



## *Training Workshop (online)*

# Enhancing University-Business and R&D-SME Collaboration for Innovation and Growth



27<sup>th</sup> May 2025



14:00 - 17:00 PST | 09:00 - 12:00 GMT

Universities and R&D institutions have long been recognized as engines of innovation and knowledge creation. However, the growing need for sustainable and impactful research demands stronger partnerships between academia, research organizations, and industry, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). In today's competitive landscape, research faculty must adopt entrepreneurial mindsets—actively seeking industry partners, developing sustainable collaboration models, and aligning their efforts with market needs.

SMEs, which are the backbone of many economies, especially in the Global South, depend on effective R&D to drive innovation, reduce costs, and expand to international markets. Collaborative efforts with universities and R&D institutions can serve as a crucial catalyst for SMEs to access advanced knowledge, new technologies, and innovative solutions. Similarly, universities and R&D institutions can benefit from partnerships with SMEs by gaining practical insights, resources, and pathways to commercialize their research.

Recognizing the importance of fostering innovation and in response to the expressed interest of the members of the COMSATS Network of International S&T Centres of Excellence, during 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of COMSATS Coordinating Council, **COMSATS is organizing a training on “Enhancing University-Business and R&D-SME Collaboration for Innovation and Growth” on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Online).** This workshop will target researchers and scientists from relevant institutions—including universities, public and private R&D organizations, technology parks, innovation hubs, and government agencies engaged in science, technology, and industrial development—with the aim of equipping them with essential skills with essential skills to pitch their innovations, build effective collaborations with industry (MSMEs), and deepen their understanding of innovation mechanisms.

## OBJECTIVE

The specific objectives of the training workshop are as follows:

1. To equip researchers and R&D officials with the necessary skills to develop and pitch innovative research projects that are aligned with industry needs and market demands.
2. To cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset in researchers, enabling them to effectively identify potential industry partners and engage in collaborative projects that promote innovation and growth.
3. To enhance participants' understanding of the policy, governance, and funding frameworks that support

R&D-SME partnerships, and provide guidance on navigating these systems to ensure the successful commercialization of research.

4. To promote sustainable and green innovation practices by integrating green economy principles into R&D collaborations, exploring opportunities for SMEs to implement environmentally friendly solutions.
5. To build the capacity of researchers and R&D officials to address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by collaboration with SMEs, with a focus on the development of high-impact, market-ready innovations.

## THEME AREAS FOR TRAINING

The training program will focus on the following key themes, providing participants with comprehensive insights and actionable knowledge:

1. **SME Collaboration Strategies:** Effective collaboration with SMEs requires addressing common barriers and identifying shared goals. This theme will provide guidelines for fostering successful SME-university partnerships, highlighting mutual benefits and strategies to enhance collaboration. Participants will learn how to navigate challenges and leverage synergies for innovation.
2. **Green Economy and Sustainable Innovation:** Integrating green economy principles into R&D collaborations is essential for addressing global climate challenges. This theme will focus on leveraging innovation to promote sustainable practices and exploring opportunities for SMEs to adopt green solutions. Participants will gain knowledge on how R&D can contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly economy.
3. **Entrepreneurial Skills for Researchers:** Researchers must develop an entrepreneurial mindset to effectively engage with industry partners. This theme will focus on skills such as crafting compelling pitches to attract industry collaboration, identifying potential partners, and adopting an entrepreneurial approach to managing research projects. These skills will help researchers align their work with industry needs and market demands.
4. **University-Industry Collaboration (UIC):** University-Industry Collaboration is a vital driver of innovation. The training will emphasize the importance and benefits of such collaborations for advancing research and development. Participants will learn strategies for building trust and establishing sustainable partnerships with MSMEs, supported by case studies of successful UIC initiatives that highlight best practices and lessons learned.
5. **Innovation and Technology Transfer Mechanisms:** Bridging the gap between research and commercialization is critical for impactful R&D. This theme will explore technology transfer models, intellectual property (IP) management, and the roles of incubators, accelerators, and startups in fostering innovation. Participants will gain insights into transforming research outcomes into market-ready products and services.
6. **Policy and Governance Support:** Policy frameworks play a crucial role in enabling R&D-SME collaborations. This theme will cover the role of governance in fostering innovation, incentives, and funding opportunities available to support partnerships. Participants will explore strategies to align their research objectives with national development priorities, ensuring policy support for their initiatives.

## TRAINING METHODOLOGY

The online training program will utilize a dynamic mix of methodologies to ensure an engaging and impactful learning experience. Interactive lectures, conducted by subject-matter experts from academia and industry, will provide participants with foundational knowledge and practical insights into collaboration strategies. Virtual case study presentations will showcase best practices and successful models of collaboration, offering participants actionable examples. Hands-on workshops, adapted for an online setting, will focus on developing key skills such as pitching, partnership building, and intellectual property (IP) management through guided activities and interactive tools. Panel discussions featuring a diverse group of experts from universities, R&D institutions, and SMEs will

encourage in-depth dialogue and exploration of key themes. To foster networking and idea exchange, virtual breakout sessions will be organized, allowing participants to connect, share experiences, and collaborate effectively.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Participants gain an entrepreneurial mindset to approach industry collaborations.
2. Enhanced understanding of UIC and R&D-SME collaboration models.
3. Improved skills in pitching research innovations to industry.
4. Increased awareness of policy frameworks and funding opportunities.
5. Strengthened capacity to drive innovation for sustainable development.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

- Researchers and scientists from members of the COMSATS Network of Centres of Excellence.
- University faculty members involved in R&D.
- SME representatives and innovation managers.

### PROPOSED PARTNERS AND FUNDING AGENCIES

- International Network for Small and Medium Enterprises (INSME)-Italy
- Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)-Pakistan
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)-Austria
- South Centre-Geneva
- The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)- Türkiye
- Pardis Technology Park, Iran

### CONTACT AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations may be sent to the following officials. For any additional details related to the virtual workshop, please contact:

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