THEI2.0 – Towards HEInnovate2.0: From assessment to action

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THEI2.0

D7.2 – Policy Recommendation Report

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Authors	Robertt Valente, Bárbara Gabriel
Document Description	The future impact and reach of HEInnovate is closely related to its ability to provide content, guidelines, and definite actions ready to be used by HEIs. Transferability and exploitation of THEI2.0 results and tools, on the other side, can help HEInnovate on this goal, involving both future users of HEInnovate and policymakers (in and out of HEIs), by means of European cooperation on policy and practice levels. This Policy Recommendation Report is built from the expertise gathered by the THEI2.0 project, delivering innovative solutions and guidelines that can bring long-term changes and sustainable transformation to the whole Higher Education ecosystem at the European level.

Partners and team of THEI2.0 project

	Universidade de Aveiro (UAVR)	Portugal
	Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)	Ireland
	Lappeenrannan-Lahden teknillinen yliopisto (LUT)	Finland
	Strascheg Center for Entrepreneurship GmbH (SCE)	Germany
	Fundació TecnoCampus Mataro-Maresme (TecnoCampus)	Spain

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1. Introduction

THEI2.0 project is built to support users of HEInnovate self-reflection tool in an integrated and contextualised way. The project adds value to HEInnovate, creating a framework and tools that are ready to use by Higher Education Institutions (HEI), helping those Institutions in their strategy to become more entrepreneurial and innovative. Starting where HEInnovate ends, THEI2.0 project transforms the self-reflection, internal brainstorming results from that platform into definite actions, tools to make those actions turn into reality, and guidelines to measure the impact of those actions in time, monitoring the evolution and transformation of Higher Education Institutions.

THEI2.0 offers a methodology that guides HEIs from the reflection that arises in the context of HEInnovate assessment into action. The implementation of the proposed methodology leads to a deep analysis and understanding of HEInnovate results, their translation into actions, and the final assessment of the impact of those actions on the institution's dynamic and strategy. THEI2.0 Model also offers a set of tools for reflection, inspiration, decision-making and planning. The toolkit is available both in online and printed versions and can be accessed through the website (http://www.thei2.eu).

THEI2.0 project aggregates a number of deliverables that can be directly downstream implemented right after the user (HEI) has obtained their HEInnovate experience and results. These deliverables include a complete framework of implementation, guidelines and recommendations, a structured methodology and a hands-on toolkit. These have been tested in a series of pilot workshops, internal and external, the latter with the participation of several representatives of different HEIs.

Based on this accumulated experience, gathered by the consortium members during THEI2.0 project, comes this report on Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and decision-makers, aiming to provide a long-lasting impact on Higher Education Institutions and the whole entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem in Europe.

2. THEI2.0: From Assessment to Action (a summary)

2.1. HEInnovate (for an assessment phase)

HEInnovate (http://www.heinnovate.eu) is a self-assessment tool for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) wishing to explore their entrepreneurial and innovative potential. This tool helps HEIs in identifying their current entrepreneurial development in a systematic way. HEInnovate is supported by the European Commission and the OECD.

HEInnovate is structured in eight dimensions that can be used (individually or grouped) for reflection and brainstorming on the entrepreneurial and innovative level of each HEI. These dimensions currently are as following:

- Leadership and Governance
- Organisational Capacity: Funding, People and Incentives
- Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning
- Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs
- Digital Transformation and Capability
- Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration
- The Internationalised Institution
- Measuring Impact

HEInnovate website also provides a collection of case studies and user stories that exemplify the functioning of the platform as used by different HEIs across the world.

2.2. THEI2.0 (providing action capabilities)

Starting where HEInnovate ends and based on its results, THEI2.0 project provides methodologies and procedures for decision-makers at Higher Education Institutions aiming at improving their entrepreneurial potential. While HEInnovate can provide brainstorming and reflexive analyses about the entrepreneurial and innovation maturity of a given HEI, no guidelines are given on how to translate this brainstorming into measurable, concrete, and definite actions and their strategic planning. In this sense, THEI2.0 assumes the goal of bringing HEInnovate to a higher level, enriching its potential with an augmented version to support and inspire HEIs and their staff to become (even) more innovative and entrepreneurial.

The THEI2.0 Project provides a number of deliverables that can be used by HEI in defining a strategic plan and actions in the short, medium, and long term. They are:

- eHEI Profiles: a systematic clustering and categorization of each HEI in several profiles according to their level of entrepreneurial development, based on HEInnovate assessment;
- eHEI Journey: a suggested path that HEIs can follow in their entrepreneurial development strategy;
- eHEI Recommendation Cards: cards presenting systematic organization and categorization of best practices and suitable actions that can help HEIs in their strategy definition;
- eHEI Canvas: visual tools that facilitate the selection of key actions for the different dimensions represented in HEInnovate;
- THEI2.0 digital badges system concept: an independent system that recognizes and rewards the efforts of HEIs in their entrepreneurial development by using HEInnovate assessment and THEI2.0 toolkit.

3. Alignment with the European Strategy for Universities

Taking into account the report from the European Commission (January 18th, 2022, COM(2022) 16 Final), on the European Strategy for Universities, we believe THEI2.0 Project, its outcomes, resources and recommendations are aligned with the strategic vision and goals for HEIs as described in this document as described in the following.

"*Excellent and inclusive universities are a condition and foundation for open, democratic, fair and sustainable societies as well as sustained growth, entrepreneurship and employment.*"

Having provided a model, guidelines and tools for not only internal reflection but mainly for actions and transformation, THEI2.0 policy recommendations will help foster the needed and constant monitoring of the positioning of HEIs, related not only to themselves and their role and contributions to their self-improvement and development but especially regarding the transformative role of HEIs in their cooperation and co-creation with the Society and external stakeholders.

"*Universities have a unique position at the crossroads of education, research, innovation, serving society and economy*"

THEI2.0 Project and its deliverables are capable of helping HEIs in their mission of establishing a natural interface between different stakeholders, particularly Society and external partners (at national and international levels), by helping HEIs in their strategic decision-making process of becoming more entrepreneurial and innovative.

"*Universities can better solve big societal challenges by engaging more effectively in transnational cooperation.*"

The outputs and outcomes of the THEI2.0 project help HEIs in their mission to become more innovative and entrepreneurial, particularly by close collaboration and co-creation with external partners and society at large.

"*As skills needs are rapidly evolving, the higher education sector has to adapt.*"

THEI2.0 outcomes and recommendations can be beneficial to HEIs in many ways. They help HEIs to carry out reflexive, internal discussion, brainstorming and defining a strategic plan, but especially contribute to becoming more agile, efficient and inclusive in their strategic decision-making stages. Additionally, they offer tools and methodology to a constant and updated monitoring process that provides true capability of adaption and response in real-time to internal and external needs.The framework and results from THEI2.0 can therefore be crucial to fulfil another goal of the European Comission, as presented in the cited document, that is:

"*Universities have to remain competitive on a worldwide scene.*".

4. Policy recommendations for longlasting impact and transformation

Considering the tools developed in THEI2.0 project and its alignment with what is considered for the European strategy for (and of) universities, it is believed they are relevant in supporting and inspiring HEIs in their mission to create impact in(to) Society and their role as entrepreneurial and more innovative organisations. HEInnovate, since its launching, has been an extremely helpful platform and tool to support brainstorming and reflection within HEIs about their level of entrepreneurship and innovation in eight different dimensions. However, as time passes and more HEIs use and exploit HEInnovate capabilities, a need arises to take a step further towards (in)to action. The aim of HEInnovate, since its beginning, was to provide assessment and reflection for HEIs, but if they wanted to move forward in the definition of their strategy, actions and resources were needed to increase their entrepreneurial and innovative characters. Besides bridging the gap between the reflexive, self-assessment, exercise provided by HEInnovate and the decision-making process that is needed to consolidate HEIs strategy, THEI2.0 provides a methodology and a number of tools to interactively review, monitor, and consolidate the execution stages toward longlasting impact and transformation of Higher Education Institutions. The support and inspiration provided by THEI2.0 diverse tools have the main aim to help HEIs not only to become more entrepreneurial but mostly to reinforce their role as a key-element for impact on Society.

To fully guarantee the scalability and widespread dispersive use of THEI2.0 methodology and tools within HEIs, at the same time providing a renewed and more relevant usage of HEInnovate itself in the forthcoming years, the following recommendations can be presented by the Project Consortium for further consideration. This set of recommendations is presented from the top (higher) level of operationalization and impact, towards the more localized (internal) system:

- **Full integration of THEI2.0 tools and resources into HEInnovate:** employing this recommendation an integrated and fully comprehensive assessment and actionable tool (together) can be provided by the European Commission and OECD to help HEIs in their continuous improvement in becoming more entrepreneurial and more innovative;

- **Adoption of eHEI Profiles as a way to categorize and index HEIs**: the Profiles provided by THEI2.0 for Higher Education Institutions, created based on the current dimensions of and the results coming from HEInnovate, represent an interdisciplinary, transversal and independent maturity index regarding entrepreneurship and innovation as well as entrepreneurial development of HEIs . The Profiles can not only help HEIs in doing their journey from their current status to the desired one, but can be also used to match, group, and cluster different HEIs in collaborative networks. These collaborative networks can be created either by clustering HEIs with similar THEI2.0 Profiles (that is, similar maturity levels, needs, and challenges), and/or by clustering Institutions with distinct Profiles following a mentoring strategy where more mature HEIs can guide less mature HEIs in following their path towards development. The Profiles can be also used as a maturity index for HEIs when applying for funding, as a distinctive character of their evolution and ambitions, together with the Badge System created and promoted by THEI2.0;

- **THEI2.0 Digital Badge System as a way to reward and promote the effort of HEIs to evolve and develop**: THEI2.0 creates and promotes a Digital Badge system that not only is

capable of monitoring the evolution and journey of each HEI in becoming more entrepreneurial and innovative but is also capable of rewarding this evolution and effort. The THEI2.0 Digital Badge system is modular and flexible, in a way that it can be applied to a whole HEI, or their internal organization (boards, faculties, departments, courses and, most importantly, individuals). As in the case of eHEI Profiles, the Digital Badges provide an independent, transversal and integrative way of communication and benchmarking, especially for the Institution itself, in the sense that HEIs can strategically monitor their evolution with time, assessing deviations and acting (if necessary) in correcting them, again using THEI2.0 methodology, models and tools. At a higher, national, level, the Digital Badge system can also be used (or provide the basis) for an accreditation system focused on the entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities of each HEI;

- **eHEI Workshops as institutional tools for strategic planning, viable decisions, and internal engagement:** one of the deliverables of THEI2.0 Project is the eHEI Workshops, sessions where intensive and immersive discussion, planning and decision-making take place based on results coming from HEInnovate. These are the opportunities for either top-down decision-makers, e.g. rectors, presidents, boards, deans, directors, other management structure representatives, teachers, students and professional and support staff, not only to reflect on HEIs current state but mainly to clearly and detailedly foresee the future of each HEI in what entrepreneurship and innovation concern and its entrepreneurial development as a whole or according to a specific dimension(s) to be addressed.

5. References

European Commission (2022), European Strategy for Universities COM(2022) 16 Final. Brussels: European Commission.

European Commission and OECD (n.d.), HEInnovate https://heinnovate.eu/en.

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