



CASE STUDY: **NEW WAYS TO TEACH INNOVATION**

KickStart

KickStart is an innovation network of Higher Education institutions in Europe and Latin America that aims to identify needs and best practices for the training of innovation professionals, and supports the creation of transnational alliances, collaborations and international start-ups.

Financed by the European Commission's ALFA programme, the network aims to equip these professionals to respond to society's needs by offering effective knowledge exchange solutions, and to evolve a common space for innovation within the higher education systems of the participating regions.

The project is driven by Glasgow Caledonian University's international projects team, housed in the department of Research, Innovation and Enterprise.

As part of their activities, the network has so far established International Innovation Centres in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.

Glasgow Caledonian University works with eight other universities in Chile, Bolivia, Columbia, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Argentina and Germany. The partnership also brings together Bogota Chamber of Commerce, companies and government agencies.

This project is the second phase of the KickStart project. While the first phase was focused on raising awareness and the implementation of instruments to support innovation, the new project aims to implement complete programmes within the participating HEIs so that the results of the project will be more effective and sustainable.

As part of their activities, the network has so far established International Innovation Centres in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, which will act as the focal points for the implementation of a one-year scheme for strategies and extracurricular activities.

The KickStart project held its first ISLAE (Innovation Support in Latin America and Europe) Conference at Glasgow Caledonian University and attracted upwards of 150 delegates from the UK, Europe and Latin America for discussion, idea-sharing, introductions and networking on commercialisation and knowledge exchange topics. The supporting Innovation Marketplace event was opened by Jim Mather MSP for Enterprise, Energy & Tourism and offered a unique showcase for Latin American partners and their associates and offered a comparative insight into Latin American and European approaches to innovation, the management of innovation and innovation in practice and finally the exploitation of innovative ideas in and for a Latin American and European context.

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APPLIED KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

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From an economic development perspective, the concept of innovation has evolved from its purest connotations in terms of “invention” and “novelty” to refer more specifically to the exploitation of new knowledge predominantly for commercial gain. It has become recognised that for successful innovation to take place, collaboration between government/public institutions, businesses and universities is needed.

A university’s principle activity is knowledge creation. As such, Glasgow Caledonian University plays a crucial role at the beginning of the innovation process in the creation and evolution of an idea. At an institutional level, the transfer of the knowledge created beyond the confines of academia has also become increasingly relevant. However, fundamental changes are taking place in the innovation agenda and universities must respond to it in order to make a full contribution to the development of a changing knowledge based economy. As the commercial model has become clearly challenged by recession, a greater emphasis has been placed on the social role that innovation

can play. There is also more focus on problem solving, innovation networks and collaboration.

The KickStart network aims to complete a diagnostic study of existing innovation support within Latin American institutions and best practices within EU. They are working on a publication outlining the needs and best practices for university-society engagement, and formulating strategies and extracurricular activities for teaching and supporting innovation. The project will also lead to the creation of a database detailing the technology offer of each university and the corresponding demand within each region.

The partners will also aim to create a joint programme of postgraduate study in innovation, aimed at training professionals of all disciplines in both Europe and Latin America.

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