



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

# SPEED UP

Interreg Europe



Economic promotion  
for East Brandenburg (DE)

# ACTION PLAN

STIC Economic Promotion for East Brandenburg



**East Brandenburg**

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Project	Supporting Practices for Entrepreneurship Ecosystems in the Development of Urban Policies (SPEED UP)
Project partner	STIC Wirtschaftsfördergesellschaft MOL
Country	Germany
NUTS2 region	Brandenburg
Contact person	Judit Gulya
Email address	<a href="mailto:j.gulya@stic.de">j.gulya@stic.de</a>
Phone	+49 (0)3341 33 51 15
Organization`s website	<a href="http://www.stic.de">www.stic.de</a>

More **information** about SPEED UP:

Website: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/speedup/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/speedupinterreg/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SPEEDUPproject>

You Tube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJxqnb\\_JfSICz\\_zvLyOoeA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJxqnb_JfSICz_zvLyOoeA)

## Background and Summary

The overall objective of SPEED UP is to trigger policy change in the partners' regions improving the implementation of the policy instruments under Structural Funds programmes dedicated to support of entrepreneurship, in particular concerning business incubation. The SPEED UP exchange delivered new approaches and ideas that could be applied within existing programs in Brandenburg in order to improve entrepreneurship services. For example, the testing of digital formats of business incubation (Action 2/Action Plan) will be integrated in an existing startup programme for young people funded by ESF.

In result of the first phase of exchange of experience this regional action plan has been developed to include the lessons learnt of SPEED UP project within the **Entrepreneurship and Succession Strategy of Brandenburg**.

The general aim of the action plan therefore is to improve the efficiency and future resilience of the highly developed business incubation support system in the federal state of Brandenburg. SPEED UP Brandenburg is tackling ESF and not ERDF as originally planned.

According to the lessons learned and the Good Practices shared by SPEED UP partners during the interregional meetings ESF Brandenburg has been elaborated in close cooperation with the involved ministries as the more proper instrument for the regional transfer. The framework has a longstanding tradition regarding business incubation and startup support realized by different projects, initiatives and further services. Action one and action two will be integrated in a pilot project initiated by the ministry MASGF funded by the Structural Fund ESF. The pilot project has been developed to transfer SPEED UP Good Practices to Brandenburg.

Furthermore, this action plan needs to be put in the context with three other Interreg Europe projects (iEER, STOB regions and SOCENT SPAs) addressing the **Entrepreneurship and Succession Strategy of Brandenburg**. Synergy effects between the different RAP's and different outcomes help to adapt the BI support in Brandenburg for the upcoming new EU funding period.

The action plan has been developed on the basis of two stakeholders workshop considering and close cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Health, Women and Family (MASGF), Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (MWE), and the Economic Development Agency Brandenburg (WFBB).

SPEED UP defines four focus topics that has been discussed intensively throughout regional stakeholder meetings, interregional workshops & seminars and study visits:

**Focus topic 1 improve the services provided by the business incubators and ensure their financial sustainability**

Brandenburg provides a comprehensive entrepreneurship support system funded by the Structural Funds that is outstanding, also on European level. On the other hand, this strength can turn into a weakness in the likely case of decreasing funding for Brandenburg region. Thus, new and/or modified models of entrepreneurship support are necessary in order to secure entrepreneurship support across the urban and rural area of Brandenburg and to foster innovation. Important requirement is the mapping of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (see Action 1), which allows policy makers to identify pooling opportunities, to track relevant actors and target groups.

**Focus Topic 2 deepen the cooperation between the public authorities, business sector, universities and R&D institutions**

SPEED UP demonstrated the importance of cooperation activities between different actors in order to address the dynamic needs of entrepreneurs and companies. Strategic partnerships are efficient models to provide relevant services to entrepreneurs across 1. the organization's core activity, 2. the different company development stages, 3. regional boundaries or even beyond.

iEER Brandenburg action plan already stated that Brandenburg is facing a lack of coordination between different actors. SPEED UP Brandenburg is sharing these objections. Public-private partnerships are still rarely developed but they are offering great potential to improve and innovate the support services as has been seen in many Good Practices among SPEED UP regions, e.g. Nana Bianca (coworking, business incubator and accelerator) who offers seed investment for start-up by cooperating with the public sector in distribution of grants.

Moreover, new actors like private coworking entered the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the last two years. This opens new potentials for public - private partnerships which is still rarely developed in Brandenburg.

**Focus topic 3 enable support to specific target groups, such as young people, migrants or female entrepreneurs;**

Since Brandenburg offers specific entrepreneurship programs for young people and migrants, female entrepreneurship is always integral part of the support programs. Furthermore, there are several initiatives such as the Brandenburg competition of "Female entrepreneur of the Years" or regular's table for female entrepreneurs. Even though, every third business founder in Brandenburg is a woman there is still an economic potential. SPEED UP demonstrated the importance to include insensitive for women to foster female entrepreneurship. Innovative example is the coworking Spazio Co-Stanza in Florence offering additional childcare services. Besides concrete services addressed to woman digital entrepreneurship support is offering a high potential not only for women but for other target groups too (disabled persons, rural entrepreneurship, employed persons – see Action 2).

**Focus topic 4** develop monitoring systems within the incubators on the performance of their activities and those of hosted companies

For the development of a monitoring system and the identification Key Performance Indicators it is highly recommended to involve all main players of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. KPI's have to be customised related to each organizational structure and is subject to constant adjustments. The biggest challenges even for policy makers is the access to updated data and data-gathering over a longer period. Both objectives should be envisaged in longer term in order to be able to measure the impact of entrepreneurship services even beyond the program participation.

### Conclusions

Many European regions developed innovate models and approaches that could not be considered in the action plan but provide a **potential to improve** existing programs and initiatives in Brandenburg. The **results** based on the interregional learning of SPEED UP are the following:

- SPEED UP has proven that Brandenburg provides a comprehensive entrepreneurship support system funded by the Structural Funds that is outstanding, also on European level. On the other hand, this strength can turn into a weakness in case of decreasing the funding. **Public-private partnerships** are successful models to foster financial sustainability of business incubators and business incubation programs
- Furthermore, **Membership fees** can ensure a financial sustainability of a business incubator/incubation program and may increase the entrepreneur's commitment as free services is often taken by granted (no show-rates etc.)
- **Hybrid forms** of Business Incubators and/or Startup Centers offering different kind of services across different stages and needs of founders has proven to be successful models in Europe and should be considered for the next funding period.
- On the other hand, **Business Incubators addresses a particular industry** has a high potential for boost innovation
- Business plan contests are ideal initiatives to engage different entrepreneurial actors
- **Incentives for companies** are important to attract interest to cooperate with the university and R&D sector
- **Gamification** offers great potential to reach and educate young people
- Entrepreneurial learning at schools is important to establish an entrepreneurial mindset
- **Micro credit models without conditions for access except the business idea** (like educational background, nationality, absence of debts) are successful instruments to support micro-companies across all sectors and to include people in the local economy who has generally limited access (migrants, lowest level of education, indebted persons)
- **Digitalization** has a great potential to ensure entrepreneurship support in the rural area. Online business incubation can supplement face-to-face training and coaching.

## Action 1: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in East-Brandenburg

### Background

SPEED UP demonstrated that a comprehensive entrepreneurial ecosystem is crucial for regions to foster entrepreneurship. Business incubators, coworking spaces and accelerators are main players within the ecosystem and were standing in a mutual relationship to each other. As Brandenburg provides a wide range of support programs and services SPEED UP identified the following challenges:

- Lack of cooperation between existing companies, founders, startups/new companies and successors
- Company succession need to be embedded deeper in entrepreneurship support. Interreg Europe project “STOB regions” will address this issue in their action plan
- Lack of transparency of support services
- Potential of higher awareness about support services by entrepreneurs
- Brandenburg’s entrepreneurship support system is strongly depended from the EU Structural funds. There are few strategies in order to reduce this dependence
- The potential of digitalization is still an untapped resource, especially in the rural area

Main objective of the action “Entrepreneurial Ecosystem” is the **entrepreneurial ecosystem mapping** in the administrative districts Märkisch-Oderland, Oder-Spree, Uckermark, Barnim and the city Frankfurt (Oder). As a third dimension the pilot project will apply the updated entrepreneurial development phases by Interreg Europe project “iEER” to identify all relevant actors and services of the ecosystem. The consideration of the development phases of entrepreneurs enables to discover gaps and overlaps in BI support.

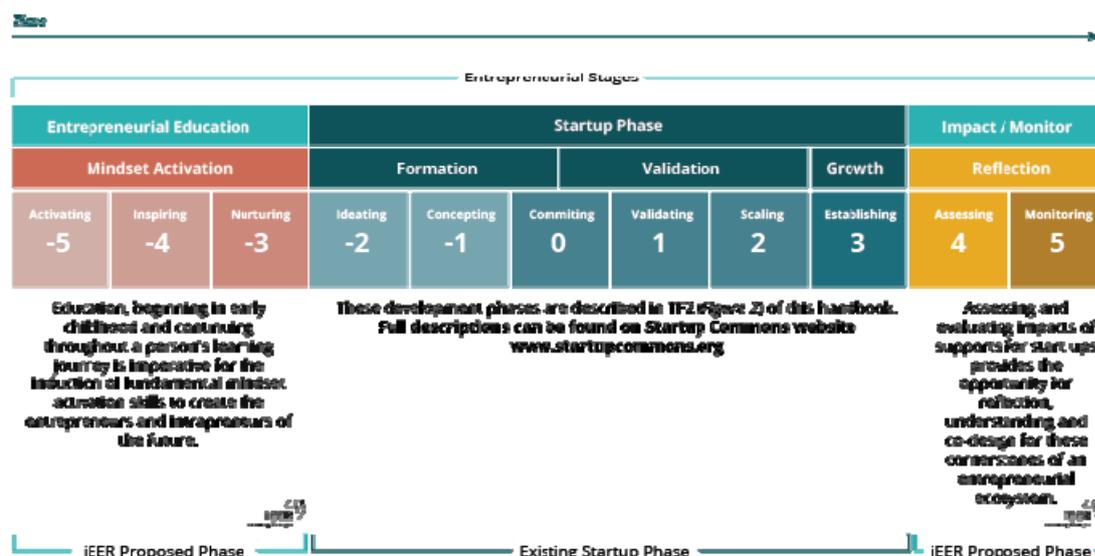


Fig.: 1: iEER model of the stages in the entrepreneurial process from a supporting perspective

This task is crucial in order to identify existing services, to reveal deficits and to develop new strategies in order to overcome the above mentioned challenges. Further goal is the identification of

already existing “entrepreneurship hotspots” in the administrative districts Märkisch-Oderland, Oder-Spree, Uckermark, Barnim and the city of Frankfurt (Oder). The results will be included in a digital map.

### Visualization of the Ecosystem

As learned by other European Good Practices platforms/websites illustrating these start up instruments/ contact point/ activities are integral part of local entrepreneurial ecosystems. Several platform providers on regional and national level are summarizing a variety of services but these platforms are showing a lack of information due to several reasons (interest-led information, not up to date, no cooperation/linkage to other entrepreneurial actors). On the other hand, there is no map or website presenting all startup support programme by the State of Brandenburg. This leads to disorientation of people who are looking for information regarding entrepreneurship support. This observation has been already stated by iEER action plan Brandenburg (see Résumé) and confirmed by SPEED UP Brandenburg.

In result, an online version of the entrepreneurial ecosystem based on a map and further information will be created. The results of the mapping will be included.

This action is going to refer to the good practice “Made of Lisbon” (Portugal). The platform grew organically from a map demonstrating existing business incubators in Lisbon to a platform, which includes relevant actors from the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lisbon. The map gives a good orientation about Business Incubators, Accelerators, startup programs, universities, info points and entrepreneurs. It includes different tools such a news section and an event calendar. The platform is always transforming according to the vivid ecosystem in Lisbon.

The existing and visible entrepreneurial ecosystem “Made of Lisboa” should be adapted to the special conditions in Brandenburg. The Lisbon ecosystem works is a highly developed capital. Brandenburg is a rural state with some smaller cities. That means higher distances, less infrastructure, smaller population density etc.. In addition Made of Lisboa is not taking account to the different entrepreneurial phases (see also iEER-model).

That why it is necessary to transform this outstanding good practice for Brandenburg. In a first pilot step a map of the ecosystem in East Brandenburg (Chamber district Ostbrandenburg) is created. This map can be easily extended by other regions.

Action one will be integrated in Brandenburg pilot project “Entrepreneurial Ecosystem East – Brandenburg” funded by ESF.

### Action

Mapping the entrepreneurial ecosystem under consideration the iEER model in the districts Märkisch-Oderland, Oder-Spree, Uckermark, Barnim and the city Frankfurt (Oder):

#### Phase 1 (October 2019 – November 2020)

- Identification of existing startup support activities, entrepreneurial actors and marketing activities
- Identification of special needs in the suburban and rural area
- Identification of existing entrepreneurship hotspots
- Examination of websites/platforms
- Visualization of the entrepreneurial ecosystem by a map including all entrepreneurial contact points, actors and activities in respective regions
- Cooperation and exchange of experience with the University of Applied Sciences Brandenburg regarding their iEER pilot project „Founders City Brandenburg“
- Involvement of local stakeholder group and the ministries of the State of Brandenburg MASGF and MWE

#### Phase 2 (December 2020 – May 2021)

- Examination and improvement of existing networks
- Examination of pooling opportunities of entrepreneurship in the five regions
- Development of actions to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Development of a collaborative attitude between different stakeholders by collaborative events
- If possible, re-activation or transformation of existing websites
- Linkage to startup programs of the State of Brandenburg and other important platforms (KFW-Gründerplattform.de, Einheitlicher Ansprechpartner Brandenburg/Points of Single Contact Brandenburg)
- Involvement of local stakeholder group and the ministries of the State of Brandenburg MASGF and MWE

#### Phase 3 (June 2021 – March 2022)

- Evaluation of user-friendliness (testing phase)
- Assurance of continuous of the website by a proper organisation (Chambers, WFBB or TGW Brandenburg e. V.)

<b>Policy context</b>	<b>Investment for growth and job programs</b> Strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs
<b>Name of the policy instrument addressed</b>	ESF – Operational program Brandenburg
<b>Players involved:</b>	Project management: STIC Wirtschaftsfördergesellschaft mbH Stakeholders: MASGF and MWE TGW e. V. Agrathaer GmbH, Chamber of Commerce East Brandenburg, Europe University Viadrina, coworking spaces: Coworking Oderbruch, Blok O
<b>Timeframe:</b>	October 2019 - March 2022
<b>Costs (if relevant):</b>	Approx.. 300.000 EUR (for 30 months)
<b>Funding sources (if relevant):</b>	ESF
<b>Expected impacts (KPI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map of all relevant supporting business incubation activities in East- Brandenburg</li> <li>- Gaps / overlaps in existing business incubation programs are identified</li> <li>- Strategy to keep and enhance the high quality BI support - even under declining funds</li> </ul>

## Action 2: Online coaching and webinars

### Background:

Brandenburg has a comprehensive startup support instruments financed by European Funding. On the other hand, Brandenburg is facing structural challenges typical for rural areas hampers the implementation of start up support:

- Long distances between entrepreneurs and startup services
- Attendance of seminars & workshop is compulsory
- Similar activities (workshop organization) by different beneficiaries. Each organisation has to invest resources (personal/financial) in marketing activities.

From this background, digital services could be a help to improve the support of business incubation. At this time the use of online services in business incubation is still not strongly developed within the support system in Brandenburg. Nevertheless it provides high potential to reach more potential entrepreneurs.

Main objective of this action is to improve the existing services by using digital opportunities, mainly online coaching and webinars. Individual coaching online and webinars are offering more flexibility for aspiring entrepreneurs to focus on starting a business parallel to childcare, working duties or long distances. This action is aiming on the integration and further development of online activities within the already existing startup supporting programs in Brandenburg (e.g. Lotsendienste, Gründungswerkstätten für junge Leute)

This action has been inspired by Lisbon Good Practices „Startup Lisboa“. The incubator “Startup lisboa” offers two models of incubation: physical and virtual.

In both models the support structure “includes mentoring, linking to strategic partnerships, access to investment/funding, a valuable and extensive list of perks and benefits - including learning activities and office hours with domain experts - and a community based on knowledge and sharing”.

This best practice proves that business incubation can operate online as well. The offered tools webinars and individual online coachings seems to be an elementary progress for the existing BI supporting system in Brandenburg.

Action two will be integrated in Brandenburg pilot project “Entrepreneurial Ecosystem East – Brandenburg” funded by ESF.

### Action:

Phase 1 (October 2019 – November 2020)

- Development of Webinars within the selected startup supporting programs (in cooperation with young companies, Zukunft Lausitz and Social Impact)
- Integration of online – coaching and webinars in the startup support services of of young companies

- First test run (online-coaching&webinare) and evaluation

Phase 2 (December 2020 – May 2021)

- Implementation of the online coachings in young companies
- Acquisition of role models= successful entrepreneurs from East Brandenburg (Chamber district East-Brandenburg)
- Evaluation of actions

Phase 3 (June 2021 – March 2022)

- Continuous development of webinars within the selected startup supporting programs (in cooperation with young companies, Zukunft Lausitz and Social Impact)
- Development of online-coaching curricula
- Examination of new webinar formats. For example, webinar with successful entrepreneurs from East Brandenburg to motivate young people to start their business

<b>Policy context</b>	<b>Investment for growth and job programs</b> Strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs
<b>Name of policy instrument addressed</b>	ESF – Operational program Brandenburg
<b>Players involved</b>	Project management: STIC Wirtschaftsfördergesellschaft Stakeholders: Social Impact Zukunft Lausitz External experts Entrepreneurs from Brandenburg
<b>Timeframe:</b>	October 2019 - March 2022
<b>Costs:</b>	ca. 5.000 €
<b>Funding Source:</b>	ESF
<b>Expected impacts (KPI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving reach of existing BI supporting programs</li> <li>- number of participants using the online webinars and coachings</li> <li>- number of new developed online programs and broadcasts</li> <li>- number of acquired online coaches and lecturers</li> </ul>

### Action 3: Startup-Video game for students

#### Background:

Interregional learning experience, study visits and regional stakeholder meetings in Brandenburg underlined that entrepreneurial education in the young age is a main pillar when it comes to strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset and to foster entrepreneurship.

Brandenburg has already established several instruments aiming on student – entrepreneurial learning is part of the regular teaching curriculum. Despite that, Brandenburg is facing a lack of digital solutions when it comes to entrepreneurial learning.

Good example for gamification and entrepreneurial learning is the video game (Start and Up) by Polo Tecnologico Lucchese (Business Incubator). This browser based computer game (Atari style) simulates the development of a business. The aim of the game is to create a new product and bring it successful to the market. The game has been already tested and positive evaluated by Italian students.

#### Action:

- Sensitization of stakeholders to develop and/or implement gamification activities to foster entrepreneurial mindset in the young age
- Examination of existing video games and their distribution
- Defining the requirements for a video game
- Examination, if the translation of the Italian computer game „Start and Up“ is possible
- Identifying possible partners for implementation

<b>Policy context</b>	<b>Investment for growth and job programs</b> Strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs
<b>Players involved</b>	kobra.net gGmbH MASGF, MBSJ, MWE Schools in Brandenburg, student, teachers Foundations Multipliers/Stakeholders
<b>Timeframe</b>	2019 – February 2021
<b>Costs (if relevant)</b>	/
<b>Funding sources (if relevant):</b>	/
<b>Expected Impacts (KPI)</b>	- Number of supporting partners - Number of meetings of supporting partners - Development of requirement specifications including a task list