



Entrepreneurship

How can regions develop entrepreneurial attitudes and culture?

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POLICY PAPER

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Thematic capitalisation

Over the last seven years the INTERREG IVC programme has been enabling public institutions all over Europe – over 2000 in total – to ‘learn through cooperation’ across 204 different interregional projects aimed at improving regional policies.

In June 2012, the programme commissioned a team of thematic experts to analyse, benchmark, and capitalise on the wealth of knowledge generated by projects working on similar regional development issues. Altogether, 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment, have been covered. 12 reports are now available detailing the insights and lessons from this capitalisation process for the benefit of all regions across Europe.

This policy paper distils the essential findings of the report into a ‘ready-to-use’ tool to convince policymakers of not only the need for change, but exactly what change is required.

Since the financial crisis, European states have developed a much stronger interest in how to support and boost the potential of self-employment and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship and the creation of new SMEs are key drivers for growth, employment and continued economic prosperity.

The concern, though, is that fewer Europeans start or grow businesses, compared to their counterparts in the US and Japan. For decades, entrepreneurship levels have remained stubbornly low.

Regions can play a role in unleashing the benefits of entrepreneurship and in creating eco-systems that promote and support enterprising attitudes and activities. The development of tailor-made regional entrepreneurship policies is a crucial step towards building competitive advantages for regional development and job creation. The key challenges that regional policy makers need to overcome in order to boost entrepreneurship range from access to finance and a lack of entrepreneurial culture, to the fragmentation and inadequacy of support measures.

Key messages and recommendations

Our analysis of nine interregional cooperation projects focusing on suitable entrepreneurship policies provides useful insights and inspiration for regional policy makers. We feature here key messages and recommendations from these entrepreneurship projects.

Build on your core strengths

Build on regional core strengths and develop smart specialisation strategies as a source of opportunities for entrepreneurs and competitive advantages for the region.

Coaching and access to finance

The long-established Munich Business Plan (IMAGEEN) is organised as a competition, with prizes including financial input as part of a support package. Since 1997, over €300m seed capital has been invested, creating 808 businesses and 5,919 jobs.

Offer stability and long-term commitment

Commit to long-term regional entrepreneurship policies as prerequisites for attracting and keeping entrepreneurs and investments in the region. Unstable and insecure environments prevent entrepreneurs from thriving, investing and planning on a long-term basis.



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Enable entrepreneurs

Keep the focus on entrepreneurs, instead of only on the supporting infrastructure, and help them to flourish in a favourable environment. It is people who make a difference and create companies and jobs. Create a clearly structured, easy-to-access ecosystem of support measures relevant to the different stages of entrepreneurial development.

Foster growth of companies

Support entrepreneurs in the start-up phase and in the next development phase when new products or services have to be developed and commercialised.

Provide coaching for optimal business planning and investor-readiness, enabling entrepreneurs to access finance during the different stages of company development.

Entrepreneurship and education

The Danish 'Innocamp' (from ENSPIRE EU) and the Estonian 'Hour Innovation Camp' (from YES) immerse young people in an enterprise focused experience, and build links between schools and local businesses. Young people are equipped with enterprising attitudes such as team working, creative problem-solving and planning.

Educate and communicate on entrepreneurship

Foster cooperation between researchers and companies as a source of ideas for entrepreneurs and to instigate an entrepreneurial attitude in the academic world. Stimulate entrepreneurship throughout all levels of education.

Communicate opportunities and showcase good results of regional entrepreneurship programmes to inspire people and build trust in

entrepreneurship as a career opportunity.

Release the potential of social entrepreneurship

Create new opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged people to fully participate in society and develop a focused strategy on social enterprises combining economic and social interests.

Social enterprises

Both the PASE and MESSE projects explored regulatory models to support social enterprise. The Italian Marche region operates a co-programming model which brings public sector and social entrepreneurs together to develop and fund social services. Nationally, there are reserved tenders for social enterprises, and 5% of public spending goes on enterprises focused on integration.

"Entrepreneurs are persons who seek to generate value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets." – OECD

Policy sharing, policy learning

22 May 2014, Brussels

A day of learning about the latest policy trends and best practices available from all around Europe in 12 topics



This **one-day event** will showcase policy recommendations and lessons learnt resulting from the thematic analysis of the projects.

Thematic specialists and practitioners will present the knowledge acquired through interregional cooperation and discuss the latest policy trends and common challenges identified in European regions.

Interactive workshops and networking opportunities will allow those involved in policymaking to share ideas, get inspired and make new contacts for the future.

Whether you work for a local municipality, regional authority or national ministry; regional agency or European association...as long as you are involved in the policy process, you are welcome to come and share your experiences and leave with good practices you might like to try at home.

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