

Enspire EU

# Regional Strategy Plans

A report on the individual strategy plans of the partner regions, and what to consider when implementing them.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to develop a strategy plan for how the different partner regions can capitalize on the exchange of experiences and affect their structural funds programmes in a positive way for fostering entrepreneurial mindsets.

The partner regions of the Enspire EU project participated in a steering group meeting during the final conference on the project held in late November 2012 on Cyprus. At this meeting each partner were asked to fill out a template in which they were reflecting on their individual future strategies. By reflecting on their future visions, challenges, actions and objectives the goal was to use this information to outline strategy plans for each of the partner regions. The strategy plans should be seen as the first step in the process of increasing the support and initiatives to benefit new entrepreneurs.

This report will contain 11 strategy plans, one for each partner except the lead partner, South Denmark European Office, who is producing this report. Furthermore, the report contains a section on how the regions should focus their strategies, bearing in mind their different structural conditions and a section giving advice on how to affect how funds are spend in the respective countries and how to attract funding to the regions to spend on entrepreneurial initiatives.

## 2. STRATEGY PLANS

### Zlin, Czech Republic

#### **Vision and challenges**

The long-term goal of the Zlin Region is simply to have more people in the region thinking in an entrepreneurial way. Reaching this goal will include losing “the fear of self-employment” among the inhabitants, thus being able as a region to show the positive side of entrepreneurship. It will also include more social responsibility from already established companies (ideologically and by transferring experiences).

Finally, from a jurisdictional point of view there is a need for changing taxation and entrepreneurial policies if more people are to become entrepreneurs. In general this should result in more business start-ups and more students and young people inspired to start their own business.

To change the mindset of the inhabitants a bottom up or a “learning-by-doing” approach could advantageously be applied in the Zlin Region, giving the opportunity to initiatives that offer this chance. In reaching the long-term goal, convincing local authorities and politicians are one of the biggest challenges to overcome. Operators play the most important role of all (not the local authorities and politicians themselves), but there is a need for long-term political strategies that allocate the necessary resources for operators to promote initiatives fostering entrepreneurial mindsets.

#### **Actions and objectives**

Action to be taken will include more “learning-by-doing” activities (pilot activities and best practices transfer of what works elsewhere). Also there should be a focus on making local operators cooperate - not compete. Setting up targets under the following categories could be useful when implanting a strategy for the region:

- Number of specific activities implemented
- Number of participants
- Outcomes and continuation of individual activities
- Promotion and support from established enterprises and other relevant stakeholders

## Vejle, Denmark

### **Vision and challenges**

The long-term goal for Vejle municipality when it comes to targeting the entrepreneurial mindset can be summarized in three words: *Knowledge*, *Growth* and *Welfare*. In more concrete terms, there should be general focus on changing the education system in a way that fosters a more entrepreneur friendly mindset of the next generations. In the field of welfare focus areas should include industries such as Green Tech and Welfare Tech.

Creating more entrepreneurs would also require more Public-Private Partnership and co-production. In fact, the potential for innovation and entrepreneurial development in a knowledge society like the Region of Southern Denmark might lie in a more prominent role for the university and the hybridisation of elements from university, industry and government to generate new institutional and social formats for the production, transfer and application of knowledge. Ideally, this should lead to a stage where entrepreneurship is demanded (not supplied) as in a bottom-up movement.

One of the biggest obstacles in reaching the overall goal might be the culture of targeting entrepreneurship (how things are usually done), which often takes time to alter. Another important issue is whether or not the funding opportunities available in the Region of Southern Denmark will fit into the entrepreneurial agenda outlined above. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that Vejle Municipality and the Region of Southern Denmark in a European perspective is a small unit and therefore will be dependent on initiatives and developments in larger context.

### **Actions and objectives**

To reach the overall goal for the region there will first of all be a need for a long-term planning and to cooperate with other regions in and outside Denmark. Also, within the region there should be a better cooperation across municipalities.

Changing entrepreneurship from a stage of “supplied” to “demanded” would also require a more user driven society and the courage to prioritize in the region (“Smart Specialization”). Within 2020 this strategy for Vejle municipality should result in:

- 5.000 new jobs
- 2.000 additional students
- 500 new entrepreneurs and
- 10.000 extra inhabitant

## Hampshire, England

### **Vision and challenges**

When it comes to entrepreneurship, the overall vision is to position Hampshire as a leading business location and to develop the physical environment for growth in order to support economic growth across Hampshire.

Some of the main challenges related to the vision are that the business support landscape is confusing in Hampshire. Political ambition on entrepreneurship is clear from central government but structures are many and confused. Also, there is a limited access to finance for SMEs and not everyone agrees that the focus should be on high growth companies (i.e. should we intervene in disadvantaged communities or will they benefit from a thriving economy).

### **Actions and objectives**

In order to achieve the vision a number of actions must be taken in Hampshire:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of available business support
2. Identify opportunities to simplify business support landscape
3. Develop a clearly branded Hampshire online business portal
4. Support businesses who want to internationalise (e.g. support exporting)
5. Provide a single Hampshire business directory
6. Capture and analyse business support enquiries to HCC to develop responsive services
7. Interventions to support ex-Forces personnel into self-employment
8. Promote business awareness (including self-employment) in schools across Hampshire

The above mentioned actions will enable Hampshire to support the most effective providers of business support to simplify the business support landscape, focus support on high growth companies and help businesses gain access to finance.

## Larnaca, Cyprus

### **Vision and challenges**

The long-term goal is to foster an entrepreneurial mindset across Cyprus through education and training that demonstrates and teaches innovation, entrepreneurship and responsible risk taking.

In Cyprus there is a lack of entrepreneurial education. Education that promotes entrepreneurial mindset is essential. Thus, the overall objective is to promote teaching, executive education, research, consulting and outreach activities in the entrepreneurship discipline and other interdisciplinary fields.

The main obstacles that Cyprus is facing can be summarized as follows: First of all, entrepreneurship education is not explicitly recognized in the education system. Secondly, there is a lack of planning for promoting entrepreneurial mindset. Cyprus has a lot of measures but they are not explicitly for entrepreneurship. Thus, the long-term strategies are more generic and are not focused on entrepreneurship. Finally there is also a lack of financial support to start-ups and to some degree inadequacies of a “policy infrastructure”.

### **Actions and objectives**

1. Specific action plans that will focus exclusively on the integration of entrepreneurship education.
2. An advisory group, representing various entrepreneurial stakeholders of Cyprus, in order to canvas support for initiatives and to get more knowledge on how to develop value adding activities that advance theory, best practice and policy debate.
3. Build relationships with sponsors that could extend the support for programmes e.g. banks and other professional service providers.
4. Embark on the identification of European Union funding for priority projects, how to develop the network in order to roll out training and research initiatives across metropolitan centres and regional economies.
5. Promote a supporting culture and embrace business failures as a lesson.
6. Promote (local) success stories and motives for business creation.

Furthermore, concrete targets under that following categories could be useful when implanting the strategy:

- Number of start-ups
- Insertion of entrepreneurial lessons in primary and secondary education
- Creation of entrepreneurial networks and explicit entrepreneurship policy

## Ile de France Region, France

### **Vision and challenges**

The vision of the Ile de France Region is to empower poor areas by creating opportunities for self-employment for the disadvantaged people in these areas under the slogan “Entrepreneurship for all”.

The main barriers to in order to reach this goal are primarily access to information, resources (funding and premises) and access and “knowhow” in relation to networking. But on the other hand, there is also a multitude of coaching, training and information structures in the region. Plus, there is a very strong and positive dynamic associated with entrepreneurship, both on national (Plan étudiants entrepreneurs) and European level. Thus the weaknesses relates to the lack of visibility and clarity on the roles and missions of all the local operators involved. There is no “one-stop shop” at the moment.

### **Actions and objectives**

Some of the actions that need to be taken include in order to reach the goal include the recruitment “entrepreneurial awareness agents” right in the middle of the poor areas. Furthermore, it is also important to build and run information centres in the same areas. Finally, there should be a stakeholder agreement in relation to the two action/objectives.

Criteria for measuring the success of the action plans could advantageously include:

- Number of people who have been informed about entrepreneurship as a possibility
- Number of people who have the intention of undertaking an entrepreneurial venture
- Number of persons who are seeking advice from coaching and training structures

## Central Transdanubian, Hungary

### **Vision and challenges**

The vision of the Central Transdanubian region when it comes to targeting the entrepreneurial mindset includes improvements over a variety of issues.

First of all there is a need for better cooperation between the four biggest cities of the region, sharing some tasks regarding the promotion of entrepreneurship. The vision includes furthermore an excellent infrastructure, lower taxes, easier administration and last but not least a focus on bringing in economic courses in the national basic study plan. Finally it is also a long-term goal to enable a better connection to the economies and markets of the neighbouring countries (clusterization).

Some of the obstacles the region is facing and which it has to try to overcome are for instance a very high unemployment rate (over 11%). Also worth mentioning are some relatively high taxes, a lack of administrative expertise and problematic high schools.

### **Actions and objectives**

In order to push the region in the right direction it would be necessary to take political decisions, which to a higher degree are based on expert opinions. It would also be important to bring in innovation and improve the education system in number of ways to foster entrepreneurship. In general there is a need for making the inhabitants more interested in the development of the region.

If the strategy turns out to be a success it would be possible to see some positive numbers when it comes to:

- New enterprises
- The average lifetime of the enterprises
- The unemployment rate
- The regional GDP rate and
- Welfare indicators

## Halland, Sweden

### **Vision and challenges**

The Halland Region has a five year vision in which politicians and decision makers are knowledgeable about the need for entrepreneurial inspiration and make plans accordingly.

In a longer term the objective of the region is to aim at achieving a situation in which it is as natural for a "Hallønning" to become an entrepreneur as to become an employee. The next five years political focus should contribute to this longer term effect.

One the challenges that the region is facing at the moment is the fact that there is a gap between officials and politicians. The system is not build to go two ways, meaning that the officials do not have the authority to tell politicians what to do and have no means to reach them.

Another challenge is the mindset of the Swedish people. Swedish people are characterised as being safe and even though it is assumed that they would be positive towards the thought of entrepreneurship. It is a completely different thing than if they themselves have to become an entrepreneur. In other words, the challenge lies in changing the mindset or the cultural norm of the Swedish peoples feeling towards being an entrepreneur.

### **Actions and Objectives**

The region has identified four actions that they believe will prove useful in increasing the level of entrepreneurship in the region. These are:

1. Get the top management onboard.
2. Get space on the political cabinet's agenda.
3. Collaborate with schools and influence the mindset of young people.
4. Do campaigns that actively incorporate the use of role models.

The actions are all proposed to overcome the above mentioned challenges. Action 1 and 2 should therefore be seen as means to reduce the gap that currently exists between officials and politicians and actions 3 and 4 as means to influence the cultural norm regarding entrepreneurship.

When the actions are taken then they should be adapted in policies and on the general agenda of the cabinet and when entrepreneurial mindset is put on the school schedule, not as an individual subject but as a general way of teaching and learning, the region will review its actions as being successfully implemented. However, the long term aim of the output is to increase the level of entrepreneurs.

## Seville, Spain

### **Vision and challenges**

The visions of Seville is to increase the entrepreneurial mindset in the educational system; to create policies that promote entrepreneurship; to simplify some of the administrative procedures (e.g. administrative requirements to start up a company); to promote creation of innovative enterprises based on technology and with an international projection; and to increase the support of the enterprise in the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture.

One of the challenges that the region is facing is a current lack of promotion of entrepreneurial mindsets in the school system, especially in the early ages. Difficulties getting entrepreneurial projects financed are another pressing issue in Seville and correlates with the fact that young people starting out to be entrepreneurs and building their own business face many difficulties in the process. Moreover there is a lack of funds from the Regional Government at the moment and the administrative procedures to enter into entrepreneurship are too complex and incalculable for many.

In other words in Seville the visions are to a large extends to overcome the above mentioned challenges.

### **Actions and Objectives**

To achieve the visions of Seville it is proposed that the following actions should be taken: Administrative procedures should be simplified from state level, which the region will try to work for. Seville will also work to secure that entrepreneurship is part of the school schedule by following the example of the Regional Government of Andalusia who has just launched a plan to promote entrepreneurial mindsets in schools. Furthermore, the region will help and support entrepreneurs in the finding of funds to finance their projects.

At a national level the objectives of the above mentioned actions are to reduce unemployment rates, to create solid and innovative enterprises with an international projection and to strengthen and protect micro companies in Spain.

## Kranj, Slovenia

### **Vision and challenges**

The vision of the Business Support Centre is to be the number one centre of promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in Slovenia. The Centre aims at providing a wide and varied program to inspire entrepreneurship and innovation. The programs shall be prepared and implemented by a variety of different stakeholders including a combined effort from schools, companies and support organisations such as chambers and development agencies.

In the larger respect it is the vision of the Kranj region to achieve a situation where entrepreneurship is the strategic point of the regional/national strategic programs.

One of the challenges facing young entrepreneurs is the access to seed capital. The policies on the matter are too complex and thereby reducing the number of people trying to access the funding opportunities. Another challenge is to change the mindset of young people and to encourage their entrepreneurial spirits.

### **Actions and Objectives**

The Kranj region has identified a number of actions that will be implemented to promote entrepreneurship. These are: Upgrade different existing measures into efficient entrepreneurial/innovation network of providers; Increase the media focus on former entrepreneurs and position them as role models; Redefine the existing support opportunities so that they become more specific and relates directly to the market; Upgrade support for entrepreneurial mindsets in the entire school system from kindergarten to PhD; Upgrade support for start-up SME's in the first years to increase their chance of survival by also creating an infrastructure that eases the access to labs, specific experts, networks and markets; Find a way to enforce inclusion into regional/national policy programs for the next programming period; Define and upgrade working groups of stakeholders working on specific programs within the field of entrepreneurship; Upgrade and connect stakeholders into effective network.

Moreover, the region will include the findings of the Enspire EU in future regional programs and when working with national level politicians by highlighting specific needs of the region in the field of the entrepreneurship and innovation.

The success criteria of the above mentioned actions will be a situation where there in the Kranj region is a number of new companies, of patents, of students included in entrepreneurial programs and of pupils and schools in general included in transferred innovation camps.

## North-West, Romania

### **Vision and challenges**

The long term vision for the North-West region would be for entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs to start their business for the sake of realizing their dreams and not necessarily because of the lack of other options and out of desperation. Also, there should be a great support and will from local authorities to improve conditions for entrepreneurship and not just for the disadvantaged categories, but for entrepreneurs in general.

Entrepreneurs face several challenges in Romania. First of all there is a huge bureaucracy and administrative burden for entrepreneurs in Romania to overcome. Second, the existing initiatives for supporting entrepreneurs are national and there are not enough financial resources to meet the entire interested target group. Third, the selection process for the funds is mostly done on a first come first serve basis and not on a mere qualified evaluation of the idea presented. Fourth, and maybe the most important challenge, is still to change the mindset of the people and the attitude towards successful entrepreneurs so that they are not to be considered suspicious if succeeding in a business.

### **Actions and Objectives**

The first and most important deliverable would be to have a clear strategy on supporting entrepreneurship at local and regional level with recommendations, indicators and concrete tools for achieving the set of objectives.

The most important action would be to simplify the process of starting a company and to offer more facilities for start-ups, maybe even coaching in the first months if needed. The focus should not necessarily be the disadvantaged, but entrepreneurs in general. This due to the fact that it is really hard to be an entrepreneur in Romania even if you are not part of the 3D.

The above mentioned action should result in a number of new enterprises created in a certain period compared to other regions in the country in the same period. Also there should be a list of new services and aids offered to (new) entrepreneurs, their number being a good indicator in this sense as well.

## Lubuskie, Poland

### **Vision and challenges**

The vision of the Lubuskie Region is to promote entrepreneurial mindset already from an early stage via school and educational processes. This vision should be seen as an expression for the better choice in the sense that instead of “acting after”, prevention is more effective and cheaper than the cure.

The region also aims at being an “entrepreneurial region”. Hereby meant supporting entrepreneurship and no over-regulation on the matter. The long term vision for the region is to create a stable and safe environment for the entrepreneurs and to have close cooperation with the public administration, enterprises and educational entities in order to make policies that are real and answer the real needs of the market (including the labour market).

The challenges facing the region are several. First, Poland is characterized as having a more narrowed definition of entrepreneurship than other EU countries. Second, there are not many activities currently promoting entrepreneurship in the education system. The current entrepreneurship classes focuses on business and not on the entrepreneurial mindset, understood as the ability to solve problems and thinking “outside the box”.

Third, there is a low level of social responsibility of the enterprises in the region. The enterprises are poor at cooperating with schools in terms of inspiring children and there is a tendency towards enterprises only focusing on what is happening right now, instead of thinking about how to attract their future employees.

Fourth, there is a need for a stable political environment. The shifting governments are a problem for making long term decisions, policies and strategies. Fifth, authorities co-operates with other stakeholders concerning the labour market on the big decisions, but not that often on the daily basis actions which at the moment have the consequence that some of the activities overlap and double, because of a lack of exchange of information. Sixth, there is a perception that it is all about the money, but based on the ENSPIRE EU project, it is clear that some actions could be done (improved) by using the resources that already exists in the region.

### **Actions and Objectives**

One of the actions that could be taken to secure a good atmosphere for new businesses is to have the regional authorities prepare statements on proposals for new law regulations concerning entrepreneurship to influence the policy makers. Both national and regional policies should have a wider perception of entrepreneurship.

Measures should also be taken to enhance the entrepreneurial mindset within the education system and a support network should be

established to the benefit of those who want to start own business (training, financing, legal, tax support etc.). At the same time, this network should promote initiatives in schools to raise awareness among children and youth.

Furthermore, actions should be taken to raise awareness of social responsibility among existing businesses (CSR) and there should be a forum to exchange knowledge and best practices (peer learning).

The objective of the above mentioned actions is to develop an “entrepreneurial mindset” which can be useful for self-employment but also as an “intrapreneurship” in already existing organizations. In terms of an educational fixed indicator of “number of new businesses created” that would be impossible to establish, as it would be difficult to prove a direct correlation between actions conducted in schools and number of new self-employed (and results won’t be visible immediately).

### 3. GENERAL TENDENCIES

The partner regions have all proposed a strategy plan in where they have considered and defined the visions, objectives and challenges of their region and also the actions that can be taken to overcome the identified challenges and meet the visions.

On the basis of the individual strategy plans it is possible to outline three general tendencies that have shown to be important factors across the partner regions.

1. From the above strategy plans it is clear that all regions find it challenging to **change the mindsets** of the people in the respective regions. The entrepreneurial mindset is not thought to be a particularly common mindset throughout the partner regions, hence the focus on this matter. All of the partner regions believe that the mindset of the people can be changed by implementing courses on entrepreneurship all through the educational system. For instance Hampshire mentions in their strategy plan the importance of promoting “Business awareness” in schools, while Larnaca and Lubuskie stress that entrepreneurship in general will need to be a part of the educational system from the very first stage.

By growing up and being required to think in entrepreneurial ways is thought as one of the most effective ways to change the mindsets of the people. However, changing a mindset of a population is not something done over night and results might not even show for decades. Another action that can be taken to overcome the lacking entrepreneurial mindset is to object people to the experiences of former entrepreneurs, both some that have succeeded and some that might have tried several times before succeeding. All to break down the current negative perceptions on entrepreneurship. As highlighted by Novancia, recruiting “entrepreneurial awareness agents” to raise awareness in the middle of those areas that one wish to target could be a welcoming initiative.

2. Another tendency which is clear from the above section is the need for a **downsizing of the bureaucracy** concerning start-ups. The administrative burden imposed on start-ups is identified as a factor that scares entrepreneurs off. In other words, a large bureaucracy has a negative effect on the number of entrepreneurs in the regions. As stated by North-West Romania it would be a good idea to simplify the process of starting a company and to offer more facilities for start-ups and maybe also

coaching in the beginning if needed. Furthermore, there is an increasing need for funding opportunities earmarked new start-ups. There are two sides of this problem; first of all, there are simply not enough finance and funds to apply as for instance stressed by Seville. Entrepreneurs face difficulties across the partner regions when they try to attract financing for their projects, since there is a lack of cash equivalents in the funding programmes. The other side of the coin consist of the fact that the actual applying for funding is too comprehensive and too administration heavy.

**3.** What becomes clear from the strategy plans is the need for **a support system** in the respective regions. A support system should aim at helping and guiding the entrepreneur throughout the start-up process, but also on a longer term basis i.e. securing the survival of the new enterprise. The support system should consist of experts, business actors and successful former entrepreneurs, who ideally should function as mentors for the new entrepreneurs. An initiative as such should provide the entrepreneurs with a feeling of safety and be a place where they can brainstorm their ideas with qualified people.

## 4. FOCUSING STRATEGIES

In the following section some general advice will be given on how the regions advantageously can focus its strategies on promoting entrepreneurship by taking into account economic and structural differences.

The partner regions of the project vary on many aspects, for which reason it is difficult to propose strategies that are useable and effective for all of them. For example, the regions vary in terms of GDP per inhabitant and in terms of the share of local-government in consolidated general government total expenditure. Both factors could be of importance when identifying the strategies that the regions should incorporate when trying to affect regional and national strategies on entrepreneurship.

**Figure 1 – GDP in percentage of EU27**

Region	EU27=100
Nord-Vest (Romania)	41,5
Lubuskie (Poland)	48,3
Közép-Dunántúl (Hungary)	58,0
Střední Morava (Czech Republic)	64,2
Andalucía (Seville)	79,6
Kypros (Cyprus)	97,2
Zahodna Slovenija (Slovenia)	108,9
Syddanmark (Vejle)	115,0
Hampshire and Isle of Wight (England)	115,2
Västsvrige (Sweden)	117,2
Île de France (France)	167,7

Gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant in purchasing power standard (PPS), by NUTS 2 regions, 2008. Source: Eurostat

The data from figure 1 indicates that there is a tremendous difference in the prosperity level between the regions from where the partners exist. Based on this fact it can be argued that the regions with a lower prosperity level should promote different initiatives than the regions with a higher prosperity level.

Thus, all things being equal, **economic necessity as opposed to economic opportunity** play a very different role, when it comes to starting your own business across the partner regions. A report from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011) shows that in countries as Denmark over 90 % of all entrepreneurs are opportunity-driven where as in country as Romania there is almost as many necessity-driven as opportunity driven entrepreneurs.

Hence, for those regions with a lower prosperity level, policy recommendation no. 4 from the Enspire EU project “**Aim to create improvement and opportunity driven entrepreneurs**” is of much bigger importance since there is no economic gain in just starting any business. The necessity-driven is often an option to unemployment. It is the opportunity-driven entrepreneurs that are drivers of growth and therefore need to be encouraged and supported. Is it important to notice that opportunity-driven entrepreneurs are also being found among the Enspire EU target groups.

Besides the differences in economic incentives for becoming entrepreneurs, it might also be important to take into account **cultural differences**. Although there in general are more active entrepreneurs in countries with a higher prosperity level, there is still room for improvements and changing the entrepreneurial culture might be one of them. The report from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011) reveals that the percentage of the adult population that think entrepreneurship is a good career choice in Poland is one of the highest in Europe (73 %). At the other end, Sweden with only 52 % has one of the lowest percentages although the country also holds the record for highest percentage of currently active entrepreneurs. Thus, it might look like some of the wealthier regions could be benefitting from other parts of the entrepreneur chain working successfully, but are somehow to larger degree lacking the entrepreneurial mindset of the population. Hence, the policy recommendation no. 1 and 2 from Enspire EU project “**Highlight entrepreneurial inspiration as an area of focus**” and “**Outline the factors and activities that improve entrepreneurial inspiration**” are perhaps more important for those regions if they want to see a further improvement in the number of self-employed.

That being said, all regions should aim at implementing as effective strategies as possible and not only stick to one or two policy recommendations, which is also highlighted in the 10 policy commendation from Enspire EU.

**Figure 2 – Local share of total government expenditure**

Country	% of total
Cyprus	5%
Spain	13%
Slovenia	20%
France	20%
Romania	25%
Hungary	26%
Czech Republic	28%
England	28%
Poland	32%
Sweden	48%
Denmark	63%

Share of local-government in consolidated general government total expenditure, 2010 percentage of total. Source: Eurostat

Figure 2 shows how much of the total government budget, in the respective countries, that is being used at local level and thereby indicates how centralized the power is. From this it can be argued that where much of the government budget is being used at local level, the local authorities has more decision making power and resources than in the countries where the power is highly centralized. This simply implies that in the regions, characterized by having a larger budget and more decision making power, it is easier to allocate more resources to promote entrepreneurial friendly conditions.

Thus, in countries where the share of local-government expenditures is high it might also be easier to **“secure the needed resources”** as stated in the 10<sup>th</sup> policy recommendation (the size of the region also plays an important role). Hence, a regional strategy plan should take into account at which administrative level policies targeting specific parts entrepreneurship are being compiled at, and how much “power” the region has on its own to secure the needed resources.

If one take “entrepreneurial educational” as an example, which almost every partner regions has mentioned in their individual strategy plan, it would be relevant to first outline whether or not a country has a national strategy for promoting entrepreneurship and to what extend the region has the power to change some of the content or to come up with a strategy on

its own. France for instance has a highly centralized educational system and a relatively low degree of local-government power. As shown in a report from Eurydice (2012) the country doesn't have a national strategy for promoting entrepreneurship at primary school. Hence, it is hard to imagine a regional strategy plan for promoting entrepreneurial education in primary school without also trying to target the national level, which advantageously could be done in cooperation with other regions in France.

In those regions where initiatives are easier implemented at regional level, taking into account the specific need for education in a particularly region, might be a good place to start. The report from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011) point at some quite surprising results as a survey shows that Denmark is one of the counties, where women lack the skills and knowledge to start-up the most (only 24 % say that they got the skills and knowledge, as supposed to Slovenia where over 43 % of the female population say that they got what it take). Thus, if a region got the resources to target the education system more directly it should remember to take into account which groups in the population that would benefit the most. On the other hand, for some regions lifting the entire educational system even help the most. By doing so it is necessary to target the more broadly entrepreneurial chain.

## 5. AFFECTING FUNDS

On the basis of the partner regions input from the workshop it is important also to address the question of how to affect the structural funds and other relevant funding opportunities. The following section will be initiated with some general guidelines for affecting decision makers which will be followed by the suggestions of the partner regions and their thoughts on how to affect the structural funds in their countries.

When trying to affect political decisions and gain influence on a particular political issue – in this case structural funds – it is important to keep a few things in mind. First of all, it is important to establish a personal meeting with one of the central actors of the particular policy decision. Policy makers get contacted by lots of different organisations and institutions and it is therefore valuable to meet the person one is trying to convince in person to increase the chance of this person remembering your arguments. Knowing your facts and presenting them in a trustworthy way is another key aspect of achieving your goal successfully, as well as it is to know the current legislation on the subject. Another useful tool in the lobbying process is the building of alliances. Teaming up with other organisations with similar interests will make the voice stronger and organisations are then more likely to achieve their goals.

It is first of all important that the partner regions use the outcomes of the Enspire EU project when developing the strategies that are to affect the funding programs and the opportunities to attract funding for their respective regions. The outcomes from the project should be incorporated into the strategies as arguments to convince the governments of the importance of supporting entrepreneurship through structural funds.

It is suggested, by the partner regions, that a closer contact to the policy makers of the respective countries would have a positive effect on the local authority's opportunities to impact the policies being implemented. A shorter distance between the local authorities and the designers of the structural funds could be the answer to an increased focus on entrepreneurship, including pilot actions and 'Learning by doing' processes. Furthermore, the regions should be better at enforcing specific needs of their region – for instance the European Regional Development Fund or other national funding programs. They should engage national level authorities more deeply in forming and understanding the specific needs and goals of the regions. By incorporating national level authorities in the

strategies and goals of the regions it is expected that they are more responsive to the regions needs of an allocation of more funds to entrepreneurship.

In line with the foregoing possible strategy, it is also suggested that a closer contact to the respective regional offices in Brussels could have a positive effect on the lobbying initiatives towards attracting more funding opportunities. This is compliant with the general guideline emphasizing on alliances. Working together on strategies and bringing in knowledge from organisations with more experience within the area of affecting policies could prove valuable in affecting the funding programs.

In other words, it is of great significance that the regions try to convince their governments of the importance of supporting entrepreneurship by allocating structural funds to the regional initiatives on the matter.

Arguments that might prove useful in the convincing of governments are arguments on how entrepreneurship can promote both regional and national economic growth. Arguments emphasizing on the paradox of spending money on social- and unemployment aids instead of entrepreneurial support, might also be a convincing argument in especially the countries affected the most by the financial crises.

Furthermore, it is of great importance that the regions are more adaptable and think outside the box when trying to attract funding. Therefore Regions could try to promote access to alternative ways of financing, such as business angels, risk capital and microcredit's instead of relying solely on the structural funds.

## 6. SUMMING UP

The aim of this report was to develop strategy plans for each of the partner regions of the Enspire EU project to provide the initial step in the process of increasing focus on entrepreneurship throughout the regions.

From developing the strategy plans it became clear that the regions see the best way to inspire young people to think in entrepreneurial ways, is to include courses on the matter all through the educational system. Also, the regions will work to ease the administrative burden that new entrepreneurs face and at the same time try to increase the opportunities for attracting funding for innovative ideas. A support system to help entrepreneurs overcome the initial challenges is also an important focus across the strategy plans.

However, the partner regions should bear in mind that they are all characterized as having different structural conditions, for which reason it makes more sense for the individual regions to focus more on some aspects of the strategy than of others. To select on which aspects of the strategy to focus the policy recommendations set up as part of the Enspire EU project, might prove useful.

Finally, the report also provides some guidelines for affecting structural funds. It is of particular importance that there is not too big bureaucratically differences between the local and the national authorities if the local authorities are to have a say in how the structural funds are being spend and especially in the planning of the future structural funds.