

RISE

Resilient Innovation Ecosystems for EU Value Chains



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA). Neither the European Union nor EISMEA can be held responsible for them.

1. What is Project RISE?

Project RISE is an initiative aimed at accelerating the deployment of innovation while fostering sustainable and successful interregional cooperation. It focuses on promoting the drivers and investments necessary for innovation, particularly in less developed regions.

2. What are the objectives of Project RISE?

The main objective of Project RISE is to enhance the capacity of less developed regions through successful interregional collaborations. Specifically, it aims to support the emergence and growth of innovative and resilient projects in three less developed regions: Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Portugal.

3. What are the major pillars of Project RISE?

Project RISE is built on five major pillars:

1. Focus on innovation for less developed regions.
2. Providing support in key domains such as Mineral Raw Materials, Forest Biomass, Bioenergy, and Sustainable buildings in the energy field.
3. Identification of shared S3 (Smart Specialization Strategy) areas.
4. Placing SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) at the center of activities.
5. Developing a Pipeline of relevant projects.

4. What are the steps involved in Project RISE?

Project RISE follows four major steps:

1. Analysis of the Status Quo and setting up a pan-European ecosystem.
2. Mapping local innovation ecosystems and assessing possible innovation pathways.
3. Identifying compatible specialization strategies for cluster-related activities.
4. Implementing a strategy of actions targeting the creation of new business opportunities and economic growth.

5. How does Project RISE benefit the participating regions?

Project RISE benefits participating regions by:

- Enhancing their innovation capacity.
- Facilitating the development of common future opportunities through interregional cooperation.

- Identifying best practices and development programs for cluster-related activities.
- Creating connections between actors in the quadruple-helix ecosystems (government, academia, industry, and civil society).

6. What are the key areas of focus for Project RISE?

Project RISE focuses on key domains including Mineral Raw Materials, Forest Biomass, Bioenergy, and Sustainable buildings in the energy field. These areas are crucial for promoting sustainable development and fostering innovation in less developed regions.

7. How can organizations or individuals get involved in Project RISE?

Organizations or individuals interested in getting involved in Project RISE can reach out to the project coordinators or relevant regional authorities for more information on collaboration opportunities, funding schemes, and participation criteria.

8. How does Project RISE contribute to the overall European innovation landscape?

Project RISE contributes to the European innovation landscape by fostering cross-regional collaboration, sharing best practices, and promoting the development of innovative projects in less developed regions. It aims to create a more inclusive and sustainable innovation ecosystem across Europe.

9. What does "Ecosystem building and facilitating collaboration in EU value chains" entail?

This initiative focuses on constructing an interregional ecosystem to facilitate collaborations among companies and regions within the European Union. It aims to enhance innovation capacity, foster internationalization processes, and promote collaboration across regions.

10. What are the key objectives of this initiative?

The objectives include:

1. Developing a roadmap to boost the innovation capacity of international ecosystems, thereby contributing to innovation and internationalization processes across regions.

2. Establishing enduring partnerships between local and regional companies and the broader European markets, industries, and regions.
3. Offering support for collaborative endeavors by formulating guidelines and best practices for joint investment projects, with a focus on ensuring a smooth and productive collaboration process.

11. How does this initiative contribute to the innovation landscape in the EU?

By developing a roadmap to enhance innovation capacity and fostering enduring partnerships, this initiative contributes to the overall innovation landscape in the EU. It facilitates knowledge exchange, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices among companies and regions, thereby promoting innovation and internationalization processes.

12. How are partnerships established between local and regional companies and broader European markets, industries, and regions?

Partnerships are established through proactive engagement and collaboration initiatives. Local and regional companies can connect with broader European markets, industries, and regions through networking events, matchmaking activities, and targeted outreach efforts facilitated by the initiative.

13. What types of support are offered for collaborative endeavors?

Support for collaborative endeavors includes:

- Formulating guidelines and best practices for joint investment projects.
- Providing assistance in navigating regulatory frameworks and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles.
- Offering access to funding opportunities and resources for joint research and development initiatives.

14. How can companies and regions participate in this initiative?

Companies and regions interested in participating in this initiative must apply their ideas in MINE.THE.GAP Platform. For more detail information on collaboration opportunities, participation criteria, and upcoming events or activities, applicants are advised to read RISE Program - Guidelines for Applicants document.

15. What are the expected outcomes of this initiative?

The expected outcomes include:

- Strengthened collaboration and partnerships among companies and regions within the EU.
- Enhanced innovation capacity and competitiveness of participating ecosystems.
- Increased internationalization and market access opportunities for local and regional businesses.
- Facilitation of knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices across regions and industries.

16. What is the Pipeline of Investment Projects in the context of the RISE project?

The Pipeline of Investment Projects refers to the development of cross-regional innovation investment projects within the RISE project framework. It involves mobilizing networks and capabilities across EU regions to create new projects that foster innovation and collaboration.

17. How does the RISE consortium facilitate the development of investment projects?

The RISE consortium mobilizes its past and current networks and combines capabilities across EU regions to develop investment projects. It organizes collaborative matchmaking workshops to facilitate the process.

18. What are collaborative matchmaking workshops, and how do they work?

Collaborative matchmaking workshops are sessions where partners come together to explore existing technologies, solutions, and business models. The workshops aim to match partners, merge interests from quadruple helix representatives (government, academia, industry, and civil society), and develop collaborative investment projects based on innovative solutions.

19. What is the role of quadruple helix representatives in the development of investment projects?

Quadruple helix representatives, including civil society, play a crucial role in the development of investment projects. They contribute diverse perspectives and interests, ensuring the projects are well-rounded and aligned with societal needs.

20. How does the RISE project guide the process of drafting joint innovation investment plans?

The RISE project provides guidance and support throughout the process of drafting joint innovation investment plans. This includes ensuring the robustness of collaborative concepts, grounding them in a business logic, and achieving mature business plans for interregional innovation scale-up projects.

21. What is the ultimate goal of the Pipeline of Investment Projects within the RISE project?

The ultimate goal is to achieve mature business plans for interregional innovation scale-up projects. These projects aim to promote innovation, drive economic growth, and create tangible benefits for the participating regions and stakeholders.

22. How can organizations or individuals participate in the development of investment projects within the RISE project?

Organizations or individuals interested in participating can engage with the RISE consortium through collaborative matchmaking workshops, networking events, and outreach activities.

23. What does "Bringing Projects Close to Market" entail within the RISE project?

Bringing Projects Close to Market is the fourth step of the RISE project, focusing on vital investment planning for previously validated projects. This step aims to bridge the gap between project development and market readiness.

24. How does RISE facilitate the process of bringing projects close to market?

RISE facilitates the process by:

1. Conducting EU Investor Mapping to identify potential investors in industrial circular economy.
2. Facilitating connections between project holders and relevant investors.
3. Providing guidance on fundraising strategy tailored to project needs.
4. Compiling cases for public funding to support project development.

25. What is EU Investor Mapping, and why is it important?

EU Investor Mapping involves comprehensive research to identify potential investors in industrial circular economy. This includes corporate investors, private equity, venture capital funds, family offices, investment banks, promotional banks, and business angels. It's essential for connecting projects with suitable investors.

26. How does RISE facilitate connections between project holders and investors?

RISE identifies lead contacts in investment entities and facilitates access to its project pipeline for projects ready to raise private funds. The aim is to establish connections based on the strategic goals of both project holders and investors.

27. What is the role of RISE experts in crafting a fundraising strategy?

RISE experts provide guidance to project holders in crafting a tailored fundraising strategy. This strategy aligns with project needs and considers both private and public funding sources to maximize financial support and sustainability.

28. What are the benefits of mixed funding for projects within the RISE project?

Mixed funding, which includes both public and private sources, ensures financial stability and resilience for projects. RISE compiles cases for public funding, such as European Calls of Interest, to support the development of creative and resilient ecosystems.

29. How can projects within the RISE project access support for bringing their projects close to market?

Projects within the RISE project can access support by engaging with project coordinators, participating in guidance sessions offered by RISE experts, and leveraging the connections facilitated by the project. They can also explore opportunities for public funding compiled by RISE to enhance their fundraising strategies.

30. Who may apply for the RISE Program?

The RISE Program offers a unique opportunity for various entities to participate, including:

- SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises)
- Start-ups or spin-offs
- Big companies

- Regional/local authorities
- Universities/education/training organizations
- Research and technology organizations
- Clusters or technology parks
- Chambers of commerce or other business associations
- Non-profit organizations
- Civil society organizations
- NGOs

31. What are the eligibility criteria for applicants?

To be eligible for the RISE Program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. They must be from one of the identified countries: Bulgaria, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, and Sweden.
2. The proposed activities must focus on producing impact in Less Developed Regions of Severozapaden (Bulgaria), Alentejo (Portugal), and/or Vzhodna Slovenija (Slovenia).
3. The proposed actions must be TRL6+ solutions, meaning projects with an engineering-scale prototype tested in an industrial environment and requiring further collaboration to develop more technical and technological solutions or optimize resources to make the project economically viable.

32. What are the priorities or key domains for projects within the RISE Program?

The RISE Program focuses on key domains aligned with the green and digital transition and smart manufacturing in the identified Less Developed Regions. These key domains include:

1. Mineral Raw Materials: Innovative solutions to secure and promote the resilience of the European mineral raw materials value chain.
2. Forest Biomass: Innovative approaches for mobilizing forest biomass for bioenergy.
3. Bioenergy and Sustainable Buildings: Innovative production and use of renewable resources, coupled with the development and implementation of technologies and strategies that reduce environmental impact, promote circularity, and minimize carbon emissions in economic activities.

33. How are actions categorized within the RISE Program?

Actions within the RISE Program are categorized based on the type of investors they seek and the financing mix of the project. Categories include seeking strategic

investors, financial investors, mixed approaches, and partners for interregional cooperation. Additionally, the program distinguishes between investment innovation cases and investments subject to mainstream investors.

34. How can entities or projects align with the priorities of the RISE Program?

Entities and projects can align with the priorities of the RISE Program by focusing on the identified key domains and addressing specific priorities within those domains. This may include developing innovative solutions, promoting circular economy practices, utilizing renewable resources, and implementing technologies to reduce environmental impact and carbon emissions.

35. How can organizations apply for the RISE Program?

Organizations can apply for the RISE Program by following a two-step process:

1. Register on the MINE.THE.GAP Platform (Partner Search) to provide basic information, alignment with RISE objectives, and previous experience.
2. Create a Partner Search by providing detailed information about the action the consortium wants to develop and identifying opportunities and partners they are looking for.

36. What information is required during the registration on the MINE.THE.GAP platform?

During registration on the MINE.THE.GAP platform, applicants must provide:

- Basic entity details.
- Alignment with RISE program goals.
- Previous experience in innovation and collaboration activities.
- Potential areas of interest for interregional cooperation.

37. What information is needed to create a Partner Search in the online application form?

To create a Partner Search, applicants must complete an online application form, providing detailed information including:

- Description of the entity and its activities.
- Details about the action(s) the entity wants to share, including goals, scope, and potential impact.

- Search for partners and/or investors, specifying the type of collaboration sought.
- Financial requirements for the action, including the amount needed and type of investment.
- Status of the business plan, including Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL).
- Experience with public funding and references.
- Collaborative opportunities expectations.

38. How are Partner Searches selected for participation in the RISE Program?

The selection process is conducted in one phase by the RISE Consortium. Partner Searches are evaluated based on criteria including alignment with program goals, previous experience, potential for collaboration, clarity and accuracy of information provided, and suitability and innovation of the proposed action.

39. What are the criteria for selecting entities during the pre-selection phase?

Entities are pre-selected based on criteria such as alignment with program goals, clarity of alignment, relevance to key domains, potential impact on interregional cooperation, previous experience, and potential for collaboration.

40. What are the criteria for selecting actions during the selection phase?

Actions are selected based on criteria including description of entity and activities, alignment with RISE program goals, feasibility and innovation of the proposed action, potential impact on RISE Key Domains, transparency and specificity in seeking partners or investors, clarity and accuracy of financial request, readiness of the business plan for investment, experience with public funding, and specificity of collaborative needs and opportunities.

41. How can applicants ensure their application stands out during the selection process?

Applicants can ensure their application stands out by providing clear and concise information, demonstrating alignment with RISE program goals, highlighting the feasibility and innovation of their proposed action, and articulating specific collaborative needs and opportunities aligned with the RISE Program objectives.

42. What does "Facilitating collaboration in EU value chains" entail within the RISE Program?

Facilitating collaboration in EU value chains involves fostering cooperation among businesses and stakeholders within the European Union to enhance the efficiency, competitiveness, and innovation of supply chains. This collaboration spans various sectors, from manufacturing to services, with the goal of creating integrated and resilient value chains.

43. What is the "Pipeline of investment projects" in the context of the RISE Program?

The Pipeline of investment projects refers to a structured and planned series of investment opportunities within the EU. This involves identifying and organizing a portfolio of projects that attract investments, stimulate economic growth, and contribute to strategic objectives. Projects can include infrastructure development, technology initiatives, and sustainable ventures aligned with EU priorities.

44. How does the RISE Program facilitate "Bringing projects close to market"?

Bringing projects close to market involves strategic and operational activities aimed at transitioning innovative ideas, products, or services from development to commercial availability. RISE provides training, support, and monitoring activities to selected actions, helping refine prototypes, conduct market research, secure funding, address regulations, and establish distribution channels for successful commercialization.

45. What are the key objectives of these activities within the RISE Program?

The key objectives are to enhance collaboration within EU value chains, stimulate investment in innovative projects, and facilitate the transition of projects from development to market deployment, thereby contributing to economic growth and innovation within the European Union.

46. What is the timetable for the RISE Program?

The timetable for the RISE Program is as follows:

	Step	Timeline
1	Application submission	15 th February to 15 th March 2024
2	Selection	15 th March to 15 th April 2024
3	Announcement of the selected applications	April 2024
4	Pipeline of investment projects	September 2024 to February 2025

Workshop 1 – Mineral Raw Materials	
Workshop 2 – Forest Biomass	
Workshop 3 – Bioenergy and Sustainable Buildings	
Bilateral meetings	
5 Bringing projects close to market	March 2025 to October 2025
Collaboration sessions	
Market Deployment Plan	
Bilateral meetings	
Workshops	

47. What activities are included in the Pipeline of Investment Projects phase?

The Pipeline of Investment Projects phase includes workshops focused on specific domains such as Mineral Raw Materials, Forest Biomass, Bioenergy, and Sustainable Buildings. It also involves bilateral meetings aimed at fostering collaboration and the development of investment plans.

48. What activities are involved in the "Bringing projects close to market" phase?

Activities in the Bringing Projects Close to Market phase include collaboration sessions, the development of Market Deployment Plans, bilateral meetings, and workshops aimed at refining prototypes, conducting market research, and establishing distribution channels for successful commercialization.

Contact Information

Bulgaria



CTBG - KLIYNTEH BULGARIA FONDATSIYA

[info\(at\)cleantech.bg](mailto:info(at)cleantech.bg)

Finland



DIGIPOLIS - KEMIN DIGIPOLIS OY

[pirkka.junes\(at\)digipolis.fi](mailto:pirkka.junes(at)digipolis.fi)

Portugal



ACPMR – ASSOCIAÇÃO CLUSTER PORTUGAL MINERAL RESOURCES

[geral\(at\)clustermineralresources.pt](mailto:geral(at)clustermineralresources.pt)

Slovenia



TECOS - RAZVOJNI CENTER ORODJARSTVA SLOVENIJE

[peter.fajs\(at\)tecos.si](mailto:peter.fajs(at)tecos.si)
[simona.vernon\(at\)tecos.si](mailto:simona.vernon(at)tecos.si)

France



N-ABLE

[emmanuel.boudard\(at\)n-able.io](mailto:emmanuel.boudard(at)n-able.io)

Italy



LE2C - LOMBARDY ENERGY CLEANTECH CLUSTER

[info\(at\)energycluster.it](mailto:info(at)energycluster.it)

Spain



ICAMCYL - FUNDACION ICAMCYL

[projects\(at\)icamcyl.com](mailto:projects(at)icamcyl.com)

Sweden



PAPER PROVINCE - THE PAPER PROVINCE EKONOMISK FOERENING

[info\(at\)paperprovince.com](mailto:info(at)paperprovince.com)

Consortium

Eight partners from eight European countries charting the course towards a greener, more sustainable interregional collaboration, cultivating resilient ecosystems for a brighter, shared future.

 digipolis.fi Kemi, Finland	 paperprovince.com Karlstadt, Sweden	 clustermineralresources.pt Estremoz, Portugal
 icamcyl.com León, Spain	 energycluster.it Milan, Italy	 cleantech.bg Sofia, Bulgaria
 n-able.io Annecy, France	 tecoss.si Celje, Slovenia	



