



Country:	Portugal
Member/Company	Beta-i
Initiative	<i>Multiple Initiatives</i>

Overview

Beta-i began 10 years ago as a Lisbon-based association, focused on promoting entrepreneurship and innovation as a tangible possibility to youngsters who faced the 2007-2009 financial crisis severe consequences. Over time, and amongst other initiatives, we have created one of the Top 10 European accelerators for many years ([Lisbon Challenge](#)) according to Startup Heatmap Europe. Thanks to this, we have examples of back-in-the-day, early-stage startup founders who are now raising investment and actually making an impact in their areas.

Two years ago, and after having been a key agent within the well-known Portuguese / Lisbon digital ecosystem growth case, Beta-i has turned into a private company, a collaborative innovation consultancy firm. We have leveraged this previous field expertise to better modulate corporates + startups (and research centres) collaborative efforts to accelerate market reach, data access and digital transformation on both sides. We manage and deliver the leading Energy Innovation program in the world ([Free Electrons](#)); the Lisbon City Council main open innovation platform ([Smart Open Lisboa](#)); just finished an international [Blue Economy](#) program, while kickstarting a huge, 3-year project to capture investment and develop innovation hubs throughout 30 ports in the [Atlantic Ocean](#).

While these examples depict deals, pilot-driven approaches and a deeper innovation process, following up on Beta-i's current five continents reach, other cases might better illustrate how Beta-i has leveraged its long-time support for youth at a scalable level. In [Mais Ajuda](#) ("More Aid"), a major social impact program run by a top-3 supermarket chain in Portugal, Beta-i's expert team teaches entrepreneurial skills to all selected social enterprises and startups. This sort of training is deployed in every program involving early-stage startups, just as it has been done with [Lispa](#) in Angola (English context, [here](#)). Amongst other initiatives, the program is about supporting students' very first moves via "[Beta Shift](#)", and then business modelling and growth design, via "[Beta Start](#)". The methods are used in different projects, including recent Portugal Tourism Authority efforts to support post-covid innovation with [Shift to Start](#), and were featured and explained by [Phocuswire Research](#).

When it comes to a more specific *innovation education* approach alongside universities and other stakeholders, Beta-i has recently partnered with The Lisbon MBA, the only executive program in the country ranked in Financial Times Top 100, to teach students about [Action Learning Entrepreneurship](#); is part of the [Corship](#) consortium, an ambitious Erasmus+ program that reached more than 2,000 people last year with a [MOOC](#) and is deploying its [Masterclass](#) between April and June 2021, not to mention research papers on the topic and a new tool to support co-innovation which is already being [used and reviewed](#). Beta-i has also helped bring [European Innovation Academy](#) to Portugal and is currently partnering in a new pan-European consortium to develop a toolkit for high education teachers focused on social impact entrepreneurship learning and development.



Key Messages and Policy Aims

- Working towards youth business capabilities is not only a mission, or an undeniable need. It's the only way to ensure Europe's Green and Digital transformation goals and United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals towards the future.
- Besides, working for and alongside youth is a definitive way of leveraging their experience and knowledge from the bottom-up, in order to support new companies and business models.
- The multiple initiatives from the partner above mentioned bring a fresh approach to the consultancy world, based on a hands-on, diversity-nudged, tangible-driven way of working collaboratively.
- There's no tangible mindset change ahead without Innovation Education. It's not only about awareness and mindset, but rather about useful, understandable tools and methods to deploy innovation processes. At European level, initiatives such as Knowledge Alliance, HEI Education and many others have a crucial role on that.
- Collaboration between different stakeholders within the economic tissue as a whole, or the innovation ecosystem in particular, is crucial to set up foundational change in the current status quo
- Each end every innovation project should bring an educational / training feature, being tailored-designed to its stakeholders.
- Support scale-up projects as innovation knowledge disseminators could be easily become a public policy worldwide, in collaboration with major companies and universities.