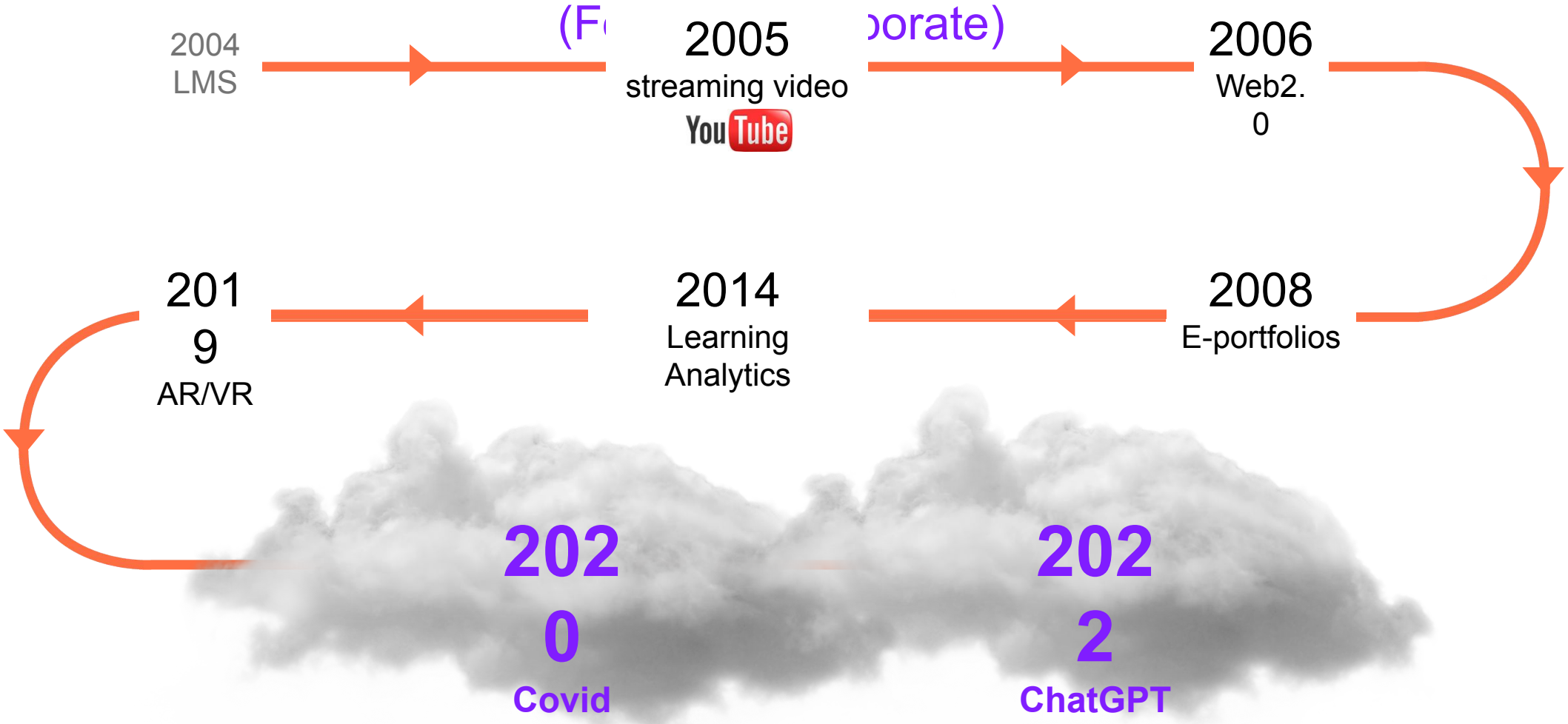
Edtech Innovations and Testbeds – Aligning the European perspective

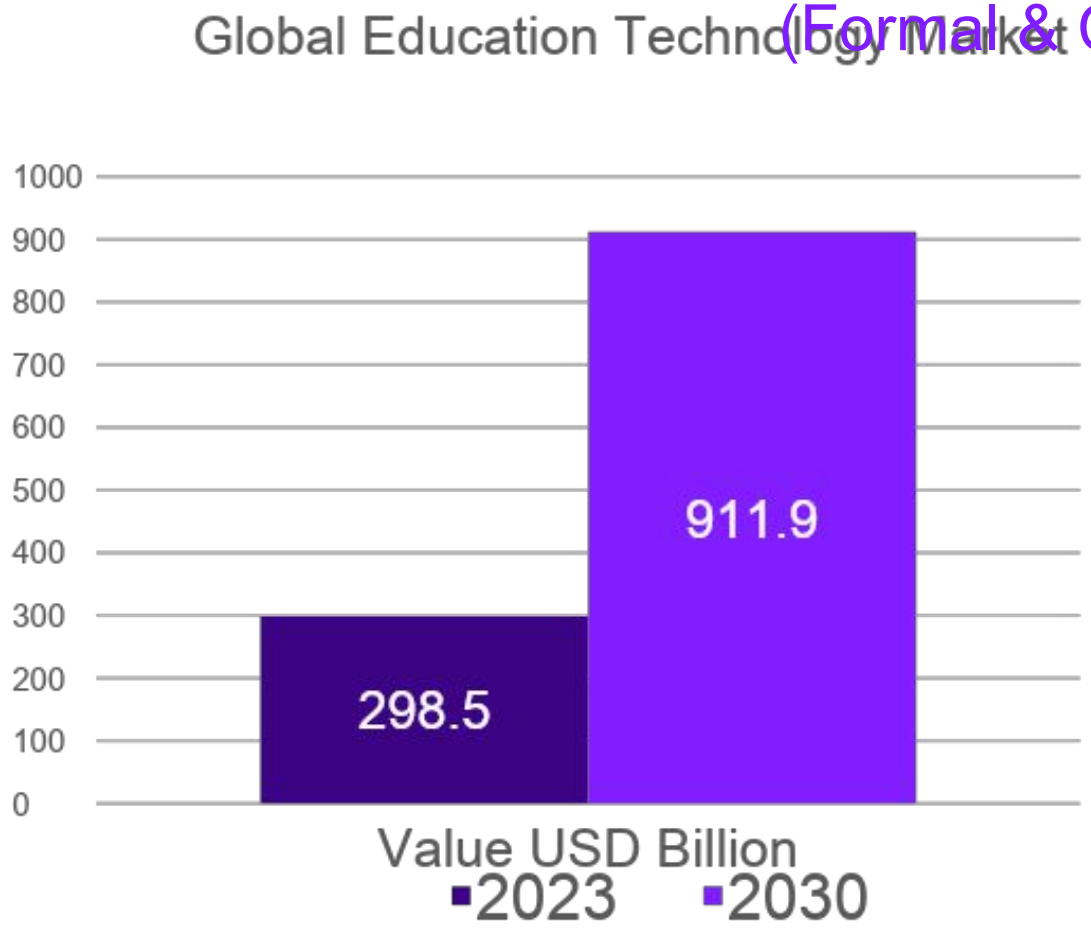
Dr Peter Gillis – Research Lead

Learnovate

Edtech - the last 20 years



Edtech – the next 5 years
(Formal & Corporate)



"This (growth) is ascribed to the emergence of AI and digitalisation in EdTech solutions.

PRESCIENT & STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE
Where knowledge inspires strategy

Edtech – no guardrails

(Formal & Corporate)

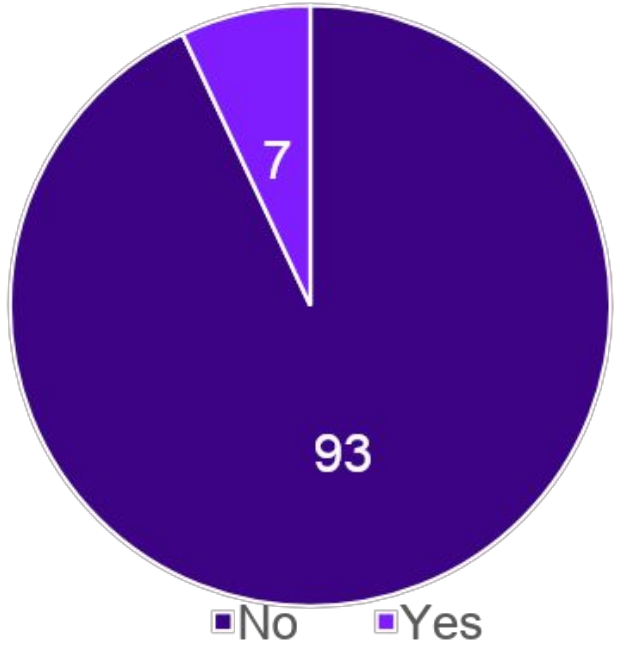
"the impact of EdTech .. lacks unequivocal proof through clear measurement.

there is currently little independent evidence for either their efficacy or safety, and no specific regulations

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

% of Edtech tools that can show Rigorous Evidence



"EdTech investors …, prioritise profitability over educational efficacy.

…scaling without evidence of positive impact, has resulted in the widespread distribution of low-quality products in schools"

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Overwhelming choices

With thousands of educational technology (EdTech) tools available, navigating the options can be overwhelming

unicef

An overwhelming variety of tools available, each claiming to improve student outcomes …. Added layers of complexity about compatibility, security and cost can lead to decision fatigue. (2024)

EdSurge

…. education institutions are currently questioning their … skill sets required to appropriately evaluate and vet these new technologies

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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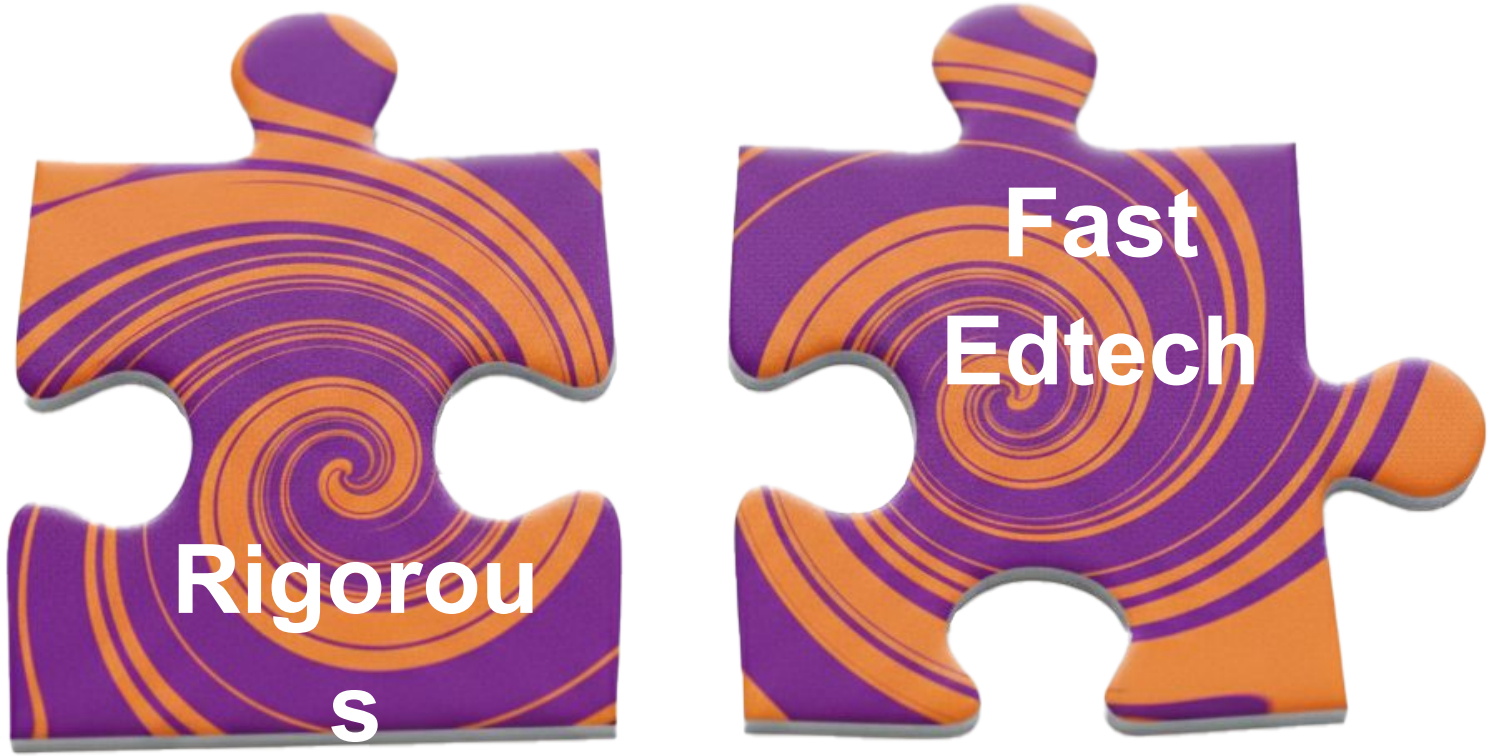
66% of Swedish secondary teachers agreed that learning materials should be print-first in the future (2025)

The Brussels Times



Educational technology research is at a crucial juncture, where the rapid pace of technological advancement, increasing complexity of learning environments, and uncertainty about the field's future demand research that is aware, relevant, and critical.

(Schmidt, McDonald, & Moore, 2025)

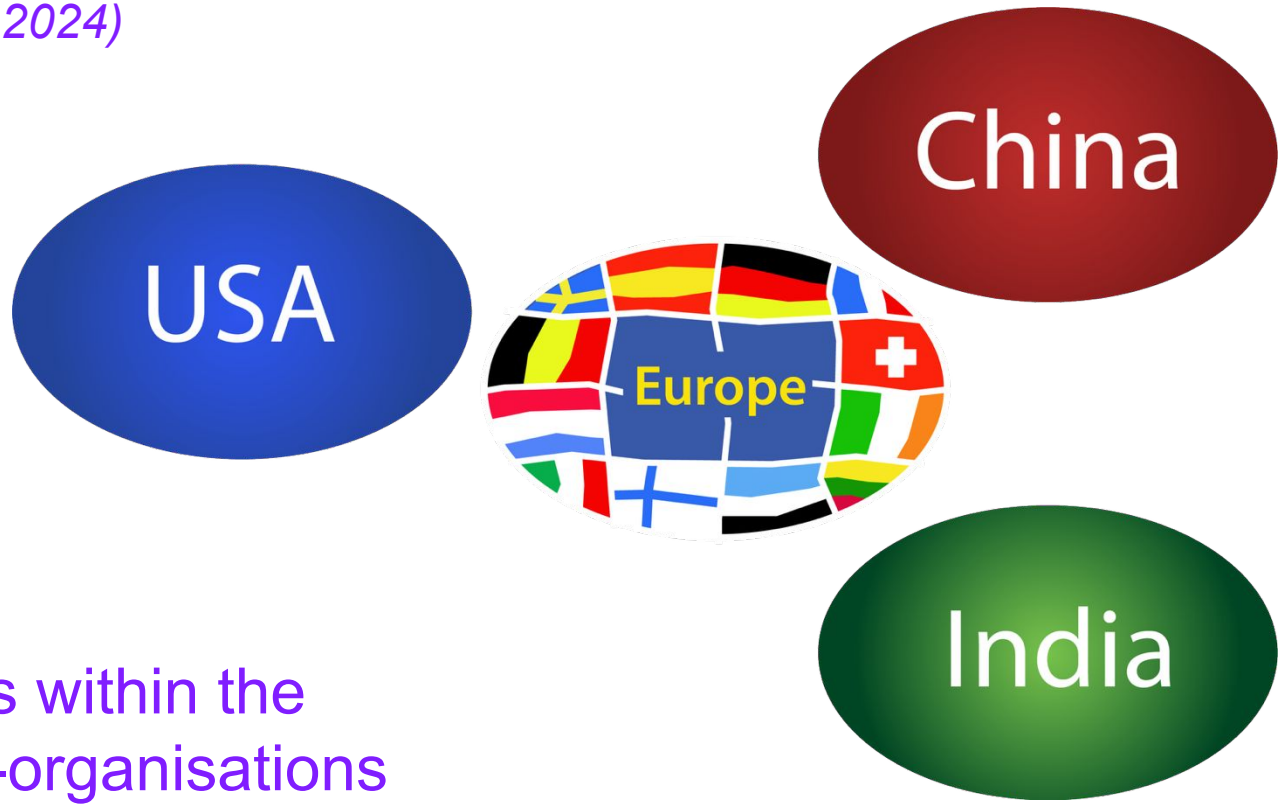
Competing in a Global arena

Fragmentation of the Single Market hinders innovative companies that reach the growth stage from scaling up in the EU.

The future of European competitiveness (Sept 2024)
Mario Draghi

“with markets fragmented across member states, European entrepreneurs are finding it hard to compete with U.S. and Chinese tech giants.”

THE WATCHER POST.EU



just under 70% of EdTech providers within the greater European region are micro-organisations

Educause

Overdue Change for Edtech is coming

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

To address the challenges of trust, transparency and evidence-based decision making in AIED, an internationally recognised, independent review framework is essential.

Towards a European review framework for AI EdTech systems (2024)

UNESCO

UNESCO is calling on its Member States to ensure the fair, equitable and safe development of educational technologies. This means establishing appropriate normative frameworks and setting standards…

Global Education Monitoring Report (2023)

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Consensus must be reached regarding the minimum quality standards expected of EdTech. … the current disjointed approaches must be consolidated into a unified EdTech quality framework.

Why we need global minimum quality standards in EdTech (2024)

Overdue Change for Edtech is coming

Department for Education

74

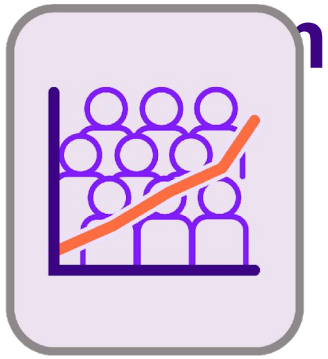
Frameworks

considered and evaluated

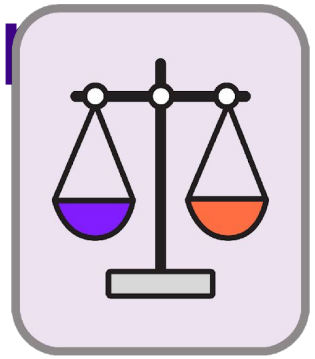
Quality Frameworks and Standards Review
December 2023

5Es of

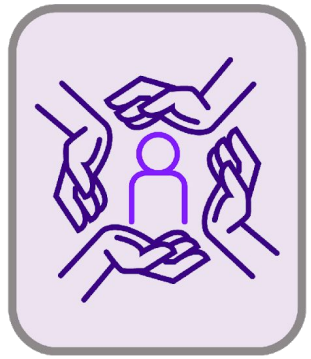
Efficacy performance in controlled experiments.



Effectiveness Performance in real classroom settings.



Equity Beneficiaries including marginalized groups.



Ethics Implement with regard to data safety.

Environment Local and wider environment impacts.

The Gap

The Gap

While the industry welcomes and even demands some kind of regulatory framework, **there is a need for this to be**

- independently implemented,
- locally relevant,
- internationally aligned and include long-term policy goals.

Council of Europe (2024)

Schools

Edtech

L&D

Learners

Initiating a European conversation on EdTech Testbedding

March 2025, Kortrijk, Belgium

Committed to meaningful impact

Independent

edtech station
Belgium

HELSINKI EDUCATION HUB
Finland

Innovation & industry led

Nationally Supported

Learnovate
Ireland

NOLAI
Netherlands

swiss EdTech COLLIDER
Switzerland

Connected to the ecosystem

Not for profit

Bridging the Gap

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

UNESCO

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

European innovation and testbed consortium (EITC)

Consolidated, unbiased and expert inputs. Providing pragmatic support to all stakeholders.

Co-creation ecosystem, leveraging the insights from all partners (design with research)

A common 'language' for Europe and beyond (EdTech & Research) .

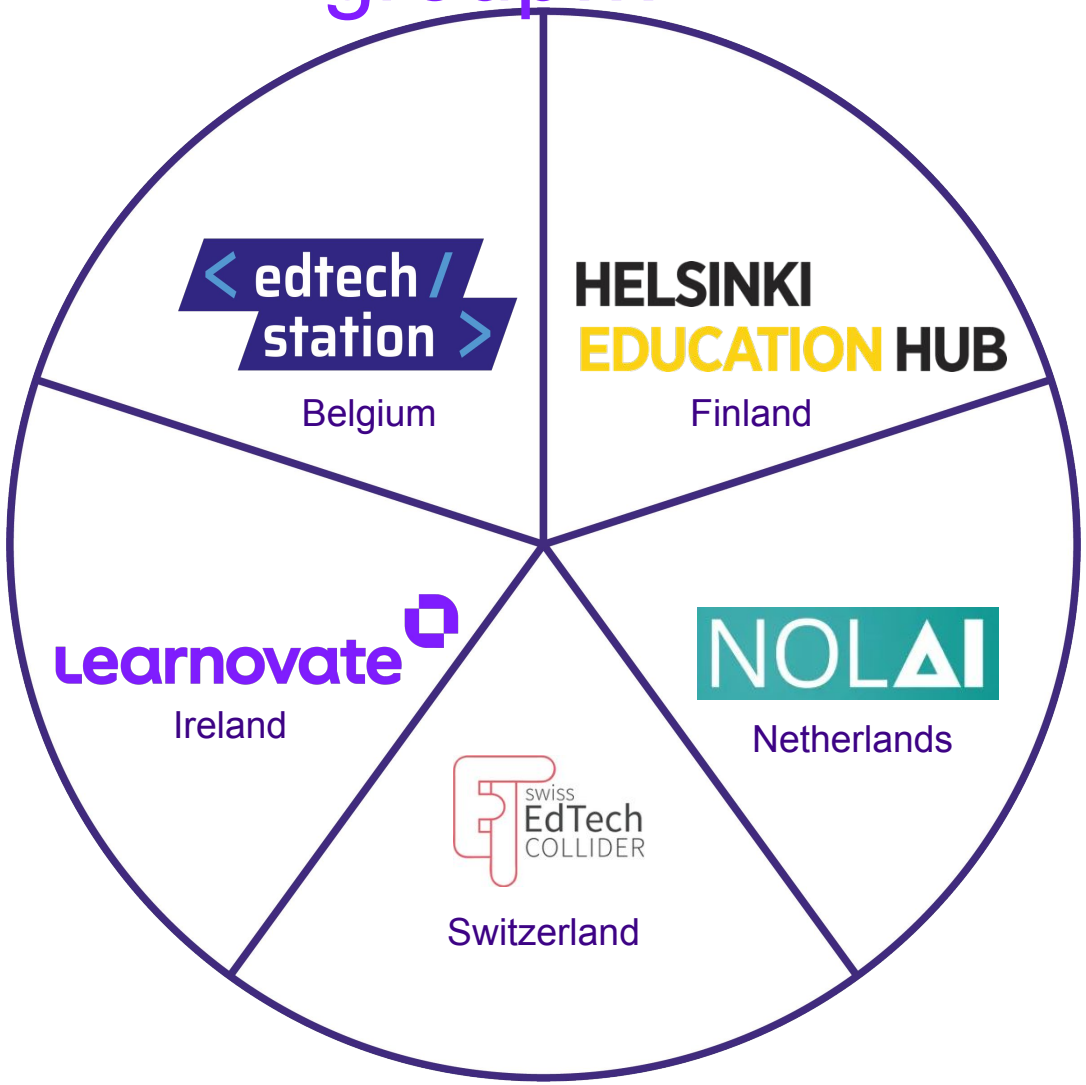
Schools

Edtech

L&D

Learners

Meet the group….



HELSINKI EDUCATION HUB

Heidi Lammassaari, Project Manager

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

Helsinki
Helsingfors

Helsinki Education Hub applies the Triple Helix innovation model at the municipal level. Given Finland's decentralized governance, a national model is unnecessary. As a local pioneer, Helsinki Education Hub provides a scalable framework for other municipalities.

HELSINKI EDUCATION HUB

ACADEMIC RESEARCH & INFRASTRUCTURE

Generating new projects

Competence development in innovation and entrepreneurship

Co-creation challenges for students

TESTBED SERVICES

Easy access Co-Development (EAC) in Helsinki schools

Helsinki-driven innovation pilots

Providing entrepreneurs' a reference and

STARTUP INCUBATION

Product development From POC to MVP Lean Launchpad-modu

Educational Sciences -module

NOLAI
NATIONAAL
ONDERWIJSLAB AI

Kim Brandes

NOLAI - in short

RESPONSIBLE AI IN EDUCATION

Nationaal Groeifonds

Develop and research responsible AI for primary and secondary education

Funding
National Growth Fund
€143 million

Duration
2022-2032

Location
Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Scope
- 9 strategic partners
- 55 partners
- 24 ongoing projects
- 10 pending projects
- 80 AI prototypes in total
- 67 employees (incl. 10 teachers)

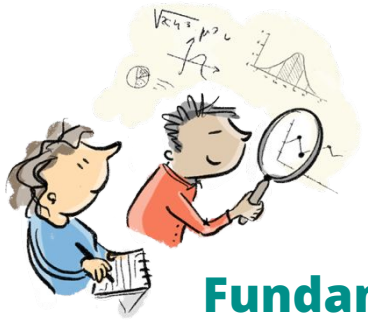
stichting Klasse
Lucas Onderwijs
QUADRAAM
HAN_UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
oost nl
Brightlands
Radboud Universiteit
Universiteit Utrecht
Maastricht University

NOLAI

NOLAI APPROACH

Triple Helix Innovation

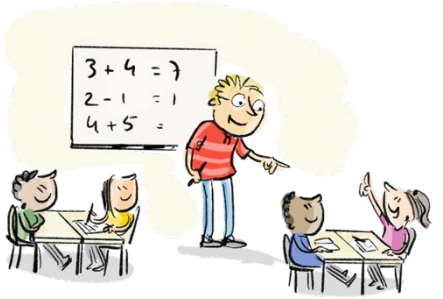
Business Development



Fundamental Research

Creation

Implementation



Professional Development

Annelies Volckaert
Innovation & Research

Learnovation 9.10.25

VLAIO < edtech / station >
Samen voor sterk innoveren

<edtech/station>

EdTech Companies

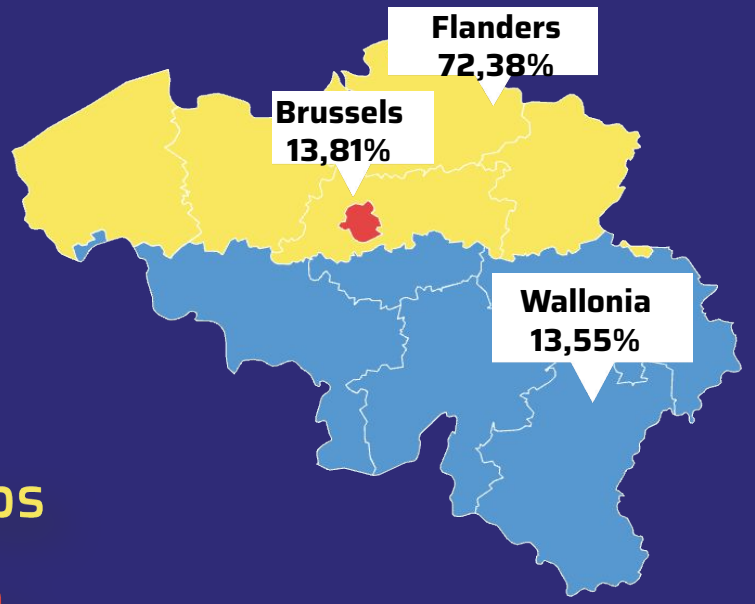
< edtech / station >

All users at Schools & Corps

Academia

Public authorities

Industria



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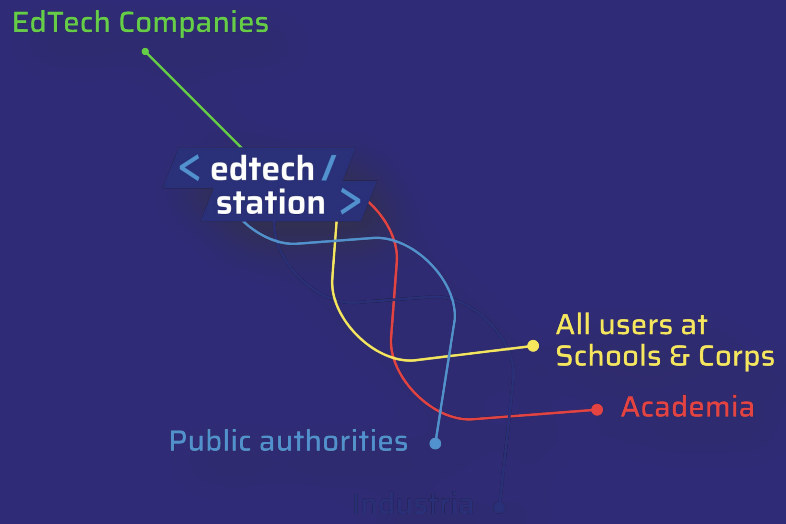
Testbeds in Belgium

The quadruple helix translated into Testbeds



Public Authorities

Edtech Companies

Edtech Solution

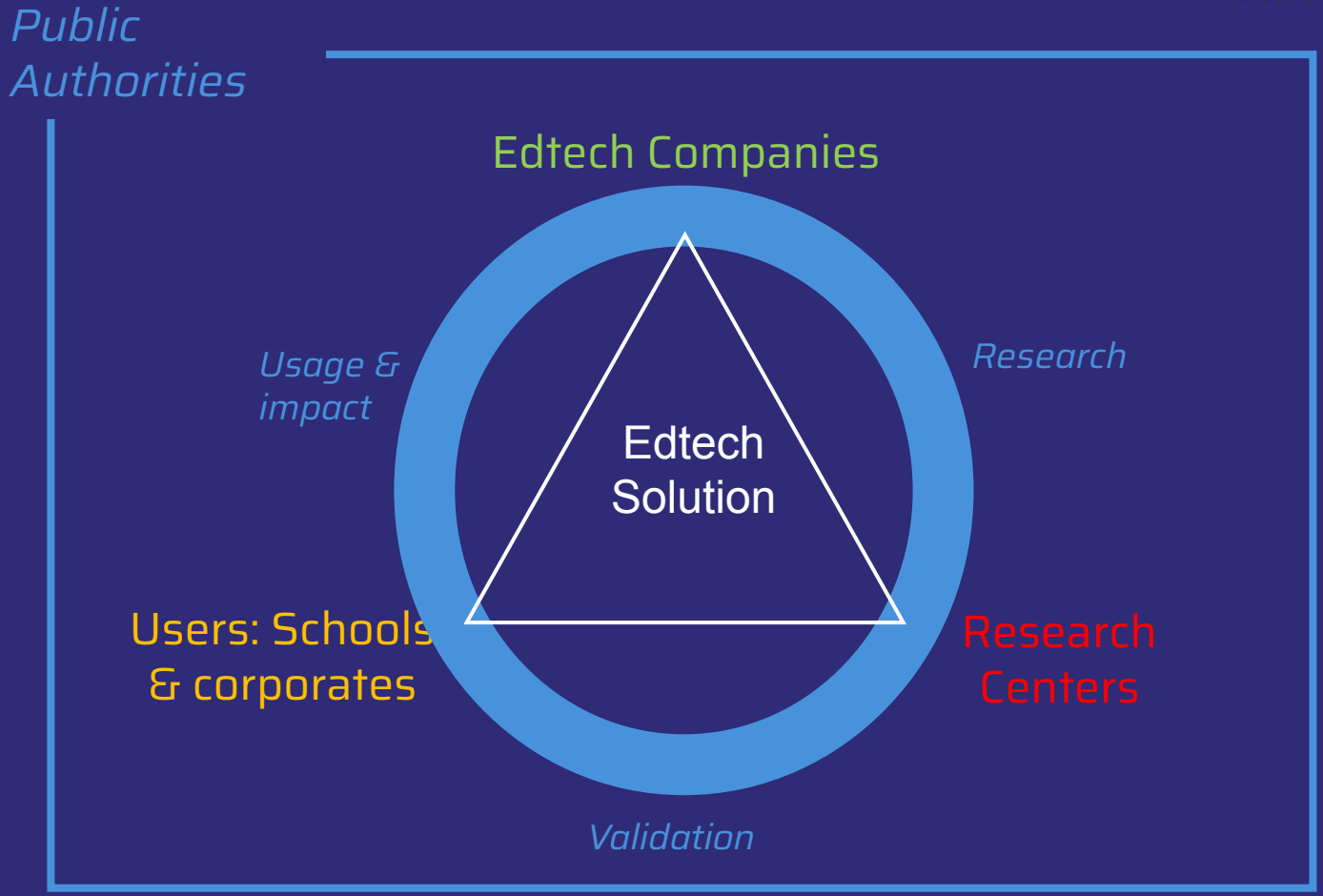
Users: Schools & corporates

Research Centers

< edtech / station >

Testbeds in Belgium

The quadruple helix translated into Testbeds



<edtech/station> launched in may 2022

The hub for all Belgian EdTech

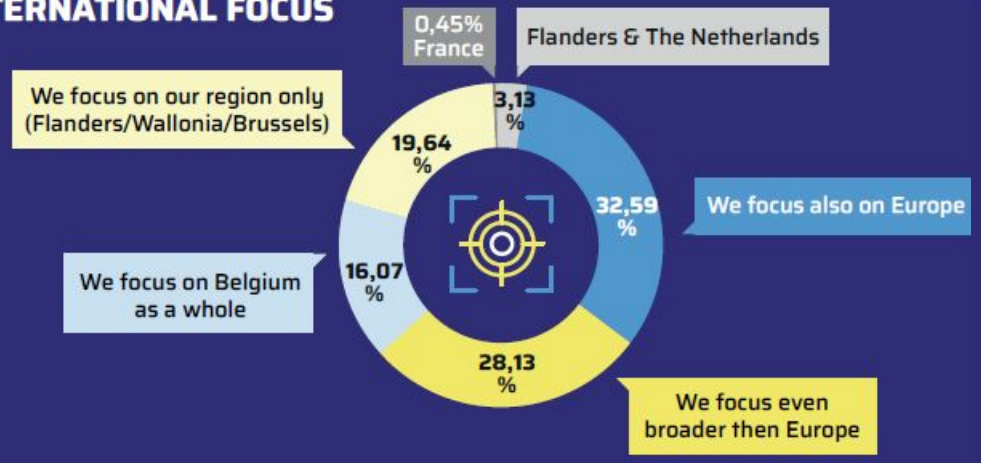
WHY <e/s> ?

- Member growth
- Research & innovation
- Internationalization Belgian EdTech

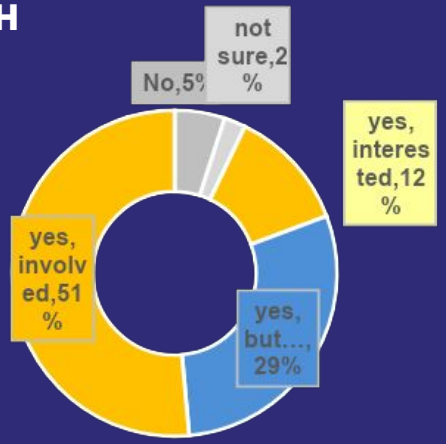
Facilitating to:

- Connect & Inspire
- Collaborate & Interact
- Create & Innovate

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS



FOCUS ON RESEARCH



Sector: 408 companies

Sector Turnover: 1040 MI0 €

Members of <e/s>: 150

Research projects 2022-2026: 42
72 companies involved

Testbeds finished: 4

Testbeds planned 2026-2028:
20 EdTech companies
80 Testbeds

<edtech/station>

Swiss EdTech Collider

Switzerland’s Impactful EdTech Ecosystem

09.10.2025 | LEARNOVATION 2025

Swiss EdTech Collider
EPFL Innovation Park - Building C
CH - 1015 Lausanne | Switzerland

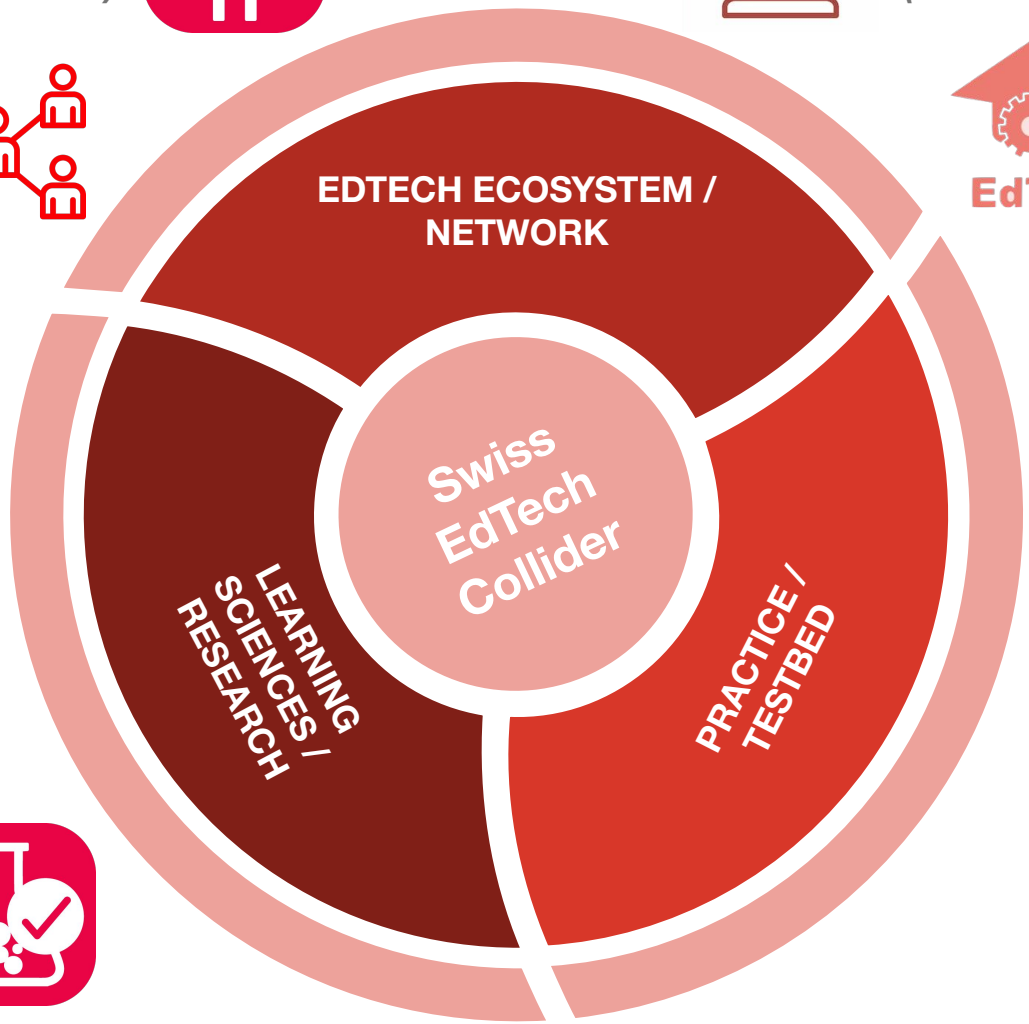
Swiss EdTech Collider EdTech Ecosystem – innovations to create impact since 2

COLLABORATION NETWORK PLATFORM
(since 04.2017)

VISIBILITY PLATFORM EDTECH
(since 04.2017)

CONNECTION TO LEADING EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS
(since 04.2017)

CONNECTION TO LEARNING SCIENCES (EPFL LEARN, ML4ED)
(since 04.2017)



MASTER THESIS INITIATIVE
(2019 - 2022)

LIGHTHOUSE INITIATIVE
- Research Learning Science
(since 07.2024)

TESTBED PROGRAM
- Testing EdTech tools
(since 11.2022)

CO-CREATION PROJECTS
- Individual EdTech Projects
(since 01.2025)

Swiss National EdTech Testbed Program: connecting educators, schools and EdTech startups to create impactful test-bedding (status 10.2025)

17
EdTech Innovation & Tools

660+
Testbeds

6
Official Good Practice Papers

Covers ALL Switzerland

26 cantons (states), 4 different languages and different educational curricula

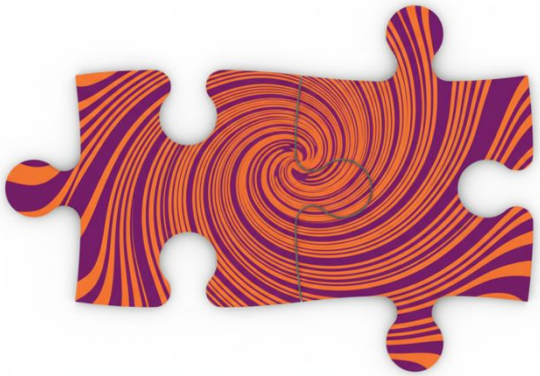
530+
Educators

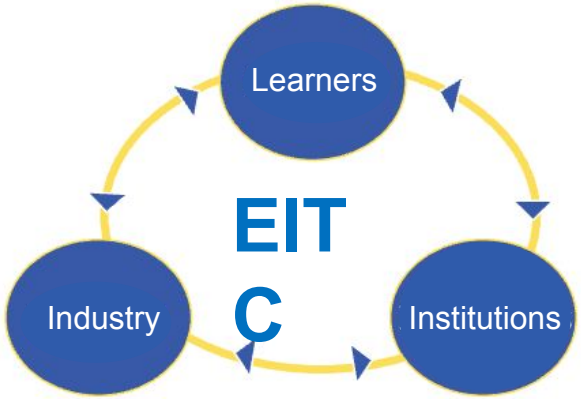
270+
Public Schools

9’350+
Students

Bridging the Gap

- A unique consortium - focused group of experts.
- Already working on these challenges at the national level in Europe.
- Experts who can support a Europe wide infrastructure and models.
- We welcome future partners (Spain and Italy).





Learnovate
Thank you!
Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin
TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
ENTERPRISE IRELAND
IDA IRELAND SUPPORTED