

TUCN, part of Inno-EU+, a successful European entrepreneurship project

The Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, partner in Inno-Eut+, a **complementary** project of the new European University Alliance entitled European University of Technology (EUt+), is glad to announce the successful results achieved during the implementation period July 2021 - June 2022 (first year of the 2-year period funded project).

The main goal of the Inno-Eut+ project is to increase the innovation and entrepreneurship capacity of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) involved, with an increase in the number of aspiring entrepreneurs and spin-offs created, due to the joint entrepreneurial studies and support mechanisms implemented. Universities are attempting to add value to the classical technical education students receive at university, with the intention of breeding the new generation of innovators.

The €1.2 million project's aim is to provide formal and informal, inclusive entrepreneurship education programs that will enable the academic and non-academic personnel to inspire, mentor, and support individuals or groups of aspiring entrepreneurs among a broad group of students and researchers.

Results

The Inno-EU+ management team is happy to present the outcomes of the project's first year of execution, which have culminated in institutional improvements, contributions to innovation and company growth, partnerships strengthening, and the quality of innovation and entrepreneurship education being improved. As a consequence, students and academics have been encouraged to think like entrepreneurs in order to identify useful solutions to local and social problems.

Strengthening partnerships

The knowledge triangle was successfully integrated with the help of seven HEIs and two non-HEIs partners, Water Alliance and Chrysalis LEAP, both of whom are well-known in the field of clean technology innovation and entrepreneurship.

Improving the quality of innovation and entrepreneurship education

The first step to reach our objectives was to train our staff as Climate Entrepreneurship Trainers by Chrysalis LEAP and deliver to the students a well-structured idea development program. 100 academic and non-academic staff members have been trained and this resulted in the training of 571 students as well as the generation of more than 150 business concepts in total in the Inno-EU+ Alliance.

The training and mentoring of the students across the Alliance were the biggest impact we had during the Inno-EU+ project. To further enhance the positive impact of our training, we have implemented the Inno-EU+ Student DemoDays.

The debut of the Inno-EU+ *Student Demo Day* was conducted in Cartagena in early 2022, with the best team of students from each HEI member presenting their idea generated during the *Climate Entrepreneurship Training* program.



The second *Inno-EUT+ Student DemoDay* event, featuring student representatives from partner HEIs, was held in Riga at the end of June 2022. In Riga the students also participated in a Dirty Prototyping session to have a visual representation of their idea.



Promoting commitment and institutional change

Additionally, during the first year of Inno-EUT+, 62 academic and non-academic staff members were trained by Riga University of Technology through the *Change Agents* training module to act as ambassadors for innovation and intrapreneurship within their HEI, as well as to find innovative solutions to existing problems within their organizations.

Another significant outcome is the *Educator handbook for designing inclusive entrepreneurship courses in higher education* as well as its translation into 7 languages: English, Spanish, French, Greek, Bulgarian, Latvian, and Romanian. This handbook serves as a guide and could also be used to train university professors to create entrepreneurship courses for specific minority groups (women, young people, older people, unemployed, immigrants and people with disabilities). The handbook focuses on two primary approaches: Universal Design for Learning and guiding instructors who are eager to take part in different types of entrepreneurial initiatives, as well as aiding specific categories of under-represented groups.

Contributions to innovation and company growth

In order to support our local innovation ecosystems, a customized mentorship program was created and delivered to a few pre-selected startups under the Inno-Eut+ Startup Support Scheme. This program supported and mentored ten already registered green tech companies with applications spanning from water treatment solutions to disrupting initiatives for the renewable energy sector.

Testimonials

„It was of great practical relevance to me. It advanced my skills and knowledge about starting a business. And last but not least, it really gave me great networking opportunities." (*start-up, Netherlands*)

„We've gone through a lot of changes in the last year. Mentoring has helped us gain a structured perspective on the market. It has also allowed us to pivot into what the current business model entails. Since the mentoring we have been able to make some big steps forward." (*start-up, Sweden*)

„A different lesson, a new way of looking at things, so a new focus... These words can sum up my experience in the Inno-EUt+ program. I was impressed by the vision and commitment of all the people I met." (*student, Romania*)

About Inno-EUt+

Innovative European University of Technology (Inno-EUt+) is a project that is part of the new European University of Technology Alliance (EUt+), fully in line with the overall objectives of the Alliance and with a strong focus on integrating innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education institutions. The partners taking part in this project are 7 of the 8 universities in the EUt+ consortium, namely: Technological University of Sofia, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Technical University of Dublin, Troyes University of Technology, Polytechnic University of Cartagena, Riga Technical University and Cyprus University of Technology, together with two external partners, the Water Alliance, a water-related technology innovation hub supporting startups and companies in this sector, and Chrysalis LEAP, the first clean technology business idea accelerator in Cyprus and EIT Climate-KIC RIS partner since 2016.