

Emerging Forms of Coworking inside the Business Incubators in Serbia

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to determine the possibilities of building coworking-based relations in business incubators in Serbia. The basic hypothesis was the supposition that creating or improving the internal business incubator network of cooperation will build and improve the coworking facilities, too.

***Design/methodology/approach** – The study sets out with the examination of the existing work ambient for cooperation in general. In the first phase the authors tried to detect and evaluate the level of cooperation, especially the spontaneous forms of internal collaboration between tenants. For the beginning it was supposed that the existence of open and free collaboration between tenants or within some of their functions may improve facilities for extension of incubator services, too. The approach involved the review and analysis of the business incubators in Serbia with special focus on determining the need for the collaboration of tenants and possibilities of extension with coworkers as a new form of service. The data was collected based on the method of questionnaire and different observation techniques, experimental learning from initial results, stakeholder mapping. Some basic questions were included about the business incubators (activity, number of tenants, number of employees, the degree of horizontal differentiation, etc.). The main part was devoted to the forms of cooperation between tenants of the business incubators (e.g. existence of internal cooperation among tenants, subject of cooperation, and way of establishing cooperation). (Illustrated with the detailed case study of the Business incubator Subotica)*

***Findings** –The need and also the possibilities for coworking exists in Serbian business incubators. It is evident that cooperation between tenants exists, but mainly in an informal way. The effects of such forms of coopera-*

tion can hardly be measured and controlled, and unfortunately, it means the suboptimal use of business opportunities, resulting in a lower actual business performance. The problem can be managed with additional measures of organizational change and development to expand the services of incubators e.g. with the offer of coworking place.

Practical implications – Based on the results the authors suggest more sophisticated analyses and even more measures of internal and external stakeholders. They can be part of existing and potential networks of cooperation. These findings will help practitioners in understanding the importance of extension of organizational boundaries and to develop new appropriate forms of cooperation and coworking, as well as for new training and development strategies. Social implications would be the development of coworking as a new type of employment within the existing facilities of business incubators

Originality/value New aspects of work functions and definition of new services for incubators are offered. The results of the study provide valuable information and applicable methodological approaches for the entrepreneurs of surrounding regions and countries too.

Key words: business incubator, coworking, organizational change, stakeholder analysis