DEEPTECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INCUBATION

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Jonathan Potter, PhD
Head of Entrepreneurship Policy and Analysis Unit
Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD

Theme for this session

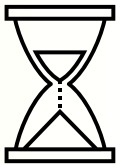
What it takes to build **supportive ecosystems** for **science-based ventures**, from specialised incubation and acceleration to the research-to-market pipeline connecting universities, labs, and industry.

What is deeptech entrepreneurship?

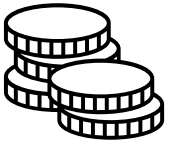
- **Start-ups** and **scale-ups** that turn **scientific or engineering breakthroughs** into products. Distinguishing features :



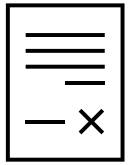
Science-based: Rooted in research, often led by academic founders.



Long development cycles: Often 10-15 years from lab to market.



High capital needs: Experimental R&D and physical assets before revenue.



IP-intensive: Value protected by patents and trade secrets.

What OECD does on deeptech entrepreneurship

Work areas:

- Deeptech entrepreneurial ecosystems
  - Data and international benchmarking, country studies, international policy exchange workshops
- Knowledge valorisation from research
  - HEInnovate guidance to universities, knowledge valorisation through RTIs and knowledge exchange brokers
- Incubation policies
  - Country studies, international policy exchange workshops

Key reports :

- Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Diagnostics
- Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Diagnostics of Spain
- University knowledge exchange in Italy
- Incubation in Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Online tools:

- OECD / EU HEInnovate Guidance for the Entrepreneurial University
- SMEs Scaling Up Policy Tool

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4 recurring bottlenecks constraining deeptech entrepreneurial ecosystems

Ecosystem bottlenecks poorly understood	Ecosystem diagnostics – data and stakeholder discussion
Firms leave the domestic economy	Ecosystem strengthening, entrepreneurial recycling
Deeptech funding gap	VC co-investment, tax measures, mobilise pensions, improve IP valuation
Lack of anchor organisations	Engage universities and corporates

3 recurring bottlenecks constraining knowledge valorisation

IP uncertainty problem	→	IP simplification and ownership clarity
Limited academic founder business skills	→	Founder training and mentoring, pairing with commercial co-founders, alumni networks
Weak university-business links	→	Knowledge exchange brokers, commercialisation incentives

3 recurring bottlenecks limiting incubator outcomes

Traditional incubation models	→	Fund networking and ecosystem building
Incubator focus on domestic markets	→	Soft landing programmes and global partnerships
Weak mentoring capacity	→	Recruit and train mentors, require coaching guidelines

Future challenges for policy and research

1. How does an economy retain mobile deeptech ventures?
2. How do you create a recognised and supported Knowledge Exchange Manager professional role in universities?
3. How to shift incubators from infrastructure and generic services to ecosystem hubs?

Thank you!

Jonathan.Potter@oecd.org

Twitter: @OECD_local
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/oecd-local
Website: www.oecd.org/cfe
Blog: oecdcogito.blog

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