



**Call for:
MASTER THESIS**

AI's Influence on Venture Creation and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Topic Description:

The last few years have seen a rise in AI tools and LLMs, which have often been touted as drivers of productivity that allow for more effective and efficient ideation and product design. While this reasoning would make AI of relevance for any firm regardless of sector as an external enabler, these tools have given rise to a new crop of ventures whose entire business model focuses on developing, leveraging and validating AI tools. This has also led to startup support ecosystems and politicians embracing AI as the next big thing, pouring funding into local AI firms in the hopes of capitalizing on these developments.

To inspect the impact AI has had on new ventures in Baden-Württemberg over the last few years, two questions need to be answered: “How do AI-focused ventures use AI in their offerings or design, and how has the ecosystem responded to them?”, and “How – if at all – do non-AI focused ventures use AI in their offerings or design, and how has the ecosystem’s embracing of AI directly or indirectly impacted these firms?” This masters project will investigate these questions via interviews with AI- and non-AI-focused startups that have emerged or failed in BW in recent years. To gain new insights, perceptions of founders pursuing different approaches inside the AI space will be compared and contrasted with non-AI founders’ perceptions on the use and usefulness of AI, application methods as well as changes in startup ecosystems caused by this technology.

Goals & Expected Contributions:

1. Gain insights into if and how the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem is responding to AI as a new topic and industry
2. Analyze different founder perspectives on AI as a tool and/or a business focus
3. Synthesize broader concepts on how founders and ecosystems adapt to new technologies and emerging business opportunities

Initial Readings:

- Stam, E., & van de Ven, A. (2021). Entrepreneurial ecosystem elements. *Small Business Economics* 65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-019-00270-6>
- Chalmers, D., MacKenzie, N. G., & Carter, S. (2020). Artificial Intelligence and Entrepreneurship: Implications for Venture Creation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 45(5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258720934581>
- Davidsson, P., & Sufyan, M. (2023). What does AI think of AI as an external enabler (EE) of entrepreneurship? An assessment through and of the EE framework. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2023.e00413>

Your Profile:

You can apply for this thesis call if you (are)...

- highly motivated to work in a structured way.
- interested in the topic.
- familiar with or eager to learn about qualitative interviews and research methods.
- creative and interested in learning new things, topics, and methods.



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- enrolled in either MSc BWL / MSc BWL t.o. / MSc TechMan / MA EPSF program.
- have previously completed at least one course offered at ENI (or plan to do so during your thesis semester).

How to Apply:

Application deadline: **30.04.2025**.

To apply, please prepare a max. 2-page exposé summarizing your proposed approach to the topic and a proposed preliminary overview of contents. Please also indicate if you have already completed a course at ENI and don't forget to add your contact details. You may submit your exposé via our website: <https://www.eni.uni-stuttgart.de/en/teaching/Courses/Bachelor-and-Masterthesis/>

If you have questions about this call, please reach out to johannes.engels@eni.uni-stuttgart.de

We are looking forward to working with you!