Regional Innovation Plan of the Region of Western Greece

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Σφάλμα! Δεν έχει οριστεί σελιδοδείκτης.
1. InCompass project presentation

The InCompass project aims to support the self-sustainability of creative incubator units and enable them to develop and share innovative methods to move away from a general dependence on public funding.

Co-financed by the EU’s European Regional Development fund through the INTERREG IVC Programme, the project objective is to inform on and stimulate collaborative development of local, regional, national and EU policy and thereby increase the capacity to create more spaces for experiment, innovation and entrepreneurship in the creative industries, and to enable them to provide a driver for sustainable growth and job creation as stated in the Lisbon Agenda.

1.1. Background

Incubator units for creative industries business start ups provide much needed space and act as vital support mechanisms and catalysts for the development of entrepreneurship and innovation in this sector right across the EU.

The creative industries provide significant employment opportunities, and are now recognized as one of "Europe’s most dynamic sectors, with strong potential to contribute to growth and job creation.

However, most survive only with some Regional Authority funding or subsidy and, with the current public funding cutbacks, many are now facing serious threats to their financial survival and ability to realize their full potential as a force for change and economic development.

While much research in previously funded projects has focused on the role and value of specific activities undertaken within creative incubator units, InCompass will focus exclusively on how they can become independently financially sustainable. Using a number of existing incubator units across the EU as the main study vehicle, the project will identify a number of existing good practices that are already providing levels of financial security and transfer them for collective adoption into, and improvement of, regional policy. The adoption into policy of the combinations of these good practices will potentially offer "total financial sustainability solutions.
1.2. Methodology and results

InCompass Project involves a programme of Study Visits and Reports on good practice; Thematic Seminars to share the findings within the consortium; and Regional Implementation Groups (RIGs) of stakeholders to assess the transferability of good practice and make regional policy recommendations.

For this purpose, three workgroups has been set up to analyse 3 different aspects of the financial sustainability of creative incubator units:

WG 1 – Commercial contextualization

Within creative incubators, the commercial contextualisation of their financing is mainly about finding the optimal balance between keeping fees and rents as low as possible to new incubatees in a very infant stage and gradually increasing fees and rents with their increasing financial capacity with survival and growth. In addition, it is also about renting out services, facilities and spaces to external companies and institutions at commercial fees.

WG 2 – Social contextualization

The contribution of social activities to financial sustainability of creative incubators is mostly founded on forms of informal learning by interchange of information, ideas and knowledge. It is mainly mediation activities that connect incubatees to each other and to stakeholders in the outside world that facilitate informal learning.

WG 3 – Tiers of support, networks and partnerships

The topics of interest for WG3 include all sorts of more or less organized and planned forms of networks and partnerships both within the incubators and with external partners that have favourable effects on the profitability of either individual incubatees or the incubator itself.

From research of the findings of similarly themed projects, and recommendations within the project partnership, suitable creative incubator units for Study visits will be indentified that are most likely to show good practice in areas that can impact positively on financial sustainability and show greatest opportunity for transfer and policy improvement.

These Workgroups were undertaken Study Visits to incubator spaces, and prepared reports on their findings and instances of good practice, where identified. These reports were disseminated at Thematic Seminars held as part of regular Partner Meetings over the lifetime of the project. This will result in the transfer of good practices between partners and implementing actions to improve the financial sustainability of incubator units via the Regional Implementation Groups.
2. Creative industries and Incubators

2.1. Business Incubators

In conditions of global economic recession, intense international competition and changes in production and consumption patterns, business incubators and other sources of financing can help in the effort towards a sustainable development strategy.

The business incubators are a tool for economic growth oriented to accelerate the development process of start-ups through a range of resources and business support services (Best Practice in Business Incubation, Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations, 2001).

Business incubation is a dynamic process to encourage people and particularly young people to start their own innovative business through the provision of an appropriate infrastructure environment and services that promotes entrepreneurship (http://nbia.org/).

The incubators making visible their presence in the 1980s excelled in three basic generations according to the following figure.

**Figure 1 General incubators**

![Diagram showing three generations of business incubators](image)

**Source:** Lalkaka D., “Current Trends in Business Incubation”, Africa Regional Conference in Business Incubation, 2003

In the current reality the incubators in simple form have a consultative role for businesses which are not installed in the incubator and are considered as "virtual" or "incubators without walls". In their full dimension offer additional physical space and other auxiliary
facilities installation (European Union Regional Policy,”The Smart Guide to Innovation-Based Incubators (IBI)”, Feb 2010).

Their services are characterized as low-cost services but high profitability. It is mainly services of housing, library, design, marketing, market research, management accounting, access to finance, legal services, education services, consulting services etc.

Particularly important is the extra effort of incubators to foster networking among enterprises and between enterprises and research-universities, giving the possibility of diffusion of existing and new knowledge on reproduction.

Working in the incubator and the surrounding networks, the incubators’ clients –the start-up innovative enterprises- should "graduate" after a certain period of time, offering the available space to new start-up enterprises. Within this period the incubatees must acquire the necessary skills for their sustainability on the market. Empirical studies have shown that 87% of enterprises that participated in incubators have managed to remain in the market ("Innovation and Entrepreneurship Unit", Lecture 6, University of Macedonia)

2.1.1. Trends – Developments in the field of business incubators

According to Philippe ALBERT and Lynda GAYNOR in the publication "National Contexts, Incubator Families and Trends in Incubation‐Views From Four Countries" the following features represent the evolution in the field of Business Incubators:

1) Increased national and international coverage of Incubators
   More incubators now appear in areas that were difficult to meet them in the past e.g. in rural areas and in small towns: for example two incubators are built on an island in Venice, Italy.

2) Institutionalization και professionalization
   Since the incubators are acceptable tool of economic development have begun and are developing best practices, assessing business ideas and can now bring quality standards. This development is proceeding in parallel with the better recognition (professionalization) of the role of the incubator Manager. An indication for this is the first M.Sc in Incubation Management that started in the United Kingdom.

3) Customizing the model of incubators in all regimes
   Incubator model is extremely flexible and adaptable to many frames and many forms of economy and governance regimes.

4) Diversification and specialization
The incubators are being developed now tend to be more and more specialized. So we can meet Incubator for breeding marine species in Wales, Incubators dedicated to nanotechnology and/or in new alternative energy sources.

5) Competition sharpening

The competition between incubators to attract entrepreneurs now takes place not only in the same area, for example between public or private incubators or between cities and regions, but also between countries.

6) Increased cooperation

The Incubators are forced to cooperate at regional, national or international level, both for their own progress and for their start-up businesses.

7) Increase the diversity of participants

The participants in a business incubator have begun to diverge, with the result to be presented at the incubators the Church, the military, hospitals and even prisons.

8) Incubators have the role of the tomorrow business school

As incubators are strongest and most organized, seems to adopt the role of new, practical school of business tomorrow. The traditional educational system does not seem to be able to change quickly enough to respond to this new challenge, and indeed does not seem to recognize that the incubators are their new "competitors". The responsibility of the traditional education system is limited to training salaried workforce for the simple future.

2.2. Creative – cultural businesses and incubators

Creative Incubators are related to businesses promoting and developing the sectors of creation and culture.

In the Green Paper, in Article 2 of the proposal of the framework program "Creative Europe", the cultural and creative sector is defined as any area where the activities are based on cultural values and/or products which are an artistic and creative expression regardless these activities have or not been driven by the market and regardless the type of structure that exercises them" (European Commission (2011). This definition is based on "model of concentric circles" (Throsby, D., 2001, Economics and Culture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; KEA (2006), the Economy of Culture in Europe, a study prepared for the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture, KEA European Affairs, Brussels, October). According to this model, the more intense is the cultural, creative and artistic features of a product the more can be included in the hard core of the cultural and creative economy.
In the concentric circles 1 and 2 exist purely cultural and creative activities, while the circles 3 and 4 are related activities of the cultural and creative sector. However, if a business activity belongs in any of the concentric cycles there is a common feature concerning income that firstly, it is derived from the exploitation of the creative inspiration of their workforce and secondly, from the exclusive economic management of copyrights by transforming the product from a simple recreational activity or individual activity in industry (Sophia Lazaretou, 2014, 'Smart economy: cultural and creative industries in Greece. May be way out of the crisis? ', Bank of Greece).

The connection between the creative industries and economic development is mainly due to the work of Richard Florida who was the first to put the issue of creativity in the center of the discussions on the drafting regional development. (Jarvis, D., Lambie, H. and Berkeley, N., "Creative Industries and Urban Regeneration", 2008).

According to Florida the key for success of local development policies is summarized in the theory as the "4T" which should exist in a region. These are: the talent, the technology, the tolerance and the territorial advantages of a region (Florida, R. The Rise of the Creative Class, Basic Books, New York.,2002). From the analysis of the four "T" the Florida wants to point that the cities as development strategy would be much more a human climate than a business. In world literature many researchers have found that the creative industry is one of the most promising economic sectors (Marlets,G. Van Woerken,C. , 2007. "Skills and creativity in a cross section of Dutch Cities", 2004); Florida, Richard & Mellander,
Charlotta & Stolarick, Kevin, 2007. "Inside the Black Box of Regional Development - human capital, the creative class and tolerance," The European Commission in September 2012 issued a study in accordance with which Europe is the leader in world trade with 70% of the world market in the field of culture and the creation and contributes 440 billion dollars, i.e. 3%
the European GDP and employs 6 million people and 1 million - self-employed persons (European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document on Competitiveness of the European High-end Industries, SWD(2012) 286 final, 26 September). In additional, the qualitative contribution of cultural and creative enterprises in the European Union appears through the diffusion of the knowledge economy, innovation and social cohesion throughout the economy by transferring the European culture across the globe (Mapping of CCI Export and internationalisation Strategies in EU Member States by Judith Staines and Colin Mercer EENC Report, February 2013).

According to the Porter vital parameter for the field of culture and the creative industry is to establish clusters. The clusters have been defined by the Porter, as "geographic clusters interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, companies related industries and related institutions" (Porter, M. (2005), "Local Clusters in a global economy" in Hartley, creative industries, Blackwell Publishing). The incubators of cultural and creative enterprises can contribute decisively in this direction. What differentiates the creative from the other incubators is an ongoing ability to develop business networks between creative enterprises, creative people and the political environment (Zora Jaurova, V4 creative venture capitalists, "Guide to places and spaces of creative incubation).

Empirical studies have shown the development of former industrial areas with many abandoned buildings. The buildings were magnets for creative activities. In many cases have been used for cultural events, festivals, art galleries, etc. The regeneration is due to modern trends in innovative design principles in urban regeneration and recreation of the regions. Furthermore, due to the particular characteristics of the creative and cultural businesses, the majority of these companies are small and compact with a sense of independence and an important rate of uncertainty and therefore need accessible, flexible and low-cost labor areas and leases. In addition, a viable need is to be in a position well-connected with the various formal and informal networks in order to release the creativity and diffuse information on new trends and opportunities. (Majbritt Chambers and Knud Erik Serup Vejle, 2011, "Venture Capitalists for creative Entrepreneurs), coupled with" - based on 27 case studies).

In other cases it has been observed that the creative incubators have contributed significantly to the development of "spin-off" companies in relevant sectors thus confirming the theory that creativity can be a vehicle for economic development in a wider set of enterprises spreading economic prosperity in the whole economy (Zora Jaurova, V4 creative venture capitalists, "Guide to places and spaces of creative incubation). It has, also, been
observed that regions with a significant degree of concentration cultural and creative enterprises are regions that have a high degree of economic prosperity in the Europe of 27 member states (Priority Sector Report: Creative and Cultural Industries 2010).

The services offered by creative incubators are common with those of incubators in general and provide accommodation, advisory services, training, etc. However, it should be designed in accordance with the current needs of the incubees. An important role for the success of the incubator is the ability to unite the business with the artistic space thus providing the opportunity for new companies to enter and offer innovation in freight value. The creative incubators are a combination of common business incubators and the artistic and creative atelier with a view on the one hand to produce creative ideas and on the other with the ability to provide the best possible commercial exploitation. The objective of the cultural and creative enterprises is to urge the society to produce creative ideas. This opportunity is given within the convergence of enterprises in discrete groups which will lead to economic, social and cultural interaction which will contribute to developing new ideas, concepts and practices making complexes in these innovation centers. In fact, the significance of informal contacts within the incubator and the clusters is increased. This is in accordance with business executives registered in different incubators, which were questioned and stated that the spontaneous daily contacts with the staff and members of the incubator and related businesses have greater added value than the formal and structured activities (Zora Jaurova, V4 creative venture capitalists, "Guide to places and spaces of creative incubation).

Finally, it should be understood that in developing creative areas should be given special attention to the specific characteristics of the region. Creativity could be found in any area, however not all areas can to become creative poles with important competitive advantage. The existence of creative people is a crucial prerequisite. The leaders for the formulation development policy of the region will have to take into account the modern urban development trends and to design a policy framework based on specific characteristics of creative people but also to local and regional policies required to attract them.

2.3. The creative industry in Greece

In Greek reality there is no organized effort to record the cultural and creative sector both at the level of enterprises and incubators. This fact perhaps shows that the sector is in a relatively early stage. However, the last ten years have appeared hopeful messages for its development.

The economic recession has forced the need for flexible forms of cooperation with low cost and high added value in an industry that is by its nature uncertain. Something beautiful is being born in Greece. The answer is the working collectives in which people who share the same principles and values are creating cooperatives. Urban or Social cooperatives
independent of their legal status have a similar mode, common understanding of the meaning of work and the relationships that employees develop between them and with the society.

The associates make islets that allow them not only to survive, but, more importantly, to live with dignity (http://parallhlografos.wordpress.com/).

Below are some examples of working collectives in the field of culture and creation without, however, ignoring the significance of some others.

**The girls love the beavers:** is located in Megalou Vasileiou 46 and Adronikou, Gazi. Is the only collective which describes itself as “female”, in which women architects, librarians, shipbuilders, kindergarteners, sound engineers, activists, dog-mothers, cat-mothers, simple mothers and other many women cooking excellent appetizers for 2 euro, salads for 3 euro and serve coffee and drinks at prices (almost) at cost (http://parallhlografos.wordpress.com/).

**Free software, free workers:** FOSS Office is a network of scientists with various specialties working in the field of information technology and networks in order to stimulate the use free software. The FOSS is aiming to spread solutions open source software in business environments and in education and user familiarity with these solutions. They believe that the savings in solutions of Information and Communications Technologies by adopting open source software can act as an incentive for the spread of knowledge developed around the free software (https://www.fossoffice.com/).

**Collective Planning and Design:** is a multi-disciplinary team that aspires to study and to plan in the public space. The team also is trying to become the connecting mechanism of the citizen with the social institution, local authorities and any institution that related to their projects. Furthermore, there are envisions becoming a hub for exchanging knowledge, questioning, ideas between citizens, experts, decision-makers and any other interested and to become an innovation pole through relevant partnerships with other scientific groups (http://www.cpd-consultants.gr/).

**Radiobubble:** they have created their own stamping ground in 146 Hippokratous road, where they organize exhibitions, projections, discussions and parties until early in the morning. Very recently, the activity became cooperative. The radiobubble is an open web, radio community and because of the culture from which pervaded, with difficulty can be set in the conventional way "positions" and "roles". It is much more than just a team that they do journalism: they are the innovators in what was called “citizens journalism” and we owe that to them since information travels abroad in the vast cyberspace (http://www.radiobubble.gr).
In addition, the current situation in Greece has created significant initiatives for the creation of incubators and business clusters

**Romance:** is a member of the Cultural Organization BIOS launched the action in 2001, recommending the Athens public the first audio-visual festival with emphasis on electronic music, the BIOS01. Two festivals after the first one and having need for a fixed base, the team activated the building of 84 Piraeus Street, creating a completely new for the Athens area data and proposing actions introduced in public urban culture. Located in the historic center of Athens is consisting both an incubator and office spaces for new businesses in the creative and cultural center, open to the public, with a daily program of events. The project operates in the wider creative space including architecture, as graphic design, design, fashion, photography, publications, art events, and new media and new technologies etc. ([http://www.romantso.gr/](http://www.romantso.gr/)).

**Incubator View:** It is an incubator that supports new enterprises in the sectors of culture and creativity in the city of Athens and represents a major initiative of the Athens Chamber of Industry and Commerce within the social recovery effort of the municipality. The planned actions consist of development of tourism and the promotion of Athens, with axes the conference tourism and the travel Weekend ([http://www.romantso.gr/](http://www.romantso.gr/)).

**Incubator Techopolis:** is an integral part of Technopolis and its mission is to identify innovative business ideas and to support their commercialization effectively based on the interest of the shareholders of the company. The incubator focuses in the field of Information Technologies and communications, as well as in other relevant fields and is directly linked to the park, utilizing existing networks and partnerships. The incubator offers the scope for developing and implementing business ideas and technologies, which connects with the Technopolis, while the new companies enjoying the benefits of their location in a dynamic working environment ([http://www.technopolis.gr/pages/incubator](http://www.technopolis.gr/pages/incubator)).

**Orange Grove:** It is an initiative of the embassy of the Netherlands in Athens and inspiration of Ambassador Jan Versteeg, in order to help the Greek young people who want to try their luck in entrepreneurship. Closing a one year life in Orange Grove have been included 47 startups from 90 ambitious entrepreneurs less than 35 years old. This means that they had free workplace (light, water, telephone and Internet) but something more important, as explained the ambassador: the opportunity all these dynamic and optimistic brains, to exchange ideas and to use the coherence and the support of the entire group for their benefit ([http://www.kathimerini.gr/785245/article/oikonomia/epixeirhseis/ta-prwta-gene8lia-enos--portokalewna-eykairwn](http://www.kathimerini.gr/785245/article/oikonomia/epixeirhseis/ta-prwta-gene8lia-enos--portokalewna-eykairwn)).

**Incubator industrial park of Rethymno:** It is an effort that has been undertaken in the industrial park of Rethymno to create an incubator. It aims to be an incubator that play an important role in the development of creative and cultural businesses, promotes the
clustering SMEs and will highlight innovative ideas with commercial value (http://www.vioparet.gr).

**Corallia:** is a Greek initiative cluster based in Athens. Corallia has already developed and coordinates three technology clusters with increased specialization in Greece, and in particular the gi-Cluster (Technologies and creative content), the mi-Cluster (Systems and Applications Nano/Micro) and si-Cluster (space technologies and applications). In addition Corallia tries to contribute to innovation through the three InnoHubs operating at strategic positions in the capital and in the region:

- α1•innohub (Focusing on innovation and high technology)
- α2•innohub *(Node networking, innovation and high technology)*
- π1•innohub *(Bridge in high technology, research and innovation in Western Greece* (http://www.corallia.org).

Corallia has recently joined the internationally recognized network of European Business Innovation Centers EBN and acquired the certification of excellence EU|BIC which is the reference standard for innovative companies in Europe. As it has been notified it is very important to be a part of the EBN (European Business and Innovation Centers Network) which is part of a network with a history 30 years and 160 Business Innovation Centers, incubators and accelerators certified quality and 100 other cooperating bodies (http://www.kathimerini.gr/787170/article/oikonomia/epixeirhseis/kentro-kainotomias-eyrwpaikhs-anagnwrishes-to-corallia).

**The Exarchia of a book:** The high degree of concentration publishers and booksellers in Exarchia and, at the same time, the development of many places like taverns, restaurants, bars and entertainment (theaters, cinemas) have created a distinct domestic market in the region, which is aimed primarily at young age visitors and residents, who featuring a developed cultural capital increase the demand for cultural goods, such as the books. (http://creativegreece.net ; Vassilis Audikos, Publications Epikentro, 2014 "The cultural and creative industries in Greece").

**CulturePolis:** It is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, which operates mainly in Europe and Mediterranean basin with a view to contributing through research, analysis, and dialog to target actions to information and awareness and common - in various sectors of the economy but also in creative economy and entrepreneurship. Greece is registered in Corfu and deals with issues which reflect the cultural identity of each region (http://www.culturepolis.org/).

**Creativity Platform:** is a non-profit-making collective figure which wants to become an interdisciplinary platform for exchanging ideas, actions, research and applications around the themes of "creative capital" and the "creative economy" in the city of Thessaloniki and
In the Greek area general. Main goal of creativity platform is to provide the platform to activate this dialog in the city of Thessaloniki and to promote projects, actions and applications at fields meeting of creative communities, professional bodies, the business world and policy making (http://www.incubator.vioparet.gr/).

2.4. Region of Western Greece

In the Region of Western Greece has not been observed a consistent effort recording and valuating the industry. Moreover, in the region there is neither an incubator of cultural and creative enterprises nor an organized consultancy effort towards networking and synergy issues within the industry. There are only individuals trying on specific issues which could be identified.

At the level of an incubator and organized consulting services can only be identified the cases of the scientific Park of Patras incubator and the Corallia incubator.

**Incubator of Patras Science Park**: The Science Park of Patra was established in accordance with the model of "incubator" for new businesses based on technology. The main purpose is to provide high-quality infrastructure, as well as cooperation in appropriate economic and social conditions that will support and promote the creation, operation and development of innovative enterprises through procedures spin-off/spin-out and the cooperation between university, research centers and industry. For more than 15 years, the Science Park supports the development of innovative enterprises, which are based on technology in various sectors such as biotechnology, clean energy and other industrial technologies, thus contributing to the knowledge-based economy in Region. Today, the Patras Science Park is the home of 24 companies and organizations, which employ about 120 people in areas such as engineering, chemistry, physics, and medicine. These companies have been supplied with a blend of high quality areas, offices, technical infrastructure and support administrative and business services (http://www.psp.org.gr/).

**Corallia - p1 innohub**: Operates from 2011 as "bridge" in high technology, research and innovation. The p1 innohub helps accelerate the development of innovative companies in western Greece. Features infrastructures and services aimed at "start-up" and "early-stage" businesses, while at the same time, large companies can be installed in p1 innohub, gaining access to the markets of Western Greece and talented scientific potential of the region. The spirit interaction and networking is diffused at InnoCafé, which is at the disposal of guests and employees p1 innohub offering coffee, traditional Greek and Mediterranean cuisine as well as specialised catering upon request. The p1 innohub also has a modern, high-fashion, design and equipment exhibition space to display innovative products and technological advances. In Inno on-Display there are 15 positions exhibits, touch screens and information...
material of the products of its members for the viewing needs and promotions business, becoming important attraction companies seeking partnerships [http://www.corallia.org/el/activity-fields/innohubs/646-p1-innohub.htm].

In the Region of Western Greece there is strong cultural and creative activity which is being specialized in specific themes.

In particular,

**Art in Progress:** Art in Progress is a civil non-profit company dealing with culture, which was founded and operates in Patra from June 2011. Art in Progress focuses on implementation of art, cultural and educational events with the primary aim the acquaintance with the modern artistic creation of public of Patras and to configure the appropriate conditions for the cultural upgrade of the city.

Through the emergence of modern art events, Art in Progress also looks forward to the wider economic and social development of the country. An integral part of its mission is the initiatives that aimed at the training of children, young people and of all citizens. [http://www.artinprogress.eu/us/].

**PATRAS ART FAIR:** This is a great artistic organization of ZERVAS ART. The institution of international painting is an important artistic initiative that has made Patra an international arts center in more than 120 countries. Approximately 200 Art universities and more than 2,000 painters cooperate and participate in a great artistic organization, which is now an international artistic power. [http://www.pelop.gr/?page=article&srv=14&DocID=201991]

**Local quality pact Aitolias:** created by enterprises in the sector of rural tourism in the area of the mountains of Naupaktias under the Community initiative LEADER II, as well as other businesses in the region and the business carried out in the framework of the Community initiative LEADER +. Today the Local quality pact Aitolias has 29 members who are involved with companies in rural tourism such as hostels, traditional tavernas and cafes, as well as enterprises of alternative forms of tourism (kayaking, mountain biking, rafting, cannoing) [http://www.agro-tour.net].

**The Carnival of Patra:** is the largest carnival event in Greece. It has 180 years of history. The Carnival of Patras is not only the great parade of last Sunday but a whole event including dances, parades (involving 40,000 people dressed up for carnival), Hunting the hidden treasure (with participation of about 90 crews), Children Carnival (with participation of about 12,000 children), street theater, exhibitions, films, Panhellenic Festival of amateur satire theatre etc. Now the organization is being undertaken only by the Municipality of Patras via the Non for profit Corporation “Patrino Carnival” which monitors also the carnival workshop. This workshop is unique in Greece and is a place where the glorious tanks of Kink
carnival and associates as well as other constructions which decorate the town during the Carnival manufactured are being manufactured (http://carnivalpatras.gr/).

**Dreamland Festival in Ancient Olympia:** Like the famous Tomorrowland and other similar events during the basic three-day festival are involved at least 30 leading Greek DJ’S and producers of Dance music. The DJ’S and producers are surrounded by Dance show and various other events involving actors, clowns, stilt walkers. Guests at the festival have the opportunity to learn more on voluntary action and to take part in interactive workshops on ecology, art and philosophy, as well as in sporting activities at Alfeios river (kayaking, rafting, hydrospeed, etc) (http://www.monopoli.gr/afieromata/item/129495-Dreamland-Festival-sthn-Archaia-Olympia).

**International Film Festival Olympia for Children and Young People:** It was founded in 1997 and is the only institution in the field of theater for children and young people who work in Greece. The philosophy, goals and objectives of the programs are carried out by “To Neaniko Plano” in cooperation of the Prefecture of Ilia. Then the festival was actively supported by the Ministry of Culture and other entities representing the cinema and the education. The International Film Festival Olympia for Children and Young People is being organized every year during the first week of December at Pyrgos, the capital of the Prefecture of Ilia at the Region Western Greece. In recent years, the number of attendants are more than 20,000 per year, while more than 250 children and young people being actively involved, on a daily basis with the structures and activities of the Festival (http://www.fringenet.gr/community/profile/2104).

In addition, the region has a range of products and companies related to the field of creation which demonstrate the cultural heritage of the region (http://www.agro-tour.net/web).

In particular,

1. **Folk Art Workshops - Traditional Products**
   - Folk woodcut workshops
   - Traditional Wineries
   - Traditional bakeries
   - Laboratory creation pipes

2. **Local Products**

**LOCAL PRODUCTS FROM ACHAIA:**
In Achaia Mountain there is livestock production: **livestock, milk production** and feta cheese.

- Kalavrita: There are three production units for standardized cheese products and another one in Soudena. In addition there are two production units for standardized pasta and units for ostrich-farming.
- In Kallifono there is frog farming unit.
- The Union of the region of Egiaila with organic extra virgin olive oil
- There are: 1 Protected Designation of Origin wine (Patra), 3 wines with Designation of Origin Controlled (production of Patras, Moschato Rio, Moschato Patras) and 7 local wines.
- The Aegialia has approximately 25-30% of the Greek Corinthian currant production which has been identified as a product protected by designation of origin.

**AITOLOAKARNANIAS EELS**: THE Lagoon of Messolongi is ideal place for many living species of eel (Anquilla). Especially the eels of Messolongi considered by the tastier of Europe and are among the most popular delicacy.

**AITOLOAKARNANIAS CHESTNUT:**
In the municipalities Apodotias Platanou and Domnistas there is rich vegetation from chestnut trees. The chestnut is a local product in the region from which it is prepared the well-known sweet chestnut.

**BOTARGO**: One of the most representative and most precious of Greek products of hydrated world, is the botargo of Messolongi because of its distinguish district taste, aroma and delicate flavor. It is being prepared with traditional technical and not dried.

Having major archaeological sites and museums, the region is a center of international attraction by contributing to tourism but also in other development activities in the field of creation and culture ([http://www.agro-tour.net/web](http://www.agro-tour.net/web)).

Indicatively,
- Archeological Place and the museum of Ancient Olympia
- Ancient Leontio
- Mycenaean Cemetary
- Neolithic settlement Sylivainas
- Ancient Aigeira
- Archeological Space of Psofidos, Ancient Theater Macineias
- Naupaktos castle
• Temple of Poseidon at Ancient Molikreio
• Archeological Place in the lower Basilica
• Remnants of the Temple Diana convent Trimitou
• The Temple of Lefrias Atrmidos in Kalidona

The tourist approach and the territorial diversity of the region contribute and offer for a plethora of activities (http://www.agro-tour.net/web).

Some cases are,
• Thermal Baths Agrapidokampou
• Spring baths at Stachi
• Climbing Field of Barasova
• Kayak - rafting - Cycling in river Ladonas
• Agrotourism Farm Trikorfoy
• Horse Riding in the municipality of Farres
• Path to Niohori - Palionexouo
• Shelters at Helmos and Panaxaikos
• Route to the Canyon "Always raining"
• Hand gliding center in Etyloakarnania
• Cycling Route on Arakinthos mountain

2.4.1. Conclusions

The existence of a number of facts like the cultural heritage of the region, the rich and varied landscape, the important number universities- research institutes and the intense activity in culture and creation, have not been able to allow the Region highlight and develop the dynamic industry of creativity. The central objective should be the strengthening of the cooperation with a view to the development, promotion and commercialization of innovation. Attracting creative people and creating relationships-cluster networks among key actors at the local system of innovation are the keys to a sustainable innovative entrepreneurship.

2.5. European experience

In accordance with the "Spica Directory" (Science Park and innovation centers Association’s Directory), in 2010 there were 1390 business incubators in Europe of 27 member states with a total sheltered 24,411 companies and 172,128 employees. Expressed as averages the European reality is formed at 51.5 incubators with 904 sheltered companies (incubatees) and 6.375 employees per member state presenting however significant deviation and variation between the 27 member states. In the first place is Germany with 375 incubators and
follows England with 220, Belgium with 131 and Poland with 127. It is worth mentioning the fact that Germany and the UK as a whole hold 43% of the total number of incubators of E-27, hosting 56% of all enterprises and employing 68% of all workers. Greece occupies the 11th position with 5 incubators that host 44 companies and 140 employees. This image shows a situation in which Greece is in a low position compared to the European average but has become the relative weighting basis of population. The last in ranking is Malta, following Estonia and Luxembourg, with just one incubator, 4 companies and 6 employees (http://www.spica-directory.net/).
3. Develop questionnaires for business incubators

3.1. Analysis of questionnaires

The region of Western Greece has conducted a research using questionnaires, in order to highlight the existing mode of incubators and to diagnose the opinions/thoughts of stakeholders at regional and national level. Stakeholders were grouped into four main categories to facilitate analysis: companies who are integrated into incubators, public policy makers, associations facilitating entrepreneurship (ie chambers of commerce) and research entities. To each category has been sent a questionnaire properly configured to the particular characteristics of each group.

Companies which are integrated in an incubator (Incubatees): During the survey 28 companies responded, 14 from Patra, 6 from Thessaloniki, 7 from Athens and one from Crete. In one of the questions the degree of satisfaction (7 steps between dissatisfied and very satisfied) of the enterprises from the provision of specific services and infrastructures was requested. For better understanding these specific services and infrastructures were grouped into four main categories: infrastructure (8 questions), support services (15), cooperation (6) and external environment (15). Another question was on the selection 10 out of a total 45 services which incubatees consider that it are important for the functioning of the incubator and need further improvement.

Policy makers: The questionnaire consisted of 11 questions. 8 in total public bodies responded: the Region of Western Greece, the Intermediate Managing Authority of the Region of Western Greece, the Municipality of Egialia, the Municipality of Agrinio, the Municipality of Patras, the Development Company of the Region of Western Greece, the Municipality of Sacred city Messolongi and the Decentralized Administration of eloponnese, Western Greece and Ionian Sea.

Associations entrepreneurship: The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions and sent electronically and via fax to a total of 17 Associations of entrepreneurship of which 6 chambers of Commerce and 3 professional associations responded. Concerning the geographical distribution of participants 5 were originated by the Western Greece Region and 4 from the rest of Greece.

Research entities: the questionnaire consisted of 18 questions and was sent to 30 research entities. 20 replies were received from the research entities from which 19 were located in the geographical region of Western Greece and one in Macedonia. In more detail the replies
received were: 6 from the IEXMH, 11 from University of Patras, 1 from the Computer Technology Institute and Press (CTI), 1 from Research Committee of the University of Patras and 1 from the University of Macedonia.

Indicatively some of the results of the research are shown below:

(A) Opinions of business executives working in incubatees

Diagram 1 Infrastructure of Western Greece

There is relative satisfaction (taking into account that the neutral point is at 23 %) for the infrastructure with all the "satisfied" being almost 45.5 % while the corresponding figure in National level is 55.5 %.
Relatively small business satisfaction for the support services with the "satisfied" being just three points higher than the "dissatisfied". Throughout the investigation, the “satisfied” level was respectively 52%
Diagram 2 Support Services Western Greece

Relative satisfaction rate of 44% with an average satisfaction in National level 50%
In the region there is low level of satisfaction 43% whilst the whole survey has 50%.

**Need to further improvement by category in Western Greece**
## Table 1: Major services requiring need for further improvement in Western Greece

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Degree need improvement</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>External Environment</td>
<td>Negative / 50%</td>
<td>Very Large</td>
<td>6,72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Support</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Negative / 43%</td>
<td>Very Large</td>
<td>5,88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State support</td>
<td>External Environment</td>
<td>Negative / 50%</td>
<td>Very Large</td>
<td>5,88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing (advertising) and sales offices</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Negative / 50%</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>5,04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development cooperation within the incubators</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Positive / 64%</td>
<td>Medium to Large</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative flexibility for quick and accurate decisions</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Positive / 64%</td>
<td>Medium to Large</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access by investors</td>
<td>External Environment</td>
<td>Positive / 50%</td>
<td>Medium to Large</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting services</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Neutral / 40%</td>
<td>Medium to Large</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Positive / 57%</td>
<td>Medium to Large</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for launching start-up companies</td>
<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Positive and Negative / 43%</td>
<td>Medium to Large</td>
<td>4,20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(B) Views of Policy makers, of Chambers of Commerce and of research institutions in relevant questions:

**Question:** Do you think that there is a need to create (new) incubators in Western Greece Region? If yes which of the following areas do you think that should be developed incubators?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy makers</th>
<th>Associations Entrepreneurship</th>
<th>Research entities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 100%</td>
<td>Yes: 100%</td>
<td>Yes: 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Pie charts showing percentages of answers for different institutions.](image)

**Question:** Will the institution you represent participate in an effort to establish a common policy for innovation and the creation of incubators in the region? If "YES" how?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy makers</th>
<th>Associations Entrepreneurship</th>
<th>Research entities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 100%</td>
<td>YES: 100%</td>
<td>YES: 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar charts showing percentages of answers for different institutions.](image)
3.2. Conclusions

Some important conclusions from the analysis of the questionnaires are,

**Business incubators**

**Opportunities**

- Infrastructure
- Basic training
- Providing motives for individual initiatives
- Scientific cooperation with universities
- Accessibility
- Participation in public procurement and research

**Weaknesses**

- Financial support
- State support
- Business Support
- Advisory services and particularly in marketing (advertising) and sales services
- Development of cooperation inside the incubators
- Access by investors
- Administrative flexibility for quick and accurate decisions

**Policy makers**

**Opportunities**

- Good understanding of the action of incubators in Western Greece,
- Need to create new incubator,
- Important field of action the agricultural sector,
- Development of actions for the promotion and the general development of incubators,
- Participation in the effort for a common policy on innovation and the creation of an incubator in the region of Western Greece

**Weaknesses**

- Moderate perception/knowledge of incubators,
- Moderate perception of the importance of the cultural sector and creation sector and the social economy in modern economy
**Associations entrepreneurship - Commerce**

**Opportunities**

- Familiarity with the concept of the incubator
- Need for new incubators
- Considerable scope for the agricultural sector, telecommunications and information technology
- Connection of incubators with the meaning of innovation
- Positive response on the effort for a common policy for innovation and creating incubator.

**Weaknesses**

- Non-participation of the members of the chambers of Commerce in business incubators
- Non-effective operation of incubators in the region as tool for economic development
- Lack of know-how on the management of incubators
- Lack of readability of the cultural and creative sector

**Research entities**

**Opportunities**

- Familiarity with the concept of an incubator
- Need for new incubators
- Determination of several sectors like the creative and cultural businesses
- Positive response on the effort for a common policy for innovation and creating incubator
- Existence of a stable and long-term cooperation between incubators and the research institutions
- Partnerships with technology parks and innovation centers for technology transfer

**Weaknesses**

- The lack of cooperation between incubators and research bodies (from the side of the research entities)
4. Regional Innovation Plan

4.1. Introduction

The Regional Innovation plan in the region Western Greece to create a business incubator aims to determine the necessary procedures and actions to be taken by all relevant stakeholders, for the successful completion of this project.

All relevant stakeholders including the Region of Western Greece, the Municipalities of Patras, of Agrinio, of Pirgos, the Municipal and regional theaters of Patras and Agrinion, The chambers of Axaia, Ili and Etoloakarnania, the Patras University, the Science Park of Patras and the Foundation for Research and Technology/Institute of Chemical Engineering Sciences (ICE-HT), the TEI of Western Greece and University of Patra, in one hand are the critical mass of knowledge and experience required and, on the other hand will play a key role by contributing the maximum for the completion of this project. All the representatives of all the relevant stakeholders form the Regional Innovation Group (RIG).

In this plan, first will be described the proposed mode of operation of the Regional Innovation Group so as to enable the whole administration to be flexible and effective.

Then, based on the findings of the project INCOMPASS and in particular the conclusions for the characteristics required for a successful incubator, the plan will attempt an approach for evaluating and prioritizing these characteristics based on the needs and characteristics of the cultural creative enterprises. In this direction will be presented the recommended actions for how these characteristics could be developed for the incubator of the Region of Western Greece.

Finally, the Regional Innovation Plan of the Region of Western Greece will propose a one-year time plan of critical actions and activities in order the incubator to be successfully concluded.

4.2. Regional Innovation Group in Western Greece Region

The Regional Innovation Group is the body responsible for monitoring and implementing the Regional Innovation Plan in the Region of Western Greece to create an incubator. It is composed of representatives of all relevant stakeholders of the region.

The operation of the Regional Innovation Group which aims to develop and implement an objective, reliable and valid mechanism for creating and monitoring the Regional Innovation Plan in the Region of Western Greece will be based in three directions:

- Recognition of the objectives and the problems for the successful outcome of the project
• To ensure the effective and within the time and financial limits implementation of the actions to be performed.
• To ensure the achievement of the objectives of the action.

The proposed monitoring mechanism has the following phases (Stages):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRST STAGE</td>
<td>Setting goals or Identifying and defining problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND STAGE</td>
<td>Suggestions of members of regional innovation group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD STAGE</td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOURTH STAGE</td>
<td>Implement the action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIFTH STAGE</td>
<td>Evaluation of the process and feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the first phase, the Regional Innovation Group will define the objectives which will seek to achieve and the problems which will solve in terms of creating an incubator. A very important point is to describe all the above with clarity, as far as the content is concerned, realism, hierarchy, as far as the importance is concerned and consequence as far as the overall goals of the Region Western Greece are concerned. Then, based on the results of the first phase all stakeholders will have to discuss the proposals with the aim to reach and address the goals and problems, respectively. Through a conciliatory process and discussion and based on the following figure decisions making will take place about what specific actions will take place in the direction of creating an incubator.
Using the data collected in the first and in the second phase and by identifying and analyzing the alternative actions, will be selected these actions which reflect the strategy of the Region Western Greece and which can both highlight the innovation and to lay the foundations for the sustainable development of an incubator.

With this approach the operating mechanism of the Regional Innovation Group reaches the next stage, the implementation of an action plan that will implement the decisions taken. In this direction all the relevant stakeholders will contribute, based on their know-how, and implement, based on the human, technological and financial resources that have, the actions assigned to them (undertook) during the phase of the decision-making process aiming at promoting innovation and the creation of an incubator.

The last phase of the monitoring and enforcement mechanism includes the evaluation of the action plans of the Regional Innovation Plan in the Region of Western Greece to create an incubator and the reloading of the Regional Innovation Group with information, corrections and improvements for the next phases. In this way the assessment of actions will be:

- Control of the design process to the achievement of the objective/s.
- Positioning and/or replacing the plan in relation to objective/s.
- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses and comparative view of individual results.
- Monitoring of physical and financial progress of Action Plans.
- Composition and reform of proposals.

In addition, apart from the proposed monitoring mechanism the existence of **horizontal procedures** is proposed which will govern all actions in order to ensure the successful completion of the project of creating a business incubator in the Region of Western Greece.

Regional Innovation Plan of the Region of Western Greece 31
The proposed horizontal monitoring procedures for the Regional Innovation Plan of the Region of Western Greece to create an incubator are:

**The procedure for managing risks, and**

**Review the Programming Process**

**The procedure for managing risks**

The procedure of risk management is a tool for identification, recording, evaluation and management of major risks which may appear during the implementation of a project and which may act inhibitory to the achievement of expected results.

Especially for the Regional Innovation Plan in the Region of Western Greece to create a business incubator this methodological tool will be used during the implementation of actions/Action Plans, both for the timely provision of the problems which may appear and for managing them.

The steps of the procedure "risk management" are as follows:

**Step 1: Identify risks**

The identification of risks that emerge during the implementation of the Regional innovation Plan to create an incubator is based on the greatest possible understanding of the real requirements of Action Plans and individual objectives that have been set.

Below are listed some indicative risk categories that may appear:

- Variations in time schedules on the physical and economic object of the Action Plans.
- Failure to carry out the work by the entities involved.
- Difficulty in coordination of the entities involved.

**Step 2: risk assessment**

The risk assessment is at the stage of identification and aims to determine the probability of appearance and to assess the gravity of appearance. For the evaluation of each risk identified shall be taken into account two dimensions:

- The probability of the occurrence of the risk (e.g. almost certain, likely, unlikely, very unlikely).
- The quality, which refers to the degree to effect the desired results (e.g. low, medium, high).
For the systematic capture of risks it is proposed the development of a Summary Table which will be describing the nature of risks, the likelihood of their occurrence and the degree of impact on objectives and stakeholders.

In the table below a sample model is given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the risk</th>
<th>Probability of occurrence</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Involved entities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variations in time schedules</td>
<td>(Scale: almost certain, likely, unlikely, very unlikely)</td>
<td>(Scale: Low, Medium, High)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak coordination of the involved entities</td>
<td>(Scale: almost certain, likely, unlikely, very unlikely)</td>
<td>(Scale: Low, Medium, High)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 3: risk management**

This stage concerns the management of risks which may appear in the implementation of the Regional Innovation Plan for creating incubator and refers to the efforts to reduce the probability and/or reduction of negative consequences.

The risk management operations can be divided into two main categories:

- Preventive actions, aimed to minimize and/or eliminate the probability of risk or minimize the severity.
- Actions for manage the risk, which must be performed if the risk eventually appear (e.g. alternative plans).

**Step 4: Systematic risk overview**

This stage refers to a systematic and reliable monitoring of all potential sources of danger that may appear during the implementation of the Regional Innovation Plan and provides the ability to examine and control the implementation of the action plans of the Regional Innovation Plan, the early diagnosis and treatment of risks and deviations from the original objective.

The systematic risk review is a process which would be a good idea to take place continuously, from the beginning of the implementation of actions associated with the
Regional Innovation Plan of Western Greece Region to create incubator and until the completion of the whole project.

**Review of the Programming Process**

The implementation of the Regional Innovation Plan to Region of Western Greece to create a business incubator is not a static process. It is a dynamic approach and there is a probability during the implementation to be reviewed. For example, it could be proven the need to create another incubator with a different object theme or the need to improve existing in parallel with the creation of a new or even could be identified the need not to create a new incubator but to develop further the existing ones.

The review process is linked to the results obtained from the monitoring process of the physical, temporal and financial progress of the implementation of the actions as well as by identifying, recording and analysis of the risks presented.

The review process may be referred to the following parameters:

- Timetables.
- Objectives and expected results.
- Budgets.
- Actions for the implementation of the operations.

In this context, it is important that the Regional Innovation Group, as the responsible body for the monitoring of the implementation of the actions set out in the Regional Innovation Plan of Western Greece Region for creating business incubator, will respond rapidly to the needs for revision, customizing them to the new conditions.

For the smooth functioning of the Regional Innovation Group it is suggested the monthly meeting of the members where decisions will be taken and the landmarks required will be placed for the smooth evolution of actions of the Regional Innovation Plan of the Region of Western Greece to create a business incubator, until the next meeting.

### 4.3. The correlation of good practices of Incompass project with the characteristics of the Region of Western Greece to create a business incubator

During the implementation of the project Incompass a total of 29 visits to business incubators incurred in seven regions throughout Europe. The cases of incubators visited show a wide variety in size, ownership, the object but also how they were funded.

An examination of their characteristics shows that a first distinction could be made between the incubators that focus on creative industries and their object is design, the fashion and
the arts in general, and the incubators that are directed to technological creative industries and the information technology and the development of electronic games. In addition, the examination of 29 incubators showed that the first category of incubators were housed in old industrial buildings in urban areas while the second category usually housed in newly constructed buildings toward the end of the geographical urban areas. Yet, this second category of incubators is also associated with institutions of higher education and science parks, or part thereof. However all the above are not the rule as there are incubators that are placed outside of these 2 categories.

The project Incompass examined good practices (characteristics) of 29 incubators in order to reach the best practices (optimal characteristics) of them. For the identification of the best practices the project Incompass used 5 criteria for assessing good practices collected from visits to a total of 29 incubators, so that after the evaluation these practices to be the best practices (characteristics) which could a, existing or under creation, business incubator have.

These criteria were:

- The practices can be transferred from one case study to another.
- These practices can ultimately generate revenue.
- The risk that exists in the implementation of a practice is clear and can be treated
- The practices contribute to launch or develop a regional business incubator system
- The practices can affect local and regional factors of public policy making

The assessment of good practices, based on the above criteria, has led to the emergence of 16 best practices (Table below). Best practices were grouped into three categories highlighting 3 dimensions: a) Commercial, b) Social and c) Networking. Through the Incompass project it was found that although the social dimension of best practices (characteristics) of a business incubator strengthens the interest for new businesses ultimately does not promote and is not playing an important role in sustainability of an incubator.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Group</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Dimension</td>
<td>1. Rent out workspaces to non-incubatees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Rent out spaces to third parties and for events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. EU-funded projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Financial benefits from public authorities, other than subsidy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Equity sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Market incubatees’ knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Market incubator’s knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Dimension</td>
<td>8. Relation to neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking and Cooperation</td>
<td>9. Relation to higher education institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>10. Involve alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. The Prince’s Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Focus on workspaces and ‘outsource’ support program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Pre-incubation and raising awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Mix of start-ups and more mature firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. Cluster development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The working group of the Region of Western Greece for the program Incompass evaluated these 16 best practices of the program in conjunction with the characteristics of the Region of Western Greece. The objective of this exercise was to identify these practices which are the important characteristics of a business incubator that will be developed in the Region of Western Greece.

For the purpose of evaluation, the working group initially assessed with a scale of 1 - 5 (small, small significance, moderate significance, great significance, necessary) the significance of each best practice taking into account both the characteristics of the Region of Western Greece and whether it is possible to achieve and to operate each best practice by one or more entities which mainly come from the public sector and which are or will be the administrative and operational bodies of an existing or under creation business incubator, respectively. Simultaneously, after this evaluation, the actions that could be pursued, in order to achieve the development of each one of the best practices, were prepared and are presented below.
The results of these findings should be taken into account by the Regional Innovation Group of the Region of Western Greece in the application and implementation of the Regional Innovation Plan to create a business incubator in the Region of Western Greece. The results of the evaluation of the 16 best practices and the proposed actions in order to be achieved in the Region of Western Greece are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice 1/16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rent out workspaces to non-incubatees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

Several times the incubators rent their workplaces inside the incubator to persons or institutions for short periods of time (hours, days, weeks or months)

**Significance**

Small

**Proposed actions**

The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

1) Promotion of this service through the website of the incubator
2) Promotion via social networks and media
3) Special prices for young people, particularly students
**Practice 2/16**  
Rent out spaces to third parties and for events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Several times the incubators rent workplaces for events (exhibitions, Social Events, workshops, speeches with varied content)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The actions that could be made to develop this practice depend to a large extent to the characteristics of the space in which the business incubator is being housed. Thus, depending on the building and its characteristics the following actions could be proposed:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) The promotion of the Incubator’s space for exhibitions of all types of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) The promotion of the Incubator’s space for social events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Renting the Incubator’s space for workshops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Practice 3/16**

**EU-funded projects**

**Description**

The financing of business incubators from EU funds, namely the ERDF, the ESF or the Lifelong Learning is a very common practice which contributes to the development of incubators since it is acting as an additional tool towards sustainability.

**Significance**

Necessary

**Proposed actions**

The Region of Western Greece and the relevant stakeholders have special know-how in the field of programs and their funding from the EU funds. During the 4 Programming Periods they participated in a very large number of European projects. Nevertheless, the actions that could be implemented in order to further develop this practice are:

- Continuous monitoring of all programs (Inter-regional cooperation, cross-border cooperation, the HORIZON 2020)
- Continuous networking of all stakeholders with old and new potential partners in order to maximize the chances of success.
- Try networking with other incubators in order to develop projects from calls aimed at further development of the “Incubator” concept.
- Increase the submissions of projects proposals to be financed.
Practice 4/16
Financial benefits from public authorities, other than subsidy

Description
Some incubators have managed to reclaim and achieve either their own financial facility or for the businesses located within them. A key example is the reduced taxation. In addition, the granting of an abandoned building which after an intervention can accommodate a business incubator, could be proposed.

Significance
Low or in the case of buildings’ granting Important

Proposed actions
The financial allowances from the public authorities are a very difficult task for the Greek reality as fiscal policy is being determined by the central administration. At the same time, any effort for granting buildings to individuals would take place with private market criteria and not with any public allowances. Building or space granting could take place only in cases where the proposed incubator would have as shareholders the relevant stakeholders themselves.
### Practice 5/16

**Equity sharing**

#### Description

The case of an Incubator acquiring shares of the companies which are located in the Incubator is a form of trust and confidence the incubator is showing to its companies. The incubator i.e. buys shares in a newly created company to share in future profits.

#### Significance

Low

#### Proposed actions

Given that the proposed business incubator that will be created at the Region of Western Greece will have as shareholders all the relevant regional stakeholders and logically a public - state character, it is difficult this feature (practice) to be adopted.

In addition, equity sharing carries a risk which the business incubator would not like to undertake. Finally, the participation of incubators in equity sharing from new businesses that are housed in them is very likely to lead to a subjective selection. This process, however, opposes to the philosophy of a business incubator where the start-up companies are selected through objective criteria.
### Practice 6/16
**Market incubatees’ knowledge**

#### Description
Some incubators sell the skills, knowledge and know-how of the companies that located in them. They are trying, in a way; assist them to liaise with potential customers using the size, the experience and their contacts. All of the above are implemented against a specific fee or a percentage of the remuneration of the company.

#### Significance
Moderate

#### Proposed actions
The actions that could be undertaken to develop this practice include:

1. Networking the incubator with the market
2. Creating Products ‐ Services for sale (Branding)
3. To avoid from both sides (incubator ‐ incubatee) develop an employer ‐ employee relationship
4. Support from the incubator during the process of sales
Practice 7/16
Market incubator’s knowledge

Description
In addition to the knowledge, skills and expertise of incubatees, incubators often trade their own know how and experience. A program for Branding or for sales methodology or crisis management that an incubator could have developed might be promoted and traded to both to private individuals and businesses as well as to the educational and university Institutions.

Significance
Moderate

Proposed actions
The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

• Expertise in very specific thematic objects necessary for a large number of enterprises (for example: education methodology for the increase of information, entrepreneurship skill development for young people). This action could be an important factor developing revenue and would be particularly attractive since it combines the theoretical background with the real needs of start-up enterprises

• Networking with other more developed incubators from abroad in order to transfer both to companies within the incubator and throughout the rest of the market the expertise in various topics
### Practice 8/16

**Relation to neighborhood**

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>The business incubator in addition to the financial component contains features that enhance the social dimension. If an incubator can document that confronts unemployment, increases social cohesion or maintain and develop public spaces then it is certain that this added value can utilize claiming funding from all social policy implementation bodies in the region.</td>
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<th>Significance</th>
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<td>Necessary</td>
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<th>Proposed actions</th>
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<td>The Region of Western Greece through the Patras Carnival, which is a form of creative incubator, has managed to highlight both the social and commercial dimension. In this way the Patras carnival is the largest social and cultural event in the country of its kind. Counting 180 years of history is involving tens of thousands of carnival residents and visitors. The Carnival of Patras is not only the great parade of last Sunday, which is well known worldwide, but a number of events including dances, parades (involving 40,000 costumed group members), the Hunting of the hidden treasure (with participation of about 90 crews), Children Carnival (with participation of 12,000 children), street theater, exhibitions, tributes to films, Panhellenic Festival of Amateur Theatre Satire etc. The Carnival of Patras has as a vital force the energy of the youth that gives freshness and aura of enthusiasm at this great feast that lasts for a short period of time (the preparation lasts for almost a year). The carnival of Patras shows that in The Region of Western Greece there is know-how for the development and highlighting of the social dimension of an incubator. The actions which could be implemented in order to develop this practice on a possible business incubator include:</td>
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- The thematic object of the incubator that will be chosen by the Regional Innovation Group for the Region of Western Greece will have to be in the creative area of Business (fashion, theater, accessories development, gift development etc) since this area covers elements that could be enhanced by all participants coming or not from different vulnerable social groups. |
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<th>Practice 8/16 (Continue)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Relation to neighborhood</td>
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<td>Proposed Actions (Continue)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To carry out a survey and a mapping procedure of all interested parties so that there is a critical mass of professionals who need a creative business incubator in the Region of Western Greece</td>
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Practice 9/16
Relation to higher education institutions

Description
Many business incubators have Education Institutions as shareholders or these Incubators are part of the university itself. Universities by creating a business incubator may market the results of their research activities. The aim is to enable students to transform research into a product or service and to establish a Business Incubator in which in future most of its incubates will become spin-offs.

Significance
Necessary

Proposed actions
Higher Education institutions are the key knowledge and research structures in the direction of creating innovation. At this point it should be emphasized that no product or service can be classified as innovative if it not able to acquire commercial competence and success. (Livieratos, guide innovation for small businesses”, 2013). In this direction all research activities have the need for a business incubator where they can grow and be transformed from an idea or patent to innovative commercial product or service.

The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

- Programming Agreement on research and cooperation level. The research institutions could try to meet the market needs by listening to the start-up businesses. This is a great opportunity for cooperation of academic community with the enterprises, a fact that has not taken place up to now, although several attempts and efforts have taken place. A cooperation between the institutions of higher education with the business incubator in the Region of Western Greece could be the beginning.

- Consultancy services from academics to the businesses not in the research level but at the level of funding, marketing, human resource management, branding etc.

- Creating a node of innovation and entrepreneurship (i-hub)

The above action is a proposal of the University of Patras and is presented in detail in Annex.
Practice 10/16
Involve alumni

Description
The companies which have graduated from an incubator and finally walked out and were able to survive in the highly competitive free market environment set a best practice example for the companies located in a business incubator. These companies could, therefore on a regular basis, offer actions of mentoring and coaching on existing incubatees.

Significance
Necessary

Proposed actions
The action of activating companies graduated of an incubator is a very important factor in the successful operation of an incubator. The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

1. Recording of all companies who graduated
2. Updating of graduates data in order to find out the phase at which each company stands
3. Organize networking events
4. Organize seminar events
5. Development of an incubator mentoring and coaching program with special preferential prices for the businesses located in the incubator
Description
The program of the organization "The Prince's Trust" is a program in which young people under 30, unemployed, interested to self-employment, test their ideas in order to create a company.

Most young people are higher education graduates and most of the time the Agency itself is trying to discover within the Educational institutions young people who really can do something different from the others.

Significance
Necessary

Proposed actions
The actions that could be made to develop this practice are not many since it requires the existence of a agency such as the "The Prince's Trust". However, through the General Secretariat of Youth it would be possible to develop a program as the “hives of entrepreneurship” where young people with specific characteristics could receive funding for the creation of their company by developing start up companies into the proposed incubator in the Region of Western Greece.

Key action is the political pressure from all the relevant stakeholders for the creation and financing of such a program targeting the Region of Western Greece.
Practice 12/16
Focus on workspaces and ‘outsource’ support program

Description
Many incubators in order to reduce their operating costs separate space and infrastructure renting from other supporting activities (mentoring and coaching), and implement them through subcontractors.

Significance
Low

Proposed actions
The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

1. The programming agreement for cooperation between all relevant stakeholders. In this way all stakeholders (Chambers, Municipalities, Research Institutes, Universities, the Region of Western Greece) would cooperate with their executives (as subcontractors) providing the necessary services to the incubatees.
2. The charge of above mentioned services with a fairly reasonable price.
Practice 13/16
Pre-incubation and raising awareness

Description
Many business incubators are participating in information road shows before the maturity of an idea that could be hosted in an incubator. A characteristic example of this is the briefing of graduates of educational institutions with workshops, seminars or by introducing modules of entrepreneurship in the curriculum. A lot of times this briefing is initiated during the primary and secondary education.

Significance
Necessary

Proposed actions
The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

• Innovation and entrepreneurship Weeks or Days
  The term innovation weeks - days describes the policy tool that comes to support policies which are aiming at increasing the innovative readiness of small and medium-sized enterprises in order to enhance the cooperation between the businesses and the suppliers of research and development (R&D). The main objective of this mechanism is to bring young people to the business reality and to develop links between the entrepreneurs and the people of research and science.
  
  This is a proposal of the University of Patras and described in detail in Annex

• Innovation competition
  It is proposed to create innovation and entrepreneurship competitions where through an evaluative process the most innovative and implementable ideas will be highlighted. The best 3 ideas will be able to find a place in the incubator whenever their potential innovator (entrepreneur) may decide to do so.
Practice 13/16 (Continue)
Pre-incubation and raising awareness

Proposed actions (Continue)

- Information Days at Schools.
  One day of each semester there will be an information day for the students about innovation and entrepreneurship. Academics or the staff of the incubator will inform the students about the basic knowledge of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. At this point it is worth mentioning that short animated films with real heroes could be used in order to enable the kids understand what whole concept is and at the same time raise the youth interest.

- The introduction of innovation and entrepreneurship concepts in courses of higher education institutions
  A very important element for young entrepreneurs is to inform them about the actual dimensions of entrepreneurship. In this direction higher education institutions could add in the required courses the corresponding sections of innovation and entrepreneurship.
### Practice 14/16
Partnerships

#### Description
Almost all business incubators are involved in partnerships with schools, universities, banks or other companies. In this way they manage to take a contribution in kind from each partner company. (e.g. low interest rate loans, reduced prices to telecommunications services or Electricity power, reduced prices in mentoring and coaching services)

#### Significance
Necessary

#### Proposed actions
All relevant stakeholders including the Region of Western Greece, the Municipalities of Patras, of Agrinio, of Pirgos, the Municipal and regional theaters of Patras and Agrinion, The chambers of Axaia, Itea and Etoloakarnania, the Patras University, the Science Park of Patras and the Foundation for Research and Technology/ Institute of Chemical Engineering Sciences (ICE-HT), the TEI of Western Greece and University of Patra, in one hand are the critical mass of knowledge and experience required and, on the other hand will play a key role by contributing the maximum for the completion of this project.

For this reason it is proposed the wider possible participation and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders which could contribute both in kind and in financial resources for the successful completion of this effort.
### Practice 15/16
Mix of start-ups with more mature companies

#### Description
In many cases is observed the existence of start-ups and more mature companies in a business incubator. The aim is to enable more mature businesses to advice start-ups. This allows the different housing charges per incubate and creates the possibility of cross selling the services of the incubatees in special rates. The whole concept reduces the costs without changing in the quality of the services provided.

#### Significance
Necessary

#### Proposed actions
The actions that could be made to develop this practice include:

1. Information for preferential prices in order to attract mature enterprises
2. Awareness program for exchange of services between the incubatees. This can lead to win – win situation. For example, a specialized consulting company on marketing would offer its services to start-up companies which in turn would offer IT support with low charges.
3. Networking of local incubators with the ones in Greece and abroad as well as with mature companies
### Practice 16/16

**Cluster development**

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Cluster is a group of companies and institutions that can be co-located (not necessarily) in a specific geographical area and are interdependently connected with the provision of groups of products or services.

The cluster members are driven by various external factors in relation to their position. These external factors include, for example, access to specialized labor markets and suppliers, knowledge transfer, the pressure to achieve greater economic efficiency to tackle increasing competitiveness, as well as continuous learning, thanks to a close interaction between the customer and the specialized suppliers.

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The initiative of Corallia cluster located in Athens and in the Region of Western Greece shows that there are opportunities for investment and successful ventures for the Greek High-Tech entrepreneurship.

In addition, this initiative proves that the region of Western Greece can use the model of Corallia in any attempt to create a business incubator.

It is therefore necessary to use the Corallia as model entrepreneurship development and could be used to represent a point of reference for both the development of a business incubator and for the further improvement of the cultural field through the Carnival of Patra. Finally, the creation of a cluster through a business incubator in combination with the geographical concentration of companies in a particular sector may help identify macroeconomic policies in order to achieve sustainable development in the Region of Western Greece.
4.4. **Action Plan of the Regional Innovation Group for the implementation of the Regional innovation Plan in the region of Western Greece to create incubator**

The proposed action plan of the Regional Innovation Group for the implementation of the Regional Innovation Plan in the Region in Western Greece for creating an incubator has duration of one year. The Regional Innovation Group will meet once every month. The meeting will take place on the premises of the Region in Western Greece or every time can be hosted at a different institution member of Regional Innovation Group. At the end of each meeting the actions and the milestones for the current period which will be evaluated at the next meeting of the Regional Innovation Group, will be set out. One week before each meeting all participants in the Regional Innovation Group will send to the institution which will have the secretarial role the proposed topics for discussion.

The institution that will undertake the secretarial support at the end of each meeting will send the minutes within 5 days to all members of the Regional Innovation Group.

**Elements and Milestones of the Meetings**

The first meeting the Regional Innovation Group is proposed to take place on the premises of the Region in Western Greece with representatives from the Western Greece Region, the Municipality of Patra, Agrinio, Pirgou, the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Patra and Agrinio, chambers of Achaia, Hleia and Etoloakarnania, University of Patra, Science Park of Patra and the Foundation for Research and Technology/ Institute Science chemical engineering and the technological institute. In this first meeting the following topics are proposed to be discussed:

- In which areas will the meetings of the Regional Innovation Group take place?
- Brainstorming on whether all relevant stakeholders of the Region of Western Greece are being represented
- Which institution will assume support the meetings in secretarial terms?
- What kind of incubator will be created? This requires special analysis and will be discussed and completed during the second meeting of the Regional Innovation Group. It is proposed that during the first meeting the stakeholders to contribute with documented arguments so that at the second meeting the necessary decisions could be taken.

The milestones of the first meeting, which will then be met, are proposed to be:
- Is necessary for the Region of Western Greece the creation of a new incubator? Are further improvements or redesign needed at the existing ones?
- In case RIG decides to create an incubator it is required another decision to be taken on the sector in which the incubator will be developed.

The institution responsible for the secretarial support will invite to the next meeting new possible stakeholders and will send the minutes of the first meeting so that at the next meeting the new stakeholders will not only be informed about the topics but also be prepared for what they have to contribute.

During the next meetings the characteristics (practices) which, through the project INCOMPASS, arose for the successful operation and viability of an incubator in the Region of Western Greece, will be presented.

The proposed milestones are:

- Suggestions for the places where the incubator could be hosted
- What practices each stakeholder accepts and how he could contribute to their development.

Then, after deciding the place which will host the incubator, all entities will present the way (flexible action plans) each of them will contribute to the development of the practices (characteristics) selected by the Regional Innovation Group.

The proposed milestones are:

- How much time and how much money required for the development of the place which will host the incubator (renovations, rent, logistics, other infrastructure).
- How will the place which will host the incubator be financed?
- What practices (characteristics) of the incubator will be selected to be carried out and how.
- How will each institution finance all these proposed flexible action plans?

Subsequently, there will be consultation on all issues which have been raised up to this point. These issues are considered to be particularly important for the operation and viability of the incubator and important decisions are expected to be taken. Issues like “the project financing”, “the implementation of the proposed flexible action plans of each institution” will be tackled.
The proposed milestones are:

- The completion of the place which will host the incubator
- Proposals from all stakeholders on how the incubator will operate
- Consultation of all proposed proposals
- Start-up and implementation of all flexible action plans from stakeholders

In the event that difficulties occur during the decision-making process it is proposed to increase the time of consultation or the rapprochement of the matter of creating an incubator.

The next stage consists the necessary construction activities for the accomplishment of the buildings and the infrastructure of the incubator. Those stakeholders responsible for the construction will inform RIG for the progress of the project, the timetable for its completion and possible deviations. The same concept will be repeated also for the flexible action plans of each participating institution (stakeholder).

In addition, consultation will be taking place between all relevant stakeholders concerning the operation of the incubator.

The proposed milestones are:

- The implementation of a business plan for the proposed incubator which will involve all the flexible action plans of the organizations involved (stakeholders) and will prove the viability (sustainability) of the whole concept.
- Which institution (stakeholder) and with what kind of funding will develop this business plan

At this point it is worth emphasizing that there is a chance the stakeholders to decide the joint financing of the incubator for a specific period of time before the whole project become autonomous, independent and therefore sustainable and profitable. These decisions are in consultation and will be taken during the meetings of the Regional Innovation Group.

- The completion of the construction work for the premises of the incubator

Finally, as soon as the business plan is finalized its implementation is proposed, through the flexible action plans of each institution (stakeholder). The milestones in this period are the selection of personnel which will lead the incubator into operation and the initialization of the operation itself.
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Month 1</th>
<th>Month 2</th>
<th>Month 3</th>
<th>Month 4</th>
<th>Month 5</th>
<th>Month 6</th>
<th>Month 7</th>
<th>Month 8</th>
<th>Month 9</th>
<th>Month 10</th>
<th>Month 11</th>
<th>Month 12</th>
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<td>Creation of Regional Innovation Group</td>
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<td>Selection of New Incubator or Redesign</td>
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<td>The place the Incubator will be</td>
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<td>Incubator Features (Practices)</td>
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<td>Implementation of Flexible Action Plans</td>
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<td>Business Plan for the Operation of the</td>
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<td>Operation of the Incubator</td>
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GANTT DIAGRAM
4.5. Conclusions on the characteristics successful models incubators

Based on an analysis of the characteristics (best practices) of successful models incubators which have emerged from the project Incompass, a grouping of these characteristics in the following categories could take place:

**Infrastructure and equipment**

The telecommunications’ infrastructure is one of the key elements of success in a business incubator. Most business incubators are active in the area of high technology and the use of information technology and communications technology. For this reason the existence of necessary equipment and infrastructure is integral to the success of a business incubator.

**Funding Opportunities**

The financing of business incubators from resources of the European Union and in particular by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Central Bank or the program of life-long learning is a very common practice and contributes to the development of incubators as acting additionally in the field of sustainability. For this reason the possibility of the incubator participating in such programs increases the chances of sustainability.

**Creating Partnerships**

Almost all business incubators are involved in partnerships with schools, universities, banks or other companies. In this way they manage to take a contribution in kind from each partner company. (e.g. low interest rate loans, reduced prices to telecommunications services or Electricity power, reduced prices in mentoring and coaching services)

For this reason partnerships are one of the main aims of the management team of an incubator which often have a positive effect on sustainability.

**The knowledge of entrepreneurship - Creating Revenue**

Some incubators sell the skills, knowledge and know-how of the companies that located in them. They are trying, in a way; assist them to liaise with potential customers using the size, the experience and their contacts. All of the above are implemented against a specific fee or a percentage of the remuneration of the company.

In addition to the knowledge, skills and expertise of incubateeis, incubators often trade their own know how and experience. A program for Branding or for sales methodology or crisis management that an incubator could have developed might be promoted and traded to
both to private individuals and businesses as well as to the educational and university Institutions

The incubators that facilitate these characteristics (practices) show that they are aware of the field of entrepreneurship and thus are able to set up an example for the start-up companies that are located inside them. In addition, they set the bases for a successful sustainable and profitable trend.

**Extroversion**

The business incubators are forced to cooperate at regional, national or international level, both for their advancement and that of their Incubatees (start-ups). The successful incubator models have shown that international cooperation increases the chances of success since they are transferring elements of entrepreneurship and information something which introversion and the fear of new businesses wouldn’t have allowed them to experience.

The above characteristics are the reference points of the road map of Regional Innovation Group in an attempt to monitor and implement the Regional Innovation Plan in the region of Western Greece to create an incubator.