



EFFECTIVE SME SUPPORT

**NEW INCUBATION PROGRAMME
IN WIELKOPOLSKA**

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTED IN WIELKOPOLSKA REGION AS THE RESULT OF ESSPO PROJECT

INCUBATION PROGRAMME ENSURING INDIVIDUAL APPROACH TO EACH START-UP NEEDS AND SUPPORT QUALITY STANDARDS

ESSPO LESSONS LEARNT APPLIED IN THE ACTION

Lesson learnt	Source of the lesson
Targeting the right SMEs, active recruitment, selection of promising candidates	
<p>a. Active search by intermediaries: <i>Quite often headhunting method (direct communication from BDO to startup team) works best. This is not to say that there shouldn't be a public call, there should, but one should not only rely on passive recruitment strategy.</i></p> <p>b. Definition of startup, should make sure that the supported startups have potential to develop e.g. business model is scalable or it is not just a repletion of popular business done in vicinity</p> <p>c. Evaluation board accepting the incubatees should have business people who have experience in business, as they can better assess the potential of the business projects.</p>	<p>Recommendations from the peer review in Wielkopolska done by the Estonian partner (19-20 October 2016) and the experiences of Tartu incubation programmes.</p>
<p>d. Specialization of each incubators on the target groups (e.g. technologies) makes it easier to set up recruitment and selection process as well as committee set up</p> <p>e. Each incubator should be able to involve intermediaries, companies, financial institutions in selection committee.</p>	<p>Peer review made in Region Centre Val de Loire (France) (25-26/04/2017 with representatives of LP and the Wielkopolska Regional Authority</p>
<p>f. A broad mentor network should be developed with defined criteria for both mentors and company engagement. Mentors should mainly be experienced entrepreneurs, technical experts or corporate industry veterans;</p> <p>g. Incubators should ask companies not growing or not meeting expected criteria to leave – it makes room for new more innovative and creative companies. Incubators should create demand/awareness by making it competitive to be accepted into programs, have clear criteria for acceptance and graduation.</p>	<p>Insights from the representatives 2 international incubation associations: EBN and INBIA visiting Poznań and participating in an at additional Regional Stakeholder Group meeting (20/04/2017)</p>
Quality of the service, competences of incubators	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. The definition of quality should be based on the perspective of companies – what is the value and quality important for them. i. Incubation support should include funding for increasing competences for business support services organisation as well. So that the potential stays within the intermediary. j. Continuous capacity building of incubator staff is crucial to retain quality in the eyes of SME's and also policy owner 	<p>Recommendations from the peer review in Wielkopolska done by the Estonian partner (19-20 October 2016) and the experiences of Tartu incubation programmes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> k. Collaboration of incubators in a network is a good way for improvement of services and development of new types of support. l. Involvement of experienced mentors in the incubation process and scheduling it with regular review of milestones. 	<p>Peer review made in Region Centre Val de Loire (France) (25-26/04/2017 with representatives of LP and the Wielkopolska Regional Authority</p>

NATURE OF THE ACTION

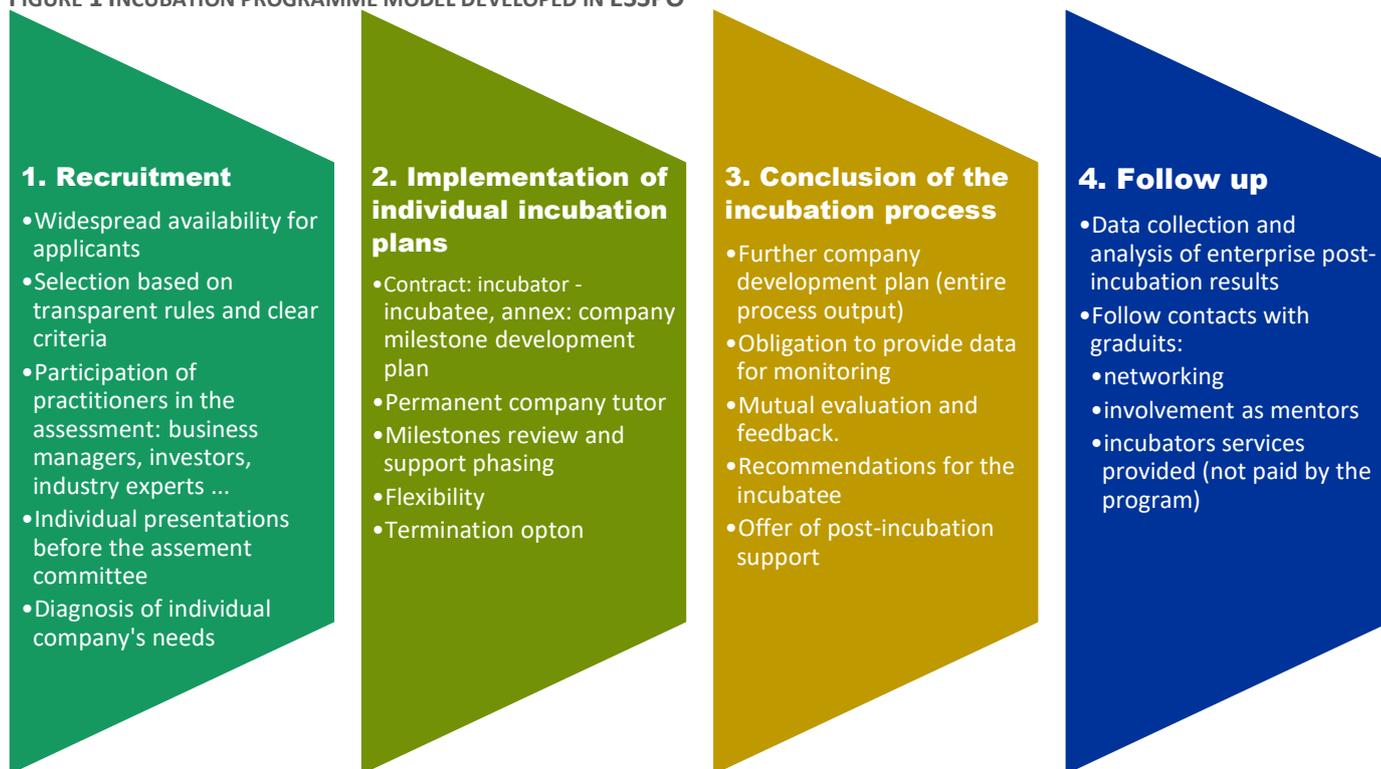
ESSPO contributed to the design of new instrument for start-ups incubation. The general assumptions of the measure were set in the detailed description of the priorities of the Wielkopolskie ROP (submeasure 1.3.1.) The concept was to provide support services to newly established companies through incubators, the direct beneficiaries. LP agreed with the Management Authority that ESSPO Regional Stockholder Group would work out the detailed model of the service provision, including the quality requirements. The objective was to ensure transparency and quality of the support to the start-ups and the contribution to the region's smart specialisation strategy.

One of the difficulties resolved has been preparation an open call for any entities, that ensures the adequate quality of the intermediary services and effective process of incubation. And at the same time the instrument must respect the impartiality of the call regulation as well transparent call process. That means especially that the project and the stakeholders did not discuss access criteria for potential beneficiaries.

The instrument has been based on an incubation programme model inspired with the lessons learned within the project as well as dialogue among the relevant stakeholders, including young entrepreneurs.

The model is presented in the graph below:

FIGURE 1 INCUBATION PROGRAMME MODEL DEVELOPED IN ESSPO



The model was used to specify the quality requirements for each step of the incubation process that are to be respected by the beneficiaries:

QUALITY PLAN FOR INCUBATION PROGRAMME

No.	Requirement	Evidence
Recruitment and selection of start-ups		
1.	<p>Information about recruitment is publicly available so that all interested parties can take part in it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadlines give sufficient time for the preparation of the application - minimum 3 weeks from the announcement. 	Announcement on the incubator website and the program platform
2.	<p>The recruitment rules are transparent.</p> <p>The recruitment call includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the target group - characteristics of enterprises preferred in the incubation program, eg. industry, applied technologies, business readiness, product innovation, location of the company's activity. • Recruitment regulations (or the entire incubation process), describing the evaluation criteria and the manner of the assessment. • Annexed to the regulations is the template of the incubation agreement. 	Recruitment documentation attached to the call

3.	<p>Confidentiality of data provided by the applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competition regulations ensure the confidentiality of data. 	Recruitment documentation attached to the call
4.	<p>Reliable evaluation of candidates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required information from candidates provides necessary information for the assessment The evaluators declare their impartiality to the candidates. Individual meetings of candidates with the evaluation committee are an obligatory element of the assessment process. Business practitioners and external experts participate in the evaluation committee. The assessment process is documented and includes individual assessments in individual criteria. In addition, a collective (average or consensus) assessment is prepared along with justification. Upon request, the applicant's assessment results are made available not disclosing the names of the persons involved in the assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application forms Assessment reports
5.	<p>Diagnosis of individual company's needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The preparation of an individual incubation program must be preceded by an assessment of the needs of each company. As a minimum, a common tool for testing innovation potential should be used. The assessment can be part of the recruitment process and can take place at any stage. 	Written conclusions from the assessment
Implementation of incubation program		
6.	<p>Signature of the incubation agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The incubator and the entrepreneur(s) sign an incubation agreement as the template included in the recruitment call. Annexes to the contract are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company development plan, comprising an action plan and milestones to be achieved - prepared by the entrepreneur (s) and accepted by the incubators, Individual incubation plan, adapted to the enterprise development plan, including the scope and value of planned support services from 5 areas (infrastructure, business support, business development advise, specialized services and advise, investment support) - prepared by BEI and accepted by the entrepreneur (s). This contract describes the responsibilities of both parties. 	Agreements and the annexes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contract should reserve the transfer of the next tranche of support dependent on the achievement of specific milestones set in the business plan. • The contract contains appropriate clauses regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provision of information on the development of the enterprise, including financial and employment data, also for a period of at least 3 years from the end of the incubation program, ○ Terms of termination of the contract in the event of non-performance of activities planned in the incubation agreement, ○ Terms of change introduction to the enterprise development plan, ○ The incubatee obligations to cooperate with other incubatees and participate in networking. 	
7.	<p>Ensuring the quality of services provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incubators provides services according to internal procedures ensuring the quality assurance. It is recommended to use certified systems (eg ISO). The procedure includes adequate measures for the confidentiality of incubatees financial and personal data. • Each incubate works with a designated tutor coordinating the entire incubation process and services provided. • The incubators keeps a register of services provided to each incubate and, meetings. Conclusions from meetings are recorded in writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation describing the procedures for the provision of services in the incubator • Register of services provided • Conclusions from periodic reviews of the incubation program progress • Customer satisfaction survey tool. Conclusions from the assessments and notes on the implemented actions.
8.	<p>Competences and experience of people providing advisory and training services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the internal procedures referred to in point 7 above, the incubators ensures that the persons providing advisory and training services have appropriate competences. The incubation program describes the knowledge and experience requirements and each person involved meets these requirements. • As part of the incubation program, the incubatee has access to mentors or coaches with relevant experience in the field (minimum of one monthly consultation or a specific pool of hours to be used as part of the entire program). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation describing the procedures for the provision of services in BEI, in the part concerning the requirements for personnel • CV of persons providing advisory and training services) • Register of services provided, in which individual consultations are recorded
9.	<p>Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the individual incubation program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incubator and entrepreneurs at least once every 6 months jointly review the progress of the incubation program: implementation of activities by entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions from periodical reviews of the incubation program progress. • Customer satisfaction survey tool. Conclusions

	<p>and achievement of milestones as well as implementation and effects of incubation services. The written conclusions of the assessment are prepared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incubator conducts customer satisfaction surveys in a manner ensuring impartiality of collected information, draws conclusions from research and implements them in practice. 	<p>from the conducted assessments and notes on the implemented actions.</p>
Conclusion of the incubation process and follow up		
10.	<p>Summary of the program and identification of subsequent company development steps and possible sources of support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The incubator and the incubate have a meeting summing up the incubation program. They pass on their evaluation of cooperation. The incubator provides recommendations for further development and the offer of other support services, which the entrepreneur can use after the incubation. The incubator reminds the obligation to provide financial and employment data that has been set in the contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed offer of other development services Notes from the meeting
11.	<p>Monitoring of enterprise development in the post-incubation period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The incubator maintains contacts with the incubation graduates, e.g. by inviting to networking meetings and other events. The incubator collects data on the development of the enterprise according to the data and transmission frequency ranges established in the contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from monitoring the development of enterprises – incubation graduates

The quality requirements are part of the instrument concept, and are included in its regulations. Beneficiaries are obliged to prepare their applications respecting the requirements, which should be also followed in the implementation phase.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Region in Poland (UMWW)
 - Department of Regional Policy – responsible for the ROP planning and evaluation,
 - Department for Implementation of the Regional Programme – department for the preparation of the detailed documentation of the instrument and its implementation.
- Poznan Science and Technology Park of Adam Mickiewicz University Foundation (PPNT) – responsible for the coordination of the Regional Stakeholder Group work, communication and support for the stakeholders in the interregional policy learning process, preparation of reports,
- Members of Regional Stakeholders Group (RSG)– representatives of regional authority, municipalities, intermediaries and entrepreneurs – responsible for the design of the instrument concept sharing experiences and knowledge from their perspectives;
- Beneficiaries of the instrument – practical implementation of the incubation program, communication among each other and provision of feedback on the incubation program in practice.

TIMEFRAME

- Delivery of the dedicated ESSPO report describing the instrument concept, including incubation model and quality requirements – April 2017.
- Preparation of the instrument documentation by the UMWW **May-August 2017**
- Announcement of the call for application. The regulation includes the the quality assurance model above , with clear reference to ESSPO document, was included in the call for proposal regulations, announced on the at: <http://wrpo.wielkopolskie.pl/nabory/212> - **5th of September 2017**
- Intake of applications – 29th of September 2017 – **10th of November 2017**
- Assessments of applications – **November 2017-February 2018**
- Decision on selected projects - **7th of March 2018**
- Implementation of projects – **June 2018 – December 2021**
- Second call – tbc. – **January 2021**

COSTS

- First call:
 - allocation (ROP, ERDF): 15 mln PLN (ca. 3,5 mln EUR)
 - value of projects selected: 8,86 mln z PLN (ca. 2 mln EUR) including ERDF contribution: 6,58 mln PLN (ca. 1,58 mln EUR)
- Second call – tbc.

FUNDING SOURCES

Through the policy instrument indicated in part II