



The Beneficiaries

Alexander Innovation Zone SA (Head Partner)

The Head Partner of CO-WORKING is the Alexander Innovation Zone SA, the entity that has undertaken the management and development of the Innovation Zone of Thessaloniki. The role of AZK is to strengthen and promote innovation in the wider area of Thessaloniki, with emphasis on purposes of public interest. The Alexander Innovation Zone SA has the necessary experience, know-how and capacity in the planning, management and coordination of EU-funded projects as it has participated in many EU-funded projects under INTERREG.



Special Account for Research Funds of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

The Special Account for Research Funds (SARF) is the university body created to meet the specific needs of the research activity of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. More specifically SARF facilitates the distinction between teaching work and the allocation of external funding for the management of research and research-related activities. It boasts experienced researchers and academics, experts in economics, development, business etc. The staff of the department has participated in several EU-funded projects such as INTERREG A, B, and C, ESPON, INTERACT, FP, HORIZON etc.



University of National and World Economy

The University of National and World Economy, is one of the oldest, most prestigious and largest economic universities in Southeastern Europe, a pioneer in Bulgarian higher education. In 2006 UNWE received the highest institutional rating among all Bulgarian universities by the National Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation. The University is the absolute leader in the professional fields of Economics, Management and Administration in Bulgaria.



National Company Industrial Zones PLC

The NATIONAL COMPANY INDUSTRIAL ZONE PLC, is a company under the guidance of the Ministry of Economy of Bulgaria, which designs, develops and manages industrial and free zones, assisting investors in the implementation of projects. The company assists investors in the implementation of projects in economic zones with developed infrastructure, first class locations and transport links and manages 11 industrial zones across the country with a total area of over 7.4 million square meters.

Interreg Greece-Bulgaria Co-Working



European Regional Development Fund

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European Regional Development Fund

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, the participating countries, and the Managing Authority.



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It all starts with an idea!

CO-WORKING FACT SHEET



Project area of Implementation

The geographical area of intervention of the project covers a large part of the border between Greece and Bulgaria with a direct focus on the areas of NUTS III of Thessaloniki, Haskovo and their surrounding areas. More specifically, as far as the Greek territory is concerned, the activities will be implemented throughout the area of the Regional Units of Thessaloniki undertaken by the Alexander Innovation Zone and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

In Bulgaria, activities will be carried out throughout the territory of the Haskovo Region, which will be undertaken by the University of National and World Economy and the National Company Industrial Zone PLC. The two Universities involved in the project will provide scientific support for the overall implementation of the project and will cover research needs in the field of entrepreneurship.

The outreach activities will be carried out along the cross-border areas with the aim of attracting potential early-stage groups as well other stakeholders and cross-border areas interested in exploiting project results and participating in the acceleration activities in the pre-incubation stage so as to benefit from them.

The CO-WORKING Project

The CO-WORKING project aspires to create an innovative ecosystem in the cross-border region between Greece and Bulgaria, aiming to encourage business creation, by means of:

- enhancing access to the know-how of businesses
- promoting information
- creating the context which will allow the flourishing of competitive goods -products and services.

The implementation of the system is based on the establishment of two support mechanisms for the pre-incubation of businesses based in the two countries respectively. Unlike a common business incubator, the pre-incubator will only support business ideas/projects and not businesses already in operation.

The project aims at accelerating early-stage teams to develop a business idea under real-life conditions, before taking an entrepreneurial risk, with the goal to transform initial ideas into viable proposals that go beyond the so-called "valley of death".

The expected results are directly related to the specific objectives and as a whole are the means to achieve the overall objectives of the project.

- The results of the CO-WORKING project are related to
- (a) the development of a strategy, spaces and tools for cooperation
 - (b) the implementation of cooperation bootcamps; and
 - (c) the implementation of accelerated cooperation activities.



Project objectives

- The development of a pre-incubation strategy in the cross-border region based on consultation with local stakeholders and empirical evidence, fieldwork, building on existing international methodologies.
- The installation and equipment of two pre-incubators.
- The development of a Business Idea Diagnostic Tool related to a pre-incubator "Toolkit". On this basis, early-stage teams can develop their own Business Model Canvas (BMC) and validate their business ideas based on a business diagnostics methodology.
- The organization of training weeks with the aim of providing the teams with the basic principles of entrepreneurship, leading to a series of events.
- The launch of a holistic acceleration mechanism, including personalized education, mentoring and training support; as well as business missions.
- Consultation with key stakeholders, policy recommendations and capitalization.
- The creation of a mobile network of advisers and an advisory unit between the two project areas well beyond the end of the project.
- The entire support mechanism is expected to be interconnected with the University Career Centers and any other organizations that may be related to the innovation and entrepreneurship in the cross-border region.