Synergies between Horizon Europe and the new cohesion policy programmes: a practical approach

Laura Savini
Finlombarda S.p.A.

Bruxelles, 19 October 2022
The implementation of **synergies with Horizon 2020** had been an objective underlying the entire R&I regional policy regardless the funding source.
Synergy with Horizon 2020/Sme Instrument

Lombardia region implemented a pilot regional scheme in synergy with SME Instrument Phase 1 back in 2014 (even before the concept of SoE was implemented)

How and why?
The background condition

- A good combination of strategic vision at regional level and sound knowledge of Horizon 2020 technicalities and scope provided by Finlombarda/EEN that contributed to the set-up of the initiative
- Numbers: a large successful participation of Lombardia companies
Synergy with Horizon 2020

- The **pilot call** was successfully (one company got funded in phase 2)
- From then on a **structured scheme, under ERDF**, was developed to cover the full cycle of SMEs Instrument phase 1 calls
- The latest call was:

**Lombardy ROP - ERDF 2014-2020**

**Axis 1 «Strengthening research, development and innovation»**

Call Innodriver S3 – Edition 2019
(DGR 2005/2019
Support to SoE holder- SME Instrument Phase 1

Total budget 1020.000,00 €
Main features of Innodriver call B -2019

- **Objective**: support the further development of the business plan and related feasibility studies to be submitted under phase 2 of SMEs Instrument

- **Budget**: 900.000,00 increased up to 1020.000,00 €

- Number of **funded SMEs**: 34

- **Eligible participants**: Micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (excluding simple companies that do not carry out commercial activities) that received the SoE and in line with ERDF rules

- **Funding**: fixed funding of 30K€ (against the EU 50K) a lump sum approach

- **Application documents**: the submitted EU project + SoE certificate

- **Documents for disbursement**: project submitted under phase 2, summary of the Business Plan, ESR
Measure B - eligible projects and consistency with S3

The SoE projects had to be In line with the "Regional Strategy of Smart Specialization for Research and Innovation" S3 8 ecosystems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs expressed by the territory</th>
<th>Aerospace</th>
<th>Agricultural and food</th>
<th>Eco-industry</th>
<th>Creative and cultural industries</th>
<th>Health Industry</th>
<th>Advanced Manufacturing</th>
<th>Sustainable mobility</th>
<th>SCC - Smart Cities &amp; Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Life Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity and Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Mobility and Architecture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S3 Specializations (7 Areas of Specialization and 1 transversal development driver)
Advantages and key issues

- No technical evaluation performed by MA
- No administrative report for participants
- **Reduction of the overall procedure timing** from call deadline to disbursement: from 120 days to 75 days
- Application of **de minimis regime** with the risk of rejection from the National Aid Register for exceeding the ceiling of 200,000€ after project approval
- **Dissemination** issues since the names of the SoE holders were not available at the time but great support from the EU **RTD SoE team** for the promotion of the call
- Mismatch between n. of SoEs and number of companies (*a company could receive more than one SoE*)
WIN-WIN SITUATION

- support to excellent projects
- simplified procedure for participants
- minor administrative burden for managing authority

BUT

careful upstream planning needed and throughout knowledge of Horizon rules

- The **budget call** was set considering a number of potential beneficiaries of 20-30% lower compared to the number of SoEs issued (companies could receive more than one SoE)

- A company could resubmit and obtain funding after applying for regional support so a rule to avoid **double funding** was defined

- The SoE score was used for the **ranking list**

- The set of documents requested to SMEs allowed for the **follow-up** monitoring and better knowledge of company business
EIC Accelerator synergies: some comments

Horizon 2020

• **Lombardia** received a very high number of SoEs for SMES Instrument phase 2 and EIC Accelerator in Horizon 2020 largely exceeding any regional funding capacity over 200 SoEs for a funding request of approximately 300.000.000 €

• Difficulties to implement a regional scheme because of the size /numbers of regional granted SoEs and state aids rules

Horizon Europe

• Synergies with HE and EIC Accelerator are included in the **Lombardia Regional Operational Programme 2021-2027**

• New **GBER**

• **Reverse situation** as compared to H2020: so far only 1 Accelerator SoE granted

• **No critical mass**
THANKS FOR THE ATTENTION

laura.savini@finlombarda.it