



Annex I. Action Plan

Action Plan

**OSS – One Stop Shop towards competitive SMEs,
focusing on the ecosystem for the first line service system**





European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

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The content of this document is based on learning, experience and information from good practices, originally presented and discussed with partners in the Interreg One Stop Shop programme, then reported, shared discussed with colleagues and stakeholders in the Hampshire region. Whilst we have learnt much from each thematic workshop, this proposal has been identified as a result of a particular good practice & ideas gathered from other partner countries and regions in the project and based on the needs of SMEs in Hampshire - all with a focus on improving the ecosystems for the first line business support system.



I – General Information

Project	OSS – One Stop Shop towards competitive SMEs, focusing on the ecosystem for the first line service system https://www.interregeurope.eu/oss/
Partner organisation	WSX Enterprise (Business Support Organisation) -Hampshire England
Other partner organisations involved (if relevant)	N/A
Country	United Kingdom
NUTS2 region	South East England
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1. Background Information- OSS project

Historical statistical data has shown that there is a lower rate of start-ups in Europe compared to other parts of the world (e.g., Asia or US). These circumstances underline the need to create and offer attractive jobs and places to live for young people who may go on to leave our regions and set up new businesses elsewhere if conditions aren't right. With this project we want to develop an attractive tailor-made ecosystem for start-ups. Its aim is to improve SMEs growth, entrepreneur skills and to overcome defined barriers. Project partners have defined that commitment and willingness to invest in long-term policy is important to increase the number and quality of start-ups in their region.

The main objective of OSS programme therefore, is to focus on the ecosystem for the first line service system, to improve existing policies for SMEs competitiveness by enhancing advisory support services for first time entrepreneurs. As a result, OSS aims to build a complete ecosystem for entrepreneurs that are starting new business.

OSS aim to address these topics; FLS (first level system) as a complete ecosystem; digital capabilities, mentoring and collaboration between start-ups and business, collaboration between different levels of governance, access to finance, and business incubation. OSS will also look



at the possibility to make the advisory services more accessible with the evolvement of digital capabilities.

To achieve that, every partner will contribute with its expertise and best practices from their first line service (FLS) system with the final output the design of a Toolbox of experience and expertise that can be accessed by any/all stakeholders and policy bodies etc. across Europe. Partners in the OSS consortium will also work **to develop and enhance an advisory support service adapted to the needs of entrepreneurs**. With the partners ambition to change the different regions' advisory services and with significant knowledge on national policies and engaging stakeholders from different spheres of competence, - to support the work of the OSS programme **to influence relevant/current and future policies** related to project's main objective,

About this Action Plan

This OSS ACTION PLAN is a document providing details on how information and lessons learnt arising from their cooperation and partner workshops will be implemented in order to improve the policy instrument that is addressed within the region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, resources; the costs (if any), funding sources (if any) etc and success measures proposed.

This ACTION PLAN gives direct recommendations for measures that will significantly boost SMEs competitiveness, enhance business performance in the regions concerned and ultimately, create a better investment environment.

Outcomes will include dissemination of development and testing information on the innovative new business model i.e., the Start-Up App that will lead to productivity gains and provide access to new markets with local stakeholders (as well as our OSS partners) – the, what, how and why, learning and results to date. This Action will also be used to influence/improve relevant regional start-up/SME business support policy, strategy as well as practice.

The Action Plan aims to impact:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
<input type="checkbox"/>	European Territorial Cooperation programme
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other regional development policy instrument

2. Summary

WSX Enterprise Hampshire presents its action to promote SMEs competitiveness, with a focus on the

first line service system. The Action Plan is developed under the OSS Project, funded by Interreg Europe.

The OSS Project was designed to achieve its goals via holding thematic meetings on the following topics: the system of primary services for entrepreneurs as a whole ecosystem; digital opportunities, mentoring and cooperation between start-ups and business, cooperation between different levels of government, access to finance and business incubation plus an additional COVID-19 business support workshop.

All project activities were focused on increasing the added value for entrepreneurs and increasing consumer satisfaction with the first level support system in each region. OSS will create change by changing approach/support and policies, leading to progress/benefits for the regional economy.

3.1 Thematic meetings

Recommendations in this action plan are based on good practice learning arising from partners thematic project workshops, discussions and follow activities taking place in Phase 1 of the OSS Project (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/oss/events/>). These were as follows:

3.1.1. KICK OFF MEETING – Alesund, Norway, June 2018-Lead Partner host. First meeting an introduction in the project implementation: presentation of startup services (**including the lean business/entrepreneurly project** <https://leanbusinessplatform.com>) in partners regions, good practices from More and Romsdal -hoppid.no; Norwegian Maritime Competence Center in Alesund; how entrepreneurial ecosystem works- visits and discussions.

3.1.2. Thematic meeting "**DIGITALIZATION OF START-UP SERVICES**", January 2019, hosted by partners from UK partner in Aldeshot Enterprise Centre, Hampshire - good practices can be viewed: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/oss/library/>

3.1.3 Thematic meeting "**MENTORING AND FACILITATING THE CONTACT OF START-UPS WITH RELEVANT BUSINESSES BY REGION**", September 17-18/09/2019 hosted by ARED-Vratsa (study visits to Vratsa Software Society and Tech Park-Sofia)

3.1.4. Thematic meeting "**MANAGEMENT OF ECOSYSTEMS FOR INITIAL SERVICES FOR START-UPS BY SECTORS**", hosted by the District Administration of Granada, Spain; 15/5/20- on-line

3.1.5. Thematic meeting "**FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS TO SUPPORT INITIAL START-UP SERVICES**" (microfunding and crowdfunding) - hosted by the Regional Development Agency, Kranj, Slovenia, 17-18/11/2020-on-line

3.1.6 Thematic meeting "**BUSINESS INCUBATION, PHYSICAL SPACE FOR NEW ENTERPRISES, AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE START-UP SUPPORT SYSTEM**", hosted by the Regional Development Agency, Rzeszow, Poland – 8/9 June 2021

3.1.7 OSS Partners also ran an additional special edition online workshop "**COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT WORKSHOP**" –swapping practice/ideas & information on initiatives in Europe run to help entrepreneurs to fight the crisis caused by the pandemic - 23/03/21.

3.2. Regular local stakeholder meetings

Although the original main Hampshire County Council stakeholder group which we were discussing the project with unexpectedly disbanded in 2019* we have continued to discuss the OSS programme and proposed action with our other key stakeholders – in spite of COVID 19

This has included Hampshire County Council Economic Development Officers, Solent Local Economic Partnership COVID-19 Taskforce, Enterprise M3 Stakeholder Group & COVID 19 Taskforce in addition to online discussions with local stakeholders e.g. Hampshire Chamber of



Commerce, University of Portsmouth, local sector groups etc. as well as with WSX Enterprise colleagues in our sister organisation – Dorset Growth Hub <https://www.dorsetgrowthhub.co.uk/> who presented information at the OSS COVID-19 workshop and who very quickly adapted and digitized many aspects of start-up business support.

We are also updating and discussing the OSS Project with WSX Enterprise Board members comprised of stakeholder/entrepreneurial representatives who effectively acting as our steering an advisory group while we wait for a new Hampshire* wide stakeholder group be formed, post Covid.

We have also presented and actively undertaken an ongoing exchange of project information with another Interreg programme – Everywhere International SMEs - <https://www.interregeurope.eu/eis/>

*(We were advised that Hampshire County Council will be setting up a new stakeholder group later this year).

II. Policy context

Name of the policy instruments addressed in the Action Plan.

European Structural Investment Funds – Dorset , Hampshire, Enterprise M3

Why: Public policy recognises the importance of new businesses and supporting entrepreneurs, but there is not enough focus on the urban/rural different agendas, and also a lack of a cohesive programme across our region. The LEP model, which is the local voice of government in all the regions of UK England and Wales, all have a separate approach. While this is welcome in terms of reflecting local needs, it also breeds duplication of efforts and fragmentation in support services for first time entrepreneurs, when a cohesive joined up approach would bring a more dynamic and cost effective solution. These project actions gives us the opportunity to develop and trial digital start up support which may assist entrepreneurship support and support in rural areas (often disadvantaged) that once tested through WSX Enterprise resources (that would otherwise have been unavailable without the OSS project) will enable a united, collaborative 21stC model to influence future entrepreneurship delivery. Using intelligence gained from the Start-Up app (with express permission of users) it would also help to properly inform relevant policy strategy and resources).

Additional/highly significant policy and strategy documents as follows incorporating support for start-ups/SMEs:

Solent LEP and EM3 LEP Local Industrial Strategy & COVID19 Review & Recovery Plans

The focus of this action is mainly to improve delivery and support of the entrepreneurship ecosystem using digital delivery as an option to more traditional business support systems.

Details of the actions envisaged:

ACTION



Design & Development of a pilot 'Start-Up App' Tool – (innovative tool/approach) which from research undertaken in 2019/2020 there is no known similar tool in active use by other UK Business Support organisations

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FROM THE PROJECT (initiative/activity or good practice that inspired this action)

Inspiration was gathered from many aspects of the project and partner discussions but in particular:

Workshop 2 Aldershot Jan 2019 – Info presented on Entrepreneurly Platform inspired us with the idea for a similar or possibly smaller scale project

Feb- Dec 2019 – further information & detailed discussion re the platform and how it works with Norwegian (lead) partner and original providers/platform developers.

Jan 2020 – Fact finding meeting with Entrepreneurly development team – Gatwick

WSX Team/Stakeholder discussion re support gaps etc re our past/current business support – concluded that although there were insufficient funds to replicate the Lean Business Platform in Hampshire, we decided to develop a small scale pilot Start-Up App incorporating some of the methodology, features and digital aspects of the best practice platform.

March 2021 – Further inspired by learning from the OSS Mentoring Workshop (Sept 2019) and action proposal discussed at one of our team meetings in March from our Norwegian partner (May-Britt Roald)

inspired us even more to look at the possibility of developing a bite size mentoring portal that could be run alongside and complement the Start-Up App (subject to Phase 2 funding)

OUTLINE TIMETABLE

OVERVIEW

Jan 2019 – initial idea for some kind of scaled down digital support tool through to 2021/22.
Development/pilot testing, adding content, video clips etc refinement/improvement, dissemination & soft launch

OSS PHASE 1 ACTIVITIES

July/August 2020 – Tender developed and issued to three/four potential Providers. Provider selected, contract issued.

Sept 2020 - Project start with supplier/small internal team working with developer.

Oct 2020- May 2021 – Start-up development ongoing WSX team development work/meetings

June 2021 pilot App now ready for initial testing

June 2021 and now ongoing initial testing, review and improvement. Preparation of short bitesize additional digital content to use alongside of core App process.

OSS PHASE 2 ACTIVITIES to include: -

Benchmark testing against KPIs. Customer feedback and refinement. OSS Partner dissemination (at rescheduled OSS partner workshop, soft launch.

Final pilot phase review and stakeholder dissemination.

*(Possible added value activities and subject to approved resources in Phase2 may enable us to look at linking to a bitesize mentoring app (working with Norwegian partners programme action))



RELEVANCE (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)

Assessing usefulness of Start –App as a first line support tool (as a standalone tool and/or supplemented with additional traditional one to one support).

With simple built in analytics the tool will also help collate intelligence/trends that can be used to inform future business start-up support policy and resources.

COSTS

C£25K initial costs funded by WSX Enterprise

All other time/resources; testing/feedback, development and improvements work from across WSX team resources and stakeholder feedback.

FINANCE

WSX Enterprise – Budget c25K

KPI'S – within the time scale of OSS project and then ongoing.

Measures proposed/to include:

Benchmark testing as above. Number of start-ups supported by the App. Client retention

Client feedback – simple feedback survey.

Number of business started as a result Number of jobs created

Start-up business revenue generated

Delivery costs/payback actual and forecast potential/impact re economic growth

IV. Validation –

Date: 9th September 2021

Andrea McCallum

Manager Enterprise & SME Growth, Hampshire County Council

Signature: 

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____

