

ClusterPoliSEE Project
Smarter Cluster Policies for South East Europe
Cod. SEE/C/0008/1.3/X

WP 1 – Transnational project and financial management
act. 1.1 - SC, STC and WGs setting up and project management

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
FOR THE SETTING UP OF
CLUSTERPOLISEE WORKING GROUPS
CONCEPT PAPER

WORKING GROUP N. 6

(please, insert the number of your WG)

PRIORITY AREA - “NEW SKILLS AND JOBS CREATION”

(please, insert the priority area of your WG)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Aims of WGs

WGs' main objective is to contribute to a broader understanding of the tackled policy area, to anticipate future needs, and to foster greater cooperation among policy researchers and decision-makers from both government and business sectors. The employment of Working Groups (WGs) is intended as the preferred way of **engaging stakeholders in the co-design of new policy mechanisms**.

Each WG focuses on an established thematic priority area as defined in WP1, facilitating the breakdown of cluster development policies in specific discussion topics of interest to SEE countries and beyond, all WGs will touch upon the horizontal issue of multiple-level and cross-department cluster policies.

At this purpose, each WGs, coordinated by the WGs Leader, will bring together representatives of partnership (max. n. 3) and experts (max. n. 2) to share their insights and experiences and to debate on issues of interest and concern. Ad hoc participants among relevant stakeholders are eligible to participate on a case-by-case basis in specific meetings and activities.

1.2 WGs Leaders

The leadership of WGs was agreed and defined in approved project application form:

WG	LEADER
1 - Innovation, R&D driven Cluster Development	ERDF PP 1 - Emilia Romagna Regione, Directorate for Industry, Trade and Tourism - IT
2 - Sustainability through Cluster Development	IPA-I PP 1 – Istrian Development Agency - HR
3 - International Cluster Cooperation and networking	ERDF PP 5 - Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency – BG
4 - Financial Framework Improvement (Cluster Financing)	ERDF PP 18 – MAG, Hungarian Economic Development Centre - HU
5 - Clusters and Regional Specialization	ERDF PP 8 - Athena Research and Innovation Center in Information, Communication and Knowledge Technologies / Corallia Clusters Initiative Unit - GR
6 - New skills and Jobs creation	ERDF PP 11 North East Regional Development Agency - RO

WGs Leaders are assigned to lead and coordinate the thematic priority areas and are responsible for:

1. WGs setting up
 - Elaboration of WGs concept paper and Expression of Interest;
 - Collection and evaluation of Partnership EoIs (also providing partnership with necessary additional information and/or explanations);
 - Short-listing of experts to be involved in WGs.
2. Coordination of WGs activities through all project phases;
3. Structuring and documenting WGs' outputs and deliverables.

1.3 Overview of WGs' task (please refer to WPs)

The tasks of WGs in relation to the project activities are as follow:

Act.3.1 - Provide feedback and share "*ClusterPolISEE Platform concept*" including specific recommendations on concerned topics;

Act.3.2 - Support the definition of "*ClusterPolISEE Platform operative plan and functional architecture*";

Act.3.3 - Constant feeding and coordination of the ClustePolISEE on-line repository on the respective WG thematic priority area and support the stakeholder's consultation in the Platform on 6 central topics, as follows: development of the questionnaire for public consultation, coordination of public consultation, collection of questionnaires and elaboration of data;

- Act.5.1 - Organization and participation in WGs meetings (one physical and the others conducted through the policy learning platform);
- Act.5.1 - Provide a final report on the new policy learning mechanisms in 6 specific thematic priority areas, generation of six new policy learning mechanisms in support of Cluster development and definition of reflective mutual policy approach on cross-department multiple policy level understanding and coordination;
- Act.5.2 - Support the definition of the Guideline for Pilot Actions implementation (scheme), that will be based on the set of policy measures defined in WP5.1 and the Pilot Action implementation monitoring, through the close cooperation (also by platform) with the PPs that are assigned to lead and coordinate the Pilot Actions implementation,
- Act.5.3 - Support the evaluation activity of the pilot actions;
- Act.5.3 - Organization and participation in WGs final transnational Workshop in Brussels.

2. STRATEGY OF WORKING GROUP n. ----

2.1 Description of the WG's topic

(max. 4000 characters)

Please, briefly describe the extent of the topic to be dealt within WG ¹referring to objectives to be reached and indicative questions to be discussed.

Expected output/results and timing are described in the AF:

Output	Target value	Period of deliver
Concept papers for WGs setting up (including Eol format)	n.6	period 01
Expression of Interests for WGs setting up	n. 23	period 01
WGs setting up documents	n. 6	period 01
Platform concept - recommendations on specific topics	n. 1	period 01
Platform operative plan and functional architecture	n. 1	period 01
On line repository/database on the 6 central topics results and best practices	n. 1	period 06
Questionnaire for Stakeholder public consultation on 6 cluster central topics	n. 6	
Result of public consultation report and statistical data	n. 6	period 06
New policy learning mechanisms developed	n. 7	period 04
Reflective policy making mechanism pattern	n. 1	period 04
WGs meetings – reports	n. 5	period 05
Guideline for pilot actions implementation (scheme)	n. 1	period 04
Evaluation Report of Pilot action	n. 1	period 05
WGs Final Transnational Workshop	n. 1	period 05
Results	Target value	Period of deliver
Staff members with increased capacity on Learning mechanisms though platform management (knowledge/skills)	n. 78	period 02
policy makers with increate awareness through platform public consultation (knowledge/skills)	n. 52	period 06
stakeholders with increased awareness involved in platform public consultation (rate 1 to 20 for each PPs involved in mutual learning activities)	n. 260	period 06
Policy makers with enhanced capacities to identify and evaluate factors of competitiveness (critical mass) and concentrate resources on key priorities	n. 50	period 04
Established cooperation network, by platform, in support of cluster development	n. 6	period 05
Policy makers with enhanced ability and capacity due to a reflective policy making	n. 50	period 05
Regional based Cluster Policies improved by mutual learning	n. 13	period 05

¹ Please note that, during negotiation process, JTS highlights the risk for WGs to be too vague in the development of contents. It will be essential that the project focuses itself to achieve added value over that which is already known and initiatives that have already taken or are taking place.

For this reason, It will be of particular interest to the JTS to see the concept papers, as already requested.

According to the project objective, **the Cluster Poli SEE Platform** must contribute to the enhancement of national and regional policy makers' capacity to anticipate change and to develop smart specialization strategies for cluster improvement that are capable to accelerate cluster performance differentiation and structural change toward knowledge based SEE economy.

In this context, for the project objective, employment and new jobs creation means **to set the policy framework for improving the number and the quality of jobs created in the cluster structures, mobilising relevant regional stakeholders, recommending appropriate policy learning mechanism and providing sectoral input to the policy makers** in their effort to prepare the future cluster development policy in SEE area.

To this goal, the WG should act in a **reflective and advisory manner** for the Cluster Poli SEE partnership (activities foreseen in WP 3 and 6) by taking-out from the public consultation process and statistical data, the specificity for new skills and jobs generation in cluster structures for developing a new policy learning mechanism capable to be tested, evaluated and included in the platform as reference.

WG will **analyse** emerging, evolving and **changing occupations in existing cluster structures** toward the evolution of labour market conditions at EU level, **assess existing challenges** both for young and disadvantaged groups employment and for employers, for accelerating the shift to low carbon economy and the use of high level ICT skills in cluster management and activities. The WG should be able to **recommend human resource development tools** that support high strategic management and good administrative capacity of a cluster policy mechanism.

WG will act as **advisory sectoral group** to provide methodological support for tailoring new cluster development policies and financing programs (targeting for example on forecasting the required new skills, designing updated qualifications in each sector, filling-in the employment issues related to work contract and fiscal legislation and work force mobility) which are based on facts and figures resulted from SEE cluster policy common understanding and previous experiences (WP4 outputs). Giving common policy recommendations can contribute to solving common challenges in existing cluster structures and policies.

WG should contribute to creating a **pattern for successful and performing cluster policy management** and encourage implementation of **early benchmarking system** that will be applied in SEE regions in order to boost competitiveness. It should be able to **identify and recommend best practices and models** used to forecast, acquire and retain the required skills in cluster policy implementation activities. WG should identify and recommend existing regional, national and EU instruments that can contribute to the improved capacity of the cluster policy makers and the cluster stakeholders to evaluate and monitor the new skills required in the context of global competitiveness and evolution of labour market needs.

WG activity has to **foster cooperation among different interested parties** in cluster policy development by emphasizing on bringing together existing clusters and their national networks representatives across SEE area and using the Cluster Poli SEE platform to make specific information widely available both to link the existing EU information sources and to make the EU information available in targeted, user-friendly and accessible formats. WG should encourage PPs to **share information on surplus and shortages of skills across their regions**, and take it into account in new cluster policies.

2.2 Consistency of the topic with EU policies

(max. 4000 characters)

Please, briefly describe the consistency of WG topic with EU policies (in terms of objectives and challenges) , with a focus on South East Europe area, also highlighting added value.

Please, also explain how WG contributes to the achievement of EU objectives in the specific topic and synergies with relevant ongoing EU initiatives/projects/networks/specific programme.

The topic of the WG is correlated with the provisions of the **EC Communication 868/2008 New skills for new jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs**, which focuses on strengthening the Union's capacity for upgrading skills at all levels, for anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs, and for ensuring that the assessment of skills and labour market needs becomes a permanent part of the EU's policies for Employment and Growth. In particular, the WG topic is articulated and intends to contribute to the following main actions envisaged in this document:

1. **Making labour markets to function better through further reform**, by promoting better incentives to take-up learning opportunities and more individually tailored help for people looking for work;
2. **Equipping people with the right skills for employment**, by helping people to see which skills are most needed now and in the future and allow them to develop the right mix of skills;
3. **Improving quality and working conditions** by making legislation more effective and easier for individuals and business to understand and apply;
4. **Creating jobs** by improving conditions for set-up and running a business.

The topic respond to **European Employment Support Initiative** and **European Economic Recovery Plan²** provisions that indicate continue investment in knowledge, skills and competences, measures for retraining and skills upgrading as essential to ensure that Europe addresses future development opportunities.

The WG recommendations will be aligned in SEE clusters area with the **Employment package** presented in April 2012 that indicates the following proposals to be addressed by the Member States in their national employment policies:

- **Exploit the big job potential for the future such as the green economy** where 20 million jobs could be created between now and 2020, to encourage inclusion of green employment into their National Job Plans, strengthening the green skills intelligence;
- **Support an increase in highly qualified ICT labour** and promote digital skills across the workforce.

Some **common challenges** are recognised from this perspective in all Member States that has to be considered in the activity of the WG:

- unprecedented high unemployment rate and actual declining rates of fertility in EU that results in visible shrinkage of the working age population, putting the social model and welfare system at risk;
- young people are not attracted enough in maths and science, engineering, information and communication technologies and environmental protection;
- the contribution of entrepreneurs and social partners in development of policy instruments is not effective enough;
- more and higher quality jobs require improved skills, therefore a reliable mechanism for monitoring the existing labour market offer and demand and a strong capacity for anticipating the future needs;

² Council of European Union, Conclusions on New skills for New Jobs Anticipating and matching the labour market and skills needs, 2930th Employment Social Policy Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, 09.03.2009

- the competition from other parts and the need for higher use of existing available skills across EU urge Member States to strengthen their national employment policies;
- The European Commission had identified that the biggest job potential areas for the future are the green economy, health services and ICT.

Synergies with relevant ongoing EU initiatives are envisaged within WG activity that will:

- Produce a set of recommendations on anticipated future skills needed in the existing SEE clusters on the premises to increase economic performances based on **EU regular forecasts** on labour demand and supply³;
- Develop and test a single mechanism to evaluate the take-up capacity of individual PPs in cluster employment area;
- Increase the use of European instruments proposed to raise skills like **European Labour Market Monitor** and **Match and Map**;
- Identify the skills which are needed to move SEE cluster activities towards a low carbon economy to generate the working greener conditions;
- Increase cooperation between business and education establishments in terms of setting curricula and establishing system of trades and qualification at national level. Recommend improvements for the **Skills Pyramid** to meet SEE cluster development strategic ambitions.

2.3 Working Methodology

(max. 4000 characters)

Please, referring to the methodology described in the AF, integrate with any additional actions, methodological tools - e.g. Communication tool, reports preparation procedures- (also with reference to the topic considered in the relevant WG) you plan to adopt.

1. Identification of the WG members

For the identification of the stakeholders (policy researchers and decision makers' representatives) equal right of representation principle will be used for all PPs. An EoI template will be circulated and used as supporting document for this process. EoIs will be collected and assessed by the LP and WG coordinator. The assessment will take into account the evaluation criteria fulfilled by each candidate in order to select the most appropriate representatives and reach a reasonable number of members (min 6 members). The appointed WG members will commonly decide the invitation/consultation on specific topics of other relevant experts in their regions. Communication inside the WG will take place by e-mail including LP and WP coordinators (for respective activities implemented under content packages of the Cluster Poli SEE Project).

2. Content actions of the WG

2.1 The WG members will use on-line consultation to contribute to the Platform concept generation, the Platform operative plan and functional architecture definition by formulating and submitting specific recommendations according to the project timetable. To this extend, the experience of advanced Member States in cluster policy implementation will be most welcomed. The proposals will have to address the new skills and job creation issue inside the cluster policy, the support financing programs and cooperation tools, in order to provide a clear vision of the quantity and quality of existing employment in cluster structures, the challenges for acquiring and retaining the new skills in cluster structures, the instruments and recognized good practices that are available at SEE level for encouraging new and quality jobs creation in this type of regional agglomerations. The horizontal issue of multilevel and cross department cluster policies will be observed in the recommendation formulated and information gathered.

³ MEMO/10/602 Europe 2020 flagship initiative "An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment", Strasbourg 23.11.2010

2.2 The WG have to agree on the list of topics that will be included in the on-line repository of the Cluster Poli SEE Platform for the thematic area concerned and contribute with relevant indications of data sources that PPs would be able to exploit and bring into consideration along the project content activities. Taking into account the role of the on-line repository to ensure project results and best practices to guarantee support for relevant cluster stakeholders to extract and learn from project outcomes, to facilitate transnational transfer of cluster policies, to contribute at fostering cross sectoral cooperation and the implementation of thematic based strategies, the information provided must be detailed and concrete.

2.3 The WG members will agree the structure of the thematic questionnaire drafted by WG leader to be used during *public consultation process* (Activity 3.3) and will make comments on the conclusion report prepared by responsible partner. The WG will provide recommendations on the number and type of stakeholders to be involved in the public consultation process. The questionnaires will collect relevant data on innovative measures supporting cluster development, detect needs and feed the activities of the working group, thus ensuring the uptake of the project results. It will be directed both to policy makers/institutional actors and private sector. The questionnaire will have to be structured in such manner to be able to correlate information to be collected from the same stakeholders with different purposes along the project implementation process (see consultation process involved in Activity 4.1- qualitative impact analysis of the cluster policy/programme at regional level, Activity 4.2 - foresight exercise at regional level, Activity 6.2 - foresight exercise at SEE level on 2013-2020 strategy choices).

2.4 Taking into account the need to develop a ***New policy learning mechanism in the thematic area of New skills for new jobs*** each WG member will have to propose the elements of reflective mutual policy approach that should be included in the new tool definition. The methodology used will be direct meetings where WG members will formulate proposals taking into account the reflection on PPs experience with cluster policy implementation, their capacity to generate new cluster policy instruments, the need for a coordinated vision of cross department multiple policy level. The policy learning mechanism will have to bring methodological improvement and solutions to remove existing learning barriers in cluster policy learning tools. The development of the new policy learning mechanism report will be a collective work conducted under WG coordinator support that will take-up the results of previous analyse activities in the project: regional and overall impact assessment dossier, regional foresight exercise reports and the regional based analyses is on current policies for cluster development.

2.5 Testing methodology will be used during the implementation of Activity 5.2 that is targeting to promote evidence based regional policy learning mechanism and a set of measures that will be tested and implemented. The selected pilot actions should propose new approaches; indicate areas with strengths and areas that need further improvement and assess possibility to replicate the pilot actions elsewhere. The guideline for pilot actions implementation will be provided by PP11. WG members will met twice (1 meeting on line and 1 workshop) to identify and select the specific pilot action that will be promoted as contribution to the implementation of the new regional policy learning mechanism in the area of new skills and jobs.

2.6 The communication between members of the WG will be ensured mainly by e-mail but also via direct meetings (the thematic workshop dedicated to New policy learning mechanism definition in Athens and WGs final transnational workshop in Brussels) and the on-line communication ensured through Cluster Poli SEE Platform. A separate section on the ICT platform will be dedicated to the WGs activities and several web communication tools will be activated (the forum, webinars, the counselling area where WG members will have the possibility to express their considerations in relation to the project Cluster Polis SEE activities and outcomes.

2.4 WG composition

(max. 4000 characters)

Please, indicate the key skills and competences and level of experience needed with reference to the relevant topic enabling to participate as member of WG.

Please, also provide any additional criteria that will be taken under consideration for inclusion on the list of WGmembers.

The composition of the WG is:

- RDA North-East as WG leader
- 1 partner with significant experience in cluster policy mechanism development and implementation
- 1 partner with less experience or ideal in the phase to launch a cluster policy mechanism
- 1 IPA partner
- 1 International External Consultant(IEC) with relevant experience in human resource development and strategic management(*)

(*The potential candidates for IEC should be able to indicate the following skills, competences and experience level:

Professional training and skills

- License diploma or equivalent in economic/legal/public administration field
- Professional experience of at least 5 years
- Good knowledge of English (spoken, written)

Specific professional experience

- Experience in activities or consultancy provided to ministries or governmental organizations in activities related to economic development policies, especially regional development policies/support initiatives for clusters;
- Experience in activities or consultancy provided to supporting (creation and development) organizations for clusters development;
- Experience in development and implementation of at least 1 project dedicated to improve economic policies in EU Member States and regions.