



# GREEN HEXAGON



## Green HExagon Handbook

**Adapting and Recognising Sustainable Green Business  
Pre-Incubation Programs in Higher Education**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Green Hexagon pre-incubation program

*The Green HExagon project was implemented by four partner universities – University of Latvia (Latvia), Wiener Neustadt University of Applied Sciences (Austria), Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague (Czech Republic) and University of Tartu (Estonia), all strongly committed to innovation and support of early-stage start-ups and continuous improvement of the services provided by their business incubators.*

**The project focused on 6 distinct aspects of growth** – development, skills, collaboration, business, innovation and the environment and climate, which also formed the backbone of the online international Pre-Incubation Program jointly developed and implemented by the partnering universities.

The idea of having a joint pre-incubation program stemmed from the needs analysis the partners performed during the project application stage when they identified areas where extra focus and improvements were necessary, such as innovative participant-centred training and support for customers of the partner universities' business incubators, i.e., the students, academic and non-academic staff members. **Building on this, the partners jointly designed a four months' long Pre-Incubation Program that was run simultaneously at the partner universities' business incubators.**

All project partners participated in developing the program content and each of them undertook a fair share of organisational work related to the program's implementation, e.g., engaging trainers and mentors and organising activities. As a result, the participants of the program could benefit from interaction with international trainers' team and thus augment their intercultural communication skills as well.

*The program was organised in two rounds, corresponding to the regular cycle of the university business incubator programs, and the partners received feedback from the participants at the end of each round. **The received feedback was used for making improvements to the program content,** for example, adding new topics for workshops and finetuning the agenda of the bootcamp.*

Most of the Pre-Incubation Program was implemented online, and participants affiliated to all the partnering universities participated in all sessions. The online workshops were supplemented by two on-site bootcamps, one for each round.

*Each round of the Pre-Incubation Program ended with a Demo Day when the best teams pitched and competed for a prize of up to 5000 EUR.*



When designing the program, the partners chose a strategic approach that supported its further adaptability, scalability and replicability, for example, by expanding subjects covered by workshops, boosting the interdisciplinary dimension of the program, inviting new partners to the program or adapting it to the university study curricula.

## 1.2 Importance of adapting to study curricula

**An international pre-incubation program benefits students in ways that locally implemented incubators might not be able to.**

### 1.2.1 Strengthening entrepreneurial mindset

*Firstly, one of the main goals of Green Hexagon is to provide partner university students with an opportunity to participate and compete with their own business idea. For those who have not been able to come up with an idea the program includes an ideation workshop that supports generating a suitable business idea. When students still lack an idea, they can join as a team member and contribute to develop and test it. This way there are multiple options that provide students with mindset strengthening options.*

### 1.2.2 Practical experience

Green Hexagon is of course not just a theoretical program. Participants are guided through business development processes from ideation to prototyping and even pitching in front of a professional international jury. *In order to prepare the students for a successful experience and project development, a handful of supporting workshops are conducted.*

### 1.2.3 Training on core importance topics

For the purpose of providing participating students the best possible support in their project development process the following workshops are carried out: leaderships skills, generative Ai in innovation, Business model canvas, Pitching ABC, Product (service) design, European green deal, LowCode/NoCode and Revenue models. The combination of such practical workshops conducted by industry lead professionals develop and train participants core topic competencies and prepare them for the final pitch.

### 1.2.4 International networking and collaboration

In order to provide the participants an eye opening and unique experience, students are welcome to form international teams around a focus idea. **Furthermore, an international networking opportunity is arranged in the form of a 3-day Bootcamp.** Since most of the program is organised through online platforms like Zoom and Slack, a physical networking and collaboration event is necessary to strengthen and support the overall experience.

## 1.3 Significance of recognising learning outcomes

Many universities, among them the Green Hexagon partners, focus on developing and improving their own internal pre-incubation programs for entrepreneurial students. However, the structure, content and approach might vary in each institution. The aim of this handbook is to lay out a practice-based guideline for combining a sustainable pre-incubation program model.

**The following chapters include the outcomes and learnings gathered during implementation of the Green Hexagon pre-incubation program.** The partner universities have combined a case description to provide existing and new programs still under development with relevant input. These outcomes can be recognised and adapted as learning guidelines for pre-incubation programs.



## 2 Program Overview

### 2.1 Detailed description of the pre-incubation program

In line with its philosophy, the Pre-Incubation Program is envisaged for individuals and start-ups working on green and sustainable business ideas. *Moreover, green practices are applied in all stages of the program reducing its ecological footprint and raising the participants' awareness of environment-friendly solutions.*

The Pre-Incubation program consists of several key components which are explored in more detail below: a series of workshops designed to support aspiring early-stage entrepreneurs in development of green start-ups; individual coaching sessions to provide personalized and relevant support for the program participants; and a skills and leadership development program to equip the participants with an array of soft skills necessary for successful launching and running of their start-ups. **Each round of the Pre-Incubation Program ends with an online Demo Day where the best teams present their pitches and compete for a prize.**

Apart from the training activities, the program also emphasizes the importance of collaboration and networking, providing the participants opportunities for experience sharing and mutual learning – *the online workshops are supplemented with in-situ activities such as bootcamps.*



The international nature of the Pre-Incubation Program helps the participants gain international and intercultural communication skills, as well as polish their English language skills which is an additional learning benefit for the participants. **Furthermore, formation of international teams is highly welcome.** Additionally, the online nature of the program and its activities support improving of the participants' digital skills which enhance their future competitiveness.

*The duration of the Pre-Incubation Program is four months, and the program activities take place every week during this period, typically in late afternoon – evening so that students, academic and non-academic staff can combine the program with their studies and jobs.*

The program participants are students, academic and non-academic staff from the partner universities. They can join the program as teams or as individuals with or without business idea. In case the participants enrol in the program as individuals, they can participate in all program activities but have to form or join a team before the Demo Day if they want to pitch and compete for the prize.

The topics covered during the Pre-Incubation Program include the following: ideation, team formation, generative AI in innovation, business model canvas, product/ service design, marketing ABC and go-to-market strategy, revenue models and pitching training, all with a focus on sustainability and green innovation. *The topics can be supplemented and adapted as necessary to tailor the program to the needs of the participants.*

**The organisation of workshops and engagement of trainers is divided among the partnering universities to ensure a diversity of perspectives and experiences for the benefit of the program participants.**

All partners are involved in recruitment of participants and organise a joint marketing campaign, using social media, university networks, specially organised events etc to outreach to the target audience.

## 2.2 Goals and objectives

**The program is designed for teams who have new ideas or are in an early stage of idea development.** Thus, its main goals are as follows: *i) to show that entrepreneurship and launching one's own start-up can be an exciting career opportunity; ii) to support developing entrepreneurial mindset and inspire creativity and willingness to step out of one's comfort zone to try to implement their business idea; iii) to raise awareness about sustainability and environment related issues and finding of innovative solutions for challenges in these areas; and iv) to equip the early-stage entrepreneurs with a set of skills and competencies that facilitate implementation of their business ideas and increase their competitiveness.*

Another aim is encouraging of transdisciplinary cooperation both within the individual universities and across the entire consortium as it is available for students, academic and non-academic staff from every department and discipline.

The program focuses on very practical subjects and skills that the early-stage entrepreneurs can immediately apply in their start-ups.

Additionally, the program puts strong emphasis on tailored guidance by experienced mentors to help the participants address the specific challenges of their business ventures.

## 2.3 Key components of the pre-incubation program

*As written above, the Pre-Incubation Program consists of several key components that together form a comprehensive support system for participants.* The backbone of the program is a series of workshops that provide essential structure and foundational knowledge. However, the true value of the program emerges from the integration of these workshops with other critical components, each essential on its own but synergistically powerful when combined.

One pivotal element is the team formation process, initiated at the kick-off event. Assembling the right team members is often underestimated but crucial for the success of any entrepreneurial endeavor. This event begins with basics like value proposition to guide the participants on what to focus on when presenting their idea. Participants then engage in online breakout rooms, where project teams present their ideas to one another and exchange feedback. Those without a team or specific idea, known as "free radicals," can move between breakout rooms to find projects that interest them. *This exercise not only aims to form teams but also hones skills in idea presentation, feedback exchange, and networking, thereby fostering a community of like-minded individuals.*

Individual coaching sessions are another vital component, providing tailored support and guidance for specific challenges faced by participants. While workshops cover general startup development topics, these one-on-one sessions address unique issues, offering personalized advice that directly influences progress. *Mentoring sessions further enhance this support, focusing on particular hurdles and offering specialized expertise.*

**A distinguishing feature of the Pre-Incubation Program is its emphasis on sustainability. Right from the application process, where participants must demonstrate a connection to at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the program integrates sustainability into every aspect. This focus extends to the final pitch, where sustainable impact is a criterion for receiving grant money.**

The program also boasts a strong international orientation, fostering cross-border connections and collaborations. The bootcamp, in particular, is a hub for creating international networks and friendships that can lead to future business opportunities. Workshops led by international leaders offer fresh perspectives and encourage innovative, out-of-the-box thinking.

In conclusion, the Pre-Incubation Program's strength lies in the interplay of its various components. The combination of structured workshops, team formation activities, individualized coaching, and a steadfast commitment to sustainability creates a robust ecosystem that supports aspiring entrepreneurs in the early stages of their journey. *This holistic approach ensures that participants are well-equipped to develop viable, impactful business models.*

## **2.4 Key components of the skills and leadership development program**

Besides the shared key component of the international aspect, the Skills and Leadership Program, consisting of the three workshops “Positive Leadership”, “European Green Deal as business opportunity” and “Accelerating the product development process using LowCode/NoCode prototyping”, focused on specific topics in comparison to the workshops of the pre-incubation program.

Those three workshops cover main skills necessary for projects in the early idea phase. *On the first sight, Positive Leadership may be very important only when having some employees, but the development of the right culture starts with the founding team. So, it is necessary to consider essentials of positive leadership principles right at the beginning.* The workshop on European Green Deal not only explains the regulatory framework but also teaches how to use it for new business opportunities. And the last workshop on no-code and low-code solutions enables potential founders to create first prototypes and MVPs in short time – no matter if you have a technical background or not.





## 3 Adapting for Study Curricula

### Integration Strategies in Curriculum & Extra Curriculum Activities

#### 3.1 Collaborating with academic departments

The first thing to do is to identify departments to work with, whether it is publicity or faculty and departments. At CZU, each faculty has its own faculty representative, and it is necessary to contact them, to explain well what the program is about and what target group it is aimed at. Ideally get cooperation from them, where they will share the opportunity of the program with their students, but also identify specific faculty with whom to set up promotions at the introductory seminars in the semester.



#### 3.2 Aligning with curriculum standards

Based on the curriculum settings, agree on a collaborative approach with individuals and a timeline of steps that will work for both parties. Of course, it is natural to target programs that are more entrepreneurial, but other more vocational programs may have entrepreneurial ideas, so it is good to encourage collaboration across the board. Students from different disciplines can then assemble a functional core team to grow budding entrepreneurs.

#### 3.3 Developing course modules

During the pre-incubation program UT “Principles of Entrepreneurship” students were given a possibility to participate, further develop their projects and gain additional wisdom provided by the Green Hexagon workshops. *Multiple teams were able to practice product or service development in class and additionally in the program.* Such approach enabled the teams to speed up their process and double the learning opportunities. Based on this experiment valuable observations can be made that enable us to take these best practices into future course module development.

#### 3.4 Micro-credentials

According to the Council of the European Union “Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability” micro-credentials certify the learning outcomes of short-term learning experiences, for example a short course or training. *They offer a flexible, targeted way to help people develop the knowledge, skills and competences they need for their personal and professional development.*

When designing and issuing micro-credentials, some key principles should be followed. **The 10 principles presented below specify the nature of microcredentials and offer guidance on the design and issuance of high quality micro-credentials.** The 10 principles highlight the key characteristics of the European approach to micro-credentials. They are universal and may be applied in any area or sector. [Link](#)

**The 10 core principles are as follows:** *quality, transparency, relevance, valid assessment, learning pathways, recognition, portability, learner-centered, authentic, information & guidance.*

Micro-credentials should be clearly identified as such with elements that make it possible for learners, education and training institutions, quality assurance agencies, and employers to understand the value and content of micro-credentials and to compare them.

The European approach to micro-credentials suggests a list of critical information elements that any micro-credential should provide and can be adapted in future pre-incubation program in order to provide an additional micro-credential to the participants.

[A European approach to micro-credentials brochure.](#)





## 4 Best Practices

### 4.1 Implementing Non-Formal and Extra-Curricular Activities

The program of the bootcamps held in Austria and Latvia included intensive and in-depth workshops on marketing – “Marketing ABC” and “Go-to-market strategies”. **During the workshops, the participants could interact with highly professional experts and gain hands-on experience in designing their landing pages and marketing strategies and in setting up their marketing channels etc.**

The aim of the workshops was to equip the participants with toolkits they could immediately apply in their startups. *According to the post-bootcamp evaluations, the participants found the workshops highly useful, praising especially the hands-on approach.*

#### 4.1.1 Collaborating with ecosystem partners

The project activities included organisation of local and regional ecosystem networking events. **Said events not only strengthened the existing co-operation ties between the partner universities and their respective ecosystems, but laid basis also for long-term collaborations.** For example, the University of Latvia Business Incubator formed a successful co-operation with the Innovation Centre of Riga Stradiņš University, and both HEIs are now engaging in organisation of joint activities and projects. The regional networking events helped the partner universities to receive valuable insights in neighbouring ecosystems and to expand their regional cooperation initiatives.

#### 4.1.2 Skill mapping

During the project, identifying and mapping the skills of the business incubator’s target audience was crucial for developing a tailored training program. Skills were ranked based on their importance to participants and their self-assessed competence. *The goal was to identify the skills needed by aspiring entrepreneurs to address societal and environmental challenges, ultimately creating high-potential, quality, and sustainable startups.*

Various techniques, such as brainstorming and mind mapping, were used to identify areas including soft skills, entrepreneurial mindset, technical skills, economic skills, and specific skills for creating sustainable startups. The primary frameworks guiding the survey were EntreComp (The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework) and GreenComp (The European Sustainability Competence Framework), complemented by additional considerations. Due to the extensive number of competencies, only a subset was used in the survey, that was used for the identification of the skills.

The outcome was a comprehensive list of skills necessary for starting a sustainable business, based on EntreComp and GreenComp, and a ranking of a subset of those skills, based on the survey. **This ranked list formed the basis for the skills and leadership training program.** The survey also provided insights into the perceived competencies and the importance of various skills among the target group.

In future implementations, skill mapping of pre-incubation program participants can be conducted before, during, and after the program to demonstrate progress and the program's impact. This approach will yield valuable data for business incubators to refine and enhance their services, but also for the participants themselves.

Separate reports detailing the concept of skill mapping, and the results were created to provide in-depth information.

#### Literature:

##### EntreComp:

European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Bacigalupo, M., Kampylis, P., Punie, Y. et al., EntreComp – The entrepreneurship competence framework, Publications Office, 2016, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2791/160811>

##### GreenComp:

Bianchi, G., Pisiotis, U. and Cabrera Giraldez, M., GreenComp The European sustainability competence framework, Punie, Y. and Bacigalupo, M. editor(s), EUR 30955 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, ISBN 978-92-76-53201-9, doi:10.2760/821058, JRC128040.

## 4.2 Sharing Expertise

### Building networks within the innovation ecosystem

As part of working with the ecosystem, we recommend, for example: find out what potential partners you have in your immediate or wider area. To exemplify: there are several initiatives in the Czech Republic where ecosystem collaboration can be deepened, for instance, the Czech Invest agency or the Disruptors community, the student initiative StartupNight. It is possible to organise networking events aimed at reaching out to such communities in your immediate or wider circle. *These can be networking events that are thematic. They can be targeted at budding entrepreneurs who have a chance to pitch an idea to each other and get feedback from the audience on what needs to be improved.*

**At the same time, they can spread awareness about themselves, whether in terms of potential new partners, hiring new team members or even financial investors.** At these events, from the perspective of a representative of an institution, contact can be made with possible new mentors for the project or possible referrals to suitable people.



## 5 Case Studies and Success Stories

### Showcasing BI-s and Individuals that Successfully Adapted and Recognised the Program

#### 5.1 BeResilien GmbH – Bean Saver

Idea / business model: Driving circular economy by collecting coffee grounds and converting it into valuable products. **Their business model consists of three parts:**

1. *Collecting coffee grounds: They work with organisations that produce a minimum amount of coffee grounds per week to collect them efficiently*
2. *Processing: The collected coffee grounds are processed by their partners to make various products, from fertilizer pellets to heating briquettes*
3. *Products and applications: The products are then distributed via retailers*

[More information](#)

*Vera Amtmann's entrepreneurial journey began in the first round of the GreenHEXagon pre-incubation program. Initially, she focused on facilitating Austrian wineries in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through business development, brand management and sales strategies. However, after starting solo and experiencing team changes – she found two team members who left her after some time, Vera pivoted her idea after a few individual consultations.*

**Within four months of the program, she founded her company and secured a collaboration with OMV**, a major energy company seeking circular economy solutions for its net-zero carbon ambitions by 2050. OMV became Vera's first client and a valuable supporter.

Vera credits the program's workshops and individual consultations for her success. Notably, she returned to share her story and inspire the second round of participants. This exemplifies her ongoing connection with the FHWN StartUp Center and her position as a valuable member of the network.

#### 5.2 Gutopia

*The Gutopia team participated in the first round of the Pre-Incubation Program and was declared the winner of the pitching competition at the Demo Day. The team's business idea is fermented probiotic plant-based kefir, made from cashews, hazelnuts or soy. These vegan products are healthy alternatives for health-conscious people who also care about environmental and sustainability issues as these plant-based kefirs have lower ecological footprint than traditional cow's milk. The initial business model is based on direct deliveries to organic/vegan stores, coffee shops, zero waste shops, and the team has ambitions to enter supermarket chains as well. The team leader has expertise in biology and nutrition science.*

**They main results they have achieved during the Pre-Incubation Program were as follows:** formation of the team; creation of their identity (brand name, vision, mission, and also visual identity); they have identified the necessary steps for scaling up the business

to expand production from a home kitchen to a food production line; and have built connections with scientists, mentors, business owners and experts in food technology, marketing and design.

**Gutopia received a prize of 3000 EUR** and used it for renting production premises, designing marketing materials and purchasing ingredients for the experimental batch to scale up their business.

### 5.3 Predictable Beekeeping “ForQueenBee”

*The team “Predictable Beekeeping “ForQueenBee” participated in the first round of the Pre-Incubation Program. Their idea is an IoT sensor device which is linked with an APP and by being placed inside beehives remotely tracks processes in bee colonies which allow beekeepers to predict more sparingly the apiary visits and timely reduce risks in bee colonies like death due to lack of timely food supply, swarming, queen bee absence et.al.*

**The team focuses on providing a viable solution to the following problems:** 1) bee colonies can no longer exist independently without a participation of beekeeper and even though a beekeeper has inspected each hive 2 - 3 times a month, each year at least 30% of world bees are collapsing due to insecticides, diseases, swarming and lack of food; 2) current devices available in the market for predicting beehive processes are too costly, too big, hard to install or not precise enough and the beekeeper cannot timely predict processes and prevent risks (like detecting swarming few minutes before event is too late) which can result in loss of bee colonies. The IoT device proposed by the team will be placed inside a beehive and will help beekeepers remotely detect processes in bee colonies, like swarming, starvation, and rapid nectar flow, thus allowing them to plan work more productively and prevent risks timely.

The majority of current solutions in the market detect rapid nectar flow and swarming with hive scales, but they are heavy to use and detect swarming only at the time of the event. The team’s solution will be able to detect signs of swarming reliably 1-2 days before the event with the help of a microphone sensor that the device uses to compare audio samples with a previously trained machine learning algorithm and to detect rapid nectar flow and signs of starvation in bee colonies.

**Their target audience are commercial beekeepers in the European Union which have at least 150 hives in the season.** The team intends to market their product through their homepage, taking part in beekeeping conferences, markets, annual beekeeping events in Latvia and Europe. *Another alternative is the white label business model.*

Their revenue model is based on annual subscription fees for each apiary equipped with the device and a one-off fee for setup of each device.

The team recognizes that they had benefited a lot from their mentors during the Pre- incubation Program, shaping their business model and learning about setting up of a landing page etc. **Predictable Beekeeping “ForQueenBee” received a prize of 2000 EUR** and used it for making a prototype.

## 5.4 MeadoWays

*The MeadoWays team participated in the first round of the Pre-Incubation Program, and their idea was a biodegradable, plastic-free and durable packaging alternative to help businesses seal and sell products in an environment-friendly way.*

*The packaging would be crafted from recycled hay and haulm – renewable and readily available, but undervalued resource. This innovative packaging would help reduce the pollution caused by plastic packaging. The idea was at an early stage; however, it had a good potential for implementation.*

**According to the evaluation of the international jury, MeadoWays ranked 3rd during the pitch competition at the Demo Day.** Though they did not get the prize, the team leader was determined to overcome all challenges, such as lack of team members and funding for additional research, and continued developing her idea and registering her start-up.

## 5.5 MossHub

*The team “MossHub” participated in the second round of the Pre-Incubation Program and was declared the winner of the pitching competition at the Demo Day 2024. They address the problem of air pollution in cities by proposing freestanding displays to enhance outdoor air quality, based on ecotechnology utilizing moss as a filter. MossHub features cultivated moss tiles nurtured within controlled incubator on a macroalgae substrate. After 3-4 months, when moss tiles are mature enough, they are ready to clean the air in cities. Display for moss tiles attachment is built from solar panels waste and wooden construction, having minor CO2 footprint, it serves a dual purpose: enhancing the urban aesthetic and actively contributing to people and environmental well-being.*

**The team targets their product at the following segments:** B2B (construction and real estate development companies) and B2G (municipalities). Their revenue model envisages production and licensing (of whole supply chain) to scale, as well as sales of 70 displays (5-6 displays per month). *MossHub has already registered a startup, and its CEOs and co-founders have considerable experience in international marketing, public relations, sales, new business entry, while the team members include biologists-moss specialists and environmental law experts.*

The team listed the following as their main achievements during the Green HEXagon pre-incubation program: **development of a business plan for 5 years** (based on the chosen revenue model); enhanced investors pitch and sales pitch deck; gained extensive knowledge in all business areas, especially focusing on marketing and sales strategy, after valuable bootcamp sessions. “All of the program was super useful for us, as we developed our product and its go-to-market strategy all the time and at the moment we feel comfortable to present our product to potential customers and we already have ongoing negotiations with one customer for the first pilot”, explained the team leaders.

**By unanimous decision of the international jury, MossHub received a prize of 5000 EUR** and used the prize for producing a prototype to be piloted in the city environment.

## 5.6 Vana Lugu

*Vana Lugu participated in the second round of the Pre-Incubation Program. They build personalised audio tours around Tartu, Tallinn and other Baltic cities based on customer interests and hobbies. They provide exploration of student life in the XIX century or hunting of some ghosts around the town. Specific tour topic can be chosen, and a custom crafted tour will be created.*

**The team consists of local guides, and they love Estonia!** Vana Lugu aims to help all visitors connect with the beloved towns. People are all different and love different things. Some want to learn more about modern art when in a new city, some won't, and some want a mix of everything!

**Vana Lugu team has conducted over 500 tours**, and now they have decided to move forward and provide a personalised audio tour to enable exploration of Tartu anytime a person likes to. Their exciting virtual tours allow you to experience Tartu's past and modern history like never before.

## 5.7 Green Panels

*Vertical aeroponic garden expandable to every direction with 365 sustainable growth of vegetable (mostly leafy). Automatic irrigation system provides control for the customer to ensure quality of the crop through water level, sunlight and temperature monitoring. within the set of panels. The GreenPanels gadget can be hung up on the wall or mounted on a stand either outside or inside with possible extensions like LEDs to support the growth in a dark part of a room or a greenhouse effect cover to protect the plants from unpleasant weather conditions.*

Potential customers: There are two main possibilities - either a **private person or a legal entity**. From young adults passionate about bio products or a new technology to middle-aged persons living in an apartment with lack of space or just a balcony that would go to waste if a large flowerpot would've been put on it which would limit the space and would be put out of regular use. Or it could be someone who believes it would be economical and beneficial for them to grow their own with GreenPanels. It could be a family living a healthy lifestyle.

**Then there is a private entity**, a company which could possibly purchase a useful gadget of GreenPanels into an office building to increase the amount of greenery which is to be believed improves concentration of oxygen in the premises.





## 6 Challenges and Solutions

### Addressing Common Challenges in Program Adaptation and Recognition Providing Solutions and Recommendations

#### 6.1 Program team formation

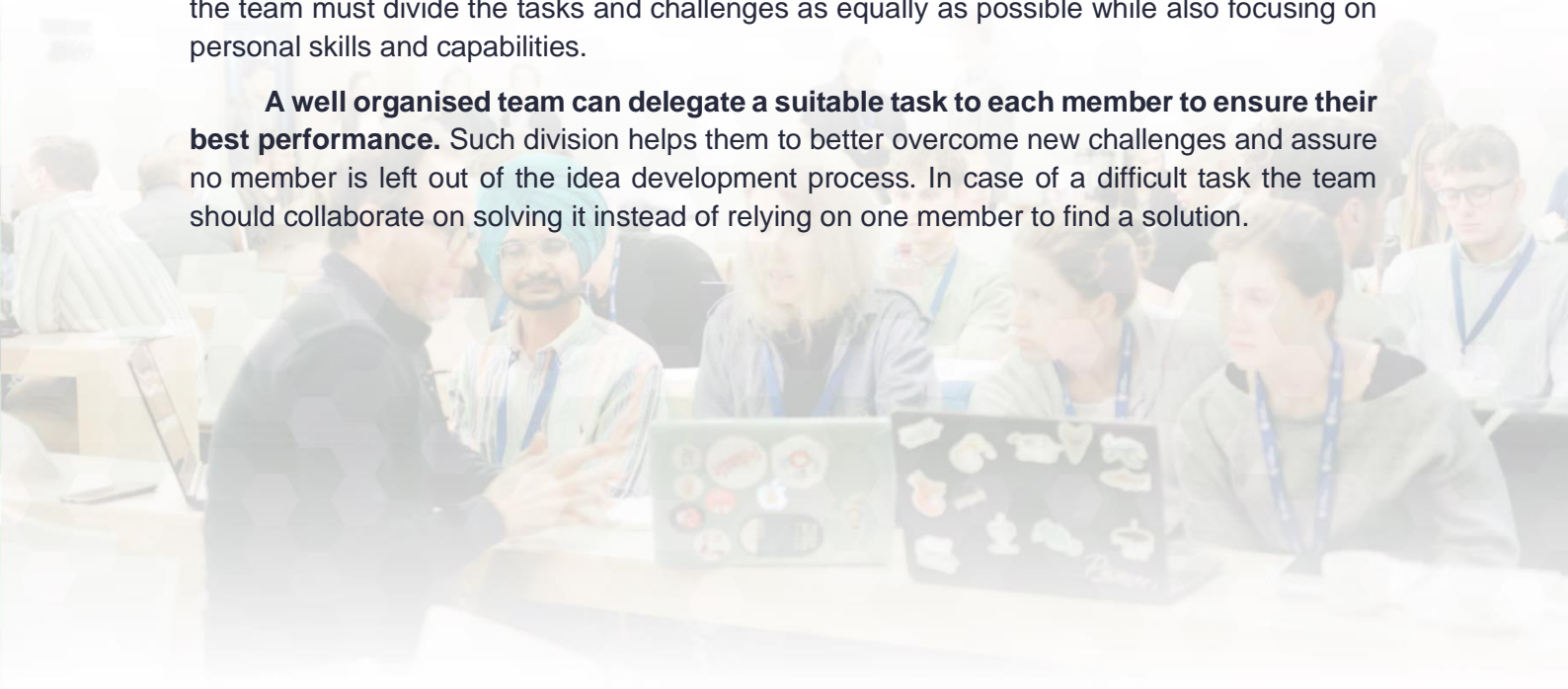
When forming a program team, it is very important to choose the right teammates with whom you can learn from each other and develop your idea. Complementarity of skills, personalities and interests bring diverse perspectives to the team, allowing each member to make meaningful contribution to development of the business idea. *For example, certain team members may have experience in technical areas, while others may excel in management, community engagement or PR, making the team effort stronger than any individual contribution.*

Matchmaking, ideation and team formation events are instrumental in facilitating creation of efficient teams which have a good balance of required skills and can perform well together. Such events may be also targeted at specific groups of students, e.g. deeptech students, to encourage interaction across disciplines and faculties and to address a common challenge related to lack of technical or IT expertise within the teams.

#### 6.2 Dividing tasks

*One man's armies can be efficient only to a certain point – each founder or team leader has to master the art of engaging team members and dividing tasks among them to ensure the team's success.* Each team should consist of multiple members who should share common goals and values. To achieve maximum input and contribution of each team member, the team must divide the tasks and challenges as equally as possible while also focusing on personal skills and capabilities.

**A well organised team can delegate a suitable task to each member to ensure their best performance.** Such division helps them to better overcome new challenges and assure no member is left out of the idea development process. In case of a difficult task the team should collaborate on solving it instead of relying on one member to find a solution.





## 7 Future Prospects

### The Role of Sustainable Green Business in Future Education

Sustainable development has become absolute necessity in the era of global environmental challenges, resource depletion, biodiversity loss, climate change, and social equity issues. According to the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development means “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. *It cannot be achieved without a wholistic approach to education equipping students with awareness, understanding, knowledge, skills, values and sustainability mindset that encourages stewardship towards local communities and society in general.*

This is something where universities and their business incubators can play a pivotal role by promoting acquisition of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that support instilling of environmental consciousness and awareness, and sustainability mindset. It includes development of critical, systemic and strategic thinking, decision making and problem-solving skills, as well as spurring of innovation and creativity enabling the students to see new business opportunities that would be both sustainable and economically viable.

For example, the Pre-Incubation Program “Green HExagon” included a workshop on the European Green Deal emphasizing the new possibilities and business opportunities that come together with the new requirements. *Furthermore, the universities and their business incubators are catalysts of innovation and research, and targeted support to sustainable green business ideas can trigger creation of more and more startups and spinoffs offering innovative technologies, products and services that are instrumental in reaching sustainability goals.* Additionally, sustainability and green practices, skills and competencies are not limited to individual subjects and disciplines – they are truly interdisciplinary and as such should be incorporated in the entire curriculum.

**The interdisciplinarity dimension can be strengthened by facilitating collaboration, communication and teamwork across faculties and disciplines,** for example, by recruiting students from different study fields to university business incubator programs and encouraging them to form multi-disciplinary teams that work together on a green business idea or research. Moreover, the universities and their business incubators can team up with other ecosystem players, such as sustainable entrepreneurs, environmental NGOs etc to offer their students hands-on experience in green business, for example, traineeships, field trips, skills learning initiatives to spark interest in finding sustainable innovative solutions to environmental challenges.



## 8 Conclusion

### Summarising the Handbook's Key Points

### Encouraging Further Collaboration and Adaptation

The Pre-Incubation Program is designed so that it can be easily supplemented with new modules focussing on general topics, for example, creative and design thinking or possibilities brought for early-stage entrepreneurs by AI, or on more specific areas, such as training for founders of deep tech or health startups, workshops on commercialisation aspects and intellectual property rights etc.

**The Program design allows also for accepting of new co-operation partners**, i.e., other universities interested in offering international pre-incubation programs to their students, thus facilitating further multiplication of knowledge and adoption of best practices adopted by the Green HExagon partners and encouraging expansion of collaboration networks.



*Furthermore, the program activities can also be adapted for greater integration of other ecosystem actors, for example, engaging entrepreneurs as team mentors, organising matchmaking events between companies and start-ups etc.*