Application for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2026

Contact Information :

Ilias Kanbar
PhD Candidate in Innovation and International Business
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Recommender:
Professor Dr. Max von Zedtwitz
Professor of Strategic Management
University of St. Gallen (HSG)
Professor (part-time), Innovation and International Business
Copenhagen Business School

Email: max.vonzedtwitz@unisg.ch

Attn: Brett Maranjian
NBER Conference Coordinator

11 Feb 2026

Prof. Dr. Max von Zedtwitz
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RECOMMENDATION LETTER FOR MR. ILIAS KANBAR

Dear Brett,

I am Max von Zedtwitz, a professor of strategy at the University of St. Gallen and a part-time professor of innovation and international business at Copenhagen Business School. I co-supervise **Ilias Kanbar** who pursues a PhD at the Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 in France under the joint supervision with Professor Véronique Zardet.

Ilias has a master's degree in applied economics from Dijon, which included courses on economic analysis, health economics, econometrics, economics of innovation, industrial strategy, etc. As part of his doctoral training at Lyon, he had additional relevant courses such as innovation and growth in economics and management, ethics for researchers in economics and management, etc. While his PhD topic of « Reverse Innovation » is not a typical economics core subject, he is nevertheless trained and conversant in advanced economics theory and research, and he clearly immersed himself in innovation research.

I would therefore very much appreciate if you could consider Ilias Kanbar's application for the NBER Innovation Research Bootcamp in July 2026. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Max von Zedtwitz

Professor (part-time), International Management and Innovation (CBS)
Full Professor, Strategic Management, University of St. Gallen (HSG)
Director, GLORAD Center for Global R&D and Innovation (GLORAD)

Ilias KANBAR
PhD student in Innovation and International Business
University Jean Moulin Lyon 3 / Ilias.kanbar1@univ-lyon3.fr

In Lyon, 10/02/2026

Application for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp 2026

Dear Madam or Sir,

My name is Ilias Kanbar, and I am a fourth-year PhD candidate at Jean Moulin University Lyon 3 in France. My research lies at the intersection of innovation and international business, with a particular focus on reverse innovation (RI): innovations that are first adopted in developing countries and subsequently transferred to developed markets.

While the original definition of RI primarily adopts a market perspective, my work approaches the phenomenon from a product-centered perspective. Specifically, I shift the focus upstream toward pre-market activities. Although my empirical analyses are conducted at the firm level, my work draws extensively on economic literature, particularly in economic geography, global value chains, and the role of intangibles in value creation. My interest in economics dates back to my Master's degree in Applied Economics at the University of Burgundy, where I was trained in structural econometrics and quantitative economic analysis. Since then, even as my research has focused on firm-level dynamics, I have maintained a strong interest in macro-level processes and the spatial organization of innovation. This intellectual orientation has led me to actively engage with broader economic debates, including attending the 18th edition of the Journées de l'Économie (Jéco) in Lyon (November 2025).

Naturally, the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp immediately attracted my attention, as its focus on the economics of innovation directly relates to the methodological and theoretical challenges I currently face. In particular, I analyze upstream innovation activities and their geographic distribution by examining firms' patenting behavior. I review patent data in an exploratory and descriptive manner, with attention to technological domains, the timing of inventive activity, and the international scope of filings. I also analyze selected backward and forward citations to document technological linkages and potential knowledge flows across regions.

Participating in this event would allow me to strengthen the empirical dimension of my work, particularly regarding the measurement of knowledge flows, the economic interpretation of patent-based indicators, and the development of more rigorous identification strategies. Engaging with scholars working at the intersection of innovation, trade, and economic development would help clarify and sharpen my contribution to the economics of globalization.

At this stage of my doctoral journey, I see the Boot Camp as a crucial step in consolidating my research agenda and aligning it more closely with advances in innovation economics.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Ilias Kanbar

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Ilias KANBAR
PhD Candidate in Innovation and International Business

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FIELDS OF EXPERTISE : Innovation, International Business, Reverse Innovation, Innovation from Emerging Markets, Healthcare

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Sep 2022 – Present **PhD Candidate in Management sciences**
  University Jean Moulin Lyon 3, Lyon
  Title : *Revisiting Reverse Innovation through the Lens of the Global Innovation Value Chain: Understanding Upstream Innovation Dynamics*
  Supervisors : Véronique Zardet/Max von Zedtwitz

- Apr 2022 – Aug 2022 **Research Assistant**
  Chair of Care Values, Lyon

- Feb 2019 – Jul 2019 **Internship - Health Economics Department**
  Ministry of Health, Rabat

- Nov 2018 – Dec 2018 **Internship - Financial Affairs Department**
  Ibn Sina University Hospital - Children's Hospital, Rabat

EDUCATION

- Feb 2024 – May 2024 **Visiting PhD Fellow**
  Copenhagen Business School
  Department of International Economics, Government and Business

- 2021 – 2022 **Research in Management**
  Emlyon Business School, Lyon
  Dissertation title: Reverse Innovation in a Healthcare Startup: an

analysis through the lens of the absorptive capacity theory

- 2020 – 2021 **Master 2 - Change Management in Territories, Healthcare Establishments, and Medico-Social Networks**
Iaelyon School of Management (With honors), Lyon
Dissertation title : The role of human and organizational factors in the development of the quality approach: a case study of a geriatric clinic

- 2019 – 2020 **Master 1 Applied Economics - Management and Evaluation of Healthcare Organizations**
University of Burgundy, Dijon
Dissertation title : "Healthcare Financing through obligatory health insurance in France and the Challenge of Financial Accessibility to Care"

- 2017 – 2019 **Master's Degree - Economics and Management of Healthcare (head of class)**
University Mohammed V Souissi, Rabat
Dissertation title : "Contribution of obligatory health insurance to the financing of the healthcare system in Morocco: a reflection on the levers of Universal Health Coverage"

- 2014 – 2019 **Bachelor's degree - Economics and Management**
University Mohammed V Souissi, Rabat

- 2013 – 2014 **High school – experimental sciences**

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Global New Product Development
Innovation originating from Africa
Innovation from emerging markets
Global Value Chain
Qualitative and Quantitative Research

RESEARCH CENTER OR RESEARCH TEAM

- Member of the Strategy & ISEOR Research Group, Laboratory Magellan.
- Member of International management Research Group
- Research Associate, Center for Global R&D and Innovation Research, Copenhagen Business School, Danemark.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE :

L3 Gestion & Management, Practical Course, « Diagnostic stratégique de l'entreprise », 30H, 2021/2022

L3 Gestion & Management, Practical Course, « Analyse et Diagnostic stratégique », 30H, 2023/2024

Master's Degree International Business Realities, Magistral course, « Global Innovation», 12H, 2025/2026

L3 Gestion & Management, Practical Course, « Socio-economic performance», 40H, 2025/2026.

Academic tutoring for students writing their dissertation, IAELYON and University Mohammed V Rabat.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Kanbar, I., and Vinot, D. (2022), « Processus de diffusion d'une innovation du Maroc à la France : illustration des mécanismes de l'innovation inversée en santé », *3éme Journée Automnale du Management International*, Lyon.
- Kanbar, I., and Vinot, D. (2022), « Monographie préliminaire du processus de diffusion d'une innovation du Maroc à la France : illustration des mécanismes de l'innovation inversée en santé », *Colloque Aramos*, November 2022, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Kanbar, I., and Vinot, D. (2023), « Innovation inversée et innovation pédagogique : quel liens ? » *,Colloque PROJECTICS*, Agadir, Maroc.
- Kanbar, I. (2024), « From Global Value Chain to Global Innovation Value Chain *», in International ISEOR Colloquium,* June 2024, Lyon, France.
- Kanbar, I., and von Zedtwitz, M. (2025), « Global Innovation Value Chains: A Decomposition Perspective on Product Development», 15ème conférence annuelle *Atlas-AFMI*.
- Kanbar, I. (2026), « Unpacking the Black Box of Reverse Innovation: How Local Constraints Shape Upstream Product Architecture», Academy of International Business Annual meeting, in review.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Panelist in a Professional Development Workshop (PDW) : "Mobilizing the notion of Dysfunction and Mirror Effect : an Innovative Approach to Change Management, AOM Chicago 2024". Organizer : Véronique Zardet, Penalists : Mahmoud F., Kanbar I, Giraudet M., Gephart R.
- Participation in the International Management Division Doctoral Student Consortium, AOM Chicago 2024.

SEMINARS

- Participation in IB course : **International Business: State-of-the Art Theories and Topics, Copenhagen Business School PhD School, March, 2024**. Courses : Why and how companies became multinationals ; Internalization theory; Behavioral perspectives in IB; Stakeholder theory in the global context; Backlash against globalization and mitigation strategies; knowledge transfer across borders; international human resource management; MNEs and Grand challenges.
- Participation in the **4th CIM/CINet Reviewing Seminar,** Creativity and Innovation Management (CIM) and the Continuous Innovation Network (CINet) have taken the initiative to develop a reviewing seminar to help young academics make the first step in their reviewing career (I reviewed academic papers and contributed to peer feedback discussions).

Languages

English (Advanced), Arabic (Native Language) , French (Native Language) , Italian (Fluent).

Interests

Economic and Health News, Western Spaghetti, Running and football (regular player at amateur level and writer for Calciomio), Biodiversity referent at the Association Des Espèces Parmi'Lyon.

SOCIAL NETWORKS:

Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/in/iliaskanbar/

COMPLETED PHD COURSES:

- *Ethics for Researchers in Economics and Management* (2022–2023, 12 hours)
- *Innovation and Growth in Economics and Management: Schumpeter's Contribution* (2022–2023, 21 hours), University Jean Moulin Lyon 3, contact : Pr Caroline Hussler.
- *International Business: State-of-the-Art Theories and Topics* (2024-2025, 30 hours), Copenhagen Business School, contact: Pr Grazia Santangelo.