

ENTRE

Your inspiration on coaching in VET Entrepreneurship Education

HOW TO DEVELOP A VET ENTREPRENEUR HUB

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



PREFACE

Welcome to the How to HUB guide of the C-ENTRE project.

This guide was developed within the framework of the C-ENTRE project (project number: 2024-2-HU01-KA220-VET-000294403), implemented under the Erasmus+ Programme Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training (KA220-VET).

The project aims to support VET educators in developing coaching-oriented approaches to entrepreneurship education. This guide focuses on the place where such learning can happen: the Entrepreneur HUB. It brings together the co-creation workshops with students and teachers, the desk research in Hungary, The Netherlands and Portugal, and the study visits to HUBs in The Netherlands. From this material it builds a practical route for establishing a HUB in a vocational education and training (VET) context.

The guide is designed for VET leaders, teachers, project managers, policy makers and partner organizations. Rather than prescribing one model, it offers questions, examples, checklists and templates that can be adapted to different educational contexts. The guide is a companion to the other C-ENTRE training materials: where those support educators in the classroom, this guide supports institutions in creating the environment around it.

The materials were developed collaboratively by the project partners, based on their expertise in entrepreneurship education, coaching methodologies and vocational education and training.

For further information, contact us via the project website c-entre.eu.

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INTRODUCTION

This guide aims to provide inspiration, tips, tricks and hands-on tools for setting up an Entrepreneur HUB in a vocational education and training (VET) institution. It translates the research, co-creation workshops and study visits of the C-ENTRE project into a practical route from first idea to a working HUB, whatever your starting point or region.

There is no single model for a HUB. What works depends on the needs of your students and teachers, your institution's strategy and the ecosystem around you. The guide therefore does not prescribe a solution. It gives you examples from The Netherlands, Hungary and Portugal, and the tools to make your own choices.

START WITH THE ONLINE SELF-ASSESSMENT



The test at c-entre.eu/hub-test takes about 7 to 10 minutes. It has 30 statements, which you answer with Yes, Maybe or No. The statements cover the three levels of this guide:

- MICRO: students and teachers
- MESO: regional and national ecosystem
- MACRO: European benchmarks

The result shows your priority level and where to begin in this guide.

READING GUIDE

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

VET leaders, teachers, project managers, policy makers and partner organizations who develop, run or scale entrepreneurial learning environments. It suits institutions starting from scratch and those improving an existing initiative.

HOW THE GUIDE IS BUILT

The guide works in three levels, followed by a synthesis and practical tools:

1. **MICRO**: students and teachers, daily learning practice and user needs.
2. **MESO**: the regional and national ecosystem, policies, partnerships and funding.
3. **MACRO**: European benchmarks and transferable models.
4. **Integrated HUB architecture**: how the three levels come together in governance, learning model, sustainability and coaches.
5. **Implementation pathway**: three phases, from preparation to scaling.
6. **Tools, templates and visual summary**: materials you can use directly.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Did you take the online test at c-entre.eu/hub-test? If so, please proceed to the chapter linked to your test result:

Your test result points to	Start with
MICRO students and teachers: roles, time, space and tools	Chapter 1
MESO regional and national ecosystem: partnerships, funding and networks	Chapter 2
MACRO European benchmarks: learning from European examples	Chapter 3

The test names the level with the most room to grow. You can also read the other levels; chapters 4 and 5 bring the three together.



Of course, you can also read the guide from start to finish or jump to what you need. Chapters 1–5 each end with a checklist or roadmap. Chapters 1–3 also contain blocks "Lesson for your HUB" in most sections, which turn an example into an action, and templates you can adapt.

The examples in this guide come from three countries. Treat them as inspiration to adapt to your own context, not as models to copy.

1 – MICRO LEVEL: INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS

The MICRO level starts with the people who will use the HUB: students and teachers in vocational education and training (VET). Their daily reality, motivations and constraints decide whether an Entrepreneur HUB is functional, inspiring and used. This chapter shows what students and teachers asked for in co-creation workshops, how those wishes were prioritized, and what follows for the design, the coaches and the implementation of your own HUB.

The chapter does two things. It accounts for how C-ENTRE gathered input in three countries (The Netherlands, Hungary and Portugal) and it gives you the tools to map the micro environment of your own institution. Each country ran its own co-creation workshop, so the findings differ in detail. This chapter therefore highlights what the workshops have in common and what stands out, as inspiration rather than a blueprint.

The chapter has six parts. Chapter 1.1 describes how the workshops were organized and gives you questions to run your own. Chapter 1.2 gives the key findings. Chapter 1.3 shows how the wishes were prioritized with the MoSCoW method. Chapter 1.4 turns the priorities into design principles. Chapter 1.5 describes the role of business coaches. Chapter 1.6 is a checklist you can use with your own team.

1.1 - CO-CREATION WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

A HUB that students and teachers helped to design is a HUB they will use. Instead of guessing what a vocational institution needs, the partners ran a participatory co-creation workshop with the people who will work in the space every day, using ideation tools and visual mapping techniques. The same format can be repeated in any institution.

WHO TAKES PART

The quality of the workshop depends on who is in the room. The partners selected participants on four criteria:

- They are involved in VET and in entrepreneurship.
- They have a local background, rather than an international one.
- The group is a mix of students and teachers, in an equal ratio.
- Where possible, other VET entrepreneurship stakeholders join, to broaden the perspectives.

In Szeged (Hungary), for example, the workshop brought together four VET students and four VET teachers.

THE TWO-HOUR WORKSHOP

The workshop takes two hours and follows five phases. Together they move the group from a shared mindset to a prioritized list of requirements.

Phase	What happens	Result
1. Warm-up and mindset reflection	Open group discussion on what an entrepreneurial mindset means in practice: creativity, autonomy, real-world problem solving and awareness of risk.	A shared language
2. Context and trend setting	Short presentation of European HUB examples, VET innovation practice and the C-ENTRE project.	A common frame of reference
3. Paired needs assessment	Student-teacher pairs work through a structured questionnaire on barriers, missing resources, personal drivers and expectations of the physical space.	Needs, barriers and motivations
4. Visual mapping and floorplan design	Groups draw floorplans and moodboards that show zones, equipment and atmosphere.	Floorplans and moodboards
5. MoSCoW prioritization	Ideas are grouped into themes and sorted into Must, Should, Could and Won't have (yet).	A transparent, feasible requirement list

TOOLS TO MAP YOUR OWN MICRO ENVIRONMENT

You can run the same workshop in your own institution. Use the material below, and adapt the wording to your context.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PAIRED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Give each student-teacher pair these questions on paper and ask them to write down answers separately before comparing.

- What would make you want to spend time in this space?
- What gets in the way of working on your own projects at school today? (space, time, rules, storage, money)
- What do you need to try an idea quickly and cheaply?
- Who would you like to meet or learn from, and how?
- What worries you about starting something real? (risk, legal, financial, tax)
- What would you expect from the other group (students from teachers, teachers from students)?

PROMPTS FOR THE MOODBOARD AND FLOORPLAN

- Which zones does the space need? (open, focused, meeting, social, storage)
- Which three words describe the atmosphere?
- Where do coaches and visitors sit?

- What do people see when they walk in?

ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

After the workshop, write your results in a table like this one:

Theme	What we heard	Must / Should / Could / Won't (yet)	Owner
Space and layout			
Tools and infrastructure			
People and network			
Support and coaching			
Atmosphere and facilities			

Compare your table with the common ground in chapter 1.2. Where you agree, you are in good company. Where you differ, that is what makes your HUB specific.

TWO-HOUR WORKSHOP STEP BY STEP

Appendix 1 contains the full facilitator version of this workshop, with preparation, materials, a detailed agenda and tips. It follows the same five steps as the table above, but groups them into rounds and uses slightly different timings. The table in Appendix 1 shows which round belongs to which phase. Use the timings in this chapter as a quick overview and the Appendix when you plan and run the session.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Pair every student with a teacher in the needs assessment. Each hears the other's barriers first-hand, and that shared understanding is what makes the later priorities easy to agree on. Chapter 1.6 turns this format into steps you can follow.

1.2 - KEY FINDINGS

The workshops produced moodboards, floorplans and long lists of wishes. Because each country ran its own session, the lists differ. The table below puts them side by side and shows where they overlap. Those overlaps are the most reliable signal for your own HUB.

WHERE THE WORKSHOPS AGREE

Theme	The Netherlands	Portugal and Hungary	Common ground
Atmosphere	A homely, natural vibe, with glass and wooden elements.	Natural light, plants and relaxed seating.	A studio feel instead of a classroom.

Theme	The Netherlands	Portugal and Hungary	Common ground
Flexible workplace	Open space next to smaller areas for personal work, with whiteboards, chalkboards and silent areas.	Modular furniture, mobile whiteboards, noticeboards and quiet focus zones.	A flexible mix of open and focused areas.
Knowledge and people	Experienced entrepreneurs, advisors, masterclasses and books.	Structured access to active entrepreneurs and mentors.	Real entrepreneurs close at hand.
Equality and community	Everybody is "the same", a who's who board and a request board.	Flat hierarchy, community events and a knowledge-sharing culture.	Students, teachers and entrepreneurs as equals.
Support	A coach who helps combine school and entrepreneurship.	One central contact point and mentoring zones.	A visible person to ask.
Social space	A café-like area, free coffee and tea, and games such as ping-pong.	A kitchenette or coffee corner and recreation.	Informal places to meet.

Two items came up in only one set of workshops: lockable long-term storage for prototypes, and reliable Wi-Fi and power. Both are practical Must haves, so check them locally.

The sections below describe the findings in more detail.

WHAT THE MOODBOARDS AND FLOORPLANS SHOW

The moodboards show a modern office: open and transparent, with room for individual work and for meetings. Knowledge sources and relaxing options sit close by. Glass, wooden elements and creative brainstorm possibilities return in the decoration. The floorplans make a clear distinction between an open space and smaller dedicated areas for personal work, and they ask for working areas as well as relaxing spaces.

DESIRED HUB FUNCTIONS

- **A flexible space for thinking and doing.** An experimental studio for students and a "Teacher Incubator" where educators can try active learning methods.
- **Mentoring and collaboration zones.** Areas for one-to-one coaching, shared tables, notice boards, whiteboards, chalkboards and quiet focus zones.
- **Hardware and low-cost prototyping.** Computers, screens, projectors and printers, plus whiteboards, flipcharts, cardboard, glue and hand tools.

- **One central gateway.** A single entry point or contact person for curriculum toolkits, legal and administrative guidance, funding and access to active entrepreneurs.

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

Barrier	What it looks like
Space	Traditional classrooms with fixed desks limit the variety of activities and flexible teamwork.
Curriculum and administration	Full timetables, strict curriculum rules and a heavy administrative load for teachers.
Interrupted projects	No secure, lockable, long-term storage, so prototypes cannot stay between sessions.
Uncertainty	Fear of failure and confusion about legal, financial and tax matters when moving from theory to a real venture.

MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS

- Developing creativity, autonomy, risk awareness and practical problem solving.
- Treating VET students as responsible, self-directed adults who own their projects.
- Showing earlier student results and prototypes in the space as inspiring examples.
- Offering teachers a safe, low-risk place to try methods such as Lean Startup and Design Thinking.

FINDINGS FOR STUDENTS

Students grouped their wishes into six themes:

Theme	What students asked for
Workplace	Enough desks, personal dedicated spaces, chalkboards, whiteboards, notice boards, meeting rooms and silent areas.
Facilities	A homely, natural atmosphere, free coffee, tea and hot chocolate, free parking and brainstorm material.
Goals	A motivating, serious and ambitious environment with autonomy, purpose and coaching.
Inspiration and knowledge	Advisors, experienced entrepreneurs, books, masterclasses and people with experience.

Theme	What students asked for
Network	Meeting rooms, meeting entrepreneurs, helping each other, a "who's who" board, a request board, a café-like social area and games such as ping-pong.
Support	Clear deadlines, realistic assessments and a coach who helps combine school and entrepreneurship.

FINDINGS FOR TEACHERS

Teachers grouped their wishes into five themes:

Theme	What teachers asked for
Equality	Everybody is "the same", with a pro-active spirit, a good workflow, and giving and receiving feedback.
Inspiration and knowledge	Real entrepreneurs in the building, coaching and workshops, several knowledge areas and entrepreneurs from all VET programmes.
Structure	Clear rules and dedicated time frames, with flexibility. Students and teachers are both present.
Colleagues	Meeting each other, with a small core group acting as "owners" of the HUB.
Facilities	An open space with a variety of people, from school and freelance, usable as workplace or classroom.

Teachers also expect flexible scheduling, efficient use of resources and structured help to link their classrooms with companies and regional entrepreneurs.

THE THREE THINGS THAT MATTERED MOST

Participants singled out three items as critical:

1. Equality between students, teachers, entrepreneurs and others.
2. Inspiring each other by sharing knowledge and experience.
3. A natural atmosphere that makes you *want* to work there.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Most of what people asked for is low-cost and about atmosphere, flexibility and people, not expensive equipment. Start there.

1.3 - PRIORITIZATION WITH MOSCOW

A long wish list is not a plan. At the end of the workshop, participants grouped all findings into themes and then ranked the themes with the MoSCoW method. MoSCoW sorts

every idea into one of four levels, which keeps the process transparent and feasible while the scope stays ambitious.

Level	Meaning
Must have	Without it, the HUB cannot work.
Should have	Important, but the HUB can open without it.
Could have	Nice to have if time and budget allow.
Won't have (yet)	Consciously postponed, not forgotten.

PRIORITIES FROM THE WORKSHOPS IN PORTUGAL AND HUNGARY

Level	Findings
Must have	A reconfigurable space with modular furniture. Reliable high-speed Wi-Fi and enough power points. Lockable long-term project storage. Basic low-cost prototyping tools (whiteboards, flipcharts, cardboard, glue, hand tools). Essential presentation hardware: computers, monitors, projectors, printers. Structured access to mentors, such as office hours or speed-mentoring with practicing entrepreneurs. One central gateway or contact person.
Should have	Shared collaboration tables and a second screen. Regular community events: meetups, demo days and pitch showcases. A digital platform to share ideas and documents between sessions. Coaching toolkits and peer guidelines for teachers.
Could have	Comfort and atmosphere: beanbags, lounge seating, a kitchenette or coffee corner, plants, air conditioning. Peer-to-peer feedback where teachers and students are equal partners. Formal cooperation with external incubators or accelerators. Virtual international exchange.
Won't have (yet)	A fully equipped high-tech maker space, because setup and maintenance are expensive. Complex legal and administrative services on site, which are better arranged through partners. Mandatory participation, because the HUB should stay voluntary to protect intrinsic motivation.

Advanced tools such as 3D printers and laser cutters were placed as a "Could have" in one workshop and as "not yet" in another. The two tables do not have to match. Each group ranked the ideas against its own situation, and the differences show how much the right priorities depend on context. Read the tables for common patterns: Motivation

and shared knowledge are Must or Should wherever they were ranked; equality ranks from Should to Could.

PRIORITIES BY GROUP

The workshop in The Netherlands ranked the themes separately for students and for teachers.

Level	Students	Teachers
Must have	A motivating environment: rewarding, autonomy and passion, which creates a sense of purpose.	A space where knowledge and inspiration are shared.
Should have	Networking through interaction: exchange, a café or bar, whiteboard and chalk.	No difference between teachers and students: equal partners.
Could have	A place that supports interaction, feedback and equal partnership between teachers and students.	Good facilities and workplace layout.
Won't have (yet)	Support with deadlines, planning and realistic goal setting.	Structure, team spirit and market forces.

IN PRACTICE

The two views are not in conflict. Students put motivation and purpose first, and teachers put shared knowledge and inspiration first. Both groups describe the same HUB: a place where people want to be and where they learn from each other.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Run the MoSCoW session in your own workshop rather than copying this table. Your "Must haves" will depend on what your institution already has, such as rooms, Wi-Fi or storage. Use the lists above as a starting point and write down what you postponed, so that "Won't (yet)" does not turn into "never".

1.4 - HUB DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The findings and priorities lead to a set of design principles. They cover what the HUB must offer (functional requirements), how it should feel (experiential qualities) and who it is for (access and inclusivity).

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Principle	What it means
Dynamic space configuration	Replace rows of desks with modular furniture, shared project tables, mobile whiteboards,

Principle	What it means
	notice boards and dedicated mentoring zones. A mix of open areas and spaces for focused work, meetings and brainstorming.
Digital and physical infrastructure	High-speed Wi-Fi, plenty of power points, monitors, printers, prototyping materials, hand tools and lockable long-term storage for prototypes.
Social and well-being facilities	Informal meeting areas, a café or kitchenette corner and recreation such as ping-pong, to support networking and well-being.
Healthy, comfortable environment	Natural light, ventilation, plants and a pleasant interior, so people want to spend time on their ideas.

EXPERIENTIAL QUALITIES

- **A professional studio atmosphere.** An open, inspiring space that looks like a co-working studio, not a school building.
- **Motivation and purpose.** Space that encourages autonomy, passion and a clear goal.
- **Inspiration and knowledge sharing.** Access to advisors, experienced entrepreneurs, books and masterclasses.
- **Networking and collaboration.** Informal contact between students, teachers and external entrepreneurs, supported by a visible "who's who" board and a request board.
- **Peer-to-peer learning.** Members share their own expertise and learn from each other beyond the borders of their study programme.

ACCESS AND INCLUSIVITY

- **Equality.** Students, teachers and external partners take part as equals.
- **Voluntary and open.** The HUB is an opportunity, not an obligation, and is open to all VET students, whatever their discipline, level or learning style.
- **Flexible access.** Schedule access and resources so that everyone can take part, regardless of programme or role.
- **A visible gateway.** A coordinator or central contact point helps students from different disciplines find their way.
- **Inclusive design.** Spaces and programmes that suit different learning styles, backgrounds and abilities.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

You can apply most of these principles in a room you already have. Moving the desks, adding a lockable cupboard and naming one contact person cost little and cover three of the Must haves.

1.5 - ROLE OF BUSINESS COACHES

Business coaches connect education, entrepreneurship and student support. Their role follows directly from the needs the workshops identified: planning help, access to knowledge, and a bridge to the business world. In short, coaches help the HUB work as a safe, structured and inspiring space.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTEGRATION

- Guide students from theory to a practical business perspective, in project planning, unit costing, time management and goal setting.
- Help students apply the Kolb learning cycle to turn technical school assignments into viable mini-projects or micro-enterprises.
- Open up knowledge sources, both inside the HUB and through external partners.
- Make sure students' entrepreneurial activities fit the educational requirements and learning outcomes.

MENTORING AND FACILITATION

- Offer one-to-one coaching and small-group sessions in the dedicated mentoring zones.
- Organize workshops, challenge-based projects and knowledge-sharing sessions.
- Use action-oriented methods: Lean Startup, Design Thinking, rapid prototyping and simulated business role-plays.
- Support reflection, feedback and iterative learning. Short online questionnaires or self-mapping tools help students see their learning style, strengths and pitfalls.
- Run risk-assessment workshops, which address the fear of failure that students named.

COLLABORATION WITH TEACHERS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS

- Act as the bridge between students, teachers, local SMEs and entrepreneurs.
- Manage mentor office hours, speed-mentoring events and challenge-based projects with regional companies.
- Check that company contributions are mutually beneficial and not exploitative.
- Translate industry needs into learning outcomes, and share insights and good practice with teachers.

COACH OR COORDINATOR?

Coaching and running the HUB are different jobs. Next to the coaches, you may need a coordinator who manages access, supports the community and organizes workshops,

events and external partnerships. In a small HUB one person can start with both roles, but name them separately so that neither is forgotten. The coordinator is also the visible "gateway" that students asked for.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Do not wait for a perfect coaching team. Train a few interested teachers in the action-oriented methods, set fixed mentor office hours and publish one contact point. That already covers the core of the coach role.

1.6 - IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to set up a HUB that reflects what your own students and teachers need. Tick each step when it is done.

CO-CREATION AND VALIDATION

- ▢ Plan a two-hour co-creation workshop with an equal number of VET students and teachers, plus other local stakeholders if possible.
- ▢ Follow the five phases: warm-up, context, paired needs assessment, floorplan and moodboard, MoSCoW.
- ▢ Use moodboards, floorplan sketches and thematic grouping to make requirements visible.
- ▢ Test your assumptions in the paired needs assessment: barriers, missing resources, motivation and expectations of the space.
- ▢ Check the design choices again with participants and adjust.

MINIMUM VIABLE HUB

- ▢ Agree the Must haves through MoSCoW and write down what is postponed.
- ▢ Arrange a reconfigurable space with modular furniture.
- ▢ Make sure there is reliable Wi-Fi and enough power points.
- ▢ Provide lockable long-term storage for prototypes.
- ▢ Provide basic prototyping materials and presentation equipment.
- ▢ Plan informal meeting opportunities, such as a coffee corner and a who's who board.

BUSINESS COACH ROLES

- ▢ Appoint one or more business coaches and, if needed, a coordinator.
- ▢ Define their tasks: mentoring, workshops, and links to companies.
- ▢ Train selected teachers in action-oriented methods such as Lean Startup and Design Thinking.
- ▢ Set fixed mentor office hours and publish one contact point.
- ▢ Agree with teachers how the coaches' work fits the curriculum.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- ▢ Collect regular feedback from students, teachers and company partners.
- ▢ Review the design principles, layout and priorities periodically.
- ▢ Revisit the "Won't have (yet)" list when budget and experience grow.

Sources: C-ENTRE co-creation workshops in The Netherlands (Leeuwarden), Hungary (Szeged) and Portugal (Braga).

2 – MESO LEVEL: REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM

The MESO level looks beyond your institution. An Entrepreneur HUB is not an isolated space or programme. It lives in a regional and national ecosystem of companies, startup networks, support organizations, public authorities and funding bodies. A HUB that builds on this ecosystem avoids duplication, stays relevant for longer and gives vocational learners access to real challenges, mentors and networks.

This chapter draws on desk research in Hungary, The Netherlands and Portugal. The three countries offer complementary examples: collaborative innovation networks in The Netherlands, dual education and industry partnerships in Hungary, and regional innovation strategies with multi-stakeholder cooperation in Portugal. Use them as inspiration, not as models to copy, and as a guide to map the ecosystem around your own institution.

The chapter has six parts. Chapter 2.1 describes the desk research behind the chapter. Chapter 2.2 gives the regional findings: innovation infrastructure, policy priorities, and the gaps and opportunities for VET. Chapter 2.3 maps the stakeholders and describes three partnership models. Chapter 2.4 shows how policy, funding and institutional strategy fit together. Chapter 2.5 describes the HUB functions in a regional context, from coaching to links with the vocational curriculum. Chapter 2.6 is a step-by-step checklist for implementing the MESO level in your own region.

2.1 - DESK RESEARCH AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Before designing a HUB, look at what your region already offers. The partners did this in Hungary, The Netherlands and Portugal. They studied the policies, entrepreneurship programmes, innovation infrastructure and regional networks that matter for an Entrepreneur HUB in vocational education and training (VET). You can use the same four areas to scan your own region.

WHAT THE RESEARCH LOOKED AT

- **Policy alignment.** National and regional innovation strategies and VET priorities.
- **Entrepreneurship support.** Existing programmes, funding opportunities and innovation infrastructure.
- **Stakeholder networks.** Connections between schools, businesses, public authorities and entrepreneurial communities.
- **Educational models.** Approaches that link entrepreneurial learning with practical business challenges.

WHAT STANDS OUT PER COUNTRY

Country	What stands out
The Netherlands	Collaborative innovation networks
Hungary	Dual education structures and industry partnerships
Portugal	Regional innovation strategies and multi-stakeholder cooperation

The main finding is the same in all three: build on what your region already has. Connect vocational learners with the wider entrepreneurship ecosystem instead of creating entirely new structures.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Use the four areas as a quick scan of your own region. Write one line per area: which policies, programmes, networks and education models already touch entrepreneurship in VET? That is the start of the ecosystem map you make in step 2 of the checklist in 2.6.

2.2 - REGIONAL FINDINGS

This section brings together what the partner regions showed on three points: the innovation infrastructure that already exists, the policy priorities you can link to, and the gaps and opportunities for VET. Each point ends with what it means for your own HUB.

EXISTING INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Innovation infrastructure is more than buildings and equipment. Business networks, mentoring programmes and shared working environments are resources too, especially when students can work on real business challenges. Three examples show three different ways to use them.

Example	What it is	What partners bring	What you can take from it
Media Innovation Campus Leeuwarden (MICA), The Netherlands	Students, educators and businesses work together on multidisciplinary projects in media, communication and digital innovation.	Companies are committed project partners, through financial contributions or project investments. Students are not treated as unpaid labour.	A partnership works when both sides gain: companies get fresh perspectives and solutions, students meet professional expectations and client relationships.
Sectoral Training Centres (ÁKKs), Hungary	Centres that bring schools and companies together.	Industry partners provide advanced equipment, technical expertise and mentoring. Students work on practical production challenges, such as improving an industrial process.	Use existing industry partnerships and facilities to bring entrepreneurship into technical training, without large new investments.
Startup Braga and Human Power Hub, Portugal	Two organizations with different focus: Startup Braga supports technology ventures, the	In the Portuguese proposal, a VET HUB prepares students: it helps them turn technical prototypes into validated business concepts, then	Complement existing incubators instead of copying them, and offer vocational learners an easier first step.

Example	What it is	What partners bring	What you can take from it
	Human Power Hub focuses on social innovation and community challenges.	refers them to the right organization.	

POLICY PRIORITIES

Regional strategies in the three countries share several priorities: SME competitiveness, digital transformation, sustainability and talent retention. If your HUB links to these priorities, it is easier to attract partners and to find public funding. The priorities also help you choose challenges that matter to your region.

- **Braga, Portugal.** The Cávado 2030 strategy stresses SME competitiveness and talent retention. Braga's municipal climate policies focus on sustainability and circular economy. The Portuguese analysis suggests turning these into student assignments, such as helping family-owned businesses automate processes or developing products from industrial waste.
- **Northern Netherlands.** The KONNECT 2.0 programme uses public funding to encourage collaboration between SMEs and knowledge institutions, with a focus on innovation hubs and thematic networks. Do not look for funding for education only. Look for programmes that support joint innovation and knowledge exchange, and position students as contributors to regional development.
- **Hungary.** The regional focus is on industrial modernization and keeping local talent. A HUB can help young people start micro-enterprises or modernize family businesses. That strengthens the local economy and gives vocational graduates a reason to stay in their region.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VET

All partner regions have innovation infrastructure, but vocational learners often cannot reach it. Traditional incubators tend to focus on university graduates, technology startups or established ventures. Vocational students may get no support in turning a practical technical solution into a business. A HUB can close this gap with accessible coaching, early-stage business development and links to regional networks.

Start from the graduation project. Portuguese students complete a Projeto de Aptidão Profissional (PAP) and Hungarian technical students complete a practical examination project. These projects often produce a technical solution or prototype that is never developed further. A HUB can add one extra stage: students check the market need, calculate costs, test the solution with businesses and draft a basic business model. This creates an entrepreneurial path without a new programme.

A pathway from the Portuguese analysis. Inspired by the Link me UP – 1000 Ideias co-creation model, multidisciplinary student teams would work on challenges submitted by local SMEs and combine technical, creative and business skills. After a structured development period, promising solutions are tested with companies and referred to Startup Braga or the Human Power Hub. The result is a continuous path from school project to company validation to incubation.

Progression in The Netherlands. NHL Stenden's Center for Entrepreneurship offers workshops, mentoring, venture programmes and links to regional entrepreneurial networks. Together with challenge-based environments such as MICA, it shows how students can grow from exploring an idea to building a practical solution with external partners. For a vocational institution, similar links give students access to expertise and networks beyond their own school.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Before you plan anything new, list what your region already offers: spaces, programmes and networks that support entrepreneurs. Then mark the gap this chapter found in the partner regions: support that vocational learners can actually reach. Start from one thing your students already do, such as a final-year project or practical exam, and ask how it could become the first step towards an entrepreneurial project.

2.3 - STAKEHOLDER MAPPING AND PARTNERSHIP MODELS

This section introduces the typical stakeholder groups and shows how an Entrepreneur HUB can position itself as the connector between them.

SIX STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The regional analyses identify six main stakeholder groups relevant to Entrepreneur HUB development: vocational education providers, startup support organizations and incubators, innovation intermediaries and development agencies, businesses, SMEs and industry associations, public authorities and policy organizations, and national and regional entrepreneurship programmes. Their contributions range from educational expertise and mentoring to industry challenges, funding opportunities and business development support.

- **Vocational education providers** are the educational base of your HUB. They bring students, teachers, technical expertise, workshops and room in the existing curriculum. In Hungary, Vocational Training Centres and Sectoral Training Centres (ÁKKs) already connect education with industry. In Portugal, schools such as Escola Profissional de Braga (EPB) and Profitecla can use students' practical graduation projects as a starting point. Embed HUB activities in these existing structures, not only in extracurricular programmes.
- **Startup support organizations and incubators** offer what a school often cannot: business mentoring, incubation, access to investors and support for new ventures. In the Northern Netherlands, networks such as Founded in Friesland connect entrepreneurs with wider startup communities. In Portugal,

Startup Braga and the Human Power Hub offer different paths for technology and social enterprises. Your HUB prepares students through early idea development, business modelling and validation, and the partner takes over for more advanced support.

- **Innovation intermediaries and development agencies** link schools to regional economic opportunities. InvestBraga in Portugal has extensive business networks and knows what regional industry needs. The Portuguese analysis suggests using this knowledge to find operational challenges that vocational students can work on. In The Netherlands, the Northern Development Agency (NOM) and YnBusiness give access to business development networks and innovation expertise. They help you find partners beyond your own network.
- **Businesses, SMEs and industry associations** bring real challenges, professional expertise, mentoring and resources. It works best when both sides gain. The Hungarian analysis describes companies that contribute equipment and technical mentors while students work on practical industrial challenges. Companies get possible solutions and future skilled employees, and students build entrepreneurial competences in an authentic setting. Such partnerships can also lead to new products, services or business processes.
- **Public authorities and policy organizations** give strategic direction, legitimacy and possible funding. Municipalities, regional development bodies and national agencies can link your HUB to priorities such as digitalization, sustainability and talent retention, so that entrepreneurial education supports broader economic and social goals.
- **National and regional entrepreneurship programmes** provide funding, training and visibility for new ventures, and can open doors that a school cannot open alone. Examples from the partner countries are KONNECT 2.0 in the Northern Netherlands, Portugal 2030 and Norte 2030, and GINOP Plusz in Hungary. A HUB can use these programmes to find co-funding and partners, and to connect student projects to regional priorities. Check the eligibility, deadlines and co-financing rules of each programme before you plan around it (see 2.4).

PARTNERSHIP MODELS AND MUTUAL VALUE

Effective partnerships have complementary responsibilities and clear benefits for every organization involved. The country analyses suggest three models you can use as inspiration.

Model	Example	How it works	Principle to take
Collaborative innovation	The Netherlands: MICA	Schools and companies work together on multidisciplinary projects. Companies provide real challenges and contribute financially or through project investment. Students and educators contribute knowledge, creativity and solutions. It is a professional	Agree clear expectations on project goals, partner contributions and the

Model	Example	How it works	Principle to take
		partnership, not a traditional school assignment.	value for everyone.
Industry-integrated	Hungary: the dual vocational system	The dual system already links schools, employers and chambers of commerce. A HUB extends this to entrepreneurial projects, mentoring and student business ideas. Chambers help you reach SMEs, and sectoral training centres provide technical infrastructure.	Extend relationships that already exist instead of building a separate partner network.
Progressive entrepreneurial support	Portugal: the Braga proposal	Partners contribute at successive stages. Vocational schools identify promising technical projects, the HUB provides business development and coaching, SMEs support practical testing and InvestBraga opens commercial networks. More developed ventures are referred to Startup Braga or the Human Power Hub.	Let the HUB coordinate a continuous path, and let each partner contribute what it does best.

POSITIONING THE HUB AS AN ECOSYSTEM CONNECTOR

A stakeholder map is more than a list of who is in your region. Ask how the organizations can complement each other: what can each contribute, what does it expect in return, and where does cooperation create extra value?

The Dutch and Hungarian examples show reciprocity: companies contribute resources and expertise, not only assignments. The Portuguese model adds clear responsibilities and referral paths, so students find the right support as their project grows.

A HUB can therefore act as a coordinating platform. It translates business needs into learning opportunities, connects learners with external expertise and helps them move towards entrepreneurial activity. What counts is not the number of partners but the quality of the cooperation, the clarity of roles and the value created for all.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Draw a map of the six stakeholder groups for your region. For each organization, write what it can offer and what it expects in return. Start with the one or two partners where both sides clearly benefit, and make sure companies take part as partners who contribute, not only as providers of assignments. The stakeholder map in 6.1 helps you do this.

2.4 - POLICY, FUNDING, AND INSTITUTIONAL FIT

A HUB lasts when education policy, regional priorities, funding and the strategy of your own institution point in the same direction. Hungary, The Netherlands and Portugal show

three different ways to fit entrepreneurial activities into existing frameworks. This section links HUB design to national and regional policy frameworks, funding instruments, and institutional strategies and mandates.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS

National education policy and regional innovation strategies are a good foundation, especially where they encourage practical learning, industry collaboration and entrepreneurial competences.

- **Hungary.** The VET 4.0 strategy (Szakképzés 4.0) modernizes vocational education, builds digital competences and strengthens the links between schools and businesses. Its focus on project-based learning and dual education leaves room for entrepreneurship in existing programmes. A HUB can build on the mandatory technical examination projects (projektfeladat) and help students explore their commercial potential while they meet the usual requirements. HUB activities support existing educational goals instead of creating a parallel learning structure.
- **Portugal.** The Portugal 2030 Strategy and the regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) stress digital transformation, sustainability and SME competitiveness. The Braga analysis suggests translating these priorities into student assignments, such as automation solutions for local manufacturers or circular economy opportunities. Link HUB projects to the priorities of CIM Cávado and Braga's municipal climate strategy, and you show how entrepreneurial learning contributes to regional economic development.
- **Northern Netherlands.** Regional strategies encourage collaboration between education, businesses and innovation networks. Programmes for digital innovation, sustainable development and SME competitiveness let vocational institutions take part in regional innovation. Use these priorities to select relevant industry challenges and to build partnerships beyond the education sector.

FUNDING INSTRUMENTS AND INCENTIVES

The country analyses identify several funding instruments for entrepreneurship education, innovation projects and collaboration between schools and businesses. Whether they fit depends on your activities, your partners and the eligibility rules.

Country	Instrument	What it supports	How a HUB might use it
Hungary	GINOP Plusz (Economic Development and Innovation Operational Programme Plus)	SME competitiveness, digitalization and vocational development	Combine it with the institution's own resources and with contributions from industry partners. Companies in Sectoral Training Centres may provide equipment, expertise or materials, so the HUB does not have to finance everything itself.

Country	Instrument	What it supports	How a HUB might use it
The Netherlands	SNN and EFRO (European Regional Development Fund) programmes, including Valorisatie Klein and challenge-based innovation subsidies	Regional innovation and collaboration	Look for funding through partnerships with SMEs and regional organizations, especially when student projects contribute to practical innovation or societal challenges.
Portugal	Portugal 2030 and Norte 2030	European funding linked to regional priorities such as digitalization, SME innovation and the green transition	Place HUB activities within these initiatives. For example, work with local manufacturers on energy efficiency or process automation, provided the activities and the partnership meet the programme requirements.

Check the relevant calls, eligibility conditions and available budgets before you write a funding proposal.

Across the three countries, Erasmus+ offers opportunities for international cooperation, methodology development and knowledge exchange, as the C-ENTRE project itself shows. But project grants do not last. Separate the funding for initial development from the resources you need for regular operations, and combine institutional commitments, external grants and partner contributions where that makes sense.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND MANDATES

For the long term, your HUB should contribute directly to the goals of the institution that hosts it. Common goals are graduate employability, entrepreneurial competence, stronger industry partnerships and the practical use of vocational knowledge. Embedding HUB activities in regular educational processes helps to secure commitment and reduces dependence on temporary project funding.

- **Portugal.** The national framework includes the Projeto de Aptidão Profissional (PAP), a final-year practical project, and Formação em Contexto de Trabalho (FCT), workplace-based training. The Portuguese analysis suggests adding business validation and entrepreneurial development to PAP projects, and using workplace training to find and address real business challenges. With the right institutional approval, these activities can count towards existing learning and assessment requirements instead of adding to students' workload.

- **Hungary.** Connect HUB activities with the official Training and Output Requirements (Képzési és Kimeneti Követelmények – KKK) and the existing dual-training arrangements. Students can develop entrepreneurial ideas through their technical project work, get coaching from teachers and test solutions with industry partners. This supports the goals of vocational training centres on employability, industry cooperation and practical competence.
- **The Netherlands.** The Dutch analysis stresses the link with the institution's performance goals and with regional collaboration strategies. Student-led innovation projects, employer engagement and entrepreneurial competence development can become measurable contributions to those goals. Assign responsibility for coordination, coaching and external partnerships within the institution, so that the activities continue beyond the start-up phase.

Choose indicators that show what the HUB achieves, such as student participation in entrepreneurial projects, partnerships with businesses, viable business concepts, and graduates who move into employment or self-employment. Pick indicators that reflect both educational outcomes and regional impact. They help you judge the value of the HUB and decide whether to continue.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Connect your HUB to one regional or national priority, such as SME competitiveness, digitalization, sustainability or keeping talent in the region, and to one goal of your own institution. Then check which funding instruments fit, including their eligibility, deadlines and co-financing rules. Project grants end, so decide early which activities must continue without them.

2.5 - HUB FUNCTIONS IN REGIONAL CONTEXT

An Entrepreneur HUB combines educational support with practical business development. Adapt its functions to the needs of vocational learners and to what your regional ecosystem already offers. This section describes six functions and shows how they can follow each other: coaching and mentoring, incubation and venture development, entrepreneurship workshops, challenge-based learning and industry collaboration, networking and ecosystem engagement, and links with vocational curricula.

COACHING AND MENTORING

Coaching helps students recognize opportunities, validate ideas and build the confidence and competences to turn technical knowledge into practical business solutions. A strong approach combines the pedagogical expertise of VET teachers with the market experience of entrepreneurs and industry professionals.

In practice: the Hungarian model. The C-ENTRE analysis proposes teachers trained as VET coaches, who guide students' learning with experiential methods such as Kolb's learning cycle. External mentors from local businesses and chambers of commerce give feedback on customer needs, pricing and commercial feasibility. A student with a

technical prototype first gets coaching on who the customers could be, and then feedback from an SME owner on whether the solution answers a real market need. Teachers can then focus on learning and personal development, while business professionals bring the commercial expertise.

INCUBATION AND VENTURE DEVELOPMENT

Incubation in a VET HUB does not need a dedicated business incubator. Short, practice-oriented programmes can take students from first idea to tested prototype or viable business concept, using facilities and expertise that already exist in your institution or regional network.

In practice: two short programmes. In Hungary, the Sectoral Training Centres (ÁKKs) are a possible setting. The national analysis proposes development periods of about six to twelve weeks, in which students use professional equipment, get mentoring and test solutions to practical industry problems. In Portugal, a similar proposal is an eight-week programme that prepares vocational students for further support from organizations such as Startup Braga. Both organize incubation around achievable milestones and practical experiments, not around extensive theoretical business plans.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP WORKSHOPS

Technical programmes often do not cover the business knowledge that students need. Workshops fill that gap. Useful topics are customer discovery, value propositions, business modelling, pricing, financial planning, pitching and the legal basics of starting a business.

In practice: NHL Stenden. The Center for Entrepreneurship in The Netherlands offers workshops as part of a wider support environment with mentoring, venture programmes and regional networking. For a VET HUB, this suggests organizing workshops around the real stages of student projects. Students who are about to test a prototype attend a customer validation workshop first. Students who are preparing a business presentation get targeted help with costing and pitching. This way the knowledge can be used immediately.

CHALLENGE-BASED LEARNING AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

Challenge-based learning connects vocational competences with real business and community needs. Students do not write hypothetical business plans. They work on problems from external partners, experience professional expectations and test their solutions in a realistic setting.

- **MICA, The Netherlands.** Multidisciplinary student teams work with businesses on challenges in media, communication and digital innovation. Companies take part as committed partners: they contribute resources and expertise and benefit from student creativity. This model suits HUBs that want lasting industry relationships based on mutual value.
- **Link me UP – 1000 Ideias, Portugal.** The Portuguese analysis proposes multidisciplinary innovation sprints. Students from different vocational fields

work on challenges submitted by regional SMEs. For example, students of electronics, multimedia and business administration could jointly develop a solution to a company's operational problem. Students learn that entrepreneurship is a process that needs complementary competences, not an individual activity.

NETWORKING AND ECOSYSTEM ENGAGEMENT

Networking gives vocational learners access to professional communities, potential customers, business mentors and support organizations. Make it structured, not an occasional event, so that students receive feedback, build professional relationships and see possible entrepreneurial paths.

- **Chamber Demo Days, Hungary.** Students present working prototypes to local entrepreneurs, industry representatives and potential business partners. This is an accessible alternative to a standard startup pitch event, because vocational learners are often strongest in showing practical solutions. They get direct feedback on commercial applications, find possible customers and make contacts for further development.
- **Reverse pitching, Portugal.** Businesses present their operational challenges to student teams, instead of students pitching ideas to companies. The HUB then helps interested learners and industry partners to work together. Students engage with clear business needs from the start, so networking has a purpose.

LINKING HUB ACTIVITIES TO VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

When HUB activities are part of existing programmes, more students can take part and the learning counts. Connect coaching, workshops and innovation challenges to practical assignments, internships, graduation projects and recognized learning outcomes, within your institutional and regulatory requirements.

Country	Link to the curriculum	How the HUB uses it
Portugal	Projeto de Aptidão Profissional (PAP) and Formação em Contexto de Trabalho (FCT)	The Portuguese analysis proposes adding entrepreneurial components. Students use workplace placements to find operational challenges, develop solutions in HUB-supported projects and include business validation in their graduation assignment. Technical assessment and entrepreneurial development are connected, without necessarily adding standalone assignments.
Hungary	Training and Output Requirements (KKK) and mandatory technical examination projects	Students develop their practical examination assignment into a business concept, supported by coaching, customer validation and industry feedback. Existing dual-training partnerships give opportunities to test solutions in professional settings.

Country	Link to the curriculum	How the HUB uses it
The Netherlands	Recognized learning outcomes and project-based programmes	Collaborative innovation projects add to students' professional development and strengthen the relationship between school and regional businesses. Involve curriculum coordinators and teachers in the design, so that HUB activities contribute to formal learning goals and do not compete with students' regular study load.

PUTTING THE FUNCTIONS INTO A DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The functions work best when they support successive stages of a student's development. A practical order that emerged from the partner analyses:

1. Workshops and industry challenges.
2. Individual or team coaching.
3. Prototype development and early-stage incubation.
4. Networking with potential customers, mentors and established support organizations.

The Portuguese proposal follows this order: students find opportunities in vocational projects or workplace experiences, develop solutions in multidisciplinary teams, receive coaching and commercial validation, and connect with regional organizations for further development. The Hungarian model follows a similar order, with more emphasis on existing technical training facilities and chamber-supported industry networks.

If you are setting up a HUB, start with a manageable combination of coaching, practical workshops and external challenges. Add the more advanced functions, especially incubation and venture development, through partnerships with existing regional organizations once student demand and institutional capacity have grown.

LESSON FOR YOUR HUB

Do not start with every function. Begin with three: coaching, practical workshops and one external challenge from a regional company. Add incubation later, ideally through a partner. Link each activity to a project or learning outcome that already exists in your programme, so students and teachers can take part without extra workload.

2.6 - IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to assess your regional ecosystem, build the right partnerships and align your HUB with educational priorities, available resources and funding. Each step ends with a practical output that you can add to your implementation plan. Tick each step when it is done.

Implementation principle. Begin with a manageable pilot, using existing institutional resources and a small number of committed partners. Expand the functions of the HUB

once the first model has shown educational value, partner commitment and operational feasibility.

STEP 1 – DEFINE THE HUB'S REGIONAL FOCUS

- ☐ Identify the vocational fields, student groups and geographical area the HUB will serve.
- ☐ Identify two or three regional economic challenges that match students' technical competences.
- ☐ Define what the HUB will offer that existing entrepreneurship services do not.

Expected output: *a one-page description of the HUB's regional purpose and target groups.*

STEP 2 – MAP THE EXISTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

- ☐ List the relevant VET providers, companies, chambers of commerce, startup networks, incubators, innovation intermediaries and public authorities.
- ☐ Identify the available facilities, equipment, mentoring programmes, events and business support services.
- ☐ Record what each organization already does, and where there are gaps or opportunities for vocational learners.
- ☐ Identify resources that you can reach through partnerships instead of developing them in the HUB.

Expected output: *a regional ecosystem map and resource inventory.*

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- ☐ Shortlist organizations that can provide business challenges, technical resources, mentoring, funding or entrepreneurial progression opportunities.
- ☐ Identify what each partner gains, such as access to student talent, innovative solutions or future employees.
- ☐ Prioritize partners based on strategic relevance, willingness to collaborate and practical contributions.
- ☐ Arrange exploratory meetings to check mutual interests and expectations.

Expected output: *a prioritized partner shortlist with potential contributions and mutual benefits.*

STEP 4 – ESTABLISH PRACTICAL PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

- ☐ Agree on responsibilities for student supervision, coaching, facilities, resources and communication.
- ☐ Define how companies propose challenges and how student teams are selected and supported.
- ☐ Clarify expectations about financial or in-kind contributions, project outcomes and intellectual property.

- ☐ Document the agreements and name a contact person in each organization.

Expected output: *draft partnership agreements and an operational responsibility matrix.*

STEP 5 – CHECK POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT

- ☐ Review the relevant national VET strategies, regional innovation priorities and local development plans.
- ☐ Identify which priorities the HUB can address directly, such as digitalization, sustainability or SME competitiveness.
- ☐ Connect the proposed HUB activities to the strategic goals of your institution and to formal vocational learning outcomes.
- ☐ Confirm with institutional leadership which activities can be integrated into curricula, internships or graduation projects.

Expected output: *a policy and institutional alignment matrix, with the relevant approvals identified.*

STEP 6 – ASSESS FUNDING AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- ☐ Estimate the minimum costs of coordination, coaching, workshops, materials and facilities.
- ☐ Identify the resources already available in the institution and through partners.
- ☐ Investigate relevant regional, national and European funding instruments, and check eligibility, deadlines and co-financing requirements.
- ☐ Distinguish between initial development costs and ongoing operating costs.
- ☐ Identify which core activities the institution and partners can sustain without temporary grant funding.

Expected output: *an initial HUB budget, a funding opportunities register and a sustainability plan.*

STEP 7 – DESIGN AND TEST A SMALL-SCALE HUB PILOT

- ☐ Select one vocational programme or student group and one or two external business partners.
- ☐ Choose a real business or community challenge that fits the students' learning objectives.
- ☐ Combine a short workshop series, structured coaching, practical development and a final presentation to partners.
- ☐ Agree on a realistic schedule, responsibilities and measurable learning and project outcomes.
- ☐ Collect feedback from students, teachers and partners before you expand the model.

Expected output: *an approved pilot plan with a timeline, partners, activities and evaluation criteria.*

STEP 8 – EVALUATE RESULTS AND PREPARE FOR CONTINUED OPERATION

- ☐ Review student learning, project outcomes, partner satisfaction and use of resources.
- ☐ Assess whether the HUB contributes to institutional objectives and regional needs.
- ☐ Identify which partnerships and activities should continue, change or expand.
- ☐ Assign ongoing responsibility for HUB coordination and agree on the next implementation cycle.

Expected output: *a pilot evaluation and a decision on the next phase of HUB development.*

3 – MACRO LEVEL: EUROPEAN BENCHMARKING

The MACRO level brings a European view to your local HUB design, so you can build on approaches that already work instead of starting from zero. It draws on four HUBs visited by teams from The Netherlands, Portugal and Hungary.

This chapter has four parts. Chapter 3.1 describes the visits and the four HUBs. Chapter 3.2 gives the success factors that travel across them. Chapter 3.3 explains how to adapt a model without copying its weak points. Chapter 3.4 is a checklist you can use with your own team.

3.1 - INTERNATIONAL SITE VISITS

Four Dutch Entrepreneur HUBs were visited by mixed international teams and assessed with one shared observation form. This chapter explains how they were chosen, how they were studied, and what each one looks like.

HOW THE HUBS WERE SELECTED

All four HUBs are in The Netherlands and were visited during the study visit in The Netherlands in October 2026. The Netherlands was chosen because, in the partners' experience, it has a number of well-established Entrepreneur HUBs within education, while comparable HUBs hardly exist yet in Hungary and Portugal. The four HUBs differ clearly in how they connect vocational students to entrepreneurship and in how they are funded, so together they show what a HUB can look like under different conditions. The visiting teams came from The Netherlands, Portugal and Hungary.

HOW THE HUBS WERE STUDIED

Every visit used the same structured form, "Observation Form MACRO – Learning from Benchmarks". It has three tick-list sections (the role of entrepreneurship in VET, skills for the future, European relevance and transferability) and four open questions. In total, 36 forms were completed by twelve observers for the intitutions Drechtsteden Ondernemers Centrum (DOC), the Center for Entrepreneurship (CfE), Media Innovation Campus (MICA) and Grafisch Lyceum Utrecht (GLU). During the guided tours, short conversations of a few minutes were held with startups and students.

Two caveats apply when reading the results. Eight forms were filled in by two observers who ticked nearly every option; three other observers ticked far fewer. The numbers therefore describe patterns, they do not measure the HUBs. This guide reports "observed by x of x observers", never a percentage of HUBs.

WHY A BENCHMARK VISIT

A HUB is easier to design when you have seen one work. Reading about a model shows its outline; standing in the building shows who is there, what students do all day and what it costs to keep the doors open. The visits were set up for that purpose: to see

working HUBs in practice and to bring back lessons that a reader in any European country can test against their own situation.

WHAT THE OBSERVATION FORM ASKED

The form has three tick-list sections with 29 options in total, followed by four open questions. Observers ticked an option when they saw evidence of it during the visit.

Section	Focus	Options observers could tick
1. Role of entrepreneurship in VET (10 options)	How the HUB brings entrepreneurship into vocational learning	Core competence; learning by running a real business; open to a broad student population; integrated into vocational learning; entrepreneurial mindset and initiative; employability skills; spotting opportunities and solving problems; failure and experimentation as part of learning; networks beyond the school; pathways from education to self-employment
2. Skills for the future (9 options)	Which skills students visibly build	Creativity and innovation; problem-solving; communication and collaboration; sustainability skills; financial and business literacy; self-management and resilience; adaptability and lifelong learning; AI and emerging digital technologies; intercultural and international competences
3. European relevance and transferability (10 options)	Whether the approach could work elsewhere, and under which conditions	Can be replicated in other VET institutions; can work across regional contexts; low barriers to implementation; needs specific funding or infrastructure; needs specific partnerships or ecosystem conditions; needs changes in curriculum or qualification structures; potential for international cooperation; potential for student and staff mobility; link with European programmes and initiatives; addresses a common European challenge

The four open questions asked what is particularly interesting, innovative or transferable; what should be taken into account in the evaluation; which one question should be investigated further; and what else is worth remembering.

FROM FORMS TO FINDINGS

The ticks were counted per option, per HUB and per group of observers. The open answers were typed out and grouped into themes, for example "learning by doing", "school, companies and community" and "conditions for transfer". The counts in this

chapter describe what observers saw. They show patterns across the forms, not measurements of the HUBs.

THE FOUR HUBS AT A GLANCE

HUB	Set-up	How it is funded	Who it serves	What stands out
Drechtsteden Ondernemers Centrum (DOC), Dordrecht	Two to three years old. Run by one teacher employed by the VET college Da Vinci.	Low rents paid by regular starting entrepreneurs (desk, computer, coffee). This covers the building and the teacher's salary.	Starting entrepreneurs first; vocational students second.	The low rent comes with a return: tenants offer internships to students, or students run their own business at DOC.
Grafisch Lyceum Utrecht (GLU), Utrecht	About five years old. Run by one core teacher.	Regular VET funding for classes. Groups of about 25 students pay for the coaching teachers.	Graduates of a regular VET programme who want to start a business.	A one-year optional follow-on programme ('kopopleiding'): students start a real company and are coached and assessed on it.
Media Innovation Campus (MICA), Leeuwarden	Independent foundation, about five years old.	European funds, subsidies and applications to the Regional Investment Fund for VET (RIF). Subsidies are slowly decreasing, so MICA builds more of its own	Students from different education levels, creative professionals, makers and companies in the north of The Netherlands.	Companies bring real questions that MICA links to students and professionals; thematic labs and a talent pool give students paid experience. Digital innovation, including AI, is a focus.

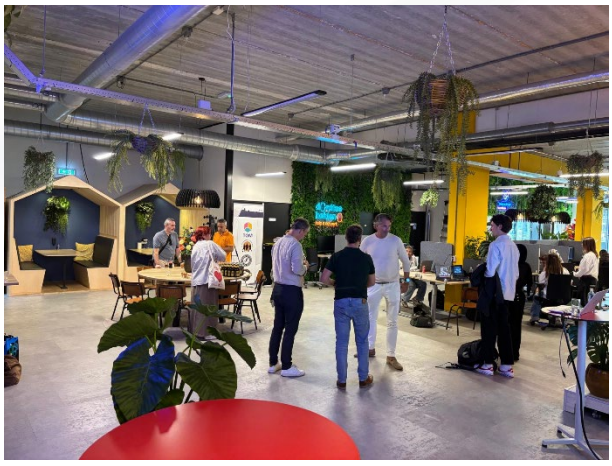
HUB	Set-up	How it is funded	Who it serves	What stands out
		revenue streams.		
Center for Entrepreneurship (CfE), Leeuwarden	About six years old. Started as a student-led initiative that grew out of a graduation project.	Funded from the institution's own budget.	Extracurricular and open to all students of the institution, together with regional entrepreneurs and partners.	"By and for students": room to experiment, plus programmes, international opportunities and a museum of past projects.

Sources: DOC, GLU, MICA, CfE, and the HUB visits.

HUB PROFILES

The four profiles below follow the same order: what the visitors saw, how it runs, the biggest challenge, an example from practice and the lesson for your own HUB.

Drechtsteden Ondernemers Centrum (DOC), Dordrecht



What the visitors saw. DOC is a building of three floors. The tour started downstairs with a general introduction, followed by a walk along all three floors. Starting entrepreneurs sit spread across the building and pay a low rent. Students are visible too: some do jobs for the startups, and some VET students run their own business from DOC. The space has high ceilings, many quiet seats, large tables to work at together and small niches with separate computers and laptops. A few logos, for example of the municipality, show with whom DOC works.

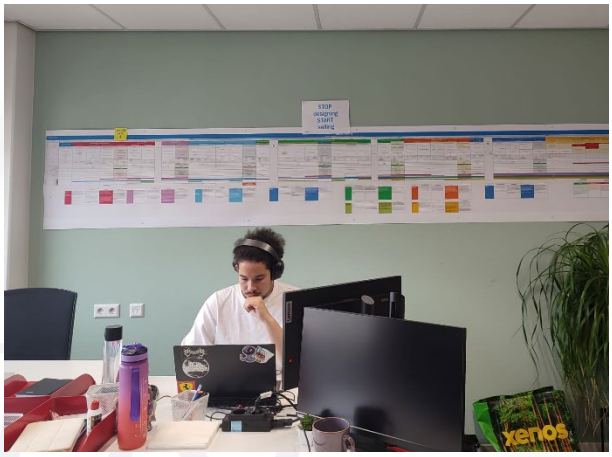
How it runs. DOC is two to three years old and run by one teacher employed by the VET college Da Vinci. Regular starting entrepreneurs rent a desk, a computer and coffee at a low price. The low rent comes with a return: they offer internships to students, or students run their own business at DOC.

Biggest challenge: funding. VET funding does not pay for a building, so DOC needed a third source of income. It found one by renting workplaces to startups at a low rent. That income covers the building and the teacher's salary, which makes DOC self-sustaining.

Example from practice. Students carried out assignments for the municipality.

Lesson for your HUB. The funding model. Renting workplaces to regular startups pays for the whole system, and the visitors found it the most distinctive funding model they saw. Before you copy it, check whether your region has enough startups and a suitable building.

Grafisch Lyceum Utrecht (GLU), Utrecht



What the visitors saw. GLU runs a follow-on programme ('kopopleiding') in the VET system: students can take it after they have finished their regular VET programme. The space consists of small offices. Students are actively helped with their own business, much more actively than at DOC. Every Monday there is a startup moment where all students meet and make their planning. A large planning hangs on the wall, which students work through together: more structured at the start, looser as the year goes on. The planning is prepared in advance and linked to the work processes of the national VET qualification. Students work through these work processes, and in doing so they earn their follow-on programme in entrepreneurship.

How it runs. GLU has existed for about five years and is run by one core teacher. It falls within regular VET funding: groups of about 25 students pay for the coaching teachers. The programme lasts one year, and students start a real company that is coached and assessed. According to GLU's website, students get weekly guidance from an internal coach and an external coach they choose for their learning goals, and they share experiences in a coaching group.

Biggest challenge: support inside the institution. The staff member who drives the programme named the challenge as getting colleagues and the board to join, because they are often wary of new forms of education. Describing it as a pilot helps: when you try something under that name, programmes and board tend to move along.

Example from practice. A company with two students as owners makes videos and promotional films for businesses. Through well-known Dutch contacts they now make promotional videos with fairly well-known artists in the music world. It is already a well-running business.

Lesson for your HUB. The trajectory is worked out step by step for the student. Students do not only work on their own company: the work is linked automatically to work processes and so to credits. If your VET system has a comparable qualification

structure, building on it makes the programme recognized and the business a part of the study.

Media Innovation Campus (MICA), Leeuwarden



What the visitors saw. MICA has a different set-up from DOC and GLU. It brings higher education, VET and business together in one place, with innovation in media as the focus and a talent pool at its core. During the tour, students from higher education and from VET sat mixed together in the same rooms, something the visitors had not seen elsewhere in The Netherlands. VET students do real jobs for students in higher education, and sometimes they design for each other. All of them are still in their programme and work in the media world.

How it runs. MICA is an independent foundation of about five years old. According to its website, companies bring practical questions that MICA links to students and professionals, and students can gain paid experience through a talent pool. Funding comes from European funds, subsidies and applications to the Regional Investment Fund for VET (RIF). Subsidies are slowly decreasing, so MICA builds more of its own revenue streams.

Biggest challenge: funding. MICA needs a large building, and the costs do not come directly from the budgets of the VET institute or the higher-education institution. The building was financed through a RIF application, and new subsidies are being requested now. The challenge is to keep a flow of money going. MICA is trying to do that with third revenue streams instead of depending on subsidies.

Examples from practice.

- A startup from a few years ago in which students used media to raise awareness of war. They built an exhibition from short media items that make the consequences of war felt: a podcast of a few minutes, a silent film, and photos and objects spread through the room.
- A group of students who worked on immersive media. Their concept immerses a room in an experience much bigger than music or film alone, by using several kinds of media at the same time and stimulating the senses in many ways.

Lesson for your HUB. Bring several parts of society together in one physical space: VET school, higher education and business. Many regions try to make these parties work together, but it rarely succeeds as long as they stay in separate buildings and schools, because students will not keep travelling between sites. It works when they sit next to each other. The visitors had not seen a permanent shared space like this anywhere else in The Netherlands.

Center for Entrepreneurship (CfE), Leeuwarden



What the visitors saw. CfE is a separate department within the institution. It does not belong to one programme. Students from all programmes can take part extracurricular: they follow short courses of about four weeks, called trails or journeys, in which they are guided in setting up their own business. There is a pre-startup journey and a startup journey. Afterwards they can take part in the HAYO Incentive Fund, a competition made possible by a sponsor, with a main prize of about €2,000 as an investment in their own business. Hundreds of students are active there at any time, from technical companies to marketing companies and everything in between.

How it runs. CfE is about six years old and started as a student-led initiative that grew out of a graduation project. It is funded from the institution's own budget. Students may link their business to their programme, but they do not have to. Student entrepreneurs are encouraged to join the CfE community through which their network will grow quickly.

Biggest challenge: support from the board. The hardest part was winning over the board and arranging a large, central space for the HUB. That meant a real investment.

Example from practice. The strength is the range, not one company. Because CfE is open to all students of all programmes, every kind of business can find a place there.

Lesson for your HUB. Two things made it grow: the director's exceptional drive, and a continuous conversation with the board and the programme managers. He also fought for a clearly visible HUB space in the centre, on the ground floor. It cost money, but the space itself matters because it gives the HUB a face.

3.2 - KEY EUROPEAN SUCCESS FACTORS

Four lessons travel best across the visits: align the money with existing funding logic, put real work at the centre of learning, treat partnerships as a core activity, and decide early how you will show impact. Each is grouped below under the four themes of the MACRO level. Counts show how many of the observation forms mention a point.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

- **Small teams, high dependency.** DOC and GLU are each run by one teacher. One observer asked directly whether the concept depends on the power of one person and what risk that brings.
- **Funding follows an existing logic.** DOC pays for itself with low rents from starting entrepreneurs. GLU sits inside regular VET funding and needs groups of about 25 students. Neither relies on a separate project grant. Observers saw specific

funding or infrastructure as a requirement on the majority of forms, one asked how a programme can be funded at all.

- **Lesson:** choose a funding model that your institution already knows how to run, and name a second person who can take over.

In practice: four funding routes. Each HUB solved the money question differently, and each route has its own weak point.

HUB	Where the money comes from	Where it can go wrong
DOC	Low rents from starting entrepreneurs, enough to cover the building and the teacher's salary	Needs enough startups nearby and a teacher who can keep it running
GLU	Regular VET funding, with groups of about 25 students paying for the coaching teachers	Needs full groups and a board that accepts a new form of education
MICA	European funds, subsidies and applications to the Regional Investment Fund for VET (RIF), moving towards its own revenue	Subsidies are slowly decreasing
CfE	The institution's own budget	Needs continuing support from the board

The common thread is the aim of money that comes back every year: DOC and GLU already have it, CfE draws on its institution's budget, and MICA is working towards it as subsidies decrease. Winning the board is part of governance too. GLU's staff member found that calling the work a pilot made colleagues and the board more willing to move along, and at CfE the director kept talking with the board and the programme managers until the HUB got a central, visible space.

PEDAGOGICAL MACRO INTEGRATION

- **Learning by doing with real projects** is the most repeated point in the open answers (4 of 11 forms).
- **Skills students build:** creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, and self-management and resilience were observed on 10 of 11 forms; employability skills and networks beyond the school on 10 of 11; entrepreneurial mindset on 9 of 11.
- **Rarely observed:** sustainability skills (4 of 11) and intercultural or international competences (5 of 11). Failure and experimentation as part of learning was seen on 7 of 11 forms, and on none of the three MICA forms.
- **Who gets in:** entrepreneurship was open to a broad student population on 6 of 11 forms. GLU is a dedicated one-year programme, which explains its absence there.

- **Lesson:** make the project real (a real client, a real company) and plan explicitly for the skills that were rarely seen, especially sustainability and international work.

In practice: four ways to build entrepreneurship into learning

- **GLU** works step by step. The whole year is planned in advance and linked to the work processes of the national VET qualification, so running a company automatically counts towards the programme and its credits. Every Monday all students meet for a startup moment. The structure is strict at the start and loosens during the year.
- **CfE** offers short journeys of about four weeks, a pre-startup journey and a startup journey, outside any programme. Students from all programmes can join, and the HAYO Incentive Fund offers a chance of about €2,000 as investment in their own business.
- **MICA** mixes VET and higher-education students in the same rooms. VET students do real jobs for higher-education students and sometimes design for each other, so learning happens through real orders.
- **DOC** lets students work for the startups in the building, or run their own business there.

The contrast is useful: GLU gives structure and recognition, CfE gives freedom, and MICA and DOC give real work. A new HUB can combine them, for example a fixed trajectory with room for students' own ideas.

PARTNERSHIP MACRO MANAGEMENT

- **School, companies and community are linked** on 4 of 11 forms, for example co-working combined with internships (DOC) or companies bringing questions that students work on (MICA).
- **Mixed groups:** DOC puts students, teachers and entrepreneurs in one setting; MICA connects students from different education levels with professionals.
- **Dependency:** 9 of 11 forms say the model needs specific partnerships or ecosystem conditions. One observer asked how more universities can be involved with the vocational area.
- **Lesson:** map your partners before you design the HUB, and agree what each side gives and gets (DOC's low rent for internships is a clear example).

In practice: partners with a clear exchange. At DOC the exchange is explicit: starting entrepreneurs get a low rent and give students internships or work. Logos of partners such as the municipality are visible in the building, and students carried out assignments for the municipality. At MICA, companies bring practical questions that students work on. CfE works with a sponsor for its incentive fund and with regional entrepreneurs.

MICA adds a lesson about place. It works because VET, higher education and business sit next to each other in one permanent space (see the MICA profile in 3.1).

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT

- **Open question for observers:** how to know that students' ideas are relevant (CfE), what the key output is (DOC), what the impact is on students and their future (MICA) and how motivated students are and how many take part (CfE).
- **Alumni** came up once, as a comparison with other countries.
- **Lesson:** pick two or three simple indicators from day one (for example participation, ventures started, internships offered) and review them every year; without them the open questions above stay open.

In practice: signs of results. The HUBs showed their results through examples rather than figures. At GLU, a company run by two students now makes promotional videos with fairly well-known artists. At MICA, students built an exhibition on the consequences of war from short media items, and another group developed an immersive media concept. At CfE, the evidence is the range: hundreds of students with companies from technical to marketing.

These examples show what a HUB can produce, but they do not show how much. A HUB that wants lasting support from a board or a funder needs a few numbers next to the stories, such as how many students take part, how many ventures start and how many internships are offered.

WHAT TRANSFERS AND WHAT DOES NOT

All observers saw the model as able to work in other regional contexts and as offering potential for student and staff mobility. Replication in other VET institutions, international cooperation and links with European programmes were seen all but one forms. But low barriers to implementation were ticked on only 2 forms. Transferable does not mean easy: that tension is the subject of chapter 3.3.

3.3 - ADAPTATION VS. REPLICATION

Copy the principle behind a HUB, not its outward form. Every element that works in the Dutch HUBs rests on conditions that may be missing in your region, and the visitors themselves named those conditions as the first thing to check.

THE RISK OF COPYING WITHOUT CONTEXT

Observers asked the same question again and again: how can this approach be used in other schools, VET systems or countries? Their answers to "what should we take into account" were consistent: the differences between education systems, the needs and resources of each school, funding, and the risk of depending on one person. A HUB copied without these checks can look right and still fail, because the funding, the partners or the qualification rules it relied on are not there. This matters most in countries where HUBs like these hardly exist yet and the Dutch examples are a main source of inspiration.

WHAT EACH MODEL DEPENDS ON

Element seen in the visits	What it depends on	Question to ask before adapting
DOC: low rents from starting entrepreneurs pay for the HUB	A local market of starters, a suitable building, a school willing to let a teacher run it	Is there enough demand from entrepreneurs to carry the costs, and what return can they give students?
GLU: a one-year programme inside regular funding	A national funding system that pays for classes, a possible follow-on qualification, groups of about 25	Can a similar programme be funded and recognized in your VET system?
MICA: companies bring real questions to students	A network of companies and a regional need for the skills on offer	Which companies would bring real questions, and who coordinates them?
CfE: student-led, with room to experiment	A culture in which students may lead and fail safely	Are students allowed to take real decisions, and who backs them when it goes wrong?

Across all forms, observers saw these needs: specific partnerships or ecosystem conditions, specific funding or infrastructure and changes to curriculum or qualification structures.

HOW TO ADAPT

1. **Separate the principle from the form.** Decide what must stay (for example: students work on real projects with real partners) and what can change (building, funding route, programme length).
2. **Start from your own context.** List your funding rules, partners, qualification rules and who will run the HUB, using the MICRO and MESO chapters.
3. **Start small and test.** Run a first version at limited scale before you commit funding.
4. **Plan for the key person.** Agree from the start who can take over, and write down how the HUB works.
5. **Share what you learn.** Report adaptations back to the partners, so the next HUB learns from yours.

WORKED EXAMPLE: ADAPTING GLU

The example below is illustrative. It shows how the five steps work for one model; it is not a real HUB. GLU is used because its set-up is within reach of most VET schools: it needs no building of its own and no separate income stream.

Imagine a VET school in a country where qualifications are described in competences or work processes, where a board is cautious about new forms of education, and where students often ask how to start their own business.

Step 1: principle and form. The principle behind GLU is a step-by-step trajectory built on the existing qualification structure, so that running a real company counts towards a recognized qualification. The form is a one-year follow-on programme with groups of about 25 students, small offices, a weekly startup moment, a planning on the wall and one core teacher. The principle must stay; the form can change.

Step 2: your own context. Check each element against your situation.

GLU element	Check in your school	Possible adaptation
Trajectory linked to the national work processes	Does your system describe competences or units that entrepreneurship can be linked to?	Map the trajectory to the competences you already have, and ask the awarding body early whether it counts
A one-year follow-on programme	Is there room for an extra year or module after the regular programme?	Offer an optional module or a part-time track first
Regular funding for groups of about 25	How is VET funding organized, and what is the smallest group that is financed?	Combine students from several programmes, or start with a smaller pilot group
Coaching and assessment of real companies	Who coaches, who assesses, and what qualifications do they need?	Add local entrepreneurs as coaches next to the teacher
Weekly startup moment and wall planning	Can all students meet once a week?	Keep both; they are easy to copy
One core teacher	What happens if this teacher leaves?	Share the programme between two teachers from the start

Step 3: start small. GLU's staff member found that calling the work a pilot made colleagues and the board more willing to move along. Run a first group under that name, with a fixed review date, before you ask for a full programme.

Step 4: plan for the key person. Write down the trajectory: the steps, the planning, how companies are coached and who assesses them. A second teacher should be able to run the next group from this description.

Step 5: share what you learn. Report the results to the other partners, including what did not work, for example where the mapping to your competences caused problems.

The outcome of this exercise is not a copy of GLU but a plan for your school. It keeps what made GLU work, a clear path that links students' own companies to recognized credit, and changes whatever your system does not allow.

3.4 - IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist before you copy, adapt or reject a European model. Tick an item only when you can name the evidence.

SELECTING REFERENCE MODELS

- ☐ Name the problem your HUB must solve (students, entrepreneurs, partners, region).
- ☐ Look at more than one model, with different funding and set-up.
- ☐ For each model, find out who runs it, since when, who it serves and how it is funded.
- ☐ Speak to, or visit, at least one HUB you want to learn from.

ASSESSING TRANSFERABILITY

- ☐ Funding: name a funding route in your system that works like the model's.
- ☐ Partners: name the companies, schools and community partners the model needs.
- ☐ Rules: check whether curriculum or qualification rules must change.
- ☐ People: make sure more than one person can run the HUB, so it does not depend on a single key person.
- ☐ Students: find out who can take part and who is left out.
- ☐ Skills: plan for sustainability and international skills, which were rarely observed.

INTEGRATING EUROPEAN INSPIRATION RESPONSIBLY

- ☐ Write down which principles you keep and which parts you change, and why.
- ☐ Start with a small pilot and set a review date.
- ☐ Choose two or three indicators (for example participation, ventures started, internships offered).
- ☐ Link up with a European programme or partner for mobility or cooperation.
- ☐ Report what you learn back to the partners.

COMPARE REFERENCE MODELS

Fill in one row per model you consider. Write "yes", "partly" or "no" for each condition, and add a short note on what would have to change.

Reference model	Funding route possible?	Partners available?	Rules allow it?	People to run it?	Our verdict
DOC					

Reference model	Funding route possible?	Partners available?	Rules allow it?	People to run it?	Our verdict
GLU					
MICA					
CfE					
Another model					

A model with two or more "no" answers is not ready to copy. Either adapt it using chapter 3.3 or choose another.

4 – INTEGRATED HUB ARCHITECTURE

The three levels of this guide answer three different questions. The MICRO level asks what students and teachers need. The MESO level asks what the region offers and expects. The MACRO level asks what has worked elsewhere in Europe. This chapter brings the answers together into one design: the mission of your HUB, and the choices on governance, learning, money and coaching that follow from it.

Start by writing your mission in one or two sentences. The table helps you do so. Fill in the middle column with your own findings.

Level	Question	Your finding	What it means for the design
MICRO	What do our students and teachers need most?		The activities and the space
MESO	Which partners, policies and funding fit us?		The partners and the funding mix
MACRO	Which model suits our context?		The governance and learning model

4.1 - GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

A HUB needs someone who is accountable, someone who runs it day to day, and a way to involve partners. In VET institutions, the question is how much of this can sit inside existing structures. The partner workshops asked for one visible contact point and for a small core group acting as the "owners" of the HUB (see 1.2). Three set-ups are possible. Check them against the governance structures in chapter 3.2 before you adopt them.

Set-up	How it works	Fits when	Watch out for
Embedded in the institution	Teachers and a coordinator run the HUB within the school or department	You start small and have management support	Depends on a few people and on school time
Institution with a partner board	The institution hosts, a board of companies and organizations advises	You have strong regional partners	Needs time to agree roles
Joint partnership	Institution and partners share ownership and costs	Partners contribute money or people	Needs clear agreements and a longer lead time

DECISION PROMPTS

- Who owns the HUB and decides on its budget?
- Who coordinates it day to day, and how many hours are available?
- How do students and teachers have a say, as they asked for in the workshops?
- Which partners sit at the table, and what do they contribute?

The set-ups are a framework for your own choice, not a ranking. Many HUBs can begin embedded and add a partner board as their network grows.

4.2 - LEARNING MODEL

Entrepreneurial learning in the HUB happens through a path that students can enter at different points. Chapter 2.5 describes the functions. A practical order is: workshops and external challenges first, then coaching, then prototype and project work, and finally support for those who want to start a venture. Not every student goes all the way. The path should be voluntary and open to students of every programme.

Tie the path to what students already do. Final-year projects and practical exams, such as the PAP in Portugal and examination projects in Hungary, are good starting points (see 2.4 and 2.5). Use experiential methods such as the Kolb learning cycle (available for free at c-entre.eu/kolb/) so that an assignment becomes a small project with real feedback.

DECISION PROMPTS

- Which part of the path is offered in the first year?
- Which existing assignments or projects can be linked?
- How is participation recognized or rewarded, without making it mandatory?

4.3 - SUSTAINABILITY MODEL

A HUB lasts when it is funded, useful and embedded in the institution. The three go together.

- **Financial sustainability.** Project grants such as Erasmus+ are time-limited. Plan which activities continue without them, and combine institutional budget, regional and European funding and contributions from partners (see 2.4). At MICA, funding comes from European funds, subsidies and the regional RIF, and subsidies are slowly decreasing. At CfE, the institution pays from its own means (see 3.1).
- **Impact and indicators.** Choose a few indicators that show the HUB's value, such as participation, partnerships, viable business ideas and graduate progression. Add a social or environmental indicator if it fits your mission.
- **Long-term embedding.** Link the HUB to the institution's strategy and to formal learning outcomes, so it does not depend on one person.

Ideas from the Dutch co-creation workshop that you could test: small membership fees, an access model for companies, and paid workspace for student entrepreneurs. These are ideas, not proven models. Test one on a small scale first.

DECISION PROMPTS

- Which activities continue after project funding ends?
- Which two indicators are tracked?

4.4 - BUSINESS COACHES

Chapter 1.5 describes the role in detail and chapter 2.5 shows how coaching fits the regional context. In the architecture, the coach is the link between the learning model and the ecosystem: the person who turns a student's idea into a project, and a partner's challenge into learning. Position coaches inside the HUB's services, not next to them, and agree with the coordinator on who does what.

Actor	Coaches work with them to
Students	Plan, reflect and develop ideas
Teachers	Link projects to the curriculum
Coordinator	Share the agenda for workshops and office hours
Companies and mentors	Prepare challenges and keep contributions mutually beneficial

DECISION PROMPTS

- Who coaches?
- Who coordinates, and how many hours are available?

4.5 - IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist brings together the decisions of this chapter before you start your pilot. Work through the three parts: final design decisions, internal alignment and readiness for piloting. Tick an item only when it is agreed and written down. An item you cannot tick is a decision for your team. When most items are ticked, continue to chapter 5.

FINAL DESIGN DECISIONS

- ☐ Write the mission in one or two sentences.
- ☐ Choose a governance set-up and name the owner.
- ☐ Agree the first version of the learning path.
- ☐ Draft the funding mix and the continuation plan.

INTERNAL ALIGNMENT

- ☐ Get approval for the plan from institutional leadership.
- ☐ Involve teachers and arrange their time.
- ☐ Name the coordinator and the coaches.

READINESS FOR PILOTING

- ☐ Identify the pilot group and one or two partners.
- ☐ Arrange space, tools and a contact point (see 1.6).
- ☐ Choose indicators for the pilot.

5 – IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY

Building a HUB in one step is risky. You commit money, people and partners before you know what works. A phased approach lowers that risk: you learn from a small pilot, show results to leadership and partners, and then expand. Each phase below ends with a gate, a short question you answer before you continue.

5.1 - PHASE 1: PREPARATION & DESIGN

The aim of this phase is a plan that your leadership and first partners support. It combines the work from the earlier chapters:

- Run your own co-creation workshop and write the one-page summary (chapter 1).
- Map your ecosystem and shortlist partners (chapter 2).
- Choose reference models and decide what to adapt (chapter 3).
- Write the mission and choose governance, learning path and funding mix (chapter 4).

Involve leadership from the start, and agree who coordinates the work and how many hours they have. Use the test result at c-entre.eu/hub-test to see where you are weakest.

Gate 1. Do we have a written mission, a named owner and coordinator, and at least one committed partner?

5.2 - PHASE 2: PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

The pilot tests the HUB on a small scale. Choose one programme or student group, one or two partners and a real challenge. Combine a short series of workshops, coaching and a final presentation to the partners, as in step 7 of the chapter 2 checklist. A Hungarian analysis proposes short development periods of about six to twelve weeks for incubation (see 2.5), which shows how compact a pilot can be.

Manage expectations on both sides. Tell students, teachers and partners what the pilot is, what it is not, and how long it lasts. Collect feedback from all three groups during the pilot, not only at the end.

Gate 2. Did students learn, did partners see value, and can we run this again with the people and money available?

5.3 - PHASE 3: REFINEMENT & SCALING

Use the results of the pilot to decide what to keep, change or extend. Typical questions:

- Which activities and partnerships continue as they are, and which change?
- Which functions do we add next, such as incubation, once the basics work?
- How do we embed the HUB in the curriculum and in the budget, so it survives staff changes?

- Who is responsible for coordination in the next cycle?

Scale in steps. Add students, programmes or partners one at a time, and measure the same indicators each round. Plan a review each year and keep the "Won't have (yet)" list from chapter 1 up to date.

Gate 3. Is the HUB part of the institution's regular work and planning?

5.4 - ROADMAP CHECKLIST

Copy this table to track your progress. The items refer to the checklists in earlier chapters.

Phase	Key actions	Checklist	Gate	Done
1. Preparation & design	Workshop, ecosystem map, partner shortlist, mission, governance, funding	1.6, 2.6 (steps 1–6), 3.4, 4.5	Mission, owner and partner confirmed	☐
2. Pilot	One group, one or two partners, real challenge, feedback	2.6 (step 7)	Learning, partner value, repeatable	☐
3. Refinement & scaling	Evaluate, adjust, add functions, embed	2.6 (step 8)	Part of regular work and budget	☐

6 – TOOLS, TEMPLATES & VISUAL SUMMARY

This chapter brings together the tools of the guide, so you can find them in one place, use them as they are or adapt them to your institution. Each tool refers to the chapter where it is explained.

6.1 - PRACTICAL TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Tool	Use it to	Explained in
Workshop agenda	Run your own co-creation workshop	1.1
Paired needs assessment questions	Find barriers, motivations and expectations	1.1
One-page summary and MoSCoW sheet	Record and prioritize needs	1.1, 1.3
Stakeholder map	Map partners and what each can contribute	2.3, 2.6
Reference model comparison	Compare benchmark HUBs with your context	3.4
Governance canvas	Choose owner, coordinator, partners and decision rights	4.1
Mission table	Write the mission of your HUB	Chapter 4
Pilot plan	Plan the pilot with partners, schedule and criteria	5.2
Roadmap	Follow progress across phases	5.4
HubMatch	Make people's ideas of the ideal HUB concrete	Below

The agenda, the stakeholder map, the governance canvas and the pilot plan follow below. The other tools are in the chapters named in the table.

WORKSHOP AGENDA (TWO HOURS)

The five phases are described in 1.1. The times are a suggestion that you can adjust to your group. Appendix 1 gives the same workshop as a facilitator guide, with rounds instead of phases.

Phase	Suggested time	What to prepare
1. Warm-up and mindset reflection	15 min	A question on what an entrepreneurial mindset means in practice
2. Context and trend setting	15 min	A short presentation of HUB examples and the project

Phase	Suggested time	What to prepare
3. Paired needs assessment	30 min	Printed questions, one set per student-teacher pair
4. Visual mapping and floorplan design	40 min	Paper, markers and magazines for moodboards, a floorplan outline
5. MoSCoW prioritization	20 min	Sticky notes in four colours or a printed grid

STAKEHOLDER MAP

Copy this table and add a row for each organization. Use the six groups from 2.3: vocational education providers, startup support organizations and incubators, innovation intermediaries and development agencies, businesses, SMEs and industry associations, public authorities and policy organizations, and national and regional entrepreneurship programmes.

Organization	Group	What they can offer	What they expect	Contact person	Next step

GOVERNANCE CANVAS

Fill in one answer per row. If you cannot answer a row yet, it is a decision for your team.

Question	Our answer
What is the mission of the HUB, in one or two sentences?	
Who owns the HUB and decides on its budget?	
Who coordinates it day to day, and how many hours a week?	
Who are the coaches, and how are they linked to teachers?	
Which partners are at the table, and what do they contribute?	

Question	Our answer
How do students and teachers have a say?	
How is the HUB funded now, and after project funding ends?	
When do we review the HUB, and on which indicators?	

PILOT PLAN

Item	Our plan
Student group or programme	
Partners (one or two)	
Real challenge	
Activities (workshops, coaching, final presentation)	
Schedule and roles	
Learning outcomes	
Indicators of success	
Feedback moments (students, teachers, partners)	
Date of Gate 2 decision (see 5.2)	

DESIGN YOUR OWN ENTREPRENEUR HUB IN VR: HUBMATCH

A short, intuitive test with a virtual reality (VR) experience, made for the Dutch C-ENTRE symposium. It helps people to put into words what their ideal Entrepreneur HUB feels like, before they discuss practical details.

- **The test.** Participants answer 14 quick questions on gut feeling: choosing a scene, a colour palette, the "superpower" of the coach, where the HUB should be in the school and what they would buy first with a small budget. They also say how much they agree with statements such as "Failing is allowed: that is where you learn most".
- **The result.** The answers lead to a real-time impression of a HUB. The impression combines a theme with an atmosphere.

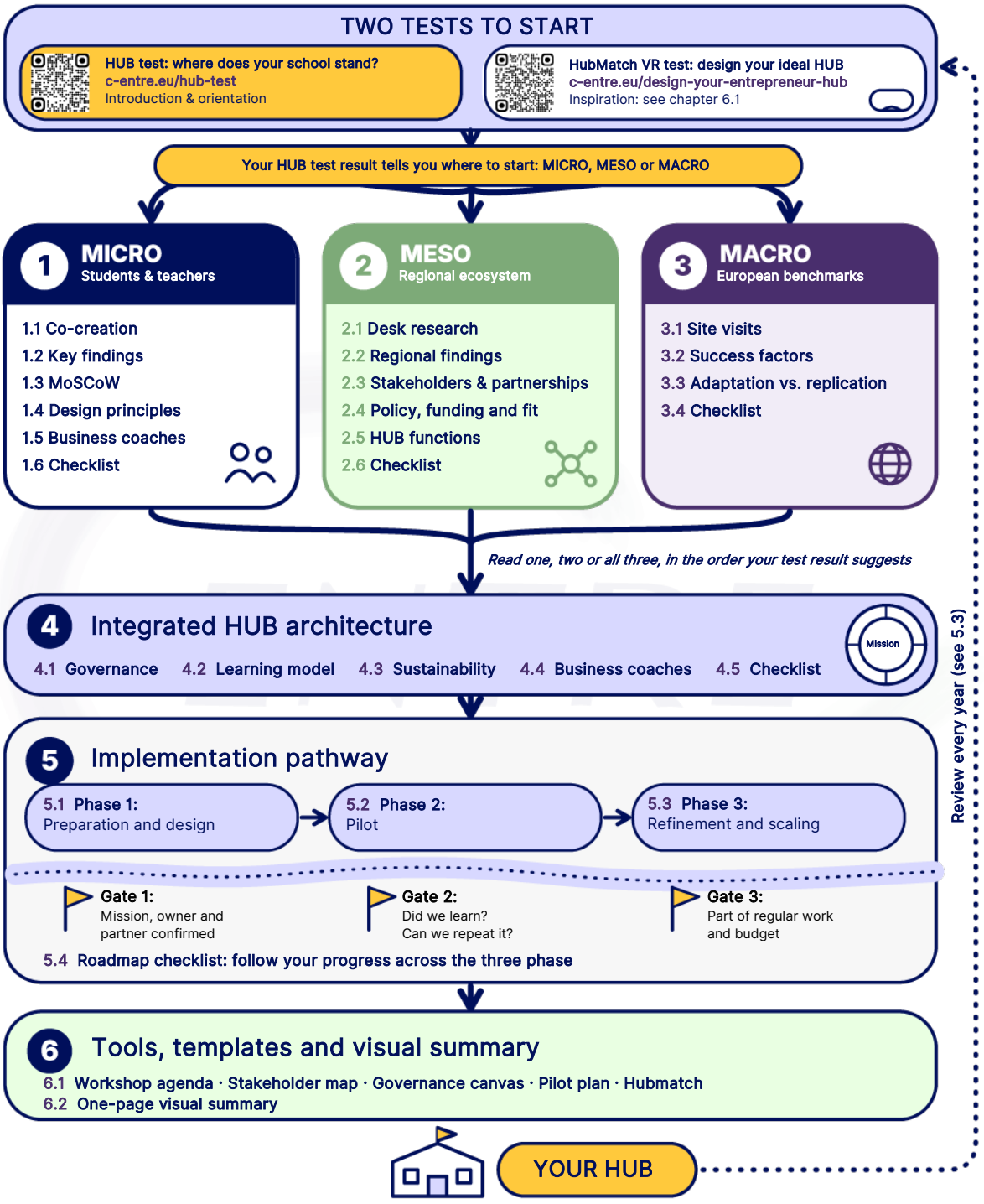
- **The experience.** Participants step into their impression in 360 degrees, with a VR headset if one is available. The result can also be viewed on a screen without a headset.
- **Afterwards.** Participants can leave their email address to receive a picture and description of their impression, a link to look around again in 3D, and a link to the free online HUB test.

HubMatch is available at c-entre.eu/design-your-entrepreneur-hub. At the moment of publication (end 2026), the interface is currently in Dutch and may later be translated into other languages. Using a Meta Quest VR headset improves the experience.

Use in your own HUB project. Use HubMatch as a warm-up at the start of a co-creation workshop (section 1.1) or at an event. Compare the impressions that participants end up with, and ask what they have in common.

6.2 - ONE-PAGE VISUAL SUMMARY

The visual summary shows the whole guide on one page: how the three levels lead to the HUB design, and how the design leads to a pilot and to scaling. Use it as a poster, a handout at workshops or a quick orientation before reading the chapters.


TWO TESTS TO START
HUB test: where does your school stand?
c-entre.eu/hub-test
Introduction & orientation
HubMatch VR test: design your ideal HUB
c-entre.eu/design-your-entrepreneur-hub
Inspiration: see chapter 6.1
Your HUB test result tells you where to start: MICRO, MESO or MACRO
1 MICRO
Students & teachers
1.1 Co-creation
1.2 Key findings
1.3 MoSCoW
1.4 Design principles
1.5 Business coaches
1.6 Checklist
2 MESO
Regional ecosystem
2.1 Desk research
2.2 Regional findings
2.3 Stakeholders & partnerships
2.4 Policy, funding and fit
2.5 HUB functions
2.6 Checklist
3 MACRO
European benchmarks
3.1 Site visits
3.2 Success factors
3.3 Adaptation vs. replication
3.4 Checklist
Read one, two or all three, in the order your test result suggests
4 Integrated HUB architecture
Mission
4.1 Governance
4.2 Learning model
4.3 Sustainability
4.4 Business coaches
4.5 Checklist
5 Implementation pathway
5.1 Phase 1:
Preparation and design
5.2 Phase 2:
Pilot
5.3 Phase 3:
Refinement and scaling
Gate 1:
Mission, owner and partner confirmed
Gate 2:
Did we learn?
Can we repeat it?
Gate 3:
Part of regular work and budget
5.4 Roadmap checklist: follow your progress across the three phase
6 Tools, templates and visual summary
6.1 Workshop agenda · Stakeholder map · Governance canvas · Pilot plan · Hubmatch
6.2 One-page visual summary
YOUR HUB
Review every year (see 5.3)

FINAL THOUGHTS

The How to HUB guide is built on the idea that an Entrepreneur HUB works best when it grows from the people who use it, the ecosystem around it and the experience of others. The three levels of the guide – MICRO, MESO and MACRO – together form a coherent framework. They help institutions to move from first ideas to a working HUB: starting from the needs of students and teachers, building on regional partners, policies and funding, and learning from European examples.

Throughout the guide, readers are encouraged to move from reflection to action. Co-creation workshops give students and teachers a real voice in the design. Stakeholder mapping and partnership models help institutions to build on what already exists. A small pilot allows them to test and learn before they scale. By starting small and reviewing the results, institutions can reduce risk and build the confidence and commitment needed to continue.

The guide also highlights the importance of balancing ambition and feasibility. A HUB benefits from an inspiring vision, but it works when priorities are clear, resources are realistic and ideas that must wait are written down rather than forgotten. In the same way, European examples can inspire, but they are most useful when they are adapted to the local context rather than copied.

Finally, the guide emphasizes that a HUB is not a fixed model but a living structure. It develops together with its students, teachers, coaches and partners. Business coaches and coordinators play a central role in this development: not by providing ready-made solutions, but by connecting people, asking good questions and supporting learners to take responsibility for their own entrepreneurial journey. By collecting feedback and reviewing priorities regularly, institutions can keep their HUB relevant and sustainable.

The C-ENTRE project hopes that the ideas, examples and tools presented in this guide will inspire VET institutions to start their own Entrepreneur HUB, to keep adapting it to their users and region, and to share what they learn with others.

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APPENDIX 1 - ORGANIZING A CO-CREATION SESSION

This appendix is the detailed facilitator version of the two-hour workshop in section 1.1. The five phases of 1.1 are organized here as rounds. The order and the timings differ slightly, because the rounds follow the workshop materials used in the C-ENTRE sessions. Both versions take two hours and lead to the same result: a prioritized list of requirements. Choose the version that suits your group.

Phase in section 1.1	Round in this appendix
1. Warm-up and mindset reflection	Welcome and introductions
2. Context and trend setting	Welcome and introductions (C-ENTRE context and central question)
3. Paired needs assessment	Round 2 – Student perspective Round 3 – Teacher perspective
4. Visual mapping and floorplan design	Round 1 – Inspiration boards / moodboards (floor plan optional)
5. MoSCoW prioritization	Round 4 – Grouping and identifying themes Round 5 – Prioritizing

1. PURPOSE AND APPROACH

A co-creation session brings together the people who may use, deliver or support an Entrepreneur HUB to shape its key features. In the C-ENTRE approach, the session focuses on the implementation guide for the HUB and explores the question: “What are the most important themes to consider when developing a successful Entrepreneur HUB?”

The aim is to collect different ideas, make student and teacher needs visible, identify common themes and agree which elements should receive priority. The process is participatory: all contributions are welcomed before the group starts clustering and prioritizing them.

2. WHO SHOULD TAKE PART?

Invite a mix of people connected to vocational education and entrepreneurship. The workshop format is designed to include students and teachers, ideally working in pairs during the perspective-based activities. Depending on the local context, school or institutional representatives may also contribute.

- Students: bring the learner’s experience, expectations and reasons for using the HUB.
- VET teachers/trainers: contribute teaching, coaching and implementation perspectives.
- School or HUB representatives: help connect ideas to the institutional context.

3. PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

- Choose a facilitator to explain each activity, keep time and encourage balanced participation.
- Prepare a room with wall or table space where participants can display and rearrange their work.
- Provide sticky notes, thick markers, flip-chart paper, pens and voting/prioritization dots or tokens.
- Prepare a visible agenda and a way to capture the results (photographs, notes or a digital board).
- For the inspiration round, provide magazines, images, examples or other visual prompts if available.

Before participants arrive, arrange the room so that people can work individually, in pairs and as a whole group. Make it easy for everyone to contribute and remind participants that questions and suggestions are welcome.

4. SUGGESTED TWO-HOUR AGENDA

Time	Activity	Duration
14:30–14:35	Welcome, C-ENTRE context and co-creation objective	5 min
14:35–14:40	Introductions	5 min
14:40–15:10	Round 1 – Inspiration boards / moodboards	30 min
15:10–15:25	Round 2 – Student perspective	15 min
15:25–15:40	Round 3 – Teacher perspective	15 min
15:40–16:05	Round 4 – Grouping and identifying themes	25 min
16:05–16:20	Round 5 – Prioritizing	15 min
16:20–16:25	Conclusion	5 min
16:25–16:30	Looking ahead and next steps	5 min

5. AGENDA IN DETAIL

Welcome and introductions | 10 minutes

Briefly introduce C-ENTRE and explain that this session will contribute to the development of an implementation guide for an Entrepreneur HUB. State the central question and the expected outcome: a shared set of themes and priorities. Ask each participant to introduce themselves, indicate whether they are a student, teacher or school representative, and briefly describe their experience of entrepreneurship in VET.

Round 1 – Inspiration boards / moodboards | 30 minutes

Purpose: explore participants' first ideas and build a shared picture of what an Entrepreneur HUB could be.

- Invite participants to reflect individually on the question: "What is an Entrepreneur HUB?"
- Ask them to create a moodboard showing the atmosphere, features or experiences they associate with the HUB.
- As an optional spatial exercise, ask participants to work together to sketch a floor plan or layout.
- Invite participants to share their work. Facilitate an open conversation about inspiration, similarities and differences.

Facilitator prompt: "What inspires you? What would make this place feel like a real home for entrepreneurship?" The Dutch workshop material includes both an individual moodboard and a jointly created floor plan; the Portuguese material emphasizes moodboards and discussion. Choose the format that best fits the group.

Round 2 – Student perspective | 15 minutes

Purpose: identify what would make students genuinely want and need to use the HUB. Form pairs of one student and one teacher wherever possible. Brainstorm freely and record one idea per sticky note.

- Consider: equipment and facilities; people; roles; activities or functions; location.
- Use the guiding question: "What would make you actually use this HUB?"
- Encourage concrete ideas as well as ambitious suggestions. Do not evaluate or reject ideas at this stage.

Round 3 – Teacher perspective | 15 minutes

Purpose: explore the HUB from the teacher's point of view. Keep the same student–teacher pairs, but explicitly shift the discussion to the teacher perspective. Brainstorm equipment, people, roles, functions, location and anything else that would support teachers in using the HUB.

- Ask what teachers would need to coach, guide or support entrepreneurial learning in the HUB.
- Continue using one idea per sticky note so that contributions can be rearranged during the next round.

Round 4 – Grouping and identifying themes | 25 minutes

Bring all sticky notes and ideas together. Invite the group to group similar contributions, split clusters that contain different ideas and look for connections or themes that may not be immediately obvious. Give each cluster a short, clear theme title. Check with participants that the labels accurately represent the ideas.

6. PRIORITIZING AND CLOSING

Round 5 – Prioritizing | 15 minutes

Ask participants to decide which themes or elements deserve the greatest priority. Use the prompt from the workshop: "Where would you put your money?" Participants should

consider which elements are most important for a successful and useful Entrepreneur HUB; they could be given fake money to enrich the experience.

As a final prioritization step, use the MoSCoW categories shown in the C-ENTRE workshop materials:

Level	Meaning
MUST have	Essential elements for the HUB.
SHOULD have	Important elements to include where possible.
COULD have	Useful elements that could be included if resources allow.
WON'T have (yet)	Elements participants would like to see, but which are not a current priority.

Conclusion and looking ahead | 10 minutes

Summarize the main themes and priorities. Check whether participants recognize their contributions in the results and invite any final clarification. Explain what will happen next: the session results will be processed and shared with participants.

7. OUTPUTS TO CAPTURE

- Photographs or digital copies of the inspiration boards and any floor-plan sketches.
- All student-perspective and teacher-perspective sticky notes.
- The final clusters, with their agreed theme titles.
- The prioritized themes, including their MoSCoW category.
- A short record of key discussion points, open questions and any differences of opinion.

Keep the original contributions as well as the grouped summary. This makes it possible to trace how the priorities emerged and to retain ideas that may be relevant at a later stage.

8. PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- Keep the process open during brainstorming: generate ideas first, evaluate them later.
- Make sure student and teacher voices are both heard; do not let one perspective dominate.
- Use one idea per sticky note to make clustering easier.
- Ask participants to explain unclear notes before grouping or prioritizing them.
- Keep the agreed timeboxes visible and explain transitions between rounds.
- Document the process, not only the final priorities.

SUGGESTED CLOSING QUESTION

"If we could put only a few things in place to make this Entrepreneur HUB valuable for students and teachers, what should they be?"