

The ASKFOOD Reversed Incubator: an innovative training approach for entrepreneurial skills development and innovation in food-related sectors

Germana Di Falco¹, Ruud Verkerk², Helga Medic³, Gerhard Schleining⁴, Giorgia Sabbatini⁵, Marco Faieta⁶, Paola Pittia⁶

¹ Cassiopea (Italy), ² Wageningen University of Research (The Netherlands); ³ University of Zagreb, ⁴ ISEKI-Food Association (Austria) ⁵ FEDERALIMENTARE (Italy) ⁶

University of Teramo, Teramo (Italy)

Corresponding author: ppittia@unite.it

The food and drink industry is one of the biggest manufacturing sector in the EU and worldwide. Despite its high competitiveness, it has reached a maturity level and several factors are hindering innovation. A systemic approach involving all stakeholders and an academia-industry joint collaboration is required to tackle emerging challenges, to catch common opportunities in the job market, and to boost innovation in the food sector. Food professionals require new skills and entrepreneurial competences to meet the requirements of the current and future job market, in a continuously changing working and societal environment.

The ASKFOOD Reversed Incubator

The Erasmus+ ASKFOOD (2018-2021, www.askfood.eu) project has designed and piloted a new “Open innovation” training methodological approach to promote entrepreneurial skills, the “ASKFOOD Reversed Incubator” (ASKFOOD-RI, www.askfood.eu/reversed-incubator-0) (Fig. 1)

It aims to invert the logic with which we transform ideas into new businesses and combines training with entrepreneurial opportunities to generate innovation in food-related sectors.

Students and young talents organized in teams develop ideas based on real needs/opportunities of innovation expressed by companies, under the supervision of mentors within a co-creation project in a development framework and supported by a business-oriented training (Fig.2).

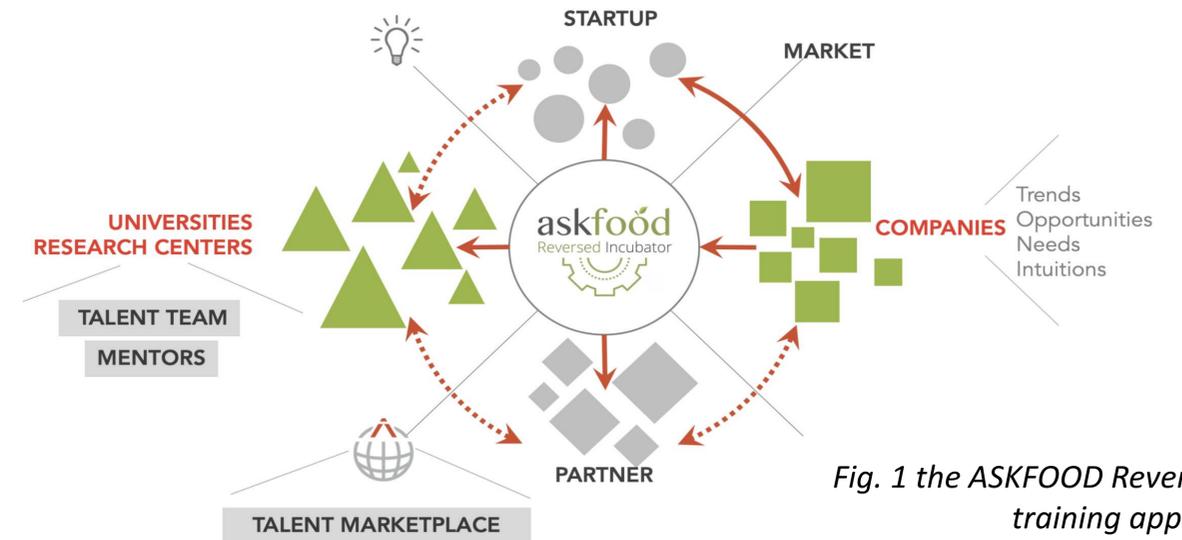


Fig. 1 the ASKFOOD Reversed Incubator training approach concept

Italy – 2019-20 & 2021 Editions

The first pilot test, carried out in Italy in 2019, involved **9 companies and start-ups** from different manufacturing sectors and **11 talent teams made of students (Bachelor, Master)** of different disciplines (Food Science and Technology, Economy & Marketing). One of the Talent Team started an incubation process. The ongoing (2021) edition involves 4 food companies and 5 Talents’ Teams

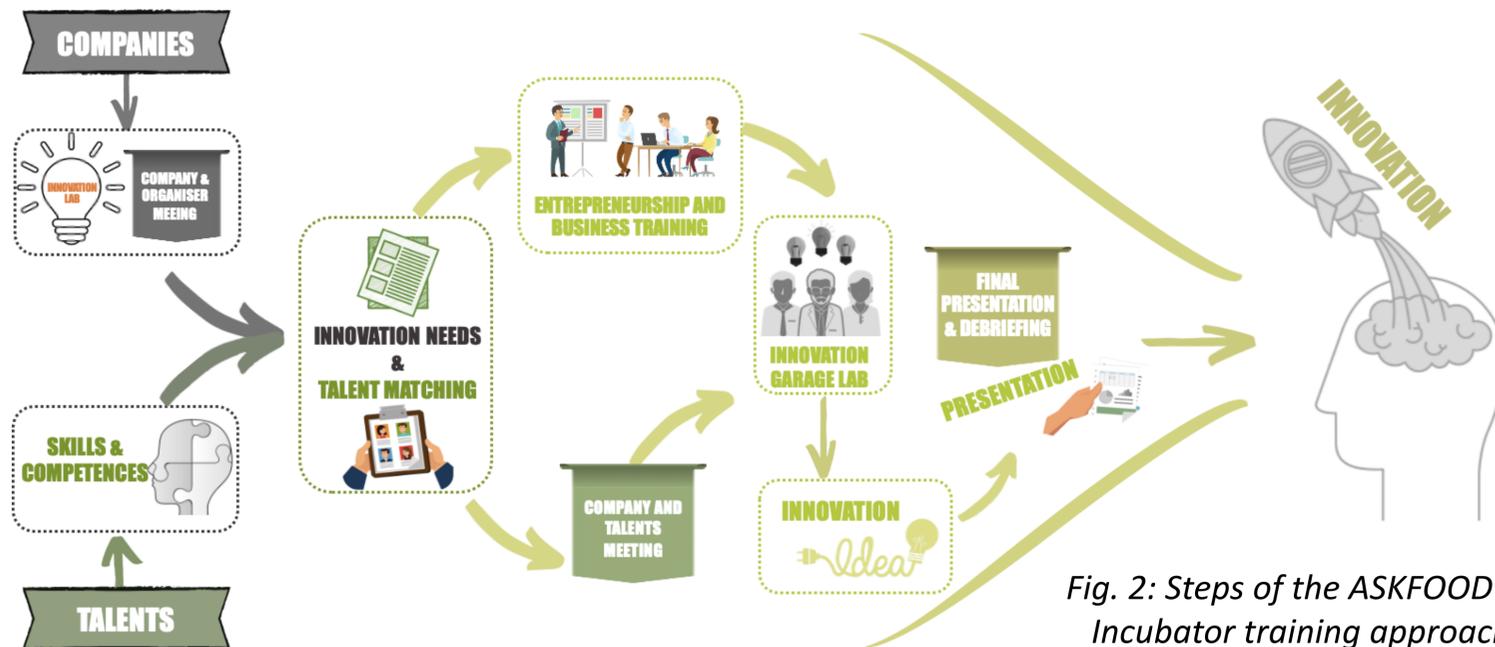
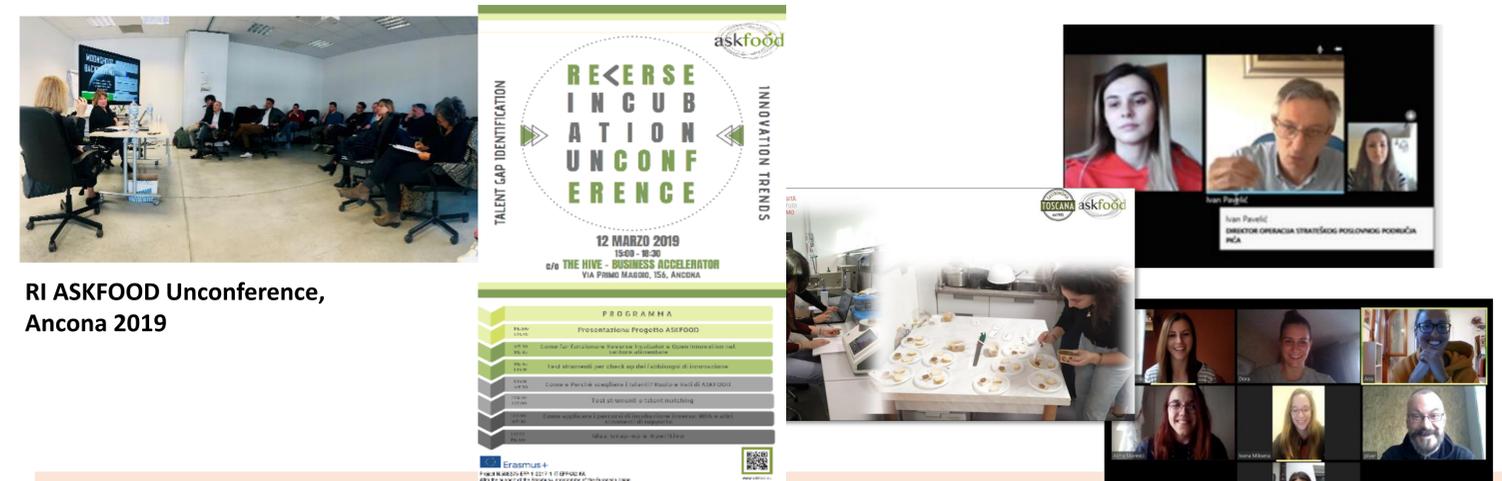


Fig. 2: Steps of the ASKFOOD Reversed Incubator training approach concept



Other Editions:

- Croatia (October 2020): 4 food companies and 3 Talent Teams
- The Netherlands (2020, 2021): in total 7 companies and 14 Talent teams