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## HEInnovate at the University of Vaasa, Finland

*Using HEInnovate to develop co-innovation and co-creation of curricula*

The University of Vaasa engaged with HEInnovate in winter 2018, following a period of organisational re-structuring and re-orientation. During this re-structuring, the university launched three large-scale multidisciplinary research platforms. The newly appointed director of one of these, of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab (InnoLab), has been developing an expansive programme of activities, and used HEInnovate to inform future strategic development directions.

The main aim of the HEInnovate project within InnoLab was to explore ways to strengthen the approach to curriculum co-creation and co-innovation, capitalising on the university's already strong regional links with businesses and the municipality.

The director of InnoLab coordinated a large self-assessment exercise, and arranged an ambitious two-part workshop. The workshop programme was innovative, and designed specifically to best engage a diverse group of stakeholders. The morning session took place in the university and focused on the discussing the results of the self-assessment exercise. The morning resulted in a set of agreed internal priorities for action and concrete initiatives to address them.

The afternoon session was designed to engage senior members of the university plus a wide range of partners from the local and regional ecosystem. Participants included representatives of VAMK University of Applied Sciences, the City of Vaasa, the regional council, several regional technology centres, clusters & research platforms, and major employers such as Wärtsilä. The afternoon session was arranged at an informal venue in a part of the city that is being re-established as an innovation and social space. This created an open and constructive atmosphere, with all parties speaking fully and sharing their thoughts. The group of participants formed small groups based on shared priorities, and discussed their own roles

in the creation and strengthening of mutually-beneficial regional structures.

Key to success in engaging this broad range of stakeholders was the production of very considered briefings to invitees on how the exercise would contribute to the development of InnoLab and the broader region.

One of the main benefits of the HEInnovate exercise was that it created the opportunity to bring together a wide range of stakeholders and include them in the future development of InnoLab's programme. The exercise helped identify existing areas of good practice, both within the university and its partners, and concrete plans to scale them. Several initiatives were designed during the workshop, including approaches to bringing real-world business challenges to university students.

*This user story was prepared by Martin Wain from Technopolis Group, with input by Mari K. Niemi, Director of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab (InnoLab), University of Vaasa.*

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