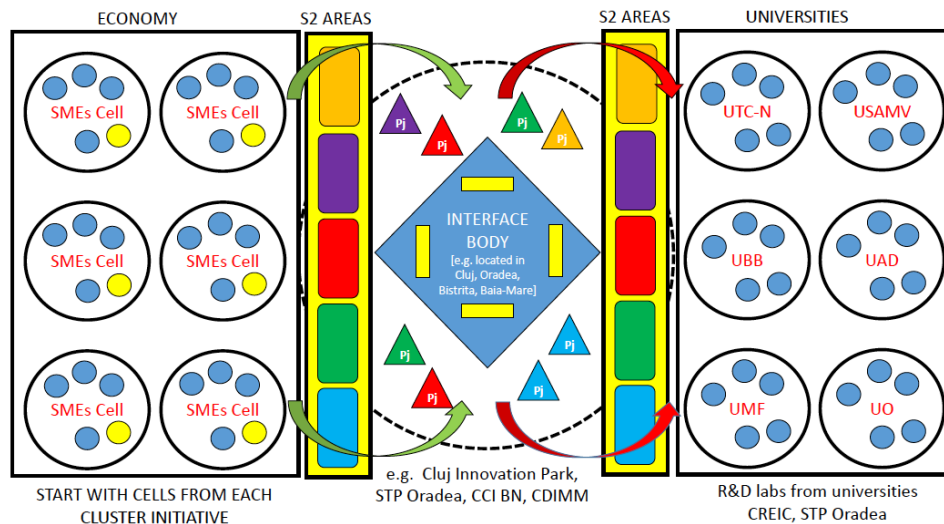


Project proposal

1. Project Scope

The project is intended to strengthen innovation capacity and innovation activity in North West Romania. It adopts a platform approach modelled on existing practice operated by ETH Zurich. A schematic of the proposed approach is set out below. This was produced by one of the participants and endorsed by the Sub-Committee.



Source: Stelian Brad

The intention is to:

Mobilise research capacity in the region to respond to industry needs for research, validation and viability activities.

This will be operationalized through:

- A collaborative internet based platform through which research groups can offer support to requests for assistance from industry groupings (collections of firms).
- An institutional structure will be formed consisting of a Board (Steering Group) of key stakeholders (Universities/firm representatives), plus a secretariat (which could be staffed from existing organisations), plus a collaborative platform.
- A region-wide network would be formed through the development of geographically focused hubs.

The model has similarities to the co-location centres of the EIT's KICs and the region is advised to examine this approach. Participants highlighted existing models of web-enabled collaboration platforms (such as Conference) that could form the foundations of the proposed project.

- Modular activities could include the following:
- Collaborative projects between researchers/research groups and SMEs
- Collaborative projects between PhD students and SMEs under the supervision of a university/research group (or more than one university/research group)
- Small-scale industry-led projects to be tackled by groups of/individual post-graduate students under supervision
- Industry-led projects to be tackled by graduate associates working in the company but under the supervision/auspices of a university/research group (KTP model)
- Expert technical seminars

Key considerations will include development of model IP agreements. Extensions of the project could include the promotion of Innovation Vouchers and similar options to generate a revenue stream for the Platform. Various strands of the proposed project could be developed through complementary funding streams, promoting synergy and building an entrepreneurial discovery process in practice.

2. Scale,

The project is region-wide in scale. Hubs will ensure that activity is not concentrated only in one location. Crucially, the project is scalable and might be adapted to take a transnational complexion. This could have advantages to both participating firms and Universities.

3. Focus,

The broad focus is IT (as per the Terms of Reference and identified need in the region). Sub-themes, capitalising on the region's strengths in IT applications and specialist industrial sectors could focus on:

- Energy
- Environment
- Health

Possible links to the EIT KICs in Health and Energy were discussed, to complement the more obvious link to KIC Digital. In this respect, links might also be made to Thematic Platform

initiatives being driven by the EC's Smart Specialisation Platform (<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/s3-thematic-platforms>) and DG Enterprise (see ReConfirm - <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reconfirm>).

4. *Equipment/facilities required*

Participants suggested that, initially, existing facilities would be sufficient. To facilitate the success of the proposed project a benchmarking and

5. *Key partners to be engaged,*

- Cluster organisations (such as Cluj-IT)
- (Independent) Technology Transfer Centers
- Universities
- SMEs

The role of National Research Institutes was not discussed.

In the future, cells could include public sector bodies, if they wished to develop innovation applications to the challenges that they face.

6. *Potential beneficiaries,*

Potential beneficiaries include:

- SMEs
- Students
- Existing employees
- Universities/Research groups

7. *Potential demand,*

Participants estimate that on the basis of present activity levels demand would be a minimum of 300 projects per year. Some firms would participate in multiple projects. Consideration should be given to the implications of relevant State Aid Regulations.

8. *Likely costs (capital and revenue),*

This aspect was not fully detailed. Initial discussion highlighted how costs could be modified depending on the final content of the proposed project. Initial outlay could be relatively modest, with the project developing incrementally over time. Some core costs (such as staffing) might be met through secondments of existing staff.