



BOLOGNA INCREDIBOL

Supporting young creative entrepreneurs in Bologna

Incredibol supports young entrepreneurs developing their own business and networks in the Emilia Romagna region's cultural and creative industries sector.

It is based around a network of partners made up of public and private institutions that helps establish new creative enterprises.

CREATIVE PROBLEMS...

Bologna's creative sector is booming but it is quite fragmented and has few well-structured enterprises, as creative entrepreneurs often lack the managerial and organisational skills to develop a sound business. This results in low profits for the region's 77 000 artisanal businesses, and a 'brain drain' as creative people move to other regions.

...CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Incredibol is promoted by the municipality of Bologna to support the creative and cultural businesses of the region, particularly during their start-up phase.

It offers creative entrepreneurs a one-stop-shop for guidance, advice, training, free creative spaces, financial contributions and other tools help them establish and grow their businesses through a network of public-private partnerships. Incredibol receives a small amount of funding and so relies on the multiplier effect and its network, the community and the positive attitude of all participants for promotion and its success.

Incredibol encourages creative entrepreneurs through grants and specific tools:

- a network of partners to help entrepreneurs solve managerial and legal issues; they also offer training and consulting assistance
- the municipality of Bologna assigns rent-free spaces to creative entrepreneurs to use as offices, laboratories and warehouses
- promoting the work of the creative entrepreneurs through the network and Incredibol's partners
- financial contributions to creative entrepreneurs to help them market their work outside the region and internationally
- tutoring activities and workshops/seminars based on the artists' needs.

The programme targets creative entrepreneurs at the beginning of their careers. Incredibol selects them through an open call for innovative projects. Working with its network of partners, Incredibol selects those they consider will benefit most from the programme. 95 people applied during the first call in 2010 and 12 were selected; the second call received 148 applications of which 20 were finally chosen.

The increase in the applications underlines the creative and cultural industries (CCI) sectors' growing interest in and awareness of the project; it also reveals the importance of the initiative.

Incredibol is an innovative project because it goes beyond financial contributions to address the creation of a fertile network that constantly produces positive spill over effects.

The programme is an initiative of the municipality of Bologna (Culture Area), and is now run by the department of economy and city promotion.



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SUCSESSES

- 32 creative projects were supported since 2010. These include a visual design studio, a sound-strategy agency, a children's fashion studio and a web platform to match designers, producers and consumers.
- 10 rent-free spaces were assigned.
- Financial contributions of €20 000 were made.
- The winners benefited from more than 500 hours of one-to-one consulting and training.
- The network now has 15 partners.
- A fast-growing creative community is developing in the city and the region.
- Incredibol is recognised as a place to develop policies for the cultural and creative industries.

“ Money does not change your business, the right contacts do ”

Lorelei,
 one of the winners of the first edition

CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges was finding the right way to approach creative entrepreneurs. To resolve this, the Incredibol team analysed the sector, studying its needs and peculiarities. The team also talked to the creative entrepreneurs to get their feedback and involved their partners so that they could design a solution that met the actual needs of the creative entrepreneurs. The team learned that grants in the cultural and creative sector are often less important than suitable spaces, support, contacts and networking.

EXPANSION

In 2013 Incredibol expanded its scope thanks to the direct support of the Emilia Romagna region. It now covers the whole Emilia Romagna region and is able to offer additional services including communication tools and internationalisation activities. Additional funding is available, so that Incredibol can assist more entrepreneurs. Two specific initiatives will support the audio-visual and the design sectors. The latter, in particular, will help create a cooperative working space in the Accademia di Belle Arti (Bologna's prestigious art school) where six selected designers will work for one year tutored by a range of experts.

FUNDING

In 2010 the total budget was €32 000. 50% of this came from Bologna city council and 50% from the state department for youth and the Association of Italian Municipalities.

For 2011, the total budget was €40 000. This time, 50% came from the municipality of Bologna and 50% from Carisbo (Bank Foundation).

For the 2013 call, the programme received €300 000, 100% financed by the Emilia Romagna region. As a result, Incredibol is now able to develop a new set of activities.