

ENGAGING ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS FOR THE YOUTH

Action Plan for Mentoring programme

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About this report

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1 Objective

The Mentoring Programme is organised by the Ecosys4you project partnership (www.ecosys4you.eu) to establish connections between the Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in the Ruhr, Varna, and Slovenia. Ecosys4you has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101100432.

This Action Plan describes the process of developing a high-quality, cross-ecosystem mentoring programme for students getting ready to start a company. The objective is to support students with a business idea or general aspiration towards entrepreneurship. The mentoring programme shall cover a fair expense allowance for mentors to mobilise truly capable mentors and shall be designed to be implemented permanently.

Mentoring is a special partnership between two or more people based on commitment to the mentoring process, shared goals and expectations, focus, mutual trust, and respect. Mentoring can also encompass activities that allow for the transfer of knowledge and skills from mentor to mentee. Both the mentor and the mentee give and grow in the mentoring process. The mentee can learn valuable knowledge from the mentor's expertise, and past mistakes and competencies can be strengthened in specific areas. Mentees will have the opportunity to establish valuable connections with higher-level experts. The mentoring success will depend on clearly defined roles and expectations in addition to the participant's awareness of the benefits of participating in the mentoring program.

The mentoring programme will be organised in two rounds – the first one in 2024, and the second one – in 2025.

Benefits for mentees

- Increased self-confidence;
- Stop time and reflection;
- A sounding board to discuss ideas and approaches before action is taken;
- Development of strong communication skills;
- Growing personal network within the business;
- Exposure to new and different perspectives;
- Guidance from someone experienced;
- Being supported by somebody;
- An opportunity to think about things in a different way;
- Better decisions;
- Increased chance of promotion.

Benefits for mentors

- Growing a personal network;
- Evolve as a business person;
- Increased chance of promotion, including international promotion;
- Strengthening international relations;
- Leadership skills development;
- Development of strong communication skills;
- Increased job satisfaction;
- Personal satisfaction for supporting another person;
- Exposure to new and different perspectives;

- Establishment of new partnerships and new projects;
- Learn from experience;
- Challenge and stimulation;
- Payment for work done.

The mentor will help light the path for the mentee to follow. Learning from the mentor's wisdom and past experience will serve the mentee well and produce great benefits.

Responsibilities – Mentees

- Regularly meet your mentor – in person/ online/ by phone;
- Be proactive about contacting your mentor and scheduling meetings;
- Commit to self-development;
- Assume responsibility for acquiring or improving skills and knowledge;
- Discuss individual development planning with the mentor/s;
- Be open and honest on goals, expectations, challenges, and concerns so others can help you;
- Prepare for meetings and come up with an agenda;
- Actively listen and ask questions;
- Seek advice, opinion, feedback, and direction from the mentor/s;
- Be receptive to constructive criticism/feedback and ask for it;
- Respect the mentor's time and resources;
- Stay accessible, committed, and engaged during the length of the program;
- Comfortably give feedback to the mentor on what is working or not working in the mentoring relationship;
- Let the Mentoring Program's responsible partners know as soon as possible if you are struggling to connect with your mentor.

Responsibilities – Mentor

- Meet with your mentee and/or engage in mentoring activities – in person/ online/ by phone;
- Willingly share your experience and professional success in the organisation;
- Explain how the organisation is structured;
- Look for experiences that will stretch the mentee;
- Stay accessible, committed, and engaged during the length of the program;
- Provide open and candid feedback;
- Offer encouragement through genuine positive reinforcement;
- Be a positive role model;
- Share “lessons learned” from their own experiences;
- Let the Mentoring Program's responsible partners know as soon as possible if you are struggling to connect with your mentee.

To maximise the outcome of this experience and ensure that mentors derive value from the time they dedicate to mentee business development, we recommend mentees devote a minimum of 6 hours to program activities.

2 Recruitment of mentors and mentees

Mentors and mentees will be recruited using the communication types identified within the project communication channels. The deadline for applying for the 1st edition of the mentoring programme is September 30th, 2024; for the 2nd edition, March 31st, 2025.

The recruitment process of the mentors could be organised using several approaches:

- Invitation to experts we already know from project partners' past and current initiatives, including experts and trainers from our networks of members, partners, clients, teachers from schools, VET centres, and universities, as well as practitioners from businesses and mentors from other EU countries working on Erasmus+ projects with similar topics to this project.
- Experts recommended by mentors who could fit in the mentoring programme.
- Open call for applications published on partners' organisational websites, project websites, social media, and other relevant media.

The recruitment process of the mentees will be organised by launching a public call in every project partner's region. The launch of the call will be disseminated via project dissemination channels, such as project and institutional web pages, social media, projects, or other events.

2.1 Process and criteria for selection of the mentors

Required skills and behaviours of the ideal mentor:

- Empathy
- Knowledge
- Time
- Great listener
- Sharp thinking
- Patience
- Dedicated
- See the core of the problem

Every potential mentor has to submit an application form, regardless of the approach used for recruitment. All the received application forms will be checked for administrative eligibility – whether the Application form is submitted within the set deadline and whether it includes the minimum required information. In case some information is missing, the manager of the mentoring programme from the project partners will send a request to provide it. If it is not provided after the send request, the application will not be accepted as eligible.

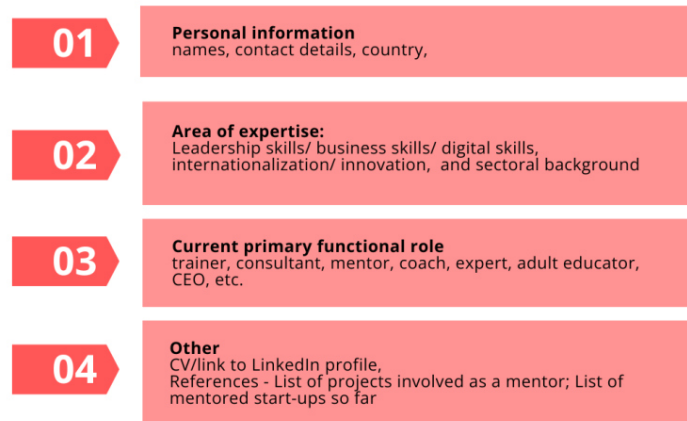


Figure 1: Content of the Application Form for mentors

Application Form for mentors:

- Name and Last Name
- Country of residence
- E-mail/ phone number
- Please explain your motivation for participation in Ecosys4you mentoring programme (max 100 words)
- Please describe your expertise in the field of entrepreneurship and business skills, focus on sectoral background (max 150 words)
- Please, indicate your current primary functional role: CEO, (co-) founder, mentor, trainer, consultant, expert, coach, other (please specify)
- Please provide professional CV/ link to LinkedIn profile
- Please provide a List of projects in which you were involved as a mentor
- Please provide a List of start-ups which you have been mentored.

Process of selection of mentors starts with submission of the applications.



Figure 2: Process of selection of the mentors

The mentors for the 1st edition of the mentoring programme will be selected until 15 October 2024. The results will be announced by 30 October 2024.

The mentors for the 2nd edition of the mentoring programme will be selected until 30 April 2025. The results will be announced by 15 May 2025.

The selected mentors from the 1st edition will be invited to continue work during the 2nd edition, so the pull of mentors will be enlarged.

2.2 Process and criteria for selection of mentees

The target groups of the mentoring activities are students and young entrepreneurs. We aim to attract highly motivated young people between 18 and 35 years old with sufficient English skills who are interested in founding or running a business. During the project implementation, 30 mentees from all 3 project regions are targeted.

Required skills and behaviours of the ideal mentee:

- Open-minded
- Ability to listen
- Willingness to change
- Open for feedback
- Having the capacity to see outside from his/her business
- Thinking out of the box
- Problem solver

Every potential mentee or group of mentees has to submit an application form.

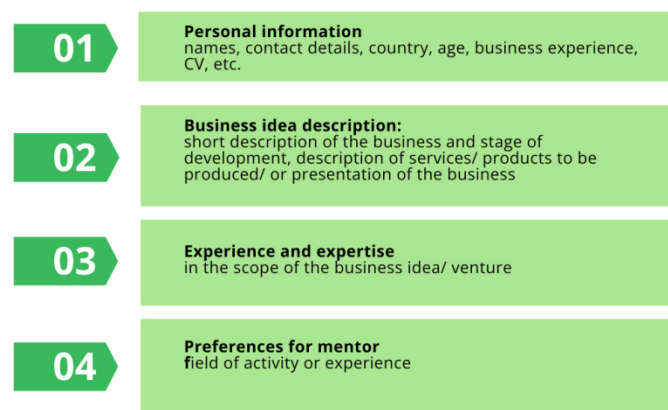


Figure 2: Content of Application Form for mentees

Application Form for mentees:

- Name and Last Name
- Country of residence
- E-mail/ phone number
- Age
- Are you applying individually or as a team working on a joint idea?
- If you are applying as a team member, please indicate the name and last name, country of residence, and age of other applicants from the team.
- Please indicate your entrepreneurship status: I have a business idea; I am (co-) founder of a starting company
- Please indicate the sector of your business/ business idea
- Please describe your business idea and the stage of development (max 100 words)

- Please describe what makes your product/ service special (max 150 words)
- Please provide a link to video or presentation of the product/ service (optional)
- Please provide professional CV/ link to LinkedIn profile
- Please describe your expertise in the field of the business idea
- What are your expectations from participation in the mentoring programme (max 100 words)
- Please indicate any preferences that you have with regard to the mentor (e.g. field of expertise, sector, etc);
- What kind of support is needed within the mentoring programme? (max 100 words)
- Please indicate if you are experienced in other programmes of Ecosys4you: Training, Internship, and/ or Challenges.



Figure 3: Timeline for participation of mentees in the 1st edition

2.3 Matchmaking events

Matchmaking events are a way of networking, under more structured circumstances, with people who want to connect with others, want to help others or get new perspectives on an idea.

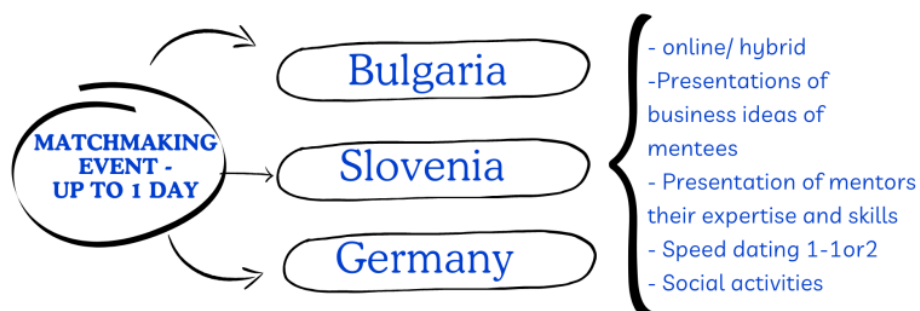


Figure 4: Structure of the matchmaking event

The matchmaking event will last up to one day and be held online or hybrid. During the event, mentees will present their business ideas. On the other hand, mentors will present themselves and their fields of expertise. Speed dating 1 to 1 -2 will be organised to improve the matchmaking between mentees and mentors.

Attendance on-site will be organised, as well as social activities, for better linkages between mentors and mentees.

The matchmaking event for the 1st edition of the mentoring programme will be organised in November 2024.

The matchmaking event for the 2nd edition of the mentoring programme will be organised May – June 2025.

3 Implementation of the mentoring programme

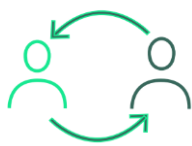
The mentoring programme is a partnership between a mentor and mentee for the purpose of growing the mentee’s skills, relationships, and business start-up or development. The programme is primarily focused on obtaining skills and business set-up and/ or development. The mentoring programme will start after the Matchmaking event (Nov.2024—for the 1st edition and May/June 2025—for the 2nd edition). **The duration of each programme edition is 6 months.**

The mentoring programme will be managed by RAPIV and supported by the other project partners.

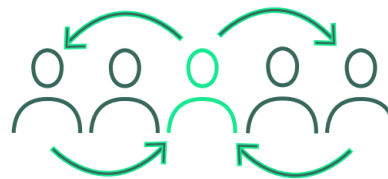
There are three natural stages of every mentoring process:

1. Establishing the relationship
2. Developing the mentee
3. Ending the relationship

The relationship between mentor and mentees could be different depending on the mentee's needs:



or



Individual mentorship – one mentee partners with one or more mentors

Group mentorship –one or more mentors partner with multiple mentees

The following is an outline of steps an organisation may take to initiate its Mentoring Program and to sustain it from cycle to cycle:

- Create mentor/mentee pairings based on compatibility from application forms or targeted matches for new hires entering specific occupations.
- Conduct an orientation session.
- Conduct planned activities.
- Evaluate each step of the implementation.
- Conduct the final evaluation and take action as necessary before launching the next program cycle.

Once your mentees and mentors have been recruited and matched, the kick-off program will begin with an online orientation session. During the orientation session, policies and procedures should be outlined and clarified.

The activities of the mentoring programme include:

- Regular mentoring meetings:
Who: Mentor/Mentee pair
When: Monthly
What: Mentees and mentors will work on mentoring related activities and discuss resources and ideas to address the mentee's development, set goals, and assigned coursework.
- Information Seminars (Required Activity for Mentees)/ webinars/ group sessions
Who: Mentors/ trainers/ staff members could organize joint information seminars with mentees on specific common topic under request from mentees
When: up to 3 sessions during the edition of the mentoring programme
What: Mentees will participate

4 Evaluation

Feedback is obtained from the mentors and mentees and the Ecosys4you project team by means of surveys to evaluate the programme. The range of questions is as follows:

Survey with the mentees:

- What entrepreneurial skills have you learnt?
- What will you take with you for starting/developing a business?
- Has your willingness to start a company increased?
- What did you miss during the mentoring programme?
- Did you participate in information seminars/ webinars/ group sessions?
- Please evaluate the usefulness of the provided information during the mentoring programme, including from seminars/webinars/ group sessions for starting/developing your business.
- What did you like most during the mentoring programme?
- What didn't you like during the mentoring programme?
- Will you recommend it to your friends/ peers?

Survey with the mentors:

- What did challenge you during the mentoring programme?
- Was the support from the intern helpful?
- Would you like to participate again in the mentoring programme? [Why? | Why not?]
- Did you benefit from your participation in the programme? (How?)

Feedback within the Ecosys4you-team:

- What was good?
- What was missing?
- What should be changed?
- What needs improvement in the mentoring programme's next edition?

5 Documents of the Mentoring programme

Application form for mentors - template
Application form for mentees - template
Evaluation sheets for mentors and mentees
Mentoring Contract - template

Consent Form for mentees - template
Evaluation feedback from mentors
Evaluation feedback from mentees
Evaluation feedback from Ecosys4you project team

Imprint

Publisher and Contact

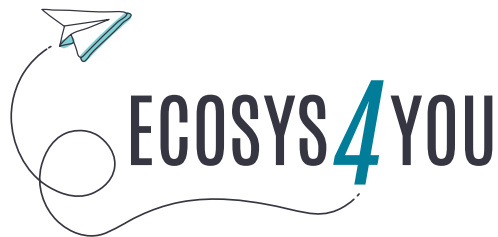
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Ecosys4you – Engaging Entrepreneurial Ecosystems for the Youth (2023-2026) strives to bridge the entrepreneurial ecosystems of the Ruhr in Germany, Varna in Bulgaria, and Slovenia by connecting young founders, start-ups, HEIs and other ecosystem actors.

Consortium



Funded by



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