



Application form
European Entrepreneurial Regions (EER)
Pilot scheme

1. Contact details

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Application year:

- EER year 2011
- EER year 2012

Uusimaa Regional Council is applying for Helsinki-Uusimaa Region to be awarded the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label primarily for the year 2011 and secondarily for the year 2012.

Please submit your application, together with the declaration of political commitment to:
eer2010@cor.europa.eu. **Deadline for applications: 15 January 2010.**

2. Presentation of the political vision

Presentation of the political vision of Helsinki-Uusimaa Region

The region forms the metropolitan area in Finland. In this application, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region (later in this document described as “the Region”) refers to the economically expanding metropolitan area.

The core of the Uusimaa Regional Plan, to year 2033, is crystallized in the vision *Helsinki-Uusimaa Region serves as an international metropolitan home base for prosperity*. The vision has been concretized into six strategic objectives, which will be implemented by means of strategic choices. The Plan is the product of an extensive consultation process involving all major stakeholders in the Region and in state administration. The Plan gives evidences demonstrating political commitment. It was approved by the Regional Council, consisting of the representatives of all municipalities, in its meeting on December 9, 2009. The ongoing implementation of the plan creates strategic partnerships among key Regional actors in order to execute the prioritized actions.

The political vision of the Region is the idea that a strong capital area serves as an engine securing prerequisites for Finnish success. The Region is being developed as a growing metropolis in accordance with the Lisbon Strategy by paying particular attention to expertise, innovation and a well-functioning local structure. According to the Regional Plan, creative industries will be bolstered and Uusimaa will in 2033 thrive as an innovative and versatile cultural platform where business activities based on creativity promote the local industrial structure and employment.

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region’s strategic choices as evidence of the political commitment

In the operating year 2011 of the EER application the aim is to fulfil the Small Business Act and to operate as a European pioneer in the areas defined below. The activities can be comprehensively benchmarked and benefited from in other European regions as they establish their respective development programs. For the EER application the most essential political alignments and choices are as follows:

- **Helsinki-Uusimaa Region to become the most significant innovation concentration in the Baltic Sea Region.** The innovation concentration aims to bolster SME prerequisites to identify and establish strategic partnerships. The Region will be developed into the most significant innovation cluster in the Baltic Sea Region with a customer-driven, open innovation environment benefiting from the strengths of the different Regional areas. In particular, favourable conditions will be created for the integration of science- and research-driven and practically oriented innovation activities. Collaborative platforms and interfaces are needed to form a stepping stone for innovations. Focus is on societal innovations where entrepreneurship and new forms of business and especially services are needed; similarly the role of SMEs and new start-ups is accentuated.
- **Sustainable development promoted with innovation.** Innovations in sustainable development help save nonrenewable resources and reduce emissions. Such innovations face an extremely huge global demand as e.g. a substantial decrease in greenhouse gases without radical innovations poses great challenges. In these markets the Region is to have a dual role:
 1. It adopts and benefits from innovations created elsewhere and
 2. It develops and industrializes innovations promoting sustainable development.

The political vision addresses these principles which are also applied within the Region-internal development so as to aim at a well-functioning and effective societal structure reducing the level of energy consumption and mobility as well as enhancing wellbeing. The design of the Regional Plan takes into consideration eco-efficiency and the demands of urban design and energy economy. These activities create new business opportunities through entrepreneurship.

- **By a decision taken in its Regional Council, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is assuming a role as the first Finnish carbon-neutral province and forerunner in response to climate change.** To achieve this, it has made the strategic choices to focus in particular on the following: 1) Increase in the use of renewable energy forms and development of sustainable development technologies, and 2) Creation of new practices in construction to promote sustainable lifecycle thinking.

Political commitment and productive collaboration covering the entire Region are also manifested through the strategies and plans approved for implementation by different actors, including municipalities concretizing these alignments into local activities.

As an example, the Espoo City Council strategy defines five most important change areas for the years 2009-2012. In each of these the overall targets, the major measurements, evaluation criteria and indicators, as well as most significant development activities are defined. In particular, the areas of “Provision of services” and “Blooming and competitive city of sustainable development” deal with many activities important for innovation activities, sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and other SME activities, which are in line and can be found at the core of this EER application.

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region’s entrepreneurial potential - SWOT and key points

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationally recognized collaborative operator network with shared strategies (innovation strategy, competitiveness strategy) • Public sector has stabilized the operating environment and created versatile development services for enterprises • Policy is based on long-term investments in expertise, research and R&D in all sectors • Entrepreneurship is leveraged by a variety of collaborative measures and operators • Universities and other educational institutions have strategies for high level education and training opportunities for entrepreneurship and SMEs 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly growing region creates market opportunities for novel innovative services, in particular • Aging population creates new business opportunities • Fast traffic connections to St. Petersburg • Active development and high level utilization of innovative public procurement concepts encouraging entrepreneurship • New areas of expertise (nanotechnology and biotechnology) and their application to traditional fields • Utilization of linking together high-technology and clean nature in a new way
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threshold for entrepreneurship as measured through GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) higher than in other countries in general • Much overlap in the innovation system • Enterprises operate mostly in domestic markets and thereby their level of internationality is too low with respect to business opportunities • Few growth-oriented and innovative SMEs compared to international standards 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population causes labour shortage and challenges the future of SMEs • Globalization pushes expertise and enterprises to move to countries offering the most favourable operating opportunities • Industrial structure still dependent on large corporations and few industries • SMEs operating as sub-contractors of traditional large are facing structural threats

Table 1. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region’s entrepreneurial potential - SWOT

Finland and the Region have from the late 90’s been among the leading countries and regions in international benchmarkings and evaluations dealing with competitiveness, welfare and also education and innovation policy. A challenge is that in recent years the rankings especially in information society surveys have been declining. However, the Finnish innovation system is among the best in the world and the existing practices and concepts, as well as the future plans can be benefited from by the other EU regions.

Finland and the Region are facing serious demographic challenges. In the near future, the labour force will begin to rapidly decrease as a result of the aging of population. Without extensive work-based or competence-based immigration, economic growth can only be achieved by improving productivity of work. Commitment to the fight against climate change and to increasing renewable energy may harm the economy's growth potential and competitiveness, in the short term. As a consequence of globalization, industrial manufacturing will extensively be located in the most favourable operating conditions, i.e. China, India and South-East Asia. Despite the complications and threats these changes entail, the challenges mentioned above open at the same time new opportunities for entrepreneurship.

According to international evaluations, Finland and the Region have still some structural challenges concerning entrepreneurship. In the overall entrepreneurial activity among all GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) countries, Finland is above average just behind the USA, even though the potential of entrepreneurial activity is not so high. In contrast, the survival rate of entrepreneurial activity is measured to be relatively high. The Region has to work hard to attract innovative, growth-oriented and truly international entrepreneurs.

Also, productivity of services and innovations in the service sector needs calls for new ways to provide services. Entrepreneurship is one solution for creating public and retail services. The Region's economy depends mainly on ICT, metal and heavy industries, construction and real estate, and more and more on knowledge and service industries. New extensive investments especially in nanotechnology, wellbeing and cleantech clusters are seen as the key to industrial renewal.

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and the metropolitan policy

The Finnish government decided in its Government Programme to launch a specific metropolitan policy. This plan of action is unprecedented in its kind, as no such policy has previously been exercised in Finland. The metropolitan policy is based on the region's specific characteristics. The future activities should be founded on the good experiences acquired during the current regency; upon addressing the metropolitan policy, the succeeding Government Programme should accentuate regional innovation environments, global value networks, and the significance of entrepreneurship and increasing versatility of the innovation base. In this development, the EER award will have a strategic impact.

Commitment to implementation

All actors mentioned in the EER application express their commitment. The role of the Uusimaa Regional Council and its decisions enjoy politically representative cooperation and collaborative decision-making. The municipality level is politically committed to collaboration within the Region. In the support letters, this is demonstrated by the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Advisory Board undersigners being the chairpersons who also act as the chairpersons of the city boards of the three largest cities in the Region. Municipalities are engaged in the EER application both as decision makers and as members of the implementation processes.

The activities described in this EER application reflect the positive collaborative culture prevalent in the Region. However, the effects of the EER preparation process have already taken the Region's activities to the next level, where individual projects are more tightly incorporated into a common plan of action to be orchestrated in the implementation phase. Innovativeness and societal impact will significantly increase when implementing the measures stated in the EER application.

3. Action plan

Action Plan

This EER application shows first and foremost a bottom-up way of working and commitment to the activities presented in the application. A regional top-down process has provided a political frame, as well as has set the strategic guidelines.

The activities substantiated in this EER application are genuinely and largely already planned and preparations are on way. Additionally, it has been evaluated on the basis of EU Small Business Act as a significant and regionally new-creating activity, the materialization of which is being collaborated by the common political and operational commitment manifested through the extensive preparation of this EER application.

The EER Implementation Committee will be formed so that representation of the most pertinent aspects of this application and high-level expertise will be secured. Successful implementation is further guaranteed by the fact that these operators already collaborate in other contexts. The EU Committee of the Region's (CoR) representatives of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and other political leaders will establish an EER Steering Committee to plan and promote the EU dimension of the activities. The operating plans drafted and active reciprocal collaboration serve as channels for other regions to learn from the best practices already existing or being created. For this purpose a special team of "change agents" will be formed. Their expertise is available also for the use of other EU regions in benchmarking and facilitating similar activities.

The Region will define special efforts for the EER year which aim at and establish new practices for cooperation with CoR and directly with other EU regions. The expansion and deepening of the use of the Lisbon Monitoring Platform (LMP) serves as a pertinent activity and instrument. Throughout the EER action plan, we will allocate activities in accordance with the Small Business Act and to influencing and implementing other objects aligning EU activities. Such measures will be focused, in particular on "The Future "EU 2020" Strategy", "New Skills for New Jobs" and "European Innovation Act".

a. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region measures to achieve the principles of the EU's Small Business Act

The Finnish government has created a Policy Program for Employment, Entrepreneurship and Work Life, thereby responding to the challenges set by declining workforce and recent changes in global business. The implementation plan of the program addresses the essential principles of the EU Small Business Act. Additionally, each region has its own policy emphases. The main objective is to support corporate growth intentions, increase entrepreneurship education, improve public services directed to entrepreneurs, decrease entrepreneurial bureaucracy, and evaluate the impact of legislation on entrepreneurship. The program deploys taxation and financing as instruments supporting entrepreneurship and leveraging entrepreneurs' **social security and financial risk tolerance, addressing also bankruptcy and a second chance.**

In accordance with the EU Small Business Act, the program has brought into the spotlight the promotion of and support for **family entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship in creative industries and in agriculture and forestry.** A workgroup has been established to identify measures to encourage those who have undergone bankruptcy to start again as entrepreneurs. The Ubiquitous Information Society Advisory Board has taken actions to fasten the **adoption of electronic invoicing and other transactions** in the public and private sectors and introduce these to consumers.

Additionally, mainstreaming the principles at the regional level will be strengthened when re-defining the Competitiveness Strategy for the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The Competitiveness Strategy is one of the spearheads of the Metropolitan Policy outlined in the Finnish Government Program and in the policy of the Region.

The implementation of the strategy intensifies the internationalization of the metropolitan area and its connection to global networks. Building attractive and innovative development and operating **environments for enterprises and citizens** increases the attractiveness of entrepreneurship in the Region. This improves the marketing of the Region and attracts international businesses and foreign investment.

An example of **Think Small First** is the focus of the Regional Organization of Enterprises in Helsinki on convincing Helsinki City to implement a SME-friendly procurement policy. One of the materializations of this type of “think small first” policy is the alternative provision of social and health services together with city entrepreneurs.

The objective of **Public administration responds to SME needs** is to create an entrepreneurially friendly environment in the Region. An excellent example of this is the development of small- and medium-sized enterprise services by using service design.

City of Helsinki has defined in its economic development a strategy that all departments and utilities together are responsible for in creating a business-friendly city administration.

- *Helsinki – A business friendly partner* sets the target for common operation principles for transparency, impartiality, business friendliness, quality thinking and promptness in dealing with business enterprises.
- The usage of design in the service innovation process is gaining more importance in City administration through the years 2011 and 2012, and the target will acquire more visibility also as part of the World Design Capital 2012 program.

In adapting public policy tools to SME needs and in facilitating **SME participation in public procurement and pre-commercial procurement**, the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen have built up a joint pilot program introducing innovation-friendly procurement processes and guidelines. The idea of this action is to build larger FP 7 projects to help SMEs take the opportunities offered by **the single market**.

- The project will create and disseminate knowledge that can be applied in procurement procedures and contractual practices that promote innovations, encourage dialogue between customers and service providers, and strengthen cooperation capabilities.
- The creation of a network of highly trained procurement professionals and their support by a web-based toolbox will be set up in the future.

An example of **promoting the upgrading of skills in SMEs and all forms of innovation** is the project for inhabitant and customer-based safety solutions in urban environment. The project’s idea is to renew the community of safety service producers, bringing new information and new points of view for working together with other operators, thereby creating multi-based safety solutions.

- In the **Project for inhabitant and customer-based safety solution in urban environment**, new implementation processes for safety solution based on inhabitant and customer needs are carried out, new total safety models are developed, pilots for commercial safety solutions are made and canals for commercializing are identified.
- By building bridges between the participants, research results are reflected to new business concepts. Companies and the third sector are active in the innovation process. With pre-commercial procurement methods, comprehensive solutions are created to known problems. The safety in city environment and everyday life is approached interdisciplinarily by combining the branches of science like: anthropology, environmental psychology, risk management, and urban geography.

To **enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities** helps SMEs to commercialize cleantech innovations. The project called Innovation Pipeline provides support for the cleantech and environmental technology innovations. The target groups are SMEs and spin-off companies as well as universities. Every innovation is evaluated and rated by the panel of expertise. If an innovation is chosen in the project, the panel will make an individual plan for the company with the innovation and help to find the best channel to the market.

The concrete benefits for the companies in commercializing environmental innovations are

- Preliminary evaluation by a network of specialists
- Support for the development, commercialization and internationalization, like expertise from universities and other institutes of higher learning, research institutes and development companies, competence and experience in preparing projects, networks and practical models for making agreements on industrial property rights
- Financing opportunities

In the Region there are several initiatives to **encourage and support SMEs to benefit from market growth**. As a whole, the Region's entrepreneurship support through the business growth life cycle is presented in Part 3c and Table 2. Especially the Private-Public Partnering co-operation platforms support with Growth Financing and Networking will accelerate SMEs towards global markets.

- The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region Entrepreneurship Excellence Support Model implementation and partners' commitment to the joint operation model encourages the companies to grow, thereby helping to increase the number of growth companies and to create global success stories.

b. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region introducing entrepreneurship in schools and training programs

The entrepreneurship education lies solidly on the strengths of the Finnish education system which can be crystallized into two concepts: equity and excellence. As a token, Finland has repeatedly performed outstandingly in the PISA survey.

The promotion of entrepreneurship in the Region's general education institutions relies on entrepreneurship education and competitions. These activities are arranged on a regular basis with the support of the operating environment through entrepreneurial and other organizations. In the secondary system vocational schools, entrepreneurship gains visibility through incubator activities and entrepreneurship education.

Young Enterprise Finland (YEF) offers an array of study modules ranging from pre-school and initial education to graduate level. The methodology of these modules is based on Learning by Doing -concept in the fields of entrepreneurship and consumer education.

In universities the promotion of entrepreneurship takes 4 forms: 1) activation of entrepreneurship and pre-incubation, 2) leveraging research into business, 3) incubation, and 4) study modules on entrepreneurship.

The enterprise incubation network within the metropolitan region is comprehensive, ranging from e.g. Spinno Enterprise Center in Otaniemi, Start – Up Center in Helsinki, Techvilla in Hyvinkää and the wellbeing incubator maintained by the Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Altogether, they give rise to approximately 100 – 150 new start-ups annually, about a third of which spin out of universities as student-led firms. The TULI (from research to business) endeavour advances university-driven innovation. Research-originated business is bolstered by invention disclosures at universities.

The main entrepreneurship activities in schools training programmes:

- InnoOmnia is a new action implementing entrepreneurial activation into the vocational education.
- An important form of entrepreneurial activation of students is business idea competitions like VentureCup and SENSE.
- In the Region's universities of applied sciences all students of business administration are to draft their own business plan.
- Aalto Entrepreneurship Society is a unique example of student-originated and -run entrepreneurial activation in collaboration between students and business life (www.aaltoes.com).
- The Helsinki Metropolitan Enterprise Academy (www.hmea.fi) common for the metropolitan region and universities of applied sciences hosts the largest entrepreneurial event in Finland. The frame of the HMEA models the Enterprise Tuesday from Cambridge.

- The innovation services shared by the universities and universities of applied sciences in the metropolitan region help refine research outcomes into business. The Helsinki Metropolitan Innovation Platform (HMIP) serves as a common innovation platform for the Region’s universities, having contributed to entrepreneurship also internationally. Such entrepreneurship camps as the Cambridge Boot Camp in Cambridge have provided ground for concrete work. Of almost a 100 participants of the camp roughly 40% started up their own firm during their studies.
- Exemplary new initiatives supporting entrepreneurship are the VIGO program fortifying growth businesses and the operations of the Foundation for Finnish Inventions to commercialize innovations, both promoting incubation activities.
- Examples of university curricula orienting students directly to entrepreneurship comprise the School of Creative Entrepreneurship and Laurea Business Ventures.
- The University of Helsinki as the largest university in Finland is launching a 4 ECTS-credit mandatory course for all students in all degrees to cover innovation activities and IPR issues with the lead of specialists.
- Young Enterprise Finland (YEF) arranges curricula-related events on a yearly basis. Regional YEF fairs gather together youngsters within the YEF Year as an Entrepreneur program, extending over the academic year. The fairs offer a forum to meet with each other and share their experiences from the compact entrepreneurship program, while enjoying the exhibition.
- Women’s Enterprise Agency, one of the 12 Enterprise Agencies in the Region, organizes activities to encourage entrepreneurship among women and provide them with coaching in the early stages of their entrepreneurial career by organizing entrepreneur-driven hands-on consultation, training and mentoring. Some 40 events are organized annually with approximately 400 participants.

c. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region support at each critical level of the business growth cycle

The Region’s entrepreneurship support throughout the business growth life cycle consists of the entrepreneurial environment of the Region, which include the infrastructure, the organizations operating in the field of entrepreneurship & business growth, development services and other support in different phases, the tools used, and all the organizations and the partner network operating according to the principle of Private-Public Partnering. This Helsinki-Uusimaa Region excellence – the Entrepreneurship Support Model – is presented as a table below:

Firm birth DISCOVERY	Development INCUBATION	Expansion ACCELERATION	Speed-Up to Global Markets GLOBALISATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities • Research Institutes • Private and Public Sector spin-offs <p>→ Activation and Idea evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Incubation • Academia • Aalto University • VTT • Foundation for Inventors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incubators • Development organisations • Entrepreneurial eco-system drivers <p>→ Company set-up Kick-off and Coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helsinki Region Incubators • Enterprising Future aim • Aalto Entrepreneurship Society by students • Laurea University of Applied Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Parks • Business Development • PrivatePublicPartnering co-operation platforms <p>→ Growth Financing and Networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tekes financing • New hi-tech firms growth acceleration • Technopolis growth services • VC firms & Venture Accelerators • VTT Ventures • Service Providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationalisation Centres of Expertise Clusters, Growth programmes <p>→ Growth Enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationalisation support initiatives & co-operation • Cluster activities • VC firms • European schemes and co-operation networks

Table 2: Entrepreneurship Support Model.

The Region has committed to major measures to support entrepreneurship throughout the business growth life cycle. The Entrepreneurship support model covers all the themes of entrepreneurial activation, entrepreneurial commitment and co-operation and entrepreneurial excellence.

The following measures to strengthen the support and planned activities in the run-up to the EER year and in the EER year itself demonstrate the overall sustainability of the activities:

- The regional action plan for the European Entrepreneurial year 2011/2012 includes the implementation and further development of the regional model on the basis of the best practical examples of the entrepreneurial excellence identified in the Region.
- The entrepreneurial environment, organizations, development services and support in different phases are continuously updated and presentation material will be developed.
- The model is open also for foreign entrepreneurs and small businesses, and the advisory services concept for foreigners will be developed in the NoWrongDoor project 2010-2012.
- The Region will describe examples of entrepreneurial excellence and is ready to share these good practices with other European regions.

The targeted activities and new openings, scheduled for the EER year 2011, are described in several sections of this application. The most significant events can be found in part 4.

Some key actors and developers of new actions in this support model are:

Aalto Entrepreneurial University initiative and the **Aalto Entrepreneurship Society initiative** strive to create an entrepreneurial eco-system in the Aalto University. This “Student-run growth entrepreneurship catalyst” aims at activating students, bringing together and helping students to find and create ideas, form teams, learn, create startups and successful companies. Activities for entrepreneurial activation include monthly events & “Aaltoes Fairs – e.g. connecting students, alumni, entrepreneurs & investors.

Multidisciplinary **Laurea University of Applied Sciences** will launch the new Spinno Enterprise Center incubator offering services for entrepreneurs and companies. To develop entrepreneurship Laurea will organize a seminar “Incubation after 2012” and to boost academic entrepreneurship Metropolitan Boot Camps in European cooperation with Cambridge.

Regional development company **Culminatum Innovation** and the **Centre of Expertise Programme** organize 2011/2012 an Industrial policy event and cluster cooperation event. The Centres of Expertise look for active participation in European projects.

Tekes – the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation offers R&D and growth financing to projects that create in the long-term the greatest benefits for the economy and society. An example of world-class expertise and important new opportunity for financing growth companies is the Tekes YIC financing scheme for young and innovative growth companies.

Technopolis Ventures and **Technopolis** Business Development, Growth & Networking services help high tech growth companies gain access to investors, customers, and partners. Together with partners they organize a MoneyTalks event for entrepreneurs & financiers every second Thursday of the month and a full program MoneyTalks Forum – Entrepreneur to Financier Pitching, Matchmaking and Networking Event – twice a year.

Entrepreneurs themselves with intermediaries have created new kind of roots –level entrepreneurship where new companies themselves work in fast and flexible forms of co-operation. This has already made camp –style events possible where companies, investors, experience from best practices and regional supporting organizations meet in an open, creative atmosphere. These events have a flexible format which can be re-used both in Finland and in EU 2011/2012. Due to their simultaneously regional and international nature, these actions connect entrepreneurs to EU-level investments, research, knowledge and partnerships.

d. Development of a regional cluster policy

Cluster policy is a fixed-term special government funded Centre of Expertise Programme aimed at focusing regional resources and activities on development areas of key national importance. The programme promotes the utilisation of the highest international standard of knowledge and expertise that exists in the different regions. All specialization fields have their own defined focus areas and strategic partnerships and customers. Services offered by the clusters have been productized and there are several development projects linking different cluster competences collectively. Some of the examples are Security, Urban Living Concepts and Innovation Pipeline. An objective is to create a 65-MEUR project base by 2012 that involves 7000 companies and all important innovation organizations, universities and research institutions.

The well-organized clusters and cooperation managed by Culminatum Innovation in Helsinki-Uusimaa Region are presented in the Figure 1.

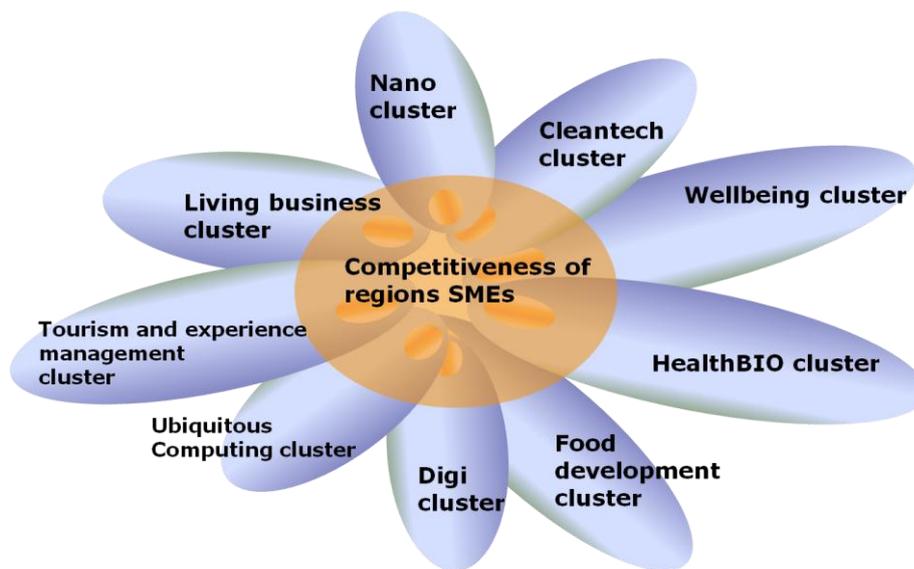


Figure 1. Clusters increasing SMEs competitiveness.

The cluster policy boosts the collaboration for the competitiveness of the companies in the Region. The main focus areas are defined for each cluster.

The strategy of cluster activity for the next years includes:

- to support the development of prospective SMEs to growth and internationalization
- to enhance and develop SME chances to commercialize services and business potentials obtained through high-standard research
- to improve SME chances to productize and commercialize developed innovations
- to reinforce business knowhow, internationalization and networking abilities in SMEs
- to create open innovation arenas and business ecosystems with close partner cooperation, such as Thematic Development Arenas in the Region

In the regional cluster policy the activities in the years 2010-2012 are especially focused to productize services offered by the clusters:

- Project planning and project development (public, private and third sector)
- Innovation and commercialization services. As examples Field-Specific SME Growth Services and CulminatumPump are conceptualized models for expertise transfer between research and SMEs
- New partnerships: tailored partnering, facilitating and developing thematic networks
- Public Procurement for new innovative SME services and products in the private sector and productivity and service development in the public sector
- Service Design for developing public services and Knowledge Intensive Business Services

e. Making optimal use of the EU's structural funds and other public funding in the Region

The reform of State Regional Administration enhances the role of the regional councils. The purpose is to coordinate and harmonize regional development activities more effectively than previously. From the beginning of 2010, there will be only two regional authorities which provide regional development funding, both national and EU-funds, in the Region; the Uusimaa Regional Council and the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment.

Because the amount of EU funding is relatively small in the Region, most of the funding for small and medium-sized companies as well as larger companies is based on national sources. According to Finnish National Structural Fund Strategy, the objective of EU funding is to provide the best possible preconditions for entrepreneurship everywhere in Finland.

- Therefore, assistance for the establishment and development of small and medium-sized companies plays a key role in the effort to reach these objectives.
- In the Region, funding must be targeted at high-quality projects that promote business activity and improve the long-term competitiveness of companies.

The urban dimension is included in the Finnish National Structural Fund Strategy. In the Southern Finland ERDF program, action line 4 is meant for the development of large urban areas. In the Metropolitan area, the aim is to focus on special challenges of the cities as well as to promote their competitiveness.

- The thematic action line 5 in the Southern Finland ERDF program is focused on the development of core competence areas in the regions. 80% of the action line's budget is allocated to the themes related to Competence Clusters of the National Centre of Expertise Programme.
- Development of such clusters as Cleantech, Intelligent Machines, HealthBIO, Nanotechnology and Ubiquitous Computing has a great importance in the Region's competitiveness.

Financing from the European Social Fund (ESF) is used, along with financing from the ERDF program, for the promotion of employment and competitiveness. In the Region special attention has been directed to the financing of business incubators.

- A successful and still developing measure is the Enterprising Future aim & the Helsinki Region Incubators network offering services for more than 700 entrepreneurs and generating 250 new start-ups per year. Main services include business idea consulting, a network of specialized and regional business incubators, and expert services.

f. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region Private-Public Partnership

The Region has a proven track record in establishing partnerships between public and private sectors on the regional level. Some best practices are awarded on the European level, as an example the operating model to support the generation of New Technology-Based Firms.

Finland as a forerunner of the university reform with private partnering

A new university law with substantial changes to the old system became effective from the beginning of 2010. A regionally, nationally and internationally significant and unique public-private cooperation endeavour is materializing through the creation and implementation of Aalto University. A unique feature of the targets can be summarized by "Aalto stimulates new forms of research-based multidisciplinary collaboration and facilitates the birth of new innovations".

- Prerequisites to tackle the enormous challenges are created by investing a substantial start-up capital in the internationally significant university of science, art, technology and business, together with the Finnish industries (companies and the Confederation of the Finnish Industries EK).

- Aalto University strategy alignments support the promotion of entrepreneurship: “Promoting entrepreneurship and supporting new high tech business are essential aspects of Aalto University’s societal influence. Entrepreneurship promotion is incorporated as an inherent element into the University’s research and teaching activities.”

User-driven innovation environments (living labs) as part of the public private cooperation

The thematic innovation environments serve as development platforms for new service and product innovations. The development is driven by user needs. An example of such collaboration is the common development agenda of the development platforms for the coming years, aimed at enhancing public service processes and designing service concepts together with customers and public- and private-sector operators. Examples of the above are:

- The Terveystauko endeavour by Active Life Village Oy to mitigate rush-hour problems in health centres by transferring services to shopping malls
- The “digital services in public transportation” project by Forum Virium Helsinki
- A project on the application of RFID and sensor technology by Vantaan Innovaatio-Instituutti
- Aalto University brings new added value to European living labs by focusing on developing the Knowledge Triangle addressing practical methods, processes and concepts.

Public procurement an integral part of the public-private collaboration on the EU level

Public purchasing is developed on the EU level and also regionally by means of two EU networks already in place. By means of pre-commercial acquisitions, the public sector finds it possible to share the risks and benefits with companies in the design, modelling and testing of new products or services. In addition, public-sector efficiency is promoted by resorting to e.g. joint procurement crossing the borders of the EU.

The PreCo endeavour (Enhancing Innovation in pre-commercial public purchasing processes PCP) is implemented by a network of European public- and private-sector actors under the coordination of Culminatium Innovation.

- The goal is to support, in particular, such pre-commercial acquisitions that promote innovation and citizen participation in solution design and implementation. Procurement is under scrutiny mainly in health care and energy.
- The endeavour aims at establishing a European thematic network gathering together best practices and disseminating information about successful experiments.

Private-Public Partnership in Baltic Sea Cooperation

The Active ageing project will focus on preparing a public-private cluster model for a transnational Baltic Sea Region cluster in supporting active ageing (healthcare, wellness and assistive technologies & products).

A demand-based open innovation service concept in Active Ageing will be designed between the Baltic Sea Region and Asia, and in the practical implementation of the concept, the project looks for an innovation service provider to operate on the Asian markets.

Common regional program by entrepreneurial associations to promote SME conditions

Private-Public partnership is supported by the Federations of Enterprises of the Region by launching a common program in spring 2010 along with the proposed measures for promoting entrepreneurship in the Region. The associations represent more 20 000 SMEs within their region.

Social inclusion and specific information society activities

An extensive endeavour organized by TIEKE (Finnish Information Society Development Centre) aiming at the utilization of ICT throughout society will be carried out in the Region to bolster e-business boosting the operations and to help in transferring to electronic financial administration (e-invoices, e-accounting etc.).

- According to a plan drawn, in the Muutostahto (Will to change) project a 1000 change agents will be trained to accelerate the deployment of ICT in companies and in the public sector while building them a career as entrepreneurs or hired employees. This endeavour is realized in collaboration with Aalto University and labour market organizations.
- A “Road Show” will be run in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy as well as a “nursing” program to provide entrepreneurs with prerequisites for and knowledge about the latest opportunities for utilizing ICT.

In the years 2010 and 2011 a program directed to senior citizens will be implemented by TIEKE together with the Ministry of Transport and Communications to provide all seniors with the preparedness to benefit from IT in their daily chores and communication.

- The project aims to develop innovations to assist the elderly in managing at home as long as possible and to act as independent citizens in the social media. At the same time, the program aims to make the tacit knowledge of seniors available to others.

4. EER activities and communication.

EER activities and communication

Activities and communication scheduled for the EER year are planned to be organized according to their respective roles in the process on the following three levels:

- World class entrepreneurial excellence level
- Entrepreneurial commitment & co-operation level
- Entrepreneurial activation level

The entrepreneurial excellence level focuses on the implementation of the Small Business Act principles, Baltic Sea and European co-operation activities, the dissemination of the world-class excellence of the Region, launching of new initiatives, and exchange of best practices within the European Union.

Entrepreneurial commitment & co-operation refers e.g. to activities guaranteeing support during the business life cycle. Entrepreneurial activation denotes introducing and promoting entrepreneurship e.g. in schools, training programs and universities. Figure 2 below presents the flow of the main EER events:

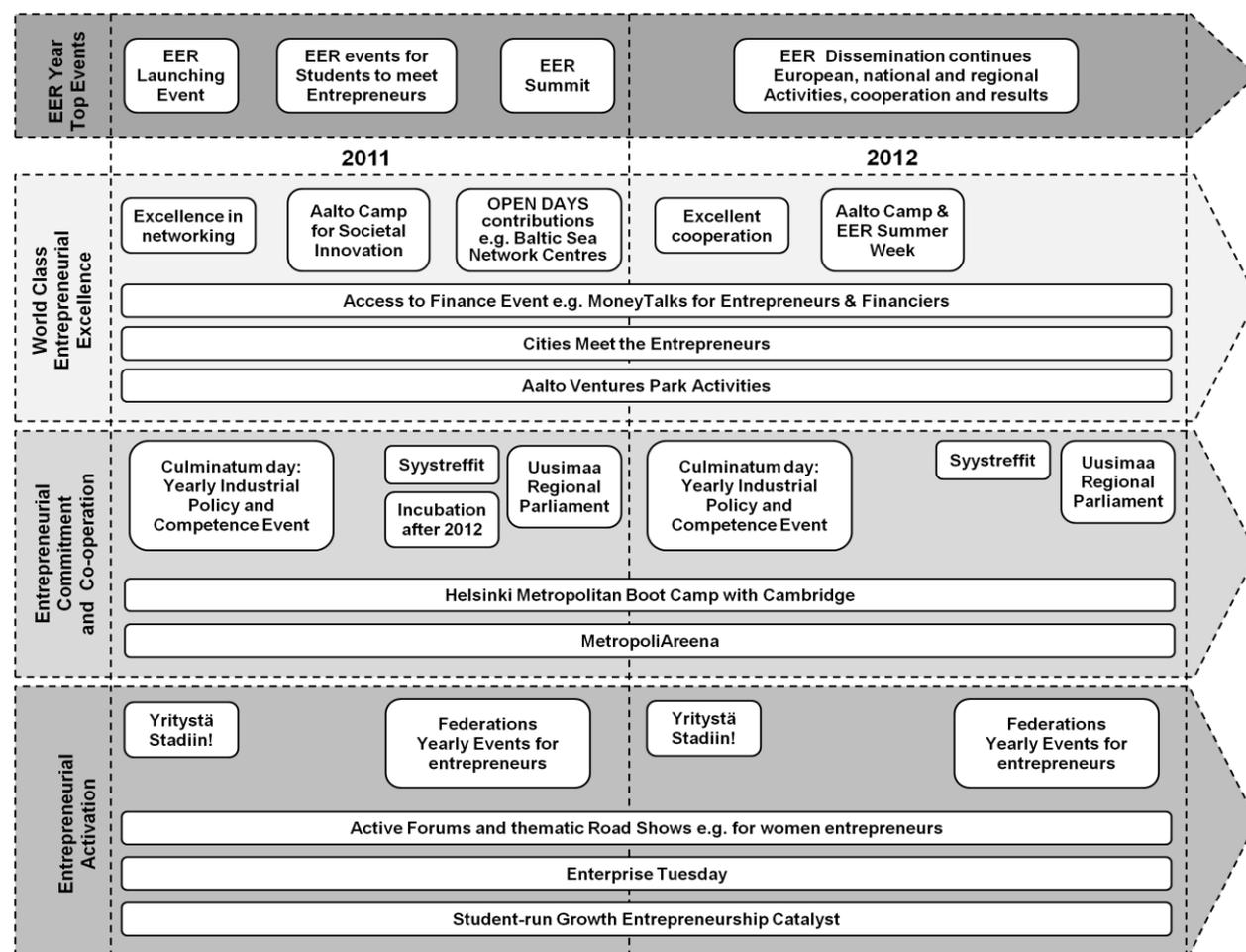


Figure 2. The Flow of main EER events.

Specific entrepreneurship activities and communication in the EER year 2011, as well as for the follow-up year 2012 are outlined above, and exemplars of the major activities are listed and described below. Each of these requires run-up activities which will be carried out in 2010 in a broad cooperation of the actors concerned.

Aalto Camp for Societal Innovation (ACSI) – will demonstrate the entrepreneurial excellence launched and communicate the world-class pioneership of Aalto University, where science and art meet technology and business, the Aalto Entrepreneurial University concept and the Aalto Centre for Entrepreneurship into the European level.

Helsinki Metropolitan Boot Camp with Cambridge – an entrepreneurship camp for college or university students having a business idea which they want to develop and expand and also have an interest in entrepreneurship. Helsinki region with Cambridge is benchmarking and disseminating the best practices.

Incubation after 2012 – a European seminar for business development actors will be organized by the multidisciplinary Laurea University of Applied Sciences to discuss new ways to develop and finance entrepreneurship, business ideas and growth companies.

MetropoliAreena – an open forum for the Region organized by the Federations of Enterprises is utilizing TV and new forms of media to intensify the focus of development into the Region by eliciting political discussion and entrepreneurial commitment & cooperation.

Cities Meet the Entrepreneurs – a joint seminar for the governance of the cities of Espoo, Helsinki, Kauniainen & Vantaa and the entrepreneurs to discuss the issues in the agenda.

Syystreffit – an annual networking and trust-building get-together in the autumn which aims at networking between city key persons, entrepreneurs & academy. The specific theme for the EER year will be social media networking and how entrepreneurially-minded students meet academy and business.

Culminatum Innovation day – bi-annually organized thematic event revolving around industrial policy and cluster cooperation based on the Centre of Expertise Programme in the Region. In the EER year the themes will be “How research results support SMEs” and “Public procurement, R&D and participation of SMEs”.

Aaltoes Fairs – monthly events of the Aalto Entrepreneurship Society connect students, alumni, entrepreneurs and investors. The events boost entrepreneurial activation and strive for creating an entrepreneurial eco-system in the Aalto University.

The Region is committed to sharing good practices and to developing and introducing coordinated reliable service support structures for fast-growing SMEs with all the Metropolises of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The project Baltic Sea Innovation Network Centres – BaSIC will present the results to create harmonized, seamless working conditions for innovative SMEs in accessing BSR markets in the OPEN DAYS of the **Committee of the Regions** in the EER year 2011/2012.

The plan is to apply to organize the ECOS meeting with a regionally focused EER seminar in Helsinki.

As the Entrepreneurship Support Model (Table 2 in Part 3) and the attached declaration of political commitment with the support letters demonstrate, the proven excellence in networking in the Region is extensive and includes all the key actors and a wide spectrum of organizations operating in entrepreneurial activation, in commitment and cooperation, and in entrepreneurial excellence. The operations based on bottom-up excellence offer benefits to entrepreneurs and all other customers and stakeholders involved in the process of the EER year, in the Region and the EU.

This submission with all the supporting evidence in the form of past successes and future plans and visions stand for our intent and determination to further serve the European entrepreneurial front with our expertise, innovativeness and commitment. We hereby request for our application to be considered for the European Entrepreneurial Region award.