

THE ROLE OF EU-FUNDED RESEARCH NETWORKS IN PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE-INTENSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship (KIE) can be considered a key driving force for an innovation-led and high-growth development path by converting useful knowledge into innovative new ventures.^[1] Therefore, it can enhance the Greek economy's innovation and knowledge content, and long-term developmental prospects. At the same time, the EU-funded Framework Programmes (FPs) and the research partnerships and networks that are developed through them are supposed to create and diffuse innovation across and within Member States.^[2] Considering the intense and steady participation of Greece in the FPs across time^[3], this paper examines whether FP-based collaborative R&D networks can promote KIE by allowing young Greek firms a) to gain access to a considerable amount of resources and b) to develop relationships with actors exhibiting a high degree of diversity. The second research objective is to unveil the nature of young firms participating in FPs by examining their characteristics and role in the projects.

For the first objective, we conducted Social Network Analysis (SNA) using the STEP-to-RJVs database (developed by LIEE-NTUA including detailed information on all collaborative research projects funded by EU), to describe the structural characteristics of the networks, the position of Greek young firms in them and the collaboration patterns among these firms and other network actors. Regarding the second objective, we conducted extensive desk research to develop a database highlighting the characteristics of Greek firms (including their founders' traits) established from 2010 onwards that have also participated in at least one FP7 and/or H2020 project. Our findings show that these firms are embedded in highly interconnected networks, having access to a large amount of technological knowledge and information held by diverse actors (in terms of type, sector, and centrality position). In addition, they are largely knowledge-intensive and can assume multiple project roles, while their participation is related to their research-intensive orientation. Moreover, their specialized knowledge and capabilities can make them attractive partners to network incumbents and facilitate their network entry.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge-Intensive Entrepreneurship, Framework Programmes, Social Network Analysis, Desk Research

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