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ACCELERATING LOCAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE

NEWSLETTER #4: AUGUST 2024 ISSUE



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ACCELERO Project Final Newsletter: Sustaining Momentum in European Innovation



ACCELERO's Final Chapter: Reflecting on Our Journey and Impact

As the ACCELERO project concludes, we reflect on the significant milestones and achievements that have marked our journey. From the outset, ACCELERO aimed to enhance innovation ecosystems across Europe through initiatives like the Co-Creation Design Sprint and the Educational Webinar Series. These efforts have empowered startups, SMEs, and business support organisations, fostering a more inclusive and balanced European innovation landscape.

Throughout the project, numerous success stories from partners and beneficiaries have emerged. ACCELERO's programmes and support mechanisms have enabled startups and SMEs to expand their horizons and tackle challenges confidently. Collaboration between business support organisations has led to innovative solutions and strengthened networks, proving the effectiveness of our approach in promoting cross-border cooperation.

Looking ahead, the vision for European innovation ecosystems post-ACCELERO remains vibrant and forward-thinking. Although the project is concluding, the foundations we have laid will continue to support future initiatives. Our partners are committed to sustaining the momentum by launching new pilot programmes, expanding their reach on platforms like EuroQuity, and continuously improving their services through rigorous quality assessments and certifications.

In conclusion, the ACCELERO project has made a lasting impact on the European innovation landscape. By bringing together a diverse consortium of dedicated partners, we have achieved remarkable successes and set new standards for collaboration and excellence. As we reflect on our journey, we celebrate the achievements and look forward to the continued growth and development of Europe's innovation ecosystems driven by the foundations established through ACCELERO.

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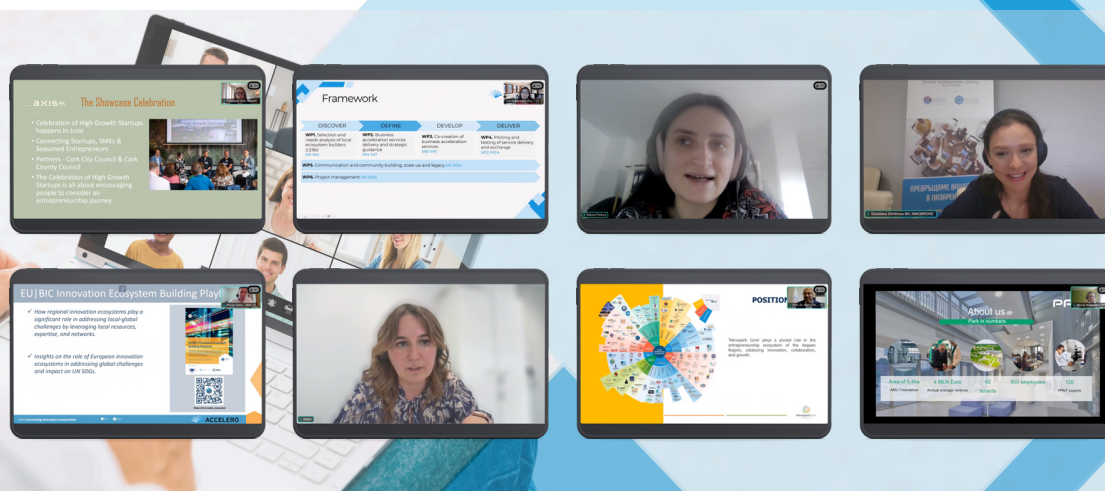
Building Stronger Ecosystems: Innovation Workshop Highlights

The "Innovation Across Borders: Building Stronger Ecosystems Through Collaboration" workshop, hosted by the ACCELERO project on June 25th, gathered business support organisations, universities, startups, SMEs, and innovators from across Europe. Distinguished speakers, including Laura Maragna (EurA), Jana Drzkova (Bpifrance), Aleksandar Filiposki (YES Foundation), Rosen Dimov (Go-Up Incubator), Miroslav Macan (Entrepreneurial Center of Krapina-Zagorje County), Ainslie Peters (CREW), Helena Deane (Western Development Commission), Rubén Carrandi (EBN), and Valentin Marin (Bpifrance), shared valuable insights to enhance innovation ecosystems.

Participants gained expert knowledge on leveraging cross-border collaboration to foster innovation. The workshop emphasized ACCELERO's role in bridging gaps between European innovation ecosystems and offered practical advice on utilizing its resources and network for growth. Discussions covered strategic partnerships, market expansion, and the latest innovation trends, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of enhancing their local ecosystems.

A key highlight was the session on leveraging the Euroquity platform. Participants learned how to use this matchmaking tool to connect with startups, investors, and innovation leaders across Europe. The platform serves as a critical resource for fostering collaboration and expanding business networks and will remain active for two years after ACCELERO ends.

Real-world success stories underscored the tangible benefits of collaboration and innovation. Case studies showcased how organisations like the Entrepreneurial Center of Krapina-Zagorje County Ltd. and Teknopark Izmir have successfully piloted innovative services through ACCELERO. Additionally, the workshop introduced free innovation support programmes, including the EIC Scaling Club, EU-LAC Digital Accelerator, and SPECTRA Project, offering essential support to startups and SMEs.



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Expand Your Horizons: Insights from the Go Global Programme

In an era where technology and innovation accelerate at an unprecedented pace, the Go Global Programme, an initiative of the ACCELERO project, stands out as a crucial support system for startups and SMEs aiming to expand internationally. The programme emphasizes the importance of leveraging technological advancements for global market expansion. By adopting cutting-edge technologies, businesses can innovate and scale more effectively, accessing new markets and staying competitive.

Global expansion is not just about entering new markets; it's about fostering innovation and collaboration on a broader scale. The programme highlights how internationalization drives growth and agility, allowing enterprises to stay ahead of industry trends. Engaging in global networks enables startups and SMEs to foster innovation by learning from diverse markets and collaborating with international partners.

The programme also addresses the risk of disruption, emphasizing the necessity of timely internationalization to avoid obsolescence. In a rapidly changing global market, businesses that delay expanding their horizons risk falling behind. The Go Global Programme aims to mitigate this risk by providing timely support and resources to help enterprises navigate the complexities of global expansion.

Key features of the Go Global Programme include comprehensive market analysis, strategic advisory services, and mentorship. Participants gain detailed insights into target markets, helping them make informed decisions about their international strategy. The programme also offers access to a network of experienced mentors who guide businesses through the complexities of global expansion, providing practical advice and support. Additionally, the programme introduces participants to potential investors and funding sources, crucial for supporting global growth.

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ACCELERO Panel at EBN Congress 2024

The ACCELERO team successfully conducted a pivotal panel discussion at the EBN Congress 2024 in Nantes, focusing on the crucial role of Business Support Organisations (BSOs) in fostering open innovation within ecosystems. Industry leaders shared their insights on how to effectively drive innovation through collaboration and resource sharing. The panel emphasized the importance of creating dynamic, interconnected networks that can respond swiftly to new opportunities and challenges.

Strategic best practices were a focal point of the discussion. The panellists presented effective strategies for reinforcing open innovation, including fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability. They highlighted the significance of implementing structured processes that encourage experimentation and collaboration across different sectors. These strategies are essential for BSOs aiming to enhance their support services and drive impactful innovation within their regions.

Collaborative networking was another key theme of the panel. Participants engaged in meaningful exchanges, building networks of like-minded organisations and individuals. This collaborative environment fostered a spirit of mutual support and shared learning, enabling attendees to gain new perspectives and ideas. The networking opportunities provided by the EBN Congress were instrumental in forging strong partnerships that can drive sustainable growth and innovation.

The panel featured distinguished speakers, including Miroslav Macan (Entrepreneurial Center of Krapina-Zagorje County), Carla Duarte (IPN), Florent Riout (Atlanpole), and Patrycja Dąbrowska-Wierzbicka (Krakow Technology Park), with Laura Maragna (EurA AG) as the moderator. Each speaker brought unique insights and experiences, enriching the discussion with diverse perspectives on open innovation. Their collective expertise underscored the importance of leveraging collaborative efforts to build robust and resilient innovation ecosystems across Europe.

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ACCELERO Consortium Meeting in Nantes

In June, the ACCELERO consortium convened in Nantes at the Bpifrance premises, marking a significant milestone in the project's journey. This gathering provided an essential platform for partners to share detailed advancements in pilot testing and discuss the impact of these initiatives. The meeting was a testament to the collaborative spirit driving the ACCELERO project, highlighting the progress made and setting the stage for future developments.

Strategic discussions during the meeting centred on the legacy of the ACCELERO project and its role in fostering a pan-European innovation ecosystem. Partners explored ways to sustain and expand the project's impact, emphasizing the importance of creating a cohesive and supportive environment for startups and SMEs across Europe. These discussions underscored the project's commitment to long-term growth and innovation.

Looking ahead, the consortium outlined several future initiatives, including the launch of the Go Global programme. This initiative aims to support startups and SMEs in overcoming the challenges of international growth, providing them with the tools and resources needed to expand into global markets. Additionally, the meeting highlighted upcoming workshops designed to equip business support organisations, innovators, and stakeholders with insights and strategies for fostering a thriving innovation ecosystem.

Collaboration and impact remain at the heart of the ACCELERO project. The consortium emphasized the importance of expanding the ACCELERO community beyond the project lifetime, inviting more stakeholders to join their efforts in driving innovation across Europe. By leveraging collective expertise and resources, the project dedicated to create a dynamic and inclusive innovation landscape that benefits businesses and society. The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to collaboration, innovation, and growth, setting a promising direction for the conclusion of ACCELERO.

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Impactful Workshop on Innovation Ecosystems Orchestration

On May 16th, BIC Innobridge and the EBN hosted the "Innovation Ecosystems Orchestration and Reinforcement" workshop. This event gathered BSOs from across Europe to explore effective strategies for building dynamic innovation ecosystems. Esteemed speakers, including Laura Maragna (EurA AG), Florian Sora (EBN), Fionnuala Wall (AxisBIC), CyRIC, Belen Talavera Chaves (FUNDECYT-PCTEX), Prof. Dr. Metin Tanoğlu (Teknopark İzmir), Michał Wujewski (Poznan Science and Technology Park), and Raluca Prelucă (Fonduri Structurale / Consolid8), contributed significantly to the workshop's success.

Participants received in-depth knowledge on how to effectively support and orchestrate innovation ecosystems. The workshop included presentations on the EBN Innovation Ecosystem Building Playbook, which provided structured guidelines on ecosystem development and a comprehensive overview of the EBN BIC community support framework. These expert insights equipped attendees with the knowledge needed to drive positive changes within their ecosystems.

The event highlighted proven best practices for building and sustaining vibrant innovation ecosystems. Sessions focused on actionable strategies for ecosystem building and engagement creation, offering participants practical solutions that could be implemented in their own regions. Real-world examples from successful BSOs illustrated the benefits of these strategies and their impact on local ecosystems.

Additionally, the panel discussions addressed specific regional challenges and opportunities, helping participants understand how to transform their local ecosystems effectively. By sharing experiences and solutions, attendees gained a deeper understanding of how to navigate and overcome regional barriers to innovation, fostering a more dynamic and resilient innovation landscape.

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Advancing Innovation: Pilot-Testing Co-Created Services

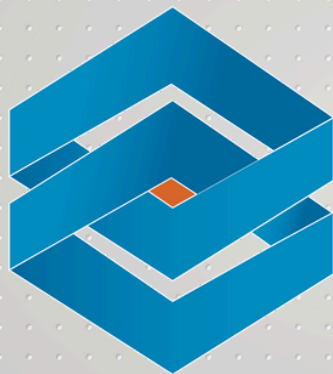
In the ACCELERO Project, the pilot-testing phase played a crucial role in enhancing the quality of business acceleration services provided by Local Ecosystem Builders (LEBs). The pilot tests aimed to develop and implement tailored services to meet the specific needs of local innovation ecosystems. Through the development and implementation of innovative tools and methods, BSOs supported their local clients—startups and SMEs—contributing to sustainability and competitiveness in the European market.

Participating BSOs were initially involved in the process of designing new services or improving existing ones by participating in a week-long boot camp, workshops, and one-on-one mentoring meetings with project partners. This preparation phase ensured that the services were well-tailored to the specific needs of local ecosystems. The services focused on several key areas, including sustainable development, internationalization, and scaling up innovation, utilizing methodologies such as design thinking and place-based innovation approaches.

The pilot implementations confirmed the necessity and value of these services, highlighting their impact on developing the BSOs themselves and attracting new sources of funding. The BSOs reported increased visibility and engagement with potential partners and clients. Notably, the pilots facilitated the establishment of new partnerships and the enhancement of organizational flexibility, enabling BSOs to better respond to changing market dynamics.

Feedback from the startups and SMEs involved in the pilots was overwhelmingly positive. Participants appreciated the practical support and tailored services, which helped them address real challenges and seize new opportunities. The success of the pilot phase underscores the importance of continuous development and adaptation of services to meet the evolving needs of local innovation ecosystems, ensuring sustainable growth and competitiveness in the European market.

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certified by ebn

Elevating Excellence: The Path to EU|BIC Certification for BSOs

The path to EU|BIC Certification is a cornerstone of the ACCELERO project, aiming to elevate the standards of Business Support Organisations (BSOs) across Europe. This prestigious recognition by the European Business & Innovation Centre Network (EBN) signifies a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement in service delivery.

The certification journey involves a rigorous evaluation process where BSOs must demonstrate their capacity to deliver high-quality services to startups and SMEs. Throughout the ACCELERO project, selected Local Ecosystem Builders (LEBs) engaged in pilot-testing phases, refining their services and implementing best practices to meet the stringent criteria set by the EBN.

Recently, the Entrepreneurial Center of Krapina-Zagorje County Ltd. and Teknopark Izmir successfully achieved EU|BIC Certification. These organisations exemplify the dedication and high standards required for this recognition. The certification not only enhances their credibility but also provides them with a framework for continuous improvement and access to a network of over 110 quality-certified EU|BICs across 35 countries.

Commitment to excellence remains at the forefront of ACCELERO's mission. By promoting quality systems and facilitating peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, the project ensures that BSOs are well-equipped to support innovation and entrepreneurship in their regions. This ongoing commitment to high service standards will continue to foster a vibrant and inclusive innovation ecosystem across Europe.

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ACCELERO Consortium: Spearheading European Innovation

The ACCELERO consortium represents a formidable alliance of expertise and visionary thinking, dedicated to revolutionizing the European innovation landscape. At the heart of our efforts lies a diverse group of leading organisations, each contributing unique strengths to the collective mission. EurA AG, for instance, brings over two decades of experience in business scale-up and fostering partnerships, managing more than 80 technology networks in Germany.

This collaborative synergy among consortium members amplifies our impact. EBN from Belgium elevates BSO services with its EU|BIC Certification and Impact Assessment Framework, while Bwcon from Germany offers practical innovation support through events like hackathons and summer academies. BIC Innobridge in Bulgaria integrates project management and forward-thinking business planning, and BPI in France specializes in equity investment and innovation funding. Krakowski Park Technologiczny (KPT) in Poland stands out for its customized incubation and acceleration programmes, focusing on financial incentives and building a cohesive entrepreneurial community.

Looking forward, the ACCELERO Consortium is committed to enhancing European innovation ecosystems. A key aspect of our future plans is expanding our community on platforms like EuroQuity. By fostering an active and engaged community on EuroQuity, we can facilitate better connections between startups, investors, and business support organisations. This collaborative environment on EuroQuity is crucial for knowledge sharing, networking, and accessing funding opportunities, ultimately driving growth and innovation across Europe.

Collectively, the consortium's efforts drive significant advancements in innovation. By leveraging our combined expertise and resources, we are not only supporting the growth of startups and SMEs but also contributing to a cohesive, collaborative, and forward-thinking European innovation ecosystem. This united approach positions the ACCELERO Consortium as a cornerstone in Europe's journey toward sustained innovation and development.



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Looking Ahead: Final Reflections and Future Directions

Reflecting on the journey, the ACCELERO project has made significant strides in enhancing the European innovation landscape. Through a series of strategic initiatives, pilot programmes, and collaborative efforts, we have successfully bridged gaps between diverse innovation ecosystems across Europe. Our collective efforts have empowered startups, SMEs, and Business Support Organisations (BSOs) to leverage new opportunities, drive growth, and contribute to a balanced and inclusive innovation environment. The achievements of ACCELERO underscore our commitment to fostering sustainable and impactful innovation.

Messages from leaders within the consortium echo this sentiment of progress and optimism. "ACCELERO has set a benchmark in cross-border collaboration and innovation support," says Laura Maragna, Senior Innovation Consultant at EurA AG. "Our journey so far has demonstrated the power of collective effort and shared vision." Similarly, Jana Drzkova of Bpifrance emphasizes, "The success of our initiatives lies in our unified approach and the active engagement of all partners. Together, we have created a robust foundation for future growth."

Looking ahead, sustaining the network and fostering continued collaboration are paramount. The ACCELERO consortium aims to expand our presence on platforms like EuroQuity, enhancing our community of innovators, startups, and BSOs. EuroQuity will serve as a central hub for knowledge exchange, networking, and collaboration, ensuring that the momentum we have built continues to grow. By leveraging this platform, we can foster a more balanced and inclusive innovation landscape where all regions can thrive, promoting sustained growth and innovation across Europe.

We encourage all participants and stakeholders to stay engaged and continue leveraging the resources and networks provided by ACCELERO. Your active participation is crucial in maintaining the vibrant community we have built and driving forward our shared mission of innovation and growth. Let's embrace the future with the same spirit of collaboration and commitment that has brought us this far. Together, we can continue to achieve remarkable outcomes and shape a brighter future for European innovation.



Join us on EuroQuity and shape the future of European innovation!



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