



WOIC 2021

8th ANNUAL
WORLD OPEN INNOVATION CONFERENCE

World Open Innovation Conference 2021 – Closing statement

The 8th annual World Open Innovation Conference (WOIC) was hosted from the High Tech Campus Eindhoven (The Netherlands), as a virtual experience that brought together international participants from science, government and industry on a global online platform. Participants from all continents found each other, presented and exchanged ideas on this year's conference theme "Building Successful Ecosystems Through Open Innovation".

"The COVID-situation certainly proved to be a major challenge, yet the conference still managed to create new connections and enable new insights in important domains connected to open innovation. Our organizing team, together with our partners and sponsors, and the wider community are focused on learning from each other and we know that we can achieve greater things when we work together." (Professor Marcel Bogers - TU/e & Conference Chair of WOIC)

Today more than ever, the open innovation principle has an essential task due to new global realities. A reality in which geopolitical movements are putting pressure on the global innovation system and in which addressing our generation's grand challenges will require an open and collaborative approach. Working together is essential to remain future proof because innovation has the potential to deliver real solutions. How? By building ecosystems through open innovation!

The location was therefore not chosen by coincidence, as John Jorritsma — mayor of Eindhoven — underlined: *"We are proud to host this year's World Open Innovation Conference in Eindhoven, in the heart of our 'Brainport' region which has lead European innovation rankings for years in a row. Brainport is a thriving innovation ecosystem in which 20 years ago high-tech industries, governments and knowledge institutes together embraced the ideas of Henry Chesbrough on open innovation."*

Open innovation ecosystems such as Brainport have the potential to be the drivers in addressing global challenges first and foremost on sustainability. How to make this work ran like a thread through the entire conference. It requires fostering open innovation within an ecosystem while ensuring open innovation across borders between national and international ecosystems.

"Not so long ago, the Philips lab located in Eindhoven was the world for much of the innovation output of this region. Today with Brainport, the world is now the lab for thousands of researchers and engineers working for hundreds of companies. It has become a global innovation hotspot." (Professor Henry Chesbrough – University of California, Berkeley & Founding Chair of WOIC)

The 8th annual World Open Innovation Conference created a melting pot of academics and practitioners to bring together the recent scientific studies and ongoing practices on open innovation and ecosystems. Bringing together theory and practice, it became clear that open innovation plays a central role in developing ecosystems that both address current societal challenges and develop organizations' strategies and business models that would make this work. This also trickles down to how companies organize themselves, and how they address the human side in open innovation. It's about attitudes toward open innovation and about tapping into all available human capital in an open innovation ecosystem.

Open innovation in ecosystems doesn't happen overnight. Setting the right conditions is something that requires attention of all stakeholders in the quadruple helix — academics, industry practitioners, policymakers and citizens. Both companies and governments will have to take their responsibility to jointly shape those conditions that will enable the development of ecosystems that deliver societally relevant solutions through open innovation. Robert-Jan Smits (President of TU/e): *"Innovation ecosystems are powerful tools for boosting innovation and creativity in a setting of partnership and cooperation and as such are solution providers for some of the grand societal challenges our planet is facing, be it the energy transition or climate change. For this reason governments should put the development of new and the strengthening of existing innovation ecosystems at the core of their innovation policies"*.

The conference concluded with a clear call to all open innovation's actors, in government, industry and science, to join hands to ensure our world's future sustainability and together develop the full potential of open innovation ecosystems toward this goal.

On behalf of the main organizing parties:

World Open Innovation Conference (WOIC) – Marcel Bogers & Henry Chesbrough

Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) – Robert-Jan Smits

Brainport Development – John Jorritsma

