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GROW - a 7.5m Euros programme between Andalusia, Emilia-Romagna, Noord Brabant, Malopolska and South East England. These five relatively high growth regions are at different stages of development but shared the same vision - not growth at all costs but the achievement of 'smart growth'. The regions joined forces to work towards implementing the Lisbon Agenda to make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. There were 3 pillars to the GROW Programme: GREEN GROWTH for environment, BUSINESS GROWTH for business cooperation, innovation & entrepreneurship and INCLUSIVE GROWTH for employment and social inclusion. GROW was launched in Seville in June 2005 and ended with the previous programming period on 31 December 2007.

Throughout 2007 project partners have been looking to the future and planning the next steps beyond the 2000 – 2006 funding period. Partners discussed how to maximise the dissemination of results achieved, ways to encourage sub projects to continue their collaboration independently and the legacy of GROW Programme. A legacy report will be available on the GROW website from March 2008 – www.grow3c.com

Mid programme the Stockholm Region had already expressed interest to join the partnership. Representatives of the Stockholm Region participated in the GROW programme throughout 2007 in an 'observer' capacity and hosted the 'GROW 2 Preparation Meeting' in Stockholm 22/23 November 2007.

Different funding streams were considered for the legacy of GROW and partners agreed that INTERREG IVC would be the most appropriate stream. The INTERREG IVC Programme is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund Policies, for the period 2007-2013 and was approved by the European Commission on 11 September 2007. The INTERREG IVC Programme aims, by means of interregional cooperation, to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and contribute to economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe, by:

- Enabling local and regional actors across the EU to exchange their experiences and knowledge;

- Matching regions less experienced in a certain policy field with more advanced regions; and
- Ensuring the transfer of good practices into Structural Funds mainstream programmes.

One of the differences with the previous programme is that the regulations require programmes to be more narrowly focussed. Although existing project partners had already conducted a mapping exercise listing the themes which are priorities for their regions, it became apparent these could not all be addressed through one application. This was confirmed at the individual consultation with the JTS attended by the GROW Team on 20 November 2007. Therefore, two applications for mini-programmes were being developed and one submitted under each of the two thematic priorities during the 1st call which closed on 15 January 2008.

An application called **PEOPLE** was submitted under Priority 1: Innovation and the knowledge economy - employment, human capital and education.

An application called **POWER** was submitted under Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention - energy and sustainable transport.

POWER

SEEDA will lead the **POWER Mini-Programme** working with 6 other partners: Malopolska (Poland), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Noord-Brabant (Netherlands), Stockholm (Sweden), Andalucia (Spain) and the most recent addition to the partnership Tallinn (Estonia). The total budget of the mini-programme is 5.8 million Euros with a co-financing rate of 75%. The programme is scheduled to commence in July 2008 and run through December 2011.

Climate change has risen to the top of everyone's agenda and the partners are committed to exploring the best ways of driving low carbon economies and working jointly to meet the ambitious related targets set by the EU and our national governments.

Building on what worked well in GROW, SEEDA will host the POWER Secretariat which will also be jointly funded by the Environment Agency and SEERA. Management activities will be coordinated through a network of Regional Correspondents, one per participating region. SEEDA will be the Lead Partner and accountable body to the European Commission for the programme.

The mini-programme will fund a maximum of 12 sub projects on the following sub themes: 1) Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies, 2) Sustainable Transport, 3) Eco-innovation and Environmental Technologies, 4) Behaviour Change and 5) Mainstreaming with EU Structural Funds. Activities under these themes will contribute towards the reduction of each region's ecological footprint. Results and feedback from the sub projects will inform the network of regional policy experts in their field and be used to influence policies at all levels to ensure a more integrated approach.

PEOPLE

SEEDA negotiated with the Junta de Andalucia, partner region with which it has successfully collaborated through GROW, for them to take the lead and SEEDA to become a partner in the **PEOPLE Mini-Programme**. (This way, the risk is spread and chances more open. The JTS would not have given the lead of 2 mini-programmes to the same organisation.) This mini-programme involves Andalucia (Spain) as lead partner and accountable body, Venezia (Italy), Noord-Brabant (Netherlands), Malopolska (Poland), Stockholm (Sweden), Timis (Romania) and South East England (UK). The total budget of the mini-programme is nearly 4 million Euros with a co-financing rate of 75% (the UK budget is 720,000 Euros). The programme is scheduled to commence in September 2008 and run through August 2011.

The objective of the PEOPLE project is to explore the opportunities for new employment and for improving well-being and cohesion in the frame of the demographic and societal changes faced by the European regions.

Through the implementation of the mini-programme a maximum of 12 sub-projects involving local and sub-regional stakeholders will be tendered out to provide innovative ideas and solutions to demographic and societal changes faced by the European regions. The thematic sub-themes the subprojects will deliver on, are Social e-inclusion (Noord-Brabant), Silver Economy (Stockholm), Civil Society Capacity Building (Venice), ICT for health and dependency (SEE), Social Entrepreneurship (Malopolska), and Work Life Balance (Andalucia).

More specifically, SEEDA will:

- lead on the ICT for Health and dependency sub theme
- be responsible for the communication of the mini-programme
- develop and manage the mini programme website (it is planned to run the two mini-programmes in parallel to each other using the same tools)
- organise secondment opportunities with the other regions involved in the programme
- stage an international conference
- produce a final report on ICT for Health and dependency.

A decision on the two applications will be given in Summer 2008.

