



business creation support methodology

RESULTS, SOLUTIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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AND RECOMMENDATIONS

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP



ESCOLA PROFISSIONAL DE AVEIRO



AEVA - Associação para a Educação e Valorização de Recursos Humanos do Distrito de Aveiro

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0.

INTRODUCTION

CRER project – Creation of Enterprises in Rural Area – was developed with the support and co-finance of EQUAL Community Initiative and by a development partnership (DP) with several entities, namely:

ADRIMAG Rural Development Association (Promoter)

AECA Arouca Enterprise Association

ANJE National Association of Young Entrepreneurs

CNO Sever Do Vouga New Opportunities Center

Desafios Desporto e Aventura Lda. – enterprise of training and outdoor activities

FORESP Vale de Cambra Technological Scholl

SEMA Enterprise Association

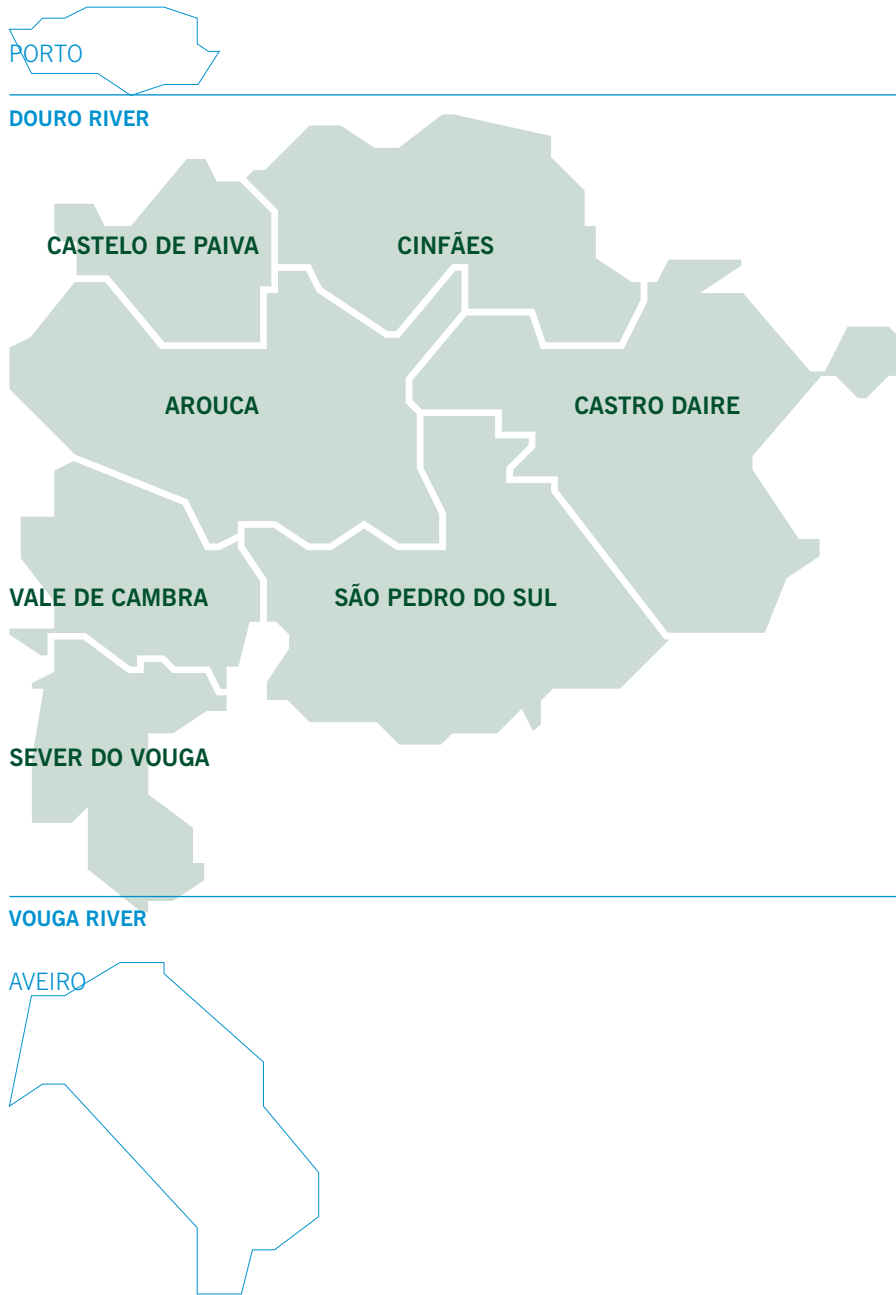
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The project was developed from July 2005 to October 2007 and as by main results the creation of CRER association and CRER methodology, which is still being used by the DP and its being disseminated to other Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESO), namely, AEVA/EPA – Aveiro Professional Scholl, Algarve University/CRIA – Regional Center for the Innovation in Algarve, ADCMoura – Development Association of Moura Municipality and Moura Municipality.

ADRIMAG'S AREA

FIGURE 1



1.

CRER PROJECT

1.1. ADRIMAG'S REGION

Co-funded by EQUAL CRER Project was promoted by a non-profit rural development association – ADRIMAG, in partnership with local and regional institutions and transnational partners from Belgium (Syntra Flanders), Czech Republic (EDUKOL and CEPAC) and France (RBG – Réseau des Boutiques de Gestion) and was co-financed by EQUAL Community Initiative, a part of the European Union's strategy for more and better jobs and for ensuring that no one is denied access to them. Funded by the European Social Fund, EQUAL initiative is testing since 2001 new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality experienced by those in work and those looking for a job.

ADRIMAG's area has seven municipalities (Arouca, Castelo de Paiva, Castro Daire, Cinfães, São Pedro do Sul, Sever do Vouga and Vale de Cambra) and is located between Douro and Vouga Rivers, as shown in figure 1.

This territory is located in the Centre/North of Portugal and it is a mountainous and agricultural area with 1688 km², with beautiful landscapes and high environmental quality, used often for adventure and extreme sports. The area has a rich historic and cultural patrimony, regional products and typical gastronomy with strong potential for tourism development (MOREIRA, 2006).

ADRIMAG's territory has municipalities with rural characteristics and it is a debilitated and disfavoured economic area, according to PRASD - Programme for Recuperation of Disfavoured Areas and Sectors, promoted by the Ministry of Economy in 2004. All the municipalities that belong to ADRIMAG's territory are integrated in the "less-favoured Portugal", with a per capita GDP below 75% of the national rate (MINISTÉRIO DA ECONOMIA, 2004).

Although the distance to main cities and to highways is short, the intermunicipal access is poor due to sinuous and mountainous roads, which complicates the access between municipalities and main roads. There is no integrated transportation system, which makes it difficult for travellers to cut across the region as the main means of transportation is the personal car.

In what concerns population, this region presents a negative growth rate (-1.7%) though with some disparities between municipalities. This negative growth rate is more notable in the villages located in the inner part of the region and with difficult accessibilities (ADRIMAG, 2004).

The region has an ageing index 6.1% larger than the national index, the level of education is lower than the national level and the unemployment rate is larger than the national average (ADRIMAG, 2004).

Besides the demographic aspects that contribute to rural and disfavoured characteristics of this region, there are also other barriers that need to be surmounted in order to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and business creation in the region.

The region suffers from the typical risk aversion of individuals with low social capital and is steeped in cultural traditions in which trust and reciprocity is not rewarded (ADRIMAG, 2004). The lack of alternative ways to finance and support the creation and development of new enterprises does not enable the diffusion of innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives: there is a lack of training and personalised support to give and promote competencies in the field of business creation. As a consequence of this portrait there is a strong need to foster entrepreneurship and innovation.

The economic backbone of ADRIMAG's region is composed of micro, small and medium-sized firms (MOREIRA, 2006). While entrepreneurship is discussed at national policy level, few rural areas have been able to address entrepreneurs at the centre of the strategic development of rural milieus.

ADRIMAG's region has a very poor set of ESOs operating throughout the community. For example, business and innovation centres, technology development centres and incubating centres are quite scarce or non-existing hindering the entrepreneurial process. The available centres supporting entrepreneurial activities are understaffed and under budgeted and lack a dynamic, entrepreneurial flavour. People living in this rural area, such as young people, women and unemployed people need the support of a structure to foster entrepreneurship and help them with the business creation. In questionnaires developed among prospective entrepreneurs living in ADRIMAG's area, the following obstacles were identified (ADRIMAG, 2004): poor access to capital; lack of industrial space; poor business logistics; lack of institutional support; heavy administrative and bureaucratic burdens and lack of information about support and programmes for business creation.

1.2

1.2. MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The main objective of CRER project was to transfer and to adapt a structure that existed in France since 1995, which main goal was to test and experiment business ideas without the formal creation of the enterprise. The name of the structure is *couveuse*. A *couveuse* is a structure that allows the reduction of risk and underpins the initial phase of an activity. It optimises the success possibilities of an entrepreneurial project, giving the promoters the learning about the “being an entrepreneur”. On the one hand entrepreneurs get used to the operational aspects of the business (the emission of invoices, manipulation of information, studying the market and the clients, etc.) and, on the other hand, the *couveuse* gives them the possibility of testing the de facto viability of their project (in terms of marketing planning, financial planning and strategy definition).

2.

CRER APPROPRIATION METHODOLOGY

2.1

2.1. COUVEUSES IN FRANCE

The *couveuses* emerged in 1995, in France, due to (a) the entrepreneurs' need of support and follow up; and (b) the lack of entrepreneurial culture and financial support to create new enterprises. They give a juridical and legal framework to entrepreneurs which allows them to have their economic activity: the *couveuses* organise a real test of business activity, giving entrepreneurs the necessary conditions to analyse the pertinence and economic viability of their projects, with the support of partners and finance, and giving them the opportunity of evaluating their capacities to develop their projects and decide about the creation or not of the enterprise (MARTINS, 2007b).

A *couveuse* is a structure that allows the reduction of risk and protects the initial phase of a business activity. On the one hand, it optimises the success possibilities of an entrepreneurial project, giving the promoters the learning about the “entrepreneur’s profession”: the entrepreneurs get used to the emission of invoices, the manipulation of information and studying the market. On the other hand, it gives entrepreneurs the possibility of testing the commercial viability of their project. The added value of the *couveuses* is to allow, before the formal creation of the firm, the test of a business in real context, giving the entrepreneur (a) a legal and secure framework; (b) the possibility of learning about her/his business; and (c) a network of new contacts.

A *couveuse* is a structure that allows the test and experimentation of a business idea, without the need of a formal creation of an enterprise. The beneficiaries of this social economy structure are, mainly, unemployed people, young people, disabled people, women and individuals without entrepreneurial spirit. Besides the test of a business activity, the *couveuses* also foster the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture of their target groups, because they give a global follow up support oriented to the needs of their beneficiaries. Being an instrument that allows the social and professional insertion and training of disfavoured groups, it becomes indispensable for local development, the creation of new enterprises and promoting new wealth (MARTINS, 2007b).

Although the *couveuses* in France exist since 1995, their legal experimentation started in 2000, which was given by the French Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, through a circular letter from DGEFP – General Delegation of Employment and Professional Training, in 26th of June 2000 and gave an experimental period to the *couveuses* with the duration of 18 months. This right to experimentation was conceded to entities that could give juridical and physical support and follow up of entrepreneurs in their project of business and activities creation, in situation of real production, with maintenance or preservation of social privileges. The circular letter defines the conditions in which these experiences can be developed, taking in account the objectives, and exposes the modalities of follow up and management at local and national level.

The *couveuses* concept has also the support of a law, created in 2003 which started to be implemented in July 2005, after the publication of an edict on May 2005 for appliance of the “CAPE” – Support Contract to the Creation of an Enterprise (MARTINS, 2007b).

The law about the economic initiative emerged in 2003 and has by objectives to foster the creation of one million new enterprises in the period of 5 years and to assure that 500 000 enterprises can be sold in 10 years. The law has four main ideas: to secure, to finance, to follow and to simplify. It contains 28 measures grouped in 7 themes: the simplification of the creation of enterprises; the simplification of the daily life of entrepreneurs; the improvement of the security of the entrepreneurs; the facilitation to financial funds; the easy access to follow up entrepreneurs; to be an entrepreneur after being employee; the transference of enterprises.

In the theme “follow up of entrepreneurs” there are two articles (20 and 21) which regulate the practices developed by the *couveuses*, creating the CAPE (Contract of Enterprise Creation Support) which defines the conditions of status and support of the entrepreneur during the test of business ideas.

The development of *couveuses* is an example of the adaptation of legislation and regulation in order to develop entrepreneurship and business creation in certain territories. Despite the inexistence of support legislation, several institutions and entities have implemented and developed a structure to support entrepreneurs and the creation of new businesses and contribute for the local and regional development.

2.2

2.2. HOW WAS THE METHODOLOGY IMPLEMENTED IN PORTUGAL

Initially, the objective of the CRER project was to transfer to the Portuguese territory the *couveuses* methodology, in order to create an ESO to allow the test and experimentation of new business ideas. The representatives of the CRER Development Partnership (DP) made several study visits in order to get acquainted and to see in loco the development and activities of *couveuses* and *boutiques de gestion* in France. As the *couveuses* and the *boutiques de gestion* have different missions and aims – whilst *couveuses* support entrepreneurs in the testing and experimentation of business ideas, the *Boutique de Gestion* is oriented to support entrepreneurs with the elaboration and finalisation of the business – the DP concluded that the transference and incorporation of the *couveuses* methodology to the Portuguese environment was not sufficient because the intertwined actions of both institutions were missing in ADRIMAG’s territory. Due to the lack of ESOs in the region, the partnership decided that the version of the Portuguese *couveuse* would need to integrate as well a support methodology to help all potential rural entrepreneurs with the definition and development of the new business.

The appropriation of the methodology was implemented with the help of study visits and taking part in workgroups (MARTINS, 2007a), during the activities of an ENTRE project – the transnational component of CRER project – developed in partnership with entities from Belgium, Czech Republic and France.

2.3

2.3. OBSTACLE AND CONSTRAINS

The appropriation of the methodology was a difficult and long process. The innovation and complexity of the *couveuses* methodology demanded a very hard work, in order to adapt and to create all the instruments needed for the development of the methodology. The adaptation of the business creation process in order to integrate the new phase of test and experimentation of business ideas was crucial.

Despite that, the DP found some obstacles concerning legislation about the structure and the status of the entrepreneur during the phase of test and experimentation (MARTINS, 2007a).

Regarding legislation, there were two kinds of problems: one concerned with the institutions and other concerned with the potential entrepreneur. Institutionally, prior to this project, there was no legislation regarding ESO providing services of testing and experimentation of business ideas. Regarding the entrepreneur, the Portuguese legislation does not allow an unemployed person to receive social benefits while exercising a new business venture, even in the test and experimentation phase of the new firm creation process.

Due to a gap in the Portuguese legislation, before the CRER project Portugal did not have any institution with the objective of testing and experimenting business ideas. So, the decision of the DP was, like in the French territory, to create an association to help the entrepreneurs with all the procedures in the test and experimentation phase, namely, in order to create the legal environment for the potential entrepreneur to issue invoices and receipts whilst the firm has not legally created.

The test and experimentation phase is a particular step in the process of business creation that is not yet legally regulated in Portugal. There are several ways and modalities of entrepreneurial/enterprise creation support: training of short, medium and long duration, training in action, individual and personalized follow up. During the phase of support and training, what is the status of the potential entrepreneurs? Unemployed? Trainees? In probation? Entrepreneurs? Can they be unemployed and can they continue to receive their unemployment benefits?

This process of follow up during the test, in which the entrepreneur is active and producing products or providing services, question the entrepreneur status because:

The beneficiary cannot be considered as unemployed because is neither looking for a job, nor is available for work; besides that, the beneficiary is not unemployed, because is working for the promotion and development of his/her own business, because he/she has to sell his/her products and services to test the business and to make the analysis of the economic and financial viability of the business;

The beneficiary cannot be considered as a trainee, because the training that he/she receives is tailored to his/her business specific needs. Accordingly, the support that he/she receives is not a formal training that fits in the legal framework of the professional training in Portugal, namely in terms of structure, modules and training program;

The beneficiary cannot be considered as being in a probation, because although she/he develops her/his own activity in a real context of work and for is own benefit, he/she does not have practical on-the-job training;

The beneficiary cannot be considered as a manager, because she/he does not have an enterprise created, the products that she/he sells and the services that she/he develops are not invoiced in the name of the beneficiary but in the name of the structure that gives them the legal and juridical framework.

The main objective of the CRER project was, at first, the transference of the *couveuse* methodology to ADRIMAG's territory, which was a radical innovation in the territory. During the study visits, it was clear that it was not possible to transfer only the *couveuse* methodology as in France it was being used intertwined with the *Boutique de Gestion* methodology in order to help potential entrepreneurs with the elaboration of the business plan. Clearly, in France both methodologies are interconnected.

This means that before the entrance in the *couveuse*, the entrepreneur needs support to create his/her business plan and to structure the project idea and objectives. The support of the entrepreneur in France, before the entrance in the *couveuse*, might be developed by the *boutiques de gestion* (or other institutions or experts, including consultants, for instance).

2.4

2.4. SOLUTIONS

During the experimentation of the methodology, in the implementation of CRER project, it has been very difficult to explain to entrepreneurs the methodology during the phase of test and experimentation because of the innovation of the methodology in Portugal. The status of the entrepreneur during the test was also difficulty to define due to the specificity of the test and the support legislation (that already exists in France).

The solution founded by the DP, taking in account the entrepreneur status, was that the entrepreneur would be a trainee during the test and experimentation phase of the business idea. This allowed circumventing the gap of the Portuguese legislation that encourages all unemployed to receive training during their unemployment period.

Concerning the legal status of the Portuguese *couveuse* the decision of the DP was to create an association – CRER – Centre of Resources and Experimentation – because it could do all the activities and promote all the services of an ESO. In France, *couveuses* also have the juridical form of an association (MARTINS, 2007a).

2.5

2.5. RESULTS

CRER project had three distinct results:

The creation of **CRER association**

– Center of Resources and Experimentation

The development of **CRER methodology**

– an integrated methodology of entrepreneurial support

The conception of **CRER product** | Methodological Guide for creation and appropriation

2.5.1. CRER association

CRER – Centre of Resources and Experimentation is an association created during the development of CRER project – Creation of Enterprises in Rural Area which has by territory, the municipalities of Arouca, Castelo de Paiva, Castro Daire, Cinfães, São Pedro do Sul, Sever do Vouga and Vale de Cambra.

This structure has by main objective the creation of conditions for entrepreneurs to create and develop a sustainable business and benefit the support for the elaboration of a business plan and the test and experimentation of business ideas.

2.5.2 CRER methodology

CRER methodology is an integrated methodology of entrepreneurial support which is divided in three phases, as shown in figure 2:

Information and nurturing
entrepreneurship and business creation

Maturation and finalization of the business plan, giving support in the preparation and elaboration of business plan

Test and experimentation of business ideas, by giving support to the test of a business idea, without the creation of an enterprise

Each phase involves different actions with several tasks. Each action has instruments and procedures in order to help the CRER development agent in supporting the potential entrepreneur throughout the phases. All the instruments were adapted from the existent instruments of the above mentioned methodologies and institutions.

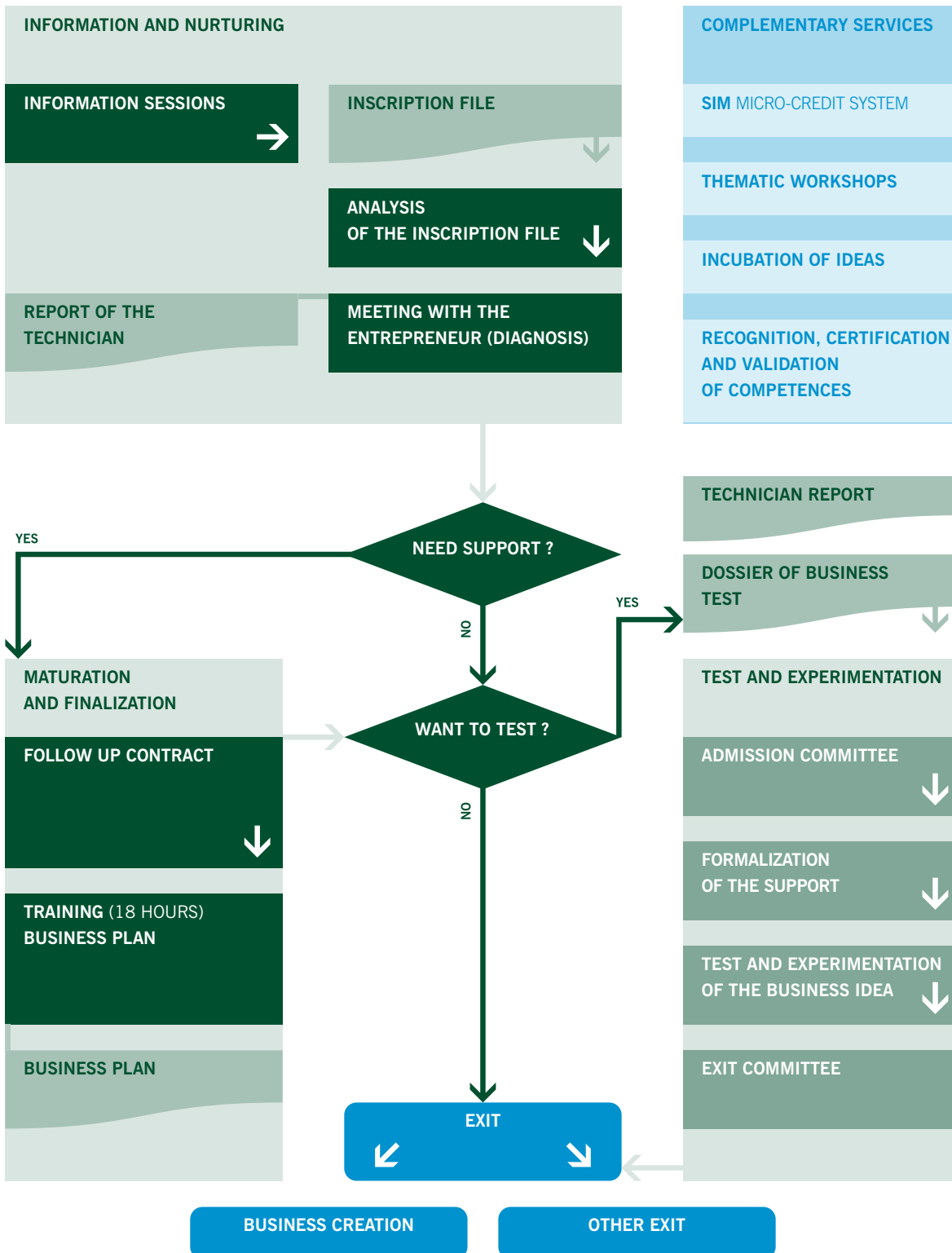
As it is clear from figure 2, the only compulsory phase in which the prospective entrepreneur must participate is the phase of information and nurturing and according to the diagnosis of the entrepreneur/idea/project the entrepreneur can proceed either to other phases or to create his/her own business elsewhere.

The experimentation and test phase is the most innovative one of all the process: it allows the entrepreneur to test the business idea, before the formal creation of the enterprise. This phase is the adaptation of the *couveuses* methodology to the Portuguese territory. It can be considered a radical innovation as it was not legally possible in Portugal to incubate business ideas before the beginning of this project. In this phase, the entrepreneur has the support of the CRER structure and his/her tutor in all main business areas: accounting, finance, marketing, communication, image, infrastructures, etc.

CRER METHODOLOGY

FIGURE 2

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2.5.3. CRER Product

The development of the project and methodology has by result an “EQUAL product”¹ which combines all the information and instruments necessary to implement the CRER methodology. This integrated methodology allows the support in different phases of the enterprise creation, from the business idea, through the test and experimentation, without the formal creation of the enterprise, to the business creation. The methodology is the result of appropriation and adaptation of different methodologies and instruments (mentioned before), used by other national and transnational, institutions and partners and combines several valences crucial in the process of business creation: to inform, to support and to test.

The product is a methodological guide for appropriation of CRER: Centre of Resources and Experimentation and Methodology, which contains all the instruments needed to implement and incorporate the methodology and/or a Centre of Resources and Experimentation in another location/region.

The objective of the product is to disseminate and allow the incorporation of a support methodology to enterprise creation, since the idea to the enterprise creation, with the possibility of test and experimentation of and activity/business.

The product contains the following information:

- 1 **CRER product as an EQUAL project.** Explanation and link of the product to the EQUAL principles: partnership, empowerment, innovation, equal opportunities, transnationality, mainstreaming.
- 2 **The *couveuses* in France.** Information about the *couveuses* in France: objectives, beneficiaries, working model, support and follow up, finance of the structure, legal framework (support legislation) and results of the *couveuses*.
- 3 **Appropriation and adaptation of *couveuses* – CRER Case Study.** Appropriation methodology; difficulties and obstacles; solutions, appropriation results and orientation for future interventions.
- 4 **Steps for the creation and appropriation of CRER structure and methodology.** Definition of CRER structure, methodology and steps for the creation and incorporation of CRER; objectives of CRER network.
- 5 **FACE – Training of technicians for enterprise creation and entrepreneurship.** Objectives of the training and methodology.
- 6 **CRER methodology.** Detailed description of the phases of CRER methodology.
- 7 **CRER support instruments.** All instruments used by the technicians during the implementation and development of the methodology with entrepreneurs.

This product is being disseminated in Action 3 of EQUAL Community Initiative, among institutions and entities that work with potential entrepreneurs and that have by main objective the promotion of entrepreneurship and business creation. To transfer the methodology and instruments is necessary that the technicians, which will use the methodology, have some training and technical assistance and they need also to make some study visits to attend meetings, sessions and training with entrepreneurs.

1. “Products are visible outputs of EQUAL projects that add value and function as means of support or solutions for problems facing Development Partnerships or intermediate or final beneficiaries. They are essentially technical and pedagogical resources or tools that support the action that materialize and systematize strategies, processes, methodologies, etc.”

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/0706-msf-pt-leaf_en.pdf

3.

CRER DISSEMINATION

3.1

3.1. DISSEMINATION METHODOLOGY

The future interventions must be done by phases of implementation and development, namely possible on Action 3 of EQUAL – dissemination phase or by agreements between entities belonging to CRER Network and the entities that want to incorporate the methodology.

The dissemination of CRER must be oriented to two fields:

DISSEMINATION FOR THE PRACTICE

Dissemination of the project to other entities, similar to CRER partners, that want to appropriate all, or parts of CRER methodology and structure.

DISSEMINATION FOR THE POLICY

Dissemination of the project among public entities in order to make possible the change and adaptation of legislation, namely related with the entrepreneur status.

Considering the dissemination for the practice, it's recommended that the entities develop the following activities:

PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION OF CRER METHODOLOGY

- Analysis of the institution and relation with the CRER methodology
- Preparation of the business and viability plan, with information about the the needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Mobilization of local/regional actors



In our institution, there are the necessary conditions for the appropriation of CRER methodology as we think that AEVA, while a school, should promote the entrepreneurial attitude of the youngsters. The entrepreneurial phenomenon is, as we know, a cultural aspect which involves the creation of an environment and of a very specific practice, which is revealed not only in the type of action and objectives that are promoted, but also in the way we lead with innovation, change and mistakes. Thus, creating an office to support the young entrepreneur (final year students of EPA school, ex-students of the school not inserted in the labor market, students of other schools of the region, handicapped youngsters and women), beginning in November 2008, and adopting CRER methodology in total, we wish to support, stimulate, create new opportunities concerning jobs to these youngsters, exploring innovative ideas. We want to adapt the whole CRER methodology due to its appropriateness, relevancy, utility and easy-friendly applicability and adaptation and due to the important support given so far and in the future by the team who developed it.

ANA RIBEIRO | ELISABETE MOREIRA | ELVIRA RIBEIRO · AEVA/EPA - CRER APPROPRIATION

The appropriation of CRER methodology and all its instruments, in CRIA – Regional Centre for the Innovation in Algarve from Algarve University, helped to structure and to organize the activities that we already developed in the field of promotion and support of entrepreneurship, as well as to introduce new procedures and techniques that enriched our services.

JOÃO AMARO · CRIA COORDINATOR - CRER APPROPRIATION

PHASE 2 TRAINING AND SUPPORT OF CRER TECHNICIANS

- FACE – Training Course for Entrepreneurial Support Agents
– training course with the duration of 42 hours
- Study Visits to the entities that already use CRER methodology
- Technical assistance from CRER technicians in the entities that want to incorporate the methodology



CRER is a methodology with two options, in the application to a real context. By one hand, it organizes and facilitates the process of follow up and support of the entrepreneur's business ideas, and makes them responsible for the development of their ideas and their activity. By other hand, it introduces in the Portuguese system the experimentation of a business idea, promoting a better consolidation of the enterprise and increasing the survival rate of the enterprises, combining the local context with a global orientation. It is methodology that promotes policy recommendations and encourages changes in the follow up and support of enterprise creation in Portugal.

ANTÓNIO MARTINS · ADC MOURA - CRER APPROPRIATION

PHASE 3 DEVELOPMENT OF CRER METHODOLOGY

- Support to the entrepreneur
- Development of CRER methodology



To create an enterprise is necessary, first, to have the ambition (or dream as I prefer to call). But, as in everything, the dream is not enough to build projects. Although my wish and consciousness of the problems that I might have, it was crucial to define a strategy to guide me through the entrepreneurial world. And here came CRER. With the help of this entrepreneurial support program in rural areas, I was able to characterize my intervention area, to make an analysis of my competitors... it has been defined the steps for my enterprise to become a reality.

With the help of CRER technician I was able to understand a little more about the dynamics of entrepreneurship – that was totally unknown to me – and I gained trust about my professional success. I didn't need to have an answer for the Employment Center. The future depends only of me!

I accomplished all the steps of my business plan, used all the instruments that I had available and I overcome all the expectations that were defined.

The day that I entered in ADRIMAG' door to question about the support that they can give me in the creation of my enterprise was, with no doubt, one of the most decisive days of my (short) life.

CLÁUDIA OLIVEIRA - CRER ENTREPRENEUR

3.2

3.2. CRER NETWORK

To facilitate the incorporation of CRER structure and/or methodology and instruments, it has been created a network, with the participation of all entities that use CRER, which main objective is to facilitate the promotion and dissemination of CRER (methodology, instruments and structure), in a organized and structured way and with a corporate and unique image, acting in an institutional cooperation, to entities with similar objectives of CRER.

In specific terms, the objectives of CRER network are:

- 1 To maintain the cohesion of CRER users and to unite the CRER information
- 2 To guarantee the quality of CRER instruments as well as the quality of service to the beneficiaries and potential entrepreneurs
- 3 To create communication between the members of the network
- 4 To maintain the information updated to all the network members
- 5 To ensure the combination of all procedures to develop CRER in other entities
- 6 To establish ways to evaluation the implementation and actualization of CRER methodology and instruments
- 7 To facilitate future incorporation processes of CRER methodology



CRER methodology, through several instruments created, it will allow an integrated approach in the support of enterprise creation and consolidation of the enterprises. The dissemination of CRER methodology and network are an added value for the exchange of practices among entities that work in different contexts and with different target groups, providing an important knowledge in the promotion of entrepreneurship.

CÉLIA GOMES - CÂMARA MUNICIPAL DE MOURA - CRER APPROPRIATION

4.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The CRER project was developed during two years and a half and its main objective was to stimulate entrepreneurship, giving potential entrepreneurs the opportunity to develop their skills and competences towards entrepreneurship, helping them with the elaboration of the business plan as well as with the search for financing to create their own enterprise, taking in account their characteristics and profile of the potential entrepreneur.

The CRER project is aimed at pre-start and start-up phases of the entrepreneurial process, designed and delivered to address the areas of motivation, opportunity and skills, with the primary objective of encouraging more people to consider entrepreneurship, to move into the nascent stage and proceed into start up and early phases of a business. It has all the instruments and information to be disseminated among similar entities with the objective of promotion of entrepreneurship and business creation.

During the conception of the project and methodology, several barriers emerged due to the lack of support legislation, concerning the structure and the entrepreneur. But the main obstacle was linked with the entrepreneur: the inexistence of a support legislation related with the entrepreneur status was a barrier to the proper implementation and development of the project. The indefinite status of the entrepreneur was clearly an obstacle for the experimentation of CRER project, mainly in the phase of test and experimentation of business ideas. It was very difficult to influence the project target groups to join the project during the phase of test and experimentation of business ideas.

The main target groups of this methodology are unemployed, young people, women and beneficiaries of RSI. Being an instrument that contributes for social and professional inclusion and training of disfavored people, this methodology is crucial for local development because contributes for the creation of wealth in the region and the development of sustainable enterprises.

The innovation of the project, particularly in the phase of test and experimentation of business ideas, demands a change of regulation and legislation to help with the well development of the methodology and the increase of interest and motivation of potential entrepreneurs with the possibility of creating and enterprise, for two reasons:

the methodology has by target disfavored groups and combines support, training, test and experimentation, micro-credit and subventions, which can contribute for a high degree of success and low risk;

the methodology can contribute to the decrease of unemployment, the reduction of social inequalities and to the training of new entrepreneurs.

The methodology continues to be developed by ADRIMAG and CRER – Centre of Resources and Experimentation and the methodology is being disseminated among other entrepreneurial support organizations in other regions of Portugal, with different target groups, to check the interest of people in the methodology and continue with the development of an innovative process of entrepreneurial support.

5.

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