



EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Building Playbook

A comprehensive framework with hands-on tools for incubators, accelerators, science and technology park and other innovation actors in accelerating collaborative innovation for (regional) sustainable economic development.

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EBN, Brussels - June 2023



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Acknowledgements: we are especially grateful for the pioneers and experts in the field (e.g. EY, Israel Innovation Institute, EC Joint Research Centre, and a selection of work forwarded by EU|BIC community members) who continue to dedicate their work to build the scientific and practical knowledge around innovation ecosystem building. The results of their work formed the starting point for the formulation of the EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework.

Data analysis: CSIL

Layout and design: Sclegate

All photos © EBN and member organisations

Digital version: 978-2-931214-01-5 (ISBN) / 9782931214015 (EAN)



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About the European Business and Innovation Centre Network

EBN (European Business and Innovation Centre Network) is a not-for-profit that serves a pan-European, global community of people that use innovative business as a driver for regional (sustainable economic) development. EBN's initiatives include EU|BIC certification, development and distribution of quality business support programmes, facilitation and initiation of project collaborations, global networking, and advocacy for excellent business support actors like the EU|BICs.



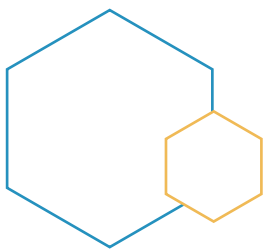
EU|BICs, quality-certified European Business Innovation Centres, are on a mission to drive economic development and well-being in their regions. More than 100 certified EU|BICs and 40 Associate members are shaping our global community. Becoming an EU|BIC means responding to our mission to use business and innovation as a force for regional development with the best possible actions to create thriving startups and SMEs. In other words, EU|BICs take real steps to ensure that their services are as best as possible for their clients and their regions.



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Executive Summary

Innovation is a transformative force that drives economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. It addresses systemic crises and spans various dimensions, making it essential for tackling global challenges. Equally, dynamic innovation ecosystems are crucial for fostering growth, entrepreneurship, and addressing global challenges. These ecosystems bring together diverse actors, foster collaboration, attract investment, develop skills, and support commercialisation.

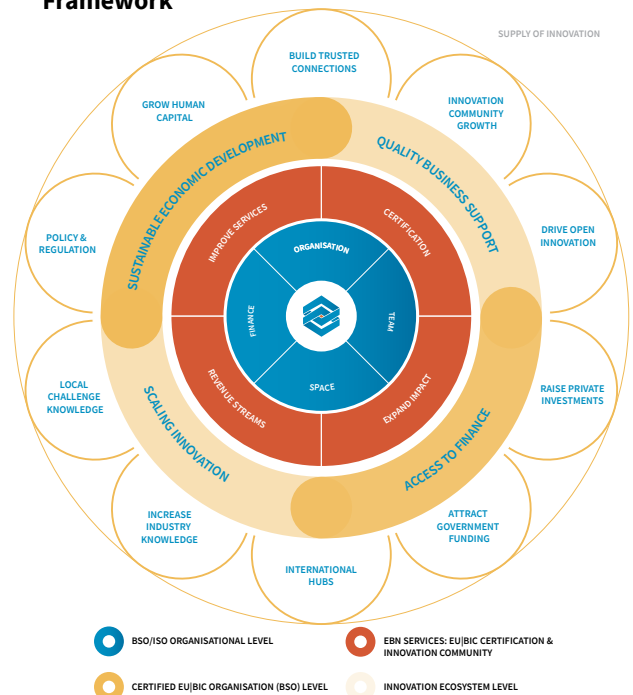
Regional innovation ecosystems play a significant role in addressing local challenges by leveraging local resources, expertise, and networks. By embracing regional specificities, these ecosystems ensure relevance, effectiveness, and local ownership.

The introduction of the EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework, highlights the immense importance of collaboration, to achieve digital transformation, green transition, social inclusion, and lasting impact in European innovation ecosystems. Placed at the heart of the innovation ecosystem, certified EU|BICs, as business and innovation support organisations, play a vital role in regional development, job creation, and making a positive societal impact. They provide resources, guidance, and connections for startups and SMEs to thrive, and coordinate cooperation between ecosystem actors.

Collaboration within ecosystems is the key to promoting knowledge sharing and efficient solutions. By strengthening and adapting these ecosystems, we can achieve sustainable progress and drive impactful innovation aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Europe's innovation ecosystems, ideally interconnected, are effectively responding to global challenges in a regional, and local innovation ecosystem. Characterised by collaboration, inclusivity, and interconnectedness, Europe's innovation ecosystems with EU|BICs at their core, are fostering innovation and entrepreneurship to address local specificities while tackling global issues.

We are guided by the European Union's (EU) aim to position Europe as a global innovation leader by fostering a pan-European approach and providing support in various forms,

EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Booster Framework



including collaboration, funding, talent nurturing, digital education, and establishing harmonised legislation and standards. Digital transformation and green transition are priorities for the EU, and therefore as well for the EU|BICs operating in Europe's regions. European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) and EU|BICs, are among others, driving forces behind this transformation, championing initiatives that contribute to a greener, more sustainable planet.

The EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework provides a comprehensive toolbox for governments, business support actors (i.e. incubators, accelerators, science parks, and universities) and industry leaders to build and strengthen local innovation ecosystems. The three intervention levels (organisation, business/ innovation support organisation, and innovation ecosystem) consist of interconnected verticals that collect proven and effective actions within their respective domains. This comprehensive framework offers a complete methodological roadmap for all innovation stakeholders to strengthen their local startup and innovation ecosystem. Through this framework, we seek to better connect stakeholders, improve service delivery, gain recognition of excellence, and build trusted connections for pan-European and global innovation.

Together, with our extensive network across Europe, we are creating a sustainable growth path for European startups, academia, governments, and innovators of all kinds. Join us as we ignite and design local, regional, and national innovation ecosystem strategies that drive positive change and shape a prosperous future.





Foreword

As the CEO of EBN, I am thrilled to emphasise the significance of collaboration, digital transformation, green transition, social inclusion, and sustainable impact in European innovation ecosystems.

For nearly four decades, EBN and the EU|BIC community are guided by the belief in innovation as a powerful force that drives economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. Increasingly, innovation can address systemic crises and create solutions across multiple dimensions. Our certified EU|BICs play a vital role in regional development, job creation, and making a positive societal impact by providing resources, guidance, and connections for startups and SMEs to thrive.

Together, we are building dynamic ecosystems that foster growth, entrepreneurship, and tackle global challenges. By strengthening and adapting our innovation ecosystems, we ensure sustainable progress and drive impactful innovation aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, we are pleased with the support and endorsement found among EBN's long-lasting institutional partners for innovation ecosystem building.

Regional innovation ecosystems are key in addressing local challenges by leveraging local resources and networks. They support the development of context-specific solutions, ensuring relevance, effectiveness, and local ownership. Our efforts align with European strategies and initiatives such as the European Green Deal and the Horizon Europe Programme, demonstrating our commitment to sustainable growth and competitiveness.

Through digital transformation and the green transition, we are embracing the opportunities to shape a cleaner, more sustainable future. European Digital Innovation Hubs and EU|BICs alike are driving forces behind this transformation, championing initiatives that contribute to a greener planet and support businesses in meeting digital challenges.

At the core of our mission is sustainable economic development, driving inclusion and positive societal impact. We strive to foster support for inclusive, sustainable, and impact-oriented ventures that ultimately contribute to greater wellbeing for European citizens – and beyond. Indeed, by integrating social and environmental considerations into business strategies, we can also empower underrepresented entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into successful businesses.

Together, with our extensive network across Europe, we are paving the way for a sustainable growth path for European startups, academia, governments, and innovators of all kinds. Through our EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework, we provide a comprehensive roadmap for realising and strengthening local innovation ecosystems, driving pan-European and global innovation.

Laura Lecci, CEO EBN





Reader Manual:

How to Best Navigate the Playbook

Here are some instructions to help you navigate and make the most of your reading experience:

1. **Download Adobe Acrobat Reader:** If you haven't already, download and install Adobe Acrobat Reader on your device. You can find the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader for free on the official Adobe website.
2. **Open the PDF:** Locate the interactive PDF document on your device and double-click to open it. The document should automatically open in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Refrain from using your web browser to open the document, this will limit the interactive elements of the document.
3. **Navigation:** Use the table of contents, tabs, or hyperlinks within the document to quickly jump to specific sections or pages of interest. Simply click on the links to navigate seamlessly.
4. **Interactive Elements:** Keep an eye out for interactive elements such as clickable buttons in EU|BIC Ecosystem Framework visual. These elements may guide you directly to additional information and expanded content further on in the document. Simply click on these elements to interact with them.
7. **Annotations and Notes:** Use the annotation tools provided (such as highlighting, underlining, or adding sticky notes) to mark important sections, jot down thoughts, or make personal annotations as you read.
8. **Printing and Saving:** If you want to print the document, ensure that you have selected the appropriate print settings to maintain the interactivity, such as printing in colour and selecting "fit to page." Remember to save a copy of the PDF on your device for future reference.

Each chapter will provide you with practical examples of tools and instruments to build and strengthen your innovation ecosystem:

- **Chapter 1** sets out how startups and support ecosystem thinking have become the norm and how collaborative innovation forms the key to solving global challenges.
- **Chapter 2** explores the specific role of Europe's innovation ecosystem in the context of the European Union's and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals priorities.
- **Chapter 3** presents the EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework, which highlights the specific role of business support organisations, such as incubators, accelerators, science and technology parks, in building and orchestrating multi-stakeholder environments suitable for innovation to thrive.
- **Chapter 4** offers a rich, yet non-exhaustive list of proven and tested tools that the members of the pan-European EU|BIC community successfully use in their local innovation ecosystems.





Chapter 1:

Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems for Sustainable and Thriving Societies

In today's rapidly evolving world, innovation has emerged as a crucial driver of economic growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. As societies face multifaceted challenges, the transformative power of innovation is being recognised by public authorities, political leaders, and thought influencers. Startups and business ecosystems have become instrumental in shaping social development, empowered by their remarkable capacity to innovate. Leveraging new technologies and benefiting from globalisation, innovation has become a tangible reality that holds the promise of addressing systemic crises across economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions. EU|BICs (European Business and Innovation Centres) play a pivotal role in igniting and interconnecting regional innovation ecosystems.

Defining EU|BIC Innovation Model

Innovation, rooted in the Latin term “innovare,” has been a concept since the 13th century. It goes beyond novelty and technology, encompassing the design and realisation of new economic contributions by combining existing elements in novel ways. From technological advancements to product development, incremental improvements, and disruptive changes, innovation spans sectors like healthcare, communication, energy, and extends beyond the private sector, with innovation playing a vital role in public services and societal development. Moreover, innovation is not solely about novelty or scientific content; its ultimate measure lies in its success in the marketplace and the economy. It is through the effective implementation and commercialisation of innovative ideas that their true value is realised.

Startups play a crucial role in driving innovation, employment, and economic growth in Europe. However, it's important to ensure that innovation serves human well-being, respects ecological boundaries, and promotes inclusivity. By understanding the diverse types and intensities of innovation, organisations and policymakers can harness its power to drive progress, competitiveness, and sustainable prosperity.

Within this context, EBN and the pan-European community of certified EU|BICs have played a pivotal role in Europe's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Originating as far back as 1984, the network acts as a response to Europe's need to restructure its industrial base and embrace new technologies, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Led by Count Etienne Davignon and supported by bankers, industrialists, and the European Commission, the first European Business and Innovation Centre (EU|BIC) was established. These EU|BICs aimed to support regional economic development by fostering innovative startups and helping existing SMEs modernise and innovate.

As an international association, EBN represents EU|BICs and stakeholder organisations involved in supporting innovative startups and companies. EBN is the official coordinator of the EU|BIC trademark, a recognised quality system for innovation and entrepreneurship. Over the years, EBN has expanded its reach, formed strategic partnerships and developed a rich portfolio of services supporting the ever-increasing implementation quality of its certified EU|BIC and Associate members..

Today, EBN remains a constant force in the ever-evolving innovation landscape, supporting tens of thousands of startups and SMEs. Through its EU|BIC certification, quality standards, technical assistance, and innovation community, EBN continues to contribute to regional and local sustainable economic development, competitiveness, and growth in Europe – and increasingly knowledge beyond the borders of the EU. Innovation ecosystem building stands at the core of our members' activities and thereby gains a central place in EBN's daily work.





The Importance of Innovation Ecosystems

Establishing robust and dynamic innovation ecosystems is vital for driving economic growth, fostering entrepreneurship, and addressing global challenges. Consisting of networks of organisations and institutions, including enterprises, educational and research institutions, financial entities, and government agencies they promote collaboration, partnership, and knowledge sharing - an environment that facilitates effective problem-solving.

Typically, innovation ecosystems provide a fertile ground for startups to thrive by offering resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities. They play a crucial role in transforming innovative concepts into successful ventures that address societal and environmental challenges. Reflecting on the rising interest in nurturing deep tech science and companies, research, infrastructural and financial development activities within Europe's ecosystems are instrumental in driving the creation of new technologies and innovations, contributing to societal progress and EU competitiveness.

Startups now recognise the importance of collaborative efforts involving multiple stakeholders, moving away from relying solely on individual creativity. They integrate collective competencies within their innovation process to foster growth, knowledge, and innovation. Investment from venture capitalists, angel investors, and government agencies remains critical in vitalising innovation landscapes enabling the translation of ideas into tangible solutions and driving the emergence of new industries, job creation, and regional economic growth.

Skills development, particularly in STEM fields, is crucial for emerging and moderate innovator regions. Facing a widening skills gap, Europe could benefit from education and training programmes to empower individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and implement innovative solutions. Furthermore, ecosystems support the commercialisation of research and new technologies by providing funding opportunities, mentorship, and business support services. Ultimately, this process leads to the development of new industries, job opportunities, and the potential for transformative impact starting regionally and expanding on a global scale.

EU|BIC Collaborative Innovation

Business support organisations (BSOs), such as incubators, accelerators, science and technology parks and innovation hubs, are vital actors within innovation ecosystems. They play a pivotal role in supporting innovation and entrepreneurship by providing comprehensive incubation and acceleration services for startups and SMEs. BSOs offer physical space, resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities to nurture the growth of early-stage startups. They also facilitate collaboration and knowledge transfer through science parks and innovation hubs, bringing together diverse stakeholders to co-create and share ideas.

Quality-certified BSOs, distinguished by the EU|BIC label granted by EBN, provide comprehensive incubation and acceleration processes, promoting innovation in startups and SMEs throughout their development stages. Within this framework, BSOs are positioned as the central and coordinating actor of innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem. Even though their main purpose is identical, organisational characteristics vary and can be summarised in the following categories:

- Incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs, venture-builders, business support organisations
- Chambers of commerce, business, and startup associations
- Universities and Research Institutions
- Business angels, impact funds, seed, and venture capital firms.

Collaboration and partnerships among BSOs, such as the EU|BICs are key components of innovation ecosystems. As the understanding of innovation and entrepreneurship evolves, a paradigm shift is taking place, emphasizing collaboration and collective efforts within ecosystems. This new approach emphasises the integration of various stakeholders, including citizens, social societies, political decision-makers, research institutions, universities, SMEs, startups, large corporates, and business support organisations.

By fostering collaboration among different stakeholders, locally rooted ecosystems promote effective problem-solving and combine their capacities in addressing both local and global challenges. Research and development





activities within innovation ecosystems drive the creation of new technologies and innovations, while the paradigm shift towards collective efforts emphasizes the importance of integrating diverse competencies for fostering growth and innovation.

By actively participating in the creation, integration, and orchestration of ecosystems, these stakeholders facilitate the realisation of impactful innovation. This collaborative model aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 9, which emphasizes resilient

infrastructure, sustainable industrialisation, and fostering innovation. Strengthening and adapting innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems to global challenges becomes essential for achieving these ambitious and sustainable goals. Overall, by nurturing startups, facilitating collaboration, and fostering innovation, EU|BICs as orchestrating actors in collaborative innovation ecosystems seek to contribute to regional economic development, job creation, and sustainable prosperity.





Chapter 2:

Innovation Ecosystems Responding to Global Challenges

This chapter explores the role of European innovation ecosystems in addressing global challenges and establishing Europe as a global leader in innovation. It discusses the EU's approach and the key building blocks that enhance the competitiveness of the European innovation ecosystem. The chapter emphasizes the significance of innovation ecosystems in contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and driving sustainable economic growth, societal progress, and technological advancements. It also examines exemplary European ecosystems that effectively respond to global challenges through collaboration, inclusivity, and interconnectedness.

European Regions and Context-Specific Solutions

While global challenges require coordinated action, they also manifest themselves locally with diverse and complex specificities. Involving local stakeholders in regional innovation ecosystems can address local issues effectively by leveraging local resources, expertise, and networks. By embracing regional specificities, innovation ecosystems support the development and scaling of context-specific solutions to local challenges. This approach ensures the relevance, effectiveness, and local ownership of the solutions, ultimately leading to sustainable and impactful outcomes.

To build, nurture and connect regional innovation ecosystems, a series of initiatives are being put in place, with EU|BICs and mission aligned BSOs called to undertake a central role, because of their position at the core of the ecosystems and their availability of different tools and services to support innovation and entrepreneurship. Here we highlight key themes that the EU|BIC community, committed to promoting sustainable economic development for four decades, is addressing in the ever-changing landscape. We will explore the challenges faced by innovation ecosystem actors and how they are preparing to embrace megatrends.

EU Innovation Agenda

The European Union (EU) is committed to positioning Europe as a global innovation leader through a comprehensive approach. This approach focuses on fostering collaboration, providing adequate funding, creating an enabling environment for innovation, addressing data-related challenges, and promoting digital education and skills development. The digital and green transition take a central place and guide all actions in Europe's innovation agenda.

In line with this, the EU aims to build cohesive innovation ecosystems by nurturing entrepreneurial talent, providing funding, investing in digital infrastructure, and removing barriers to establishing harmonised legislation. By unlocking the potential of data-driven innovation and promoting digital skills, the EU aims to drive sustainable economic growth and technological advancements in Europe.



European Strategies and Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies

European strategies, such as the European Green Deal and the European Pillar for Social Rights, are rooted in the United Nations SDGs and guide Europe's green and digital transitions. These strategies recognise the critical role of innovation ecosystems in supporting the scaling of companies, encouraging innovation, and fostering cooperation among national, regional, and local innovation actors.

The EU's commitment to innovation is further exemplified through the Horizon Europe Programme, with a budget of €95.5 billion allocated to research and innovation between 2021 and 2027. This programme focuses on addressing climate change, achieving the SDGs, and boosting the EU's

competitiveness and growth. By accelerating digital and green transitions, restoring ecosystems, promoting a circular economy, and building a resilient and inclusive society, the EU aims to unlock the impact of European research and innovation.

In conclusion, innovation ecosystems are pivotal to the success of the European R&I strategy. The EU's approach, with its ten fundamental building blocks, fosters collaboration, provides funding and addresses regulatory barriers to position Europe as a global innovation leader. Innovation ecosystems play a crucial role in driving sustainable economic growth, societal progress, and technological advancements by developing solutions that address global challenges outlined by the SDGs.

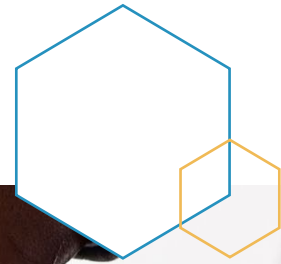


Source: European Commission 2020



The EU's commitment to innovation, as demonstrated by the Horizon Europe Programme and other strategic initiatives, underscores the importance of innovation ecosystems in unlocking the full potential of research and innovation. By involving local stakeholders and considering regional specificities, innovation ecosystems enable the development and scaling of context-specific solutions to local challenges, ensuring relevance, effectiveness, and local ownership.

Through a cohesive and integrated approach, Europe can create a vibrant and competitive innovation ecosystem that drives sustainable economic growth, social progress, and global leadership in innovation. By aligning with the SDGs and regional specificities, European innovation ecosystems contribute to a better future for Europe and the world, addressing global challenges and positioning Europe at the forefront of innovation and sustainability.





Digital Transformation: The Power of (E)DIHs

Digital transformation is a priority for the EU, and European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) have been established as one-stop shops to support businesses and public sector organisations in meeting digital challenges. These hubs serve as orchestrators of digital transformation, connecting stakeholders and fostering innovation experiments.

As we have seen, incubators and accelerators, science and technology parks, regional development agencies and, in summary, members of the EU|BIC Community, are themselves orchestrators of their regional innovation ecosystems making them key players within this ecosystem, providing valuable support to EDIHs. Currently, 42 EU|BIC community members contribute to 34 EDIHs across Europe.

DIVA - Empowering Digital Transformation in Pays de la Loire

DIVA (Digital Innovation Value Accelerator) is the Digital Innovation Hub for the Pays de la Loire region in France. It is a game-changer for businesses, helping them thrive in the digital era. DIVA offers comprehensive support to small and medium-sized businesses, digital start-ups, and regional organisations, guiding them through digital transformation.

Recognised as a European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH), DIVA is backed by the Pays de la Loire Regional Council and co-financed by the European Commission. With a consortium of partners including EU|BICs Atlanpole, Angers Technopole, and Laval Mayenne Technopole, DIVA provides tailored assistance and fosters ethical AI use.

Led by Atlanpole, DIVA brings together expertise to accelerate digital transformation. Businesses benefit from a wealth of resources, networks, and knowledge, enabling them to thrive in the digital landscape. Numerous success stories highlight the impact of DIVA, with businesses achieving remarkable growth and resilience.

The support, expertise, and collaborative environment provided by DIVA and its partners are invaluable assets. Together, we are shaping a future where digital innovation drives sustainable growth and success in Pays de la Loire.

Green Transition: Seizing the Net-Zero Opportunity

The urgency to limit global temperature rise and achieve net-zero emissions presents a significant opportunity to invest in the clean energy economy and shape the net-zero age. Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal, the EU aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 through initiatives such as the Fit-for-55 Package and the REPowerEU plan.

By investing boldly, this transition will create jobs, revitalise manufacturing, and drive down costs while supporting global decarbonization efforts. Innovation ecosystems, with EU|BICs at the forefront, are driving this transformation, championing initiatives for a greener and more sustainable planet.

Unlocking Sustainable Business Models: The SwitchMed Methodology by EU|BIC Berytech

EU|BIC Berytech proudly contributes to Lebanon's innovation landscape by implementing the SwitchMed Methodology. This powerful tool fuels the Green Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, uniting BSOs, academia, researchers, donors, financial institutions, and government entities with international support programs.

Funded by the EU and implemented by renowned organisations like UNIDO, UNEP, and MedWaves, SwitchMed exemplifies the strength of partnerships. Berytech seamlessly integrates this methodology, fostering sustainable consumption and production practices for a circular economy.

We equip startups and BSOs with sustainable business development tools, including Green Business Models, Impact Measurement, Eco-design, and Access to Green Funds. Our integrated approach includes a comprehensive 5-day training programme utilising the business model canvas, accompanied by personalised coaching from local experts and 40 hours of mentoring through the SwitchMed incubation programme.





MINERVA Business Angels: Driving the Green Economy with EU|BIC University of Warwick Science Park

As part of the EU|BIC University of Warwick Science Park, MINERVA Business Angel Network is a driving force in the green economy. They provide a platform for private investors seeking to invest in emerging technology businesses. With over 150 members from the UK and overseas, corporate partnerships with Venture Capitalists, and collaborations with universities, they facilitate face-to-face events at various locations.

Since 2010, MINERVA has invested in over 130 companies, enabling them to leverage more than £80 million. The network has been recognised as the 2nd most active investment group for green projects in the UK. It is driven by their passion for innovative technologies that address pressing challenges in the green economy.

In this era of urgency to combat climate change and transition to a carbon-free economy, early-stage startups and spinouts play a crucial role. They are nimble, and creative, and often become the foundation for larger organisations seeking cutting-edge technology. As the demand for green solutions intensifies, these startups have the potential to become the next unicorns, focusing on green economy-related problems.

At MINERVA, they embrace this transformative moment. Their recent investments include a company developing midsize electric boats with hydrogen hybrid engines, a startup producing electrically assisted cargo bicycles for last-mile delivery, and a recycled clothing company, among others.

Space & Deep Tech: Exploring Opportunities

The exploration of space, security, defence, and deep tech represents a frontier for innovation. The European Space Agency Business Incubation Centres (ESA BICs) play a vital role in nurturing startups in these domains. Collaboration between ESA BICs and the EU|BIC community fuels technological advancements and supports ventures working on ground-breaking innovations.

Unlocking Innovation in Space: EU|BIC Instituto Pedro Nunes, Jorge Pimenta

“As the Innovation Director at EU|BIC Instituto Pedro Nunes, I am thrilled to share about the synergies we have explored with the European Space Agency (ESA). Our mission is to promote innovation and technology transfer by bridging the gap between the scientific, technological, and business sectors.

At IPN, we specialise in incubating and accelerating startups that leverage space technologies. As the coordinating centre for ESA’s Business Incubation Centre in Portugal, we provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ for space opportunities and the repurposing of space technology. Our goal is to bring space knowledge down to Earth, inspiring its application in new and diverse fields.

We also manage ESA Business Application in Portugal, supporting companies in their feasibility studies to identify sustainable applications and services using space technologies. Through this user-driven service, we connect entrepreneurs with competitive tenders and open competitions, providing funding of up to 100% depending on the call. Additionally, we facilitate demonstration projects for the implementation of pre-operational services.

By combining our EU|BIC and ESA BIC mandates, we offer a diverse range of services to our companies and ecosystem, fostering internationalisation and increasing the technological intensity of regional businesses. We invite entrepreneurs to look upward and discover the limitless possibilities that satellites offer as a solution to challenges here on Earth.”





Open, Responsible and Inclusive Innovation: Driving Sustainability and Impact

Regional research and innovation ecosystems face complexity and uncertainty, requiring place-based approaches and the engagement of diverse stakeholders from the start. Open, Responsible, and Inclusive Innovation processes offer a holistic framework to address societal needs and regional priorities while fostering innovation.

In addition, demand-driven innovation, and co-creation, when well-orchestrated at the regional level, can lead to inclusive, sustainable, and scalable solutions. Identifying ecosystem orchestrators who facilitate dialogues and collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for connecting societal challenges with policy strategies and defining innovative solutions that are likely to be accepted and sustainable in the long term.

There is a special role and opportunity for EU|BICs in integrating social and environmental considerations into business strategies, facilitating access to capital for entrepreneurs, and supporting diverse entrepreneurs and impact-focused companies. To expand their impact, business support actors can provide capacity-building and support services to small and medium-sized enterprises pursuing sustainability, enabling them to transform ideas into successful businesses. Inclusive entrepreneurship, driven by underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, generates jobs, stimulates economic growth, and addresses social and financial exclusion.

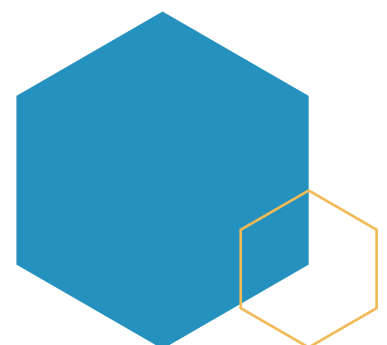
Furthermore, as proven in the successful Better Incubation project, coordinated by EBN, re-evaluating incubation models and entrepreneurial ecosystems can foster inclusive and sustainable ventures that drive positive societal change, with a focus on aligning goals between investors and founders and considering the overall impact of investments beyond financial returns.

Unlocking Sustainable Impact: LLAMP 3i by EU|BICs in the Valencian Community

LLAMP 3i is a game-changer for companies aiming to align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Valencian Institute of Business Competitiveness (IVACE) and CEEI Valencia has pioneered the first self-diagnostic test for quantifying the social and environmental impact of businesses, enabling entrepreneurs to assess their sustainability strategies systematically.

LLAMP 3i is an advanced acceleration programme that empowers companies to achieve triple innovative impact: social, environmental, and sustainable economic. Through personalised roadmaps, mentoring sessions, and advisory support, participants receive comprehensive guidance tailored to their unique needs. The programme also facilitates group sessions with SDG experts, communication workshops, participation in fairs/demo days for enhanced visibility, and the chance to compete for the prestigious Triple-Impact Awards.

Implemented by esteemed EU|BICs like CEEI Castellón, CEEI Elche, and CEEI Valencia, LLAMP 3i has successfully completed three editions, leaving a profound mark on participating companies. It's a catalyst for positive change, propelling businesses towards sustainable growth while aligning with the SDGs. Join us on this impactful journey, where sustainable innovation meets success.





How Smart Specialisation Strategies enable all places to innovate and help all regions to become the best that they can be. Esther Peñalver, Managing Director at EU|BIC CEEI Murcia

With citizens steering the conversation, Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices have the potential to mobilise European citizens and entrepreneurs around common goals-offering a multitude of opportunities to participate in change.

Excellent innovators and their supporters more and more operate from the paradigm that opening science and innovation to civil society advances human knowledge and accelerates the transformation of our communities towards more sustainable and resilient practices.

“Smart Specialisation Strategies resilient practices”, if well designed, equipped with adequate resources and properly managed, they contribute to addressing the new European challenges. Crucially, these strategies must respond to a series of key questions to ensure their coherence but, above all, to keep them connected to the real needs of society. Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) seeks the participation of society in science and innovation, from the earliest stages, to align its results with the values and goals of all the actors involved, a fundamental issue for the design, implementation and evaluation of smart specialisation strategies. It is crucial to realise how innovation systems and policies have been evolving in the last decades, through different approaches. If in the 1950s it was all about stimulating industry to invest more in Research and Technology development, the 90s focused on connecting actors – fostering the creation of ecosystems and public-private partnerships.

Now, in the 2020s era, policies are more and more focused on stepping up societal transitions, with the emergence of a challenge-driven innovation policy, stimulating targeted and selective innovations. Many persistent problems in the world,

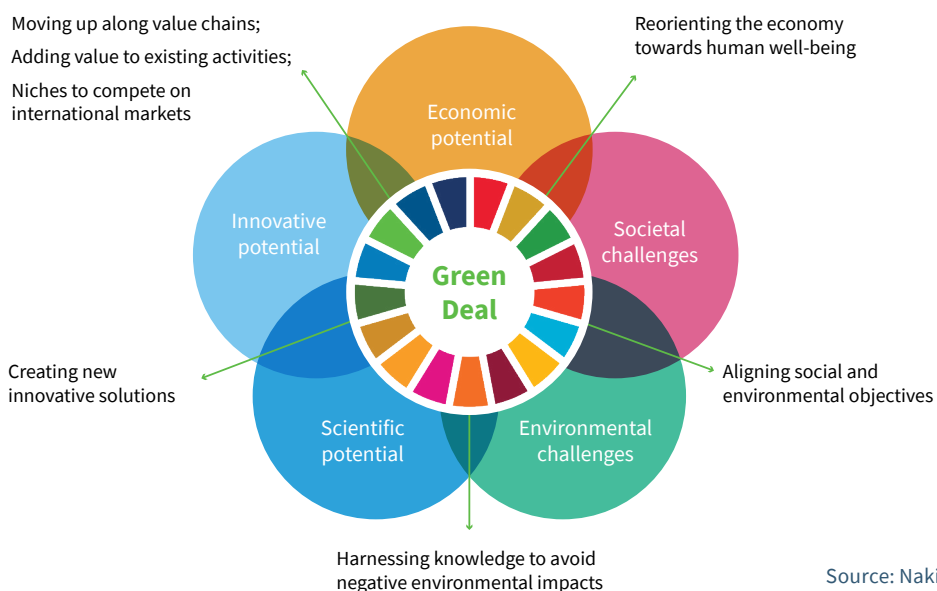
such as climate change, ageing population or economic inequity, can only be efficiently addressed if we radically change our economy and the way we have organised society.

Formulating missions with specific goals can be a powerful tool for challenge-driven innovation policies and instruments. A mission boosts and guides regional innovation ecosystems, with both a sense of urgency and a sense of meaning.

Strengthening sustainability dimension - Smart Specialisation for Sustainable Development Goals powered by EBN partner - Joint Research Centre - European Commission

Smart Specialisation for Sustainable Development Goals (S3 for SDGs) is a methodological approach that aspires to integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and resulting sustainability challenges in the whole policy cycle of Smart Specialisation Strategies – from their design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The basic idea of S3 for SDGs is that science, technology and innovation can and should be mobilised not only for economic growth but also to address societal and environmental challenges. This new purpose of innovation is reflected in the new metrics, diagnostic approaches, rethinking stakeholder engagement and participation, policy mix, governance, financing and budgeting for SDGs and sustainability. S3 for SDGs allows localising global challenges, making them meaningful for different territorial contexts and local communities. This is the basis for the mobilisation of new stakeholder coalitions and innovative solutions for a sustainable transition.

New dimensions of Smart specialisation for SDGs call for broader and more systematic considerations of synergies, trade-offs and relevant stakeholders.



Source: Nakicenovic, et al.





Which Ecosystem KPIs to Measure and How

Towards Enabling Interoperability Within/ Between Ecosystems: Requirements for Tools and Approaches – a reflection on the EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework by StartupCommons



Data interoperability plays a crucial role in fostering an integrated approach within the EU|BIC innovation ecosystem. Its significance lies in facilitating seamless data exchange, efficient collaboration, enhanced insights, scalability, and regulatory compliance. By unlocking collaboration, fostering innovation, and driving success for startups and entrepreneurs across Europe, data interoperability becomes a fundamental aspect of the ecosystem.

To establish an innovation and entrepreneurship infrastructure that promotes interoperability, several key requirements for tools and approaches should be taken into account:

- 1. User-Centric Design:** The infrastructure should prioritise a seamless and intuitive user experience, avoiding complex navigation and large silos. Users must have access to personalised information through dedicated applications or “windows,” ensuring easy accessibility and personalised delivery of information. This approach enhances user satisfaction and efficiency.
- 2. Modular Architecture:** By adopting a modular architecture that separates front-end and back-end components, the infrastructure gains flexibility, scalability, and easier maintenance and updates. Decoupling the user interface from the underlying data and functionality allows the platform to adapt more effectively to changing needs and technological advancements.
- 3. Comprehensive Data Repository:** The infrastructure should serve as a centralised and reliable source of high-quality, timely, and accurate information. It should encompass various data types, including user profiles, programme details, funding opportunities, success stories, and industry insights. Ensuring data integrity and security is crucial for building trust and enabling informed decision-making.

4. Seamless Integration: The infrastructure should facilitate seamless integration between different digital solutions at national, regional, and city levels. Balancing operational efficiency, scalability, and standardisation at the European level while allowing flexibility for national, regional, and local adaptations is essential. Enabling smooth data sharing, interoperability, and collaboration among different stakeholders within the ecosystem should be a priority.

5. Global Alignment: To foster European/global connectivity and collaboration, the infrastructure should identify common needs and align with international standards and practices. It should establish connections between different levels, such as national/international, regional/cities, to enable seamless interaction, information exchange, and cross-border opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs.

6. Data Management and Automation: The infrastructure should prioritise efficient data management and automation, going beyond identity management and data portability. It should empower EBN stakeholders to collect and utilise customer data effectively while ensuring privacy and compliance with relevant regulations. Leveraging automation capabilities based on artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) can streamline processes, facilitate data-driven decision-making, and enhance the overall user experience.

Source: Nakicenovic, et al.



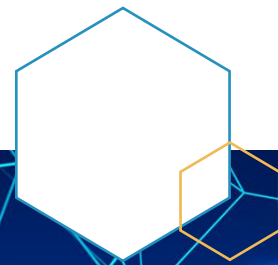


7. Open Standards and Open Source: Adhering to open standards ensures interoperability and enables seamless integration with other systems and platforms. Embracing open-source components fosters collaboration, innovation, and community-driven development, making the platform more adaptable, transparent, and accessible.

By embracing these requirements, the pan-European EU|BIC innovation ecosystem can establish a robust infrastructure that promotes data interoperability, collaboration, and innovation. This approach will drive the success of startups and entrepreneurs across Europe while fostering connectivity and collaboration on a global scale.

Conclusion

Innovation ecosystems are instrumental in addressing global challenges and embracing megatrends. The EU|BIC community, with its dedication to regional sustainable economic development, is actively responding to these challenges. The community is shaping a brighter and more innovative future by leveraging digital transformation, driving the green transition, promoting social inclusion, and exploring frontier technologies. Embracing these trends will ensure a resilient and prosperous society for generations to come.



EU|BIC Community's Impact 2022-2023

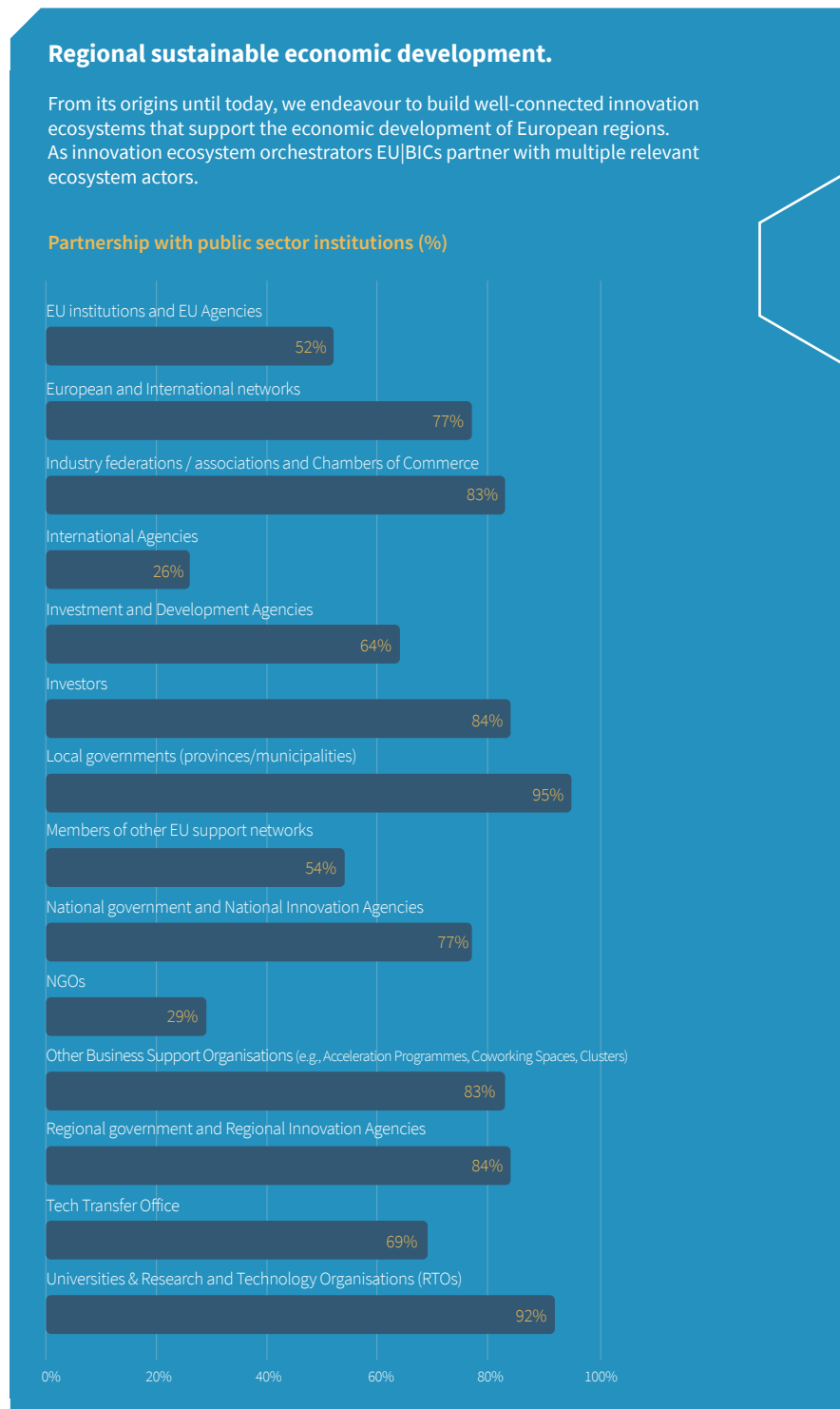
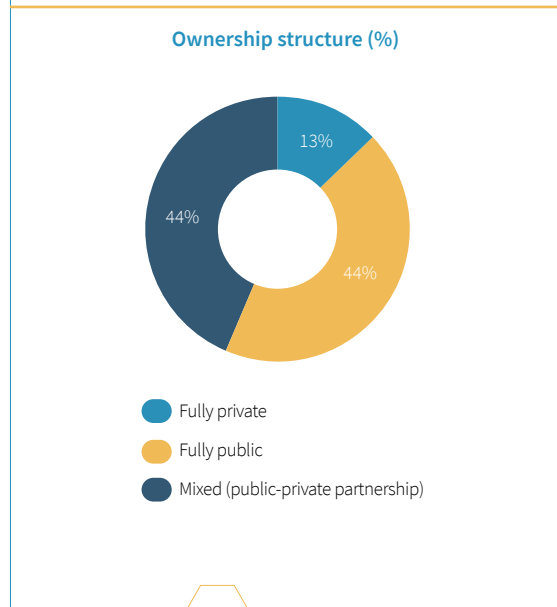
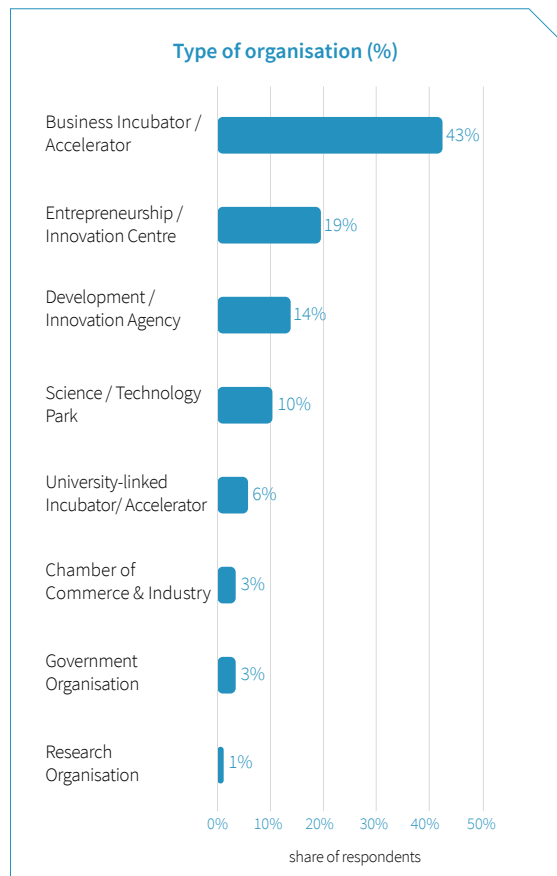
Transformational strength of Europe's innovation ecosystems.

EU|BICs are an important component of regional innovation ecosystems in all regions where they exist. Their position is leveraged most when EU|BICs play an active role in orchestrating the innovation ecosystem or they act as developers of the region's Innovation strategy. Those who do this successfully assert the creative power of local entrepreneurs, steer different support mechanisms, co-design instruments to accelerate the transformation of regional economies.

Although diverse, most organisations in the EU|BIC community operate primarily as a startup incubators and accelerators.

EU|BICs use the best possible actions to create thriving startups and SMEs - working in industries ranging from Space, Health, Food, Energy, Smart Materials, and Digital. A key feature of EU|BICs as innovation ecosystem builders and business intermediaries: they are taking real steps to ensure that their services are best advantageous to their clients - and best advantageous to their regions.

As a pan-European community, we concentrate our efforts around four mission commitments: regional economic development, quality business support, access to finance, and scaling European innovation. We believe these four-mission elements form the core building blocks of a well-performing innovation ecosystem.

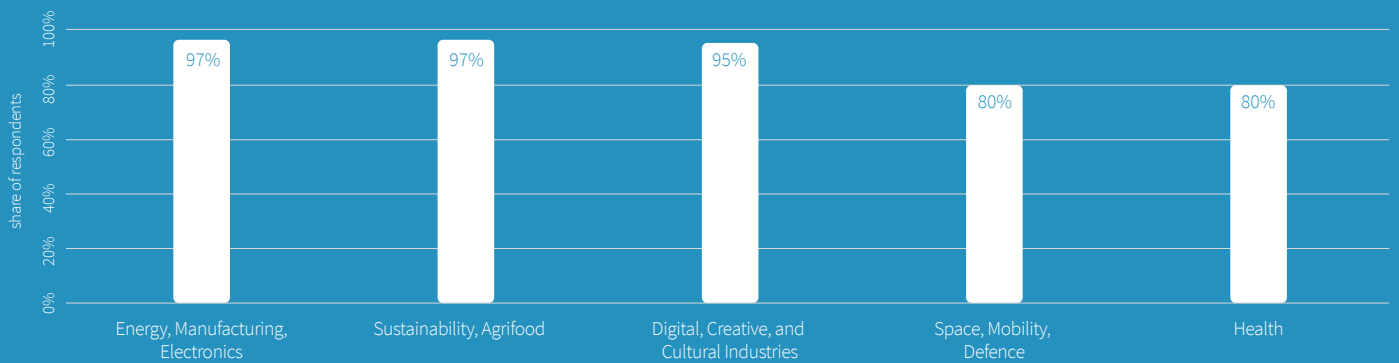


EU|BICs all over the Europe and beyond are the privileged actors in their regional and local entrepreneurship arena, federating wide ecosystems and innovation specialists to the profit of regions and communities' development.

Areas of expertise

EBN and EU|BICs share the mission and responsibility to build a community of connected business innovation leaders committed to addressing our world's most pressing issues with innovative solutions. Centring sustainability, inclusion and social transformation around innovation is a display of responsibility, agility, forward-thinking, and resilience, as demonstrated by the EU|BIC community.

SECTORS REPRESENTED BY EU|BICs (%)



More than 90% of EU|BICs operate as generic or mixed-sector experts, Sustainability (green innovation) and Smart Manufacturing areas are well represented - with almost all EU|BICs being experts in these areas. EU|BICs consider vast ecosystems and expertise, representing diversified communities and ecosystems. Approximately 40% of EU|BICs also specialise on social and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Companies (startups, scale-ups, SMEs) supported by EU|BICs created:

15,900+ jobs

in **3,770+** companies

with an average of **306 jobs** created per EU|BIC

Quality business and innovation support.

EU|BICs conduct their operations in a manner that delivers the most excellent innovation support services possible. Our quality-certified, entrepreneurial selection, ideation, acceleration, and incubation programmes are designed to support startups, scale-ups, SMEs and innovators of all kinds to keep succeeding in achieving their mission.

In 2022, we helped more than **36,500 companies and entrepreneurs** to get a head start getting their innovation on the market.

SURVIVAL RATE

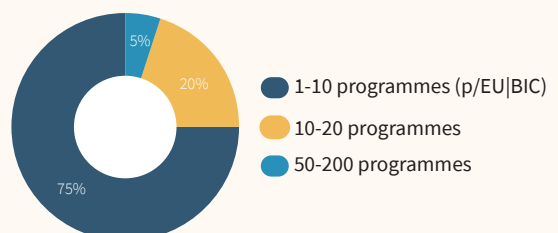
82%

of supported companies survive after 3 years

- ✓ **32 800+** enquiries received
- ✓ **13 300+** entrepreneurs selected
- ✓ **7 400+** start-ups supported
- ✓ **9 800+** SMEs supported

288 Average days of coaching & mentoring
(25 000+ days in total)

840+ ideation, incubation, acceleration, scale-up programmes run



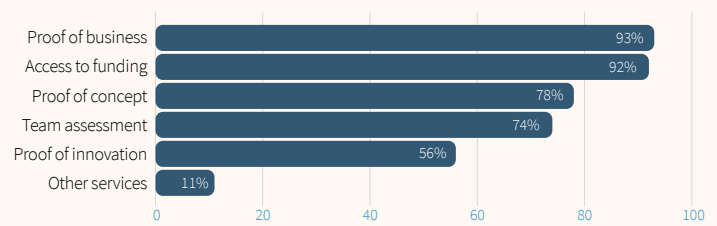
Startups and scale-ups supported by EU|BICs outperform other European startups in the first 3-year's survival rates with 82% vs 58% EU average (source: Eurostat). This measure showcases the sustainability of businesses supported and quality support of EU|BICs.

Business support services

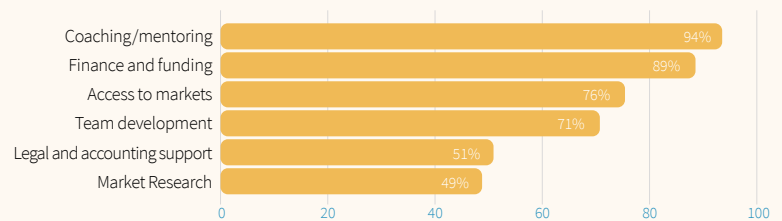
EU|BICs provide a comprehensive set of innovation and business support services along the full entrepreneurial journey from ideation to scaling and internationalisation. Highlighting services provided by most of the EU|BIC community, these include:

- Ideation phase services: proof of business (92%) and access to pre-seed funding (89%)
- Startup services: coaching/mentoring (92%), financing and funding (89%), as well as access to markets (83%) were services provided to Start-ups.
- Growth Services: access to funding (90%) and access to markets (73%) were supported at this stage of growth.
- In total, companies supported by EU|BICs filed close to 1,000 patents.

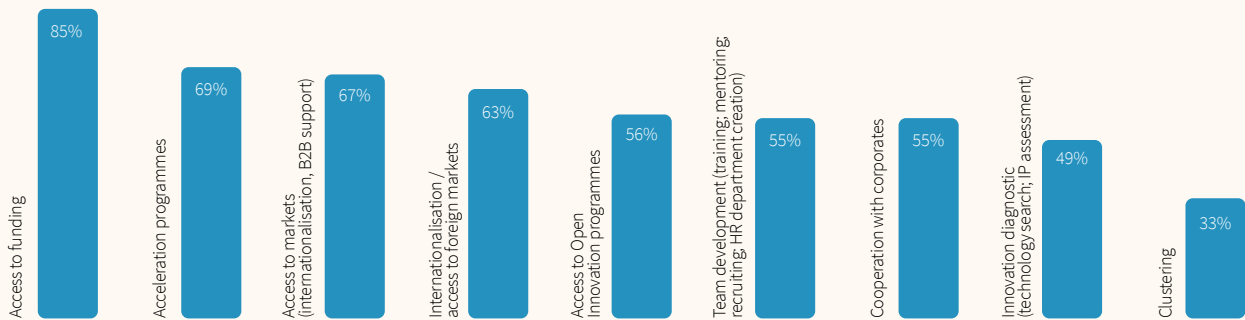
Selection services provided (%)



Provision of start-up services (%)



Growth services provided (%)



Access to finance

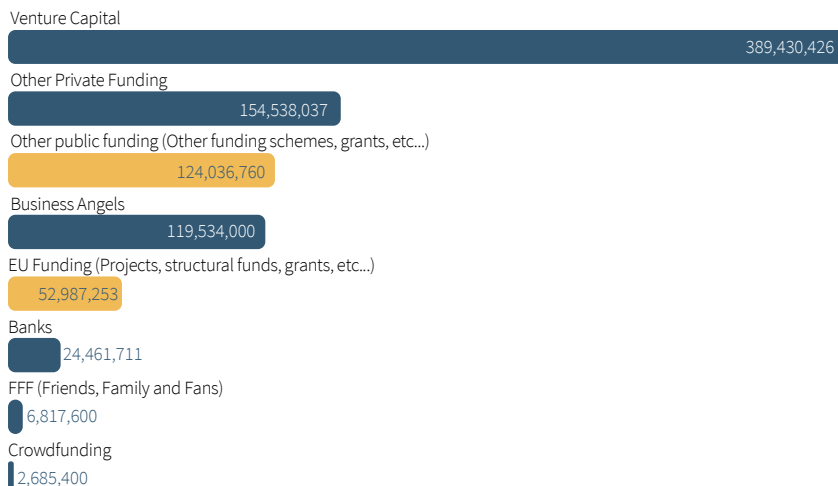
Since inception until today, we endeavour to provide a steady pipeline of innovative, investment-ready companies and foster supportive investment opportunities, including access to private investments, EU and non-EU grants, loans and equity funds, ensuring the continuity of the businesses and innovations that a competitive European economy needs.

With a network of networks also including hundreds of investors, we rely on various tools and programmes to embed innovation to finance, and finance to innovation and share best practices on investment processes.

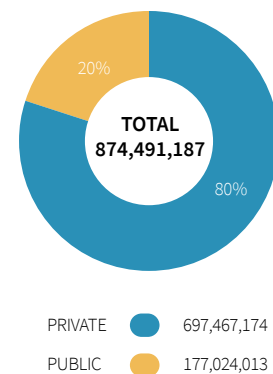
Existence of an affiliate seed fund investing in start-up companies



Amount of funding raised by companies supported by EU|BICs, per investor type



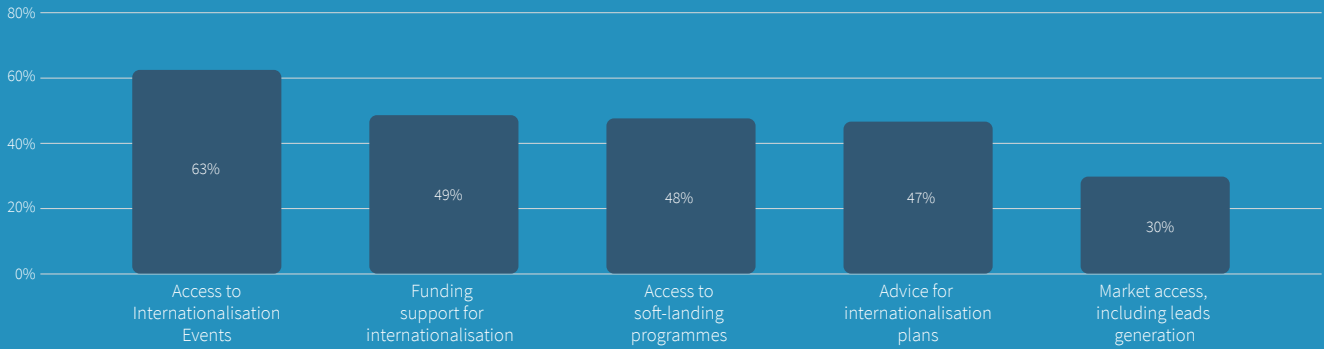
Total amount of funding raised



Scaling European Innovation.

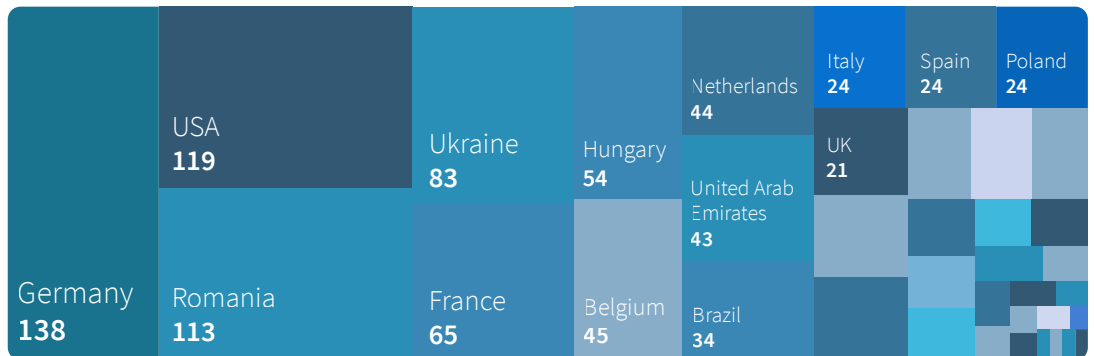
Our pan-European nature is one of our greatest assets to bolster the internationalisation potential of European startups, scaleups and innovative SMEs to support those who already operate on an international scale and to reinforce Europe as a global leader in entrepreneurial research and innovation.

Share of EU|BICs providing main internationalisation services

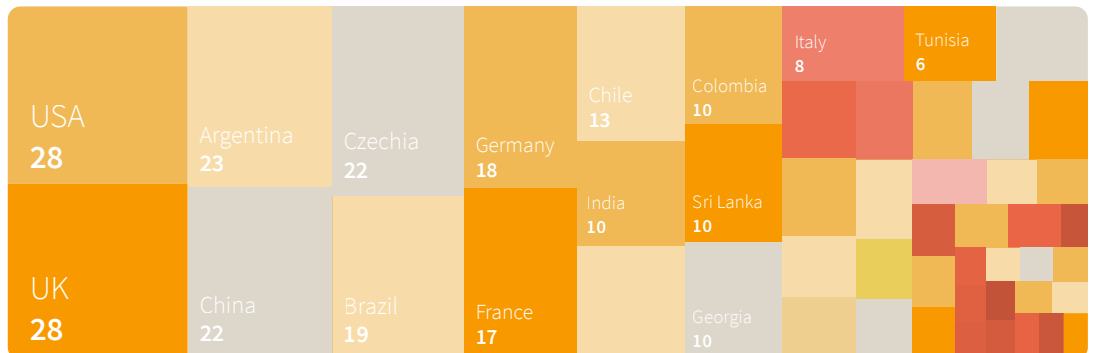


Generally, **internationalisation services** include access to internationalisation events (67%), advise for elaboration of internationalisation plans or strategies (46%), and funding support for internationalisation activities.

EU|BICs supported local companies to access foreign markets



EU|BICs supported companies from these foreign countries to access the local (European) market:



Share of EU|BICs offering incentives to attract foreign companies



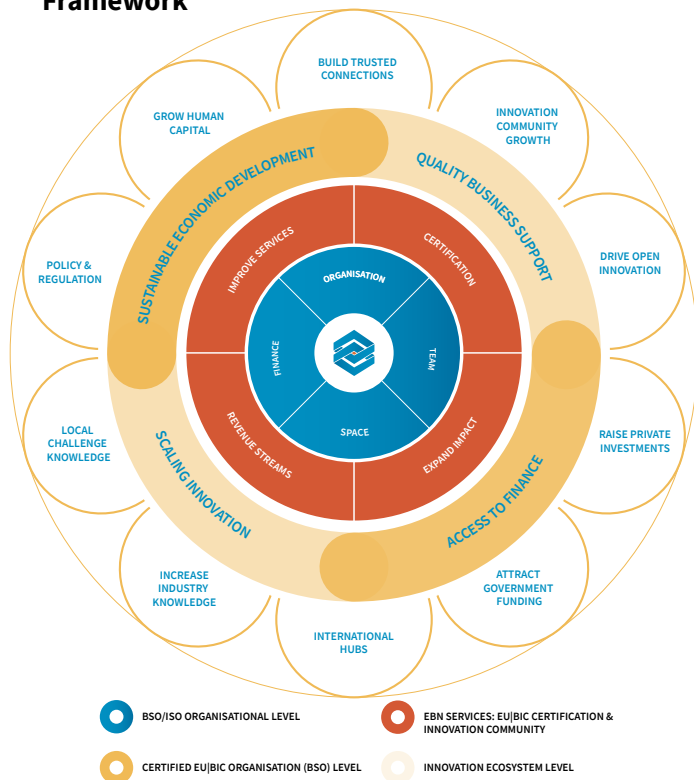


Chapter 3:

EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework: Playbook for Building and Orchestrating Collaborative Innovation

The EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework, based on the experience of EBN and EU|BICs, aims to be a valuable tool to support the development of innovation ecosystems in Europe and beyond. The European EU|BIC innovation community is today home to over 165 quality-certified incubators and accelerators, university-linked spin-off centres, science, and technology parks, and connecting corporates, investors, government institutions, academia, and innovators of all kinds, illustrating a profound impact on the advancement of pan-European and global innovation.

EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework



Implemented by the EU|BIC community and its 165+ members, 630+ experts and ecosystem partners across Europe, the framework shares tested methodologies and actions that can be replicated to ignite and design local, regional, and national innovation ecosystem strategies.

Three Impact Areas: How to Navigate the Framework

To meet the growing demand for new, strengthened, and connected innovation ecosystems in Europe and the growing needs of its increasing number of beneficiaries and clients, the EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework categorises the multitude of potential support services in primary innovation verticals. Each vertical offers a unique “toolbox” of customised and comprehensive actions.

The three intervention levels (organisation, business/innovation support organisation, and innovation ecosystem) consist of interconnected verticals that collect proven and effective actions within their respective domains. This comprehensive framework offers a complete methodological roadmap for all innovation stakeholders to strengthen their local startup and innovation ecosystem.





BSO/ISO organisational level

Starting at the **local orchestrating entity**, both young and well-established organisations aiming to support entrepreneurial innovators pursue in general four main goals: continuous development of their organisation, team, finances, and physical spaces for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Areas for support: through services and performance assessment, among others provided by EBN and European ecosystem partners, business and innovation support organisations can use tools to:

- Improve innovation and business support service delivery to clients (startups, SMEs, R&D&I and industry) (Services)
- Gain performance insights and certified recognition of excellence (Certification)
- Expand impact on the local/ regional/ national innovation ecosystem (Impact)
- Access new forms of income to maintain financial sustainability (Finance)



EBN Services: EU|BIC Certification & Innovation Community

To enhance the four verticals outlined in the “Organisational Management” component, EBN provides a range of services that assist in achieving the organisation’s goals and objectives. Thus supporting the organisation’s aim to become a certified member of Europe’s innovation community as an EU|BIC.





Certified EU|BIC Business and Innovation Centre Organisation Level

Being a certified or associate EU|BIC member means a business support organisation's commitment to our community's four guiding missions supporting European innovation:

1. **Regional Sustainable Economic Development:** Building well-connected innovation ecosystems stimulating job creation.
2. **Quality Business and Innovation Support:** Delivering excellent business innovation support services and increasing the survival rates of your client's startups and SMEs.
3. **Access to Finance:** Creating pathways for startups and companies to become investment-ready and facilitating their access to investment opportunities.
4. **Scaling European Innovation:** Bolter the internationalisation potential of (non)European startups, scale-ups and SMEs.

Together, with 165+ certified and associate members, the EU|BIC innovation community offers a wide range of specialised services **helping innovators, startups, and SMEs in European regions and across the globe to start, grow and scale.**

This includes motivating early-stage entrepreneurs, facilitating mature companies developing new products or manufacturing processes, connecting academic groups seeking to transfer their ideas to the market, brokering corporations interested in collaborating with European startups and technology, scaling (non)European companies seeking new markets abroad and traditional factories and plants seeking to incorporate innovative and advanced manufacturing into their businesses.

We believe that we can learn and make use of our different approaches to drive innovation and entrepreneurship which are tailored to each unique local innovation ecosystem. Simultaneously, many of the **services provided can be replicated in other regions benefiting the growth of emerging startup and innovation ecosystems.** Altogether, the services provided by the EU|BIC community and local partners make up a well-connected, efficient, and inclusive European innovation ecosystem.

The **certified business/ innovation support organisational level** provides a non-exhaustive list of concrete tools that members successfully apply in their operating areas. The community is proud to promote these as tested and valuable actions to build and grow innovation ecosystems in emerging areas in Europe – implemented jointly by the members of the EU|BIC community and their local institutional, academic and industry partners.



2. Certified Business and Innovation Centre (EU|BIC) Management

REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Building well-connected innovation ecosystems stimulating job creation.

Objectives:

- Promoting entrepreneurial cultures among early-stage entrepreneurs, academia, government, and society.
- Understanding of 'environment', modern challenges, market needs and market structure (a quintuple helix of innovation).
- Building strategic partnerships with innovation ecosystem stakeholders.
- Connecting regional challenges ('environment') with 4 key innovation helix stakeholders (academia, industry, government, and society).
- Building alumni entrepreneur communities to stimulate the return of knowledge.

Tools

- Co-working space
- Business and Industry Expert Database
- International Business Mentor Network
- Co-design S3/I3 policy and collaborations (EU Partnerships for Regional Innovation)

QUALITY BUSINESS AND INNOVATION SUPPORT

Goal: Delivering excellent business innovation support services and increasing the survival rates of companies.

Objectives:

- Increasing the use of mentors and domain experts.
- Supporting entrepreneurs during the idea validation and company-creation stages.
- Providing support to entrepreneurs in their startup and scale-up phases Providing support to entrepreneurs in their startup and scale-up phases.
- Providing access to technology, research, and talent and promoting collaborations with the academic world.
- Building pools of Advisory Board candidates.
- Provide Strategic reviews (competitor and IP), financial reviews, and modelling.

Tools

- Incubator and accelerator programmes
- Tech Startup (business development) programme
- Specialised, holistic support programme tracks.
- Growth mapping (Oxford Innovation)
- Impact and SDG-oriented business modelling
- Fast prototyping
- Living Labs
- Test zones

ACCESS TO FINANCE

Goal: Provide a pipeline of investment-ready companies and investment opportunities.

Objectives:

- Providing access to private investors (business angels, VCs, and lenders).
- Provide access to open innovation and corporate venture capital.
- Provide access to EU and non-EU grants, loans, and equity funds.
- Bringing foreign investors to the relevant field.
- Develop sectorial programmes and initiatives to fit organisations, companies, investors, and corporate needs.
- Support IP valorisation and technology transfer for universities and inventors.
- Facilitate sector-specific networks, pitching opportunities and feedback rounds.

Tools

- Investment Readiness programme
- Proof of concept funding
- Community investment pool
- Showcasing
- Business (matching) grants
- Seed fund: Sponsored thematic feasibility programmes

SCALING EUROPEAN INNOVATION

Goal: Bolster the internationalisation potential of European startups and scale-ups.

Objectives:

- Providing access to foreign markets with insights on markets, talent, business environments and ecosystems.
- Enhancing and boosting small businesses on the international playing field and supporting fast growth.
- Stimulate access to dedicated soft-landing zones.
- Connecting entrepreneurs and large enterprises supporting the implementation of innovative technologies in large organisations.
- Hosting alumni groups targeting disruptive SMEs.
- Providing internationalisation support, understanding new market opportunities and how to access foreign markets.

Tools

- Scale-up programmes
- Site (virtual/physical) visits and discovery programmes
- International events
- Alumni groups
- Internationalisation support desk





Innovation Ecosystem Building Level

Energised by a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, robust technological infrastructure and skilled human workforce that produces a vast substantial number of startups per capita in the world, innovation is one of Europe's most sought-after resources.

The world's best innovation ecosystems share common qualities that foster collaboration, attract talent, promote entrepreneurship, and provide a supportive environment for research, funding, and market access. By understanding and cultivating these key qualities, organisations and governments can position themselves at the forefront of innovation, driving economic growth and maintaining a competitive advantage in the global landscape.

As ecosystem orchestrators, local EU|BICs provide a variety of practical tools and funding platforms aimed at effectively addressing the dynamic and changing needs of Europe's and globally connected innovation ecosystems.

The '**Innovation Ecosystem Building**' level of the framework provides a non-exhaustive list of concrete and replicable tools that members successfully apply to ignite, build, and mature their local innovation ecosystem.





3. Innovation Ecosystem Building

POLICY & REGULATION

Goal: Promoting a supportive environment for the ecosystem within central and local Government.

Tools

- Policy expert meetings
- Unite ministerial units
- One-on-one expert sessions
- Policy-paper
- Policymakers training

INNOVATION COMMUNITY GROWTH

Goal: Increasing the number of people that operate in the relevant entrepreneurial and innovation fields.

Tools

- Thematic business idea factory
- Knowledge transfer programmes
- Hackathons/ Ideathons/ Startup Weekends
- Regional entrepreneurship mapping
- Focused programmes

RAISE PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

Goal: Encouraging Investor activities in the local market.

Tools

- Encouraging investor activities in the local market.
- Business Angel Evangelisation
- Investor networks
- Closed-door meetings

INCREASE INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

Goal: Encouraging an increased demand for innovation in large organisations.

Tools

- Challenge Competitions
- Corporate seminars
- Enablers Meetups

GROW HUMAN CAPITAL

Goal: Strengthening the professional know-how of community members in their relevant spheres of knowledge.

Tools

- Entrepreneurial culture
- Talent (deep tech) matchmaking tool
- Train-the-business-trainer
- Mentoring/ certification programmes
- Student and graduate entrepreneurship programmes
- HEI innovation assessment
- University-facilitated skills training for the industry workforce

DRIVE OPEN INNOVATION

Goal: Digitalising, modernising, and diversifying industries.

Tools

- Online challenge platforms
- SME-corporate value co-creation platform
- Large corporates competitions
- National/ Global Competitions
- Innovation Guidance
- Territorial development and marketing

ATTRACT GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Goal: Provide access to EU and non-EU grants, loans and blended finance.

Tools

- I3/S3 alignment
- Grant Advisory
- Networking events
- Clustering

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGE KNOWLEDGE

Goal: Enhancing familiarity of governments with the relevant technologies and companies and vice-versa introduce local challenges to startups

Tools

- Co-creation as a Service
- Public Innovation Management and Policy Labs
- Citizenship Awareness
- SDG alignment

BUILD TRUSTED CONNECTIONS

Goal: Enhancing the social capital of the ecosystem: familiarity, trust, and collaborations.

Tools

- Innovation Community Management
- Cross-platform collaborations
- Ecosystem promotion and orchestration
- Meetups
- Project consortia building

CONNECT INTERNATIONAL HUBS

Goal: Making agreements with incubators/accelerators, associations, and service providers abroad to ease entry, ease of stay and provide tailored services.

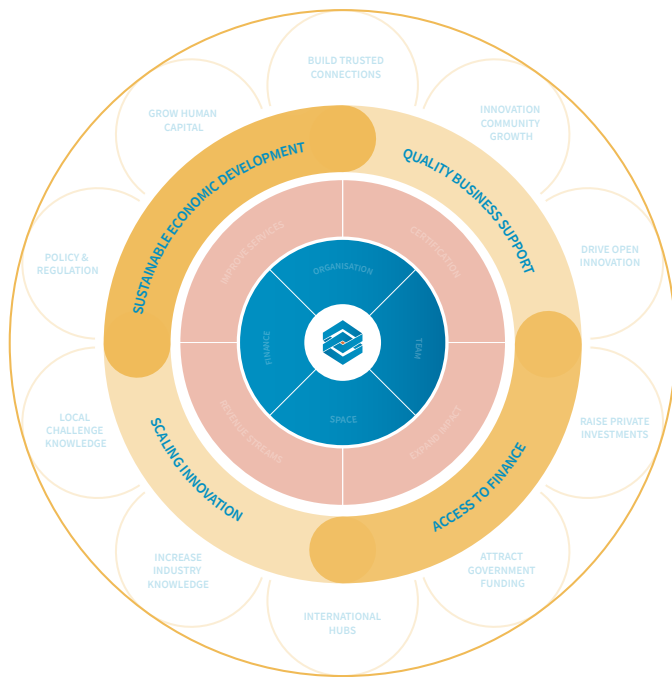
Tools

- Foreign market agents
- Exchange/ Trade missions
- Soft-landing agreements
- Clustering



Chapter 4:

Tools That Work: Examples of Ecosystem Building Actions Implemented by EU|BIC Community and Partners

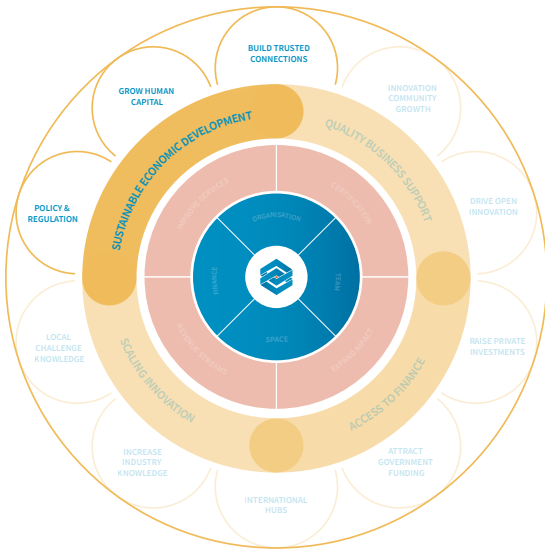


Business and Innovation Centre (EU|BIC) Management

The certified business/ innovation support organisational level provides a non-exhaustive list of concrete tools that members successfully apply in their operating areas. The community is proud to promote these as tested and valuable actions to build and grow innovation ecosystems in emerging areas in Europe – implemented jointly by the members of the EU|BIC community and their local institutional, academic and industry partners.

The tools in this non-exhaustive list are used by EU|BICs to deliver on our community’s mission commitments: to drive regional sustainable economic growth, provide quality business support, stimulate access to finance, and scale innovation – while contributing to the growth of their local innovation ecosystem. Per mission, we proudly highlight some examples of the many initiatives currently being used with success. **The complete list of the tools implemented by and within the EU|BIC community can be made available upon request at the EBN Secretariat.**





Regional Sustainable Economic Development: Building well-connected innovation ecosystems stimulating job creation.

Vertical	Tools	Explanation
<p>Regional Sustainable Economic Development</p>	Student and graduate entrepreneurship programmes	Entrepreneurial projects led by students at schools and universities
	Mentors	Accompanying companies with assistance from mentors (volunteers)
	Researchers	Identifying relevant researchers and presenting their projects to the community
	Business and industry experts database	Composing a database of expert consultants (subject to a fee) for the community
	Policy experts	Providing interconnection with regional policymakers through periodic meetings
	Train-the-business-trainer	Reaching out to could-be and would-be entrepreneurs to grow their motivation to start a company
	Co-working space	Build vibrant communities of entrepreneurs, experts, partners and investors
	Cross-platform collabs	Connecting local players, industry, research, think tanks, Ministries and CSO actors around a common theme.
	Co-creation as a service	Facilitating processes and workshops toward developing new policies, RIS, public consultation process etc.
	Innovation Community Management	Consolidation of all efforts around meetups, hackathons, research, building alumni community etc.
Policy labs	Creating space for dialogue and cooperation through e.g. regulatory sandboxes.	



Student and graduate entrepreneurship programmes

EU|BIC DNA Cascais: Fostering youth entrepreneurship in Portugal

The DNA Cascais Entrepreneurship Programme, operated by EU|BIC DNA Cascais is one of the largest education programmes for entrepreneurship in Portugal. Its main objective is to eliminate some of the gaps in the Portuguese educational system, preparing young people for the labour market, instilling them with an entrepreneurial attitude, as well as equipping them with other business competencies. **We believe entrepreneurship to be more than the act of creating a business. It is an attitude, one that is rooted in knowledge and innovation, and in the implementation of initiatives that generate value.**

Over 15 editions of the project, provided more than 58,000 students to take part in these journeys for a better future. DNA Cascais co-developed NES (Network of Entrepreneurial Schools) which functions as a learning community of Schools, Municipalities, Local Development Agencies, and promoters of entrepreneurship education projects that seek to improve educational practices and promote an entrepreneurial attitude within the school ecosystem.

Mentors

EU|BIC Madri+d: Igniting a global mentorship network

EU|BIC Madri+d Business modelling support through global mentorship network The **International Business Mentors Network, founded by EU|BIC Madri+d aims to promote the excellence of mentoring for entrepreneurs, a service of great value for all of us who support innovative entrepreneurs.** We realise how important it is to dedicate time and effort to follow a quality mentoring methodology, where mentors and entrepreneurs share techniques and meet periodically to advance their development plans.

A new methodology created from scratch was the basis of international quality certification, now widely recognised. The Network has more than 450 Business Mentors in 33 countries, mainly in Europe and Latin America. Certified business mentors benefit from the recognition of the certification in the world of entrepreneurship and business management. The key is not to have many mentors in your network, but to differentiate yourself from the many mentoring networks that exist today. The quality certification processes give the trust and confidence required by mentors or by managers of startup mentoring programmes. The Madri+d Foundation is the body of the Madrid Regional Government responsible for Accreditation and Certification of the Quality of Higher Education which enables us to guarantee certification with our resources and procedures.

EU Tools | Regional Innovation Valleys: Boosting Collaboration and Coordinated Investments



One noteworthy initiative that showcases the power of collaboration is the Regional Innovation Valleys action by the European Commission. Introduced as part of the New European Innovation Agenda, the Regional Innovation Valleys are an essential instrument for achieving economic development and social welfare. These valleys bring together selected regional ecosystems, leveraging their smart Specialisation strategies while also addressing specific local challenges and needs. By coordinating research and innovation investments and policies, these ecosystems contribute to the Union's strategic priorities. The aim is to advance European innovation ecosystems, foster interconnectivity, and bridge the gap for regions that are lagging.

EU Tools | Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI): Driving Territorial Transformation



Collaboration is key to tackling emerging trends and global societal challenges. The European Commission's Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) adopts a systemic approach to innovation policy that focuses on specific locations. It builds on the success of smart specialisation strategies and aims to be a strategic framework for innovation-driven territorial transformation. By connecting EU priorities with national plans and local opportunities and challenges, PRI fosters collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders. This strategy ensures that regional ecosystems work together towards broader European goals, promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.



Comment by European Commission, Joint Research Centre Seville – Knowledge for Policy

Note: The views expressed are purely those of the authors and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission.

Why is having a framework for innovation-driven and territorial transformation at the EU level so critical?

The Green and Digital transition of the European Green Deal will necessitate significant changes in our production and consumption systems. Past industrial transitions have shown that policy plays a crucial role in anticipating needs, aiding businesses in positioning themselves for future opportunities, and mitigating the high social costs of transitions.

Innovation plays a critical role to reduce potential trade-offs between sustainability, economic prosperity, and social cohesion. As a result, innovation policy must be at the forefront. However, typical innovation policy will not suffice. Challenge-oriented innovation necessitates much broader coordination within government, among policy portfolios and levels, and between government and crucial stakeholders.

Therefore, a framework for innovation-driven dialogue, coordination, and joint action is not just necessary, but imperative. Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) aims to supplement Smart Specialisation (S3) by building on the positive experiences of regions and member states over the past decade. At the same time, PRI intends to shift strategic planning from a focus on economic competitiveness to a focus on sustainability or long-term societal well-being, which includes economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

Can you explain the concepts and methods used for co-creating Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI)?

Challenge-oriented innovation policies begin with a societal issue that is widely recognised and understandable to citizens, such as pollution, social integration of marginalised groups, or the future of transitioning industries. From there, decision-makers and stakeholders collaborate to address the problem. This involves working with problem owners, who can be anyone from patients to farmers to commuters. The goal is to connect challenge holders with the right solution providers.

The value of challenge-oriented innovation is that it provides a simple organising principle for cooperation in fragmented decision-making structures. Local challenges can be a rallying point for stakeholders to form partnerships and work together. In a complex world, achieving consensus can be difficult. A coalition of the willing can begin exploring pathways to finding solutions. These coalitions can emerge in any given territory, whose shape and size will vary over time.

Creating space for dialogue and cooperation is a crucial step. Missions, policy labs, and regulatory sandboxes are ways to establish this space, as described in the Playbook (Pontikakis et al., 2022). It is also important to integrate feedback from this dialogue into policymaking and provide tailored support to partnerships so they can succeed in tackling their challenges.

Can you explain the main building blocks of the Partnerships for Regional Innovation?

The Partnerships for Regional Innovation are built upon three interconnected and operational building blocks. These include the Strategic Policy Framework, Open Discovery Process, and Policies and Actions Mix. The Strategic Policy Framework repurposes existing strategies and establishes a foundation for planning actions in the following two building blocks. The Open Discovery Process (ODP) allows for engagement and co-creation with various stakeholders by working backwards from desired societal outcomes. The Policy and Action Mix mobilises additional instruments, including private sector co-investments, to achieve desired outcomes.

The Strategic Policy Framework sets out the “rules of the game” and establishes mechanisms for revising these rules, if necessary, through monitoring and evaluation. The Open Discovery Process and the Policy and Action Mix are where policy design and implementation occur. The two building blocks are closely connected, with the ODP potentially leading to proposals for changes to the policy mix. The ODP is also where an open agenda for territorial transformation is developed that unites multiple funds and policymakers, potentially including the actions of stakeholders.

Unlike S3, which is limited to ERDF innovation funds, PRI considers other essential funds and policies for transformation, such as energy, transport, environmental, demand-side policies, skills, and regulation. As a result, the partnerships are broader and go beyond STI actors. Transformative Innovation Policies are designed as policy mixes or portfolios of projects/instruments.



Can you provide insight on how to effectively orchestrate the implementation of PRI actions/projects? Additionally, when is it most beneficial to engage with BSO/ISO actors as stakeholders?

The relevance of stakeholders will vary greatly depending on the goal. PRI recognises that addressing time-sensitive societal challenges requires a combination of technological and non-technological innovations and actions, such as supporting other business investments and regulatory changes that are not typically part of innovation policy.

This requires partnerships between different types of stakeholders, including innovators, technology users, financiers, regulators, professional associations, trade unions, educators, and more.

BSOs/ISOs can play a critical role in facilitating dialogue, collaboration, and co-creation between various stakeholders. They can also support the development of necessary skills and capacities in the ecosystem and directly assist organisations, including start-ups, in developing and scaling new solutions. Encouraging the creation of startups will be essential, as many sustainable innovations that contribute to EU priorities are not offered by established companies.

Startups will also be instrumental in creating more affordable prototypes of sustainability solutions tailored to local needs (see “Innovation policies for affordability” in the toolbox). “The European start-up village forum” is a valuable resource for linking different stakeholders in the process of sustainable innovation and is featured in the Playbook.

What are some key considerations for the long-term development of PRI?

To grow PRI long-term, we must assess regional needs, broaden our view of innovation, unlearn beliefs, work backwards from goals, involve stakeholders, and focus on governance, development issues, and targeted policies. Europe faces societal challenges requiring industrial and policy transitions. Change is gradual and needs support and governance capabilities. A challenge-oriented approach can synchronise efforts. Identifying governance gaps is critical. Balancing control and influence is important, considering policies, funds, and stakeholders.

Can you provide suggestions for tools that BSO/ISOs can use to foster successful ecosystems and cultivate partnerships for regional innovation on their own turf?

To approach innovation in a challenge-oriented manner is to depart from the traditional method of beginning with a budget, establishing priorities, implementing them, and assessing the impacts. Starting with the problem creates space for “out of the box” thinking and collaboration, but it necessitates new abilities such as promoting shared understanding, communication, negotiation, and trust-building for cooperation.

It is critical to define the problem in a way that is well-suited to your capabilities, including diagnostic tools such as the Complexity Compass, Resilience Dashboards, STI for SGS, POINT Reviews, and others, as outlined in the PRI Playbook. The JRC is currently gathering best practices from pioneering regions and member states involved in the PRI pilot and documenting them in a new, practical playbook.



United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)



UNIDO's intervention model for enterprise development in post-conflict countries through the creation of Enterprise Development Units (EDU)

A country's social stability is paramount for economic growth and resilience to shocks. Irrespective of inherent social fault lines, a country is stable if the economic growth percolates to the masses. This includes sustainable income to run their households and the development of Institutions that serve the population's needs. A country coming out of post-conflict face severe restrictions in both the above areas. The economy is shattered and needs to be built, and the fastest and most effective way is the private sector development, particularly the SMEs. These agents of change have to face international competition, which brings in goods and services which are qualitatively superior and cost-effective to the local produce.

The private sector staying away in isolation for years due to the conflict in their country needs support to build their capacities and knowledge. They need exposure to technology, including best management practices, credit, etc. A country devastated by conflict does not have institutions that can cater to its needs, and simultaneously building these business development service providers is not the government's priority. Hence, a vacuum is created where the SMEs that could have been the harbinger of domestic investment mobilisation and job creation cannot fulfil their role.

Problem Areas

- In post-conflict countries, most Institutions collapse, creating a vacuum in the support system for the private sector, particularly the SMEs. Institutions providing Business Development Services are no more sustainable and have disappeared. What remains are primarily humanitarian NGOs focusing on donor-driven priorities.
- Decades of isolation push the productive sector SMEs into technology obsolescence. They become entirely out of sync with modern technology and machinery. The obsolete machinery decreases their productive efficiency and leads to their oblivion.
- Years of isolation make the SME owners, and their managers operate the business in a makeshift manner, rarely and occasionally using best management practices. This considerably impacts business performance.
- Access to credit is a significant issue for SMEs. The existing financial institutions which have come out of the conflict are very conservative with their capital. These financial institutions prefer clients with a solid collateral base and disburse loans of short duration & high-interest rates like trade financing products. This completely withers away capital infusion into the SMEs, particularly the ones in the productive sector.
- The private sector does not have any options to have access to knowledge and information related to their business. The collapse of infrastructure and Institutions during the conflict period resulted in a vacuum of the knowledge economy. The lack of BDS Institutions (red. Business Development Services) is one significant shortcoming in that aspect.

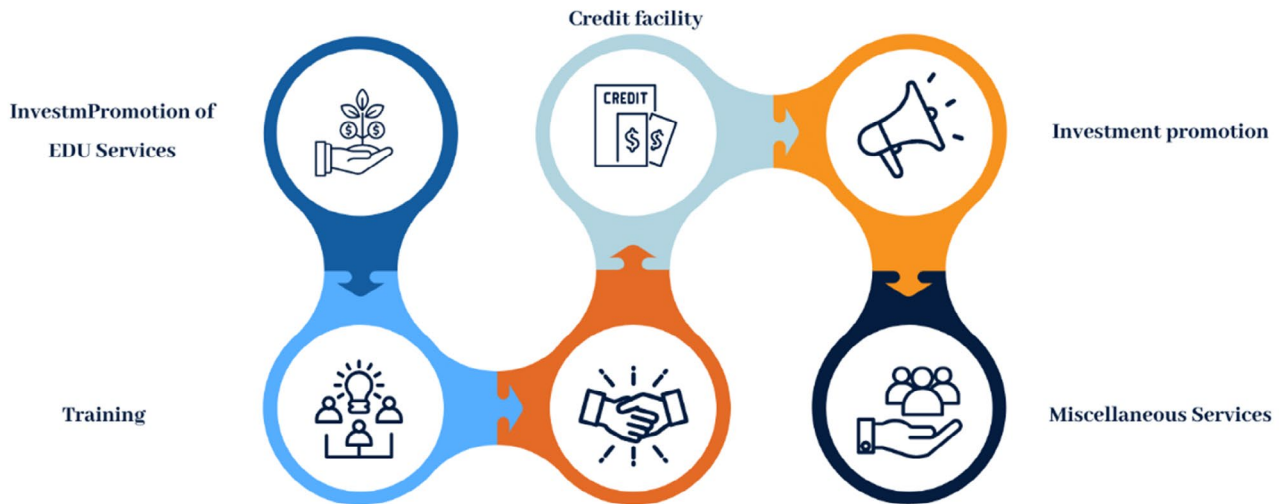
Intervention Model

The methodology/approach used to create the eco-system for providing business development services to SMEs and potential entrepreneurs is built from a sustainability perspective. The model has been implemented in countries like Jordan, Iraq, and Somalia, and to some extent in Myanmar. The primary node of delivery of services is through a unit called Enterprise Development Unit (EDU), which is physically hosted in an Institution with a similar mandate of supporting the private sector.



Somalia Enterprise Development Units Network (EDUs Network)

EDU Service delivery cycle



The promotion of EDU services results in attracting interested SMEs or potential entrepreneurs to the EDUs. UNIDO has developed a course curriculum with approximately 48 hours of training for interested participants on enterprise management skills in the EDUs. The training is provided by local experts selected based on their specific skill sets and who undergo Training of Trainers (ToTs) conducted by UNIDO. Once the participants graduate from the training, they undergo one-to-one sessions in business counselling. Specific help or support is provided by UNIDO-trained local business counsellors on subjects like developing a business plan, bringing in concepts of inventory management, accounting systems, etc.

Overview of the services provided by the EDUs



Besides training and counselling, one of the significant components of value-added services the EDUs provides is Investment Promotion. This targets enterprises, particularly in the productive sector, who need support and help in technology sourcing, machinery procurement, market linkages, etc. This support is provided through an extensive network of UNIDO partners. Primarily, it is through the UNIDO-ITPO network, followed by international business associations. Domestic companies are exposed to B2B matchmaking and a self-funded visit to international fairs & exhibitions.

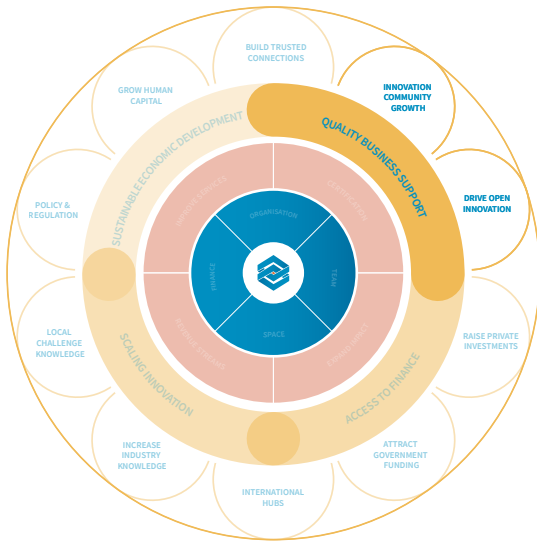
The most critical component of the intervention model is the Credit facility. The experience of UNIDO indicates that in a post-conflict country, the banking system could be more robust and geared toward the needs of SMEs. Failure to infuse capital in the business to incorporate new changes leads to collapse or non-start of the company. Hence, the credit facility under the programme is designed to be embedded within a financial institution to leverage its functional and operational strengths. The dedicated fund within the credit facility is earmarked for the enterprises that have undergone services from EDUs. The loan products designed for disbursement are usually adapted to local financial norms with a marginal discount to maintain market trends.

Learnings

The experience of UNIDO in implementing this enterprise development model in various countries has resulted in learnings that can be used to tweak the model to have a better impact.

- It has been noticed that the governance of the host institutions of the EDUs matters in terms of project deliverables and the prospect of sustainability. The efficiency of achieving targets by host institutions, which are private sector associations like chambers of commerce/industry, is better than those hosted by Government bodies like Ministries or Investment boards. This could be due to various reasons:
 - Easier access to the EDUs hosted by Private sector associations.
 - Higher accountability and monitoring of the deliverables due to commercial perspective since it uses the project to attract more members.
 - The mandate of the private sector associations is more in sync with the project deliverables.

- It is essential that the EDU's sustainability after the project completion will depend on the quality and type of services that it will offer to the private sector. The private sector generally does not consider enterprise management training and business counselling high on its priority list. It is reluctant to pay for these EDU services since the results are not very tangible. It has been observed that more tangible services, like assistance in getting ISO certification, preparation of Business Plans using COMFAR software that can be quickly submitted to banks for financing, ready to be part of a delegation visiting international fairs & exhibitions for B2B matchmaking, etc. Hence, it is essential that EDU services have to keep on evolving to satisfy the needs of the private sector.
- A dedicated credit facility embedded within the project is vital for its success. The EDU services lead the companies to expand; without capital, it is not feasible. The existing banking system is not conducive to receiving credit for enterprises because of a lack of collateral and un-friendly credit terms. The dedicated credit facility provides loans at lower than the market rate (mainly for trade finance) and significantly lower collaterals, thereby promoting the concept of project financing.



Quality Business and Innovation Support: Delivering excellent business innovation support services and increasing the survival rates of your client’s startups and SMEs.

Vertical	Tools	Explanation
Quality Business Support	Incubator, Accelerator	Development of incubation and acceleration programmes
	Tech Startup (business development) programme	Equips entrepreneurs with skills required to launch their validated business model. This is through training and 121 mentoring sessions.
	Knowledge transfer programmes	Training researchers to accelerate deep tech science and solutions to the market
	Talent (deeptech) matchmaking tool	Enlarging the source of potential talent and matching with the needs of startups companies
	Thematic business idea factory	Scouting for and developing potential business ideas (feasibility programmes p/theme).
	Innovation management and assessment	Guidance, tools and methods on innovation management and innovation assessment
	Fast prototyping	Providing fab lab and specialised machinery for advanced solution modelling through hardware and electronic partnerships
	Living Lab	Living Lab for experiments
	Test zones	Infrastructure to run tech and solution applications in both natural and virtual environments.
	Specialised, holistic support programme tracks	Promoting dedicated support on a specific issue (e.g. circularity) via accelerator, IP valorisation, policy push, community-building
Open innovation	Host online platform promoting challenges, entrepreneurial solutions and support interventions via open innovation	
Impact and SDG-oriented business modelling	Impact goals based upon the social development goals (SDG).	



Incubator, Accelerator

EU|BIC CyRIC: A-synchronous, high-quality incubation for technological companies

Our services, Idea Validation, Product Design, Testing, Prototyping, IP, Business Modelling, Financial Planning and Commercialisation, are meticulously adjusted and delivered on-demand and case-specific. It is not “the service”, but rather “the depth and intensity” of each service at a specific level. Every incoming Industry 4.0 startup application is examined accordingly. After the case-by-case evaluation (e.g. on TRL status, team assessment and competencies, infrastructure, technical know-how, and the road to market) we design a tailor-made incubation process. That means that all the in-house startups have asynchronous high-quality incubation that is adjusted to their need per se. Having the ability to be agile and “flexible” on the sequence and intensity of services offered to Industry 4.0 startups, is key for us.

CyRIC’s service value chain is tailored, and critically, not structured as a curriculum. There is no such thing as a “magic recipe” in our philosophy. Rather, entrepreneurial success depends on the persistence and aspiration of the Industry 4.0 startup founder, in combination with our strong technological arm and incubation guidance. We invest in maintaining and expanding our in-house competencies to be as flexible and as agile as possible. However, we maintain a network of high-end professional experts that are ready on-demand to provide advice and guidance in specific areas, such as Intellectual Property and Product Certification. We constantly seek to expand our in-house expertise and capacity.

BIKCEEI innovation methodologies and tools for regional innovator communities

CEEI Valencia, CEEI Castellon, CEEI Elche (Valencia community) developed their own business tools and methodologies for supporting companies. BIKCEEI is a programme coordinated by the CEEIs of the Valencian Community to provide the Valencian entrepreneurial ecosystem with innovation methodologies and tools. It is an initiative promoted and financed by the Generalitat Valenciana, through the Instituto Valenciano de Competitividad Empresarial (IVACE), within its policy of support to entrepreneurship and SMEs, and has the co-financing of the ERDF funds of the European Union, within the ERDF operational programme of the Valencian Community 2014-2020.

The main objective of BIKCEEI is to provide entrepreneurs with a guided and accessible innovation system that allows improvements in their future strategies as well as to generate value. BIKCEEI is composed of several modules BIK IDEA, BIK STARTUP, BIK SCALE and BIK EXO. All of them merge and intertwine in order to achieve the basic standardisation criteria ranging from the discovery of the problem, the development of a functional solution and the construction of a sustainable and scalable business model.

EU Tools | EIC Ecosystem Partnerships: Scaling Breakthrough Technologies



The European Innovation Council (EIC) recognises the pivotal role of European innovation ecosystems in identifying, developing, and scaling up breakthrough technologies and game-changing innovations. The EIC actively collaborates with accelerators, incubators, technology parks, and other key stakeholders within these ecosystems. Through partnerships, the EIC provides EIC companies with access to acceleration services, specialised infrastructures, and customised training opportunities. By leveraging the resources and expertise within the ecosystem, the EIC ecosystem partnerships create a conducive environment for innovation and growth.

Testimonial: EU|BIC FI.L.S.E. - Igniting Connections and Driving Innovation in Europe

By Pietro de Martino, Manager of Incubation, Acceleration, and Innovation at EU|BIC FI.L.S.E.; Board Representative for Italian EU|BICs.

“As the financial and economic development agency of the Liguria Region, FI.L.S.E. S.p.A. plays a crucial role in supporting the Ligurian economic system. We are proud to be selected as a local partner by the European Innovation Council (EIC), offering our services to EIC-funded innovators. Collaborating with the EIC allows us to expand our mandate and establish valuable connections at the European level. We now have access to the most promising entrepreneurial projects, technologies, and innovative companies within the EIC portfolio.

The EIC provides essential support to our projects and companies, connecting them with specialised partners and valuable resources. Through this partnership, we can guide our innovators in their fundraising journey, offering training and facilitating investor matchmaking. Joining forces with the EIC grants us access to a portfolio of over 6,000 EIC-funded companies and 430 research teams across Europe. We also encourage our EU|BIC community peers to become EIC partners. This thriving community offers unique opportunities for collaboration and services across various disruptive innovation areas.

F.I.L.S.E. is excited to embark on this journey as an EIC Ecosystem partner. We are confident that this collaboration will propel our innovators forward, providing them with crucial resources and elevating their projects to new heights of success. Together, we can drive economic growth, societal advancement, and technological breakthroughs within the European Innovation Ecosystem.”



Test zones

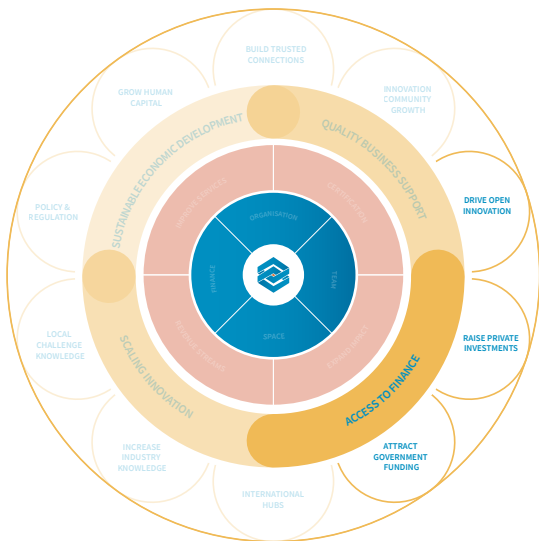
EU|BIC CAP Innove: Providing test zones for autonomous systems

EU|BIC CAP Innove provides test zones, running through ID2Move natural and artificial indoor and outdoor test zones for autonomous systems. These can be flying drones, maritime drones or ground vehicles.

Outdoor ground test zone: In collaboration with RACB CAP Innove provides access to a two-hectare vehicle racing track, located next to CAP Innove aerial test zone. This track allows companies to test their machine in close-to-reality conditions. Close turns, straight lines, braking tracks, roundabouts or even wet tracks, nearly every test situation is scriptable. CAP Innove also provides another test zone equipped with efficient test equipment like fully recovered soil or watered parts.

Outdoor aerial test zone: The Geozone covers 606 hectares and offers the widest range of overflight scenarios in Europe: asphalted area, agricultural land, industrial zone, urban area, speedway and railway. The flight altitude is 400 feet. BVLOS flights, spreading, transport, dropping and night flights are possible after a SORA validation.

Indoor test zone: CAP Innove indoor area counts with a surface of 600m² and 8m of ceiling height, enabling companies to carry out numerous tests, both on the ground and in the air. The area is equipped with a removable floor and the latest generation of motion capture cameras. Every single square of the ground can be removed and replaced by its company sensors (pressure, acceleration, etc.) while motion capture cameras can track up to 100 objects with a precision in millimetres and milliseconds. Ideal to test autonomous flight software, swarm flights, latency in information sharing and decision making and much more.



Access to Finance: Providing a pipeline of investment-ready companies and investment opportunities.

Vertical	Tools	Explanation
<p>Access to Finance</p>	Investor networks	Build and facilitate local business angel and private investor networks
	Showcasing	Host demo days to attract investors per field.
	Business (matching) grants	Match funded grants to aid businesses to scale and grow.
	Closed-door meetings	Closed meetings focused on the needs of the client/investors.
	Investment readiness programme	Organise accelerator programmes targeting startups and scale-ups.
	Seed funds	Sponsored thematic programmes enabling the scouting of business and innovation p/theme (corporates).
	Community investment pool	Utilise alumni and the community to expand the available capital for new companies.
	Proof of concept funding	Services to support early stage teams, before incorporation, to test, create demos, buy some consultancy services to create a “demo” pretotype... Up to 5K.
	Business angel evangelisation	Meetings and broad communication encouraging successful entrepreneurs to engage in VC investing.
Grant advisory	Events and 1 on 1 advisory about current EU funding opportunities.	



Investor networks

EU|BIC Furthr: Venture Capital Fund, Investing in Truly Transformative Tech

Targeting the next generation of highly scalable tech companies in Ireland, with a focus on B2B SaaS across a wide range of vertical markets and MedTech. Furthr VC is looking to invest in highly scalable, early-stage tech companies. Furthr wants to help **build Ireland's next generation of leading technology companies, having deep expertise in preparing companies for investment, with 85% of our start-ups going on to secure third-party funding. For 30 years**, Furthr's business consultants have shared their first-hand experience, considerable knowledge, resources and passion to benefit many of today's business leaders.

Furthr's current fund is highly active, investing in some of Ireland's most scalable and transformative tech start-ups at the seed stage and beyond. The fund is backed by several leading tech entrepreneurs and business leaders as well as Enterprise Ireland. Furthr is investing in 7+ new start-ups every year, with the ability to invest up to €3m in an individual company through multiple investment rounds to drive growth in international markets.

Companies that Furthr is seeking to invest in our highly scalable, early-stage companies developing B2B software products and services, as well as Class I and II medical devices. Furthr VC In Numbers: €50m under management, 50+ investee companies, €120 m of co-investment leveraged to date, 7+ new investments annually.

Seed funds

EU|BIC Marseille Innovation: Innovation fund to facilitate the scale-up of companies without dilution

EU|BIC Marseille Innovation developed an innovation fund to facilitate the scale-up of local start-ups. By involving several partner banks and private endowment funds in its expertise in supporting innovation, Marseille Innovation provides start-ups with the capital they need to consolidate their growth.

Marseille Innovation is the first support structure for innovative companies in the region and created an Innovation fund allowing access to targeting start-ups growth supported by the Marseille Innovation accelerator. The fund is called Innovation Fund by MI, and it provides project leaders working with technological innovations, so called Honorary Innovation loans of 30,000 euros. The loan has zero interest rate and is guaranteed by Bpifrance (The public bank for investment in France).

The applications to access the load are studied by an evaluation committee composed of former successful entrepreneurs of Marseille Innovation and its partners. The creation of this fund is the link in the value chain of Marseille Innovation support strategy for enabling startups to have cash quickly and without an essential dilution for their start.



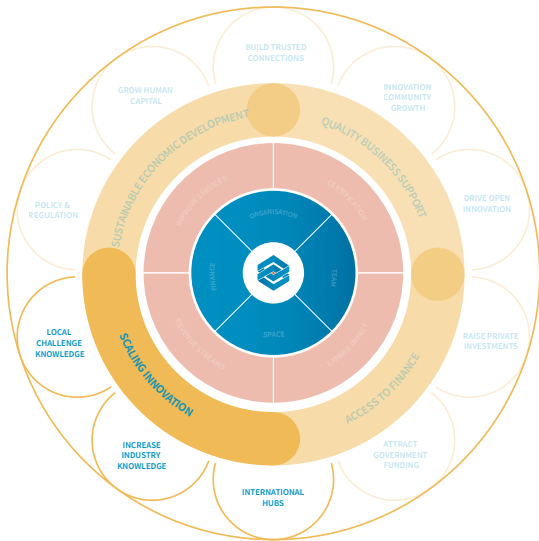
Showcasing

EU|BIC St John's Innovation Centre: Systematising contacts between companies and investors

St John's Innovation Centre unites its vast connection with business angel actors, groups and networks in the annual PitchFest event, making the process more efficient through scale. "The key ingredients at the outset ensure that supply and demand are in balance and that our selection and training added enough value to keep both companies and investors engaged. In our experience, investors are often willing to provide informal advice in the early years of a cluster's development, but they will soon lose interest unless investable proposals start coming through regularly.

Pitchfest's (East of England editions) cumulative figures over 6 years show an investment of £23M in 33 companies, including sectors such as IT & Telematics, Manufacturing & Engineering, and Bioscience & Healthcare, with 43 jobs created and 46 jobs preserved. Since early 2021, we have been rolling out this service across the country, working with partner organisations, as part of a service funded by Innovate UK EDGE. By Spring 2022, two cohorts of around 15 companies each will have been put through Pitchfest in each of the English regions, Wales and (soon) Northern Ireland. That means that over 200 companies will have been drilled intensively to become investment ready, out of a pool of 1,000 applicants. And the longer-term legacy will be embedding the know-how in organisations like St John's across the UK.





Scaling European Innovation: Bolter the internationalisation potential of (non)European startups, scale-ups and SMEs.

Vertical	Tools	Explanation
Scaling Innovation	Site (virtual/physical) visits	Host and organise foreign market and BSO visits and info sessions.
	Scale-up programmes	Organise business support programmes for startups seeking to expand and enter new foreign markets.
	International events	Present BSO and client companies at international business fairs, events and exhibitions.
	Foreign market agents	Hosting representatives of foreign markets and clusters onsite (local office space rent).
	Alumni groups	Organise periodic events for the alumni community and regularly engage them using physical meetings or online platforms.
	SME-corporate value co-creation platform	Managing scaling of startups by EBN, upgrading the market capacity/competitive advantage of member BSOs.
	Exchange/ trade missions	Growing the knowledge of foreign markets and local intermediaries.
	Internationalisation support desk	Understanding and accessing new market opportunities.
	Softlanding agreements	Supporting companies to be present in new markets, by making agreements with incubators/accelerators in other countries to ease their stay and provide tailored services.



Scale-up programmes

EU|BIC CEEI Asturias: Accelerating the internationalisation of young innovative companies

EU|BIC CEEI Asturias & ASTUREX jointly launched the programme “Accelerator for Internationalisation - Quick Global”. This innovative programme aims to speed up the internationalisation of young companies in the technology sphere with a potentially global market or multi-market companies.

The programme aims to create a culture of early internationalisation in our regional entrepreneurship, working collaboratively with other organisations and institutions involved in regional economic development, entrepreneurship and internationalisation. Furthermore, it prioritises the integration of various promotion services in a single programme, as well as the creation of an agile methodology to support the internationalisation of young companies, testing their effectiveness and efficiency.

QUICK GLOBAL is a 6-month programme, which provides participating companies with a variety of services. Among others, these include:

- Entrepreneurial tutorials and international commerce, enabling participants to design and validate their internationalisation plan and contact potential clients/advisers in a specific target market.
 - Mentoring and accompaniment with the heads of consolidated international companies.
 - Access to potential investors or other funding sources to facilitate this process. foreign incubators to offer to its startup community.
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EU|BIC ESTIA Entreprendre: Providing internationalisation services for early-stage startups

SIRENA Start-up is a regional programme designed to boost the internationalisation of early-stage start-ups supported by the regional South-East French EU|BICs. A series of actions are carried out in this programme. Within this framework, ESTIA Entreprendre has ensured the creation of an original soft landing exchange programme enabling start-ups to gain international experience in a trustworthy environment.

The first experience between the Region Nouvelle Aquitaine (France) and Senegal will now be extended to other destinations with the methodology put in place: Canada, Spain, Germany...

The fundamental principles of this soft-landing exchange are:

- The identification of partners in the partner countries with equivalent support systems,
- The implementation of tools for the selection and support of start-ups
- The preparation of specific agreements for the management of the programme
- The follow-up and valorisation of the programme.



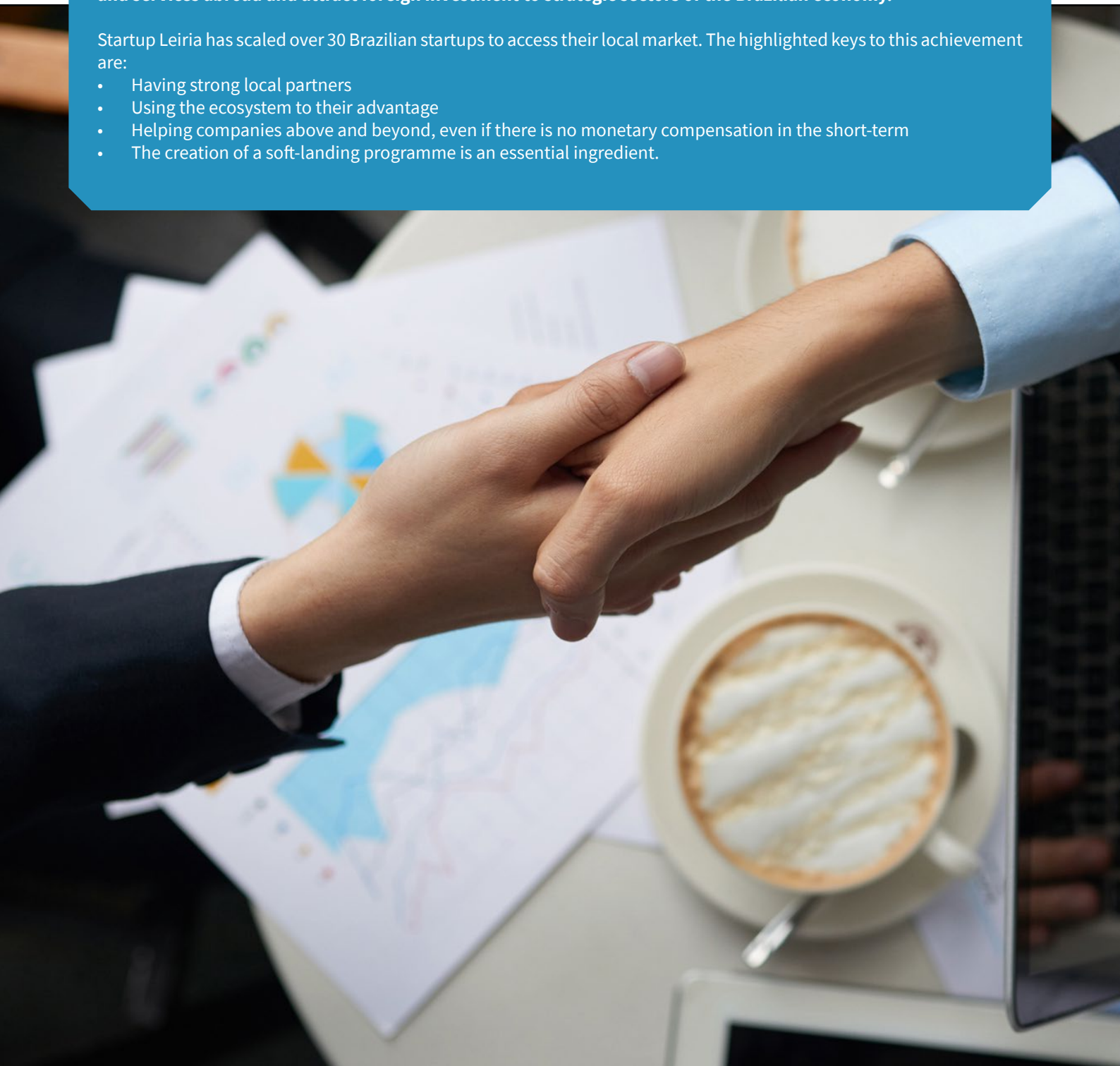
Foreign market agents

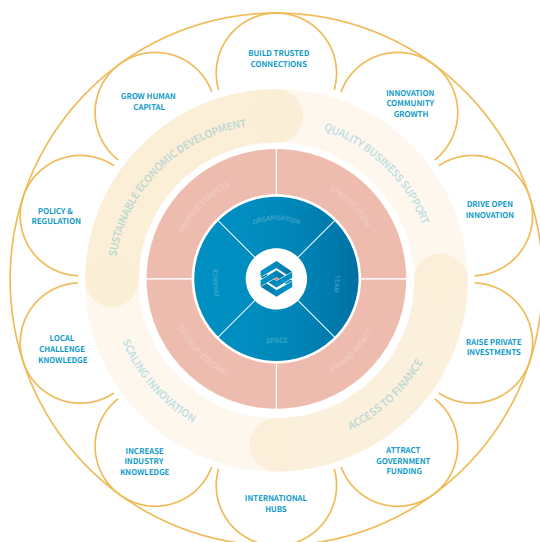
EU|BIC Startup Leiria: Soft-landing strategy inviting Brazilian companies to Portugal

One and a half years ago we started to establish partnerships in other countries, with a more intense focus on Brazil. We established partnerships with universities and similar hubs in Brazil, and we had the chance to **connect with Apex and Softex - the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil) works to promote Brazilian products and services abroad and attract foreign investment to strategic sectors of the Brazilian economy.**

Startup Leiria has scaled over 30 Brazilian startups to access their local market. The highlighted keys to this achievement are:

- Having strong local partners
- Using the ecosystem to their advantage
- Helping companies above and beyond, even if there is no monetary compensation in the short-term
- The creation of a soft-landing programme is an essential ingredient.





Innovation Ecosystem Building

To build, nurture and connect regional innovation ecosystems, a series of initiatives are being put in place, with EU|BICs and mission aligned BSOs called to undertake a central role, because of their position at the core of the ecosystems and their availability of different tools and services to support innovation and entrepreneurship.

Here we highlight some key initiatives that the EU|BIC community, committed to promoting sustainable economic development for four decades, is successfully delivering in support of strong innovation ecosystems, in the ever-changing landscape. The complete list of the tools implemented by and within the EU|BIC community can be made available upon request at the EBN Secretariat.

“EU|BICs are an important component of regional Innovation ecosystems in all regions where they exist. However, this is happening, only in regions where they play an active role in orchestrating the Innovation ecosystem or they act as developers of the region’s Innovation strategy. Those that do, are typically in a much better position to use the creative power of local entrepreneurs and to put together in an organised way the different support mechanisms and instruments that can accelerate the transformation of regional economies. I encourage all EU|BICs to engage actively in co-designing the smart specialisation strategies as a way to leverage the impact of their activities for the benefit of startups and scaleups.”

David Uhlíř

Chief Strategy Officer, EU|BIC JIC
(South Moravian Innovation Centre)

Policy and Regulation

EU|BICs in collaboration with Joint Research Centre Seville - European Commission: Strengthen sustainability dimension and integrate SDGs in S3

A reflection framework is designed as a tool to assist policymakers and practitioners in Europe and beyond in reflecting on how to localise and integrate sustainability challenges and goals in Smart Specialisation

Strategies at regional and national levels. The framework discusses the main implications and challenges of integrating sustainability challenges and the SDGs for each step of S3. To guide the reflection process, the framework puts forward questions for each step of the process. The JRC team organised co-creation sessions with 11 regions and countries from the EU and beyond, during which JRC consulted more than 30 policymakers and practitioners working on Smart Specialisation. The experiences of the regions and countries invited to participate in the exercise reflect the diverse socioeconomic and policy contexts that S3 practitioners work in.

Selected questions in the reflection framework:

<p>Diagnosis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the diagnosis include evidence of impacts and risks for your territory associated with global environmental and societal challenges? • Do you analyse the strengths and weaknesses of actors, institutions and infrastructures to adapt and change to address sustainability challenges and the SDGs? • How are various types of evidence on sustainability challenges and opportunities collected to support the S3 design? • How are diverse perspectives on the challenges included in the diagnosis, including from previously not involved or marginalised groups?
<p>Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does S3 address sustainability challenges and the SDGs in their selected priority areas? • What is the relative importance of sustainability-oriented goals and specialisation areas compared to economic development and competitiveness goals in S3? • What are the incentives, drivers and barriers to including sustainability-related specialisation areas and objectives, notably the SDGs, in the S3 priorities? • Are S3 priorities targeting niches with the potential to demonstrate and scale transformative innovation needed to achieve the SDGs in the region and beyond?
<p>Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the inclusion of sustainability challenges in S3 change the selection and design of policy instruments and policy portfolios used to implement S3? • Does the action plan include instruments designed to support the experimentation of risky sustainability-oriented innovation projects? • Is the action plan designed to allow adjustments based on the continuous process of entrepreneurial discovery and insights from monitoring and evaluation? • Does the action plan include coordination mechanisms to ensure internal coherence of S3 and external coherence and synergies with relevant policy areas?
<p>Diagnosis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does S3 address sustainability challenges and the SDGs in their selected priority areas? • What is the relative importance of sustainability-oriented goals and specialisation areas compared to economic development and competitiveness goals in S3? • What are the incentives, drivers and barriers to including sustainability-related specialisation areas and objectives, notably the SDGs, in the S3 priorities? • Are S3 priorities targeting niches with the potential to demonstrate and scale transformative innovation needed to achieve the SDGs in the region and beyond?
<p>Action plan and policy mix</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the inclusion of sustainability challenges in S3 change the selection and design of policy instruments and policy portfolios used to implement S3? • Does the action plan include instruments designed to support the experimentation of risky sustainability-oriented innovation projects? • Is the action plan designed to allow adjustments based on the continuous process of entrepreneurial discovery and insights from monitoring and evaluation? • Does the action plan include coordination mechanisms to ensure internal coherence of S3 and external coherence and synergies with relevant policy areas?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the M&E system allow for the measurement of sustainability outcomes and impacts of S3 and research and innovation instruments? • Does your evaluation system include methods, indicators and processes designed to capture transformative outcomes of supported projects? • Does the M&E system encourage continuous policy learning from policy experiments and implementation? • Does the M&E system ensure continuous participation and feedback from key stakeholder groups and civil society? Is evaluation linked to the EDP?



Grow Human Capital

Community seminar and training

EU|BIC Cap Innove: MBA Highlights

Jointly coordinated by CAP Innove and **developed in collaboration with the University of Brussels: ULB – the department Solvay Business School Lifelong Learning. It is effectively combining a high-level training course in Innovation and General Management** with the analysis of recent and concrete business cases.

The MBA Highlights a one-year-long programme divided into 6 sessions 2 days on Friday and Saturday). The targets for MBA Highlights are Entrepreneurs/CEOs of SMEs who want to grow their businesses and take a step back from their businesses as well as managers active in larger structures who will have to take on more cross-functional responsibilities. The programme aims to help Walloon companies and more particularly those active in Walloon Brabant to innovate and develop successfully and sustainably by learning to work together. CAP Innove also wishes to develop the management skills and leadership style of entrepreneurs and managers of supported or new companies while ensuring the implementation of new skills and tools and Promoting networking between entrepreneurs and developing businesses.

Conference

EU|BIC JIC: Inspiring and connecting people dedicated to innovation

Velvet Innovation Conference brings together people from companies, public and research institutions, universities, NGOs, and the creative industry. The mission is to inspire and connect people dedicated to innovation by showcasing new ideas and providing a platform for international networking. The attendees can meet like-minded international innovators and get inspired by industry leaders and #brnoregion success stories. The idea for the Velvet Innovation Conference was born out of the desire of local businesses involved in the innovation ecosystem to meet in person and have an impact and a meaningful change. JIC believes in creating solutions to global challenges by fostering strong relationships between companies, public institutions, research structures, universities, non-profit organisations, creatives, and visionaries. We celebrate the success of local innovation and inspire the next generation of leaders to bring sustainable change.

Velvet Innovation Conference is an annual half-day event focused on innovation, emphasising various aspects of sustainability. The English-speaking conference offers a range of topics, from technology trends to potential business opportunities. It represents a unique opportunity to meet all the key players in one place and be part of the change ecosystem players want to see in the world. It allows participants to meet new people, get inspired, and join the discussion.



Conference

EU|BIC Kraków Technology Park: Leading game industry event

Digital Dragons Conference is the leading game industry event that has been growing over the past 10 years and in 2022 attracted 2100 publishers, producers and developers. It is bringing in yearly visitors from all over the world, including creators of the industry's top hits, indie game developers, publishers, investors and leading media outlets.

In the 10 years of its operation, the conference has earned the accolade of one of Europe's crucial events in the games development sector. "We started with 300 participants and now, we expect annually around 2000 people. Poland is now one of the most attractive locations in Europe for the video games sector. Games developed in Poland enjoy tremendous popularity among gamers all over the world." Krzysztof Krzysztofiak, Director of the Technology Park Division at KPT discloses.

Digital Dragons provides a perfect opportunity to show the development of the sector in the last decade, together with the potential of Kraków and Małopolska for the sector, as well as the contribution of our region to the dynamically developing segment of the new, digital economy. Other than the conference, KPT also runs other game-related projects: the Digital Dragons Academy for those only taking the first steps in the sector, an incubator for game dev startups, an accelerator for foreign businesses eager to develop the games in Poland, and finally extensive market studies that the whole game development sector has made use of for many years.

Entrepreneurial culture

EU|BIC StartHub Wageningen: Aiming to startup people

Entrepreneurial culture at Wageningen University and Research aims to 'startup' people. This means that the focus lies not only on creating as many startups as possible but also on stimulating an entrepreneurial mindset among our students and young scientists. This reflects in students finding jobs that require a more entrepreneurial way of working; always considering people, profit, planet. It also results in research projects that have a clear value-creation pathway. EU|BIC StartHub Wageningen follows several processes that help in fostering this entrepreneurial culture. Our programme covers three different stages before the actual incubation of start-ups. We start with Inspiration; a series of events such as thought-provoking webinars, showcasing success and failure stories and discussions about relevant topics. The second stage is Ideation, where student teams can join a 5-week programme to develop their start-up idea.



Build Trusted Connections

Ecosystem promotion and orchestration

EU|BIC Associate EurA: Turning Innovation into Business Success with the Support of Innovation Ecosystems

EurA builds and develops innovation ecosystems in different domains- at local, regional, national, and cross-border levels. With more than 70 innovation and technology networks, EurA has many years of experience in the initiation, establishment and management of networks. EurA supports innovation ecosystem actors to self-organise and thrive in a European and global market. EurA offers advice services allowing business support organisations to elevate their innovation ecosystems through close management and stakeholder engagement methodologies. Also, EurA organises and manages a wide ecosystem expert platform, working with companies to develop innovations, create project concepts, acquire funding and financing, and support successful commercialisation.

Meetups

EU|BIC CorkBIC: The Entrepreneur Experience™

The Entrepreneur Experience™ is a unique opportunity for 24 Emerging Entrepreneurs to gain advice and mentoring from 24 of Ireland's most successful business leaders over 24 hours. After we developed and delivered the first Entrepreneur Experience™ back in 2011, our 10th anniversary was a special one – once again back in person in 2021.

The theme of the event was the 'Big Reconnection', delivered by CorkBIC and chaired by 'our Captain' Pete Smyth, Broadlake. **In 24 hours, this event includes one-to-one sessions, deep-dive analysis, constructive group sessions, pitching sessions and inspiring plenary sessions.** 24 Emerging Entrepreneurs are selected to participate. 24 Seasoned Entrepreneurs, some of Ireland and Europe's most successful business leaders are invited to share their experiences and inspiration. Each Seasoned Entrepreneur mentors and coaches an Emerging Entrepreneur over 24 hours.

Every year, entrepreneurs come from across the globe including, Spain, France, Chile, Rwanda, Portugal and all over Ireland.

When the final selection has been made, CorkBIC then pairs the selected Emerging entrepreneurs with Seasoned Entrepreneurs. This is the critical stage of the event and where their expertise is key. The pairings are usually personality-based and take into account – sector, market, challenges etc. The matched pairs meet well in advance of the event so they both understand the issues and challenges to be explored.



Innovation Community Growth

Focused programmes

EU|BIC Lazio Innova: Mentoring Programmes to support the scouting of new business ideas and startups creation

Boost Your Ideas (BYI) pre-acceleration programme has been set up to scout innovative solutions for the economic and competitive repositioning of Lazio in the post-Covid recovery. According to the success of the first edition of the initiative in 2020, the programme has now reached its 4th edition. It provides mentorship and rewards in services and money to the best solutions selected at the end of its 3rd phase.

The BYI programme is strengthened by the support and interaction with a network of 50 project partners coming from the innovation world: large companies, potential users, investors, incubators, accelerators, competence centres and public administrations - able to invest their specialised know-how and skills in vertical projects closest to their sector. Eighty bilateral meetings were held to develop business opportunities, qualified mentorship, and investments to enter the market.

The Programme is fully digital and has national coverage. The global pandemic has forced the revision of the services model, stepping into a new digitalised way to provide advanced and specialised services to startups. “Indeed, with Boost Your Ideas, we had the opportunity to map startups’ specific needs for entering a new market and positioning new products.” A large number of BYI participants has fuelled and raised the level of Lazio Innova’s innovation ecosystem, especially referring to its local network of Innovation Hubs (the so-called “Active Spaces”).

Regional entrepreneurship mapping

Mapping platform to support the entrepreneurship, creation and growth of companies in a Spanish Region

EU|BICs CEEI Castellon, CEEI Valencia, CEEI Elche: developed the Map of Entities and Services for Entrepreneurship in the Valencian Community, gathering the entities offering services for entrepreneurship, creation and growth of companies. Currently, the map gathers 800 entities in Alicante, Castellón and Valencia.

Thanks to this map, entrepreneurs, managers and other users can find the entities in their environment that best suit their needs. They also obtain information about who provides the services they need, what kind of services they offer and where they can find them. This map was developed by the Valencian Region EU|BICS, being commissioned by the regional government. The map of entities and services also indicates the services “value chain”, covering services ranging from motivation and creation of entrepreneurial vocations to innovation, internationalisation and/or rapid business growth.

CEEI Bahía de Cádiz www.cadiz.red is an informal ecosystem network created by the University of Cádiz and the provincial government in which we, CEEI Bahía de Cádiz are involved. It aims at communicating the entities, services and tools available in the province of Cádiz to support entrepreneurship, to unify the offer and send a better more organised message to the entrepreneurs and businesses on where to get what support. The different organisations meet regularly in ecosystem workshops.



Drive Open Innovation

EU|BIC PPNT: Providing online connections between deep-tech startups across Europe with local tech hubs and investors

EU|BIC Poznan Science and Technology Park organises Poznan Online Market Discovery Programme connects deep-tech startups across Europe with local tech hubs to create new relevant contacts for new market discovery and expansion. Moreover, thanks to founder-to-founder learning, startups are introduced to like-minded entrepreneurs, allowing them to inspire each other.

The Online Market Discovery Tour is divided into two parts:

- First, the selected startups are invited to attend a 2-day conference. Without the need for physical travel, startups get to take part in online workshops and panel sessions led by some of the biggest names in the international deep-tech scene. The sessions cover topics such as local & international business culture, collaboration with corporates, how to raise investments and much more.
- The 2-day conference is followed by 1-on-1 meetings. Startups are allowed to meet with local industry experts, corporate representatives, and investors to gain more insights into the selected startup ecosystem. 1-on-1 meetings are followed between companies and investors

Open Innovation

EU|BIC BEAZ: Dynamising the business environment and accelerating innovation processes

“BIOK! is an open innovation meeting point that allows companies to connect startups and SMEs and provide them with a first market option, attracting them to the Bizkaia region in Spain. It operates with startups and SMEs that are technological and/or in specific fields of knowledge, National or International.

Through this programme, qualified employment is created in the territory and the competitive positioning of reference companies. **BIOK! LivingLab solves the lack of access to innovative solutions for public actors and corporates. The initiative was born to identify public-private challenges that act as catalysts to generate a market and bring clients closer to startups and SMEs.**

It is a paradigm shift for an agency like Beaz, which has historically acted as a managing body for traditional tools to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the territory. Previously we were based on different types of instruments and subsidies, mostly public policies and the promotion of innovation from the supply side. Beaz now complements its support tools for entrepreneurship and innovation from a demand-driven angle, promoting entrepreneurship and R&D&i in Bizkaia using the capacity of procurement from leading companies and public administrations in the territory.

International hubs

EU Tools | Building and Connecting Innovation Ecosystems in Africa and Europe: EBN, EU|BICs and DG International Partnerships



Innovation ecosystems are not limited to Europe; they are instrumental in driving progress globally. EBN and the community of EU|BICs have joined forces with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships of the European Commission to foster innovation ecosystems in Africa. Through this collaboration, EBN and EU|BICs leverage their expertise to support the development and growth of innovation ecosystems in African countries. This initiative promotes knowledge exchange and drives sustainable economic development in Africa by sharing best practices, providing capacity building, and facilitating cross-border partnerships.

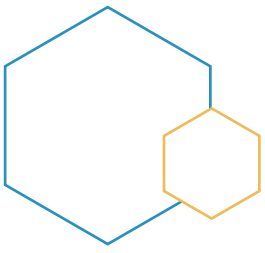
From its inception, the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) pursues the formulation of effective policies and strategies to support the development of effective innovation ecosystems in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The focus of DG INTPA's work is, yet not limited, to contribute to the strengthening of entrepreneurial capacities and building more inclusive and sustainable societies, in line with the EU priorities for international cooperation.

DG INTPA's actions in support of entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium-sized company (MSME) creation, leverage the unique potentials and challenges of each target country and mobilise science, technology, and innovation to address key societal, environmental, and economic issues in line with the achievement of the SDGs and of the Global Gateway priorities. As such, these actions emphasise promoting private sector and value chain development, including the strengthening of innovation ecosystems intending to preserve livelihoods and promote inclusive job creation, that ensures productive employment and the right to an adequate standard of living and decent work.

In catalysing an entrepreneurial environment and supporting business incubators and businesses, DG INTPA operates with an ecosystem approach. As such, starting from the improvement of the pre-incubation phase, to trigger entrepreneurship proposals, up to mobilising different actors such as universities or training centres, and potential business creators towards business incubation, ultimately seeks to facilitate the emergence of new ecosystems of innovation to provide the needed services for micro, small and medium-sized companies.

DG INTPA business incubator actors are key in assisting emerging enterprises to survive the start-up phase and develop into operationally and financially self-sustaining businesses. Business incubators offer access to funding, networking opportunities, business and technical assistance and access to facilities. Business incubation is a proven vehicle to ensure that small and medium-sized companies, develop into competitive and successful businesses, which contributes positively to emerging economies around the globe .





Afterword

Leveraging the Knowledge and Experience of EBN and the EU|BIC Community

We extend a warm invitation to innovation experts, government officials and policymakers to tap into the invaluable knowledge and experience captured in the EBN (European Business and Innovation Centre Network) and the EU|BIC community in the realm of innovation ecosystem building.

The EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Building Playbook serves to provide a comprehensive framework with hands-on tools for incubators, accelerators, science and technology park and other innovation actors in accelerating collaborative innovation for (regional) sustainable economic development. This publication highlighted some of the many tools that are implemented and refined daily by our members.

Innovation ecosystems are the key drivers of economic growth, societal progress, and sustainable development. They foster collaboration, entrepreneurship, and the development of innovative solutions to address pressing global challenges. EBN and the EU|BIC community have been at the forefront of nurturing and strengthening innovation ecosystems across Europe, playing a vital role in enabling startups, SMEs, and researchers to thrive.

Through their comprehensive incubation and acceleration processes, EBN-certified EU|BICs provide a supportive environment for startups and SMEs to develop, scale, and commercialise their innovative ideas. These organisations facilitate access to funding, offer mentorship and guidance, and foster collaboration between different stakeholders. Their work aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal, driving forward the transition to a sustainable, inclusive, and digital future.

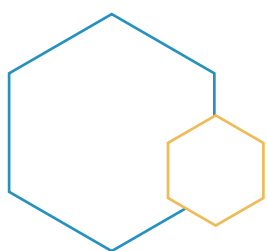
Government experts possess the power to shape policies, strategies, and frameworks that can accelerate the growth and impact of innovation ecosystems. By leveraging the knowledge and experience of EBN and the EU|BIC community, you can gain valuable insights into effective ecosystem-building practices, learn from successful case studies, and collaborate with a network of like-minded professionals.

Together, we can foster an environment that nurtures innovation, empowers entrepreneurs, and addresses societal challenges head-on. We invite you to join forces to build robust and dynamic innovation ecosystems that drive economic prosperity, social well-being, and a sustainable future for all.

In trusted collaboration, we can improve Europe's innovation landscape among all member states and regions, ultimately to create lasting positive change for all.

For more information visit www.ebn.eu or reach out directly via info@ebn.eu.





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