



RE-EURECA-PRO

The Research and Innovation Dimension of the European University on Responsible Consumption and Production

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| Participants: | Montanuniversität Leoben, Mittweida University of Applied Sciences, Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg, University of León, University of Petrosani, Silesian University of Technology, Technical University of Crete |
| WP 8: | Action 3 – New Shared Potential - Joint Innovation Structure Utilization Strategy, Technical University of Crete |
| D8.3: | Pilot actions |
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2. Introduction

For D8.3 “Pilot actions” for joint innovation structure utilization, two pilot actions were implemented with the aim of promoting innovative thinking and connecting entrepreneurship and academia. The main parameters considered were the involvement of education, economy and society while promoting concepts of sustainability. In other words, what was promoted and implemented were the collaboration of mentors and students in innovative processes of turning ideas into sustainable plans and the contribution of all partners universities in a live event of innovative entrepreneurship.

Also, the specific pilot actions were selected based on feasibility and effectiveness so that they can be implemented on a regular basis after the end of the project and promote the involvement of students, entrepreneurs and society. Specifically: within the time constraints of the project’s duration, the pilot actions that were tested were the **Mentors’ contribution** to the Technical University of Crete Project Week (11-12-13 October 2023, TUC’s premises), and the **online Startup Coffee Event**, organized by the Technical University of Crete (4 April 2024, 19.00 – 20.30 Athens time).

3. Description of pilot actions

Mentorship contribution on innovation

During the project and in the context of establishing a list of mentors specialized in sustainable solutions and plans, the Technical University of Crete, with the contribution of the partner universities, formed a list of forty-five mentors. Due to this report’s public nature, the names of the mentors are not included. They remain available for any partner university in the respective TUC cloud file.

To test the contribution of mentorship expertise to students creative ideas and project design, the Technical University of Crete involved a group of mentors in the respective Project Week that took place on campus in October 2023 titled "[Creative ideas for sustainable solutions](#)".

TUC Project Week was published and promoted on several websites and social media, as well as in the TUC e-class news feed, through which students receive all notifications about their classes.

Mentorship contribution during the Project Week at the Technical University of Crete (TUC)

The Project Week at the Technical University of Crete took place on 11-12-13 of October 2023, on Campus, in which 35 students participated (49% female and 51% male). It must be noted that TUC Project Week was open to participation to any student from any university (and not only to TUC students).

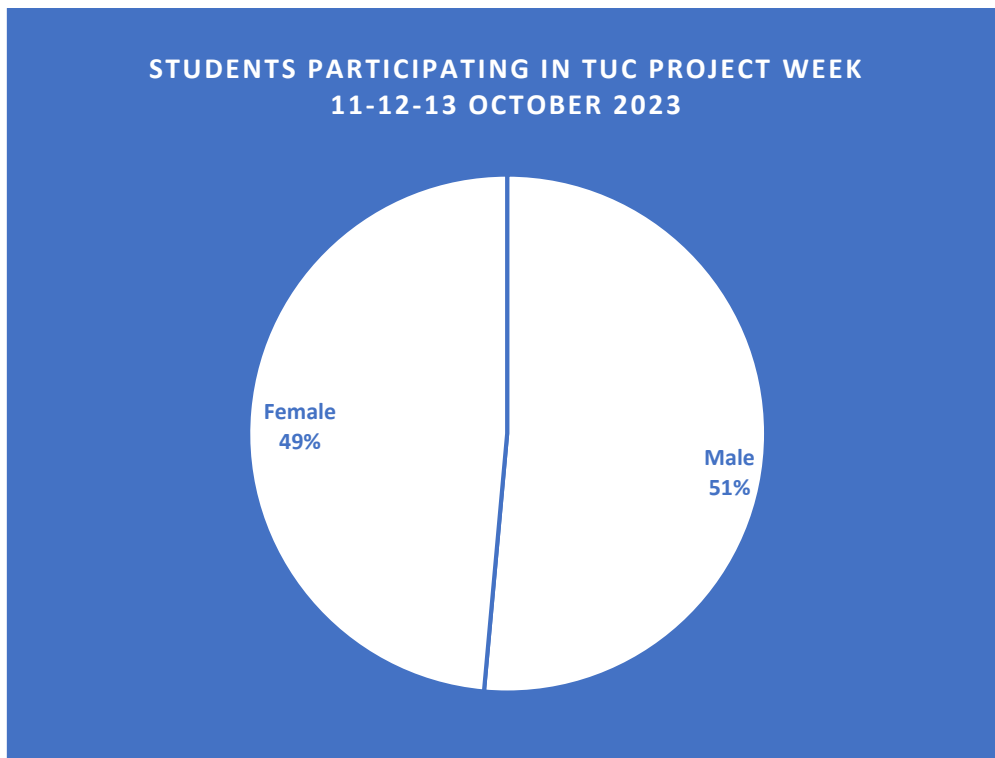


Image 1 Percentage of female and male students in TUC Project Week

The focus of TUC Project Week was on creative ideas and sustainable plans. The topics that were presented were the following:

- “Sustainable Tourism and protection of NATURA 2000 areas”, presented by Prof. Theocharis Tsoutsos, Director, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Lab, School of Chemical & Environmental Engineering of TUC.
- “Recycling and Schools”, presented by Ms Marianthi Liapi, TUC TIE Lab, School of Architecture of TUC and supervised by Prof. Konstantinos-Alketas Oungrinis, TUC TIE Lab Founder and Director, Vice Rector of Research and Innovation of TUC.
- Innovation at the University and its connection to society. The importance of the contribution of mentors to the student groups, presented by Prof. Panayiotis Partsinevelos, Head of the SenseLab Space Informatics research group of the Laboratory of Geodesy and Informatics of Geosciences, School of Mineral Resources Engineering, TUC, Member of the Board of Directors.

TUC Project Week took place in three days and was organized as such:

Day #1: presentation of the two general topics to all participating students.

Day #2: forming five groups of students and elaborating on ideas and sustainable solutions on one (or both) of the topics that were presented on Day #1. Receiving advice from mentors.

Days #3: presentations by the students of their ideas and proposed sustainable solutions.

Specifically day #2 was dedicated to assisting the student groups in completing a sustainable plan. Five mentors participated – professors and researchers - with expertise in innovative sustainability projects. In rotation, each mentor discussed with each of the five student groups the parameters of:

- The sustainability intensity of the proposed idea
- The Innovation quintuple helix innovation model
- The time and budget constraints

On day #3 (last day), the students were asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire (prepared by TUC) about the mentorship contribution and its value to the overall process of forming an idea into a project.

The participants were asked to answer the following questions:

1. Why did you decide to take part in the Re-EURECA PRO Project Week?
2. On which of the following would you like support and guidance from mentors?
 - a) feedback on the clarity and structure of your draft project
 - b) support for the preparation of a formal presentation
 - c) motivation and encouragement at difficult moments in the project
 - d) help in brainstorming to find solutions when obstacles arise
 - e) availability to answer questions and provide guidance
3. To what extent are you familiar with the following terms and processes related to entrepreneurship and innovation:
 - a) business plan-sustainability
 - b) market analysis
 - c) technical implementation of the project
 - d) protection of intellectual property

The results are briefly summarized below:

Regarding the first question, a very common answer was that the participants considered the event as interesting, and that the certificate of completion would be useful for them in the future. Also, most participants evaluated the event as helpful regarding team collaboration and pitching.

Regarding the second and third question, results are presented in images 2 and 3 respectively:

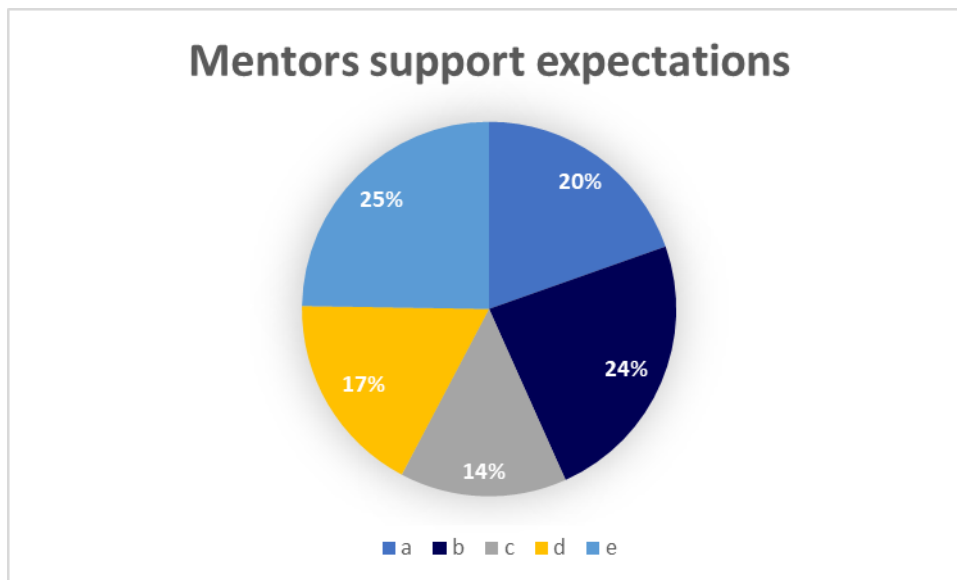


Image 2 Support and guidance from mentors

Based on the answers, 25% of the participants needed mentors to be available to answer questions and provide guidance and 24% needed support for the preparation of their proposal.

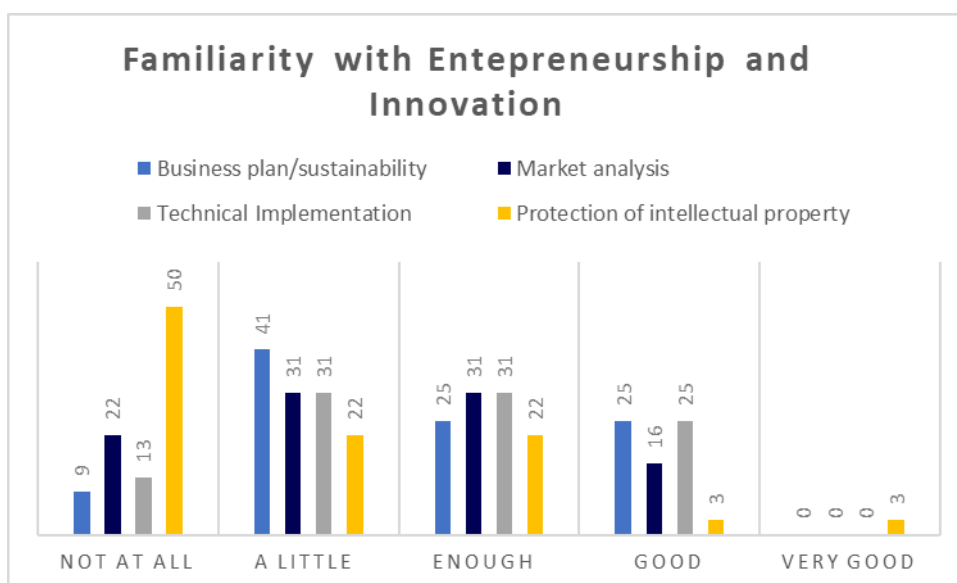


Image 3 Familiarity with Entrepreneurship and innovation

The participants seem to lack knowledge regarding the protection of intellectual property since 50% answered that they are not at all familiar with the term, whilst 41% declared that they are only a bit familiar with the terms and processes of business planning and 31% declared that they are a bit familiar with the processes of market analysis and technical implantation. Finally, only 3% expressed that they are extensively familiar with IP protection, and no one was confident enough to declare very good knowledge of the other terms and processes.

To evaluate the students' impact with the mentors during the project week, a second questionnaire was distributed after the event:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how successful do you consider your project to be, with 10 being a great success?
2. In which of the following did feedback and mentor guidance contribute significantly to improving your work? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5.
 - a) feedback on the clarity and structure of your draft project
 - b) support for the preparation of a formal presentation
 - c) motivation and encouragement at difficult moments in the project
 - d) help in brainstorming to find solutions when obstacles arise
 - e) availability to answer questions and provide guidance
 - f) Would you recommend mentoring to other students working on similar projects? Why or why not?
3. After the mentoring experience, to what extent do you feel familiar with the following terms and processes related to entrepreneurship and innovation?
 - a) business plan-sustainability
 - b) market analysis
 - c) technical implementation of the project
 - d) protection of intellectual property

Based on the answers, the average rate of satisfaction for their projects was 8.0625 on a scale of 1 to 10, meaning that the students were very pleased with their results.

In the below chart, the opinions of the participants regarding support from mentors on topics a,b,c,d,e (as mentioned above) are depicted:

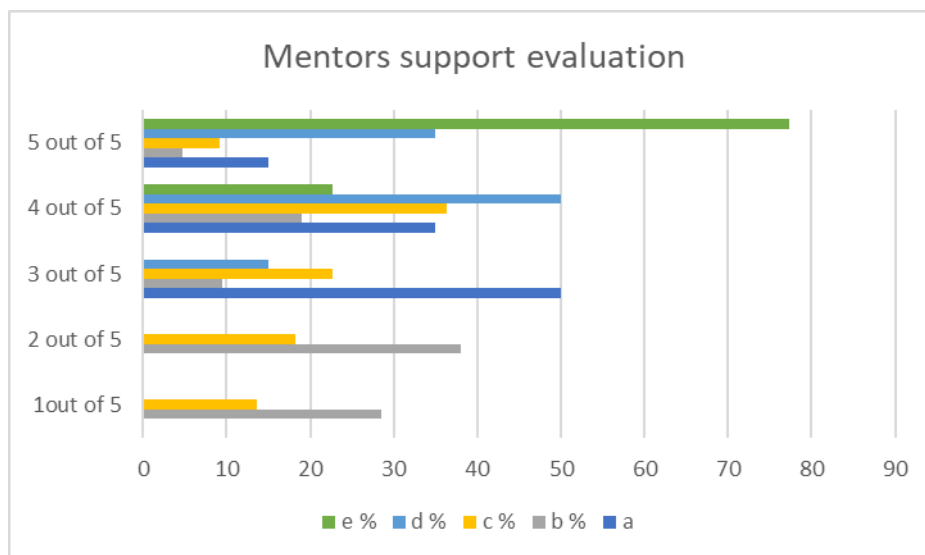


Image 4 Mentors support evaluation

The mentors' guidance and contribution regarding structure and clarity of their projects was rated 3 out of 5 by 50% of the participants, meaning they were not quite satisfied. The same dissatisfaction was seen with reference to the mentors' support on the students' presentation preparation, since it was rated 2 out of 5 by 38% of the participants. When it comes to motivation and encouragement at difficult moments in the project, the participants were very satisfied, since 36% of them rated the mentors' support as 4 out of 5 and

for help in brainstorming to find solutions when obstacles arise, 50% rated the mentors' support as 4 out of 5, as well.

Help in brainstorming to find solutions when obstacles arise was rated as 4 out of 5 by 50% and 5 out of 5 by 35%, leading to a 75% which was very satisfied with mentors' support on this aspect, and their availability to answer questions and provide guidance was rated as 5 out of 5 by 77% and 4 out of 5 by 23%, leading to an impressive 100% which was very satisfied with their mentorship experience.

Finally, regarding the last part (f) of the second question, the most common answer among students was that they would recommend mentoring to other students, since it was an interesting experience for them.

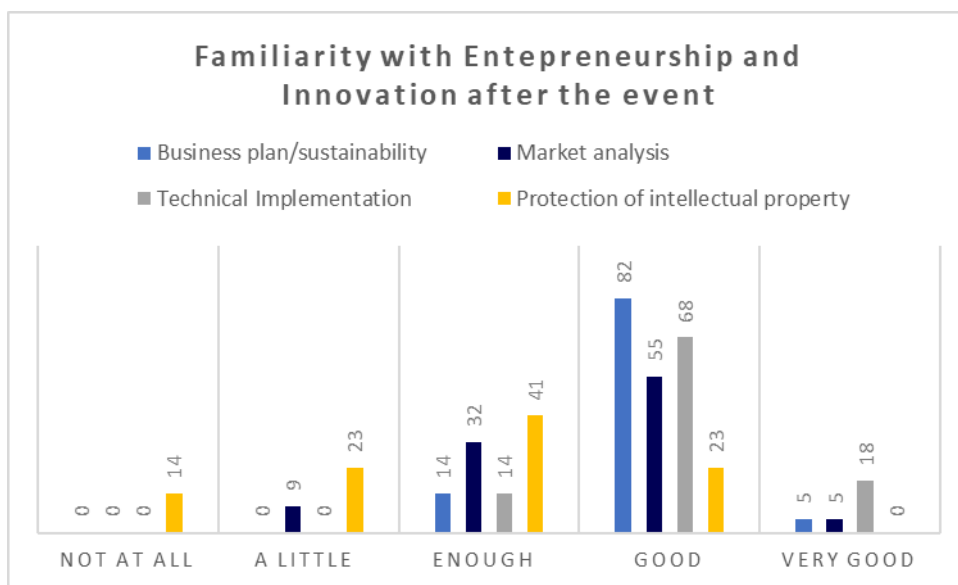


Image 5 Familiarity with entrepreneurship and innovation after the event

Regarding the evaluation of the mentors' influence on the participants familiarity with entrepreneurship and innovation after the event the results are impressive. A percentage of 82% feel that they have a good perspective on business plans, 68 % feel more confident with their skills in technical implementation and a 55% think they have a good knowledge of market analysis.

Overall, the results of the pilot action are promising and indicate the importance of mentorship activities on the students' mentality on topics of entrepreneurship and innovation, their confidence and improvement of skills.

Startup coffee event

To examine further the interaction between academia and entrepreneurship in topics of sustainable production and consumption, the Technical University of Crete organized an online startup coffee event, in April 2024, open to all partners universities and the public, entrepreneurs evolved from an academic environment or not, researchers and students.

The online startup coffee event was promoted via the project's website, TUC's website and social media and the partner universities' networks of students, researchers and entrepreneurs. Also, it was communicated to local chambers of commerce emailing lists and international initiatives such as the Eustartups.com.

Speakers from the academic and the entrepreneurial fields were invited to share their experiences, while adhering to time limits. The event's agenda follows:

Welcome: Ms. Virginia Alizioti, Project Management, TUC

Ms. Aga Kosciuszko, Project Management Lead RE-EURECA-PRO, MUL

Section 1: The joint alliance innovation ecosystem, Prof. Panayiotis Partsinevelos, TUC (5 minutes),

Section 2: Startups in Greece: Legal, administrative risks and challenges, Ms. Popi Daskalaki, "Women Do Business" (10 minutes),

Section 3: European funding opportunities, Ms. Ana Patricia Fanjul head of the "Community-Led Local Development" project / ULE (10 minutes),

Section 4: Pitching session, introduction of start-ups (20-30 minutes)

Section 5: Open meetups in breakout rooms or private chats between participants, (10 minutes),

Section 6: "Say less to get more" (5 minutes)

THE 3-MINUTE RULE: SAY LESS TO GET MORE FROM ANY PITCH OR PRESENTATION by Brant Pinvidic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBNjbgDvvdg> (2.54 minutes)

Section 7: Evaluation and input through an electronic questionnaire, (5 minutes), (Ms. Christina Brempou, project management, TUC)

Closing remarks (5 minutes).

This online startup coffee event pilot action was designed in the above scheme (topics and duration) to include the main characteristics of startup fairs while considering the variability of the participants' backgrounds and maintaining its focus on inspiring and motivating all to a fruitful discussion. The topics focus was on sustainability and innovation, funding opportunities, gender issues and effective ways for pitching an idea. The timeframe per section was kept short but effective, to simulate time pressure conditions of the entrepreneurial world.

Upon completion of the event, all participants were asked to fill out an online questionnaire that included the following questions with the respective answers in the figures that follow:

1. Occupation: student, researcher, start-up, entrepreneur, professor, university employee
2. Expectations: by attending the event did you get: Relaxation, Answers, Market Insights, Information on relevant Information on different, Entrepreneurial advice, Possible collaborators, Information on funding (YES/NO), input (YES/NO), New ideas - (YES/NO)?
3. How often would you like this event to take place? Every month? Every two months? Every three months? Once in six months?
4. How long would be the ideal duration of the coffee meet up?
5. Would you participate again (YES/NO)?
6. Would you like this event to be open to a wider audience (YES/NO)?



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Occupations

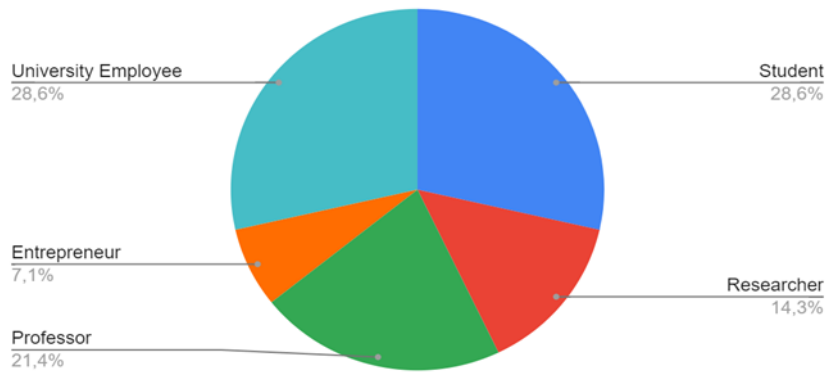


Image 6 Occupation of the participants

By attending this event did you get:

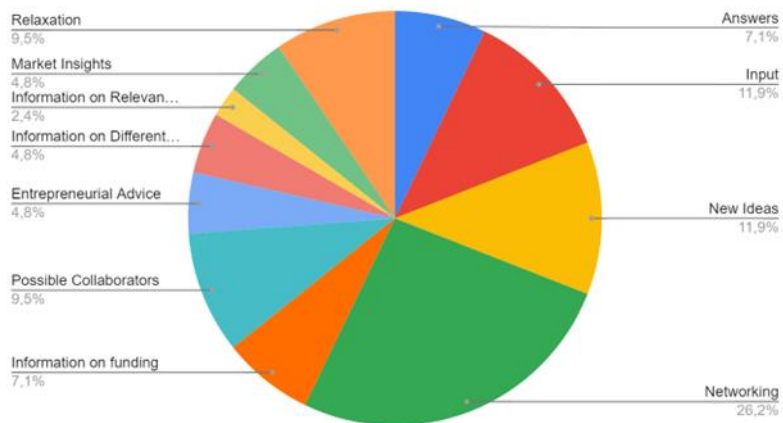


Image 7 Frequency

How long would be the ideal duration of the coffee meet-up?

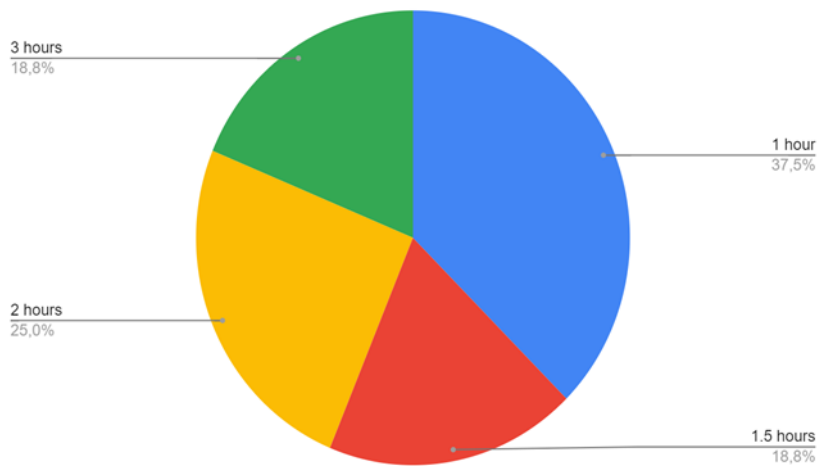
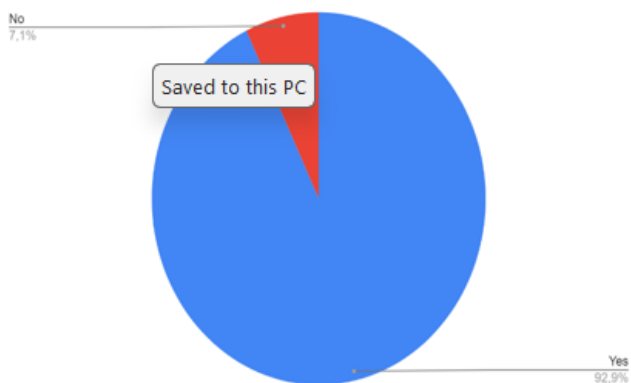
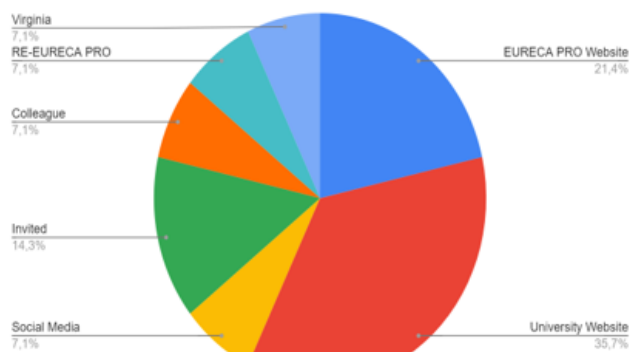


Image 8 Duration

Would you like this event to be open to a wider audience?



How did you find out about this event?



Would you participate again?

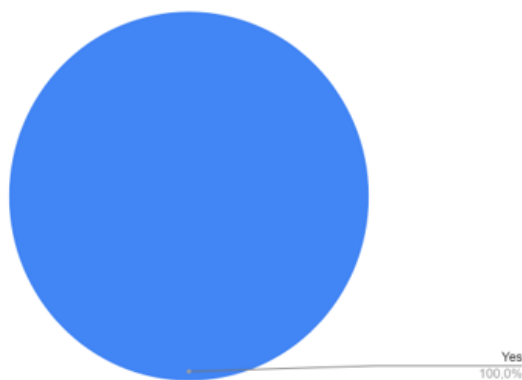


Image 9 General questions

Overall, the Start-up coffee event was evaluated as a joyful and interesting experience. Most of the participants declared that they increased their networking during the event, and they would like to repeat it every 2 months. The ideal duration would be 1 hour and nearly everyone thought it should be open to a wider audience. Finally, 100% of them expressed that they would happily participate again.

4. Synopsis

D8.3 “Pilot actions” arise basically from the WP8 milestones and deliverables 8.1 and 8.2 that include information on the partner universities’ degree of experience in mentorship and startups. The WP8’s objective of a joint innovation structure utilization strategy underlined the rationale of ‘mentorship’ and ‘startup events’: The participation of mentors in the students’ project week and the realization of an online startup coffee event functioned as forerunners and testbeds, for the utilization of a common mentorship database and the regular establishment of online events between the academic and the entrepreneurial communities.

Contribution from the academic community and the entrepreneurial field and gender representation were achieved. Specifically: In TUC's project week, 49% were female students and 51% were male students, in a university where the male students outnumber female students. In the online Startup Coffee event, two out of the three main speakers were female, representing the entrepreneurial and startup fields respectively.

Based on the discussions and brainstorming that took place in both events and according to the questionnaires' conclusions, the main topics that were highlighted were 'pitching'/presentation skills and the funding opportunities.

Both pilot actions were planned in a realistic manner to respond to time and energy constraints, to fit the needs of students, aspiring entrepreneurs and businesspeople for comprehensive and brief input and networking. The agendas of both events were designed to be utilized and adjusted easily by all partner universities to organize similar events quickly and effectively, even after the project's completion. Moreover, the questionnaires included all main questions to evaluate all aspects of the events. Finally, the specific pilot actions were chosen and tested to function supplementary to each other in future activities: students, mentors and entrepreneurs may participate and contribute interchangeably via providing practical input and promoting innovative thinking in similar events.

5. Annex

TUC Project Week poster



The poster features a light blue background with a gold horizontal bar at the top. In the top left corner is the EURECA-PRO logo, which includes a network of nodes and a stylized book icon. In the top right corner is the logo of the Technical University of Crete, depicting a winged figure. The main title 'TUC Project Week' is centered in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below it, the tagline 'Καινοτόμες ιδέες για βιώσιμες λύσεις' and its English translation 'Creative ideas for sustainable solutions' are centered in a smaller, dark blue font. The dates '11-12-13 Οκτωβρίου 2023' are prominently displayed in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below the dates, the location 'Technical University of Crete Campus' is listed, followed by the specific dates and times for each day: Thursday, 11.10 (09.30-14.00), Friday, 12.10 (10.00-13.30), and Saturday, 13.10 (10.00-13.30). The text 'Για όλους τους φοιτητές και τις φοιτήτριες' is centered below the schedule. A large, stylized lightbulb icon composed of various gears is centered in the lower half of the poster. At the bottom, the project name 'RE-EURECA-PRO' and its full description are centered. Below this, the grant agreement number and project duration are provided. The footer contains a row of logos for the participating institutions: Universidad León, Montan University, Hochschule Mittweida, Technical University of Crete, Stefan University of Technology, and PETROSANI, along with the European Union flag and a small text block.

TUC Project Week

Καινοτόμες ιδέες για βιώσιμες λύσεις
Creative ideas for sustainable solutions

11-12-13 Οκτωβρίου 2023

Technical University of Crete Campus
Τετάρτη, 11.10, αίθουσα Κ2.Α1 (Κτίριο Κ2), 09.30-14.00
Πέμπτη, 12.10, αμφιθέατρο "Μ. Μανουσάκης" (Κτίριο Γ4), 10.00 – 13.30
Παρασκευή, 13.10, αμφιθέατρο "Μ. Μανουσάκης" (Κτίριο Γ4), 10.00-13.30
Για όλους τους φοιτητές και τις φοιτήτριες



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TUC online Startup Coffee event poster




EURECA-PRO
RESEARCH & INNOVATION

RE-EURECA-PRO
Online Startup
Coffee Event

Technical University of Crete
Chania, Crete, Greece
04.04.2024

#EurecaPro www.eurecapro.eu

Zoom Link:


 Funded by the Horizon 2020
Erasmus+ Programme of the
European Union

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