



*Connecting the territory*

*through the innovation **network***



- Spain
- Italy
- Slovenia
- Germany
- Portugal
- Romania
- Bulgaria
- United Kingdom

## II Dissemination Event

### RETA PRESENTS THE INOLINK PROJECT PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS IN BRUSSELS

*The conference was also attended by representatives of other European Interreg IV C that have participation of Spanish partners*

The Andalusian Technology Network (RETA), as lead partner, presented the European Project Inolink last May 22nd, during a working day celebrated on the headquarters of the Committee of the Regions, in Brussels.



During the meeting, in which has been attended by a group of participants from Spain, Italy, Slovakia, United Kingdom and Bulgaria, and representatives of the Committee of the Regions and from various European regions with headquarters in Brussels, the preliminary conclusions of the project have been analyzed. The project has in its objectives the increase of the reach of regional innovation policies in different European areas, through a better connection between the actors involved in the respective innovation systems, especially of those located in the most backward areas. [Read more](#)

## Inventica 2012

### INOLINK PROJECT, IN THE EVENT INVENTICA 2012, ORGANIZED BY ADR

North-East Regional Development Agency organized, during 13th – 15th of June 2012, in partnership with National Institute of Inventics Iasi, the 16th edition of the event INVENTICA 2012, dedicated to the promotion of innovation and technological transfer activities in North-East Region.



This traditional event included several thematic sections, as the following:

- Inventics Exhibition entitled “International Exhibition of Inventics, Research and Technological Transfer”, organised, between 13th – 15th of June 2012, at University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” – Corp A (Hall of Lost Steps). The participants were important personalities in the domain: inventologists, university professors, performant inventors, members of

some societies and associations from France, Belgium, Austria, Moldavia Republic, Croatia, Serbia, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, trade societies, companies and members of Romanian Inventors Society. North-East Regional Development Agency participated with promotion / dissemination publications (brochures, flyers) about agency's services, projects implemented or under implementation on innovation, including INOLINK project.

- Workshop "Innovation in North-East Region – results and perspectives for the period 2014-2020", on 13th of June 2012 (between 14.00-17.00 hrs.), in Iasi (University "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Hall „Mihai Eminescu"). The participants were representatives of local public administration, universities and research centres from the region, such as representatives of business environment and interested SMEs.

The topics presented were related to:

- Regional Action Plan on Innovation of North-East Region for the period 2014-2020;
- Examples of projects implemented in North-East Region in the field of innovation – Project "INOLINK – Connecting the territory through the innovation network";
- Innovation Culture for Performance and Iasi School for Inventics;
- Strategies for innovation and stimulation of innovative performance.

More information in [www.adrnordest.ro](http://www.adrnordest.ro).

## THE CHALLENGES FACING REGIONAL INNOVATION POLICY

Innovation is the engine fuelling the economic growth of an industrial society. For this reason, European, national and regional policies are focussing on the innovation process.

Especially those regions in the process of structural transformation, such as Saarland, are looking to incentives to promote their economic development.

But what constitutes successful regional innovation support? Within the framework of the EU-funded INOLINK project Saarland's competence network NanoBioNet e. V. has examined this question in terms of how innovation is promoted in selected European regions, which obstacles are preventing innovation and which measures have proved to be particularly effective in removing them. NanoBioNet has consolidated the results of the study and will be presenting them in the forthcoming week at the ISPIM (International Society for Professional Innovation Management) Conference in Barcelona. [Read more.](#)

**XXIII ISPIM CONFERENCE**  
**17-20 JUNE 2012**  
**ACTION FOR INNOVATION:**  
**INNOVATING FROM EXPERIENCE**

## RAPIV VISIT COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

In the framework of INOLINK project, under INTERREG IVC of the European Commission, delegation from Varna, including: Mr. Dancho Simeonov, District Governor of Varna District, Mr. Kosta Bazitov – Deputy Mayor of Varna Municipality; Prof. Anna Nedyalkova, rector of Varna Free University; Prof. Aneliya Klisarova, rector of Medical University - Varna; Mr. Yani Yanev, Chairman of the Management Board of Regional Agency for Entrepreneurship and Innovations – Varna (RAPIV); Dr. Dimitar Radev, Executive Director and Ms. Irina Kircheva, Project Expert, participated in study visit in Coventry, West Midlands, UK on 07th and 08th March 2012.



The delegation got acquainted with the policies for support of innovations, business and the commercialization of scientific research. [Read more.](#)

## SUCCESSFUL 2ND ROUND OF STUDY VISITS

*The INOLINK project partners conducted from March 2012 till June 2012 ten second-round study visits and got the insight into 14 good practices of the INOLINK area.*

Prior to the conduction of the 2nd round of the study visit and in order to assist the good practice holder, the project partners conducted the self-evaluation with the assistance of the questionnaire, in which the following aspects were included: level of good practice (policy, strategy, operational) and the number of people to be involved for its implementation as well as the availability of funds, existence of broader policy context (e.g. national), foreseen inclusion of other regional/national organisation, needed for the implementation of the good practices, the likelihood of the good practice sustainability. The project partners rated also additional points concerning the viability and sustainability as well as the importance of different factors to be taken into account in the good practice examples such as cutting-edge knowledge in new technologies and/or business models, access to knowledge and networks as well as to the skilled work force, incentives for cooperation, innovation management skills, awareness for motivation, market information, demand for new goods and services, access to funding, international markets, IP and on available innovation support measures.

According to the obtained results of the self-evaluation, the project partners prepared the proposal for the 2nd round of the study visit in order to ease the organisation and its implementation, answering the question concerning the nature of the visit (bilateral/multi-lateral, the methods of the knowledge deepening [workshop, lecture, training etc.]), expected duration of the 2nd round of the study visit, number of the participants and the expected content, defined according to the needs of the project partners and transferability of the good practice: related

to the institutional set-up, content related, process related as well as results and likely impact related.

Coventry University Enterprise Ltd. (West Midland Region, UK) hosted in the 2nd round seven partners (RAPIV, MRA, NE-RDA, NBN, FUNDECYT, CRIA; RETA), Maribor Development Agency (Podravje region, Slovenia) one (FUNDECYT), CIRA (Algarve, Portugal) hosted one (CUE) and RETA also one (MRA).

The following **good-practices** were in depth presented and discussed during the 2nd round of study visits:

A. in **Coventry**, by the host partner CUE (Coventry University Enterprises Ltd):

1. Coventry University Technology Park
2. EEN - Enterprise Europe Network in the West Midlands
3. HDTI - Health Design & Technology Institute
4. IAE - Institute of Applied Entrepreneurship
5. ICE - Institute for Creative Enterprise
6. KTP - Knowledge Transfer Partnership
7. SGI - Serious Games Institute
8. SPEED Project
9. UKTI - UK Trade & Investment
10. WMES - West Midlands European Service

B. in **Algarve**, by the host partner CRIA (Division of Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer)

11. UIPP - University Industry Partnership Project

C. in **Maribor**, by the host partner MRA (Maribor Development Agency)

12. Tovarna Podjemov – Venture Factory

D. in **Sevilla**, by the host partner RETA

13. Talentia
14. Jeremy Fund

Project partners prepared also the evaluation of the host organisations as well as of the presentation of the good practices. The most of the good practices visited for the 2nd time were rated as very good/excellent. Although the project partners and their stakeholders were impressed by the good practices and their implementation, the partners made also the following observations:

- a. there should be a clear political commitment for the transfer of the good practices;
- b. the transfer of the good practice can never be done in the proportion 1:1, the cultural, scientific, behaviour and others viewpoints do impact the implementation of the good practices;
- c. good practice can serve as the stimulus for the practices not directly related to the observed/studied one.
- d. good practices should have concrete follow up actions, which involve policy makers of the participating region in order to gain political commitment.

More details about the single good practice can be found at the project web-page: <http://www.inolink.eu>

## WORKSHOP AND DISSEMINATION EVENT “EUROPEAN OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE REGIONAL INNOVATION POLICY”, 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> April 2012 – VARNA (BULGARIA)

70 participants from different areas of the society joined the workshop and dissemination event “European Opportunities for Improvement of the Regional Innovation Policy”: local and regional authorities, research institutes and universities (Varna Free University, Medical University Varna, Institute of Ecological Modernization, University of Economics - Varna), international partners from INOLINK project, representatives of private sector, NGOs, media, economical and trade chambers, students and others.

The main objective of the action was to present successful European practices for support of the innovations in order to present a proposal for their inclusion in the Bulgarian Regional Policy.



*Official opening of the International Conference: Mr. Nikolay Nankov, Deputy Minister Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works*

The conference was announced in the electronic and local media in advance and a press release was sent to 40 media on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012. After the event there were announces in the media – TV Chernomore, Chernomore newspaper.

The participants in the event were welcomed by Mr. Nikolay Nankov, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works; Mr. Dancho Simeonov, District Governor of Varna District and by Mr. Hristo Bozov, Deputy Mayor of Varna Municipality. The regional event was opened by Mr. Yani Yanev, Chairman of RAPIV who gave the floor to Mr. Lyudmil Ikonov to introduce the lecturers.

The programme of the event started with the presentation “National Policy of Bulgaria for Support of Innovations”. Mr. Emil Komatichiev from the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism presented the main Priorities and measures of the National Policy for support of innovations.

In the second presentation “Regional policy of Bulgaria and European opportunities for cooperation”, Mr. Belin Mollov made an overview of the present policies in the field of innovation support.

Third presentation was made by Mr. Todor Yalamov from Applied Research and Communications Fund (Arc Fund) who introduced an annual report on the national innovation system in Bulgaria “Innovations.bg”. The event continued with a review of the projects implemented by Varna Municipality and the innovation policy of the Municipality. Lecturer was Mr. Petar Radushev, Director of the Directorate “International cooperation, projects and programmes”, Varna Municipality.

The second part of the event continued with presentation “RAPIV’s activities in support of Innovations”, carried out by Dr. Dimitar Radev, Executive Director of RAPIV. Dr. Radev presented the experience of RAPIV in the field of innovation support, which is carried out mainly through the realisation of EU funded projects.

The project INOLINK, main objectives and results were presented by Mrs. Veronica Ramirez, representing the lead partner RETA and Mr. Jon Ansoleaga from Infyde.

The current achievements of the project were further presented by the project partners as follows:

- Ms. Soizic Tsin introduced to the participants the Good Practices Guide, prepared by Coventry University Enterprise Ltd. Which will include all good practices, identified during the implementation of INOLINK project. Ms. Tsin also presented the experience of CUE Ltd. In the development and management of Technology Park Coventry and its four institutes.

–Mr. Matthias Mallmann from NanoBioNet presented the Survey on Innovation Needs as well as NanoBioNet good practices in the support of clusters and innovation networks.

- Last presentation was made by Mrs. Amna Potočnik from Maribor Development Agency (MRA), who presented the Mentoring plan for the transfer of good practices and the experience of MRA in the development of smart specialisation strategy.

The event was followed by discussion among the participants, in which the participants filled in short questionnaires handed out in advance, to express their opinion about the organisation of the event and the quality of the presented information.

The Workshop on Regional Improvement plans continued on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The Programme started with presentation “Opportunities for transfer of good practices in the Regional Improvement Plans”.

Ms. Irina Kircheva, project expert from RAPIV introduced the definitions of the Improvement plan according to Interreg IVC Programme and according to the INOLINK Application form. According to the INTERREG IVC manual, all the INTERREG IVC projects should contribute to improve the regional/local policies or instruments they address. This improvement can take different forms:

- Policy document that is modified to take into consideration some of the lessons learnt within the cooperation project.
- In other cases, it will be the Transfer of an approach that influences the way the policy/instrument is implemented.

After the review of definitions, proposal of RAPIV for template and action plan for the development of the Regional Improvement Plans was presented.

## PROFILE. EXTREMADURA (SPAIN)



Extremadura is one of the seventeen autonomous communities of Spain. Located in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula, the region occupies 41,634 km<sup>2</sup> and has approximately 1,100,000 inhabitants, representing a population density of about 26 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. The economic configuration, by production sectors, has a more traditional production structure than the national average. The primary sector in Extremadura is characterized by a low technological development and an over-dependence of the vast majority of farms on the environmental conditions. This explains that the main trade and industrial sectors in the region are related to agriculture and manufacturing sector, mainly food and drink.

In other respects, the low investment in research in the productive sectors affects the regional development. Moreover, the research culture in the region is raising much slower than in other regions and the investments in R&D&i projects from the private sector are not enough to achieve a competitive industrial sector, which causes a low regional development. Through the Law of Science, Technology and Innovation of Extremadura, public sector actions on scientific and technical research, technological development and innovation are regulated for the first time in the region.

Therefore the agents involved into the generation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and techniques, or participating in management tasks and project management of technical and scientific research, technological development and innovation are key actors in the Extremadura Science, Technology and Innovation System (SECTI). Concerning to the University of Extremadura, it aims for the creation, development and transmission of science and technology, making it the main engine of science, technology and innovation in the region.

Nowadays, there are enrolled a total of 187 research groups and a total of 1.421 researchers registered in the Catalogue of Research Groups of the Science, technology and Innovation System of Extremadura. In the 90's, Extremadura raised a debate on their regional development future, encouraging the articulation of its own System through studies and analysis of various national and international R & D Systems.

Over the past ten years, Extremadura has set up and vertebrate their own System of Science and Technology, which is currently in full development, responding to the needs of a region with a distinctive socioeconomic profile and whose expectations were not covered before being taken the transfers in R&D&i. The Fourth Regional Plan for R&D&i reveals that internal spending on R&D iwas 1.1% of the total of Spain until 2008, while the extremeonian GDP reached the 1.69% of national GDP and the employment the 2.09% of the total. These data show that to converge towards the average values in Spain, Extremadura must continue with a higher growth in the coming years.

### The main results at a glance

- The main innovative sectors are Energy, Food, Agriculture, fisheries and foresting, ICT and Communication equipment, and Tourism, according to the stakeholders. There are discrepancies about whether or not the construction industry should be considered an innovative sector in Extremadura, probably due to the crisis which the sector is experiencing since 2008 and the current uncertainties about the capacity of the construction companies to innovate. However, one of the most important and active technology centers of the region, INTROMAC, is dedicated to serve, in the R&D field, exclusively to companies in the construction sector, which are increasingly convinced that the only way to compete is to innovate.

[Read more.](#)

## PROFILE. SAARLAND (GERMANY)



The Saarland is located in the west of Germany and adjoins France and Luxembourg. It has a population of a little over one million of which nearly 180.000 are living in the capital Saarbrücken. Defined in the past predominantly by coal and steel, the Saar region has undergone a structural transformation which has been influenced not only by the IT sector but also by the automotive, mechanical engineering and steel industries.

Today, one in four jobs is created by automotive engineering and the related supply industry. In the course of the last few decades Saarland has developed into a business location with great diversity, the fields of power generation technology, food technology, IT technology and automotive engineering ranking amongst the most important growth sectors. One of the strengths of the Saar economy is its world orientation, which is reflected in a rapidly developing export capacity. Saarland's weaknesses lie traditionally in the below-average number of business enterprises (lack of entrepreneurs) and in poor start-up activity. Moreover, there is limited scope in the region for financial undertakings - in 2010 one third of Saarland's state budget was financed through loans.

Saarland's universities play a significant role in the regional research landscape. Saarland makes a relatively important contribution to educating the new generation of scientists. The 11,2 percentage rate of all the doctorate degrees awarded at its universities is the highest in Germany. Between 1985 and 1995 Saarland's policy on technology generated the development and expansion of an impressive research landscape. Saarland University was extended to include a Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. Ten independent research institutes were also established, of which the Max Planck Institute for Computer

Science, the Leibniz Institute for New Materials and the Fraunhofer Institute for Biomedical Engineering and Non-Destructive Testing are especially worth mentioning. As in other locations, schoolchildren and students in Saarland have been found to show little interest in studying natural sciences and technology. In order to counteract a lack of qualified manpower many extra-curricular initiatives and work groups have been introduced to promote natural sciences and mathematics as subjects of study by setting up school laboratories, school sponsorships, further training programmes, etc.

Saarland's Innovation Strategy has seen the most promising areas in the field of IT, nanotechnology and biotechnology, the automotive industry, logistics and knowledge. It has therefore set-up five related clusterorganisations.

Several studies investigated the Saarland with quiet divergent results revealing several strengths but as well weaknesses which lead finally to a ranking in the middle field of innovation. The European Regional Innovation Scoreboard (RIS) classify the Saarland's innovation performance in 2004 and 2006 as medium-high and concerning the enablers (tertiary education, life-long learning, public R&D, broadband) as average. Other studies reveal a low R&D rate of employment and of turnover in research and development or identify the areas of public finances and demography as Saarland's real weaknesses. On the other hand it is pointed out that the Saarland "shows how it is possible to approach a structural transformation through a shrewd innovation policy and the favourable tailwind of global economic activity" or foster the Saarland as Entrepreneur-friendly: "between 2000 and 2008 there were 40% more company start-ups than closures in this region. The ratio nationwide is 27%."

This survey was performed between July and November 2010. More than 40 innovation-related institutions were identified of which 16 finally contributed to this survey.

## The main results at a glance

- Automotive, steel industry, machine building, automation technology, IT, healthcare, h.c.-management, medical devices and nanotechnology/new materials are recognised as the top 5 innovative sectors in the region even if some of them have still low economic relevance and are seen as “seed crystals” with promising potential. In some interviews it was pointed out that in the major enterprises of the economic relevant sectors, the innovations are not created directly in the Saarland but in the holding company. But as long as jobs and taxes stay in the region the role as “extended work bench” does not necessarily imply disadvantages.

[Read more.](#)



## PROFILE. NORTH-EAST REGION (ROMANIA)



The region covers the North-East part of the country and, according to the tradition; it is a part of the old historical region of Moldavia. Having a total surface of 36,850 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 3.712.396 inhabitants, North-East Region is the larger of the 8 development regions of Romania. The North-East Region consists of six counties (Bacau, Botosani, Iasi, Neamt, Suceava and Vaslui). The geographical and historical conditions have determined a serious social and economic gap in the North-East Region. The economic feature of the '60s was agriculture prevalence, the living standard being very low. During 1965-1985, the region was subject to a forced industrialization, aimed at restoring the existing economic condition by purchasing modern producing capacities, fact that determined the establishment of an industrial culture, labour force qualification and training of a large number of specialists. Nevertheless, the industrial development was planned to be too diversified and didn't take into consideration the natural, energetic and environmental resources available in the region.

During 1998 -1999, it could be ascertained that there was a decline registered at both regional and national levels, due to effects of liberalization of the foreign currency exchange rate against Romanian Lei and because of the loss resulted from the restructuring process initiated during 1997. The faulty management, a direct result of the reticence in implementing the quality standard system for the production and products, lack of enterprise development strategy, undeveloped marketing rules in promoting the products, alongside the loss of sales markets and drop in the level of competitiveness of the products due to the lack of resources for maintaining the investment, have caused a sharp decrease in the industry since 1997, with serious

implications on the development of the region as concerning all the economic sectors.

In North-East Region, the crisis influenced some industrial activities, with a previous explosive development (textile and ready-made clothes industry, construction materials industry) which, due to the worldwide economy regression, had to be restructured. At county level, within entire region (except Suceava county), the textile and ready-made clothes industry is placed on the first position. The development of timber industry is important for administrations from Bacau, Suceava and Neamt counties, and food industry in Bacau, Botosani and Suceava counties. An increased attention is given to support of strategic branches. The most frequently options are related to development of IT and biotechnologies sectors, and the less are referring to nanotechnologies, pharmaceutical industry and energies produced by alternative sources. The counties Suceava and Iasi are closer to support biotechnologies industry, IT industry is in Bacau, Botosani and Suceava counties, and pharmaceutical industry in Botosani, Iasi and Neamt counties. As concerning the business support structures, the highest interest concerns the business incubators.

In the region there are several research units: RD units, 8 universities, agricultural research units and companies with RD profile. Very important is the development, since the last years, of the research and excellency centres within universities of the region, recognised by the National Council of Scientific Research from Higher Education, with the governmental program CEEX. In this context, between 2001-2006, in North-East Region, were set up 12 Excellency Centres within the following universities: University "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iasi, Technical University "Gh.Asachi" Iasi and University for Medicine and Pharmacy "Gr.T.Popa" Iasi. In the same time, between 2001- 2006, CNSIS recognized 79 research centres in North-East Region, located within University "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Iasi, Technical University

“Gh.Asachi” Iasi, University for Medicine and Pharmacy “Gr.T.Popa” Iasi, University from Bacau and University “Stefan cel Mare” Suceava.

In North-East Region, the financing of research and innovation sector is made with public funds (more than 55%) but it was registered an ascendent trend of annual expenses for research-development and an increased number of employees in this sector. Also, it was registered a low receptivity of companies regarding the RDI results due to a low absorption capacity of the RDI results. Also, can be noticed a lack of communication and partnerships which can support the development of RDI sector. Technological and innovation transfer towards economy is still at the beginning because the specific infrastructure for the diffusion, transfer and valorization of RDI results, is under crystallization. The previous activities developed under the RIS project which encouraged development of a regional innovation strategy in our region underlined several conclusions:

- there is a need of a regional action plan, with specific financing sources, which will meet the need and offer of innovation.
- there have been indicated several networks dedicated to innovation and which should be interconnected or, at least, promoted in a common manner.
- the universities and scientific parks are the main actors in promoting technological innovation and technological transfer, so they have to raise their visibility in the region regarding the offered services
- the local technological transfer units from Iasi and Botosani are recognized as being functional and those from Bacau and Vaslui can be improved
- cluster initiatives in agri-food, tourism and textile sectors have a positive perception in the region, so it should be encouraged to be more developed
- there are major elements which are affecting the innovation process, as financing conditions, economic risks and rigidity between different types of actors

## The main results at a glance

- Food / drink, Tourism, Wholesale and retail trade, Software, ICT and Communication equipment, are recognized as the top 5 innovative sectors in the region and are seen as “seed crystals” with promising potential.
- The barriers which prevent regional companies and organisations from introducing innovations into the market are referring to the lack of access to funding (to finance innovation and growth), lack of incentives for cooperation between players, lack of appropriate IP – high protection and information on available innovation support measures.

[Read more.](#)



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