

NEWSLETTER

Interreg
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REWARD

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GET TO KNOW THE PROJECT, UPDATES, UPCOMING EVENTS

In response to global trends, technological development and the emergence of new forms of work and lifestyles, policymakers need to develop a better understanding of the brain-drain brain-gain phenomenon and take action for the benefit of communities by adapting their policies for developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship.

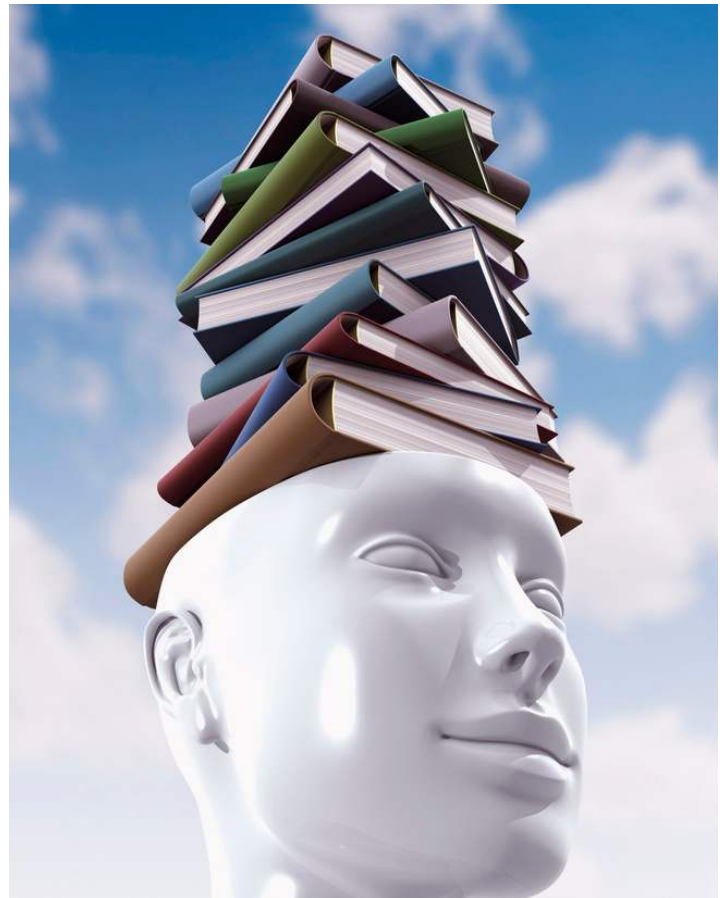
Against this background, REWARD brings together 9 partners from 2 transition regions (FI, IE) and 6 less developed regions (HR, PT, IT, SK, PL, CZ) to find solutions to these challenges.

ABOUT PROJECT

REWARD aims to improve regional policies and programmes for retaining and attracting knowledge workers for regional development. It will identify, analyse, disseminate and transfer good practices among regional policy actors in 4 complementary areas. The specific objectives are thus to:

- Improve the effectiveness of **university-industry collaboration** as a means of retaining graduates in existing jobs
- Support entrepreneurship and increase **business support** to create new jobs in the economy
- Improve interventions that enhance the **quality of life** and foster regional attractiveness
- Adapt to **new forms of work** (digital nomads, remote work, second homeowners).

A FEW NUMBERS



Common theme

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The REWARD project is an active contribution to EU cohesion policy that supports economic growth, jobs and sustainable development, while at the same time reducing disparities in regional development.

The Mazovia Region organized the first event of the Regional Stakeholder Group.

The Mazovia Region, and especially Warsaw, is the business, scientific and technological center of Poland, attracting many qualified specialists. Nevertheless, retaining qualified staff in the region is a challenge for the Mazovian authorities. Retaining knowledge workers has a direct impact on the competitiveness of the Mazovia and its development as a modern technological and innovation center.

Therefore, the region is implementing the REWARD project, which aims to improve cooperation between key and interested parties and promote activities that increase the ability of enterprises to attract qualified labor.

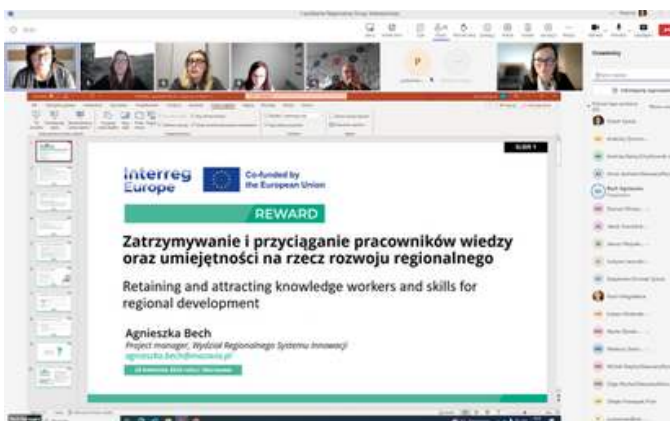
On April 24, the first event in the project took place - first meeting of the Regional Stakeholder Group was held.

The meeting was attended by representatives of institutions invited by the Marshal of the Masovian Voivodeship. Among them were representatives of subregional cities, universities, business incubators as well as the Provincial Labor Office, the Mazovia Development Agency and the Płock Industrial and Technology Park.

The aim of the meeting was to introduce stakeholders to the topic of the European Territorial Community and present the benefits of participating in international projects and familiarize them with the assumptions of the REWARD project.

The role of stakeholders in the project and the possibility of their involvement were discussed. People participating in the meeting also had the opportunity to learn about the planned activities in the project.

A significant part of the meeting was devoted to the Status Quo analysis survey, which aims to present the demographic and economic situation of all project partners.



The inaugural partner meeting of the Inter-municipality Community of Médio Tejo, Portugal

The first stakeholder meeting of the Inter-municipal Community of Médio Tejo, took place on the 28th of June, in Torres Novas, in the headquarters of Nersant – The Regional Enterprise Association.

The meeting agenda included a brief project presentation, concerning project main topics, objectives and targets, activities and project timeline. The role of local stakeholders was also on focus, and there was room for a debate between the organisations.

Previous projects and initiatives applied to regional competitiveness were discussed, and partners confirmed to have great expectations about the REWARD methodology, based on a solid SQA, good practice examples, stakeholders meetings and learning together with the other project partners, identified to have high relevance to our own regional context.



The participants were representatives from five organisations:

- Inter-municipal Community of Médio Tejo
- Nersant – The Regional Enterprise Association
- IPT – The Polytechnic Institute of Tomar
- Tagusvalley – Science and Technology Parc
- Centro Regional Coordination and Development Commission.



Next meeting was scheduled to take place in the last trimester of the year, in order to summarize learnings from the next project meeting on university-industry collaboration

How to Strengthen South Savo's Talent Pool and Attract Skilled Workers?

On 27 August Savonlinna Development Services Ltd., Finland organised the meeting with the key stakeholders.

Topics of the meeting was:

How can we enhance the knowledge capital of South Savo and attract skilled workers to local businesses? How can we create high-skilled job opportunities in the region? And where will we find the talent for these roles?

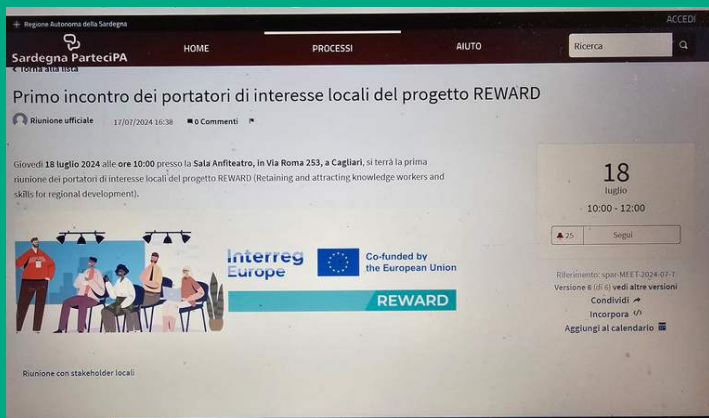
The REWARD project aims to improve collaboration among key stakeholders and promote actions that enhance the ability of companies within South Savo's innovation ecosystems and networks to attract skilled workforce. By seeking EU-wide feasible ideas and solutions, REWARD focuses on making these strategies applicable in South Savo.



At the first REWARD stakeholder meeting solutions were brainstormed together. The meeting was organized as a hybrid and in total there were 36 participants. At the meeting partner reviewed the situation in participating regions, showcase "best practices," and refine our understanding of challenges in South Savo. Also evaluation of the measures has been taken to attract skilled workers.

The session in Cagliari introduced the REWARD project

On 18th July 2024, the first stakeholder meeting was held at the Assessorato dell'Industria in Cagliari. The session introduced the REWARD project (Retaining and attracting knowledge workers and skills for regional development) and facilitated discussions on strategies to retain and attract skilled professionals to Sardinia. The meeting placed a significant emphasis on the critical role of University-Industry collaboration in creating conditions that retain knowledge workers and boost regional growth.



Additionally, the participants discussed the upcoming first operational event in Autumn 2024, which will bring together the international partners and stakeholder of the REWARD project in Sardinia. This event will specifically focus on the relationship between Universities and Industry, and how this collaboration can be leveraged to attract and retain talent within the region.

On 5th August 2024, a workshop was organized to continue the discussions.

It focused on understanding local capacity to attract knowledge workers, sharing good practices, and identifying areas where policy improvements could be made.

These events are part of Sardinia's effort to engage stakeholders in shaping policies that support regional economic growth through talent retention and development.

The goal for the next meeting is to monitor policy changes and identify new projects aimed at retaining and attracting qualified workers.



The participation of the Trnava region in the REWARD project

The participation of the Trnava region in the REWARD project represents a significant opportunity to share experiences and best practices with other partners, as well as to learn from them. Thanks to this project, the Trnava region will be able to improve its regional policies with the aim of attracting and retaining skilled workers, which is crucial for the prosperity of the region.

The first local meeting within this project took place on September 25, 2024, at 9:30 AM at the TTSK Office on Starohájska 10 in Trnava. The meeting provided space for exchanging opinions and presenting ideas that could be beneficial for regional development and inspiring for other partners. The participation of representatives from universities and industry was significant, as their cooperation plays a key role in connecting academia with practice and the labor market.



REWARD Stakeholders for the Western Region in Ireland met in Galway to review progress

The aim of the meeting, which took place on 18th September 2024, was to consolidate the grouping, deepen engagement and agree on the next course of action.

Stakeholders engaged and participated in planning for the following project activities:

- Reviewing the Status Quo Analysis, with particular emphasis on Section III – Policy Instruments
- Next Interregional Study Visit
- Identifying good practices from the region related to planned thematic workshops.

The complexity of the local ecosystem was noted, and it was agreed that building a clear picture of what was currently happening would help to avoid duplication and promote cohesion and synergy.



The Regional Development Agency of the Pardubice Region, Czech Republic, organised at the meeting

On Friday, September 27, a stakeholder meeting for the REWARD project took place in the premises of the EURO Hotel, aimed at maintaining and attracting talent and knowledge workers to the Pardubice region. Klára Štefančová, director of RDA PR opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

In the introduction she mentioned that this meeting is organized within the REWARD project. She emphasized that it is a non-investment project, funded by the EU, which could help to bring concrete measures contributing to reducing the outflow of talent from the region. Good practices will be shared and experiences will be exchanged with the European regions involved in the project.

She also said that today's meeting would focus primarily on the topic of brain drain from the Pardubice Region and ways to retain talents. She also said that the programme will include a discussion focused on sharing best practices and experiences, including proposals for measures that could help address this problem.

Subsequently, all participants briefly introduced themselves and then Jan Gregor gave a more detailed presentation of the REWARD project itself.

Participants agreed to establish regular meetings, every six months, where participants share their experiences and bring new ideas to address current challenges.



Suggestions for future meetings:

- Focus on specific areas: It is recommended to select one or two key areas or activities to focus on at each meeting. This focus will allow for deeper and more effective discussion and suggestions for solutions.
- Transfer of international experience: It is important to translate and bring experiences from international settings that can bring new perspectives and innovative approaches.
- Analyses and data work: Detailed analysis should be produced on selected topics to serve as a basis for future decision-making and practices.



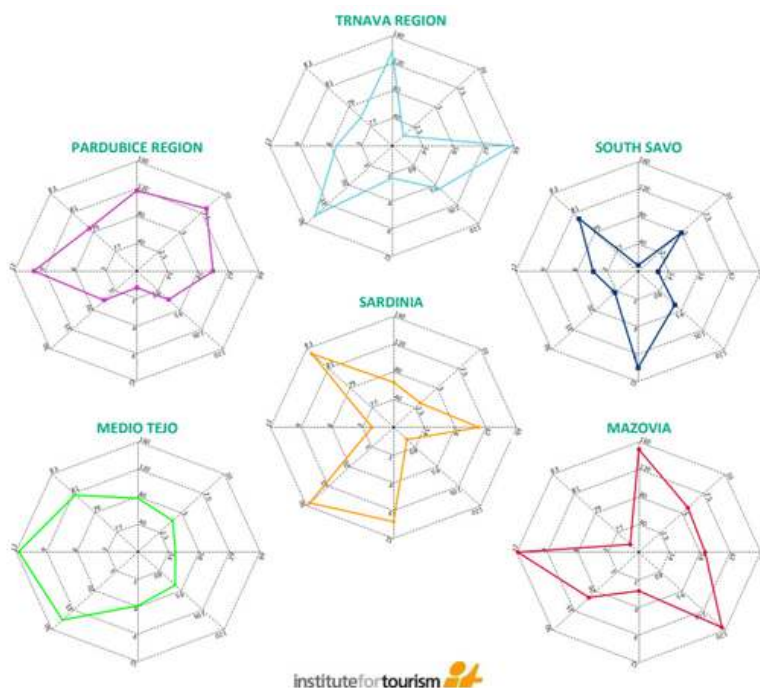
The Institute for Tourism (IZT), serving as the advisory partner, has completed a comprehensive Status Quo Analysis (SQA), laying a solid foundation for the REWARD project's implementation.

The Institute for Tourism provides methodological and academic support to the entire REWARD partnership as an advisory partner.

To ensure a uniform and comparable approach to data collection, IZT prepared a background information paper on critical concepts essential for influencing the attraction and retention of knowledge workers. They also developed a detailed SQA questionnaire with instructions, providing continuous support to all project partners throughout the process. Partners collected and shared relevant data, and preliminary findings were presented at the first kick-off meeting in Tomar, Portugal, organized by the Inter-Municipal Community of Médio Tejo in May 2024.

Building on the SQA, IZT produced fact sheets for each partner region, featuring information relevant to the project's objectives, descriptions of best practices, and summaries of regional advantages and challenges in attracting and retaining knowledge workers. These fact sheets aim to facilitate policy transfer based on best practices by providing contextual information that delves into the broader context, leading to policy formulation and implementation. By overcoming language barriers and time constraints, the fact sheets enable partners to familiarize themselves with each region's unique context ahead of the interregional meeting in Sardinia.

Originally intended to be part of a comprehensive SQA publication presented in November 2025, the fact sheets have been distributed earlier to maximize their usefulness. Savonlinna Development Services and IZT express their gratitude to all partners for their diligent efforts in completing the questionnaire to a high standard within the project's tight timetable. The early distribution of these fact sheets underscores the collaborative spirit of the REWARD project and our shared commitment to enhancing regional policies for attracting and retaining knowledge workers.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Interregional policy learning event in Cagliari on 13th and 14th November , Sardinia



Autonomous Region of Sardinia will organise the 1st interregional policy learning event on university-industry collaboration. The event is scheduled for November 13th and 14th 2024.

The event will take place over two days, with the aim of exploring best practices related to university-industry collaboration and their potential for policy transfer.

The first day will include guided tours of scientific and technological sites in Sardinia, with the participation of both local and international stakeholders.

The second day will feature presentations of best practices by the involved stakeholders, both local and international, followed by thematic discussions in a World Café format. The event will conclude with a synthesis of the discussed practices, transfer opportunities and a visit to the "Einstein Telescope" exhibition in Cagliari, which is also considered a best practice.

The event aims to explore how university-industry collaborations can create ideal conditions to attract and retain skilled workers, contributing to regional growth.

By exchanging good practices and analyzing effective cooperation models, the goal is to strengthen the connection between University and Industry, fostering economic development and innovation.

The objectives of this event are to:

- Strengthen university-industry collaboration to attract skilled talent.
- Promote regional economic growth through innovation.
- Share good practices from different regions and sectors.



THE PARTNERSHIP



Savonlinna Development Services (FI)



South Savo Regional Council (FI)



Institute for Tourism (HR)



Inter-Municipal Community of Médio Tejo (PT)



Autonomous Region of Sardinia (IT)



Western Development Commission (IE)



Trnavský samosprávny kraj (SK)



Marshal's Office of the Mazovian Voivodeship (PL)



Regionální rozvojová agentura Pardubického kraje (CZ)



EVENTS

- **Q&A session about financial reporting**

An online question and answer session on financial reporting will take place on October 17, 2024 between 10:00-12:00 CEST/Paris time.

All partners in projects approved in the second call can join and ask their questions.

[Register here.](#)

- **Leading industrial transition**

On 6 and 7 November 2024, the Policy Learning Platform is organising two workshops diving into several aspects of Europe's industrial transformation, in Bilbao, Spain.

Throughout guest lectures, interactive sessions and study visits you will learn everything about leading industrial transition.

To access the registration form, [login](#) an Interreg Europe community account.

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