

B-innovative

Training for Entrepreneurs



University of
Bedfordshire

Welcome to B-innovative

Background

B-innovative evolved from the University of Bedfordshire's successful 'Basics of Building a Business' (also known as B-3) lecture series to help transfer knowledge and expertise to other European nation states. The B-innovative project constituted a collaborative effort of five European partners in addition to the University of Bedfordshire who led the project.

What was B-innovative

B-innovative was a European partnership programme funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning programme which aimed to support business start-ups whilst developing a spirit of entrepreneurship.

At the heart of the programme is a partnership approach to ensure that best practice is shared and that lessons learnt in one member state can be passed onto another, so that the programme is forever adapting to meet the needs of the participants. The partners used a website and LinkedIn groups to provide European opportunities to delegates and their business ideas whether this was supply chains, mentoring or simply sharing experiences.

For more information on the B-innovative programme and partnership please visit-
www.b-innovative.org

The B-innovative partnership has gone from strength to strength. Working collaboratively, each cohort was evaluated thoroughly, improvements identified and implemented and lessons learnt shared. This enabled the partnership to evolve its provision to meet the needs of participants and provide the best possible learner experience.

Dr Nicholas Lancaster

Director of Enterprise

B-innovative is one of the most powerful projects I've ever been involved with. You could see the transformation of delegates from being sceptical of their business idea at session 1 to full blown entrepreneurs by the end of the programme. By bringing together local and business communities we were able to offer a business start-up programme that was built for and by delegates. **Dr Nicholas Lancaster**



B-innovative delivery in the UK proved highly successful with 235 would-be entrepreneurs supported by the programme. A number of these individuals are working toward starting their own businesses or have enhanced their employability skills. Business concepts put forward by prior participants fall into sectors from education to food to creative industries. B-innovative took the previous B-3 programme to another level by meeting the needs of not only students and graduates but also members of the wider community. Many participants hadn't initially considered starting a business due to their background but the programme helped support them in realizing their business potential.

The programme offered delegates the opportunity to develop their business ideas, gain awareness of costing and pricing, understand their marketplace and competitors, identify company structures and Intellectual Property (IP) and learn how to raise investment. One of the strengths of the programme was its delivery by local business owners. The programme consisted of interactive sessions including presentations, discussion and group work. Delegates developed live business plans which they could use to obtain future investment in their business.

The University of Bedfordshire is keen to continue to support entrepreneurial activity beyond the end of the programme by supporting individuals into the future.

I designed and delivered the B-innovative Team Building session. It was great to see delegates interact, open their minds to networking, get interested in challenges other businesses face and successes they achieve. The University of Bedfordshire delivered a fantastic programme that provided delegates with an opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills but also gave them confidence to realize their business ideas. Karen Chamberlain, KC Learning and Development (B-innovative speaker)

Having a degree in Business didn't give me enough confidence to start my own business. B-innovative did! The programme enabled me to develop skills I need to pursue my business idea. Sessions were well structured, with excellent speakers and industry experts, who covered topics from finance through to marketing and management. I am now confident I can apply the knowledge and skills gained and move my business forward. Wayne Cartmel, B-innovative winner (cohort 5)

I entered the B-innovative programme as it provided the ideal first steps in embarking on a business start-up mission. Also, the prize monies have been hugely beneficial to help build our early stage products. Declan Sweeney, winner (cohort 4)



B-innovative - Poland

B-innovative in Poland proved to be hugely successful, attracting people with entrepreneurial ideas as well as business start-ups. In the later stage, the programme became available to a wider audience due to high public demand. Cohort 4 attracted 93 committed participants, which resulted in a higher number of business plans submitted to the final competition.

Participants benefited from sessions delivered by professional business owners, as well as academic experts in fields such as business, education and governmental institutions and they found particularly useful sessions focused on marketing, finance and market competitiveness.

The great advantage of B-innovative seminars was their networking character. They allowed delegates to share their experiences and develop strong business relationships.

In my opinion participation in the B-innovative project was an interesting experience. The topics discussed motivated me to continue working on my business idea. The knowledge gained during the training was a source of inspiration for my business vision which I hope to realize in the near future.

The excellent interaction with the speakers made the learning process more enjoyable.

For me, as a start-up entrepreneur, it was extremely beneficial to share best practices and stories of successes and challenges businesses face.

I found the session on the competitor analysis hugely beneficial. This along with risk assessment is an important element of running the business.

*I am glad I had the opportunity taken part in the B-innovative project. And with no doubt I would love to participate in similar projects. **Maciej Gomolka, B-innovative winner (cohort 4)***



In Switzerland, B-innovative was organised by the privately funded organisation, Technopark Zurich that aims at boosting innovation, 'Know-How' knowledge and technology transfer in Zurich.

The programme offered participants an opportunity to meet the speakers and previous B-innovative attendees during various networking events organised throughout the cohorts. It was during these events that all participants could share their business experiences, and discuss successes and challenges their businesses face.

What is more, some participants had an opportunity to visit speakers' companies directly, giving them good insight into the everyday life of an entrepreneur.

B-innovative participants also benefited from hugely popular newly developed concepts 'Lean Start-up' and 'Social Entrepreneurship' and some had an opportunity to develop their language skills, as various sessions were delivered in English language due to large number of exchange students interested in the programme.

Swiss B-innovative turned out to be very successful, with delegates praising the programme's informative and inspiring content, excellent speakers and opportunity to networking with like-minded business people.

I had the great pleasure to talk to the B-innovative delegates about financing options and the 'Lean Start-up'. The delegates were able to get involved in many discussions around the area of financing, including different types of investors, how to handle them and where to find them. Delivering the B-innovative session was an enjoyable experience thanks to highly motivated students and a neat programme organisation.
Jan Fölscher, Business Angels Switzerland, speaker

I enjoyed the open and informal atmosphere during the course and the discussions with participants and speakers. Also, B-innovative enabled me to gain skills essential for starting my business. To summarise, the course motivated me to develop my business idea further and join the follow-up courses.
Felix Budde, participant

I mostly enjoyed the session on successful founders, listening to personal experiences of real business owners, their successes but also the challenges they had to face was both surprising and inspirational. B-innovative encouraged me to start my own business Inolytix AG three months later.
Ralf Dümpelmann, participant



B-innovative - Slovakia

The Slovakian B-innovative partner, Inova Nova, is a non-profit organisation founded in 2009 focused mainly on regional development, support of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Sessions were delivered by successful entrepreneurs, managers or experienced lecturers based at top Slovakian Universities. Participants benefited from sessions covering topics essential to gaining an understanding on how to start a business, including business idea formation, vision creation, IP rights in business, raising investment and many more.

The programme proved to be highly successful with 115 delegates participating and 47 business concepts submitted to the final competition. The modern and flexible format of B-innovative, with its inspiring sessions and excellent speakers, enabled delegates to further develop their business ideas.



Nowadays in Slovakia, it is difficult to pursue a desired career, so I was very happy that I could add value to the B-innovative programme by delivering my session on 'Raising Investment' to the delegates. The experience was very valuable for me and I hope also for the participants. Tomas Lodnan, TrashOUT - lecturer

The business start-up community is growing very fast, but it focuses mainly on IT. From my point of view this course should be very useful for young people involved in other industry sectors and aiming at starting their own business.

Mrs. Katarína Vasková - lecturer



The Regional Innovation Agency of South Great Plain, the B-innovative partner in Hungary, reached more than 150 people enabling them to develop the skills essential to starting their own enterprises.

The programme also offered participants an interactive milieu where they can share experiences, thoughts and ideas.

What is more, the programme offered participants an opportunity to take part in various competitions, including a Business Concept competition and a Business Plan competition. Participants created valuable business plans which they will be able to use when moving forward their business idea.

The Agency invited experienced lecturers and local business owners to deliver the B-innovative sessions, which was greatly appreciated by participants.

In order to create a unique business community, the Agency created the Hungarian B-innovative group on LinkedIn, which will be used by participants and speakers as a platform to share information, ideas and experiences.

I found the implementation of the B-innovative project an interesting experience. It is the first international project of the RIA-SGP and I am proud that we involved so many participants and lecturers, organised sessions at various locations and designed fantastic competitions. Hopefully the participants are all satisfied with the project's achievements and would like to participate in similar events in the future. Dr. István Molnár, Regional Innovation Agency of South Great Plain, Project Manager

The sessions were well structured with clear and logically defined topics focusing on the process of starting, organising and managing business. I enjoyed the practical and interactive sessions, which helped me to understand legal, economic and financial aspects of running the business. Dr. József Tóth, Kecskeméti College, programme organiser

The whole programme was well organised with great, practical sessions, challenging competitions and excellent speakers. Overall it was an amazing experience and I hope to join similar projects in the future. László Medics, participant, winner of the first Business Plan competition





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