Entrepreneurship Accelerators in Greek Universities

The Aegean Startups Case
Perspectives and Opportunities for International Collaboration

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The context

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EyVPMQHxuU
So, what defines “Aegean Startups” business accelerator?

- **Distribution**: spread in 6 islands of the Aegean Sea, connected with 10 other facilities / cities in Greece and Europe, relying heavily on digital means.

- **Diversity**: combining 15,000 of our students, and many more from Universities in Greece and abroad, including citizens and VSE’s from different domains and sectors. We like experimenting.

- **Demand orientation**: we try to work along the needs of businesses and administrations from several sectors of the economy, while utilizing the "powers" of the Aegean.
What are the top offerings of the Aegean?

• Tourism and culture
  – Aegean islands (like Santorini, Myconos, Rhodes, Crete) are top touristic destinations worldwide, attracting more than 10M tourists per year
  – Pythagoras, Homer, Sappho, Epicure, Hippocrates are just a few of the philosophers that marked the Aegean Islands with their presence

• Agriculture, food and beverage industry
  – Lesvos: The Ouzo capital of the world
  – Chios: The only Mastiha producing island
  – Samos and Lemnos: The sweet wine champions

• Energy generation potential
  – Wind, sun, sea waves offer great potential for energy generation

• An environment for advanced maritime transport and sealife preservation

• The Aegean quality of life, able to attract people from all over the world, doing business “on or for” the islands
An Aegean Startups “round”

Provide the Background / Story
Market structure and statistics, Research, Studies, Underlying Information

Set the Needs
Targets, objectives, ideas as expressed by the local players

Launch the Call
International call for new entrepreneurial ideas, tackling the needs

Find the Best
3 top ideas, getting seed financing and market support for establishment and operation

Go to Market
Connect with business communities, start working with customers

Local Business Chambers
Municipality and District Officials
Individual Companies

Business Mentors, Financing and VC, from Greece and abroad

International, multi-disciplinary teams

Aegean Startups team

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Example: The Tourism Round in 2016

The Story

The Needs

The Call

The Winners

Three teams/proposals getting 15K EUR each, progressively. Full collaboration with Business Chamber and interested local businesses for fast market traction.

International Call for Proposals (electronic, two step process)

New forms of tourism: medical, conference, cultural, wedding, cruise

New means of tourism marketing and sales: digital, multi-lingual, multi-cultural issues

Technology in Tourism: Mobile apps, IoT, collaborative models

Market information on Rhodes, studies and operational data, with the support of the local Union of Hotels and local municipalities
The Platform at www.aegean-startups.gr

- Digital Submission and Screening system, based on experts' opinions
- Team enhancement and collaboration system. Crowdlike and crowdfunding extensions
- Remote Mentoring and Digital Training system
- Information on the market status, stories, and needs
Collaboration Network and Opportunities

University of the Aegean

Local Administration
Local Businesses
NGO’s, citizens
Business Mentors
Other Universities
Late-Stage Incubators
Crowdfunding and Financing

Early-stage Incubators in the Islands

Students
Faculty, Researchers

Greece
Internationally
Startups from the 2015 round

Samiaki Gi (Earth of Samos): “Umbrella” branding and Digital Marketing for agricultural products of Samos

Aegean4You: online platform offering gastronomy tourism packages in the Aegean islands

CultPath: online service creating cultural “paths” for tourists in the Aegean islands (e.g. the Pythagorian path, the Argonauts path)

Smartups: electronic platform that automates team enhancement and cross-disciplinary collaboration
Next Steps / Plans

• An international round on Smart Cities / Smart Islands solutions (Greece, Slovenia, Kroatia, Italy, Cyprus)

• A joint project with TU Karlsruhe and Uni Torino on needs from 3 areas on Automotive Industry / ICT / Tourism

• Enhancing our platform with new tools for ideas screening, startup valuation, data collection

• Extend to adolescents / start collaborating with schools

• European and International Research projects on Web Entrepreneurship and Co-Creation (HORIZON 2016-2017)
Lessons?

• Demand orientation is the best asset for market traction

• Tools, more tools for augmenting reach and screening rates (from 1/10 to 1/100 to 1/1000)

• Patterns, more patterns for innovation generation (detect, teach, use)

• Do not press too much on time. Do not forget that the “crux of the matter” is ...
People!
Go Aegean!

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