EIT HEI INITIATIVE
Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education

Entrepreneurial University Network

EntreUnity

Participating partners

Queen's University Belfast (Lead partner)
UNITED KINGDOM

Aarhus University
DENMARK

Helix Research and Enterprise (Ireland)
IRELAND

Lancaster University
UNITED KINGDOM

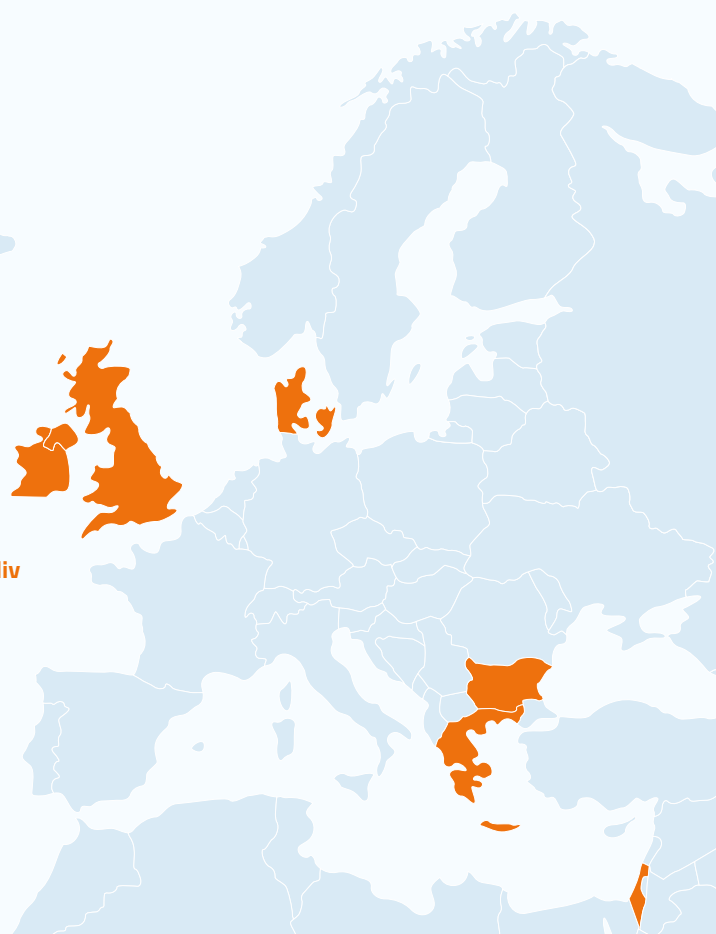**Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark**
ISRAEL

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
IRELAND

University of Crete
GREECE

University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv
BULGARIA

University Of Manchester
UNITED KINGDOM

University of the West of Scotland
UNITED KINGDOM

Max. funding Phase 1
€400,000

Max. funding Phase 2
€800,000

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Supported By
eit Food

Coordinated by
eit RawMaterials
Connecting matters

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Project description

EntreUnity is a network of aspiring entrepreneurial universities that share a passion and a responsibility to tackle global food security, ageing populations and climate change by educating and training the next generation of agri-food, health and green-tech students in entrepreneurship and leadership. The network also contributes to the transfer of knowledge, know-how and innovation processes to companies and public actors.

During the last five years, all of EntreUnity's higher education institutions (HEIs) extended their initial education and teaching missions towards the triple helix and knowledge triangle paradigms, substantially increasing knowledge, technology transfer and innovation. In line with this transition, the term 'entrepreneurial university' became increasingly popular. However, there is a lack of understanding of the term, its mission and how the role is reflected in regional innovation ecosystems.

To address this, EntreUnity, led by the Queen's University of Belfast and ranked 1st in the UK as the most entrepreneurial university in 2019 and 2020 (Octopus Ventures Impact Rankings), integrates the efforts of 8 academic organisations and a specialist innovation management SME. The project sees the HEI as an institutional entrepreneur with a mandate to reflect on societal challenges that provides scalable platforms for affecting transformative change, moving HEI's away from the narrow research commercialisation perspective and opening up opportunities for local contextualised roles in the regional innovation ecosystem.

The project's objectives are to:

- build a network of world class entrepreneurial higher education innovation leaders, that support outstanding students and staff;
- engage in cutting-edge innovation programmes across their campuses and regions;
- develop world class solutions to global societal challenges that foster sustainable growth, create high-quality jobs and improve the quality of life of citizens;
- transform young people and create professionals able to tackle societal challenges and needs.

The EntreUnity innovation vision action plan, tailor-made to each partner's requirements, sets out a road map to empower HEI's to implement institutional change and become regional hubs of innovation through value creation initiatives. During the pilot phase, EntreUnity will support:

- education/training for 370 students;
- the formation of 40 new European knowledge-based start-ups;
- the creation of 250 high-quality jobs in knowledge-intensive industries;
- the development of strategic plans for HEI senior management to link education with industry, fostering the entrepreneurial character of the university;
- contributions to the design of regional and national innovation strategies for smart specialisation.

The EntreUnity results and outcomes will be successfully translated into real world impact aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to validate its success as an impactful intervention within HEIs.

Pilot Call Timeline

About the EIT's HEI Initiative

The EIT's HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education was launched by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and is led by EIT RawMaterials – one of the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities.

The initiative is part of the EIT's 2021–2027 EIT Strategy, and it aims to help higher education institutions to build the capacity to innovate and to teach innovation and entrepreneurship. More specifically, the initiative aims to encourage these institutions to look at their own practices and develop concrete actions to increase their impact on their ecosystems.

In March 2020, the HEI Initiative launched a Pilot Call for Proposals, inviting higher education institutions to design activities that will improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity. We are pleased to announce the results of this Pilot Call. To stay updated on the latest developments, visit the initiative website (https://www.eit-hei.eu/) and subscribe to our newsletter.