

Innovation Ecosystems / Electives / 2026

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FACULTY INFORMATION

Name, Title	Juan Pablo Madiedo M. Associate Professor
Email address	madiedomontanez@rsm.nl
LinkedIn/RSM profile	www.linkedin.com/in/juan-pablo-madiedo-289a3ab
Preferred contact	Schedule an appointment via email.

FACULTY BIO

Juan Madiedo is Associate Professor at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. He is also director of Erasmus Centre for Innovation and RSM's MSc in Management of Innovation Program. In his research he focuses on the role of managers in the performance of the projects of the firm. More specifically, his works investigate how different types of experience accumulated by managers in their role influence the way in which organizations accumulate and leverage different sources of knowledge at their disposal. His research has appeared in leading academic journals, and featured in the Harvard Business Review – Deusto. He regularly engages with international organizations on their innovation and operations management related challenges.

ABSTRACT

In a world of deep technical interdependence, competitive advantage is no longer a solo sport. This course provides a high-stakes executive playbook for navigating complex, multi-partner environments where you must collaborate to innovate without losing your strategic edge.

Designed for leaders at the intersection of operations, engineering, and strategy, this elective moves beyond traditional "Make vs. Buy" logic to master Ecosystem Architecture. Through the lens of contemporary leaders like Nvidia, Google, and ASM, we will dissect the real-world mechanics of Power and Protection. You will learn to audit platform governance, engineer "Knowledge Firewalls" to guard your IP, and solve the "Cold Start" problem to trigger network effects.

Stop reacting to the market's shifts. Learn to design the structures that define your industry's future.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Learning areas	Educational Goals: Upon completion of the course, participants will be able to...
I. Content- related	Define primary roles within an innovation ecosystem.
	Identify the governance rules that control innovation partner behaviour.
	Identify the assets that create strategic leverage within an innovation ecosystem.
II. Skills-related	Evaluate power dynamics in an innovation ecosystem.
	Design tools to protect proprietary IP.
	Diagnose the health of an innovation partnership.
III. Attitude-related	Question the risks of maintaining total internal control.
	Assume the perspective of partners towards innovation collaborative efforts.

TEACHING METHODS AND WORKLOAD

The course follows a "Theory-to-Tool" methodology designed for senior professionals. It prioritizes the application of strategic frameworks to the students' actual business environments over passive content consumption.

Challenge-Based Learning: We use high-stakes, real-world cases to simulate the trade-offs executives face in complex ecosystems.

Active Collaborative Learning: Classroom time is split between brief "Anchor Lectures" and intensive group-based mapping sessions. Students work in multidisciplinary teams to solve the likes of "Cold Start" and "IP Protection" challenges.

Student-Centered Application: The primary "textbook" is the student's own professional context. Classroom tools—like the Knowledge Firewall and Leverage Map—are applied directly to their own organizations.

Facilitated Co-Creation: The instructor acts as a strategic facilitator, helping students pressure-test their "Strategic Ecosystem Dossier" through peer review and expert feedback (including guest sessions from industry leaders).

Description	Calculation	Total
In-Class sessions:	6 x 3 hours	18 hours
Class Preparation:	18 x 2	36 hours
Individual Assignment		30 hours
Total Course Hours		84 Total hours
EC (Number of study credits)	3 x 28	84 Total hours

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Course: Innovation Ecosystems		Assessment formats		
Educational goals per course:		Ecosystem Strategy Dossier	Critical Strategy Review	Total
After following this course, students will be able to:				
Define primary roles within an innovation ecosystem.		X		
Identify the governance rules that control innovation partner behaviour.		X		
Identify the assets that create strategic leverage within an innovation ecosystem.		X		
Evaluate power dynamics in an innovation ecosystem.		X		
Design tools to protect proprietary IP.		X		
Diagnose the health of an innovation partnership.		X		
Question the risks of maintaining total internal control.		X		
Assume the perspective of partners towards innovation collaborative efforts.			X	
Weighting factor		70%	30%	100%
Minimum grade required		5.5*	5.5	5.5
When failed, resit option within academic year (Yes/No)**		Yes	Yes	
Form of examination (e.g. MC, Open-book, etc.)		Essay	Essay	
Group / Individual assessment (Group/Individual)		Individual	Individual	

In order to pass the course, each assessment or deliverable (component grade) with a resit option, needs to be at least 5.5. Components with no resit option bear no minimum grade required, but to pass the overall course, the final grade needs to be at least 5.5.

Grades are rounded according to the rounding provisions included in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) of the programme, and are expressed with 1 decimal point. Not meeting the minimum grade required for either a component grade or the overall course grade determines a fail for the course. Participants can resit a failed component only once. There is no capping of the grade for a resit examination. The only exception is when the nature of the failed assignment allows for an improvement effort of the same assignment (capped at 5.5 for that component).

For this particular course, both individual assignments **allow for an improvement effort in case failed (capped at 5.5)**

Grade penalties for unauthorized late submissions will be automatically imposed. Penalties for unauthorised late submissions range from 10% to 20% deduction from the examination component depending on the hours/days late. Unauthorised late submissions 4 days or longer after the deadline without prior notification and a reasonable explanation for the late submission, will not be accepted.

Attendance is mandatory and a requirement to pass the course. Missing classes and arriving late may result in grading penalties and even a fail for the course.

Fraud, Plagiarism / Self-plagiarism (Refer to separate RSM Code of Conduct, Rules and Guidelines, and Teaching and Examination Regulations)

The Examination Board defines fraud as *“the action or negligence of a student because of which it is impossible, entirely, or partially, to form a correct judgment about the knowledge, insight, and skills of them or another student”* (R&Gs and TERs). Examples of fraud are cheating, cribbing, plagiarism, freeriding in a team assignment, availability of unauthorized (study) material during a test such as mobile phones, contract cheating/outsourcing/ghost-writing, unauthorized use of generative AI, identity fraud, theft.

Confirmed cases of fraud/plagiarism will lead to (appropriate and proportional) sanctions as defined by the Examination Board in the Rules and Guidelines (R&G). Repetitive cases of fraud/plagiarism lead to expulsion from the programme.

Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarising of the work of another person or group without acknowledgment, including submission of another student’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else.

Using ideas from your own prior work (assignment) without referencing the work in your assignment is considered self-plagiarism.

Participants are required to adhere to the 6 principles outlined in the RSM AI guidelines with regard to the use of Artificial Intelligence Platforms such as ChatGPT and related software/tools. The unauthorised use constitutes violation of plagiarism/ fraud policy.

For this particular course, the faculty promotes **an embraced use of AI**.

For more information about academic integrity and AI please refer to the Programme's Teaching and Examination Regulations and RSM AI guidelines documents on the Student Hub.

Assessment / Deliverable:	Individual or group:	(Due) date and hand in location:	% of final grade:
Ecosystem Strategy Dossier	Individual	TBD	70 %
Critical Strategy Review	Individual	TBD	30 %

For all Canvas submissions, please make sure to include the student name, EUR student number, and programme name within the document itself (on the cover page), and your initials, EUR student number, and programme name in the title of the file submission

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S) AND READINGS

There is no need to buy a textbook. The readings per session are listed below. You are required to do all the readings in advance and to contribute to class discussion. Note that this course is not about covering material, but it is about uncovering and discovering insights. You should read each article, note its main takeaways, and offer a detailed critique and extensions. If you are short of time, make sure that you read the case. I expect each of you to steer the discussion to create a more interactive learning environment.

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1: Friday, 4 September – 18:30-21:30	
Topics:	The Strategic Bet: Control vs. Reach Most firms prefer control, but control can come at a cost: slower access to markets, weaker data positions, limited scale, and reduced influence over emerging standards. This session examines when it makes strategic sense to operate independently and when ecosystem participation becomes the smarter move. Participants will work with a practical decision tool to assess the upside and risk of ecosystem participation. Core question: When is collaboration worth the loss of control? Session output: A defensible go/no-go argument for ecosystem engagement.
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 2: Saturday, 5 September – 9:30-12:30

Topics:	Position of Power: Where Do You Sit? Entering an ecosystem is not enough. The real question is whether your organization enters from a position of strength or becomes another replaceable participant. This session focuses on how firms identify the assets, capabilities, interfaces, or relationships that give them leverage. Participants will assess whether their organization is best positioned as a vendor, complementor, anchor, or potential orchestrator. Core question: What gives us leverage in this ecosystem? Session output: A clear view of the role the firm can credibly play.
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 3: Saturday, 5 September – 13:30-16:30

Topics:	Governance: The underpinnings of the System Ecosystems are not governed only through contracts. They are shaped by decision rights, incentives, access rules, standards, informal influence, and the ability to change participation conditions over time. This session examines how firms can understand and influence the rules of the system, even when they are not formally in charge. Participants will map where power sits and where governance risks or opportunities emerge. Core question: Who shapes the rules, and how can we influence them? Session output: A governance map of key decision rights, influence points, and risks.
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 4: Friday, 18 September – 18:30-21:30

Topics:	From Sustainability Ambition to Ecosystem Momentum Sustainability ambitions often require more than internal action. They depend on partners, digital infrastructure, technical capabilities, data, credibility, and market adoption. This session explores how sustainability-oriented opportunities can be translated into ecosystem momentum rather than remaining isolated pilots or broad corporate aspirations. Core question: How do we mobilize partners around sustainability-oriented growth? Session output: An activation path for turning a sustainability opportunity into ecosystem momentum.
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 5: Saturday, 19 September – 9:30-12:30

Topics:	Protecting the Crown Jewels: Collaboration Without Leakage Ecosystem collaboration often requires deep technical exchange, but openness can expose the very capabilities that make a firm valuable. This session examines how firms collaborate while protecting critical knowledge, IP, data, and architectural control. Core question: How do we collaborate without giving away the core? Session output: A practical boundary design for safe and productive collaboration.
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

Session 6: Session 5: Saturday, 19 September – 13:30-16:30

Topics:	Ecosystem Portfolio: Stay, Scale, or Walk Not every ecosystem deserves continued investment. Some should be scaled, some renegotiated, and some exited before they drain resources and attention. This final session focuses on how firms evaluate performance over time and make disciplined decisions about where to commit, where to intervene, and where to walk away. Participants will develop a portfolio view of their ecosystem engagements. Core question: Which ecosystems deserve more commitment, and which ones no longer justify the cost? Session output: A stay-scale-renegotiate-exit view of the firm's ecosystem portfolio.
Readings:	TBD
Case:	TBD

ASSIGNMENTS DESCRIPTION

More information about the assignments and grading rubrics will be made available on Canvas closer to the start of the course.

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