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Enterprise EuroLodging

Parallel session

The role of SPTs and AOs in inter-regional cooperation

Author:

Soledad Diaz (sdiaz@apte.org)

APTE (Asociación Parques Científico-Tecnológicos de España):
Spanish Association of Science Parks, Spain

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Enterprise EuroLodging

Executive Summary

In a world where companies are born looking to a global market, not only with their focus on the closest ones, internationalisation has become a key process for enterprise development. Belonging to professional networks that could facilitate a gateway to international markets and the correct exploitation of them has a very high value for companies. The national associations of Science and Technology Parks (STPS) could be this gateway to all the organizations located in parks including the own management bodies of parks. Enterprise EuroLodging Program (E²) is the first project proposal to be developed between national associations with the coordination and support of the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP). The main objective of the program is to foster the mobility of enterprises and all kinds of interested organisations, located in different IASP members offering the opportunity to spend short periods of time in their facilities.

OTHER SOFT LANDING INITIATIVES:

The term “**soft landing**” is widely used nowadays but it is important to contextualize it because its origin is related with a period of downturn in an economic cycle: “A soft landing in the business cycle is the process of an economy shifting from growth to slow-growth to potentially flat, as it approaches but avoids a recession”.

However, we are interested in another definition of soft landing, one about promoting the internationalization of companies and entrepreneurs. For this reason, we have analyzed several soft landing programs and initiatives, in order to design a new one.

Some examples of softlanding initiatives are the following ones:

- **Soft Landing Gran Canaria:**

Soft Landing Gran Canaria is a program designed for national and international startups with business projects in different stages of development, with special attention to the needs and challenges associated with evaluating seeking funding.

The proposed format is a platform for knowledge transfer, simulation and training that enables startups to better understand their business opportunities and improve their communication skills and presentation of their projects in the background (present the information needed by the partner for make a decision), and in form (personal “elevator pitch” presentation, executive summary, business plan ...).

The program combines lectures and symposium, case studies and coaching in an environment of constant exchange between instructors and entrepreneurs for a day and a half.

- **Basque Soft Landing:**

The main goal of this program is to facilitate implementation in the Basque Country of young and innovative technology companies (start-ups, spin-offs) with activities in strategic sectors (biosciences, nanotechnologies, intelligent electronics, renewable energy ...).

This program provides specialized care services to those companies that would be interested in their establishment in Euskadi and Customized support in the implementation phase of the company.

This is a successful initiative with a lot of companies attracted to the Basque Country. The secret of the success of this program could be the proper coordination between the promoters of the soft landing program.

- **Barcelona Mobile Soft Landing¹:**

This program is promoted by Mobile World Capital Barcelona Foundation (MWCB)

It is an initiative to encourage innovative companies in the mobile and start up growth phase to open an office in Barcelona and in the short term to grow and consolidate in the territory.

Companies interested have to pay a small fee to MWCB and collaborate with them promoting Mobile sector and MWCB provides them free offices to establish in Barcelona.

¹ http://mobileworldcapital.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Soft_Landing_MWCapital_ENG_vDEF.pdf

- **European Association of Business and Innovation Centres (EBN) International Hub²:**

The Internationalisation Service's main objective is to offer companies easy and practical solutions from "smart take-off" to "soft landing" to ensure that businesses entering or expanding into new markets are introduced to the country's business practices, culture and opportunities more effectively.

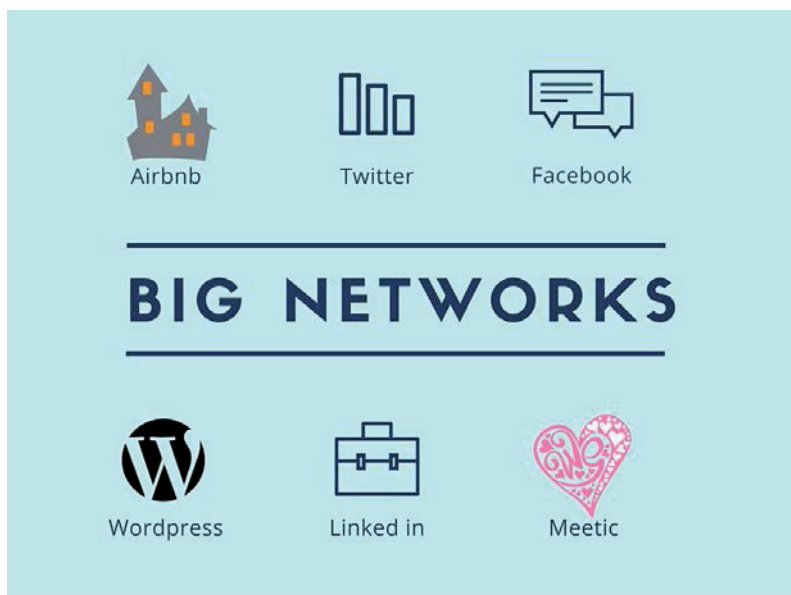
The Service helps to accelerate foreign companies' learning processes, to make new contacts in the new country, to establish overseas sales presence and provides access to the resources and intelligence necessary to meet specific business goals.

The program has a service platform that ensures that SMEs entering or expanding into a new country are introduced to that country's business practices and culture most effectively. This is a service that provides a practical solution both to promote existing internationalisation services and to profile growing SMEs looking for international opportunities.

However, in the majority of cases, these are regional or national initiatives focused **only on attracting foreign investment rather than promoting business internationalization and providing of a lot of services to the interested companies.**

For that reason, we think a good way to develop this new initiative was to not create new infrastructures or actors, but to enhance our science and technology **networks** and the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation as an umbrella to support this initiative.

We thought that the key to success was in the potential of the contacts networks that are currently dominating the economic sector.



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<http://ebn.be/index.php?lnk=KzF0aDVES1I3bG9TYXFGGeEhLL2dQKzFzVnVCRWxhb1crdjhMdzllMG41UT0>
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In this sense, the union of both kinds of networks, specifically, international and national associations as networks and the methodology and use of big networks could be the key to achieve this program's goals.

A NEW WAY TO PROMOTE BUSINESS SOFT LANDING:

The idea of this program began after participating in several World Conferences and Workshops organized by IASP where assistants discussed what they could do to exploit in a better way the great networks that are IASP and the national associations of STPs.

As we introduced before, **Enterprise EuroLodging (E²)** is a collaborative project between associations of science and technology parks with the coordination of IASP which aims to **promote the mobility of resident companies in IASP members and, at the same time, add value to the services provided by STPs.**

E² would like to become the meeting point for all kinds of organisations located in parks who have interest in participating in soft landing activities in foreign countries.

However, we were aware that **any initiative including a lot of participants could be difficult to manage and the possible bureaucracy of the management could negatively affect participation** of science and technology parks, entrepreneurs and companies. For that reason, we thought that a better way to promote participation was to choose an easy tool as meeting point and to publish that each STP could offer to landing companies. Also, it was very important not to ask a lot of information from the participant, both STPs and companies. In this sense, for us, the most important was promoting the first contact between STPs and companies, and for that goal, we only need an **easy online platform** and to disseminate this platform through **social networks** to potential participants.

At the present time, **social networks are the best tools to promote any initiative or business** because **people trust more in social networks than other channels of communication**, as for example, advertising or publicity.

For the online platform, we decided to choose a **blog** instead of a website for several reasons:

- It is easy to create, maintain and update.
- It is highly customizable.
- It is very appropriate for community building.
- Its structure is more flexible than a traditional website.
- It is a good tool for SEO.

We visualize our online platform to be similar to **Airbnb**, as in, an easy way both for STPs and companies to provide hosting services and promote the mobility of enterprises located in different countries. All these activities and the success of the hosting STPs are based on the assessment of participant companies. For that reason, the participant companies have to fill in an evaluation form about their experiences in the program and the host STPs.

HOW DID WE DEVELOP THE INITIATIVE?

In accordance with our schedule, we designed the online platform and the operating methodology during January 2016 and we launched the initiative in February 2016.

Our initiative is called **Enterprise Eurolodging (E²)**. We chose this name by combining Euro for the European origin of the program and lodging referred to all the facilities available for participants, because we are looking for an expression to clarify in the title the main goal of the project.

At the beginning we focused the project only at European level and for this reason we chose “Eurolodging” but in the end we have opened the initiative to the entire world. However, we have maintained the title.

The main tool of the project is a blog³ hosted by WordPress technology using the Toujours theme that we created in only two hours.

The blog has five sections:

What is E²? Where we describe the main goals of the initiative and how it is going to be developed.

Participants: In this section there is a list of STPs participating in the initiative.

Associations of STPs: Here is a list with the national associations of STPs participating in the program.

Facilities available: this section has several subsections, one for each country where the STP participants are located, and in each country you can find a page with the information of the parks that are taking part in the initiative including a detailed description about what kind of facilities are offered for soft landing activities, along with relevant pictures and media.

Also, it is very important that STPs describe the innovation ecosystem where they are located. To elaborate, they have to provide information about universities, technology centers, laboratories, etc. located in or near their spaces. In this way, companies could have a better idea about the opportunities and advantages in choosing a particular location.

Moreover, in this section, STPs should provide interested companies information and support in logistic issues, for example, accommodation, public transportation, flights, etc.

How to apply for soft landing: entrepreneur or companies interested in learning about new markets in other countries only have to fill an easy questionnaire that appears in this section to participate in our program.

Share your experience: we consider that for the success of the program it could be important to allow the possibility to share the experiences of attending companies through the program social networks. In this sense we can encourage more companies to participate through Enterprise EuroLodging’s social networks.

When we design the blog, we created a Twitter account to inform all the participants about the latest news of the program and also, we created **a short video with a summary of the main goals of the initiative**. We shared this video across Youtube and it is included on the main page of the blog.

With the blog designed and social networks created, we started with the promotion of the initiative across a selection of national associations of STPs members of IASP, sending an e-mail to them: **Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Baltics and Turkey**.

³ <https://eurolodging.wordpress.com/>

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Participation in the program is normally coordinated by the national associations.

We thought that this initiative could become a new service provided by them to their science and technology parks members.

Also, we designed a very easy methodology to encourage participation in the program. To join the program it is only necessary to fill in two simple forms (one for the Associations and another for STPs).

STPs have to fill in their forms with detailed information about their facilities for soft landing services, what services they offer and the total infrastructure of the park. It is very important to include attractive pictures about their facilities and a contact person who will be in charge of soft landing services.

Associations only have to give information about their members, their services and their team.

The forms have to be sent to APTE through the following e-mail: eurolodging@gmail.com

As we noted before, this program does not have funding. It wholly depends on the collaboration of each participating entity under the coordination of APTE and support of IASP. For that reason, this program does not have any restriction of duration and also, there are no conditions in the offer of spaces and services for soft landing activities providing by participant STPs.

Also, for companies or entrepreneurs interested in applying for soft Landing, they only have to fill in a form in which they have to choose the country they are interested in, what they want to do there and if they are interested in a specific Science and Technology Park. With this information, APTE will put them in contact with parks located in the chosen country and select the most appropriate according to the requirements needed by the company. After that, APTE facilitates the contact between company and STP, finishing here the service provided by the platform Enterprise Eurolodging.

WHAT WE EXPECT?

The results of the project up to now are reflected in the number of parks and associations that are participating. In Spain, where the initiative has started we have a total of two associations and nine parks involved in the program. We also have participants from Italy, one association and one park, and the national association of Parks from Portugal, Tecparques, association with a tradition of close cooperation with APTE, and we hope to expand soon the number of them.

Looking into more detail, these are the associations and parks currently participating:

Spain

Associations:



- Association of Science and Technology Parks of Spain (APTE)



- The Network of Science and Technology Parks of Catalonia (Xarxa de Parcs Científics i Tecnològics de Catalunya - XPCAT).



Science and Technology Parks:

	<p>Andalusian Technology Park (PTA S.A.) (Spain, Málaga)</p>
	<p>Almería Science & Technology Park (PITA S.A.) (Spain, Almería)</p>
 <p><i>Centres universitaris adscrits a la</i></p> 	<p>TecnoCampus (Spain, Barcelona)</p>
	<p>Parque Tecnológico de Galicia S.A. (Tecnópole) (Spain, Ourense)</p>
	<p>Parque Científico Tecnológico Avilés (Innovation Island) (Spain, Asturias)</p>
	<p>Polo de Innovación Garaia (Spain, Gipuzkoa)</p>

 P T S Parque Tecnológico de la Salud FUNDACION	Granada Health Technology Park (PTS Granada) (Spain, Granada)
 Parque Científico y Tecnológico de Extremadura	Science and Technology Park Extremadura
 PARQUE CIENTÍFICO DE MADRID	Madrid Science Park


Italy

Association:

Italian Association of Science and Technology Parks (APSTI)



Science and Technology Park:

	PTP - Science Park
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Portugal

Association:

Tecparques - Associação Portuguesa de Parques de
Ciência e Tecnologia



We are expecting, in a short period of time, the incorporation to the program of participants from new countries and of course, to increase the number of parks located in Spain and Italy. Regarding the expansion of participating countries we have received shows of interest from United Kingdom, through their national association of parks, UKSPA, and also from other countries like Russia and even farther away because we have also interest from Brazil.

One of the reasons to prepare this Paper for the IASP World Conference on Science and Technology Parks, is the possibility of showing to all the audience what we are doing and to encourage parks to become a part of the Program.

The first steps of the program are quite difficult because we have to convince the parks and associations about the potential of the program without facts and figures about the results of internationalisation activities, but we are sure that, just in the moment when exchange between parks starts, the number of parks that would like to be included in E² will grow quickly.

WHAT WE WILL DO TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTICIPATION?

At present, new competitors have emerged in the innovation ecosystem and they are developing new ways to promote the transfer of technology, internationalization, business development, business cooperation, etc.

Because of this, national associations of Science and Technology Parks are aware that both we and our members need to develop new initiatives and added value services for their tenants to become more competitive.

Also, companies need to discover new markets to be innovative and competitive. For that reason, we consider that the participation in this program could be positive for each kind of participant.

We would like to emphasize the important services that could be provided by both national associations and STPs to their tenants through this initiative because no other entity can provide them an open window to international markets the way they can. For that reason, **we believe that activities as Enterprise EuroLodging should be more common in our day to day to be more competitive.**

In this sense, we have designed a communication plan with a high numbers of actions to promote the participation in this program, as the following ones:

- Writing a paper for the 33rd edition of the IASP World Conference.
- Publishing a daily post in the blog of the initiative about the program news.
- Completing the blog information with logistical details of each possible destination of soft landing.
- Sharing the program news and information through each National Association and STPs' social networks.
- Encouraging participating Parks to include Enterprise EuroLodging in their list of services.
- Designing email campaigns of information to all the IASP members to encourage their participation.
- Promoting a Hospitality award: a special recognition for those top rated parks by companies who visit.

WHAT CAN I LOSE AND EARN FOR PARTICIPATING?:

This could be the most common question for those that are deciding to join this initiative.

As we highlighted before, this project does not have funding, but rather it depends solely on the collaboration of each participating entity under the coordination of APTE and support of IASP. In this sense, the participation in this initiative does not involve any restriction or the need to prepare a technical or economic justification for participation therein. Also, each STPs is free to establish the conditions for hosting the companies participating in the softlanding activities.

On the other hand, the role of APTE is to coordinate the initiative, publish all the information of participant in the blog, updating this information, managing the social networks, encouraging participation in the program and putting companies in contact with the STP selected.

The other national associations have to decided the role that they want to develop in this program and the activities that they and their members have to develop to host the companies that choose them as a destination. However, National Associations and STPs that are more active in the program could obtain more benefits from it.

In this respect, the benefits of participating in this program could be very important, as for example, the following ones:

- Attracting new companies.
- Attracting foreign investment.
- Developing new services.
- Promoting collaboration on international projects among foreign companies and local companies.
- Developing new businesses and start ups.
- International recognition.
- Prestige.

Regarding what we can lose, we only consider the possibility to lose “time” if our contribution to the program is only basic information about who are.

As an anonymous proverb says: *“Participation is the path that leads to success”*.