

EIRMA/15.098

November 2015

FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG YOUNG INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

Insight from HEKATE Final Conference: "Building bridges between industry and its future innovation managers"

22 September 2015 – Brussels, Belgium Mission of Norway to the EU / Norges delegasjon til EU

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Read on EIRMA website: Fostering entrepreneurship among young industry professionals and academic researchers



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FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG YOUNG INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

Over the past two years, the HEKATE project has been connecting industry and academia to increase the understanding of - and enthusiasm for - entrepreneurship and innovation among young scientists and technologists. At the project's end, participants and stakeholders met at Norway House in Brussels, at the final conference organised by EIRMA, to discuss HEKATE's outcomes, analyse what has been learnt, and plan how to continue its success.

WHY HEKATE MATTERS TO INDUSTRY

Industry needs access to talented people to carry out the research and development that underpins its pipeline of new products and services. As competition increases, though, pure intellectual horsepower is not enough. Companies need to hire more people who understand what it means to use science and technology to innovate, to build businesses, and to create positive change within companies, through intrapreneurship, and in markets, through entrepreneurship.

These people aren't easy to find - it takes a rare mix of technical insight, ambition, and charisma, among many other qualities, to see an idea through to successful implementation. Many scientists and technologists receive little training in what it means to do this kind of work, to implement change or create a business: they have therefore little understanding of the scope of the challenge or the intellectual satisfaction of addressing it. And so they don't engage, to the detriment of themselves and of society.

"We can't take management people and turn them into scientists, so we have to take scientists and give them management skills," said Monica Schofield, director international cooperation and EU office, TuTech Innovation, and HEKATE project convenor. "People in higher education tend to have only seen the higher education environment. We're not trying to turn everyone into start-ups, but to communicate the opportunities from different perspectives."

HEKATE was launched out to enable this communication, in part by overcoming some fundamental differences between the motivations and practices of industry and academia.



Monica Schofield, TuTech "We're not trying to turn everyone into start-ups"

Leopold Demiddeleer, managing director and Founder of TechBridgeOne, former director of future businesses at Solvay, and honorary president of EIRMA, chaired the meeting. He highlighted one of these issues: "How can you reconcile time constants in academia and industry? Building a curriculum takes an average of eight years, but CEOs think that it can be done in three months.

"Reconciling this needs a network of people. You have to show up and create a new atmosphere for enterprise."

THE MUTUAL BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT

It's not as if the challenges that industry faces are uninteresting. Anne Goldberg, new innovation platform director for Solvay, pointed out that her company is trying to develop a sustainable approach to chemistry, in the context of the challenges that society faces today.

"We need to disconnect economic growth and improving welfare from the ever-increasing use of nonrenewable resources," she said. Innovation is embedded in the DNA of Solvay. The company has long engaged with society and education, and sees HEKATE and similar projects as a way to find and work with like-minded people, with a variety of attitudes to risk, with whom it can develop new ways to address societal challenges.

"it's about keeping up-to-date with what's going on in basic and applied research, and being able to access help and advice quickly through these networks," she added.

Kevin de Caluwé, global innovation manager at Bekaert, said: "University doctoral students bring new ideas into our company, because we have a very limited view on the world: even though we have so many people in research, we don't know everything. And it makes you more flexible."

Working with academia can also help bridge silos within companies, according to Goldberg. The advantages shouldn't all flow one way, either, she added: "We do have colleagues who teach at University and this is quite a natural way to keep in contact. We also have 'white hairs' who return to university to teach, giving back to society what they have received."

CREATING THE CONTEXT FOR ENGAGEMENT

Organisations such as the European Commission and national governments can create a context that promotes greater engagement between academia and industry and so fosters more entrepreneurship. That's certainly one of the Commission's ambitions.

Peter Baur from the higher education department at the European Commission's DG Education and Culture, said that higher education institutes (HEIs) need to become more open, and more engaged with industry and the cities and local environment in which they operate.



Peter Baur, DG Education and Culture

"Knowledge alliances should help to stimulate innovation in education and through education" In 2008, the Commission set up a European platform, the University-Business Forum, to enable the exchange of good practice and to stimulate mutual learning between stakeholders from higher education, business and public authorities. Discussions between stakeholders yielded two key outputs.

The first was the idea of creating 'Knowledge Alliances' to foster innovation in higher education, enterprises and the socio-economic environment. After two pilot calls in 2011 and 2012, the Knowledge Alliances were introduced as part of the last call under the Lifelong Learning Programme in 2013: the HEKATE project was one of the selected projects.

Knowledge Alliances are now a full part of the new Erasmus+ programme and there is a lot of interest in them: there were 230 applications to run Knowledge Alliance projects in 2014, and 200 in 2015.

"Knowledge Alliances should help to stimulate innovation in education and innovation through education," said Baur.

The second key output of the stakeholders' exchanges is <u>HEInnovate</u>, an independent self-assessment tool providing guidance and advice to HEIs that want to develop their entrepreneurial potential. The self assessment involves users rating the relevance of a series of statement to their situation and institution.

HEInnovate is not about benchmarking or scoring: it is a tool to promote peer learning and organisational change. It has already been used by around 600 HEIs, in Europe, as well as in the US, Russia and Australia, to name a few.

HEInnovate also acts as a framework for discussions between stakeholders from different departments in the HEI, and is used by many to refine their strategy.

The Commission and the OECD also organise country reviews, based on the HEInnovate methodology that may result in recommendations and learning models for policy action by national HEIs and government stakeholders. The first country review was in Bulgaria, and four more such reviews are foreseen in Hungary, Ireland, Poland and the Netherlands.

Measures tend to drive behaviour, so the results of the national assessments may end up being used to inform policymaking - although this may mean finding a way to ensure the independence of the assessments, rather than basing policy on self-assessment reports.

The European University Association also offers <u>U-B Tool</u>, a selfassessment tool for collaborative research partnerships between universities, businesses and other non-academic organisations. It goes beyond the number of patent applications an institution gains and considers issues such as the quality of the process, using 47 indicators. It can also be used to monitor the progress of a partnership.



Kjersti Gauden, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research "The best collaborations are those with some intensity, where there is a timeline and continuity"

There are national initiatives on entrepreneurship education in universities, too.

According to Kjersti Gauden, advisor to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, it has been focusing on entrepreneurship education, starting at kindergarten level, since 2004. This has been driven through a series of policy papers and several initiatives, such as the establishment of The Norwegian School of Entrepreneurship, a Norwegian Award for Student Businesses, and the Council for Collaboration between State Universities and Colleges and Business Life.

After more than a decade of such activity, over 83% of students at Norwegian universities have had contact with a business partner during their studies, and this has a positive effect on motivation, completion rates and employability. It has also enabled the state to better understand what works.

"The best collaborations are those with some intensity, where there is a timeline and continuity with the enterprises," said Gauden.



Erik Øverland, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

Collaboration agreements between industry and academia make it easier for leaders to be mentors Norway has also set up collaboration agreements between industry and academia, for example with the Federation of Norwegian Service Enterprises.

"It makes it easier for leaders to be mentors to student businesses, and it has been working," said Gauden.

Erik Øverland, senior advisor at the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, discussed how knowledge transfer mechanisms are evolving in Norway.

One of the biggest reasons for doing this was the abolition, in 2003, of the Professors' Privilege, [i.e. academics' rights to exploit ideas they developed at university for personal gain], and a new requirement for publicly funded research organisations to enable their work to be used for societal benefit.

Between 2003 and 2010, therefore, seven out of eight Norwegian universities established technology transfer offices (TTOs). The government has also made intellectual property rights management, academic/industrial collaboration and other relevant issues part of its governance criteria for public universities. According to Øverland, the most important tool for commercialising research is FORNY and its successor, the <u>FORNY2020</u> programme, which supports seven TTOs with funding allocated on the basis of several criteria, such as their ability to manage commercialisation projects effectively. Funding for this program has varied, but it is helping to improve the ratio between ideas presented and successful commercialisations.

Norway has done a lot, quite quickly, to increase students' understanding of entrepreneurship, although Overland suggests there is room for improvement, for example through better coordination of national and local strategies and a more holistic approach to supporting entrepreneurship.

One thing he can't change, though, is the nature of Norway's economy: "It is a challenge for industrial actors and the technology transfer offices to think of using students, because of both legislation which does not include students, and a lack of interest by industrial actors."

THE HEKATE PROJECT

The HEKATE project was formed to find new ways to strengthen links between industry and academia. It was based on a couple of clear ideas.

"If you want to bring lots of people together to understand each other, you have to give them something to do," said Schofield. "Universities give tools and knowledge, but storytelling can convey wisdom."

Two HEIs were involved in running HEKATE workshops: Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH), and the University of Manchester.

HEKATE at **TUHH**

Christian Lüthje, head of the Institute of Marketing and Innovation, TUHH, said that the implementation of HEKATE was based on three hypotheses.

The first is that entrepreneurial education and training is useful because it can sort a population of students, most of whom haven't thought about it, into a population who have much more factually based attitudes to entrepreneurship.

The second hypothesis is that industry and academia need to meet, so that academia understands what industry does and industry understands the role and outcome of academic research.

The third hypothesis is that diverse teams are more effective.

These three hypotheses are reflected in the four key elements of the HEKATE workshops at TUHH: people from industry and academia are matched in pairs, or 'tandems'; they develop a project from initial idea to funding pitch; the workshops rely on experiential learning; and there's input from R&D professionals and academia.

The tandem element is particularly important. The HEKATE project team worked hard to match, for example, PhDs and postdocs with young people in industry, or people with an idea with people without an idea, or people with different levels of knowledge.



Christian Lüthje, TUHH "The harder you work on developing matches, the better"

"The harder you work on developing matches, the better, although sometimes these tandems form naturally," said Lüthje.

In practice, the workshops involved input from industry and academia, joint work on developing ideas, formal training on how to pitch an idea, and a final pitch to a jury.

According to Lüthje, learnings from the HEKATE project are now in regular use at TUHH.

HEKATE at the University of Manchester

Fumi Kitagawa, lecturer at Manchester Business School during the project, pointed out that, like Hamburg, Manchester already has a lot of work going on to connect higher education and industry. HEKATE, therefore, was trying to add value in an already rich environment.



Fumi Kitagawa, MBS

HEKATE project in Manchester focused on PhD and early career post-doctoral researchers, working in an environment already rich with related initiatives The HEKATE workshops at Manchester focused on PhD and early-career post-doctoral researchers in STEM subjects, to encourage the development of 'enterprising scientists', in collaboration with industry partners and internal academics who could act as role models. Enterprising scientists, according to Kitagawa, may have a number of roles, from launching start-ups from within an academic environment, to creating standalone startups, to becoming intrapreneurs, innovating within organisations.

The Manchester HEKATE workshops included one day hearing about the real-world experiences of people in each of these roles, discussions of the entrepreneurial commercialisation of knowledge, and views from practitioners. The second day included industrial case studies presented by EIRMA members, discussions of stakeholder management strategies, and more on developing an entrepreneurial career.

Thierry Piret, head of Solvay Ventures, offered his insights into corporate venturing, using case studies and a group exercise, while de Caluwé of Bekaert talked about innovation portfolio management and ran a group exercise. The workshops also heard stories about three enterprising scientists based in Manchester.

The result was that over the two days the attendees interacted with people with many perspectives on entrepreneurship, from start-up founders, venture capitalists, innovation managers, and others.

THE USER EXPERIENCE

What did the students think of the HEKATE experience?

Amina Malik is a research associate and PhD candidate at the <u>Institute for Air Transportation Systems</u> at TUHH, active in the Women in Aerospace and Hamburg Aviation networks. She is interested in entrepreneurship, and encouraging links between Europe and developing countries.

Malik told the meeting that she had expected the workshops to offer theoretical learning about issues such as intellectual property rights, business model innovation, innovation management and pitching.

In practice, she liked the practical approach of the workshop, working in tandem teams to develop real ideas, such as a plan she had to develop electronic versions of paper manuals. During the project, she was able to think about business models, consider stakeholder analysis, and faced critical reviews of her idea from other participants. She was also trained in pitching professionally, which was "intense and exciting".

"My idea didn't go forward, but I developed the context to progress other ideas," Malik said. "What we lack as researchers is an



Amina Mailk, TUHH "Getting the right information at the right time is really important"

understanding of whether there is a market, how we could define the market, what the basic paperwork to establish it is, and what funding tools are available".

"There is a dissemination problem somewhere. Getting the right information at the right time is really important," Malik added. She suggested that the workshops should continue, and should be broken down into phases to match the technology readiness levels of the attendees' ideas. She also called for more mentoring, especially from young entrepreneurs who have just been through the process.

Omonigho Otanocha is a PhD candidate at the <u>Laser Processing Research Centre at the University of</u> <u>Manchester</u>, and attended HEKATE workshops in Manchester and Hamburg. He also acts as a facilitator and peer mentor for teaching assistants within the Manchester Enterprise Centre.



Omonigho Otanocha University of Manchester

> "If you can use real examples that really motivates students"

Otanocha joined the HEKATE workshops because of an interest in entrepreneurship and the opportunity to learn from experienced entrepreneurs.

"One of the things that fired me up when I finished my first degree was that I never wanted to be fired: I wanted to be able to fire my boss!" he joked.

Otanocha felt that one of the most important things about the Manchester workshop was the quality of the speakers, and their passion to share experiences. That passion prompted him to act. He has a Keep In View book of project ideas, and once the workshop was over he decided he would do something about them. He then went to Hamburg for the second HEKATE workshop, to visit a potential investor in one of his ideas, and to learn about German culture.

Learnings from this trip included a recognition that ideas are free, the importance of knowing your end users, and the fact that having a paying customer is the key to turning an idea into a business. He also learned that he had to be very sure about his ideas when working in Germany "because if you fail, you're dead."

Otanocha argues that universities promoting entrepreneurship should focus on broadening what students are taught, to include team-building skills, negotiation, practical project management, enterprise orientation and sustainability. He also favours using more experiential learning, and greater contact with professionals from within and outside the university.

"If you can use real examples, that really motivates students," he said.

OTHER EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HEKATE does not exist in a vacuum: both Hamburg and Manchester have a strong ecosystem of initiatives and infrastructure to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among academics. The meeting heard about two other approaches.

Biolnno

<u>BioInno</u> is a Knowledge Alliance project to strengthen education in entrepreneurship in the biosciences, and to foster the flow of knowledge between research and innovation.

Antoine Harfouche, associate professor of biotechnology and bioentrepreneurship at the University of Tuscia, told the meeting that part of the motivation for teaching business innovation is that opportunities for PhDs and postdoctoral researchers are narrowing, with employers wanting to hire people who can bring additional skills.

Building bridges between industry and its future innovation managers

"Scientists do science, but entrepreneurs have to be charismatic, articulate, have a rich knowledge base, be energetic and demonstrate leadership."

Therefore the BioInno project has to inspire, motivate and educate through a curriculum, that can teach passion, empathy and so on - as well as the basic functional skills. Harfouche said it is also important to use the online tools that Millennials use, such as Twitter, Instagram, and online fora.

Other aspects of BioInno include using icebreaking processes, to get people talking, entrepreneurial storytelling, teaching people to pitch ideas, offering webinars and developing an electronic learning platform called <u>BioInno2go</u>. Harfouche recommends talking about product development processes, so that participants can also understand where risks lie.

BioInno also runs an internship program, and uses public relations and academic papers to share its message. It has developed guidelines for bio-innovation entrepreneurship, and a set of sustainability measures.



Antoine Harfouche University of Tuscia

"Entrepreneurs have to be charismatic, articulate, energetic..."

IDEATE

<u>IDEATE</u> is an 'Interdisciplinary Entrepreneurial Application for Transforming Education in High Technologies', backed by the <u>University of Staffordshire</u> in the UK, the <u>University of Nova Gorica</u> in Slovenia, the <u>University of Turku</u> in Finland, <u>Vilnius Business College</u>, and <u>D-Labs</u>, a company based in London and Ljubljana, Slovenia, which helps start-ups develop their businesses.



Rosemary Borup University of Staffordshire

"There are discrepancies in who can commit to this kind of programme" According to Rosemary Borup, principal lecturer at Staffordshire University, IDEATE's motivation is slightly different from the other projects discussed here. She told the meeting that she wanted to change the language of progress a little, to reach a different cohort of students: "Geographers, sports students, nurses and so on want to be innovative, but they don't necessarily identify with the term 'entrepreneurship'."

The IDEATE project was designed to address four key European Union priorities: youth unemployment; modernising teaching in HEIs; linking to industry; and developing cultural awareness among member states.

The dream was to:

- train academics and students to develop entrepreneurial behaviours
- develop interdisciplinary curricula to do so
- deliver them as a series of residential courses held in more than one country, with students from different disciplines, operating as creative and scientific teams, addressing a task set by an employer
- evaluate the approach, refine it, share it, and provide resources for others to try it.

Ideas can flow freely, especially among a group of enthusiastic educators, but implementation can prove more difficult.

"The nightmare didn't begin at the beginning, because we were all teachers fired up and talking about the same thing in the same language," she said. There followed a series of issues to be overcome to run the

curriculum. These included aligning the number of educational credits it would be worth between the UK and European systems, finding gaps in the timetables of all the partner institutions, and finding the right ways to validate the course for students at different levels.

There were also difficulties in getting support from some academics, and uneven uptake of the course among the target population.

"There are discrepancies in who can commit to this kind of programme, especially if they have many other commitments," said Borup.

Despite this, the students who did get involved in the programme appreciated its "learning by doing" approach, the ability to experience other cultures, and that the group included people with mixed levels of education and from a variety of disciplines. They also felt that the skills they had learned are directly transferable to other areas of their academic life, and felt greater ownership of their learning.

One student is reported to have said: "What I have taken away are skills that will last me for a lifetime."

LESSONS LEARNT

HEKATE, BioInno, IDEATE and similar programmes focus on helping students realise that they can create change, innovate, act as intrapreneurs within organisations, spin businesses out from HEIs or existing businesses, or even start businesses of their own - and that it is intellectually challenging, exciting and perhaps, even, financially rewarding. What did each group of participants take out of participating in these events?

For students

The student participants in these projects liked:

- their multi-perspective approach
- their European, multi-cultural dimension
- the workshop-based, learning-by-doing format
- the ability to hear from, and interact directly, with experienced entrepreneurs
- in the case of HEKATE, access to EIRMA members' experience
- access to people with a broad range of industrial backgrounds

For educators

Educators face a number of challenges and opportunities in running these courses, as detailed in part by Borup.

Other models

- Maurizio Manfrini, a senior scientist at nanoelectronics research centre IMEC International, said his institution runs innovation weeks in which PhDs and postdoctoral researchers can pitch their ideas to a committee
- Evelyne De Decker, president of JADE Belgium, a junior enterprise networking group, said her organisation is trying to provide young entrepreneurs with training and coaching from people within the network, "because sometimes people are a bit lost"
- Rita Morais, project expert at the research and innovation unit of the European University Association, said that linking research, education and innovation is a priority for the association. "This has traditionally been looked at from the doctorate perspective, but we want to foster more ties between research, education and innovation across all areas in European universities."
- Another participant said she ran 'start-up weekends' and suggested they should be added to curricula: "This is very much about practice, not knowledge-sharing or teaching"

Challenges

- for HEKATE in particular, "What was unique was building tandem teams. It's very labourintensive, but it makes the whole workshop more effective," according to Natalia Tomiyama, who co-managed the implementation of HEKATE as a researcher at TUHH
- making time: for academics to develop and deliver courses; for students to attend; and in curriculum timetables, for industrialists to contribute to courses
- managing competing priorities
- competing for attention with other knowledge-acquisition activities

Recommendation

- Otanocha said: "What industry can do to facilitate learning is mentor people on specific projects, which has a huge impact because students can see that what they are doing is going to be real"
- Otanocha recommended running business model innovation workshops for second- or third-year undergraduates, but giving a high value to implementation in the assessment

Dissemination

- Several participants said they wanted to see entrepreneurship training pushed earlier in the curriculum, as Norway is doing
- Schofield said: "The dilemma is pushing things further downstream, and the issue is time"
- A UK-based participant in the meeting said that simple replication wouldn't work, in the UK at least, because students are becoming more averse to risk as tuition fees rise: "You need a geographically specific set of solutions"

For business

One of the main issues with running projects such as HEKATE is getting and sustaining industrial engagement. This can also be true in other forms of industrial collaboration.

One participant felt that "it is easy for industry to finance a PhD project, but hard to extract value from it."

Goldberg at Solvay said that it is hard to achieve lasting partnerships because industry and academia have different strategies.

"You need to trust the people and the partnerships to continue to interact," she said. "The value is in the constant collaboration."

How do you establish a long-term stable relationship between industry and academia?

De Caluwé at Bekaert pointed out that long-term collaborations fit best when they align with the long-term goals of the company, rather than a tactical, short-term aim.

A participant from TU Eindhoven pointed out that it had joint roadmaps with strategic partners such as Philips and ASML.

Goldberg at Solvay offered guidelines industry can use to think about when to engage with academia:

- think about where you're based in your company in a business unit, or elsewhere?
- think about your timeline
- work out whether you are familiar with the technology/market that you want to address
- work out what kind of innovation you are doing. Is it core, and therefore should be kept secret, or new to you and therefore should be accessed through partnering?



Anne Goldberg, Solvay

"You need to trust the people and the partnerships to continue to interact" Richard Granger, an innovation educator and consultant and EIRMA individual member, pointed out that Rolls-Royce has effectively outsourced its fundamental technology development to a group of more than 20 university technology companies. Meanwhile, Ireland has developed protocols for the ownership of any intellectual property that results from a relationship between industry and academia that favour longterm partnerships.

"The whole thrust of that set of guidelines is all about creating long-term relationships," he said, "and fostering industry going into academia to teach and share."

Other insights from the meeting included:

- it's difficult to build relationships with industry, and especially to expect industry to support repeat events
- you have to work hard to get enterprise support for people to come from industry
- it helps if you structure a networking event to gain support
- It is important to be aware of your institutional context

CONCLUSIONS

The HEKATE project has demonstrated that students will happily engage with the idea of becoming more innovative and entrepreneurial, especially if it is taught through project work, direct interaction with people who have done it, and they are given training, for example in pitching ideas, to help them along.

Given this enthusiasm and its potential benefits, it makes sense to spread the idea as widely as possible.

"The challenge is wider dissemination to more traditional HEIs, especially in south and eastern Europe," said Schofield.

The issue, in terms of implementation, is that it is hard to develop and sustain industrial engagement. EIRMA helped ease this problem for the HEKATE project through relationships that have built up amongst its members.



Leopold Demiddeleer, TechBridgeOne

"There is no point in awakening the hunger to be entrepreneurial if the opportunities aren't there" "One of the legacies of HEKATE is to provide higher education access to these people and their stories through EIRMA at the European level," said Schofield.

EIRMA has now created a platform for collaboration between industry and HEIs, "a kind of dating mechanism," as Schofield puts it.

The <u>platform</u> will help experienced innovation managers get in contact with HEIs to offer their help in a number of ways, such as by acting as trainers in HEI workshops, by sharing their experiences, or by providing case studies and other resources.

Wrapping up the meeting, Demiddeleer said that a lot of the work of industry/academic collaborations was about learning the vocabulary of others. He also called for HEIs to take a more rigorous approach to self assessment, and to be more willing to improve themselves.

Taking a wider view, he warned that people should be wary of the myth of the start-up: "Don't oversell the value of them: it's the giants who hold the whole thing together."

Demiddeleer pointed out that society was taking a big bet on industry to tackle many of society's most difficult problems. Despite this, industrial research organisations are under intense competitive pressure to do more with less. Schofield sounded a related, cautionary note: "There's no point in awakening the hunger to be entrepreneurial if the opportunities aren't there."

Action Points

- Create a culture that understands and supports innovation, intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship
- Develop a diverse ecosystem of supporting projects, platforms, resources and infrastructure
- Measure how open your HEIs are to innovation
- Use the initial measurement process to build consensus on what entrepreneurship means in that organisational context
- Set openness to innovation as a goal for HEIs, and track their progress towards it
- Ask industry to engage with HEIs as a way to:
 - Keep in touch with what is going on in research
 - Scout for new people
 - Scout for ideas
 - Engage in matchmaking
 - Build their local ecosystem
 - Pay back and find potential routes for spin-outs (open innovation)
- Be luckier in entrepreneurship, by trying more often

Text and pictures by Luke Collins







This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.