

**Implementation of the Small Business Act  
for Europe (SBA) and Entrepreneurship  
Policies at Local and Regional Level**

**This study was commissioned by the Committee of the Regions and written  
by t33, SWECO and OIR.  
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# Executive Summary

The Small Business Act (SBA) was adopted by the European Commission in June 2008. The SBA aims to address the needs of Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by establishing 10 principles to guide the implementation of EU policies. The principles are:

- I** To create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded
- II** To ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance
- III** To design rules according to the 'Think Small First' principle
- IV** To make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs
- V** To adapt public policy tools to SME needs
- VI** To facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions
- VII** To help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market
- VIII** To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation
- IX** To help SMEs turn environmental challenges into opportunities
- X** To encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets.

The Committee of the Regions (COR) launched the European Entrepreneurial Region Award label (EER) in 2009, an initiative to facilitate the implementation of the 'Small Business Act for Europe' at regional and local levels. This project identifies and rewards EU regions with excellent entrepreneurial visions with the label of 'Entrepreneurial region of the year'.

The aim of this study is to present the CoR and Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) with a critical view on how the SBA is implemented and possible evolution towards a more regional and local approach. The methodology combines different analytical tools using several information sources to overcome the lack of evidence about the application of SBA at regional level. The main instruments used are:

- a **literature and database review** to identify the good practices of European Regions with regard to SBA implementation. The findings from the review are illustrated in maps for each individual SBA principle;
- a **survey** conducted to investigate the key priorities and good practices of the regions and how multi-level governance functions among different stakeholders;

- **case studies of EER regions** to understand more in-depth the regional context as well as the existing initiatives and to learn useful lessons for the future;

- **multi-criteria analysis**, to generate an overall assessment concerning the application of SBA principles at national and regional level.

The study focuses on:

1. how the SBA is implemented across Europe at regional level;
2. what key lessons can be drawn from the experience of EER regions;
3. how SBA (principles) might evolve in the coming years, with future cohesion policy in mind.

The following table in the next pages shows the main findings of this study, summarizes the principal lessons learnt, and displays the most relevant policy recommendations.

MAIN FINDINGS	LESSONS LEARNT	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>Regions play an important role in implementing SBA principles.</b></p> <p>In particular the following principles:</p> <p><b>I</b> Business environment</p> <p><b>IV</b> Responsive public administration</p> <p><b>VII</b> Single Market opportunities</p> <p><b>VIII</b> Innovation</p> <p><b>IX</b> Environmental challenges</p>	<p>Regions are particularly effective when the principle is more place-based and less related to the legislative framework. Innovation, environment, and the business climate are the fields where regions offered SMEs more substantial support.</p>	<p><b>The new ‘regional SBA’ should be formulated around principles which tie in more closely with LRAs’ capabilities and competences (I-IV-VII-VIII-IX).</b></p> <p>In addition, two other principles should be included:</p> <p><b>III</b> Designing rules according to the “think small first” principle; a stronger focus on this approach is a <i>sine qua non</i> condition in order to improve the quality of governance and coordination between institutions and SMEs. Without a clear <i>ex ante</i> understanding of the impact of administrative/regulative legislation on SMEs, the implementation of policy measures is less likely to be effective even at regional level.</p> <p><b>V</b> Adaptation of public policy tools to SMEs must be based on principles: as a matter of fact, state aid and public procurement are the two main tools available to LRAs to foster local and regional development.</p>

MAIN FINDINGS	LESSONS LEARNT	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>Regions and the State are complementary in applying the SBA.</b></p> <p>There is a discrepancy between national and regional performance in the application of SBA principles.</p>	<p>Application of the SBA involves different levels of governance (European, national, regional and local) and an active dialogue among stakeholders and between stakeholders and institutions. Regions act as a stimulus for national authorities, providing good examples, ideas, benchmarking and innovative approaches.</p>	<p><b>The policy strategy to implement the SBA should be more context-specific and adaptable to the particular needs of a region.</b></p> <p>The SBA should not just be about issuing principles and guidelines. Consequently, more emphasis should be given to supporting implementation at national and regional level and to monitoring developments, even at regional level.</p>
<p><b>In the EER regions, vision is more important than context.</b></p> <p>There are many differences in the context (economic, social, political) but the EER regions have similar approaches and long-term objectives.</p>	<p>Capacity to apply SBA principles depends on regional policy attitudes and requires a cultural change in policy makers. The EER label represents a good stimulus and example for other regions since it is based on mutual learning, peer reviewing and networking through knowledge transfer, especially in the public sector.</p>	<p><b>EER Regions should be able to make better use of their experience.</b></p> <p>This may require more systematic analysis of EER experience on a regular basis aiming to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• innovative approaches that could be relevant to other similar regions in Europe;</li> <li>• possible synergies and mutual enrichment among regions with similar advantages/disadvantages;</li> <li>• links to programmes or related initiatives in other EU programmes which may support implementation of the strategies</li> </ul>



<b>MAIN FINDINGS</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNT</b>	<b>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<p><b>SBA application is crucial for implementation of the Structural Funds in the next programming period</b></p> <p>In the new draft Regulation, application of the SBA is an ex-ante conditionality.</p>	<p>EER regions have developed valuable experience in planning application of the SBA principles through specific interventions and actions. In this period they will provide useful inspiration for the authorities responsible for various programmes across Europe.</p>	<p><b>The EER regions need a higher profile</b></p> <p>A strategic approach should be put in place in order to make local and regional authorities and policy makers informed about projects, best practices and EER activities and ensure the right use is made of the successful strategies as well as EER approaches to the SBA.</p>



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context of the study

This document is the final report in the study ‘**Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) and Entrepreneurship Policies at Local and Regional Level**’ compiled upon request of the Committee of the Regions.

Adopted in June 2008<sup>1</sup>, the **Small Business Act for Europe (SBA)** reflects the Commission’s strategy to enhance the central role of small and medium enterprises in the European economy by putting in place a comprehensive SME policy framework for the European Union (EU) and its Member States. The SBA consists of a wide-ranging set of pro-enterprise measures designed to make life easier for SMEs. The SBA seeks to promote entrepreneurship, anchoring the ‘Think Small First’ principle in law and policy-making, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of European SMEs. Moreover, in the recent SBA review<sup>2</sup>, the Commission identifies measures to respond to the economic crisis and develop actions that are consistent with the Europe 2020 strategy. These include paying specific attention to SMEs’ financial needs, taking a broad-based approach to enhancing market access for SMEs and helping SMEs to contribute to a resource-efficient economy. Moreover, the review also focuses on improving governance of SBA implementation and, in this respect, this study contributes findings at LRA level.

The SBA is built on ten core principles, whose aim is to guide the design and implementation of policies at European, national and regional level. Furthermore, a set of new legislative proposals<sup>3</sup> are guided both by the ‘Think Small First’ principle and by a set of new policy measures based on SMEs’ needs at both EU and national level. For the SBA to be effective and to ensure the full and timely delivery of all its actions, both genuine political partnership and the active support of the EU, its institutions and Member States will be required.

Local and regional authorities are involved in the implementation of the SBA. A concrete and specific contribution from the CoR to the SBA is the **European Entrepreneurial Region (EER)** project that identifies and rewards EU regions

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1 Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – ‘Think Small First’ - A ‘Small Business Act’ for Europe, 25.6.2008, COM(2008) 394 final.

2 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Review of the ‘Small Business Act’ for Europe, 23.2.2011, COM(2011) 78 final.

3 COM(2011) 78 final.

showing outstanding and innovative entrepreneurial policy strategies. For enterprise support measures, the EER aims to:

- implement the principles of SBA at regional and local level in a more structured way;
- promote more efficient use of public and private funds;
- improve/build up cooperation between policy makers and relevant stakeholders at local and regional level so they act together to carry out SBA-targeted policies;
- support regional governance mechanisms for SBA partnerships between all relevant stakeholders.

## **1.2 Aims and structure of the report**

The overall objective of the study is to assess SBA implementation, by gathering data and identifying good practices for each of the ten SBA principles. The study is intended to help promote the idea of entrepreneurship at local and regional level in a more structured way throughout Europe by analysing all regions' good practices, including EER experiences, and by identifying key problems and the issues that inhibit implementation of the SBA, both at national and regional level. Moreover, it provides recommendations for effective governance tools at local and regional level. The information provided in this report will be helpful for ongoing and future EER activities. The results should be useful in raising the interest of regions and Member States to learn more from successful European examples.

In the framework of the study, the report is organised as follows:

- Chapter 2** presents the methodology used to implement the report. In more detail, it describes which sources and databases were used, how regions applying SBA principles were mapped, and how the questionnaire and the targets in the survey were dealt with.
- Chapter 3** describes the mapping exercise displaying the application of SBA principles at regional level.

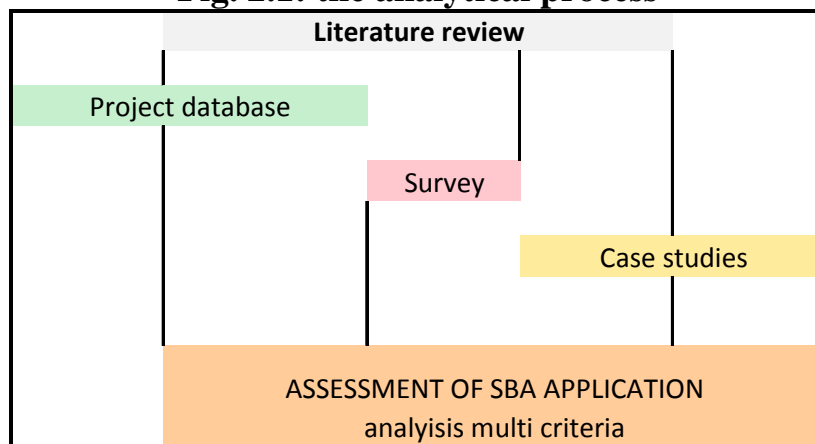
- Chapter 4** analyses EER experiences based on the relevant documentation of the nine EER regions and direct interviews with their representatives. This chapter describes the context and the background characteristics of the EER regions, the policy vision and tools used to implement it as well as the impact of the EER label on the regions' policy strategy.
- Chapter 5** assesses application of the SBA's ten principles within European countries at regional level. In particular, it provides a brief overview of the national level, it outlines the main results of the survey, and it combines the survey and database results to develop an overall assessment of how SBA principles are applied at regional level.
- Chapter 6** presents lessons learnt from the analysis of how regions - including EER regions - apply SBA principles, and sets out policy recommendations on how to improve use of the SBA tool in support of SMEs and regional economies.
- Annex 1:** Bibliography and references
- Annex 2:** List of the regions by country applying one or more SBA principles
- Annex 3:** References to projects and good practices
- Annex 4:** Survey questionnaire
- Annex 5:** Case studies of the EER regions



## 2. Methodology

This section clarifies the methodology used in searching the literature and databases concerning the SBA and provides information on the survey and on the mapping exercise needed for the final report. It is divided into three sub-sections based on the tasks requested in the technical specification. Sub-section 2.1 presents the main sources and official documents regarding the SBA that were searched and analysed. A detailed list of all these documents is included in the Bibliography (**Annex 1**). Sub-section 2.2 looks at the presentation of the databases that have been used to identify good practices and key problems in applying SBA principles. The same datasets have also been used to construct the maps in the final report. The complete list of regions is incorporated in **Annex 2**. Sub-section 2.3 describes the survey, which was conducted to investigate the key priorities and good practices of the regions and how multi-level governance functions among different stakeholders. The complete questionnaire is presented in **Annex 3**. Sub-section 2.4 illustrates the case study analysis, which aims to provide insights gleaned from EER support for SMEs. Finally, sub-section 2.5 assesses how SBA principles were applied. The overall analytical process is synthetically described in the figure below.

**Fig. 2.1: the analytical process**



### 2.1 The literature review (Task 1)

A number of sources were analysed to identify the approach of regional and local administrations towards SMEs as well as the features of policy measures they had adopted. The literature review took into consideration **official Commission texts** concerning the SBA as well as **political opinions** expressed by different stakeholders. The objective was to reconstruct the institutional framework of the SBA as well as to track the evolution of the policy debate.

**Academic research papers** were also examined. The papers come from different disciplinary approaches: political, economic and regional, as well as representing the positions of different stakeholders inside the EU. In particular, evaluation reports were taken into consideration and analysed.

**Table 2.1: Main sources, documents types and key words for the literature review<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Main information source</b>	<b>Key words</b>	<b>Document types</b>
European Commission website	Small Business Act	Communications, Memos, Fact sheets, Data, Statistics, Conference conclusions
Committee of Regions website	Small Business Act	Panel topics, press releases, SBA opinions and review
Committee of Regions website	European Entrepreneurial Region	Panel topics, press releases
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) website	SMEs and entrepreneurship	Papers

**2.2 The database review and mapping (Task 2)**

The Commission implements a performance review on a yearly basis in order to monitor Member States’ performance in implementing the SBA by combining a wide range of indicators. The results of this exercise are presented in the countries’ "2010/11 SBA Fact Sheets". A similar exercise does not exist at regional level. Furthermore, the information related to SBA implementation is fragmented and not homogenous. To overcome this lack of information, as a proxy for LRA capacity to adopt SBA principles, the ability of LRAs to implement European projects in fields concerning the SBA was chosen. Thus a database review was put in place to identify regions with good practices for European projects in implementation of the SBA, as well as countries with special SME envoys. The table below reported the searched databases.

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<sup>4</sup> A detailed list of all these documents is in the bibliography (Annex 1).



**Table 2.2: Databases searched**

<b>Name of database</b>
Small Business Act - Database of good practices
Interreg IVc - Approved Projects Database
Interreg IVc - Good Practices Database
Cambridge Econometrics - Annual Report on European SMES: Data
European Commission – SBA Fact Sheets 2010/2011
European Commission – SME Performance Review 2009 – Indicators

Based on the information and data collected, a new specific database was set up. The database is structured on individual examples of good practice (records) and contains information regarding the location, project title, and activities carried out. From this information, we compiled a table containing a list of good practices at regional level (see Annex 2).

**Figure 2.2 Snapshot of the database**

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Country	Region	Project title	SBA principle	Appointment	Measure	Factors of success	Problems/ Lessons learnt	Other important information	Source	Award/Good Practice DB	
307	GR	Anatoliki Makedonia, Th	Trans-frontier Business F	7. Internationalisation (EU anc No	Increase in the business awareness from both sides	This measure built m	.	.	Small Business Act - De	.	
308	HU	All	Innovationmanagement	8. Skills and innovation	No	The innovation centre gathers creative ideas from	The consortium pool	Insufficient knowledge	At the outset, the activities fi	Small Business Act - De	.
309	HU	Nyugat-Dunántúl	Setting up a networking	7. Internationalisation (EU anc No	This programme focuses on business knowledge de	.	.	.	Small Business Act - De	.	
310	HU	All	The EU comes to your hc	6. Improving access to finance	No	It's a programme which aimed at preparing SMEs fi	.	.	The SBA principle might be w	Small Business Act - De	.
311	IT	Tuscany	Fabrica Ethica, (Ethical P	10. Responsible entrepreneur	No	Promotion of corporate social responsibility at a re	.	.	Small Business Act - De	x	
312	IT	Emilia-Romagna	Joining together to comp	7. Internationalisation (EU anc No	To provide small businesses with access to national	The region's support	.	.	Small Business Act - De	.	
313	IT		Raising awareness on bu	9. Turning environmental chal	No	Develop a national networking strategy for busines	For the first time in t	.	The SBA principle might be w	Small Business Act - De	.
314	LT	Lietuva	Marketplace Baltic Regic	7. Internationalisation (EU anc No	A cost-free help desk was set up to provide qualifi	.	.	.	Small Business Act - De	.	
315	LT	Lietuva	Public Awareness Raisin	6. Improving access to finance	No	LSB (Lithuanian Standards Board) has organised aw	The previous practi	.	The SBA principle might be w	Small Business Act - De	.
316	LU	Luxembourg (The Great	1,2,3 GO, the Greater Re	7. Internationalisation (EU anc No	The network advises future entrepreneurs on how	A key strength lies in	.	.	Small Business Act - De	x	
317	LU	Luxembourg (The Great	1,2,3 GO	1.2 Support and advice during	No	1,2,3 GO is an interregional business plan contest	The strong point is th	The interregionality r	Small Business Act - De	.	
318	LU	Luxembourg (The Great	Information and advice	7. Internationalisation (EU anc No	This project develops an "information and advice	.	.	.	Small Business Act - De	.	

On the basis of information collected in the database, a **mapping exercise** was performed in order to create electronic maps of regions, including the EER regions, implementing the SBA by each principle. The map instrument allows immediate identification of SME-friendly and entrepreneurial regions by taking into account a different range of initiatives, e.g. Interreg IVc – Approved Projects database and Good Practices database, SBA –Database of Good Practices as well as EER regions’ experiences. The maps are displayed in section 3.2.

## 2.3 Survey of stakeholders (Task 3)

A survey (Task 3 of the technical specifications) among regional and local authorities and business support providers, including EER regions, was conducted to:

- identify and analyse good practices and the key priorities of the regions;
- analyse the level of stakeholder dialogue (multi-level governance);
- analyse, in selected cases, how limited competences at regional and local level may hamper the application of the SBA, and suggest ways of overcoming this potential obstacle.

The questionnaire included 14 questions covering application of the 10 SBA principles and queries related to the main tools and multi-level governance issues. The survey was available in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

The questionnaire<sup>5</sup> was distributed according to the contact details listed in the ‘Small Business Act - Database of good practices’ provided by the European Commission. Around 600 single e-mail addresses from about 700 entries could be used, since there were some people who had reported several good practices.

The survey was e-mailed on 23 February. By 14 March, 129 people had started to fill in the questionnaire. After feedback from the CoR, some additional questions and amendments were made to the survey and a reminder to respondents was circulated. Representatives from the nine EER regions were also added to the lists of respondents.

In total, 150 answers were submitted by the beginning of April. However, not everyone answered all the questions. Most of the respondents preferred to answer the English and German version of the survey, 64 and 51 respectively. Most respondents were representing a public body, and the majority were working at either national or regional levels.

The survey also investigated the presence of regional envoys for SMEs. Despite the use of different information sources, a few were identified. A notable exception is represented by Wallonia in Belgium, which not only nominated a SME envoy but also established a ‘SME parliament’ in 2011, an initiative inspired by the SBA and acknowledged by the Commission.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Annex 3 for the complete questionnaire.

<sup>6</sup> Other SME envoys can be found in Ostergotland (SE), Denbighshire (UK) and Lombardia (IT).

## 2.4 Case studies: analysis of the EER experience in supporting SMEs

In order to more specifically verify how SBA principles are applied in the regional context, a study analysis of the nine EER regions was conducted. The regions studied were Brandenburg (DE), County Kerry (IE) and Murcia (ES) for 2011, Catalonia (ES), Trnava (SK), Helsinki-Uusimaa (FI) for 2012, and Nord-Pas de Calais (FR), Southern Denmark (DK) and Styria (AT) for 2013. The case study was based on two steps:

- 1) desk analysis of EER documentation, such as:
  - Application forms (EER Scheme);
  - EER regions' reports and factsheets;
  - EER regions' websites.
  
- 2) direct interviews with the regional EER contact points to complement the desk analysis. The interviews were based on four main questions:
  - *What is the role and the use of EU Structural Funds in supporting implementation of the Small Business Act principles in your region?*
  - *Which of the 10 SBA principles does your region focus on most and why?*
  - *What is the impact of the EER label and activities on entrepreneurs and SME policy in your region?*
  - *What are the key features and lessons learnt from the application of SBA principles? What can be maintained and adopted for future regional policy strategy?*

Based on the desk analysis and on the interview, the case study for each EER region was organised as follows:

**Context.** A brief description of the social and economic conditions of the region, with a particular focus on the weaknesses and strengths of the SME environment and a summary of the policy background is included.

**Vision and Objectives.** A synthesis of the goals and objectives the region intends to adopt in its EER strategy.

**SBA principles directly concerned.** The SBA principles directly addressed by the region and how the region plans to accomplish them.

**Main operational tools put in place.** The concrete strategy implemented by the region to support and assist SMEs.

**Role of the Structural Funds.** The use of measures funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social

Fund (ESF), and links between rural development measures (LEADER) as well as potential associations with regional and national sources.

**Impact of the EER on SME policy.** A description of the influence EER experience has on ordinary regional policy and future use of the EER experience.

**Main issues and lessons learnt.** Verification problems in implementation of EER strategy and the main lessons learnt.

The main findings of the case study are displayed in section 4, while a detailed analysis of the EER experiences is contained in **Annex 4**.

## 2.5 Multi-criteria analysis to assess the application of SBA principles in the EU

Since there are many different information sources, it was necessary to integrate different parameters in arriving at a final assessment. Thus a multi-criteria analysis was implemented. This approach allows integration of different qualitative and quantitative insights from the database, the survey and the EER case studies.

The first step of the analysis was measuring performance by defining a proxy for each principle as shown in the table here below:

**Table 2.3: The first step of multi-criteria analysis**

Principle	National		Regional		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1	0.5	59.3	31	8	+
2	0.6	63	0.7	1	-
3	0.6	55.6	1.1	4	-
4	0.7	70.4	13.7	5	+
5	0.5	77.8	7.4	3	+
6	0.6	55.6	4.8	6	+
7	0.6	74.1	19.6	6	+
8	0.4	63	27.7	9	+
9	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Not available</i>	13.7	6	+
10	0.5	66.7	1.8	4	-
<i>Average</i>	<i>0.56</i>	<i>65.1</i>	<i>12.2</i>		

- a) at national level the score is based on the countries' "2010/11 SBA Fact Sheets", the tool already described in section 2.1. The Fact Sheets provide data about implementation of SBA principles, except for Principle IX. We used two indicators:

- the first, displayed in column (1), is the average score at EU level in implementing each principle. The score ranges from 0 to 1 according to a series of indicators as described in the SBA Fact Sheets.

- the second, column (2), is the percentage of states performing on par with or above the EU average.

b) at regional level, we use three different sources:

- the number of projects, column (3), related to each SBA principle from the database described in subsection 2.2. In order to avoid double-counting, we removed projects adopted by the same region under the same principle. For instance, in the first principle, 31% indicates the percentage of regions out of the 271 regions at NUTS II level that have implemented at least one project in principle;

- the number of the nine EER regions which have implemented each principle (column 4);

- the result of the survey, column (5), described in subsection 2.3. In this case, we assign ‘+’ when the principle has been ‘frequently mentioned’ and ‘-’ when the principle has not been frequently mentioned’.

The second step was to homogenise the scores in order to obtain, for both levels, a single indicator

- at national level: based on the difference from the average (last row), we combined the two indicators by assigning ‘+’ or ‘-’ when the discrepancy for each principle is above or below the average. In the case of principles 2 and 10, we assign ‘=’ since the discrepancy is nearly zero.

- at regional level: we adopt the same criteria as used before by considering the difference from the average (last row) for column (3); the adoption of ‘+’ or ‘-’ is also influenced by the results shown in the last two columns. In this case we also assign ‘++’ or ‘--’ when the discrepancy is particularly high or low combined with a high or low number of EER regions and a positive or negative answer from the survey.

The resulting table from this exercise and the related analysis are shown in section 5.3.



### 3. Mapping the application of SBA

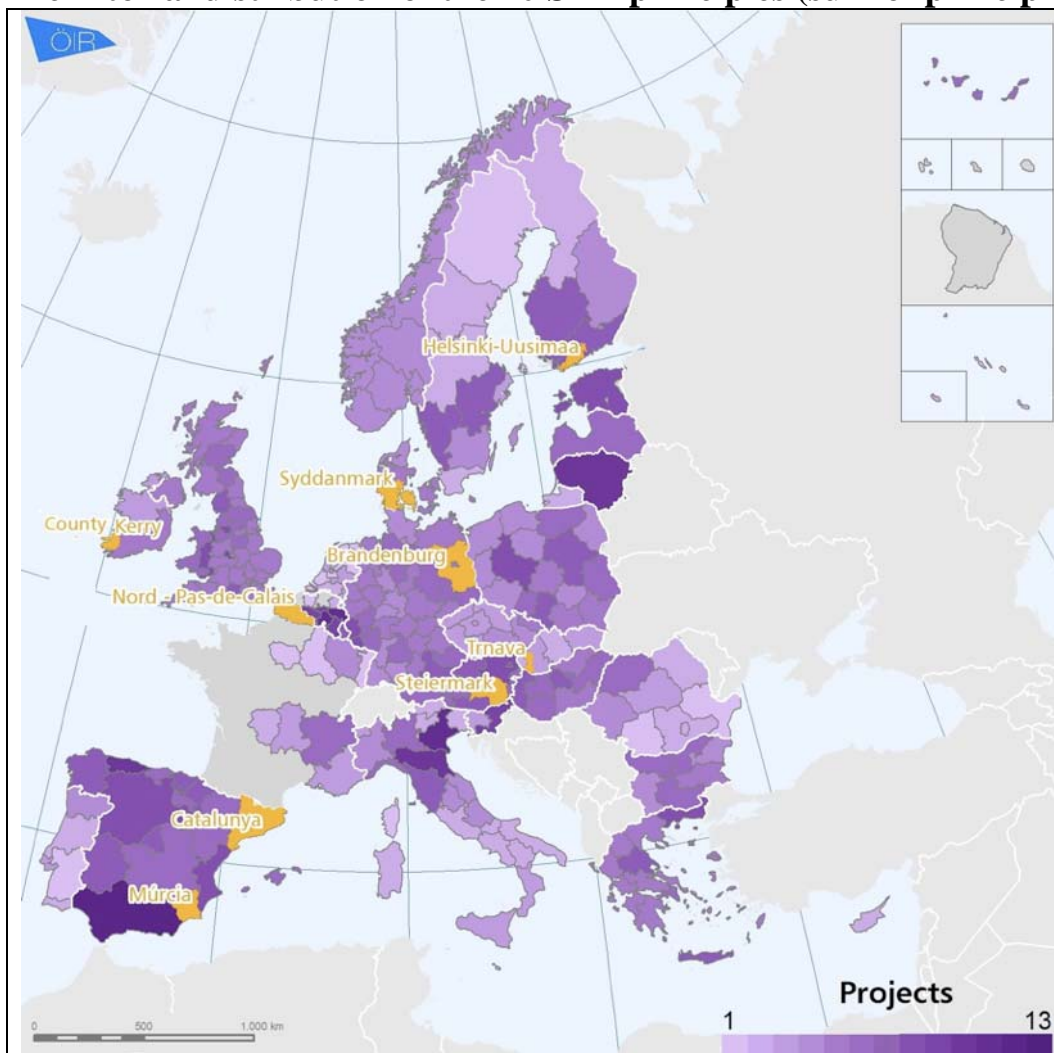
This chapter provides a description of how the SBA was applied by mapping the territorial distribution of the principles across Europe at a regional level (see Chapter 2 on methodology for further details). For each region, the maps combine information on:

-the *number* of projects funded by the European Transnational Cooperation Program IVC;

-the *number* of projects from the “best practices” SBA database .

The first map provides a summary of the level of application of *all* SBA principles across the EU. However, the next ten maps display the number of projects implemented at regional level broken down for *each* SBA principle. Moreover, each map is accompanied by a description with one or more examples taken from EER good practices.

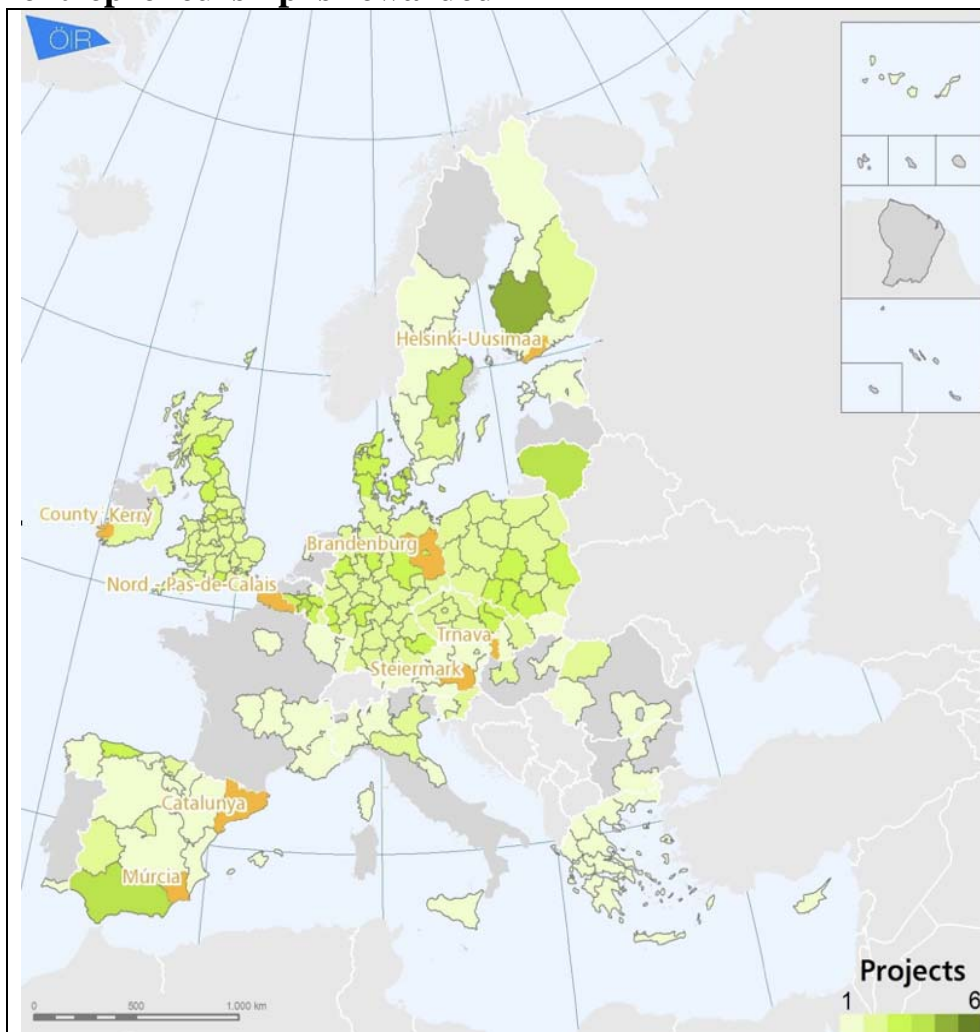
## Territorial distribution of the 10 SBA principles (sum of principles I to X)



This map, which also shows the location of EER regions, indicates that the number of projects is quite evenly distributed across European regions. In France, measurements were not taken in all regions and there is no national initiative at all. By contrast, Spain and Lithuania are outstanding. According to the map, the most dynamic regions in terms of the number of projects implemented are Cataluña, Andalucía and Asturias in Spain, the provinces of Liège and Namur in Belgium, and in Italy, Veneto and Emilia Romagna.



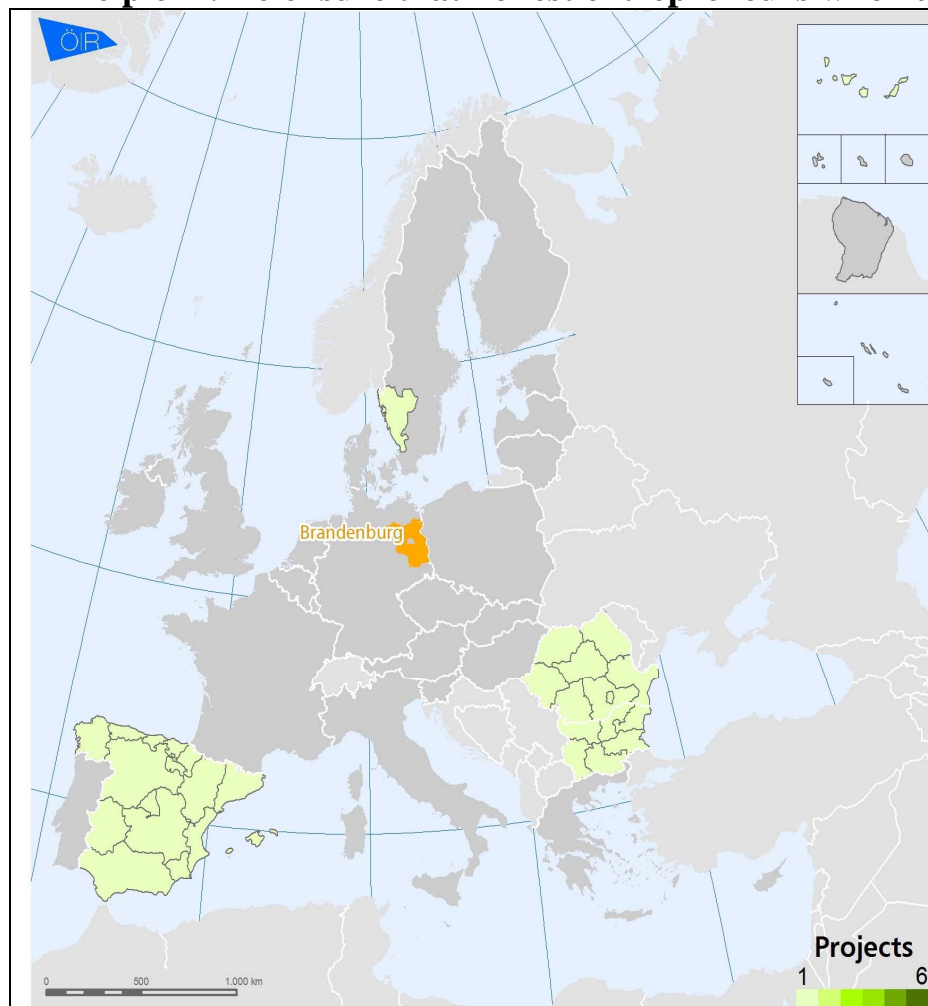
**Principle I: To create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded**



The projects assigned to the first SBA principle are quite evenly distributed across the EU. Most of the European regions have implemented at least one project. The NUTS II Region Länsi-Suomi in Finland's performance is outstanding with five projects.

***EER good practice:*** among the EER regions it is worth underlining the efforts made by County Kerry in the diffusion of entrepreneurship culture among young people by introducing entrepreneurship in schools and by promoting training programmes, such as the YEP, the Junior Entrepreneur Programme, the Fast Track Degree in entrepreneurship, Business Start-up and Business Growth Training. By the end of 2011, 30% of high school students had completed the YEP and 80% of junior school students in the Region had taken part in the pilot phase of the Junior Entrepreneur Programme. Moreover, the most successful start-ups and entrepreneurs monitored by Kerry Technology Park were rewarded with a learning exercise in Silicon Valley where several of them created a branch, which in turn sustained Kerry's long-term objective to become more internationally connected.

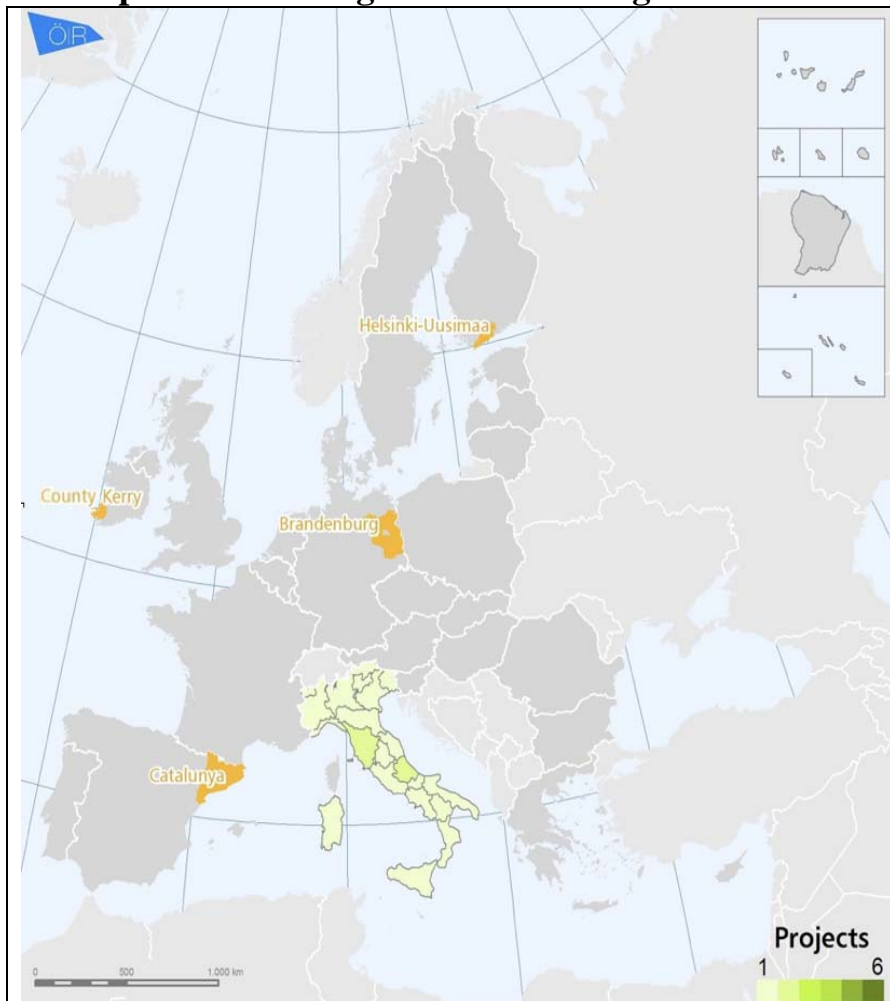
## Principle II: To ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance



According to the map, a few regions have established measures to ensure a second chance for honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy, mainly concentrated in Bulgaria, Romania and Spain. Most of the actions taken are at national level. The business potential of re-establishing businesses after bankruptcies is still underestimated by regions and starting a new career is often connected with several obstacles.

***EER good practice:*** Brandenburg is the only EER region that implemented some measures to meet this principle. It launched an “*emergency aid package*” for enterprises at risk in order to protect investment and employment. This package is complemented by the work of a *task force* bringing together representatives from the Ministry of Economic and European Affairs, ILB and ZAB in co-operation with the Guarantee Bank. The group is responsible for identifying, monitoring, and stabilizing enterprises that face severe difficulties due to the economic and/or financial crisis.

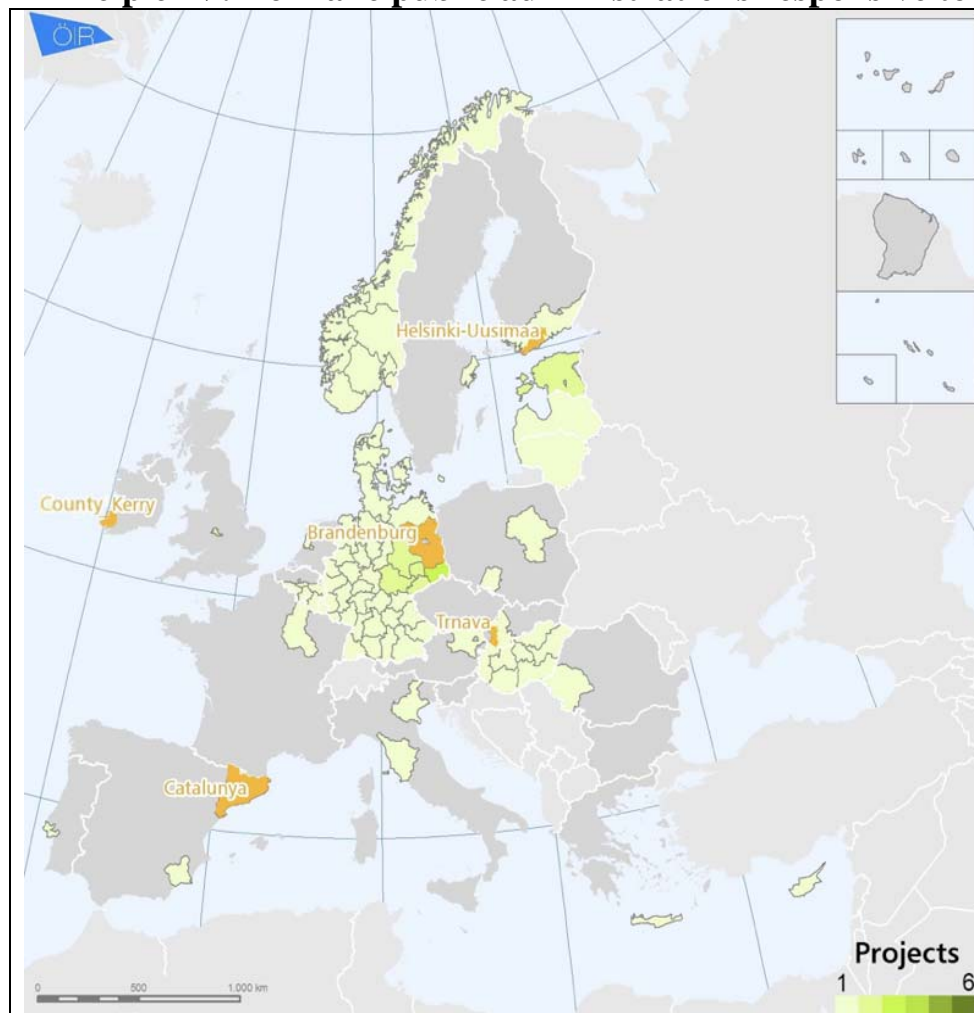
### Principle III: To design rules according to the ‘Think Small First’ principle



Even if many Member States have launched several initiatives on this principle, at a regional level the third principle has been scarcely applied. Apart from Italy, which introduced a regional tax break for productive activities, only EER label holders Brandenburg, County Kerry, Cataluña and the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region took measures to implement the ‘Think small first’ principle.

***EER good practice:*** An example of Think Small First is the collaboration of the Regional Organization of Enterprises in Helsinki-Uusimaa with Helsinki City to implement a SME-friendly procurement policy. One of the results achieved by this type of “think small first” policy is the provision of social and health services together with city entrepreneurs.

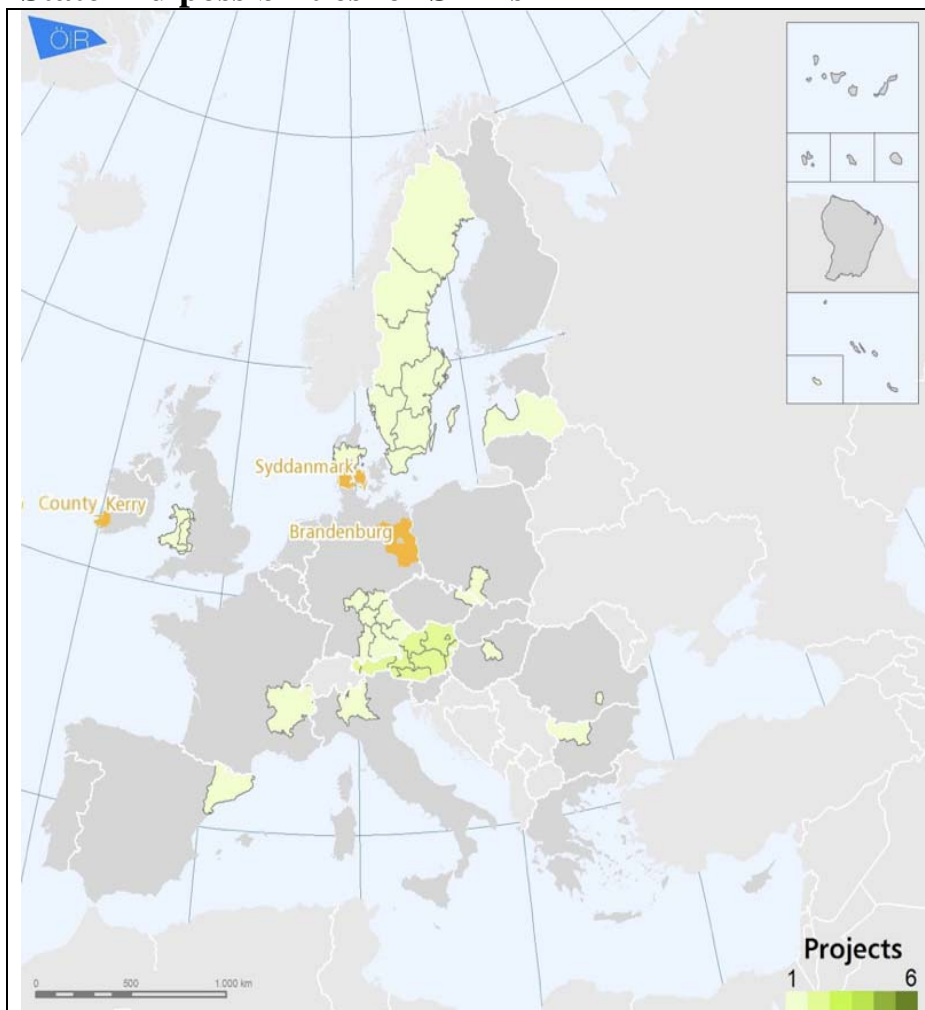
## Principle IV: To make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs



Principle 4 consists of measures to make life easier for SMEs, like e-government or one-stop-shop solutions in order to lower costs and to improve services. Most projects were carried out in the German region of Saxony, whereas in most countries just one or two regional projects could be mapped. Concerning the EER regions, Brandenburg, Catalonia, County Kerry, the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and Trnava Self-Governing Region mainstreamed the fourth SBA principle.

***EER good practice:*** among EER regions, Catalonia has been very active in reducing the administrative burden on SMEs by adopting a participative approach to finding shared solutions. This region is implementing the system called PICA (Platform for Administrative Integration and Collaboration) which incorporates databases from different public administrations. This will allow SMEs to save time with data being transferred internally so that companies do not have to submit the same document several times. In order to implement this system and to reduce the information obligations for SMEs, a working group was set up with public officials and entrepreneurs

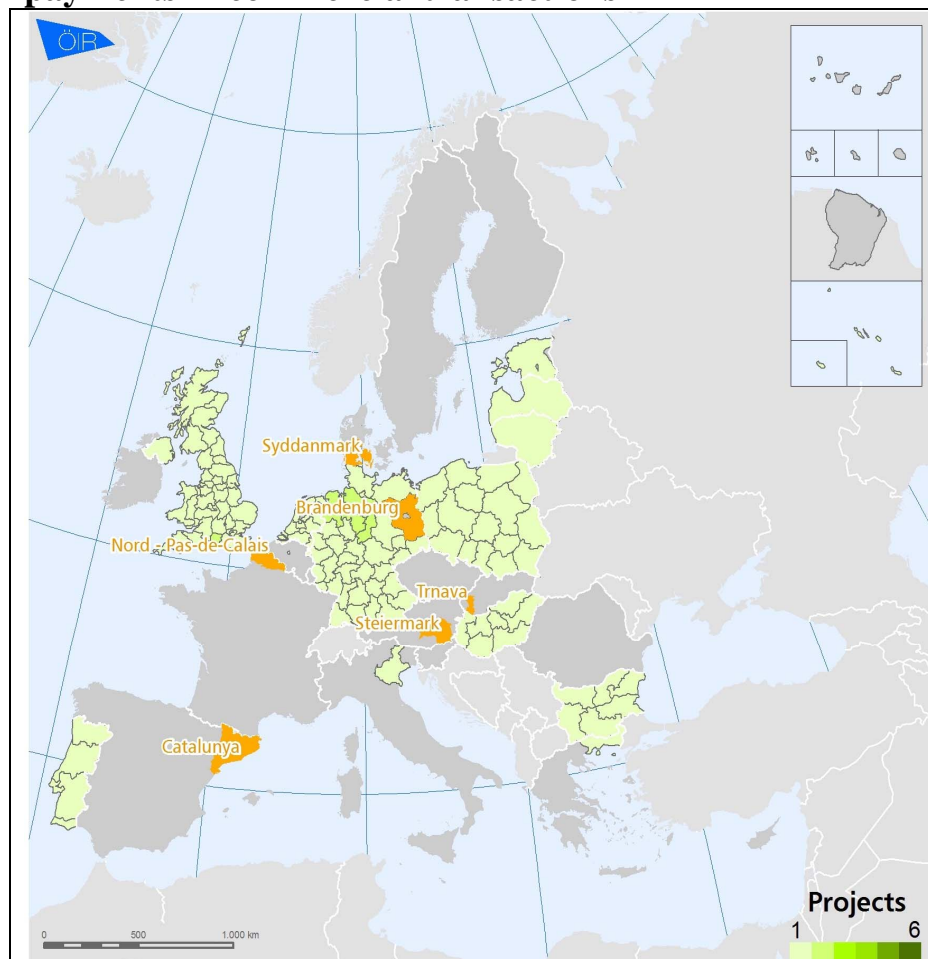
**Principle V: To adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SME participation in public procurement and use State Aid possibilities for SMEs**



Underlying this principle is the fact that large enterprises benefit most from public procurement, where contracting authorities need to apply the EU public procurement framework. The map shows that there are several regional projects that were carried out under the fifth principle. This principle was also particularly highlighted in the regional SME policies of the EER regions of County Kerry, Brandenburg, Catalonia and Southern Denmark.

***EER good practice:*** the EER Region of Catalonia set up the internet forum ‘Anella CPI’ as an exchange platform for companies, institutions and consultants interested in public procurement. The EER Region of Southern Denmark alternatively uses smart regulation and innovative procurement based on end-user needs, in order to enable the region to handle the challenges of an ageing population by ensuring high-quality affordable healthcare. A specific example is the *Welfare Partnership* for 2011/13 developed to create partnerships between small and big companies to facilitate SME access to the Danish public procurement market and export markets.

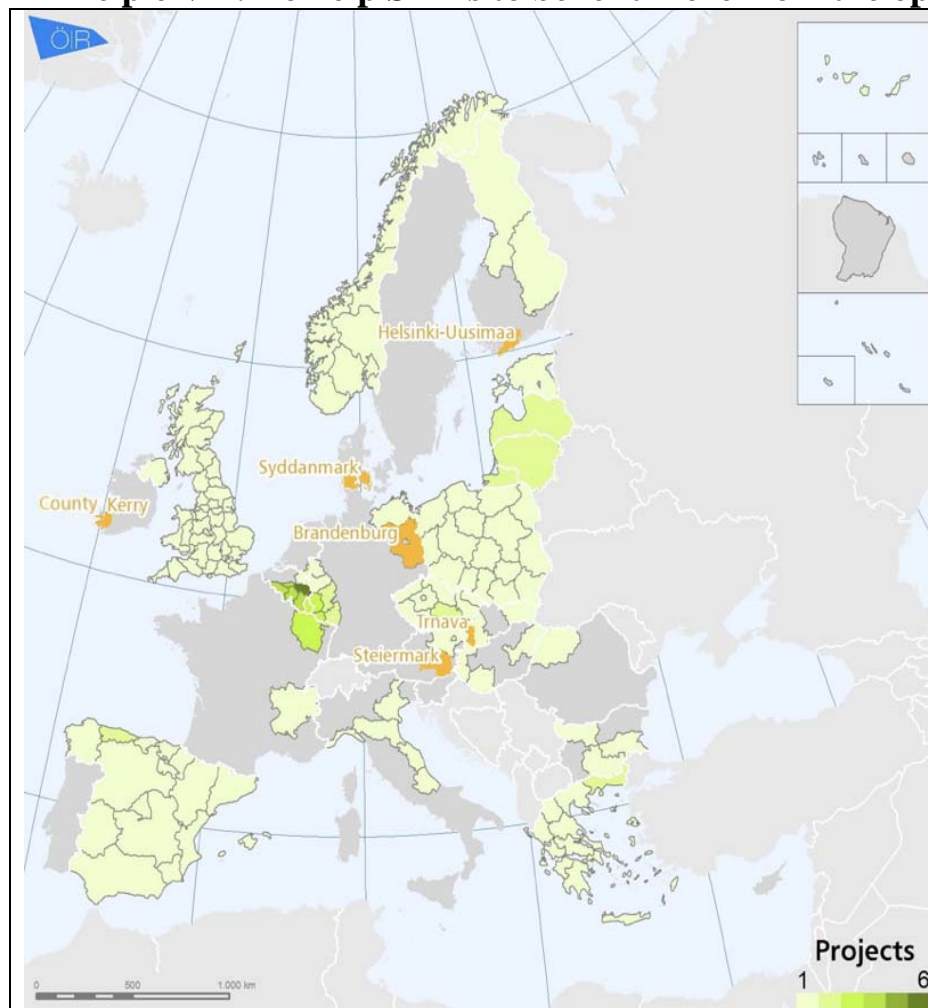
## Principle VI: To facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions



The majority of projects assigned to this guideline are accomplished on a national basis. Exceptions are measures adopted in Belgium, Greece, Italy, Germany and the UK, where additional regional projects were implemented. Furthermore, more than half of the EER regions mainstreamed the sixth SBA principle 'Improving access to finance-late payments'.

***EER good practice:*** the EER region of Brandenburg launched the ProTraC project to support innovative SME projects by linking businesses and the science sector. Measures include the development of new direct regional funding mechanisms as well as informational activities and guidance given by experts. The ProTraC project aims at facilitating access to European funding sources by supporting SMEs in preparing EU project proposals.

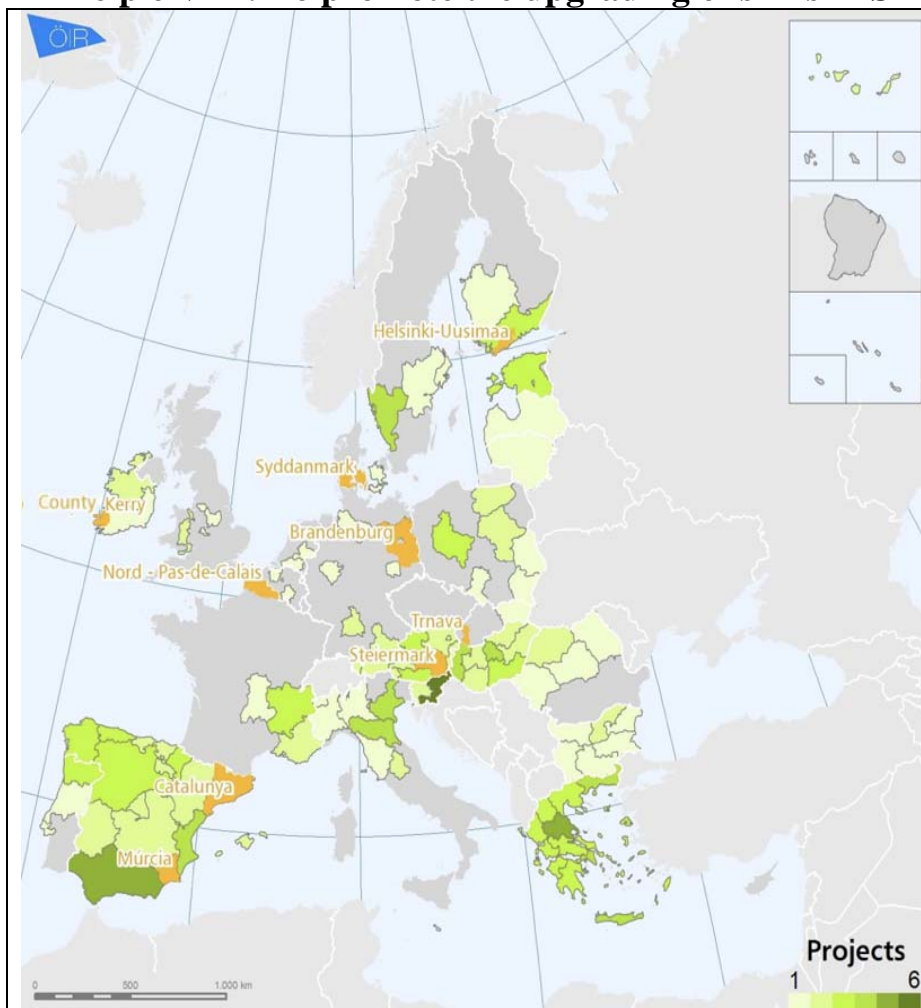
## Principle VII: To help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market



This principle enables SMEs to participate in the development of standards and to facilitate access to patents and trademarks. Apart from some national initiatives, many regional projects were completed especially in the UK, Spain and Poland. A dynamic development can be observed in Belgium, in particular in the Province of Liège where the most projects were implemented. As the map shows, the same applies to the EER regions, which launched manifold initiatives to foster the internationalisation of SMEs.

***EER good practice:*** Trnava has participated (and will continue doing so in the future) in various projects in the Centrope region, which strives to foster the development of a Central European Region. Through the Austro-Slovak “Intelligent Energy Project” the Trnava Self-Governing Region has established an international Energy Cluster together with the Federal Province of Burgenland. The objective is to assist companies in the renewable energy sector through pilot projects, workshops, publications and the development of energy concepts. Together with Hungary these two countries also participate in the Duo\*\*Stars Project, which promotes a favourable regional environment for entrepreneurs.

## Principle VIII: To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation

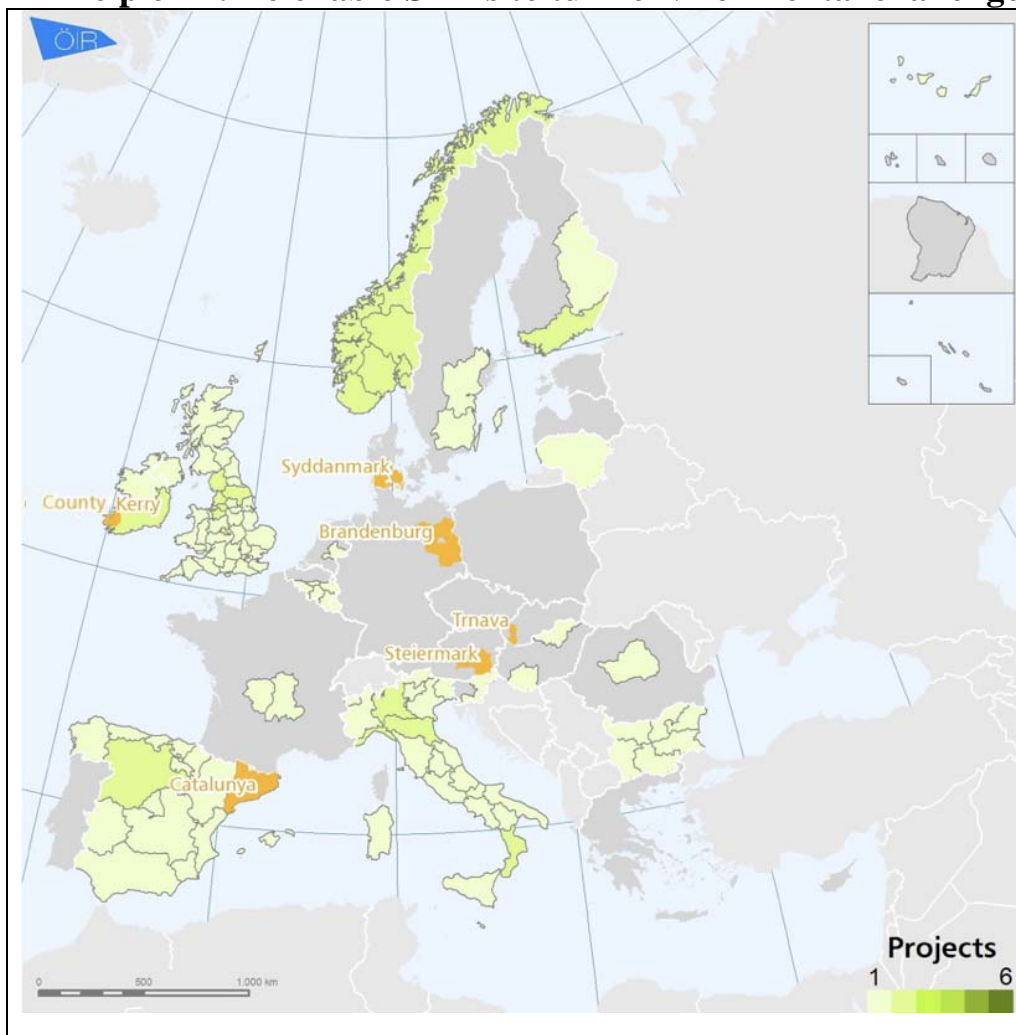


Except for Cyprus and the Czech Republic, all Member States have regional projects associated with this principle. Particularly remarkable in quantitative terms are the regions of Catalonia in Spain and Vzhodna Slovenija in Slovenia, each with six projects. The eighth SBA principle has been mainstreamed by all EER regions, especially by using regional cluster policies as in the Trnava Self-Governing Region.

***EER good practices:*** the EER region of Murcia in Spain encourages companies to innovate through the Innovation Agents Network. Moreover, the government supports technological centres in adapting to new market demands, while helping to set up new technology centres in specific areas of interest, and to develop a regional technology market to foster technology transfer and adopt new technological solutions. The region guarantees services for entrepreneurs, by providing a pool of agents supporting the entrepreneur at every stage of a start-up project. It also actively promotes and supports various measures such as the entrepreneur's roadmap, the Columbus Programme (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs), personal coaching for entrepreneurs, the common service catalogue for entrepreneurs and suppliers, senior advisory services for entrepreneurs, incubators and specific training for women entrepreneurs, and collaboration between the research sector and regional SMEs.



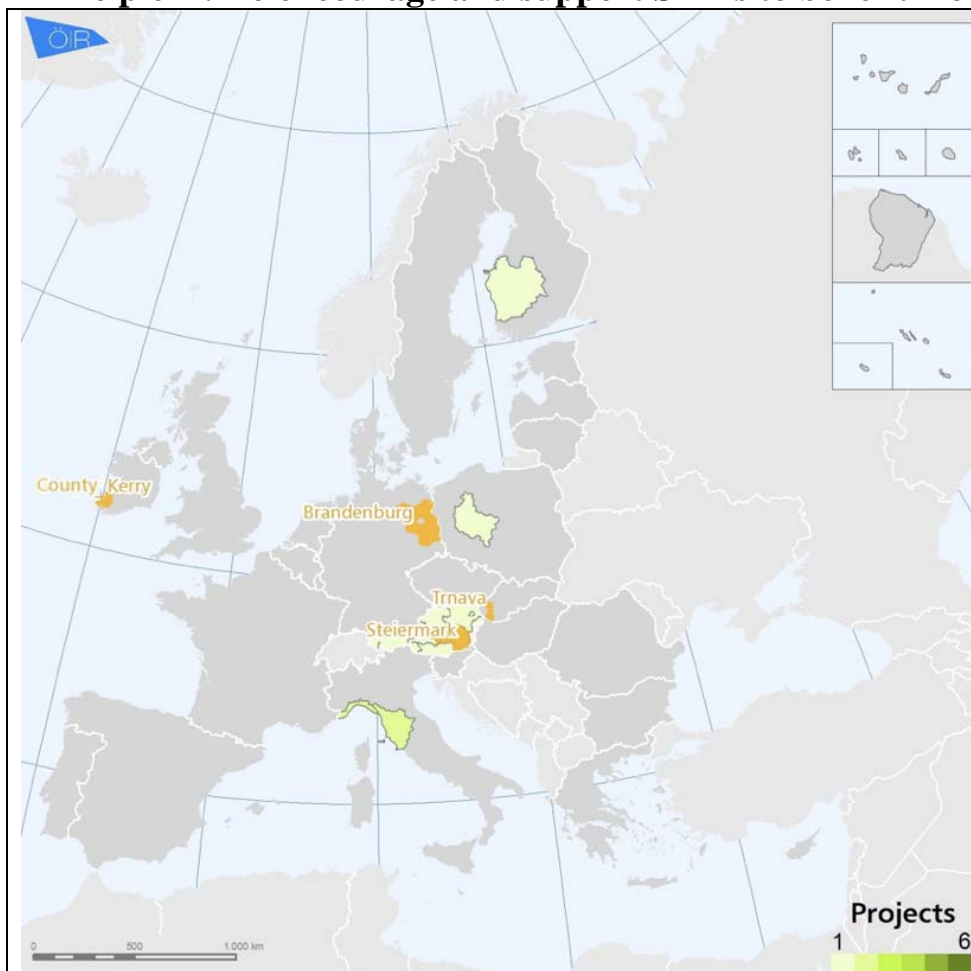
## Principle IX: To enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities



Although no region has a large number of projects implementing principle 9, these are quite evenly distributed across the EU. The United Kingdom, Italy and Spain have the largest number of regions implementing this principle. There are also several EER regions which took action in order to support regional SMEs in turning environmental challenges into opportunities.

***EER good practice:*** the EER region of Styria has one of the world's highest concentrations of environmental technology enterprises. About 200 Styrian enterprises and research institutions are working today on cleaner and greener technologies. ECO WORLD STYRIA ([www.eco.at](http://www.eco.at)) is an organisation supporting the Province of Styria's economic initiative in the field of energy and environmental technology.

## Principle X: To encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets



This principle aims at revealing an almost untapped potential for many SMEs relying on fast-growing markets outside the EU. Measures include market-specific support, such as information on potential partners abroad as well as business training activities. However, related projects can be found in a few countries, e.g. Austria, where a nationwide mentoring programme for migrants was established. Furthermore Brandenburg, County Kerry and the Trnava Self-Governing Region were particularly active in mainstreaming this SBA principle within the framework of their EER activities.

***EER good practice:*** Brandenburg puts in place different tools to support SMEs in internationalisation directly or by exploiting European projects. The region provides direct financial support for marketing, trade fair or market development activities or the promotion of exports through consulting and assistance (export support programme). Through several projects (JOSEFIN, ILB and ZAB) the Region's guarantee fund supports transnational business for SMEs. This support is complemented by coaching, enabling funds to reduce risks and thus encourage banks to finance SMEs intending to engage internationally in cross-border innovation activities tapping into the potential of growing international markets.

## 4. Good practices: the EER experience in supporting SMEs

The European Entrepreneurial Region Award label (EER) was launched in 2009 and is an initiative aimed at facilitating the implementation of the ‘Small Business Act for Europe’ at regional and local levels. This project identifies and rewards EU regions with excellent entrepreneurial visions with the label of ‘Entrepreneurial region of the year’.

The EER label has been awarded to nine Regions; Brandenburg (DE), County Kerry (IE) and Murcia (ES) in 2011, Catalonia (ES), Trnava (SK), Helsinki-Uusimaa (FI) in 2012 and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (FR), Southern Denmark (DK) and Styria (A) for 2013.

EER regions are characterised by different socio-economic features and different policy tools have been implemented to meet the SBA principles. All nine regional strategies have been supported and widely sustained by Structural Funds. The achievement of SBA principles has deeply changed and influenced future regional policy strategy. The EER award is therefore perceived as a strategic instrument to be adopted and integrated into regional policy as well as an important tool for promoting the region’s policy in the rest of the country and around Europe.

With the exception of Nord-Pas de Calais and Murcia, all the EER regions have applied at least five of the 10 principles. In Helsinki-Uumismaa and Brandenburg, regional policies have been able to apply all 10 SBA principles. Principles II (Second Chance), III (Think Small First) and IV (Make Public Administrations Responsive) have had lower success rates, while with principles I (Business Environment), VI (Facilitate Access to Finance), VIII (Single Market Opportunities) and IX (Environmental Challenges) the EER regions have performed better.

### 4.1 Different contexts...

The nine EER regions have different economic backgrounds, with the only common aspect being the difficulties that SMEs face in accessing financing coupled with a high level of debt and decreasing economic margins.

The main differences can be summarised as follows:

**Discrepancies in the economic context:** some regions have macro-economic problems such as higher unemployment rates, lower investment in R&D, lower

levels of education, or lower export shares compared to their national context. For example, in Trnava, where the economy is mostly based on traditional activities, there is a mismatch of supply and demand on the regional labour market, impacting particularly negatively on school leavers and graduates, while R&D capacity and the use of information technology are less developed. A similar situation can be found in Nord Pas de Calais where the economy has structural weaknesses such as a relatively high unemployment rate and a low level of investment in research and development. In other cases, such as Helsinki-Uusima, EER regions benefit from important advantages such as higher rates of start-up and survival rates together with sectoral specialisation in emerging and dynamic sectors such as ICT-related products and services. For instance, Southern Denmark has the highest share of entrepreneur growth with 25% of all Danish entrepreneurs based in the region, as well as the top survival rate for new companies. It is also the Danish region where most people consider starting a company and the title 'Danish Entrepreneurial Municipality of the Year' was awarded to its municipalities four out of five times from 2007 to 2011. These initial socio-economic conditions, however, do not necessarily affect application of the SBA principles. Although in certain cases the presence of a stronger, well-developed economic context helps (Southern Denmark, Helsinki-Uusimaa), in other cases the EER regions have been able to transform disadvantages and challenges into new opportunities for SMEs and further economic development, and apply most of the 10 SBA principles (County Kerry, Nord-Pas de Calais).

**Presence/absence of solid coordination and cooperation amongst enterprises and institutions:** a few EER regions benefit from solid collaborative relationships between enterprises, institutions, business support agencies, schools and universities, which facilitate the expansion of an entrepreneurial culture, the exchange of innovative ideas, the emergence of new projects and favour the overall economic development of the region. One of the main aims of the EER label was to create and/or reinforce cooperation amongst enterprises and institutions and to tap into the resulting potential. A good example is the founding of an EER Committee in the Southern Denmark region, comprising 13 people representing the regional council, the business community, municipalities and educational institutions. This EER Committee intends to guarantee political coordination of strategic activities by involving both institutions and private corporations and is supported by important key actors from business, the regional cluster, local business service centres and educational institutions. It offers counselling services, supports the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture in the region and oversees the fulfilment of the strategy to achieve and implement SBA principles. Another example taken from the EER experience is the creation of the CPIC (the Catalan Industrial Policy Council) by the government of Catalonia in 2012, a measure aimed at solving

the chronic lack of cooperation and strategic alliances between companies, the inadequate relationship between universities and companies and the lack of coordination of innovation policies among government agencies. The CPIC involves the government, the most representative business associations and the unions, and is responsible for participating in the definition of objectives and the identification of suitable policy instruments for each sector. It also provides information about regulations concerning business and industrial matters. In the case of Murcia, SME support relies on a regional network consisting of numerous business organisations, three universities, two Business Innovation Centres, 17 incubators, 10 Technology Centres, six regional clusters, cutting-edge R&D equipment and several regional and national financial institutions. The entire pool of entities accounts for more than 1,000 people dedicated to entrepreneurship. Moreover in 1986 the Spanish region established the Instituto de Fomento de la Región de Murcia (INFO) as the Regional Development Agency of Murcia (Spain). INFO is responsible for coordinating most aspects of regional economic development and establishing an environment that favours corporate competitiveness through regional industrial planning, technical and financial assistance to SMEs, the setting up of technological infrastructure and business centres, innovation and technology transfer, cluster development, export promotion, entrepreneurship development and efforts to attract foreign investment.

**Presence/absence of an entrepreneurial and innovative culture:** in some EER Regions running a business relies predominantly on self-training, with industrial companies focusing heavily on the local market and traditional activities with a limited presence in emerging sectors. These limitations are due to weaknesses in the regional entrepreneurship culture, inhibiting companies' productivity potential, access to credit and networking capacity. For example, in Catalonia, an entrepreneurial spirit together with a strong entrepreneurial tradition supported by trade associations and professional unions/guides, has allowed the region to move from being the eighth European region in terms of absolute numbers of individual entrepreneurs in 2000 to being second in 2008. In other cases, the lack of an enterprise culture has not prevented the region from achieving its purposes. For example, entrepreneurialism in Brandenburg was poorly developed up to 1990 as it was still reeling from the transformation process following the integration of East Germany/DDR/German Democratic Republic with the Federal Republic of Germany and the EU. Despite this, nowadays the region shows comparatively high rates of self-employment and start-ups with respect to the rest of the country, has applied all the 10 SBA principles, and set up a joint innovation strategy with the Berlin Region.

**Presence/absence of technological centres/parks:** many strategies aimed at applying the SBA principles are based on stimulating business innovation and

on the interconnection between research centres and firms. Therefore, the absence of a developed R&D capacity and the limited use of ICT could represent an additional disadvantage for regional development. In some EER regions, the presence of technological parks with highly qualified personnel acting as hubs to facilitate business, sustains and supports the establishment of partnerships and a network of enterprises encouraging start-ups or relocation, and favours the creation of new knowledge-based jobs. County Kerry exemplifies this with its main strength being solid co-ordination and collaboration amongst its enterprises, institutions, enterprise support agencies, schools and universities. The Shared Technology Park (STP) opened in 2001 as a joint campus for Shannon Development's Kerry Technology Park (KTP) and the Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) offering opportunities for companies to start-up or relocate. The KTP/ITT partnership, with 30 entrepreneurial companies, 300 knowledge-based jobs created access to a network of hundreds of national entrepreneurs, acts as an 'entrepreneurship facilitation' hub between the entrepreneurial community and new start-ups. Moreover, these research centres actively spread innovation culture among students. Since 2007, Shannon Development and ITT have managed the Young Entrepreneur Programme (YEP) engaging secondary schools and 3rd level students across the county, training teachers and introducing over 2000 students to the entrepreneur community. The YEP has been a successful example, inspiring many Eastern European countries as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## **4.2 ...but similar policy vision, objectives and tools...**

Despite the differing backgrounds of the EER regions, strategies adopted to apply SBA principles and to implement regional policy visions have focused on four main objectives:

**Fostering entrepreneurship:** all the EER regions have promoted a strategy to facilitate start-ups and business formations in order to support entrepreneurship. Moreover, such policies have been accompanied by measures to raise awareness among students and young people, and by special measures to support female entrepreneurship. The case of Styria is very illustrative. The Styrian Business Promotion Agency ([www.sfg.at](http://www.sfg.at)) operates the "Start!Up-Club" project, with support from the Styrian Economic Chamber, the Styrian Provincial School Board and the Styrian Savings Bank. The "Start!Up-Club" is a platform for young Styrians considering self-employment and entrepreneurship as a career option. Services range from setting up virtual businesses as part of a training course to events in the start-up sector. Moreover, "Start!Up-School" features a province-wide project on implementation and continuing development in order to raise awareness at an early stage of self-employment as a career option. In addition, there is particular emphasis on supporting female entrepreneurship, by

establishing: the Styrian Women's Business Centre, which aims to support women at all stages of their start-up and their entrepreneurial career. Moreover, there is the Business Incubator Centre which provides young women entrepreneurs with advisory and coaching services, extensive know-how transfer, subsidised offices and modern infrastructure.

**Developing a culture of entrepreneurship:** to achieve this EER regions have taken steps in two fields. Firstly, they have implemented plans to reinforce co-ordination and cooperation among public and private institutions, research centres, universities and SMEs. This has favoured the consolidation of a solid strategic basis to improve the economic context where SMEs are active and to guarantee them support at each critical level of the business life cycle. The EER Committees or Councils established in some EER regions are illustrative in this sense. Secondly, all EER regions have actively promoted an entrepreneurial culture among young people in schools, universities and research centres, by organising seminars, workshops and specific courses. A widely-used and useful tool has been the organisation of competitions for young people to promote new and innovative ideas, projects and solutions. County Kerry's success through the Young Entrepreneur Programme mentioned in the analysis of Figure 3.3 is an excellent example in this respect. Similar programmes, like *IDEA House* (free courses and intensive 24-hour workshops for students), *Business Idea Competitions* (open to all primary, secondary and university students) and *South Danish Engineer Pioneers* (to develop cooperation between the University of Southern Denmark, secondary and primary schools and SMEs located in remote areas of the region) have been promoted in Southern Denmark. Finally Murcia actively promotes and supports several measures such as the entrepreneur's roadmap, the Columbus Programme (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs), personal coaching for entrepreneurs, the common service catalogue for entrepreneurs and suppliers, senior advisory services for entrepreneurs, incubators and specific training for women entrepreneurs.

**Increasing the level of SME innovation:** updating the technological intensity of SME activities is considered an important instrument for increasing SME efficiency and productivity and orientating the overall regional productive framework towards more dynamic, innovative and emerging activities. EER regions have therefore supported and encouraged the transfer of know-how from research institutions to SMEs and taken measures to sustain R&D innovation. In some cases, strategy has also focused on the implementation of regional and inter-regional cluster policies specialised in key innovative and growing industries in order to exploit economies of scale in the implementation of innovative projects and advanced solutions. The upgrade of the technological framework of regional SMEs has also been accompanied by a focus on the use of clean and green technology to shift the economy towards a sustainable green

economy and responsible use of resources, e.g. the ‘Cleantech’ initiative in Brandenburg, Figure 3.10. Good examples are the initiatives promoted by the Federal Province of Styria, which fostered know-how transfer from research institutions to SMEs through the SCIENCE FIT campaign, enabling enterprises to find scientific solutions to operational problems. Furthermore the INNOLAB at Campus 02 at the University of Applied Sciences in Graz supports inventors and innovative entrepreneurs in putting ideas into practice. Moreover, the region houses a number of Austrian competence centres, the so-called Competence Centres for Excellent Technologies, promoting innovation in Styria through the collaboration of science and industry and the creation of so-called Innovation Pools.

**Favouring the internationalisation of firms:** one of the most fundamental keys to success for firms is the ability to compete on an international integrated market and face the challenges of emerging economies. Therefore, for SMEs it is not only important to maintain flexibility and adaptability, but also to be export-oriented and look at the global market as an opportunity for further development and growth. The EER regions, especially those with productive systems focused primarily on local markets, have been actively involved in fostering the internationalisation and export-orientation of regional SMEs by promoting financial aid and/or tax reduction measures and by implementing a policy for global and international clusters. Moreover, the internationalisation process concerns not only SMEs, but also involves institutions, by favouring the exchange of good practices, innovative ideas and experience. County Kerry and Trnava have promoted initiatives by encouraging active participation of neighbouring countries. Finally, Southern Denmark has also implemented programmes to expand the region's interregional and cross-border relationship with the regions of Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, as well as the regions around the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

**Supporting SME access to finance:** one of the common key problems affecting EER regions is the difficulties faced by SMEs in obtaining financing. Many measures have been adopted by EER governments to support SME access to financing. These include instituting public-private cooperation, decreasing taxes and/or registration fees for start-ups, building up cost-efficient forms of partnership between public and private organisations and facilitating business financing by creating web portals to build and promote available funding schemes for SMEs, etc. For example, Murcia promotes a strategy to provide financial aid for entrepreneurs through the entrepreneurship help program, microcredit for entrepreneurs, the ‘quality seal’ initiative for entrepreneurial projects and the establishment of meeting points between investors and entrepreneurs (Business Angels Network). Moreover, all the EER regions’ strategies have made use of the Structural Funds (ERDF and the Cohesion



Fund). The Structural Funds have been vital in creating useful networks of research centres, in financing business and promoting the competitiveness of SMEs in the global market, in upgrading labour skills and entrepreneurial initiatives at early stages and in financing secondary education programmes, academic start-ups as well as professional training. For example, the Catalan business sector has benefited from the improvement of general transport conditions and the environment due to a Cohesion Fund exclusively earmarked for transport networks and the environment. In addition, European Funds have had a direct impact on this sector, by encouraging business development and competitiveness in the Catalan economy, geared especially to SMEs. Moreover, with regard to research and technological development, the ERDF has been vital in creating a good network of research centres by building and equipping these in a short period of time and creating synergies with the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. In Trnava, EU funds co-finance several joint educational programmes in schools and the private sector as well as the already mentioned Duo\*\*Star Project, the Intelligent Energy Project and the Trnava Regional Innovation Centre. European structural funds have also been fundamental for the improvement of the entrepreneurial environment in Brandenburg, especially regarding initiatives fostering start-ups, which are co-financed by the ESF and the ERDF. The ESF played a particular role in financing secondary education programmes, academic start-ups as well as professional training. Moreover, a new venture capital fund launched in the last structural funding period and offering ERDF co-financing has been continued in the current period. Among other things, it provides SMEs with loans, and it is planned to further develop these activities.

### **4.3 ...impacting on regional policy attitude**

The EER label has significantly impacted on the regional policy of EER regions, not only in terms of the effectiveness of policy implementation but also in terms of how and what to plan and organise in a future strategic approach.

The main tangible result of the EER label is the change in policy **vision**, putting SME support at the core of the political agenda for regional decision makers. Moreover the EER experience pushes regions to adopt an integrated approach, which links various aspects together such as the environment, culture, credit and governance. Thus the strategy of support for SMEs has become the pillar of a sustainable and innovative economy based on ecological modernisation of the productive framework and the use of clean and green resources. It is not surprising therefore that some EER regions have identified environmental sustainability as one of the three main pillars of their strategy. Nord-Pas de Calais has developed a policy for global and international competitive clusters primarily in the industrial sector with a particular focus on fostering

environmental and social conversion within the region. Moreover, the EER label has allowed regions to adopt a policy strategy based on a few precise and specific aims, making the initiatives more focused and more effective. Examples are the ‘three-main-pillars’ strategies adopted by Southern Denmark (sustainable energy with a focus on energy efficiency and offshore energy; health and welfare technologies; the experience economy, with a focus on tourism and design), Styria (Styria 2020, Growth through Innovation: Mobility, Eco-Tech and Health-Tech), Catalonia (the Business Environment and Business Creation; Structure and Business Size; Business Strategy) or Murcia (Business and Entrepreneurship Development; Innovation, Cooperation and Internationalisation; Sustainable Development Guarantee). In other cases strategy has focused on only some sectors of the economy, for example in Trnava (the automotive, electronics and energy sectors) or on achieving one major policy aim, as in the case of County Kerry, whose entrepreneurship strategy is to build a sustainable economy through indigenous, home-grown businesses and local entrepreneurs and to reduce their dependence on external companies.

As a consequence of the changes in the policy vision of the EER regions, the EER label has also affected the **policy horizon** of regional strategies by making the policy initiatives part of long-term planning. Even if EER regions need to continue these efforts even after their respective EER years and seize opportunities to set common targets and develop common activities, the time horizon in which the policy is called to act is now perceived as a long-term integrated action plan, with precise aims for the future and new policy tools to be adopted. The intensive effort needed to disseminate an entrepreneurial culture among young people is a clear example of how the policy horizon has changed in EER regions. Some examples come from the Catalan Agreement on Research and Innovation, which constitutes a strategic agreement with economic and social agents, universities and political parties with the objective of Catalonia becoming an international benchmark in terms of research and innovation by 2020, and from the Catalan Strategy for Sustainable Development, which constitutes a roadmap establishing quantitative objectives and priority actions ensuring that Catalonia moves towards greater social, economic and environmental sustainability, establishing 2026 as the target year. The Helsinki-Uusimaa policy horizon is much more extended. The Uusimaa Regional Plan covers the period up to 2033 and aims for the region to become an internationally recognised metropolitan area fostering prosperity. There is a particular emphasis on creative industries. In accordance with the SBA principles, the region is striving to become the most innovative agglomeration in the Baltic Sea Region. Therefore, sustainable development and renewable energies play a vital role in creating new business opportunities and generating innovative potential. This complements the overall regional strategy of

becoming a pioneer in responding to challenges posed by climate change in the near future.

Finally, the EER label has allowed regions to have greater internal and external **visibility**. Internally the EER label raises awareness in the business sector, public administrations and society in general that SMEs and their spirit of enterprise are the backbone of the European economy. This makes the different stakeholders conscious of the importance of SMEs and concentrates more effort, resources and measures to support and aid the growth of enterprises. Moreover, the EER label allows more SMEs and entrepreneurs to be reached when explaining specific tools to support them. Externally, the EER label promotes EER regions as good regions to do business with and therefore helps to attract direct foreign investments favouring economic growth. The EER label also promotes recognition of a region's strategic approach in the rest of the country as well as in Europe, offering a means of exchanging ideas, good practices and innovative projects.



## 5. Application of the SBA's ten principles

This chapter assesses application of the SBA's ten principles across and within European countries. In particular, Section 5.1 provides an overview of the national level and is mainly based on information collected from the SBA factsheets of DG Enterprise and Industry for the 2010/2011 period<sup>7</sup>. Section 5.2 presents the main results of the survey. Section 5.3, by combining the survey results and the databases, offers a synthetic multi-criteria analysis for each principle and includes an overall assessment of the application of the SBA principles based on EER experiences.

### 5.1 A synthetic overview at national level

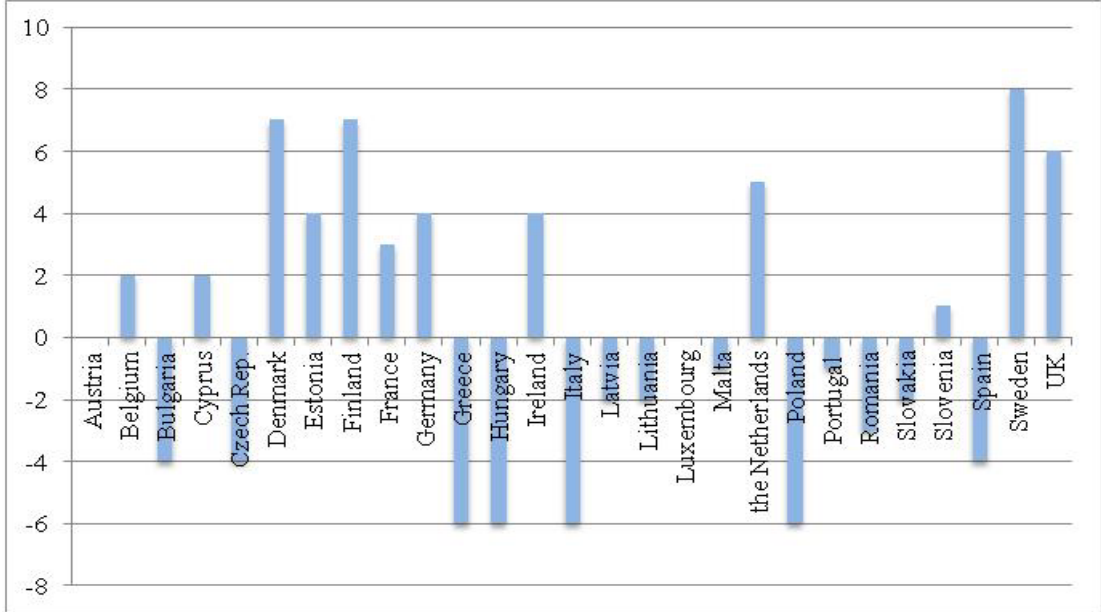
Based on the 'SBA Fact Sheets 2010/11' of the European Commission's DG Enterprise and Industry, Figure 4.1 illustrates and summarises the performance of the 27 Member States in applying the SBA principles in 2010/2011. It shows a clear geographical difference in the application of the SBA among the Member States:

- **Northern European countries** (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have above average performance in applying almost all the ten principles.
- **Eastern and 'newcomer' countries** such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia are trying to catch up with the EU average. They are implementing successful measures.
- **France and Germany** present a mixed picture: performing well in some fields while lagging behind in others.
- **Southern European Member States**, e.g. Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are in a situation that puts them on par with or below the EU average. This result is mostly due to the effects of the financial and economic crisis that is particularly intense in southern Europe.

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2011), "SBA Fact Sheet 2010/11", EC Enterprise and Industry.

**Figure 5.1 - SBA’s implementation at national level: cumulated score**



**Note:** the figure sums up, by country, the normalised score for each of the principles by assigning +1, -1 or 0 if performance is above, under or equal to the EU average. The cumulated score ranges therefore from -10 (minimum) to +10 (maximum).

**Source:** calculation based on the ‘SBA Fact Sheets 2010/11’, EC – Enterprise and Industry

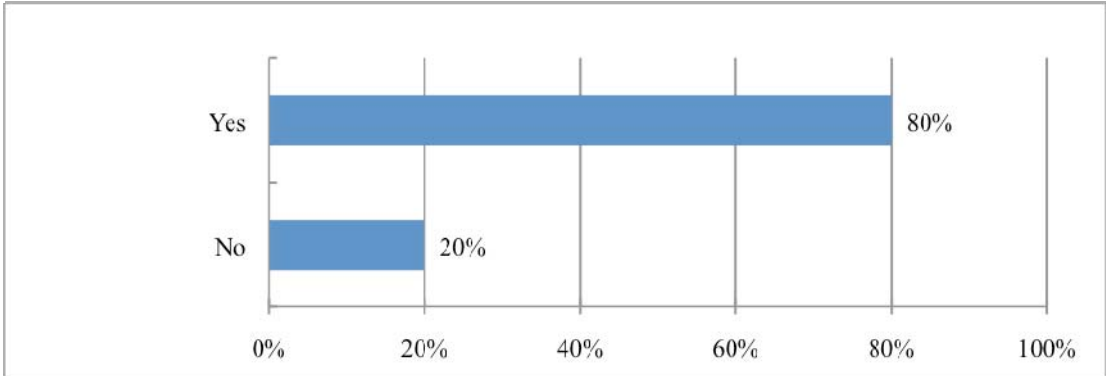
## 5.2 Insights from the ground

The survey involved mainly public officials (80%) at both regional and national level dealing with SME support and assistance. Although the survey does not achieve statistical representativeness, it provides an interesting overview of opinions and perceptions from people working in the field.

This paragraph explains the main and clearest survey findings (see Chapter 2 on methodology and Annex 3 for details); for some specific questions no clear trends emerge due to the (relatively) limited number of respondents. The clearest and most interesting results concerned the following aspects: awareness of SBA principles; their influence on local policy; the existence of a SME strategy; application of SBA principles; and the potential contribution of Europe to SME support.

The first positive insight from the survey is that the SBA is already well known among public administrations in Europe. All respondents testified to awareness of SBA principles in their regions. Moreover, the majority of respondents claimed that SBA principles influenced their region/country's policies (Figure 5.2).

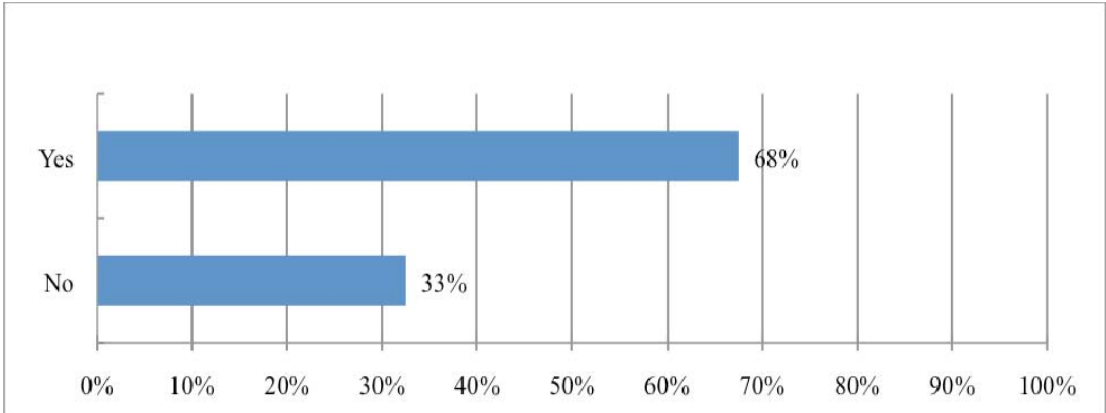
**Figure 4.2 – Answers to the question: has the SBA in anyway influenced the SME policy of the national/regional authority?**



Source: T33 and SWECO

Fewer respondents, although still a majority, reported that their regions/countries had strategies directly targeted at SMEs (see Figure 5.3).

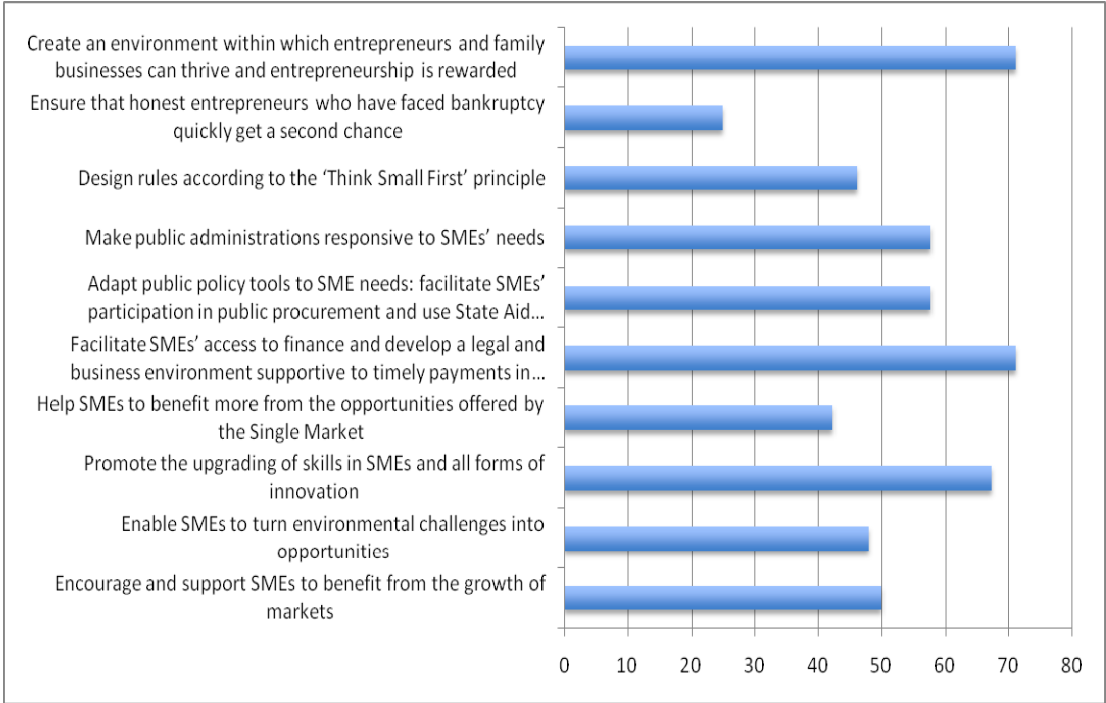
**Figure 5.3 – Answers to the question: are there any specific entrepreneurship strategies applied in regional and/or local policy-making targeted at small business?**



Source: T33 and SWECO

Moreover, responses show that there are similarities in the application of SBA principles (see Figure 5.4), except in relation to principle II (Second Chance) and principle VII (Single Market Opportunities).

**Figure 5.4 – Answers to the question: which principles for supporting small businesses are applied in your region/country?**

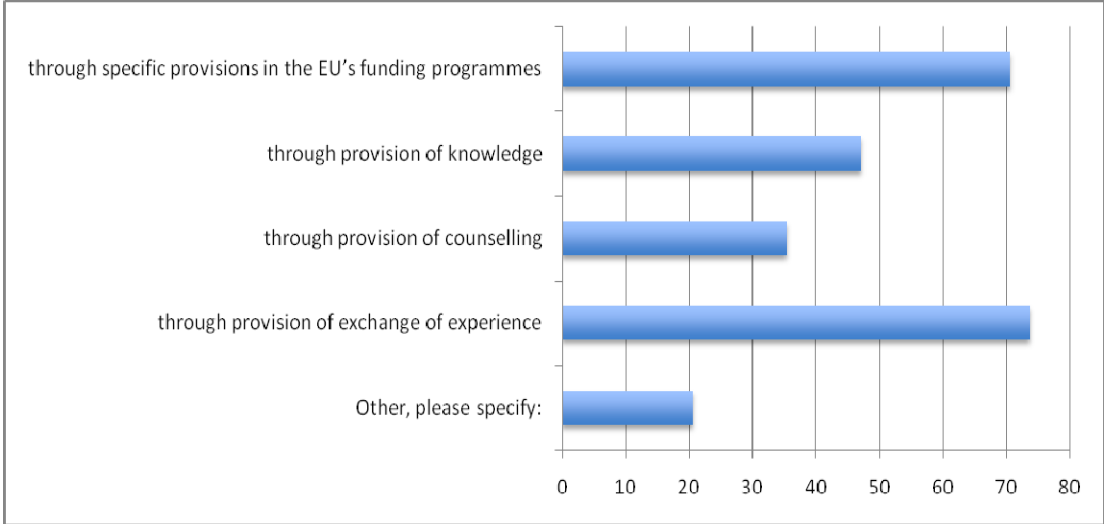


Source: T33 and SWECO



Finally an interesting insight comes from the question regarding the contribution of Europe to SME support. Among the possible options, the most popular was “exchange of experiences”.

**Figure 4.5 – Answers to the question: How could the government at the European level contribute to a future ‘Regional SBA’?**



Source: T33 and SWECO

### 5.3 Overall assessment of application of SBA principles

In order to assess how SBA principles are applied, different information sources are combined (survey and database) through a multi-criteria analysis (more detailed description of the methodology in sub-section 2.5). The table below summarises the results of the multi-criteria analysis in relation to each principle. The extent to which each principle is applied is shown in the second (national) and third (regional) columns. The range goes from “++” (very high), “+” (high), “=” (sufficient), “-” (low), and “--” (very low).

**Table 5.1. Multi-criteria analysis**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Regional</b>
<i>I. Create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded</i>	-	++
<i>II. Ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance</i>	=	--
<i>III. Think small first</i>	-	--
<i>IV. Make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs</i>	+	=
<i>V Adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SMEs' participation in public procurement and better use of State Aid possibilities for SMEs</i>	+	-
<i>VI. Facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions</i>	-	-
<i>VII. Help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market</i>	+	+
<i>VIII. Promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation</i>	-	++
<i>IX. Enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities</i>	<i>Not Available</i>	=
<i>X. Encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets</i>	=	--

The table provides an interesting and informative overview of performance at EU level with regard to countries and regions applying SBA principles. In particular the table reveals three different situations:

- I) For some principles (I, V, VIII and X) there is a discrepancy in performance between the national and regional levels.
- II) In the case of principles II, III, VI both levels face the same difficulties.
- III) Local and regional authorities and central authorities are equally relevant for the remaining principles.

More specifically, in relation to principles I (Business Environment) and VIII (Innovation), performance at regional level is better than at national level. This clearly applies to EER regions, all of which have invested significantly in developing an environment suitable for business and entrepreneurship (**Principle I**). The key activities here are intended to promote networking among SMEs and a favourable business climate. A wide variety of instruments are used: Business Angels (South Denmark), promotion of clusters (Nord-Pais de Calais), incubators (Helsinki-Uusimaa), a campaign to raise awareness of entrepreneurship culture (Travna), a business growth centre (County Kerry).

With regard to promoting innovation (**Principle VIII**), all EER regions are engaged in fostering innovation. Their main aim is to support the “triple Helix<sup>8</sup>” of innovation by supporting business and university partnerships or establishing public/private research centres. Another means of fostering innovation by EER Regions is systematic support for SME participation in the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, for example in Helsinki – Unisimaa and Styria<sup>9</sup>.

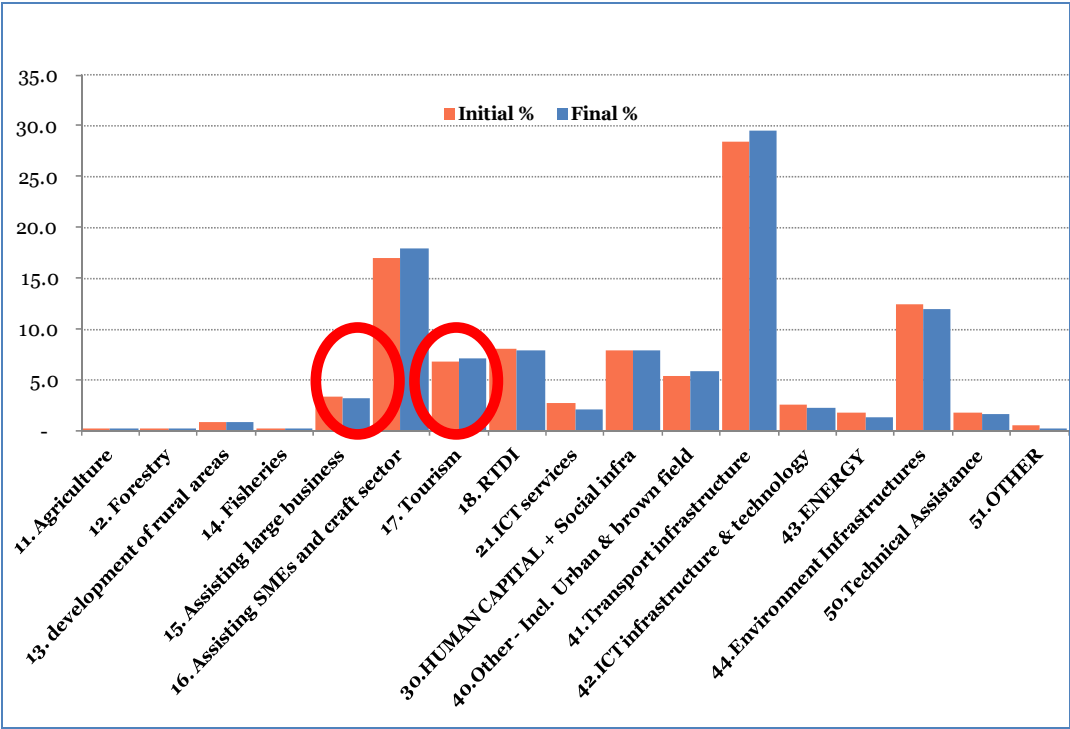
Finally, further evidence of regional efforts to support SMEs (particularly in the R&D field) comes from ERDF expenditure. In the past programming period (2000-2006) one-third of Regional Operational Programmes budgets was used to support SMEs, 8% specifically to foster research and development measures (see the chart below).

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8 The triple Helix is a wide known metaphor where academia, government, and industry constitute the three helices that engage in triple helix innovation. Educational institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities) primarily represent academia in this paradigm; however, educational institutions at other levels are not precluded from contributing to, and participating in, triple helix innovation processes. Government may be represented by any of the three levels of government - federal (national), state (provincial), and local (municipal) - and State-owned companies. There are no restrictions on the types of industry (corporate) involvement in triple helix innovation processes: i.e., industry may be represented by private corporations, partnerships, or sole proprietorships. (definition taken from the “taxonomy of the Triple Helix” of the Triple Helix Institute ([http://www.triplehelixinstitute.org/thi/ithi\\_drupal/sites/default/files/uploaded/documents/TaxonomyOfTripleHelixInnovation.pdf](http://www.triplehelixinstitute.org/thi/ithi_drupal/sites/default/files/uploaded/documents/TaxonomyOfTripleHelixInnovation.pdf)))

9 The crucial importance of innovation for SME development is also reflected in the new cohesion policy approach with an explicit requirement (as an ex ante conditionality) for an innovation strategy to promote smart specialisation underpinning ROP priorities (see box 1, next chapter).

**Figure 5.5. Initial and final ERDF FoI expenditure allocations, EU level (%)**



Source: DG REGIO Expenditure Database<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the national level appears more relevant in facilitating SME participation in public procurement (**Principle V**). This has to do with the fact that regions generally apply national public procurement law which in turn transposes EU directives. Although LRAs want more flexibility in this field<sup>11</sup>, public procurement regulation is still mostly a national or European competence. The national level is also more relevant to helping SMEs tap into the potential of global markets (**Principle X**). In this case, the main obstacle facing regions is the level of technical know-how required. Indeed, in EER regions engaged actively in internationalisation, SMEs are supported by highly specialised regional organisations with substantial in-house expertise. This is the case of the South Danish European Office (a liaison office between local and regional authorities and the EU) and the International Centre Styria (ICS).

Both countries and regions find it difficult to apply principles related to financial resources and assistance (**Principles II and VI**), especially Principle II (Second Chance). This is not surprising since one of the key problems for SMEs are the

<sup>10</sup> Analysis of financial and physical data in the Final Implementation Reports concerning the Objective 1 and 2 Programmes for 2000-2006 financed by the European Regional Development Fund (t33 – OIR – Spatial foresight)

<sup>11</sup> With regard to public procurement and the need for greater flexibility, it is worth checking the views expressed by LRAs during public consultation on adoption of the new directive ([http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/publicprocurement/modernising\\_rules/consultations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/modernising_rules/consultations/index_en.htm) and the CoR's draft opinion on the subject (<http://www.toad.cor.europa.eu/corwipdetail.aspx?folderpath=ECOS-V/029&id=21410>)

obstacles they face in accessing capital markets. Despite regional efforts and the numerous initiatives, the lack of finance is still a real and serious burden on European SME growth potential, especially in Member States where investment risks are high and access to credit – in particular micro-credit – is limited. Moreover, it should be noted that the situation of SMEs has worsened with the current financial and economic crisis, which, together with the increasing economic challenges of globalisation and the emergence of new economies as strong competitors on the international integrated market, has severely limited their financial resources.

Especially at regional level, the ‘Think Small First’ principle (**Principle III**) is only rarely applied, by just 1.1% of European regions. This principle is relevant to different levels of governance (European - national - regional) and closely correlates to limited use of the ‘SME-Test’.

Finally the analysis shows that efficient and sound coordination and cooperation between different government levels could be a key success factor in applying SBA principles. As a matter of fact, the two levels seem to be equally active in applying most principles. In particular, positive results have been achieved in applying principles **IV** (Make Public Administration Responsive), **VII** (Single Market Opportunities) and **IX** (Environmental Challenges), especially in relation to the environment. While environmental regulation is mostly a national competence, the regions play an important role in developing the green economy through incentives. For example, the Helsinki-Uusimaa region has supported a number of green offshore and energy efficiency projects. Another interesting experience from County Kerry is the “RegCEP” project (regional clusters for energy planning) to support regional specialization in smart energy production.

In conclusion, the analysis shows that LRAs are particularly relevant to principles **I** (Business Environment) and **VIII** (Single Market Opportunities), and also - to a more limited extent - to **IV** (Make Public Administration Responsive), **VII** (Single Market Opportunities), and **IX** (Environmental Challenges). With regard to Principles **II** (Second Chance), **VI** (Facilitate Access to Finance) and **VIII** (Innovation), regions face the same difficulties as at national level. Finally regional and local levels seem to be less relevant to Principles **V** (Public Procurement) and **X** (Growth of Markets). Regions therefore are better able to achieve outstanding results for principles of greater regional relevance concerned with developing or improving the SME environment. By contrast, for principles which have more to do with ‘external’ factors, such as legislation or international markets, the national level plays a more effective role.



## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 Lessons learnt

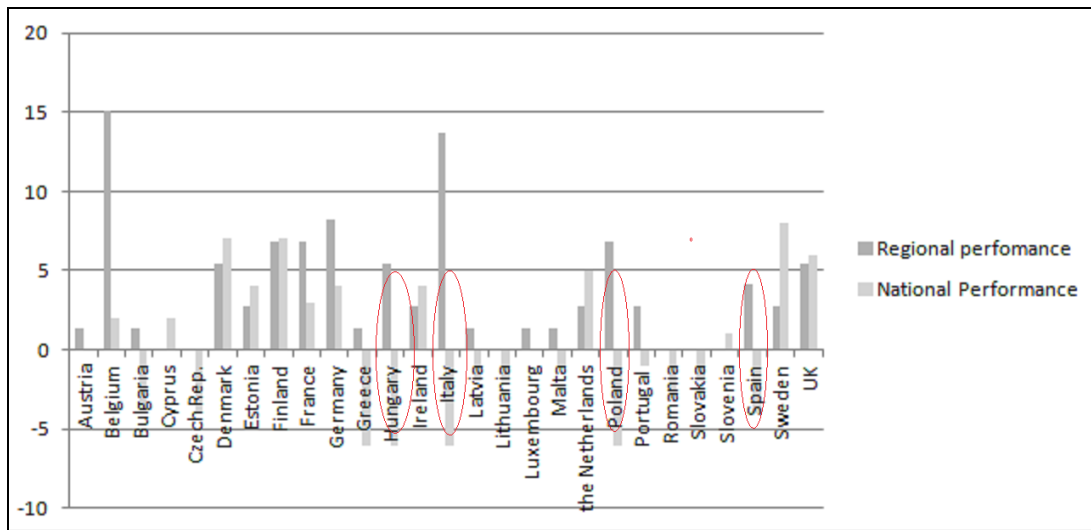
From the analysis and the findings of the previous chapter we can learn four main lessons (see table below).

**Figure 6.1 From findings to lessons learnt**

Findings	→	LESSONS LEARNT
Regions effectively apply principles I (Business Environment), IV (Make Public Administrations Responsive), VII (Single Market Opportunities), VIII (Innovation) and IX (Environmental challenges)	→	The regions are particularly effective when the principle is more place-based
Regions and national governments are complementary in applying the SBA.	→	Applying the SBA requires different levels of governance
There are many differences in the (economic, social, political) context of EER regions but they have similar approaches and long term objectives.	→	Applying SBA principles requires a cultural change among policy makers.
In the new draft regulation, application of SBA Principles is an ex ante conditionality	→	EER Regions are a useful source of inspiration for regional authorities in drafting future programmes

The first lesson we can learn from assessing the application of SBA principles is that **LRAs play a decisive role**. Compared to the national level, they are equally active for half of these principles and they are (more) relevant especially when support to SMEs needs to be ‘place-based’ (Principles I – Business Environmental and VIII - Innovation). By contrast, when principles are more concerned with the legislative framework, LRAs are less relevant, e.g. Principles II (Second Chance), III (Think Small First) and VI (Facilitate Access to Finance). If we analyse Member States’ performance, it is interesting to note that those with poor national performance have a relatively high outcome at regional level (see Figure 6.2). This is the case for Hungary, Italy, Spain and Poland.

**Figure 6.2 National and Regional performance**



**Source:** our explanation is based on the ‘SBA Fact Sheets 2010/11’, European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry.

This discrepancy between national and regional performance reflects differing institutional and administrative frameworks in Member States. For example in Italy and Germany, the regions play a crucial role in supporting SMEs in many different fields. The assessment of regional implementation of the SBA and the above figures provide some useful insights:

- a) The regions complement national authorities in supporting SMEs.
- b) Regions can compensate for the low performance of national authorities by supporting SMEs. They can be more active in assisting and supporting a business friendly environment and promoting entrepreneurship.
- c) Regions act as a stimulus for national authorities, providing good examples, ideas, benchmarking and innovative approaches. More specifically, as revealed by the survey, regional and local authorities are the key actors in improving the dialogue between public administration and small businesses.

As a second lesson, the study **shows the importance of sound multi-level governance in implementing SBA principles**. More specifically, the assessment shows that in relation to many principles, regional, local and national authorities are equally relevant or face the same problems. This confirms the importance of genuine and operational cooperation between different government levels. The survey reflects a consensus, independently of the institutional framework or division of responsibilities, that the different levels of government already cooperate closely (see the table below). In this sense, LRAs



also play an important role in ‘vertical dialogue’ in European Multi Level Governance.

**Table 6.1 Collaboration between the various levels of governance (European to local) on different areas of action**

	Complement each other	Work closely together	Work in parallel	Hinder each other
Provision of funding (opportunities)	X			
Appropriate regulatory and legal frameworks			X	
Non-financial support such as advisory services	X	X		
Support of relevant networks	X	X	X	

The third lesson comes from the EER regions. There are differences in context if we look at income, political and institutional frameworks, infrastructure quality, the economy, and the role of local businesses. More specifically, few regions can rely on the support of a developed entrepreneurship culture or the presence of business infrastructure such as technological centres/parks, incubators and growth centres. However, the study has identified similarities in terms of a holistic approach towards SMEs. At the same time, EER regions implement measures in the fields of culture, education, internationalisation, environment and innovation. The main common feature of EER regions is their shared vision that entrepreneurship is not just an economic or financial issue but above all a cultural challenge for policy makers and the whole public administration.

The fourth lesson from the analysis of the case studies is that **EU Structural Funds and the SBA** are closely linked. For many EER regions, the ERDF provides a framework of specific programme priorities and/or measures targeting SMEs. More specifically, ERDF funding is associated with a wide range of different tools: from grants and loans supporting investments, to venture capital and guarantee funds, from business infrastructure such as incubators and growth centres to eco-incentives, from SME networks and clusters to joint R&D projects with universities. On the other hand, the ESF supports vocational training and start-ups. It also plays a major role in upgrading skills and competences in the labour force. In almost all EER regions, Structural Funds complement national resources. However, in many cases, Structural Funds represent the main source of funding for regional policy in support of

SMEs, in relation not just to the Convergence objective but also the Employment and Competitiveness objective.

Structural Funds are therefore already the main tool used by LRAs to support SMEs and implement SBA principles. In the next programming period the connection between the SBA and Cohesion Policy will be even closer due to *ex-ante* conditionality (see box below). In this context, the need for effective multilevel governance will be crucial in drafting a 'partnership agreement' over the next few months. Thus EER experiences are now of major importance for all European regions approaching the new programming period, providing them with input for their SBA strategy (necessary for the *ex ante* conditionality) and their Operational Programme.

### **Box. 6.1: The importance of SBA principles in the next Structural Fund programming period, 2014 -2020**

The link between SBA principles and Structural Funds will be even more important in the new programming period. In the draft new Structural Funds Regulation<sup>12</sup>, the Commission has closely tied one of the *ex-ante* conditions to application of the SBA. In Annex IV of the proposal, regarding the third thematic priority, ‘enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs’, the proposed new Regulation states that:

*‘Specific actions have been carried out for the effective implementation of the Small Business Act (SBA) and its Review of 23 February 2011 including the "Think Small First" principle. The specific actions include:*

- a monitoring mechanism to ensure implementation of the SBA including a body in charge of coordinating SME issues across different administrative levels (“SME Envoy”);*
- measures to reduce the time to set-up a business to three working days and the cost to €100;*
- measures to reduce the time needed to get licences and permits to take up and perform the specific activity of an enterprise to three months;*
- a mechanism for systematic assessment of the impact of legislation on SMEs using an "SME test" while taking into account differences in the size of enterprises, where relevant.*

Of course, responsibility for implementing these actions will not lie with LRAs alone. Nevertheless it seems clear that in the next period SBA principles will be closely intertwined with Operational Programmes funded by ERDF and ESF.

## **6.2 Policy recommendations**

Based on the lessons drawn from the previous section, the SBA principles will play an increasingly significant role, especially due to the *ex-ante* conditionality of Structural Funds. SME support will be a cornerstone of future cohesion policy and consequently one of the most important strategic issues which

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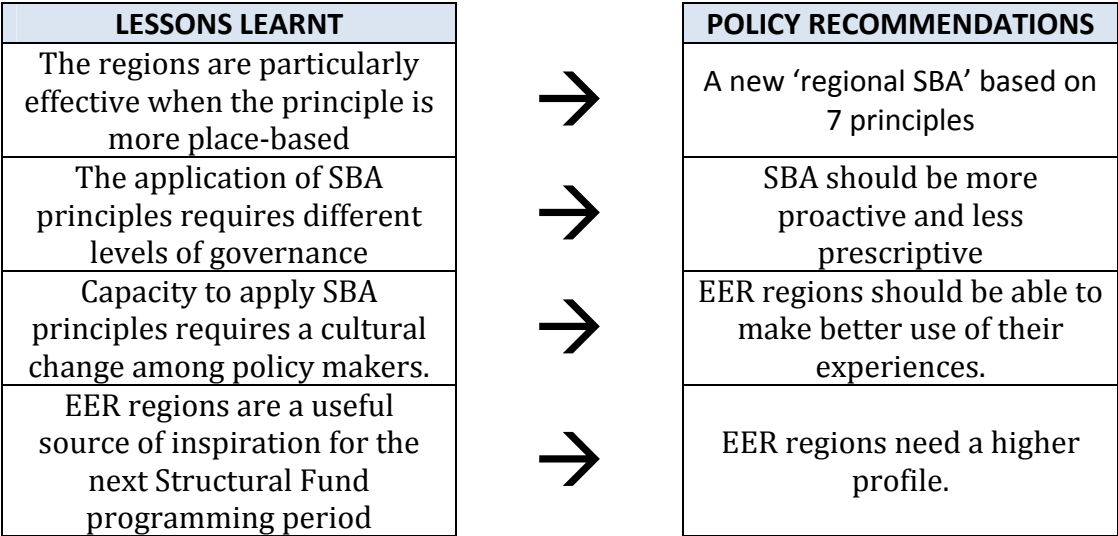
12 Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund covered by the Common Strategic Framework and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, 6.10.2011, COM(2011) 615.

regions will have to address. As a result, applying SBA principles will boost regional SME strategies while promoting the European integration process at regional level.

In this respect, the EER experience represents a unique opportunity to make regions aware of the importance of an effective and structured SME policy built on SBA principles. The EER initiative supports regions in identifying and applying adequate policy measures to support SMEs and in exchanging good practices and innovative ideas with one another.

To ensure that EERs feed into a SME-friendly European policy, some changes are needed at both strategic (SBA principles) and operational (functioning of EERs) levels. To this end we have translated the main conclusions of this study into a series of policy recommendations focusing on: the potential focus of a new regional SBA; the need for better support for SBA implementation; and strategic issues for capitalisation and dissemination.

**Figure 6.2: From lessons learnt to recommendations**



**(A) PUTTING THE RIGHT FOCUS ON A REGIONAL SBA**

In order to support the idea of a regional SBA, more efforts are needed to make SBA principles more regional and specific. It might even be advisable to focus on the 7 key principles relevant at regional level (see point 2).

***(1) Make SBA principles more regional and specific***

SBA principles need a more regional and specific orientation in order to be more responsive to regional needs. The EER experiences discussed in the previous chapters show that a successful regional strategy applying SBA principles needs

to be specific, by defining a few important pillars and taking a few strong actions to achieve them. Such a strategy also needs to be accompanied by close coordination between institutions, firms, research centres, schools and universities. The creation of a committee or secretariat and the appointment of an SME envoy dedicated to SBA activities – an option not much used at a regional level – is a good way of coordinating the strategy and implementing it more effectively. Making SBA principles more regional and specific should be the task of the CoR in cooperation with EERs.

## ***(2) Formulate a new Regional SBA around seven principles***

A new ‘regional SBA’ could be also be based on the principles closest to LRA capabilities and competences. Our survey provides some insights here. The principles most relevant to LRAs are:

- Create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive (**Principle I**)
- Make public administrations responsive to SMEs’ needs (**Principle IV**)
- Help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (**Principle VII**)
- Promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (**Principle VIII**)
- Enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (**Principle IX**).

In addition, it is important to include other two principles, even though our analysis does not clearly highlight their relevance:

•Think Small First (**Principle III**): the survey shows that the ‘Think Small First’ principle is one of the less frequently applied principles. The Commission has made a commitment to implementing this principle in its policy-making and introduced the ‘SME-test’ to assess the impact of forthcoming legislation and administrative initiatives on SMEs. Unfortunately the adoption of the SME test across European regions is actually rather slow and inconsistent, as confirmed by the survey results. Nevertheless its more intensive use is a *condition sine qua non* in order to improve the quality of governance and coordination between institutions and SMEs. Without a clear *ex ante* understanding of the impact of administrative requirements and legislation on SMEs, implementation of policy measures is less likely to be effective, not least at regional level. The

Commission, with the CoR's help, could try to advocate the 'Think Small First' principle more widely.

Adapt government policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SME participation in public procurement, and make better use of state aid possibilities for SMEs (**Principle V**). Indeed, some of the main policy instruments for LRAs to support economic development are business incentives, e.g. in the field of innovation, the green economy, start-ups, etc., as well as development of public infrastructure (transport, environment, broadband). In terms of both incentives and infrastructure, LRAs have to deal with state aid and public procurement legislation, which sometimes significantly adds to the administrative burden.

## **(B) SUPPORT SBA IMPLEMENTATION**

SBA is not just about issuing principles and guidelines. In the end the key to success is putting principles and guidelines into practice. Consequently, there should be more emphasis on supporting implementation at national and regional level and monitoring developments.

### ***(1) Ensure that the SBA does not focus only on WHAT but also on HOW***

Our survey shows that a "regional SBA" should be based on mutual learning, peer reviewing and networking through knowledge transfer, especially in the public sector. In other words, a "regional SBA" should have a more proactive role, focusing not only on "what to do" but also on "how to do it". Thus the EER label could be a very promising opportunity. Although it has been used in very different contexts, the EER experience provides useful and concrete insights.

- It is crucial to instil an entrepreneurship culture in young people, with the involvement of universities and secondary schools.
- In addition, more operational tools to enhance cooperation between SMEs, universities and research institutions should be implemented to facilitate knowledge transfer and to enhance innovation.
- Policy governance is a key issue in this process. All EER regions should invest in building consensus and a common vision with the various stakeholders.
- Finally, a holistic approach embracing several different fields, e.g. education, innovation, finance, R&D and environmental protection is of crucial importance.

Here too, the CoR in cooperation with EER regions could help to disseminate the lessons learned from EER experiences and support networks and mutual learning in relation to the ‘how’ of SBA implementation.

***(2) Establish a regular monitoring platform for SBA implementation***

A more systematic analysis has to be conducted on a regular basis by external experts aiming to identify:

- innovative approaches of potential relevance to other regions in Europe
- policy recommendations for national and EU levels
- possible synergies and mutual enrichment among regions
- links to programmes or related initiatives in other EU programmes.

**(C) STRENGTHEN DISSEMINATION AND CAPITALISATION**

***(1) Ensure better capitalisation of EER experience***

Despite this potential key role, the EER initiative still suffers from a lack of visibility at European and regional level. In order to raise awareness among other European Institutions:

- a) Web pages of the European Commission DGs concerned with SBA implementation, e.g. DG REGIO, DG ENTERPRISE, specifically dedicated to SME policy should include a direct link to the EER-CoR portal (<http://cor.europa.eu/en/takepart/eer/Pages/a3102159-c752-42ef-bba5-0103042d0615.aspx> ). For example, the portal dedicated to the European Small Business Act should connect to the EER label more clearly.
- b) The EER label should also be used by other EU institutions, especially the European Parliament. Information activities targeting MEPs could be extremely useful in raising awareness of the EER label.

EER experiences should be capitalised and disseminated in a more structured way to make more effective use of knowledge acquired by regions with the EER label for the benefit of local and regional authorities in Europe. Findings of reports by external experts, best practices and other relevant materials from LRAs should be easily accessible on the EER website thanks to continuous updating of key words and categorisation by subject. Unfortunately, a large amount of interesting material is not currently available.

***(2) A higher profile in support of regional authorities in drafting new regional operational programmes for the 2014-2020 period.***

The link between SBA principles and Structural Funds will be even more important in the new programming period, since the Commission has strictly linked one of the *ex ante* conditions to application of the SBA. EER regions represent a good example of how specific measures can be used in the application of SBA principles. It is therefore important for regional programming authorities to become aware of potential support from EER experiences as soon as possible. A strategic approach should be put in place to identify potential targets of dissemination. There are many different regional stakeholders so it is necessary to focus on specific categories such as:

- local and regional authorities in Europe dealing with cohesion policy programmes, e.g. managing authorities, CBC partners, trans-national and interregional projects.
- local and regional authorities interested in the specific field of SME support.
- policy makers in charge of industrial policy.


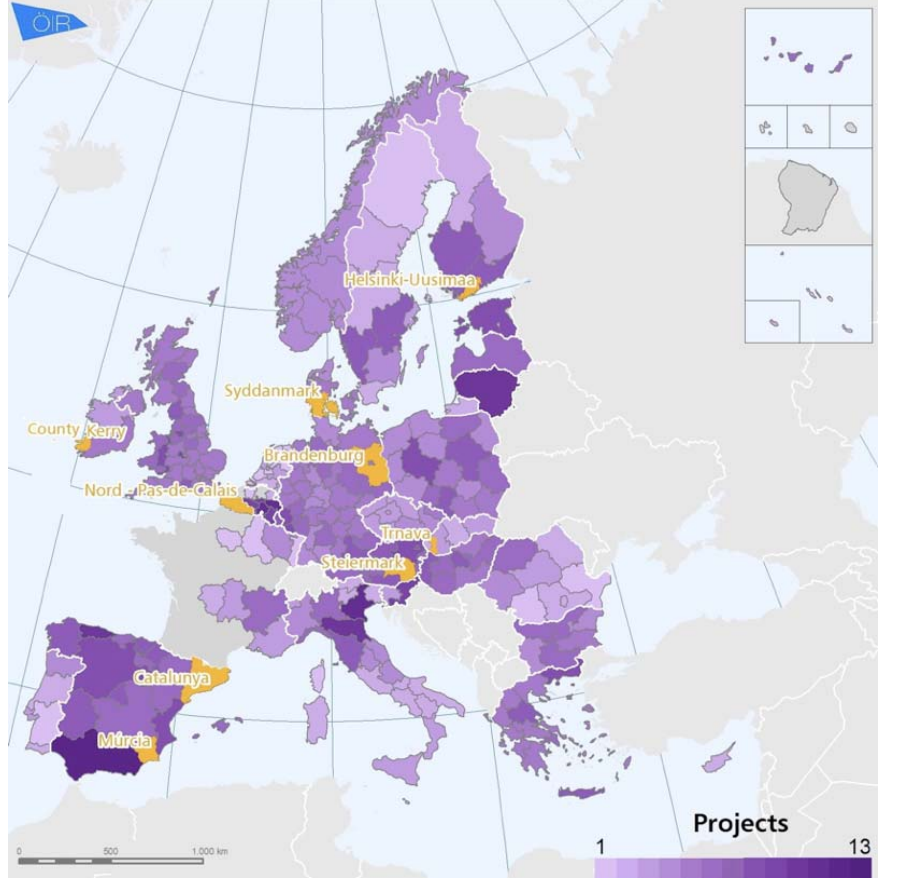
Such stakeholders should be contacted through news mails or similar web tools to keep them informed about EER activities.

An additional awareness-raising measure would be to use the maps displayed in this study as useful tools to attract and focus the attention of potential users:

- a) The EER website should include a dedicated page on “EER good practice” with a map of all EER regions (first map in chapter 3) and a banner with the list of 10 SBA principles. It could provide the option of focusing on a single principle or EER region.
- b) Clicking on a region in the map would open a specific case study (taken from Annex 4) for that EER region
- c) Clicking on a principle would open a report listing all the relevant experiences of EER regions, taken from Annex 4. This “thematic report” would include the relevant map as a cover page (taken from the maps in chapter 3).



The next page shows what the introductory page could look like:

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) Best practices</h2>
	<p><b>I</b> To create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded</p> <p><b>II</b> To ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance</p> <p><b>III</b> To design rules according to the 'Think Small First' principle</p> <p><b>IV</b> To make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs</p> <p><b>V</b> To adapt public policy tools to SME needs</p> <p><b>VI</b> To facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions</p> <p><b>VII</b> To help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market</p> <p><b>VIII</b> To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation</p> <p><b>IX</b> To enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities</p> <p><b>X</b> To encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets.</p>



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# **ANNEX 2 LIST OF REGIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
AT	Kärnten	8. Skills and innovation	.
AT	Oberösterreich	8. Skills and innovation	.
AT	Niederösterreich	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
AT	Wien	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
AT	Niederösterreich	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
AT	All	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
AT	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
AT	All	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
AT	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
AT	All	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
AT	All	10. Responsible entrepreneurships	x
BE	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	8. Skills and innovation	.
BE	Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen	8. Skills and innovation	.
BE	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	8. Skills and innovation	.
BE	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
BE	Prov. Namur	8. Skills and innovation	.
BE	Prov. Limburg (B)	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
BE	Prov. Namur	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
BE	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	8. Skills and innovation	.
BE	Walloon Brabant	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
BE	Hainaut	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.



Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
BE	Liège	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
BE	Luxembourg (Belgium)	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
BE	Namur	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
BE	Wallonia (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
BE	Wallonia (The Greater Region)	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
BE	Brussels-Capital Region	6.1. Access to finance	.
BE	Walloon Brabant	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Hainaut	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Liège	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Luxembourg (Belgium)	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Namur	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Province Limburg (Euregio Maas-Rhein)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	German-speaking Community in Belgium (Euregio Maas-Rhein)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Province Liège (Euregio Maas-Rhein)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Walloon Brabant	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Hainaut	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Liège	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Luxembourg (Belgium)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Namur	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Wallonia (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BE	Brussels Capital Region	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
BE	Walloon Brabant	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
BE	Hainaut	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
BE	Liège	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
BE	Luxembourg (Belgium)	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
BE	Namur	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
BE	Walloon Brabant	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Hainaut	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Liège	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Luxembourg (Belgium)	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Namur	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
BE	Wallonia (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BG	Severen tsentralen	8. Skills and innovation	.
BG	Severen tsentralen	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
BG	Severozapaden	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
BG	Yugoiztochen	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
BG	Severozapaden	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
BG	Yuzhen tsentralen	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
BG		9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
BG		6.1. Access to finance	.
BG		8. Skills and innovation	.
BG		2. A second chance after bankruptcy	.
BG	Yuzhen tsentralen	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
CY	Kypros / Kibris	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
CY	Kypros / Kibris	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
CZ	Stredni Morava	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
CZ	Moravskoslezsko	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
CZ	Moravskoslezsko	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
CZ	Jihovýchod	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
CZ		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
CZ		1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
CZ		1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
DE	Stuttgart	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Arnsberg	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Leipzig	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Oberbayern	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Lüneburg	8. Skills and innovation	x
DE	Berlin	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Darmstadt	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	x
DE	Oberbayern	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Bremen	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Dresden	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Hannover	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
DE	Stuttgart	8. Skills and innovation	.
DE	Münster	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DE	Saarland (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
DE	Trier (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
DE	Saarland (The Greater Region)	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DE	Trier (The Greater Region)	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DE	Aachen (Euregio Maas-Rhein)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE		6.1. Access to finance	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
DE	Saarland (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE	Rhineland-Palatinate (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE	Brandenburg	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE	Saarland (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE	Rheinland-Pfalz(The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE	Niederbayern	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	x
DE	Oberbayern	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Niederbayern	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Oberpfalz	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Oberfranken	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Mittelfranken	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Unterfranken	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Schwaben	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DE	Chemnitz	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Dresden	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Leipzig	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Sachsen-Anhalt	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Thüringen	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Brandenburg-Nordost	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DE	All	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DE	Sachsen-Anhalt	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DE	All	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
DE	Brandenburg-Nordost	8. Skills and innovation	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
DE	All	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
DE	Braunschweig	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
DE	Hannover	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
DE	Lüneburg	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
DE	Weser-Ems	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
DE	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
DE	Düsseldorf	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
DK	Southern Denmark	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
DK	Southern Denmark	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	x
DK	Southern Denmark	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
DK	Småland med öarna	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	x
DK	Midtjylland	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
DK	Sjælland	8. Skills and innovation	x
DK		1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DK	All	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
DK	All	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
DK	Hovedstaden	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
DK	All	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
EE	Eesti	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
EE	Eesti	8. Skills and innovation	x
EE	Eesti	8. Skills and innovation	.
EE	Eesti	8. Skills and innovation	.
EE	Eesti	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
EE	Eesti	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	x
EE	Eesti	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
EE	Eesti	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
ES	Galicia	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Comunidad Valenciana	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Comunidad Valenciana	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Principado de Asturias	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Andalucía	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Catalonia	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Catalonia	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Andalucía	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Principado de Asturias	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
ES	Barcelona	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	x
ES	Catalonia	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
ES	Andalucía	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
ES	Catalonia	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	x
ES	Castilla y León	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
ES	Andalucía	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	País Vasco	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	x
ES	Catalonia	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Comunidad Foral de Navarra	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Región de Murcia	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
ES	Andalucía	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
ES	Comunidad de Madrid	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
ES	Principado de Asturias	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
ES	Andalucía	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
ES	Catalonia	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Región de Murcia	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.
ES	All	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
ES		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
ES		9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
ES	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Extremadura	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.
ES	Castile-León	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	All	2. A second chance after bankruptcy	.
ES	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
ES	Asturias	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
FI	Etelä-Suomi	8. Skills and innovation	.
FI	Länsi-Suomi	8. Skills and innovation	.
FI	Etelä-Suomi	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
FI	Etelä-Suomi	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
FI	Etelä-Suomi	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
FI	Pohjois-Suomi	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
FI	Itä-Suomi	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
FI	Itä-Suomi	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
FI	Itä-Suomi	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FI	Etelä-Suomi	8. Skills and innovation	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
FI	Etelä-Suomi	8. Skills and innovation	.
FI	Länsi-Suomi	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.
FI	Länsi-Suomi	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	x
FI		1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FI	Länsi-Suomi	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FI	Länsi-Suomi	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FI	Länsi-Suomi	10. Responsible entrepreneurships	x
FR	Auvergne	8. Skills and innovation	.
FR	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	8. Skills and innovation	x
FR	Rhône-Alpes	8. Skills and innovation	.
FR	Île de France	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
FR	Rhône-Alpes	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	x
FR	Auvergne	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
FR	Rhône-Alpes	8. Skills and innovation	.
FR	Champagne-Ardenne	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
FR	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
FR	Nord - Pas-de-Calais	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FR	Nord - Pas-de-Calais	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FR	Limousin	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
FR	Limousin	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FR	Corse	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FR	Rhône-Alpes	8. Skills and innovation	.
FR	Alsace	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.



Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
FR	Lorraine (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
FR	Lorraine (The Greater Region)	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
FR	Lorraine (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
FR	Lorraine (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
FR	Rhône-Alpes	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
FR	Rhône-Alpes	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
FR	Auvergne	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	x
GR	Kriti - Heraklion	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	Thessalia	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	Thessalia	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	6.1. Access to finance	x
GR	Kriti	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
GR	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	Attiki	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	All	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
GR	Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
GR	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
GR		1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
GR		8. Skills and innovation	.
GR	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
HU	Nyugat-Dunantul	8. Skills and innovation	.
HU	Del-Alfold	8. Skills and innovation	.
HU	Kozep-Magyarország	8. Skills and innovation	x

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
HU	Kozep-Magyarország	8. Skills and innovation	.
HU	Eszak-Alfold	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
HU	Kozep-Dunantul	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
HU	Kozep-Magyarország	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
HU	Del-Dunantul	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
HU	Nyugat-Dunantul	8. Skills and innovation	.
HU	Del-Dunantul	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
HU	Eszak-Alfold	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
HU	Kozep-Dunantul	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
HU	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
HU	Nyugat-Dunántúl	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
HU	All	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
HU	All	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
HU	Észak-Magyarország	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
HU	All	8. Skills and innovation	.
IE	Southern and Eastern	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IE	Southern and Eastern	8. Skills and innovation	.
IE	Border, Midland and Western	8. Skills and innovation	x
IE	Border, Midland and Western	8. Skills and innovation	.
IE	Southern and Eastern	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.
IE	Border, Midland and Western	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IE	Southern and Eastern	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IE	Southern and Eastern	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	x

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
IT	Umbria	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Emilia-Romagna	8. Skills and innovation	x
IT	Emilia-Romagna	8. Skills and innovation	x
IT	Emilia-Romagna	8. Skills and innovation	x
IT	Abruzzo	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
IT	Abruzzo	3. "Think small first"	x
IT	Veneto	8. Skills and innovation	x
IT	Veneto	8. Skills and innovation	x
IT	Emilia-Romagna	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Veneto	8. Skills and innovation	x
IT	Umbria	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Emilia-Romagna	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
IT	Lombardia	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
IT	Piemonte	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Emilia-Romagna	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
IT	Lombardia	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Veneto	8. Skills and innovation	.
IT	Veneto	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
IT	Marche	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
IT	Liguria	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IT	Calabria	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IT	Sicilia	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
IT	Toscana	8. Skills and innovation	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
IT	Tuscany	10. Responsible entrepreneurships	x
IT	Emilia-Romagna	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
IT		9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IT	Toscana	10. Responsible entrepreneurships	.
IT	All	3.1. Taxation	.
IT	Toscana	3. "Think small first"	.
IT	Emilia-Romagna	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
IT	Veneto	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
IT	Liguria	10. Responsible entrepreneurships	.
IT	Veneto	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
IT	Veneto	6.1. Access to finance	.
IT	Lombardia	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
IT	Liguria	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
IT	Lombardia	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
IT	Liguria	10. Responsible entrepreneurships	.
IT	Veneto	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
IT	Marche	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
IT	Toscana	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
IT	Piemonte	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
LT	Lietuva	8. Skills and innovation	.
LT	Lietuva	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
LT	Lietuva	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
LT	Lietuva	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
LT	Lietuva	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
LT	Lietuva	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
LT	Lietuva	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
LT	Lietuva	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
LT	Lietuva	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
LT	Lietuva	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
LU	Luxembourg (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
LU	Luxembourg (The Greater Region)	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
LU	Luxembourg (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
LU	Luxembourg (The Greater Region)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
LU	Luxembourg	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
LU	Luxembourg	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
LU	Luxembourg	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
LV	Latvija	6.1. Access to finance	x
LV	Latvija	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
LV	Latvija	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
LV	Latvija	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
LV	Latvija	8. Skills and innovation	.
LV	Latvija	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
MT	Malta	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
MT	Malta	8. Skills and innovation	.
NL	Noord-Brabant	8. Skills and innovation	.
NL	Amsterdam	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	x
NL	Noord-Holland	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
NL	Gelderland	8. Skills and innovation	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
NL	Province Limburg (Euregio Maas-Rhein)	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
NL	Limburg	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	x
NL	Gelderland	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
NL	All	6.1. Access to finance	.
NO	.	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
NO		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
NO		9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
NO	All	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
PL	Mazowieckie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PL	Warminsko-Mazurskie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PL	Wielkopolskie	8. Skills and innovation	x
PL	Wielkopolskie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PL	Mazowieckie	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	x
PL	Lubuskie	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
PL	Lodzkie	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	x
PL	Slaskie	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
PL	Mazowieckie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PL	Warminsko-Mazurskie	8. Skills and innovation	x
PL	Opolskie	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
PL	Malopolskie	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
PL	Slaskie	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
PL	Slaskie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PL	Opolskie	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
PL		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
PL	All	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
PL	Wielkopolskie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PL	All	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
PL	All	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
PL	Wielkopolskie	10. Responsible entrepreneurs	x
PO	Podkarpackie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PO	Lubelskie	8. Skills and innovation	.
PT	Norte	8. Skills and innovation	.
PT	Centro (P)	8. Skills and innovation	x
PT	Norte	8. Skills and innovation	.
PT	Lisboa	8. Skills and innovation	.
PT	Norte	8. Skills and innovation	x
PT	Região Autónoma da Madeira	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
PT	Lisboa	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
PT	Algarve	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
PT	All	6.1. Access to finance	.
RO	Nord-Vest	8. Skills and innovation	.
RO	Nord-Vest	8. Skills and innovation	.
RO	Centru	8. Skills and innovation	.
RO	Vest	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
RO	Nord-Vest	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
RO	Bucuresti – Ilfov	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
RO	Vest	8. Skills and innovation	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
RO	Nord-Vest	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
RO	Nord-Est	8. Skills and innovation	.
RO	Vest	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
RO	Sud – Muntenia	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
RO	Centru	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
RO	Nord-Vest	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
RO	All	2. A second chance after bankruptcy	.
RU	Kaliningrad	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
RU		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
SE	Östra Mellansverige	8. Skills and innovation	.
SE	Västssverige	8. Skills and innovation	.
SE	Stockholm	8. Skills and innovation	.
SE	Västssverige	8. Skills and innovation	.
SE	Östra Mellansverige	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
SE	Småland med öarna	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
SE	Stockholm	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
SE	Västssverige	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
SE	Västssverige	8. Skills and innovation	.
SE	Mellersta Norrland	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
SE	Östra Mellansverige	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.
SE		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
SE	Östra Mellansverige	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
SE	All	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.



<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
SE	Norra Mellansverige	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
SE	Östra Mellansverige	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
SE	Västssverige	2. A second chance after bankruptcy	.
SE	Sydsverige	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
SE	Östra Mellansverige	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
SE	Västssverige	8. Skills and innovation	x
SE	Småland med öarna	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Zahodna Slovenija	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
SI	Zahodna Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
SI	Slovenija	8. Skills and innovation	.
SI	Vzhodna Slovenija	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
SK	Vychodne Slovensko	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
SK	Vychodne Slovensko	8. Skills and innovation	.
SK	Zapadne Slovensko	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
SK	Stredne Slovensko	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	.
SK	Bratislava Region	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.

Country	Region	SBA principle	Award/Good Practice DB
SK	Západné Slovensko	7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
SK	All	1.1 Entrepreneurship education	.
UK	East Wales	8. Skills and innovation	.
UK	Greater Manchester	8. Skills and innovation	.
UK	Eastern Scotland	1. Promoting entrepreneurship	.
UK	Birmingham	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	x
UK	West Midlands	4. Better public administration - cutting red tape	.
UK	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	x
UK	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	6.1. Access to finance	.
UK	West Midlands	8. Skills and innovation	.
UK	West Yorkshire	1.4. Special target groups: ethnic minorities, unemployed, youth, older people	x
UK	North Yorkshire	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	x
UK	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire	8. Skills and innovation	.
UK	Greater Manchester	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
UK	East Wales	8. Skills and innovation	.
UK	All	1.2 Support and advice during the life cycle of a business	.
UK		7. Internationalisation (EU and non-EU markets)	.
UK	All	6. Improving access to finance-late payments	.
UK	Cumbria	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
UK	All	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
UK	West Midlands	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
UK	All	1.3. Women's entrepreneurship	.
UK	Cumbria	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>SBA principle</b>	<b>Award/Good Practice DB</b>
UK	Cheshire	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
UK	Greater Manchester	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
UK	Lancashire	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
UK	Merseyside	9. Turning environmental challenges into opportunities	.
UK	West Wales and The Valleys	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.
UK	East Wales	5. Improving access to public procurement and state aid	.

**Source:** drawn up by OIR and T33, based on “Small Business Act – Database of Good Practices”, “Interreg IVc – Approved Projects Database”, “Interreg IVc – Good Practice Database” and “Mini-Europe Project”



## ANNEX 3 LIST OF THE PROJECTS MENTIONED IN THE STUDY

Brandenburg (EER 2011) – Emergency Aid Package - [www.mwe.brandenburg.de](http://www.mwe.brandenburg.de)

Brandenburg (EER 2011) – ProTraC - [www.mwe.brandenburg.de](http://www.mwe.brandenburg.de)

Brandenburg (EER 2011) – Josefin - [www.zab-brandenburg.de](http://www.zab-brandenburg.de)

Brandenburg (EER 2011) – CleanTech - [www.zab-brandenburg.de](http://www.zab-brandenburg.de)

Catalonia (EER 2012) – Pica - [www.acordestrategic.cat](http://www.acordestrategic.cat)

Catalonia (EER 2012) – Anella CPI – [www.anella.cat](http://www.anella.cat)

County Kerry (EER 2011) – Junior Entrepreneur Programme [www.juniorentrepreneur.ie](http://www.juniorentrepreneur.ie)

County Kerry (EER 2011) – Shared Technology Park - [www.shannondevelopment.ie](http://www.shannondevelopment.ie)

Helsinki-Uusimaa (EER 2012) – Regional Organization of Enterprises - [www.yrittajat.fi/helsinginyrittajat](http://www.yrittajat.fi/helsinginyrittajat)

Murcia (EER 2011) – Columbus Programme/Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs - [www.ena.es](http://www.ena.es)

Murcia (EER 2011) – INFO - [www.institutofomentomurcia.es](http://www.institutofomentomurcia.es)

Southern Denmark (EER 2013) – Welfare Partnership - [www.regionsyddanmark.dk](http://www.regionsyddanmark.dk)

Styria (EER 2013) – Eco World Styria – [www.eco.at](http://www.eco.at)

Styria (EER 2013) – Start!Up-Club – [www.sfg.at](http://www.sfg.at)

Styria (EER 2013) – Science Fit – Innolab – [www.uni-graz.at](http://www.uni-graz.at)

Trnava (EER 2012) - Intelligent Energy Project - [www.ite-project.eu](http://www.ite-project.eu)

Trnava (EER 2012) - Duo\*\*Stars - [www.duostars.eu](http://www.duostars.eu)



# ANNEX 4 QUESTIONNAIRE

We believe the online questionnaire should consist of 10-15 questions in order to encourage a high response rate. The survey will be available in English and most likely in German, French, Italian and preferably also Polish and Spanish. Below follows the first draft of the questionnaire.

## Background information

*What kind of organisation do you represent?*

- Public body
- Private organisation
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Other, please specify

*What level does your organisation represent?*

- National
- Regional
- Local
- Other, please specify

## Regional priorities

"Regions" are defined in the broader sense as regions, Länder, communities, autonomous communities, departments, provinces, counties, metropolitan regions and any other political level with the relevant competences to meet its commitments.

### Question 1:

*Is your region/country aware of the SBA and/or its ten principles?*

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**Question 2:**

*Has the SBA in any way influenced the SME policy of the national/regional authority? If so, how?*

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**Question 3:**

*Are there any specific entrepreneurship strategies or measures applied in regional and/or local policy-making targeted at small businesses, i.e. which can be related to application of the SBA in your country?*

Yes

No

If yes, what are the key priorities concerning application of SBA principles at the regional and local level in

- a. your region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)?
- b. regions in your country (for respondents representing the national level)?

**Question 4:**

*Which principles for supporting small businesses are applied in*

- a. your region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)?
- b. regions in your country (for respondents representing the national level)?

Please provide a specific example for each principle applied.

<input type="checkbox"/>	To create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	To ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	To design rules according to the ‘Think Small First’ principle <hr/> <hr/>



<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SMEs' participation in public procurement and use State Aid possibilities for SMEs</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets</p> <hr/> <hr/>

**Question 5:**

*Which policy areas are most relevant to supporting small businesses in*

- a. your region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)?
- b. regions in your country (for respondents representing the national level)?

*Prioritise a maximum of 5 areas, where 1=first priority, etc. and explain why*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Education and training for entrepreneurship _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheaper and faster start-ups _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Better legislation and regulation _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Availability of skills _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving online access _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting more out of the Single Market _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxation and financial matters _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strengthening the technological capacity of small enterprises _____ _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	Making use of successful e-business models and developing top-class small business support <hr/> <hr/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Developing stronger, more effective representation of small enterprises' interests at Union and national level <hr/> <hr/>

**Question 6:**

*Has your*

*A. region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)*

*B. regions in your country (for respondents representing the national level) appointed*

	Yes	No
Special SME envoys <sup>13</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SME ministers (where applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SME ambassadors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, is this appointment at a political or administrative level

Political level

Administrative level

If yes, what are the region/country's expectations?

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If yes, what are the main changes in the region/country's strategy?

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<sup>13</sup> As part of the Review of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA), the Commission invited Member States to appoint a national SME Envoy to complement the role of the European Commission's SME Envoy. Together with representatives of EU-level SME business organisations, the Network of SME Envoys will make up an SBA advisory group.

If no to all of the above, why not?

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**Question 7:**

*In which way do EU Structural Funds support small businesses in*

- a. your region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)?
- b. regions in your country (for respondents the representing national level)?

*Please mark the relevant options!*

	ERDF	ESF
There are specific programme priorities and/or measures targeting SMEs such as: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The themes addressed by the programmes are relevant to SME support, for example: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The programmes provide grants for SMEs such as: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The programmes provide financial support (other than grants) for SMEs such as: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The programmes support advisory services for SMEs such as: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The programmes support training and education measures targeting SMEs such as: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The programmes support networks of small businesses such as: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Multi-level governance / Example of governance tools**

#### **Question 8:**

*In your country, which governance levels play the most important role in supporting small business?*

*Please indicate the most important level for every area of action!*

	Local	Regional	National	European
Provision of funding (opportunities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate regulatory and legal frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-financial support such as advisory services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support of relevant networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 9:**

*How would you describe the collaboration between the various levels of governance (European to local) for the different areas of action in your country?*

	They complement each other	The work closely together	They work in parallel	They hinder each other
Provision of funding (opportunities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate regulatory and legal frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-financial support such as advisory services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support of relevant networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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**Question 10:**

*How would you characterise the dialogue between different levels of public administration and small businesses in your country?*

*Please tick the appropriate boxes!*

	Local admin.	Regional admin.	National admin.
They provide information in the form of brochures and websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

They are available for dialogue with stakeholders on request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They seek direct contact with stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They have developed specific tools for stakeholder dialogue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Do you have any examples of effective tools for stakeholder dialogue at local and regional level in your country?*

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## **Development of small business support**

### **Question 11:**

*In your opinion, which are the most important fields for developing small business support in your country?*

	Local	Regional	National
Clear mandate for the public sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better knowledge and competence in the public sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Better financial resources in the public sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better human resources in the public sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better networks in the public sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Future 'regional SBA'

### Question 12:

*Would*

- a. your region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)?
  - b. regions in your country (for respondents representing the national level)?
- be interested in a future 'regional SBA' which regions could sign up to?*

### Question 13:

*How could the European Union contribute to a future 'regional SBA'?*

<input type="checkbox"/>	through specific provisions in the EU's funding programmes
<input type="checkbox"/>	through provision of knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/>	through provision of counselling
<input type="checkbox"/>	through provision of exchange of experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____ _____



## Examples of good practice

### Question 14:

*Do you have any examples of good practice from*

- a. *your region (for respondents representing regional and local levels)?*
- b. *regions in your country (for respondents representing the national level)?*

*regarding the application of SBA principles?*

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# ANNEX 5 CASE STUDIES OF EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEURIAL REGIONS (EER)

This appendix describes the nine EER experiences by looking at their strategies for implementing SBA principles. In particular, it investigates the visions and objectives of the strategies, the main operational tools put in place and the impact of the EER on regional policy. It then draws some possible lessons learnt from each experience as examples of good practices for future policy strategies.

The regions studied were Brandenburg (DE), County Kerry (IE) and Murcia (ES) for 2011, Catalonia (ES), Trnava (SK), Helsinki-Uusimaa (FI) for 2012, and Nord-Pas de Calais (FR), Southern Denmark (DK) and Styria (AT) for 2013. Analysis in the case studies is based on two steps:

- 3) desk-based analysis of EER documentation, such as:
  - Application forms (EER Scheme);
  - EER regions' reports and factsheets;
  - EER regions' websites.
  
- 4) direct interviews with regional EER contact points complementing desk-based analysis. The interviews were based on four main questions:
  - *What is the role and the use of EU Structural Funds in supporting implementation of Small Business Act principles in your region?*
  - *Which of the 10 SBA principles does your region focus on most and why?*
  - *What is the impact of the EER label, activities to support entrepreneurs, and SME policy in your region?*
  - *What are the key features and lessons learnt from applying SBA principles? What can be maintained and adopted for future regional strategies?*

## County Kerry, Ireland (EER 2011)

### CONTEXT

*County Kerry is located in southwest Ireland. It has an area of 1815 sq. miles and a population of 125,000. Tralee and Killarney are the two main towns, with the tip of the Dingle Peninsula the most westerly point of Europe. Agriculture, fishing, and tourism are traditionally the key economic sectors. However manufacturing is becoming more relevant with a small number of medium-size manufacturing firms and a growing number of new software, telecommunications, and biotechnology companies.*



*The main strength of the County is close coordination and cooperation between companies, institutions, enterprise support agencies, schools and universities. The main example of this is the Shared Technology Park (STP) opened in 2001 as a joint campus for Shannon Development's Kerry Technology Park (KTP) and Tralee Institute of Technology (ITT), providing companies with an opportunity to start-up or relocate.*

### REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

The main purpose of the entrepreneurship strategy in Kerry is to build a sustainable economy through indigenous, home-grown businesses and local entrepreneurs and to reduce dependence on external companies. To achieve this purpose the County Kerry intends to: develop an entrepreneurship culture where entrepreneurship is seen by young people and their families as a valid and high-status career choice; promote enterprise education by exposing all junior, secondary and tertiary degree students to entrepreneurship at an early stage; support enterprises that are destined to stay local throughout their entire business lifecycle; strengthen a partnership approach by combining the private and public sectors and reinforcing the inter-agency thought process; and strengthen research-industry links by acting as a broker between the ITT, research centres and commercial activity within the county.

County Kerry has mainstreamed the following SBA principles:

- To create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)
- ‘Think Small First’ (3)
- To make public administrations responsive to SME’s needs (4)
- To adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SMEs’ participation in public procurement and better use of State Aid possibilities for SMEs (5)
- To help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (7)
- To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)
- To enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (9)
- To encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets (10)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

In order to apply SBA principles, the County Kerry has:

- introduced entrepreneurship in schools and training programmes, such as the YEP 4<sup>th</sup> cycle, the Junior Entrepreneur Programme, the Fast Track Degree in entrepreneurship, the Business Start-up and Business Growth Training;
- guaranteed support at each critical level of business growth by providing 4 Incubation Centres, feasibility grants, innovation vouchers, capital grants for micro-businesses and by launching the ‘Kerry Ambassador’ programme, the ITT commercialization strategy and the ENDEAVOUR programme;
- promoted the KTP/ITT partnership, with 30 entrepreneurial companies, 300 knowledge-based jobs created and a connection to a network of 100s of national entrepreneurs; this partnership acts as a hub of ‘entrepreneurship facilitation’ between the entrepreneurial community and new start-ups. Moreover, since 2007 Shannon Development and ITT have launched the Young Entrepreneur Programme (YEP) involving secondary schools and tertiary students across the county, trained teachers

and brought over 2000 students in contact with the entrepreneur community. The YEP has been a successful example inspiring many Eastern countries as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and a number of the Gulf States.

- developed a (inter)regional cluster policy by focusing on a select number of clusters within and beyond the region in sectors such as biotechnology, digital media, software and telecommunications, and renewable energy;
- built up cost-efficient forms of partnerships between the public and private sectors and between national and EU levels in order to create and sustain an entrepreneurial environment. The main examples are the two projects on energy and regional development (RegCEP and BioMob) led by Shannon Development and the four Interreg projects (DARRA, MITKE, CANTATA and ICER) with partners across Europe.
- Promoted its activities through conferences, competitions and awards, publications, workshops and business stress panels.

The Structural Funds have supported the county's SME policy, providing financial support together with the Irish government.

The main impact of the EER label has been greater awareness of the policy among SMEs. Moreover, the EER has helped the county's policy to achieve recognition in the rest of the country as well as in Europe. The policy has significantly changed since the EER, with more of a focus on SME needs and, most importantly, on a long-term vision and policy planning based on past experience.

There are two **main insights** from County Kerry. First, supporting entrepreneurship is basically a cultural issue. The County therefore particularly focused on disseminating entrepreneurship culture among young people. By the end of 2011, 30% of high school students had completed the YEP and 80% of junior school students in the region had taken part in the pilot phase of the Junior Entrepreneur Programme. Moreover, the most successful start-ups and entrepreneurs monitored by Kerry Technology Park were rewarded with a learning exercise in Silicon Valley where several of them created a branch, which in turn supported Kerry's long-term objective of becoming more connected internationally. The second crucial factor in implementing SBA principles is governance. Kerry is endeavouring to develop close cooperation and coordination between institutions, enterprises, technology centres and schools.

## Region de Murcia, Spain (EER 2011)

### CONTEXT

*The region of Murcia is located in south east Spain with an area of 11,313 sq. kilometres and 1.4 million inhabitants. Murcia's food, metal, chemicals and non-metallic minerals sectors have a competitive position at a national level. Some sectors (food & beverages, chemicals, etc.) are well represented abroad and there is growing international trade of regional products, with rising volumes and new markets. Furthermore, there are several business activities on traditional markets where the public sector is encouraging and promoting networking.*



*Murcia is a highly dynamic region with various economic sectors – especially in agriculture, food and beverages and tourism - characterized by an considerable flexibility and adaptability to changes due to their small and medium profile. Moreover entrepreneurs and SMEs are supported by various innovation and business infrastructures and by many regional organizations committed to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. The region's main weakness is a lack of enterprise culture. Entrepreneurship education in school and high school is still at an embryonic stage, technology transfer between research and business needs to be improved, there is a mismatch between education and business needs, and a lack of cooperation initiatives between companies.*

### REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

The region has identified three main strategic objectives:

- a) business and entrepreneurship development, by modernising, diversifying SMEs production into high value and emerging sectors and increasing the overall regional productive capacity.
- b) Innovation, cooperation and internationalisation, by making businesses and citizens more aware of why they need to innovate and how they can

benefit from innovation, promoting specific measures to connect businesses and create actual clusters, helping regional companies to reach new markets, consolidate their presence in existing markets, and attract FDI.

- c) Guarantee sustainable development, by reconciling human needs with environmental protection so that they can be met in the present as well as in the future.

Particular attention is paid to fostering entrepreneurship and business innovation with a view to delivering added value to SMEs through the provision of an integrated system of business supports promoted more widely at local/ regional level.

Murcia has mainstreamed the following SBA principles:

-To create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)

-To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

Implementation of Murcia's SME policy is mainly driven by the Regional Ministries of Education, Training and Employment and of Tertiary Education, Enterprise and Research. Moreover, SME support relies on a regional network comprising numerous business organizations, 3 universities, 2 BICs, 17 incubators, 10 Technology Centres, 6 regional clusters with cutting-edge R&D equipment, and several regional and national financial institutions. This network brings together over 1,000 people dedicated to entrepreneurship.

Specifically, the action plan comprises the following initiatives:

- fostering entrepreneurship culture activities, by organizing competitions for business ideas and interactive virtual games, workshops for entrepreneurs, seminars, courses and projects in schools and universities, and occupational training courses for the unemployed;
- guaranteeing services for entrepreneurs, by providing a pool of agents supporting entrepreneurs at every stage of start-up projects. The region actively promotes and supports various measures such as the entrepreneur's roadmap, the Columbus Programme (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs), personal coaching for entrepreneurs, a common service



catalogue for entrepreneurs and suppliers, senior advisory services for entrepreneurs, incubators and specific training for women entrepreneurs.

- providing financial aid for entrepreneurs through the entrepreneurship help programme, microcredit for entrepreneurs, the “Quality seal” initiative for entrepreneurial projects, establishing meeting points between investors and entrepreneurs (Business Angels Network)
- supporting SME internationalization, with support for regional industries on external markets, through specialized assessment and training and financial support.
- promoting collaboration and cooperation initiatives launched by the government such as cluster promotion policies, joint territorial strategies and contribution to cross-border integration (Morocco and Ecuador).
- improving the innovation system by encouraging companies to innovate through the Innovation Agents Network and the Innovation Check initiatives promoted by the government. Moreover, the government helps technological centres to adapt to new market demands; it also supports the creation of new technology centres focusing on specific areas of interest, and the development of a regional technology market to foster technological transfer and new technological solutions.
- facilitating business financing by establishing collaboration schemes with key national and international institutions to help companies get expert advice on preparing R&D projects. The region, through the CROEM, provides different alternatives enabling business projects to meet most of their specific financial needs, and promotes specific financial actions to support women entrepreneurs through the Women's Institute (IMRM).
- supporting a sustainable economy by organizing conferences and permanent training inside businesses to promote corporate social and environmental responsibility, encouraging SMEs to adopt business models focusing on sustainability.

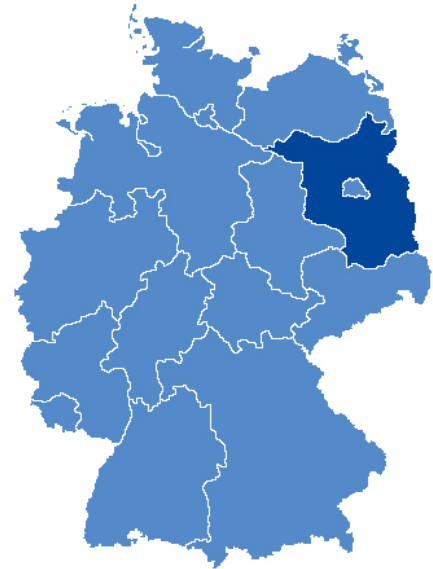
The main **insight** from the Murcia’s experience is its capacity to focus on two principles. The region has launched and continues to launch new projects, which have a positive impact on implementation of the EER strategy. The strategy draws much of its strength from a large community of stakeholders and the public and private organisations involved. The local government has launched several specific policy initiatives promoting innovation, supporting the creation of technology-based firms, sustaining business cooperation and corporate social

responsibility, and contributing to the creation and development of an entrepreneurial culture.

# The State of Brandenburg, Germany (EER 2011)

## CONTEXT

*The State of Brandenburg is located on the eastern border of Germany with Potsdam as the regional capital. It covers an area of 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> and numbers 2.5 million inhabitants. As in many European regions the population is ageing but the situation here is exacerbated by the drain of young graduates. Regional per capita GDP is €19 700*



*As a former part of the German Democratic Republic Brandenburg is still shaped by the transformation process followed by integration in the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union. For example, entrepreneurship was poorly developed up to 1990. However, nowadays rates of self-employment and start-ups are comparatively high, due to various governmental subsidy measures. Of particular importance for regional socio-economic development is the German capital Berlin, which is completely enclosed by Brandenburg.*

## REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

Since 2004 a new economic strategy is being implemented focusing on boosting regional strengths. Accordingly, funding programmes are channelled to certain growth centres and sectors of excellence. Links to Berlin are continuing to develop. Future challenges are the environmental modernisation of the economy, enhancing creative and innovative potential and human resources as well as developing new forms of financial support for SMEs.

Brandenburg has mainstreamed the following SBA principles:

- to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)
- to ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance (2)
- to design rules according to the “Think Small First” principle (3)
- to make public administrations responsive to SME’s needs (4)
- to adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SMEs’ participation in

public procurement and better use State Aid possibilities for SMEs (5)

-to facilitate SME's access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions (6)

-to help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (7)

-to promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)

-to enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (9)

-to encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets (10)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

In order to apply SBA principles, the State of Brandenburg has:

- launched several cooperation initiatives together with Berlin, such as a common innovation strategy, the "Businessplan-Wettbewerb Berlin-Brandenburg (BPW)" regional start-up award and collaboration on a new international airport;
- established the "GründungsnetzwerkBrandburg" to enable cooperation between several regional institutions, thus promoting entrepreneurship and supporting start-ups, with an emphasis on women, migrants and unemployed persons. The Brandenburg Institute for Entrepreneurship and SME (BIEM) particularly emphasises technology-driven start-ups.
- established the ProTraC project, which especially supports innovative SME projects. Measures include information activities and expert guidance as well as the development of new direct regional funding mechanisms. One of the project's core aims is to link businesses and the research sector.
- taken measures to foster the internationalisation and export-orientation of regional SMEs through financial support (M4 directive), qualification measures (Export support programme) and consulting;
- framed an overall regional innovation policy. Among other things, this includes the "iqbrandenburg" network bringing together technology transfer centres and fostering cooperation between the research sector and

regional SMEs. A patent marketing agency “ZAB Brainshell” was established to simplify dissemination of academic inventions.

- founded a task force called “Cleantech” working on clean technologies, the aim being to attract companies to Brandenburg, thus boosting innovative potential and creating new green jobs;
- developed a (inter)regional cluster policy driven by SMEs and focussing on 15 growth industries;

European Structural Funds are fundamental in improving the entrepreneurial environment in Brandenburg. In particular, initiatives supporting start-ups are co-financed by the ESF and the ERDF. The ESF plays a key role in financing secondary education programmes, academic start-ups as well as professional training. A new venture capital fund, launched during the last Structural Fund programming period with ERDF co-financing, is being continued during the current period. Activities of the fund, for example providing loans to SMEs, will be stepped up.

In order to make better use of the financial means provided by the Structural Funds, Brandenburg has launched various initiatives:

- In response to low levels of participation by regional SMEs in European R&D programmes, regional authorities launched the “ProTraC” project to facilitate access to European funding sources by supporting SMEs in preparing EU project proposals.
- In order to measure the sustainability of grants, a sustainability check covering economic, ecological and social dimensions was implemented.

The main **insight** from Brandenburg is its ability to exploit financial resources by combining different sources (EU/national), by helping SMEs to obtain additional funding from European programmes and by focusing on the financial sustainability of its activities.

## Catalonia, Spain (EER 2012)

### CONTEXT

*Catalonia is a region located in northeast Spain with an area of 32,114 sq. kilometres and a population of 7.3 million inhabitants. SMEs constitute the base of the regional economy, with an above-average weight compared to the rest of the EU: in 2006 SMEs accounted for 99.9% of regional companies, 76% of employment and 67.6% of gross value added.*



*Thanks to its entrepreneurial spirit, Catalonia moved from being the eighth European region in terms of the absolute number of individual entrepreneurs in 2000 to second in 2008. Indeed, the region has a light, diversified and flexible production structure, a strong entrepreneurial tradition supported by trade associations and professional unions, a high level of international trade and a strong position in the Mediterranean especially in business and ICT-related services. The region faces several problems, such as low productivity growth, problems accessing funding, high levels of debt and decreasing economic margins. The main weakness in the structure of Catalan companies is their small size. Moreover, there is a lack of cooperation and strategic alliances between companies, insufficient links between academia and business, and a failure by government agencies to coordinate innovation policies.*

### REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

The main objective of the 2010-2013 Catalan SBA Implementation Plan is to develop and implement specific actions tailored to SMEs, so that they can lead economic recovery, contribute to economic competitiveness and promote the knowledge economy. The measures set out in the plan are grouped under three major strategic pillars:

- a) Business environment and business creation, aimed at increasing the rate of entrepreneurial activity in the region;
- b) Structure and business size, aimed at increasing the average size of SMEs, currently below the EU-15 average;

- c) Business strategy: innovation, internationalisation and sustainability, aimed at increasing the number of innovative and internationalised companies in the region.

In implementing the plan, the region intends to take into account that companies are at the heart of economic activity and that progress is closely linked to entrepreneurship, innovation and risk taking. This implies the existence of general principles behind the plan. The strategy must be non-interventionist, with the government providing support and facilitating activity, but with initiatives coming from companies. The strategy should also be selective in the sense that public resources must be concentrated on priority projects based on political, productive and budgetary criteria. Moreover, in order to be more effective, the strategic actions must be aligned with EU and Spanish national policies. Finally, another important factor is a friendly and participative public-private partnership, with the same system bringing together the administration, institutions, the business sector, universities, training centres, business associations and unions, the financial sector etc.

Catalonia has mainstreamed the following six SBA principles:

- To create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family business can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)
- To think small first (3)
- To make public administrations responsive to SMEs' needs (4)
- To facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions (6)
- To promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)
- To enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (9)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

In order to favour business creation (Pillar 1), the government intends to instil a spirit of innovation and business among young people by:

- introducing the business spirit as a key element into school curricula, organising workshops, training activities and brainstorming seminars, creating the Entrepreneurial Universities Network and fostering the

INICIA business creation network (created in 2008 and formed by 150 local units and 400 technicians).

- Reducing and simplifying requirements for commercial licenses and permits and reducing company registration charges.

To help SMEs get bigger (Pillar 2), the government intends to:

- support and accelerate the process of integrating databases used in processes affecting companies into PICA (Platform for Administrative Integration and Collaboration), and create a working group to reduce the statistical requirements for SMEs.
- design aid to foster integrated investments in growth and the use of risk capital funds and reduce the administrative burden by 25%.
- set up the CPIC (the Catalan Industrial Policy Council) bringing together the government and the most representative business associations and unions. This council is involved in defining objectives and identifying the most suitable policy instruments for each sector, and it provides information about business and industrial legislation.
- implement flexibility measures and cut taxes.

For the business strategy (Pillar 3), the region has:

- implemented the Catalan Agreement on Research and Innovation, constituting a strategic agreement with economic and social agents, universities and political parties with a view to Catalonia becoming an international research and innovation benchmark by 2020;
- implemented the Catalan Strategy for Sustainable Development, a roadmap with quantitative objectives and priority actions ensuring that Catalonia moves towards greater social, economic and environmental sustainability, with 2026 as the target year.
- supported business internationalization developed by the Catalan Business Support Agency, ACC10. To achieve this objective, the region intends to develop the JEREMIE programme, manage the European Regional Development Fund global subsidy for business innovation in Catalonia, support European R&D, strengthen Catalan participation in the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation's EUROINGENIO Plan, and step up ACC10 funding and financing programmes. Furthermore, the strategy



focuses on fostering the TECNIO Network, and increasing participation by Catalan companies in Centre for Industrial Technological Development (CDTI) projects and also in the EU's Seventh Framework Programme, relative to the Sixth Framework Programme. The region also intends to boost implementation of environmental management systems in SMEs and, through public-private cooperation, develop sectors with a major environmental impact offering competitive advantages in specific activity sectors;

- finally, in order to foster the efforts of SMEs to internationalise and become high-growth companies, strengthen international relations, foster transnational cooperation initiatives previously implemented under the European INNET project and, through ACCIÓ, strengthen sector-based actions providing integrated support for companies.

For the first few years after Catalonia started receiving funding, most ERDF co-financed measures were targeted at economic reconversion; however, in the past decade they have pursued competitiveness and employment targets. The Cohesion Fund, in turn, is exclusively earmarked for transport networks and the environment. The Catalan business sector has benefited from general improvements in the fields of transport and the environment. European Funds have also had a direct impact here, by encouraging business development and economic competitiveness especially geared to Catalan SMEs. Moreover, with regard to research and technological development, the ERDF has played a vital role, building and equipping research centres and effectively networking them in a short period of time, while developing synergies with the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. Finally, business development and Catalan economic competitiveness is supported by various ERDF projects of particular relevance to SMEs. These include projects by ACCIÓ, which offers grants supporting innovation and new business activities; the Reempresa project in support of entrepreneurs and SMEs; the JEREMIE financial engineering instrument representing an innovative approach to co-financing projects (with conventional subsidies being replaced by loans generating a multiplier effect).

Catalonia's recognition as a European Entrepreneurial Regional (EER) constitutes a major opportunity for the Catalonian Government to take a step forward in its communication strategy. The EER label reminds the Catalonian business fabric, business stakeholders, public administration and society in general that SMEs and their entrepreneurial spirit are the backbone of the Catalan and European economy. Therefore, support for entrepreneurship and productive business, and a commitment to growth and competitiveness have been and will continue to be key political priorities for the EU and the Catalonian Government. The region is developing a suitable policy aligned with

European recommendations, and its trajectory proves that it is prepared to tackle future challenges. The EER label enables it to reach more SMEs and entrepreneurs when explaining the specific tools to support them. It is also a useful means of promoting Catalonia as a good region to do business in and therefore of attracting FDI.

The main **insight** from the Catalan strategy is the value of measures to solve the economic and financial problems in a regional context and to apply SBA principles. Against the background of the economic crisis, the key priority for the region is to improve and implement a renewed industrial policy plan by simplifying business legislation and administrative procedures, disseminating the value of entrepreneurship education, promoting internationalisation in the regional economy, and favouring technological progress and technology transfer in production systems.

## Helsinki-Uusimaa, Finland (EER 2012)

### CONTEXT

*Located in the south of Finland, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is the country's capital region. Comprising 28 municipalities with a total of 1,5 million inhabitants it accounts for 28% of the Finnish population. The region is an economically expanding metropolitan area, where nearly a third of the total labour force is to be found and about 37% of the country's GDP is generated.*



*Regional industry is based on large companies in the ICT, metal and heavy industries, construction, real estate, knowledge and service sectors. Nanotechnologies, wellbeing and cleantech are newly emerging sectors. In the future, the region will have to cope with a steadily ageing population, and this will affect the local labour force. National and regional innovation systems and entrepreneurial activities rank highly in international evaluations. Nevertheless, both need further strengthening and commitment especially in terms of responding to the challenges of globalisation and climate change. A specific metropolitan policy has therefore been developed by the Finnish Government.*

### REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

The region's future development until 2033 is based on the Uusimaa Regional Plan, which was set up with the participation of local stakeholders and government administration. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region aims to become an internationally recognised metropolitan area fostering prosperity. There is particular emphasis on creative industries. In accordance with SBA principles, the region is striving to become the most innovative agglomeration in the Baltic Region. Sustainable development and renewable energies are to play a vital role in creating new business opportunities and generating innovative potential. This complements the overall regional strategy of becoming a pioneer in responding to the challenges of climate change.

In accordance with measures taken at the national level the Helsinki-Uusimaa region has focused on the following SBA principles:

-to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)

- to design rules according to the “Think Small First” principle (3)
- to make public administrations responsive to SME’s needs (4)
- to help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (7)
- to promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

Steps by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region to apply SBA principles include the following:

- introducing regional specifications for the national Policy Programme for Employment, Entrepreneurship and Working Life, Metropolitan Policy and specifically the Competitiveness Strategy for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area as well as the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region Entrepreneurship Excellence Support Model;
- launching the “Innovation Pipeline” project targeted at SMEs and universities in order to support pre-selected cleantech innovations in their market launch;
- building up a pilot programme for the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen, aiming to introduce innovation-friendly procurement processes and guidelines tailored to the needs of SMEs. This will enable them to take advantage of the single European market through larger FP 7 projects;
- starting a project for residents and customer-based safety solutions in urban environments. An interdisciplinary approach is being used to develop new multi-based safety solutions, thus upgrading skills in SMEs and encouraging innovation;
- promoting entrepreneurial activities through entrepreneurship education and competitions backed by a comprehensive enterprise incubation network of schools, universities, businesses and other relevant institutions such as Young Enterprise Finland (YEF) or the Women’s Enterprise Agency. Activities range from secondary school and university courses to coaching and entrepreneurial events;

- developing a regional cluster policy specialising in key industries and managed by Culminatum Innovation. Within this framework, SMEs benefit from innovative potential through high-standard research and internationalisation as well as from networking opportunities.

As the amount of EU funding in the region is relatively small, national funding plays a crucial role. Finland's Structural Fund objectives for the region are to promote business activities and long-term competitiveness based on high-quality projects.

Action line 4 of the Southern Finland ERDF programme applies to the metropolitan area in order to improve its competitiveness and meet specific urban challenges. 80% of the action line 5 budget is dedicated to developing regional competence clusters. The European Social Fund (ESF) contributes funding for business incubator projects, e.g. support for start-ups. The ESF is also important both for training skilled employees and for promoting innovation and entrepreneurialism among students.

The main **insight** of the regional approach to SME's policy is undoubtedly its policy horizon, which implies the adoption of long-term strategies. This makes the strategy more efficient and constructive. This is also testified by the particular focus in Uusimaa on diffuse entrepreneurship culture among young people.

# Trnava Self-Governing Region, Slovak Republic (EER 2012)

## CONTEXT

*The Trnava Self-Governing Region is the smallest region of the Slovak Republic with a population of over 550,000 inhabitants. It borders the Czech Republic and Hungary and is located inside the triangle formed by the larger cities Vienna, Bratislava and Győr; it is therefore part of the Centrope region. Per capita gross domestic product is higher than the Slovak average and amounts to €18,000, with a high level of foreign direct investments.*



*The region is characterised by an agricultural and industrial structure. The latter is highly diversified, though dependent on key industry leaders and their subcontractors. The population is generally well educated thanks to the existing educational network but there is a mismatch between supply and demand on the regional labour market, particularly disadvantaging school leavers and graduates. Furthermore R&D capacity and the use of information technology are poorly developed.*

## REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

Future economic development in Trnava will be based on the three key automotive, electronics and energy sectors. The focus will be on entrepreneurship, high added value production, innovation and R&D with an increased share of public-private investments. Further industrial diversification is to be sustained.

The Trnava Self-Governing Region has mainstreamed the following SBA principles:

- to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)
- to make public administrations responsive to SME's needs (4)
- to facilitate SME's access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions (6)

-to help SMEs benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (7)

-to promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)

-to enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (9)

-to encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets (10)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

To mainstream the SBA principles, the Trnava Self-Governing Region has:

- set up regional organizations representing SME interests, such as the Economic Council, which advises the regional government;
- established the non-profit Trnava Regional Innovation Centre (RIC), which promotes dynamic business development and in particular helps SME to operate nationally and internationally. It also strives for optimal use of resources from the EU Structural Funds.
- participated (and will continue doing so in the future) in various projects in the Centroe region, which strives to foster the development of a Central European Region. Cross-border initiatives are taken to encourage cooperation in the fields of innovation, R&D, infrastructure, accessibility and the development of a skilled labour force. As part of the Austro-Slovak “Intelligent Energy Project” the Trnava Self-Governing Region has established an international energy cluster together with the Federal Province of Burgenland. The objective is to assist companies in the field of renewable energy sources through pilot projects, workshops, publications and the development of energy concepts. Together with Hungary these two countries also participate in the Duo\*\*Stars Project, which promotes a favourable regional environment for entrepreneurs. One specific outcome will be the development of an industrial zone to attract investments in Dolný Bar municipality;
- developed a regional cluster strategy playing a significant role in disseminating innovation;
- implemented a national “Quality at school – success in life” project, which aims to ensure that business needs are reflected in school curricula. Furthermore, cooperation between the educational system, local government and the private sector is to be stepped up;

- launched information campaigns on the development capacities of the Trnava business environment, for example in terms of internationalisation or innovative potential;

EU funds contribute to the implementation of various initiatives. They co-finance several joint educational programmes by schools and the private sector as well as the Duo\*\*Star Project, the Intelligent Energy Project and the Trnava Regional Innovation Centre.

Activities during the EER year will promote innovation as a crucial factor of regional economic growth among SMEs, their employees and the general public. Specific measures include the above-mentioned projects, as well as the establishment of advice centres and incubator organizations. This ties in with the Slovak Innovation Strategy 2007-2013 which is in turn based on the EU Innovation Strategy.

The main **insight** of Trnava's approach to the SBA can be found in its support for cross-border projects, in order to support SME expansion and tap into the potential of the Single Market. Moreover, this approach goes hand-in-hand with a focus on renewable resources and the environment, as shown by the "Intelligent Energy Project".



## Region of Southern Denmark, Denmark (EER 2013)

### CONTEXT

*The Region of Southern Denmark (RSD) is located in South Denmark, with an area of 12,206 sq. kilometres and 1.2 million inhabitants. Per capita GDP is EUR 36,000. Despite its low share of exports, low educational levels compared to the national average, a lack of access to venture capital and limited SME participation in public procurement, RSD has the highest share of growth entrepreneurs with 25% of all Danish growth entrepreneurs based there.*



*Moreover, the region has the highest survival rate for new companies, it is the Danish region with the highest percentage of people considering starting a business, and its municipalities have been rewarded the title of Danish Entrepreneurial Municipality of the Year 4 out of 5 times in the 2007-2011 period.*

### REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

The region's strategy is based on three priority areas:

- sustainable energy, focusing on energy efficiency and offshore;
- health and welfare technologies;
- the experience economy, with a focus on tourism and design.

A central part of the strategy is to foster public-private cooperation, to open up public institutions to innovation partnerships with private companies and to promote business development by offering easy access to regional research institutions.

The SBA principles directly concerned are the following:

- to adapt public policy tools to SME needs: facilitate SMEs' participation in public procurement and better use of State Aid possibilities for SMEs (5)
- to facilitate SMEs' access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial (6)
- to help SMEs benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (7)
- promoting the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)
- enabling SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (9)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

In order to achieve tangible results and coordinate activities, four important key actors are involved in the strategy. These are the Regional Council and the Growth Forum, which ensures a strong political commitment; the South Danish Regional Business Development Centre (RBDC) for counselling services; Danfoss, one of the largest industrial cooperatives, which promotes an entrepreneurial culture by making its know-how available; and the South Jutland Young Enterprise Region, which supports young entrepreneurial initiatives. The four actors have formed an EER Committee, with 13 members representing the regional council, business community, municipalities and educational institutions.

In order to implement the political vision, the following central activity areas have been identified:

- a) implementing the SBA and EU policy through the South Danish growth model, which aims to boost growth, entrepreneurship and employment. To achieve the results in the area the following initiatives have been adopted:
  - ensuring access to finance to ensure growth and investment, for example through the *Southern Denmark Business Angels* (network of regional investors supporting start-ups), the *Fund for Growth Promotion in Southern Denmark* (to provide loans in remote areas of the region in the field of health and welfare technology), *Science Ventures Denmark A/S* (to support investments in high-tech business development), and *South Danish Technological Innovation* (to facilitate access to capital).

- Using smart regulation and innovative procurement based on end-user needs, enabling the region to meet the challenges of an ageing population by ensuring high-quality affordable healthcare. A specific example is the *Welfare Partnership* for 2011-2013 developed to create partnerships between small and large companies to facilitate SME access to public procurement markets in Denmark and abroad.
  - Making full use of the Single Market and going international, through, for example, the South Danish European Office (a liaison office between local and regional public authorities and the EU), the Enterprise Europe Network and the Alliance for Offshore Renewables (to support SMEs in their internationalisation process)
  - Measures in the fields of education, know-how, research and innovation, to strengthen education, research and innovation and help SMEs participate in R&D.
- b) Promoting a regional entrepreneurial culture in South Denmark, by providing free and independent counselling at each critical stage of the business life cycle, with the support of the RBDC, and by promoting entrepreneurship in schools, research institutions, universities and companies. Entrepreneurship education is implemented with the support of projects such as the *IDEA House* (which provides free courses and intensive 24-hour workshops for students), *Business Idea Competitions* (open to all primary, secondary and university students) and the *South Danish Engineer Pioneers* (to develop cooperation between the University of Southern Denmark, secondary and primary schools and SMEs located in remote areas of the region).
- c) Regional integration and cooperation. In order to strengthen cooperation, RSD intends to further develop interregional and cross-border links with Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and regions around the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Moreover, an interregional cluster policy is a high priority, with a focus on sustainable energy - 50% of Danish offshore employment is based in RSD - , health and welfare technologies, and the experience economy. The *Fund for Growth Promotion in Southern Denmark* specifically targets start-ups in remote areas, while the *Future Factory South Funen* project promotes networking and support activities in the creative industry.
- d) Environmental sustainability, by supporting investments in green offshore energy and energy efficiency. The region has already taken specific steps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Moreover, RSD supports various projects to

reduce barriers for SMEs by developing templates and networks (such as *Energy at Sea* or *SunRise PV*).

An important part of the 2013 strategy is the launch of a regional entrepreneurial one-stop-shop, combining all information and services for regional entrepreneurs, including information about access to capital, the transfer of best practices from INTERREG IVA projects, and the IGBP (International cross-border Best-Practice Entrepreneur Guide), which identifies best entrepreneur counselling practices in Northern Germany and South Denmark. Moreover, RSD will conduct a theme-oriented competition on innovation and entrepreneurship based on the Danfoss *Man on the Moon* concept and focused on the region's three strategic areas. The competition aims to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among young people.

EU Structural Funds play a key role in implementing the regional strategy. They are used as a major funding source, combined with regional funding from the public and private sectors.

.As the region has a focused strategic approach, the EU Structural Funds are only used for programmes supporting the three strategic areas of business excellence, which are:

- Sustainable energy, focusing on energy efficiency and offshore
- Health and welfare technologies
- The experience economy, focusing on tourism and design.

As the industrial structure in the region is characterized by a high number of SMEs, there is also a natural relation and identity with most of the Small Business Act.

The EER label acknowledges this strategic approach. Since 2008 the Southern Denmark Growth Forum has formulated and implemented a strategy of smart specialization. This strategy is targeted at areas where regional businesses have special potential, at the same time as addressing four of the largest challenges facing Europe today: globalization, demographic change, climate change, and sustainable energy supplies.

There are two main **insights** from the RSD experience, the first concerning the specific focus of its strategy, the second concerning governance. The main strength of the RSD strategy is its specific focus on three main strategic areas – sustainable energy, health and welfare technologies, and the experience

economy. An additional benefit is political coordination of strategic activities by the EER secretariat, which involves both institutions and private corporations and is supported by key actors from business, regional clusters, local business service centres and educational institutions.

# Federal Province of Styria, Austria (EER 2013)

## CONTEXT

*Styria is one of nine federal provinces, located in the southeast of Austria. It borders Slovenia and the capital city is Graz. Styria is the second largest province of Austria, covering over 16,400 km<sup>2</sup>, with about 1.2 million inhabitants. Regional per capita GDP is €29,400. Relative to total added value in the*



*region, industrial and commercial production represents a high percentage. Over the last twenty years the traditional industrial sector has been renewed and restructured as a specific regional asset, thanks to direct links with research and development institutions as well as highly qualified staff. This applies especially to the Central Region and the Upper Styrian economic area, both drivers for technological and innovative development.*

## REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

In the future structural weaknesses and relocation of production sites may challenge regional economic development. Furthermore, SMEs need support, especially in relation to diversification and innovative potential. There are new opportunities in the growing markets of South-Eastern Europe. In 2011 the Styrian provincial government therefore launched a new long-term “Styria 2020 – Growth through Innovation” economic strategy in order to address regional and global challenges adequately. The three main pillars of the strategy are mobility, eco-tech and health-tech. This new strategy is intended to lead the way to smart specialisation.

Styria has focused on the following SBA principles:

- to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)
- to facilitate SME’s access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions (6)
- to help SMEs benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market (7)

-to promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)

-to enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities (9)

-to encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets (10)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

Alongside several national initiatives to apply SBA principles, Styria has:

- launched a comprehensive “Styria 2020 – Growth through innovation” economic strategy in 2011, to enhance Styria’s appeal as a business location;
- established a large number of Austrian competence centres (“Competence Centres for Excellent Technologies”) to promote the Styrian innovation system through cooperation between research and industry, thus creating “Innovation Pools”;
- established several advisory and support institutions, such as the Internationalisation Centre Styria (ICS), which aims to increase the number of export-orientated SMEs, or the Styrian Business Promotion Agency (SFG), whose main objective is to promote Styria’s standing as a knowledge and innovation region. The latter is also the regional contact point for Southeast Styrian participation in the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7);
- brought together 20 institutions and organisations in the GRÜNDERLAND STEIERMARK network ([www.gruenderland.st](http://www.gruenderland.st)), which serves as a contact and information point for enterprise founders and entrepreneurs;
- launched various tailored programmes in the fields of micro-enterprises and one-person companies, women’s entrepreneurship, migrant start-ups, entrepreneurial succession and qualification;
- launched the “Start!Up-Club” and “Start!Up-School” projects to raise awareness of self-employment and entrepreneurship as a career option for school leavers. It also initiated the Triality! programme for apprentices, complementing existing apprenticeship and vocational education schemes in the field of technical education;

- fostered know-how transfer from research institutions to SMEs through the SCIENCE FIT campaign. This initiative enables enterprises to find scientific solutions for operational problems. INNOLAB at Campus 02 University of Applied Sciences also helps inventors and innovative entrepreneurs to put ideas into practice;
- encouraged business networking by establishing a cluster strategy. For example, this includes the successful ECO WORLD STYRIA environmental cluster focused on green technology, as well as a regional network of creative industries (Creative Industries Styria - CIS);
- launched several competitions for entrepreneurs, with awards for outstanding business activities in the fields of female start-ups, innovation and corporate social responsibility;

Styria aims to link SBA principles with the ERDF through the current “Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013” operational programme. For example, the ERDF co-financed the Triality! programme as well as the SCIENCE FIT campaign.

In addition, Department 14 – Economic Affairs and Innovation, the managing authority of the operational programme, is also involved in the bilateral “Austria-Slovenia 2007-2013” ETC programme supporting bilateral innovative economic projects.

The ESF also played a key role in financing measures to help workers adapt to industrial change and changing production systems. How? Which measures?

In December 2011 Styria was chosen as one of three European Entrepreneurial Regions in 2013. As an EER year, 2013 will be a focal point of regional public relations activity under the “Regional Competitiveness Styria 2007-2013” operational programme; for example there will be various events. In addition, all relevant stakeholders including cluster organisations, competence centres, the Styrian Business Promotion Agency and the Styrian Economic Chamber will be actively involved in planning and implementing the EER year. The EER award will be an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences with other EER regions, thus facilitating networks at European level and collaboration on specific thematic issues.

The main **insight** from the strategy adopted by Styria is its focus on supporting technological upgrading and development as well as the dissemination of know-how in order to foster SME diversification.



## Nord Pas de Calais, France (EER 2013)

### CONTEXT

*Nord Pas de Calais is located in the north of France on the border to Belgium with Lille as the regional administrative capital. It has about 4 million inhabitants, over one-third of whom are younger than 25 years.*



*The region is characterized by structural weaknesses such as a relatively high unemployment rate and low level of investment in research and development. There are many students in the region, but also a large number of young graduates leaving. The economy was hit by several industrial and mining crises in the past, and a dynamic redeployment programme to promote diversification is therefore underway. This programme has mobilised considerable financial and human resources. Dynamic business sectors such as health or innovative textiles have become established, with new opportunities for cooperation between SMEs and larger businesses through clusters and centres of excellence. A regional innovation strategy prioritises initiatives and sectors, thus boosting the region's innovative potential.*

### REGIONAL VISION AND SBA PRINCIPLES

The policy vision is “to give the regional economic policy of Nord Pas de Calais a new lease of life.” The overall principle backed by regional institutions is to create permanent jobs to tackle future social challenges. For the 2007-2013 programming period, the PRCTE (regional programme for business start-ups and transfers) as well as the SRDE (regional economic development scheme) were launched to mobilise the socio-economic sector and stimulate new activities. These initiatives focus on entrepreneurialism, the importance of innovation, internationalisation, new technologies, financial tools, clusters, centres of excellence and economic intelligence. Based on the PRCTE several specific action plans have been drawn up.

In cooperation with education authorities, universities, representatives of organisations defending women’s rights, and local businesses the regional authority has drawn up an SRIE (regional economic initiative strategy) to

foster women's entrepreneurship, the role of entrepreneurialism in school education and the mobilisation of human and financial resources.

The region of Nord Pas de Calais has applied these SBA principles:

-to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded (1)

-to facilitate SME's access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions (6)

-to promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation (8)

## **IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND**

In order to apply SBA principles, Nord Pas de Calais has:

- launched several regional programmes, such as the Regional Economic Development Scheme (SRDE), the Regional Programme for Business Start-Ups and Transfers (PRCTE) and the Regional Programme for the Development of the Social and Solidarity-Based Economy (PRDESS);
- released a SME plan for 2000 high-potential businesses in order to support the competitiveness and innovative potential of regional business. This plan envisages providing consultancy services together with adequate tools and resources;
- promoted entrepreneurship among students through a wide range of measures, stimulating the business creativity of young people;
- created a website ([www.jetrouvedesfondspropres.com](http://www.jetrouvedesfondspropres.com)) to structure and promote available funding schemes for SMEs;
- developed a policy for global and international competitive clusters mainly in the industrial sector with a focus on environmental and social conversion in the region. The eco-construction sector is one example of a successful response to current challenges, enabling SMEs to adopt and stimulate innovation in the field of renewable energy. In addition, 11 economic centres of excellence comprising specified sectors of excellence have been set up.

- launched communication campaigns (TV, radio, press, internet, several events such as the CREER fair) and projects in secondary schools and universities to raise interest in entrepreneurship among the general public, especially among young people and women. "Hubhouses" have been set up to support students in implementing their own entrepreneurial initiatives;

The main **insight** from Nord Pas de Calais is its approach to promoting entrepreneurship in schools. One of the tools that the authority hopes to promote is the entrepreneurship passport enabling students to capitalise on their experiences as budding entrepreneurs well into the long term. The region also boasts a network of Hubhouses dedicated to student entrepreneurship. These are places where students can meet to discuss and develop their projects, aided by a range of tools (phones, computers, meeting rooms, interactive kiosks, etc.) and resources (themed workshops, conferences, opportunities to meet business professionals, an entrepreneurs' club, and even junior enterprises). They are open to all students enrolled at any higher education establishment in the region.