

2nd Conference of the Southeast European
Network of Start up Centers and Incubators
21 and 22 March 2007, Maribor, Slovenia

Report



**Report on the Second Conference of the Southeast European Network of Start up
Centers and Incubators.
Held on 21 and 22 march in Maribor, Slovenia**

Contents

- 1. Background SENSI**
- 2. The second SENSI Conference**
- 3. Workshops**
- 4. Conclusion**
- 5. Annexes**

Mr. Ralph van der Zijden
www.academictraining.org
April 2007

1. Background SENSI

The Southeast European Network of Business Start-up Centres and Incubators (SENSI) was founded at the Tuzla conference on October the 20th and 21st of 2006. The goal of this conference was to establish a network of Business Start up Centres and Incubators in Southeast Europe. Through this network members can discuss the best practices on how Business Start-up Centres and Incubators can support starting entrepreneurs. Cooperation between the different business start-up centers and incubators in Southeast Europe is one of the main goals of the SENSI. Before SENSI, most Business Startup Centres and Incubators were still operating independently from each other. The SENSI initiative is trying to overcome this cooperation gap. The SENSI-members believe that universities, governments and the business sector in Southeast Europe should jointly promote entrepreneurship.

The SENSI currently consists of 27 members and keeps expanding. All existing Business Support Centres and Incubators in Southeast Europe are invited to join. The members of SENSI signed a declaration in Tuzla, stating to support each other by providing the following services to each other:

1. Exchange of best practices;
2. Exchange of training curricula, syllabi, training materials and trainers and experts;
3. Mobility of entrepreneurs, students, professors and experts between the centers;
4. Joint study visits and conferences on a rotational basis between network members;
5. Joint study visits to similar centers within and outside of Southeast Europe;
6. The organization of a joint regional business plan competition;
7. Supporting regional business opportunities.

2. The 2nd SENSI conference.

The Second SENSI conference in Maribor was organized by the Academic Training Association (ATA) as part of its Business Start up Centre Kosovo project, in cooperation with IRP. The conference was open to existing and potential SENSI members. The conference took place in Maribor (Slovenia) on 21 and 22 of March. In total 24 participants attended the conference. ATA fully covered the total expenses for twenty participants. Participants came from all parts of Southeast Europe.

First day of the conference Wednesday 21 March 2007

The SENSI conference was organized in conjunction with the 27th Podim Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation: “Nurturing champions of innovation and entrepreneurship”. The SENSI members joined the first day of the Podim conference, attending presentations and discussions by several leading (international) experts on innovation and entrepreneurship (Program: Annex I). In the evening, the awards for best innovative entrepreneurial idea of Slovenia were handed out, followed by a gala dinner.

Second day of the conference Thursday 22 March 2007

Opening session

In the morning, SENSI members attended the Podim plenary session, with speeches by the H.E. Mr. John Groffen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Slovenia and Mr. Michel Richter, co-director of ATA, who both addressed SENSI members during the SENSI plenary later that morning. This SENSI plenary was opened by the chair of the Podim conference Prof. Miroslav Rebernik. After this, three new SENSI members introduced themselves to the network. Marko Mocnik of the Pomurje Business Incubator Network in Slovenia presented a good example of how a network of incubators can function (annex IV). Mr. Mocnik emphasized, amongst others, that the need for international cooperation between incubators which will ease the accessibility of SMEs to foreign markets.

Mr. Bojan Stevanovic presented the Serbian Business Incubators Business Support Centre (annex V). This centre promotes cooperation between incubators in Serbia. By combining strengths, the incubators can share experts for trainings, but can also form a stronger front towards the government for instance. Suggestions for SENSI cooperation from Mr. Stevanovic are to organize workshops for incubator managers, match-making for incubated companies and exchange of experiences.

The third presentation was held by Mr. Vladan Jeremic from the Timok Club Knjazevac, the leading organization behind the Business incubator centre in Knjazevac, the first ever incubator in Serbia. As the incubator Knjazevac is a self sustainable incubator many lessons on sustainability can be learned. A spontaneous discussion on self-sustainability of BSCs and IBs was held amongst the members after the presentation. Mr. Jeremic emphasized the importance of local leaders and the importance of partnership.

After the presentation the chair of the SENSI-plenary, the chair Mr. Ralph van der Zijden of ATA presented the results of a small survey amongst the participants (annex II). This survey has been conducted in order to find commonalities between members in the fields

of ICT, organizational structure, activities and future challenges. 11 out of 24 participants handed in the survey, others will be sent a digital version to fill in. A full report will be published on www.sensi.biz. Some of the outcomes of the survey indicate on which issues SENSI members want to and can cooperate:

- When asked for what an on line database should be used, all members wanted a database with all BSCs, and many want a database with trainers, with SMEs and one with consultants;
- The added value of SENSI is the sharing of experiences and of best practices;
- Online tools should mainly be used for a database containing member info, and for communication between members and to others;
- Most mentioned partners are University / Local Business Community / Chamber of Commerce, as well as SME Agencies and the municipality
- Only 3 out of 8 members used ISO-standards
- Main activities of most of the members provide consulting and training, followed by the provision of office space, providing IT support and coaching;
- All members are willing to share training material, although under some conditions

The biggest challenges for the coming four years as indicated by the members are providing more and better services, growth of office / working space and sustainability. SENSI can help through exchanging experiences amongst members and exchange of trainers and experts.

From this small survey, it becomes clear that the members face similar problems, and are under some conditions willing to cooperate and share materials. However, SENSI's main function should be that of a platform for sharing experiences.

The final presentation before the start of the workshop was by Mag. Iztok Lesjak, Director of the Technology Park Ljubljana / Slovenian and Head of the Slovenian Incubator and Technology Park Network. Mr. Lesjak presented the network and its members to SENSI. The network can be regarded as a good example of how SENSI could or should function and what a network can contribute to the members of it.

3. Workshops

Three workshops were organized to enable SENSI members to discuss concrete cooperation in smaller groups. The members were asked beforehand what subjects they would like to discuss in workshops. The titles of the workshops were:

- Workshop 1. Connecting Business and Start ups
- Workshop 2. Student exchange
- Workshop 3. How to make SENSI more productive? Work in-between Conferences.

Each workshop was chaired by a member of SENSI.

Workshop 1

Most participants choose to follow Workshop 1, chaired by Mr. Jovan Sekuloski. The high number of participants shows the interest of members to connect their activities to the business world but also made it harder to finalize the workshop in the scarce amount of time available. The topics discussed were:

1. Benefits an entrepreneur/Start Up can get – from an entrepreneur/start up point of view.
2. What should BI's and Business Centers Offer?
3. How can and can BSC and BI's be sustainable?

The participants gathered concerns rising at their day to day work and obstacles and challenges that each of their organizations face. Participants then came up with suggestions/solutions by sharing experiences and best practices. They discussed what each of their organizations had gone through and what practices worked and what did not. Because of the time limitation, the participants were not able to agree on specific plans and/or action points on how to solve some of the joint problems their organizations have. For the next conference it is suggested to have workshops on each of the sub-topics. This way members can discuss each topic more concretely. The most concrete results coming forth from the workshop were the notice that BSC's and BI's should provide a diversity of services to their client (operational and strategic plans, providing business information including information on various sources of funding and credit guarantees, affordable premises, meeting rooms and equipment, mechanism to measure feasibility and sustainability of a business idea). About sustainability, the ideas for becoming self-sustainable were to:

- Charge the clients for services
- Charged Counseling
- Finance through projects
- Shareholding
- Include a virtual component on commercial base

Added to the advices on sustainability, it was mentioned by some participants that sustainability does not have to be a necessity. From the discussion that followed during the plenary it became clear that the issue of sustainability is an issue that will be set on the agenda of the next conference as well, for it seems a common challenge to all members.

Workshop 2

A modest group of 4 participants followed the workshop on student exchange chaired by Mr. Bojan Jovanovski. From the start it became clear that the title 'student' should be changed, since SENSI members do not only serve students. Therefore, the term 'user' was introduced. Then the needs of users were identified which ranged from get training on how to start up or run a business and exchanging experiences to networking and discover new markets. The working group identified two kinds of exchange which can be used to fulfill the needs : Virtual exchange and Physical exchange. Virtual exchange can take place through sharing of databases, an internet forum, a start up portal, links on the SENSI website to start ups and a SENSI newsletter and / or mailing list.

Physical exchange can take place through organizing conferences for users, study visits, SME trade missions, internships (regional) and a regional Business Plan Competition.

It was concluded that exchange of each kind of user is important for success. SENSI should start with virtual exchange, because it is cheap, easy to implement and crosses physical borders. Another recommendation is to make a survey for users in order to identify their (exchange) needs. In relation to physical exchange it was recommended that the BSC or IB should finance its own users with or without an user contribution. Also, it was advised to connect to (student) organizations that already do exchanges. Finally, BSCs / BIs can inform users about mobility grants.

Workshop 3

A group of 5 participants joined Workshop 3 on work in-between conferences, chaired by Bojan Stevanovic. The workshop first analyzed the conclusions from the previous conference, as mentioned in the Tuzla declaration (www.sensi.biz). The following facts have been concluded from the analysis:

1. There is a need, interest and drive for SENSI
2. The participants expressed many important areas for SENSI to work on
3. The participants asked many questions about the organizational issues of SENSI

These 3 conclusions were the starting point of the working group discussion. The objectives of the discussion were to propose the SENSI objectives in 2007 and the action plan to cover the organizational issues. The results of the workgroup were further discussed in the final plenary session of the conference, in order to reach consensus amongst all members, and to identify members who want to take up certain tasks. The first decision was to develop a SENSI status/organizational draft. The responsible group of members will consist of Michel Richter, Dragan Milutinovic, Vladan Jeremic and Bojan Stevanovic. They will draft a proposal by the end of May, and present it to the members. At the next conference, this proposal should be adopted by SENSI.

An internet portal will also be developed. This will be done by ATA and BSC Kosovo together with Bojan Jovanovski from UKIM BSC Skopje. The deadline for this draft is end of June.

The workgroup also proposed to organize a regional business idea competition in the first half of 2008. Responsible members who will take up this task will still have to be found.

The members all applauded the idea to have a next conference in 2007. ATA fully financed the 1st and 2nd conference through its BSC Kosovo project and own funds, but will not be able to keep up the full financing in the future. Therefore, a structure should be found through which for instance members contribute to a part of the costs of the conference. As for the organization of the third conference, several members offered to act as a host. Most of these members come from Macedonia. As it adds much value to the conference and the exposure of SENSI to organize its conference in conjunction with

another conference dealing with similar topics, like entrepreneurship, members agreed to look for similar event in their region to which SENSI could connect. The chair therefore proposed to have all ideas and opportunities for a place and date for the third conference to be send to Michel Richter before the end of May (m.richter@academictraining.org).

During the concluding plenary session all workgroupchairs presented the results of their working groups. The results of workshop 3 were further discussed with all members and concrete appointments were made. The following actions will be taken:

Responsible	Task	Deadline
ATA BSC Kosovo UKIM BSC Skopje	-Draft the needs for an internet portal -Include Virtual user exchange -Design an internetportal	30 June
Michel Richter, Dragan Milutinovic Vladan Jeremic Bojan Stevanovic	-Write Status/organizational draft	31 May
All	-Send proposal for next conference to Michel Richter	31 May

4. Conclusion

The 2nd SENSI conference was aimed at concretize the ambitions voiced in Tuzla and adopted in the Tuzla Declaration. At the second conference, it has become clear that the interest for SENSI is growing and that the need for cooperation and especially the sharing of experience between all actors active in entrepreneurial support in the SEE region is apparent. Many new members have joined SENSI, and as the results of the workshops show, there is a strong willingness to turn intentions into practices. At the end of May a draft status proposal will be written, which will help recognize SENSI as an official body. When a status is decided upon, SENSI can take a next step in for instance applying for funding.

The most obvious way to keep SENSI activities up and going in between conferences is an internet portal, through which members can communicate, and users can find a place to contact each other and share experiences. A group of members have taken up the task to develop an internet portal, which will be finished end June.

All members fully supported the idea of having a third SENSI conference before the end of the year. Both members from Macedonia and Serbia showed interest to host this conference in their country. ATA will again act as a co-organizer and co-financer, although ways of sharing the costs will have to be found in order to make SENSI a sustainable network.

The Second SENSI conference has shown the willingness of people and their organizations to cooperate in order to reach a common goal. The believe that entrepreneurial spirit and activities have to be promoted everywhere in the region is shared by all SENSI members. This conference has shown that members are not only willing to talk about this, but are now ready to act to achieve genuine cooperation.

5. Annexes

Annex I and II are included in the report. Annex III to IX are attached separately. This report including all annexes can also be downloaded at www.sensi.biz

Annex I : Program

Annex II : List of Attendees

Annex III : Presentation Plenary

Annex IV : Presentation Pomurje Business Incubator network, Mr. Marko Mocnik

Annex V : Presentation Serbian Business Incubators Support Centre, Mr. Bojan Stevanovic

Annex VI : Presentation BIC and Timok Club Knajezevac, Dragan Milutinovic

Annex VII : Results Workshop I

Annex VIII : Results Workshop II

Annex IX : Results Workshop III

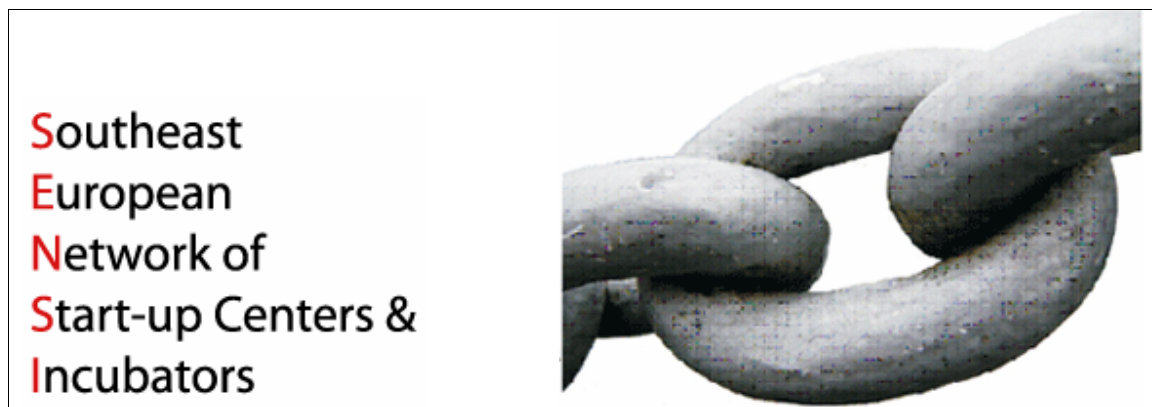
Second Southeast European Business Centre and Incubator Conference

What can Business Centres and Incubators do for starting entrepreneurs?

In conjunction with the 27th PODIM-conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Maribor, 21 and 22 March 2007

Venue:
Habakuk Hotel, Maribor



Academic Training Association, Amsterdam

www.academictraining.org



27th Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Maribor, Slovenia

www.sl.podim.org



Business Start-up Centre Kosovo

www.bsckosovo.org



IRP Institute for Entrepreneurship Research

www.irp.si

Second Southeast European Business Centre and Incubator Conference

What can Business Centres and Incubators do for starting entrepreneurs?

Maribor, 21 and 22 March 2006

The Conference shares lessons learned on how Business Centres and Incubators in Southeast Europe can support starting entrepreneurs. Special attention is given to enhancing regional cooperation between initiatives.

Background

This conference is organized by the Academic Training Association, in close cooperation with IRP. The conference is planned in conjunction with the **27th Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Nurturing Champions of Innovation and Entrepreneurship**. The Second Southeast European Business Centre and Incubator conference will bring together members of the Southeast European Network of Business Start-up Centres and Incubators (SENSI), which was established in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 20 October 2006 after the First Southeast European Business Centre and Incubator Conference.

SENSI aims to improve business support for young starting entrepreneurs, and the quality of and accessibility to these services, in order to increase their chance of long-term business success. The SENSI-members believe that Southeast European universities, governments and the business sector should jointly promote entrepreneurship. Efforts in providing education on entrepreneurship as well as concrete support to starting companies need to be intensified. Entrepreneurial centres, such as business start-up centres and business incubators have proven to be useful tools for accelerating economic growth and entrepreneurship promotion.

The network currently consists of 11 members, but is rapidly expanding. All existing Business Centres and Incubators in Southeast Europe are invited to join. The members of SENSI support each other by providing the following services to each other:

1. Exchange of best practices;
2. Exchange of training curricula, syllabi, training materials and trainers and experts;
3. Mobility of entrepreneurs, students, professors and experts between the centres;
4. Joint study visits and conferences on a rotational basis between network members;
5. Joint study visits to similar centres within and outside of Southeast Europe;
6. The organization of a joint regional business plan competition;
7. Supporting regional business opportunities.

The aim of the conference is to discuss best practices on how Business Start-up Centres and Incubators can support starting entrepreneurs. Most Business Start-up Centres and Incubators are still operating independently from each other. The SENSI initiative is a first effort to overcome this cooperation gap.

This is why the Academic Training Association and IRP have taken the initiative to organize a two-day conference to bring together existing and potential stakeholders. Existing as well as planned initiatives related to business support are invited to participate on 21 and 22 March 2007 in Maribor. One part of the conference will be accessible to members of the Southeast European Network of Start-up Centers and Incubators (www.sensi.biz) only. Those who are interested to join SENSI can register during the conference.

PROGRAM

For a full, up-to-date program, please visit <http://en.podim.org/programme/>
Day 1 – Wednesday, 21 March: 27th Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation PODIM 2007 – organized by IRP

- 8³⁰-9⁰⁰ Registration
- 9⁰⁰-9³⁰ Prof. **Miroslav Rebernik**, Conference Chair, University of Maribor, Slovenia
"Introduction to the topic of the 27th PODIM Conference"
Welcome by **Rector** of the University of Maribor and **Mayor** of City of Maribor
- 9³⁰-11⁰⁰ Mrs. **Maive Rute**, Director, European Commission, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry
"Competitiveness based on Entrepreneurship and Innovation"
Prof. **Alan Barrell**, Entrepreneur in Residence, University of Cambridge Entrepreneurship Centre, UK
"Innovation and Entrepreneurship – Cambridge Phenomenon"
Mr. **Pierre Lafitt (invited)**, Founder, Sophia Antipolis, France
"Sophia Antipolis – the Power of Networking"
- 11⁰⁰-11³⁰ Coffee break and Opening of the Arena Exhibition
- 11³⁰-13⁰⁰ Prof. **Alain Fayolle**, Head of the Entrepreneurship Research Centre, EM LYON - Ecole de Management de Lyon, France
"Creating Entrepreneurship Potential at Universities"
Prof. **Dušan Lesjak**, State Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
"Fostering Regional Development with Decentralisation and Liberalization of Slovenian Higher Education System"
Dr. **Ederyn Williams**, Director, Warwick Ventures, UK
"Academic spin-off companies: Myths and Reality"
- 13⁰⁰-14³⁰ Lunch
- 14³⁰-16⁰⁰ Mr. **Goran Radman**, Chairman, Microsoft, South East Europe,
"Initiatives for nurturing the next generation of research talents and high tech start-ups"
Mr. **Vikas Sahni**, CEO, Softedge-Systems, Ireland
"Exploiting IP Ventures technology to realize rapid growth and quick time to market"
Mrs. **Tatjana Fink**, CEO, Trimo,
"Nurturing Champions in Succesfull Slovenian Company"
- 16⁰⁰ – 16³⁰ **Coffee break**
Registration for participation in the SENSI workshops on Friday.
- 16³⁰-18⁰⁰ **Round table: "What is Missing: Talent, Technology or Tolerance?"**
Chair: Peter Frankl, Editor in Chief, Business Daily Finance
Participants: successful entrepreneurs and managers, representatives of university and government, and two speakers from the morning sessions
- 18⁰⁰-19⁰⁰ Coffee break

19⁰⁰-20⁰⁰

Slovenian entrepreneurial contest: Most Entrepreneurial Idea 2006/07

Prize-winner award ceremony of the Slovenian entrepreneurial contest

Most Entrepreneurial Idea 2006/07 organized by Business Daily Finance and Venture Factory

20⁰⁰-22⁰⁰

Gala dinner

Day 2 – Thursday, 22 March: 27th Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation PODIM 2007 – organized by IRP & Second Southeast European Business Centre and Incubator Conference – organized by ATA and BSC Kosovo

Day 2 – Thursday, March 22nd

9 ⁰⁰ – 10 ³⁰	Plenary session
	Welcome address by H.E. Mr John Groffen , Ambassador of the Netherlands, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ljubljana and Mr. Michel Richter , co-director, Academic Training Association (ATA), the Netherlands. Prof. David Birchall , Director of School and Director of Henley Management College's Learning and Teaching Services, Henley Management College, UK "Leading Through Technological Innovation"
10 ³⁰ – 11 ⁰⁰	<i>Coffee break</i>
11 ³⁰ – 13 ⁰⁰	Plenary Session of the 2nd conference of the Southeast European Network for Start up Centres and Incubators Chair: Mr. Ralph van der Zijden <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening by Prof. Miroslav Rebernik• Introduction by Mr. Michel Richter, co-director ATA• Welcome address by H.E. Mr. John Groffen, Dutch Embassy Slovenia• Presentations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pomurje Business Incubator network, Mr. Marko Mocnik• Serbian Business Incubators Support Centre, Mr. Bojan Stevanovic• Mag. Iztok Lesjak, Technology Park Ljubljana / Slovenian Incubator and Technology Park Network• Presentation of results of SENSI Survey• Encouraging Entrepreneurship through BSCs: What can BSCs and IBs do for starting entrepreneurs? <p><i>Organized by SENSI and ATA. Open to all participants of the conference</i></p>
13 ⁰⁰ – 14 ⁰⁰	Lunch

<p>14⁰⁰ – 16³⁰ (including coffee break)</p>	<p>SENSI workshop Connecting Business and Start ups Chaired by Mr. Jovan Sekuloski Gica Business Incubator Ohrid</p>	<p>SENSI Workshop Student exchange Chaired by: Mr. Bojan Jovanoski BSC University of Skopje</p>	<p>SENSI workshop How to make the SENSI more productive? Work in-between conferences: networking and matchmaking Chaired by: Bojan Stevanovic Entranse: Serbian Business Incubators Support Centre</p>
<p>17⁰⁰ – 17⁴⁵</p>	<p>SENSI Plenary session Presentation of workshop results</p>		

Last name	First name	Organization	E-mail	Office phone	mob. phone	Position
Barreu	Alan	Cambridge University	alan@alanbarrell.com	+441223416466	+447557644597	Professor
Ahmetpahic	Naidin	ZEDA Agency Zenica	naidin@zeda.ba	+38732449410	+38761263083	Senior consultant
Ajanovic	Vedrana	BIT center Tuzla	vedrana@bit.ba	+38735304651	+387618826288	Marketing manager
Bajrami	Belma	BSC Kosovo	b.bajrami@bsckosovo.org	38138247982	37744258800	Coordinator
Bertovic	Danijel	Pins Incubator	pins@ri.t-com.hr	+38551810820	+385981678912	Project manager
Boskovic	Veljibor	Inventivnost Doo	veljibor_boskovic@yahoo.com		+38167523182	Director
Curkovic	Boris	BSC UN Tuzla	boris.curkovic@untz.be	+38735300510	+38761185573	Coordinator
Danilovic Grkovic	Gordana	BITF Belgrade	danilovic@ikonline.net	+38111318555	+381646168619	Manager
Despotovski	Ljupco	Yes foundation SINTEF	LD@mir.org.mk	+38923077008	+38970242646	Incubator manager consultant
Fazliu	Safet	Ministry of trade and Industry	Safet.Fazliu@kos-gov.net	+3813820036031	+37744162578	Chief of Div. Enterprises and Reg Dev.
Flasker	Dejan	Avicom	dflasker@yahoo.com		+38540373380	director
Gjoreska	Rebeka	Gica Incubator	rebeka@gica.net.mk	+38946231781	+38970391337	Manager
Halebic	Jasmin	Zenica University	Jasmin.halebic@ef.unze.ba	+38732444710	+38761646905	Senior assistant
Jeremic	Vladan	Timok Club	Jeremic@ptt.yu	+38119730002	+38163452441	President
John	Groffen	Embassy of the Netherlands	john.groffen@minbuza.nl			Ambassador
Jovonoski	Bojan	Ukim-BSC Skopje	Bojan@mf.edu.mk	+38923099482	+38970612490	Project assistant
Kega	Flamur	Chamber of Commerce Kosovo	f.kega@jpcoc.net			
Milotinovic	Dragan	Business incubator center	bicknjazevac@ptt.yu	+38119735022	+38163442904	Director
Mocnik	Marko	Pomarije business incubator	marko@mp-pi.si	+38625308200	+38641222543	Director
Penezie	Nenad	Serbian chamber of commerce	nenad.penezie@pkps.co.yu	+381713284445	+38162280802	Vice president
Petrovic	Andrija	Tehnoloski park-impulsni centar	andrija.petrovic@vels.hr	0038542213700	0038598414181	President of the board
Richter	Michel	ATA	m.r.richter@academictraining.org	0031 (0)20 568 2088	+31 (0)6 12367575	Co-director
Ruskovic	Vesna	University of Novi Sad, faculty of engineering	vesna.raskovic@inovacija.org	+381214750082	+381638925825	coordinator assitant
Sekuloski	Jovanco	Gica Incubator	gica.inkubaror@mt.net.mk	+38946231780	+38970467763	Project manager
Stevanovic	Bojan	Entranse	bojan.stevanovic@entransse.org	+381112184368	+38143403333	Business advisor
Vojinovic	Ivana	ISSP	ivavojinovic@yahoo.com	+38181634329	+38169051096	Analyst

Annex II

