



**Associazione Italiana
degli Incubatori Universitari
e delle Business Plan Competition**

**PNICube network for the
entrepreneurial valorization of
university research**

PNICube

Network of local networks for innovative entrepreneurship from research

Founded in 2004, PNICube is the **italian Association** of Universities, academic Incubators and regional Start Cups. PNICube's mission is to pursue the **entrepreneurial valorization of research** through a wide-ranging, local and national, **generative pathway** of innovative entrepreneurship **which main protagonists are researchers and university students**.

Unique in Italy and Europe, the PNICube network has **53 associate members**, including **Universities, academic Incubators, and other organizations** that promote innovation and entrepreneurship. Through **16 regional Start Cups**, PNICube involves **17 italian Regions** and it is aimed at promoting the creation and development of **knowledge-intensive, high social impact enterprises for sustainable progress**. **A network of networks for sustainable progress**.

In its 20 years of existence, the PNICube network has generated **1.088 innovative start-up projects** from **Universities and Public Research Organizations-PROs** (an average of more than 50 per year), distributed by innovation categories as follows: 380 Life Sciences-MedTech; 221 CleanTech & Energy; 339 ICT; 148 Industrial. To date, **more than 50% are operating in the markets**.

The OECD has recognized PNICube as a **best practice** for the sustainable development of Italy and its regions. Indeed, the OECD acknowledges the PNICube's ability to **connect local networks** in which universities, businesses, investors, and public administrations work together (Report 2019, [Supporting Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Higher Education in Italy](#)).

PNICube pursues its mission through two important initiatives: the **National Innovation Award-PNI** and the **Italian Master Startup Award-IMSA**.

PNICube Network Purposes

Promoted by the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI), the main purpose of PNICube is **to foster the creation of start-ups/spin-offs from research for sustainable development, through the combination of 5 key sub-objectives.**



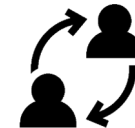
Fostering the creation of research start-ups/spin-off



Informing and promoting engagement initiatives directed at the academic community



Encouraging the creation of university incubators



Exchanging experiences among members and fostering mutual collaboration



Acquiring resources directed toward enterprise creation activities



Promoting and supporting members in international collaborations

Regional Start Cups

Local networks for entrepreneurship from research



Regional Start Cups are **Business Plan Competitions** associated with PNI³Cube, they are **activated on yearly basis by Universities and Academic Incubators in collaboration with PROs**. They support and reward the best innovative business projects that originate from regional research systems within universities and PROs, by stimulating the emergence of knowledge-intensive start-ups.

Regional Start Cups imply the collaboration of Universities, academic Incubators, enterprises, investors and local public administrations over the territories.

The winning projects of the regional Start Cups participate in the national **PNI** competition.

Young start-ups from the regional Start Cup circuit operating in the markets participate in the national **IMSA** competition.

Start Cup 2023

The 17 Regions involved in 2023 through 16 regional Start Cups:

Abruzzo, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Marche, Molise, Piedmont and Aosta Valley, Apulia, Sardinia, Sicily, Tuscany, Trentino South Tyrol, Veneto.

National Innovation Award - PNI



The National Innovation Award - PNI is the most extensive and widespread **Business Plan Competition** in Italy. Each year, it rewards the best innovative business projects by selecting them among the winners of the regional Start Cups.

The innovation sectors, established in the PNI Regulation, are related to four award categories “**Cleantech & Energy**”, “**Life Sciences-MED Tech**”, “**ICT**”, “**Industrial**”.

The initiative engages researchers and university students, connecting them with enterprises, financial organizations and the world of innovation.

Prizes edition 2022



- **25.000€ to be awarded to the first-place winner in each of the 4 innovation categories**
- **20.000 € to the best project in the field of Climate Change**
- **Awards and special mentions** supported by associate members and partners of the PNICube Association

Total prize money

1.500.000€: 500,000€ and 1 million € in **services** offered by the **PNICube network** along the entire path from the regional Start Cups to the final PNI challenge

Italian Master Startup Award - IMSA



The Italian Master Startup Award - IMSA, established in 2007, is the only **national-based Competition** that rewards the market achievements of young enterprises with high knowledge content originating from Universities and Public Research Institutions which are promoters of the regional Start Cups associated with the **PNICube network**.

The Award is organized on yearly basis by the PNICube Association in collaboration with one of its associate members, which hosts the award ceremony.

Purposes

- Giving **visibility to innovative enterprises** that have achieved significant social and economic results during the early years of their lifecycle;
- **Tracking the results obtained** through business plan competitions and incubation activities carried out by the Association's members and its institutional partners.

The PNICube Board of Directors 2023 - 2025

1. *Paola M. A. Paniccia* - University of Rome Tor Vergata (**President**)
2. *Giuseppe Scellato* - I3P Incubator Politecnico of Turin (**Secretariat**)
3. *Massimiliano Ambra* - Rome Biomedical Campus University Foundation
4. *Giulio Antonini* - University of L'Aquila
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10. *Monia Gentile* – Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies
11. *Alessandro Grandi* - Almacube srl (**Past President**)
12. *Renato Passaro* - University of Naples Parthenope
13. *Evaristo Ricci* - University of Florence
14. *Marcantonio Ruisi* - University of Palermo

PNICube's associate members



Abruzzo Region



Calabria Region



Università degli Studi
Mediterranea
di Reggio Calabria



Emilia Romagna Region



Lazio Region



Lombardy Region



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO



Università Commerciale
Luigi Bocconi



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore



POLITECNICO
DI MILANO

Molise Region



UNIVERSITÀ
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DEL MOLISE

Piedmont Region



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TORINO



Sardinia Region



uniss
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SASSARI



Università degli
Studi di Cagliari

Sicily Region



UNIVERSITÀ
degli STUDI
di CATANIA



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PALERMO

Tuscany Region



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE



UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA



Sant'Anna
School of Advanced Studies - Pisa

Veneto Region



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA



UNIVERSITÀ
di VERONA

Basilicata Region



Università degli Studi della Basilicata
Il tuo futuro parte da qui

Campania Region



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II



V:
Università degli Studi
della Campania
Luigi Vanelli



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI
PARTHENOPE



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
SUOR ORSOLA
BENINCASA



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DEL SANNIO
Benevento

Friuli Venezia Giulia Region



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI UDINE
hic sunt futura

Liguria Region



Filse
Incubatore di Genova



Marche Region



unimc
UNIVERSITÀ DI MACERATA

l'umanesimo che innova



UNIVERSITÀ
di CAMERINO

Trentino South Tyrol Region



TRENTINOSVILUPPO
IMPRESA INNOVAZIONE MARKETING TERRITORIALE

Partnership e Sponsorship

Partner



InnovUp
 Italian Innovation
 & Startup Ecosystem



Green&Blue
 Gruppo Gedi



**Social
 Innovation
 Monitor**

Sponsor



Collaborations and Institutional Partnerships

Over time, the PNICube network has developed important **synergies with Institutions and Organizations committed to promoting entrepreneurship and innovation**, with particular reference to young people, women and "Made in Italy".

In the past year, collaborations and institutional partnerships have been established with:

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)**
- **Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (MIMIT)**
- **Invitalia**
- **Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS)**
- **Italian Embassy to the Holy See**
- **French Embassy in Italy**
- **Pépité France-Pôles Étudiants pour l'Innovation, le Transfert et l'Entrepreneuriat**
- **Israel Embassy in Italy**



Collaborations and Institutional Partnerships

The most recently institutional collaboration initiatives launched:

- Participation in the Commission's work for the evaluation of projects submitted to the call promoted by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)** for the awarding of the Prize "Innovation that speaks Italian – Italian technological start-ups operating abroad"
- Participation in the works of the "Italia Startup Visa" technical Committee, established at the **Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (MIMIT)**;
- Protocol with **Invitalia** aimed at putting in place coordinated actions to support, with incentives, information/promotion activities and targeted services to foster the birth and development of high-innovation enterprises;
- Sponsorship and collaboration with **Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS)** aimed at promoting start-up projects that implement solutions strongly oriented to sustainable development goals;
- Sponsorship and collaboration with and with the **Italian Embassy to the Holy See**, aimed at promoting the PNICube network's start-ups that, in different innovation sectors, realize solutions for the quality of life strongly oriented to environmental sustainability and integral ecology.
- Sponsorship and collaboration with the **French Embassy in Italy**, aimed at promoting the development of the PNICube network's start-ups through the "International mobility program"; which, in turn, is designed to foster the mobility of Italian students and young researchers aspiring entrepreneurs under the implementation of the Treaty between Italy and France for enhanced bilateral cooperation ("Quirinal Treaty").
- Cooperation with **Pépité France-Pôles Étudiants pour l'Innovation, le Transfert et l'Entrepreneuriat** aimed at fostering the mobility of students and young researchers aspiring entrepreneurs from the two countries through the above-mentioned "International mobility program".
- Sponsorship and collaboration with **the Israel Embassy in Italy** aimed at supporting the innovation and internationalization of the PNICube network's start-ups, also by awarding of special Mentions and Prizes and the implementation of best practices.



PNICube's Results and Impact

In its 20 years of existence, the PNICube network has generated **1.088 projects of innovative start-ups** from Universities and Public Research Institutions (an average of more than 50 per year), distributed by the innovation categories in the competition as follows:

- 380 in the Life Sciences-MedTech sector;
- 221 in the CleanTech & Energy sector;
- 339 in the ICT sector;
- 148 in the Industrial sector.

To date more than 50% are operating in the markets.

The generative capacity of the Network over the past three years:

- With the involvement of about **6.450 researchers** aspiring entrepreneurs, more than **2.300 business ideas** participated in the regional Start Cups, of which more than 190 made it to the PNI final;
- The **Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** indicates a technology maturity level averaging 4/5;
- More than **60 young innovative start-ups operating in the markets** (from Universities and Public Research Institutions associated with the network) applied for the IMSA Award. Of these, 50% were selected for the Award final.

Following the most advanced approaches on entrepreneurship education (including the recent European frameworks of EntreComp (2016) and GreenComp (2022), which are strongly connected to the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda), the PNICube network represents a concrete opportunity to disseminate and strengthen a culture of enterprise and innovation that combines technical skills and values, with a focus on the values of health, respect for natural ecosystems, combating climate change, responsible technological innovation, personal fulfillment, dignity of labor, and social justice, for a sustainable development from all perspectives.

The past three editions of PNI e IMSA



PNI organizers:



IMSA organizers:

2020



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA



UNIVERSITÀ
di **VERONA**

2021



TOR VERGATA
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI
FEDERICO II

2022



PNI 2020 - Bologna

PNI 2020 was organized by the **University of Bologna** and **Almacube**, the **University's and Confindustria Center Area Emilia's incubator**. For the first time since its founding, it was entirely held **online** on the Ibrida.io platform over two days: **Monday, November 30th** and **Friday, December 4th**.

The 2020 edition was attended by:

- 14 Start Cups
- 868 business ideas proposed by 2745 university researchers aspiring entrepreneurs
- 334 Business Plans

To the final Round:

- 65 projects, regional Start Cup winners
- 75% supported by patent («super finalists»)
- Avarege TRL 4/5
- 341 researchers aspiring entrepreneurs



PNI 2021 - Rome

PNI 2021 was organized by “**Tor Vergata**” University of Rome and was held, for the first time in Lazio, in Rome on **Tuesday, November 30th** and **Friday, December 3rd**.

The 2021 edition was attended by:

- 15 Start Cups
- 727 business ideas proposed by 1815 aspiring entrepreneurs
- 399 Business Plans

To the final Round:

- 63 projects, regional Start Cup winners
- 48% supported by patent
- Avarege TRL 4/5
- 294 researchers aspiring entrepreneurs



PNI 2022 - Aquila

The twentieth edition of PNI 2022 was organized in L'Aquila by the **University of Aquila** in collaboration with the **Gran Sasso Science Institute** e **Innovalley** on **Thursday, December 1st** and **Friday, December 2nd**.



The 2022 edition was attended by

- 15 Start Cups
- 717 business ideas proposed by 1891 aspiring entrepreneurs
- 230 Business Plans

Alla Fase finale:

- 65 projects, regional Start Cup winners
- 48% supported by patent
- Avarege TRL 4/5
- 294 researchers aspiring entrepreneurs

PNI 2022 News
Special Award Climate Change

IMSA 2020 Award – Verona



UNIVERSITÀ
di VERONA



UNIVR
IL SAPERE A COLORI



IMSA 2020
FAI SPICCARE IL VOLO
ALLA TUA STARTUP

• • • • •

VERONA

25 SETTEMBRE 2020
EVENTO ONLINE

19-21 NOVEMBRE 2020
FESTIVAL DEL FUTURO

• • • • •

LE ISCRIZIONI SONO APERTE
FINO AL 31/07/2020
PER ISCRIZIONI E MAGGIORI INFORMAZIONI VISITA
IL SITO: WWW.PREMIOIMSA.IT

The **IMSA 2020 Award** was organized by the PNICube Association and the **University of Verona** with the support of **Athesis Publishing Group**, which was chosen as an innovative partner.

The event, organized as a TV program, was streamed on September 25th on the websites of the daily newspapers L'Arena, Il Giornale di Vicenza and Bresciaoggi, www.premioimsa.it - www.univr.it - www.pnicube.it. Such an event was attended by **10 start-ups**.

IMSA 2021 Award – Naples



IMSA 2021

IL FUTURO DELLA TUA STARTUP È ORA

Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II
Polo Tecnologico di San Giovanni a Teduccio - Aula magna

Le iscrizioni sono aperte fino al 29 luglio 2021



Per iscrizioni e informazioni: www.pnicube.it/premioimsa2021-napoli

The **IMSA 2021 Award**, the fifteenth edition, was organized by PNI Cube in collaboration with the **University of Federico II** and with the support of the traveling innovation fair Innovation Village (www.innovationvillage.it) and the European Council for Small Business (www.ecsb.org).

The event was held on **September 23rd** at the Polo Tecnologico in San Giovanni a Teduccio, Naples, with the participation of **13 startups**.

Premio IMSA 2022 - Turin



The IMSA 2022 Award Final took place from the main stage of **Italian Tech Week**, the largest Italian event on technology, on **September 30th** at OGR-Officine Grandi Riparazioni in Turin. The event was live streamed on Repubblica, La Stampa, Live Now, and was attended on site by 200 people and **8 finalist startups**.

Premio IMSA 2023 - Turin



The IMSA 2023 Award Final took place from the main stage of **Italian Tech Week**, the largest Italian event on technology, on **September 28th** at OGR-Officine Grandi Riparazioni in Turin.

The event was live streamed on Repubblica, La Stampa, Repubblica, Secolo XIX, Huffington Post, and was attended on site by 400 people and **10 finalist startups**.

For keeping in touch



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1087 follower in 2020 - 2022



www.pnicube.it



@PNICube
2.473 follower in 2023

For further information contact to:
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**Thanks for your
attention**