

Proposal Name: Integrating Novelty, Nurturing Opportunity, Valuing Academia, Transforming Enterprise
Acronym: I.N.N.O.V.A.T.E

Rationale/Challenge:

Why is there no European Google or Amazon? Why have some of Europe's hottest start-ups, such as Sweden's Spotify, moved to Silicon Valley?

Key Project Purpose

Considering the above we came in the proposed project with the term **innotpreneurs** that will create a novel curriculum for coaches that will learn how to challenge entrepreneurs and researchers and transform them into innovators who design products that solve real problems.

Project Objectives

Based on the above challenges/rationale, we suggest six potential project objectives for fostering 'innotpreneurs':

1. **Curriculum Development:** Design an interdisciplinary curriculum for coaches that combines innovation management with entrepreneurial skills, and industry-specific knowledge tailored to convert research into marketable breakthroughs.
2. **Mentorship and Coaching Training:** Pilot testing a comprehensive training program for breakthrough innovation coaches that emphasizes techniques for challenging and guiding entrepreneurs and researchers to think innovatively and address real-world problems. Emphasis will be given on guiding researchers that are active in basic research¹ in deep-tech and cutting edge technologies
3. **Cross-Sector Partnerships via incubation labs:** Set up virtual "incubation labs" where 'innotpreneurs' can identify accessible for free or with some small fee research facilities to develop and test their ideas and achievements,.
4. **Access to Funding:** Develop a guide for easier navigation and access to European and public funding (e.g. EIT, EIC, Cascade/FSTP funding) but also to private one such as seed and/or venture capital for start-ups that emerge from this program by the innotpreneurs with the support of the project coaches
5. **Recognition and Certification Program:** Develop formal recognition and certification mechanisms with the introduction of micro-credentials aligned with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) for coaches, ensuring that their skills and contributions are acknowledged within the professional community and the innovation ecosystem.
6. **Talent Retention Initiatives:** Implement initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining top talent within Europe. This might involve the suggestion or initiation of various measures such as Innotpreneur Fellowships, Start-up Visa, tax incentives, European innovation competitions, etc)

Based on the objectives provided, here are specific work packages (WPs) and tasks for each of the six objectives as well as suggested profile of partners:

Work Package 1: Curriculum Development for Coaching

¹ such as ERC and MSCA grant holders of Horizon Europe, the largest Research and Innovation Funding Programme

Objective: Design an interdisciplinary curriculum for coaches that combines innovation management with entrepreneurial skills, and industry-specific knowledge to convert research into marketable breakthroughs.

Tasks:

1. **Task 1.1:** Needs Assessment and Industry Engagement
 - Conduct research, surveys and interviews with industry leaders to identify key skills and knowledge gaps for coaches
 - Identify breakthrough innovation opportunities across various sectors by analysing market trends and future demands.
2. **Task 1.2:** Curriculum Design & Development for Coaching
 - Develop modules on innovative thinking methodologies and real-world problem-solving skills, innovation management, market analysis, product development, intellectual property rights, regulatory barriers, access to finance, and go-to-market strategies.
 - Integrate case studies of breakthrough innovations that anticipated emerging or future needs
 - Collect and assess freely available training resources for innotepreneurs
 - Develop comprehensive training materials including handbooks, slide decks and training videos and host them in an e-Learning environment
3. **Task 1.3:** Curricula Testing, Validation and finalisation
 - Pilot the curriculum and the training resources with a selected group of coaches and potential innotepreneurs, start-up founders,
 - Launch the training program across multiple sectors
 - Collect feedback and adjust the curriculum accordingly

WP1 Leader: A university with entrepreneurship or coaching programs and strong ties to Industry

WP1 Participants:

1. Industry association or a network of start-ups
2. Universities and research centers with high activity on basic research in cutting edge/deep-tech technologies (e.g ERC such as StG, CoG, AdG, SyG, PoC grants) and/or EIC projects (such as Pathfinder and Transition), [
3. E-learning provider (Key Innovations Cyprus Ltd)
4. A network of innovation consultants or [EAIC - European Association of Innovation Consultants](#)
5. (optional) An actor from a previous Erasmus+ project on entrepreneurship or EIT Education and Training Programmes

Work Package 2: Cross-Sector Partnerships via Incubation Labs

Objective: Establish virtual incubation labs for 'innotepreneurs' to develop and test ideas, with support from academia, industry, and Technology Transfer Offices.

Tasks:

1. **Task 2.1:** Virtual Incubation Lab Setup
 - Design and set up of virtual incubation lab.
 - Identify and list available freely or with a fee research infrastructures, lab-equipment and development tools in the participating countries and beyond
2. **Task 2.2:** Partnership Development
 - Formulate partnerships with universities, technoparks, equipment labs, research centres, industry for free or with small fee use of their infrastructures

- Formulate partnerships with industry leaders and/or TTOs for legal and regulatory advice for lab users (innotepreneurs and coaches).

WP2 Leader: Key Innovations Cyprus Ltd with its OpenCosmos Virtual Accelerator

WP2: Participants:

- Universities affiliated with technoparks and TTOs,
- Industry association or a network of start-ups,
- Organisations with deep-tech labs/research infrastructures
- Expert on research infrastructures & deep-tech lab facilities

Work Package 3: Access to Funding

Objective: Create a comprehensive guide for innotepreneurs and coaches to navigate and exploit European and public/private funding opportunities.

Tasks:

1. **Task 3.1:** Funding Navigation Guide Development
 - Compile information on European funding mechanisms and private investment sources.
 - Create an online repository with a user-friendly list of funding resources.
2. **Task 3.2:** Funding Advisory Services
 - Establish a team of coaches as funding advisors within the virtual incubation lab.
 - Provide personalized funding strategy virtual sessions for innotepreneurs.

WP3 Leader: Key Innovations Cyprus Ltd as expert in European funds else a consultancy company expert on private funding and investment

WP3 Participants:

- A network of innovation consultants or coaches or [EAIC - European Association of Innovation Consultants](#)
- Expert company on private funding and ventures

Work Package 4: Recognition and Certification Program

Objective: Establish a recognition and certification framework for coaches aligned with the EQF.

Tasks:

1. **Task 4.1:** Micro-Credential Framework Development
 - Develop micro-credentials for coaching skills in innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - Align the micro-credentials with EQF levels and ensure they are recognized across the EU.
2. **Task 4.2:** Certification Process Establishment
 - Set up a certification process including assessment and validation.
 - Launch an online platform for micro-credential management based on blockchain technology if possible

WP4 Leader: An expert company on Microcredentials and EQF

WP4 Participants: An IT company expert in blockchain (Else Key Innovations Cyprus Ltd)

Work Package 5: Talent Retention Initiatives

Objective: Launch initiatives to attract and retain top talent in Europe.

Tasks:

1. **Task 5.1:** Fellowship and Visa Program Development

- Advocate for and assist in the development of the Innopreneur Fellowship program to offer financial and coaching support. The program could provide funding for product development, and opportunities for international exchange
- Advocate for and assist in the development of startup visa programs that allow entrepreneurs from around the world to start and scale their businesses in Europe.

2. **Task 5.2:** Incentive and Competition Creation

- Propose tax incentives for startups and investors to European policymakers.
- Organize innovation competitions to showcase European startup potential.

WP5 Leader: Industry Association or network of innovative companies

WP5 Participants: All participants as policy formulators and advisors

The above WP structure will be complemented with Project Management as well as D&E activities.