

Jan 24, 2019 13:23 CET

## **Fierce competition forces accelerators and incubators to position themselves internationally and specialize in specific industries**

- **Accelerator and incubator numbers have increased fivefold globally in the last ten years**
- **Almost half of them focus on a single industry and have an international strategy**
- **Only 35 percent specialize in one particular technology**

Munich, January 2019: Startups are the drivers of innovation in today's economy. Thousands of accelerators and incubators have been set up around the world to support entrepreneurs striving to get young businesses off the ground. And the numbers are rising, with almost five times more accelerators and incubators present in the global market now than a decade ago. However, their rapid rise is leading to intense competition between programs. These are the findings of the new study, which saw Roland Berger survey a panel of some 200 accelerators and incubators from around the globe ([Download study here](#)).

"No longer can accelerators and incubators thrive just by offering office space or mentoring programs and the like," says Anne Bioulac, Partner at Roland Berger. "They can only survive if they make themselves stand out from the crowd. One of the best ways of doing this is by consistently specializing in one industry or technology and having an international business model."

## **Offers of classic support dominate the market**

So far, such providers have mainly concentrated on classic support functions such as coaching (96%), workshops (90%) and the provision of office space (86%). Only about half of them give startups access to special technologies. While 54 percent of the surveyed institutions specialize in certain industries, just 35 percent focus on a specific area of technology such as the Internet of Things, big data or artificial intelligence. By international comparison, institutions in the United States (65%) already focus the most on individual industries, followed by Europe (59%) and the Middle East and North Africa region (57%).

Accelerators and incubators could also do more to internationalize their business: only just under half of those surveyed are already pursuing an international strategy, expanding into other markets or entering into new partnerships.

"New offerings, such as corporate incubators or programs run by venture capital funds, represent additional competition for accelerators and incubators. And given the high level of liquidity on the financial markets, startups are not dependent on investments from these kinds of providers," comments Anne Bioulac.

Industry incumbents, venture capital funds and government institutions, on the other hand, are all potential customers for established providers: "Accelerators and incubators offer substantial expertise. This means they can support investment decisions in important ways in a market that is very dynamic and extremely opaque," says Bioulac. As such, they can increasingly operate as an interface between startups, incumbents, investors and academia and establish themselves as platforms for technology transfer.

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