



IV Congresso Nazionale di Selvicoltura  
Accademia Italiana di Scienze Forestali, Regione Piemonte, Università degli Studi di Torino  
Sessione 14 "Politiche e istituzioni forestali", 6 novembre 2019

## Impact investments, business accelerators and social innovation programs in the primary sector: experiences from ECOSTAR and SIMRA projects

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1: Dipart. TESAF, Università di Padova

2: ETIFOR Srl, *spin-off* dell'Università di Padova

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1. Impact investments
2. ECOSTAR and SIMRA projects
3. Incubators and accelerators
4. Final remarks

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## A raising awareness on job creation in new forest activities



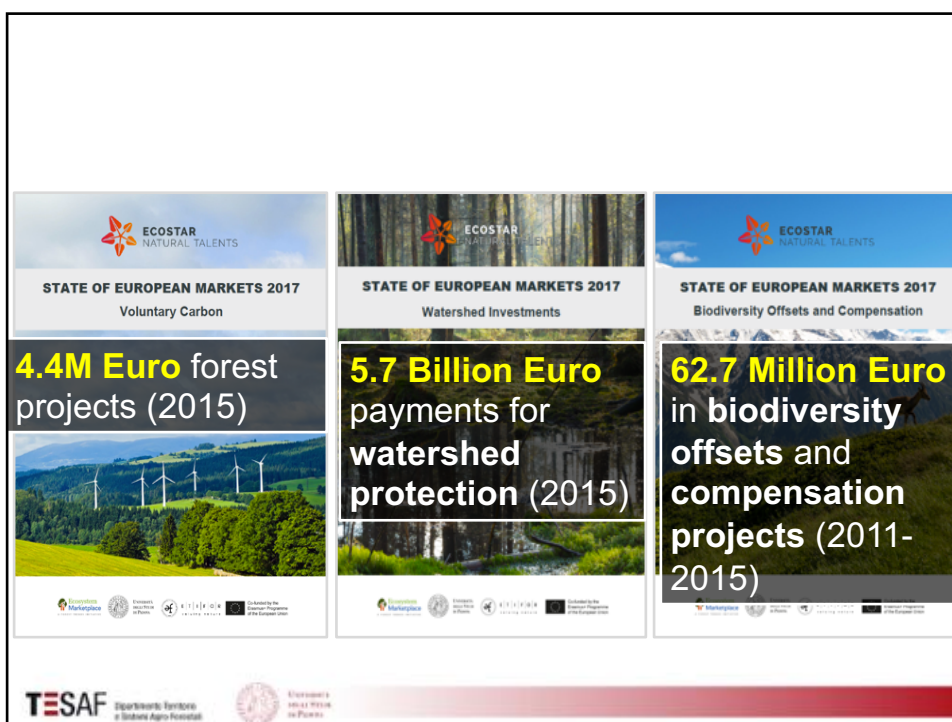
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Universidad de Puerto Rico  
Escuela de Forestal



UNITED NATIONS



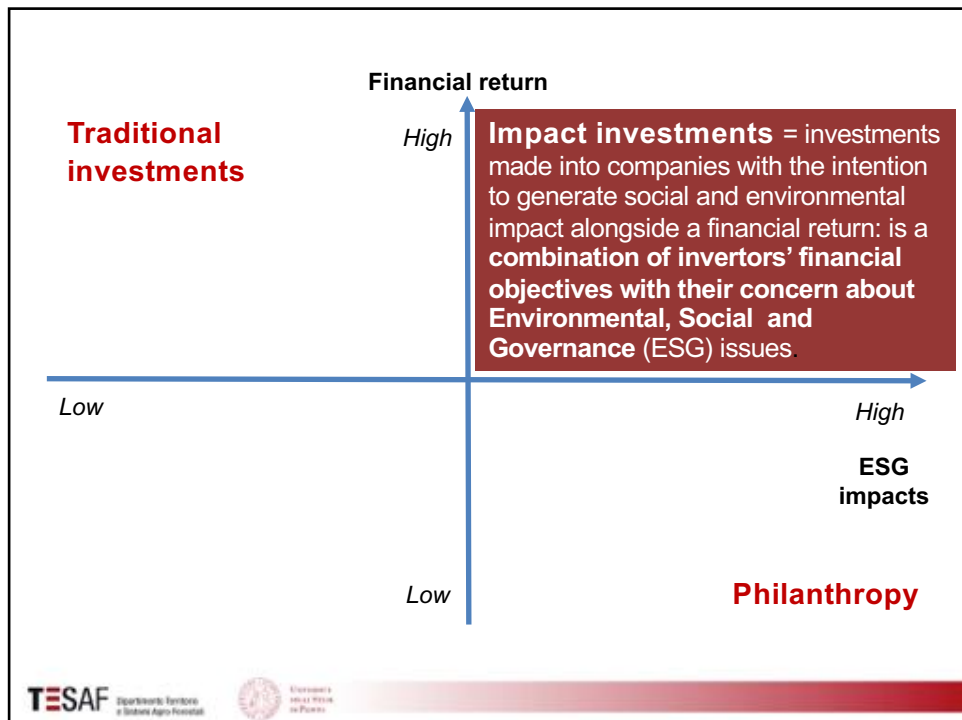
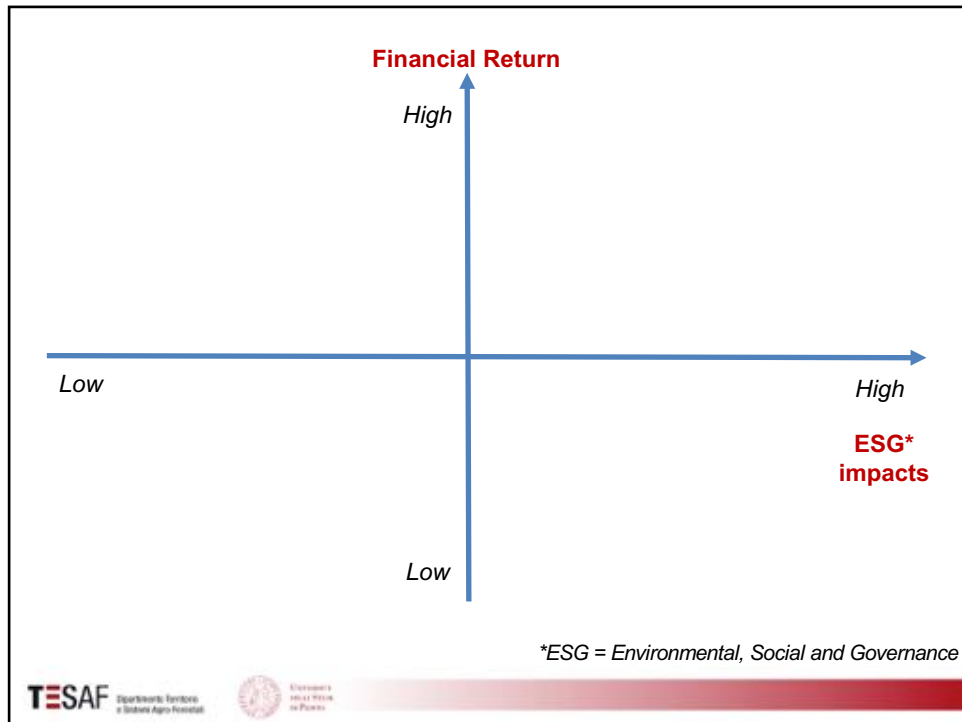
## Development new markets in the forest sector: 2 main constraints

- Capitals
- Entrepreneurship (business competence)
  - Land
  - Public support
  - Legislative framework
  - ...

1. **Impact investments**
2. ECOSTAR and SIMRA projects
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## Growth of Impact investing (in broad sense) by Region 2014–2016

Region	2014	2016	Growth over period	Compound Annual Growth Rate
Europe	\$ 10,775	\$ 12,040	11.7%	5.7%
United States	\$ 6,572	\$ 8,723	32.7%	15.2%
Canada	\$ 729	\$ 1,086	49.0%	22.0%
Australia/New Zealand	\$ 148	\$ 516	247.5%	86.4%
Asia ex Japan	\$ 45	\$ 52	15.7%	7.6%
Japan	\$ 7	\$ 474	6689.6%	724.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 18,276</b>	<b>\$ 22,890</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>

Proportion of SRI Relative to Total Managed Assets → 26%  
(Europe → 53%)

Source: Global Sustainable Investment Alliance (GSIA)  
2016 Global Sustainable Investment Review



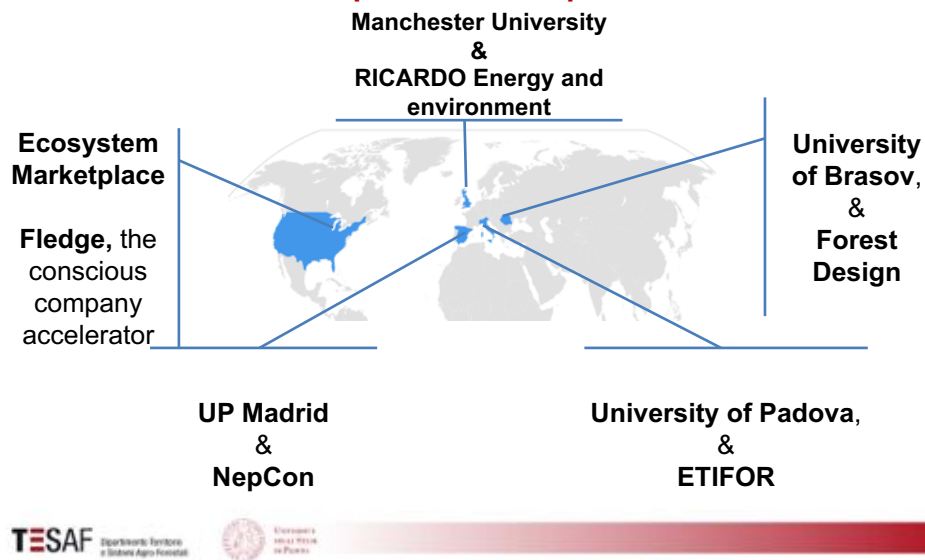
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## ECOSTAR Erasmus+ KA project: the partnership



## 1<sup>st</sup> step Training Needs Assessment in EU

Entrepreneurship gaps in **14 forestry departments**:

- Evaluation of university commitment to entrepreneurship education: **medium-low**
- **80%** of respondents consider that entrepreneurship could be a useful field of study within their university curriculum
- **27%** with specific courses made available by their university (**12%** within their faculty/school)



More info at:

[www.ecostarhub.com/reports/](http://www.ecostarhub.com/reports/)

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> step: an e-course

aimed at guiding **students and professionals** to acquire high level **entrepreneurial skills** by working with **private sector**, to convert innovative ideas into successful **business plans** for **impact investments**, in the field of **natural resources**



**E-LEARNING COURSE**  
2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND PRODUCTS: FROM IDEAS TO BUSINESS

**The first international course that helps you value nature!**

An online course providing continuous interaction with top international professors, experts and company directors specialized in the fields of forestry and ecosystem services and products.

The course guides you to create innovative business ideas in the following sectors:

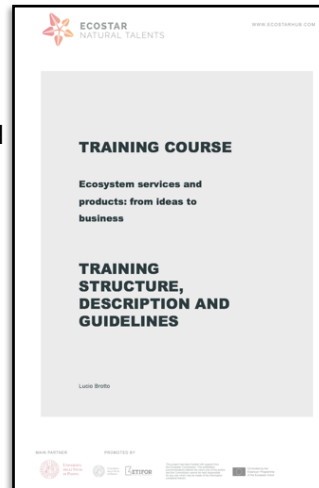
- natural capital
- economic evaluation
- sustainable investments
- wild forest products
- payment for ecosystem services
- forest certification
- carbon market
- ecotourism

<https://www.ecostarhub.com/>

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- **4 partner Universities**
  - UNIPD, Italy
  - Madrid, Spain
  - Brasov, Romania
  - Manchester, UK
- **15 e-moderators** (1 coordinator, 1 assistant coordinator, lecturers: initially trained for consistency in the approach)
- **150 learning hours/student** (30 direct online interaction with e-moderators/lecturers)
- **6 to 7.5 ECTS**
- **5 online e-modules + assignments**



E-learning course - Ecosystem services and products: from ideas to business. Program and timetable 2017-2018 (6-8 ECTS)

Module title	Expected learning outcomes	E-lessons (BP = component of Business Plan)	Modality	Timetable	Developer & E-lecturer
1: Are you innovation friendly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moodle platform</li> <li>understand course structure</li> <li>socialize with e-fellows</li> </ul>	1.1 Log in and answer the welcome letter 1.2 Have you ever seen innovation and entrepreneurship?	Web surfing	1 week Monday 16/10 Friday 20/10	DEVELOPER 2 Italy (Lucio & Colm) E-LECTURER 3 Spain + 3 Italy
2: Entrepreneurial ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand regulatory frameworks</li> <li>Comprehend market forces</li> </ul>	2.1 How to become an entrepreneur: definition, legal, taxation and economic framework (BP)	Web surfing and law reading	1 week Monday 23/10	DEVELOPER 1 Italy (Colm)
3: Market outlooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learn key concepts and trends of ecosystem services markets</li> <li>overview of voluntary, regional and domestic initiatives</li> </ul>				(Enrico) n + 2 Italy
4: The business idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>get familiar with business plan</li> <li>learn from best European business plan examples</li> </ul>	CANVAS model (BP)		Friday 17/11	E-LECTURER 2 Spain + 2 Italy
5: Let's focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine two selected topics among the 8 proposed</li> <li>Develop a business idea</li> </ul>	5.1 Sector innovations and trends 5.2 Draft business idea (BP) 5.3 SWOT analysis (BP)  Choose 2 (??) topics: 1) natural capital 2) economic evaluation 3) wild forest products 4) investments 5) payment ecosystem services 6) forest certification 7) carbon market 8) ecotourism.	Group work	2 weeks Monday 20/11 Friday 1/12	DEVELOPER & E-LECTURER 1 Italy + 1 UK + 1 Romania 1 Spain
E: Final Examination		6.1 Individual assignment: development of business plan idea using the CANVAS model (1000 words) (BP) <a href="https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/102mOZQm8Aa0CalmNaPZ5KCNQwAih9m4baYgT0VWNAA/template/preview?usp=drive_web">https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/102mOZQm8Aa0CalmNaPZ5KCNQwAih9m4baYgT0VWNAA/template/preview?usp=drive_web</a>		2 weeks, Monday 4/12, Friday 16/12	
RESULTS OF FINAL EXAMINATION		UNIPD & UPM give marks & comments on assignment to students (includes a proposal for next step)			Evaluated by E-LECTURERS 1 Italy + 1 Spain. Grades by 31/01/2018
COURSE EVALUATION BY STUDENTS		Students fill in an on-line form (anonymous)			By 16/12

**Evaluation of participants' performance:**  
 25% active online participation  
 25% mid term evaluation  
 50% final examination



### Participants:

- 171 involved participants & lecturers
- **156 enrolled participants**
  - 67% students formally enrolled in a University (BS, MSc and PhD)
  - 33% non students (e.g., entrepreneurs)
- 135 active participants
- **69 participants who completed the e-course (51.1 %)**
- 26 nationalities (9 EU countries)

### Level of satisfaction (anonymous evaluation form):

- **93% of participants are satisfied**, the e-course met their expectations
- 78% of participants think there is not much duplication/repetition of contents with other courses



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- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • natural capital         | • payment for ecosystem services |
| • economic evaluation     | • forest certification           |
| • sustainable investments | • carbon market                  |
| • wild forest products    | • ecotourism                     |

[www.ecostarhub.com/e-learning-course/](http://www.ecostarhub.com/e-learning-course/)

First edition  
**Oct-Dec 2017**  
150 learning hours  
(40 hours of e-modules)

Second edition  
**Feb 2019**

Registration open  
**Oct 2018**




Home Project ▾ Links News / Events Blog Resources ▾

## Objectives

SIMRA's overarching objective is to fill the **significant knowledge gap** in understanding and enhancing social innovation in marginalised rural areas by advancing the state-of-the-art in social innovation and connected governance mechanisms in agriculture and forestry sectors and in rural development in general. This objective will be achieved by blending diverse theoretical positions into a coherent explanation of spatial variability of social innovation, encompassing its empirical diversity (complexities and various dimensions), co-constructing a novel evaluative toolkit, and developing improved knowledge of determinants of success in order to answer the question of **how to support enhanced governance and social innovations**, addressing specificities and priorities of social needs and new social relationships and collaborations, especially in marginalised rural areas across the EU,

<http://www.simra-h2020.eu/>

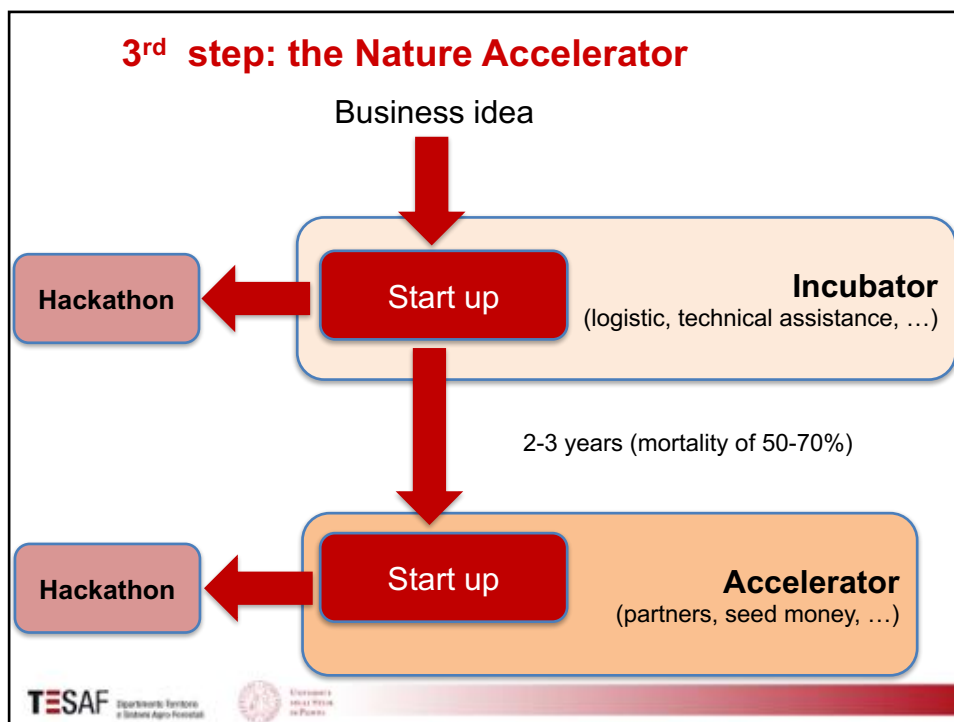
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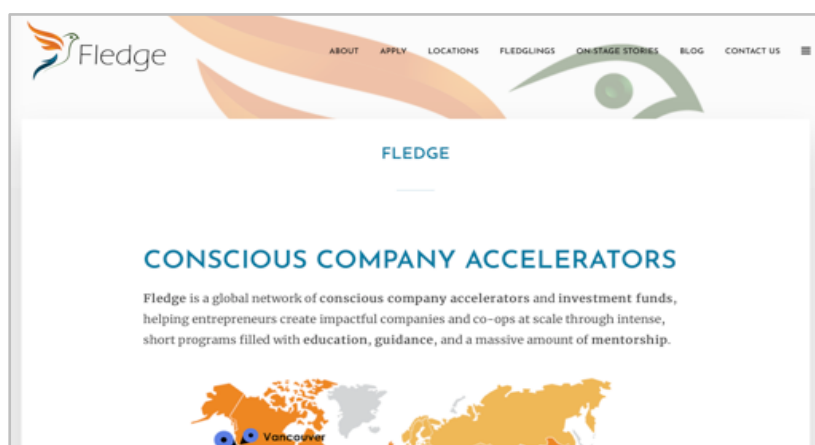
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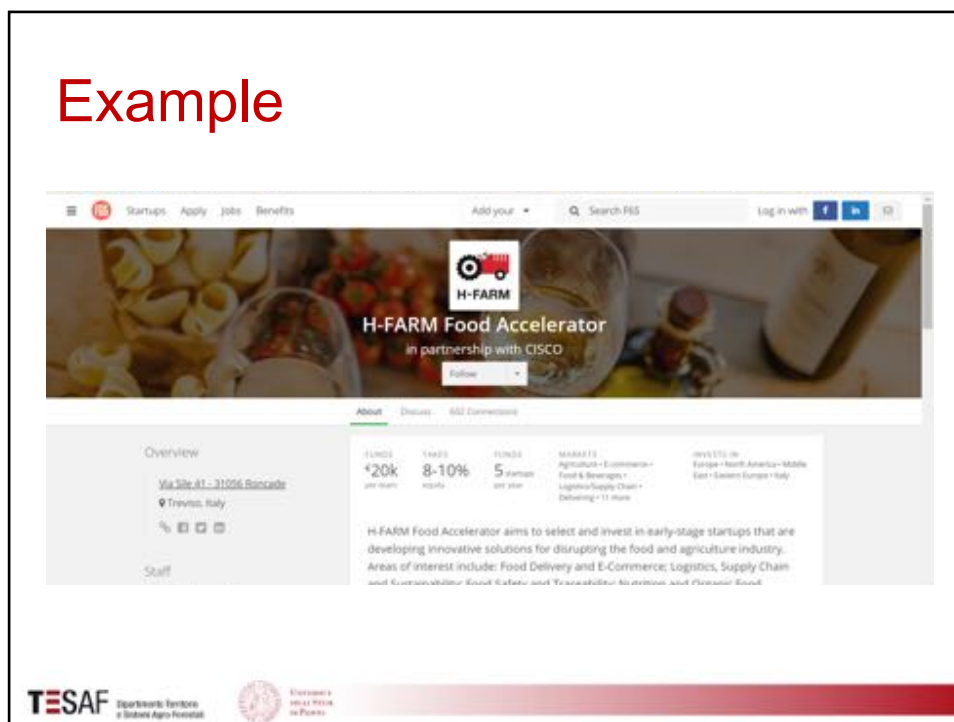
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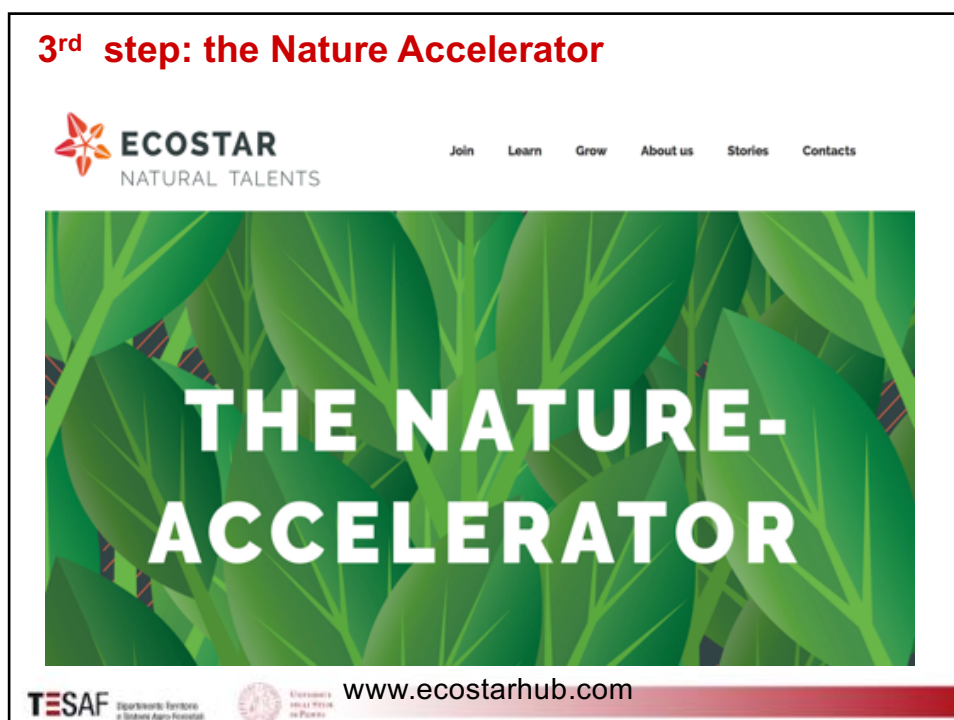
## Example



## Example



### 3<sup>rd</sup> step: the Nature Accelerator



## University of Padova incubator

The screenshot shows the UniSMART website with a dark background and a grid of service cards. The header includes navigation links: HOME, IP AND PATENTS, INNOVATION CONSULTING, COMMUNITY, NETWORKING SERVICES, CONTACTS, and a language toggle for ENGLISH. The main headline reads: "No organization can thrive without innovation. Without knowledge, there can be no innovation." Below this, a sub-headline states: "Ideas and skills that make your company grow. Become a Partner of the Innovation community built around the University of Padova." The three service cards are:
 

- IP AND PATENT**: UniSMART is the techtransfer company of the University of Padova responsible for commercializing its technologies and inventions, protected by over 100 National and international patents. A button below says "CHECK OUT THE IP LIST".
- CONTRACT RESEARCH**: UniSMART exploits the skills, resources and facilities of the University's research groups to set up multidisciplinary research projects commissioned by innovation-seeking companies. A button below says "SEE HOW IT WORKS".
- INNOVATION CONSULTING**: Technology scouting, strategic product and service roadmaps, business models and go-to-market strategies including "smart" legal, innovation financing and strategy towards H2020 and EU funding instruments, hackathon and idea contest with talents and much more.

 The footer includes the TESAF logo (Departmento Territorio e Sistemi Agro-Forestali) and the University of Padova logo (Università degli Studi di Padova). The URL [www.unismart.it/en/](http://www.unismart.it/en/) is displayed in the bottom right corner of the screenshot area.

The **Nature-Accelerator** selects and invests in early-stage impactful startups that are developing **innovative and sustainable solutions**



**Agriculture**



**Forestry**



**Natural  
Resource**



**Ecotourism**

## Scouting

Dec 2017 – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**250+** applicant from **49+** countries

15<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**66** shortlisted and interviewed

16<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**8** start-ups selected



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**iNergy AGTECH**  
Horticulture Technology Development

**Green Charcoal**  
Sustaining Ecosystem

**OBRi**  
— Live Healthy —



Sintala design

**8**

startups



**OXYN**

**centralparkbees**

**iGreengo**

**crickè**

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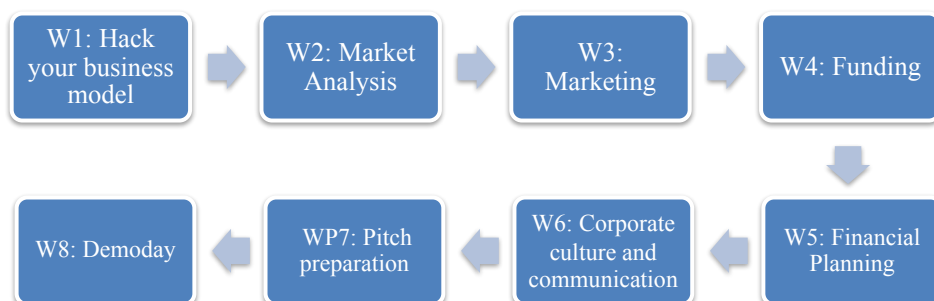


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## Intensive training 8 weeks (June/July 2018)



## Final-event



Demo day  
Pitches to  
potential  
investors  
(19<sup>th</sup> July)

170  
participants

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## Some final remarks

- All start-ups (but 1) approached by investors willing to invest on them
- Follow-up activities and further developments already going on (company developments, new project proposals...)
- New online training program from Feb. 2019
- The Nature accelerator to become a permanent program for nature-based initiatives

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**SIPARTE, the first rural Hackathon in Italy!**

23 October 2018 • Lucia Lopez Marco • [Leave a comment](#)



*What's the perfect recipe for a successful Rural Hackathon? Here are the secrets to a memorable experience: the Rural Hackathon "Siparte", held on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in Feltre (northeastern Italy).*




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- Still **great emphasis on provisioning services** by policy makers, academia and forest institutions
- **Several examples of niche, very innovative cultural services**, rarely the outcomes of formal educational programs run by the forest schools
- To promote these services we need to **integrate our curricula** with topics related to entrepreneurship creation → a **new role of public institutions as partners, facilitators, promoters**, ... with a set of new tools that can create jobs and smart opportunities for the sustainable development of forest resources...

...but public institutions are not always open and reactive to a rapidly changing world

