

## Accompaniment of Entrepreneurs in Tunisia

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**ABSTRACT:** *In all countries, viable businesses constitute a guarantee for economic growth and development. Therefore, accompaniment, which is imposed on public authorities, is an important element for the sustainability and success of businesses. Because business creation is assumed to be the cornerstone of economic development, the viability of businesses is necessary for the establishment of effective accompaniment structures, which crucially necessitates supporting its development. The objective of the current paper is to analyze the measures of support and accompaniment of entrepreneurs and to identify the various aids available in the region of Sfax which constitutes an important economic center in Tunisia. To reach this end, semi-structured interviews were submitted to 27 agents of business intervention and consultants in entrepreneurship management. The methodological investigation revolves around the following two dimensions: types and needs of interventions and resources placed at their disposal. The results of this research have highlighted the need for the training of the accompanying interveners and greater personalization of tools offered to them.*

**Keywords:** *Accompaniment, interveners, financing needs, complementarity.*

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### I. Introduction

As an important vehicle for economic development, the company must be surrounded by the greatest care and take advantage of great interest since its disappearance is costly to the community (Sammut, 2000). If we rely on the results of the PACE survey (1998), the chances of entrepreneurs' survival would be 67% when consulting a counselor, against 56% otherwise. So, some steps should be taken and implemented tools are to be put at work so as to ensure the viability of these entities and to avoid the problems arising at their disappearance. The need for such measures is undoubtedly vital since advice and support of entrepreneurs are beneficial and fruitful. Certainly, accompaniment and support systems have gradually developed (Fayolle, 2004).

However, according to Marion (1999), the effectiveness of these support devices remains mitigated. Bares (2004) highlighted the lack of specialized skills and the lack of regional complementarity in France. Thus, entrepreneurship is necessary for local development, particularly in remote areas. The ability to support entrepreneurial development is crucial. This mutually concerns the central authorities and the local agents.

Even if access to financial capital fall within the central government, human capital and social capital incumbent on the local responsible agents are very often regarded as a matter that concerns the local environment (Cappelletti, L., 2010; Evald, M.R., Klyver, K., & Christensen, P.R., 2011).

Kamdem, E., Nkakleu, R., Fouda Ongodo, M., Biboum, AD, & Ikelle, R. (2011) argue that under the influence of local agents, the region can experience real changes and ensure an economic dynamic, especially in the presence of accompanying practices. According to Kokou Doku (2001) and Dorota, Leszczynska (2014), there is a clear need for support of young enterprises, except that this support remains insufficient.

It is worth noting that the support systems to business creation and the entrepreneurial accompaniment methods have aroused little interest among researchers engaged in the field of entrepreneurship (Fayolle, 2004). Although the importance of support and accompaniment measures is evident, they remain perfectible (Chaubaud, D et al. (2010). For Bares (2004), it is essential to continue research on the supporting devices, especially because the results of research undertaken to date remain mitigated.

Through the approach of the current paper, we will analyze the measures of support and accompaniment of entrepreneurs in the region of Sfax-Tunisia in order to assess whether the various aids available are related to the perceived needs. To this end, we conducted interviews with interveners having business relationships with the entrepreneurs of this region.

First, it is appropriate to provide clarification of the concept of support and accompaniment of entrepreneurs. Then, we will present the general approach of the study before coming to the findings.

No doubt that the need for training of accompanists interveners, the need for better coordination of the various agencies and the need for the customization of tools offered to interveners which are necessary conditions to ensure the company's survival and success. The first measures to support business creation date back to the late 1970. These measures specifically were targeting firms in their process of creation.

It is worth noting that local actors, as the Chamber of Commerce, are responsible for these measures. Assistance is offered, according to François Royer (2003), in the form of loans or grants. The aim is to increase the number of start-ups. Later, other measures have sought to reduce the failure rate of businesses. These measures are

based on mechanisms for monitoring the evolution of funding projects. Then, in replacement of direct loans, other measures have focused on the training of managers and on strengthening monitoring procedures. This measure is taken so as to promote the funding of aid and training organizations (Omri and Frikha A., M., 2012). The focus has now become on the development of new forms of support and assistance designed specifically to meet the needs of innovative projects. Hence, the first forms of incubators have arisen. According to Gibb (2000), the concept of support refers to intervention programs subsidized by public funds: training, secured loans, financing, consulting etc. All these aid measures are upstream or downstream of the entrepreneurial process (Omri and Frikha A., M., 2012).

In fact, some measures were implemented to encourage business creation; others targeted the development of sustainable businesses (François-Noyer, 2003). According to Chrisman and McMullan (2004), the devices that are implemented and made at work have varied objectives. Some devices are seeking to develop a network (Hansen, 1995), or setting a management team (Rice, 2002); others seek to raise capital (Bygrave and Timmons, 1992), or to prepare a business plan (Smeltzer et al. 1991). Howard (1990) and Souren et al. (2014) state that in order to meet the different needs of businesses and entrepreneurs, different procedures can be performed: training programs, business incubation, mentoring, networking, low interest rate loans, grants and guarantees, supportive government regulations, etc.

In 2001, the OECD presented a synthesis of youth entrepreneurship promotion devices which target a specific audience as different support programs are designed and implemented to enhance youth business creation. However, many of these devices are commonly used by relatively older people. Moreover, there is no doubt that no country has implemented these features in their entirety.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the optimal, systematic and ideal implemented process.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Promoting Entrepreneurship Devices**

<b>Training outside the regular education system</b>	<b>Business management skills</b> <b>Entrepreneurial qualities</b>
<b>Aid at startup</b> <b>Aid in the development of the company</b>	<b>Funding:</b> <b>Capital: loans, grants, awards</b> <b>Access to credit</b> <b>Premises Equipment</b> logistic support <b>Ideas, advice and guidance</b> <b>operational support</b> Planning operational management Financial management
<b>Network formation</b>	<b>national and international associations</b>
<b>Transfers between generation</b>	Of information through consulting Of enterprises and activities during retirement

Source: l'OCDE (2001)

For Howard (1990), there exist three types of support that can facilitate business start-ups: financial support, strategic support and commercial support. Similarly, Bares (2004) identifies three areas to facilitate access to enterprise creation: Financial support, network advice and logistical support. For a creation ex nihilo, we appealed to the strategic, financial, legal and tax consulting. We also have recourse to the establishment of functional policies such as production, communication, sales, management and human resources (Kokou Doku, 2001). For Maggioni et al. (1999), there are two goals for these measurements: encouraging people to become entrepreneurs and training them, and reducing the costs associated with entrepreneurial activities.

These measures, in their totality, enhance access to three types of capital: financial capital, human capital and social capital. The first relates to government measures that allow entrepreneurs to have access to the various funds in the form of grants or loans. The other two measures concern the local agents. They are able to facilitate the acquisition of human capital and social capital (Schuller, T., 2007; Cappelletti, L., 2010). The training programs and counselors' monitoring allow entrepreneurs to learn new skills and to be related to various networks (Souren et al, 2014. Bregeon et al, 2014.). The entrepreneurial accompaniment is part of a perspective of help and advice in the creation and strategic management (Boulayoune, A. 2012; and Deltour F. and Lethiais V., 2014).

According to Julien (1997), there is a method based on the heuristic and systemic decision. Chabaud et al. (2010) add that the accompaniment to business creation procedures have become routine and are among of the socio-economic concerns. Collective actions have raised awareness to business creation and accompaniment of the creators coming from the need to provide regions with business energy (Johannison 1988).

## II. The Accompaniment

In the English language, the term accompaniment means counseling, coaching, tutoring, sponsorship or even mentoring. In fact, we retain that support is not limited to the field of entrepreneurship. It concerns as well educational, vocational training, , hospital setting, sport, legal, social, and socio-economic fields, etc. (Boulayoune, A. 2012). These numerous fields of application has made accompaniment difficult to identify as a practice that ought to be adapted to various situations. Figure 1 illustrates the nebulous of accompaniment as advocated by Paul (2002).

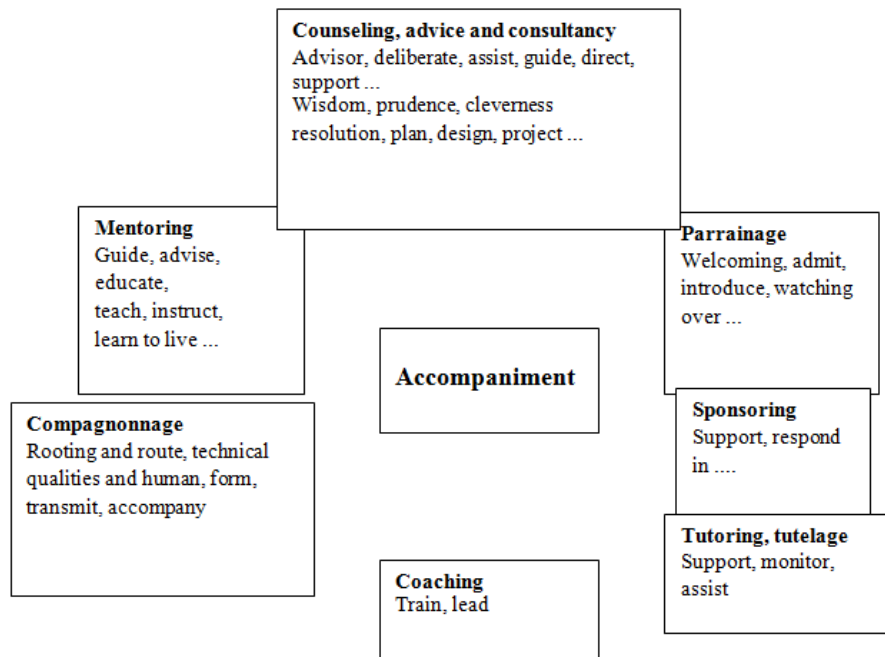


Figure 1: The Nebulous of Accompaniment (Paul, 2002 P.56)

Although accompaniment is characterized by different aspects, it has, nevertheless, common characteristics which are based on the same logic. For Roberge (2002), the true essence of accompaniment stems from the relational position, values and ethics. According to Paul (2002), accompanying means 'joining someone to go along with him where he goes.' Thus, accompaniment is both an art and a craft. In this sense, Roberge (2002) notes that the accompanist profession is the art of the relationship which allows the accompanied person in a given context to walk on his own path at his own pace, depending on his needs and personal goals. Accompaniment connects an accompanying person and the accompanied (Deltour F. et Lethiais V., 2014). The challenge for the accompanying person is not to do something for the accompanied contractor, but to bring him to do it himself (Roberge, 2002). The great challenge for the accompanying person is to put at the service of the accompanied contractor his knowledge, expertise and uniqueness by ensuring never to substitute for him. In entrepreneurship, accompaniment must meet certain conditions. The advisors must be experienced so that he can provide the necessary advice and use the service of "just-in-time". In this sense, the aid should take place just when the need is felt (Chrisman and McMullan, 2004). Accompaniment facilitates the learning of the first business and managerial functions for the entrepreneur (Boulayoune, A. 2012). Thus, the accompanied entrepreneur will be able to complete administrative files, meet the bankers, get legal information, and obtain the first contracts (Kokou Doku, 2001).

Benoin and S enicourt (1980) propose a visualization of the aid process and assistance for the creation and development of businesses where several types of actions are provided: preparation, consulting, institutional and financial support, etc. This has pushed Audet et al. (2004) and Barres, F., & Persson, S. (2011) to maintain that mentoring and coaching programs have gained popularity in recent times. The results of the PACE (1998) study reveal that the more a contractor follows the advice given to him, the more his company's chances of survival increase. These chances of survival would be 67% when consulting a counselor, against 56% when having no counseling. Nevertheless, for Bar es (2004, though a more systematic effort to advise business creators is expected to contribute at a rate of greater success, accompaniment alone does not ascertain getting better results. Therefore, the essence lies in the behavior and the ability of the future entrepreneur to seek appropriate advice. Fayolle (2004) admits that although assisting contractors in the quest for information, training, consulting, support for search for funding or insertion into business networks are part and parcel of the accompaniment process, the fact remains that we have not progressed in the last 20 years on these issues of definition and

semantics. The mitigated results that appear in support systems studies necessitate further research on entrepreneurs' knowledge on the one hand, and on the supporting devices on the other one (Barès, 2004).

In this approach, we are particularly interested in measures and support practices and accompaniment of entrepreneurs in the region of Sfax in Tunisia. We sought to better understand the practices used by intervenants in the different phases of the entrepreneurial process and to better assess the support services available to entrepreneurs in this region.

### **III. Background of the Study**

The current research which aims to identify the strategies of entrepreneurial culture development in the region of Sfax - Tunisia, was conducted as part of the research activities in the laboratory of Governance, Accounting and Finance in the Faculty of Economics and management of Sfax. In fact, Sfax is the second largest city in Tunisia with over a million inhabitants. It is famous for its important economic activities, agriculture, very active industries, port activities, fishery products, highly developed service sector activities, etc. In recent years, Sfax has experienced strong growth in its population due to a significant exodus of young people from neighboring regions.

#### **3.1 Methodology**

As part of this process, we chose the interview as our research methodology for the realization of the study. Three focus groups were selected and made with interveners and advisers to SMEs in the region of Sfax. Geoffrion (2003) advanced that the technique of the interview usually meets six to twelve participants and is perceived as a facilitator for a structured discussion on a particular topic. The same author argues that this method is often used to perform pre-testing in advertising for the evaluation of a product or a business, as it offers several advantages. In fact, it allows the use of open questions and requires the presence of an animator who ensures participants' understanding of issues.

Interaction which others allows participants to remember some important items that they could have neglected to mention. In addition, the group provides synergy in the interaction between the participants. This method allows responding to the comments of others.

However, the groups are generally not representative. Accordingly, the results are a little bit biased since they are limited to only the perception of people who took part in the discussion, without counting the bias that may be unintentionally introduced by the animator. We can say that though the group dynamics provides some benefit, it minimizes the contribution of some participants in the discussion while enhancing others. Thus, the role of the animator is crucial.

#### **3.2. Procedures**

12 speakers from five different agencies in Sfax took part in a first phase of discussions conducted on 14 and 15 June, 2015. The second phase was conducted between 25 and 27 June of the same year, with 7 players operating in 4 different agencies of the same city. In the third phase, 9 speakers from 4 different organizations took part between 12 and 13 September, 2015. In total, 27 participants from 13 organizations participated in one or other of the three discussion groups. We contacted these organizations by phone and email. The directors of these entities were free to determine themselves or interveners to take part in the discussion group. To encourage participation, a training seminar was proposed prior to the focus groups. At the beginning, participants were asked to individually complete the questionnaire. This fairly common practice is called "extended focus group". We administered a questionnaire to the participants before the group session. The questionnaire covers the topics that will be discussed later in groups. This first step will help both the group and the animator, as participants, to have the opportunity to develop their views and positions prior to the group session, without being influenced by other members. For the animator or moderator, the participants' responses serve to highlight all positions, even those relating to the minority, as part of the discussion. The questionnaire covered the first theme that relates to the needs of users and types of intervention used by interveners as part of their function. Participants were asked about the reasons that motivate entrepreneurs to apply for grants in different business development stages.

The questionnaire covers, then, the question of the most common interventions that respond to the demands and shortcomings of the offered services and possible improvements. The second theme concerns the interventions and the available resources made at work for interveners. Participants were first asked about their needs in terms of training, tools or methods to make the intervention more effective. The participants were also asked to comment on their perceptions of skills required to work effectively with contractors, and how to acquire them. Once the responses were received, participants were invited to discuss their responses to enrich and reach consensus on priorities. In this sense, and in accordance with the approach of Geoffrion (2003), two groups were formed in different sub-groups, in part to ensure separating participants who know each other. The following results highlight the understanding of the collective opinions of participants on various topics related to support

mechanisms of entrepreneurs. These results were compiled from individual surveys and reports by the animators of each group.

#### **IV. Results**

In what follows, we present the results that we obtained after completing the three discussion groups. These results summarize the emerging consensus of different groups. Two major topics were addressed during the discussion. A first section is reserved to the results of the first theme (the needs and types of intervention); a second section covers the results for the second theme on the resources and mechanisms of interventions.

For interveners, entrepreneurs are first and foremost motivated by the search for funding. For participants, funding remains the major reason why entrepreneurs resort to different agencies. Entrepreneurs seek mainly to obtain information from interveners on the different programs, the funding agencies, and the available information on the private or public funding rate of beneficial interest, or the opportunities for non-repayable grants. For these entrepreneurs, the role of interveners is primarily to guide them in the business world, focusing on their search for information and funding. In addition to funding, entrepreneurs, in their start-ups phase, are seeking aid for the development of their business plans since this document is often required when applying for funds. Therefore, they tend to validate their business plans.

Moreover, entrepreneurs seek to be informed on technical details concerning the planning, procedures, legal aspects ascertaining the accompaniment of their businesses. Definitely, entrepreneurs need moral support and positivism. It is worth noting that participants' requests for assistance in the development stage are similar, even if the requirements are better defined in the second group. When starting a business, the needs of accompanying entrepreneurs specifically reflect their needs to mentoring. Thus, entrepreneurs have recourse to interveners' services in order to fill their weaknesses in financing, accounting and budgeting, information management, marketing, human resources and recruitment. Thus, we find that most requests for assistance come from early-stage entrepreneur although this category of entrepreneurs is relatively less numerous. The entrepreneurs whose companies are in the development stage have more specific needs. It is worth signaling that funding is an important incentive for the development and growth of businesses. Thus, entrepreneurs are looking for tips to validate the expansion of their projects. They also seek to be accompanied in their approach through coaching or mentoring. In the stage of development, the demands of entrepreneurs are more targeted. Their needs generally relate to the recruitment of qualified personnel, management succession, the study of new markets, marketing or advertising, etc. In any case, they often know what they want whether in terms of advice or training. They seek to register for seminars on specific topics and get a wider business network. The advisory service can take many forms, ranging from technical assistance to empathic listening, and constitutes the main intervention proposed by the participants to meet the needs of entrepreneurs. Notwithstanding, in some cases, interveners offer general advice to guide entrepreneurs towards the distinct available funding programs. Moreover, they help them find the right contacts and establish links with potential investors. Indeed, entrepreneurs are constantly looking for investors and specialists, and wish to make contacts with the largest possible number of development aid and funding agencies. So, they want to know influential people in the ministries to obtain references and make acquaintances. The consulting service can also provide specific information on the legal aspects of the project. In this sense, interventions can take different forms. In fact, it sometimes happens that entrepreneurs are not aware of their needs, which then requires work based on listening and needs analysis. Some interventions are, therefore, oriented towards accompaniment, coaching or help in finding a mentor. For some participants, it is necessary to monitor contractors who were already viewed to check the results of their efforts. Some of them consider it deplorable that the monitoring step is not very often performed as it is not automatically integrated in practice. It should be noted that the services that interveners offer to entrepreneurs have four major deficiencies. The first problem concerns the financing programs that are available to entrepreneurs. The second concerns the cohesion in the general offer of services to entrepreneurs. Another shortcoming relates to insufficient training for entrepreneurs and interveners. Finally, the last problem relates to the monitoring of client companies. Thus, when discussing major gaps in funding, participants evoked the issue of lack of availability of venture capital, lack of flexibility in financing deals and poor access to bank financing. They also mentioned the limited assistance for entrepreneurs who are 45 years old or more. It is also worth pointing out that counselors are facing the difficulty to keep updated due to the numerous and frequent changes in programs, which, in turn, has made Sfax face difficulties in the entrepreneurial field.

The second gap concerns the overall organization of the offer of support for entrepreneurship. Thus, it is up to advisors and interveners to strengthen cohesion among the various intervention agencies. Although organizations have very diverse missions, it is recognized that teamwork and cooperation are not always obvious. It is also worth signaling that there are so many entrepreneurs who have almost total ignorance of existing agencies and often do not always know where to turn. Moreover, precarious operating budgets limit a little bit the action of stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need to specify the existence of a clear political dimension. Indeed, many interventions reveal a highly politicized decision-making structure and a strong

bureaucratic sharp appearance. Besides, very often the files are the subject of genuine political interference. Moreover, we retain lack of appropriate training, both mentioned by entrepreneurs and interveners. This issue relates both to lack of management skills on the part of entrepreneurs and also the shortage of skilled labor. Through the interviews, we were able to identify the lack of tools in the realization of entrepreneurial potential. We cannot deny that the interveners were frustrated for not being able to ensure further follow-up with companies appealing to them. They often neglect this step due to lack of time and/or resources. Nevertheless, several suggestions were made by participants in order to facilitate the work of the interveners. For instance, they perceive a greater need to organize a concertation to better serve the interests of entrepreneurs. They also find it necessary to establish specific programs that can meet the specific needs of entrepreneurs in Sfax. For them, such a move cannot be achieved without both an effective collaboration and an extensive networking. Intervenors also suggest the creation of a plan for the development of the region and the direction of consulting services to make effective interventions to organizations. Still for interveners, it is essential to find tools to ensure a look at the region and the retention of skilled labor. This also serves to ensure urban presence to promote the potential of the region for businesses, proponents and manpower.

During the discussions, the interveners revealed their dissatisfaction with the political dimension in the actions and decisions of business support agencies. They offer a better balance at the political level. It is obvious that a greater level of autonomy should be left to local managers. Intervenors also aims to have an increase in their operating budgets to be able to provide initial investment for businesses. According to them, investment in infrastructure could facilitate the installation of new entrepreneurs. As for access to funding, and given the low offer of financing for entrepreneurs aged over 45 years, the creation of a regional assistance fund is proposed. In this case, an intervener proposes extending the programs for young developers with regard to age as a binding parameter. The advisers, meanwhile, suggested that more entrepreneurial potential assessment tools and entrepreneurial management skills should be available and made at work.

The concern of entrepreneurs' skills is palpable. Some of them suggested that services are conditional to the entrepreneurial potential of prospective developers. In this sense, some business management programs should be made as mandatory. Hence, there is consensus that it is necessary to educate and sensitize young people on the concept of entrepreneurship at schools. The advisers seem to agree on the need to improve training to facilitate interventions in the entrepreneurial process through the development of skills and intervention techniques. Intervenors consider that they need regular updates in various fields in order to ensure quality service. In this respect, 3 speakers specify that certain formations are more difficult to reach due to remoteness. So, they find that entrepreneurs are willing to engage in the offered training programs. Thus, though entrepreneurship training is desirable, it must comply with the requirements. Among the tools that were suggested was the access to test the entrepreneurial potential, which allows discovering the strengths and weaknesses of each intervention. Moreover, the participants wish to be able to have access to an interactive business plan which can be completed remotely. An enhanced start-up fund, improved monitoring measures, and the development of tools or procedures are necessary as they facilitate the task of business creation.

Another participant made a highly relevant remark. According to him, it is possible to offer a quality service with current resources. This indicates a certain degree of non-uniformity in the participants. Advisors must master two types of skills when intervening with entrepreneurs in the pre-start-up, start-up or the development stages. They must have the technical skills to provide adequate counseling, and interpersonal skills to guide entrepreneurs. Having skills in psychology and having an open mind can be an advantage that cannot be overlooked. During the development stage, entrepreneurs are less likely to be consulted. They essentially seek technical advice and professional knowledge of the intervener in management and in the development of market or product. At this point, the entrepreneur needs a counselor who has an experience equivalent to his, who is able to interact with him at the level of knowledge and respond to his questions. The second area of competence raised by entrepreneurs in the development stage is related to active listening and good analytical skills. The advisor appears to represent an important pillar for the entrepreneur in terms of networking as he serves as a matchmaker for customer wishing to push ahead his project. As part of this process, the interviewed have made several suggestions in terms of short-term actions to improve the current situation in service-business advice.

Therefore, four main themes emerged: training, advocacy, networking and tools. Intervenors suggest developing trainings and make them not only more accessible but also mandatory. For them, we must promote lifelong learning by planning workshops or extra seminars periodically. Furthermore, awareness at different levels should be performed. General managers or politicians should be sensitized to the need for training. Participants want policymakers to develop a vision of the issues related to the field of business consulting services. For them, it is necessary to raise entrepreneurs' awareness of mentoring and enhance the business of interveners in SMEs (Perreti, J.M., 2013). Third, for the interveners, networking is important. So, they suggest creating a peer network to further promote exchange of information between experts from different agencies and departments related to development. Finally, it is proposed that tools can facilitate interventions. For instance, creating a

website or a portal would make information accessible, which ought to consolidate various services related to the creation and development of businesses.

## **V. Discussion and Conclusion**

In this paper, we were able to review the types of intervention carried out by interveners and advisors to SMEs in the city of Sfax and shed light on the gaps and needs in the field of entrepreneurship. We note that the concerns of the consulted interveners are consistent with the results of other studies on the subject (Fayolle, 2004, Caron, 2006). Our research has established a need for improved knowledge of consulted. In the same way, a report of Industry Canada (2006) highlights the need to improve consulted knowledge about the various tools available and ensure better transmission of this information. Industry Canada has highlighted the value of developing a "centralized" tool of disseminated information. The discussions highlighted a real need for training among interveners who pointed out the difficulty in accessing to the existing training programs due to distance. Since interveners are aware that training covers various aspects, they aim at developing the skills of support which are necessary for their work. They hope a better uniformity in the intervening and counseling professions, and they highlight the need for technical, professional, and intervention skills and experience.

Caron (2006) suggested better training of interveners. For Bares (2004), standardization improves tracking. For Chabaud, D et al. (2010), a reduction of the gap between the level of the entrepreneur experience and that of the intervener improves the support process. So, our results are consistent with other approaches like that of Industry Canada results (2006) which focused on the need of a certification process for small business advisers to ensure a minimum level of competence. According to Fayolle (2004), accompaniment appears to be a real art implying possessing sound knowledge and diverse skills. In this sense, active listening, empathy and education are important qualities enabling the coach to succeed in his challenging mission. The eminent task of the coach is to make the entrepreneur do things himself.

In our approach, the interveners emphasized the need to customize the offer of services according to regional realities. They reported a real need of tools to address the lack of qualified staff and the exodus of young people which particularly affects the region. The customization and flexibility of tools are consistent with the consultation conducted by Industry Canada, for which the ability to effectively identify regional differences in their assessment procedures is considered as a vital element for advisors. This flexibility seems to be very important in any assessment tool. It is used to address the need to accommodate a range of differences between entrepreneurs. Fayolle (2004) suggests that accompanying avoids taking refuge in technical solutions plated on poorly formulated, or insufficiently reformulated, problems by the contractor. Caron (2006) argues that it is necessary to give more importance to the maintenance and development of enterprises that start with a better assessment of training needs.

The devices of support for the creation and development of enterprises are numerous, but can be sometimes the cause of some problems. In our approach, the interveners raised the issue of lack of collaboration and coordination between the various entities. Therefore they suggested strengthening the cohesion between the various intervention agencies. The study conducted in France by Bares (2004) emphasizes that the interveners do not always know all of their potential partners or even the reality of their mission, which makes it difficult for the creator to be in such a "jungle". This corroborates with Kokou Doku's (2001) findings which assert that despite the increasing number of agencies in France supporting the creation of companies, the entrepreneur still is confronted with actors pursuing divergent interests. The discussions we conducted allowed us to deepen the knowledge of the support and accompanying measures available to entrepreneurs in the region of Sfax-Tunisia. They also allowed us to identify the needs and courses of action to improve the installed devices. The major elements of this approach corroborate with the findings made in other regions and other countries. It is worth wondering whether the use of open questions, the data collection method, the method of analysis, and the data processing could limit the emergence of specific regional findings. At any event, the concerns and needs of interveners and accompanying persons should be satisfied no matter where they operate.

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