

Appendix. Representative Quotes of each 2nd-order theme and 1st-order concept

2nd-order Themes	1st-order Concepts	Representative Quotes*
Target group	Entrepreneur typology	“We do not target; it is a fact that today, the people who come to meet us are people who want to create SMEs or their own jobs.” (IS#Case_A#1)
	Firm/project	“Some incubators generally support the firm; so, they are rather generalist, while others are strictly dedicated to supporting innovative firms.” (IM#Case_B#1)
Industry sector	Industry or economic sector	“In the sector of activities, we are generalists. We can work so well on commercial, craft, liberal professions, agriculture, and new technologies.” (IS#Case_A#1); “There is also support for firms in the social economy.” (INS#1)
Geographical area	Area typology	“The more I am in urban areas, the more I have an extremely specialized public view of technological innovation. The more I go to rural areas, the more general projects I have.” (NC#2)
	Area level	“Each incubator can be specialized in relation to geographical territories [departmental, regional, national and international].” (IS#Case_A#1)
Service offering	Generic	“The different services that we received during the 2 years of support were helpful with structuring the business plan and access to the network, and then we benefited from the premises at advantageous rates.” (T#Case_A#3)
	Specific	“We have an incubator staff member who specializes in fundraising and investor relations. Her mission is to be in contact with fundraisers, capital investment funds and business angels and to meet them. Then, we hold events. Every day, we are in a fundraising phase with local business angels. It can be private people who we know in our network.” (IS#Case_B#2)
Competitive environment	Political/territorial impact	“There will be more competition at the policy level than at the operational level because a politician needs to develop employment within his/her territory. So, there is still a notion of competition between territories.” (FE#2)
	Lack of resources	“An incubator that is mainly publicly funded is in danger today because public funds are evaporating.” (INS#1); “It seems that many people want to create incubators, but this will very soon test the limits of funders.” (IM#Case_C#4)
	Potential entrants	“Private incubators arrived with a completely different economic model and can actually directly threaten public-funded incubators.” (IM#Case_C#7)
Organizational structure	Complementarity	“I think that everyone has their place; each person completes and strengthens each tenant” (IS#Case_C#5); “We do not go alone on a firm [...]. We are there to complete, to reassure, and to take part in the risks with others.” (FE#1)
	Incubator size	“There are a multitude of very small incubators. So, it is better to have big incubators. Finally, in my opinion, I see that the academic incubator has 10 projects, while the other has 15. There is no critical size. So, it is better at some point to have a critical size.” (IM#Case_C#3); “The incubator [X] can

provide some shade to other incubators because now it has become very, very, very big. So, there's a little bit of an imbalance; that is how I feel.” (FE#2)

Incubator notoriety “Some people believe that we have too many tenants; so, it is not possible that we do a good job and that we oversell our reputation.” (IM#Case_B#3)
“There is the reputation of the incubator, which means that when you are number one in the world, you have a reputation that is not the same as when you are a small incubator that is geographically distant from the center of the region.” (RE#2)

Nature of relations “We work systematically in co-support with an incubator.” (IM#Case_B#1);
“My project was too innovative, so [the incubator] preferred to send me to a more appropriate one.” (T#Case_A#3); “We subcontract a number of things for [our tenants].” (IM#Case_B#1); “People know each other, people talk to each other, and things are going pretty well.” (NC#2)

Intensity of relations “We very often meet each other during events on business creation or trade fairs, and all the actors are there. It is an opportunity to exchange information and to talk to each other. We invite each other to project reviews.” (IS#Case_C#5)

Individual mindset Willingness to collaborate “I think that it is very important to always prioritize these partnerships, to work with other incubators, and to bring in specialists in many different areas for each working meeting quite regularly for the progress of the project.” (IS#Case_C#5)

Individualistic behavior “As I have statistics to deliver to my funders in terms of productivity with regard to the assigned public funds, instead of sharing a tenant with another incubator, I will keep [the tenant] for myself – even if I consider that this co-support is necessary for the success of the firm.” (NC#2)

Incubator individual benefits Quality “It is the quality of our support that depends on [the ecosystem]. If there were no relationships in this whole ecosystem, our support would be very nice but not efficient enough.” (IS#CASE_A#9)

Best practices “For me, the objective is that I am good, but then, I share what I am good at with others, and they may also bring me other experiences, and then, I am even better.” (IM#Case_A#8)

Ecosystem collective benefits Ecosystem efficiency “When we work together, we have to do it in good intelligence. We must not stack layers on top of each other and do the same job six times because it would cost the community a fortune. It would be counterproductive and unprofitable. With all the money spent, the community is going to ask whether the action is efficient. But we can be in innovation or collaborative work and be effective as a group.” (NC#2)

Synergy effects “The more we are able to work in synergy, the more we improve the performance of everyone.” (FE#1)

* FE=Funding Entity; T=Tenant; INS=Institutional; IM=Incubator Manager; IS=Incubator

Staff; NC=Network Coordinator; RE=Research Entity