



The Interface Center in Algerian Universities: Future Outlooks and Ambitions (Business Incubator, Entrepreneurship Development Center, Technology and Innovation Support Center, University-Business Liaison Office)

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Abstract:

This study aims to highlight the role of the Interface Center (Consultation, Research, and Development Office) and its various units—namely the Business Incubator, the Entrepreneurship Development Hub, the Technology and Innovation Assistance Center, and the University-Business Liaison Office—within Algerian universities. The findings demonstrate that these centers were established To promote communication between universities and economic and social entities by encouraging the transmission of knowledge and technology from higher education and scientific research institutions to various actors in the national economy. These actors include economic institutions, as well as administrative, social, cultural, and sports bodies. This is achieved through technical assistance, consultations, studies, training, and activities associated with disseminating applied research results. The centers strive to commercialize these results, contribute to their sale, exploitation, or transformation into subsidiaries, startups, or micro-enterprises. The ultimate goal is to make these resources available to economic institutions, administrative bodies, or any other entities interested in benefiting from them, thereby facilitating the integration of university and higher education center graduates into the development cycle at both local and national levels.

Keywords: Interface; Business Incubator; Center; Entrepreneurship; University; Institutions; Technology; Innovation.

JEL Classification Codes: L26 ; M13 ; I23 ; M51.

1-Introduction:

In line with the actions taken by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to create the necessary conditions for advancing technological development and innovation, as well as to support and promote projects with social and economic impact, the ministry has adopted a policy aimed at increasing communication and increasing cooperation between the university and its economic and social surroundings. This effort aims to create a genuine and effective partnership that leverages science and knowledge in the service of economic development at both local and national levels.

The primary objective of increasing communication between the university and economic and social institutions is to facilitate the integration of university graduates into the development cycle at local and national levels, recognizing that these institutions offer real employment opportunities.

From this perspective, the university is now tasked with providing a high-quality education that meets the requirements of the job market within its social and economic environment. The training offered to students is a crucial component that supports their future professional integration. To achieve this, the university has established the Interface Center (Consultation, Research, and Development Office), which comprises several units dedicated to maintaining communication with economic and social sectors.

These units include the Business Incubator, the Center of Entrepreneurship Development, the Center of Technology and Innovation Assistance, and the Office of University-Business Liaison.

Therefore, this study aims to address the following problem statement:

What is the role of the Interface Center in Algerian universities? What are the primary units it comprises?

Based on this problem statement, the study is divided into the following sections:

- **The Interface Center in Algerian Universities: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks.**
- **The Business Incubator: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks.**
- **The Entrepreneurship Development Center: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks.**
- **The Technology and Innovation Support Center: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks.**
- **The University-Business Liaison Office: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks.**

2. The Interface Center in Algerian Universities: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks: (Ministerial Decision No 215, 2023) (Circular No. 03/A/2024)

2.1 Concept of the Interface Center in Algerian Universities:

Ministerial Decree No. 215, dated December 24, 2023, defines the procedures for establishing an interface called the "Consultation, Research, and Development Office" within higher education and scientific research institutions, referred to in the text as the "Interface." According to the relevant legislation and regulations, and based on its needs, the Interface can include a diverse range of personnel and specializations from the following categories:

- Permanent professors and specialized research professors, especially in management, sociology, technology, sciences, and computer science;
- University students from various levels or holders of higher education degrees;
- Independent researchers from within or outside the country, in accordance with applicable laws;
- Professional and technical staff.

2.2 Objectives of the Interface Center in Algerian Universities:

- Determining various challenges encountered by economic and social stakeholders, as well as administrative entities, and propose suitable solutions and follow-up mechanisms;
- Promoting the value of applied research, scientific studies, patents, and several research products with added value carried out by research professors, permanent researchers, and students;
- Facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology from higher education and scientific research institutions to various national economic actors, encompassing economic institutions and administrative, social, cultural, and sports bodies. This is achieved through technical assistance, consultations, studies, training, and all activities associated with disseminating applied research results, endeavoring to commercialize them, and contributing to their sale, exploitation, or transformation into subsidiaries, startups, or micro-enterprises. These resources are made available to economic institutions, administrative bodies, or other entities interested in benefiting from them for a fee.

2.3 Tasks of the Interface Center in Algerian Universities:

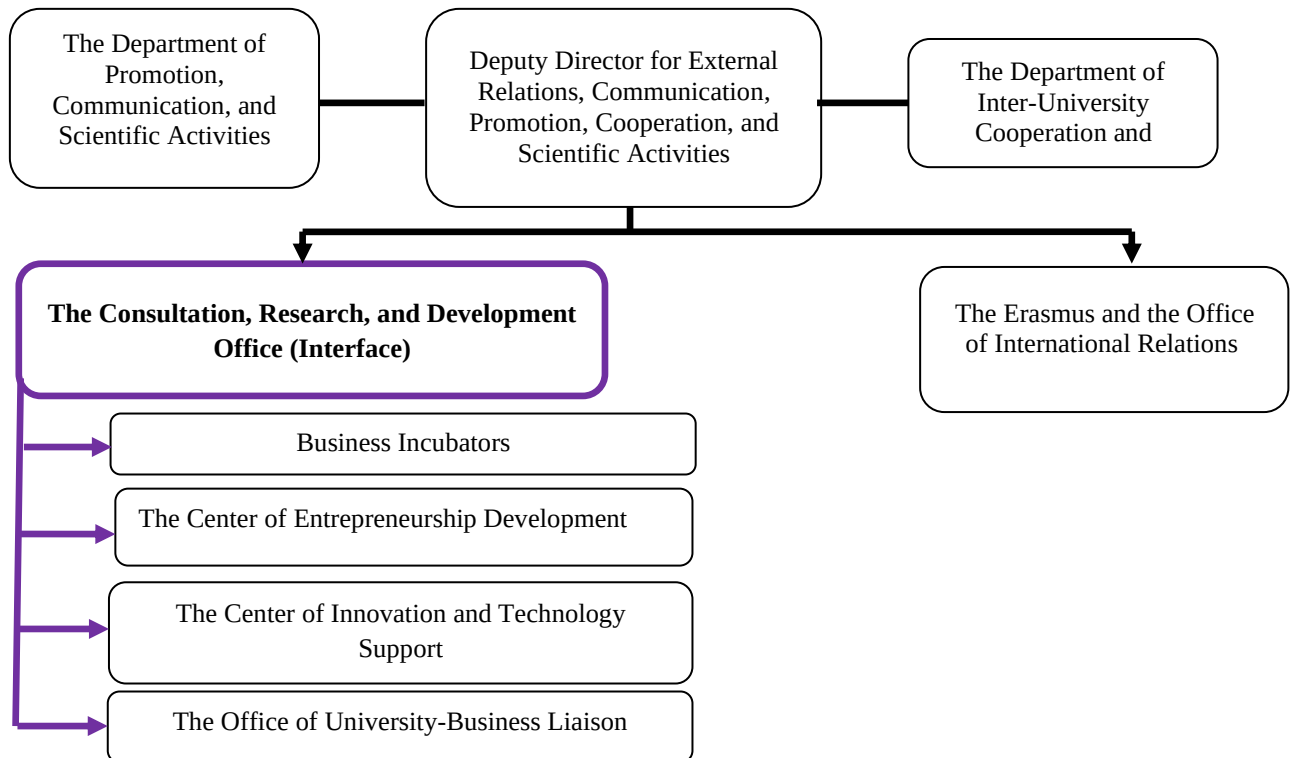
The Interface connects higher education and scientific research organizations with the economic and social surroundings. . In this context, it is responsible, according to applicable legislation and regulations, for the following:

- Determining challenges and difficulties faced by economic and social stakeholders and administrative bodies, proposing solutions, and monitoring their application;
- Managing consulting services offered by higher education institutions;
- Marketing short training courses and relevant capacity-building programs provided by higher education institutions;
- Increasing knowledge among instructors, scholars, and students in higher education and scientific research organizations about the importance of their research and breakthroughs to the economic and social environment.
- Assisting in managing intellectual and industrial property (patents, trademarks, industrial designs, copyrights, and related rights) at the national and international levels and their commercialization;
- Continuously coordinating with technology support centers, university business incubators, entrepreneurship development centers, research laboratories, research centers, and technology platforms to promote the value of their scientific and innovative products by finding local, national, or international markets for them in exchange for financial compensation;

- Marketing and negotiating on behalf of professors, researchers, and students to transfer their technical research and innovations to economic and social partners;
- Administering disputes associated with the intellectual and industrial property of scientific research results;
- Offering consultations, expertise, and studies in the area of specialization of the affiliated institution;
- Conducting training courses, skill enhancement programs, and information renewal sessions;
- Organizing competitions, exams, tests, and professional assessments.

The interface may also engage in manufacturing and other income-generating activities identified by higher education and scientific research institutions.

Fig.1. The Organizational Structure of the Interface Center in Algerian Universities.



Source: the Interface Center in Ghardaia University

3. Business Incubator: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks: (Decree No. 12-293, 2012) (Decision No. 1428 , 2022)

3.1 Concept of the Business Incubator:

According to Article 11 of Executive Decree 12-293, a university business incubator is a structure designed to host and support an innovative project directly associated with research. It helps the project owner achieve his idea and demonstrates its long-term feasibility, offering training, consulting, and funding support while guiding them through establishing the business.

Business incubators are also defined as services under the supervision of the university, affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education, and under the authority of the Directorate General for Scientific Research and Technological Growth. It monitors and guiding university students to transform them into highly competent entrepreneurs with distinguished scientific and professional skills. The startup incubator seeks to attract, nurture, and guide people who have innovative and creative ideas, assisting in turning them into productive economic projects. The main goal is to develop profitable startups which contribute to economic development and diversifying of exports.

The business incubator supports projects as they transition from the activity stage to the growth stage of business enterprises. It provides entrepreneurs and experts with the necessary information to ensure the success of their projects, helping them overcome obstacles commonly faced by small business owners, particularly in the early stages, until the project is completed and graduates from the incubation stage.

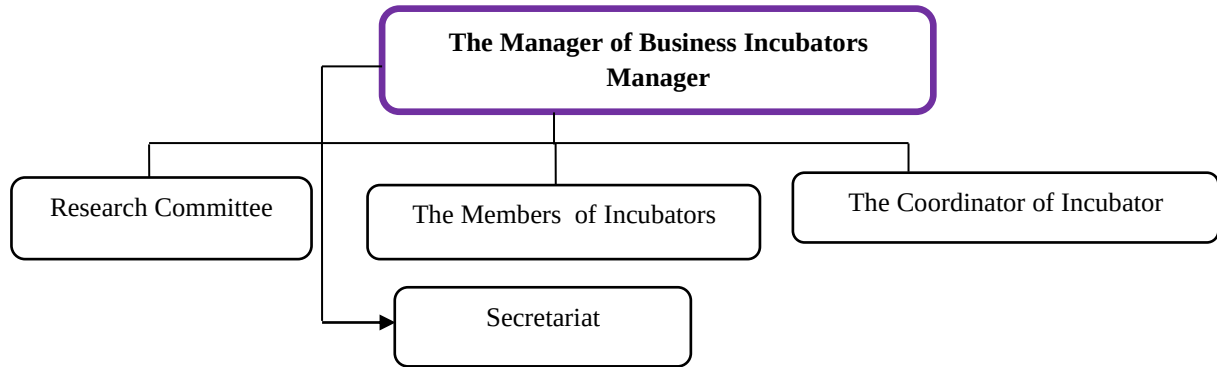
3.2 Business Incubator Objectives:

The incubator plays a crucial role in development and seeks to support startups from technical, administrative, and financial perspectives. This ensures that these startups can withstand intense international competition and persist despite their challenges and difficulties.

3.3 Business Incubator Tasks:

- Attracting and select individuals with creative and innovative ideas;
- Increasing the survival rate of startups and improve entrepreneurial activity;
- Offering training and development, including the application of the Business Model Canvas (BMC);
- Providing instruction and development, particularly the use of the Canvas of Business Model (BMC);
- Encouraging and mentoring persons with innovative and distinctive ideas;
- Providing legal counsel and judicial experience;
- Offering scientific and technical experience and develop the innovative and creative types of initial projects;
- Providing agreements and making them accessible to owners of innovative projects.
- Building connections and partnerships with relevant organizations for startup accreditation and patent registration.
- Instruction in efficient communication strategies, leadership, and marketing;
- Analyzing the behavior of individuals and organizations within an institutional framework
- Providing financial support and funding for project owners who have obtained the LABEL certification;
- Offering spaces for activities and work for startups;
- Organizing study days, conferences, and training sessions associated with startups and entrepreneurship (for students and professors);
- Motivating professors and researchers to support students in launching private businesses and generating job opportunities.
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Fig.2. the organizational frame work of the Startup Incubators.



Source: the Business Incubator in Ghardaia University

Incubation is overseen by a director nominated by the Rector. The former is picked from among academics that have necessary credentials and are eager to manage and mentor. The team consists of academics, administrative personnel, and employees. As a result, the university serves as the president of the business incubator. The head of the Coordination and Follow-up Unit for Ministerial Decision 1275 is charged for collaborating with the incubators director to implement the annual program and work plan developed at the start of the academic year.

4. Entrepreneurship Development Center: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks: (Executive Decree No. 23-410 , 2023)

The Entrepreneurship House at the university has been transformed into the Centre of Entrepreneurship Development (CDE) as part of the university's engagement with the economic and social environment and in accordance with several partnership agreements between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, startups, and micro-enterprises sought at assisting and strengthening university students with investment ideas.

4.1 Definition of the Development of Entrepreneurship Centre (CDE):

The Development of Entrepreneurship Centre is a framework intended to accommodate and help students and graduates from higher education and research institutes with projects. It helps them achieve their ideas and establish their micro-enterprises. According to the collaboration agreement between the Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Knowledge Economy, startups and micro-enterprises The opening of the Entrepreneurship Development Centres was announced during the National Student Entrepreneur Conference held on July 13, 2023, at the International Conference Center. These centers replace the previous Entrepreneurship Houses in Algerian universities (totaling 100), with the centers established in numerous universities. On November 20, 2023, the Entrepreneurship Development Center was categorized as a joint research service under Executive Decree No. 23-410, dated November 20, 2023, which amends Executive Decree No. 12-293, dated July 21, 2012, Addressing the responsibilities, organization, and operation of collaborative research services in scientific and technology disciplines.

In addition to planning awareness-raising activities to boost entrepreneurial spirit in the educational institutions, the Center of Entrepreneurship Development is responsible for providing formation to improve skills in entrepreneurship, particularly in the fundamentals of entrepreneurship, strategic planning, growth of businesses, management of operations, management of resources, creation of a company, legal issues, and growth plans.

4.2 Objectives of the Entrepreneurship Development Center (CDE):

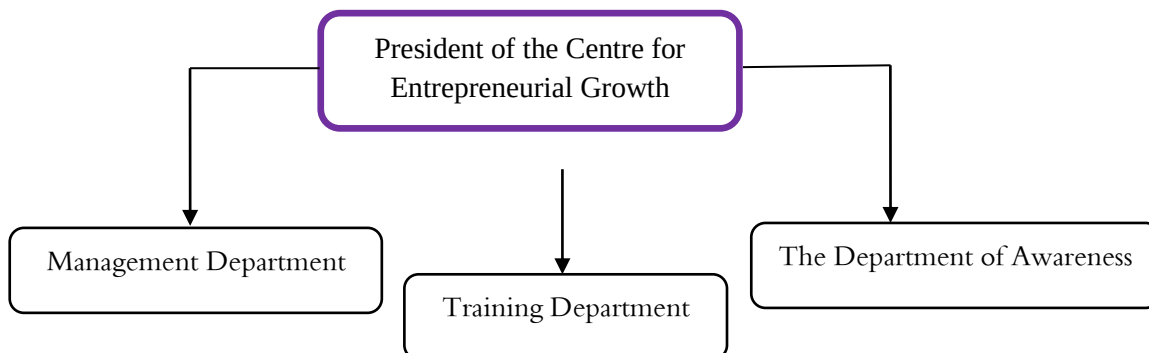
The center seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

- **Informational/Awareness Objective:** To raise awareness among university students about the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship (establishing a culture of entrepreneurship among students);
- **Guidance Objective (Mentoring):** To guide students towards creating projects that align with their goals and aspirations;
- **Training Objective:** To ensure comprehensive training for students in the field of entrepreneurship;
- **Economic Objective:** To drive development and positively contribute to the national economy by supporting the creation of wealth-generating projects.

4.3 Objectives of the Development of Entrepreneurship Centre (CDE):

- Organizing several seminars and awareness-raising activities to attract students with investment ideas;
- Offering necessary consultation to university students concerning entrepreneurship;
- Organizing competitions and specialized training sessions on topics such as business establishment, business management, relationships with various stakeholders (shareholders, funders, customers, suppliers, tax authorities, social security, etc.), financing methods, and government assistance plans;
- Collaborating with the startup incubators, the Innovation and Technology Assistance Centre, and the Office for University-Economic and Social Environment Liaison to offer comprehensive services for numerous investment projects.

Fig.3. Organizational Frame work of the Development of Entrepreneurship Centre (CDE).



Source: the Entrepreneurship Development Center in Ghardaia University

5. Innovative Technology Supporting Centre: Concept, Goals, and Duties Innovative Technology Supporting Centre (CATI): (Ministerial Decision No 215, 2023)

5.1 Definition of the Innovative Technology Supporting Centre (CATI):

The institution developed the Centre for Technology and Innovation Supporting Centre (CATI) as part of a collaboration arrangement with Algeria's National Institute for Industrial Intellectual Property (INAPI).

This partnership outlines the conditions and terms for creating the center to ensure that its services align with the needs of users, encompassing professors, researchers, and students, in the domain of technological information, while also ensuring the protection of their industrial property.

The center offers access to high-quality technological information and related services, aiding users in leveraging their innovative capabilities, establishing intellectual property rights, and protecting and managing these rights.

5.2 Objectives of the Technology and Innovation Support Center (CATI):

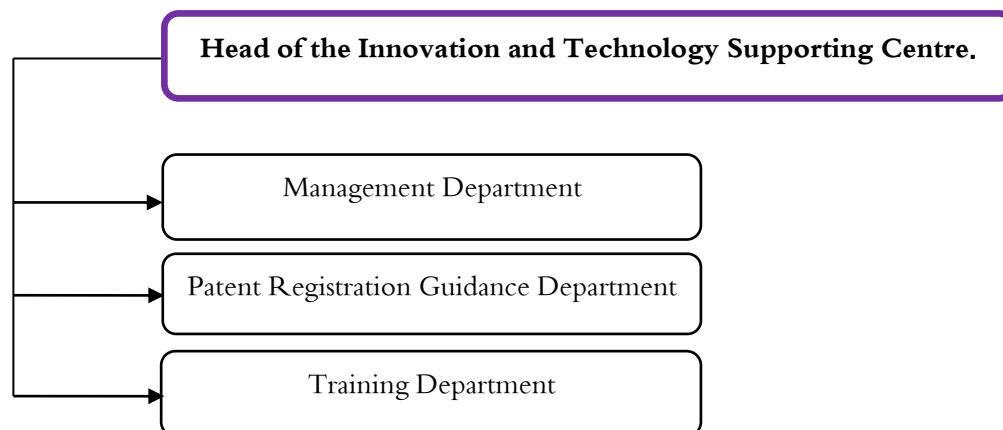
- Creating an environment that supports innovation and technological advancement;
- Offering support and assistance services for project holders, enhance the culture of trademark registration and protection, and facilitate access to scientific and technical resources;
- Supporting activities associated with technology transfer and training;
- Bolstering activities related to technology and innovation at the university;
- Fostering the realization of scientific research outcomes and creative work at the university;
- Contributing to valorizing scientific research results and innovations in coordination with several institutions and organizations.

5.3 Tasks of the Innovative Technology Supporting Centre (CATI):

Through the creation of the Innovative Technology Supporting Centre (CATI), the government's Ministry of Higher Education and Research in Science aspires to achieve the following goals:

- Providing access to electronic sources of patents and associated academic and commercial property articles.
- Participating with the search and retrieval of technical information
- Offering formation on database searches;
- Offering basic information on intellectual and industrial property laws, management, strategies, and technology exploitation and commercialization;
- Facilitating the patent application process;
- Providing guidance on how to file patent applications, trademarks, industrial designs, etc., and assist in drafting and filing applications both nationally and internationally;
- Supporting and assist researchers in developing their ideas for patents;
- Offering necessary training in intellectual and industrial property and patents;
- Collaborating and exchange expertise with all institutions and organizations related to the mission of centre.
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Fig.4. The Organizational Framework of Innovative Technology Supporting Centre (CATI).



Source: the Technology and Innovation Support Center in Ghardaia University.

6. University-Business Liaison Office: Concept, Objectives, and Tasks: (Ministerial Decision No 215, 2023)

6.1 Concept of University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE):

University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE) links the university with economic institutions. It includes a group of university members under the national project policy PAPS-ESRS, which supports the sectoral policy for higher education and scientific research. This policy highlights close and permanent partnerships with the European Union to modernize university training and align its outcomes with market demands and socio-economic sector needs, enhancing scientific research and promoting employment opportunities.

6.2 Objectives and Strategies of University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE):

- Establishing a functional center (CDE) and a club (CRE) in collaboration with the International Labour Office;
- Building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between the university and the socio-economic sector;
- Forming agreements within the pedagogical framework and employment potential with research laboratories and companies;
- Mapping and cataloguing economic institutions in the region;
- Creating a labour observatory;
- Addressing community issues and linking them with the university's research projects;
- Cataloguing and evaluating innovative projects;
- Supporting graduates in starting their small businesses.

6.3 Tasks of University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE):

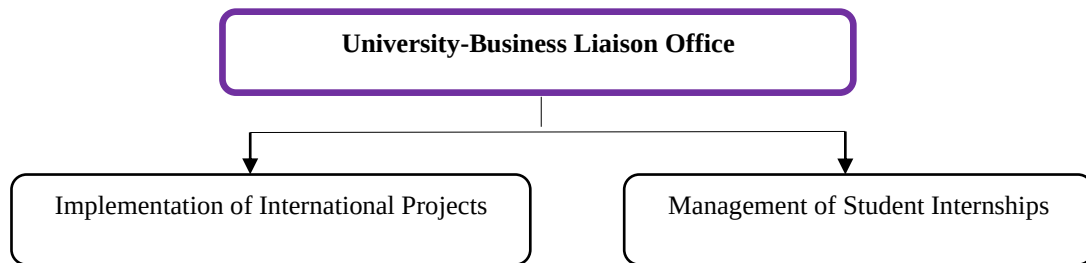
The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research seeks to fulfill the following through the creation of University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE):

- Strengthening relationships between the university and economic institutions;
- Enhancing employability;

- Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Setting goals with credibility in collaboration with partners;
- Institutionalizing relationships between the university and economic institutions;
- Preparing for global changes in the labour market and research fields;
- Developing relational networks;
- Collaborating with all researchers and scientific clubs;
- Facilitating students' internships in economic institutions at the end of their training periods;
- Participating in national and international competitions;
- Defining profiles and specialities required in the labour market;

Collaborating with several leading committees: provincial, district, municipal, Chamber of Commerce (CCI), provincial executive directorates, ANEM, CNAC, DAS, associations, etc.

Fig.5. The Organizational Structure of University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE).



Source: University-Business Liaison Office in Ghardaia University.

7-Conclusion:

The higher education sector is working to implement national strategies sought at enhancing economic competitiveness and supporting technology. This is being achieved through measures that encourage innovation and improve the impact of research by connecting universities to social and economic organizations. A number of findings were obtained:

- The university liaison centre bridges universities and research institutes with their social and economic surroundings.
- The university linkage centre helps to transmit technology and knowledge from institutions of higher learning and research to various national economic organizations.
- The business incubator focuses on mentoring and supporting university students to make them highly skilled and distinguished entrepreneurs.
- The Entrepreneurship Development Center (CDE) is dedicated to fostering an entrepreneurial culture within the academic environment.
- University-Business Liaison Office (BLUE) seeks to increase awareness, offer advice and formation, and make links between the university and its economic and social surroundings.
- The Technology and Innovation Support Center (CATI) was established to encourage, develop, and stimulate creative and innovative capacities.

8. Bibliography List:

- Circular No. 03/A/2024 regarding the creation of a subsidiary institution in the form of an "Office of Consulting and Research and Development."

- Decision No. 1428 concerning the establishment of business incubators at university institutions.
- Decree No. 12-293 that defines the functions, organization, and management of shared research services
- Executive Decree No. 23-410 which amends Executive Decree No. 12-293 dated 2 Ramadan 1433 (July 21, 2012) that defines the functions, organization, and management of shared research services.
- Ministerial Decision No 215 which specifies the procedures for establishing an "Office of Consulting and Research and Development" at higher education institutions.
- <https://www.univ-ghardaia.edu.dz>