


Joint Research Centre - JRC

The European Commission's science and knowledge service

Place-Based Innovation Ecosystems
with Emphasis on Youth
Entrepreneurship

Case Study: Slovenia / Ljubljana Start-up
Ecosystem

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 #S3platform

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Background Information on the Case Study

- Focus on Ljubljana/Slovenia's start-up ecosystem and its main actors and orchestrators i.e. "innovation process entrepreneurs".
- Part of a series on *Place-based innovation ecosystems* that was born in 2017 from a fruitful collaboration between the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC).
- The aim is to promote the importance of evidence-based policy development for regional and urban policy makers.

Key Facts: Slovenia / Ljubljana Innovation Ecosystem

- Ljubljana - the capital of Slovenia, the EU MS with 2 million inhabitants.
- High concentration of Higher Education and RTDI Institutions: <60% of Slovenian researchers (in FTE) work in the region.
- **University of Ljubljana** = the biggest Slovenian university with cca. 6,000 employees and more than 40,000 students = the central higher education institution in Slovenia.
- All major **National Research Institutes** are located in Ljubljana.
- **Variety of Intermediary Institutions** in support of RTDI and entrepreneurship developed .
- Several of them are located in Ljubljana region and contribute importantly to promotion of entrepreneurship, especially start-ups – the following deserve special attention from the viewpoint of youth entrepreneurship:
 - Technology Park Ljubljana (TPL)
 - ABC Accelerator
 - Ljubljana University Incubator (LUI)

Technology Park Ljubljana (TPL)

- Est. in 1994, today the park has **>300 companies** providing employment for **>9000 people**. The 75.000 m² of premises of **high quality infrastructure** represent “**Smart City**”: high concentration of start-ups and high tech SMEs + adjoining services like pharmacy, kindergarten, restaurants, tourist agency, etc.
- Leading regional Innovation Hub for Knowledge and Technology Transfer;
- Provides **consultancy services**: most of the services are provided free of charge to the individual enterprises if they are included in any of the government programmes for entrepreneurship promotion.
- Includes a **co-working space** called "Tobogan", where young entrepreneurs can rent office space and a **Geek-House**, both being a part of Start:up Slovenia Initiative programme (described later).
- **TPL's network is extensive**, from cooperation with the government in designing appropriate entrepreneurship policy advices to the internationalisation and cooperation with other stakeholders in specific projects / programmes.
- **Focus on Start-ups and Scale-ups** (companies born in TPL) by provision of numerous support services.

ABC Accelerator

- Est. in 2015 = relatively young initiative: 1st call for potential investors to join issued in spring 2015. The **support** assured from **important local & international companies** (e.g. BTC, XLab, AMCham and newly created ABD Tim company. Among strong strategic partners also IBM and University of Ljubljana).
- First offered three months **programmes for potential start-ups with international mentors, infrastructure/ technical/ financial support.**
- In exchange for 8% share in the ownership the new-born company receives €15,000 cash, access to all the infrastructure available at BTC City for testing products/services/ /applications and <€250,000 of services offered by IBM over the period of 3 years.
- ABC accelerator has **helped more than 100 Start-ups** with entire financial resources coming from private companies and actively participates in the **Start-up initiative.**
- **Start-ups programme:** M1-3 > selected start-ups taken under the wing of selected mentor(s) and receive training and advice on where to take their business; M4-6 > mentorship offered to develop contacts with potential investors, distributors, other support organisations and potential partners to access global markets.

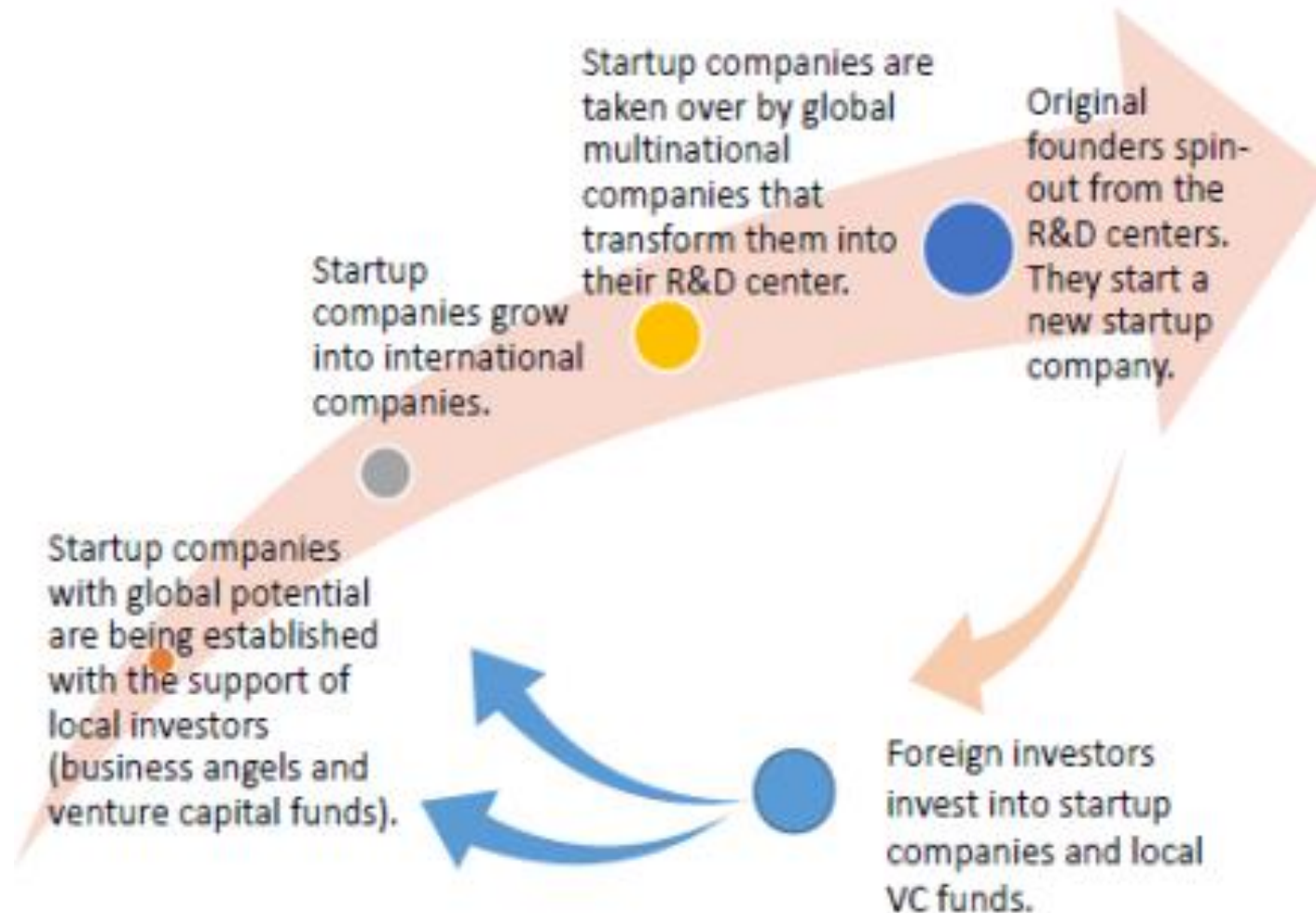
Ljubljana University Incubator (LUI)

- Established in 2004 to boost entrepreneurship amongst the student and academic staff of the University of Ljubljana;
- To date, LUI has helped 139 start-ups, with as high as 90% survival rate!
- Provides:
 - consultancy in all stages of business process – from the idea to the company establishment;
 - legal and financial advices;
 - office space to (potential) start-ups;
 - mentorship, networking, support in applications for government funding;
 - organises various types of workshops;
- Also LUI actively participates in the in Start-up Initiative.

Start-up Initiative setting-up the Scene systematically

- **Start-up Initiative:** Est. 2014 as a Platform facilitating cooperation of all relevant stakeholders with contributions from the governmental institutions to knowledge institutions, enterprises and other subjects of the innovation ecosystem.
- Activities address sets of measures most problematic for start-ups:
 - Access to finance; Business talent activation; Implementation of comprehensive support programmes; Acceleration of commercialisation of knowledge and technologies; Internationalisation; Consistent, comprehensive and strategic governance of the start-up support environment.
- The core programmes of the Initiative, implemented by the partners, are
 - Programmes for talent activation – i.e. motivational meetings, student competitions, start-up weekends, accelerators for the idea development);
 - Programmes for accelerated launch - **Geek House accelerator**, **Start:up roadshow** events; Competition “Start:up of the year” as well as other workshops and events.
 - Programmes for global growth - **Go:Global accelerator**; 1:1 mentorship events; Entering accelerators abroad; other programmes for global growth, etc.

Start-up scheme as adopted by "Start-up Initiative"



Self-Initiatives of Young Entrepreneurs

- Over the recent years, several bottom-up initiatives of young entrepreneurs emerged – e.g.:
 - 11 co-working spaces were registered across Slovenia, providing facilities to start-ups;
 - Private companies have been launching their own incubators, e.g. Kolektor's incubator, next door to Technology park;
 - Fund-raising events are taking place, some run by BIT-Coin firms!

Government support: Slovenian Entrepreneurship Fund

Est. 1992, provides:

- **Start Up Incentives** to young enterprises (start-ups less than 12 months old) in the first development phase < €52,000;
- **Seed Capital** to young enterprises (less than 5 years old) in the second development phase and their entrance on the market < €75,000;
- **Venture Capital** for the fast-growing innovative enterprises in the third development phase in the form of capital investments and mezzanine loans together with private investors through venture capital companies < €1.5 M;
- **Microcredits** represent direct credits of the Fund at an affordable contractual interest rate < € 25,000;
- **Guarantees** as collateral for bank loans with interest rate subsidy that represent the largest share of the approved funds of the Fund < €1.25 M.

Other relevant Innovation Ecosystem Activities

PODIM - the Biggest Start-up conference in the region:

- in 2018 < 1100 participants with 500 applications of start-ups for Marketplace.
- 160 most promising start-ups from the region (South-East Europe & Western Balkans) presented in the catalogues; special Demo day to present their activities to potential investors.
- PODIM attracted major global distributors like Amazon, Nital, Cylla, Blue Green Group, QoQa and many others.

Conclusions

- Ljubljana Innovation Ecosystem with its numerous dynamic actors contributes significantly to developing and shaping the national Slovenian ecosystem which is one of the most vibrant & dynamic Innovation Ecosystems in the Eastern Europe.
- The system has not evolved instantly and some of its segments are still in the making.
- A bottom-up drive of various institutions in creating an open cooperation platform bringing together a complete “value-chain” of services to Start-up community proved essential.
- An important role in Ljubljana Innovation Ecosystem is played today by a lively Young Entrepreneurial class, which did not settle to wait for the completion of overall Innovation framework to embark on doing business globally.

Thank you!



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