Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE

Co-funded by the European Union

TASK4ISI

D.2.3.2 - Local Action Plan Package — ISIHUB Romagna

Authors:

PP4 - Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli

PP5 - O.P.E.N. Network - Offenders Pathways to Employment National Network

Version 4

M30

10 2026



Table of contents

1. Strategic Positioning **3**
1.1 Regional rationale 3
1.2 JSA priorities advanced 4
1.3 Implementation logic 4
2. Action Lines **6**
2.1 Overview 6
2.2 Action lines – details 6
3. Local Coordination **10**
3.1 Coordination model 10
3.2 Stakeholder engagement 10
4. Monitoring and Learning **12**
4.1 Common indicators 12
4.2 Feedback mechanisms 12
5. Sustainability Perspectives **14**
5.1 Continuation of action lines 14
5.2 Funding and institutional anchoring 15
5.3 Anchoring in S3/S4+ 15

Disclaimer
*This publication has been developed within the **CE0200771 TASK4ISI** project, supported by the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme with co-financing from the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the authors and the project partnership and does not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme, its programme bodies or the European Union. Neither the programme authorities nor the European Union can be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.*

Local Action Plan Package — ISIHUB Romagna

Region	*Emilia Romagna, Italy*
Regional ISIHUB Lead	*OPEN; Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli*
Prepared by	*Valeria Morici (O.P.E.N. Network);* *Serena Musolesi (Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli);* *Barbara Bovelacci (O.P.E.N. Network);* *Mara Morici (O.P.E.N. Network);* *Francesca Scocchera (O.P.E.N. Network);*
Version / Date	*V4 — M30*

1 Strategic Positioning

1.1 Regional rationale

Emilia-Romagna is characterised by an economically dynamic, export-oriented ecosystem featuring high entrepreneurial density and a strong overall labour force participation rate of 79.0% (aged 20–64). As highlighted in the TASK4ISI Joint Strategy Agenda (D.2.3.1), this positive aggregate figure conceals significant challenges identified in regional policies, such as the gender gap —with female participation at 72.0% compared to 86.1% for males together with population ageing dynamics, persistent youth NEET rates, and a contracting trend in youth-led and female-owned enterprises.

While the regional support ecosystem demonstrates significant indicators of investment and success regarding high-tech entrepreneurship, there remains margins for improvement concerning more traditional business initiatives, which are frequently led by underrepresented groups.

The two pilots implemented in the region confirmed that the main local gap is not the absence of entrepreneurship support, but the difficulty for under-represented aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs to identify, access and effectively use existing services. Participants presented highly diverse business ideas, including traditional, service-based, creative, social and technology-oriented activities, and required flexible delivery, personalised mentoring and active connection to mainstream business-support actors.
To support this context, this Local Action Plan (LAPP) serves as an operational policy instrument in support of local development policies.

Against this background, the LAPP translates the **pilot-tested ISIHUB Romagna approach into a multi-year local framework** built around **three mutually reinforcing actions**: access and profiling, modular skills development, tailored mentoring and matchmaking for business start-up, access to finance and ecosystem integration.
Commencing in November 2026, Consorzio OPEN/TECHNE and the Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli/CERCAL will launch a monitoring exercise to identify prospective regional, national, and European funding opportunities. These opportunities will be presented to ISIHUB Romagna stakeholders to ensure the sustained implementation of the Action Lines set out below and to foster potential collaborative projects stemming from them. The operational framework covers the period from 2026 to 2031 and foresees annual review meetings to maintain stakeholder engagement during periods with no active collaborative calls or projects.

1.2 JSA priorities advanced

In accordance with the TASK4ISI Joint Strategy Agenda (Deliverable D.2.3.1) and in consideration of regional profile and pilot evidence, this Local Action Plan advances **P3 (Make support systems navigable through ISIHUB intermediaries) as the primary focus**, operationalized through **Action Line 1 (Access, Profiling & Referral)**. This addresses the need for greater institutional coordination and increased awareness of access points to services. While Emilia-Romagna possesses a highly developed innovation landscape— anchored by actors like ART-ER (the Emilia-Romagna regional innovation and development agency) municipal and private incubator networks, chambers of commerce, and trade associations such as CNA and Confartigianato— support mechanisms remain heavily skewed towards technology-driven ventures. Consequently, traditional, service-based, and social enterprises led by under-represented groups struggle to locate appropriate assistance.

This LAPP, therefore, promotes structured referral pathways that seamlessly connect 'missing' entrepreneurs to mainstream ecosystem support, positioning the regional ISIHUB as an entry point and navigation hub for the broader territorial ecosystem.

P2 (Build skills and capabilities through low-threshold learning) acts as the secondary priority, operationalised through **Action Line 2 (Modular Inclusive Entrepreneurship Skills)** to build baseline readiness for under-represented entrepreneurs. Pilot delivery demonstrated that target group cohorts (women, youth, migrants, people with disabilities, senior) exhibit widely varying levels of business literacy, confidence, and digital capabilities. To transform nascent concepts into sustainable ventures, the LAPP deploys modular, target-aware learning pathways that combine flexibility in calendar, hybrid mode and tailored support.

P1 (Lower the financial and administrative threshold) is addressed through **Action Line A3 (Tailored mentoring, business matchmaking & start-up Support)**, responding to practical barriers experienced by first-time and early-stage founders when moving from a business idea towards formal start-up. Pilot activities highlighted the importance of tailored support on financing opportunities, access to credit, tax and legal requirements, VAT registration and other administrative steps, combined with individual mentoring and referrals to specialised ecosystem actors.

P4 (Reach across territories through hybrid delivery) operates as a **cross-cutting delivery principle.** Pilot implementation showed that hybrid participation, evening and weekend sessions, catch-up activities and the use of different local venues helped reduce participation barriers linked to work, study, family responsibilities, mobility and individual

circumstances. The LAPP therefore retains a blended and territorially distributed delivery model, combining online access with local physical points across Romagna.

1.3 Implementation logic

Grounded in the ISIHUB Romagna pilot experience, the three action lines are conceived as complementary and flexible components of a single support pathway rather than as a rigid sequence.

1. **Action Line 1 – Access, profiling and referral**: it provides a low-threshold entry point, identifies individual needs and entrepreneurial readiness, and connects participants with the most appropriate services and ecosystem actors.
2. **Action Line 2 – Modular Inclusive Entrepreneurship Skills**: it builds practical business, financial and digital capabilities through flexible and accessible learning formats adapted to different starting points.
3. **Action Line 3 – Tailored Mentoring, Business Matchmaking and start-up support**: it provides case-based mentoring and specialist advice, strengthens connections with relevant networks and business-support organisations, and supports concrete next steps related to business development, market access, administrative requirements and access to finance.

Pilot implementation showed that training, mentoring, referral, networking and individual support are most effective when they can be combined and overlap according to participants' business maturity, needs and availability. Hybrid delivery therefore remains a cross-cutting principle across all three action lines. While the three functions build directly on practices tested through the pilots, their post-project coordination arrangements, partner responsibilities and funding mechanisms are still emerging and will be further defined with the ISIHUB network.

2 Action Lines

2.1 Overview

ID	Action line title	Target group	JSA priority	Status	Pilot evidence?
A1	*ISIHUB Access, Profiling & Referral*	*Aspiring founders, job seekers, under-represented group*	*P3; P4*	*Potential*	*Yes - ISIHUB Pilot and network*
A2	*Modular Inclusive Entrepreneurship Skills*	Women, young graduates, first-time entrepreneurs	P2; P1	Potential	*Yes - ISIHUB Pilot and network*
A3	*Tailored Mentoring, Business Matchmaking & Start-up Support*	First-time entrepreneurs	P1; P3	Potential	*Yes - ISIHUB Pilot and network*

2.2 Action lines — details

Action Line — A1	
Title and JSA link	**Title:** *ISIHUB Access, Profiling & Referral* **Primarily advances:** *P3 — Make support systems navigable through ISIHUB intermediaries.* *Also contributes to: P4 — Reach across territories through hybrid delivery.*
Rationale and pilot evidence	The Romagna pilots confirmed that the territory already offers a broad range of entrepreneurship-support services, while under-represented aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs may experience difficulties in identifying the most appropriate entry point and in maintaining

	continuity throughout their entrepreneurial pathway. During pilot implementation, participant profiling, rolling enrolment, personalised follow-up and cooperation with municipalities, employment services, universities, the Chamber of Commerce, business associations and specialised inclusion actors proved important for reaching participants and connecting them with appropriate support. A1 therefore consolidates **the pilot-tested bridging role of ISIHUB Romagna into a structured navigation and referral function**.
Main activities and target groups	Main activities: • **Initial Guidance & Profiling:** Provision of **1-on-1** sessions, entrepreneurial readiness **profiling**, and **skill diagnostics**. • **Orientation & Pathway Mapping**: Tailored orientation on regional business models, legal forms, and available support schemes. • **Active Referral & Navigation**: Coordinated handovers to specialized local partners (e.g., employment centres, trade bodies, incubators). **Delivery Format**: Delivered via a hybrid model combining local physical desks and online guidance sessions. **Intended target reach:** ~ 15-20 aspiring entrepreneurs annually across Romagna.
Key actors	**Lead / coordinator:** *Consorzio OPEN/TECHNE and Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli/CERCAL* **Other potential actors:** *Orientagiovani Cesena; Centri per l'Impiego ; Camera di Commercio ; UEPE; ART-ER; Regional incubators;*
Expected contribution and possible policy/funding links	**Expected contribution:** *Reduces entry friction for under-represented groups, ensures structured referral paths, and prevents user drop-off between orientation and business launch.* **Possible policy/funding links:** *Municipal youth service contracts, Regional Employment Agency resources (Centri per l'Impiego), and ESF+ (European Social Fund Plus) regional priorities.*

Action Line — A2	
Title and JSA link	**Title:** *Modular Inclusive Entrepreneurship Skills* **Primarily advances:** *P2 — Build skills and capabilities through low-threshold learning.*

	Also contributes to: P1 — Lower the financial and administrative threshold.
Rationale and pilot evidence	The two regional pilots showed that participants enter entrepreneurship support with very different levels of business maturity, confidence, digital competence and technical knowledge. Effective support therefore requires modular and practical learning that can be adapted to individual starting points and combined with flexible delivery and personalised support. The pilots identified recurring needs in business-model development, market validation, financial literacy, pricing and break-even analysis, communication and personal branding, digital marketing and AI, legal and tax basics, and access to entrepreneurship-support and financing opportunities.
Main activities and target groups	Activities include the delivery of modular, short-format training such as workshops. Workshops will be structured in **interactive group sessions (in-person and online)** with practical exercises on finance education, personal and brand communication, marketing strategies, development of a Business Model Canvas, and other relevant topics. **Intended target reach:** ~15-25 participants per year across targeted cohorts (women re-entering the labour market, young people, and vulnerable groups).
Key actors	**Lead / coordinator:** *Consorzio OPEN/TECHNE and Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli/CERCAL* **Other potential actors:** *Apeiron; Romagna Tech; CNA; Confartigianato ; Techne through HUB@FO; CERCAL; Romagna Banca through workshop delivery; other regional incubators;*
Expected contribution and possible policy/funding links	**Expected contribution:** *Increases business literacy and economic independence, reduces early-stage start-up failure rates, and prevents economic abuse among vulnerable target groups.* **Possible policy/funding links:** *Emilia-Romagna Regional Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Funds, ESF+ vocational training measures, and association co-funding.*

Action Line — A3	
Title and JSA link	**Title:** *Tailored Mentoring, Business Matchmaking & Start-up Support* **Primarily advances:** *P1 — Lower the financial and administrative threshold.*

	Also contributes to: P3 — Make support systems navigable through ISIHUB intermediaries.
Rationale and pilot evidence	The two regional pilots showed that collective training alone is not sufficient for participants with different business ideas, maturity levels and vulnerabilities. Individual mentoring and specialist consultancy were used to refine business models, address product and market questions, strengthen personal positioning, navigate legal and tax requirements, support VAT or company set-up, explore financing opportunities and connect participants with business associations and specialised experts. The Business Matchmaking Pilot further demonstrated the value of using mentors, experts and trade associations as bridges between under-represented entrepreneurs and the mainstream entrepreneurial ecosystem.
Main activities and target groups	This Action Line includes a direct technical assistance desk for credit applications combined with full bureaucratic registration support. Mentors guide applicants through eligibility verification, business plan drafting, and official start-up procedures. ● **Format**: In-person consultations across local offices with assisted digital tooling. ● **Intended target reach**: ~ 20-30 micro-entrepreneurs supported annually.
Key actors	**Lead / coordinator:** *Consorzio OPEN/TECHNE and Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli/CERCAL* **Other potential actors:** *CNA; Confartigianato; Municipality of Cesena through Microcredit Information Desk ; Chamber of Commerce; Apeiron; CesenaLab; other regional incubators;*
Expected contribution and possible policy/funding links	**Expected contribution:** *Enables financial inclusion for non-bankable founders, lowers administrative barriers to entry, and ensures business sustainability through pre- and post-set-up mentoring.* **Possible policy/funding links:** *National Microcredit Fund with State Guarantee, Unioncamere's and Chamber of Commerce's National New Business Service (SNI), and European Project funds.*

3 Local Coordination

3.1 Coordination model

Role	Organisation	Contribution	Status
Regional ISIHUB Lead	*OPEN and the Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli, supported by TECHNE and CERCAL respectively*	Collegial board of coordination; local coordination; main contact point for entrepreneurs; ecosystem facilitation.	*Under discussion*
Training delivery partner/s	*Techne, Cercal, ART-ER, Confartigianato Cesena, CNA Forlì-Cesena, Camera di Commercio, RomagnaBanca, LinkAut, Apeiron, CISE, Romagna Tech, Cesena Lab and other regional incubators*	Training delivery, mentoring.	*Under discussion*
Communication parter/s	*OPEN and the Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli, supported by TECHNE and CERCAL respectively, with the involvement of the ISIHUB Romagna's stakeholders*	Outreach activities; engagement and involvement of participants and potential new partners.	*Under discussion*
Administrative and finance partner/s	*TECHNE*	Administrative and finance lead.	*Under discussion*
Other coordination mechanism	*Informal advisory and working groups with local stakeholders, tailored to specific target groups and training requirements.*	Strategic feedback; informal exchange.	*Under discussion*

3.2 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement will combine a light coordination structure with operational bilateral cooperation. During active delivery periods, the ISIHUB Lead will maintain regular exchanges with the partners directly involved in each action line, while a broader ISIHUB coordination meeting will be organised on a quarterly basis to review participation, referrals, emerging barriers and service gaps. An **annual LAPP review workshop** will assess monitoring evidence, update the action lines and discuss partner roles and resources for the following year. Between meetings, bilateral exchanges and an updated referral/contact map will support effective handovers of participants to relevant services.

4 Monitoring and Learning

4.1 Common indicators

The following common indicators will be used to monitor implementation and support cross-regional comparability. Data on participants will be disaggregated by relevant target group, including women, young people, migrants or people with a migratory background, seniors and persons with disabilities. Additional region-specific indicators are included to monitor the referral and matchmaking functions that are central to the ISIHUB Romagna action lines.

Indicator	Type	Action line	Possible data source
Number of participants involved in entrepreneurship support activities	Output	*[A1] [A2] [A3]*	Attendance lists, registration forms
Share (%) of participants from under-represented groups (disaggregated)	Output	*[A1] [A2] [A3]*	Registration forms
Number of business ideas developed or supported	Output / Result	*[A3]*	Programme reports, follow-up
Number of organisations involved in ISIHUB or LAPP implementation	Output	*[A3 / coordination]*	ISIHUB records and reports

4.2 Feedback mechanisms

Satisfaction surveys collected from participants, trainers, and organisers at the conclusion of pilot activities provide the primary baseline evidence informing the current design and implementation decisions of this Local Action Plan. As the regional ISIHUB network formalises its governance structure, long-term feedback mechanisms, monitoring tools, and evaluation protocols will be collaboratively discussed and defined alongside network partners to ensure ongoing learning and service adaptation.

Possible mechanisms:

Mechanism	What it captures	Frequency
Participant satisfaction surveys	Relevance, format quality, perceived usefulness	At the end of each activity
ISIHUB coordination meetings	Implementation issues, ecosystem signals, corrective decisions	Potentially quarterly

5 Sustainability Perspectives

5.1 Continuation of action lines

The creation of a collegial coordination board is under discussion between project partners (Consorzio OPEN and Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli, supported by Techne and Cercal respectively) to ensure continuity of Action Lines beyond the conclusion of the project.

Action Line 1 - ISIHUB Access, Profiling & Referral

Action Line A1 is currently categorized at **a potential maturity level**, with the designated lead responsible actor remaining **under discussion** among regional ecosystem partners.

Beyond the lifetime of the TASK4ISI project, A1 is envisaged to continue as a permanent entry point by mainstreaming initial guidance into the diverse services the Region offers. Long-term financial and operational sustainability could be anchored in ESF+ (European Social Fund Plus) regional priority axes, securing low-threshold orientation and navigation for under-represented groups across the Romagna territory.

Action line A2 — Modular Inclusive Entrepreneurship Skills

Action Line A2 is similarly positioned at a **potential** stage of maturity, with institutional leads and coordinator roles currently **under discussion** across project partners, trade bodies, non-profits entities, and training agencies. Post-TASK4ISI continuation could focus on coordination of the modular, flexible learning series into established regional vocational training measures co-funded through ESF+ and the Emilia-Romagna Regional Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Funds. Supplementary contribution from participating trade associations could support the ongoing delivery of practical business literacy and financial modules for vulnerable cohorts.

Action line A3 — Tailored Mentoring, Business Matchmaking & Start-up Support

Action Line A3 is positioned at a potential stage of maturity, with institutional leads and coordinator roles currently under discussion.

Post-TASK4ISI could rely on institutionalising start-up tutoring and credit accompaniment within existing business support frameworks, notably the Unioncamere's and Chamber of Commerce's National New Business Service (Servizio Nuove Imprese - SNI), trade association

branch desks, and public services such as Sportello Orientagiovani of Municipality of Cesena. Financial access for non-bankable founders could be sustained by leveraging the National Microcredit Fund with State Guarantee (Fondo Nazionale del Microcredito) alongside complementary European Project funding lines.

5.2 Funding and institutional anchoring

Long-term resourcing and institutional anchoring for the LAPP action lines depend on blending multiple prospective funding channels rather than relying on a single dedicated stream. At this stage, all funding pathways remain diverse and potential, representing structural opportunities for further dialogue with regional network partners.

Key options include tapping into the Emilia-Romagna ESF+ Regional Programme—specifically priority axes dedicated to vocational training, employment support, and social inclusion—as well as relevant ERDF measures for competitive micro-enterprise development, Erasmus+ programmes and Interreg Central Europe programmes.

Institutionally, sustainability can be fostered by embedding guidance and mentoring directly into existing services, such as Unioncamere's and Chamber of Commerce's Servizio Nuove Imprese (SNI) network and municipal and public employment platforms.

Furthermore, in-kind contributions from ISIHUB network members—such as trade associations (e.g., CNA and Confartigianato) and training bodies (e.g. CERCAL and Techne) providing staff time, expertise, and local branch infrastructure—offer a realistic, low-cost baseline to support the long-term delivery of guidance, training, and tutoring in the areas of credit and micro-credit, finance, and funding opportunities across the territory.

5.3 Anchoring in S3/S4+

In line with Chapter 5 of the Joint Strategy Agenda, inclusive entrepreneurship is framed not as an isolated social welfare track, but as an essential delivery mechanism and cross-cutting enabler within Emilia-Romagna's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3/S4+).
While inclusive business creation is not currently articulated as a standalone domain in the regional S3, it directly reinforces horizontal priority axes focused on human capital development, social innovation, skills enhancement, and inclusive digital and green transitions.
Action Lines A1, A2, and A3 operationalise this connection by equipping non-traditional and under-represented founders with the skills, guidance, and financial access necessary to participate in the broader regional economy.
Policy integration currently remains aspirational and under discussion.

The ISIHUB will use pilot evidence and the annual LAPP review process to engage relevant regional policy actors and identify concrete opportunities to integrate inclusive entrepreneurship into future updates of the regional Smart Specialisation and economic development framework.