



Alter'Incub: A French incubator network for social enterprises (France)

What?

Alter'Incub [1] is the first regional incubator dedicated to social enterprises in France. This multi-stakeholder structure was launched in 2007 by the Regional Union of Co-operative Companies of Languedoc-Roussillon (URScop-LR) in partnership with the Regional Council of Languedoc-Roussillon. Its main mission is to assist entrepreneurs and offer them legal, financial and commercial support to create socially innovative enterprises at the end of the incubation period. The overarching goal is to take advantage of all possible synergies to transfer social innovation from the theoretical to the economic sphere in sectors such as housing, environment and consumption.

Why?

Despite national interest in social entrepreneurship in the early 2000s, barely any support existed in France for social innovation. Alter'Incub was a pioneer in helping projects to take advantage of existing instruments in the conventional economic system.

Key Activities

Alter'Incub's programme lasts 15 months and includes:

- Individual support: helping entrepreneurs with networking, market studies, financial and business planning, choice of legal form and status, and management.
- Collective support: collective training sessions leading to positive group dynamics; better communication between project initiators; acquisition of strategic, marketing and management skills.
- External support: mobilising partnerships with local experts in order to respond to the needs, in particular of innovative projects, where entrepreneurs may need specific resources (e.g. specific legal advice, detailed market studies) that would not be available otherwise.

Impact

In less than ten years and as of mid-2018, Alter'Incub supported the creation of 57 social enterprises, which in turn provided 357 jobs, in the region. It contributed to defining social innovation and social enterprise in France and helped design regional and national policies supporting social innovation. It now heads a network of five incubators in three regions of France, with a sixth one currently being implemented in the *Centre* administrative region.

This case study was adapted from a longer piece that was published in the OECD/EC (2017), Boosting Social Enterprise Development: Good Practice Compendium. For additional information and details, please refer to the [original publication](#) [2]

Source URL: <https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/en/node/31>

Links

[1] <http://www.alterincub.coop/>

[2] <http://www.oecd.org/publications/boosting-social-enterprise-development-9789264268500-en.htm>