



Alliance for Entrepreneurship and Development in Western Greece

International Conference
"Alliance for Entrepreneurship and Development in Western Greece"
13-15 December 2017

Determinants of inter-firm R&D collaborations

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This paper explores the determinants of R&D collaborations of SMEs using a unique dataset derived from a survey of 3500 Greek SMEs. In doing so four categories of factors are examined for their potential role in the engagement of firms in R&D collaborations referring to (a) technological competencies, (b) multinational activity, (c) competitive strategies, and (d) internal organization. The descriptive statistics show that SMEs located in the Region of Western Greece tend to exhibit a greater cooperative R&D intensity compared to the total sample of SMEs under examination. The empirical analysis is based on the estimation of ordered probit models for different age groups of SMEs. Our main results indicate that firms' technological competencies seem to significantly increase the likelihood of older firms to participate in inter-firm R&D collaborations. Moreover, we find that international diversity of export activity raises the probability of older as well as middle-aged SMEs to participate in inter-firm R&D collaborations. Finally, professional management appears to play a significant role in firms' decision to participate in R&D projects especially in the case of young SMEs. Policy and managerial implications of our findings highlight the need to stimulate SMEs' internationalization and support the development of technological competencies