

Preface by OECD and European Commission

Entrepreneurship and innovation are key drivers of inclusive growth and social cohesion. This is why it is important that higher education systems and institutions strategically develop innovative and entrepreneurial approaches towards education, research and engagement with stakeholders, and act as catalysts of these processes.

Many higher education institutions have a solid foundation on which they can build and develop new initiatives, often due to the pioneering role of individuals. However, scaling up entrepreneurial and innovative initiatives, and promoting and sustained change at institutional level, is a multi-dimensional effort. It requires adopting new rules and practices on resource allocation, staff incentives, continuous professional development, and the creation of strategic partnerships – locally, nationally and globally. It cannot happen unless higher education institutions include engagement with business and communities in their core functions.

The HEInnovate guiding framework offers policy guidance and advice by identifying and analysing institutional and national practices, and by making information available at international level, to help new initiatives evolve and grow. The framework encompasses a self-assessment tool for higher education institutions, a series of country reviews, and a peer-learning network facilitating exchanges of experiences and best practices among relevant stakeholders.

The HEInnovate country review of Italy shows that policy practices related to the entrepreneurial and innovation agenda in higher education are developing all over the country. Italy's strong and international business sector as well as natural and cultural amenities provide vast engagement opportunities for higher education institutions. A strategic approach at system level should capitalise on existing institutional initiatives and help develop them to generate more value for the economy and society. Recent reforms go in the right direction. Based on field analysis and international good practices, this report provides policy guidance to help Italian policy makers and stakeholders define a long-term national strategy to support higher education engagement with the society and with the business and economic sectors.

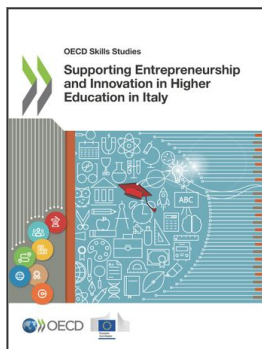
The HEInnovate review provides a number of learning models contributing to the current discussion in Europe and the wider OECD area on policy practices to support entrepreneurship and innovation in higher education. The OECD and the European Commission are grateful to the Italian government for the effective and lasting partnership created through this review, and look forward to continued collaboration.



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