

**Abstract**

Regional policies for entrepreneurship are currently going through a transition from increasing the quantity of entrepreneurship to the quality of entrepreneurship. The next step will be the transition from entrepreneurship policy towards policy for an entrepreneurial economy. The entrepreneurial ecosystem approach has been heralded as a new framework accommodating these transitions. This approach starts with the entrepreneurial actor, but emphasizes the context of productive entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not only the output of the system, entrepreneurs are important players themselves in creating the ecosystem and keeping it healthy.

This research briefing reviews the entrepreneurial ecosystem literature, its shortcomings, and provides a novel synthesis. The entrepreneurial ecosystem approach speaks directly to practitioners, but its causal depth and evidence base is rather limited. This article provides a novel synthesis including a causal scheme of how the framework and systemic conditions of the ecosystem lead to particular entrepreneurial activities as output of the ecosystem and new value creation as outcome of the ecosystem. In addition it provides a framework for analyzing the interactions between the elements within the ecosystem. This offers a much more rigorous and relevant starting point for subsequent studies into entrepreneurial ecosystems and the regional policy implications of these.