

Annex III – Report from session on ‘Research and Innovation ecosystems’

Key questions for the discussion:

What could you improve to your universities as innovation process?

What top down and/or bottom up logics do you use to support entrepreneurship?

What are the key players and tools to support entrepreneurship?

1. A level perspective

There are different levels and approaches: macro, meso, micro.

Micro-level: people, structures, organizations and the university

Meso-level: networks and strategic relationships

Macro-level: culture and government support

- Authorities should listen researchers because they create technology and value.
- Universities should support resources-based strategies and create strategic links between entities to develop a sustainable ecosystem.
- Identify the most important players and establish good connections with them (identification of players is important)
 - o **Academy of science (they give money and support technology development, patents and copy rights)**
 - o **Chamber of Commerce (strong player) to establish connections with companies**
 - o **Universities (research lab cooperation) at the same time cooperate and compete with each other.**
- Speak the same language. Develop tools and methods to share the same language when you speak about entrepreneurship. Bottom-up efforts and initiatives could help.
- Some universities testify that they have Technology Transfer Offices and Incubators but they don't closely work together. It is important to find key persons in each entity. Additionally, it is important to create an identification map. It is hard to hear that some people try to create some novel events or practices that probably may already exist already in the university. It is important to circulate information first inside the university and then show it to the world. To do this, it is important to think strategically.
- Create lasting links and strong ties between player.

2. Lack of strategic thinking

Several universities testify that they have money and support but they don't know how to use it and develop a specific strategy. Most universities focus on short-term results and don't take a step back to think of a long-term strategy.

In this case, it is important to **“Think outside the box”**. Developing courses on building an entrepreneurial philosophy or an entrepreneurial logic (for students but also for faculty staff) may help to improve this situation.

3. Focus on quantitative results

Another point that was raised was the influence of university stakeholders. Some universities stated that their stakeholders (chambers of commerce, ministry, professional associations, foundations) give them

money to support innovation and innovative ideas of their students. Thus, they fund them only if there are students with innovative ideas. This may lead to questionable results.

It was noted that it is important to identify performance indicators that focus on more qualitative results (academic or business-oriented indicators)

4. University's goals

Universities should encourage all innovations or innovative business models as they create value. It was advised to not only focus on technological innovation. Some service-based innovations may create important value (Uberization)

- University has not only the task to create companies, but also to educate our students.
- We have to be respectful to the entrepreneurial activity.
- Entrepreneurs are warriors.
- We have to educate our students: how to become entrepreneurs, how to create business, and how to respect others entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship as a discipline

5. Create a supportive environment

-Create a supportive environment for business creation and entrepreneurship.

-Strategy of the university: try to change their mind. Build entrepreneurial thinks. Changing ourselves and the environment

-Get out of the building and find other players of the ecosystem. Get out of the box and find key player to create an ecosystem.

-To do so, first we have to change ourselves, then try to develop an entrepreneurship spirit in the university and then develop an entrepreneurial university.

6. Success factors for entrepreneurship

- Multidisciplinary teams or groups of students = Combination of diverse skills. Example: combine IT knowledge with law school students (on how to protect patents) or economy students.

- Avoid thinking "success=patents". Many successful firms that create value are not based on patents. Develop two ways of thinking: i) (based on patents) try to commercialize patents and create value in the market; ii) (based on no-patents) try to develop service-based innovative projects.

- Avoid illegal entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial is developed based on the paradigm of opportunities. Opportunities may arise when the law fails. However, students should avoid this direction.

- Find the balance between creating technology, protecting it by patents but also commercializing it and creating value. France is strong in creating patents but not so good in commercializing them. Tools are important for all stages of the process.

7. Future perspectives

- Digitalization
- Uberization

"Together we can create the entrepreneurial university of the future"