

Becoming: Exploring to Evolve

March 31, 2025

Discovering the Talent Development Program, FBK's talent development program designed to bring out, nurture and take the potential of researchers and technologists toward new personal and professional goals: identity is not unchanging but is transformed through experience, because living is becoming.

Talent is a combination of natural abilities, acquired skills and passion that enables a person to excel in a particular field or activity.

In order to bring out one's talent and express one's potential, the practice and dedication with which one puts into action a natural predisposition and the exercise of creativity play a key role. Talent can be recognized and cultivated in various ways, such as through education, mentoring, and opportunities to experiment.

Four steps to one's path

Last year, FBK launched a pilot project aimed at recognizing and developing existing talent in the research and innovation community that forms the beating heart of the Foundation.

The project involved 50 researchers and technologists and was divided into four phases of work. The starting point is the discovery of individual potential. First, the distinctive competencies of the research profile were mapped through a [Hogan](#) assessment. Next, scientific production was analyzed based on quantitative indicators. Finally, the indications emerging from the assessment of potential were shared and passions and aptitudes were identified through a personal interview.

The second step is an invitation to follow one's passions and design development paths, with the support of research management that can best suggest and/or direct the growth path. Paths that are tailored to one's uniqueness and that fit into a fertile ground in which to cultivate one's talents. Specifically, there are four professional and organizational dimensions on which to direct energies and get to work: scientific research; its enhancement, aimed at producing socio-economic impact; technology development; and, finally, the management of research teams to help define scientific strategy. These career paths allow for a focus on where to harness talent, in what collaborative contexts to get involved, and with what priorities.

The third step, which builds on the previous two, is the construction of a path of gradual change, a personal strategy that makes use of a wide range of tools and actions aimed at each of the four possible directions in which it is possible to move. For example, while those who focus on scientific

research may hone project design skills with the goal of competing to acquire grants such as [ERC](#) or [MSCA](#), for those who want to strengthen their coordination skills will have to deepen leadership and project portfolio management.

Having the personal strategy being defined, the path goes on dynamically with activities that will provide strategic direction and support talents in the gradual achieving of personal aspirations that were first listened to, then described, and finally put to work.

This addressing actions, through periodic “debriefing”, takes the form of an exploratory, i.e. cognitive, activity, the outcomes of which can be various, either at FBK or outside: in other academic research contexts, in public administration or within business career paths (start-ups and innovation).

Being aware about the possibilities that the market offers and the interest that vertical skills can generate is critical. The opportunity is facilitated by a series of periodic horizon-opening and thematically in-depth meetings with domain experts who are able to inspire and with whom to make contact in order to probe both new project ideas and mutually beneficial prospects for collaboration. The first of these events was held March 25 and featured Nicola Cracchi Bianchi, from [Deda Next](#), and Nicola Doppio and Elisa Morganti, from Fondazione [Hub Innovazione Trentino](#). From their respective perspectives, they discussed the open innovation management approach, which promotes collaboration and the exchange of ideas between an organization and its external environment, such as universities, startups, suppliers and customers. This model makes it possible to leverage external knowledge and resources to accelerate the development of new products, services and technologies, overcoming the limits of the company’s internal capabilities.

In particular, Nicola Doppio presented the [open innovation challenges](#) method promoted by HIT, with various formulas and adaptations to topics, which over time have involved a total of more than 100 companies and public administration

entities. Cracchi Bianchi’s testimony focused on describing the activities of the CO-INNOVATION LAB, which since 2016 sees FBK and DEDAGROUP collaborating following the open innovation paradigm, co-investing to work together on the development of joint research and development projects.

A key element, when comparing the two reference organizations that come into contact, is the time factor, compressed in the case of business decisions with respect to what are the standards for research. Collaborating within co-innovation and open innovation schemes also represents an alternative market strategy to proceeding through mergers with and acquisitions of startups or sometimes big industry players.

From experimentation to the TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Thanks to the feedback gathered from the first beneficiaries of the initiative, the program was structured and expanded to 130 participants.

Talent is an extraordinary resource. To achieve one’s goals and have an impact on the world, it is essential to have the opportunity to express it and the chance to discover new paths to take. FBK invests in this direction, offering unrelentless support to its talents, showing a network of opportunities that live up to their expectations and providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

“The *Open Innovation: Collaborate to Innovate* meeting with Nicola Cracchi Bianchi, Elisa Morganti and Nicola Doppio was very interesting and engaging.” – Tahir Ahmad, cybersecurity researcher at FBK commented – “It has emphasized the power of collaboration in driving innovation and explored practical strategies for fostering open innovation ecosystems. I particularly appreciated Cracchi Bianchi’s perspectives on breaking silos and enabling cross-sector

partnerships, which led to an enriching discussion.”

The program’s motto, “Become all that we can be,” sums up in itself the sense of a journey made up of encounters and exploration that, one step at a time, define the evolving identities of those in the craft of research, constantly connected with the scientific community, to exchange views among peers, debate, refute theories and define novel ideas that expand the common heritage of knowledge.

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