATOLIKI will announce the operation of the Office with the support of Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM).

To reassure the durability of results, ANATOLIKI will totally involve RCM in the implementation of the pilot. The Regional Authority is one of the main shareholders of ANATOLIKI SA and the two bodies work very close together. The Regional Authority will participate in the selection Committee of candidate entrepreneurs and will also be a member of the Monitoring Committee that will monitor the implementation of the pilot action along with Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and ANATOLIKI SA representatives. To achieve full involvement of the Regional Authority, the Monitoring Committee will deliver at least 2 assessment reports of the pilot action. The involvement of the regional Authority is considered necessary so that it gets politically committed in case of successful outcome of the pilot action, to include the action in the policy instrument for after pilot phase, thus influencing the policy instrument with a new a call.

The policy responsible involved will be the Directorate of Innovation and Entrepreneurship of the Central Macedonia Regional Authority.
Timeframe
October 2019- September 2020
Costs
Total budget 35.501€, including (staff, overheads and external expertise)
Funding sources
Pilot Action to be funded by Interreg Europe Programme.

Action 2. Innovation Ecosystem: Creation / Operation of incubators

Description:

The second action of the RAP is the creation of new (pre)incubators in the Region of Central Macedonia or the sustainment/funding of existing incubatory schemes established in the Region seeking future funds in order to be sustained. The (pre)incubatory schemes support start-ups to orient towards the market, to attract initial investment by venture capital companies and to network. Mentoring and counselling services are offered, in addition to shared office spaces.

PURE COSMOS included study visits in Birmingham i-Centrum (27th Sept 2016 during PEER REVIEW in Birmingham), in Catalanian ACCIO (study visit in Barcelona on 29th Nov2017) and in GP1- OK!THESS in Thessaloniki (study visit in Thessaloniki on 21st March 2017). The Regional Authority of Central Macedonia was inspired by the combination of incubating services with local public Innovation initiatives in Birmingham. The i-centrum offers space and facilities for start-ups, mentoring services and vicinity to the University. Additionally, it offers spaces for extroversion (events), for social interaction and also spaces for possible collaboration (graphic design services, banks etc). Catalanian ACCIÓ offers different internationalization and innovation programs for catalan startups OK!THESS supports teams in turning their idea into a product. It is a local initiative taken by different public stakeholders to connect with the innovation zone of Thessaloniki and the market.

The abovementioned good practices are of high interest for the Region of Central Macedonia, where there is augmenting interest in searching and supporting new innovative ideas, as a way out of the economic crisis. The Regional Authority politically supports innovation in the region, so incubatory services to new business ideas and new business models are considered of high regional value.

The Regional Action Plan therefore includes such an action to support start-ups not only

in Thessaloniki (like GP1-OK!THESS), the capital city of the Region but also to other cities within the regional boundaries. Influenced by the Catalan ACCIO, preincubators are expected to adopt initiatives on internationalising start ups making them extrovert. RCM Preincubators can adopt practices of Birmingham i-centrum that offers a certain spatial layout , creating spaces that host both startup teams and banks or business angels offices in the same building or even the same floor. (Pre)incubators to be created can widen their services in turning start-ups more extrovert through internationalisation initiatives(such as ACCIO implements).

The creation and operation of incubators in the Region will boost competitiveness and will offer connection between international or national companies with local businesses. Incubators will support business from ideas to funding options. The only existing non private incubator is OK!THESS which is at the moment being funded by Niarchos Foundation and by local sponsors. To continue offering its services, public funding is necessary. The creation of incubators-satellites in other cities of the Region is also expected to support entrepreneurship and create an innovation cluster in the Region.

ANATOLIKI SA is in discussion with the Regional Authority of Central Macedonia in regards to implementing a measure on “Innovation and Entrepreneurship Eco-system Support Structures”. A call on this measure can support business incubators in their initial organisation and their operation.

Players involved

The Regional Authority of Central Macedonia,
the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020,
Municipalities of Central Macedonia
Business incubators
Innovation Institutes
Universities

Business Incubators will be the beneficiaries. Existing incubators can influence the call according to their needs. The incubators can be structured by the cooperation of Public administration bodies and innovation zones or already existing operating incubators.

The Regional Authority and the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 will be the policy owners managing the call and implementing the support offered to incubators.

Municipalities - in collaboration with Innovation Institutes and the University- can formulate incubators, under Public-Private Cooperation or Memorandum of Cooperation.

Timeframe

05/2019- 12/2020

Costs

4.000.000€

Funding sources

ERDF through Central Macedonia Regional Operation Program 2014-2020

Priority Axis 1

Investment Priority 1b: “Promoting business investment in research and innovation, developing synergies between enterprises, research and development centers and the higher education sector, in particular by promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, of public services”

Diagrammatic depiction of services offered today and after RAP implementation. Similarities and inspiration by PURE COSMOS Good practices



Existing Innovation ecosystem	After the Action "Creation / Operation of incubators"	Good Practices taken advantage of
OK!THESS (GP1) is the only non private incubator in the Region It is at the moment funded by a sponsorship	OK!THESS is sustained with ERDF funds	OK!THESS (GP1) supports teams in turning their idea into a product. It connects SMEs with the innovation zone of Thessaloniki and the market.
There are other existing private incubators in the Regional capital, but not in other regional units.	New incubators created in other regional units-cities, turning RCM into an innovation Region with extrovert character.	OK!THESS (GP1) was created under a memorandum of cooperation signed by many different local stakeholders by initiative of Thessaloniki Municipality. It can inspire other Municipalities and stakeholders in the Region to create such an incubator. The good practice is transferable.
	Create new shared spaces for start-ups incubation and acceleration Offer mentoring and counseling programs	Birmingham i-centrum offers space and facilities for start-ups, mentoring services and vicinity to the University. Additionally, it offers spaces for extroversion (events), for social interaction and also spaces for possible collaboration (graphic design services, banks etc).
		Catalonian ACCIÓ offers different internationalization and innovation programs for Catalan startups

G) Policy instrument improvement

PURE COSMOS has significantly contributed to policy change through the Peers recommendations and the interregional exchange of good practices. The inclusion of a Regional Digital Service System for Citizens & Businesses (OSS) into the Regional Action Plan is expected to **improve** public **governance**, to better serve businesses and to promote digital online applications that are transparent, traceable and legally generated.

The policy change has already begun with the call already opened regarding the development and operation of a One Stop Liaison Office in RCM.

Further change is expected to be monitored during phase 2 of PURE COSMOS project implementation, when next calls of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 are expected to be launched, directing ERDF funds for better public service supply to SMEs.

The change addressed through PURE COSMOS derived not only by the Interregional Exchange of Experience among partners, but also by the **strong political will** of the Regional Governor to create the first Regional OSS in Greece under the competences of the Regional Authority.

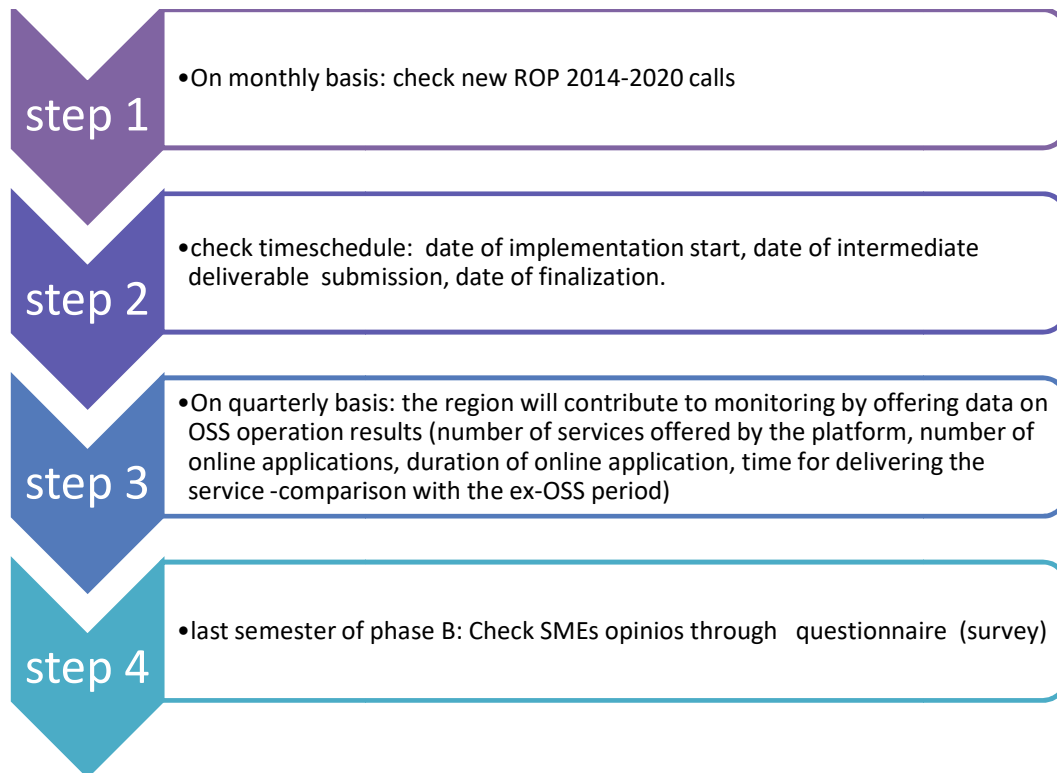
H) Monitoring of the RAP

The RAP will be monitored in total collaboration with the Region of Central Macedonia. Since there was no OSS applied in the Region before, the Regional Authority will provide ANATOLIKI SA with useful information on the OSS use, after its launching.

ANATOLIKI SA plans to monitor the Regional Action during Phase 2 in 4 steps


1. Every month check which calls are open, out of the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020
2. After the publication of a relevant call, ANATOLIKI will check when the implementation starts and when the deliverable of the Contractor is finalized. In case of partial deliverable monitor the dates of intermediate submission.
3. After the creation of the OSS by the Contractor, ANATOLIKI SA will check every 3 months, with the Regional Authority what are the services offered by the platform, how many applications are made online how much time-consuming is it to apply through the OSS
4. In the last semester of phase 2, a questionnaire will be distributed to SMEs in order to reply on SMEs satisfaction by the Actions implemented. Questionnaires will be

distributed by Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry through its efficient CRM system.



The monitoring of new calls is expected to be done through an instrument for monthly registration.

Table for monthly registration:

		MONITORING FORM	
		No. _____	Date: _____
<u>Monitoring Responsible</u>			
Name: _____			
<u>Action</u>	Number	Title:	
<u>FUNDING INSTRUMENT</u>			
ROP: _____			
Other: _____			
<u>Contact Person:</u>			
<u>Source of Information:</u>			
Site: _____			
Other: _____			
<u>Checking Points</u>		<u>Links - Pdf of calls</u>	
new call	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Relevant Call	<input type="checkbox"/>		
ROP Axis	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Number of new services provided to SMEs	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Funding amount deriving from this call	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Cummulative Amount	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Relevant Indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Number		comments	
1			
2			
3			
4			

Action Plan Monitoring Table

date of control		ANNUAL TARGET ACHIEVEMENT								CHECK EVERY		2019 -control results												2020
policy instrument		Specific objective	2019	2020	2021	MONITORING RESPONSIBLE	Responsible from RCM	SOURCES OF INFORMATION - ROP	SOURCES OF INFORMATION- Other sources		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL				
(1) Digital Service System for Citizens & Businesses- Services to optimize and digitize business processes. (OSS)	1b	"Promote business investment in research and innovation, develop links and synergies between businesses, research and development centers"	1b2			Kyriakopoulou/ Sarigiannis	Maria Goulaptsi/ Kostas Michailidis	-	-	1 MONTH														
	2c	"Strengthening ICT applications in the field of e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health "	2c1			Kyriakopoulou/ Sarigiannis	Maria Goulaptsi/ Kostas Michailidis	-	-	1 MONTH														
(1.1) Central Macedonia Office for micro & small Enterprises (CeMAO-misme)		INTERREG EUROPE				Kyriakopoulou/ Sarigiannis	Maria Goulaptsi/ Kostas Michailidis			3 MONTHS														
(2) Innovation Ecosystem: Creation / Operation of incubators	1b	"Promoting business investment in research and innovation, developing synergies between enterprises, research and development centers and the higher education sector, in particular by promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, of public services"				Kyriakopoulou/ Sarigiannis	Maria Goulaptsi/ Kostas Michailidis	-	-	1 MONTH														

I) Approval of RAP

The official approval of the above actions will come out of the Regional Authority and its Managing Authority of the ROP 2014-2020, by signed approval. After approval, ANATOLIKI SA will remain in close cooperation with the Region Of Central Macedonia to monitor the progress of calls published and to give feedback on funding addressed through this Action Plan.

SOURCES

- Approved Strategic Regional Plan for RCM 2015-2019, (http://www.pkm.gov.gr/inst/pkm/gallery/PKM%20files/Epixeirhsiako_2015-2019/2015_03_30_%CE%95%CE%93%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%9A%CE%A1%CE%99%CE%9C%CE%95%CE%9D%CE%9F%20%CE%A3%CE%A4%CE%A1%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%97%CE%93%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%9F%20%CE%A3%CE%A7%CE%95%CE%94%CE%99%CE%9F%20%CE%95%CE%A0%CE%99%CE%A7%CE%95%CE%99%CE%A1%CE%97%CE%A3%CE%99%CE%91%CE%9A%CE%9F%CE%A5%20%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%93%CE%A1%CE%91%CE%9C%CE%9C%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%9F%CE%A3%20%CE%A0%CE%9A%CE%9C%202015-2019.pdf)
- Baseline Survey Results
- PURE COSMOS Good Practice Register (available online: www.interregeurope.eu/purecosmos/good-practices/)