



West Macedonia & ERIK ACTION



Upgrading the Innovation Capacity of Existing Firms

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The Region of West Macedonia



- Prefecture of Kozani
- Prefecture of Kastoria
- Prefecture of Florina
- Prefecture of Grevena
- Total population: 303,857 inhabitants

Economic activities:

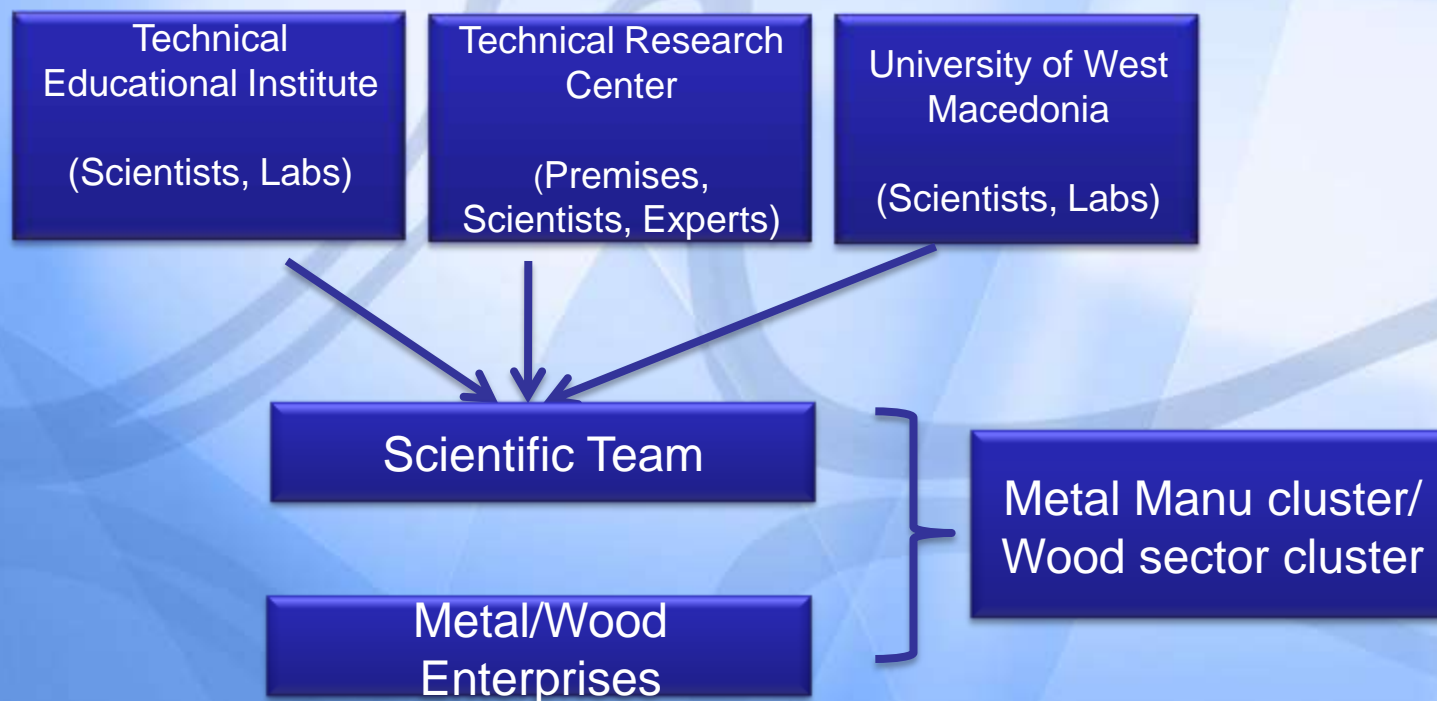
- Mining
- Power production (*70% of country's total power is produced in WM*)
- Metal, Marble, Wood and Fur-leather sectors

Challenges in the field of cooperation of enterprises

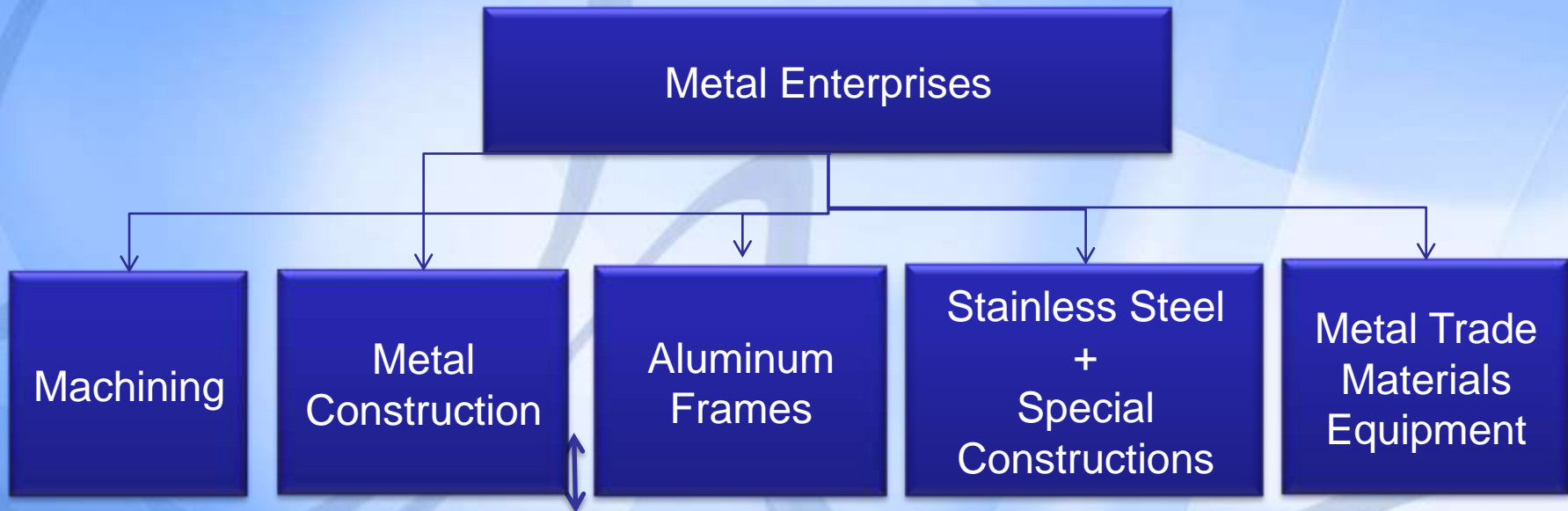
- ✓ Region with low spirit of entrepreneurial activity – Need for cultural change through targeted actions (e.g. Clustering)
- ✓ Need to create strategic alliances and increase competition in global markets,- not only at local levels- Increase awareness of enterprises on the benefits of cooperation having common agenda on sector specific issues (e.g. wood, metal)
- ✓ Target and coordinate actions to address specific needs (e.g. training of employees , marketing strategy to create international profile, quality assurance of products and services, R&D, funding for R&D)
- ✓ Improve effectiveness of regional development policies in the field of innovation

Cooperation of existing enterprises in WM

Metal Manu and the Wood sector clusters are initiatives to create links between the enterprises and the research institutions of the region through building trust and strong co operations.



Metal Manu and the activities of enterprises in the metal sector



Metal Manu goal through cooperation is to develop the mechanism that integrates capacities and competences in different fields of the metal sector and become more competitive

ERIK ACTION and lessons learnt from enterprise cooperation

- Continuous contacts with the enterprises (through seminars, workshops, conferences) increases awareness on the benefits of cooperation
- Transferring successful GPs from other European regions have increased understanding on the value of cooperation
- Initiatives of common interest that could result in better prices in raw materials, energy, services and products needs coordination and targeted support
- Strategic Marketing Plans are necessary for the promotion of products and services in New markets and Exports
- Common research agenda and co-operation with the Universities and Research Institutes are vital to address needs such as R&D, special training for employees, etc.)

ERIK ACTION and lessons learnt from enterprise cooperation within Metal Manu & Wood Cluster

- Scientific and Organisational Support is necessary for upgrading the innovation profile of enterprises
- Promotion of New products –Patents
- Counseling on Funding Programs

Transferring GPs: Innovation Assistant & Trainee in Time

A mixed approach for better results

The region of Western Macedonia is designing to implement the two GPs:

- a) Innovation Assistant
- b) Trainee in TIME

by incorporating them into one project. This approach better serves the characteristics of the enterprises in the Region.

The Proposed Action: Improve innovation and competence of SMEs in the Region of Western Macedonia

The goal of initiating the action is to increase innovation capacities and competencies of the SME's in the Region of Western Macedonia recruiting graduates with little or no working experience.

Reasons for choosing the GPs: Innovation Assistant & Trainee in Time

The main reasons for selecting the Innovation Assistant for transfer is the alignment of this GP with WM ROP strategic effort for improving competitiveness and employment through the knowledge and innovation economy. Specifically the action is envisaged to:

- Support enterprises in employing high level personnel.
- Increase innovation capacity of enterprises in the region
- Create job opportunities for skilled people (graduates)
- Reduce unemployment rate of the region
- Give equal opportunities and promote gender mainstreaming

Technical Characteristics of Pilot Implementation

- Duration: 12 months
- Pilot action will be initiated within the **Metal Manu** cluster
- Training teams will be created with a maximum number of 10 graduates interested to follow particular educational sessions
- 5 thematic groups will be developed according to the needs of the enterprises:
 - a) Training in the use of advanced technological applications in the sector of metal;
 - b) Training in advanced designing applications for the sector of metal;
 - c) Training in advanced applications of information technology;
 - d) Training in innovation management; and
 - e) Training and practice in advanced techniques of metal treatment

Stakeholders involved

- **Region of Western Macedonia**
- **Managing Authority of ROP of Western Macedonia**
- **University of West Macedonia**
- **ANKO- West Macedonia Development Company**
- **Federation of Industries of Western Macedonia**
- **Technical Educational Institute of West Macedonia, T.E.I.**

Problems encountered during the transfer process and solutions adopted

- Funding tools in all regions in Greece are in a re-design phase due to the economic downturn. The University of West Macedonia is in close communication with the regional authorities for integrating the action into the new schemes of ROP.
- The Regional authority of West Macedonia is assessing the implementation of the action as a necessary linchpin to support the regional economy and is making effort to identify the time frame and appropriate budget to initiate the proposed action.
- The alternative funding tool to ROP is the Special Development Program of the region of West Macedonia that could support the proposed action.

The future after ERIK ACTION

Assets from ERIK ACTION:

- An important database on Good practices promoting innovation
- Increased knowledge on ways of implementation
- Strategic competencies in tailoring the Good Practices to suit regional characteristic
- Intra-regional partnerships
- Inter-regional co operations

The way forward:

- *Capitalise knowledge and experience gained promoting the integration of more Good Practices in the region*
- *Nurture innovation competences in the region and make other regions to follow*
- *Outperform on the demands of the competitive markets forming strategic alliances*

Thank you for your attention

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