

# Are Service Profiles Incubator-Specific? Results from an Empirical Investigation in Italy\*

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**ABSTRACT.** What are the core services of start-up incubators, and how can they be managed best? We use five incubator archetypes (university, regional business, company-internal, independent commercial, and virtual incubators) to identify key services and describe their implementation. Case-research was conducted on 10 incubators (from an estimated total of 50) in Italy. We concluded that differences in competitive scope (industry, geography, and segment focus) and differences in strategic objectives (profit versus non-for-profit) influence the nature, quality and implementation of incubation services and the way they are managed.

**Keywords:** startup ventures, entrepreneurship, strategy, incubation, best practice

**JEL Classification:** O31, O32

## 1. Introduction

Incubators seek to combine technology, capital and know-how to leverage entrepreneurial talent, accelerate the development of new companies, and thus speed up the commercialization of technology. They help entrepreneurs develop business and marketing plans, build management teams, obtain venture capital, and provide access to professional services. In addition, incubators provide flexible office space, information technologies and other more specialized equipment, as well as administrative services. After the incubating period, start-up ventures graduate from the incubator to

become independent, self-sustaining businesses (e.g., Mian, 1996).

This, at least, is the ideal. In reality we have seen many incubators diverge from the mission statements put forward on webpages, leaflets, or in network meetings. Many incubators failed to provide essential incubation and support services that they promised and entrepreneurs were looking for (see e.g. Hansen *et al.*, 2000), and they did not succeed in delivering on the financial or economic returns that they promised to their investors. Some incubators ventured into an industry they did not understand themselves, and others were plainly exploiting the entrepreneurs to gain future financial returns. Even among the better managed incubators, many did not seem to have a clear understanding of what services were critical for the success of their start-ups and of how they could be implemented successfully.

This paper presents the results of research conducted in Italy with a focus on incubator services and incubator management practices. In the next two sections, we give an overview of the incubator industry and some of the pertinent literature, and we introduce an incubator typology before arriving at our research questions. In our analytical section, we first establish why Italian incubators can be classified in archetypes. Then, we study incubator services and relate them to specific incubator archetypes. We conclude that service profiles can be optimized for certain archetypes, which we surmise to be an obligation of policy makers, investors, and incubator directors.

## 2. The incubation industry

The early literature on incubators focused on incubating initiatives, such as public/institutional

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operators with economic development objectives (to increase employment and economic/technological growth), using mainly public resources (Cooper, 1985; Marrifield, 1987; Mian, 1996; Autio and Klofsten, 1998). The main objective of public incubators was to reduce the costs of doing business by offering a diverse set of services ranging from the provision of space, infrastructures and facilities, as well as access to technical and managerial expertise, assistance in business plan development. From a more conceptual point of view the rationale behind the establishment of incubators is related to the 'market failure' of small start-ups, particularly with respect to technological opportunities, the appropriability regime, and capital market imperfections (information asymmetries and adverse selection). Market failures create barriers for start-ups such as access to capital, knowledge, and complementary resources and technologies, staff recruiting, marketing, advertising, public relations, administrative and legal affairs (Storey and Tether, 1998; Colombo and DelMastro, 2002). Public incubators (such as the BIC Business Innovation Centers established by the European Union) were seen as attempts to help start-ups overcome these barriers and become self-sustaining companies in their own right.

Many public incubators were associated with academic institutions, leading to a new class of incubators called university incubators. Government policy-makers increasingly viewed science as a vehicle for energizing national and regional economies and with increasing frequency asked universities to lend resources, faculty time and talent to economic development efforts (Roberts, 1991; Mian, 1994, 1996; Stankiewicz, 1994).

After a period of initial euphoria about public incubating mechanisms, doubts were raised about their effectiveness as an economic development tool (Sherman, 1999; Autio and Klofsten, 1998). In the second half of the 1990s, entrepreneurs and businessmen close to the Internet revolution promoted a new breed of incubators focused on on-line technologies and services, which led to the reinforced establishment of profit-oriented private and virtual incubators.

Following the collapse of the Internet economy in early 2000, the competitive environment for incubators has tightened considerably. Around that time, Barrow put the number of incubators at

3500 worldwide (Barrow, 2001) and the Economist (2000) at 1100. In Europe, a survey sponsored by the European Commission identified around 900 incubators (CSES, 2002). The attraction of Internet incubators and private incubators has diminished since, but universities, governments and large corporations continue to explore incubators as a means of spurring innovation and employment in adverse economic conditions. As a consequence, the number of incubators is continuing to grow, and better conceptual constructs to analyze and understand incubators are needed.

### 3. Understanding incubators: strategy and services

The term "incubator" is neither legally nor academically defined. Classes of incubators (such as university incubators) were used pragmatically, although some research distinguished between different types of incubators at least implicitly (e.g., Mian, 1996; Nash-Hoff, 1998; Chinsomboon, 2000).

Based on Porter's (1986) four different elements of competitive scope (vertical scope, segment scope, geographical focus, industry focus) and distinctive strategic objective (for-profit or not-for-profit), one of the present authors proposed a classification of five different incubator "archetypes" that included the most frequently used incubator denominations, as well as a general incubator business model (von Zedtwitz, 2003): Regional business incubators, university incubators, virtual incubators, independent commercial incubators, and company-internal incubators.

With respect to the strategic objective, the first two types are generally not-for-profit oriented, while the latter two have for-profit objectives. While independent commercial incubators are generally run by individuals with no affiliation to a parent organization, company-internal incubators are affiliated with larger, often multinational companies. Virtual incubators focus on the very early entrepreneur usually in the Internet industry, where the intention to generate profits is strong but not always achieved.

With respect to competitive scopes, Porter's vertical scope differentiates incubators from other start-up facilitators such as business angels, venture capitalists (since incubators focus mainly on early-stage startups). The five different incubator

archetypes can be further differentiated by the three remaining scope dimensions of segment, geography, and industry:

- Segment scope allows incubators to generate startups from distinct sources. University incubators typically give preference to faculty and student entrepreneurs. Corporate incubators prefer their own employees to external entrepreneurs. Other incubators tend to keep their doors open to a variety of sources.
- Geographical focus is a natural competitive factor for regional business incubators, since their mission is to support new business locally. Networks are crucial for successful incubation, and since networks are usually limited to certain regions, many incubators strive to establish a good local presence.
- Industry focus can be another competitive dimension for incubation, not only because of the professional expertise and competencies of incubator managers, but also because of their ability to create synergy among incubating entrepreneurs.

Incubators also differ in terms of their service offering. While several authors have studied the role of these services for incubation (e.g., Nash-Hoff, 1998; Hansen *et al.*, 2000; Molnar *et al.*, 1997), few have suggested what would constitute a defining minimum service offering. Five of those services are frequently mentioned (Table I):

1. Access to physical resources such as office space and IT infrastructure.

2. Office support services such as secretarial and mail services, security systems, and IT troubleshooting.
3. Access to capital, including seed money, venture capital, etc.
4. Process support such as mentoring, coaching, consulting, but also legal advice and book-keeping.
5. Networking services, both incubator internal as well as external with customers, collaborators, and potential investors.

As one of the authors outlines in more detail in an earlier paper (von Zedtwitz, 2003), four of five services are a minimal condition for an incubator as otherwise the service profile would be indistinguishable from real-estate agents, pure-play venture capitalists, technology transfer offices, or business angels.

Empirical verification of the significance of these services was studied by national incubation associations (NBIA, 2003; CSES, 2002; UKBI, 2003). However, a differentiated analysis of these services within the context of different incubation objectives has been largely missing. Since incubator objectives are often developed in order to satisfy political or public demands (80–90% of all incubators are regional business or university incubators, in whose inception public representatives and government officials play a very influential role (e.g., NBIA, 2003)), but incubator services depend on the background and proficiency of the incubator management team, we hypothesize that incubator service profiles are not perfectly matched with the incubation objectives.

Table I  
Incubators offer a wide range of start-up facilitation services

Service category	Services	Sources of competitive advantage	Competitors
Physical infrastructure	Office space, desk, PC, telephone amenities	Favorable rent/lease terms, volume discount, shared use	Municipalities, science parks, real-estate/landlords
Office support	PC & equip. support, secretary & mail, security	IT support & lease, reception services, safety & protection	Science parks, real-estate operators
Access to capital	Direct investment, access to VCs, pseudo salaries	Own incubation fund, milestone installments, road-shows	Venture capitalists, business angels
Process support	Coaching, mentoring, consulting & legal	Preferred client agreements, start-up training, business planning	Law & accountancy firms, consultants, business angels
Networking	Key employees, customers, suppliers, collaborators	“Rolodex”, internal matchmaking, travel support	HR firms, networking organizations, VC and business angels

Our research aims were thus twofold

1. To determine typical service profiles for incubator archetypes, and
2. To identify typical shortcomings of incubators in developing good incubator service practice.

We expected the results of this research to be instructive for both future academic research (linking strategy research with knowledge and technology transfer and capability research) and managerial practice (developing a better understanding of the advantages and shortcomings of incubation practices).

#### 4. Research methodology

Over the course of the past 40 years, incubators were created for different reasons at different times. To some extent, this may explain some of the apparent differences among them. In order to limit political, cultural or economic factors to affect our investigation, we decided to collect data from incubators from a single country. Our choice was Italy, because most of the incubators were created within a relatively short period of time in the late 1990s and early 2000. Also, one of the authors was associated with an Italian university, had access to a significant share of the local incubator population, had previous incubator research experience and was able to conduct the necessary case research in Italian. By late 2001, there were about 50 incubators in Italy, allowing us to sample a substantial share of all Italian incubators within a reasonable frame of time and resources. Moreover, the Italian setting is interesting because the bulk of incubators seems to have emerged all at the same time, in response to the growing interest to new venture creation that characterized Italy at the beginning of year 2000. Thus, we would be able to study incubators of approximately the same age and created within the same economic and political spirit.

We also recognized that we would need to ascertain the existence of incubator archetypes in Italy first (as we would later try to match archetypes with service profiles). For the purpose of our study we thus defined incubators as service firms that support entrepreneurs in at least four of the

following five areas: office space, office management, funding and venture capital, coaching and mentoring, and networking services. Our research focused on identifying incubator archetypes and incubation business models—their strategy, their sources of competitive advantage, and their implementation. In order to differentiate incubators, we used as the reference model of the five archetypes introduced earlier, which gave us the opportunity to test the validity of the incubator archetypes in a new (national) context.

The scope of the study extended to incubators which had at least one year's operational experience in the IT, high-technology, or biotech industry, and had generated at least one graduated start-up. For case study research, we selected two incubators from each archetype, studying 10 Italian incubators matching our selection criteria (see Appendix for a short summary of each incubator). At the time of research there were only three university incubators. Although we investigated all of them, we report cases for only on two of them. As for the regional incubators, our choice was based on the first two regional incubators established in Italy, which have received the greatest research so far and for which the most complementary information was available. As for company-internal incubators and virtual incubators, we choose the only two cases available at that time for the two typologies. Among the independent private incubators we choose two among the first private incubators established. In total, including case study research, desk research, and survey research, we sampled 15 incubators in Italy.

In late 2001 and early 2002, we conducted face-to-face interviews with incubator managers or directors, taking notes or taping the actual conversation. In some instances, follow-up interviews were necessary, which we conducted by phone or email. We complemented our reports of each incubator with additional material found on the incubator's website, company promotional material, or third-party reports from universities, incubator associations, or specialized consulting companies. We also had the opportunity to talk to actual entrepreneurs being incubated at these incubators, whose feedback we used to refine our interpretations.

We used a semi-structured research questionnaire to guide our interviews and eventual analysis.

This questionnaire addressed 18 individual points most critical for the explanation of an incubator business model. The central sections of this questionnaire focused on the competitive advantages and market positioning, service and product offering, and problem management. We expected to find confirmation for some of the findings described in the literature, but had the questionnaire intentionally formulated open enough to allow for unexpected insights to be captured and elaborated in context. The questionnaire was adapted from a questionnaire used by one of the authors in earlier research in 41 incubators in the US, China, and Europe, thus allowing us to compare our Italian findings with incubator data produced elsewhere.

The chosen research approach is in compliance with case study research (Yin, 1994). We are aware that this research approach has its shortcomings, particularly with respect to the power of generalization, and may be subject to interpretative bias. However, our investigation was conducted in a relatively small population of research subjects, focusing on few best-practices rather than the adoption of a general and widespread standard. In these circumstances, case study research tends to be quite a powerful empirical research tool to produce often unexpected insights and revelations.

## 5. Incubators in Italy: empirical analysis

### *A. Do we find evidence for supporting five incubator archetypes in Italy?*

Our first step in this research was to establish the validity of the incubator typology in Italy. Within the population sampled, it posed no problem to differentiate Italian incubators along competitive scope and profit-orientation and categorize them in the framework of the five incubation archetypes. We found very few ambiguous cases of unclear classification. Thus we could ascertain that the five archetypes were a useful tool to classify incubators in Italy as well. Some of the incubators that did not fully match the archetypes are analyzed below.

Italian incubators also interpreted their operations more narrowly than what would be possible within the definition realm. We assume that this focus is due to the limitation of the population and precedent-setting within the Italian framework. For instance, Italian university incubators invested

in start-ups operating in specific university-related areas, and they selected companies operating close by and active in regional/national markets; they were based mostly on public funding.

In agreement with the typology, Italian regional incubators did not focus on a specific industry. As to the selection of their tenants, they showed a preference for companies that settled in close vicinity, and particularly the earliest ones operated in areas earmarked for regional development and thus also received public funding. Some regional incubators, however, were located downtown and in big industrial centers, such as the Bologna Business Incubator Center. Regional business incubators were the most frequently observed forms of incubation in Italy.

Italian independent commercial incubators tended to invest in specific high tech sectors, and typically in companies operating on national and international markets. This is unsurprising given the venture capital nature of many independent incubators and their clear orientation towards profit-expectations. Independent commercial incubators were located in industrialized areas and managed by individuals who were deeply committed to their start-up ventures. They usually relied on private funding.

Similarly to independent commercial incubators, Italian company-internal incubators invested in specific high-tech sectors, usually related to their core business, for the creation of companies active on national and international markets. They were located close by their parent organizations and also received funding from them. These incubators were charged with the exploitation of core competencies within the firm, but not necessarily to develop ventures in competition with existing business lines. Again, this is in agreement with the typology.

Finally, Italian virtual incubators showed characteristics similar to independent commercial incubators. The main difference was their preference for on-line services and the absence of a physical location. The virtual incubators studied charged for their services or exhibited a for-profit orientation otherwise, hence supporting the original virtual incubation archetype.

On the basis of these characteristics we concluded that the incubator typology is also a valid model to classify Italian incubators. However, we noticed that the incubator industry in Italy was

still developing, as indicated by the co-existence of highly specialized incubators and diversifying/unfocused incubators. It appeared that a dominant design of incubation, tailored to the specific requirements of the Italian context, had not been found yet. One of the company-internal incubators also engaged in a tight university cooperation, and for all practical purposes assumed the role of that university's academic incubator. We surmise that this strategic move was at least partially motivated by the difficult economic situation in Italy in the years of 2000 and 2001. At the time of conclusion of this research, it was unclear whether this would be a viable cooperation at least from the point of view of the corporate-internal incubator.

Many university as well as regional business incubators tended to accommodate private investors among their sponsors and hence were at a risk of diluting their strict not-for-profit objective. Some regional business incubators became increasingly interested in academic spin-off start-ups, while we also observed university-based incubators to look at extramural start-up opportunities. Also, very much like their foreign counterparts at that time, many independent commercial incubators did not fare particularly well in Italy. There were more than a dozen of them, but quite a few were in the process of estranging their business models from incubation or closing down operations. Many physical incubators added virtual incubation to expand their services offering, while newly-founded incubators in particular focused on virtual startup support in preparation for physical incubation services to be added later.

We also noticed that the line between for-profit and not-for-profit was not always a sharp one for some commercial incubators. Many for-profit incubators were aware of their effects on the surrounding regional economy. Using the argument of positive spill-over into a regional economy, for-profit incubators have been able to attract the support from local regional governments and business angels.

#### *B. Incubator services in Italy and a cross-case analysis*

Turning to our original research question, the identification of service offerings within given archetypes, we noticed that the line between

for-profit and not-for-profit becomes clearer when taking incubator services into account. We will first report some of our archetype-specific findings before offering a cross-case analysis.

During our interviews we found out that many regional business incubators did not provide financial support to their start-ups. Incubator management teams often did not possess the management and financial skills required to run a new business. However, these regional business incubators were very adept in providing start-ups with logistic services and local visibility.

As illustrated in the cases of the Polytechnic of Turin and the University of Bologna, university-based incubators showed their efficacy of transferring knowledge and in creating formal and successful relations with universities. Their added value was in establishing an interface between the start-up and sources of scientific and technological knowledge. University-based incubators in Italy added greatest value to new start-ups in terms of:

- (a) Network of relations accessible to new ventures through the incubator;
- (b) Visibility and reputation of affiliation to advanced research institution;
- (c) Access to academic laboratories and facilities; and
- (d) Access to academic specialized knowledge.

However, they did not provide venture capital and access to specialized managerial competencies. Although neither of the two university-based incubators had been critical for the creation of the new ventures (all of them had been established before the incubators' formal establishment), previous research focused on benefits and problems perceived by companies hosted within these two academic incubators (Grimaldi and Grandi, 2001) showed that they had significantly contributed to the diffusion of an entrepreneurial culture within the universities with which they were affiliated and were largely successful in having academics accept the 'commercialization of research results through new ventures' as part of the university's institutional mission.

Our cases of independent incubators showed an incubation model different from the one adopted by regional business and university-based incubators. The first difference was in the emphasis of

strategic networking and partnering. All independent incubators declared that their companies had highly benefited from the possibility of creating long-lasting and sound relations with the incubators' partners. External partners enabled the incubatees to access easily and quickly the competencies that were not available in-house but important for their business. These relations enabled them to speed up their business development. External technological partners also benefited from sharing their knowledge with incubatees, because in some cases (depending on the nature of their intervention) they were able to get an equity stake, or they started a partnership with the start-up or negotiated joint follow-up activities.

The second difference related to the quality and quantity of provision of venture capital. Independent incubators were more experienced in terms of access to start-up funding, venture capital and to specialized management and coaching resources. The management had ample experience in consulting, investing, or running businesses, and was thus in a better position to assess the quality of start-up businesses and their fit with the competitive strengths of the incubator. With the funding of start-ups being tied to entrepreneurial milestones rather than fulfilling scientific or political criteria, investment in these start-ups had been of higher quality and with greater expectations of success.

Table II summarizes and presents a cross-case overview of the findings. In Italy, the key value-adding elements of regional business incubators for their startups was exposure to the local community and logistical services. University-based incubators in Italy served as warrants of scientific and technical quality, i.e. the reputation of the university increases the perceived quality of the associated startups, as well as access to advanced know-how and laboratory equipment and instruments. Independent incubators focused on networking access, consulting, coaching, and funding.

We observed that regional business and university-based incubators not only had different strategic objectives from for-profit incubators, they were also managed differently. The management teams of independent incubators were generally more experienced and were able to transfer competencies and knowledge directly to their incubatees. Publicly-funded incubators were generally run by people without such experience, who hence

acted mostly as intermediaries between start-ups they hosted and external institutions. As a consequence, their competence profiles, service levels, and performance measurement systems differed. Most of their teams did not possess the management and financial skills required to run new businesses (see also e.g., Autio and Klofsten, 1998).

In the case of privately-funded incubators such as BainLab, Speed@Egg and Enutrix, teams were set up to follow specific entrepreneurial projects. The composition of the team depended on the competencies required by each project. In general, they were made up of senior individuals who brought to the new ventures knowledge and competencies that they had acquired in previous business or start-up experience. In the cases of Speed@Egg and E-nutrix, several management team members had invested their own savings in some of the incubated ventures and were thus additionally motivated to ensure the success of their start-ups. All cases showed the importance of the incubator's management team to develop community contacts and support, and to devote time for consulting, mentoring and networking with their tenant companies.

To summarize this cross-case analysis, we saw substantial differences in the composition of services offered as well as in the quality of these services. There was a tenor of hope among incubator directors and entrepreneurs that their incubators would learn from best-practices, and that some intransparencies and obsolete management practices would be given up. Given our principal research question, the identification of service offerings for incubator archetypes and their typical shortcomings, we can conclude based on case study and other qualitative research that the different incubator archetypes result in different incubator service offerings, partly in response to their respective start-up clientele ("segment scope" in Porterian terms), partly due to skills and know-how available. A clear identification of shortcomings could not be made as an equally clear quality standard of incubator services was missing.

## **6. Implications for policy making and incubator management**

Incubator archetypes and their increasingly detailed description provide policy makers, investors

Table II  
Differences in strategic objectives induced differences in managerial focus

	Regional business incubator	University incubator	Independent incubator	Company-internal incubator	Virtual incubator
Mission	Not-for-profit; develop regional economy	Not-for-profit; promote academic entrepreneurship	For-profit; create successful startups	For-profit; exploit or leverage internal ideas	For-profit; support would-be entrepreneurs
Competitive focus	Geographic (local areas in which they operate)	Academic start-ups	Industry	Mostly company-internal employees	Internet and ICT industry
Funding	National, public	Regional, public	Private	Private	Private
Physical infrastructure	Below-market price	Provided	Some provided	Some provided	None or little
Office support	Provided	Provided	Provided	Some provided	None or little
Access to capital	External	External	Internal investment	Internal	Internal and external
Process support	Often outsourced	Some internal, some external, internal scientific advice	Strong internal consulting capacity, dedicated project management, hands-on	Strong in-house technical skills	Process guidance, management consulting, market research
Networking	Local, informal, networks	Strong within-university network; business plan competition	Strong industry network and partnerships	Company-internal leads	Regional, online

and incubator managers alike with the opportunity to develop clearer strategic objectives and customer value propositions towards start-up entrepreneurs. Since incubator archetypes relate to certain service offerings, incubator service profiles can be fine-tuned and optimized for certain incubator archetypes. Policy makers could also insist on defined service quality levels and service process maturity. Such commonly agreed and publicized service levels would have the following advantages:

- They would allow entrepreneurs to identify and select the best match between their start-up's needs and the incubator's experience and skill-set;
- They would make transparent best-practices of incubator services and incubator processes of facilitating entrepreneurial technology transfer and commercialization;
- They would allow incubators to benchmark themselves against best-in-class incubators and incubation service processes;
- They would, in turn, result in better incubation and eventually in better start-ups and, hopefully, a stronger development of regional economy.

We expect that the adoption of such an incubator benchmark would induce a number of important managerial and organizational changes in most incubators. How such a system would have to be implemented, and how it should be complemented by alternative forms of entrepreneurial support, goes beyond the scope of this paper and is likely to depend on national frameworks and policies.

We also see our findings to be relevant for incubators to think of a different positioning *vis-à-vis* the investor and sponsor community. While preference for profit-orientated schemes alternate with public-mission focus according to the state of the overall economy (due to ROI considerations of private investors), there is an opportunity for incubator directors to combine for-profit with public-mission objectives to hedge against fluctuations in funding and investor support. Such a move would necessitate the cooperation with investors and assumes the possibility to develop a long-term strategy for incubators. This, however,

given the relative novelty of incubators and inexperience of investors/sponsors with incubation programs, is unlikely to happen without a significant reassessment of the prospects of incubation at national or international levels.

## 7. Implications for research

This research suggests that different incubator archetypes exist in Italy, and that each has a preference for a certain service offering. It was not possible to identify insufficient service offerings conclusively.

Future research could focus on the geographical dimension of incubator archetypes, and establish their validity in regions and countries so far not covered by this research. We expect that countries with economic, political and societal situations very different from the traditional Western economies pursue different incubation initiatives, which may be reflected in the existence of new or the elimination of established incubator archetypes.

Future research should also focus on the strategic value-added of incubators to their entrepreneurial clientele, in particular in combination with developing and fine-tuning an incubator service offering for each archetype. Once we understand better what 'good incubator management' is supposed to be, we will be one step closer to defining a benchmark model for incubators and subsequently be able to learn systematically from incubators in their respective peer groups.

Last but not least, the incubator industry is evolving like any other industry, and research is necessary to observe any regularities and patterns that elude our investigation based on short-period research. Long-term studies are required within defined systems of incubation that allow us to develop incubator theory further.

## 8. Conclusions

Based on a framework of five incubator archetypes we examined the Italian incubation industry. The five archetypes appear to be a useful instrument to analyze incubator business models and incubator service offerings. In particular, service profiles relate to certain incubator archetypes, based on their

strategic objectives, their managerial focus, and the attracted start-up clientele.

It would be important for all incubators to acknowledge spill-over benefits from their focused activity into secondary domains (such as generating some contribution to the regional economy), and that these benefits could be anticipated, exploited and managed better. Once research on incubators has brought about a better understanding of service quality, and incubator policy has been adopted to reflect a focus on incubation quality rather than quantity, incubator managers would be able to fine-tune their business models around their actual core competencies and leverage additional experience from benchmark incubators.

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