



“ATM for SMEs” Access to Microfinance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Project meeting in Poland – Best Practices from ATM for SMEs Project Partners

At the meeting in Sandomierz, Poland at the beginning of October 2017 the project partners' main prospective was to share their best practices in “MICROFINANCE AS A TOOL TO LOCAL EMPLOYMENT”. These practices are implemented in their own regions and the activities, results and contributions are altered. All programs aim to provide loans with the objective of fighting unemployment and social exclusion by supporting business initiatives for disadvantaged groups of people.

There are different target groups depending on the main goal of the loan. *The Świętokrzyskie Voivodship Loan Fund* finance entrepreneurs who are planning to establish their own business or who have been running their business for below the 12 months' period. Also in Poland, the *Świętokrzyski Guarantee Fund* is addressed primarily to entities whose creditworthiness has been positively verified by a bank or other financial institution, while target beneficiaries of the *Loan Fund of Center for Promoting and Supporting Agricultural Enterprises in Sandomierz* are mainly entrepreneurs in the service and trade sector.

After the host the other partners presented their best practices as well. The “Cash on Start” program of National Association of Entrepreneurship Support offers loans for entrepreneurial activity and for a wide range of purposes such as investment capital, turnover, also including current operational costs, extension or modernization of production and intangible assets related to the implemented project and they have a personalized 4 hour coaching on writing their business plan. The *PORA* program's target groups include unemployed people, young people, long-term unemployed people, people over the age of 50 and people with disabilities.

Microfinance Norway allows youth, women, immigrants, and unemployed individuals to improve their own lives through self-employment, and the “*Székesfehérvár*” credit scheme also targets local micro enterprises who are excluded from the credit schemes offered by commercial banks. *CEEI Burgos's* loans have supported Automotive workshops, Restaurants and bars, Logistics, Farming and Rural hotels so far, *KIZ SINNOVA* promotes entrepreneurship for women with migration background.

The target group of *Involvement of Microfinance* by Zala County Foundation for Enterprise Promotion are jobseekers, who have been registered by the district labour office for at least one month, or who receive rehabilitation service or rehabilitation benefit. The *Agency of Regional Development Foundation in Starachowice* offers micro-loans for business starters, and *Voivodship Labour Office in Kielce* supports entrepreneurs with grants and low interest loans advisory, financial and legal assistance, as well as training.

Project information:

Number of partners: 10

Countries involved: Hungary, Germany, Poland, Italy, Spain, Norway, Croatia, Belgium

Main outputs: 9 regional action plans, 6 study trips, 9 improved policies, 6 new projects generated

Project duration: 4/2016 – 3/2021

ERDF funding: 1.622.097 €