



## Strengthening institutional capacities for innovation, entrepreneurship and technology transfer

### Promising Practice

*Implemented by:* Instituto Profesional INACAP

*Where:* Chile

*Status:* Launched in December 2020

*Summary:* The initiative, a project funded by the Chilean Ministry of Education, is an applied training programme in innovation and entrepreneurship. The programme is implemented together with Münster University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and geared towards INACAP faculty who develop innovative solutions to industry problems.

## Overview

INACAP is a Chilean non-profit higher education institution with about 90,000 students at 28 campuses within the 16 regions of the country. Its focus is Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and it offers two- and four-year programmes in different areas of study.

## Description

### Innovation and entrepreneurship training course for INACAP faculty

The initiative, funded by the Chilean Ministry of Education, started in December 2020 and during the first semester of 2021, the innovation and entrepreneurship training course was designed together with Münster University of Applied Sciences, Germany. This university has been a strategic partner in the training programme as an expert in innovation and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, selected industry partners identified internal problems to be solved by the participants, INACAP's faculty members, during the training programme.

### Innovative solutions to industry challenges

After a thorough selection process, the first of two cohorts started the training programme in August 2021 with 40 faculty members participating and receiving intensive language training in English. The participants were divided into 13 multidisciplinary teams from different campuses, each of them working on one industry challenge for a duration of six months. Each team developed an innovative solution to the problem with the help of the "Digital Accelerator" programme which was provided by Münster University of Applied Sciences. The solution was then pitched at an in-person innovation workshop in Santiago in January 2022 where all faculty as well as experts from the partner institution participated.

### Presentation of functional prototypes

The best six teams continued the programme between March and August 2022, where they developed an advanced functional prototype. The teams presented their prototypes to the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem at Münster University of Applied Sciences during a one week in-person workshop in June 2022.

Following feedback provided during the workshop, each team improved their prototype and eventually transferred it to the company of the innovation challenge between July and August 2022, officially ending the programme.

At the end of July 2022, the second cohort started following the same training programme.

## Objectives

The objectives of this initiative are to:

- Strengthen INACAP's innovation and entrepreneurship learning ecosystem through the training of faculty;
- Support INACAP faculty to develop global competence as well as to improve proficiency in English; and
- Enhance industry and community engagement by developing innovative solutions to real world problems.

The target group is INACAP faculty through the different activities and programmes that focus on innovation and entrepreneurship.

### Training INACAP faculty to lead and implement innovation and entrepreneurship activities and programmes

The initiative addresses the institutional need to develop innovation and entrepreneurship capacities of the faculty so that they are prepared to lead and implement the different institutional activities and programmes. Furthermore, it contributes to an institutional policy of engaging with the community and local companies which, in return, have the need to solve real world problems in order to stay competitive.

Thus far, at a national level, the initiative is a unique example of an applied training programme involving an international partner institution as well as real industry challenges.



*Participants at the training course in Germany*

## Outcomes and impact

The expected outcomes of the initiative are:

- Training of 80 INACAP faculty members in innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as in English;
- Transfer the functional prototypes developed by the programme's participants to the companies; and
- Transfer the experience and knowledge acquired by the participants to other members of the INACAP faculty.

The initiative has the following main impacts:

- Faculty members who, as experts in innovation and entrepreneurship, are better prepared to lead projects that are developed together with industry;
- A different point of view due to the international environment and learning experience in the programme;
- Companies receiving innovative solutions and first prototypes to real problems they face, thus improving their competitive advantage; and
- Long-term impact and experience transfer to other faculty members, augmenting the number of innovation projects with industry and number of trained faculty in innovation and entrepreneurship.

## Challenges

### Selecting faculty members for the programme

The selection of faculty members that had some knowledge of the innovation process and entrepreneurship, as well as proficiency in English was one of the challenges encountered. To address this, INACAP designed a thorough selection process, including pre-requisites such as basic experience in innovation and entrepreneurship as well as a minimum of B1 in the English language. As part of the selection process, verbal and written tests were completed by all the applicants.

### Identifying industry problems and committed companies

Another challenge was the identification of industry problems and the commitment of the companies to accompany the teams during their development of the innovative solutions. INACAP chose to only contact companies that had previous experience working with the institute on similar projects. Selected companies were informed about the programme in order to understand that the identified problems could only be solved at the pace of the programme.

## Working on innovative solutions following the end of the programme

The final challenge was that after completing the functional prototype and transferring to the company, faculty are not obliged to do additional work on the project. However, most of the companies do not have the capacity to implement the project without the support of faculty, therefore, posing a risk that the effort done does not lead to the expected outcomes of the project. INACAP was able to continue working on some projects but within the framework of another institutional programme that focuses on the implementation of an innovation project with the possibility of applying for public funding.

## Insights

Faculty members should be continuously accompanied and coached by experts to support them in the development of their innovative solutions. This enables the teams to remain motivated and to be able to develop solutions that address the problems proposed by companies. This also enables the faculty to incorporate and to apply the different tools of the "Digital Accelerator", based on the Design Thinking methodology.

Furthermore, when implementing similar initiatives, it is key to have a trustworthy partner institution that is flexible to overcome different challenges that may arise.

## Next steps

As part of the main programme objectives, the initiative includes the development of a transfer strategy to other institutional faculty members. Therefore, the programme will continue beyond December 2023 but on a smaller scale.

### Learn more

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