

D15.1 CHARM-EU INCUBATOR HUBS

**CHARM-EIGHT ∞ (CHARM-EU EXPANSION, INTER-INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS,
GOVERNANCE, HIGHER EDUCATION, TRANSFORMATION)**

DELIVERABLE D15.1– REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARM-EU INCUBATOR HUBS WITH A NUMBER OF PILOT ACTIVITIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CHARM-EU INCUBATOR HUBS

Deliverable 15.1 sets out the conceptual foundation, baseline analysis, and initial pilots for the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network under Task 15.1. Its aim is to support CHARM-EIGHT's objective of strengthening innovation and entrepreneurship capacity across the alliance through shared, cross-regional structures. The deliverable explains how the consortium developed a flexible and context-sensitive framework that accommodates the diverse institutional environments and regional ecosystems of the partner universities.

The methodology followed an explorative, adaptive approach rather than a prescriptive model. Through a structured self-assessment, stakeholder input, and thematic analysis, partners mapped their innovation services, identified strengths and weaknesses, and highlighted areas for cross-regional synergy. This process confirmed that a flexible framework is essential to reflect the varying levels of institutional maturity, funding access, and ecosystem interdependencies across CHARM-EU.

Building on this foundation, two pilot activities, the CHARM-DEN Pitching Event and the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey, tested early components of the Incubator Hub Network. CHARM-DEN provided a shared platform for student and early-stage start-up engagement across regions, while the Innovator's Journey established a recurring, hybrid seminar format delivered via the Hybrid Active Learning Classroom (HALC), integrating entrepreneurial learning into CHARM-EU structures.

The initial impacts are already visible. Several universities advanced internal coordination, updated their innovation service mappings, or deepened links with regional start-ups.

Summarized, the insights from Task 15.1 form a strategic basis for upcoming work in Tasks 15.2 and 15.3, particularly the development of the challenge-based platform and mechanisms for external stakeholder engagement. Reflections on scalability show strong partner interest in continuing and expanding pilots such as CHARM-DEN beyond the project period and demonstrate the potential for a durable, networked incubator model within CHARM-EU.

This deliverable therefore provides a validated baseline, proof-of-concept pilots, and a shared strategic direction, laying the groundwork for a sustainable CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network aligned with the ambitions of CHARM-EIGHT.

1. INTRODUCTION

Deliverable 15.1, *Report on the establishment of CHARM-EU Incubator Hubs with a number of pilot activities*, presents the outcomes of Task T15.1, *Establish and run CHARM-EU incubator hubs for start-up movements*, within Work Package 15: Worldwide Non-Academic Stakeholder Consolidation and Expansion. The aim of this deliverable is to document how CHARM-EU partners collaboratively designed, implemented, and tested a shared model for the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network, and to demonstrate how this model supports the wider objectives defined in the Description of Action.

This deliverable directly contributes to the overall objective of WP15, which is to *scale up and consolidate efforts in stakeholder engagement and integrate strategic partners into CHARM-EU activities*. Through the development of incubator hubs, Task 15.1 strengthens the alliance’s capacity to engage external stakeholders in entrepreneurial, social innovation, and research-based activities, thereby operationalising Objective O15.1 “consolidating and expanding partnerships with governments, businesses, civil society, alumni networks, and international actors” and indirectly supporting Objective O15.2 “exploring pathways for sustainable funding of stakeholder engagement”. The incubator hubs draw on existing entrepreneurship structures across the partner universities, previously mapped through TORCH analyses, and integrate both academic and extra-academic actors in the development of real-world start-ups and social innovation initiatives.

In addition, Deliverable 15.1 supports General Objective 5 of CHARM-EIGHT, *the creation of a multilingual, intercultural, inclusive, mobile, digitally enabled European higher education environment that embeds European values and diverse global perspectives*. The incubator hubs contribute to this objective by fostering transnational collaboration, strengthening ties between university communities and societal actors, and providing learning and innovation spaces that connect different cultural, professional, and disciplinary perspectives. The hubs also embody the cross-cutting principles identified in TORCH: responsible research and innovation, inclusion, ethics, gender balance, open science, business collaboration, and public engagement—which serve as guiding values for all CHARM-EU activities.

The establishment of the incubator hubs and their associated pilot activities furthermore aligns with CHARM-EU’s commitment to challenge-based, sustainability-oriented education and innovation. Through collaboration between students, researchers, academics, and external partners, the hubs aim to build young enterprises and social movements grounded in the thematic expertise of the master’s programme. In doing so, they form a structural bridge between educational, research, and civic missions and provide the foundation for long-term cooperation across regional ecosystems.

This deliverable therefore serves a dual purpose: it documents what has been established under Task 15.1, and it provides the methodological, conceptual, and operational basis for subsequent activities in WP15. It demonstrates how CHARM-EU partners jointly designed a flexible, scalable incubator hub model tailored to different regional contexts; how complementary pilot activities

tested and refined this model; and how these efforts contribute to CHARM-EU's broader institutional transformation by strengthening external engagement, supporting innovation capacity, and embedding entrepreneurial mindsets across the alliance.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in developing the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network was designed to guide a structured yet flexible and collaborative process encompassing concept design, baseline analysis, and pilot implementation across the participating CHARM-EU universities. Rather than serving as a purely academic framework, it outlines how the consortium collectively approached its actions — from gathering information on existing innovation services to co-developing and testing shared models and activities.

The methodological framework was deliberately conceived to capture the diversity and complexity of innovation and entrepreneurship support across the CHARM-EU Alliance. Given the heterogeneity of institutional contexts, regional ecosystems, and stakeholder constellations within the consortium, a rigid or prescriptive approach would have been neither feasible nor meaningful. Instead, the chosen framework follows an explorative and adaptive logic, allowing each partner to represent its local conditions while still contributing to a comparable and coherent overall picture.

This flexible structure ensures that regional particularities — such as varying levels of institutional maturity, funding landscapes, and ecosystem interdependencies — are recognised as integral components of CHARM-EU’s collective innovation capacity, rather than flattened out for the sake of standardisation. The methodology therefore prioritises inclusiveness, context sensitivity, and stakeholder engagement over uniformity. Its purpose is not only to map existing structures, but also to identify synergies, gaps, and shared opportunities that inform the subsequent analytical and practical phases — including the analysis of strengths and weaknesses (Chapter 3) and the design of pilot activities (Chapter 4).

Throughout the process, the approach was guided by key principles of collaborative learning, evidence-based improvement and stakeholder inclusion — in line with major European programmes¹ such as the EIT HEI Initiative², and also informed by broader innovation support logic found in the EIC’s funding instruments. Each step — from input gathering to implementation — was designed to promote mutual learning and scalability, ensuring that the incubator network could emerge organically from the consortium’s shared strengths rather than from a prescriptive top-down model.

2.1 Input

¹ EIC Work Programme 2025: https://eic.ec.europa.eu/document/download/5e1eb75f-e437-477f-9ee9-ef54ff6387fd_en?filename=EIC%20Work%20Programme%202025.pdf

² About the EIT HEI initiative: <https://eit-hei.eu/about/about-eit-hei-initiative/>

To develop a coherent and comparable understanding of the existing innovation ecosystems within CHARM-EU, the partners jointly defined a structured process for gathering and analysing input data. This phase provided the empirical foundation for shaping both the baseline analysis and the conceptual framework of the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network.

2.1.1 Matrix

The primary instrument for collecting and comparing data was a comprehensive input matrix developed collaboratively by the CHARM-EU partners. This tool served as a reference framework for mapping the innovation and entrepreneurship support services already available across the alliance. It enabled a structured, partner-driven identification of strengths, opportunities, and complementarities. The matrix is applied in chapter 3 to define the baseline of all CHARM-EU partner institutions.

2.1.1.1 Innovation services overview from each participating university

Building on this framework, each partner institution systematically documented its innovation-related services within the matrix. The data collection process followed the logic of the HEI Initiative's Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP) framework³, which encourages higher education institutions to map and enhance their innovation and entrepreneurship capacities through structured self-assessment and benchmarking.

Universities were asked to list all relevant services — such as ideation and creativity support, incubation and acceleration programmes, technology transfer and IP management, mentoring and training for start-ups, and collaboration interfaces with external actors. To ensure comparability, entries were categorised by target groups (students, researchers, start-ups, SMEs), governance structures (centralised, faculty-based, or cross-institutional), and maturity levels (nascent, developing, or established). This harmonised approach made it possible to identify both convergences and divergences in institutional practices and innovation support mechanisms.

2.1.1.2 Internally or externally provided services or no services

Within the same matrix, each service was further classified according to its mode of provision— whether it was offered internally, accessed externally through partnerships, provided collaboratively with other actors, or not currently available. In addition, the quality or maturity of each service was rated on a three-point scale (1–3), allowing a more nuanced understanding of institutional capacities across different service categories.

³ <https://eit-hei.eu/projects/inventhei/>

This typology reflects the open innovation principles promoted within European innovation policy, particularly by the EIT's Knowledge Triangle⁴ and the EIC's Open Innovation pillar, both of which emphasize the interdependence between institutional and regional innovation actors. By systematically differentiating internal, external, and collaborative provision modes, the consortium was able to identify dependencies on external stakeholders, assess the degree of institutional self-sufficiency, and reveal potential opportunities for shared service development across the alliance.

This phase of the methodology provided a detailed empirical foundation for the subsequent stages of analysis. The process was iterative and consultative: institutions refined their inputs following feedback from the project coordination team to ensure completeness, internal coherence, and alignment with the common analytical framework.

2.1.2 Outreach to external stakeholders for feedback (individual survey)

Building on this framework, each partner institution systematically documented its innovation-related services within the matrix. The data collection process was inspired by the logic of the EIT HEI Initiative's Innovation Vision Action Plan (IVAP), which promotes structured self-analysis and benchmarking of universities' innovation and entrepreneurship capacities. In line with the HEI Initiative's self-assessment approach⁵, the CHARM-EU partners carried out a reflective internal review of their existing services, governance structures, and stakeholder interfaces. Rather than developing full action plans, they applied similar principles of self-reflection and evidence gathering to map their institutional strengths and identify areas for potential improvement in a comparable and transparent manner.

An individual survey instrument was developed for this purpose, following established standards for stakeholder engagement in European higher education policy evaluations. The survey design drew on the indicator-and-benchmarking logic of the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS)⁶. It combined quantitative metrics with open-ended qualitative questions and gathered feedback from representatives of industry, start-ups, regional innovation agencies, public authorities, and other ecosystem actors on the effectiveness, accessibility, and impact of university innovation services.

Responses were collected anonymously and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The collected data provided an essential external validation layer, helping to triangulate institutional self-assessments with stakeholder experiences. This approach

⁴ <https://eit.europa.eu/our-activities/knowledge-triangle>

⁵ <https://www.heinnovate.eu/en>

⁶ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/statistics/performance-indicators/european-innovation-scoreboard_en

ensured a multidimensional understanding of innovation support practices and their relevance to external needs.

2.1.3 Analysis of gathered data

The analysis of the collected data followed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques to produce a comprehensive and nuanced interpretation. Quantitative data derived from the service matrices and closed-ended survey questions were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify common patterns, frequencies, and distributions across institutions. This allowed for the detection of systemic tendencies, such as the prevalence of certain types of innovation services or reliance on external partners.

Qualitative data, primarily drawn from open-ended survey responses and partner reflections, were analysed using inductive thematic techniques. While not a full grounded theory study, the coding process adopted key elements—such as iterative coding and emergence of themes—while being informed by the analytical categories derived from EU innovation policy frameworks. Particular attention was paid to themes around institutional capacities, partnership models, service maturity, and promising practices. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data enhanced the robustness of the findings, and is informed by methodological guidance from the European Commission’s Better Regulation Toolbox (2023)⁷, which encourages mixed-method approaches and stakeholder consultation in evaluation contexts.

2.2 Output

2.2.1 Synthesis of feedback from the partner universities and external stakeholders

The analytical outcomes were synthesised to produce an integrated understanding of innovation services within the alliance. The synthesis reconciled internal institutional data with external stakeholder feedback, creating a cross-sectional and longitudinal perspective on innovation service provision. This integrative step was essential for identifying both systemic patterns and context-specific variations, as well as for revealing shared challenges and opportunities for mutual learning. The resulting synthesis is discussed in detail in chapters 3.1.2 - 3.1.6 to define a baseline and identify desirable changes. It represents a multi-perspective evidence base from which strategic recommendations could be derived.

2.2.2 Balancing ideals with reality, limitations, and available resources

In line with the pragmatic orientation of EU-funded collaborative projects, the next methodological step consisted in balancing aspirational ideals with institutional realities. The analysis acknowledged

⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/9c8d2189-8abd-4f29-84e9-abc843cc68e0_en?filename=BR%20toolbox%20-%20Jul%202023%20-%20FINAL.pdf

that while the alliance collectively aspires to high-performing, interconnected innovation ecosystems, the practical implementation of such a vision is mediated by resource availability, organisational constraints, and regulatory environments which reflects the kind of incremental, evidence-based transformation encouraged in EIC Pathfinder⁸ projects, rather than prescriptive top-down frameworks. By integrating feasibility considerations, the methodology ensured that recommendations remain actionable, context-sensitive, and scalable across different institutional settings.

2.2.3 Learning within the alliance and disseminating best practices

A key methodological feature of the process was its learning-oriented design. The analytical results were shared and discussed among all partner universities through structured workshops, peer-learning sessions, and written feedback rounds. This iterative exchange supported a culture of mutual reflection and continuous improvement, in line with the EIT Knowledge Triangle principle, which encourages the integration of education, research, and innovation through collaboration. This approach facilitated intra-alliance learning and lays the foundation for potential dissemination beyond the CHARM-EU consortium.

2.2.4 Harmonizing and interconnecting for improved innovation ecosystem services

The final synthesis step focused on developing a shared framework for the harmonisation and inter-connection of innovation services across the alliance. The methodological approach here was both analytical and strategic: it sought to translate empirical findings into a coherent vision for cross-institutional integration. In line with the principles of the European Research Area Policy Agenda 2022-24⁹, especially the emphasis on interoperability, openness and coordinated governance, the process involved identifying potential complementarities among institutional offerings, defining mechanisms for joint service provision, and outlining pathways for coordinated or networked development of innovation services. The outcome of this stage provides a roadmap for strengthening the collective innovation ecosystem and contributes to the broader European objective of enhancing the innovation capacity of higher education institutions.

2.3 Conclusion

In summary, the methodology adopted was intentionally open and exploratory, reflecting the consortium's commitment to inclusivity and adaptability. The matrix and related analytical tools were not designed to enforce uniformity but to accommodate the heterogeneity of CHARM-EU's institutional and regional contexts. This flexible framework allowed partners to describe their

⁸ https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-pathfinder_en

⁹ <https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/documents/european-research-area-policy-agenda-2022-24>

innovation ecosystems in their own terms, while still contributing to a collective understanding of the alliance's innovation landscape.

This exploratory and participatory approach not only revealed shared challenges and strengths but also laid the groundwork for the analytical synthesis presented in Chapter 3, and for the development of concrete pilot actions discussed in Chapter 4. In this way, the methodology served as both a diagnostic instrument and a collaborative process—one that reflects CHARM-EU's overarching mission to integrate diverse perspectives in pursuit of sustainable innovation.

3. BASELINE AND CONCEPT OF THE CHARM-EU INCUBATOR HUB NETWORK

Building on the methodological framework and data collection process described in the previous chapter, this section translates the analytical findings into a coherent conceptual foundation for the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network. It connects the evidence gathered through the institutional mapping and comparative analysis with the strategic considerations that shaped the overall hub design and its intended function within the alliance.

3.1. Baseline

3.1.1 Introduction: Fragmented Starting Point

At the beginning of Work Package 15, each CHARM-EU partner university operated mainly within its own regional or national innovation ecosystem. These ecosystems were, in most cases, mature and well-established within their local contexts, yet they remained isolated from one another. While all partner universities had developed a range of entrepreneurial support services, these structures were deeply embedded in local networks and seldom interconnected across borders.

Moreso, each partner's ecosystem reflects its regional policy environment, funding opportunities, and institutional priorities, leading to distinct strengths and approaches. While some partners have long-standing incubator infrastructures and established networks, others are still in earlier stages of ecosystem building. The diversity of local contexts results in uneven access to entrepreneurial support and investment opportunities.

As a consequence, the entrepreneurial potential within CHARM-EU was not leveraged at a collective European level. Each partner benefited from its local strengths, but also suffered from structural limitations. The baseline situation thus presented both a rich foundation of local expertise and a missed opportunity for transnational collaboration and knowledge exchange.

3.1.2 Strengths and Weaknesses Across the Consortium

The analysis of the initial situation revealed a number of key strengths and weaknesses across the CHARM-EU partner institutions and their surrounding ecosystems:

Strengths:

- Each CHARM-EU university has established connections with local start-up ecosystems, including incubators, technology transfer offices, innovation agencies, and regional policy actors.
- There is a high degree of institutional commitment to entrepreneurship education and student innovation, often embedded in broader university strategies.

- Several partners—particularly Trinity College Dublin and Utrecht University—already possess strong internal structures for start-up support, mentoring, and business development.
- Across all partners, there is increasing interest among students in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, aligning well with CHARM-EU’s mission.

Weaknesses:

- Entrepreneurial ecosystems are fragmented and regionally bounded, leading to a lack of cross-institutional visibility and cooperation.
- Funding opportunities vary significantly between regions, resulting in unequal access to financial and investment support. For example, in Finland (Åbo Akademi University), early-stage funding is particularly difficult to secure, pushing start-ups to look abroad.
- There is limited awareness among students and staff of opportunities across other CHARM regions, leading to underutilized synergies.
- Entrepreneurial support services tend to operate within national legal and administrative frameworks, which complicates transnational collaboration.
- A lack of shared communication channels and coordination mechanisms hindered the creation of joint activities or knowledge-sharing practices.
- Insecurity and doubts among students about entrepreneurship today due to the unsecure economic situation in Europe creates disincentives to start a business or be an entrepreneur in general

Building on the methodological framework and the input matrix described in Chapter 2, a simple dual coding system has been introduced to provide a more accurate and comparable overview of the innovation and entrepreneurship support offered across CHARM-EU partner universities.

Numerical scale (1–3) reflects the *level and quality* of each service:

- **1 – Basic:** The service exists in a limited or emerging form. Activities may be occasional or project-based, with modest institutional integration. Typical examples include short-term workshops, mentoring opportunities coordinated externally, or access to general entrepreneurship programmes not specifically tailored to the university community.
- **2 – Intermediate:** The service is structured and regularly available, though not yet comprehensive. Activities are more coordinated, and there is growing institutional engagement. Examples include recurring training sessions, co-organised events with external partners, or incubator services accessible to a portion of the student body or staff.
- **3 – Advanced:** The service is fully developed, strategically embedded in the university’s innovation ecosystem, and supported by dedicated staff and resources. This may include

institutional innovation offices or hubs, structured mentoring and incubation programmes, and direct links with internal funding or entrepreneurship curricula.

Letter scale (I, C, E, N) indicates the *delivery mode*:

- **I (Internal):** The service is primarily managed and delivered within the university.
- **C (Collaborative):** The service is co-delivered through formal partnerships with external entities (e.g. incubators, innovation agencies, or regional ecosystems).
- **E (External):** The service is offered mainly by external providers, with limited direct management by the university.
- **N (not currently available):** The service is not yet established at the university but could be developed in the future.

Supports & Services	UM	UB	TCD	UU	ELTE	ÅAU	JMU	HRW
Mentorship and Coaching	2I	3C	3C	3I	2C	3I	3C	3C
Networking Opportunities	3I	2C	3C	3C	2C	3I	2E	2C
Access to Resources	3I	2I	3C	3C	1E	2C	2E	3I
Educational Programs	3I	2C	3C	3E	1E	2C	2C	3I
Funding and Investment	3C	3I	3E	3C	2C	2C	1E	1E
Collaborative Environment	3I	3I	3C	3I	1E	2C	3E	2C
Validation and Feedback	3I	2C	3C	3C	1E	2C	3E	2I

Table 1: Overview of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support and Services across CHARM-EU Partner Universities

Below you will find a detailed description of the different supports and services assessed for each partner university.

Mentorship and Coaching: Entrepreneurs receive guidance from experienced mentors and industry experts. This support helps them navigate challenges and make informed decisions.

Networking Opportunities: Organised events, workshops, and meetups that facilitate networking with other startups, potential investors, and industry leaders. This can lead to partnerships, funding opportunities, and valuable connections.

Access to Resources: Access to physical or virtual resources, including office space, technological tools, administrative support, and sometimes even legal and financial services.

Educational Programs: Training programs covering a range of topics, such as business development, marketing, financial planning, and product development. These programs are designed to equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

Funding and Investment: Connections with venture capitalists, angel investors, and other funding sources. Supporting start-ups prepare for pitching to investors and securing funding.

Collaborative Environment: Delivering a physical or virtual collaborative atmosphere in incubator hubs encourages idea exchange and problem-solving among startups. This can lead to innovation and the development of new products or services.

Validation and Feedback: Enabling start-ups / students to test their ideas and products within the incubator community, receiving constructive feedback that can be crucial for refining their offerings before a broader market launch.

The most notable findings regarding categories are that while Mentorship & Coaching and Network Opportunities are rather advanced across the alliance, Funding and Investment is only on a basic level at several partners institutions. Overall, the services are predominantly offered through external or collaborative manners. Looking at the partners themselves, a significant difference in advancement level of the services can be seen. Additionally, there are several partners that do not offer any services internally and rely on collaboration or external partnerships. The following chapters will discuss implications and provide ways to overcome potential limitations.

The current values are indicative and have been reviewed and validated by each CHARM-EU partner university.

3.1.3 Defining the Problem: Locally framed entrepreneurial activities and existing ecosystem boundaries

The baseline analysis highlighted that each university's innovation ecosystem naturally aligns with local and national strengths and priorities. The ecosystem actors, universities, start-up incubators, government agencies, and investors, mostly collaborated within regional boundaries and are thus also bounded to the resources and limitations of their own ecosystem.

While this regional focus brought contextual relevance and proximity to local industries, it also created a focused lens through which entrepreneurial opportunities were viewed.

Consequently, several potential opportunities were untapped:

- Financially, because international investors and funding programmes remained largely untapped.
- Strategically, because start-ups had limited exposure to alternative approaches, business cultures, or market perspectives.
- Educationally, because students lacked the opportunity to learn from peers, mentors, and role models from other European contexts.

Generally, a regional lens might lead to decreased chances of collaborating with international companies and organizations which negatively affects the funding opportunities for external funding from EU.

This fragmentation also reduced the visibility of sustainability-focused entrepreneurship initiatives that could otherwise have benefited from a joint CHARM-EU platform and shared identity.

3.1.4. Towards a Shared Vision: The Need for a Broader Mindset

To address these limitations, the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub initiative was conceived as a network-based model that transcends geographical and institutional boundaries. The goal was to promote:

- A more diverse entrepreneurial mindset, by exposing participants to multiple regional and disciplinary perspectives;
- Access to a broader pool of role models and mentors, facilitating cross-cultural exchange and peer learning;
- Shared best practices and mutual reinforcement of institutional support structures; and
- Increased access to international investment and funding opportunities through cross-regional connections.

In practice, this means that each partner university continues to operate within its local context, but now as part of a larger, integrated CHARM-EU ecosystem that facilitates mobility of ideas, expertise, and people.

3.1.5 Target Groups of Local and Cross-Regional Support Services

Before the establishment of the Incubator Hub Network, local support services mainly targeted: Students, Local start-ups and SMEs, and regional authorities within their respective regions. The network model now seeks to extend these target groups horizontally, thus allowing students from one university to benefit from workshops, mentors, or services offered by another partner.

For example, a student team at Åbo Akademi University could receive pitching feedback from CHARM-DEN jury members at Trinity College Dublin, thus connecting with a wider pool of investors

and mentors. Conversely, an early-stage venture at Utrecht University could benefit from sustainability-oriented coaching expertise from the University of Barcelona.

Such cross-utilization of services strengthens the overall value proposition of CHARM-EU's innovation ecosystem and increases the collective resilience and inclusivity.

3.1.6 Baseline Implications: Shared Weaknesses as Shared Opportunities

A key insight from the baseline phase was that each partner's weaknesses can become another partner's opportunity. For example:

- In regions where funding is scarce, collaboration with partners that have stronger investor networks (e.g. Ireland) can open new financing avenues.
- Where entrepreneurial education is less developed, partners with mature programmes can provide models, mentors, or shared training activities.
- Conversely, institutions that are more advanced in sustainability innovation can support others in integrating this focus into their local entrepreneurial culture.

This principle of “mutual complementarity” became one of the defining characteristics of the Incubator Hub concept. Rather than building physical hubs in each region, CHARM-EU aims to connect existing local strengths into one distributed yet cohesive support network.

3.1.7 Conclusion: From Fragmentation to Integration

In summary, the baseline showed that CHARM-EU partners have mature local innovation frameworks, which could be further linked and aligned across Europe. The differing strengths and development needs of each partner create opportunities for reciprocal learning and collaboration. The challenge was not the lack of entrepreneurial activity, but the absence of an integrated mechanism that would allow partners to learn from each other, share services, and co-develop transnational innovation opportunities.

The establishment of the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network thus began as a strategic response to this fragmentation. It aims to move from isolated local ecosystems to a coordinated, network-based model that maximizes the strengths of each partner and offers students, staff, and entrepreneurs a truly European environment for sustainable innovation.

3.2 Concept of the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network

3.2.1 From Fragmentation to a Networked Approach

Building upon the fragmented starting point described in the baseline, CHARM-EU's approach to entrepreneurial and innovation support deliberately moves away from traditional physical incubator structures. Instead, it establishes a network-based model that connects and amplifies the strengths of each partner region. This shift represents both an organizational innovation and a pedagogical approach, reflecting CHARM-EU's overall philosophy of challenge-based, transdisciplinary, and sustainability-oriented education.

The Incubator Hub Network is thus not a single building or local infrastructure, but a distributed ecosystem. It connects people, services, and opportunities across regions while leveraging digital tools, hybrid events, and shared learning processes.

This design was chosen deliberately to:

- Avoid the high financial and administrative burden of physical infrastructures;
- Ensure long-term sustainability beyond project funding; and
- Allow for flexibility and inclusivity, enabling participation from all CHARM regions regardless of size or resource availability.

By connecting the existing local innovation ecosystems of the CHARM-EU partners, the network becomes more than the sum of its parts: A European incubator system that supports sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship on a transnational level.

To find a basis and starting point for creating meaningful content within the network to provide value to both internal and external stakeholders, a survey was conducted at the beginning of the endeavor. This survey was aimed at the most important external stakeholders of the regional incubators / start-up ecosystem. The results have been incorporated into the network's framework as well as the specific formats (Appendices 1, 2).

3.2.2 Core Principles of the Incubator Hub Network

The concept is grounded in a set of guiding principles that shape its design, implementation, and long-term vision:

Network over Structure

The Incubator Hub operates as a virtual and relational structure rather than a physical space. Each partner contributes through its existing local resources (mentors, offices, events, contacts), which are then integrated into the shared network on demand. This enables the consortium to function as one distributed incubator, in consequence reducing duplication and expanding access.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

The network is designed to be open and inclusive. Activities are accessible to students, researchers, alumni, and external stakeholders from all partner institutions, regardless of their physical location. Events are typically organized in hybrid formats, allowing both in-person participation and virtual engagement. This principle was first tested and validated during the Innovators' Journey seminar series, which successfully combined local and online participation across regions.

Transdisciplinary and Sustainability Orientation

In alignment with CHARM-EU's educational mission, the Incubator Hub focuses on innovation for sustainability and social impact. It encourages participants to address real-world challenges from multiple disciplinary perspectives and to develop solutions that integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions.

Iterative Engagement and Longitudinal Participation

A distinctive feature of the Incubator Hub is its iterative and longitudinal character. Participants are encouraged to engage in multiple events and programmes over time, for example, moving from a challenge-based learning activity, to participation in the Innovators' Journey, and later pitching their developed idea at CHARM-DEN. This iterative logic creates a continuous innovation pipeline, where each event reinforces the next and participants progress through different stages of entrepreneurial maturity.

Synergies and Sharing of Capabilities

The Incubator Hub acts as a connector between existing support services across the CHARM-EU alliance. Partners can draw upon each other's competencies, such as:

- Coaching and mentoring expertise,
- Access to investors or venture capital networks,
- Regional start-up incubator facilities,
- Training offers or accelerator programmes.

This mutual reinforcement model allows each partner to extend its local offer through the shared European network.

3.2.3 Functional Design of the Network

The Incubator Hub Network operates through a multi-layered functional model:

3.2.3.1 The Local Layer

Each CHARM-EU partner remains embedded in its local start-up and innovation ecosystem, maintaining established collaborations with universities, investors, and local industries. Local staff members act as regional contact points for the Incubator Hub Network, coordinating the participation of students, researchers, and external stakeholders.

3.2.3.2 The Cross-Regional Layer

At this level, the network connects all partners through joint events, shared mentoring, and a unified communication and coordination framework.

This layer enables:

- Common branding (CHARM-EU Incubator Hub),
- Shared promotion and outreach to students and external stakeholders,
- Co-organization of transnational events such as CHARM-DEN, CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers, or the Innovators' Journey,
- Exchange of good practices between university innovation offices and technology transfer units.

3.2.3.3 The Digital Layer

Although not yet fully implemented, the Sustainability Challenge Platform (Task 15.2) will play a key role in connecting these layers even further.

The long-term vision is for the platform to function as a digital interface through which participants can:

- Access entrepreneurial support services
 - Register for events
 - Share ideas, projects, and challenges
 - Connect with mentors, experts, and investors.
- This digital layer ensures the continuity of engagement between physical events and the overall incubator process.

The conceptual framework outlined above is summarized in the graphic below, which highlights the interconnections between the different layers.

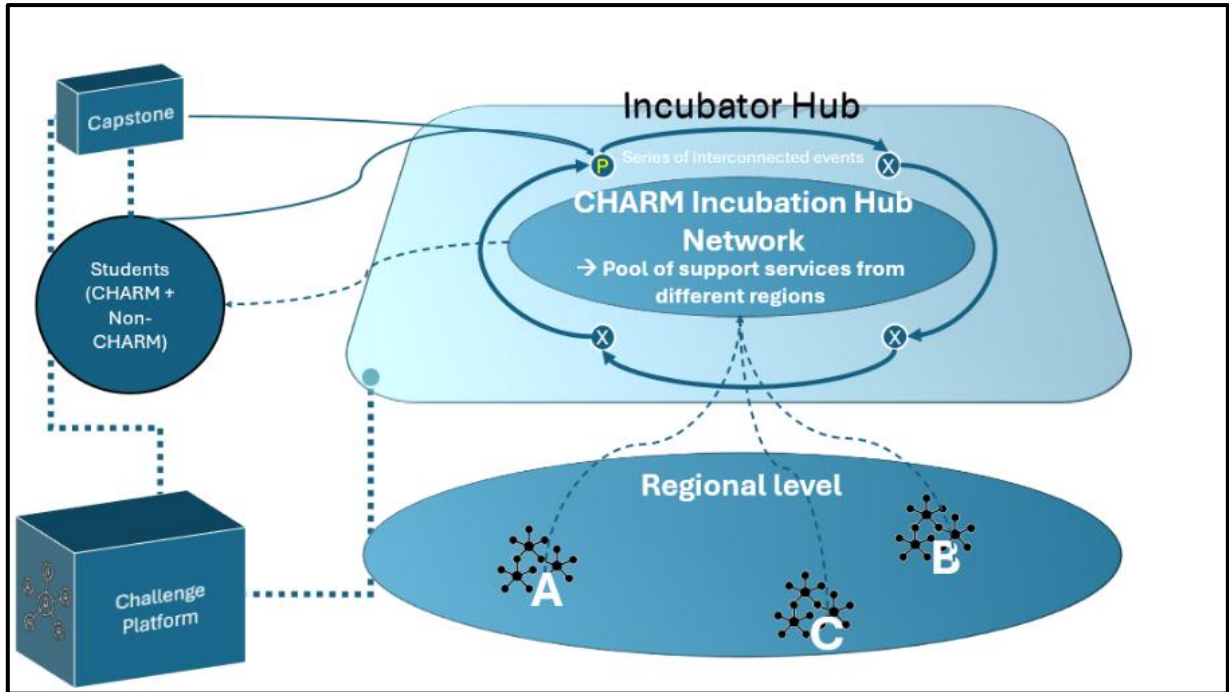


Figure 1: Visualized concept of the different layers and the iterative characteristics of the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network

3.2.4 Target Groups and Value Proposition

The CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network targets a diverse range of participants and stakeholders, reflecting its transdisciplinary mission and provides distinct added value:

- For Students and alumni from the CHARM-EU Master’s programme and partner universities, it offers access to real-life entrepreneurial experience, mentorship, and exposure to international innovation cultures.
- For Researchers and academic staff, it creates pathways for knowledge transfer and collaborative innovation.
- For External stakeholders, including start-ups, SMEs, NGOs, and public institutions, it provides access to fresh ideas, talent, and partnership opportunities.
- For investors, it offers a curated pool of early-stage sustainable ventures from across Europe.

3.2.5 Integration with CHARM-EU Education

The Incubator Hub Network is deeply embedded in CHARM-EU’s educational architecture. Its activities are not standalone entrepreneurship trainings, but extensions of CHARM-EU’s pedagogical model based on challenge-based learning, co-creation, and transdisciplinarity.

For instance:

- The Capstone phase of the CHARM-EU Master’s programme naturally feeds into the Incubator Hub pipeline, as student teams often develop projects that could evolve into start-up or social innovation concepts if they receive proper guidance to do so.
- The Innovators’ Journey Seminar Series provides structured learning opportunities that support these teams in developing entrepreneurial skills, such as storytelling, pitching, and business modelling.
- The CHARM-DEN pitching event serves as an external-facing format, offering students the chance to present their ideas to a jury of experts and investors, and to receive professional feedback.
- The CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers format connects students and alumni with inspiring entrepreneurs and innovators from across the CHARM-EU regions, providing role models and networking opportunities.

Together, these activities form a coherent educational and innovation ecosystem, where learning and entrepreneurship mutually reinforce each other.

3.2.6 The Iterative and Self-Sustaining Logic

A defining element of the Incubator Hub Network is its iterative cycle of engagement. Each activity is designed not as a one-off event but as part of a continuum that encourages participants to remain connected and to advance their ideas through successive stages.

For example:

- i. A student encounters an entrepreneurial role model in a Changemakers event.
- ii. Motivated, they join a seminar from the Innovators’ Journey series, learning practical tools for ideation and business design.
- iii. They develop a project idea during the Capstone Module or another course.
- iv. The idea is then presented and refined at CHARM-DEN, gaining exposure to experts and potential investors.
- v. Feedback and connections from CHARM-DEN feed back into the next cycle of seminars, mentoring, or new project ideas.

This cyclical model ensures that the network continuously generates its own community of learners, innovators, and potential entrepreneurs, building long-term capacity beyond the lifetime of the project.

3.2.7 Implications and Advantages of Adopting a Network-Based Model Instead of Separate Physical Hubs

The decision to establish the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub as a network rather than as a set of physical hubs in each partner region represents a strategic adaptation to the realities of inter-university collaboration and resource distribution within CHARM-EU. While the original task description referred to “Incubator Hubs,” the network-based model preserves the core objectives of fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and cross-regional collaboration — but does so in a more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable way.

Cost-effectiveness and long-term feasibility

Creating and maintaining physical incubator hubs across all CHARM-EU regions would have required substantial investments in infrastructure, staffing, and operational budgets, which vary greatly between partners. The network model avoids these disparities by leveraging existing facilities, support systems, and staff in each region. This ensures the feasibility and financial sustainability of the incubator approach beyond the project’s lifetime.

Equal participation and access across all regions

A network model guarantees equal access to resources and activities for all CHARM-EU partners, independent of their financial or infrastructural capacity. Instead of concentrating resources in select physical locations, the network allows every partner to contribute based on its strengths, for instance, TCD’s experience with spin-outs, seed and venture capital engagement, ELTE’s community-based innovation expertise, or UB’s connection to regional entrepreneurial ecosystems. This promotes balance and fairness within the alliance.

Stronger integration and cross-regional collaboration

The network structure facilitates cross-border participation and co-creation. Students, researchers, and start-ups from one region can directly access support services or participate in events organized by another region. This breaks down regional silos, stimulates knowledge exchange, and creates a shared pool of resources and expertise that no single physical hub could offer on its own.

Flexibility and scalability

Operating as a network allows CHARM-EU to adapt flexibly to evolving needs, technologies, and collaboration formats. New partners, organizations, or thematic focuses can be integrated without the limitations imposed by physical infrastructure. The model can thus grow organically, scaling from pilot activities, such as CHARM-DEN, the Innovators’ Journey, and CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers, into a mature and connected European innovation ecosystem.

Sustainability and digital transformation

The network model aligns with CHARM-EU’s commitment to sustainability and digitalization. By reducing the need for physical infrastructure, travel, and localized investments, it lowers the environmental footprint while promoting virtual collaboration tools and hybrid event formats. This supports both the Green Deal objectives and CHARM-EU’s own sustainability ethos.

Alignment with CHARM-EU’s educational principles

Finally, the network approach mirrors CHARM-EU’s educational model. Just as the CHARM-EU Master’s programme operates as an interconnected system rather than separate institutional courses, the Incubator Hub Network operates as a collective infrastructure for innovation and entrepreneurship, fully aligned with the alliance’s mission and governance principles.

In summary, the shift from “incubator hubs” to a “network of incubator hubs” is not a reduction of ambition, but rather a refined, forward-looking interpretation of the original goal — one that enhances inclusivity, sustainability, and cross-regional value creation while ensuring long-term feasibility and impact.

3.2.8 Conclusion

The CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network offers a practical and forward-looking approach to connecting European university innovation ecosystems. It provides a scalable, inclusive, and sustainable model that leverages local strengths while promoting cross-regional collaboration and shared learning.

By combining physical events, hybrid engagement, and digital connectivity, it creates a living ecosystem of innovation—one that supports students, researchers, and stakeholders in co-creating solutions for a sustainable future.

In the long term, this network approach not only strengthens CHARM-EU’s internal capacity for entrepreneurship and innovation but also contributes to the European vision of interconnected, socially responsible universities driving systemic change. The concept has been deliberately designed with future scalability in mind. It can expand horizontally—by including new regions or institutions—and vertically—by deepening its integration with CHARM-EU’s research and educational activities.

3.3 Connection with Other Work Packages and the CHARM-EU Master's Programme

3.3.1 Overview and Rationale

The CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network is not conceived as an isolated activity but as an integrative mechanism that connects education, research, and innovation across the alliance. In this sense, it functions as a bridge, translating CHARM-EU's pedagogical principles (transdisciplinarity, challenge-based learning, sustainability) into tangible entrepreneurial practice.

To ensure long-term impact and systemic coherence, the concept of the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network was developed in close alignment with other CHARM-EIGHT work packages and with the Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability in mind. The following sections outline the main connections between WP15 and other WPs, as well as the role of the Incubator Hub Network within the educational structure of CHARM-EU.

3.3.2 Connection to WP13 – Stakeholder Needs Analysis and Mapping

WP13 conducted a comprehensive needs analysis and stakeholder mapping across CHARM-EU partner universities (D13.1: *Needs Analysis Framework*), identifying stakeholders' interest and relevance and how to manage them.

Key synergies include:

- **Identification of stakeholder types and needs:** WP13's mapping highlighted that while regional stakeholder non-academic stakeholders may not have the highest interest, but potentially a big influence. This insight laid the foundation for the network-based hub concept to find synergies between the ecosystems and thus increase relevance and interest for the high-influence stakeholders.
- **Strategic prioritization of target groups:** WP13 identified Alumni and the Universities' networks as key actors that need to be managed closely. The incubator hub formats (CHARM-DEN, Innovators' Journey, Changemakers) were conceptualized with those target groups in mind to have a primary point of engagement for those

These findings directly informed the baseline definition and conceptual development of the Incubator Hub Network (see Chapter 3a and 3b). Thus, the Incubator Hub Network can be seen as the operational response to the systemic needs and opportunities identified by WP13.

Moving forward, the collaboration will continue through the External Relations Committee (ERC), established by WP 13. The ERC is an advisory board that supports topics related to external stakeholders.

The Committee's role in identifying new potential stakeholders for engagement and especially the introduction of new stakeholders to the Alliance will become an important support for WP15 for future endeavors. Identifying and onboarding new stakeholders to established formats based on

their review of the current stakeholder composition will be key to making future iteration of the events even more engaging to various stakeholders. It is planned to have a recurring meeting starting from 2026 to ensure transparent and good communication.

3.3.3 Connection to WP14 – External Relations and Global South Engagement

WP14 focuses on building external partnerships and fostering global engagement, including connections with institutions in the Global South (GS).

The Incubator Hub Network directly supports these objectives by offering a concrete engagement framework where external stakeholders, including GS partners, can participate actively in CHARM-EU's innovation ecosystem.

Key connections include:

- **Ambassadorships with Global South universities:** WP14's ambassador programme aims to build strategic collaborations around topics of sustainability, innovation, and education. WP15, through the Incubator Hub Network, provides an entry point for GS stakeholders into CHARM-EU's entrepreneurial and innovation formats. Successful inaugural meeting with several GS universities. Survey to be conducted (Appendix 3).
- **Knowledge exchange and ecosystem collaboration:** By integrating GS perspectives into entrepreneurial activities, the Incubator Hub could promote mutual learning and inclusive innovation. This contributes to CHARM-EU's ambition of becoming a globally connected European University.
- **Partner agreements and future collaboration models:** WP14 and WP15 have discussed including specific clauses on entrepreneurship and innovation exchange within future partnership agreements, ensuring that CHARM-EU's innovation ecosystem remains open, diverse, and globally relevant. A first version of a general LOI on a broad collaboration can be found in Appendix 4, which will act as basis for future discussions, internally and together with potential partners in the GS.

Through these connections, the Incubator Hub Network not only strengthens CHARM-EU's regional impact but also contributes to its international dimension, embedding the alliance in a broader global dialogue on sustainability and innovation.

3.3.4 Connection to the Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability (MGCS)

The Incubator Hub Network aligns closely with the MGCS's philosophy of learning through real-world challenges, while enriching it with an entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented dimension.

Key points of integration include:

i. The Capstone

The Capstone, representing the culmination of the MGCS, asks students to address complex sustainability challenges in collaboration with external partners. It naturally connects to the Incubator Hub Network, as Capstone projects have innovation or start-up potential. Through collaboration with WP15 students could have access to additional mentoring and pitching opportunities such as CHARM-DEN. Generally, as outlined in chapter 3.2.6, the iterative nature of the Incubator Hub Network and its events could allow students to gain knowledge about entrepreneurship topics that can contribute to a capstone project.

On the other hand, steady stakeholder engagement of start-ups can strengthen the ties between CHARM-EU and its regional changemakers, allowing a steady collaboration. It is quite significant that one of the winning teams of CHARM-DEN 2024. The winning team FORSure, is active as a Capstone stakeholder in the master's programme and is interested to stay involved with CHARM-EU in the future. This perfectly shows how CHARM-EU can benefit its students and real-life connection through smart and innovative stakeholder engagement.

ii. The Social Innovation Module

In December 2025, the pilot event CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers format will be integrated into the Social Innovation module, marking an important milestone for curricular collaboration between the Master's program and WP15 (see Chapter 4).

This integration:

- Provides students with direct interaction opportunities with social entrepreneurs and innovators from the CHARM-EU regions.
- Bridges academic learning with real-world entrepreneurial experience, thereby reinforcing learning outcomes related to leadership, creativity, and systems thinking.
- Demonstrates that WP15 activities can be curricular extensions that complement the formal programme while maintaining flexibility.

iii. Educational Synergies

Across these touchpoints, the Incubator Hub Network reinforces CHARM-EU's mission to foster entrepreneurial mindsets for sustainability by creating continuity between learning phases and entrepreneurial action while providing innovative learning opportunities.

The CHARM-EU Innovators' Journey Seminar Series is an extracurricular offer that provides entrepreneurial knowledge and competencies, complementing the MGCS curriculum.

Generally, the Incubator Hub Network reinforces CHARM-EU's mission to foster entrepreneurial mindsets for sustainability, creates continuity between learning phases and entrepreneurial action, and expands educational impact by connecting formal study with applied innovation experiences.

3.3.6 Connection to WP4 – Transversal Skills and Education Needs

WP4 works on identifying transversal competences and learning needs across the alliance. Key intersections include:

- The Incubator Hub Network acts as a delivery mechanism for transversal skills training in areas such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and creativity.
- Insights from WP15's event evaluations (see chapter 4.1, Appendix 5) are shared back with WP4, enriching CHARM-EU's understanding of competence development outside the formal curriculum.

In essence, the collaboration between WP4 and WP15 ensures that entrepreneurial and innovation skills are not peripheral but integral to CHARM-EU's educational framework even more so in the future.

Besides those content focused collaborations, WP15 collaborates with WP16 and WP17 to ensure visibility and dissemination of the Incubator Hub Network's activities across the CHARM-EU alliance and beyond. The collaboration has been very close and successful, as can be seen in several sections of chapter 4, but will not be of focus here as the collaboration was not directly about co-creation of content or formats.

3.3.7 Summary

The Incubator Hub Network exemplifies CHARM-EU's integrated approach by connecting education with innovation and entrepreneurship while extending regional engagement to a global scale. It enhances visibility and impact through dissemination.

Through these horizontal and vertical linkages, WP15's work not only advances its own objectives but also amplifies the collective output of CHARM-EU as a European University Alliance.

The network model ensures that innovation and entrepreneurship are not add-ons but embedded pillars of CHARM-EU's mission, thus supporting sustainable transformation through collaboration, creativity, and stakeholder engagement.

4. PILOT ACTIVITIES (AIMS OF THE ACTIVITIES + BENEFITS)

In the following chapter a number of successfully established pilot activities are described, from conceptualization to evaluation.

4.1 CHARM-DEN

The CHARM-DEN¹⁰ online pitch serves as a catalyst for building meaningful relationships and partnerships between emerging start-ups and the incubators across the CHARM-EU regions. The format was chosen as the WP's and the Network's first pilot activity due to positive feedback in conversations that was confirmed in a separate dedicated survey about a potential pitching contest and other formats (Appendices 1, 2).

Held annually, this format brings together students, PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, alumni, entrepreneurs, and start-ups affiliated with CHARM-EU universities or their regional innovation ecosystems. Through an online pitch competition, innovators gain a European stage to showcase their ideas and receive feedback from a multidisciplinary jury of experts drawn from across the Alliance.

At its core, CHARM-DEN explores new ways of using pitch methodologies to unlock the potential of existing scientific work. By encouraging participants to translate their research into compelling entrepreneurial narratives, the initiative aims to strengthen scientific entrepreneurship across Europe powered by the reach and collaboration of the CHARM-EU network.

For transparency, CHARM-DEN is financially supported by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) through its *Programme Co//ectif 2024*. The AUF is a worldwide network of French-speaking universities that funds initiatives fostering academic cooperation, innovation, and capacity building within higher education and research institutions.

The additional financial support received did not finance any work, staff time, coordination tasks, or organisational activities carried out under Task 15.1 or within the CHARM-EIGHT grant agreement. All conceptual development, organisational work, event preparation, documentation, evaluation, and network-building activities described in this deliverable were fully executed within the scope and budget of CHARM-EIGHT.

¹⁰ The name CHARM-DEN is inspired by the popular television show "Dragon's Den", where aspiring entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas to a panel of investors. Similarly, CHARM-DEN is a stage for teams from the CHARM-EU Alliance to present innovative, sustainability-driven projects to a jury of experts. The name playfully reflects the dynamic and entrepreneurial spirit of the event while aligning with CHARM-EU's mission to foster challenge-based learning, creativity, and real-world impact.

The AUF funding was used exclusively for a complementary purpose that is not eligible under CHARM-EIGHT's financial rules: AUF funding covered only the prizes awarded to the winning CHARM-DEN teams. These prizes, intended to support professional development services or travel to advance the project ideas, fall outside the eligible cost categories of the CHARM-EIGHT budget. The external AUF contribution therefore enabled CHARM-EU to offer an enhanced benefit to participants without duplicating or substituting any activity or cost already covered by the CHARM-EIGHT project.

In fact, this external contribution is also fully aligned with Objective 15.2 and Task 15.4 of the DoA, which explicitly call for the diversification of financial resources and the development of sustainable funding models for stakeholder engagement. Securing AUF support for the CHARM-DEN prizes represents an example of this diversification: it complements CHARM-EIGHT without replacing or duplicating any of its funded activities, and it provides a concrete demonstration of how external hybrid funding can strengthen the long-term sustainability of CHARM-EU's innovation and entrepreneurship engagement.

4.1.1 Organisational structure of the CHARM-DEN pitch contest

CHARM-DEN is divided into two parallel strands to accommodate projects at different stages of development:

- **Strand 1** focuses on early-stage projects and is intended for students, PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and early-career researchers whose ideas are still conceptual.
- **Strand 2** targets more advanced projects, such as start-ups and spin-offs, that already have a prototype or a proven business model and value proposition.

Each CHARM-EU partner university is responsible for selecting and training its candidates for pitching. Universities also form a multidisciplinary jury, including representatives from incubators, technology transfer offices, and investors. The target audience are students, researchers, and other entrepreneurs affiliated with CHARM-EU partners and their innovation ecosystem.

The thematic focus of CHARM-DEN is sustainability. As part of the participation process, teams looking to participate submit a two-page document summarizing the key points of their project. A template is provided in Appendix 7. Teams also submit a five-minute video pitch which highlights the impact of their project on sustainability. During the event, the video is presented which is followed by a seven-minute Q&A session with the jury members.

Jury members receive both the two-pagers and the video pitches in advance to familiarize themselves with the teams and provide elaborate feedback and interesting questions. They are briefed beforehand on the event's flow, scoring system, and expectations through a preparatory meeting. An example evaluation sheet is available in Appendix 8.

At the conclusion of CHARM-DEN, results are announced based on the jury's ratings. Winning teams can choose between two types of prizes, each valued up to €1,250:

- Funding for professional services supporting the development of their project, or
- Coverage of travel and accommodation expenses associated with the project.

After the event, participants and audience members can request follow-up meetings with the teams for further discussion or questions, which the event organizers facilitate. All teams also receive a comprehensive feedback document based on the jury's scoring and comments.

The pilot edition took place in October 2024, which was followed by the second edition in October 2025 with adjustments based on the experience and insights gained.

4.1.2 Summary of CHARM-DEN Editions to Date

4.1.2.1 CHARM-DEN 2024, 1st Edition

The first CHARM-DEN pitch contest took place on October 21st, 2024, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM (CET), and focused on the central theme of sustainability. The jury was composed of eight members, each representing a different university within CHARM-EU. This multidisciplinary panel brought together diverse specializations and areas of expertise, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive evaluation of the projects presented.

A total of six teams (twelve entrepreneurs in total) participated in this inaugural edition, coming respectively from Utrecht University (UU), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University of Barcelona (UB), Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU), University of Montpellier (UM), and Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). Counting teams, jury and audience, over 50 people participated in the event, including several external stakeholders from the various start-up ecosystems. Each team presented innovative ideas linked to sustainable development challenges (see example of project description in Appendix 9).

After deliberation, the jury selected two winning projects, one for each strand:

- *GuardenAI* (ELTE), competing in the early-stage strand, was awarded coverage of travel and accommodation expenses to attend a prestigious tradeshow in Paris for innovation the agricultural sector. This opportunity aimed to help the team strengthen their expertise, gain visibility, and connect with relevant stakeholders in their field.
- *ForSURE* (UU), competing in the mature project strand, received funding for professional services to further develop their project. More specifically, they benefited from a 12-month mentorship provided by a local incubator, which guided them in scaling up their initiative and refining their business model.

This first edition served as a valuable pilot phase, allowing organizers to identify areas for improvement in the contest structure, jury coordination, and participant preparation. The lessons learned from this experience were integrated into the planning of the second edition, leading to a more refined and efficient implementation in 2025.

A report on CHARM-DEN 2024 can be found in Appendix 6.

4.1.2.2 CHARM-DEN 2025, 2nd Edition

The second edition of the CHARM-DEN pitch contest was held on October 21st, 2025, from 3:00 to 5:15 PM (CET). The event's overarching theme remained unchanged and focused on sustainability.

The jury for this edition consisted of eight members, each representing a different university within CHARM-EU. This diverse panel brought together a wide range of expertise and perspectives, covering fields such as innovation management, entrepreneurship, environmental sciences, and technology transfer. Their collective experience ensured a fair and insightful evaluation process.

A total of seven teams (more than 20 entrepreneurs in total) took part in this 2025 session, representing UU, TCD, UB, JMU, UM, ELTE and ÅAU. Each team presented an innovative project tackling sustainability issues through multidisciplinary and practical approaches. The event was followed by more than 70 people, counting teams, jury and audience. Part of the audience were several external stakeholders from start-up incubators and their network, as well as several staff members from the CHARM-EU partners, mainly those that have spin-out or start-up focus. An example of a detailed project description can be found in Appendix 10.

Following the jury's deliberation, two projects were awarded:

- *The Speaking Collar System* from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) was the winning team for the early-stage strand
- *turboTEM* from Trinity College Dublin (TCD) were crowned winner of the mature strand

The prizes chose by the 2 projects are yet to be discussed together with the teams

The adjustments implemented through the evaluation system showed noticeable improvements in preparation and outreach process, as well as in overall communication to external stakeholders. The results confirmed the growing relevance of CHARM-DEN as a key initiative to promote innovation and sustainability across the Alliance.

4.1.3 Internal Analysis of Event Execution

4.1.3.1 Planning and communication

After the testing phase in 2024, CHARM-DEN 2025 marks the beginning of the full-scale implementation. Through bi-monthly meetings, WP15 members reflected on lessons learned and discussed ways to enhance the upcoming edition. To ensure better preparation, the team collaboratively developed the CHARM-DEN Guidelines, outlining the contest’s structure, conditions, and expectations. These were accompanied by a simplified and more transparent evaluation form, as well as a new application template (see “Improvements/Mitigation Actions”). Based on these guidelines, clear timelines were established for both organizers and participants to ensure alignment and smooth coordination.

Date	Activity	Category	Details / Channels
25 August 2025	Shortlisting of participating teams	Project management	Preliminary selection of project proposals by universities
2 September 2025	First communication post	Communication	Announcement on Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook
5 September 2025	Final team selection	Project management	Confirmation of final list of participating teams
10 September 2025	Newsletter publication	Communication	CHARM-EU General Newsletter
12 September 2025	Jury selection and submission of two-pagers	Project management	Selection of jury members and submission of project summaries
15 September 2025	Social media stories (Content in Appendix 6)	Communication	Instagram stories highlighting upcoming contest
19 September 2025	Newsletter publication	Communication	CHARM-EU Student Newsletter
25 September 2025	First reminder post	Communication	LinkedIn post promoting the contest
26 September 2025	Newsletter publication	Communication	CHARM-EU Internal Newsletter
29 September 2025	Submission of pitch videos	Project management	Final submission of project videos for jury review

7 October 2025	Second reminder post	Communication	LinkedIn and Facebook
7 October 2025	Jury briefing	Project management	Preparatory meeting and instruction for jury members
15 October 2025	Third reminder post	Communication	LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram stories
16 October 2025	Newsletter publication	Communication	CHARM-EU General Newsletter
21 October 2025	Contest event	Project management	CHARM-DEN Pitch Contest, 3:00 to 5:15 PM (CET)
21 October 2025	Final communication post	Communication	Last reminder and live coverage on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram

Table 2: CHARM-DEN 2025 Timeline

4.1.3.2 Outcomes & benefits

Participation in CHARM-DEN offers numerous benefits for all stakeholders involved, both for participants and partner institutions across the Alliance as well as their ecosystems.

For participants, CHARM-DEN provides a unique opportunity to enhance the visibility of project leaders at the European level. Through videos and dedicated articles published on the CHARM-EU website, participants can showcase their innovations, reach a broader audience, and expand their professional networks across Europe.

In addition, the initiative serves as an important training platform for participants to strengthen their pitching skills. The pitching exercise enables teams to refine their communication techniques, ensuring they can present their projects effectively and with greater impact. The event also provides valuable opportunities for constructive feedback, as project leaders benefit from the expertise and guidance of jury members, who offer practical recommendations to improve the quality and potential of each project.

Moreover, the prizes reserved for the winning teams are designed to support the further development of their ideas and strengthen the connection between the partners' ecosystems.

Finally, all participants are granted access to a "Pitch Guide", a practical tool designed to help them craft compelling and impactful presentations. This guide remains a valuable resource beyond the competition itself, supporting participants in future events and throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

For partner institutions, CHARM-DEN contributes to the strengthening of innovation ecosystems and the creation of new opportunities for collaboration. By supporting early-stage projects and encouraging their maturation, the initiative increases the likelihood of transforming research output into start-ups emerging from university laboratories. It also promotes the development of European partnerships with socio-economic actors, building strong and sustainable links with stakeholders from the scientific entrepreneurship and incubation ecosystem.

Beyond individual projects, CHARM-DEN reinforces the structuring and long-term sustainability of the CHARM-EU Alliance. The initiative also enables the transfer and dissemination of best practices across the European higher education landscape. Tools such as the “Pitch Guide” and the event’s overall format can be shared with universities outside the Alliance, fostering a broader culture of innovation and collaboration at the European level.

4.1.3.3 PDCA: Internal & External Evaluation and Mitigating Actions

To continuously improve the CHARM-DEN initiative, several surveys are conducted among all stakeholders after each edition of the event, including audience members, participating teams, and jury members. These evaluations aim to collect feedback on satisfaction, event organisation, and possible areas for improvement for future sessions. Detailed survey questions and responses for each group are available in Appendix 5.

As the writing of this deliverable the evaluation for the 2025 edition has not yet been concluded. Therefore, the following section will discuss the evaluation of the pilot edition in 2024.

Audience feedback

A total of six audience members completed the satisfaction survey. Results showed that 67% of participants learned about CHARM-DEN through personal communication, highlighting the importance of word-of-mouth and partner networks in event promotion.

Regarding the event’s structure and organisation, respondents rated it as excellent or above average for 83%, while the clarity of objectives was unanimously recognised as clear (100%). The technical setup received mixed feedback, with half of respondents considering it above average or excellent, while 33% rated it below average or poor. The support provided during the event was generally positive, with equal proportions of responses between “excellent,” “above average,” and “average.”

The engagement level of the content received a rating of 4/5, and the balance between presentations, Q&A sessions, and feedback was rated 3.83/5. The overall satisfaction reached 4.17/5, and 83% of attendees expressed interest in participating again in the future.

Main suggestions for improvement from the audience included promoting in-person presentations, and providing better access to networks and resources among CHARM-EU partner universities.

Participating teams' feedback

Four teams responded to the post-event survey. All participants agreed that the balance between presentations, Q&A sessions, and feedback was appropriate. The feedback provided by the jury was considered valuable (100%), with most respondents agreeing they had enough time for discussion (75%) and that judges were professional and fair (100%).

However, several areas for improvement were identified. Teams suggested better technical preparation, particularly to avoid sound issues, and noted that creating a high-quality pre-recorded video required significant time and effort. Some expressed that live presentations might be more effective. There were also requests for clearer communication, especially regarding timelines, connection links, and evaluation criteria.

Overall, teams' satisfaction was rated 3.75/5, and 75% felt adequately prepared for the event.

Jury feedback

The jury survey, completed by four jury members, also yielded positive results. Most jury members (75%) felt adequately prepared for their role, and communication before the event was rated as above average to excellent (100%). Support provided during preparation was similarly rated above average or excellent by all respondents, and the event's structure and timing received 100% positive evaluations (50% above average, 50% excellent).

The technical setup was considered excellent or above average by 75%, and the scoring system was rated highly with an average score of 4.33/5. The balance between presentations, Q&A, and feedback was rated 3.67/5, and all jury members (100%) indicated they would be interested in participating in a future edition. Key suggestions from the jury focused on improving the evaluation process, such as refining the Excel scoring sheet, sharing jury comments before the event, and allowing members to volunteer as lead discussants for specific pitches. Some also recommended introducing live presentations rather than fully pre-recorded ones. Jury members expressed a very high level of satisfaction, with an average rating of 4.5/5.

Overall, the feedback collected from all stakeholders confirmed the strong engagement and relevance of CHARM-DEN, while also highlighting areas for improvement related to technical preparation, communication, and the preference for live interactions in future editions.

Improvements and mitigating actions

Based on the survey (external analysis) and the review of the organization at each partner (intern analysis), we identified several action points that could be improved for the next edition for the event the following year:

Problems	Immediate improvements	Future improvements
Unclear participation rules and prize conditions for the first session	Draft a “Rules and Guidelines” document compiling all key information for participants	Strengthen and clarify communication with teams ahead of the event; ensure harmonized messages rather than separate updates from each university’s project manager
Lack of standardized candidate training: each pitch had a very different format	Improve communication and consistency through the creation of a “Pitch Guide” providing structural foundations for pitches and encouraging a standardized training approach	Share the standardized “Pitch Guide” before each session, and possibly organize a short team briefing (similar to the one held for jury members) to further harmonize pitches
Lack of Funding for winning projects (limited CHARM-DEN budget)* * As outlined in the beginning of Chapter 4, the AUF contribution covered exclusively the prizes awarded to winning teams and did not fund any CHARM-EIGHT activities, staff time, or organisational costs.	Secure external funding (AUF) to support winning teams	For the first two editions only; identify a sustainable way to fund winning teams in future editions
Funding for winning projects was delayed due to unclear procedures	Draft a fund transfer agreement to clarify and streamline the reimbursement process, and establish clearer rules to help teams provide the required information more quickly	Implement a simplified reimbursement process to ensure faster and more transparent fund transfers in future editions
No female jury members during the first edition	Inclusion of 2 female jury members in the second edition, but gender balance still not achieved	Strive for full gender equality within both teams and the jury

Table 3: Identified “Pain points” through survey and mitigating measures

Although there are no quantitative survey results for 2025, the first qualitative, anecdotal feedback was very positive, especially regarding the issues that were identified with the help of 2024's survey. Praise has been given from the jury's side for the clear and transparent communication and evaluation system. Overall, the flow and engaging nature of the event was highlighted and even offers for future collaboration on the event format have been communicated. A quantitative survey similar to the one in 2024 will follow in December 2025.

4.2. CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey

4.2.1 Short description & event details

The CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey is a recurring annual seminar series designed to strengthen entrepreneurial knowledge and capacity across the CHARM-EU alliance. These seminars offer structured learning opportunities on entrepreneurship and innovation, with a focus on sustainable entrepreneurship. The Innovator's Journey directly contributes to WP15's objective of capacity building through the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub network, complementing activities such as the CHARM-DEN Pitching Event by offering theoretical and practical foundations for entrepreneurial engagement.

CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey consists of four seminars per academic year. Two of these seminars will take place in the first half of the academic year and two seminars in the second half of the academic year. The CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey is scheduled with the teaching days of CHARM-EU students from the programme Global Challenges for Sustainability in mind. The inaugural pilot in 2025 will include three seminars due to time constraints, laying the groundwork for a full four-part structure in the following academic years.

Each session covers a different topic related to sustainable entrepreneurship, ranging from foundational concepts to more advanced topics. In May 2025, students from the CHARM-EU master's programme Global Challenges for Sustainability indicated in a survey (see Appendix 11) that their preferred topics are AI and Innovation, Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders, Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability, and Design Thinking and the Evolution of Innovative Ideas in Multidisciplinary Teams. Speakers are selected from across the CHARM-EU network, including university centres for entrepreneurship, academic experts, and young experts.

By taking place within the Hybrid Active Learning Classroom (HALC), the Innovator's Journey is firmly anchored in CHARM-EU's educational structures, drawing on the alliance's hybrid teaching environment. Participants can attend a seminar either on the location at one of the CHARM-EU partner universities that hosts students at that time and where the speaker is present, or they can choose to follow the seminar online.

Each seminar is delivered as a concise, hybrid learning session — typically 1 to 1.5 hours — in which experts from across the CHARM-EU network introduce key and emerging themes in sustainable entrepreneurship through a balanced mix of conceptual input, practical examples, and interactive elements that encourage reflection and engagement.

The seminars are designed to build foundational entrepreneurial competencies, including opportunity recognition, creative problem-solving, responsible innovation, and the application of sustainability principles in entrepreneurial contexts. Each session aims to strengthen students'

confidence, broaden their understanding of innovation pathways, and support the development of transferable skills relevant across disciplines.

4.2.2 Editions

4.2.2.1 First edition

The first seminar took place on Friday, the 9th of May 2025. The CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey: Unlocking Innovation Through Entrepreneurship was delivered by a professor who is based at TCD. There were 25 attendees present, of which 8 attended online and 17 locally at TCD. The participants were a mix of students and CHARM-EU staff members.

A feedback survey (see Appendix 11) was distributed to all participants of the first edition of the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey. While only four participants filled in the survey after the first edition, the responses were positive. The respondents indicated that they thought the first session was relevant for knowledge enhancement related to innovation and creativity, and while indicated a bit less, also for knowledge enhancement of entrepreneurship. The seminar was regarded as inspiring by 1 respondent and the introduction of different creative ways of thinking was mentioned as being most valuable or interesting by three other respondents. Two respondents included suggestions for improvement, such as more exercises during the seminar and making sure the online audience can also understand the audience on location.

4.2.2.2 Second edition

The second seminar took place on Wednesday, the 1st of October 2025. The CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey: Building Responsible Skills for Digital and AI-Driven Entrepreneurship was delivered by a professor who is based at TCD. There were 43 different registrations for this session, but unfortunately only 15 participants attended, of which none attended on location at TCD. The attendees were once again a mix of students and CHARM-EU staff members.

A feedback survey will also be distributed for participants of the second edition. However, as of writing, there are no results available yet to include.

4.2.2.3 Third and fourth edition

The third edition of the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey will be planned for the upcoming months, taking place at the end of November, December or January, depending on availability of speakers at the CHARM-EU partner universities that have students on location.

The fourth session would typically take place before the end of academic year 2025-2026. However, as mentioned above, due to being the inaugural version of the series and starting later in the year 2025, only three sessions will be held. The third session is expected to be the last of this first iteration.

The topic of the last remaining session will be chosen in discussion with the speaker, in line with the preferences that students indicated in the earlier survey mentioned.

4.2.3 Improvements & mitigation actions

The earlier promotion of the second session of the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey resulted in 43 registrations. While there were more registrations compared to the first session, only 16 out of 43 registered people actually participated. While it is not uncommon for online events to have less attendance than indicated, this needs mitigation actions to ensure that this discrepancy is less large for the upcoming editions.

Several mitigation actions were discussed to prevent this large discrepancy between registrations and actual attendance for the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey. For upcoming editions, the visibility of the event will be targeted with earlier registrations possibilities and early communication in the student newsletter. Moreover, reminder emails and direct communication with CHARM-EU master students in the week before the event will hopefully prevent a similar situation.

4.2.4 Communication

The promotion for the first session focused mostly on students of the CHARM-EU master's programme Global Challenges for Sustainability and their attendance of the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey. Additionally, the first session was promoted in collaboration with WP17 and included an [agenda item](#) on the CHARM-EU website, as well as a [LinkedIn post](#).

For the second session of the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey, members of WP17 were involved earlier to ensure timely communication about this pilot activity. Promotional actions from WP17 included announcements through the CHARM-EU student newsletter, [agenda item](#) on the CHARM-EU website and on the CHARM-EU social media channels, including [LinkedIn](#). The earlier communication improved the visibility of the seminar series, resulting in 43 registrations prior to the event.

Promotion of the upcoming sessions will also be done in collaboration with WP17, following a similar schedule and starting early with promotion and registration.

4.3 CHARM-EU meets Changemakers

4.3.1 Short description & event details

CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers is a concept derived from Meet the Expert sessions that take place in the CHARM-EU Master's Programme Global Challenges for Sustainability. During Meet the Expert sessions, students get in touch with experts in specific fields to learn more about a specific topic. For CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers the concept is similar, but with a focus on entrepreneurship and social innovation. Specifically, this session is embedded in the Social Innovation Module of the MGCS and aims to connect CHARM-EU master students with real-world impact startups, embedding entrepreneurial mindsets in the master programme. CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers is set to take place on the 2nd of December 2025.

4.3.2 Planning

This pilot activity is planned as a single teaching day of around 7 hours long, which combines both local and hybrid elements. Students will be asked to prepare for the session by reading material related to the Business Model Canvas. The material will be provided by the facilitator for this teaching day with whom the WP was in close connection with throughout the preparation of this endeavour.

As visible in the table below, the day will start with a short hybrid introduction to the Business Model Canvas, which will be led by the facilitator and leave room for questions the students might have after reading the material available. After this introduction, students will have the opportunity to engage directly with a local start-up in a dedicated Q&A session. This is a core element of the format: instead of learning about entrepreneurship in the abstract, students interact with real founders, explore authentic business challenges, and ask targeted questions about how the start-up applies and adapts its business model. Because this takes place in parallel across all CHARM-EU locations, each classroom works with its own invited start-up, supported on site by teaching assistants who ensure a smooth and engaging learning experience.

After lunch, all hybrid classrooms reconnect online for the second part of the day. In mixed groups, students collaboratively prepare short presentations reflecting on the insights gained from their start-up meetings — analysing the feasibility, sustainability orientation, and innovation potential of the business models they encountered. These presentations are then shared across all locations, facilitated by the hybrid lead facilitator.

This structure is a significant organisational achievement for CHARM-EU: it synchronises multiple classrooms, integrates local start-ups across four universities, and enables students to learn together in a transnational hybrid environment. It demonstrates the alliance's capability to design and deliver complex, high-impact educational formats that combine academic guidance, real-world engagement, and advanced hybrid teaching infrastructure.

10:00–11:15	Hybrid Introduction to the BMC Concept – Theoretical Background, Use Cases, and Practical Application (from the seminar room in Würzburg to all active classrooms in Budapest, Dublin, Würzburg, and Utrecht)
11:30–13:00	Visit of a Sustainability Start-Up Start-ups introduce themselves; students ask questions to help them fill in the BMC for the respective start-up (1 start-up per location, moderated by teaching assistants, lecturers, or project staff on site; organized by a working group from the CHARM-Eight project). The lecturer in Würzburg will receive information about the four companies in advance.
13:00–14:00	Lunch Break
14:00–15:30	Group Work Creation of the BMC at the Respective Locations (supported by teaching assistants at the other sites; by the lecturer in Würzburg)
15:45–17:00	Mutual Presentation of Results and Final Presentations (hybrid session across all locations, led by the lecturer in Würzburg)

Table 4: Schedule for the collaborative teaching day

4.3.2 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for organizing and carrying out the teaching day are outlined below.

WP15

Members of WP15 will prepare this teaching day in more detail. This entails coordinating the overall event, as well as engaging start-ups to participate in the hybrid classrooms. Additionally, WP15 will organize a facilitator who will guide and moderate the hybrid parts as well as start-ups that will visit the hybrid classrooms.

Generally, WP15 takes the responsibility for the overall organization and preparation of this event and ensures that the students have a good crossover experience between theory and practical real-life application.

Facilitator

The facilitator, an academic from one of the CHARM-EU universities, that hosts students from the MGCS, has several responsibilities during the event. Prior to the event, they provide reading material related to the BMC so students can prepare the session. During the session, they guide students in applying the Business Model Canvas to real start-up cases and answer questions students might have about the BMC. They provide guiding questions as well that students can utilise during the meeting with the start-ups. Additionally, they should be able to redirect student reflections to the learning outcomes of the module.

During the teaching day, they will collaborate with the teaching assistants in the different hybrid classrooms. As of writing, the preparations for the teaching day on the 2nd of December 2025 have advanced to a point that the event is fully organized, reading materials have been provided and the TA's have been in touch with and briefed by the facilitator.

Teaching Assistant

The teaching assistants at the four CHARM-EU locations that have students, are there to ensure a smooth hybrid connection. Additionally, the teaching assistants can support the students during the meeting with the local start-ups. During the second part of the day, the teaching assistants can assist the students while they are preparing their presentations and provide technical support during the hybrid sharing session.

Start-ups

Prior to this pilot, WP15 members will reach out to start-ups to participate. Preferably, these are start-ups who already have a connection to CHARM-EU. For example, previous participants of CHARM-DEN or CHARM-EU alumni.

One or more members of a start-up will be present per location. While their needed preparation is limited, they will be briefed about what to expect during the day and will be asked to prepare information about their business models to share with the students. They then participate in the Q&A session and answer questions that students have.

The involvement of start-ups is beneficial for establishing a stronger relationship between start-ups and CHARM-EU and complements the relationships already formed during CHARM-DEN. In that regard, it is especially significant that two of those "Changemaker Start-ups" have been previous participants of CHARM-DEN. ForSURE (UU) participated in 2024 and won the mature strand. KLAO (JMU) participated in 2025 and reached second place in the young start-up strand. This can be seen as proof of the iterative concept of the events and further shows how the Incubator hub Network is applied in real life.

This highlights another potential benefit of CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers: Establishing a stronger relationship of startups with CHARM-EU and act as role models for students of all CHARM-EU partners, thus bridging borders.

4.3.4 Evaluation plan

After the pilot CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers takes place, WP15 will evaluate this event. This will be done by reaching out to the facilitator, teaching assistants and the start-ups to discuss things that went well and points for improvement. Students can also be involved in collecting feedback to ensure a complete evaluation of the pilot, assessing impact and effectiveness of the format. Based

on this feedback and the overall evaluation outcomes, the CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers format may be refined and integrated as a recurring component of the Social Innovation module.

4.4 Summary and Conclusions

The pilot activities implemented within the CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network, CHARM-DEN, the CHARM-EU Innovator's Journey, and CHARM-EU Meets Changemakers, demonstrate that WP15 has moved beyond conceptual design to the creation of concrete, functioning formats. These pilots are not theoretical examples: they represent fully executed activities involving real participants, real start-ups, hybrid teaching environments, training structures, and coordinated multi-university organisation. Together, they operationalise the WP15 framework by testing different modes of delivery, supporting both early-stage and advanced entrepreneurial projects, and integrating academic learning with hands-on engagement. As a combined set, these activities form the clearest practical foundation for how the Incubator Hub Network can work in practice.

The pilots demonstrated the network's capacity to engage a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, including students, early-career researchers, staff, and entrepreneurs. At the same time, cross-institutional collaboration highlighted synergies and opportunities for further integration within the alliance, while feedback mechanisms allowed iterative refinement of formats and content, including strategies to improve seminar attendance.

Importantly, the methodological choices described in Chapter 2 and the baseline analysis presented in Chapter 3 have been validated through these pilot activities. The flexible, explorative framework, which was explicitly designed to accommodate the diverse institutional contexts, regional ecosystems, and stakeholder needs across CHARM-EU, proved effective in practice. By allowing each partner to operate according to its local conditions while contributing to a shared network, the pilots confirmed that the chosen approach balances comparability, inclusiveness, and adaptability, ensuring that interventions are both relevant and impactful across the alliance.

Overall, the pilots confirmed the feasibility and added value of a structured, flexible, and hybrid approach to fostering innovation, mutual learning, and collaboration across partner universities. The lessons learned will guide future iterations, contributing to the development of a harmonized, scalable, and sustainable innovation ecosystem within CHARM-EU.

5. CONCLUSION & FUTURE VISION

This final chapter brings together the key insights derived from the methodological approach (Chapter 2), the baseline analysis (Chapter 3), and the pilot activities implemented under Task 15.1 (Chapter 4). The purpose is to assess the contribution of Deliverable 15.1 to the objectives of CHARM-EIGHT and Work Package 15, and to outline how the emerging Incubator Hub Network can continue to evolve beyond the current project period. The pilots conducted in 2024–2025 provided essential validation of the flexible, explorative framework chosen for Task 15.1. Rather than imposing a standardised model across highly diverse partner ecosystems, the network-based approach allowed each university to contribute in ways aligned with its own institutional strengths, regional conditions, and stakeholder needs. The following sections summarise the impact achieved so far and describe the long-term potential of the Incubator Hub Network as a scalable and sustainable CHARM-EU structure.

Partner-Level Impact

The activities carried out under Task 15.1 have already produced tangible effects within several partner universities. The baseline matrix supported internal self-reflection and helped identify structural gaps, particularly at ÅAU and ELTE, where limited early-stage funding or fragmented regional support systems were made more visible. At institutions such as TCD, UU, UB and JMU, existing entrepreneurship centres reported that CHARM-DEN and the Innovator’s Journey strengthened ties between academic staff, innovation offices, and student-facing support structures. New collaboration channels emerged—for example, Utrecht University’s community manager and JMU’s start-up incubator both reported increased interest in cross-university networking and exposure to international teams. Several partners also adopted shared CHARM-EU tools—such as scoring rubrics, feedback templates, and hybrid facilitation practices—enhancing internal processes beyond the pilot activities themselves.

These outcomes demonstrate that Task 15.1 has contributed to new ways of working, improved coordination mechanisms, and a more interconnected institutional mindset. Crucially, these effects stem directly from CHARM-EIGHT funding and would not have been achieved under pre-existing structures.

Alliance-Level Impact

At CHARM-EU level, the Incubator Hub Network contributes to the wider mission of building a connected, inclusive, and innovation-driven European university. The pilot activities broadened participation across eight out of nine partners, introducing a shared European framework for entrepreneurship capacity-building. CHARM-DEN successfully brought together teams, jury members, and stakeholders across the alliance, advancing WP15 Objective O15.1 by strengthening stakeholder engagement and visibility. The Innovator’s Journey and Changemakers pilots supported

multilingual, hybrid, and intercultural learning environments—directly contributing to General Objective 5 of CHARM-EIGHT, which emphasizes European values, mobility, sustainability, and inclusive innovation.

The alliance-level impact is further reflected in early KPIs: cross-partner participation in hybrid seminars, more than 100 students and staff involved in pilot activities and increased engagement with start-ups and innovation staff across all regions. Together, these results confirm that the Incubator Hub Network serves as an effective driver for strengthening CHARM-EU’s innovation capacity and cross-regional collaboration.

Future Vision and Scalability Beyond CHARM-EIGHT

The CHARM-EU Incubator Hub Network is positioned to become a lasting element of the alliance’s educational and innovation landscape. The pilots have validated the strength of the network model: a flexible, scalable, and low-resource structure that enables meaningful cross-university collaboration without the need for physical hubs. Building on this foundation, the Incubator Hub Network could, in future alliance cycles, support more specialised activities such as cross-university acceleration programmes, thematic innovation challenges, or structured collaborations between technology transfer offices. The long-term vision is for the network to serve as a pan-European platform where students, researchers, staff, and external stakeholders collaborate on real-world challenges—reflecting CHARM-EU’s values of sustainability, inclusiveness, and transdisciplinarity.

The pilot activities conducted under Task 15.1 demonstrate that this vision is not only aspirational but also feasible. Their modular, hybrid, and partnership-based design allows each activity to be replicated, enlarged, or adapted with relatively limited additional effort. CHARM-DEN, for example, showed strong potential for long-term institutional uptake: JMU’s start-up incubator and the Chair of Entrepreneurship expressed interest in integrating future editions into their regular activities, while the ELTE jury member indicated willingness to explore ways of expanding the event beyond the project period. These reactions reveal that ecosystem actors across the alliance recognise the value of the format and are motivated to sustain it.

Because none of the pilots rely on dedicated physical infrastructure, the Incubator Hub Network can continue after CHARM-EIGHT if partners commit modest coordination capacity. The hybrid seminar formats, cross-campus jury approach, and shared templates developed through this deliverable are easily transferable and can be hosted by any university in the alliance. With a validated model, shared practices, and demonstrated interest from internal and external stakeholders, the Incubator Hub Network is well positioned to evolve into a durable structure that continues strengthening collaboration, innovation, and stakeholder engagement long after the end of the current funding cycle.

6. ANNEX

Appendix 1: Survey to stakeholders on CHARM-DEN and other formats to collaborate on

The following entries provide links to the Microsoft forms that were specifically created for this purpose and are freely accessible:

- Survey: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/A6jQVa7un9?origin=lprLink>
 - Results: [Questionnaire about the planned online event series "Intenational Pitches" – Ergebnisse](#)

Appendix 2: Strategy meetings with stakeholders – leading questions and feedback (JMU)

1. **Possible Fields of Involvement:**

- *What are possible fields of involvement?*
- *How involved can you be?*

2. **Feasible Pilot Project:**

- *What would be an easily feasible pilot project that can be built upon?*
- *How do you feel about international pitches?*
- *How could your involvement look like?*
- *Training?*
- *Connection to a target group that wants to do such a pitch?*

a. **Regarding International Pitches (IntPitch):**

- o Basic information about IntPitch
 - Competition (small prize necessary) or pure evaluation (prize = feedback)
 - Small monetary prize could be okay since PR, experience, and feedback could already offer significant value
 - Networking between startups from different regions (exchange of experiences)
- o Open Questions:
 - What are the goals for startups?
 - What should ZDI tell potential candidates?
 - How large is the target group?
- o Format:
 - Each university up to two teams, a panel, and a winner announced at the end
 - Multiple categories (e.g., before and after founding) or thematic (life science vs. IT)
 - Turn it into a larger event
 - Target audience: Existing teams (founded from scientific research)
- o Involvement/Role of ZDI:
 - ZDI's accelerator track already includes final pitches
 - The track runs concurrently with the semester, final pitches a few weeks after the end of lectures (February/March and July/August)
 - Shortly thereafter, IntPitch could take place
- o Goals:
 - Feedback
 - Strengthening the entrepreneurial mindset for "undecided"

3. **Collaboration and Improving Activities:**

- *What and how do you plan this collaboration to improve your existing activities?*

- *What would be your expectations and wishes about exchanges between stakeholders of each university?*
 - *Expectations also about involvement in CHARM EU events?*
 - Interesting Partners:
 - o Utrecht and Dublin, especially regarding the strong networking of local players (HEI <-> incubators <-> city)
 - o Contact establishment with the city of Utrecht (Freek; Merijn(?))
 - o Incubators of partner universities in general
 - o Our role: Facilitate contacts?
- 4. Challenge Platform:**
- *What are particular motivations to get involved?*
 - *What role would be possible?*
 - *Which use cases could be included to suit you?*
 - *What sort of "matching" is interesting to you and your clients?*
 - *How must a platform look like in order for you to benefit from it?*
 - Interesting Groups for the Platform (in terms of added value):
 - o Professionals (for startups and companies): Students and researchers can connect, and companies get highly qualified employees
 - o ZDI/Wü as a location to attract startups to Würzburg (also from the international environment) (startup <-> region)
 - o Researchers <-> startups (I need player A, B, C to complete my research)
 - o Connect ZDI's "Conceptathon" with the concept of the platform
 - Basic Requirements for Interest/Participation in the Platform:
 - o Personnel recruitment through the help of students (personnel shortage in startups/companies)
 - o Active consultation of startups necessary, so a profound understanding of the centers is important
- 5. Local Experiences and Initiatives:**
- *What kind of your local experiences and initiatives would you promote through CHARM EU partnership?*
 - Startup and innovation bar camp on November 23rd
 - Regional innovation entrepreneurship networking
 - Is it possible to advertise at the university?
 - 80-100 participants
 - Topics are open
 - Opportunity to present CHARM
 - Use the alliance for promotion
 - What other topics should be conveyed through the alliance? (Question for everyone)
 - Webweek on the topic of digitalization (also hybrid/online). Connect with CBL platform?

- Space Up Space Conference in 2025, including ESA and Airbus as participants. Advertise through the alliance.
- CHARM introduction? Other guest contributions? EUS Easy program (??)
- 6. **Applied Data Science Networking Days in Utrecht:**
 - External stakeholders with problem spaces and needs related to (applied) data science.
 - ZDI and TGZ are interested. Keep them informed.
 - Startups: Prognostica, Urban Sense
- 7. **Financial Support:**
 - *Which types of actions or operations in CHARM (e.g., support for student mobility) could you imagine to support financially?*
 - *Are there funding opportunities that you might be able to tap into through cooperation with CHARM?*
 - Apply for calls together with companies based on challenges
 - Include the general possibility of raising funds into the platform
- 8. **Other:**
 - Feedback:
 - o CBL is very interesting, especially concerning startups. Inspiring. Very interested, especially in adopting some of the structures and networks (e.g., Utrecht).
 - o New VP for Innovation is beneficial regarding transfer and networking.

Appendix 3: Draft of questionnaire for GS partner potential formats for collaboration

Dear Partner,

Thank you again for participating in our inaugural meeting and sharing your perspectives. We are now exploring ways to collaborate with you in the CHARM-EU Master's programme and related activities. Below is a list of potential engagement formats for your institution. Please indicate which formats are most relevant or feasible for your participation.

Instructions:

- You may **select up to three formats** that your institution is interested in.
- For the selected formats, please assign a **priority from 1 (highest) to 3 (lowest)** to indicate your preference.
- Your input will help us plan meaningful, mutually beneficial collaboration opportunities, and ensure engagement with marginalized groups and Global South stakeholders.

Categories:

Seminar Series – Partners can participate or host online seminars to share expertise on sustainability, innovation, or region-specific topics.

CHARM-DEN pitching contest – Partners can contribute by proposing challenges, mentoring teams, or joining as jury members in this pitching and innovation event.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) – Partners may contribute content, case studies, or modules to reach a broad audience of CHARM-EU learners online.

Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) – Partners can co-teach or provide thematic input in this short-term, mixed digital–physical learning programme.

Capstone Project – Partners can propose real-world challenges, supervise, or mentor student teams in the final project of the CHARM-EU Master.

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) – Partners collaborate online to design assignments and projects for students unable to participate in physical mobility, fostering intercultural exchange.

Appendix 4: Draft for general LoI / MoU with GS partners and other partnerships



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

[NAME OF PARTNER]

AND

CHARM-EU

1. PREAMBLE

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter "the MoU") is made between:

- **[Name of partner]**, an **[institution of higher education/organisation]** duly established and existing under the laws of **[country]**, represented for the purposes of this MoU by its **[President/Rector/Vice-Chancellor] [full name]**,

and

- CHARM-EU, a European Universities Alliance formed by the University of Barcelona (Spain), Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), Utrecht University (the Netherlands), the University of Montpellier (France), Eötvös Loránd University Budapest (Hungary), Åbo Akademi University (Finland), Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg (Germany), Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and the University of Bergen (Norway), and represented for the purposes of this MoU by **[its Secretary General, Meritxell Chavez]**,

Singularly referred to as "the Party" and collectively as "the Parties",

Recognising their shared commitment to advancing higher education, research, innovation, and societal engagement, the Parties express their intention to cooperate under the terms set out in this MoU.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MoU is to establish a framework for cooperation between the Parties in areas of mutual interest and to provide a basis for developing specific collaborative activities.

3. PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

The cooperation between the Parties shall be guided by the following principles:

- Mutual respect, transparency, and equality;
- Reciprocity and mutual benefit;
- Academic freedom and institutional autonomy;
- Compliance with the respective laws, policies, and regulations of each Party.

4. AREAS OF COLLABORATION

The Parties intend to explore cooperation in, but not limited to, the following areas:

- [Joint research initiatives and capacity-building activities;]
- [Student and staff mobility schemes;]
- [Joint academic or training programmes;]
- [Exchange of information, best practices, and resources;]
- [Organisation of conferences, workshops, and seminars;]
- [Any other areas of co-operation to be mutually agreed upon by the Parties.]

5. LEGAL STATUS

This MoU is not intended to create any legal obligations or financial commitments between the Parties.

Any collaborative activities arising from this MoU shall be formalised through specific written agreements between the parties participating in such activities, which will specify the respective legal and financial responsibilities, if any.

6. COORDINATION

Each Party may designate a contact point or coordination office responsible to serve as liaison and for overseeing communication under this MoU.

- For [name of partner]: [contact]
- For CHARM-EU: [contact]

7. DURATION AND TERMINATION

This MoU shall take effect on the date of the last signature and shall remain in effect for five (5) years, unless terminated earlier by either Party with six (6) months' written notice.

Activities in progress at the time of termination of this MoU may be permitted to conclude as planned unless otherwise agreed.

This MoU may be renewed or amended by mutual written consent of the Parties.

8. SIGNATURES

This MoU is signed in two identical copies, one for each Party.

For [Name of partner]:

Name:

Title:

Date:

For CHARM-EU:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Appendix 5: Questionnaires for CHARM-DEN evaluation

The following entries provide links to the Microsoft forms that were specifically created for the event and are freely accessible:

- Participating Teams: [Feedback for CHARM-DEN: Participating Teams – Formular ausfüllen](#)
 - Results: [Feedback for CHARM-DEN: Participating Teams – Ergebnisse](#)
- Jury members: [Feedback CHARM-DEN - Jury – Formular ausfüllen](#)
 - Results: [Feedback CHARM-DEN - Jury – Ergebnisse](#)
- Audience: [Feedback CHARM-DEN – Formular ausfüllen](#)
 - Results: [Feedback CHARM-DEN – Ergebnisse](#)

Appendix 6: CHARM-DEN event calendar and report

The following entries provide links to the official CHARM-EU website and are publicly accessible.

- Event calendar 2024: [CHARM-EU DEN International Pitches - CHARM-EU](#)
- Report 2024: [Meet the CHARM-dragons... GuardenAI and ForSURE win inaugural CHARM-DEN award - CHARM-EU](#)
- Event calendar 2025: [CHARM-DEN International Pitches - CHARM-EU](#)

Appendix 7: CHARM-DEN template two-pager

Strand 1: Student Teams / Early Entrepreneurial Phase

Team Name: [Insert Team Name]

1. Overview:

- **Brief Description:** [Provide a concise summary of the project idea]
 - **Industry/Sector:** [Specify the industry or sector the project falls into]
 - **Target Market:** [Describe the primary audience or customers targeted by the project]
-

2. Problem Statement:

- [Clearly articulate the problem or need that the project addresses]
-

3. Proposed Solution:

- [Describe the proposed solution or product offered by the team, highlighting unique features or innovations]
-

4. Development Stage:

- **Current Status:** [Idea stage, early development, etc.]
 - **Future Plans:** [Next steps for development and implementation]
-

5. Key Resources Needed:

- [List any resources or support needed to move the project forward (e.g., mentorship, funding, partnerships)]
-

6. Milestones and Achievements:

- [List any significant milestones or achievements reached by the team so far]


7. Team composition:

- [Member 1 Name] - [Role]
- [Member 2 Name] - [Role]
- [Member 3 Name] - [Role]
- [Member 4 Name] - [Role]

8. Contact Information:

- **Email:** [Insert contact email]
- **Phone:** [Insert contact phone number]

Appendix 8: CHARM-DEN template evaluation sheet

 CHARM-DEN	EVALUATION SHEET					Jury instructions To be completed Select via drop-down list Date : 21st October 2025		
						First name & LAST NAME of the jury member:		
Name of the project Project acronym (optional)		Team1 T1						
Criteria 1 : Business Idea	Rating					Comments		
	1	2	3	4	5			
	<i>Very weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>			
5								
Criteria 2 : Project feasibility & sustainability perspective	Rating					Comments		
	1	2	3	4	5			
	<i>Very weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>			
4								
Criteria 3 : Quality of the pitch	Rating					Comments		
	1	2	3	4	5			
	<i>Very weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>			
5								
Criteria 4 : Effectiveness and precision in addressing jury questions	Rating					Comments		
	1	2	3	4	5			
	<i>Very weak</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>			
3								
Overall score (out of 20)					17,00			
General comments								

Score Summary
Team 1:

Scoring Matrix	Business Idea	Project feasibility & sustainability perspective	Quality of the pitch	Effectiveness and precision in addressing jury questions	Sum	Feedback?*a	Question?*b
Juror 1	2	3	1	3	9	X	
Juror 2	1	1	4	1	7		
Juror 3	4	2	1	2	9		
Juror 4	5	4	2	4	15		
Juror 5	2	3	3	3	11		
Juror 6	3	1	4	1	9		
Juror 7	4	2	1	2	9		
Juror 8	5	5	5	5	20		
Sum	26	21	21	21	89		

*a: Do you want to give verbal feedback on the team in the end?
*b: Do you want to pose a question in the Q&A?

Appendix 9: CHARM-DEN teams 2024, exemplary ForSURE

Version 2: Mature Startups with Prototypes

Team Name: ForSURE Europe B.V.

1. Overview:

- **Brief Description:** ForSURE helps businesses ensure full compliance with sustainability regulations by offering the first fully automated Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) compliance software, reducing complexity, saving time, and mitigating compliance risks.
 - **Industry/Sector:** Our software can be placed in the Compliance Tech sector.
 - **Target Market:** Eventually all SME's falling under EPR in Europe, however now we focus primarily on SME's retailing electronics active in markets covered by our software.
-

2. Problem Statement:

- Businesses are burdened by the complexity of EPR reporting. EPR is a legislation which holds producers, retailers, and distributors accountable for the waste that their products will inevitably generate when disposed of. For this, they need to deliver reports regularly which are very complex in nature, especially if a business sells across multiple EPR categories and countries. EPR categories entail different specifications of products, like batteries, textiles, or single use plastics.
-

3. Solution:

- We've created a software that automates this reporting, automatically collecting data and applying the relevant legislation to generate a report that can be sent to the government immediately.
-

4. Business Model:

- Our business model generates revenue with a primary revenue stream from the annual subscription fee for our software. A secondary revenue stream is generated from potential consulting. Our pricing strategy is to offer our software for €5000,-, which is significantly cheaper than our competitors thus more accessible for SME's. Key partnerships are those with EPR agencies (for their expertise) and accountants (if necessary to assist in auditing), in turn they benefit from more efficient and accurate reporting processes. We market our software via both digital and physical channels like expositions or our website. Our fixed costs are derived from hosting our website, server, and email. Variable cost arise in R&D and marketing. Finally our key activities are made up of developing the software, managing regulatory updates, sales,

7. Milestones and Achievements:

- We've been approached by 12 companies looking for a solution like ours, and are currently in talks with an EPR agency to whitelabel our software.
 - We secured the Rabobank Pre-seed Investment Fund.
 - We have a fully working software ready to enter the market.
-

8. Future Plans:

- Expanding the coverage of our software.
 - Utilize search based targeting to find early adaptors.
 - Expand software with features like cost calculations, Automatic Audit Checks, Compliance Checking, Eco-modulation, and an AI categorizer.
-

9. Team composition:

- Niclas Brinkmann - CEO
- Daniel Hammandouche - CTO
- Isaak Siebenga – CCO
- Daniel Arians – Marketing
- Henrieke Büniger – CSLO
- Darshan Ramanagoudra – Sales

10. Contact Information:

- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Phone:** [REDACTED]
- **Website:** <https://for-sure.net/>

Appendix 10: CHARM-DEN teams 2025, exemplary Team KLAO

Strand 1: Student Teams / Early Entrepreneurial Phase

Team Name: KLAO

1. Overview:

- **Brief Description:** KLAO is the **first AI-powered translator for certified, DIN-compliant Leichte Sprache (Easy Read Language)**. It integrates the entire process, from translation to certification, on a single platform using both **AI and human expertise**. The team aims to enable equal access to information for everyone, especially the 6.2 million people in Germany who require Leichte Sprache to participate in society.
 - **Industry/Sector:** KLAO is categorized under **IT Services since it's a software product**. Its primary business model and target customers place it within the **Business-to-Government (B2G)** sector, with additional reach into social organisations.
 - **Target Market:** KLAO's primary target market is the **DACH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)**, with **44,359 potential customers**. This includes: Public institutions and authorities, social organizations, museums, media houses, health insurance companies, banks as well as Leichte Sprache (Easy Read Language) experts.
-

2. Problem Statement:

- The core problem KLAO addresses is the **exclusion of 6.2 million people in Germany from important information** due to complex language. This includes individuals with learning disabilities, cognitive impairments, and those learning German as a second language. Despite a **legal obligation since 2019/2020** for public institutions to offer Leichte Sprache, **92.8% of them do not currently comply**. Its because traditional agencies are **expensive and time-consuming**, involving months-long coordination processes and high costs (e.g., €15,000 for 100 pages). On the other hand AI-only solutions produce **non-compliant texts** as they often lack the mandatory human review by people with learning difficulties, which is essential for DIN-conformity.
-

3. Proposed Solution:

- KLAO offers a unique web-based software solution that is the **first AI-powered translator for certified, DIN-compliant Leichte Sprache (Easy Read Language)**. It integrates the entire process, from AI-driven translation and DIN-norm formatting to certification, on a single platform. KLAO's core innovation lies in its **hybrid approach, combining Artificial Intelligence with human expertise**. This ensures texts are not only translated efficiently but also **certified as DIN-conform** by Leichte Sprache experts and proofreaders (people with learning difficulties), fostering genuine inclusion. This approach

significantly **reduces translation costs by over 50 % and certification time by 75 %** compared to traditional methods, providing a cost-efficient, time-saving, and legally compliant solution for public institutions and organizations.

4. Development Stage:

- **Current Status:** KLAO is currently in its **development phase** with an **MVP that is undergoing pilot testing**. KLAO has already secured **12 pilot customers** (including the cities of Würzburg and Hildesheim, and museums in Deggendorf) who are using the MVP. Now, after testing the first clients are being converted to paying customers. Meanwhile the team is working on the Proofreading and Expert-Portal (PEP) where the certification process will be automated and managed by the clients.
- **Future Plans:** In Q4 2025 the first customers (converted pilot customers) will be onboarded, meanwhile the PEP is being developed. At the same time the team will take part in fairs, conferences and webinars (like ConSozial, Bits&Pretzels) to raise awareness and acquire sales leads. In 2026 feedback will be collected for both products (PEP and KLAO translation software) and implemented.

5. Key Resources Needed:

- Currently KLAO is funded with the EXIST-Gründungsstipendium (funding programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE)). Further financing after the end of the programme is expected to come from business angels and state funding.

6. Milestones and Achievements:

- Batch 16 of Media Lab Startup Fellowship
- 2nd Prize in Flight Program 2024 (Schweinfurt), Social Impact Award, Pitch & Beer Award Coburg, Red Bull Basement, also nominated for ConSozial Social Innovation Award 2025

7. Team composition:

- Fabian Schlausch – Founder & CEO – Partnerships and Sales
 - Abdullah Abdelrazek – Co-Founder & CTO – AI and Product Development
 - Svenja Fischer – Co-Founder & CMO – Marketing and Project Management
 - Raphael Schrauth – Intern and future employee – Expert for Leichte Sprache
-

8. Contact Information:

- **Email:** [REDACTED]
- **Phone:** [REDACTED]

Appendix 11: Innovator’s Journey - surveys

Survey - Topic prioritization:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=jb6V1Qaz9EWAZJ5bgvvlK-izFyKjsMhEh1cjZdo8uLpUQUpOWURaTTRTTTE5VjQwN1EwNjEwUVNUNC4u>

Results:

ID	Email	Select the top four options
3	anonymous	Design Thinking (evolution of innovative ideas in multidisciplinary teams) Climate Enterprise Development Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Innovation Ecosystem
5	anonymous	Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Climate Enterprise Development Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders Innovation Mindset
6	anonymous	Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders Innovation Mindset AI and Innovation
7	anonymous	Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Climate Enterprise Development Innovation Ecosystem Culture for Strategic Innovation
8	anonymous	Design Thinking (evolution of innovative ideas in multidisciplinary teams) Culture for Strategic Innovation Climate Enterprise Development Innovation Ecosystem
9	anonymous	Climate Enterprise Development Innovation Ecosystem Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Innovation Mindset
10	anonymous	Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Climate Enterprise Development AI and Innovation Culture for Strategic Innovation
11	anonymous	Innovation Ecosystem Culture for Strategic Innovation Innovation Mindset Climate Enterprise Development
12	anonymous	Innovation Ecosystem Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders Climate Enterprise Development
13	anonymous	Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Climate Enterprise Development AI and Innovation Innovation Ecosystem
14	anonymous	Climate Enterprise Development Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability Culture for Strategic Innovation Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders
15	anonymous	Climate Enterprise Development Innovation Ecosystem Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Sustainability AI and Innovation
16	anonymous	AI and Innovation Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders Culture for Strategic Innovation Innovation Mindset
17	anonymous	Emotional Intelligence for Future Leaders Design Thinking (evolution of innovative ideas in multidisciplinary teams) Innovation Mindset Culture for Strategic Innovation
1	anonymous	
2	anonymous	
4	anonymous	

Survey - feedback 1st Edition:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=jb6V1Qaz9EWAZJ5bgvVlK-izFyKjsMhEh1cjZdo8uLpURDVJQ1M3OFdMRTNZNTgxT1c5REExVzI3UC4u>

Results:

id	Email	Name	How did you attend the seminar?	How would you rate the overall content of the seminar?	How relevant was the seminar content in helping you understand or enhance	How relevant was the seminar content in helping you understand or enhance	Do you think the seminar aligned well with CHARM-EU principles and it is a	seminar did you find most valuable or interesting?	Do you have any other comments you would like to share with us?
1	anonymous		Online	4		4	Yes	creative thinking strategy	I was connected online, and I couldn't hear the people speaking in person.
2	anonymous		Online	5	5	4	Yes	Convergent and divergent thinking	
3	anonymous		Online	4	5	3	Maybe	The talk was very inspiring	-
4	anonymous		In-person	4	4	3	Maybe	The brainstorming exercise we did with the brick	Maybe more exercises that put you in the position of thinking outside of the box