



INNOVA FOSTER

**FOSTERING STARTUP & INNOVATION
ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE**

Good Practices Study

Index Number: PGI02237



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1. INTRODUCTION: DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE AND THE PROPOSED APPROACH

SMEs are the backbone of the European economy. They represent 99.8% of European companies, employ over 90 million people and generate 56.8% of value added in the EU-28 non-financial business sector.¹ Recognizing their importance, the EC implemented the “**Small Business Act**” for Europe (SBA)² that provides “a comprehensive SME policy framework, promotes entrepreneurship and anchors the ‘Think Small First’ principle in law and policy making to strengthen SMEs’ competitiveness”. The Small Business Act for Europe has 10 core principles:

- 1) Create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded.
- 2) Ensure that honest entrepreneurs who have faced bankruptcy quickly get a second chance.
- 3) Design rules according to the ‘Think Small First’ principle.
- 4) Make public administrations responsive to SMEs’ needs.
- 5) Adapt public policy tools to SMEs’ needs: facilitate SMEs’ participation in public procurement and better use State Aid possibilities for SMEs.
- 6) Facilitate SMEs’ access to finance and develop a legal and business environment supportive to timely payments in commercial transactions.
- 7) Help SMEs to benefit more from the opportunities offered by the Single Market.
- 8) Promote the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation.
- 9) Enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities.
- 10) Encourage and support SMEs to benefit from the growth of markets.

Furthermore, in an effort to underline the importance of regions in the implementation of the SBA, the Interreg Europe Programme, through its Policy Learning Platform, has published the policy brief “**The role of regions in the implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe**”. This document posits that regional authorities are closer to SMEs, have better information about regional economic structure and have a better understanding of local companies’ needs. As such, the document states that regional authorities can support the implementation of the Small Business Act by:

- Providing education and training;
- Promoting entrepreneurship;
- Providing advice and financial support for SMEs;
- Providing an SME-friendly administration;
- Ensuring that entrepreneurs that have faced bankruptcy are given the same treatment as first-time entrepreneurs;
- Reducing administrative burdens on SMEs;
- Creating a single point of contact for SMEs;
- Creating SME-friendly public procurement processes;

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/32601/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>

² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/small-business-act_en

Startups are a special case within SMEs, because as stated in the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan³:

- Entrepreneurship makes economies more competitive and innovative;
- Commercializing new ideas creates wealth;
- Without the jobs created by startups average net employment growth in Europe would be negative.

This action plan goes on to state that in order **“to make entrepreneurship the growth engine of our economy Europe needs a thorough, far-reaching cultural change”**. This is because European entrepreneurs face a challenging environment where education does not provide the right foundation for entrepreneurs, access to markets and credit is difficult, there is a fear of punitive sanctions in case of failure and procedures are bureaucratic. Furthermore, the document states that there is “a widespread culture that does not recognise or reward entrepreneurial endeavours enough”.

In addition, there is a significant gap in Europe in the number of startups that successfully reach the scaleup stage. Although Europe has come to be on par with the United States in the number of startups, only a comparatively small percentage of these companies grow into larger firms. According to a communication from the European Commission titled “Europe's next leaders: The Start-up and Scale-up Initiative”, up to **1 million new jobs could be created in the EU** in the next 20 years **if the share of scaleups would match that of the US**.⁴

In a paper called “From Start-up to Scale-up: Examining Public Policies for the Financing of High-Growth Ventures”⁵, Duruflé et al. (2016) state that this scaleup gap is mainly due to a financing gap. They identified 6 core problems of financing scaleups in Europe that they define as challenges (the paper actually compares the United States to Europe and Canada, but for the purpose of this study only Europe is mentioned):

- “Relative to the US, the European venture capital market remains smaller. Importantly, the gap is larger at the scale-up stage than the start-up stage.
- Financing scale-up requires large venture equity rounds, which in turn requires sufficiently large funds. Relative to the US, Europe has fewer large experienced venture equity funds.
- Given the relatively lower access to scale-up financing in Europe, successful European companies often seek to be bought out. Acquirers are likely to come from abroad, especially from the US. However, there is no systematic evidence about how this affects the underlying activities of the acquired companies.
- Venture debt in the US complements venture equity as a source of funding scaleups. However, the European market for venture debt remains underdeveloped.
- European stock markets have not been able to serve as a major source of funding for scale-ups, nor provide an important source of liquidity for venture equity investors.
- Secondary sales of shares are an alternative for giving investors liquidity, but there are significant informational challenges in this market. Solutions are beginning to emerge in the US, less so in Europe.”

³ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/promoting-entrepreneurship/action-plan_en

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/europes-next-leaders-start-and-scale-initiative-1_en

⁵ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2913512

It is therefore undeniable that SMEs, and startups in particular, play a pivotal role in providing smart sustainable growth and the creation of jobs in Europe. As such, it is of the utmost importance to support entrepreneurs and startups in their journey towards growth.

INNOVA FOSTER aims at leveraging Startups (**scalable, high-potential SMEs with less than 5 years of life**) growth through their engagement into the innovation processes at local or regional level and improving their role as regional and industry innovation providers in **seven European regions**, and hence, the results of the **7 policies addressed** by the project, with their engagement into the innovation processes as regional and industry innovation providers.

Fig. 1. Innova Foster Partners

Role	Partner	Policy	Country
Lead Partner	INCYDE Foundation	Spanish Smart Growth Operative Programme	Spain
Partner	Torun Regional Development Agency	Torun Regional Development Strategy	Poland
Partner	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC)	Greater Manchester European Structural Investment Fund	United Kingdom
Partner	Cork City Council	Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014 -2020	Ireland
Partner	Malta Enterprise	ERDF OP1 – Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	Malta
Partner	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014-2020-- REGIONAL Development Programme of Podravje Region 2014-2020	Slovenia
Partner	Tartu City Government	The development strategy "Tartu 2030"	Estonia

Source: Innova Foster

For this purpose, Innova Foster includes **interregional visits, local stakeholders engagement and joint research** into improvement of regional and local policies and programmes to support the growth of high-potential SMEs to make them ramp-up, growth and get global.

In order to exchange knowledge and create their own policy-mix and **Action Plan**, all Innova Foster partners have worked on an internal and external analysis of **Good practices** about the regional situation of Startups and innovation ecosystems.

In order to facilitate implementation, these actions were organised in a **two-step process**:

- **Part A:** in a first step, trends and global policies that can serve the purpose of the project were analysed and exchange visits were made to each partner in order to:
 - Know the local ecosystems of entrepreneurship and innovation;
 - Identify good practices;
 - Help each partner determine how to improve their contribution to the development of a powerful ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship from the public sphere.
- **Part B: each partner establishes its own Action Plan, which is then implemented and evaluated during the next two years.**

These Action Plans are implemented as demonstrators, de-risking the development and scale-up of novel service systems, encouraging engagement with stakeholders and users, sharing experience across Europe and identifying clusters of expertise and opportunities for partnership.

Fig. 2. Innova Foster Partnership Location



Source: Innova Foster Website – Google Maps

In order to **further amplify the impact and sustainability of the project results**, the present study is proposed, analysing the problematic object of the project as a whole, as well as the solutions or improvements identified, including good practices recommended.

2. STUDY DESCRIPTION AND CONTENTS

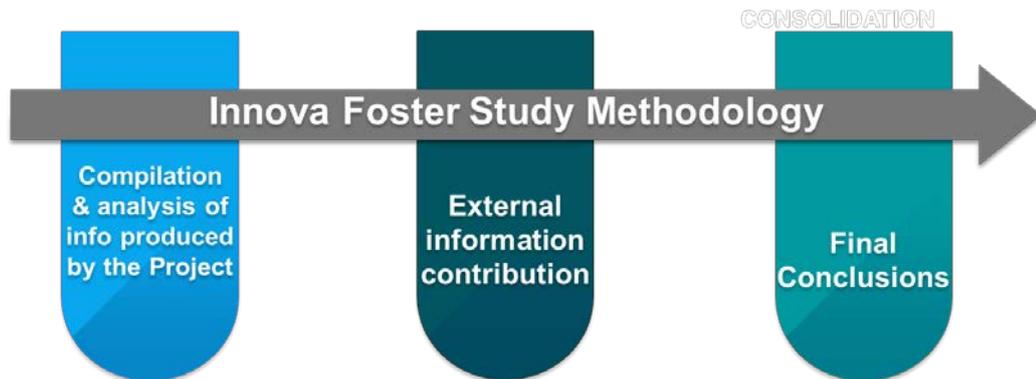
As mentioned in the introduction section, the main objectives of the present study are to **further amplify the impact and sustainability of the project results**. With these in mind, the study includes the gathered information and main conclusions with the following **structure**:

- **Introduction**: Description of the challenge and the proposed approach to address it.
- **Methodology** applied for the elaboration of the study:
 - Compilation and **analysis of the information elaborated by the partners** during the implementation of the project:
 - ✓ **Local ecosystem diagnosis** of the partners.
 - ✓ **Thematic workshops**.
 - ✓ **Good Practices** compiled.
 - Gathering of **external information** to enrich the study:
 - ✓ A **compiled SWOT analysis** based on the partners' local ecosystem diagnostics.
 - ✓ Case Studies: **2 additional Good Practices** are added to the ones analysed by the partners, taking into account the regional needs identified after the analysis of all the information produced by the project.
 - ✓ **Interviews** with project partners in order to maximize the useful information provided by each Case Study, in order to achieve conclusions of more significance.
 - ✓ **Stakeholders'** feedback on the ecosystem diagnoses.
 - **Final conclusions** are drawn from the analysis of all the information previously collected.
- **Summary SWOT analysis** is prepared based on the partners' local ecosystem diagnostics.
- **Case Studies**: compilation of the **16 Good Practices** identified.
- **Final conclusions**: main solutions and improvements identified through the present study, which should be taken into account when developing Action Plans addressing the Startups' engagement into the innovation processes at local or regional levels

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to create a solid foundation for the study, the process began with the analysis of the current situation of the support to the Startups growth on their role as regional and industry innovation providers within the partnering organizations, and other entities with relevant similarities, including three steps describe in the graphic below:

Fig. 3. Innova Foster Study definition process



Source: Innova Foster

These three steps contain the following specifics:

- **Compilation and analysis of the information** elaborated by the partners during the implementation of the project:
 - A **local ecosystem diagnosis** of the actual conditions of the agencies and the 7 regions where the partners are established regarding their local ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - **Case studies**: The 14 good practices identified (2 per partner) explained, which will serve as an example to all the partnership.
 - The documents generated during the **thematic workshops** in the following areas:
 - Innovative public procurement
 - Incubation centres as platforms for innovation
 - Incentives for cooperation between industry and Startups
 - Supply side innovation vouchers and innovation management support
 - Support to clusters in emerging industries driven by innovation
 - Regional awareness raising measures
 - Global trends to Start-up linkage on innovation
- Gathering of **external information** to enrich the study:
 - A **summary SWOT analysis** is prepared based on the partners' local ecosystem diagnosis.
 - **2 good practices added** by external experts once they have analysed the information of the first step, containing the main advantages identified which would benefit the partners of the Project.

- **Interviews** with project partners: In order to supplement the information gathered, interviews are conducted with project partners, to obtain their feedback in order to reflect the main information on the Case Studies and lessons learned by each one.
- **Final conclusions** are drawn from the analysis of all the information previously collected, related to the regional/local implementation needs, challenges and risks, trying to make them as practical as possible in order to facilitate its implementation through the action plans to be developed by the partners. Also, the feedback of the partners regarding the participation and role of the **stakeholders** is included in this section.

In summary, based on the results of all the previously defined actions, the present study was compiled.

4. LOCAL ECOSYSTEM DIAGNOSIS: SUMMARY SWOT

As part of the learning experience of the project, Innova Foster implemented interregional exchange visits, one hosted by each of the 7 partners. Within these visits, each hosting partner elaborated a **local ecosystem diagnosis** of their actual conditions regarding their local ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship.

These local diagnoses should answer several important questions:

- What's the regional/local situation of the start-up and innovation ecosystem?
- What are the needs?
- What are the best practices (and why)?
- What should be done to improve the policy?

Also, these local diagnoses were peer reviewed during the interregional visits by all partners and participating stakeholders. This feedback was then taken into account for the elaboration of each respective Action Plan. For the purpose of this study we'll only briefly describe the main characteristics of each ecosystem. The full ecosystem diagnoses can be found on the Innova Foster website⁶.

INCYDE FOUNDATION, SPAIN

In Spain, the startup scene is booming with Madrid and Barcelona at the forefront as the main hubs of activity. The economic crisis has generated favourable conditions for the appearance of a greater number of startups such as low rent for working spaces and low wages. However, most new businesses are created out of necessity as a means of self-employment, and therefore these new businesses are low tech and service oriented (B2C). Furthermore, the general attitude towards risk and failure, and the social status of entrepreneurs, although improving, are still unfavourable to entrepreneurial activity. Nonetheless, the crisis seems to have created a new breed of entrepreneur and with increasing amounts of local funding available, these founders have created a new generation of world-class companies. There are numerous financial and tax incentives available and a variety of programmes that support research and innovation.

The country has a good network of science and technology parks, incubators and accelerators that support startups. In addition, the amount of funding available to startups has grown in the last few years, with a notable increase in seed and pre-seed capital. This growth can be partially explained by the appearance of new investors, mainly business angels and venture capital. Furthermore, globally recognised business schools are present locally so there is huge managerial potential. The availability of talent and the comparatively low costs of Madrid have attracted companies like Google and Amazon.

TORUN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, POLAND

Poland is ranked 38th out of 127 countries in the Global Innovation Index, a ranking that assesses 81 indicators, including data on patent applications, political environment, education, infrastructure and business. When it comes to starting a business, the country is ranked 107th out 190 because of the bureaucracy and time required to start a new business. The Kuyavian-Pomeranian region has network of incubators and acceleration programmes that provide support to entrepreneurs, however the

⁶ <https://www.interregeurope.eu/innovafoster/local-diagnosis/>

acceleration programmes need to be improved, especially in regard to the involvement of private funding.

Nowadays, local startups rely solely on EU funding for support and one of the region's main limitations is the number of local Venture Capital funds. Only three exist and all have public support. In addition, cooperation between universities/research centres and businesses is low and the general attitude towards risk and failure does not favour entrepreneurship.

OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL, UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester ranks 15th out of 60 European cities in the European Digital City Index that measures how well different European cities support digital entrepreneurship. Oldham and the Greater Manchester area have seen rapid growth in startup numbers in recent years. This growth however is apparently connected to people who are now classed as self-employed as they move from unemployment into low/insecure work.

The region has fully operational private and public support programmes for startups. These programmes include support for livelihood startups (self-employment and early stage businesses), growth startups (companies with the potential to turnover 250,000 GBP or employ 5 staff within the first 3 years) and scale-ups. There is, however, a general lack of awareness amongst local businesses regarding the support that is available to them, even though there is a strong business support offer.

CORK CITY COUNCIL, IRELAND

In a strong pro-business environment, where innovation is a key source of competitive advantage, Ireland demonstrates the highest percentage of high-growth firms across the EU. The nature of Ireland's ecosystem makes it easy for key stakeholders involved in innovation to interact and Ireland has been cited as the most R&D effective country in the EU. Over the last 25 years, Cork has consistently attracted many of the world's largest companies and the region is now home to global market leaders in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, ICT, biotechnology, professional services and international financial services.

In Cork, the startup community is widely supported and the success of the region is characterised by the strong inter-agency partnerships and cross-community collaboration, all contributing to world class educational standards, good connectivity, strength in global business sectors, a thriving startup and SME sector and ability to attract talent and overseas investment. Nevertheless, there is still insufficient investment in key enabling infrastructure and technology.

MALTA ENTERPRISE, MALTA

Malta's central position in the Mediterranean makes it a highly strategic dynamic hub in Europe. Being one of the world's smallest and most densely populated countries its startup ecosystem especially booms in the e-gaming and online betting sector, and each month new tech-centric events and new ventures are happening. 39% of local startups were founded by 'immigrants' who state that the primary reason startups move to Malta is due to better regulation and policies.

However, some existing startups complain that the regulatory environment needs to be improved, namely bankruptcy laws and capital gains tax. In addition, the business - academia connections and the activity of private Venture Capital funds also require significant improvement.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTRE BISTRA PTUJ, SLOVENIA

Slovenia is ranked 30th out of 190 countries in the World Bank's Doing Business Survey 2017, which compares regulatory conditions for doing business in different countries. In addition, Slovenia is one of the top 5 countries with the least number of procedures to start a new business and is the country

where it is cheapest to launch a new corporation. Regarding innovation, Slovenia has the highest rate of SME collaboration in innovation with higher education or research in the OECD.

Although Slovenians hold successful entrepreneurs in high regard, their belief that entrepreneurship is a good career choice is much lower. Furthermore, the risk averse culture and weak local market also hinder entrepreneurship. The country has comparatively high labour costs and over the long-term businesses will face increasing recruitment difficulties due to a declining population and high emigration levels.

TARTU CITY GOVERNMENT, ESTONIA

Estonia has made a name for itself for the innovative application of communications technology. It has created a paperless society where you can even become an e-resident of the country and has one of the most liberal tax systems in the world (only corporate income tax is paid on dividends). Estonia has also created a startup visa that can be used by non-EU entrepreneurs who wish to be a part of the Estonian startup community and also by Estonian startups wishing to recruit foreign talent. The city of Tartu is home to a rapidly growing ICT ecosystem which has attracted the attention of venture capitalists as well as foreign ICT companies. In 2016, the city hosted more than 60 startup events involving over 5000 people.

The startup scene in Tartu is characterized by many startups, who have partially grown out of the large ICT companies and who supplement each other and form a well-working cluster. The startup community's prosperity can be largely attributed to the beneficial relationships that have developed among key players in Tartu. This has produced a nurturing and supportive ecosystem. And in working to make Tartu a truly attractive city for startup founders (from Tartu and beyond), strong and active cooperation has started to unfold among these key players (i.e sTARTUp Day). This entails developing partnerships among startup founders, the city government, Tartu University and others, that create win-win situations for all parties involved, while keeping an eye on the primary goal of continuing to improve the local startup ecosystem.

Hereunder are the inputs considered from each partner in order to make the comparative analysis:

Fig. 4. Innova Foster partners individual SWOT analysis

INTERNAL FACTORS			
	INCYDE Foundation	Torun Regional Development Agency	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
STRENGTHS (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing number of incubators, accelerators and science and technology parks • Growing number of start-up events • Highly educated human capital • Vibrant start-up communities in Barcelona and Madrid • Increasingly active Business Angels • Healthy balance between early stage and late stage funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dynamically developing startups' ecosystem • Infrastructure (incubators) • Strong academic centres • Relatively strong business support institutions • EU funds for startups • Strong IT industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good connectivity – motorways, tram, access to the rail network. • Diverse & vibrant community. • Links to further and higher education. • Sector strengths – e.g. manufacturing, logistics. • Family owned businesses wanting to stay in Oldham. • Sector-based networks/groups. • Affordable sites and premises. • Strong business support offer.
WEAKNESSES (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low quality of new enterprises (most are self-employment) • High levels of bureaucracy and taxes • Government-enabled funding and VC funds still need to grow • Training in entrepreneurship needs to be strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor education structure (dominance of the humanistic profile, insufficient number of IT graduates) • A small number of large investors • Low level of acceptance for the "risk culture", fear of investing • Lack of VC funds in the region • Low expenditure on R&D • Poor cooperation between universities and startups and business support institutions • Lack of a leading event on a national scale: innovation fair/show • Low economic and financial awareness among students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low skills and multiple deprivation. • Limited dialogue with businesses and understanding of business needs. • Lack of awareness/active promotion of the business support offer. • Business survival rates. • Limited supply of readily available good quality sites and premises. • Image.

INTERNAL FACTORS

	Cork City Council	Malta Enterprise	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Tartu City Government
STRENGTHS (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple-helix approach to economic leadership • Strong collaborative inter-agency partnerships • Thriving startup community supported by a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem • Strong pro-business environment / can-do attitude • Strong (and growing) indigenous SME community • One of the most educated workforces in the world • Excellence in RDI on across third-level research institutes • Strong track record in attracting and retaining Foreign Direct Investment • Direct access to EU markets • Strong cluster development in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing & Support capture both public/private programmes. • Support also includes integrated public/private programmes. • Market includes demand-oriented support & market creation: public procurement & other. • Corporate VC is part of private financing. Incubation is typically considered as a 'support infrastructure'. • Small cluster, growing media attention and increasing 'community' vibe and meetups • Specialist Research, Development and Innovation support is present • Availability of skilled, affordable and experienced talent confirmed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appealing lifestyle • Low cost of living • ICT infrastructure • Good knowledge of foreign languages (English, German) • Developed national startup ecosystem • Strong ecosystem in Maribor • Collaboration and openness • Famous startups • Easy and cheap registration of company • VEM (one-stop-shop) offices – services for startups free of charge • Public institutions with wide networks and experiences in collaboration programmes • International connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tartu is the economic leader of South Estonia. • Small and compact city where relevant actors and ecosystem members know each other well. • High level of qualification and education and internationally recognized research. • Strong start-up ecosystem with many start-up events and support services. • Various incubators and accelerators. • Positive competition between business consulting and incubating service providers.
WEAKNESSES (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible over dependence on FDI • Dependence on a small number of companies for high proportion of employment • Insufficient investment in key enabling infrastructure and technology • Significant lack of availability and access to quality, affordable housing within the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academia-Industry linkages still represent a largely untapped opportunity, although some initiatives ongoing regardless • Startup output: 50 –100 • Risk-averse culture, fear of failure still high • Mainstream culture not sufficiently geared towards high-growth entrepreneurship • Access to finance issue recognised and given importance potentially too much. • Insolvency framework • Fiscal issues • Lack of awareness and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk-averse culture • Giving-up culture • Most people in Slovenia would prefer that everyone had a similar standard of living • No business incubator in Ptuj • High cost of labour • Weak local market • Pushing the necessity entrepreneurship to unemployed • Lack of sales experience • Bad understanding of business with decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical mass issues among all sectors and stakeholders • Far from target markets. • Weak local market. • Absence of MNEs or big enterprises, who would create corporate programs for startups. • The local market lacks funding • There is no entity (organisation or person) that would act as community manager/ecosystem manager for the whole startup ecosystem in Tartu

EXTERNAL FACTORS			
	INCYDE Foundation	Torun Regional Development Agency	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current job market makes entrepreneurship a good option • Highest ever percentage of people who see good business opportunities • Lower rents and living costs than major EU cities • Lower salaries • Major corporates are beginning to support start-ups • Growing media coverage for entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State policy focused on the development of academic entrepreneurship • Appearing of large foreign investors • Large internal market (Poland) - possibility of testing • Inflow of foreigners, low labor costs • Convenient location in the centre of Poland and Europe (security) • Increase of "innovative" awareness among small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperation with startups – innovation carrier • Access to non-returnable funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent investment in strategic sites. • Active business leaders and potential 'ambassadors' GM Spatial Framework – new housing and employment floorspace (industrial, warehousing, office, retail, leisure). • Good business support offer and network of providers. • Apprenticeship Levy
THREATS (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low scores for technology/innovative development indicators • Fear of failure is still relatively high, although improving • People prefer wage-earning jobs to self-employment • Brain drain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monopolisation of the market by "large" players, based on their own solutions and technologies • Global downturn causing economic stagnation in Poland / global economic situation • Insufficient support for startups in the initial period (e.g. difficulty in obtaining financing in the form of a bank loan, low interest of investors in the initial period of activity of companies) • Outflow of young people from the region (brain drain) • Lack of stable legal and economic policy • A systemic gap in the science of entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued out migration of young people/skilled individuals • Disparities widening across GM – north/south divide • Regulations • Accessing EU market opportunities

EXTERNAL FACTORS				
	Cork City Council	Malta Enterprise	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Tartu City Government
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall regional population over 0.5 million • Promote the Cork region as internationally competitive/attractive location to live and to work • Many 'home-grown' firms compete globally and have built strong international brands • Continue to develop creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship skills • Emerging rural enterprise and other clusters • Continue to attract highly creative and technical people with world class research capabilities and infrastructure • Strong linkages with educator community to build on existing entrepreneurial learning and experiences • Increased awareness and responsive actions resulting from the Regional Skills Forum • Explore non-traditional finance investment models such as regional angel funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startup environment highly characterised by expat influence and globally connected • Growing emphasis on highlighted success stories • Multiple public & private support initiatives incl. incubators, early-stage acceleration & advice • Malta recognised as a jurisdiction where policy-making is nimble • An opportunity to learn from past success at fostering vertical ecosystems (e.g. Financial Services, iGaming) • Public grants, fiscal incentives, prizes available, other recent developments (e.g. Zaar) positive • Corporate VC is an opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of new entrepreneurs • Corporate startup hubs • Social entrepreneurship • Better use of R&D • Emerging markets • 4th industrial revolution – innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness for coordinated activities and planning among stakeholders. • Innova Foster project contacts as basis for cross regional cooperation. • Continuous flow of students starting their careers as entrepreneurs in Tartu. • More foreign students choose Tartu as a study destination • Start-up success stories and examples of good cooperation between different stakeholders. • Education of new entrepreneurs can improve outcomes of the startup ecosystem. • Foreign multi-national enterprises looking to invest in local startups
THREATS (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition from other city regions • Market disruption which will be faced by many different business sectors post-Brexit • Reduced bi-lateral trade flows post-Brexit • Volatility in currency markets and longer-term investment implications • Global market uncertainties in anticipation of new emerging US economic policies • Peripheral location impacting on connectivity, both physical and communications • Limited foreign language skills across the indigenous population • Rising costs potentially impacting on competitiveness and attractiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence and foresight are critical to develop policy • Risk finance limited, and access to debt finance remains problematic for innovative startups • Talent pool is limited, and specialist talent is still hard to source • Short-term issues: importing TCN talent –a question of regulatory limitations or awareness? • Long-term issues: education system and entrepreneurship • Small domestic market size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain drain • Demographics – the ageing society • Education with lower standards • High youth unemployment • Technology over business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially too many events aimed at start-ups and businesses which can bring about waste of resources • Fear of failure, lack of trust, and readiness for cooperation in the business culture. • Brain drain - many skilled engineers and scientists choose to leave the country. • Demographics as a significant threat. Estonian population is declining and there is a shortage of skilled and well-educated labour already.

Source: Innova Foster

The analysis of the different ecosystems has shown that the regions participating in the Innova Foster consortium have different characteristics. The diversity of the partnership, although enriching from the knowledge exchange perspective, makes it difficult to draw conclusions that would apply to the consortium as a whole. As such, we centred our analysis in trying to identify **common strengths and weaknesses** among some regions and matching those weaknesses to the strengths of other partners in the consortium whenever possible.

Limited access to finance

The **need to develop regional Venture Capital** was identified by Torun, while Malta reported the need to **improve access to finance** in general and Tartu identified the **lack of domestic funding**. These four regions need to improve the funding options available to the start-up ecosystem.

Risk-averse culture

A risk-averse culture is one of the challenges faced by INCYDE, Torun, Malta and Bistra. Although cultural shifts are very hard to attain, especially in the framework of a 2-year action plan, some effort could be made towards improving the overall image of risk takers such as entrepreneurs. The pro-business environment and can-do attitude of the Irish ecosystem could be used as inspiration.

Education in entrepreneurship

Similarly, the need for more widespread and **better-quality education in entrepreneurship** was reported by Torun and Malta. Entrepreneurship in these countries could benefit from the inclusion or improvement of business and entrepreneurship related subjects in schools and universities.

Fiscal and legal framework

INCYDE, Torun and Malta also reported **fiscal, legal and bureaucracy issues** that make it hard to create or manage new businesses as a challenge in their respective regions. On the other hand, Estonia and Slovenia have created a business friendly legal and fiscal framework.

Brain drain

INCYDE, Torun, Oldham, Bistra and Tartu all identified **brain drain as a threat to their startup ecosystem**, as top talent from these regions is leaving in search of better career prospects. Fostering entrepreneurship as a viable and attractive career path may help retain top talent in those regions.

To put into perspective the main characteristics of these regional innovation ecosystems, a joint SWOT was prepared to summarize their shared features.

Fig. 5. Innova Foster partners aggregate SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy start-up ecosystem in most of the partnering regions. • Strong business support offer • Highly educated human capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor dialogue and understanding of business needs • Limited access to finance • Risk-averse culture • Poor academia-Industry linkages
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of business opportunities for SMEs • Multiple public & private support initiatives and education for new entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain drain • Legal and economic policies uncertainty (Brexit...) • Demographics: ageing society, youth migrations • Peripheral location /small domestic markets depending on the region

Source: Innova Foster

5. CASE STUDIES: GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED

After careful analysis of all the learnings and exchange of experiences generated through Innova Foster's activities, the partner organizations, with input from their respective stakeholders, proceeded to collect the 14 good practices (2 per partner) that they considered most relevant.

Fig. 6. Innova Foster Good practices distribution

PARTNER	GOOD PRACTICES
INCYDE Foundation	1. Aerospace Incubator of Technological Transfer
	2. Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model (Barcelona Activa)
Torun Regional Development Agency	3. Support for Academic Entrepreneurship in the Kuyavian and Pomeranian region
	4. Startup Weekend Torun
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	5. GC Mentoring Programme
	6. VentureFest North West
Cork City Council	7. Innovation Voucher Programme
	8. Innovation Partnership Programme
Malta Enterprise	9. Business START
	10. Life Sciences Centre Setting up
Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	11. PODIM Conference
	12. TKALKA / WEAWER
Tartu City Government	13. sTARTUp Day Business Festival
	14. Kaleidoskoop/Idealab

Source: Innova Foster

5.1. INCYDE FOUNDATION

PRACTICE 1: AEROSPACE INCUBATOR OF TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFER

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

INCYDE FOUNDATION

Spain
Andalusia
Sevilla



Cámara
Sevilla

[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

This initiative's main objective is to foster regional productivity specifically supporting the development of one of the main sectors in the region of Andalusia, which is the Aerospace sector. Andalusia is the second most important region in Spain in the aerospace sector.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No. But it is co-financed by ERDF

Detailed information on the practice

The Aerospace High Tech Incubator is conceived as an infrastructure where, equipment, knowledge and transfer of technology are crucial. In addition to having appropriate and specialized infrastructure and equipment (laboratories, testing rooms, demonstration rooms, etc.), the incubator has a Partner Network that provides scientific and business advisory services, financing instruments, internationalization actions, patent and brand registration and maintenance, software and technological applications, project checking and validation platforms, etc. This way, the incubated entities receive added-value services, both from the various agents engaged in the process and from INCYDE, for a varying period of time (up to 5 years maximum). This time should enable them to engage in innovation activities.

The Incubator offers services to incubated enterprises in 4 phases:

- *Funding*
- *Incubation*
- *Acceleration*
- *Go to market*

Key data

- *1,400 square meters facility in the heart of the Aerospace Technology Park of Andalusia;*
- *Highly specialized resources;*
- *600 square meters of industrial warehouse;*
- *Training areas, multi-service rooms, certification and analysis platforms and banks, electronic and mechanical laboratories, industrial workshop, etc.*
- *Incubation space for a minimum of 30 companies;*
- *Network of tutors specialized in the launch and management of micro-enterprises;*

- Network of mentors specialized in the market and technological aspects of the aeronautical sector and complementary sectors;
- Network of advisors on financing, internationalization, technologies, etc.

The Aerospace Incubator of Technology Transfer is a collaborative project of the Andalusian agents of the aerospace sector coordinated and managed by the Chamber of Commerce of Seville that resulted in the creation of a specialized infrastructure to shelter between 20 and 25 companies.

The main objectives of the Project are:

- *To establish the first group of the aerospace sector "stakeholders" in Spain, as there was none so far, neither in Andalusia nor in Spain.*
- *To integrate in the Advisory Council of the Incubator these principal agents of the sector to take advantage of their synergies.*
- *To have an instrument for transferring the technology created both in the University of Seville and in the Andalusian Technological Centre specialized in the Aerospace sector.*
- *To promote entrepreneurship in the aerospace complementary sectors and to diversify their segments of market and to develop new products and services.*

Resources needed

The total investment of the project is 1.6 M€ (80% provided by ERDF).

Timescale (start/end date)

May 2016 – ongoing

Evidence of success [results achieved]

*Since the Incubator started its activity more than **15 projects have been supported and 9 companies are nowadays in the Incubator** developing high-tech projects, including projects of collaborative robotics, new applications of materials, assembly of small aircraft, or launchers for small satellites.*

Furthermore, an international cooperation Project with Portugal was developed to take advantage of synergies between the Andalusian and Portuguese aerospace companies in their relationships with AIRBUS and EMBRAER.

Challenges encountered

- *The set-up of a Strategic Adviser Board formed by the maximum representatives from Airbus, the sector, the University, the Technological Center, the Regional Government, the Chamber of Commerce of Seville and the Foundation of the Chambers of Commerce of Spain (INCYDE) together with a representative of a financial institution, all committed to the development of the sector.*
- *The creation of a Technical Committee, integrated by representatives from the Chamber of Commerce of Seville, the University of Seville and CATEC (technological aerospace center), for the selection and help of the presented projects.*
- *The design of an incubation program specialized in companies of the sector, as well as the support for the integration in the supply chain. It is a highly integrated vertical sector with important barriers to entry to new companies.*
- *The development of yearly programs of training and creation of new companies.*

Potential for learning or transfer

A High-Tech incubator is conceived as a project focused on technology transfer by institutions responsible for R&D&i, to the market. To such end, it is essential to have a network of partners providing the necessary services to ensure that

incubated Micro-SMEs receive R&D&i to be applied in their business models.

In addition to having adequate infrastructure and specialized equipment (laboratories, testing rooms, demonstration rooms, etc.), High-Tech Incubators need to have a network of partners that provide scientific and business advisory services, financing instruments, internationalization actions, patent and brand registration and maintenance, software and technological applications, project checking and validation platforms. In this sense, a key success factor is the identification of a good network of R&D service providers.

Moreover, this practice is interesting to other regions because it can be used to provide:

- *Better use of public and private resources for the promotion of a specific sector through joint and coordinated action.*
- *Support to the creation and development of new companies, giving them preferential access to sectorial supply chains.*
- *Resources to the development of a high technological component sector with high added value.*
- *New opportunities for local talent, reducing the need to move to other places.*

Further information

<https://camaradesevilla.com/autonomos-camara/alojamiento-empresarial/vivero-aeronautico-incubadora-transferencia-tecnologia-aeronautica/>

Keywords related to your practice

High-tech; aerospace; SMEs; incubation; infrastructure; acceleration; network.

PRACTICE 2: INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP MODEL

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

Barcelona Activa

Spain

Catalonia

Barcelona



[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

The IEM's aim is to coach entrepreneurs from their business idea to the setting up of their company.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No.

Detailed information on the practice

Tackling unemployment is at the top of the EU priorities: approximately 4 million jobs are needed to return to pre-crisis employment levels. Groups such as youth, women and seniors face particularly high risks of being marginalised in the labour market. However, there is often a paradox insofar as some of the most thriving cities in the EU generally offer the widest range of employment opportunities but, at the same time, some of them have the highest levels of unemployment and social exclusion. Inclusive growth should overcome this negative impact of the current cities' development model, by empowering people through high levels of employment.

Entrepreneurship is one form of job creation and a way to raise individuals' economic and social autonomy. However, European citizens share many barriers to become an entrepreneur, such as lack of education; lack of contacts; difficulties to access funding or lack of experience, among others. These barriers are common to all entrepreneurs, but there are groups of people (such as people who are older than 45, women and people younger than 30) that face additional barriers due to their social, education or personal features.

The Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model is a genuine solution that mainly combines the economic and social dimension using physical and on-line channels to provide the services, offering both individual and group coaching and in cooperation with the city's ecosystem.

It has 4 features:

UNIVERSAL: *it is open to everyone. The first step to access the services is a welcome session where all the available tools are presented. 226 welcome sessions are held every year (both on-line and in-site).*

All the attendees are offered different services according to their needs.

- Personalised advice: a team of entrepreneurship experts coaches entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into feasible businesses with:

- A set of on-line tools: an online toolkit to produce SWOT analysis of business ideas, well-structured business plans, self-assessment of key entrepreneurial skills, and key information about legal procedures, access to funding and market intelligence.

- Training seminars: entrepreneurs are offered training in those fields that are essential for the management of a new company, such as legal status and procedures, market research, financial plans, entrepreneurial skills...

BLENDED: the combination of the in-site and on-line services provides the model with a flexibility for those entrepreneurs facing mobility and time restrictions.

TAILOR MADE: programs designed for those groups that face specific hindrances due to their social/personal circumstances.

INTEGRATED: it has the ability to refer those who reach out to BA but are not ready to start a business to other services (i.e. those offered by the employment or training deps).

The Model is implemented in permanent contact with the different stakeholders operating at economic and social levels in the city of Barcelona, which enables to adapt to the changes of the society and economy. These stakeholders include different levels of governance (Catalan government, Spanish government and European Union); the academic community (universities and research centres); the private sector (other companies, financial sector...). Thus, the model is based upon horizontal integrated interventions (economic, social) with vertical integrated interventions (cooperation with local stakeholders and different levels of governance).

Resources needed

Average yearly cost:

Activity: 500.000 €

Staff: 900.000€ (the BA entrepreneurship area's composed by 16 staff members).

Infrastructures: 180.000€

At the launch of the model the City Council got Structural Funds from the EU

Timescale (start/end date)

2004 - ongoing

Evidence of success [results achieved]

The following data summarize the initiative's impact in the period between 2004 and 2017:

More than 100.000 people participated in any of its services or tools (3.800 of them in any of the tailor-made programmes). This figure supposed that 26.000 business plans were finally coached and finally 18.000 companies created.

At the end of the day these companies created 32.000 new jobs.

Challenges encountered

This model is deeply affected by the economic context and, therefore, it needs to be adapted to the ever-changing economic reality. Even if it is a mainstream instrument, it also needs tailor-made side programs to target groups with specific needs

Potential for learning or transfer

Since unemployment and the difficulties of the population to launch their own business is a shared challenge amongst many European societies, the IEM is an interesting public policy for many cities.

After Barcelona Activas's long-term experience in transferring the IEM to other cities, the following elements that eventually need to be adapted have been detected:

- Pre-existing services and the ecosystem: every city may have different backgrounds in terms of institutions operating in the entrepreneurship sector and providing different services. A starting point study is needed both to detect the services already being provided and those lacking in order to avoid overlapping

services, resources wasting and uncovered needs.

- Funding: depending on the existing resources the eventual lack of them could be overcome with public-private agreements, users co-payment, company's social responsibility, international third-parties' funds, etc.

- Tailor-made programmes: need to be adapted to the social and economic context of every city, although most European cities face similar challenges in relation to certain groups with special difficulties in accessing the labour market as women, older people, youth or immigrants.

- Territorial approach: depending on the urban planning of the city and the specific mobility trends in every city those in-site services might be differently deployed

- Communication: when the model is newly implemented in a city it needs a communication plan so that the potential users are aware of the availability of resources, their aims and their scope.

Further information

<https://emprenedoria.barcelonactiva.cat/emprenedoria/en/index.jsp>

Keywords related to your practice

Entrepreneurship, training, coaching, mentoring

5.2. TORUN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

PRACTICE 3: SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE KUYAVIAN AND POMERANIAN REGION

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship

Poland
Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship
n/a

[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the
practice

*The practice is established under a sub-measure of the Regional Operational Programme of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, planned for the **support of academic entrepreneurship** in the region. It consists of competitions conducted to support research and development processes in academic enterprises and provide support for spin-off enterprises.*

**Does this practice come
from an Interreg Europe
Project**

No

**Detailed information
on the practice**

One of the factors that affects the economic development of the region is the active cooperation between science and business community (academic entrepreneurship). The results of this cooperation are spin-off companies (spin out and spin off type). The desirable effect is to commercialize scientific research, giving mutual benefits for both academics and scientific workers as well as business partners. Thanks to it, the economy gains a wider inflow of innovative solutions and new types of business are created. In spite of many advantages of academic entrepreneurship, there are still numerous barriers to the development of companies created by researchers. One of them is the lack of sufficient financial support for R&D work.

*In the Regional Operational Programme of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship for the years 2014-2020 financial resources are planned to support academic entrepreneurship in the region. Competitions are conducted under 1.3.1 sub-measure: **Support for research and development processes in academic enterprises and provide support for spin-off enterprises by:***

- *covering the costs of R&D work,*
- *covering the costs related to submitting a patent, utility model or industrial design in order to obtain protection granted by national, regional, European or international industrial property protection authorities, as well as patent analysis,*
- *creating or developing R&D facilities in spin-off enterprises, in particular the purchase of fixed assets and intangible assets.*

The contribution of enterprise is at least 15% of the eligible costs for the project.

The beneficiaries of the support are spin-off enterprises from the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. The Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Programme is the Board of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship.

Resources needed

The amount of funds allocated for co-financing projects under the competition

from the European Regional Development Fund amounts to: 15 157 450,00 PLN (in 2018), 13 090 800,00 PLN (in 2016).

Timescale (start/end date)

2014-2020 (1st competition in 2016, 2nd competition in 2018).

Evidence of success
[results achieved]

In the call for proposals in 2016, 32 projects were submitted and 16 of them received funding. Half of these projects concern original research and implementation works, the rest of them concern purchasing of consultancy services, primarily in the field of business, law and building economic links.

Examples of startups that have received funding:

- Neurodio from Torun gets over 700,000 PLN to finance research and implementation work on modern forms of diagnosis and therapy of disorders in the acquisition of mathematical knowledge. The interdisciplinary project combines developmental psychology, psychometry, IT and game design. Researchers hope to create a prototype of an effective IT tool for psychological tests which permits objective measurement of mathematical abilities and improvement of existing methods of supporting children with mathematical difficulties (cognitive training in the form of a computer game supporting the child's development).
- Globedata prepares for research on IT technology for multi-aspect analysis of large data sets and intends to launch innovative services related to mass data processing using the IoT and mobile solutions. The amount of financing is nearly 2 500 000,00 PLN.
- ZJ Technology from Bydgoszcz specializes in dietary supplements. The support will be used to create safe (preserving pro-health value of raw materials) technologies for granulating, manufacturing and confectioning seeds that will be used to compose concentrated preparations that supplement a healthy diet. The amount of financing is 720 000,00 PLN.
- Nano-implant conducts research on the implant prototype for its clinical implantation. They obtained funding for this study in the amount of over 2 300 000,00 PLN. For the purpose of the project, the cooperation was established between a group of immunologists from the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun (Department of Immunology) and microbiologists from the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection of the University of Lodz (Laboratory of Biology of Infections). The industrial research work involves engineers specializing in 3D prototyping and printing, supported by PrintMed3D from Grudziadz. Experimental development on the nature of clinical trials is conducted in cooperation with hospitals and clinics from the Kuyavian and Pomeranian region.

Challenges encountered

- Waiting time for call of proposals results is too long,
- Formal requirements are too complicated,
- It is uncertain whether the funds for supporting academic entrepreneurship will be available after 2020 (in the next stage of programming)

Potential for learning or transfer

Lack of sufficient financial support for R&D in academic companies is a barrier faced by spin off/out companies not only in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian region. Hence, the transfer described in example of support above may be of interest for representatives from other regions/countries.

The key factor guaranteeing the effective implementation of this practice is the

financial security (they can come from various sources: EU funds, state funds) and their efficient distribution (clear access criteria, catalogue of eligible costs, transparent project selection criteria). Before implementing this practice, it is worth to consult what kind of support the interested parties expect (spin off/out companies).

Further information

<https://www.kujawsko-pomorskie.pl/>

Keywords related to your practice

academic entrepreneurship; European funds; cooperation between science and business; research and development.

PRACTICE 4: STARTUP WEEKEND TORUN

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]

Exea Smart Space

[Country]

Poland

[Region]

Kuyavian-Pomeranian
Voivodeship

[City]

Torun



[Good Practice Information]

**Short summary of
the practice**

*Startup Weekend is a 54-hour event supported by Google and Techstars. The event is for individuals (regardless of their professions or competencies) **who have ideas for innovative solutions or new businesses** and who want to put them into practice. It is an event that helps to build a startup community, startup culture and creating impact in local city or region.*

**Does this practice come
from an Interreg Europe
Project**

No

**Detailed
information on the
practice**

*Startup Weekend Torun is a **regional edition of global event supported by Google and Techstars and it is organized by Exea Smart Space**. During 54 hours, the participants have to build the team with whom they would like to share their ideas and create the company. The aim is to create a prototype of an online product or service – portals, mobile apps, shops.*

The team consists of people of various skills and competencies such as computer programmers, graphic designer, marketers, scientists, freelancers or technological specialists. Then, the best business ideas on which the teams will work are picked. Both mentors and counsellors are supporting the participants, they are sharing their knowledge and professional experience. Moreover, their role is to point out mistakes and to advise how to bring in potential clients. During the last day, each team presents their work in front of the jury – investors and experts in business development. The winners receive a prize from the sponsors.

Startup Weekend can take two forms. The first form is more general, the team develop any project connected to technology, mainly mobile apps and online tools. The second form requires more specific subject matter, hence the project should be narrowed to one sector or trend.

Examples of such event are Startup Weekend Internet of Things or Smart City. The aim of these events is to support innovative projects connected with processing and analyzing of data or smart cities, smart houses or smart companies.

Resources needed

Personnel: A group of 4-8 people who spend time on organization of the event, for example logistics of the event, catering, advertising materials, working materials, contact with the sponsors and partners, engagement of mentors and the jury.

Financial: Budget from 7,5K to 20K euro, depending on the number of participants and the location of the event.

Timescale (start/end date)	<i>The first edition took place in 2014. All Techstars Startup Weekend events must follow the standard 3 day, weekend-long format.</i>
Evidence of success [results achieved]	<i>Three editions of Startup Weekend have been organized in Toruń so far. They took place in 2014, 2015, and 2017 and they are considered as the biggest and the highest-rated events in this category in Europe. The number of participants exceeded 300 people from Poland and abroad. There were 40 mentors from recognizable technological companies and startups such as IBM, Microsoft, Mozilla, Allegro. There were 40 teams and some of them are still developing their projects.</i>
Challenges encountered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Startup Weekend is a non-profit event that is why it is important to find and attract sponsors so they can cover the expenditure. Revenue from the tickets does not cover all expenditure of Startup Weekend.</i> • <i>The balanced list of computer programmers/graphic designers/non-technical people. During the event, the teams consist of developers, graphic designers and idea men so it is essential to have a well-balanced participants (for 100 participants: 30 computer programmers, 30 graphic designers, 40 non-technical people).</i>
Potential for learning or transfer	<i>Organizing Startup Weekend can be an extremely rewarding experience and can lead to some amazing opportunities. This event is organized with the support of Techstars and Google. Everything you need to know about organization, is available in the Startup Weekend Organizer's Guide which includes detailed instructions.</i>
Further information	http://communities.techstars.com/poland/torun/startup-weekend/events
Keywords related to your practice	<i>event; startup; entrepreneurship; mentoring; business idea.</i>

5.3. OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PRACTICE 5: GC MENTORING PROGRAMME

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

Business Growth Hub

United Kingdom
Greater Manchester

Oldham



[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

*The **GC Mentoring Programme** provides an opportunity for businesses to access direct experience free of charge via experienced mentors that are suited to the mentees needs and preferences.*

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No.

Detailed information on the practice

*Businesses (SMEs) are referred to the GC Business Growth Hub through the various in-house business support programmes. They are referred at the appropriate time for them so that they have already received support for the business and are now looking for personal development through the use of a **mentor on a particular topic/challenge**.*

Each mentee completes a profile with his information and challenges, type of mentor including skill set, knowledge, experience and personality. This profile is to match them with an appropriate mentor.

The mentor/mentee are introduced via email and asked to complete an induction pack which contains a code of conduct, statement of understanding about responsibilities and roles, confidentiality etc. The mentor will contact the mentee to arrange a first meeting, following on from this meeting their advisor from the Hub will make contact with both parties to check that they are happy to proceed, all going well the meetings will continue. If at this point either party does not want to continue the matching process will begin again.

At around the 4 month point the GC Business Growth Hub checks again with both parties to get feedback. Customer satisfaction surveys are also used at regular intervals to check all parties are happy.

*The **mentor matching process** ensures the GC BGH gets it right the first time. With new mentor/mentee profile forms including additional questions around challenges and issues to **ensure greater alignment to the mentor's skillset**. A mentoring advisor will meet/speak with the mentee, to probe deeper around specific requirements/challenges to aid a better match and to gauge the personality of the mentee. To ensure a consistent approach to the matching process and to share intelligence, the mentoring team speak weekly/fortnightly about any matches.*

Resources needed	<p>The following resources are required to deliver the project across Greater Manchester:</p> <p>Human resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Project Manager and 3 advisors • 240 active volunteer mentors <p>Financial resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running costs - £40,000 per advisor per year. • Management costs - £18,000 per year. • Mentor expenses - £2,000 per year <p>Other costs: professional development, events, quarterly dinners etc - £10,000 per year IT costs - £1,500 per year</p>
Timescale (start/end date)	Jan 2015 – Dec 2018
Evidence of success [results achieved]	There are 679 active mentoring relationships providing advice, guidance and support on a whole range of issues.
Challenges encountered	<p>There is on-going mentor support (mentor only events) which have been very well received by mentors. These include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal evening dinners • Less formal networking events to build connections and round table style discussions • Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions are designed to meet the request of the mentors • Induction workshops for new mentors
Potential for learning or transfer	<p>Business advice and guidance as a result of direct business experience is invaluable to start-up and growing businesses no matter of their location, age or size.</p> <p>The GC Mentoring Programme is simple yet effective and could be replicated easily in any region or country.</p>
Further information	https://www.businessgrowthhub.com/services/leadership-mentoring
Keywords related to your practice	Mentoring; matching; business support; skillset alignment

PRACTICE 6: VENTUREFEST NORTH WEST

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]

Business Growth Hub



[Country]

United Kingdom

[Region]

Greater Manchester

[City]

Oldham

[Good Practice Information]

**Short summary of
the practice**

VentureFest North West is an event that helps businesses find funding and support to suit their needs. It brings together the NW region's innovators, entrepreneurs and investors to facilitate business connections, growth opportunities and new ideas.

**Does this practice
come from an Interreg
Europe Project**

No

**Detailed
information on the
practice**

The event provides a mix of inspirational speakers, interactive workshops, exhibitors and networking opportunities. The event also features the "Innovation Showcase Competition" that enables businesses to promote their latest products, services and innovations to an audience of potential customers, partners and funders.

There are four categories - Product Innovation, Service Innovation, Digital Innovation, and Innovative Established Business - and business may enter more than one.

There is also be an Overall Winner and a Venturefest Audience Winner.

Entries are considered by a judging panel, which is made up of industry experts. Shortlisted businesses receive support in the lead-up to the event. Ten finalists make a short presentation at Venturefest North West, when all the winners will be announced.

Winners receive business support packages worth thousands of pounds valuable publicity.

The event also provides "Meet the Funder" sessions providing business owners with the opportunity to have one-to-one 'speed meetings' with various funders/investors matched to their business profile and funding requirements. The ten-minute sessions take place in private and pre-selected businesses are able to have meetings with a range of funders, including angel investors, equity specialists, loan funds and grant providers.

The event is run [GC Business Growth Hub](#), working with regional partners [Cheshire & Warrington Growth Hub](#), [Cumbria Growth Hub](#), [Liverpool City Region's Local Growth Hub](#), and [Boost, Lancashire's Business Growth Hub](#).

Resources needed

The event costs about £100,000 to put on. It also requires at least 1 member of staff to co-ordinate throughout the year and about 20 members of staff to support on the day of the event.

Timescale (start/end date)	Annual event /ongoing
Evidence of success [results achieved]	<p>Results from 2017 event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 658 Delegates • more than 90% of delegates rated the event 'Excellent' or 'Good' • Over £50,000 in prizes • Over £4m in funding offers • Total reach of 5.8m Twitter users
Challenges encountered	<p>Business support is an essential part of this programme particularly because the success of this event is linked to the amount of investment generated.</p> <p>To access funding and investment, businesses must be investment ready, therefore it is important that businesses have received maximum support in advance of the event.</p>
Potential for learning or transfer	<p>Access to finance is an issue that is not unique in origin. It's a borderless issue that all businesses face no matter of their location, age or size. Venturefest North West provides an event for all businesses to access free of charge that enables them to showcase their products and access a range of funding all under one roof. The event is simple yet effective and could be replicated easily in any region or country.</p> <p>Financial and human resources are an essential part of this event and as stated above at least £100,000 is required to put on the event. This can be a large amount of funding to find. However, with the event generating £4m in investment there is an argument that the costs are more than justified.</p>
Further information	http://www.venturefestnorthwest.com/about
Keywords related to your practice	Event; startup; venture; funding

5.4. CORK CITY COUNCIL

PRACTICE 7: INNOVATION VOUCHERS PROGRAMME

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

Enterprise Ireland

Ireland

Ireland

Cork Regional Office



[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

Enterprise Ireland's Innovation Vouchers Programme objective is to promote and encourage a transfer of knowledge between Ireland's public knowledge providers and the small business community, creating greater synergies between the two.

Under the initiative, vouchers worth €5,000 are allocated on a semi-competitive basis to small businesses whose proposals, to work with public knowledge providers on specific innovation questions, meet basic criteria.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No, the establishment of an Innovation Voucher initiative was a key recommendation of the Small Business Forum in their report 'Small Business is Big Business', published in May 2006.

Detailed information on the practice

For the purposes of the Innovation Voucher Initiative, a SME is defined as a company or (if part of a group) a group of companies where the total number of full-time employees in the company (or the entire group) is less than 250 and has an annual turnover total not exceeding €50m and/or an annual Balance Sheet total not exceeding €43m. (Exclusions: SMEs in the agricultural sector are excluded in line with State aid guidelines).

Small or medium sized limited companies with a business opportunity or problem that want to explore, can apply for an Innovation Voucher worth €5,000.

The innovation voucher initiative is restricted to limited companies and they must be registered as such with the Companies registration office in Dublin at the time of submission. www.cro.ie.

Under the initiative, vouchers worth €5,000 are allocated on a semi-competitive basis to small businesses whose proposals, to work with public knowledge providers on specific innovation questions, meet basic criteria. It has since been expanded to allow SME's apply as well.

There are two types of vouchers available: the standard 5k voucher and a co-funded voucher. Companies can avail of up to three vouchers – two fully funded and the third co-funded.

Enterprise Ireland generally have at least three open calls each year during which companies can apply for a standard 5k voucher and the calls are announced in advance on the website www.innovationvouchers.ie.

The full list of participating knowledge providers is available on the website www.innovationvouchers.ie (This is an All Ireland initiative and includes 10 knowledge providers from Northern Ireland). You can use the voucher with any of the 38 research providers listed on our website. You choose the knowledge provider that you want to work with, there is no restriction. There is a voucher contact person for each college listed on our website and companies are free to contact them to discuss their project. You

	<p>cannot use a voucher with a private sector knowledge provider, only with those listed on our website.</p> <p>There is also the Co-Funded Fast Track voucher and you can apply for these at any time. The value of the voucher is €5,000 and the company contributes 50% of the project costs in cash. Therefore, a company may use the Fast Track voucher to cover project costs up to €10,000 on a 50-50 co-funded basis.</p>
Resources needed	<p>The Innovation Vouchers programme is an All-Ireland initiative and 4,500 Innovation vouchers were completed over the period of 2007-2016, worth approximately €22m.</p>
Timescale (start/end date)	<p>Enterprise Ireland's Innovation Vouchers Programme was established in 2007. The Programme is ongoing.</p>
Evidence of success [results achieved]	<p>To date, the programme has achieved the following results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helped businesses to achieve an estimated €87.424 million of cumulative net additional sales (PV), equivalent to sales of €9.94 per €1.00 of EI investment; • supported an estimated cumulative net additional EVA impact of €31.141 million (PV), equivalent to an impact of €3.10 per €1.00 of EI investment; • supported 806 net full time equivalent jobs.
Challenges encountered	<p>Overall, the Vouchers Programme is a popular, successful and valued initiative. The Programme is not overly strict in terms of acceptance criteria, or overly generous in terms of the value and number of vouchers that companies can receive.</p>
Potential for learning or transfer	<p>A review of the programme was carried out by independent consultants Frontline in 2013, which allows the identification of potentially interesting characteristics for other regions to learn from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward and cost effective to manage; • accessible and utilised by a broad range of SME businesses; • highly beneficial to companies in many ways, including increasing competitiveness; • highly beneficial to Knowledge Providers through building new client partnerships, developing market relevant knowledge for academic staff, raising teaching levels and in some cases generating a surplus; • making a contribution to Ireland's economy through EVA and job creation. <p>The knowledge providers believe that one of the benefits of Innovation Vouchers is the opportunity to expose new academics to companies and research projects. Despite this, the biggest problem - because of the short term nature of projects - is finding researchers with the time to take on the research projects. A popular view is that Innovation Vouchers present an excellent first rung on the 'innovation' ladder for businesses.</p> <p>Institutes recognise strong network and reputational benefits to being involved in the programme and it has stimulated improved demand for engagement from companies. It is also felt that projects have led to a strengthening of expertise in core research areas.</p> <p>There are perceived educational benefits, with many researchers saying that working with companies on projects was adding relevance through using 'live examples' to make points when teaching. Commercialisation of work is another perceived major benefit; 69% of researchers were involved with a project where a new product had been developed.</p> <p>Few barriers were identified. Internal bureaucracy, companies' unrealistic expectations of what can be delivered and the system of having a small number of 'call' periods for applications were mentioned by small numbers of interviewees.</p> <p>There is high satisfaction with the Programme across the Institutes. Those responsible for the programme see the application process as straightforward and simple and highlighted that this is appreciated by Institutes. Another plus noted is the relatively fast</p>

approval once an application is in the system. The vast majority of researchers found it to be a good or very good experience and made many positive comments.

Further information www.innovationvouchers.ie
<https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/>

Keywords related to your practice *Cork; Ireland; Innovation; knowledge exchange; knowledge transfer; knowledge expert; technology transfer; research; research and development; Innovation Management; Innovation Voucher; commercialisation; small and medium-sized enterprises; SME; SME Support; SME Growth; SME Promotion; Capacity Development.*

PRACTICE 8: INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]

Enterprise Ireland

[Country]

Ireland

[Region]

Ireland

[City]

Cork Regional Office / Dublin HQ



[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

The Innovation Partnership Programme **encourages Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes** resulting in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction.

Companies can access expertise and resources to develop new and improved products, processes, services, and generate new knowledge and know-how.

The participating company benefits in terms of its growth, the evolution of its strategic research and development and the creation of new knowledge that it can use to generate commercial advantage. The research institute benefits in terms of developing skill sets, intellectual property and publications.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No, however it is part-supported by the ERDF fund.

Detailed information on the practice

The Programme provides **grants of up to 80% towards eligible costs of the research project.**

The normal **duration of a project** will be from six months up to a maximum of two years. Longer projects are considered in exceptional circumstances.

There are **two phases associated with an Innovation Partnership application:**

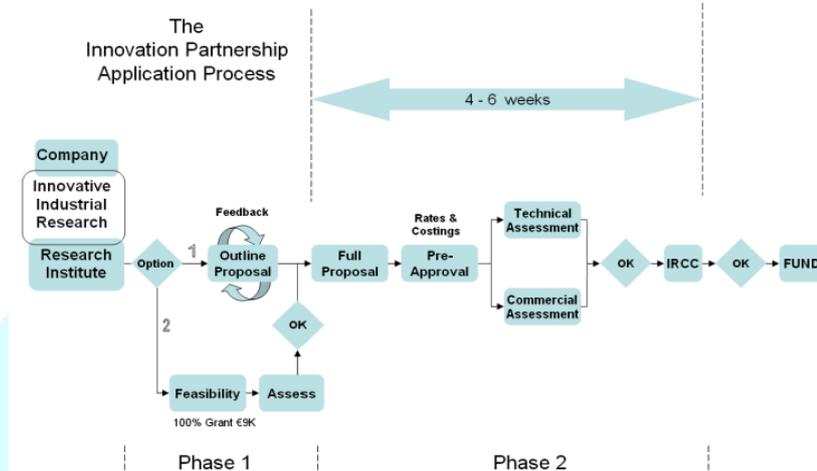
• In **Phase 1** there are two options:

- **Option 1** is to submit an **Outline Proposal Document**: The Principal Investigator in the research institute prepares the Innovation partnership Outline Proposal Application.

Based on the Outline Proposal, Enterprise Ireland provides feedback and advice on: Eligibility, appropriate next steps (i.e. proceed to a full application or consider a Feasibility Study), appropriate grant rates.

- **Option 2** is to apply for an Innovation Partnership **Feasibility Study**: this is a small, short-term study designed to enable the Principal Investigator to develop a proposal for a full Innovation Partnership Application. Maximum funding for an Innovation Partnership Feasibility study provides 100% grant to a limit of €9,000.

• **Phase 2** is a Full Application: they will be accepted following the approval of an outline proposal or the submission of a report upon completion of a Feasibility Study.



Eligible Companies: manufacturing or internationally traded services companies with an operating base in Ireland that wish to collaborate with one or more research institutes, also based in Ireland.

Companies must be a registered client of one of the following state development agencies: Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Údarás na Gaeltachta. The company must have the full support of their assigned Development Adviser / Agency Contact to participate in the programme. This support must be confirmed before any application forms are submitted.

Eligible Research Institutes: Applications for grants will be considered from researchers (or group of researchers) based in research institutes in Ireland to collaborate with companies where the lead company is based also in Ireland.

Therefore the 3rd level institution must be based in Ireland as the funding must be spend in Ireland. However, a **company outside of Ireland can join an innovation partnership cluster once the main industrial partner is based in Ireland and an economic benefit to Ireland is clearly defined and confirmed by the relevant agency resources.**

Funding Levels: Under the state aid guidelines, **funding rates can vary from 40% to 80% depending on the size of company and the type of research.**

Funding will **normally not exceed €200,000**. Exceptions to this limit may be made for established clients of Enterprise Ireland and other State development agencies where the Innovation Partnership project and the follow-on activity will clearly lead to a significant increase in the company's employment and/or sales and exports.

Grant funding to projects involving early stage companies and High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) clients will normally be capped at €100,000.

Project Application Management: The proposal applications to Enterprise Ireland and the administration of the project are managed by the Principal Investigator in the participating research institute. Upon approval, the grant is paid directly to the research institute.

Company Contribution: all Innovation Partnership projects require the company partner to provide minimum cash contribution of **20% of the total project cost**. In all cases, the company partner must have the resources to contribute its share of the funding for the research and to fund the commercialisation of the research, when completed.

Knowledge Providers: whatever sector, there are knowledge providers to choose

	<p>from across Ireland: http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/Research_in_Ireland/Research-Map-of-Ireland/</p> <p>Management of Intellectual Property: It is a requirement of the Innovation Partnership agreement that consideration should be given to making the results of the research accessible to other researchers either through patenting or publishing as appropriate.</p> <p>As part of its contract with the company, the research institute should have a prior agreement concerning the exploitation of Intellectual Property;</p> <p>A signed agreement covering Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is required for all approved Innovation Partnership projects.</p> <p>Calendar for proposals: Outline Proposals and Feasibility Proposals can be submitted at any time while full Innovation Partnership Proposals can be submitted following a review of an Outline Proposals or a positive outcome of a Feasibility Study. The review committee meet approximately 11 times per year.</p>
Resources needed	<p>Data 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average cost of project €306,000 • Average Enterprise Ireland spend per project €197,000 • Company contribution average €67,000 (€42K cash; €25K in kind)
Timescale (start/end date)	2000 – ongoing
Evidence of success [results achieved]	<p>In an independent survey of companies that participated in the Innovation Partnership Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96% of respondents would be willing to recommend the Programme to other businesses; • 71% of participant companies surveyed said that their objectives were largely or fully achieved; • Each €1 of funding invested by Enterprise Ireland in Innovation Partnerships delivered €10 Net Turnover Impact at the company side. <p>Data 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66 Innovation Partnerships funded so far • Over €13 million approved • Target 70 Innovation Partnerships funded each year
Challenges encountered	Ownership/Licencing negotiations for Intellectual Property can be challenging
Potential for learning or transfer	Some aspects of this practice could be potentially interesting for other regions to learn from. For example, the two-phase application process, which allows for a more efficient use of resources.
Further information	<p>https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/ https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Funding-Supports/Researcher/Funding-to-Collaborate-with-Industry-in-Ireland/Innovation-Partnerships.shortcut.html https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/funding-supports/company/esestablish-sme-funding/innovation-partnerships.html</p>
Keywords related to your practice	Cork; Ireland; Innovation; Innovation Partnership; Innovation Partnerships; Knowledge exchange; Knowledge Transfer; Knowledge Expert; Technology Transfer; Research; Research and Development; Innovation Management; Commercialisation; Small and medium-sized Enterprises; SMEs; SME Support; SME Growth; SME Promotion; Capacity Development; Knowledge Providers.

5.5. MALTA ENTERPRISE

PRACTICE 9: BUSINESS START

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

Malta Enterprise
Malta
Malta
All region

[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

Malta Enterprise, via Business START is offering a **seed funding for start-ups**. The measure is intended to support Small Start-up Undertakings that have a viable business concept and are in the early stage of its development. Initiatives that are deemed to be economically viable shall be supported through a **grant of up to €25,000**.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No.

Detailed information on the practice

The Business START is intended to support small start-up undertakings that are in the process of establishing and/or consolidating a business operation that has been deemed as economically feasible and innovative by the Corporation.

In order to be **eligible**, the applicant must be:

- proposing products and/or services that have potential to be marketed and distributed internationally; and
- producing products and/or service which are new or substantially improved compared to the state of the art in the local industry.

The **maximum value of aid** that may be provided is a cash grant of up to €25,000 which shall be disbursed as follows:

An **initial instalment** of up to €10,000 shall be paid once the project is approved. The amount will be determined by the Corporation after taking into consideration the innovative elements of the proposed business, the employment levels at application stage and the vision of the promoters on how to further develop their business.

The initial payment shall only be paid once the applicant registers a minimum of one employee.

Subsequent instalments shall be paid quarterly after the Corporation reviews and endorses that the progress achieved is in line with the business plan as approved or as adjusted to adapt to market requirements. The grant at the end of each quarter shall be calculated by multiplying €1500 to the number of Full Time Employee which has been engaged with the beneficiary at least one (1) full month prior to the end of the quarter in review. The total payment in any quarter shall not exceed €10,000.

Resources needed

The total budget for this scheme is 1,000,000€ per year and 5,000,000€ until 2020. Applications will be processed on a first come first served basis until the budget allocated for this measure is fully utilised.

Timescale (start/end date)	<i>June 2015 - ongoing</i>
Evidence of success [results achieved]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the pilot project (10 months) there were 40 beneficiaries.</i> • <i>After this success the scheme was continued and in the subsequent year another 34 enterprises benefited. This is deemed to be a great success, considering the uptake vis a vis the size of the country.</i> • <i>Main sector who benefitted till present are digital media, software and manufacturing.</i>
Challenges encountered	<i>The Business START scheme provides pre-financing for startups. This was a completely new concept and hence, a mentality change was necessary, as well as getting all top management on board, as this is the first of such schemes ever to be launched and managed by Malta Enterprise and dealing with the risks related to startups was new.</i>
Potential for learning or transfer	<i>The full process of design, deployment and managing a seed capital scheme, tailored to the current ecosystem, can be shared with the partners.</i>
Further information	<p>www.maltaenterprise.com</p> <p>Scheme guidelines: https://www.maltaenterprise.com/support/business-start-bstart</p>
Keywords related to your practice	<i>Malta; seed fund; start-up; early stage; business support; grant</i>

PRACTICE 10 : SETTING UP A LIFE SCIENCES CENTRE

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

Malta Enterprise

Malta

Malta

All region



[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

*The **Malta Life Sciences Centre is part of the Malta Life Sciences Park (MLSP)**, which was designed to promote research and development and to spur the growth of the life sciences sector in Malta, building on the base that the country developed in the pharmaceutical industry during the last decade. The Park is currently split in two main buildings, namely the Malta Life Sciences Centre and the Malta Digital Hub.*

The Life Sciences Centre located close to the Hospital and University focus on Life Sciences and associated technologies and aim to incorporate pharmaceutical /biotech laboratories and research facilities to support knowledge-based companies.

*The **Centre is helping to increase skills in the sector and drive new FDI and RTD activity and incubate new enterprises.***

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No

Detailed information on the practice

*The **main objectives** of the Malta Life Sciences are:*

- 1. Creation, incubation and attraction of new knowledge-based companies;*
- 2. Supporting new and existing SME to invest in knowledge-based activities;*
- 3. Increasing collaboration between knowledge institutes and Malta enterprises;*
- 4. Develop a currently unutilised area designated as an employment node around the MDH and UoM in generating high value-adding activities.*

*This project tries to foster the following **benefits**:*

- Around 28 enterprises (local and foreign) on site, as well as about 11 enterprises involved in clustering and sharing of knowledge;*
- An increase in R&D expenditure through the access to advanced laboratory equipment for research and development and advanced testing equipment for existing SMEs and new startup companies;*
- The LSC will consist of working spaces for NTBFs, R&D Laboratory areas and laboratories specialised in providing a service to industry, a basement for radiology activities, staging areas to allow housing, maintenance and calibration of larger field equipment, and units specifically for the incubation facility.*
- As part of its package the LCS offers to its tenants a Common Innovation Laboratory area and common facilities consisting of an exhibition space, a child-care facility, a cafeteria and coffee area, a multi-purpose auditorium and meeting rooms. In addition, the centre will provide complimentary*

	<p>and permanent space to host local facilitators of life sciences networks that will assist the tenants to collaborate on technology efforts involving tenants and other entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project provides facilities with the right functional environment whereby target companies can achieve expansion and growth through specialisation in key knowledge-based activities and networking with companies from the same sectors, hospital, academia (close proximity to both) and other service providers like laboratories who choose to set an operation within the centre, as well as generate employment by incubating new enterprises in the sector.
Resources needed	Project Cost: €20,792,553 – supported by ERDF
Timescale (start/end date)	Infrastructural project 2008 – 2015, started operation in 2016 and ongoing.
Evidence of success [results achieved]	Started operation in 2016 and already houses a large number of tenants who operate in a variety of sectors within the life sciences industry. http://www.maltalifesciencespark.com/tenants-list/
Challenges encountered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an EU funded initiative, which posed additional administrative burdens / checks to make it work (application, development, construction etc). • Also the mechanism of actual creating the physical space was an issue, as Malta Enterprise's offices were demolished to build the Centre and all the staff needed to be moved to other premises. • Fill up the space with relevant companies as well as start creating revenue.
Potential for learning or transfer	<p>Identifying a national need and moulding the investment in infrastructure accordingly.</p> <p>Using ERDF funds to support strategic investment, the process used to identify the need, stakeholder involvement, the drafting of the plan etc.</p>
Further information	<p>Original project description: https://investinyourfuture.gov.mt/project/research-science-and-technology/biomalta-setting-up-a-life-sciences-centre-33947700</p> <p>MLSP website: www.mlsp.com.mt</p> <p>Other: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/malta/setting-up-a-life-sciences-centre-in-malta</p>
Keywords related to your practice	Life sciences; research; development; infrastructure; facilities; incubation; clustering; networking.

5.6. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTRE BISTRA PTUJ

PRACTICE 11: PODIM CONFERENCE

[Organisation in charge of the good practice]	Several (Start:up Alpe Adria, Initiative Start:up Slovenia, University of Maribor among others)
[Country]	Slovenia
[Region]	Podravje
[City]	Maribor

The logo for the PODIM conference, featuring the word "PODIM" in white, bold, uppercase letters on a red rectangular background.

[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice *PODIM is the largest and leading conference on entrepreneurship, startups and innovation in the Alps-Adriatic region.*

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project N/A.

Detailed information on the practice

PODIM is the largest and leading conference on entrepreneurship, start-ups and innovation in the Alps-Adriatic region and one of the largest international start-up and business conferences in the CEE region. Every year, it offers two days of intensive courses and networking opportunities, numerous lectures, roundtables, panel discussions and workshops. The innovativeness and speed of successful start-ups interferes with all aspects of the private and business life. Sometimes they entirely change the way a society and the industry functions.

Each year, the PODIM conference is where the announcement of the winner of the national competition Start-up of the year is made.

Also, the PODIM Challenge is a special content part of the conference, meant to help start-up companies come into contact with esteemed international investors. 11 of them joined the event in 2017, coming from the most known European business hubs and accelerators. 37 start-ups from 7 countries wanted to pitch and get a date with them. Six companies were chosen to get the full attention of the investor committee and the audience.

It also has a series of Regional Roadshow events where early-stage startups that are looking for a seed investment or a strategic partnership with big corporations can meet the PODIM team and the main PODIM partners (accelerators, investors, corporate representatives ...) at one of this roadshow events happening all over European Adriatic & Western Balkans countries.

This Good Practice gives the Startups of the region the opportunity to meet with potential investors, corporate representatives, and other potential strategic partners from the ranks of PODIM speakers, experts, investors ...

The event has managed to involve the participation of a series of relevant stakeholders, sponsors and partners of the area: <http://www.podim.org/en-us/stakeholders>

Resources needed

PODIM had the funding of the Slovene Enterprise Fund, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as the European Commission, the sponsorship of Nova KBM, and the collaboration of a big team of

	<i>experts of the organizers.</i>
Timescale (start/end date)	<i>2 days /once a year</i>
Evidence of success [results achieved]	<p><i>In 2017, 826 participants from 33 countries, internationally renowned speakers, start-up stars and investors attended PODIM. Structure of attendees:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• 425 startups and SMEs (51%)</i> <i>• 126 regional startup ecosystem representatives (15%)</i> <i>• 106 corporation representatives (13%)</i> <i>• 68 investors from Europe and US (8%)</i> <i>• 45 government representatives (5%)</i> <i>• 30 students and academics (4%)</i> <i>• 26 media representatives (3%)</i> <p><i>The media icon TechCrunch has placed the concluding event as a “must-see” start-up conference.</i></p> <p><i>In May 2018, it was attended by over 1000 people, of which 341 were startups, 90 were investors from all over the world, and 117 were representatives of big established companies from the region and further.</i></p>
Challenges encountered	<i>The conference is getting bigger every year regarding the participants and speakers demanding more professionalism in organisation and managing of the event. In early years it was crucial to get support from policy makers on national and local levels. This support is now evident since every year the president and/or prime minister are speakers. Also, the financing of such project is a challenge every year.</i>
Potential for learning or transfer	<i>The full process of design of the conference, organisation and managing as well as the continuous effort to involve stakeholders and get the policy makers behind the project are aspects of the good practice with potential for learning and transfer.</i>
Further information	http://www.podim.org/
Keywords related to your practice	<i>Startup, conference, investors, event, networking, award.</i>

PRACTICE 12: TKALKA / WEAVER

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]

Cooperative Tkalka



[Country]

Slovenia

[Region]

Podravje

[City]

Maribor

[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

Tkalka/Weaver is a co-working and a social process space, promoting new ways of collaboration in society and development of new social practices.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

N/A

Detailed information on the practice

Tkalka/Weaver is an alternative office building in Maribor to a collage of organisations, initiatives and individuals who inhabit its premises in diverse processes of cooperation and in multifarious aspects of co-working. Tkalka/Weaver connects and intersects in the organic atmosphere of a working and living habitat, thus standing for both the edifice it designates and the process it embodies: it is co-working in ceaseless formation; it is a delicate fabric of professional, conceptual and existential variety; it is supportive environment for socially engaged work and life.

As an incubator of change with a total surface of 2500 m², it contains a polyphony of entrepreneurship and social economy, tourism, sustainable development, non-governmental sector, consultancy services and advocacy, environmental programmes, intergenerational initiatives, human resources development and employment strategies, local environment and its products.

The headquarters of a galenical laboratory owned by the Municipality of Maribor had not been used for five years. Therefore, the municipality decided to rent it in order to promote tourism, entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, cooperatives and social innovation development.

After some negotiations, the Municipality of Maribor signed a contract with the local public institution for tourism, Zavod za turizem Maribor – Pohorje. They organised a call and selected four beneficiaries that are now using the building: PRIZMA Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities, Centre of alternative autonomous production CAAP, Socio-cultural association Frekvenca and Institute Green Directive.

The users of shared working spaces are organisations that were paying a rather high rent, organisations that were not able to rent their own spaces, desk-sharing programme users in the former premises of CAAP and individuals that were not able to find suitable space on the market.

Resources needed

The beneficiaries have a contract of free rent for five years that binds them to pay for all operating costs. The contracts between the beneficiaries and other users last for three years.

The new users of the premises renovated the space with their own minimal

resources, through voluntary work, and help from sponsors and donators.

Timescale (start/end date)

May 2014/ongoing

Evidence of success
[results achieved]

Tkalka/Weaver was awarded as best coworking space in Slovenia in 2015.

There are more than 25 organisations and social enterprises or cooperatives and more than 20 users of the desk-sharing programme (self-employed, micro enterprises, start-ups), all together more than 100 individuals.

Weaver is also a support environment for socially engaged work and lifestyle. The enterprises, cooperatives and NGOs housed are active in many different fields such as culture, media, food, housing, minorities etc. Weaver has given birth to a new platform of social relations where life and work go hand in hand.

Although all users organise their projects independently, they share not only operating costs, but also technical equipment such as printers, photocopiers, projectors and shared spaces such as the kitchenettes, boardrooms, classrooms. They also share knowledge and frequently collaborate in common projects and activities as their efforts are often complementary.

The activities of Weaver are tightly bound to the local context of Maribor. On the one hand the interested public gets involved through regular activities and events and on the other hand almost all social enterprises in the city have some contact with the organisations in Weaver. The desk-sharing is also an opportunity for local organisations to work in the vicinity of similar organisations. Weaver has also become a central point for social enterprises and cooperatives that are situated in the city centre.

Challenges encountered

The management of a building with this complex network of relationships between organisations can be very challenging. Therefore, the users organised regular meetings in the first year which later on resulted in a programming board. which discusses technical questions, programmes and contents (coworking, public events, support environment) as well as public relations and community building.

Community building also gets a lot of attention – people run out of energy and motivation – and therefore they need an encouraging environment and certain conditions have to be fulfilled to spur creativity. A variety of profiles enables complementary services and products, so you can find everything you need in one place. Cooperation is not based only on the friendly environment but also on shared interests. Reciprocity between the users is also connected to jobs they can arrange for each other, which is much more rewarding.

An important factor for collaboration is also establishing communication channels. For that purpose, they use interactive boards in the building and they formed a group for communication about common activities. They stress that it is important to encourage every individual not to get isolated in their office but talk about their activities with other users of Weaver.

Potential for learning or transfer

The development of the social economy ecosystem as well as the promotion of social entrepreneurship are two aspects with potential for learning or transfer.

Further information

<http://www.novimaribor.com/tkalka/>

Keywords related to your practice

Co-working; community building; shared working spaces;

5.7. TARTU CITY GOVERNMENT

PRACTICE 13: STARTUP DAY

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]
[Country]
[Region]
[City]

University of Tartu and City of Tartu
Estonia
South-Estonia
Tartu



[Good Practice Information]

Short summary of the practice

sTARTUp Day is the biggest business festival in the Baltic States

It's a flagship event where startupper and traditional entrepreneurs, experts and newbies, government and media will discuss early stage businesses. It's an event where people who have thought about creating their own startup can get the necessary motivation and actually go through with their idea. It's an event where everyday people with an interest in startups and technology can meet others with similar interests and grow their network.

This good practice tries to encourage people to become more entrepreneurial and innovative, give ideas on how to avoid common mistakes and create collaborations between entrepreneurs, startups, corporations and ecosystem organizations.

Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project

No

Detailed information on the practice

sTARTUp Day aims to bring together several stakeholders from traditional entrepreneurs, IT specialists, business enthusiasts and start uppers to government and media.

This is a flagship event for Southern Estonian IT businesses, organized by the key players of the startup ecosystem of Tartu. The idea was initiated by the University of Tartu, which decided to collaborate with the city government of Tartu, sTARTUp Hub, and many other partners to bring the business festival to life, such as Tartu Science Park, Tartu Business Advisory Services, Tartu Centre for Creative Industries, Tartu Biotechnology Park, University of Tartu Idea Lab, Ole Rohkem, Contriiber, sTARTUp Hub, Spark Hub, Buildit, Convertal, Mooncascade.

In 2016, sTARTUp Day focused on a theme that is linked to the startup mentality in Tartu: running lean - or answering one important question, 'How To Earn If There's Nothing To Burn?'. Startups are often criticized for burning through investors' money and failing to earn enough profit. The speakers will discuss how to increase the success rate of startups and how the lean approach can help startups to avoid making common mistakes.

Resources needed

The budget for the event was over 100000 EUR plus in-kind expenses. Nearly 100 people including volunteers are included in the process.

Timescale (start/end date)

2016 / ongoing (Annual)

Evidence of success
[results achieved]

The first sTARTUp Day was held in Tartu in December 2016, ended up with 3000 participants, 100 startups and 70 investors, becoming the biggest business festival in the Baltics.

sTARTUp Day 2019 is expected to host 4000 participants: startup founders, entrepreneurs, investors, academicians, students and business enthusiasts. Festival is open to everyone who is interested in:

- *Entrepreneurship and startups;*
- *getting to know how to avoid making common mistakes in starting a business;*
- *getting to know how to increase success rate;*
- *meeting with interesting people, networking with greatest minds and making new contacts,*
- *or just enjoy the inspiring vibes of the business festival held in Tartu.*

The synergies between the stakeholders/business support ecosystems were created for future cooperation. Today, the group of organisers have at least one study trip per year to learn from other good practises. Future cooperation in creating the startup vibe in Tartu is ongoing.

Challenges encountered

An event of this scale needs every piece of the puzzle to fit together. And it is not only the stakeholders, but also speakers, venue etc.

- *Problems with the venue regarding the communication and power.*
- *Also, difficulties getting a balanced stakeholder group and not to show this as an initiative of one stakeholder (the university), but as a group effort.*
- *Funding. Each stakeholder can contribute in-kind, but sponsors are needed to pay the bills.*

Potential for learning or transfer

The festival brought together stakeholders from traditional business sectors, IT and biotechnology, start-ups, business support organisations, government and media. All stakeholders work together to reach one goal and this enables the creation of a strong team that overcame several issues on the way – lack of funds in the beginning, lack of space, problems with the venue etc. The full process of design, organisation and managing, tailored to the current ecosystem, all this know-how can be shared with other possible organizers of this type of events.

sTARTUp Day has the potential to become an annual wrap-up event for the Estonian startup scene.

Further information

<https://startupday.ee/>

Keywords related to your practice

Startup; event; Estonia;

PRACTICE 14: KALEIDOSKOOP/IDEALAB

[Organisation
in charge of
the good
practice]

University of Tartu, Tartu
City

[Country]
[Region]

Estonia
South-Estonia

[City]

Tartu



[Good Practice Information]

**Short summary of
the practice**

The University of Tartu runs a pre-incubation program called Idea Lab, consisting of a series of events with the goal of providing mentorship to students. At the end of each semester, and within these events, a pitching competition called Kaleidoskoop is organized.

Kaleidoskoop is the biggest students' business and project ideas competition in South-Estonia. The competition is intended to support the students in Tartu and help teams shape their ideas into tested business models.

**Does this practice
come from an Interreg
Europe Project**

No, but receives funding from the European Social Fund.

**Detailed
information on the
practice**

University of Tartu plays a very important role in the ecosystem as it is keen on supporting and promoting entrepreneurship.

UT encourages its students to work on their business ideas already during their studies. They run a pre-incubation program called Idea Lab. The Idea Lab program consists of a series of events with the goal of providing mentorship to students. Participating teams work on their ideas throughout the program, where they have a chance to get advice from experts of different fields at every event.

The most important parts of the Idea Lab programme are STARTER and Kaleidoskoop.

Hands-on extra-curricular business development programme STARTER provides knowledge and skills for student start-up projects and helps teams to shape their ideas into tested business models. Semester-long STARTER programme consists of workshops that guide teams from ideation to business model. Teams receive individual mentoring from start-up founders or entrepreneurs and regular performance evaluation from instructors.

The STARTER programme ends with business and project ideas competition Kaleidoskoop that has a number of cash prizes and access to start-up ecosystem services.

At the end of each semester, a pitching competition called Kaleidoskoop is organized. At Kaleidoskoop, teams pitch their business plans they've been developing to a jury.

The main requirements for participation are the following:

- *At least 50% of the team members should be students from universities, vocational or general education schools.*
- *All the teams have 3 minutes for a pitch.*
- *At the finals, all the teams will have 5 minutes for questions from the jury.*
- *A perfect pitch would include following information: team name, description of*

the problem, offered solution, potential market, competition, business model, the competence of the team.

- *The pitch has to be in English and up to 3 slides can be used.*

In the selection round, ten teams will be selected to compete in the finals. Criteria:

- *Team's assessment of the need/problem*
- *The quality, novelty, and potential of the solution*
- *Progress and business model validation.*
- *Team's capabilities*
- *Pitch*

The jury chooses the team with the most promising business idea — this team gets a chance to participate in SLUSH. Also, Tartu City Government encourages the teams by giving cash prizes to best teams.

The university takes part in organizing many entrepreneurship-related events. The student business and project ideas competition Kaleidoskoop is also held as a part of the sTARTUp Day festival.

Resources needed

Joint effort by the University of Tartu and their curricula and startup community. Tartu City Government is directly supporting the event with ca. 1000 EUR, but indirectly with supporting the incubators to help the student teams to have access to start-up ecosystem services

Timescale (start/end date)

Started in 2010 / ongoing

Evidence of success [results achieved]

Kaleidoskoop is the biggest students' business and project ideas competition in South-Estonia.

The teams that come out of the Idea Lab and win the Kaleidoskoop competition, have strong business cases and have had international success:

- *The 2017 spring winner Festera (producing indoor recycling bins) was founded as a student company and awarded with the title of Student Company of the Year 2017 in Europe.*
- *Winner of 2017 autumn, Decomer Technology, was one of the top 7 teams at Ajujaht, the largest competition of business ideas in Estonia.*

Challenges encountered

No relevant challenges encountered during the implementation of the practice.

Potential for learning or transfer

The full process of design, deployment and managing a business development programme scheme for students, tailored to the current ecosystem, can be shared with the partners.

Further information

<http://ideelabor.ut.ee/projects/kaleidoskoop>

Keywords related to your practice

Incubation; acceleration; pitch; mentorship; university

6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Innova Foster has been focused on results since its inception, hence, one of its objectives is to act as demonstrators, derisking the development of novel service systems and approaches and encouraging engagement with stakeholders.

The experiences shared across Europe in order to identify new opportunities, have allowed the participating regions to define several **Good Practices of interest, some of which will be transferred to their respective Action Plans**, thus cultivating long-term collaboration among the partners as well as engaging the interested stakeholders in the Action Plans governance.

Creating a strong startup ecosystem is a holistic long-term effort that requires planning and the implementation of measures that go well beyond typical 4- or 5-year election cycles. It requires staying power and the ability to analyse the results and adjust the policies accordingly. It also requires a realistic analysis of local strengths and weaknesses so that the measures to be implemented take full advantage of the existing strengths and correctly address the identified weaknesses. Furthermore, ecosystems evolve and the policy mix needs to be adapted to the evolutionary stage of each ecosystem. This requires constant monitoring and the correct definition of indicators and metrics. This is why cases where regions or governments merely try to replicate the policies of a given success story from another region typically fail.

Nevertheless, this does not take away from the importance of exchanging experiences and learning from the mistakes or successes of other regions or countries. What this means is that lessons learned and, more specifically good practices identified in other regions will most likely need to be adapted before implementation in other regions.

Within the framework of the Innova Foster project, a diagnosis of the ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation of each participating region was prepared. Based on the analysis of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystems we were able to match the weaknesses and challenges identified in some regions to the strengths of other regions in the consortium. This allowed us to identify **opportunities for future cooperation** between the following regions:

- INCYDE and Torun report high levels of bureaucracy, while Bistra Ptuj highlights the easy and cheap registration of a company in their country, as Slovenia is in the top 5 of countries with the least number of procedures to start a new business.
- Torun reports poor cooperation between universities, start-ups and business support institutions in the region's ecosystem, and Malta points to the lack of academia-industry linkages. Meanwhile, Cork has a triple helix approach to economic leadership, with initiatives like Innovation vouchers and innovation partnerships, and Slovenia has the highest level of SME collaboration in innovation with higher education or research in the OECD.
- Tartu City Government points to a lack of domestic funding, which could be alleviated by exchanging notes with areas with a strong track record in attracting and retaining Foreign Direct Investment, such as Cork. In addition, Tartu could look into partnerships with startup events from other regions in order to increase the reach and exposure of its startup events, in an effort to attract more international investors and entrepreneurs.

- In Cork, the use of public procurement to support startups and SMEs, and the creation of university spin-offs still needs improvement. To that end, Cork could benefit from the experiences in Public Procurement of Innovation from Spain and Estonia and academic entrepreneurship from Poland.
- Last but not least, INCYDE, Torun, Malta and Bistra Ptuj report a risk averse or giving-up culture prevailing in the ecosystem, in contrast with Cork, where there is a strong pro-business environment and can-do attitude.

In addition, each partner analysed the state of development of the main available instruments for the promotion of the development of SMEs and startups. The results of this analysis have been collected in a [joint instrument status matrix](#), which is shown in the following table.

Fig. 7. Regional diagnosis: instrument status matrix

Instrument		INCYDE Foundation	Torun Regional Development Agency	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cork City Council	Malta Enterprise	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Tartu City Government	
Startup ecosystem	Density	A recognizable cluster of startups exist	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Developing	Recently created	Operational	Operational
		Startup movement in the media	Operational	Operational	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Operational
		Meetups and events for entrepreneurs happens every week	Operational	Developing	Developing	Operational	Non Existing	Operational	Operational
		Academic and research networks are well connected to business	Operational	Operational	Developing	Operational	Non Existing	Developing	Developing
	Culture	Entrepreneurs are high-lighted as role models	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Developing	Developing
		Failure is accepted as a part of the learning progress	Developing	Developing	Operational	Developing	Non Existing	Developing	Developing
		Jobs at startups are promoted	Developing	Developing	Operational	Recently created	Non Existing	Operational	Developing
	Funding (private)	Seed capital	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Operational
		Crowdfunding	Developing	Non existing	Operational	Recently created	Recently created	Developing	Developing
		Venture capital	Operational	Non existing	Operational	Recently created	Non Existing	Operational	Developing
		Prizes	Recently created	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Recently created
	Regulatory environment	Tax regulation fosters entrepreneurship	Developing	Developing	Operational	Operational	Non Existing	Developing	Developing
		Patent protection system supports innovation	Operational	Developing	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Developing	Developing
		R&D transference to market is encouraged	Operational	Developing	Developing	Recently created	Developing	Developing	Operational
		Special visas for startups	Operational	Developing	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Operational
	Support services & business training	Incubators	Operational	Operational	Operational	Developing	Recently created	Operational	Operational
		Accelerators	Operational	Operational	Operational	Developing	Non Existing	Operational	Operational
		Next-generation incubators and acceleration (coworking)	Operational	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Non Existing	Operational	Operational

Instrument		INCYDE Foundation	Torun Regional Development Agency	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cork City Council	Malta Enterprise	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Tartu City Government	
Institutional support	Talent	Flexible labor market	Operational	Developing	Operational	Operational	Non Existing	Recently created	Developing
		Education system focused on competences, not knowledge	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
		Companies supporting long-life-learning	Developing	Non existing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
		Coding included in the education system	Recently created	Developing	Developing	Recently created	Recently created	Developing	Developing
		Promotion of STEM education	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Operational	Developing	Developing	Operational
		Gender gap tackled, specially in STEM education	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Operational	Developing	Recently created	Developing
	Financing	Seed capital (public support or investment)	Operational	Developing	Operational	Operational	Developing	Operational	Developing
		Crowdfunding (public support or investment)	Non Existing	Developing	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Developing	Non Existing
		Venture capital (public support or investment)	Operational	Developing	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Developing
		Prizes (public support or investment)	Operational	Operational	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Operational
		Incentives for new and experienced investors	Developing	Developing	Operational	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Developing
	Support services & business training	Support for developing commercial loans for startups	Operational	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Operational	Operational	Developing
		Technology transfer and university spin-offs	Operational	Operational	Operational	Recently created	Developing	Operational	Operational
		Business and financial training	Operational	Operational	Operational	Developing	Developing	Operational	Operational

Instrument			INCYDE Foundation	Torun Regional Development Agency	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cork City Council	Malta Enterprise	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Tartu City Government
Institutional support	Integrated public/private programmes (financing & services)		Developing	Developing	Developing	Recently created	Recently created	Operational	Operational
	Demand-oriented support & market creation: Public procurement & other		Recently created	Developing	Developing	Non Existing	Recently created	Non Existing	Operational
Enhancing corporate innovation	Traditional models	Corporate venture capital	Operational	Developing	Operational	Developing	Recently created	Non Existing	Developing
		Corporate incubation (inside-out)	Developing	Developing	Operational	Developing	Non Existing	Recently created	Non Existing
	New models	Outside-in startup programmes	Recently created	Developing	Developing	Developing	Non Existing	Non Existing	Non Existing
		Inside-out platform startup programmes	Recently created	Developing	Developing	Developing	Non Existing	Non Existing	Non Existing

Source: Innova Foster

This matrix can help explain the reasons for transferring good practices between regions and also to identify the most suitable good practices to be added by external experts, as it gives us an overview of the current status of each instrument for all participating regions.

After reviewing all the information and documents generated in the project together with this matrix, it was concluded that most of the consortium could benefit from external good practices in new corporate innovation models and improving access to finance, especially Venture Capital. These 2 external good practices are briefly described in the following text boxes.

EXTERNAL GOOD PRACTICE: NEW CORPORATE INNOVATION MODELS

Enel Innovation Hubs

Enel is a multinational energy company and one of the world's leading integrated electricity and gas operators that works in 34 countries across 5 continents, selling gas and distributing electricity to more than 70 million end users. The company employs nearly 70.000 people.

Enel Innovation Hubs are part of the Enel Startup Programme that aims to achieve Enel's goals in terms of clean energy and a sustainable future through an open innovation approach. In the words of Enel's CEO of Innovation Hubs, "it does not matter where the idea comes from, what matters is that it is a good one".

The company realised that they could not do it all on their own and that they didn't have access to all the innovative technologies that exist. As such, they started *working* "together with venture capital funds, accelerators, incubators, universities, big industrial players and government institutions in a constant search for startups and SMEs to collaborate with Enel to make traditional businesses more efficient and/or to generate industrial growth through new business models". To date, Enel has opened Innovation Hubs in Tel Aviv, San Francisco, Moscow, Madrid, Catania, Santiago de Chile and Rio de Janeiro.

In addition to the scouting work done by the hubs that's aimed at identifying interesting startups, the company has setup the Open Innovability platform¹, a crowdsourcing space where anyone can present an idea for a solution to the different challenges published by Enel.

If an idea has the potential to lead to an innovative development in one of the fields of interest for Enel, then the startup that presented the project is inserted into an acceleration plan. Enel finances and accompanies the startup with their own engineers and technicians in order to develop the product in a short period of time,



which they will purchase in order to apply on an industrial scale. The acceleration programme lasts 6 months and chosen startups can develop their products with support from Enel's managers and engineers, test solutions in laboratories and in production facilities and have access to the Group's network of partners and suppliers. Enel also provides coaching and mentoring sessions to improve entrepreneur's business and marketing skills. In some cases, if a startup has solutions that are particularly well suited to their needs, Enel may consider acquiring the company.

Since 2016, Enel has examined 3,000 startups of which 450 were evaluated in more detail, and have invested several million Euros in 140 startup projects. 35 of these startups are now in the scale up phase.

Even though these initiatives depend on the private sector, public authorities can promote Corporate Startup Engagement (CSE) by tying funding for companies to doing pilots between startups and corporations, creating a platform to facilitate matchmaking between corporations and startups, organising workshops for corporations on how to engage with startups and promote success stories of CSE. In addition, funding for local accelerators could also be connected to the development of CSE programmes.

EXTERNAL GOOD PRACTICE: IMPROVING ACCESS TO FINANCE

Venture Capital in Singapore

Singapore has become one of the world's easiest places to do business because of its simple and transparent procedures to create and run a business. In addition, its business and tax laws are easy to follow, stable and business friendly. There is no capital gain tax and corporate tax is capped at 17%. Additionally, some tax incentives were put in place for venture funds, venture capital management companies and angel investors. There are also entrepreneurial visas that can be obtained in a matter of days and the cost of living is lower than in other similar hubs.

Venture Capital is a key ingredient in any startup ecosystem, not only because of the funds that these investors provide but principally because of the support and business savvy that private venture capitalists can bring to the table. By recognising the importance of a robust venture capital base and implementing complementary measures and policies, the Singaporean government has managed to turn a conservative and moderate society where entrepreneurship was seen as a fad into a startup haven in a little over two decades. Many countries have tried and failed to replicate Silicon Valley through funds, infrastructure and tax incentives. Singapore, however, has outshone other countries in creating a vibrant startup ecosystem in a relatively short period of time.

As a first step, the government prepared an extensive study to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local ecosystem. Then it prepared a series of programmes to address those weaknesses and bridge the identified gaps. Initially, Singapore started working on the demand side and promoting the creation of startups through grants schemes and policies aimed at supporting incubators and seed stage funding. Once the seed stage funding needs were addressed, the government moved on to the next step of helping startups attract venture capital investment.

In 2009 Singapore created the Technology Incubation Scheme in which the government would provide 85% of the needed capital if a third-party investor was willing to provide 15% up to a maximum of 500,000 Singaporean dollars per company. This initiative was implemented together with 7 incubators selected by the National Research Foundation (NRF) out of 32 proposals from national

and foreign entities. These incubators, of which only 2 are local companies, would identify the startups that participated in the programme and invest at least 15% of the capital. The incubators, would then have the option to buy out the NRF's share within 3 years by repaying the capital plus interest. This means that the government was willing to assume most of the risk, while giving the incubators the option to reap most of the benefits. Under the guidance and mentoring of the incubator managers, the startups greatly improved their chances of success, thus diminishing the risk.

In addition, Singapore also created the Early Stage Venture Fund, where the NRF invests with venture capitalists by matching their investments in local early-stage tech companies. This fund was created in 2008 and in 2016 it committed 10 million Singapore dollars per fund on a matching basis with 4 different corporate venture capital funds. Corporate VCs have the option to buy out the NRF's share by returning the capital with interest within 5 years.

According to NRF data, the 100 million Singaporean dollars allocated to these schemes allowed startups to attract approximately 400 million in additional funding from private capital. By assuming most of the risk, the government also succeeded in attracting a significant number of experienced local business executives and investors that are now an important part of the startup ecosystem as angel investors and mentors.

From 2010 to 2015 the number of funding deals in Singapore increased from 26 to 220. The value of these deals also had significant growth in 5 years, as it went from USD 80.57 million in 2010 to USD 1.16 billion in 2015.

Although one cannot simply copy the policies from another country and hope to get the same results, Singapore's model is recognised as one of the most easily adaptable to other countries. It is important to start with a correct diagnosis of the local weaknesses and gaps and then to systematically address those needs adapting the policies as the ecosystem evolves. Even though local authorities have created several incentives, experts say that the approach of matching investments from the private sector was probably the most effective in attracting venture capital.

The analysis of the characteristics of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the 7 participating regions, based on a common methodology, as well as the identification of Good Practices, also applying a format that allows the comparison and contextual analysis of their advantages and disadvantages, has allowed **several of the partners to identify new actions of interest** (within those developed by other partners) **which will be transferred to their own Action Plans**.

The following table shows the **practices that will be transferred**, as well as the partner from which they emanate and who aims to incorporate them:

Fig. 8. Innova Foster BBPP transfer between partners

GOOD PRACTICE OF INTEREST FOR TRANSFER	OWNER OF THE GOOD PRACTICE						
	INCYDE Foundation	Torun Regional Development Agency	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cork City Council	Malta Enterprise	Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Tartu City Government
PARTNER: BISTRA PTUJ							
sTARtUp Day Business Festival							X
Innovation Partnership Programme				X			
PARTNER: CORK CITY COUNCIL							
VentureFest North West			X				
Support for Academic Entrepreneurship		X					
PARTNER: INCYDE FOUNDATION							
PODIM Conference						X	
Tkalka/Weaver						X	
sTARtUp Day Business Festival							X
GC Mentoring Programme			X				
PARTNER: MALTA ENTERPRISE							
Innovation Voucher Programme				X			
sTARtUp Day Business Festival							X
PODIM Conference						X	
High Tech Aerospace Incubator	X						
PARTNER: OLDHAM							
sTARtUp Day Business Festival							X
PARTNER: TARTU CITY GOVERNMENT							
Innovation Partnership Programme				X			
PODIM Conference						X	
PARTNER: TORUN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY							
GC Mentoring Programme			X				
PODIM Conference						X	

Source: Innova Foster

The aspects of interest of each good practice selected for transfer and the potential benefits for its introduction in another region are as follows:

Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj – Transferred from Tartu City Government

- **sTARTUp Day business festival:** Although the Bistra Ptuj has some initiatives of similar nature in the region (Start-up Maribor and Start-up Ptuj programmes), this good practice has elements that can help upgrade them and strengthen their impact.

Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj – Transferred from Cork City Council

- **Innovation Partnership Programme:** This good practice would reinforce the cooperation between businesses and industry to improve innovation, which is something the region is continuously striving for.

Cork City Council – Transferred from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

- **VentureFest North West:** this good practice helps businesses find funding and support to suit their needs. It brings together innovators, entrepreneurs and investors to facilitate business connections, growth opportunities and new ideas, hence would help Cork's region solve some of its barriers to enterprise driven competitiveness, such as access to finance, and greater business collaboration.

Cork City Council – Transferred from Torun Regional Development Agency

- **Academic Entrepreneurship:** this good practice consists in competitions conducted to support research and development processes in academic enterprises and providing support for spin-off enterprises. The implementation of a programme of this nature by Cork City Council will also help the participants gaining sales skills, as well as providing support to innovative spin-offs.

Incyde Foundation – Transferred from Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj

- **PODIM:** the Conference has some very interesting aspects that will be incorporated into the actions of Incyde's Action Plan. In particular, the roadshow part of the conference has led to the creation of Roadshow for high-tech incubators which will improve the current programme. Furthermore, this roadshow will be complemented by a National Congress of High-Tech Incubators that will also incorporate the lessons learned from the Podim conference.

Incyde Foundation – Transferred from Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj

- **Tkalka/Weaver:** this good practice has inspired Incyde to include social and environmental criteria in the selection process of incubators in order promote social entrepreneurship.

Incyde Foundation – Transferred from Tartu City Government

- **sTARTUp Day business festival:** the event has provided some very interesting insights that will be used to promote technological entrepreneurship in seminars organized in different regions all over the country.

Incyde Foundation – Transferred from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

- **GC Mentoring Programme:** although Incyde already provides mentoring activities, this good practice has some elements that are very interesting and will be used to improve current mentoring programmes.

Malta Enterprise – Transferred from Cork City Council

- **Innovation Voucher Programme:** the programme would have to be adapted to Malta context specifically as to account for small size limitations while keeping the focus on innovation appetite, easy access to knowledge, collaborative development and minimal bureaucracy. This practice presented a case of a more developed ecosystem built on entrepreneurship and innovation, whereby many of high potential SMEs / solid scaleups arise out of innovation background or in collaboration with good links to research organisations. Collaborations between universities institutes and local industry (SMEs) are encouraged through this programme.

Malta Enterprise – Transferred from Tartu City Government

- **sTARTUp Day business festival:** This good practice provided interesting learnings that will be used in startup demo events where startups can discuss projects with stakeholders and investors. The lessons learned from this event will also be used in the organization of a national yearly startup event.

Malta Enterprise – Transferred from Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj

- **PODIM:** this good practice provided interesting insights related to the organization of a high profile startup event that will be used for the organization of a national yearly startup event.

Malta Enterprise – Transferred from Incyde Foundation

- **High Tech Aerospace Incubator:** this infrastructure where equipment, knowledge and transfer of technology are crucial was inspirational and will be used to update incubation/acceleration facilities in Malta.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council – Transferred from Torun Regional Development Agency

- **Startup Weekend:** this good practice consists of an event that helps to build a startup community, startup culture and creating impact in local city or region, hence would be adequate for the improvements of issues presented by Oldham area, which are: engage SMEs into the local innovation ecosystem, in order to become more competitive, as well as facilitating their linkage with the industry.

Tartu City Government – Transferred from Cork City Council

- **Innovation Partnership Programme:** This good practice encourages companies to work with research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction. Companies can access expertise and resources to develop new and improved products, processes, services, and generate new knowledge and know-how. This is interesting for Tartu City, as they have other projects and initiatives ongoing in regard to university-industry cooperation and promoting research and innovation infrastructures which would be complementary to this one, and would increase their respective impact in the ecosystem.

Tartu City Government – Transferred from Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj

- **PODIM:** this conference is one of the largest annual international startup and business conferences in the CEE region, and some of the aspects of this practice would be useful for the improvement of the sTARTUp Day event that Tartu co-organizes.

Torun Regional Development Agency – Transferred from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

- **GC Mentoring Programme:** This programme provides an opportunity for businesses to access direct experience free of charge via experienced mentors that are suited to the mentees needs and preferences. This will complement the services that are provided for startups in the region.

Startup owners often face problems and challenges that are not necessarily solved by traditional forms of support for companies.

Torun Regional Development Agency – Transferred from Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj

- **PODIM:** Despite the greater impact of the PODIM conference compared to the conference organized in our region - the Regional Innovation Forum and different target group (not only startups), we can use the aspects of organising the competition for startups.

In addition to the transfer of practices between regions, the sharing of experiences and the opportunities that were identified for future cooperation, the Innova Foster partners have also identified additional benefits that resulted from their participation in the project.

Partners identified exposure to European best practices and creative and innovative thinking at regional level, as well as establishing contacts with people that may help in the implementation of those practices as a benefit of participating in Innova Foster.

In addition, they recognized the ability to network and build relationships with new regions and organizations across the EU outside their usual areas of cooperation as another benefit. The project has already generated collaboration between partners in activities outside the scope of the Innova Foster project.

As an added bonus, some partners have even stated that they improved their relationship with local stakeholders as a result of the project's activities. This is a very significant outcome as one cannot stress enough the importance of **involving relevant stakeholders** in the identification of suitable instruments for fostering innovation in their respective areas of influence. Stakeholder involvement in this process will **increase the potential success of the policies to be implemented**.

ANNEX I: DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL ECOSYSTEM DIAGNOSIS

This Annex contains links to the complete information gathered regarding the local ecosystem diagnosis made by all Innova Foster partners, which most relevant characteristics have been summarised in a SWOT in Section 4.

Partner	Country	Link
INCYDE Foundation	Spain	https://bit.ly/2SfKCQc
Torun Regional Development Agency	Poland	https://bit.ly/2EDFy4F
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC)	United Kingdom	https://bit.ly/2BvXVET
Cork City Council	Ireland	https://bit.ly/2GvyBo9
Malta Enterprise	Malta	https://bit.ly/2R4jhCT
Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj	Slovenia	https://bit.ly/2CnRmWx
Tartu City Government	Estonia	https://bit.ly/2PMDWXm

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