

## *Preface by OECD and European Commission*

Entrepreneurship and innovation are key drivers of inclusive growth. Higher education systems and institutions that strategically develop innovative and entrepreneurial approaches towards education, research and engagement with stakeholders catalyse these drivers. Policy reforms supporting these trends are emerging internationally. Often, due to the pioneering role of individuals, many higher education institutions (HEIs) have a solid foundation of initiatives on which to build on.

Scaling up entrepreneurial and innovative initiatives and sustaining change at institutional level is a multi-dimensional effort. It requires adopting new rules and practices regarding resource allocation, staff incentives, continuous professional development, and the creation of strategic partnerships – locally, nationally and globally. Importantly, HEIs should include engagement with business and communities in their core functions, funding and staff deployment provisions.

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 HEInnovate guiding 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 Austria shows a collection of good institutional and policy practices. The national higher education system has consistently recognised the need to become more entrepreneurial and innovative with a view to supporting the economic, social and cultural development of the country, and its regions. Over the past decades, the government has been implementing a broad reform agenda to provide strategic funding, diversify higher education institutions (HEIs), and promote an allocation of students that improves the quality of services, empowering them vis à vis the future of work and society.

Going forward, Austria could capitalise on the institutional diversity of its higher education system and promote partnerships and interdisciplinary programmes spurring entrepreneurship and innovation in all students and stakeholders. The higher education system should adopt a clear and shared definition of entrepreneurship, which goes beyond business creation and puts the emphasis on nurturing the entrepreneurial mindset of students and faculty. At the same time, entrepreneurship and innovation practices could take into account the different characteristics and needs of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystems, characterising the country.

The HEInnovate review provides a number of “learning models” contributing to the current discussions 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 Austrian federal government for the effective and lasting partnership created through this review. We look forward to continued collaboration with Austria in HEInnovate.

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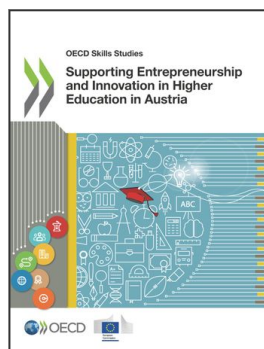
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