

The GIID Global Network of Innovation Districts

University Innovation Quarter (UIQ) has teamed up with an ambitious group of innovation districts worldwide to advance one of the most promising models for 21st century innovation, work and urban living.

For decades, isolated science parks and campuses defined where and how innovation was achieved. Accessible primarily by car, these environments often neglected quality of life and the integration of work, housing and recreation. UIQ, along with a select group of other districts, has joined the **GIID Global Network of Innovation Districts**, to develop and showcase a more sustainable model. Launched in March 2022, the GIID Global Network started with 23 districts and is now expanding to up to 50 innovation districts across 13 countries.

Innovation districts are physically compact urban areas, transit-accessible and technically wired, with a mix of housing, offices and retail. Leading-edge anchor institutions, companies, and centers of research excellence typically cluster within districts, connecting with startups, business incubators and accelerators. As a result, innovation districts provide the kinds of environments that today's creative institutions, firms, and workers crave—physical proximity, mixing, open spaces.

Today, large macro forces – the *de-risking* of global relationships, the *decarbonization* of the economy and the need to *diversify talent* – are transforming the role and relevance of innovation districts. These macro forces demand innovation – in technology, in financial products, in regulatory policies, in business processes, in collaboration between universities, companies, startups, investors, skills providers, governments and adjacent communities. This innovation imperative, in turn, places a high premium on innovation districts where disparate players can come together to invent, test, adapt and prototype a broad range of solutions across multiple dimensions, specialized sectors, and stakeholders.

The GIID Global Network maximizes the potential of innovation districts by leveraging high-quality research and sharing best practices from ambitious districts around the world. These insights will help governments and investors understand how to turn innovation districts into engines of economic development, social inclusion and investment.

The participating innovation districts span Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, Australia, and Asia. They are addressing a wide range of issues, including, but not limited to, how best to leverage their unique R&D strengths and niches, develop financially-sustainable governance models, accelerate ambitious efforts to attract industry and investment and coordinate organized responses to climate change.

Through the GIID Global Network, district leaders are sharing strategies for organizing innovation districts around, for example, governance and finance, and exploring ways to

expand employment and educational opportunities for disadvantaged populations in an equitable and inclusive manner. They are also considering different approaches to create high-quality environments where diverse populations can enjoy living, working and playing, all in a compact setting.

“In-depth research and on-the-ground practice demonstrate that successful innovation districts rely on a delicate balance between leveraging unique local assets and leading with intentionality. Strategic engagements with other districts around the world that are experimenting and driving cutting-edge practice provide the key to unlocking such intentionality. This is the value of the Global Network,” shared Julie Wagner, President of The Global Institute on Innovation Districts.

Over the next year, UIQ will participate in the Connect program, a highly-curated initiative co-designed with innovation district leaders to foster new, impactful connections within a global community of districts at various stages of development. This program is crafted to equip leaders with data-driven insights and a deeper understanding of each district’s unique strengths and challenges, helping refine strategies for growth. It also offers valuable peer-exchange opportunities to help leaders navigate the complexity and fast-changing dynamism of innovation districts. Additionally, UIQ will gain exclusive access to GIID’s empirical research and a nuanced, longitudinal analysis of district progression, uncovering key factors and interventions that accelerate growth while learning from stalled efforts.

The Global Institute on Innovation Districts

The Global Institute is an independent, global-reaching research organization dedicated to the growth of innovation districts worldwide. It has a multi-disciplinary team of researchers and practitioners, including leaders who have worked exclusively to advance innovation districts over the past 15 years. The Global Institute is led by its co-founder, Julie Wagner, who drew the world’s attention to the growing impact of innovation districts by co-authoring “The Rise of Innovation Districts”, a report published in 2014 by the Brookings Institution. Subsequently, Wagner has co-authored key research to codify this evolving model of place-based innovation, notably “The Evolution of innovation Districts: The New Geography of Global Innovation”, published by the GIID in 2019. Find out more: www.giid.org

To learn more about the new learning programs that GIID is launching for districts in the Global Network, click here: <https://www.giid.org/global-network/>