

Openness and connectivity go hand in hand

Open Science, Open Education and Open Innovation. This is quite a broad area on which to focus a talk lasting only a few short minutes. However, one important element of openness is to eliminate barriers to participation in public and public-private research and innovation programs and projects.

My organisation, the European Institute of Innovation & Technology, the EIT, is doing just that: eliminating barriers to participation.

By bringing together leading businesses, higher education institutions and research centres, in what we call the 'Knowledge Triangle', the EIT is removing obstacles to communication between these three essential actors. We create strong ecosystems for entrepreneurial innovation – the Innovation Communities, KICs – based upon diversity, mobility and connectivity. Don't underestimate how complicated this is.

This open connectivity has the effect of ensuring a free and effective exchange of information and knowhow. Were that not the case, our Innovation Communities would not be seeing the successes that they are, with accelerating numbers of start-ups, scale-ups, products and services created, and more than 1,100 partners attracted from every side of the Knowledge Triangle – and with much more to come.

In education, our six Innovation Communities are leading the way in providing entrepreneurial skills to a new generation. But more than that, they make increasingly use of MOOCs – Massive Open Online Courses. These courses are open to all.

The EIT's Regional Innovation Scheme is gathering all the experience and knowledge and good practice of the EIT Community and takes it to regions that are considered to be modest or moderate innovators, with the intention of raising their capacity to innovate.

All strong examples of eliminating barriers to openness – where strong connectivity plays a major role. But openness requires checks and accountability to ensure quality? For the EIT Community, this is carried out in a connected interplay between members of the Community and the EIT itself.