

## INTERCOUNTRY COOPERATION NETWORK OF BUSINESS INCUBATORS IN THE BSR

### THE PROJECT HAS CONCLUDED. IBI NET HAS STARTED TO OPERATE!

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#### IBI Net IN FIGURES

- Launched on December, 2009
- Duration: 30 months
- Number of partners: 7 from Latvia, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Germany, Belorussia and an Associated Partner from Russia
- Total budget: 677 050 EUR, incl.
  - ERDF: 507 800 EUR
  - ENPI: 100 450 EUR
  - Norwegian National Funding: 68 800 EUR



With the conclusion of the conference and the forum dedicated to the future of the business incubators, international network of business incubators - IBI Net has started its independent life. It is a collaboration platform that links up business incubators, companies and the political architects of the countries of the Baltic Sea region (BSR). Networking and cooperation is a key, since fostering business development requires tight cooperation among policy makers, business support organizers, universities and investors.

Moreover, the experience in the BSR shows that business incubation is moving towards elastic and tailored business consultancy services and coaching of start-ups, on the spot business acceleration labs rather than space with basic business services. In one word, know-how and networking are key elements in this process.

IBI Net project that started in December 2009 is completed. International business incubators network in the BSR has been created –a platform business incubators can use to better help their companies to grow. Riga Planning Region, as an initiator of the idea and the project, gained important experience in working side by side with partners from Latvia, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Germany, Belarus and Russia to generate solutions that help business incubators in the region expand cooperation internationally to better support business development in the region. Implementation of such projects is a challenging task. It is important to find common language among partners with different backgrounds and business support traditions. However, different partner experiences and know-how was a success factor contributing to the quality of project results: IBI Net Portal collaboration and contacts, IT tool for monitoring start-up development, guidelines for IBI Net operations and models of financing, benchmarking and many others.

With the completion of the project, IBI Net network starts its independent life and decisive factor for its operation will be a value proposal to its members. However, as seen in the project, value is created in interaction and cooperation. IBI Net Association led by IBI Net partners will be the driving force for sustaining the network, however, it is also important that new business incubators in the BSR join IBI Net, gain from cooperation and enrich its value with their know-how, contacts and working methods. After all, IBI Net is created with the goal to create such business incubator services in the BSR that helps companies grow and internationalize.

Joint IBI Net Association! Joint IBI Net Portal!



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## DISCUSSIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUSINESS INCUBATORS TOOK PLACE IN RIGA

Business incubator forum took place on May 14<sup>th</sup>. During it, experience in managing business incubators in the Baltic Sea region and the examples of good practice were exchanged; the success stories of businesses were introduced; experts of business incubators met in order to discuss the common problems and search for innovative solutions as well as seek joining the IBI Net network.

Furthermore, the closing conference of the IBI Net project on May 15<sup>th</sup> was dedicated to discussions about the role of business incubators in the growth of the Baltic Sea region and their support in the development of states and regions as well as about the future prospects of creating unified political environment for the IBI Net collaboration network.



First day. IBI Net Forum has started. Representatives from nine Baltic Sea Region countries participate.

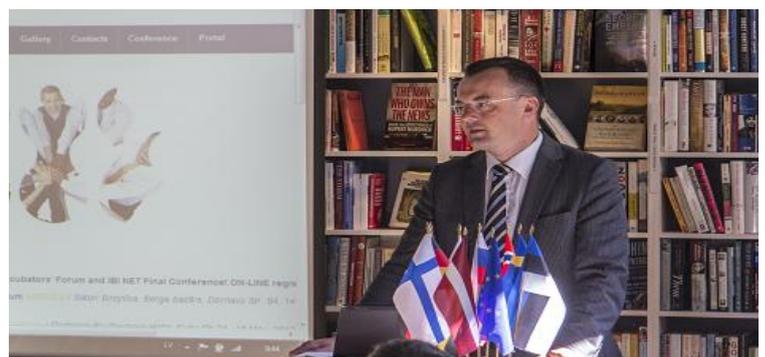
Second day – Conference. Minister of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia Edmunds Sprūdžs opens the Conference.



IBI Net Conference holds joint discussion among representatives of business incubators, innovation promoters, universities and policy makers. has gathered.



During the IBI Net Forum a key-note speech was given by Pēteris Strautiņš, the leading macroeconomics expert in Latvia.



## NETWORKING FORUM OF BUSINESS INCUBATORS IN RIGA



Mario Kokowsky, director of the Technology Centre of Western Pomerania, introduces the Association of Business Incubators - future driving force of IBI Net.



Inga Brieze, IBI Net project manager, representative of Riga Planning Region, presents achievements of the project



Hot discussions about the best ways to support business incubators taking place among experts and guests



IBI Net Forum: introduction to business incubators from 9 BSR countries and their companies.



Organizers of IBI Net Forum and conference about successful completion of the project.

## VIEWS ABOUT THE PROJECT



**Inga Brieze**, IBI Net project manager, representative of Riga Planning Region:

"To us as the lead partner of the project, the project was important to promote business development in Riga region based on the best practice examples and networking platforms in the Baltic Sea Region. Advocacy for qualitative business support services hopefully will grow into policy initiatives supporting business incubators in the region. Rapidly changing business environment requires new type of business incubators – from physical locations with base services to quality and focused business consultancy and coaching programs. Synergies of national and municipal support to business support instruments should be pursued."

**Mario Kokowsky**, director of the Technology Centre of Western Pomerania (Germany):

"Last autumn, within the framework of IBI Net project an international association of business incubators was founded. Its objective is the protection of the interests of the business incubators in the region and the improvement of the competitiveness of incubators in order to positively influence the economic growth of the Baltic Sea region. Through the association a set of unified business incubator criteria, methods and the models of attraction of financial instruments will be developed and offered to other incubators in order to provide a significant long-term contribution to the evolution of the business incubators."



**Sture Ericsson**, managing director of the Teknikdalen foundation (Sweden):

"Analysis of the business incubators in the Baltic Sea region carried out as a part of IBI Net project concluded that one of the main challenges of business incubators in these countries is securing long term financing. Usually financing is attracted for a particular time period hence additional services such as business consultations and training, the main necessity of young business men, are not provided. For example, the business incubator in Sweden is leaving the sector of provision of rented offices for businesses. It is not as important as helping the businesses to develop strong ideas through coaching and advice."

**Rihards Zariņš**, the representative of Riga Technical University, the director of the Creative Andrejsala business incubator (Latvia):

"We are used to business incubators operating locally, but with the creation of IBI Net network international collaboration has become possible. It is paramount if we wish to improve the competitiveness of the business incubators and provide new services. It is an important tool of exchange of information for companies in business incubators and their interaction with companies internationally. For that purpose within the framework of this project IBI Net portal has been created as a online contact and information exchange through which it is possible to join the IBI Net network and acquire the necessary information."





**Beata Dziuba**, representative of Elblag City Council (Poland):

“There is still a lot to do in the sector of international business incubators. We need to develop unified methods, which would, for example, allow the monitoring of the success of the businesses after their incubation period. We need to create a unified definition of the business incubators of the Baltic Sea Region as at the moment it differs from country to country making the comparison of their success hard to carry out.”

**Ludmila Šmigova**, the representative of the Scientific-Technological Park BNTU “Polytechnic” (Belarus):

“The meeting of business incubators on an international level is a great opportunity to develop the collaboration in the east-west direction. There are 10 business incubators in Belarus that would appreciate the chance of exchanging their experience with business incubators and their businesses in the west. Moreover, for other countries it would be a great opportunity to acquire information and contacts in the Belarusian market and start some cooperation. Also, collaboration started in IBI Net can be expanded to joint research projects.”



**Øyvind Nordstrand**, Business developer, Hedmark Innovation Centre (Norway):

“We have seen the differences throughout the Baltic Sea region between how incubators are run and financed. This is useful information for us and we will use it in our further development of our incubator. We also look forward to further cooperation with the members of IBI Net as we have got to know them and their specialities. We believe this will strengthen our businesses in our incubator in the future as we get better in internationalization and develop network in the region.”

## THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS ON IBI NET

1. International association of business incubators in the Baltic Sea region for advocacy of interests established.
2. For the first time analysis of business incubators in the Baltic Sea region countries carried out.
3. International forum and conference of business incubators and entrepreneurs organized; participants from nine countries took part.
4. Awareness of policy makers on national and local level raised raising the profile of the necessity of quality business support services and practical approaches, that can improve development of business incubators in the region.
5. International network of business incubators in the Baltic Sea regions established and their capacity strengthened.
6. IBI Net portal developed where information about support and collaboration opportunities in the region can be found.
7. Models for long term financing of business incubators developed.
8. IT tool improving the efficiency of monitoring, forecasting in business management process of start-up developed.

## MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTERS OF LATVIA



Minister of the  
Environmental Protection  
and Regional Development  
of Latvia **Edmunds Sprūdžs**

Minister of the Economic  
of Latvia **Daniels Pavļuts**

On 9<sup>th</sup> of May and on 12<sup>th</sup> of July representatives of IBI Net project from Riga Planning Region (RPR) and Riga Technical University (RTU) met with the Minister of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development Edmunds Sprūdžs and Minister of Economic of Latvia Daniels Pavļuts, to inform about the key results of the project, policy recommendations and discussed practical models of using project findings to foster business incubation development in Latvia on regional level.

Both Ministers stressed that the value of international cooperation projects is gaining new ideas and inspirations for local solutions.

**Edmunds Sprūdžs**, Minister of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development: „Business incubators in Latvia have to become a very important support function for entrepreneurship. It must be a very strong catalyzer of ideas. We have to learn to select ideas with future and strong potential for export. It will help for Latvian business incubators, to become a place where future of Latvia’s economics is being incubated. I hope that our incubators will use this international network of business incubators to acquire knowledge from countries with long history of business incubators and improve their competitiveness.”

## THE PROJECT HAS CONCLUDED. WHAT NOW?

### JOIN THE IBI NET ASSOCIATION!

Last autumn IBI Net Association was established. It is a permanent body whose task will be facilitating further collaboration among business incubators in IBI Net, attraction of new members, further use of IBI Net results and advocating for further development of business incubators in the Baltic Sea region.

All business incubators, their enterprises, associations of the sector, universities and municipalities – everyone for whom it is important to be represented internationally, are welcome to join IBI Net association.

More information: Benjamin Techen,  
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### JOIN IBI NET PORTAL!



More than 200 participants from different countries of the Baltic Sea region have already joined IBI Net portal.

If you want to be in the platform of IBI Net, use the tools developed in the project and enjoy all advantages it can give to you, join!

It is very easy to do: [www.ibi-net.eu](http://www.ibi-net.eu) look for section Portal.

## THANKS TO THE IBI NET TEAM FOR THE JOB WELL DONE!



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