Union for the Mediterranean
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RESEARCH TO BUSINESS

From Research to Business: Turning Knowledge into **Jobs, Innovation,** and **Growth**

Acknowledgements

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We are deeply grateful to all the participants of the workshop: entrepreneurs, scientists, representatives of ministries, universities, and ecosystem organisations, whose expertise and engagement formed the foundation of this outcome document. Their collective experience reflects the growing maturity and ambition of the Mediterranean's research commercialisation ecosystem.

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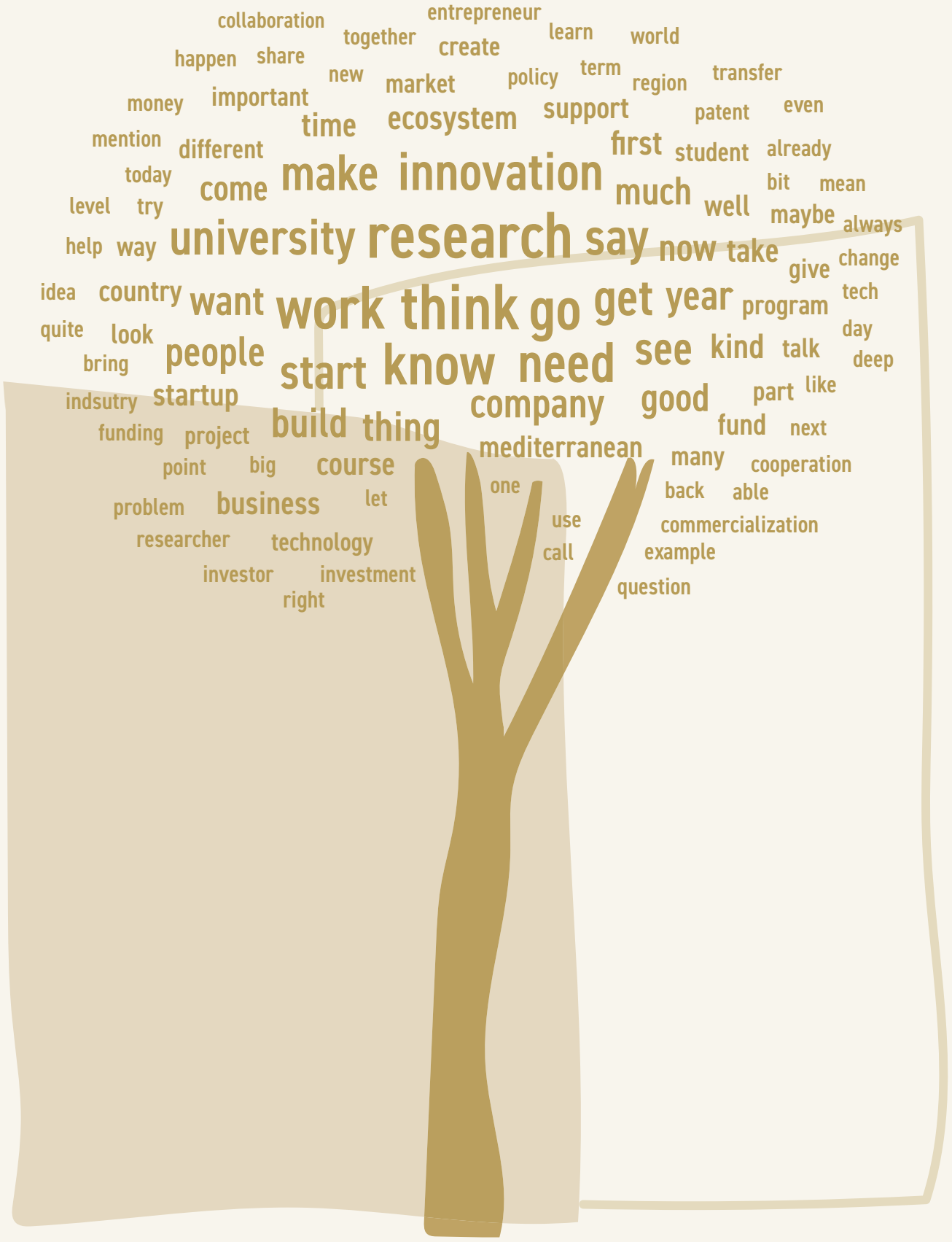

Keywords mentioned over 75 times reveal the core themes driving the Malta conversations.

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Overview of the Programme

From Research to Business: Turning Knowledge into Jobs, Innovation, & Growth | October 13–15, 2025 in Malta

Day 1: High-Level Segment | October 13

9:00 – 9:20 **Opening Remarks**
This high-level session focuses on unlocking the potential of research commercialisation as a driver of innovation and regional development. Through strategic dialogue and real-world inspiration, it aims to elevate research valorisation as a shared priority across institutions, sectors, and borders.

9:20 – 9:40 **Fireside Chat | Daring Futures: Youth, Space & Science**
In this fireside, astronaut and entrepreneur Sara Sabry will share how science-driven entrepreneurship can empower the next generation to tackle humanity's most pressing global challenges.

9:40 – 10:20 **PANEL 1 | The Unsung Heroes: Scaling Research to Business Across the Region**
This panel shines a light on the innovators turning research into real-world impact across the region. By sharing their journeys, challenges, and successes, these pioneers highlight how scaling research to business can strengthen regional innovation ecosystems and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs.

10:20 – 11:00 **PANEL 2 | The Unprecedented Opportunity: Research Valorisation as a Key Enabler for Regional Prosperity**
This panel explores how research valorisation can serve as a cornerstone for building resilient innovation ecosystems across regions. Bringing together ecosystem leaders across the region the discussion will highlight the unprecedented opportunities that emerge when research is transformed into market-ready solutions: driving growth, talent development, and cross-border collaboration.

11:00 – 11:25 **Closing Keynotes: The Road Ahead**

Day 2: Research to Business Workshop | October 14

9:00 - 11:15 **World Climate Simulation**
A workshop with a systems simulation exploring the complexities of climate change, highlighting the need for scalable, global collaboration and solutions. This sets the scene for the environmental aspect of the quintuple helix model, while creating urgency for research commercialisation.

11:45 - 13:15 **Understanding Research Commercialisation**
A session contextualising commercialisation pathways, key considerations throughout the process, different models from around the world, and how we have ended up in the models we have today.

14:30 - 14:45 **Ecosystems as a Key Enabler for Research Commercialisation**
This segment features discussions on the current state of research commercialisation in the Mediterranean and highlight successful initiatives that have advanced innovation.

14:45 - 15:30 **Panel 1 | Emerging Pathways: Regional Cooperation for Research to Business**
This panel explores how regional institutions and initiatives are laying the groundwork for stronger research to business pathways. By identifying challenges and opportunities, the discussion will highlight how collaborative programmes can enable research commercialisation to thrive across the region.

15:30 - 16:00 **PRIMA Foundation | Paving the Path from Research to Business**

16:00 - 16:45 **Panel 2 | Research Commercialisation in Practice**
This panel brings together practitioners showcasing how university research is taken from lab to market.

Day 3: Research to Business Workshop | October 15

9:00 - 10:30 **Funding & Legal**
A session focused on an overview of how venture capital works, public funding instruments and grants, and typical legal considerations with emphasis on IPR.

11:00 - 12:30 **Go-to-Market & Spinout Support**
This session will double down on the everyday work in supporting research commercialisation. The session will be centred around the Innovation Readiness Level™ framework developed for innovation advisors in universities but later adapted to cover a wide range of fields.

13:30 - 14:30 **Academia & Business**
A session focused on the mechanics and systems of how academia and industry can collaborate to enable and enhance research commercialisation. The session will include co-innovation and licensing, as well as an overview into the trends related to the topic over the last decades.

15:00 - 16:30 **Overcoming Obstacles**
A closing discussion where participants reflect on structural barriers and share ideas for unlocking the potential of research commercialisation in the region.

Foreword

Innovation is not a peripheral concern for the Euro-Mediterranean region. It is central to a shared vision of inclusive growth. It turns dialogue into delivery, builds bridges where we cannot yet see them, and fosters cross-border collaboration.

It is recognised through the **UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation (2022)**, where UfM Member States have called for innovation to become a tool for building knowledge, skills, careers, and economic inclusion for Mediterranean graduates and researchers.

The Mediterranean is home to extraordinary ingenuity and talent, yet this potential has not fully translated into broad economic and social impact.

While research excellence thrives across our region, its results often remain confined to laboratories instead of reaching markets and communities: we need stronger links between researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, and industries.

It is not only about funding; but about creating ecosystems that turn ideas into solutions, attract investment, and foster collaboration across borders. Persistent challenges remind us why this matters: regional youth unemployment remains among the highest globally, and businesses struggle to find the skills they need. These realities underscore the urgency of transforming research into innovation that generates jobs, resilience, and shared prosperity.

Against this backdrop, the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** convened the **"From Research to Business" High-Level Segment and Training Workshops** in Malta on 13-15 October 2025, followed by an **Innovation Fair** in Brussels on 23 October. These events brought together policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders to explore how we can bridge the gap between research and market. In Malta, we launched the foundations for a new regional training programme, From Research to Business, to be rolled out in 2026 with the support of the Spanish Development Cooperation.

The UfM continues to provide platforms for dialogue and coordination, notably through the **UfM Regional Platform on Research and Innovation** and its Working Groups on **Mobility of Researchers and Capacity Building** and **Open Data and Digitalisation.**

These mechanisms, alongside successful initiatives such as the **Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)**, demonstrate the power of co-ownership and regional collaboration in turning knowledge into impact.

This report synthesises the outcomes of these discussions and training sessions. It reflects a shared commitment to empower researchers, entrepreneurs, and innovators, and to clear the bottlenecks that hinder their progress. It also contributes to an upcoming **UfM Research Scalability Strategy.**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our partners and co-organisers, the **European Commission, Xjenza Malta,** for their invaluable collaboration, and to the **German Development Cooperation** for their steadfast support in making this initiative possible. A special thank you is also due to the authors of this report, **MIMIR.**

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Barcelona Process, let us reaffirm a simple truth: science, technology, and innovation are the engines of shared prosperity in the Mediterranean. This document is both a reflection and a call to action: from research to business, from pilot to scale.

Joan Borrell

Deputy Secretary General for Higher Education and Research

Union for the Mediterranean

The UfM Innovation- Employability Initiative

Advancing Knowledge and Prosperity in the Mediterranean

In the Mediterranean region, the disconnect between academic excellence and underperforming innovation ecosystems continues to hinder youth employment and economic resilience. While universities produce high-level research, graduates often face limited career prospects, and innovation remains under-leveraged. This gap not only affects individual livelihoods but also slows the region's transition toward inclusive, green, and knowledge-based economies.

To address this challenge, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), with support from the German Development Cooperation, launched the Innovation–Employability Initiative in 2019 under its Higher Education and Research Division. Over several years, the initiative has built capacities and developed knowledge products around the need to align higher education and research with labour market demands. Through publications, trainings, policy dialogues, and stakeholder engagement, it has contributed to a growing awareness of how research, skills, and innovation can be better connected to foster youth employment and sustainable development.

Key Knowledge Outputs and Strategic Themes

Handbook on Reinforcing the Innovation–Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean
A comprehensive mapping of 146 good practices from 15 countries, this handbook offers actionable recommendations to policymakers and institutions to strengthen the link between higher education and innovation-driven employment.

Vocational Pathways in Higher Education
This strategic note outlines a regional approach to promoting vocational and professional pathways in universities, with a focus on green skills, entrepreneurship, and sustainable employment.

Green Innovation and Employability in the Mediterranean through the Triple Helix
This publication explores the role of academia, industry, and government in fostering innovation ecosystems that support employability, particularly in the context of green and digital transitions.

Integrating Green Skills into Education and Research
Addressing the twin transitions, this paper identifies skill gaps and proposes frameworks for embedding green and digital competencies into curricula, research agendas, and training programmes.

The From Research to Business conference and training in Malta (October 2025) marks the final milestone of this journey. It consolidates the initiative's legacy by reaffirming the UfM's commitment to connecting education with employment for a more resilient and innovative Mediterranean.

Giuseppe Provenzano

Project Manager, Higher Education and Research
Union for the Mediterranean

Executive Summary & Policy Recommendations

The "From Research to Business: Turning Knowledge into Jobs, Innovation, & Growth" high-level segment and workshop, held in Malta on October 13–15, 2025, marked a turning point in the Union for the Mediterranean's (UfM) efforts to connect research, innovation, and employment. Supported by the German Development Cooperation, the event brought together over 200 policymakers, university leaders, investors, and entrepreneurs across the region to explore how scientific excellence can be transformed into jobs, competitiveness, and sustainable prosperity.

Across the Mediterranean, research output has grown faster than the ability to translate it into real-world solutions, leaving the full potential of this knowledge untapped. The region's youth is the most educated generation in its history, but many still face limited pathways to apply their skills in practice. Strengthening research commercialisation offers a direct way to turn talent into opportunity, linking science with skills, innovation with inclusion, and universities with industry. Participants in Malta agreed that **commercialisation must move from being an academic afterthought to becoming a driver of regional development and resilience.**

Participants emphasised that research commercialisation should be recognised as a strategic policy priority and a key enabler of job creation, resilience, and regional cohesion. It is not only about transferring technology but also about translating knowledge into opportunity and building the skills and ecosystems that help people turn ideas into impact. This shift requires supportive frameworks that empower researchers, encourage collaboration, and make it easier for innovations to cross borders and reach the market. The Malta workshop was structured around six interconnected themes: understanding research commercialisation, building ecosystems, navigating funding and legal frameworks, supporting spinouts, strengthening academia–business collaboration, and overcoming obstacles. Together, they paved the path for linking research with entrepreneurship and employment. Discussions emphasised that **healthy innovation systems are built on trust, openness, and long-term partnership between universities, public authorities, investors, and the private sector.** Ecosystems thrive when they invest not only in infrastructure, but also in people.

Participants highlighted the need for more predictable and transparent funding, stronger legal and intellectual property frameworks, and clearer institutional incentives for researchers to engage in innovation. Equally important is fostering a culture that values entrepreneurship, as well as **recognising research commercialisation as a public good, creating meaningful work, addressing societal challenges, and unlocking the potential of the region's youth.**

The Malta meeting demonstrated that the Mediterranean has the knowledge, creativity, and

determination to lead in research-based innovation. **What is needed now is coordinated policy, sustained cooperation, and shared commitment to turn ideas into action.** By strengthening the bridges between research and business, the region can transform its scientific excellence into jobs, innovation, and long-term prosperity for all. As the UfM prepares to launch its "From Research to Business" initiative in 2026, the message from Malta is clear: **turning knowledge into jobs and innovation is not only possible, it is essential for building a prosperous and resilient Mediterranean future.**

Policy Recommendations

Introduction

The "From Research to Business: Turning Knowledge into Jobs, Innovation, & Growth" high-level segment and workshop is an initiative of the Union for the Mediterranean, supported by the German Development Cooperation, designed to create shared understanding and practical momentum for advancing research commercialisation across the Mediterranean.

Held in Malta on October 13–15, 2025, the workshop brought together over 50 participants, including policymakers, university leaders, technology transfer professionals, academic entrepreneurs, investors, and representatives of regional innovation initiatives.

This document presents a synthesis of the topics and dialogues held in Malta and is structured around the themes covered throughout the event: understanding research commercialisation, building ecosystems, navigating funding and legal frameworks, developing go-to-market strategies, fostering academia–business collaboration, and overcoming obstacles.

The high-level segment on October 13 took place as part of the UfM High-Level Policy Conference on Employment and Labour. The session on "From Research to Business" brought together over 200 participants, including ministers, senior officials, and innovation leaders across the Euro-Mediterranean region. It provided a platform to connect the agenda on employment and skills with the emerging opportunities of research commercialisation, positioning innovation as a key driver of sustainable growth and competitiveness in the region.

The event built on the foundations laid by previous UfM initiatives, including the 2022 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation in Paris, the 2024 UfM Youth Forum in Helsinki, and ongoing collaborations within PRIMA, Horizon Europe's Mediterranean Initiative, and the Innovation–Employability Nexus. Together, these dialogues reflect a growing recognition that research valorisation is essential to job creation, sustainable development, and regional competitiveness.

Participants shared a common concern: despite the region's scientific excellence and its highly educated youth, the translation of research into market-ready solutions remains limited. This gap is not a question of talent but of connection: between academia and industry, policy and practice, and invention and investment. The workshop was designed to address these barriers through open exchange and practical examples across the region.

We hope this document will inspire policymakers and practitioners alike to build on the unique strengths of the Mediterranean and to transform research commercialisation into a driver of regional prosperity. It is also intended as a contribution to the broader UfM agenda for research, innovation, and employability, helping turn shared vision into sustained regional cooperation.

What question do you feel is the most crucial?

Building that future begins with the right questions. During the Malta workshop, participants engaged with thirteen questions aimed to facilitate a dialogue on a shared roadmap: an invitation to reflect on how universities, governments, and innovators can overcome barriers and design the future of research commercialisation together.

1

Understanding Research Commercialisation

Research commercialisation is the process of translating scientific discoveries into practical solutions that create value for society and the economy. It links research with entrepreneurship, policy, and investment, ensuring that public knowledge and scientific excellence contribute to innovation, job creation, and long-term prosperity. When research commercialisation works, science moves beyond the laboratory to power new industries, address societal challenges, and strengthen resilience across economies.

Across the Mediterranean, research excellence is not in short supply. The region is home to world-class universities, a growing pool of highly educated youth, and a long tradition of scientific inquiry. As was noted during the Malta discussions, **the challenge is not talent or ideas but the lack of connective tissue:** the mechanisms, synergies, and trust that allow discoveries to become viable businesses across borders.

The concept of commercialising knowledge is not new to the Mediterranean. This region has always been a meeting point of ideas and application, from the invention of early engineering tools to the first patent system established in fifteenth-century Venice. Scholars, artisans, and traders once worked side by side to turn discovery into progress, creating systems that connected theory with practice. In 1977, the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia convened a landmark seminar in Beirut that warned against relying solely on imported technology and called instead for regional cooperation, local capacity-building, and innovation rooted in cultural and economic realities. Even then, governments and scholars in the region saw **science and technology as essential tools for sovereignty, social progress, and economic diversification.**

These ideas predate and, in many ways, anticipate the logic that would later define the U.S. Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, which allowed universities to own and commercialise inventions developed with public funding. The Act enabled universities to claim ownership of publicly funded inventions and license them to the private sector, creating a structured link between research and business. While Bayh-Dole is often credited with igniting a global wave of university-driven innovation, the underlying principle of linking research to economic growth was already familiar to policymakers and scientists in the Mediterranean decades earlier. The difference lies in implementation: whereas the Mediterranean emphasised collective ownership and social benefit, Bayh-Dole institutionalised private ownership and market-driven incentives.
Still, the Act became a defining moment for research commercialisation globally. It reshaped the role of universities **from passive knowledge producers into active economic actors,** inspiring

similar frameworks across Europe and the Mediterranean. The original goal was not merely to generate profit but to transform societies through knowledge. Initially, universities mostly licensed their inventions to large companies, but over time the system became slower and more bureaucratic, often prioritising profit over the diffusion of new technology.

Across Europe, the Bayh-Dole Act also became the reference point for university-based innovation. Yet, as recent analyses, including Mario Draghi's 2024 report on the future of European competitiveness, underline, Europe's innovation landscape remains fragmented. Much of the progress has come from individual institutions rather than coordinated strategies. Initiatives such as the proposed EU Startup and Scaleup Act aim to address this by aligning regulation, funding, and talent mobility, but progress has been uneven. For the Mediterranean countries, this contrast offers valuable insight. While European systems often evolved through institutional experimentation, the Mediterranean has taken a more integrated, mission-driven approach from the start.

Participants agreed that there is a great need to rethink how research commercialisation is done, and that the Euro-Mediterranean region has a clear advantage. With a shared scientific heritage, a strong network of universities, and a growing entrepreneurial culture, the region can shape its own model: one that reflects cooperation, inclusiveness, and purpose. Strengthening research commercialisation means **empowering researchers to turn their findings into solutions,** encouraging collaboration between academia and business, and designing policies that reward impact rather than output.

Policymakers across the region recognise that strengthening research commercialisation is not only about innovation, but about competitiveness, employment, and inclusion. The UfM Deputy Secretary General Joan Borrell reminded participants, "the Mediterranean has a wealth of scientific excellence, but still faces a persistent challenge: **turning that knowledge into tangible innovation, jobs, and growth."**

A word cloud capturing the most common answers to the question "What word best describes the role of universities in society?"

Policy Recommendations

1. Recognise research commercialisation as a strategic policy priority

Research commercialisation should be recognised as a central engine of economic growth and employment, not as a narrow academic concern. Raising awareness among policymakers, industry leaders, and citizens about its potential can help anchor it in national and regional development agendas. This awareness must also be supported by training modules for politicians and policymakers, as well as communicating efforts to the wider public, so that science-based innovation becomes part of societal conversation and even electoral debate. Such understanding and visibility can in turn drive interdepartmental collaboration, ensuring that ministries of education, economy, and labour work together toward shared goals. This was further emphasised by the opening remarks of Stefan Olsson, Deputy Director General at the European Commission: "Breaking institutional silos and aligning policies across sectors is essential to unlock the full economic and societal value of research."

2. Empower researchers to turn knowledge into solutions

Participants emphasised that research commercialisation should reinforce, not replace, high-quality basic research, ensuring that scientific excellence remains the foundation for innovation. Making research commercialisation a strategic priority requires brilliant basic research. However, there was consensus that current funding and incentive structures do not support research commercialisation: "universities are not rewarding for innovations in the same way as publications or education, monetary or otherwise," Anu Honkalinna, Head of Spinout Asset Management at Aalto University pointed out. To address this, universities need support to integrate commercialisation into their missions and metrics, ensuring that researchers are recognised and rewarded for impact. Embedding these incentives will make research excellence the foundation for both knowledge creation and sustainable economic growth.

Case ANPR
– Bridging Science and Society

The Tunisian Government has developed a cluster organisational model for implementing their vision of research governance and valorisation. The General Directorate for Research Valorisation (DGVR) works alongside the General Directorate of Scientific Research (DGRS) of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the National Agency for the Promotion of Scientific Research (ANPR), and the General Directorate for European Projects (Horizon Europe) to ensure coherence between national research policies, valorisation efforts, and international collaboration. The ANPR's main mission is to promote the transfer of research results to the socio-economic sphere and, conversely, to integrate the needs of that sphere into research priorities. It works to valorise patents and research outcomes through programmes, funding mechanisms, support structures, and interface organisations.

The ANPR is responsible for strengthening the link between research and business through 25 Technology Transfer Offices (BuTTs) set up to act as intermediaries between universities and businesses. Their role is to assist researchers in protecting intellectual property, negotiating contracts, and valorising results from laboratories. They act as local structures capable of identifying the innovative potential of academic work and guiding it toward concrete applications. "The ANPR coordinates the network of all these BuTTs and supports them through capacity building, study visits, organisation of international events, conferences, and contribution to financing of certain activities" Dhouha Sbaoulji, Project Manager at ANPR, explains.

In 2012, the ANPR created MOBIDOC to promote collaborative research on a national level. MOBIDOC is a mobility system for PhD students and postdocs to carry out applied research in beneficiary organisations. "The main objective of this mechanism is the interactions between research and the socio-economic world and improve the employability of young researchers," Sbaoulji explains. From its inception, over 900 researchers have been working with 425 beneficiary organisations, resulting in almost 400 scientific articles, 26 patents, and 7 startups coming out of the programme.

The ANPR also runs a project financed by the Ministry to support the establishment of innovative spinoffs. Twenty spinoffs have been established from universities and technoparks so far. The ANPR is also responsible for running the INTECMED accelerator programme in Tunisia as well as part of the DIRASA Erasmus+ project that aims to improve the governance of university research in Tunisia. These initiatives illustrate ANPR's expanding role in fostering entrepreneurial outcomes and linking national programmes with international projects.

Research valorisation in Tunisia relies on targeted and often sector-based funding mechanisms. The main objective is to transform research results into concrete solutions for socio-economic development: new products, wealth and job creation, exports, as well as the resolution of previously unsolved socio-technical issues. These mechanisms generally require public-private partnerships and aim to accelerate the transfer of innovations, support technological maturation, and foster entrepreneurship (startups and spinoffs). In parallel, Tunisia benefits from external competitive funding through participation in international bilateral and multilateral projects (e.g. France, Spain, Morocco, India), as well as European programmes (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, PRIMA). Together, these efforts position ANPR as a key actor in Tunisia's evolving system of research valorisation and innovation governance.

2

Ecosystems as a Key Enabler for Research Commercialisation

Ecosystem was one of the most frequently used terms across the three days of discussion, appearing 169 times in total and highlighted repeatedly by policymakers in both the opening and closing remarks. UfM Deputy Secretary General Joan Borrell emphasised that the UfM is trying to build ecosystems through "cooperation with a full ecosystem of universities, investors, startups, and public administration working in synergy. But all this needs to happen within international, transnational and regional cooperation, because ideas know no border. This is critical particularly for our region."

The opening statements were echoed by Anne-France Wittmann, Programme Officer at the European Commission: "the EU is committed to continue nurturing a vibrant, inclusive innovation ecosystem across the region where research meets business and ideas can create jobs and local impact in the communities." These comments capture a central insight of the Malta workshop: innovation and research commercialisation do not occur in isolation but depend on the relationships, cultures, and structures that connect people and institutions.

Historically, research commercialisation has operated on a university-by-university logic, often confined to institutional boundaries, yet it depends not only on the quality of science or the availability of funding but also on the environment that surrounds it. **Across the Mediterranean, many barriers to innovation are not technical but systemic and behavioural.** Fragmented systems, hesitancy toward risk, and the absence of a shared language between academia, investors, and policymakers limit potential. Strengthening ecosystems therefore requires a shift in mindset toward openness, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

During the workshop, participants used the Ecosystem Canvas by ITUInnovation to visualise how actors connect within their national and regional contexts. This exercise revealed that ecosystems are not primarily structural but social systems. As several speakers observed, **ecosystems evolve through trust, generosity, and mutual support,** not control. Ahmad Sufian Bayram, Founder of Startup Syria, offered a useful distinction, reminding participants that an innovation ecosystem is "complex, not complicated." A complicated system can be engineered and repeated; a complex one, like raising a child, cannot be copied or reproduced mechanically. This perspective served as a caution against attempts to replicate models such as Silicon Valley without considering local context and dynamics. Participants agreed that there is no one-size-fits-all model for ecosystem building; each country must adapt approaches to its own realities and resources while staying connected through regional collaboration.

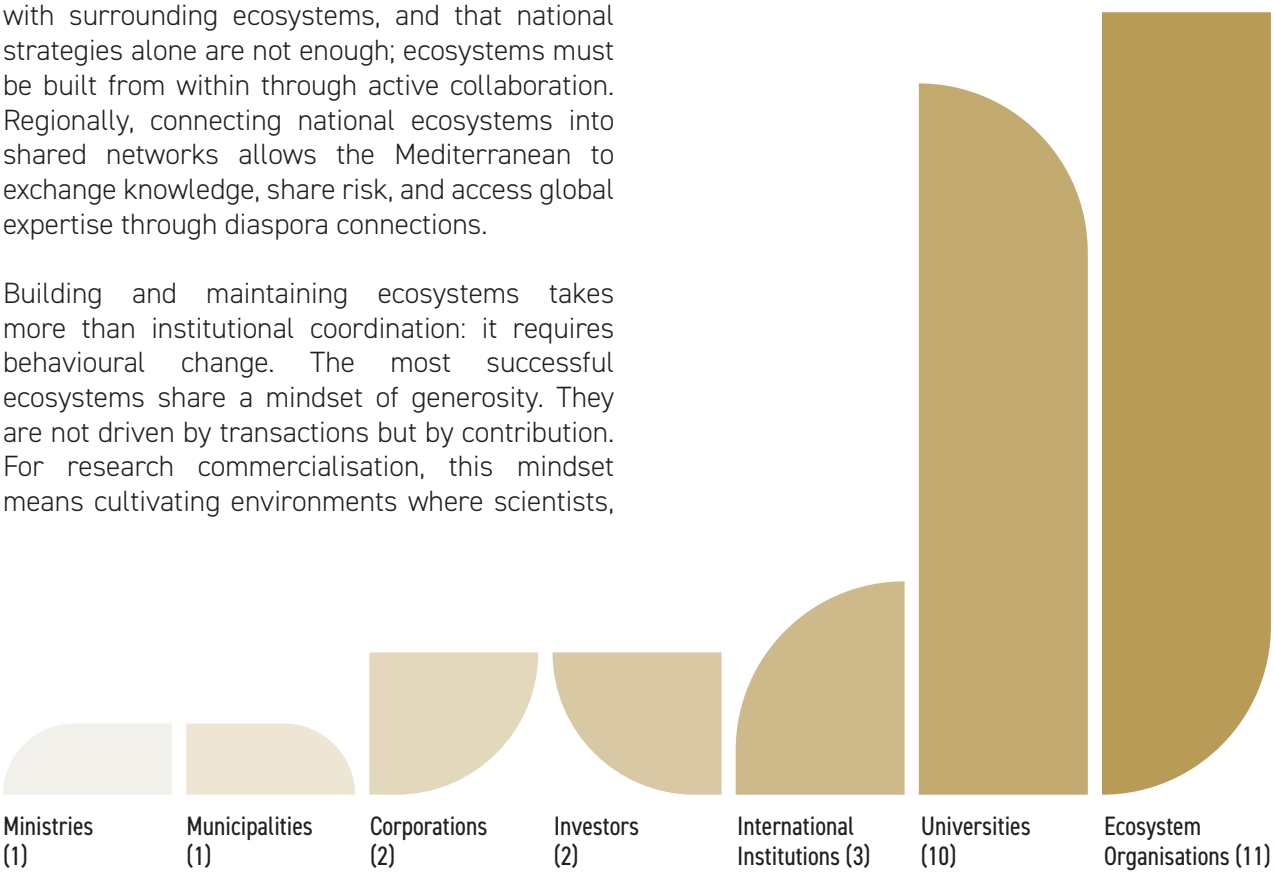
A young ecosystem leader shared that young people often face barriers to entering the startup world due to limited opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship in safe environments. Building this mindset early can create a culture where

founders and researchers give back, sustaining the ecosystem over time. Other participants highlighted the need **to elevate researchers and research-based entrepreneurs through media, public platforms, and storytelling that celebrates their achievements.** Recognising and elevating these role models not only inspires new talent but also reinforces a culture of contribution and collective pride in innovation. Examples from across the region illustrated these dynamics. The transformation of cities such as Barcelona and Beirut shows the impact of long-term ecosystem investment on research commercialisation. Heba Gaber also shared an important insight from the European Commission, highlighting the need to interact not only directly with entrepreneurs but also with innovation enablers across the value chain.

Healthy ecosystems exist at multiple levels. Locally, universities, incubators, and municipalities provide early spaces for collaboration. Nationally, policies and funding frameworks can either enable or constrain these dynamics. We heard that agencies such as Portugal's National Innovation Agency are evolving to integrate more closely with surrounding ecosystems, and that national strategies alone are not enough; ecosystems must be built from within through active collaboration. Regionally, connecting national ecosystems into shared networks allows the Mediterranean to exchange knowledge, share risk, and access global expertise through diaspora connections.

Building and maintaining ecosystems takes more than institutional coordination: it requires behavioural change. The most successful ecosystems share a mindset of generosity. They are not driven by transactions but by contribution. For research commercialisation, this mindset means cultivating environments where scientists, entrepreneurs, and investors see themselves as part of a shared mission. Universities should support founders not only through contracts but through mentorship and cultural encouragement. Policymakers should design frameworks that reward cooperation and cross-sector collaboration. Governments and large institutions can act as early customers, signalling trust and bridging the gap between research and market.

Ultimately, strong ecosystems treat relationships as assets and trust as infrastructure. **They prioritise the flow of ideas over ownership and collective progress over individual gain.** The region already possesses many of the ingredients for success: world-class universities, dynamic entrepreneurs, and a deep tradition of cooperation. The next step is to strengthen the social and institutional links that bind these elements together. When universities, businesses, governments, and citizens commit to a shared purpose, ecosystems become more than networks—they become living systems capable of turning research into lasting prosperity across the region.



Who should take the lead? Ecosystem organisations and universities were viewed as the natural leaders for advancing research commercialisation across the region.

Policy Recommendations

3. Empower Community-Driven Ecosystem Development

Several participants underlined that one of the greatest barriers to collaboration is lack of visibility. Ecosystem actors often remain unaware of each other's capabilities and resources. Mapping national and regional ecosystems would allow better coordination and attract both public and private investment. As Yoeil Ashraf, CEO at Progressio, noted, "this is a data problem first; we don't see the ecosystem enough." He went on to estimate that 70% of the current problems are due to awareness and 30% due to infrastructure. Creating a shared Mediterranean platform to visualise active initiatives, infrastructure, and funding opportunities would reduce duplication, strengthen partnerships, and make ecosystems more accessible from within and abroad.

4. Enable Ecosystem Growth through Targeted Funding Mechanisms

Participants stressed that ecosystems cannot be engineered but must be nurtured through long-term, inclusive support. As Andrea Tinagli, European Investment Bank Senior Official at the UfM, noted, "we need to have specific financial instruments to facilitate this ecosystem of dialogue for innovation." Drawing on his experience, Ahmad Sufian Bayram, Founder of Startup Syria, described how inclusive processes can turn fragmented systems into functioning ones through founder forums, policy hackathons, and investor and academic networks. Several participants also proposed making the UfM Research to Business workshop an annual event to sustain this dialogue and shared momentum. Dedicated funding for connectors, not only founders, would ensure ecosystems evolve as open and dynamic communities.

Case Berytech

– Seeing Ecosystems as an Opportunity

In 2002 the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) was instrumental in founding Berytech. Since then Berytech has evolved into a leading business support organisation in the region, providing a dynamic environment for the creation and development of startups and SMEs, as well as fostering innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship in Lebanon.

Berytech has been a driving force for entrepreneurship and innovation in Lebanon. The crises since 2019 allowed Berytech to refocus attention on local production and the valorisation of local resources as a solution to these challenges, while creating a global, competitive edge for Lebanon. Krystel Khalil, Director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Programmes at Berytech, explains, "We saw immense potential for innovation happening inside academia and the drive of researchers to create spinoffs." she continues.

The EU-funded Lebanon Innovate is one of Berytech's flagship programmes aimed at building the intellectual property and knowledge transfer ecosystem in Lebanon. It started in 2022 with mapping the ecosystem, which revealed a clear gap between industries and universities, and a lack of infrastructure support for IP-based innovation. Mapping helped business stakeholders identify where to funnel their opportunities. "My advice is whatever you want to do or build, start by mapping your ecosystem locally to make sure you are complementing other stakeholders." Khalil says.

At its core, Lebanon Innovate is about building the ecosystem by connecting universities and industry, with special emphasis on IP and law firms, industry networks, and business support organisations. In practice, this is done through a platform for communication, capacity building, partnership, and networking in Lebanon and beyond, also by leveraging the diaspora. "Communication is very important from many angles, it creates a mechanism for multiple stakeholders to meet and co-create," Khalil notes. Much of their work is sector specific, bringing in stakeholders from a specific field to talk to each other and build an agenda for Lebanon.

In the Lebanon Innovate programme, Berytech works with eight universities in Lebanon to integrate entrepreneurship support in the prototyping phase, encourage research teams to team up with business-minded founders, and help them build their IP policies, and set up technology transfer and grant offices. Berytech, in partnership with five leading organisations from Lebanon and Europe, has provided capacity-building and technical assistance to staff, deans, researchers, and industrial stakeholders to help shift their mindset and strategies toward a culture of collaboration and the commercialisation of innovations." Khalil explains.

A vibrant ecosystem has spillover effects into society. "If we just look at the angle of industry-academia collaboration, we can see how much research valorisation can contribute to job creation. Because when we support researchers to bring their innovation to market and create those commercial opportunities, by simply providing that collaboration environment you see a lot of new business models coming up: joint ventures, spinoffs, and researchers driving industry innovation forward." Khalil concludes.

3

Funding as an Enabler

Most researchers want to see their inventions contribute to making the world a better place, and many assume this will happen naturally through publishing or sharing ideas. Yet, in today's innovation systems, discovery alone rarely changes the world. Turning research into real impact requires not only curiosity but also capital, trust, and a willingness to engage with markets. For many scientists, this feels uncomfortable. The logic of business can seem distant from the values of academia, and the language of investment can appear to measure progress in returns rather than results. However, research commercialisation is not about replacing public purpose with private interest, but about connecting both through a shared understanding of risk and reward.

Most inventions require substantial funding to reach the market. Grant-based programmes are essential in early stages, but almost without exception, spinouts must also attract funding from venture capital funds, corporate venture investors, and family offices operating with a private equity mindset. These investors see private capital as an asset class with its own risk and return logic. As one of the investors present in Malta emphasised: "just one company will make up the whole fund." Their expectations shape the pace of innovation: the need for rapid growth, high scalability, and measurable returns. That same pressure applies to university-based deep tech companies.

Participants in Malta repeatedly pointed to the same challenge: **the absence of financing structures that match the specific needs of research-based innovation.** Traditional grants often stop too early, while private investors tend to enter too late. This funding gap, known as the valley of death, leaves many promising technologies stalled before market entry. Participants called for funding instruments tailored to research to market cycles typical for hardware and life sciences, where product development requires heavy investment and longer timelines. Early-stage funding instruments should take minimal equity to avoid limiting startups' ability to attract follow-on investment, especially in later funding rounds. Grant-style mechanisms or light equity stakes were seen as key to helping new teams gain traction and retain control in their formative years. Sometimes just mapping available funding instruments can make them more accessible as the examples of Xjenza Malta and the National Innovation Agency of Portugal showed.

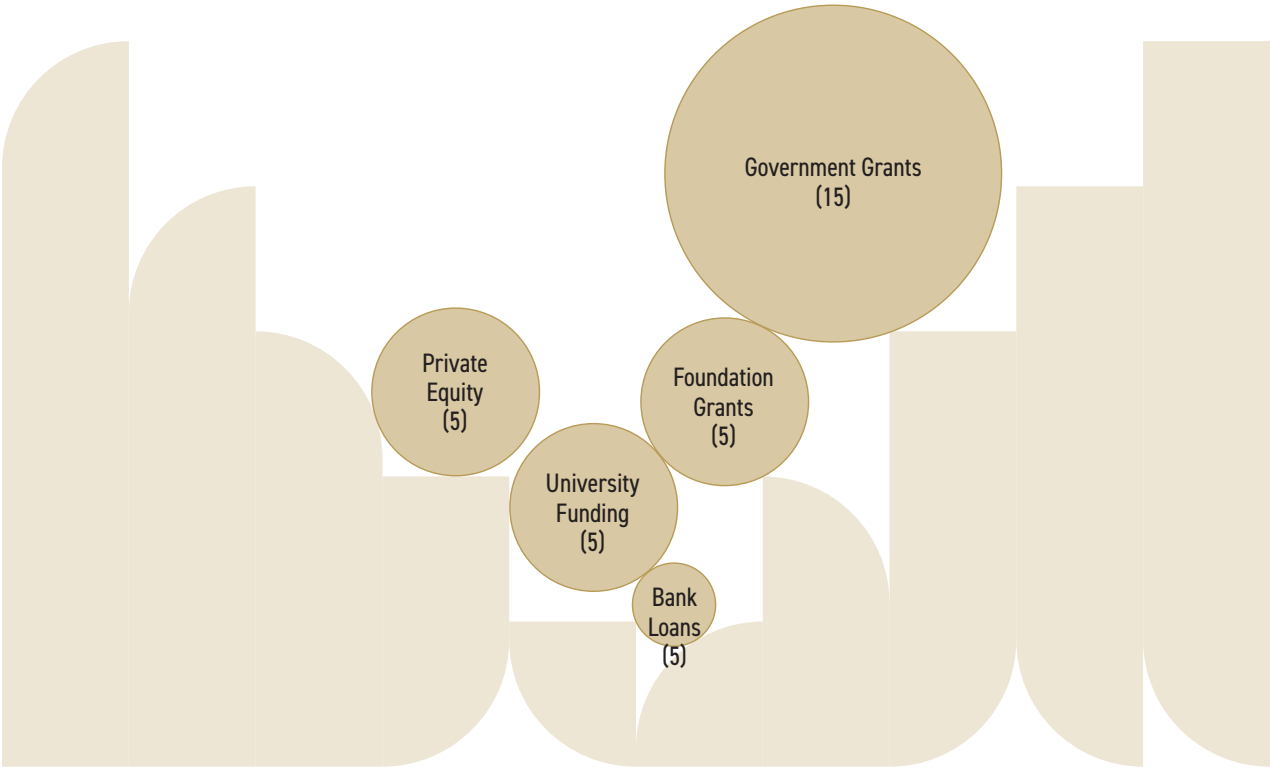
Building an investor base that understands research-driven innovation is essential. As one founder put it, the hardest part is educating where the money comes from. Developing this understanding through training, policy alignment, and cross-border investor networks will be crucial to sustain growth. **For a collaboration to work, both sides must learn each other's logic:** researchers must see venture funding not as a distortion of purpose, but as a mechanism to scale solutions, while investors must understand that some of the most transformative innovations require time, trust, and public partnership. For researchers, transitions from research to market requires technology readiness, as well as financial and institutional literacy: an understanding of how capital

works, what investors expect, how risk and reward are shared, as well as how intellectual property can be leveraged to unlock financing.

Venture investors are inherently global in their search for promising technologies and ambitious teams, and this opens an opportunity for the Mediterranean. With its growing scientific base and entrepreneurial momentum, the region can attract international capital by improving investment readiness and visibility. However, as several participants noted, when capital is not local, foreign investors often wait until startups can show traction. As Mohamed Dhaouafi, Founder of Cure Bionics, explained, **"investors will not join until you made all the hard work."** Building stronger domestic funding capacity and linking it to global investment networks will be key to ensuring that university spinoffs and deep tech companies from the region become more visible, credible, and ultimately investable globally.

Funding mechanisms already exist across the Mediterranean, yet participants agreed that new instruments are still needed to bridge remaining gaps. Examples from Europe show that commercialisation accelerates when governments establish university-linked investment vehicles or match public and private funds. University-specific seed funds were also presented as a successful complement to the broader funding landscape. Andrea Tinagli, European Investment Bank Senior Official at the UfM, called for dedicated tools for early-stage innovation and mechanisms that can de-risk investment by combining public and private capital. PRIMA and its potential expansion based on the FUTURE4PRIMA project's outcomes were seen as key vehicles, while instruments from the European Innovation Council that combine funding and expertise were highlighted as valuable benchmarks. Heba Gaber, Reasearch and Innovation Officer at the European Commission, also stressed the importance of input from entrepreneurs and enablers when designing the programmes. Several participants emphasised that institutional investors and national funds could play a catalytic role by co-investing with private actors, helping to attract follow-on financing and strengthen the entire ecosystem.

However, participants agreed that **funding alone is not enough.** Even the most well-designed instruments will have limited impact if research groups lack ambition, skills, and institutional support to commercialise their work. Strengthening human capacity, building teams with entrepreneurial mindsets, and supporting incubators and innovation intermediaries remain essential for ensuring that funding translates into impact.



How should inventions be funded over the valley of death? Participants favoured public and university-based funding as the most effective ways to bridge the gap between research and market.

Policy Recommendations

5. Develop Dedicated Funding Instruments for the Transition from Research to Market

The most critical funding gap occurs between research and commercial readiness. Policymakers should establish targeted mechanisms such as proof-of-concept grants, pre-seed funds, and convertible public investment instruments to bridge this stage. Public funding should focus on de-risking early innovation, enabling private investors to follow. Such instruments can turn promising discoveries into investable ventures and prevent high-potential ideas from being lost in the "valley of death."

6. Build National and Regional Venture Capital Ecosystems

Mediterranean countries can accelerate innovation by mobilising institutional capital, including sovereign wealth funds, university endowments, development banks, and pension funds, into new venture capital and co-investment vehicles. These funds should prioritise science-based startups and university spinouts with clear societal impact. Private high-net-worth individuals could also be incentivised through tax incentives. Investing in such mechanisms will create long-term capacity for financing research-driven entrepreneurship and strengthen the region's position in global innovation markets.

7. Strengthen Investor Capacity and Financial Literacy

To make capital work for innovation, investors and researchers alike need a better understanding of each other's logic. Training programmes for investors, angel networks, and fund managers should focus on the distinct nature of deep tech and university-based innovation. At the same time, universities should integrate investment literacy into entrepreneurship training. As participants agreed, aligning expectations and timelines between public funders, researchers, and investors is key to unlocking more sustainable and impactful financing.

Case Algerian Startup Fund
– Turning Policy into Risk Capital

Established in October 2020, the Algerian Startup Fund (ASF) marks a turning point in Algeria's approach to commercialising innovations and ideas. Created under the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and Micro-Enterprises and capitalised by six public banks, ASF is the country's first public private equity fund dedicated exclusively to startups. The fund's initial endowment of around US $9 million was quickly expanded through a 2022 partnership with the Treasury, which made available an additional US $411 million from regional investment funds across all 58 wilayas. This move elevated ASF into one of the largest state-backed venture vehicles in North Africa, signaling Algeria's intent to embed risk capital as a core part of its innovation economy.[1]

ASF sits at the heart of a national innovation pipeline that begins with the Startup Label, a formal certification for innovative ventures, and extends through Algeria Venture, the country's public accelerator network. Only startups labeled by an independent national committee can apply for ASF investment, ensuring that funding flows to projects meeting transparent innovation criteria. The label itself acts as a quality seal for innovation, giving both the state and private investors a shared reference point. Typical ticket sizes range from US $15 000–150 000, with upper ceilings now reaching about US $1 million for later-stage cases. By 2024, ASF had already invested in more than 70 startups and helped hundreds of innovative projects gain traction, many of them originating from university ecosystems.

This system of labelling, acceleration, and venture funding reflects a maturing ecosystem built on strong institutional groundwork. Over just a few years, Algeria has created the key instruments, policy, capital, and coordination that position the country to now grow in culture, volume, and international visibility. As Abdellah Mallek, founder of SYLABS, one of Algiers' pioneering accelerators, emphasised during the Malta session: "To succeed in this, we need to build it within the ecosystem." His point captures the current inflection point: Algeria has laid the physical and financial infrastructure, and the task ahead is to let the ecosystem itself take ownership, connecting universities, investors, and entrepreneurs around a shared vision.

The significance of ASF lies in how it redefines public innovation finance. For decades, Algeria's entrepreneurial landscape relied on grants, subsidised loans, and state tenders. The creation of a venture capital mechanism introduces a risk-sharing logic that rewards growth, market validation, and accountability. Public money becomes an equity partner that succeeds when startups succeed. This represents a cultural and financial shift that aligns the incentives of entrepreneurs and the state, creating a bridge between ideas and business.

1 | Wamda, "Algerian Startup Fund to invest $411 million in local startups", 25 August 2022.

4

Regulatory Frameworks for Trust

The discussion in Malta underscored that law and policy are not background conditions but active enablers of innovation. Across the Mediterranean, participants agreed that predictable and transparent legal systems are essential for transforming research into opportunity. Standardised templates and fair contracts for spinouts, covering intellectual property transfers, licensing, shareholder agreements, and term sheets, reduce negotiation time, clarify responsibilities, and create trust.

Many regulatory frameworks are inherited from EU or national systems that shape how universities operate. Participants stressed that improving intergovernmental collaboration and simplifying procedures, from procurement to mobility, is key to creating a more innovation-friendly environment. Participants highlighted that for example Egypt has put a lot of energy into systematically building structures, including a network of tech transfer offices and improved laws for science, technology, and innovation, but not really the same or equal amount of energy in institutionalising the technology transfer practices inside universities and research centres. Universities also need clear and coherent internal IPR policies that define ownership, revenue sharing, and researcher incentives.

Intellectual property rights were at the centre of many conversations. Protecting inventions is not only about ownership, but also about ensuring that the resources invested in product development, testing, and regulatory approval can be recovered. Strong IP protection gives investors and partners confidence that their capital will not be undermined by imitation. Participants stressed that **IP protection is not a bureaucratic afterthought, but the foundation on which commercialisation rests.** As Mohamed Dhaouafi, Founder of Cure Bionics, reminded, "investors will not invest in something that is not protected." The goal, participants agreed, is to design IP regimes that reward innovation while ensuring that public investment in science continues to serve public purpose. Cross-licensing, patent pools, and specialised IP funds were mentioned as ways to leverage research outputs for greater societal value. These approaches allow universities to monetise their IP portfolios while encouraging collaboration rather than competition.

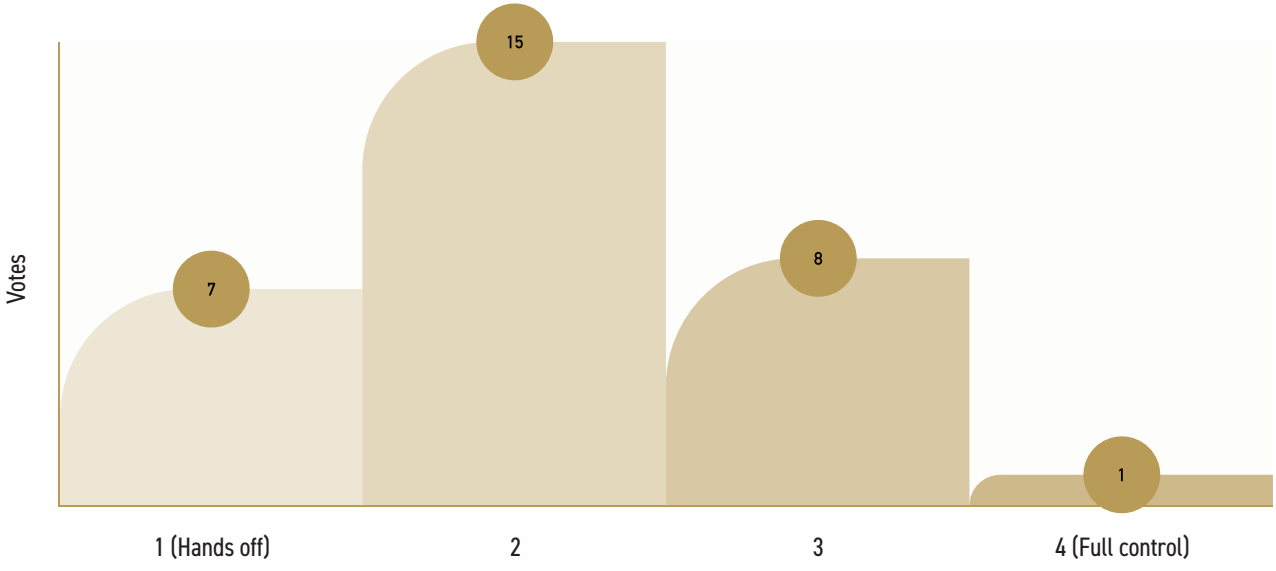
Many speakers pointed out that **IP and legal literacy remain limited across universities and startups.** Researchers are often uncertain when to protect their work, what rights they hold, and how to navigate the process. Participants called for more high-quality, hands-on legal support and training that integrates intellectual property and entrepreneurship into academic curricula. As most university spinouts require multiple funding rounds before reaching maturity, ownership structures become a strategic question. Technology transfer can take many forms, from licensing to established companies or SMEs, to direct IPR transfers to the spinout itself, which is the preferred model of many European investors. Several participants also emphasised that active founders need to retain sufficient ownership until exit and keep

enough shares to motivate new team members through option schemes for the company to remain investable.

Funding and legal are heavily intertwined. Both internal legal processes and the external regulatory environment directly shape the investability of spinouts. Legal clarity and investor confidence go hand-in-hand: transparent equity arrangements, predictable taxation, and clear ownership structures make spinouts easier to finance. **Predictability and stability are key to attracting foreign direct investment.** Favourable frameworks, such as Tunisia's Startup Law, that provide tax exemptions and grants, help keep promising startups local. Rigorous documentation and compliance processes help spinouts withstand the due diligence that accompanies investment or acquisition, avoiding last-minute surprises that can derail otherwise promising ventures. Participants also highlighted that meeting quality, safety, and ethical standards early on through regulatory compliance and certifications is increasingly critical for market access and investor confidence.

Collaboration between different stakeholders ensures that innovation policy remains grounded in reality and oriented toward shared outcomes. Several participants proposed platforms where researchers, innovators, financial partners, and policymakers can work together on projects, emphasising that progress requires translating dialogue into concrete financial and operational instruments. Overall, policy plays a much more decisive role in the success of research-based companies than other types of startups, calling for new and improved co-created regulatory frameworks. When Progressio started to work closely with the government, reshaping policy became one of its first tasks: "what we ended up doing is building a policy that [allows] for everyone to work together and for everyone to understand their goals, the rules, and what they get in return." Wasseem Ghaly, COO at Progressio, describes. Mario Cervantes, Senior Economist at the OECD, also underlined the importance of open and accessible data as a cornerstone of modern research commercialisation, noting that data fuels innovation capacity and must be supported through collaborative digital infrastructure.

Participants consistently highlighted that while intellectual property protection and clear legal frameworks are essential for attracting investment, overly complex or fragmented regulations can delay innovation. Many called for standardised contracts, simpler processes, and stronger education around IP and legal readiness across the region. The question is not whether science and markets can coexist, but how to align them so that both serve human progress. By combining strong legal foundations with values of inclusion and fairness, the Mediterranean and Europe can demonstrate that **research commercialisation, when designed with integrity, is not about extraction, but about shared prosperity.**



What should the role of governments be? Participants generally favoured a limited but active government role in research commercialisation, with most responses leaning toward facilitation rather than control.

Policy Recommendations

8. Streamline Legal Frameworks that Foster Regional Collaboration

Across the Mediterranean, regulatory complexity and fragmented procedures slow innovation. Participants called for simplifying legal documentation, standardising spinout contracts, and aligning regulations across countries. Regional collaboration can help. As one participant noted, "there might not be someone in Tunisia that can help out, but there might be experiences from Morocco, and vice versa." Establishing a shared regional platform to exchange templates, model agreements, and regulatory expertise would reduce transaction costs and strengthen cross-border cooperation.

9. Build Legal and IP Literacy Across the Ecosystem

Legal and IP literacy should become a core competence of research-based entrepreneurs. Participants stressed that most researchers and students still lack practical understanding of IP rights, contracts, and regulatory obligations. Integrating IPR, startup law, and contract basics into curricula will equip future entrepreneurs with the skills to navigate innovation ecosystems confidently. Universities and accelerators should offer integrated training on IP management, contracts, and investor relations. Governments and development organisations can support by funding accessible legal support services for startups and spinouts. Building these competences will help researchers negotiate fair terms, avoid preventable pitfalls, and ensure that the value of publicly funded research benefits society.

10. Create Innovation-Friendly Policy Environments through Aligning Policy with Practice

Governments and regional bodies should review inherited regulations to reduce barriers to innovation. Simplifying state-aid regulations, revising tax regulations for spinouts, and improving mobility through streamlined visa processes can significantly enhance competitiveness. Participants called for closer collaboration between policymakers, practitioners, and investors to ensure that policy is grounded in practical realities. A predictable and innovation-friendly policy environment would attract long-term investment, improve regional coherence, and help promising startups grow locally rather than relocate abroad.

Case IP Model in Jordan

– Building a Shared Model for Research Commercialisation

The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) is Jordan's leading scientific institution established by royal decree in 1970 and hosts the Intellectual Property Commercialisation Office (IPCO), established in 2010 as part of an EU-funded programme to support innovators and inventors by providing services for patent registration and protection. Since then IPCO has become the central technology transfer office of the Jordan Technology Transfer Network, offering patentability assessments, patent drafting, and advisory services. Many of these services are provided free of charge, extending support not only to RSS researchers but to universities, startups, and local innovators across Jordan.

One of IPCO's main activities is to help universities draft their IP policies. "We provide centralised services for university technology transfer officers, startups, local community, and universities in the region," Mohammad Diab, Intellectual Property and Clients Manager at IPCO, explains. In 2017, The Jordanian Patent Office joined the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and a few years later in 2020 Jordan started a project aimed at forming a national IP Model.

IPCO conducted an assessment of the current IP status of Jordanian universities and analysed the technology transfer processes as well as the types of possible intellectual property rights that can be generated within universities. The project, which eventually engaged 11 universities and research institutions, became the first coordinated national effort to create a consistent approach to IP management in the higher education sector. Based on this assessment IPCO developed an IP assessment matrix, a type of survey that was distributed to the technology transfer officers in order to use it as a basis for an IP skeleton. IPCO then reviewed all submitted policies and formulated a model institutional IP policy for Jordanian universities and research institutions. The policy was drafted in accordance with international agreements and national legislation, ensuring that Jordan's research institutions align with global standards of intellectual property protection.

The model is not a national model per se, but it has been implemented in many universities across Jordan. "Each of the beneficiaries has its own managerial structure, thus the time needed for each of them to draft, amend and adopt the institutional policy differs," Diab explains.

The resulting Institutional IP Policy for Universities and Research Institutions in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan lays out principles for managing and utilising institutional IP, promoting awareness among researchers, and enhancing the efficiency of IP asset management. It serves as a guide for universities to draft or amend their own policies in line with their missions while contributing to Jordan's broader socio-economic development. It also reinforces the social responsibility of Jordan's universities to create and disseminate knowledge while maintaining the ability to protect their intellectual property, ensuring that openness and protection evolve hand-in-hand.

5

Go-to-Market & Spinout Support

The path from research to real-world application rarely fails because of science. More often, it breaks down in the final stretch, when brilliant discoveries struggle to reach the market, the public, or the planet they were meant to serve. The so-called "go-to-market" phase is where innovation meets its true test. For university spinouts, this stage can be exhilarating but also daunting, requiring a transition from academic exploration to entrepreneurial execution.

Across the Mediterranean, many research projects with strong technical merit stall before they become viable ventures. **Negotiations over intellectual property take too long, founding teams form late or lack the needed skillset, and the journey from proof of concept to paying customers remains unpredictable.** As one researcher-turned-entrepreneur noted, "we could all have really good products and research, but it has to fit somewhere and make money too." Krystel Khalil, Director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Programmes of Berytech, explained that her organisation "made sure to integrate entrepreneurship support before the researchers finished their prototype so that they could understand the market."

Ultimately, the scientific method and entrepreneurial mindset share more similarities than differences. But two key differences remain: speed and timing. The startup ecosystem, driven by risk capital, moves at a faster pace, and founders must master when to seek funding. Whereas it is customary to apply for funding before starting a major research project, startups benefit from bringing in equity-based funding after reaching major milestones. Similarly, the investors taking part in the workshop reminded that founders need to demonstrate the potential to grow so big that they can return all the money that has been invested in all the other portfolio companies.

Strong ecosystems, well-connected and experienced advisors, and sufficient funding are key. **The ecosystem cannot do the work for the entrepreneurs, but predictable, transparent and coherent policies and processes create a supporting context.** Across the region, a range of mechanisms are already emerging often combining early funding with capacity building: government and regional programmes, accelerators and incubators, university technology transfer offices, grants, venture capital, and even crowdfunding platforms.

Compared to regular startups, research-based spinouts typically have to cross two valleys of death, one to mature and increase the technology readiness level enough to spin out, and the other one before finding product-market-fit. Support with finding suitable and sufficient funding instruments, navigating legal issues, and licensing is instrumental. Standardised legal documentation is helpful in the beginning, but founders stressed that direct support from qualified experts remains essential. Transparent taxation frameworks were also raised as essential to encourage entrepreneurship and attract smart money and international investment.

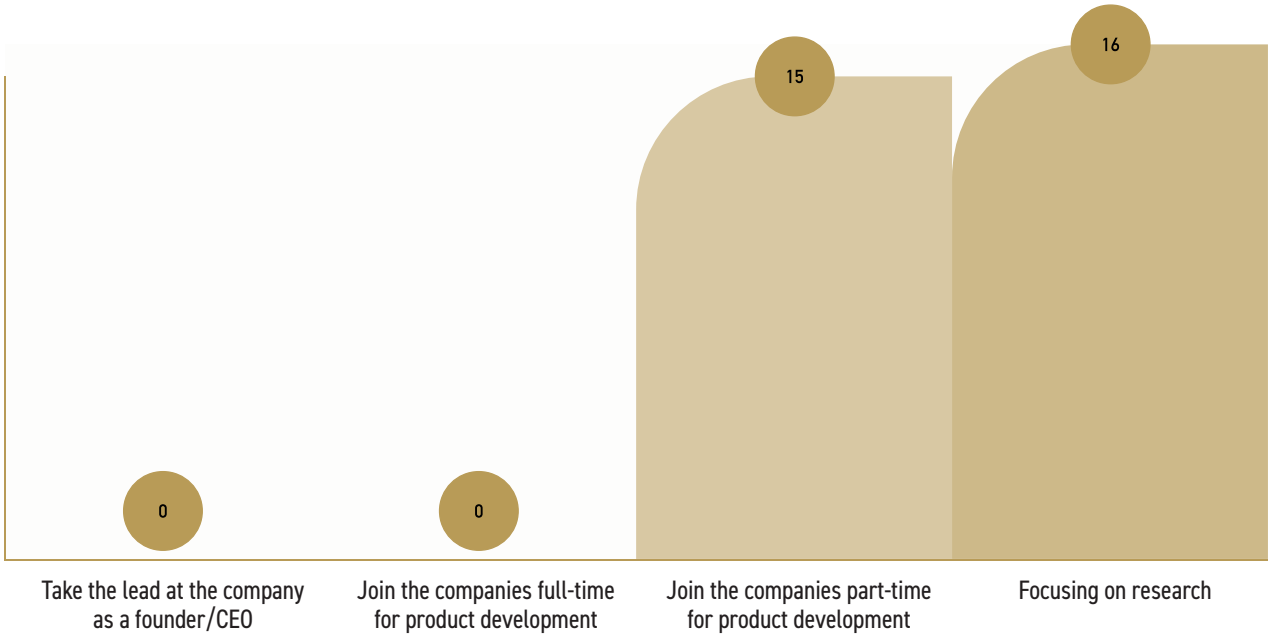
The Innovation Readiness Level™ (IRL) framework presented during the workshop offers a practical

tool to navigate the complexity of research commercialisation. Building on NASA's Technology Readiness Levels, IRL assesses not only technical maturity but also customer, IPR, team, business, and financial readiness. It provides a shared language for innovators, universities, and investors to coordinate their efforts and identify what is needed next. When applied consistently, such tools can align programmes, policies, and funding around the same readiness logic, making the journey from research to impact faster and more transparent. By sharing a common readiness vocabulary, actors across borders can coordinate more efficiently, reducing duplication and accelerating scale.

In the end, people are more important than tech, one speaker reflected. **Spinout support cannot be designed on the premise that the inventors want and can become the founders driving the ideas on the market.** An underutilised bridge in this phase is the student community. Engaging them in market research, customer validation, and early commercial exploration accelerates technology transfer and also equips them with entrepreneurial skills and networks at the same time. The entrepreneurs present at the workshop also beautifully highlighted the potential of youth. Many of the successful founders had started their companies straight out of university.

Entrepreneurial journeys shared during the workshop illustrated that success is as much about mindset as it is about mechanisms. Nisrine Sadik, Founder of Lumina, emphasised, "as entrepreneurs, we don't give up." Mohamed Dhaouafi, Founder of Cure Bionics, reflected that seeing someone walking again, changing someone's life, brings him a lot of happiness that weighs much heavier than this feeling of giving up." Mohamed Elamir just founded his second startup, Sealevä, reflecting that, "Whatever I'm doing as an entrepreneur, it has to have a big impact." Astronaut and founder Sara Sabry emphasised that she, "love, love, love challenging questions. That's one of my favourite things in the world now." These young entrepreneurs also emphasise the responsibility of entrepreneurs to solve problems and take responsibility for their own success. Dhaouafi encourages all founders to do their homework — learn how to convince people about your startup.

Ultimately, the goal of spinout support is not just to launch new companies, but to create conditions where knowledge can move freely from research to society. As Keith Azzopardi Tanti, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Research & Innovation of Malta, reminded, this means **"ensuring that research excellence does not stop at publications, but is translated into new businesses, competitive solutions, and sustainable livelihoods."** Go-to-market strategies that embed a readiness mindset from the start can turn the region's research excellence into prosperity and ensure that no breakthrough is lost in translation between the lab and society.



What should the role of researchers be? Participants saw the role of researchers primarily as knowledge creators, with part-time collaboration preferred over full-time industry leadership.

Policy Recommendations

11. Facilitate Market Validation through Public Procurement and Early Pilots

Participants underlined that one of the biggest barriers for spinouts is proving that their innovation works in real-world settings. Governments, public agencies, and large institutions can play a catalytic role by acting as early customers. Public procurement programmes, go-to-market vouchers, and testbed collaborations can provide spinouts with critical data, credibility, and revenue during the validation stage. As one founder noted, if entrepreneurs have access to more facilities, expertise, and piloting opportunities with governments and institutions, they will have more chances to succeed.

12. Strengthen Spinout Success through Networks, Mentorship, and Team Development

Many spinouts falter not because of weak ideas but because of missing capabilities. Participants stressed the importance of connecting founders with experienced mentors, investors, and policymakers who can guide them through early-stage challenges. Programmes that match researchers with seasoned executives and entrepreneurial talent can help form balanced founding teams, adding business and leadership skills to technical excellence. Cross-border mentorship networks would also attract diaspora expertise and ensure that promising technologies gain visibility beyond national boundaries.

Case E-JUST
– A University Turning Research into Impact

The Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology is an Egyptian research university with a Japanese partnership, established by Presidential Decree in 2009 as a university based on scientific research and diversified education. E-JUST is known as a frontrunner in research commercialisation and industry-academia collaboration.

E-JUST is ranked as Egypt's leading university in patent filings, with more than 113 patents filed in just a decade. The university provides comprehensive patent support for all students and faculty and has made courses on intellectual property, publication ethics, and entrepreneurship mandatory since its inception. "We also have a very fair IPR policy where 70% of the revenue goes to the inventor, not the institution" explains E-JUST President Dr. Amr Adly. The university also rewards inventors through an Inventors Club, where researchers receive recognition and bonuses as they file more patents.

A recent success story comes from a group of E-JUST researchers who developed a locally produced graphene ink after a major appliance manufacturer approached the university for gas sensors to install in its heaters. Imported graphene ink was extremely expensive, so the team created their own, reducing costs to just five percent of the imported equivalent. The project yielded eight patents and brought together professors, lab engineers, and graduate and undergraduate students, exemplifying the collaborative spirit that defines the university's approach to research and innovation.

E-JUST's Dragon Incubator is not just an incubator but a full innovation ecosystem, recognised with several awards. It serves students, faculty members, and outside innovators with technical, business, and legal support. In addition, E-JUST has a virtual incubator open to anyone offering training courses on early entrepreneurship. Those seeking one-on-one mentorship or funding apply through a structured process, where expert panels assess ideas and their potential for incubation.

E-JUST offers seed funds to further develop ideas and has a broad network of business angels and venture capital investors. The university provides seed funds from the Academy of Scientific Research, which plays an important role in convincing outside investors to join. While not every venture succeeds, several have delivered strong returns. Dr. Adly notes that in the region, many industries lack dedicated R&D divisions, so "you cannot approach industrial entities in the MENA region with papers and ideas, you have to approach them with tangible things that convince a businessman that for every dollar he will get a return of two or three."

"Universities have another role: to bridge the gap with industry, to be in touch with industries, to know what is really needed to be done" Dr. Adly concludes. E-JUST has a strong relationship with industry; it offers industrial entities facilities to upgrade their products or further develop their products and regularly hosts events where researchers and founders can meet business angels and venture capital investors early on.

6

Academia & Business

When universities and businesses work together to push the frontiers of knowledge, they can become a powerful engine for innovation. Today, innovation is no longer a linear pipeline from lab to market, but an interactive process where companies scan external ideas, researchers co-create with users, and startups package validated solutions for adoption. Across the Mediterranean, cooperation between universities and the private sector remains uneven. World-class research capacity exists in the region, but businesses often lack incentives or mechanisms to collaborate with academia.

Several participants emphasised that there are significant differences between industries and R&D practices within the region. In countries like Germany, the United States, and Japan close to 80% of the R&D capacity resides in industry, whereas the corresponding number in the MENA region is closer to 5% according to one of the participants. This was further validated by discussions on the apparent lack of R&D divisions in many industries in the region. E-JUST has addressed this gap through partnerships with Japanese companies, while Progressio noted that missing interfaces, not lack of interest, are often the real obstacle. In some cases, companies had proactively reached out to universities.

Closer cooperation between academia and industry is essential for translating research results into market-ready applications. Effective partnerships foster the exchange of ideas, create new jobs, and ensure that research responds to real societal and economic needs. The UfM Handbook on Innovation and Employability Nexus[1] highlights that the shift towards open innovation has transformed the relationship between universities and industry. Many participants emphasised an apparent decline in licensing activities between universities and corporates, offset by growth in corporate venture capital, acquisitions, and piloting programmes. **Overall, corporates are looking for more mature ideas: something de-risked where they can just have it working without risk attached to it.** A representative from the OECD also emphasised that the majority of businesses are not innovating and that innovation predominantly happens in SMEs, a sentiment echoed by many other participants.

Several initiatives in the Mediterranean region are already bridging this gap. Berytech in Lebanon focuses on ecosystem development by connecting universities, industries, and IP professionals through sector-specific programmes. Its "reverse pitching" approach invites companies to present real challenges for researchers to solve, aligning academic work with market needs. Progressio, in turn, connects academia and business through digital platforms, shared lab spaces and advocating for policy that enables collaboration.

Universities are bridge builders, and technology transfer offices (TTOs) are the natural point of contact, but researchers also need to be active.

1 | N. Volles and C. Switzer, *Reinforcing the Innovation-Employability Nexus in the Mediterranean: A Handbook for Academia, Industry and Policymakers,* Union for the Mediterranean, Barcelona, 2020.

One of the researchers reflected that they often care a lot about publications and h-index, and even when they are solving immediate industrial problems brilliant research risks getting stuck in labs. She emphasised the importance of "being present on the business map." Others highlighted the importance of communication as a way to align incentives and timelines. This also helps industries understand what research can bring to them. One participant noted: **"research is highly technical. So how can we really communicate in a way to make it more accessible to the general audience?"** Others also cautioned against the misconception that collaboration with industry threatens academic integrity, noting that academic freedom and research commercialisation work in union, and that strong basic research is in fact the foundation for successful innovation.

Testbeds, pilots, and shared labs are critical for turning collaboration into tangible results. Many participants called for shared lab infrastructure. One example came from Finland, where a chemical company opened affordable shared lab spaces at its headquarters, and Progressio is building a similar network of infrastructure in Egypt. One of the founders also highlighted corporates as valuable investors, particularly through piloting opportunities. Based on his experience, he called for more pilots and testbeds where small companies can test new inventions in an industry setting. Enrico Deluchi, Chairman of the Deep Tech Alliance, shared how they connect startups with corporates in energy, manufacturing, and utilities to accelerate market entry and adoption.

Students are the living tissue between academia and industry. They move across disciplines, complete internships, and bring fresh signals from markets back into labs. Several speakers urged universities to expose students from the very first year to business contexts, not only large corporates but also startups, so that entrepreneurial thinking and customer discovery become part of scientific training. This was also emphasised in the policy context to ensure fresh graduates fit labour-market requirements. A graduate of the CIHEAM Bari Master's programme in Open Innovation and Entrepreneurship described how its students collaborate directly with companies to solve real industry challenges. The Secretary General of CIHEAM, Teodoro Miano, explained that they connect institutions, national authorities, and private companies to co-design their educational programmes.

For the UfM region, strengthening academia–business collaboration is about more than technology transfer: it is about building shared purpose. By aligning university research agendas with the needs of emerging industries, such as renewable energy, agri-tech, health, and digital transformation, the region can turn its research excellence into tangible economic and societal value. The rapid pace of technological innovation, shorter product life cycles, and an ever-increasingly competitive landscape have made university research–based innovations essential for organisational renewal. **The scientific community is especially crucial for addressing grand challenges such as climate change, water quality, and affordable and clean energy through new knowledge and innovative approaches.** As one participant reflected, universities can no longer remain "in the tower watching society," but must engage directly in shaping it through collaboration and innovation.

Should we focus on licensing or to corporates or creating spinoff companies? Most participants preferred creating spinoffs, viewing startups as dynamic bridges between research and industry. They were seen as key vehicles for bringing new technologies into established companies through open innovation and early-stage investment.

Policy Recommendations

13. Encourage Corporate Engagement and Industrial R&D through Policy Incentives

Universities and companies should jointly develop shared laboratories, testbeds, and sector-based research platforms that accelerate technology adoption. Policies can incentivise industrial R&D investment through tax incentives, matched funding, and recognition schemes for companies that collaborate with academia. Corporate venture capital arms should be encouraged, and publicly supported testbeds can help startups and researchers validate technologies in real industrial conditions. A representative of Xjenza Malta also highlighted that providing industry access is seldom enough, it is "also about changing mentalities of researchers giving them the tools towards entrepreneurship." Fiscal measures such as R&D tax credits, matched funding for joint projects, and recognition schemes for innovation-oriented firms can further support the development of industrial R&D units across the region.

14. Strengthen Academia-Business Interaction through Policy Coordination

Participants emphasised the need for more regular and structured interaction between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. At the policy level, stronger coordination between ministries of science, education, enterprise, and employment is crucial. As a participant explained, "at policy and advisor level, we have mostly three, two ministries that are always connected [...] sometimes depending on the government, one is stronger than the other." Aligning these policy domains can ensure that education, research, and innovation operate as one continuum, connecting academic excellence with societal and industrial renewal.

Case Progressio

– Powering Egypt's Commercialisation Engine

Progressio emerged in Cairo as a private commercialisation lab with a public mission: to make inventions a national economic driver. In a region where research commercialisation has often struggled under slow bureaucratic structures, Egypt took the route of partnering with a private operator to build the country's first national commercialisation engine. In 2025, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT) entrusted Progressio with designing and operating the National Center for Technology Commercialization, a new hub to connect research institutions, universities, and industry. The centre's role is to modernise Egypt's technology transfer offices, standardise IP frameworks, and train hundreds of commercialisation officers through the ASRT network, turning fragmented initiatives into a coherent national system. "We ended up building a policy for everyone to work together and understand their goals, the rules and what they get in return, and trying to build a bigger picture for everyone to understand that there is actual value to commercialising the technology" says Wasseem Ghaly, COO at Progressio.

Progressio approaches commercialisation as an industrial operation instead of just a policy experiment. It works directly with corporations in sectors such as agriculture, energy, health care, and ICT to identify applied research that can meet real market needs. Progressio maps patent portfolios, validates technologies with industrial partners, and helps with licensing packages. This industry-first approach has begun changing how Egyptian universities view research-based inventions from mere research findings to tradable assets within global value chains.

Progressio is also building the digital backbone for Egypt's innovation data. Through the National Center, it has begun cataloguing and digitising thousands of patent disclosures and prototype datasets from universities and research institutions into a unified database managed at ASRT. This system introduces data-driven decision-making to research funding and licensing for the first time in Egypt, allowing ministries and investors to see in real time where technologies are emerging, which institutions are producing them, and which sectors have commercial potential.

International collaboration is built into the model. For example, Progressio is working with Real AI B.V in the Netherlands on an AI platform. Progressio's ambition to "connect one million minds" reflects a broader movement, linking Egypt's inventors with diaspora scientists, multinational R&D centres, and regional innovation funds.

For Egypt, Progressio represents a new governance model of delegating national innovation functions to a specialised private actor while retaining strategic oversight. The hybrid structure combines public legitimacy with private execution speed and expertise. By aligning industry demand, public infrastructure, and international expertise under one operator, Progressio has turned Egypt's commercialisation challenge into an opportunity of public-private partnership.

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Overcoming Obstacles

The Mediterranean has always been a melting pot of ideas, cultures, and knowledge systems. From early engineering and mathematics to the universities that shaped modern science, this region has long understood that progress depends on the exchange of ideas. The translation movement linking Baghdad, Toledo, and Sicily show how scientific ideas once travelled through shared infrastructure and trust. Yet today, research commercialisation across the world is slowing under the weight of outdated models and fragmented systems.

The Euro-Mediterranean region holds the diversity, scientific excellence, and cooperative spirit needed to lead a new era. One that reconnects research with purpose, innovation with inclusion, and discovery with human progress. By aligning research with societal needs, investing in trust, and valuing collaboration over competition, this region can show that research commercialisation is not only an economic activity but a public good.

Across the workshop, participants repeatedly returned to one theme: collaboration is the foundation for renewal. Andreas Garbade, Advisor at GIZ, urged participants to **"think together, huddle together, innovate together, co-create together,"** and to carry that energy back into their daily work. Zineb Hatem, Head of Bridges of Talent Department at UM6P France, emphasised that innovation and impact happen when knowledge, people, and opportunities flow across borders, while Xjenza Malta encouraged participants to advance individual projects while strengthening the regional innovation ecosystem. In her closing remarks, Sandrine Borg, Senior Executive at Xjenza Malta, described the Malta gathering as "a snapshot of what regional collaboration truly looks like," where diversity of perspective reflected the very spirit of the Mediterranean itself.

Youth emerged as one of the most powerful forces for renewal across the discussions. As Deputy Director General Stefan Olsson observed, **young people are seeking not only jobs and economic security but also purpose: the possibility to change the world and tackle the great challenges of sustainable growth.** Historically, students have driven many of society's major transformations, and participants agreed that this generation must again be empowered to take action beyond mere protesting through working on real solutions to pressing challenges, as many of the entrepreneurs present demonstrated. **Research commercialisation remains a powerful but often overlooked connector between youth, employment, and innovation.** At the same time, attracting and retaining talent remains one of the region's greatest challenges and opportunities. Participants warned that unless ecosystems are designed to offer both purpose and growth, young innovators will seek opportunities elsewhere. The region's future depends on its ability to make this generation feel that innovation is meaningful and accessible work.

Leveraging diaspora networks emerged as a key opportunity for deepening this sense of shared purpose. These networks can link Mediterranean

startups and researchers to global expertise, partners, and markets — transforming mobility into an engine of shared prosperity. **Participants described the diaspora as a huge opportunity to bring back innovations and partnerships to the region.** As one serial entrepreneur eagerly reflected, "I could go back to Egypt and contribute with what I've learned in Europe."

Regional collaboration remains the backbone of Mediterranean innovation. The UfM continues to act as a bridge between regions, disciplines, and ideas, transforming cooperation into concrete results. The Euro-Mediterranean University of Fes, a flagship UfM initiative now home to over 4,500 students across 11 schools, stands as proof that joint commitment can build lasting institutions of excellence. Similarly, PRIMA demonstrates how shared governance and co-funding can advance research by bringing together EU member states, associated countries, and Mediterranean partners on equal footing.

Resilience was also discussed as a question of sovereignty. One of the participants also highlighted that **recent global crises have underscored how research and development underpin not only growth but also security and self-determination.** Many emphasised the relief in understanding that we are working on a shared set of challenges, with one participant hoping that the silver lining could be "that this could be the moment where the external pressure acts as a catalyst to truly get us to collaborate together, regardless of the frictions we have between us." Many praised the way participants spoke freely about their challenges with each other; sharing knowledge is really good, but sharing our problems is much better, as it accelerates learning across the ecosystem. There was a joint desire to keep the communication going throughout the year, sharing problems and resources and working on the solutions together. As one of the participants put it: "you might have a really strong obstacle against you, but you can always overcome it with good people and an entrepreneurial mindset." Building regional trust and scientific exchange is therefore not only an economic imperative but a peace-building strategy.

Ultimately, participants saw peace and cooperation as two sides of the same coin. "The precondition for cooperation is peace," UfM Deputy Secretary General Joan Borrell reminded the room, "and cooperation helps to preserve it." By investing in human capital, empowering young people, and strengthening cross-border trust, the region can turn knowledge into stability and innovation into shared prosperity. The Euro-Mediterranean region has the experience, talent, and collective spirit to lead the way. As Giuseppe Provenzano, Project Manager at UfM, put it: "the jobs of the future depend on the science of today. So let's empower these changemakers."

What should the primary role of research commercialisation be? Participants agreed that research commercialisation should balance financial returns with societal value. When the two conflict, most prioritised delivering societal benefits over maximising profit.

Policy Recommendations

15. Mobilise Mediterranean Talent

The region's greatest untapped resource is its people, both at home and abroad. Participants highlighted the Mediterranean diaspora as a vast reservoir of expertise, investment, and connection. As one participant noted, "there is a huge opportunity in the people who are originally from the Mediterranean region," and turning this into action would transform brain drain into brain circulation. Encouraging diaspora members to act as mentors, investors, and advisors can strengthen local ecosystems and bridge access to international markets. Expanding cross-regional research and education initiatives, such as PRIMA and the Euro-Mediterranean Universities, would further anchor these exchanges, ensuring that knowledge and talent flow both ways.

16. Empower Youth as Catalysts of Innovation and Stability

Young people are central to reshaping research commercialisation and driving cultural renewal. Participants stressed that students should not only be trained for jobs but equipped to create them. Policies should embed entrepreneurial learning, mobility, and mentorship throughout education, from early exposure to research collaboration to practical pathways into startups and innovation labs. Youth is increasingly anxious about solving global challenges, and is looking for meaningful career paths. Supporting youth-led initiatives across borders will strengthen regional trust, resilience and stability. As one speaker reminded, "most major changes in society have been driven by students." Investing in this generation's curiosity, courage, and capacity for cooperation is an investment in long-term peace and prosperity.

17. Integrate Innovation and Entrepreneurship into Rebuilding and Recovery Programmes

Participants from across the region highlighted that entrepreneurship can act as a bridge between recovery and renewal. In times of crisis, innovation is not only about growth but also about resilience: creating solutions where people might otherwise lose hope. In such contexts, building and creating is not about becoming the next billionaire, but comes from a surviving mindset, where people find a way to continue and grow with what they can achieve. Berytech's experience also illustrated how connecting universities, industries, and support organisations can turn uncertainty into opportunity. Integrating innovation and entrepreneurship into rebuilding programmes would therefore serve both economic and social purposes, fostering stability, collaboration, and shared confidence in the region's future.

Case Startup Syria
– Rebuilding from Within

When the Syrian conflict forced millions to flee and shattered the country's economy, the idea of building startups seemed far removed from daily reality. Yet, amid destruction, Startup Syria was founded in 2013 to support founders, startups, and ecosystem organisations working in and for Syria. What began as a community platform quickly evolved into one of the most significant initiatives supporting Syrian entrepreneurs at home and across the diaspora, helping rebuild connections and confidence in a fractured ecosystem.

Startup Syria empowers entrepreneurs and nurtures the next wave of startups by creating spaces for dialogue, connecting founders with mentors and experts, and supporting emerging entrepreneurs ready to launch their ventures. By collaborating with stakeholders across sectors, it works to make entrepreneurship a cornerstone of Syria's economic recovery and a driving force for a more resilient future.

"Innovation is a way for us to solve problems, to make people's lives easier," says Ahmad Sufian Bayram, Founder of Startup Syria, who describes entrepreneurship in the Syrian context as often being about survival. For Startup Syria new technologies is all about enabling founders through creating a platform for open knowledge, research and data to provide Syrian founders with the tools and networks they need to grow and scale their ventures.
At first, the Syrian ecosystem was fragmented, with local hubs isolated from one another. Startup Syria set out to create a common vision by engaging ecosystem stakeholders across regions and sectors. Over the past few years, Startup Syria has also united Syrian founders globally, hosting meetups in more than ten cities including Berlin, Cairo, San Francisco, Dubai, Beirut, and Kuala Lumpur.

The lessons of Startup Syria reach far beyond one country. Despite years of political instability, economic isolation, and infrastructural collapse, Syrian entrepreneurs have demonstrated remarkable agility and ingenuity[1]. They show that innovation can be a form of reconstruction. For the Mediterranean, it demonstrates how fragile contexts can still generate strong ecosystems when collaboration replaces competition and when knowledge, not capital, becomes the primary currency.

Bayram believes that the entrepreneurial spirit of the Syrian people will continue to shine as a beacon of resilience and innovation. For those seeking to replicate the success of Startup Syria, he offers one piece of advice: don't try to copy another ecosystem: "Put founders at the centre and be patient. Building an ecosystem is a long process. It takes time."

1 | A.S. Bayram, *Startup Syria: Rising from the Rubble*, Startup Syria, 2025.

Conclusions & **the Road Ahead**

The discussion in Malta underscored that research commercialisation remains one of the most overlooked areas in policy design, despite its central role in linking knowledge creation with economic and social impact. The topic sits at the crossroads of research and education, economic development, and employment, and rarely falls squarely under the mandate of any one ministry or agency. This institutional ambiguity has often left research commercialisation as a space between domains. It is everyone's responsibility, yet no one's territory.

The complexity of mandates and the number of stakeholders involved often make research commercialisation a difficult topic to digest. One of the key insights from the Malta discussions was the importance of creating environments where exchanges are framed in good faith and made engaging, inspiring, and fun. **When participants feel energised and aligned, implementation becomes far more likely.** The Malta event achieved exactly that atmosphere: as Byron Camilleri, Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment of Malta, described, it was "a truly insightful and inspiring discussion," while Deputy Director General Stefan Olsson noted that it provided "a lot of inspiration and encouragement." Many participants described the event as **exceptional in its mix of focus, energy and openness, praising the carefully tailored participant group and the facilitation** that made the discussions both productive and enjoyable. Several stressed that gatherings of this kind should become an annual forum for the region's research commercialisation community.

Participants highlighted that this intersection should become a shared field of collaboration, bringing together policymakers, universities, investors, and industry actors under a common vision. A stronger policy focus could help unite these stakeholders, providing direction and legitimacy to those already leading on the operational front. Across the region, public-private partnerships are emerging as models for how research commercialisation can work in practice, with entrepreneurial intermediaries and private commercialisation offices demonstrating that implementation capacity already exists when frameworks and incentives align.

Beyond the policy dimension, the workshop created an unexpected sense of solidarity among participants working at this junction of disciplines. Many described how encouraging it was to meet others tackling the same cross-sector challenges, often in isolation. **This reaffirmed the need for more spaces for exchange, visibility, and mutual learning among research commercialisation professionals in the Mediterranean.**

Looking ahead, the Union for the Mediterranean is taking concrete steps to maintain this momentum. It announced in Malta the launch of a two-year project, From Research to Business, supported by the Spanish Development Cooperation AECID,

starting in 2026. The project will accompany researchers and innovators in developing the commercialisation of their innovations, improving bankability, and connecting them with mentors and investor networks.

PRIMA Foundation's programme also holds great promise for bridging the early-stage funding gap between innovation and markets. The initiative has established a valuable framework for supporting applied research with commercial potential, yet its scale remains limited relative to the region's needs. **As PRIMA continues to evolve, its ongoing institutional development and growing coordination with national innovation agencies will enable it to play a significant role in financing the transition from research to business in the Mediterranean.**

The participants of the Malta workshop committed to continue building on this collaborative spirit, building regional and international cohesive initiatives that make the Mediterranean research commercialisation ecosystem greater than the sum of its parts. The UfM's hosting of the Euro-Mediterranean Hub for Research and Innovation provides an open platform to sustain this collaboration and ensure that research, business, and policy continue to converge in the years ahead.

What should the role of research commercialisation be in the context of the Mediterranean? Participants described the role of research commercialisation in the Mediterranean as a bridge between innovation, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

What is the UfM?

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental organisation that brings together all countries of the European Union and 16 countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean to enhance regional cooperation, dialogue, and the implementation of projects and initiatives with tangible impact to address the three strategic objectives of the region: stability, inclusive and sustainable development, and integration.

The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, based in Barcelona, is the permanent structure dedicated to this partnership. It ensures the operational follow-up of the regional priorities identified. In partnership with key international actors, it promotes region-wide cooperation projects and initiatives that address the root causes of the current regional security, environmental, and socio-economic challenges.

Meet MIMIR

MIMIR is redefining research commercialisation with students leading the way. Originating from Finland's student-led entrepreneurship movement, MIMIR is a non-profit built on a deep love for science and learning, and on the belief that university research can be one of the most powerful forces for solving the world's most pressing challenges. Impactful research commercialisation will require educating a new generation of entrepreneurs with a deep appreciation of science.

MIMIR's approach is twofold: on the one hand, organising grassroots programmes, events, and competitions to change culture and connect students, entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, and scientists, and on the other hand working closely with policymakers to ensure new scientific discoveries turn into solutions that benefit humanity globally.

The best chance we have to address the great challenges of our time, from climate change to humanitarian crises, lies in bridging science and society more effectively. By connecting researchers, students, and innovators, MIMIR helps build the structures and skills needed to turn knowledge into meaningful progress.