

Programme: The Podkarpackie Science and Technology Park Academic Pre-Incubator
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1. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICE

Opened in 2007 and located in an Economic Zone, part of a major infrastructure development, the Podkarpackie Science and Technology Park Academic Pre-Incubator is a platform for creation and development of cooperation in the field of innovation.

▪ Overview & Aims

Set up as an infrastructure measure not a financial instrument, the original investment/project objectives were:

- To create and facilitate strong cooperation between science and SMEs, enhancing cooperation in the field of innovation in the Podkarpackie region.
- The creation of **Pre-Incubator** places for students and graduates of universities located in the region, providing them with dedicated opportunities to start their enterprises

The Pre Incubator facilities are designed to **provide innovative start-ups with a natural pathway to the high tech facilities available** in the Science and Technology Park, supporting and enabling early stage businesses to move to the facilities provided by the Technological Incubator and ultimately, as they progress, to buy land and build facilities in the special Economic Zones set aside for innovative businesses.

- **Key Resources**
- **Programme Partners.** None advised
- **Funding: Funding Body & SME Contribution** - Building/fitting out costs c €100K. Capital Funding via EU/Regional Funds, The Pre-Incubator is not a financial instrument, – no investment from SMEs/no funding facility.
- **Eligibility Criteria**
Students and graduates of universities and SMEs located in the region.
- **Terms and Conditions**
N/A. No repayment terms, the scheme is not a direct financial instrument.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The Pre-Incubator facility is operated by a team of 6-7 people providing technical support for the businesses involved.

There is a simple application process for pre-incubator places with decisions taking about a week and no costs, aside from the applicant's time incurred in the application process.

▪ Key Steps – How it Works

Businesses located in the pre-incubator facility are able to access to a range of support and also encouraged to participate in a number of parallel initiatives; Coaching, Innovation Fairs and Competitions e.g. Junior Innovator Competition etc.

▪ Key Stats

An incentive tool, rather than a financial instrument/tool, SMEs are unable to access funding through the scheme.

The Pre-Incubator facility has enabled the set-up of 17 new enterprises, 5 of which are now next stage businesses and who have progressed onto Incubator space located in the Park, creating 30 new jobs.

3. KEY LEARNING POINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Legacy – Located close to the University the Pre-Incubator provides a connection between Academia and Industry. University students, graduates, junior academics and SMEs located in the region now have access to start up facilities and business support/coaching.

– What worked well

Students now have a facility to get started/access the early stage information they need.

– Challenges/Weaknesses

The focus was on infrastructure and building, i.e. an infrastructure measure, not a financial instrument. Set up with capital funds, there was no funding available for grants or other financial support **Transferability**

– Opportunities: Similar/established Incubator facilities already exist in partner regions. Low support costs i.e. the cost of coaching and access to space in other parts of the building for events/fairs/workshops etc is considered transferable.

Threats

None advised. The scheme has done what it intended, i.e. provide start up facilities, sustaining the facility, albeit at a very low cost, ongoing running costs may be an issue.

FURTHER INFORMATION

DIFASS You Tube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwX9sQD9SqM>

Academic Incubator Video Presentation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PJZliIWTd0>