



iStart

**Follow Up Activities for Enhancing
Participants Entrepreneurial Endeavours
& Capitalizing on the VLE and DEP
Curriculum**



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4.4: Follow Up Activities for Enhancing Participants Entrepreneurial Endeavours

Intellectual Output 4, Task 4.4 was related to the follow-up activities to further enhance the participants' entrepreneurial endeavours and induce the best practices into the academic curriculum.

All partners involved in the implementation of the 4 Academies, offered the teams as well as individual participants that graduated from the academies, whether they belonged to the winning teams or not, the opportunity to request and receive support and advice. All partners assigned experts, dedicated members of their teams, to provide this kind of support to all participants. The support offered took, at a minimum, the form of the following:

- Further assessment of their business ideas and value propositions
- Further provision and guidance in the form of advice for networking and financing opportunities existing locally/ nationally
- Advice on further research necessary for the development of their business ideas
- Post-academy collaboration and networking with other stakeholders engaged in the academies and the co-creation mechanism

More specifically, on a per partner basis, the following activities took place:

During the **iStart Thessaloniki Academy**, the mentors offered one month of free coaching to all participants, regardless of their placement during the pitching competition. Many participants, grouped as teams or individuals, used the offer by the mentors and utilized the free coaching to develop further their entrepreneurial idea. They worked with the mentors to investigate the relevant competition, to value the market and draft budget sheets to explore the viability of their idea. The work with the mentors was dynamic and ad-hoc. Mentors coached the students either during ad-hoc face-to-face meetings, online skype calls and e-mail exchanges. Several individuals continue to work with the mentors developing their ideas further.

Additionally, the mentors offered three months coaching support for free to a particular team which they selected. The team followed the mentors' instructions and matured gradually their idea, pivoting when necessary. The team continuous to pursue and explore their idea with the active coaching of the mentors.

During the **iStart Coimbra Academy**, the mentors, one external and one internal to IPN, offered free coaching to all participants during the Academy and were always available for further contacts. Some of the participants used the contact with the mentors to further develop their idea and to access other entrepreneurship competitions in Portugal.

Also, IPN Business Incubator offered 6/4/2 months of free coaching and virtual incubation to first, second and third winner of the pitching competition, that included the following services:

- Technical orientation in the companies' establishment and early stage development;

- Tutorial follow-up for the business plan development
- Intellectual property and legal assistance
- Access and contact with several national and international research centres, knowledge institutions and funding sources, etc.
- Access to specialized consultants in varied areas (management, investments, marketing, taxes, safety, hygiene and health services at work, market strategy, technologies, quality, among others) on favourable terms
- Support for the applications in areas such as: incentive for business investment, R&D, innovation, employment programs, among others
- Access to regular training in technological and management areas
- Support to fundraising and funding

All three winning teams used the virtual incubation period.

During the **iStart Como Academy**, there was a mixed team of mentors among permanent tutors of ComoNExT and one special guest as an external mentor, who worked all week long with the teams. During the Academy all participants had the opportunity to visit the Innovation Hub (ca 130 innovative companies) and to have specific meetings with some of them. ComoNExT's Academy offered three months of pre-incubation to the best three teams selected by the jury at the final pitching session. Those Teams had their own tutor and the opportunity to be presented to all ComoNExT's ecosystem. These teams were: BOOKME (that some months later won a startup prize in Berlin), BOOKIE and BREATHE. Breathe in particular went on developing the idea and under a new name settled the startup: they are at now working with an international Italian pharma Company. There was a fourth team, TREND, that applied to ComoNExT's annual Call of Interest and has been supported in focusing and improving the presentation of their idea.

It is interesting to notice that ComoNExT engaged many of the universities of its region, in implementing the Como Academy and there were participants from a big number and variety of faculties, as Economics, marketing , ICT Engineering Environmental & Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Law, Product Design, International Sciences, Marine Ecology.

During the **iStart Izmir Academy**, Yasar University's Incubation Centre, Minerva and the Technology Transfer Office offered to the participants who wanted to proceed with their idea, either as teams and/or as individuals, three months of free pre-incubation time, with the opportunity to expand it to twelve months. Also, they offered all teams free mentoring services, coaching and advise on existing opportunities for the financing of their ideas, via other programs sponsored by government, like the BIGG program. Three of the teams, TickTown, EcoElectricVehicle and Let's Talk where interested and discussed with Minerva Incubation Centre. One of them, EcoElectricVehicle is already located in the Incubation Centre and collaborates closely with the mentors of Minerva Incubation Centre and the experts of the Technology Transfer Office of YASAR University. Also, two of the teams TickTown and EcoElectricVehicle proceeded with applying to the BIGG program in which they were accepted to continue with mentoring support and the educational training part of the programme.

4.5 Follow Up Activities for Capitalizing on the VLE and DEP Curriculum

Intellectual Output 4, Task 4.5 was related to the follow-up activities to capitalize the quadruple helix co-creation through piloting of the VLE and DEP curriculum and infuse the best practices into the academic curriculum and use the VLE and the DEP curriculum in the future assuring this way the sustainability of the projects results.

The follow-up activities to capitalize on the projects results and the piloting of the VLE and DEP curriculum has resulted, on a per partners basis, in the following:

YASAR UNIVERISTY has adopted the developed curriculum of iStart and used it in the design of two new courses that are offered by the university. The first course is an elective course offered to 3rd and 4th year students of the Engineering Faculty. The course is named IE 4465 “Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Engineering” and is an 6 ECTS course, offered on a semester basis, both in Fall and Spring Semester. The course aims to provide a solid foundation in the fundamental principles of entrepreneurship and equip engineering students (potential future entrepreneurs) with the tools and inspiration they need to start and grow a successful business, as well as with skills and knowledge to design start-up business models and experiment with relevant tools, understand and use different analysis for their idea and business model validation, and provide them with knowledge to understand the importance of innovation and technology management in engineering and their relationship with entrepreneurship. The second course is named UFND 6120 “Entrepreneurship and Business Planning” and is offered to all university students and all faculties. It is a compulsory university foundation course of 2ECTS credits. Both courses engage the active usage of iStart’s VLE platform for supporting the education and training of the students on-line. During the last two semesters, 707 and 347 students have enrolled in UFND 6120 and 37 and 28 students have enrolled in IE 4465, during Fall 2018/19 and Spring 2019, equivalently.

SEERC assisted in embedding the VLE platform on ‘Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management’ course at City College. Content from the iStart VLE is presented during the classes and students are encouraged to follow the links for further reading, assessment and online videos. The iStart VLE will continue to have a significant contribution for the undergraduate and postgraduate courses on Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management of City College and students will benefit from the online content. Furthermore, certain components of the iStart DPE curriculum are utilized during the classes of ‘Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management’ at City College: startup financing, designing a minimum viable product, idea validation, lean business model canvas, among others, have been used at the abovementioned class. Finally, SEERC has assisted City College to utilize the iStart DEP curriculum during professional training classes. iStart DEP curriculum was useful since it illustrated how small entrepreneurial projects can start and flourish with startup mentality and lean methodologies.

ComoNExT, as ComoNExT is not a University, it has been necessary to involve in the implementation of the Academy especially different universities of the region: Università Cattolica Milano, Politecnico Milano, Bocconi Milano, LIUC Castellanza (VA), Università Insubria, Scuola di Como, La Sapienza Roma. Some Professors followed the activities of the project , the use of the Platform and the results of the Academy. Thanks to their participation a collaboration agreement was undersigned with a Professor of Catholic University in Milan, that proposes to the students to use the VLE Platform. ComoNExT is also settling a permanent program (yearly one) for university

students of all faculties to repeat the experience of the Academy. Moreover, an agreement has been undersigned between ComoNExT and LIUC Business School (Univerità Cattaneo Castellanza VA) and a new Master course has been constructed: Master in Innovation Management: it lasts one year and it involves the Academy model and the use of the VLE Platform.

ComoNExT is constructing a general “Educational program” dedicated to innovation and for all students (elementary, middle, upper school and universities) and there are many Modules that will refer to the use of the VLE Platform.

IPN has been participating during 2019 in a new EU project supporting Silver Entrepreneurs. Project Silver Starters is a project that aims to support senior citizens in creating start-ups that are geared to healthy living and active ageing (<https://www.eithealth.eu/silver>). Most start-up courses target and are tailored to young entrepreneurs. Given our increasing healthy life years, however, more and more seniors are considering a second career and wish to create start-ups, which is shown to be beneficial for wellbeing and health. This project will be based on some of iStart curriculum, but it will fill this gap and train them to start their own businesses in healthy living and active ageing. In 8 weeks a group in Poland (classic room training) and Netherlands (100% online), will follow an adaptive, individual learning pathway and learn essentials about entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the DEP curriculum and the VLE platform will be presented in the classes of entrepreneurship given in the Faculty of Sciences and Technology from Coimbra’s University, and the students will be encourage to use the VLE platform for some of the project assignments.