

HORIZON-EIE-2023-CONNECT-01-02: Preparatory action for setting up joint Programmes among innovation ecosystems actors

Part B: technical description

PREPARE: AN EU-WIDE SPRINGBOARD FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATION PROCUREMENT

List of participants

#	Participant name	Acronym	Country	Ecosystem role	Innovation performance
1	Ticbiomed (coordinator)	TBM	Spain	Supporter	Moderate innovator
2	Instituto Fomento Region de Murcia	INFO	Spain	Funder/Manager/Policy	Moderate innovator
3	Innovation Skåne	INSK	Sweden	Supporter / Manager	Innovation leader
4	Region Skåne	RGSK	Sweden	Funder / Policy Maker	Innovation leader
5	Rohealth	ROH	Romania	Supporter	Emerging innovator
6	Bucharest – Ilfov Regional Development Agency	BIRDA	Romania	Funder/Manager/Policy Maker	Emerging innovator
7	Business Oulu (City of Oulu)	BOU	Finland	Supporter / Manager	Strong innovator
8	Council of Oulu Region	PPL	Finland	Funder/Policy Maker/	Strong innovator

1 Excellence #@REL-EVA-RE@#

The PREPARE project

This project is a preparatory action for creating innovation procurement policies and instruments that can be effective and sustainable at regional level, but also relevant at European level. The preparatory work will be achieved by using four European regions that cover the full range of innovation performances defined by the EC's Regional Innovation Scoreboard as development sites: Murcia (ES), Skåne (SE), Bucharest-Ilfov (RO) and Oulu (FI).

During the project, the project consortium will:

1. Gather information from i) regional public bodies in charge of innovation policies and funding instruments, and ii) innovation ecosystem players, which propose and execute projects, using state of the art learnings and best practices.
2. Analyse this information to produce a Joint Programme and four regional Action Plans to incorporate innovation procurement to each region's policy and increase its impact by leveraging EU initiatives and funding.

The PREPARE consortium will produce and widely disseminate added-value results, including a knowledge asset on the state of the art of innovation procurement and policy recommendations. Exploitation initiatives will deliver capacity building, policy promotion at EU, national and regional level and the engagement of a network of EU regions interested in leveraging public procurement instruments to foster impactful innovation.

Innovation procurement: a flagship tool for the New European Innovation Agenda

Innovation Procurement (**inP**) is the public procurement of innovative goods, services, or works that do not yet exist or that are not currently available on the market. The objective of innovation procurement is to stimulate the development of new solutions that can improve public services or address societal challenges. Its benefits include the creation of new markets, the stimulation of economic growth, and the improvement of public services.

According to European Commission's communication "Making Public Procurement work in and for Europe", improving the quality and transparency of public procurement is a high priority for the EC. A substantial part of public investment in the EU economy is spent through public procurement, representing 14% of the EU's GDP, with a value of approximately 2 trillion €.

If used in a strategic manner, public procurement can contribute to addressing many of Europe’s major challenges, especially in creating sustainable growth and jobs. It can enable investments in the real economy and stimulate demand to increase competitiveness based on innovation and digitalisation. And while public procurement presents many challenges, it is also an opportunity.

In fact, according to the New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA) the public sector’s market role can be leveraged to “shape markets, deliver improved and accessible services, crowd in private investment where it would otherwise be lacking, and importantly provide innovative start-ups with a vital first customer”. EU benchmarking (EC, 2018) shows that inP investments must be doubled to modernise public services and strengthen EU’s industrial competitiveness.

Innovation Procurement is explicitly mentioned in the New EU Innovation Agenda (NEUIA) in these sections:

2.2 Framework conditions for deep tech innovation/ 2.2.1. Challenges

2.2.2 Flagship on enabling deep tech innovation through experimentation spaces and public procurement.

2.5. Improving the innovation policy-making framework/ 2.5.1 Challenges

What are the challenges?

EU-level challenges related to the procurement of innovation identified in the NEUIA are:

1. Modernising public services requires a doubling of investments in innovation procurement.
2. To date, while 81% of OECD countries have developed national strategies with policies that foster innovation procurement, only a third of EU Member States have such strategies.
3. Difficulties for decision makers at EU and national level to have a commonly shared view of the state of play and of the different trends of innovation in the EU.
4. Data that can help improve existing approaches is either missing or inconsistent, impeding informed decision-making.

Innovation procurement approach under PREPARE.

In the context of this project, we will focus on innovation procurement (inP) approaches that are demand-driven (it is the customer who states the unmet need) and co-creative (the solution is developed together between customer and supplier). This does not preclude to promote other types like the direct procurement of innovative solutions or others enabled by EU and national procurement laws or investigate other formats indicated in the NEUIA as policy sandboxes.

In its conceptual core, innovation procurement requires and aligns two types of actors:

Type 1: Stakeholders. Public Authorities that promote innovation. They have these roles:

- *Policy Maker.* Defines innovation policies, eg. within RIS3 or PRI, and its related implementation instruments.
- *Instrument Manager:* Rolls out policy instruments, eg. launches calls, awards beneficiaries, supervises execution and transfers payments.
- *Funder:* Assigns funds (eg. ERDF) to invest on innovation policies and instruments.

Type 2: Innovation players. This umbrella term captures the quadruple helix members of the ecosystem that participate in a concrete innovation procurement project. Their roles are:

- *Challengers:* Organizations with an unmet need (*challenge*) that requires innovation to be solved. They can be *Public Procurers* (eg. Healthcare organizations or Municipalities) or *Big Buyers*, referring to large organizations market traction power due to their size and relevance.
- *Solvers:* entities with the capacity to solve challenges. Examples include Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), deep-tech startups, universities, and technological centres.
- *Supporters:* clusters, associations or consultancies that can help to matchmake and deliver business value to the previous types and the whole ecosystem.

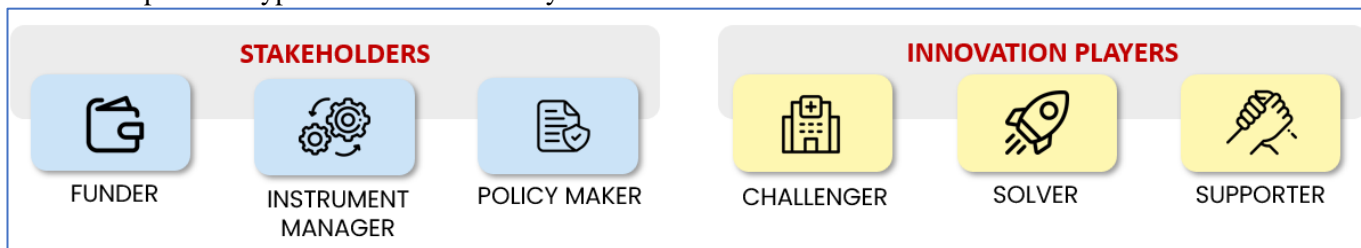


Figure 1.1: innovation procurement types and roles.

These target groups are described in more detail section 2.1.

Note on terminology: we consistently use the same term in *italics* across the proposal. This is to disambiguate concepts that can be synonyms in plain language, but that acquire a unique meaning in our text.

A concrete instance of the inP process under our approach is triggered when a Challenger identifies an inefficiency/opportunity/need (called a challenge) that wants to be solved. The challenge is shared then with the Instrument Manager, that leverages funds from the Funder to set up a call to identify an adequate Solver (eg. a deep tech startup). After its identification, Challenger and Solver co-create a solution in a *pilot*. A Supporter (eg. a cluster) delivers business support for successful adoption and commercialization in case the solution is positively evaluated. The Policy Maker learns for the results of the implementations and improves the inP instruments over time.

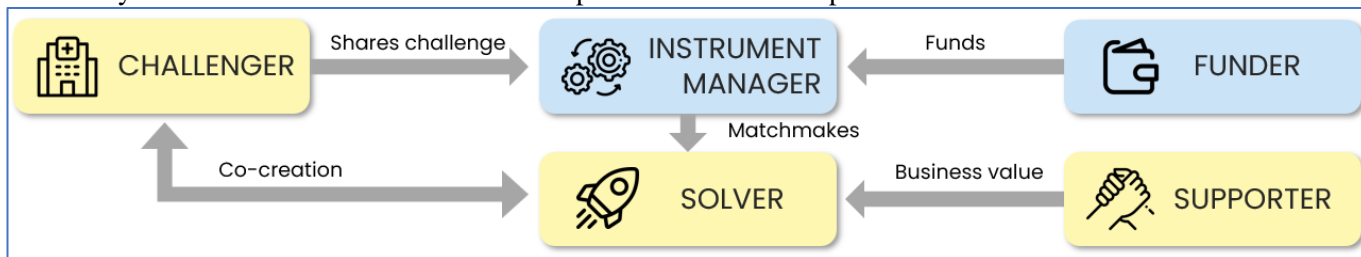


Figure 1.2. Innovation Procurement implementation model in the context of PREPARE.

Innovation Procurement can be implemented under several models. The EC has used demand-driven co-creation instruments in the form of PreCommercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI) for years (see description below).

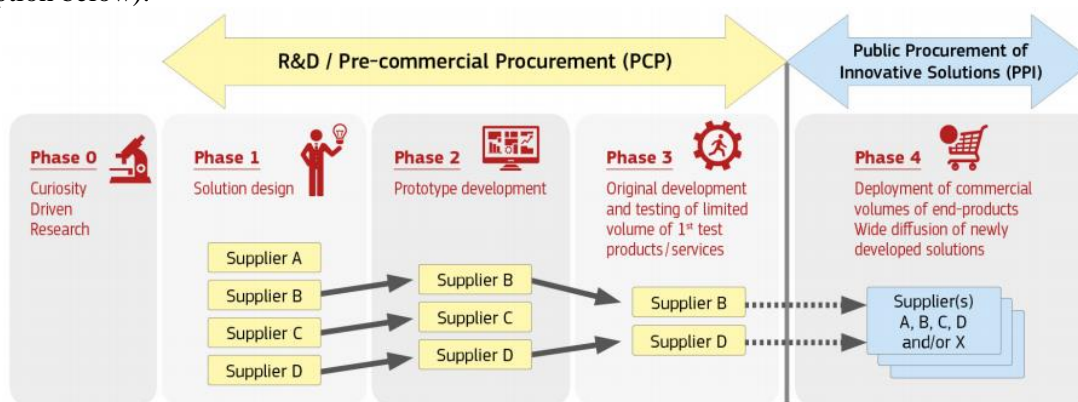
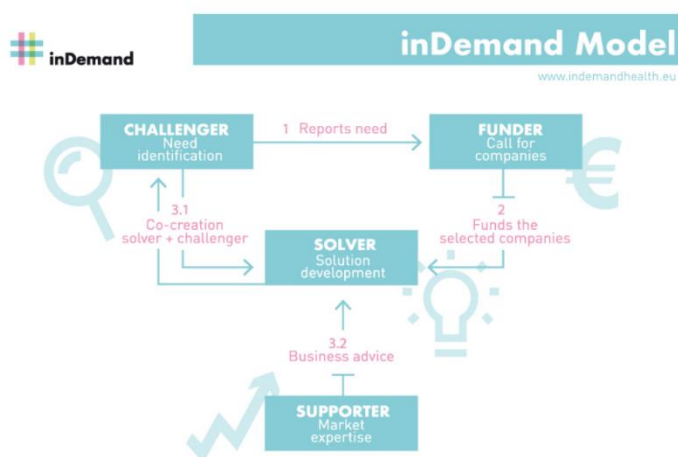


Figure 1.3. PCP and PPI implementation models.

Under them, several Challengers join forces to find a solution to same challenge following a funnel approach engaging multiple Solvers. As they are usually implemented, they require big budgets (in the M€s) and management resources and take around 3-5 years end to end. However, their implementation under these conditions is a major effort. The multiple co-creation phases increase organizational labour and internal costs. They also require a multi-year deployment, which increases risks in case of changes in critical personnel. From our experience (see Section 3.2) they are well suited to address big challenges, co-funded by generous EU grants, but are hard to implement at regional level.

Looking for alternatives, the regions of Murcia and Oulu proposed in 2017 a new model that is cheaper (in the k€s), lighter in overheads and faster (9-12 months) to implement. The model is called *Lean Procurement of Innovation* (LPI). Under it, one Challenger co-creates with one Solver, that receives support from a Supporter for business scalation.



LPI is of special interest when experience on demand driven co-creation is limited and/or budgets are low. Regional authorities can start by launching small scale implementations, lowering the overall risk during the learning period. Besides, given the pace of evolution of some technologies -like deep tech-, having shorter co-creation periods favours the adoption of state-of-the-art solutions. The LPI is sector-agnostic and can be used horizontally across industries, though it was originally benchmarked with public healthcare organizations, one of the major regional procurers.

This approach has been successfully implemented in EC projects like inDemand, Cherries and inDemand RCT, and in the recently awarded innoBuyer and HealthChain

(see Section 3.2). It has also been sponsored by private Funders- pharma- in 3 successive years. We will leverage previous know-how and learnings from them. Very importantly the take up of best practices, like to request commitment to Challengers' top management when sharing a challenge, to maximize chances that successful innovation is adopted, a policy barrier cited in the new EU innovation Agenda (article 2.5.1).

This explanation over innovation procurement instruments is relevant because:

- Standard EC-backed instruments do not necessarily fit into regional realities. Therefore, shows that there is room for improvement for meta-innovation (innovation on innovation instruments). At local level there is not the same level of alignment among funding routes, organizational structures, and decision making than at EU one.
- inP is a relatively under-used policy instrument that is not well understood, with no clear regional policy strategies even if they are mentioned in RIS3s/PRI. There is little available know-how and track records that break show-stopper loops: no experience, no risk-taking, no learning.
- There is a need for capacitation and results-based pedagogy, to get the buy-in of decision makers and stakeholders from EU regions.

By combining their forces, PREPARE partners will help to overcome barriers by deploying actions to:

- Develop and implement a Joint Programme and Action Plans that serve as a blueprint and benchmark for other regions. Lower the barriers for others to follow in a cascading effect, while avoids re-inventing the wheel.
- Generate and disseminate know-how and use cases and leverage them for capacitation.
- Provide policy recommendations drawn on first hand experiences.
- Increase value-for-money by synergizing with existing funding with a reinforcing effect.

Our project testing grounds



We represent four regions that cover the whole range of innovation performance levels in the Regional Innovation Scoreboard. **Murcia** is a Moderate Innovator region in Spain, home to internationally recognized research teams in healthcare, biotechnology and agrifood sciences, with several technological clusters and multinational enterprises in sectors like energy, manufacturing, and engineering sectors. **Skåne** has a long history of innovation. It is home to globally leading technology companies, world-leading research, and a supportive innovation system. Companies such as TetraPak and Gambro, the developer of the first artificial kidney, were born there. As an Innovation Leader, it was ranked the 9th most innovative region in the EU in 2021. **Bucharest-Ilfov** comprises the municipality of Bucharest and the surrounding Ilfov county. Located by the Black Sea is a major economic hub, accommodating international companies from the financial and technological sectors, and several industrial parks and manufacturing

facilities. It is an Emerging innovator region. Northern Ostrobothnia is usually called “**Oulu region**” after its capital city, where half of the region’s population lives. As a Strong innovator region, it is a leading education hub and an internationally recognized innovation site.

A description of the regional policies and innovation funding plus an ecosystem description is presented below.

MURCIA, ES – Moderate innovator (*Región de Murcia*, NUTS 2 region [ES62](#)). Murcia’s RIS3 incorporates inP among its main lines of action since its creation in 2014. As a result, several inP projects have been carried out in the region, such as a pilot on PCP for the energy sector and several LPI projects for healthcare and others (see section 3.2 for details from all partners).

One of the Strategic Objectives of the updated **2021-27 RIS3** is to promote innovation among the public sector with an "Innovative Public Procurement" program. The main priority areas are agrifood (including water management and environment), marine and maritime industry, energy and chemical industry, and healthcare.

The region is currently **participating in the PRI pilot**, improving the benchmark analysis made with other European regions for the first RIS3. Murcia is also part of the **Urban Mobility and Food EIT KICs**, which have supported several start-ups in the region for their scale-up and technology pilot programs.

The total public budget to **support innovation** in Murcia during 2021-27 is estimated at 330M €, while public procurement amounted to 9.4B€ in 2021.

Ecosystem description

INFO is the regional development agency with the *funder, policy maker and manager* roles. Other government offices responsible for economy, innovation, research, and related areas, have the potential to assume these roles under their areas of influence. It is member of EU-wide innovation promoting associations as ERRIN and EURADA.

The *innovation players* in this region are:

- *challengers*: aside from the public procurers previously mentioned, there are Multinational companies with headquarters in the region in sectors like food, energy, manufacturing, and engineering (e.g., Grupo Hefame, 1,400M€ revenues in 2020; El Pozo Alimentación, 1,392M€) candidates for *big buyers*.

- *solvers* with strong presence include SMEs within transport, logistics, energy and chemical engineering industries, and internationally recognized R&D centres in healthcare, biotechnology and agrifood sciences.
- *supporters* include more than 10 technological, business hubs and sectorial clusters (e.g., Ticbiomed, a PREPARE consortium partner).

SKÅNE, SE – Innovation leader (Skåne län, NUTS 3 region [SE224](#)). Skåne’s regional annual budget policy explicitly includes and describes inP tools, but there is not a specific budget item dedicated to it. However, a nationwide initiative to promote it was adopted in 2022, which is meant to be supported by regional innovation agencies. The region’s RIS3 focuses on the MAX IV synchrotron radiation laboratory, the European Spallation Source for pulsed neutron source research, Lund’s Science Village innovation ecosystem, Advanced materials and manufacturing, Food Innovation, Life Science and Health, Smart sustainable cities, and Tech.

Skåne is a member of ERRIN, from which received support to be selected for a PRI pilot, currently being executed. Also the Health EIT KIC chose Skåne as one of its certified locations for the EIT Health Living Labs and Test Beds Programme, benefitting local healthcare start-ups with accelerator services.

The total public budget to **support innovation** in Skåne during 2021-27 is estimated at 147M €, while public procurement amounted to 5.0B€ in 2021.

Ecosystem description

The main inP *funders* are Region Skåne (a PREPARE consortium partner), city of Malmö and Lund municipality. They also play the role of *policy makers*. Additionally, Region Skåne is a *manager* of inP funding through its subsidiaries such as Innovation Skåne (PREPARE partner).

The *innovation players* in this region are:

- *challengers*: companies in the food and advanced materials and manufacturing sectors (e.g., Alfa Laval, 3.7B€ revenues in 2022; AAK AB, 2.5B€; TetraPak, 1.5B€) can be considered potential *big buyers* in the region.
- *solvers* in this region are SMEs and R&D centres (e.g., Malmö and Lund universities, ultra-high-field MRI research centre at Skåne University Hospital) in the region’s recognized healthcare, advanced materials, food innovation, and smart tech sectors.
- *supporters* include several science villages, incubators, and clusters for different sectors, such as Medicin Village for pharma, medtech, and biotech (150 companies, also a member of the Denmark-South of Sweden cluster for Life science) and the Nordic Healthcare Accelerator – Cerner Sandbox.

BUCHAREST-ILFOV, RO – Emerging innovator (București-Ilfov, NUTS 2 region [RO32](#)). Its RIS3 states the commitment of public authorities to support innovation, while the Romanian government has been actively promoting inP to support economic growth and competitiveness with a specific framework and innovation development programme. It focuses on ICT, healthcare, optoelectronics, nanotechnology and advanced materials, bioeconomy and creative industries.

Bucharest-Ilfov is a member of **three EIT KICs** (Food, Urban Mobility, and Digital) and home to an [EIT RIS Hub](#), which has allowed several start-ups and SMEs in the region to benefit from their support.

The total public budget to **support innovation** in Bucharest-Ilfov during 2021-27 is estimated at a maximum of 2.7B€, while the amount budgeted by public administrations for procurement in the region is at least 3B€/year.

Ecosystem description

The main inP *funders*, excluding the central public administration and its subordinates, are Bucharest Municipality (1.4B€/yr), Ilfov County Council (0.8B€/yr) and Bucharest District no. 1 (125M€/yr). They also play the role of *policy makers*. The Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (BIRDA, PREPARE partner) is a *manager* of innovation funding for the region.

The *innovation players* in this region are:

- *challengers*: companies in the energy, manufacturing, and banking sectors (e.g., OMV Petrom, 12.4B€ revenues in 2022; Automobile Dacia, 4.3B€; Rompetrol Rafinare, 2.5B€) are potential *big buyers*.
- *solvers* in this region are SMEs and R&D centres in the ICT, healthcare, optoelectronics, nanotechnology, advanced materials, and bioeconomy industries.
- *supporters* include the ROhealth healthcare and bioeconomy cluster (a PREPARE partner), the EIT RIS Hubs and other innovation clusters for specific sectors (e.g., Mechatrec), accelerators/incubators (e.g., Impact Hub, Tech Hub), and technological and business parks (e.g. Magurele Science Park).

OULU / NORTHERN OSTROBOTHNIA, FI – Strong innovator (Pohjois-Pohjanmaa, NUTS 3 region [FI1D9](#)). The City of Oulu and the Wellbeing Service County of Northern Ostrobothnia (“Pohde”), which is responsible for public health services in the region, explicitly include a 5% target for inP in their strategic plans.

This would mean approximately **67.5 M€/year**. Additionally, the Council of Oulu region currently has a budget of 300-500k€/year for inP. The focus areas of the region's RIS3 are preventive healthcare, sustainable circular economy and cleantech solutions.

Oulu region is currently part of a PRI pilot, called [ELMO](#), which consists in evaluating the implementation of the 2019-23 RIS3 and using the resulting analysis to update it for the 2024-27 period. The total public budget allocated to supporting innovation in 2021-27 is estimated at 153M€. In addition, Just Transition Fund (JTF) can be used to support innovations. The budget for 2022-2025 is 96MEUR

The City of Oulu's budget for public procurement is ~500M€/yr (19% of procurement in the region). This excludes procurement for the healthcare sector (~850 M€/yr, 32%), which is separately managed by Pohde. The total amount of public procurement in Northern Ostrobothnia is estimated at 2.6B€/yr.

Ecosystem description

The main inP funders are Pohde, the City of Oulu and the Council of Oulu region. The last two also play the role of *policy makers*. City of Oulu is also, through its various subsidiaries, a *manager* of inP funding instruments.

The *innovation players* in this region are:

- *challengers*: companies in the ICT, sustainable materials and food distribution sectors (e.g., Nokia Group, 24.9M€ revenues in 2022; S Group, 11.5M€; Stora Enso, 10.2M€) are potential *big buyers* in the region.
- *solvers* in this region are SMEs and R&D centers in the ICT and green industries. The OuluHealth ecosystem is a world leader in using ICT innovations (e.g., 5G/6G, IoT, AI, BigData) for health and life science solutions.
- *supporters* include the Oulu Innovation Alliance, a strategic coalition of organizations and innovation leaders that promote innovation and sustainable growth, and [OuluHealth](#), a healthcare cluster that gathers universities, research centres, companies, business professionals and public bodies. Several Digital Innovation Hubs also support the ICT sector.

1.1 Objectives #@PRJ-OBJ-PO@#

The PREPARE project has **four main objectives**:

1. [Connect and align four regional ecosystems to promote innovation procurement.](#)

Before Month 6, partners will engage with *stakeholders* (public authorities in charge of innovation policies) and *Innovation players* (members of the local ecosystem) in an open dialogue to introduce, explain, and motivate innovation procurement. Several information gathering formats like interviews, focus groups, workshops and surveys will be used to get an understanding on the awareness, motivation, obstacles, and capacitation needs for effective implementation. Less well-represented stakeholders and innovation territories, including rural areas, will be included in the engagement, which will promote gender equality across the regional ecosystems.

2. [Prepare a joint Programme and five Action Plans to increase growth and competitiveness.](#)

The PREPARE Joint Programme is an strategic blueprint document that states WHY innovation procurement is a policy that needs to be pursued at regional level, and guides the WHAT, WHO, HOW and WHEN.

After this strategic exercise, the programme is operationalized in 5 Action Plans: one to be jointly executed and 4 that are region specific. Each plan presents the Objectives and indicators; Governance, Tasks and responsibilities; Timeline and milestones; and follow up and feedback mechanisms. The plans state the actions to be implemented with a horizon of 3+ years.

Critical outcomes of the Plans are the launch of a yearly innovation procurement instrument, assigning adequate resources to its implementation, and the capacitation of the ecosystem for increasingly effective implementation. The intended collaboration between offer and demand is oriented to create new business opportunities and support the green and digital transitions, as well as strategic autonomy.

3. [Gather information and react to policy and funding sources.](#)

Regional policies (specially RIS3 and PRI) will be reviewed and enhanced to incorporate learnings, instruments and best practices acquired while preparing the Action Plans. The objective is to increase the value-for-money of existing and new instruments, in close collaboration with an inclusive regional ecosystem. In the case of innovation procurement initiatives, the deployed instruments will not only benefit innovation-producing organizations, but also improve local public services.

At EU level there is the opportunity to engage and apply for direct participation in innovation policy-making frameworks stated in the New EU Innovation Agenda, including advisory groups and support facilities. Partners will share policy-improving proposals in two workshops with the EC and in direct communications with national policy representatives.

Economic opportunities for innovation funding, present and future, will be collected and documented based on consortium knowledge, desktop research and engagement with external experts. These include public ones like Cohesion Policy instruments, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and Horizon Europe. But also, private ones

as investors, accelerators, or Big Buyers. They will be incorporated into the Action Plans as funding sources for launching instruments and setting up capacitation activities.

Reaction to those

4. Create and exploit knowledge assets.

We will create two knowledge assets: i) by month 6 a State-of-the-art report on innovation procurement collecting insights gathered during the interaction of the ecosystem, and ii) a position paper and action call with proposals for improving policy at EU, national and regional level by the project end. Apart from the direct learnings by the project execution they will be enriched with literature review and consultation with external experts. They will be presented in the policy workshops to be held with the EC and regionally, and widely disseminated through the project channels, including a devoted webinar for each. Besides, a knowledge base storing project documentation and external references will be freely and openly accessible. These assets are intended to spread the word about how innovation procurement can benefit EU countries and regions and gain critical mass for future policy activities.

Our major exploitation routes are: i) implementation of the Action Plans, ii) Application to new sources of funding (one already identified for 2024), iii) nurture a network of sister regions and iv) put in value the project assets. Besides, each partner type -funder, policy maker, instrument manager and supporter- will generate a strategy to put in value the outputs of the project to generate sustainable outcomes for long-term impact.

1.2 **Support measures and methodology** #@CON-MET-CM@##@COM-PL-CP@#

PREPARE approach is split in two phases. Phase 1 is about knowledge acquisition by interacting with regional stakeholders and innovation players, together with desktop research and validation with external experts. This knowledge is then put in value in a second phase to produce the Joint Programme and Action Plans, advancing inP policies and leveraging available funding sources. In both phases, knowledge assets are created and disseminated.

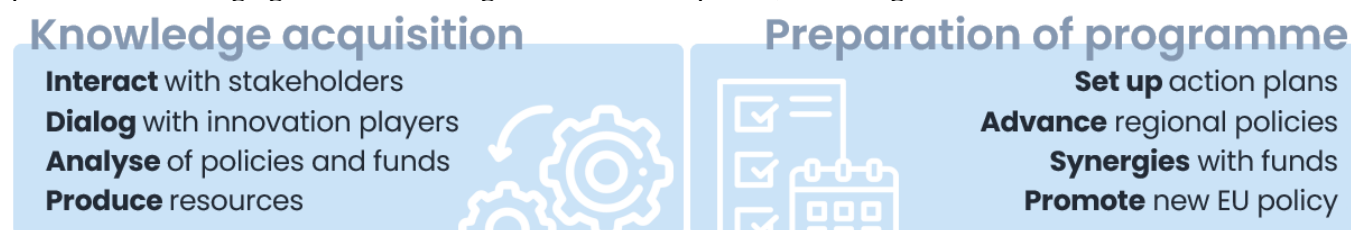


Figure 1.4 PREPARE phased measures.

Phase 1: KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION.

During the first half of the project, the following key measures take place.

Interact with regional innovation procurement stakeholders.

As per our terminology, *Stakeholders* are those who work for regional Public Authorities with the mandate to promote innovation (procurement) within their region. Their roles include *Policy Makers*, *Instrument Managers* and *Funders* which may be located in different departments in the same organization and not necessarily be aligned for the purposes of inP.

Our interaction process with them starts with their identification and mapping. We target politically appointed leadership, intermediate management [eg. heads of units] and technicians (likely civil servants). Some of these stakeholders are already known by the partners – some of them their own colleagues-, and others will be identified via organigrams of the key public authorities, to be impacted for the adoption of innovation procurement. A shared tool (see data management below) will be used to collect and filter data (position/role, prior knowledge and maturity, relationships/dependencies with others, etc).

Then the interaction for gathering relevant information starts. Note that though these roles/departments are in charge of innovation, not necessarily have an advance knowledge on inP. It is therefore important to interact with them to learn about their awareness and motivation, together with their recommendations. As part of the exercise, partners will identify capacitation needs and potential barriers for effective implementation. Of special interest are updated references and expectations on policy and funding sources that can impact the deployment of inP.

To gather this information, partners will rely on interviews and focus groups.

Interviews start with an introductory email motivating the meeting. They are based on a common script, that guides the conversation (not recorded to encourage openness). It is paramount that insights are collected right after the dialog.

Focus groups accommodate 14-16 people lasting 2-3 hours. We will make a gender balanced selection of participants, bringing views from different perspectives. It is critical to prepare the script and the group dynamics.

There is a moderator that gives all a chance to speak avoiding ramifications. Insights are collected by a rapporteur, that ask for confirmation of the most relevant ones when doing the recap at the end of the session.

The collected insights are stored in a common *insight repository*, that is, a digital tool that is designed and formatted in a way to be used for the creation of the project assets and the Joint Programme and Action Plans. Supporting material in the form of **multiformat documentation** (eg Memos, PPT presentation) is used to convey professional-looking messages for recruitment and effective interaction.

Note: **Governance** and planning are stated in Section 3 - which partner does what when-. For instance, the work above is led by the regional Policy Makers.

Lead an open dialog with innovation players.

Partners follow a bottom-up approach when engaging with quadruple-helix innovation players from the local ecosystem to gather their feedback. Player types include potential Challengers (Public Procurers and Big Buyers), Solvers (SMEs and Universities) and Supporters (clusters and associations). Interviews and focus groups will be customized to fit the idiosyncrasy of each player type.

In addition, workshops and a survey are launched in each region in its local language:

Workshops are a 4-5 hour event with 30-40 people from multiple player types. They combine all-together exchange of information within sectoral and mixed tables.

Surveys help to collect information from a wide audience. An online tool is used, with different ‘question routes’ per player type. A common English template is translated into local language for better response rate. Unstructured responses are translated for qualitative analysis for insights, while structured ones are converted into quantitative indicators for (inter-)regional evaluation.

For all these means of connection, Measures will be put in place to include of underrepresented innovation players, like citizens and from rural areas, as well as the promotion of gender diversity. Thematic areas related to Green and Digital transition, as well as those stressed by the New EU Agenda for Innovation will be included in the information exchange.

The interaction with potential Challengers is very important as they trigger our demand-driven approach. Their awareness level, willingness to participate, even top of mind challenges is very relevant for future roll-out. This exchange is the core for the identification of areas of competitive advantage, capacitation needs, and potential barriers. Also, for the detection of *Champions* – those motivated individuals that can become first instrument beneficiaries.

As an **added value** this interaction will:

- Identify areas of cooperation to direct/focus demand driven regional research and innovation investments.
- Detect knowledge gaps, support needs, and activities to improve ecosystem take up.
- Assess supra-regional barriers and strengths to tackle weakness and scale-up opportunities among the consortium regions, but also at EU and national level.

Analyse innovation procurement policy agendas and funding sources

We collect the state-of-the-art on innovation procurement policy and potential funding sources.

- Policy to enable design of own instruments with information, how to incorporate them into existing ones and align them with major trends to multiply synergies.
- Funding sources to economically support the implementation of instrument: co-funding of the co-creation, payment to business support, maintaining the organizational structure for sustainability and improvement.

Policy sources already known to be relevant are:

- The New European Innovation Agenda, in particular its references to innovation procurement on its ‘Framework conditions including regulations can drive or thwart the development and uptake of innovative new products and processes Challenge.
- The Partnership for Regional Innovation (PRI) pilot action will be closely followed to analyse the ongoing works, including the reference to ‘regulatory sandboxes’ and the strategic use of regulatory standards for innovation (Page 57 of the [PRI Playbook](#)).
- The RIS3s for the opportunity to refocus S3 efforts on societal outcomes with an enhanced coordination across policy areas, supported by innovation procurement.

Potential **funding sources** are:

- Regional: European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF): European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the Territorial Cooperation Funds (Interreg)
- National in synergy with regional: Next Generation EU/the Recovery and Resilience Facility
- National: Public innovation-support programmes/calls that can be leveraged for challenge solving.

- European Level: Horizon Europe programme, Digital Europe Programme, Single Market Programme, Interregional innovation investments (I3), Interreg and other opportunities promoted by DGs RTD, Connect, Regio and Growth.
- Private Funders like investors (seed/venture capital), multinationals (pharma, construction companies), accelerators or Big Buyers will be collected from the partners' prior contacts.

Besides we will conduct a resource exploratory exercise to collect benchmark data, policy trends from the literature. Known literature references from the OCDE, the [Benchmarking of innovation procurement investments and policy frameworks across Europe](#) by PWC (presented in March 2023) and public policy researchers will be collected via a bibliographic desktop search. The resources will be stored in an easy to navigate folder structure with descriptive file names, to be publicly available in an on-line repository that is updated overtime in what we call the *PREPARE knowledge base*.

We will also look for lessons learnt, best practices and success stories interacting with external Experts. These include procurement competence centres (eg Zenit), consultancies (eg Empirica), sister projects (eg Procure4Health), and other key opinion leaders like winners from the European Innovation Procurement Awards. We will conduct interviews, and one focus group; and organize an open public webinar to share lessons learnt, known pitfalls and recommendations.

The documentation above is stored in the PREPARE knowledge base, an open container of documentation and resources that is publicly accessible and becomes one of the key project assets.

Produce a state-of-the-art knowledge asset on innovation procurement.

The sources of policy and funding information, concrete resources and insights are structured and stored in both the insight repository and knowledge base, so that they are fit for purpose for the creation of the Programme and Action Plans and the development of a public knowledge asset encapsulating the state of the art on inP, specially targeting regional policies.

This asset presents an entry-level overview of the state of play (resources, insights, outputs of interactions like surveys and workshops) and with initial recommendations for policy making at EU, national and regional level. The core of the asset will be a report, that will be fragmented into web articles, infographics and social media posts for the multiplication of dissemination opportunities. It will be first presented the in a mid-term policy workshop with the EC in Brussels. Dissemination activities at national and regional level are explained in Section 2.2.

Phase 2. PREPARATION OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME

After the knowledge gathering phase, the consortium now is ready to put the information is value

Set up and finalise Joint long-term Programmes and Action Plans.

The PREPARE Joint Programme is an strategic blueprint document that states WHY innovation procurement is a policy that needs to be pursued at regional level, and guides the WHAT, WHO, HOW and WHEN.

In its preparation, partners will make a conscious exercise to avoid 'paralysis because of the analysis'. The amount of information gathered in the previous phase can be overwhelming, so a prioritization exercise needs to be in place for short term traction. When in doubt we will follow the 'Start small but aim for snowball effect' principle.

The creation process starts with an assessment of information exercise to provide guidance and make informed decisions. Leverages RIS3 known tools (eg. SWOT) to support the analysis per region and as a consortium.

The Joint Programme proposes:

- Policy preferred approach(es) for instruments, eg. Lean Procurement of Innovation; implementation roll-out: identification of challenges till evaluation of co-creation; and support services for innovation impactful: adoption by challengers, commercial scalation.
- Organizational structure and governance: roles and responsibilities of personnel in charge of inP that manages know-how and relational capital in an iterative learning approach.
- Capacitation delivery formats segmented per regional actor types (mainly stakeholders, public procurers, big buyers, and potential funders) and for out-of-consortium stakeholders.
- Funding opportunities by Regional/National/EU/Private sources for instrument deployment (more detail below).
- Advancement of new policy (more detail below).
- Economic sustainability: Joint application to external competitive calls to either increase the number and/or scope of co-created solutions; design of sustainable business models, including the delivery of paid services by supporters.
- Scalability and multiplication: Leverage the PREPARE Network to increase influence on EU/national policy improvement, Application to new sources of funding, exchange of new knowledge.

After this strategic exercise, the programme is operationalized in 5 Action Plans: one to be jointly executed and 4 that are region specific. The plans state the actions for the next 3 years.

Each plan collects: Objectives and indicators; Governance, Tasks and responsibilities; Timeline and milestones; and follow up and feedback mechanisms. Examples of regional Action Plan objectives are: # of challenges solved via inP instruments, # of capacitation activities targeting public procurers and big buyers. Objectives for the consortium level Action Plan ones: # yearly joint application to an EU source of funding; # joint delivery of a capacitation to other regions.

The added values of doing this exercise together rather than at individual level with own resources are: i) take advantage of initial know-how from the other consortium regions and share of insights, in particular for the newbies; ii) more credibility for internal stakeholders; straightforward connection for commercial scalability and aggregation of demand; iii) more chances of success towards EU competitive calls due to trust generated during execution;) more access to experts and networks;) more weight for policy lobby at EU level; production of information in English for world consumption;) more authority in front of other regions to join the PREPARE network.

The main target audience at the time of designing them are regional top decision makers for their approval and the buy in from regional stakeholders; with periodic pedagogic/motivational exercises specially when there is a change on top decision makers or key personnel.

Once a draft of the Programme or Action Plan is produced it is validated with key stakeholders and innovation players via interviews and one focus group per region. After feedback, the plan is consolidated and professionally translated and formatted. With this documentation (including summaries adapted to the target types), regional partners will actively seek approval from top political decision makers, so that it is assumed at regional level. This requires aligning funding, resources for instrument managing and policy making within a horizon of 3+ years.

As with any new initiative, it is critical to set up short-term mechanisms to make it a sustainable and impactful in the long run. Change management principles like John Kotter's 8 Step Change Model¹ will be considered at the time of rolling out the plan.

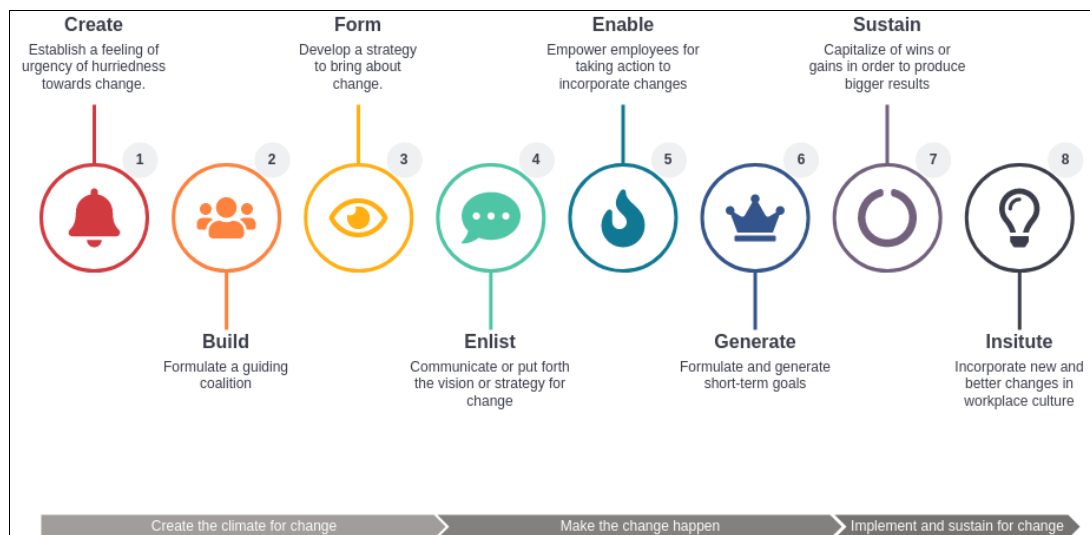


Figure 1.5. Kotter 8 Step Change Management Model

Advance policy on innovation procurement.

Partners will identify how current regional initiatives focused on improving coordination and directionality of regional, national and EU innovation policies (specially RIS3 and PRI) can be enhanced by incorporating gathered insights and learnings from the creation of the Programme/Action plans.

Most regional innovation-support instruments only target entrepreneurs, with no embedded interaction per se with potential customers at the development phase. While this approach works for many sectors, it is also true that identifying profitable market opportunities within public procurers is not an easy task² for SMEs. Since procurers tend to be risk averse, it is a formidable task to formally engage them for co-creation, and even more to those involving deep tech start-ups and innovative small players. Therefore, during the design and execution of the Joint Programme and Action Plans, special attention will be paid to promote challenges and matchmake them with this type of players.

¹ John Kotter's 8 Step Change Model

² Leading public sector innovation: Co-creating for a better society by Christian Bason

At the same time, with so many barriers, those regions that excel on fostering innovation procurement will acquire a competitive edge. That is, they increase the return of investment for their solution ecosystem and the public service providers. This does not necessarily imply to allocate more budget, but rather it is an opportunity to re-think existing instruments and to refocus RIS3/PRI efforts with a view to influence the new programming scenario legislative proposals for the post 2027 period, around 2025. The result can be the replacement of obsolete instruments with more impactful ones, based on demand-driven co-creation principles. It is a kind of meta-innovation, where innovation takes place on the instruments themselves. The systemic adoption of these principle can provoke a cascade effect that increases regional growth beyond innovation procurement initiatives.

An intended added value of PREPARE is to take the advantage of the reflection it provokes at local policy level to incorporate and/or update priorities, trends and focus areas from the NEUIA into regional umbrella policy strategies such as RIS3. For example, stressing the support of deep tech companies, and the Green and Digital focus areas.

In this regard, and to closely follow the opportunities to influence that will grow from the NEUIA, a twofold approach is envisaged: 1) active participation in the new S3 Community of practices (S3 COP) to be launched on March 2023; 2) PRI Scientific Committee and JRC experts. Concerning PRI, our partner regions are actively following current developments of the pilot initiative and are ready to react to the new developments from the innovative coordinated calls scenario on regional Innovation valleys under Horizon Europe and the I3 instrument.

PREPARE has made an strategic alliance with [ERRIN](#) (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) and [EURADA](#) (European Association of Development Agencies) as I3 working group members -ERRIN holding the secretariat of the S3 CoP-. They will be a key channel to identify common ground in EU regions around inP policy improvement and gain enough critical mass so as to disseminate to different target EC DGs such as REGIO, RTD or CONNECT.

Another relevant output will be to build on the work that our different partner regions are developing in the framework of the Partnership for Regional Innovation (PRI) initiative. With PREPARE we will apply the lessons learnt from the new strategic approach to innovation-driven territorial transformation and the examples, tools and governance mechanisms included in the PRI Playbook, to engage together in innovation procurement. PREPARE will contribute to the strengthening of the innovation ecosystems of the partner territories, committed to the spirit of PRI and the need to work together in new ways, aligning efforts around this specific mission of common interest which is the effective adoption of innovation procurement policies and instruments improving public services or addressing societal challenges in a challenge-oriented way. We will contact the PRI scientific committee of experts recruited by the JRC to gather their vision and inputs.

At EU level there is the opportunity to engage and apply for direct participation in the innovation policy-making frameworks mentioned in the New EU Innovation Agenda: Innovation-Friendly Regulations Advisory Group, Horizon Europe Policy Support Facility, Technical Support Instrument, Technical Assistance for Regional Policy, together with the [Fi-compass](#) is a platform for advisory services on financial instruments under EU shared management. With the collaboration of the PREPARE Project Officer, we will liaise with the EIC Forum to promote innovation procurement-support activities and policies. We will also synergize with the ERA Forum to ensure alignment with the ERA Policy Agenda. The timing is about right as project execution likely will overlap with their staffing.

Create policy-advancement assets.

With the learnings during the gathering on information and the preparation of the Programme and Action Plans we will create a position paper for inP policy improvement. This second knowledge asset targets key actors in the EU decision-making process, such as EC inP related DGs (EIC, Connect, Grow, RTD), the JRC - responsible of providing evidence-based science and knowledge, the European parliament – European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) - and the EU Council, through the national Permanent Representations and national ministries.

This asset will be presented in policy workshop in Brussels at project end, to serve as a call to action and promote take-up. With a view to influence the new S3/Innovation Agenda post 2027 proposals, expected around 2025, debates and EU interinstitutional planning will be monitored to ensure an effective contribution from both policy and funding approaches.

It will also be promoted in a Webinar and within the PREPARE Network of regions. We will also ask for dissemination support to Brussels located associations such as EURADA and ERRIN - members of the European Commission expert group on Interregional Innovation Investment - the I3 Expert Group; and IGLO - informal association of Brussels-based non-profit R&D Liaison Offices-. An adapted version will be shared with national and local policymakers.

Foster synergies with current and other funding sources.

The deployment of innovation procurement at regional level requires funding two senses: i) Economic support of the co-creation between Challengers and Solver, with the participation of Supporters; ii) continuous activity of Instrument Manager infrastructure to manage the inP calls and acquire know-how to improve them over time.

The information acquired during the previous ‘Analyse innovation procurement policy agendas and funding sources’ work is now put in value to plan and execute on the acquisition of public and private funds for both.

At regional level, as part of the Action Plan, stakeholders and (political) decision makers will be engaged to invest current funding (ERDF) on inP instrument implementation. Same with the Cohesion Policy instruments, the Recovery and Resilience Facility. At EU level, known or upcoming competitive calls from Horizon EU programmes -promoted by the EIC and DG Grow, REGIO, RTD and CONNECT- will be listed and evaluated. A promising instrument is INTERREG, that promotes interregional collaboration tackling common challenges.

For this exercise, partners will connect with National Contact Points to foresee EU opportunities, including the identification of relevant EC policy officers to inquire. The same exercise will be done at national level.

After project end, depending on the opportunity, partners will decide if a particular call is worth pursuing by themselves and/or in combination with innovation players aiming to co-create a solution to a demand challenge. Meaning that the identified regional challenges can be solved leveraging out-of-region funding sources. With the added value that PREPARE and Network regions can contribute with partners and know-how to the proposal given their collaboration triggered by our project. For instance, as a first gain of applying to this call - even if it is not successful- partners will prepare a joint proposal to the call *HORIZON-EIE-2024-CONNECT-01-01: Implementing co-funded action plans for connected regional innovation valleys* to be opened in Q2 2023. As mentioned in the Open Day Webinar, it is the perfect complementary follow up action to our current collaboration.

1.2.1 Management of data and Intellectual Property Rights.

Our project, in compliance with obligations and requirements set forth in the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and the ePrivacy Directive (2002/58/EC), will apply all the needed organisational and technological measures for data privacy by design and by default as well as the latest security solutions.

A Data Management Plan (DMP) is at the core of the research data management. It will provide an analysis of the elements of our data management policy about all the data that will be generated within the project. A description of all data that will be generated or collected will be provided, as well as information on the purpose of the data collection, their relation to the objectives of the project, the types and formats of the data, data re-use, data origin, their expected size and ‘data utility’. It will also provide details on data interoperability and practical data management procedures, e.g., guidelines for documenting activities.

Data captured by primary sources e.g interviews, surveys, workshops, or new registrations in the project activities and events will be collected in compliance with the GDPR (and local implementations). No personal data will be divulged to third parties (unless necessary and subject to participants’ consent). To facilitate the development of the DMP according to international standards, PREPARE will use the Horizon Europe programme-recommended Data Stewardship Wizard tool. The DMP and data collection will follow the FAIR principles.

Sound management of Intellectual Property will be put in place as another means to achieve sustainable exploitation. At consortium level, this will be dealt with in the Consortium Agreement (CA) which will be concluded before the start of the project. The CA will define key concepts relating to IPR such as background and foreground knowledge, exploitation, access rights and potential pricing types.

2 Impact

2.1.1 Target groups

TARGET GROUP	SEGMENTS		FOCUS
Stakeholders within public authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funders ● Instrument Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy Makers ● Top regional political level. 	HIGH
Regional authorities with mandates for funding, managing, and generating policy that impacts the adoption of inP. At position level, targets include regional ministers and director generals; middle management; technicians and administrative support staff. Though some of these organizations are part of the consortium by no means are their personnel aligned with the objectives of the project. There is a strong need to raise awareness and motivate them to this end, and to collect their feedbacks, concerns, opportunities, and capacitation gaps.			
Public and private procurers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional public organizations that deliver services to citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private big buyers. Business champions. 	HIGH
Public service providers are candidates to identify unmet needs requiring innovative solutions, at the start of the inP process. Typically, at regional level this includes: Healthcare, Education, Municipalities (also in rural areas). The scope in this segment is broader as not only top and middle management can participate when implementing the instruments, but also personnel closer to the citizen needs, like teachers, nurses, or clerical staff. Very important are also those working on supporting departments like IT, legal, procurement or innovation units.			

On the private side are Big Buyers: businesses that by their commercial reach and purchasing power can be a *market opener* for solvers. Similar to their public counterparts, they share organizational complexity and limited experience with challenge identification. They can however be much quicker in procuring co-created solutions. As the landscape is bigger here, we select those that are more dynamic and open to new opportunities, known by the consortium or identified with support from ecosystem players. Specially within organizations that can influence areas specified in the New EU Innovation Agenda (green & digital transformation). They will be the prime subjects for the interviews for gathering Challenger relevant information. For a 360-view, all voices are invited to the focus groups and workshops: early adopters, yes-but, laggards, road blockers.

Local ecosystem innovative players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Startups/SMEs/Entrepreneurs HEIs (eg. Universities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society and end users. Intermediate organizations (e.g. clusters) Innovation experts. 	MEDIUM
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This target group includes the key innovation players from across the quadruple helix, including citizens. Efforts will be made to include rural areas, to ensure gender equality and inclusivity. A non-exhaustive list includes:

- Innovation-based solvers*: especially Small and Medium Enterprises and start-ups.
- Research-based solvers*: e.g. universities and RTOs.
- End users*: Capable of proposing unmet needs and participating in the co-creation.
- Ecosystem supporters*: Candidates to deliver business support, specialised services, and added value.

As above, they will be consulted to identify areas of competitive advantage for sustainable economic growth, needs, and opportunities for setting up innovation procurement regional policies.

External policymakers and funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Commission. National policy makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National managers of public funding. Private funders. 	MEDIUM
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Policy Makers: Provide heads of units and policy officers (EIC, DGs CONNECT, RTD, GROW & REGIO) with policy-oriented recommendations and invite them to 2 workshops. They will be interviewed in Task 3.2.

At national level, those authorities in charge of innovation policies and programmes will be also informed.

Funders: Officers with knowledge and influence in public funding programmes like Horizon Europe, Cohesion Policy instruments, the Recovery & Resilience Facility or Next Generation Europe, at EU/national/regional level.

Of special interest are potential private funders interested in the improvement of public services as part of their marketing efforts, e.g. market access departments within Pharma or big IT companies. Under the right, ethical conditions, they have funded innovation initiatives in the past and could do so in this context as well. Likewise, venture capital, accelerators/incubators (e.g. [Wayra](#), [Startup Wise Guys](#), [Systematic](#)) could also play that role and/or provide value added business services to the Solvers. The work in Task 3.3 directly foster synergies with current and other funding sources.

Other regions, Experts and Multipliers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regions interested in the project Innovation & procurement experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networks. EU resources 	LOW
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The project will leverage the consortium's networks aligned with our objectives at national/EU level, including:

- Networks from previous EU projects: inDemand, eCare, innoBuyer, Procure4Health
- Innovation & procurement experts: ZENIT, Empirica, SILO, Zabala, Corvers, PWC or Bird&Bird
- Networks: ERRIN, EURADA, Health Proc,
- EU resources: EIT KICs, DIHs and NCPs

The successive sections present the project's expected results, expected outcomes, and expected impact, charting pathways for the results of project activities to generate wider outcomes within 3 years post project and wider impact within 5 years post project.

2.1.2 Expected results.

Result1: Connection of innovative ecosystems and inclusion of all players.

The first phase of PREPARE is an extensive and close interaction and connection of the local ecosystem to gather information that enables the preparation of sound Joint Programme and the Action Plans of the second phase.

For inP purposes our high focus target groups are: stakeholders within public authorities, public and private procurers and local ecosystem innovative players. We will identify Champions within those for when the time comes for launching initial/low hanging fruit opportunities.

The interaction with these targets is designed to ensure inclusiveness and diversity with the involvement of all innovation actors, from across the quadruple helix. As a result, it maximises the value of innovation to all, and ensures equitable diffusion of its benefits. Pay attention to gender equality objectives, rural areas and engages new,

less well-represented stakeholders and less advanced innovation territories. As an added value our outreach favours the interconnection among them, for future unintended collaboration opportunities.

The expected results of the connection are to understand i) Level of awareness on inP, ii) Current knowledge and capacitation need iii) Needs and motivation to actively engage iv) Opportunities and potential barriers and v) expectations. Methods for gathering information: interviews, focus groups, workshops, and surveys.

Finally, we will also tap on the experience of external experts to acquire state of the art knowledge on inP.

Expected Results KPIs	Average per region
Stakeholders: Number of interviews and total participants	10 / 16
Stakeholders: Number of focus groups and total participants	2 / 30
Public and private procurers: Number of interviews / total participants	20 / 32
Public and private procurers: Number of focus groups / total participants	2 / 30
Innovation players: Number of interviews / total participants	10 / 16
Innovation players: Number of focus groups / total participants	2 / 30
Innovation players: Number of workshops / total participants	1 / 45
Total survey responses	120
Number of Champions identified.	25
Total segmented contact list (mapping result)	300
Total regional actors impacted by dissemination.	2000
Outreach with experts: Number of interviews and total participants (per consortium)	5 / 8
Outreach with experts: Number of focus groups and total participants (per consortium)	1 / 15

Result2: Joint planning and policy alignment.

Based on the insights gathered in Result 1, we conduct an assessment at regional and consortium level. As a result, we produce one Joint Plan and five Action Plans (one common plus one per region). The Joint Programme sets the strategy while the Action Plans operationalize it post-project stating the objectives, key activities, roles/responsibilities, expected results/timeline, key enabling policies and available funding sources. They aim to strengthen the performance and capacity of their innovation ecosystems, their efficient interconnection, and their alignment to jointly tackle challenges and needs identified by Public Procurers and big buyers.

The results of the PREPARE actions and learning will be also used to promote new policy at regional, national and EU level, with the creation of knowledge assets on the state of the art of inP, policy recommendation in the form of a position paper, the organization of policy workshops and webinars to disseminate resources, findings and calls to actions. We will create and update an open Knowledge Base with the documentation and assets we produce.

Expected Results KPIs	Per consortium
Number of policy workshops organised at EC level	2
Number of policy officers engaged	>40
Number of policy relevant materials made available in the Knowledge Base	>60
inP policy position papers	1
Webinars/participants explaining our policy recommendations	2/120
Accesses to knowledge base (visits)	2000
Joint Programme defined	1
Action Plans drafted	4

Result3: Synergies with funding opportunities.

Long-term Innovation procurement implementation requires funding in two senses: i) Economic support of the co-creation between Challengers and Solver, with the participation of Supporters; ii) continuous activity of the Instrument Manager infrastructure to manage the inP calls and acquire know-how to improve them over time.

Partners will analyse public regional, national and EU funding opportunities for both of them and identify those that are more promising for short-term launch of initiatives as part of the Action Plan. See listing of already identified funding sources in Section 1.2. For financing co-creation, business support and future commercialization, we will actively liaise and investigate value-exchange models with investors (seed, business angels and venture capital), accelerators and the Big Buyers themselves. These sources are documented and included in the Knowledge base.

Expected Results KPIs	Average per region
Number of private potential investors engaged.	25
Number of regional funds identified and assessed	8
Number of national funds/calls identified and assessed	6/3

Number of EU funds/calls identified and assessed	8/4
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Result4: Cooperation among European territories and networks

PREPARE will establish the Network of inP ecosystems to promote cross-fertilisation and facilitate knowledge transfer. Much as the Joint Programme provides a key reference on inP, the Network provides a platform to establish synergistical collaboration between different regional innovation valleys, and multilaterally learn from practical experience. This represents a major asset for moderate/emerging innovator regions to draw upon lessons learned from stronger innovators in inP and establish collaboration with innovation leaders/strong innovators.

The very regions included in the PREPARE project, reflect this dynamic and will initially form the bedrock of the Network to disseminate project results. In the mid-term, the Network has significant potential to further enhance reference documents (e.g. evolving the Joint Programme) and to scale to strengthen and expand cooperation with innovation ecosystems worldwide interested in adopting inP. To help identify and scale the Network, we leverage partners' close connection with EU associations that promote innovation among regions ERRIN and EURADA (small budget devoted to them) and the partner's membership (see Section 3.2) of KICs, EITs, and sister projects.

Expected Results KPIs	Total values
Number of regions contacted	>60
Number of regions engaged and onboarded into the PREPARE network	>30
From those, within moderate' and 'emerging innovators' regions	>12
Number of regions benefiting from capacitation actions during project life	>25
Number of persons from the network attending/consuming PREPARE content	>300

2.1.3 Expected outcomes

The project will strongly contribute to expected outcomes of the call defined in the work programme by (i) implementing the Action Plans and (ii) cross-regional collaboration activities of the Joint Programme. The implicit timeframe for these contributions is after implementing the Action Plans, 3 years after completion of PREPARE.

Outcome1: Open dialogue towards more dynamic, inclusive and connected innovation ecosystems via-co-planning, co-implementation and co-investments around areas outlined in the New European Agenda.

Relevant expected results: Result 1 & 2 & 3

Innovation procurement is identified as a dedicated action of the [New European Agenda](#) under its second flagship. As a result of our open dialogue within our ecosystems, and the roll out of the Joint Programme and the Action Plans ecosystem players will be capable to participate in the implemented inP instruments, through the (i) match-making Challengers with Solvers, (ii) mobilising Supporters to deliver and monetize value exchange. Stakeholders and Players will acquire capacities and establishing inP processes for continuous challenge-driven co-creation to address unmet needs/market failures, funded by co-investments from multiple public and private sources.

Overall, post-project outcomes will better align our regional innovation ecosystems, catalysing inclusion and facilitating collaboration between complementary innovation actors to deliver mutual benefits for those involved – and for society. Those includes: (i) for Solvers: activate new commercial/research opportunities, activate new public/private innovation funding; (ii) for Challengers: better address major needs/challenges, leverage innovation results to improve products/ services, address budget limitations through better value for money; (iii) for Supporters: systematise support role and monetise expertise; (iv) for Citizens: improved services and products, better value from limited public funding; (v) for Regions: “bottom-up” guidance (and a better understanding of system-level interactions that impact innovation journeys) to shape enabling policies, improved regional growth and employment. Our structured and systematic approach in leveraging market challenges to create new business opportunities is exported to other EU regions through EU-wide collaboration, particularly via the Network, promoting uptake and synergies between cross-border regions.

Expected Outcomes KPIs (for 3 year period after project end)	Average per region
Public Procurer organizations/personnel mobilized	10 / 50
Public Big Buyers/personnel mobilized	24 / 120
challenges identified	>320
Calls/challenges selected and managed by regional inP instruments	>3/24
Calls/challenges managed by other sources of funding	>4/8
solvers proposing solutions/selected and supported	>180 / 36
supporters delivering value	12
successfully co-created solutions	≥25
successfully adopted solutions by the challengers	≥12

Outcome2: Prepare joint long-term programmes and action plans fostering collaboration, common innovation-support activities, and the creation of common knowledge assets...enhancing synergies and complementarities ...and encouraging the alignment of their innovation policies and...the new European Innovation Agenda.

Relevant Expected Results: Result 1 & 2 & 3.

The Joint Programme and Action Plans created during the project directly contribute to the goals of the New European Innovation Agenda in enabling a new wave of demand-driven innovation in Europe: (i) strengthen connections between innovation players on the regional level, promoting inclusivity and ensuring complementarities between different expertise and resources; (ii) strengthen synergistic cross-border collaboration particularly for the benefit of regions lagging behind; (iii) improve access to finance for (deep tech) start-ups and scale-ups by mobilising yet untapped sources of public procurement to support innovation; (iv) create new innovation opportunities, mobilising (and retaining) talent, to harness deep tech in addressing societal challenges; (v) strengthen EU industrial leadership and resilience across multiple sectors and resilience, e.g. lower dependence on critical materials; (vi) improve the policy framework to enable innovation investments and scaling of deep tech start-ups/SMEs. Our approach is also highly attuned with toolbox identified in the Partnerships for Regional Innovation Playbook which recognises public procurement for innovation as a strategic measure.

inP instrument implementation at regional level is still in its infancy, and the development and implementation of enabling policies are important pre-requisites to realise its full potential as an impact-supportive innovation framework. We aim to kick-start a virtuous, self-reinforcing circle: (i) operationalize a participatory approach to inP as a promising innovation framework that closely involves a wide spectrum of relevant players in regional innovation ecosystems through the Joint Programme, (ii) use this knowledge to craft regionally-tailored Action Plans based on regional needs and contextual conditions to actualise inP with benefits to all, (iii) foster complementary linkages between regions to support collaboration, reiteration, continuous learning, and capacitation (Joint Programme), (iv) foster linkages with wider innovation ecosystem (e.g. EIC) to strengthen flows of information, knowledge, and talent; (v) in the long-term build a culture of inP within innovation ecosystems and drive continuous improvement through pooling knowledge and experience. The outcomes of PREPARE and its implementation will take a large stride in this direction.

PREPARE's Joint Programme will generate a roadmap to inP and collaboration between regions and contribute important common policy related knowledge assets: state of the art of inP, a set of policy recommendations, participation in policy consultations/advisory, access to best practices/lessons learned via the Knowledge base. By tailoring these strategic assets to regional specificities, and testing them through implementation, we will both improve/validate our Joint Programme and develop an empirical knowledge base available to all regions: i.e. "soft knowledge" assets such as best practices to inspire commitment and buy-in across innovation ecosystems, measures to promote inclusion/gender equality, lessons learned through trial and error/trial and success, etc. The Network will provide an important platform for EU regions to harness inP as a valuable tool to generate conducive conditions for deep tech innovation, helping them harness the new opportunities delivered by this new wave of technology to boost regional growth and development.

Expected Outcomes KPIs (for 3 year period after project end)	Average per region
InP offices in regional Instrument Manager organization.	1
Personnel involved in that inP office.	≥5
Percentage of innovation funding for inP vs total innovation funds	≥8%
Regional policy initiatives impacted by inP principles	≥4
EU Policy advisory boards joined	≥5
Number of regional stakeholders and players engaged in EU-level policy advisory groups	≥20

Outcome3: Foster synergies with other EU funding programmes.

Relevant expected results: Result 1 & 2 & 3 & 4

As a result of the study and assessment of funding sources, PREPARE regions will strongly leverage EU funding programmes and public/ private funding for implementing their Action Plans, and in the long run, for maintaining and strengthening inP instruments and delivering value to their ecosystems. To ensure close collaboration between the 4 PREPARE regions, we recognise the significant opportunity from future calls under Horizon EIE and I3 programmes and others. Nonetheless, this is "a nice to have" rather than a "must have", and Action Plans will be implemented regardless. The Action Plans will identify and assess existing funding sources to which regions have access (Cohesion Policy instruments, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, national or regional public funds, private funds, etc.) to implement different parts of the Action Plans in each region. We include regions with higher and lower innovation scores and will demonstrate how existing funding can enhance access to innovation in both, thus

showing inP can contribute to reducing territorial inequalities in access to innovation support. In the longer-term, our policy advocacy (started by activities in the project) will shape local, national and European policies to be more enabling for inP.

Expected Outcomes KPIs (for 3 year period after project end)	Total values
Number of joint proposals submitted to external sources to implement Action Plans	>6
Increase on innovation support from mobilising new funding sources	>8%
% of funding mobilized to implement the full ambition of Action Plans	≥95%
Own money mobilized by Funders to support inP Action Plans	> €8 M
Own money mobilized by Solvers & challengers	> €8 M
Number of private funders contacted/mobilized	20 / 4

Outcome4: Include key innovation players from across the quadruple helix, all EU territories, and rural areas

Relevant expected results: Result4.

During the data gathering phase in the first half of PREPARE, we engaged key innovation players from across the quadruple helix in each region. The engagement was inclusive-by-design so to also incorporate rural and usually less involved players views with a gender balance perspective.

Inherent to our approach was the assessment of the needs, barriers, and knowledge. To provide a solution to them as well as to foster buy-in and participation for future initiatives, the Action Plans incorporate dissemination and capacitation initiatives at two levels: regional and international.

At regional level capacitation initiatives will focus first on stakeholders, public procurers, big buyers and potential investors. Funding sources identified in Result3 will be leveraged to cover the expenses of trainers and logistics. At EU level, the Network will provide the seed to foster know-how acquisition on inP implementation policies by regions from across the EU (and beyond), including ones with lower innovation scores or large rural areas. This is also an opportunity to provide economic means to Supporters, like promoting the PREPARE regions as references and Key Opinion Leaders in the topic to be leveraged in new collaboration opportunities. As an added value, participating regions will exchange and collaborate with each other and contribute to the Network to realise complementarities, strengthening and expanding cross-regional collaboration and cross-fertilisation.

Expected Outcomes KPIs (for 3 year period after project end)	Total values
Regional capacitation initiatives delivered	≥12
Regional individuals benefitting from capacitation	≥140
EU capacitation initiatives delivered	>10
EU people benefitting from capacitation	>160
regions that acquire learnings for their own policy initiatives	>30
non-PREPARE regions defining inP strategies.	≥20

2.1.4 Project expected impacts.

The project will strongly contribute to expected impacts of the call defined in the work programme through continued operations (and evolution) of established inP innovation ecosystems and through proactive facilitation of uptake to other regions. The implicit timeframe is 5 years after the completion of having executed the Action Plans.

Impact1. Interconnected, inclusive, and more efficient innovation ecosystems across the EU to tackle societal challenges. Foster more inclusive and gender equal innovation ecosystems.

Relevant expected outcomes: Outcome1, Outcome2, Outcome3.

PREPARE and follow up activities will create a web of strong linkages within regional innovation ecosystems and between them (see Impact 2). Our approach to inP, in effect, creates a streamlined “innovation pipeline” through better ecosystem alignment and coordination to increase deep tech SMEs’: **Access to finance**, leveraging (public/private) procurement spending to support innovation and strengthen linkages to investors; **Access to knowledge**, via identifying unmet needs/challenges and connecting to valuable support services; **Access to resources**, greater access to research/corporate testing facilities through collaborative goal-oriented innovation; **Access to markets**, through a “secured” first buyer highly interested in innovation results. Benefits are also delivered to other stakeholders/innovation players as described under Outcome 1, to incentivise perpetual collaboration. Ecosystem linkages within regions are strengthened and new ones are created by the Action Plans, leveraging public/private procurement funding as a demand-driven engine for innovation.

We recognise that inequalities in innovation ecosystems are caused by system level biases in terms of relationships (big public organizations vs startups), which will be identified and assessed courtesy of our systems-thinking approach. These are major themes to be addressed in the Joint Programme and Action Plans: e.g. problem definition

to reflect different social and gender needs, closer coordination between suppliers and public innovation support/public procurement, awareness of equity issues in innovation support instruments, etc.

In the large picture, inP generates a mutually beneficial triple win for the entire ecosystem: (i) economic/employment benefits from higher rates of commercialisation by Solvers, (ii) greater uptake of targeted innovations by Challengers, and (iii) better budget utilisation for public services through efficiency gains of solutions. In the long-run, inP will gain a reputation for success, its processes will be improved through iterative implementation, which will further hone its potential to address significant market and societal challenges.

Expected Impact KPIs (for 5 year period after Action Plans)	Total values
Total regional innovation budget mobilised in PREPARE regions for inP	Average of $\geq 8\%$ in year 5
New regional policy instruments adopted that enable inP	All 4 PREPARE regions
Lower/equal expenditure per citizen in PREPARE regions with higher satisfaction in public services provided for adopted solutions to challenges.	0-5% lower expenditure; >10% higher satisfaction
Increase in regional digitalisation and lower environmental impact	>5% / >1%
Higher growth of employment in SMEs and deep tech startups participating in PREPARE follow up inP initiatives.	+5%
Lower failure rates and higher revenues of startups in in SMEs and deep tech startups participating in PREPARE follow up inP initiatives compared to European averages	>15% / >10%
Greater gender balance in participation of inP programmes, and women-led public procurement winners	Improvement of participation rates of $\geq 20\%$ in year 5 compared to baseline

Impact2. Enhance cross-border network connectivity & inter-regional collaboration of regional innovation valleys by reinforcing their capacity to create, reshore, and renew European value chains ...

Relevant expected outcomes: Outcome2.

The project "prepares the ground" for the first large scale implementation of inP in 4 very different regions – which will serve as an important precedent and reference for other regions. In turn, it implements the collaborative structure and key activities to catalyse cross pollination and knowledge transfer with other regions.

To promote knowledge transfer and enable replication, a collaborative structure with a long-term perspective is established by the Network under the vision (and activities) of the Joint Programme. We are aware that natural diffusion will not suffice and that dissemination must be proactively accelerated, to which end we mobilise our consortium links to procurements authorities/clusters in established networks from other projects (e.g. InnoBuyer, Procure4Health, dRural, HealthChain, etc.) and from relevant European umbrella organisations/forums (e.g. EHPPA, EUPF, etc.). We will identify suitable candidates to lead their regions and coordinate the ecosystems based on defined criteria, and identify EU-level funding to support planning activities (e.g. defining own Strategies, Action Plans, and participating in activities within the Network and others).

Cross-regional collaboration is key to realising the potential impact of inP to contribute to the significant challenges of the twin transition, as well as other key social challenges, leveraging deep tech to overcome current trade-offs and generate new efficiencies/possibilities. Pooling cross-regional resources and honing our approach through joint lessons learned are instrumental, with particular value to enable innovation in regions with lower innovation performance (both European and international) as explained under Impact 3 and 4.

Expected Impact KPIs (for 5 year period after Action Plans)	Total values
Regions in the Network preparing and rolling out Action Plans based on the PREPARE Joint Programme, in the EU	≥ 10
Network collaborative contributions to relevant EU policy consultations	≥ 8 joint contributions provided

Impact3. Reducing territorial inequalities in access to innovation support.

Relevant expected outcomes: Outcome3.

In our experience in line with prevalent literature (e.g. [JRC, 2017](#); [EIC, 2020](#); etc.), major limitations to innovation stem from lack access to finance, knowledge, markets, and technology/resources. inP has a major advantage as an innovation framework in that it seeks to "make use of what is there" by improving synergistic interlinkages and developing new capacities. By leveraging cross-regional linkages, this is of large value to reduce territorial inequalities within regions and between regions. The potential of greater efficacy is further enhanced by cross-regional collaboration initially set-out in Joint Programme and further evolved via established governance processes of the Network, and the joint knowledge assets available on the Knowledge Base. As we include two regions with lower innovation scores as a part of the PREPARE, we will identify unique challenges and issues that do not apply to regions with higher innovation scores. Finally, inter-regional collaboration activities scale, the value of access to knowledge/resources will grow in accordance with the network effects, acting as a bridge for innovators to access

valuable resources: knowledge/skills, experimentation facilities, (specialized) support services, etc. This will overcome inherent limitations of less developed ecosystems and boost their overall growth potential.

Expected Impact KPIs (for 5 year period after Action Plans)	Total values
Faster growth in innovation procurement support access in regions with lower impact scores than higher, demonstrating convergence	+25% faster growth rates
Relative growth in value of innovation procurement support services between regions	+15% growth

Impact4. Strengthen and expand cooperation between innovation ecosystems worldwide.

Relevant expected outcomes: Outcome4.

The consortium is committed to inP as a major strategic direction, and to leading/animating the Network to help other regions uptake inP. The collaborative tools and activities initially defined in PREPARE's Joint Programme will evolve to meet the long-term needs of the Network. The Network's governance will be directly enabling to this end, supporting evolution through experience of regions implementing inP; allowing innovation players in different regions to connect, exchange knowledge, and to leverage or establish new collaborative activities. Transferability is integrated by design, with the insights and experiences of PREPARE partners (and others) readily available to other regions both within Europe and outside. The Network will expand internationally in the mid-term leveraging consortium links to South America, EU Accession countries, Central Asia, etc. As a key Network activity, we will identify and promote synergy between inP and External Action activities for Neighbourhood countries, Pre-accession assistance for candidate countries, EuropeAid for global communities. These insights (as well as key reference documents and best practices) will be available in the Knowledge base and via Network peer exchanges.

Expected Impact KPIs (for 5 year period after Action Plans)	Total values
Regions in the Network adopting inP based on the PREPARE Joint Programme, internationally	≥15
International regions participating in activities defined in the Joint Programme	≥30

2.1.5 Barriers and framework conditions

Barriers & requirements	How we address them
Social	
Poor linkages and lack of trust between actors	Our process is driven by participatory engagement to study the innovation ecosystems, seeking commitment/buy-in while with stakeholders and innovation players. We stress benefits to this end, seeking to build trust and joint visions through co-development of Action Plans. On the cross-border level, we engage innovation intermediaries (Policy Makers and Supporters) for capacity building to facilitate participation of regional players, drawing on local knowledge and networks.
Preference for business-as-usual among stakeholders & innovation actors	
Economic	
Funding and budget limitations to implement project results	Action Plans will seek synergies between existing funding instruments. The alignment to financial opportunities already available to the regions, and the potential award of competitive opportunities at EU and national level shall enable the acquisition of funding to fuel the deployment of the planned actions.
Significant innovation financing needs	Linking SME innovation and research funding with public procurement creates a pipeline between experimentation and the first buyer, addressing a significant barrier to scaling-up and commercialisation. In addition, our approach promotes collaborations (regional and cross border) to realise synergies between innovation players – pooling resources and gaining access to new markets.
Regulatory	
Cross-border differences in regulatory regimes stifle cross-border innovation potential	The Joint Programme will consider the regulatory differences and provide collaborative mechanisms between innovation ecosystems to identify and address them. We recognise a key role for Supporters and other networking agents as cross-border innovation catalysts via the Network of inP ecosystems.
Policy limitations to coordination across funding instruments	inP is driven by vision-based dialogue between stakeholders and innovation players, seeking to identify synergies to benefit the innovation ecosystem. There are clear framework conditions and limitations to this extent in each context. Our approach has an inherent long-term perspective, aiming to demonstrate inP's potential, promote knowledge exchange, advocate for conducive policies, and build trust with

	local stakeholder/innovation players towards developing an inP culture required for mature inP innovation ecosystems.
Technical	
Different digital systems and work processes across procurers and across borders limit addressable market	inP directly promotes hands-on collaboration between Solvers and end-users/Challengers, to facilitate innovation driven by user-needs, and suited to current systems and work processes. The network of inP ecosystems helps bridge innovators to end-users in other locations, to allow for customisation at various points of the innovation pipeline.

2.2 Dissemination, exploitation and communication.

2.2.1 Plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities.

A Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (DEP) will be developed. Its objectives are: i) Raise awareness among regional, national and EU targets defined in Section 2.1 ii) support the engagement of individuals of stakeholders, innovation players and experts; iii) make openly accessible the PREPARE knowledge assets (knowledge base) and documentation iv) recruit audiences to the dissemination initiatives like webinars and workshops v) design and validate the sustainability actions for future exploitation.

At the kick-off meeting all partners appoint a Communication and Dissemination Committee (C&D), composed of one contact per partner, in charge of coordinating the communication, recruiting partner staff to deliver quality content and leverage each partner's communication channels to multiply the project messages. The Committee oversees tracking the dissemination activity and results by making use of the appropriate tools per channel. The tracked indicators are reviewed. In case of underperformance, it proposes corrective measures to increase impact. The first version of the DEP, due Month 2, will have a major focus on the Dissemination and Communication activities detailed below. By mid-project an updated version will improve initial planning and create sustainability-oriented strategies and action points. The focus of the final version at project end is the exploitation routes as a consortium and per individual partner. The initial draft of the plan will be reviewed and updated every 2 months.

2.2.1.1 Dissemination materials, channels, and events.

The dissemination part of the plan describes the materials and channels to build effective awareness and generate traction among the target groups.

MATERIALS	
Knowledge assets and project documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All target groups
<p>PREPARE will make available several assets, including the two key ones: i) state-of-the-art on innovation procurement and ii) a positioning paper for improving innovation procurement policies. The Joint Programme and Action Plans are also included in this category.</p> <p>Each asset will be formatted to address different segments and dissemination channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report: Document in pdf format with full content. Executive summary. Concise presentation of the main insights in PPT format. Web summary: Motivating text to access the above resources from the project web site. Social media posts: A selection of insights optimized for the consumption in these channels. <p>Due to the expected wide dissemination, partners will implement a quality assurance and allocated economic resources for professional formatting and translation to local languages of common work.</p>	
DIGITAL CHANNELS	
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All target groups
<p>After the release of each asset, an open webinar will be organized to promote their consumption at EU level. Partners will leverage their own channels to reproduce the project-based dissemination, which focus on the contacts acquired during project execution. Besides, a cherry-pick selection of multipliers like experts, relevant associations (ERRIN and EURADA), sister projects and regions in the PREPARE network, and other multipliers will be contacted to request their support in the recruitment.</p>	
Knowledge Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All target groups
<p>The Knowledge Base is the online space where project documentation and external sources are structured for convenient navigation and access. It will present the information with self-explanatory file names under an easy-to-understand folder structure. Tools like OneDrive or Dropbox will be explored to manage it.</p> <p>It will be curated by TBM for quality assurance and updated as new documentation is produced/found.</p>	
EVENTS	
Regional presentation of the Joint Programme and Action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional stakeholders and innovation players

Each action plan will be publicly presented at regional level, introduced by a senior officer from a regional authority participating in the execution of the project. With the support of its press office, there will be an invitation to the media (press, TV, etc) a following press release and dissemination through the regional agencies participating in the project. Stakeholders and ecosystem players will be invited to attend, and adapted information will be shared with them via email after the event.

Policy workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers and funders at EU level.
<p>Two policy workshops (mid-term and project end) will be organized in Brussels taking advantage of the consortium meetings. Target group EC policymakers will be recruited and invited to attend with the collaboration of our project officer and the EIC. In the first one the state-of-the-art asset will be presented followed by an open dialog to comment on findings and acquire insights towards the upcoming programme and action plans. Besides, partners will propose themselves for engaging in direct participation in the innovation policy-making frameworks mentioned in the New EU Innovation Agenda (listed in Section 1.2). PREPARE policy proposal asset will be presented in the second workshop, inviting previous and new policy officers with the direct support of ERRIN and EURADA. On top of these workshops, regional and national policy makers will receive documentation in adequate formats. Partners will promote their discussion in individual or collective meetings depending on the interest from the recipient(s).</p>	

2.2.1.2 Exploitation of results

An important part of the DEP are the Exploitation strategy and measures after project end. It states i) the target groups that stand to benefit; ii) exploitation routes for the beneficiaries, the consortium as a whole, and per individual partner; iii) the general terms of use and relevant IPR provisions (see Section 1.2.1); and iv) means and procedures for the exploitation of the assets and a roadmap to this end.

As a consortium, the major exploitation route are:

- i) **Implementation of the regional action plans.** Each plan will have multiple dimensions, some critical ones are:
 1. Launch of a yearly innovation procurement instrument, assigning adequate resources to its implementation. The beneficiaries are the regional challengers, solvers and supporters that participate in the instruments.
 2. Capacitate stakeholders and critical innovation players like Public Procurers and Big Buyers, after the analysis of the detected gaps.
 3. Advance policies: Incorporate relevant ideas into regional policies, in particular RIS3 and PRI and join EU advisory boards (mentioned in Section 1).
 4. Allocate enough regional funding as to make the above sustainable over the next 3 years.
- ii) **Application to new sources of funding.** Both for the co-creation between Challengers and Solvers, with the participation of Supporters; ii) Instrument Manager infrastructure. The key sources been described in Section 1.2 will become the primary target. Partners will create a timeline of execution, with a responsible head for the ones with a positive decision for application.
- iii) **Nurture a network of regions.** The seed of the network will be those that expressed an interest during the partner search for building this proposal (14), the ones that participate in sister projects (listed in Section 3.2) and known contacts from the partners. They will be contacted and invited to join the network, so they can get privileged access to the assets and dissemination activities. At least 2 joint telcos will be organized to better understand their capacitation needs for enhancing their own policies, new funding opportunities of common interest and how can we jointly push policy forward at EU level. When relevant, other experts and multipliers can be requested to provide their input/support.
- iv) **Put in value the assets.** These include the inP knowledge assets produced during the project, the knowledge base, the insight repository, and the relational capital acquired during project execution.

Exploitation routes for the consortium partner types are:

- a) Funders: capture resources for new sources of funding and leverage current funds (ERDF, Structural Funds) to be able to invest economic resources for the yearly deployment of their regional action plan.
- b) Policy Makers: Improve regional policy (RIS3 and PRI) and rethink current instruments based on the learnings from demand-driven co-creation approaches.
- c) Instrument Managers: implement the new policy instruments end to end: from the identification of challenges from Public procurers and Big buyers, selection of solvers, support of the co-creation and evaluation of the results. They will also provide feedback to Funders and Policy Makers for policy optimization after each iteration.
- d) Supporters: Unlike Public Administration, they need to investigate a sustainable business model that finances their activities. At regional level, they can support the execution of the instruments as subcontractors of the Instrument Managers and deliver capacitation to stakeholders or players. Out of the region, they can provide services to members of the PREPARE network (including proposal preparation of funding calls) and others leveraging the project assets. Finally, they can help Big Buyers and new Funders to set up their own programmes.

Initial exploitation hypothesis and service models will be validated with members of the ecosystem and project network via interviews. After the feedback an exploitation strategy and roadmap will be developed, to be executed at consortium and individual partner level after project end.

2.2.1.3 Communication Plan

Communication activities involve specific measures for promoting the project and its results. The preferred distribution of project information is digitally-based (newsletters and SS.MM. content including videos, tweets and posts), though exceptionally roll-ups or paper-based material may be produced.

Campaigns will be designed and implemented in 'waves' with the mission to generate awareness; support recruitment for initiatives; and disseminate results, assets, and key learnings. The measures to address targets are:

BRANDING & COMMUNICATION MATERIAL	
Logo & corporate image	● ALL Stakeholders
PREPARE brand identity will be designed to appeal primarily to the High priority target groups. Its logo will be designed to be easily grasped by this audience. MS Office and PowerPoint templates are created based on the corporate image, as well as the email templates to be used in the mailing list.	
Slide Decks, project introduction material and dissemination aids	● ALL Stakeholders
Slide decks complement the website as 'Point of Entry', especially for interviews, focus groups and workshops. A first version is always produced in English, to be later translated to each local language. The decks will be customized per target group by the partner in charge of driving the interaction at local level, and evolved over the project lifetime. They will also be created for EU policy makers and the Network (potential) members.	
Infographics & Banners Multimedia Material	● Wide audience
Infographics and banners are eye-catching elements to quickly draw attention on our initiatives. The project graphic elements will be designed integrating them on the website, social media and newsletters. We will produce videos to have self-explanatory and appealing material for the website and social media, leveraging other available distribution channels of promotion (e.g. YouTube). Public webinars and live training modules will be recorded and made available. As regard of content, we will extensively use interview, testimonials and success stories.	
DIGITAL CHANNELS	
Project Website	● Wide audience
The website is the primary asset for promoting the activities and results to all target audiences, providing comprehensive information our objectives, the consortium, the EU contribution, relevant events and pointing at the references to resources. It will directly point to the Knowledge Base for centralized access. The website will be ready by M02 and regularly updated. It will be available at least 3 years after project end.	
Social Media	● Wide audience
Social media channels – LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube- will post regular content to spread out news, recruit for webinars and open initiatives, as well as results of project advancement including the interaction with the local ecosystems and policy makers.	
Mailing list	● ALL Stakeholders
e-mail will be a key channel to recruitment and follow up of target groups. Given the duration of the project, it is the most reliable and effective way to reach local stakeholders and players. To be EU GDPR-compliant, partners' contact databases will not be shared. Rather, messages are commonly agreed and then released per partner within their own list. When possible, email campaigns will be as segmented as possible to avoid spamming. Those willing to do so, will join the project mailing list so they can receive (targeted) messages over project advancement and news. These contacts will be managed using an email manager that is EU GDPR-compliant and following the instructions from the Data Management Plan.	
Communication KPIs	Total values
# of unique visits to the consortium webpage	>1000
# of contacts self-registered to the mailing list	>20
# of followers in Twitter + LinkedIn accounts	>300
# Twitter + LinkedIn posts using specific project hashtags	>50
# webinars attendees	>180

Summary

SPECIFIC NEEDS	EXPECTED RESULTS	S & E & C MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of easy-to-implement tools for public procurers to tender and adopt early market innovative solutions to solve specific needs ● Lack of awareness and motivation among the public procurers about the benefits of the inP ● Lack of procurer skills and knowledge to identify their needs and formulate clear challenges to be solved by innovative solutions. ● Lack of SME skills to offer solutions to procurers. ● Lack of collaboration between public procurers & SMEs in co-designing innovative solutions ● Lack of know-how and inP strategies at EU regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Connection of ecosystems and inclusion of all innovation players</u>, incl.: 100 stakeholders interviewed & 8 focus groups, 128 innovation players interviewed & 4 workshops; 480 survey responses, 32 experts interviewed & 4 focus groups ● <u>Assessment of obstacles, needs & opportunities, and co-planning for regional growth</u>: 1 Joint Programme, 4 Action Plans ● <u>Synergies with funding opportunities identified</u>: 48 Big Buyers and 60 investors engaged, 16 national funding instruments assessed, 16 EU funding instruments assessed. ● <u>Policy advancement on inP</u>: 2 policy workshops engaging >40 policy officers, 1 policy paper ● <u>Cooperation among EU territories & networks</u>: >30 regions engaged in Network, >25 benefitting from capacitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≠ <u>Coordination of Action Plans</u>, presented in PREPARE regions, provides a clear roadmap to operationalise inP in these regions, identifying funding instruments and detailing post project activities. ≠ <u>Network of inP ecosystems</u>: Brings together a trans-border network to collaborate (Joint Programme) and promote inP to other regions. ≠ <u>Capacity building & knowledge transfer</u>: Webinars and workshops held with EU and int'l regions to promote the Joint Programme. ≠ <u>Policy promotion at EU, national and regional level</u>: 2 policy workshops targeting EC/ regional policymakers, EIC, etc. ≠ <u>The Knowledge Base</u>: with key project & other documents for inP. ≠ <u>Communication & raising awareness</u>: online/offline tools to raise awareness of the project.
TARGETS	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
<p><u>Stakeholders</u>:</p> <p>Funders & Instrument Managers, Public/private procurers, regional policy makers</p> <p><u>Innovation players</u>: Solvers, Challengers, Supporters</p> <p><u>Other</u>: National & EU policy makers, Stakeholders & Inno. Players in other regions, experts & multipliers</p>	<p>After 3 years of Action Plan implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Open dialogue towards improved innovation ecosystems aligned with New European Agenda</u>: 100 public procurers and Big Buyers, 320 challenges identified, 120 funded, 480 solvers applying and 144 supported, 50 solutions adopted by challengers ● <u>Foster collaboration, common innovation support activities, and common knowledge assets in line with the New EU Innovation Agenda</u>: >4 inP offices, >8% innovation funding for inP, >8 advisory boards joined ● <u>Foster synergies with EU funding</u>: >16 proposals submitted, >8% higher innovation funding, >95% of Action Plans funded, > €8 M of own money by Solvers & challengers. ● <u>Include key innovation players across quadruple helix</u>: >120 regional personnel and >160 EU personnel benefitting from capacitation, >30 regions uptake learnings, >20 regions defining inP strategies 	<p>5 years after Action Plan implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Interconnected, inclusive and more efficient innovation ecosystems</u>: >8% of innovation budget for inP, new inP regional policies in all PREPARE regions, Lower/equal expenditure per citizen in PREPARE regions with higher satisfaction in public services provided for adopted solutions to challenges. ● <u>Enhance cross-border network connectivity & collaboration</u>: >10 new regions adopt inP based on Joint Programme in the EU, >8 regions contribute to EU policy consult. ● <u>Reduce territorial inequalities in access to innovation support</u>: +25% faster growth in regions with lower innovation scores in the Network, +15% growth in cross-regional innovation procurement services. ● <u>Strengthen & expand cooperation globally</u>: >15 Regions in the Network adopting inP based on the PREPARE Joint Programme

3 QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY #@QUA-LIT-QL@##@WRK-PLA-WP@#

3.1 Work plan and resources

Work plan structure and timing

The work plan is structured in 4 work packages.

WP1 is dedicated to Project Management activities and will last for the entirety of the project’s 12 months. It includes managing the risks, the data lifecycle and the innovation aspects of the project

WP2 will be executed during the first six months and is dedicated to acquiring the knowledge necessary to build the Joint Program. **WP3** will be executed subsequently, during the second half of the project. It consists in using the results of **WP2** to develop the Joint Program and the four localized action plans.

Finally, **WP4** gathers all the dissemination and exploitation tasks planned during the entire 12 months of the project.

The dependencies of the WPs are shown in the Pert chart.

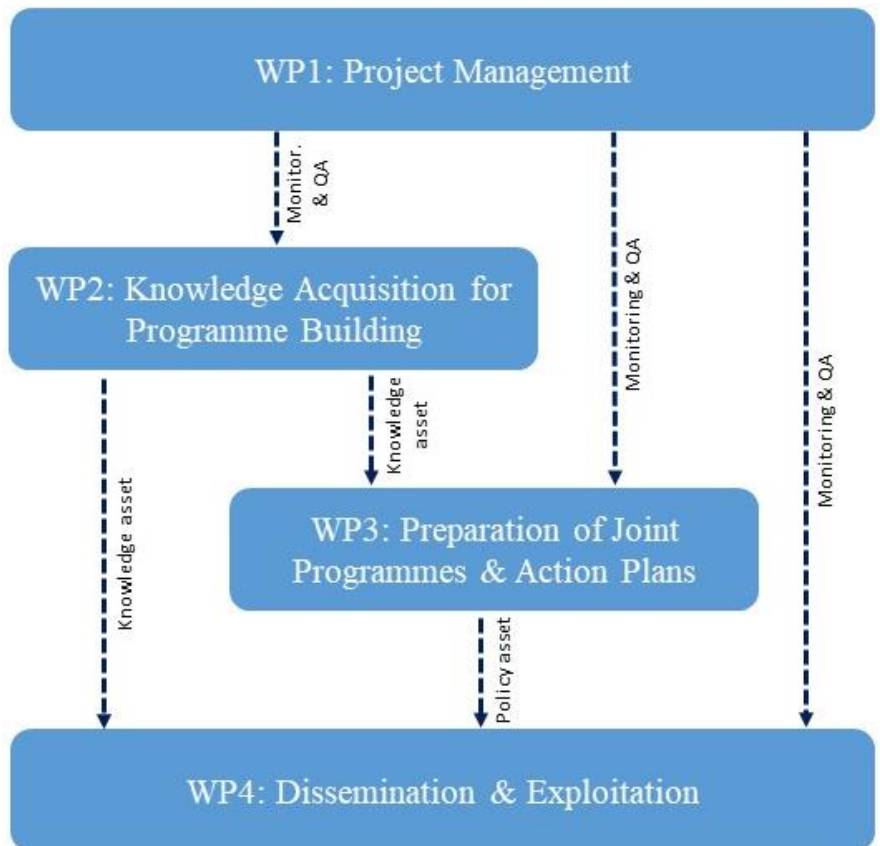


Table 3.0.1: Pert chart.

The Gantt chart below describes the Task Leadership and timeline of the project.

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
WP1: Project Management [TBM]	[Shaded]											
T1.1: Coordination & quality assurance. [TBM]	[Shaded]											
T1.2: Data, IPR, Risk and Innovation Management. [TBM]	[Shaded]											
WP2: Knowledge Acquisition for Programme Building [BOU]	[Shaded]											
T2.1: Interaction with regional innovation procurement stakeholders. [INFO]	[Shaded]											
T2.2: Open dialog with innovation players. [INSK]	[Shaded]											
T2.3: Analysis of innovation procurement policy agendas and funding sources. [BOU]	[Shaded]											
T2.4: Production of a state-of-the-art knowledge asset on innovation procurement. [ROH]	[Shaded]											
WP3: Preparation of Joint Programmes & Action Plans [RGSK]	[Shaded]											
T3.1: Development of the joint long-term program and action plans. [BIRDA]	[Shaded]											
T3.2: Policy advancement on innovation procurement. [COOU]	[Shaded]											
T3.3: Foster synergies with current and other funding sources. [INSK]	[Shaded]											
WP4: Dissemination & Exploitation [TBM]	[Shaded]											
T4.1: Dissemination and Communication. [TBM]	[Shaded]											
T4.2: Exploitation. [TBM]	[Shaded]											

Table 3.0.2: Gantt chart including the respective task and WP leaders.

Detailed work description

The following tables describe in detail the work planned during the project and the resources allocated to it.

Table 3.1a: List of work packages

WP #	Work Package Title	Lead Participant #	Lead Participant Name	Short	Person-Months	Start Month	End month
1	Project Management	1	TICBIOMED (TBM)		7	1	12
2	Knowledge Acquisition for Programme Building	7	OULUN KAUPUNKI (BOU)		38,5	1	6
3	Preparation of Joint Program & Action Plans	4	SKANE LAN (RGSK)		33	7	12
4	Dissemination & Exploitation	5	TICBIOMED (TBM)		11	1	12

Table 3.1b: Work package description

Work package number	1
Work package title	Project Management

Objectives

- To ensure a successful execution of the project, delivering the expected results within the planned timeframe.
- To comply with the Grant Agreement requirements for the project.

Description of work – WP Leader: TBM.**Task 1.1. - Coordination & quality assurance (M1-M12, Task Leader: TBM).**

This task involves coordinating and managing administrative matters and giving administrative support to all partners, prepare administrative reports for the EC, distribution of funds, ensuring compilation of project deliverables, ensuring periodic reporting and communication with EC services and project officer(s).

A six-month Interim Report, summarising the progress of the project each semester, will be prepared internally and presented to the EC. These will contain a summary of the tasks developed at each WPs and an estimation of expenditure during the semester. The official Progress Report and Final Report Documents will be generated after every period and submitted accomplishing the deadlines stated in the official guidelines of Horizon EU. This task is also responsible for continuous monitoring and management of innovation.

Task 1.2. - Data, IPR, Risk and Innovation Management (M1-M12, Task Leader: TBM).

This task will develop and update the risk registry, including identification of critical implementation risks and definition of related mitigation processes and contingency plans (*Table 3.e*). The risk registry will cover technical, innovation, project management, and exploitation risks, employing ISO 31000 risk management procedures and practices. The Data Management Plan will be created (*DI.1*) and implemented throughout the entire data lifecycle: collection, processing, generation and archiving of data in full compliance with GDPR (personal data), data security best practices, and the open science obligations of the Grant Agreement (research data). We will also make sure that all data collected during the project follows FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

Additionally, this task will address innovation management including Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) containing guidelines on how to work in accordance with the IPR provisions of the CA covering both background and foreground knowledge developed during the project.

Work package number	2
Work package title	Knowledge Acquisition for Programme Building

Objectives

- To map out the inP *stakeholders, innovation players* and experts of each region and capture from them the knowledge that will serve as basis for the Joint Programme.
- To assess the current inP state of the art at regional, national and EU levels.
- To create and open disseminate a knowledge asset on the state of the art of innovation procurement policy.

Description of work - WP Leader: BOU.**Task 2.1. - Interaction with regional innovation procurement stakeholders (M1-M5, Task Leader: INFO).**

The regional development agency of Murcia (INFO) leads the other partners with the role of *Policy Maker* (RGSK, BIRDA and COOU) in their interaction with its own regional stakeholders.

These partners agree on the target profiles of interest and identify the key targets for the preparatory interviews and the focus groups. For the interviews, INFO leads the preparation in English of the multiformat documents to be included when proposing interviews. Those act as ‘templates’ to be translated to the local language by the Policy Makers.

These partners also create the common interview scripts, segmented by stakeholder type. Partners will agree on the critical insights to be identified and how they are collected. This prior exercise is critical to ease the comparison and, above all, the latter exploitation for Programme building. Insight examples and mock interviews will be used as means to agree on granularity and a common understanding of what is important to gather.

For the focus groups, partners will collaborate on the common script for the group dynamics, the tools, and artifacts to promote participation, moderation rules and share of best practices specially among the focus group named moderators. A rapporteur will collect insights and store them in the repository.

The other partners will provide feedback on the recruitment materials, recommendations for the preparation of the interview/focus group dynamics and support the assessment of the results.

INFO will set up a calendar for recruitment and periodic internal meetings to exchange lessons learnt for subsequent interactions across the regions. After the deadline for stakeholder interaction, all partners will assess the information presented by the Policy Makers and draw clues for Programme preparation.

All project contact data will be stored in a common tool to communication management, to be managed by TBM (partner in charge of dissemination). Strict privacy (GDPR) and security measures will be put in place by-design. Insights and relevant information will be stored in the PREPARE insight repository. INFO and TBM will lead the definition of its architecture, metadata, storage platform and exploitation tools. Templates, metadata selection of tools and public resources in the knowledge base, led by TBM.

Task 2.2. - Open dialog with innovation players (M1-M5, Task Leader: INSK).

Partner Innovation Skåne (INSK) coordinates the other partners with the role of *Supporter* (TBM, BIRDA and BOU) as regional leaders in the interaction with the local ecosystem players. Due to the regional scope of the target groups, the involvement of the other partners is expected to be high specially for recruitment and analysis. This task follows a very similar conceptual approach and execution process as T2.1, with the regional leading partners agreeing on profiles, preparation of multiformat templates, insight granularity, scripts, dynamics, and assessment of results. Task leaders will be in continuous contact to exchange learnings and tips that can benefit each other's work. For all interactions, but specially for the workshop and survey, Supporters will make sure to include typically less involved participants, including rural areas, that are gender diverse.

INSK sets the governance for recruitment, deadlines and assessment period of the collected data. It will also drive the preparation of the survey in English in a dedicated online multilingual tool, to be translated by each Supporter for question presentation in local language and back for the responses to be jointly evaluated.

All partners contribute and provide feedback on the recruitment materials, recommendations for the preparation of the interview/focus groups/workshops and survey; and actively participate in the assessment of the results.

Communication tool, insight repository and knowledge base are fed with the result of the task.

Task 2.3. – Analysis of innovation procurement policy agendas and funding sources (M1-M5, TL: BOU).

Business Oulu (BOU) in close collaboration with ROH, conduct an extensive desktop research to identify resources of interest for policy and funding purposes. BOU will define the folder structure and file naming convention so that all resources stored in the Knowledge Base (in this Task and any other) are easy to locate and access.

BOU coordinates all partners in their contribution of relevant documentation in English and local language. It also makes a systematic desktop search by keyword on the internet and EC sources. More than on exhaustivity of resources, efforts will be focused on making (pieces of) information actionable for our purposes. For example, for the most important resources, BOU and ROH will prepare a fiche with the value and information relevant. As a result, key policy programmes, funding sources and competitive call opportunities will be easy to incorporate within the Joint Programme and the knowledge assets.

As with Experts, BOU collects from the partners and in open searches candidates to acquire lessons learnt, best practices and use cases. It will organize the interviews, focus group and an open webinar to crowd source insights from other experiences. BOU leads the assessment of task outputs with the other partners. Corporate communication tool, insight repository and knowledge base are updated. This information/resources will continue to be fed following this approach during the second half and during programme execution.

Task 2.4. – Production of a state-of-the-art knowledge asset on innovation procurement (M2-M6, TL: ROH).

RoHealth (ROH) in close collaboration with BOU, creates a knowledge asset that gathers the state of the art of inP at regional, national and EU levels. The asset leverages the data, information, knowledge and wisdom acquired in the previous tasks and produces a entry-level overview of the state of play of inP for the purposes of promoting policy at regional, national and EU level.

It will be leveraged in the organization of the first policy workshop in Brussels in parallel of the mid-term evaluation review. Also, ROH and BOU lead the organization of an open webinar for its wide dissemination and as an attractor for the PREPARE Network and show progress to those contacted in the previous tasks.

Objectives

- To create a Joint Program and five 3-year action plans.
- To advance policy on innovation Procurement
- To ensure the sustainability of the Joint Program and action plans beyond the project.

Description of work - WP Leader: RGSK.**Task 3.1. – Development of the joint long-term program and action plans. (M7-M12, Task Leader: BIRDA).**

BIRDA coordinates and leads the other partners with the role of *Policy Maker* (INFO, RGSK, and COOU) in leveraging the WP2 gathered information to build the foundational documents that will drive execution.

Policy Makers define first the structure of the Joint Programme and the Action Plan, which materialize our strategy and planning. In its preparation, partners will make a conscious exercise to avoid ‘paralysis because of the analysis’. The amount of information gathered in the previous phase can be overwhelming, so a prioritization exercise and methodology needs to be in place, so ready-to-go traction. When in doubt: ‘Start small but aim for snowball effect’ principle. Process starts with an assessment of information exercise to provide guidance and make informed decisions. Leverages RIS3 known tools (eg. SWOT) to support the analysis per region and as a consortium. A draft of the Programme is presented to the other partners for feedback. BIRDA will seek consensus on the table of content, assigning responsibilities and deadlines for each chapter. Once the first draft is produced, there will be an iterative quality check by the leader. When mature, professional formatting and graphs will be incorporated. A final review by an external entity will be subcontracted.

When mature enough, each Policy Maker leads the creation of the Action Plan for its region, with BIRDA leading the way for the common one. Drafts will be validated with partners, stakeholders, and experts. When stable, documentation will be professionally formatted and presented in meetings for buy in by decision makers and stakeholders. Also, publicly promoted in public events at regional level and on a webinar for the wide community and a specific meeting with Network regions.

Task 3.2. – Policy advancement on innovation procurement. (M7-M12, Task Leader: COOU).

Oulu Council coordinates *Policy Makers* in translating WP2 outputs into proposals at regional, national and EU level. At regional level, this exercise is done in parallel with T3.1 to get early feedback and buy-in from policy stakeholders and decision makers. Efforts will be made so that they see inP as an opportunity of regional growth and bring them on-board along the process. The ultimate objective is to systematically incorporate inP in innovation policies and design, fund and manage yearly inP instruments as close as the project end as possible.

At EU level, partners will liaise with policy forums mentioned in the NEUIA and generate a knowledge asset on policy recommendations. This work will be led by INFO, who will also arrange the organization of a second policy workshop in Brussels, with this asset as a collateral. Besides, open dissemination through project channels aims to reinforce visibility at EU but also at national level key opinion leaders.

Task 3.3. – Foster synergies with current and other funding sources. (M7-M12, Task Leader: INSK).

INSK coordinates the Funder partners to trigger the process of securing regional funds for the launching of the inP instruments defined in T3.2. Again, it is critical to use persuasive approaches to motivate stakeholders on it. Compelling gathered evidence and success stories will be put together to help along the process. Note that the funding does not only has to fund the co-creation of the solution between Solvers and Challengers, but also the resources to be used to manage the inP instrument over time and improve it via the acquired know-how.

Identified EU opportunities for collective application will be evaluated. For the most promising in the short term, consortia will be brought together among the PREPARE partners and, if of interest, inviting Network regions. At national level, partners will propose sustainable mechanisms to facilitate that Challengers and Solvers take advantage of this funding for their co-creation of solutions. INSK will define a procedure for the identification and sharing of future funding opportunities identified after project end.

Objectives

- To disseminate, communicate and exploit the results of the project with different target groups, to foster the project’s targeted outcomes.
- To achieve the project’s expected impacts both during and after its execution.

Description of work - WP Leader: TBM.

Task 4.1. - Dissemination and Communication (M1-M12, Task Leader: TBM).

TBM leads the development of a Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (DEP). Each partner will appoint a contact point to the Communication and Dissemination Committee (C&DC) during the Kick off Meeting, that will be the bridge head to mobilize internal dissemination resources, channels and contacts for dissemination and communication purposes. The C&DC meets online at least once per month to define, advance, and follow up on the actions approved in the DEP.

TBM will create the social media channels, the services of a GDPR-compliant mailing list/contact manager. Channel-specific content like videos, infographics, posts, etc. A social media workflow so that partners' channels consistently multiply messages in social media centrally posted. Our logo and corporate image, including templates for .DOCs, PPTs and emails, will be available in M1. Project website will be available in M2 and host the PREPARE knowledge base and the public project documentation and content. Critical for dissemination are the recruitments of stakeholders, innovation players, experts and EC policy makers, as well as for the participation in our webinars and events. TBM will ensure governance, so partners reinforce each other during these activities, as well as the correct use of the corporate image across channels and formats, in English and local languages.

The project messages using the corporate channels are generated in English, to be translated into local languages when appropriate. All partners are responsible for adding a landing page pointing to the project one, and contributing to a central collection of relevant resources like events of interest for dissemination, papers and articles of interest or cross-communication opportunities.

The production of messages, adjusted for each dissemination target, is included in the quarterly planning. The production of content is first distributed by the project channels and then translated and/or multiplied by the partner networks.

Task 4.2. – Exploitation (M1-M12, Task Leader TBM).

The DEP planning regarding the exploitation of assets and the preparatory actions towards sustainability of outcomes take place in this task. At a systemic level partners will focus on how to deploy the exploitation objectives i) Implementation of the Action Plans; ii) Application to new sources of funding; iii) Nurture a Network of regions and iv) Put in value the assets. Partners will make a listing of candidates to seed the network and update it over time. This listing also manages the contact details and the summary of interactions and needs from regions. TBM will lead the preparation of compelling messages for them to join, to be distributed by the partner who has access to the candidates. At least 2 joint telcos will be organized with the ones that show interest to expose the PREPARE resources and experiences, and to understand their capacitation and other needs. The organization of public webinars that disseminate the project assets are also opportunities for further engagement. The Action Plans will also include proposals to put in value the Network for enhancing their own policies, take advantage of funding opportunities and organize capacitation initiatives.

Exploitation planning also state a) project's assets and their exploitation routes; b) exploitation plans for the consortium and per individual partner (type): Funder, Challenger, Instrument Manager and Supporter; and c) means and procedures for the exploitation of the assets and a roadmap to this end. The first exploitation draft within the DEP will be delivered in M6, with a final consolidated version at project end.

Table 3.1c: List of Deliverables

#	Deliverable name	WP	lead	Type	Diss. level	Delive
D1.1	Data Management Plan	1	TBM	DMP	SEN	M3
D2.1	inP state of the art knowledge asset	2	BOU	R	PU	M6
D3.1	Joint Program and action plans	3	RGSK	R	SEN	M12
D3.2	Public policy asset	3	RGSK	R	PU	M12
D4.1	Project website	4	TBM	DEC	PU	M2
D4.2	Dissemination and exploitation Plan	4	TBM	R	SEN	M6

Table 3.1d: List of milestones

#	Milestone name	WP(s)	Due	Means of verification
ML2	Website available	4	M2	Project website publicly accessible.
ML2	Mid-term policy workshop	2	M6	Presentation of the finished knowledge asset, including all the learnings from WP2 execution.
ML3	Final review meeting & policy workshop	1, 2, 3, 4	M12	Presentation of the finished Joint Program, the four regional action plans and the public policy asset.

Table 3.1e: Critical risks for implementation #@RSK-MGT-RM@#

Description of risk	WP	Proposed risk-mitigation measures
Engagement and involvement of <i>stakeholders</i> in the project is too low to capture enough relevant information about inP in the region. Likelihood: Medium Severity: Medium	2, 4	Project partners include clusters and other strategic networking intermediaries building from existing regional networks and our experience/contacts from previous inP projects. Specific communication and dissemination actions targeting these groups will be executed during the project. We will track progress and follow up to ensure momentum/meet targets.
Engagement and involvement of <i>innovation players</i> , especially <i>Challengers</i> , is too low to capture enough relevant information about inP in the region. Likelihood: Low Severity: Medium	2, 4	The project partners already have experience engaging this type of person or organization in previous inP projects, and have developed a network of contacts among them, which will be used during the project. Specific communication and dissemination actions targeting this group will be executed in WP4.
Low willingness of regional and/or EU <i>policy makers</i> to adopt the joint programme or action plans as public policy. Likelihood: Low Severity: Medium	3	Co-planning will ensure that we address concerns and key issues, link into policy priorities, and address organisational processes. We will stress social/economic benefits and provide support. We build off existing contacts and experience on the regional level.
Unforeseen absence or changes in the key personnel of the project due to illness, retirement, work leave or resignation. Likelihood: Medium Severity: Medium	1, 2, 3, 4	Each partner organisation will form a team to work on the project, meeting periodically to share updates on project activities, and create basic documentation tracking progress and associated resources and results. All personnel changes will be notified to the consortium in a timely manner whilst nominating a suitable replacement, and the Project Manager with help of the coordinator will support onboarding for any personnel changes.
Partner fails to deliver inputs/deliverables in time or of low quality	1, 2, 3, 4	Regular monitoring, additional training, temporary transfer of budget/ responsibility, continuation with parallel tasks, plan in detail dedicated effort to address delay and avoid knock-on effects for the project.
Workload over- or under-estimated in the Grant Agreement	1, 2, 3, 4	A well-developed workplan & budget based on EU project experience. WP leads continuously monitor effort/budget to identify risks early on and will discuss with relevant partners. We use budget estimates as a guide and focus on actual costs; after meeting GA commitments, critical & impactful activities within the project's scope are prioritised for additional budget.
Delays and deviations in implementing Action Plans	2, 3	We establish regular coordination mechanisms among all regional key players and evaluate progress involved to monitor implementation, make strategic decisions and address issues. Changes will be assessed to ensure that main objectives are met.
Lack of commitment to Joint Programmes and operational difficulties (different work culture, language barriers, etc.)	1, 3	The key collaborative activities prescribed by the Joint Programme will be monitored and supported by a steering committee to ensure smooth operations. Key barriers will be assessed and addressed for each, involving experts/supporters for specific cases. The Network governance body will oversee all activities.

#\$RSK-MGT-RM\$#

Table 3.1f: Summary of staff effort

	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	Total PMs per Participant
1 / TICBIOMED	3.5	4.0	4.0	7.5	19.0
2 / INSTITUTO DE FOMENTO DE MURCIA	0.5	6.5	3.5	0.5	11.0
3 / INNOVATION SKANE AB	0.5	6.0	4.0	0.5	11.0
4 / SKANE LAN	0.5	4.0	5.0	0.5	10.0
5 / ROHEALTH -	0.5	5.0	2.5	0.5	8.5
6 / BUCURESTI ILFOV RDA	0.5	5.0	6.0	0.5	12.0
7 / OULUN KAUPUNKI	0.5	6.5	4.5	0.5	12.0
8 / COUNCIL OF OULU REGION	0.5	1.5	3.5	0.5	6.0
Total PMs	7.0	38.5	33.0	11.0	89.5

Table 3.1h: 'Purchase costs' items

Purchase costs only exceed 15% of personnel costs in the case of the Romanian partners (ROH exceeds in 1,037€ and BIRDA in 3,240€). This is mainly due to their travel costs (5,000€ each), which are significant due to the travel costs from Bucharest to Murcia and Brussels (twice). Each of these partners also has to get aid on professional translations, document editing and proof-reading (2,000€ each). In addition, BIRDA organizes local dissemination and ecosystem engagement actions, which means an additional cost of 2,000€ to produce communication media and renting event materials.

5 / ROHEALTH - HEALTH AND BIOECONOMY CLUSTER		
Travel and subsistence	5,000.00 €	3 trips (min. 2 nights) planned during the project: 1 to Murcia + 2 to Brussels (2 pax each).
Other goods, works and services	2,000.00 €	Purchase of translations, professional editing and proof-reading of project documents.
Total	7,000.00 €	
6 / BUCURESTI ILFOV REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY		
Travel and subsistence	5,000.00 €	3 trips (min. 2 nights) planned during the project: 1 to Murcia + 2 to Brussels (2 pax each).
Other goods, works and services	2,000.00 €	Purchase of translations, professional editing and proof-reading of project documents.
	2,000.00 €	Production of communication media and rental of event materials.
Total	9,000.00 €	

Summary of budget

The total budget for this 12-month project is **675,265€**, computing indirect costs at a 25% rate.

This is over the recommended budget for this call due to:

- PREPARE covers four regions, one per Innovation Maturity category (Emerging, Moderate, Strong and Leader). The rationales behind it is to be able to acquire knowledge and experiences from each category so ensure the EU-wide relevance of the project while matching regions from our Network with our peers. This is above the requirement of minimum 2 regions stated in the call.
- As per design of our innovation procurement model, we require regional partners that cover the four roles (Funder, Instrument Manager, Policy Maker, and Supporter). In our case these roles are covered with two partners per region, totalling 8. This is above the requirement of minimum 3 partners stated in the call. The number of consortium partners increases our power to thoroughly achieve the objectives of the project, but also increases the project's workload up to **89.5PM**.
- Half of the consortium partners are in the Nordics. As per their standards, they have comparatively higher personnel costs than other European geographies.

The total budget amount devoted to direct personnel costs is **476,572€** (70.6% of total budget).

The other direct costs (**63,640€**) are due to travel and accommodation costs (36,000€) and professional production, editing and translation of project documents and dissemination media (27,640€). TBM has made a reservation of

4k€ to economically compensate the collaboration of ERRIN and EURADA. Also to continue with the online presence and project tools for 3 years after project end.

There are three in-person meetings planned during the project: the project's kick-off meeting in Murcia (coordinators' region), and two meetings in Brussels to hold both the project review meetings and the policy workshops with the EC. The travel and accommodation costs have been calculated for a stay of at least one night (two in the case of partners travelling a long distance from Murcia) and two people travelling per partner.

There are **no other costs** belonging to other categories (e.g., subcontracting, internally invoiced goods and services) or in-kind contributions provided by third parties.

As for lump sum payments, WP2 ends at PM6 and WP3 at PM12. WP1 (project management) and WP4 (dissemination and exploitation) are naturally all-project efforts. The consortium has decided not to artificially split them for the sake of the mid-term project payment calculations, but we will still request to the EC to consider the rationale of our decision and proceed with fair payment compliance.

#§WRK-PLA-WP§#

3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole #@CON-SOR-CS@##@PRJ-MGT-PM@#

Our consortium is composed by 8 partners from 4 different regions of EU member countries (ES, SE, RO and FI). The “innovation performance” of these four regions according to the EC's [Regional Innovation Scoreboard](#) cover the full existing range, which underlines the **relevance of this project for EU-level policy building**.

There are two consortium partners for each one of these regions. In three cases, the two partners have already participated together in EU-funded projects focused on inP, and with partners from other regions:

- All six partners from Murcia, Skåne and Oulu participated in the [READi for Health](#) (FP7, 2013-16) project, which already included work on inP instruments (PPI and PCP).
- Ticbiomed, INFO, Business Oulu and Council of Oulu region participated together in the [inDemand](#) project (H2020, 2017-20), which successfully designed, applied and benchmarked the Lean Procurement of Innovation model and disseminated it to 12 European regions.
- Ticbiomed, INFO, Innovation Skåne and Region Skåne are participating together in [Procure4Health](#) (HE, 2022-25) to create a network of procurers and relevant stakeholders in healthcare.

The other two partners from Bucharest-Ilfov (RO) have also participated in inP projects, separately from each other. All these experiences show the **capacity and knowledge of the participants** in this specific area, which has already been developed and tested and can now serve as the basis for a successful execution.

The two consortium partners of each region **cover all the roles** necessary to implement inP model in their local ecosystem: *Funder, Manager, Policy Maker (Stakeholders)* and *Supporter (Innovation Players)*. Their place at the core of those groups is key to engaging the rest of the ecosystem in the various activities of the project.

Ticbiomed (Murcia, ES) – Supporter



ticbiomed
TRANSFORMING HEALTH

[Ticbiomed](#) is a non-profit association of 60 entities in the healthcare sector. It has a network of **national and international contacts** developed during the last 14 years while connecting demand and supply of innovative solutions for the European

healthcare sector.

Ticbiomed first **developed the LPI model** as leader of the [inDemand](#) project, then benchmarked it with the [inDemand RCT](#) (H2020, 2019-23) project. The model is also being applied by Ticbiomed to diverse European regions in the [CHERRIES](#) (H2020, 2020-23) and [InnoBuyer](#) (HE, 2022-25) projects. The association has also participated in several H2020 PCP projects, such as [inCareHeart](#) and [ProEmpower](#). During the [PREPARE](#) project, Ticbiomed will lead Project Management (**WP1**) and Dissemination and Exploitation (**WP4**).

Instituto De Fomento De La Region De Murcia (Murcia, ES) - Funder, Manager & Policy Maker



[Instituto de Fomento de la Región de Murcia](#) (INFO) is the **Regional Development Agency** of Murcia. It fosters economic growth by supporting innovation and internationalization of enterprises, and has been managing EU funds since 1990. In particular, it manages the ERDF programme for the region (170M€ in 2021-27), which includes leading the development of Murcia's RIS3 and its update for the 2021-27 period (“[RIS4](#)”).

INFO has participated in other EU-funded projects that **apply the LPI model** to diverse European regions, such as [inDemand](#) and its experimental benchmark project [inDemand RCT](#). INFO will be responsible for the interaction with *stakeholders (T2.1)*.

Innovation Skåne (Skåne, SE) - Supporter & Manager



[Innovation Skåne](#) is a public organization that acts as an engine of innovation for the region, creating and executing innovation projects for public bodies, and attracting funding from other actors in Sweden and the EU. It has experience executing high-impact inP actions, such as EU-

funded projects that develop connected innovation systems ([Digit Pre](#), 2022-25; Invest4health, 2023-26) or implement PCP and LPI models ([READi for Health](#), [Procure4Health](#)). In 2022, the Swedish government adopted their initiative to promote the use of PCPs for co-development with public actors nation-wide.

Innovation Skåne has offices in Lund's [Medicon Village](#), Malmö, Helsingborg and Kristianstad, and a total staff of approximately 45 people. During the project, the organisation will lead the dialog with *innovation players* (T2.2) and the synergies with funding sources (T3.3).

Skane Lan (Skåne, SE) - Funder & Policy Maker



[Region Skåne](#) is the public administrative body responsible for regional growth, coordination of EU actions and funding, and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. It is responsible for developing Skåne's RIS3. Region Skåne has experience developing advanced collaborations with several regional healthcare actors, such as Skåne University Hospital and the regional hospital in Ängelholm, to address the ambitions and unmet needs of regional buyers and challenge owners.

Aside from its experience in regional projects, Region Skåne has collaborated with Innovation Skåne and other [PREPARE](#) partners in EU-funded projects to improve and implement successful inP tools, such as [READi for Health](#) and [Procure4Health](#). Region Skåne will lead the preparation of Joint Programmes and action plans (WP3).

Rohealth - Health And Bioeconomy Cluster (Bucharest-Ilfov, RO) – Supporter



[Rohealth](#) is a cluster of 91 enterprises in the healthcare and bioeconomy sector, and one of the 11 “Gold Label” clusters in Europe. It promotes and supports cooperation through sustainable national and international partnerships between private companies, universities, research organizations and public entities/authorities.

Rohealth has participated in the [PRONTO](#) (EU COSME, 2020-2023) project, aimed at supporting public procurers in implementing PPI solutions. It regularly collaborates with the Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (see below) in competitive EU and national funding calls, with a success rate of 3 EU-funded projects per year.

Rohealth has a staff of 26 people working at its offices in downtown Bucharest. Rohealth will lead the analysis of innovation procurement agendas (T2.3).

Bucuresti Ilfov Regional Development Agency (Bucharest-Ilfov, RO) - Funder, Manager & Policy Maker



The [Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency \(BIRDA\)](#) is a non-governmental, non-profit institution established in 1999 to promote and support sustainable development in the region, through services to the public and private sector. It is the coordinator of all regional innovation strategies financed by European and national R&D programmes, including the development of its RIS3. BIRDA participated in [iBuy](#) (ERDF, 2014-20), a project dedicated to developing innovative inP models that encourage public authorities to start acting from the demand side of innovation, boosting innovation through public procurement.

BIRDA has a team of 90 people working at its offices in Bucharest, and a wide network of collaborators at all geographical levels that extend its reach. BIRDA will be responsible for the development of the joint long-term program and action plans (T3.1).

Oulun Kaupunki (Oulu, FI) - Supporter & Manager



[Business Oulu](#) is an enterprise owned by the City of Oulu. It aims to support growing companies and to coordinate the Oulu Health ecosystem, driving innovation in the Healthtech business. It was established in 2011 and has almost 12 years of experience managing public funds for innovation from administrations at all levels (local to European). It is regularly involved in inP innovation projects, and is currently developing a more efficient and sustainable procurement strategy for the City of Oulu, to boost local inP. Business Oulu has previously contributed to **successful LPI projects**, such as [inDemand](#) and [READi for Health](#).

Approximately 95 people work for Business Oulu at its offices in the [BusinessAsema](#) entrepreneurship hub. During the project, the organization will be responsible for the acquisition of knowledge (WP2), especially contributing to the task of producing the inP state of the art (T2.4).

Council Of Oulu Region (Oulu, FI) - Funder & Policy Maker



The [Council of Oulu Region](#) is a regional development and planning organization acting on behalf of its member municipalities. It coordinates EU funding programs in the region and represents Oulu region in both national and international projects, programs and working groups. It is responsible for creating the region's RIS3, involving all its relevant ecosystem members in the process. The Council is also a partner in the [S3 Agri-Food, Energy and Industrial Renewal Platforms](#) for Eastern and Northern Finland (NUTS 2 region [FI1D](#)).

The Council of Oulu has experience developing co-creation processes in past projects, such as [CoHeWe](#) (ERDF, 2018-20), which was executed in collaboration with the City of Oulu. It has also participated in the **successful LPI**

project [inDemand](#) and [READi for Health](#). Council of Oulu Region will be responsible for the task of enhancing regional policies and linking them with EU initiatives (**T3.2**).

##CON-SOR-CS## ##PRJ-MGT-PM## ##QUA-LIT-QL##