

innovation...

The Central Europe Programme promotes innovation, competitiveness, accessibility and environmental sustainability in Central Europe





innovation...



I3SME - INTRODURRE L'INNOVAZIONE ALL'INTERNO DELLE PICCOLE MEDIE IMPRESE

Il progetto è stato finanziato dal programma di Cooperazione territoriale area Centro Europa (ex iniziativa Interreg) all'interno del primo bando pubblicato nella fase di programmazione 2007-2013. I partner del progetto sono:

- **Lead Partner: Provincia di Bologna**
- CNA Emilia Romagna
- Provincia Autonoma di Trento
- Gründer- & Servicezentrum Fürstenfeld Ems KG (Austria)
- Brandenburg Economic Development Board (Germania)
- South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency (Ungheria)
- Pannon Business Network Association (Ungheria)
- Regional Development Agency Region Poludniowui (Polonia)
- TechnoCenter presso l'Università di Maribor (Slovenia)

Le Istituzioni associate al progetto sono la Regione Emilia Romagna - Servizio Politiche di Sviluppo Economico e il Ministero per gli Affari economici della Regione del Brandeburgo.

- ABSTRACT DEL PROGETTO

Nelle regioni dove la produzione economica è caratterizzata dalla concentrazione di Piccole Medie Imprese il livello di introduzione dell'innovazione e le spese in ricerca e sviluppo sono piuttosto bassi.

La situazione è rilevante nelle regioni del Central Europe Programme dove gli intermediari d'affari giocano un ruolo cruciale. I3SME punta al miglioramento del livello di introduzione dell'innovazione e degli strumenti di ricerca e sviluppo nelle imprese attraverso il supporto dei centri di affari, dei centri tecnologici e delle amministrazioni pubbliche incaricate della promozione di politiche innovative.

Le performance delle Piccole Medie Imprese possono essere migliorate attraverso l'identificazione a livello internazionale degli strumenti, delle metodologie e delle strategie più appropriate per migliorare l'innovazione all'interno settori di business. Il progetto punta ad elevare il livello dell'innovazione basato su investimenti in risorse umane e allocazione di risorse finanziarie per l'adozione di sistemi innovativi (ICT, RTD, spin off solutions).

Le Piccole Medie Imprese hanno bisogno di risposte rapide, di sostegno in questo processo e di identificare strategie all'interno di una dimensione europea. RTD e l'introduzione di innovazione non sono più un semplice meccanismo adottabile a livello locale ma devono essere conciliate con l'identificazione di strategie europee e strumenti comuni condivisi.

Le attività del progetto I3SME si concentrano sulla risoluzione di questi problemi attraverso l'identificazione di strategie internazionali comuni introdotte da *campioni nascosti* collocati nelle diverse regioni, attraverso un'attività di benchmarking e l'identificazione di un manuale operativo su come applicare gli strumenti nelle imprese pilota.

Il processo sarà accompagnato e promosso da soggetti aventi ruolo di facilitatori, attori all'interno dei sostenitori dell'innovazione, *in primis* le associazioni rappresentative di imprese attive nell'ambito del supporto all'innovazione, i centri ICT e le Amministrazioni pubbliche.

Lo sviluppo internazionale dei profili dei facilitatori nell'ultima parte del progetto sarà applicato direttamente all'interno delle Piccole Medie Imprese, dove azioni concrete di supporto alla conoscenza dell'innovazione verranno applicate in accordo con i bisogni e le specifiche richieste. Inoltre, verrà sviluppato un Manuale per l'adozione di metodologie per l'applicazione dell'innovazione da parte delle PMI.

In questo contesto, le attività di disseminazione avranno un ruolo cruciale per un'ampia diffusione degli strumenti innovativi a favore delle imprese che non sono direttamente coinvolte nel progetto ed anche nei paesi al di fuori dell'area Central Europe.

I principali strumenti di diffusione internazionale dei risultati del progetto (conferenze internazionali, comunicati stampa, annunci pubblicitari televisivi, interviste radio e un sito web) saranno coordinati e perfezionati da un piano di disseminazione costruito nei primi mesi del progetto.

Relativamente alla disseminazione, incontri locali - denominati *cocktail della ricerca* - saranno organizzati per migliorare le relazioni fra gli organismi accademici, gli intermediari d'affari e gli altri attori locali determinanti.



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Central European regions are characterized by a high concentration of micro and small & medium sized enterprises (micro and SME). In Austria, Germany and Italy large enterprises are only a part of the enterprises. In Germany for example, which is the most industrialized area, more than 90 % of the enterprises are SMEs. In other regions which faced fragmentation and important political changes in the '80s and '90s, in the last years a new small entrepreneurship is arising.

Another trend which is presently experienced in all the involved countries is that investment in the innovation field is becoming the key element of competitiveness. From the other hand, investment in innovation as traditionally conceived in the large enterprises (R&D department, in-house research team, investment in research of a fixed share of the incomes, medium and long term strategies) are not strategically and economically sustainable in small enterprises.

Moreover, a change in the existing culture and approach to these issues should be introduced within this target group, capitalizing at the same time some features of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises such their ability to adopt good practices to their own needs. At the same time, in order to make SMEs key actors in this sector, a change in the general approach regarding innovation within the enterprises is needed. For this reason the partners have conceived a set of interventions, including the strengthening of bodies which operate in this field, a stronger networking among public and private operators and institution and the provision of services directly addressed to this target group.

The partners involved within the project will jointly collaborate in order to compare the services provided and their approaches regarding the assistance to micro enterprises and SMEs for the acquisition of innovations and the enhancement of their performances. They will be able to select some good practices, share and transfer them by the development of action plans and guidelines and the implementation of pilot projects for the testing of the new introduced services.

The dissemination activities foreseen in the project will enable the partners to spread out the project results at transnational level, involving a large number of stakeholders. Moreover, the project envisages the setting up of sustainable networks, both at local and international levels, with the involvement of all the relevant operators and policy makers at the aim of creating the conditions for the development of an innovation system and coordinated policies, thus guaranteeing long term effects and improvements.

The transnational cooperation approach will be vital for the project activities as only a confrontation and a cooperation among the areas involved will be able to booster the adoption of effective systems and services. Business activities, which would not have normally the possibility to access to a wide range of know-how and experience set, will be able to improve their performances and confront their production, management, distribution practices and to introduce innovations.

TARGET GROUPS

- micro and SMEs in the involved regions. It is envisaged the direct involvement of 1000 SMEs and the training of 18 facilitators which will be able to support the enterprises in the acquisition of innovation. Decision makers (25) will be involved by the Strategic Committee action
- local development agencies, business associations, universities and research and technological transfer centers and relevant public authorities will be directly involved in the project and will benefit from the envisaged activities. They need support in the identification of instruments and strategies to apply innovation inside SMEs and provide an capabilities transfer at international level in order to ensure the efficiency an added value.

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES will be the business economic operators (SMEs) in general as well as intermediary associations and decision makers in and out the Programme area needing support towards innovation (technological and human resources) application.



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About the Province of Bologna

The Province of Bologna is one of the 101 Provinces in Italy and its territory extends on 3702,5 Squared Kilometres and 60 municipalities (including Bologna City). Province Institutions are part of the Italian federalism model, based on Municipalities (8.000), Provinces (101) Regions (20) and the central Parliament and Government. Legislative power is exercised at the National and Regional level with different competences, while local Institutions provide different services to the community. All of them are directly elected by citizens every five years.

The Province administrations manage relevant planning and control functions on the territory, in different topics such as territorial planning, mobility, environment, economic development, public health and training courses.

During the last ten years, Provinces have developed a particular strategic importance within the federalist frame, also thanks to some relevant functions delegated by national and regional Laws, such as defining and approving the PTCs, a kind of provincial Masterplan.

Moreover, due to the growing importance of metropolitan area functions, the most important Italian Provinces - including Bologna metropolitan area - are listed by law within the Italian Metropolitan Cities.

The Department responsible for the project is the Local Development Department.



Partners:

Lead Partner

Province of Bologna

Provincia di Bologna

Bologna, Italy

www.provincia.bologna.it



PROVINCIA DI BOLOGNA

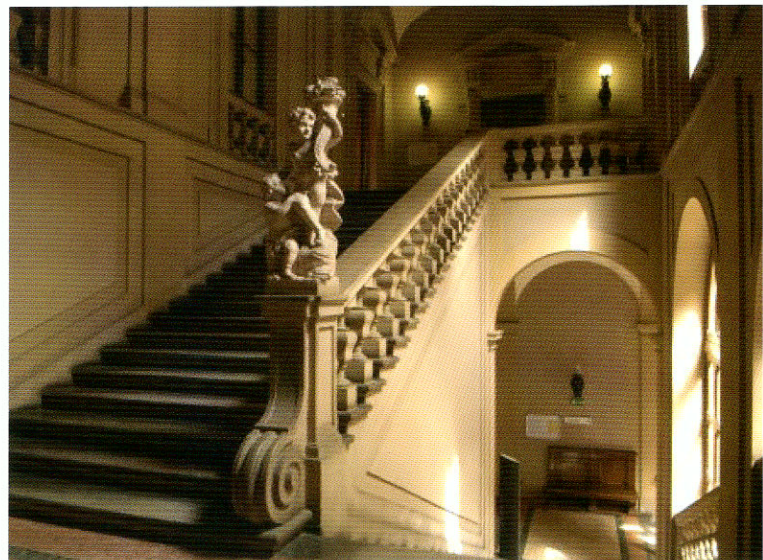


The economical and productive context

The economical system is characterised by small businesses which operate in the production fields such as: mechanics, electronics, textiles and clothing. Highly technological skills, exclusive know how at times, and international markets.

In the area, Universities and research centres are present, networked as businesses, through specific service centres.

The area, characterised by its spontaneous entrepreneurship and strongly supported by public politics for its incentives and support to companies, presents an elevated number of companies in advanced tertiary sector.





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Emilia Romagna

CNA Regional Association of Emilia Romagna is the **Confederation for Handicraft and for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Region of Emilia Romagna**, located in the north of Italy. As a private association of firms, it represents and protects the interests of its members, of the Provincial Associations and of the companies sectors with public and private institutions, with regional political, social and economic organizations.

It associates **over 71.000** companies and it's made up of the 10 Provincial Associations working in the region. Together with the provincial offices and other regional branches of CNA it forms part of the system of the National Confederation of Artisans and Small and Medium Enterprises, National CNA. It defines, develops and manages regional financial and sector policies, drawing up inter-sector agreements.

CNA Regional Association of Emilia Romagna has a direct relationship with enterprises via its **diffuse area**

network of regional and provincial offices, each one of which develops independent structures providing services and consultancy specifically adapted to the local companies. CNA's advantage is an integrated and widespread organization. To provide information and assistance to companies in every aspect of work, there are **226 CNA offices distributed throughout the region**, in which over 2500 skilled, professional employees work. Reliability, competence and economic opportunities are what CNA can offer the entrepreneurial world.

Knowledge, research and technological innovation are the strategic routes followed by CNA through **CNA Innovazione's** work and services.

CNA Innovazione, the Centre for the Organizational and Managerial Innovation for Craft and SMEs, in fact, is the Research and Development Department belonging to CNA system in Emilia Romagna. It's the first Centre for the distribution and management of innovation in micro, small and medium enterprises. It's focused on companies analysis, through benchmarking methods and tools, and it supports the organizational change and the introduction of innovative managerial practices within companies.

CNA Innovazione promotes business innovation and acts as an intermediary between SMEs' needs and the supply coming from the world of Research and University.

Through the support of Temporary Managers, it provides specific services in various processes:

- Approach to national and international markets;
- Innovation;
- Production and logistics; Customer service; Planning and control;
- Human resources management;
- Relations with the territory.

To create opportunities of knowledge transfer among SMEs, the Centre favors the strengthening of the value of best practices and their dissemination through the territory.



Project Partner 2

CNA Regional Association of Emilia Romagna
CNA Associazione regionale dell'Emilia Romagna
Bologna, Italy
www.cnaemiliaromagna.it





innovation...

TRENTINOSVILUPPO
IMPRESA INNOVAZIONE SOSTENIBILITÀ

CEii
TRENTINO



The Autonomous Province of Trento, "Trentino", strongly believes that enhanced innovation, as well as knowledge development and transfer, are key factors for the sustainable socio-economic growth and international competitiveness of its territory.

In the last years the provincial administration has been shaping its institutional setting and legislative framework in order to boost the dynamism and competitiveness of local companies (whether already consolidated or still a start-up).

Specific institutional bodies and specialized entities, like **Trentino Sviluppo Spa** (www.trentinosviluppo.it) and **CEii Trentino** (Centro Europeo di Impresa ed Innovazione del Trentino – European Centre for Enterprise and Innovation in Trentino www.ceii.it) are now points of reference for would-be entrepreneurs who are planning to start a business, for companies that want to achieve growth in an increasingly competitive market and, finally, for potential investors who want to find out what opportunities are available in Trentino for the development of a particular business project.

In compliance with the principles of entrepreneurship, innovation, social cohesion and quality of life, employment, and environment, they:



- **support** innovative processes and transfer of technology in local micro, small and medium-sized companies;
- **create** networks and initiate synergies between companies and research centres at both national and international level;
- **carry out** territorial marketing
- **promote** the competitive assets of the local system in order to attract the skills, technologies, and investments of producers who are based outside the province of Trento;
- **support** start-ups;
- **offer** organizational, financial and technological consultancy for companies;

Project Partner 3

Provincia Autonoma di Trento

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Serv.europa.sviluppocale@provincia.tn.it

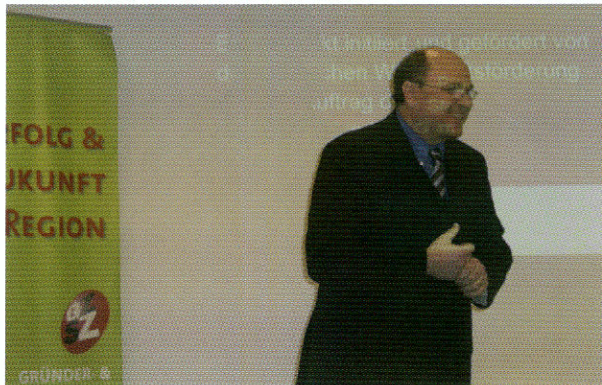




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GRÜNDER- & SERVICEZENTRUM FÜRSTENFELD



Start-up & Service Centre Fürstenfeld

The maxim is: "Success & future in the region"

The object of the enterprise "Start-up & Service Centre" in the region of East-Styria is to support founders and foundresses and young entrepreneurs from the beginning.

Since the start in the year 2000 more than 10.000 women and men joined the events in the Centre. The centre forms a platform for networking, know how-transfer and continuing education.



Project Partner 4

Gründer- und Servicezentrum Fürstenfeld Ems KG.
Start-up & Service Centre Fürstenfeld
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Email: office@gzsz-ff.at www.gzsz-ff.at

The positioning of the Start-up & Service Centre:

- The first aim is to endorse founders and foundresses on their way to entrepreneurship and small companies in developing strategies
- The second is promoting the economical development in the region
- Third we support young entrepreneurs to gain access to the market and new technologies

The Start-up & Service Centre has an unique organisational structure:

- The work is done exclusively by self-employed businesswomen and businessmen as they are able to refer their experience to start-ups and sme`s
- The Start-up & Service Centre has 25 entrepreneurs as active members
- 14 communities from the district are members too

The main focus are

- Marketing & Sales
- Leadership & Development in companies
- Professional Trainings in Strategy & Management & Innovation

Services are offered

- Call Centre
- Leasing of seminar room & multi-media
- Mentoring
- Organisation of information events & workshops
- Setup of networks & Know-how transfer
- Coordination of projects





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Brandenburg Economic Development Board GmbH (ZAB) is the main contact point in the state of Brandenburg for all issues relating to business settlements, innovative medium-sized companies and technology-oriented start-up firms. ZAB is Brandenburg's central contact for inquiries concerning innovation and (external) business promotion as well as energy, technology transfer and cluster management. ZAB functions as a one-stop agency dealing with individual clients on a project-to-project basis. The RegionalCenters offer clients on-the-spot consultation service.

ZAB works as a "Partner for the Future" together with the InvestitionsBank des Landes Brandenburg (ILB) and BC Brandenburg Capital GmbH. This partnership ensures fast and specific advice on regional, central and EU funding as well as all aspects of finance. ZAB cooperates closely with the Berlin funding and innovation agencies.



We assist potential investors based in Germany and abroad

- by providing sector-specific information on the location,
- by developing individual packages for investors.
- by searching for a suitable location,
- by organising financial support for their investments
- to attract and train skilled staff.

Project Partner 5

Brandenburg Economic Development Board
ZukunftsAgentur Brandenburg GmbH (ZAB)
Potsdam, Germany
www.zab-brandenburg.de

Invest in Brandenburg.

ZAB
Brandenburg Economic
Development Board



We support Brandenburg companies

- as they expand and introduce innovative technology to their operations,
- as they interact with company clusters, sector networks and scientific institutes,
- as they go about achieving optimal levels of efficiency in their use of energy,
- by organising their participation in trade fairs, trade missions and events as they tap into national and international markets,
- by being part of the enterprise europe network

We assist innovative and technology-oriented start-up firms

- in developing and evaluating a business plan,
- in pursuing projects,
- in applying for start-up funding,
- in their interactions with regional collaborative and know-how networks,
- in their search for partners in the fields of research and science.



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South Transdanubian Region

South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency

South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency

The Agency was established in 1998, as the operative body of the South Transdanubian Regional Development Council, in this respect it acts as a regional authority in the region. It is Intermediate Body in the Regional Operational Programme of the Structural Funds, responsible for the preparation of the development concept and strategy, operational programmes and action plans of the region, managing National Development Funds and Regional Innovation Funds. STRDA managed applications of more than 1300 projects within the application programmes, in which more than 55 billion HUF were spent on developments, more than 30 own initiated projects, organized more than 200 programmes.

The STRDA has coordinated the elaboration of the Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) supported by the EU 5th Framework Programme between 2001 and 2004. The consortium members of the project were the Transdanubian Research Institute (of the Centre for Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Technology Network Ltd. and Shannon Development. In order to create a realistic strategy built on reliable economic data, the representatives of the most important companies of the region also participated in the definition of the objectives of the innovation strategy.

Project Partner 6

South Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency Non-for-profit Ltd.

(Dél-Dunántúli Regionális Innovációs Ügynökség Nonprofit Kft.)

H-7621 Pécs, Király u. 23-25. HUNGARY

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Today the innovation activities are managed by the Regional Innovation Agency in the region, which is a separate legal entity that has seceded from STRDA in 2008. However, as a particular task of STRDA is to initiate and coordinate projects based on the key development factors of the region, and as utilization of innovative technologies at SMEs is a preferable development potential, therefore the Agency has joined I3SME which can contribute to the development of the innovative functioning of the local SMEs.

The South Transdanubian Region

The region, situated in the south-western part of Hungary is bordered by the Lake Balaton from the North, the river Danube from the East and Hungary's southern border river, the Drava from the South. It's made up of the counties Baranya, Somogy and Tolna. South Transdanubia covers an area of 14,169 km² (15,2% of the country) and has a population of approximately 1 million inhabitants (9,8% of the country). Its strong rural character comes across through its lack of medium sized towns and the consequent fragmented settlement structure. This is the southern section of Pannonia, the ancient Roman province, where UNESCO has declared the early Christian cemetery of Pécs to be a World Heritage site. Besides, the city of Pécs has just won the title of "The Cultural Capital of Europe - 2010".



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The Pannon Business Network Association

Our mission is to contribute to the improvement of employment quality and competitiveness of enterprises with the cooperation of clusters' and industrial parks' network representing the region's economic structure on sectorial and geographical base.

The aim of PBN is to integrate many company groups representing the West-Pannon Region in Hungary, so as to establish a network, which would be cost-effective and representative in terms of regional sectors, geography and in terms of size of companies. This integration can be realized by cluster in case of Hungarian small and medium sized companies.

After a half year preparation work a formally established organization started its operation, which was set up for the common coordination and development of the region's clusters and industrial parks with the participation of the stakeholders.

Pannon Business Network was established with the cluster founder membership, and after the establishment the industrial parks joined the network.

Short description of the West-Pannon region

Up to the last years three clusters have been operating in our region (West-Pannon Region), and according to their experience and the sector analysis further 5 clusters were established in the recent years. So automobile, wood and furniture, thermal, logistics, mechatronic, handcraft cluster, renewable energy and textile clusters are operating at moment in our territory.

While the domestic enterprises have great importance in terms of employment, international companies are significant in terms of GDP and export. The industrial parks territorially are able to represent the most important international companies this time. There are 27 industrial parks in the region.

Project Partner 7

Ms. Andrea Kurucz - Project Manager

Pannon Business Network

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General services of PBN

- The organization and management of Sectoral Clusters
- Continuous cluster management
- Identification of specific analyses and stakeholders regarding the target area
- Survey of needs - specific cluster strategy
- Establishment and reinforcement of national and international cooperation
- Market analysis, brief sectoral reports
- Development of the innovational - technological basis
- Development and realization of specific projects
- Complex development of industrial parks
- Screening of industrial parks, real estates, companies, services
- Survey of needs with companies
- Creation of links with competence centers
- Organization of suppliers' networks for companies
- HR services
- Human resource map - employment survey
- Links with the regional labour market - pact line
- Research in economy and human matters
- Market research according to specific needs of companies
- Network cooperation with professional training companies
- Economic situation analysis (on settlement, area and regional level)
- Preparation of brief sectoral reports



innovation...



Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego S.A.
Bielsko-Biala

The idea of the Agency is to initiate, organize and support the development of south Silesia voivodeship area and its promotion in Poland and abroad. We accomplish our aims with help of stockholders funds, the profit from our business activity and other forms of financial support including European Union funds.

The special achievement of Regional Development Agency is completed Beskid Technology Incubator building in Bielsko-Biala.

Our past activity was noticed and rewarded on the international stage by inviting our Agency to the exclusive European Association of Development Agencies EURADA seated in Brussels and choosing the President of Regional Development Agency to be a member of supervisory board in 2003. In Poland the Agency is a member of The National Association of Regional Development Agencies NARDA seated in Warsaw.



- Area promotion of the economy potential.
- Complex assistance for small and medium enterprises as a part of National Services System for small and medium enterprises, including professional technical, organizational, economic-financial and legal consultancy, marketing, training courses, seminars.
- Activity connected with gaining the financial resources from EU.
- Consulting activity.
- Training courses.
- Cooperation as a part of preparing and accomplishment of projects with foreign investors.
- Professional preparation of the requests of financing the investment projects and tasks being completed with the financial support of EU.
- Accomplishment of investment projects for local governments and enterprises.



Project Partner 8

Regional Development Agency
Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego SA
Bielsko-Biala, Poland



Introducing Innovation

Introducing Innovation Inside SMEs in Central Europe

Inside SMEs in Central Europe

Central Europe Programme

iSME
introducing innovation inside SMEs



Res.In.Tec Italia



"Our prerogative is to combine tradition and passion with the most advanced technologies"
"La nostra prerogativa è combinare tradizione e passione con le più avanzate tecnologie"

Activity: restoration of historical building subject to preservation, seismic updating of structures and carbon fibre consolidation
Operative headquarters: Corporeno, Ferrara (Italy)
Web Site: www.resintec.it
N° employees: 18
Turnover: € 2.497.869
Geographical markets: Italy

Attività: restauro di beni sottoposti a tutela, adeguamento sismico di edificio e consolidamenti in fibra di carbonio
Sede operativa: Corporeno (FE)
Sito Web: www.resintec.it
N° addetti: 18
Fatturato: € 2.497.869
Mercato Geografico: Italia

Established in 2001, Res.In.Tec Italia (Restauri Innovativi Tecnologici Italia) is specialized in restoration and structural reinforcement, involving both historical buildings subject to preservation and infrastructure for the regulatory and seismic updating. The company uses the most advanced techniques of innovative and technological restoration. Along with the designers it provides clients an all-round service, from consultancy/diagnosis and assistance for the planning of activities to the reinforcement sizing.



«We love facing the unknown...». The different level of conservation and deterioration of buildings have facilitated the continuous research of new operational methodologies and a constant updating of new materials. Around 10% of the company turnover is invested in R&D and the stages of analysis and designing are based upon the complete participation of research laboratories and institutions with which Res.In.Tec jointly invests. *«In order to be able to resolve the most unusual problems in preservative restoration, it is necessary to understand the causes and suggest ad hoc vanguard solutions».*

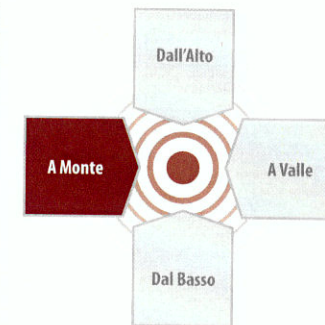
The company has consolidated relations with important Universities, among which the University of Bologna and Florence. It has recently financed a PHD grant at the Polytechnic University of Marche, with the aim of selecting innovative preservation techniques for frescos and plaster in light structures. *«Together with the University we are working out a mathematical model that describes the building system behavior. This collaboration allows us to develop new technologies and to widen our know-how».*



L'azienda ha consolidato relazioni con importanti Università, tra le quali Bologna e Firenze, e recentemente finanziato una borsa di dottorato presso l'Università Politecnica delle Marche per individuare nuove tecniche innovative per la conservazione di affreschi e stucchi su strutture leggere. *«Stiamo elaborando con l'Università un modello matematico che descriva il comportamento del sistema costruttivo. Le collaborazioni ci permettono di sviluppare nuove tecnologie e ampliare le nostre conoscenze».*

Fondata nel 2001, Res.In.Tec Italia (Restauri Innovativi Tecnologici) è specializzata nel restauro conservativo e consolidamento strutturale, sia su strutture storiche sottoposte a tutela che su infrastrutture per l'adeguamento normativo e sismico. L'azienda applica le tecniche più evolute del restauro innovativo e tecnologico e, in sinergia con i progettisti, fornisce al cliente un servizio completo che va dalla consulenza/diagnostica e assistenza per la progettazione degli interventi, al dimensionamento dei rinforzi.

«Amiamo affrontare lo sconosciuto...». Il diverso grado di conservazione e degrado ai quali le strutture sono soggette favoriscono la ricerca di nuove metodologie operative ed un costante aggiornamento su nuovi materiali. L'azienda investe in R&S circa il 10% del fatturato e le fasi di analisi e progettazione prevedono coinvolgimento di laboratori ed enti di ricerca con i quali Res.In.Tec investe congiuntamente. *«Per poter risolvere le problematiche più inusuali nell'ambito del restauro conservativo, è necessario conoscere le cause e proporre soluzioni all'avanguardia».*





innovation...

The TechnoCenter at the University of Maribor is a Technology Transfer Office, which combines a wide range of services needed for a successful transfer of research achievements in economic environment. We work as an interface between the university research area and economic interests, with the mission to support a cooperation between the University and the economy, to successfully transfer knowledge and technology from the University to the economy and promote innovation culture and a supportive environment for researchers. By doing so, we wish to contribute to the increased national and especially regional economic development.

Key competences can be divided into three sections:

- Technology transfer and commercialization of innovations, including the protection and management of the intellectual property.
- Professional and administrative support for different forms of research collaborations (contracts, grants, and other initiatives) between sides mentioned above.
- Development of business and research partnership between the University and organizations from the private or public sector (spin-off companies, licensing, etc.).
- Apart from our services, we are actively engaged in national and European projects. We also organize scientific conferences and networking events and allow the companies which collaborate with the University in research area to choose and award the best researcher in their view.

The I3SME project gives us an opportunity to strengthen capacities aimed at supporting SMEs in the region by setting up new instruments and services.

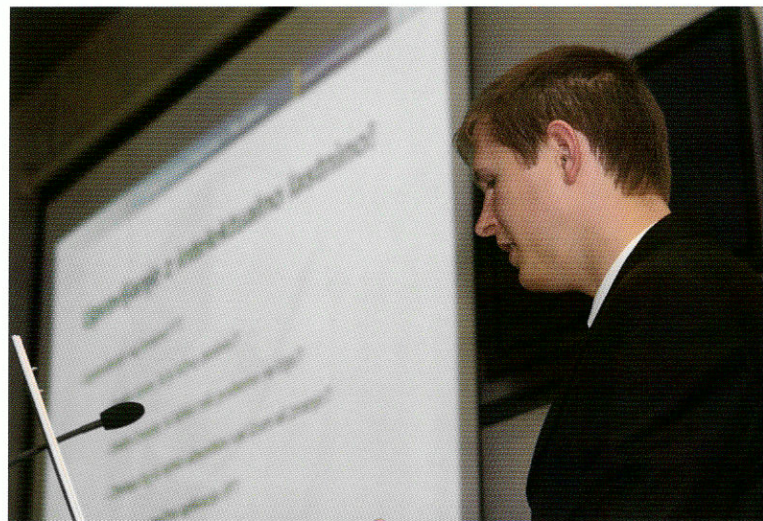
Project Partner 9

TechnoCenter at the University of Maribor

TehnoCenter Univerze v Mariboru

Maribor, Slovenia

www.tehnocenter.uni-mb.si





innovation...

I3SME "Introducing innovation inside SMEs" I3SME activities have been developed as a boosting instrument tackling SMEs problems in EU countries - in particular new MSs - in order to foster the innovation diffusion and application, knowledge transfer between SMEs at regional and international level. SMEs will better exploit R&D and ICT instruments and opportunities, apply innovative management strategies and identify networks for innovation application inside their realities.

Project activities are characterized by a first phase of benchmarking process within the SMEs by the identification of a set of indicators allowing the identification of the hidden champions and the diffusion of the best performances and methodologies of innovation application by the technology platform. Project partners will support the diffusion of information on the new instruments towards the most hidden SMEs (mainly of the secondary sector) and on the possible policies to be applied supporting the instruments.

Facilitators, intermediaries bodies representatives striving for innovation enhancement, will support the process providing concrete support to SMEs after targeted training sessions. The application of the new instruments directly in the companies will boost them in open their borders towards innovative instruments in manage production process, HR management, participation to R&D projects,

ICT applications utilization and a wide range of opportunities.

The pilot projects are the concrete application of the process and support the creation of an international community able to apply innovation processes.

Project results dissemination by international conferences, media involvement, research cocktails – meeting between entrepreneurs, researchers, business representatives, policy makers - will be the fil rouge of activities implementation supporting the diffusion of innovation at international level.

Project website : www.i3sme.eu