

Press release

Berlin, September 27, 2024

Reduco and Solar Optic win Grand Finale of 2nd Annual INNOVA Europe Competition

Start-up teams from nine of Europe's best business schools competed for €25K in prize money at STATION F in Paris.

Students and young entrepreneurs representing Europe's top business schools participated in the Grand Finale of the 2nd Annual INNOVA Europe Competition today at STATION F in Paris. This year's event brought together more schools than ever and challenged students and recent graduates to use entrepreneurial thinking to solve some of the planet's biggest challenges.

The day's grand prize winner in the Rising Stars category was **Solar Optic** (KSE Graduate Business School), a technology that brings sunlight directly into buildings without using electricity, which walked away with €20K in prize money and a year of free incubation services at one of the nine participating schools. Another big winner, this time in the Young Hopes category, was **Reduco** (ESMT Berlin), a property technology platform that lowers CO2 emissions in buildings, which won €5K in prize money to help make their startup dream a reality.

Advancing sustainable business

The INNOVA Europe competition was founded in 2022 by EDHEC Business School, POLIMI Graduate School of Management, and ESMT Berlin to foster competition between business students and alumni, focusing on environmental transition, empowerment and inclusion, and healthy living. This year's competition received generous support from BNP Paribas Company Engagement, BNP Paribas Wealth Management France and BivwAk!, with additional backing from Ring Capital and STATION F.

"Entrepreneurship is key to regenerating the economy and our society at large, and it is BNP Paribas' ambition to empower the builders of a better, fairer and more sustainable world," said Antoine Sire, senior advisor for impact economy and social inclusion for [BNP Paribas](#).

"We are proud to support the 2nd edition of INNOVA Europe, reinforcing our shared commitment with EDHEC Business School—our partner for the impact seed fund Generations Powered by EDHEC—to support responsible business models that will have a positive impact on society and the environment," said Geoffroy Bragadir, Ring Capital's co-founder & managing partner.

This year's host of INNOVA Europe was EDHEC Business School, which won last year's grand finale with [Dooda](#), a student startup producing insect-based animal food ingredients. EDHEC is one of two French business schools with entrepreneurship space at [STATION F, the largest startup campus in the world](#). During the day-long event, schools from across Europe participated in a Responsible Entrepreneurship by Design workshop hosted on EDHEC's Paris campus, networked and shared innovative business plans, and pitched their startup ideas to experts.

"At EDHEC, we believe in the power of international exchange and cooperation, so we're incredibly proud to be able to host this year's INNOVA Europe Competition at STATION F in Paris," said Ludovic Cailluet, associate dean, Centre for Responsible Entrepreneurship at EDHEC Business School. "This event brings together some of Europe's brightest students and young entrepreneurs. It's a unique

opportunity for them to pitch their responsible business ideas to a panel of experts and network with their peers. Our ambition with ESMT and Polimi GSB is to develop and promote a European vision for responsible entrepreneurship by cooperating with the continent's most advanced business and engineering schools.”

Inspiring global change for a brighter future

INNOVA Europe is unique. Its mission is to encourage young entrepreneurs to devise new ways to meet the [United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#), including providing clean and affordable energy, promoting responsible consumption, ensuring gender equality, reducing global poverty, and advancing a holistic approach to well-being and health.

“INNOVA Europe showcases how entrepreneurship can tackle some of the world's biggest challenges,” said Roland Siegers, director of external engagement at ESMT Berlin. “By bringing together talented students from diverse backgrounds, we are fostering innovation that contributes to a more sustainable and inclusive future. The international collaboration between leading business schools is crucial, as it enables the exchange of ideas and expertise that help shape solutions with global impact. We are proud to be part of this initiative and witness the incredible ideas shaping tomorrow.”

Tommaso Agasisti, associate dean for internationalization at POLIMI Graduate School of Management, which hosted INNOVA Europe last year, said he is pleased with the event’s growth, with six more business schools participating this year. “We’re up to nine schools, which reflects the tremendous interest and enthusiasm for this initiative,” he said. “It’s inspiring to witness the dedication of students and young entrepreneurs in applying their skills to make a meaningful impact. Congratulations to the winners and all participants for their incredible efforts and dedication!”

This year’s event offered two startup categories: Young Hopes (ideation stage) and Rising Stars (startup stage). Startups in the first category were judged on their clarity of vision, ability to solve specific sustainability challenges, and the singularity of their value proposition. Those in the second category were evaluated on progress, lessons learned, next steps, and team members’ ability to illustrate their product’s viability and market readiness.

More than 120 students, alumni, professors, and professionals participated in this edition of INNOVA Europe. More information about the event is available [here](#).

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About ESMT Berlin

ESMT Berlin is a leading global business school with its campus in the heart of Berlin. Founded by 25 global companies, ESMT offers master, MBA, and PhD programs, as well as executive education on its campus in Berlin, in locations around the world, online, and in online blended format. Focusing on leadership, innovation, and analytics, its diverse faculty publishes outstanding research in top academic journals. Additionally, the international business school provides an interdisciplinary platform for discourse between politics, business, and academia. ESMT is a non-profit private institution of higher education with the right to grant PhDs and is accredited by AACSB, AMBA,

EQUIS, and ZEvA. It is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all its activities and communities. [esmt.berlin](https://www.esmt.berlin)

About EDHEC Business School

EDHEC Business School, a leader in management education in Europe since 1906, has been ranked 7th Best Business School in Europe by the Financial Times for three straight years. EDHEC's 2024-2028 strategic plan – Generations 2050 – reflects the school's dedication to accelerating the world's most important economic, social, and environmental transformations through education and research with impact. EDHEC's 55K students and alumni – entrepreneurs devoted to reinventing business for the common good – are committed to reaching these goals.

EDHEC's model – based on research that benefits society, business, and students – is unique and sets it apart from competitors. EDHEC's campuses are centres of excellence, innovation, foresight and diversity, and are committed to serving future generations in a world undergoing radical change. Our "raison d'être" is to make a positive impact on the world.

EDHEC profile

- 9400 undergraduate students, 175 professors and researchers, 14 centres of expertise, 130 nationalities
- A portfolio of 29 transformative programmes: Bachelor (BBA and BSc), Master in Management, Master of Science (MSc), MBAs (Full-time, Executive MBA and MBA Online), PhD in Finance, EDHEC Executive Education (for managers, executives, and entrepreneurs), EDHEC Online (created in 2018) for distance learning
- 3 French campuses that offer rich student experiences in Lille, Nice, and Paris, as well as 3 entrepreneurship campuses: the Jean Arnault Campus in Roubaix, EDHEC Entrepreneurs at Station F, the world's largest start-up campus in Paris, and Techforward in partnership with Eurecom and Institut les Mines-Telecom at Sophie Antipolis in Nice
- Triple accredited for the highest quality in business education by AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA

About POLIMI Graduate School of Management

Based in Milan, Italy's main business center, the business school of Politecnico di Milano was created over 40 years ago as MIP Politecnico di Milano and today it is a not-for-profit Consortia Limited Company composed of the University and a group of leading Italian and multinational companies.

The School offers more than 50 masters degrees, including MBA and EMBA, and a catalogue of over 250 open programs, along with customized training for companies. As part of the School of Management of Politecnico di Milano, it is among the few "Triple Crown" accredited schools across the world.

With over 20,000 alumni and 3,000 students every year it is an innovative and entrepreneurial community made up of diverse people and partners.

In 2020 POLIMI GSoM was the first European Business School to become a B Corp certified business. Since 2023 it is a Benefit Corporation.