

Innovation and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Report

Fudan University
Shanghai, China

For Engage 2026 · Aurora Lyng & Malin Nupen

Fudan University
复旦大学

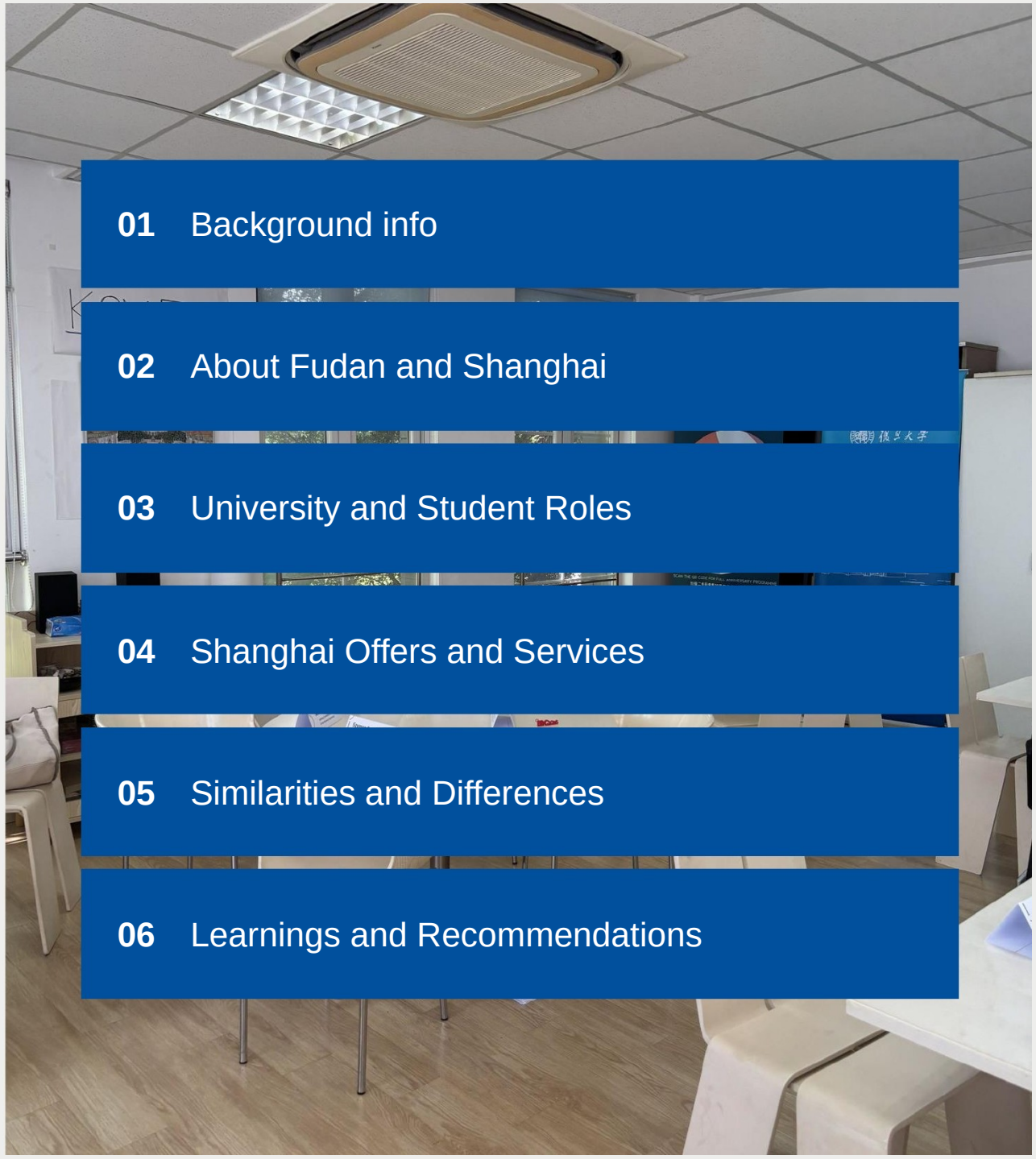
NTNU

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

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Fudan University · 复旦大学

NTNU



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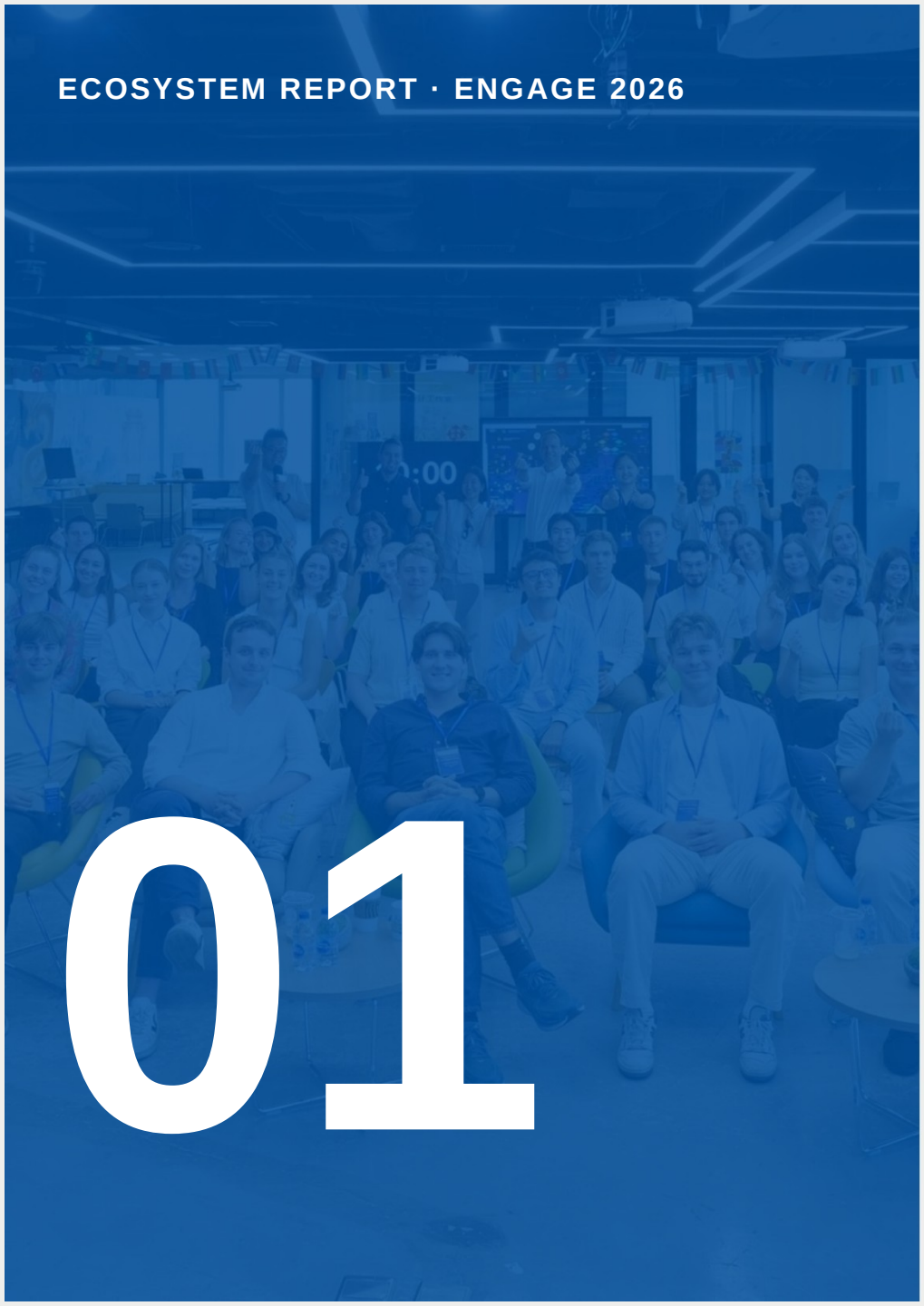
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01

Background Information

Fudan University
复旦大学

NTNU

Scale: Trondheim and Shanghai

Both outlines are drawn at the same map scale.



Yangpu is one of Shanghai's 16 districts. It covers about the same ground as Trondheim's built-up urban area (≈ 60 km²) but is home to more than five times as many people as the whole municipality.

TRONDHEIM MUNICIPALITY

529 km² area

219,000 inhabitants

SHANGHAI MUNICIPALITY

6,341 km² land area · **12×** Trondheim

≈ 25 M inhabitants · **>100×**

YANGPU DISTRICT · FUDAN'S HOME

61 km² area · **1/9** of Trondheim

1.24 M inhabitants

MONEY IN THIS REPORT

1 yuan ≈ NOK 1.43

CNY/RMB · Norges Bank rate, 13 Nov 2026. NOK equivalents are given in brackets and rounded.

Shanghai's outline shows the administrative boundary, including river and coastal waters.

Fudan and NTNU side by side

	Fudan University 复旦大学	NTNU
STUDENTS	 ≈ 56,300 bachelor’s · master’s and doctoral · international (2.2k) Includes roughly 15,000 doctoral students. Fudan’s own figures, June 2026.	 ≈ 43,500 registered students, 2025. NTNU’s own figures. Bachelor’s and master’s level only; doctoral candidates are counted separately.
ACADEMIC PROFILE	**Comprehensive research university.** Humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, medicine and engineering are developed in balance Humanities · Social sciences & economics · Natural sciences · Medicine & health · Technology & engineering · Education · Arts	**Main profile in science and technology:** about half of the students, and 70% of Norway’s master’s education in technology Technology & engineering · Natural sciences · Medicine & health · Social sciences & economics · Humanities · Education · Architecture & arts

Main areas · Also offered · Based on each university’s own description of its profile.

Why the visit

Business and Innovation in China (BIIC) 2026 · Nordic Centre, Fudan University · 10–24 July

MA-level course with ~60 hours of lectures, practitioners' talks and company visits; cross-cultural teams, a group pitch and a study trip.

The Nordic Centre (1995) links 23 Nordic universities with Fudan. Each member, NTNU included, gets three BIIC places a year.

We wanted to understand the Chinese market and its startup ecosystems, and which innovation areas are big compared with Norway. As NTNU School of Entrepreneurship (ES) students, where a startup is part of the degree, we looked for similar opportunities at Fudan and wanted to meet people in Shanghai's startup scene.







Our two weeks in Shanghai

Week 1

10 Jul	13 Jul	14 Jul	15 Jul	16 Jul	17–18 Jul
Kick-off at the Nordic Centre	EY Shanghai + consumer culture talk	Volvo Cars China	Fudan dragon and lion dance club	NICE innovation centre	Study trip to Ningbo

Week 2

20 Jul	21 Jul	22 Jul	23 Jul	24 Jul
Sustainability talk + Onesight startup case	Studio9 and Nine United (design)	Team work on our pitch	**Gala pitching, Changyang Valley**	Nordic consulates at the Finnish Consulate

Company visits and guest talks

EY Shanghai

Lujiazui: innovation-driven development and high-tech industries in China

Volvo Cars China

Sustainable innovation and working across cultures

NICE

National Innovation Center par Excellence, Shanghai

Studio9 and Nine United

Design agency: latest design trends in China

Onesight Technology

Co-founder Jiang Tong on challenges for Chinese tech startups in China and the USA

Ningbo

Nordic Industrial Park and Ningbo University

Guest talks

Benjamin Cavender (China Market Research Group) on consumer culture · Heidi Berg (Danish Industries) on sustainability · Nordic consulates on business–government relations, incl. Norway’s Deputy Consul General





23 JULY · GALA PITCHING

Yangpu–Nordic Future Entrepreneurs Roundtable

The BIIC teams pitched to a panel of judges at Changyang Valley Innovation Park in Yangpu, with Venture Cup China and East Shanghai Talent Port as partners. The top teams received awards.

Aurora's team · 3rd place

Teammates from Sweden, Finland and Norway, with backgrounds in technology, economics and management. We pitched "Pitch a Friend" – a new dating concept for China, where many young people are single.

Malin's team

Teammates from Ukraine, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. We pitched social fitness events in China, making it easier to combine exercise and a social life for people who work long days.



02

About Fudan

and Shanghai

Fudan University
复旦大学

NTNU



Guanghua Towers, Handan campus · public domain



Jiangwan campus · Prcmise, CC BY-SA 4.0

Establishment Fudan

- Founded 1905 as Fudan Public School; Fudan University since 1917
- Four campuses: Handan, Fenglin, Zhangjiang and Jiangwan
- Global top 30 (QS 2026) and among the top 3 in mainland China
- Host of the Nordic Centre on the Handan campus since 1995

16.1k
undergraduates

38.0k
graduate students

2.2k
international students

Innovation profile

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship (I&E) College (创新创业学院) since 2015
- First-batch national I&E education demonstration university
- New innovation colleges for chips, AI, biomedicine and robotics (2024–25)
- Alumni founded or lead 14 unicorns, e.g. Hellobike and Abogen



Lujiazui at night · Larry Qian, CC0

Why Shanghai?

- China’s financial and commercial centre, ~25 million inhabitants – more than 100× Trondheim
- City policy is built around three leading industries: **chips, biomedicine and AI**
- STAR Market (科创板 , 2019) gives tech startups a domestic exit: 611 listed firms by July 2026
- Founders cluster in districts such as Zhangjiang (Pudong) and Yangpu, where Fudan is located

#11
startup ecosystem globally, #4 in Asia

36
active unicorns

$228B
ecosystem value, H2 2023–2025

18+
city-certified “high-quality incubators”

Yangpu – Fudan’s home district

One of China’s first “National Innovative Pilot Districts” and a core base for Shanghai’s science and technology innovation strategy.

10
universities, incl. Fudan and Tongji

100+
research institutes

8,000+
tech enterprises

- **Yangpu International Startup Competition** (10th edition 2025–26): overseas and university tracks; up to 50,000 yuan (≈ NOK 72,000) in prize money plus up to 2 M yuan (≈ NOK 2.9 M) in follow-up support
- Fudan’s new Zuquan innovation centres opened in Yangpu’s “Future Valley” in June 2026
- Comparable to the Gløshaugen, Tech Port and Gründerbrakka cluster in Trondheim, at city-district scale



Yangpu Bridge · Gribeco, CC BY 2.5





03

University and Student Roles

Fudan University
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NTNU

Who owns I&E at Fudan?

I&E Work Leading Group (创新创业工作领导小组)

Chaired by the Party Secretary and the President – top-level ownership

Education

I&E College (2015) + Office of Academic Affairs

Courses, I&E micro-majors, the national 大创 student training programme

Students

Youth League Committee (校团委)

Youth Innovation Center, student incubator, Zhuoyue Cup, approves all student clubs

Research

Tech Transfer Center + Zuquan Institute

Patents, licensing, spin-offs, scientist startup camp, own funds

Infrastructure

Fudan Asset Management Co.

Owns Fudan National University Science Park and its incubators

Key difference: student activity sits under the Party's Youth League and a top-level leading group – at NTNU the equivalent arenas are independent student organisations.

From idea to company: the Fudan path

1 · Explore

- I&E electives and micro-majors
- Fudan Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (FDUROP)
- Entrepreneurship Association, hackathons
- Internal Zhuoyue Cup competition

2 · Build

- 大创 startup training and practice (credits + funding)
- Free space in 复虹青创汇 near campus
- Youth Innovation Center Fund (116 M RMB ≈ NOK 166 M)
- National competitions: Challenge Cup, China Innovation Competition

3 · Scale

- Fudan Science Park incubators and accelerator
- Shanghai student angel fund (EFG, Entrepreneurship Foundation for Graduates)
- Fudan Sci-Tech funds (1 bn RMB ≈ NOK 1.43 bn each)
- District programmes (Zhangjiang, Yangpu)

Entrepreneurship education

No degree like NTNU School of Entrepreneurship – I&E comes as electives, micro-majors and credit-bearing startup projects (required nationally since 2015).

Offer	Level	What it is	NTNU match
I&E micro-major (创新创业微专业)	Bachelor	Cross-disciplinary certificate track	Experts in Teamwork
大创 training programme	Bachelor, master	Teams of≤5 run a startup project for 1–2 credits, with funding	Venture Cup + NTNU Discovery
FDUROP	Bachelor	One mentor per student in research; 3,896 students since 2018	Research assistant roles
Electives and summer courses	All	E.g. “Student entrepreneurship: mindset, skills and methods”, 2 credits	Entrepreneurship electives
Fudan School of Management (FDSM) MBA + iLab	Master	Innovation and entrepreneurship track; action learning with 341 companies	ES (partly)

Also: students may take leave to start a company and keep their study place – not a standard option at NTNU.



Student-active, not student-driven

Every club registers with the Youth League, which approves and funds its activities. We found no independent organisation like Spark*, Start NTNU or Fram.

Entrepreneurship Association

Investor talks, alumni events, project matching

Zhuoyue Cup (卓越杯)

2024: 241 projects, 1,200+ students

iGEM (synthetic biology), AI hackathons

12 iGEM golds since 2011; 2 silvers in a national AI hackathon 2026

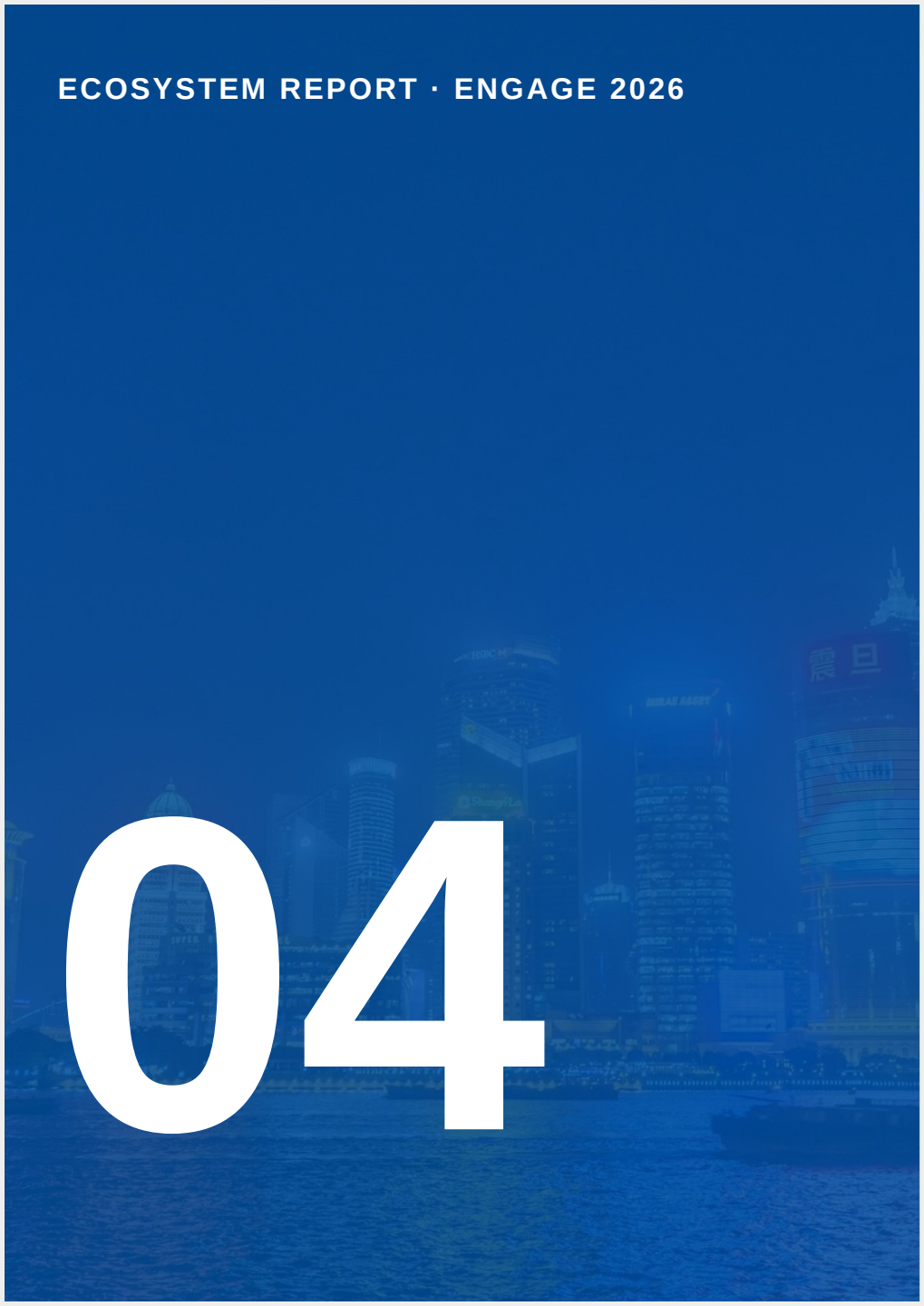
International startup competition

First edition March 2026: 11 teams, 43 students

Results in national competitions

4 gold in the China International College Students' Innovation Competition 2024; 2 gold in the Challenge Cup (挑战杯) 2024

We visited Fudan's student club for traditional dragon and lion dance. Clubs like this are run by students, but registered with and supported through the university.



04

Shanghai

Offers and Services

Fudan University
复旦大学

NTNU

Measures for young founders in Shanghai

Public · Pudong

Zhangjiang Science City

- Up to 1 M yuan (≈ NOK 1.4 M) a year for 3 years to high-growth tech startups
- Main founder under 40; **current students are eligible**
- Startup offices at 1 yuan (≈ NOK 1.43) per m² per day

Public · Pudong

Pudong Youth “15 measures”

- Space at ≤1 yuan/m²/day (≈ NOK 1.43) for 3 years; 6 months free in key industries
- Youth innovation fund cluster of 10 bn yuan (≈ NOK 14.3 bn)
- Furnished youth apartments and free short stays

Public · Shanghai city

Graduate startup support

- Guaranteed loans: 200k yuan (≈ NOK 287k) before founding (students too), 500k (≈ NOK 717k) per person, 4 M (≈ NOK 5.7 M) per company
- The state pays most of the interest
- One-off 8,000 yuan (≈ NOK 11,500) to new graduate founders

Nationally: state-funded incubators must give ~30% of their space free to graduates, and university science parks must be free for enrolled students (2021 guideline).

Funding for student startups

Source	Type	Scheme and amount
大创（state + Fudan)	Grant	2,000 yuan (≈ NOK 2,900) at Fudan level to ≥100,000 yuan (≈ NOK 143,000) at national practice level
Shanghai student angel fund (EFG, 2006)	Loan / equity	Up to 500,000 yuan (≈ NOK 717,000) interest-free loan or equity; grants up to 100,000 (≈ NOK 143,000)
Youth Innovation Center Fund	Donor	116 M yuan (≈ NOK 166 M), 2025, for student teams: seed money, mentors
Fudan Sci-Tech funds	University VC	2 × 1 bn yuan (≈ NOK 1.43 bn each), 2024–25 + US$100 M overseas fund (2025)
VC partners (Yunfeng, Jingwei, Fanhai)	Private	80 M yuan (≈ NOK 115 M) I&E fund; ~300 projects funded (2021)

Sum up

Much more money than in Trondheim, but mostly loans, equity and target-driven grants, not “soft” funding like Aneo-bidraget.

EFG loans and equity require Chinese nationality, so international students are in practice left out.

Spaces and support around Fudan

Student incubator · free

复虹青创汇 Fuhong Youth Innovation Hub

Opened May 2025, 1,000+ m², 100 m from campus. No rent for teams of 3–10 students or alumni; mentors and pitch events each semester.

Science park · university-owned

Fudan National University Science Park

Since 2000. Maker space, incubator and accelerator in Yangpu and Hongkou; investor matching and free legal advice for early teams.

Research spin-offs

Proof-of-concept and F-LAB

Green-tech proof-of-concept centre (2023, 9 companies); F-LAB scientist startup camp (2025, 34 projects).

City incubator · Pudong

Zhangjiang Hi-Tech 895 Incubator

1,600+ companies since 2015; earns ~60% of revenue from services, not rent.

Local terminology

Term	Meaning
双创	Mass entrepreneurship and innovation, a national strategy since 2014–15
创新创业学院	Innovation and Entrepreneurship College at a university
大创	National student I&E training programme
众创空间	Maker space / early-stage co-working incubator
大学科技园	University science park
产学研	Industry–university–research collaboration
科技成果转化	Technology transfer / commercialisation

Term	Meaning
概念验证中心	Proof-of-concept centre
创业导师	Startup mentor, often a professor or senior founder
天使基金	“Angel fund”: nickname for Shanghai’s student fund (EFG)
引导基金	Government guidance fund that brings in private VC
挑战杯	Challenge Cup: the Youth League’s national student competition
硬科技	Hard tech / deep tech
科创板	STAR Market: Shanghai’s tech stock board (2019)



05

Similarities and Differences

Fudan × NTNU

Fudan University
复旦大学

NTNU

Similarities and differences

Category	NTNU / Trondheim	Fudan / Shanghai	Comment
How is the ecosystem governed?	Both top-down and student-driven; many arenas run by students with NTNU support	Top-down: a leading group under the Party Secretary and President; city and districts set priorities	Governance is more top-down at Fudan
Student-driven initiatives	Spark*, Start NTNU, Fram, Boost, Gruva, Designhjelpen, Revolve, Ascend	Clubs exist, but all are registered with and funded by the Youth League	NTNU’s volunteer culture is a clear strength
The university’s role	Founded key arenas (Engage, Spark*, Gründerbrakka); master’s at ES	Own I&E College, incubator, science park, tech transfer and VC funds	Fudan acts as investor as well as educator
Education	Full venture-creation master’s (ES), Experts in Teamwork	No entrepreneurship degree; electives, micro-majors and credit-bearing startup projects	NTNU is deeper; Fudan reaches more students

Similarities and differences

Category	NTNU / Trondheim	Fudan / Shanghai	Comment
Guidance and mentoring	Student-to-student (Spark*), ES supervisors, alumni network	Professors, alumni executives and industry mentors; industry mentor required in startup practice	Mentors in China are senior professionals
Funding	Soft funding: Aneo-bidraget, NTNU Discovery, STUD-ENT	Loans, equity and grants up to 500k yuan (≈ NOK 717k); 116 M yuan (≈ NOK 166 M) donor fund; university VC	Far larger sums, tied to targets and sectors
Global focus	International markets encouraged; few structured links to China	Courts international students and founders (Yangpu roundtable, international competition)	Nordic Centre membership is an underused bridge
Culture and policy	Starting a company is less common than taking a job	Entrepreneurship is national policy (双创); 24 M sign-ups to the national student competition	Scale is >100×: copy formats, not budgets



06

Learnings and Recommendations

Fudan & China

Fudan University
复旦大学

NTNU

RECOMMENDATIONS 1/2 · AT HOME

What NTNU can copy from Fudan

Changes NTNU can make in Trondheim. Copy Fudan's structures (credits, clear paths and funding partners) but keep NTNU's student-driven culture: NTNU had 33 STUD-ENT projects in three years, all of Vestlandet 4.

01. **A "startup practice" track for all students**
Like Fudan's 大创 : run a real venture for credits with an academic and an industry mentor. Today mainly an ES option at NTNU

02. **Link student research to new ventures**
3 of Fudan's 4 national gold teams in 2024 began in its undergraduate research scheme. Pair students with NTNU research early

03. **Foundation-funded seed money**
Fudan's student fund (116 M yuan ≈ NOK 166 M) is foundation-funded, as is Bergen's NOK 26.6 M student-founder programme

04. **Turn the ecosystem page into a path**
NTNU lists about 25 actors on one page, but in no order. Fudan's offers form Explore → Build → Scale

05. **Recognise founding as grounds for leave**
Chinese rules let students pause their studies to start a company; NTNU's leave rules do not mention entrepreneurship

RECOMMENDATIONS 2/2 · ABROAD

How NTNU can use its link to China

Bridges to Shanghai for students, staff and startups. NTNU already has a door in through the Nordic Centre. It should use it far more actively.

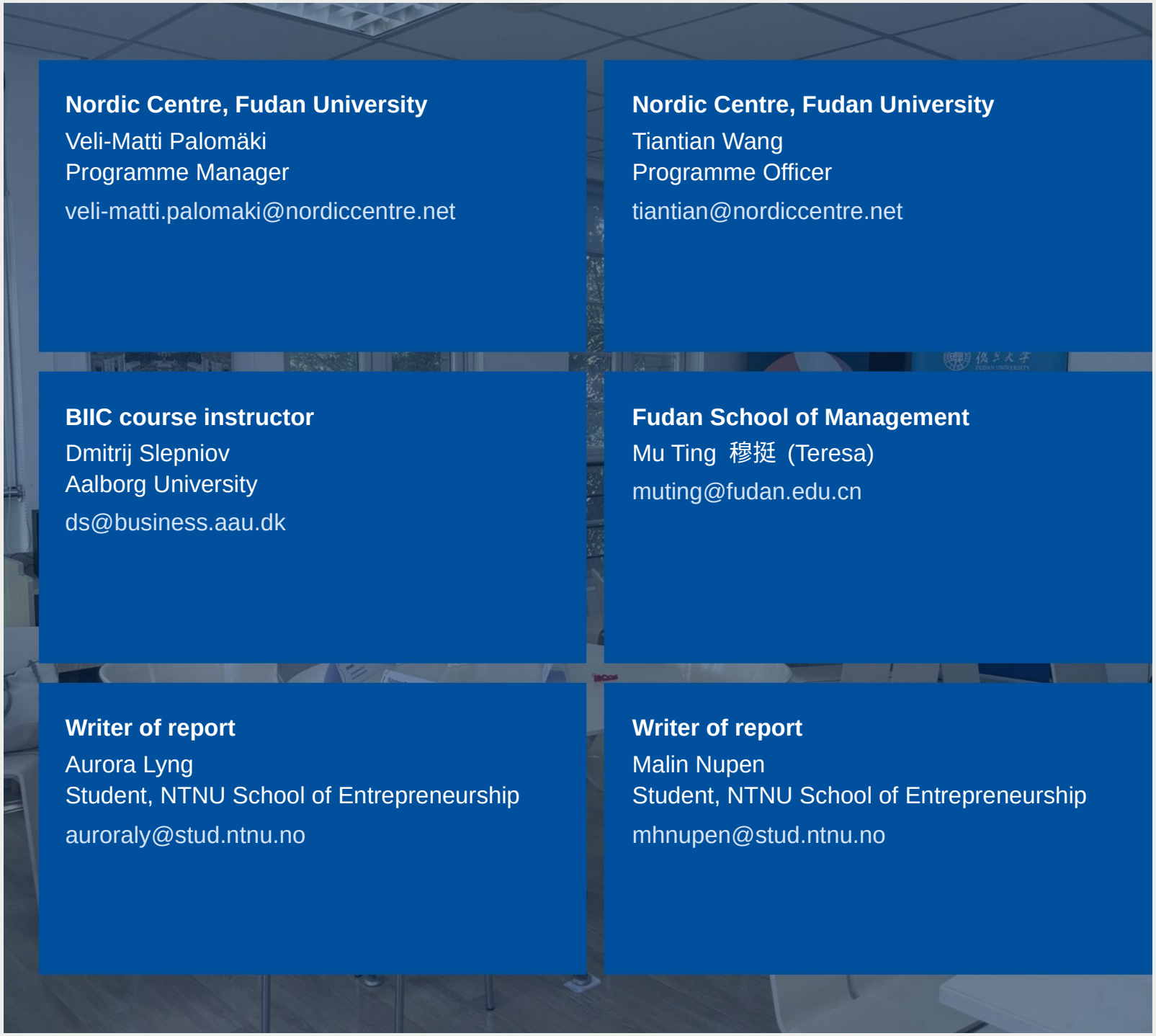
01. **Make BIIC a standing offer**
Advertise NTNU's three yearly places to NTNU students, with an ecosystem mapping as the deliverable

02. **Add an Asia option to ES**
ES's international options today are Boston University and CERN. BIIC or Fudan could add Asia

03. **Use the Nordic Centre's staff funding**
Research stays of up to four weeks and workshop funding twice a year. Engage can deepen this mapping on site

04. **Use Norway's team in Shanghai**
The Consulate General's business and innovation staff can be a first contact for NTNU startups exploring China

05. **Visit and connect**
Fudan's Youth Innovation Center, 复虹青创汇 (its "Gründerbrakka") and the Science Park are natural partners for Engage and Spark*



Nordic Centre, Fudan University
Veli-Matti Palomäki
Programme Manager
veli-matti.palomaki@nordiccentre.net

Nordic Centre, Fudan University
Tiantian Wang
Programme Officer
tiantian@nordiccentre.net

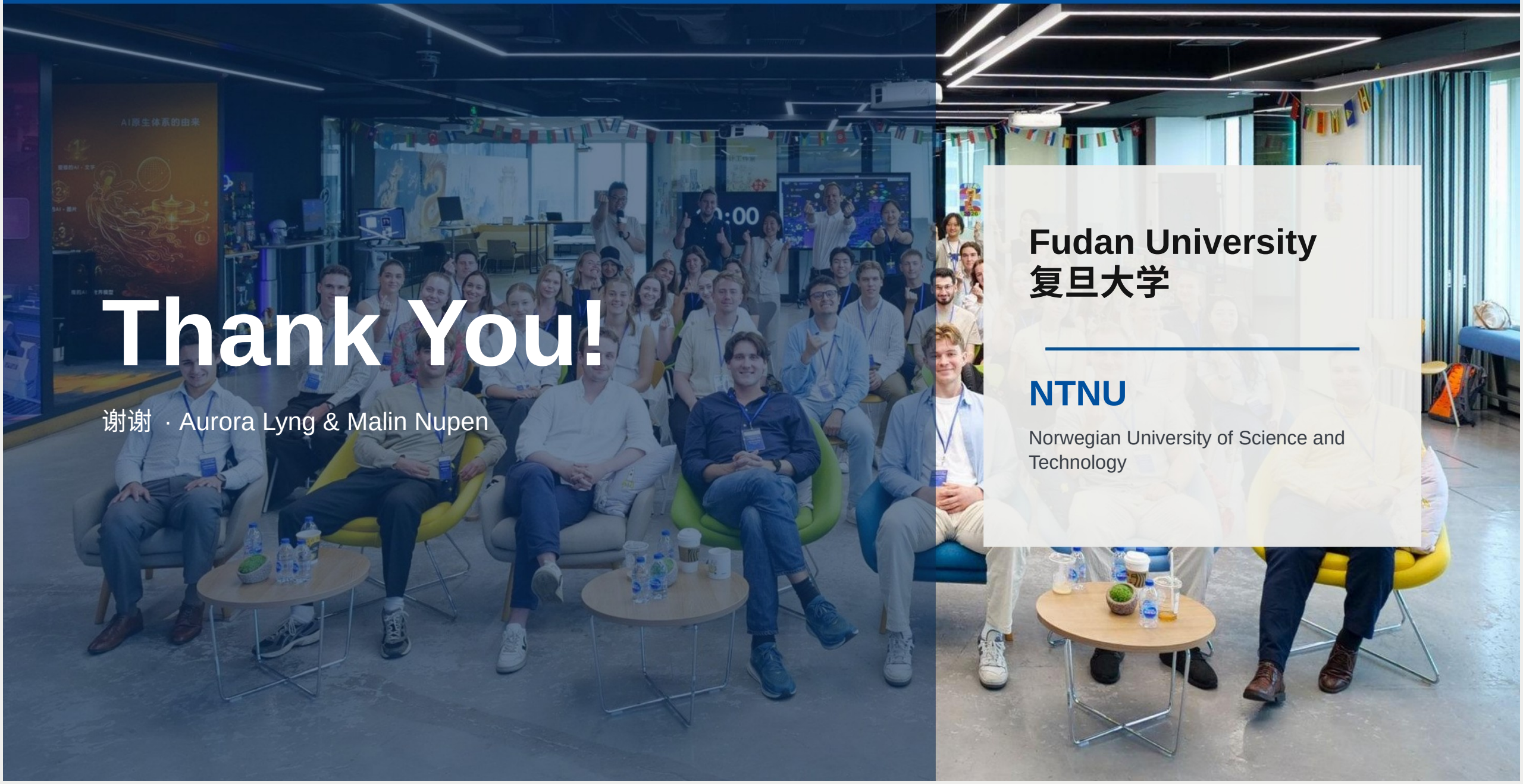
BIIC course instructor
Dmitrij Slepniov
Aalborg University
ds@business.aau.dk

Fudan School of Management
Mu Ting 穆挺 (Teresa)
muting@fudan.edu.cn

Writer of report
Aurora Lyng
Student, NTNU School of Entrepreneurship
auroraly@stud.ntnu.no

Writer of report
Malin Nupen
Student, NTNU School of Entrepreneurship
mhnupen@stud.ntnu.no

Contact Persons



Thank You!

谢谢 · Aurora Lyng & Malin Nupen

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