

Initial Project outline for the Interreg Europe Programme

“Scale-Up Cities & regions” (working title)

Brainport - Eindhoven

Project topic: Effective Governance Models for Controlled and Sustainable Growth

Lead Partner: Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven, supported by Brainport Development

Policy Instruments targeted: Development strategies of the project partner regions and agglomerations

Call: third call closing on **07 June 2024**

Introduction

The Metropolitan Region of Eindhoven, in cooperation with Brainport Development, is **looking for partners** to cooperate on an Interreg Europe project for the third call of the Interreg Europe Programme. The project aims to gather regions or urban agglomerations from across Europe facing the “growing pains” associated with an exponential economic growth stemming from their high tech industry sectors and work together on improving related governance models. In this way, the project aims to help place the concerned regions on a sustainable growth path, where benefits associated with growth are evenly distributed across the larger agglomeration or region.

The challenge

The Brainport region Eindhoven has been experiencing an explosive growth in terms of employment and housing construction fuelled by the rapid expansion of its high-tech industry, in particular related to the company giant ASML, one of the few suppliers of chip-printing machines globally. Eindhoven’s growth is thus interwoven with that of the tech giant which is expected to fill ca. 70,000 jobs by 2030, leading to a complexity of issues that need to be considered simultaneously. As outlined in the Strategic Agenda Brainport, the Brainport region Eindhoven “can only consolidate its growth rates if there is enough attractive housing, the region is sufficiently accessible, there is enough space to house and scale up new innovative companies, there is enough talent available, and everyone is able to participate.”

Eindhoven is not alone. Several urban hotspots across Europe face similar challenges, racing to keep up with their booming high-tech industry. These rapidly expanding industries can be testing for the infrastructure and service providing capacities of the urbanized areas where they are located. They can seriously strain housing, transportation or energy supply capacities, and endanger accessibility of adequate health and education services, not to mention the impacts of the sudden influx of the new (foreign) workforce into the city or region. At the same time, these trends can further aggravate the

position of adjacent cities and regions which are often already struggling to allure investment and talent.

Objective

In line with the above, the primary objective of the project is to help city agglomerations and regions gain knowledge and insights on handling adverse effects and challenges related to a sudden and unsustainable growth in their regions. Project partners will achieve this via policy improvement, creating a better governance framework and tools to regain control and steer their cities and regions towards sustainable and balanced development - all done with the help of knowledge sharing and mutual learning across the project partners. Key focus topics of the project will include: 1) addressing gaps in local infrastructure and public services, esp. limited capacities of local/regional energy grids and basic services such as education and health and 2) establishing efficient cooperation mechanisms within the regional context across various levels of governance.

The project objective contributes to the **Interreg Europe Policy Objective 5: Europe closer to Citizens** (i) Sustainable integrated territorial development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security (urban areas). This new Policy Objective has been introduced to the main Cohesion Policy framework as an enhanced commitment to integrated territorial development (incl. sustainable urban development). PO5 encourages local actors to take the lead in identifying and addressing their diverse challenges, thus tapping into their local development potentials.

Foreseen activities

The project activities are required to be implemented in two phases over four years.

The core phase, lasting 3 years, is dedicated to interregional learning and policy improvement.

- Interregional learning takes place through the exchange of experience and good practices among project partners during seminars, workshops, site visits, staff exchanges, and peer reviews.
- The main outcome of the project is required to be a form of policy improvement by each partner / participating region. The term 'policy improvement' refers to implementation of new types of projects financed through the policy instrument (for those policies implying the presence of funding), change in the management of a policy instrument (improving governance), or the revision of the policy instrument itself.
- Projects have the opportunity to test certain project elements in small pilots during the core phase as well.
- A stakeholder group for each policy addressed must be created and engaged throughout the project, which offers a great opportunity for local ecosystem and network building.

The second phase considers a follow-up period of one year, with the aim of monitoring the effects of the policy improvements stemming from the core phase, reporting on any new policy improvements

deriving from partners' exchange of experiences, and monitoring the implementation of action plans for regions not achieving policy improvements by the end of the project core phase. Pilots started later during the project may continue in this period.

Partnership

The main outcome of an Interreg Europe project is to achieve meaningful policy improvement. Project partners are required to choose a policy instrument which they can actively influence during the project. Policy responsible authorities are the main target group of the Interreg Europe programme. At least 50% of the policy instruments addressed have to involve the related policy responsible authority directly as project partner, in other cases, they need to be involved at least as an 'associate public authority'.

In line with the programme requirements, we are looking to create a partnership consisting of 6 to 10 partners representing 5 to 8 regions,

- Representing city agglomerations or regions experiencing sudden economic growth
- Representing a good geographical balance across Europe and Switzerland, including the new EU Candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine)
 - Non-EU countries can take a role of 'discovery partners' (max. 1-2 per project; no obligation to address a policy instrument, just increasing capacities on the topic / gaining experience in managing international cooperation projects)
- Including
 - some partners who have not previously participated in the Interreg Europe Programme
 - partners that demonstrate a varying level of existing experience on the topic addressed

The Interreg Europe Programme

The Interreg Europe programme is primarily targeted at local and regional public authorities and focuses on the identification, analysis, dissemination and transfer of good practices and policy experiences, with a view to improving the delivery of regional development policies. Interregional cooperation addresses policy needs at the intra-regional level by seeking solutions to those needs beyond borders. Thus, the overall objective of the programme is to improve the implementation of regional development policies, including Investment for jobs and growth goal programmes, by promoting the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, dissemination and transfer of good practices among regional policy actors. For this

reason, national, regional and local public authorities, institutions governed by public law (regional development agencies, business support organisations, universities) and private non-profit bodies are eligible to apply.

Projects have to be innovative and actively build on already existing expertise and knowledge. With regard to thematic activities, the programme expects projects to build on the existing experience of specific partner regions. By exchanging their experience, good practices, and, when relevant, testing innovative approaches, the participating partners are required to aim at finding new solutions to address their territorial challenge and at integrating these solutions into their regional development policies.

Key project features, in brief:

- Duration: 4 years
 - Core phase: 3 years
 - Follow-up phase: 1 year
- Project-level funding: around € 1.5 to 2 million ERDF
- Co-financing
 - Public bodies and bodies governed by public law: 80%
 - Private non-profit bodies: 70%
- Partnership
 - 5-12 partners
 - From 5-8 regions representing a balanced geographic distribution: North, East, South, West, completed by representatives of new EU Candidate countries.

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