



YES!DELFT, THE NETHERLANDS

What?

YES!Delft was started in 2005 as one of the first incubators in the Netherlands by the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), the City of Delft and the Dutch Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO). YES!Delft offers training to university students and staff and comprehensive support (including coaching and incubation facilities) to start-ups at different stages. It operates as a non-profit.

Why?

YES!Delft was created with the goal to identify and support technological entrepreneurs with growth potential and help reinforce linkages between the university, the local Technopolis Science Park and the business community. By combining tailored support and shared facilities, YES!Delft aims to facilitate the creation of personal relationships and networks, which are important for knowledge exchange.

Key activities

YES!Delft organises its activities around 9 technological areas: Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, BioTech, CleanTech, MedTech, EdTech, Aviation, Robotics and Complex Technology. Several entrepreneurship support programmes are offered in these areas, including the Validation Lab, which helps early-stage entrepreneurs develop a business idea into a viable business model. It also includes the Acceleration Programme for entrepreneurs who have a validated and competitive product and a range of financial supports. In addition, YES!Delft runs the YES!Talent programme which helps connect new entrepreneurs with potential co-founders and active start-ups with potential employees. YES!Delft also offers entrepreneurship courses for higher education students. In addition to seminars, coaching and mentoring, and business consulting, YES!Delft offers opportunities to access knowledge and experience through its network of experienced entrepreneurs, service providers, investors and technical experts. Programme managers regularly organise network meetings and events for entrepreneurs, government officials, service providers and investors. These include a large annual event, as well as smaller social meetings where entrepreneurs can meet potential investors and partners in a more informal setting. YES!Delft also established an Student Board to maintain effective linkages with the university and student body.

Impact

YES!Delft has supported over 200 start-ups between 2005 and 2019. As of 2018, there were 17 local, national and international organisations sponsoring the incubator programme. In 2015, 82% of the businesses supported since the inception of the programme were still operating. The high success rate is attributed to the comprehensive nature of the support programme and the strong connections between entrepreneurs and external investors.

This case study was adapted from material published in: OECD/European Union (2020), "Policy brief on Recent Developments in Youth Entrepreneurship".

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