

HEI-Private Sector Partnerships

University of Twente Experience

GREEN FINANCE Erasmus+ Kick-off Training T2.1 – Day 3

University of Twente (UT)
January 25, 2026 — ULBS, Sibiu, Romania

Key Facts

- Founded 1961, Enschede, Netherlands
- 12,000+ students, 5 faculties
- Technical-social focus
- Campus university (largest in NL)

Entrepreneurial DNA

- “Most Entrepreneurial University” 4x (ScienceWorks)
- 1,000+ spin-offs (most in NL)
- Notable: Booking.com, DEMCON, Xsens

Why “Entrepreneurial”?

Since 1986, UT has systematically built a culture of innovation:

- Student entrepreneurship programs
- Faculty involvement in start-ups
- Regional ecosystem development
- Industry co-creation embedded in research

Impact

10,000+ jobs created via spin-offs
EUR 1.5B+ regional economic impact

Source: utwente.nl/en/business/most-entrepreneurial-university/

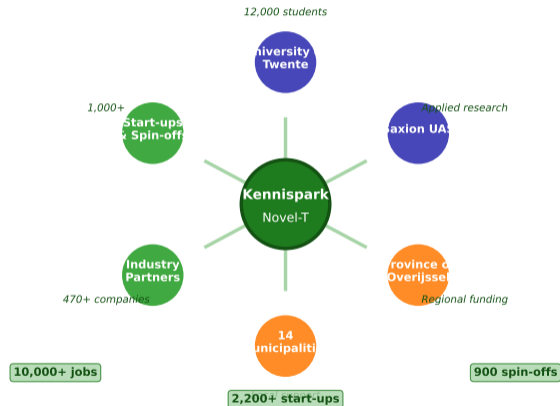
Kennispark Twente

- NL's largest science park
- 470+ companies, 6,000+ jobs
- 900 spin-offs since founding

Novel-T: “Spider in the Web”

- Orchestrates university-business collaboration
- 10,000+ jobs created (10 years)
- 2,200+ start-ups supported
- Goal: 100,000 entrepreneurs by 2033

Twente Innovation Ecosystem



Source: kennispark.nl/en/services/novel-t/

MSCA Digital Finance Network

- 8 universities across Europe
- Industry: Deloitte, Swedbank, Intesa Sanpaolo, Raiffeisen
- Partner: European Central Bank (ECB)
- Focus: Green credit scoring, sustainable finance, AI/ML

Sponsored Positions

- ING Bank: Joint Associate Professor (AI & Finance)
- Industry-funded PhD positions

Research Centers

- FELab: Financial Engineering for risk management tools
- Connecting Industries: Public-private research funding

Partnership Models

| Type | Example |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Joint research | MSCA networks |
| Contract research | Industry projects |
| Sponsored chairs | ING professorship |
| PhD funding | Impulse (EUR 40M) |

Source: digitalfinance.wiki.utwente.nl

Joint Curriculum Development

- Novel-T/Kennispark as first contact point
- Industry involvement in program design
- Fraunhofer Project Center: Smart Products education

Industry in the Classroom

- Guest lectures by practitioners
- Real business cases
- Company-sponsored thesis projects
- Challenge-based learning

Internship Structure

| Level | Duration | ECTS |
|----------|----------|------|
| Master | 14 weeks | 20 |
| Bachelor | 10 weeks | 15 |

Connecting Organizations

- Novel-T SMART
- Integrand, UniPartners
- IAESTE (international)
- JobTeaser (career platform)

12,000+ students available to companies

Source: utwente.nl/en/business/how-to-find-talent/

Professional Learning & Development Centre

- Executive education programs
- Part-time Masters (Risk Management, Public Management)
- Customized corporate training

Corporate Training Examples

- Nedap University: 18-month software retraining
- Systems Engineering masterclass (5 days)
- Tax Administration training
- Achmea, Kadaster programs

Specialized Academies

| Academy | Focus |
|------------|----------------------|
| TechMed | Health technology |
| Geoversity | Geo-information |
| Pro-U | Continuing education |
| DesignLab | Design thinking |

Key Success Factors

- Flexibility (part-time, modular)
- Industry-relevant content
- Combination of theory & practice
- Networking opportunities

Source: [utwente.nl/en/education/lifelong-learning/incompany/](https://www.utwente.nl/en/education/lifelong-learning/incompany/)

World-Class Labs

- MESA+ NanoLab: World-leading nanotechnology (1,250+ researchers)
- TechMed Centre: Medical technology
- Digital Society Institute

Industry-Sponsored Centers

- TPRC: Joint venture with Boeing, TenCate, Stork Fokker (composites)
- T-Xchange: VR/serious gaming with Thales
- Fraunhofer Innovation Platform (FIP-AM@UT)

Access for Companies

| Mechanism | Value |
|---------------------|------------|
| Innovation vouchers | EUR 10,000 |
| Facility rental | Variable |
| Joint projects | Co-funded |

Key Principle

Shared infrastructure reduces barriers for SMEs to access advanced technology

Open innovation mindset: UT equipment available to regional companies

Source: utwente.nl/en/business/using-facilities/

Green Hub Twente

- Central sustainability platform
- Connects research, education, operations
- Campus as living lab

Climate Manifesto (Nov 2025)

- Signed with Dutch universities
- Commitment to carbon neutrality
- Research focus on climate solutions

Education

40+ courses linked to Energy Transition

Sustainability Research Areas

- Green credit scoring (MSCA Digital Finance)
- Energy systems and storage
- Circular economy
- Sustainable materials
- Smart mobility

Regional Collaboration

- Challenge-based learning with Saxion, ROC van Twente
- Industry sustainability challenges
- Student projects on real problems

Source: utwente.nl/en/sustainability/green-hub-twente/

What Makes It Work

- 35+ years entrepreneurial culture (since 1986)
- Strong regional ecosystem (Kennispark, Novel-T)
- Multi-stakeholder governance (UT + Saxion + Province + Municipalities)
- EU/National funding mechanisms
- Dedicated orchestration (Novel-T as “spider”)
- Long-term commitment, not just projects

Challenges

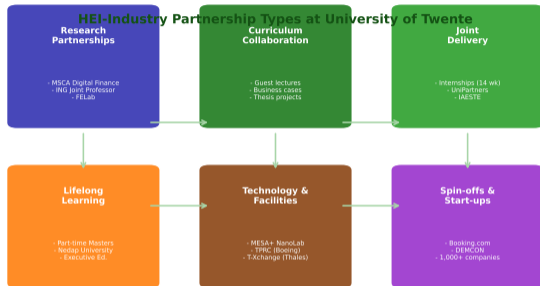
- IPR issues in short-term projects
- Academic vs industry timelines
- Cultural/institutional differences
- Trust-building takes time
- Different success metrics
- Staff rotation (both sides)

Key Insight

“Successful UIC requires sustained investment in relationship-building, not just transactional collaborations.”

Source: Springer (2023) Management Review Quarterly, doi:10.1007/s11301-023-00349-1

Key Takeaways for GREEN FINANCE Partners



All partnership types interconnected in the Twente ecosystem

Lessons from UT Experience

1. Build long-term partnerships, not just projects
2. Leverage regional ecosystems
3. Integrate industry in curriculum design
4. Focus on green finance/sustainability themes
5. Start with pilot collaborations

Questions for Discussion

- What ecosystem exists in your region?
- Which partnership type fits your context?
- What are your main barriers?

All partnership types interconnected – start where you can, build systematically