

Implementation of regional policy actions in Latvia and elaboration of regional development measures

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| Project number: | Nr. 4.3-24/NFI/INP-001 |
| Project title: | Implementation of regional policy actions in Latvia and elaboration of regional development measures |
| Project implementer: | Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development |
| Total budget: | EUR 1 174 983.81 |
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| Agreement signed: | 18.12.2013. |
| Place of implementation: | Latvia, duration 42 months, planned end date 30.04.2017. |
| Project partners in Latvia: | Latvia: Latgale, Vidzeme, Riga, Zemgale and Kurzeme planning regions. Latgale, Riga, Zemgale and Kurzeme planning regions in accordance with the Regional Development Law are derived public persons which ensure the regional development planning, coordination, as well as the cooperation of local governments and other state administration institutions. Main functions of planning regions are determination of planning region long-term principles, aims and priorities, coordination of development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of regional development support measures. Information about planning regions is available: http://www.latgale.lv http://www.kurzemesregions.lv http://www.zemgale.lv http://www.vidzeme.lv http://www.rpr.gov.lv |
| Project partners in Norway: | Ministry of Local government and Modernisation of Norway, Oppland County and Aust-Agder County. Information about Ministry of Local government and Modernisation of Norway is available: http://www.regjeringen.no/en.html?id=4 . Information about Oppland County is available: http://www.oppland.no Information about Aust-Agder County is available: http://www.austagderfk.no/Information-in-English/ |
| Target groups: | Municipalities, planning regions, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, which represent entrepreneurs, prospective investors, entrepreneurs, higher education institutions, and individuals. |
| Activities/results: | Development of regional entrepreneurship and innovation system The activity will involve 2 main lines of action: 1. Introduction of business and innovation promotion system in pilot region – LPR. Considering that LPR is less developed planning region in Latvia with long-term negative economic, social and demographic trends, within the activity are planned measures (visits of local governments and non-governmental organizations which represent entrepreneurs to neighboring countries, participation and representation of local governments in investment forums, development of investment catalogue for Latgale region, creation of new website www.invest.latgale.lv , establishment of representation of Latgale region in Riga etc.), which will be aimed toward activating local resources and local partnerships between entrepreneurs, state government institutions and local governments, educational and culture institutions, finance sector and non-governmental sector; |

2. organisation of regional competitions for innovative business ideas in order to promote entrepreneurship.

Planned results within activity:

1. experience exchange between Latvian and Norwegian institutions (within this activity will be ensured experience exchange events about planned and implemented entrepreneurship promotion measures in Norway. Within this activity will be investigated role of Norwegian local municipalities in entrepreneurship promotion with an emphasis on development programs of municipalities and support measures to promote development of local entrepreneurship);

2. organized 12 seminars about promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation (aim of seminars and discussions is to activate local resources and local partnerships between entrepreneurs, local governments, institutions of higher education and planning regions, as well as strengthen capacity of local governments in field of entrepreneurship development);

3. ensured 4 visits of local governments and non-governmental organizations to neighboring countries (visits will be organized to popularize local goods and products and promote sales expansion);

4. ensured participation in 4 investment forums (it is planned to participate in 4 investment forums and LPR will represent both planning region and local municipalities. Forums, where LPR will participate, will be focused on economic cooperation, innovation promotion and popularization of region economic potential);

5. elaborated investment catalogue (investment catalogue will be used as an important marketing material during visits to neighbouring countries and participating in investment forums. There will be provided also electronic version of investment catalogue which will be available both in LPR website www.latgale.lv and later also in new website www.invest.latgale.lv);

6. developed website www.invest.latgale.lv (webpage will be elaborated to ensure availability of actual information, which is essential to entrepreneurs, potential investors and municipalities. Website will provide information that is oriented towards the Latgale region, will offer opportunity to potential investors to evaluate and select potential investment objects in Latgale, as well will offer for potential investment seekers investment sites online);

7. established representation of Latgale region in Riga (in framework of activity LPR will establish multifunctional centre, which will represent actual investment projects, including investment and real estate development projects, which are important for long-term development of infrastructure, and also investment catalogues of Latgale region. For prospective investors will be offered investment opportunities using electronic version of investment catalogue. LPR will represent production of local (small/medium/large) entrepreneurs of Latgale region and also production of local craftsmans, facilitating their access to the Latvian and European Union markets. In addition to above mentioned, Representation of Latgale region will offer premises for conferences for communication of entrepreneurs and investors and other cooperation partners);

8. organized 10 regional competitions for innovative business ideas (VARAM as a project promoter will organize regional competitions for

innovative business ideas. All prospective competitors – individual persons will be welcomed to participate in contests, who are willing to start-up their own business and who have innovative and viable business idea. To draw attention to issues of regional development and orient to areas of potential business ideas, contest will be organized in each planning region).

Increasing the role of local governments in promoting entrepreneurship.

Within the activity, several measures will be implemented directed towards increasing the capacity and opportunities of local governments in promoting entrepreneurship:

1. to improve the capacities of Latvian local governments in the field of promoting entrepreneurship, trainings will be organized for experts of all local governments
2. to expand the opportunities and instruments held by local governments for promoting entrepreneurship and attracting private investments, support will be provided to the largest local municipalities for external marketing measures (by offering to prepare marketing materials in English and to participate in international exhibitions) and for preparing of business proposals for potential private investors;
3. during the implementation of the activity LIAA will be involved – first, experience of LIAA will be used for investment proposal preparation, ensuring mutual LIAA and VARAM cooperation in preparation process of investment proposals. Second, in cooperation with LIAA, which is working both with support for external marketing for entrepreneurs, and serving those investors, investment proposals will be promoted to prospective investors, which are interested in Latvia. Essential resource is foreign representation of LIAA (especially in Norway), which will be used as one of the channel to promote investment proposals to attract perspective investors.

Planned results within activity:

1. ensured experience exchange visits between Latvian and Norwegian institutions (within this activity will be ensured experience exchange events about Norwegian experience and good practice in entrepreneurship promotion, to get acquainted with responsible institutions in Norway, including with representation of LIAA in Norway about implemented measures, examples and experience in elaboration of marketing materials and investment proposals for prospective investors);
2. implemented “Knowledge Angels” programme for local governments (“Knowledge Angels” programme will include simulation games, workshops, team presentations, discussions with employees of municipalities, who are working with entrepreneurship promotion and development planning issues. Programme will be implemented in 2014-2015, providing 15 training seminars. It is planned that in total will be trained 375 local government employees);
3. developed 30 marketing materials for local governments in English (to provide opportunity for municipalities to popularize their local resources and attract investments, 30 Latvian centres of national and regional importance will have opportunity to elaborate marketing materials in English to attract investments. Marketing materials are needed as

representation material, when municipalities are participating in events of international importance, including international exhibitions, which target audience are investors);

4. developed 30 investment proposal of local governments for prospective investors (30 Latvian centres of national and regional importance will have opportunity to elaborate investment proposals. Investment proposals will be used, when local municipalities will participate in exhibitions of local and international importance and forums, and also will be used as material for cooperation with investors);

5. ensured participation of local governments in international exhibitions (Opportunity to participate in international exhibitions will be provided for 9 Latvian centres of national importance – large cities (to cover participation fee). Considering that the same 9 municipalities will elaborate marketing materials in English and investment proposals, it is a base for them to participate in international exhibitions. Participation in exhibitions is considered as an effective tool to popularize local resources and find and attract prospective investors.).

The development of support measures for remote and underdeveloped areas for attracting qualified workforce and entrepreneurs.

1. Learning from Norwegian experience and adoption of the good practice is planned for the development and implementation of support measures for remote and sparsely populated territories to ensure attraction of qualified workforce and additional stimulus for entrepreneurship.

2. Within the implementation process of the activity, evaluation of various policy measures will be performed and recommendations will be proposed for territorial differentiation of sector policy measures.

3. Main aim of activity is to prepare proposal for support measures for less developed regions and local governments of Latvia, which face with such problems as depopulation, shortage of labour, business inactivity and other problems.

Planned results within activity:

1. ensured experience exchange visit between Latvian and Norwegian institutions (within this activity will be ensured experience exchange events about development of support measures to ensure public services and promote entrepreneurship for remote and underdeveloped areas);

2. elaborated research on adaption of Norwegian good practice for development of support measures for remote and underdeveloped areas (research will include topics on identification of target area, assessment of sector policies and elaboration of stimulus. Elaboration of research has important role in planning and developing support measures for Latvian remote and underdeveloped areas. Based on research and recommendations, recommended support measures will be evaluated and used for updating action plan of Regional Policy Guidelines for 2013-2019);

3. organized 4 discussions about development of support measures for remote and underdeveloped areas (within activity will be organized 4 Norwegian expert visits to Latvia. Themes of Norwegian expert visits will be related to research on adaption of Norwegian good practice and support measures for remote and underdeveloped areas for attracting qualified workforce and entrepreneurs, which will include information

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| | <p>about research elaboration progress. In framework of visits will be organized discussions with Latvian experts about Norwegian experience in context with situation in Latvia and at final visit will be presented research and provided discussion about possible support measures in Latvia for remote and underdeveloped regions).</p> <p>Planned results in Programme level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgraded 1 planning document at state level; 2. Organized 4 exchange of experience and exchange of knowledge events between Latvian and Norwegian institutions; 3. Developed 6 strategic partnerships between Latvian and Norwegian institutions. |
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