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Innovative VET Scalable High-Impact Excellence Learning that Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate Optimized Adult Education

D2.4
Guideline for Organizing Innovation Camps Enhancing Career Development

Table of Content

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1. Why organizing an Innovation Camp?

An **Innovation Camp** is focusing on developing ideas and solutions related to for instance oceans, water resources and the **blue economy** like fisheries, marine tech, renewable ocean energy and sustainability. These camps bring together students, entrepreneurs and experts to collaborate on real-world challenges. It is designed to help students learn by doing, connect with the right people, and work on meaningful challenges related to the future of the economy. The main benefits are:

Real-World Problem Solving

One of the most valuable aspects of a Innovation Camp is the opportunity to work directly on real-world challenges affecting farming and technology development. Instead of only learning concepts in a classroom, participants are introduced to pressing issues such as marine pollution, overfishing, biodiversity loss, and the development of renewable ocean energy. These are complex, global problems that require creative and interdisciplinary solutions, making the experience both challenging and highly relevant.

By engaging with these topics, participants gain **hands-on experiences** through activities like data analysis, field insights, brainstorming sessions, and prototype development. This practical approach allows them to actively test ideas, learn from failures, and refine solutions in a collaborative environment. As a result, learning becomes more dynamic and impactful compared to traditional theoretical study.

In addition, participants develop **practical, job-relevant skills** such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and innovation methods like design thinking. These skills are transferable across many careers and are highly valued in today's workforce.

Perhaps most importantly, working closely with real environmental challenges fosters a **deeper understanding of sustainability issues within the economy**. Participants not only learn about the problems but also explore their causes, consequences, and potential solutions. This often leads to increased awareness, motivation, and a stronger sense of responsibility toward protecting marine ecosystems and contributing to a more sustainable future.

Networking Opportunities

An Innovation Camp brings together a diverse group of people, creating a unique environment where the students can connect beyond their usual circle. They will interact with **students and young professionals** from different fields, which exposes them to new perspectives and ways of thinking. At the same time, they will have access to **industry experts**, **mentors**, and sometimes even **investors**, giving them insight into how ideas move from concept to real-world impact.

These connections are more than just short-term interactions. Working closely in teams and workshops often builds strong relationships that can continue after the camp ends. This can open doors to **future collaborations**, whether on projects, startups, or research. It may also lead to **internships or job opportunities**, as professionals often notice motivated students. Over time, these contacts can grow into **long-term professional connections**, forming a valuable network that supports your career development.

Innovation boosting creativity

An Innovation Camp is designed to actively push the students beyond conventional thinking and into a more creative, solution-oriented mindset. Through structured **brainstorming sessions**, the students learn how to generate a wide range of ideas quickly, without overthinking or limiting yourself too early. These sessions encourage openness, curiosity, and collaboration, helping students build on others' ideas and discover unexpected solutions.

In **design thinking workshops**, students are guided through a human centered approach to innovation. This means focusing on real users, understanding their needs, and developing solutions that are both practical and meaningful. Students learn how to break down complex problems, test assumptions, and refine ideas step by step. Another key element is **rapid prototyping**, where ideas are quickly turned into simple models or concepts. Instead of spending too much time planning, students create early versions of companies proposed solution and test them right away. This helps students learn faster, adapt quickly, and improve their ideas through immediate or nearly immediate feedback.

As a result, students develop the ability to **turn abstract ideas into concrete solutions**, think more creatively and "outside the box," and perform effectively under **time pressure**. These are highly valuable skills in both academic and professional environments, especially in fields that require innovation and problem-solving.

Career Development

Participating in an Innovation Camp gives students careers a strong head start by adding meaningful, real-world experience to their CV. It shows that students participate in initiatives beyond the classroom and are able to work effectively in teams. This is both qualities that employers highly value. By engaging in projects focused on sustainability and innovation, students demonstrate a clear interest in solving modern global challenges, which makes their profile stand out.

During the camp, the students gain hands-on project experience where they confidently discuss in interviews whether it's how they contributed to solving a problem, collaborated with others, or developed and presented an idea. This kind of experience is often more impactful than theoretical knowledge alone.

An Innovation Camp is especially beneficial if the students aiming for a future in fields like fish farming, aquaculture, environmental science, engineering, or business and entrepreneurship, as it helps them build relevant skills, insights, and connections within these areas.

Contribution to Sustainability

As a student participating in an Innovation Camp, they go beyond traditional learning by actively contributing to solutions that have real environmental impact. Instead of only studying sustainability in theory, they become part of the effort to address some of the most pressing challenges facing oceans and water systems.

Through their work, students may help develop ideas that protect marine ecosystems, such as reducing pollution, preserving biodiversity, or improving ocean and fish farming health. At the same time, they contribute to building more sustainable industries by exploring innovations in areas like aquaculture, fish-farming, renewable ocean energy, or responsible resource management and technology development. These efforts are directly connected to broader global climate goals, meaning students' contributions align with international efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainability.

This experience gives students a strong sense of purpose. They will clearly see how new skills, competences, ideas and teamwork can create meaningful change, making their learning more motivating and impactful.

Where students, educators and industry come together to solve real-world challenges, build practical skills and turn ideas into tangible solutions.

Learn it —> Build it —> Solve it.

Skill and Competence Development

Student participating in an Innovation Camp will gain valuable skills that go far beyond traditional classroom learning. Through hands-on challenges and collaborative projects, they actively develop both **hard and soft skills** that are highly relevant for their future studies and career.

They strengthen their **problem-solving abilities** by working on real-world aquaculture and farming and sustainability issues, learning how to analyse complex situations and create practical solutions. At the same time, they improve their **teamwork and communication skills** by collaborating with people from different backgrounds, sharing ideas, and working toward common goals.

The camp will help students build confidence in **pitching ideas**, as they learn how to clearly present their solutions to mentors, experts, or even potential investors. This experience is especially valuable for expressing their thoughts in a structured and persuasive way. In addition, students will enhance their **critical thinking**, learning to question assumptions, evaluate different perspectives, and make informed decisions.

Overall, the students will leave the camp not only with new knowledge but with a stronger, more versatile skill set that prepares them for both academic success and real-world challenges.

Potential Funding and Recognition

Students participating in an Innovation Camp will have the opportunity to turn their ideas into something much bigger. Camps should include competitions or final pitch sessions where students will present their solution to a panel of experts, investors, or industry professionals.

If their idea stands out, they should **win prizes or receive funding**, which can help them take their project or an initiative from an industrial company beyond the camp and continue developing it in real life. This financial support is especially valuable if students want to build a prototype, start a small venture, or further research their concept.

In addition, strong projects often receive **mentorship and continued support**, giving students access to guidance, resources, and networks that can help refine and grow their idea over time.

Students should gain **recognition for their work**, which can boost their confidence and strengthen their academic and professional profiles. Being acknowledged for innovation and initiative is something they can highlight in their CV, applications, or interview. It helps them stand out as a motivated and forward-thinking student.

2. How to organize an Innovation Camp?

Organizing a **hybrid Innovation Camp** for both in-person attending at a campus together with remote participants online, requires careful planning so that *both groups feel equally engaged*. Think of the camp as a **digital-first experience with a physical layer**, not the other way around. Here's a clear, practical structure to follow:

Define Purpose and Format

When organizing a hybrid Innovation Camp for students, the first step is to clearly define the **purpose and overall format** of the event. This ensures that everyone involved like the participants, mentors, and organizers, shares the same expectations and goals.

Start by choosing a **clear theme** that students can relate to and feel motivated by, such as sustainable fish-farming and fisheries, aquaculture technology, or marine pollution. A focused theme helps guide the ideas students will develop and makes it easier to design relevant workshops and challenges.

Next, define the **target group**. If the camp is aimed at students, consider their level (e.g., high school, undergraduate, or master's students) and academic backgrounds. This will influence the complexity of the tasks, the type of mentoring needed, and how much guidance students require throughout the camp.

Then, decide on the **hybrid setup**. The most effective approach is a *fully integrated model*, where student teams include both online and in-person participants working together. This encourages collaboration across locations and gives students valuable experience in digital teamwork. A less effective option is running *parallel tracks*, where online and onsite students work separately, which can lead to unequal experiences.

The key is to design the camp as **one shared experience**, where all students–regardless of location–feel equally involved, connected, and able to contribute.

Co-creating solutions for real industry challenges that are developing skills and competences, driving innovation and strengthening regional future, ….. Together!

Designing the Program Structure with the Student Experiences

When organizing a one-day hybrid Innovation Camp, the program should be structured to keep students actively engaged from start to finish, whether they are participating online or in person. The goal is to create a dynamic learning journey where students move from inspiration to action within a single day.

The day typically begins with a **kick-off session**, where students join inspirational talks delivered by experts in farming sustainability or aquaculture innovation. These sessions are live-streamed so that both onsite and remote students share the same starting point, gaining insight into real-world ocean challenges and opportunities.

Next, students move into **team formation**, where groups are intentionally mixed with both online and onsite participants. This encourages collaboration across locations and helps students build digital teamwork skills. At this stage, students also get introduced to the challenge they will be working on throughout the day.

Once teams are formed, students participate in **hands-on workshops**, such as design thinking or basic business model development. These sessions guide them step-by-step in shaping their ideas into practical solutions, helping them understand how to identify problems, generate ideas, and structure them in a meaningful way.

Throughout the day, **mentoring sessions** are integrated to support students. Mentors–either physically present or joining online to provide feedback, answer questions, and help teams refine their concepts. This gives students valuable guidance and a chance to learn directly from experienced professionals.

The day concludes with a **final pitch session**, where each student team presents their solution to a panel or audience. This is a key moment where students practice communication skills, showcase their ideas, and receive feedback or recognition for their work.

Because students are joining digitally, it's important to keep online sessions **short and focused** to maintain energy and avoid fatigue. By combining interactive elements, collaboration, and expert support, the program ensures that students stay motivated and fully involved throughout the entire experience.

Choosing the Right Digital Tools

For a student participating in a hybrid Innovation Camp, having the right digital tools is essential to stay connected and fully engaged, whether they are joining online or sitting in the room. These tools act as their shared workspace, making collaboration smooth and inclusive for everyone.

For live sessions like workshops, mentoring, and team meetings, video platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams allow them to interact in real time, ask questions, and present your ideas.

When it comes to brainstorming and developing solutions with a team, digital whiteboards like Miro or Mural let you collaborate visually, adding ideas, sketches, and notes together, just like you would on a physical board.

For day-to-day communication, quick updates, and team coordination, platforms like Slack or Discord help you stay in constant contact with your teammates, share files, and organize discussions.

The key is that **all students use the same set of tools**, no matter where they are participating from. This ensures that everyone has equal access to information, can contribute in real time, and feels like a full part of the team, thus creating a seamless and collaborative hybrid experience.

Setting Up the Physical Space

When organizing a hybrid Innovation Camp for students, the physical venue should be designed so that **onsite and online participants can collaborate as equals**. The goal is to create an environment where students, regardless of location, feel like they are part of the same team experience.

First, ensure the venue has **strong and stable Wi-Fi**, as students will rely heavily on digital tools for communication, research, and collaboration. A weak connection can quickly disrupt teamwork and exclude remote participants.

Consider equipping the space with **large screens or projectors** so students onsite can clearly see and interact with their remote teammates during discussions, workshops, and mentoring sessions. This helps make online participants feel present in the room rather than "on the outside."

Good **audio and video setup is essential**. Use microphones and cameras at each working area so students can communicate clearly without constantly repeating themselves or struggling to hear. This improves the flow of collaboration and reduces frustration on both sides.

To encourage real integration, organize students into **"hybrid tables"**, where each group may include both onsite and remote members connected through a shared device. This setup promotes active collaboration and ensures that all voices are included in the problem-solving process.

Finally, it's important to actively **prevent onsite students from dominating discussions**. Facilitators should encourage balanced participation, making sure remote students have equal opportunities to contribute ideas, ask questions, and lead parts of the work.

By thoughtfully setting up the physical space in this way, you create a more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environment for all students involved.

Bridging education and industry through hands-on collaboration and cooperation, where real challenges meet fresh perspectives and innovation comes to life.

A space for hands-on learning, creative problem-solving with real-world innovation, that is empowering the next generation of skilled professionals.

Where Ideas Meet, both Online and Onsite.

Bridging Minds, Spaces and Industries.

Innovation Without Borders.

From the digital screen to the workshop floor."

Building Mixed Teams for a Hybrid Experience

When organizing a hybrid Innovation Camp, it's important to **create teams that include both in-person and remote students**. This approach ensures that everyone, regardless of location, is fully part of the same experience and contributes equally to the project.

For students, working in mixed teams means learning how to collaborate across physical and digital spaces, an essential skill in today's global and increasingly remote work environments. It also encourages **cross-cultural collaboration**, as students from different regions, backgrounds, and perspectives come together to solve shared challenges. This diversity often leads to more creative and well-rounded solutions.

In addition, students develop **strong digital teamwork skills**, such as communicating clearly online, using collaboration tools effectively, and managing tasks across time zones or different working styles. These are highly valuable competencies for both academic and professional settings.

To make this work smoothly, each team should have a **facilitator**–someone responsible for ensuring that both remote and in-person students are actively involved. The facilitator helps balance discussions, checks that everyone's ideas are heard, and keeps the team connected throughout the process.

Mentoring and Support for Students

In a hybrid Innovation Camp, mentoring should be designed so that **all students, whether onsite or online, have equal access to guidance and support** throughout the program. Mentors play a key role in helping students refine their ideas, overcome challenges, and stay on track.

For students attending in person, mentors can **move between teams physically**, offering quick feedback, answering questions, and facilitating discussions. This allows for spontaneous interactions and immediate support when teams get stuck.

At the same time, online students should have **structured opportunities to connect with mentors through scheduled video sessions**. These sessions give them dedicated time to present their progress, ask questions, and receive detailed feedback, ensuring they are just as supported as those onsite.

To make this process smooth and fair, it's important to use a system where all the student teams will reserve time slots with mentors. This helps avoid confusion, ensures equal access, and allows students to plan ahead based on their needs.

Overall, a well-organized mentoring system ensures that every student feels supported, included, and confident in developing their ideas, regardless of how they are participating in the camp.

Keeping Students Equally Engaged

In a hybrid Innovation Camp, maintaining balanced engagement is essential to ensure that **both onsite and online students feel equally involved and valued**. Without careful planning, remote participants will easily feel disconnected, while those physically present may dominate discussions.

To avoid this, design activities that actively include everyone. Use **interactive tools** such as polls, chat functions, and breakout rooms so that students, regardless of location, can contribute ideas in real time. For example, joint brainstorming sessions will happen on shared digital boards where all students collaborate simultaneously.

It's also important to **rotate speaking opportunities** between onsite and online students. This encourages equal participation and ensures that different perspectives are heard. Facilitators or team leaders will play a key role here by intentionally inviting input from quieter or remote participants. Additionally, include **energizers and short breaks** throughout the program. Hybrid settings will be more mentally demanding, especially for online students, so quick activities or informal moments help maintain energy, focus, and group connection.

A useful mindset when planning each activity is to ask: *"Can online students fully participate in this experience?"* If the answer is no, the activity should be adapted. By prioritizing inclusion in every step, the event is creating a more engaging, collaborative, and rewarding experience for all students involved.

Final Pitch Event: Ensuring Equal Participation for All Students

When planning the final pitch event in a hybrid Innovation Camp, it's important to create an experience where **both online and onsite students will participate on equal footing**. This is often the highlight of the camp, where students present their ideas, so accessibility and fairness are key.

Start by **live-streaming all student pitches**, allowing everyone, including participants, mentors, and judges, to watch in real time, regardless of location. This ensures that online students are just as visible and heard as those presenting in person.

Make sure that **both online and onsite student teams are given the same opportunity to present**, using a standardized format (e.g., same time limit, same presentation structure). Online teams should be able to present live via video, while onsite teams present in the room. However, both should be projected and shared through the same platform.

To keep the evaluation fair and transparent, consider using a **digital judging or voting system**, where judges and even fellow students can submit scores or feedback online. This avoids bias and ensures that all projects are evaluated consistently, no matter where the team is located.

Finally, **record all student presentations** and make them available afterward. This allows participants to revisit ideas, learn from each other, and share their work with a wider audience, such as potential partners, educators, or future employers.

Follow-Up Opportunities for Students

For students, the experience of an Innovation Camp should not end when the event is over. It should act as a starting point for further growth and development. After the camp, organizers should support students by **sharing recordings, presentations, and workshop materials**, allowing them to revisit what they've learned, strengthen their ideas, and continue developing their skills at their own pace.

Students will benefit greatly from being **connected with mentors, industry experts, or incubator programs**. These connections provide guidance beyond the camp, helping students refine their projects, explore career paths, and gain insights into turning ideas into real-world solutions.

In addition, offering **opportunities for funding or continued project development** enables engaged students to take their ideas further. This might include access to grants, start-up programs, or follow-up competitions where they can expand their concepts into prototypes or even early-stage ventures.

Overall, strong follow-up support ensures that students don't just participate in a short-term event, but instead gain a **long-term pathway to learning, innovation, and real impact**.

Bridging skills and competences through innovation.

From learning to doing, together.

Build skills and competences to create impact.

3. The Innovation Camp at the island Frøya, Mid-Norway

The Innovation Camp at Hitra and Frøya in the costal zone of Mid-Norway, is a collaborative annual event implemented by Guri Kunna Upper Secondary School, with support from the Blue Competence Centre and Young Entrepreneurship Trøndelag. The event focuses on youth creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation. A close collaboration and cooperation with local businesses and industry are central to the innovation camp.

Blue Competence Centre	Guri Kunna Upper Secondary School	Young Entrepreneurship Trøndelag
Main connector between collaborators, project manager role.	Project owner.	The connection with schools in Trøndelag.
Main organizer of the physical camp.	Houses the main events.	Main organizer of the digital camp.
Provides industry engagement.	Provides fish husbandry activities.	Provides entrepreneurial and UNs Sustainable Development Goals materials.
Provides suppliers to the camp.	Provides own student engagement and coordination.	Provides team-building activities.
Provides sponsor agreements (bank and business participants).	Provides part of the financing.	
Media, marketing and PR.		

Target groups

Tenth graders from all over Trøndelag visit the island region for the physical version of the Innovation Camp. Due to covid restrictions during Innovation Camp 2020, the organizers had to come up with innovative solutions, whereby the camp became wholly digital. This was such a success that the Innovation Camp is now both a physical and digital event!

Once a year, tenth graders from all over Trøndelag county visit the island region for the physical version of the Innovation Camp. The mayors of Frøya and Hitra and the Guri Kunna principal welcomes these students and kick off the camp. These students then participate in group activities like fish farm building with the coastal museum Kystmuseet. Another activity is the puzzle run around the school's local town of Sistranda organized by Guri Kunna students. Here the visitors learn about the local community, get a boat ride from Guri Kunna students to visit their sea fisheries and finally have dinner and the award ceremony at the renown Hotell Frøya after completing the Innovation Camp competition.

In the digital version of the camp, students participate in their entrepreneurial workshops. This offers comfort within their own school classrooms, with guidance given digitally by both the year's industry panels, Guri Kunna student assistants and Young Entrepreneurship Trøndelag. The digital pitches are recorded and handed out in YouTube-video format for the panels to judge.

Eight students are handpicked by Guri Kunna teachers to help guide the visitors through the daily activities, both physically and virtually. Winners are chosen by their assigned participating aquaculture company. Three jurors from each company commit to participating in the Innovation Camp. The winners are chosen based on:

- Ease of implementation into existing systems,
- Sustainability,
- Practicality.

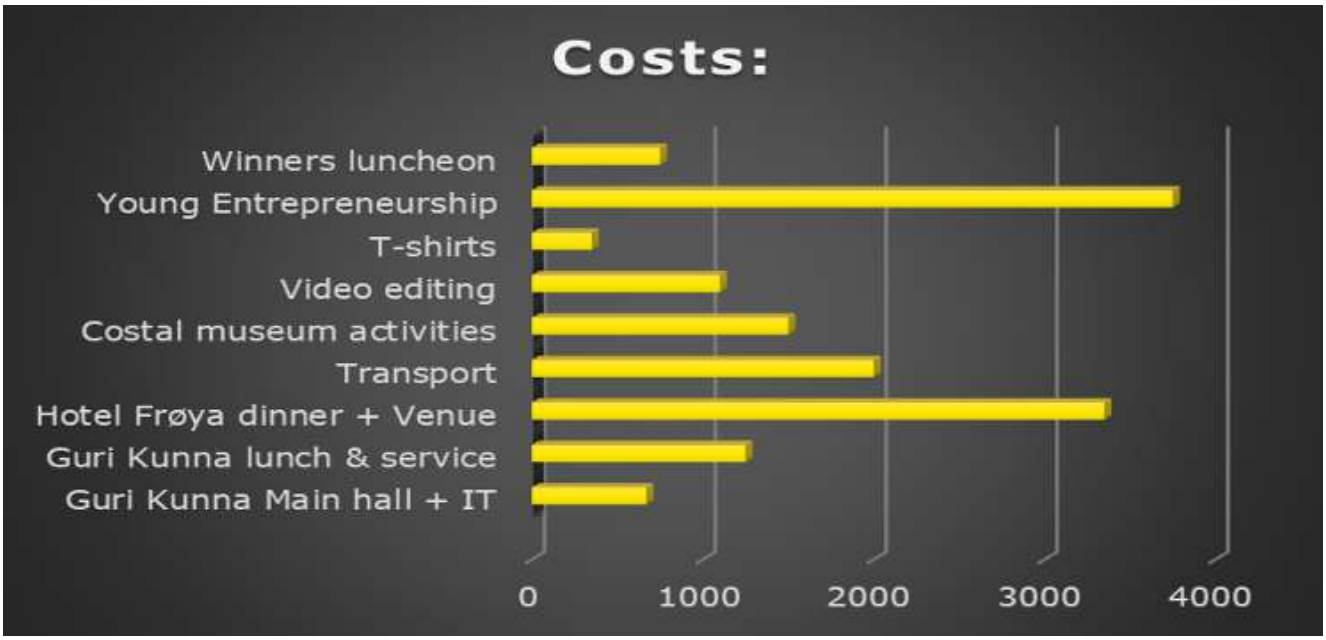
Costs

One of the winner groups from the physical camp presented with their money prize at Hotel Frøya

One of the winner groups from the digital camp presented with their money prize at school

Budget

Camp activities: - 15.000 Euros from Guri Kunna Upper Secondary School. - 9.000 Euros from 3 business participants.
Prizes: - 4.000 Euros total from local bank sponsors.
The Blue Competence Centre work is covered trough the project.



The Timeline for the On-site Participants

Time	On-Site Activity
06:30	Departure Trondheim Central Station and Klett. Stops are then arranged at relevant bus stops to pick up students and chaperones.
08:00	Frøya: Rigging equipment (for group work) at Frøya cultural center. Preparing Guri Kunna student mentors.
09:00	Buss arrivals at Frøya cultural center/Guri Kunna Upper Secondary School.
09:15-09:35	Usher students into the main hall. All organizers have a welcome speech.
09:35 – 09:55	Kystmuseet show History of Fish Farming video.
10:00 – 11:00	Start of activities at Hotel Frøya. Dividing students into two groups. Switching activities halfway: 1. Fish cage construction outside with Kystmuseet 2. Creative task inside lead by Young Entrepreneurship for students.
11:00	Lunch made by restaurant and food studies students from Guri Kunna.
11:30 – 13:15	Dividing students into two groups + switching activities halfway: 1. Boat trip with Guri Kunna students to their fish cages (10 trips) 2. Learn about the local area and social activities – puzzle run lead by Guri Kunna students in Sistranda (10-15 groups)
13:15	Gather students towards the main hall.
13:30 – 14:00	Introduction to the Camp by coordinators. The three quaculture business challenges are presentated by local businesses.
14:00 – 16:00	Blue Innovation Camp main event.
16:15 – 17:00	Students pitching their solutions to the three panels representing local business.
17:00	Dinner begins at Hotel Frøya for students.
17:30 – 17:40	The juries choose their winners.
17:45 – 18:15	Award ceremony at Hotel Frøya.
18:30 – 18:45	Students and their chaperones are lead to the busses and leave.

Learn –> Solve –> Innovate.

Real challenges –> Real solutions.

The Timeline for a Hybrid Event

Time	On-Site Activity	Parallel Digital Activities
06:30	Departure Trondheim Central Station and Klett. Stops are then arranged at relevant bus stops to pick up students and chaperones.	
08:00	Frøya: Rigging equipment (for group work) at Frøya cultural center. Preparing Guri Kunna student mentors.	
09:00	Buss arrivals at Frøya cultural center/Guri Kunna Upper Secondary School.	Teachers begin the digital kick-off in class. The ambition is to ground the hybrid camp in real industry context and practical knowledge. E.g. students observe the assembly and structure of fish cages. Introduction to materials, design and engineering principles behind aquaculture systems
09:15-09:35	Usher students into the main hall. All organizers have a welcome speech.	
09:35 – 09:55	Kystmuseet show History of Fish Farming video.	Teachers start the IC process in the classroom: understanding phases, brainstorming and choosing the best idea. Insight into sustainability, maintenance and operational challenges in fish farming. Ideas development and visualizations.
10:00 – 11:00	Start of activities at Hotel Frøya. Dividing students into two groups. Switching activities halfway: - Fish cage construction (outside) with Kystmuseet - Creative task (inside) lead by Young Entrepreneurship for students.	Interactive Q&A with experts from Kystmuseet Use of close-up visuals and explanations to ensure online participants can follow technical details. Facilitated virtual sessions (description below) ensure engagement for remote participants.
11:00	Lunch made by restaurant and food studies students from Guri Kunna.	**11:00 - 13:00:** Local business juries at Frøya (6 PC's) available in **virtual rooms** to answer questions students may have. Sitting in serviced rooms behind the Guri Kunna great hall. - 8 Guri Kunna students are also available virtually to help with brainstorming, if needed. - The teachers continue the process (selection and processing and pitch) Mixed teams of on-site and online students using digital collaboration tools. This hybrid model combines hands-on industry exposure with creative problem-solving, making the innovation camp both practical and future-oriented. Students move from observing and understanding, to creating and solving.
11:30 – 13:15	Dividing students into two groups + switching activities halfway: 1. Boat trip with Guri Kunna students to their fish cages (10 trips) 2. Learn about the local area and social activities – puzzle run lead by Guri Kunna students in Sistranda (10-15 groups).	

Digital schedule for the hybrid event

13:15	Gather students towards the main hall.	**13.00 - 13.30:** Pause **virtual rooms.**
13:30 – 14:00	Introduction to the Camp by coordinators. The three quaculture business challenges are presentated by local businesses.	**13.30-18.00:** The students propose solutions and record a digital pitch which will be posted on YouTube, unlisted. Only people with the link can view the video, content is not publicly searchable.
14:00 – 16:00	Innovation Camp main event.	Towards the end of the on-site innovation camp, student teams present their proposed solutions through a recorded digital pitch.
16:15 – 17:00	Students pitching their solutions to the three panels representing local business.	This pitch serves as both a demonstration of their work and a way to communicate ideas clearly to industry partners and evaluators.
17:00	Dinner begins at Hotel Frøya for students.	Each group produces a short video that are typically 3–5 minutes long:
17:30 – 17:40	The juries choose their winners.	A clear explanation of the challenge or problem they address. Their proposed solution, including key features or concepts. The value for the company or industry. Optional visuals such as sketches, prototypes, simulations, or demonstrations.
17:45 – 18:15	Award ceremony at Hotel Frøya.	**18:00:** Deadline for sending in their pitch via the YouTube link.
18:30 – 18:45	Students and their chaperones are lead to the busses and leave.	

Digital Schedule after Main Event:

Deadline	Activity
3 working days after main event	Young Entrepreneurship goes through all the digital pitches and picks out the top 20 for each of the three business challenges.
Morning of the fourth working day after the event	The three business juries receive their top 20 pitches to choose from.
2 days after juries receive the top picks	Jury deadline for choosing their winners and sending in their award justifications. Young Entrepreneurship contacts the school(s) that have the 1st place winners to coordinate an award ceremony.
2 days after winner choices are made by the business juries	Final broadcast at noon for all digital schools. Young Entrepreneurship surprise 1st place winners at their school(s) with a physical award ceremony.

Camp Activities – Physical and Digital

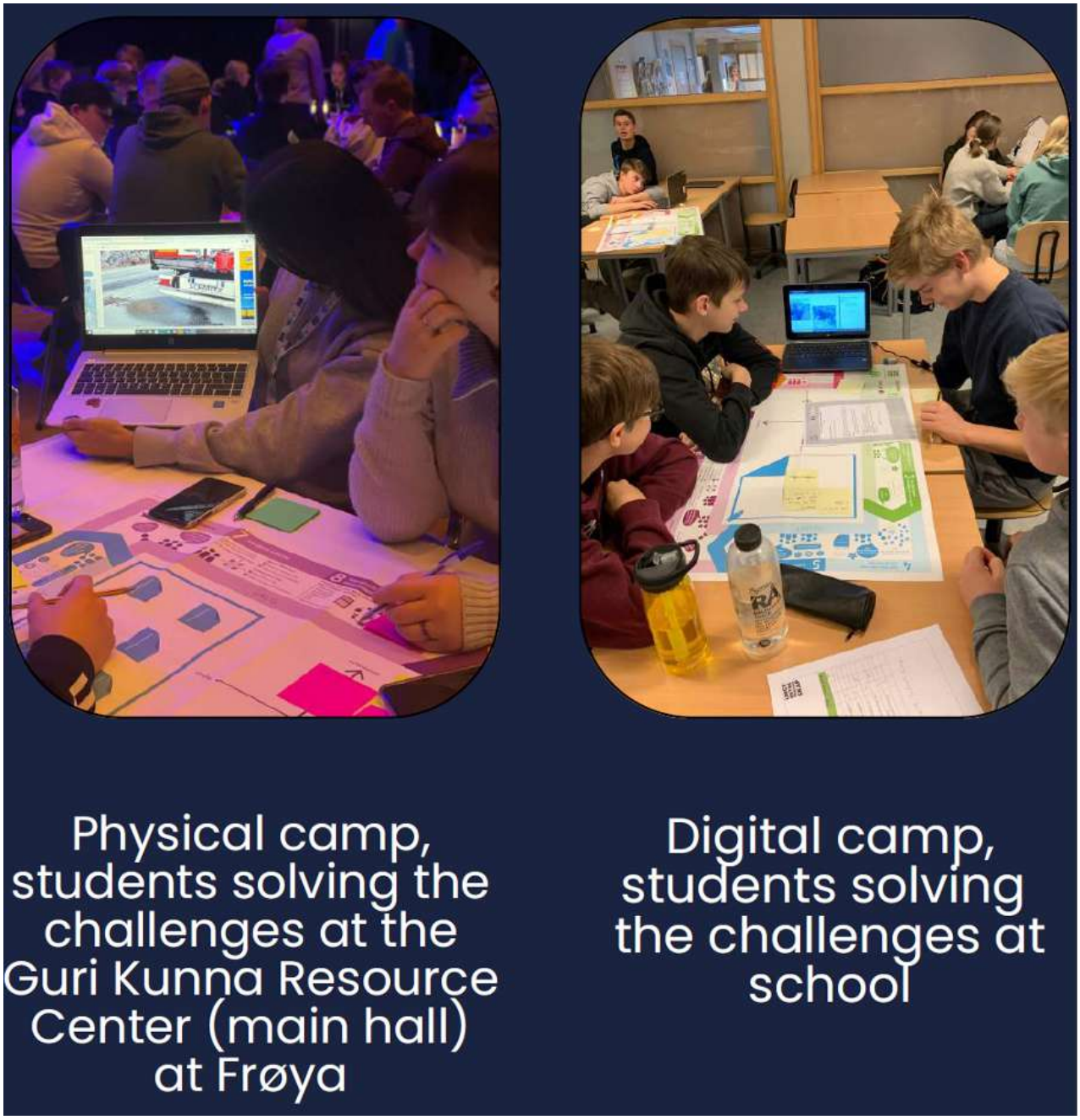
Both versions of the camp are given the same welcome and watch the same YouTube-playlist + History of Norwegian Aquaculture with Kystmuseet

Watch the Youtube playlist here:

1. Innovation Camp
2. Introduction
3. Guri Kunna presentation
4. Kystmuseet guided tour
5. Prizes
6. The Entrepreneurship process
7. The year's 3 business challenges

Camp Activities – at Frøya

Camp Activities – Main event, Physical and Digital



Co-creating the future of skills and competences.

Stronger skills through shared innovation.

From the workshop to real world experiences.

Turning skills into solutions, together.

Hands-on minds. Industry driven solutions.

Camp Activities at the Main event, Frøya

Participants of the physical camp being presented the winners by the local bank sponsoring the money prizes at the celebratory dinner at Hotel Frøya. A buffet of local food is provided, including local farmed salmon and trout.

4. Engagement and involvement of the industry at the island Frøya

How to recruit industry ?

The Innovation Camp at Hitra and Frøya is a collaborative annual event implemented by Guri Kunna Upper Secondary School, with support from Blått Kompetansesenter (Blue Competence Center) and Ungt Entreprenørskap Trøndelag (Young Entrepreneurship Trøndelag). The event focuses on youth creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation. A close collaboration with local businesses is central to the innovation camp.

The role of the company Blue Competence Centre as a regional development actor is central and in fact it is the business community itself together with the municipalities that have taken the initiative for the establishment of the company and actually also own the company. The company's offices are located in the building next door to the school at Frøya, and this is not accidental. This is done to have the opportunity for close and daily dialogue with both the school and the business community.

Through the innovation camp, the upper secondary school wants to give students a taste of how to set up a business plan for a business establishment, as well as make students more familiar with the local business community. Hopefully, this will lead to more young people daring to embark on future business establishments. For the business community, it is interesting to see the youthful business perspective? There may be some "wild" and very youthful ideas, but interesting, nonetheless. Occasionally, partly or fully ideas may also come up that may be worth pursuing.

The first step will be to establish a good dialogue with the business community. Then you need to take some initiative and actually contact them. Our experience is that the business community generally responds well to this. Hitra and Frøya are district municipalities and perhaps we have become accustomed to the fact that more cooperation is required to succeed so far from the cities.

We also experience the local business community as being willing to help finance such youth-oriented activities. *(See more about financing and costs in separate chapters).*

Concept:

In short, the concept is that the business community is challenged to come up with some real challenges that business community struggles within their daily lives and for which the students will then propose solutions. A jury composed of participating companies selects what they perceive as the best ideas, and local banks provide cash prizes for these.

A proactive workflow methodology facilitating regional development through VET supported innovation and entrepreneurial processes, includes:

- **Preparation:** Define the company's current position in the market and its local and regional role
- **Problems and opportunities:** Prioritize problems and opportunities requiring innovation
- **Resources:** Evaluate the company staff's business skills set and capabilities to support innovation
- **Planning:** Develop a project plan with timelines for developing selected deliverables, and associated staff skills
- **Quality Assurance:** Monitor and remediate development activities
- **Piloting:** Test and evaluate innovative solution(s) and validate results
- **Inspection of components:** Collect feedback from the specific stakeholders
- **Evaluation:** Collect feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of the innovation
- **Delivery:** Success stories that foster further engagement and support

The innovation camps should be designed for young people aged 14–20, offering early opportunities to engage with the industrial business community within a specific industry in their region. Local and regional companies should be actively involved. They are invited to contribute by

- Providing case studies, tasks, or real-world challenges for students to work on
- Offering mentoring support throughout the camp
- Participating as jury members to evaluate student proposals
- Contributing through sponsorship, including prizes, travel costs, food, and other direct expenses

Students are organized into groups of approximately four to five participants prior to the camp. The challenges can either be assigned to all groups or selected by the students themselves, depending on the chosen format. To ensure effective participation, a clear system for registration and selection of students should be established in advance.

The implementation of the camp begins with a **welcome session**, introducing participants to the program for the day, including group work structure and available mentors.

This is followed by **presentations from participating companies**, where they introduce the real-world challenges students will work on. The **jury members** are also presented at this stage.

Students begin working on their assigned or chosen tasks in groups. Throughout the process, **mentors are available to support the teams** as needed. Mentors include experienced teachers, representatives from SMEs and other relevant stakeholders. During the camp, teams have the opportunity to **test and refine their pitches** based on feedback. The camp concludes with **final presentations (pitches) to the jury,** followed by a closing session and award ceremony.

An evaluation of the camp is carried out to collect and analyze feedback to identify, for each of the three target groups **companies, educators and learners,** the key benefits and strengths of the innovation camp, as well as areas that require improvement. Structured evaluation surveys should be conducted with the following groups

- Students
- Company representatives
- Teachers and facilitators

The results should be used to refine and strengthen future innovation camps. Each year, as a follow up, the VET school uses these results to improve the organization of a one-day innovation camp to promote early engagement with industry. These demand-driven VET system solutions help industrial companies develop and pilot new business interventions (products, processes and services) within a region.

VET supported and enhanced regional development and innovation

VET providers in rural regions should help industrial companies to apply a bottom up approach to developing an upward converging workflow methodology that enhances the regional economy, by developing, supporting and strengthening the business skills base and capabilities for developing innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, VET providers should help mobilize innovation within SMEs in their region, by supporting the development of the culture and skills and competences (business and technical) required by receptive companies, helping them to build the internal capacity for addressing future challenges, by reiterating the processes developed and proven. Concurrently, VET providers should create and refine new business support services that can be cascaded to other SME companies and indirectly benefit regional development.

Understanding the needs includes identifying problems and opportunities, to devise potential solutions and innovations (products, processes or services) , to help pilot solutions and monitor and evaluate the results.

Turning students into innovators.

Where tomorrow's workforce solves today's problems.

Innovation starts here.

Build skills and competences to solve problems. Use this to shape the future."

This includes setting up and organizing an iterative process that leads to the refinement of solutions and innovations until the problem is solved, the innovation is realized and value added for any targeted beneficiaries.

The process should identifying input factors essential to providing innovative solutions, such as

- Selecting a team leader to champion the innovation and lead the internal team
- Organize an interdisciplinary group of staff that can support and challenge each other creatively.
- Anchoring the innovation to existing business activities and gaining support of the company's senior leadership.

Recognizing that a minority of VET learners are ever likely to start their own business as 'entrepreneurs, their entrepreneurial development will however, prepare them for innovating within those SMEs and companies that employ them. These helps supporting that they will be more inventive when developing products, services, improving routine work processes or solving problems.

5. Policy recommendations

Defining the problem

What - Students have insufficient hands-on experience with creating business plans and limited interaction with the local business community, making it harder for them to understand and engage with real-world entrepreneurship.

Who - To many students indeed lack practical experience and exposure to how industrial companies are actually created and operated. While they often learn theoretical concepts in school, they too often do not get the opportunity to apply this knowledge by developing and transforming a business idea into a structured plan.

Why - At the same time, students tend to have limited familiarity with their local business community, including how local companies function, what challenges they face and what opportunities exist. This gap leads to low confidence in entrepreneurship, limited understanding of real-world business processes and weak connections between students and local industry.

Evidences and context

Innovation comprises of a series of tasks followed by actions. This is a structured process of tasks and actions where ideas evolve through defined stages, transforming from initial concepts into fully developed and implemented solutions. During the first **discover phase,** students gather insights and inspiration that actively guide and shape their innovation strategy. While most companies recognize idea generation as part of innovation, making it a focused activity helps **capturing better ideas** faster by tapping students diverse ways of thinking. In the face of novelty, there is inherent uncertainty about which solutions are most likely to succeed and **merit selection**. Efficient and cost-effective testing of ideas is critical to achieving a positive return on innovation and preparing **selected concepts for incubation**. Once an idea has been validated as viable, the next step is to bring it to completion by **accelerating its development** established through a structured, repeatable innovation process.

Aims of the recommendation

Goal - How to create a more supportive framework where VET providers and local/regional industrial companies collaborate and cooperate more effectively to co-develop skills and competences, foster innovation and better prepare learners for real-world industry challenges?

Short term - VET providers often struggle to ensure that their training remains closely aligned with the rapidly evolving needs of local and regional industries. At the same time, industrial companies face challenges in accessing a skilled workforce that is equipped with relevant, up-to-date competences and practical problem-solving abilities.

Long term - There is currently a gap between education and industry collaboration, resulting in graduates who lack industry-relevant skills, competences and innovation experiences. Companies often find it difficult to recruit and develop talent suited to their needs, leading to missed opportunities for applied innovation and knowledge exchange at the local level.

Professional growth for those who grow others.

What actions should be taken

Who - The VET provider act as the coordinator and facilitator of the innovation camps. Local and regional industrial companies are the problem owners, mentors and co-developers. The students are the core participants and innovators. Public sector and other regional development actors are the enablers and funders.

What -

The VET providers lead and structure the innovation camps, *making the collaboration educationally meaningful and operationally possible*:

- Design the innovation camp format (duration, structure, outcomes)
- Integrate camps into curriculum and learning outcomes
- Prepare students with relevant skills (teamwork, problem-solving, basic innovation methods)
- Facilitate the camp (workshops, tools, coaching)
- Ensure quality, inclusion and assessment

The industrial companies provide real challenges and insight, *ensuring relevance and creating real value from outcomes:*

- Define real-world problems or cases (e.g. production, sustainability, digitalization)
- Contribute mentors and technical expertise
- Give access to data, equipment, or site visits where relevant
- Provide feedback on student solutions
- Explore implementation of the best ideas

The students co-create and innovate, *being the drivers of innovation and learning:*

- Working in multidisciplinary teams
- Applying technical and vocational skills to solve real challenges
- Developing prototypes, concepts, or process improvements
- Present and defend solutions to companies

Where education meets industry and ideas become reality.

Public sector and regional actors enable and scale, by making the initiative sustainable and scalable:

- Provide funding or incentives for collaboration
- Support network building between VET and industry
- Align camps with regional development strategies
- Help scale successful models across regions

Implementation plan

How it could be done:

- Start with a co-design phase where VET and companies define the goals, themes and challenges
- Follow up with a preparation phase where the students receive the training, while the companies prepare cases
- The innovation camp execution should be an intensive, time-bound collaboration (e.g. only one day long), that apply mentoring together with iterative problem-solving
- This is followed by the presentation and evaluation phases, where students pitch solutions, while companies evaluate and give feedback
- The follow-up outlines how the best ideas be further developed or implemented, whereby the reflection- and learning processes are integrated into VET

Timeline - A strong implementation timeline describes how the innovation camp unfolds over time, starting from early planning to execution and follow-up. This includes co-design and building partnership 2-3 months before, preparation 2-6 weeks before, camp execution 2-5 days before, culminating into evaluation and immediate follow up during 1-2 weeks after.

Resources - Describe and detail the resources needed. They fall into a few key categories: people, money and budget, physical and digital infrastructure, time resources at multiple stages during preparation, execution and follow up, and partnerships with coordinating efforts.

Evaluation and alternatives

This should help securing that the value creation is not significantly dropped, by providing

- Tools for feedback (surveys, interviews)
- Time for reflection sessions
- Capacity to support implementation of best ideas

Keep in mind that the most critical resources are not just money, but committed people, time for preparation and strong collaboration with industry

Impacts

The impact of an innovation camp targets several levels. These are the individual, institutional, industrial and regional level.

For **the VET providers** the short term impact is a stronger link to industry and more attractive and modern VET learning offers. The long term impact secures that the curricula become up to date and relevant. The reputation is enhanced as a forward looking VET provider. In addition, it make it easier to recruit new students. The VET will shift from teaching skills to co-creating competences with industry.

For **the students** the short term impact is to help them gain hands-on experience with real industry problems. They will develop skills in problem-solving, teamwork, and communication, resulting in increased motivation and engagement since the learning feels relevant. The long term impact includes improved employability and better understanding of workplace expectations. This leads to stronger innovation mindset by not just following procedures, but improving them through the activities. The students will become job-ready and future-ready, not just qualified on paper.

The short term impact on **the companies** includes fresh ideas and alternative perspectives on real challenges. It provides early access to potential future employees. The long term impact leads to stronger talent pipeline, and increased engagement with VET. The potential innovation outcomes for process improvements and new concepts, will increase since the industry will receive both innovation input and recruitment advantages.

The regional ecosystem short term impact is leading to an increased collaboration between education and industry, while the visibility of the local innovation capacity is demonstrated. The long term impact demonstrates a stronger regional innovation ecosystem that is better aligned between workforce skills and competences, and industry needs. This provides increased competitiveness and attractiveness of the region, help building a local innovation culture and not just single, isolated projects.

At **the system level** the innovation camps help breaking down the education–industry gap, while they encourages practice based innovation and VET. This help creating new models for collaboration and cooperation that can be scaled and repeated. The impact depends heavily on the quality of the collaboration where symbolic partnership has little or no effect, the relevance of the company challenges provided and the proper follow-up after the camp. Without these three elements the camp risks becoming just a one-off event with limited value.

Call to action

It must commit to making innovation camps a permanent, structured collaboration between VET providers and industry partners, moving from one-off events to continuous practice. It should be specific by addressing who does what, be time-bound linked to next semester, next funding cycle etc., and include specific commitment, not just intention(s).

Specific actions by stakeholders

To create real and lasting impact, **VET providers** must move beyond treating innovation camps as one-off events and instead embed them as a core element of their vocational education.

- The innovation camps should be fully integrated into the formal curriculum. They should be aligned with learning outcomes, assessment criteria and subject content so that participation is not optional, but an essential part of how students develop technical and transversal skills. When embedded this way, innovation camps become a structured learning arena where theory and practice meet, rather than an add-on activity.
- The VET providers need to commit dedicated annual resources to ensure continuity and quality. This includes allocating staff time for planning and facilitation, budgeting for materials and logistics, and building internal competence in innovation methods. Without stable resourcing, innovation camps risk becoming inconsistent and losing their educational value.
- A VET providers should establish long-term partnerships with selected companies rather than relying on ad hoc collaboration. Strategic partnerships enable deeper engagement, better alignment of challenges with industry needs, and the opportunity to develop trust over time. This continuity allows companies to contribute more meaningfully. It ensures that innovation camps generate not only learning outcomes, but also real value for industry.

Action: Institutionalize innovation camps as a core learning method. The VET providers must take the lead in institutionalizing innovation camps by making them structured and resourced, by providing partnership-driven learning experiences that bridge education and industry in a sustainable way.

Industrial companies play a central role in ensuring that innovation camps deliver real value. Their contribution goes beyond participation since they act as problem owners, co-developer, and implementation partners. Each year, companies must bring authentic, current challenges from their operations. This includes production efficiency, sustainability, digitalization, or workflow improvements.

These challenges must be concrete enough to work on within the camp, yet open-ended enough to allow for creative solutions. The companies should actively participate by assigning and involving:

- Technical mentors who guide student teams with domain knowledge
- Decision-makers who can evaluate ideas and move them forward

This combination is crucial since mentors support learning, while decision-makers ensure that promising ideas don't stop at the concept stage. Furthermore, they should commit to testing at least one solution developed during the camp.

This involves for instance

- Prototyping of concepts,
- Running small-scale pilots,
- Integrating ideas into existing processes

Even partial implementation sends a strong signal that student contributions are valued and can lead to real change. By undertaking this role the companies

- Gain access to fresh perspectives and new ideas,
- Strengthen their future talent pipeline,
- Contribute to building a more skilled and innovation ready workforce

Action: Actively co-develop talent and test student-driven innovation. This help ensuring that the student work is meaningful and directly connected to real industry needs. It bridges the gap between learning and actual innovation, by turning the camp from an educational exercise into a driver of tangible innovation. The industrial companies move from passive stakeholders to active co-creators of both skills and solutions.

Co-develop talent. Co-create solutions.

Don't just hire talent, help building it.

From student ideas to industry impact.

Test ideas today. Hire innovators tomorrow.

Partner with learners to profit from innovation.

Regional actors like municipalities, county authorities, and development agencies play a crucial role in turning innovation camps from isolated initiatives into sustainable, system-level practices. They must act as enablers, coordinators and long-term investors in the collaboration between VET providers and industry. This includes predictable mechanisms and accessible initiatives for funding that are lowering the barriers for participation. This includes for instance seed funding for pilot innovation camps, co-financing models where costs are shared between VET providers and companies, incentives for companies that contribute time, mentorship, or resources and grants for follow-up projects that implement student solutions.

The regional actors should maximize the impact by ensuring that successful models and solutions are replicated and adapted. This includes facilitating innovation camps that not stand alone, but are aligned with broader regional priorities such as skills development, innovation capacity and economic growth.

Action: Enable and scale the model(s) regionally.