



BIC OBSERVATORY 2007

Business and Innovation Centres (EC-BICs)

BIC Network in 2007 Facts and Figures



EBN



The European BIC Network is the Home
of Innovative Entrepreneurship & Incubation in Europe

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BIC Network in 2007 Facts and Figures

Innovation with Vision, Incubation in Action, Networking by Passion

“EBN is a place where you can meet Business & Innovation Centres
Powered by a Dream Team
Guided by Visionaries
Endorsed by Leading Stakeholders
Totally credible to the private sector
Mandated by the public sector
Sustainable and politically independent
Making impact on the civil society
Stimulating the entrepreneurship culture
Embedding innovation by all means and with all
(from academic sources or not)
Serving multi sector entrepreneur communities
Open to external partnerships and a connector
of small business to the global landscape
Acting as an idea lab and development centre for growing firms
Providing knowledge and creativity centre facilities
An interactive cross road for people, projects,
Know-How, Technologies, IP,
Investment, Research and Entrepreneurs”

Philippe Vanrie
CEO of EBN

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Foreword

BIC: a robust European benchmark for innovation and incubation professionals

EBN was set up in 1984 as a joint initiative of the European Commission (EC), European industry leaders and the first pioneering BICs.

EBN is now the leading pan-European network bringing together 200+ BICs, and similar organisations across Europe and beyond.

BICs are professional organisations which promote, stimulate and develop innovation in start-ups and SMEs at all stages of their development. BICs serve both the public interest and private sector, with the goal of contributing ultimately to regional economic development, by offering a wide range of professional business support services.

Since 2002, EBN was awarded a trademark licensing contract from the EC. This enables EBN to manage the licence of the EC-BIC trademark.

EBN implements a certification system enabling the development of a network of excellence through the integration of a quality approach. The BICs that have been granted the EC-BIC trademark commit themselves to respect their obligations within this quality process. The purpose of the EC-BIC trademark is to provide an assurance that BICs meet certain standards in terms of their service offering and performance.

In 2007 the network continued to welcome new members with four new centres accredited to the EC-BIC standard. These new members contributed to the performance of the network as a whole, which reported increases in the following results:

- The number of events to promote entrepreneurship and the number of people attending;
- The number of start-ups created;
- The number of tenants in incubators;
- The number of jobs created in SMEs.

It should be noted that the increase in start-ups marks a four year upward trend, which demonstrates that BICs continue to make an ever more important impact on enterprise creation in Europe and beyond. This remains a key activity of the network, whose mission and key objectives have recently been published in an update to the BIC Quality Criteria, approved by the EC and the EBN Board in May 2008.

The report is based on the annual results collected on-line from over 140 accredited BICs, representing data from 93% of the network. This result ensures that the Observatory continues to be a serious, statistically robust and credible document, which is becoming a benchmark for other European business support networks. Furthermore, the data provided by BICs showed a marked reduction in extreme values, reflecting in part the even greater precision with which BICs recorded their results.

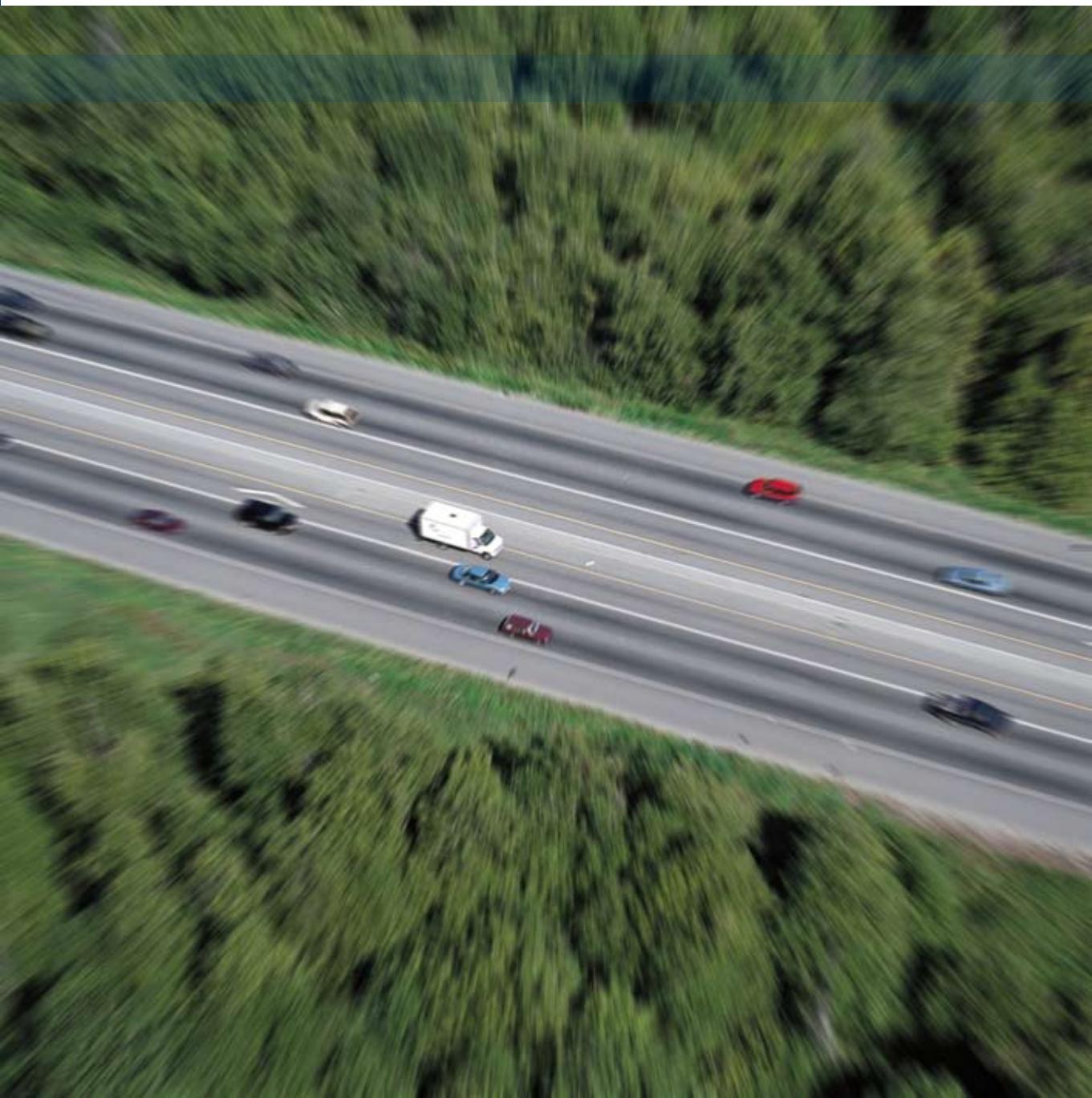
This Observatory report for 2007 includes a number of case studies looking at examples of some of the hard work that has contributed to the network's results.

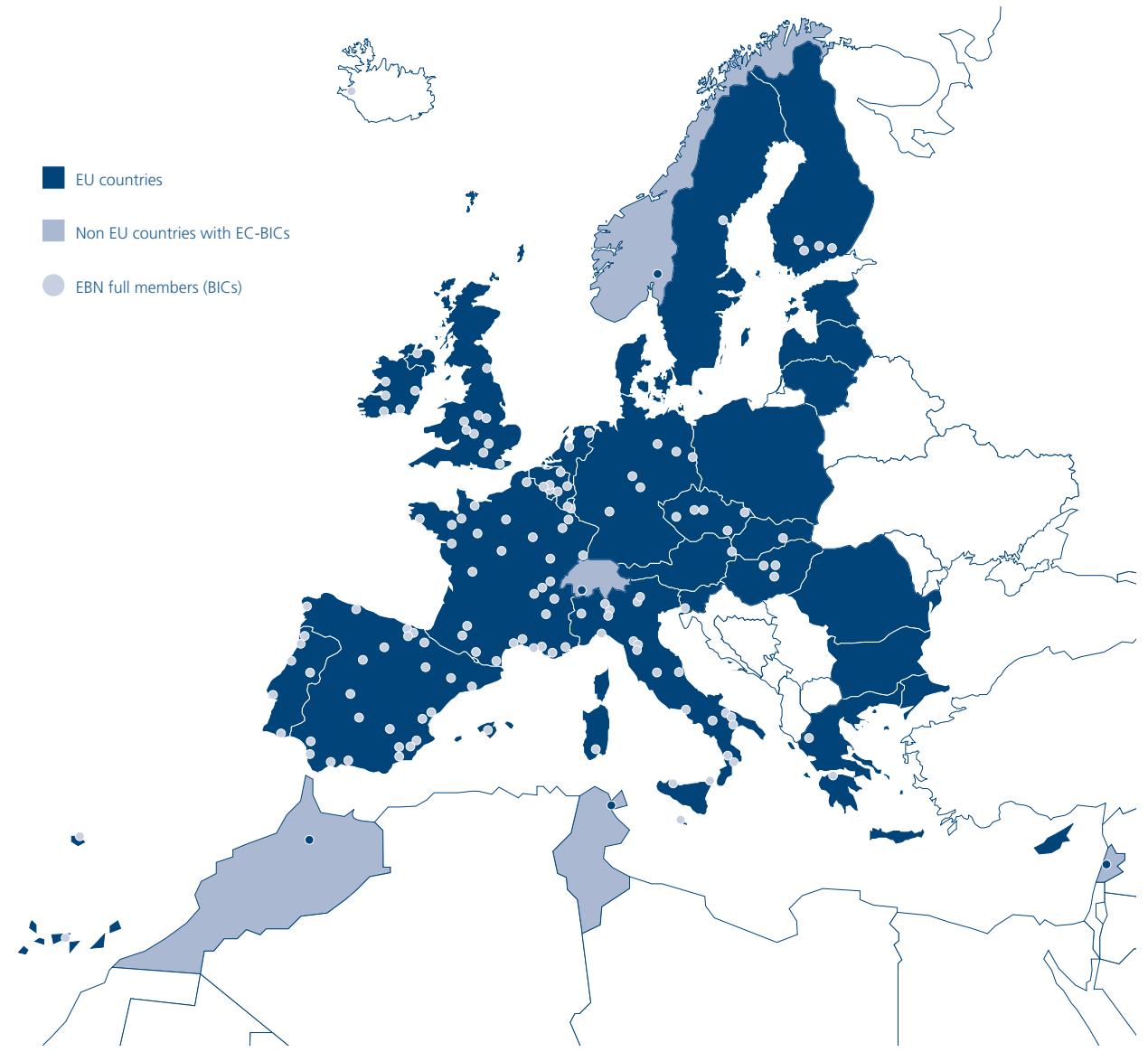
This benchmarking analysis provides to our members and stakeholders detailed and up to date information that will help BICs to further promote and continuously improve their activities and their success!



Philippe Vanrie
EBN CEO

Luigi Campitelli
EBN President





1 | Distribution of BICs in 2007

The strategy of EBN to increase the number of BICs within the former EU 15 and to expand the network within the new Member States and the EU neighbouring countries is showing results. More BICs are indeed operating in the

UK, France, Spain, Central and Eastern European Countries as well as on the South and East banks of the Mediterranean.

2 | Average age of BICs

	1985-1989	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2007	Total since creation of the network
BICs created as a new entity	15.83%	25.90%	12.23%	7.19%	2.88%	64.03%
BICs set-up in an existing organisation	3.60%	5.76%	10.79%	12.23%	3.60%	35.97%
Percentage of total BICs in period	19.43%	31.65%	23.02%	19.42%	6.48%	100.00%

The average age of a BIC in 2007 was 12.5 years. The table below presents the information about the year in which individual BICs started their activities. Between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s the BICs were more likely to be created as a completely new entity than to be set up within an existing organisation. This trend was reversed

in the early 2000s. The main phenomenon that has been observed in the last 2-3 years is that of well established operators (Science Parks, Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce etc.) applying for accreditation of their existing operations in alignment with the EBN BIC Quality System.

Statistical characteristics of the survey

- Total number of potential participants 144
- Number in the sample validated for calculations 93%
- Method: on-line self-evaluation questionnaire plus subsequent validation by EBN Quality Team
- Quality portal: <http://quality.ebn.be> (restricted access to Full Members)
- Questionnaire contained 136 questions, grouped into 9 sections
- Only results from validated questionnaires have been used

3 | Financial orientation of BICs

Not for profit	87%	For profit	13%
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4 | Value for money of BICs

	2005	2006	2007
Cost per job created with support of a BIC ¹	5,218 €	7,692 €	8,789 €
Public financial contribution per job created	3,143 €	4,924 €	5,410 €
Average number of start-ups per 100K € of BIC income	1.7	1.84	2.15
Average number of jobs created per 100K € of BIC income	19	12.9	11.1
Average number of business plans created per 100K € of BIC income	8.5	9.86	5.8
Average number of companies assisted per 100K € of BIC income	7	9.35	8
Average number of start-ups per FTE ² member of BIC staff	2	1.71	2.12
Average number of jobs created per FTE member of BIC staff	22	12	11
Average number of business plans created per FTE member of BIC staff	10	9.17	5.75
Average number of companies assisted per FTE member of BIC staff	8.3	8.69	8

The evolution of these figures over the years seems to indicate an increase in the intensity of the resource required from a BIC to support an enterprise creation project through the business planning phase to start-up and job creation. The growing complexity of projects – both for

enterprise creation and for innovation – coupled with the concentrated level of support from BICs to entrepreneurs has also contributed to the shift in some of the above indicators.

¹ Benchmark of € 4,000 to € 8,000 established in Final Report: Benchmarking of Business Incubators. Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services. February 2002. This data compares well to the benchmark after taking inflation into consideration.

² Full Time Equivalent



5 | Summary of Key Indicators 2007

Process Indicators

Indicator	Total 2007	Average per BIC	Median	Variation against average 2006	Variation against median 2006
Number of existing (established) SMEs supported	19,810	146	74	-7.01%	13.85%
Estimated percentage of total projects focused on technological innovation	-	56%	58%	2%	3%
Number of events organised in 2007 to promote entrepreneurship	4,929	36	12	20%	9.09%
Number of training events organised in 2007 for either new entrepreneurs or existing SMEs	4,854	40	10	0%	-28.57%

Performance Indicators

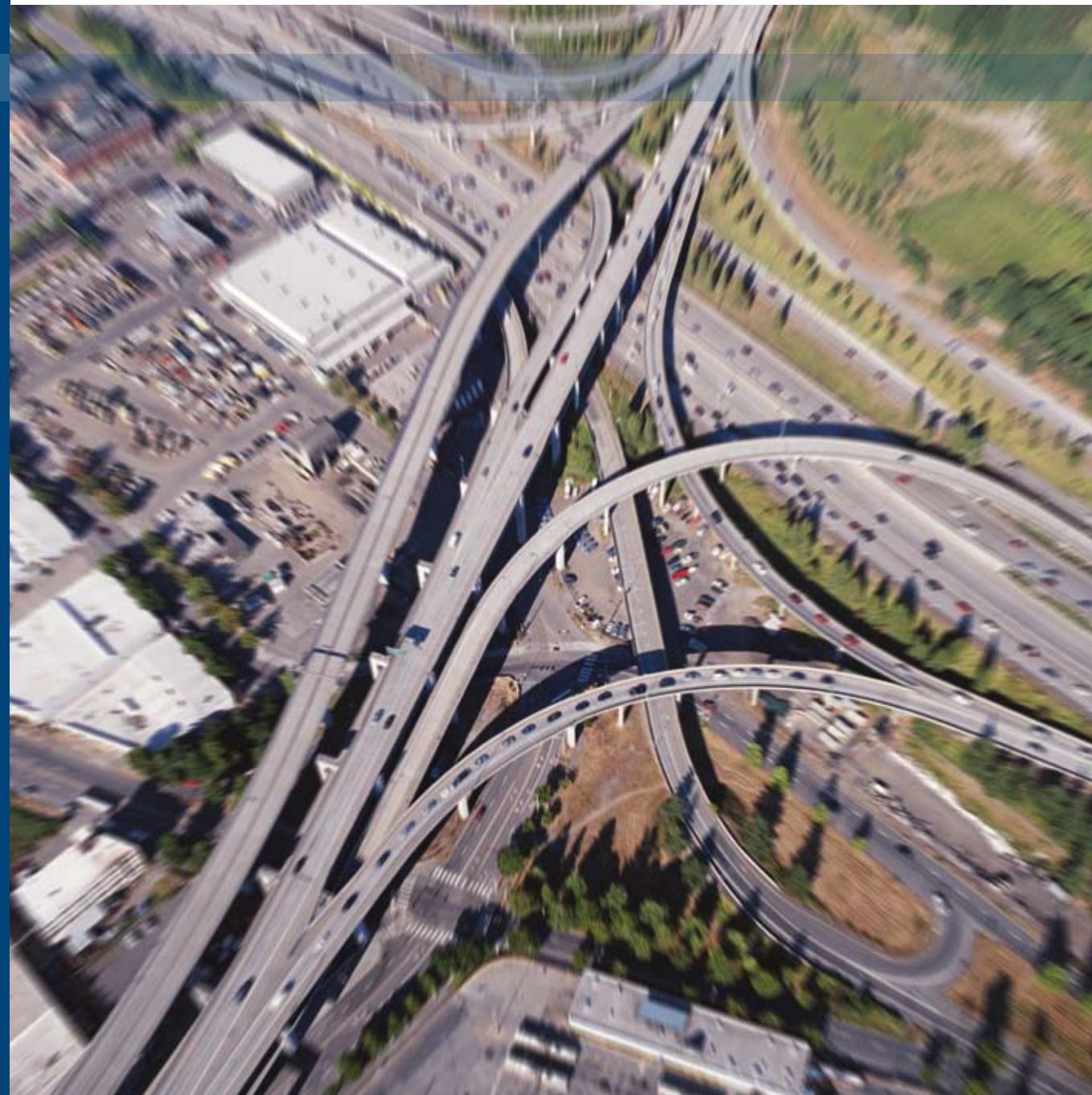
Indicator	Total 2007	Average per BIC	Median	Variation against average 2006	Variation against median 2006
Number of start-up or other enterprise projects during the year	14,505	109	21	-30.13%	16.67%
Selected prior to feasibility study	28,504	210	55	-17.65%	12.24%
Number of business plans produced during the year	14,121	105	21	-36.36%	0%
Number of start-ups created during the year	5,249	39	13	25.81%	18.18%
Enterprise Survival Rate	-	89%	90%	0%	0%
Number of tenants in incubator	3,917	31	23	6.90%	15%
Total employment by tenants in 2007	21,561	171	97	3.39%	7.78%
Number of jobs created in SMEs	7,986	62	29	3.33%	45%
Number of jobs maintained in SMEs	32,495	256	63	-1.54%	-30.77%
Number of people that attended events to promote entrepreneurship	203,394	1,509	500	22.88%	25%
Number of people that attended training events	61,891	513	150	-5.87%	-19.35%

Total 2007: Sum of all results reported for relevant indicator, by sample
Average per BIC: Simple average - total (above) divided by number of BICs in sample

Median: Middle value, above and below which lies equal number of

values. Median is robust estimate of centre of sample of data, since outliers have little effect on it

Variation: Percentage increase or decrease compared to average reported for previous year



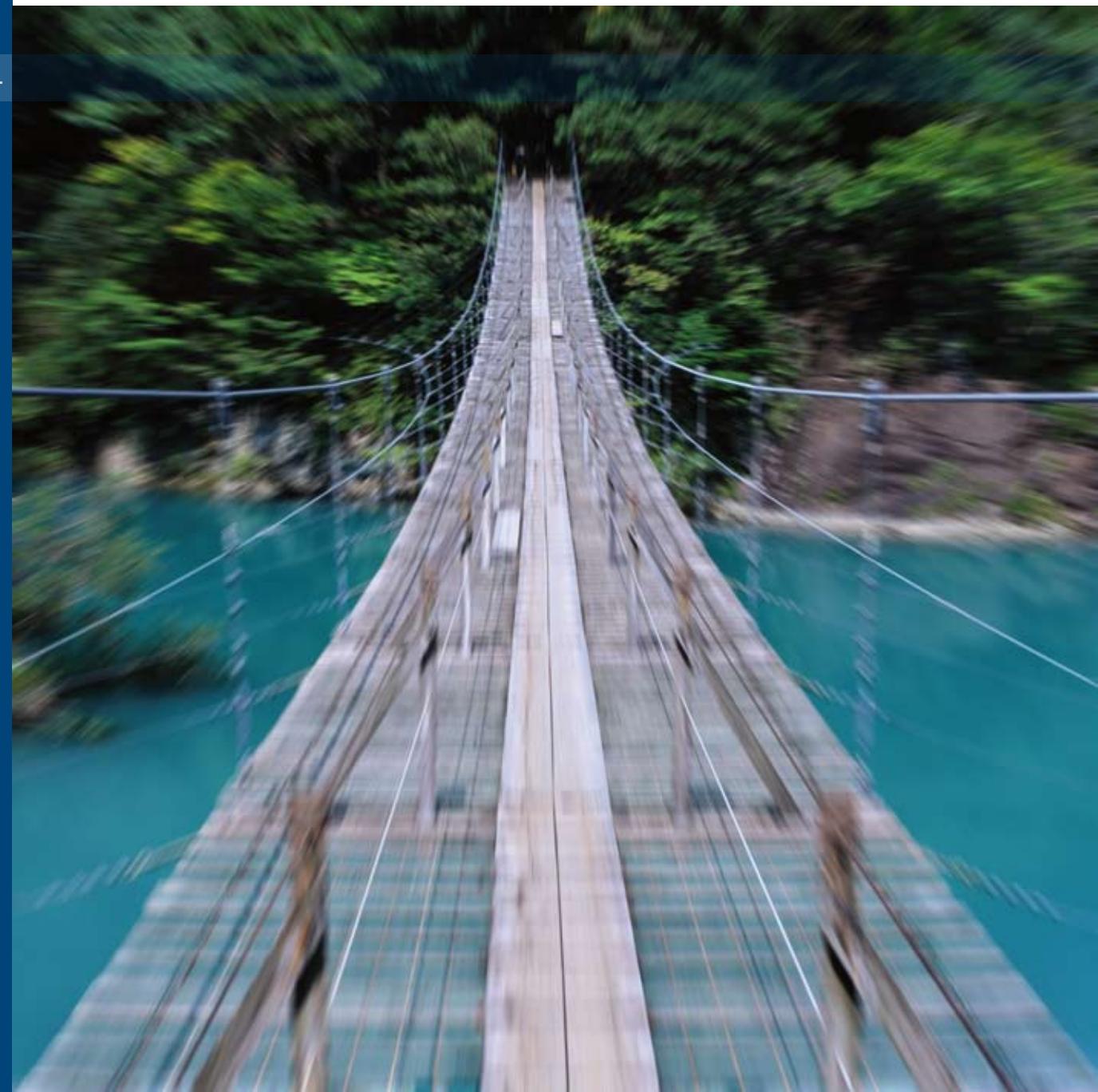
6 | Key Indicators 2007: Review of Process Indicators

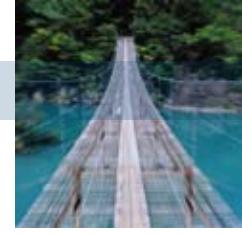
The indicators defined in the Observatory describe the BICs objectives in terms of quantity and quality and are selected in a way to provide unambiguous information about BICs achievements.

EBN has put in place a reliable data collection process and has built a strong management information system in which the indicators play a crucial role.

Indicators enable decision makers to assess progress toward the achievement of intended objectives and goals. Process indicators measure ways in which program and services are provided to end users and beneficiaries. They also help decision makers to analyse the level of required inputs (i.e. staff, partners, etc.) considered as critical within the BIC supply chain.

EBN has defined and measures the indicators in consistent and systematic way and ensures the credibility of the process during the years. The indicators in the Observatory were selected because they identify firstly the areas of activities that are most common in the network, most important and provide the best snapshot of what a BIC should be doing to meet its obligations in terms of the BIC Quality Mark Criteria.





Number of existing SMEs supported during the year

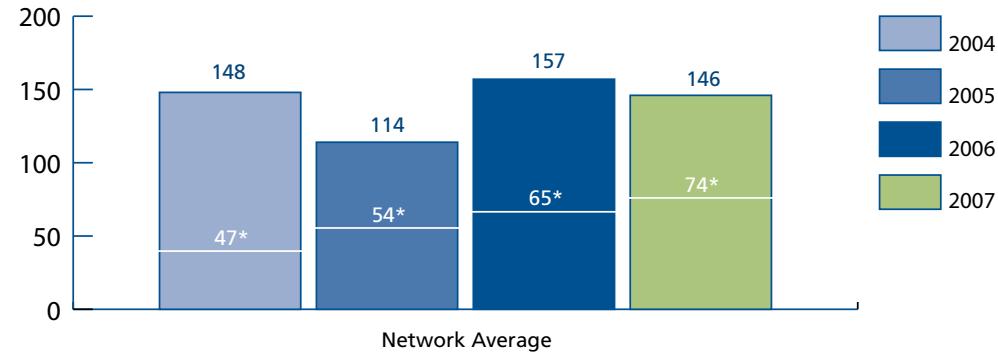
This data was collected by combining the results of three questions from the questionnaire, namely those about the number of enterprises supported in the framework of specific innovative projects, the number of enterprises supported in the framework of diagnostics for analysing innovation weaknesses and the number of enterprises supported in the framework of SMEs included in programmes/activities aimed at increasing their competitiveness. The average of 146 SMEs supported per BIC represents a decrease

of 7.01% against the average for the previous year. The median figure of 74 supported SMEs shows an increase for the third consecutive year.

Almost all BICs support existing SMEs, with 95.7% of those taking part in the annual survey indicating that they supported SMEs in 2007 and only 4.3% indicating that they did not. This shows that very few BICs are exclusively serving startups.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	148	114	157	146	-7.01%
Network median	47	54	65	74	13.85%

How many existing SMEs did you support in the year?



* median



BIC Promofirenze, Mr Vasco Galgani, President, Italy

How did you achieve your results?

Promofirenze, Special Agency of the Chamber of Commerce of Florence, provides tailor made services and support to start-up companies throughout the whole implementation process, especially in topics related to internationalisation and access to finance. Thanks to our experience, we are able to identify the most relevant markets and assist our client companies to participate in international trade fairs, B2B events, commercial missions, etc. Moreover, Promofirenze offers technical assistance and support to enterprises applying for public and structural funds that help the development of their business.



What partners were involved, if any?

We have developed a structured network of national and international partners and have established protocols and cooperation agreements with many private and public bodies such as regional governmental agencies, universities, chambers of commerce, business associations, financial institutions, science and technology parks, etc. Promofirenze is also a member of the Enterprise Europe Network, providing information and advice to companies on EU matters.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

Promofirenze undertakes numerous cross-border activities in phase with its core business that is the preparation and development of innovative companies to enter foreign markets. We provide general, specialised and technical information about foreign countries as well as information about international contracts. We also identify partners, produce market and sec-

tor studies, guide on international financing, organise foreign missions for operators and reception of foreign delegations. Moreover, our territorial marketing services are designed to attract international and national investments into our region. Finally, Promofirenze has strong expertise and long experience in managing international projects that help to develop services and activities for client companies in cooperation with partners from other countries.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Promofirenze has developed and put in place concrete instruments for detection of market opportunities and building of fruitful business relationships with local and foreign enterprises in order to overcome the usual barriers for the entry into foreign markets.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Promofirenze has a strategic mission to enhance the competitiveness of the companies in the Florentine region. For this purpose we establish relations and cooperate closely with all important regional players and further contribute to the stability and prosperity of the whole Florentine area.

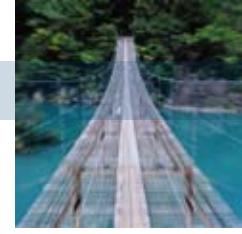
What do you think of the BIC network?

EBN is an excellent instrument for cooperation which offers opportunities for exchange of best practices, European projects, lobbying and easy access to technical information. We also value highly EBN trainings on current topics, benchmarking, sharing of experience and important synergies with other BICs.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

Promofirenze is a non-profit organisation that promotes entrepreneurship, supports creation and development of new innovative companies and existing SMEs. The strong know-how of Promofirenze makes it a centre of excellence and a reference point for internationalisation, business cooperation, finance, EU matters, training seminars, marketing and projects.





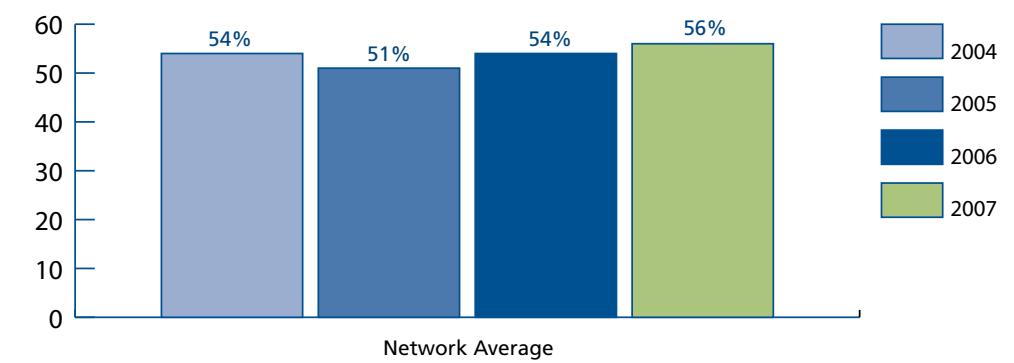
Estimated total number of projects that were focused on technological innovation

The average estimated percentage of projects focused on technological innovation for the whole network was 56%. This represents a small but steady increase for the last two years. Although this figure represents just over half of all projects, it should be remembered that for EC-BICs, "innovation" has never been narrowly defined in terms of technology and it is more important than ever before

that the network considers "innovation" as those developments which ultimately give entrepreneurs and SMEs their competitive edge, whether technological in nature or not. The emergence of numerous projects aimed at developing innovation in services has also been observed within the BIC community.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	54%	51%	54%	56%	2.00%
Network median	57%	50%	55%	58%	3.00%

Estimated percentage of total projects launched in the year that where about technological innovation



Cork BIC, Mr Michael O'Connor, CEO, Ireland



How did you achieve your results?

Cork BIC, a multidisciplinary "venture consulting" organisation, provides a holistic approach with a private sector bias for start-up businesses to convert ideas into reality. We act selectively, effectively becoming a partner, and accompany the entrepreneur through all the stages of development of his/her business. Our customers tend to be high risk, high potential companies and projects with a requirement for hands-on advice over a period of five weeks to five years.

What partners were involved, if any?

We seek to optimise our networks throughout Ireland, EU and beyond for the transfer of innovation and international benchmarking so as to give our customers every opportunity to be born global. We do this in close cooperation with our partners - Enterprise Ireland, Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment, City & County Enterprise Boards in Cork & Kerry, Cork Institute of Technology and University College Cork, Cork Chamber of Commerce, the private sector and our colleagues in over 200 regions of the EU and beyond in generating a feeder-stock of innovative SMEs capable of competing on the international stage.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

Cork BIC is engaged in a number of trans-national projects, such as Soho Solo accelerating the arrival of a new generation of entrepreneurs into the Cork & Kerry area, who run their business independently from their customers' location; and the EU-project Detect-it 2 where we actively involve our customers in the FP7 possibilities, which necessitates the finding of European partners.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Cork BIC's goal is to create a global footprint for start-ups through using innovative networking and linking major corporations to build strategic alliances and routes to the market. In 2007, through EurOffice Services Cork BIC undertook a trade mission to Sophia Antipolis in France. We selected as our counterpart BIC CICOM because of its incubation experience and the fact that their personnel has good personal connections

and commercial networks to enable our entrepreneurs to meet the right people. The mission provided target introductions with downstream back-up support to enable our customers to accelerate and grow internationally.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Cork BIC contributes significantly to regional economic development through the provision of a comprehensive range of services to the SME sector, including the provision of business information, advice, counselling and mentoring. We are also involved in the development and management of incubation space and the promotion of an enterprise culture within the region.

What do you think of the BIC network?

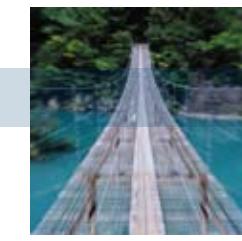
Cork BIC is a long established and proud active member of EBN. Being part of a quality assured EU-wide branded network adds more value to the EC-BIC label. Through the network Cork BIC has developed long term partnerships and joint-ventured on projects with some of the most "innovating BICs" around Europe.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

Cork BIC was formed in 1988 with the support of the EC, the Cork Chamber of Commerce, local authorities, statutory agencies and universities/colleges. It was licensed as an EC-BIC in 1994. We provide intensive services to higher-potential entrepreneurs. These services include incubation space, seed capital, business planning, risk minimisation and just-in-time knowledge all delivered through a distinctive private/public partnership approach. This leverages significant additional investment and facilitates access to the expertise of established business executives.



CORKBIC
www.corkbic



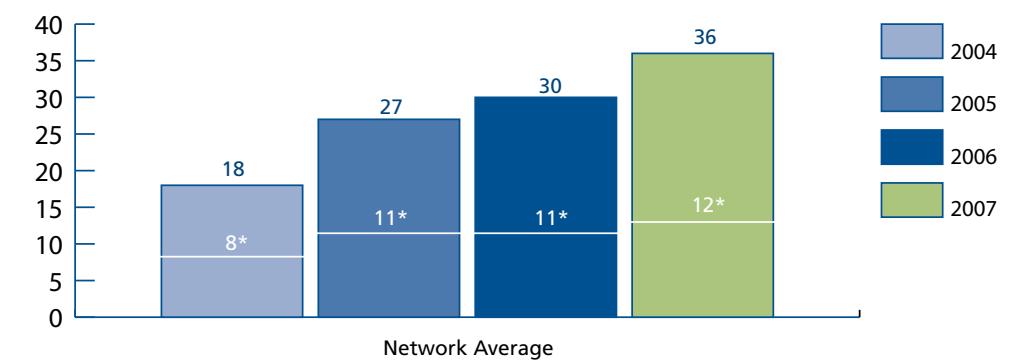
Number of events organised in 2007 to promote entrepreneurship

The average number of events held per BIC in 2007 to promote entrepreneurship was 36. This represents a very large increase against 2006 of 20% and also a 100% increase over the last 4 years. The median figure of 12 events shows a 9.09% increase compared to 2006. These results demonstrate that promoting innovative entrepreneurship – a key mission of BICs – continues to remain a priority for the network, responding (as can be seen by the related results on the number of attendees) to a growing demand

for information and support, from potential entrepreneurs. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the increase in the averages over the last four years, which is not mirrored by the median - by contrast relatively stable - is partly explained by the increase in the promotion of entrepreneurship by BICs through awareness raising events, within schools, colleges and universities. The number of attendees at events to promote entrepreneurship in 2007 is covered later in this report.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	18	27	30	36	20.00%
Network median	8	11	11	12	9.09%

How many events did you organise in the year to promote entrepreneurship?



* median



La Maison de l'Entreprise CEEI, Mr Patrice Thiry, Belgium



How did you achieve your results?

Beyond its coaching activities for the creation and development of enterprises, LME promotes innovation, creativity and the concept of design. It also promotes entrepreneurship

in high schools and universities. This wide approach enables us to reach different audiences and to cover every step of entrepreneurship, from creation and development to growth and business diversification. Events are promoted to target audiences in order to guarantee the best impact. LME team carefully selects the subject to ensure that the participants get the most out of it.

What partners were involved, if any?

LME works closely with all relevant parties. We organise brainstorming sessions – CreaMons – for companies in partnership with the Faculté Polytechnique de Mons (FPM) and the City of Mons. The aim is to validate or improve products and concepts before they go to market. Another action is the “Chair of Entrepreneurship”. LME developed together with the University of Mons-Hainaut and the FPM a 75 h programme to coach students to create their business projects. Finally, together with the competence center “Design Innovation” we develop workshops for entrepreneurs to help them to anticipate the trends of innovation and to take the right decisions at the right moment.

Are there any cross-border features in your activities?

Within the framework of the “Archange” project, LME collaborated with the Technopôle de l’Aisne, France to develop a global company coaching approach to create and manage

websites. This joint action brought added value to our respective customers and gave broader and cross-border scope of the activities.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

The cross-border “Archange” initiative was a source of exchanges for the companies that led to, depending on the case, brief collaboration or long term partnerships.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

The impact of an event on the life of a company is indirect and it is difficult to establish whether our seminars are at the origin of a company or the creation of new jobs, even if they represent a clear added value for entrepreneurs and start-ups. There is no 100% guarantee that starters attending our sessions and develop projects wouldn’t have done the same without our help. The number of people that took part to one or several specific or general BIC promotional events in 2007 was 4,643.

What do you think of the BIC network?

The events organised by EBN represent a clear added value for LME. The exchange of experience with other BICs helps us to fine-tune our products and services and the benchmarking helps us to develop new ideas and to use new innovative concepts tested elsewhere, which is a significant time saver. Furthermore, the network provides a unique opportunity for specific partner searches including high technology. The contacts established through the network give an opportunity for finding rapid and efficient solutions to technological, financial and commercial issues.

Give a brief introduction of your BIC

Created in 1996, LME has four business centers representing 3,000 m² of offices with a housing capacity of 49 to 62 companies, set up to cover the target region. Located in the Province of Hainaut, Belgium, originally an Objective I zone and now a convergence area, LME contributes to the socio-economic revitalisation of the region.

Established as a public/private partnership, LME works with a team of twelve people.





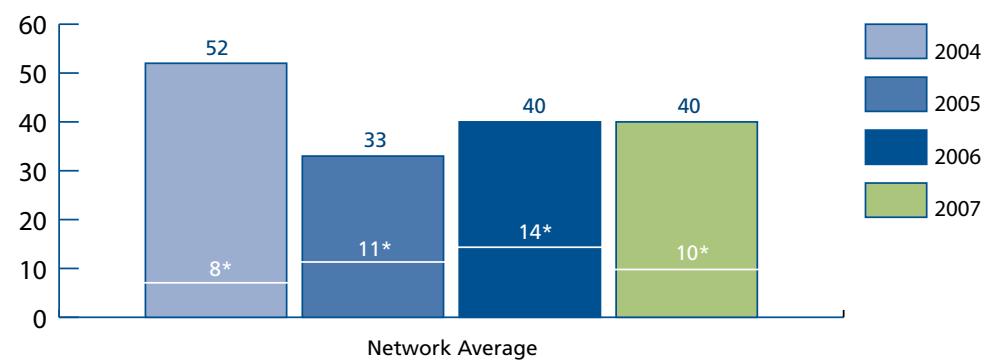
Number of training events in 2007 for either new entrepreneurs or existing SMEs

The average number of training events held per BIC in 2007 was 40, which represents the same figure as the previous year. The median of 10 events shows a decrease of 28.57% against 2006. Of all the BICs, 85.6% reported that they assess the training needs of their clients. In 2007

the majority of the BICs preferred to organise less but more specialised training sessions in small groups, for a bigger impact on client companies. The number of attendees at training events in 2007 is covered later in this report.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	52	33	40	40	0.00%
Network median	8	11	14	10	-28.57%

How many training events organised in the year for new entrepreneurs/existing SMEs?



* median



The NE Group Edwinstowe House, Mrs Linda Shepherd, CEO, United Kingdom

How did you achieve your results?

We have built up relationships with our customers over some time and work hard to ensure that we understand their needs in terms of training and development. We then produce a brochure every 3 months setting out a schedule of training and development courses and workshop sessions the subjects of which are those which SMEs tell us they would like, specifically around the disciplines of business and strategic planning, financial management, marketing, innovation (product design and process), human resource management, exporting, introduction to ICT, introduction to new markets and acquisition of new customers and networking. The marketing approach must be adapted to suit the customer, to engage SMEs in significant numbers. Our marketing approach is to 'network the networks'. Furthermore, we have found that SMEs do not respond to literature, mailshots or traditional marketing methods. These are seen as a distraction and are rarely given any serious consideration so building relationships and gaining customers as a result of our reputation, are important.

What partners were involved, if any?

We have formal partnerships with our regional development agency (East Midlands Development Agency) and also with the Further and Higher Education sectors in our region and more work is also planned in other regions, particularly South Yorkshire.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

Yes we have worked closely at government level in Hungary where we are transferring our knowledge, particularly that related to economic regeneration.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

We have been able to build partnerships and transfer knowledge where appropriate.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

The turnover of businesses that we worked with between June 2006 and June 2007 was £ 351 m.

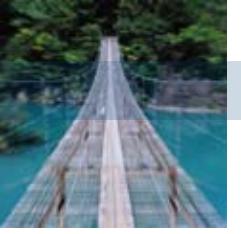
What do you think of the BIC network?

We are active members of the network and have used it to seek partners and find projects in which we would like to participate. The process of completing the quality questionnaire every year make us reflect on our activities. It also provides useful information to EBN. We work hard to ensure that we get the best value for money from our membership.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

The ethos of The NE Group is property driven economic development. We currently manage a portfolio of 6 major properties providing 200,000 square feet of business incubation and managed workspace. Working with 120 tenant companies in those properties and a further 3,000 businesses across the East Midlands, providing business support, leadership and management development together with demonstration facilities to show the application of technology to business processes.





Number of people working in the BIC

According to the questionnaires, most BICs have between 7 and 9 staff, the same as in 2006. This figure includes non-

core staff who in some way make a contribution to the work of BICs.

Number of people working in the BIC	3-6	7-9	10-14	15-25	> 25
Number of BICs	29	31	29	24	19

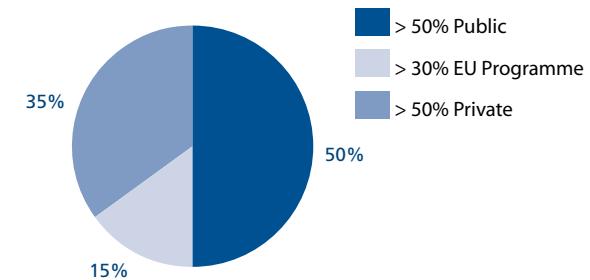
Overall income and expenditure

Revenue

The BIC network generated a total revenue of over 242 M€ in 2007, an increase from 233 M€ for the year 2006 of just under 4%. This includes 92 M€ from private sources, up from 89M€; 31 M€ from EU funds/programmes up from

23 M€ in 2006 and 49.3 M€ from national or regional bodies (70.4 M€ in 2006), some of which may also be from EU programmes. Three main revenue models were again identified among the network: private-based, public-based and EU based. In 2007, 35% of BICs generated more than half of their income from private sources, which represents an

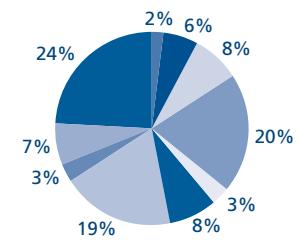
BIC Business Models



increase of 6% compared to the year 2006. Funding from public bodies remained almost unchanged. It represented 50% of all funding. Income from EU programmes was the principle source of revenue for 15% of members, compared with 19% in 2006. In the network as a whole, 10 different sources of revenue were identified. The average total in-

come per BIC was around 1.77 M€. From this, the average contribution per BIC from public finance was around 1 M€. However, obviously there was a wide margin between the smallest and the largest incomes in the network.

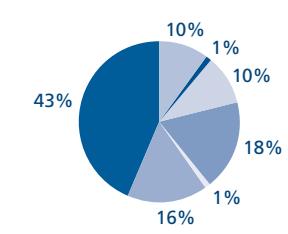
Income



- Income from national, regional, local bodies (24%)
- EU Structural Funds (7%)
- Other public subsidies (3%)
- Public income through national & regional programmes (19%)
- Income from EU programmes (8%)
- Other public income (3%)
- Income from housing + incubator service (20%)
- Income from client SMEs/entrepreneurs (8%)
- Other private income (6%)
- Private sponsorship (2%)

Expenditure

The pie chart shows the average breakdown of costs in the network.



- Payroll (43%)
- Consultants & external expert (16%)
- Subsidies to entrepreneurs (1%)
- Overheads (18%)
- Cost of incubator building (10%)
- Financial costs (1%)
- Other costs (10%)



BIC of Attika, Mr Konstantinos Gaglias, General Manager, Greece



What were the main topics of the projects that you were involved in?

The main topics of the projects where BIC of Attika is involved in are innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainable development, internationalisation of SMEs, employment, active ageing and incubation.

What part of the European projects do you value most?

The most valuable aspects of our participation in EU projects concern cooperation, development of tools and methodologies for SMEs, exchange of best practice, networking and exploitation of results.

Have you established any valuable contacts with other organisations by working in projects?

The participation of BIC of Attika in EU projects has brought about valuable contacts with other BICs, chambers of commerce, federations of industries, IRCs, regional authorities, technology parks, incubators, universities, research centers and of course SMEs. The development of these contacts has opened numerous opportunities for BIC of Attika and its customers.

Did European projects have an impact on your customers in any other way?

Through its participation in EU projects BIC of Attika has developed a significant number of tools and methodologies for SMEs, which are used in day-to-day business by BIC customers. Furthermore work on EU projects has made it possible for the BIC to exchange experience that is subsequently transferred to customers.

What impact have these European projects had on the local economy?

In most cases, EU projects have had an indirect impact on the local economy. By collaborating with the local authorities BIC of Attika plans and develops initiatives that are later implemented by other players in the region. An example of such an initiative was the Innovative Actions Program for the region of Attika (ARI-ACT) aiming at raising the quality of life in the region.

Can you establish a link between these results and being member of EBN?

As a full EBN member BIC of Attika is informed about new policies, initiatives and trends in Europe as well as in the world.



Furthermore, BIC of Attika has the opportunity to establish partnerships with other BICs leading to successful cooperation.

How do you use EBN and the BIC network to develop your ideas and proposals into funded EC projects?

Close collaboration with EBN staff as well as the participation of BIC of Attika in events have resulted in numerous formal and informal discussions. We consider these contacts as means for building our most valuable asset, namely our network. Membership in such a network provides for BIC of Attika the opportunity to develop jointly project ideas and to implement activities with members from other countries.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

BIC of Attika is a non-profit organisation with a main aim of supporting entrepreneurs and SMEs in the Attika region. It was established in 1995 on the initiative of the Athens Chamber of Small and Medium Sized Industries and other public and private bodies, including local authorities, banks, universities, private companies, etc. They constitute the membership. Today BIC of Attika employs 15 people with an in-depth knowledge of business practice and consulting, in outlining and developing proposals as well as in implementing, management and evaluation of European and national programs. BIC of Attika is also operating its business incubator in the Lavrion Technology and Cultural Park. The most important activity of this BIC is to provide consulting services to SMEs, to manage the incubator building and EU projects.



Technology Centre AS Prague, Dr Karel Klusáček, Director, Czech Republic



What were the main topics of the projects that you were involved in?

The Technology Centre of the Academy of Sciences (TCAS) is an organisation that finances most of its activities from projects that are realised in a framework of European and national programs. The core field in which the TCAS is operating is the support of research, development and innovative entrepreneurship.

What part of the European projects do you value most?

European projects represent a unique opportunity to facilitate the sharing of expertise and knowledge of partners from different countries. Objectives can be achieved together in a much shorter time than if partners worked on them separately.

Have you established any valuable contacts with other organisations by working in projects?

Projects bring together organisations working in the same field, complementing their competences and sharing similar visions. The TCAS maintains and develops the network of our partners since it constitutes an important resource for our activities thus satisfying the needs of our customers.

Did European projects have an impact on your customers in any other way?

The results of our projects usually serve our customers either directly or indirectly. The other benefit is that these projects help us to enhance our expertise and to widen the portfolio of our services. As a result we are able to satisfy the needs of our customers better.

What impact have these European projects had on the local economy?

Many of these projects, e.g. Enterprise Europe Network, Loco-Motive, have direct impact on the players in the field of R&D and innovation. Other projects, e.g. FutureFood6, have an indirect impact, improving the environment in which businesses and organisations work through implementing new concepts and ideas. They also enhance the ability of local businesses to achieve better performance.

Can you establish a link between these results and being member of EBN?

EBN played a very positive role in the phase of establishing the TCAS by providing assistance based on the experience of its members. Moreover, these days, EBN represents for the TCAS an important platform for the exchange of ideas, accessing fresh information on support measures for business and innovation, as well as to meet participants in the wide EBN network.

How do you use EBN and the BIC network to develop your ideas and proposals into funded EC projects?

The EBN group of professionals can be used for generating new ideas, comparing experiences, and discussing projects, their challenges and results. EBN is also a brand name providing its members with a reference point indicating that their services and activities are accredited to a European Quality Mark (the EC-BIC label), which possibly opens opportunities for new project partnerships.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

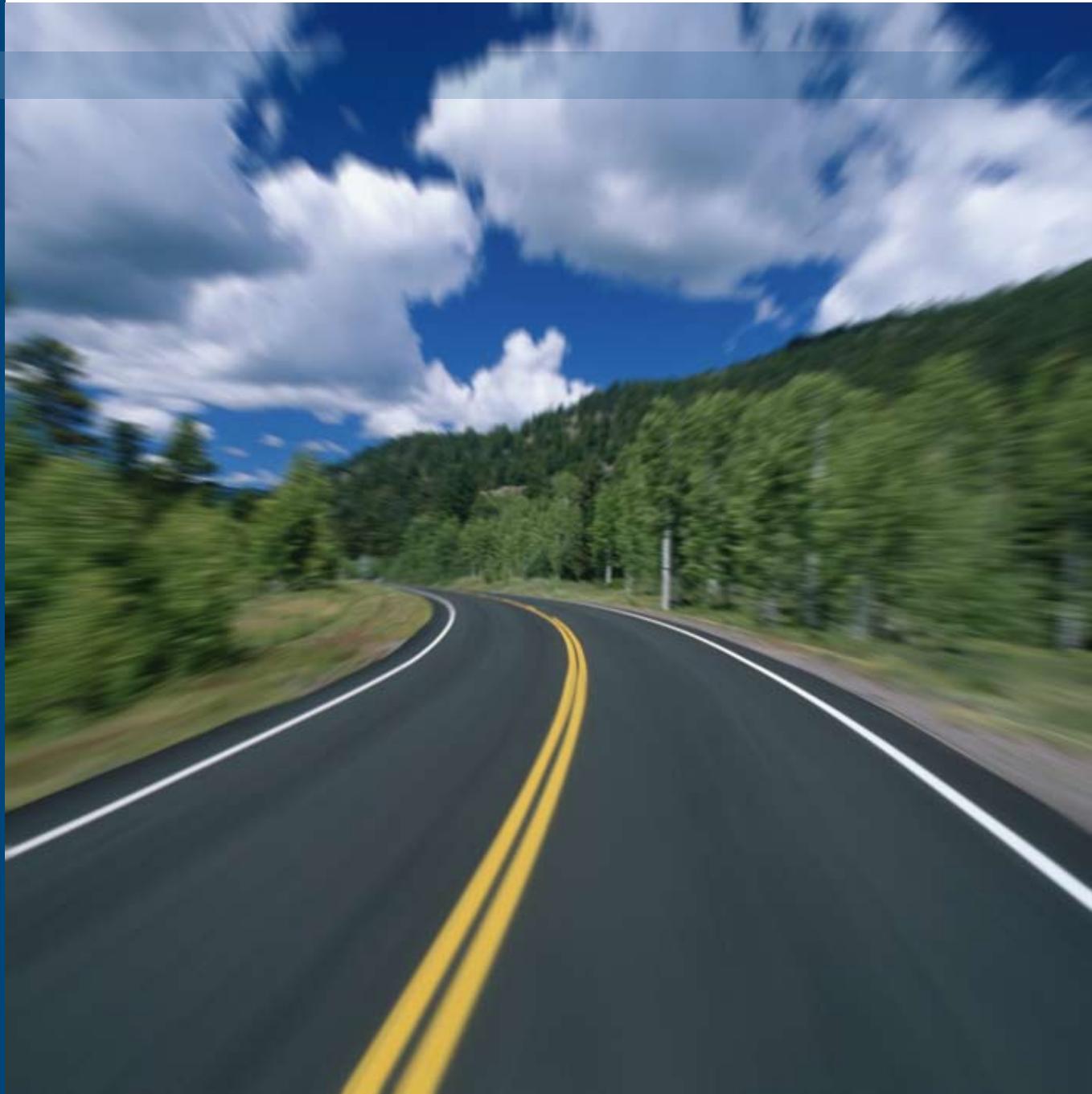
Since 1993 the TCAS promotes the industrial application of R&D, provides technology transfer services and stimulates the creation and growth of innovative SMEs. The TCAS is the coordinator of the Czech part of the Enterprise Europe Network providing information on R&D as well as assistance and training for SMEs. This TCAS is also one of the founders of the consortium operating the new Business Incubator in Prague. The TCAS is also the national information point for the EU Framework Program. It hosts and coordinates the Liaison Office for R&D (CZELO) in Brussels as well where it represents the Czech research community.



7 | Key Indicators 2007: Review of Performance Indicators

The Performance indicators also called Success indicators represent a key part of the BICs management tool to define measurable objectives, which are made up of a direction, key performance indicators (KPI), benchmark, target and time frame. The Performance indicators in the Observatory were selected in a way to be SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Result-oriented; Time-bound). They give a clear picture of what is important and help the BICs to assess better whether their aims and objectives are being achieved and where their strategies are being effectively implemented.

The Performance indicators identify the most important measures of the impact of BICs on their region, in terms of stimulation of innovation, development of SMEs and employment. BICs that wish to use indicators wisely need to be firmly committed to provision and development of quality services and identify weak points as an opportunity for improving performance. BICs management and staff need to be committed to providing quality services and continual improvement of the quality of those services to ensure always the satisfaction of the client companies and entrepreneurs.





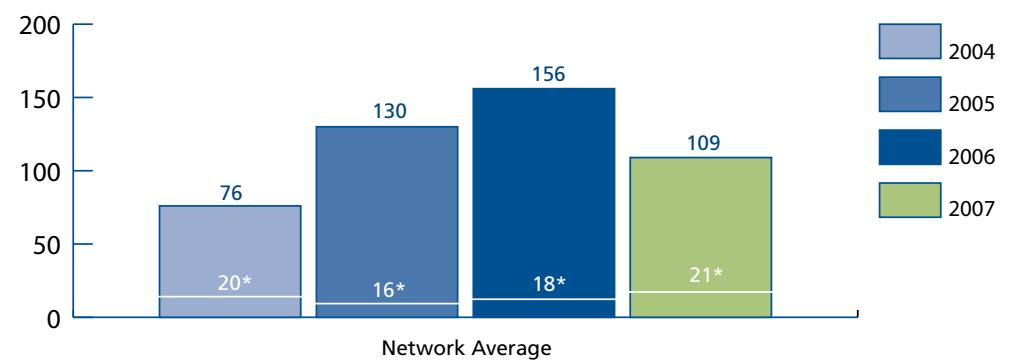
Number of enterprise creation projects during the year

The average number of enterprise creation projects after feasibility study during the year in 2007 was 109. This represents a decrease against 2006 of 30.13%. The median figure of 21 projects shows an increase of 16.67% against 2006.

This significant drop in the average together with the contrasting slight increase in the median is the result of a decrease in extreme values reported by BICs. This trend has been noted elsewhere in the report, for other indicators and is highlighted in the foreword.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	76	130	156	109	-30.13%
Network median	20	16	18	21	16.67%

How many enterprise creation projects have you selected during the year?



* median



University of Warwick Science Park Ltd, Mr David Rowe, Director, United Kingdom



How did you achieve your results?

The 10 people comprising the Projects Team are able to offer a wide range of support to tenant companies from Knowledge Transfer, Access to Finance and Technical Marketing. The ability to tailor specific support via the new IGNITE programme has been particularly effective. This programme is part funded by the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands. In total, in 2007, UWSP supported 115 enterprise creation projects, following feasibility study.

What partners were involved, if any?

The Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands), Government Office (Government Office West Midlands) for ERDF funds and the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS).

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

Over the last 18 months UWSP has been one of the driving forces behind the Bridge to Growth programme, a soft landings initiative. To date over 12 companies from the Nordic countries and Holland have come to UWSP. Another example can be found in the Technical Marketing support unit, which has two Leonardo student placements.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Through the Technical Marketing support a number of UK companies have been able to enter European markets.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

We have helped to improve the survivability of the 300+ Start-up & Micro companies we have worked with over the last year.

What do you think of the BIC network?

It is a great idea and a useful network.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

Our BIC was founded in 1984 and added additional Incubator space in 1987, 1997, 1998, 2000 & 2001. Currently at over 90% occupancy we are home to over 100 companies. The BIC is part of the University of Warwick Science Park which has over 35,000 square metres of mixed grow-on space.





Number of business plans produced during the year

The average number of business plans produced in 2007 was 105 – a decrease of 36.36% against the average for 2006. The median figure of 21 business plans was steady for the last three years.

97.84% of BICs reported that they provided a business plan template for entrepreneurs and 96.40% reported that they actually helped the entrepreneur to write the business plan.

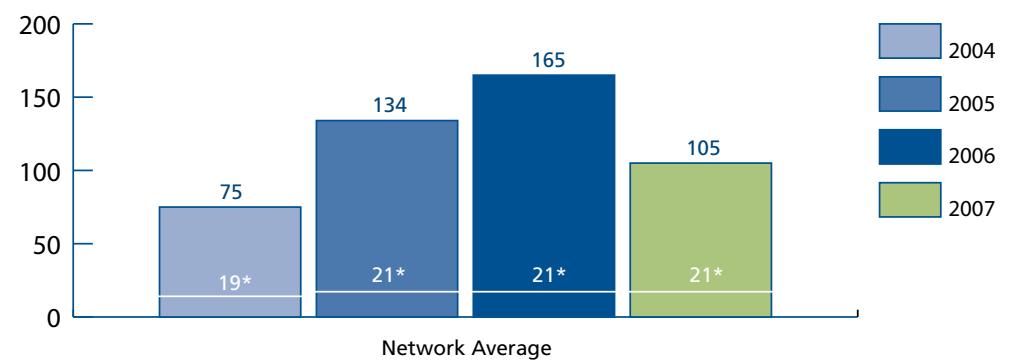
Almost all enterprise creation projects selected after feasibility study resulted ultimately in the drawing up of a business

plan. Even after taking into account the length of the process from initial enquiry to business plan and start-up (which is not always completed within a given calendar year) the data show that the robust selection criteria applied by the BICs result in a rate of selection between successful feasibility study and business plan that is very high.

The decrease in the number of business plans produced in 2007 can be partly explained by the more accurate interpretation - in general – of the relevant question, by the BICs.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	75	134	165	105	-36.36%
Network median	19	21	21	21	0.00%

Among evaluated projects, how many business plans were produced during the year?



* median



Barcelona Activa S.A., Mrs Yolanda Pérez, Director, Spain



How did you achieve your results?

We have 22 years of experience as a BIC and we believe that our open model of giving support to new start-ups has evolved significantly to meet the socio-economic changes and the needs of our customers. Every year in our Entrepreneurship centre we coach entrepreneurs with more than 1,100 new business project ideas including the making of a business plan. Moreover, in the framework of our innovative business growth programs we organise networking events, investment readiness and management seminars, technology bridges (business trips) to global innovation hot spots, etc. All our customers receive tailor made support.

What partners were involved, if any?

The close collaboration with partners such as: the IESE Business School, Business Angels, La Caixa and Caja Navarra Saving Banks, the BioCat bio cluster, Business Associations, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Microsoft as well as a number of other major companies is a key factor of our success.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

The aim of our technology and innovation bridges is to develop and strengthen the relationship between businesses in Barcelona and regions such as the Silicon Valley, China, UK, Finland, Japan, etc. EurOffice Services (EOS) is another key project in which several EBN members support SMEs facilitating their successful entry into new foreign markets.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Depending on the maturity of the companies, technology and innovation bridges have different results: from benchmarking and detection of new business models to doing business with major companies and identifying new partners. The same goes for EOS, which also includes training and coaching services.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Barcelona Activa helps more than 700 new start-ups each year which generate a total of 1,500 new jobs. 15% of these companies are scientific or technology based. In 2007, we gave intensive incubation support to 366 innovative start-ups, 116 of which are hosted in our premises in the Glòries Incubator and BCN Nord Technology Park. The survival rate of the tenants 3 years after creation is 84%, their average turnover is nearly 1 M€, they employ 850 people and form clusters that help boost the innovative capacity of the city. We also helped to improve the social cohesion of the city.

What do you think of the BIC network?

We have been part of the network since its start and we are very satisfied with how it has grown in terms of number of members and activities. It's a great tool for benchmarking and cooperation with other organisations that share our aims.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

Barcelona Activa is the local development agency of the Barcelona City Council. The main activity of the BIC is to facilitate establishment of businesses and business growth. We provide expert advice, interactive online tools, knowledge and other appropriate support. Barcelona Activa is also in charge of the Xarxactiva Business Network (idea exchange platform for 700 entrepreneurs) and the mentoring program where successful entrepreneurs help innovative businesses to grow and internationalise by providing investment readiness seminars and training. In order to secure the economic future of the city, Barcelona Activa is helping new innovative companies able to attract talents to operate globally, to lead international projects and to compete successfully on the international market.





Number of start-ups created during the year

The total number of start-ups for the network in 2007 was 5,249. The average number per BIC was 39, which represents a significant increase of 25.81% against 2006.

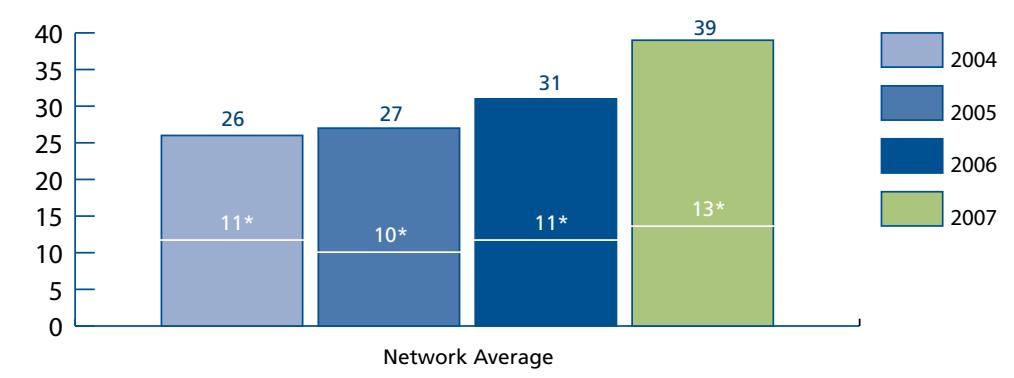
The figures also show a steady upward trend for the last four years. This demonstrates that BICs continue to be increasingly successful in this activity, making an ever more important impact on enterprise creation in Europe and beyond.

Furthermore, the proportion of business plans that resulted in the creation of an enterprise increased to around 33% in 2007 from 20% in 2006. This reflects the increasing effectiveness of the selection process applied by many BICs.

The ultimate success of this selection is further highlighted in the enterprise survival rate reported on the next page.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	26	27	31	39	25.81%
Network median	11	10	11	13	18.18%

How many start-ups were created with the support of your BIC during the year?



* median

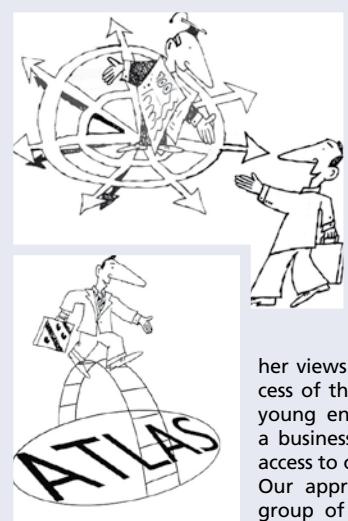


Business Development Friesland, Mr Lennard Drogendijk, Director, Netherlands



How did you achieve your results?

The success formula Nieuwe Bedrijvigheid Friesland (New Businesses Friesland) has been initiated in 2003 at the start of our BIC. We make use of a straightforward method. We buy an address list of new start-ups in our region, we send them a letter and make a follow-up call to see whether they are truly innovative and willing to grow. If the phone conversation is encouraging, we will pay the start-up a visit and evaluate the opportunities on the spot. We focus heavily on the entrepreneur behind the service or the product. His/her views and ideas are key to the success of the start-up company. Once the young entrepreneurs have constructed a business plan, we offer them advice, access to our broad network and grants. Our approach has led to a successful group of young entrepreneurs with a 95% survival rate after 3 years.



What partners were involved, if any?

We closely cooperate with the Province of Friesland and municipalities in Friesland to generate a flow of deals and understanding for our methodology.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

BDF actively supports all start-ups during the initial stage of the company. Some of them quickly take their first steps on the international scene. These companies are generally so innovative they can become global winners in their specific market niche. Thanks to international projects in which we are involved, for instance our Export ATLAS project (exportatlas.nl) and EBN's ClusterNet project (ebn-cbc.net), we are able to fully

support these start-ups on a European level by offering them useful contacts and business opportunities.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Cross-border activities opened up new and undiscovered markets around the world, but equally important, they led to new innovative ideas within the company as a result of attending international fairs and getting a better sense of local demand and opportunities.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Since 2003, we have assisted over 60 innovative start-ups. Together they account for 310 new jobs in the region and economic activity worth over 9 million euros.

What do you think of the BIC network?

The BIC network provides great opportunities. BDF regularly attends meetings and events and this strengthens the relationship with EBN and its team. The EBN team and their experts maintain a good relation with BDF and its director. We recently found out that a case of beer even stimulates the EBN team to wear orange clothes during the Dutch national holiday, Queens Day.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

BDF is an international project management agency with a team of 7 employees. In 2008 we celebrated our 5 year anniversary. The main goal of BDF is to develop projects that stimulate growth of SMEs in the northern part of the Netherlands. BDF is looking for financial support for these projects and carries out the projects individually or in collaboration with other organisations. By using the available knowledge and contacts of BDF and by participating in its projects, entrepreneurs can realise the growth objectives of their companies.





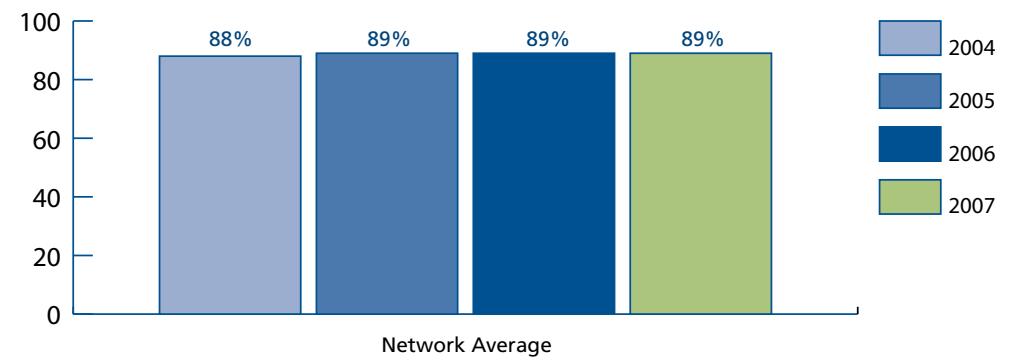
Enterprise Survival Rate

The rate of enterprises created with the support of a BIC, that survive for more than 3 years was 89%. This indicator barely changed over the last four years. In a study³ undertaken for Directorate General Enterprise of the European Commission, the benchmark survival rate

was given as 85%. From this, it is clear that the BIC network consistently contributes positively to the survival prospects of enterprises beyond three years and is consistently exceeding the benchmark given in the final report for the above study.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	88%	89%	89%	89%	0%
Network median	90%	90%	90%	90%	0%

Estimated percentage enterprise survival rate up to 3 years after creation?



³ Benchmarking of Business Incubators. Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services. February 2002



BATT - Operating Corporation for Application and Technology Centers in Thuringia, Dr Bertram Harendt, Director, Germany

How did you achieve your results?

The Operating Company for Application and Technology Centers in Thuringia (BATT) manages four centers owned by the Foundation for Technology, Innovation and Research Thuringia (STIFT). BATT provides services, incubation infrastructure and research facilities for SMEs and puts considerable efforts to develop all essential business activities to help companies achieve their objectives. Furthermore, BATT provides media infrastructure and other modern facilities as well as finance and funding advice. BATT is also organising events and public relation activities. BATT contribution to the structural and economic support of young SMEs active in various high-tech sectors has helped to promote a survival rate of 100% for incubated companies after three years of operation.

What partners were involved, if any?

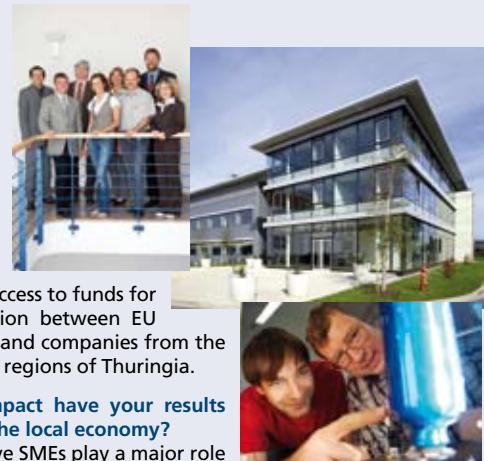
Both BATT's shareholders, the State Development Corporation (LEG) of Thuringia and STIFT maintain excellent contacts in industry, research and politics and together they ensure the link between business and university. In this framework, they ensure the link between BATT tenants and Thuringian research institutes as well as SMEs participation in EU, national or local programs. Finally they promote cooperation and exchange activities in the framework of cluster initiatives in sectors such as optics, media, micro-system technology, construction, plastic processing and automotive industries.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

The close cooperation with LEG allowed BATT to promote and improve significantly the contacts between companies active in the ENABLE project. Moreover, BATT is a work-package leader in the project InnoCentre aiming to support university spin-offs. BATT is also involved in a network of six European regions engaged in various micro- and nano-technology projects within the Sixth Framework Program.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Our cross-border activities contribute to the development of new technologies, improve know-how and technology transfer. It also helps create successful business relations and im-



proved access to funds for cooperation between EU partners and companies from the fourteen regions of Thuringia.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Innovative SMEs play a major role in the regional economy. The four spheres where BATT is involved (media, micro-system technology, nano-technology and construction technology) embody key aspects of the economic development in Thuringia and we actively encourage young innovative companies to use our infrastructure. The result is that the number of jobs in these sectors is growing at an exceptionally high rate.

What do you think of the BIC network?

The BIC network offers excellent opportunities not only for exchange of best practice but also for know-how and technology transfer. The network gives opportunities for easy partner search and contacts with other entrepreneurs and companies.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

BATT was established in 2004 in Erfurt and is owned by LEG and STIFT. In 2007, BATT certified its integrated management system according to ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 standards. In the same year, BATT was successfully evaluated according to the EC-BIC quality criteria. BATT has twelve employees and manages the application centers on behalf of their owner STIFT. The total investment in the centers is 90 M€.





Number of tenants in incubators

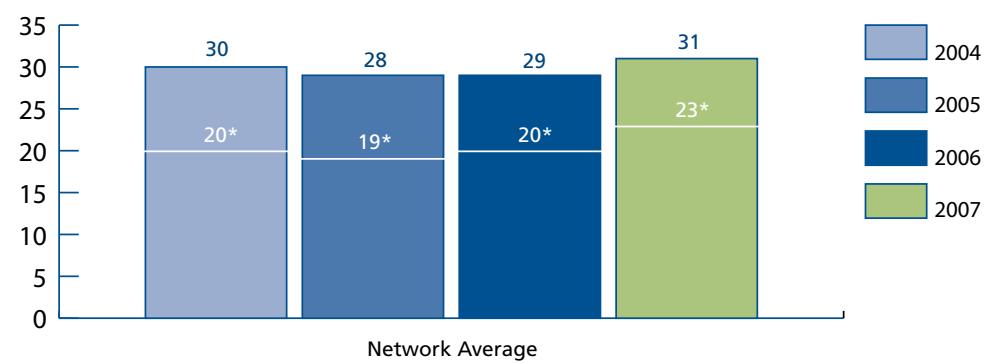
The total number of enterprises in incubators in 2007 was 3,917. It means that, on average, each BIC supports a small business cluster, comprising around 31 young companies. Compared with the average of 29 for 2006, the number of companies hosted by incubators managed by BICs remained relatively stable for the last four years. The median increased by 15%.

74.87% of BICs provided physical incubation space in 2007, while 25.13% did not. However, this does not mean that the latter did not deliver incubation support services and other types of consultancy.

The average incubation time was 3 years and the average occupation rate was nearly 80%.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	30	28	29	31	6.90%
Network median	20	19	20	23	15.00%

How many tenants (enterprises) were located in your incubator during the year?



* median



Forskningsparken As, Mr Svenning Torp, CEO, Norway

How did you achieve your results?

Through hard work over many years focusing on services central to start-up companies. This in a framework where we combine real estate and innovation services making a sustainable business model.

What partners were involved, if any?

The University of Oslo and the Oslo Kommune have been central partners throughout the years. Moreover, Forskningsparken has developed a wide range of partnerships aimed at improving the impact of the different services and features of the BIC. Some of the most prominent partners are: SIVA (which contributes 50% of the incubator grants), Kistefos (which part finances the seed capital fund Springfondet), VentureLab and Innovation Norway together with the Research Council of Norway which guarantees public grants.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

To date, there have been few. However, now we are launching a go-to-market program together with Symbion in Copenhagen.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

Limited so far, but we hope for results from the above.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

The increasing number of tenants in our incubator is a very good indicator for the region: the start-up companies not only bring wealth to the region (the gross income in start-up companies increased 700% between 1999 and 2005), but we also noticed a significant increase in the number of employees in the start-up companies. Moreover, in general terms, the share value of a start-up company supported by Forskningsparken doubles in the first year following creation.



What do you think of the BIC network?

An excellent network to establish common EU-projects, to exchange best practice, learn and be inspired by other BICs, and to promote the BIC concept to political authorities.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

The mission of Oslo Innovation Centre is to help commercially viable research results and project ideas develop into profitable enterprises. This is done on a sound commercial basis by being an active business development partner and by providing an environment for growth in suitable premises. Oslo Innovation Centre aims to be one of the leading centres in Europe for innovation and industrial development. We are committed to the commercialisation of ideas and results from research environments. We will soon house more than 140 companies, which will mean that approximately 1700 people work in the Park.





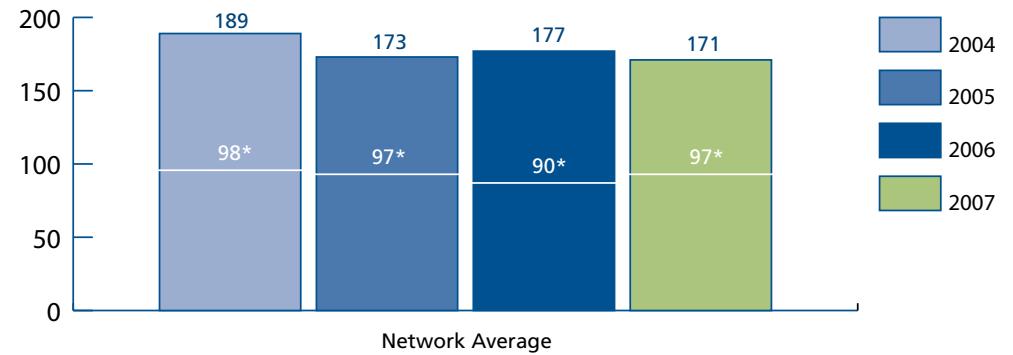
Total employment by tenants in 2007

The total number of employees in tenant companies in the network in 2007 was 21,561. This represents averages of 5.5 employees per company and of 171 employees per BIC incubator. It also represents an overall decrease of 3.39%

against 2006 in the average. The median figure shows an increase of 7.78% - back to its 2005 level.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	189	173	177	171	-3.39%
Network median	98	97	90	97	7.78%

Total employment by tenants during the year



* median



Agropole – CEEI 47, Mr Gilles Recour, General Director, France



Pierre Camani (President of the Conseil Général de Lot-et-Garonne), J. Alain Mariotti (President of the Chamber of Commerce), Jacques Bilit (President of the Agropole Services)

How did you achieve your results?

Since 1998 CEEI 47 has been supporting the creation, the development and the achievements of enterprises in the South-western part of France. The main area of our activities is in the innovative agro-food sectors. All our services are concentrated in the Agropole Techno Park that includes specialised and general incubators, a techno center, a training center, a conference center, office rental space for companies, etc. We are proud of the 4000 m² of manufacturing space for new start-ups, which we can offer.

What partners were involved, if any?

Our main partners are major corporations and enterprises, banks, local authorities, chambers of commerce, other business support organisations, the order of chartered accountants, lawyers, notaries, etc.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

Our Agro-food technological resource center cooperates closely with its French and European counterparts through various European research programs. The BIC is always represented on large international fairs i.e. SIAL, ANUGA and last but not least, every year we receive delegations from all around the world.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your customers?

The relationships and the various activities of cooperation with European partners are very beneficial for our client com-

panies. These joint actions give access to top technologies and facilitate the integration of the companies in the international economy.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

CEEI 47 has directly contributed to the setting up and the development of more than 110 companies and the creation of more than 2,000 jobs in the region. More than 115 M€ of investments were generated.

What do you think of the BIC Network?

Networks are essential to promote business exchanges as well as benchmarking and exchange of best practices. Moreover, the importance and the advantages that the BIC network brings could facilitate every action of common interest.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

CEEI 47 was founded in 1998 and is the appointed partner for entrepreneurs and start-up companies in Lot-et-Garonne department in South-western part of France. The BIC proposes all necessary competences for the development, the validation and the follow up of enterprise projects. Our services are devised around three essential tools: departmental network of incubators, competence and financing networks.



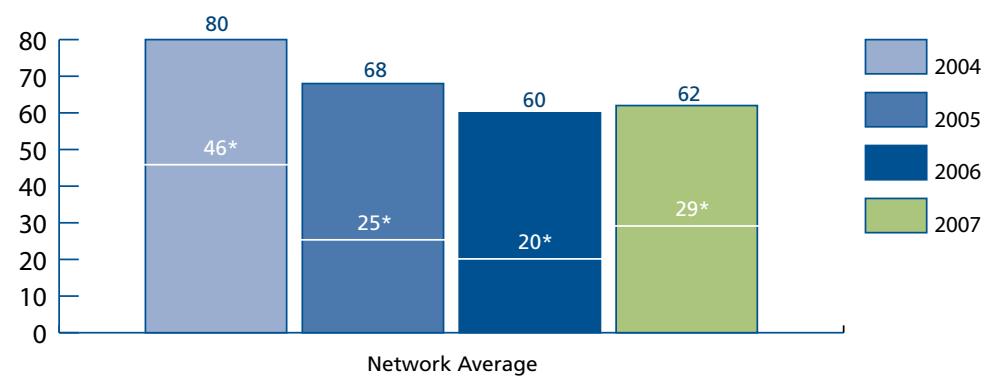


Number of jobs created in SMEs (client companies of BICs)

The total number of jobs created in SMEs in 2007 as reported by BICs was 7,986. The average number of jobs created per BIC was 62 which represents a small increase of 3.33% against the average for the previous year.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	80	68	60	62	3.33%
Network median	46	25	20	29	45.00%

How many jobs were created in SMEs (client companies of the BIC) during the year?



* median



Nantes Atlanpole, Mr Jean-François Balducchi, General Director, France



How did you achieve your results?

Our results are the consequence of the dynamism of the Nantes University Centre, with more than 50,000 students and 2,500 researchers, and our ability to be involved in new clusters and to support new fields of activity. In the last 10 years, new materials, ICT, life sciences and biotechnologies appeared to be up and coming fields for the future.

What partners were involved, if any?

Since its setting up in 1987, Atlanpole has integrated itself into a broad environment and has created links with the key players of the local hi-tech community (companies, universities and research organisations). Atlanpole is mainly supported by several partners such as local authorities, chambers of commerce and the University of Nantes, building together a strong partnership. The constitution of such a unified network was made possible thanks to networking and incubation which play a major role in the strategy of technopoles.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?

Atlanpole is involved in many international activities: Atlanpole leads the Atlantic Biotherapies cluster, we participate in international trade fairs – such as BIO - and organise top-level business meetings and international business conventions in Nantes. Atlanpole also leads the AFIBIO programme, which links 7 partners across Europe. Its goal is to facilitate biotech companies' access to funding. Along with around 40 European Technopoles, Atlanpole also participates in the Detect IT 2 European project, which seeks to foster greater SME participation in EU-funded collaborative innovation programs in biotech, renewable energy and ICT.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

These activities facilitate the internationalisation of our innovative SMEs. For instance, Atlanpole cooperates with biotech clusters in Europe (such as Cambridge, Milan, Goteborg, Heidelberg) and North America (Seattle, North Carolina). We hope that it will help our young biotech companies in developing technology transfer and business world wide.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Since 1987, we have been enhancing the synergy between business and research so that innovative projects can emerge and flourish in our region. In 2007, we had in our network 278 innovative companies with a total of 20,000 jobs. Moreover, we have contributed to setting up new competitiveness clusters, for instance Atlantic Biotherapies, designed to increase economic growth and foster innovation, which creates added value and jobs.



What do you think of the BIC network?

EBN is a very good way to promote best practice in Europe. This network also enables SMEs to find skills which match their needs.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

As the Technopole for the "Nantes Atlantique" economic area, Atlanpole's vocation is to bring entrepreneurs and researchers together, into a truly dynamic innovation network. Atlanpole is a Business Incubator accredited by the French Ministry of Research and is member of the French National Innovation Network (RETIS), the European Business Innovation Centre Network (EBN) and the International Association of Science Parks (IASP). Atlanpole has been awarded ISO 9001 certification for each of its 3 core activities, namely skills networking and partnership engineering, business support and innovative project engineering and promotion of competitiveness clusters and inward investment.





Number of jobs maintained in SMEs

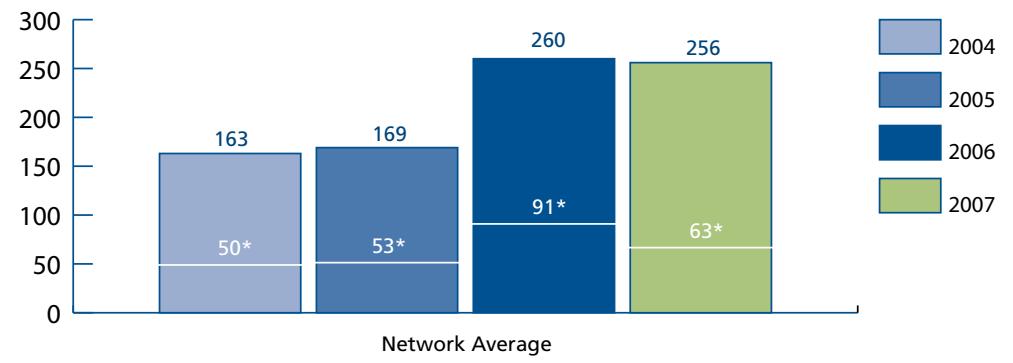
The total number of jobs maintained in SMEs as reported by BICs was 32,495.

The average number of jobs maintained per BIC was 256 – a slight decrease compared to 2006. The median figure of 63 jobs maintained in SMEs shows a drop of 30.77%, whilst still remaining significantly higher than the median figures for both 2004 and 2005.

In the case of this particular indicator, it should be noted that many BICs do not have an entirely accurate way to collect the relevant data and it is understood that many estimate the result reported. Nevertheless, the statistic is still widely used within the EU in economic and related reports and also in reports related to EU funding. For this reason, EBN has decided to continue asking for the information from the BICs.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	163	169	260	256	-1.54%
Network median	50	53	91	63	-30.77%

How many jobs were maintained in these SMEs through your assistance/support?



* median



Beaz S.A., Mr Raul Onaindia, General Director, Spain



How did you achieve your results?

Since 1987 Beaz has continuously been achieving good results in creating companies and helping to maintain jobs thanks to its policy of proximity with the people and centres generating ideas, such as Technical Centres, Universities and Educational Centres. These results have also been achieved as a result of the extensive knowledge and experience of Beaz's 25 professionals.

Which partners, if any, are involved in your results?

89% of Beaz's share capital is constituted by the Provincial Council of Bizkaia (Local Government), as well as different private companies from for example the electrical, financial and petrochemical sectors. Beaz's activities are successful because of this public-private format and the collaboration through agreements with research centres, universities and companies.

Do you perform cross border activities? Which?

Beaz has extensive experience participating in international and European projects which allows it to acquire and exchange knowledge which is transformed into tools for increasing and improving the competitiveness of the companies in Bizkaia. Apart from this Beaz is currently collaborating in a cooperation project in Cuba and also intends to enter a new European project.

What impact do these cross border activities have on your customers?

Our customers benefit from our international networks which facilitate their access to new markets and help them to - amongst other things - improve their knowledge by collaborating with other bodies and companies thereby generating synergies which enables the internationalisation of their products, thereby generating wealth for Bizkaia.

What impact do your results have on the local economy?

On the local level Beaz contributes to making the industrial fabric of Bizkaia more sophisticated by boosting the creation of companies and maintenance of jobs with a higher level of innovation. This translates into more than 1,000 high added value, knowledge-based companies created since 1987. Furthermore, 273 jobs were maintained in the 2007 financial year.

What do you think about the BIC network?

It is an essential instrument for the exchange of good practice. The network allows added value services to be offered to our customers, which result from the various benchmarking activities coordinated by EBN.

Could you briefly describe your BIC?

Beaz is a public company of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia attached to the Department for Innovation and Economic Development. We are devoted to the creation and consolidation of innovative companies for which we have a team involved in the development of high added value consultancy services. We have various incubators such as the one dedicated to the biotechnology sector and the one located in the Public University of the Basque Country aimed at channelling academic spin-offs. There is also the prospect of creating two new incubators in cooperation with a Technological Centre and with Deusto University. With all of this Beaz's mission is to contribute to enriching the industrial and business fabric of Bizkaia helping to create new innovative, competitive and profitable business models where the workers use all of their potential and talent.





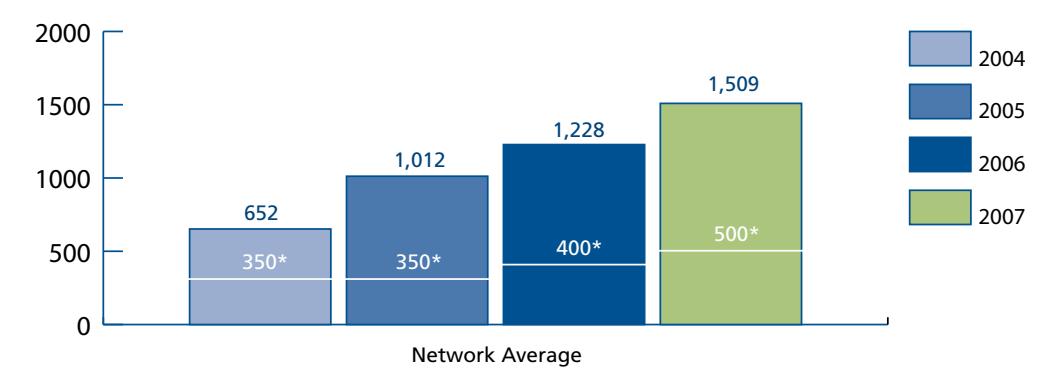
Number of people that attended events to promote entrepreneurship

In 2007, 203,394 people attended BIC events across the network to promote entrepreneurship. The average was 1,509, which represents a very large increase against 2006 of 22.88%.

The median figure was 500, up from 400 in 2006. For the last four years the BICs have shown a significant and progressive increase in the number of participants in events organised to promote entrepreneurship, with the latest result showing a 131% increase against 2004.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	652	1,012	1,228	1,509	22.88%
Network median	350	350	400	500	25.00%

How many people attended events to promote entrepreneurship?



* median



How did you achieve your results?

During 2007, NET - Novas Empresas e Tecnologias, S.A., Business and Innovation Centre of Oporto organised several events and was present in several others, to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the North Region of Portugal. In total, these events were attended by more than 8,000 people. In addition, NET organised monthly the Ideas Consulting Room (Clinic of Ideas), where anyone can drop in to discuss business ideas, with a view to creating companies. This initiative aims to encourage entrepreneurship and the creation of academic spin-offs. NET also organised several conferences during the year in universities, faculties and associations to promote entrepreneurship and innovation; participated in Job Fairs, which promoted the creation of new companies as an alternative for employment; organised an annual "Ideas Contest" for the creation of new innovative companies in the North Region of Portugal; and organised other types of events, like the "Seminars for the Generation and Maturation of Ideas" and "Sunset Entrepreneurship Meetings". These good results reflect the strong marketing and communication campaign, using several media channels and materials and exploiting some excellent relationships with several entities of the region.

What partners were involved, if any?

The partners involved with NET were private and public universities, faculties, associations and other relevant entities in the region. With some of them NET has established protocols and cooperation agreements, to promote entrepreneurship and to increase the potential for the creation of new and innovative companies.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities, and what are they?



Systematically NET collaborates with international partners including several Spanish BICs. NET has invited Spanish speakers to promote the Seminars for the Generation and Maturation of Ideas in Oporto.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

According to the relevant satisfaction surveys the people that attended these events were very satisfied. During the events the entrepreneurs and the SMEs had access to different tools and had an opportunity to hear about examples of best practice.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Naturally promoting entrepreneurship does not have an immediate impact in terms of an increase in the start up of new companies, but these events are mainly to promote the concept of entrepreneurship and to explain what skills are needed, to potential entrepreneurs. NET - BIC of Oporto has promoted entrepreneurship in the North Region of Portugal since 1987, offering a range of quality services to entrepreneurs and existing SMEs. The BIC is recognised as an entity specialising in supporting the creation of new innovative and technology-based companies, with great growth potential and a high rate of success.

What do you think of the BIC network?

The BIC network is very important, particularly to access and exchange know-how, develop a knowledge network, benefit from benchmarking activities, exchange best practice with other BICs in Europe and other innovation entities.

Could you also give a brief introduction to your own BIC?

NET - BIC Oporto was founded in October 1987 by a group of entrepreneurs and regional authorities, and has the mission to help the creation of innovative business and technological enterprises, with great potential growth and collectively a low failure ratio, promoting the launch of small enterprises and supporting the modernisation of existing SMEs. As an entity aimed at developing innovative businesses, having great experience and know-how, with a special focus on innovation, NET - BIC Porto offers a transversal range of services to new entrepreneurs, to help them build their new businesses or modernise their companies (in areas such as marketing, finance, technological transfer, cooperation and internationalisation, incubation/housing, training of innovative entrepreneurs, development of innovative projects in existing SMEs etc.) NET has participated in several Portuguese and European projects, some supported by the BIC network.





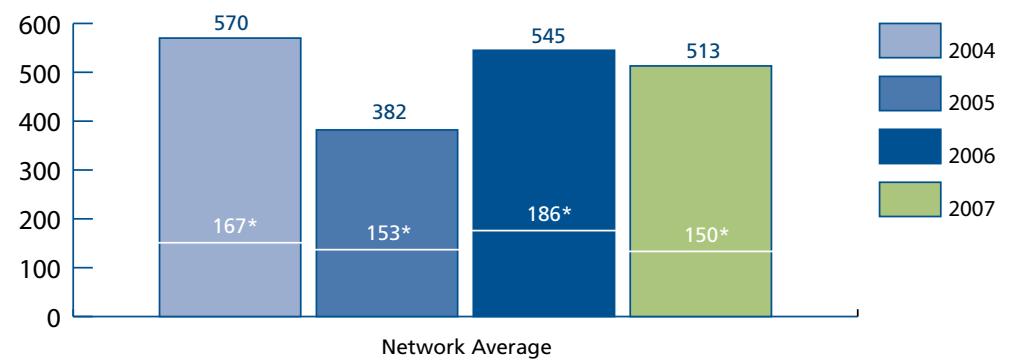
Number of people that attended training events

This data was collected by combining the answers to two questions, namely that relating to the number of training events for new entrepreneurs and that relating to the number of training events for existing SMEs. The total number of people attending training events in 2007 across the network was 61,891. The median figure was 150 training

events, which represents a decrease of 19.35% against 2006. The average number of attendees was 513, slightly down from 545 in 2006 but still above the 2005 level. The decrease is partly due to the trend in BICs to organise specialised training in smaller groups, allowing each attendee to receive more individual support during the training.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	Variation 2006/2007
Network average	570	382	545	513	-5.87%
Network median	167	153	186	150	-19.35%

How many people attended your training events during the year?



* median



Lahti Science & Business Park, Mr Lauri Ylöstalo, CEO, Finland



How did you achieve your results?

We carefully consider the needs of local business and implement only events that as of their start have strong company participation rate. We try to differentiate from other event organisers by focusing on specific issues like Cleantech. We are also actively building a specific Cleantech event brand which helps us to improve our marketing. To overcome the general lack of time in SMEs, we organise with great success tailor-made events i.e. two-hour target market seminars (China, Russia). Furthermore, Lahti Science and Business Park (LahtiSBP) includes Finland's largest team of specialists solely concentrated on the development of Cleantech business which was a key element in boosting our results and becoming the coordinator of the national Cleantech cluster.

What partners were involved, if any?

We provide a wide range of services that cannot be accomplished without the close cooperation with other business developers. Our partners include key players in business development, growth & internationalisation, financing and venture capital.

Are there any cross-border features of your activities and what are they?

LahtiSBP cross-border activities are dictated by the needs of local companies. We have implemented targeted initiatives for important rapidly growing markets i.e. China, Russia such as market surveys, developing export networks, organising congresses on promotion, capital investment and international contacts. We are also the coordinator of the Enviroparks network, which gathers environmental focused companies and science and technology parks. Enviroparks has developed B2B

and marketing service platform (www.envimatch.com) including information for around 7,000 companies.

What impact has this cross-border activity had on your clients?

One significant impact is the huge growth of turnover of the environmental business in the region. It has been growing with 18% annually since 2005.

What impact have your results had on the local economy?

Since 2005 we have attracted 30 M€ Cleantech investments in our region which directly contributed to the creation of 170 new jobs. This is the most significant impact on the local economy that secures our existence and financial sustainability.

What do you think of the BIC network?

EBN has great potential in terms of internationalisation and setting up project consortia. Nowadays energy and environment are high priorities for the EC and many BICs have national cluster development experience. We, therefore, highly appreciate EBN's initiative to establish a committed energy and environment sub-network in the near future. Our Cleantech cluster could be used as a pilot project.

Brief introduction of our BIC

Lahti is Finland's second most important centre for environmental business after the capital region Helsinki. Lahti has a solid foundation in Cleantech business thanks to both extensive cross-sector research and concentration of Cleantech companies. Our main aim is to develop the Lahti Region into a world-class environmental business and research centre by promoting the establishment and development of growth companies and innovative activities. Our business incubator is the second largest in Finland. Our owners include municipalities 84 %, companies 12%, universities 3% and private persons 1%. Our turnover in 2007 was 6.1 M€ and the budgeted turnover for 2008 is 7.4 M€. Our personnel are around 40. We are members of TEKEL (Finnish Science Park Association), IASP and EBN.



8 | Performance of the network in core business areas

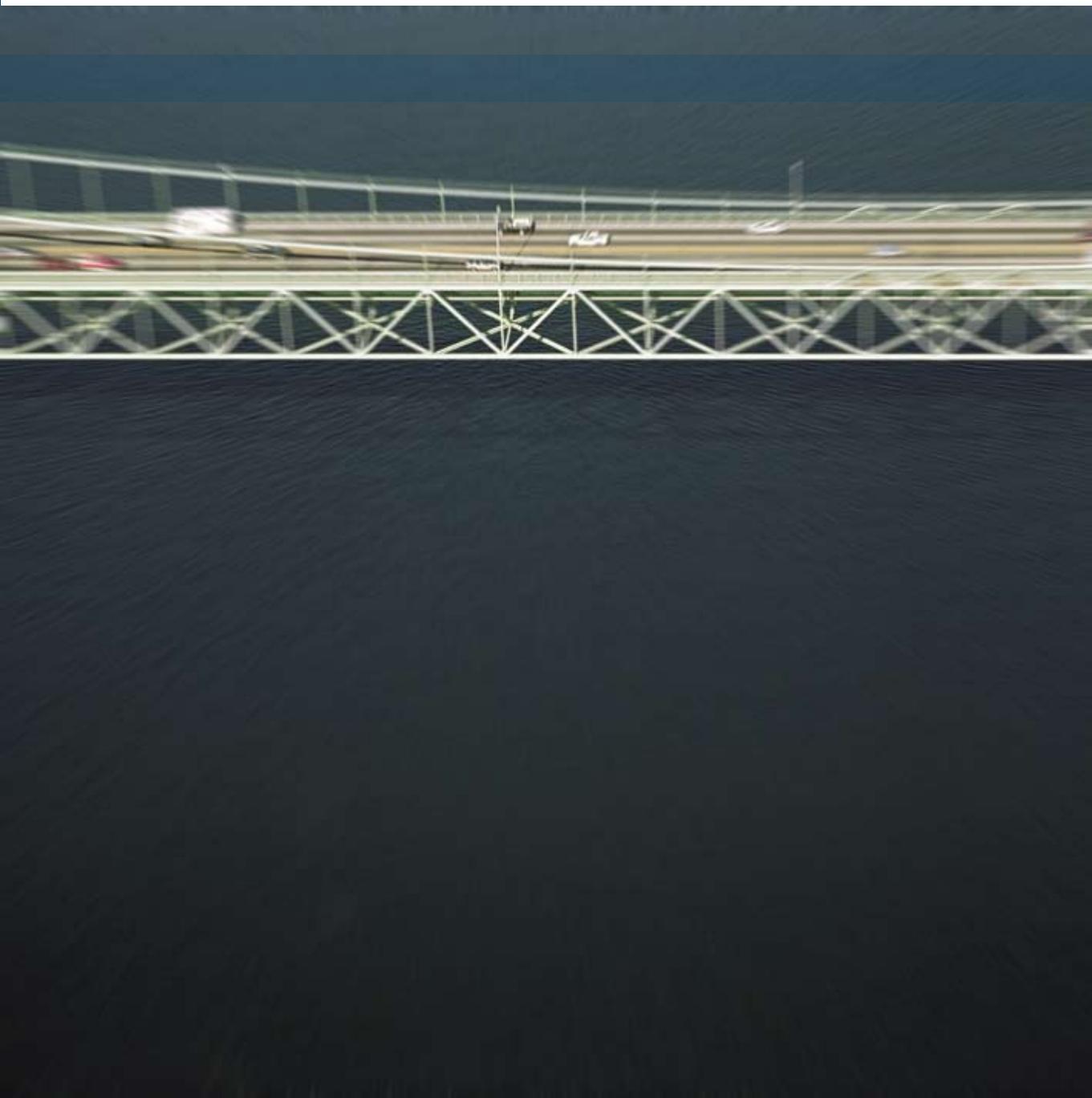
Introduction

The radar chart is an analytical tool developed for benchmarking in the private and public sectors. The method graphically shows relative strengths and weaknesses in defined areas, as well as a general overview of performance. The radial axes of the radar chart quantify performance in terms of the degree of attainment of the identified goals and the chart provides an overview of performance based on multiple performance criteria.

The data gathered through the questionnaire for 2007 are presented in radar charts below to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the BIC network in three core

business areas: services to new entrepreneurs, services to existing SME's, co-operation and internationalisation services. There is also a fourth chart which looks at operational aspects that either directly affect or are related to the quality of services provided to clients.

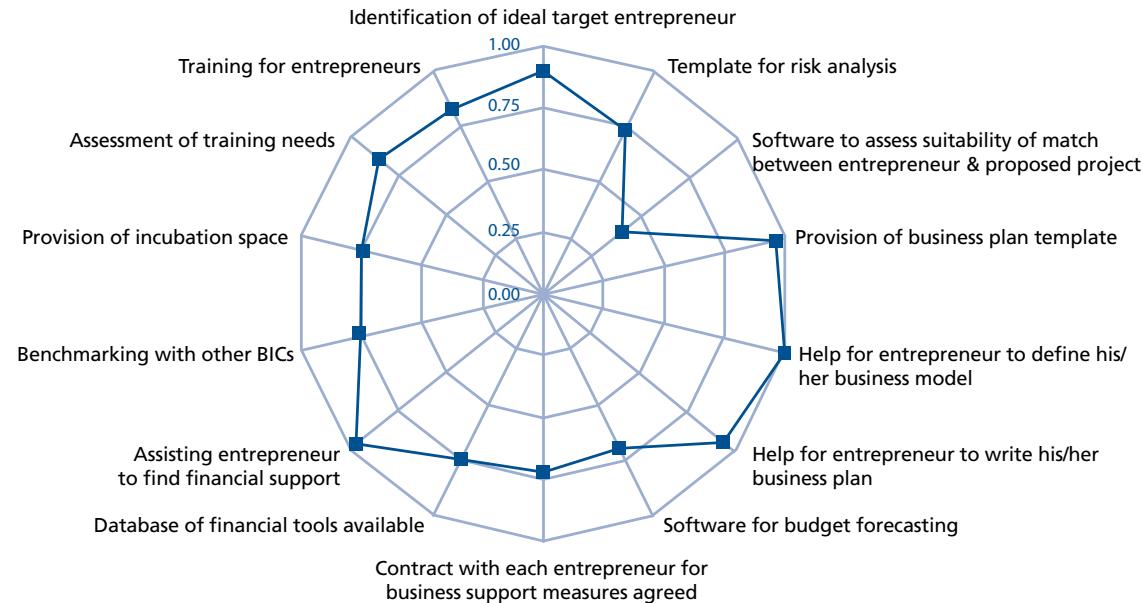
These radar charts have changed very little since 2006. This is logical because they are based on answers to questions about methodology and processes used in the delivery of core services, which do not change dramatically from year to year.



Services to New Entrepreneurs

The analysis of services to new entrepreneurs shows that in 2007 as in 2006 nearly all BICs identified their ideal target entrepreneurs, provided business planning templates, assisted entrepreneurs to find financial support, helped entrepreneurs to define their business model and to write their business plan. More than 80% of BICs assessed the training needs of entrepreneurs and subsequently provided training. More than 70% of BICs used a template for risk analysis, offered software for budget forecasting,

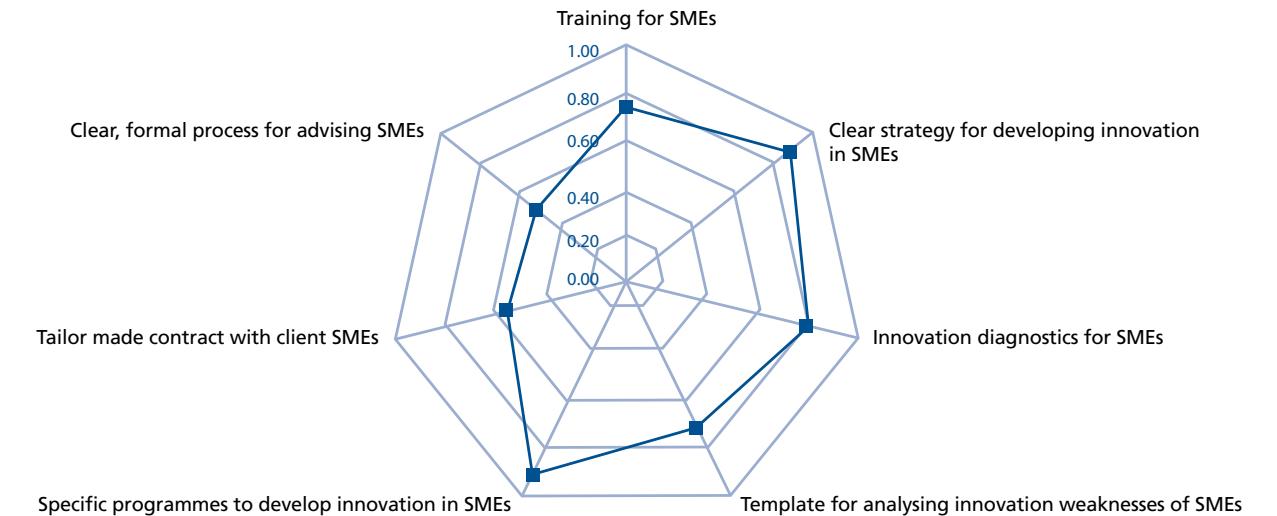
signed a contract with entrepreneurs for the business support measures agreed, benchmarked with other BICs and provided incubation space. On the other hand only 40% of BICs used software to assess the suitability of the match between entrepreneurs and the proposed projects. This therefore remains an area for potential development for most BICs.



Services to Existing SMEs

The analysis of services to existing SMEs shows that in 2007 as in 2006 nearly 90% of BICs had a clearly defined strategy for developing innovation in existing SMEs and implemented specific programmes to develop innovation and competitiveness in targeted SMEs. More than 70% of BICs organised training sessions for SMEs and carried out innovation diagnostics for existing SMEs (i.e. SWOT analysis etc.). 68% of BICs used a template for analysing the innovation weaknesses of SMEs, 57% signed tailor-made contracts with client SMEs. Just under half (49%) had a clear, formal process for advising SMEs (e.g. in the form of a quality manual). In general, the radar chart shows that services to SMEs remain an important area for some further development within the network.

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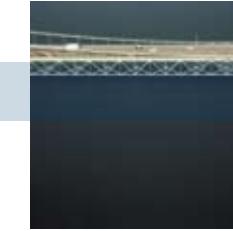
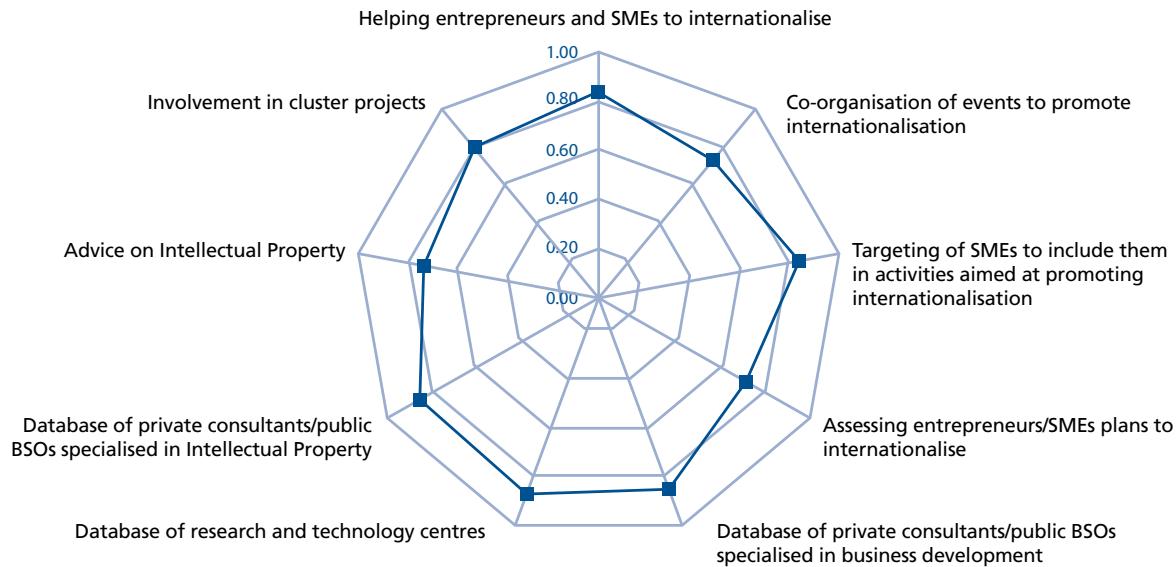




Co-operation and Internationalisation

The analysis of services related to co-operation and internationalisation shows a strong performance across the network. Almost all BICs helped their clients to internationalise, provided intellectual property advice and were

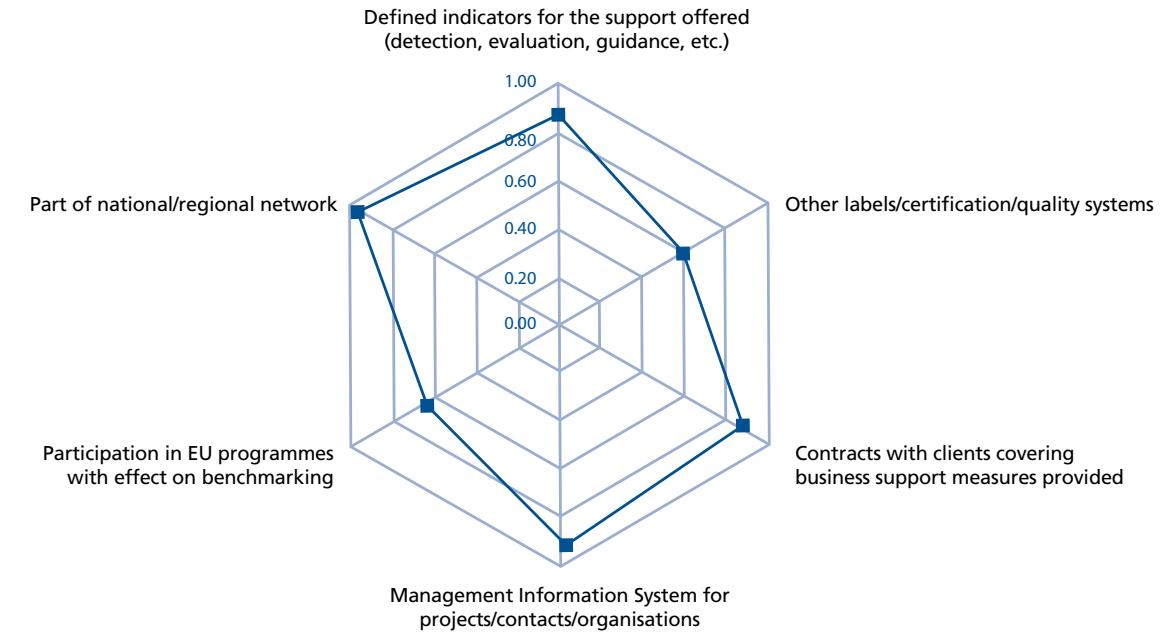
involved in cluster projects. Furthermore, almost all BICs had databases of private or public consultants specialised in intellectual property and business development as well as databases of research and technological centres.



Quality

With regard to the quality of services provided, almost all BICs defined indicators for the support offered to clients, used a management information system for project/contact management and belonged to a national/regional

network. 53% of BICs had certification other than the "EC BIC" label and 64% of BICs participated in EU programmes related to benchmarking.



Conclusion

EBN, the BIC community: Faster, Smarter, Together

The BIC network results for 2007 show that the BIC mission continues to be implemented effectively for the benefit of entrepreneurs, start-up companies and SMEs in Europe and beyond. In particular, the mission to promote innovative entrepreneurship was reinforced in 2007 by significant increases in both the number of events held to promote entrepreneurship and the number of people attending. The audience for these events also widened to include a growing number of young students and graduates in schools, colleges and universities, participating in the activities of BICs in their wider communities. So BICs are reaching the entrepreneurs of the future, meaning that their impact will be seen for years to come!

Furthermore, as BICs continue to adopt the best practice promoted by the EC-BIC model it is clear that the methods used widely in the network are improving the prospects of would-be start-up companies.

The intensity of support given to entrepreneurs and start-up companies in the early stages and the rigorous selection process used by BICs means that companies graduating from this first stage are increasingly likely to launch their business and to continue trading beyond three years.

The updated BIC Quality Criteria should ensure that our new BICs of the future are well equipped to deliver the services that have proved to be effective in the past, whilst taking into account the evolving environment in which we operate and in which our client entrepreneurs and SMEs operate.

The European Commission as well as the European Space Agency and numerous national and regional authorities have confirmed their strategic interest in the BIC model. EBN will continue to power the engine room of this successful and growing network, supporting you in your important contribution to the creation and growth of sustainable companies and jobs in your regions.



EBN services and activities

With headquarters in Brussels, EBN organises various activities designed to be of genuine help to its members, and through them to SMEs. These activities include:



Policy

EBN represents the voice and interests of the BICs and its Associate members, their stakeholders and customers to all EU organisations and EC institutions. EBN acts as an interface between EU Policy makers and its members, and maximises the reputation of the members both in the private and public sector (local, regional, national, European).



Quality

EBN undertakes feasibility studies and technical support for the setting up of new BICs, Incubation and Innovation centres, through on-site visits, audits, and assistance in quality assurance. EBN ensures that members comply to a professional, serious and specific quality system, using both process and result indicators, delivering advice, benchmarking, and assistance to BICs, candidate BICs and similar organisations.



Networking

EBN creates the appropriate environment for networking and exchange to take place between members, especially at the international level, through projects, events, thematic actions, sector-specific approaches, etc. EBN also facilitates benchmarking and the sharing/transfer of expertise, tools, and specific know-how, enabling members to continuously evolve and adapt to competitive environments.



Projects

EBN facilitates the network "idea-lab" and drives the "project factory" of its community, inventing, testing and deploying pilot-schemes, EC-funded projects and thematic working groups. EBN monitors calls for tenders within the EU, and alert members of forthcoming projects which may be of strategic interest. EBN builds and coordinates consortium involving members in order to respond accurately to the relevant project opportunities.



Promotion

EBN is a recognised quality brand, and communicates members' technical assets via newsletters and publications. EBN promotes the network through participation in international and national events, and takes all initiatives to increase its members' exposure in media, publications and events.

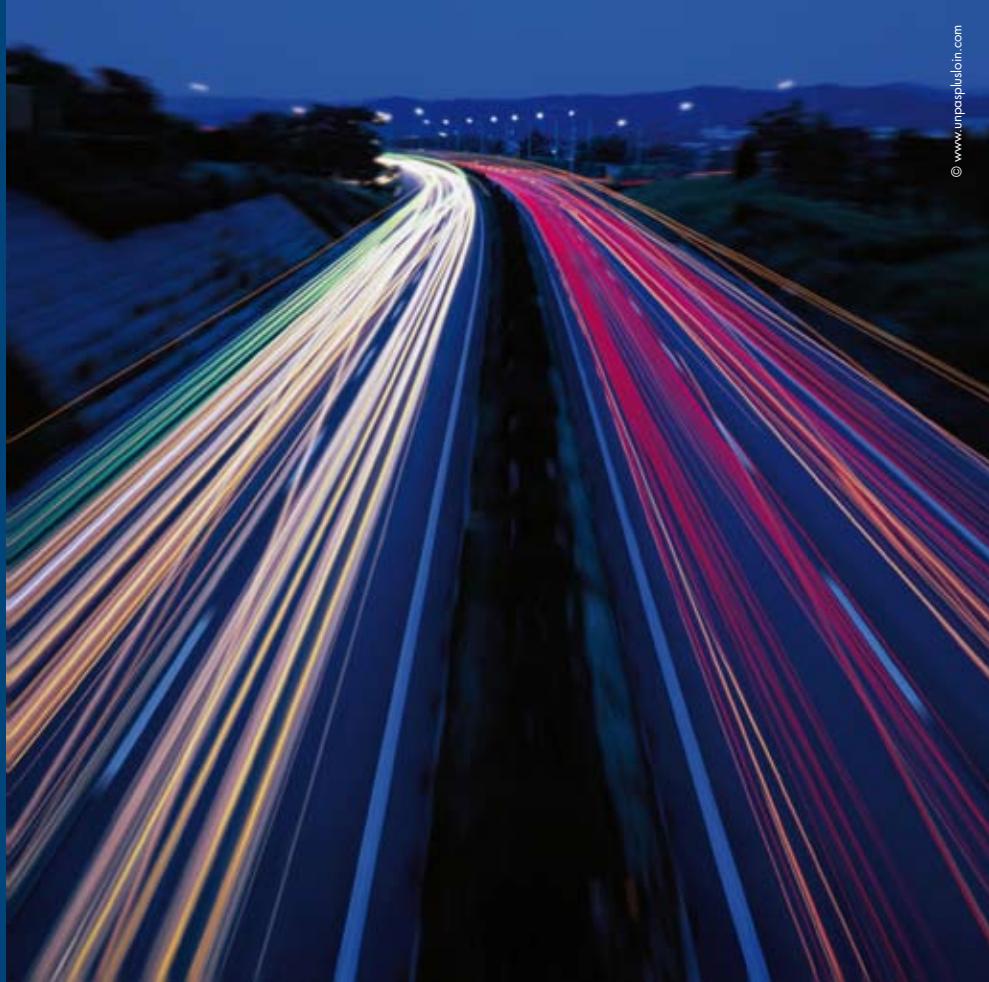


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