

FUNDING OF BLUE GROWTH - Innovation Voucher Scheme of Project BLUE_BOOST_ADRION programme

Rethinking Tourism B2B Event
08.10.2020, Croatia

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Project **BLUE_BOOST** Identity



Project: “BLUE_BOOST - BOOSTing the innovation potential of the triple helix of Adriatic-Ionian traditional and emerging BLUE growth sectors clusters through an open source/knowledge sharing and community based approach”

European Territorial Cooperation Programme
Interreg V-B ADRIAN

Implementation period: Jan 2018 – Dec 2020

7 Partners, from 4 countries: Croatia, Italy, Greece, Albania

6 Associate Partners from 5 countries: Croatia, Italy, Greece, Albania & Montenegro.

Budget ≈ 1.500.000 €

Project **BLUE_BOOST** Identity



Lead Partner CCE – Zadar County Chamber (Croatia), PP2 – University of Camerino (Italy), PP3 – Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Greece), PP4 – Central European Initiative (IT), PP5 – Albanian Development Fund (AL), PP6 – Patras Science Park (GR), PP7 – Apulia Region (IT)

BLUE_BOOST aims at boosting the innovation potential of ADRION area traditional and emerging Blue Growth sectors by:

enhancing innovation capacities of MSMEs/ START Ups

testing a transnational Innovation Voucher scheme

promoting transnational innovation networking

Project BLUE_BOOST Innovation Voucher Scheme

The BLUE_BOOST transnational innovation voucher scheme is composed by a unique transnational call for projects proposals to be granted with innovation vouchers (max 10.000,00 euro), launched in all the 7 project's Pilot Areas.

Around 350.000,00 euro, for 35 vouchers, 5 (in most cases) per partner area, have been allocated to MSMEs & START-UPS wishing to improve their position all along the value chains of Blue Economy.

Involved parties of the Scheme



a) INNOVATION VOUCHER DONORS:
project partners (PPs)

b) INNOVATION VOUCHER SCHEME
EVALUATORS:

PPs and Associated Partners.

c) BENEFICIARIES: MSMEs and / or Start -
Ups of traditional mature blue growth
sectors such as fisheries, logistics, ship-
building/repair and of the new emerging
market niches such as blue technology
(including aquaculture and biotechnology),
robotics, new materials, green shipbuilding,
monitoring of the sea, deep sea resources,
and bio security which have their
headquarters/branch office in each project
partner region, active in one of the Blue
sectors selected by the PP (3 for most
PPs).

Involved parties of the Scheme

d) KNOWLEDGE PROVIDERS:

Research, Development and Innovation Bodies, skilled enterprises specialised in marine/maritime sciences, technologies and business management, and open source – knowledge sharing and community based non-institutional New Innovation Agents such as fablabs, co-working spaces, innovation hubs, living labs etc from the whole ADRION Program eligible Area, acting as knowledge providers.

Methodology



Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) valorised experience from past EU projects and initiatives, as well as information gained through project's regional Blue Growth studies, to elaborate a specific methodology for the implementation of the BLUE_BOOST pilot action.

The methodology was tailored to specific local innovation needs of detected Adriatic-Ionian Blue sectors.

It is a document containing the BLUE_BOOST common vision and detailed workplan, which describes all the implementation stages of the pilot action.

Coaching Path

A 3-stage Coaching Path was foreseen and implemented in every Pilot Area: BLUE LABS, BLUE SCENARIO WORKSHOPS and BLUE HACKATHONS offered local SMEs information and competences on innovation development.

Most important, they offered excellent networking opportunities among people involved in the Regional Blue Growth community, mainly among businesses and potential Knowledge Providers.

This networking played a decisive role for developing innovative projects proposals for BLUE_BOOST Innovation Vouchers.

Attraction of Knowledge Providers



A transnational call for Expression of Interest of Knowledge Providers (B_B KPs EoI) was composed by TCCI and launched by PPs in February 2019, in all the ADRION eligible territories, in order to develop a database with all possible relevant knowledge / technology providers to be chosen by the vouchers applicants (Blue sectors MSMEs/STARTUPs of involved territories). Finally, the Call for EoI was opened in June 2019 even to KPs not based in, but being able to provide services in ADRION area (in EU more generally).

No sectoral or expertise restrictions were foreseen regarding the profile of KPs.

Knowledge Providers Gallery

An on-line KPs Gallery was created, containing Research, Development and Innovation Bodies, skilled enterprises and New Innovation Agents (fablabs, co-working spaces, innovation hubs etc) eligible as B_B KPs.

The Blue MSMEs/STARTUPS wishing to participate in the B_B Innovation Voucher Call had to choose a KP from the Gallery.

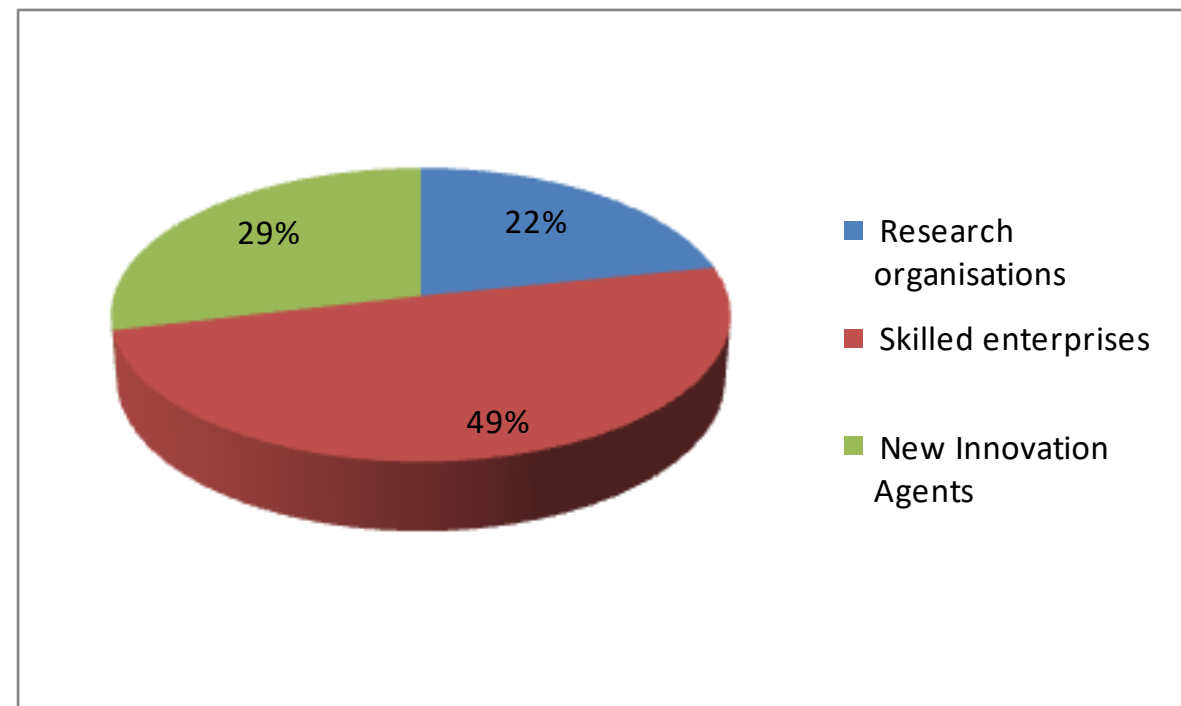
The B_B KPs Gallery is still available at the BLUE_BOOST Networking Platform, on <https://blueboost.unicam.it/> and is still open to new entries, until the end of the project.

It is intended to be treasured and capitalized by partners and stakeholders beyond the B_B lifetime in other initiatives aimed at improving Blue Growth innovation and knowledge in the Adriatic-Ionian area.

Knowledge Providers Gallery

Actual situation of KPs in the Gallery per profile:

Research organisations	22
Skilled enterprises	50
New Innovation Agents	29
Total	101



Call for Innovative Projects Proposals



BLUE_BOOST transnational Call for innovation vouchers was launched in May 2019 and promoted in all the 7 ADRION areas to realise innovative projects Blue MSMEs/STARTUPs in collaboration with KPs. Each pilot area had €50.000 for allocating to at least 5 vouchers.

The Call included Terms of Reference and all necessary documents, for the businesses, Knowledge Providers and PPs, in a complete Application Package provided by TCCI.

PPs and their Local Innovation Committees (LIC) supported businesses and their KPs, in order to develop innovative project proposals, among others also by organising Info Days.

Transnational Brokerage Event



To enhance transnational networking of MSMEs - START-Ups & KPs a transnational brokerage event was held in Thessaloniki, on 5th June 2019, organised by TCCI.

In total more than 70 participants, stakeholders were selected by their local PPs, following a public Expression of Interest.

More than 40 brokerage meetings were realised between interested parties.

Apart from the networking of SMEs with KPs, in view of the Innovation Vouchers Call, the Brokerage Event aimed more generally at promoting cooperation, for example between Blue MSMEs & START-Ups or between KPs from different BLUE_BOOST Regions.

Reception of innovative projects proposals

The B_B Innovation Voucher Call closed in July 2019.

In total 57 proposals of innovative projects were received by the 7 PP:

Pilot Area	Proposals Received	Eligible Proposals
Zadar County (HR)	8	8
Marche Region (IT)	11	10
Central Macedonia (GR)	11	11
Friuli-Venezia-Giulia (IT)	4	4
Albania	7	7
Western Greece (GR)	10	10
Apulia Region (IT)	6	6
TOTAL	57	56

56/57 proposals were formally eligible, proving the effective support provided to candidates by PPs.

Evaluation of innovative projects



Applications, including all stages of the innovation cycle, at technical, organisational and marketing level, were selected locally, by LIC of each PP, according to the same transnational criteria, included in the Call:

- Excellence (40%)
- Impact (30%)
- Capability (30%)

Each PP granted its area's best selected projects, according to their budget, within the limits of its budget (50.000,00€ each) and kept the rest eligible ones in reserve list.

The results at project level have been published on the B_B web portal <https://blueboost.adrioninterreg.eu/>.

Selection and contracting

Selection and contracting was realised by the end of August 2019, despite the fact that the necessary stage of De Minimis eligibility control had to be realised centrally, by the ADRION JS.

The projects granted by Pilot Area were:

Pilot Area	Eligible Proposals	Granted vouchers
Zadar County (HR)	8	5
Marche Region (IT)	10	5
Central Macedonia (GR)	11	5
Friuli-Venezia-Giulia (IT)	4	4
Albania	7	5
Western Greece (GR)	10	6
Apulia Region (IT)	6	5
TOTAL	56	35

BLUE_BOOST reached the target of granting 35 Innovation Vouchers.

Implementation and monitoring



Awarded MSMEs/STARTUPs and their KPs had at least 6 months to conclude the agreed activities, according to their Application Form.

Monitoring visits were held by local PPs guided by their LICs, at the beginning of the implementation period.

After that, LICs drafted a Startup Report highlighting positive project workflow and / or possible problems such as unjustified delays, unexpected conflicts between MSMEs & KPs etc.

If a Startup Report identified severe problems in the implementation of a project, the Pilot Partner could withdraw the voucher and award the 1st of the reserve list.

Completion of projects

Upon the conclusion of each innovative project, a Final Report describing the activities implemented in its framework was composed by the relevant KP and delivered to the MSME/Start-up.

All the beneficiary MSMEs/Start-ups approved the Final Reports and forwarded to their competent PP respective Requests for Payment.

Responsible Pilot Project Partners validated each project's Final Report within 15 working days from the date of submission and accepted the Request for Payment or requested integrations, additional information, documents etc.

Payment of Vouchers



Apart from a few cases where specific circumstances, mainly the COVID-19 situation, provoked delays to the projects' completion, all other projects were validated within foreseen time frame.

Payment procedures were delayed by COVID-19, due to quarantines, but:

29 / 35 B_B Innovation Vouchers were paid out by June 2020.

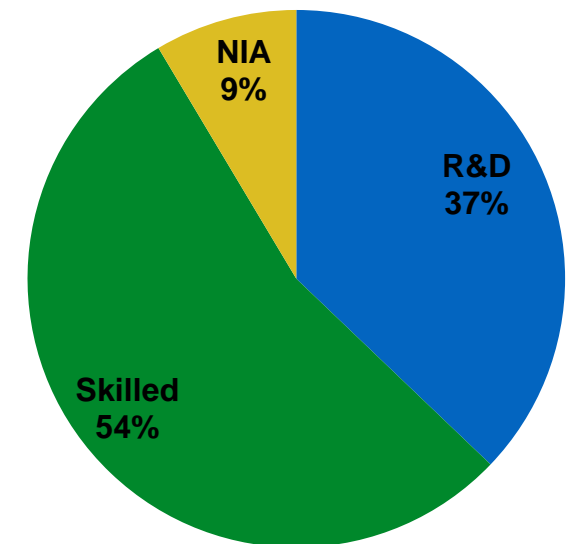
34 / 35 have been paid out by beginning of October 2020.

In one case, Social Security procedures have not allowed payment, expected soon.

Projects' profile

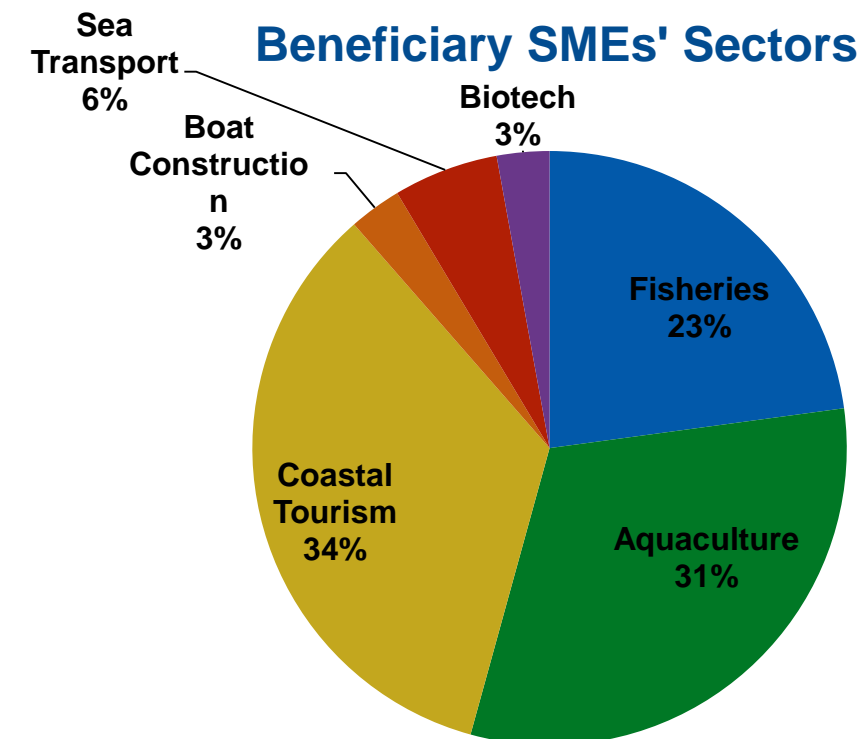
Profile of KPs	
R & D organisations	13
Skilled SMEs	19
New Innov Agents	3
TOTAL	35

Profile of KPs



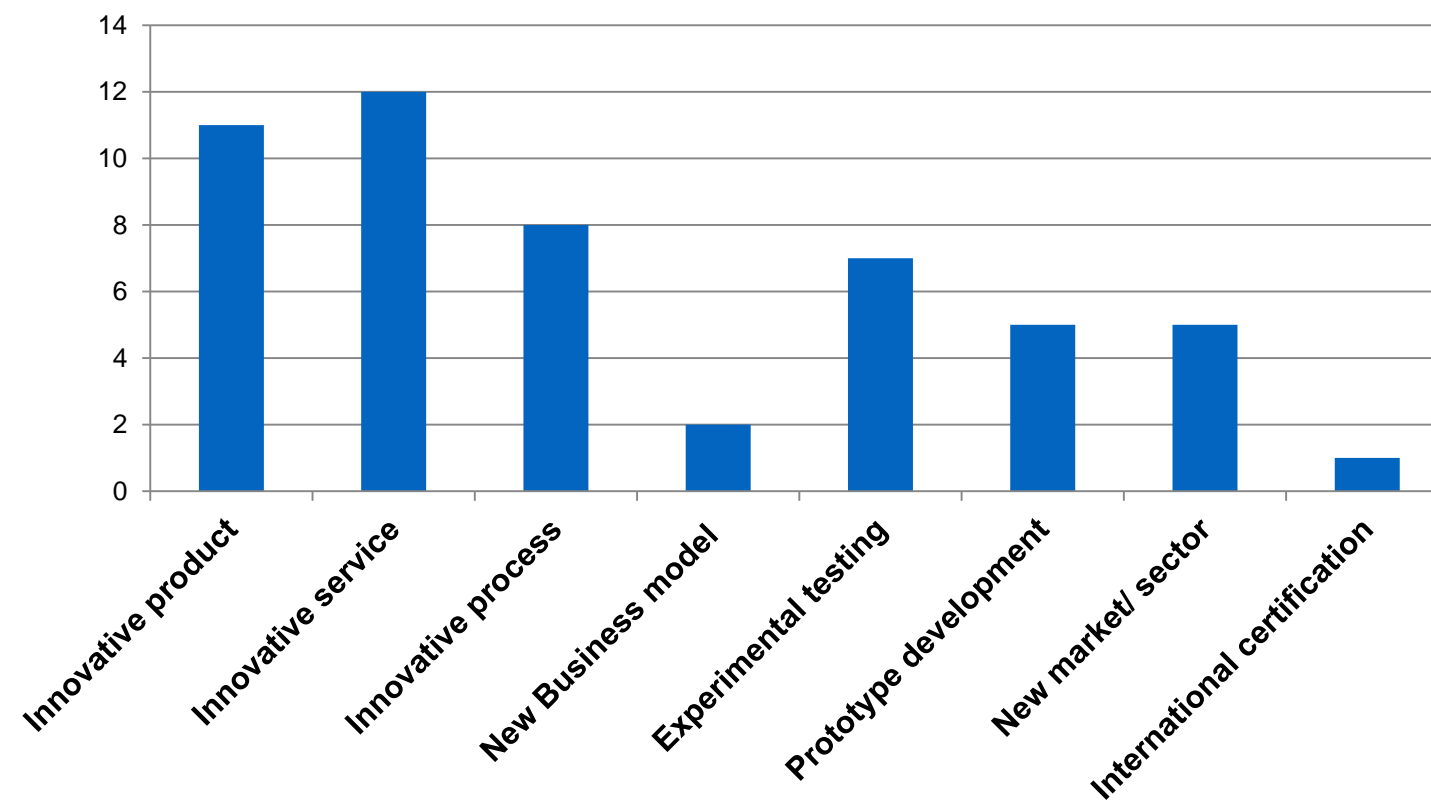
Sector of Beneficiary SMEs						
Fisheries	Aquaculture	Coastal Tourism	Boat Construction	Sea Transport	Biotech	TOTAL
8	11	12	1	2	1	35

Beneficiary SMEs' Sectors



Projects' profile

Type of innovation							
Innovative product	Innovative service	Innovative process	New Business model	Experimental testing	Prototype development	New market/ sector	International certification
11	12	8	2	7	5	5	1



Evaluation of Voucher Scheme

The external evaluation regards the whole pilot action rather than individual projects, in particular output additionality and behavioral additionality: if or not the assignment for which the voucher was given would have been carried out also without the funding support and if or not the SMEs have further contracted other KPs for follow-up assignments paid through other means.

This activity is also used to identify success stories for dissemination and lines of development for following or transferable schemes.

BLUE_BOOST Associate Partners are involved in this activity, supporting PPs.

BLUE_BOOST Networking Strategy



BLUE_BOOST also includes a complete Transnational Innovation Networking Strategy and relative Joint Action Plan, to create and animate an informal network composed of INNOVATION KEY ACTORS of the ADRION maritime clusters, aimed at promoting new forms of trans-boundary cooperation across maritime sub-sectors, favour new value chains of products / services, supporting benchmarking and learning through the open source, knowledge sharing and community based approach promoted by B_B.

B_B Network will be an important asset to be valorised even after the project lifetime.



Project co-financed by the European
Regional Development Fund



<https://blueboost.adrioninterreg.eu/>

**Thank you for your
attention!**

