

D4.2 SME Benchmarking – Key Findings

This deliverable presents the results of the SME benchmarking survey undertaken in all four regions. The survey instrument and methodology utilised are both outlined in deliverable 4.1. This page presents a brief overview of the main findings.

In terms of knowledge transfer, different patterns were discovered across the four regions. The evidence from Yorkshire and Humberside showed that the only sources of knowledge rated as important were customers and suppliers located outside the region. Thus, no local sources of knowledge were rated as important. In Central Macedonia and East Macedonia-Thrace (Greece) it was customers and suppliers inside and outside the region which were rated as important. In Thrace (Turkey) this pattern was also observed with the addition of rival firms and public sector organisations from the region, which were rated as important sources of knowledge. In South and East Bulgaria customers and suppliers were also rated as important sources of knowledge, although no data on whether these were inside or outside the region was obtained.

In terms of collaboration, similar patterns were observed. In Yorkshire and Humberside the important partners in collaboration are located outside the region, whereas in Central Macedonia and East Macedonia-Thrace (Greece) and Thrace (Turkey) partners in the region are rated as more important. In Central Macedonia and East Macedonia-Thrace (Greece) rival firms within the region were also rated as important partners in collaboration. In South and East Bulgaria customers and suppliers were also rated as important for collaboration.

Social interaction with individuals from firms that were either sources of knowledge or a partner in collaboration occurs in the UK, Greek and Turkish regions; in Bulgaria however, social interaction is seen as being culturally intertwined with the logic of undertaking business to such an extent that this interaction forms an implicit feature of business environment. It was also shown that in the UK and Greece social interaction is highly dependent on whether knowledge transfer or collaboration is involved. In Turkey, a higher proportion stated that interaction would still continue in the absence of knowledge transfer or collaboration.

In the UK and Greek regions, the data showed that the SMEs are generally aware of the business support organisations in the region, but do not tend to interact with them frequently. In Turkey, there is a higher level of awareness of the institutions and a good level of interaction with them. Significantly there are also fewer organisations in the region, which may be concentrating interaction on a smaller number of players.