



Instruments for boosting entrepreneurship and start-ups

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This report is a result of reiterative processes between the partners in the project leading to the concept description. Regional lessons learned are based on entrepreneurial implementation processes by the Smart Up BSR partners individually and in joint partner activities. The participating partners are listed below.



1. Introduction

This report presents a concept description and recommendations towards regional entrepreneurship acceleration programs in the Baltic Sea region. The concept report aims to give a basis for regions to build their entrepreneurship acceleration program fitting their place-based needs

This document includes a general background section on regional entrepreneurial acceleration, as well as a BSR entrepreneurial actions overview. Based on this introductory exploration we can make some conclusions on the characterising elements of entrepreneurial activity and innovation in the Baltic Sea Region. This underlines the fact that BSR regions' innovation performance derives from a combination of entrepreneurship with lifelong learning. Therefore, the significance of how entrepreneurship acceleration can be grounded in learning and productivity.

The concept has been developed based on the interchange and collaboration of the Smart-Up BSR project partners and is the result of several implementation events taking place in the Innovation Camps and workshops including local public actors and entrepreneurs.

2. Entrepreneurship and Innovation Performance

The Baltic Sea Region includes top performing regions occupying the very highest positions as Innovation Leaders in the European Union.

The grouping of regions which represent innovation leaders includes regions that have consistently acted within the Smart Specialisation concept of strategy creation, revision and implementation, but it also includes regions, such as Stockholm, that has gone a different path. Entrepreneurial action is a distinguishing mark between regions in the BSR.

Among the regions in the mid-range, strong and moderate innovators, there is some variety in how Smart Specialisation strategy and implementation has played a role in driving regional economic development and how entrepreneurial action has been applied.

When comparing the innovation performance of the Baltic Sea regions with reference to the Regional Scoreboard Innovation Index, the profiling by innovation indicators shows that the improving or weakening of the Baltic Sea regions' performance can be linked with proxies for Learning regions, and for full-scale Capacity power houses. Among the regions in the lower end of the innovation index scale a willingness to operationalise Smart Specialisation and the boosting of entrepreneurial activities in particular, appears to be a driving force as a means for the regions to emerge as thriving markets. However, the governance structures have influence in how Smart Specialisation is in fact operationalised.

The variety of positionings among the regions means that across the Baltic Sea there exists a potential for growth through inter-regional collaboration. In order for actions to be taken to clarify the focus of the economic drivers in these regions, strategic innovation instruments will be beneficial to lead these regions towards an improved position in innovation performance and in the overall economic transformation. This has not yet been approached in a consistent way by the Smart Specialisation strategies.

The exact three dimensions that correlate with the long-term top-performance of regions like Helsinki-Uusimaa and Stockholm are: Life-long learning, Trademark applications, Scientific co-publications. The combination of these three criteria currently indicates top performance and it denotes a regional balance.

The three elements in the combination of indicators secure a balance of entrepreneurial capacity and scientific/research competence supported by a wide-ranging societal effort in upholding skills and knowledge. This indicates the

importance of a constellation of strategic actions working together. Each of these dimensions contain a high degree of entrepreneurial facets. Regions sharing this combination of indicators are identified as capacity powerhouses best positioned to tackle the challenges of sustainability and entrepreneurial activity.

3. Entrepreneurial Action in BSR Regions

The impetus for a strategic entrepreneurial approach can also be found from broader cross-sector themes heavily involving research which leads to innovation as for example in the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Tallinn in Estonia, Aarhus in Midjylland, Riga in Latvia. Scientific competence and expertise shown through an emphasis on research seems to have two strategic perspectives: technological excellence and innovation on one hand, and, on the other hand, fulfilling a broader societal purpose. The latter has a global reach through climate responsibility in addition to a local benefit of an improved quality of life and of entrepreneurial activities.

Several regions present up-front strategic choices relating to citizens' quality of life, green initiatives, alignment with SDGs. This is a challenging approach of combining breadth with focus which, if successful, could be outlined as a necessary combination for regional economic transformation. Yet, some regions relying on previous hierarchical governance traditions, lack the instruments to cut through a maze of diversity in order to reach a clear choice of priorities. Diversity may also be connected to path dependency, where choices are added to existing industrial paths while making the region less open for new opportunities through for inter-regional engagement.

Regions that may to some extent have employed triple and quadruple helix approaches as a modus operandi even prior to the introduction of Smart Specialisation may have a head start in the way innovation and regional development strategic processes are conducted. This would indicate that following this direction with persistence would strengthen the regions on the long run. With the right tools a vivid inter-regional cooperation can be maintained by applying revisions to Smart Specialisation, securing stronger implementation and consequently strengthening the BSR as macro-region.

In order to reach a balance of regional strengths strategies perform a harmonizing act between supporting traditional and proven sectors while directing them into new potential industrial paths. The groupings resulting from the Smart Specialisation strategy stories of the Baltic Sea Region are: regions strategically building on innovation, science and technology; regions strategically building on logistics and local industry; regions strategically building on clusters and industrial collaboration; and regions strategically building on a clear focus and prioritization, contrasted with regions building on a diversification outlook.

Smart Specialisation work has shown that innovation and development policies in the Baltic Sea Region have led to high performance and have brought prosperity on varying grounds, either through science, knowledge and economy, or digitalisation,

or logistics and harbour developments. Smart Specialisation has also faced complexity resulting in regional/local and national tensions. Through Smart Specialisation strategy creation and revision administrative models have been exposed that don't necessarily serve the innovative development of regional activities and need to be adjusted to bridge the socio-economic disparities between the territories.

While in some of the regions Smart Specialisation Strategy has led to a high level of focus and in other territories development areas are still occupying a wider range of possibilities. The strategy stories of Latvia and Lithuania indicate that the revision process has a role in reducing the priorities of an initial strategy response with a largely multi-focal approach showing a me-too tendency.

Smart Specialisation has contributed in a positive way to the focus and prioritisation of innovation strategies and related policies, which is made apparent in the innovation performance of the regions. However, economic transformation of the Baltic Sea region as such is not yet a reality: Attempts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals are largely still in their initial phases or still missing, and inter-regional collaboration - although assumed through Smart Specialisation - is not a norm in the Baltic Sea Region.

Many challenges in the Baltic Sea Region are of cross-sectoral nature. Possible solutions to these challenges benefit from being addressed together by various countries and sectors. In examining the environment in which Baltic Sea Region's companies, industry, and communities operate we come across a wide perspective of inter-related regional issues characterising a sustainable and entrepreneurial future. This adds the perspective of cross-issue relevance for regional innovation and is based upon the understanding that events, activities, governance of innovation, and political ownership benefit from an entrepreneurial way.

Although it is not always easy to work towards creating cross-issue collaborations, Smart Specialisation strategy work has to some extent provided the space to explore and develop ideas for new shared ways of talking, strategizing, and taking action. With Smart Specialisation strategy in mind the relevance of cross-issue approach can be understood to successfully bring together an inspiring vision of the macro-region: the Baltic Sea Region governance for prosperous businesses and civil society. This needs to be followed by a strategic emphasis on competencies related to implementing regional sustainability and entrepreneurial strength. The instruments presented in chapter three lead in this direction.

While commitment to utilising top level science and technology organisations is key to economically transforming a region through innovation, future co-operation between municipalities needs necessarily to be driven forward. Through such co-operation entrepreneurial activity can be enabled, facilitated or boosted.

Balance between fitting regional needs and cross-regional perspectives

In terms of working towards transforming regions to entrepreneurial regions we can learn from the balance between local strength and international cooperation in science and research. From the perspective of utilising science and education as a driving force for regions it is relevant to observe the dynamics of resourcing innovation capacity through entrepreneurial approaches

The science and research driven strong hubs in any of the studied regions of the Baltic Sea Region show a pattern of accumulating resources, in terms of funding and competences, being able to engage in locally relevant solutions and serve the local population, including local SMEs, and functioning as the motor of the region. This provides a locally based vision leveraging on links to a knowledge economy and thus increasing the growth potential of locally rooted industry.

There is a growing recognition that for regional innovation systems to drive regional transformation. Regions working together can create an inter-related vision of what society as a whole could be. To do this, we can not only rely on strategies that are powerful and relevant for single issues, but they need to be equally relevant across different stakeholders matters, across industrial areas, and across territories. We need to ensure that we employ helpful tools to tackle cross-issue perspectives. This also leads to stronger entrepreneurial regions, through stakeholder cooperation.

Examples

Most capital regions in BSR fall in the science and technology driven category of regions. Nevertheless, regions with harbour areas and logistics hubs clearly benefit from linking the high-end research and science driven priorities with the locally grounded industry.

Science and technology are the top performing core of smaller regions like Tallinn and Aarhus, as well as cities and regions in Latvia and Lithuania who need an increased labour force. For these regions science and technology and the scope of integration with local industry are the determining factors of their strategically chosen innovation outlook. In their approach we can recognize a commitment to an expertise driven strategy that pushes forward the innovation capacity of the region. Their challenge is to guarantee the necessary knowledge and expertise on a constant basis by strategic associations to industrial sectors, and research supporting their entrepreneurial domain.

The changes in regions comprising port cities like Riga, Leipaja, Vilnius, Klaipeda, Gdansk, and Kotka, and the recent company developments related to the port in the Kymenlaakso region in Finland support the understanding that Smart Specialisation strategy can lead to opportunities for local companies to excel in innovation even in a highly competitive environment. Smart Specialisation has been essential for Kymenlaakso as a region situated not too far East from Helsinki and the capital region, forced to compete for expertise and to hinder brain drain towards the capital region. The presence of a harbour and other logistical nodes does not mean these regions cannot perform in other areas, but logistics-related areas can be leveraged thanks to the ability to exploit close-at-hand application domains. This can link logistics, energy, and construction with new technological and research driven solutions and provide entrepreneurial opportunities. Similarly transport and logistics can expand the influence in other specialisation areas by offering the quick access needed.

Midtjylland has followed a process that in practice is to a great extent in alignment with Smart Specialisation concepts, although the region does not explicitly base its development efforts on Smart Specialisation. The City of Aarhus entrepreneurial approach in introducing smart city pilots has contributed to the regional success. Due to the changes and governance restructuring in Denmark it appears that the regional role in development may take the action further away from a distinct Smart Specialisation approach even though support for entrepreneurial activities is promised. While the role of Aarhus, the leading city in the region, will be critical to balance out the current (de-)centralising approach, in order to engage multi-level governance perspectives appropriate strategic tools that support an entrepreneurial approach to regional development will be crucial.

As pointed out by the city of Aarhus solutions to local development issues and challenges that cities face will most often contain a significant element of digitalization and will require implementation of technology. In addition to technology, as pointed in the quote by the city of Espoo, the future of cities and regions is forged in daily work serving citizens and by citizens. Both aspects, technology and citizens, need to be taken in consideration and integrated into the core of sustainable economic transformation and Smart Specialisation strategies.

Thematic pilots are concrete activities putting Smart Specialisation into practice to improve local everyday life. In our study of the pilot activities in BSR regions we have come across the complexities of transferring knowledge and experience from strategies towards implementation and economic transformation. Coordination actions were taken to engage EU level experts to assist in the activities, thus creating cooperation channels between SDGs and Smart Specialisation actors in order for regions to reach the high level goals of the EU and SDG agenda.

Entrepreneurial Action in BSR for the Sustainable EU Agenda and UN SDGs

Grand societal challenges involve the pressing real-life problems related to environment, health, and quality of life. Due to their complexity, they require boundary spanning collaborations across different scientific disciplines, sectors and countries involving heterogeneous partners from research, engineering, business, policy-making and civil society. For example, climate change is not only an environmental problem: its effects will alter people's lives in economic, social and environmental spheres. It is evident that climate change can't be solved through environmental policy actions alone but needs a systemic approach and involvement of diverse stakeholders on global and local levels.

As can be seen, societal challenges are systemic and non-linear, requiring out-of-the-box thinking. Embracing ambiguity and showing receptivity to new ideas in multi-actor settings is key to solving the complex challenges encapsulated in the SDGs. The Smart Specialisation approach recommends that regions focus their efforts and resources on a limited number of ambitious yet realistic priorities, niches valuable for solving societal issues, through which they would be able to develop excellence in a smart, sustainable and inclusive manner. Uniting the many national and regional stakeholders around a shared vision for development in favour of the SDGs requires an inclusive approach to innovation.

Coordinating and facilitating innovation efforts in regional contexts is usually the prerogative of the public sector, yet results can only be achieved through public and business sector sharing a vision of a sustainable region, country and planet. Through Smart Specialisation processes it is worthwhile exploring how the public sector can stimulate discussion and increase stakeholder interaction around grand societal challenges like climate change, circular economy and healthy ageing. The focus is not on sustainability exclusively. Through the outputs of each thematic pilot dealing with eg circular economy or active healthy aging regions can contribute directly to the sustainable development. For example, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy work for the solution in climate change mitigation. The circular economy solutions reduce waste and overproduction and lead to creating sustainable growth.

As regions are tackling SDG strategies, they are taking action in linking the way Smart Specialisation strategy induces economic transformation with SDGs opportunities. Smart Specialisation strategy contributes in pushing forward actions supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However, local entrepreneurial activities and innovation are key in BSR for participating in reaching the goals of a sustainable macro-region and need to be accelerated.

Innovation and entrepreneurial capabilities are seen as the key to solving the systemic challenges that lie behind these priorities. Solutions need the mobilisation of all resources and all actors across regions. Therefore, regional implementation is the next vital step towards realising at local level the goals set by the Commission and entrepreneurial actions need to be more efficient especially thinking of digital technologies. This ensures that new Industrial Strategy can transform European businesses yet remain fit to achieve their local ambitions and cope with global competition.

4. Concept Description

In light of the grand societal challenges depicted above boosting entrepreneurship is a vital measure that also supports the local regional economic development and sustainability.

The concept developed based on the interchange and collaboration with the Smart-Up BSR project partners as the result of implementation events including local public actors, entrepreneurs and local organisations leading innovation. In addition to the joint approaches, regions have also individually conducted tentative entrepreneurial boosting activities.

We believe that this concept has a wider significance than its use in the Baltic Sea Region. This is due to the fact that using this concept each region can specifically address its place-based needs.

A Tool for Daily Work

Smart Specialisation is still often seen as one of the many issues local/regional politicians must deal with in their daily work, and amidst short-term concerns perceived as more urgent. Entrepreneurial acceleration therefore needs instruments to tackle both the wider Smart Specialisation aims and daily work.

In this sense Smart Specialisation is expected to enable entrepreneurship acceleration, while vice versa entrepreneurship acceleration can be understood as supporting the implementation of Smart Specialisation.

There seems to be a discrepancy that needs to be solved between seeing Smart Specialisation as a long-term issue and considering urgent immediate measures relating to local issues and the needs entrepreneurs as primary. This calls for a tool for daily work to balance the immediate needs and the change management that is required for the long-term strategies.

This is the aim of the tools for the monitoring and reflection on Smart Specialisation strategy and implementation suggested in this concept report and applied in the regions of the Smart-Up BSR project. The Regional Strategy Diamond specifically, ways can be identified for a change towards a balanced Smart Specialisation strategy implementation between long term policy making and short-term needs.

As one of the strategic instruments, the Regional Strategy Diamond, supports the efforts to bridge some of the gaps in various levels of communication, competence

gaps, and commitment gaps. Organisations leading the implementation and committed politicians can more easily take ownership and have tools for putting RIS3 at the core of their regional transformation. Moreover, the instrument provides tangible action to involve relevant regional, national and European goal setting. This allows politicians and leaders in a multi-layer governance to function as equally active parties through expertise sharing and project participation in action-related advisory, knowledge building, and steering roles.

Consequently, the Regional Strategy Diamond allows applying evidence-based policy making by means of change management and capacity building instruments which function as a mobilisation of locally active stakeholders to collaborate in a broader, balanced context. This balance can clarify the place-based perspective to participating stakeholders and help also to open up relevant action and practices. It also should be noted that the Regional Strategy Diamond steers regions to open up to include inter-regional and international layers.

While regions can benefit from the tool for balancing local economic transformation, regions operating on their own often make decisions based on limited perspectives. Even pioneering and entrepreneurial regions often find it challenging to integrate what they find elsewhere for inspiration in a balanced way. Capability building tools, and the Regional Strategy Diamond in particular, can save time in conducting the processes that implement, monitor and reflect how stakeholders manage innovation locally, or succeed in leveraging on cross-regional innovation.

The Regional Strategy Diamond angles serve to illustrate that each region has different evidence-based anchor points in creating a strategic balance. Thus, when used locally for an evidence-based regional analysis the regional strategic diamond can ensure the ability and capacity to implement the strategic choices in practice. To leverage the locally based point of action a place-based and evidence-based process is required, rather than a fit-for-all formula. Thus, the Regional Strategy Diamond functions as an instrument to help calibrating that balance. As a regional development instrument, it is an adaptation that facilitates daily work in entrepreneurship acceleration and strategy implementation.

Boosting Entrepreneurship through the Regional Strategy Diamond

As the Regional Strategy Diamond is conceptualised to calibrate balance, the instrument functions according to the specific angles at different action points in the local process and can therefore function as a guiding force for boosting entrepreneurship.

Just like the starting impulses of each single angle are most efficient if they are evidence-based, correcting the angle movements during the implementation needs to equally be evidence-based and related to every other angle. The Regional Strategy Diamond has five angles in total: Strategy, Actions, Competences, Competitiveness, and Leadership in Context. The model assumes that each angle drives the process in an equally significant way. The core of the diamond represented by Leadership in Context plays a key role in enabling the other angles to succeed. However, the efficiency of each angle is created by how they link to each other, rather than by the unique performance of each angle.

While facing movement and change from either within the regional environment or from external forces, the connections between the angles are affected. Also, since each of the angles can function towards maintaining or disrupting balance, the connecting links need to balance out those changes. Thus, though strategy is often emphasized as the most crucial activity, strategy creation as content and as communication only represent one angle. Formulating the direction and the priorities the region moves towards needs to be based on other angles like actions and competences, as every angle is equally engaged in maintaining a successful balance through tensions and movements. Why do regions, companies and entrepreneurs benefit from a tool like the regional strategy diamond? For example, they can rely on the strategy diamond to focus on and maintain a balance which otherwise may be overlooked, and which may be crucial to move and boost entrepreneurial action. The strategy diamond leads to identifying links and consequences between different angles of strategic action.

How does it work? Modifications that are initiated at one angle will affect the performance at any other angle and this will take place in different specific ways for each individual stakeholder of the entrepreneurial action. Regional actors have been advised to apply evidence-based policy making in regional development strategy work and for identifying and implementing Smart Specialisation strategic priorities. Often regionally operating stakeholders find it easier to fall back on imitating successful regions. They may perceive it as a risk to put into action solutions that may diverge from general approaches.

This may work up to a certain point, nonetheless, simply trying to replicate other successful actors will indeed not yield similar results in every situation. The actions taken relating to one angle, though focussed on that specific angle, need to be directed at creating balance and at reducing imbalances.

Examples of the attempted balance would include balance between national and regional priorities, balance by cross-cutting themes, balance between global knowledge and local know-how, balance between research-intensive and entrepreneurial activities, balance between citizens-focused local priorities and global challenges, balance between public sector strategic direction and reliance on

industrial clusters, balance between local and external talent, balance between nodes of scientific knowledge and marginal areas, balance between specialisation and diversification. Who can use the regional strategy diamond and who is it serving?

The stakeholders involved in regional transformation through boosting entrepreneurship form a broad spectrum of actors. Regions that are developing evidence-based policies need to engage multiple layers of governance to utilise the advantage of the regional strategy diamond. The tool itself brings a large variety of stakeholders to the table always when the angles are discussed. This in itself boosts an entrepreneurial approach and drive for entrepreneurial action. Also, the tool can be used to activate otherwise less confident actors for decision making and implementation with transformation in mind. Stakeholders that provide data and statistics will be crucial for establishing the status of each angle and how it relates to the success of the angles in balance.

However, the everyday action and implementation will be most crucial. The following questions need to guide entrepreneurial action:

How do you compete? Entrepreneurial Culture

How do we lead? Competitiveness through Leadership Actions

What you do? Competences for entrepreneurial action

What you say? Strategy in action

What do you have? Capabilities to maintain and boost entrepreneurship.



Regional Strategy Diamond for Economic Transformation

Regional business actors and citizens' needs are elements that come to the fore as validation for entrepreneurship. This means a broad involvement of public actors and private entrepreneurial actors.

Balancing the angles in the regional strategy diamond of a region implies that at some point corrective imbalance has a role, not as a final solution, but as an intentional move which in turn leads to an overall balance. Regionally, this turns out to be a unique process particularly relevant for particular actors in a region-specific environment.

The willingness of the people involved to go through diamond process, be it business owners, academics, researchers, industrial innovators, or public sector and societal innovators, and as such it is place-bound and would not necessarily work as a formula to fit all. How can the tool be used?

Basing the adjustments between angles on a sound analysis for evidence-based regional innovation strategies is one of the advantages of the tool. However, this goes beyond an inward look and does require cross-regional collaboration. The competitiveness angle in fact contains the facet of internationalisation and aspect of cross-region and cross-border activities. An outlook that includes openness is based on a detailed evidence-based approach to local economic activities and on knowledge of local strengths and opportunities that can flourish within a cross-regional environment.

Fittingly, the regional strategy diamond approach directs the cross-regional dialogue away from attempting to imitate successful strategies implemented in other places. Successful inter-regional approaches are achieved by an evaluation of actions which correspond to the strategy balance of the diamond angles: the angle of strategy, the angle of actions, the angle of competences, the angle of competitiveness and the angle of leadership, culture and context. An explicit goal of achieving balance in the implementation of evidence-based policy making is to secure regional strength not through a limiting inward focus but through a conscious action in piloting systemic transnational partnering. Without a sustainable balance the process of pioneering innovation ecosystems defining the BSR macro-region would not benefit all regions equally. What does the tool deliver?

Due to the nature of the challenges of collaboration and engagement it is essential in implementation actions to balance every partner's or region's effort into raising the capacity of every stakeholder while leveraging the collective potential. Organisations encounter this need of balancing in local internal development, or cross-regional co-operation, or collaboration of the BSR as a whole.

The balance of the angles includes improving opportunities for cross-regional partnering as well as implementation of such established partnering. This can be facilitated even more by integrating the other two capacity building instruments, Organisational Innovation Competency Set, and Innovation Camps.

With evidence-based policy making in mind regions tend to operate too much on their own and are tempted to refer to other regional examples as ready-made successful solutions to be imitated. This is not furthering the concept of an entrepreneurial region or regional entrepreneurship acceleration

With entrepreneurship acceleration in mind, the challenge for each region is breaking the silos for entrepreneurial interchange within and across regional innovation ecosystems.

This ensures a balance which then affects the ability of a region's entrepreneurial actors to master current and future circumstances. For this the Regional Strategy Diamond tool is a practical aid.

A region's effectiveness in entrepreneurship acceleration can be ensured by applying the tool to assist daily work as well as by activating and maintaining the recommended attitudes presented in the following section.

Social entrepreneurship tool

Entrepreneurship acceleration while helping the economic growth of regions also includes promoting social progress. Smart-Up BSR partners familiarised themselves with the social entrepreneurship tool derived from the betterentrepreneurship.eu site. (See Annex 1)

The idea of the tool is to combine innovation-driven entrepreneurship and regional social and inclusion aspects. These are essential elements that both address competitive advantage and policy approaches.

Partner regions need to consider this perspective of entrepreneurship's multiple angles which help regional teams to commit to social innovation while boosting entrepreneurship. Through the social entrepreneurship tool the social inclusion aspect and a learning aspect engage the entrepreneurs and start-ups with during with the community. The results besides helping entrepreneurs is to build and implement a fitting regional strategy for enhancing local and regional innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystems.

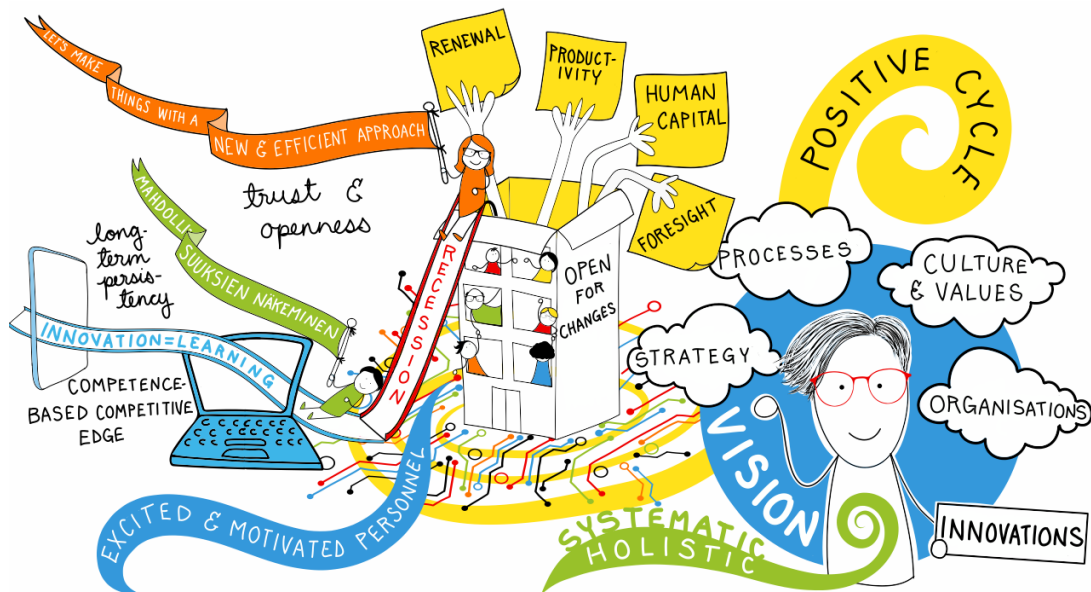
5. Recommendation for BSR regional entrepreneurship accelerator

In order to ensure that the BSR regions are able to accelerate entrepreneurship we would like to emphasize learning. For acceleration of entrepreneurship learning needs to include a renewal and a productivity part. A quote by Mahatma Gandhi illustrates these two aspects of constant productivity and constant willingness to learn.

Live like you die tomorrow. Learn as if you would live forever.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Renewal and productivity go hand in hand, as a regenerating company or organization must also be productive. Our opportunities in the world are not in quantity but in quality. Therefore, it is vital to accelerate entrepreneurship by enhancing different and more efficient ways to create the excellence we need to succeed in global competition. We present here elements of a positive cycle that ensures entrepreneurship acceleration.



The two aspects that contribute to entrepreneurship are constant learning on one hand and on the other hand putting what is learned into practice in order to provide new learning. The benefits and opportunities of learning have always been recognized in internationally significant organizations. In order to accelerate entrepreneurship putting learning into practice and working on the productivity side of learning is essential.

Life-long learning

As mentioned in the introduction the three dimensions that constitute the long-term top-performance of regions like Helsinki-Uusimaa and Stockholm are: Life-long learning, Trademark applications, Scientific co-publications. The combination of the two top components shows the importance of learning, specifically lifelong learning combined with productivity which results in trademark applications. The scientific base represented by the third component of competitiveness in the top regions creates the possibility for both learning and productivity. This results in top performance and it also denotes that regional balance between learning and productivity is needed.

A major proponent of lifelong learning is both the Club of Rome and Unesco, highlighting the benefits of lifelong learning, both formal and non-formal. Unesco emphasizes the importance of a skilled and trained workforce precisely in its ability to innovate or imitate, as well as in the adoption of new technologies, bringing measurable productivity benefits. These are the conditions that accelerate entrepreneurship. The benefits are societal, and globally, a more skilled population has traditionally been reflected in the nation's stability, economy, and well-being. Finland is a good example of this, however this is evident in the recent changes in all of the BSR regions that participated in the Smart-Up BSR project, based on the developments in the regional education, research and science resources.

Renewal and productivity

Throughout the project the regional activities in the BSR regions have shown that it is worth investing in renewal, people and the development of new solutions, products, processes and services. Especially during a recession or a period of decline it is worth developing something new, to be at the forefront when the boom begins.

The opportunity costs of training and research and development investments decrease during the downturn, ie it is advantageous for companies to invest in renewal during the recession. This requires a new kind of attitude. Companies can cope with new products and services as well as talented experts in global competition.

A key factor in the renewal is an enthusiastic and motivated people. An innovative company often also has a clear vision of where we are going. However, innovations do not arise from scratch or by chance, but are often based on years of long-term and personal investment in innovation. Trust is key. That is when we feel that we,

as well as our innovation potential, are valued and exploited. This is the key to success. The potential for innovation must be nurtured and nurtured - both innovative people and innovations can easily escape the world.

Human capital an acceleration resource

Human capital, that is, people and learning, is a strategic resource whose growth and promotion provide a significant competitive advantage. Human capital generates innovations and knowledge that others do not possess.

This helps in embracing new things, such as new technologies and adapting to international competition. Training increases employee productivity, both in terms of the individual's and the company's ability to innovate.

In order to ensure that entrepreneurship can be accelerated attention needs to be given to human capital. It is through human capital that a region can achieve internationalisation, open innovation and new ways of learning.

People make the ecosystem visible and keep it in motion, as well as accelerate it or, if renewal is not embraced, they can slow productivity. Human capital can be safeguarded through the ability of a region and its organisations to motivate, coach and facilitate the stakeholders of its ecosystem.

Holistic processes for regional development

Innovation and learning need to be supported by systematic and holistic processes, which also need to be renewed fittingly to the locally based needs. However, as proposed through the emphasis on learning and human capital, processes are needed for reforming approaches. The component of seeing opportunities requires experience and confidence in the future.

To enable innovation in regional development, where changes are not predictable, we need to be systematic, research and reflect on issues, while still giving creativity and confidence as free hands as possible. Looking ahead and creating a spiral of positivity are important in the corporate world and the public sector, as well as at the individual level.

Success is an attitude. It is openness to new ideas, a willingness to listen, a willingness to learn, a desire to grow and the flexibility to change. *(BJ Gallagher)*

The strength of networks and the role of ecosystems in learning should not be underestimated. Sharing experiences ensures maximum benefit and wider use of

information. In the Smart-Up BSR, where innovation camps act as networkers and enable the exchange of ideas and experiences between experts, systematically generating and expanding many new initiatives. There are several positive experiences, most recently the innovation cooperation between Aalto, Aarhus and Tallinn.

Learning from failures

It is also important to strive to streamline existing business. Identifying this need for renewal can be difficult, but a permissive, confident atmosphere has a powerful impact on the renewal of a company, organization, or individual - so things sometimes fall into place surprisingly easily. However, the basic pillars of innovation activities may be different from the basic activities of an organization.

In innovation, often the biggest mistake is made in forcing some revolutionary innovation into an old mould where it no longer works. What is essential is how to balance things by acting according to processes, but at the same time giving space to find new solutions and ways of doing things without compromising the company's core business.

In innovation, the doctrine is also found through failures. Even if a new area of business does not take off, the organization often is left with new skills, knowledge, and technologies that can be leveraged elsewhere. There must be a state of mind for change, which requires both management and employees to put themselves into play.

6. Conclusion

This concept report and its recommendations aims at fostering awareness of structural challenges towards boosting entrepreneurship. This engages individual regions and highlights the need for transnational cooperation towards establishing regional and cross-regional balance. Crossing borders to make better use of existing best practices and change management instruments allows regional institutions to make adjustments that may not have been evident. This awareness and reveals optional and new possibilities.

Appropriating other successful regions' formulas in entrepreneurship acceleration denotes weak ownership and makes it easier for politicians to distance themselves from the results. Using the proposed tool includes evaluating in practice the regional commitment as well as the collaboration with other BSR regions in boosting entrepreneurship. The overall balance makes it easier to add clear political commitment in boosting entrepreneurship, as well as supporting strategic and operative value.

For BSR regions close collaboration in sharing and disseminating results and learning creates a way of balancing the elements in the strategy diamond angles. Overall, these actions can result in boosting entrepreneurship at regional level. It can also engage European institutions, such as Committee of the Regions (CoR), the JRC and European top-level experts of Smart Specialisation.

Things are renewed step by step and small changes occur every day - change starts and is boosted with attitudes.



4.5 Instruments for boosting entrepreneurship and start-ups

26th February, 2020



The diagram is a circular wheel divided into eight segments, each with an icon and a label: Institutions (building icon), Regulations (document icon), Finance (stack of coins icon), Markets (shopping basket icon), Skills (pencil icon), Impact (two vertical bars icon), Culture (group of people icon), and a central white circle. The central circle contains the text: "Improve your policies for social entrepreneurship" and "Check the wheel to see the self-assessment modules accessible in 24 languages".

Better Entrepreneurship Tool

Inclusive
Social

www.betterentrepreneurship.eu

Inclusive entrepreneurship

Inclusive entrepreneurship contributes to social inclusion and gives all people an equal opportunity to start up and operate businesses. Here you can assess policies and programmes that help women, youth, migrants and unemployed people with business creation and self-employment.

Start your assessment

- Supporting women in entrepreneurship >
- Supporting youth in entrepreneurship >
- Supporting migrants in entrepreneurship >
- Supporting the unemployed in entrepreneurship >

Social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship focuses on social enterprises, which are businesses that aim to have an explicit social impact through their economic activities. Here you can assess to what extent current policies and initiatives help these types of businesses to start-up and scale-up.

Start your assessment

Social entrepreneurship >



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www.betterentrepreneurship.eu

Self-assessment tool

- The tool is available at: <https://www.betterentrepreneurship.eu/>

SBI 2011 action plan

Access to finance

- EaSI
- ESF, EARDF

Visibility and recognition

- Mapping study
- Country reviews
- Policy briefs,
- Compendium
- GECES expert group
- Mainstreaming (Horizon, Erasmus, COSME...)

Regulatory aspects

- Public procurement
- Foundation statute (withdrawn)
- National legal frameworks

SUPPORTING WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial culture



Strengthening the design and delivery of inclusive entrepreneurship support



Building a supportive regulatory environment



Building entrepreneurship skills and capacities for inclusive entrepreneurship



Facilitating access to business finance for inclusive entrepreneurship



Expanding networks for inclusive entrepreneurship

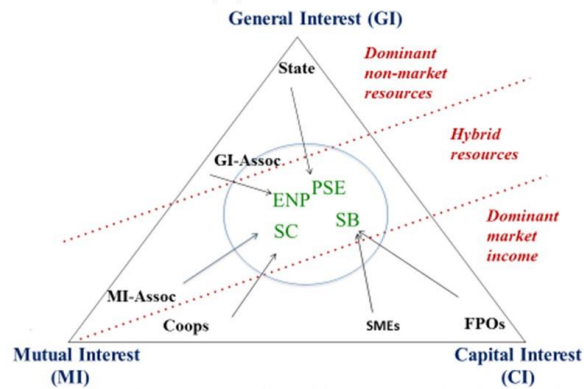
Contribution to the EU social policy objectives



Social enterprise

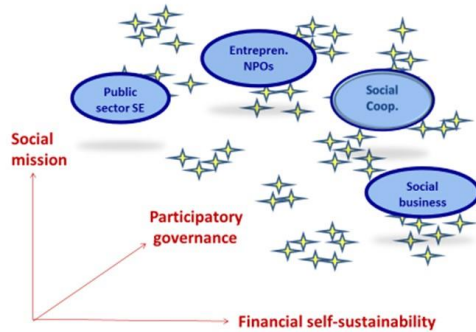


What happens in the field?



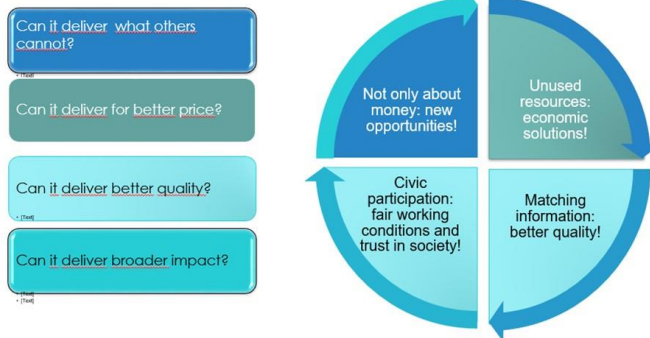
Nyssens, Marthe ; Defourny, Jacques. Fundamentals for an International Typology of Social Enterprise Models, Voluntas (2017)

Diversity is part of picture



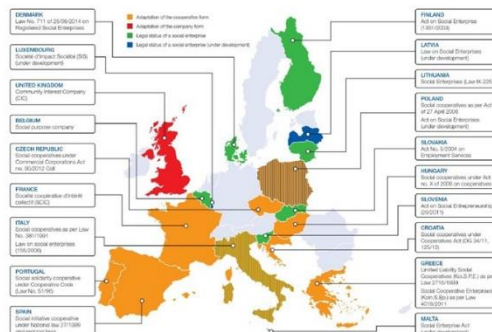
Source: Marthe Nyssens

Competitive advantages?



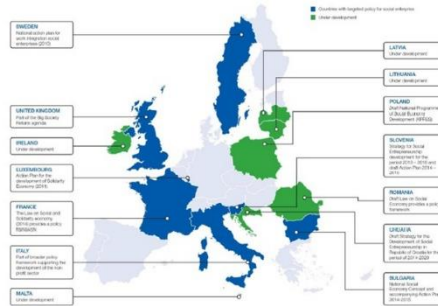
EU mapping – legal environment

Figure 5.2 Countries with specific legal forms or statuses for social enterprise

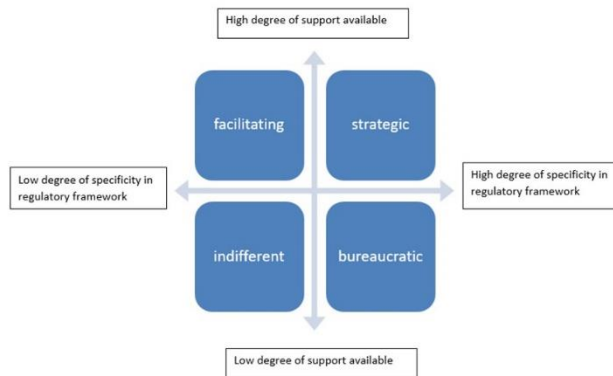


EU mapping – policy frameworks

Figure 5.1 Countries with policy frameworks targeting social enterprise



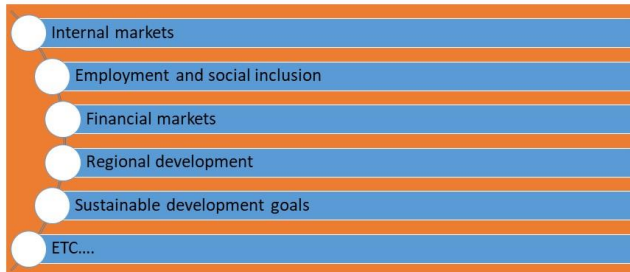
Possible policy approaches



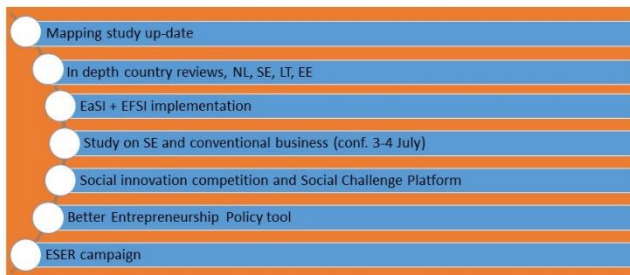
Evolution of the EU agenda



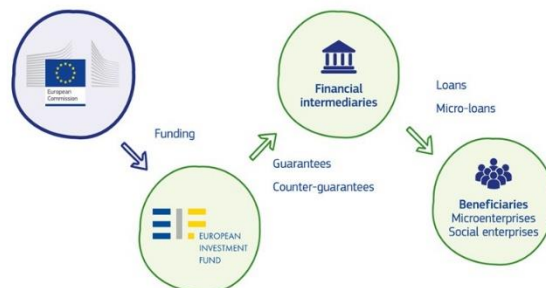
Multiple policy angles



Examples, ongoing actions 2018



Example: Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) program



European Social Economy Regions Pilot

(Visibility – networking and regional strategies – 32 regions in 2018)



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Use of concept in your region

In the partners' meeting we discussed:

- >whether partners see use for this concept
- >to whom should this be presented in each region
- >possibilities to organize this concept to be presented
- >agreeing to share share experiences on how this concept was received
- >agreeing on Aalto acting as support in fostering the concept on a need basis

Thank you!

Follow us on **Twitter!**

@SocEntEU #EU4SocEnt #GECES

And join our **LinkedIn** Community page:

"EU for Social Economy & Social Enterprises"



Websites:

GROW : <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy>

EMPL : [Social entrepreneurship](#)