

IEA – TECHNO SEED – A concrete way to promote entrepreneurial initiatives in ICT field

The Techno Seed is an initiative founded by the Ministry of Economic Development of Italy with participation of University of Udine and two research centers. It has been developed in North-East Italy and is one of the 11 incubation projects founded by the Ministry. The aim is to collect good and innovative ideas in the ICT field, turn them into concrete innovations, and launch business through the creation of new enterprises. The project aims also to stimulate the development of an entrepreneurial culture and strengthen the relations between the University and the regional economic system. This initiative will make it possible an expert's team to develop an idea and transform it in into real enterprise.

The project structure has three phases:

- The first one is Entrepreneurial Training, which consists of carrying out workshops on business culture and preparation of a provisional business plan (really 32 seminars were organized with about 1000 participants). Finally, the Scientific and Technical Committee chaired by the scientific director of the project and composed of 9 members, selects 36 potential entrepreneurs.
- The second phase is Entrepreneurial Project Development, which ensures advice and support services to develop a business plan. An entrepreneurial laboratory is going to support the business plan preparation and a technological laboratory – to verify the feasibility of the idea. This phase brings to the identification of 12 new enterprises.
- The third phase “Start-Up and Incubation” foresees a possibility to use financial contribution to start the activity and to use the incubation services inside appropriated spaces – the sustaining of each enterprise was ensured with financial support of €20000.

<http://technoseed.it/>

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- Good initiative for collecting innovative ideas in ICT field as well makes them reality through the creation of new enterprises. The main benefit achieved thanks to this project is the creation of new enterprises which enrich the social and economic fabric of the zone. In fact, at the end of the project, the 15 new enterprises created give employment to 74 persons and this number is continuously increasing;
- Techno Seed is one of the 11 incubation projects funded by the Ministry and it is promoted by Friuli Innovazione (a research center), by University of Udine and by Ires FVG (Economic and Social Research Center)
- Stimulation of relations between University and the regional economic system. A sophisticated models for acquiring optimal synergism between Academics and Industrial party;
- Long term experience aggregation (project started at the beginning of 2000 years);

- Techno Seed project recognized the necessity of providing a concrete action of entrepreneurial training, from the moment that most of the potential entrepreneurs have no skills in economic, administrative or communication field, being these persons mostly researchers and technical;
- Support services to develop a definitive business plan and possibility to use a financial contribution.

Weaknesses:

- Activity developed only for North-East of Italy;
- Lack of multi language availability on the official site “www.technoseed.it” /at least English is mandatory/;
- Despite the current public funding (in the framework of the project) the challenge is to obtain of new funding, both public and private. Is it certainly feasible? What about the additional funding coming from FRIULIA spa and Mediocredito FVG?
- The expansion of the incubated enterprises sectors, into hi-tech fields. Which are these fields into the major area of ICT? The same as now (software design and development for business or research applications, application software in the field of mobile device, environmental technologies, safety, informative architecture services to enterprises, e-learning instruments and measurement instruments)? Are they really innovative?

Opportunities:

- Intensify the local industry. Innovative approaches leading to a successful businesses;
- New market that you can enter with technology that shall speed-up idea realization;
- Strengthen technological transfer between the researchers and economic sector;
- It is mentioned the partnership with the ACHIEVE network which assembles about 20 European incubators specialized in ICT. This network is funded by the European Community and is coordinated by the Cambridge University.

Threats:

- There are more attractive proposals from other regions or countries.
- Uncertain competitiveness and advancing of created companies.
- There is a possibility of lack of financial resources.