



**Interreg
North Sea**



Co-funded by
the European Union

FREIIA



Høgskolen i Østfold

STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

JOINTLY DEVELOPED

WP4

Grim Henriksen Langsholt, Thai Uy Tran

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3. FREIIA FOSTERING STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

4. LEARNING AS A DRIVER FOR TRANSFORMATION

5. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION: THE BRIDGE BETWEEN INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE

5. THE PROCESS: FROM OBSERVATION TO INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

7. THE ROLE OF STUDENTS: FROM LEARNERS TO CHANGE AGENTS

8. GOVERNANCE INTEGRATION: LINKING INNOVATION TO DECISION-MAKING

8. EVALUATION: LEARNING AND IMPACT

9. CONCLUSION: EDUCATION AS PARTICIPATION

10. JOINTLY DEVELOPED



FREIA Fostering Student Entrepreneurship^{WP4}

Work Package 4 (WP4) of the FREIA project focuses on strengthening student-driven sustainable entrepreneurship across European island communities. WP4 brings together students, researchers, educators, and local stakeholders in a collaborative process where real community challenges become learning arenas for innovation.

In WP4, the islands function as living laboratories, offering unique environments where students can explore sustainability transitions in real time and engage directly with community needs.

Through field visits, interviews, co-creation workshops, and qualitative analysis, WP4 enables students to explore local needs, identify opportunities, and co-develop solutions that support sustainability transitions. The work carried out in WP4 contributes directly to FREIA's broader ambition of enhancing innovation capacity in isolated and fragile communities by integrating circular economy principles, participatory governance, and place-based learning.

WP4 demonstrates how students can play an active role in shaping resilient futures for island societies, not only by generating ideas, but by facilitating dialogue, bridging sectors, and helping communities work towards long-term sustainability.



Learning as a Driver for Transformation

The Student Innovation Governance Cycle introduces a new way of understanding the relationship between education, innovation, and governance. It is based on the belief that learning becomes meaningful when it takes place through engagement with real-world challenges. In this model, students do not only learn about innovation; they practice it. They participate in community development and institutional reflection, where small actions and ideas can evolve into lasting change.

The model integrates three core approaches. TIPPING helps students identify small but strategic opportunities for improvement, moments within a system where a minor adjustment can lead to larger transformation. Action Learning develops students' ability to reflect and adapt through iterative cycles of doing, observing, and learning. RUDDER provides a framework for governance, ensuring that the ideas and experiments generated by students are anchored in clear roles, responsibilities, and long-term value.

Together, these perspectives form a continuous cycle of learning, experimentation, and institutional growth.

In small island or village contexts, innovation dynamics are shaped by closeness, trust, and informality. Networks are small and interconnected, meaning that a single engaged resident can become a decisive tipping point. Such settings allow innovation to emerge quickly, but they are also more vulnerable. The model therefore recognises that context, including island size, social structure, and culture, influences both the pace and sustainability of transformation.



**Interreg
North Sea**



Co-funded by
the European Union

FREIIA

 Høgskolen i Østfold

Conceptual Foundation: The Bridge Between Innovation and Governance

At the heart of the model lies FREIIA's understanding of innovation as a living, participatory process.

TIPPING emphasises recognising existing practices that have the potential to grow into something larger. It teaches students to observe social systems carefully, identify where energy and engagement already exist, and strengthen these points of potential. This approach highlights the power of incremental action and the importance of local knowledge.

Action Learning turns every stage of the process into an opportunity for growth. Students act, observe, reflect, and act again, developing both practical and ethical awareness. Reflection is seen not as an afterthought but as a vital form of inquiry and understanding.

RUDDER links creativity to governance by defining leadership, facilitation, provision, and communication roles. It shows how ideas evolve from individual insight into collective responsibility. Students learn that innovation continues beyond ideation; it requires governance, collaboration, and sustained effort.

On the islands, innovation often emerges through micro-interactions: a brief conversation at a local event, a volunteer testing a student prototype, or a resident saying, "We are already doing something like that." These small, informal exchanges can be just as important as formal observations. The model therefore treats everyday moments of connection as valid and valuable elements of the innovation process.

The Process: From Observation to Institutional Learning

The Student Innovation Governance Cycle unfolds through five interconnected phases, each reflecting both a stage of the students' learning journey and a step in the broader governance process.

You will see the Phases under.



Phase 1: Observe and Identify / listen (TIPPING)

The process begins with immersion in a real community context. Students observe, conduct interviews, and map local systems to identify small but meaningful tipping points. These points often arise in everyday life, where trust and informal dialogue play a key role. Focusing on observation rather than immediate problem-solving helps develop empathy, systems awareness, and contextual understanding.

Phase 2: Experiment and Learn (TIPPING + Action Learning)

Students co-create small interventions with local actors such as workshops, prototypes, or communication initiatives. Each test is documented and discussed to capture learning outcomes. The goal is not to produce final solutions but to strengthen adaptability and collective insight within both student teams and communities. Facilitators play an essential role in guiding reflection, helping students slow down, observe carefully, and recognise the value of small insights.

Phase 3: Reflect and Analyse (Action Learning)

Reflection connects action to understanding. Students analyse their results, discuss outcomes with mentors and partners, and identify why certain ideas succeeded or failed. Their reflections are recorded in learning briefs, serving both as educational artefacts and as practical feedback for local stakeholders. This phase builds students' analytical and communication skills while encouraging constructive dialogue.

Phase 4: Anchor and Implement (RUDDER)

Once viable ideas have been identified, students work to integrate them into local governance processes. They may present findings to municipal representatives, propose implementation strategies, or contribute to planning efforts. The RUDDER framework becomes concrete at this stage, clarifying leadership, support roles, and accountability. Anchoring should also align with local sustainability priorities and respond to economic, social, and environmental needs identified by the community.

In small communities, governance often operates through relationships rather than formal structures. Organisations and entrepreneurs may have limited capacity to institutionalise new ideas. Anchoring therefore requires informal, trust-based engagement, including regular meetings, storytelling, and collaborative discussions that ensure ownership and continuity. Local facilitators also ensure continuity between successive student cohorts, maintaining trust and accumulated knowledge across project phases.

Phase 5: Disseminate and Reapply (RUDDER + Action Learning)

The final phase focuses on knowledge sharing and long-term learning. Students summarise their process and results in case studies or visual narratives that can be shared through platforms such as the FREIIA Co-Lab. Dissemination reinforces reflection, visibility, and collective responsibility. Storytelling is not only a dissemination tool but also a governance mechanism that strengthens visibility, shared understanding, and community identity.

The Role of Students: From Learners to Change Agents

Throughout the cycle, students evolve from observers into facilitators, analysts, and mediators of innovation. They interact directly with residents, local officials, and professionals, discovering how change is negotiated and maintained.

Entrepreneurship in this model extends beyond business creation. It is the ability to recognise potential, mobilise people, and design actions that lead to improvement. Students learn to balance creativity with responsibility, intuition with structure, and individual initiative with collective governance.

Students gradually become embedded in the community. They are recognised by residents, invited by local entrepreneurs, and valued as contributors rather than visitors. This embeddedness creates trust, collaboration, and mutual learning that endure beyond the project.

To support this process, the model highlights the importance of local facilitators who act as connectors, guides, and trusted intermediaries. These facilitators help students navigate local culture, identify opportunities, and maintain continuity across student cohorts. Their role can be defined as Local Innovation Hosts or Community Facilitators.

Governance Integration: Linking Innovation to Decision-Making

The governance dimension ensures that learning and innovation become part of decision-making structures. The RUDDER framework coordinates leadership, facilitation, and communication roles to sustain outcomes. Each student-led initiative connects to a decision point such as resource allocation, local validation, or public dialogue.

Attention must also be given to power dynamics within local governance to ensure that students' contributions translate into shared ownership rather than reinforcing existing hierarchies.

On islands like Schiermonnikoog and Hvaler, anchoring often takes place through informal gatherings that are open and non-obligatory. Such meetings foster safety, openness, and engagement. Governance in these contexts grows organically through trust, proximity, and voluntary participation. This approach expands the meaning of governance, which becomes not only administrative but also relational and narrative, emerging from shared participation and storytelling.

Evaluation: Learning and Impact

Evaluation in the Student Innovation Governance Cycle is developmental rather than summative. Learning and impact are considered equally important.

Student progress is assessed through reflective journals, group discussions, and demonstrations of how insights have been turned into practice. At the project level, success is measured through engagement quality, collaboration, and local continuity rather than quantitative results.

For communities, the key question is whether the ideas continue to evolve after the students leave. Evaluation thus becomes a shared dialogue between students, facilitators, and communities about what has been learned and what can be sustained.

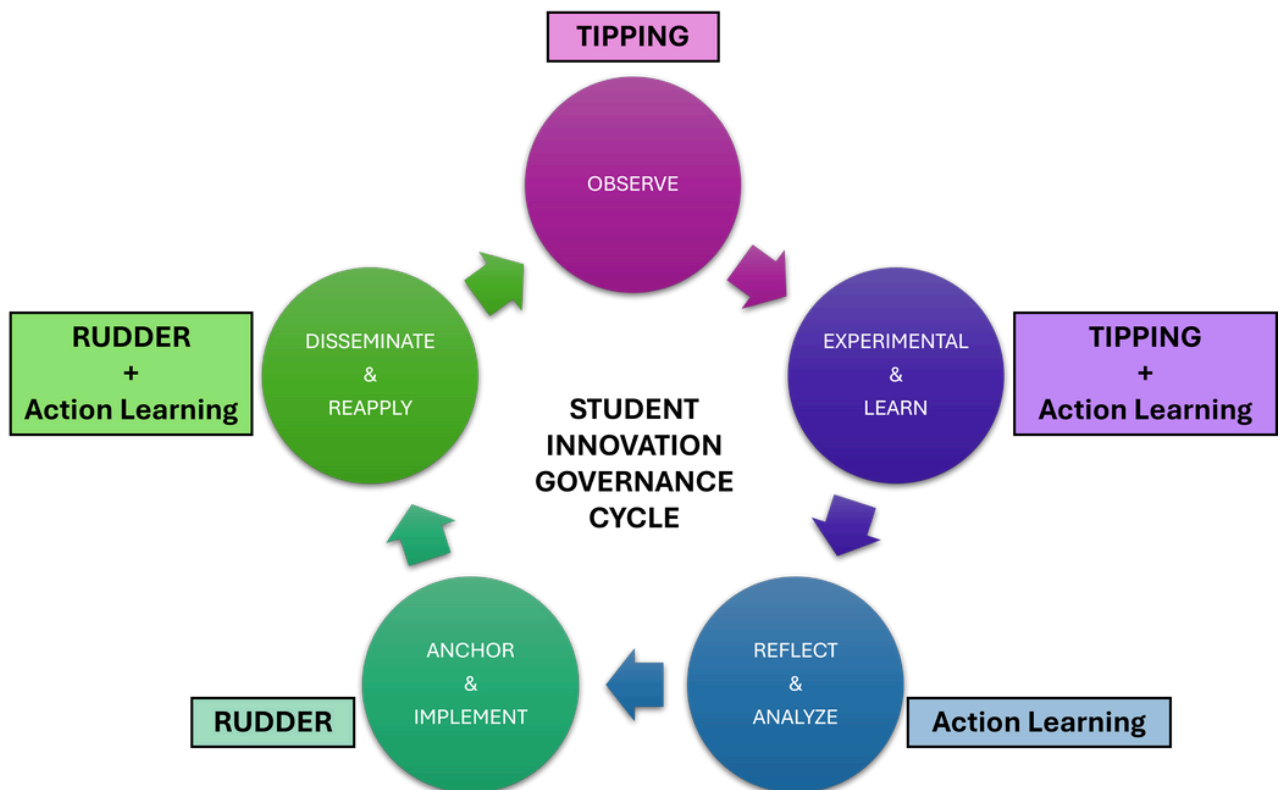
Conclusion: Education as Participation

The Student Innovation Governance Cycle provides a holistic framework where learning, entrepreneurship, and governance converge. By combining TIPPING's systemic awareness, Action Learning's reflective depth, and RUDDER's structural coherence, the model turns student projects into living laboratories of transformation.

Education here is not only preparation for participation; it is participation. Students learn not only to understand systems but to actively shape them. They experience the connection between creativity and accountability, insight and implementation, and individual growth and collective progress.

In small communities, this requires trust, preparation, and continuity. When students arrive not to extract but to contribute, offering something meaningful and leaving something valuable behind, genuine participation emerges.

The Student Innovation Governance Cycle therefore embodies FREIIA's vision of inter-island collaboration, a dynamic, human-centred model in which learning becomes governance and education becomes a shared act of community building.



Jointly developed With

Norway: Grim Henriksen Langsholt, Thai Uy Tran

Sweden: Lisa Bomble

Danmark: Frida Skovgaard Sørensen

Germany: Cormac Walsh

Netherlands: Jacqueline Mulder

France: Maxime Turck

