



Support services for student entrepreneurship in higher education

Community for Educational Innovation (CEI)



May 19, 2025



European
Commission



Agenda

15:30 Welcome

15:40 Intervention 1: From vision to action: Fostering entrepreneurship culture in academia
Sara Proença

16:00 Intervention 2: International students' perspectives on innovation in higher education
Rita Dias

16:20 Intervention 3: Experience of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab & the StartLab.Brussels
Thomas Crispeels

16:40 Interactive Debate

16:55 Closing Remarks

OBJECTIVE

Explore the services that higher education institutions put in place to help students transform their entrepreneurial ideas into concrete initiatives.

KEY TOPICS

- Implementation of support services
- Students' perspectives on innovation
- Experiences in start-up labs



Support services for student entrepreneurship in higher education

- **Support services** for entrepreneurship provide resources, mentorship, and infrastructure to help students transform entrepreneurial ideas into successful ventures.
- They are **extra-curricular/co-curricular** offerings, complementing the academic curriculum, and help bridge the gap between theory and practical application.



Incubators and accelerators

Mentorship schemes

Networking opportunities

Seed funding and access to capital

Business centers

Entrepreneurship/venture labs



Challenges in implementing support services

Fragmentation of services

Scattered services across departments create inefficiencies and limit effectiveness

Funding

Reliance on short-term funding, which can limit long-term planning

Scalability

Expanding support services to accommodate more students requires planning and resources.

Institutional prioritisation

Cultural and institutional changes that prioritise practical, hands-on learning alongside theoretical education





Sara Proença

Polytechnic University
of Coimbra, Portugal

Intervention 1

From vision to action: Fostering entrepreneurship culture in academia

- Professor at the Polytechnic University of Coimbra (PUC), Portugal, since 2003. Teaching experience in entrepreneurship and economics.
- Director of the INOPOL Entrepreneurship Academy, a unit aiming to promote innovation and entrepreneurship and to foster the creation and growth of new startup and spinoff companies.
- Experience as Pro-President of PUC for innovation and entrepreneurship (2019-21)
- PhD in Economics from Lisbon School of Economics and Management, University of Lisbon.

From Vision to Action: Fostering Entrepreneurship Culture in Academia

Sara Proença

Director @ INOPOL Entrepreneurship Academy

Polytechnic University of Coimbra (PUC), Portugal

19 May 2025



The Polytechnic University of Coimbra (PUC) was created in 1979, by the decree-law which established the dual system in Portuguese Higher Education: **UNIVERSITIES and POLYTECHNICS**

PUC ranks on the top positions of Polytechnic education and is one of the largest Portuguese higher education institutions (HEI).

6 SCHOOLS

+12.000 STUDENTS

+800 TEACHERS

+500 STAFF

+60 BACHELORS

+50 MASTERS

+70 POSTGRADUATE COURSES

+25 TECHNICAL COURSES



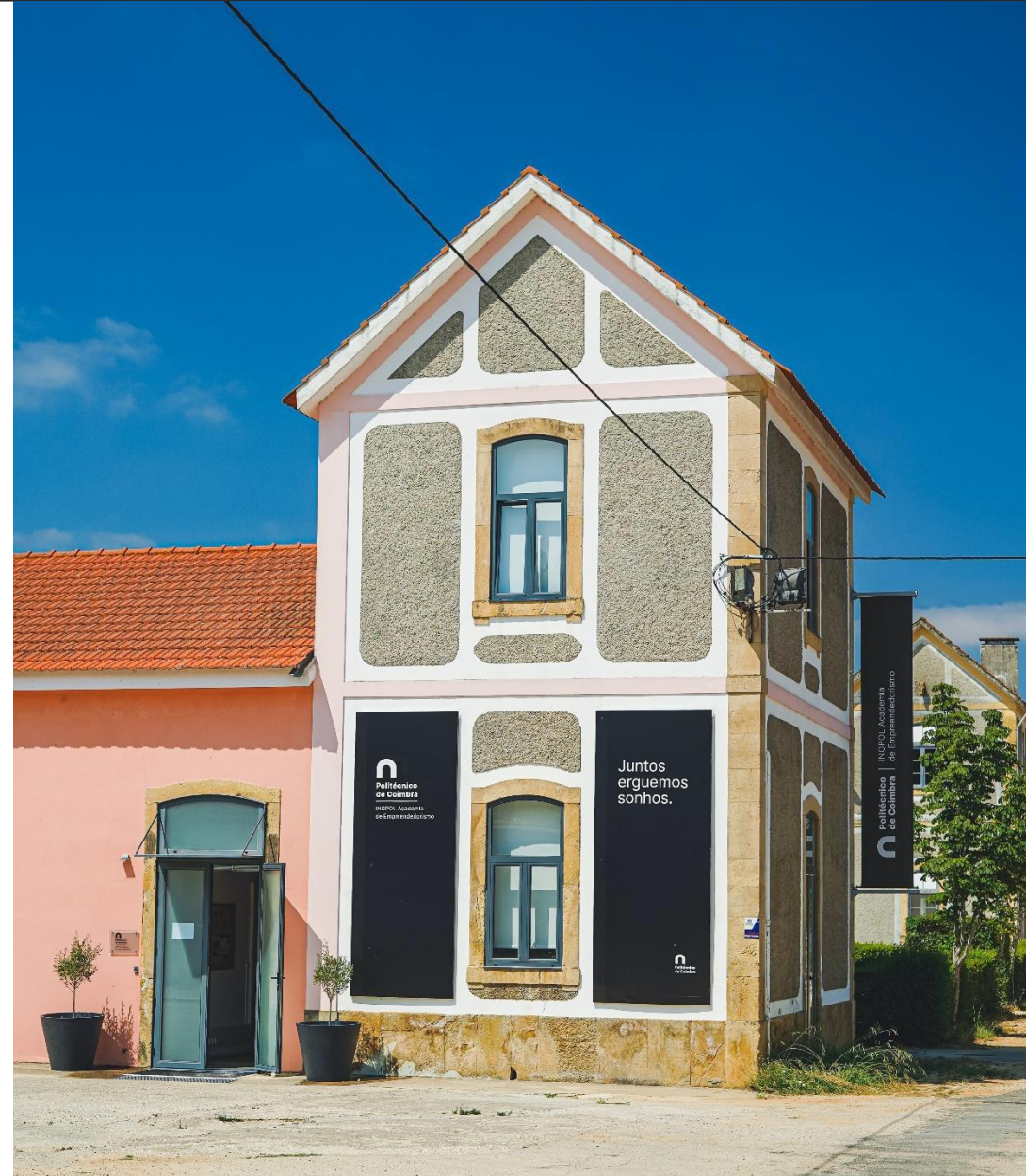
INOPOL Entrepreneurship Academy

Polytechnic University of Coimbra



Our mission

- **PROMOTE**
A culture of innovation and entrepreneurship
- **FOSTER**
The creation and development of knowledge-based, innovative startups and spinoffs
- **STIMULATE**
Knowledge transfer and valorisation
- **BOOST**
The employability of PUC's graduates



What we do?

- Early-stage support for **innovative business projects**
- **Knowledge valorisation** support
- Physical and virtual **incubation** of ideas, projects and startups
- Strengthening the link between the **scientific and technological ecosystem** and the **business world**
- Fostering integration in entrepreneurship & innovation **networks and projects**
- **Employability** and **career** services



Our Team



Sara Proença
Director



João Carreira
Innovation, Entrepreneurship &
Incubation



Letícia Santos
Employability & Career Services



Lara Portugal
Knowledge Transfer



Diana Garcia
Knowledge Transfer
& Incubation

Our target



Teachers



Researchers



Students



Alumni

Multidisciplinary
programs and projects

Support in technology
transfer processes

Training

Assistance in
intellectual
property matters

Mentoring
and coaching

Networking
initiatives and
events

Business ideas' competitions,
ignition projects and proofs of
concept

Funding opportunities and integration in innovation &
entrepreneurship ecosystem

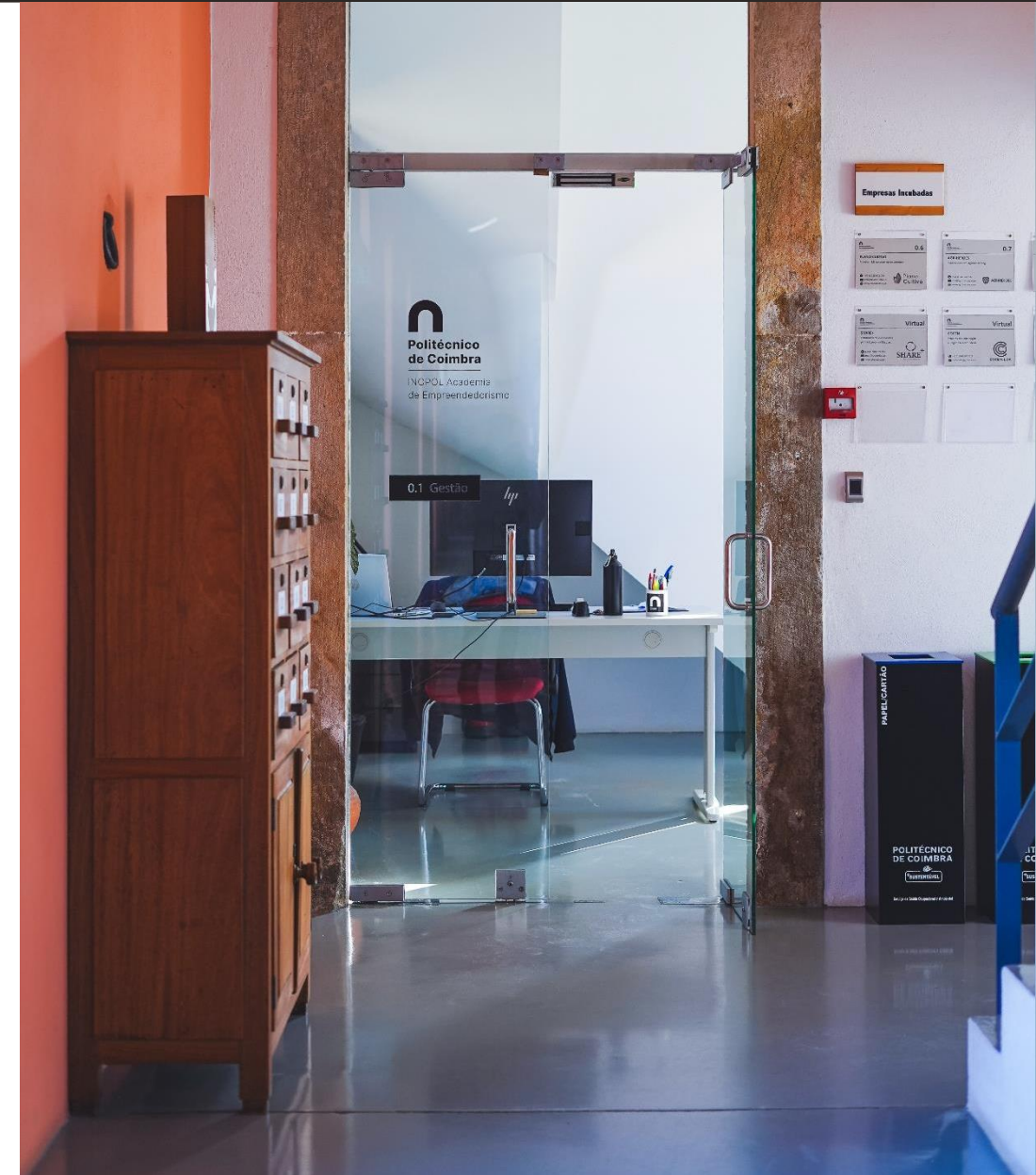
INCUBATION

1 ^º	↗
Salas	1.1 - 1.8
0 ^º	→
Gestão	0.1
Sala de Cowork	0.2
Sala de Reuniões	0.3
Salas	0.4 - 0.7
Copa	
WC	



Services

- **Workspace** for installation (12-30m2)
- **Logistics services** (reception, meeting rooms, pantry, videoconference, mailbox, Internet, cleaning, printer)
- Support in **business plan development**
- **Intellectual property and legal assistance** (technology transfer contracts, patents or brands' registration)
- Privileged access to **R&D units and laboratories**, partners' network and funding opportunities
- Access to **training, workshops** and **events**
- **Marketing and communication** support



Applications

- **Permanently** open
- Submission of Application Form
- Screening and review by **Evaluation Committee**
- **Assessment Criteria:**
 - degree of innovation
 - technological maturity
 - potential market
 - economic and financial viability
 - complementarity with other incubated companies and PUC ecosystem
 - team CV
 - expected impact on regional development



Startups ecosystem

Physical incubation (7)



Virtual incubation (17)



Cowork incubation (2)



KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION



Knowledge Valorisation

- **Intellectual Property (IP)**

- ✓ Provision of information on IP and applicable legal framework
- ✓ Assistance on IP database searches
- ✓ Support on the preparation of applications for different types of IP (patents, utility models, brands)
- ✓ Formalisation and management of IP rights' allocation processes

- **Technology Transfer**

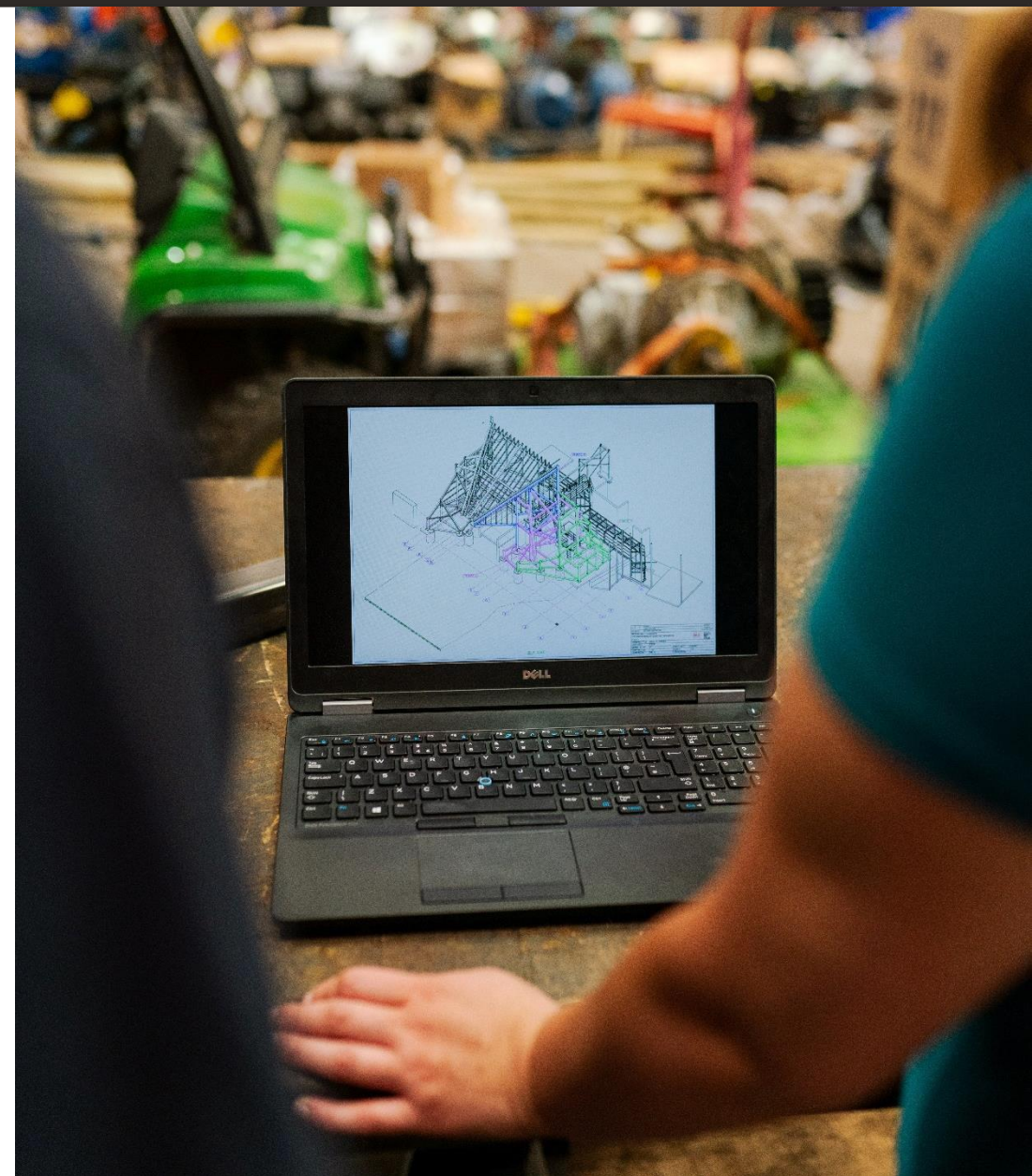
- ✓ Support on the diagnosis of intellectual property assets
- ✓ Templates for technology transfer agreements
- ✓ Assistance on technology licensing processes
- ✓ Support on the creation of spinoffs

Knowledge generated
within PUC



Licencing
agreements

Sale of
invention/creation



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES



POLIEMPREENDE

*The largest network for the promotion of entrepreneurship
in Portuguese polytechnic higher education*

- 21 polytechnic institutions
- 1 annual edition
- Promotion of innovative new businesses and valorisation of knowledge generated within the academic community
- Awareness-building sessions, capacity training workshops and mentoring
- Regional phase + National event
- Monetary prizes + ECTS (Diploma Supplement) + free incubation @INOPOL

Target audience:

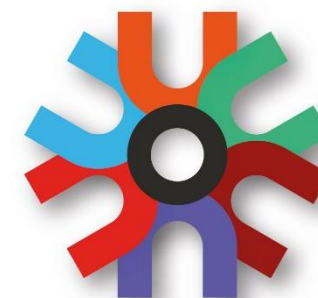
- Students, graduates, teachers and researchers
- Other individuals, if members of teams with polytechnics' students and/or graduates



JOB SUMMIT IPC & SCIENCE2BUSINESS

A dynamic event designed to offer the IPC community and the public:

- Unique opportunities to **connect with top companies** and recruiters across diverse industries
 - **Networking** with experienced and inspiring professionals
 - Exposure to **innovative and high-impact projects** shaping the future
-
- ✓ **Summit Stage** – engaging panels and hands-on workshops
 - ✓ **Job Meet** – direct connections with hiring companies
 - ✓ **Science2Business** – building bridges between academia and industry
 - ✓ **Networking & Coffee** – casual meetups and great conversations



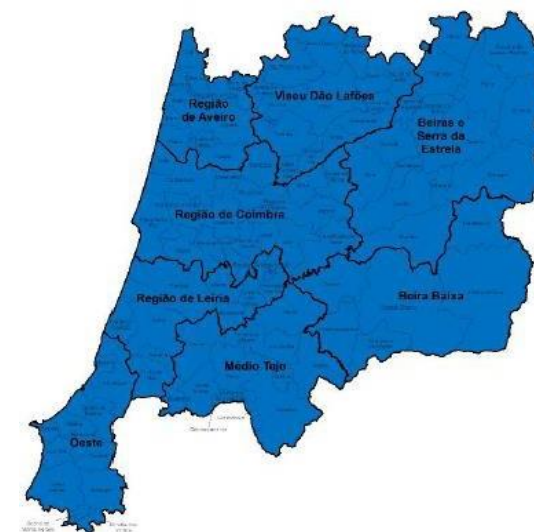
**JOB SUMMIT IPC
&
SCIENCE²BUSINESS**



INOVC

*Innovation Ecosystem for Knowledge and Technology
Transfer in PT Center Region*

- Co-promotion project with 23 partners (10 HEIs + 3 S&T Parks + 10 CKTVT).
- Program aimed at enhancing the valorization and transfer of knowledge and R&D and Innovation outputs to the regional economy by strengthening the Regional Innovation Ecosystem.
- Awareness and stimulation actions for R&D, regional networking meetings, international benchmarking missions, company visits and visits from companies to HEIs/R&D centers, events, technology fairs, identification of R&D challenges, business idea competitions, ignition grants and proof-of-concept initiatives, and a regional technology brokerage network.



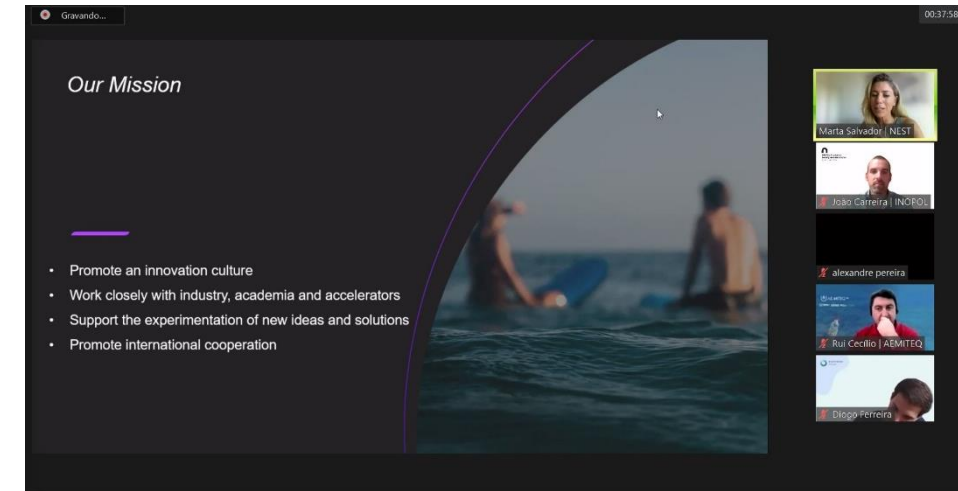
LET'S TALK

Webinars on key topics of innovation and entrepreneurship

- Learning / training sessions for awareness-building and skills development
- Monthly editions

Target audience:

Entrepreneurs, students, teachers, researchers & partners from the innovation ecosystem



NETWORKS & PARTNERS



Our numbers *(jul/21 - dez/24)*

224 actions to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, employability

143 business/entrepreneurial projects supported

7.123 students, graduates, teachers, researchers and staff trained

62 intellectual property registrations

10 startups and spinoff companies promoted

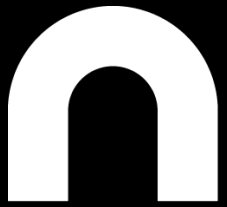
35 companies/projects incubated

46 partnerships

13 network or consortium projects/programs

2,6M€ competitive funding raised





INOPOL

Entrepreneurship Academy

Polytechnic University of Coimbra



Campus Politécnico de Coimbra
Av. Mário Silva, Bencanta 3045-601 Coimbra



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www.inopol.ipc.pt



inopol@ipc.pt



LINKEDIN



INSTAGRAM



DO YOU HAVE
ANY
QUESTIONS?



Rita Dias

Erasmus Student
Network (ESN)

Intervention 2

International students' perspectives on innovation in higher education

- President of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), responsible for the coordination of the organisation, external relations, policy, and advocacy. Her priorities include increasing participation in learning mobility and promoting civic engagement and youth participation through Erasmus.
- Professional experience at the United States Embassy in Lisbon and at the Political Observatory in the Association for Political Studies and Scientific Research.
- Bachelor's in political science and international relations, University of Beira Interior, and a Master's in public policy, ISCTE–University Institute of Lisbon, with an Erasmus exchange at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

International students' perspectives on innovation in higher education



Community for Educational Innovation Webinar



Who are we?

ESN is the key student volunteer organisation in Europe dealing with learning mobility



Our network in numbers

15,000+
volunteers

1000+
HEIs

46
countries

350,000+
students

Enrichment of society through international students



Our work in international education

- Mobility opportunities for students - Erasmus+
- European University Alliances
- European Degree

How to we do it?

- KA2 Projects
- Research
- Policy
- Advocacy



ETI LABS - The Erasmus Talent & Innovation Labs





ETI LABS - The Erasmus Talent & Innovation Labs

The **ETI Labs** project aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and the demands of the labour market by creating stronger cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and businesses.



Partners

The project is led by Erasmus Student Network, in collaboration with EURASHE, Association of European Regions, ESSCA School of Management, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, MCI Management Center Innsbruck, and ALGEBRA University College.



Main Goals & Outputs

- Create sustainable cooperation models between universities and businesses through the development of **Erasmus Talent & Innovation Labs** → allow students to engage in challenge-based learning, directly addressing real-world issues posed by companies;
- Fostering **competencies in critical areas** such as digital transformation, sustainable development, and social entrepreneurship, all while enhancing the employability of Erasmus+ participants.



Main Goals & Outputs

- **Science & Innovation Shop Framework** → support university-business collaboration
- **Talent & Innovation Labs** → offering hands-on learning experiences for students
- **Quality Standard for Erasmus Traineeships** → integrated into the ErasmusIntern platform
- **Online Hubs** → sharing best practices and learning resources
- **Policy recommendations** → guide future education-to-business collaboration at the European level





The ETI Labs Project just started!

January 2025 - December 2028





Erasmus Careers



Project concept

General Objective: Ensure **competences** that are gained on **mobility** contribute to the **career prospects** of Erasmus+ participants.

Specific Objectives:

- Competences gained by students and trainees during their mobility abroad are identified. (WP2)
- A better understanding for the learning that takes place during the International Student Lifecycle (WP3)
- The competences gained by students during mobility are better understood and recognised by employers (WP4)
- Students understand the impact of international student mobility on their career path (WP5)
- Competences gained abroad are recognised and integrated in Education policies (WP6)





Check all the project
outputs in

[*project.erasmuscareers.org*](https://project.erasmuscareers.org/)
/



Policy & Research



Our Publications



ESNsurvey

The voice of the Erasmus Generation



Co-funded by
the European Union



What is the ESNsurvey?

A **student-led research** initiative running since **2005** focused on **mobility** and the **Erasmus+** programme.



The ESNsurvey

turns data into action
and action into change.



Co-funded by
the European Union



This year's edition:

- The **XVI** edition: **12 May** - 31 July
- Takes ~**25 mins**
- Available in **multiple languages** to ensure accessibility for all students



What makes this edition special?

→ New sections on:

- European Degree
- Improvement of the teaching and learning section
- Improvement of the skills related questions
- More options fitted for the European University Alliances

→ Comparative potential across:

- Countries
- Other Programmes (Erasmus+, SEMP, Turing, etc.)
- Institutions and Alliances



What makes this edition special?

→ Introduction of the Graduate Track:

- For students who went abroad before August 2023
- Understand the trends in career development following mobility experiences
- Support the understanding of how the Union of Skills and Erasmus are connected



Erasmus Student Network

president@esn.org

President| ESN AISBL

esn.org





DO YOU HAVE
ANY
QUESTIONS?



Thomas Crispeels

Vrije Universiteit Brussel,
Belgium

Intervention 3

Experience of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab & the StartLab.Brussels

- Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation and chair of the Brussels Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and teaches courses on technology entrepreneurship and innovation in the life sciences.
- Director of StartLab.Brussels, the Brussels pre-incubator for first-time entrepreneurs.
- PhD Applied Economic Sciences: Business Engineers, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

StartLab brussels

Support Services for Student Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

Prof. dr. Thomas Crispeels
Webinar, 19th of May 2025



950+

Entrepreneurs
Empowerd



Our foundations

- **2024:** 8th year of operations for StartLab Brussels, 3rd year as a multi-university pre-incubator on a shared location
- **Purpose:** we empower first-time entrepreneurs to shape a brighter future
- **Vision:** We believe entrepreneurs have the power to create a brighter societal and environmental future
- **Mission:** Startlab Brussels coaches, trains and connects bold entrepreneurs to build impactful startups, driving innovation and positive change



Our offering



**Coworking
Space**



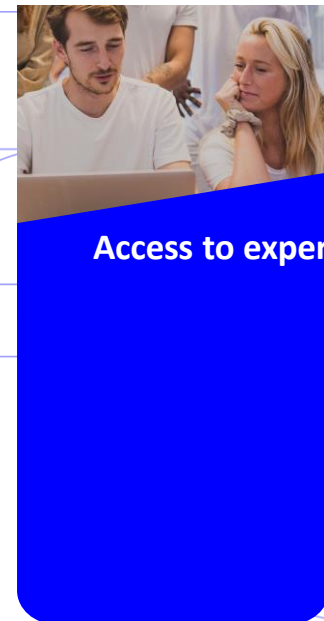
**Workshops
&
Masterclasses**



**Networking
Events & access
to a vibrant
community**



**Coaching sessions
&
Advisory
Board**

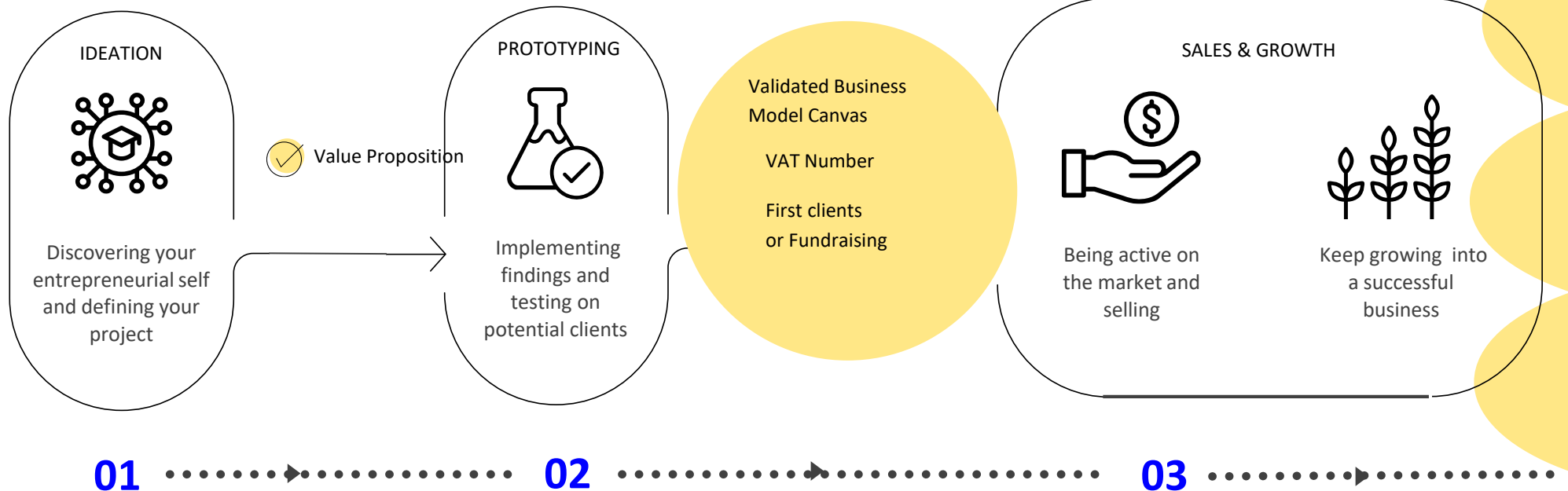


Access to exper

Our Program

TEST.LAB

LAUNCH.LAB



Our New Program

Startlab4Researchers

- Launched in **October 2024, 16 projects.**
- Under the supervision of the **Tech Transfer** Team of the VUB
- Tailored for **academic researchers** in **transforming their innovative ideas/solutions from research to market-driven solutions.**
- Focus: Identify practical applications, adopt a market-driven approach, safeguard intellectual property.



Meet the Team!



Thomas
Co-Founder



Olivier
Co-founder



Caroline
CEO



Eléonore
Head of Program



Maarten
PM SLB4Researchers



Jeremy
Facility officer



Agathe
Marketing & Community
officer



Lea
Head of Marketing
& Events



Julie
RH & Admin
Manager



Jesse
PM Manager
TESTLAB



Victoria
PM Manager
LAUNCHLAB

Our key figures

Since our creation in 2016...



Since the beginning, we have welcomed more than 950 entrepreneurs to our community. They all have one goal in common: to have a positive impact on society. Every year we support countless projects. We guide them through the 2 steps program and help them launch their business.

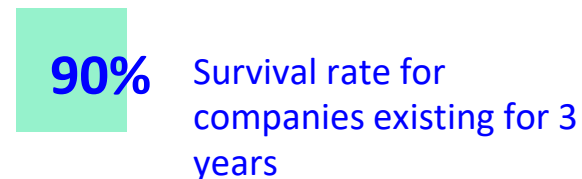


Per year, we support approximately 300 entrepreneurs from A to Z. This represents approximately 180 projects!



This is the number of active companies launched with the support of StartLAB.BRUSSELS. **29%** conversion rate.

*companies or sole proprietor




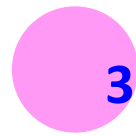
Founders have hired from 1 up to 36 employees after launching their companies!


*companies or sole proprietor

Our key figures

Focus on 2024

 **262** Projects incubated (**94** new projects in 2024)

 **382** Entrepreneurs supported (**140** new incubees in 2024)
45% women.
34% of Students
60% of Young graduates (-30yrs.)
5% of + 30yrs.

 **26** Businesses created

 **34** Created jobs!!
Founders included





Apéro Pitch

Beauté, Cosmétique
& Bien-être

Cofounders Event

Daoust - 2024-2025 - Présentation

Panel discussion
28 March
6:30pm
9:30pm

StartLab
BRUSSELS

Ready to forge powerful partnerships that last? Whether you're considering teaming up **or** have already embarked on a journey, laying strong foundations is key!

Interested? Join us !



Thomas Daenen
Panel Animator
& Legal Experience

Jerome Derycke
Start-up Experience

Guillaume Massard
Start-up Experience

Laurent Mikolajczak
Seasoned entrepreneur
& Coach

BEYOND.
LAW FIRM

Liléo
A taste is born

MEET MY JOB

3ee Founders
Building Ambitious Impact

15+ EVENTS

SUMMER REUNION

27.06.2024 - 6.30 PM



FOOD, DRINKS, AND
NETWORKING WITH
STARTLAB INCUBEES,
COACHES, EXPERTS,
ALUMNI, AND PARTNERS

@VUB - U RESIDENCE



PITCH XXL

MONARD LAW
joined by BUYLE

be.brussels

ULB
UNIVERSITÉ
LIBRE
DE BRUXELLES

VUB
Vrije
Universiteit
Brussel

S
SOLWAY
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

daoust

PULSE
FOUNDATION

1810
yet brussels

VUB
UNIVERSITÉ
BRUXELLES

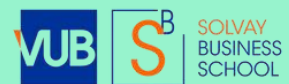
Solvay
Entrepreneurs

universitaire
BRUSSEL

erasmus
UNIVERSITY

BNP PARIBAS
FORTIS







I made it into the...

StartLab.Family

Our Stories

Our Start-ups

Lileo

A mom is born

By Anastasia Luyckx & Jérôme Derycke



Discrete and **hands-off breast pump**

Key dates

- 2020: Join Startlab Brussels
- 2021: Lauréats of MedTech Accelerator Jury awards 2021
- 2021: First support from Innoviris and the Brussels-Capital region through a grant.
- 2025: First sales!

nolla

By Gauthier Bodart

Nolla is an **eco-friendly cosmetics brand** aimed at developing innovative and enjoyable products to use, while preserving the environment.

- 2020: Join Startlab Brussels
- 2021: Lauréats of MedTech



Our Stories

Our Start-ups

VOC memo

By Tanguy De Saffel, Clara Martini, Lucas Prieels



Vocomemo is a **voice recorder** designed to enhance **Alzheimer's** patients autonomy and ease the mental load of caregivers by offering a discreet, easy-to-use solution with an intuitive app for setting up personalized audio reminders, helping the patients orient themselves in time and space.

THE
JAMES
DYSON
AWARD

#SOSHE 2023
FESTIVAL

↓ LUCID

By Jean Seyl !

Lucid designs and develops **clothing** made from materials that are respectful of both the **environment** and people. The production is done as locally as possible to support the **local economy** and strengthen the resilience of our industries.



Our Stories

Our Start-ups



By Mathilde Wittock



Belgian artist and designer
Transforming **used tennis balls**
into designer furniture.

HEMPHUIS

By Darya Shkarupina & Artem Tsymbalov

Hemphuis uses hemp-based
remediation to **clean** and
restore **contaminated soils**



Our Stories

Our Alumni



This **agency** connects **students** with small businesses, offering them opportunities to work on **communication projects** and gain hands-on experience in areas like social media, video, and design.



By Coraline de Spirlet

Unago is the first **recruitment agency** for individuals with a **criminal background** in Belgium.



Our Stories

Our Alumni



By Diana Borcescu & Maxime Jacobs

Inmersives is a **multi-sensory, 4D device** designed to enhance the **wellbeing and health** of individuals, especially **patients** in elderly care homes, specialized institutions, or those experiencing anxiety and depression.



MEET MY JOB

By Guillaume Massard

The **job offer platform** for people looking for **sens-full jobs**



Contact us



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THANK YOU





DO YOU HAVE
ANY
QUESTIONS?

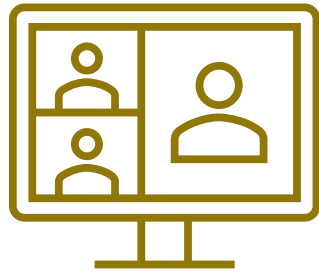
WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR GOOD PRACTICES!

- **Share your practices** on 'Support services for student entrepreneurship in higher education'
- **A short insight** into innovative practices
- To be presented in the **CEI report about the activities from Thematic Strand 1**

https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/GoodPractices1_2



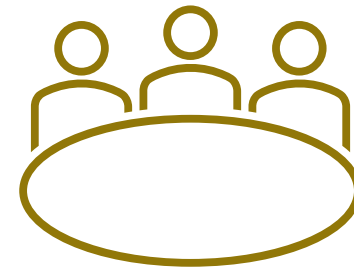
Upcoming events



WEBINAR

Entrepreneurial skills and
competences throughout life

June 26, 15:30–17:00



STUDY VISIT

From Ideas to Action – Advancing
Entrepreneurial Education

**June 18 – 19, 2025, Barcelona
(Spain)**





Thank you!



cei@ppmi.it