Pilot
Training
Programme

Learners’ Package

TRAINING MODULE No. 1
Creativity and Innovation

Professor Joseph Hassid

August 2015
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document, constituting part of a FIERE project deliverable in the context of the project’s Work Package 3: ‘Indicative innovative entrepreneurship skills training programme’, has been prepared in accordance with specifications applicable for all similar FIERE Training Modules.

It does not intend to provide a comprehensive review of the field of creativity and innovation. Instead it is intended as an introduction and starting point for discussions during Pilot Training sessions / Workshops to be organised in the various FIERE project partner regions in Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Ireland, Iceland and Portugal.

In preparing this Module 1: “Creativity and Innovation”, a variety of sources and published works have been used. We would like to also acknowledge comments and material provided by other FIERE project partners, through personal exchanges and discussions in partners’ meetings.

Professor Joseph Hassid

AllWeb S.A. (Greece)

August 2015
CONTENTS

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................................................... 1

   1.1. Training modules objectives and relevance for the FIERE project and its target groups ............... 1

   1.2. Training programme learning objectives ............................................................................................... 2

   1.3. Training module structure ...................................................................................................................... 3

2. Setting the scene ........................................................................................................................................ 4

3. What is Creativity?....................................................................................................................................... 5

4. Short literature review of creativity and of its contribution to "value creation" .......................................... 6

   4.1. Some Basic questions ............................................................................................................................. 6

   4.2. Organisational creativity ......................................................................................................................... 9

       4.2.1. Structure and Systems of a Creative Organisation ........................................................................ 10

       4.2.2. Resources and skills ....................................................................................................................... 11

5. Creativity in Public Administration – is it relevant? .................................................................................... 13

   5.1. Why Do We Need Creativity in Public Organisations? ......................................................................... 13

   5.2. Impediments to Creativity .................................................................................................................... 15

6. FIERE Project: Regional Organisations’ Skills Needs Survey – References to Creativity and related skills . 16

   6.1. Introductory remarks ........................................................................................................................... 16

   6.2. Key Survey findings on the importance of “Creativity and Innovation” ............................................. 16

7. FIERE Project – Summaries of selected Good Practices .............................................................................. 18

   7.1. Introductory remarks ........................................................................................................................... 18

   7.2. Summary of the Austurbrú Case Study ................................................................................................ 19

   7.3. Summary of Case Study “The merger of North and South Tipperary County Councils” ............... 21

References ....................................................................................................................................................... 24

Useful websites ............................................................................................................................................... 26
1. Introduction

The **FIERE (Furthering Innovative Entrepreneurial Regions of Europe) project** aims to support local communities and regional economies by specifically focusing on developing skills among organisations’ employees to behave more entrepreneurially and innovatively within their work environment. The paradigm of *innovative entrepreneurship* lies at the intersection of entrepreneurship and innovation as it recognises the necessity of teaching innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity skills to policy makers, managers, administrators, enterprise development officers, community leaders and developers, founders of community and social enterprises, and organisers/managers of local community entities.

The FIERE partnership includes 7 partner organisations: the Tipperary County Council and the Waterford Institute of Technology from Ireland; AllWeb Solutions – a leading IT company in Greece; CESIE – a not-for-profit independent NGO from Italy; the Commercial and Industrial Association of Barcelos from Portugal; Einurd ehf – a consultancy company from Iceland; the Institute of Postgraduate Studies at the University of National and World Economy from Bulgaria. The partners are gathered around the idea to design and implement a training programme in each FIERE partner region to support employees by increasing their potential, capacity and capability to behave entrepreneurially and innovatively.

1.1. Training modules objectives and relevance for the FIERE project and its target groups

Through the elaboration of training content under FIERE **Work Package (WP) 3: ‘Indicative innovative entrepreneurship skills training programme’** the FIERE project partnership seeks to develop an innovative entrepreneurship training programme (TP) that addresses skills needs of regional organisations, while, at the same time, taking into account the operational issues associated with regional training programme delivery (e.g. developing a network of mentors/facilitators to assist regional adult education learners). The process of training programme development is not confined to WP3 only. It uses the results of WP2 ‘User Needs Analysis’ and WP4 ‘Case Studies’ and will eventually take into account the feedback from WP5 ‘Pilot Actions’ to fine tune the developed training products.

The work programme for WP3 builds on the results of the needs analysis undertaken of regional organisations in relation to innovative entrepreneurship provision and is based on the case studies, elaborated by each project partner to support the exchange of good practices of how
regional organisations in the partner countries have successfully implemented innovative entrepreneurial approaches to addressing the challenges faced by their regions. WP3 focuses on developing an indicative specification for an innovative entrepreneurship skills adult education course that identifies the following key learning modules to comprise the FIERE training programme:

- **Module 1:** “Creativity and innovation”;
- **Module 2:** “Analytical thinking and resourcefulness as ways to identify and satisfy customer / citizens’ needs”;
- **Module 3:** “Leadership and resilience in order to enhance innovation and more responsive service in public and voluntary sector”.

The content of the training modules package will eventually be used for the development of training handbooks for trainers/mentors/counsellors and for adult learners. The handbooks will provide learning materials to assist the participants to understand the basic concepts of innovative entrepreneurship. Additionally – and potentially importantly in the context of the delivery of the adult education programme in a regional context – the training handbooks will also address the supports that may need to be put in place at a regional level to support participants to implement the skills they have acquired.

**1.2. Training programme learning objectives**

After taking the training course, elaborated under the FIERE project, and more specifically – Training Module 1, participants should be able to:

1. Define the concept of creativity and innovation and their role for the organisation.
2. Identify and examine the relationship between innovative entrepreneurship on one hand, and creativity – on the other.
3. Discuss their own reflections on the concept of creativity and innovation, including its meaning and role in their organisation.
4. Explain the significance of creativity and innovation for the quality of the services provided by the organisation.
5. Apply different techniques for enhancing the level of creativity and innovation in the organisation.
6. Illustrate how innovative entrepreneurship in the regions can be supported by organisational creativity.
7. Evaluate different components of creativity and identify the approaches to each component in different situations.

8. Evaluate the potential for personal creative behaviour/opportunity in their current role.

9. Evaluate how to enhance individual creativity within the workplace.

10. Identify and analyse the factors associated with innovation and entrepreneurship that determine the success at organisational and/or regional level.

11. Design innovative services that cater for the needs and expectations of customers and/or citizens.

12. Plan actions for the development of their organisations as well as for the socio-economic betterment of their regions.

1.3. Training module structure

The structure of the training modules agreed by project partners includes the following sections:

- **The concept of the skills covered by the respective module** – a short literature review on the main theoretical concepts of the skills, on which the respective training module is focused.

- **Relevance of identified skills for regional organisations** – a summary of the key findings from WP2 in order to justify the selection of the particular skills to be included in the respective training module.

- **Examples of good practices** – summaries of two/three case studies, which are most relevant for the respective training module and the skills it focuses on.

- **Conclusions and recommendations** – benefits for regional organisations arising from their involvement in the training course delivered using the materials elaborated under FIERE project and recommendations for most appropriate training delivery methods and approaches, to be eventually used in **WP5 ‘Pilot Actions’**.
2. Setting the scene …

The socioeconomic and institutional environment, in which all organisations operate nowadays, is characterised by a continuous search for effectiveness and efficiency (in qualitative and resources use terms).

According to many experts in the field, creativity and innovation have, in recent decades, become the “industrial religion”. Both of them may be thought of as the “factor x” in any business (or, generally, economic organisation’s) “growth equation”, accounting for productivity growth that cannot be explained by increases in capital and labour. Furthermore, with globalised competition and rapid technological developments, the speed of change occurring within many markets and organisational environments has, in recent years, accelerated dramatically. Creativity and Innovation are often cited as the means by which organisations should respond to this change and exploit the many opportunities, which accompany or result from this change.

“Innovate or fall behind: the competitive imperative for virtually all businesses today is that simple!” This is how Leonard and Straus (1997) saw it in a Harvard Business Review article. And this view is widely shared (Peters, 1990 and Beck, 1992).

“What happens when your competitors are just as lean and competent as you and your cost-effectiveness is no longer a unique advantage?” was the crucial question asked by creativity guru, Edward De Bono (1995). Creativity is essential for any business. Let’s suppose creativity is the capacity for generating novel and valued outputs. There is no obvious way through which a business can generate and maintain a competitive advantage without some such process. At present business practitioners and researchers alike are groping towards an understanding of the factors that help or hinder creativity.

One of the essential elements to organisational success is its adaptability, which manifests itself as people are able to introduce and accept changes through developing initiatives based on creativity and innovation. To encourage creativity, all organisations need to create a “climate” that supports and enables the creative thinking of their employees. Organisations must continuously seek to remove obstacles and barriers that might impact negatively on creativity and, at the same time, enhance the factors that promote creativity.
3. What is Creativity?

Creativity is the “art” of developing new and imaginative ideas into reality! It is expressed by the ability to perceive and interpret the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena and situations and generate solutions.

Creativity involves two closely linked processes: thinking, then producing. If a person has ideas, but does not act on them, he/she may be defined as imaginative, but not necessarily as “creative”!

Creativity is the process of bringing something new into being. Creativity requires passion and commitment. It brings to one’s awareness what was previously hidden and points to new life!

Innovation, on the other hand, is defined as the implementation of a new or significantly improved product, service or process that creates value for business, government or society.

Some people may wrongly argue that creativity has nothing to do with innovation. Creativity however is an indispensable part of the innovation equation. There is no innovation without creativity. The key performance indicator, in both creativity and innovation, is Value Creation.

Defining creativity is not easy, as there are many definitions, each pointing to specific aspects of the same concept. For example, the definition offered by Encyclopaedia Britannica is that: “(creativity is)... the ability to produce something new through imaginative skill, whether this refers to a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form”.

4. Short literature review of creativity and of its contribution to “value creation”

4.1. Some Basic questions

Research on creativity dates back to 1960 and scholars started appreciating its contribution in enhancing efficiency, effectiveness and thus assist in upgrading business, organisations’ performance, better customer service quality and competitive advantage.

Cook (1998) considered creativity as an “element of competitive advantage” for organisations – any type of organisations. The most competitive and profitable new products/services will be those that meet the customers’ needs more effectively than the competitor’s products or services and are therefore preferred by more customers (McAdam and McClelland, 2002). Innovation and creativity benefit companies beyond direct sales growth or efficiency improvements. A company or an organisation that establishes an effective creativity and innovation process is also likely to realize social benefits that arise from increased levels of team working and employee motivation.

For our purposes, the main crucial question that needs to be answered is: Can creativity be learned? Or, to put it differently: Can we train people to become more creative?

A study by George Land reveals that people are naturally creative although, as they grow up, they learn to be …..uncreative! Creativity is however generally believed to be a skill that can be developed and a process that can be managed! It begins with a foundation of knowledge, learning a discipline and mastering a way of thinking. One learns to be creative by experimenting, exploring, questioning assumptions, using imagination and proceeding with a meaningful synthesis of collected information. Learning to be creative is akin to learning a sport. It requires practice to develop the right muscles and a supportive environment in which to flourish.

Studies have attempted to uncover the so-called “Innovators’ DNA”, that is what determines one’s ability to generate innovative ideas. This is not merely a function of the mind, but it also depends on a number of key behaviours that optimise one’s brain for discovery. Five such key behaviours may be singled out for analysis and consideration:

1. **Associating:** drawing connections between questions, problems, or ideas from seemingly unrelated fields
2. **Questioning:** posing queries that challenge common wisdom
3. **Observing**: scrutinizing the behaviour of customers, suppliers, and competitors to identify new ways of doing things

4. **Networking**: meeting people with different ideas and perspectives

5. **Experimenting**: constructing interactive experiences and provoking unorthodox responses to see what insights emerge.

Another equally crucial question is: “what are the components of creativity”. Research highlights a number of common environmental factors which support creative behaviour in the individual. These include:

- Reinforcement (different people suggesting similar ideas)
- Goals and aspirations
- Extended Effort (creating ideas based on other people’s suggestion)
- Freedom & Autonomy
- Sense of security

Harvard Business Review authors (2002) interviewed 16 innovation leaders from across different sectors and different parts of the world and asked them what was the one thing they did that most inspired innovation in their organisations. The following diagram illustrates their responses and provides some useful ideas for consideration:
A summary answer to the crucial question put earlier is also shown in the chart below. The three main components indicated ("Expertise", "Creative thinking" and "Motivation") may be interpreted and analysed in various ways. What is important however is that "creativity" per se, emerges at the "common area of intersection" of all these key components. For creativity to emerge and develop, all three components have to exist, operate and interact!

![3 Components of Creativity](chart.png)

It is generally accepted that Creativity, in all types of organisations, is, as mentioned, a skill that can be developed and a process that can be managed. As already argued, this process begins with a foundation of knowledge, learning a discipline and mastering a certain way of thinking. One learns to be creative by experimenting, exploring, questioning assumptions, using imagination and blending information.

Another crucial question that also needs an answer is: "If creativity can be taught, how is this done?"

In 1956 Louis R. Mobley argued that, "any effective creativity training programme, should be built around six basic principles":

**First**: "Traditional" teaching methodologies like reading, lecturing, testing and memorisation, is worse than useless"! Most education focuses on providing answers in a linear “step by step” way. Mobley realized that asking radically different questions in a “non-linear” way is the key to creativity!
Second: Becoming creative is an unlearning, rather than a learning process! The goal of a creativity augmenting programme should not be to add more assumptions, but to unend existing ones and should be designed as a “mind blowing experience”. Participants should be pulled out of their comfort zone – often in embarrassing, frustrating, even infuriating ways. Providing a humbling experience, especially for hot shot individuals with egos to match, has its risks, but it may set in motion the processes that will generate more creativity.

Third: We don’t learn to be creative. Instead we must become “creative people”! The example offered is that: “A Marine recruit doesn’t learn to be a Marine by reading some Manuals. He becomes a Marine by undergoing the rigors of boot camp. Like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, he is transformed into a Marine”.

Fourth: The fastest way to become creative is to mingle and interact with other creative people! Despite the fact that some training programmes may start in an unsystematic and unstructured environment, most of the benefits result through “peer to peer interaction” which frequently takes place in informal ways.

Fifth: Creativity is highly correlated with self-knowledge! It is impossible to overcome biases if we don’t know they are there.

Sixth and perhaps most important: Programme participants must be given “permission to be wrong”! Every great idea grows from considering – even in some informal manner - large numbers of “bad” ones! The single biggest reason why most people never live up to their creative potential is from fear of making a fool out of themselves. The principle to be applied here is that “there are no bad or wrong ideas, only building blocks for even better ones”!

4.2. Organisational creativity

Organisational creativity is not the simple aggregate of all members' independent Creativity. It is instead a function of creativity of individuals as group members within an organisational setting, which is relevant to their collective strategy and goal (Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin, 1993). Organisational creativity is defined as: “the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working together in a complex social system”, or it could, alternatively, be understood as: “The creation of a valuable, useful new product, service,
idea, procedure or process by individuals working within a complex social organization”. (Mumford, 2011)

4.2.1. Structure and Systems of a Creative Organisation

To structure an organisation for group creativity, Amabile (1998) advocates for matching people to the right tasks and projects and giving them freedom around work process. On the other hand, one is warned that a common way managers or organisations end up killing creativity is by bringing together homogeneous teams. This may be seen as efficient and helpful to high morale, but "everyone comes to the table with a similar mindset. They will most probably also leave with the same"! On the contrary, a mutually supportive group with a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds is much more relevant for a team seeking to generate creative ideas. Of course, diversity per se is not sufficient! A team needs at least three more common qualities: (a) the members must share exhilaration over their common goal, (b) they must be willing to assist each other through difficult periods and problems and (c) every member must recognize the unique knowledge and perspective other partners bring to the group.

Employees will be most creative when the organisational structure and systems support people to feel motivated, primarily by the interest, satisfaction and challenge of the work itself. This type of internal structure, if properly established and efficiently operational, can make a big difference in fostering creativity. Training is particularly important for setting up work groups in which people, despite the fact that they are not homogenous in terms of their backgrounds, will stimulate and learn from each other. Assignments to projects can make a big difference, too. To encourage creativity, people need work that they are going to find appropriately challenging - not so far out of their skill range that they just can't do anything, but certainly something that is going to get them to operate at the top of their skill level, allowing them to really stretch and grow. That level of challenge is very important for intrinsic motivation!

Finally, the overall organisation atmosphere needs be open to creativity, from the highest levels! A collaborative atmosphere where people are continuously sharing ideas and helping each other with their work, rather than competing with each other, is necessary. Whatever reward systems are in place should recognise creative work. Recognising the value of creativity in that way sends a powerful message of support - and helps people stay passionate about their work, whatever this may be!
4.2.2. Resources and skills

Resources and skills are the basic tools an organisation has at its disposal to function properly and complete its business. These include, for example, the people, capital, machines, equipment and materials that an organisation has acquired for use in its operations. Resources and technology can impact the feelings and attitudes of people in organisations by either enhancing or inhibiting appropriate creative behaviours. (Issaksen et al, 2000). A lack of key resources can often frustrate and provide barriers to creative thinking and limit initiative. Access to and efficient use of resources can be a powerful stimulus for creativity and change.

Amabile (1998) also states that time and money are also resources of major importance that can either kill or encourage organisational creativity. Managers therefore need to manage these resources with great thoughtfulness. It is advisable that, while it is the duty of managers to determine the funding, staffing, and other resources that a team legitimately needs to complete a project, they must understand where the threshold of sufficiency is. This constitutes a balanced point upon which creativity does not improve when more resources are added, but restricted when less resource is put in.

The work of an organisation requires people to have an appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and capabilities to perform the work efficiently and effectively. The work undertaken determines, to a large extent, the selection of who needs to work on what jobs – since each job is composed of some range of tasks. The demands made by these jobs influence the behaviours required by the organisation to accomplish its purpose and, in turn, affects the “internal environment and climate”. Individuals’ skills and abilities are the capabilities and knowledge held by individuals within the organisation. They determine the level of talent available to the organisation to meet work requirements. If a workplace is filled with highly qualified people with sufficient talent to contribute to the organisation’s objectives, the climate will be positively affected. If creativity is concerned with the generation of ideas while team and organisational creativity is concerned with both the generation of ideas and the implementation of these ideas, this could make creative people an essential element of organisational creativity process and, ultimately, determine success prospects for a whole series of other functions!

This short overview of the vast literature on creativity, presented here, attempted to identify some common patterns and themes regarding factors that may enhance organisational creativity and provide answers to key questions, of particular reference to “training for creativity”. Although
the dimensions – organisational climate, organisational culture, organisational structure and systems, leadership and resources and skills – may be explored in much greater depth, it is important to acknowledge that they are somewhat overlapping and the boundaries between them are not always clear.

In fact, it is the sum of the whole, rather than the individual parts, that enhance organisations’ creativity! Each dimension, on its own, cannot support creativity. Organisations are complex social, political and technical systems and no simplistic formula for becoming more creative can be applied.

Organisational creativity is linked to a risky balance of complexity, compromise and choice. The “creative organisation” needs to be flexible while controlling risk, but, at the same time, it must be willing and able to provide the freedom to search for the ‘new’, through learning and experimentation. There is evidence that supports the view that an environment conducive to creativity is critical and is linked both to the culture, the climate, and the physical aspects of the environment. There is a systems view of creativity which suggests that most, if not all, creative outcomes are generated in environments where creativity, as a “culture” is, in various ways, encouraged and rewarded.
5. Creativity in Public Administration – is it relevant?

Marshall Dimock (1986, p. 3), a well-known author on creativity and organisations’ management, argues that “Creativity is one of the hallmarks of leadership and is a central component in the science and, most particularly, the art of public administration” and also that “Creativity is perhaps the most important concept in public administration”.

One of the biggest challenges that both public and private organisations face and will have to face in the future, is the accelerating pace and complexity of regional, national and international societies and economies, operating as interconnected systems. In order to cope with such complexity, the single most important attribute and skill of leaders will be Creativity. The very notion of Creativity suggests potentials for innovation and originality, that is, “…the ability to see old problems in novel ways and to devise new ways of thinking, analyzing and acting”.

Creativity is critical to organisational success, as it helps people and organisations to respond to new Challenges and Opportunities for Change. How can we foster creativity in ourselves and others? How can we manage people in public organisations in a manner that enhances and encourages their creativity in ways and forms which are consistent with public values and accountability?

5.1. Why Do We Need Creativity in Public Organisations?

It is also important to ask some fundamental questions, such as:
(a) What are the consequences of creativity for public organisations?
(b) Why should public servants strive to be creative and to support the creativity of others?
(c) How do individuals respond to opportunities to be creative in the workplace?

The answers to these questions may provide insights about both the nature of creativity and of its importance for public service.

For public organisations to be effective, they must craft and facilitate creative responses to increasingly complex societal problems and citizens’ needs and demands. Organisations and individuals who work in them must innovate and change, as community needs and demands shift. Meeting these challenges requires the full use of all available human and mental resources. Among the most important of those resources is Creativity - the capacity to think of old problems in new ways, to change our perspectives and create novel and useful approaches to making...
organisations work better and serve citizens’ needs – both existing and emerging ones. Failure to do so is wasteful to individuals and organisations and is inconsistent with the values of public service. It is incumbent on all of us, then, to use our imaginations and expertise as we work to achieve public goals. Creativity is directly and positively linked to organisational effectiveness and to improvements in quality and productivity. It increases the quality of solutions to organisational problems, helps to stimulate innovation, revitalises motivation, and promotes team performance (Raudsepp, 1978). Creativity helps organisations respond to challenges, demands and opportunities for change.

There are other benefits as well. There is evidence that the opportunity to be creative is important for employee motivation and retention. Employees and potential employees strongly value the chance to use their creativity. For example, one of the findings of a survey conducted among business executives in early 2000s was that the top-ranked qualities desired in a job were committed co-workers, creativity, responsibility and the ability to work independently (R.B. Denhardt et.al, 2013). It was also been found that managers who are creative and have opportunities to use their creativity on the job, are less likely to want to leave their organisations (Cameron M. Ford, 1995). It has even been demonstrated that innovation and creativity can reduce workplace stress. Helping people to become more innovative and creative “not only makes the work environment less stressful but also leads to the introduction of procedures which enhance productivity and quality of work” (Bunce & West, 1996, p. 210).

Creativity allows public organisations to be responsive and to develop new and better ways of serving citizens and using resources wisely. The opportunity to be creative can help to motivate people, keep them interested in and committed to their work, and reduce stress. So, creativity is not just something for “creative types” or a matter of a “flight of fancy” whenever people happen to have some extra time. It is a rather critical component of managing organisational behaviour and achieving public service goals.

Creativity is more than a flash of insight. Instead it can be thought of as a process with five identifiable steps or stages: (1) preparation, (2) concentration, (3) incubation, (4) illumination, and (5) verification (Boone & Hollingsworth, 1990). The characteristics and the content of these stages are not elaborated in this document but interesting material may be found in many studies and reports.
5.2. Impediments to Creativity

There are also of course a number of impediments or barriers to creativity (M.A. Runco, 2014) which need also to be considered. Removing these barriers can be the first step in fostering creativity in ourselves and others. The most commonly projected ones are the following:

- Defining the initial problem incorrectly or in a deficient manner
- Judging too quickly alternative views expressed and ideas proposed
- Stopping at the first “acceptable” idea, without considering alternatives
- Lack of support from superiors and/or co-workers
- Hostility to sharing knowledge.
6. FIERE Project: Regional Organisations’ Skills Needs Survey – References to Creativity and related skills

6.1. Introductory remarks

According to the FIERE project Work Plan, a survey on users’ entrepreneurship skills was carried out by all partners. Partners interviewed 450 respondents from 223 regional public, private, community & enterprise and voluntary organisations in all six partner regions to find out their current level of entrepreneurship skills training and their needs for additional training needed in order to perform, more effectively, their tasks. According to the composite Europe-wide report, “resourcefulness”, “resilience” and “analytical thinking” were the most common skills cited as important for the organisation, the individual employee and as important skills to be trained in.

The results of this survey have been used to develop an entrepreneurial skills training programme aimed at increasing the capacity and capability of individual employees to behave, think and act more entrepreneurially.

In February 2015, partners met in Sofia (Bulgaria) for the project’s 3rd Partnership meeting. During the meeting, based on the findings of the User Needs Analysis survey, partners defined the content of the entrepreneurial skills training programme and discussed possible ways for delivering it in each country, starting in June 2015

It was decided that the training programme would be focused on three main skills, or groups of skills, which, directly or indirectly, were identified as those that the survey participants seemed to consider as “priority skills”. Three Training modules were formed accordingly:

- **Module 1: Creativity and innovation.**
- **Module 2: Resilience and leadership.**
- **Module 3: Analytical thinking and resourcefulness.**

6.2. Key Survey findings on the importance of “Creativity and Innovation”.

Creativity and Innovation skills were explicitly regarded as “priorities” by many survey respondents. Frequency of responses varied, according to the region being surveyed, the type of organisation respondents were working for and even according to certain of their demographic characteristics.

The following indicative findings are worth mentioning:
In **Bulgaria**, Creativity and Innovation skills are considered “important to perform their role” by respondents in both the public and the private sector organisations surveyed.

In **Greece**, many respondents, independently of the surveyed organisation’s sector, made specific reference to the importance of Creativity and Innovation.

In **Iceland**, all respondents from private sector organisations indicated that such skills are “required” by their employers.

In **Ireland**, most of the respondents working in Public sector or Community organisations, indicated that these skills are important to perform their role and that they should be trained accordingly. Overall, independently of sector, they are considered to be “priority skills”.

In **Portugal**, all respondents for public and Community and Enterprise sectors indicated that Creativity and Innovation skills are required by their employers.

Similar views were expressed by respondents to the Survey undertaken in **Italy**. In the private sector such skills are “required by the organisations” and more training is needed and similar were the views expressed, as to the specific skills importance by respondents in public sector organisations.

Detailed presentation and analysis of survey results, by region and overall, may be found in the corresponding FIERE Survey Reports.
7. FIERE Project – Summaries of selected Good Practices

7.1. Introductory remarks

The aim of the FIERE Case studies is to prepare and disseminate good practice case studies. Good Practices demonstrate how selected regional organisations in various countries, implemented “innovative” and “entrepreneurial” ways for improving their performance.

Following an identification and appraisal process by the partnership, the seven (7) Case Studies selected from the FIERE partner regions are:

1. The case of Austurbrú – the case of an amalgamation of regional support institution in East Iceland.
2. The case of ICY – Innovation centre for young people in the town of Gotse Delchev, located in the South-Western part of Bulgaria.
3. The case of Libera Terra (literally “Freed Land”) a not for profit social cooperative founded 2001 in the “Alto Belice Corleonese” region in Sicily, Italy.
4. The case of “Improve my city” an initiative by the Municipality of Thermi, situated in the east side of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki (Greece).
5. The case study of the merger of the former North and South Tipperary County Councils into Tipperary County Council (TCC), Ireland.
6. The case of In.Cubo – Incubator of Innovative Business Initiatives created by ACIBTM - Association for the Incubation Center of Technological Base of Minho, Portugal.
7. The case study of Waterford Institute of Technology’s (WIT) ‘ArcLabs Research & Innovation Centre’ as a model for supporting a regional ecosystem of open innovation also in Ireland.

The case studies, appropriately organised, will constitute a significant element of the training programme to be delivered within the FIERE project.

The training programme, in which these Case Studies’ material will be exploited, consists of 3 modules:

1. Module 1: Creativity and Innovation
2. Module 2: Analytical thinking and resourcefulness as ways to identify and satisfy customer / citizens’ needs
3. Module 3: Leadership and resilience in order to enhance innovation and more responsive service in public and voluntary sector

Although case studies can apply to more than one training module the selection was made so that preferably two case studies could apply to each module. For Module 1, to which we have been referring in previous sections, the most relevant cases are those of Austurbrú and Tipperary County Council, as they both demonstrate creative and innovative approaches to enhance and develop services in regions through amalgamation of regional support institutions. Summaries of these two Case studies are presented below, while their full text may be found in the FIERE Case Studies Handbook.

7.2. Summary of the Austurbrú Case Study

Austurbrú ses. is a support organisation in East Iceland founded on the 8th of May 2012. The name refers to a bridge in the east which is meant to convey the understanding of the whole of the eastern part of Iceland as one territory. The landmass Austurbrú services stretches from the village Djúpivogur in the south to Vopnafjörður in the north. Eight different municipalities form the hinterland for Austurbrú and the total number of inhabitants in this territory is only just over 10,000.¹

Austurbrú ses as a project was an ambitious amalgamation of the management of SSA and four existing entities owned by the municipalities in the east of Iceland. The formal preparation work for Austurbrú started in 2008 and came to fruition in May 2012 with the formation of Austurbrú. An extensive level of professional work was put into the preparation by more than one steering committee. The development of the process went from collaboration of independent entities partly or wholly owned by the municipalities that formed the SSA to an formal entity that would provide an umbrella over the existing structure to enhance efficiency and reduce cost and finally to a merger of the existing structures into one entity, Austurbrú.

The goals set out in the beginning look more like a mission statement rather than achievable, measurable goals and therefore it is difficult to measure the success of the project. However, the financial goals were not achieved; in fact the cost of operation increased by about 23% instead of being reduced as was supposed.

¹ See SSA website: [http://www.ssa.is/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=32&lang=is](http://www.ssa.is/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=32&lang=is)
Training of personnel was not high on the agenda as it was seen as more a formal structure being put over an existing operation. This resulted in a less coherent organisation than was anticipated and a very high turnover in the post of Managing Director of Austurbrú affected the coherence of the new entity.

The implementation process was not carried out in detail (at least there is no evidence of that) even though a lot of work was put in by the steering committees in analysing what was needed in the implementation process.

The project failed to reduce cost but it seems that it delivered the services it was supposed to even if the lack of measureable goals in the beginning and then a comparison study afterwards prevents us from making a judgement on that. The merger of the existing entities into one did not go as planned and Austurbrú ses has now a new organisational chart and new management that is meant to improve its status, that process is still on-going and too soon to tell if it will work. What made the project fail was the lack of preparation of the personnel that were supposed to take the project forward and a lack of a sense of togetherness in Austurbrú ses among board members, stakeholders and employees.

As mentioned above the training of personnel in order to implement the new order was lacking. An extensive involvement of personnel and the new MD from an early stage would have enhanced the viability of the project.

The lessons to be learned from the project is that it is paramount that a common understanding between the owners/stakeholders and the people on the ground is necessary to bring the project to success. Even if the analysis and preparation among the stakeholders in the beginning was extensive the lack of training of personnel and involvement from early on in the process did have negative effects on the project.

There were innovative steps involved in the process in the way that it was trying to bring a number of different entities into one large organisation that would be able to serve the community better than small individual organisations.

Austurbrú ses is an interesting project for the FIERE project because of what made it fail. It underlines the importance of keeping the people on the ground involved in the process of change.
in order to make it happen. Ambitious projects will not succeed without the commitment of the people meant to carry them out.

7.3. Summary of Case Study “The merger of North and South Tipperary County Councils”

This case study reviews the merger of the former North and South Tipperary County Councils into Tipperary County Council (TCC) which took place in June 2014. It is extracted from a more detailed review carried out in late 2014 by the Institute of Public Administration at the request of the management of the unified TCC.

County Tipperary, Ireland’s largest inland county, has a population of 158,754 and covers an area of 4,282 km². Tipperary had been administered as two separate local government units since 1838 when the county was split for the purposes of Grand Juries, established by the English parliament, which then governed the island of Ireland.

In July 2011 the Irish Government announced the establishment of a unified county council in Tipperary, with effect from the 2014 local government elections, to replace the existing North and South Tipperary County Councils. The merger was to be part of a wider local government reform initiative.

The general objective of the merger project was to deliver the merger effectively and on time, maintain delivery of services across the county and to maximise resource deployment and savings.

The management process put in place to undertake the amalgamation project utilized the resources of the existing councils and allocated them to best advantage in terms of their input to task completion. The merger was managed by a joint management team (JMT) comprising the management teams of the two councils. A project support team was established and supported the implementation group and coordinated the actions agreed by the JMT. The support team comprised a project co-ordinator at director level, appointed to work on the project full-time, the two HR managers and two senior staff from corporate services. Management sub-groups were also established on a function by function basis (e.g. IT, finance, roads) in order to progress issues such as the merger of policies, procedures and protocols.

The government announced further local government reforms in October 2012. As a result, the merger project became a far bigger and more complex one. Whereas previously it had encompassed the merger of the two local authorities and the incorporation of the Library
Committee, it now also involved the dissolution of the county’s seven urban councils and incorporation of their staff and functions into the new council.

The project took place over two inter-related phases – (1) a planning phase and (2) an implementation phase. The planning phase encompassed the period from July 2011 through to the acceptance in July 2012 by the Minister of the merger implementation plan. The plan detailed the approach to be taken in delivering on the terms of reference prescribed by government. The objective of the implementation group was to produce a comprehensive implementation plan that set out the steps required to ensure that the merger would happen on schedule.

The implementation phase then ran to the official merger date of 3 June 2014. It encompassed a focus on the merger of systems and procedures. Overall, there were 128 mini merger ‘projects’ ranging from the integration of major systems like pay-roll, financial management and planning, through to minor processes such as parking fines. The approach adopted was that a project team was put in place drawn from the section with responsibility for the system or procedure.

Innovative features of the project include a new service model for delivery of services; introduction of customer service desks; development of a new public-facing website; energy-saving/carbon-reduction improvements in building facilities; and risk management planning.

Given the scale of the project, the number of stakeholders involved, and the wider challenges arising from reform of the overall public service, the merger was managed very effectively. The administrative, legal, financial and political merger was achieved on time and within budget. Savings of €6.1m per year were to be achieved over an extended period. By February 2015, savings were already in excess of €3m. The costs of the merger including one-off expenditure on IT harmonisation, office improvements and corporate branding amounted to €1.7m, lower than the anticipated figure.

Communication with stakeholders – staff, elected representatives, trade-unions and other local organisations – represented an important aspect of the merger.

Social inclusion was a significant priority that guided the merger of the two councils. Marginalised communities, and the marginalised within communities, now have the opportunity to participate in local decision making and to influence and shape local decisions through new structures developed as part of the merger process.
The consolidation phase encompasses the period from legal merger (June 2014). This is focused on moving past the technical merger to building a new organisational culture. Removing divisions and developing a new culture around a shared understanding of the aims of the new organisation is fundamental to any merger. The first step in this process has been the development of a new corporate plan for the period 2015-2019, which sets out a clear vision for the whole county.

The merger of two large local authorities had not occurred in Ireland prior to 2014. Learning from the experience has been identified as a key outcome that will provide guidance to other public service organisations engaged in similar reorganisations in Ireland and across the wider E.U.
References


Useful websites


Cranfield University, Innovation and Creativity in Industry [http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/SAS/competitivedesign/index.html](http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/SAS/competitivedesign/index.html)

Cranfield University, Centre for Competitive Creative Design [http://www.centrefordesign.co.uk/education-template.php](http://www.centrefordesign.co.uk/education-template.php)


Creative D – a network programme for the creative industries in Dublin [www.creatived.ie](http://www.creatived.ie)

Creative Thinking Network [http://www.creativethinkingnetwork.com](http://www.creativethinkingnetwork.com)


Cornwall’s Creative Consortium [www.realideas.org](http://www.realideas.org)

Denmark, The Center for Culture and Experience Economy [http://www.cko.dk/about-ccee](http://www.cko.dk/about-ccee)

ECCE Innovation – initiative to promote and develop new markets for small businesses and actors in the creative, artistic and cultural fields [http://www.ecce-innovation.eu](http://www.ecce-innovation.eu)


Irish Times Innovation Awards [www.irishtimes.com/innovationawards](http://www.irishtimes.com/innovationawards)

Jump! – Innovation and marketing company – helps clients figure out solutions to their challenges and inspire radical action [www.jump.ie](http://www.jump.ie)

Lean 2 Innovative Thinking offers clients hands on practical facilitation in improving the
performance of their organisation. Uses the Lean Philosophy in tandem with the Creativity and Innovation fields as the primary catalysts for performance improvement.

www.lean2innovativethinking.com

Let’s Create – Regions of Knowledge initiative for the creative industries http://www.lets-create.eu/

Mycoed - Central repository for creativity and innovation tools and techniques www.mycoted.com

One North East, Design Network North http://www.designnetworknorth.org/

Platform Ireland – broadcasting Irish Arts http://www.platformireland.ie/

Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Centre for Design & Innovation http://www.c4di.org.uk/

The Creativity Hub – helping people develop their creative ability, Northern Ireland based http://www.thecreativityhub.com/

The Impact Factory http://www.impactfactory.com/

The Innovation Factory (Comparator) http://www.innovationfactory.eu/

The National Digital Research Centre http://www.ndrc.ie

UK Design Council, Designing Demand http://www.designingdemand.org.uk/

Welsh Assembly Government - Flexible Support for Innovation http://fs4b.wales.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?site=230&r.s=m&r.l1=5001392897&r.lc=en&r.l2=5001459854&r.i=5001520393&type=RESOURCES&itemId=5001459864&r.t=CASE%20STUDIES&lang=en

Welsh Assembly Government – Project Dynamo http://www.projectdynamo.com