

# ROADMAP

## A ROADMAP FOR INCREASED MANAGEMENT CAPACITY IN INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATIONS

### SUMMARY

The peer review concept has been used in the IRIS project as a tool to contribute to the improvement of governance structures and organisational set-up among incubators in the Baltic Sea Region. It was evident during the project that there are clear benefits for all the participating individual incubators, as well as for the collective, to conduct the peer reviews in a trusted network such as IRIS.

The methodology and the network resulted in participating incubators having the opportunity to get insight and learnings from colleagues, allowing them to evolve as an incubator. Connecting with other incubators, learning best practices and share innovations, has thus been demonstrated to be a powerful way to develop their capabilities to support start-ups and SMEs.

All participating incubators demonstrate a significantly higher management capacity at the end of the project as a result of knowledge being formulated and accessible during the process.

Identified areas of excellence among the incubators were that they all are well integrated with their local and regional ecosystem of universities, municipality and industry and have a multitude of international collaborations.

Identified areas for improvement among some of the incubators were a need to improve their marketing and communication capacity, improve the description of incubation processes and criteria for entry or exit. Common feedback was that participants were lacking supporting methods and tools that tackle sustainability issues for growth in start-ups and SMEs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, effects and learnings, the IRIS project gives the following recommendations:

- Continue to invest in peer review for incubators for increased coherence in the Baltic Sea Region. Peer reviews on a regular basis will provide the participating incubators excellent opportunities to develop continuously, and quality assure their activities.
- Stakeholders and end-users shall be included in the peer review process.
- Diversity among participating incubators should be encouraged.
- Encourage the development of new hands-on incubator sustainability tools for business development and growth. This is a common need among the participating partners.
- Encourage incubators to describe and promote their offers and processes.
- Encourage incubators to clearly define criteria for entry into and exit from an incubator process.