



Business Pre Incubation



Business Plan

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BUSINESS PRE-INCUBATION BUSINESS PLAN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Background

The proposal will establish a Hub and Spoke provision of Business Pre-incubation in Communities First Partnerships across Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT). It is built on a strong network between Communities First Partnerships and support agencies, thereby ensuring a maximisation of resources and the avoidance of duplication. All business models will be supported but there will be an emphasis on social enterprise. The project is seen as a two year pilot scheme to investigate the value of pre-incubation to the development of businesses in Communities First Partnerships. It responds to the One Wales agenda and the Welsh Assembly Governments strategy for the development of social enterprise and the demands of the Communities Next and Communities@One programmes.

1.2. The Service

- The creation of a Business Pre-Incubation Network across committed Communities First Partnerships in RCT.
- The service will provide encouragement and support to individuals and organisations at the critical pre start up phase.
- This support will be provided through a network that will operate on a Hub and Spoke basis to maximise the resources available across RCT.

The COMMUNITIES FIRST BUSINESS PRE-INCUBATION NETWORK: Currently includes 17 Communities First Partnerships and relevant support agencies.

The HUB: The Telecentre And Business School (TABS) will develop pre-incubation service in Porth, as well as establishing a Social Enterprise Incubation facility.

The SPOKES: 6 Community First Partnerships will develop a facility offering Micro Pre-Incubation support to its businesses.

The remaining 11 Partnerships will be supported in investigating the value of business pre-incubation to their communities. It is hoped that all remaining Communities First Partnerships within RCT will recognise the value of the Network and add their support.

1.3. Business Incubation

Business incubation is a process. Incubation supports companies to grow and survive. It has 3 core characteristics:

- § Selective – Business Incubators have a process by which they select clients
- § Supportive – Business Incubators do something for their clients
- § Time-Limited – Clients become viable free-standing companies and leave

Business incubators are not buildings. Incubation can switch premises or even exist without premises. Most successful programmes however do have a fixed location.



The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to using a Business Incubation strategy as a way of starting and growing more businesses. It is supporting TABS to bring this project forward. Business Incubation has four stages Pre-Incubation, Early Stage Incubation, Classic Incubation and Graduate Incubation. This Business Plan relates to the Pre-Incubation Stage and details the activities of a Business Pre-Incubation Pilot programme covering a two year period.

1.4. Pre-Incubation Service – The new service will:

- § Provide pre incubation support to a minimum of 20 potential enterprises in the first 1 year, of which at least 50% will be defined as social enterprise – rising to 30 in year 2 with again at least 50% defined as social enterprise
- § Increase their chance of success- Achieving a 25% success rate in terms of company registration
- § Creating at least 100 volunteering and training opportunities will be created targeted at the economically inactive – rising to over 200 in year two
- § Establish businesses that deliver new services in the local economy that improve well being – reaching over 1,000 local residents over the two years
- § Skilling the new businesses to embed the use of quality models to demonstrate impact in achieving social, environmental, technological & economic outputs

1.5. Service Features – The pre-incubation service is a pro-active provision that consists of a cocktail of support activities, including training and education and business support, offered by network members which link the development of social enterprise to regeneration programmes. Service features include:

- § Providing intensive support to identified enterprises with growth potential.
- § Focusing efforts on new start up
- § Ensuring the identified businesses have access to the support offered by existing providers of training and education
- § Ensuring the identified businesses have access to the support offered by existing business support agencies
- § Additional intensive support being provided by the pre-incubation service
- § Businesses will be selected for their capacity to demonstrate: a strong business case that will deliver ‘triple bottom line’.

Features of the intensive support will include connecting social enterprises to networks of experts and peers: raising aspirations; confidence building; providing access to mentors: information about benchmarked best practice: coordination of existing business support services: specialist training: information about start up and development finance: hotdesking: ICT support and e learning resources: market research information to inform business ventures.

A major challenge facing this model is communication. This challenge will be met via the use of technology. The Network will be developed along the lines of an online community of interest. Bi-monthly meetings will be arranged to allow for traditional networking activities while operational communication will be enabled via the use of ICT. The Hub will develop an internet-based, resource in support of all pre-incubation needs and this is identified as a critical component in the pre-incubation service.



1.6. Beneficiaries – Will include:

- § Direct beneficiaries - Residents living and working in Rhondda Cynon Taf, with a focus on those disadvantaged and economically inactive.
- § Indirect beneficiaries - Those receiving new and enhanced services provided by emerging new and growing enterprises in sectors as diverse as creative industries: leisure, tourism and heritage: environment: health and social care.
- § Location – The pre-incubator service will be piloted in Porth (TABS) and Communities First areas across RCT. This learning will be used to explore opportunities to replicate the service in other regions across Wales.

1.7. The Need

The strategy and policy context ranging from WAG, local authorities and communities is one that is encouraging the development of more and better social enterprises. This pre-incubation service will focus on meeting the needs of one segments in the market, that of Communities First / Communities Next Partnerships.

Social Enterprise is increasingly being seen by communities, practitioners, policy makers and investors as being able to make a unique contribution to creating and retaining wealth in depressed local economies. The development of strong social enterprise is seen by RCT Economic Development Strategy as playing a key part in the regeneration of the area. Social Enterprise Incubation has been accepted as a key strand of local economic development activity. WAG has launched a Social Enterprise Strategy to help grow the sector. Despite these stated priorities the number of social enterprise start ups has remained stubbornly low, with no significant new social enterprise establish in RCT since 2000. Secondary research across RCT 200 - 2006 indicated;

- Low levels of entrepreneurial activity, with RCT being the only authority in the South Wales Valleys area suffering a down-turn in new business start-up
- Very low numbers of new social enterprises established
- Decreasing numbers of women engaged in entrepreneurial activity
- Low numbers of unemployed people engaged in entrepreneurial activity
- Very few people with low qualifications engaged in entrepreneurial activity
- Difficulties in accessing finance / funding is seen as the major barrier to entrepreneurial activity
- Enterprise education is identified as a significant lever to the development of entrepreneurial activity but is largely absent at community level

Primary research among Communities First Partnerships indicates that:

- 80% believe the potential for SE development is medium to very high
- The main support agencies Communities First Partnership link with are Interlink (80%); Groundwork (70%); Wales Co-operative Centre (60%) – very limited links with main stream business support
- Most partnership have just a basic understanding of Business Incubation
- Most partnerships identify Support for business development as a Medium to Very High priority (90%)



1.8. About Existing Business Support

Pre-Incubation is about capacity building. It is about training and education. It is about awareness, aspiration, opportunity and the creation of an enterprising culture. It is about confidence building, skills build and vocational experiences. It is about mentoring and coaching. It is about research and consultancy and it is about general business advice and guidance. Existing programmes are a reactive response to demand. This project will deliver a pro-active response to new business start-up which links the development of new business, particularly new social business, to existing provision and regeneration programmes such as Communities First / Next..

1.9. Delivery

The project will be promoted through the Communities First Pre-Incubation Network, via a range of mediums existing in member organisations. The project will be driven by the network members, a Project Manager and Support Worker. It will participate in a Wales/UK/European incubation network. It will link closely with the Innovations Centre, Luton – part of the Cambridge University incubation network - and the Taste of Enterprise programme delivery by Newport and Gwent Enterprise Agency, both offering a valuable source of best practice advice and mentoring support.

Phase 1 is seen as a pilot program and will be targeted at the development of enterprise in the identified Communities First Partnerships along with an RCT wide service delivered by the TABS. The main objective will be to develop an effective, pro-active pre-incubation service which meets the need of its beneficiaries. Crucial in this will be the continued development of the Communities First Pre-Incubation Network, the strengthening of the resources within both the Hub and Spokes and the development of the use of ICT. This pilot will access funding via the Welsh Assembly Government (DE&T) Business Pre-Incubation Fund to cover all financial costs. The Network will look to access a number of funding strands in support of the development of enterprise including Convergence Funding, Communities Next Training Budgets, the Communities Trust Fund, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Communities@One, Local Service Board and the Heads of the Valleys programme as well as investigate the potential for income generation opportunities.

Phase 2 and 3 will build on the experience of Phase 1 by extending the pre-incubation service to all remaining interested partnerships and establish a sustainable business incubation service across RCT offering all four stages of business incubation which meets the needs of all network members.

1.10. Investment Needed – The total cost of this pilot service for the first 2 years is £254,695. The pilot will be part funded by the Welsh Assembly Government - Dept of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Business Pre-Incubation Fund.

1.11. Time Line – It is planned to have the service operational in July 2008 with pre launch activity taking place between May and June 2008

1.12 More Information - Contact Paul Nagle, TABS, Penrhiwgwynt Road, Porth, RCT, CF39 9UB. Tel 01443 682 312. Email: paulnagle@tabstraining.co.uk



BUSINESS PRE-INCUBATION: BUSINESS PLAN

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. About the Project The proposal will establish a Hub and Spoke provision of business pre-incubation in Communities First Partnerships. It is built on a strong network between Communities First Partnerships and support agencies, thereby ensuring a maximisation of resources and the avoidance of duplication. All business models will be supported but there will be an emphasis on social enterprise. The project is seen as a two year pilot scheme to investigate the value of pre-incubation to the development of businesses in Communities First Partnerships.

The COMMUNITIES FIRST BUSINESS PRE-INCUBATION NETWORK: The network is currently composed of 17 Communities First Partnerships. All relevant support agencies are aware of its existence from its launch in January 2008 and all are currently included in the network. (*For Network members and details of meeting see Appendix 1*). The Network will advise on all strategic and operational activities relating to business pre-incubation, as well as offering a unique forum to develop further initiatives relating to business development in participating partnerships.

The HUB: The Telecentre And Business School (TABS) will develop pre-incubation service in Porth, as well as establishing a Social Enterprise Incubation facility.

The SPOKES: 6 Community First Partnership will develop a facility offering Micro Pre-Incubation support to its businesses (*named below*).

The remaining 11 Communities First Partnerships in the network will be supported in investigating the value of business pre-incubation to their partnerships. It is hoped that eventually all remaining Communities First Partnership within RCT will recognise the value of the Network and add their support.

The Service

- The creation of a Business Pre-Incubation Network across committed Communities First Partnerships in RCT.
- The service will provide encouragement and support to individuals and organisations at the critical pre start up phase.
- This support will be provided through a network that will operate on a Hub and Spoke basis to maximise the resources available across RCT.

The Hub: At launch the Hub role will be led by Telecentre And Business School in Porth. Resourced developed at this Hub will be shared with other organisations seeking to be hubs in the future

The Spokes: The launch of the project includes the following Communities First Partnerships Spokes – Treherbert, Cwmaman, Penywaun, Penrhys, Penrhweiber/Miskin/Perthcelyn(PMP) and Fernhill & Glenboi.



2.2 About TABS - TABS is a social enterprise with a 13 year track record delivering support to local people seeking to enter the world of work, including personal development programmes, key skills and NVQ provision. The organisation has built strong links with Communities First partnerships over many years via the provision of training services and partnerships bids to the European Structural funds (*For Links see Appendix 2*). The organisation has a strong track record raising investment from public and charitable funding sources and has experience managing complex and fast moving contracts and service level agreements. This experience and commitment will be brought to this new Pre-Incubation venture.

2.3 About Communities First / Communities Next

Communities First / Next is a long-term strategy for improving opportunities and the quality of life for people living and working in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. It differs from previous funding programmes in a number of ways

- it is a long-term programme which will run for a minimum of 10 years
- it enables communities themselves to decide what is needed
- it increases the level of participation of local people
- it brings in funding and support from a number of different sources
- it is about making a lasting difference to our disadvantaged communities
- it encourages creativity, risk-taking and imaginative approaches
- it involves an integrated approach to addressing poverty, and Communities Next will require Partnerships to develop innovative solutions aimed at addressing economic activity and developing social enterprise

A mapping exercise has been undertaken which links the activities provided by this pre-incubation service to the key demands of Communities Next, see *Appendix 3*.

2.4. About Social Enterprise - Social Enterprise is increasingly being seen by communities, practitioners, policy makers and investors as being able to make a unique contribution to creating and retaining wealth in depressed local economies. The development of strong social enterprise is seen by RCT Economic Development Strategy as playing a key part in the regeneration of the area. Social Enterprise Incubation has been accepted as a key strand of local economic development activity. The Welsh Assembly Government has launched a Social Enterprise Strategy to help grow the sector. Despite these stated priorities the number of social enterprise start ups has remained stubbornly low, with no significant new social enterprise established in RCT since 2000. Secondary research across RCT 2000-2006 indicated;

- Low levels of entrepreneurial activity, with RCT being the only authority in the South Wales Valleys area suffering a down-turn in new business start-up
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- Difficulties in accessing finance / funding is seen as the major barrier to entrepreneurial activity
- Enterprise education is identified as a significant lever to the development of entrepreneurial activity but is largely absent at community level



Primary research among Communities First Partnerships indicates that:

- 80% believe the potential for SE development is medium to very high
- The main support agencies Communities First Partnership link with are Interlink (80%); Groundwork (70%); Wales Co-operative Centre (60%) – very limited links with main stream business support
- Most partnership have just a basic understanding of Business Incubation
- Most partnerships identify Support for business development as a Medium to Very High priority (90%)

For further detail on above research see Appendix 4.

Business incubation is viewed by Welsh Assembly Government as necessary part of a business support framework to help create and grow viable social enterprises.

2.5. About Business Incubation – Business incubation is different to other forms of business support in that it provides a complete, tailored, ‘hands-on’ business support environment. The resources made available through an incubation environment are provided by both an on-site incubation team as well as ‘brought in’ from a network of external contacts. Incubation is a resource-intensive activity therefore most incubation has to be selective. The purpose of incubation is not to provide support indefinitely, so most incubation environments will set a limit on the time that they will work with client ventures before they are encouraged to move on.

Business incubator is a term often used to describe the physical, ‘with-walls’ facility through which business incubation is delivered. ‘Without walls’ (‘virtual’) incubators also exist, which seek to deliver incubation processes through means other than physical premises, although even virtual incubators frequently provide some hot-desking facilities or meeting rooms for their clients. Some incubation environments operate with a combination of both ‘virtual’ and ‘physical’ provision.

Business incubation is a process. Incubation supports companies to grow and survive. There are several models but the three core characteristics are:

1. Selective – Business Incubators have a process by which they select clients
2. Supportive – Business Incubators do something for their clients
3. Time-Limited – Clients grow to become free-standing companies and leave

Business incubators are not buildings. Incubation can switch premises or even exist without premises. Most successful programmes however do have a fixed location. Source – UK Incubation Ltd 2006

Welsh Assembly Government is committed to a Business Incubation strategy that will produce thriving businesses throughout the economy, creating economic improvement underpinned by coordinated business support, education and training.

For further detail see Appendix 5.



2.6. About Existing Business Support

Pre-Incubation is about capacity building. It is about training and education. It is about awareness, aspiration, opportunity and the creation of an enterprising culture. It is about confidence building, skills build and vocational experiences. It is about mentoring and coaching. It is about research and consultancy and it is about general business advice and guidance. Analysis of existing business support indicates:

- 10 Agencies Supporting Pre-Start; 6 Agencies support Post Start
- It is largely a re-active service
- Mainly aimed at High Growth (£65,000 pa)
- Uncoordinated / Competitive
- Under Change (particularly for post start) and particularly agencies working together
- Limited with regard to social enterprise (Wales Cooperative Centre)
- Few links to regeneration programmes

(For Map of Existing Business Support Agencies See Appendix 6(a))

Flexible Support For Business

The Welsh Assembly Government is reforming its support for business under Flexible Support for Business (www.business-support-wales.gov.uk). The Flexible Support for Business approach will help Welsh businesses start, grow and prosper. It will consist of three main elements:

- *Access*
- Fast, simple and straightforward access to information, advice and support for all existing businesses, and prospective businesses, via a gateway that will include a single website, a national phone number, and face to face contact through a network of local centres.
- *Relationship Management*
- Dedicated relationship managers to support the development of strategically important businesses by building a package of relevant tailored support that will unlock the growth potential of those businesses.
- *Funding and Specialist Support*
- A Single Investment Fund which will be the only source for a package of financial and specialist support from the Assembly Government to meet businesses' individual needs.

The new approach will be rolled out during 2008-09 with clear and comprehensive communications to businesses and our key stakeholders at all key stages. This Pre-Incubation Pilot will ensure understanding and engagement of the service in relation to the development of business in Communities First Partnership.

It can be argued that all elements that compose a pre-incubation service already exist through many WAG initiatives, particularly through the programmes delivered by DCELLS and DE&T.



This project takes the view that the services do exist to a large degree, but that they have largely been unsuccessful in linking the development of social enterprise to mainstream training and education, business support and regeneration programmes. Existing programmes are a reactive response to demand.

What is needed, and what this project will deliver, is a pro-active response to new business start-up which links the development of new business, particularly new social business, to existing provision and regeneration programmes such as Communities First and Communities Next. Discussion has undertaken with many of the support agencies which have identified ways in which the pre-incubation service can add value to existing provision – *see Appendix 6(b)*.

The Hub and Spoke model of support for the development of business offered in this proposal is unique. No such service is offered in Wales or the United Kingdom. Elements of the proposal do exist locally with the work of GTI and more significantly with the work of Newport and Gwent Enterprise Agency through their Taste of Enterprise and Market place initiatives.

The Taste of Enterprise project formed part of the Entrepreneurial Action Plan (EAP), representing a collaborative partnership between Menter a Busnes' Ffatri Fenter, Wales Co-Op's ERP strand and Newport & Gwent with Market Place. The common theme and objectives surrounded test trading concepts as a mechanism to change culture and forge engagement in entrepreneurial activities. The project was seen as a 'bridge' or 'conduit' linking those thinking about enterprise with those actually setting up enterprise/business. The clients for each were pre-start at the point of entry to the projects.

Enterprise Art, one of the schemes, has acted not only as a spring board into self employment but also as an environment that builds personal confidence and improves the quality of life in under confident and vulnerable people, especially the client base with mental health issues and long term disabilities. The projects strength lies in the flexible approach that staff takes towards each client which caters for very specific individual needs with regards to developing a business idea.

This project has linked with the above successful schemes, as well as with the Luton and Dunstable Innovation Centre in Cambridgeshire, in developing this proposal.

2.7 Project Development

The overall business incubation project has been discussed with partners for over 2 years. This business plan, with a focus on pre-incubation for Communities First Partnerships, has been developed over a 6 month period. It has been tightened through meetings with Communities First Co-Ordinators, consultations and through a workshop held in February 2008. The development of the business plan is being supported by the DEIN department in Welsh Assembly Government. DEIN have engaged a consultant to work with TABS to help build consensus and raise investment for the project. This phase is taking place between November 2007 and March 2008.



3. THE SERVICE

3.1. What Will It Do? – The new service is based on the Business Incubator 3 principles of selection, intensive support and time limited and will support new business start-up.

Provide <u>pre incubation support</u> to potential enterprises	A minimum of 40 businesses supported in the first 2 years
Increase their chance of success	Achieving a 50% new start-up rate
Reduce levels of economic inactivity	New Start-ups employing 20 people at year 1 – rising to over 40 year 2 Creating over 100 volunteering and training opportunities at year 1- rising to over 200 at year 2
Deliver new services in the local economy that improve well being & Local service delivery	Increased community cohesion Providing services that will reach over 2,000 individuals and their families over a 2 year period

For detailed list of Outcomes; Results and Impacts see Appendix 7

3.2. Service Features – New service features focusing on **pre incubation** support to potential/emerging enterprises, including social enterprises, to include training, business support, coaching & mentoring, and consultancy & research. The service will be delivered through a Hub and Spoke mechanism, with close links to all relevant support agencies. The HUB will be managed by TABS and the Spokes by the Communities First Partnerships.

Hub – Services

Communities First Pre Incubation Network Development

- Facilitation of Communities First incubation network - consisting of Communities First Partnerships, business support agencies and investors and other stakeholders that can support the development of new businesses in Communities First areas.
- The Hub will support spokes at different levels of understanding and capacity – providing intensive support to those willing and able to move early and quickly.

Brand

- Development of Pre Incubation brand with network partners.

Resources

- Hub Infrastructure (based at TABS Porth) including - Hot desking: Meeting space: Website: Photocopier, printer and video conferencing.
- Market research/intelligence – identification of market need.
- Key Information – e.g. vacant properties, procurement opportunities, and Business support toolkits.
- Development of a training programme: to include as a minimum ICT, identifying market needs, personal development training needs, business planning, company law, – and in some cases basic skills. These resources will be delivered at hub and spoke locations – and on line where possible.
- Benchmarking -highlighting best practice – including responsible business practice – quality tools that support sustainability principles; operational systems, policies and procedures
- Manage annual pre incubation awards scheme.

Mentoring/Coaching Support



- Mentoring/coaching - recruiting and supporting a pool of mentors who will be able to offer hands support to emerging businesses.
- Peer mentoring and support – using on-line communications to plug pre start up businesses into peer support relationships.

Brokerage with Business Support Organisations

- Brokerage role with key business support organisations – DTA Wales, Coop Centre, Community Enterprise Wales, Social Firms Wales, Interlink, Business in Focus, Venture Wales.

Introduction to Investors

- Building relationships to introduce potential businesses to investors - including CRT, UnLtd, CIF, Community Loans Fund, Finance Wales, Local authority funding streams and banks. UnLtd have indicated that they will look to support incubatees

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Development of Wider Pre Incubation Coverage and a Full Incubation Service in the Future

- Recruitment of new Communities First partnerships into the network
- Supporting partner organisations that wish to develop into Hubs.
- To ensure the network drives plans to extend the service to provide support to early stage established businesses in the future.

General Encouragement and Support

- Providing moral support and encouragement to new businesses and network members

Resources required By the Hub Include

Staff to develop the network and key partnerships for Spokes and businesses

- Funding to develop key resources needed to provide support to pre start up businesses
- Pre Incubation Space at TABS Porth base for face to face networking
- On line resources to facilitate virtual networking

Spoke Services

To enable a hub and spoke model to play to the strengths of each - Spokes will be required to commit to:

- Join and contribute to the Pre Incubation Network – sharing information with peer spokes and the hub
- Provide a named business support person for each business
- Promote the pre incubation service to local individuals, groups and businesses through spoke networks - using branded material developed and agreed by Hub and Spokes
- Host, and attempt to fund where possible, pre incubation training opportunities that will be identified by the network
- Provide hot desking space with connectivity and meeting space
- Identify and encourage links with local businesses
- Include this stream of work in Communities First Partnership action plans
- Commitment to support the evaluation of the pre incubation service
- Be receptive to opportunities to scale up businesses that could operate across communities first boundaries



3.3. Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Business Incubation is a process and not a building. However most business incubation facilities do focus on a particular business sector and are housed in one building. The Hub and Spoke model developed in this proposal is largely unique but necessary in that it aims to support the needs of different communities across RCT. It is considered that at this stage the low levels of entrepreneurial activity, and in particular the very low levels of new-start social enterprise development, makes the partnership model of pre-incubation support the most viable option.

A major challenge facing this model is communication. Communication between the network members and between the hub and the spokes, including communication with developing entrepreneurs. This challenge will be met via the use of technology, in particular information communication technology.

The Network will be developed along the lines of an online community of interest. Bi-monthly meetings will be arranged to allow for personal interaction and traditional networking activities. These meetings will focus on specific elements within the pre-incubation service, allow for discussion on project development, enable a forum for the development of other initiatives such as that required by the Heads of The Valleys and Communities@One programme and promote links with other sectors. Attendance at these meetings will be optional and related to interest in the content.

Operational communication will be enabled via the use of ICT. The Hub will develop an online, internet-based, resource in support of all pre-incubation needs. Clearly this will be a long-term development project within the pre-incubation service and will require some level of financial resource, although in large-part freely available programmes and software will be used. Early stage development has identified the following applications;

- Creation of Pre-Incubation Central website to hold information on the pre-incubation service by Communities First Partnership, highlighting success, promoting good practice, notes of meetings, latest developments relating to the development of social enterprise etc.
- Use of Google Applications to support distance partnership working
- Use of SKYPE to support oral / visual communication
- Use of Moodle to develop on-line learning
- Creation of a database of useful websites relating to learning and business support
- Development of relevant and useful Blogs, Wikis and Podcasts
- Online Forums and Chat rooms
- Promotion of social networking facilities
- Marketing Tool for new / developing enterprises
- Promotion of partnership building and cross partnership working to support the development of enterprises looking to extend markets
- Development of a recruitment tool for employment and work-placements

In summary ICT is identified as a critical, and developing, component in the pre-incubation service and the above relates to initial potential uses.



3.4. How Will the Service Develop Over Time?

3.4.1. Phase 1 (first year) – Phase 1 is seen as a pilot program and will be targeted at the development of enterprise in the identified Communities First Partnerships along with an RCT wide service delivered by the Telecentre And Business School Limited. The main objective will be to develop an effective, pro-active pre-incubation service which meets the need of its beneficiaries. Crucial in this will be the continued development of the Communities First Pre-Incubation Network, the strengthening of the resources within both the Hub and Spokes and the development of the use of ICT. This pilot will be part funded by the DE&T Business Pre-Incubation Fund.

A major aim within the first year will be to ensure that the Hub moves to the next stage in the incubation ladder and establishes a Business Incubation facility with a focus on social enterprise. The Network will look to access a number of funding strands in support of education and learning, particularly based on new technologies, and the development of enterprise, including social enterprise. Activity to include:

- Use of Business Pre-Incubation Fund money to access Convergence Funding to increase pre-incubation activity and resources
- Investigation into the potential for Communities Next Training Budgets and the Communities Trust Fund to support pre-incubation activities
- Increasing links with the local providers of education and training such as Coleg Morgannwg, the University of Glamorgan, local schools and Tydfil Training in support of the development of entrepreneurial training programmes
- Application to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to establish a Social Enterprise Business Incubation Service
- Application to Communities@One to link the use of ICT to the development of social enterprise
- Building of links with Communities First Creative Communities project
- Building of links with Local Service Board in support of pre-incubation activities
- Investigation of the Heads of the Valleys programme to identify areas of support
- Identification of, and support for the development of, building assets to provide space for new business activities
- Investigation of income generation opportunities in support of sustainability
- Investigate extension to the membership of the Network, to include developing social enterprises and private sector business and to investigate the potential for a membership fee to support facilities

3.4.2. Phase 2 (year 2) - Phase 2 will build on the experience of Phase 1 by extending the pre-incubation service to all remaining interested partnerships. It is anticipated that some Communities First Partnerships will have ambitions to establish business incubation facilities and they will be supported in this development.

3.4.3. Phase 3 (years 3 - 5) – A move from pilot to mainstream activity with a focus on establishing a sustainable business incubation service across RCT offering all four stages of business incubation which meets the needs of all network members.

The above outlines the development of the service within RCT but it is crucial that links are forged with other local authorities undertaking similar developments.



4. THE MARKET / BENEFICIARIES

4.1. Market Segments

The Pre-Incubation Service is targeted at meeting the needs of Communities First Partnerships in RCT. Beneficiaries will include Communities First Partnerships and residents within partnership areas. Selection of beneficiaries will be determined by negotiation between individual Communities First Partnerships and the Hub.

Communities First Pre-Incubation Network

In terms of the Pre-Incubation Network all Communities First Partnerships have been invited. Currently 17 partnerships are included. Three partnerships have stated that they do not see business pre-incubation as a priority at this stage but may engage at a later date. The remaining partnerships have not replied to any contact.

Four new partnerships are to be established from April 1st, namely Bryncynon, Gelli, Ystrad and Bryncynon have requested inclusion in the pilot stage while the remaining three will be contact once established.

Pre-Incubation Pilot

Six Communities First Partnerships are included as beneficiaries within the pilot, namely;

- Treherbert (CwmNi)
- Penrhys
- Penywaun
- Cwmaman
- Miskin
- Mountain Ash West (Fernhill)

Also a Pre-Incubation Facility will be establish at the Telecentre And Business School Limited. This facility will have no geographical limit but will focus on business within Rhondda Cynon Taff.

<p>§ Direct beneficiaries (per annum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a minimum of 20 groups receiving pre-incubation support○ a minimum of 10 new business created○ a minimum of 10 new jobs created○ a minimum of 100 volunteering and training opportunities
<p>§ Indirect beneficiaries (per annum)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Over 1000 local residents benefiting from enhanced services in communities that improve well being - in sectors as diverse as creative industries: leisure, tourism and heritage: environment: health and social care.



4.2. Communities First in RCT

RCT Action Plans for 2004 – 2007 were analysed to assess interest in social enterprise as a force to help deliver elements of the plans or as significant force for change. Social enterprise development featured strongly in the action plans of many communities in RCT such as Clydach Vale, Fernhill, Gilfach Goch, Maerdy, Penrhys, Penywaun Enterprise Partnership, Glyn Goch, Cwmni, Cwmaman, Darrenlas, Abercwmboi, Pontygwaith, Rhydfelin and Ynyshir/Wattstown.

Clearly there is a desire to support the development of social enterprise, hence the interest in this project.

Six Communities First Partnerships will establish pre-incubation facilities in Phase 1 of the project.

4.2.1. Treherbert (CwmNi) – Rhys Burton

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	2	2
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	3	2
Number of individuals supported	30	35
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	5	5
Number of people following a relevant qualification	15	20

Results

A result is the final consequence of a sequence of actions or events

Number of new business registered	8	12
Number of new business starting trading	3	5
Number of new jobs created	5	5
Number of people gaining paid employment	7	7
Number of qualifications gained	15	20
Number of people moving into further learning	8	10

Support to develop a derelict petrol station site as units for local social enterprise development



4.2.2. Penrhys – Wayne Carter

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	3	1
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	1	2
Number of individuals supported	15	20
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	20	20
Number of people following a relevant qualification	8	10

Results

A result is the final consequence of a sequence of actions or events

Number of new business registered	2	2
Number of new business starting trading	1	1
Number of new jobs created	4	6
Number of people gaining paid employment	4	6
Number of qualifications gained	8	10
Number of people moving into further learning	7	10

Additional Information

Canolfan Rhys Arts and Education Centre provide a wide range of creative industry opportunities. As an integral part of the draft Sustainability and Social Enterprise Strategy for the Centre (January 2008) it has been identified that there is further scope for development in this area. Pre-incubation support will enable the centre to become a local base for creative industry freelance staff to develop their services and benefit from a central location and the network. In identifying the need for pre-incubation support, two examples are highlighted as follows:

TEMPO

Group of 4/5 freelance artists/media seeking to develop a social enterprise to enhance their service provision in the South Wales area and beyond. The group require support for the following areas:

- Undertake a feasibility study and development of business plan
- Seek best practice in terms of project development
- Marketing of services
- Rental of space/ ICT/Telephone/Broadband and administrative/financial support
- Pre incubation training opportunities that will be identified by the group

Crafty Pilgrims

Crafty Pilgrims is the working title for a volunteer group of 8 local people who are primarily developing craft products as part of the Penrhys Pilgrims Project. Their aim is:

To improve the social and economic prospects of the community of Penrhys Village, through the development of a social enterprise to promote leisure and tourism employment opportunities.



In terms of Pre-incubation support, they are looking to explore the following areas of development:

- Marketing – leaflets/literature/panels/web presence etc.
- Scoping the potential market for development
- Initial start up costs for product development/exploration
- Training
- Use of office space/ICT etc.

By providing a locally developed incubator within Canolfan Rhys, a range of services can be offered and there is clearly scope for cost savings and sharing of resources. The initial start up costs identified below will provide the basis for both identified groups to develop from this and will act as catalysts for other interested individuals/groups that may move towards becoming social enterprises and party of the network.

4.2.3. Penywaun – Gary Foreman

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	1	3
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	3	3
Number of individuals supported	2	30
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	15	20
Number of people following a relevant qualification	4	6

Results

A result is the final consequence of a sequence of actions or events

Number of new business registered	1	2
Number of new business starting trading	1	2
Number of new jobs created	3	2
Number of people gaining paid employment	3	4
Number of qualifications gained	4	3
Number of people moving into further learning	4	15

The Penywaun Enterprise Partnership (PEP) is the Lead Body for Communities First in the Penywaun Ward. PEP was established in 1996 to assist the social, economic and environmental regeneration of Penywaun. Penywaun ranks as the 2nd most deprived ward in Wales.

Penywaun Enterprise Partnership working with Bryncynon Strategy, Arts Factory and Glyn Goch - Less Talk Ltd – a new social enterprise to develop training and job opportunities in the expanding construction market place



4.2.4. Cwmaman – Amanada Orrell

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	2	3
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	3	4
Number of individuals supported	70	70
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	6	6
Number of people following a relevant qualification (15 from groups, 18 referred through training sessions)	33	33

- Individuals from existing groups 10
- Individuals from new groups 15
- Individuals supported 33 (68 possible appointments, minus 25 individuals from existing/new groups), minus 24 attending trips
- Individuals attending trips 12 (same individuals will attend both trips)

Results

Number of new business registered	2	3
Number of new business starting trading	3	2
Number of new jobs created (part or full-time)	5	5
Number of people gaining paid employment	3	3
Number of qualifications gained	27	27
Number of people moving into further learning	13	13

The area has identified two potential community enterprises, the Skate/Climbing project and the Community Woodland. Also work is being undertaken to develop a derelict pub as a community asset, namely the Sheppard's Arms.

4.2.5. Penrhiwceiber, Miskin and Perthcelyn – Darren Jones

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	2	3
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	1	3
Number of individuals supported	30	30
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	12	20
Number of people following a recognised qualification	4	6

Results

Number of new business registered	1	2
Number of new business starting trading	1	2
Number of new jobs created	2	2
Number of people gaining paid employment	2	4
Number of qualifications gained	3	3
Number of people moving into further learning	15	15



The PMP partnership has identified incubation support for local business as a significant component of their service development. They see involvement in this pre-incubation facility as an important first step in this objective. They are currently working with two groups who will immediately benefit from the provision. Over the year they have set of target of 20 local residents accessing the facility.

4.2.6. Mountain Ash West (Fernhill) – Rhian Hopkins

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	2	2
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	2	2
Number of individuals supported	30	30
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	10	10
Number of people following a relevant qualification	8	8

Results

Number of new business registered	1	2
Number of new business starting trading	1	2
Number of new jobs created	1	4
Number of people gaining paid employment	2	2
Number of qualifications gained	6	6
Number of people moving into further learning	6	6

It is proposed that the Pre-incubation centre will be hosted in the new Community Link Building. At a central point in the estate, the building is fully accessible for all. A purpose build office space will be made available, which will be fully equipped with the necessary office stationery and equipment to ensure that budding entrepreneurs and enterprises have the tools to move forward at their own speed.

Currently the Fernhill & Glenboi Communities First programme has several budding social enterprises, the majority of which need an office base and key resources to progress their ideas and initiatives. It is hoped that a key support worker will be available to identify community residents who have an interest in developing business ideas and will be able to signpost those people to the necessary organisation who can move them forward. Support will also be provided by the worker with regard to establishing good administrative practices, financial systems, basic computer skills and other necessary office related functions.

Individuals and groups in the area are looking to develop a range of community business including community transport, community café, cake decoration, childcare, hairdressers, window cleaning, and craft.



4.2.7. Also include in the network are the Communities First Partnerships of :

Darrenlas	Antony Brown
Aberaman South (Abercomboi) (W)	Victoria Snook
Gilfach Goch	Kate O’Sullivan
Cwm Clydach	Keith Davies
Tylorstown	Patricia Fenlon
Jenny O’Hara	Glyncoch
Christine O’Neil	Penygraig
Carol Humphreys	Rhydfelen Central
Cymmer	Louise McGovern
Adele Morgan	Tonyrefail (West)
Bryncynon	Micelle Leyton-Johnston

During the pilot stage support will be limited to awareness raising workshops and signposting of individuals and groups looking to gain pre-incubation support via the TABS provision.

4.2.8. Telecentre And Business School – Paul Nagle

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	10	15
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	5	8
Number of individuals supported	100	150
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	10	10
Number of people following a relevant qualification	50	75

Results

A result is the final consequence of a sequence of actions or events

Number of new business registered	5	8
Number of new business starting trading	3	5
Number of new jobs created	6	10
Number of people gaining paid employment	20	30
Number of qualifications gained	20	30
Number of people moving into further learning	20	30

TABS has invested three years in investigated business incubation in support of social enterprise. The organisation is itself a social enterprise that has provided learning opportunities to local residents within RCT for over 13 years. It is a partnership organisation had has established strong links with most providers of education and training in the area and will work with these partners in support of this service. In particular it will use its sub-contracting arrangement with Tydfil Training to deliver Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA) to encourage entrepreneurship.

Interested individuals attending the 30 hour per week training programme will gain their skills and vocational qualifications through entrepreneurial activities. This programme can cover periods of between three to twelve months, and occasionally



longer, hence offering a significant opportunity for individuals and groups to develop the ideas and skills to successfully establish a business. Where this happens progress will then be to the Pre-Incubation facility within the TABS organisation.

TABS has detail plans to establish a social enterprise business incubator, hence a natural progression from the business pre-incubator for that business model. Experience over the years suggests that approximately 10% of people attending the WBLA provision have the desire to establish a business, hence this is a serious input into the pre-incubation facility.

The organisation will link with other training and education providers and promote the facility. In particular it will link with local schools and target young people following the 14 – 18 Pathways programme. Other areas of recruitment will include the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Unltd and Finance Wales who provide funding and finance for social enterprise development.

4.2.9. Project Targets - Totals

Outcomes

	Year 1	Year 2
Number of existing groups supported	22	30
Number of new groups / partnerships formed	18	23
Number of individuals supported	277	337
Number of volunteers engaged in support activities	78	86
Number of people following a relevant qualification	122	150

Results

A result is the final consequence of a sequence of actions or events

Number of new business registered	20	30
Number of new business starting trading	13	18
Number of new jobs created	26	37
Number of people gaining paid employment	41	55
Number of qualifications gained	83	90
Number of people moving into further learning	73	88

Impacts

The degree of success of a campaign. The outcome of an event expressed in qualitative or quantitative terms

Reduction in unemployment rate		
Reduction in economically inactive rate		
Increase in income generation		
Increase in social enterprise activity and strengthening of the third sector		

For Summary see Appendix 8



5. PROMOTION

5.1. Tools

Essential tools include:

- § Website, blog and discussion groups
- § Promotion Pack: brochure: newsletter/briefings
- § Email newsletter
- § Power point presentations
- § Use of Social Enterprise Case studies, Quality/ Procurement/ Asset Development Toolkits
- § Social Entrepreneur Web based networks
- § Information packs summarising potential investment available to new start ups and those at early stage development
- § These tools will be 'piggy backed' through voluntary sector support organisations mail outs and through links to key websites

5.2. Communities First Partnerships

The Communities First partnerships included in the Pre-Incubation Network will use existing marketing budgets and activities to promote the pre-incubation service within their communities

5.3. Support Agencies

Investigations will be undertaken with all support agencies within the Communities First Pre-Incubation Network to identify the potential to access expertise and funding within their organisation in support of promotional activities.



6. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INCUBATOR TEAM

6.1 Communities First Pre-Incubation Network

The development of the project is being supported by a Communities First Pre-Incubation Network (*see Appendix 1 for membership*). Its purpose is to:

- § To champion the project
- § Shape and sign off the business plan
- § Support the development of a partnership that will help focus business support
- § Help win resources to make the project happen - in kind and financial
- § Promote project activities

6.2. The Team

The work of the Pre-Incubator will be driven by a team of 2 people. The support roles combine a mix of **coordination, facilitation** and **catalyst**.

Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Stimulate demand for services from organisations and individuals § Facilitation and support to existing Business support network § Identification of new market opportunities in RCT § Liaison with existing and potential investors
Admin/Finance Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Admin and finance § Hot desking, managed workspace and IT facilities

The current TABS team has extensive transferable experience and skills in supporting individuals on learning pathways, personal development and confidence building, ICT training and work based learning. Staffs also have experience managing complex and fast moving learning contracts and service level agreements.

6.3. Selection Panel

While it is accepted that business pre-incubation by definition includes an element of selection, it is likely that the use of selection criteria within the pilot phase of the service will be marginal and focused at individual Communities First Partnership level. This component of business incubation will be developed over time, along with the development of the service itself, through negotiations between Network members. (*See Appendix 7 for Selection Criteria – A Note For Discussion*)

6.4. Advisory Group

An Advisory Group will be recruited from the Communities First Pre-Incubation Network. This flexible resource will be available to the social enterprises to assist with thorny issues and advice. The Advisory Group will be invited to networking and training events at TABS where they will have the opportunity to meet social enterprises. The networking will also take place via email and video conferencing – at times convenient to the group members.



6.5. Team Support

The following key skills/knowledge/experience and participation in key networks will be vital to ensure success:

- § Understanding of benchmarked best practice in the field of social enterprise incubation. Experience in this market place is quite rare in the UK. This incubator will access quality support from the UK Business Incubation Association.
- § TABS is a founder member of the Pan Wales Business Incubation Practitioners Network and has access to the leading authorities across Wales in the area of business incubation
- § TABS has established a partnership with Newport and Gwent Enterprise Agency via their Taste of Enterprise (TOE) Project. This partnership will fast track the transfer of best practice to assist with the set up phase. This partner views TABS as an important partner in their plans to establish stronger networks of business support agencies - both physical and virtual.
- § TABS has established a partnership with the Innovation Centre (www.innovationcentre.co.uk) a Luton based incubation service that is part of a wider incubation network including Cambridge University and European partners in Poland. This partnership will fast track the transfer of best practice to assist with the set up phase. This partner views TABS as an important partner in their plans to establish stronger networks of business support agencies - both physical and virtual.
- § Coaching and Mentoring. Mentoring relationship will be essential for social enterprises seeking incubation support. TABS staff will take on mentors through Luton based Innovations Centre to inform and develop their own practice. TABS is member of the Development Trust Association, Community Enterprise Wales (Associate Consultant Status) and INTERLINK and hence has access to individuals within these networks. TABS staff are providing mentoring support through Regen School – this expertise will be transferred to this project.



7. MONITORING AND EVALUTATION

7.1 The Framework

The Communities First Pre-Incubation Service is a new and innovative approach to supporting business development within Rhondda Cynon Taff. This Business Plan details the activities which will be undertaken over the first two years while the service is developed.

Every attempt will be made to ensure that the expertise existing within the network is maximised to deliver an effective service. External links will be forged with relevant organisations with the aim of replicating good practice.

Additionally a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be developed to ensure that every opportunity is taken capture both success and failure and to reflect on both with a view to improving the service. The Framework will be developed by the network in the early stages of the project but will include as a minimum the following;

7.2 Pre-Implementation Stage

- Clear project objectives
- Confirmation of outcomes / results / impacts (SMART)
- Identification of Performance Indicators
- Clear Timetable for implementation
- Detail costs of planned inputs
- Analysis of existing response to the challenge of business development
- Analysis of business development activities in comparable areas

7.3 Implementation Stage

- Monitor Progress
 - o Monitor inputs
 - o Monitor outputs
 - o Monitor key milestones
 - o Investigate any other core tracking data that does not relate to the above but may be useful
 - o Allow the monitoring to influence implementation

7.4 Post-Implementation – Evaluation

- Compare outcome data with the baseline
- Calculate the cost effectiveness of the project
- Calculate the costs of the project, including any inputs monitored during the project
- Compare the cost of the project with the cost of previous responses to the problem and estimate any savings
- Examine comparable areas
- Examine trends in the wider area and any similar comparison area to asses impact

At this stage it is expected that all monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken through the use of expertise existing within the Pre-Incubation Network.



8. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND INVESTMENT REQUIRED

8.1. Total Costs

Total project costs for the first 2 years are £254,695.

Year 1 - £128,104

Year 2 - £126,591

8.2. Capital Costs

The Capital cost relate to ICT equipment including laptops, PC systems and printers required by the spokes for the use of incubatees.

8.3. Revenue Costs

The revenue cost include;

- Salaries & on-cost for the Project Manager and Finance / Administration Support
- External support to promote and encourage entrepreneurial activity – this activity is best invested in the Hub as it relates equally to all partners
- General overheads for both the Hub and Spokes
- Resources including
- Childcare to ensure inclusivity

8.4 Project Earned Income

As a general principle businesses working at the pre-incubation stage will receive the service free. The focus of this business plan is to establish service which will require grant funding to operate. However financial sustainability is a major long-term outcome and the project will generate significant activity aimed at income generation. This activity will be largely invested with the HUB and a move to other stages of business incubation which offer greater potential for commercial activities.

8.5. Funding the Pilot

Investment for this first 2 years will be sought from the DE&T Business Pre-Incubation Fund. It is accepted that the total financial demands identified in the process of developing the Business Plan cannot be met entirely by this fund. Negotiations have been undertaken with all partners to identify the minimum finances needed to start the process. It will then be a main objective of employed staff to access necessary funding to meet the funding gap. Items that can be put aside initially as:-

- TABS – all detailed expenditure is needed by this partner
- PMP - capital, resources and childcare
- Cwmni – resources and Enterprise Support
- Penywaun - capital
- Penrhys - training, resources and enterprise support
- Fernhill - capital and childcare
- Cwmaman - childcare

TABS	Cwmni	PMP	Penywaun	Penrhys	Fernhill	Cwmaman	
55,246	£6,434	£3,500	£2,959	£5,000	£7,468	3,500	£84,107



9. SWOT ANALYSIS

9.1. Strength

- § Strong Communities First Pre-Incubation Network
- § Commitment and passion - TABS has a 13 + year old track record supporting learning and pathways into work; CF Partnerships 6 year track record
- § Social Enterprise Incubator is in both WAG Incubation strategy and RCT Economic Regeneration Strategy
- § Strong WAG DE&T 'buy in' to develop the project
- § Partnership with Newport & Gwent Enterprise Agency (TOE)
- § Partnership with Innovation Centre, Luton - a strong source of best practice, mentoring, training and access to University and European networks
- § Ability to deliver accredited training
- § IT expertise
- § Opportunities to share overheads at Porth Operation
- § Hot desking space – in both Hub & spokes
- § Member of Business Incubation Association
- § Member of The all Wales Incubation Practitioners Group
- § Member of Social Enterprise Development Partnership Fund Advisory Group
- § Member of DTA – with strong access to key Community First Partnerships

9.2. Weakness

- § Limited experience providing business support services
- § Current weak asset base

9.3. Opportunity

- § The WAG (DE&T) Pre-Incubation Fund has identified a clear need and view TABS as a suitable delivery partner
- § Key Communities First Partnerships have identified social enterprise development as key strands of their action plans and many have firm projects needing immediate intensive support
- § Opportunities to up skill existing TABS staff (in partnership with Innovation Centre, Luton & Newport & Gwent Enterprise Agency (TOE) through best practice knowledge transfer, mentoring and training
- § RCT recognises that Social Enterprise business model with growth potential have a role to play in disadvantaged communities - and in future growth sectors of the economy (esp. construction/maintenance)
- § Opportunities to purchase existing premises in Porth

9.4. Threat

- § Potential lack of cooperation from business support agencies – especially those tasked with supporting social enterprise
- § Fragmented funding environment
- § Current short term uncertainty over the roll out of Convergence funding



10. RISKS

The key risks associated with this project are getting the right management team in place, delays – especially uncertainty over European Convergence Funding and joining up existing business support agencies.

10.1. Management Team – Delivering support to new social enterprise using a business incubation model is new in Wales and very young across the UK. The management team driving this new project needs to be appraised of best practice in providing this support. The approach developed has been to build a broad based partnership with existing business support organisations identifying where the win/win relationships exist and planning out actions to build on this. In addition the project has created a partnership with The Innovation Centre, a Luton based business incubator.

This partnership will support the TABS management team with mentoring support to key team members: be a channel for knowledge and skills transfer: and actively seek out UK and European project opportunities

10.2. Delays - Any project looking to develop a mixed funding base will experience challenges faced by different funders working to different timetables and able to make decisions at different speeds. These delays can cause drift and are one of the biggest sources of frustration.

The approach that will be adopted here is target early funders to come on board. Early supporters have been identified to fund early/launch phase and use this commitment to give confidence to other funders to back later phases

10.3. Convergence Funding - Uncertainty over European Convergence Funding is a challenge faced by all Valleys based local authorities. The framework for assessing needs and distributing the finance is still being developed. This 'limbo' period risks stalling all regeneration projects in South Wales for the first half of 2007. The project is actively being positioned in emerging actions and measures.

The TABS team are working actively with project champions in the local authority (who sit on the project steering group) and regeneration partnerships to ensure the social enterprise incubator remains to be viewed as a strategically important project that should be supported. All indications to date have been positive.

10.4. Business Support Agency Cooperation - Business support agencies in South Wales do not have a strong track record of cooperation. The development phase of this project has involved establishing the basis of cooperation that is possible between theoretically competing business support agencies. The win/win and mutual benefit opportunities are summarised in Appendix 3. The Incubator Manager will work closely to further develop these win/win opportunities.



11. TIME LINE

The aim is to have the service operational by July 2008 by progressing against this time line:

11.1. Pre Launch - June 2008

- § Confirmation of support from Pre-Incubation Fund (DE&T)
- § Brand development: on line - website development: off line - promotional materials: flyers; leaflets: headed paper: business cards etc
- § Staff development - establishment of mentoring relationships for key staff with Luton partners The Innovations Centre.
- § Recruitment of Selection Panel membership
- § Recruitment of business mentors
- § Equip managed workspace and hot desking areas in Porth
- § Establish virtual incubation infrastructure
- § Steering Group - Discussion with group about its involvement post launch Advisory Group. Recruitment of additional Advisory Group members.

11.2. Launch – July 2008

- § Win positive media profile
- § Promotion of opportunities with social enterprises, support agencies and other key opinion formers

11.3. Operational – July 2008

- § Assessment of first businesses
- § Pre-Incubation commences
- § Ongoing promotion of opportunities
- § Ongoing transfer of best practice from incubation and business support

12. MORE INFORMATION

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