



iEER Handbook

Boosting Innovative Entrepreneurial
Ecosystems in Regions For
Young Entrepreneurs

2016/2020

iEER
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

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Region of
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VALENCIANA**


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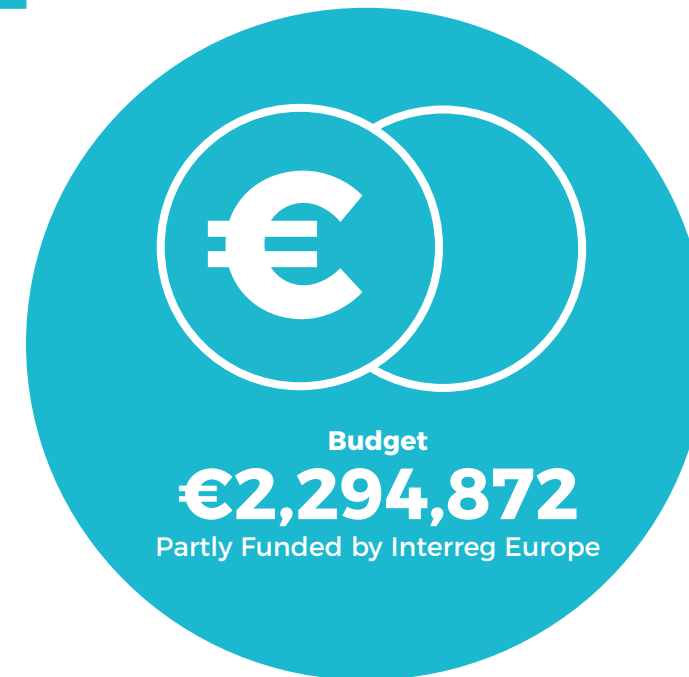

**Technische Hochschule
Brandenburg**
University of
Applied Sciences



iEER peer visit, CoLab, Southern Denmark

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About the iEER project

iEER is an Interreg Europe funded flagship project bringing together 10 regions around Europe. Initiated by a group of regions conferred with the European Entrepreneurial Region Award, iEER aims to define smart paths and solutions to boost regional entrepreneurship ecosystems which support young entrepreneurs. Together the ten regions have one goal, that of boosting entrepreneurship, whether governmental, municipal or in the private /social economy, underpinned by the focus on young entrepreneurs. In the first two years 2016-

2018, the iEER project is helping partners to learn from each other to build better services and regional policies in support of startups. By identifying good practices that have helped to break down silo mentalities and bring together all actors to contribute to the region's success in promoting entrepreneurial activity, the Group aims to have a lasting legacy and produce collaborative work which will yield further Interreg Europe support for participant regions, many of whom aim to create new enterprise policies in their areas.

Introduction

Foreword



Markku Markkula

1st Vice-President of the
European Committee of the Regions
Chairman of the iEER High Level Steering Committee

"Europe is a land of innovation waiting for cultivation. SMEs are its seed, ESIFs its tools, and growth and jobs are its harvest"

In the first of the CoR 2015-2020 priorities, we drive a fresh start for the European economy and **urge EU to involve local and regional authorities** deeply in delivering and investing in sustainable growth and jobs. For the investment to be smart and create impacts, it should be based on local needs, draw on successful examples from the grass roots level and encourage a new entrepreneurial spirit across Europe.

This publication and the results of the iEER Interreg Europe project – boosting innovative thinking on entrepreneurship ecosystems in regions for young entrepreneurs – **show how knowledge and good practices are being transferred and co-created across Europe**. It is the journey of how ten European regions have supported each other in developing better entrepreneurship ecosystems. A bottom-up approach and cooperation is crucial for the people and regions to exchange innovations in the public sector and between the regions. This contributes to the EU's aims of creating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and harmonizing the development gaps between different territories.

The European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label – awarded yearly to three European regions since 2011 – has been set up in **partnership between the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission**. The iEER Interreg Europe project is a continuous effort of EER award winning regions to boost the entrepreneurship spirit in Europe. We need to cultivate young entrepreneurs within and between the regions to be the crop of Europe's future.

I congratulate the joint efforts of these ten devoted regions: Brandenburg, Hauts-de-France, Kerry, Marche, Southern Denmark, Northern Ireland, Valencia, West Pomerania and West Region Romania and Helsinki-Uusimaa in the successfully pursuit of an entrepreneurial region.



Markku Markkula

Introduction

Executive Summary



Christine Chang

Coordinator of iEER
Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

Entrepreneurship is a buzzword of today. It is **not just about starting a business**, or spinning out a company from research. **It's a mindset**, or a way of thinking and doing things differently - being **innovative, creative, resourceful and adaptable** - in ever changing situations.

Thanks to the funding support of the Interreg Europe, the iEER regions including Helsinki-Uusimaa, Brandenburg, Hauts de France, Kerry, Marche, Southern Denmark, Northern Ireland, Valencia, West Pomerania and West Region Romania were able to come together, learn from each other and thus transfer and implement new measures to develop the regional entrepreneurship ecosystems in 2016-2020.

Conferred with the European Entrepreneurial Region Award, the iEER regions have aspired to drive entrepreneurial mindset in our territories. It is a spirit that we seek to nurture and learn not only as an individual but also as an organisation and a region. Therefore, we have sought to make regions entrepreneurial and to have the policy makers, HEIs, business development agencies and young entrepreneurs committed to and part of a thriving entrepreneurship ecosystem – known as quadruple helix cooperation. I am proud to say that in the past 2 years iEER has already cooperated with and

has involved nearly 600 actors from these entrepreneurial ecosystems and beyond.

This book presents the essence and takeaway of the regions from the iEER learning process. This year (2018), we are turning the cooperation into a new chapter where some of these good practices will be implemented in the regions in 2018-2020 and we hope some of these good practices will be of relevance and inspiration to your regions too.

What to expect in this report

This book is a resource for those who are working on developing startups and policies focused on entrepreneurship at the local, regional and EU levels. Four themes which run throughout this report are the key areas of policy intervention in developing entrepreneurship ecosystems in regions

Thematic Focus 1

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

Entrepreneurial competence combines the tasks of entrepreneurial learning

“Entrepreneurship is a buzzword of today.

It is not just about starting a business, or spinning out a company from research.

It's a mindset, or a way of thinking and doing things differently by being innovative, creative, resourceful and adaptable in ever changing situations.”

Christine Chang - Coordinator, iEER

and entrepreneurial culture and mindset activation. This [chapter](#) defines successful factors that support entrepreneurial learning , entrepreneurial culture and mindset activation and also presents good practices that can be transferable to other European regions.

Thematic Focus 2

Startup and Acceleration support

The effectiveness of startup and acceleration support is dependent on the collaboration and dynamics of a startup ecosystem. This [chapter](#) presents the startup ecosystem framework, good practices on startup and acceleration support and interconnection (virtual and real) between innovation & entrepreneurship development platforms and societies in different regions.

Thematic Focus 3

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

Peripheral regions suffer from remoteness, low population density, small size and fragmentation of markets. This [chapter](#) presents good practices focusing on building

entrepreneurial capacity, support infrasture and services both for those starting new business and for the viability of existing SMEs in outlying areas.

Thematic Focus 4

RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Smart specialisation is a territorial strategy that prioritizes certain industries and clusters as a result of entrepreneurial discovery process. This [chapter](#) dives into a comparison study on the RIS3 strategies of all iEER regions, analysis of their support to startups and presentation and transferability of good practices.

Outstanding Best Practices

Following the TF section the TF leaders present a recommendation of [20 best practices](#) that stood out as outstanding examples of practice. This selection was made based on the best practices that were submitted by each partner region during this project.

Regional Profiles

There is certainly no one size fits all solution when it comes to good practice adoption. This [section](#) helps readers to understand the background and regional specification of iEER regions using an interactive snapshot of the region. The profiles also present some additional good practices and policy instruments that exemplify entrepreneurship in their partner region

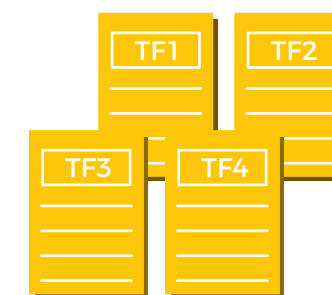
Lessons Learned and Policy development

Towards our Implementation Phase

The report concludes with [overall findings](#) as a result of the data and peer learnings in 2016-2018 and with a list of key local and interregional actions that will be implemented in 2018-2020 to develop regional entrepreneurial ecosytems based on the findings and recurring themes presented in the regional profiles.

Handbook Tip :

Most logos you will find are interactive and contain URLs. Try clicking the *e-Book Video* symbol when you see it.



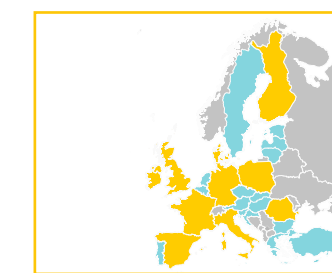
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4 Thematic focus reports from Brandenburg, Helsinki, Northern Ireland and Southern Denmark



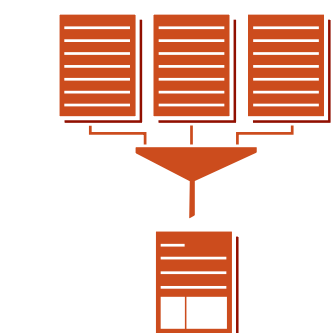
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The number of best practices submitted by various actors within the ten regions



10

The number of regions visited and peer evaluated



10

10 Regional reports were produced and synthesised for this handbook

Thematic Focus Topics

This section holds four TF reports that approach the topic of entrepreneurship from different perspectives

Thematic Focus 1

[Entrepreneurial Competence](#)
[A good practice analysis](#)

Thematic Focus 2

[Startup and](#)
[Accelerator Support](#)

Thematic Focus 3

[Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs](#)
[in Outlying Areas](#)

Thematic Focus 4

[RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation](#)
[for Young Entrepreneurs](#)

Thematic Focus 1

Entrepreneurial Competence

A good practice analysis

Imprint

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1. Introduction

In recent years, more attention has been brought to the topic of entrepreneurship and how countries, industries and institutions can possibly shed a light on and support this career path. While higher education institutions have focused on educating students, new pathways have been implemented and should be considered as well when it comes to supporting entrepreneurship and the development of necessary entrepreneurial competences.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 99% of all businesses in the European Union (EU), highlighting their economic importance (European Commission n.d.). SMEs and entrepreneurship create jobs and growth in regions of outlying areas, they promote innovative ideas and market new products or services. In order for this to be sustainable and enable a positive regional development and attractiveness of a region long term, entrepreneurs and SMEs need an entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides assistance, less regulatory burden in firm creation and innovation as well as learning in general, for them to survive, grow and eventually compete on an international level. This agenda is in line with the Small Business Act (European Commission 2008, p. 3 f.) and Strategy 2020 (European Commission 2010, p. 5 f.) of the European Union.

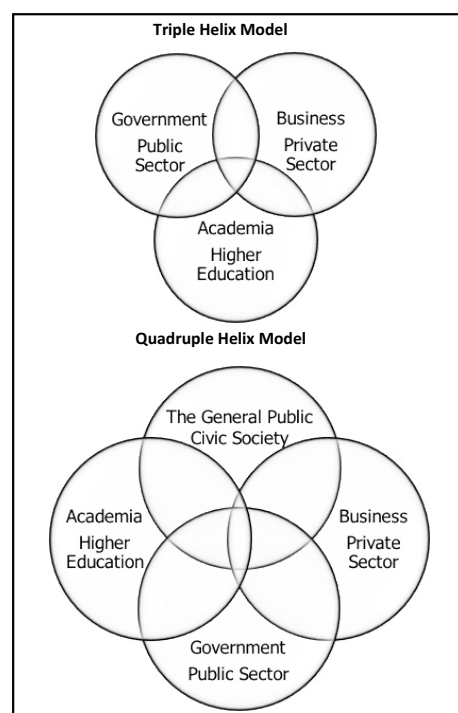


Figure 1: Helix models (own source) (based on image accessed [here](#) 29/06/17)

The Interreg Europe project “Boosting innovative Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Regions for young entrepreneurs” (iEER) has been launched to focus on exactly this issue, boosting entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The ultimate goal is to identify possible good practices of 10 EU regions and to learn from each other, develop an action plan to eventually be able to transfer and adapt practices to other regions and create guidelines for new activities. The thematic focus of this report led by the Brandenburg region, especially by the University of Applied Sciences Brandenburg, is “entrepreneurial competence”. The goal is to analyze existing methods and initiatives within the different regions

of the iEER partners and identify which resources or criteria are needed to transfer these methods and initiatives and meet the overall goals of the project.

By using this path, a description of the **helix model** (see Fig.1) is needed:

The **Triple Helix** model states, that industry, university/academia and government have parallel ties or interactions that create an environment in order for knowledge to be created and purposefully used or transferred. While each of the elements has its own function, university namely producing and spreading knowledge, industry the production and the government as a guarantor for stability and rightful collaborations, they each partly take each other’s role (Etzkowitz 2008, p. 1).

The iEER project is based on an extended version of this model with a fourth helix, the civic society also known as the users of innovations. Consequently, the **Quadruple Helix** model states that every action in the other three helixes somehow evolves around the users / society and innovation has to be ultimately relevant for or is created by them in the case of an entrepreneur. The collaborative Triple Helix model is therefore extended by a user-centered perspective, putting the innovation-user or groups of consumers, representing the demand-side of innovation amidst the other helixes (Carayannis, Rakhmatullin 2014, p. 217 ff.; Foray et al. 2012, p. 37).

The innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem is grounded upon the helix approach. And boosting entrepreneurial competence in different ways across the helixes is one possibility to shape and improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem to be more open, enabling innovation by young entrepreneurs and economic growth.

2. Objectives and Descriptions

In order to understand the concept of **entrepreneurial competence** and finally give a concrete definition for the purpose of this report, meta-analytic studies have been taken into account. A great deal of management and behavioral research has been conducted over the last decades, analyzing different personality traits that may lead to entrepreneurial behavior and success. In doing so, two models in particular stand out and will therefore be included in the theoretic background on entrepreneurial

competence: the Big Five-Model and the Measure of Entrepreneurial Tendencies and Abilities (META).

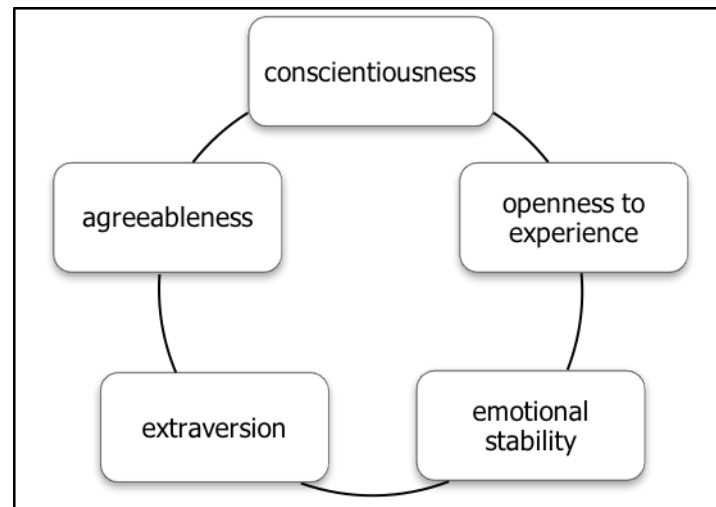


Figure 2: Big Five Model (own source)

(based on Zhao et al. 2010)

The **Big Five-Model (See Fig. 2)**

states that there are five general personality traits, which can be related to entrepreneurial intentions and performance, also described as creating entrepreneurship motivation and enabling successful continuance. These traits can also differentiate an entrepreneur from a non-entrepreneur (Zhao and Seibert 2006; Zhao et al. 2010, p. 382 f.). The theory describes

conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability, extraversion to be positively and agreeableness to be negatively related to entrepreneurial intentions and firm performance. While most constructs are self-explanatory by their name, conscientiousness is defined as an individual's achievement motivation and perseverance whereas agreeableness signifies the attitude concerning an individual's interaction with others, a low agreeableness would hence be favorable for an entrepreneur who needs to focus on his own needs and beliefs according to Zhao et al. (2010, p. 384 ff.). In their review, Zhao et al. (2010, p. 392) found proof of conscientiousness, openness to experience, emotional stability and extraversion to promote entrepreneurial intentions and performance, while agreeableness seems to not be related to either of the dependent variables. They also included a sixth personality trait, namely risk propensity/ tendency, in their analysis which they hypothesized to be positively related to entrepreneurial intentions but negatively related to entrepreneurial intentions but negatively related to performance and discovered it to be only true for the intentions. This indicates that risk aversion may be favorable for long-term success, although risk propensity is needed at an earlier stage. Furthermore, openness to experience, which is also closely related to creativity, and conscientiousness are the most important personality traits (Zhao et al. 2010, p. 392 ff.).

Leutner et al. (2014, p. 59 ff.) found in their analysis of META that the only important factors in the entrepreneurial personality according to the five factors are agreeableness and extraversion. This is due to the fact that they included META in their analysis, which are measures for opportunity recognition and exploitation as well as innovation and value creation. The related dimensions were entrepreneurial proactivity, entrepreneurial creativity, entrepreneurial opportunism and entrepreneurial vision. All of them are more closely related to entrepreneurship and therefore able to predict entrepreneurial success overall better, than the broad personality traits of the big five model. Leutner et al.'s findings (2014, p. 62 f.) hence promote the use of such models to describe the entrepreneurial personality and competences and beyond that show applicability for different environments or entrepreneurial fields: corporate, social and invention entrepreneurship.

These before shown personality traits and skills are part of entrepreneurial competences which should be boosted in the context of the iEER project. For this reason, the EU has come up with an Entrepreneurship Competence (EntreComp) Framework in 2016 which is also established upon an academic literature review, case studies and different types of workshops. While in theory, entrepreneurship is often defined following the Schumpeterian (1947, p. 151) definition as doing new things or allocating existing factors in a new manner, which essentially means innovating, the EU has broadened its understanding of entrepreneurship even further. The EU describes entrepreneurship as a "transversal competence [...] from nurturing personal development, to actively participating in society, to (re)entering the job market [...], and to starting ventures (cultural, social or commercial)" (Bacigalupo et al. 2016, p. 6). It does not exclude any type of entrepreneurship and even includes intrapreneurship, also known as corporate entrepreneurship within a firm or entrepreneurial thinking as an employee, which can also foster innovative ideas and promote business growth of an existing firm.

The **EntreComp framework** defines entrepreneurship as such and consists of 15 competences that an entrepreneur should have/ be able to perform in a business context and are clustered in three interrelated competence areas (Bacigalupo et al. 2016, p. 6). According to the three competence areas entrepreneurship competence is "the ability [of an entrepreneur or a group] to transform ideas and opportunities into action by mobilizing [personal, material and non-material] resources", which

is closely related to the KSAO model and competence literature (Bacigalupo et al. 2016, p. 10). Each competence component is not restricted to be part of only one area, the framework is flexible and can be adapted according to the user's needs. The framework can be seen in figure 3. Competences mentioned in the Big Five-model and META are also acknowledged in this framework, for example motivation and perseverance, coping with risk, creativity or vision and spotting opportunities. The literature review of Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010, p. 102 ff.) describes similar competences to be found significant by a range of authors, namely management and coordination skills, self-efficacy, delegation and motivation, commitment, idea generation, spotting opportunities and strategizing to take advantage of them, initiative/ decisiveness and interpersonal skills.

It is evident that a great number of these competences are closely linked to management and relationship competences overall, which makes sense since entrepreneurs act in a business-related network or ecosystem (see the helixes) that they seek to cope with in their advantage. As shown in the diagram below, the EntreComp framework has taken such traits into account as well. The goal is

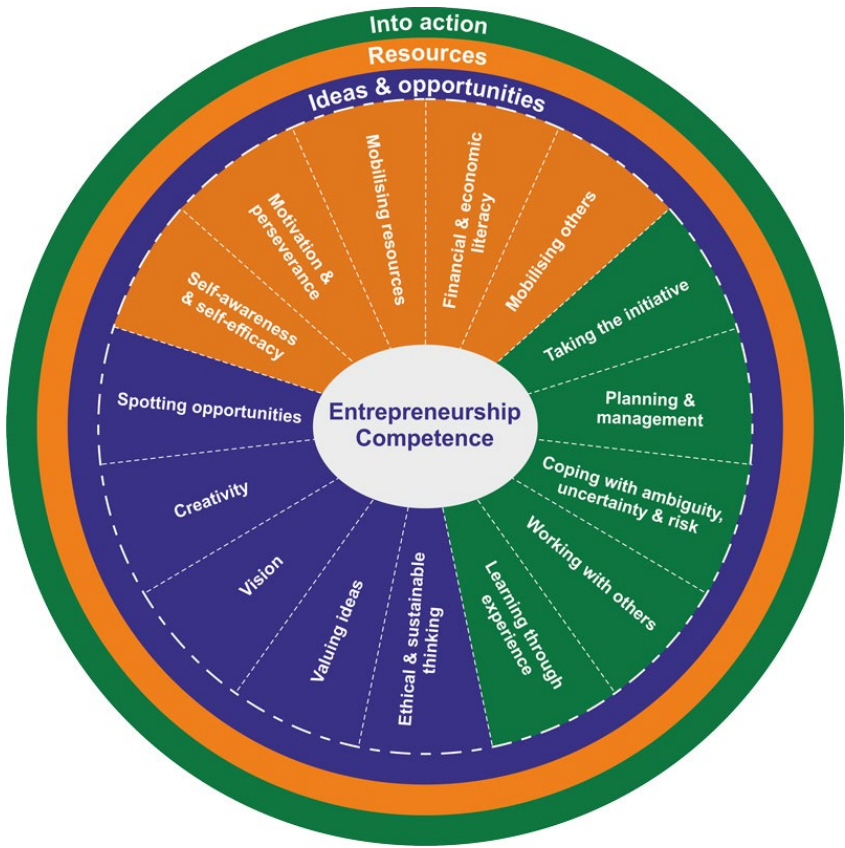


Figure 3: EntreComp Framework
(Source: Bacigalupo et al. 2016, p. 11)

to see a progression within the entrepreneur's competences towards independence. Any further details on this framework can be found in Bacigalupo et al. (2016). The framework's appendix provides suggestions on what entrepreneurs should be able to do and moreover how to behave in order to combine resources, ideas and opportunities and given or learned abilities in an advantageous manner. Evidently, no one single competence makes or

breaks an entrepreneur, but instead entrepreneurial competence is a well matched and continuously developing set of components adjusted to the background of the entrepreneurial idea and already existing skills, mindsets within the person or team.

Therefore, the following description of **entrepreneurial competence** has been developed for the iEER project to collect and analyze the different good practices from the different regions:

The European Union describes entrepreneurship as a "transversal competence, which can be applied by citizens to all spheres of life from nurturing personal development, to actively participating in society, to (re)entering the job market as an employee or as a self-employed person, and to starting ventures (cultural, social or commercial)" (Bacigalupo et al. 2016, p. 6).

Entrepreneurial competence combines the tasks of entrepreneurial learning (1) and entrepreneurial culture and mindset activation (2) in one theme.

- (1) **Teaching methodologies** with theoretical and practical methods as well as consultancy, mentoring programs and learning with and from existing businesses to improve the entrepreneurial competencies defined by the European union,
- (2) Including programs, activities and interaction in the region for **activating entrepreneurial mindsets** and stimulating young people towards the theme and the opportunity of being an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurial learning happens through education, training, mentoring, consulting and learning with and from experienced individuals or businesses. **Culture promotion and mindset activation** refer to modules, networking and sensitization activities, stressing entrepreneurship as an attractive opportunity.

Building entrepreneurial competence is key to optimizing the fit between the entrepreneur (-ial team), idea, resources and the opportunity given in a certain environment and promotes more creativity, innovation as well as sustainable regional growth. The research on main activities, which can be considered good practices if implemented effectively and showing the desired results, are presented in the following table:

Practice	Definition
1. EET	Entrepreneurial education and training (EET) has found more and more approval in economies overall and specifically higher education institutions (HEIs). To define entrepreneurial education and training it is important to stress that it nowadays encompasses more than the delivery of single courses to students at university. In operational practice it combines academic education and formal training in business and management tasks (Valerio et al. 2014, p. 21).
1.1 Education	<p>Entrepreneurial education has emerged into own study programs but also courses on the subject of entrepreneurship offered at universities, secondary and primary school levels. Their main goal is to stimulate and teach about the topic and make students understand what it means and takes to be an entrepreneur while putting theoretical groundwork into action (Sánchez 2013, p. 447 ff.; Oosterbeek et al. 2010, p. 442 f.).</p> <p>The objectives of such practices are first of all promoting awareness, an entrepreneurial mindset and improving skills, abilities and knowledge.</p> <p>In detail, they have shown to enhance creativity, self-confidence and self-efficacy, proactivity and team work (Sánchez 2013, p. 448; Valerio et al. 2014, p. 22).</p>
1.2 Training	Trainings on entrepreneurship are furthermore aimed at potential and practicing entrepreneurs and adult learners, not only students (Valerio et al. 2014, p. 3). It can for example be done through business plan training, pitching or courses on business basics but also creativity and innovation focused workshops (Jansen et al. 2015, p. 176).
2. Mentoring	Mentoring could be commonly defined as “long-term relationship wherein an experienced mentor provides guidance and advice on any topic needed on the basis of regular interaction”. Wilbanks 2013 (p. 94) mentions consistent interaction as one of three basic features of mentoring relationships. Adding mutual social exchange over a certain period and improvement of the mentee’s career and everyday work.

Practice	Definition
3. Coaching	<p>Business coaching is often defined as a relationship between an experienced coach and a less experienced coachee producing changes in coachee behavior and focusing on company challenges. It thus aims at promoting leadership skills, decision making and ultimately improving job and company performance and results in an action plan for the coachee (Kutzhanova et al. 2009, p. 4).</p> <p>Entrepreneurial coaching appears to have a more detailed approach to supporting the coachee than mentoring. In that, it is aimed at a variety of skills to be developed, namely technical, managerial, entrepreneurial and personal skills. Ultimately the entrepreneur will be able to develop the own company on the basis of a through coaching enhanced skillset (Audet and Couteret 2012, p. 516; Kutzhanova et al. 2009, p. 4).</p>
4. Learning from existing businesses	<p>Learning from existing businesses encompasses different approaches.</p> <p>Using role models to activate the entrepreneurial mindset in aspiring entrepreneurs or students is one way. Role models are a source of knowledge and inspiration which they pass on to others, activating their self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention (Laviolette et al. 2012, p. 720). Successful but also unsuccessful businesses as well as experienced entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs, for example, are suitable.</p> <p>Also important are sessions to train the trainers/ educators, activating their mindset, giving them the knowledge background knowledge and methods or tools to deliver the intended. Guaranteeing a better result by ensuring trainer and delivery quality (Valerio et al. 2014, p. 48 f.).</p>
5. Networking	Networking is another element to be found in different practices, which is also resulting in entrepreneurial learning and the development of a personal entrepreneurial environment, building upon and increasing an entrepreneur’s social competence. It gives way to business relationships and knowledge exchange as well as marketing opportunities (Jansen et al. 2015, p. 178).

Table 1: Practices building entrepreneurial competence (own source)

3. Critical Success Factors for Entrepreneurship Competence

First of all, the general quality of activities provided is important. Thereby ensuring the **quality of mentors/ teachers**, and thus making sure the general fit and later on satisfaction is good. This can be done through good selection of teachers/ trainers (in regards of experience, knowledge), as well as offering programs and material providing them with the skills, motivation and information they need, but also participant selection processes (Abduh et al. 2007, p. 87; Bergek and Norrman 2008, p. 23 f.; Peters et al. 2004, p. 88; Sánchez 2013, p. 459).

Furthermore, initial interest of participants influences the outcome of best practices. Forcing entrepreneurship will surely lead to dissatisfaction and rejection (Oosterbeek et al. 2010, p. 452). That is why raising awareness and creating a flourishing culture is so important. Thus, the overall **environment needs to be positive towards entrepreneurship**, promoting networks, role models and initiatives and also realizing funding for activities and entrepreneurs (Abduh et al. 2007, p. 87 f). And a clear focus of entrepreneurial needs and goals will also enable a better outcome (McKevitt and Marshall 2014, p. 273).

Other critical factors especially determining the success of interpersonal relationships in these activities are trust, chemistry, honesty and openness towards new ideas as well as the willingness to work hard and frequent feedback (Allen et al. 2008, p. 353 f.; Audet and Couteret 2012, p. 527; St-Jean and Audet 2012, p. 135; St-Jean 2012, p. 212; Sullivan 2000, p. 170). This ultimately leads to higher satisfaction of all parties, better communication processes and therefore enabling outcome optimization through uncertainty reduction and goal achievement.

Wesman (2016) describes “The **6 Startup Essentials** for a Business That Will Succeed”, including

1. “Commit to one business,
2. Know your industry,

3. Join the right organizations,

4. Create a business blueprint,

5. You can’t do it alone. Build a team

6. Take good care of yourself and stay curious”

Summarizing these thoughts, entrepreneurship is about deeply committing to one’s own idea and “it’s about making a commitment to something that will absorb large amounts [of the entrepreneurs] time.” Further, knowing the industry, having all information needed and knowing where to get this information is an essential key to success. An optimal starting point to succeed is therefore setting milestones for financial and business development. Additionally, team building and team management are indispensable. Finally, establishing a good work-life-balance is essential and also proves the entrepreneur’s private and corporate planning skills (Wesman 2016).

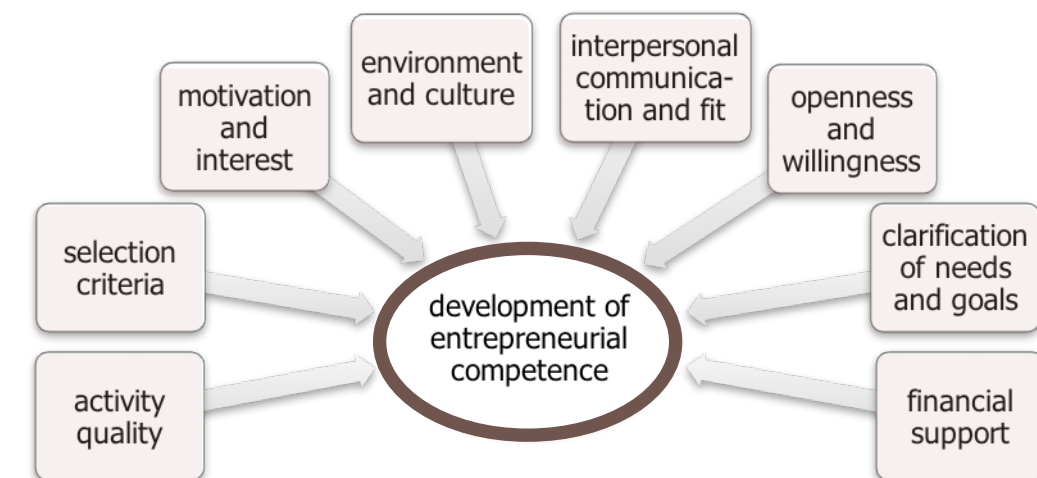


Figure 4: Development of entrepreneurial competence (own source)

(based on Abduh et al. (2007, p. 87), Allen et al. (2008, p. 353 f.), Audet and Couteret (2012, p. 527), Bergek and Norrman (2008, p. 23 f.), McKevitt and Marshall (2014, p. 273), Oosterbeek et al. (2010, p. 452), Peters et al. (2004, p. 88), Sánchez (2013, p. 459), St-Jean and Audet (2012, p. 135), St-Jean and Audet (2009, p. 158), St-Jean (2012, p. 212), Sullivan (2000, p. 170))

There out, the following criteria for good practices have been settled for the iEER project in the theme of **entrepreneurial competence**:

1. Activities / Methodologies that include the three actions of “Ideas and Opportunities”, “Resources” and “Into Action”

a. Encouraging creativity, idea generation, ethical and sustainable thinking

b. Learning self-awareness, motivation, right use of resources and communication

c. Increasing the own willingness to take action, the ability to team work, the ability to evaluation risks and skills in management and planning
2. Modules for educators, trainers and teachers to encourage the theme of entrepreneurship
3. Actions that increased the level of interaction between education and community
4. Programs that improve the increase of entrepreneurial capacity of young people including the aspects of innovation and digitalization

4. Best Practice Initiatives and Activities

Taking into account the established description and criteria, the 11 partners were asked to submit good practices from their region to give great examples of entrepreneurial activities in the field of entrepreneurial competence. Furthermore, these activities will to be analyzed in chapter 5.

Table 2 shows the different good practices of the 10 regions within the iEER Project:

GP Number	Region	Good Practice title
GP 1	West Region Romania	<div>Innovation Labs Pre-accelerator Programme</div> <div><i>“The programme offers feedback sessions in the first phase, facilitating the creation of interdisciplinary teams. Then, the pre-acceleration programme starts with a hackathon where the admitted teams are selected. Then there are 3 months of mentoring and coaching, during which the teams work on their prototype, business model, presentation, long term vs short term objectives, guided by seasoned entrepreneurs.”</i></div>
GP 2	Marche	<div>Contamination Lab of Polytechnic University of Marche (also: Clab)</div> <div><i>“Provides a specific space designed within the main university campus, the Contamination Lab, and a specific program that runs every academic year, oriented to promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and innovation. The space is organized in four areas: the cHouse (for group work), the cClass (for seminars and other learning activities), the cWork (for hosting nascent entrepreneurs) and the cFun (for relax). The program involves about 50 students coming from all the curricula (Medicine and Surgery, Engineering, Economy, Natural Sciences, Rural Sciences) and all years of study from undergraduate students to doctoral students (last year, also from two other universities and a high school).”</i></div>

GP 3	Hauts-de-France	<p>Hubhouse – Sensitization</p> <p><i>“Between 2006 and 2014, the Regional council in collaboration with Universities have created 7 Hubhouses on the Nord-Pas de Calais territory. The objective is to develop a strong entrepreneurial culture to convince young people of the positive aspects of entrepreneurship. By having early hands-on experience in carrying out their project, young people develop entrepreneurial values and skills for their future professional insertion.”</i></p>
GP 4	Hauts-de-France	<p>PEPITE (Student Pole for Innovation, Transfer and Entrepreneurship)</p> <p><i>“Four national measures in 2014:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>-The access for all students to a training in entrepreneurship and innovation integrated in the education cursus,</i> <i>- The setting up of 29 PEPITE on higher education sites, to support the implementation of entrepreneurship and innovation training programs in higher education and to accompany students-entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial projects. The training and support of PEPITE is mainly based on learning by doing,</i> <i>- The creation of the National Student-Entrepreneur Status (SNEE, a world first, accessible to students and alumni) and all the associated activities / benefits such as double tutoring, specific diploma in entrepreneurship, national certification of entrepreneurial skills, specific “acceleration” program (PEPITE STARTER), facilities for the funding of the future enterprise, partnership with national networks of advisors.</i> <i>- The creation of a national PEPITE prize with a subsidy during the creation of companies (criteria’s = the ambition of the project + innovation).”</i>

GP 5	Helsinki-Uusimaa	<p>Entrepreneurship societies and their grassroots activities</p> <p><i>“Entrepreneurship Societies have a key role in student entrepreneurship activation and entrepreneurial ecosystem development in Helsinki-Uusimaa Region. Entrepreneurship societies have raised the public profile of startups, celebrated successful entrepreneurs and made entrepreneurship a desirable career path for young people. Entrepreneurship Societies or equivalents are voluntary organizations within Universities that promote entrepreneurship by throwing events, offering networks and by taking part in the developing of entrepreneurial operations in universities.”</i></p>
GP 6	Helsinki-Uusimaa	<p>Helsinki Growth Alliance (HGA) project</p> <p><i>“Offers public services for startups and entrepreneurs in the Greater Helsinki area to develop business ideas into growth companies. Together with HGA partners, HGA organises regular training, workshops, events and other activities to support startups and individuals progress with their business. HGA helps in business ideation, business conception, business modelling, pitching, and team building.”</i></p>

GP 7	València	<p>Aula Empreende Programme</p> <p><i>"Aula Empreende helps to increase the rates of entrepreneurship at universities, coming both from the students and from professors and researchers. Aula Empreende facilitates the connection of the Education and R&D&i system of all the areas of knowledge of the universities with the entrepreneurial ecosystem, hence promoting the entrepreneurial culture at all levels of the universities."</i></p>
GP 8	Brandenburg	<p>Servicestelle-Schülerfirmen (Student companies)</p> <p><i>"Student companies are school projects that start their own business in the school environment. A team of students, in classes or in after school clubs, develops a business idea, creates a business model and starts operating the new business – with real products or services. Popular branches for school companies are in the fields of catering & kiosk, arts & handcraft and event management/IT."</i></p>
GP 9	Northern Ireland	<p>The Employer Support Programme – InnovateUs</p> <p><i>"InnovateUs is a funded skills development programme, which offers a unique, tailored training solution for small businesses. Funded by the Department for the Economy, the programme's aim is to deliver bespoke training solutions that encourage and enable a business to bring an idea to the market through new product, service or process development."</i></p>

GP 10	Northern Ireland	<p>TRADELINKS II</p> <p><i>"Small Businesses were recruited in the cross border region (IRL / NI) based on having an existing business idea that has not yet led to trading or employment or contracts – in other words an idea from an entrepreneur in an existing or new business which hasn't yet benefitted from funding, research, patenting advice, despite having a strong marketing and concept grounding. If the SMEs needed business advice and formal training, Tradelinks provided this as well as a route to the market and how to simplify / understand processes such as business regulations."</i></p>
GP 11	Southern Denmark	<p>Entrepreneurship Across (Original title: "Entreprenørskab på kryds og tværs")</p> <p><i>"The purpose of the project was to strengthen the teaching of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship by "teaching the teachers". The main aim of the project was to upskill the teachers at the educations in the region."</i></p>
GP 12	Westpomeranian Region	<p>Business pre-incubator</p> <p><i>"The service involves free sharing of workstations in a shared open space room. In addition, there will be free of charge. Furnishing of rooms (furniture, laptops and printers). As part of the package of services, AIP tenants will receive Possibility to participate in trainings organized in RCLiTT and professional advice on the establishment and development of one's own company."</i></p>

GP 13	County Kerry	<p>CEED - Centre for entrepreneurship and enterprise development</p> <p><i>“CEED aims to spread the spirit of enterprise and innovation to both the Institute community and to wider national and international audiences through the creation and delivery of a range of educational and business activities that inspire and build skills in the practice of entrepreneurship. The centre collaborates with over 400 experienced entrepreneurs, innovators and other practitioners to provide relevant, credible and practical training. A number of courses, events and programs in entrepreneurship are run every year and attended by 2500+ students and delegates. Our research agenda has a particular focus on research into design driven innovation, entrepreneurial learning, incubation and new venture creation and sustainability. It brings together academics, spinout enterprises, student entrepreneurs, startup businesses and researchers for the study and practice of innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise.”</i></p>
GP 14	West Region Romania	<p>Support for innovative solutions in West Region Romania</p> <p><i>“Tehimpuls is the main promoter of innovation in the regional business environment. One of its objectives is to provide customized support for business development, to assist innovative ideas to commercialize and young companies to develop on more mature markets. Tehimpuls delivers innovation vouchers, grants and customized consultancy to researchers and young entrepreneurs, to startups, spin-offs and SMEs.”</i></p>

Table 2: Good practice initiatives

A full description and information on the projects and initiatives can be found in the attachment of this report.

5. Transferability and How-to Guideline

The following table takes a deep look into the different good practices and analyzes them by taking into account the established description and criteria concerning the field of entrepreneurial competence:

Question	Count	GP 1	GP 2	GP 3	GP 4	GP 5	GP 6	GP 7	GP 8	GP 9	GP 10	GP 11	GP 12	GP 13	GP 14
1. Is it teaching methodology with															
a) theoretical methods	5		x					x	x			x		x	
b) practical methods	14	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
c) consultancy (mentoring, coaching, training etc.)	12	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
d) learning from existing businesses	1					x									
2. Does the GP															
a) activate entrepreneurial mindset?	9		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	
b) stimulate entrepreneurial intention?	9		x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x	x
c) support the entrepreneurial idea?	10	x	x	x			x		x	x	x		x	x	x
3. Which group is targeted?															
a) kindergardeners/pre-schoolers	0														
b) pupils	2								x					x	
c) students	10	x	x	x	x	x		x				x	x	x	x
d) alumni	1				x										
e) non-academics	0														
f) educators	5			x				x	x			x		x	
g) trainers	0														
h) others	8		researchers				open for everyone	researchers		SMEs (< 50)	SMEs		startups	startups, researchers, enterprises	researchers, startups, SMEs

Question	Count	GP 1	GP 2	GP 3	GP 4	GP 5	GP 6	GP 7	GP 8	GP 9	GP 10	GP 11	GP 12	GP 13	GP 14
4. Which learning outcomes does the GP provide?															
a) creativity	12	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
b) idea generation	13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
c) ethical and sustainable thinking	3										x			x	x
d) self-awareness	10	x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x
e) motivation	8		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x			
f) use of resources	5	x					x			x	x				x
g) communication	12	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
h) proactivity	9		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	
i) teamwork	6	x	x			x	x	x	x						
j) risk evaluation	1													x	
k) management and planning	13	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
5. Does the GP foster entrepreneurial culture?															
a) yes	14	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
b) no	0														
6. Does the GP focus on a specific theme?															
a) if yes, which?	3	tech									cross-border trade				automotive and machine building, agri- food, information and communication technology, constructions, energy efficiency and renewable energy
b) no	11		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	

Question	Count	GP 1	GP 2	GP 3	GP 4	GP 5	GP 6	GP 7	GP 8	GP 9	GP 10	GP 11	GP 12	GP 13	GP 14
7. What are the resources needed?															
a) financial		30.000 €/ year	60.000 € for facilities, 100.000€ / year	150.000-200.000€ / per year	1.000.000€ + X for 3 years	financed by the universities and the city / no amount determined	891.920 €/ 40 month	7.000€ / phase 1, 10.000€ / phase 2	Teachers are released from their teacher's duty from the ministry for this work / no amount determined	300.000€ / year	3.000.000€ / 550 SMEs	191.900 € / 2 years	416.000 € / year	funded through benefit in kind and private sponsorship, no amount determined	prizes consist of funds / grants and the training/ consultancy
b) staff		3 (program manager, front of house, financial officer)	3 (coordinator, organization, tutoring)	3	8 to 12 (implementation, coordination, teaching)	voluntary work	5	1-2	7 part-time (3 of them are teachers)	no information	no information	high involvement of professors and teachers	16	no information	no information
8. What is the time span of running the GP?		2012 / ongoing	2014 / ongoing	2006 / ongoing	2014 / ongoing	2007 / ongoing	2015 / ongoing	2009 / ongoing	2005 / ongoing	2011 / ongoing	2009 till 2012	2008 till 2010	2016 / ongoing	2008 / ongoing	2013 / ongoing
9. How is success measured?															
a) quantitative	12		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
b) qualitative	6	x	x				x		x	x		x			

Question	Count	GP 1	GP 2	GP 3	GP 4	GP 5	GP 6	GP 7	GP 8	GP 9	GP 10	GP 11	GP 12	GP 13	GP 14
10. Is there an explicitly high transfer potential?															
a) if yes, why	12		Easily transferable to other universities: overcoming limitations of the educational system, focusing on practice and stimulation, specific monitoring program	Yes, but only if stakeholders are mobilized and the institutions do cooperate	Yes, but only if the legal framework allows it. An own entrepreneurial status would totally help spreading the ideal	Yes, but there are people needed that do the work voluntary. If these people are available they spread the idea intrinsically and this motivates much more than other methods.	Because it fosters the cooperation between different actors and creates a common and simplified service model	Multidisciplinary. Existing transfers show that it is easy to adapt. Guidelines are available. Moderate costs.	Early stimulation gets more and more into focus and needs to be implemented. This module shows and great work between schools and entrepreneurial supporters. Regularly round tables can help coordinating the transferability.	Forstering the link between education and existing businesses on an academic level.	Great direct benefit for SMEs, but only if an interreg application succeeded High financial resources needed.	Yes, but a more representative duration would be great. No ongoing testing. Potential of teaching the teachers is very high even for intrinsic motivation to promote the theme.		It is a very holistic approach fostering entrepreneurial mindset from an early stage on and helping to start up. But is relying on the competitive approach.	The monitoring of grants' implementation is a good and transferrable means to show impact, great help for commercialization but funding is crucial.
b) no	3	overlapping with TF2								overlapping with TF2			overlapping with TF2		overlapping with TF2
11. Is the GP EU-funded?															
a) yes	9			x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
b) no	3	x	x			not directly		x							

Table 3: Analysis criteria for entrepreneurial competence (own source)

This analysis of good practices is based on individual answers of the iEER partners. There are many more examples in Europe that are missing and are not included. Nevertheless, this analysis can give examples of good activities and help to define standards for Europe or give examples to widen the regions’ activities in the field of entrepreneurial competence.

5.1 Must-Haves in the field of Entrepreneurial Competence

The analysis of the different good practice examples of the 10 regions in the iEER project is based on the outcome of the submitted good practices and is collected in table 3, which can be seen above.

This chapter shows the “Must-Haves” in the field of entrepreneurial competence:

First, the majority of submitted good practices is mentioned as **practical oriented methods**. Entrepreneurial learning is often done by learning-by-doing methods and brings the idea of being an entrepreneur to a felt real live situation while being in a testing area. Further, the field of consultancy with consulting, training and mentoring is often used as activity in entrepreneurial competence.

Secondly, all good practices ether **support, activate or stimulate entrepreneurial ideas and activities**, while most of the activities are developed for students, educators or others as SMEs, researchers or startups. The target groups mostly start with students and just a few examples are concentrating on younger groups to activate their minds for the field of entrepreneurial thinking. The activities themselves are mostly concentrating on the practical use of methods by learning from case studies or doing it on one’s own.

Thirdly, the themes that are focused while providing a program or activity are **idea generation, business planning, creativity and communication**. This combination shows a general skill range, an entrepreneur should have to develop an idea and to bring this idea further to a real business. Additionally, the field of creativity and idea generation with methods like design-thinking, prototyping and others are very useful to show young people a first way of how to be entrepreneurial. Further, the field of self-awareness can be seen in many examples. Helping the entrepreneur learning the right skills to develop one’s own business and supporting in developing an own standing.

Fourthly, all of the good practices are more or less **fostering entrepreneurial culture**. All of the examples show at least networking aspects to link people with each

other and foster the idea of entrepreneurship. More, all examples use the wording of entrepreneurial thinking and try to establish a culture in which entrepreneurs arise by nature.

Fifth, the majority of activities is **measured numerically** and explains success with number of different events, number of participants, number of established startups, number of created jobs and many more. The qualitative measurement is used next to the numerical measurement. This includes participant questionnaires or awards that the initiatives won because of their great performance and impact.

Finally and importantly, the majority of submitted practices is financed by the European Union and shows that policy makers are mostly initiating entrepreneurial activities in this field.

Summarizing, if a European standard for the field of entrepreneurial competence in regions should be developed, the following aspects need to be taken into consideration:

1. Universities are a key for entrepreneurial learning and mindset activation but other educational institutions should also be considered while establishing a strategy for entrepreneurial competence,
 2. Ensure an active involvement of important actors in your region,
 3. Practical orientation of methods ensure learning by doing,
 4. Methods need to be supportive for entrepreneurial ideas and foster creativity of participants,
 5. Themes of idea generation, business planning, creativity and communication should be included in the learning outcomes,
 6. Activities should foster entrepreneurial culture in different ways and spread the idea of an entrepreneurial region / community / university / person.

5.2 Outstanding Initiatives

While the previous chapter established a standard or “Must-Have”-status for regions in the field of entrepreneurial competence, the following chapter is having a deeper look into the submitted good practices and analyzes what could be done in a region to be outstanding in that field.

All good practices submitted are special and very great examples when it comes to entrepreneurial learning and mindset activation. Each example shows a great case how a region or institution can help spread the idea of entrepreneurship and how the environment can help support young entrepreneurs.

“Outstanding” in this framework means having activities or initiatives that are more likely to be special or new in the following manner:

- Focus on a special target group that may be overlooked
- Providing an activity / initiative that does focuses on a special theme
- Providing an innovative or new method / activity / initiative

Some examples are more likely to provide a more holistic or more strategic or even more focused approach. The following four examples are such good practices and the reason why they are chosen will be described in the following table 4:

Aula Empreende	<p><i>Combined initiative for students and professors:</i></p> <p>First, it trains university teachers and researchers in capacities and entrepreneurial motivation skills.</p> <p>Secondly, professors have to promote entrepreneurial culture by creating and coordinating student teams, which develop new business ideas.</p> <p>Finally, these teams can win the “Motivem” award in a competition.</p> <p>Holistic approach, which combines a train-the-trainer program with a business planning competition for students.</p>
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Entrepreneurship Societies and their grassroots activities	<p><i>Events and small activities organized by students for students at the different universities in Helsinki-Uusimaa:</i></p> <p>The entrepreneurship societies in Helsinki are intrinsically motivated and push entrepreneurial thinking on their own. The work they do is voluntary and they see themselves as the driver for entrepreneurial thinking. This is a great example for natural entrepreneurship and the strength of motivation. Furthermore, out of these activities many companies arise from the organizing students.</p>
Pepite	<p><i>Establishing an National Student-Entrepreneur Status:</i></p> <p>Pepite is the first program, which creates a national student entrepreneur status, to give also alumni the chance of participating in entrepreneurial courses and activities, benefit from co-working spaces and national certification of entrepreneurial skills, while not being member of the university anymore. Furthermore, it is a holistic approach to support young entrepreneurs, already as students, to pursue their idea and receive ECTS for it during their studies, participate in networking and win a prize.</p>
Student Companies	<p><i>One of the very rare examples of developing entrepreneurial culture starting at a very early age:</i></p> <p>The Service department applies the classical idea generating and business planning at an early stage in the pupil's environment. Therefore, teachers are prepared and pupils are trained in different skills for entrepreneurial thinking and acting.</p> <p>Further, this project leads to a real change in the school system in the region of Brandenburg. The Ministry of Education followed this approach and started implementing entrepreneurial learning into the schools schedules. Early learning and mindset activation is the key for successful mindset changes.</p>

Table 4: Outstanding good practices (own source)

As an addition to the outstanding practices mentioned before, the project partners included the following good practice as well, due to a special interest for this activity in discussion meetings:

5.3 Transferability of Good Practices in the field of Entrepreneurial Competence

The transferability of different activities, initiatives or programs is firstly dependent **on cultural differences** and **political frameworks**. These cannot always be changed or even hinder transferability. Therefore, the transferability needs to be proven by every region on its own. Each region knows their frameworks and culture best and should decide by its itself if a program can be transferred or need to be modified for usage. Nevertheless, some criteria can be established to analyze the good practices about “what could work” or “what can be transferred to other regions”.

Considering the **duration** of programs and initiatives within the good practices, the majority is still ongoing and most of them have been running for more than five years. This shows a first proof for success of the program and a possible transferability.

Secondly, the **needed resources** should be taking into consideration while proving the transferability of different good practices. The majority is financed by the European Union and includes staff resources in different amounts. The remaining financial resources depend on needed infrastructure like buildings, rent, hardware or other physical resources.

Another important aspect mentioned in the good practices is the **involvement** of different actors and the **cooperation** in the ecosystem. If the actors do not cooperate, most programs cannot succeed.

In conclusion, the good practices submitted by partners are more or less transferable keeping in mind different stages or different frameworks. This needs to be taken into account by choosing individual good practice for one's own region. Therefore, a deep look into the “Must-Haves” and the existing programs should be a first step towards an optimized approach in entrepreneurial competence.

6. Case Studies

By analyzing all the different good practice activities and initiatives, the users and participants are the ones that can describe their outcome the best. Next to quantitative criteria, this is a qualitative indicator for a great transferability of initiatives. Due to this fact, the shown case studies or testimonials show main outcomes or statements about individual good practices. Some of the cases are nowadays real startups or companies and others where ideas that arose while being within a program, initiative course or other activities.

Alejandro López, from Oiko Esports, on the strengths of Aula Emprende:

"The chance to develop the idea in a team, jointly with a professor experienced in the area. The training and the interaction with the rest of the teams."

Maged Hegazy, founder and CEO of iLearn3d Sp. Z o.o. (www.ilearn3d.com), says, that the **Business Incubator RCIiTT** provides a

"place to work and good networking" but suggests "more networking with international speakers".

Dr Ricardo Malheiro, from ReadyToPub lists the strengths of **CEED** as follows:

It is "applied, experiential, engaging, real time [with] engagement of the SME in the training, use of multiple pedagogies- poster presentations, breakout sessions, interactive workshops, mind mapping, reflective learning, role playing, action learning, case studies, team work, ask the expert, panel pitching, networking, [including] the value of the SME mentor, negotiations skills and the online resource tools."

Alessandro Bruschi, from KidneyDose, suggests that it would improve the **CLab**:

"To make people aware that, if they want, they can switch their ideas into a business and to give them the basics to launch it."

Michele Patrassi, CTO of ClubUp! Sport Network (www.clubup.it), on the obtained benefits of **Contamination Lab (CLab)**:

"Connections and knowledge of various horizontal skills and subject like economic, teamwork, pitch (building and presentation) and personal branding."

Roman Igual and Viktor Toldov, from LITUUS, where advised by their business incubator to join the **PEPITE** program. What benefits did they got from the practice?

"Meetings with personal mentors, courses provided by experts in different fields (finance, law, management), networking events, business challenges and prizes (Pepite Tremplin)."

ALBERTO BOCCALINI, from eSALUS, considers the strengths of **CLab** to be

"Interactivity, team working that includes increased efficiency, the ability to focus different minds on the same problem, and mutual support."

KONFIGO took part in the **Business Incubato RCIiTT** and benefitted from an

"Office for free for 1 year, various training services and business [and] legal support." But they see room for improvement regarding "Help finding potential investors / business angels, marketing support services."

Peik Hämekoski, co-founder of Fiksari (www.fiksari.fi), on Aaltoes, part of **Entrepreneurship societies and their grassroots activities.**

"It's a "Great place to meet interesting and talented people with similar goals and ambitions. Also it is a place where anyone can do really anything." What are the benefits of this practice? "The focus was to do and not to plan. [...] Also after being active in the community one has access to pretty much anyone in the local start-up community.""

Appendix

GP Number	Region	Good Practice Title
GP 1	West Region Romania	Innovation Labs Pre-accelerator Programme
GP 2	Marche	Contamination Lab of Polytechnic University of Marche (also: Clab)
GP 3	Hauts-de-France	Hubhouse – Sensitization
GP 4	Hauts-de-France	PEPITE (Student Pole for Innovation, Transfer and Entrepreneurship)
GP 5	Helsinki-Uusimaa	Entrepreneurship societies and their grassroots activities
GP 6	Helsinki-Uusimaa	Helsinki Growth Alliance (HGA) project
GP 7	València	Aula Emprende Programme
GP 8	Brandenburg	Servicestelle-Schülerfirmen (Student companies)
GP 9	Northern Ireland	The Employer Support Programme – InnovateUs
GP 10	Northern Ireland	TRADELINKS II
GP 11	Southern Denmark	Entrepreneurship Across (Original title: “Entreprenørskab på kryds og tværs”)
GP 12	Westpomeranian Region	Business incubator
GP 13	County Kerry	CEED - Centre for entrepreneurship and enterprise development
GP 14	West Region Romania	Support for innovative solutions in West Region Romania

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Thematic Focus 2

Startup and Accelerator Support

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1. Introduction

The economic importance of entrepreneurship is commonly understood and purposeful policy efforts to harness this driver are plenty. Policymakers often target small-and medium-sized firms and new entrepreneurs. Policy initiatives have gradually grown more refined over time and talk is about “entrepreneurship eco-systems,” a term used to refer to a palette of policy measures that address the broad range of needs new ventures have during their early life cycle.¹ The Interreg Europe project “Boosting innovative Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Regions for young entrepreneurs” (iEER) has been launched to focus on exactly this issue, *boosting entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial ecosystem*.

Many regions across Europe have witnessed a remarkable increase in innovation and entrepreneurial activities. To this end Interreg Europe project iEER aims to provide an important platform to analyse, review and recommend entrepreneurship support best practices that can be transferable across several regions in Europe. The iEER best practice report would show the intensity of the entrepreneurship activities in the regions and support received by entrepreneurs. The Interreg Europe iEER project is a flagship project funded by the European Union. The iEER best practices focus in **Thematic Focus Area 2: Startup and Accelerator Support** is led by Laurea University of Applied Sciences together with other partners in ten European regions of the iEER project.

iEER aims to define smart paths and solutions for partner regions to boost and orchestrate entrepreneurship ecosystems supporting young entrepreneurs when forty percent of young people in Europe indicate an interest in self-employment. The project pays special attention to the role European Structural funds and regional authorities can have supporting young entrepreneurship.

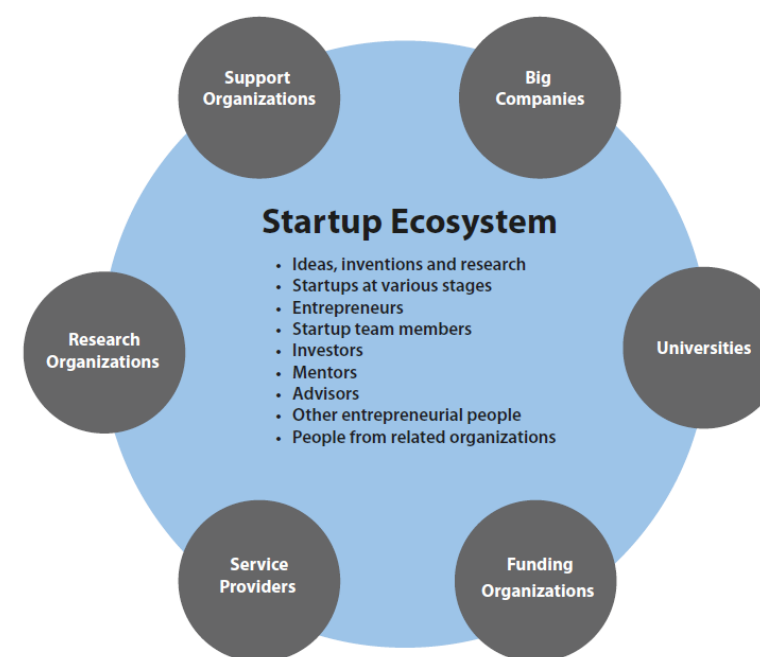
This report is based on following background research and thorough understanding of startup ecosystem development framework

1. 9 regions provided 15 Good practices (all forms in appendix 1)
2. Interviews with startup companies during Slush in Helsinki 2016 (In chapter 6 Case studies)

Startup Ecosystems

Startups Ecosystem

A startup ecosystem is formed by people, startups in their various stages and various types of organizations in a location (physical and/or virtual), interacting as a system to create new startup companies



Source: www.startupcommons.org

Startups Ecosystem activities

- Organizations and activities with start-up activities
- Universities
 - Advisory & mentoring organizations
 - Startup incubators
 - Startup accelerators
 - Co-working spaces
 - Service providers (consulting, accounting, legal, etc.)
 - Event organizers
 - Start-up competitions
 - Investor networks
 - Venture capital companies
 - Crowdfunding portals
 - Other funding providers (loans, grants etc.)
 - Start-up blogs & other business media
 - Other facilitators

“People from these roles are regarded as linked together Through shared events, activities, locations and interactions. As startup ecosystems are generally defined by the network of interactions among people, organizations and their environment, they can come in many types but are usually better known as startup ecosystems of specific cities or online communities (although some may say that due to social networks, the entire globe is just one big network of startup ecosystems.”

<http://www.startupcommons.org/what-is-startup-ecosystem.html>

Figure 1: Key actors in startup ecosystems

iEER addresses the needs of the partner regions in four thematic areas:

Thematic Focus area 1 looks into Good practice examples from **Entrepreneurship competence and activation**. Specific topics in this are:

1. Learning entrepreneurship Objective: Exchanges of best practice for developing HEI’s entrepreneurial teaching methodology with/by education and business.
2. Entrepreneurial mindset activation Objective: Exchanges of best practice activities in activating entrepreneurial mindsets of the young and the HEIs.

Thematic Focus Area 2 (this report) focuses on Good practices that succeed in **Acceleration and startup support for young entrepreneurs**. Example of best practices:

- Activating and Networking activities/student involvement
- Development Structures for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Physical and virtual development communities)
- Incubation and Pre-incubation Services and programmes (Pro-programme, Innovation Vouchers , Knowledge Transfer Partnership)
- Financial support for startups (Expert services, capital funding, crowdsourcing , specific cluster funding support, etc., Business Alliance Fund)

Thematic Focus Area 3 seeks to identify Good Practices in **Pathways for young entrepreneurs in outlying areas** in order to identify the best practices and policies for the design of an effective young entrepreneurship policy according to the regional-specific characteristics

Thematic Focus Area 4 looks for Good practices that *exemplify* **RIS3 - Smart Specialisation implementation for young entrepreneurs**.

Aside from the Good Practices, **Learning Camps** are an important part of this project across the four task force themes above. Learning camps are where the project partners come together in each region to study the various key issues and brainstorm in workshops in search of good ideas, practices and new developments. Learning Camps are complemented by **Peer Reviews** that form an important part of the learning process. Peer Reviews provide an outside perspective to the region and the received feedback is a valuable tool in improving the local ecosystems.

Expected Results and Impacts

Local level

1. To strengthen the management/governance/support for entrepreneurship support ecosystem oin the regions of Helsinki-Uusimaa, Southern Denmark, Marche, Northern Ireland, Kerry County, Valencia, Brandenburg, Nord Pas de Calais, Westpomerania and West Region Romania.

Interregional/European level

2. To learn and test the best practices of the EER regions is an evidence based approach that could contribute to the establishment of an European reference framework that transfers and up-scales the best practices of Europe for young entrepreneurship (Heinnovate, RIS3 platform and EER scheme) .
3. To increase the policy learning and capacity building of Europe at the local, regional and European levels and forecast the policy development needs beyond 2020.

The goal is to identify possible good practices of 10 EU regions and to learn from each other, develop an **action plan** to eventually be able to transfer and adapt practices to other regions and create guidelines for new activities. The interregional learning process is supported by collecting their Good Practices from each region. This report focuses on the *Thematic Focus Area 2: Startup and Accelerator Support* and Good Practices provided across the regions and identifies some of the key factors that have been deployed to influence / overcome barriers to entrepreneurial activity in the partner regions. The iEER good practice report would show the intensity of the entrepreneurship activities in the regions and support received by entrepreneurs

European Perspective on Startups

iEER project is in-line with the European Commission's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and Startup and Scale-up Initiative that aims to give Europe's many innovative entrepreneurs every opportunity to become world leading companies. It pulls togeth-

er all the possibilities that the EU already offers and adds a new focus on venture capital investment, insolvency law and taxation Startup Europe aims to strengthen the business environment for web and ICT entrepreneurs so that their ideas and business can start and grow in the EU.

iEER Supports Startup Europe and Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plans

ICT startups can access support services such as advice, networking and legal assistance, from EU funded projects on the [Startup Europe Club One Stop Shop](#).

The [Startup Europe Advisory Board](#) reviews the activities carried out by the EC Startup Europe team.

In a larger scale iEER as a project is in-line with European Union's [The Digital Single Market strategy](#) and vision of Open innovation, open science, open to the world. For example, in chapter 5 of this report there is an example of Digitalizing good practices.

2. Objectives and Descriptions

Objectives of in **Thematic Focus Area 2: Startup and Accelerator Support** theme are

- to enhance the competitiveness of the regions by reforming its innovation ecosystem by bench learning, networking and co-creating innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems by exchanging the best practices on startup and acceleration support
- Interconnection (virtual and real) between innovation & entrepreneur development platforms and societies in different iEER Regions

The key objectives include:

1. Identification and selection of best entrepreneurship practices within regions under thematic focus area 2
2. Provide good practices on youth entrepreneurship that can be shared and adopted amongst regions to boost youth entrepreneurship
3. To help regions across Europe under the thematic focus areas to design, develop, and deploy better policy aimed at youth entrepreneurship
4. Identify well integrated network support systems that provide startups with motivation and acceleration to manage their companies successfully at early stages regardless of age or gender
5. Investigates complexities and issues faced by different startup ecosystem with the regions.

One of the key objectives of this Report is to identify the good practices and learn how they have succeeded. There are many different types of good practices:

- Startup events
- Activating and Networking activities/student involvement
- Development Structures for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Physical and virtual development communities)
- Incubation and Pre-incubation Services and programmes (Pro-programme , Innovation Vouchers , Knowledge Transfer Partnership)
- Financial support for startups (Expert services, capital funding, crowdsourcing , specific cluster funding support, etc., Business Alliance Fund Many of the Good Practices have been funded through or in the context of the EU Structural and Investment Funds programmes – but many of these have no direct connection to EU funding

3. Critical/Successful Factors for supporting Young Entrepreneurs in Startup and Accelerator Support

The rise of the modern startup coincided with the emergence of a new type of Startup Support Programme: the Accelerator. A whitepaper by NUMA based on discussions with 150+ accelerator programmes, offers the following definition: “Startup accelerators, or seed accelerators, are typically for-profit organisations that foster a physical environment that supports accelerated growth for startups.”

The success of the startup accelerators is prompting more traditional business and academic incubators to adjust their programmes. As the reach of accelerator programmes expands we can expect a blurring of boundaries between these programmes in particular in the field of high tech and IoT.

An accepted definition of scale-ups used by the OECD and many other research agencies centers on sustained periods of fast growth: “Scale-ups are enterprises with average annualised growth in employees (or in turnover) greater than 20 percent a year over a three-year period, having 10 or more employees at the beginning of the observation period.” Unfortunately, Europe lags behind the US and other leading economies in the number and size of scale-up companies. Research estimates that closing the scale-up gap in the UK alone could generate an additional 238,000 jobs and £38 billion additional turnover in the short term, £96 billion per annum in the medium-term, and a potential of £225 billion additional GVA in the long term (2034)¹

Volume of possible startup and accelerator programmes has increase. For example in Helsinki region there were at least 31 startup and accelerator events or programmes during summer 2017. (appendix 3)

General definitions
Startup is a business in the form of a company, a partnership or temporary organization designed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model to grow fast in a big and/or fast growing market.
A business incubator can be defined as a support program that <ul style="list-style-type: none">- provides dedicated office space to all of its client companies.- Business incubators typically also provide a targeted array of resources and services, such as: business services, training, advice, mentoring, and networking opportunities
A business accelerator can be defined as a support program that provides significant funding to all of its client companies. In contrast to business incubators, business accelerators typically share the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A highly competitive selection process, (with acceptance rates of 1-3% in the most prestigious)accelerators- Cohort-based, i.e. there are terms in which new classes enter, pass through the program, and then graduate with a final pitch or demo- Tend to focus on teams rather than individual founders.
A hybrid support program is defined as a venture support program that provides space to some companies and funding to some companies.
A virtual incubator doesn't provide office space but other services
Entrepreneurship Acceleration Acceleration Services for young entrepreneurs includes at least following actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Developing business ideas- Coaching and networking the teams- Finding pathways for Entrepreneurs Startup facilities and activities should also be available. This all should deliver world class pre-incubation and incubation programs for startups aiming at rapid growth and even international success

In Valencia Learning camp October 26.-27. The overriding theme was Startup support and acceleration.

The major challenges outlined for startup support and acceleration were:

1. Focusing on problems: Most of the entrepreneurs are so passionate about their ideas that forget about answering the question: what does the idea serve? Hence, one of the major challenges is focusing on a problem that is worth solving, rather than the idea itself. Sometimes taking a personal problem as a starting point may help.

2. Customer development When testing the idea is crucial not only to ask the right questions, but to the right people. Entrepreneurs tend to manipulate questions, to get the answer they want to hear, and use friends and relatives as clients. They should choose potential customers to validate their business idea; look for the right pool of early adopters. Do not overestimate success and start with a small version of the business.

3. Idea sharing. A majority of startup founders don't feel comfortable sharing their business ideas; they make them loose opportunities and different points of view than would contribute to improve their business.

In order to face up these challenges, the table discussed the following solutions

1. Promote well balanced teams, which will help to focus on different aspects rather than just a brilliant idea.

2. Show products to customers and try to validate the market as soon as possible.

3. Invite enterprises to propose problems to be solved

4. Give entrepreneurs carrots (= helps, money, support) Getting entrepreneurs' trust.

3.1. Startup Development Phases

Startup Development Phases is a communication tool to help understand key aspects of a startup journey, identify key stages and to help develop Startup from **“idea to business”** and from **“founding team to organization”** in a more balanced and understandable manner.

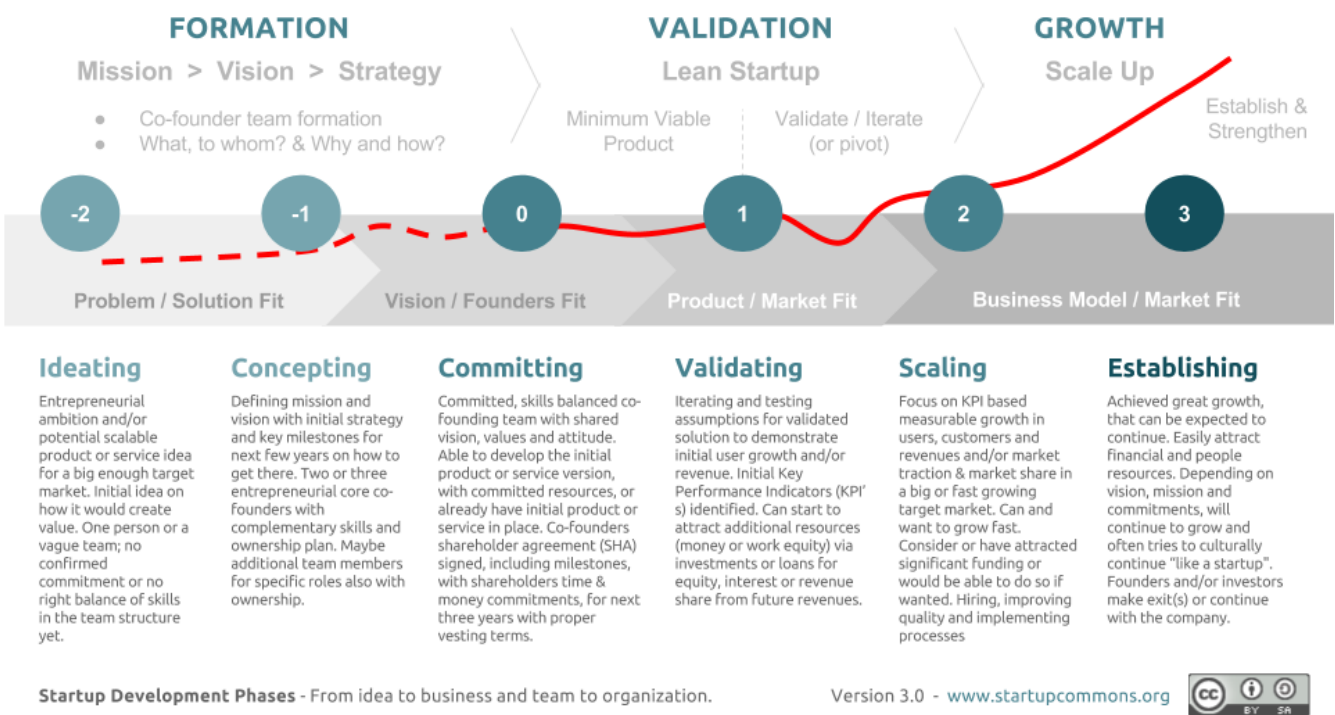


Figure 2: [Startup development phases](#).

In addition to the innovation process itself, from idea to value generating product and business model, startups also need to build a strong and committed founding team and develop both of these together into a real growing business and organization that captures the value being created. While there are many resources and self-education tools available for product side, much less is available for understanding entrepreneurship, team founding and growing as an organization types of challenges. Yet, if asked from professional investors, pretty much all would agree that team is the most important factor and also most people in business generally agree, that „business is about the people“.

By this simplified framework, both the startup entrepreneurs and those supporting them can communicate much faster about startups current development stage and what support is available or actions needed to get to the next stage.

This startup development phases framework is used as a core tool, for training curriculum for new entrepreneurs, educators and supporting people, as well as for our startup ecosystem development consulting and digital platform to connect, visualize, measure and benchmark startup ecosystems.

The framework is published under creative commons license for free use and is part of wikipedia article about startup company https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Startup_company. A resource that is first and most commons place to seek to start understanding what a startup is.

List of some other known places that have already adopted the framework to use:

- [Key Frameworks and Models](#) - Stanford Technology Ventures Program (STVP).
- A Startup Ecosystem Strategy for the City of Toronto, [From Concept to Commercialization](#)
- Startup Estonia, [mapping the startup support organizations and services](#) most relevant for each phase
- [How To Connect Research and Startup Communities](#) by Anil John
- iPage: [The 5 Growth Milestones All Small Businesses Should Aim For](#)
- Startup Island 2020' Forum - [Startup Gathering 2015](#)
- ICT Startup Funding, [Sources of funding](#)
- 성혁 박, [Biz Plan](#)
- YuHsuan Chao, [Growth Hacking - There's No Silver Bullet](#)
- Natalija Snapkauskaitė, [Why You Shouldn't Focus on User Acquisition \(Yet\)](#)

3.2 Supporting Startup Development

Considering the startup development phases and the founders venture from from nothing to success, there are many different types of challenges they face and the the type of support that will help avoid mistakes and to help their journey.

Startup ecosystems are collaborative environments involving public and private organizations, where their support focuses also overlap. The balance between public services or publicly funded support services tend to be focused in the earlier phases, while private and for profit type of services are focusing on later phases of the journey, where the startup company is starting to have more clarity and shape.

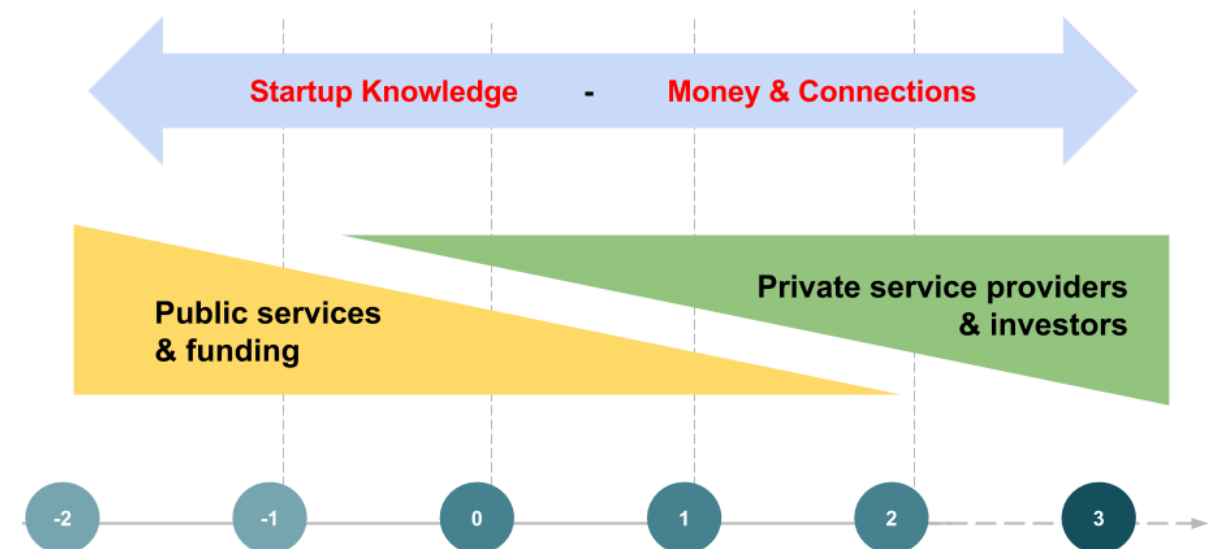


Figure 3: Supporting startup development

Key support phases

From both overall startup journey perspectives, key steps to focus on are:

Formation stage is about inspiring and access to key knowledge, to build the right mindset, understanding and abilities for the journey ahead, typical issues to avoid or solve, what steps to take in what order and about available support along the way.

Validation, is where the support focus shift to initial product development, strengthening core team via mentoring, supporting model business validation and customer development.

Growth, at this phase the support focus is mostly about resourcing and scaling various business operations internationally.

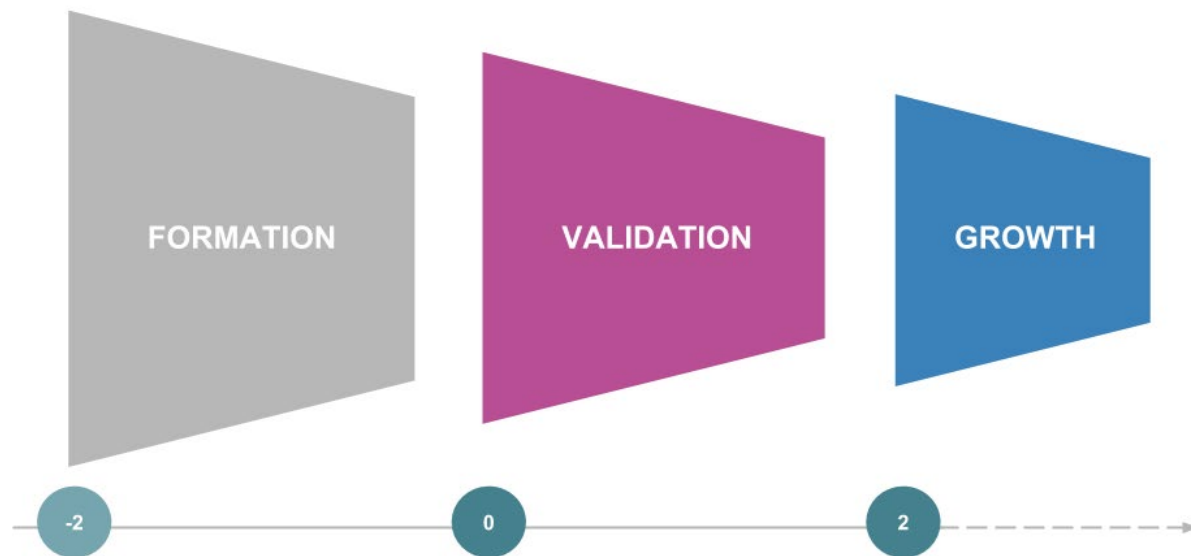


Figure 4: Key support phases

Types of Key Organisations

For those new to startups and startup ecosystems (particularly new startups founders and new investors), simply trying to get some sense and more holistic mental picture about different organizations, available services and services relevancy & availability, by reading about websites and directories is extremely challenging and time consuming. At the same time the ecosystem is in constant change, where entirely new organizations & services emerge and others are ended. Therefore, it is helpful to get a general sense of the types of key organizations, their position in the ecosystem and regards to startup development, along with understanding their main function in the ecosystem context.

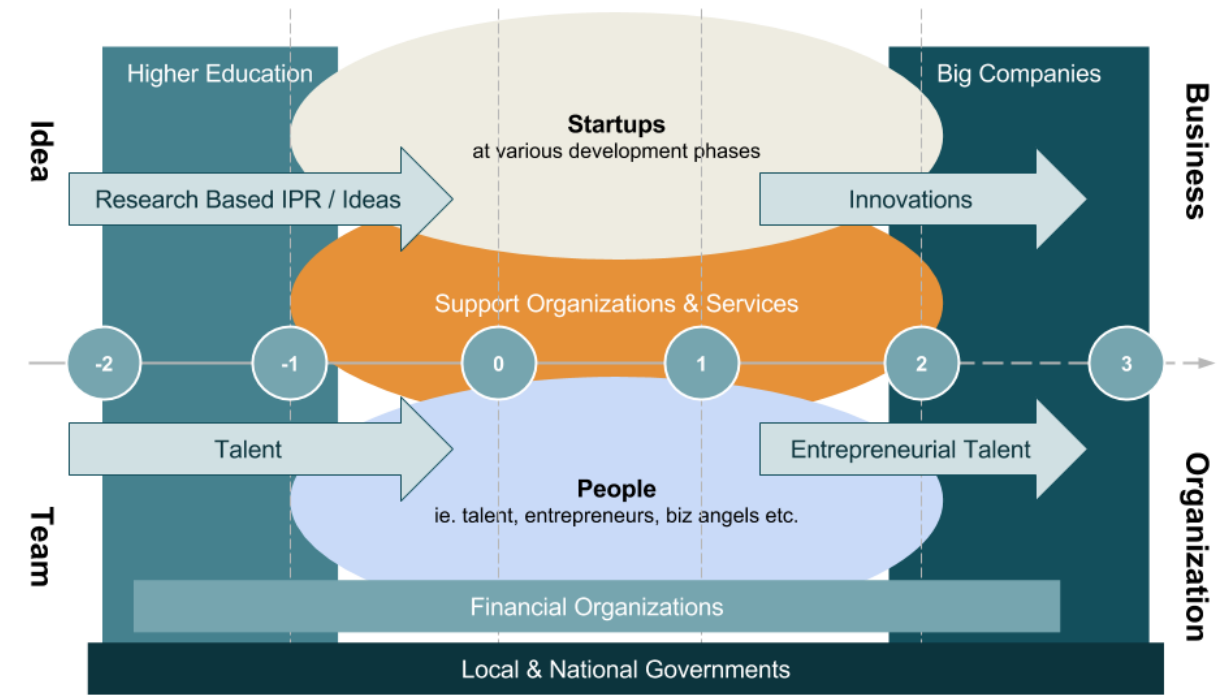


Figure 5: Types of key organizations

A startup ecosystem is formed by talent, startups in their various stages and various types of public, private and NGO organizations typically in a city region, interacting as an organic system to create new innovative companies. Different organizations focus on different parts of the ecosystem function, business vertical and/or startups at their specific development phases. Government, higher education, financial organizations and big companies are the cornerstone organizations in any startup ecosystem. Each of the development phase have their high-level activities and targets to achieve to move forward to next phase.

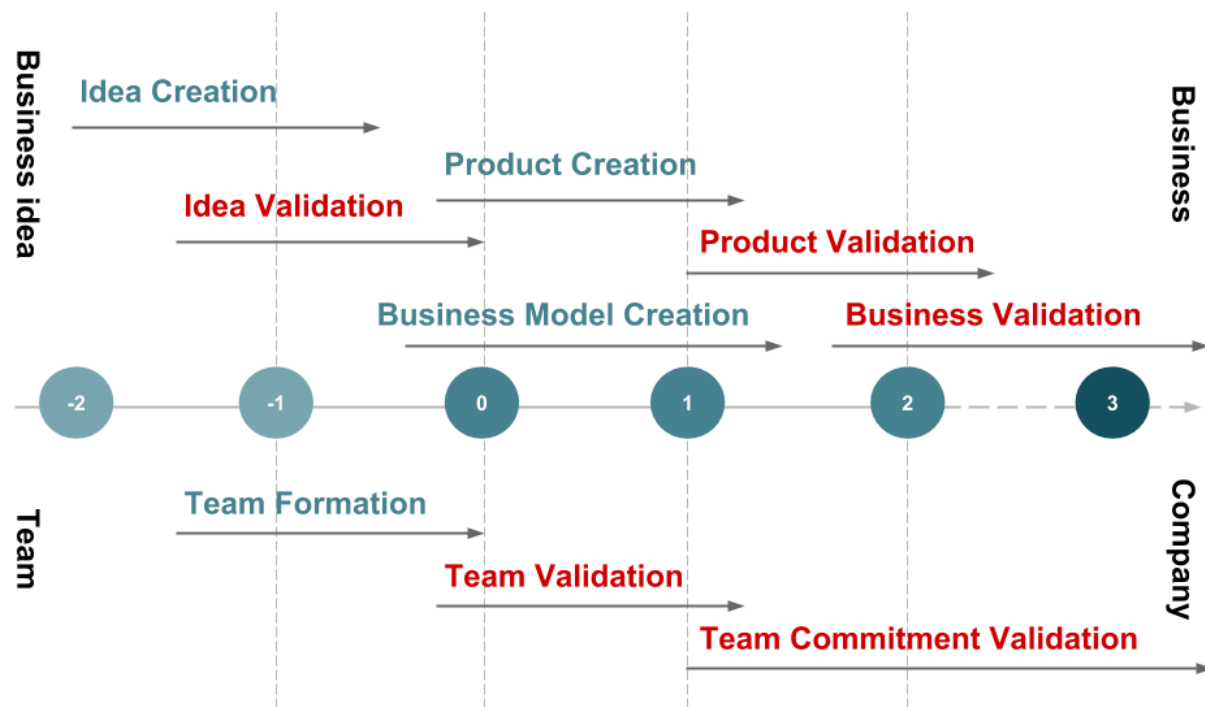


Figure 6: High level activities for development phases

Some of the types of services needed to support entrepreneurs to achieve these targets, that should be evenly available are:

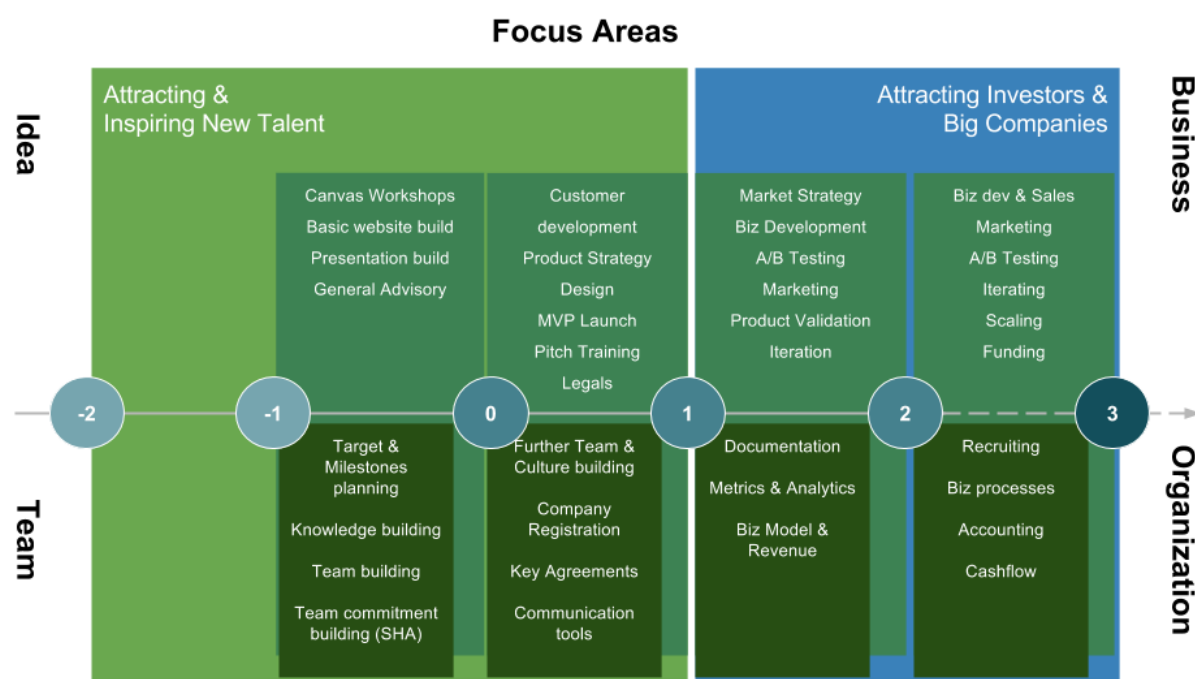


Figure 7: Types of services for development phases

Selected Key Findings

Communities in general, understand what their needs are better than any outside organization. Otherwise, it could have risk of not getting their own ideas brainstorming to happen if they just take on external recommendations or models directly to use, that could then potentially lower local commitment or in general would not be fit to local settings. Therefore, developing a startup ecosystem to build a flourishing startup ecosystem requires a substantial amount of feeling of belonging, engagement, empowerment and building of mutual mindset and understanding of local people and organizations with right knowledge, tools and resources.

Silos Reducing Effectiveness - There is a clear feeling about local startup supporting organizations are working in silos, causing people and organizations to miss the big picture. There is a mutual understanding that in order to affect real change, there is a need and desire to break the walls to connect services and work collaboratively with businesses, non-profits, and other government agencies but this is not happening in a real sense. What is important in such scenario is to seize the opportunity to start creating real operative process level connections across silos, improving communication level between organizations and ensuring that key actors are working efficiently toward the mutually agreed goals.

Overlapping services and service gaps - In many cases there are overlapping processes for different stages of the startups development. At the same time, there are gaps in some support needs areas, often regarding team and organization building support and connecting or navigating between services. By adding availability of these services in specific times of year or months, more caps and discontinuum arises.

4. Good Practice Initiatives and Activities

All iEER partners were asked to submit Good Practices of their startup and acceleration services according to several indicators. The iEER project has collected 15 Good Practices from nine regions in the theme of Startup and Accelerator Support for young entrepreneurs



Figure 8: Good practice activities and collected good practices

Examples of good practices, many examples have activities in many of the following categories

Startup Events

Slush, Helsinki-Uusimaa

- Two day startup and investor event organised annually
- Student driven, non-profit originally founded to change attitudes to entrepreneurship
- Facilitates investors and founders meeting

- In 2016 there were 2,336 startups, 1,146 investors, 5,643 investor-startup meetings and 610 journalists
- Strong emphasis in founder and investor meeting

Activating and Networking Activities/ Student Involvement

Hubhouse – Accompanying mission, Haut-de-France

- The Regional council in collaboration with Universities have created 7 Hubhouses
- Develop a strong entrepreneurial culture and ecosystem
- Hubs for all students and less 2 years graduated who want to develop or create a project.
- 34,477 Students sensitized, 312 students guided, 30 business creations

Development Structures for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

(Physical and virtual development communities)

STARTUPV – Valencia

- Promotes entrepreneurial culture among the university community
- Provides entrepreneurial training to students
- Free accessible mentorship programs
- Up to 50 annual promotion activities
- Main stakeholders include 5 public universities

Incubation and Pre-incubation Services and Programmes

(Pro-programme, Innovation Vouchers, Knowledge Transfer Partnership)

Antreprenor de Sezon (Seasonal Entrepreneur), West Region Romania

- Pre-incubation program provided participants with opportunity to test their ideas
- Antreprenor de Sezon" was developed to give students opportunity to try out entrepreneurship in a one month challenge
- 10 teams of students with 2 kind of backgrounds: entrepreneurial/economic and creative/artistic
- Main aim is to develop a product that can be sold

Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer (RCiTT), West Pomerania, Poland

- Activities are shared on the 2 options both pre-incubation and incubation
- Pre-incubation program is for everybody who wants to start a business
- Incubation program (1-2 years) provides help for young companies, which are developing their business
- Conducts counseling and training services for companies, researches, students and university graduates in the field of technology transfer, funding researches and development and supporting academic entrepreneurship
- Some of the services are free of charge

(Expert services, capital funding, crowdsourcing, specific cluster funding support, Business Alliance Fund etc.)

The New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme

- Ireland's national entrepreneurship programme
- Accelerate development of sustainable new businesses
- New Frontiers differs from privately-funded 'accelerator'

The following table includes all the presented **Good Practices**

GP	Region	Programme	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes
GP 1	Southern Denmark	Pro Project	Startup (0 - 2) : yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 2	Valencia	STARTUPV	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2) : yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 3	Haut-de-France	Hubhouse	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): maybe Growth (2-): no
GP 4	Haut-de-France	StarPartner	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): no
GP 5	West Region Romania	Antreprenor de Sezon (Seasonal Entrepreneur)	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): no Growth (2-): no
GP 6	West Region Romania	INCUBOXX	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): ? Startup (0 - 2):? Growth (2-):?
GP 7	Helsinki-Uusimaa	Slush	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 8	County Kerry	The New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 9	Brandenburg	Centre for Entrepreneurship and Transfer	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 10	Brandenburg	Zukunft Lausitz	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): no
GP 11	Brandenburg	Innovationszentrum Senftenberg	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): no Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 12	Brandenburg	EXIST	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): no Growth (2-): no

GP 13	West Pomerania	Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer (RCiITT) / Business pre-incubator	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): yes Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): maybe/no
GP 14	Northern Ireland	Innovation for Competitiveness Enterprises (ICE)	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): no Startup (0 - 2): yes Growth (2-): yes
GP 15	Northern Ireland	Innovation Alliance	Pre-startup (-2 - 0): ? Startup (0 - 2): ? Growth (2-): ?

Table 1: Summary of the TF area 2 good practices

All good practices are described in more detail in appendix 4 (All good practices table) and all entry forms of good practices in an another appendix 1 (TF2 Good practices)

5. Transferability and How-to Guide

Two point of views

1. Overall ecosystem development objectives

A holistic view of a startup ecosystem is needed to focus, from policy makers perspective, on different players and elements that are directly impacting in the overall performance of the ecosystem, identifying strengths and weaknesses, key roles, setting measurable objectives and actions to be achieved over time to communicate what’s happening in the ecosystem as the best marketing campaign to attract people, talent, investments, etc. and to benchmark activities with other comparable ecosystems.

Analytics and visualization of the information and data - to maintain and distribute up to date information to help new talent and startups to navigate and to offer all key stakeholders knowledge and information about opportunities, what’s happening, what is working and what needs or is being improved in their startup ecosystem.

1. Ecosystem service development

(Model presented in this chapter focuses transferring support service practices)

Definitions - When people in the ecosystem discuss, initially it is generally along the lines of mixed concepts such as general entrepreneurship, family businesses, micro companies, small & medium companies and tech startups, mainly in the context of entrepreneurial communities. To make real progress, each of these concepts demand different needs, require clear understanding of the stages through they are moving along the way and they require specific support and effective coordination among the different supporting players for each of these concepts as these entities are dynamic organizations by nature, being most likely to find connections among these concepts, to bring more focus on chosen concept of innovative startups and startup ecosystem.

Aim

1. The impact of the best practice areas on the region and its stakeholders
2. World class pre-incubation and incubation programs for startups (aiming at rapid growth and international success for young entrepreneurs) New jobs created by SMEs using structural funds and/or supported by accelerators in EU and regions
3. Working interlinked entrepreneurship support ecosystem among 10 regions and possibility to extent to other regions

Suggested model for transferring best practices

There are great benefits in sharing best practices for improving regional collaboration. However, some focus need to be taken on the question of “how?” to make sharing effectively and successfully.

Transferring Best Practises

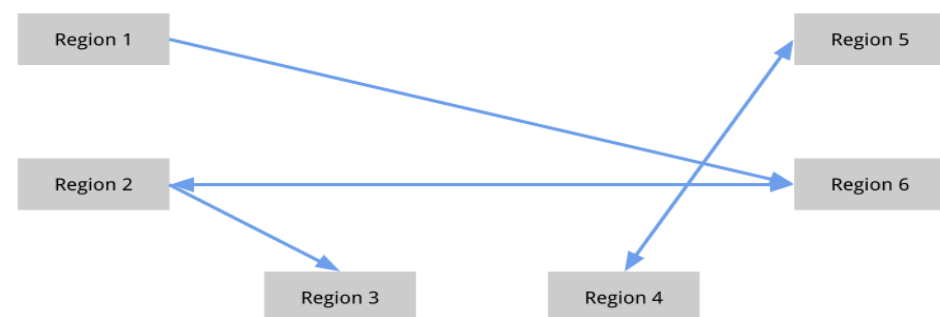


Figure 9: How to make sharing effective

Without documenting the sharable best practice concepts, in a way that really shows the concept to be transferrable, the actual sharing and implementing will be challenging. Also without having easily available information about available shared best practices, related contact persons, terms and other details, learning about available best practices becomes very limited and as such a lot of available sharing potential is lost.

Some learnings for creating effective model can be learned from how some business models are effectively franchised. Also, by learning how Open Source projects are coordinated, similar models could be utilized for sharing of best practices and using Creative Commons licensing for the rights of way the best practices can be used.

Suggested solution aims to tackle two main challenges; 1) documenting best practice concepts to make those transferrable and 2) creating a model for actual sharing.

1. By creating a commonly agreed centralized model for actual sharing and terms of use, will make it easier for all interested parties to share their own best practices, utilize best practices from others and to make or communicate results, changes and improvements they have made with the concept in their own use.

Model For Transferring Best Practises

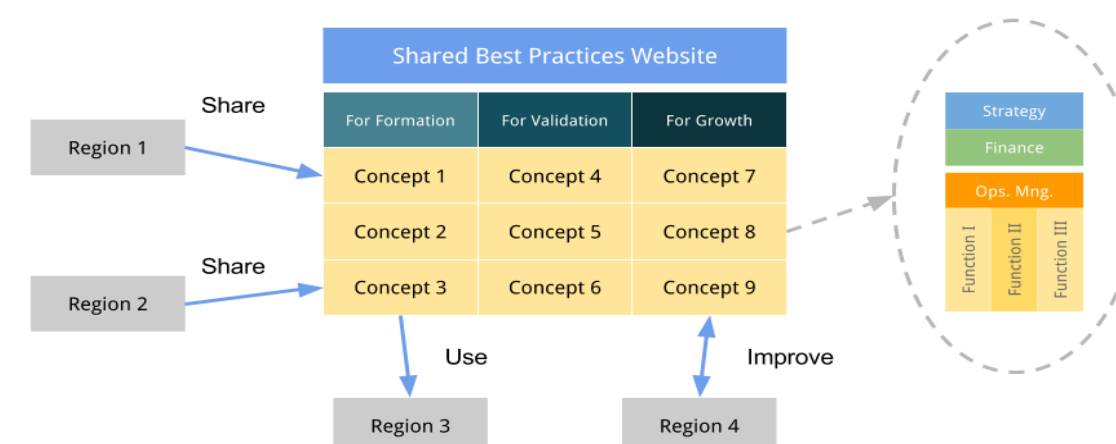


Figure 10: Suggested shared best practices website

By labeling the concepts logically, will make them easier to share and find per specific need.

- Focus area (Formation, Validation or Growth)
- Service Objective (from ecosystem development framework)
- Target Audience
- Type of service (one to one, one to many, many to many)
- Duration
- Target availability (always, daily, few times per week, weekly, few times per month, monthly, every few months, few times per year, yearly)
- Related Concepts
- Budget

2. By creating and using mutually developed and agreed documentation model, will help to make sure documentation takes into account all key elements of the concept from different related parties perspective and will make it easier for documenting all best practises in commonly agreed way. Documentation should be aimed to include “all things” for planning and operating, ie: finance, strategy, operative management and operative teams levels.

There is a risk of making adjustments based on outdated data, as startup world is very dynamic and things are changing all the time.

6. Case Studies

As young entrepreneurs are in the centre of this report were startup companies interviewed during Slush 2016. The interview structure included :

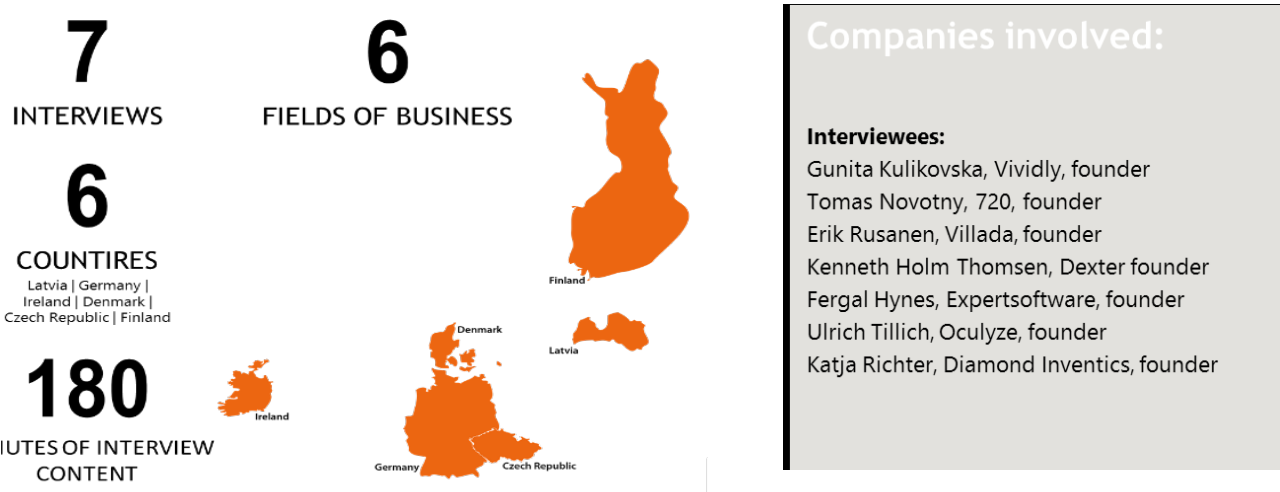


Figure 11: Summary of the interviews during Slush

The purpose for the conducted interview was to highlight the obstacles and challenges in start-up’s support services and to find possible solution to manage the whole process of starting a successful business from scratch.

YouTube links to all full-length video interview and summary of Slush 2016 and lunch video.	
Slush 2016	https://youtu.be/QNduSyf3yGQ
Lunch Video	https://youtu.be/O0kUedbQtQk
Gunita Kulikovski	https://youtu.be/uhYGPdFMYIc
Eerik Rusanen	https://youtu.be/L9oq5nqmAzW
Tomas Novotny	https://youtu.be/ctJlZK5MTH0
Dr. Ulrich Tillich	https://youtu.be/McAFY51ZHFc
Kenneth Madsen	https://youtu.be/I_U21uBGKuW
Katya Richter	https://youtu.be/UskDtRvvh0Q
Fergal Hynes	https://youtu.be/9a8qgsWfp8g

Table 2: Summary of the video interviews

The interviewed business founders have different backgrounds. Some of them still doing basic studies while the others have several years' research or working experience. The programs should be modified based participants' previous experience. The others have no experience how to write business proposals or then the others have huge amount knowledge how to run a project and what are the main turning points.

All interviewed had received some of the public or private support services. The given support has been mostly financial for the company use but as much as mentoring. The entrepreneurs see that the supporting instruments could be improved.

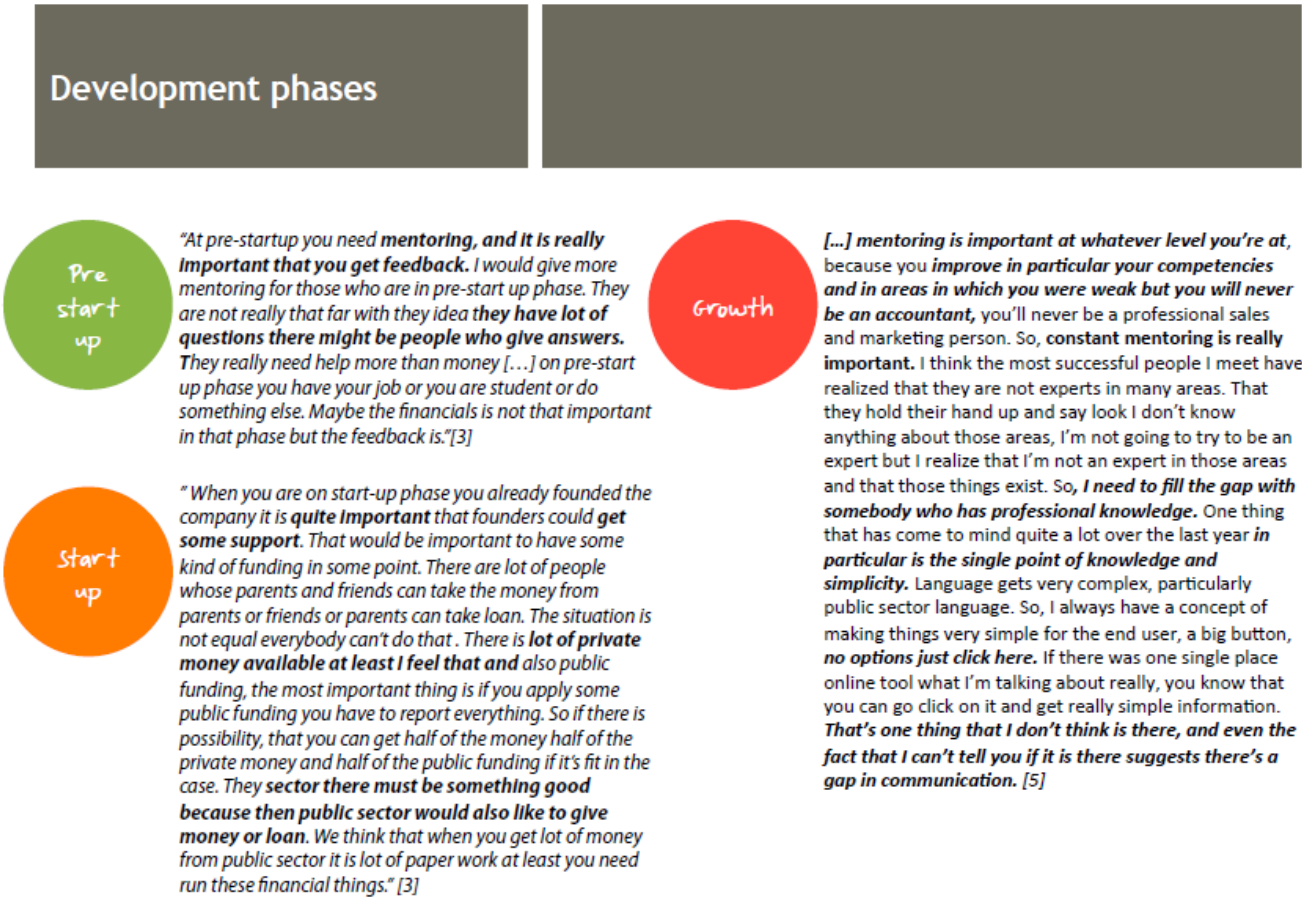


Figure 12: Feedback summary concerning development phases

The main points of interviews.

1. Creating **trust** in the eyes of supporter
2. Building up **credibility**
3. **Peer support**
4. Building up **capability** to make decisions
5. **Failing and learning**

Table 3: The key points of interviews

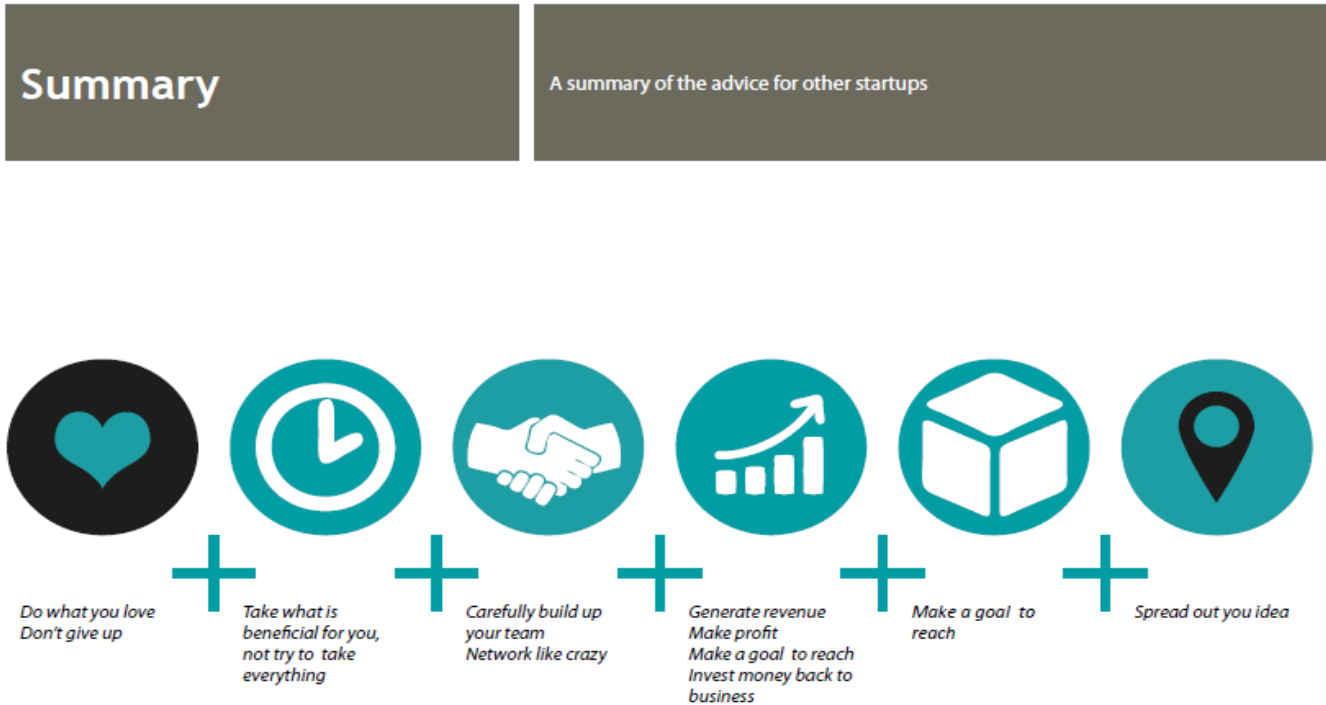


Figure 13: Summary of the advice for other startups

Startup Interviews also as an appendix, see appendix 2

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Appendix:

1. [SUMMARY OF THE IEER TF AREA 2 GOOD PRACTICES 2017- STARTUP AND ACCELERATOR SUPPORT](#)
2. [Young entrepreneurs: Laurea TF area 2 interviews](#)
3. [Startup & Accelerator EVENTS/ PROGRAMS @Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Summer 2017](#)
4. [All Good practices table for TF area 2 – Startup and accelerator support](#)
5. [TF2 example of support service documentation](#)
6. [Valencia Learning camp problems and demands for startup and accelerator support](#)

Link to
Appendix

Thematic Focus 3

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

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1. Objectives and Descriptions

Background

One of the key objectives of this Thematic Focus 3 Report is to analyse the various Good Practices that help peripheral and outlying areas with the challenges and opportunities that confront startups & young entrepreneurs.

The TF3 team asserts that it is key to demonstrate success or lack of success with key quantifiable and related, social, outcomes – therefore we identify projects that have delivered jobs and growth opportunities and which have been successful in promoting young entrepreneurial growth. Most of the Good Practices have been funded through or in the context of the EU Structural and Investment Funds programmes -some are illustrative of policies and strategies that bring together local, national and European policies in the outlying areas.

Criteria and Definitions

In collecting the Good Practices, we have applied a number of criteria and definitions:

- **Young Entrepreneurs** is considered to be projects that have involved people between the ages of 18 and 45.
- **Outlying areas** is considered to be rural, upland, mountainous, low population and peripheral areas that face challenges with regional infrastructure, supply chains and distance to markets etc. (as per the recent [CoR report](#));
- Good Practices that are indicative of a **multi-level governance partnership approach** with institutions at different levels.
- Important emphasis on a **bottom up approach** where stakeholders and beneficiaries have been closely involved in the design and implementation of Good Practices.

Typology of Good Practices

Four types of Good Practices have been identified by the iEER partnership, and these are colour coded in section 4 for ease of reference.

- Policies / projects that build up **entrepreneurial capacity** and provide opportunities through education and training in outlying areas.
- Policies / projects that support the process of **starting new business ventures**, including pre-startup advice and appraisal of the 'business idea' as well as assistance with the various aspects of setting up a new business in an outlying area.
- Policies / projects concerned with the **growth, improvement of competitiveness and viability of existing SMEs** in outlying areas through the provision of advice, easier access to finance and the reduction of administrative burden.
- Policies / projects concerned with providing **generic business advice, specialist services, clustering and infrastructural amenities** which are supportive of enterprise formation and development in outlying areas.

Summaries of Good practices by type – [SEE SECTION 4](#) and ANNEX I FOR GEO-GRAPHICAL NOTATION

i) Building Entrepreneurial Capacity in Outlying Regions

With **rural depopulation** being a significant issue for many rural and outlying regions across Europe there is an important role for public authorities to play in promoting the region to returnees. People that come from the region but who may have left earlier in their careers for opportunities in the major centres. The [Comeback Elbe-Elster](#) project is a good example of the need to address the challenges in attracting people to return and to provide them with the professional support following their

arrival. Projects like these are particularly beneficial in rural areas that are long way for major centres or universities. Providing access to consulting opportunities, providing shared working spaces and setting up networking opportunities for the new returnees are important also. The project demonstrates that whilst take up has been positive these types of project need to be multi agency driven and be developed from bottom up to avoid local resistance to the project's objectives in traditional communities.

The [Student Enterprise Programme](#) is a national initiative in Ireland to encourage **entrepreneurship** from an early age. The programme involves over 22,000 students every year who find out what it is really like to be their own boss and run their own business. [Local Enterprise Offices](#) like the one in County Kerry play an important role in promoting it across the outlying areas where young people in family and traditional businesses can be encouraged from an early age to consider the entrepreneurial opportunities that are open to them in their communities. The initiative has seen some remarkable success stories with high levels of innovation, ingenuity and clever sales pitches especially when students are taken out of their normal school environment to deal with external stakeholders who can help them progress their business idea. The Local Enterprise network provides significant support to teachers and students to get involved and is a particularly important activity at a time when young people are forming their own ideas about future career paths.

The [Back to Work Enterprise Allowance \(BTWEA\)](#) is an interesting example of a **bottom up multi-level governance approach**. It allows for long term unemployed to benefit from their social security/welfare benefits over a two-year period whilst pursuing a route to self-employment. In County Kerry, take up has been good (around 10% of the Irish take up) and many participants on the scheme note the importance of the scheme in providing a 'safety net' whilst they established their enterprise. The scheme seems to have worked better over the four-year cycle initially as opposed to the two years now available. A certain amount of training is needed to counter low educational attainment and low self-esteem among the long term unemployed. Part of that successful uptake can be put down to the South Kerry Development Partnership and its team of enterprise officers. Funded through ESIF and EAFRD (pillar 2), it is an experienced rural development organisation and has successfully

implemented numerous state & EU funded rural development programmes since its foundation in 1991. It combines an economic development role, creating sustainable jobs and attracting investment with community, cultural and social development activities and as an NGO is overseen by a voluntary board of directors consisting of 22 members representing four key pillars, The Community & Voluntary Sector, The Social Partners, Statutory Agencies and Local Government.

[South Denmark's Factory of the Future](#) is an initiative of the 4 municipal areas of [Southern Funen](#). The focus for the project is on changing mindsets in outlying areas. Southern Funen is an outlying area with low growth and limited access to knowledge, advice and relevant collaboration partners. The project aims to improve the growth conditions by attracting a cluster of creative entrepreneurs on Southern Funen from other parts of the country. Supported through the European Social Fund, the project's objectives are achieved through courses and coaching for selected entrepreneurs to improve their skills and changing mindset and provides networking activities, mentoring and building the partnership and commitment amongst the different municipal administrations to encourage collaboration rather than competition that reduces the effectiveness of the intervention. Overall, 46% of participants state the scheme has improved their growth potential. Successful communications and recruitment allied to the commitment of local government.

ii) Support for Starting New Business Ventures in Outlying Regions

Infrastructures are important in outlying rural areas. The [Gründerwerkstatt young companies' startup incubator](#) targets young people (age: 18 – 30 years old) where its key objectives are to **reduce unemployment** among young people and **reduce the outward migration** from the rural region towards urban areas. The incubator provides facilities, services and training free of charge to new entrepreneurs across the region and boasts an impressive survival rate for businesses that have gone through the startup process. In terms of achievements, from the 1112 participants overall, 622 startup companies were formed of which 76% are still in business displaying growth, increased recruitment and developing apprenticeships. High

demand for seminars through the web ('webinars') for the least mobile. Some of the challenges included the fact that whilst the services offered are free it is not widely appreciated and the system is sensitive to labour market fluctuations with funding being a crucial issue for startups. The project is supported by the main Ministries in the region and whilst grants are important to startups, so too are expertise of those involved to engender an **open dialogue, build trust and inspire self-confidence between trainers and startups**.

Building on traditional economic and rural strengths is an important factor and here ["Pacchetto Giovani 2016" - Regional Rural Development Plan -Marche Sub Measure 6.1: "support to startups of new farmers" \(EAFRD\)](#) is a good example of a programme seeking to **build and sustain the attractiveness, innovation and competitiveness of the region's rural sector**. To do these younger farmers are encouraged to invest (up to 41 years of age) and become entrepreneurs themselves by setting up a rural micro or small enterprises for the first time. The Rural Development programme (EAFRD) measure 6.1 since its launch has received 350 applications with 87 of those being accepted with an average grant of €40,000. Of the 87 a significant number have led to the creation of successful enterprises. Some of the issues encountered included the need to carefully gauge the correct amount to award and that it would have been more effective to have **one streamlined measure covering all the specific actions aimed at young entrepreneurs in the rural sector**.

iii) Promoting the Growth, Improvement of Competitiveness and Viability of Existing SMEs

Effective partnership between regional stakeholders in the field of enterprise and entrepreneurship is of vital value to the entrepreneurship ecosystem of any region breaking down silos, communicating the offer and showcasing success. Since its creation the [Kerry Month of Enterprise](#) has directly contributed to over 80 startups in 4 years. Attendance at the events have grown from 600 to 3,000. This is a good example of a **partnership** initiative that has found its place in the annual calendar in

Kerry with local partners acknowledging the need for and the benefits of collaboration between all stakeholders and the different levels.

Rural outlying regions face a number of challenges with an **ageing population** being an important one. Part of the challenge in outlying regions is the promotion of startups and growth of existing businesses and the **sustainability of businesses from one generation to the next**. In Northern Ireland, this has been an important consideration and the development of innovative approaches to ownership and management in family owned SMEs has been a key part of the [Success Through Succession \(STS\)](#) project. With succession challenges being an important cause of business failure beyond the first generation of ownership, this project has been innovative in developing a 'share and learn' approach in the Family Business Forum which took up these themes and crucially encourages different generations within a family business to discuss these issues in an informal setting that **builds trust and confidence between the different participants**. The project is notable for its **durability** in being private sector funded in the 4 years since the EU Interreg financing ended.

Rural businesses diversification in areas that build on a region's strengths are key. As part of the EAFRD Rural development programme in Northern Ireland, the [Down Rural Area Partnership \(DRAP\) MEASURE 3.2 BUSINESS CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT](#) (2009 – 2015) focused on the sectors that could best replace Agriculture as the economic drivers in the local economy. The initiative ranges from support for new micro-enterprises to helping existing businesses to grow and prosper. With over €900,000 from government and EU rural development programme sources and €1m in match funding, it has supported 39 projects and created 50 new jobs created in the area. Some of the challenges have included access to match funding and explaining the need for a clear and well supported audit trail.

Responding to the economic and financial crisis and its impact of rural business in outlying areas has been particularly important. In the Marche Region of Italy, the policy response involved the creation of jobs through ["Support to startup, growth and continuity of MSMEs located in productive crisis areas"](#) It is an **integrated financial instrument aimed at the revival of entrepreneurial activities and**

employment creation throughout the regional outlying areas affected by the economic and employment crisis. In its opening phase, it received 160 applications and the programme is due to be backed up in the near future with an additional European Social Fund (ESF) instrument to provide training and capacity building to entrepreneurs.

iv) Providing Generic Business Advice, Specialist Services, Clustering and Infrastructural Amenities in Outlying Regions

The [Castellon provincial plan for enhancing entrepreneurship initiatives \(CEDES centers\)](#) Valencia (ES) is about building economies of scale in the rural outlying areas. It aims to deliver resources and services that cannot be provided directly by small town councils in the (largely agricultural) inland areas of the province. The network focuses on providing advice and encouraging young entrepreneurs, helping people find jobs, creating companies and growing and consolidating businesses. So far over €600 000 has been committed funding the five CEDES centres which have been set up to house specialists in employment, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and new technologies who can help, advise and facilitate entrepreneurs that can build a new economic dynamic in the rural areas. One of the challenges has been communication and spreading the word about the availability, scope and location of the services in the rural area.

Supporting the creation and encouraging the attraction of technology oriented businesses is a challenge for the outlying areas where the economies of scale and access to knowledge industries and research partners are limited. This is of greater significance in the [ICBAN Cross Border Region](#) between the Republic and Ireland (IRL) and Northern Ireland (UK). In this case the [Innovation and Enterprise Programme \(IEP\)](#) has been important in building block in providing the additional capacity to help and support entrepreneurs through twin business workspace facilities in both sides of the border Omagh (Co. Tyrone) and Carrick-on-Shannon (Co. Leitrim). Its objectives

are to build upon these physical centres by providing business advisory services including specialist consultancy, mentoring and cross-border networking events.

The [Mid Ulster District Council economic development strategy](#) demonstrates the importance of ensuring that other agencies are bought in to the strategy and that ownership on the part of the local community is achieved. The strategy included a comprehensive set of actions to accelerate business growth, innovation and productivity focusing on Mid Ulster's SMEs. Overall, 43 new jobs have been created and it achieved an overall economic impact of over €4m representing a 40:1 ratio of return on investment.

The work of the Committee of the Regions

Of importance to this TF3 Report is a recent study that was published in 2016 by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) – [Entrepreneurship on islands and other peripheral regions](#). The study analyses the particular challenges faced by entrepreneurs and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) on islands and in other peripheral areas when starting up and running a business. It identifies and analyses good practices to foster resilience and to stimulate innovative and sustainable entrepreneurial development in these areas. Its **analysis** shows that many economies in peripheral regions suffer from *remoteness, low population density, small size and fragmentation of markets (including labour markets)*, and economic dependence on a few economic sectors and niches with less representation of manufacturing sectors. The report goes on to say that *“the predominance of small firms and the lack of large companies make these economies even more dependent on SMEs and entrepreneurial initiatives than in other regions.”* In its **recommendations**, the CoR study encourages national and regional authorities to develop:

place-based and **tailor-made strategies** with a focus on exploiting their comparative advantages, ensure good **coordination** with other policies, adopt **business models** built on quality, environmental values, distinctiveness, recognition of quality and/or

territorial labels and cultural references

support to **innovation** in service sectors (tourism, retail) as well as in agricultural and agro-food sectors

promote rural innovation **ecosystems and links** between farmers, fishermen and knowledge suppliers (universities, technology parks)

- Enhance **networks** of entrepreneurs, networks with business angels and venture capital investors, and networks of professional business services

For the European Union, the Study Encourages:

the development of **specific indicators** (at NUTS 3 or LAU-2 level) to make the territorial challenges of islands and peripheral areas more visible;

- support for **specific knowledge transfer** and management processes with regard to economic development on islands and peripheral areas and;
- specific support for **capacity-building measures** and travel grants for participation at events (knowledge exchange, networking)

Other Research

Significant work is being carried out by the [EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT \(ENRD\)](#) where there has been a focus on developing both the 'external' and 'internal' entrepreneurial environment as an important step towards creating a diverse range of entrepreneurial businesses. This applies in the field of digitisation, and the ENRD Thematic Group on Smart and Competitive Rural Businesses focuses on the need to improve both the external and internal environment of businesses:

- The **external environment** (i.e. factors that are somewhat beyond the direct control of local areas and businesses) implies improving the access to fast broadband, through developing the relevant infrastructure;
- The **internal environment** (that provide existing and potential entrepreneurs with

the skills and confidence required to take ideas forward) include among others the upgrading of digital and innovative skills of businesses.

The Thematic Group TF3 asserts that whilst setting up of fast broadband services is one challenge – noting that Northern Ireland has just received approximately £100 million from its national government (June 2017) to do this - 'research and understanding on the social and economic impact of broadband and ICT on the development of rural businesses and rural areas in general is much more limited'. Clearly learning can be applied in this issue across the regions which have outlying issues for their entrepreneurs.

The Study refers to an INTERREG EUROPE project called [ERUDITE](#) that recognises that setting up broadband infrastructure is just a starting point, and that more actions are needed to improve the understanding of the design, operation and impacts of services and socio-economic impacts of investment. There is a strong need to identify similar initiatives and better understand how rural businesses can most effectively use broadband infrastructure to generate economic and social added value.

In addition, in April 2017, the European Commission published a report setting out a reflection on 'villages of the future' and the need to bring different programmes together in order to build strategic approaches to promoting so called '[SMART VILLAGES](#)', including support for knowledge, investments and connectivity. Specific actions include exchange platforms, funding opportunities, capacity-building activities, events, thematic work, and research projects. The European Commission is currently considering a Smart Villages inter-service group that would work on developing a strategic approach to promoting the development of Smart Villages through EU funds in the medium to long term.

2. Critical/Successful Factors for Supporting Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

A. Some factors that inhibit entrepreneurial activity in support of young entrepreneurs in outlying areas

*Population factors are often one of the main challenges for the development of an entrepreneurial economy in the outlying areas. As demonstrated in the challenges that each of the Good practices is confronted with, the **ageing population** in rural areas is often exacerbated by the **outward migration** of young people in search of work and opportunities in the urban centres.*

Often the challenge for outlying areas is an issue of **changing mindsets**. The Good practices from South Denmark are seeking to tackle this particular aspect.

As a result, outlying regions are confronted a **lack of economies of scale and supply chain weaknesses** that make geographical location and access to markets a decisive factor in the competitiveness of any business. Their **remoteness and accessibility** to markets dictates the type of product or service sector that can successfully compete from these outlying regions.

The iEER Learning Camp 3 focused on the issues of **connectivity and infrastructure in rural areas** and which contribute to **technology and skills gaps**. Even in the regions where infrastructure investments are being made, the human dimension should not be overlooked. Through the programme and strategy Good Practices presented by Marche and Northern Ireland, TF3 asserts that policy makers could benefit from additional understanding of the social and economic impact of broadband and ICT on the development of rural businesses.

The particular challenge confronted by **cross border outlying regions** is also significant. Given their location it is the cross-border areas which are left on the

fringes of the national or regional economy and lack the key assets to make them attractive to **inward investors**. Often the challenges facing cross border areas are compounded by the lack of access to University and knowledge based networks, together with misunderstood or complex employment, welfare and legislative differences – even in a Single Market, for example differing interpretations and applications of welfare benefits and regional employment and pensions legislation.

Generally, through this report iEER partners Good Practices commonly and compellingly state the **lack of awareness** that the outlying rural population has for the services that organisations and projects are making available often for free.

TF3 Group therefore recommends that effective communication campaigns involving all levels of government and the relevant agencies tasked with the promotion of entrepreneurship should come together as is the case with the Kerry Month of Enterprise.

A number of the Good practices cite the **over dependence on particular economic sectors** (i.e. agriculture and tourism) and the need for effective multi diversification in the outlying areas. One of the challenges here is to reduce the plethora of different initiatives that seek to tackle entrepreneurship barriers, and develop effective integrated territorial strategies and economic regeneration plans that build on the strengths and natural capacities of the region and focus on the key sectors that priority should be given to if that mono dependence is to be widened.

To counter a number of the above challenges it is essential for policies and projects to build a **new economic dynamic in the rural areas**. This can be achieved by identifying the regions' local ecosystems, specific local assets, natural strengths and economic heritage. Understanding the climatic and environmental limits of the region (i.e. by how much tourism can grow without damaging the region's environment).

Often the question is not a binary one between growth and lifestyle businesses in outlying areas. The [STS project](#) highlights the demand that exists for planning succession and how it can be key to **sustaining and adapting business in outlying areas for future generations** and in ensuring that assets, expertise and employment

opportunities are passed from one generation to the next.

The key task of the Southern Denmark experience is to **change mindsets** (in the context of the [Factory of the Future](#) project) in traditional rural populations to become more open to new emerging sectors. **Rejuvenating rural populations** through investments in higher education facilities or outreach services that encourage young people to move to and live in the outlying area which will sustain and build up the skills of the local population. The County Kerry approach to entrepreneurship which focuses on generating and encouraging [young entrepreneurship](#) in schools is innovative particularly in regions where rural family business is the norm. It also supports the diversification of the employment base which has been overdependent on the public sector in the past. Finally, the possibility of encouraging returnees, as in the case of Brandenburg with the [Comeback Elbe project](#) by persuading emigrants to come back home through diaspora campaigns is an interesting way to bring important motivators, drivers and new wealth back into the outlying areas.

Strategies and policies should encourage and build upon the strengths of the outlying regions to diversify employment and provide new opportunities.

With smart specialisation, TF3 Group asserts: what about smart villages? – a recent policy initiative that has been launched by the European Commission. The complexity of these projects requires a multi sectoral and multi-level approach that has clear local ownership amongst the population if the initiative is to be a success.

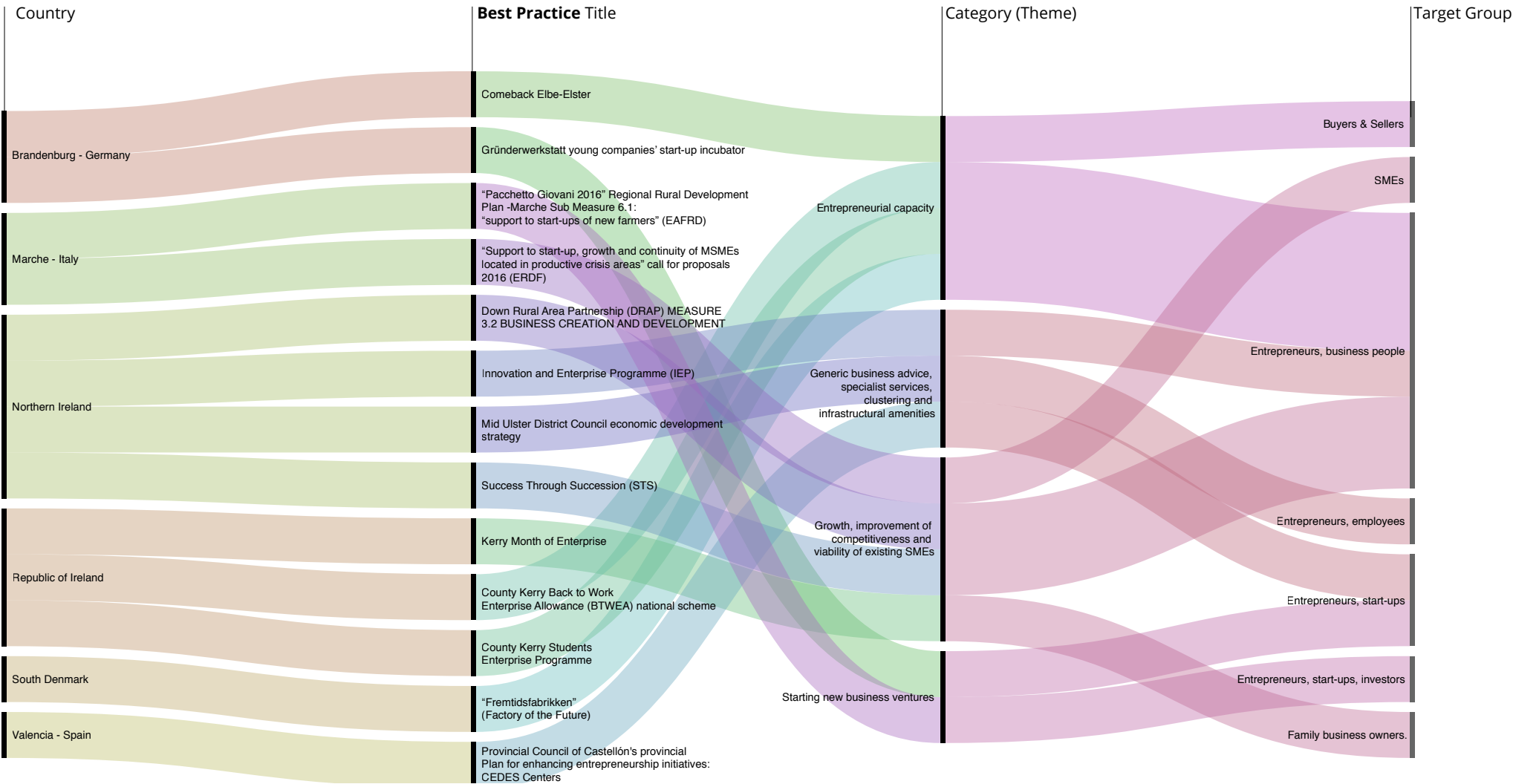
It is noticeable in a number of the Good Practices that an effective approach **to partnership, multi-level governance and multi sectoral working** are key elements in the design, delivery and achievement of results in outlying regions. Resources are finite and the **design and “bottom up” need for programmes and project ownership** – driven for example by local councils / municipalities which can act as municipal entrepreneurs - can be the difference between their success or fall. Longer-term success can be measured in terms of sustainability and durability and a number of the Good Practices have continued as privately funded initiatives beyond the lifetime of the original EU funding.

The Irish Central Border Area Network – [the ICBAN region](#) in IRL /NI - is an important example of how the [Innovation and Enterprise Programme \(IEP\)](#) is playing an important role in creating entrepreneurship opportunities in the cross-border areas. Part of this is about the availability of infrastructure in the cross-border areas but it is also about the skills and networks of people and the natural resources of the cross-border area. Vital to the success of any of our Good Practices is their communication to the wider public in the region and the maturity of the partnership between the partners involved. By communicating effectively throughout wider rural outlying areas, people will be made aware of opportunities and encouraged to come forward with their ideas, their skills and their needs.

3. Good Practice Initiatives and Activities

The Good Practices of Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas have been divided up into the following categories:

Awareness raising (1), Clusters (2), Education (2), Grant support (1), Incubation and facilitation (2), online platforms (4), SME support and advice (5).



Visualisation developed by the IT Tralee and NILGA for the iEER project. EER regions joint forces in boosting innovative entrepreneurial ecosystems supporting young entrepreneurs. Information valid as of 2017.



4. Transferability and How-to Guidelines – In summary

a) What works? What does not work?

Whilst success can be defined in a variety of ways, it is clear that successful projects can be defined in terms of their **engagement** and **outcomes** but also in terms of their **design** and **need**.

TF3 group asserts that projects that have recognised the needs of the area the design and delivery phase are often characterised by a bottom up or placed based approach to entrepreneurship- support activities that bring multiple agencies together in delivering on the ground. The connection between projects and national measures applied locally like unemployment benefits and job seekers allowances can be vital in giving new entrants the time and the space to adapt and reskill.

TF3 asserts that a key challenge facing outlying rural areas is often characterised by dependency on limited economic sectors such as agriculture and associated emigration. Communicating and making resources available to the rural population is a challenge and “Rural Proofing” – data and qualitative assessments of local rural economy and social cohesion needs all have to be locally assessed and new policies at regional, national and EU levels applied to militate against agricultural / tourism dependency and emigration.

In building or exploit capacity in outlying rural areas it is worth looking at a comparison of the processes. How ere the project designed? How does the local population get engaged in economic regeneration activities of the local authorities and municipalities? How does central government and its agencies work together? Structures like the Local Enterprise Offices in Ireland as Community Locally Led Development models might be structures that merit further investigation as they

bring the different strands of entrepreneurship together in the local territory. This can help with the match funding requirements of many of the different EU programmes and funds that touch upon entrepreneurship. Get it right and the long-term sustainability of projects can be assured financially a long time after EU or nation funding ends. The example of the Success through Succession project and the emergence of the Family Business Forum is a good example here having been funded for four years since the official end of that project.

b) What can be transferred to other regions?

Common to most of the projects is the sense that something needs to be brought in to replace failing traditional rural/ activities or businesses which by their nature do NOT create an entrepreneurial ethos to be established locally. In some cases, this means promoting education (which is often lacking) self-esteem among the unemployed or facilities such as incubator units or temporary desk or administrative facilities. In some cases, there is an overt need to seek these from outside, either from nearby regions or from among a diaspora that has scattered in search of better opportunities. Creating these opportunities locally is the key central theme. And that can sometimes expose failings or lack of experience amongst those upon whom the tasks of training, driving and encouraging entrepreneurship failure. Hence the regularly expressed need for all agencies to work in conjunction and maximise the potential they might have.

Most of the Good Practices received have elements within them in their design, partnership, focus and delivery that are transferable to the other regions.

Local conditions are important here. Strategic choices and priorities are important in outlying areas. All regions are different. They are characterised by different strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats and the mix of priorities for one region to raise levels of entrepreneurship might differ from another region.

Learning from the projects that are seeking to tackle the underlying causes of poor

entrepreneurship take up caused by an ageing rural population, retention of young people, changing traditional mindsets, attracting returnees are all excellent projects that could be tried and tested in the other partner regions.

c) What cannot be transferred to other regions?

There seems to be an opportunity in some regions to develop micro-small type enterprises. For example, the younger farmers in Marche represents a group who would appear to have benefited from enterprise development and entrepreneurial support. This approach has also worked in Kerry but appears to be a much harder task in other regions.

Outlying areas may be better suited to the development of particular types of entrepreneurial activity linked to the natural environment, services that build on cultural heritage and exploit niche markets linked with the location and physical environment of the outlying areas. Products requiring more distribution and transport could see these external costs being more expensive as a result of location, peripheralist and poor supply chain networks into larger markets.

Each of the partner regions has a different structure and system of multi-level governance that influences the competences and structure of local government and the agencies involved in entrepreneurship support activities locally.

Sector specific initiatives that might not be relevant in all territories.

d) What elements demand special attention? What needs to be further developed at practical and policy levels?

Education and the sense of entrepreneurial possibilities. Not just among the youth or unemployed but among older persons who might never have considered a different approach and, particularly among teachers and other potential trainers who have no real experience of enterprise or sense of the possibilities which exist. Also, a clear realisation of the genuine potential which may exist locally before importing expensive and possibly inappropriate solutions. This would imply some kind of local audit along the lines of the ERDF preliminary programming tool.

Coordination of the funds touching upon entrepreneurship in the local area especially in the context of initiatives such as the smart village or a territorial place based regeneration strategy where economic diversification and entrepreneurship measures are an important part.

Effective communication with the local population about the take up on opportunities. This seems to be one of the common issues to emerge in the Good Practices, Services and opportunities are being made available by the support stakeholders but the message is not getting out to the local population in the outlying area.

Understanding the socio-economic impact of broadband upgrades and investments on rural businesses. This is a one of the interesting challenges ahead. As many outlying regions are catching up with the quality of their next generation access (NGA) broadband networks there is a potential that it is a supply driven investment. More bottom up research is needed to understand if the businesses are able to take up opportunities offered by this access and how they identify and build new markets online. Given the generational gap that exists in relation to ICT, there is an important socio-economic issue to understand in relation to the impact of these technologies on rural business and the wider population of outlying areas. Often it is the soft measures to train and enable the population to take advantage of these services that is vital.

With the increasing importance of devolution and local empowerment, the role of territorial placed based strategies and structures that bring together different programmes to deliver projects locally.

5. Recommendations

For iEER Partners

There is a need to share more information in case studies about the base level engagement processes: the more effective these are the more likely there is to be a successful outcome.

To invite partners who have succeeded in achieving higher levels of engagement, take up from local entrepreneurs (including communications and outreach activities) to identify the critical success factors for the other partners where this has been a challenge.

That the rural development programmes in Valencia, Marche and Northern Ireland review further their case studies to see what specific benefits can be transferred to each of the partners that have submitted these good practices.

Place-based and tailor-made strategies with a focus on exploiting comparative advantages and promoting a more efficient use of existing natural, cultural and geographical assets should be encouraged.

For Regional and National Level Stakeholders

Policies to support SMEs and entrepreneurship development in outlying areas should take into account the specific, local, physical, social, technological and infrastructural evidence in each local ecosystem (for example, a town, a village, a district electoral area, a Super Output Area), drawn together dynamically by the municipality with and for the region – so as to sustain the micro economy and influence wider policy. ta requirements of these areas.

To identify how successful entrepreneurship development in outlying areas has to reconcile the constraints of traditional business models in the outlying areas and especially cross border areas.

That links between stakeholders and different policies in the multi-level government and geographical arena are key to success locally. Local authorities play a leading role in the development of their communities and have knowledge of the challenges their businesses and entrepreneurs face, so do their partner agencies, universities and associated Business Schools – local economic development partnerships which are successful usually adopt the vision – “Think Global – Act Local”.

For the European Union

Successful interventions need to build upon an effective multi-level partnership where both EU and national policies work together to target the key challenges of that have been identified and prioritised locally in outlying areas.

Different EU funds are present in outlying areas in pursuit of entrepreneurship support. Whilst the mainstream ERDF regional programmes play a vital role in funding these programmes so too do the EAFRD and the rural development programmes. The initiatives and thematic working groups under the [EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT \(ENRD\)](#) are doing some useful work especially in relation to initiatives like Broadband and smart villages. In addition, the opportunity to learn from similar regions through the European Union is underlined by programmes like INTERREG EUROPE.

APPENDIX and ANNEX

Link to
Appendix and Annex

Summary Recommendation

Entrepreneurship activity is vital to the economies and wellbeing of the EU's outlying regions and the necessary changes (which can materially be influenced by all of the thematic focus reports and the extremely productive and compelling iEER project overall, as part of EER), to EU, national and regional policies for intervention in and the fostering of an enhanced, dynamic culture of entrepreneurial ethos in such outlying areas in the period 2020-2027 must harness the experience and analysis drawn together by the 10 regions – including the crucial ability to analyse an outlying area of Europe which has the EER Award and which from 2020, will be a non-EU region (N. Ireland) bordering the EU (Ireland). Therefore, this overall project, and specifically our TF3 Report, have major policy and practice learning consequences, which we respectfully but earnestly suggest should be part of the dialogue within the Committee of the regions, initially to enable continuation of the partnership so well formed and so purposefully brought together in this instance, but, also, ultimately, to shape Entrepreneurial policy from a youth, peripheral and bottom up approach – from young citizen to support agency, to local municipality, to region, to nation and to wider European institutions.

Disclaimer

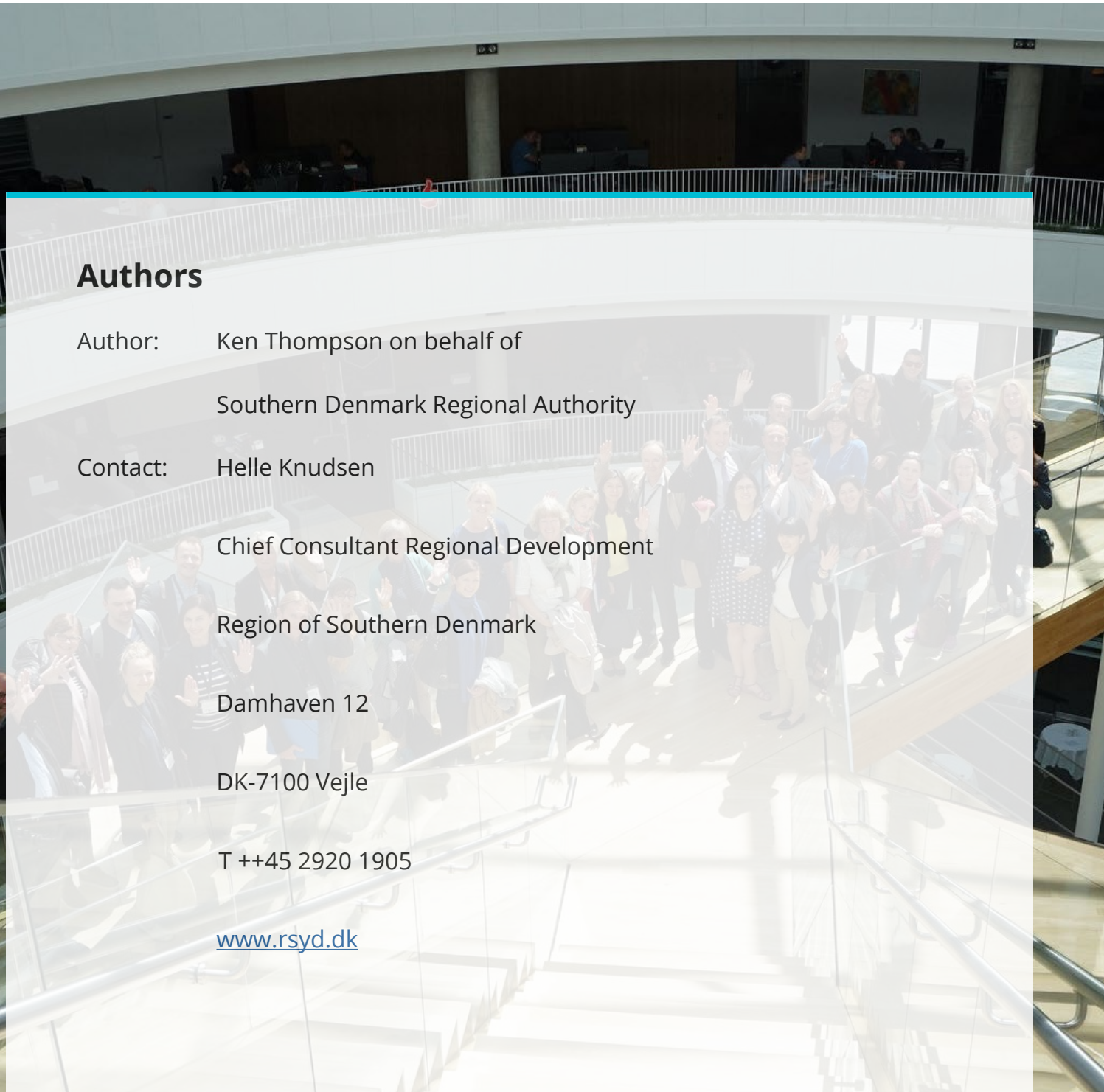
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Thematic Focus 4

RIS3 Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Findings based on the Smart Specialisation Survey - iEER Interreg Europe



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1. Introduction

This section contains a short summary of the findings based on the smart specialization survey conducted among the ten partner regions. The structure in the paper will be the same as in the presentation made by Associate Professor Mads Bruun Ingstrup at the learning camp in Odense, Denmark.

The findings are entirely based on an analysis of the survey data provided by each of the regions. The questions answered are as stated in the appendix 1-2 and the full data set is found in appendix 3 at the end of this paper.

2. Findings

Smart Specialization as a Concept

“Smart specialization is about the policy process to select and prioritize fields or areas where a cluster of activities should be developed. Regions need to focus on certain domains but being focused is not enough: they need to focus by developing distinctive and original areas of specialization (not by imitating each other)”
(Foray et al, 2013).

Smart specialization can be defined in different ways. It is therefore relevant to clarify the definition used as basis for the analysis:

Based on Foray’s definition, we are emphasizing the following key elements in our analysis:

- Non-neutral territorial policy
- Interactive process between policy and private sector
- Evolving priorities

A **smart specialization** strategy is therefore a **territorial strategy that prioritizes certain industries and clusters over others**. However, the prioritization changes over time.

Smart Specialization Strategy

Each region has been asked to state when they launched their *smart specialization* strategy. This can be seen here:

2007	Capital Region Berlin - Brandenburg*
2008	Region of Southern Denmark
2009	
2010	
2011	Region of Brandenburg
2012	
2013	Marche Regional Authority
2014	North France Innovation Development Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council
2015	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
2016	Regional Development Agency of the West Region Romania Institute of Technology Tralee Westpomeranian Region
2017	Regional Government of Valencia

* The joint innovation strategy of the two Federal States Berlin and Brandenburg (innoBB) was approved

Generally, two types of smart specialization strategies were discovered: a narrow type and a broad type. The main difference between the two types of strategies is to which extent they are focused on certain industries and clusters or not. Those regions having a narrow strategy have made a clear prioritization whereas those having a broad strategy focus more generally on the entire business environment.

Narrow strategy	Broad strategy
France	Spain
Denmark	Northern Ireland
Finland	Poland
Germany	Rumania
	Ireland
	Italy

The different strategies mentioned under each region contain a variation of goals. These goals can be either realized within a short timeframe, where as some of them has a longer timespan and can therefore be realized in the future.

The **goals** are as followed:

- Innovation
- Higher productivity
- Entrepreneurship (both startups and scale-ups)
- Labor market participation
- Investments

These goals are broadly the same for all regions, but it is unclear what the specific target is for each of the goals. The means to reach the target is therefore unclear in most of the smart specialization strategies.

Based on the findings in the analysis, initiatives related to smart specialization are **mostly funded through EU and regional funds**, whereas private funding's are missing out. So the majority of the business development initiatives are supported by regional governments but the links to local and national governments are unclear.

Implementation

To implement the smart specialization strategies the regions dependent on many of the same financial elements such as loans and grants as well as incubators. Furthermore it is important to have an infrastructure which supports and enables transactions in and across regions. Generally, for example business angels and knowledge networks can be important for regions, when implementing a smart specialization strategy.

Some of the problems about the regions' smart specialization strategies are that they **all stress the importance of universities, but only very few of the regions have incorporated the universities into their strategies**. Across the regions, the role of universities is rather unclear because it seems that the research and education activities have not been adopted to the smart specialization strategy.

Furthermore, how to transfer knowledge and best practice have not been formula-rized in most of the regions, which is a problem for the ongoing learning in and between the regions.

Generally there is a great focus on Triple Helix but the division of labor between the actors is unclear.

3. Impact

The smart specialization strategies affect different areas within the regions. The main parameters are: high growth firms, youth entrepreneurship, innovation, economic growth, job creation, and internationalization. However, no explicit focus on intrapreneurship. In continuation of the analysis, a number of similarities and differences between the regions can be found. Some examples of this are:

High growth firms

- Scale-ups
- Database with firms in order to customize initiatives
- Services regarding internationalization and innovation management

Youth entrepreneurship

- Through universities and related incubators
- Entrepreneurship competitions

Job creation

- Demonstrate job creation perspectives when applying for funding

Intrapreneurship

- Not target

Economic growth

- New products and services
- Demonstrate growth perspectives when applying for funding
- Firm growth
- Firm internationalization

Innovation

- Requirements when applying for funding
- Loans and grants
- Training
- Technology centers

Internationalization

- Show internationalization perspectives when applying for funding
- Help firms to find investment opportunities

4. Experiences and Transferability

What works? What does not work

- Using external funds to strengthen the implementation of strategies.*
 - To support the implementation of the relevant 3S initiatives all regions rely on the support of external funding. This is to a large extent provided via various EU funding programs, which mostly are administrated by regional government or development institutions. To further strengthen this, regions should look towards strengthening the ties with national and also local government initiatives.
 - EU funding is a strong tool to foster and promote the set-up and development of regional strategies. Especially when linked to regional strengths and competences.
- Triple Helix effect lacks efficiency*
 - The role and interaction between industry, government and academia is not clearly defined. The role of academia can be strengthened and actively incorporated in the Smart Specialisation Strategy.
 - Transfer of knowledge and learning loop can be improved to harvest the full potential of the 3S focus. Important to apply feedback loop to accumulate learnings and to fully understand to what extent the involved partners contribute to the outcome.
- Focused strategy pays off*
 - Having a narrow focused strategy and aiming at key areas of industry offers the opportunity to target investments and policies jointly, hence having the opportunity to leverage this into a Triple Helix set-up and support it via regional investment.
- Intrapreneurship can be strengthened*
 - No specific initiatives with particularly focus on intrapreneurship is in place. This can be strengthened.

What can be transferred to other regions

e. Focus

- i. Based on experience, it is recommended that regions have a narrow focus on what industries to focus on in a 3S approach. To fully harvest the benefits from 3S, focus and resources must be directed to few clusters, where there are growth potential and strong ties to industry and academy present.
- ii. Political focus must be maintained over time to secure continuous development and growth. Policies are not only to create the initial spark, but must be aligned continuously over time and adjusted to secure the wanted effect. It is imperative to see regional policies as a partner over time and not only in the form of kickstarting the process.

f. EU funding as tool for development and implementation

- i. EU funding can be utilized as an integral part of the strategy. Via the funding opportunities strategies can be implemented at a scale that will bring new business development within the clusters.

g. Building on regional competences

- i. The outset must be on pre-existing resources and competences that are available in the region already. These can be strengthened via regional policies and collaboration in a narrow 3S initiative. To be successful and achieve the intended results regions must look to existing competences and build on those in their efforts to create growth.

h. Strategy and effect

- i. The learnings from Southern Denmark on what the longitudinal focus can bring, highlights the importance of applying a long term focus for the regional strategy work in regard to having the intended effects of the strategy work and inherent policies.

What can't be transferred to other regions

i. Industry structure

- i. The actual pattern of industry and academia varies from region to region and the collaborative set-up must follow this region specific set-up. There is no universal formula for the development and implementation of 3S, but instead regions must base their efforts on own strengths and opportunities.

What elements demand special attention? What needs to be further developed at practical and policy level?

j. Academia involvement

- i. The involvement of academia must be more coherent. Policy makers should pay attention to how academia can be incorporated in the strategies and especially the implementation and cooperation with industry. There is an evident lack of clear involvement from academia, both in the development of policies and the practical application. Policymakers and academia could look for further alignment of focus areas for mutual benefit.

5. Conclusion

What we can conclude from the survey is as follows:

- Not all of the strategies follow the key principles and definition of smart specialization.
- The implementation initiatives are very similar across the regions.
- The links to local and national government levels are not transparent.
- Transfer of knowledge and best practice are not formalized.
- Difficult to see which of the implementation initiatives and associated actors that are related to the achievement of which goals.
- It is clear which outcomes the regions are targeting but the degree of improvement that they wish to aim for is rather unclear.

Observations and Experiences

Based on the findings, observations and experiences, the following points are relevant for the further development of smart specialization strategies:

- Focus on a few areas rather than many. Be specific and aim at improving a few key areas rather than focusing on multiple areas.
- Be clear why you as a region have target specific industries and clusters.
- Enforce firms to take responsibility in the formulation and implementation of smart specialization strategies.
- Clarify the role of universities. Universities can be helpful in numerous ways, but it is important to clarify the specific role they should play.
- Strong political commitment is important for the long-term development and implementation of smart specialization strategies.

Appendix 1

Smart Specialization Questions

Name and region

- Please fill in your full name, and your Region

Initiatives

Business development strategies

- What are the main building blocks in your past, current or proposed business development strategy in your region?
- What would you like to achieve with your current business development strategy?
- Does your region have a codified smart specialization strategy? (yes/no) If yes: in which year was it implemented?
- Based on your current business development strategy – What initiatives are currently available in your region?

Support Structure

Access to Finance

- How are the business development initiatives financed?

Policies and Framework

- How are these business development initiatives supported politically?

Culture

- To which extent have these business development initiatives fostered increased awareness regarding the necessity and importance of entrepreneurship? Please elaborate.

Technology

- How is technological best practice shared and transferred through these business development initiatives?

Institutions

- How do regional research and educational institutions support the business development initiatives?

Structural Funds

- How do structural funds effect these business development initiatives?

Networks

- Who are the main actors in regard to the business development initiatives?

Process and Methodology

Innovation

- What are the specific factors that foster innovation in these business development initiatives?

Communication and Promotion

- How are the business development initiatives communicated and promoted?

Skills

- What types of work-related skills are particular requested in regard to the business development initiatives?
- To which extend are these work-related skills available in your region?

Business infrastructure

- What type of business infrastructure is in place as to implement the business development initiatives?

Impact

High Growth

- How do the business development initiatives target, create or assist high growth companies?

Youth Entrepreneurship

- What is the impact of the business development initiatives on youth entrepreneurship?

Intrapreneurship

- How is intrapreneurship targeted, created or assisted through the business development initiatives?

Innovation

- How is innovation targeted, created or assisted through the business development initiatives?

Economic growth

- How is economic growth targeted, created or assisted through the business development initiatives?

Job creation

- How is job creation targeted, created or assisted through the business development initiatives?

Globalization

- To which extend do these business development initiatives support the internationalization of firms and how?

Learning Points

To do

- Based on your experiences – what would you recommend other regions wanting to implement a smart specialization strategy to do?

Not to do

- Based on your experiences - what would you recommend other regions wanting to implement a smart specialization strategy NOT to do?

Appendix 2

Good Practice Template

1. General information	
Title of the practice	
Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project	

In case 'yes' is selected, the following sections appear:

Please select the project acronym	
-----------------------------------	--

Specific objective		
Main institution involved		
Location of the practice	Country	
	NUTS 1	
	NUTS 2	
	NUTS 3	

2. Detailed description	
Detailed information on the practice	<p>[1500 characters] Please provide information on the practice itself.</p> <p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">What is the problem addressed and the context which triggered the introduction of the practice?How does the practice reach its objectives and how it is implemented?Who are the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the practice?
Resources needed	<p>[300 characters] Please specify the amount of funding/financial resources used and/or the human resources required to set up and to run the practice.</p>
Timescale (start/end date)	

Evidence of success (results achieved)	<p>[500 characters] Why is this practice considered as good? Please provide factual evidence that demonstrates its success or failure (e.g. measurable outputs/results).</p>
Difficulties encountered/ lessons learned	<p>[300 characters] Please specify any difficulties encountered/lessons learned during the implementation of the practice.</p>
Potential for learning or transfer	<p>[1000 characters] Please explain why you consider this practice (or some aspects of this practice) as being potentially interesting for other regions to learn from. This can be done e.g. through information on key success factors for a transfer or on, factors that can hamper a transfer. Information on transfer(s) that already took place can also be provided (if possible, specify the country, the region – NUTS 2 – and organisation to which the practice was transferred)</p> <p>[Technical: A good practice be edited throughout a project life time (e.g. to add information on the transfers that have occurred)]</p>
Further information	
Contact details	<p>[Technical: the contact details will be visible only to "Policy Learning Platforms registered members"]</p>
Name	
Organisation	
Email	
Expert opinion	<p>[500 characters] [Technical: to be filled in by the Policy Learning Platforms experts]</p>

iEER additional questions to be answered:

Is this best practice supported by EU structural funds? If not, how can it be relevant for the structural funding authority?	
Is there any cost to participants in engaging with this good practice?	
How are participants/users selected for this best practice? Please outline any criteria that is required.	
Please outline how this good practice is marketed in your region and how it reaches the end-user (please include links if available)	
What is new and/or innovative about this good practice?	
How has this good practice boosted young entrepreneurship and supported business creation in your region?	
Can you please outline “what not to do or things to avoid” in relation to this good practice from experience and learning in providing this good practice in your region?	

Appendix 3

Use the button below to view this external resource as it is too large for the handbook.

Link to
**Smart Specialisations and
Good Practices**
report

Best Practices

This section shows 20 of the most outstanding best practices recommended by the Thematic Focus experts

Aula Emprende

Training teachers in the education of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes to promote and transfer entrepreneurship to students. Teacher coaching programs include; motivation, creativity, organization, finance, from idea to reality, and creation of project idea with groups of students coordinated by the teacher or the researcher. The Motivem Awards reward the top ten teams with a capital injection.



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Contamination Lab

Encourage the emergence of radical innovation projects by students and researchers. Promote diversity of profiles in teams. Specific area with 4 zones (work, training, accommodation, relaxation) within the main university campus and a specific program open to all academic levels oriented towards the promotion of entrepreneurial attitudes and innovation. CLab also has a monitoring guide.



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Entrepreneurship Societies and their Grassroots Activities

Focusing on youth-oriented idea development and the encouragement of the follow-through on ideas. Activating Student Entrepreneurship and Developing the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and mind-set. Volunteer organization within universities that organize events, networking and participate in the deployment of entrepreneurial operations in HEIs. The focus is on inspiration, idea generation and entrepreneurial activation.



LAUREAES

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Pépité

The four-spoked wheel of enterprise aims to increase young entrepreneurship in France, as well as the country as a whole. The targeted areas are; the national status of the student-entrepreneur, the Diploma of the Student Entrepreneur, the creation of more Pepites in more areas, and the Prix Tremplin.



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Student Companies

Promoting entrepreneurial spirit and skills in schools. Creation of enterprises by students in the classroom or in clubs (after school) and training of secondary school teachers to integrate entrepreneurial education activities into their classroom (School with entrepreneurial mindset).



kobra.net
Beratung . Bildung . Brandenburg

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Image source: © Kobra.net

Seasonal Entrepreneur

For students that choose self-employment, rather than joining the workforce, there is Antreprenor de Sezon (Seasonal Entrepreneur). A youth enterprise competition that sees ten student teams compete against one another over the course of a month. The initial €100 investment into their company is expected to be returned, all other profits are kept by the students, as well the prizes they can win.



antreprenor|
de sezon

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HubHouse

Develop a strong entrepreneurial culture to convince young people of the positive aspects of entrepreneurship. Hubhouses are hubs and working spaces for all students and graduates of less than two years to carry out their enterprise projects. They set a support pathway to entrepreneurship: individual coaching, workshops and training, networking, events.



HUBHOUSE
Oser - Imaginer - Entreprendre

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New Frontiers Programme

New Frontiers is Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme that is funded and managed by Enterprise Ireland (EI). Its primary purpose is to accelerate the development of sustainable new businesses which have strong employment and growth potential and contribute to job creation and economic activity in regional locations. Financial aid of up to €15,000 in funding is offered with no equity taken from the business along with training, mentoring and office space



NEW FRONTIERS
entrepreneur development
an Enterprise Ireland programme

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Slush

A world leading enterprise event, created with the goal of creating a dialogue between the 20,000+ attendees. Enterprise has never been a more viable option than today, and it has never been easier than with Slush's startup community. With 1,336 entrepreneurs, 1,146 investors, and the countless mentors happily offering their expertise.



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STARTUPV

Through training, mentoring, and the facilitation of enterprise tools, students/recent graduates can create their own high-growth firms. Once the teams conceived of UPV members, they can enter the different, tailored entrepreneurial project spaces. The next step is entry into the STARTUPV hub, and finally the production of rapid growth, high returns businesses



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Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer

The RCIITT – Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer is a regional pre-incubation hub. It offers workstations, open space, furniture, laptops, printers, training, professional advice, project evaluation and development. Their aim is to encourage enterprise by making it easy through education and an assisted setup process for start-ups and entrepreneurs.



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Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)

The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) scheme encourages recipients of certain social welfare payments to become entrepreneurs by allowing them to keep a percentage of their social welfare payment up to two years. In addition to income support, the entrepreneur is subsidised to help with the costs of setting up their business all this provided through the Enterprise Support Grant (ESG).



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CEDES Centers

Strengthen and coordinate current municipal programs, aiming to create wealth and employment, as well as the cohesion and promotion of development opportunities in the interior areas. The services provided by the CEDES are included in the Provincial Strategy for increased employment, entrepreneurship and economic growth that provide support and training services to groups involved in the economic development of an area: unemployed people, entrepreneurs and inland SMEs.

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TF3

Factory of The Future

The project aims at improving the growth conditions of creative entrepreneurs in Southern Funen; and, as a consequence, attracting creative entrepreneurs from other geographical areas of the country. This local incubator offers courses and coaching for selected entrepreneurs, improving their skills and mindset. In addition, the project provides network activities, mentoring, and courses for municipal administration and business advisers.

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TF3

Success Through Succession

Success Through Succession aims to build capacity within SMEs to increase, enhance and sustain regional economic development. As well as establishing regional succession planning hubs providing cross-border expertise, training, an in-house mentoring to support newly formed governance structures and businesses and to contribute to a dynamic economy through the innovative improvements in ownership.

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MEDIA



TF3

Young Companies

Reduce youth unemployment by focusing their efforts to make rural regions more viable to young people. This startup incubator hopes to stem the migration from rural areas to urban centres by offering a support hub and growth space to young entrepreneurs. Services include mentoring and teaching as well as fully equipped workspaces with good infrastructure.

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TF3

DIGITAL HEALTH VENTURE FORUM

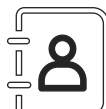
Foster innovative entrepreneurship promotes Valencia as an attractive region. Forty of the best Spanish and European early-stage companies are selected to be present at the Forum by the investors of the Selection Committee. After the pitching sessions, a networking lunch, One2One meetings are organized for the companies, the investors and the partners, to encourage cohesion.



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PATENTS AND KNOWLEDGE BANK PROGRAMME

The Patent Bank consists of a website and sets of activities to attract SMEs. The webpage was launched as a platform to integrate any patent, development, capacity or research likely to be adopted by any company in its search for innovative tools that can help to improve its productivity and increase competitiveness.



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Scale Up Denmark

The Scale-up Denmark initiative is an accelerator program that targets the most promising national and international entrepreneurs within the business areas of the five regions smart specialisation strategies. The program consists of intensive development courses, professional discussions, mentoring, participation in relevant courses and workshops and access to expert knowledge and venture capital.

SCALE-UP DENMARK

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MEDIA

VALENCIAN ENTREPRENEUR COUNCIL

This organism gathers all economic and innovation stakeholders involved in driving the regional Entrepreneurship Strategy. The actions fostered have been: Vision of the different types of entrepreneurship envisaged and set up of working groups (2015), decision to build an action plan until 2020 towards an innovative, diversified and efficient entrepreneurship ecosystem and implementation of first strategic actions (2017).



GENERALITAT VALENCIANA

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Regional Profiles

A short summary on the ten partner regions
TIP: Use quicklinks below to go directly to a region

[Helsinki - Uusimaa](#)

[Hauts-De-France](#)

[West Pomerania](#)

[Northern Ireland](#)

[West Region Romania](#)

[Southern Denmark](#)

[Brandenburg](#)

[Valencia](#)

[Marche Region](#)

[County Kerry](#)

Introduction

Helsinki Uusimaa Summary

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is strategically situated by the Baltic Sea in the southern coast of Finland, close to the growing markets of Russia and Baltic countries. The Region has developed into a knowledge and innovation hub partly due to investments in research and development and the considerable number of people employed in ICT field. Its education system has performed well in PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment in the OECD) stating its excellent quality. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region was awarded the EER label in 2012.

2012
EER AWARD
YEAR

Socio-Economic Profile

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region includes Greater Helsinki, the only large metropolitan area of Finland. Its land area (9,440 km², represents only 3% of the total Finnish territory and, in contrast, its population (1.6 million) stands at 30% of the total country's population (density of 180/km². In 2016, 15,700 people moved to the Helsinki Region from abroad while another 9,700 left the region to move abroad. In total, over 11.5% of the population are of foreign background. The average age is 40 years old. Over two-thirds of the population (66.4%) are in the age cohort (15-64), and almost 17% are 65 years and older.

The region is the economic engine of Finland, relying on an extremely versatile industrial structure, a dynamic business landscape, highly-skilled workers, and a high-quality research and education environment. The region accounts for 34% of all jobs in Finland. As an international investment destination Helsinki Region is recognised as the **best medium-sized region in Europe***. The main

industry and economic activity centres are: Wholesale, Health and Social Services, Occupational Scientific and technical activity, Technology industry, Administrative and support services and Construction.

The Region is home to over 100,000 companies, employing over 500,000. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region has developed into a knowledge and innovation hub, partly due to investments in research and development and a considerable number of people employed in ICT field.

Its education system has performed well in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment in the OECD) stating its excellent quality. There are 12 HEIs: 6 Universities (University of Helsinki and Aalto University among others) and 6 universities of applied sciences. Furthermore, public research institutions are centrally located in Uusimaa.

The Region is well connected on national and local levels, and also to neighbouring countries (Estonia, Sweden, Norway and Russia); it has an international airport, four international ports and versatile transport system due to long-term planning (20-30 years).

1,600,000

Helsinki Uusimaa's Population (As of 2017)

*According to FDI Magazine 2018/19 [here](#)

Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

Almost each university and university of applied Sciences in the region has an entrepreneurship society. The biggest is the [Aalto Entrepreneurship Society](#). Entrepreneurship Society is a mentoring activity, aimed at the student community and welcomes experienced serial-entrepreneurs as mentors and coaches. This fully volunteer-based association operates close to the university entrepreneurship education and provides activities such as startup traineeship programs, incubation programs, conferences, pitching events and even provision of venture capital funding.

Startup and Acceleration Support

The importance of startups and entrepreneurship in the Helsinki Region is also reflected by the organization of [Slush](#) - the largest and leading startup and investor conference in Northern Europe and Russia. Slush is organized yearly by [Startup Sauna](#), the Helsinki-based seed accelerator, founded and run by students, and which has been recognised as the top young university accelerator in the world by UBI Index. In 2016, Slush was attended by over 2,300 startups, 1,100 venture capitalists and 600 journalists from over 120 countries.

[Helsinki Growth Alliance \(HGA\)](#), The Helsinki Growth Alliance offered services to startups and entrepreneurs in the Greater Helsinki area, to develop business ideas into growth companies. Together with HGA partners, HGA organised regular training courses, workshops, events and other activities to support startups and individuals progress with their business.

the iEER, Uusimaa seeks good practices from other regions to better develop pathways or support for young entrepreneurs in the outlying areas of Uusimaa.



RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region has a codified Smart Specialisation Strategy that was implemented in 2014. The initiatives currently available in the region are [Smart and Clean Foundation](#), [Health Capital Helsinki](#), Maria01, [Turbiini Start-up Hub](#), [Helsinki Business Hub](#), [Upgraded](#), Start-up Sauna, [Helsinki Think Company](#) and Helsinki Growth Alliance (Polku). Several funding instruments (regional/national funding, cities' own funding and ERDF) have been utilized to finance these initiatives. In the new regional development programme for the Helsinki region. **Vitality from start-ups and SMEs** is one of the twelve objectives for 2018-2021

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

The main actors supporting entrepreneurs and business development in the outlying areas of Uusimaa have been the development companies for example such as [Keuke](#) for the central Uusimaa and [Novago](#) for the Western Uusimaa, [Posintra](#) for the Eastern Uusimaa, HEI campuses and the [Chambers of Commerce](#). In the context of



source : <http://www.slush.org/>

Policy Framework supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

At the national level start-up support activities especially funding are mainly lead by [Business Finland](#) - a fresh organisation, formed through the merger of Tekes (the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation) and Finpro (the Finnish trade promotion organization). Business Finland offers Finnish companies services for innovation activities, internationalization, investments and tourism promotion.

At the beginning of 2018 A new type of [residence permit](#) will be introduced for growth or startup entrepreneurs. At the regional level, public business support is implemented by the [ELY Centres](#) (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment). Regional development policies supporting SMEs are implemented by the [regional councils](#). At the local and municipal level, cities and municipalities have taken an increasingly-important role and in offering many advanced services for start-ups and entrepreneurs for example [NewCo](#) by City of Helsinki offers wide range of services. Science parks, business incubators and technology centres are the major actors supporting business creation and development.



Besides public service providers there are other organisations like [FiBAN](#) a Finnish, national, non-profit association of private investors that aims to improve the possibilities for private persons to invest in unlisted potential growth companies and [Kasvu Open](#) which is a project for sparring eager to grow companies with growth experts in Finland.

The merger of three universities into one multidisciplinary science and art institution called [Aalto University](#) has also had positive impact behind the rapid development of Finnish start-up culture.

Maria01 - The Nordic's Leading Startup Community

[Maria 01](#) is a community for the start-up ecosystem in Helsinki. A League of tech entrepreneurs and investors building the future. Maria 01 members occupy 10,000m² of space in the former Maria hospital. Maria 01 is part of [Corporate Start-up Co-creation](#) project aimed to develop a new community of companies and create new models of start-up-corporate collaboration. Corporate Start-Up Co-creation (Cup) is a project initiated by the city of Helsinki, and funded by European Regional Development Fund. The Cup project is aimed at knowledge intensive, innovative, small and medium size growth companies in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region.

maria 01

Entrepreneurial Societies

KIUIAS

Led by Aalto University's entrepreneurial society [Aaltoes](#), [Kiuas](#) facilitates the creation, development, and the transformation of high value business ideas into early stage startups

[Junction](#) is Europe's leading hackathon and a converging point for developers, designers, and entrepreneurs from round the world.

JUNCTION



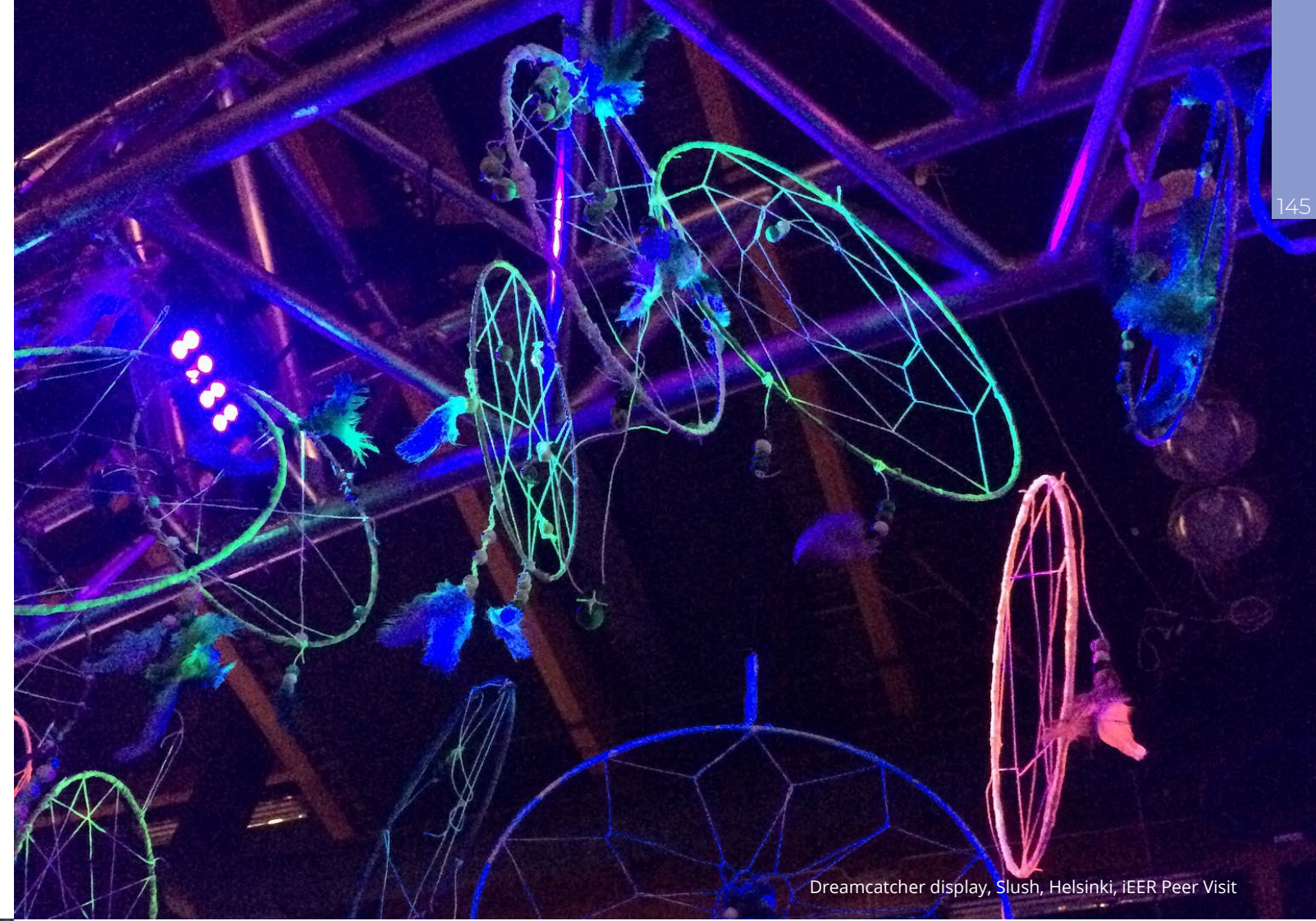
[Cambridge Venture Camp](#) is a two-week long entrepreneurship camp organized by [Laurea Entrepreneurship Society](#), [Haaga-HeliaES](#) and [Laurea](#), [Haaga-Helia](#) and [Metropolia Universities of Applied Sciences](#).

e-Book Video
Press play

SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *STRONG INTER-ORGANISATIONAL WORKING PRACTICES*

- Economically, Helsinki is one of the fastest growing areas in Northern Europe
- Highly educated workforce
- Strong collaboration among a diverse set of stakeholders with common objectives
- Supportive local ecosystem
- Helsinki a smart region – rich spectrum of co-working spaces, programs, test beds, living labs facilities, datasets, user environments, experts and other resources, which can be part of international collaboration.
- Public financing instruments work well
- Success stories such as **Slush** and **Startup Sauna** serve as good examples



Dreamcatcher display, Slush, Helsinki, iEER Peer Visit



Slush Conference, Helsinki, iEER Peer Visit

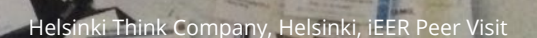
Weaknesses - *LIMITED SUPPORT FOR MARKETING AND SALES*

- Small local market
- Lack of beta customers
- Difficult to find outside investors (private capital) in the early stages
- Strong focus on technology but less support available for marketing and sales
- Inability to make use of international experience
- Major startup and entrepreneurial supports are centralized in the capital area
- Further measures to improve the development of the outlying area should be considered.



- Promote and transfer best practice and learning with the regions
- Young entrepreneurs enthusiastic to move directly to foreign markets
- Many traditional sectors such as universities are renewing their operations, which may create opportunities for the future
- Potential breeding ground for European-level joint project development
- Expand collaboration across Europe
- International collaboration has improved, more contact with Sweden and Denmark

- Small country, small local market
- Difficulty in attracting foreign talent
- Difficult to source find large scale investment funding
- Helsinki-Uusimaa receives very little structural funds compared to other regions in the country
- Lack of medium sized countries



Introduction

West Pomerania Summary

Situated in North-Western Poland, over 40% of West Pomerania's regional border is shared with the Baltic Sea and Germany, which contributes strongly to its diversified and cosmopolitan character.

Szczecin, the capital city, along with the surrounding metropolitan area, is inhabited by almost 650,000 people, accounting for 38% of the region's population of 1,700,000.

1,700,000

West Pomerania's Population (As of 2017)

Socio-Economic Profile

In recent years, the West Pomeranian Region has struggled with a diminishing working-age population. It is described as having a low population density, with less than 100 people per km². Within the region the densities vary from the biggest town having a density of 209 people per km² to areas having 30 people per km². There is a concern for the decline experienced in the population growth in the under 14 age cohort. The projection is that this age group is likely to decline further in both urban and rural areas; inter-regional migration is considered a contributory factor for the decline in youth population. The registered unemployment rate has decreased in recent years; in Szczecin it reached 7%, however in other areas it is over 3 times higher: for example, the Bilorard District has a rate of 25.5%.

Until the recent diversification into modern strategic sectors, Westpomerania was a region mainly associated with ship-building and agricultural industries. There are 1,286 enterprises per 10,000 residents in West Pomerania, which exceeded the national average (amounting to 1,087). In 2015, micro enterprise accounted for 96.4% of all businesses, the trend is for an increase in micro enterprise and decrease in SMEs and larger businesses. Overall Westpomeranian

region is dominated by services enterprises. The vast majority belong to SMEs sector and offer simple services. The authorities promote specialisation and the development of advanced services with the view to increasing innovation.

Between 2007 and 2012, the amount of foreign capital investment in the Westpomeranian Region increased by nearly 60%. Many of the West Pomeranian FDI businesses (40%) were based in the capital city Szczecin. Overall, the region is dominated by services enterprises, despite being described as having a weak economic development dynamic (regional report 2017). It has a number of exceptionally strong sectors, for example, freight by sea has 33% of national market share, and the region is ranked first in the country for electricity production from renewable resources. Wood acquisition and tourism accommodation are also considered strong sectors.

The West Pomeranian population is similar to that of Poland in terms of educational level, with 47% having just primary / lower and vocational, a further 22% with post-secondary and 19% with higher level education. Despite its peripheral location in relation to the centre of Poland, and particularly Warsaw, the West Pomeranian region is characterised by a very convenient location with respect to European markets and Baltic countries.

Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

[Regional Centre for Innovation & Technology Transfer \(RCiITT\)](#) offers advisory and training services to enterprises, scientists, students and graduates, in the field of technology transfer, research & development financing, and support to academic entrepreneurship. An array of RCiITT services are offered free of charge, using the funds provided by the **European Commission and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education**.

Startup and Acceleration Support

[Academic Business Incubator \(ABI\)](#) provides services aimed at supporting entrepreneurs at the pre-incubation, incubation and acceleration stages. At the pre-incubation stage, RCiITT and ABI provide co-working space/ hot-desk, office equipment, meeting space and advice on set-up. At incubation stage similar services are provided, plus separate office and equipment in addition to specific business-related training.

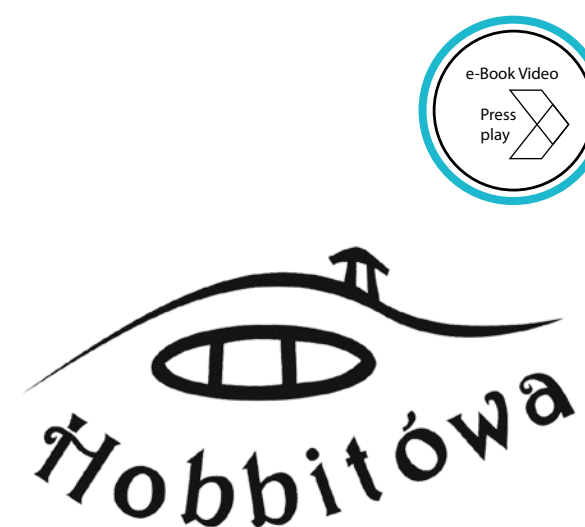
Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

The [Hobbit's Village](#) set an example of good practice in job creation in areas where employment opportunities are scarce. Themed villages are an innovative way of creating economic activities, with a minimum investment. These generate a supplementary income to households and farmers. The village features special fairy-tale buildings, thatched market stalls, craft workshops and an observation deck. The local people willingly transform into warriors, guards and other figures. Tourists visiting the Hobbit's Village may take part in various live action games prepared by the organisers. To date, the Angel, Historic, Stone and Bread Villages have been set up, following a similar pattern.

RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

The [West Pomeranian Agency for Regional Development](#) has many functions including; the promotion of the region, and economic activation and support of SMEs. It also has a remit in information and training of entrepreneurs, provision of advisory and consultancy services including innovation development and finding partners. While RIS3 provides for youth entrepreneurship, its impact on young entrepreneurs is not direct.

“While RIS3 provides for youth entrepreneurship, its impact on young entrepreneurs is not direct.”



Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

Business awareness among young people is gradually increasing, due in part, to self-employment as an alternative to unemployment. The need to support entrepreneurship also appears to be increasingly recognised by administrative authorities in the region. For many years political support has been offered by regional authorities for different initiatives promoting entrepreneurship development, and through numerous strategic documents (including the “[Regional Development Strategy for Smart Specialisation in Westpomeranian 2020+](#)”).

vision for the future is one of supporting international cooperation and the internationalization of business activities

The vision for the future is one of supporting international cooperation and the internationalization of business activities, thus strengthening competitive power of the region. The documents define a number of business support-oriented measures, such as loans, guarantees and support to investments, along with research, land preparation for investments, training sessions, fairs, promotion, consultancy, mentoring and coaching.

This support is mainly directed to enterprises, including SMEs; introducing novel ideas to the market, and in particular in cooperation with R&D units and entities operating in the field of smart specialisations. Other entities which may apply for support for innovation development and implementation, as part of the innovation-oriented regional policy, include higher education establishments, organisations supporting entrepreneurship, credit and warranty funds, and incubators.

Entrepreneurial Initiatives

Just one of the many startup events hosted in the region is [Startup Weekend Szczecin](#). Organised by [Netcamp](#) and the [Technopark Pomerania](#), Startup Weekend has a unique opportunity to turn a startup idea into an actual product. Netcamp's Maciej Jankowski told the iEER team of how the weekend hackathon is open to all startup ideas especially those with a focus on change for cities into Smart Cities using IoT, open data, iBeacons, etc.



**PRESS
PLAY**

**Startup
Weekend**

**STARTUP
WEEKEND
(TRAILER)**



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SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *MANY POLICIES AND INITIATIVES SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP*

- A regional smart specialisation strategy
- A high and still growing percentage of people with higher education
- A strategic location with good development prospects - the vicinity of the state border (Germany and Scandinavia), and coastal location with a favourable tourist profile
- A dynamic development of business support actors /agencies /organisations
- A dynamic development of the private sector (business angles, financial institutions)



RCLiTT, Szczecin, iEER Peer Visit Poland

Weaknesses - *POORLY DEVELOPED CULTURE OF COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT FIELD*

- lack of consistent policies targeting young people
- lack of entrepreneurship support for start-up business at pre-start stage
- culture of non-cooperation between entrepreneurs (between large and small businesses, and poor cooperation between SME's and the local government), academia and business or science (cooperation between the fourth helix the scientists, public and economic sectors) media is neither stable or satisfactory
- Many entrepreneurs are necessity entrepreneurs – transitioning out of unemployment or seeing it as an alternative to unemployment
- High percentage of micro business and low survival rates, (SME enterprise offering low quality and lack of competitiveness)
- Low level of innovative high technology or R&D based enterprises
- Poorly developed financial market
- Weak education sector – low level of HEI's, limited secondary level offering no competition
- Incompetent and ineffective use of external resource intended for entrepreneurship development



Sculpture within Technopark Pomerania, Szczecin, iEER Peer Visit Poland

Threats - *PULL EFFECT, OUTFLOW OF YOUNG PEOPLE*

- Low wage economy in the enterprise field creating a PUSH effect to other regions in Poland, European countries and further
- Pull factor of educational opportunities offered abroad – resulting in migration of young talent
- The number of EU funding instruments and subsidies from 2021 is unpredictable
- Financial support period inadequate in rapidly changing market conditions
- Weakening administrative capacity, bureaucracy and procedures limiting the operating efficiency

Opportunities - *COOPERATION POLICY AND ACTION REQUIRED DEVELOP INFRA-STRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR GROWTH OF STARTUPS*

- Develop a cooperation policy between service providers.
- Promote networking opportunities and events for stakeholders/ actors in the ecosystem
- Audit , map and coordinated the extensive range of support services available appropriately,
- Offer bespoke course to entrepreneurs at every stage of business life cycle clearly targeting market demands
- Establish portfolio of initiatives for pre-startup phase entrepreneurs
- Promote close proximity to Germany and coastal position as a positive

Introduction

West Region Romania Summary

Located in the Western part of Romania, West Region Romania has been the traditional gateway to Central and Western Europe as well as to the South-Eastern European space, recognized by its strong cosmopolitan and multicultural character and high quality of life.

The region provides a dynamic economic environment, hosting the 2nd largest concentration of businesses in the country. The main economic sectors - automotive, IT&C and electronics, manufacture industry, agri-food and constructions are sustained by 12 HEIs producing over 12.000 graduates each year.

The unique mix of architectural and cultural heritages, as well as the beautiful sceneries, make the region more and more popular among tourists.

Socio-Economic Profile

West Region is one of the eight development regions in Romania, located at the country's borders with Hungary and Serbia. The 1.8m population is predominantly urban (64%) and ethnically diverse (2015). The fast growing economy ranking 2nd after the capital region is characterised by advantageous features, such as skilled workforce, proximity to Western markets and a cosmopolitan mindset of the population.

The region's economy has been growing fast in recent years, providing space for innovation and focused support in this direction, despite low RDI investments. The Region produces 58% of the average EU28 GDP per capita and hosts over 47k companies. Main economic sectors: automotive and machine building, ICT and electronics, agri-food, textiles and constructions.

West Region Romania hosts several industrial parks (Arad, Resita, Hunedoara

and Timisoara) and both private and public incubation spaces for early stage businesses, mainly in Timisoara and Arad.

The unemployment rate has been 5% in 2016, below the national average (5.9%) and below the EU28 average (8.6%). The employment structure (2017) is over one third services (36%), followed by manufacturing (33%), agriculture (20%), construction (8%) and public administration (3.6%). However, the long tradition of ICT research has a strong contribution to added value production in the region.

Tourism is also a growing sector, both through the presence of two national parks (Retezat, Apuseni), the diverse touristic offer and the opportunities provided by "Timisoara European Capital of Culture 2021".

Overall the competitiveness of the region relies on the contribution of the strong University Centre particularly in contributing to value added research in areas such as medicine, technical, agro-food and social sciences.

1,800,000

West Romania's Population (As of 2017)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

The [Innovation Labs](#) pre-accelerator programme. This pre-accelerator programme allows students and young entrepreneurs to practice tech entrepreneurship without facing the costs of “testing the water” in the commercial world. This program was initiated in 2012, when there were no structured programs for pre-acceleration in Romania.



An example of support for innovative solutions in West Region Romania is the [Regional Innovation Competition](#), and is organised by a regional innovation and

technology transfer centre - [Tehimpuls](#).

The objective of the event is to support and promote innovative ideas developed in the region, through tailored consultancy schemes and bespoke training sessions on Intellectual Property Rights, innovation management and commercialisation.

Startup and Acceleration support

[INCUBOXX](#) is the largest business incubator in the West Region of Romania. Its mission is to support companies from the region to become competitive at national and international level. The centre was established in 2014.

It represents an office building with 6 floors



where local authorities offer facilities (under favourable term and conditions), for ICT companies.

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

[Seasonal Entrepreneur](#) gives students and young people the opportunity to try out the entrepreneur’s “clothes” for one month in a competition that gives them experience, money and networking.



MindsHub, IEER Peer Visit, West Region Romania

Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

consolidate advantages within economic sectors with growth potential

The current ERDF architecture is financing SME companies under the second priority axis, strengthening competitiveness aiming to consolidate advantages within economic sectors with growth potential. Small and medium sized companies are supported through financing their production capacities and developing services. Micro-enterprises are encouraged through business incubation, promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating the development of new ideas.

The priority within the Regional OP 2014-2020 concerns business support structures with a total budget of 117,65 mil EUR. The main objective is to strengthen market consolidation of small and medium enterprises.

The core of West Region's RIS3 lies the objective of improving the cooperation between knowledge suppliers, mostly universities and RTDI and the private sector. Cooperation and entrepreneurial stimulus are also envisaged through activities dedicated to young students and professionals, conceived in order to support the entire process from idea generation to business development.

In 2017 a national programme funding newly established startups was launched. The programme offered de minimis support for the creation of new

strengthen market consolidation of small and medium enterprises

businesses, including equipment, soft/hardware, services and other costs needed to run a business.

The Human Capital OP 2014-2020 is funding [Romania Start Up Plus](#) a programme with a total budget of almost 45 mil EUR for West Region, through which up to 40k EUR will fund innovative ideas which will be further developed into start-ups by young entrepreneurs. University students are the main target group.



**REGIUNEA VEST
ROMÂNIA**



Raluca CIBU-BUZAC, ADR VEST speaks at iEER Peer Visit, West Region Romania

SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMMES AND INFRASTRUCTURE*

- Existence of business support infrastructure including (shared workspaces, startup hubs, co-working places and innovative and creative HQ's)
- Existence of business support programmes for startups and initiatives
- Strategic clusters (Automativest, TIC, Rosenc, Packaging, Tourism etc.)
- Emerging informal and flexible initiatives contributing to the support ecosystem.
- Test -bed for innovative spin- offs from Mature IT companies
- Emergence of small community of business angels
- people, food



MindsHub, iEER Peer Visit, West Region Romania

Weaknesses - *LIMITED ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION*

- Limited Entrepreneurial Education in Schools – lack of clarity in how it is delivered and how it translates to inciting ambition or idea generation
- Some business infrastructure has unclear procedures, processes, and strategies for to deliver immediate support
- Lack of internationalization support provided by the entrepreneurial system actors.
- Over emphasis on awareness raising and less on “how to” meaning - lack of steps taken to provide bespoke training, coaching, mentoring for startups.
- Insufficient funding /programmes available for early development stage
- Lack of support of entrepreneurship in the creative industries and social entrepreneurship
- Limited promotion of business angle community
- Lack of cooperation between the regional entrepreneurial support architecture



MindsHub, iEER Peer Visit, West Region Romania



Timisoara, iEER Peer Visit, West Region Romania

Opportunities - ALIGNMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORTS

- Transform entrepreneurial support initiatives to align with the business life cycle from idea generation to growth, and distinguish between businesses size and sectors.
- Strategic clusters – may transform joint projects into entrepreneurial projects in the form of spin-offs (ROSENC)
- The existence of a dedicated fund to support start-ups (Axis 2, Romania Startup Plus; Romania Startup Nation; Seed and Acceleration Funds EIFS etc.)
- Developing entrepreneurial Students Societies (SAS) in all universities
- Human capital (talented and multi-linguistic)
- Digitisation and Social Media – have opened up “borders” and delocalisation in term of unconventional funding, allowing wider access to opportunities, information and as a promotional tool within the ecosystems entrepreneurial support infrastructure and learning tools.
- Diaspora - presents potential for entrepreneurial growth yet to be tapped

Threats - DECREASING TERRITORIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

- Economic and social context promotes conformism and professional development for the benefit of large companies but not for the young entrepreneur after graduation
- The educational legal framework does not accommodate the attraction of foreign talent and skills as they fail to comply or fulfil Romanian academic criteria. This then limits the skills pool to promote entrepreneurship
- Development polarization decreases territorial entrepreneurial opportunities and access to support, even in neighbouring areas
- Not all startups proceed or wish to proceed along the growth spectrum and as such enterprise development remains at semi-hobby status
- There is strong international competition within the European regions for finance for startups and “money tends to concentrate in places where formal infrastructure (e.g. incubators, tax incentives) and informal (e.g. Regional brand, lobby, and visible social media support local community) already fit together



Timisoara, iEER Peer Visit, West Region Romania

Introduction

Brandenburg Summary

Brandenburg is one of the sixteen federated states of Germany. It lies in the northeast of the country covering an area of 29,478 square kilometers and has 2.49 million inhabitants. The capital and largest city is Potsdam. Brandenburg surrounds but does not include the national capital and city-state Berlin forming a metropolitan area. Brandenburg was awarded the EER (European Entrepreneurial Region) award 2011.

2011
EER AWARD
YEAR

Audimax Technische Hochschule Brandenburg, IEER Peer Visit Brandenburg

Socio-Economic Profile

Brandenburg has a population of 2.49 million inhabitants. The population density in the Brandenburg region has been decreasing for the past 20 years. Currently however, this downward trend is beginning to curb. A concern for the region is its aging profile. In 2015, the average age of inhabitants was 46.8 years, and in the period 1991–2015, the percentage of people 65 years and older almost doubled to 23.3%, while almost two-thirds of the population (64.3%) were aged between 15 and 64 years of age.

Brandenburg has 845,600 employees (2017), with an unemployment rate of 7.0%. There are 109,545 companies in the Brandenburg Region, over 97.8% of these are categorised as micro/small with a large majority micro. Self-employment level is considered high at 11.8%, and puts Brandenburg second in Germany behind Berlin at 12.3%. Generally the region of Brandenburg is specialised in nine economic clusters, five of those are

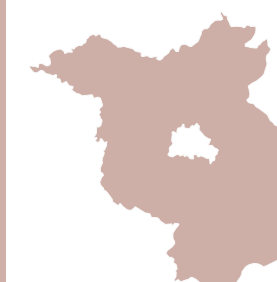
constructed with Berlin; Energy Technology, Healthcare Industries, ICT/Media and Creative Industries, Transport/ Mobility and Logistics/ Optic and Photonics. The following four are Brandenburg Region specific clusters; Food Industry, Plastic/Chemistry, Metal and Tourism.

Over a quarter (28%) of the Brandenburg population has a university degree, which is slightly above the value for Germany as a whole (27%). There are 8 public HEIs and some private ones. Entrepreneurship education is promoted in all universities and other public institutions in an effort to qualify young entrepreneurs for future careers.

Brandenburg is very well-connected. Located in the centre of Europe, it has access to modern roads, railways, waterway and airways. The ICT network in Brandenburg is well-developed, but there is still some enhancement required.

2,495,000

Brandenburg Population (As of 2016)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

[Student Companies](#) has received a lot of support and attention within the region and is considered an outstanding practice in entrepreneurial competence. Student companies are developed in schools by pupils and teachers. Teams create a business idea, business model and start up their own company.



Startup and Acceleration Support

Brandenburg offers extensive support, programmes and events in the startup and acceleration stage. The activities and supports are focused on training and education in the education field such as universities.

[EXIST](#) is a business startup grant that supports individuals at universities and research institutions who are starting up technology and knowledge-based businesses.



The [Centre for Entrepreneurship and Transfer](#) is a service unit at the University of Applied Sciences Brandenburg, it supports the combining of technology transfer and entrepreneurial activities to strengthen the economical region of Brandenburg. Free co-working spaces, as well as access to networks and funding programmes, are among the offering.



[The Innovation Centre Senftenberg](#) offers optimal conditions and capacities to startups and founders. It provides laboratories and office space for tenants starting their business in the biotechnology and medical technology field to attract and retain innovation and entrepreneurship.



The [Zukunft Lausitz](#) programme aims to motivate and educate young people to build businesses locally and teach / train the participants in business skills and entrepreneurial practice.



Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

[Young Companies](#) is a startup incubator for young people. The objective being to reduce unemployment and the migration from the rural communities towards urban areas in order to maintain a solid workforce in the region.

The Welcome Agency "[Comeback Elbe-Elster](#)" is working to help individuals to settle into their new-old lives in the region. It targets returnees, commuters and job changer. The main themes are: demographical change, establishing a culture of welcome and changing the image of the region.



RIS3 - Smart Specialisation-Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

The [Gründung innovativ](#) program funds innovative SMEs in the start-up and acquisition stages, once the region of Brandenburg has given approval on behalf of the EFRE OP funds (period of programme 2014 to 2020).

Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

The government of the State of Brandenburg consists of the Prime Minister and the Provincial Ministers. It implements the policies of national government, and is accountable to the state parliament. The State Chancellery and the Ministries head the regional government authority as **"Supreme Federal State Authority"**. The **"Higher Federal State Authorities"** and the **"Lower Federal State Authorities"** are their subordinate authorities.

Brandenburg has a strong focus on fostering the economic development through innovation. Therefore in 2017 the government signed the **"Transfer strategy Brandenburg – Improvement of the cooperation of Science with Economy, Politics and Civil Society"**. This replenishes existing strategies such as the strategy for entrepreneurship and succession, the skilled-workforce strategy of Brandenburg and the joint innovation strategy of Brandenburg and Berlin (innoBB). Supporting young entrepreneurs and startups is taken as a task that involves several ministries. The following ministries are included in the iEER project as regional steering group and lead the change in entrepreneurial matters.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Women and Family (MASGF) is jointly responsible for the integration of the unemployed people into workforce/the labour market, but also for the qualification of employees in terms of the lifelong learning strategy and the mobility of workers e.g. by offering ESF programmes.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (MWE) coordinates functions such as competition, SME development, energy, external economic linkages, entrepreneurship and regional policy. The entrepreneurship unit



within the Ministry coordinates the "Entrepreneurship network Brandenburg".

The Ministry of Justice, for European Affairs and Consumer Protection (MdJEV) is responsible for EU Funds coordination in the region and chairs a single monitoring committee for the operational programs for ESIF.

The Ministry of Science, Research and Culture (MWFK) is responsible for the promotion of universities and research Institutions. These are important starting points as well as supporters for young entrepreneurs and startups

The primary focus of the **European Social Fund Operational Programme** is the support of founders; about 10 % of the budget are invested for these purposes.

Under the ESF-OP, there are two funding schemes with an allocation of 31 million EUR.

1. Funding guideline **"Promotion of qualification and coaching activities for foundations in the country of Brandenburg"** and its Priority Axis A:

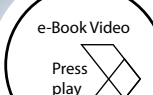
Development of sustainable and high quality employment and support for employee mobility. The guideline was jointly established by MASGF and MWE.

2. Funding project **"Innovations Requires Courage: Consulting, coaching and further steering"** and its priority investment 1:

Self-employment, entrepreneurial spirit and the foundation of new enterprises, including innovative microenterprises and SMEs. The project was set up by MASGF."

Maria Leye
Project Manager
TH Brandenburg

LEARNING ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH iEER
iEER LEARNING CAMP (BRANDENBURG)



SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *DIVERSITY OF NETWORKS AND SUPPORT*

- Existence and promotion of an Innovation strategy
- Diversity of networks between economic field, academic (HEI) and science
- Potential for growth through innovation cantered programmes and support in the HEI's
- Extensive information and support in place both locally and regionally for startups and pre startups and acceleration
- Targeted, tailored consulting services to suit specific groups i.e. migrants, startups for young people, chambers of Industry and Commerce, chambers of crafts
- Extensive promotion of "innovation" through "Innovation Requires Courage" programme
- Promotion and availability of production areas, spaces, talent and skilled labour, cheap rents and a supply of subsidies as well as funds

Weaknesses - *CULTURE OF SUPPORT AND RISK ACCEPTANCE*

- Brandenburg is not renowned for entrepreneurship or opportunity perception
- Poor visibility of successful entrepreneurs
- Low entrepreneurial mindset and late/limited integration of entrepreneurial thinking in educational or training systems
- Limited venture capital available for startup or acceleration, public-private partnership not pronounced
- In the outlying areas there is a lack of appropriate infrastructure (incubation facilities, cost effective startup facilities with offices and meeting rooms), poor broadband internet connections
- Lack of networking and interaction with large companies
- Challenges with public funding instruments – high bureaucracy, lack of transparency, lack of innovation, limited risk acceptance, split of funding in two phases pre and post startup
- Many entrepreneurs are necessity entrepreneurs – transitioning out of unemployment, however , this is decreasing

Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences, iEER Peer Visit



iEER Workshop, Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences, iEER Peer Visit Brandenburg

Opportunities - *BRANDING BRANDENBURG AS PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY "FOR LIVING AND WORKING"*

- Build the brand Brandenburg – the place for “living and working”
- Promote close proximity to Berlin as a positive
- Use networks – large pool of Alumni available
- Coordinated the extensive range of support services available appropriately and develop a cooperation policy between service providers
- Immigrants presents high potential for entrepreneurial growth, yet to be tapped
- Regional teams to use common platforms and matching events for networking in outlying areas
- Establish and use of appropriate incubation space in outlying areas
- Digitalisation and all factors concerning has high potential for positively impacting entrepreneurship in outlying areas
- Broad innovation inputs, knowledge and technology transfer from HEIs and research institutes

Threats - *RISK ACCEPTANCE, PULL EFFECT OF BERLIN*

- Difficulty in changing mindset and culture of financial institutions and public bodies with regards to embracing change and risk acceptance
- Pull effect of Berlin - close proximity to Berlin seen as a threat regarding emigration of people and companies
- The amount of EU funding instruments and subsidies from 2021 is unpredictable
- Low take up in funding instruments and offers by aspiring and established entrepreneurs



iEER Workshop, Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences, iEER Peer Visit Brandenburg

Introduction

Marche Summary

Located in the centre of Italy, facing the Adriatic Sea, Marche region is an ancient region with an extraordinary cultural and natural heritage with great modernity and innovation. The manufacturing system is based on MSMEs started by local entrepreneurs. These are clustered in districts and specialized in the mechanical engineering and traditional 'made in Italy' sectors: hide, leather, footwear, textiles, clothing, woodworking and furnishings, and food. It was the first Italian region to be awarded with EER (in 2014) and one of the leading regions within the EU Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian regions (EUSAIR).

2014
EER AWARD
YEAR

Socio-Economic Profile

The Marche region in Italy has a population of over 1.5 million inhabitants, and occupies a territory of 9,401km² (31% mountains, 34% hills along the coast). The capital city Ancona is an important harbour in the Adriatic Sea, and has daily connections with Greece, Croatia, Montenegro and Albania. The population density of the region at 164 people /km² is lower than the national average (201 /km²). Since 1976, the region's population has been increasing, and over 14% have a degree or higher. A quarter of the population is over 65 years of age.

The Marche region has a strong indigenous manufacturing industry, based on small and medium firms, started by local entrepreneurs. The region is placed third nationally for its level of fish production, highlighting the importance of its fishing industry and tradition. The economy of Marche is sensitive to the national economic environment. It accelerated in 2014 in line with the nation economy, and dipped in 2015

again, to reflect the overall Italian economic trends. Marche has an unemployment rate of 10%, with youth unemployment three times higher at 31% (2016).

The employment rate (ratio of employed in the 15-64 age cohort) showed a decrease in the period 2012 -2016 from 62.6 to 62.2% respectively. However, the Marche Region was well above the nation averages of 55.6 (2012) and 57.2 (2016). At 35%, the Marche Region's share of employment in industry is higher than the Italian State average, the tertiary sectors (63%) and reminder are employed in agriculture (2%).

The Marche Region accounts for 6% of the Italian export value. Exports increased by 5.6% in 2016 when compared to 2015. The pharmaceutical sector, at 10%, has surpassed leather goods and footwear, which were the main traditional industries. Mechatronics is also a very important, and is now second to pharmaceuticals. The Marche Region is well connected by highways, and the regional and provincial road network is well developed.

1,538,055

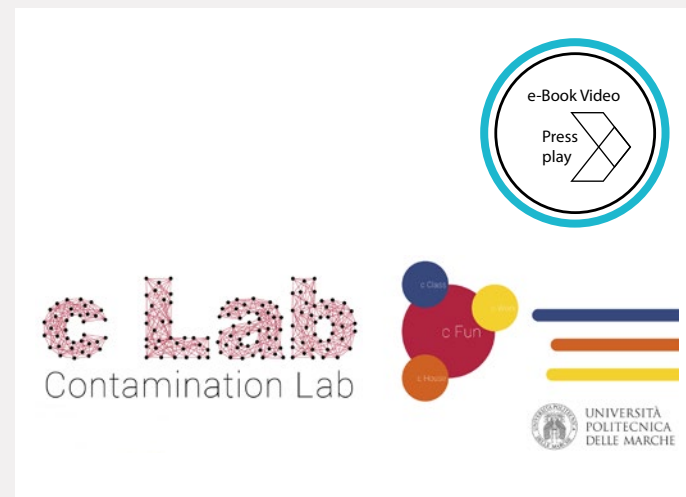
Marche's Population (As of 2017)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

In recent years a valid entrepreneurial support ecosystem developed thanks to the action of public and private regional players. The **Chamber of Commerce of Macerata** has been involved in spearheading the Territorial Laboratory on Entrepreneurial Skills since 2012; this initiative supports work experience for secondary school pupils of the province.



Other initiatives in the Marche region focusing on developing entrepreneurial competencies include: the [CONTAMINATION LAB-C Lab](#), which is a centre funded by [UNIVPM](#). Established in 2015, this Centre promotes entrepreneurship at different stages along a student's educational cycle

and across disciplines. [UNIURBLAB](#), a new contamination lab replicates best practice from **UNIVPM** opened in 2017, and it targets new graduates and students from the **Higher Institute of Arts**.

[LUCI \(laboratory of university of Macerata\)](#) is aimed at stimulating and developing an entrepreneurial attitude across the educational and spectrum and beyond from second level to researchers in the field of social science and humanities.

Startup and Acceleration Support

[NextEquity](#), a Crowdfunding platform, has played a key role in the region especially in the innovative sectors in cooperation with the [University of Camerino](#). It is one of the best performing at national level and plays a very active role with Startups in the regional ecosystem.

The Chamber of Commerce of Ancona is providing services and training for established regional startups and SME's. There are four incubators in the region, two of which are certified by the Ministry. The four, [JCUBE](#), [THE HIVE](#), [HUB 21](#), [BP CUBE](#),

work collaboratively and offer different initiatives including: a tour to Silicon Valley, business planning, and funding competitions. [Warehouse co-working factory](#) in Marotta aims to empower creative, talented, young people and help them to see entrepreneurship as a viable career option.



Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

Examples of best practice include **Pacchetto Giovani 2016 and Financial measure (MSMEs)**. Firstly, Pacchetto Giovani 2016 allocated grants to potential young

entrepreneurs (people aged up to 41 years), who intended setting up a micro or small enterprise for the first time in a rural area. Secondly, **the MSME financial programme**, launched in 2016, allocates grants to start up projects and productive development (expansion, diversification, and reactivation).

RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

The ERDF explicitly supports entrepreneurship throughout the Marche Region. Priority industries include: **home automation, mechatronics, sustainable manufacture, wellness and wellbeing and ICT for advanced services**. Such industries are supported primarily through the "support and development of knowledge based startups." There was a regional call for proposals launched in 2016 and closed in March 2017. The purpose of the call was to identify gazelles companies, i.e. micro or small companies that show a very high rate of development, and are able to give further impetus to the economic growth of the Marche region.



Policy Framework supporting young entrepreneurs and startups

The Marche Region has a long tradition in entrepreneurship and in promoting youth entrepreneurship through the support of regional funds and ESIF. The Marche regional strategy has an integrated vision, which combines enterprise and job creation.

Therefore the **Marche Regional Authority**, through a unique Management Authority, has aimed to develop integrated entrepreneurial programmes and activities through **ERDF and ESF**. Since the eighties, the Marche Regional Authority has been financing business startup by targeting young entrepreneurs and women through specific regional measures and a mix of ESF, private funding and working with a regional bank.

..an estimated
10% of the
population are
entrepreneurs.

Currently, an estimated 10% of the population are entrepreneurs. The Marche Region is the second highest region for innovative startups. Credit is given to the

National and Regional Framework Startup Act, 2012. However, to date, focus has been concentrated on startup phase, and less on sustaining the scaling-up and growth of such new firms (growth stage).

In 2016 **Marche Regional Authority** supported business and startups thanks to additional **regional funds Incentives for the birth of new craft businesses**. This Action aimed to promote new craft enterprises, especially run by youngsters and women. Other programmes availing of regional funds included the Advanced Cultural Cluster -Strategic Regional Programme (DCE) aimed at promoting cultural and creative industries through the following frameworks

- Enhancement of cultural heritage
- Tourism development

- Technological applications
- Startup of new enterprises and cultural and creative startup (53% of the funds, amounting to 9 projects).

.....young
entrepreneurship of
critical importance in
the Marche region.

Currently, the decreasing dynamism of the company demography and the higher unemployment rate (especially young unemployment), as effect of the economic crisis combined with the ageing population structure of the region, makes the issue on young entrepreneurship of critical importance in the Marche region. A reviewed policy will be required in order to promote a more holistic approach towards support from idea generation right throughout the business life cycle to high growth.

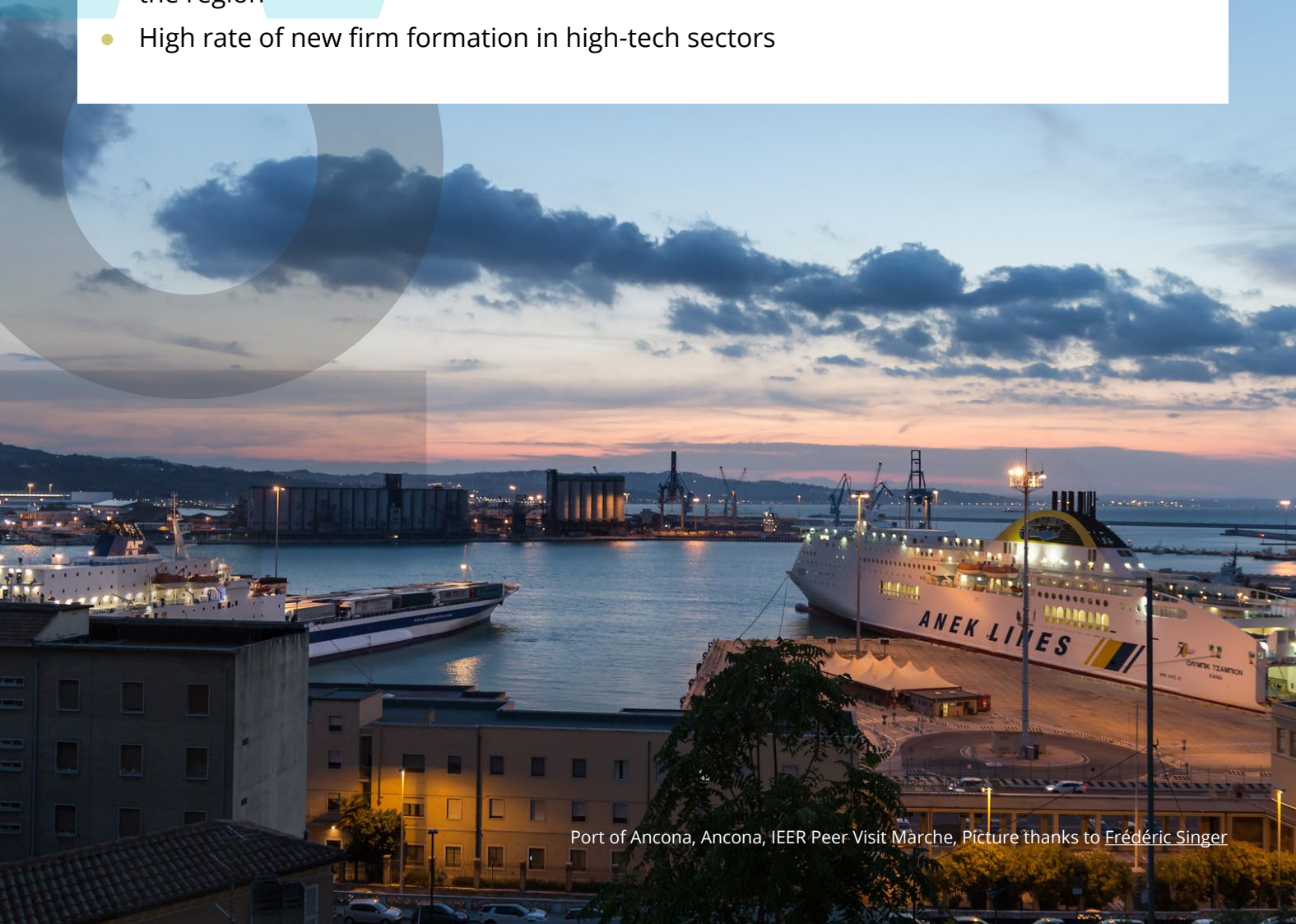


Prof Donato Lacobucci, iEER Peer Visit, Marche

SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *TRADITION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET*

- Tradition of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial mindset
- A favourable environment for the growth of innovative startups, as reinforced by Start-up Act 2012 passed by National Government
- The Start-up Act significantly changed behaviour of the main actors involved in entrepreneurship ecosystems (entrepreneurs, finance institutions, universities etc.)
- Regional government and other public and private organisations active in providing support for startups
- Universities in the region are very active in technology transfer and spin-off creation
- High entrepreneurial propensity, entrepreneurial competences and attitudes are well developed
- Regional leaders in incubating innovation - four incubators for innovative startups in the region
- High rate of new firm formation in high-tech sectors



Port of Ancona, Ancona, IEER Peer Visit Marche, Picture thanks to Frédéric Singer



Public Market, Ancona, IEER Peer Visit Marche, Picture thanks to Frédéric Singer

Weaknesses - *LACK OF FOCUS ON UP-SCALING AND GROWTH OF "STARTUPS AND NEW ENTERPRISES"*

- Entrepreneurial supports focused on pre-startup phase.
- Limited international networks
- Deficits in ICT infrastructure, big challenge in rural areas
- Need for enhanced co-ordination and cooperation among stakeholders at all levels in the entrepreneurial development and support space
- Low levels of research and development investment in the private sector
- Business demography profile is dominated by micro/small enterprises
- Difficulty in changing risk acceptance of financial institutions or large corporations – thus challenging to emerge from startup to growth phase
- Limited critical mass for sufficient clustering advantages for innovative startups in incubator units
- Peripheral to main Italian and European financial centres.

Threats - *PULL EFFECT OF LARGER REGIONS AND OTHER COUNTRIES*

- Brain Drain - Pull factor of larger regions and cities
- Young educated people migrating for employment opportunities
- Vulnerability of traditional industries to international competition
- Global competition for markets and finance

Opportunities - *LONG TERM PROMOTION ENTREPRENEURSHIP*

- Long term promotion of entrepreneurship
- Increase global networks
- Increased global request for high quality production
- Government to develop a coordination and collaboration policy among stakeholders in the entrepreneurship ecosystem develop a cooperation policy between service providers.
- Development of funding measures for the prototype stage
- Adopt best practices for enterprise support architecture to include monitoring and evaluating systems and policy change required to support incubators to grow and internationalise.

Michele Mari, Gluos, UNIVPM, Ancona, IEER Peer Visit Marche



Contamination Lab

c Class

c Work

Contamination Lab, UNIVPM, Ancona, IEER Peer Visit Marche

Introduction

Hauts-de-France Summary

Hauts-de-France, located in the North of France, is a large, dynamic and strategically positioned region combining a seacoast and an international border as well as an easy access to Paris. The Hauts-de-France region have a rich history and culture with renowned resources such as the “Louvre-Lens Museum” or the “Calais lace”. Hauts-de-France (ex-Nord-Pas de Calais) region was awarded European Entrepreneurial Région in 2013

2013
EER AWARD
YEAR

Socio-Economic Profile

Hauts-de-France (HDF) is the new region covering the Northern part of the French territory. The Hauts-de France region is large, dynamic and strategically positioned in the heart of Europe. The city of Lille is the region’s capital city. With nearly six million inhabitants, Hauts-de-France is the third most densely populated region in France at 189 inhabitants /km² surpassing the national average of 115.

However, population growth seems to be limited by migratory deficit, with a growth rate of 0.21% (2009-2014). Hauts-de-France is considered to have a young population; 38% of population are 29 years and younger and one in five persons (20%) is 14 years and younger. Although the region faces a lot of challenges, including a high unemployment rate and the closure of major industries, it has a powerful economy (4th regional economy in France), and is very prominent in terms of attracting Foreign Direct Investment.

Major investments come from USA, Germany, Netherlands, UK and Belgium. In 2015 there were 299,500 companies in the region employing 1.4 million people. In 2016, a further 32,895 (+2%) new companies were formed. Industry is the main employer with 19% of all employees engaged in this sector. The main economic activities are: Transport (railway, automotive industries), food & health, sustainable & green activities, ICT, advanced materials, services & customers relations. However, there is an unemployment rate of 12.4%, partly due to the disparities between companies’ needs and workers’ qualifications or training.

Over 27% of population between 25 – 64 years of age are graduates of a Higher Education Institute (HEI). In the Hauts-de-France (HDF) region there are 7 universities and 18 business and engineering schools.

HDF is strategically located, the region combines a sea coast and an international border with Belgium, as well as easy access to Paris. From Lille, the high speed railway reaches Paris in 30 minutes, London in 1 hour and 20 minutes. A fibre optic network will be deployed in most parts by 2025.

6,000,000

Hauts-de-France Population (As of 2017)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

A network of 7 [Hubhouses](#) was created with the aim of developing a strong entrepreneurial culture among young people, especially among students. Hubhouses lie in the heart of the universities and offer three interrelated actions; information actions, awareness –raising and action learning.



Secondly, [Pépité](#), a national plan has been deployed in the region, so as to facilitate entrepreneurship training and education.



Pôle Étudiant Pour l'Innovation,
le Transfert, l'Entrepreneuriat



Startup and Acceleration Support

The Hauts-de-France region is a startup friendly region, and provides various programmes for young entrepreneurs; the following are examples of best practice. Hubhouses, which are work spaces for students and recent graduates to work on projects, receive support in terms of individual coaching, workshops, and training, networking events.

The [StarPartners](#) is an online platform, where startups can publish profiles and the competences they require. These are matched with expert mentors, investor, organizations and other potential sources of support.



Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

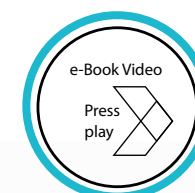
In its entrepreneurial strategies, the region aims at covering the entire territory with organisations supporting Entrepreneurship. In July 2016, Nord France Innovation Development conducted a study on the time a regional citizen needs to reach one of the entrepreneurship support organisations/ desks in the region. The study highlighted that entrepreneurs/citizens have to cover 15.2km on average to reach one of the support offices. The distance varies from 7km to 23.9km depending on the area of employment. This shows that the link between digital and face-to-face services across the country is essential.

RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

In 2012, the NPDC Region launched the **Regional Strategy for Initiative and Entrepreneurship (SRIE)**, a multi-stakeholder collaboration aimed at changing mindset in relation to entrepreneurship and fostering spirit of initiative by focusing on the following areas; Breaking the barriers to entrepreneurship, improving the employability of young people by reinforcing key skills, making them an actor in the development of the region. Main target groups are: school pupils, students and young people.



Région
Hauts-de-France



Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

With a tradition in industry, the Hauts-de-France region, used to be characterised by a strong employee culture, hence a low rate of entrepreneurship. In 2001 the Regional Council launched, **the entrepreneurship programme (PRCTE)**, with the ambition to catch up with the national level of business startups (7,000 startup creations per year in 2001 to almost 24,000 since 2010 in the ex-Nord-Pas de Calais region).

Since 2001, a number of programmes and projects have been targeted at stimulating entrepreneurship as a career choice. Between 2006 and 2014, the Regional Council in collaboration with Universities created seven **Hubhouses** in the ex-Nord-Pas de Calais

region. The objective is to develop a strong entrepreneurial culture, so as to convince young people of the positive aspects of entrepreneurship. Hubhouses were associated with 300 projects with 30 creations per year.

...aiming at changing the mindset of the population on entrepreneurship

In 2012, the ex-Nord-Pas de Calais region launched the **Regional Strategy for Initiative and Entrepreneurship (SRIE)** aiming at changing the mindset of the population on entrepreneurship and fostering spirit of initiative. The Regional Council and Regional Education Authority steer regional actors to rollout the initiative.

Through a labelling of “entrepreneurship” educational tools, the Regional Education Authority facilitates their deployment in schools. It allows for the shaping a diversified range of actions from primary school pupils to 2nd level and higher education courses, in all there are **52 entrepreneurship actions**, and **11 regional stakeholders involved**.

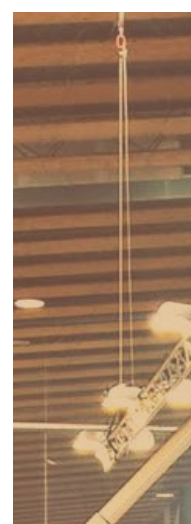
In 2013, the French State took measures to stimulate entrepreneurship with the creation of a **“Student Entrepreneur” scheme** aiming to enable those who set up a com-

..focused on integrating entrepreneurship into the education curriculum.

pany after completing their studies to keep on benefitting from students status.

The Ministry of National Education and Higher Education and Research, with the support of the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Digital and the Caisse des Depots et Consignations, launched national measures in 2014, which focused on integrating student training in entrepreneurship into the education curriculum. These involved setting up **29 PEPITEs on higher education sites**, the creation of a **national PEPITE prize**, and **National Student-Entrepreneur Status (SNEE)**, a world first, accessible to students and alumni). Two PEPITE were certified for the Hauts-de-France. They are in charge of deploying entrepreneurial student status and entrepreneurship trainings in all higher education institutions.

In Hauts-de-France region, a specificity of this program is to be linked to existing networks of structures and actors, in particular the Hubhouses, the incubators or other professional networks (chambers of commerce, etc.)



idee
Innovons et Développons l'Esprit d'Entreprendre

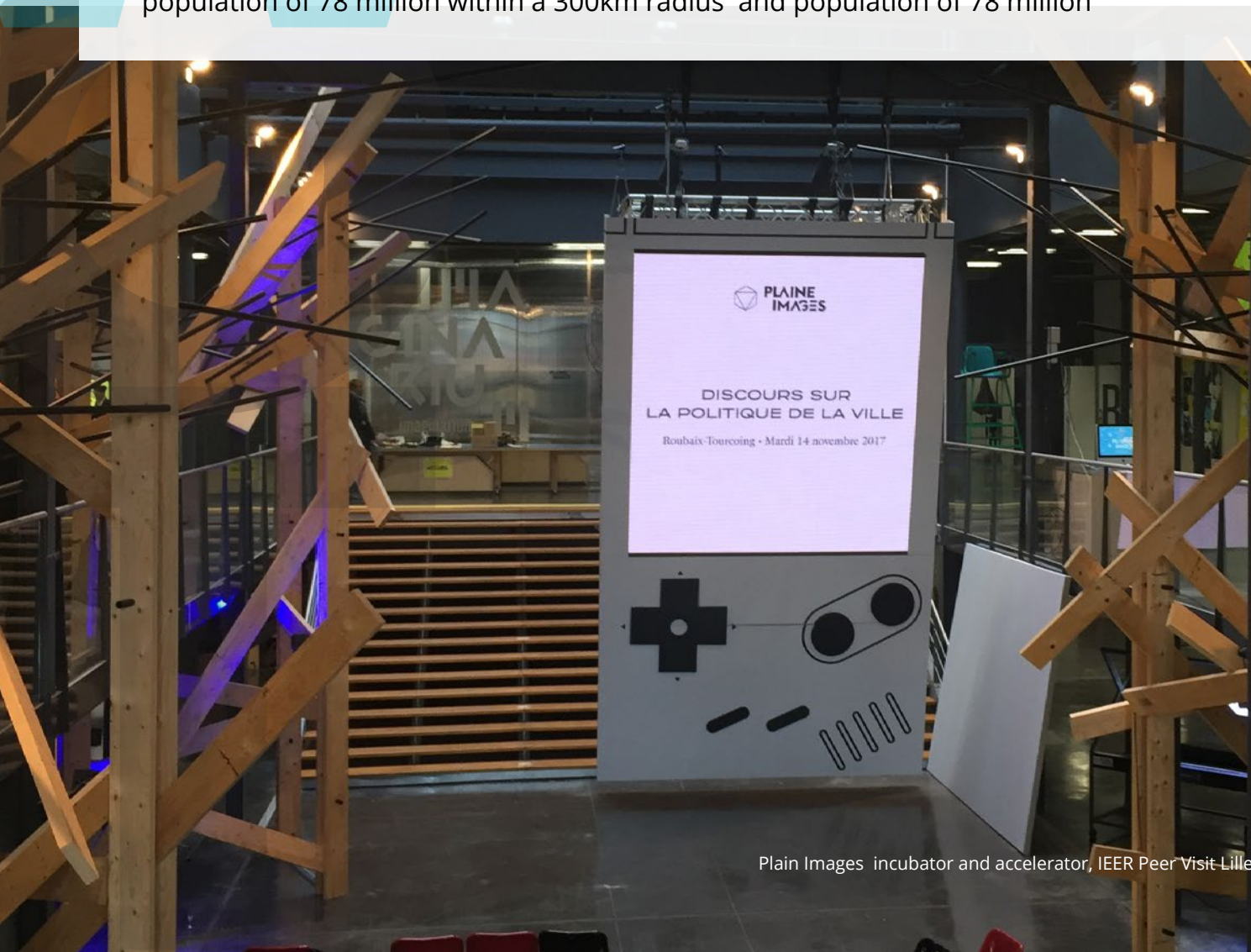
SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *STRONG SUPPORTING ARCHITECTURE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP*

- Strong supporting architecture for entrepreneurship from both national and regional government
- One third of entrepreneurs have a high level of qualifications (degree or higher)
- Focused national and regional programmatic approach to promotion of entrepreneurship culture among pupils and teachers in schools and HEI's and Pepite France supporting student entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship infrastructure, Hubhouse network, Innovation centres and 30 partner collaboration to raise awareness among young people, 150 entrepreneurship support offices within the region, with over 700 entrepreneurship experts
- Entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs are position in the heart of the richest consumer area in Europe with €1,500 billion in potential purchasing power and population of 78 million within a 300km radius and population of 78 million



Euratechnologies startup incubator and accelerator, IEER Peer Visit Lille



Plain Images incubator and accelerator, IEER Peer Visit Lille

Weaknesses - *CULTURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND HIGH PAYING JOBS AND FEAR OF FAILURE*

- Internationalisation is a major challenge for companies, particularly startups (lack of time and finance)
- Few "gazelles" are born in Hauts-de-France
- Limited high-tech companies/ projects being produced in HEI incubators
- Lack of funding for technology Parks/centres
- Despite being in a positive market environment it's difficult for entrepreneurs to take advantage of it
- Miss-match of needs - between companies needs and works qualifications, and researchers' need to publish and companies need for growth
- Strong culture of employment, high paying jobs, fear of failure, a lack of confidence and tradition, results in an overall lack of entrepreneurial spirit despite current entrepreneurship programmes to strengthen the entrepreneurship culture
- Challenges in changing the academic mindset in building closer working relationships with the economic field
- Real disparities in entrepreneurial services and support infrastructure both through the region between urban vs. rural areas
- IT network deficient in areas



Napoleon Bridge accessing the Citadel 's island, IEER Peer Visit Lille, Picture thanks to Bogdan Solga

Opportunities - *MARKETING AS A PLACE OF NEW OPPORTUNITY "FOR LIVING AND WORKING"*

- Build brand Hauts-de-France – the place for “living and working”
- Utilise close proximity to Paris
- Promote networking and close collaboration between universities and companies
- New era of entrepreneurship potential (students and foreign entrepreneurs)
- Need to have sector specific animation in relation to technological driven startups
- Development of technology parks
- The region benefits from access and proximity due to the merge of the two former regions

Threats - *MARKETING AS A PLACE OF NEW OPPORTUNITY "FOR LIVING AND WORKING"*

- Region suffers a lack of attractiveness globally
- Difficulty in changing mindset and culture of financial institutions and public bodies with regards embracing change and risk acceptance
- Merge of the two former regions resulted in market competition from the ile-de-France region
- Pull effect of Paris, South of France or Internationally
- Close proximity to Paris seen as a threat regarding emigration of people and companies
- The amount of EU funding instruments and subsidies from 2021 is unpredictable.
- Low take up in funding instruments and offers by aspiring and established entrepreneurs



Catholic University of Lille, IEER Peer Visit Lille, Picture thanks to Bogdan Solga

Introduction



Northern Ireland Summary

Northern Ireland has a rich industrial heritage and is now a top global destination for financial services technologies investments. The region is home to world-class companies within the aerospace, advanced engineering and manufacturing sector as well as life and health sciences sectors. The region hosts internationally renowned universities & research centres. Tourism is a significant driver for the local economy with visitors coming for its spectacular scenery and standout visitor assets. Northern Ireland was awarded EER (European Entrepreneurial Region) Status in 2015.

2015
EER AWARD
YEAR

Socio-Economic Profile

Northern Ireland (UK) is located on the Northwest periphery of the European Union (EU). It shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Northern Ireland's (NI) population stands at 1,862,100 (2016), which represents 2.8% of UK's total population. Almost two-fifths of the population live within the Belfast Metropolitan Area, with another sizable concentration of population living in the Derry/ Londonderry area.

Northern Ireland has a young population, with approximately one-third aged between 0-24 years of age. High rates of economic inactivity (27%) have been engrained into the Northern Ireland's economy for decades in part, as a legacy of the "conflict." A growing trend is the rate of young people aged 16 to 24 years, who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). At 12.2% its almost 2% above UK average. An unemployment rate of 7.2% reflect a continuation of recently steady

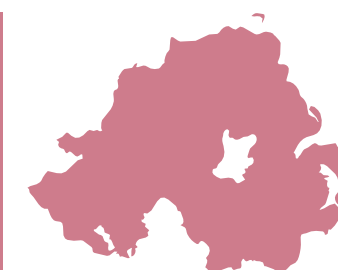
or falling rates; it has fallen 43% in the period 2013-2016. However, NI mirrors the economy of the UK in that there is a growing concentration of workers at the national minimum wage level, with the exception of few flagship industrial sectors.

The knowledge economy in NI employs one in eleven people directly or indirectly and is responsible for 85% of all sales outside NI. There are 750 R&D companies recorded. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs - enterprises with less than 250 employees) accounted for 47% of business R&D expenditure. The private sector created 53,000 extra jobs in the 4 year period 2012-2016.

There are over 200,000 employable graduates in NI (1 in 9 of population). A total of 145,650 qualifications in STEM at level 2 and above were conferred in the period 2011- 2015. Continuous investment in STEM skills, improved management and leadership skills have been identified by the Northern Ireland Innovation Strategy 2014-2025 as critical foundations for future economic growth.

1,862,100

Northern Ireland's Population (As of 2016)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

The Employer Support Programme – [InnovateUs](#) is a funded skills development programme, which offers a unique, tailored training solution for small businesses. The aim of the programme is to deliver bespoke training solutions that encourage and enable a business to bring an idea to market through new product, service or process development.



[TRADELINKS II](#) - Small businesses were recruited in the cross-border region (Republic of Ireland / Northern Ireland), based on

having an existing business idea, which has not yet benefitted from funding, research or patenting advice, despite having a strong marketing and concept grounding. Tradelinks provided formal training, as well as a route to the market and how to simplify / understand processes such as business regulations.

Startup and Acceleration Support

[Innovation Alliance](#) creates a new culture of collaboration in innovation, supported by achieving two specific goals: training SMEs in the skills needed to effectively engage with HEI research and supplying HEIs with case study guidelines to illuminate new methodologies for innovation transfer.

[Innovation for Competitiveness Enterprises \(ICE\)](#) focuses on the development of an innovation culture that centres on creating tangible results and benefits for businesses involved. Business mentors conduct detailed reviews of how businesses are operating and make recommendations which are results and action orientated, to maximise rewards.

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

The [Mid-Ulster District Council](#) economic development strategy is a collaborative strategy that includes a comprehensive set of actions to accelerate business growth, innovation and productivity focusing on Mid Ulster's SMEs. Overall, it has achieved an economic impact of over €4m representing a 40:1 ratio of return on investment.



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

[Success Through Succession](#) is an innovate programme run by [Ulster University Business School](#) and the Harbison Mulholland's [Family Business Forum](#) aimed at family business owners (and family members) who are committed to working towards a planned succession for their business within the next 10 years. By tackling the challenges of succession planning, the programme also aims to build capacity within the regional SME sector to increase, enhance and sustain regional economic development.



RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

The [Innovation and Enterprise Programme \(IEP\)](#) aims to provide "hot desk" facilities for short term rental, create two new hubs for the delivery of **innovation-centred support**, facilitate on going collaboration on a cross-border basis, deliver a series of events and ensure an average salary level equal to or higher than the private sector median.

Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

Entrepreneurialism has been a priority for the Northern Ireland Executive since 2002. **The Programme for Government (PfG) 2002-2005** made entrepreneurship a priority, recognising that 'promoting competitiveness requires focus on entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity,' and committing the Executive to take action in these areas.

promoting competitiveness requires focus on entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity

The **Department for Economy (DfE)** has primary responsibility for overseeing the promotion of enterprise and entrepreneurship in NI. However, **Invest NI (INI)** is tasked with the actual delivery of DfE's policies and strategies. Promoting entrepreneurship forms part of the NI current Economic Strategy. It is identified as a historic weakness. The strategy sets targets to promote '6,500 jobs in new startups', support 60

startups to sell outside the UK and 440 to sell to the UK, and to support 160 social economy startups.

The 2014 Northern Ireland Innovation Strategy acknowledges the need to encourage 'higher levels of entrepreneurship' and to 'examine ways to encourage our young people to be more entrepreneurial'. A key part of the Smart Specialisation strategy for the region committed to doubling the business startup rate from 7% to 14% by 2020. The Innovation strategy progress report published last year confirmed that rate had reached 8.7% in 2016.

...committed to doubling the business startup rate from 7% to 14% by 2020

Supporting entrepreneurs in outlying areas with iEER in Northern Ireland and County Kerry

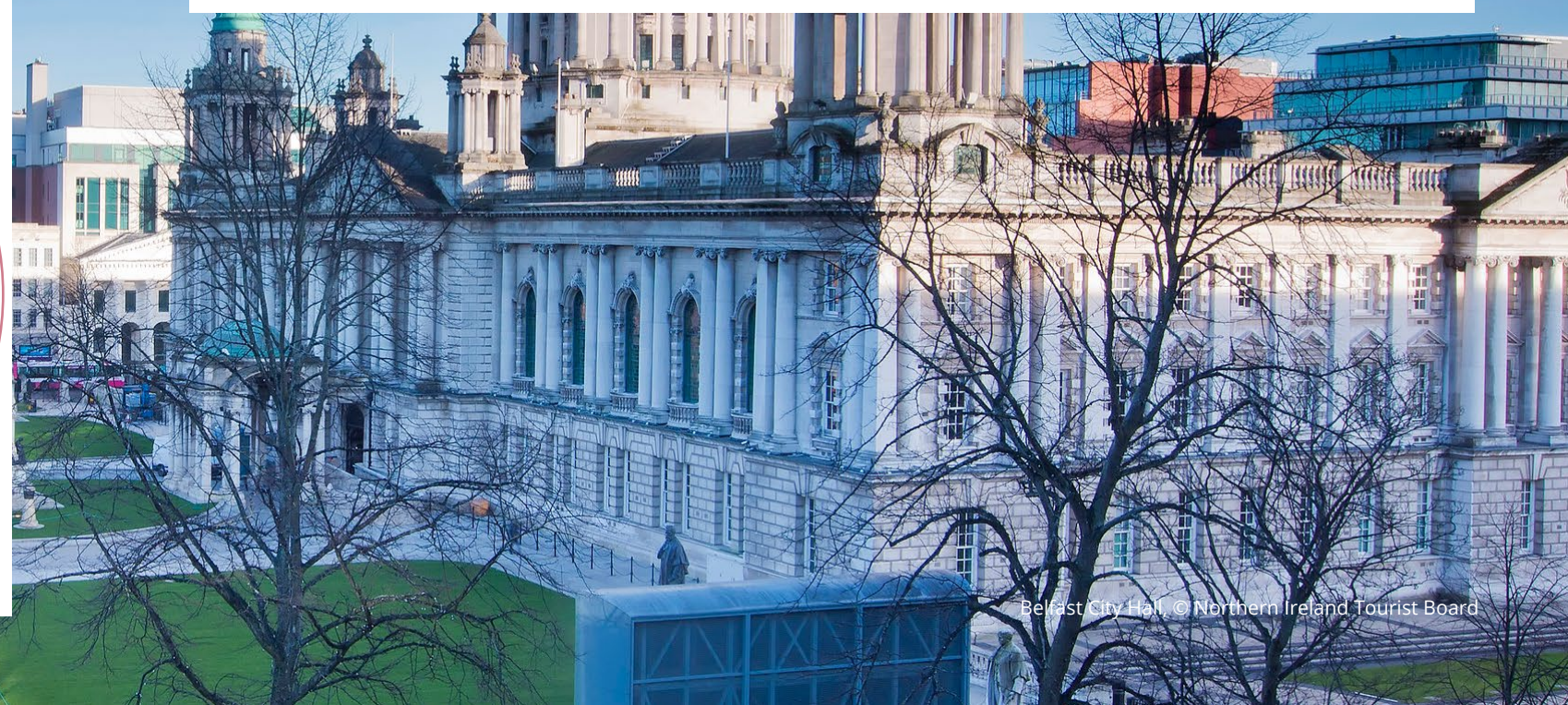
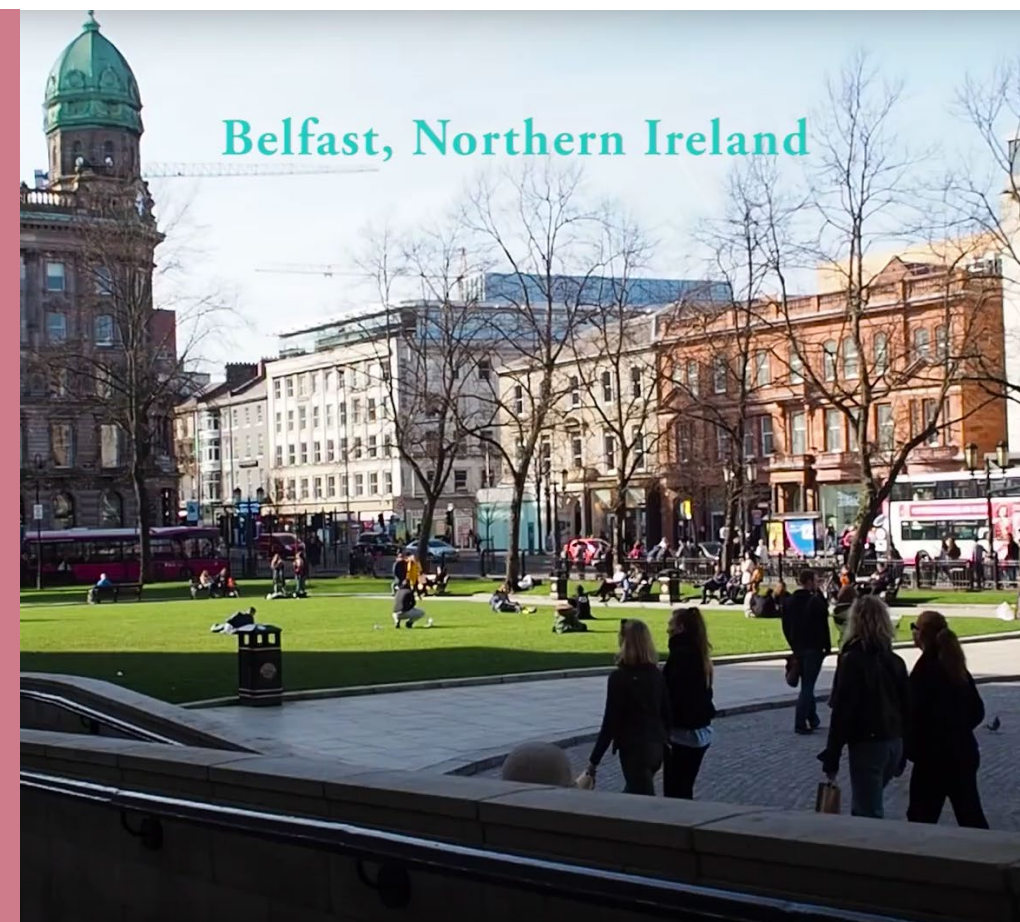
**PRESS
PLAY**

**iEER LEARNING
CAMP
(Northern Ireland)**

**SUPPORTING
ENTREPRENEURS
IN OUTLYING
AREAS**



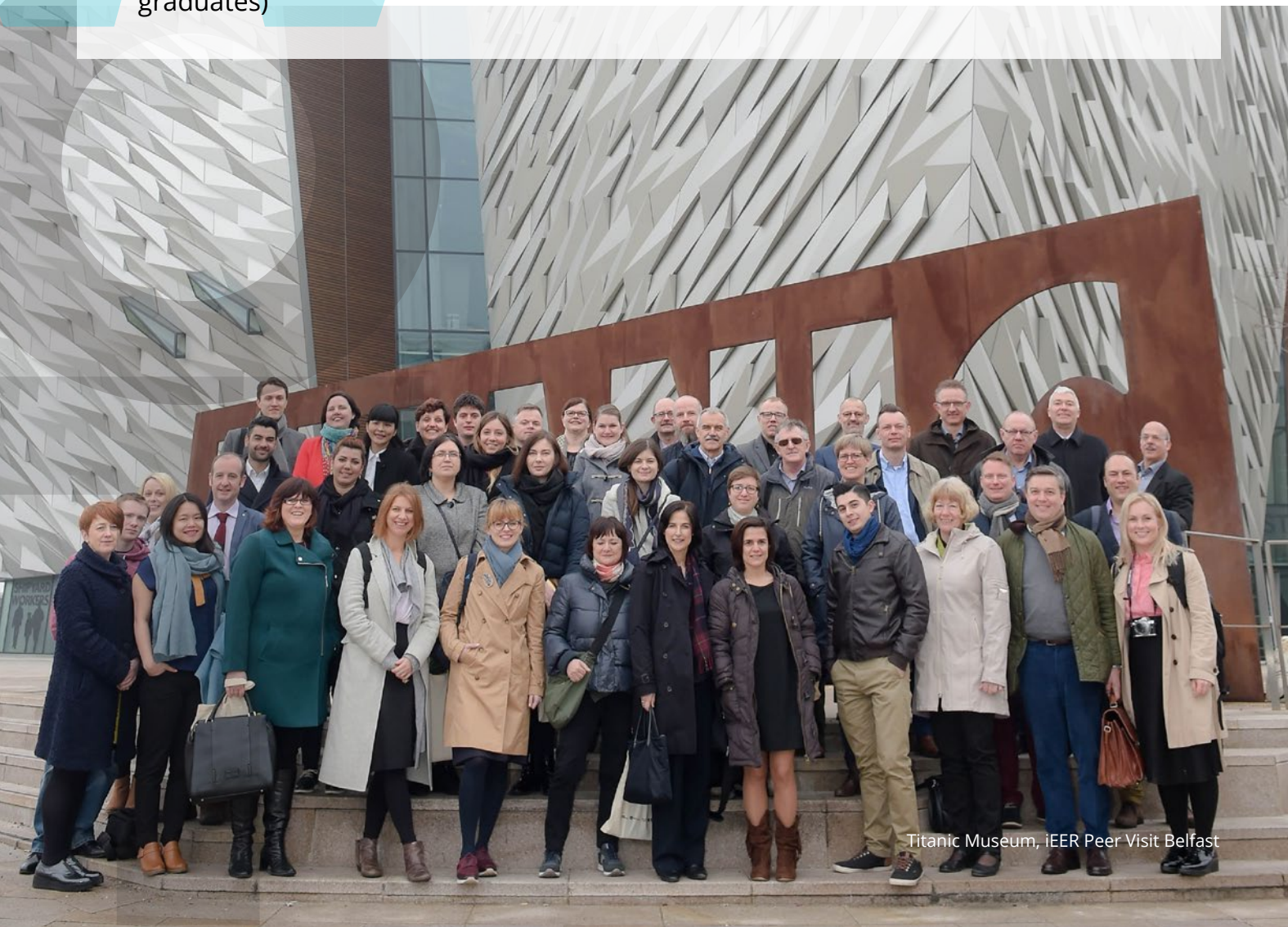
Belfast, Northern Ireland



SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS A PRIORITY OF NORTHERN IRELAND*

- Strong governmental support for entrepreneurship development
- Reform of public administration, streamlining economic intervention and giving local authorities the powers to implement local action plans endorsed by local community
- Strong indigenous SME base, especially with exporting R&D and Innovation
- Strong FDI history in manufacturing and services
- Increasingly focused in skills matching to industry requirements
- Strong networking and cooperation practices within NI and cross border with ROI and West Scotland
- Young demographic - one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in Europe
- Good education system, high quality skills base (1 in 9 of population employable graduates)



Titanic Museum, iEER Peer Visit Belfast



Queen's University Belfast, © Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Weaknesses - *ECONOMIC INACTIVITY ENGRAINED*

- Low levels of entrepreneurship
- Difficulty accessing finance for SMEs
- Weak skills profile vis-a-vis leading economies
- Low skills levels and economic inactivity engrained
- Business demography profile is dominated by small firms over reliant on public sector/ fiscal subvention and FDI in low value sectors
- Much of NI's growth has been in low wage services and low export intensity micro / small enterprises
- Low labour market participation rates with high proportion of workforce with no qualifications
- Corporate tax much higher than its land border state neighbour (IRL)
- Historical legacy of conflict



Game of Thrones - The Dark Hedges_The Kingsroad © Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Opportunities - *PROMOTE NI AS AN INVEST OPPORTUNITY AND A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK*

- Long term promotion of entrepreneurship as career option –sell the merits of owning and growing your own business
- Strongly promote NI as a place to invest and work particularly to high value FDI and NI diaspora
- Programmes in place to improve export performance of SMEs
- Developing economies – new markets for exports and FDI
- Encourage more companies to undertake and exploit R&D
- Increase productivity of companies
- Implement the Entrepreneurship action plan
- One stop shop approach to entrepreneurship support and services locally

Threats - *PUSH FACTOR FROM LOW WAGE ECONOMY*

- **Brain Drain** – Push factor of low wages – educated people pulled to larger regions and cities – young educated people migrating for employment opportunities
- Increasing youth unemployment
- Vulnerability of traditional industries to international competition
- **BREXIT** and the implications of UK withdrawal from EU
- Potential reductions in Regional Aid
- Cuts in UK public expenditure
- Global competition for markets and finance



Breathtaking view of the Mourne Mountains in County Down, © Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Introduction

Southern Denmark Summary

The Region of Southern Denmark (SD) is located in the South-West of Denmark. It is a dynamic growth area which enjoys a central geographical location close to Germany and to the rest of Europe. Several of the companies based in SD are world-renowned: Danfoss, Ecco Denmark, LEGO and the offshore industry in Esbjerg. The Region has a Smart Specialisation Strategy closely linked to its clusters in the field of robotics, health and social care innovation, sustainable energy and experience economy, including tourism and design. SD was awarded EER (European Entrepreneurial Region) Status in 2013.

2013
EER AWARD
YEAR

Socio-Economic Profile

The Region of Southern Denmark is one of five regions in Denmark, with a population of 1.2 million people it makes up 20% of the total Danish population. In the period 2011-2016 the growth in population was 1.3 %. The majority of the population is between 40-69 years of age. The population density is 98 inhabitants per km².

Three-quarters of the population are aged 25-64 are employed. The region selected three business focuses (3S), (Sustainable energy, Health and welfare technology and Experience business), on the basis of its professional strengths and in terms of job creation and future market possibilities.

From 2012 to 2014, there has been a 0.9 % increase in jobs. The Region of Southern Denmark is the top region in the country in terms of startups' survival rates and job creation. Of the companies created in 2009-2010, the survival rate in 2014 was nearly 64 %. In 2014, over 3,050 businesses were

created in the Region of Southern Denmark. The following numbers show the distribution of jobs by company size: Micro (22%) Small (34%), Medium and Large (>50 employees) (44%). In general, Denmark has very few large companies by European standards.

Just over one-quarter (26%) of the population has obtained a degree or higher level of education. There are many HEIs in the region. The main University, the University of Southern Denmark has four campuses spread throughout the region. Furthermore, the region has a Design University, two University Colleges, three Business Academies, a College of Teacher Education, an International Maritime Academy, a Navigation School for educating naval officers and a School of Marine Engineering

Access to broadband and mobile coverage is reasonable in the Western part, but lacking on Eastern part of the region. The Region has a goal of bringing 100 Mb/s download and 30 Mb/s upload to all parts of the region by year 2020.

1,217,000

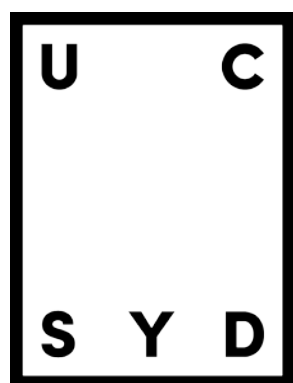
Southern Denmark Population (As of 2017)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

“[Entrepreneurship Across](#)” (Original title: “Entreprenørskab på kryds og tværs”). The main purpose of the project was to strengthen the teaching of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship by “teaching the teachers” and up-skilling then in the field of entrepreneurship and business creation. 180 teachers from three profession-specific colleges participated.



Startup and Acceleration Support

[Scale-up Denmark](#) is a 4 year initiative that is expected to identify 355 relevant companies. It has the potential to create 1,200 new jobs, with a combined increase in turnover of €266m.



[Pre Scale-up Denmark](#) is a programme in the Region of Southern Denmark that aims to increase qualifications of high potential entrepreneurs and direct them towards the Scale-up Denmark initiative. The programme is funded by the ESF and the Region's own Development funds. The programme is expected to create 120 new jobs.

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

[Factory of the Future](#) aims to improve the growth conditions of creative entrepreneurs in Southern Funen, and as a consequence, attract creative entrepreneurs from other geographical areas of the country. The objectives are reached through delivering courses and providing coaching to selected entrepreneurs, improving their skills and changing mindset. In addition the project facilitates; network activities, mentoring and business advice.



RIS3 - Smart Specialisation-Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Pro-programme targeted to students, highly educated entrepreneurs and employees from established business clusters with

promising prospects of job creation. The main focus of the programme was to train and support entrepreneurs in being more effective in the start-up and expansion phases. The project succeeded in establishing and accelerating their growth in a relative short period.

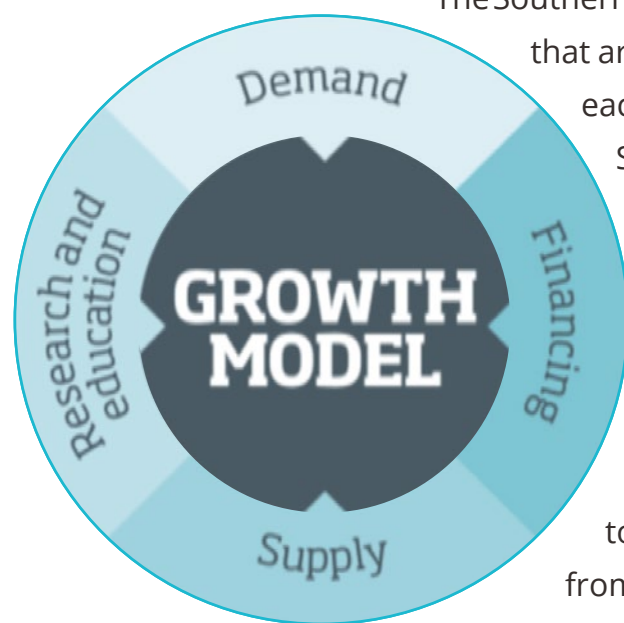


PRESS PLAY
iEER LEARNING CAMP
(SOUTHERN DENMARK)
RIS3 AND YOUNG
ENTREPRENEURS



Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

The **Regional Growth and Development Strategy** of South Denmark sets the framework for the setting up of the regional strategy for business development, the objective being to increase productivity, growth and jobs in the region. Every four years the Regional Council appoints a Growth Forum of 21 members, recommended by business organisations, educational institutions and municipalities. The Growth Forum spends €13m of the regional business development fund and around €11m of the structural funds (ERDF and ESF), annually to implement its strategy.



The Southern Denmark Growth model consists of four areas that are the foundation for realising the potential in each of the business areas: Demand, Financing, Supply and Research and Education. The model constitutes the infrastructure of the business policy. It provides opportunities for supporting the framework conditions that are of importance for each business area and take action where it is most promising. Thereby, it becomes possible to support the interconnected value chains from idea to market. This can be done in various ways, e.g. through grants to projects or through partnerships with relevant operators.

The **Growth Forum** has set up a long-term business strategy running from 2012-2020. Every other year a two year action plan is developed for the implementation of the strategy. The present strategy and action plan focuses on three overall business areas: Health and Social Innovation, Sustainable energy and Experience Economy (Contained in the region's Smart Specialisation Strategy).

Higher productivity and employment rate



Nationally and inter-regionally, the Growth Forum of Southern Denmark emphasises cross collaboration and a suitable division of labour with the other regional growth fora and the State.

The Region of Southern Denmark is also working to take advantages of those opportunities that come from international co-operation, in particular the collaboration across the German-Danish border. This applies to e.g. EU's Horizon 2020 programme and Interreg, including international collaboration that contributes to the internationalisation of the Growth Forum's priority areas.

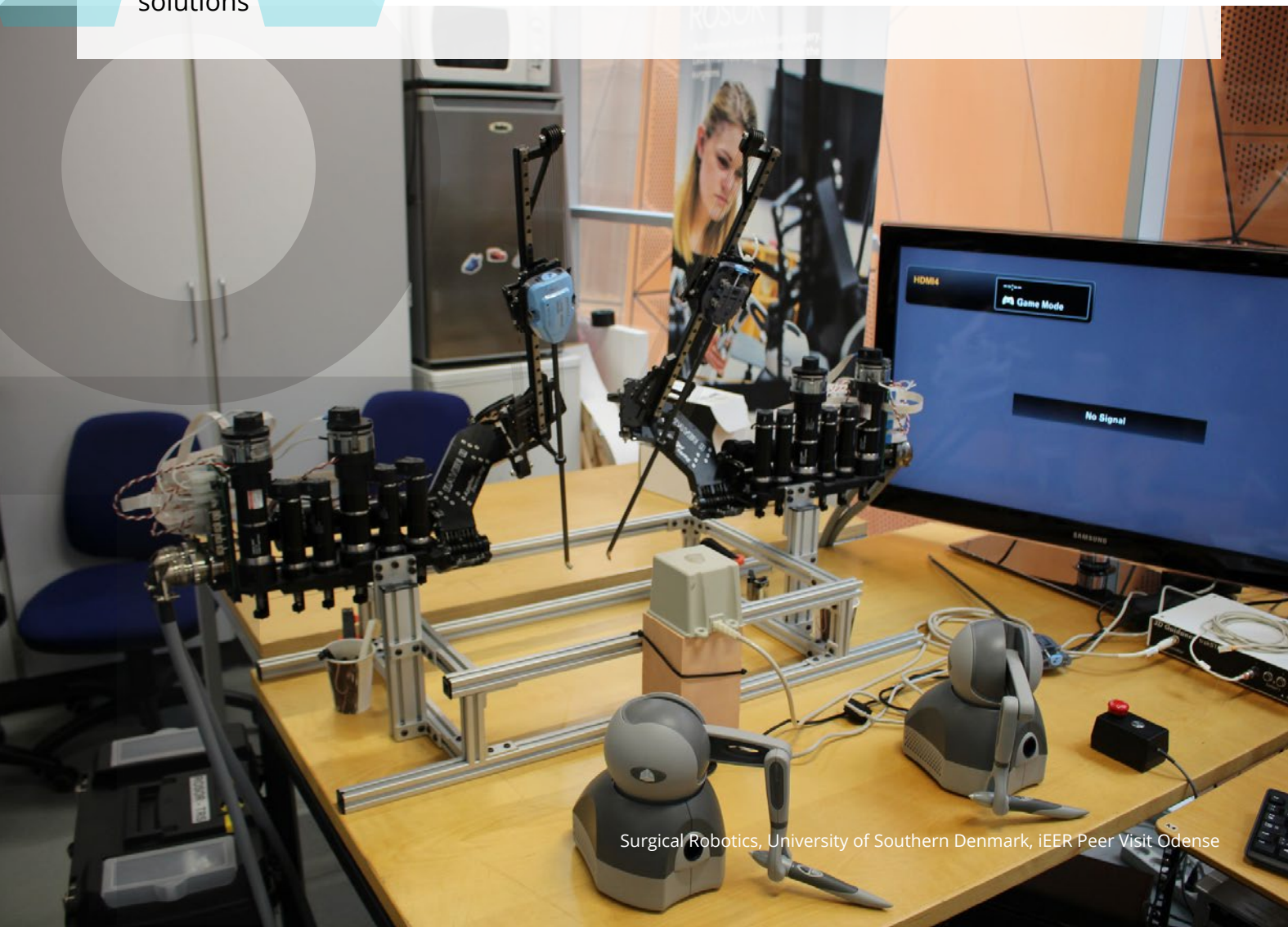
Produced by the Communication Group Team VJ, this regional profile film provides a snapshot of how the Region of Southern Denmark influences the everyday lives of its citizens.



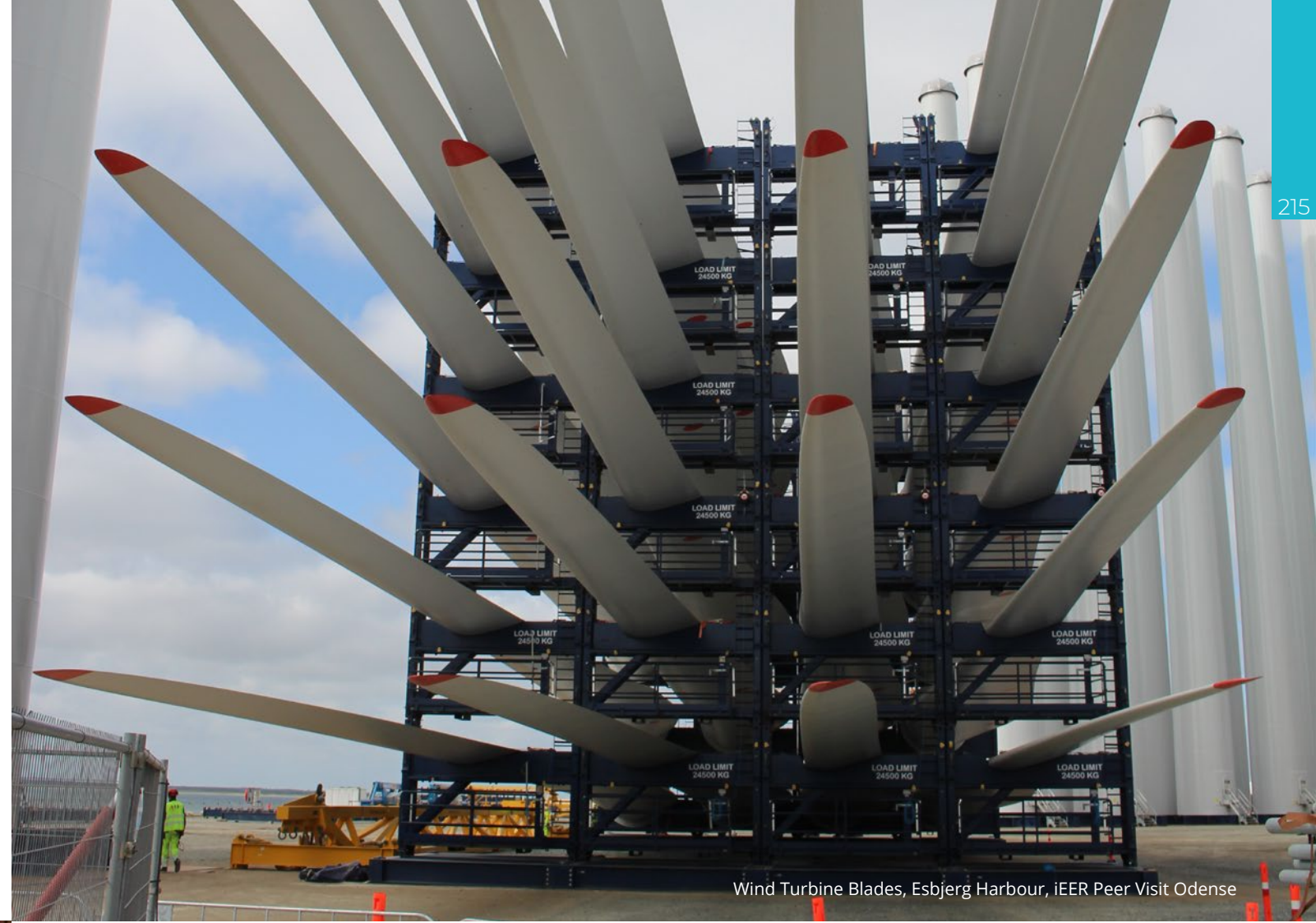
SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *THE LONGITUDINAL EFFORT TO SYNCHRONISE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES*

- Clear direction from Regional policies - the designated clusters are supported by policies
- Funds are targeted to the 3S initiatives - this secures substantial funds for development
- The regional policies are backed by substantial funding for development and implementation
- Culture that supports the smart specialisation strategies
- Growing focus on creating alignment between regional clusters and the educational possibilities in the region
- Mutual understanding of the importance of having educational programmes that balance with the cluster demands
- There are clear and growing markets for welfare tech, clean tech and green tech solutions



Surgical Robotics, University of Southern Denmark, iEER Peer Visit Odense



Wind Turbine Blades, Esbjerg Harbour, iEER Peer Visit Odense

Weaknesses - *RELIANCE ON PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING AND DESIGNATED CLUSTERS*

- Reliance on the designated industries being the most prosperous ones, global trends or cycles may undermine the strategy
- There is a lack of private investment; dependency is still on public funds
- The overall strategic aim needs to permeate the different layers within industry and academia to be fully implemented
- EU funding is predominantly pushing the development - this single string of funding makes the strategy vulnerable if EU strategies shift
- Some markets are depending on public investment; welfare technology, energy efficient technologies, to continue development
- Need for development of international markets for regional products



CoLab Plug & Play, iEER Peer Visit Odense

Opportunities - *FURTHER POTENTIAL TO BOOST GROWTH IN 3S SECTORS*

- The transfer the knowledge and learning from present sectors into the development of new clusters
- Further potential to boost the growth of the 3S sector if more private investment is achieved
- There is potential for further growth if 3S strategy is adopted by all actors within the triple helix
- There is potential for more support from national government, academia and private actors
- Closer cooperation with academia can accommodate the lack of talent available in the region
- Improved international outlook of regional companies- currently best practice for specific sectors

Threats - *RISK THAT STRATEGY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY ALL ACTORS*

- Regional policy makers are elected – thus focus may change over time.
- Global trends can undermine the premise for the strategies
- Global demand may change resulting in regional industries experiencing difficulties selling internationally
- If the focus of the EU funding shifts, then there would be a substantial lack of funding opportunities, that could not be overtaken by private or local funds to the same extent, thus hampering the development
- If strategy is not accepted by industry and academia, this may create unwanted inertia in implementation
- Lack of talent in the region and its outlying areas



Mockup Lab Demo at the CoLab Plug & Play, iEER Peer Visit Odense

Introduction

Valencia Region Summary

The Valencia Region is strategically positioned in the middle of Western Mediterranean Arch. It is served by 5 ports, 3 international airports, fast road network, excellent railway connections for passengers and goods. Valencia Region with 3,3% GDP growth and 10,65% of Spanish business, represents the third Spanish region in terms of startups, and the first in terms of accelerators, incubators and co-working. Valencia community counts 15 universities with more than 100,000 students. Valencia Region Spain won the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label in 2015

2015
EER AWARD
YEAR

Socio-Economic Profile

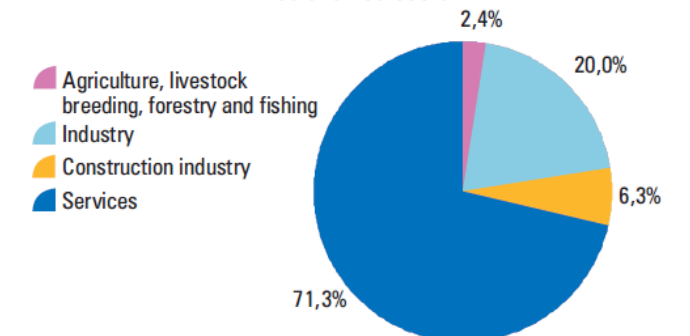
Population in the Community of Valencia 2016 was 4.959.968, which represents 10.68% of the total Spanish population. The population in 2016 has decreased by 20.721 inhabitants pkm² on the previous year. The highest concentration of populations are found in the municipalities closest to the coast, reflecting an imbalance between rural areas and the Mediterranean coast.

The [unemployment rate](#) in the Comunitat Valenciana has continued its downward trend, standing at 20.61% in 2016, one point above that corresponding to Spain. The youth unemployment rate in the region during third quarter 2017 was 38.90%, compared to 35.97% registered at the national average.

In 2016, there were **344.335 companies** in Valencia Region, which means 10,65 % of Spanish Companies. In this year 5.207 new companies were set up (almost all SME). Valencia Region is the fourth ranked region behind Madrid, Catalonia, and Andalusia in terms of increases in the creation of new businesses.

According to data on sectorial contribution to the [gross value added](#) (GVA) of the Valencian economy in 2016, the agricultural sector of the Region of Valencia represented 2.4%. The weight of the manufacturing industry was 16.6% of its GVA and that of the energy sector to 3.4%, in total 20.0%. The construction sector accounted for 6.3%, gaining weight over the previous year, when it represented 6.1%.

Gross added value, 2016 (1st estimate)
95.375.106.000 €



Regarding **main industry and economic activity**, Valencia Region shows a sectorial specialization not very different from that of Spain, where services concentrate most of the gross value added (GVA) and employment of the region.

In the region, there are 15 universities both public and private with over 100,000 students each year.

4,959,968

Valencia's Population (As of 2016)



Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

Since 2016, entrepreneurship education has been incorporated in the school curricula, vocational training and higher education, in keeping with directive from National government. The Valencia region have implemented a specific subject “**Enterprise and Entrepreneurship initiative**,” along with other actions one of which is the [Aula Emprende](#), which focuses on helping to increase the rate of entrepreneurship at universities; at student, professor and researcher level. The aim of training teachers and researchers at universities in entrepreneurship is that such learning would be transferred to students.

Startup and Acceleration Support

The Valencia Region has designed and implemented actions to facilitate the startup of companies emerging from universities. An example of these are the [STARTUP UPV](#) which offers entrepreneurial training for the student population and free, accessible mentoring service for current and former students. [5UCV Startup competition](#), which the 5 Valencian public universities created, is aimed at rewarding the best entrepreneurial initiatives and business trajectories of the Valencian community.



5UCV Award Ceremony



Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

To counter balance the rural-coastal divide, the Valencia Region has introduced a network of 5 [Centres for Economic and Social Dynamisation \(CEDES\)](#), the aim is to deliver services and resources that cannot be directly provided by small town councils in the rural (interior) areas. The aim is to strengthen the region as a whole.



RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Programmes to support RIS3 implementation is within a wider policy area referred to as a “Nursery of Opportunities” (NOs) which has 13 funding streams and a budget of €482,031. NOs comprise of some

consolidated programmes already in place and also integrates new ideas for example new funding instruments, almost half of this fund (€232,000) centers on providing loans for innovative SME’s.



Advanced monitoring systems in Valencia used for safety, agriculture and logistics

RIS3 Comunitat Valenciana
(Valencian community)

Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups



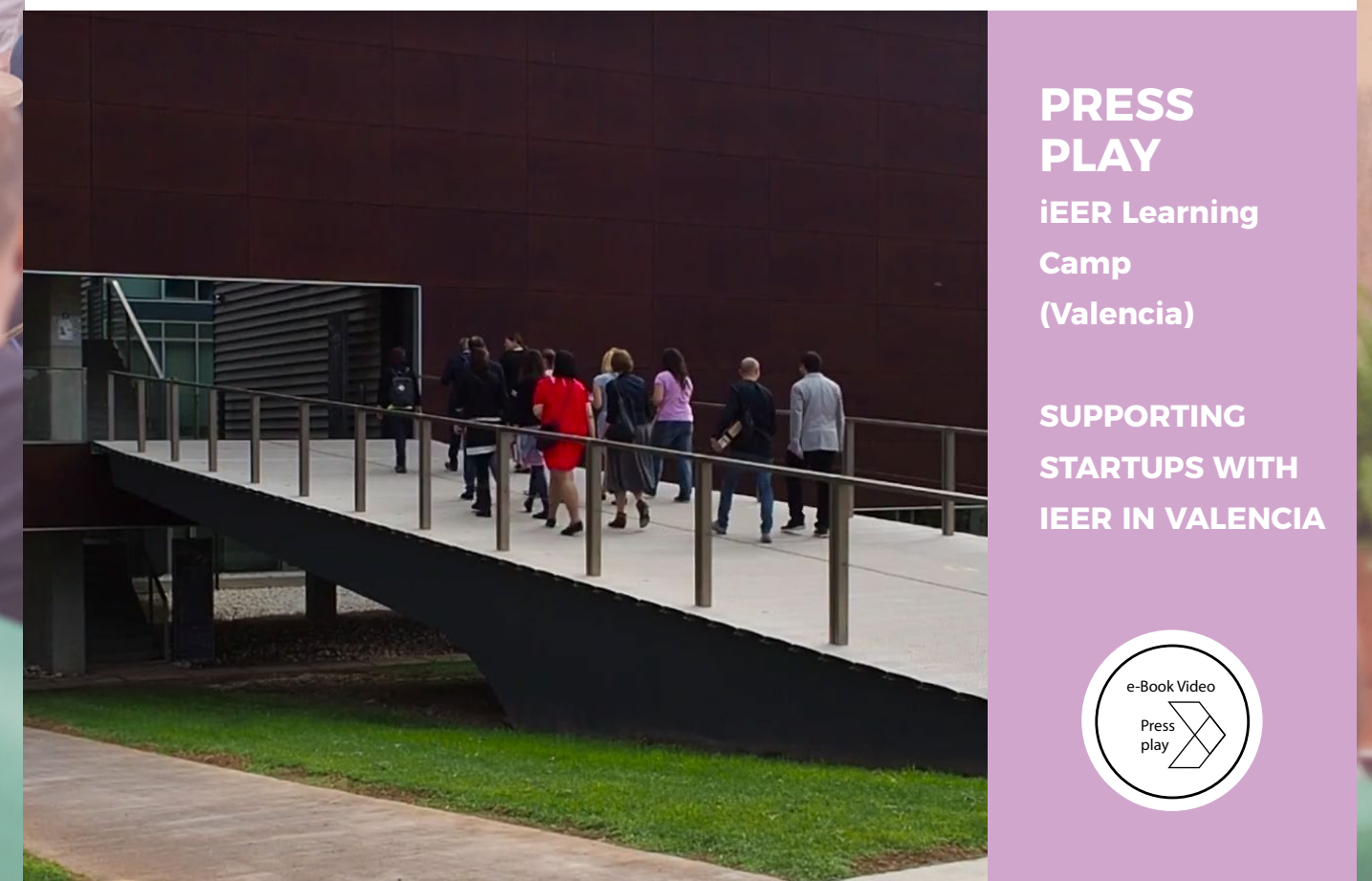
Few entities (34%) declare a focus on 'market access' as mission / vision...

There is a large concentration of entities that offer entrepreneurship support. However, **81% of such services are concentrated on the pre- and startup stage**, offering dynamic, information, networking and advisory services. In the similar way, the financial resources that are offered are mainly focused on pre-startup and startup phases, and less on growth phase, especially in advanced services (financing growth, internationalization, innovation and protection). Few entities (34%) declare a focus on 'market access' as mission/vision, although it is one of the main issues for companies.

The support services mainly focus on initial information, guidance, advice for project preparation, definition of the business model, economic-financial aspects, legal forms and formalities, but in general, projects are not taken 'to the market'. There is no support for advanced services in critical areas for startups, specialised human capital, financing for growth.

In Valencia, there are 11 different departments/organisations linked to youth entrepreneurship

The **Valencia Region (2014-2020)** receives and manages funding to support entrepreneurship through the operation programmes of **ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, and FEMP**. In Valencia, there are eleven different departments/organisations linked to youth entrepreneurship as an essential part of the EU strategy on growth, employment, education, social inclusion and reduction of youth unemployment. However, not all are funded by structural funds to carry out action to support the same.



SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *EXTENSIVE SUPPORT FOR EARLY STAGE AND PRE-STARTUP PHASE*

- Quality of life, climate, location, accessibility, logistics
- Relevant Universities: 5 public, 3 private, and many business schools
- Net of R+D+i centres, scientific parks, technological institutes
- Many stakeholders supporting entrepreneurship throughout the region
- High entrepreneurial mindset in the region
- Sound industrial and craftsmanship tradition
- Exports oriented economy
- Relevant tourist attraction
- Increase of entrepreneurs' education level
- Extensive support for initial phase



STARTUP 5UCV, iEER Peer Visit, Valencia

Weaknesses - *ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION NOT INTEGRATED INTO MAIN STREAM EDUCATION*

- Poor financial support for entrepreneurs, specially for growth phase
- High level of bureaucracy to create business
- Training in entrepreneurship not included as regular subject in education system
- High number of stakeholders supporting entrepreneurship, in concurrence
- Few big enterprises for reference and innovation drive
- No culture of intrapreneurship
- Lack of public procurement of innovation
- Proceeding to introduce innovation in traditional businesses not developed
- Lack of common indicators of impact-efficiency
- Entrepreneurship as the only way out of unemployment: forced entrepreneur
- Low investment in R+D+i

Ciudad Politécnica de la Innovación

Polytechnic City of Innovation Foundation, iEER Peer Visit, Valencia



The City of Arts and Sciences, iEER Peer Visit, Valencia

Opportunities - THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED AND INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

- Attraction of international entrepreneurs and investors for scale-up
- Urban development plans: smart cities, ISUD strategies financed by ERDF
- Improvement of entrepreneurship culture: reference event
- Involvement of enterprises and business leaders in entrepreneurship
- Fostering a higher specialization of stakeholders in entrepreneurship ecosystem
- Enhancing coordination of stakeholders along the region
- Training enterprises in CSR, explaining benefits of involvement
- Increasing business leaders training in innovation
- Development of tailor-made financial instruments
- Unique entrepreneurs register
- Innovation of traditional enterprises
- Investment in environment protection and green economy

Threats - PULL EFFECT OF MADRID FOR ENTREPRENEURS WHO WISH TO EXPLOIT GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES

- Fostering entrepreneurship training from primary school
- Facing global concurrence
- Scale-up difficulties
- Complexity of proceedings
- Inequality of accessibility throughout the region
- Cultural features: loss of values, excess of parental protection, fear of failure
- Little collaboration among stakeholders of the ecosystem
- Discontinuity of public policies, frequent change of political representatives
- Loss of credibility for not supporting some phase of entrepreneurship
- Financial regulation, concurrence for funds because of high public debt
- Slow transfer of enterprises' needs to educational system



The City of Arts and Sciences, iEER Peer Visit, Valencia

Introduction



County Kerry Summary

County* Kerry is located in the South-West of Ireland. Kerry is often a by-word for success given the county's achievements in business, literature and sport. Kerry's stunning landscapes and world renowned hospitality are among its key strategic assets, and the county is one of the most popular holiday destinations in Europe. Kerry was awarded EER (European Entrepreneurial Region) Status in 2011.

2011
EER AWARD
YEAR

* Throughout this document, Kerry is referred to as a region, in line with EER criteria and nomenclature. The author is however conscious that, in political and administrative terms, Kerry is a county, and along with Cork City and County Cork, it forms part of the NUTS III Region, known as the South-West.

Socio-Economic Profile

Kerry has a population of 147,707 and a growth rate of 1.5% lags behind national averages (3.8% in 2016) which has persisted for several decades. Kerry's population varies, from its capital town Tralee, with a population of 23,691, to its smallest village Cromane, with a population of 116. Kerry is predominantly a rural county, with population density of 31.4 per km/sq. comparing to a state average of 56.4 per km². Kerry has an older demographic than Ireland as a whole, and young people, especially those aged 20 to 29, are particularly underrepresented in the population.

Kerry has a more traditional economic profile and has a **high level of dependency on the primary sector and services**. There are 8,191 active enterprises² in the county, employing 26,932 people. Of these, 30% are employed in micro enterprises, a further 32% are employed in the SME sector (enterprises categorised as employing between 10- 49 people), and the remaining 40% work in large

enterprises, employing over 50 people. FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) is less prevalent in Kerry than in rest of the State. However, there are almost 1,800 people employed directly in such companies.

There is one HEI (Higher Education Institute) in the county, with over 3,500 full & part-time students. Although Kerry has one of the highest levels of progression from second-level to university-level education in Ireland, it has a lower level of third level attainment (23%). Kerry's challenge is in attracting those graduates back to the county.

Kerry is peripheral in location in relation to Dublin, Ireland's capital. However it is serviced by air, rail and road networks. ICT infrastructure has improved in recent years, but deficits and challenges remain, particularly in the more peripheral parts of the county.

147,707

Kerry's Population (As of 2017)



²Active enterprises are trading and exclude farming and public sector

Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mindset Activation

The [Tom Crean Business Centre](#) is an incubation centre located in the Kerry Technology Park. Home to the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development ([CEED](#)), it aims to spread the spirit of enterprise and innovation across both the Institute (HEI) community and the wider national and international audience, through the creation and delivery of a range of educational and business activities that inspire and build skills in the practice of entrepreneurship.



Startup and Acceleration Support

The [New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme](#) led by [Enterprise Ireland](#) is a three-phase national programme. Phase 1 is two months part-time aimed at testing the business idea. Phase 2 is a six month full-time programme with incubation space, mentorship, training and a €15,000 stipend. Phase 3 is an additional 2-3 months aimed at further stress testing the business.



Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

The [Back to Work Enterprise Allowance](#) (BTWEA) scheme encourages people in receipt of certain social welfare payments to

become self-employed. The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance scheme facilitates the entrepreneur to keep a percentage of their social welfare payment for up to 2 years. In addition to income support (their weekly payment), the entrepreneur is provided with financial support to help with the costs of setting up their business.

The [Student Enterprise Programme](#) is a national initiative to encourage young entrepreneurship from an early age. This involves over 22,000 students every year who find out what it is really like to run their own business.



The [Kerry Month of Enterprise](#) is an example of effective partnership between stakeholders in the field of enterprise and entrepreneurship. Since its creation, it has directly contributed to over 50 startups in 4 years. Attendance at the events has grown from 600 to 2,000 helping to attract in excess of €1m for young entrepreneurs and €4m for research.

RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Taste Kerry www.tastekerry.com is an organisation that promotes and provides support to everyone involved in food and drink in Kerry, with a particular emphasis on the use of local produce. Taste Kerry operates as an umbrella organisation that offers support to cluster groups and networks such as farmers markets, food festivals, food producers (primary and secondary) hotels, Bed and breakfasts, restaurants, cafes, bars and anyone involved in the food industry in Kerry.



[KerrySciTech](#) is an industry-led and industry-driven, value-creating cluster, comprising member companies and supporting partners established to showcase science and technology jobs and employers in Kerry.



Policy Framework Supporting Young Entrepreneurs and Startups

Entrepreneurship and enterprise development in Kerry is governed and influenced by several policies at national, regional and local tiers. All such plans and strategies are also affected by planning guidelines that are formulated at the NUTS II level. There are a number of actors working at regional, county and sub-county level which serve to leverage regional and structural funds into Kerry.

Investments in the Southern and Eastern region are made by the [Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme](#), co-funded by the **European Regional Development Fund** and the Irish Government. The only exception to this is the Sustainable Urban Development Priority, which is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the relevant local authority. To date, more than 700 projects have been approved for European Regional Development Fund co-funding under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme, which is managed by the [Southern Regional Assembly](#).

Arising under the **Local Government Reform Act 2014** the **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies** will provide a long-term regional level strategic planning and



economic framework in support of the implementation of the National Planning Framework. There will be a single RSES for the Southern Region.

The [Kerry County Development Plan 2015- 2021](#) set out policies and objectives to facilitate the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. The chapter specifically on 'Economic Development and Employment,' acknowledges the importance of indigenous enterprises (including agriculture, tourism and retail) in the Kerry context.

The Kerry [Local Economic & Community Plan \(LECP\)](#) 2016 – 2022 was developed by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The LECP for Kerry contains a focused number of high level goals and actions to drive economic, social and community development in the county. The LECP was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, the broader community and business interests and has taken into account relevant national, regional and local policies.

Kerry County Council's [Local Enterprise Office](#) is the first stop shop to provide support and essential services to start, grow and develop micro business in Kerry.

The [LEADER](#) programme for 2014-2020 has identified a number of strategic priorities for EU rural enterprise. LEADER is included under priority 6 of the [Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 \(RDP\)](#): "promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas".

The aim of the [Action Plan for Jobs Regional \(APJR\)](#) for the South West is to develop the full potential of the region for enterprise and job creation, building upon its assets and areas of competitive advantage. This can only be achieved by a new level of collaboration among key players in the region working to achieve common goals. The **Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation** (DBEI) through its agencies in the region, [Enterprise Ireland \(EI\)](#) and [IDA Ireland \(IDA\)](#) together with [Kerry County Council](#), [Science Foundation Ireland \(SFI\)](#), [Údarás na Gaeltachta \(ÚnaG\)](#) and the [Local Enterprise Offices \(LEOs\)](#) will play a leading role in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, investment, exports and jobs growth over the period.

SWOT - Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Strengths - *DIVERSITY OF NETWORKS AND SUPPORT*

- Strong history of entrepreneurship
- Diverse sources of finance e.g. LEO, LEADER companies, Enterprise Ireland
- Kerry has an open door policy and willingness to share experiences
- Available entrepreneurship infrastructure, incubation hubs, flexible office and meeting spaces, digital working hubs etc.
- Strong collaborative working practices among actors in the entrepreneurial development field and between academia, industry and the local authority
- An HEI with an established track record in attracting research grants and access to funding schemes
- Extensive information and support in place both locally and regionally for pre-startups, startups and scale-up companies
- Targeted, tailored consulting services to suit specific groups i.e. startups for young people and food businesses
- Údarás na Gaeltachta (meaning Gaeltacht Authority) - vibrant entrepreneurial agency responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of nominally Irish-speaking regions of Ireland



iEER partners visiting IT Tralee, iEER Peer Visit, Kerry



IT Tralee, County Kerry, © IT Tralee

Weaknesses - *ACCESS TO FINANCE IS CHALLENGING*

- Need to focus on more internationalisation opportunity
- Need to increase entrepreneurial activity from primary to third-level
- Many organisations are not eligible for funding i.e. restaurants, retail
- Limited core funding support for companies that employ over 10 people
- Lenders are risk adverse following downturn
- Specialised financial support is limited
- Similar to national trends, access to graduates in specialised areas such as ICT is challenging
- Lack of clarity in supports post National Framework Programmes



Minister Brendan Griffin launches the 2018 Kerry Month of Enterprise. Image thanks to ©KerryCoCo

Opportunities - *BRAND KERRY AS PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY "FOR LIVING AND WORKING"*

- Strong collaboration between the ITT (HEI) and private sector will increase options for continued professional development for the regional workforce
- Increased flexibility in local funding
- Scope and need to empower peer funding institutions and promote co-operative banking in Kerry and in the regions
- Build on our entrepreneurial spirit, international status, our entrepreneurial education and reputation as an entrepreneurial region
- Strategic cluster planning such as Fintech, Agritech and Circular Economies
- Create a "Kerry Idea Bank" where ideas can be exhibited and IP protected
- Capitalise on the large diaspora network at a national level through the Kerry Prosper Series and internationally through other networks

Threats - *COST OF FUNDING AND POST 2008 CONSERVATISM*

- Increased regulation through bureaucratic burden
- Limited funding opportunities and conservative culture of banks
- BREXIT - the unknown may be challenging, policies, travelling arrangements, corporate taxes
- Protectionist policies in some other countries, notably the USA
- Pull effect of urban centres and internationally for job opportunities
- Fear of failure for repeat entrepreneurs
- Lack of clarity in respect of EU funding instruments and subsidies post 2021



Tom Crean Business and incubation Centre , IT Tralee, Kerry

Lessons Learned

Interregional learning and knowledge transfer

Lessons Learned

Interregional Learning and Knowledge Transfer

Experiences from iEER regions

In the previous section, short summaries of each of the ten iEER partner regions were presented. The demographic and socio-economic profiles provided by the iEER regions identify a number of variables that affect entrepreneurship in contemporary Europe.

The Marche and Hauts-de-France Regions reveal the challenges associated with deindustrialisation and the transition from manufacturing-based economies to those that are more broadly-based. Western Pomerania and West Romania have, over recent decades, undergone very significant economic transitions, and, while embracing the opportunities presented by globalisation and EU membership, they face challenges associated with distance from the European Core and connectivity deficits. Northern Ireland, as well as Kerry, also has connectivity issues, due to its physical location, and the region is challenged by an extraordinarily-high dependence on public sector employment.

It is also adversely affected by the outmigration of young people. The loss of young people from the villages and rural communities in the interior of Kerry and Valencia is indicative of the spatial imbalances facing these regions, as economic activity has become increasingly concentrated in the capital or in coastal locations. Brandenburg

is experiencing a similar rural to urban pull, and its proximity to Berlin is not yielding sufficient spill-over effects as to stem the decline and population losses in much of the region. The urban-rural dynamic is also evident in Helsinki-Uusimaa, and although the capital region is an economic driver, it is somewhat delimited by the small size of the domestic market. This is also an issue for Southern Denmark, thus underscoring, in both cases, the importance of international linkages. Indeed, approaches based on linkages – intraregional, interregional and transnational – consistently emerge from among the partner regions as providing supportive mechanisms in enabling and sustaining entrepreneurship. Such linkages can be both hard and soft in infrastructural terms, but in addition, as regions' experiences show, inter-firm and inter-agency linkages have promotive effects with respect to the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Furthermore, linkages between agencies, firms and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) are also of strategic value.

Northern Ireland, and to some extent, West Romania, Western Pomerania and Kerry have to contend with peripherality and distance from populous markets. Those regions' experiences demonstrate the importance of investing in connectivity – physical and virtual. Valencia's connectivity to other regions that form the so-called 'Mediterranean Arc' represents a positive example.

Helsinki-Uusimaa's investment in international connectivity and Western Pomerania's investments in physical cross-border connectivity, coupled with institutional collaborations, including with actors in neighbouring regions in Germany, provide further evidence of the merits of enhancing regional connectivity and accessibility. Similarly, as demonstrated by the case of Hauts-de-France, enhanced connectivity, coupled with cross-border collaboration with neighbouring municipalities in

“..importance of linkages.... intra-regional, interregional and trans-national”

“investing in connectivity – physical and virtual”

Belgium, serves the region well. While enhanced connectivity to other parts of Ireland is essential for Kerry's economic development, connectivity to France and the rest of mainland Europe, via Cork and Ireland's South-East Region, comes into sharp focus in the context of Brexit.

Just as some of the partner regions have had to transition from old-world economies to new forms and ways of generating economic development, all need to invest in innovation and in creativity, and the iEER project provides several useful pointers in those respects.

Investing in Innovation and Creativity

The iEER project partners have demonstrated and showcased several ways in which they have stimulated innovation and new economic activities. The provision of incubation spaces and the delivery of targeted and bespoke information to entrepreneurs emerge as key strategies in several regions. Among the more striking of the incubation spaces are those in Hauts-de-France (Hubhouses) and Southern Denmark. Both provide a suite of supports that engender enabling conditions for new-firm development, and they are linked to HEIs. In both cases, as is prevalent throughout iEER partner projects, there are robust and longitudinal data, based on clear indicators that demonstrate their outputs and performance.

“Regional Branding also emerges as a means of promoting innovation”

Regional branding also emerges as a means of promoting innovation. Branding contributes to enabling firms and emerging businesses to associate themselves with the particular strengths and identity of a region. This has been most pressing in Hauts-de-France, as the region is a relatively new political entity, having been created by the merger of two long-established regions. Branding represents a perceived opportunity in Brandenburg, as actors are

keen to harness a perception of the region as one that is connected to Berlin, not just in physical terms, but to its universities and other institutions. Helsinki's long-association with innovation and new product development stands that region in good stead, nationally and internationally. This enables it to attract talent and strengthen its stocks of human and knowledge capital, thus generating cycles of innovation. Kerry is already associated with several strong brands with an international profile, and the county is world renowned for its hospitality which could be used in different manners for future marketing. The clustering of economic activities is proving to be a successful strategy in some regions. In the case of Southern Denmark, for example, firms collaborate on the basis of thematic as well as geographical clusters.

Mindsets and Governance

It is striking that almost all project partners refer to ‘mindsets,’ both in terms of barriers to economic development and in terms of enablers of innovation and progress. A number of regions refer to the mindsets in the financial institutions as inhibiting innovation, and they refer to a need for more risk-taking. Showcasing Ireland, the major banks have been nationalised, but rather than being obliged to serve citizens, they are working towards re-privatization. In the meantime, would-be entrepreneurs have difficulties accessing seed capital. However, iEER partners pointed out the importance of public policy bringing pressure to bear on the financial institutions to be more responsive to the expansion needs and potential of small businesses.

Mindsets of the business community also featured in the regional reports, with several stating that inter-firm competition and rivalries act as barriers to economic development. In contrast, they noted that when firms collaborate with one another, mutual benefits generally accrue. This was evidenced in the case of the Factory of the Future in Southern Denmark, which is much more than a traditional incubation

“all project partners refer to ‘mindsets’ both in terms of barriers and enablers”

space, but one in which mentoring takes place, and in which inter-firm networking is actively promoted. The Marche Region seeks to build on Mid and Northern Italy's long tradition in cooperatives and is finding and promoting new ways of supporting cooperative development. Considering Kerry's cooperative tradition – formally in farming, and less formally in sectors such as tourism – there is potential to draw on the Marche experience specifically, and models in the neighbouring region of Emilia-Romagna.

Political mindsets and attitudes are also factors in shaping the business environment. In the case of Valencia, there are several positive examples of local mayors and councillors, generally collaborating in networks, to promote the marketing of rural communities and the protection of public services. Mayors are also instrumental in ensuring that government agencies delivery services, in particular, information and employment support services at the local level. This ensures that centralisation is avoided and that services are more targeted and effective, as is illustrated by the example of the CEDES network. In a similar vein, in recognising the need for mindset shifts in the public sector, the Factory of the Future initiative, in Southern Denmark, includes in its services, mentoring of public bodies.

Associated with the issues of mindsets and governance is that of funding. While Western Pomerania and West Romania continue to enjoy access to EU Convergence Funds, all the other partners face challenges in terms of mainstreaming initiatives that have been piloted using EU supports. In the case of Northern Ireland, this issue is extremely acute, not just because of Brexit, but because the region has had a particularly high level of dependence on EU funds and transfers from Britain. The examples from Hauts-de-France, Brandenburg and Valencia demonstrate how regional authorities stepped into the funding breach, and have been successful in leveraging private sector support and engagement. Their involvement in the private sector, through various fora and in co-decision and management of particular projects, offers models that are potentially transferable to the iEER partners.

**“challenges
mainstreaming
initiatives that
have been
piloted using EU
supports”**

The Role of Third-Level Institutions

The alignment of education and training with economic development strategies emerges as an effective tool in several regions. This is clearly the case in Marche, where the cLabs operate on the basis of engaging with students in both second-level schools and third-level institutes. These provide clear evidence of a partnership between education providers and enterprise agencies. In the case of Valencia, we see how the UPV enables business start-ups among third level students through talent captures and the provision of access to mentors. Similar practices pertain in the case of RCLiTT in Western Pomerania, which also incorporates a research consultancy, scholarships, internships and placements. All three models have features that are replicable in iEER partner regions. The Demola initiative in Southern Denmark, which is driven by local government, and which involves companies and universities (especially students), provides further evidence of the benefits that accrue from involving HEIs in the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems

**“...involving
HEIs in the
development of
entrepreneurial
ecosystems”**

The Policy Environment

Regional policy and regional actors play significant roles in shaping and driving economic development. We see across the project partners that governments and state agencies are not simply creators of the economic environment and context in which businesses operate, but are active agents, with prominent roles in economic development. In the case of Southern Denmark, for example, the Scale-Up Initiative, an accelerator programme for small businesses was founded and is funded by a partnership of four regional authorities. Another innovative practice in Southern Denmark mentioned previously, is that of the Factory of the Future. This was established by local government through municipalities coming together.

The Valencian Entrepreneurship Council demonstrates how regional government can play a useful role in supporting the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem. The Council has operationalised common indicators for the measurement of the effectiveness of this ecosystem, thus providing for continuity of supports despite any changes in agency personnel or the funding environment. This is clearly relevant to other iEER regions, as all too often reviews of projects and initiatives have noted that successes are all too often attributable to personalities, rather than to any systemic, policy or institutional shifts. The Valencian approach removes the reliance on personalities by promoting sets of indicators, criteria and guiding principles that transcend and affect all the stakeholders and institutions involved and implicated.

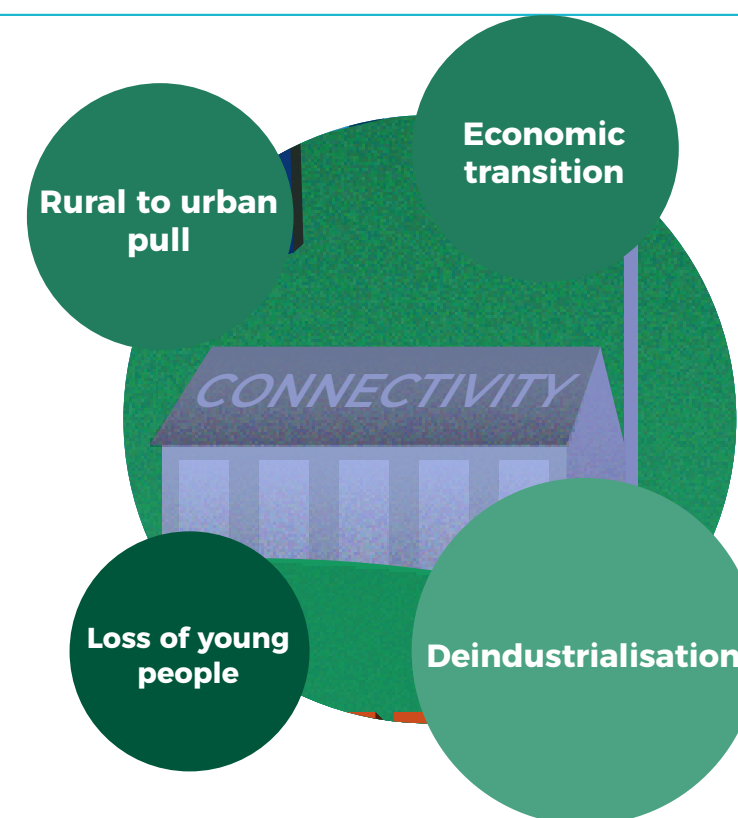
**“remove
the reliance on
personalities by
promoting
indicators and
principles”**

The Building Blocks of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

iEER intensively worked with quadruple helix actors in each region. This included mapping the actors and co-creating a SWOT in the regional ecosystem using the template of the Founder's Institute reviewing the condition of the regional entrepreneurship ecosystem. The SWOT and the results of the regional report were used to brainstorming areas for improvement and future actions. Even though iEER partners are located across the European landscape and they represent the regions in diversity and variety, to our surprise, the findings present both challenges and opportunities that are seemingly common to all:

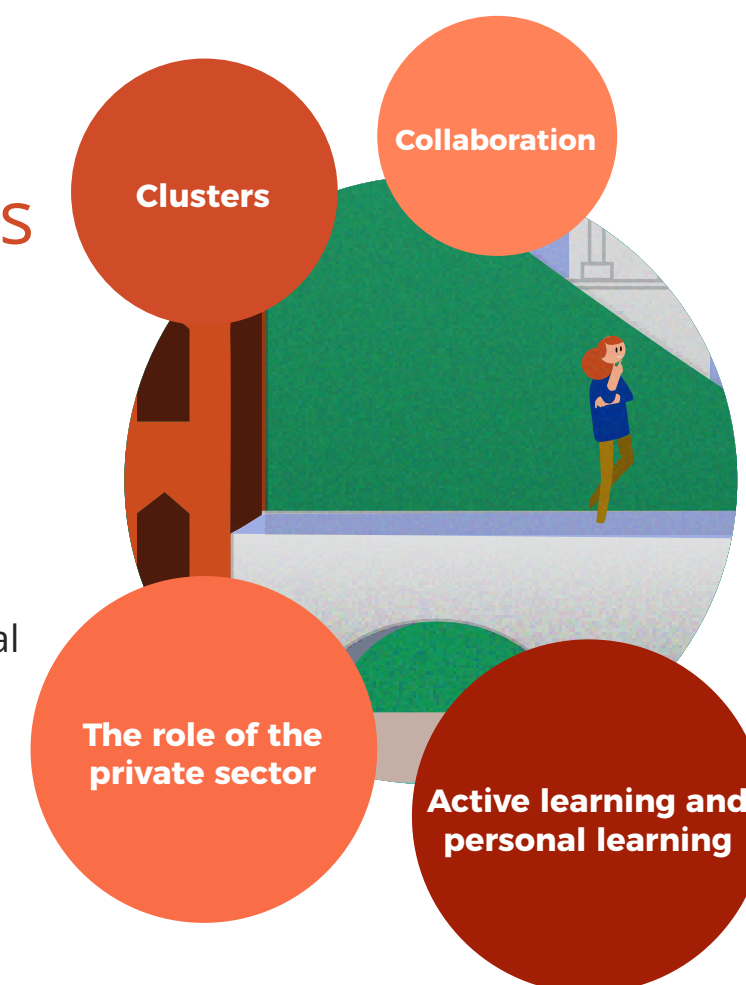
Challenges for Regions

- Deindustrialisation
- Economic transition
- Connectivity deficits
- Outmigration
- Loss of young people
- Spatial imbalance
- Rural to urban pull
- Urban-rural dynamic
- Population losses
- Peripherality
- Brexit and fear



Key Opportunities

- The role of the private sector
- Partnerships
- Collaboration
- Investment
- Accessibility
- Clusters to drive entrepreneurial mindsets
- Innovation
- Risk-taking
- Active learning and personal learning



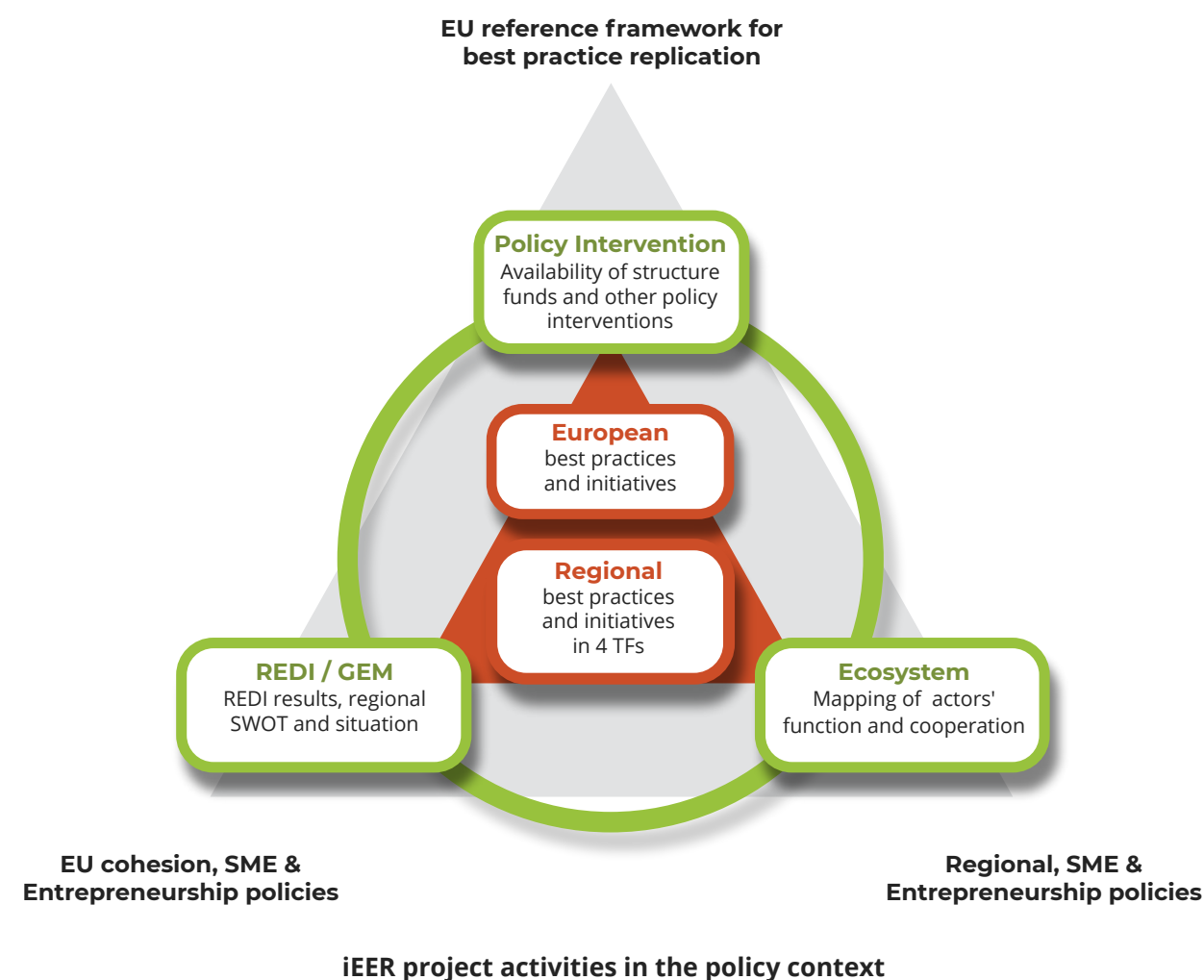
Fortunately, regardless of the physical distribution across the European landscape and the variety in respect of geography, economic resources and institutional arrangements, iEER regions universally provide evidence of the importance of the human dimension in the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems.

All regions demonstrate their effort in promoting investment in human capital, innovation and creativity. They reap dividends from investments in education, training and the promotion of collaboration – inter-firm and inter-institutional. Structured relationships, mindset and the capacity of institutions and governance emerge as key enablers of economic development and favourable ecosystems. The regions also take stock of their own resources and potential, and while they look outwards to form linkages and partnerships, they contend that development ought to be based, in the first instance at least, on valorising and harnessing local and indigenous resources as well as the network - third level institutions and actors. These resources are not just ingredients in respect of shaping firms' activities but also regional policy environment; they are ingredients of regional identity and perception, thus underscoring the linkages and complementarity between the economic, the social and the natural environment.

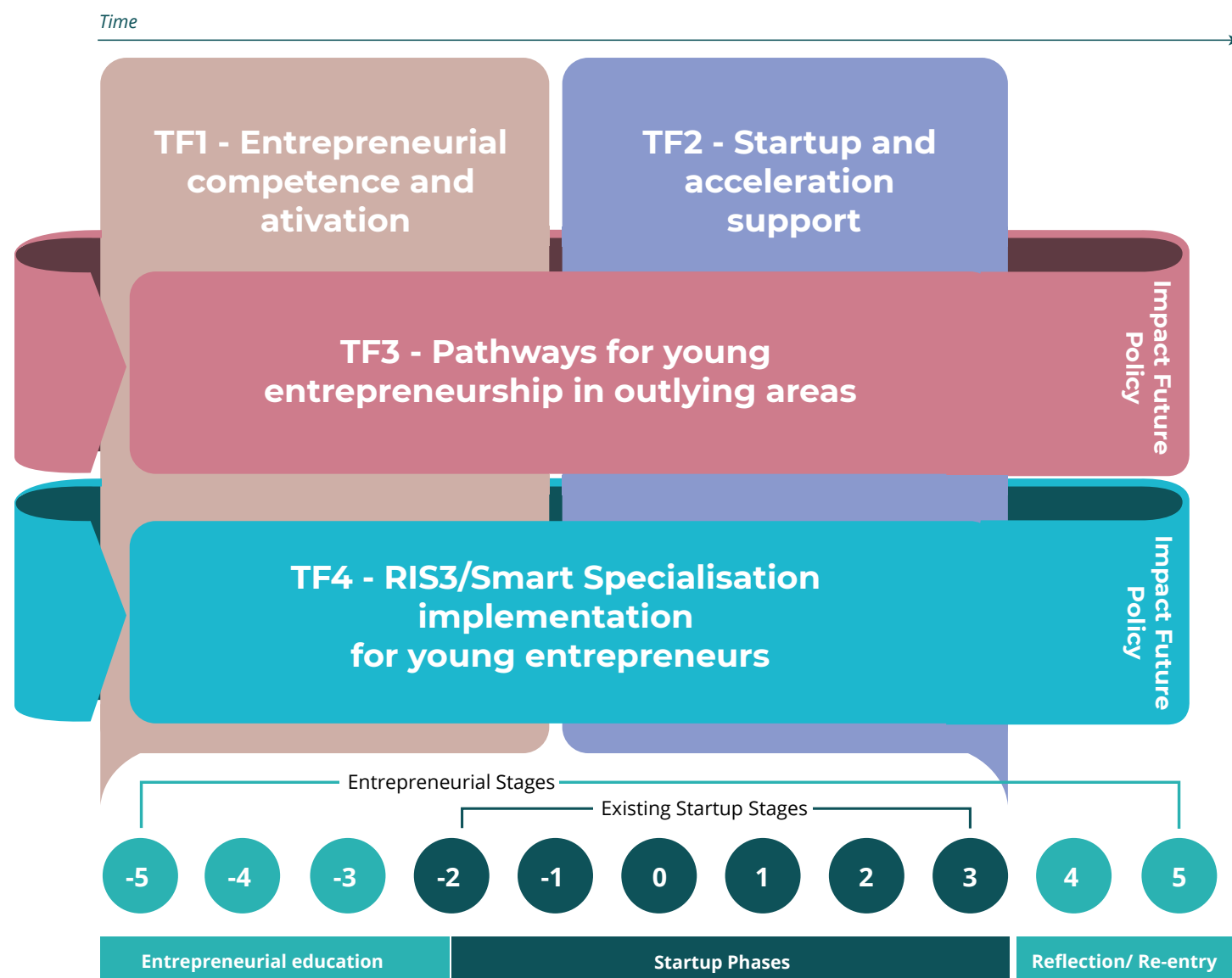
**“harnessing
local and
indigenous
resources”**

Learning from Best Practices

iEER brought a community of nearly 600 practitioners who work on entrepreneurship policy and support to learn best practices.



Based on the impacts and functions of best practices in the context of entrepreneurship ecosystem development, these best practices have been sorted into four themes. The first two themes are “TF1 - Entrepreneurial competence and activation” and “TF2 - Startup and acceleration support” which constitutes the lifespan of an entrepreneur – ideation, startup, growth and acceleration. The last two themes are “TF3 - Pathways for young entrepreneurship in outlying areas” and “TF4 - RIS3/ Smart Specialisation implementation for young entrepreneurs” are a horizontal principle that tackles the broader issues and role of a regional authority in the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem.



iEER themes mapped against entrepreneurial development phases

In the topic of “entrepreneurial competence and mindset activation”, five best practices were identified. **Aula-Emprende** is a training programme from Valencia. In a nutshell, it is a programme to train the trainers and encourage professors to teach entrepreneurship in classes. **Entrepreneurial Society** from Helsinki-Uusimaa is a student based and driven society for students. It is a bottom-up approach and activity which promotes entrepreneurial mindset among young students. **Contamination Lab** from Marche is a multi-discipline incubator and space for students), **Pepit**, presented by Hauts de France, is a national status programme for the entrepreneurial student which guarantee access for the student to have access to entrepreneurship training

and learning. **Student companies** from Brandenburg is an incubator programme for young students.

In the topic of “startup and acceleration support”, five outstanding best practices were selected. **Hubhouse** from Hauts de France is a network of incubators and of networks funded by Hauts-de-France, **SLUSH** from Helsinki-Uusimaa is one of the biggest startup and investor matching event and conference driven by the entrepreneurs for the entrepreneurs. **New Frontiers** presented by Kerry is a national funding programme for entrepreneurs, **STARTUPV** from Valencia is a network of incubator programme among 5 public universities funded by Valencia regional government and Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology, **RCiTT**, from West Pomerania, is a regional incubator and programme.

The third topic on how to effectively support entrepreneurs in outlying areas. It identified five outstanding best practices which operate to support the path for young entrepreneurs in outlying areas. It includes **Back To Work Enterprise Allowance** from Kerry, which is a scheme encourages people getting certain social welfare payments to be self-employment. **CEDES Centres** from Valencia is a coordination of municipal programme supporting startups. **Factory of the Future** from Southern Denmark is an incubator programme for creative entrepreneurs and education on civil servants. **Success through succession** from Northern Ireland is a family business support and training. **Young companies** from Brandenburg is an incubator programme in rural areas of Brandenburg.

The fourth topic is how to work with young entrepreneurs and business in RIS3 (smart specialisation). Four best practices were identified. The **digital health venture** forum from Valencia is a forum facilitating the entrepreneurship of students and young graduates. **Scale-up Denmark** is a national acceleration programme in the specialisation areas of Southern Denmark. **Patent and knowledge bank programme** from Valencia is a platform to integrate patterns and commercialisation process. **Valencia Entrepreneur Council** is a multi-level decision making body for entrepreneurial policies.

Policy Development

Defining paths and solutions for thriving
entrepreneurial ecosystems



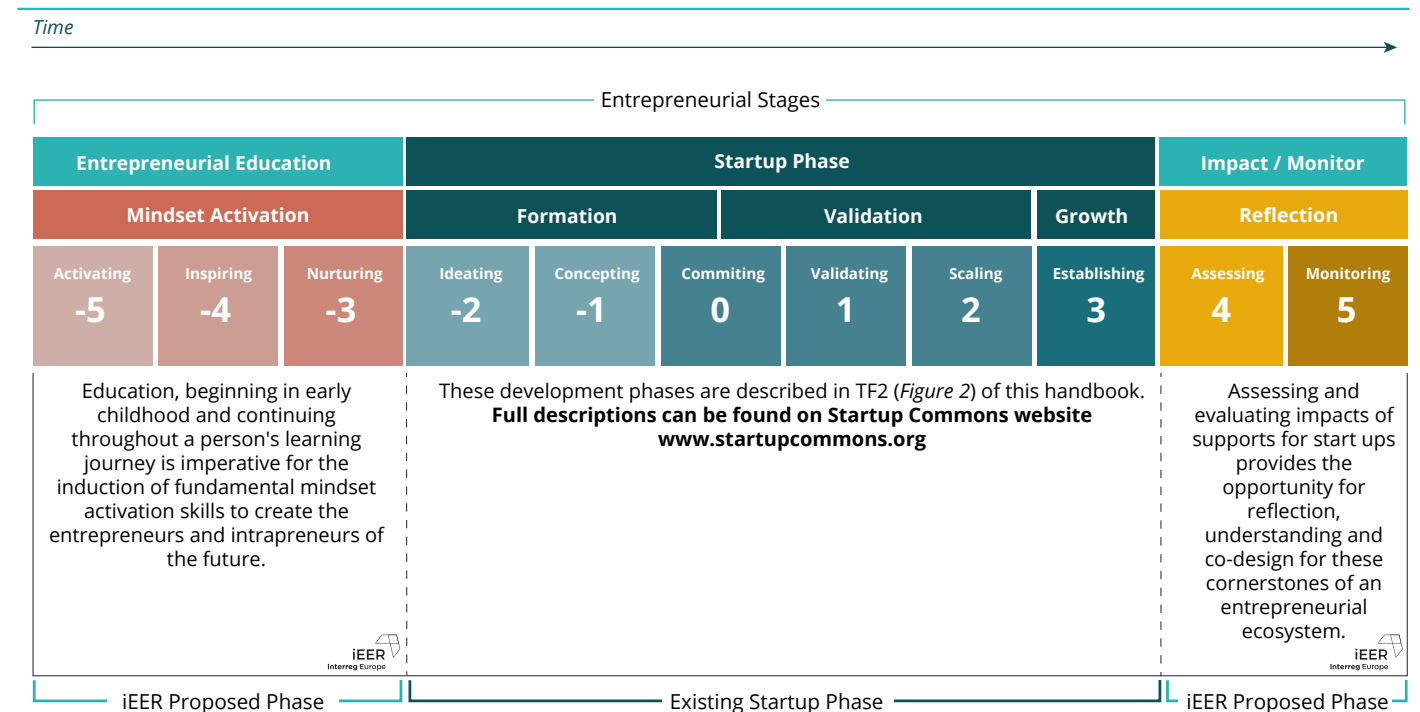


Policy Development

Defining Paths and Solutions for Thriving Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Conceptualising a Framework

In order to reflect the complexity of the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem and the role of the regions in the policy context, iEER has adapted the startup development phases presented in the [TF2 report](#) and extended the concept with additional stages for entrepreneurial education and monitoring impacts. With such a framework, the iEER have been able to collect and group the good practices to reflect the role of a regional authority and its support in the business stages - ideation, startup and scale up.



Conceptual phases -5 to -3 and phases 4 and 5 proposed by iEER

Entrepreneurial Education

Two of the key findings which were derived from the iEER project through the thematic focus themes and overall project methodology was the intrinsic role of education in developing entrepreneurial competence and mindset activation. Through studying the various best practices there was a general consensus made by the iEER project that the role of entrepreneurial education is needed at an early stage in a person's learning journey. There are many good practices available through the higher education institutes in iEER regions but entrepreneurial education needs to begin many years before higher education and should be instilled throughout the education spectrum from early childhood education, through primary and secondary education and inclusive of further, vocational and community education.

iEER therefore proposes an expansion of the Startup Commons framework to include a preliminary phase called "Entrepreneurial Education". This first phase is focused on mindset activation and includes the stages of activating, inspiring and nurturing mindset activation.

One of the iEER outstanding good practices is Aula Emprende. Initiated in Valencia region in 2009, it is recognised for its impact and results in enhancing entrepreneurial competence and mindset of the young people in the region. A mindset to tackle challenges, determination to overcome hurdles and ability to think out of the box and to find solutions are key characters of a successful entrepreneur. The Aula Emprende Program aims to activate the professors and teachers to take an active role in nurturing entrepreneurial competence of young people in the classroom. The creation of a network of regions using similar methods to promote entrepreneurial spirit to ensure quality through certification (an element of this good practice) offers a European added value for interregional transfer and adoption.

Impact and Monitoring

It is essential to continuously monitor and evaluate the various supports available to an entrepreneur to ensure that they are as dynamic as the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem is. We have learned that 'a one size fits all' model or attitude is not conducive to the needs of an entrepreneur and a more tailored personal/business/place centred approach is needed. In order to develop more effective and valuable supports for the entrepreneurial ecosystem, iEER proposes an additional "Impact and Monitoring" phase to the framework previously discussed.

Assessing and evaluating impacts of supports for startups provides the opportunity for reflection, understanding and co-design for these cornerstones of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. As a general principle, the iEER regions optimize the support of the European Structural funds in the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems and thus improve the performance of the structural fund policy in creating growth and jobs. Tools with possibilities to measure impacts and results of policy intervention are fundamental for policy improvement. In addition to the 20 best practices presented in the handbook, tools which evaluate policy impact have been identified by the iEER project including HEInnovate (European Commission/OECD), Astrid (Hauts de France) and "Monitoring and Effects Measurement 2015" (Southern Denmark). The conceptual phase of "Impact and Monitoring" was further explored with the iEER Growth grid as inspiration for future development.



iEER Growth Grid Concept

The overall task of monitoring and evaluating the impacts of the European structural funds are designated to the European Commission DG Regio. However, managing authorities or intermediate bodies of the structural fund programmes are also keen to prove the worth of a given intervention. It is commonly recognised that high-quality impact evaluations generate learning relevant amongst policymakers, yet they are typically set-up or dedicated for one agency, country or project.

When it comes to introducing such a monitoring tool into an interregional tool to monitor the impacts - interoperability and key performance indicator (KPI) raised as key challenges for integrated development. The interoperability of such a new tool with other existing tools in the region with international standards hinder the development of an innovative monitoring tool. There has been a gap identified in the learning stages during phase 1 in most regions in the **ongoing evaluation of their ecosystems**.

The peer reviews and regional report analysis offered an optimum avenue for regions to begin benchmarking and cross referencing each of the ten ecosystems. In addition, a concept called the **iEER Growth Grid** was created as a possible tool for development post implementation phase.

The **iEER Growth Grid** concept is a web based software tool to facilitate iEER in monitoring their action plans as well as evaluating their interregional entrepreneurial ecosystems in order to improve how structural funds are used optimally in the regions which arose as a result from the learning in phase 1. The concept was designed to gather data inputs and also generate real time data visualisations and analysis focused on entrepreneurial ecosystem benchmarking.

Inspiration for the Growth Grid

During the peer visits, the iEER team assessed other monitoring approaches that had been developed in partner regions such as

- **HEInnovate** - Self Assessment tools for HEI's interested in evaluating the entrepreneurial and innovative nature of their higher education environment.. An initiative of the European Commission, DG Education and Culture and the OECD LEED Forum, and supported by a panel of six independent experts
- **Astride** - Web access platform and database that consolidates ecosystem activity facilitated by NFID (Hauts-De-France)
- **Monitoring and effects measurement 2015** Publication based on the Structural Funds programme in the Region of Southern Denmark 2007-2011

These practices helped the iEER team to design a recommendation for partners to assess and monitor growth, performance and impact of entrepreneurship through existing regional/interregional policy instruments.

Core Features of the Growth Grid

The iEER Growth Grid concept has three core features as listed below:

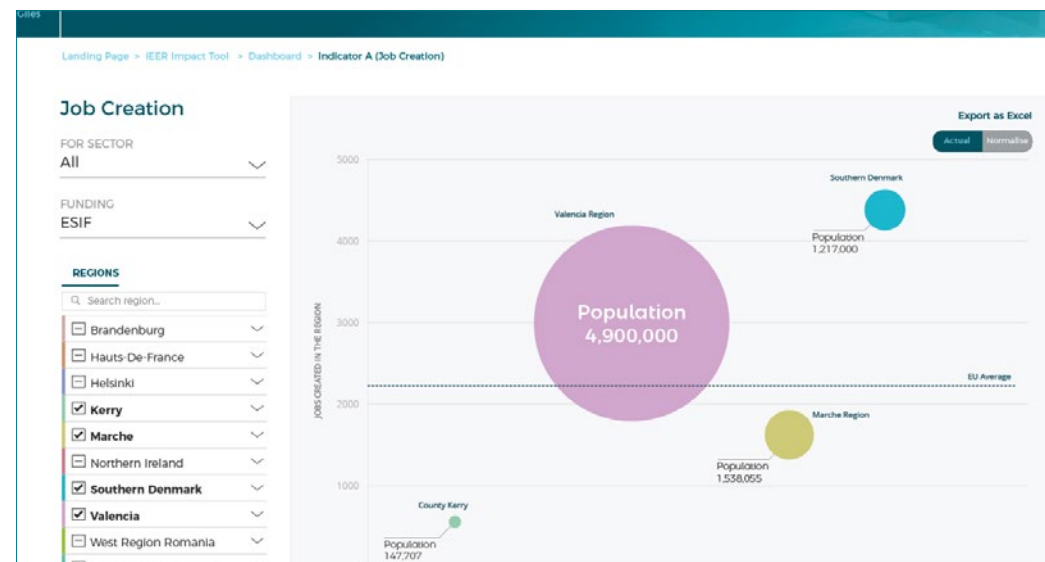
- Self assessment
- Benchmarking
- Monitoring of Impact

The **self assessment feature** will allow end users (local stakeholders groups made up of regional/local authorities, HEIs, agencies and startups themselves) to self assess their entrepreneurial ecosystem incrementally (for example every 6 or 12 months) based on predetermined indicators. A key output of the self assessment tool will be **the transfer of best practices** and resources for the domains that are in need of attention.



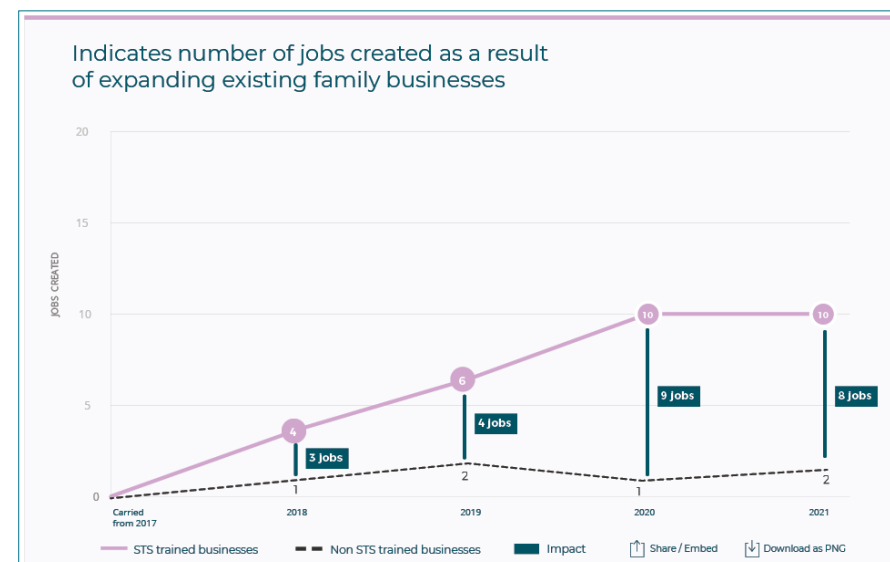
Self Assessment tool showing recommendations of best practices based on result

The **benchmarking feature** will allow users to input common indicators that are attainable for all regions in order to compare other partners and themselves from previous measurements. The purpose of aggregating these common indicators (e.g. job creation, number of incubators, sectors) is to **allow the user to view/benchmark their regional data against partners of their choosing**.



Benchmarking tool showing regions being selected to generate interactive downloadable data visuals

The **monitoring feature** will allow the regions to monitor regional specific actions. While the assessment and benchmarking tool use common indicators to evaluate the current state of entrepreneurship in the region, this third feature will allow the user to monitor actions adopted by the region in order to boost areas in need of attention. The impact evaluation of these actions will be measured using counter-factual methodology. Using this methodology the tool will be able to **compare a group influenced by European Structural Funds** with a 'control group' (same profile of people, entrepreneurs or startups) that have **not** been involved or influenced by European financial supports.



Impact tool showing impact measures based on a concept action being influenced by European Structural Funds. In this case, impact is shown as the difference in the number of jobs created.

Experience Capitalised into Actions

iEER Action Plans

The iEER action plans set out the development priorities, selection of good practices and dedicated support of eleven European Growth and Job Operational programmes, along with other regional policies for the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. This work is based on the co-creation and peer-learning of nearly 600 stakeholders in the regions. The iEER project learning process helped the regional authorities to identify the areas in need of policy attention and solutions to remedy challenges in the ecosystems. These actions are mainly served to transfer a broad scope of initiatives including Valencia Entrepreneurship Council, Aula Emprende, Comeback Elbe-Elster, Scale-up Denmark and Slush throughout the partner regions.

In the past two years, the pre-assumptions of regions based on the development needs of their entrepreneurial ecosystems has been confirmed. The importance of coherent policy interventions and involvement of multi (quadruple-helix) actors have been highlighted throughout the process.

It has been commonly identified in these regions that actors predominantly operate in silos and the policy instruments supporting different stages of business and entrepreneurial ventures remain scattered. For instance, in the context of the iEER project, the instruments supporting "entrepreneurial competence and mindset activation" and "startup and acceleration support" are funded by the European Social Fund and by the European Regional Development Fund. The concept of an entrepreneurial ecosystem and collaborative platforms such as Valencia Entrepreneurship Council, Patent Bank and Scale-up Denmark have been positively perceived by the iEER regions. These good practices offer the regions a new way to pool efforts and also consolidate multi-streams of funding in order to invest smartly. In order to achieve this, the multi-level policy supports and funding should be further reinforced and harmonized, taking into account the decreasing resources of funding available to the public sector in Europe.

European impacts

The intensive cooperation in the past two years has led the iEER regions to discover common development needs for their ecosystems. A solid foundation for future European partnership has been formed between and beyond these ten regions in their efforts to develop their entrepreneurial ecosystem. These priorities include promoting the entrepreneurial mindset of young people and the public sector – extending the good practice models of entrepreneurial education (Aula Emprende), family business (Success Through Succession) and creativity (Factory of the Future) which in essence support the growth and acceleration of startups. Other priorities promote activating regions to implement the Smart Specialisation Strategy that focus on the acceleration and scale up support to startups and participation in pan European networks such as the Startup Europe Regions network (SERN).

While the actions are very much focused on the development of entrepreneurship, the competence and infrastructure in the public sector to support the renewal of economy and industry should not be overlooked. Digitalisation and interoperability of public services at local, regional, national and European level is crucial to avoid the duplication of efforts and to increase the information flow and accessibility of services. It requires the further development of digital platforms, utilizing the example of the iEER Growth Grid concept and other mentioned digital ecosystem tools, for the simplification of the legal registry and bureaucracy, stakeholder collaboration and monitoring of implementation and impacts.

To conclude, some of our high-level representatives have shared their thoughts on boosting innovative entrepreneurial ecosystems in regions for young entrepreneurs.

Administrations must act following a roadmap that includes the following lines and also objectives in specific groups:

1. Support the growth and consolidation of new companies with concrete measures
2. Achieve a high number of projects to become large companies, which in turn generate quality employment.
3. Increase the number of women entrepreneurs
4. That entrepreneurship contributes to fight against the phenomenon of depopulation.



Mr Francisco Álvarez
General Director of Economy,
Entrepreneurship and
Cooperativism (Valencia Region, Spain)



Reiner Kneifel-Haverkamp
Head of Unit, Brandenburg Ministry of
Justice, for European Affairs and
Consumer Protection (Germany)

The will to keep track of the **fast changing trends** in startup support, the **readiness** to learn from other regions experiences and the **resolve** to do everything for **and with** the startups and all the stakeholders concerned are key elements for successful interregional cooperation.

To take full advantage of all opportunities for **economic and social development**, the regions need to **support local entrepreneurs**, encourage entrepreneurship among **children and teenagers** to start their own businesses.



Olgierd Geblewicz
Marshal of the Westpomeranian Region, Member of the EU Committee of the Regions (West Pomerania, Poland)

There are so many offers in support entrepreneurial ecosystems but I think that the regional people and SMEs don't connect with them because they are not aware of them

The first step to become noticed is to write/
speak in the language of the region. The **EU** has to translate their projects, programs, applications and supports very quickly in the **respective national language.** And then promote the offers in a **smart** way.



Karin Jäger
Brandenburg Ministry for
Economic Affairs and Energy
(Germany)



Karsten Uno Petersen
Member of the EU Committee of the
Regions, Member of the Regional
Council, Chair of the Committee for
Innovation (Southern Denmark)

iEER has provided us with important knowledge of challenges and solutions to improve conditions for startups in the European Regions – **in particular in outlying areas.**

European cities and regions have seen vast changes in the employment landscape; older traditional manufacturing jobs have been swept away by increasing global competition and technological advances. If cities and regions are to adapt to a changing world, **entrepreneurship must be visible** and be the **corner stone of economic development plans.**



Cllr Kieran McCarthy (Ind)
Cork City Council
Member of the EU Committee of
the Regions (Ireland)

When talking about entrepreneurial ecosystems, I feel that it is crucial to mention the importance of **engaging the private sector** from the very beginning. Here the role of government/local government is indirect and one of a facilitator, not a manager. However, local actors, especially local government should not assist youth businesses directly but create conditions for them by removing the obstacles that prevent them from growing.



Trevor Cummings
Councillor of Ards and North
Down Borough Council, United
Kingdom (Northern Ireland)



Dr. Volker Offermann
Head of Unit, Brandenburg Ministry of
Labor, Social Affairs, Health, Women and
Family (Germany)

Young people should recognize that **entrepreneurship is a promising alternative** to (other-directed) employment. Local policies can foster the sensitization of young people beginning in school and further strengthening entrepreneurial competences in HEI. Successful regional entrepreneurs can support this as role models

To boost the startups and scale-up of business in regions, we should build on our **smart specialisation strategy.** It is to invest smartly and to set frameworks to guarantee quality of business support services, mobility of people, availability of funding and the access to market for growth-oriented enterprise. This can only be achieved when we **cooperate beyond regional borders** and when we take actions.



Ossi Savolainen
Regional Mayor for Helsinki-
Uusimaa Region (Finland)

Epilogue

With this handbook, the iEER project partners wish to thank members of the iEER high-level committee and local steering groups representing entrepreneurs, business support agencies, higher education institutes and public sector representatives for their commitment and contribution to the iEER activities. With the support of the European Committee of the Regions, the European Commission, and Interreg Europe (co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund), this cooperation will flourish.

We see the iEER-project and its cooperation as an excellent example of how regional policy makers and stakeholders can work together for young entrepreneurs in such a complex regional context. A special credit goes to the iEER partner Institute of Technology, Tralee for the excellent coordination of the content, editorial and visualisation of this handbook.

It is with great pride that we see the fruits of the iEER project come together. We hope the readers of this handbook will find inspiration to boost innovative entrepreneurship in their regions.

Christine Chang - Coordinator, iEER

Special Thanks

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