



SEE-IFA-NETWORK – 1.Thematic Seminar “Country reports, analysis, and implications for other WPs” *25 November 2009 – Bucharest*

The organisation of this Thematic Seminar was foreseen in the Application Form: all partners will meet 2 times a year, each Thematic Seminar being mentioned in WP 1 (act. 1.4). The aim of the first Thematic Seminar was to report on the project status, and to assure fine tuning between the different project activities. Special emphasis was put on the discussion of WP 3.

Participants at this Seminar were:

LP delegation¹ - WP 1, 5, 7 - R. Mosburger, A. Waclik, A. Tkacheva, G. Ruppert

PP1² delegation – R. Karcheva

PP2³ delegation – WP 4 - F. Canatelli, C. Denti

PP 3⁴ delegation – T.Rumelioti, G.Kakarelidis

PP 4⁵ delegation – R.Gönczy

PP 5⁶ delegation - WP 5 - excused

PP 6⁷ delegation – WP 2,3 - N.Vasiliu, V.Vulturescu, M.Mitroi, N.Cioranu, E.Dumitras, V.Teodorescu, L.D.Ghiculescu

PP 7⁸ excused

IPA PP 1⁹ excused

10% PP 1¹⁰ - P.Galeski, S.Popijac

10% PP 2¹¹ - M.Paunov, Z.Eremic

The meeting started with an introductory speech by Mr. Vasiliu welcoming participants in Bucharest stressing that AMCSIT is glad to organize this meeting for such an important project.

¹ AWS AustriaWirtschaftservice GmbH (AT)

² EPF - Euro Perspectives Foundation (BG)

³ FINLOM - Finlombarda S.p.A. (IT)

⁴ GEORAMA (GR)

⁵ TETALAP - Hungarian Science and Technology Foundation (HU)

⁶ RegVEN – Regione Veneto (IT)

⁷ AMCSIT – Management Agency for Scientific Research, Technology Transfer and Innovation - Politehnica (RO)

⁸ SID - Slovene Export and Development Bank Inc, Ljubljana (SI)

⁹ FME - Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" (FYROM)

¹⁰ AZRA - Varazdin County Development Agency (HR)

¹¹ RDA Banat - Regional Agency for Socio-Economic Development Banat (SR)

Mr. Vasiliu also gave a brief presentation on AMCSIT, (activities and performed on daily basis and important events organised during 2009).

R. Mosburger let all participants know that the project started successfully and first steps were in the right direction. She also said that some partners met difficulties regarding activities to be performed in SEE-IFA-PROJECT as their organizations passed through reorganization and changes or faced capacity constraints. It has been also mentioned that the subsidy contract between LP and JTS¹² has been signed in September 2009 (after some delays), but that the IPA grant contract still had not been signed yet. Moreover, none of the partners has signed the national cofinancing agreement so far, even though in all cases oral agreements do exist. It was agreed that all partners who haven't signed their national cofinancing agreements by the end of 2009, should inform the LP about it.

WP 1: A. Waclik presented the situation regarding 1st reporting period specifying that AWS has received 4 ERDF-PPs DoVoE¹³ (from AWS, AMCSIT, EPF, TETALAP). The remaining 4 ERDF-Partners and 3 non ERDF-Partners have submitted an Activity Report for period 1. It is estimated that the first payment will be done by JTS close to the end of February 2010. A. Waclik also reminded partners that the reimbursement process can take about 6 months. She also presented a statistic on period 1-expenditures (planned vs. reported and validated) highlighting that a budget cut might be possible after reporting period nr. 3 for those partners who significantly underspend their budgets. Andrea concluded with a few remarks, as follows:

- In case that (parts of) WP 0 funds are not used up, budget shifts from WP0 to other WPs are **not** possible
- To enable all partners to meet the set deadlines, all WP-leaders have agreed to pay increased attention in order to avoid deadline clashes
- Partners are asked to **communicate** to the project staff when deadlines cannot be met.

After this presentation, each WP leader gave presentations on the activities performed by now or planned in the next future, as follows:

WP 2: V. Vulturescu gave a presentation on WP 2 activities, highlighting that the first phase (task 2.1) was successfully passed, benefiting from the effort, expertise and experience of AWS colleagues. As specified in the application form, task 2.1 has been subcontracted by AWS to a PR agency, and the following deliverables were obtained:

- A communication strategy (presented to all PPs)

¹² JTS = Joint Technical Secretariat = Secretariat of SEE program, established in Budapest, Hungary

¹³ DoVoE = Declarations of Validation of Expenditures

- Several communication tools (project logo, communication templates, a roll-up, etc.)
- Web page design (based on input provided by PP6)

The communication tools and materials will be made available to all partners before Christmas 2009. For the website, each partner is requested to provide a logo of his organisation in a suitable format (.jpeg, .gif) to the WP2 leader. WP 2 presentation continued with a detailed presentation given by Marius Mitroi on SEE-IFA-NETWORK web page www.see-ifa.eu and intranet. Marius also presented a concept for an innovation portal which is aiming to offer a match – making process (technology/products development demands and offers). However, further analysis is needed with a focus on: similar instruments across EU, achievement of critical mass, effort that should be paid by each partner during the lifetime of SEE-IFA-NETWORK and after its end. Viorel requested all partners to provide inputs / comments / feed-back, in order to assess the maturity of such an idea, its usefulness and impact, etc. It was also suggested to assess the scope and needs of an innovation portal within the framework of the Local Support Group (LSG) Meetings.

Concerning the LSG Meetings, it was suggested that, if needed, the expertise of local LSG members could also be used as “external expertise” in relation to other project activities. However, it was emphasised that there is no budget provided for the local round table discussions.

WP 3: V. Vulturescu gave a presentation on the status quo of the country studies highlighting that the methodological framework and country studies template were successfully carried out. It was observed that the definition of the term “innovation” was in some cases not very clear cut. This turned out to be challenging, since some statistics focus more on a technology and R&D-centred definition, whereas others cover also closer-to-market forms of innovation. Moreover, definitions are often industry-focused and thereby neglect innovation within the services sector. So far, except IPA-Partner 1¹⁴ (delays due to the non-eligibility of costs prior the signing of the IPA Grant Contract), all partners provided their country studies. Each partner presented the main outcomes of Country Studies. It was concluded that further refinement is needed in order to achieve the same level of consistency and the following deadlines were defined:

- 5 December 2009 – V. Vulturescu will send a request to all partners specifying all points of the respective country studies that need to be revised and refined according to an example provided;
- 15 December 2009 – all country studies have to be finalised and received by V. Vulturescu;
- 20 January 2010 – V. Vulturescu will provide LP (and all partners) with a synthesis of all Country Studies.

¹⁴ IPA-Partner 1 = FME - Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje (FYROM)

Since the focus of the first Thematic Seminar was on WP3, all partners presented their respective country studies (General overview, SWOT, Best practice examples). On the basis of these presentations, good practice examples from each country and criteria for the selection of good practice were extracted and discussed:

Selection Criteria of project partners for Good Practice Instruments:

- incentives (RO, HU)
- commercial viability of a project (RO)
- patent requests with market potential (RO)
- intensity of funding (respecting the EU State Aid Rules) (HU)
- simplicity (HU)
- Leverage of private resources
- Knowledge sharing (Dissemination mechanism)
- Efficiency of funding (SR, IT)
- Multiplying effect (SR, HR, IT)
- Allocation quality (HR)
- Coverage of Eligible companies (HR)
- Direct Assistance and mentoring (GR)
- Transparency (BG)
- Trigger of Innovation (BG)
- Practical issues (BG)
- Access to finance (GR)
- Broad coverage (AT)
- Teaching the target group
- Eco-friendliness

In general, it was mentioned that EU criteria for appropriate state aid are: market relevance, additionality of support schemes, leverage / multiplier effect, efficiency / effectiveness.

Good practice examples

AT: 1. Innovation support program (grants, guarantees)

2. General funding program

IT: 1. Seed financing

2. Fund "Made in Lombardia"

3. META DISTRETTI (collaboration of companies)

GR 1. Intellectual. Prop. Organization

2. "Venture Capital" Fund

3. TEMPME

H: Immoszek Plus program (grants)

RO and SI: -

BG: The Municipal Guarantee Fund for SME - Sofia Municipality

Promotion of Innovative Participation among Young People in Bulgaria (TECHNOSTART)

Advanced Equity Holding JSCo

HR: 1. Ministry of Economy – with several instruments (grants)

2. Guarantee fund of AZRA

SR: 1. Program for Development of Competitiveness of companies (grants by Ministry of Industry)

2. Contest of best technology + innovation

The section of Country Studies was concluded with a presentation on a synthesis of SWOT analyses given by V.Vulturescu, who concluded that (national) analysis were heterogeneous and many local aspect we emphasised; it was rather difficult to find common problems. However some issues were identified in each study. Also, all partners concluded that WP 3 work is feeding most of the other WPs and is crucial that country studies has to be performed at the best level and harmonised among them. It is therefore essential that the clarifications requested by the WP3-leader will be provided in the best available quality.

It was discussed that, in addition to the partner countries participating in the SEE IFA project, four additional country studies should also be prepared (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovakia). These studies shall be carried out by external experts on a bilateral basis. Funds are budgeted for this purpose within the budgets of AMCSIT, Georama, SID Bank and TETALAP. TETALAP, EPF and RDA Banat said they could provide some contacts to external experts which could be contracted for the realization of these remaining studies. However, these can also be finished at a later stage as compared to the partner country studies.

The output of WP3 will consist of two parts, which will also be published on the SEE IFA website:

- a) A compilation of all refined country studies
- b) A synthesis of the country studies.

WP 4: F. Canatelli gave a general presentation of WP 4, stressing that activities which will be performed in this WP are very much relying on the content of country studies. A plan (provisional Gantt chart) has been presented to all partners together with the content of each activity supposed to be performed in WP 4.

WP 5: The content and status quo of WP 5 has been presented by A. Tkacheva. She mentioned that some partners did not deliver their interviews. Under these circumstances the Demand Analysis has been delayed and new deadlines have to be set up. The next steps foreseen are:

11.12.2009	Deadline for the submission of the remaining interviews
01.02.2010	AWS send the Partners the results of the Demand Analysis
22.02.2010	Partners send AWS their statements regarding Demand Analysis
30.06.2010	Finalisation of the Feasibility Study by AWS

In spring 2010, the ITC (Intensive Training Course) on „Patent and License Management“ will be held in Vienna in the Framework of WP7 (date to be determined). The ITC (approx. 20 participants) will be mainly targeted to the IPA and 10% PPs (including associated organisations). Provided that there are still places available and budget permitting, the other partners are also welcome to participate in the ITC.

WP 6: Unfortunately colleagues from Regione VENETO were not able to attend the meeting. However, WP6 has not started yet and there were no critical issues to be reported.

WP 7: R. Mosburger gave a brief presentation on WP 7 activities that are to be performed within this WP. As WP 7 did not started yet, deadlines and activities are not impacting in this period. The Synthesis of the Country Studies will also form the basis of the Training Needs Assessment and the detailed Training Plan.

A last exchange of ideas was focused on the LSG setting - a very important part of the SEE-IFA communication process. All project'partners were urged to set up LSG (institutions & stakeholders involved in the project) to discuss every 6 months the project status Two partners have hold a LGS meeting in their countries - Austria and Bulgaria The EPF'representative raised a couple of problems discussed in the frame of their LGS'meeting:

- ✓ An adequate definition related to the innovation activities - it is a need to have a more enlarged definition in order to cover a more enlarged scope of activities
- ✓ A LGS network to be created between all partners' LGS in order to establish a permanent infrastructure for better exchange of good practices and ideas and to create a favourable conditions for multiplying the project impact

The Lead partner AWS promised to do some research and to provide a more extensive definition of "innovation" to be used by all partners. They will examine the possibility of a LSG'network and will report later.

In general, despite slight delays, partners participated actively in the activities they were involved in. Participants agreed that, when setting up new deadlines, these should not overlap each other to allow the partners to fulfil their contractual obligations. However, it appears that IPA – Partner 1 encountered some difficulties when signing its funding contract with EC delegation in F.Y.R.O.M.

and, in this respect, they were not able to produce and send so far their contributions to any of the WPs. R. Mosburger mentioned that she sent e-mail messages to EC delegation asking to accelerate the process of contract production and signature. Efforts will be further paid in this sense. The meeting was closed concluding that all participants worked according to the agreed plan, even some issues needed special attention.