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BERYTECH TECHNOLOGICAL POLE

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Introduction

Berytech is the first Lebanese technological pole offering all the appropriate services and the necessary environment for the development of companies and their activities by providing an incubator for start-ups, a business accelerator, and company hosting facilities intended to develop companies and accompany them until their maturity stage and their development on the local, regional or international markets. The experience of Berytech is very recent but unique in Lebanon in incubation; the strategy was based on the understanding that the development of businesses can't be taken up as a stand-alone activity related to infrastructure support without catering to the support services needed by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) at pre operational stage and post operational stage of the enterprise.

Berytech started operation since November 2001. In a period of two years, Berytech has successfully established itself in Lebanon as an important SME promotion and development support institution. It has facilitated the creation of more than 15 SMEs, and hosts more than 12 already established SMEs covering IT, multimedia, tourism and services, with around 130 jobs created.

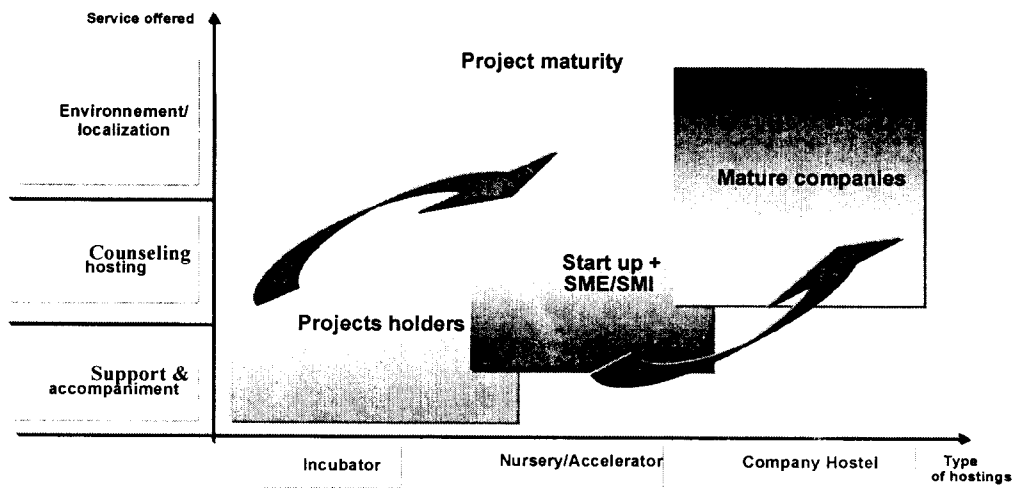
Berytech

Berytech offers all the appropriate services and the necessary environment for the development of companies and their activities by providing an incubator for start-ups, a business accelerator, and company hosting facilities intended to develop companies and accompany them until their maturity stage and their development on the local, regional or international markets.

The incubator of Berytech identifies interesting and innovative projects or ideas and helps them evolve into sustainable companies by providing the adequate technical assistance (develop business plans and entrepreneurship culture, legal and intellectual property aspects, etc.), access to financial support, and full hosting capabilities within small offices for a limited period between 6 to 8 months.

The business accelerator of Berytech provides the necessary means, services and assistance, as well as links to financial needs for newly-born companies to launch their commercial activities, both locally and internationally.

The business hosting facilities of Berytech welcome well-established SMEs (both local and international companies) in innovative businesses that need to benefit from a high-tech environment, and are looking to become part of a group synergy and cluster with other companies in Berytech and other technological poles to complement and broaden their activities and be open to both local and international markets.



Berytech also proposes additional services such as counselling and coaching in various areas such as finance, accounting, HR, legal and so forth.

The rich documentation center in Berytech is a relaxing space adequate for doing research and readings with direct links with thousands of databases. Information is available electronically via digital support, and hardcopy such as books and periodical magazines.

A training room is also available equipped with powerful workstations, connected permanently to hi-speed Internet. It allows both initial and continuous training to IT, Windows or Linux, and also provides the setup for training to new digital audio-video technologies, such as e-learning and multimedia tool creation.

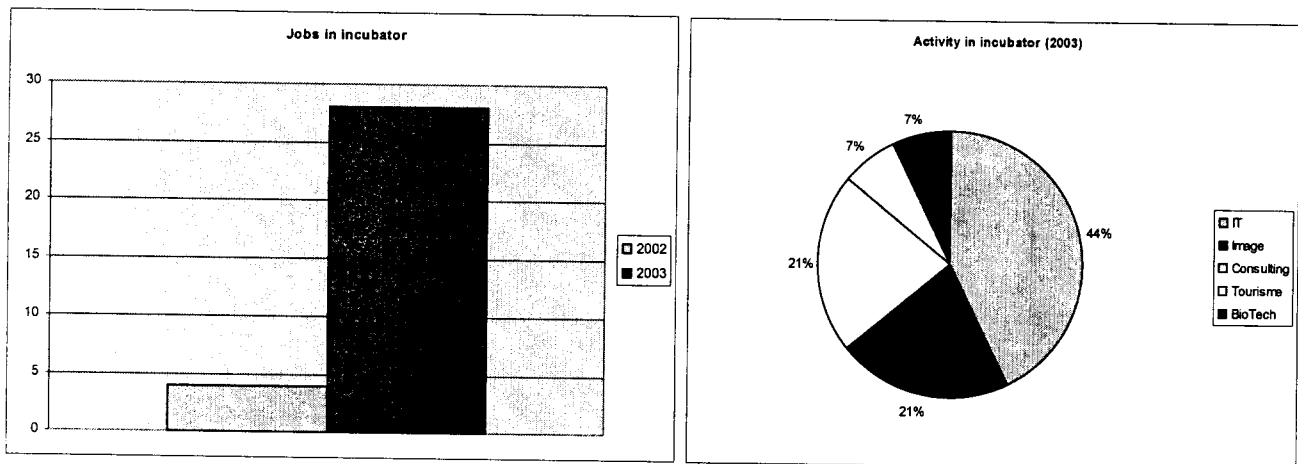
BERYTECH offers meeting rooms and videoconferencing auditoriums equipped with state-of-the-art audiovisual tools. The rooms' capacities are between 10, 16, 40, and 300 places, welcoming training sessions, interviews, workshops, etc.

Built within the Campus of Science & Technology of the University St. Joseph, Berytech and the hosted companies have privileged access to all the available technological platforms necessary for their technical development: laboratories, research centers, documentation and resources centers, and the E-Campus of the AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie), as well as rapid availability of manpower (human resources such as students or field experts).

Activity Report (2002-2003)

Incubator

The Berytech building was inaugurated on November 2001. The activity of the incubator started slow in 2002 and then picked up in 2003, as can be seen in the following graphs.



More than 30 projects were evaluated over 24 months of existence, and Berytech reached around 40% incubator occupancy in December 2003, with a little less than 30 jobs created and an average of 2 persons per project (or company). The target is to raise the occupancy to 100% in 2004 which would inevitably raise the number of jobs.

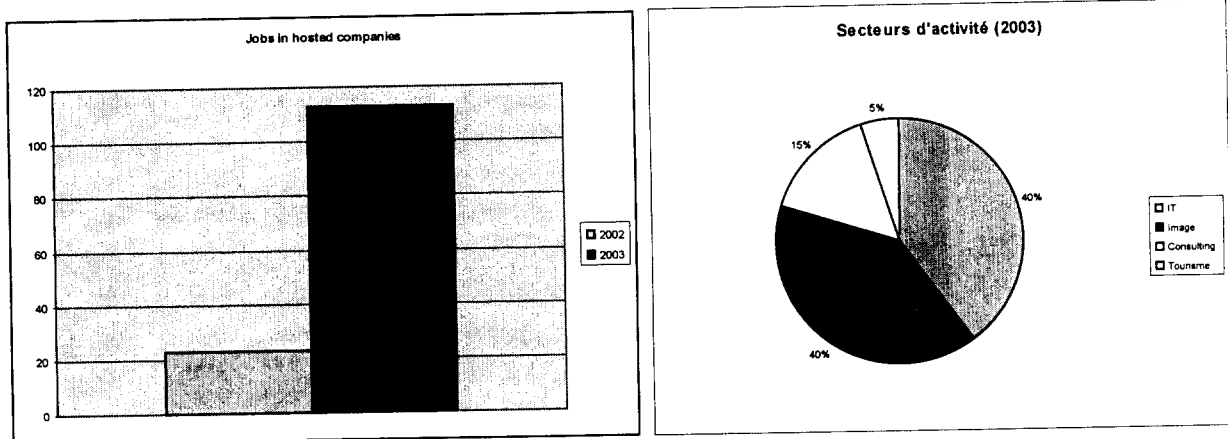
Below is a summary of the projects and companies that integrated the incubator and their sector of activities. Some projects may choose to leave Berytech to other premises when the company is created and activities launched.

Shown below a couple of examples of how Berytech incubator customizes the appropriate help to selected projects.

Name	Project	Sector	Origin	Incubator's input
Skuldtech – Liban	Thematic ADN chips	Biotechnology	lab research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Industrial protection, patents ➤ Entrepreneurial training ➤ Market Study / Business Plan ➤ Links with foreign partners (France)
Chabakat	Wireless ISP	IT	employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Entrepreneurial training ➤ Business Plan ➤ Links with investors (KAFALAT)

Business accelerator/hosting

In addition to the incubator activities, Berytech has been for the last two years actively creating clusters around a nucleus of major players in the Lebanese movie and IT industries, reassembling several specialized Lebanese companies in the film production and IT, thus becoming the reference as “media and IT village” in these two uprising sectors in Lebanon. Companies and organizations in the these two industries choose to be hosted in Berytech to work in synergy with each other as a cluster in complementarities of competences, optimizing their investments, equipment and human resources, resulting in an economy of scope thus leveraging their market offer and creating an attraction pole for movie production or IT development. For example, Berytech is becoming a “one-stop-shop” for the movie industry because of the complete cycle chain of a movie creation and development: Laboratory of movie development, Laboratory of telecinema, Laboratory of movie restoration and unit of storage, Laboratory of post-production, 2D and animated drawings, Architectural 3D, Sound studio, Video clips and TV programs, Multimedia digital edition, Light engineering, Engineering and installation of movie equipment, Professional training, both initial and continuous (in progress): Academic Agency of the Francophonie (audio-visual Masters).



Berytech also helped initiate the creation of the “Fondation Liban Cinema”, which is an association gathering all the professionals in the film industry, companies, free-lancers, academics and students. It has been created to help fund the support for promotion, film creation and facilitate the development of coproductions. The Foundation is hosted in Berytech to benefit from the dynamics created by the media pole within.

Direct assistance to companies and entrepreneurs in Lebanon

In addition to the help provided to the companies and start-ups hosted in the technological pole, Berytech is also setting up programs for technical assistance to companies outside the technological pole, such as:

- Industrial Modernization Program funded by the European Commission and supporting the development of private sector manufacturing in Lebanon, with particular emphasis on established Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in food processing, printing, packaging, tanning and shoe manufacturing
- Revitalization of Small and Medium Industries in South Lebanon, a joint UNIDO/Berytech project on Entrepreneurship Development and Computer Training courses, counseling, and follow-up coaching with a select group of entrepreneurs.

International partnerships

Berytech is part of a network of European techno-parks for international visibility of the pole and the tenants companies. As a result, the companies are open to local and international firms for business-matching opportunities, and potential partners would help in assisting the project, such as finding local and international markets for outputs

Berytech also prospects to find partnerships with neighboring countries and namely Europe; contacts with the region of Charente-Poitou and the city of the Rochelle in France for the development of a cooperation in the image industry in Lebanon are already begun well. An audit mission on behalf of two experts of the European Union is underway to diagnose the local film industry and identify the technical needs and elaborate action plans to raise the current level of production, quality criteria, operation modes and continuous professional formation in the best European training centers.

Also, a partnership is signed between Berytech and SOPHIA ANTIPOLIS science-park, considered the best reference in France. Berytech is also an associate member of the European Business Network (EBN), which is the leading European network gathering more than 200 similar organizations such as incubators, innovation centers and entrepreneurship centers.

In order to broaden the scope of the international partnership, Berytech is interested with an agreement based on developing the following actions:

1. to encourage scientific, technological and commercial relations between laboratories and companies established in both Berytech and Campania regions, having activities of common interest.
2. to facilitate information exchange, partnership, technology transfer, and to help companies in Berytech and Campania.
3. to facilitate the exchange of post-graduate students and trainees between institutions and companies of each region.
4. to represent, on a reciprocal basis, an entry door to institutions and local administrations and to serve as guides to potential local investments.
5. to encourage the exchange of development programs in all areas of interest for both regions,
6. to undertake a periodic assessment of the actions in-progress.
7. to develop a "Business.Connect" portal which allows business matching and lab promotion with all members of the site, and provides visibility to the hosted companies in Berytech and the region of Campania within the network.