

## ESSPO – EFFECTIVE SME SUPPORT

ESSPO is Interreg Europe's project, designed to deliver specific solutions which will improve support services portfolios for Small and Medium Enterprises sector in European regions. It focuses on the effectiveness of SME innovation support and answers the sector needs with comprehensive Action Plans capable of visibly impacting the regional economies.

ESSPO main objective is to improve the regional policies directed to SMEs competitiveness and engagement in innovation. This aim will be achieved through interregional learning process engaging the partners and the stakeholders from their territories. This means working directly with policy and decision makers on regional, national and international levels, intermediaries providing support services and single companies.

ESSPO addresses the issue of insufficient impact and efficiency of policies aiming to enhance SMEs competitiveness, especially their growth on national and international markets as well as their engagement in innovation processes. The project will work on the solutions to align the support services into efficient portfolios such as:

- development of new support services to better match the SME needs (filling the gaps, alignment to changing conditions);
- diagnostic tools to assess company absorption capacity and management tools to provide the right match of needs with competent support;
- combination of different kinds of support (financial, advice, access to infrastructure etc.) into a joint set;
- better coordination of the support provided by different actors and remedies to its fragmentation;
- improvements of support good quality;
- improvements of programme management practices (calls for proposals, project and contact with beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation the results).

ESSPO takes a longterm aim (1 April 2016-31 March 2021) and will work on specific improvements of SME policy instruments in 8 different territories on national, regional, subregional and local level. Partners working in ESSPO and their respective territories are:

- Wielkopolska (PL): Adam Mickiewicz University Foundation, Poznan Science and Technology Park (lead partner)
- European Association of Development Agencies (advisory partner)
- Nord Pas de Calais – Picardie (FR) : North France Innovation Development
- Castilla y León (ES): ADE - Agency of Innovation, Business Financing and Internationalization of Castilla y León
- Gabrovo (BG): Municipality of Gabrovo
- Bulgaria: Applied Research and Communications Fund
- Tartu (EE): Tartu Science Park Foundation
- Basque Country (ES): Tecnalia Research & Innovation Foundation
- Weserbergland (DE): District of Hameln-Pyrmont

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