

Action plan of Western Macedonia, Greece

I Profile of the Action Plan

Project:	BRIDGES
Partner organisation:	Regional Development Agency of W. Macedonia – ANKO, PP5
Other partner organisations involved:	
Country:	Greece
NUTS2:	EL53
Region:	Western Macedonia
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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact

Investment for Growth and Jobs programme		X
Type 1: Implementation of new project	X	
Type 2: Change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance)	X	
Type 3: Change in the strategic focus of the policy instrument (structural change)		
Other improvements not corresponding to types 1-3 (please comment)		
European Territorial Cooperation programme		
Other regional development policy instrument		

Name of the policy instrument: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme ROP W. Macedonia 2014 – 2020

Improvement needs: Weak absorptiveness of research excellence of the RIS3 industries and the economy in general; Low effectiveness of innovation management, including RIS3 implementation; RIS3 implementation needs to clarify implementation agency; Clusters for growth and innovation weak.

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III Action plan outline**Overview**

The objective of the action plan of ANKO PP5 of the BRIDGES project, is 1) to improve the benefits of the Western Macedonia structural funds for businesses by increasing their innovation absorptive capacity, and as a result improve innovation & SME competitiveness through investments addressed by the Western Macedonia Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ROP); 2) improve access to and awareness of the RIS3 by adopting on line interactive solutions; 3) strengthen the impact of interregional innovation partnerships by supporting transregional research-to-business and business-to-research types of projects.

Three actions are foreseen: Action 1 Innovation ready businesses apply to Western Macedonia ROP calls, Activity 2 RIS3 interactive platform and Action 3 Policy instrument governance improvement: opening of Western Macedonia ROP to interregional research-to-businesses and business-to-research co-operations (interregional research eligibility). Action 3 is implemented through the pilot action for testing and mainstreaming *Tools for transregional research-to-business partnerships*.

The implementation of Actions 1 and 2 are funded by the 2014-2020 ROP of Western Macedonia. The implementation of Action 3 has operational costs and funding for mini projects and follow up actions. Operational costs are about the cost estimate of PP5 participating in & contributing to Action 3, and they come from underspending of the BRIDGES project. The implementation of mini projects and follow up actions comes from the 2014-2020 ROP of Western Macedonia.

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The action plan impacts the Regional Operational Programme of W. Macedonia 2014 – 2020 and its RIS3 Agri-food industries. It builds on the findings of the Western Macedonia innovation map and feasibility study; it benefits from the good practice analysis and transfer. It has been formulated in close cooperation with the Managing Authority of Western Macedonia for the 2014-2020 Regional Operational Programme (ROP). PP5 action plan has been developed in close cooperation with the Western Macedonia MA.

Good practice transfer & the action plan

PP5 works on the transfer / integration of three GPs

- AUTODIAGNOSTIC TOOL, good practice by PP9, accepted to the Interreg Europe data base <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/157/autodiagnostic-tool-for-agro-smes/> : The "AUTODIAGNOSTIC TOOL" is linked with a Feasibility analysis for the Agri-food sector businesses in W. Macedonia in terms of their technological & commercial performance and innovation potential" in order to identify and propose technological solutions for Agri-food sector businesses that will formulate concrete projects to be funded by ROP, or/and will be indicative Actions in the revised version of this Policy Instrument. The application of the AUTODIAGNOSTIC TOOL is a precondition for the implementation of Action 1.
- HURC platform by the PP4 good practice *Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council RIS3 coordination*, accepted to the Interreg Europe data base <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/252/helsinki-uusimaa-regional-council-ris3-coordination/>: The platform is a part of the overall coordination approach of the HURC RIS3. The GP is a good tool to disseminate and motivate participation to the ROP calls. PP5 contacted PP4, exchanged information and prepared a concept paper that was sent to the MA and the Regional Research and Innovation Council (RRIC) proposing adoption to the ROP and thus funding. MA will include this GP as a concrete project in the forthcoming ROP open call for supporting SMEs under Thematic Objective 3 "Improvement of competitiveness of SMEs". Transfer of the HURC platform is done through Action 2 of the PP5 action plan.
- CENTROPE for the pilot action. CENTROPE is a transnational innovation voucher developed through a Central Europe Interreg B project called CENTROPE. CENTROPE was contributed to BRIDGES good practices by BRIDGES PP7, and the GP is accepted to the Interreg Europe data base <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/11/centrope-innovation-voucher/>. Through the BRIDGES pilot the GP is transferred to interregional level. Nine out of the ten types of the CENTROPE supported activities are adopted by the pilot action, while a number of transferability challenges are also addressed, for example provisions for the sustainability of the effort, faster processes, and addressing marketing challenges. The pilot action stresses facilitation for research-to-business actions and associated investments, which are at the heart of RIS3 implementation. PP5 joined the pilot action to get better experience of bilateral research to business partnerships and impact accordingly the regional policy instrument (improvement of governance). CENTROPE is tested and transferred through Action 3 of the PP5 action plan.

Action plan

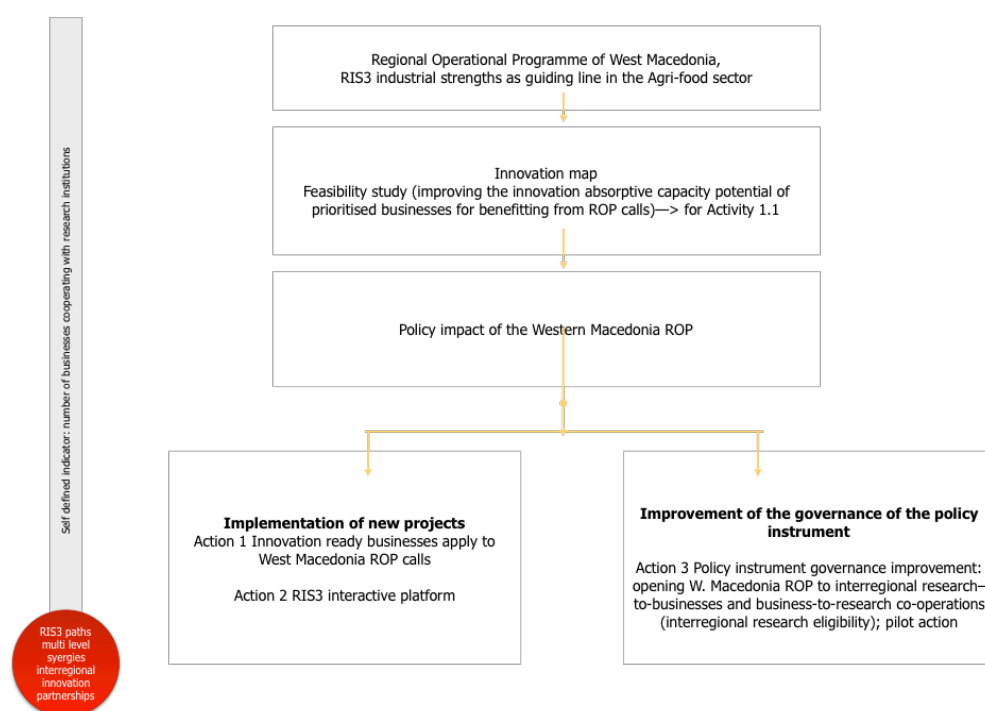
Policy impact in W. Macedonia ROP

The policy impact in W. Macedonia ROP is of Type 1 and 2: Type 1 Implementation of new projects, aiming also Type 2: Improvement of the governance of the policy instrument. Results will be generated from the cumulative result of projects based on three types of Activities:

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- Innovation readiness of SMEs, referring to projects based on approved SME applications to the ROP aiming at improved competences targets identified through the feasibility study. The feasibility study of PP5 identified the technological capacities and needs of rural SMEs for accessing funding from the ROP in terms of the RIS3 policy delivery. For this purpose, PP5 utilised the AUTODIAGNOSTIC TOOL Good Practice.
- RIS3 practical information and knowledge for SMEs, through the development and operation of an interactive platform, being funded by the ROP and utilizing the BRIDGES Good Practise HURC platform, in order to provide to ROP beneficiaries information and Good Practise solutions to be transferred.
- Research-to-research and research-to-business capacity building & implementation of joint schemes, through the development of concepts and technological solutions that as concrete projects will propose for funding through the ROP. The feasibility of this action has been already tested and confirmed. During Phase 1. The ROP of Western Macedonia tested the possibility of interregional research to business partnership under Investment Priority 1.b of the ROP that MA launched (submission deadline extended to: 3/9/2018). This experience that in effect allowed to complement missing lacking required research resources in the region and beyond, towards innovation-based development, showed that such solutions are both possible and useful. Therefore, in forthcoming calls of the Western Macedonia ROP 2014-2020, under measures supporting entrepreneurship and innovation there will be added provisions that "interregional research-based co-operation is promoted in terms of complementing required and lacking research & knowledge resources in the region and beyond".

Figure 1 Action plan PP5



Feasibility study

Feasibility analysis for the Agri-food sector businesses in W. Macedonia in terms of their technological & commercial performance and innovation potential" (finalized at the end of July 2018). The purpose of the study is to improve the innovation absorptiveness potential of Agri-food SMEs towards higher benefits from

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the ESIF 2014-2020 calls relating to the technological and commercial performance of such businesses, having as optimization question "New technological solutions applied by Agri-food SMEs".

The BRIDGES Good practice "AUTODIAGNOSTIC TOOL" was applied to identify the innovation performance and capacity of 20 Agri-food SMEs in reference to the following types of technologies:

- Wine: *Enabling precision farming techniques and technologies*. Precision farming projects in the viticulture sector aimed to reduce the use of inputs in the whole production chain (i.e energy, water, fertilizers and pesticides) / crop monitoring, soil monitoring, yield and quality monitoring.
- Dairy: 1) *Precision Livestock Farming (PLF)*. Small scale PLF projects on dairy sector (lameness, traceability, animal behaviour). 2) *Environmental footprint*: Small scale mini-projects for the assessment of environmental footprint in the dairy sector. Pilot implementation of novel techniques (including the precision feeding) for reducing the environmental footprint.
- Herbs: *Increasing the usage of aromatic plants and herbs from natural products*: Development of a database containing information about medicinal plants, active principles, technologies and local farmers; to set up two pilot cultures for demonstrating the medicinal and aromatic plants cultivation and harvesting technologies.
- Horizontal actions (for all sub-sectors). 1) Advanced quality, traceability and safety in the agri-food chain: Adoption and use of traceability systems in the Agri-food sector. 2) Dynamic Sustainability Management and Information Streaming for the Agri-food Sector: Development of a set of tools for efficient sustainability management and establish communication and information flow between the consumer education bodies, policy makers and Agri-food SMEs.

Actions

Action 1 Innovation ready businesses apply to W. Macedonia ROP calls

Funding for Action 1, for the implementation of Western Macedonia calls is 480 000€. The funding comes from the Structural Funds of Western Macedonia.

The Activity 1.1 is based on the findings of the "Feasibility analysis for the Agri-food sector businesses in W. Macedonia in terms of their technological & commercial performance and innovation potential" (finalized at the end of July 2018). The purpose of the study is to improve the innovation absorptiveness potential of Agri-food SMEs towards higher benefits from the ESIF 2014-2020 calls relating to the technological and commercial performance of such businesses, having as optimization question "New technological solutions applied by Agri-food SMEs".

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Action 1 is implemented by the Managing Authority of Western Macedonia. Items (1) and (2) are prioritised for this round of calls. Based on the assessment of the 20 businesses, applications to the ROP of Western Macedonia will be made to focus on precision farming of the wine and dairy industries. PP5 elaborated and suggested targeted criteria for the ROP calls to the MA. The final list of criteria, the calls, the selected projects and the monitoring of the implementation involve the MA during Phase 2. PP5 will support in the monitoring as foreseen in the BRIDGES action plan for Phase 2.

For Action 1 implementation steps, please see Table 1.

Action 2 RIS3 interactive platform

Funding for Action 2, implementation of the interactive platform is 60 000€. It comes from the Structural Funds of Western Macedonia.

The Activity 1.2 is the endorsement of the BRIDGES Good Practice "HURC platform". For this purpose PP5 contacted PP4 exchanged information and prepared a concept paper that was sent to the Managing Authority of the ROP and also to the Regional Research and Innovation Council (RRIC), proposing agreement, endorsement and funding as a concrete project.

The MA agreed to endorse this project in the forthcoming ROP open call for supporting SMEs under Thematic Objective 3 "Improvement of competitiveness of SMEs", that is to be launched until the end of 2018. The operational framework of the platform is to be specified by the MA and will be addressed under the contents of the respective Open Call.

The platform will be utilized also for the purpose of the newly/under establishment Structure for Supporting Innovation and RIS3 policy in W. Macedonia Region has been launched (from 18.06.2018 to 20.08.2018) by MA under an open call with beneficiaries the Region of W. Macedonia and the Regional Development Fund of W. Macedonia. This new Structure will support the Regional Council of Research & Innovation in the effective implementation of RIS3 policy in the Region, utilizing the competences for the enhancement of connecting and networking R&D and R2B.

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Specifically, the RIS3 interactive platform will support two out of 7 basic pillars of the former mentioned Structure, referring to:

- Information – communication – provision of progress data (to Regional Council of Research & Innovation and MA) for RIS3 priority sectors of the Region (pillar 3 of the Open Call for the Structure)
- Elaboration and implementation of communication plan (pillar 7 of the Open Call for the Structure)

Action 2 is implemented by the Managing Authority of Western Macedonia. As mentioned above, PP5 have prepared a complete project planning proposal and submitted to the MA. The progress of the Action 2 implementation will be done by the MA of Western Macedonia. PP5 will support the MA as foreseen in the BRIDGES project Phase 2 activities.

For Action 2 implementation steps, please see Table 1.

Action 3 Policy instrument governance improvement: opening W. Macedonia ROP to interregional research-to-businesses and business-to-research co-operations (interregional research eligibility- this is the pilot action)

Funding for Action 3: (1) Operational costs and facilitation to access pools of research-clients: ANKO: 23 200€, from the BRIDGES project budget. (2) Funding for mini projects: 18 000€ Structural Funds (3) Funding for follow up actions: 360 000€ from the Structural Funds of Western Macedonia.

The improvement of the policy instrument of PP5 happens through the pilot action. The purpose of the pilot action is to improve the governance of the policy instruments of the three pilot-action participating regions (Kainuu, Helsinki-Uusimaa, and Western Macedonia). This is done by (1) testing interregionally the CENTROPE GP and (2) introducing new action lines into the policy instruments of the three regions and thus reinforcing their RISE3 delivery effectiveness. Such approaches are (still) innovative at Structural Funds level.

For PP5, the pilot action is structured into two parts: Stage 1 dealing with transregional research to business mini projects, and Stage 2 Funding of the follow up projects (i.e. of the product development plans that result from the mini projects).

In Western Macedonia, the pilot action matches research-to-business across the BRIDGES partnership and maintains the BRIDGES project RIS3 & innovation-system reference (bio-based industries). Interregional research-to-business mini-projects are organised for preparing full research-to-business projects &/or investment plans, which are called for short 'follow-up actions'. The mini-projects are based on value offers by research units willing to internationalise their research, and concern product & service development / improvement. They are aligned to the TRL¹ scale provisions. Benefitting excellence fields are those identified

¹ TRL = Technology readiness level, TRL 3: Experimental proof of concept; TRL 4: Technology validated in lab; TRL 5: Technology validated in relevant industrial environment; TRL 6: Technology demonstrated in relevant industrial environment; TRL 7: System prototype demonstration in operational environment; TRL 8: System complete and qualified; TRL 9: Actual system proven in operational environment.

<https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/kets-tools/kets-tc/map>.

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in the innovation map during Phase 1 and part of the RIS3 of Western Macedonia: Biomass chain; Biomass testing (includes Co-combustion biomass with lignite, Gasification of biomass, Biomass testing-power production of biomass) and Research & laboratory work - Chemical Process & Energy Resources Institute (CPERI).

Follow up actions are, for example, investment & financing plans, ETC projects, regional / national structural funds applications, etc., that will be implemented in the programme area of the businesses that benefitted from the mini-project in the first place. Funding for the pilot action mini projects and follow up projects comes from the ROP 2014-2020 of Western Macedonia. For this purpose, one action line is added to the ROP of Western Macedonia, under the heading '*Tools for transregional research-to-business partnerships*'. This happens quite early in the pilot action implementation; it is monitored and evaluated throughout the pilot action and further.

The pilot action is important to PP5 for three important aspects of excellence-market placement requirements and economy renewal: (a) it facilitates access to a large pool of potential clients to research units, (b) it funds the preparation of product development / improvement plans in which follow up funding solutions are described clearly, (c) it ensures funding for the follow up actions. PP5 considers the BRIDGES project an important renewal initiative for the regional economy. It is in this context that PP5 MA decided to open up the ROP calls to benefit for interregional cooperation schemes and follow up actions of the mini projects.

Expected outputs:

- 1 policy instrument impacted: 2014-2020 ROP of PP5 (Western Macedonia). The policy impact will be recognisable under a common title for all three regions: *Tools facilitating transregional² research-to-business partnerships*.
- 3 research-to-business transregional mini-projects implemented and with 3 fundable 'follow up actions' clearly described, and 3 follow up actions funded.
- 1 ex post evaluation report for the purpose of reinforcing the mainstreaming of the strengths of the pilot action and impacting the policy instruments of the three participating regions. The recommendations of the evaluation report are required inputs to the regional board of PP5 and the implications of the report for the PP5 policy instrument will be discussed accordingly.

Implementation of Action 3

The implementation of Action 3 is identical to the activities of the pilot action. It involved both PP5 ANKO and the MA. The activity plan of the pilot action is agreed among the partners and is re-iterated below:

Table 1 Action 3 plan

PHASE 2
Semester 1
There are nine (9) main activities taking place during the 1 st semester, i.e. 1.4.2019 – 30.9.2019:

² The term 'transregional' is utilised as a more inclusive term to allow options for a wider range of partnerships beyond the programme areas of the partners, i.e. to allow for interregional, transnational, and eventually maybe cross border options.

PHASE 2**I. MINI-PROJECTS:**

1. The organisational arrangements of PP4 'Enhancement of EU services' are finalised.
2. The results of the approval (or not) of the pilot action are informed to applicants. In case the pilot action is approved, then:
 3. Kick off events and information to the press in the PP2, PP4 and PP5 regions take place.
 4. One interregional meeting is planned to take place in Helsinki Finland, to finalise (any) pending issues among the pilot action partners. During the interregional meeting the supportive material (mini-project concepts, methodology, criteria and evaluation approach), that have already been prepared during Phase 1 are reviewed, finalised and adopted.
5. Announcement of calls of the mini-projects and invitation to research units to participate is made by PP2, PP4 and PP5.
6. Filling in of the value offer outlines by the research units starts.

II. POLICY IMPACT

7. Mainstreaming item (i) The concept of mini projects under the heading 'Tools facilitating transregional research-to-business partnerships' is included into the RIS3 revision agendas of PP2 & PP4 (spring 2019) and integrated into the ROP for Western Macedonia (spring 2019). PP2 and PP4 issue calls for mini projects, and PP5 issues calls for mini projects and follow up actions under the present. Western Macedonia ROP.
8. Mainstreaming item (ii) (Members of the RIS3 revision teams (PP2 and PP4) & the Western Macedonia ROP join the pilot action monitoring process to be able to have -to-day experience of the mini projects.

III. MANAGEMENT

9. Coordination of the pilot action activities (coordination is done by PP2).
10. One online progress-assessment and trouble-shooting meeting.

Semester 2

Ten (10) main activities are foreseen for the 2nd semester, i.e. 1.10.2019-31.3.2020.

I. MINI-PROJECTS

1. Search for clients, and matching between research and businesses, starts. First partnerships are identified.
2. Applications for mini-projects, evaluation and approval of mini-projects, start.
3. Implementation of mini-projects starts. We expect that mini-projects will be implemented during approximately 3 months, i.e. a development plan of the follow up action is expected to be ready within 3 months.
4. Filling in of value offers by research units continues.

II. POLICY IMPACT

5. Mainstreaming item (iii) Recommendations are made for the concrete provisions to mainstream of the mini projects to the RIS3 teams of PP2 and PP4, following the results and effectiveness of the calls; the same process if followed by the regional board of the PP5 MA.

III. EVALUATION

6. The first data collection starts. The data collection is carried out by PP2, and inputs come from PP2, PP4, PP5, PP5 MA, research and any other beneficiaries.

IV. MANAGEMENT

7. Coordination of the pilot action activities.

PHASE 2
<p>8. One online progress-assessment and trouble-shooting meeting.</p> <p>9. One face-to-face meeting, back to back with all other Phase 2 planned meetings. Preliminary planned to be held during the later part of Autumn 2019.</p> <p>10. Phase 2 reporting.</p>
Semester 3
<p>Eight (8) main activities are foreseen for the 3rd semester, i.e. 1.4.2020 - 30.9.2020.</p> <p>I. MINI-PROJECTS</p> <p>1. Applications for the last mini-projects, evaluation and approval of mini-projects.</p> <p>2. Implementation of mini-projects continues.</p> <p>3. Closing of the mini-projects implementation. All follow up actions (= development plans) must be completed by the end of August 2020.</p> <p>II. POLICY IMPACT</p> <p>4. Mainstreaming item (iii) Recommendations are made for the concrete provisions to mainstream of the mini projects to the RIS3 teams of PP2 and PP4, following the results and effectiveness of the calls; the same process if followed by the regional board of the PP5 MA.</p> <p>5. Revised RIS3 text and ROP actions with the mainstreamed title Tools facilitating transregional research-to-business partnerships and items included are available.</p> <p>III. EVALUATION</p> <p>6. Data collection for the evaluation report continues and the evaluation report is produced; deadline for the evaluation report is 30.9.2020.</p> <p>IV. MANAGEMENT</p> <p>7. Coordination of the pilot action activities.</p> <p>8. One online progress-assessment and trouble-shooting meeting.</p> <p>9. One face-to-face meeting, back to back with all other Phase 2 planned meetings and the final conference.</p>
Semester 4
<p>No content related activities should take place in this semester. The last months of the project should be entirely dedicated to the project closure.</p>

Players involved

- Managing Authority of ROP of W. Macedonia 2014 – 2020
- Regional Development Agency of W. Macedonia – ANKO (BRIDGES PP5)
- Regional Research and Innovation Council (RRIC)
- Regional SMEs, clusters, businesses, education and research institutions;
- Other stakeholders (members of RSG)

Table 2 Timetable of the action plan

Action plan implementation	Timetable	
Action 1 Innovation ready businesses apply to W. Macedonia ROP calls		
Criteria for the calls addressing Action 1 priorities are formulated and integrated into the Western Macedonia ROP.	Spring 2019	
Opening of calls and applications	Spring Autumn 2019	
Wine: Enabling precision farming techniques and technologies		
Dairy: 1) Precision Livestock Farming (PLF); 2) Environment footprint.	Autumn 2019	
Applications made, selection		
Implementation of the selected projects	Winter-Spring-Autumn 2020	
Action 2 RIS3 interactive platform		
Project implementation plan of the HURC GP transfer formulated by PP5 and sent to the MA	Phase 1	
Terms of reference and competition	01/2019	
Selection of technical expert & creation of the portal	03/2019 – 07/2019	
Populating the portal with information	08/2019 – 12/2021	
Interactive service operation	08/2019 – 12/2021	
Internal evaluation	05-07/2020–11-12/2021	
Action 3 Implementation of the pilot action (only PP2, PP4 and PP5)		
Activities	Partner involvement	Semester
Organisational arrangements cleared (renewal of 'EU projects service')	PP4	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019)
Approval of the pilot announced	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019)
Kick off of the pilot, local meetings	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019)
Interregional meeting (Finland & Greece) in Helsinki	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019)
Mainstreaming item (i) The concept of mini projects under the heading 'Tools facilitating transregional research-to-business partnerships' is included into the RIS3 revision agendas of PP2 & PP4 (spring 2019) and integrated into the ROP for Western Macedonia (spring 2019). PP2 and PP4 issue calls for mini projects, and PP5 issues calls for mini projects and follow up actions under the present. Western Macedonia ROP.	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019)
Mainstreaming item (ii) (Members of the RIS3 revision teams (PP2 and PP4) & the Western Macedonia ROP join the pilot action monitoring process to be able to have -to-day experience of the mini projects.		
Announcement of calls for the mini-projects	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019)
Filling in of value offers with research units	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019) 2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020)
Search for clients	PP5 primarily	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020)

Action plan implementation		Timetable
	PP2, PP4, PP5	3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
Applications for mini-projects, evaluation and approval of mini-projects	P2, PP4, MA of PP5	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
Observation of the pilot action implementation	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019) 2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020)
Mainstreaming item (iii) Recommendations are made for the concrete provisions to mainstream of the mini projects to the RIS3 teams of PP2 and PP4, following the results and effectiveness of the calls; the same process if followed by the regional board of the PP5 MA. Revised RIS3 text and ROP actions with the mainstreamed title Tools facilitating transregional research-to-business partnerships and items included are available.	PP2, PP4, PP5	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3(1.10.2019 - 31.3.2020) at the latest.
Implementation of mini-projects	Research from PP2, PP4 and PP5 regions; clients across the BRIDGES partnership	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
Data collection for the evaluation	PP2, collecting data from PP2, PP4, PP5 & PP5 MA	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
Evaluation report	PP2	3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
The results of the ex post evaluation of the pilot action, indicating the most successful aspects of the pilot are annexed to the revised RIS3 and the Western Macedonian ROP.	PP2, PP4, PP5	4(1.10.2020 – 31.3.2021)
Face-to-face meetings. (back to back with all other Phase 2 planned meetings)	All BRIDGES partners	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
Closing conference	All BRIDGES partners	3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020)
Pilot action coordination	PP2, PP4, PP5	1 (1.4.2019-30.9.2019) 2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 3 (1.4.2020 – 30.9.2020) 4(1.10.2020 – 31.3.2021)
Phase 2 reporting	All BRIDGES partners	2(1.10.2019 -31.3.2020) 4(1.10.2020 – 31.3.2021)

Impact on the region

- Self-defined indicator: number of businesses cooperating with research institutions, total of 40 businesses
- The number of 40 businesses was overestimated in the application form and concerned both innovative and non-innovative projects for SMEs that will be funded by ROP of Western Macedonia. The index of 20 businesses concerns only innovative projects that could be applied.
- REGIONAL MEASUREMENT: Number of funded concrete projects / Number of projects involving research, business intermediaries and businesses
- Following the call for tenders procedures and before the finalization of the evaluation, the projects applied per sector are: agri-food SMEs: 13, wine/dairy:10, fair products: 7. According to the available budget it is estimated that finally 20 projects will be approved for implementation.

Impact already realised

The aim for the impact in the Region goes through the influence of the Policy Instrument (Regional Operational Programme of W. Macedonia 2014 – 2020) by the improvement of technological and commercial position of Agri-food (RIS3 Priority sector) businesses, utilizing structural and other funds for the promotion of innovation and RTD, along with the enhancement of capacity building of RIS3 policy implementation. Thus, the policy impact of the ROP is based on its RIS3 Agri-food industrial strengths as guiding lines and moreover will be ensured by the 3 main Activities of the Action Plan to be undertaken and implemented, as concrete projects. The above Activities within BRIDGES project have the strong support of the Regional Stakeholders Group (RSG) and especially the representatives of the Regional Research & Innovation Council and the Managing Authority of the ROP. Specifically, the RRIC is aware of the HURC platform GP transfer and contributed to the relevant PP5's concept paper that was sent to MA as concrete project to be endorsed, with a document with notes and ideas respectively. The MA has already endorsed the HURC platform as an Indicative Activity – concrete project that will be included in the forthcoming ROP open call for supporting SMEs under Thematic Objective 3 "Improvement of competitiveness of SMEs". Also MA is encouraging the interregional partnerships as PP5 and PP4 are working on establishing a partnership between Voion Products Land Company and VTT Technical Research Centre, focused on faba bean treatment for protein enrichment and reduction of antinutrients, to be proposed for funding under the Open Call of the Investment Priority 1.b that MA already launched. MA will approve both the Feasibility Study and the Action Plan at forthcoming RSG meetings.

Approval and endorsement action plan PP5

Approval of the action plan for PP5 ANKO

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____

Endorsement of the PP5 ANKO action plan by the Managing Authority of Western Macedonia

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____