

PROJECT PERIODIC REPORT

Grant Agreement number: 611878

Project acronym: ATALANTA

Project title: Atalanta is Transnational Accelerator Networks Acceleration

Funding Scheme: Coordination and Support Action (CSA)

Date of latest version of Annex I against which the assessment will be made: Draft proposed for an ongoing amendment in July 2015

Periodic report: 1st ☐ 2nd ☒ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐

Period covered: from 1/9/2014 to 31/8/2015

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¹ Usually the contact person of the coordinator as specified in Art. 8.1. of the Grant Agreement.

² The home page of the website should contain the generic European flag and the FP7 logo which are available in electronic format at the Europa website (logo of the European flag: http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/index_en.htm logo of the 7th FP: http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=logos). The area of activity of the project should also be mentioned.

1. Publishable summary

The overall project objective is to drive innovation, facilitate technology transfer and to support entrepreneurship on a transnational European level to contribute to the exploitation of more innovative products and services coming from European R&D projects and to support the creation of more successful ICT start-ups in Europe. This overall objective will be achieved through actions and events organised in thematic domains as well as the use of existing electronic platforms and networking tools. The project will have a special focus on acceleration programmes, which are the new paradigm regarding entrepreneurship support. With this focus, the project will complement the activities of incubator networks like EBN that are already well established in Europe. Accelerator programmes are not seen as a competing concept to business incubation, but as a complementing measure with the objective to accelerate the incubation of the most promising enterprises.

In more concrete terms, **the project supports groups of leading accelerators for delivering cross border services to innovative SMEs and entrepreneurs and links these groups with knowledge creators and education organisations (i.e. mentors, trainers, service providers and partners) on one side, to venture capital organisations (i.e. investors) and the business world (i.e. potential clients, partners and suppliers) on the other.** This corresponds to the following detailed objectives:

- **Transnational Accelerators**

Install transnational cooperation networks of accelerators to enhance sharing of best practices, dissemination of new methodologies, dissemination of accelerator programmes towards knowledge creators and optimised mapping of start-ups to accelerator programmes; new networks will build on existing organisations, but will extend existing operation schemes;

- **Linking Knowledge Creation and Enterprise Creation**

Install new transnational cooperation networks and improve existing networks by linking accelerators with innovation networks, in particular the EBN and other incubator networks, but also networks of researchers and PhD students at universities and research centres and networks of project officers at European funding initiatives;

- **Creating Synergy Networks**

Install new transnational synergy networks and improve existing ones by linking accelerator networks with networks of venture capital organisations and ecosystems of potential suppliers, partners and customers in the ICT area;

- **New Techniques and Methodologies**

Provide new real and virtual techniques and methods for transnational cooperation, such as virtual acceleration, real and virtual office hours for leading edge experience sharing and virtual mentoring; these techniques will be implemented by existing internet-based tools, new tools are developed only if no solution is available for a certain purpose.

To achieve these goals, the project will perform three iterations of dissemination, capacitation of facilitators and research champions, preparation of start-ups, acceleration programmes and synergy networking including start-up mentoring and training. The steps in each iteration will be implemented in terms of dissemination and training events, the partners' acceleration programmes and physical and virtual office hours.

The intention in performing the activities in iterations is to test and optimise the cooperation schemes and new methodologies and to control their success.

The work will be implemented in five core work packages in addition to the Project Management work package:

WP2 – Bridging

This work package implements the objective *Linking Knowledge Creation to Enterprise Creation*; all activities related to the promotion, capacitation and preparation to reach innovative start-ups, researchers, PhD students and ICT projects of the European Framework Programme fall into the scope of this work package. In this context, a study about the “hidden research” – research that does not lead to market application, but does also not lead to failure of the company, will be prepared.

WP3 – Transnational Accelerators

This work package implements the objective *Transactional Accelerators*. It comprises the accelerator activities of each partner. The work in this context is executed individually by each partner according to each partner’s internal policies and strategies.

It comprises as well all activities related to the transnational networking among accelerators.

WP4 - Office Hours

This work package implements the objective *New Techniques and Methodologies*. The new component of real and virtual office hours is developed and tested by all partners together. In the scope of this work package, office hours will be planned, set up and executed.

WP5 – Synergies

This work package implements the objective *Creating Synergy Networks*. It comprises all post-acceleration networking activities towards venture capital organisations and the market.

WP6 - Dissemination and Exploitation

This work package comprises all activities that aim at extending the project structures beyond its lifetime and thus establishing them in the European acceleration landscape.

Some of the achievements and outcomes of the project during the second reporting period, which can be summarized as follows:

- **Launch of Staff Exchange:** the project launched this service within the consortium during this reporting period and was able to fine-tune it through several iterations. It is a major opportunity to enhance and leverage collaboration among the several players in the ecosystems supporting startups (pre-accelerators, accelerators, etc). The project has been able to share the insights gained and will be making this service available outside the consortium through the creating of a network of accelerators/pre-accelerators;
- **Launch of Startup Exchange:** this service creates direct value to startups by leveraging on synergies between accelerators in different geographic contexts and with different specializations/resources. The service was launched in this period and is under evaluation and fine-tuning.
- **Launch of 2nd Chance:** this service optimizes the scouting process for accelerators with the establishment of a referral process through which startups that can best benefit from acceleration get higher chances to enter a program.
- **Pre-accelarators Summit and European Accelerators Summit (2nd edition):** these two events, geared at creating healthy discussion within the acceleration and pre-acceleration sectors in Europe, are key accomplishments of the ATALANTA project. They are important milestones in the creation of transnational cooperation networks. These events are also valuable in understanding these sectors, challenges and opportunities they face as well as the role played in the European ecosystem.
- **Deeper collaboration between consortium partners:** changes in the management of the project, with increased communication have enabled partners to work more closely together, establishing collaborative relationships that create value beyond the scope of ATALANTA. Within the project, enhanced collaboration resulted in better use of resources as well as better results. A good

example is the joint communication of activities, which resulted in the near duplication of applications to acceleration programs within the consortium. Mutual promotion of programs, exchange of best practices and overall exchange of information within the consortium created value and change throughout this implementation year.

- *Successful implementation of the acceleration programs related to the period (continued from year 1):* in the sequence of ATALANTA year 1, the project continued to implement events, workshops and other programs that provide quality resources and skills to startups in the European ecosystem. A total of 133 startups have benefited from the acceleration programmes with direct mentoring on their business, establishment of key business relationships, raising of capital and others.

The achievements mentioned above are major steps for the project to proceed in the coming year with the opening of collaboration and best practices to a larger group of accelerators in Europe. Through the lessons learned this year and the instruments designed, ATALANTA is better equipped to drive structured collaboration between accelerators in the coming year, which is a major objective for the project.