



BE-READI Points Toolkit

31st March 2022

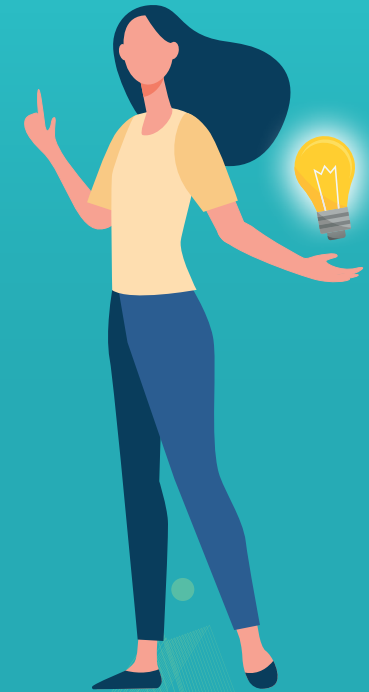


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List of Abbreviations

AS	Alpine Space
B2B	Business to Business
BSO	Business Support Organisation
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network
EoI	Expression of Interest
IHC	Innovation Health Check
PP	Project Partner
R&D	Research & Development
SME	Small Medium Enterprise

Purpose of this document

This booklet is addressed to BSOs, which have direct contact with SMEs on the territory that want to respond to actual needs in terms of relaunching their businesses. In fact, the BE-READI Project aims to create a transnational BE-READI Point Network that supports and gives guidelines to companies on the launch of their Second Life Project ideas on the market. Within the framework of the AS BE-READI ALPS Project, the partners have developed better supporting services, collected and adapted tools and resources, and documented the experience of their BE-READI Journey assessment phases with companies. This booklet gives an overview of the general methodology used by the BE-READI Points and provides inspirational insights to BSOs, which intend to undertake the same supporting path providing their client companies with assessments, training, partners matching and tracking their activity with a quality system in

the future. Therefore, the new BE-READI Point can follow the path carried out by BE-READI ALPS and can replicate it, by adapting it to the companies' needs it is supporting.

This is the result of an extensive and shared search for assessment tools and methodologies among the BE-READI Partners and it is focused on setting up, enlarging and professionalising the network supporting the BE-READI Points. In this way, they are required to help companies in their business model's shift in a synergic and transnational perspective. For each step of the journey, a description of the activities is provided, reporting how and why the BE-READI Points addressed the issues, from the starting point to the final achievement, with feedback on the performance and the results. Some recommendations for new organisations are also provided.

The booklet enables:

- to gain an overview and follow the process, defining the tools and the phases to make the BE-READI Journey understandable for a new BE-READI Point,
- new BSOs to use these or similar methodologies to provide effective support to companies when launching Second Life Project ideas,
- to show what performed well and what could be improved,
- to avoid mistakes and improve network efficiency and cooperation.



Overview of the BE-READI ALPS Project and methodology used

BE-READI ALPS is an AS funded project aimed at defining, testing, and modelling an Alpine Space innovative supporting system. This project valorises mutual competencies, sets up AS bridges and cooperation channels, upgrading tools and soft skills among BE-READI Points and companies. Indeed, it aimed at strengthening the innovation capabilities of SMEs, fostering cooperation between innovation centres, intermediaries, and companies.

Objectives related to the project results:

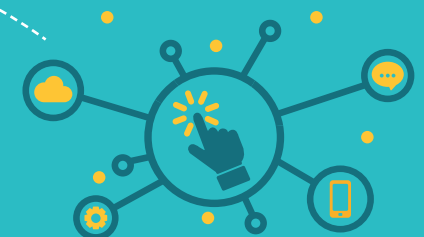
→ Structure and professionalise the BE-READI Points and their mutual ecosystems with standardised and synergic services, which are focused on transnational cooperation,

→ Drive innovative methodologies and transnational matching solutions for SMEs to multiply their opportunities and boost their capabilities, sustaining them to plan a business relaunch and the creation of strategic partnerships.

Toward this goal, the BE-READI Partners have focused on several integrated tasks including:

- a. involvement of companies and service providers,
- b. assessment of companies' financial, innovation and internalisation readiness,
- c. training formats both for companies and for internal BE-READI Staff,
- d. coaching activities to support the launch of Second Life Project ideas,

- e. matching companies at national and transnational level,
- f. monitoring the quality of the BE-READI Journey,
- g. organising events as transversal activity to involve, promote and match.





BE-READI AT
POLICY LEVEL

The role of the BE-READI Point in the Journey

The BE-READI Point target

The project is primarily aimed at supporting the innovative growth of **Alpine SMEs and mature companies** valuing their competences and resources available in the AS. This main aim was chosen because mature SMEs often have a traditional mentality and a low digitalisation level, and they could suffer from decreasing competitiveness. Mature businesses had experienced an initial phase of successful expansion and then they reached a point of maturity and stability in the market. These types of companies face challenges in terms of growth, they have to be able to go beyond the logic of their life cycle and gain additional room in the market. Moreover, companies have been exposed to rapid market changes and financial crises that usually lead to a loss of competitiveness and decreasing growth rates. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that now more than ever companies

need to be resilient, responsive to change, innovative and able to reshape their value chains in a transnational perspective.

At the maturity phase, there could be two scenarios: either deciding to take a step back towards the expansion stage or thinking a possible exit strategy. This is the stage to which this project refers: in order to enable the companies to enter in a new life cycle with their products, and in supporting them in the launching of Second Life Projects.

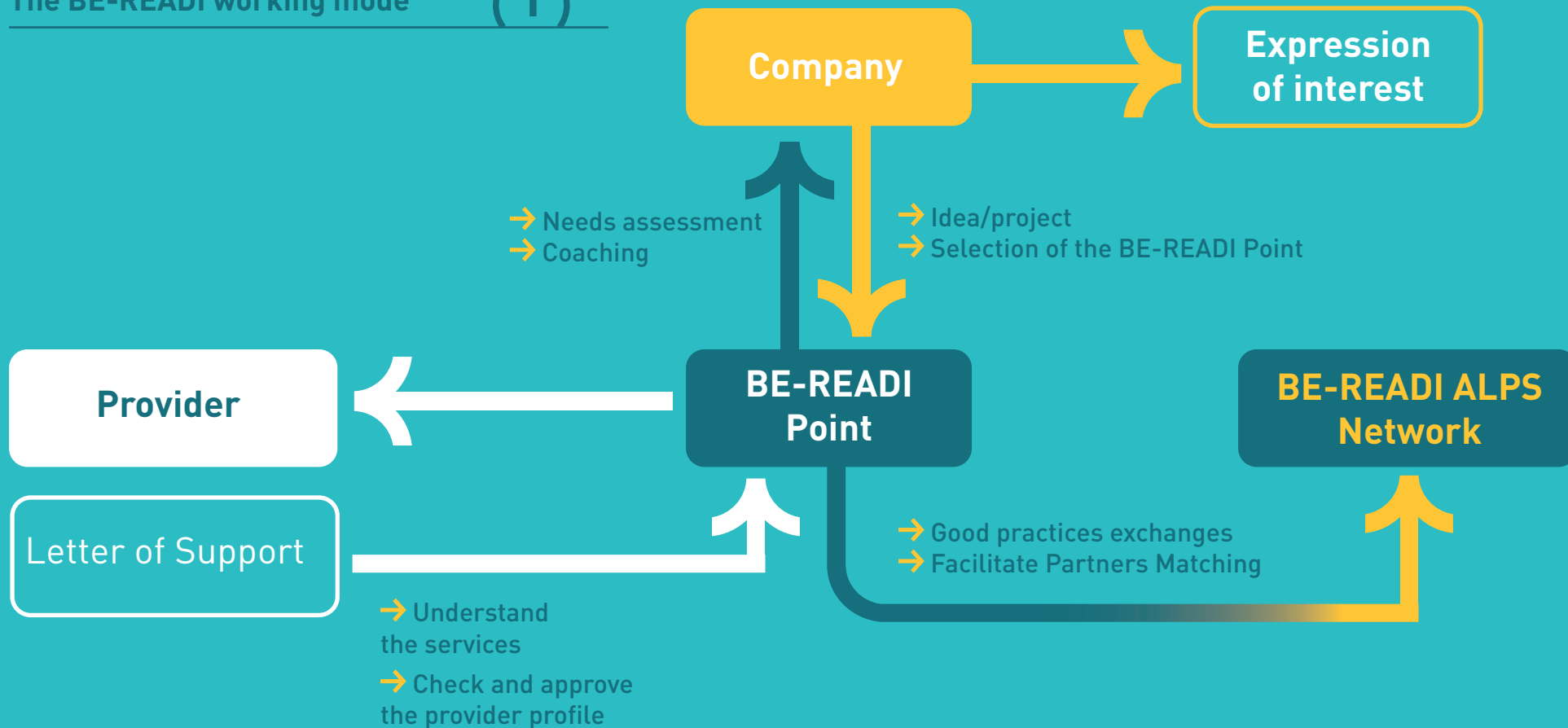
The BE-READI Project also aims to extend the company value chain by partnering with other companies and specialised providers (like start-ups focused on digitalisation, technology providers and R&D centres) that can enlarge the network with qualified partners. Furthermore, this can give the opportunity to companies to increase their reputation and create an open innovation environment.

In addition, **local, regional, and national public authorities** can be part of the process by supporting initiatives of transnational cooperation. It is essential even to involve the policy in actions able to create the needed ecosystem to foster the business strategic development within a transregional and transnational perspective.

Finally, each region cooperates in a network of shared or even specialised services with other local agents, to which companies have access. For this reason, constant information exchange on services and business support activities with other **key players** are essential. The network extension contributes to increasing the quality of the whole ecosystem with a final relevant benefit for SMEs.

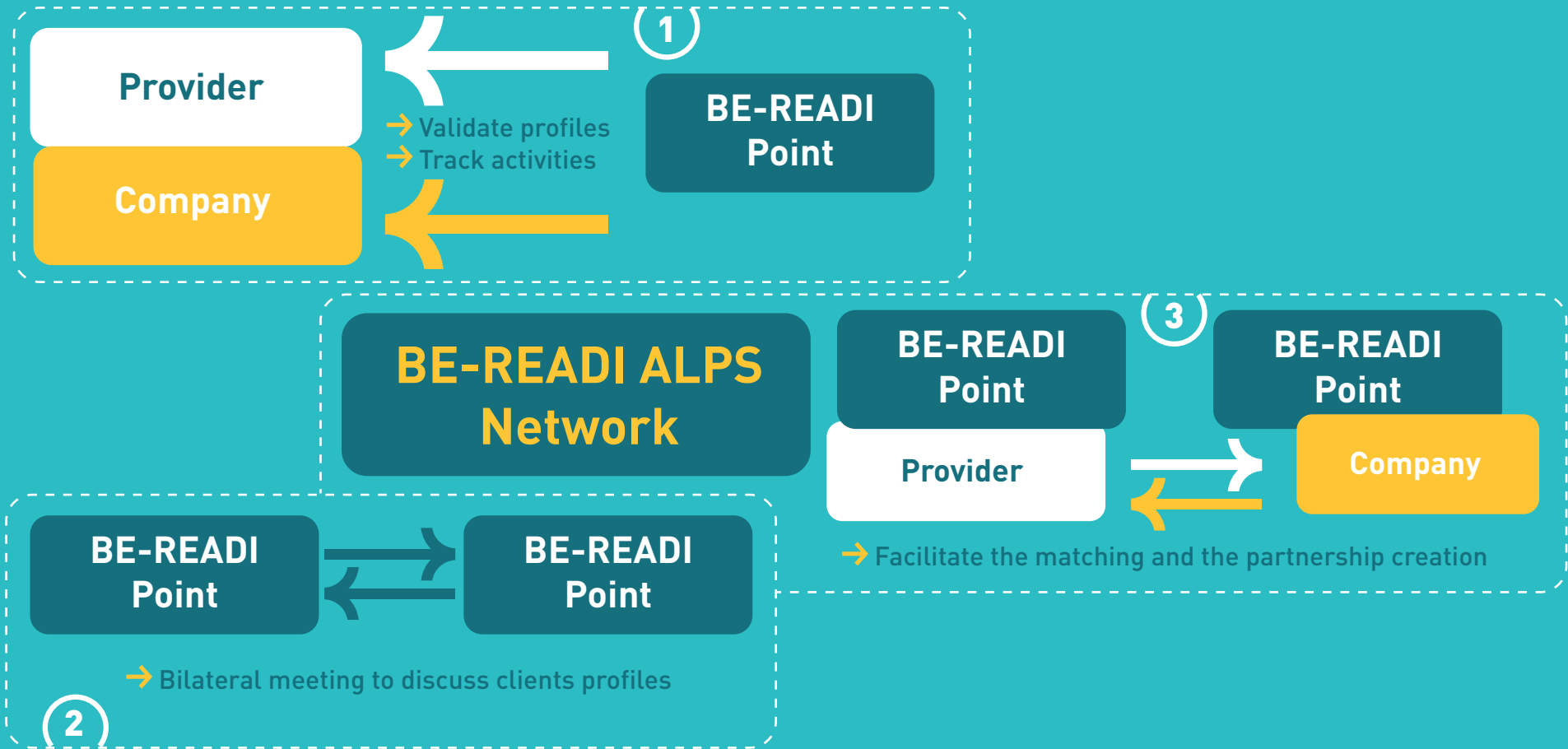
The BE-READI Point working mode

The BE-READI working mode 1

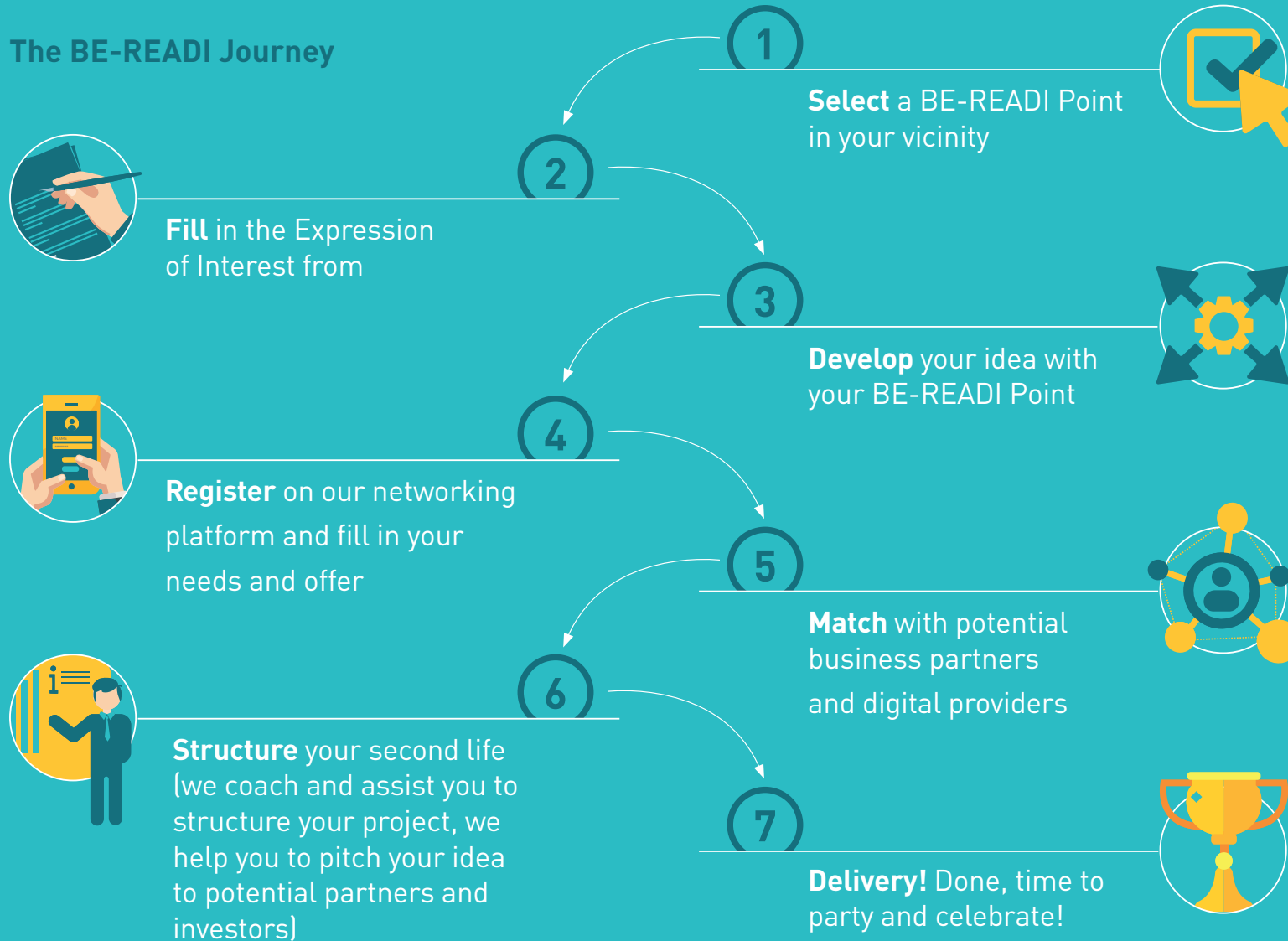


The BE-READI working mode

2



The BE-READI Journey



The role of each BE-READI Point is central in supporting the Journey of each company. The following pages will list and describe the key steps that each BE-READI Point should take, from the moment of first contacts with companies and providers, to the achievement of Second Life's objectives. Each section will be divided into three paragraphs:

→ **BE-READI ACTIVITIES**
 describing the activities initiated and carried out by the project network

→ **TOOLS & RESOURCES**
 made available and tested in the pilot phase of the project

→ **ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT**
 with advice and suggestions for improving the service

Building the community

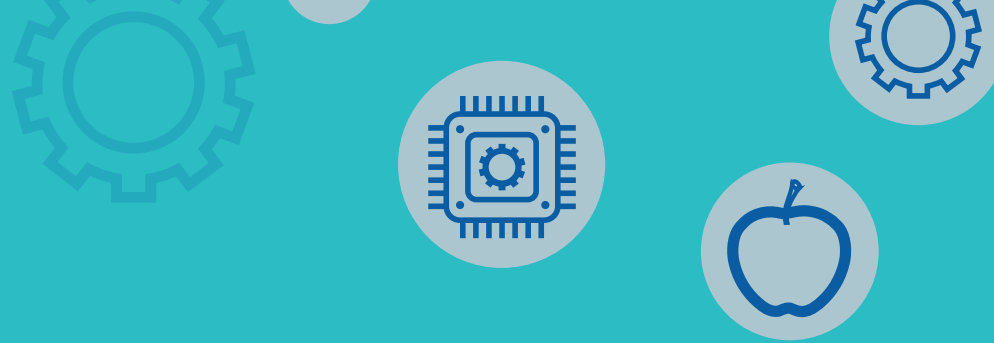
BE-READI Activities

Firstly, the BE-READI Point should involve companies as well as service providers to build up its network at the local level and ensure the necessary conditions to start the BE-READI Journey. Indeed, this preliminary phase encompasses both the involvement of companies, which are going to start their BE-READI Journey to develop the Second Life Project, as well as providers, service suppliers that would support and share expertise to the whole network (i.e. in terms of digitalisation, alternative finance, export or technology management). In addition, each BE-READI Point should prepare itself by establishing a local connection with relevant local organisations, for example the local Chambers of commerce, specialised agencies, or consultancy experts to be able to understand companies' needs and undertake the right supporting path.

Local organisations could also be involved in the whole process and support the network with their expertise. In order to reshape companies' value chains with a transnational perspective, BE-READI Partners have scouted and evaluated each possible local partnership and network and have defined the protocols and cooperation agreements needed to involve these actors in the BE-READI Community. In this phase, the mapping of providers at the local level was necessary. This has been done by creating a database that contains potential providers active in the partner's region to understand their sector of activity, internationalisation attitude and relevance for the project. The contacting step was then implemented either by sending an informative email or by inviting providers to informative and matching events, i.e. Ideas Factory and DigithON

in order to provide open and targeted discussions with experts. [A protocol for providers' involvement](#) has been developed to accompany BE-READI Points in creating a regional network of service, technology providers, investors, consultants, and start-ups to be accredited into the project.

Both companies that are interested in being supported by a BE-READI Point and the involved providers could directly contact the point located in its territory or the nearest one. During the project, the BE-READI Points have also stimulated the involvement of companies with innovative ideas in several ways and with several tools.



TOOLS & RESOURCES

The feedback from the partner's experience reported that for the involvement of providers and companies in the project, it is highly effective to immediately present and highlight the practical advantages of taking part in the project activities and being part of the network. For this reason, inviting companies or potential providers directly to informative or matching events or giving them the possibility to take part in webinar sessions could significantly increase the likelihood of joining the project thereafter. Social media campaigns and promotional events were of fundamental importance to make the project visible and publicise the activities. For this purpose, a dedicated [website](#) and a [LinkedIn social page](#) were created. Three types of events have been organised for the involvement phase:

- the **BE-READI Breakfast**, in which the presentation of the project to local stakeholders takes place,
- the **Ideas Factory** events that are aimed at supporting companies in the ideas generation phase and
- the **DigithON** events, which are digital matching events to boost the partnership creation among companies and providers.

All gatherings were very successful and highly appreciated by the whole network. In particular, PPs have noticed how presentation to stakeholders and companies was a good start to find potential interested SMEs whereas DigithONs helped a lot in following-up and keeping them focused on their commitment.

Two tools were used to formalise providers' and companies' involvement in the project. The Letter of Support is the document that represents the willingness of the provider to be involved and participate in the project activities and should clearly indicate the service made available to the network. Providers that decided to sign the **Letter of Support** would be added to a project database. This is followed by the creation of an online profile in the BE-READI Networking Platform, where transnational meetings between solution providers and companies seeking technologies, services, consultancy, or advice could take place virtually. Companies interested in launching their Second Life Project ideas should instead fill in the **Eol form**, in which their willingness to initiate the process is stated. Each Second Life Project idea would then be evaluated in the next assessment phase.



THE BE-READI
LINKEDIN PROFILE

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

This phase showed that the most important practice could be to present opportunities, advantages, and real examples to companies from the very beginning. Illustrating the added value of participating in the project and the possible transnational cooperation opportunities is crucial to attract innovative ideas and be able to start the BE-READI Journey. Companies need to be followed from the beginning to be encouraged to present their innovative idea and BE-READI Points talk to them even several times and are always at their disposal.

As far as the providers' involvement is concerned, it is recommended to involve local Chambers of commerce because they list digital, innovation, internationalisation or expert companies and could be useful to start from an already existing pool of reliable agents. Sometimes could be useful also to involve EEN partners to exploit synergies and contact

companies with transnational innovative potential. It is suggested to involve service providers with some basic requirements, among others having a reference person speaking fluent English and offering a transnational service that bring an added value that could be recognised also from companies outside their national area of competence.



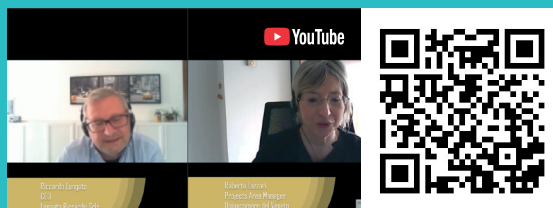
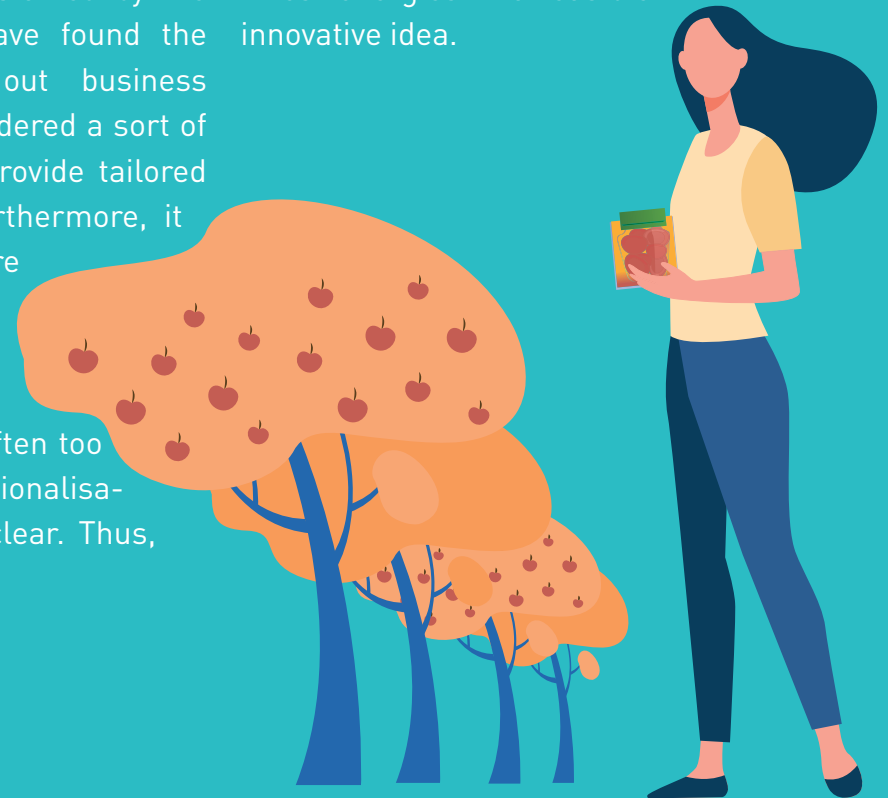
Assessment

BE-READI ACTIVITIES

As soon as the BE-READI Point registers an Eol from a company, it needs to assess its needs and readiness toward the BE-READI Journey. The **assessment phase** is crucial because it gives an accurate overview of the company and create awareness on some important points, namely innovation, finance, and internationalisation in today's international market. Assessing a company represents a filter to understand the feasibility of the project and the readiness of the same company in launching Second Life Projects. It should be seen as a dialogue between a BE-READI Point and the company itself. In this sense, the BE-READI Point should act as a neutral evaluator that

provides a general overview of the company situation and determines if the Second Life Project idea is ready to be sustained by the company. BE-READI Points have found the assessment helps to find out business capabilities, which can be considered a sort of launch pad for being able to provide tailored services to each company. Furthermore, it has been noticed how SMEs are often not fully aware of the resources and efforts needed to launch a Second Life Project; expectations are often too high, innovation and internationalisation attitudes are not enough clear. Thus,

assessment has been the fundamental starting point to determine if the company is willing to invest energies in a feasible innovative idea.



THE COMPANY'S POINT OF VIEW



TOOLS & RESOURCES

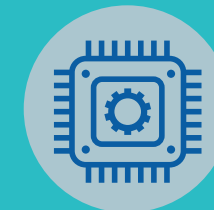
At this stage, BE-READI ALPS has developed an assessment toolkit to make this phase homogeneous and obtain comparable evaluations among BE-READI Points. The BE-READI Starter Kit proposed here is composed of the following tools:

- **S-Peek** for financial readiness,
- **Internationalisation questionnaire** for internationalisation capacity,
- **Innovation Health Check (IHC)** for assessing the innovative approach,
- **Assessment Grid.**

This set of digital and methodological tools can be used by the BE-READI Point to measure companies' readiness from a financial, digital and innovation perspective and it also evaluates the strengths of the project proposal. The assessment then converges in the form called **Assessment Grid**, which includes and summarises all the data in a form providing an over-

view of the readiness situation of the company. Referring to the BE-READI Partners' experience, S-Peek has been really helpful due to its immediate and simple release of the quantitative financial even for those who do not have deep financial skills. The Internationalisation questionnaire emerged to be useful too, due to the fact that it provides qualitative results. The IHC methodology is the most complete and solid tool to develop an innovation strategy. However, it requires anyway, advanced skills and a lot of commitment to be used. For this reason, BE-READI Points have rarely made use of this instrument. While these three tools were available for each BE-READI Point as supporting assessing methodologies, the digital Assessment Grid was designed to standardise information and collect them in one report. Therefore, it can be considered a mandatory tool for all the BE-READI Points. The information collected in the Assessment Grids has been shared on a common platform among BE-READI Points since it could be

useful to better identify potential apt partners. A joint agreement to treat the reserved and sensitive data has been also set up and signed and was the legal basis for all the BE-READI Points to share the collected information. For each of those **tools**, a specific training session was organised for BE-READI Points and interested partners.



ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Assessment Grid should be considered a never-ending tool and should always be used throughout the subsequent coaching and service delivery processes, as new information and business or environmental situations could flow in to enrich the project idea. For this reason, it is suggested to maintain regular communication and follow-up with companies and consider the possibility to reassess the company more than once. In fact, in more than one case companies were able to change their financial situation or organisational objectives based on contingencies, for example the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, while others have enhanced their human resources, so their capacities increased during the project lifetime. As a result, the BE-READI Point should be able to adapt and flexibly use the assessment tools according to contingent situations as well as other circumstances. For example, the internationalisation questionnaire

could be used only partially to satisfy specific information needs. With regard to this, other tools already present in the BSO can complement the BE-READI Starter Kit and enrich the assessment analysing other business dimensions. The Swiss partners, for instance, found an alternative Swiss platform to assess the financial soundness called MoneyHouse since Swiss data on S-Peek was often not available due to the no legal obligation to disclose financial information. Other instruments such as the CreditReform database and financial balance sheet statements can be used. BE-READI Points can thus integrate their assessment tools, revise most suitable approaches and update Grids along contingencies change. On the other hand, defining a unique standard tool to be used with each company and by each BE-READI Point allows comparisons and facilitates the Monitoring phase. BE-READI Partners would

suggest maintaining the Assessment Grid as the main instrument to fully understand the company situation and allow benchmarking. This instrument has indeed the advantage of being flexible and effective since fields to be filled in are predefined but the BE-READI Point has the chance to put additional information in the comment sections. As a final remark, the network suggests having a quality manager, who critically reviews the Grids and encourages the BE-READI Points to be detailed. Training sessions should be organised at the beginning with simple illustrative examples.

Training

BE-READI ACTIVITIES

As part of the network qualification, a complete training program has been set up and delivered throughout the project's lifetime. It includes a [training program for the BE-READI Points](#) and specific modules for companies. In BE-READI ALPS, it was considered important to capture current market trends, train each player, maintain the BE-READI Staff updated, and follow up results. The BE-READI Staff have learned how to design webinar content, use technologies to collaborate in remote with companies and the other colleagues, share and structure information with digital creative tools, understand how to approach investors and find suitable alternative funding sources for the companies they are supporting. There are skills that enrich the whole team and represent valuable knowledge for future activities. Moreover, lifelong learning and training are essential parts of any business growth and generate trends or innovation,

with the possibility to learn and deepen new methodologies and tools. Companies require soft skills and knowledge about current trends and have appreciated receiving [training sessions](#). Webinars have also been keyways to learn from experienced professionals. Based on a careful selection of speakers, companies were able to access quality content tailored to their needs. Each company had the possibility to actively take part in these formative events and could expand their professional network and deepen knowledge and competencies about current market trends with the support of the organising team, in charge of facilitating the community. Training informational material has been used also to promote the project itself, present the services provided and the potential opportunities for SMEs.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

The training phase has been delivered through five Train the Trainer seminars and a series of webinars for companies. All these training activities took place online, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The BE-READI Network has exploited its own communication channels as well as experts' network for promotion and visibility. The training program for the BE- READI Staff was agreed upon partners and resulted in five virtual appointments to strengthen the competencies of PPs in supporting SMEs. The mainly used platform was GoToWebinar and for each session a toolkit produced by the training facilitator has been delivered to the other partners with the supporting presentation. Feedback was collected after the seminars, either by phone or email. Webinars are affordable and convenient for participants. On the other hand, they also represent one of the most

impactful tools for distance learning for companies and they allow acquiring knowledge without geographical limitations. The webinars have been organised, conducted, and recorded through the platform GoToWebinar, which permitted access to all the recordings available also after the live meeting. In order to ensure accessibility to the general public, all webinars have been then transferred to the [project's YouTube channel](#). According to the needs of each SME, the BE-READI Point can take advantage of a specific training webinar and watch it in replay. After the training phase, feedback tools promoted by the BE-READI Point could be helpful as a base to provide further organisation and content improvement.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

As far as the training format is concerned, the BE-READI Partners suggest – if possible – hybrid events to reach a wider pool of companies and permit a higher level of interaction and information exchange. Updated tools and technologies should always be considered to ensure the best success of the meetings. It is important to keep the webinars short, focused, and targeted; discussions should be supported by a clear-cut facilitating strategy. Each webinar should be conceived as a true discussion and exchange platform, each time around the themes addressed by the webinars. It is recommended to have webinar presentations in English or include English subtitles if the presentation is conducted in another language. Each partner should organise at least one webinar for companies so that

all PPs can benefit from complementary expertise. The success of training sessions is connected to a correct topic description as well. Another important aspect is indeed to ensure flexibility of the topics chosen according to a regular internal and external needs analysis. The BE-READI Point should then be always concerned with the companies' training requirements and internal staff training needs. It is recommended to always exploit the competences of other BE-READI Points, do signpost activities and share feedback information to the team members in order to centralise inputs and better assess impacts. Finally, a better integration regarding webinars and seminars is expected: this could be achieved by sharing a common timetable to avoid duplication of topics and following a progressive and coordinated training schedule.



THE BE-READI
YOUTUBE CHANNEL



THE COMPANY'S POINT OF VIEW

Coaching

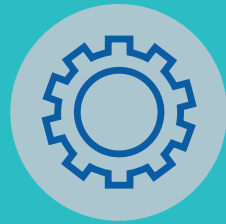
BE-READI ACTIVITIES

After the assessment phase, when the Second Life Project idea is considered “ready”, the BE-READI Point should stay in contact with the company and guide it throughout the client journey. The BE-READI Point defines together with the company the strategy to be pursued for the launch of the Second Life Project and the milestones to be achieved. At each step, the company provides a short deliverable on the carried-out activities. There are different levels of coaching depending on the stage of development the company has reached. The kind of coaching also depends on the competencies of the BE-READI Staff. Coaching activities are useful to:

- Get advised on how to further develop the Second Life Project, helping the entrepreneur to see his/her ideas from “outside”,
- Adapt the service or product on how it could work on another market,
- Break down the Second Life Project in small concrete and achievable steps with a timetable of intermediate “milestones” to be achieved in order to help the entrepreneur to allocate the needed time and resources,
- Focus on the profile(s) of suitable partners/providers to enrich the business proposal,
- Be oriented about possible funding opportunities,
- Help to plan strategy and design innovative roadmaps.

In the phase of market introduction, the coach could transfer useful information to BE-READI Points in the target country in order to launch the Second Life Project idea more effectively on the market.





TOOLS & RESOURCES

In some cases, BE-READI Points have externalised the coaching service to professionals, while in other cases they have provided the service internally. The working mode depends on the competences and know-how of the available internal staff. In general, the coaching service is expensive, customised and time-consuming. A deep segmentation, based on the assessment phase, is needed for the BE-READI Points to provide the service to committed companies and to work with mature projects.

In the project, a piloting transnational coaching service has also been offered and tested to pool the BE-READI Points resources and competencies and propose to companies an international-oriented service. In this case,

the “coaching” could be seen also as a “shared service” but anyway the “country” specific requirements or barriers could be addressed and taken into consideration.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Flexible and tailored-made coaching support is needed. According to feedback analyses, the initial companies’ assessed needs should be connected to Train the Trainer training and then exploited during the coaching service. Moreover, the coaching and the training phases are expected to be integrated and of mutual support, namely Train the Trainer seminars should be organised to ensure coaching competencies and coaching activities

should be provided on the basis of former training sessions. Therefore, a capitalisation of various elements of the network is expected. The coaching could, for example, be organised for more than one company at once to decrease costs and to exploit synergies and interactions. Another suggestion could be to link the coaching output to communication products (like small demos) to be used by the same BE-READI Points to understand better the company’s matching needs (what they are proposing and what they are looking for).



THE COMPANY'S POINT OF VIEW

Matching

BE-READI ACTIVITIES

BE-READI ALPS is a network that includes companies, experts, and institutions. In addition, many providers and digital companies are involved and interested in cooperation. These contacts could be shared via the BE-READI Project and companies can be brought together through BE-READI Points to meet needs and enter into cooperation. Matching activities help to:

- Profit from the existing network within the AS,
- Create local and transnational partnerships,
- Exploit new channels,
- Find digital and service providers that fit companies' needs,
- Be supported in the setting up of partnerships.

Exploiting networking and players' competencies would help companies in launching the Second Life Project ideas. The whole network is intended to facilitate information exchange between BE-READI Points and exploit to facilitate transnational cooperation.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

Different tools and resources can be exploited in this phase to facilitate the matchmaking process. The quickest way has been to contact directly other BE-READI Points by email or phone and discuss possible collaborations between companies. The correct way to conduct a bilateral meeting has resulted to be the concise explanation of what the company is looking for and which kind of requirements are needed to enter the target market.

Another useful matchmaking tool has been the BE-READI Networking Platform, where profiles of companies and providers have been registered after Letter of Support was signed and Assessment Grid tracked the readiness of the innovative idea. This platform is useful for matching profiles especially, during virtual B2B meetings like DigitON. However, the lower overall level of interaction outside events has led to the decision not to maintain it active after the project closure. The usage of other EU-networking platforms as well as internal resources and contacts is anyway encouraged but it should be supported by BE-READI Point intermediation, which is essential for companies to gain trust and rely on potential partners. In particular, when companies are interested in specific markets the BE-READI Point role becomes fundamental to exploit the network.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

In this phase, a clear communication strategy between BE-READI Points and between the BE-READI Point and the company is essential. Ongoing exchanges of information, as well as updates about the matchmaking process, are required to ensure the company feels supported. Good descriptions of companies' needs and expectations should be provided from the beginning and lead to a matching simplification. Monitoring the matching phase is crucial and would facilitate the overall monitoring phase. For this purpose, an Excel sheet with filters or a mailing communication system would be advantageous to select the most suitable profiles. Each BE-READI Point should demonstrate to be collaborative and actively take part in the matchmaking dialogues. PPs suggest implementing and strategically using a messaging chat to easily communicate and facilitate signposting.



Monitoring

BE-READI ACTIVITIES

A sound monitoring and tracking system has been set up and applied during the service testing phase to analyse the quality of services and the impact on companies. The data gathered has been used both to assess the feasibility of processes and models and the SMEs' satisfaction rate. The monitoring phase is therefore important to integrate already existing data able to give evidence of the services provided, namely the company readiness analysis and the Assessment Grid and progresses in defining and detail the Second Life innovative idea before, during, and after the coaching and matching services. Monitoring the whole BE-READI Journey and assessing companies' satisfaction is important to guarantee a quality standard, meet expectations, and finally drive companies towards their goal.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

The Quality System Pack developed by BE-READI ALPS is composed of three different tools:

- **Service tracking tool** to be filled by the involved service and digital providers. This tool is intended to be a dynamic instrument that will be updated by BE-READI Staff.
- **Satisfaction survey questionnaire** to be filled by the companies when services have been delivered.
- **Key Performance Indicators Report** based on the indicators issue by the diagnostic tools applied.

These tools are aimed at tracking and combining the information collected during the diagnostic phase and the pilot action of the project to assess the qualitative and quantitative results achieved. The Quality System Pack requires that a day-to-day monitoring system is activated so that final results have been collected continuously and are always kept under track. This system could be implemented with Excel sheets or other database tools like CRM.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Monitoring activities is not a simple task. For this reason, it is crucial to prepare a structured monitoring system from the beginning. The suggestion is to keep the tracking tool simple, monitor the company's progresses along the journey with effective data information. It should be advantageous to create a unique folder where the BE-READI Point includes all the necessary information and maintain the tool updated. The monitoring tool could be used also for matching activities. This means to have a unique and integrated file that allows to visualise at a glance the cooperation opportunities. Finally, it is well known that the involvement of companies in feedback activities is not always easy. For this reason, in order to avoid having to re-involve companies at a later stage, it

would be advisable to send the questionnaire immediately after the service has been provided (i.e. after participation in a transnational event or after the coaching service).

Events format

BE-READI ACTIVITIES

Much effort has been put by the PPs to help companies in reshaping their value chains in a transnational perspective. In particular, matching events were organised to help companies develop their Second Life Project ideas and increase their feasibility and push the transnational cooperation between BE-READI Points, digital providers, and financial investors. More specifically, Ideas Factory events were the first step of raising awareness of the BE-READI ALPS Project, stimulating companies to identify their needs, and scouting innovative ideas. BE-READI Breakfast meetings were aimed at informing regional stakeholders, like business associations or decision makers, about the project and involving them in the activities asking for feedback and support. In addition, project events to foster transnational cooperation were organised in form of DigitONs, which focused on gathering together all digital providers involved and supporting them to propose

joint services toward pilot companies. Through these matchmaking events, the SMEs had the opportunity to virtually meet other companies active in digital transformation technologies and discuss the development of new processes and strategies of digitalisation. The transnational event BE-READI [Investors Day](#) was then an opportunity for some promising European SMEs to pitch their innovative project to a panel of European investors. This was also a chance to discuss ways to foster cross-border investments in Europe. All the organised events had promotional, matching, as well as informative goals for the whole network. BE-READI Partners have noticed how Ideas Factory events were very attractive for companies and helped a lot in the Involvement phase, whereas DigitONs stimulated the matching process providing a lot of positive feedback. Considerations have been done about the possibility to organise hybrid

events (both in presence and online) – when possible – in order to facilitate the participation of players located in different countries. BE-READI Breakfast for regional stakeholders could be better organised in presence.



THE COMPANY'S POINT OF VIEW

TOOLS & RESOURCES

Each BE-READI Point should be able to organise events to disseminate the project and create opportunities for companies. The hybrid format with the possibility to record the session is recommended and ensures the sustainability of the project by maintaining the event available online also after the project end. The B2Match platform tool has proven to be very suitable, providing a high-quality event performance and successful matchmaking meetings.

Brainstorming sessions are very useful in the case of Ideas Factory, whereas pitching sessions result to be very attractive both for companies and providers during Investors Day. In particular, PPs have noticed how having a pitching session and the speech of a keynote speech in the initial part of the event consents to promote a more intense and productive matching session thereafter.

Immediately after, the follow-up activity is important and gives the possibility to interested participants to deepen the content as well as to contact speakers or the BE-READI Point.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

From the PPs' experience, it is important to be able to organise the events with a transnational perspective, using the English language, inviting international speakers, providing information that helps companies to go international with their Second Life Projects. Capturing actual market trends, understanding modern technologies possibilities, and concentrating events on all the relevant sectors of interest are crucial aspects. A general suggestion was to have more events like

DigitONs since the participation and interest rate proved to be very high. After the pandemic situation, events like Ideas Factory and DigitONs could be matched with in-presence fairs.





Conclusion and final remarks for new BE-READI Points

The importance of the assessment

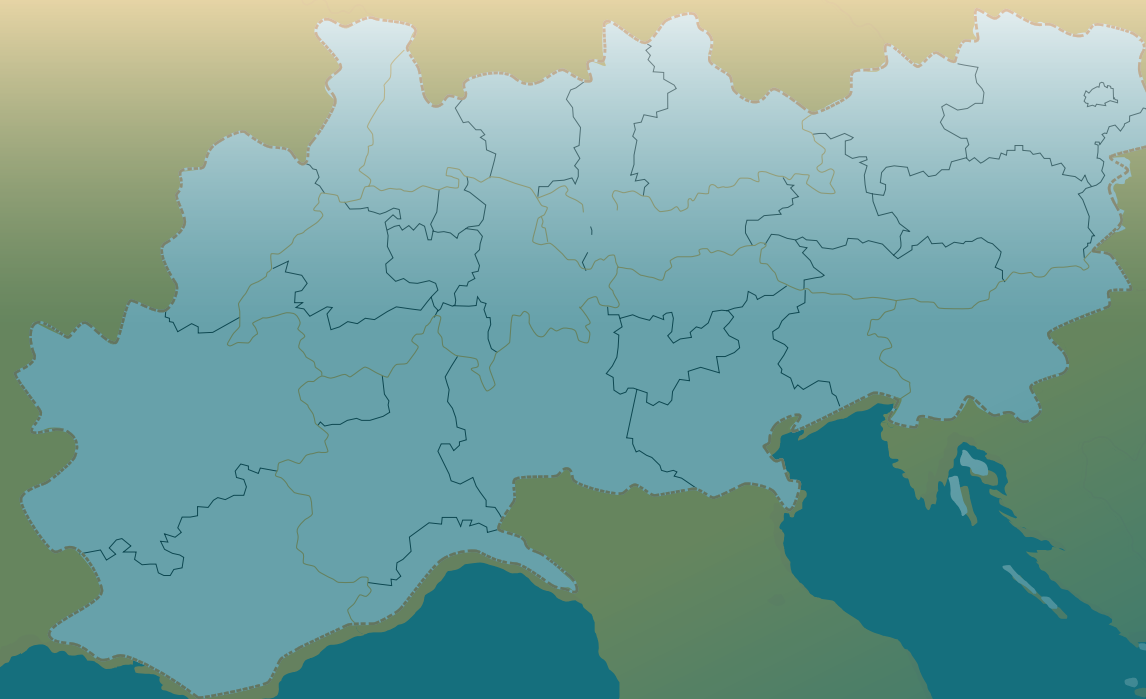
Innovative project ideas require to be accurately assessed before landing on the market. The BE-READI Point should be able to apply tools and critically assess whether the company idea is ready to be launched. The assessment determines the starting point for a successful BE-READI Journey giving a current picture of the company's awareness and readiness toward the project idea.

Support is needed before and after

The BE-READI Point is expected to follow the entire process from the beginning till the end providing support. Each service offered to companies should improve the overall BE-READI Journey performance, provide an added value for local SMEs, accompany them to the successful launch of their Second Life Project transnationally. Therefore, coaching, advising, and developing the best innovative roadmap represent the project's highlights.

Networking is the added value

The essence of the project is to promote a network favourable to the development of innovative ideas. Networking enables synergies and taking advantage of competencies from other BE-READI Points. The BE-READI Point is responsible for establishing contacts at the local and transnational levels, promoting networking activities with the final goal of improving services, matching, and creating transnational cooperation.



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