



## **Daring to succeed, entrepreneurship for better growth\***

*\*Smart sustainable and inclusive*

AER Position on Entrepreneurship

### **ANNEX**

Regional good practices

#### **Growing talent**

**Languedoc Roussillon (FR): developing a place based innovation strategy with entrepreneurship at its core, good practice presented on the occasion of the AER conference “The Answer is Innovation”, Brussels, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2013<sup>1</sup>**

The region carries out extensive activities in the field of research and development, has an incubator that was labelled the best world incubator by the NBIA in 2007, a new tech transfert company, AxLR with 45M€ for 10 years, a regional Incubator, which saw the creation of 150 companies in 12 years and 850 jobs, was awarded the 3rd national rank for innovative companies and has the 2nd highest regional rate of companies created annually and was the 1st Region in France to use JEREMIE funds.

It is however faced with a number of problems to solve such as low private R&D, small companies with too much low tech activities, a national administration not dedicated enough to entrepreneurship and a culture of science -not innovation- in the academic sector. The analysis and mapping of the regional economy, lead to the conclusion that entrepreneurship was the common denominator. The region therefore developed a place based regional innovation strategy articulated around entrepreneurship and innovation.

**Flevoland (NL): creating innovative hubs & promoting exchange between stakeholders, Geomatics business park, good practice presented in the framework of the Smart Europe project<sup>2</sup>**

Geomatics Business Park (GBP) is a business and science park for companies and knowledge institutions working in the field of earth surveillance observation and information technology.

GBP started in 2002 as a spin off of the National Aerospace Laboratory, with financial contributions from private investors, the National Aerospace Laboratory and regional & national governments. GBS objectives are the establishment of an assembly of SME's and Knowledge Institutions rendering Geo-information & satellite earth observation data into innovative,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aer.eu/en/events/regionaldevelopment/2013/the-answer-is-innovation-conference.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://smart-europe.eu>

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commercial services and products and the improvement of high tech employability in the Province of Flevoland.

The three most important success factors of GBS are:

1. Geomatics Business Park is situated in the direct vicinity of a national research institute, the National Aerospace Institute (NLR).
2. The rapidly growing market of geomatics
3. The availability of innovation Programme (Geo Valley) that is supported and executed by a consortium of enterprises.

**Østfold (NO): a comprehensive strategy for entrepreneurship education at and with schools, good practice presented on the occasion of the AER Citizen Forum “Youth entrepreneurship education: a stepping-stone to regional innovation?”, Østfold (NO), March 25<sup>th</sup> 2011<sup>3</sup>**

In the region of Østfold entrepreneurship education is organised in the framework of a partnership between schools and businesses and the County Council committed to it as a practical measure in school. In 2010 14390 students had enrolled in various Youth Entrepreneurship (YE) programs, representing 28.9% of the population aged 6 - 19 years. Youth Entrepreneurship programs are available in all 11 secondary schools in Østfold and allow young people to exercise their own talents and their own skills to create values, see the results of their own effort immediately, develop creativity, practice cooperation and social skills, collaborate with business and community life through a diversity of activities at school.

**Murcia (ES): project education at school, good practice presented at the on the occasion of the AER Citizen Forum on youth entrepreneurship strategies, Orléans (FR), April 18<sup>th</sup> 2011**

The region of Murcia has implemented a Regional Entrepreneurship Plan “Plan Emprendemos” which promotes entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial culture and supports intraregional networking. These three components break down into 35 different activities, and to mention but two of them: the EJE & EME (Young Enterprise Europe and An Enterprise in my School) Projects and the Imagina (Imagine a different Company) Contest. As a result groups of children can for instance create their cooperatives as early as in primary school and manage them for real.

**Flevoland (NL): Informal learning & company projects, good practice presented during the Smart Europe peer review in Venice (IT), February 25<sup>th</sup>- March 1<sup>st</sup> 2013**

A company project is a temporary collaboration between a (technical) company – the client – and the training “middle manager engineering” arranged by a training institute (vocational or high school) – the contractor. Students realize a design, product- or process innovation as requested by the company. An existing question for innovation by the company determines the content of the project. Students work, under guidance, in a project team to accomplish the innovation question.

If possible, the assignment is realised within the company (project team of two or more students). The result is usable as innovation within the company. The mentoring of the project team is provided by a company employee or a teacher of the training institute. The objective is realistic and attainable for the student and the result is evaluated by the company and the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aer.eu/es/events/regionaldevelopment/2011/entrepreneurship-innovation.html>

teacher of the training institute. Depending on the level in which the student is studying, there are three possible types of project:

1. A development-oriented company project for students in the lower levels;
2. A more complex practice project for students in the higher levels
3. An exam project for graduating.

The duration of the project (type 2 and 3) varies from 10 to 20 weeks, depending the extent and level of the project. Students work two to three days a week on the project, sometimes more.

**Östergötland (SE): FramtidsFrön – Future seeds, support for entrepreneurship education, good practice presented in the framework of the YES –Youth Entrepreneurship Strategies- INTERREG IVC project 2008-2011<sup>4</sup>**

FramtidsFrön is a non-profit organisation offering a comprehensive approach to entrepreneurship. The organisation supports and trains teachers in the entrepreneurial approach and provides tools to inspire and ease the work with entrepreneurship in schools. FramtidsFrön works together with municipalities and schools to plan activities and training for teachers. Its tools have been produced in co-operation with teachers to ensure that the material is good pedagogically and realistic to use.

**Vienna (AT): Youth participation in the development of regional entrepreneurship strategies, good practice presented at the AER Summer Academy on Youth Entrepreneurship in Europe's Regions, Östersund (SE), August, 24-30 2008<sup>5</sup>**

The region developed a strategy to promote the active participation of young people in life, in society and in decision making processes at local, regional and national level. The idea was to increase participation in the civic life of communities and in the system of representative democracy, provide support to the learning process for youth participation and mobilise the support of regional and local authorities. Measures to enhance youth participation included the support for the creativity of young people to develop different forms of participatory dialogues in civic society, encourage innovative projects and structures, encourage the participation in democratic processes as well as in the development of the local community. Supporting youth participation means mainstreaming youth, empowerment, social inclusion and structured dialogue, which will in turn equip youth with the capacity to take initiatives, innovate, create and take risks, which are the main qualities of a potential entrepreneur. The regional strategy is furthermore completed by a series of support measures to young entrepreneurs such as access to finance, tailor-made support, suitable training offers, changes in legislation, reduction of the stigma of failure and revision of the social security schemes for entrepreneurs.

**Madeira (PT): Internships paid at least minimum legal salary, good practice presented in the framework of the PYE - Promoting Youth Employment - project 2011-2012<sup>6</sup>**

In the Azores, there are internship programmes for university students, for those completing technological courses, and for young graduates and those holding masters degrees. All interns receive at least the minimum legal regional salary. Internship projects have a training component. The programme is said to be very popular with companies and is increasing in use.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aer.eu/en/knowledge-centre/regional-expertise/projects/yes.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aer.eu/en/events/summer-school/2000-2009/aer-summer-school.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/MainIssues/Youth/PYE/PYE\\_Conclusions.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/MainIssues/Youth/PYE/PYE_Conclusions.pdf)

The companies can use internships for training and as a selection process. Up until 2010, the costs of the internships were met by the Regional Government, but now companies contribute 25% of what interns earn. This obligation did not lead to a drop in take-up.

### **AER Eurodysey Programme youth international internships programme**

Eurodysey is an exchange programme of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) created in 1985, which allows young job seekers aged between 18 and 30 to benefit from a traineeship placement abroad for a period between three to seven months.

The objective is to allow young people to gain professional experience at the same time as they get an opportunity to improve their knowledge of a foreign language. Eurodyssée enables companies to benefit from diversity and cooperation and enables regions to develop and build the European citizenship.

### **Hampshire (GB): Vocational training for NEET (not in Education, in Employment or Training) Youth, good practice presented in the framework of the PYE - Promoting Youth Employment - project 2011-2012<sup>7</sup>**

In 2010, Hampshire County Council commissioned a partnership called Gosport College. This involved 3 local secondary schools, 2 colleges and 2 independent training providers, to deliver additional training places, targeting NEET young people in Gosport (an area with relatively high levels of deprivation and high numbers of NEET young people), where there was a lack of appropriate vocational training opportunities available for young people. This was recognised by OFSTED (the national education standards monitoring body) as an example of best practice.

### **Madeira (PT): STARTENT<sup>8</sup> - Entrepreneurial culture of young people, and entrepreneurship education**

The main objective of this project was to develop new models and materials in the field of education for entrepreneurship in Europe and to foster entrepreneurial interest and talent among young people.

The project supported teachers and educators for entrepreneurship, building links between education establishments for entrepreneurship and real entrepreneurial world, and making entrepreneurial career more attractive to young people. It brought together different European universities and practitioners, built a common platform, developed practice-based teaching material and provided the students with hands-on knowledge by actively engaging them in the project activities. The STARTENT<sup>9</sup> project contributed to develop the entrepreneurial culture of young people and to improve entrepreneurship education in Europe. The close collaboration between representatives from the academic environment and from the business sector was the main success factor of this initiative.

## **Removing barriers**

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/MainIssues/Youth/PYE/PYE\\_Conclusions.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/MainIssues/Youth/PYE/PYE_Conclusions.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.startent.eu/>

<sup>9</sup> project co-funded by the European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry under the call "Entrepreneurial culture of young people and entrepreneurship education"

**East Sweden Region (SE): Digital attractiveness : Digidel project good practice presented in the AER report “Unlocking our territories social and economic potential” adopted in Paris (FR) on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2013<sup>10</sup>**

Digidel 2013 is a campaign to increase the share of the population actively using digital services. Almost 80 per cent of the Swedish population regularly uses the Internet. Between one and a two million Swedes do not. The campaign is formed by a network of NGOs, libraries, companies and authorities. The objective of this joint effort is that 500 000 individuals presently not using the Internet will get online by the end of 2013. The campaign wants to support those who do not know how to use digital services and those who are unaware of the opportunities the Internet could offer them. People not using the Internet are found in all social groups and ages, but they are primarily elderly. The use of digital services also differs greatly between and within regions, sometimes due to poor Internet access.

**South Ostrobothnia/ Etelä-Pohjanmaa (FI): Ownership by the local authorities of an open access broadband network, good practice presented in the AER report “Unlocking our territories social and economic potential” adopted in Paris (FR) on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2013**

Etelä-Pohjanmaa has villages with low density in population (4-9 persons/km<sup>2</sup>). The local communities in Suupohja region were paying great amount for renting the copper connections, and therefore looking ways to cut cost, and the same time wishing to build their own ICT networks. Since national telecom operators had no interest to invest in rural areas, the communities established their own network in 2005, called Suupohjan Seutuverkko Ltd. The company is owned by six municipalities. The purpose is to build and operate FTTx-networks, to enable the people, companies and local authorities, to have the possibility to live and function, and gain economic growth in rural areas. A network built with the Open Access principle means that service providers have all equal opportunities in providing their services to fibre customers. Thereby customers are free to choose their service from the operator they prefer. The length of the network is about 1500 kilometers. This Suupohja region model is an great example of strong co-operation among communities, as well as individuals, service providers and telecom operators. Local authorities' ownership of their own broadband network enables to lower ICT costs and to co-operate between municipalities as well as sub-regions, to use different e-services in the future and to meet the future demands in terms of broadband speed.

**Arad (AL): Educational and occupational mobility for all: Business Advice and Guidance training for Women Entrepreneurs.**

The BADGE project, is a Lifelong Learning Programme under the Leonardo da Vinci sub-programme funded by the European Commission, which aims at empowering women facing double disadvantage to start up their own business by:

- Supporting soft skills development for employability and self-employment
- Supporting development of self efficacy, regaining confidence and motivation for work
- Equipping VET trainers/ business advisors with innovative, engaging, tailored support methodologies informed by European best practice
- Decreasing isolation felt by the target group through contact with peers both nationally and at European level, improving confidence, language and communication skills
- Making VET practices more attractive to under-represented groups

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Commissions/RegionalPolicies/ActivityReports/rapport\\_limousin\\_EN.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Commissions/RegionalPolicies/ActivityReports/rapport_limousin_EN.pdf)

**Hampshire (UK): Care Leavers Moving into Employment, the Internship Plus Programme, good practice presented in the framework of the PYE - Promoting Youth Employment - project 2011-2012<sup>11</sup>**

A social group that is disadvantaged when it comes to integrating into employment is that of young people who have been taken into care. In Hampshire, in May 2011, there were 1180 young people in care. The County has developed a programme, the Internship Plus scheme to help care leavers who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) into work. A partnership approach is used. This employment and training programme recognizes that young care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group. The scheme gathers 3 partners: Hampshire County Council, Catch 22 (a charity training provider), and the University of Winchester. Each partner contributes its competences. The scheme offers: a paid (national minimum wage, plus expenses, plus holidays) 12-18 month contract of employment; a preparatory programme certified by Winchester University; a nationally recognized qualification; and significant additional pastoral care.

**Wallonie (BE): inclusive role models, good practice presented on the occasion of the Workshop “Engaging proactively for Women entrepreneurship” on the occasion of the AER Conference *Daring to succeed*, Edirne 3 April 2014<sup>12</sup>**

Wallonie (through its Economic Stimulation Agency) has developed a whole range of programs in order to promote and foster entrepreneurship among children, from kindergarten to high-school and beyond. When these programs have been thought out, the gender aspect has been thoroughly mainstreamed. Every year, around 15 000 young people (of which 50% are girls) are targeted by these programs, as well as numerous teachers. Awareness-raising agents have started in 2009 to visit schools and meet up with teachers and classes. They provide them with a variety of educational tools, such as:

- a guide to entrepreneurial learning that develops a methodology incorporating the Spirit of Enterprise in class;
- an educational guide describing how to set up a business;
- a comic-book for younger students – called “Antoine and Laura set up their own business”;
- over 21 classroom activities (role plays, try-outs on a small scale, etc...) for which the Economic Stimulation Agency teams up with accredited operators (such as “jentrepreneurs@school”, “Cap’ten”, “école et entreprise”, “club des étudiants entrepreneurs”,...).

All in all these activities help to foster entrepreneurial attitudes among young people of both sexes and focus on teaching action in action (using role plays, etc...)”.

## Supporting entrepreneurs

**Alsace (FR): The Beneficiary’s Guide for project managers and potential project managers, good practice from presented in the AER report “Information and access to European funding” adopted in Paris (FR) on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2013<sup>13</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/MainIssues/Youth/PYE/PYE\\_Conclusions.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/MainIssues/Youth/PYE/PYE_Conclusions.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aer.eu/en/events/regionaldevelopment/2014/aer-conference-daring-to-succeed-entrepreneurship-for-better-growth.html>



The joint technical secretariat of the Upper Rhine INTERREG programme has created a single document, the 'Beneficiary's guide', which gives all the information required to set up a project, file the request, and then manage the project. This gives the interested players a one-stop shop for all the information they need.

Moreover, in the case of the eligible expenses, a model table is available in Excel, thereby simplifying the completion of the form (instead of the Word table often supplied in certain sectoral programmes, or – even more complicated – the mere indications given in the text of the call for projects).

**Wallonie (BE): Access to microcredit for female entrepreneurs, good practice presented on the occasion of the Workshop “Engaging proactively for Women entrepreneurship” on the occasion of the AER Conference *Daring to succeed*, Edirne 3 April 2014**

Access to microcredit has been made easier for female entrepreneurs, through SOWALFIN (Société Wallonne de Financement et de Garantie des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises) and its subsidiary SOCAMUT (Société des Cautions Mutuelles de Wallonie)( ), which have developed a specific product, allowing women to borrow up to 25 000 EUR, of which 75% are covered by SOWALFIN/SOCAMUT security deposits. Additionally, subordinated loans of 12 500 EUR (with low interest rates) are also available. Some 2.000.000 EUR has been dedicated to that measure, for a period stretching from 2010 to 2014 (roughly 500 000 EUR per year). SOWALFIN also collaborates with women entrepreneurs networks (mainly FCE, Diane, FAR, AFFA) and organizes specifically tailored seminars for their members.

**Fribourg (CH): One stop shop Fribourg Development Agency, good practice presented on the occasion of the AER Summer Academies on Youth Entrepreneurship in Europe's Regions, Östersund (SE), August, 24-30 2008**

Supported by the Swiss Confederation and the canton of Fribourg, Fri Up is a non-profit organisation that supports existing businesses and creation, respectively in strengthening their capacity for innovation and dynamism. It is aimed at improving the productivity and competitiveness of SMEs, as well as turning more projects into viable businesses while creating jobs with high added value in the canton of Fribourg. The association is funded by federal contributions, regional and private sector.

## Telling the world

**The AER business community: Showcasing regional success stories, networking and exchange of expertise.**

Since 1985, the Assembly of European Regions has developed an important network composed of more than 30 000 stakeholders including European and Regional decision makers. Its daily work involves dealing with the European Institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions and the Council of Europe), the political and administrative authorities of nearly 230 regions, as well as with many other regional actors (regional development agencies, regional airports, universities etc.). the AER Community is composed of young people and students, who through AER can gain further understanding of Europe, and bring in innovative ideas, elected members of European institutions, national, regional and local authorities, NGOs, institutes, universities as well as individual citizens who

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PressComm/Publications/OtherPublications/EN-Reichardt\\_Report.pdf](http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PressComm/Publications/OtherPublications/EN-Reichardt_Report.pdf)

share the same democratic and bottom-up values and companies.

**AER regional peer reviews: AER methodology, which has been applied to topics like the green economy, sustainable tourism, alcohol-related harm, innovation-based jobs...**

Peer reviews are a friendly audit undertaken by international experts on a specific topic and are organised as a one-week study in a host region interested in improving their policies, They are based on a SWOT analysis and result in concrete recommendations. Peer Reviews provide the opportunity for regions to share best practices, identify, exchange and transfer effective regional policy instruments and mechanisms to improve policies at the regional level.

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