

The process of implementation of Ecosystem Integration Labs in The process of implementation of Ecosystem Integration Labs in a university setting – an educational perspective

by T. Bartosz Kalinowski (PhD, DSc) | Pawel Glodek (PhD, DSc) | Magdalena Wisniewska (PhD) | Izabella Szudrowicz | University of Lodz | University of Lodz | University of Lodz | University of Lodz

Abstract ID: 66

Submitted: April 15, 2023

Event: CloudEARTH*i* Conference series - 2023

Topic: Academic Education and its Impact on Entrepreneurship and Sustainability

The main objective of the article is to analyse the educational factors affecting the effectiveness of Ecosystem Integration Labs (EILs) creation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It is assumed that EILs have a strong potential to ensure efficient commercialization (spinoffs) thanks to the involvement of a large number of internal stakeholders (academic and non-academic staff) in co-creation which is combined with social and environmental responsibility.

EILs are living-lab structures where responsible innovation can be co-produced with quadruple helix stakeholders to lead the path to impactful spin-offs/ startups/scale-ups. To ensure the sustainability of the Lab, it is essential to sustain and monitor that units integrated within the system follow RRI principles engaging a wide spectrum of stakeholders leading to ensure optimal positive economic, social and environmental impact. EILs are the main outcomes of the RiEcoLab project conducted at the University of Lodz and partner institutions.

The creation of Ecosystem Integration Labs aims at the following:

1. Strengthening the entrepreneurial and innovation capacity of HEIs by facilitating capacity building and changing the mindset of academic and non-academic HEI staff to become a more successful entrepreneurial university.
2. Engaging in sustainable, circular and responsible regional growth and fostering the creation of jobs via spinoffs/startups/scaleups and technology transfer
3. Enabling citizen science, open science, participatory engagement and responsibility during all R&D phases

Considering the specific characteristics of HEIs, the creation of EIL is made possible by making use of existing infrastructure - EILs are developed on a bespoke basis and based on an assessment of the needs of each university. EIL can be characterised as a matrix or a network linking existing elements and nourishing them with new processes allowing optimised performance in commercialisation activity. Implementing EILs must be supported by the educational part allowing key stakeholders to understand the idea and engage in the implementation and operation of EILs.

Implementing such formation is not free of obstacles but there are also factors that foster its formation. There can be also identified the educational needs of HEI which, when satisfied, would allow the creation of EILs as a commercialisation platform in HEI. The presented paper analyses the educational requirements mainly in the following fields:

- Improvement and renewal of already existing Technology Transfer Office.
- Improvement of advisory boards.
- Monitoring the responsible and impactful commercialisation processes in EILs.

The analysis is based on the case of University of Lodz - one of RiEcoLab project partners.

RiEcoLab stands for Responsible Innovation-led Entrepreneurial University Transformation Centres (Ecosystem Integration Labs). The project is supported by EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology) within HEI Initiative: Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education.