

Foreword

Stimulating successful business creation across all sections of society is an important requirement for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and responding to economic and social challenges in European Union countries. Entrepreneurship can respond to high rates of unemployment and low levels of labour market participation which are often concentrated in particular sections of society by enabling people to create their own jobs and jobs for others. It is fundamental to the emergence of a more entrepreneurial economy in which new firms offer new solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges. However, many people face barriers to entrepreneurship. They include access to finance, lack of appropriate skills, and lack of business networks. These obstacles are often more important for people from groups that are disadvantaged and under-represented in entrepreneurship, who often face additional barriers related to attitudes, motivations and welfare systems that discriminate against entrepreneurship. Both business development policies and active labour market policies have a role to play in helping overcome these problems. Appropriate actions can be taken at national, regional and local levels and targeted at key groups such as youth, women, seniors, the unemployed, immigrants, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. This compendium identifies the types of policy approaches that work in overcoming the problems and discusses key factors for their successful implementation.

It is intended to inspire policy makers in Europe and beyond to introduce new national and local actions to give people from all parts of society the opportunity to succeed in business creation and self-employment, drawing on experiences that have been tried and tested elsewhere. Relevant actions can be piloted and implemented using a range of local, regional, national and European Union funds that are available for this purpose, including the European Structural and Investment Funds and national active labour market policy resources, but appropriate plans and proposals have to be put into place and implemented. This compendium contains a variety of examples of approaches that can be taken. The descriptions of these policy actions not only present the programmes' activities, but also discuss the challenges faced in their development and implementation, and the keys to successfully transferring the approach to a different context. The intention is to help transfer the experiences and lessons learned so that others can avoid common pitfalls and achieve results more quickly.

This compendium is part of an on-going collaboration on inclusive entrepreneurship between the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Local Development of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. One of the key objectives of this collaboration is to support capacity development for policy makers through the provision of evidence and guidance on what works. Other outputs available include a series of policy briefs and a set of Missing Entrepreneurs reports that provide policy advice on specific target groups and policy tools. For more information on this work programme, please refer to: www.oecd.org/employment/leed/inclusive-entrepreneurship.htm.

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