



Guidelines for using HEInnovate and the Value Proposition Canvas in entrepreneurial change processes in higher education institutions

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What these guidelines are about...

These guidelines intend to support institutional practitioners engaging in entrepreneurial change processes in their higher education institutions (HEIs). The guidelines in particular show the following:

- They set out how the HEInnovate tool can be implemented usefully in change processes undertaken by HEIs that wish to strengthen their entrepreneurial character
- How the tool can be enriched to make it more helpful to support this change process, by means of:
 - o Focusing the change process on a particular HEInnovate dimension and activity
 - o Expanding the HEInnovate dimension self-assessment statements/questions
 - o Making use of a value proposition canvas (VPC) in a workshop with the HEI's stakeholders
 - o Co-developing a shared action plan as a result of the VPC workshop

1. How to make use of the HEInnovate platform

1.1 The HEInnovate tool and methodology

The HEInnovate tool and its resources (see: <https://heinnovate.eu/>) are supporting HEIs in their efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. A key element of HEInnovate is the self-assessment tool, that helps HEIs identifying their strengths and weakness with respect to the attention given to entrepreneurship and innovation throughout their institution. This self-assessment tool is primarily designed to initiate discussion processes in HEIs and to bring different stakeholder groups together in discussing institutional change and transformation towards entrepreneurship.

HEInnovate comprises a set of resources that aim to support this transformation. Currently, the HEInnovate website provides the HEInnovate self-assessment tool, a database with case studies of HEIs that have been changing towards more entrepreneurship and a rich set of training materials and country reports to guide the practitioners, managers, instructors, and policy-makers when using the HEInnovate platform in transformation processes.

Some tools that were recently added to the platform are EPIC and Entretime. EPIC provides support for measuring the impact, respectively the learning outcomes, of entrepreneurial teaching and learning in students.¹ Entretime is a platform for higher education teachers who wish to enhance their entrepreneurial teaching skills.²

¹ EPIC = The Entrepreneurial Potential and Innovation Competences. See: https://heinnovate.eu/sites/default/files/EPIC_user_guide.pdf

² See: <https://heinnovate.eu/en/related-projects/entretime>

HEInnovate is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the OECD, who have been funding the tool and its implementation and roll-out. However, HEInnovate is also a bottom-up initiative: A pan-European HEInnovate Expert Group helps shape the content of the HEInnovate self-assessment tool. Since its implementation in 2013, the HEInnovate self-assessment tool has continuously been adapted and enhanced to better serve the needs of HEIs. Since then, the tool was regularly revised, based on the feedback from the HEInnovate expert group. It was gradually adapted to the needs of HEIs and the latest developments in the higher education sector.

As has become apparent in the BeyondScale project³, the HEInnovate tool can be extended to even better accompany change processes. For instance, a discussion on the self-assessment statements can be accompanied with a list of supplementary questions for discussion and at different points during the change processes. Another addition is the Value Proposition Canvas, that can help structure discussions on entrepreneurial change between the HEI and its stakeholders.

Before we go into detail about the use of HEInnovate in entrepreneurial change processes, we first present a few background facts about HEInnovate and its origins. After that, the value proposition canvas is presented, and its use in the HEIs' projects to become more entrepreneurial.

1.2 The self assessment statements and dimensions

The HEInnovate tool currently includes 40 self-assessment statements on eight different topics/dimensions. The current dimensions are shown in Figure 1. The number of dimensions and, therefore, also the number of statements has steadily increased in recent years. Most recently, a new dimension was added: "Digital Transformation and Capability", which was fundamentally revised again in 2021.

The self-assessment statements cover various aspects of entrepreneurial HEIs and their capacities and skills in this area. This includes the managerial or governance structures, their services and capacities in their three essential missions of research, education and knowledge transfer.

Each of the eight dimensions includes five statements for users to evaluate their HEI with regard to its efforts and achievements in the field of entrepreneurship. Users can do so for each statement and award a score of 1 to 5 (or NA/non-available/applicable if they cannot or do not wish to give an answer). Higher scores indicate a better performance of the HEI in the specific dimension. However, the exact meaning of a particular score is left to the users to define. There is no exact explanation of a score – there is no benchmark against which users can compare their institution's performance.

Users can use the self-assessment tool in a variety of ways: as part of an individual assessment - i.e. the assessment is only carried out by one person, or as part of a group assessment, in which internal and external stakeholders assess their HEI. The HEInnovate tool offers the option of selecting dimensions for the self-assessment, i.e. not all statements have to be used. Elsewhere (see other

³ See: <https://www.beyondscale.eu/>

guidance notes on the BeyondScale website) we have made the recommendation to focus on a limited number of dimensions (or only one of them) in order to prevent making the change process from becoming too wide-ranging and too difficult to manage.

Figure 1: The HEInnovate resources: dimensions (see: www.heinnovate.eu)



The next figure shows what the HEInnovate platform can bring to institutions, managers and policy-makers in higher education.

Figure 2: HEInnovate: What does it do?



HEInnovate essentially aims to kick-off transformation processes that are informed by a self-assessment of the institution's performance. For this, the self-assessment tool provides a list of statements that cover eight dimensions representing the various characteristics of entrepreneurial higher education institutions. Currently, the self-assessment tool lists 42 statements across the eight dimensions shown above. The text box below lists the statements for the HEInnovate dimension "Entrepreneurial teaching and learning".

The self-assessment serves as a strength and weakness analyses. As a result, the assessment should reveal whether the listed aspects are perceived as strengths or weaknesses of the HEI. Ideally, discussing the evaluation results, in particular diverging evaluations across different stakeholder groups, should help identifying appropriate actions that will effectuate the institutional change.

Conducting the self-assessment is relatively easy: Users have to evaluate to what extent they think that the different aspects described in the statement are present in their HEI – and they do so on a five-point scale. When conducting the evaluation, users can use a web-based tool that is included in the HEInnovate platform. For each dimension the tool then generates an average score based on the scores of the individual users. These average scores are then presented in a summative overview that shows the stronger and weaker dimensions in the institution's performance. Based on their evaluation results, users are then provided with a number of institutional case studies and further resources. These resources offer examples and experiences of HEIs that – to some extent – had a similar profile and found their way in implementing changes towards becoming more entrepreneurial.

The tool can be adapted to the needs of the users in many ways: e.g., with regard to the number of evaluators (individual or group ratings), or the selection of statements to be used in the assessment.

Text box: Entrepreneurial teaching and learning in the HEInnovate self-assessment tool

Entrepreneurial teaching and learning involves exploring innovative teaching methods and finding ways to stimulate entrepreneurial mindsets. It is not just learning about entrepreneurship, it is also about being exposed to entrepreneurial experiences and acquiring the skills and competences for developing entrepreneurial mindsets.

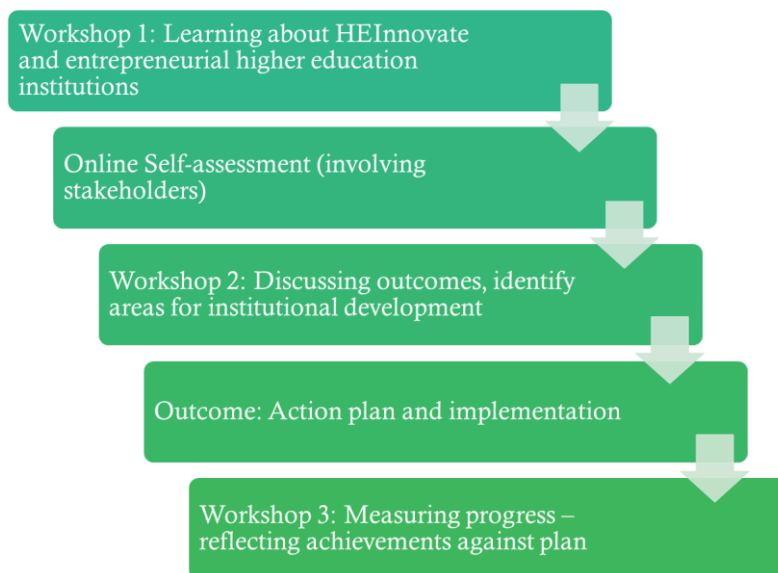
Statements (to be scored on a five-point scale):

1. The HEI provides diverse formal learning opportunities to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and skills.
2. The HEI provides diverse informal learning opportunities and experiences to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial mindsets and skills.
3. The HEI validates entrepreneurial learning outcomes which drives the design and execution of the entrepreneurial curriculum.
4. The HEI co-designs and delivers the curriculum with external stakeholders.
5. Results of entrepreneurship research are integrated into the entrepreneurial education offer.

Ideally, the self-assessment is carried out by internal and external stakeholders of the HEIs in an interactive workshop format. The different workshops are shown in Figure 3, below. For those HEIs that plan to have a more interactive format to evaluate their performance, the HEInnovate platform suggests three different workshops.

The first workshop serves as an introduction to the HEInnovate tool for novice HEInnovate users. The second and third workshop aim to support transformation processes in HEIs, allowing discussion among the stakeholders about their perceptions of the entrepreneurial potential of the HEI and its strengths and weaknesses in that respect. The second workshop is primarily about starting up the transformation process, identifying areas for improvement. These actions are the taken up in an institutional change project. The third workshop would be at (or near) the end of the project, to look back at what has been achieved and to assess progress. It can also be used to discuss potential follow-up actions.

Figure 3: The HEInnovate Process



2. The Value Proposition canvas

To enrich the use of the HEInnovate self-assessment, HEIs can add their own elements to the set of tools and workshops suggested on the HEInnovate platform. One of these additions is the value proposition workshop. Such a workshop was tested as part of the BeyondScale project and the partners in that project reported positive experiences with this addition.

The idea of the value proposition originates from the business world. The Value Proposition Canvas was initially developed by Alexander Osterwalder as a framework to ensure that there is a fit between a product and the needs of the market (Osterwalder et al., 2015). A value proposition

describes the benefits customers can expect from the products and services on offer. It gives the reason why a customer should buy a product or service from that particular business. The value proposition is the basis of the business model of a firm.

Providers of a service will need to understand their market and the needs of their customers. The same is relevant for higher education institutions (HEIs). HEIs also are interested in a match between the students' profile and the values offered by their education and research services/ outputs. The understanding of 'value' will differ between the different 'customers' – say, stakeholders – of a HEI. Value can not only be expressed in a monetary sense. There is also a signalling value attached to education – for instance expressing the skills or competencies of students / graduates or the a prestige (or reputation) value. In addition, the services offered by HEIs have a social – a *public* – value that goes beyond the private value for the individual student receiving an education (or a degree). These different types of values are not equally important to all stakeholders.

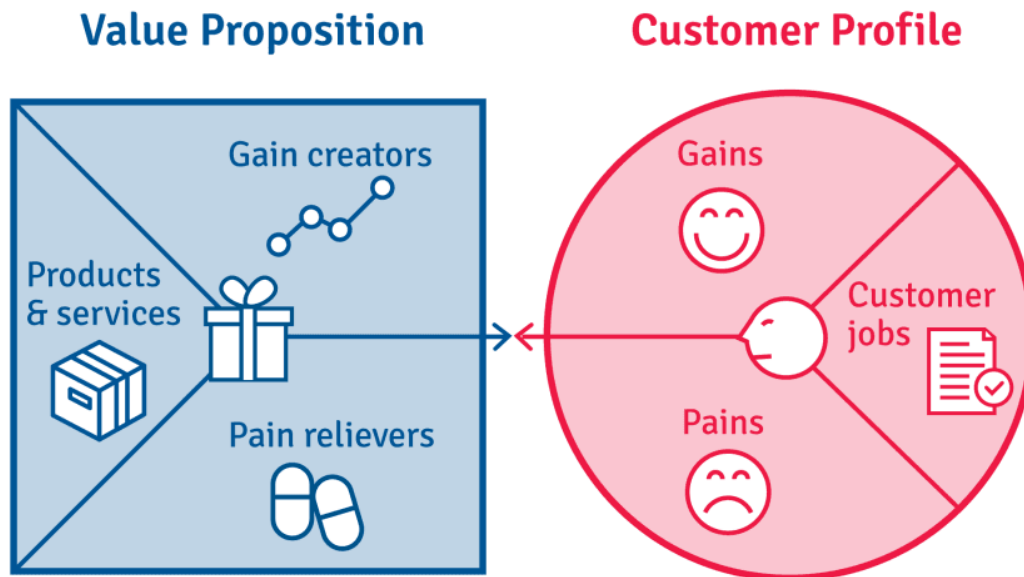
A Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) is a way to structure the different elements that feed into the value proposition. The canvas can be visualised (see Figure 4, below) and in group settings it is often used as a means to structure a discussion around business ideas. The canvas has two segments: the 'Customer Needs' and the 'Value Proposition'. In total it comprises of six elements:

- Customer jobs
- Pains
- Gains
- Products & services
- Pain relievers
- Gain creators

The canvas can be used by a HEI to identify the needs and demands of its stakeholders (both its internal and external stakeholders) and the way the HEI can address those needs. This exercise normally is initiated by one of the departments of a HEI, with a number of academics and professionals taking the lead. In the discussions around the HEI's value proposition also the HEI's clients – its internal and/or external stakeholders – can be included. Involving them would be in line with the idea that the HEI, together with its customers, is interested in *co-creating* the value(s) – the *gains* – that its customers are looking for (see also Äyväri and Jyrämä, 2017).

The function of the canvas is to structure discussions between a provider of goods and services – in our case: a HEI – and its customers (its stakeholders, e.g. its students), and to stimulate learning about the stakeholder needs. The tool helps develop the HEI's value proposition to the stakeholders.

Figure 4: The Value Proposition Canvas



Source: <https://www.b2binternational.com/research/methods/faq/what-is-the-value-proposition-canvas/>

The Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) structures the workshop discussion along the elements defined in the canvas. Workshops using the VPC thus sequentially discuss the elements 'Jobs', 'Pains' and 'Gains' of the Customers/stakeholders and then the corresponding Value Proposition, including the 'Products and Services', 'Pain Relievers' and 'Gain Creators' of the HEI.

In the literature we only find very few cases in which the VPC was applied to innovate or transform higher education. One example is the curriculum innovation in entrepreneurship education. In this case, a business model canvas was adopted and transformed to a curriculum innovation canvas (Willness and Bruni-Bossio 2017, 146). For instance, the VPC was used to propose the redesign of business models of HEIs in Malaysia to support them in becoming the universities of the future (Dahlan et al. 2020). In that case, students were the focus of the canvas – they were the customers of the HEIs and their future jobs after graduation guided the development of new business models for the Malaysian universities.

3. Value proposition workshops and guidelines for preparing and running them

The BeyondScale project has tested the Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) as a tool to help structure the HEInnovate workshops aiming to develop action plans for the HEI (see Figure 3). This section will present some guidelines to assist project managers who wish to make use of a VPC in their organisational change processes.

In the first workshops organised by the HEIs involved in the BeyondScale project, the VPC was used to learn about the demands and expectations of the HEI's internal and external stakeholders. To this end, the original HEInnovate workshop process shown in Figure 3 was adapted. The process that runs from self-assessment, formulating an action plan, implementing it, and, finally, reflection on achieved results was split in three stages: The preparation stage, the actual workshop stage and finally a reflection stage.

The preparation stage

The project partners in the BeyondScale project at the start of the project had defined two major activity areas to strengthen entrepreneurship in their institution. The first targeted primarily internal stakeholders of the HEI. This was named the “inbound” project. The other activity area addressed external stakeholders – in an “outbound” project. Employing the HEInnovate self-reflection tool was done foremost to support a more detailed planning of the HEI's actions for achieving the goals. This is where the VPC is helpful, because it explicitly considers the stakeholders' needs and expectations.

Compared to the HEInnovate workshops described above (Figure 3), the BeyondScale projects all aimed at a more limited area of application of the tool. Rather than assessing the HEI on all of the eight HEInnovate dimensions, the activities undertaken by the BeyondScale partners focused on a specific task or service of the HEI. This was done to keep the change project within bounds and increase its chances of success. Therefore, an important task during the preparation stage is to select those self-assessment statements and dimensions from the HEInnovate tool that can reveal the best insights in the strengths and weaknesses of the HEI's entrepreneurial performance.

During this preparation phase, the participants in the workshop have to be selected. The BeyondScale experience learned that a major challenge here is to identify those stakeholders who may provide useful insights and are willing to collaborate in the project and to engage in discussions. They will have to be motivated and willing to take a reflective stance and make an informed assessment of the HEI's strengths and weaknesses with respect to entrepreneurship and innovation. When identifying the workshop participants, a challenge is also to achieve a balanced composition of the participants in the workshop in order to avoid some stakeholder groups being over- or underrepresented.

A second major task in the preparation stage is to encourage the workshop participants to share their perception/evaluation of the HEI's performance in the selected HEInnovate dimension. This can be done by means of a pre-workshop questionnaire sent to the participants in the workshop.

As part of BeyondScale, the project managers conducted a survey among the participants and analysed their responses to inform and prepare the actual workshop held after the survey.

A first activity in preparing the workshop is to design a questionnaire. For this, the HEInnovate statements can be used and some can be adapted to the needs and particular situation of the HEI. This implies that the HEInnovate tool is augmented with additional questions that can provide a more detailed set of facts and opinions about the stakeholders' (i.e. the survey respondents') views. An example of such additional questions is given in the text box below for the HEInnovate dimension of *Knowledge exchange and collaboration*.

The information gathered by means of the survey can be used as an input for the workshop, to show the participants to what extent their assessments of the HEI and its entrepreneurship efforts differ. Also, the information should, above all, help the project partners decide on the activities to undertake and how each of the stakeholders understands these activities. As a result the project plan and its intended objectives may be redefined. All this should help the project managers to draft and develop their action plan.

Besides these two main tasks of selecting participants and designing the questionnaire, the project managers will have to organise the workshop in a practical sense, i.e. they have to develop a workshop programme, decide on the format (online, or face-to-face), the moderators (one or two?), and what (digital) tools to use during the workshop discussions (e.g., an online whiteboard such as Mural).

Text box: Some additional questions for the HEInnovate Dimension 'Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration'

Original HEInnovate statement:

1. *The HEI is committed to collaboration and knowledge exchange with industry, the public sector and society.*

Supplemental questions:

- What is it best known for in this regard? Please provide up to three examples.
- Where could it improve? Please provide up to three examples.

Original HEInnovate statement:

2. *The HEI demonstrates active involvement in partnerships and relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.*

Supplemental questions:

- *From your perspective please provide some positive examples of the above demonstrated by our HEI? (Maximum of three)*
- *Are there areas where the HEI could improve in this regard?*

3.1 The VPC workshop

The second step is the actual implementation of the VPC workshop. In the case of BeyondScale, the Covid19 pandemic forced all project partners to conduct online workshops. In more normal times

such workshops will be face-to-face events. An online workshop normally will last between one to two hours. While the BeyondScale partners all designed their own workshop programme to meet their needs, all of them used a quite similar sequence of programme elements.

The first issue on the agenda is dedicated to introducing the workshop participants to each other. Then, they learn about the goal of the workshop and are presented with the results of the pre-workshop survey. The latter acts as a stimulus for the discussion among the workshop participants about how the activities and services of the HEI can match better with the demands and expectations of its 'customers'- its stakeholders. This is where the Value Proposition ideas and the VPC come into play.

The VPC Can be presented to the workshop participants (see figure 4). The canvas helps structure the discussion. The, in the workshop, the canvas can be filled by the participants in a moderated discussion. This is done in an interactive way, based on the contributions of the workshop participants. To this end, some project partners in BeyondScale employed digital platforms such as MIRO. This allowed participants to type in their ideas during the discussion. However, the project managers may decide for themselves how they fill the canvas.

In the workshop, all six elements of the canvas are addressed and populated – either throughout the discussion or separately in a step-by-step way. The BeyondScale experience learned that, in most cases, filling the canvas did not result in a detailed action plan. However, it provided the project managers in charge of the HEI's inbound and outbound activity with relevant information to further design and develop their planned activity.

In the BeyondScale project, the project partners reflected on their experiences with the value proposition workshops, using the VPC and the HEInnovate tools. They reported on their experience in their *User stories* (see the BeyondScale website www.beyondscale.eu for their user stories).

The value canvas offers a structured approach to workshop activities that involve representatives of HEIs and their internal and external stakeholders. Its goal is to collect information on the various items of the canvas that will feed into a plan for the activities the HEI can undertake to become more entrepreneurial and to engage more with its external stakeholders.

The discussions aided by the canvas are meant to more clearly refine the activities the HEI can implement. These activities include gain creators and pain relievers. Examples of such activities on the side of the HEI (i.e., the left-hand side of the canvas) are shown in the table below.

In the workshop, the stakeholders (i.e., the right-hand side of the canvas) are invited to outline what they expect to achieve through the HEI's project in terms of outcomes and impacts. They will be referring to the opportunities (i.e. gains) they see and the risks (i.e. pains) they perceive.

Table 1: Business canvas concepts and examples for the higher education field

Products & Services (Project Activities)	Outcomes for customer (Impact)
Certificates for teachers Entrepreneurship module	Expertise (know how; know why) Transferable skills
Gain creators (inputs; motivators)	Gains (outputs)
Educational support for educators Physical infrastructure/platform	Entrepreneurial mindsets Entrepreneurship embedded in curriculum
Pain relievers (facilitators)	Pains (obstacles)
Subsidies ECTS Credits Compensation (money; time)	Opportunity cost Complexity Lack of knowledge; unfamiliarity

3.2 A shared action plan: elements & barriers

In the Value proposition workshop, a process of collaborative planning towards a shared action plan is expected to take place, through two parallel discussions:

1. A joint discussion on the outcomes to be delivered as part of the activity/project. This discussion should include a focus on the gain creators and pain relievers to be put in place by HEI in collaboration with its stakeholder(s);
2. A discussion that results in the development of a broad action plan for the project/activity, i.e. a value proposition between the HEI and its stakeholders, based on gain creators and pain relievers as part of the product/service (the gains) to be provided.

The components of a shared action plan, among others, are:

- The goals of the planned activity
- Expectations of HEI and stakeholders in view of the planned activity addressing pains, gains, etc.
- An agreement on shared goals and collaborations
- A description of actions that will be taken
- A description of collaboration and contributions of collaborators
- Time and resource planning

Change processes may run into problems and obstacles may be encountered along the way. The value proposition workshop, as well as the answers collected from the preparatory questionnaire can be used to identify existing as well as potential challenges and barriers that stand in the way of enhancing the HEI's entrepreneurial capacity. and to collect – bottom-up – exemplary practices and ways to address the entrepreneurial challenges.

Some of these barriers and obstacles are discussed in another guidance note available on the BeyondScale website (i.e. 'A practical guide to entrepreneurial change processes in higher education institutions').

Typical barriers that could impede entrepreneurial change are located in the following areas:

- Institutional culture (i.e. a lack of entrepreneurial culture)
- Diversifying funding (e.g., a lack of resources)
- Stimulating the academic heartland (e.g., a lack of capacity)
- Leadership and institutional management (e.g., a lack of vision and leadership – or management skills)
- Collaborating with stakeholders from an expanded periphery (e.g., a lack of support from stakeholders)

To overcome these barriers, we refer once again to the other guidance notes. In addition, as part of the BeyondScale project, two inspiration fiches were developed. An inspiration fiche is a piece of condensed information about strategies, policies and initiatives undertaken by HEIs to address the entrepreneurship and innovation agenda. A fiche is based on (practical) HEInnovate & BeyondScale experiences and the academic literature on transformation processes in higher education.

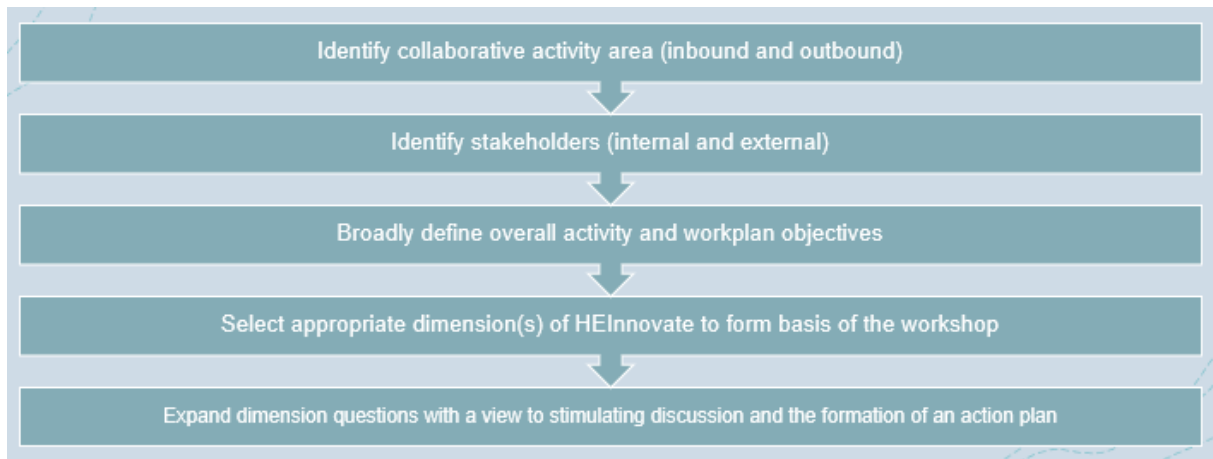
As part of an inspiration fiche, a set of interventions (i.e. actions, policies) are suggested to HEIs that wish to tackle a particular challenge (e.g., the HEI engaging more with external stakeholders). Typical barriers, and solutions to overcome them, are also part of the fiche.

Once the action plan has been implemented, at a certain point in time after a substantial part of the project has been carried out, a check can be made to assess the degree to which the project is delivering on its objectives and to establish the extent to which the 'entrepreneurial agenda' has become further embedded in HEIs. For this, the project's lead partners check the project's progress on the basis of further discussions with project participants such as the ones included earlier in the Value proposition workshop. The information that is collected in this phase of the project can be synthesized partly in *indicators*. In another note that is part of the BeyondScale toolbox & website, a list of indicators is presented for measuring the impact of a entrepreneurial change project.

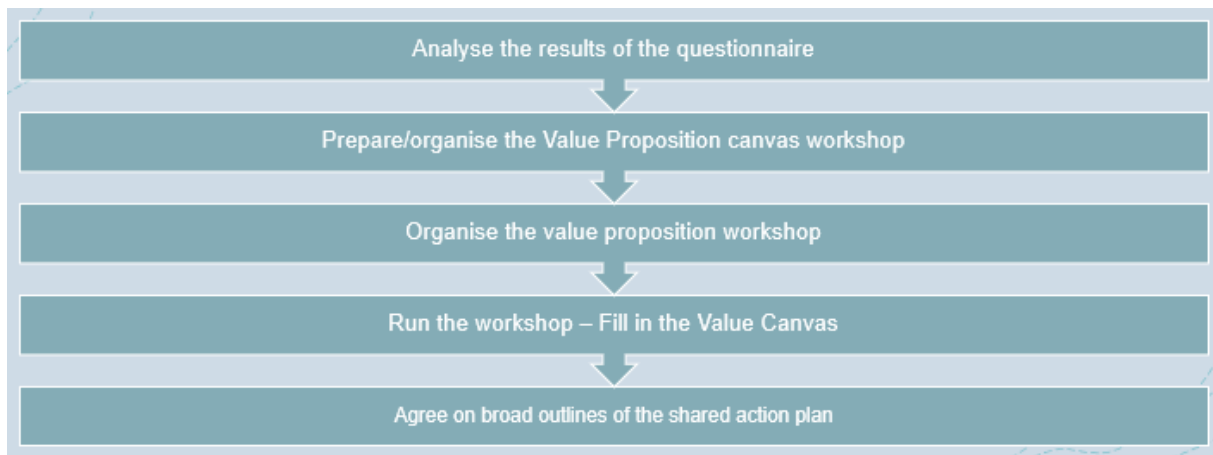
4. Guidelines in a nutshell

The guidelines presented above can be summarised in the following two pictures: one for the Preparation phase and one for the actual running of the Value proposition workshop.

Stage 1: Preparing the entrepreneurial change process



Stage 2: Running the Value proposition workshop



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