

Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Project Proposal: CERlecon

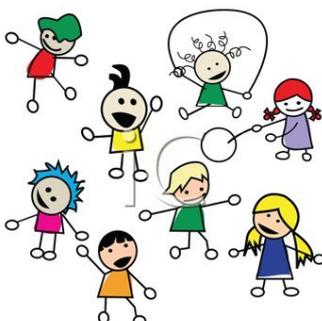
Acronym Title Number	CERlecon CENTRAL EUROPE Regional Innovation Ecosystems Network CE119
Priority	1. Cooperating on innovation to make CENTRAL EUROPE more competitive
Specific objective	1.2 To improve skills and entrepreneurial competences for advancing economic and social innovation in central European regions
Budget	3.26 MEUR
Duration	01.06.2016 – 31.05.2019 (36 months)
Lead applicant	Vienna Board of Education, European Office (AT)
Partners (14 Project institutions from 7 CE Member States/ regions: one policy partner and one expert partner per Member State)	Vienna (AT); Veneto (IT); Stuttgart (DE); Bratislava (SK); Rijeka (HR); Brno & Prague (CZ); Cracow (PL)



BASELINE Change is still needed to make the cities and regions in Central Europe better places to work and live. Daring young entrepreneurs (start-ups & young SMEs) with brilliant ideas could contribute considerably to this change. But they can't. Factors such as a lack of an entrepreneurial culture and mind-set leading to a limited interest in entrepreneurship are hampering their efforts. There is also inadequate training to improve their skills and entrepreneurial competences and innovation in general is being hampered by the lingering effects of the historical east-west divide and the recent economic crisis through an underinvestment in R&D.

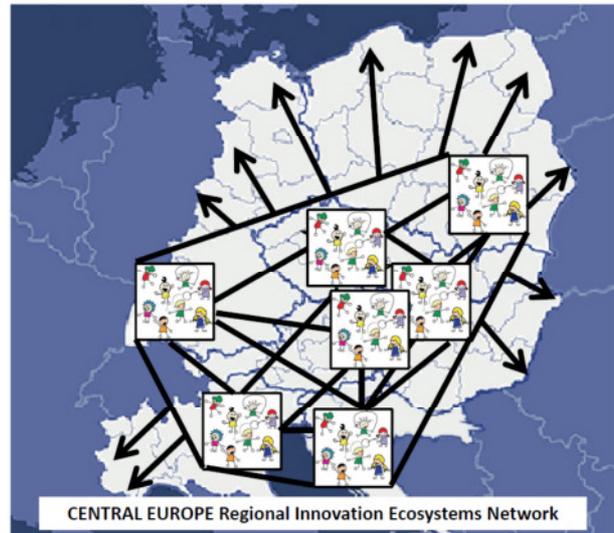
EXPECTED CHANGE By mid-2019, CERlecon will have changed the way entrepreneurs are inspired, trained and supported by developing and implementing new-type comprehensive regional innovation ecosystems (called Playparks) and a transnational innovation ecosystems' network to advance economic and social innovation in a majority of central European Member States.

CERlecon Playpark *“Learning is the act of acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing, existing knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. Learning is not compulsory; it is contextual. It does not happen all at once, but builds upon and is shaped by previous knowledge. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Play has been approached by several theorists as the first form of learning.”* (Schachter, Gilbert, Wegner (2011): *Psychology 2nd edition*)



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- One Playpark (new-type comprehensive regional innovation ecosystem) in every partner region.
- Every Playpark has 3+ specially trained Playpark trainers (project total= 21+)
- Every regional Playpark trains 70+ start-ups & young SMEs (project total=210+)
- Equal numbers of economic and social innovation business ideas and equal numbers of females and males will be selected for training
- Regional Playparks interlinked to form a transnational innovation ecosystems' network to improve the international competitiveness of the start-ups & young SMEs
- Training time: 6 months
- Training content: a new process-orientated balanced training methodology with compulsory learning modules covering all the domains of an efficient entrepreneurship ecosystem (D. Isenberg) based on Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) as well as free-time phases for business idea development and 5-day training visits to other Playparks in the network
- Start-ups & young SMEs as well as Playpark trainers evaluate the training experience in order to improve the Playparks and the network



OBJECTIVES (1) To develop smart strategies and action plans for regional innovation ecosystems and a transnational network; (2) To implement regional ecosystems and transnational network; (3) To improve the skills and competences of start-ups / young SMEs to advance economic and social innovation in central European regions.

ACTIVITIES Work Package 1: CERlecon will analyse the current regional and transnational training/service provision for start-ups & young SMEs in order to develop smart strategies and action plans for a better provision through new-type regional ecosystems and a transnational network. Work Package 2: The regional ecosystems and transnational network will be established and the Playpark trainers will be trained. Work Package 3: Potential start-ups & young SMES will be inspired in regional Playpark idea generation laboratories. Then the best potential start-ups & young SMEs will be selected and will go on a six-month training course at their regional Playpark and in the transnational network. After the training experience they and the Playpark trainers will evaluate the training which will lead to improvements in the training/service provision.

All of the activities and outputs will closely involve the policy level in the project regions to ensure sustainability.

RESULTS

- 210+ start-ups & young SMEs ('n' individuals) specially trained to contribute to RIS3 in economic and social innovation
- 21+ Playpark trainers specially trained and sustainably employed by the partner regions
- 7 new-type comprehensive regional innovation ecosystems (Playparks) and 1 transnational innovation ecosystems' network sustainably established
- 1 smart strategy for the development and implementation of regional Playparks and 1 smart strategy for the development and implementation of a transnational innovation ecosystems' network (both transferrable to other regions)
- 1 new-type comprehensive training methodology for Playpark trainers and 1 new-type comprehensive training methodology for start-ups & young SMEs