

European Cluster Alliance – WG Meeting – Tuesday 7th April, 2020 at 8.30

Working format is based on “Gilles Rules” (designed to allow everybody to speak and share, optimizing time) and using sli.do/ECA for questions / ideas / comments.

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1. CONCEPTS

- **Changes to the European Regional Development Fund Regulation**

Marek Przeor, DG REGIO

The European Commission made a series of proposals to amend legislation that will allow Member States to benefit from more financial back-up and targeted assistance, including support for SMEs under cohesion policy. DG REGIO representative presented the changes to the European Regional Development Fund Regulation which include: the financing of working capital in SMEs, investments in products and services necessary for fostering the crisis response capacities in public health services, flexibility for use of structural funds between funds, regions and topics & 100% co-financing rate for the accounting year 2020-21.

Documents are in the ECCP Forum

[Link to “Changes to European Regional Development Fund”](#)

2. NEEDS

GET PEOPLE BACK TO WORK (avoiding rebound)

- How to use available funds to enable people to be back to work (people already over the virus, in safe conditions)

MASKS AVAILABILITY

- How to provide masks to companies: there are not enough masks.
- Need to have clear regulations for producing masks. Need to simplify procedures in order to understand what it is possible and what not. Is it possible to manufacture masks and give them to common people? It is not clear if we can use masks that have been produced on our own, according with the standard, even though the conformity procedures is not being complete.
- How to ensure the traceability and the quality of the products (masks and others).
- Filtration material availability.

MORE AWARENESS ABOUT CLUSTER ROLE IN SOLVING SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

- Could Clusters have potentially a managing role for part of ERDF in order to being directly distributors, effectively and quickly?
- How to provide Cluster Organisations, and not only companies, with funding scheme projects (national or international level) in order to cover and increase all the ongoing activities aimed to face Covid19: Clusters already are doing activities for stimulate networks, matchmaking supplychains, promoting prototypes, involving and exchanging different actors competences and drive solutions.
- How to provide money to Clusters Organisation to develop effective purpose-driven networks between them (Clusters-to-Clusters)
- How to approach managing Authorities to use funds in these directions

3. SOLUTIONS

ACT PROACTIVELY TOWARDS MANAGING AUTHORITIES

- Regional authorities can cover economically through calls. Each cluster is suggested to stimulate Regional Authorities to leverage on the flexibility that European Commission has given.
- Give information, from EU Commission to managing Authorities to use Clusters as tool to solve Coronavirus: supply chain challenges, developing new links between cluster members, developing effective purpose-driven Cluster-to-Cluster networks.
- ERDF in this context can **accelerate** the local strengths and local suppliers to develop. Clusters are connector of research and business and local authorities. When the Regions will be going to reconstruct S3, which will be still a condition for policy Objective 1, there is the chance in the post Covid19 for a **more greener and a more digitalized** Regions. Clusters are a concrete tool to achieve this regional goals of S3, as they can come with concrete implementation proposal. It is a unique chance economic transition incentivized by the crisis. Clusters must be actively involved by Regional Authorities in this discussion.
- Regional Authorities should write Cluster roles in this transition economy and S3, incentivized by the crisis; translated into operational programs.

WHAT POSSIBLE ACTIONS What can we do with what have been proposed?

- Inform Regional Authorities if they will be not aware that they can leverage on Clusters and use Cluster as a solution provider in order to face Coronavirus.
- Recognition of what Clusters are doing in facing Covid19.
- develop a Fast Track streamline process to enable people to go back to work as soon as possible, involving National Sovereignty, Policies, Branches, Administrative State at different level, private identification rights, medical condition data, personal data
- Using funds to solve unemployment.