



## Policy Brief 2: Supporting European Innovation

# THE BRIGAIID BUSINESS

# DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

## Transforming sustainable innovations into sustainable businesses

While Europe generates world-class research and innovation, too little is transformed into successful businesses. The costs of this in terms of lost income and skilled jobs are substantial – and even larger when socially beneficial solutions, such as those that could protect Europe’s citizens from climate-related disasters, are left on paper.

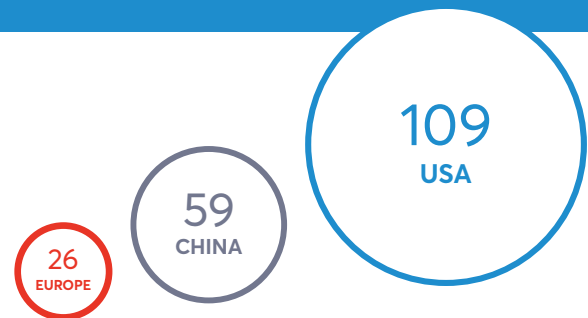
To fight this, the BRIGAIID Business Development Programme helps climate-related innovations reach the market by:

- upskilling innovators in setting up customer-centred businesses
- helping innovators develop effective business plans
- linking innovators, clients, funders, and investors

### The Problem:

#### Too few climate innovations make it to market

Even though the EU generates 1/3 of all high-scientific publications, Europe is home to only 26 “Unicorn start-ups” (start-ups valued at over \$1 billion) relative to 109 in the USA and 59 in China (EU Commission, 2018, p. 5). This means too few of the region’s great ideas make it out of the lab to blossom into successful, scalable businesses. This represents missed opportunities in terms of European jobs, income and competitiveness. Furthermore, when the innovative ideas left languishing in the lab could actually become new ways of protecting society from climate-related floods, fires, droughts, and extreme weather, these costs gain a new dimension. Climate-related disasters are already impacting Europe. In 2016 alone, they wreaked more than €20 billion of damage (EU Environmental Agency, 2019, p. 5) - and these



Number of unicorn startups in Europe, China and USA

damages are forecast to increase as the region’s climate continues to change. In response, the EU is pledging essential public investment to trigger breakthrough discoveries in the field of climate change, and to ensure their uptake and exploitation (EU Commission, 2018, p. 5). The innovations for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction affiliated to BRIGAIID aim to reduce the impact of climate change on our communities and increase their resilience to natural disasters. Through its Business Development Programme, BRIGAIID is helping to exploit their potential.

# OUR AIM IS TO PROVIDE STRUCTURAL AND ONGOING SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION CLUSTERS:

offering solutions for climate adaptation by developing an innovative mix of methods and tools, to become a standard for climate adaptation innovations.

## Our contribution:

### The BRIGAIID Business Development Programme

BRIGAIID has developed an integrated business support programme for climate innovators. We want to trigger change in European innovation by getting innovators and researchers comfortable with putting business development and marketing concepts into practice. The goal is to increase their capacity to recognise actual market needs and incorporate them into their product development process. This will ensure that the new solutions created are user-centric and globally competitive.

## BRIGAIID - ACHIEVING EU AIMS

BRIGAIID's work closely mirrors the EU's perspectives on innovation and climate change. Our Business Development Programme offers a working example of how EU innovation policy turned into action is already achieving positive impact.

The programme was developed and tested during the first year of the project. In the two subsequent years, 15 innovators have engaged with us in business support activities. Half of them have already either improved or entirely rewritten their business plan and are now entering discussions with potential clients and investors.

## How does BRIGAIID support innovators to develop their ideas into sustainable businesses?

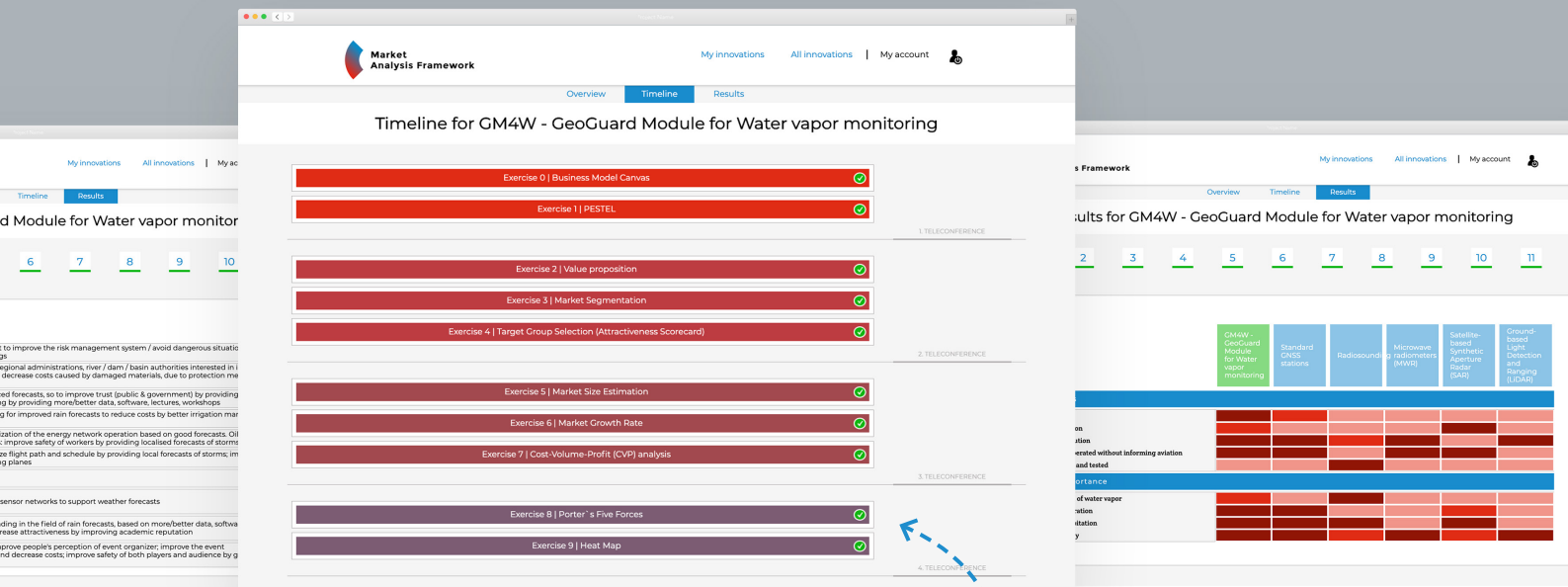
The BRIGAIID **Business Development Programme** supports European innovation by:

- 1 **Upskilling innovators** in the art of customer-centred business.
- 2 **Helping innovators** develop agile business plans that they can immediately deploy to find financing and customers.



### Steps of the Business Sustainable Programme





## BRIGAD support includes:

### a) In-person business workshops and consultation:

The programme includes a 2-day business workshop and an in-person wrap up session. There, innovators work face-to-face with BRIGAD experts to assess their business, identify key challenges, opportunities, and gather personal feedback – as well as prepare pitches to sell their business and innovation in the real world.

### b) Online collaboration through the Market-Analysis Framework (MAF+)

The MAF+ is an online assessment and decision-support system that helps innovators challenge their business idea and make strategic decisions around it. At its heart, it is a structured series of interactive business development exercises that enable innovators to define their market, recognize the key values of their innovation, identify opportunities, evaluate competitors, and conceive a suitable business model.

Climate adaptation and business experts from the BRIGAD consortium accompany the innovators every step of the way. Alongside succinct instructions and examples, BRIGAD experts provide insightful feedback through regular phone calls as well as direct feedback using the MAF+'s online review function. By the end of the assessment, the innovators have enhanced their business skills and confidence and they are able to run an

## MAF+ AVAILABLE TO ALL!

Anyone can use the MAF+, BRIGAD's online market assessment system, to develop or improve their business strategy.

All exercises have simple-to-follow instructions, tips, and examples - so any innovator can use it to upskill and improve their business.

Sign up for a free account at [maf.brigaid.eu](https://maf.brigaid.eu)

assessment independently. Through their user accounts they continue to have access to the portal, which allows them to run further iterations of the assessment and/or start a new one for a different business idea.

### c) Finding sustainable funding and customers through business plans

BRIGAD helps innovators bridge the “valley of death” and link with investors and funders. After completing the MAF+ assessment, innovators have the skills and building blocks – as well as expert support – to draft concrete business plans to attract investment and grants. BRIGAD already supports innovators to advertise to clients through the BRIGAD shopfront - [www.climateinnovationwindow.eu](https://www.climateinnovationwindow.eu) – and this is being extended to offer impact investors and end-users the opportunity to invest in a solution.



## An innovator's experience (with the programme)



**Dr. Eugenio Realini from GReD, a spin-off from the Politecnico di Milano, is an expert in global positioning systems and water vapour data, but before BRIGAIID, he would not have described himself as a confident business person. Through the BRIGAIID Business Development Programme, Eugenio developed the skills – and a business plan – to take his flash flood prevention innovation GM4W further along the road from idea to market.**

With colleagues at GReD, Eugenio had developed the science behind their innovation called GM4W, however, they were struggling to develop a strategy for turning this idea into a successful business. “We were very aware that we come from a research, academic background,” Eugenio explained, “it was clear that business development was an area where we needed support.”

Eugenio found the in-person consulting from BRIGAIID immediately beneficial. “Brainstorming at the workshop was great – we identified lots of additional potential clients,” he said, describing the opening 2-day business workshop as “intensive and interesting”. Eugenio also reported that he learned a lot from the Market Analysis Framework tool, “the MAF+ was challenging but well-guided by BRIGAIID consultants, plus the tool was user-friendly and easy to interact with.”

For Eugenio, the BRIGAIID Business Development Programme increased his business confidence and ability to communicate the value of GM4W

to clients. “I learned a lot – generally, it was really beneficial to get the training,” he reflected, “it is more natural for me now to see things from the potential customer’s view, and to focus during short conversations with clients on things that will capture their interests”. The process also had concrete results. Along with drafting a business plan that sets the strategic direction of GM4W, Eugenio reports that BRIGAIID support in identifying target market segments and quantifying potential market sizes, “changed our perception of where we should start and where we should go next”.

Overall, Eugenio recommended the BRIGAIID Programme, “it cleared up our ideas about what it means to do business development”. When asked to describe its impact on his business skills and confidence, Eugenio concluded that, “on a scale of 0-10, the BRIGAIID Business Development Programme moved me from a 0 to a 7”.



### **GM4W - AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO PREDICT HEAVY RAINFALL EVENTS**

GM4W uses low-cost global positioning receivers to gather continuous, local-level water vapour data that can predict heavy rainfall events, which are expected to increase in occurrence, severity and damage as Europe’s climate warms. GM4W can improve local weather forecasts and even help avoid flash floods and associated damage and deaths – at a low cost.

More info on GM4W and contact details can be found on the [BRIGAIID Climate Innovation Window](#).



# BRIGAIID

BRIDGING THE GAP FOR INNOVATIONS  
IN DISASTER RESILIENCE

## BRIGAIID – Consolidating European Innovation

As demonstrated by Eugenio’s story, the BRIGAIID approach – particularly the business workshops and the MAF+ assessment – supports innovators to transform their ideas into successful businesses, mitigating the damages from climate change and growing European jobs through sustainable innovation.

- If you are a **policy- or decision-maker** focused on generating conditions to convert innovation into successful business, contact us for more information.
- If you are an **innovator** who wants to develop a climate-related business, contact us for free business development support.
- If you are an **investor or funder** looking for robust climate-related innovations, or a regional council or other potential client seeking innovative ways to avoid climate impacts, visit **[www.climateinnovationwindow.eu](http://www.climateinnovationwindow.eu)**

### Footnotes Page 1:

European Commission (2018) [A renewed agenda for Research and Innovation: Europe's chance to shape its future](#)

European Environmental Agency (2019) [Economic losses from climate-related extremes in Europe](#)

European Commission (2018) [A renewed agenda for Research and Innovation - Europe's chance to shape its future.](#)

European Commission (2019) [Press Release: €2 billion to fast forward the creation of the European Innovation Council.](#)



**BRIGAIID**

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