

## South East Europe Transnational Programme

### Project Idea Form

**Project idea's title**

**«Taking Telecenters in digitally disadvantaged Communities one step further, by transforming them from internet access points and learning hubs to innovation support levers»**

**Priority**

(choose priority and indicate the relative area of intervention)

☐ Priority  
Axis 1

AoI \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Priority  
Axis 2

AoI \_\_\_\_\_

☒ Priority  
Axis 3

AoI **Develop strategies to tackle the “digital divide”**

☐ Priority  
Axis 4

AoI \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Idea Promoter**

(name of the institution)

R.A. Computer Technology Institute – Sector for Telematics and Applications for Regional Development

**Contact Person**

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Is the applicant the project's potential Lead Partner?

X Yes ☐ No

If not, is the potential Lead Partner already being chosen?

X Yes ☐ No

**Background** (main problems or challenges to be addressed)

- ♦ Key factors leading to the digital divide are:
  - Missing infrastructure or access,
  - Missing incentives to use ICTs,
  - Lack of the computer literacy or skills,
  - Poverty and social exclusion.

These barriers are very difficult to overcome within rural territories (especially distant isolated ones) and therefore the solution for these cases must include apart from traditional efforts (establish the needed infrastructure and provide financial help in order to have access) some additional support ones from the local actors (administrations, business chambers etc).

Interreg IIIB CADSES project named TELEACCESS showed that a helpful initiative towards this direction can be the creation of local “learning hubs” (telecenters) which will act as a lever to promote and support the use of information society from all local people within a disadvantaged (isolated, rural, mountainous, island) territory (which normally lack motivation and opportunities to acquire it).

With the TELEACCESS project we proposed a methodology in order to created telecenters fully customised based on the specific economic situation, existing barriers and problems, and local users needs. We presented the steps of the application of this methodology in several local rural communities in Greece, Italy and Bulgaria in order to establish local telecenters and how this led to different solutions (different kind of telecenters, by different kind of local stakeholders, providing different services to several local groups). As these new learning hubs have been created and operate within the pilot territories they created opportunities for the local population in order to come closer and use effectively the new

opportunities provided through ICTs. As a result new opportunities to take disadvantaged territories one step further are now provided.

## Objectives (main and specific objectives to be achieved)

Pilot telecenters, created by the project TELEACCESS, represent several sets of concrete cases dealing with different needs. These concrete cases identified are:

1. Telecenters to cover the needs of rural population for accessing new technologies and services (with no possibilities to do so until now) – e.g. Stambolovo case -
2. Telecenters to assist tourists, with no possibility to have an innovative info-point while visiting an outlying rural destination – e.g. Urbino case –
3. Telecenters to provide additional opportunities, for access to new technologies, to students – e.g. Casarano case –
4. Telecenters to cover specific needs of specific target groups of disadvantaged people – e.g. Piegara case –
5. Telecenters acting as innovation hubs providing support for innovation enhancement to groups of people already in touch with new technologies/services and www – e.g. Dresden case-

Aim of the proposed project is to propose a roadmap for the transformation of existing telecenters within SEE regions to category 5 ones (from the categories presented above).

Thus the project effort will be to:

- ♦ Utilize the TELEACCESS experience on:
  - **scaling up** the creation of Telecenters, cooperating with local authorities.
  - **Additional application** of the TELEACCESS methodology on several other territories
- ♦ Going one step further on TELEACCESS results turning telecenters to innovation incubators providing further opportunities on communities working on overcoming their digital divide problem (create the second step in the effort to “catch up” with the not disadvantaged territories)

## Main foreseen activities

- Application of TELEACCESS methodology on several other digital divided territories in SEE area
- Improving the methodology based on the evaluation of these new pilots and the continuous evaluation of the already established telecenters
- Study on how strong points of digital divided territories can help them eventually turn into innovation driven communities
- Plan to use the telecenters as a lever to support the results derived from the previous study
- Pilot activities within the already established telecenters in order to turn them into innovation incubators for the local communities

## Expected outputs and results

The main project output will be to create a roadmap for the transformation of existing telecenters (or newly established ones) to innovation incubators

The long term impact will be to support disadvantaged communities within the SEE in order to go one step further in their struggle to overcome their digital disparities with rest of Europe.

## Innovative character of the project idea

The digital divide prevents a knowledge-based economy, at the time when Europe aspires to become a world leader in terms of creation, exchange and use of knowledge. Digital exclusion also threatens socio-economic coherence in the enlarged EU with its more diversified geography and considerable infrastructure disparities. The risk of disconnection between rural and urban Europe, is real. Remote rural communities on their own, or even linked at national level, lack the critical mass needed for the production of solutions. At this point, the proposed project interferes by bringing together experts and experiences (in the field of telecenters acting as a lever for the provision of lifelong learning opportunities) from different countries, who, through comparisons and exchange, will create common

flexible roadmap to be shared by remote communities, to assist them on taking the next needed step (from the internet access and learning provision to the support of local innovation based on new technologies penetration)

## Partnership

### Partners involved at this stage

ERDF Partners	Organizations operating/managing/supporting telecenters from Greece, Italy, Bulgaria (Local authorities)
IPA Partners	Authority from Croatia
ENPI Partners*	

### Partners requested

ERDF Partners	Regional/Local Authorities, Local chambers, Academic/Research Institutes in the fields of ICT/economic development/innovation, Organization operating/managing telecenters
IPA Partners	«»
ENPI Partners	

### Estimated Total Budget

2.000.000 euros

### Does your project idea foresee the application for the 10% rule\*

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Please, explain in detail what will it be used for and the relevance for the project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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### Estimated duration

(in months)

32

X I would like my project's idea to be published on the Southeast Europe Transnational Programme's website and presented during the SEE kick off event. (YES)

\* ENPI Funds won't be available for the 1<sup>st</sup> Call. Partners from Ukraine and Republic of Moldova can be involved by applying for the 10% rule.

\* The 20% rule is not applicable for the 1<sup>st</sup> Call.