

iEER Action plan for West Region, Romania

1. General information

| iEER Project (PGI00111) | |
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| Partner organization | Regional Development Agency of West Region, Romania |
| Other partner organization involved (if relevant) | |
| Country | Romania |
| NUTS2 region | West Region |
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2. Background and Summary of iEER findings

[iEER](#) is an EU Interreg funded project bringing together 10 European regions, with the objective to boost the entrepreneurial ecosystems through the exchange of good practice. Since 8 regions already have the [EER label](#) (European Entrepreneurial Region), good practice is abundant in the network. Over the last 2 years, stakeholders of the startup ecosystem from West Region participated in exchange visits to other regions and a peer review of the ecosystem in West Region was done with the iEER partners. The iEER stakeholders in West Region are now ready to formulate an Action Plan for the next years, in which practical measures to boost the entrepreneurial ecosystem will be implemented.

The policy instrument addressed is the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ROP 2014-2020). West RDA is the body in charge of its implementation. One specific investment priority is concerned: 2.1. Promotion of the entrepreneurial spirit, especially through the facilitation of economical exploration of new ideas and by encouraging the creation of new enterprise.

The intervention was on priority 2.1.b Business incubators. The guidelines for potential beneficiaries was under preparation and public consultations beginning 2017. Following two rounds of public consultation, West RDA had the possibility to amend the guidelines and make recommendations, including also the recommendations of the iEER LSG mid' 2017. The call for proposals was launched in December 2017 and will be open for submissions or projects between February 5th 2018 - May 7th 2018.



West Region is the second economic region in Romania characterised by relatively high foreign investment and economic growth, low unemployment, talented and well educated young generations and a good quality of life in the main cities Timisoara and Arad. Industry boosts a strong automotive parts manufacturing sector, an IT&C sector showing sustained double-digit growth and promising potential in agriculture, food and tourism.

Looking at the ecosystem for Start-ups support, both the Peer Review Report delivered by iEER partners and the SWOT analysis conducted by the local stakeholders' group reach similar conclusions: i) there is an ecosystem for start-ups, the components are present and active; ii) there are many public and private initiatives, and there are promising signs of cooperation; iii) the Start-up Ecosystem will become more effective when the main actors coordinate their efforts on a truly regional scale.

This can be explained with the following trends:

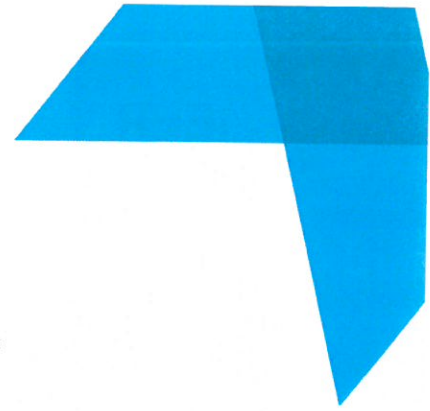
- **Governance** is centralised: National policy support through structural funds does not answer startups' needs. Funding and policy remain therefore fragmented.
- **Funding** is mainly through grants. Private funding is less visible, but is on the rise: companies are interested in creative spin-offs and a small community of business angels is emerging.
- The entrepreneurial **culture** is growing: especially young people are more entrepreneurial than the previous generation.
- **Support** for start-ups shows in strong incubation facilities, but they are not connected and focus is on the initial stage. Acceleration support is still weak.
- **Human capital** - well educated university graduates and professionals – is available in the region, but there is competition for brains from outside the region as well as from established companies within the region.

In short, dynamics is there and can probably be boosted if the actors involved cooperate more closely to reinforce each other.

Summary of iEER findings

The iEER Action plan provides the opportunity to start cooperation with support from the project and with external expertise. If we summarise the conclusions of the Peer Visit Survey provided by iEER partners, the SWOT analysis and the Regional Report done by RDA, the main opportunities are:

- Reinforce governance to promote West Region as Start-up hub
- Diversify finance for Startups
- Support the Start-up potential



Reinforce governance to promote West Region as start-up hub

The iEER project provides a perfect platform to reinforce the governance of the Start-up ecosystem in West Region, increase influence on government policy and funding opportunities and streamline the support pipeline.

The Peer Visit Survey mentions that national startup policy is too centralised to have an impact in the region and suggests it would be good if the region speaks with 'one voice' on technical matters concerning start-ups and business innovation towards central government. A careful coordination of all the organisations involved – seed/pre-seed support, incubators, HEI's, Industry (clusters and companies), start-up networks, local government – will also result in common actions and concerted investments.

The Peer Visit suggests that the variety of seed-supports, incubators and contact networks that are active in the region be organised as a pipeline, and 'marketed' with sign-posts, a referral system and intake procedures.

Once a coherent support pipeline is in place, it is important to show the effect of the pipeline in terms of initiatives and new businesses created. The availability of centralised data also makes it easier to communicate a regional identity, inform strategy discussions and - eventually - set commonly agreed objectives.

Diversify finance for startups

The Peer Visit Survey recommends that an effort should be made to diversify access to funding for start-ups. The Regional Report mentions that some grants schemes for SMEs are now in place, but the scope is limited to support production costs of existing companies, so relevance for Start-ups is limited.

The Peer Review recommends to investigate possibilities to broaden access to finance to private sources, loans etc. Improving access to finance comes along with other kinds of business expertise. The SWOT mentions the emergence of a small business angels network in Timisoara, which could play a role.

Support the Startup potential

The Peer Visit signals on the one hand an enthusiastic entrepreneurial spirit amongst the younger generation, but on the other hand sees an educational system that has difficulties to provide relevant knowledge, experience and skills. At the same time, Universities are catching up fast, with both top-down and bottom-up initiatives that allow students to gain experiences in both 'laboratory' and real-company environment. This also means that Universities are quickly gaining experience in this field, which can be extended to high school-level students as well.

The steps towards an Action Plan

The access to funds for boosting the Start-up ecosystem in West Region are limited. The Regional Operational Program has a provision for direct support for companies, but systemic actions like iEER are not yet foreseen, while additional funds from other national or EU programs are very limited. This means that the Action Plan will be low cost and depend in an important way on investments from stakeholders



like universities and companies. For this reason, the Action Plan was formulated together with the stakeholders and contributing agencies as follows.

- Opportunity analysis: Based on the iEER findings, the stakeholders identified opportunities for cooperation in the relevant chapters (governance, finance and start-up support). Working groups were formed to formulate possible projects (September workshop)
- Formulate Priority Actions: working groups made proposals for Priority Actions, from which 5 were selected for implementation (October meeting)
- The Action Plan was circulated for comments and approval amongst the stakeholders.

3. List of priority actions

The following actions were selected for implementation:

I. Reinforce Governance of the Regional Ecosystem

PA1: Create a Centre for Entrepreneurship for West Region

PA2: Disseminate success stories

The governance of the Start-up ecosystem is strengthened with the creation of a Centre for Entrepreneurship in the Region. The Centre is a public/private initiative in which universities, companies, support organisations, startup networks and local government cooperate to improve the effectiveness of the Startup ecosystem. It is a local development project funded under the ROP. Outcome will be monitored and promoted by the Centre.

II. Diversify finance

PA3: Create connections with VCs

Finance will be diversified by supporting the emerging VC network and the support organisations to establish links between Startups in the region and (inter)national VCs.

III. Support the Regional Start-up potential

PA4: Educate young people on the real face of entrepreneurship

PA5: Incubation program for students

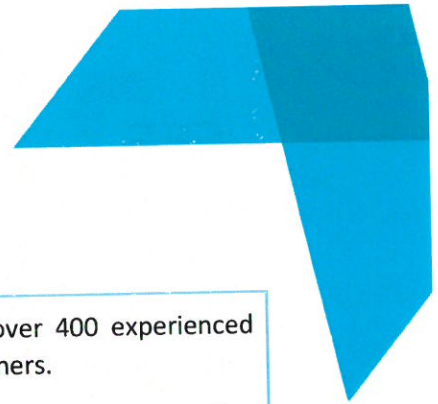
The challenge to educate young people on the real face of entrepreneurship has been taken up by support organisations in two parallel actions:

- complement the education curriculum on entrepreneurship for university students & extend entrepreneurial education towards high school setting with a game experience program
- create an Entrepreneurship Academy Program for entrepreneurs in the region⁷

4. Detailed actions

Governance of the Regional Ecosystem

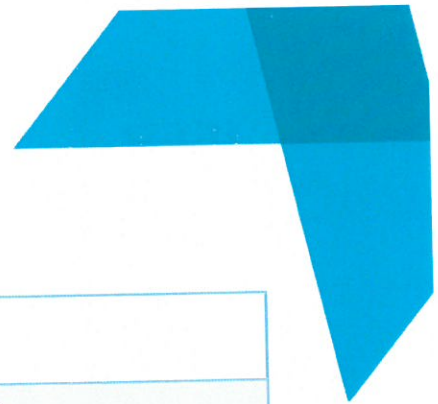
| Priority Action 1 | | Create a Centre for Entrepreneurship |
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| 1. Policy context | 1. Investment for Growth and job programmes; | |
| 2. Background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present action plan) | <p>Regions with successful start-up support ecosystems manage to attract substantial national and EU funds, spend it wisely and show the results. In comparison, efforts in West Region are fragmented; more focus and more content are required. Not one partner can solve this alone, therefore stakeholders of the Ecosystem need to step up coordination and cooperation in the following areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not so clear for companies, students and young entrepreneurs how ‘the system’ works, i.e. what assistance can be obtained from universities and dedicated support organisations. • There is a potential for linking technology transfer and development with knowledge intensive companies, applied research and innovative start-ups in the region. However, at this moment in West Region efforts are fragmented amongst several universities and support organisations, so impact is limited. • Develop joint projects/investments on a scale that matches with the potential in the region. <p>Examples from Kerry, Ireland (CEED - Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development), Brandenburg, Germany (Centre for Entrepreneurship and Transfer), Valencia, Spain (Entrepreneurial Council) provide workable models for West Region.</p> <p>Both CEED and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Transfer are two models linking entrepreneurship with technology transfer and innovation for the development of knowledge intensive new businesses. This approach will be also considered by this action.</p> <p>CEED is a also a good example of cooperation between private (Kerry Innovation Centre) and public (Institute of Technology Tralee) organisations, having initiated and currently managing the</p> | |



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| | <p>centre and their huge support network of over 400 experienced entrepreneurs, innovators and other practitioners.</p> <p>Using the existing infrastructure of the two lead partners, CEED has relied mainly on in kind contribution, private sponsorship. However, they underline the fact that the sustainability of using these methods to develop and grow a pipeline of entrepreneurs and innovative critical thinkers will require dedicated funding going forward.</p> <p>The model of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Transfer from Brandenburg is a “one-stop-agency” service unit within the University of Applied Science, focussing on a wide range of support for potential young entrepreneurs: Stimulation, Motivation and Information (Entrepreneurial Culture); Coaching, Consulting and Qualification (Entrepreneurial Competence); Infrastructure and Networking (Entrepreneurial Life). The centre is owned and managed by the University of Applied Sciences providing 2,5 full time equivalents from its own budget and an yearly fixed budget of approximately 270.000€ from European projects and own budget.</p> <p>The main “not to do” of this GP was to avoid working by yourself and to cooperate with a local network since idea generation.</p> <p>In terms of governance of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, a role which should be played also by the Centre for Entrepreneurship in West Region, the Valencian Entrepreneurial Council is a good example of successful coordination among public and private stakeholders. It enhances public-private cooperation and commitment with entrepreneurship policies, mapping the ecosystem, agreement on common indicators for measuring the efficiency of the ecosystem and it is a useful instrument for implementing the regional strategy. This cooperation model is being considered by the Centre for Entrepreneurship in the Region.</p> |
| <p>3. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)</p> | <p>The objective is to integrate the entire ecosystem supporting entrepreneurship (communities, hubs, specific services, universities, etc.) in a wider support structure - a Centre for Entrepreneurship, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide governance of the entrepreneurial ecosystem |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a landmark for entrepreneurship in the region • provide structure and more focussed support to the existing expertise • facilitate de contact with young people from high schools and universities • signposting • provide a single gateway for future young entrepreneurs • create advantages in terms of scale and knowledge • generate common projects and fundraising • improve coordination between members of the ecosystem <p>The Centre would also provide infrastructure, logistic and specific services for young entrepreneurs and startup support organisations.</p> <p>NB: At this moment, details about the creation of the Centre and its funding are being discussed with West University.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting up the cooperation 2. Raising fund 3. Structural development of the Centre 4. Operational development of the Centre |
| <p>4. Players involved (please explain their role)</p> | <p>Regional Universities Private companies Support organisations Tehimpuls - Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer</p> <p>NB: At this moment, the discussions are twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one university taking the lead of the project with further involvement of the other players mentioned - a public/private partnership applying for funding and becoming the project leader |
| <p>5. Timeframe</p> | <p>2018-2022</p> |



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| 6. Cost | minimum 400K EUR |
| 7. Funding source | Regional Operational Programme (about 50%) Contribution from the Coordinating Partner (about 50%) |
| 8. Expected impacts (please define KPI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and nature of the obstacles (in terms of resources, policy or contacts) for the start-up Ecosystem that have been solved by the Centre - Nature and amount of cooperation between partners in the service delivery to start-ups and students - Number and amount of joint projects - Number and nature of the events organised - Clients' rating |





| Priority Action 2 | Disseminate the success stories |
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| <p>1. Policy context (please indicate whether this action will impact on</p> | <p>1. Investment for Growth and job programmes;</p> |
| <p>2. Background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present action plan</p> | <p>In 2016 only, there were 3 exits with deals of importance (7, 22 and 300+ million Euro). There is a need to promote the local Startups both outside and inside the region. Of course this is highly dependent on a working ecosystem supporting startups in an integrated way.</p> <p>The Valencia start-up ecosystem provides an applicable model for West Region. Valencia Region had similar conditions to West Region some years ago: big pool of talent, low rents for housing and office space, etc.</p> <p>The actual Valencian example refers to a cooperating ecosystem called VITemprende, a network of innovative entrepreneurs that the City Council launched via Fundación Las Naves Valencia. Its members have the possibility to share knowledge, collaborate in R&D activities, transfer technology, go international and create synergies by networking with prominent bodies in the field of Valencian entrepreneurship. All actors of the ecosystem committed to a regional strategy for entrepreneurship and promote their success stories in a concerted way.</p> <p>An international program to create visibility and give the opportunity for startups to meet, exchange and cooperate with other ecosystems and stakeholders. Benefits of the program are to scale up their companies through facilitating access to innovative solutions, new competences, new markets and investors.</p> <p>There is also an online networking platform, whose members can promote themselves, position within the ecosystem, benchmark with companies of their own sector and create synergies, complete teams, find investors.</p> |



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| <p>3. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)</p> | <p>The purpose of increasing the visibility of the local success stories will be twofold: pitching & power of example.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the success stories 2. Update the existing platform (Timisoara Start-ups) <p>Timisoara Startups will be rebranded and updated. It will also include all local startups, with focus on the success stories.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Promote the platform locally to students, entrepreneurs and public administration etc. 4. Promote start-ups from the region internationally via the existing networks and connections, including a future iEER promotion network. (West RDA) |
| <p>4. Players involved (please explain their role)</p> | <p>Timisoara Start-ups (Lead Partner)</p> <p>West RDA</p> <p>Support organisations</p> |
| <p>5. Timeframe</p> | <p>2018 - 2020</p> |
| <p>6. Cost</p> | <p>10K eur</p> |
| <p>7. Funding source</p> | <p>Timisoara Startups, Support organisations and West RDA (in kind)</p> |
| <p>8. Expected impacts (please define KPI)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and type of target group reached (students, entrepreneurs, VCs) - Increase in the reputation of West Region as Start-up hub - Increase in number of people accessing Timisoara Startups Platform |

Diversify finance

Priority Action 3

Create connections with VCs

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| <p>1. Policy context:</p> | <p>Investment for Growth and job programmes;</p> |
| <p>2. Background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present action plan)</p> | <p>With the success stories known, it is obvious that the start-up potential of West Region is there to stay, and needs to come under attention of VC's both nationally and cross border in a structured way.</p> <p>A seed/pre-seed equity and an acceleration fund with money from EIF will become operational in 2018 in Romania. The implementing organisations will be interested to invest in businesses ready for VC and work at the same time with local startup hubs for proposing candidates and do selection.</p> <p>At this moment, services for start-ups focus on the initial stage of idea generation, market research, prototyping etc. Taking the next step to scale-up services is a challenge. A first step will be taken by the EEN office in Timisoara who will provide through a pilot programme, support for scale-up to a number of companies from the region.</p> <p>Matching startups with VCs could be improved with platforms like the one in Haut de France (StarPartners), an online platform for start-ups and entrepreneurs allowing them to connect and network. Start-ups can publish a profile detailing what type of competences or resources they are looking for. At the same time, potential investors can also register on the platform and explain in their profile how and what they can invest in the project (money, expertise and competences).</p> <p>Timisoara Startups, the existing platform for startups could use the model and develop a new function including profiles and matching options for the two groups. Communicating it to the target groups is also vital.</p> |
| <p>3. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List the local start-ups 2. Update the existing platform (Timisoara Start-ups) Timisoara Start-ups will be rebranded and updated. It will also include all local start-ups and create a matchmaking interface where start-ups can meet investors and vice versa 3. Benchmark the services offered to start-ups in the region 4. Organise a promotion campaign of local start-ups to attract VCs |

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| | <p>5. Facilitate a meeting and information session with the Fund Manager of seed/pre-seed funds in Romania</p> <p>6. Pilot program for scale-ups (West RDA through EEN)</p> |
| 4. Players involved (please explain their role) | <p>Timisoara Start-ups</p> <p>Cowork Timisoara & Startup Hub (Lead partners)</p> <p>West RDA</p> |
| 5. Timeframe | 2018-2020 |
| 6. Cost | 15K + 28K (Cosme + own contribution) |
| 7. Funding source | Timisoara start-ups, West RDA, Startup Hub, Cosme |
| 8. Expected impacts (please define KPI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of VCs interested in information about West Region Start-ups - Number of Start-ups prepared to contact VCs - Number and nature of contacts established between VCs and Start-ups - Number of businesses prepared for scale-up |

Support the Start-up potential

Priority Action 4. Educate Young People on the “real face” of entrepreneurship

- I. Entrepreneurship EXIT Games
- II. Entrepreneurship Academy Programme

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| 1. Policy context: | Investment for Growth and job programmes; |
| 2. Background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present action plan) | <p>With more than 10K students attracted by 14 universities in West Region per year, there is a tremendous potential for fostering & developing entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour. However, there are some major concerns that hold the process down: the lack of basic knowledge regarding what really matters when starting a business and lack of interest among youngsters to pursue this career path. On the one hand there is a poor designed and unprepared formal educational system, which cannot teach and preach entrepreneurial skills. On the other hand, although there are several private initiatives that aim to cover the lack of basic knowledge and experience, they do have the financial and other resources to cover the gap and accelerate the process.</p> <p>As observed during iEER learning camps, innovation cannot take place without various relevant stakeholders conjoint efforts and active involvement. Thus, the two proposed programs will be developed by entrepreneurs and representatives coming from NGOs, formal and non-formal educational systems and hubs.</p> <p>Furthermore, following several good practices seen during the learning camps, where entrepreneurial thinking took real shape after sustained and long-term initiatives had been adapted to suit the young generations, our two actions will be designed with the purpose of being replicated, improved (from one edition to other) and framed into interactive and meaningful forms for students.</p> <p>Using gamification in the education of entrepreneurship and challenges were concepts discussed in all iEER learning camps and found in many initiatives in the iEER regions.</p> <p>The two programmes described below will be developed including elements of GPs such as Hibster Programme (Hauts de France), CEED educational activities (Ireland) - multiple pedagogy, challenges from companies, building skills, providing a continuum of entrepreneurial education.</p> <p>CEED delivers a range of educational activities on the practice of Entrepreneurship, to inspire and build skills. CEED aims to offer programmes that provide a continuum of entrepreneurial education and experience from primary school,</p> |

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| | <p>through second and third level and ultimately to business set up by applying innovative learning experiences.</p> <p>The principles of setting up a business using multiple pedagogies including the case study method, applied theory, entrepreneurial DVDs, role playing, mentoring and reflective practice are being used for teaching students through the Young Entrepreneur Programme.</p> <p>Hibster Programme (Hauts de France) is a collaborative creativity programme dedicated to teams of students from different education fields focussing on “challenges” coming from companies from the health sector.</p> |
| <p>3. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)</p> | <p>Action I - Entrepreneurship EXIT Games Target group: high school & university students</p> <p>Objective: Provide basic knowledge on entrepreneurship for young people from high schools and universities, using adapted methods to suite their generation interests (online marketing / content and experiential learning).</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the key questions of high school & university students about being an entrepreneur <p>Instruments to be used for the research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google search - Focus group (within the target) - Short questionnaire for those working with young people & students' councils and organisations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Videos creation <p>Each video will reply to some basic questions identified in the previous stage. The content of the video will be created and presented by people already working with students</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop the format for a programme using the gamification & challenges concepts (“entrepreneurship EXIT games”). The target group will be also involved in the concept development. Entrepreneurs will also be involved for providing the challenges. 4. Pilot the programme for a group of 30 students within 3 days and validate it 5. Create an online version of the “entrepreneurship EXIT games”? <p>Both the programme and the videos supporting it will be developed in order to be further replicated.</p> |

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| | <p>Action II - Innovative Entrepreneurship Academy Programme Target group: young entrepreneurs (with a business or innovative idea to be developed into a business) & managers (with ideas of innovative projects)</p> <p>The focus of the programme will be twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to develop/improve the entrepreneurial mindset, by teaching SKILLS like critical thinking, self-awareness, creativity, resilience, innovation, problem solving, etc. - to facilitate the development of innovative projects either replying to an existing need or innovative projects creating a new demand on the market - to ensure the application of innovative ideas/projects on the market through consultancy services (access to investors, access to corporates, access to resting/prototyping facilities in Europe) <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structure the programme - Submit it for funding - Start the implementation of the programme |
| <p>4. Players involved (please explain their role)</p> | <p><i>Action I:</i> MindsHub Teen Labs Smarters Cowork Timisoara ROSENC Entrepreneurs/ Companies Other support organisations working with students, trainers</p> <p><i>Action II:</i> Tehimpuls (Coordinating Partner) Support organisations</p> |
| <p>5. Timeframe</p> | <p><i>Action I</i> 1st stage - research: April - June 2018 2nd stage - videos creation & format of the programme: July - December 2018 3rd stage - pilot programme conception: January-March 2019 4th stage - April 2019 5th stage - Online version</p> <p><i>Action II</i></p> |

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| | April 2018 - December 2020 |
| 6. Cost | 20K per programme (Action I) 100K (Action II) |
| 7. Funding source | Unknown at the moment |
| 8. Expected impacts (please define KPI) | <p><i>Action I: EXIT games</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of students/teams registered in the competition - Participants' feedback ratings - Number of challenges successfully achieved - Number of participants from Action I going to Action II (or another program) - Social media reach <p><i>Action II: Entrepreneurship programme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of participants -Number of people with new/improved entrepreneurship skills -Number of ideas with business potential developed |

Priority Action 5

Incubation Program for student teams

1. Policy context

Investment for Growth and job programmes

2. Background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present action plan)

The 10+ universities in the region have attracted about 65.000 students, more than 10.000 students per year. The entrepreneurial potential of these talented people is high, and could be stimulated more with dedicated programs. The programs should target both students and young researchers.

The “SAS - Student Entrepreneurship Society” is a top down initiative of the Ministry of Education, through which universities have to create physical spaces and specific services to support entrepreneurship among students. However, there isn’t any public funding dedicated to SAS, nor a direction of how the SAS could work.

In this case, each university can decide how to approach the SAS, what resources they can raise in order to operationalise the SAS.

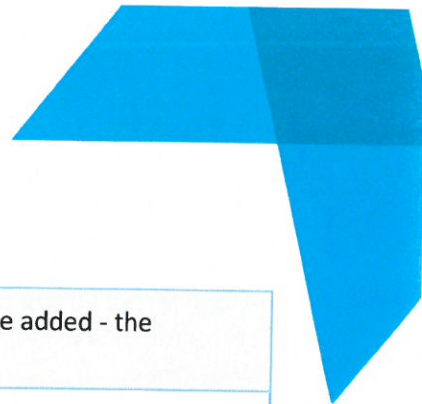
In this regard, West University of Timisoara developed an incubation programme for students and applied for public funding to implement a pilot end 2017.

The **Hubhouses (Hauts de France)** are similar to the SASs in terms of **approach** (top down). In this regard, they could be an example for making the SASs operational. Hubhouses are hubs and working spaces for all students and less 2 years graduated who want to develop or create a project, through customized support.

More than that, the good practice from Hauts de France provides a successful **model of cooperation between the existing 7 hubhouses and the common network they have been created.**

The “**Entrepreneurship societies**” (Finland) on the other hand are **voluntary** organisations within Universities aiming to raise the public profile of start-ups, celebrate successful entrepreneurs and make entrepreneurship a desirable career path for young people. All of ES rely on voluntary work and building a community is an essential part of ES. There usually aren’t many if any full-time people working for ES.

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| | <p>Activity is based on activity and attitude of the members. Universities and cities support these activities financially, but the main resource is the spirit and positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.</p> <p>An example of a programme dedicated to business development by students from different disciplines is Discover ITT. A programme ran by CEED (Ireland), it's an enterprise programme exclusively for students at the Institute of Technology, Tralee to help transform students' ideas into real businesses. Working alongside a mentor students interact and pitch to a panel of business experts throughout the programme while creating a solid business plan and attending weekly workshops. Students can work individually or in groups of three.</p> <p>Discover ITT enterprise programme has been successfully running since 2013 with over 40 students participating each year from across the institute and disciplines ranging from engineering to business to social science to creative and multimedia and games development.. In 2013 the programme ran for one semester only, in 2014 it was extended to a year-long programme. In 2015 the format moved to BootCamp style events, reflecting the national Enterprise Ireland Student Awards, with weekly workshops, followed up with one to one clinics and mentoring. In 2016 the programme was condensed to a three-month accelerator programme based on design driven innovation. This format was implemented again..</p> |
| <p>3. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)</p> | <p>The programme is a 2 month incubation programme dedicated to teams students from West University of Timisoara, from Economy, Social and Political Sciences, IT faculties. The programme includes training sessions on ideation, design thinking, product roadmapping, MVP, add on sessions.</p> <p>The viable projects resulted from the programme will access the Innovation Labs Programme (good practice from West Region, Romania promoted through iEER) and will receive funding through Start-up Plus (grants' programme funded under the Operational Programme for Competitiveness, managed by the university)</p> <p>One pilot programme has been already implemented in October & November 2017. The main outcome: 6 students' teams developed 6 ideas into viable projects.</p> |



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| | In the next programme, a new component will be added - the challenges coming from bigger companies. |
| 4. Players involved (please explain their role) | West University of Timisoara Private companies Innovation Labs (ROSENC) |
| 5. Timeframe | November 2017 - 2020 |
| 6. Cost | 30K eur per programme implemented 40K eur/startup amount invested in the innovative ideas through Startup Plus Programme |
| 7. Funding source | The Pilot programme conducted November - December 2017 received public funding (Ministry of Education - Fund). At this moment there are discussions regarding the funding for the future programme to be organised in spring 2018. There are two options to raise private money from companies providing the challenges or to apply for public money from the Ministry of Education. |
| 8. Expected impacts (please define KPI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of programmes implemented - 5 viable innovative ideas and teams to be prepared for Innovation Labs & Startup Plus and get ready for the market per programme implemented. - New entrepreneurial competence gained - Number of startups created |

5. Monitoring and impacts of the action plan

At this section, partners give an overview of how the action plan will be monitored during 2018-2020. What kind of interaction there will be among the working groups or local stakeholders?

Action Plan of West Region, implementation overview

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| Governance of the Regional Ecosystem | Resources |
|---|-----------|

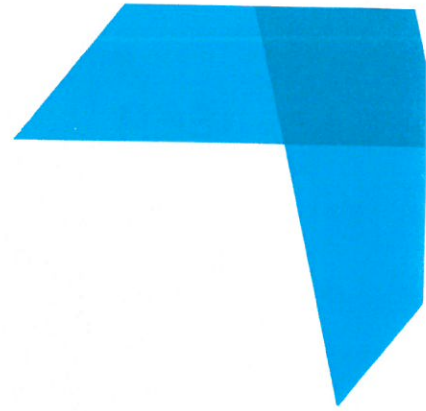


| | | |
|--|---|--|
| PA1: Create a Centre for Entrepreneurship for West Region | Regional Universities Companies Support organisations Start-up networks West RDA | 400K eur Funding from ROP & Coordinating Partner (single organisation or consortium - to be decided) |
| PA2: Disseminate success stories | Timisoara Startups West RDA Support organisations | No external costs 10K eur (in kind) |
| Diversify finance | | |
| PA3: Create connections with VC's | Timisoara Startups Cowork Timisoara Startup Hub West RDA | 15K (in kind) + 28K (Scale up Program - Cosme + own contribution 10%) |
| Support the Regional Start-up potential | | |
| PA4: Educate young people on the real face of entrepreneurship | Tehimpuls - Regional innovation and Technology Transfer Centre MindsHub Teen Labs Cowork Timisoara Smarters ROSENC Entrepreneurs/ Companies Other support organisations West RDA | 20K eur per year (Source not known at the moment) + 100K eur (ROP, Axis 1) |
| PA5: Incubation program for students | West University of Timisoara Companies Innovation Labs | 30K per program Source: West University of Timisoara/ Companies |

Monitoring principles

Showing results and learning from experience is a vital function for developing a healthy Startup Ecosystem in West Region. For this reason, we established the following principles:

- We monitor both the quality and the quantity of the results of the work done in each of the Priority Actions.
- Each Priority Action has a coordinating partner and contributing partners. The coordinating partner of a Priority Action organises suitable monitoring methods and makes practical the arrangements (like funding and logistics) with West RDA.
- Each coordinating partner makes sure that the monitoring results are updated and shared within the teams, while lessons are drawn regularly.



- The coordinating partners meet at least every 3 months (LSG meetings) to exchange progress and update plans.
- Every 6 months there is a wider Ecosystem meeting (LSG meetings), in which all partners participate and all subjects can be discussed.

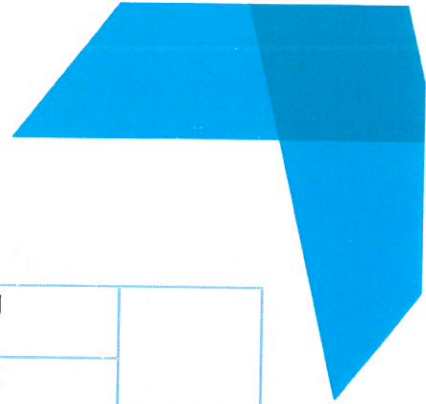
We will use the Monitoring Growth Grid to keep track of the indicators of the Action Plan.

In addition, we will cooperate with the definition of a set of indicators showing the effectiveness of the Startup Ecosystem at large.



Indicator overview of West Region Action Plan

| PA | Indicator | How | Who |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| PA 1 Centre for Entrepreneurship | - Number and nature of the obstacles (in terms of resources, policy or contacts) for start-up Ecosystem that have been solved by the Centre | Board meetings | Coordinating Partner 1 |
| | - The nature and the amount of cooperation between partners in the service delivery to start-ups and students | Work time estimation | |
| | - Number and amount of joint projects | Board meeting | |
| | - Number and nature of the events organised | CE admin | |
| | - Clients' ratings | CE admin | |
| PA2 | - Number and type of target group reached (students, entrepreneurs, VCs) | Communication Record | Coordinating Partner 2 |
| | - Increase in the reputation of West Region as Start-up hub (measured through a campaign/poll/survey) | Reputation measurement | |
| | - Increase in media coverage | Collect stories | |
| | - Increase in number of people accessing Timisoara Startup platform | Communication Record | |
| PA3 | - Number of VCs interested in information about West Region Start-ups | Communication Record | Coordinating Partner 3 |
| | - Number of Start-ups prepared to contact VC's | Communication Record | |
| | - Number and nature of contacts established between VCs and Startups | Communication Record | |
| | - Number of businesses ready for scale-up | Record | |
| PA4 EXIT games | - Reach/ Engagement (No. of subscribers to the YouTube channel / No. of likes / No. of social media shares, etc.) | Communication Record | Coordinating Partner 4 |
| | - Number of students/teams registered the competition | Record | |
| | - Participants feedback ratings | Record | |
| | - Number of challenges successfully achieved | Record | |
| | - Number of participants from Action I going to Action II (or another program) | Record | |
| Entrepreneurship programme | - Number of participants | Record | Coordinating Partner 5 |
| | - Number of people with new/improved entrepreneurship skills | Record | |
| | - Number of ideas with business potential developed | Record | |

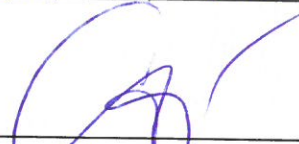


| | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------|------------------------|
| PA5 Incubation | - Number of innovative ideas and teams to be prepared for Innovation Labs & Startup Plus | Record | Coordinating Partner 6 |
| Programme for students | - Number of participants with new Start-up skills | Record | |
| | - Number of startups created | Record | |

This action plan will be implemented and monitored by the West Region Romania.

Name Surname Raluca Cibul

Position Director, West Regional Development Agency

Signature: 

Date: March, 23, 2018

Stamp of the organisation



