

How Students Become Entrepreneurs

New KIT Project Trains Entrepreneurial Thinking and Supports Entrepreneurs in Implementing Ideas / Funded by EU and State Ministry of Economics



The "Cube" CIE startup pavilion: Contact point for students interested in establishing startups on the KIT campus. (Photo: J. Parrisius, KIT)

Innovations are important to Karlsruhe as a location of industry. Well-educated young people have the most innovative ideas for opening up markets and creating value added. To facilitate their first steps from the idea to the startup, the Incubators 2 project is started. It sensitizes students, in particular females, for establishing startups and provides support. The State Ministry of Finance and Economics finances this project from the European social funds.

"We want to strengthen entrepreneurial culture at KIT, support entrepreneurial thinking among students, and extend our counseling and support offers for young entrepreneurs," explains Professor Orestis Terzidis from Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. The planned extension of the training offers addresses to students of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. This winter semester, a new series of seminars will be started in the field of entrepreneurship. Students are to learn how successful startups may develop from their ideas, capabilities, and the knowledge obtained during their studies.

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As a central element of the project, KIT will extend its counseling offers to students. Female young entrepreneurs are rare, which is to be changed in the future. The project is aimed at enhancing first counseling capacities. Students interested in establishing startups and having new business ideas are offered subject-specific coaching, support in funding matters, and help in establishing contacts to qualified mentors or startup networks.

The innovative power of a region is determined mainly by networks and living startup communities. At KIT, it is therefore planned to increase the scope of events. Furthermore, operation of contact points, such as the CIE startup pavilion, for students will be continued. It is here, where young entrepreneurs-to-be meet and discuss their ideas, establish new contacts, and promote entrepreneurial thinking.

As a fourth and last measure, an online community platform will be implemented. This platform is to facilitate support during the founding process and to enable the young entrepreneurs to exchange their knowledge in an interactive, web-based manner. Topics relating to the complete process of founding a startup can be developed in interdisciplinary cooperation and, if necessary, the information may be transmitted to a larger group of interested persons.

The partners of the Incubators 2 project are the KIT Institute for Entrepreneurship, Technology Management, and Innovation (EnTechnon), the CIE Startup Center at KIT, the KIT Innovation Management Service Unit, and the high-tech enterprise network CyberForum as well as the IT company nwebs established by Karlsruhe university graduates. On all levels of innovation development, competent partners will be ready to provide help for the students. The total budget available in the amount of EUR 584,000 is shared by the three consortium partners involved.

Further information on the promotion of startups:

<http://www.gruenden.kit.edu/>

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a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

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