

Triple Helix Partnerships for innovation and economic development

At Maastricht School of Management's (MSM) Expert Centre on Emerging Economies (ECEE), our mission is to empower sustainable private sector development (PSD) in emerging markets. A thriving private sector depends on strong partnerships between academia, industry, and government to foster innovation, commercialize knowledge, and create an enabling policy environment. Triple Helix Partnerships (THPs) play a crucial role in driving local economic development by aligning research, business, and policy efforts for sustainable impact.

Why Triple Helix Partnership

Innovation is at the heart of economic growth, but it requires more than research and ideas - it needs collaboration between universities, businesses, and policymakers to turn knowledge into commercial solutions. A well-functioning Triple Helix Partnership facilitates knowledge exchange, supports research commercialization, and enhances regional economic competitiveness. Effective THPs contribute to cluster development, strengthening industries and building resilient economies by fostering entrepreneurship and industry-driven education.

Our expertise in Triple Helix development

MSM ECEE supports institutions and governments in building Triple Helix Platforms to drive innovation, local economic development, and private sector growth. Our expertise includes:

- **THP readiness assessments**
Evaluating local conditions and partner readiness to establish strong, effective partnerships.
- **Cluster development & value chain analysis**
Conducting research on economic opportunities and designing strategic plans to enhance local industries.
- **Benchmarking & study visits**
Organizing best-practice exchanges to help stakeholders learn from successful Triple Helix models.

- **Training & capacity building**

Providing executive programs, online courses, and tailor-made training to equip organizations with the skills to build and sustain THPs.

- **Hands-on THP development**

Supporting local partners in forming partnerships, creating innovation hubs, and piloting proof-of-concept innovations.

Our approach

We use a structured four-stage process to help institutions and governments build and sustain effective Triple Helix Platforms:

- **Scoping & readiness assessment**

Analysing the local environment, partner capabilities, and opportunities for innovation in key value chains.

- **Platform development & stakeholder engagement**

Convening partners, setting strategic priorities, and designing governance structures for long-term sustainability.

- **Pilot implementation**

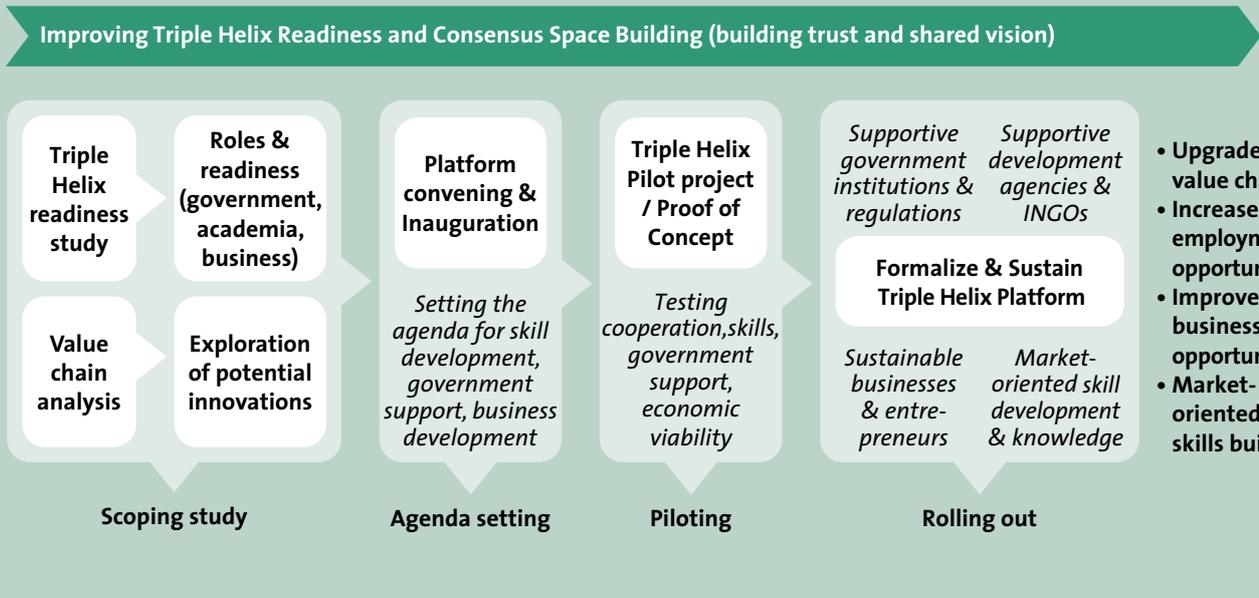
Launching proof-of-concept initiatives to test innovations and refine the THP strategy.

- **Sustaining & scaling the platform**

Strengthening trust, governance structures, and capacity to ensure long-term impact and continuous innovation.

Triple Helix in action

MSM's ECEE has successfully implemented Triple Helix Partnerships across emerging markets, driving innovation, skills development, and economic growth through collaboration between academia, industry, and government. In **Rwanda**, we developed Service, Training and Innovation Centers (STICs) to strengthen key agricultural value chains by linking vocational education, industry needs, and policy support. These centers serve as hubs for innovation, skills training, and entrepreneurship, ensuring that agricultural graduates are well-equipped for the job market.



In **Kenya**, MSM played a key role in the Itatu project which enhanced industry-driven training and university-business collaboration. By aligning education with private sector demands, the project strengthens Kenya’s competitiveness and fosters applied research, skills development, and innovation ecosystems.



In **Ethiopia**, the Bright Future in Agriculture project focused on improving the horticulture sector through capacity building, linking universities, TVET institutions, and agribusinesses to boost productivity, innovation, and employment opportunities. The project strengthened institutional partnerships to promote market-driven agricultural education.

These initiatives demonstrate how Triple Helix collaboration can transform industries, ensuring that research leads to practical innovations, businesses access skilled talent, and policies support sustainable economic growth.

What we offer

- **Executive program**
A 5-day intensive training in Maastricht (or blended learning) providing foundational skills in building and managing Triple Helix Partnerships.
- **Tailor-Made Programs**
Tailored support for organizations and governments to establish and operationalize THPs.
- **Summer course**
A specialized program for academic institutions to integrate THP concepts into graduate education.

More information

For more information or to partner with us, contact **Dr. Julius Gatune Kariuki**, Senior Project Consultant
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