

InCompass INTERREG IVC Final Conference: Incubating Creativity with profits

InCompass takes a final bow

PRESS RELEASE

A three-year project, led by Dundee and Angus (D&A) College, Scotland, to help start-up businesses beat the flat-lining effect of the economy reached a successful conclusion last month when 80 delegates representing 15 European countries met in Brussels for the InCompass Interreg IVC Final Conference.

Veronica Lynch, Director of External Relations at D&A College and InCompass Project Leader described the project as having brought together the skills, talent, expertise and resources from across Europe.

“This project has solidified 15 strong partnerships across 12 countries that successfully examined and developed sustainable approaches to the financing of incubation units for business start-ups in creative industries which can be adopted by all regions,” said the project leader.

The InCompass INTERREG IVC Final Conference “Incubating Creativity with Profits” was held on Tuesday, 18th November 2014 in Scotland House, Brussels and attended by over 80 participants representing all European partner countries and included policy makers from regional and national government organisations, elected members, incubator owners and industry representatives.

The final conference was the “Big Event Platform” used to showcase the outcomes from the European project which highlighted: success factors in financially sustainable incubation models for the creative industries, taking into account social and commercial contextualisation and Tiers of Support; and Show-casing the Good Practices/Toolkit which can be utilised in the European Regions to transfer innovation models and assist in influencing regional planning through policymakers, incubators, Industry and Academia.

To complement the project outcomes attendees were also able to hear, learn and ask questions from all the distinguished guest speakers and discuss the findings of the project in more detail with the panel experts, the discussions and debates kept the conference both lively and interactive.

The morning session focussed on “Incubating Creativity with Profits” with the audience hearing from 2 distinguished speakers.

Delegates at the conference heard how the project reached 15,000 people through 73 events; produced seven regional incubation reports; identified 170 'good practices', prioritising 16 of them; and producing the InCompass best practices toolkit for policymakers.

All of this while at the same time developing deeper engagement between industry and government at EU, national and regional level.

Speakers at the conference were Akos Szabo, of the Joint Technical Secretariat Interreg IVC, who gave an overview of the achievements of the IVC programme as well as providing an insight into the new Interreg Europe programme. Astrid Severin, Managing Director of Greenovate Europe captivated the audience by sharing her experiences around, "Embedding Entrepreneurship for Economic Growth".

The morning session continued with the 3 workgroup leaders from KTU of Lithuania, Western Greece Region and the Municipality of Bratislava outlining the key success factors for financially sustainable business incubation models. This was rounded off with a panel session moderated by Diane Milne, Dundee City Council and included representatives from the regions whose models had been identified as good practices which were transferable to other EU regions.

The afternoon session, entitled, "Innovation Planning, a Regional Approach", focussed on how European partner regions have utilised the InCompass project findings to influence regional policy. The expert panel moderated by Elsa Ferreira Nunes from Beja in Portugal explored insights into regional approaches for the creation of sustainable incubation approaches.

This had followed Jan Jacob Trip from University of Delft, the creator of the Best Practices Toolkit who launched the toolkit and reflected how this can be used by Regional Policy Makers to embed EU good practices in their own region. Since the conference, the toolkit has achieved 2,500 downloads after the first 2 weeks of its launch.

Concluding the conference Christian Weinberger, senior adviser – entrepreneurship and EUP policy, European Commission, gave an update on "Future Innovation Funds".

In concluding the conference, Veronica Lynch thanked the speakers stating:

"The InCompass project has created a lasting legacy, not only for our participating regions and our own Regional Implementation Group members but through our incubation reports and the InCompass Best Practices Toolkit, other EU regions will benefit from the project.

"The strength of the partnership has been a key contributory factor in this success and I look forward to continuing these relationships beyond the project into the next phase in our development."



NOTE FOR EDITORS

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. Funded by the EU's European Regional Development fund through the INTERREG IVC Programme, the project aims to support and inform the collaborative development of local, regional, national and EU policy and thereby increase the capacity to create more spaces for experimentation, 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. The InCompass project website will be available very soon at the following link: www.incompassproject.eu

INTERREG IVC is an EU funded programme that helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common projects. These projects enable regions to share knowledge and experience that will help them develop new policy solutions to economic, environmental and social challenges. More information can be found at www.interreg4c.net.

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