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INTRODUCTION

The partnership is expecting to produce a concrete organisational structure to drive an efficient acceleration process, through the DLTech-UP project. Based on a sound operational plan, a highly involved roster of advisors and mentors across Europe and a through dissemination and support plan, DLTech-UP aims to attract at least 20 eligible and high quality projects across several thematics addressing societal challenges.

A well structured and co-designed acceleration program is expected to offer the 10 selected projects the right tools and incentives, through constant monitoring and support, masterclasses, seed funding and mentor interactions, to drive blockchain innovative projects forward faster in direct correlation with societal needs and requirements. Exposure either physically through the events to be organised or virtually through connections with market stakeholders aims to further support their direct to society approach and expedite accelerated project development.

Monitoring the effect of the acceleration program and continuously adapting to the expressed needs and requirements of the accelerated teams is expected to propel the DLTech-UP team to sourcing the right conclusions, addressing challenges along the way and refining its strategy. The reporting of the outcomes will fuel a sustainability plan focused on replicability and scaling up societal benefits across Europe. The final report, the guidelines and replicability and scalability blueprints are expected to be disseminated across a wide network of academic and research institutes as well as market stakeholders leveraging the extensive network of engaged partners available to EILD as well as its subcontractors in the field of distributed ledger technologies, across Europe

Finally, outcomes will become publicly available through open access journals and conferences in the field, instigating further involvement into acceleration best practices by non-traditionally involved stakeholders, such as academia, as well as future acceleration programs in other cutting edge technological fields for the benefit of the society.

Specific objectives have been set out and this Project investigates the practicalities of achieving replicable results through the formation of a well-structured, well laid out, scalable and replicable acceleration program addressing its specific following objectives.



Objective 1) Co-design and launch of the Accelerator

The design of the accelerator is considered the most crucial aspect of the whole process, as it will be addressing researchers, developers, entrepreneurs, start-ups and companies alike. Thus, the cocreation process is expected to attract identifiable stakeholders from the whole quadruple helix and across several European countries. The overarching goal is to reach a wider ecosystem of stakeholders to adequately support the creation of the advisory board, evaluation committee and mentor network accordingly to their preferred capacity and involvement.

Objective 2) Open call for applications to the Accelerator

The Open Call drafted in line with the project goals will be carefully stated to clarify the social aspects of the acceleration program and the targeted projects. It will be subsequently disseminated via the appropriate channels, including academic and research institutes, the start-up ecosystem, social media and others.

Objective 3) Implementation, management and monitoring of the intensive programme

The project will be supported operationally by consortium members across several functions including daily operations, coaching of the admitted project teams, online presence and dissemination, engagement and support of the external collaborators, preparation of the masterclasses and the online/physical events throughout the project lifecycle

Objective 4) Evaluation of projects for the final award

The projects will be evaluated at the end of the acceleration cohort based on monitoring outcomes available to the evaluation committee and a set of criteria identified at the design phase of the project. This evaluation process will reach a conclusion following an evaluation of the project teams' deliverables and an office-hours process.

Objective 5) Organisation of final event

Following the conclusion of the acceleration cohort the operational team will collect all the necessary information, prepare the dissemination material and organise the final event at Brussels which will include the presentation of the project outcomes and a pitching and award ceremony for the winning teams.

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Objective 6) Communication and impact assessment

The final part of the DLTech-UP project will be to record all the findings and outcomes of the process and discuss the possible best practices that can be extrapolated. The report will be complemented with a sustainability and replicability strategy. In addition the findings will be leveraged for publication and conference presentations to DLT and Entrepreneurship focused events.

This Deliverable focuses on **solidifying the organisational structure and identifying relevant stakeholders for the advisory board, the evaluation committee and the mentor network of the DLTECH UP Accelerator.**



1. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

1.1 Overview

The proposed organizational structure for the intelligent Cross-Border Accelerator for ICT-enabled start-ups focuses on enhancing efficiency, promoting cross-border collaboration, and leveraging ICT capabilities. This structure is designed to facilitate seamless operations between Greece and Bulgaria, ensuring that the accelerator can effectively support start-ups in both regions. The key components of the proposed structure include the Advisory Board, the Evaluation Committee, and the Mentor Network.

1. Leadership and Governance

At the top of the organizational hierarchy is the Executive Committee, which comprises the CEO, CFO, CTO, and representatives from major stakeholders. This committee is responsible for overall strategic direction, resource allocation, and ensuring alignment with the accelerator’s mission and objectives.

Rationale: Centralized leadership ensures cohesive decision-making and strategic alignment across the entire organization. It also facilitates swift responses to emerging opportunities and challenges in the dynamic ICT sector.

2. Advisory Board

Role and Responsibilities: The Advisory Board provides strategic guidance, industry insights, and networking opportunities. It consists of seasoned professionals from the ICT industry, academia, and key cross-border stakeholders. Their main functions include advising on long-term strategies, identifying emerging trends, and fostering relationships with potential investors and partners.

Structure:

Chairperson: A recognized leader in the ICT field with cross-border experience.

Members: Experts from Greece and Bulgaria, including venture capitalists, successful entrepreneurs, and academic researchers.

Rationale: A diverse Advisory Board ensures a wide range of perspectives and expertise, fostering innovative strategies and robust networks essential for start-up growth.



3. Evaluation Committee

Role and Responsibilities: This committee is tasked with developing evaluation metrics, assessing start-up performance, and ensuring continuous improvement. It comprises individuals with extensive experience in start-up incubation, ICT evaluation methods, and cross-border business operations.

Structure:

Chairperson: An expert in start-up evaluation and incubation.

Members: Professionals from both regions with backgrounds in finance, technology assessment, and business development.

Rationale: The Evaluation Committee’s structured approach ensures that start-ups are rigorously assessed and supported to meet high standards of performance and innovation.

4. Mentor Network

Role and Responsibilities: The Mentor Network is dedicated to providing hands-on support, guidance, and expertise to start-ups. Mentors are drawn from successful ICT entrepreneurs, experienced business professionals, and technical experts from both Greece and Bulgaria.

Structure:

Lead Mentor Coordinator: An experienced mentor with a track record of guiding start-ups to success.

Mentors: A diverse pool of mentors specializing in different areas such as software development, business strategy, marketing, and international expansion.

Rationale: A robust Mentor Network leverages the collective expertise of successful professionals to provide tailored advice and support, which is crucial for the development and scaling of start-ups.

5. Cross-Border Collaboration Teams

Role and Responsibilities: These teams are responsible for facilitating collaboration and synergy between Greek and Bulgarian start-ups. They work on joint projects, cultural exchange programs, and shared resource management.

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Structure:

Team Leaders: Bilingual professionals with experience in cross-border projects.

Members: Specialists in project management, cultural liaison, and bilateral business development.

Rationale: Dedicated teams ensure that cross-border collaborations are productive and mutually beneficial, addressing the unique challenges of working across different regulatory and cultural environments.

6. Operational Units

These units handle the day-to-day operations of the accelerator, including administration, finance, marketing, and IT support. Each unit is equipped with professionals skilled in both general operational tasks and the specific needs of the ICT sector.

Key Units:

Administration: Manages internal processes and ensures smooth operational flow.

Finance: Oversees budgeting, funding allocation, and financial reporting.

Marketing: Develops and executes marketing strategies to promote the accelerator and its start-ups.

IT Support: Provides technological infrastructure and support, ensuring the accelerator leverages the latest ICT advancements.

Rationale: Specialized operational units ensure that all aspects of the accelerator’s functioning are optimized, contributing to a supportive environment for start-ups.

1.2 Implementation Plan

To transition to this proposed structure, the following steps will be taken:

Stakeholder Engagement: Communicate the proposed changes to all stakeholders, gathering feedback and securing buy-in.

Role Definition and Recruitment: Clearly define roles within the new structure and recruit individuals with the necessary skills and experience.

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Training and Development: Provide training to ensure all team members are aligned with the new structure and understand their responsibilities.

Technology Integration: Implement ICT tools to support collaboration and operational efficiency across borders.

Performance Monitoring: Establish metrics to monitor the effectiveness of the new structure and make adjustments as necessary.

Rationale: A phased implementation plan ensures a smooth transition, minimizing disruptions and maximizing the benefits of the new organizational structure.

By adopting this comprehensive and strategically designed organizational structure, the intelligent Cross-Border Accelerator will be well-positioned to support ICT-enabled start-ups in both Greece and Bulgaria, driving innovation and economic growth in the region.



2. ADVISORY BOARD: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Role of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board plays a critical role in the strategic oversight and success of the Cross-Border Accelerator. It serves as a guiding body that provides expertise, strategic advice, and industry connections to support the accelerator’s mission of fostering ICT-enabled start-ups in the Greece-Bulgaria border region. The Advisory Board ensures that the accelerator remains aligned with its goals and effectively responds to the dynamic needs of the start-up ecosystem.

2.2 Responsibilities of the Advisory Board

1. Strategic Guidance

Long-term Vision: Assist in shaping the long-term vision and strategic direction of the accelerator, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful.

Strategic Planning: Participate in the development of strategic plans, setting priorities, and identifying key initiatives that align with the accelerator’s mission.

Market Insights: Provide insights into market trends, technological advancements, and industry needs, helping the accelerator adapt and innovate.

2. Advisory Functions

Program Development: Advise on the design and improvement of accelerator programs, ensuring they meet the needs of start-ups and are aligned with best practices.

Policy Formulation: Offer recommendations on policies and procedures that enhance the accelerator’s operations and governance.

3. Networking and Partnerships

Industry Connections: Leverage their networks to establish and strengthen relationships with key industry players, potential partners, investors, and sponsors.



Cross-Border Collaboration: Facilitate cross-border partnerships and collaborations between stakeholders in Greece and Bulgaria, promoting synergy and resource sharing.

Outreach: Assist in promoting the accelerator within the local, regional, and international start-up ecosystems to attract high-quality start-ups and mentors.

4. Resource Mobilization

Fundraising Support: Provide support and guidance in fundraising efforts, helping to secure financial resources, grants, and sponsorships.

Resource Allocation: Advise on the effective allocation of resources to ensure maximum impact and sustainability of the accelerator’s initiatives.

5. Evaluation and Feedback

Program Evaluation: Participate in the evaluation of accelerator programs and initiatives, providing feedback to improve effectiveness and outcomes.

Performance Monitoring: Monitor the performance of the accelerator and its start-ups, ensuring that goals and benchmarks are met.

Reporting: Review and provide feedback on regular progress reports and performance metrics, ensuring transparency and accountability.

6. Mentorship and Expertise

Direct Mentorship: Offer mentorship and expertise to start-ups, sharing their knowledge and experience to help them overcome challenges and achieve growth.

Workshops and Seminars: Conduct workshops, seminars, and panel discussions to provide start-ups with valuable insights and skills.

7. Advocacy and Representation

Advocacy: Act as advocates for the accelerator and its mission, promoting the importance of ICT innovation and entrepreneurship in the Greece-Bulgaria region.

Representation: Represent the accelerator at industry events, conferences, and public forums to enhance its visibility and credibility.

8. Risk Management



Risk Identification: Identify potential risks and challenges facing the accelerator and its start-ups, and advise on mitigation strategies.

Crisis Management: Provide guidance during times of crisis or significant challenges, helping the accelerator navigate through difficulties effectively.

Composition and Structure of the Advisory Board

2.3 Diversity and Representation

Cross-Border Expertise: Include members from both Greece and Bulgaria to ensure balanced representation and understanding of the cross-border context.

Industry Experts: Comprise individuals with extensive experience and expertise in the ICT sector, entrepreneurship, and start-up ecosystems.

Diverse Backgrounds: Ensure diversity in terms of professional backgrounds, gender, and areas of expertise to bring a wide range of perspectives and insights.

2.4 Meetings and Communication

Regular Meetings: Hold regular meetings (quarterly or bi-annually) to review progress, discuss strategic issues, and provide guidance.

Ad Hoc Committees: Form ad hoc committees or working groups for specific initiatives or areas requiring focused attention.

Communication Channels: Establish effective communication channels to ensure continuous engagement and timely sharing of information.

2.5 Benefits of the Advisory Board

Benefits of the Advisory Board

Strategic Alignment: Ensures that the accelerator’s strategic direction is aligned with industry trends and start-up needs, enhancing its relevance and impact.

Enhanced Credibility: Increases the accelerator’s credibility and attractiveness to start-ups, investors, and partners through association with respected industry leaders. **Resource Access:** Provides access to valuable resources, including funding, expertise, and networks, essential for the growth and success of start-ups. **Risk Mitigation:** Helps identify and mitigate risks, ensuring the accelerator’s sustainability and resilience in a dynamic start-up ecosystem.

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In summary, the Advisory Board’s role and responsibilities are pivotal in guiding the Cross-Border Accelerator towards achieving its mission of fostering ICT-enabled start-ups in the Greece-Bulgaria region. By providing strategic guidance, industry insights, and valuable resources, the Advisory Board ensures that the accelerator remains effective, innovative, and impactful in supporting start-ups and promoting cross-border collaboration.



3. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

3.1 Cross Border Expertise

Regional Understanding

Knowledge of Greece and Bulgaria: Deep understanding of the economic, cultural, and business landscapes of both Greece and Bulgaria.

Cross-Border Collaboration: Proven experience in facilitating or participating in cross-border projects or initiatives between the two countries.

Regulatory Acumen: Familiarity with the legal and regulatory environments in both countries, particularly as they pertain to start-ups and the ICT sector.

Network and Relationships

Local Connections: Strong connections with key stakeholders, including government bodies, industry associations, and business leaders in both Greece and Bulgaria.

International Reach: Ability to leverage international networks to support cross-border collaboration and expansion opportunities for start-ups.

3.2 ICT Industry Experience

Technical Knowledge

ICT Expertise: Extensive knowledge and experience in the ICT sector, including emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, cybersecurity, and software development.

Innovation Track Record: Demonstrated history of innovation within the ICT industry, such as developing new technologies, products, or business models.

Entrepreneurial Experience

Start-Up Involvement: Experience founding, scaling, or advising successful ICT start-ups, ideally with a cross-border or international component.

Investment Acumen: Understanding of the start-up investment landscape, including experience as an investor, venture capitalist, or in raising capital for ICT ventures.



Industry Leadership

Leadership Roles: Held senior leadership positions (e.g., CEO, CTO, VP of Innovation) within established ICT companies or influential start-up ecosystems.

Thought Leadership: Recognized as a thought leader in the ICT industry, with contributions to industry publications, speaking engagements at conferences, or active participation in industry forums.

3.3 Strategic and Advisory Skills

Strategic Vision

Strategic Planning: Ability to contribute to long-term strategic planning and vision setting for the accelerator.

Business Acumen: Strong understanding of business strategy, market dynamics, and competitive positioning within the ICT sector.

Advisory Experience

Board Participation: Previous experience serving on advisory boards, corporate boards, or as an advisor to start-ups, particularly in the ICT sector.

Mentorship Capability: Proven ability to mentor and guide start-ups, providing valuable insights and practical advice to help them grow and succeed.

3.4 Commitment and Availability

Time Commitment

Engagement Level: Willingness and ability to commit the necessary time and effort to actively participate in board meetings, events, and mentoring activities.

Responsiveness: Availability to provide timely advice and support as needed, ensuring responsiveness to the accelerator’s needs.

Long-Term Involvement

Sustained Engagement: Interest in maintaining a long-term relationship with the accelerator, contributing to its evolution and sustained success.

3.5 Diversity and Inclusivity



Diverse Perspectives

Gender and Ethnic Diversity: Commitment to promoting diversity within the advisory board, including gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Varied Expertise: Inclusion of members with varied backgrounds and expertise to provide a broad range of perspectives and insights.

3.6 Conclusions

Regional Understanding: Members must have a deep understanding of both the Greek and Bulgarian business environments, including regulatory frameworks and cultural nuances. This ensures they can effectively guide cross-border collaboration and support the unique needs of start-ups operating in this region.

ICT Expertise: Members should possess substantial experience and technical knowledge in the ICT sector, demonstrating a history of innovation and leadership. Their expertise will help the accelerator stay at the forefront of technological advancements and industry trends.

Entrepreneurial and Investment Experience: Advisors with hands-on experience in founding, scaling, and investing in ICT start-ups bring practical insights and guidance that are crucial for emerging companies in the accelerator.

Strategic and Advisory Skills: Members must have a proven ability to contribute to strategic planning and provide high-level advice. Previous board or advisory experience, combined with strong business acumen, ensures they can offer valuable strategic direction.

Commitment and Availability: The effectiveness of the advisory board hinges on the members' commitment to their roles. Members should be willing to dedicate the necessary time and be responsive to the accelerator's needs, providing sustained support over the long term.

Diversity and Inclusivity: Promoting diversity within the advisory board ensures a wide range of perspectives and ideas, which is essential for fostering innovation and addressing the varied challenges faced by start-ups.

By adhering to these criteria, the accelerator can assemble an advisory board that brings a balanced mix of cross-border expertise, ICT industry experience,

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strategic insight, and commitment to support the growth and success of ICT-enabled start-ups in the Greece-Bulgaria border region.



4. EVALUATION COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Role of the Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee is tasked with assessing the progress and performance of the start-ups within the Cross-Border Accelerator. This committee ensures that start-ups meet the accelerator's standards and goals, providing structured and objective evaluations to guide their development. The committee plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality and effectiveness of the accelerator's programs and ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Evaluation Committee

1. Developing Evaluation Criteria and Metrics

1.1 Criteria Establishment

Performance Benchmarks: Establish clear and relevant performance benchmarks for start-ups, considering factors such as growth metrics, market traction, product development, and financial health.

ICT-Specific Metrics: Develop metrics tailored to ICT-enabled start-ups, including technological innovation, software development milestones, user engagement, and data security practices.

Cross-Border Considerations: Incorporate criteria that reflect the unique challenges and opportunities of operating in the cross-border context between Greece and Bulgaria.

1.2 Regular Review and Updates

Adaptive Metrics: Regularly review and update evaluation criteria to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with industry trends and the evolving needs of start-ups.

Stakeholder Input: Gather input from various stakeholders, including advisory board members, mentors, and start-ups, to refine evaluation metrics.

2. Conducting Regular Assessments

2.1 Periodic Evaluations



Scheduled Assessments: Conduct evaluations at regular intervals (e.g., quarterly, bi-annually) to monitor start-up progress and provide timely feedback.

Milestone Reviews: Assess start-ups at key milestones, such as product launches, funding rounds, and market entry, to evaluate their readiness and performance.

2.2 Comprehensive Analysis

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis: Use a combination of quantitative data (e.g., revenue growth, user numbers) and qualitative insights (e.g., customer feedback, team dynamics) for comprehensive evaluations.

Comparative Benchmarking: Compare start-up performance against industry standards and peer benchmarks to provide context and identify areas for improvement.

3. Providing Feedback and Recommendations

3.1 Constructive Feedback

Detailed Reports: Provide detailed evaluation reports to start-ups, outlining strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

Actionable Insights: Offer actionable recommendations to help start-ups address identified challenges and capitalize on opportunities.

3.2 Continuous Improvement

Follow-Up: Conduct follow-up evaluations to track the implementation of recommendations and assess subsequent progress.

Iterative Feedback Loop: Maintain an iterative feedback loop, encouraging continuous improvement and agile responses to feedback.

4. Ensuring Fairness and Transparency

4.1 Objective Evaluation

Standardized Processes: Implement standardized evaluation processes to ensure consistency and objectivity in assessments.



Impartiality: Maintain impartiality and avoid conflicts of interest by ensuring that committee members do not have direct financial or personal stakes in the start-ups being evaluated.

4.2 Transparent Communication

Clear Criteria: Clearly communicate evaluation criteria and processes to start-ups from the outset.

Open Dialogue: Foster open dialogue with start-ups, allowing them to ask questions and seek clarifications about their evaluations.

5. Supporting Decision-Making

5.1 Resource Allocation

Funding Recommendations: Provide recommendations on resource allocation, including funding, mentoring, and support services, based on start-up performance and potential.

Program Adjustments: Advise on adjustments to accelerator programs and services to better meet the needs of start-ups and enhance their growth prospects.

5.2 Selection and Graduation

Selection Process: Participate in the selection process for new start-ups entering the accelerator, ensuring they meet entry criteria and have high growth potential.

Graduation Criteria: Define and apply criteria for graduating start-ups from the accelerator, ensuring they are ready for independent growth and market competition.

6. Enhancing Accountability and Learning

6.1 Accountability Mechanisms

Performance Tracking: Implement mechanisms to track and report on the performance of start-ups and the effectiveness of the accelerator’s support.

Impact Measurement: Measure the impact of the accelerator on start-up success, regional economic development, and cross-border collaboration.

6.2 Learning and Development



Knowledge Sharing: Facilitate knowledge sharing among start-ups, mentors, and other stakeholders, promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Best Practices: Identify and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from the evaluation process to enhance the overall effectiveness of the accelerator.

4.3 Composition and Structure of the Evaluation Committee

Expertise and Diversity:

ICT and Start-Up Expertise: Include members with strong backgrounds in ICT, start-up development, and venture capital to provide relevant and informed evaluations.

Cross-Border Representation: Ensure representation from both Greece and Bulgaria to provide balanced perspectives and address cross-border dynamics.

Diverse Skills: Incorporate a diverse range of skills, including technical expertise, business strategy, financial analysis, and market research.

Operational Procedures:

Regular Meetings: Hold regular meetings to discuss evaluations, share insights, and make decisions.

Subcommittees: Form subcommittees or working groups for specific evaluation tasks or focus areas.

Documentation: Maintain thorough documentation of evaluation processes, criteria, and outcomes to ensure transparency and consistency.

Summary

Objective Evaluations: The committee ensures objective and consistent evaluations through standardized processes and criteria tailored to the unique needs of ICT-enabled start-ups operating in a cross-border environment.

Constructive Feedback: By providing detailed, actionable feedback and recommendations, the committee supports start-ups in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities for growth and improvement.

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Transparency and Fairness: Maintaining transparency and impartiality throughout the evaluation process fosters trust and accountability, ensuring that start-ups receive fair assessments.

Strategic Support: The committee’s evaluations inform critical decisions regarding resource allocation, program adjustments, and start-up selection and graduation, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the accelerator.

Continuous Improvement: By fostering a culture of learning and development, the committee contributes to the continuous improvement of both start-ups and the accelerator itself, driving sustained success and impact in the Greece-Bulgaria region.

By adhering to these roles and responsibilities, the Evaluation Committee ensures that the Cross-Border Accelerator operates effectively, supports start-up growth, and fosters innovation in the ICT sector within the Greece-Bulgaria border region.



5. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

5.1 Knowledge of Evaluation Methods

Professional Experience in Evaluation

Evaluation Frameworks: Demonstrated experience in developing and applying evaluation frameworks, tools, and methodologies, particularly in the context of start-ups and innovation ecosystems.

Performance Metrics: Expertise in designing and implementing performance metrics and indicators that accurately measure start-up progress, impact, and potential.

Impact Assessment: Proficiency in conducting impact assessments, including both qualitative and quantitative analyses, to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of programs.

Academic and Research Background

Educational Qualifications: Advanced degrees in relevant fields such as business administration, economics, data science, or social sciences, with a focus on evaluation and impact assessment.

Research Experience: Track record of conducting research on evaluation methods, preferably with publications in peer-reviewed journals or presentations at academic conferences.

Practical Application

Project Experience: Practical experience in evaluating start-ups, accelerators, or similar programs, ensuring a thorough understanding of the unique challenges and requirements of such evaluations.

Case Studies and Best Practices: Familiarity with case studies and best practices in start-up evaluation, both within the ICT sector and across other industries.

5.2 ICT Expertise

Technical Knowledge



ICT Background: Strong technical background in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including knowledge of software development, digital innovation, and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity.

Industry Trends: Up-to-date with current and emerging trends in the ICT sector, enabling informed assessments of technological feasibility, innovation potential, and market relevance of start-up solutions.

Sector-Specific Experience

Professional Experience: Experience working in the ICT industry, preferably in roles that involve innovation, product development, or technology strategy.

Start-Up Ecosystem: Familiarity with the start-up ecosystem, including incubation, acceleration, funding, and scaling processes, with a focus on ICT start-ups.

Technical Evaluation Skills

Product and Technology Assessment: Ability to assess the technical aspects of start-up products and solutions, including architecture, scalability, security, and usability.

Innovation Potential: Capability to evaluate the innovation potential and technical viability of start-up ideas, considering market needs and competitive landscape.

5.3 Cross-Border Operational Experience

Regional Expertise

Knowledge of Greece and Bulgaria: In-depth understanding of the business, economic, and cultural environments of both Greece and Bulgaria, particularly as they pertain to the ICT sector and start-up ecosystem.

Regulatory Awareness: Familiarity with the regulatory frameworks, business laws, and compliance requirements in both countries, including those specific to cross-border operations.

Cross-Border Collaboration



Project Management: Experience managing or participating in cross-border projects, demonstrating the ability to navigate and harmonize different operational practices, legal requirements, and cultural norms.

Bilateral Initiatives: Proven track record of involvement in bilateral initiatives, collaborations, or partnerships between Greece and Bulgaria, showcasing the ability to foster and sustain cross-border relationships.

Network and Relationships

Local and International Networks: Strong network of contacts in both Greece and Bulgaria, including connections with industry stakeholders, government bodies, academic institutions, and other relevant organizations.

Resource Mobilization: Ability to leverage these networks to mobilize resources, secure partnerships, and facilitate cross-border collaboration for the benefit of the accelerator and its start-ups.

5.4 Additional Criteria

Strategic Thinking

Analytical Skills: Strong analytical skills to critically assess start-up performance and potential, drawing on a comprehensive understanding of business strategy and market dynamics.

Problem-Solving: Proven ability to identify challenges and provide strategic recommendations to address issues and enhance start-up growth and success.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Effective Communication: Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, to clearly convey evaluation findings, recommendations, and feedback to start-ups and stakeholders.

Collaborative Approach: Ability to work collaboratively with other committee members, start-ups, and stakeholders, fostering a supportive and constructive evaluation environment.

Commitment and Integrity

Ethical Standards: Strong commitment to maintaining high ethical standards, impartiality, and confidentiality throughout the evaluation process.



Time Commitment: Willingness and ability to dedicate the necessary time and effort to participate in committee activities, including evaluations, meetings, and follow-up assessments.

5.5 Summary

Evaluation Expertise: Members should have a robust understanding of evaluation methods, including both theoretical knowledge and practical application. This ensures that the committee can develop and implement effective evaluation frameworks tailored to the needs of ICT-enabled start-ups.

ICT Knowledge: Deep expertise in the ICT sector is crucial for assessing the technical and innovative aspects of start-up solutions. Members should be familiar with current industry trends and possess the technical acumen to evaluate the feasibility and potential impact of ICT innovations.

Cross-Border Experience: Given the cross-border nature of the accelerator, members must have significant experience in cross-border operations, including knowledge of the business environments in Greece and Bulgaria, and a proven ability to manage cross-border projects and collaborations.

Strategic and Analytical Skills: Strong strategic thinking and analytical skills are essential for providing insightful evaluations and actionable recommendations that support start-up growth and success.

Communication and Collaboration: Effective communication and interpersonal skills are vital for delivering clear feedback and fostering a collaborative evaluation process. Members should be able to work well with diverse stakeholders and contribute to a constructive evaluation environment.

Commitment and Integrity: Members should demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical standards, impartiality, and the time required to effectively fulfill their roles on the committee.

By adhering to these criteria, the accelerator can assemble an Evaluation Committee that is well-equipped to provide thorough, objective, and impactful evaluations, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of the accelerator and the success of its start-ups in the Greece-Bulgaria border region.



6. MENTOR NETWORK: KEY FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Mentorship Programs

Individual Mentorship

Personalized Guidance: Provide one-on-one mentorship to start-up founders and teams, offering personalized guidance tailored to their specific needs and challenges.

Goal Setting: Help start-ups define clear, achievable goals and milestones, and develop strategic plans to reach them.

Ongoing Support: Maintain regular communication with assigned start-ups, offering continuous support, feedback, and encouragement throughout the accelerator program.

Group Mentorship

Peer Learning: Facilitate group mentorship sessions where multiple start-ups can share experiences, learn from each other, and gain insights from mentors.

Thematic Focus: Organize group mentorship around specific themes or challenges, such as product development, market entry, or fundraising, providing targeted advice and solutions.

Networking Opportunities: Create opportunities for start-ups to network with peers and mentors, fostering a collaborative community and potential partnerships.

Specialized Mentorship

Technical Mentorship: Provide in-depth technical guidance on specific ICT topics such as software development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and blockchain.

Business Mentorship: Offer expertise in business development areas such as marketing, sales, operations, and financial management.

Cross-Border Mentorship: Address the unique challenges of operating in a cross-border environment, including regulatory compliance, cultural differences, and cross-border marketing strategies.



6.2 Skill Development Workshops

Technical Workshops

Emerging Technologies: Conduct workshops on emerging technologies relevant to ICT start-ups, such as AI, machine learning, blockchain, IoT, and big data analytics.

Software Development: Offer training on best practices in software development, including agile methodologies, DevOps, and coding standards.

Cybersecurity: Provide sessions on cybersecurity principles, threat detection, and protection strategies to safeguard start-up assets and data.

Business and Management Workshops

Business Planning: Teach start-ups how to create effective business plans, including market analysis, competitive strategy, and financial projections.

Marketing and Sales: Conduct workshops on digital marketing strategies, customer acquisition, sales techniques, and branding.

Financial Management: Offer training on financial management, including budgeting, financial reporting, investment readiness, and fundraising strategies.

Soft Skills Workshops

Leadership Development: Provide training on leadership skills, team management, and organizational behavior to help founders lead their teams effectively.

Communication Skills: Enhance start-up founders' communication skills, including pitching, negotiation, and public speaking.

Problem-Solving: Teach critical thinking and problem-solving techniques to help start-ups navigate challenges and make informed decisions.

6.3 Networking and Resource Sharing

Networking Events

Industry Connections: Organize networking events that connect start-ups with industry leaders, potential partners, investors, and other stakeholders.



Cross-Border Networking: Facilitate cross-border networking opportunities to help start-ups establish valuable connections in both Greece and Bulgaria.

Resource Sharing

Knowledge Exchange: Encourage mentors to share their knowledge, experiences, and resources with start-ups, providing access to industry insights and best practices.

Tools and Templates: Provide access to useful tools, templates, and frameworks that can help start-ups streamline their operations and improve their business processes.

6.4 Evaluation and Feedback

Performance Monitoring

Progress Tracking: Regularly monitor the progress of start-ups, providing feedback on their performance and identifying areas for improvement.

Goal Achievement: Assess the extent to which start-ups are achieving their goals and milestones, and offer guidance on how to stay on track.

Constructive Feedback

Feedback Sessions: Conduct regular feedback sessions with start-ups, offering constructive criticism and actionable advice to help them improve.

Iterative Improvement: Encourage start-ups to implement feedback and iterate on their strategies, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

6.5 Role Modeling and Inspiration

Role Modeling

Success Stories: Share personal success stories and lessons learned to inspire and motivate start-up founders.

Best Practices: Demonstrate best practices in entrepreneurship, innovation, and business management through personal example.

Inspirational Talks

Guest Speakers: Invite successful entrepreneurs, industry experts, and thought leaders to give inspirational talks and share their insights with the start-ups.

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Motivational Sessions: Organize motivational sessions to boost the morale of start-up teams and encourage them to pursue their goals with passion and determination.

The Mentor Network in the Cross-Border Accelerator plays a vital role in supporting ICT-enabled start-ups through comprehensive mentorship programs and skill development workshops. By providing personalized and specialized mentorship, organizing targeted workshops, facilitating networking opportunities.

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DLTech UP



Co-design and launch of the Accelerator and its program of activities & Open call for applications to the Accelerator

D 3.1.1 Solidify the organisational structure and identify relevant stakeholders for the advisory board, the evaluation committee and the mentor network