



European Union
European Regional Development Fund



ERMIS OVERVIEW & BEST PRACTICES CATALOGUE

September 2012





The ERMIS project has been made possible by the INTERREG IVC and Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

The contents reflect the author's views and the INTERREG IVC Managing Authority is not liable for any use that maybe made of the information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ERMIS project stands for "Effective Reproducible Model of Innovation System" and has been made possible by the INTERREG IVC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

ERMIS together with its 15 European partners from 9 member states aims to jointly develop an effective governance model for local innovation systems, in order to foster increased competitiveness and sustainable growth within SME's.

The innovation capacity of SME's is vital to achieve economic growth in the EU. They are the economic backbone of Europe and are at the core of the ERMIS project.

One step of the ERMIS method is to identify and transfer partners' good practices.¹

This document aims to make an overview on ERMIS including a description of the project, the method and a presentation of the 25 Best practices generated and managed by the consortium partners.

¹ The charter of good practice puts the basis of what should be a good practice on the ERMIS project to enable the partners to select their best practices.

TABLE OF CONTENT

FIRST PART: ERMIS DESCRIPTION 4

The Ermis Project
The ERMIS Partners

SECOND PART: ERMIS METHODOLOGIE 9

Methodological Background

THIRD PART: ERMIS BEST PRACTICES 12

Best Practices Classification

BP1 Valor'Innov
BP2 ECOBIZ Collaborative Platform
BP3 Club Action Brevet (CAB) - the Industrial Property Club
BP4 Start Up Challenge
BP5 CIMPACA Microelectronics Integrated Centre
BP6 Cesena Sustainable Energy Action Plan - planning and administrative tools to promote environmental innovation in SMEs
BP7 Innovation Observatory of the Regional Union of the Chamber of Commerce of Emilia-Romagna and Innovation Report of the Forli-Cesena Chamber of Commerce
BP8 Global Grant SPINNER 2013
BP9 Romagna Creative District
BP10 Mechatronic Club
BP11 Creative Conversion Factory
BP12 Holst Center and Development Lab
BP13 United Brains
BP14 Penela's territory policy of enhancing and promoting / Tourism
BP15 IPN Model
BP16 Robert Bosch Department at the University of Miskolc
BP17 Local FDI support system and one-stop shop services for companies
BP18 Specific Unit of Identification and Monitoring of European and International consortia
BP19 R&D and Innovation Managers Training
BP20 Aegean Technopolis
BP21 BIOBUS - Biodiversity resources for innovative Business development
BP22 Accelerace
BP23 Connect Denmark
BP24 Science and Technology Park "TEHNOPOLIS"
BP25 Innovation Entrepreneurial Research Programs and Training

PART 1:

ERMIS
DESCRIPTION

THE ERMIS PROJECT

ERMIS stands for "Effective Reproducible Model of Innovation System" and has been made possible by the INTERREG IVC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The ERMIS project together with its 15 European partners from 9 member states aims to jointly develop an effective governance model for local innovation systems, in order to foster increased competitiveness and sustainable growth within SME's.

The innovation capacity of SME's is vital to achieve economic growth in the EU. They are the economic backbone of Europe and are at the core of the ERMIS project.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project runs from January 2010 to December 2012 and started with a comprehensive study of the composition and strengths of innovation systems that leverage performance for SME's in the 9 participating countries.

This review of academic and economic literature has enabled designing a methodology for context-specific SWOT analysis of the partners Local Innovation Systems (LIS).

Thanks to this SWOT analysis and benchmark of partner performance, partners identified relevant Best practices on territories sharing the same context. This process is central to ERMIS as the primary objective of the project is to bridge the gap between the so far partially inefficient approach of „one size fits all” and the recent perspective of a place-based innovation approach fostered by the European Union.

The transfer and the testing of these Best Practices between partners should lead to the elaboration of guidelines for a context-specific, reproducible methodology of analysis of LIS effectiveness, supported by a first set of context-specific Best Practices for fostering innovation in SMEs.

Local stakeholders are involved in the assessment throughout the process that is anticipated to last beyond the project period.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the objectives of the project, ERMIS:

- exchanges effective local innovation system tools and methods,
- designs and exchanges a governance framework and methodology to manage local innovation systems,
- designs a set of governance and management guidelines,
- involves public stakeholders outside the project,
- Involves policy makers to validate policy recommendations for implementation in the local and regional policies and Structural Funds.

PROJECT RESULTS

In accordance with the Lisbon Strategy objectives, results of the ERMIS project will enhance long-term economic performance and improve the ability of European SME's to generate innovation and growth. Knowledge generated from the project will be disseminated efficiently, and will be actively fed into relevant sustainability initiatives, enabling regional stakeholders to formulate policy strategies with regards to innovation issues.

THE ERMIS PARTNERS

FRANCE

French Riviera Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Lead Partner
Rémy-Antoine CONTI
ERMIS Project Director



Sophia Antipolis Community Agglomeration

Jean-Marie Audoli
Partner 2 Project Manager



ITALY

Cesena Municipality

Elena Giovanini
Partner 3 Project Manager



CISE: Centro per l'Innovazione e lo Sviluppo Economico

Giulia Bubbolini
Partner 4 Project Manager



NETHERLANDS

Eindhoven Municipality

Anthony Van de Ven
Partner 5 Project Manager



PORTUGAL

Penela Municipality

Luis Filipe da Silva Lourenco Matias
Partner 6 Project Manager



IPN Incubator

Ana Seguro
Partner 7 Project Manager



HUNGARY

Miskolc Municipality

Kristof Pleban
Partner 8 Project Manager



Miskolc Holding

Gergely Soos
Partner 9 Project Manager



GREECE

Region of North Aegean

Dimitrios Protoulis & Stratos Vougioukas
Partner 11 Project Director & Manager



Samos Chamber of Commerce

Panagiotis Lampropoulos
Partner 12 Project Manager



DENMARK

Horsholm Municipality

Betina Bojesen
Partner 13 Project Manager



Erhvervnet - Copenhagen Regional Agency

Bent Bennemann Bischoff
Partner 14 Project Manager



ROMANY

Iasi Municipality

Bianca Cernescu
Partner 15 Project Manager



SPAIN

ADE - Agencia de Innovation y Financiacion de Empresarial

Yolanda Arias
Partner 16 Project Manager



ERMIS brings together a balanced partnership with regional and local public authorities from Denmark France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Spain. In addition, a number of local actors involved in SME support, such as innovation centers, Chambers of Commerce, and business incubators are partners in the project.



PART 2

ERMIS

METHODOLOGY

PROJECT APPROACH

The ERMIS (Effective Reproducible Model of Innovation System) project aims to open the “black box” of the regional innovation system through a solid analysis of place-based innovation assets, to establish:

a) the state of the economic environment and the business context of regional and local innovation, stressing the peculiarity of each locality or region (confirming the paradigm that “one size does not fit all” in innovation strategies);

b) what are the reproducible assets of local or regional innovation policy (assuming that the place-based approach to innovation can be strengthened by interregional exchange of best practices as a form of knowledge diffusion).

ERMIS is a joint response from a regional perspective to the UE challenge to develop a regional policy for smart growth through Europe 2020. The ERMIS contribution is centred on:

- Taking a place based approach to innovation (recognizing the importance of local capacities and local knowledge bases);
- A recognition of regional/local interdependencies and externalities based on degrees of diversification and maturity of the economic base;
- A recognition of the dominant role of high growth SMEs.

ERMIS Model Synthesis

The ERMIS model intends to be reproducible to all European applicable whatever the regional context. As mentioned above, effectiveness relies on the ability of the model to describe the specificity of each region and to relate and compare regions that share similar contexts. Then, we assume that best practice transfers will be more effective by relying on the precise analysis of the gaps between the transferor region (where the considered practice has been developed, implemented and tested) and the host region (where the best practice will potentially be transferred).

The ERMIS model suggests a step-by-step analysis to provide a synthetic understanding of the situation of the partner region and a highlight of potential developments with regard its structure and history on the one hand and its performance.

The SWOT analysis is an appropriate tool to present synthetic results.

SWOT Analysis Presentation

The aim of the SWOT analysis is to evidence strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of partner regions in order to define and support the development of local and regional policies stimulating the innovative performance of SMEs as a source of sustainable growth. Innovative performance is defined as innovation output relative to resources invested in innovation process.

The SWOT analysis approach -generally attributed to the “design school model” (Mintzberg 1994, 36-39) was originally designed to prepare the strategic corporate planning. It aims to relate internal dimensions (strengths and weaknesses) to external dimensions (opportunities and threats) in order to clarify the current situation and initiate possible remedial actions in case of potentially unfavorable conditions.

In recent years, the SWOT analysis has been applied increasingly in a regional development context to evaluate the relevance of a specific project/policy. However, given the number of stakeholders in a region, the risk is to have ambiguous objectives and then reduce the relevance of the analysis. As a consequence, it is important that partner regions concentrate on a specific (set of) objective(s) in order to make clear which dimensions should be taken into account in the assessment process.

The SWOT instrument will help analysts evaluate their region on the basis of the relevance and of the effectiveness of policy actions in enhancing the innovative capacities of local SMEs. It follows that the study will have first to evaluate strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of SMEs in their business context, and then to estimate the relevance and the impact of innovation policy actions aiming to boost SMEs innovation performance.

Drawing on a RIS framework (as described by Cooke 2001) the study will first carry out a cluster analysis in order to establish the economic environment and the business context of local firms. It will then focus on the super-structural level (interactive learning, network functioning, co-operative culture) of the region and, subsequently, on the infrastructural level.

SWOT Analysis:

- ✓ Strengths rely on resources, conditions, or capacities firms can effectively exploit and leverage to innovate and thereby enjoy a competitive advantage
- ✓ Weaknesses are limitations, defects or lack of necessary resources, conditions, or capacities to take up innovation and achieve a competitive advantage
- ✓ Opportunities are favorable situations or conditions in the firms’ environment that could be exploited to increase the firms’ innovating capacity and achieve a competitive advantage
- ✓ Threats are unfavorable situations in the firms’ environment that could damage the firms’ competitive advantage if required resources or capacities to face and overcome these situations are not accessible

PART 3 :

ERMIS

BEST

PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES CLASSIFICATION

In order to provide help for the choices of the site visits the best practices have been grouped into 6 categories based on practical aspects:

Sector 1: Tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills

Sector 2: Internationalisation and mobilisation of SMEs

Sector 3: Promoting networking and channelling information to SMEs

Sector 4: SMEs participation in decision making and programming

Sector 5: RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs

Sector 6: Complex LED and support for the external investments

CLASSIFICATION BY TYPE	BEST PRACTICES TITLE
S1. Tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills	VALOR'INNOV: collective program for the valorization of innovation in SMEs
	Creative Conversion Factory
	Global Grant SPINNER 2013
	United Brains
	ACCELERACE
S2. Internationalization and mobilization of SMEs	Specific Unit of Identification and Monitoring of European and International consortia
	R&D and Innovation Managers Training Programme
	BIOBUS: Biodiversity resources for innovative Business development
	Young Shoots Challenge
S3. Promoting networking and channeling information to SMEs	Innovation Entrepreneurial Research Programs and Training
	ECOBIZ Collaborative Platform
	Club Action Brevet (CAB) - the Industrial Property Club
	Romagna Creative District
S4. SMEs participation in decision making and programming	Mechatronic Club
	Connect Denmark
	Cesena Sustainable Energy Action Plan - planning and administrative tools to promote environmental innovation in SMEs
	Innovation Observatory of the Regional Union of the CoC of Emilia-Romagna and Innovation Report of the Forlì-Cesena CoC
S5. RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs	Holst Centre
	IPN Model
	Robert Bosch Department of Mechatronics
	Aegean Technopolis
	CIMPACA Microelectronics Integrated Centre
S6. complex LED and support for the external investments	Science and Technology Park "TEHNOPOLIS Iasi, Romania
	Penela's territory policy of enhancing and promoting / Tourism Development
	Local FDI support system and one-stop shop services for companies

Best Practice 1: Valor'Innov – Collective programme for the valorization of innovation in the SMEs

Type of Best Practice: tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills

Problem/Opportunity: A sense of urgency from local stakeholders for a coordinated innovation value chain

VALOR'INNOV is a collective program dedicated to the detection, structuration and implementation of innovative "sleeping" projects in SMEs. It addresses the problem of low level of innovation of SMEs due to their their lack of critical mass and the difficulty for SME managers to devote the time necessary to:

- Analyze of the true feasibility and innovative potential of the project.
- Reconfigure the organization to foster the implementation of the project.
- Lead change within the firm to implement the project.

In a 360 degree approach covering all external (market forces, influencing factors, key success factors) and internal dimensions (degree of novelty of innovation, strategy, organizational configuration, strengths and Weaknesses) of the company.

- The level of risk of the project is analyzed.
- To gaps to valorize the project are identified.
- Operational processes impacted by the project are optimized.
- An approach to change management and launch of the project is implemented.

The programme is a mix of individual diagnostics and coaching with training (strategic management, change management) and cross-fertilization seminars. It gathers groups of 10 firms. Programme duration: 18 months.

VALOR'INNOV is dedicated to:

- 1) Detect innovative projects (technological or non-technological innovations) in small firms that might not be implemented properly or in due time.
- 2) Validate the potential novelty and marketability of the innovation.
- 3) Align the organizational configuration of SMEs with strategic choices addressed by the project.
- 4) Initiate the implementation of the project to put SMEs "on track".

Resources:

Total budget for 20 SMEs: 320 K€ i.e. 16K€ per SME

Work load for coordination and SMEs sourcing: 70 days

Work load / SME: 16 production days / SME

Working days with each SME: 5

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

French Riviera chamber of commerce has organized the coaching of 40 firms through VALOR'INNOV.

- 1/3 of SMEs have ultimately launched a new legal structure dedicated to the development of the innovative project.
- On average, sales related to the project have increased global sales by 10 to 15% after 18 months, and generated 2 to 3 recruitments during the same period
- Operational effectiveness has been increased according to satisfaction survey conducted with SMEs' CEO
- Numerous cross-cooperation between firms participating to the program as well with other clusters or research centers
- VALOR'INNOV has also enabled firms to formulate the business plan related to their project. This formulation has proved useful for discussion with public and private investors

Type of Best Practice: promoting networking and channeling information to SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Lack of cooperation between strategic clusters

Ecobiz was designed to meet the following expectations from firms and economic development stakeholders:

- networking, more synergies, cooperation and business exchange
- facilitate access and circulation of information
- federate initiatives dedicated to firm growth

Objectives:

- Stimulate economic development through cluster cross-fertilization
- Valorize networking throughout the whole value chain
- Strengthen networks visibility and cooperation

ECOBIZ - the network of networks:

- federate and structure communities
- host existing professional networks
- combination of virtual and physical networking
- cross-functional business intelligence
- 40 ECOBIZ networks in France hosted by Chambers of Commerce and economic development stakeholders

Functioning:

- free and secured access
- community leaders
- creation of news & documents for content and practice sharing (expert inputs)
- overall visibility of all events taking place on the territory with screening and searching by multiple themes
- member directory (by community, business, industry, expertise, territory, ...)
- forums: direct discussions (free or confidential) between members
- business platform: to promote products and services, look for partnerships, ...
- a meta-search engine

Main objectives:

- Stimulate economic development through cluster cross-fertilization
- Valorize networking throughout the whole value chain
- Strengthen networks visibility and cooperation

Resources:

Global functioning budget: 330 K€

4 permanent staff for maintenance and on-line support (each community is managed by its own staff)

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

- 8180 individual members
- 5589 companies with more than 90% SMEs
- 36 communities and hosted networks
- 7990 contributions from members
- +180000 visits / year
- 80 press articles
- 25 financial partners (large groups, public bodies)

Type of Best Practice: Promoting networking and channeling information to SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Low level of cooperation of SMEs with local R&D centers

CAB was created in 2008. It has been designed in cooperation with the French Agency for Industrial Property in order to foster the culture and practices of the protection of innovations in French firms and specifically in SMEs.

The format and the content of CAB services have been ex-ante designed with relevant stakeholders such as SMEs, large firms, R&D centers, IP lawyers, IP specialists. All major clusters of the territory were consulted (perfumes and flavors, ICT, micro-electronics, life sciences, energy...).

CAB objectives:

- inform innovative firms about the specific practices of IP dependent on industry and firm-specific contexts
- stimulate IP policies and strategies within SMEs
- sustain innovation protection strategies within SMEs
- facilitate communities of practices between innovative firms, innovation management organizations and IP specialists

CAB methodology:

- Conferences: round tables with IP specialists and practitioners on transversal IP issues (8:30 to 11:30)
- Debate meetings: debate moderated by an innovation specialist, involving innovation experts and CEOs. The format is designed to create communities of practice. The debate is followed by an "happy hour" cocktail to stimulate face to face discussions and cross-cooperation (17:00 to 19:30)
- Patent intelligence (automatic IP intelligence on demand of club members)
- IP individual coaching of SMEs to implement IP strategy
- Patenting feasibility studies
- CAB community is hosted by ECOBIZ collaborative web platform which also provides business intelligence information and agenda of events of CAB

Resources: 280 K€

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

- 1500 participants (representing 950 firms)
- 10 conferences, 10 debates
- 40 patent intelligent alerts
- 10 individual coaching's
- 10 patenting feasibility studies
- 4 newsletters
- 1 annual seminar of club members

Type of Best Practice: internationalization and mobilization of SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Low level of cooperation of SMEs with local R&D centers

Telecom Valley is an association that boosts the use of the Internet and mobility in the field of health, green-technology, tourism ... It has 140 members (SMEs, large groups, training and research organizations, institutional partners and intermediaries) and 225 volunteers. Working in project mode and commissions,

Telecom Valley stimulates technological innovation in the euro-Mediterranean and accelerates the adoption of IT usage and practice. The "Young shoots" challenge is a project led by Telecom Valley. Running for 9 years, competition for projects to create innovative company is open to students from all disciplines and backgrounds in the French Riviera. Thus, students meet in team training sessions and work together on the business plan of their project. Each team is coached and receives advice from experts in their fields which gives them the opportunity to develop their project in the best conditions. A semifinal is scheduled in March and the teams selected for the final receive a budget to help them realize their project. During 6 months, students are supervised by the steering committee. In the final, in October, teams present their project and the winners receive the Isabelle Attali prize representing an amount of 3000 euro for setting-up their business.

Beyond this financial help, it is the discovery of the experience of entrepreneurship, the importance of networking and contact with experienced professionals who value the challenge.

Objectives:

Help and train young graduates to strengthen their entrepreneurship spirit.

Gather students in multi-disciplinary teams.

Foster network development practices.

Participate in economic development of the French Riviera.

Coordinate actions of dissemination in the field of new ICT

Sustain the development of innovative initiatives in Sophia Antipolis Science Park.

Resources: 62732 EURO for the 2010-2011 challenge

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

Up to date, "Startup challenge" has enabled the creation of 3 start-ups: SimplySim in 2007, LudoTic in 2004, Indigen Interactive in 2003, representing 12 jobs. Two new businesses are presently in the process of being launched.

Type of Best Practice: RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Low level of cooperation of SMEs with local R&D centers

The PACA Microelectronics Integrated Centre is emerging as a structuring and grouping element for the Region's microelectronics sector. Start-ups, SMEs, large groups, laboratories and universities worked together to build a service center: this platform is a "compute farm" software access system, a unique innovation-assistance and operational tool for the region's start-ups. It is a place where scientist's industrialists and researchers can use top-performance equipment's, to enable them progress in their fields and firms to shorten the time and the means needed to develop novel products and services. CIMPACA aims at investing further to ensure the equipment remains state of the art, acquire tools to continue its role in Microelectronics and aims at developing its interactions with other sectors as nuclear, space and optical-phonic sectors.

By sharing human resources and equipment and bringing together SMEs and laboratories, CIM PACA enables the sector to achieve economies of scale and improve its know-how and reinforces the innovative capacity of the sector. CIM PACA facilitates start-ups' R&D process until institutional investors provide seed and venture capital.

Resources:

Within 4 years (2005-2008) CIMPACA has mobilized nearly 65 million euros, of which 55% stemming from public funding and 45% from the private sector. Annual fees to become a member of the ARCSIS CIM PACA

- 4000 Euros HT for SME and Industries (between 10 to 250 employees and more)
- 3333 Euros HT for the academics
- 1000 Euros HT for SMEs (Less than 10 employees)
- 500 Euros HT pour Start-Ups (incubated)

Apart from pooled projects, the firms are invoiced according to their usage time. Software's available: ANSOFT, CADENCE, COFLUENT DESIGN, CST, MATHWORKS, MENTOR GRAPHICS, SYNOPSIS

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises

Synergies were created to increase the entire microelectronics community competitiveness. Each player has access to local R&D tools as if they were on his own premises.

40 to 60 start-ups are potential users in PACA with a running average of 9 users.

Best Practice 6: Cesena Sustainable Energy Action Plan - planning and administrative tools to promote environmental innovation in SMEs

Type of Best Practice: SMEs participation in decision making and programming

Problem/Opportunity: incentives for “green conversion” for manufacturing and construction sectors

Since becoming a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors in November 2009 the city council has made a commitment to achieve a larger reduction in CO₂ emissions than the EU target of 20%. To achieve this and meet obligations under the Covenant, the city has recently developed a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) which provides pragmatic tools to foster environmental innovation in local SMEs. A relevant part of interventions planned in Cesena SEAP are targeted to industrial sector because of its significant impact in term of CO₂ emissions and energy consumption at local level.

The interventions in favor of environmental innovation of SMEs are:

- Reviewing administrative procedures for giving companies permission to construct and operate plants for the production of electricity, heating and cooling or transport fuels from renewable energy sources.
- Reinforcing the city council energy desk which provides information on administrative procedures to construct and operate energy plants and on financial incentives for use of renewable and energy efficiency. The help-desk will be directly managed by the in-house company for energy services of Cesena municipality. This company is totally owned by the city council and employs experts on energy issues;
- Promoting the renovation of electric machineries in SMEs to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption of industrial sector at local level.
- Creating new district heating and cooling networks within the city boundaries to provide both local SMEs and privates with thermal energy from co-generation plans and biomasses. The municipality will identify suitable areas at urban level and plan interventions together with the multi-utility company HERA. This urban planning will consider the location of rural areas and agro-industrial companies which can easily provide biomasses without significant impacts in transports. Also areas for biomasses processing will be identified. The municipality will involve Cesena’s agro-industrial companies in planning the interventions.

Objectives:

- implementing innovative governance tools and methods for a more sustainable local development;
- promoting the reduction of the environmental footprint of local SMEs by fostering environmental innovation;
- promoting environmental innovation in local SMEs by providing free consultancy services and incentives;
- streamlining administrative procedures addressed to companies to facilitate the use of renewable and to promote energy efficiency;
- reinforcing a public-private governance model to reduce environmental footprint of industrial sector by promoting environmental innovation;
- increasing companies awareness of achievable investments to reduce energy consumption and to innovate their production.

Resources:

The 2010 resources allocated to design the Cesena Sustainable Energy Action Plan were around 70.000 euros. The resources allocated in 2010 to establish the in-house company for energy services and to

reinforce the Cesena's Energy help-desk are 800.000 euros. Investments planned for energy interventions by public and private sector in Cesena till 2020 are around 468.000.000 euros.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

SMEs and large enterprises have gained advantages in term of: time and costs saving from simplification of administrative procedures to construct and operate energy plants; time and costs saving from accessing to on-line administrative procedures; free access to energy consultancy services; free access to information on incentives for the use of renewable. SMEs and large enterprises will register in next year's advantages in term of energy supply from renewable sources thanks to public and private investments in heating and cooling district networks. Local companies have been involved in 2009 and 2010 in designing the Cesena SEAP and local energy interventions. This approach to energy policies has facilitated the dialogue between the local public authority and stakeholders from industrial sector with advantages in term of balance between public and private needs.

Results from promoting the renovation of electric machineries in local SMEs:

Local energy consumption in industrial sector (2007): 86.50 GWh

Local energy consumption from electric machineries (2007): 131.91 GWh

Percentage of energy cutting within 2020: 6%

Total energy saved within 2020: 7.91 GWh

CO2 emissions cut within 2020: 3.82 ktCO2

Best Practice 7: Innovation Observatory of the Regional Union of the Chamber of Commerce of Emilia-Romagna and Innovation Report of the Forlì-Cesena Chamber of Commerce

Type of Best Practice: SMEs participation in decision making and programming

Problem/Opportunity: a low R&D intensity due to low R&D private investment (owing to prevalence of small SMEs)

The Innovation Observatory is a web-based tool to collect and analyze data on innovation performances and needs by local enterprises. It enables to map innovation in Emilia Romagna, to make comparisons between its provinces, to identify improvement areas and priorities for action and it is aimed at providing the chambers of commerce and the other local stakeholders of the innovation system with sound information for policy making, action planning and monitoring.

The Innovation Observatory was launched in 2006 by CISE (Innovation and Economic Development Centre, which is the innovation agency of the Forlì-Cesena Chamber of Commerce) and was then upgraded to a regional tool adopted by the Network of the Innovation Desks of the Chambers of Commerce of Emilia Romagna, coordinated by the Regional Union of the Chambers of Commerce Emilia-Romagna).

The Innovation Observatory is fed by annual surveys based on an on-line questionnaire (computer aided telephone interviews ensure that a relevant sample of enterprises is included).

Innovation Patterns, Innovation Tools, Innovation Needs are the investigation areas included in the Innovation Observatory. Questions include information on industry sector, activities, products and services, revenues, number of employees, localization of suppliers and clients to segment the answers to questions on type of innovation, innovation investments, impact of competitiveness, enabling factors, obstacles, revenues from innovation, innovation goals, patenting, cooperation with universities and research centers, sustainable development issues, support from public authorities.

In the province of Forlì-Cesena, the data included in the Innovation Observatory are merged with EIS indicators and the data included in SIMET (a data warehouse and data mining system to monitor the local economy, developed by CISE on behalf of the Chamber of Forlì-Cesena) to calculate 29 indicators on enabling factors (human resources, finance and support), enterprise level activities (investments, entrepreneurship, cooperation, intermediate results), outputs (results, economic impact). The indicators, along with additional qualitative and quantitative analysis are included in the annual Innovation Report of the Forlì-Cesena Province (third edition to be issued in 2011).

Objectives:

The aim of the Innovation Observatory is to provide the chambers of commerce of Emilia Romagna and the local stakeholders (with a main focus on public authorities, business associations, universities) with actual information on local innovation patterns, performances and needs from the standpoint of local enterprises.

Resources:

For the year 2011, some 130.000,00 have been allocated globally for the Innovation Observatory and the Innovation Report.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises

Neither the Innovation Observatory nor the Innovation Report of the Forlì-Cesena Province has a direct impact on the business environment in terms of increased innovation capacity in local enterprises. They both are governance tools to be adopted by public authorities, business associations, universities, innovation centers, etc. to design policies and actions to pave the way and support enterprises in building their innovation capacity, develop innovative products and services, innovate their production processes, cooperate with universities and R&D centers, etc.

Type of Best Practice: tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills

Problem/Opportunity: low percentage of workers with a post graduate degree in science and technology

The Global Grant Spinner 2013 "Interventions for the qualification of human resources in the field of research and technological innovation" is the programme established by Emilia-Romagna Region to support young individuals in the field of research and technological innovation and for the creation of a community capable of placing the individual at the core of its innovation processes for future community and knowledge economy development.

The access to Spinner 2013 is possible for employed, unemployed, individuals in search of first occupation, on redundancy payment or on mobility residing or living in Emilia-Romagna. In particular, the access is offered to graduating and graduated students, PhD students, individuals with post graduate degrees and high school students with multi-year working experience in technical and/or management fields and covering managerial positions both individually or in groups.

Spinner 2013 offers an integrated system of grants, services and opportunities for individuals consisting in:

- Financial support
- Technical Assistance and Tutorship
- Empowerment of Human Capital
- Seminars and Conferences
- Specialist Advisory services

The Spinner 2013 offer for financial support, services and opportunities is provided through assistance services carried out by the Spinner Point desks located within universities and research centers in Emilia-Romagna. The offer pertains to the following activity areas:

- Innovative and/or high knowledge content business ideas
- Industrial Research, experimental development, technology transfer
- Organizational, Managerial and Financial Innovation
- Vouchers for participating to the inter-university Masters
- International Mobility Pilot Action
- Women, Technology and Innovation Pilot Action
- Professional conversion through Innovation Projects carried out in firms

The access to Spinner 2013 is structured according to a two-step evaluation process:

- During the submission of applications, when the accompanying and support services provided by the Spinner Points induces self-evaluation and selection of qualified project ideas, dismissing inapplicable ideas before submission.
- During the evaluation of proposals, this registers an approval mean rate of 58%.

Objectives:

Spinner 2013 is dedicated to individuals interested in developing projects based upon innovative business ideas and/or with high knowledge content, industrial research, experimental development, technology transfer and on organizational, managerial and financial innovation paths, in collaboration with universities, research centers and enterprises.

Spinner 2013 offers the opportunity to take part to International level conferences in areas such as economics and knowledge and to workshops focusing on innovation culture. Through the creation of a community, it will also be a gathering point for individuals, enterprises and

institutions interested in issues related to entrepreneurship, industrial research and innovation and also in the pivotal role played by human resources for prosperity and quality growth of the regional territory.

Resources:

The budget for Spinner 2013 (launched in 2011) is over 5ml euros. The overall resources allocated between 2008 and 2010 were 18ml euros.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

Since the beginning of activities, Spinner 2013 has directly involved more than 4,000 individuals - mainly graduate and post-graduate students, PhDs and researchers - through support and first assistance services provided by the Spinner Point Network spread throughout Emilia-Romagna. On the overall number of individuals, 1072 submitted applications for grants or services.

Following the evaluation of submitted projects, 621 applications received admission, of which 90 gave origin to innovative business idea projects and/or with high knowledge content (for a total amount of 324 beneficiaries); 214 to industrial research, experimental development and technology transfer projects and 49 to managerial and financial organizational innovation.

In accordance with the Spinner 2013 principal target, the participation of candidates with a higher education and specialization is very high. As a matter of fact, graduates and post-graduate students represent 91.2%.

As for the interested subject areas, engineering represents 35.6% of applications, geobiology 11.5% and chemistry-pharmaceutics 10.8%.

The number of candidates searching not for first occupation but for re-qualification for new employment has increased (on the contrary to what prevailed during the former Spinner Program 2000-2006). Spinner 2013 therefore acts as a qualification tool for the augmentation of employment conditions and not only for facilitating the access to the Labor market.

The Spinner 2013 action plan has achieved a rather balanced geographical coverage reaching organizations and grant beneficiaries throughout the entire regional territory: areas such as Romagna and Northern Emilia (Modena, Reggio Emilia, Parma and Piacenza) have in fact increased their participation.

Type of Best Practice: promoting networking and channeling information to SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: exploit leaders' knowledge bases to strengthen small firms' competitiveness through production networks

The Romagna Creative District is currently a registered trademark, and by February 2011, it will be registered as a public-private Association (with social and cultural objectives). It currently has over 950 members subscribed to its portal www.romagnacreativedistrict.com comprising companies and professionals in creative fields including Architecture, Crafts, Design, Computer Software, Publishing, Film and Video, Photography, Media, Fashion, Music, Amusement Parks, Museum Management and Cultural Heritage, Advertising and Communication, Entertainment, Television and Radio. The majority of its members are micro and small enterprises and self-employed individuals residing in Romagna. This dynamic network of interdisciplinary companies and individuals is growing on a daily basis, with the aim of sparking creativity and boosting the economy of the region.

Romagna Creative District is the product of a voiced need to promote creativity through a common space for connecting creative individuals, institutions and enterprises that work within the Romagna region. It is a portal for creativity, a social business network which is designed to share the creative resources of individuals and companies, and to be a model for ethics and best practices. It is committed to promoting tolerance and cultural integration, and places utmost importance on social and environmental issues. It is a network for facilitating the emergence and success of young talent and an educational tool for building creative capacity. By fostering a creative network and advertising a region's inherent talent as well as its local assets, it aims to give rise to a virtuous loop that benefits the entire community.

Objectives:

Romagna Creative District aims to launch a debate (by considering interdisciplinary approaches towards the question of creativity) on whether recognizing the inherent creativity within a region may, in turn, have significant benefits on the local economy of that region and increase opportunities for the export of its talent and best practices to the world. RCD is primarily a social network which connects businesses within the creative tertiary sector; RCD is designed to be a creative think tank available to businesses, institutions and to the region itself; it is a network for facilitating the emergence and success of young talent; an informational tool for building creative capacity by increasing the demand for creative content offered by products and services, and therefore challenging businesses that are engaged in producing such products and services to improve their creative potential and capacity.

To strengthen the relationship within the territory, **RCD** has consolidated a number of partnerships with local and national institutions, such as Commune, Region, Universities, and other public entities working for the development of its local economy as well as promoting education, training and employment for young people in the region. In addition to this, RCD is currently securing relations with European organizations with whom it shares common ideas, goals and activities, in order to widen its reach and scope for development. In this phase of development, RCD aims to drive increased entrepreneurial development, by creating new business ventures; attract external firms, by promoting the internal resources that attract external companies; attract external talent, by taking advantage of resources that come from external companies; improve quality of the production of knowledge, by fostering continuous research, education and training; improve local networking skills, by its capacity to link networks of complementary nature; and improve external networking skills, by fostering international relations, and inter-regional relations.

Resources :

The first two years of RCD's activities (January 2009-January 2011) required a collective investment of human and other resources amounting to about €250,000. The financial investment for the events (May 2009: €30.000, January 2010: €15.000, October 2010: €74.000) was almost entirely covered by contributions from sponsors and technical partners. RCD is currently working on the next phase of the project, supported by the contributions received from winning the regional call for tender MISURA 2.1 AZIONE B "PROGETTI PER RETI DI IMPRESE" (MEASURE 2.1 ACTION B "PLANS FOR ENTERPRISE NETWORKS"), and aimed at increasing the competitiveness of enterprises networking within the territory. RCD is in the process of restructuring itself as an association. Thanks to regional contributions and annual memberships, by December 2012, RCD will be able to independently administer its affairs (from an economic point of view). RCD is also reinforcing collaborations with local authorities, helping to increase the strength and functions of the network and creating opportunities for economic and social development for the network.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises

In a knowledge-based economy, the determining infrastructure is based on those 'intangible' assets that lie in the reasoning and cognitive abilities of individuals and groups. In this perspective, the evolved cultural district can be considered a great opportunity for economic and social development for the region and especially for the people who live and participate in it. For these reasons, RCD is daily working on some specific issues, such as its commitment to creating a network of excellence out of creativity, which is freely shared among people, businesses and institutions, and hence increasing the chances of generating a type of capital that adds significant value to products and services.

Type of Best Practice: promoting networking and channeling information to SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: accompany the transition to a medium-tech specialization based on innovation starting from a traditional manufacturing sector with a strong mechanic specialization

The question of how an industrial district evolves over time prompts two related questions. The first concerns the extent to which the pace of evolution is linked to technological change and product upgrading; the second asks about the consequences of evolution for the inter-firm linkages of traditional districts and their mechanisms of reproduction.

The case of Reggio Emilia in northeast Italy presents features associated with the classical Italian district, in that it is a localized 'social network' specialized in customized goods. However, the district also has a longstanding tradition of openness and export-oriented production which has dictated a lesser role for traditional inter-firm linkages inside the district. It is, to a certain extent, an 'open district' with loose geographic constraints, a high rate of innovation and high intensity of technological integration within core firms.

A mechatronic product is defined as a mechanical element controlled by an electronic application that is integrated into it. 'Control' is the ability of the machine/component to change performance according to changes in external conditions. It is the high level of integration between the different technologies (mechanics, electronics and information solutions) that distinguishes a mechatronic device from one that is purely mechanically, electronically or information-based. The design and production of mechatronic devices is therefore based on the integration of two knowledge bases (KBs). The first is the traditional mechanical KB that has been the foundation for production in the Region Emilia district for decades. In the case of mechatronic devices, this must now be combined with appropriate knowledge of electronics and information technology, but as much of the additional knowledge originates outside the district, firms engaged in mechatronics need to devise new strategies for acquiring and using a second KB.

In the process, however, they are creating a 'two-track' trajectory among firms in the district as the additional knowledge tends to be held tightly by firms that have made a transition to production of mechatronic devices. As a result, the degree of homogeneity in the district is being diminished.

Objectives:

The maturity of the economic texture of the region allows for innovation that is incremental. Since one of the key specializations of Emilia Romagna is machinery and mechanical engineering, the specific evolution of the historic district of Reggio Emilia has been selected to account for the transformation of mature sectors. The Mechatronic club of Reggio Emilia is a good example of this evolution

The **mechatronic club** of Reggio Emilia is a special programme to increase the innovative capacity of leading mechatronic firms in the district.

The **mechatronic club** aims at increasing the innovative capacity of leading firms, guaranteeing at the same time that the capacities of other firms in the supply chain remain in tune with the engineering evolution of the sector.

Resources:

The Mechatronic club has been launched within the Industrial Association of Reggio Emilia and includes 70 firms. It is included in the Innovation actions of the Association. The club has a coordinator and 2 staff and organizes several events of technological dissemination during the year. The budget for the yearly activities is not very high and is about 30.000 euros.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

Knowledge accumulation and the formation of intra-cluster and intra-district linkages should be now sustained by local and regional cluster policy. Whereas there is no evidence yet that current policy actions put forward by local institutions may bridge or deepen the distance between the knowledge bases of leading and other firms, if an adaptive and competence-enhancing pattern of learning continues to prevail, the chances for a balanced evolution of the system appear much increased. Similarly, a local institution supporting innovation, Reggio Emilia Innovazione, has been reinvigorated with the mission to support R&D of local firms and scout for technology opportunities. Moreover a Faculty of Mechatronic studies has been created at the local University of Reggio Emilia. The mechatronic cluster is presently included in special innovation programme for advanced clusters of the Emilia Romagna region.

Best Practice 11: Creative Conversion Factory

Type of Best Practice: tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills

Problem/Opportunity: Limited capacity to create value “valorization”

Due to a strong Design & Technology position the Eindhoven region generates many good ideas on a regular basis. However, a lot of those ideas don't make it to the market due to reasons like:

- Lack of expertise [technical, marketing, legal,]
- No direct fit with the business interest of the idea owner
- No fit with the product/service portfolio and/or market scale of the idea owner

Many potentially valuable ideas are therefore ‘locked away’ in cabinets and drawers being idle. CCF provides Projects will be executed in a maximum of three subsequent phases which in total don't last for more than three years. Between and during the phases projects are reviewed by the assigned Review Board. The three phases have a different character with respect to rights, obligations, finance and the legal. At the end of a projects lifetime within the CCF [after the second or third phase] the final deliverables of the project are transferred to an external interested party. This party has, most likely, already been defined in a much earlier stage, preferable during the first phase or at the Mach-making event at the end of the first phase. This external party can, depending on the kind of project, market segment, complexity, required suppliers, required market parties for installation and/or service and the like], be:

- A new company that is built for this project
- A [new] department of an existing company
- An alliance of existing companies or another form.

Whatever form is preferred, part of the deliverables is also a contract that formulates what parts of the potential revenues of the results of the project are returned to the CCF.

The CCF will distribute these returned revenues to the project participants on the basis of the final assignment of ownership of the project.

At present two ideas are exploited, 20 ideas are in portfolio.

Objectives:

The aim of the CCF is to support the process of generating sustainable business propositions for products and/or services from potentially valuable ideas. The CCF facilitates and accelerates this process by stimulating the cooperation between participating companies and knowledge institutes involved in Design & Technology. The function of the CCF is to guide and support this process to transfer potential successful ideas into sustainable business propositions. Basically the following disciplines are aligned in a very early stage of business development:

- Design
- Business intelligence
- financing
- Legal
- Marketing communication

The CCF facilitates and accelerates product innovation in the field of high-tech systems. The CCF welcomes the submission of any patentable creative and technological innovation as a potential project. Submissions will be evaluated on the basis of a number of criteria, including the extent to which they enable participating organizations to achieve synergies and improve their capabilities. Once a project has been adopted, the CCF investigates whether there is a market for a product based on the idea and whether such a product is technically feasible. The CCF coordinates contacts among the various parties. The guidance involves the business development, partner search, match making with potential parties that will bring the concept to the market, relation management towards financial partners and project management related activities and the like.

At the end of a projects lifetime within the CCF the final deliverables of the project are, if and where possible, transferred to an external interested party. This party has, most likely, already been defined in a much earlier stage, preferable during the first phase or at the Match-making event at the end of the first phase.

This external party can, depending on the kind of project, market segment, complexity, required suppliers, required market parties for installation and/or service and the like], be:

- A new company that is built for this project
- A [new] department of an existing company
- An alliance of existing companies or another form.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

- New applications of high end technology.
- User centered open innovation for creative ideas (IP protected). Good assessment of IP importance in business case.
- Matching technology and design to bring innovations to the market faster and more effective.
- 'Matchmaking' between designers, technology providers & adaptors and VCs which do not occur outside the CCF.
- Central is the (IP) protected idea which forms the basis for a viable business, instead of focusing on making the idea owner an entrepreneur.

Type of Best Practice: RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Limited capacity to create value “valorization”

Holst Centre is a joint cross border initiative set up by two founding organizations: TNO (Netherlands) and imec (Belgium), with financial support from the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands. The Centre was launched December 2005 as an Open Innovation Centre for Wireless Autonomous Sensor Technologies and Flexible electronics. Its mission as stated on the **Holst Centre website is as follows:**

“To be a world-leading open-innovation R&D Centre, creating generic technologies and enhancing the innovative power in the fields of Wireless Autonomous Transducer Solutions and Systems-in-Foil by combining the strengths of our local and international industrial partners with in-house expertise.”

Holst Centre is an open innovation Centre enabling interaction between industry and academia. A key feature is the multi-partner program approach, which is based upon imec’s Industrial Affiliation Programs, where several industrial partners join a certain research program. The contents of the research program are developed by Holst Centre (in dialogue with industrial and academic players) and each industrial partner signs a bilateral contract with Holst Centre to get access to the research results developed in a program. An advantage for the companies participating is the leverage effect that occurs because companies are “pooling” their R&D resources for a certain topic. This effect is enforced by the government contribution to Holst Centre research. Another feature is the IPR model which is based upon co-ownership of the results to which the partner has contributed and non-exclusive rights to use the results generated by the technology program for which is paid.

By collaborating with both industry and academia, Holst Centre provides market insight and focus to universities and educational institutes and keeps its partner companies informed of the breakthroughs that are expected along its roadmaps. Typically, results obtained within Holst Centre aim for products that appear on the market within three to ten years.

Objectives:

A wide range of facilities, equipment and support is offered by a staff of professional engineers and experts, including clean room facilities, thin-film process- and device development, material- and process analysis, test & measurement instrumentation, laboratories, measurement services, as well as design and fabrication support for your product prototypes. Accumulated know-how of over 250 engineers and specialists (= ± 170 own staff + resident researchers from industry and academia).

Expertise covers the domains of ultra-low-power-electronics, chip design, algorithms, MEMS, integration technologies, chemistry and Nano-technology, OLED lighting, display technology, large-area electronics (printing, coating, patterning, integration processes), high tech equipment.

Resources:

Holst Centre relies for 45% on public funding, 45% on contracts with companies and 10% project funding from EU programs. The Holst Centre business model is one of public-private investment in innovation.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises

Firstly, companies participate in Holst Centre to get early and in-depth insight into the latest developments in the fields of giroles sensors and flexible electronics. Almost all companies mention this as the decisive reason for their participation in Holst Centre. For many companies these technologies do not yet belong to their core-business, but it might become important for their business within a number of years. For these companies it is important to get early insight into the (im) possibilities of the technology. By participating in a (sub) research program of Holst Centre companies get insight into the latest technological trends and development. And in addition companies have (non-exclusive) rights to use this knowledge for their own product development.

Secondly, getting access to other companies in the value chain and access to a research network are the second and third most important motive to participate in Holst Centre's research program for companies. In early phases of technology development there is a lot of uncertainty about technical feasibility, market potential, standards, etc. By participating in Holst Centre, companies have access to a network of researchers, but also to other companies participating in Holst Centre. This offers the opportunity to align strategies or technical roadmap, share thoughts about market potential of the new technology and eventually define a common standard to speed-market introduction. Especially when companies from different parts of the value chain are involved in Holst Centre, there is added value to learn from each other and even develop a common goal, without the risk of direct competition on the market place at a later stage.

Type of Best Practice: tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills

United Brains is an initiative that started around the year 2000 that connects local SMEs with knowledge institutes in the Brain port Eindhoven region. SMEs can address United Brains for expertise on for example product renewal, the production process or –service. Then, United Brains has access to a broad network of knowledge institutes as the Eindhoven University of Technology, Fontys Hogescholen, TNO, ROC Eindhoven and ROC ter AA that find a solution for these practical problems.

This Best Practice is based on the idea that Small and Medium Enterprises and knowledge institutes are not their natural partners. Research shows that only 2% of the SMEs have a durable relationship with a knowledge institute. Underlying reasons are in the fact that knowledge institutes are focused primarily on education and research. Their starting point is not delivering business, but principles. And, they are always restricted by college schedules programmers. On the other hand, SMEs are looking for solutions to problems that occur at random and need to be solved in a short time frame. These reasons make the relationship between SMEs and knowledge institutes a difficult one. United Brains tries to bridge this gap.

United Brains is collaboration between the Eindhoven University of Technology, Fontys, ROC, TNO and also Philips, DSM and Syntens. It is both a virtual and physical office window where SMEs can address their company questions by e-mail. Often, these are related to innovation since SMEs are more and more involved in product and process- renewal and improvement. United Brains interprets the question and, most often, contacts the SME concerned to ensure a correct interpretation of the question. Then, United Brains finds the proper knowledge institute to answer the question, ranging from research universities to intermediate vocational education and company research facilities. These different parties come together on a weekly basis to discuss the new questions that have arrived and to keep up with the running projects. At this meeting, questions are assigned to knowledge institutes. The knowledge institutes search for a certain expert that finds an answer to the question, who can be a students or a researcher.

United Brains guides the process from the posing of the question until the final answer. This can take up to a year.

Objectives:

United Brains tries to bridge the gap between SMEs and knowledge institutes. These are not natural partners and they do not speak the same language. This is because; SMEs focus on daily business and short time frames, whereas knowledge institutes are concerned with theoretical problems and have a more long term orientation. However, knowledge institutes can be very helpful for issues on entrepreneur's minds. They can provide high quality answers at relatively low cost.

In this way, **United Brains** contributes to the valorization of knowledge from knowledge institutes. Another benefit is the fact that students are assigned realistic challenging projects where they play a valuable role for the SME. By bringing together knowledge institutes and SMEs, United Brains contributes significantly to the quality of businesses and extent of innovation in the Brainport Eindhoven region.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

The initiative United Brains started in the year 2000. United Brains does not have to promote/market itself, since it receives enough company questions already. On a yearly basis United Brains answers 500 realistic company-questions.

Since its start, more and more knowledge institutes became a member of United Brains, which shows their interest in the project. Moreover, the SMEs involved in United Brains are very satisfied with the initiative, just as the students and researchers that have done the research to answer the company's question. The time it costs to find an answer to the company question can vary from a few minutes (when the United Brains director can answer the question himself) to 1 year. In the latter the research student can for example do an internship to answer the question completely.

Best Practice 14: Penela's territory policy of enhancing and promoting / Tourism

Regarding to the urban region, Penela is near from the city of Coimbra, establishing strong regional and natural ties with a wide range of services and activities.

Aware of national and European policy guidelines that confirm the economic, social and territorial cohesion as the main standard of development, the Municipality of Penela recognized the importance of defining a local strategy sustained, focused on innovation, competitiveness and entrepreneurship, able to create competitive advantages from the differentiating factors of the territory and establish strategic partnerships that could exploit real opportunities. With this in mind, we created the Director Program for Innovation, Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship (DP-ICE).

This program concluded that the Municipality of Penela should be distinguished by environmental excellence, quality education, development of socio-cultural peculiarities and a clear commitment to innovation based in the consolidation of an environmentally sustainable and multifunctional economic model.

Based on these conclusions, it was possible to define a vision for the Municipality shared by all:

"Local resources to service innovation, innovation in the service of local resources."

The ICE (Innovation, Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship) strategy proposed for Penela assumed local singularities as the main differentiating factor able to provide the necessary foundation for sustainable development.

Objectives:

Municipality of Penela is a local public administration situated in the centre of Portugal and within its policy of social economic development have the following aims:

- Grow a culture of innovation, competitiveness and entrepreneurship within its citizens.
- Encourage the creation of new businesses in the municipality, with special focus on strategic sectors.
- Support the restructuring of existing companies, with particular emphasis on strategic sectors.
- Take advantage of the historical and natural heritage to develop a touristic industry in the territory that could provide employment, services creation and dynamic economic environment, pushing the municipality attractiveness and economic development to a next level.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

Penela Municipality, from a very low touristic offer, will grow to a total of about 200 beds in 2012, several tourism supporting organizations, and a dynamic and diversified offer or touristic experiences, including adventure, nature, touring and health.

Through its Mini-Habitat incubator, in activity since the fall of 2008, Municipality of Penela has been supporting the creation and development of 8 business projects. With only 5 offices of space offer, the municipality due to the demand has been forced to open closed spaces, such as closed schools or stores.

Regarding to the Industrial Park, Penela's space offer is almost full with only one space to left. More than 20 companies are already settled in the Industrial Park.

The following results, computed until December 31, 2010, are to be pointed out:

Survival Rate in the Mini-Habitat	>100%
Accumulated Turnover in 2009 in the Mini-Habitat	>275 K€
Current Direct Employment in the Mini-Habitat (highly qualified)	>10

Best Practice 15: IPN Model

Type of Best Practice: RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Low level of cooperation of SMEs with local R&D centers

Instituto Pedro Nunes is the technology transfer organization from Coimbra University.

Its mission is to leverage a strong university / enterprise relationship for the promotion of innovation, quality and entrepreneurship in private and public sector organizations, by acting in three complementary areas:

- Research and technological development, consultancy and specialized services;
- Business and ideas incubation;
- Highly specialized training and promotion of science and technology

IPN has its own technological infrastructures – six R&TD laboratories and a Business Incubator that promotes the creation of tech based firms by giving support to innovative and technology-based ideas generated by its own laboratories, institutions of higher education, and other entrepreneurs. As a transversal support, the Innovation Department: provides services on intellectual property, support to RTD projects, and marketing and technology commercialization.

It also belongs to several national and international networks, including TII, EARTO, Incubator Forum and Proton (Gate2Growth).

IPN has specialized laboratories in Automation and Systems, Information Technologies, Materials, Electro analysis and Corrosion:, Pharmaceutical Studies and Geotechnique, besides accessing a network of researchers in the scientific and technological system, particularly from the University of Coimbra, mainly through the Faculty of Sciences and Technology. It also has a Training Department that organizes high level technological specialized training and training addressed to young entrepreneurs engaged in the creation of start-up companies.

IPN- Incubator has recently won the 1st place in the world award for "Best Science based incubator". The award was given during the 9th Annual Incubator Conference and Awards on "Best Practices in Science Based Incubators" on November 18 and 19, 2010 in Liverpool, UK. Rankings for the award are based on a combination of 25 quantitative performance indicators and the opinion of an international expert jury. More than 50 science-based incubators from 23 countries around the world entered the competition in 2010. Over the last six years, more than 250 incubators from Europe, Northern America, the Middle East, Australia and Asia have competed for the award.

Objectives:

Instituto Pedro Nunes is the technology transfer organization from Coimbra University.

Its mission is to leverage a strong university / enterprise relationship for the promotion of innovation, quality and entrepreneurship in private and public sector organizations, by acting in three complementary areas:

- Research and technological development, consultancy and specialized services;
- Business and ideas incubation;
- Highly specialized training and promotion of science and technology

Results:

Total firms supported: > 150 (in 15 years)

% of firms in activity: > 80%

Annual aggregated turnover of incubated firms (2010): > 70 M euros

Job creation: > 1.500 jobs (direct)

Self-sustainable business model

High return on Public Investment

Best Practice 16: Robert Bosch Department at the University of Miskolc

Type of Best Practice: RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs

Problem/Opportunity: Strengthening the role of dynamic industries, ICT sector by increasing growth of public-private partnership, knowledge

The Robert Bosch Department of Mechatronics has a short history; it was founded in July 1, 2005. Top Managements of the Bosch Group and the University of Miskolc initiated the foundation of the Department to support practical oriented education and researches in the engineering sciences devoting special emphases on the wide range applications of the mechatronics. The expenses were covered by Robert Bosch Automotive Electronics Ltd. in Hatvan, Robert Bosch Power Tool Ltd. in Miskolc, Robert Bosch Energy and Body Systems Ltd. in Miskolc, Bosch Rexroth Pneumatic Ltd. in Eger, Deutscher Stiftungsverband Bosch Rexroth Ltd. in Budapest, Robert Bosch Ltd. in Budapest.

The first Head of the Department was Associate Professor Endre Jakab (CSc), and he was succeeded by Associate Professor Tamás Szabó (Ph.D).

Education

The practical oriented education is based on a modern laboratory system: Lab for Pneumatics and Hydraulics, Lab for Sensor Techniques, Lab for PLCs and Modular Mechatronics System and Lab for Robotics and Electrical Driving Systems (See the pictures below).

The courses of the mechatronical engineering are accredited both for undergraduate program (BSc) and graduate program (MSc). The first graduation in BSc level is expected in 2010, so the first MSc course will be started in 2011. In addition to the standard education activities the Department takes part in the organization of Pneumobil and Electromobil Competitions together with the Bosch Companies.

Researches

The research projects of the Department have been induced by the BOSCH Group, e.g., Energy management optimization, Development and simulation of starters, Replacement of out of date PLCs with new ones, Technological development taking the environmental protection into consideration, Dynamical modeling of power tools, Application of intelligent robots with visual capabilities.

Objectives:

In order to establish and develop programmes in mechatronic engineering, on July 1, 2005 the Robert Bosch Department of Mechatronics was established at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Informatics of the University of Miskolc with support by the executive management of Bosch and the Bosch factories in the region. The Department operated as an enterprise for three years.

The objective of the cooperation between the factories and the University is: to apply and expand the technical and scientific knowledge in the research, teaching and wide-ranging application of mechatronics, to provide practice-oriented academic programmes and to meet the demand of the factories for engineers.

The University of Miskolc was pleased to accommodate the first department to be financed by companies since World War II and took over its operation on July 1, 2008. The University also granted substantial funds for the project. The example, although not in the same structure, has been followed by several higher education institutions.

Resources :

The Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Informatics introduced the BSc programme of Mechatronic Engineering in the academic year 2007/2008 with 29 students. It should be noted that the average admission score of the students was among the highest at the Faculty. In 2008 the MSc programme in Mechatronic Engineering was also accredited. The programmes belong to the professional responsibilities of the Robert Bosch Department of Mechatronics and the Department of Machine Tools. The Department has been funded and supported through the professional training contributions and the innovation contributions paid by companies. In the latter framework, the Department has completed several R+D projects with the involvement of the staff of the Faculty.

The practice-oriented training of the students of the programme in Mechatronic Engineering is supported by the mechatronics laboratories: hydraulics-pneumatics, PLC, drive technology, sensor technology and mechatronics systems constructed using the professional training contributions.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises

An active environment is needed for the abilities to develop and in order to achieve the objectives of the programmes cooperation between the industry and the university is essential and is already evident in several areas.

Besides theoretical and practical education, factories manufacturing mechatronic devices or using them in production play a considerable role. In the factories students or trainees on industrial placement can familiarize themselves with the various techniques, they may be given project assignments, topics for degree work and they can be involved in programs and tenders.

Type of Best Practice: complex LED and support for the external investments

Problem/Opportunity: There is not enough capacity in Miskolc for the talented students.

The management of Miskolc is committed to increasing the number of productive and productive-servicing enterprises which operate profitably on the long term as well as to creating new jobs.

In 2007 an Office for Local Economic Development was set up in Miskolc City and a FDI support system has been prepared with several pillars. One pillar is the one-stop-shop service.

Supported administration

- * Direct help from Miskolc Holding Zrt. during the lot planning, land registration and other licensing procedures.

- * Direct assistance by Miskolc Town of County Rank during the authorization process

- * One-stop administrative shopping offered by Miskolc Holding during the official proceedings with the authorities.

- * Assistance in the reconciliation with public utility service providers.

The second pillar is the investment incentives offered on the basis of a local level regulation. The services belonging to the programme to develop business and stimulate investment may be basic services, advanced services and premium services (hereafter, jointly: services), which constitute service-packages (hereafter: service-package). The individual service-packages build on each other, such that those taking advantage of the advanced services are entitled to take advantage of the basic services too; and those taking advantage of the premium services are entitled to take advantage of both the advanced services and the basic services.

The third pillar is the availability of a special fund for the companies creating a high number of workplaces that can be allocated by the Municipality of Miskolc on the basis of a selection procedure.

Objectives:

Miskolc tries to create a friendly environment for the enterprises wishing to settle down in Miskolc with the tools at its disposal and the one-stop administrative shopping system.

The Local Government of Miskolc Town of County Rank gives priority to the companies which want to move into the Mechatronics Industrial Park and takes into consideration the needs of the investors when issuing the building permits, preparing the arrangement plans or on the occasion of lot purchases furthermore offers quick and precise administration for the companies moving in.

Resources

The operation of the one-stop-shop service is the responsibility of the Miskolc Holding Plc. Direct support from the Municipality in the form of office space, infrastructure, hosting services, project management, can be allocated to the selected companies. In each case the maximum amount of the support (in the form of cash subsidy or other in kind support) cannot exceed 500,000 EUR/company which is a basic EU level regulation in the case of the temporarily support.

Best Practice 18: Specific Unit of Identification and Monitoring of European and International consortia

Type of Best Practice: internationalization and mobilization of SMEs

In order to increase the participation of regional SMEs in R&D and innovation Programmes, ADEuropa Foundation has created the Specific Unit of Identification and Monitoring of European and International consortia, a work team specialized in European and International Programmes related to R&D and innovation, especially the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP).

This Unit develops their own methodology specifically adapted to Castilla y Leon needs and according to the regional R&D and innovation strategy. One of the main specific characteristics of this methodology is related to a close and personal contact with both the proposer and the regional SME. By means of different information sources (our own contacts in Europe, WebPages such as Cordis, partners in European and international networks, partner searches, direct contacts made during attendance to info days and other events, etc.), many partner searches are collected and studied. This work is partially supported by our Delegation in Brussels.

Although the work is mainly focused on FP7 and CIP, other European Programmes related to innovation, such as INTERREG, AAL, LIFE, Health Programme, Life Long Learning, EUROSTARS, COST, PLANT-KBBE, etc. are also taken into consideration when the project might be of interest for our regional entities.

All the proposals are carefully studied and selected by the Specific Unit of Identification and Monitoring of European and International consortia, taking into account the relevance for regional SMEs as well as the most suitable call, the adequate consortium, deadline, etc. Next, the proposers of the future projects are contacted and asked for the possibility of providing them with a suitable partner from our region.

This Unit has developed a complete database about regional SMEs and other entities (Universities, Technology Centers, Public Administration, etc.) with detailed information about their interests and needs in R&D and innovation issues. This database has been elaborated thanks to an exhaustive and dedicated effort mainly based on visits, meetings, interviews, etc. with all the relevant entities of Castilla y Leon. The database is connected to a matching tool which allows finding the best partner in our region. Furthermore, the monitoring process is registered by means of an additional application. In this sense, every step taken with a particular proposal (reception of proposal, expression of interest in the proposal, entity accepted in the consortium, etc.) is registered and the current state of every proposal can be easily known.

Once the suitable partners from our region have been selected, they are informed about the possibility of participating in an international project, and a personalized advisory service is given when needed. In case of a positive answer, an "organization profile" which contains the R&D experience and interest of the company in the project is requested, in order to send it to the coordinator by e-mail.

After a positive answer from the proposer, the regional SME and the proposer are put in contact, and ADEuropa Foundation remains to support the regional partner, if needed, throughout the process of preparing and submitting the project proposal.

The Specific Unit of Identification and monitoring of European and International consortia gives also support to the entities from Castilla y Leon that are preparing their own European proposal as coordinators, offering the possibility to find European partners to complete the consortium. Similar advisory services and monitoring procedures are developed.

Objectives:

The Specific Unit of Identification and Monitoring of European and International consortium was created with the objective of increasing the participation of SMEs from Castilla y Leon in R&D and innovation European Programmes.

This team works in two directions: connecting potential partners from our region with European entities that are developing a project proposal in European Programmes, and helping regional SMEs and other entities (Universities, Technology Centers, Public Administration, etc.) to find European partners for their proposals.

This activity is developed in a personalized way, keeping direct contact with both the proposer and the regional entity. Additionally, a very complete database, a matching tool and a computer application for monitoring procedures are employed.

The final aim is increasing the participation of their companies in R&D and innovation European Programmes (FP7, CIP, etc.)

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

The Specific Unit of Identification and monitoring of European and International consortia develops a global methodology to offer SME and the rest of agents of Castilla y Leon proactive and effective strategies to take part in European Programmes and projects of higher potential, according to their needs and characteristics. Among these activities focused on participation, a proactive search for and identification of consortia under creation is one of the most relevant. These actions contribute effectively to the involvement of regional organizations as partners in those projects.

The R&D and Innovation Managers Training Programme is an initiative started up by the Regional Government of Castilla y León through ADEuropa Foundation, with the objective of incorporating in enterprises and SMEs in the region, human resources specialized in R&D and Innovation management that will facilitate SMEs participation in Innovation projects.

The first part of the programme is a theoretical-practical training 2 months long, in which 30 persons holding technical or scientific university degrees take part. This training period is provided by a professional expert team coming from different institutions related with R&D and Innovation, so the students get a direct knowledge about the different organisms that participate in this matter. During this period, the students also attend to visits to the different agents of the regional innovation system: technological centers, university institutes, and relevant enterprises in R&D and Innovation.

Once this first training period is finished, the grant Innovation Managers start a practical training 6 month-period, working within SMEs in the region, where they will have direct contact with the most practical issues concerning R&D and Innovation managing, as well as they will foster and facilitate SMEs participation in Innovation projects.

When the second period finishes, the enterprise awarded with the Innovation manager has the possibility of hiring him/her. In negative case, the Innovation manager joins a monitoring programme that provide him/her the possibility of participating in work interviews with other entities/enterprises in the region.

Objectives:

The main objective of this Programme is to reduce the barriers that regional SMEs have to participate in Innovation programmes.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

The SMEs receive for 6 months a worker specialized in R&D and Innovation managing who will help them to participate in Innovation Programmes.

Best Practice 20: Aegean Technopolis

Aegean Technopolis SA is the Technology Park of the Aegean Region in Greece, a company funded and supervised by the Greek Secretariat of Research and Development. The main premises of the park are located on the island of Chios at the heart of the Aegean Region. Aegean Technopolis provides a unique and vibrant location for established and emerging technology based companies.

Aegean Technopolis premises located on the island of Chios, in the traditional settlement of Xalkios. The premises are consisted of:

- The main building of the Aegean Technopolis Administration Offices;
- The building of resident companies; and
- The Conference Centre

The Technology Park of Aegean Technopolis offers onsite Managers and support Team providing companies with services and support related to:

- Strategy and development
- Product Design and Development
- Marketing and Promotion
- Sales Management
- Technology and Innovation Management
- Accounting, Financial and Control management

The premises of the Aegean Technopolis provide:

- Secretarial Support
- Access to Wireless-LAN
- Telephone Exchange
- Conference Room and Facilities

There exist four different ways that a technology-focused company can gain approval to be resident within the technology park:

1. Residence as a Funded Company: The candidate Company submits a business plan and an application for funding to be reviewed. In case of acceptance the company will be resident within the Technology Park
2. Residence: The candidate Company submits its statute and a synopsis of its future objectives in the field of technological innovations. Upon acceptance, the company will be resident within the Technology Park
3. Residence as a subsidiary: In this case the candidate Company should go through the same process as it is described in (2) but upon acceptance there is no need for physical presence of the Company.
4. Virtual Residence: The process is the same as it is described in (2). However, upon acceptance, the company is only referenced on the Aegean Technopolis portal.

The evaluation process of submitted Business Plans, in order to select the companies that will become resident candidates according to the master plan of the Aegean Technopolis SA and the restrictions that it places, is accomplished in five stages. The diagram illustrates the evaluation process at each stage.

Firstly, the Directorate of the Aegean Technopolis SA preselects the appropriate Business Plans that will be submitted for approval at the Board of Directors (stage A). The preselection is based on three crucial points:

(a) Business opportunity identification, which involves market size, business model and time to market;
(b) Implementation team, which involves investors and staff; and
(c) Technological innovation, in terms of the technological and economic environment and the competition
The preselected business plans, with the key themes described previously will be presented at the Board of Directors. The presentation includes a description of the agreement between the Aegean Technopolis SA and the candidate company and anyone else that might be interested in investing on the proposed business plan.

The Board of Directors nominates to a five-strong Evaluation Committee (stage B), which is formed in an ad hoc manner according to the specialization field of the candidate company, and is consisted of three executive members of the Technology Park and two external advisors. The committee evaluates and selects those business plans to be approved by the Board of Directors (stage C). The evaluation is based on the three crucial points described previously but also on:

- a. an assessment with several methods
- b. a composition of expert's opinion
- c. a deal structure which involves: alternative disengagement strategies, syndication, protection strategy-down and up, entrepreneur protection, worst case scenario
- d. the identification of risk factors

The decisions of the Evaluation Committee, in which chairs and is a permanent member the director of the Aegean Technopolis, are majority decisions and they presuppose at least the conformation of one of the two external advisors that participate in the committee. In this way, it is ensured the unanimity between the executives of the Aegean Technopolis and its independent collaborators in regard to the commercial prospects of the business plans that are submitted for approval to the Board of Directors.

Then, the Board Directors reaches its final decision and approves the Business Plans of the companies to become resident within the technology park (stage D), according to the master plan of the Aegean Technopolis that is managed and controlled by the Directorate (stage E). Finally, once a business plan has been selected, a new company is established, in which both the Aegean Technopolis and those captured the business idea might participate, in order to develop and exploit it. The initial capital is fixed depending on the cost of transforming the idea into a prototype.

The organizational structure of the Aegean Technopolis is based on two main departments that report to the CEO, serving, in that way, into the decision-making process, by allowing the executives of other departments to accomplish their tasks . Furthermore, there exists an Experts Committee, that it is consisted of advisors that come from several fields and sectors, that supports the Board of Directors of the Aegean Technopolis and participates in the selection process of companies that have applied for a residence at the Technology Park.

- Board of Directors: it is the body responsible for the management and monitoring of the Aegean Technopolis
- Experts Committee: provides consulting services to the Board of Directors and participates in the process of knowledge transfer and the enhancement of the Technology Park
- Department of Internal Control: reports to the Board of Directors. It is responsible for the internal regulation of the Technology Park and might collaborate with independent auditors and advisors to resolve any suspensions. The department is supervised by an inspectional committee which is composed of non-executive members of the Board of Directors
- Evaluation Committee: it is established in an ad hoc manner by the Board of Directors. It is responsible for the processing, evaluation and preselection of business plans submitted by companies that have applied for a residence at the Technology Park
- Directorate of the Technology Park: coordinates the process of production, location and attraction of business plans (deal flow generation). It is also responsible for the evaluation process of business plans and the services provided by the Technology Park.

It is consisted of the following three departments:

1. Department of Business Planning: it provides all the services relative to the compilation of business plans, both at the selection process and during the whole period of residence
 2. Department of Administration of Provided Services: works out the plan of residence, nominates the staff responsible for the management of resident companies and coordinates the provision of services to resident companies
 3. Department of Public Relations: it is responsible for the public relations of the Aegean Technopolis, the contracting of collaborations with companies/organizations/private individuals, the management and monitoring of activities related to the attraction of new residents at the technology park, and finally the promotion and marketing strategy of the Aegean Technopolis
- Directorate of Accounting: it is responsible of the economic and commercial management, observance of general and analytic accountancy and the compilation of budgets and financial reports

Objectives:

1. To develop the necessary infrastructure to support established and emerging technology based companies;
2. Provide a wide range of services to resident companies – guidance, business development, and brand promotion, administrative and financial support;
3. Become a viable company by investing on resident companies and participating in development Programmes;
4. Contribute to the increase of employment rates and the development of the Aegean Region

Type of Best Practice: internationalization and mobilization of SMEs

BioBus, where an initiative of the Region of North Aegean aiming to investigate the extend of innovation that can be applied in our region. The financial tools provided by the E.C. under this programmes such as NAIAS and BIOBUS, proved to be extremely valuable for our region in order to research its capacity in applying new ideas and innovation in the attempts of the local authorities and agencies that bear the burden of regional development.

In a European environment that is characterized by fast changes and developments influenced by the global changes and in an environment that is getting more and more antagonistic, our region has to be extra cautious and follow the developments as close as possible.

This programme started mainly due to the experience of the close cooperation of the partners of a former project named NAIAS. The experience accumulated in the past four years was very helpful, in making three variables work together:

The Public sector (Governmental Authorities)

The University of the Aegean (Regional academic potential)

The Entrepreneurial world (Chambers of Commerce and Private Sector)

The main idea of investigating the use of Biodiversity in the business environment proved to be more complicated and challenging than expected. All of the partners have to deal with an extremely delicate issue: the sources and uses of Biodiversity.

Biodiversity on one hand, which implies directly that resources our environment is providing us are not unlimited and that any attempt to exploit them should be carefully designed always bearing in mind the aim for sustainability, and on the other hand the need of economic development, financial growth, diversification and competition.

The two variables are at the same time antagonistic to each other and complementing each other. Our “experimentation” is aiming to find the point where we can maximize benefits and minimize losses in order to achieve knowledge that can be viable and transferable in our socioeconomic reality. In the Region of North Aegean it is difficult due to geographic conditions – we are a border of the E.C., away from the centres of developments – to generate innovation. Nevertheless we believe we have reached a noticeable level of innovation; the next step, the challenge, is to make it obvious and make it work towards the benefit of the citizens of the Region and we are confident we will reach this goal.

A systematic and significant endeavor for innovative economic and business development was materialized during 2002-2005 with the NAIAS project. NAIAS, according to the entrepreneurial opinion, has been the project producing the most tangible results on innovation not only for the public, but also for the private sector. It has been the project which acted as a liaison between the university and the business community in order to produce practical, knowledge based, innovative business results. Due to the project’s partnership, the well-designed pilot projects, and the businessmen desire all NAIAS pilot projects were successful, providing significant added value at the end.

The BIOBUS project is now focusing on one single innovation theme with existing regional resources, with recent European interest as a new developing avenue, and with potentials to be utilized as a vehicle for generation of new innovative businesses worldwide.

The theme BIOBUS is utilizing for economic development and co-operation is “biodiversity”. European Union has recently realized the need for “a biodiversity action plan for economic and development co-operation”, by issuing the first such action plan in 2001 [com (2001)162, volume V]. The citizens in developing countries depend more and more on biodiversity to support their livelihoods, through their direct use of a wide range of domesticated and semi domesticated crops, livestock etc.

supplemented by many products collected from the wild, including medicines, food supplements, building materials etc. Furthermore, biodiversity in less developed regions provides many indirect and/or intergenerational benefits from local to global levels. This includes a range of ecosystem new products and services, such as: supporting the formation of fertile soils, filtration of polluted water, stabilization of hillsides, coastlines etc. At the global level, biodiversity benefits include climate stabilization, a huge store of genetic information, and a wealth of plant, animal species and microbe species. Biodiversity is a core aspect of “environment” and is included into all spheres of economic development programs and projects.

“Biodiversity businesses” represent a new and dynamic partnership. This alliance between business and conservation interests offers enormous potential benefits for humankind. Like traditional businesses, biodiversity enterprises seek to earn a profit. At the same time, they make a deliberate effort to conserve biological diversity through the sustainable use of environmental products. Investing in biodiversity businesses will help the businesses to create new value from ecosystems, and genetic resources, and encourages businesses to employ methods that have a low impact on natural inhabitants.

The region of North Aegean has an enriched environment with resources that can be utilized for new business development, upon the transfer, and insertion into the regional community of the proper knowledge and technology. For example the islands of North Aegean are characterized by a very rich and interesting flora which has not been utilized yet as a source of new economic initiatives. The floristic and phytogeographical information related to the various species has systematically been recorded, providing the basic knowledge required for business planning.

The project aims at igniting and sustaining such a biodiversity business support initiative at a regional level, which will have transferable results and can become an innovative example of good innovation practice.

Objectives:

The project where elaborated throw the following actions

Action 7.1: Regional Business & Biodiversity Resource Centers (RBBC),

Set up one Business & Biodiversity Resource Center (BBRC) in the region, which will operate with three offices (sub centers), as a one-stop-shop where entrepreneurs, and other interested people can find out about the important role biodiversity plays for business.

Action 7.2: Biodiversity & Business growth opportunities

Identification, elaboration, promotion and provision to the business community of specific innovative business opportunities based on biodiversity ideas, knowledge and regional resources.

Action 7.3: Corporate biodiversity action plans

Formulation biodiversity business plans to selected new or existing companies.

Action 7.4: Investment on biodiversity businesses & products

Assisting selected new and existing companies of the region to develop biodiversity products, processes or new biodiversity companies, utilizing biodiversity knowledge and/or regional biodiversity resources.

Resources:

Total cost of the project where: 3,225,000 euros

Best Practice 22: Accelerace

Type of Best Practice: tackling barriers and developing SMEs skills

The Accelerace program has been initiated by the largest Danish incubator "Symbion"- located in the capital region. The programme is primarily funded by: The Danish Growth Fund (government), The Danish Capital Region (partially European regional development grants) and one of the other regions. The programme has been designed in order to overcome one of the typical weaknesses: to bring companies from ideas to market i.e. assisting in bridging the gap until proof of business,

The Accelerace programme comprises 3 main areas:

Accelerace Growth

Accelerace Invest

Accelerace Spin-off

The programme selects their candidates/beneficiaries through a semi-annual application process. A dozen of the most promising ideas/companies are then selected.

Accelerace Growth is a 5 month intensive program where professional business consultants work intensively with the company and its specific business-plan. This includes workshops with international experts within the candidates' field of expertise. The candidates are furthermore matched with their own professional business consultant – working inside the company for app. 2 days a week through the entire period.

Accelerace Spin-off is basically the same concept as Accelerace Growth however it is focused on spin-offs from existing companies and thereby realizing a potential in an idea, product or patent that is otherwise dormant or not within the core-strategy for the originating company.

Accelerace Invest is set up as a separate programme, but it works in close collaboration with the other two activities. Accelerace Invest can furnish the candidate companies with soft loans up to 400,000 € for a duration of 7 years with 2 years grace at an interest rate of 10%. Furthermore Accelerace Invest works in close collaboration with the Danish Growth Fund and local seed-investors.

The combination of supplying candidates with professional business development skills as well as capital is expected to be a winning combination

Objectives:

Over a 5 year period from 2009 more than 150 projects or companies shall have been through the programme within a 5 year timeframe

Resources:

Accelerace has a staff of 14 full-time employees.

The budget for Accelerace Growth is € 15 mill.

The budget for Accelerace Spin-off is € 5.1 mill.

The capital invested through Accelerace Invest will amount to € +13 mill.

Type of Best Practice: promoting networking and channeling information to SMEs

Connect Denmark is a private membership-based non-profit organization established in year 2000. Today Connect Denmark has in excess of 300 companies and close to 900 business executives as members. The members comprise the best performing companies and the highly estimated executives.

Connect Denmark provides free coaching to entrepreneurs from the idea stage and through the later growth stages. Furthermore Connect Denmark provides matching between entrepreneurs and professional board members.

The activities are primarily conducted through “springboards” where entrepreneurs – selected by the organization – receives sparring from a panel of typically 6-12 business executives selected among the members on basis of their respective qualifications in relation to the challenges faced by the entrepreneur.

The concept originates from San Diego in the US and has been adopted by a number of countries – however in Europe only in the northern countries.

Objectives:

Connect Denmark and its member’s make innovation and technology to the primary Danish growth factors.

For the purpose of creating and developing successful growth companies, Connect Denmark facilitates contacts between entrepreneurs and financial, industrial and business developing resources.

Resources:

The organization comprises some 10 employees. The annual budget amounts to 1.5 mill. € The major part being paid by the members as membership-fees and sponsorships. A smaller part is contributed from government funds as "proof-of-concept" funds

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises

Connect Denmark has conducted in excess of 800 springboards for Danish entrepreneurs since its inauguration. The companies have in average 5 employees and job-creation following a springboard amounts to a growth in employees of 24% (capital region 43%). Development in turnover shows a 27% growth (capital region 39%) and development in export of 18%.

43% of springboard companies have attracted new capital amounting 0.5 mill. € in average per entrepreneur – the major part being venture capital.

39% attracts professional board-members among Connect Denmark’s members

Survival rate for companies going through a Connect Denmark springboard is 93.8%

Best Practice 24: Science and Technology Park "TEHNOPOLIS"

Type of Best Practice: RDI infrastructure and cooperation serving SMEs

Science and Technology Park "TEHNOPOLIS Iasi was founded in order to use the results of research, applying advanced technologies in economy and increase participation in higher education institutions in the socio-economic development through science and technology.

Science and Technology Park "TEHNOPOLIS Iasi was founded in order to use the results of research, applying advanced technologies in economy and increase participation in higher education institutions in the socio-economic development through science and technology. The current stage of development of the Park offers to use two buildings, "Duplex «with a total built area of 1.200 square meters and "NUCLEUS «with a total built area of over 9.000 sqm.

The NUCLEUS amenities include the following areas: office areas and production areas (for rent) the laboratories exhibition areas and coffee breaks restaurant area the "Business Incubator", the "Conference Center", the "Audio-Video Studio".

Objectives:

- Technology transfer research results to economic agents in manufacturing or packages of products and services with competitive value and capitalization domestic or foreign
- Establishment of specialists with advanced training in research and higher education
- training young people to research
- attract private funding in education and research activities
- Market capitalization of scientific research results
- Creation of new jobs in advanced technologies
- stimulating innovation and scientific-technical potential of academic staff, university researchers and students
- Orientation of universities and research facilities for economic and social environment
- Integration of students and graduates of higher education institutions in the socio-economic
- stimulate initiative accredited higher education institutions and research and development units to attract new funding sources
- stimulating active participation of companies to private sector development and exploitation of research and innovation, by making high-tech products
- attracting foreign companies to invest in technology transfer activities
- developing the potential of scientific, technological and regional economic

Resources

The project was co-financed by PHARE, amounting to EUR 6,353,220.59, allocated for construction and installation activities.

Among them:

- Co-financing of EUR 4,764,915.44 awarded by the European Union
- National co-financing EUR 1,588,305.15 awarded by the Romanian Government

The value of these expenditures amounted to EUR 1.25 million approximate.

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises.

There are nine tenants in Tehnopolis Iasi. There are eight SMEs that have activities under the Business Incubator Tehnopolis is supporting entrepreneurial initiative generated, mainly, by teams of researchers, teachers and / or students from higher education institutions that are among the associate members PST "TEHNOPOLIS".

Type of Best Practice: internationalization and mobilization of SMEs

There are several academic research programs and training for stimulation the innovative entrepreneurial culture.

These are:

" Capacity for innovation and growth impact post-doctoral research programs", 80 researchers

"Training and managerial assistance to small, entrepreneurial and future entrepreneurs, managers and employees in SMEs in the North East, North West, Central and Southeast"

"Knowledge based Entrepreneurship Academy"

MEDIAEC platform (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University) - is designed to develop the highest level of educational services and research through interdisciplinary interaction, multifunctional and permanent.

Objectives:

These projects are implemented and carried through the universities, with European funding in order to stimulate the innovative spirit, entrepreneurial culture and developing SMEs. Within these programs are carried out research on entrepreneurial innovation and its impact on SME development. It offers training, consulting and specialized programs for people who want to open a small business.

Resources:

" Capacity for innovation and growth impact post-doctoral research programs", 80 researchers

The total project is 377487,804 Euro

Improvement in the business environment for SMEs and large enterprises:

These projects will lead to a better understanding of the development needs of SMEs at local and national. They will promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the entrepreneurial culture. Will train specialists in SMEs and contribute to a better foundation for developing strategies for SMEs to local and national level, with beneficial effects on economic and social development.



European Union

European Regional Development Fund



INTERREG IVC

INNOVATION & ENVIRONMENT
REGIONS OF EUROPE SHARING SOLUTIONS