

Entrepreneurial thinking the key to Scotland's growth

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Students are being encouraged to develop seedling business ideas in a bid to boost entrepreneurial thinking in Scotland's future workforce, drive business innovation and growth.

Enterprising Scottish students came together to develop their business ideas on Saturday (16 February) at Scottish Institute for Enterprise's (SIE) Fresh Ideas Exploration Day, building key entrepreneurial and business skills in the process.

The event, the second stage of SIE's Fresh Ideas competition, brought together its monthly prize winners and highly commended projects, with the intention of exploring ideas further through collaboration with other young innovators and entrepreneurs.

Attendees were invited to network with other young entrepreneurs, as well as work in groups to discuss their ideas and develop business models and audience targeting. The day ended with each individual delivering a 20-second business pitch to all attendees.

The day also included talks by Mel Sherwood, pitching and public speaking expert, and Martina Zupan, 2018 winner of the Fresh Ideas competition and founder of Alterwaste, developers of a fully compostable material made from eggshells, designed to replace plastic.

Students now have the opportunity to re-submit their ideas based on what they've learned at the event, with finalists being shortlisted and invited to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges on 9 March. Winners will be announced at an awards dinner attended by industry leaders, entrepreneurs and former winners on 28 March.

SIE is funded by the Scottish Funding Council to inspire entrepreneurial ventures in students and to build on enterprise skills for their working lives.

Jonathan Tait, senior business innovation advisor at SIE, said: "Too often we see young people believing their ideas aren't good enough, or they don't have the skills to develop a legitimate business.

"This couldn't be further from the truth, as many of us already have the entrepreneurial skills needed to succeed, such as a can-do attitude, problem solving skills and the will to keep learning.

"We're trying to show young people that with a little bit of confidence and a solid support network, ideas can really take off. SIE has already helped some of Scotland's most

promising businesses, including fully compostable material developer Alterwaste, and MindMate, a brain training app specifically developed for those with dementia or Alzheimer's.

“Their success should be a reminder to young innovators that every business starts from a great idea.

“Even if some of these ideas don't develop into fully formed businesses, we hope students will take what they've learned into their next project or career move. Entrepreneurialism is the key to keeping Scotland's business ecosystem buoyant and one step ahead of the curve.”

Martina Zupan, founder of Alterwaste, said: “The Fresh Ideas competition helped me build valuable skills and a solid network of contacts. It's very helpful to chat through your ideas and issues with people at a similar stage to you in the entrepreneurial process, and if you're open to constructive criticism, you and your business idea are more likely to flourish.

“I'm very grateful to SIE for helping me develop Alterwaste from a seedling idea to the business it is becoming.”

For more information about Fresh Ideas, visit <https://www.sie.ac.uk/freshideas>

Click here to find out more about [Alterwaste](#) and [MindMate](#).

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Notes to editors:

About SIE: The Scottish Institute for Enterprise is the national organisation for the promotion and support of enterprise and entrepreneurship in Scotland's students. SIE works with Universities and Colleges to champion enterprise education and help their students start new innovative businesses. Since 2000, SIE has provided free one-to-one advice, enterprise workshops and business competitions. SIE's services are open to all students and graduates in Scotland, up to two years after graduation. SIE is supported by the Scottish Funding Council and is part of the Scotland CAN DO framework. For more information about SIE, go to: www.sie.ac.uk

About the Fresh Ideas competition:

Fresh Ideas is SIE's main enterprise competition and is intended to recognise and support early stage ideas. The annual competition runs monthly from October to January with the overall winners announced at the SIE Awards Dinner in March. The competition includes special awards recognising Scottish Government priority areas. Fresh Ideas 2018-19 is sponsored by Marks & Clerk.

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