

## Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> Interim Meeting

November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

“Hotel Mondial”, Tirana, ALBANIA

The Interim meeting was organized as being part of the Working Package 1 in the framework of the project “SMEInnoBoost” financed under the Interreg - Balkan-Mediterranean 2014 - 2020 Transnational Program.

The meeting was hosted by the Regional Development Agency of Korca (PP6), Albania and took place in the conference hall of “Mondial Hotel” in Tirana on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

Representatives of all project partners and members of the Steering Committee were present in the meeting.

**Ms. Eleonora Negulova** (Project Manager, Lead Partner) welcomed the participants wishing for a successful implementation of the present and upcoming activities and a fruitful cooperation among all partners in this common project, marking the importance of the good decisions making regarding achieving the project goals as well as exchange of experience.

According to the Agenda, the meeting continued with presentation of the current status of implementation of the project WP’s, presented by each project partner separately.

The **PP2** (National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria, Bulgaria) representatives stated that they have delay in assignment of the statistical survey and that final results can be expected *at end of June 2019*. They raised the question about functioning of the MIS (Management Information System), asking if there is possibility for them as project partners to upload project information directly to the project user. It was stated that although in the moment there isn’t such possibility, in consequence it may be possible. It was noticed that it would be very useful for the project partners if they can participate in the upcoming seminar on MIS that will take place in Thessaloniki, Greece on Nov 27, 2018. Therefore a request for project modification will be requested, in order to include the expenses for this training into the budget.

Representatives from **PP3** (State Statistical Office, FYRoM) continued with presentation of the progress. They noted that they already have the pilot research. The partners agreed that it should be presented as a preliminary result. Further, they have reported that currently they have problems related to the Tender procedures as well as the experts that will perform the interviews – the interviewers. *Therefore a delay could be expected regarding conduction of the survey. In that regard, project modification will be requested in order to prolong the project duration for additional 6 months as well as some small budget modifications.*

Next, representatives from **PP4** (Institute of Statistics Republic of Albania) informed that they have already made procurement of IT Equipment and that no later than March 2019 they will finish with the survey. They also informed the present representatives from the Project Partners that they have appointed a new team member on the position Manager Assistant. Currently they have no delays in implementation of the project activities.

**PP5** (Foundation for development of small and medium enterprises – Skopje, FYRoM) have informed that they have no significant progress or change in project activities implementation but maintain regularly contacts with the Observers and stakeholders. Having in mind all problems reported until now, they believe that a project modification should be made for extension of project implementation period for 6 more months as well to include the travel expenses for MIS seminar into the budget.

**PP6** (Foundation Regional Development Agency (S.M.E.) of Korce, Albania) informed the partners about the problems that they have with the FLC. They noted that they began explanatory mode and that are hoping that the Lead Partner will send an explanation of what the platform should represent, what kind of functions should have, its relation and support with SAT and the Cluster platform. They stressed that they are hoping that they will settle the FLC issue and that would like to inform the JS about those kinds of problems. There isn't a support desk in Albania, regarding those issues and many of the organizations that are implementing a BM Projects are dealing with same problems. Also, they have informed that a budget modification will be requested, in order to make some small adaptation of the budget lines and WP.

**PP7** (Institute of Information and Communication Technologies - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) informed that they have no delays or unsolved issues in the moment. The activities implementation is as planned. The budget modification will be requested from them also.

**PP8** (Foundation for Research & Technology Hellas, Science & Technology Park of Crete) noted that after the modification of the project that have already been made, they are in close



Regarding the implementation of the **Communication and Dissemination strategy guide and plan**, the LP has presented the current status and it became clear that there is lack of appropriate activities, absence of users and promotion in the social media as well as absence of information about the project on the Project Partners web-sites. Some of the partners have no information or even presentation of the project at their web-sites at all (PP5, PP7 and PP8). The LP informed the Partners that they should have more serious attitude about the C&D Strategy and its activities, as well that they should use any channels of communication in order to reach the stakeholders as well as wider audience. The LP has also presented the new Communication manager, Ms. Katarina Marinova that has joined the LP project team. At the end of the presentation the LP has reminded the partners that “The aim of the consortium is to execute those C&D activities which will lead to extension of the existing network with new SMEInnoBoost friends, who will form the network of the "SMEInnoBoost Associates & Friends". This network will help to create new channels and circles for cooperation on four levels: international, national, regional and local. In this way, sustainability of the results will be supported.” It was concluded that there is much more to be done in this regard by all partners, their websites, as well as BM Programme website.

The project partners have agreed about approximate time table with an idea an “Innosummit month” to be organized in April or May, where the Innovation summits will be organized in each of the countries in consecutive order. In Progress Report №.3 partners will have to report also the dates for the Innovation Summits.

The meeting ended with a “Question and Answer session”.

### **Conclusions:**

One of the most important topics, which were discussed throughout the meeting, was the implementation of statistical survey. It was stressed that since the questionnaire is a large one it could take more time and the final results might come out in the end of June 2019. So, by that time there might come out the exact form of data.

Another issue of importance was the prolongation of the project implementing period. **The project partners agreed that 6 months prolongation of the project duration should be requested.**



- First, SAT must be finished.
- The PP8 should finish the SME questionnaire and also add additional questions. So, the contractor developing SAT to finish Alfa version.
- It might be tested in three countries.
- Partners should assign local subcontractors to test the benchmarking.
- The timing for SAT draft might be January 2019 and benchmarking might be February 2019.
- PP8 should inform the other partners what they need from them in order to improve the benchmarking process.
- A 6-month period prolongation for the project is going to be requested
- By the end of the week (5-9 November 2018), the LP should receive partners' reports with expenditures. If they have no changes to make, just confirm and submit them.
- All Project partners documents should be scanned in original and sent to LP
- The date for the next Interim Meeting was fixed on May, 2019 in FYRoM (Skopje or Ohrid).
- The LP should prepare, no later than January, request for project modification (prolongation of project implementation period for 6 months and budget modification).

Attachment:

- Steering Committee decisions;
- Photos from the meeting;
- Presentations
- Attendance list.

Prepared by:

**RDA Korca (PP6)**

Redacted and approved by LP