

Second EECOLE Roundtable

Entrepreneurial ecosystems as a new policy area

Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy
1 Devonshire Place, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
30 November and 1 December 2023

The second EECOLE Roundtable will illustrate the progress done by the network over the past year and focus on entrepreneurial ecosystems, taking stock of evidence, knowledge, and international practices. The Roundtable will discuss policy actions that leverage entrepreneurial higher education institutions to generate talent, collaborations, and knowledge spillovers to communities and partners, including SMEs and entrepreneurs facing the digital and green transitions.¹

Entrepreneurial ecosystems are based on bundles of interdependent actors and institutions, which are mostly co-located in the same place, but that can have connections also to other localities and networks. Entrepreneurial ecosystems are characterised by the connections among actors and institutions. These connections are as important as the actors themselves and determine the performance of the ecosystem and its components.

Narratives and metrics of economic success have evolved to incorporate social and environmental dimensions. Through entrepreneurial ecosystems one can move away from individual success stories of Schumpeterian “heroes” and consider social, cultural, scientific, and economic forces that have in fact contributed to success. Entrepreneurial ecosystems can become a new policy space of rules, metrics, and incentives to stimulate successful (resilient, sustainable, and scalable) businesses and individuals.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem approach does not focus on sectors or industries. It does not pick winners – in terms of industrial sectors – it facilitates the development of local assets and untapped resources. Within ecosystems, the entrepreneurial mindset features many individuals, including those active in organisations that they do not own or run, including in the public sector.

Higher education institutions have a central role in entrepreneurial ecosystems. They provide talent, collaboration opportunities and knowledge spillovers that favour entrepreneurs sharing the same ecosystem. HEIs can also structure entrepreneurial ecosystems by creating entities such as incubators and accelerators, and by connecting to science parks or other innovation intermediaries.

¹ EECOLE received the specific mandate to help SMEs and entrepreneurs contribute to the green and digital transition, from OECD Ministries, who met in Paris during the 2023 OECD SME & Entrepreneurship Ministerial Meeting 2023 <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/oecd-sme-and-entrepreneurship-ministerial-meeting-2023-key-resources.htm>



Entrepreneurial HEIs can provide cutting edge research, training and incubation and acceleration services for firms of all size and maturity, positively affecting their competitiveness. For example, entrepreneurial HEIs can help SMEs and entrepreneurs start and scale-up their business and thrive in the green and digital transitions, which are reshaping labour markets and supply chains.

However, public policies struggle to adapt actions to entrepreneurial ecosystems. Too often, public policies operate in sectoral silos and fail to remove trade-off and to generate complementarities and synergies that are needed to promote ventures and unleash the full potential of entrepreneurship.

With the support of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and Statistic Canada, and in partnership with ERIA, the Second EECOLE Roundtable will encompass discussions and field visits in Toronto to understand how to leverage higher education institutions and their stakeholders to promote entrepreneurial ecosystems. The discussion will specifically focus on SMEs and entrepreneurs: which represent actors that can benefit the most from entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The Munk School of Global Affairs, at the University of Toronto, will host the Roundtable.

Tentative Agenda

November 30th

1 Devonshire Place, Toronto

08:30 – 09:00	Registration and coffee chats
09:00 – 09:30	<u>Opening and salutations</u>
09:30 – 10:45	<p><u>A year with EECOLE: Highlights of activities and impact</u> <i>In this session a group of EECOLE partners will report on the activities in which they have been involved – reviews and policy dialogues – sharing their thoughts about results and impact. A question-and-answer session will give the opportunity to all participants to interact.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Giulia Ajmone Marsan, ERIA</p> <p>Q&A Session</p>
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:45	<p><u>Achieving the full potential of EECOLE</u> <i>This session starts with a presentation of outcomes of the recent OECD Ministerial meeting on entrepreneurship and SMEs, in which Ministers and Heads of Delegations from over 30 countries recognised the value of the EECOLE platform and asked to strengthen the connection with the SMEs and entrepreneurship policy agendas. A group of EECOLE partners will discuss how to reflect these priorities in knowledge products and processes.</i></p>



	Moderator: Raffaele Trapasso, OECD Q&A Session
12:45 – 13:00	<u>Wrap up</u>
12:45 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 17:30	<u>Group visits to MaRS – North America’s largest urban innovation hub</u> <i>Participants have the opportunity to visit MaRS Discovery District, which is considered one of the most successful innovation districts in the world.</i> Groups will be led by Maria Sobron Bernal, Giorgia Ponti, and Raffaele Trapasso, OECD
17:30 – 18:30	Refreshment (TBC)

December 1st

1 Devonshire Place, Toronto

09:00 – 09:15	<u>Introduction – transforming entrepreneurial ecosystems and skills into policy areas</u>
09:15 – 11:30	<u>Entrepreneurial ecosystems and the role of innovation intermediaries</u> <i>This session will be divided into two sub-sessions. The first one will give visibility to the research activities on innovation intermediaries and innovation territorial systems in Canada, and the second will include an international perspective.</i> Moderators: Sarah Feng, TBS Canada and Giorgia Ponti, OECD
10:15 – 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 13:00	<u>Implementing the governance of EECOLE – partnerships and functioning of task-and-finish groups (TFGs)</u> <i>This conclusive session discusses the terms of reference of the EECOLE TFGs and decides how to formalise partnerships, roles, and activities.</i> Moderator: Maria Sobron Bernal, OECD
13:00 – 13:15	Conclusions and next steps for EECOLE Raffaele Trapasso, OECD



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