



A C H I E V E

*building competence
enabling success*

ACHIEVE

GUIDE TO INCUBATION EXCELLENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

May 2008

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1. Introduction – What to Expect from This Guide

In the past 30 months the ACHIEVE project partners have built an impressive network of 22 business and technology incubators across 11 European countries.

Through this network, the project disseminated innovative coaching methodologies and tools for accelerating business start-up growth and then supported the incubators with the integration and use of those methodologies and tools.

The flexibility in the application of ACHIEVE methodologies and tools has allowed incubators to deploy them according to their individual needs and requirements.

As a result of the project's close cooperation with incubator directors, managers and coaches the ACHIEVE partners have developed an expertise in supporting the development needs of business and technology incubators at different stages of maturity.

Although every incubator in the ACHIEVE network is unique in size, purpose and process, they are all united in their ambition towards achieving incubation excellence.

In their search for excellence, ACHIEVE incubators are

not looking for a roadmap, as each of their path's is going to be as unique as they are, but for a set of useful signposts, meaningful models and benchmarks which they can use and tailor according to their own specific circumstances, needs and ambitions.

This **Guide offers four things** to further help incubators with their development:

- First – analysis of the **key factors of success of incubation**
- Second – analysis the **key factors of success of coaching**
- Third – **four stage incubation model**, a summary of *better* incubation practice of ACHIEVE incubators
- Fourth – a simple but meaningful **profile of a leading edge incubation environment** which can be used as an easy benchmark of incubation excellence

2. Project ACHIEVE – Overview

Start date:

25 November 2005

End date:

25 May 2008

Consortium Partners:

- Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning, Cambridge University, UK
- European Investment Fund, Luxembourg
- Newcastle City Council, Newcastle, UK
- CERAM, Sophia Antipolis, France
- University of Technology, Compiègne, France
- Marseille Provence Chamber of Commerce, Marseille, France
- eUconnect, Cambridge, UK

Main Objectives:

- To contribute to an effective system of support for SMEs, by disseminating innovative coaching methodology and tools through the incubator network across Europe
- To stimulate a higher growth rate of SME start-ups in the sector crucial for a dynamic and competitive European economy

Main Achievements:

- Network of 22 business and technology incubators from 11 European Countries
- Organised 3 generic and 8 individual training sessions in ACHIEVE tools for 22 incubators and 79 coaches
- Successful tool adoption, in particular of ISMA360, Investor Readiness, BizDev and Mentoring
- Establishment of one incubator-based seed fund by the EIF (negotiations concluding)
- Creation of a medial library to share the success of companies and incubators and to document the entrepreneurial journey
www.advisiontvmedia.com/eu

3. The ACHIEVE Incubator Network

The ACHIEVE incubator network was built over the first 18 months of the project and incubators were selected based on a carefully designed three-tier selection criteria.

Using this selection criteria has helped the project to ensure that all incubators in the network are at similar level of development, and, most importantly, all committed to further develop their ability to accelerate the growth of their companies through the use of innovative coaching tools which project ACHIEVE has been offering.

TIER I - INCUBATOR

- Good track record of incubating start ups with high-growth potential in ICT sector
- Good portfolio that ensures long-term sustainability
- Specialisation in ICT sector or having a strong ICT focus
- Strong business support and coach team
- University-based or strong links with local University(ies)
- Playing an active part in the regional innovation eco-system
- Member of a local/regional/national/international network

TIER II - BUSINESS COACH

- Experienced professional with proven skills in providing tailored business support to innovative start ups
- Good knowledge and experience in the processes of technology commercialisation
- Good coaching skills and ICT industry expertise
- Must be employed by (or otherwise associated with) one of the client incubators of the ACHIEVE project

TIER III - START UPS

- Operates in the ICT industry sector and has high-growth rate
- Addresses a market that is large and/or scaleable
- Able to show a significant level of innovation in its products and/or services
- Has an effective mechanism for market entry barrier or product protection such as a patent or copyright
- The management team for the new business venture should be of a sufficient size and experience to enable the company to grow at the required level, to address international markets and to approach external sources of finance with some confidence
- Must have been established within the past 5 years with a preference for those that are less than 3 years old

The ACHIEVE incubator network consists of 22 business and technology incubators from 11 European countries¹

1.	Telecom Paris	France
2.	Etincel (Incubateur d'entreprises et CEEI Poitou Charentes)	France
3.	Technopole de l'Aube en Champagne	France
4.	Estia Entreprendre	France
5.	Incubateur MultiMedia Belle de Mai	France
6.	SEMIA Business Incubator	France
7.	Gate - Garching Technologie und Gründerzentrum	Germany
8.	Incubator Technopolis Thessaloniki	Greece
9.	Innostart- National Business and Innovation Centre	Hungary
10.	Techno Seed ICT Incubator	Italy
11.	I3P - Incubatore Imprese Innovative Politecnico di Torino	Italy
12.	Cork Business Innovation Centre	Ireland
13.	Centrum voor Ondernemerschap en Innovatie	Netherlands
14.	YES!Delft	Netherlands
15.	Pomorski Park Naukowo Technologiczny	Poland
16.	Cyberpark	Turkey
17.	Chalmers Innovation	Sweden
18.	STING - Stockholm Innovation and Growth	Sweden
19.	LEAD	Sweden
20.	INEX	UK
21.	St. Johns Innovation Centre	UK
22.	i6 Charlotte Square and North East Incubators:	UK
	• i6 Charlotte Square	
	• Fabriam Centre	
	• St Peter's Gate	
	• North East Business Innovation Centre	
	• Quadrus Centre	

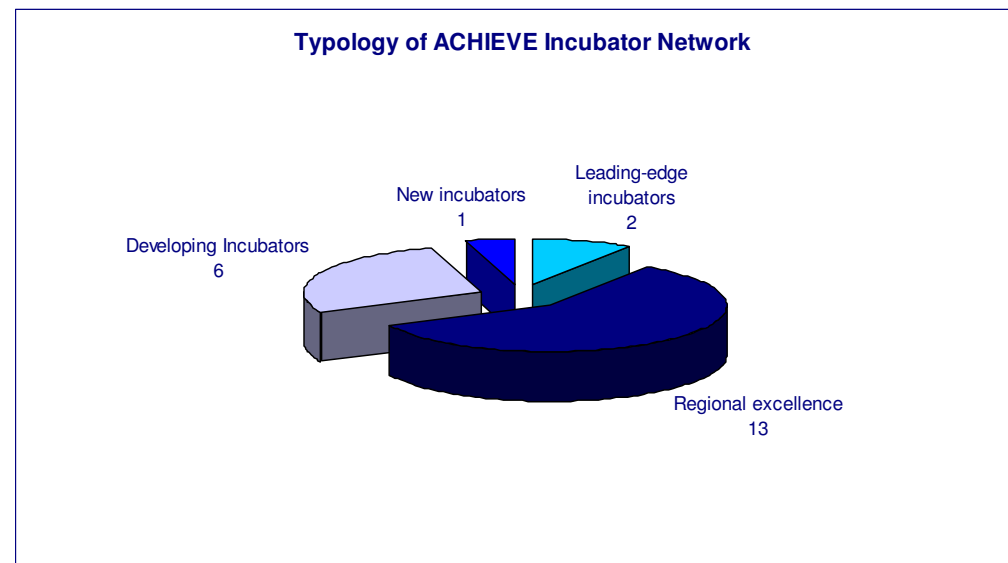
¹ In some project promotional material it is stated that the ACHIEVE incubator network consists of 23 incubators. This is because two ACHIEVE incubators - Norrköping Science Park and Mjardevi Business Incubator (both from Sweden) – have merged during the last year of the project and are now known as LEAD Incubator

Early on in the project, ACHIEVE partners developed a basic incubator typology and the incubators entering the project were grouped into the following four categories:

- Leading-edge incubators
- Regional excellence incubators
- Developing incubators
- New incubators

CATEGORY	COACHING	NETWORK	TOOLS	QUALITY DEAL FLOW
Leading-edge incubators	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Regional excellence	Good	Excellent	Good	Good
Developing incubators	Limited	Good	Limited	Good
New incubators	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited

According to this simple typology, the ACHIEVE incubator network can be illustrated as follows:



4. Towards Incubation Excellence

There are no “league” tables of successful incubators and many incubators that aspire towards incubation excellence find it difficult to meaningfully benchmark their performance against other incubators’.

Although all ACHIEVE incubators are well aware of which performance indicators they need to improve on, and how they need to do this, many admit that they find it difficult to identify exactly *what* and *how* to improve areas which could help them get on to the next level of the incubation typology and ultimately to be recognised as a leading-edge incubation environment by their peers.

Presented in this Section know-how developed as a result of the ACHIEVE research exercise can enable incubators to take a critical look at their long-term business objectives, identify strategic areas for development and select a better practice for achieving incubation excellence.

ACHIEVE Research Exercise

At the end of the project, 17 ACHIEVE incubators from 10 different countries took part in an Interview Programme. The objectives of the exercise were:

- To learn about incubation practices of each incubator within ACHIEVE network
- To identify key success factors of incubation and coaching
- To establish the contribution of ACHIEVE tools to the development of each incubator's coaching processes

The interviews were mainly with incubator directors and on some occasions with incubator coaches and managers.

Incubator Interview Questions

1. What is your incubation model?
2. How do you measure the performance of your incubator?
3. In your opinion:
 - what are the key success factors of incubation
 - what are the key success factors of coaching
 - how do you think incubation is linked to coaching
4. How does your incubator help start-ups raise finance?
5. How did you integrate ACHIEVE tools into your incubation processes and what would you like to see in our new venture – ACHIEVE MORE?



If you have any questions or to receive the full Guide please contact

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