

The Second Project Development Lab in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

Alexandroupolis, 24th June 2015

Organised by JRC-IPTS and their partners in the region as part of the European Parliament Preparatory Action (PA) "*Actual and desired state of the economic potential in regions outside the Greek capital Athens,*" a second Project Development Lab (PDL) took place in Alexandroupolis in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace on the 24th June 2015. The envisaged aim of this event was to further develop the concrete project ideas generated and developed in the four previous EDP Focus Groups and the first [Project Development Lab](#), which took place in May 2015.

Furthermore, the PDL2 was also an opportunity to present the pilot pre-calls for projects the region has recently drafted, which embed ideas emerging from the EDP process, organised in cooperation with JRC-IPTS. PDL2 thus aimed to share the calls with stakeholders (business, research, and national and local administration) and receive their feedback as well as to demonstrate how their involvement in the EDP process has fed into the policy process. Around 100 mainly local stakeholders from all sectors participated in the event.

As with previous PA events, proceedings were opened with a welcome by the Governor of the Region, George Pavlides, who again acknowledged the contribution of the JRC. The positive work of the JRC was also acknowledged in the welcoming remarks made by Petros Soukoulis, President of Innovation Council of REMTh. Mark Boden of JRC-IPTS reiterated the aims and approach of the event and its role in the PA and the RIS3 process.

Georgios Peroulakis, of DG Regio addressed the first plenary session concerning "*RIS3 for the Region: Why and which are the next steps?*"

Dr. Christos Vasilakos, Senior Researcher at the National Centre for Scientific Research "DEMOKRITOS", and the former General Secretary for Research and Technology (GSRT) made an informative [presentation on the linkages between Regional and National RIS3](#).

The next session was given over to the successive presentation of each of the draft calls by Kostas Kokkinoplitis of Research & Innovation Strategy Experts, namely:

- Thematic Objective 1 Pilot Calls (R&D&I, Technology Transfer);
- Thematic Objective 3 Pilot Calls (SMEs Competitiveness & Support to Entrepreneurship).

The calls included various forms of support for existing SMEs, targeted at increasing applied research, as well as actions for the promotion and dissemination of results. Mr Kokkinoplitis highlighted that human resource costs are an eligible expenditure. He also presented [innovation vouchers for SMEs](#) to cooperate with research centres on new products/process. These would have a maximum value of 20.000 Euros.

The calls include the [creation of incubators for high-tech SMEs](#), which could host newly founded start-ups for two years. For start-ups to be eligible for this incubation, they need to have a reliable plan to ensure viability of one business beyond the ERDF funding period. The calls also make space for regular evaluation of the SMEs performance and for coaching support throughout a 2 year window.

To benefit from the different calls, SMEs need to provide a clear, complete and integrated investment plan, specifying the technological, productive and commercial importance of the product/service in object.

Presentation of the calls was followed by discussion, centred on a number of quite detailed technical questions raised by participants. The issues raised ranged from whether managerial adequacy and efficiency was among the criteria to the compatibility of the calls with State Aid rules, to the specific needs of tourism, as a sector, and academia, as a stakeholder, to whether there would be any mechanisms for proposals to H2020 which passed the thresholds but did not receive funding to subsequently receive ERDF funds.

The regional authority planned to present the calls to each chamber of commerce in the region in the following weeks.

The afternoon session was centred on interactive development of EDP ideas in line with Horizon 2020 funding possibilities. Three of the Greek Horizon 2020 National Contact Points, with areas of responsibility particularly relevant to the EDP ideas were invited by JRC-IPTS to actively participate in PDL2. They started the session with a series of presentations:

- [An introduction to H2020 and a specific look into Agro-food – Dr Apostolos Dimitriadis, PRAXI Network – HELP FORWARD](#) (second presentation available [here](#))
- [H2020: SME instrument and Spreading Excellence – Dr Vassiliki Kalodimou, PRAXI Network – HELP FORWARD](#)
- [H2020: ICT and Tourism - Dr Iraklis Agiovlasis, National Documentation Centre \(NHRF/EKT\)](#)

Following the presentations, participants split into four parallel sessions (one for each of the four sets of ideas from the EDP focus groups on wine, meat and dairy, tourism and non-metallic minerals) to interactively explore the links between EDP ideas and H2020. Each group had a rapporteur appointed by JRC-IPTS, charged with preparing a more detailed report on their respective sessions.

The event concluded with positive reactions thanks to the high level of engagement of participants, and acknowledged the progress made.

A final PA event is foreseen for October 2015.

Other presentations available:

[Introduction to the Preparatory Action on RIS3 in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Elisabetta Marinelli, European Commission, JRC-IPTS](#)

[RIS3 Strategy for REMTh, setting priorities & related ROP calls - Vassileios Pitsinigkos, REMTh special managing authority](#)