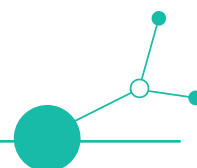


D.3.4.1 Toolkits for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

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Disclaimer

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D.3.4.1 TASK FOR ISI Toolkits for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Programme(s) covered:

- Business Skills Programme (BSP)
- Business Matchmaking Programme (BMP)

Five Region(s) covered:

- Malopolska, Poland
- Emilia Romagna, Italy
- Thuringia, Germany
- Central Hungary, Hungary
- Split Dalmatia, Croatia

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the toolkit

This toolkit has been produced in the framework of the **TASK4ISI** project, under Work Package 3: Upgrade and Enable Inclusive Entrepreneurship, which is dedicated to enabling inclusive entrepreneurship as a scalable exemplary intervention of social innovation for smart and inclusive growth. Within this framework, the toolkit aims to capture and present the validated outcomes of the pilot activities carried out under Activity 3.4, transforming project-based experience into a practical resource for further use.

Its **main purpose** is to **support the uptake, adaptation, and potential replication of the knowledge** generated through the WP3 piloting process. In this sense, the toolkit contributes to the broader objectives of TASK4ISI by helping relevant stakeholders to understand the value of inclusive entrepreneurship approaches and by encouraging the creation of favourable framework conditions for their continuation and scale-up.

The toolkit is addressed to organisations, institutions, and practitioners seeking to strengthen inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems, particularly for groups that face structural barriers in accessing entrepreneurial opportunities. By organising validated experience into a clear and transferable format, it provides a foundation for learning, adaptation, and future implementation in a variety of regional settings.

As such, the toolkit should be seen both as a project output and as a strategic resource: one that not only reflects the results achieved within TASK4ISI but also supports the longer-term ambition of embedding inclusive entrepreneurship more firmly within regional development practice, stakeholder cooperation, and policy thinking.

1.2 How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for implementing organisations and practitioners, such as:

- *NGOs*
- *Local Authorities*
- *Entrepreneurship support organisations*
- *Trainers and Mentors*
- *Business Consultant*

Follow these steps to use the toolkits effectively:

[OBJ]

Understand the regional context and your target group: Before using the toolkit, it is essential to ground your approach in the specific realities in your region. Some approaches such as:

1. *Analyse your **regional economic and entrepreneurship landscape**.*
2. *Identify “i.e. missing entrepreneurs” (e.g. women, migrants, seniors, youth, international students, people with disabilities).*
3. *Understand the **barriers they face**, such as lack of access to networks; language or cultural barriers; limited financial resources; and low confidence or lack of entrepreneurial experience.*

Data Collections that you can do:

- *Use existing data (reports, statistics, previous project outputs).*
- *Consult local stakeholders (NGOs, municipalities, community groups).*
- *Conduct short interviews or focus groups if possible.*



Adapt the programme model: The toolkit provides a validated model, but it is not meant to be copied exactly. It should be adapted to your context. Some key considerations are:

Choose your pathway:

- Business Skills Programme,
- Business Matchmaking Programme,
- or a combination of both.

Adapt:

- module content,
- duration and schedule,
- delivery format (online, hybrid, in-person),
- language and examples.

Implement training, mentoring and matchmaking activities. This is the core implementation phase, where participants develop their ideas and skills:

- Deliver training modules (workshops, practical sessions).
- Provide **individual coaching and mentoring**.
- Encourage **peer learning and collaboration**.
- Use **experiential learning methods** (learning by doing).

Connect participants with the local entrepreneurship ecosystem. Inclusive entrepreneurship programmes are only effective if participants are connected to real opportunities:

Organise networking events with:

- local entrepreneurs,
- business support organisations,
- potential partners or clients.

Provide opportunities for:

- pitching ideas,
- market testing (e.g. pop-up stores),
- collaboration with ecosystem actors.

1.3 Scope of the Toolkits

This toolkit is designed as a **place-based guide** to support the creation of framework conditions for enhancing inclusive entrepreneurship Europe. It is designed to help relevant stakeholders understand, adapt, and scale tested approaches that strengthen entrepreneurial inclusion, with a particular focus on the skills, support structures, and enabling conditions required for success. It is designed to help relevant stakeholders understand, adapt, and scale tested approaches that strengthen entrepreneurial inclusion, with a particular focus on the skills, support structures, and enabling conditions required for success.

The toolkit follows a modular approach and **provides guidance on:**

- the challenges and needs to be addressed,
- the actions to be undertaken,
- the actors to be engaged,
- the results that can be expected, and
- the mix of policy instruments and support measures to be ensured.

The current toolkit presents the validated pilot interventions in:

Kraków, Małopolska, Poland, covering:



- **Business Skills Programme:** Developing entrepreneurial competences and skills, bootcamp format; 15 and 29 November 2025, Kraków - Klaster Innowacji Społeczno-Gospodarczych, ul. Zabłocie 20.
- **Business Matchmaking Programme:** Connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with the market and ecosystem, delivered as a two-session bootcamp; 18 and 25 April 2026.

Province of Forlì-Cesena, Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy, covering:

- **Business Skills Programme:** Developing entrepreneurial competences and skills (timeframe: 6.10.2025-30.06.2026).
- **Business Matchmaking Programme:** Connecting aspiring entrepreneurship with the market and ecosystem (timeframe: 18.10.2025-31.08.2026).

in Erfurt (and Schmalkalden), in Thuringia, Germany, covering:

- **Business Skills Programme:** Developing entrepreneurial competences and skills (timeframe: 22.10.2025- 19.04.2026).
- **Business Matchmaking Programme:** Connecting aspiring entrepreneurship with the market and ecosystem (timeframe: 27.04.2026-05.06.2026).

in Budapest, Hungary

- **Business Skills Programme:** Developing entrepreneurial competences and skills (A six-week long entrepreneurship programme called KATAPULT: from 6.10. 2025 to 14.11. 2025).
- **Business Matchmaking Programme:** Connecting aspiring entrepreneurship with the market and ecosystem (An eight-week long entrepreneurship programme called SZATELLIT 12.03.2026 to 28.04.2026).

and in Budapest, Kaposvár, Sólly covering:

- **Business Skills Programme:** Developing entrepreneurial competences and skills (from 09.2025 to 03.2026).
- **Business Matchmaking Programme:** Connecting aspiring entrepreneurship with the market and ecosystem (from 09.2025 to 03.2026).

in Split, Split-Dalmatian County, Croatia, covering:

- **Business Skills Programme:** Developing entrepreneurial competences and skills (20.11.2025 - 17.01.2026)
- **Business Matchmaking Programme:** Connecting aspiring entrepreneurship with the market and ecosystem (25.05.2026 - 29.05.2026.).

At the same time, this document should be read as part of a **broader TASK4ISI toolkit collection** which includes corresponding regional toolkits developed by other project partners. Readers are therefore encouraged to consult the toolkits from the other partner regions as complementary resources, particularly when seeking comparative insights, alternative implementation approaches, or inspiration for adaptation in different territorial and institutional contexts. Taken together, these regional toolkits provide a broader understanding of how inclusive entrepreneurship can be supported across diverse settings while remaining responsive to local needs and conditions which includes corresponding regional toolkits developed by other project partners. Readers are therefore encouraged to consult the toolkits from the other partner regions as complementary resources, particularly when seeking comparative insights, alternative implementation approaches, or inspiration for adaptation in different territorial and institutional contexts. Taken together, these regional toolkits provide a broader understanding of how inclusive entrepreneurship can be supported across diverse settings while remaining responsive to local needs and conditions.



2. REGIONAL CONTEXT, CHALLENGES & TARGET GROUP

2.1 Małopolska, Poland

Małopolska (Lesser Poland) is one of Poland's strongest and most dynamic regional economies, with Kraków at its core. The region combines a large academic base - over 150,000 students, including a sizeable international cohort - with a fast-growing IT, business-services (Business Process Outsourcing BPO/Shared Services Centers SSC) and creative sector and an active start-up and innovation ecosystem. Despite this favorable environment, entrepreneurial activity is unevenly distributed. Women, migrants (notably the large Ukrainian community that has settled in the region since 2022), seniors (55+), international students and young people remain markedly under-represented among business founders. These groups face structural barriers - limited access to local networks and capital, language and administrative hurdles, and low entrepreneurial confidence - while the region's numerous support services are often fragmented and not tailored to their needs. The pilot therefore addressed a clear problem: how to turn Kraków's strong but uneven ecosystem into a genuinely inclusive one.

2.1.1 Target groups and missing entrepreneurs

Target groups	Key barriers	Specific needs
Women	- care and family responsibilities limiting available time - weaker access to finance and to business networks - confidence gap and persistent gender stereotypes	- flexible, condensed scheduling (e.g. bootcamp format) - female role models and mentors - family-friendly formats and access to women's business networks
Migrants (incl. Ukrainian refugees)	- Polish-language barrier - unfamiliarity with Polish legal, tax and business-registration rules - lack of local networks and qualification-recognition issues - uncertain residence status and limited start-up capital	- information in Ukrainian / English / simplified Polish - step-by-step guidance on administrative formalities - local networking and individual mentoring - signposting to microfinance and support services
International students	- language barrier and short / uncertain residence horizon - limited local networks - unfamiliarity with the Polish business environment	- English-language delivery and materials - networking with the local ecosystem - guidance on staying and operating in Poland after graduation
Young people	- lack of professional experience and networks - limited capital and access to early funding - low confidence and risk aversion	- practical, hands-on entrepreneurial skills - peer learning and mentoring - exposure to the ecosystem and to role models
Seniors (55+)	- limited recent business / entrepreneurial experience- digital exclusion and limited familiarity with online tools - lower confidence and risk appetite - modest, local business	- in-person, stationary delivery with individual consultations- structured, stationary, step-by-step training - support with online registration (Profil Zaufany) and digital tools - a safe, non-competitive



	ambitions - intergenerational and cultural barriers - gap in digital skills and use of online tools - lower confidence and higher risk aversion at a later career stage - preference for in-person rather than online formats	learning environment - individual consultations - step-by-step guidance on legal and formal business set-up in Poland - a supportive, low-pressure learning environment - practical use of basic digital / ICT tools
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Target groups in the Małopolska pilot

In line with the project framework, the toolkit retains the four groups identified in D2.2.1 (women, migrants, international students and young people). In the Kraków pilot, however, the groups addressed were migrants (including expats and Ukrainian refugees) and seniors aged 55+, with women strongly represented across both. Participation reached 38 people in BootCamp #1 and 30 in BootCamp #2 (24 attending both days); migrants accounted for the large majority and most participants were women, while international students and young people were not specific targets in this edition.

The categories overlapped: one participant could belong to more than one group at the same time - for example, being both a senior and a migrant. Because the registration form allowed only one self-declared category, some participants who were also eligible as seniors registered as migrants, so the headline figures under-represent seniors.

These barriers and needs directly shaped the design of the Kraków pilot. Because the target groups share a shortage of time, networks and confidence rather than a lack of ideas, each pathway was delivered as a short, intensive bootcamp rather than a course spread over many weeks: a concentrated format lowers the participation cost for people with care duties, jobs or insecure residence status, while still building a peer cohort.

Bilingual delivery (Polish/English) and materials adapted for Ukrainian participants answered the language barrier; embedded mentoring and a closing networking and pitching session answered the missing-networks barrier; and hands-on, experiential exercises - rather than theory - built the practical skills and confidence the groups most lacked.

2.1.2 Stakeholders and Ecosystem Actors

In Kraków the pilot engaged a network of ecosystem actors coordinated through the ISIHUB at KUE: the City of Kraków (Miasto Kraków) as direct organiser, KMS as the delivery partner, the technology park and incubators, the regional development agency, the chamber of commerce, migrant, women's and senior organisations, the local start-up community, and experienced entrepreneurs acting as mentors. The table below maps these actors and their roles.

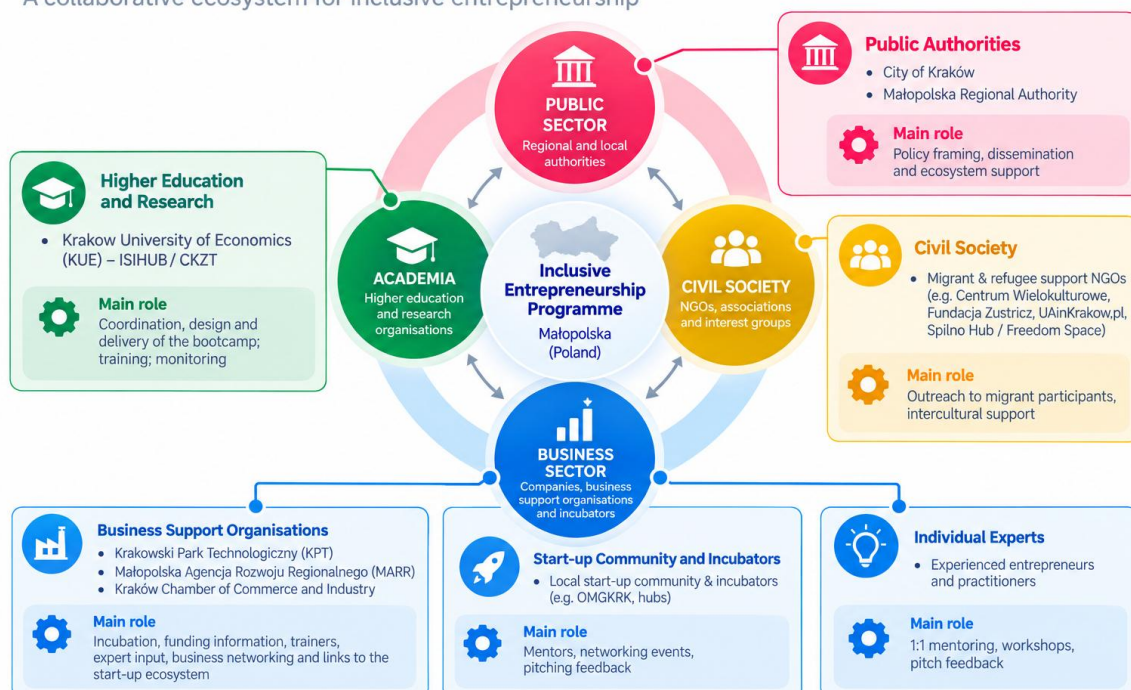
Organisation	Type	Role in the Programme
Krakow University of Economics (KUE) - ISIHUB / CKZT	University / project host	Coordination, design and delivery of the bootcamp; training; monitoring
Krakowski Park Technologiczny (KPT)	Technology park / startup support	Incubation, mentors, networking, links to the start-up ecosystem
Małopolska Agencja Rozwoju Regionalnego (MARR)	Regional development agency	Information on funding instruments, business-support services



Kraków Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Business organisation	Trainers, expert input, business networking
Migrant & refugee support NGOs (e.g. organisations supporting the Ukrainian community: Centrum Wielokulturowe w Krakowie, Fundacja Zustricz, UAinKrakow.pl,	NGO / civil society	Outreach to migrant participants, intercultural support
Local start-up community & incubators (e.g. OMGKRR, hubs)	Business community	Mentors, networking events, pitching feedback
Experienced entrepreneurs and practitioners	Individual experts	1:1 mentoring, workshops, pitch feedback
City of Kraków / Małopolska Regional Authority	Public authority	Policy framing, dissemination, ecosystem support

Helix Stakeholder Compass – Małopolska (Poland)

A collaborative ecosystem for inclusive entrepreneurship





2.2 Emilia- Romagna, Italy

Emilia-Romagna is a wealthy, export-oriented region characterised by a strong manufacturing vocation, numerous SMEs, and prominent clusters like the 'Motor Valley' and 'Food Valley'. The service sector dominates the regional economy, alongside rapidly growing investments in the data sector. Its highly structured entrepreneurial ecosystem is supported by regional agencies like ART-ER, local innovation hubs, and specialized funding mechanisms.

However, key territorial and structural problems challenges persist. A distinct urban-rural divide leaves peripheral areas less developed than metropolitan hubs. According to the National Strategy for Inner Areas, 130 municipalities in Emilia-Romagna are classified as “inner areas”, accounting for around 12% of the regional population. At the same time, the regional business support and incubation ecosystem has a strong focus on innovative and technology-driven entrepreneurship.

This is reflected, for example, in the composition of the regional startup ecosystem: 78% of Emilia-Romagna startups operate in advanced services such as software and IT consultancy, IT and information services, and scientific research and development, while more than 85% of the projects admitted to the 2025 regional call for innovative startups incorporated advanced technologies such as AI and Big Data. Consequently, traditional non-tech sectors—including crafts, personal services and social enterprises—may have more limited access to specialised support tailored to their specific needs, particularly in relation to digitalisation, skills development, visibility and access to innovation-oriented support.

2.2.1 Target groups and Missing Entrepreneurs

The Emilia-Romagna ISIHUB context identifies a diverse range of “missing entrepreneurs”, focusing primarily on women, young people, and migrants. Whilst these key priority groups encompass both aspiring entrepreneurs and early-stage entrepreneurs who are separated by their current point in the business cycle, they share an overlapping set of structural vulnerabilities, distinct characteristics, and systemic barriers:

- **Women:** Defined by a profound sense of determination, strong interpersonal skills, and a clear pursuit of economic independence. Across both aspiring entrepreneurship and early stages, their primary systemic barrier is a heavily compromised work-life balance stemming from a disproportionate share of domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Furthermore, they navigate a general lack of visible female entrepreneurial role models and a widespread deficit in confidence regarding formal credit management, banking procedures, and long-term financial planning.
- **Young People (including NEETs - i.e. Not in Education, Employment or Training):** Characterised by high levels of creativity, original thinking, and an innate openness to digital innovation. For those in the aspiring entrepreneurship phase, they are frequently constrained by severe demotivation, low professional self-reliance, and an absolute lack of start-up capital or personal savings. Upon successfully transitioning into early-stage entrepreneurs, their newly formalised ventures remain highly fragile due to persistent capital scarcity, a lack of collateral, and an acute deficiency in critical commercial skills—specifically requiring urgent support in brand identity, pricing strategy, corporate communication, and market promotion.
- **Migrants and Refugees:** Driven by a resilient cultural identity and an immediate, pressing need to generate a self-sustaining family livelihood. As aspiring entrepreneurs, they face immense initial hurdles due to language barriers, cultural isolation, and a total unfamiliarity with complex regional regulatory, tax, and legal frameworks. As early-stage entrepreneurs, whilst their businesses are fully operational,



they continue to suffer from a critical deficit in "relationship capital", leaving them structurally disconnected from broader local business ecosystems, native supply chains, and regional B2B networks.

Other Contextual Target Groups

In addition to the primary priority demographics above, the regional ecosystem recognises relevant structural vulnerabilities within other segments:

- **Seniors / Older Adults:** Possess extensive industry expertise but their entrepreneurial profile is significantly hindered across both aspiring and early stages by poor digital literacy and a pronounced aversion to financial risk.
- **Persons with Disabilities:** Demonstrate intense personal motivation and specific cognitive strengths, but navigate extreme social stigma, restrictive systemic biases, and overly complex administrative processes throughout their journey.
- **Ex-Offenders (End of Penalty):** Bring valuable prior practical or manual skills but are severely restricted by deep-seated social prejudices, immediate financial hardship, complex bureaucratic conditions, and basic logistical constraints (such as lacking a valid driving licence) at all points of their development.

Integrated Ecosystem Deficiencies

Regardless of whether individuals are navigating aspiring entrepreneurship or operating as early-stage entrepreneurs, the ISIHUB experience highlights critical, cross-cutting support gaps. Across all priority demographics, there is a universal, urgent demand for foundational upskilling in advanced financial and credit management, structured hands-on training in digital business tools, and practical guidance on how to navigate and access the services of the local Public Administration (P.A.).

Target groups	Key barriers	Specific needs
Women	-Severely compromised work-life balance due to a disproportionate burden of domestic and caregiving responsibilities. -Low entrepreneurial self-esteem and confidence regarding financial planning, business risk, and formal credit procedures. -Scarcity of visible local female entrepreneurial role models and peer support networks.	-Highly flexible hybrid training hours and dedicated childcare support options (e.g. babysitting services during workshops). -Targeted actions to consolidate self-reliance, risk management, and formal credit negotiations. -Access to mentorship schemes featuring established female entrepreneurs within the local ecosystem.
Migrant	-Language and communication barriers alongside cultural isolation. -Unfamiliarity with complex regional regulatory, bureaucratic, and legal frameworks. -Deficit in "relationship capital" during early stages, leaving operational businesses structurally disconnected from local B2B networks and regional business ecosystems.	-Active involvement of cultural mediators, multilingual translation services, and visual/simplified guidance materials. -Immediate practical, administrative, and digital support to navigate legal procedures and secure basic livelihood generation. -Structured matchmaking and integration opportunities to embed their early-stage ventures into local economic dynamics and community networks.
Young people	-Critical scarcity of initial financial resources and start-up capital at both aspiring and early stages.	-Smart, fast-paced, and visually facilitated educational formats tailored to short attention spans. -Robust individual coaching paired with practical, hands-on support in branding,



	-Widespread demotivation, low professional experience, and a lack of initial market confidence. -Deficiencies in key business-cycle operational skills, notably corporate communication, brand identity, and market promotion.	- digital marketing, and commercial launch strategy. -Facilitated paths to micro-financing, seed grants, and low-barrier investment tools
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The definition of the primary obstacles to inclusive entrepreneurship within the Emilia-Romagna territory was derived from data gathered across the lifecycle of the regional ISIHUB pilot actions. Diagnostic assessments conducted at the launch of the project were systematically cross-referenced with operational monitoring throughout the deployment of both target training paths. Qualitative evidence was captured via formal and informal feedback loops involving pilot participants, trainers, and external field experts, who regularly reported operational insights to the hub coordinators.

This consultative assessment identified four primary structural barriers that restrict target groups—particularly women, young people, and migrants—from successfully initiating and scaling business ventures within the regional ecosystem:

- *Asymmetry of Information and Foundational Knowledge Gaps:* Target groups exhibit a pronounced lack of fundamental business literacy. Operational data revealed that a significant majority of participants possessed no prior exposure to basic entrepreneurial frameworks, with many completely unfamiliar with standard strategic toolkits such as the Business Model Canvas (BMC).
- *Administrative and Bureaucratic Complexity:* The procedural requirements associated with company registration, fiscal compliance, and institutional administration within the regional context represent a significant operational and psychological entry barrier.
- *Financial Capital Deficits:* Vulnerable demographics frequently lack the formal credit history, personal equity, or collateral required by traditional banking institutions, limiting their access to necessary seed capital.
- *Deficiencies in Sectoral Integration (Relationship Capital):* Operational profiles show that early-stage and aspiring entrepreneurs face challenges entering established territorial supply chains and regional business networks, leading to structural economic isolation.

To ensure the pilot actions directly addressed these diagnosed territorial challenges, the Emilia-Romagna ISIHUB translated the collected evidence into targeted pedagogical modules, delivery structures, and mentoring mechanisms:

- *Addressing Knowledge Gaps and Bureaucratic Barriers via Applied Methodologies:* In response to the absence of foundational business knowledge, the pilot structure was systematically organized around an incremental, applied learning methodology. The curriculum introduced the Business Model Canvas (BMC) from first principles, utilizing collective training blocks to ground essential business theory. To bridge the gap between comprehension and independent implementation, the pilot combined these core lessons with structured practical exercises and mandatory at-home coursework. This independent application was subsequently reviewed and refined during customized, one-on-one (1:1) mentoring sessions with field specialists. This progressive flow—spanning collective training, practical coursework, and individual advisory sessions—allowed participants to master strategic business tools before navigating complex P.A. procedures, regional corporate law, and fiscal compliance regulations.



- *Mitigating Financial Barriers and Enhancing Ecosystem Integration:* To target capital scarcity, the training programmes integrated detailed instructional segments on alternative financing structures, including micro-credit instruments, public funding incentives, and regional grants for youth and women-led entrepreneurship. Furthermore, to combat market entry difficulties and build relationship capital, dedicated networking segments and stakeholder match-making opportunities were systematically integrated into the training schedules. These actions provided a direct link between the pilot participants and established local economic actors, business associations, and institutional stakeholders, facilitating long-term integration into the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2.2.2 Stakeholders and Ecosystem Actors

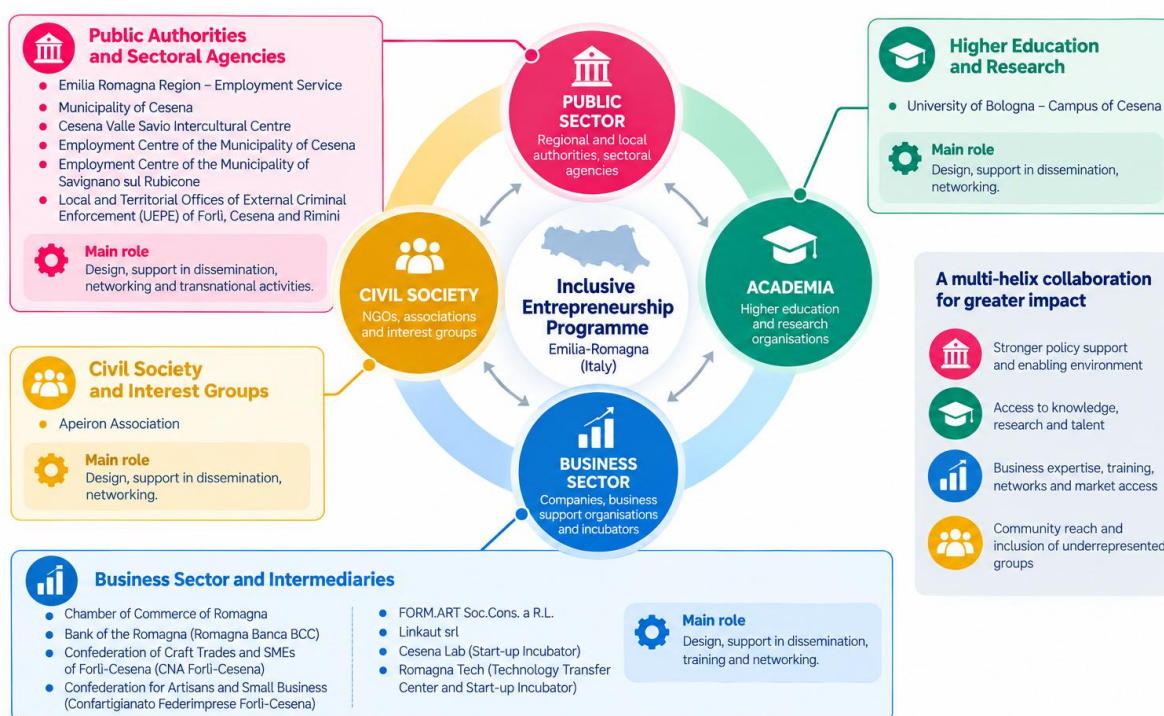
Organization	Type	Role in the Programme
Emilia Romagna Region - Employment Service	Public authority and sectoral agency	Design, support in dissemination, networking
ART-ER Emilia-Romagna-Attrattività Ricerca Territorio	Sectoral agency	Design, support in dissemination, training, networking
Municipality of Cesena	Public authority	Design, support in dissemination, networking
Cesena Valle Savio Intercultural Centre	Public authority and sectoral agency	Design, support in dissemination, networking
Employment Centre of the Municipality of Cesena	Sectoral agency	Design, support in dissemination, networking, transnational activities
Employment Centre of the Municipality of Savignano sul Rubicone	Sectoral agency	Design, support in dissemination, networking
University of Bologna - Campus of Cesena	Higher education and research organisations	Design, support in dissemination, networking
Chamber of Commerce of Romagna	Business support organizations	Design, support in dissemination, networking
Bank of the Romagna (Romagna Banca BCC)	Business support organizations	Design, support in dissemination, training, networking
Local and Territorial Offices of External Criminal Enforcement of Forlì, Cesena and Rimini (UEPE)	Public authority and sectoral agency	Design, support in dissemination
Confederation of Craft Trades and Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises of Forlì-Cesena (CNA Forlì-Cesena)	Business support organizations	Design, support in dissemination, networking, training
Confederation for Artisans and Small Business of Forlì Cesena (Confartigianato Federimprese Forlì-Cesena)	Business support organizations	Design, support in dissemination, networking, training
FORM.ART Soc.Cons. a R.L.	Training centre	Design, support in dissemination



<i>Linkaut srl</i>	<i>SME</i>	<i>Design, support in dissemination, networking</i>
<i>Apeiron Association</i>	<i>Interest groups including NGO</i>	<i>Design, support in dissemination, networking</i>
<i>Cesena Lab</i>	<i>Start-up Incubator</i>	<i>Design, support in dissemination, networking</i>
<i>Romagna Tech</i>	<i>Technology Transfer Center and Start-up Incubator</i>	<i>Networking</i>

Helix Stakeholder Compass – Emilia-Romagna (Italy)

A collaborative ecosystem for inclusive entrepreneurship



2.3 Thuringia, Germany

In 2024, Thuringia's economy remained broadly stable but showed limited growth, shaped by structural challenges including demographic decline, an ageing population and shortages of skilled workers (Statistical Office of Thuringia, 2024). The regional economy is strongly characterised by SMEs, while industry remains an important pillar and the service sector continues to expand (Invest in Thuringia, 2024). At the same time, emerging fields such as green technologies, medical technology, artificial intelligence, sustainable mobility and care services offer new opportunities for innovation and employment.

Thuringia has an established but comparatively modest entrepreneurial ecosystem, including start-up services, business development agencies, research institutions and public funding programmes. Nevertheless, start-up activity remains weaker than in more dynamic German regions, while limited access to venture capital and the relatively small regional market can constrain business development and scaling (KfW Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2024; Bundesbank, 2024).

Beyond the overall level of entrepreneurial activity, an important challenge concerns who can participate in entrepreneurship. Existing support structures do not reach all parts of the population equally, leaving



entrepreneurial potential among under-represented groups insufficiently activated. Women, young people, people with a migration background and other potential entrepreneurs may face additional barriers related to access to networks, information, financing, tailored skills development and confidence in navigating the start-up ecosystem.

2.3.1 Target groups and Missing Entrepreneurs

The Thuringia pilot responds to this gap by combining accessible skills development, practical guidance, networking, matchmaking, and connections to existing support organisations. The following table summarizes the main target groups, their key barriers and needs, and the corresponding programme responses.

Target groups	Key barriers	Specific needs
Women	- Structural gender-based discrimination - Reduced access to venture capital - Fewer role models - Individual time-related barriers	- Unbiased and non-discriminatory practices and behaviours - Access to fair financing - More role models
Migrant	- Language barriers - Administrative barriers - Reduced access to venture capital & bank financing - Smaller professional networks - Barriers at scaling businesses at national level - Structural discrimination	- Language accessibility - Easier and accessible institutional support - Reduction of structural barriers at the administrative level - Better information systems on market dynamics in the host country - Inclusive and welcoming environments
Young people (*International Student)	- Language barriers - Administrative barriers - Reduced access to venture capital & bank financing - Visa and residence constraints in self-employment - Weak integration into local businesses	- Language accessibility - Reduction of structural barriers at the administrative level (for Visa and residence permits) - Reduction of barriers in acquiring funding (linked to Visa and residence permits) - Better information systems on market dynamics in the host country

During the execution of the Business Skills Programme and Business Matchmaking Programme, it was possible to determine several barriers faced by the target groups. Some of these obstacles were transversal to women, migrants, and international students, and mostly stemmed from inefficiencies that persist both at a structural level and at a more practical level.

Most of the attendees of the programme fell into the migrant group. These included young people, mostly between the ages of 20 and 30, currently residing in Thuringia and with a migrant background. However, most of the participants in this group were also enrolled in higher education degree programmes at Schmalkalden University. This group identified the level of language proficiency and a lack of knowledge about existing funding programmes and entrepreneurial support institutions as major obstacles barriers. These two factors are interrelated and have intricate ramifications regarding access to resources and other necessary services for upscaling a business, difficulties in understanding the dynamics of regional and national markets, and challenges in establishing reliable networks and partnerships.



To respond to these challenges, the pilot programmes were designed with accessibility and institutional connection as central concerns. English was used as the main communication and training language to reduce language-related barriers and make participation more accessible to migrants, international students, and participants who may not yet feel confident engaging in German-language entrepreneurship activities. The programmes also relied on cooperation with regional stakeholders and support structures, including Startup Migrants, ThEx, StarterWerk / Hochschule Schmalkalden, and other local actors, to facilitate access to information, mentoring, funding guidance, and entrepreneurial support services. This design choice responded directly to the identified need to improve language channels, expand and reinforce institutional support structures, and strengthen mechanisms for accessibility, instruction, networking, and funding.

Although it was not expressly conveyed by participants, multiple forms of discrimination should also be considered, as these are often systematic and hidden within institutional structures and procedures. The above-mentioned obstacles are not exclusively experienced by migrants; they can also be found in the personal experiences of international students, especially those coming from non-European countries. However, their status as students may imply additional constraints connected to administrative regulations. Residence permits, visa regulations, and limitations around self-employment may aggravate their access to resources and services needed to advance their entrepreneurial pursuits.

The programme overall also saw a large turnout of women: about 66 attendees (10 from the Business Skills and 56 from the Business Matchmaking Program) were aspiring female entrepreneurs, while only 3 didn't have a migrant background. The barriers and needs of the target groups "women", "migrants" and "young people" therefore overlapped with those of migrant women and international female students. Apart from these common denominators, women entrepreneurs, whether national or international, may be subjected to covert forms of gender-based discrimination, which can create additional barriers in access to venture capital and other forms of funding. The general lack of female representation within the entrepreneurial realm may also discourage women from pursuing entrepreneurial pathways, while pointing to the need for stronger networks and support structures that are attentive to women-specific concerns and needs.

All in all, the barriers identified during the programme confirmed the existence of a wide range of obstacles that hamper the strengthening of already existing entrepreneurial structures and reduce the encouragement to boost entrepreneurial activity across the three main target groups. As previously stated, numerous obstacles are transversal and require coherent responses that cater to the needs of these groups. For this reason, the pilot programmes were not designed only as isolated training activities, but as accessible, flexible, and network-oriented support pathways. Their structure sought to respond directly to the identified barriers by improving language accessibility, strengthening institutional connections, expanding access to information and mentoring, creating networking opportunities, and supporting participants in transforming their entrepreneurial ideas into more concrete and viable initiatives.

2.3.2 Stakeholders and Ecosystem Actors

For replication, it is important to understand the constellation of existing actors to assign certain roles and contributions and the degree of collaboration, using the Stakeholder Compass. At the center, we have the **Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programmes** with the objectives of skills development; mentoring; Business creation; and Ecosystem integration.



Funding & Finance: These stakeholders provide financial support and funding opportunities.

Stakeholder	Type	Role in the Program
Thüringer Aufbaubank	Funding Institution	Financial support
EXIST-Gründungsstipendium	Federal Funding Programme	Start-up grants - Important for scaling ventures // Ecosystem support
TRIP	Regional Innovation Programme	Innovation funding - Valuable for technology-based businesses // Invited trainers

Mentoring & Business Support: These organisations provide entrepreneurial guidance

Stakeholder	Type	Role
ThEx Erfurt	Public Support Institution	ecosystem support - Mentoring and referrals
Startup Migrants	NGO / Business Network	Mentoring & Training
StarterWerk	University Service	Entrepreneurial support - ecosystem support for student entrepreneurs
neudeli Boost	University Incubator	Coaching and incubation- ecosystem support for student entrepreneurs / invited trainers / outreach

Education & Talent Development: These actors support skills development and entrepreneurial talent

Stakeholder	Type	Role
Schmalkalden University of Applied Sciences	Higher Education Institution	Recruitment and training / Ecosystem support for student entrepreneurs / outreach
Bauhaus University Weimar	University	Innovation support
StarTH	University Network	Ecosystem connection
WORT	University Department	Internationalisation support / Ecosystem support for student entrepreneurs

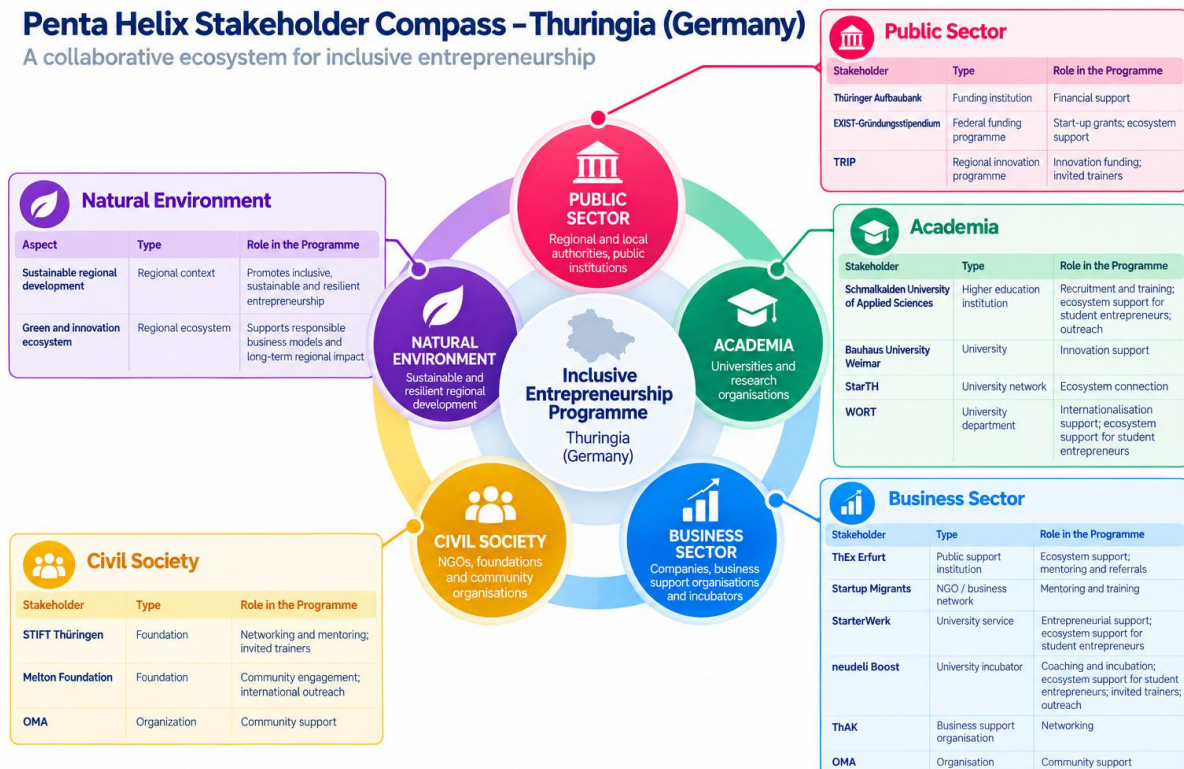
Networking & Community Building: strengthen visibility, inclusion, and community engagement.

Stakeholder	Type	Role
STIFT Thüringen	Foundation	Networking and mentoring / Invited Trainers
Melton Foundation	Foundation	Community engagement / international outreach
ThAK	Business Support Organisation	Networking
OMA	Organisation	Community support



Penta Helix Stakeholder Compass – Thuringia (Germany)

A collaborative ecosystem for inclusive entrepreneurship



2.4 Central Hungary, Budapest

Central Hungary (Budapest and Pest County) is the country's most urbanized, populous, and economically dynamic region, with population rising from 2.83M (2001) to ~3.02M (2025). It is service- and knowledge-driven, anchored by finance, ICT, and professional services in Budapest, with logistics and e-commerce growing in Pest County. Unemployment is low (3-4%), wages exceed the national average, and the region hosts major domestic firms (OTP Bank, Gedeon Richter, Magyar Telekom, MOL) alongside multinationals (IBM, Microsoft, Bosch). Entrepreneurship is supported by a moderately strong institutional ecosystem (MGFÜ, KAVOSZ, Hiventures, SEED Foundation) and funding programs (GINOP, EFOP Plus) targeting youth, women, and disadvantaged groups. Key challenges include urban-rural disparities, an aging population, underfunded inclusion programmes, and high inflation risk for micro/small enterprises, while rural development and agricultural modernization represent significant opportunities.

In these regions, the pilot testings are implemented by two partner organisations, namely; Impact Hub Budapest and MGFÜ Hungary.

2.4.1 Target groups and missing entrepreneurs

The key "missing entrepreneur" target groups identified through the ISIHUB stakeholder review are:

- **Women entrepreneurs.** Women face barriers including limited access to capital, double burden from family/caregiving roles, lower confidence, and a shortage of female role models in tech and innovation. Their strengths include strong communication skills, multitasking ability, adaptability, and a community-oriented approach to business that often integrates social and sustainability goals. Women-led enterprises also lack the resources, knowledge and support to grow their business



beyond the country borders, and scale internationally, even if their products are competitive in a broader market.

- **Entrepreneurs diagnosed with ADHD.** This group faces challenges with task structure, administrative monotony, deadlines, and emotional regulation, but brings creativity, rapid problem-solving, and the ability to identify unconventional opportunities – strengths well suited to Budapest's innovation-driven economy.
- **Entrepreneurs on the autism spectrum.** Often have trouble with informal social interaction, sensory sensitivity, and self-promotion, but offer exceptional attention to detail, structured thinking, persistence, and ethical reliability – valuable particularly in IT, engineering, finance, and R&D, sectors prominent in the region.
- **Young entrepreneurs.** Typically lack capital, managerial experience, and professional networks, but compensate with strong digital skills, innovation capacity, and adaptability – well matched to Central Hungary's ICT- and digital-services-oriented economy.

These groups do not necessarily require primarily financial support; rather, they may benefit from an inclusive and supportive environment, tailored guidance, and greater recognition of their abilities. It is important to help them recognise that certain characteristics they may perceive as disadvantages can, in certain entrepreneurial contexts, become strengths.

Overall, the regional ecosystem would benefit from adopting a more inclusive approach that recognises the potential of these groups and provides appropriate support to enable them to participate successfully in entrepreneurial activities.

Target Group by Impact Hub Budapest

Target groups	Key barriers	Specific needs
Women	Limited access to capital and investor bias; double burden of family/caregiving and entrepreneurial roles; lower self-confidence in negotiation, sales, and public speaking; few female role models/mentors, especially in tech and innovation	Targeted financing and investor-readiness support; flexible/family-compatible programme scheduling; confidence-building and public-speaking training; access to female mentors and role models, particularly in digital/innovation sectors
Entrepreneurs with ADHD	Difficulty focusing on and committing to a single viable idea; struggles with routine/administrative tasks (invoicing, tax compliance); procrastination and deadline management issues; heightened emotional responses to stress/feedback; impulsive communication that can affect negotiations	Structured goal setting and idea-prioritisation support; simplified or assisted administrative/compliance tools; coaching on emotional regulation and stress management; communication skills coaching for client/partner interactions
Young people	Difficulty with informal social interaction (networking, small talk, reading non-verbal cues); stress from unpredictability and sudden change; sensory hypersensitivity (noise, light, crowds) limiting participation in events/open offices; discomfort with self-promotion/marketing	Structured, predictable training formats; quiet/low-sensory-stimulation venues or accommodations; support with self-marketing and business promotion; alternatives to high-pressure networking events (e.g. written/online introductions)



At Impact Hub Budapest, both pilot programmes were deliberately designed to respond to the women-specific barriers identified in the D.2.2.1 peer review – limited access to capital, low confidence, social-role pressures, and a lack of role models/mentors. KATAPULT targeted the earliest stage of the entrepreneurial pipeline: women aged 18+ with only an embryonic business idea and no prior entrepreneurial experience, prioritising those facing compounding barriers (parents of young children, jobseekers, over-50s). Its six-week structure of foundational modules (business modelling, marketing, legal/tax basics, financial planning), combined with individual mentoring and peer learning, directly addresses the "lack of confidence and knowledge" barrier rather than a capital gap – consistent with participant feedback that self-belief, not technical knowledge, was their primary obstacle. The free, hybrid in-person/online format also reflects the accessibility and flexible-scheduling needs flagged in D.2.2.1 for participants juggling family or work commitments.

SZATELLIT, by contrast, was designed for the next stage of the same target group – women already running a business who needed support to grow and internationalize – addressing the networking, mentoring, and confidence-building gaps that persist even after the start-up phase. Its invitation-only, alumni-based recruitment built directly on the trust and community Impact Hub had already established with KATAPULT-type participants, reinforcing the "few female role models and mentors" gap by pairing participants with women entrepreneurs who had already scaled internationally. Sessions on leadership challenges specific to female entrepreneurs and peer networking events ("Boutique or Empire?") responded to the structural barriers – investor bias, limited networks, double burden of business and family roles – identified in the peer review, while the hybrid delivery format again ensured accessibility was not a barrier to participation.

Target Group by MGFÜ Hungary

Target groups	Key barriers	Specific needs
Women	Lack of confidence Unequal access to opportunities Gender stereotypes Work-life balance challenges Limited professional networks	Networking opportunities Mentoring and coaching Work-life balance support Confidence-building Gender-inclusive environment
Neurodivergent people	Time management Organisational challenges Impulsivity Stress and emotional regulation Maintaining focus	Tailored guidance Flexible support Administrative support Inclusive environment Mentoring and coaching Strength-based approach
Young and aspirant entrepreneurs	Lack of entrepreneurial experience Lack of confidence Limited business knowledge Fear of failure Lack of practical opportunities Limited professional networks	Access to finance Networking opportunities Business development support Guidance on starting a business Practical experience Entrepreneurship training for youth

The pilot programmes were designed to respond directly to the key barriers and specific needs identified among the target groups. The activities combined practical training, mentoring, networking, and tailored support to address both the individual and structural challenges faced by potential and existing entrepreneurs.

For women, the pilot activities focused on building confidence, strengthening professional networks, and providing mentoring and coaching. Attention was given to creating an inclusive and supportive environment



that promotes gender equality, as well as offering flexible participation options to help participants better balance work and family responsibilities.

For neurodivergent people, the pilot activities were designed to provide a supportive and inclusive environment that takes into account individual working styles and needs. Tailored guidance, mentoring and flexible support addressed challenges related to time management, organisation, maintaining focus and stress management. A strength-based approach was applied to help participants recognize and develop the entrepreneurial potential arising from their individual skills and characteristics.

For young and aspiring entrepreneurs, the pilot programmes focused on developing practical entrepreneurial knowledge and experience. Entrepreneurship training was combined with business development support, guidance on starting a business, networking opportunities, and mentoring. These activities aimed to strengthen participants' confidence, reduce the fear of failure, and provide practical tools and opportunities to help them turn an initial business idea into concrete entrepreneurial activity.

2.4.2 Stakeholders and ecosystem actors

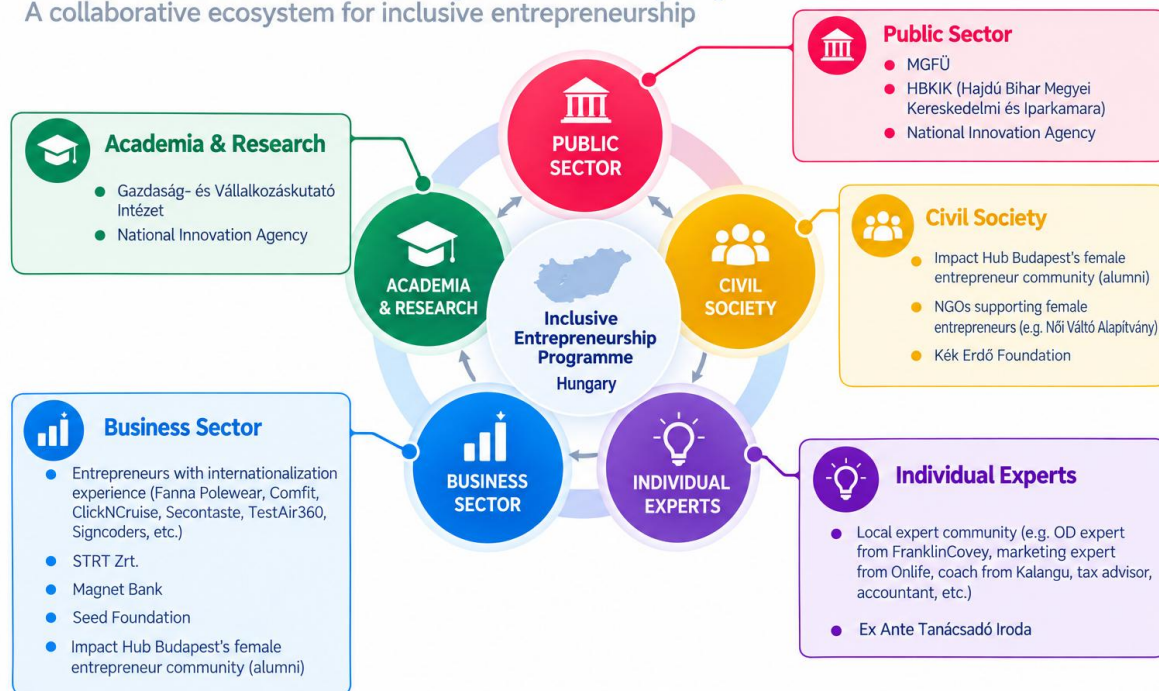
Organization	Type	Role in the Programme
Impact Hub Budapest's female entrepreneur community (alumni)	<i>Business community</i>	Community and peer-to-peer learning
Entrepreneurs with internationalization experience (Fanna Polewear, Comfit, ClickNCruise, Secontaste, TestAir360, Signcoders, etc.)	<i>Business community</i>	Business networking, peer-to-peer learning
Local expert community (e.g. OD expert from FranklinCovey, marketing expert from Onlife, coach from Kalangu, tax advisor, accountant, etc.)	<i>Individual experts</i>	Workshops, mentoring
STRT Zrt.	<i>Investor / Startup support organization</i>	Workshops, mentoring
Gazdaság- és Vállalkozáskutató Intézet	<i>Research Institute</i>	Expert input
National Innovation Agency	<i>State development agency</i>	Expert input
Magnet Bank	<i>Institutional funder</i>	Expert input
NGOs supporting female entrepreneurs (e.g Női Váltó Alapítvány)	<i>NGO / civil society</i>	Business networking

Organization	Type	Role in the Programme
MGFÜ	<i>Public authority</i>	<i>Mentoring / networking / piloting / workshops</i>
HBKIK (Hajdú Bihar Megyei Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara)	<i>Public authority</i>	<i>Networking</i>
Kék Erdő Foundation	<i>NGO</i>	<i>Networking / Mentoring</i>
Ex Ante Tanácsadó Iroda	<i>Individual experts</i>	<i>Workshops / Networking</i>
Seed Foundation	<i>Entrepreneurship support organisation</i>	<i>Networking / workshops</i>



Helix Stakeholder Compass – Hungary

A collaborative ecosystem for inclusive entrepreneurship



2.5 Split-Dalmatia, Croatia

Split-Dalmatia County is the largest county in Croatia by area and one of its most economically dynamic regions, with tourism, services, and emerging innovation sectors playing a significant role in economic development. Despite favourable entrepreneurial conditions, certain groups remain underrepresented in entrepreneurial activity, particularly women, young people, and individuals living in rural and island areas.

The regional analysis conducted within TASK4ISI identified several barriers to inclusive entrepreneurship, including limited access to entrepreneurial knowledge, mentoring opportunities, professional networks, finance, and practical business experience. Women entrepreneurs often face additional challenges related to balancing family and professional responsibilities, while young people frequently lack confidence, experience, and access to support structures.

To address these challenges, ISIHUB Split implemented targeted Business Skills and Business Matchmaking Programmes aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial competences, improving access to support services, and fostering a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2.5.1 Target groups and Missing Entrepreneurs

Based on the regional analysis, stakeholder consultations and ISIHUB discussions, women and young entrepreneurs were identified as the priority "missing entrepreneur" groups in Split-Dalmatia County. Both groups face specific barriers that limit their participation in entrepreneurial activities and therefore require tailored support measures. The Business Skills and Business Matchmaking Programmes were therefore specifically designed to strengthen the entrepreneurial capacities, networks, and opportunities of women and young entrepreneurs in Split-Dalmatia County.



Target groups	Key barriers	Specific needs
Women	- Limited access to finance and investment opportunities - Underrepresentation in professional and business networks - Difficulties balancing business and family responsibilities - Lower self-confidence and risk-taking propensity - Limited visibility of female entrepreneurial role models	- Leadership and negotiation skills development - Improved access to mentoring and professional networks - Financial literacy and access-to-finance support - Confidence-building and entrepreneurial mindset development - Peer support and networking opportunities with other women entrepreneurs
Young people	- Lack of practical business experience - Limited entrepreneurial knowledge and skills - Fear of failure and risk aversion - Limited access to mentors and business support services - Weak integration into entrepreneurial ecosystems and professional networks	- Practical entrepreneurship education and hands-on learning - Business planning and business development skills - Digital and innovation-oriented competencies - Mentoring and coaching support - Networking opportunities and stronger links with entrepreneurial support organisations

Organization	Type	Role in the Programme
RERA S.D.	Regional Development Agency	Business Matchmaking Programme organizer, stakeholder engagement, dissemination
CEDRA Split	NGO / Entrepreneurship Support Organisation	Business skills Programme design, training delivery, mentoring
Development Agency Split - RaST	Local Development Agency	Venue provision, entrepreneurial ecosystem support, outreach
Technology Park Split	Business Incubator / Innovation Hub	Training venue, networking and innovation ecosystem
HAMAG-BICRO	National SME Agency	Information on funding instruments and business support schemes
Split-Dalmatia County	Regional Authority	Strategic support and policy alignment
Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism (FEBT)	Higher Education Institution	Entrepreneurial education and young entrepreneurs' engagement
Local Entrepreneurs and SME Representatives	Private Sector	Good practice examples, mentoring and networking



Trainers and External Experts	Business Development Professionals	Skills development, coaching and specialised expertise
ISIHUB Stakeholders Network	Multi-stakeholder Platform	Co-creation, feedback, sustainability and ecosystem development

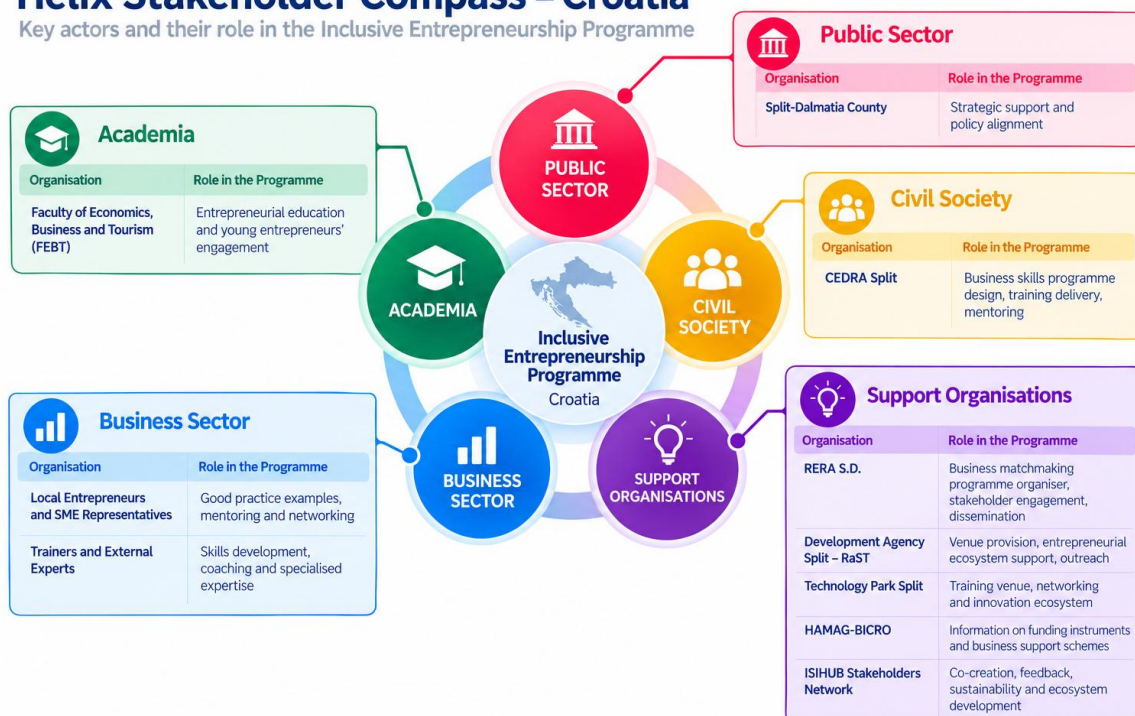
The design of the Business Skills Programme (BSP) and Business Matchmaking Programme (BMP) was directly informed by the barriers and needs identified during the regional analysis, stakeholder consultations, and ISIHUB discussions. The BSP addressed knowledge gaps and skills deficits through practical training in entrepreneurship, business planning, financial literacy, digital competences, communication, and networking. Tailored modules further responded to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, such as confidence building, leadership, networking, and work-life balance, and of young entrepreneurs, including entrepreneurial mindset development, decision-making, business planning, and practical business experience. The BMP complemented these activities by strengthening access to mentors, professional networks, business support organisations, and entrepreneurial role models, thereby addressing the limited connectivity and support structures identified as key barriers for both target groups.

2.5.2 Stakeholders and Ecosystem Actors

The implementation of the TASK4ISI pilot programmes in Split-Dalmatia County was supported by a diverse network of stakeholders engaged through ISIHUB Split. The ecosystem includes public authorities, regional and local development agencies, entrepreneurship support organisations, educational institutions, business incubators, accelerators, SMEs, NGOs, mentors, and funding institutions. These actors contributed to programme design, participant outreach, training delivery, mentoring, networking activities, and long-term sustainability of the pilot actions. Their involvement ensured that aspiring entrepreneurs related to relevant support services, expertise, funding opportunities, and business networks, thereby strengthening the regional ecosystem for inclusive entrepreneurship.

Helix Stakeholder Compass – Croatia

Key actors and their role in the Inclusive Entrepreneurship Programme





3. THE VALIDATED PILOT MODEL

3.1 Program Logic and intervention Model

The TASK4ISI pilot model follows a complementary pathway from inclusion and entrepreneurial readiness to ecosystem connection and practical next steps. It begins with identifying regional target groups and their barriers, followed by tailored skills development, mentoring, and practical application. The Business Matchmaking Programme then strengthens networking, market exposure, and links with the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The two programmes can be delivered as separate pathways or as a combined sequence, depending on regional needs. Across the pilots, the intervention logic remained place-based: the common methodology was retained while content, duration, delivery format, language, recruitment and ecosystem actors were adapted to local conditions.

3.2 TASK4ISI Participant Journey

We can identify overall TASK4ISI participation Journey as follow:

- Outreach uses social media, posters, universities, community spaces, partner and stakeholder networks, NGOs and other trusted intermediaries.
- Selection focuses on the target groups identified through the regional needs analysis and on participants' readiness for the relevant pathway.
- Onboarding introduces the programme, participants and their ideas, and can include initial assessment, portfolio or idea presentation activities.
- Skills Development combines practical workshops, exercises and learning-by-doing approaches around entrepreneurship, business models, marketing, pitching, funding and management.
- Coaching and Mentoring provides individual guidance matched to participant needs, business stage, sector and, where relevant, language or cultural background.
- Networking, Matchmaking and Testing connect participants with entrepreneurs, support organisations, potential clients, partners and other ecosystem actors.
- Next-Step Referrals support continued development through further mentoring, business support, funding information, ecosystem contacts or other relevant services.

3.3 Implementation and Delivery Structure

Coordinating and implementing organisations provide overall programme management, participant coordination, logistics and quality assurance. Trainers and mentors deliver practical learning and individual support, while external experts and practitioners contribute specialist knowledge and real-world perspectives. Stakeholder and ecosystem actors support recruitment, inclusion, mentoring, networking, market exposure, referrals, and longer-term continuation. The exact institutional mix is adapted to each territory.



3.4 Program Component

Business Skills programme:

The Business Skills Programme is designed for aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs who need practical entrepreneurial, business management and personal skills. Across the pilots, the programme used workshops, practical exercises, mentoring and peer learning to strengthen business ideas and entrepreneurial readiness.

Typical content areas include entrepreneurial mindset and confidence, value proposition and business models, market research and customer understanding, marketing and communication, financial planning and sustainability, pitching, funding, and practical business management. The exact sequence and delivery of intensity should be adapted to the target group and regional context.

Business Matchmaking programme:

The Business Matchmaking Programme connects aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. It combines practical business development with networking, mentoring or individual guidance, market exposure and opportunities to present or test business ideas. Typical activities include networking sessions, matchmaking with entrepreneurs and support organisations, expert inputs, pitching or demo activities, market testing and referrals to further business support. The format may be a focused bootcamp, recurring series, or a hybrid pathway, depending on regional conditions.

3.5 Accessibility and Inclusive Measure

Main components to ensure the inclusion are:

- Use accessible language and, where necessary, multilingual delivery or adapted materials.
- Choose schedules and formats that reflect participants' work, study, care and mobility constraints.
- Use trusted organisations and community networks to reach people who may not engage with mainstream entrepreneurship support.
- Offer personalised mentoring, coaching and referral pathways rather than relying only on group training.
- Adapt examples, communication, learning methods and support to the characteristics of each target group.

3.6 Networking, Market Exposure and Ecosystem integration

The pilots demonstrate that inclusive entrepreneurship support is strengthened when participants are connected to real people, organisations and opportunities. Networking and market exposure should therefore be planned as integral programme components rather than as optional closing activities. Relevant actors can include entrepreneurs, chambers, incubators, universities, municipalities, NGOs, finance providers, business-support organisations and other ecosystem partners.

3.7 Monitoring, Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Monitoring should combine participant, trainer, mentor and organiser feedback with simple quantitative indicators. Pre- and post-assessments, questionnaires, portfolio or business-idea outputs, participation data and qualitative feedback can be used to assess learning, confidence, networking, practical application and ecosystem connections. Findings should feed directly into programme adjustments and future replication.



4. REGIONAL PILOT TOOLKITS

4.1 Małopolska, Krakow Pilot Model

4.1.1 Program Logic and Intervention Model

In the Kraków pilot, the two pathways were delivered as two distinct but complementary bootcamps, each addressing its own, separate group of participants.

Bootcamp 1 - the Business Skills pathway, delivered in two sessions in November 2025 (15 and 29 November) - built entrepreneurial readiness, confidence and a tested idea: participants moved from problem and value proposition to business model, design-thinking validation, marketing and USP, finance and funding, and finally a pitch.

Bootcamp 2 - the Business Matchmaking pathway, delivered in two sessions in April 2026 (18 and 25 April), with a different group of participants - focused on networking skills and the ability to reach clients, partners and stakeholders, through individual mentoring, a networking session with local entrepreneurs and ecosystem actors, and a closing pitch/demo that connected participants to the market and gave them visibility. Seniors were the key target groups across both bootcamps.

The two bootcamps covered the full path from entrepreneurial readiness to real market engagement; each tailored to the needs of its own cohort.

4.1.2 Participant journey in TASK4ISI

In Kraków this journey was delivered across the two bootcamps, each with its own, separate group of participants. Outreach ran through the City of Kraków (Miasto Kraków) and KMS (delivery partner), partner NGOs, universities, senior and migrant organisations and the start-up community to reach the target groups; a light selection confirmed motivation and readiness; onboarding opened each bootcamp with expectations and a short needs check.

Bootcamp 1 (the Business Skills pathway, two sessions in November 2025) delivered the skills modules with continuous coaching and peer feedback, helping its cohort move from idea to a tested business model and pitch.

Bootcamp 2 (the Business Matchmaking pathway, two sessions in April 2026), with a different cohort, ran a networking and matchmaking session and a closing pitch where participants tested their ideas before mentors and ecosystem actors. In both bootcamps participants received individual next-step referrals - to incubators, funding instruments, mentors or further KUE activities - so that momentum continued after the programme.

Program implementation team (coordinator, trainers, mentors) and external experts

Overall coordination of the pilot - including the activities run through the ISIHUB - rested with KUE (Krakow University of Economics). The City of Kraków (Miasto Kraków) acted as the direct organiser of the bootcamps and of both training pathways, while KMS, the company contracted to deliver the training, ran the bootcamps in practice.

Training and facilitation were provided by KMS staff together with external entrepreneurship practitioners experienced in business modelling, innovation and intercultural facilitation, selected for their coaching experience and their ability to work with diverse and disadvantaged groups, including seniors and migrants. Mentoring and pitch feedback were provided by experienced entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners, who also contributed to the networking and matchmaking sessions. The team worked to clear protocols and met



regularly to adapt content to participants' needs. The implementation team comprised 13 people (covering project lead, recruitment, logistics, finance and promotion roles), supported by 5 trainers and 1 volunteer.

4.1.3 Business Skills Program Overview

In Kraków, the Business Skills Programme was delivered as an intensive, hands-on bootcamp for aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs from the target groups. Over a few concentrated days, participants turned an idea into a tested business model and a pitch, supported by practical workshops, individual coaching, and direct connection to the local ecosystem. The participation was free of charge.

Delivery was bilingual (Polish/English), with materials adapted for Ukrainian participants. The condensed bootcamp schedule lowered the time cost for people with care duties, jobs or insecure residence status; the venue was central and accessible; participation was free and flexible, with individual guidance available throughout. Outreach ran through migrant, women's, seniors and youth organisations to reach people who rarely use mainstream business support.

Business Skills Program Modules

The **Business Skills programme** is designed for beginners in the field of entrepreneurship and considers the barriers that are characteristic of the target groups. The main topics to be covered during the programme are outlined below. Participants are guided through the process of developing their business or project idea, translating it into a business model, testing it, communicating/marketing it to stakeholders and customers, and building the necessary legal, financial and managerial structures.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Core bootcamp modules			
Value Proposition & Problem-Solution Fit	3 h	Identify a real customer problem and articulate a clear value proposition.	Target groups often start from a personal need but struggle to frame it as value others will pay for; this anchors the whole bootcamp.
Business Model (Canvas)	3 h	Map the idea onto a Business Model Canvas and surface key assumptions.	Gives participants no business background a simple, visual way to turn an idea into a viable model.
Design Thinking & Idea Validation	3 h	Test assumptions with simple, low-cost methods and iterate.	Builds an experimental mindset and reduces the risk of investing in untested ideas - vital for first-time founders.
Marketing, USP & Market Positioning	3 h	Define the target customer, the unique selling point and a basic go-to-market approach.	Helps participants stand out and reach customers despite limited budgets and networks.
Finance & Funding for Business	3 h	Prepare a simple budget, understand costs and revenue, and map funding options in Poland.	Addresses the limited-capital barrier and demystifies finance for groups with low financial confidence.
Pitching & Storytelling	3 h	Structure and deliver a short, persuasive pitch.	Equips participants to present to mentors, partners and funders; builds confidence and visibility.
Accelerator Bootcamp (intensive Block)	15 h	Apply all modules to develop and refine an individual project under intensive coaching.	The experiential core of the format, where learning-by-doing and peer support consolidate skills.



Extra events			
Networking & Matchmaking session	3 h	Connect with local entrepreneurs, mentors and ecosystem actors.	Opens the networks the target groups typically lack.
Demo / Pitch day	3 h	Present the developed idea to an external audience and gather feedback.	Real-world exposure, visibility and next-step connections.
Community-building events			
Welcome / kick-off meet-up	2 h	Build trust and a safe, supportive peer group.	Inclusion starts with belonging - important for migrants and women re-entering work.
Peer-exchange & reflection session	2 h	Share progress and give structured peer feedback.	Reinforces peer learning and sustains motivation.
Informal networking gathering	2 h	Strengthen relationships beyond the formal sessions.	Keeps the cohort and ecosystem links alive after the bootcamp.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

Expected results were defined mainly at participant level: each participant would leave the bootcamp with a clearer, validated business idea, a basic business model and budget, an improved pitch, and stronger confidence and motivation to take a concrete next step. At ecosystem level, the pilot aimed to create new connections between participants and local support actors. Progress was monitored through a short pre/post self-assessment of entrepreneurial competence and confidence; trainer and mentor observation during the intensive sessions; the quality of the final pitch at the demo session; and a participant satisfaction survey. Evaluation was carried out by the KMS team (with trainers and mentors) under the supervision of KUE, with feedback gathered immediately after the bootcamp and used both to record next-step referrals and to refine future editions. The expected learning outcomes are detailed below.

Pilot results (Business Skills, November 2025). The Business Skills bootcamps attracted strong demand. BootCamp #1 (15 November 2025) gathered 38 participants (32 women, 6 men; 37 migrants, 1 senior) and BootCamp #2 (29 November 2025) gathered 30 participants (25 women, 5 men; 29 migrants, 1 senior), with 24 people attending both days; participation thus exceeded the planned minimum of 25 and was dominated by Seniors also took part in both editions, but only one person per edition identified primarily as a senior rather than as a migrant; the two target-group categories therefore reflect self-declared primary identification and should not be read as mutually exclusive population counts. Satisfaction was high (predominantly “agree” and “strongly agree”): participants reported a clearer understanding of how to set up a business in Poland, increased confidence and a stronger self-perception as innovators. The most valued elements were the practical workshops, group work and the Business Model / Lean Canvas, together with the legal session and the customer-value module; training materials were rated clear and well matched to the group. The main barriers observed were language and limited prior knowledge of legal aspects. Participants and trainers recommended more content on taxes, law and access to funding and investors, longer and more frequent courses, an initial needs survey, and wider use of IT/ICT tools. Seniors also took part in both editions, but only one person per edition identified primarily as a senior rather than as a migrant; the two target-group categories therefore reflect self-declared primary identification and should not be read as mutually exclusive population counts. Satisfaction was high (predominantly “agree” and “strongly agree”): participants reported a clearer understanding of how to set up a business in Poland, increased confidence and a stronger self-perception as innovators. The most valued elements were the practical workshops, group work and the Business Model / Lean Canvas, together with the legal session and the customer-value module; training materials were rated clear and well matched to the group. The main



barriers observed were language and limited prior knowledge of legal aspects. Participants and trainers recommended more content on taxes, law and access to funding and investors, longer and more frequent courses, an initial needs survey, and wider use of IT/ICT tools.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core elements of the model (to be retained):

1. **Inclusive recruitment targeting “missing entrepreneurs”.** Reaching women, migrants, seniors, international students and young people through trusted partner organisations was decisive - these groups rarely reach mainstream business support on their own. It is non-negotiable, because inclusion is the whole purpose of the model.
2. **Training + mentoring + networking combined.** The three elements together moved participants from idea to action; training alone would not have built the confidence or connections needed. This combination is foundational to the results.
3. **Experiential, participatory learning.** Working hands-on on participants’ own ideas drove engagement and produced real outputs (a model, a pitch). The experiential core must be preserved in any replication.
4. **Connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.** Mentoring, the networking session and the demo day gave participants visibility and concrete next steps, turning a course into a launchpad. This must remain.

Adaptable elements:

1. **Module content and sequencing.** In Kraków a fixed sequence ran from value proposition to pitch; elsewhere content and order can be adjusted to the group’s level and sectors, provided the experiential logic is kept.
2. **Duration and intensity.** Małopolska used short, intensive bootcamps suited to time-poor groups; in other contexts, a format spread over several weeks may suit working participants better. Keep the total contact time and the practical core.
3. **Delivery format.** In-person delivery worked well in Kraków; hybrid or online options can widen reach where travel or care duties are obstacles.
4. **Language and cultural adaptation.** Delivery was bilingual (Polish/English) with materials adapted for Ukrainian participants; this should be re-set to the local languages and cultures of the target groups.
5. **Ecosystem actors are involved.** The Kraków partners (KUE, KPT, chamber, NGOs, start-up community) should be replaced with their local equivalents.

4.1.4 Business Matchmaking Programme Overview

The Business Matchmaking pathway was delivered as a separate bootcamp (Bootcamp 2 - the Business Matchmaking pathway, two sessions in April 2026), with its own group of participants, distinct from the Business Skills cohort. It focused on developing participants’ networking skills and their ability to acquire clients, partners and stakeholders: structured mentoring, a networking session with entrepreneurs and support organisations, and a closing pitch/demo where participants tested their ideas and met potential partners, clients and funders.

Accessibility and inclusion measures. The matchmaking bootcamp kept a flexible, adaptive format: bilingual (Polish/English) facilitation and mentors matched to participants’ background and language. Scheduling it as a focused bootcamp kept the time and travel cost low for its participants. Pitching was kept low-pressure and supportive, with practice and feedback beforehand, so that less confident participants and non-native speakers could take part in an equal footing.



Business Matchmaking Program Modules

The Business Matchmaking Programme provides a hands-on, modular learning experience tailored to the needs of early-stage entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds, including seniors, migrants, international students, women, and young people. The programme emphasizes the development of both soft skills (such as communication and cooperation) and technical competencies essential for navigating the entrepreneurial landscape and entering the local startup ecosystem in Małopolska (Kraków).

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Mentoring kick-off & needs assessment	2 h	Match each participant with a mentor and identify individual goals and gaps.	Tailors the matchmaking journey from the start and signals that support is personal, not one-size-fits-all.
Customer & market discovery	3 h	Define the target customer and how to reach them in the local market.	Connects the idea to real demand - essential for participants new to the Polish market.
Networking skills & relationship-building	2 h	Learn how to approach, follow up with and maintain professional contacts.	Directly tackles the missing-networks barrier faced by migrants, students and women.
Pitch clinic	3 h	Refine and rehearse a pitch with structured feedback.	Builds the confidence and clarity needed to make the most of matchmaking opportunities.
Legal, tax & business set-up in Poland	3 h	Understand registration, legal forms and basic compliance in Poland.	Demystifies formalities that are a major hurdle for migrants and first-time founders.
Digital tools & online presence	2 h	Set up basic digital and AI tools for promotion and operations.	Lowers cost barriers and helps early-stage ventures reach customers quickly.
Extra events			
Networking event with the local ecosystem	3 h	Meet entrepreneurs, support organisations and potential partners or clients.	The core matchmaking moment, opening doors that participants could not reach alone.
Demo / Pitch Day with external audience	3 h	Present to mentors, ecosystem actors and potential funders.	Gives visibility, real feedback and concrete next-step connections.
Community-building events			
Mentor-mentee meet-up	2 h	Strengthen the mentoring relationship in an informal setting.	Builds trust and keeps mentoring active beyond formal sessions.
Alumni / peer follow-up session	2 h	Reconnect after the bootcamp to share progress and next steps.	Sustains the cohort and tracks longer-term outcomes.



Delivered programme (Business Matchmaking, April 2026). The Business Matchmaking pilot was run as a two-session bootcamp (18 and 25 April 2026, 20 training hours in total) at the Klaster Innowacji Społeczno-Gospodarczych, ul. Zabłocie 20, Kraków, complemented by real-time online sessions and individual mentoring. It functioned as a moderated hackathon for about 30 expats who were planning or already running a business; all sessions were delivered in English. Participants registered online describing their idea and were pre-assigned into groups of 3-5 with similar ideas, working towards a single shared business idea presented at the final pitch while still consulting their individual ideas with mentors throughout.

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

1. Mentoring was the personal backbone of the Kraków bootcamp. It opened with a short needs assessment so that each participant was matched to a mentor by sector, language and stage of idea.
2. Tailored 1:1 session then ran alongside the group modules, addressing value proposition, market entry, self-presentation, partnership-building and the practical formalities of starting up in Poland; light follow-up was offered after the closing demo.
3. Mentors were experienced entrepreneurs and ecosystem practitioners, several able to work in English or Ukrainian. The added value was clear: personal guidance turned generic content into concrete, individual next steps and noticeably raised confidence among participants who began hesitant.
4. The main lesson for replication is that mentoring must be planned and resourced from the outset - matching language and background, and protecting enough mentor time within an intensive format, are what make it work.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

Expected results from the matchmaking strand were defined mainly at participant and ecosystem level. Participants were expected to leave able to pitch their idea clearly; define their target customer and how to reach them; understand the basic legal, tax and registration steps for starting up in Poland; identify relevant funding and support; build a basic online presence; and approach networking with confidence. At ecosystem level, the aim was to create durable connections between participants and local entrepreneurs, mentors, and support organisations.

Results were assessed through the closing pitch/demo before an external audience; mentor and trainer observation during sessions; peer feedback in interactive exercises; a pre/post self-assessment of confidence and networking skills; and a satisfaction survey. The number and quality of connections made - mentors, partners, follow-up meetings - together with next-step referrals were tracked as indicators. Evaluation was carried out by the KMS team under the supervision of KUE - which oversaw the assessment of the activities as a whole - immediately after the bootcamp and fed directly into next-step support and the design of future editions.

Actual results (Business Matchmaking, April 2026). Outcomes were assessed with the project's Pilot Assessment Tool (participant, trainer and organiser questionnaires on a 1-5 scale). Participant feedback was strongly positive: on skills and competences mean scores ranged from about 3.8 to 4.3 (for example 4.31 with 97% positive on the lead skills item and 4.24 with 100% positive on applying the learning), and on innovation attitudes from about 3.9 to 4.4 (up to 4.38 with 90% positive). Trainers rated feasibility and coherence at or near 5.0. Participants particularly valued the practical group work, the pitch session, the lawyer's input and the customer-value content; the most frequent requests were for more on taxes, financing and finding investors, and for more practice time. Reported next steps included registering a business, building a development plan, and seeking clients, partners and investors.



Reflection Logic Embedded in the program

Core elements of the model (to be retained):

1. **A dedicated matchmaking bootcamp.** Concentrating mentoring, networking and the demo into a distinct, market-facing bootcamp gave participants visibility and real ecosystem contact. Delivering it as a standalone pathway, with its own cohort, kept a sharp focus on market engagement. This focused format is core to the pathway's effectiveness.
2. **Personalized mentoring matched by language and background.** Tailored 1:1 support was the engine that moved participants from idea to concrete next steps; it is non-negotiable.
3. **A real, external-facing moment (demo / pitch day).** Presenting an outside audience gave participants visibility and genuine ecosystem contact and generated next-step connections. It must be retained.
4. **Active ecosystem partners.** Without committed local entrepreneurs and support organisations there is nothing to match participants to; engaged partners are foundational.

Adaptable elements:

1. **Format of the matchmaking events.** In Kraków this was a networking session plus a demo day; elsewhere it could be a fair, speed-matchmaking, or a pop-up / market-testing format, depending on the local ecosystem.
2. **Intensity and timing.** Matchmaking was delivered as a separate, focused bootcamp following the Business Skills stage; in other contexts, it could run as a recurring series spread over time.
3. **Channels and partners.** The specific Kraków actors should be replaced with their local equivalents (hubs, chambers, incubators, NGOs).
4. **Language and cultural adaptation.** Facilitation and mentoring were offered in Polish, English and (where needed) Ukrainian; this should be re-set to the languages of the local target groups

4.2 Emilia- Romana, Italy Pilot Model

4.2.1 Program Logic and intervention Model

The design of the intervention was based on the TASK4ISI Framework Programme for Inclusive Entrepreneurship, which was locally adapted through a participatory co-design process. The key mechanism was the Peer Review process, involving stakeholders from public administration, education, and the private sector through workshops and bilateral interviews.

Thanks to their active involvement, the needs of underrepresented target groups (women, young people, migrants, and seniors) were identified, along with the training content for the Business Skills Programme and the Business Matchmaking Programme and their integration with local support services. This bottom-up approach, facilitated by experts, translated the programme's general objectives into a concrete, flexible, and inclusive action plan.

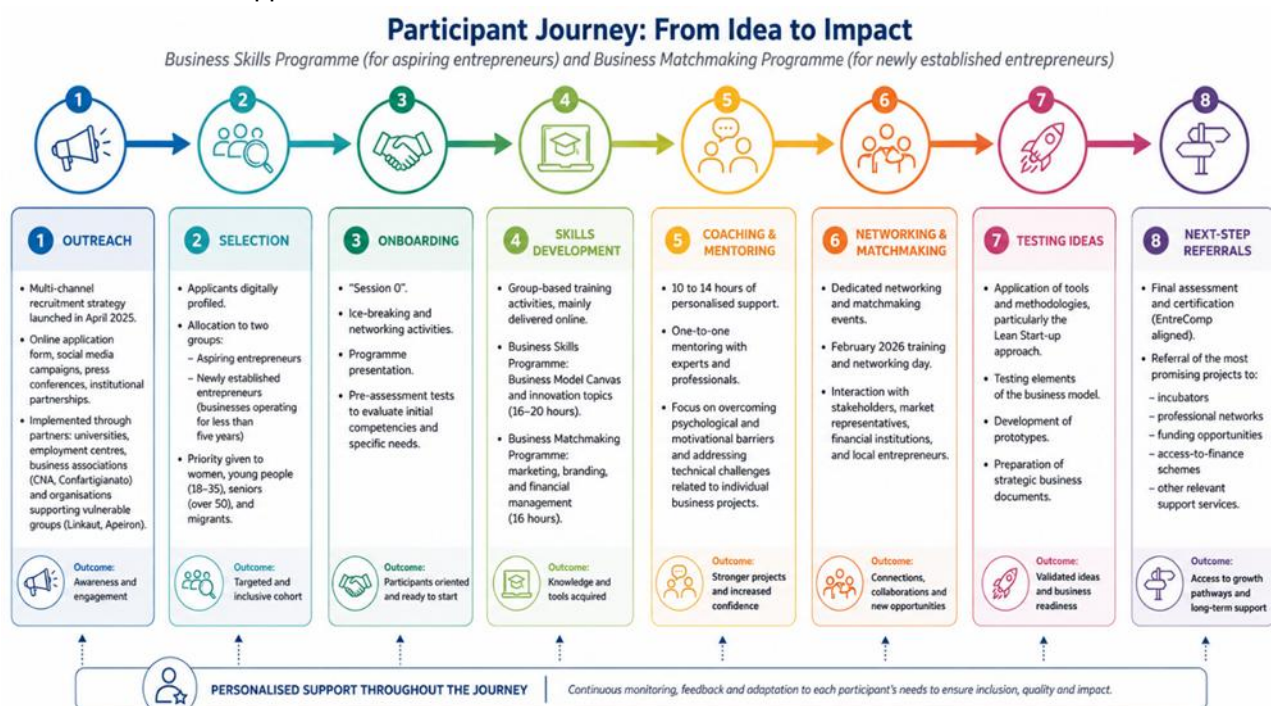
The pilot model is considered fully transferable to other settings, provided it is contextualised to local conditions and the specific characteristics of the target demographic. Its most readily replicable components include the flexible, personalised framework, the hybrid model of group instruction and individual coaching, the applied learning structure, and the educational materials developed throughout the project.

4.2.2 Participant journey in TASK4ISI

The participant journey within the Business Skills Programme (for aspiring entrepreneurs) and the Business Matchmaking Programme (for newly established entrepreneurs) was structured as a sequential and personalised pathway aimed at transforming a business idea into a viable enterprise or supporting a young business in becoming more established. The different phases are described below:



- **Outreach:** A multi-channel recruitment strategy was launched in April 2025 through an online application form, social media campaigns, press conferences, and institutional partnerships. Outreach activities were implemented through strategic partners such as universities, employment centres, and business associations (CNA, Confartigianato), with specific attention given to vulnerable groups through organisations and companies such as Linkaut and Apeiron.
- **Selection:** Applicants were digitally profiled to allocate participants to two groups: aspiring entrepreneurs and newly established entrepreneurs (businesses operating for less than five years). Priority was given to women, young people (18-35), seniors (over 50), and migrants.
- **Onboarding:** Identified as “Session 0”, this phase included ice-breaking and networking activities, programme presentation, and the administration of pre-assessment tests to evaluate participants’ initial competencies and specific needs.
- **Skills Development:** This phase consisted of group-based training activities, delivered mainly online. The Business Skills Programme focused on the Business Model Canvas and innovation topics (16-20 hours), while the Business Matchmaking Programme addressed marketing, branding, and financial management (16 hours).
- **Coaching and Mentoring:** A key component of the programme, providing between 10 and 14 hours of personalised support. Mentors and experts worked one-to-one with participants to overcome psychological and motivational barriers and to address technical challenges related to individual business projects.
- **Networking and Matchmaking:** Dedicated events were organised, including the February 2026 training and networking day, to facilitate interaction with stakeholders, market representatives, financial institutions, and local entrepreneurs.
- **Testing Ideas:** Participants applied the tools and methodologies acquired during the programme, particularly the Lean Start-up approach, to test elements of their business models, develop prototypes, and prepare strategic business documents.
- **Next-Step Referrals:** The pathway concluded with a final assessment and the award of a certification aligned with the European EntreComp framework. Participants with the most promising projects will be referred to incubators, professional networks, funding opportunities, access-to-finance schemes, and other relevant support services.





Program implementation team (coordinator, trainers, mentors) and external experts

The programme is coordinated by senior and junior project managers from Techne (on behalf of the OPEN Network) and CERCAL (on behalf of the Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli), who are responsible for logistics, monitoring and communication. The tutors, trainers, mentors and coaches - originating from key stakeholders such as CNA, Confartigianato, and implementing partners CERCAL (on behalf of the Municipality of San Mauro Pascoli) and Techne (on behalf of Consorzio OPEN) - are professionals with extensive experience in entrepreneurship, digital innovation and marketing strategies, legal and administrative matters.

They were selected based on their educational background, proven track record and feedback from previous projects. Depending on the programme's specific topics and needs, they were identified both through the expertise and professional networks of the coordinating organisations and through the broader network of project partners and local stakeholders involved in the ISIHUB Romagna ecosystem. These include Techne trainers, experts from trade associations, ART-ER, credit institutions, local incubators, and entrepreneurs, reflecting the broad range of organisations and stakeholders involved in the local ecosystem.

The coordination team meets twice a month for alignment, while maintaining constant daily communication on operational matters.

4.2.3 Business Skills Program Overview

The programme implementation team consisted of a general coordination unit composed of two senior local experts and three junior experts who alternated throughout the programme. They were responsible for logistics, training organisation, communication activities, and monitoring. The implementation team maintained regular contact and met periodically to adapt the programme to participants' needs and ensure a coherent and effective learning experience.

The trainers involved included professionals with expertise in Business Model Canvas and Lean Start-up methodologies, mentors and tutors specialised in business design and innovation, as well as external experts such as professionals, entrepreneurs, and representatives of business associations. These contributors provided testimonials, technical advice, and specialised training during both the training and networking activities. Topics covered included administrative and legal aspects of business creation, marketing and go-to-market strategies, personal branding, and the use of artificial intelligence applications for start-ups. The trainer pool also possessed intercultural and coaching competencies, enabling them to effectively support vulnerable target groups such as women, young people, migrants, and seniors, while recognising and building upon their personal experiences and strengths.

Business Skills Program Modules

The **Business Skills programme** is designed for beginners in the field of entrepreneurship and considers the barriers that are characteristic of the target groups. The main topics to be covered during the programme are outlined below. Participants are guided through the process of developing their business or project idea, translating it into a business model, testing it, communicating/marketing it to stakeholders and customers, and building the necessary legal, financial and managerial structures.



Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
<i>Socialization and assessment of skills</i>	1 h	Getting to know each other and completing pre-tests to evaluate baseline competences.	It establishes an onboarding process that builds a safe learning environment, essential for engaging vulnerable groups and reducing psychological barriers.
<i>Introduction to the Business Model Canvas</i>	4 h	Introduction to creativity, innovation, and the 11 components of the BMC to structure a business idea.	It provides the foundational framework to translate vague ideas into concrete business models, reducing the risk of failure from the start.
<i>The Value Proposition - Product Market Fit</i>	4 h	Defining the value proposition, competitive factors, customer profiling, and distribution strategies.	It helps participants identify local market niches and ensures their products/services provide real value to potential customers.
<i>Activity and Resource Management</i>	4 h	Identifying key activities, human/tangible resources, and managing team/partnerships.	It develops the competence to build and optimize the operational dynamics and team structure of the future business.
<i>Financial Management (Costs, Revenues, and Break-even)</i>	8 h	Identifying fixed/variable costs, pricing strategies, and calculating the break-even point.	It addresses a significant competence gap (financial literacy), enabling participants to conduct their own sustainability analyses and calculate break-even points.
<i>Personal Branding</i>	6 h	Developing a "value promise," identifying target audiences, and effective market positioning.	It focuses on building a professional image and market positioning, which is crucial for the visibility of entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups.
<i>Individual Coaching and Mentoring, review session</i>	11 h	Tailored support on specific topics, such as legal and taxation matters, product design, customized business planning, etc. Final assessment.	This personalized pillar (representing nearly half of the total programme hours) addresses participants' specific needs and vulnerabilities. It provides tailored guidance on business, legal, and personal challenges, helping to prevent drop-out and ensuring that aspiring entrepreneurs who face structural barriers can progress at their own pace.
Extra events - Community-building Events			
<i>Pitching and Networking Event</i>	8 h	Developing skills for clear self-presentation, pitching to investors, and accessing credit/support services. Understanding of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and support network.	It strengthens self-confidence and prepares participants to present their projects to potential investors or banks for funding. It also provides participants with immediate access to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.
<i>Final Networking Event</i>	2 h	Final event for project discussion and networking.	Strengthens participation in the ISIHUB network and membership in the local ecosystem.



Expected Results and Evaluation Process

Expected learning outcomes included the ability to:

- design and test a business model,
- build and optimize business operations and resources,
- conduct financial sustainability analyses (including break-even calculations),
- develop effective pitches for investors or credit providers
- apply innovation and market validation tools to reduce entrepreneurial risk.

Participant outcomes were assessed through pre- and post-tests based on EntreComp indicators, complemented by qualitative evaluations conducted by the lead trainer/tutor regarding the maturity of business ideas and entrepreneurial competences.

The assessment showed a significant improvement in participants' knowledge and skills: the average score increased from 60.33/100 in the pre-test to 78.93/100 in the post-test, corresponding to an average increase of approximately 31%, with all participants achieving a final score above 51/100.

Qualitative feedback confirmed the value of a practical and participant-centred approach. Participants particularly appreciated the Business Model Canvas, business planning and market analysis, as well as practical exercises, individual mentoring and opportunities for networking with professionals and other participants. They also reported increased openness to innovation, creative problem-solving and willingness to take risks. The programme contributed to transforming business ideas into more concrete projects. One new business venture was launched following the pilot.

Trainers and organisers assessed the pilot very positively in terms of its relevance, internal coherence and adaptability to the local context. They highlighted its contribution to strengthening participants' confidence, entrepreneurial competences and connections with the local ecosystem, as well as increasing awareness of inclusive entrepreneurship and the needs of missing entrepreneurs.

At ecosystem level, the evaluation also considered stakeholder engagement and collaboration, including participation in ISIHUB meetings, activities and events, and commitment to the Sustainable Cooperation Memorandum.

Lessons-learned from the hub team

The Business Skills Programme confirmed that both group training and individualized support are essential for developing entrepreneurial competences. The assessment further highlighted the effectiveness of a practical and participant-centred approach, enabling participants to apply the tools acquired to their own projects through business modelling, project work, pitches and feedback. Personalized mentoring proved particularly important for addressing participants' specific needs, sustaining engagement, and preventing drop-out through a balance of technical guidance and human-centred support.

The experience also confirmed that the heterogeneous backgrounds, levels of experience, maturity of business ideas and motivation of participants require a flexible and highly personalised approach. Content, schedules and delivery methods need to be adapted to different needs and levels of project development. Future programmes should therefore consider differentiated pathways according to the maturity of business ideas and provide more opportunities for practical, administrative and sector-specific support.



Informal networking events and face-to-face meetings were highly effective in strengthening motivation, monitoring emerging needs, and building connections with the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. The assessment confirmed that the programme contributed not only to strengthening technical and entrepreneurial competences, but also participants' confidence, ability to present their ideas and access to professional networks.

The experience also highlighted that working with highly specific target groups, such as the autistic community, may require more specialised approaches, expertise and support than those provided within a general entrepreneurship programme. This suggests the need for further exploration and dedicated approaches when designing inclusive entrepreneurship pathways for specific groups with complex support needs.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core elements of the model (to be retained):

The core elements of the ISIHUB Romagna model can be identified in two main features: close collaboration with the local stakeholder network and a training programme built on a strong synergy between technical capacity-building and human-centred support.

1. By embedding the programme within the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, the model acts as a bridge for socio-economic inclusion, creating a “safe space” for “missing entrepreneurs” from underrepresented groups. This holistic approach ensures that the development of entrepreneurial ideas is accompanied by a mindset shift, enabling vulnerable individuals to navigate social and bureaucratic barriers with greater confidence and autonomy.
2. Targeting underrepresented groups such as women, young people, migrants, and individuals facing vulnerabilities was essential to ensuring that the programme reached those who are often excluded from mainstream entrepreneurship support. Collaboration with the stakeholder network played a key role in promoting the opportunity and engaging participants, contributing to the achievement of ambitious inclusion targets (e.g. over 60% female participation). This focus is fundamental because standard support services often fail to reach people with complex life circumstances, thereby perpetuating socio-economic inequalities and overlooking valuable local talent. Inclusive recruitment should therefore be considered a core element of any inclusive entrepreneurship model.
3. The combination of group training, individual mentoring, and networking activities was crucial to the programme's success. Group sessions provided participants with the essential knowledge and tools needed to develop their entrepreneurial projects, while individualized support addressed specific technical, organizational, and personal challenges. Peer learning within the group fostered mutual inspiration and exchange, whereas networking events such as the Community Day strengthened participants' confidence, visibility, and connections with key stakeholders. This integrated approach demonstrated that technical skills alone are not sufficient; aspiring entrepreneurs also need tailored guidance, supportive relationships, and access to professional networks to succeed.
4. The use of the Business Model Canvas and Lean Start-up methodology enabled participants to transform initial ideas into more structured and, in some cases, validated business projects. Participatory learning methods, including peer exchange in small-group sessions and individual reflection with mentors, encouraged problem-solving and continuous improvement. For participants with limited entrepreneurial experience or lower self-confidence, seeing tangible progress in their



own projects increased motivation, reduced the risk of drop-out, and provided a practical roadmap for managing entrepreneurial risk. Experiential learning should therefore be regarded as a key component of effective entrepreneurship support programmes.

5. Partnerships with local ecosystem actors, including business associations, the Chamber of Commerce, financial institutions, and individual companies, provided participants with access to professional networks, expertise, and potential funding opportunities. This integration supported both skills development and awareness of the resources available to help participants advance their projects.

Adaptable Elements:

The following elements proved effective in Romagna but may require adjustments depending on local needs, ecosystem characteristics, participant profiles, available resources, and delivery conditions. Such adaptations should aim to maintain the programme's inclusive and participant-centred approach while enhancing its relevance and effectiveness in new settings.

1. In ISIHUB Romagna, the programme focused primarily on the Business Model Canvas and personal branding, complemented by individualized mentoring that generally followed the group training sessions. In other contexts, additional modules such as digital literacy for seniors or financial and tax literacy for migrants could be introduced. Adaptation should be based on locally identified skills gaps and target group needs.
2. ISIHUB Romagna mainly delivered two-hour online sessions combined with a limited number of full-day training events. In other settings, the programme could be condensed into intensive weekend formats or extended to support participants who require a more gradual engagement process. Local work-life patterns and participant availability are key factors influencing this choice.
3. ISIHUB Romagna adopted an “in-person first” approach for networking activities while delivering most workshops online to maximize flexibility and accessibility. Other contexts may require different solutions, such as mobile hubs in rural areas or permanent physical venues in urban settings. Local infrastructure, geographical characteristics, and digital access levels will influence the most suitable format. To safeguard inclusion, particular attention should be paid to addressing the digital divide, including the provision of equipment or support where necessary.
4. In ISIHUB Romagna, multilingual materials were not required. However, programmes targeting migrant communities should provide translated learning resources and, where appropriate, cultural mediation services or AI-supported translation tools. Literacy levels, language proficiency, and cultural background are key factors influencing programme design. Quality and inclusion can only be maintained if communication fosters a safe and supportive environment in which participants feel comfortable discussing personal challenges that may affect their entrepreneurial pathway.

4.2.4 Business Matchmaking Programme Overview

The Business Matchmaking Program is designed to empower early-stage entrepreneurs and start-uppers (e.g. individuals who have established a business, a self-employed business or a freelance activity for no more than five years at the time of application to the project) to build effective business relationships and enhance market potential.

The Programme was managed by a central coordination unit consisting of two senior local experts alongside three junior experts who alternated throughout the duration of the implementation. Key activities included



participants' profiling, coordination with key stakeholders, matchmaking meetings with experts and consultants, communication activities towards participants and stakeholders, and progress monitoring of participants. Through continuous communication and scheduled review meetings, the team dynamically adapted the programme's contents and calendar to participant requirements, safeguarding the quality and coherence during the whole implementation of the programme.

Specifically, to ensure broad reach and responsiveness, the programme offered hybrid collective and individual sessions held at flexible times tailored to participants' needs. Outreach and engagement were highly personalized, utilizing a mix of emails, individualized phone calls, and online follow-ups to maintain close contact. Additionally, a dedicated tutor provided continuous individual guidance, ensuring less experienced or vulnerable entrepreneurs received the necessary support to fully participate.

Additionally, the implementation of the Business Matchmaking programme successfully tested a formal cooperation framework with the trade association 'Confartigianato Federimprese Forlì-Cesena', marked by the establishment of two groups of novice entrepreneurs and the simultaneous delivery of collective training and individual sessions from consultants and experts.

Business Matchmaking Program Modules

The content module of the Business Matchmaking Programme shown below was designed to equip participants - novice, early-stage entrepreneurs and start-uppers - with finance education, notions on the uses of AI and digital skills, elements on personal branding and communication strategy, elements on marketing strategy and fundamental information on sector-specific topics (e.g. ESG regulations and the Energetic Transition) through collective group trainings as well as providing individual sessions focusing on business development, aiming at tackling each participant's needs.

Specifically for individual sessions, the Business Matchmaking programme mobilized a high-level network of trainers, consultants, and certified coaches to deliver comprehensive capacity-building activities across key development domains. The expert pool delivered specialized instruction spanning financial governance and SME taxation; legal, labor, and GDPR compliance; AI innovation, digital marketing, and service design; environmental sustainability and energy transition; STEAM methodologies and robotics; and certified leadership coaching. This multidisciplinary framework ensured a holistic approach to regional stakeholder empowerment \

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Socialization and skills assessment	6 hours	Getting to know each other and completing pre-tests to evaluate baseline competences.	It establishes an onboarding process that builds a safe learning environment, essential for engaging vulnerable groups and reducing psychological barriers.
Introduction to the course and networking	5 hours	Acquiring the first elements on the programme, its calendar and expected results. Present a pitch of your own project. Building the community.	It strengthens self-confidence and prepares participants to present their projects to potential investors or banks for funding. It also provides participants with immediate access to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Finance opportunities and financial education	7 hours	Identifying fixed/variable costs, pricing strategies, and calculating the break-even point.	It addresses a significant competence gap (financial literacy), enabling participants to conduct their own sustainability analyses and calculate break-even points.
Personal Branding, Social and Interpersonal Skills	4 hours	Developing a "value promise," identifying target audiences, and effective market positioning.	It focuses on building a professional image and market positioning, which is crucial for the visibility of entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups.
Digital skills and AI	4 hours	AI Tools for Start-up	It fills the knowledge gap on AI and its potentiality as a tool in building and managing one own's project.
Communication and Marketing strategies	4 hours	Acquiring principles of marketing and digital marketing, approaching communication strategy, and digital marketing tools. It also provides and in-depth analysis on segmentation, targeting and positioning	It fills the knowledge gap on marketing and provides fundamentals of modern marketing strategies.
Digital Business: Digital Identity, Digital marketing tools, Digital skills and AI	3 hours	Acquiring elements on how to build a digital profile.	By following this module, participants can define the digital presence of their businesses.
Sector-specific legal or compliance issues: Introduction to ESG in Business, Relevant regulations for the company and Focus on provisions or protocols of specific interest	3 hours	Introducing ESG in Business and relevant regulations for the company.	Ensuring participants are aware of administrative and legislative framework in which they operate.
Associations and organizations supporting entrepreneurship and Relevant regulations for the company: the Energetic Transition	3 hours	Fundamentals and challenges on energetic transition in business	It provides information on energetic transition and the challenges participants may face.
Business development: focusing on accounting or tax aspects	3 hours	Acquiring administrative and legal fundamentals on managing a society, on fiscal aspects and accounting.	Providing fundamental information on taxes, accounting and fiscalty to ensure participants are aware of their position.
Business development, including Business Model Canva, Project Work,	19 hours	Individual sessions	It allows participants to focus on specific needs of their projects and strengthen their projects with the support, coaching



sector-specific consultancy sessions.			and mentoring of an expert. It also gives participants to test strategies in real life situations.
Community-building Events			
Community day	8 hours	Participants get to know each other, other stakeholders and experts/trainers.	It supports networking and community-building

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

Providing an average of 14 hours of tailored support, individual mentoring was a cornerstone of our participant journey. It began with an initial assessment that was adjusted during follow-up 1:1 calls to meet evolving business needs. Delivered by a diverse pool of academic experts, industry consultants, and specialized coaches, mentoring focused directly on each participant's unique area of growth. Individual sessions covered topics such as labor law, personal branding, digital marketing, AI tools, the Business Model Canvas, and marketing strategy.

Matches between participants and experts were made possible through stakeholder networks—such as Confartigianato and CNA—as well as the internal networks of implementing partners Techne and CERCAL. This personalized support provided immense value, enabling novice entrepreneurs to acquire fundamental business knowledge, build personal confidence, and clarify vague concepts into concrete pathways. A key lesson for future replication was the high effectiveness of the onboarding approach: conducting joint introductory sessions with a coordinator/tutor ensured optimal matching between participants and mentors.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

Learning outcomes from participants include the ability to:

- communicate more effectively to improve interpersonal relations and promote their activity
- define an appropriate marketing strategy for their business reality and identify the most suitable operational activities for its implementation
- manage the financial aspects of the enterprise, analyze costs and revenues, and monitor key indicators and cash flow
- present their project to potential investors or for credit access
- recognize support and training opportunities offered by associations and entrepreneurship support entities, developing a strategic vision for the future of their business

Learning outcomes were assessed through:

- Pre- and post-training questionnaires
- Portfolio elaboration
- Feedback from trainers and mentors during individual sessions;
- Demonstration of skills during networking or simulation-based exercises

Expected learning outcomes included the ability to build effective business relationships and enhance market potential for novice entrepreneurs by covering topics such as finance and finance education, notions on communication and marketing strategies, including personal branding, digital marketing and information on go-to-market strategies and developing networking ability with fellow entrepreneurs and the network. Participant outcomes were assessed through pre- and post-tests based on EntreComp indicators, complemented by qualitative feedback from participants, trainers and organisers, and by the lead trainer/tutor's assessment of business idea maturity and entrepreneurial competences.



The assessment showed a moderate improvement in participants' knowledge and skills, compared to the group of aspiring entrepreneurs, given that the novice entrepreneurs started from a relatively high initial standard, meaning their scope for further improvement was naturally more limited. The average score increased from 82.56/100 in the pre-test to 84.88/100 in the post-test, corresponding to an average increase of approximately 2,80%, with all participants achieving a final score above 51/100.

Qualitative feedback confirmed the value of a practical and participant-centred approach. Participants appreciated practical, actionable tools alongside personalized, hands-on mentorship. The applied Business Model Canvas and value-based pricing frameworks stood out as immediate highlights, with participants noting they could directly apply these concepts to real-world projects and client work. Modules on integrating Artificial Intelligence into business operations also resonated strongly, offering fresh perspectives on streamlining workflows.

Beyond coursework, tailored support proved invaluable. Individual advisory sessions, one-to-one tutoring, and dedicated consulting provided structured guidance for navigating grant opportunities, refining business development strategies, and solidifying project ideas. Core training modules covering financial management, safety regulations, and funding planning equipped participants with foundational economic skills. Finally, interactive components—such as in-person communication workshops, sample pitches, and the speed dating networking event—created an engaging, collaborative atmosphere that tied the entire learning experience together.

Lessons-learned from the hub team

The evaluation of the Business Matchmaking Programme confirmed that combining group training with tailored, individualised support is essential for cultivating entrepreneurial competences. The assessment further demonstrated the efficacy of a practical, participant-centred methodology, which allowed individuals to apply newly acquired tools directly to their ventures through business modelling, project work, pitches, and structured feedback. Personalised mentoring was found to be especially critical; it addressed specific individual requirements, sustained engagement, and mitigated drop-out rates by balancing technical instruction with empathetic, human-centred guidance.

Furthermore, the implementation process verified that the diverse backgrounds, experience levels, motivation, and maturity of the participants' business ideas necessitate a flexible and highly tailored framework. Content, timetables, and delivery methods must be adapted to suit varying requirements and stages of venture development. Consequently, future initiatives should incorporate differentiated learning pathways based on business maturity, alongside expanded provision for practical, administrative, and sector-specific assistance.

Informal networking events and face-to-face interactions proved exceptionally useful for boosting motivation, monitoring evolving needs, and establishing links within the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. The assessment corroborated that the programme enhanced not only technical and business capabilities, but also participants' confidence, presentation skills, and access to professional networks. Ongoing engagement with commercial enterprises, public institutions, and broader ecosystem stakeholders is likely to reinforce these positive outcomes. Additionally, flexible operational arrangements—such as evening and Saturday classes, hybrid delivery, and catch-up tutoring—were indispensable for supporting participants in managing their work-life commitments.

The findings underscored that a high degree of personalisation demands substantial time and resource investment, particularly concerning one-to-one mentoring, project validation, and post-training follow-up. Progressive, continuous support should therefore be embedded as a core component of future entrepreneurship frameworks.



Finally, the experience indicated that working with highly specific demographics—such as the autistic community—may require more specialized expertise, methodologies, and support structures than those available within a general entrepreneurship initiative. This highlights the necessity for further research and dedicated frameworks when designing inclusive entrepreneurial pathways for groups with complex support requirements.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core Elements of the Model:

The core elements essential to the effectiveness and integrity of the Business Matchmaking Programme (BMP) revolve around structured inclusivity, multi-tiered support, interactive methods, and localised integration. The model targets "missing entrepreneurs", demonstrating that vulnerable groups can inject fresh enterprise directly into strategic, future-oriented regional drivers without compromising economic competitiveness. By combining collective training with tailored 1:1 mentoring, the programme bridges knowledge gaps and builds individual capacity. This is reinforced by experiential, hands-on learning—such as co-design activities and practical coursework—which dynamically adapts to varying readiness levels. Finally, the model relies on robust ecosystem embedding, utilising community events and diverse local experts to transition participants seamlessly from initial concepts to concrete market pathways.

1. Inclusive Recruitment Strategy Targeting “Missing Entrepreneurs”

This element enhanced inclusivity and accessibility within the regional pilot, demonstrating robust engagement from underrepresented entrepreneurs in key Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3/S4) areas, such as the Cultural/Creative and Digital/Logistics industries. The pilot successfully demonstrated that integrating vulnerable or less-advantaged novice entrepreneurs directly into the strategic core of regional growth does not compromise economic relevance.

2. The Combination of Training + Mentoring + Networking

Collective training provides vital business fundamentals and general knowledge, whilst individual mentoring directly addresses the specific vulnerabilities and technical requirements that "missing" entrepreneurs could not otherwise access. To operationalise this, individual mentoring sessions were structured through a step-by-step approach. First, an initial one-to-one session with a tutor or project manager was conducted to assess the participant's specific needs and skill gaps. Based on this assessment, the most suitable expert or consultant was identified within both the internal project network and the broader stakeholders' ecosystem. A preliminary matchmaking session was then organised to establish rapport and align expectations between the participant and the expert, paving the way for the tailored 1-to-1 sessions.

3. The Use of Experiential and Participatory Learning Methods

The pilot project utilised practical exercises, pitch sessions, interactive workshops, and practical assignments. This hands-on approach proved essential given the highly diverse readiness and knowledge levels of the participants upon entry. By actively applying the thematic content, participants successfully assimilated the core methodologies. This pedagogical approach is considered a critical baseline for ensuring that non-traditional learners successfully transition from theoretical knowledge to actionable implementation.

4. The Connection to the Local Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The pilot actively integrated participants into the regional network by organising a community day and embedding experts from various local business sectors as trainers and consultants. This structural connection is imperative for long-term sustainability; it equips participants with the specific tools, institutional awareness, and professional networks required to navigate and enter the local entrepreneurial ecosystem with confidence.



Adaptable Elements

While the foundational pillars should be maintained, several components of the model can be tailored to fit distinct local context requirements. Future implementations should prefer a flexible hybrid format that prioritizes the high value of in-person interactions—such as full-day workshops and networking lunches—while accommodating the specific mobility or time constraints of vulnerable participants. The overall programme duration and scheduling intensity, including the concentration of hours into full-day training sessions, should remain adaptable, granting more time and flexibility to align with regional systems. Regarding content, module topics ought to stay general enough to guarantee fundamental business training, yet local-specific modules can be injected. Finally, the delivery language must always be adapted to the local language to maximize accessibility.

4.3 Thuringia, Germany Pilot Model

4.3.1 Program Logic and intervention Model

The Business Skills Programme was designed as a low-threshold intervention to support women, migrants and young people in Thuringia in moving from initial interest or early-stage ideas towards greater entrepreneurial readiness. Its logic combined knowledge-building, confidence-building and practical idea development. Through workshops, boot-camps, coaching and networking formats, participants explored social entrepreneurship, business models, value proposition, marketing, pitching, funding, financial management and bureaucratic requirements in Germany. The programme used English-language delivery, flexible formats and peer exchange to reduce barriers and help participants develop their ideas, receive feedback, expand their networks and identify concrete next steps.

The Business Matchmaking Programme was designed as a follow-up intervention for participants who had already developed a business idea and needed support in moving closer to market entry. Its logic focused on connecting participants with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, increasing their external visibility, and helping them identify potential customers, partners, mentors and support structures. Through matchmaking events, networking opportunities, mentoring, stakeholder involvement and practical follow-up tasks, participants were encouraged to test their ideas, communicate their value proposition, and build relevant contacts. The programme used flexible formats, direct outreach, WhatsApp and email follow-up, and cooperation with actors such as Startup Migrants, ThEx and StarterWerk / Hochschule Schmalkalden to reduce access barriers and strengthen participants' integration into local business networks.

4.3.2 Participant journey in TASK4ISI

The participant journey in TASK4ISI followed a progressive pathway from initial outreach to further entrepreneurial support. Both programmes started with outreach through social media, posters, partner networks, universities, community spaces and direct stakeholder mobilisation. Interested participants were then selected and onboarded through introductory activities, idea presentations and informal exchanges with the hub team, allowing organisers to understand their profiles, needs, expectations and business ideas.

The journey then moved into skills development, where participants strengthened their entrepreneurial readiness through workshops, boot-camps and practical modules on social entrepreneurship, value proposition, business models, marketing, pitching, funding, financial management and bureaucratic requirements. Coaching and mentoring were offered throughout the process, allowing participants to receive individual feedback and guidance according to the maturity of their ideas.

Networking and matchmaking activities created opportunities to connect participants with peers, trainers, business owners, mentors and regional support organisations. Through these formats, participants could



increase their visibility, test and refine their ideas, identify potential customers or partners, and better understand the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. The final stage of the journey focused on next-step referrals, linking participants to relevant support structures, mentoring opportunities, funding information, stakeholder contacts and further activities beyond the pilot programme.

INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME FLOW



Program implementation team (coordinator, trainers, mentors) and external experts

The programmes were coordinated by project coordinators from CGE Erfurt e.V. and Plattform e.V., who divided responsibilities for communication, logistics, participant follow-up and monitoring. Trainers, mentors and external experts were selected from the stakeholder network and regional entrepreneurship ecosystem, including Startup Migrants, ThEx, StarterWerk / Hochschule Schmalkalden, universities, business owners and social innovation practitioners. They contributed expertise in entrepreneurship, social innovation, customer validation, MVP development, pitching, marketing, funding, financial management, design thinking, sales and team formation. Their role was to deliver workshops, provide mentoring and feedback, support networking and connect participants with relevant regional support structures.



4.3.3 Business Skills Program Overview

The Business Skills Programme supported women, migrants and young people in Thuringia to develop entrepreneurial readiness and confidence. Through workshops, boot-camps, coaching and networking, participants explored social entrepreneurship, business models, pitching, marketing, funding, financial management and practical steps for starting a business in Germany.

The programme used inclusive and low-threshold formats to support participation. It began with a weekend Social Hackathon that helped participants meet the hub team, exchange ideas and understand the programme. Communication was maintained through WhatsApp and periodic emails with reminders and updates. Individual mentoring was available throughout, while community and networking events helped participants build confidence, connect with peers and access regional support offers.

Business Skills Program Modules

The **Business Skills programme** is designed for beginners in the field of entrepreneurship and considers the barriers that are characteristic of the target groups. The main topics to be covered during the programme are outlined below. Participants are guided through the process of developing their business or project idea, translating it into a business model, testing it, communicating/marketing it to stakeholders and customers, and building the necessary legal, financial and managerial structures.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Kick-off: Idea Presentation	3h	Get to know each other, understand the program and receive feedback based on raw pitches .	To ensure first commitment with the program.
Value Proposition	3 h	Participants will be able to clearly define and articulate the core foundation of their business ideas in a detailed and structured manner.	To equip participants with the skills to identify key problems, develop practical solutions, communicate the benefits of their ideas, and differentiate their business concepts from competitors in the market.
Business Model Canvas	3 h	Participants will be able to draft the underlining strategy of their business idea.	To enable participants to understand and map the key elements required for the conceptual development and successful launch of their business ventures.
Marketing	3 h	Participants will be able to understand and apply best practices and appropriate formats for effectively advertising their product or service.	To enable participants to identify the key factors for retaining customers and effectively presenting the business idea to potential investors.
Economy for the Common Good	3h	Participants will be able to develop their business ideas in a sustainable, long-term	To allow participants to understand the importance of building sustainable and



		manner while considering the needs of the wider community and their social impact.	viable businesses while creating a positive impact on a broader level.
Design thinking	3h	Allow participants to understand the importance of testing to improve the product/service based on the customer reception and evaluation.	To allow participants to recognize the importance of long-term innovation and sustainability in entrepreneurial endeavors.
Pitching	3h	Equip participants with the best practices and elements when outlining a visual pitch and presenting their business ideas verbally to possible investors.	To allow participants to understand the importance of a strong pitch and how it can be decisive in securing investment and other forms of financial support.
Funding for Business	3h	Participants will be able to identify existing financing institutions, understand their requirements, and explore different ways entrepreneurs can access funding.	To allow participants to identify and understand the key regional and national institutions and programmes that provide financial support to startups.
Financial and Operational Management	3h	Participants will be able to understand the foundational decisions and practical considerations involved in starting and managing a business.	To allow participants to develop management strategies and to adapt their business to current market conditions.
USP and Market Positioning	3h	Participants will be able to understand and apply methods to define the value proposition, identify the Unique Selling Proposition (USP), and position their venture idea within the broader business context.	To allow participants to identify the distinctive features that make business ideas stand out by providing tools and strategies to explore, analyse, and conceptualise their ideas.
Preschool - Accelerator Bootcamp	18h	Participants will be able to refine and strengthen their business ideas through intensive training, expert feedback, and collaborative networking during a 3-day bootcamp.	To allow participants to apply the knowledge they have gained during the workshops while also building synergies and establishing networks with other participants.
Extra events			
Networking Event	3h	Participants learn how to present their ideas informally, ask relevant questions, and identify potential contacts, support opportunities or collaboration pathways.	By meeting local practitioners and support actors, participants can better understand the regional ecosystem, expand their contacts and gain



			confidence in entering entrepreneurial spaces.
Social Hackathon	30h	Participants develop initial business or social entrepreneurship ideas in teams, explore local community challenges, understand how entrepreneurship can create social impact, and practise pitching ideas in a supportive setting.	It allows participants to meet each other and the hub team, test ideas collaboratively, build confidence, and understand entrepreneurship as a practical tool for addressing social and community needs.
Community- building Events			
International Women's Day Event	3h	Participants will be able to engage in discussions on gender inequality in entrepreneurship and broader society through an interactive public quiz event celebrating International Women's Day.	The public event emphasized the need for structural change to reverse gender-based discrimination between women and men in terms of basic rights and within the entrepreneurial world.
Framework review session	2h	Participants are introduced to the overall programme structure, objectives, planned modules and expected learning pathway. They review the proposed framework, share their expectations and needs, and provide feedback that can be used to adapt the programme content and format.	This makes the programme participatory from the beginning. By involving participants in reviewing and adjusting the framework, the programme becomes more responsive to their real needs, readiness levels and availability, while also strengthening ownership and motivation.
Open Backyard and informal gathering	2h	Participants engage in informal peer exchange, to discuss potential challenges to be addressed in the social hackathon.	Entrepreneurship support is not only about technical knowledge, but also about belonging, motivation and networks. Informal gatherings help reduce barriers, create a sense of community and encourage participants to remain engaged beyond formal training sessions

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

The expected results of the Business Skills Programme were assessed at participant, organisational and ecosystem level. At participant level, the programme aimed to strengthen entrepreneurial readiness, confidence and practical skills. Through modules on value proposition, business models, marketing, social entrepreneurship, design thinking, pitching, funding, financial and operational management, USP and market positioning, participants were expected to explore the value of their ideas, develop and test business



models, prepare clearer pitches, identify target groups, estimate financial needs, understand funding options and navigate basic formal requirements for starting a business in Germany.

The evaluation process included a pre-test before the start of the programme and a post-test after participants completed the required hours. These tools were designed to compare changes in participants' self-assessed knowledge, confidence and skills. Learning progress was also monitored through practical exercises, idea presentations, pitching moments, group work, trainer observations, informal feedback, reflection moments and follow-up communication with participants.

The Business Skills Programme focused on equipping aspiring entrepreneurs with skills that they would need for beginning their first business. The assessment shows a clear and meaningful improvement in participants' entrepreneurial competencies based on the pre- and post-test scores. The average pre-test score was 22.3, while the average post-test score rose to 37.7, reflecting a 69% overall improvement in knowledge and skills. Most individual participants demonstrated high advancement. Only one participant showed a slight decline, but the overall pattern strongly indicates that the programme effectively strengthened participants' understanding of business concepts, planning, and entrepreneurial decision-making. These results suggest that the program successfully enhanced participants' readiness to develop and refine their business ideas, equipping them with clearer frameworks, practical tools, and greater confidence to move forward in their entrepreneurial journey.

At organisational level, the programme aimed to strengthen the Social Impulse Hub's capacity to deliver inclusive entrepreneurship support and adapt learning formats to the needs of women, migrants and young people. For this reason, additional pilot assessment surveys were also developed for hub members/organisers and trainers, to collect feedback on programme design, implementation, participant engagement, training relevance, coordination and areas for improvement.

The main evaluation criteria included relevance of the content, progress in entrepreneurial competences, feasibility and clarity of participants' business ideas, usefulness of coaching and networking opportunities, and awareness of regional support services. Indicators included participation and completion rates, quality of practical outputs, ability to articulate next steps, engagement during sessions and connections made with support actors. At ecosystem level, the programme contributed to strengthening cooperation between the hub, trainers, mentors, universities, support organisations and regional entrepreneurship networks.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core Elements of the Model

The core elements of the Business Skills Programme are the inclusive recruitment of underrepresented or "missing" entrepreneurs, the combination of training, mentoring and networking, the use of experiential and participatory learning methods, and the connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. These elements should be retained in any replication because they ensure that the programme remains inclusive, practical and connected to real entrepreneurial opportunities.

Inclusive recruitment was essential in the Thuringian pilot because the programme aimed to reach women, migrants and young people who often face barriers in accessing mainstream entrepreneurship support. This element ensured that the programme responded to groups that are less visible in the regional business ecosystem and should remain foundational to the model.

The *combination of training, mentoring and networking* was also central. Workshops helped participants develop business knowledge, while mentoring and coaching offered individual guidance, and networking events created access to peers, trainers, stakeholders and support organisations. This integrated pathway helped participants move from general interest to clearer business ideas and concrete next steps.



Experiential and participatory learning methods were important because participants were able to apply tools directly to their own ideas through group work, pitching, feedback sessions, business model exercises and practical tasks. This made the programme more accessible, engaging and relevant to different levels of experience.

Finally, the *connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem* was a non-negotiable part of the model. By involving trainers, mentors, universities, support organisations and regional stakeholders, the programme helped participants understand available support structures and build contacts beyond the training itself.

Adaptable Elements

Module content and sequencing: In Thuringia, the modules followed a step-by-step path from idea development to pitching, covering value proposition, business models, marketing, funding, financial management and presentation skills. In another context, topics may be reordered or complemented with additional areas, depending on participants' experience, sector focus and local business environment. However, the core learning outcomes should remain stable to ensure programme quality.

Programme duration and intensity: In the regional pilot, short and focused workshops were delivered over several months. This allowed gradual learning but also led to fluctuating participation. Other contexts may require shorter, more intensive or more interactive formats, such as boot-camps or youth-exchange-style models. Adaptation should consider participants' availability, motivation, mobility and support needs, while ensuring enough time for learning, practice and mentoring.

Delivery format (online/hybrid/in-person): The programme was delivered mainly in person to encourage active participation, interaction, trust-building and peer exchange. In other contexts, hybrid or online formats may be more accessible, especially for participants with disabilities, care responsibilities, long travel distances or work constraints. However, digital access and digital skills should be considered so that online formats do not create new forms of exclusion.

Language and cultural adaptation: Since the target groups in Thuringia included many migrants and international participants, English was used to reduce language barriers and support participation. In other regions, local-language, bilingual or simplified-language delivery may be more appropriate. Adaptation should consider participant demographics, literacy levels, cultural norms and confidence in formal learning environments, while preserving clarity and equal access to content.

Type of ecosystem involved: In Thuringia, the programme involved local trainers, support organisations, universities, entrepreneurship networks and stakeholders from the regional ecosystem. In other contexts, different actors may be more relevant, such as migrant organisations, women's business networks, chambers of commerce, municipalities, funding bodies or sector-specific mentors. Partnerships should remain diverse and connected to target-group needs to avoid reproducing exclusion.

4.3.4 Business Matchmaking Programme Overview

The Business Matchmaking Programme supported early-stage entrepreneurs and aspiring founders in Thuringia to move from business ideas towards market-oriented concepts. It focused on customer validation, value proposition, MVP development, sales, investor outreach, pitching, team formation, mentoring and networking with local ecosystem actors.

The programme adopted several accessibility and inclusion measures to reach and retain underrepresented participants. English was used as the main communication and training language to make the programme more accessible to migrants, international students and participants who may not yet feel confident joining German-language entrepreneurship activities. Outreach was carried out through social media, posters in



universities, cafés and community spaces, and stakeholder networks such as Startup Migrants, ThEx and StarterWerk / Hochschule Schmalkalden.

The programme also used flexible participation formats, combining online workshops, in-person sessions and informal networking spaces at the Social Impulse Hub, Nerly Café and Zoom. Different schedules, including afternoon and weekend activities, helped accommodate students, working participants and people with different availability. WhatsApp groups, email follow-up, practical tasks and mentoring opportunities supported continuous engagement, while participant portfolios and one-to-one feedback helped tailor support to individual ideas, needs and readiness levels.

Business Matchmaking Program Modules

The **Business Matchmaking Programme** provides a hands-on, modular learning experience tailored to the needs of early-stage entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds, including migrants, international students, women, and young people in Thuringia. The programme emphasizes the development of both **soft skills** (such as communication and cooperation) and **technical competencies** essential for navigating the entrepreneurial landscape and entering the local startup ecosystem.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
First Customer Program - Module 1 - Kick-Off event	3h	Participants learn to identify and understand their target customers by exploring customer journeys, sales cycles, buyer motivations, B2B and B2C differences, personas, and validation methods. They reflect on whether their business idea addresses a real pain point, the scale of the problem, and whether customers would be willing to pay for the proposed solution.	Customer understanding is a foundation for market entry. It helps participants move beyond general ideas and test whether their solution responds to real needs. By learning how to map customer journeys and build personas, participants can communicate their value more clearly, adapt their offer to different market segments, and approach sales with greater confidence.
First Customer Program - Module 2 - Understanding Your Customer	3h	Participants learn to analyse their market, identify competitors, reflect on timing, and clarify the value and positioning of their business ideas. They explore how testing, feedback, MVP development and comparison with real or plausible competitors can help them understand whether their idea is viable and how it can stand out in B2B, B2C or B2G contexts.	This module matters because entrepreneurs need to understand not only their customers, but also the wider market in which their idea will operate. By analysing competitors and testing assumptions, participants can sharpen their value proposition, identify what makes their offer unique, and make better decisions before launching a product or service.
First Customer Program - Module 3 - Value, Pricing and CVP	3h	Participants learn how to develop and assess a Minimum Viable Product, clarify their value proposition, distinguish between product features and customer value, and reflect on how to reach ideal customers. They also explore sales approaches, customer journeys,	This module matters because early-stage entrepreneurs need to test whether people actually want their product or service before investing too many resources. By focusing on MVP, customer value and communication, participants can better understand what makes their offer relevant, how it differs



		communication, trust-building, teamwork and strategy, while receiving one-to-one mentoring to refine their business ideas.	from existing solutions, and how to present it in a way that builds trust and supports market entry.
First Customer Program - Module 4 - Minimum Viable Product	3h	Participants learn how to communicate their business idea to potential investors in a clear, simple and convincing way. They explore outreach strategies, timing, follow-up communication, trust-building, and how to respond to objections related to budget, urgency, market need and value. They are also introduced to ThEx as a regional support structure for networking, mentoring and startup advice.	This module matters because early-stage entrepreneurs need to understand how to move from developing an idea to presenting it to external actors. Investor outreach requires clarity, confidence and strategic communication. By learning how to explain the value and structure of their idea, participants become better prepared to seek support, build credibility and connect with regional entrepreneurship services.
Team Matchmaking - Session 6	5h	Participants learn how to present themselves and their business ideas in a networking setting, exchange contacts, identify potential partners or team members, and understand key tools and structures for early-stage startup development. The session introduces pitch decks, business plans, accelerators, funds, grants, incubation programmes, MVPs, legal frameworks for startups in Germany, team agreements, shares, vesting and equity management.	This module matters because early-stage entrepreneurs often need more than an idea: they need collaborators, contacts, feedback and orientation within the startup ecosystem. By creating an informal but structured matchmaking space, the event helped participants build networks, explore synergies, clarify practical questions, and gain confidence in connecting their ideas with potential partners and support structures.
First Customer Program - Module 5 - Building a Sales Organisation	3h	Participants revisit key principles for launching an entrepreneurial idea and clarify open questions about their business concepts. They learn to think strategically about customer retention, clear pitching, target audiences, early adopters, MVP learning, visibility, customer contact, cultural adaptation, process documentation and feedback. One-to-one support helps them apply these elements to their own ideas.	This module matters because it helps participants consolidate what they learned across the First Customer Programme and translate it into concrete next steps. By focusing on retention, visibility, feedback and cultural context, the session supports participants in moving from idea refinement toward more sustainable customer relationships, stronger trust-building and better preparation for market entry.
Design Thinking Day - Session 7	7h	Participants learn how to use design thinking as a structured method for developing human-centred entrepreneurial solutions. They explore empathy, user needs, community mapping, problem reframing, ideation, prototyping, testing and pitching. Through tools such as the Empathy Map Canvas, Community Mapping Canvas, POV Boxes and	This module matters because inclusive entrepreneurship should respond to real human and community needs, not only market assumptions. Design thinking helps participants observe, question, test and improve their ideas in a practical and collaborative way. It strengthens experimentation, empathy, teamwork and impact-oriented thinking, supporting more



		Crazy 8's, participants apply creative problem-solving methods directly to their own business or social impact ideas.	relevant, sustainable and user-centred business concepts.
Social entrepreneurship to enhance EU cooperation across borders - Session 8	1h30	Participants learn how social entrepreneurship can respond to social and community challenges while supporting EU values such as inclusion, democracy, equality, sustainability and human rights. Through group work, challenge cards and a simplified social enterprise canvas, they identify barriers faced by migrants and young people, develop socially impactful ideas, and pitch solutions linked to specific values.	This module matters because it helps participants understand entrepreneurship as more than business creation: it can also be a tool for inclusion, participation and community-building. By connecting EU values with real-life barriers, participants learn to design ideas that are socially relevant, sustainable and transferable across European contexts.
Placemaking as a core approach for social entrepreneurship ideas - Session 9	1h30	Participants learn how local spaces can inspire social entrepreneurship ideas that respond to community needs. Through the "A Place with a Purpose" activity, they combine place cards, need cards and action cards to develop concepts linked to inclusion, participation, education, employment, sustainability and community connection. They define target groups, social impact and possibilities for sustaining their ideas beyond a one-time event.	This module matters because it shows that entrepreneurship can emerge not only from products or services, but also from places, shared needs and opportunities for co-creation. By linking placemaking with social entrepreneurship, participants learn to see local spaces as resources for inclusion, collaboration and social innovation.

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

Individual support and mentoring were integrated throughout the Business Matchmaking Programme as a complement to group workshops and networking activities. Participants received tailored guidance during one-to-one moments after several First Customer modules, where they could clarify questions, test assumptions, refine their value proposition, discuss MVP development, customer validation, sales strategies, investor outreach and next steps.

ThEx participated as a key regional stakeholder and advisory network for entrepreneurship and SME development in Thuringia. During the programme, ThEx presented its services, regional network and advisory role to participants, acting as a bridge between aspiring entrepreneurs and existing support structures. Following this introduction, ThEx facilitated opportunities for mentoring by connecting interested participants with relevant business owners and entrepreneurs through a pairing or buddying approach. This allowed participants to receive practical insights, exchange directly with local business actors, and explore entrepreneurial pathways in Thuringia in a more concrete and personalised way.

This mentoring component added value by linking participants' individual needs with real ecosystem actors. It helped participants move from early ideas towards more actionable business pathways, while also expanding ThEx's visibility among new target groups and strengthening cooperation between civil society, business actors and regional entrepreneurship support structures.



Expected Results and Evaluation Process

The expected results of the Business Matchmaking Programme were assessed at participant, organisational and ecosystem level. At participant level, the programme aimed to strengthen market-readiness, confidence, communication skills and participants' capacity to move from early-stage ideas towards more concrete and customer-oriented business concepts. Through modules on customer understanding, competition, value proposition, MVP development, sales strategies, investor outreach, design thinking, social entrepreneurship, placemaking and team matchmaking, participants were expected to identify target customers, test assumptions, analyse competitors, clarify their value proposition, develop MVP thinking, improve pitching, explore sales and investor communication, and identify potential partners or team members.

The evaluation process included practical observation, participant outputs and feedback gathered throughout the programme. Learning progress was monitored through idea presentations, customer validation exercises, persona work, competitor analysis, MVP reflection, pitching moments, group work, one-to-one mentoring, trainer observations, informal feedback, reflection moments and follow-up communication with participants. Participant portfolios also supported the documentation of business ideas, needs, expectations and progress.

From the pilot assessment it was found that the BMM training programme had a strongly positive impact on participants' entrepreneurial knowledge, confidence, and readiness to act. Responses ranged from "Agree" to "Strongly Agree," with many participants reporting clearer understanding of business development, customer needs, problem definition, and pitching. Several highlighted gaining practical skills such as structuring ideas, defining MVPs, and identifying market opportunities. Participants also valued the networking opportunities and felt more connected to the entrepreneurial ecosystem, mentioning organisations like Culture Goes Europe, Startup Migrants, Melton Foundation and Hochschule Schmalkalden as meaningful contacts. Suggestions for improvement focused on increasing hands-on practice, offering more individual feedback, expanding finance-related content, and providing additional time for networking.

At organisational level, the programme aimed to strengthen the Social Impulse Hub's capacity to deliver more targeted matchmaking and market-entry support for early-stage entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups. For this reason, additional pilot assessment surveys were also developed for hub members/organisers and trainers, to collect feedback on programme design, coordination, stakeholder involvement, participant engagement, mentoring, training relevance and areas for improvement.

The main evaluation criteria included relevance of the content, progress in market-readiness, clarity and feasibility of participants' business ideas, ability to identify customers and next steps, usefulness of mentoring and matchmaking opportunities, and awareness of regional support services. Indicators included participation and retention rates, quality of practical outputs, ability to articulate value and market fit, engagement during sessions, connections made with peers or ecosystem actors, and referrals to support structures. At ecosystem level, the programme contributed to strengthening cooperation between the hub, Startup Migrants, ThEx, StarterWerk / Hochschule Schmalkalden, trainers, mentors, universities, business actors and social innovation networks.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core Elements

The core elements of the Business Matchmaking Programme are the First Customer journey, the integration of mentoring and ecosystem connection, and the use of experiential methods such as Design Thinking. These elements should be retained in any replication because they preserve the programme's focus on helping underrepresented early-stage entrepreneurs move from ideas towards customer-oriented, market-ready and socially relevant business concepts.



1. Inclusive recruitment of “missing entrepreneurs”:

In Thuringia, the programme targeted migrants, international students, women and young people, many of whom had entrepreneurial ideas but limited access to local business networks, mentoring or German-language support. This focus ensured that the programme reached groups often underrepresented in entrepreneurship ecosystems. It should remain foundational because the model is designed to advance inclusive entrepreneurship, not only general startup support.

2. First Customer journey:

The First Customer modules formed the core learning pathway of the programme. Participants explored customer understanding, competition, value proposition, MVP thinking, sales, investor outreach and customer retention. This was essential because many participants needed support to move from having an idea to testing whether it responded to a real market need. The First Customer journey should be retained because it gives the programme its practical market-entry logic.

3. Mentoring and ecosystem connection:

One-to-one support, stakeholder input and connections with actors such as Startup Migrants, ThEx and university startup services helped participants receive tailored feedback and understand the regional support landscape. This was important in Thuringia because many participants were unfamiliar with available services. Mentoring and ecosystem connection should remain non-negotiable because they turn training into concrete pathways for further support.

4. Experiential and participatory learning through Design Thinking:

The Design Thinking Day helped participants work with empathy, user needs, community mapping, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, testing and pitching. This strengthened the practical and human-centred dimensions of the programme. It should be retained because it helps participants test assumptions, improve ideas collaboratively and design solutions that respond to real people and communities.

5. Networking and matchmaking:

The Team Matchmaking Event created space for participants to exchange ideas, identify possible collaborators, understand team formation, and connect with peers and ecosystem actors. This element contributed to confidence, visibility and relationship-building. It should be retained in replication because business matchmaking requires not only knowledge, but also access to people, contacts and opportunities.

Adaptable Elements

1. Module content and sequencing:

In Thuringia, the programme followed a pathway from customer understanding and market validation to MVP development, sales, investor outreach, team matchmaking, design thinking and social entrepreneurship. In other contexts, the sequence can be adjusted according to participants’ readiness, sectors and interests. Optional thematic sessions, such as EU cooperation or placemaking, can be replaced by topics more relevant to the local group, while keeping the core market-entry logic.

2. Programme duration and intensity:

The regional pilot was delivered as a condensed programme over several weeks, combining shorter online modules, a 5-hour matchmaking event and a full Design Thinking Day. Other contexts may require a more intensive boot-camp, a longer mentoring pathway, evening sessions, weekend formats or fewer but longer meetings. Adaptation should consider participants’ availability, motivation, travel distance, work or study commitments and need for follow-up support.



3. Delivery format:

The Business Matchmaking Programme used online workshops, in-person networking and face-to-face interactive sessions at the Social Impulse Hub and Nerly Café. This mixed format can be adapted depending on access needs, geography and group dynamics. Online delivery may improve reach, while in-person formats remain important for trust-building, collaboration and matchmaking. Hybrid options should avoid excluding participants with limited digital access or skills.

4. Language and cultural adaptation:

In Thuringia, English was used to make the programme accessible to migrants, international students and participants who may not yet feel confident in German. In other regions, the language can be adapted through local-language, bilingual or simplified-language delivery. Cultural adaptation should also consider communication styles, confidence levels, legal status, migration experiences and familiarity with local business norms.

5. Type of ecosystem actors involved:

The Thuringian model involved Startup Migrants, ThEx, StarterWerk / Hochschule Schmalkalden, the Social Impulse Hub, trainers, mentors and business actors. In other regions, different organisations may be more relevant, such as migrant associations, women's business networks, chambers of commerce, incubators, municipalities, universities, funding bodies or sector-specific mentors. The key is to ensure that ecosystem partners can provide real access to mentoring, market knowledge, contacts and follow-up opportunities.

6. Matchmaking and thematic focus:

The Team Matchmaking Event and the final thematic sessions were useful spaces for networking, collaboration and social entrepreneurship reflection. However, their format and topic can be adapted to the crowd and participants' interests. For example, one region may focus on creative entrepreneurship, another on women-led businesses, migrant entrepreneurship, digital services, green business, community spaces or access to first customers. The format should remain participatory and opportunity oriented.

4.4 Hungary, Pilot Model

4.4.1 Program Logic and intervention Model

In Impact HUB Hungary, the KATAPULT (6 weeks, autumn 2025): targeted women 18+ with an early-stage idea and no entrepreneurial experience, prioritising parents of young children, job-seekers, and over-50s. Combined 8 workshops (business modelling, marketing, legal/tax, finance) with 5 individual mentoring sessions, expert consultations, and peer learning, in hybrid online/offline format, ending in a pitching event. SZATELLIT (8 weeks, spring 2026): targeted established women entrepreneurs (KATAPULT-type alumni) ready to internationalise. Invitation-only recruitment from the alumni community ensured cohort readiness. Nine hybrid sessions covered market entry, financing, marketing, networking, and leadership, plus a large networking/matchmaking event, culminating in individual internationalisation action plans.

In MGFÜ Hungary, The pilot was implemented between September 2025 and March 2026 and designed as a practical, inclusive entrepreneurship development programme for four target groups: women entrepreneurs, young and aspiring entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs with ADHD or ASD. Based on the specific needs and challenges of each group, separate learning pathways were developed within a common methodological framework. The programme combined 30 hours of structured training with mentoring, practical exercises and peer learning. Content covered self-assessment, business planning, market research, financial literacy, risk management, marketing and networking, enabling participants to develop practical skills and apply them to their own businesses.



4.4.2 Participant journey in TASK4ISI - Impact HUB Hungary

KATAPULT participant journey:

Outreach began with an open call publicised via Impact Hub Budapest's channels, attracting 56 applicants. Selection assessed motivation, idea viability, programme fit, and social/environmental impact potential, narrowing the cohort to 12 women, with priority given to parents of young children, job-seekers, and those over 50. Onboarding took place through a kick-off workshop introducing entrepreneurial mindsets and cohort norms. Skills development followed across eight hybrid workshops covering business modelling, market validation, marketing, legal/tax basics, and financial planning. Mentoring ran in parallel, with each participant paired with a dedicated mentor for five individual sessions plus access to expert consultations (1 occasion - legal, accounting, tax). Networking occurred organically through peer learning and community-building within the cohort and Impact Hub's alumni network. Idea testing culminated in a final pitching event where participants presented their progress for expert and peer feedback. Next-step referrals took the form of alumni membership at Impact Hub Budapest, positioning KATAPULT as a launchpad rather than an endpoint – with several graduates going on to join other, more advanced programmes of Impact Hub Budapest.

SZATELLIT participant journey:

Outreach was invitation-only, with Impact Hub Budapest personally identifying alumni women entrepreneurs already considering international expansion. Selection relied on direct knowledge of participants' readiness and business stage rather than open application, yielding a cohesive cohort of 11. Onboarding occurred via a kick-off session establishing expectations, including a minimum attendance commitment of six of nine sessions. Skills development spanned market entry strategy, research, financing, international marketing, and leadership challenges specific to women entrepreneurs. Coaching and mentoring were embedded throughout via expert-led sessions and trainers with firsthand cross-border experience. Networking and matchmaking peaked at the "Boutique or Empire?" event, bringing together ~60 participants for keynotes, a funding panel, and practical workshops. Idea testing took the form of each entrepreneur developing and presenting a concrete internationalisation action plan. Next-step referrals pointed participants toward regional markets (Austria, Romania, Slovakia) and continued engagement with Impact Hub's alumni and partner networks to execute their growth plans.

Program implementation team (coordinator, trainers, mentors) and external experts

The programmes are coordinated by senior project managers from Impact Hub Budapest, who oversee logistics, communication, and monitoring, while also contributing directly as trainers and mentors. The team brings extensive experience supporting women entrepreneurs, from idea-stage founders to established business owners pursuing internationalisation. Trainers and mentors are selected for their entrepreneurship, business development, and coaching expertise, with proven ability to work with under-represented and early-stage founders (e.g. STRT, Kalangu, FranklinCovey, Onlife, etc.). External practitioners – lawyers, accountants, tax advisors, and experienced women entrepreneurs with cross-border growth experience – contribute through workshops, individual consultations, pitch feedback, and networking events such as "Boutique or Empire?". The implementation team maintains close coordination throughout delivery to adapt content and pacing to participants' evolving needs.



4.4.3 Business Skills Program Overview - IMPACT HUB

KATAPULT was a six-week foundational entrepreneurship programme for women in Hungary with early-stage ideas and no prior business experience. It focused on business modelling, marketing, legal/tax basics, and financial planning, combining workshops, individual mentoring, and expert consultations to build practical skills and confidence for launching a business.

The programme was free, lowering financial barriers, and used a hybrid online/offline format to accommodate participants' schedules and locations. Priority selection favoured women facing compounding barriers – parents of young children, job-seekers, and those over 50 – groups underrepresented in Hungary's start-up ecosystem. Weekly time commitment was kept manageable (5-7 hours), and personalised mentoring addressed individual confidence and knowledge gaps.

Business Skills Program Modules

The **Business Skills programme** is designed for beginners in the field of entrepreneurship and considers the barriers that are characteristic of the target groups. The main topics to be covered during the programme are outlined below. Participants are guided through the process of developing their business or project idea, translating it into a business model, testing it, communicating/marketing it to stakeholders and customers, and building the necessary legal, financial and managerial structures.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Introductions & Kick-off meeting workshop	3h	Introduce core entrepreneurial mindsets and skills; build group cohesion	Sets expectations and establishes a supportive cohort dynamic for the six-week journey
Business Model Canvas workshop	3h	Structure and clarify the business idea using the Business Model Canvas framework	Helps participants identify key value propositions, customers, and resources before investing further effort
Idea validation and market research workshop	4h	Learn methods to gather evidence and test assumptions about the business idea	Reduces the risk of pursuing non-viable ideas by grounding decisions in real market feedback
Marketing - Fundamentals, strategies, and tools 1.	2h	Understand core marketing concepts and positioning principles	Builds the foundation for promoting and positioning the business effectively
Marketing - Fundamentals, strategies, and tools 2.	2h	Apply practical tools for online and offline visibility	Essential for early-stage customer acquisition with limited budgets
Legal, tax, and registration basics of entrepreneurship	2h	Understand the administrative and regulatory steps for starting a business in Hungary	Removes a key knowledge barrier that often discourages first-time entrepreneurs
Basics of financial planning workshops	4h	Estimate costs, pricing, and break-even point	Critical for assessing business viability
Extra events			
Pitching event	5h	Synthesise learning and present business progress to an audience	Builds confidence and accountability through structured feedback from experts and peers
Individual mentoring (5 occasions)	5h	Apply workshop content to one's own specific business	Addresses individual confidence and knowledge



		idea with personalised guidance	gaps that group sessions cannot fully resolve
Consulting (with one expert: accountant, tax advisor, lawyer)	1h	Get direct answers to legal, tax, and accounting questions from specialists	Removes a common practical barrier to formalising a business
Community- building Events			
Matchmaking Programme networking event	4h	Engage with peers, funders, and role models in a live networking setting	Reinforces community, visibility, and access to growth opportunities

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

Mentoring was a cornerstone of KATAPULT, structured as five individual 1:1 sessions per participant running parallel to the eight group workshops, allowing each woman to apply general content to her specific business idea. Each participant was paired with a dedicated mentor – experienced entrepreneurs and business professionals – based on idea fit, enabling tailored guidance on business modelling, market validation, marketing, and financial planning as ideas evolved week to week. This personalised follow-up addressed the deeper barrier identified among participants: lack of confidence rather than knowledge. Mentoring was rated the most valuable element of the programme (4.8/5), with several participants advancing from vague concepts to completed business models, financial plans, and in one case formal business registration. The approach proved highly effective at converting workshop content into individualised progress and building entrepreneurial confidence. A key lesson for replication is ensuring sufficient mentor capacity and well-matched pairing from the outset, as personalised guidance – more than content delivery – was the decisive factor in participants' confidence growth and concrete entrepreneurial movement.

In addition to mentoring, KATAPULT offered each participant a one-hour individual consultation with an expert specialising in law, accounting, or taxation. This provided direct, practical answers to the legal and administrative questions that often deter first-time entrepreneurs from formalising their business – covering topics such as business registration, tax obligations, and contractual basics. Delivered online and scheduled flexibly between late October and mid-November 2025, these consultations complemented the broader curriculum's legal/tax module by allowing participants to address questions specific to their own business idea, removing a key practical barrier identified for women starting their first venture.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

Expected outcomes were anticipated mainly at participant level: increased entrepreneurial knowledge, clarity on business model/idea viability, and – most critically – confidence, given that self-doubt rather than knowledge gaps was the main barrier identified for women in this target group. At ecosystem level, the programme aimed to widen the pipeline of viable women-led businesses and create visible role models. Evaluation used an end-of-program survey (5-point Likert scale) covering indicators such as understanding of entrepreneurship (4.0/5), business model clarity (4.5/5), idea viability confidence (4.75/5), motivation (4.4/5), and networking value (4.4/5), alongside qualitative milestone tracking (business model canvases completed, prototypes built, one formal business registration). The process was coordinated by Impact Hub Budapest's project team immediately after programme completion, combining quantitative ratings with participant narratives to assess attitudinal shift and concrete entrepreneurial outputs.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core Elements of the Model:

1. Inclusive recruitment targeting "missing entrepreneurs"

Open call with criteria-based selection prioritised parents of young children, job-seekers, and women over 50 – groups facing compounding barriers in Hungary's start-up ecosystem. This recruitment design is what produced a cohort of genuinely underrepresented women (12 of 56 applicants), validating the



programme's relevance. Without targeted selection criteria, the programme risks attracting already-confident applicants rather than the intended "missing entrepreneurs."

2. *Combination of training + mentoring + networking*

Eight workshops were paired with five individual mentoring sessions and peer learning. Mentoring was rated the single most valuable element (4.8/5), directly converting general content into personalised progress on each participant's specific idea. This combination is non-negotiable: workshops alone would not have addressed the confidence gap participants identified as their primary barrier.

3. *Experiential and participatory learning methods*

Hands-on exercises (Business Model Canvas, market research, financial planning) culminating in a live pitching event drove concrete outputs – completed canvases, prototypes, one formal business registration. Participatory formats built confidence directly, which passive instruction would not achieve given the target group's main barrier was self-doubt, not knowledge.

4. *Connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem*

Expert consultations (legal, tax, accounting) and Impact Hub alumni membership extended support beyond the six weeks. This embeddedness ensures participants have a continued support pathway and access to mentors after programme completion, preventing post-programme isolation.

Adaptable elements of the program:

1. **Module content and sequencing:** Hungary-specific legal/tax content was used; elsewhere, this module needs full localisation while frameworks like Business Model Canvas remain unchanged. Local regulatory complexity should determine depth.
2. **Programme duration and intensity:** Six weeks at 5-7 hours/week suited Hungarian participants balancing caregiving/job-seeking. Other regions could lengthen or compress depending on local time-poverty norms, without dropping core components.
3. **Delivery format (online/hybrid/in-person):** Hybrid delivery addressed geographic spread and accessibility in Hungary. Regions with weaker digital infrastructure may need more in-person sessions; local connectivity and venue accessibility should guide the balance.
4. **Language and cultural adaptation:** Delivered in Hungarian, addressing local stigma around women's entrepreneurship. Other regions must adapt language and address their own specific cultural barriers (e.g. different social stereotypes about women in business).
5. **Type of ecosystem actors involved:** Hungary drew on local experts and Impact Hub's alumni network; replicators should map equivalent local institutions (chambers, incubators, expert pools) rather than copying named Hungarian partners.

4.4.4 Business Matchmaking Programme Overview - IMPACT HUB

Szatellit was an eight-week internationalisation programme for established women entrepreneurs from Impact Hub Budapest's alumni network. It focused on market entry strategy, financing, international marketing, and leadership, combining expert-led workshops, networking events, and mentoring to help participants build and execute concrete plans for international growth.

Recruitment leveraged an existing trusted alumni relationship, lowering psychological barriers to participation for women already known to the organisation. The hybrid online/offline format preserved flexibility while maintaining community connection. A minimum attendance requirement (6 of 9 sessions) ensured manageable commitment, and sessions on leadership challenges specific to female entrepreneurs directly addressed confidence and role-model gaps identified for this target group.



Business Matchmaking Program Modules

The **Business Matchmaking Programme** provides a hands-on, modular learning experience tailored to the needs of female entrepreneurs who have a consolidated business in Hungary, and would like to start selling internationally. The modules discussed the different aspects and typical challenges of internationalization. The structure provided ample space for the participants to learn from their peers' experience, and to hear real-life examples from guest entrepreneurs who are already selling on international markets. The matchmaking event focused on internationalisation dilemmas and provided the opportunity for the participants to enter the local entrepreneurship ecosystem. .

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Kick-off & Introductions	2h	Establish cohort relationships and clarify programme expectations	Sets the foundation for engagement and commitment across the eight-week programme
International Market Entry Strategies	4h	Learn frameworks for choosing growth models and market entry approaches	Enables informed, strategic decisions about how and where to expand
Market Research on International Markets	4h	Develop skills in market research and country selection	Reduces risk when expanding into unfamiliar international markets
Financing internationalization	2h	Map available financing options for cross-border growth	Addresses a key practical barrier to scaling internationally
International Marketing & Sales	4h	Build practical customer acquisition and digital marketing skills for international audiences	Supports effective market entry and sales execution abroad
International Networking	3h	Build relationship-building skills and international contacts	Addresses a known networking gap that limits women entrepreneurs' cross-border opportunities
Leadership Challenges for Female Entrepreneurs	4h	Identify and address leadership and mindset challenges specific to scaling internationally	Tackles confidence barriers that persist even among experienced women entrepreneurs
Extra events			
Conference Day and Networking event on International Growth	4h	Engage with peers, funders, and role models in a live networking setting	Reinforces community, visibility, and access to growth opportunities
Closing - Action Plan Presentations	3h	Consolidate learning into a concrete, individualised internationalisation action plan	Translates knowledge into measurable, actionable next steps

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

Unlike KATAPULT, Szatellit did not include a formal individual mentoring component. Instead, personalised support was embedded directly within the nine group workshops, where trainers and expert practitioners made space for participants' specific questions and tailored guidance throughout each session. This approach



reflected the profile of the target group: established entrepreneurs who needed less foundational hand-holding and more targeted, just-in-time input on their own internationalisation challenges. Themes addressed individually within sessions included market selection, financing options, customer acquisition, and leadership challenges, with trainers – many with firsthand cross-border business experience – adapting examples and advice to each participant's sector and growth stage. The cohesive, invitation-only cohort and small group size (11 participants) made this workshop-embedded approach effective, allowing genuine tailoring without the resource intensity of formal mentoring. The main lesson for replication is that for more advanced entrepreneurs, in-session personalisation can substitute for dedicated mentoring, provided group size remains small and trainers have sufficient practical expertise to respond flexibly to diverse participant needs.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

Expected outcomes targeted established women entrepreneurs' internationalisation readiness: strategic clarity, new skills for market entry, and confidence in pursuing growth. At ecosystem level, the goal was a strengthened pipeline of internationally oriented women-led businesses and stronger links to institutional support (e.g. Magnet Bank, National Innovation Agency). Evaluation relied on an end-of-program survey completed by all 11 participants (100% rated 4-5/5 overall satisfaction), assessing dimensions such as skills/knowledge gained, market-reach understanding, confidence, and risk-taking openness, complemented by qualitative tracking of concrete strategic outputs (market entry plans, competitor analyses, prospect databases, commercial collaborations initiated within the cohort). Conducted by the Impact Hub Budapest team at programme close, the evaluation combined quantitative satisfaction metrics with documented behavioural/strategic milestones to confirm internationalisation readiness gains.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core elements of the programme:

- 1. Inclusive recruitment targeting "missing entrepreneurs"**
Invitation-only outreach within Impact Hub's alumni network, based on direct knowledge of participants' readiness for internationalisation, ensured a cohesive cohort of women genuinely positioned to benefit. This trust-based recruitment is what generated high engagement (100% rated satisfaction 4-5/5) and should be retained, as cold open calls would likely produce a less-ready cohort for this advanced-stage intervention.
- 2. Combination of training + personalised support + networking/matchmaking**
Nine workshops with embedded in-session personalisation and the large "Boutique or Empire?" networking event together drove both skills gains and concrete commercial collaborations among participants. Networking was repeatedly cited as one of the most valuable elements; removing it would significantly weaken the programme's value for entrepreneurs whose key gap is access to international networks, not basic knowledge.
- 3. Experiential and participatory learning methods**
Action-plan development, case studies, and guest entrepreneur sessions translated theory into individualised internationalisation strategies (market entry plans, competitor analyses, prospect databases). This participatory approach is foundational, as it produced measurable strategic outputs that passive instruction would not.
- 4. Connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem**
Links to Magnet Bank's women's community and National Innovation Agency programmes (XPAND, Enterprise Horizon) extended participants' access to financing and institutional support beyond the



programme. This ecosystem connection is essential to ensure internationalisation momentum continues after the eight weeks end.

Adaptable elements of the program:

1. **Module content and sequencing:** Hungary-specific market focus (Austria, Romania, Slovakia) was used; other regions should substitute relevant neighbouring/target markets while retaining core frameworks (AARRR, MVP testing, country selection matrices).
2. **Programme duration and intensity:** Eight weeks/nine sessions suited established entrepreneurs balancing active businesses. Duration could be adjusted based on local entrepreneurs' capacity, without dropping core modules.
3. **Delivery format (online/hybrid/in-person):** Hybrid format enabled participation from outside Budapest; regions with different geographic or digital realities should recalibrate the online/offline balance accordingly.
4. **Language and cultural adaptation:** Delivered in Hungarian with regionally specific cross-border market content; other regions must adapt language and target-market relevance to their own geographic context.
5. **Type of ecosystem actors involved:** Hungary leveraged banks and national innovation agencies already present at the networking event; replicators should identify and engage their own equivalent financial and institutional partners.

4.4.5 Participant journey in TASK4ISI - MGFÜ Hungary

The pilots followed a structured pathway from outreach and participant selection to skills development and further business development. MGFÜ and its partners reached women entrepreneurs, young and aspiring entrepreneurs, and neurodivergent entrepreneurs through activities in Budapest, Kaposvár and Soly. Following needs assessment and onboarding, participants began with introductions, community building and self-assessment. Skills development combined 30 hours of training, practical exercises and peer learning, covering business planning, market research, financial literacy, risk management, marketing and networking. For entrepreneurs with ADHD and ASD, more flexible pilot pathways were implemented, with a less rigid structure and weekly online sessions adapted to participants' individual pace, needs and learning preferences. Coaching and mentoring supported the practical application of knowledge, while peer exchange and collaborative work strengthened networking. Participants developed and tested their ideas through practical business tools, market analysis, business planning and pitch sessions, leading to concrete next steps for business development.

Program implementation team (coordinator, trainers, mentors) and external experts

The pilots was coordinated and implemented by the Hungarian Economic Development Agency (MGFÜ), with a team of experienced trainers, mentors and external partners. Dr. Anikó Soltész, an expert in women's entrepreneurship, business mentoring and entrepreneurship coaching, contributed to the training and mentoring activities. Mariann Hornyák delivered the neurodivergent pilot, combining professional expertise with lived experience as a neurodivergent entrepreneur. SEED Foundation staff, mentors and professionals, together with the Ex Ante office, supported the women's entrepreneurship and neurodivergent pilot activities. Their combined expertise ensured tailored, practical and supportive delivery.

4.4.6 Business Skills Program Overview - MGFÜ Hungary

The Business Skills Programme strengthened the entrepreneurial skills and business capacity of women entrepreneurs, young and aspiring entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs with ADHD or ASD. It offered tailored



training, mentoring, practical exercises and peer learning, covering business planning, finance, marketing, market research, networking and other practical business skills.

The Business Skills Programme strengthened the entrepreneurial skills and business capacity of women entrepreneurs, young and aspiring entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs with ADHD or ASD. It offered tailored training, mentoring, practical exercises and peer learning, covering business planning, finance, marketing, market research, networking and other practical business skills.

Business Skills Program Modules

The **Business Skills programme** is designed for beginners in the field of entrepreneurship and considers the barriers that are characteristic of the target groups. The main topics to be covered during the programme are outlined below. Participants will be guided through the process of developing their business or project idea, translating it into a business model, testing it, communicating/marketing it to stakeholders and customers, and building the necessary legal, financial and managerial structures

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Self-awareness and entrepreneurial strengths	2h	To help participants identify their personal strengths, characteristics, entrepreneurial competences and individual working styles, and understand how these can support their business activities	ISIHUB identified the importance of building confidence and understanding individual strengths. Starting from self-assessment provided a strong foundation for participants to recognise their entrepreneurial potential and approach business challenges more consciously
Business Model Development	2h	To introduce the key elements of a business model and support participants in structuring their business ideas, including key activities, resources, partners, customer relationships, channels, costs and revenue streams	Business planning was a central need identified among participants. Working with the Business Model Canvas helped participants translate their ideas into a structured model and understand how different elements of their business are connected
Customer identification and buyer personas	3h	To help participants identify their target customers, understand customer needs and develop customer profiles relevant to their products or services	Understanding customers was essential for participants developing or strengthening their businesses. The module supported a more customer-oriented approach and helped participants make better-informed decisions about their offer and communication
Market Research and market analysis	3h	To develop participants ability to investigate markets, identify opportunities, understand competitors and use market information when making business decisions	Participants needed practical tools to assess whether their ideas and offers respond to real market needs. Market research enabled them to test assumptions and make their business planning more evidence-based



Value proposition and business offer	3h	To help participants clarify the value their business creates, identify customer needs and define how their products or services address those needs	Developing a clear value proposition helped participants move from a general business idea towards a more concrete and market-oriented offer, strengthening both strategic thinking and communication skills
Financial literacy and financial planning	3h	To strengthen participants understanding of financial planning, costs, revenues, financial decisions and the basic financial processes required to operate a business	Financial planning was identified by participants as one of the most valuable areas of the programme. Strengthening financial literacy supported more conscious decision-making and contributed to the sustainability and resilience of participants businesses
Risk and crisis management	3h	To help participants identify business risks, anticipate potential challenges and develop approaches for managing crises and changes affecting their businesses	Participants identified everyday business challenges and uncertainty as important barriers. The module provided practical approaches for responding to change and strengthened participants ability to manage risks more consciously
Marketing and communication	3h	To develop participants understanding of marketing, business communication and customer-oriented approaches to promoting their products or services	Marketing and communication skills were important for strengthening business visibility and customer relationships. The practical approach helped participants connect their business offer with appropriate communication and marketing activities
Strategic planning and business management	3h	To develop participants ability to understand the key processes of running a business, set priorities and make strategic and operational decisions	The programme aimed to equip participants with knowledge they could independently apply in the day-to-day management and development of their businesses. Strategic planning helped connect individual business activities with longer-term development goals
Individual business development	2h	To integrate the knowledge and tools acquired during the programme into an individual business plan and identify practical actions for business development	The programme progressively moved from self-assessment and understanding business fundamentals towards concrete individual business planning. This ensured that learning was translated into practical actions relevant to each participant's own business
Pitching and peer feedback	3h	To develop participants ability to present their business ideas clearly and confidently and to use feedback to improve their ideas and business models	Pitching provided an opportunity to test ideas in practice, strengthen presentation skills and receive feedback from peers. It also supported confidence-building and collaborative problem-solving
Extra events			



Networking and partnership event	4h	To strengthen participants networking competences and ability to establish professional relationships, partnerships and connections within the entrepreneurial ecosystem	Networking emerged as one of the areas participants found most challenging. Peer exchange, group work and networking activities helped participants build confidence, exchange experiences and recognise the value of cooperation rather than competition
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Training pathway for neurodivergent entrepreneurs (ADHD and ASD)

The training pathway for entrepreneurs with ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was designed as a flexible, fully online programme responding to the specific needs, learning preferences and pace of neurodivergent participants. The programme started with a mini-pilot in September 2025 and the main pilot continued from February 2026, with weekly online sessions of approximately six hours. Participants completed more than 30 hours of learning, with additional sessions organised in response to their needs and requests.

Self-awareness and entrepreneurial strengths formed the starting point of the programme. Participants explored their individual characteristics, strengths, working styles and challenges, with the aim of recognising characteristics that had previously been perceived as disadvantages as potential entrepreneurial strengths. This supported greater self-awareness, confidence and more conscious decision-making.

The programme then focused on **business management and practical business development**. Participants worked on understanding the key processes shaping their businesses and developed practical knowledge in areas such as market research, financial decision-making, business planning and strategic thinking. The emphasis was on tools and approaches that could be directly applied to their own businesses.

Networking and peer learning were integrated throughout the programme. Participants exchanged experiences, discussed common challenges, provided feedback and developed ideas together. As networking and business management were identified as major challenges, particular attention was given to creating a supportive environment where participants could build trust and professional connections.

A key element was **individual mentoring and personalised support**. The mentor helped participants apply the training content to their own entrepreneurial situations and provided a trusted space for discussing individual challenges. The mentor's own lived experience as a neurodivergent professional made the guidance particularly authentic and relatable.

The programme concluded by connecting the acquired knowledge to **individual business planning and future development**. Participants gradually moved from self-assessment and understanding their strengths towards developing practical business plans and identifying ways to strengthen the sustainability and resilience of their businesses.

The flexible structure was particularly important for this target group. Unlike the more intensive face-to-face programmes, the neurodivergent pathway was delivered through weekly online sessions, allowing participants time between sessions to reflect, complete individual assignments and apply new knowledge in practice. The programme therefore adapted not only its content, but also its pace, format and learning environment to the specific needs of participants with ADHD and ASD.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

The programme was expected to strengthen participants' entrepreneurial knowledge, confidence and practical business management skills, while improving their ability to develop business ideas, make informed financial decisions, network and engage more actively in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. At organisational



level, the pilot was expected to generate evidence on the effectiveness of tailored support for underrepresented target groups and provide lessons for future programme design.

Results were assessed through participant feedback and evaluation questionnaires, monitoring of participation and engagement, and observation by trainers and mentors. Key criteria included satisfaction with the content and delivery, perceived practical relevance, increased confidence, knowledge gained, ability to apply tools to participants' own businesses, networking outcomes and progress in business planning. Feedback was collected during and after the sessions, with trainers and mentors continuously observing engagement and progress. Final reflections also provided qualitative evidence on the programme's relevance, added value and areas for improvement.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core elements of the programme:

- 1. Inclusive recruitment targeting “missing entrepreneurs”**
The model should actively reach underrepresented and “missing” entrepreneurs whose needs may not be addressed by mainstream business support. In the Hungarian pilot, separate pathways were developed for women, young/aspiring and neurodivergent entrepreneurs. Tailored recruitment and needs assessment helped ensure that support reached participants facing specific barriers.
- 2. Training + mentoring + networking**
The combination should remain foundational. Training provided practical knowledge, mentoring supported its application to individual businesses, while networking and peer learning strengthened confidence and ecosystem connections. Participants identified networking and business management as key challenges, making this integrated approach essential.
- 3. Experiential and participatory learning**
Practical exercises, self-assessment, business planning, market research, group work, peer feedback and pitch activities enabled participants to apply knowledge directly. This supported confidence, problem-solving and the transfer of learning into concrete business actions.
- 4. Connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem**
The model should connect participants with mentors, peers, partner organisations and wider business networks. In the pilot, collaboration with MGFÜ, SEED Foundation and Ex Ante, together with activities across several locations, helped embed the programme in the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem and supported knowledge sharing beyond the programme.

Adaptable Elements

- 1. Module content and sequencing**
The Hungarian pilot used a common methodological framework but adapted content to the needs of each target group. Other regions can adjust topics, sequencing and emphasis according to identified business challenges, participant experience and local market conditions, while retaining a practical and competence-based approach.
- 2. Programme duration and intensity**
The programme provided 30 hours of training, while the neurodivergent pathway used weekly sessions and additional meetings based on participant needs. Duration and intensity can therefore be adjusted according to participants' availability, learning pace and support needs, without reducing opportunities for practice, mentoring and reflection.
- 3. Delivery format**
Women and young/aspiring entrepreneurs mainly participated in intensive face-to-face sessions, while ADHD and ASD entrepreneurs were supported through flexible online delivery. Other regions can choose online, hybrid or in-person formats based on accessibility, geography, digital readiness and target-group preferences, ensuring that the format does not create new participation barriers.



4. Language, cultural and regulatory adaptation

The methodology can be adapted to local language, entrepreneurial culture, legal, taxation and economic conditions. While core business development tools remain transferable, local examples, terminology, regulations and support opportunities should be incorporated to ensure relevance and practical applicability.

5. Local ecosystem and partnerships

The Hungarian pilot involved MGFÜ and partner organisations such as SEED Foundation and Ex Ante. Replication should identify locally relevant business support organisations, mentors, educational institutions and other ecosystem actors. The partnership structure can vary according to the regional ecosystem, while maintaining access to relevant expertise, networks and referral opportunities.

4.4.7 Business Matchmaking Programme Overview - MGFÜ Hungary

The Business Matchmaking Programme connected entrepreneurs with peers, mentors and relevant ecosystem actors to strengthen networking, cooperation and business development. It supported participants in sharing experiences, exploring potential partnerships and applying newly acquired knowledge through practical interaction and peer learning.

Business Matchmaking Program Modules

The programme used a flexible combination of online and in-person formats to respond to different participant needs. Neurodivergent entrepreneurs were supported through accessible online sessions, while women and young/aspiring entrepreneurs participated mainly in face-to-face activities. Tailored learning pathways, individual mentoring, peer support and needs-based adjustments helped reduce participation barriers and create an inclusive environment.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
<i>Understanding entrepreneurial strengths and needs</i>	<i>4h</i>	<i>To help participants identify their personal strengths, entrepreneurial competences, working styles and development needs, and understand how these influence their entrepreneurial journey</i>	<i>Understanding individual strengths and barriers was an important starting point for the programme. It helped participants build confidence, recognise their entrepreneurial potential and identify areas where further support or development was needed</i>
<i>Business model development</i>	<i>3h</i>	<i>To introduce the fundamental elements of a business model and enable participants to structure and develop their own business ideas using practical business development tools</i>	<i>Participants often had limited prior business knowledge. Working systematically on their business model helped them understand how different elements of a business are connected and turn an idea into a more structured and viable concept</i>
<i>Customer and market understanding</i>	<i>3h</i>	<i>To develop participants ability to identify customers, understand their needs, analyse markets and use customer and</i>	<i>Understanding customers and the market is essential for developing relevant products and services. Market research</i>



		<i>market information when making business decisions</i>	<i>and customer identification enabled participants to test their assumptions and make their business ideas more responsive to real market needs</i>
<i>Marketing and communication</i>	<i>3h</i>	<i>To strengthen participants understanding of marketing and business communication and enable them to communicate their value to potential customers and partners</i>	<i>Marketing and communication were identified as important elements of business development. Practical work in this area helped participants become more confident in presenting their businesses and communicating their offer to relevant audiences</i>
<i>Financial literacy and planning</i>	<i>3h</i>	<i>To develop participants basic financial literacy and their ability to understand costs, revenues, financial decisions and the financial implications of running a business</i>	<i>Financial planning was identified by participants as one of the most valuable areas of the programme. Strengthening financial literacy supported more conscious decision-making and helped participants assess the sustainability of their business activities</i>
<i>Risk and crisis management</i>	<i>3h</i>	<i>To help participants identify potential business risks, understand common challenges and develop practical approaches to managing changes and crisis situations</i>	<i>Entrepreneurs face uncertainty and changing business conditions. Addressing crisis management and risk helped participants become better prepared for challenges and strengthened the resilience of their businesses</i>
<i>Networking and business relationships</i>	<i>3h</i>	<i>To develop participants networking competences and their ability to build professional relationships, exchange experiences and identify opportunities for cooperation</i>	<i>Networking and business management were identified as major challenges by participants. Peer exchange and collaborative learning created opportunities to build confidence, share practical experiences and become more actively connected to the entrepreneurial ecosystem</i>
<i>Business planning and strategic thinking</i>	<i>4h</i>	<i>To enable participants to integrate the knowledge and tools acquired throughout the programme into an individual business plan and develop a</i>	<i>The programme gradually moved participants from self-assessment and understanding the fundamentals of entrepreneurship towards</i>



		<i>more structured approach to business development</i>	<i>concrete business planning. This helped translate learning into practical actions relevant to their own businesses or entrepreneurial ideas</i>
<i>Pitching and peer feedback</i>	<i>4h</i>	<i>To strengthen participants presentation skills and their ability to clearly communicate a business idea, while learning to receive and use constructive feedback</i>	<i>Pitching provided an opportunity to put learning into practice and test business ideas in front of others. Peer feedback encouraged reflection, joint problem-solving and idea development, while also strengthening participants confidence in presenting their businesses</i>
Extra events			
Networking event	4h	<i>To strengthen participants networking and communication skills, while creating opportunities to meet peers in similar entrepreneurial situations, exchange experiences, build meaningful professional connections, and identify potential partners, mentors and opportunities for cooperation</i>	<i>The networking event provided a safe and practical environment where participants could meet others facing similar entrepreneurial challenges. Peer exchange helped reduce the sense of isolation, build confidence and encourage mutual support, while the wider networking opportunities connected participants to potential partners and the local entrepreneurial ecosystem</i>

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

Mentoring provided personalised support alongside the practical training and networking activities. Participants received guidance tailored to their individual entrepreneurial situation, with a focus on business development, financial planning, networking, market understanding and overcoming barriers to entrepreneurship. Mentors supported participants in translating newly acquired knowledge into practical steps and helped strengthen their confidence in developing their ideas. The combination of expert guidance, peer learning and practical exercises enabled participants to reflect on their challenges and identify relevant next steps. The experience demonstrated the value of personalised support for underrepresented entrepreneurs and highlights the importance of flexible mentoring approaches that can be adapted to different target groups and levels of entrepreneurial experience.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

The learning outcomes for participants include the ability to:

- Build confidence in communicating and discussing their business ideas;
- Identify and develop relevant professional relationships;
- Exchange experiences with peers facing similar entrepreneurial challenges;
- Recognise potential cooperation, partnership and networking opportunities;
- Use networking and communication skills in real entrepreneurial settings;
- Identify relevant support, knowledge and resources within the local entrepreneurial ecosystem;



- Translate ideas and newly acquired knowledge into concrete next steps for business development.

Learning outcomes were assessed through:

- Participant feedback and evaluation questionnaires;
- Observation of participation, engagement and interaction during activities;
- Peer exchange and feedback during collaborative activities;
- Participants' reflections on the relevance and practical usefulness of the programme;
- Monitoring of networking, knowledge-sharing and cooperation opportunities emerging during the programme.

This approach assessed not only knowledge gained, but also participants confidence, engagement, ability to build meaningful connections and readiness to take further entrepreneurial steps.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core elements of the programme:

1. Inclusive recruitment targeting “missing entrepreneurs”

The model should actively engage underrepresented entrepreneurs who may not be reached by mainstream support. In the regional pilot, particular attention was given to participants facing barriers to entrepreneurship and to creating opportunities for people in similar situations to connect. Inclusive outreach is foundational because it ensures that support reaches those who can benefit most from tailored entrepreneurial development.

2. Training + mentoring + networking

The combination of practical learning, personalised support and networking should remain a core element. Training develops entrepreneurial competences, mentoring helps participants apply knowledge to their own situations, while networking creates opportunities for peer exchange and cooperation. These elements support both individual development and ecosystem engagement.

3. Experiential and participatory learning

Participants should learn through practical exercises, discussion, peer exchange, feedback and real interaction rather than through theory alone. This approach increases engagement, confidence and the ability to translate knowledge into concrete entrepreneurial actions, making it a foundational part of the model.

4. Connection to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem

The programme should connect participants with peers, mentors, business support organisations and other relevant ecosystem actors. These connections help participants identify resources, cooperation opportunities and potential next steps. Maintaining this ecosystem dimension is essential for ensuring that programme benefits extend beyond the training itself.

Adaptable Elements:

1. Module content and sequencing

Content and sequencing should respond to locally identified needs, participant experience and the characteristics of the target group. Modules can therefore be reordered or adjusted while maintaining the overall focus on practical entrepreneurial competences, networking and progression towards concrete business opportunities.

2. Programme duration and intensity

The length and intensity can be adapted to participants' availability, prior knowledge and support needs. Shorter or longer formats may be appropriate in different regions, provided sufficient time remains for practical application, interaction, networking and personalised support.

3. Delivery format

The programme can be delivered in-person, online or in a hybrid format. The choice should reflect accessibility, geography, digital readiness and participant preferences. Any format should preserve meaningful interaction and opportunities for peer exchange and networking.



4. Language and cultural adaptation

Communication, examples and learning materials should be adapted to the local language, entrepreneurial culture and specific characteristics of the target group. Local adaptation should improve relevance without changing the inclusive and participatory principles of the model.

5. Local ecosystem and partnerships

The types of organisations involved can vary according to the regional ecosystem. Local business support organisations, mentors, NGOs, educational institutions and other relevant actors can fulfil different roles. The essential requirement is that participants have meaningful access to relevant networks, expertise and opportunities for further support.

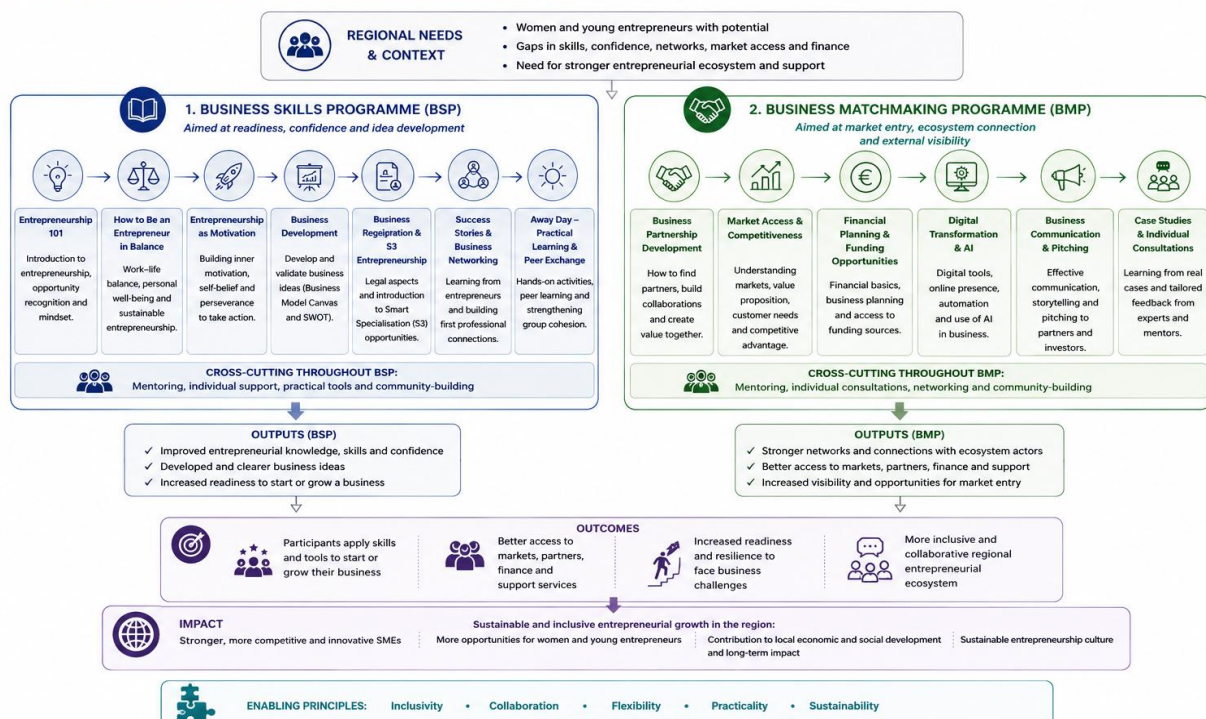
4.5 Split, Croatia Pilot Model

4.5.1 Program Logic and intervention Model

The Split ISIHUB model follows a sequential intervention logic that begins with identifying regional needs, barriers, and priority target groups. The Business Skills Programme (BSP) builds entrepreneurial readiness by strengthening participants' knowledge, confidence, resilience, and business ideas through practical learning and mentoring. The Business Matchmaking Programme (BMP) builds on this foundation by connecting participants with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, improving market access, visibility, collaboration opportunities, and access to business support. Together, the two programmes form a complementary pathway that transforms entrepreneurial potential into sustainable entrepreneurial opportunities.

Figure 1. Overall Intervention Logic of the Split ISIHUB Model

From regional needs to inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial impact





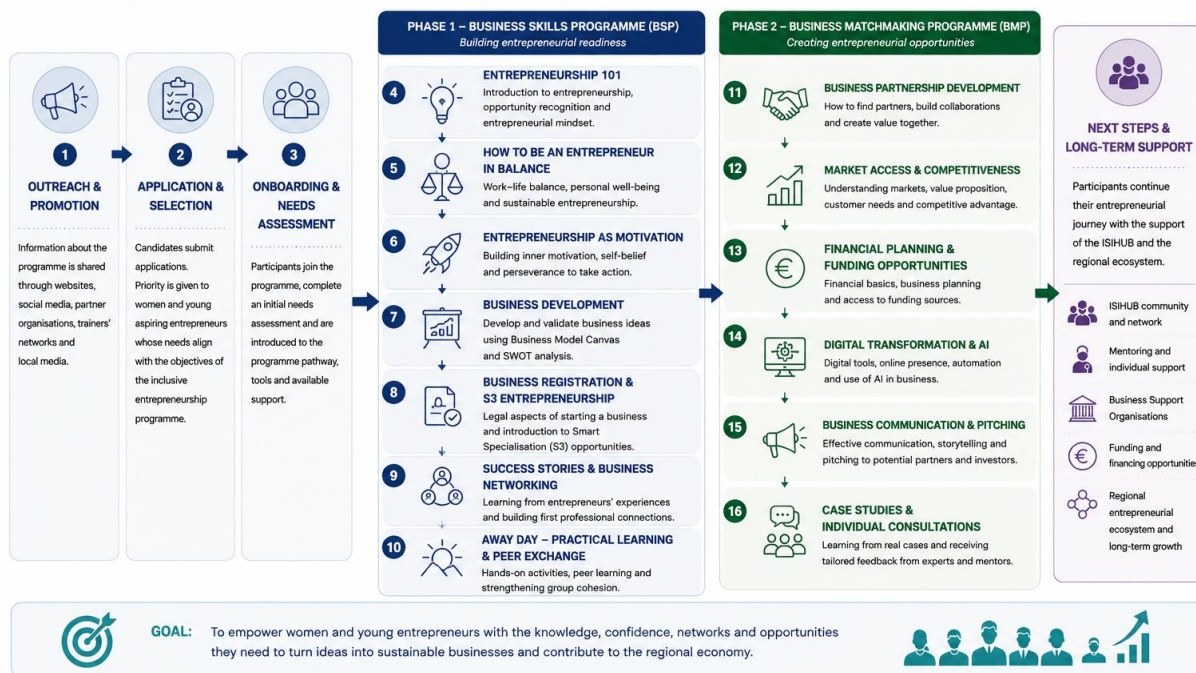
4.5.2 Participant journey in TASK4ISI

The Business Matchmaking Programme was designed to connect participants' business ideas and entrepreneurial ambitions with the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem. Building on the knowledge, skills, and confidence developed through the BSP, the programme focused on networking, mentoring, collaboration, market exposure, and ecosystem engagement. Participants were connected with entrepreneurs, business support organisations, experts, mentors, and potential partners, enabling them to expand professional networks, increase visibility, explore business opportunities, and translate entrepreneurial readiness into market-oriented activities.

The Business Skills Programme follows a progressive learning pathway in which participants first develop awareness of entrepreneurship and their own entrepreneurial potential, then acquire practical business knowledge and tools, strengthen confidence and resilience, build professional relationships through mentoring and networking, and finally apply their learning to concrete business ideas. This sequential approach transforms entrepreneurial interest into entrepreneurial readiness, providing a strong foundation for continued participation in the Business Matchmaking Programme and the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Figure 2. Participant Journey in TASK4ISI

From learning and confidence to opportunities and long-term support



Program implementation team (coordinator, trainers, mentors) and external experts

The TASK4ISI pilot programmes in Split-Dalmatia County were jointly implemented and coordinated by RERA S.D. and CEDRA Split through ISIHUB Split. The implementation team included project coordinators, trainers, mentors, and external experts with extensive experience in entrepreneurship development, business planning, social innovation, mentoring, and adult education. Additional support was provided by ecosystem stakeholders, including business support organisations, entrepreneurs, and development agencies, who contributed through training sessions, mentoring, networking activities, and business matchmaking events. Continuous cooperation among partners ensured quality delivery and responsiveness to participants' needs.



4.5.3 Business Skills Program Overview

The programme promoted equal participation through targeted outreach, free participation, and accessible training delivered at Technology Park Split. Women and young entrepreneurs received tailored learning modules alongside common entrepreneurship training, supported by mentoring, coaching, networking, and practical learning methods that responded to their specific needs and barriers.

The Business Skills Programme strengthened the entrepreneurial capacity of women and young entrepreneurs through practical business training, tailored group-specific modules, mentoring, networking, and experiential learning. Combining common entrepreneurship topics with targeted support, the programme developed business competences, confidence, resilience, and readiness to start or grow a business.

Business Skills Program Modules

The Business Skills Programme was implemented as a practical and participatory training pathway for women and young entrepreneurs. It combined introductory entrepreneurship training, tailored group-specific modules, business development tools, legal and funding guidance, success stories, networking, and a final practical Away Day. The programme used presentations, group and individual work, mentoring, coaching, peer exchange, and practical exercises to support participants in developing entrepreneurial confidence and concrete business ideas.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Entrepreneurship 101 - Introduction to Entrepreneurship	3 hours	Introduce participants to the programme, build trust, encourage team building, and create a safe environment for sharing business ideas.	This module established the foundations for active participation. It helped participants feel comfortable, build peer trust, and enter the programme with a shared understanding of its purpose.
How to Be an Entrepreneur in Balance	3 hours	Support mainly women entrepreneurs in managing stress, maintaining focus, and preventing burnout through practical self-management and NLP tools.	Many women face pressure from balancing professional and family responsibilities. This module addressed personal resilience as an important condition for sustainable entrepreneurial engagement.
Entrepreneurship as Motivation	3 hours	Help young participants strengthen decision-making, time management, process organisation, idea development, and action planning.	Young entrepreneurs often need practical support to transform ideas into concrete steps. This module helped them organise priorities and connect short-term actions with long-term goals.
Business Development	3 hours	Use of SWOT Analysis and Business Model Canvas to develop,	This was one of the key practical modules. It helped participants move from general



		structure, present, and refine participants' business ideas.	ideas to clearer business models, including customers, marketing, partnerships, and financial planning.
Business Registration + S3 Entrepreneurship	3 hours	Introduce legal forms of business, administrative requirements, independent research skills, support systems, innovation ecosystems, mentorship, and funding opportunities within the S3 framework.	Legal and administrative uncertainty is a common barrier for new entrepreneurs. This module reduced uncertainty and helped participants understand how to access support and funding.
Success Stories and Business Networking	3 hours	Present real entrepreneurial experiences related to starting a business, securing funding, overcoming challenges, mentorship, and developing entrepreneurial skills.	Role models and peer discussion helped participants see entrepreneurship as realistic and achievable. The networking element also strengthened confidence and ecosystem connection.
From Doubt to Motivation	3 hours	Support women in identifying internal obstacles such as self-doubt, fear of failure, fluctuating motivation, and imposter syndrome.	Women entrepreneurs frequently face structural and social barriers. The module provides targeted support to strengthen confidence, expand professional networks, and encourage long-term entrepreneurial engagement.
Mental Health and Coaching	3 hours	Help young participants understand where they may need support, distinguish between mentors and coaches, and identify local and international support systems.	This module encouraged young participants to seek support early and understand that entrepreneurship requires both technical knowledge and personal resilience.
Away Day - One Day Practical Camp	8 hours	Further develop business and marketing skills in an inspiring environment, encourage peer exchange, coaching, networking, and celebrate programme completion.	The Away Day consolidated the learning process. It strengthened relationships among participants, enabled practical application of knowledge, and supported motivation for continued entrepreneurial development.



Expected Results and Evaluation Process

The Business Skills Programme was expected to strengthen participants' entrepreneurial knowledge, practical business skills, confidence, and readiness to develop sustainable business ideas. Particular emphasis was placed on increasing entrepreneurial motivation, expanding professional networks, and improving participants' understanding of available business support services and funding opportunities.

The programme was evaluated through continuous observation of participants' engagement, interactive discussions, practical exercises, mentoring sessions, and individual learning portfolios completed at the end of the programme. Rather than applying a formal quantitative survey, the evaluation focused on participants' self-reflection regarding their learning experience and perceived progress.

Feedback collected through the individual portfolios indicated a high level of participant satisfaction. Participants reported that they had acquired valuable entrepreneurial knowledge and practical skills, increased their confidence in developing business ideas, established new professional contacts and friendships, and highly appreciated the support provided by trainers and mentors. Many also expressed their intention to maintain contact with mentors and continue collaborating with fellow participants and organisations within the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

Core Elements of the Model:

The Business Skills Programme is built around a set of core elements that proved essential to its successful implementation in Split-Dalmatia County. The model combines needs-based programme design, shared and target-group specific learning, practical business development tools, personal resilience, mentoring, and strong links with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. While individual training topics may be adapted to local needs, these core principles should be preserved to ensure programme quality, inclusion, and long-term impact.

Core Elements	Why it was important in the Split pilot	Why it should remain a core element in future replication
Needs-based programme design	The programme was developed following a regional needs assessment, identifying women and young entrepreneurs as priority target groups and tailoring the content to their specific barriers and opportunities.	Every region should begin with a thorough analysis of the needs of its target groups. Training should always respond to identified regional needs - without a needs-driven approach, the programme risks delivering generic content that does not address local barriers or maximise impact.
Combination of common and target-group specific modules	Participants attended shared entrepreneurship modules while women and young entrepreneurs also received tailored sessions addressing their specific challenges and development needs.	A shared learning environment promotes networking, while dedicated modules ensure that the programme remains relevant and inclusive for different target groups.
Experiential learning and practical tools	Participants worked with Design Thinking, SWOT Analysis, the Business Model Canvas, practical assignments, coaching, and	Practical application builds confidence and enables participants to transform ideas into realistic business opportunities.



	business idea development rather than relying solely on lectures.	
Inclusive recruitment of target groups	Recruitment focused on women and young entrepreneurs identified as the priority "missing entrepreneurs" in Split-Dalmatia County. Targeted outreach through ecosystem partners helped reach participants who might otherwise have limited access to entrepreneurial support.	The programme should always prioritise entrepreneurs facing structural barriers. Although target groups may differ between regions, recruitment should remain evidence-based, transparent, and inclusive to ensure equal access to opportunities.
Integrated learning model (training, mentoring and networking)	The combination of interactive training, mentoring, practical exercises, and networking enabled participants to acquire knowledge while simultaneously building confidence, professional relationships, and access to support services. This holistic approach was one of the programme's greatest strengths.	Training alone is rarely sufficient. Combining learning with mentoring and networking creates lasting value, increases participant motivation, and strengthens links with the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This integrated approach should remain a non-negotiable feature of the model.
Experiential and participatory learning methods	Workshops, group work, Design Thinking, Business Model Canvas, mentoring, peer learning, and the Away Day encouraged participants to actively apply newly acquired knowledge rather than simply receive theoretical information.	Practical and participatory learning increases engagement, confidence, and knowledge retention. While activities may be adapted, the principle of learning through experience should always be preserved.
Personal development and resilience	The programme addressed motivation, stress management, work-life balance, mental health, coaching, and overcoming self-doubt alongside business skills.	Inclusive entrepreneurship requires supporting the entrepreneur as a person, not only developing technical business competences.
Mentoring, networking and role models	Trainers, mentors, successful entrepreneurs, and peer learning created opportunities for individual guidance, inspiration, and	Access to mentors, role models, and entrepreneurial networks significantly improves participants' confidence, motivation, and long-term engagement.



	professional networking throughout the programme.	
Practical ecosystem immersion	The programme was delivered within the Technology Park Split and concluded with the Away Day, allowing participants to experience entrepreneurial support structures, networking, and collaborative learning in practice.	Entrepreneurship is best learned within a supportive ecosystem. Linking participants with local institutions and stakeholders strengthens sustainability beyond the training itself.

Adaptable Elements

Adaptable Element	Why it was important	How it can be adapted
Target groups	The Split pilot focused on women and young entrepreneurs identified through the regional needs assessment as priority "missing entrepreneurs".	Other regions should identify their own priority target groups based on local evidence and stakeholder consultations. While target groups may change, the programme should always remain inclusive and tailored to participants' specific needs.
Programme modules	The BSP combined common entrepreneurship modules with dedicated sessions addressing the different needs of women and young entrepreneurs.	Training topics and module sequencing may be adapted to reflect regional priorities, participants' experience, and local economic sectors, while preserving a balance between business skills, personal development, and practical application.
Training methods	The programme used presentations, workshops, coaching, mentoring, group work, Business Model Canvas, SWOT analysis, case studies, and peer learning.	Learning methods may vary depending on available expertise and facilities, but practical, participatory, and experiential learning should remain central to the programme.
Learning environment	Training was delivered in an innovation-oriented environment, complemented by an Away Day that encouraged networking, collaboration, and practical learning.	Venues and formats may differ, another region might replace it with a bootcamp, study visit, innovation camp, or weekend workshop, but the underlying principle is the same: create an immersive learning experience that strengthens collaboration and networking. The learning environment should encourage interaction, creativity, peer exchange, and engagement with the entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Regional ecosystem involvement	Entrepreneurs, mentors, business support organisations, and innovation stakeholders contributed to participants' learning experience and networking opportunities.	The organisations involved may differ between regions, but cooperation with local ecosystem actors should always be maintained to strengthen programme sustainability and participants' access to ongoing support.
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4.5.4 Business Matchmaking Programme Overview

The Business Matchmaking Programme connected women and young entrepreneurs with mentors, business support organisations, entrepreneurs, and other ecosystem actors. Through networking events, practical exchanges, mentoring, and collaboration opportunities, participants strengthened professional relationships, expanded their business networks, and improved their readiness to access entrepreneurial support and market opportunities.

The programme promoted equal participation through targeted outreach, free participation, accessible venues, and an inclusive networking environment. Participants were matched with mentors and ecosystem actors according to their interests and development needs, ensuring equal opportunities to establish professional connections, exchange experiences, and access ongoing business support.

Business Matchmaking Programme Overview

The Business Matchmaking Programme connected aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem through practical workshops, expert lectures, networking, and business matchmaking. The programme strengthened entrepreneurial knowledge, professional networks, and collaboration opportunities, helping participants transform business ideas into sustainable entrepreneurial initiatives. The following modules illustrate the structure of the Business Matchmaking Programme and the role each component plays in supporting participants' entrepreneurial journey.

Module title	Duration / Time	Learning objective	Why this module matters?
Modules			
Introduction to the Business Matchmaking Programme	6 hours	Introduce participants to entrepreneurial thinking, opportunity recognition, and the development of sustainable business ideas.	A strong business idea is the foundation for successful matchmaking. Participants first need to clarify their entrepreneurial vision before they can effectively communicate it to potential partners and stakeholders.
Business Partnership Development	3 hours	Develop participants' ability to build professional relationships, identify strategic partners, and understand the value of networking within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.	Business growth depends on collaboration. This module equips participants with the skills to establish partnerships and engage confidently with businesses, institutions, and support organisations.
Market Access and	3 hours	Strengthen participants'	Matchmaking is most effective when entrepreneurs clearly



Competitiveness Development		understanding of business models, customer value propositions, and Go-To-Market strategies using practical tools such as the Business Model Canvas.	understand their market, customers, and competitive advantage. This module helps participants present stronger and more market-oriented business propositions.
Increasing Competitiveness through Digital Tools	6 hours	Introduce participants to digital transformation, AI applications, and digital tools that improve business processes, communication, and competitiveness.	Digital competences are increasingly essential for entrepreneurs. This module demonstrates how digital solutions can enhance productivity, visibility, and business growth while encouraging participants to use innovation strategically.
Finance for Entrepreneurs	6 hours	Develop participants' understanding of financial planning, funding opportunities, and business sustainability.	Entrepreneurs need financial knowledge to evaluate opportunities, access funding, and build sustainable businesses. This module supports informed business decision-making and prepares participants for future investment and growth.
Business Networking and Matchmaking Event	6 hours	Facilitate direct interaction between participants, entrepreneurs, business support organisations, students, and other ecosystem stakeholders to explore cooperation opportunities.	This module transforms learning into action. By creating structured networking opportunities, participants establish valuable professional contacts, exchange experiences, and identify potential partners, clients, mentors, or collaborators.

Reflections on individual support and mentoring

Although the Business Matchmaking Programme did not include a formal long-term mentoring scheme, individual support was embedded throughout the learning process. University professors combined expert lectures with practical case studies, group discussions, and individual consultations, enabling participants to apply newly acquired knowledge to real entrepreneurial situations. Participants were encouraged to analyse business cases, complete practical assignments between sessions, and present their solutions for discussion and feedback.

Individual guidance was provided whenever participants required additional clarification or wished to discuss their own business ideas in greater depth. This combination of classroom learning, practical exercises, personalised feedback, and one-to-one discussions created a supportive learning environment that encouraged active participation and critical thinking. The experience demonstrated that even



relatively informal mentoring can significantly strengthen participants' confidence, learning outcomes, and engagement. Future programmes could further enhance this approach by introducing structured follow-up mentoring after the training programme concludes.

Expected Results and Evaluation Process

The Business Matchmaking Programme was expected to strengthen participants' entrepreneurial knowledge, increase their confidence in developing and presenting business ideas, improve their understanding of market access and financing opportunities, and facilitate stronger connections with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. Emphasis was placed on developing practical entrepreneurial competences, encouraging collaboration, and expanding professional networks.

Programme evaluation was conducted through anonymous questionnaires administered before and after the training programme, enabling comparison of participants' self-assessed knowledge, confidence, entrepreneurial competences, and expectations. In addition, qualitative feedback was collected through open-ended questions regarding participants' learning experience, the most valuable programme elements, and suggestions for future improvement.

The results demonstrated a clear positive shift in participants' self-assessment across all evaluated areas, with the overall average score increasing from approximately 3.8 to 4.3 on a five-point scale. Participants reported greater confidence in starting a business, improved understanding of financing and market access, stronger entrepreneurial knowledge, and increased awareness of available support services. Practical workshops, business plan development, financing topics, digital tools, and networking activities were most frequently identified as the most valuable elements of the programme. Overall, the evaluation confirmed that the programme successfully strengthened participants' entrepreneurial competences while fostering collaboration and engagement within the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Replication Logic Embedded in the Model

The Business Matchmaking Programme is built around a set of core elements that proved essential to its successful implementation in Split-Dalmatia County. These elements form the foundation of the model by combining entrepreneurial learning with networking, practical collaboration, and strong connections to the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. While individual programme components may be adapted to reflect different regional contexts, these core principles should be retained to preserve the programme's quality, inclusiveness, and long-term impact. The following table summarises the key elements that are considered fundamental for successful replication.

Core Element of the Model :

Core Element	Why it was important in the Split pilot	Why it should remain a core element in future replication
Ecosystem-driven approach	The programme actively connected participants with entrepreneurs, business support organisations, mentors, and academic experts, making networking a central part of the learning experience.	Strong ecosystem engagement ensures that participants gain access to knowledge, support services, and collaboration opportunities that continue beyond the programme.
Combination of learning, networking and matchmaking	The integration of expert lectures, practical workshops,	Networking should not be treated as a stand-alone event



	networking activities, and matchmaking sessions enabled participants to acquire knowledge while simultaneously establishing professional relationships.	but as an integral part of entrepreneurial learning. Combining learning with matchmaking significantly increases the programme's long-term impact.
Practice-oriented learning methods	Lectures were complemented by case studies, practical assignments, group discussions, networking exercises, and individual consultations with university professors and experts.	Practical learning enables participants to apply theoretical knowledge, develop confidence, and prepare for real business situations. This approach should remain a fundamental feature of the model.
Individual guidance and expert feedback	Participants received continuous feedback through discussions, homework assignments, case study analysis, and one-to-one consultations, allowing them to refine their ideas and receive tailored advice.	Even where formal mentoring is not available, personalised guidance significantly improves learning outcomes and participant engagement.
Connection to the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem	Cooperation between the University, entrepreneurs, business support organisations, mentors, and public institutions strengthened participants' awareness of available support services and collaboration opportunities.	Every region should actively involve ecosystem stakeholders to ensure sustainability and provide participants with long-term access to mentoring, networking, funding, and business development support.

Adaptable Element	Why it was important	How it can be adapted
Target groups	The programme was open to aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs, although most participants were students and young entrepreneurs due to the recruitment channels used.	Other regions may target different entrepreneurial groups depending on local priorities. Recruitment should remain open, transparent, and aligned with the programme objectives while ensuring equal access for all eligible participants.
Training modules	Modules addressed partnership development, market access, digitalisation, finance, and networking.	Topics, duration, and sequencing may be adapted to reflect regional economic priorities and sectoral needs while maintaining the balance between knowledge development and practical networking.
Delivery format	The programme was delivered through face-to-face lectures,	Hybrid or online delivery may be introduced where



	workshops, case studies, practical exercises, and networking events.	appropriate, provided that opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and matchmaking are preserved.
Mentors and lecturers	University professors combined academic knowledge with practical examples, case studies, homework, discussions, and individual consultations.	Other regions could engage experts with strong entrepreneurial and practical experience while ensuring that participants receive opportunities for personalised guidance and feedback.
Case studies and practical exercises	Participants analysed real business situations, completed practical assignments, and discussed solutions with lecturers and peers.	Local examples should replace generic case studies whenever possible to increase relevance, while maintaining the emphasis on experiential learning and critical thinking.
Networking and matchmaking activities	Participants established contacts with entrepreneurs, business support organisations, and fellow participants through structured networking activities.	Matchmaking formats may vary according to the maturity of the local ecosystem, but they should always facilitate meaningful interaction and encourage collaboration beyond the programme.

5. REPLICATION AND ADAPTATION

5.1 Purpose and Replication Approach

The TASK4ISI pilots demonstrate that inclusive entrepreneurship support can be transferred across different territorial and institutional contexts when a common intervention logic is maintained while programme design, delivery formats, target groups and ecosystem partnerships are adapted to local conditions.

The five regional pilots – Małopolska (Poland), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Thuringia (Germany), Central Hungary and Split-Dalmatia (Croatia) – used different institutional settings, participant profiles, delivery formats and stakeholder ecosystems. Nevertheless, they shared a common foundation: inclusive recruitment, needs-based programme design, practical and experiential learning, mentoring, networking and strong connections to the local entrepreneurship ecosystem.



Before replicating the model, organisations should begin with a local needs assessment using participant feedback, stakeholder consultation, outreach activities and available regional data. They should reflect on which groups are least reached by existing entrepreneurship support and what specific barriers affect them, such as language, legal status, childcare, transport, digital access, confidence, or unfamiliarity with local institutions. Organisations should also map which actors can support recruitment, mentoring and delivery, including universities, migrant organisations, women's networks, business support services, municipalities and funding bodies. Finally, training content, timing, language, format and matchmaking activities should be adapted to local conditions while preserving the inclusive, practical and ecosystem-connected nature of the model.

5.2 What should remain consistent and what can be adapted

5.2.1 Core elements to retain

The regional pilots particularly demonstrate that training alone is insufficient: the combination of learning, mentoring, networking and ecosystem access is central to the model. This is explicitly identified in the Małopolska and Split-Dalmatia replication logic.

Core element	Why it matters for replication
Inclusive recruitment	Ensures that groups facing structural barriers can access entrepreneurship support.
Needs-based programme design	Training responds to actual barriers and needs rather than providing generic entrepreneurship content.
Combination of training, mentoring and networking	Participants need knowledge, personalised guidance and access to networks.
Experiential and practice-oriented learning	Participants work on their own ideas and apply tools rather than relying only on theoretical learning.
Connection to the local ecosystem	Links participants to entrepreneurs, support organisations, universities, funders and other relevant actors.
Market and real-world exposure	Pitching, matchmaking, market testing and external feedback help participants move from ideas towards action.
Monitoring and feedback	Continuous feedback allows organisers to adjust delivery and improve future editions.

5.2.2 Elements that can be adapted

The toolkit explicitly recognises that programme duration, delivery format, language, cultural adaptation and local ecosystem partnerships can vary, provided the inclusive, practical and ecosystem-connected character of the intervention is maintained.

Adaptable element	Possible regional adaptation
Target groups	Women, migrants, young people, seniors, international students, unemployed people, early-stage entrepreneurs or other locally identified groups.
Programme duration	Intensive bootcamp, several-week programme, modular programme or longer support pathway.
Delivery format	In-person, online or hybrid.
Language	Local language, English, bilingual or multilingual delivery.



Training modules	Adjusted according to business maturity, sector, target group and regional barriers.
Mentoring model	1:1 mentoring, group mentoring, coaching or embedded expert support.
Matchmaking format	Networking event, pitch/demo day, business meetings, market testing, pop-up activities or entrepreneur visits.
Stakeholders	Local equivalents of universities, incubators, chambers, NGOs, funding bodies, municipalities and entrepreneurs.
Recruitment channels	NGOs, universities, migrant organisations, community networks, social media, business networks and public services.
Timeline	Adapted to local participant availability, institutional capacity and funding cycles.

5.3 Steps to Replication Process

7-Step Replication Process

From regional needs to lasting impact



Step 1. Identify target groups and barriers

The first step is to determine which groups in the region face barriers to entrepreneurship and would benefit most from the programme.

Key actions :

- Analyse regional labour market data and entrepreneurship statistics.
- Consult local NGOs, community organisations, and social services.
- Conduct short interviews or focus groups with potential participants.
- Identify structural barriers such as language barriers, limited access to finance, lack of networks, or administrative complexity.

Suggested tools:

- stakeholder consultations
- surveys or focus groups
- user persona canvas
- regional policy reports

Output: A short **target group and needs assessment** describing who the programme should target; what barriers they face and what type of support they require.



Step 2. Map regional stakeholders

Inclusive entrepreneurship programmes are most effective when connected to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, it is important to identify organisations that can support the programme.

Key actors:

- business support organisations
- chambers of commerce
- universities and incubators
- municipal economic development agencies
- migrant or women's organisations
- financial institutions or microfinance providers
- experienced entrepreneurs willing to mentor

Key actions:

- Map relevant stakeholders and their potential role.
- Establish partnerships for training, mentoring, or networking events.
- Identify organisations that can provide additional support after the programme (e.g. incubators, funding programmes).

Suggested tools:

- ecosystem mapping
- stakeholder interviews
- partnership agreements

Output: A **stakeholder map** showing potential collaborators and their roles in the programme.

Step 3. Adapt programme modules

The next step is to adapt the training and mentoring structure to the regional context and the needs of the identified target groups.

Key actions:

- review the existing Business Skills and Business Matchmaking programme models
- adapt module content, duration, and delivery format
- ensure that the programme is accessible and inclusive
- integrate local examples, legal information, and funding opportunities

Key aspects to consider:

- language accessibility
- flexible scheduling (e.g. evenings or weekends)
- hybrid or online participation options
- cultural sensitivity
- inclusion of practical exercises and experiential learning

Output: A **programme structure** including training modules, mentoring format, networking activities, and timeline for delivery.

Step 4. Open call and participant recruitment

Recruitment should ensure that the programme reaches the intended target groups in the inclusive way.

Key actions:

- prepare an open call describing the programme and participation criteria
- promote the call through community organisations, universities, NGOs, and social media
- organise information sessions or introductory workshops
- conduct a simple selection process to ensure participants' motivation and readiness

Recruitment channels:

- local NGOs and community organisations



- universities and youth networks
- migrant associations
- social media and project websites
- local media or newsletters

Output: A **selected group of participants** representing the target groups identified in Step 1.

Step 5. Delivering training and mentoring

The programme implementation combines group learning and individual support to help participants develop their entrepreneurial ideas.

Key components:

- workshops on entrepreneurship skills
- practical exercises and business tools
- individual coaching sessions
- peer learning and group feedback
- mentoring from experienced entrepreneurs

Key aspect of good practices:

- use participatory and experiential learning methods
- encourage participants to work on their own ideas
- provide continuous feedback and guidance
- adapt training methods to participants' educational and cultural backgrounds

Output: Participants' competences in business skills: entrepreneurial skills; a developed business idea; increased confidence and motivation; connected to business support ecosystem

Step 6. Organise networking and market exposure

Connecting participants to the local ecosystem is a key element of inclusive entrepreneurship programmes.

Possible activities:

- networking events with local entrepreneurs and business experts
- pitching sessions or demo days
- participation in local entrepreneurship events
- pop-up stores or market testing opportunities
- meetings with potential partners or clients

Purpose:

- test their ideas in real market conditions
- gain visibility
- build professional networks
- access potential customers or investors

Output: Participants establish **connections with the local entrepreneurial ecosystem** and gain real-world feedback on their ideas.

Step 7. Monitor results and adjust the programme after assessment

Monitoring and evaluation allow programme organisers to assess the effectiveness of the intervention and improve future editions.

Key actions:

- collect feedback from participants, trainers, and mentors
- track programme indicators such as participation and outcomes
- assess the relevance of training modules and mentoring activities



- identify areas for improvement

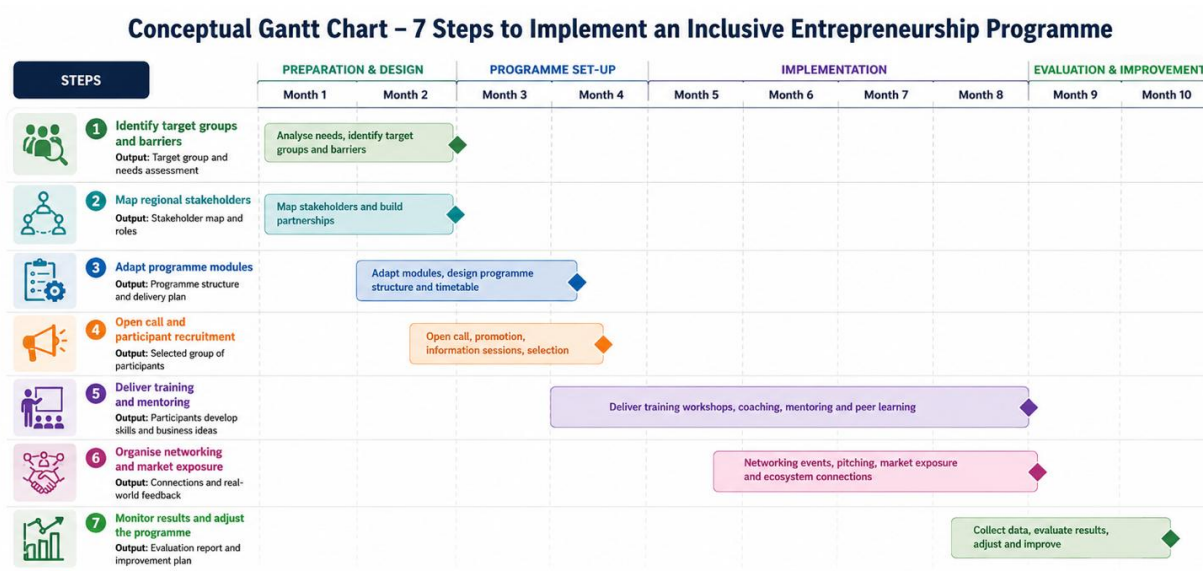
Possible indicators:

- number of participants completing the programme
- number of business ideas developed
- number of businesses started
- number of partnerships or ecosystem connections created

Output: An **evaluation report or reflection summary** that informs future programme improvements and supports replication in other regions.

5.4 Replication Roadmap

The seven steps should be understood as an **overlapping process**, rather than a strictly linear sequence. A typical replication cycle can follow this indicative structure:



5.5 Stakeholder Ecosystem Compass

Stakeholder mapping is a critical step in replicating the TASK4ISI model because inclusive entrepreneurship support depends on a functioning local ecosystem rather than on a single programme provider.

Function	Why it matters for replication
1. Identify the local ecosystem	Helps the adopting region understand which organisations already provide entrepreneurship, education, finance, mentoring, networking and community support.
2. Match functions with actors	Replication does not require the same organisations as the pilot. It requires equivalent functions to be covered by suitable local actors.
3. Build partnerships before implementation	Identifying stakeholders early makes it possible to secure trainers, mentors, venues, funding information, recruitment channels and networking opportunities.

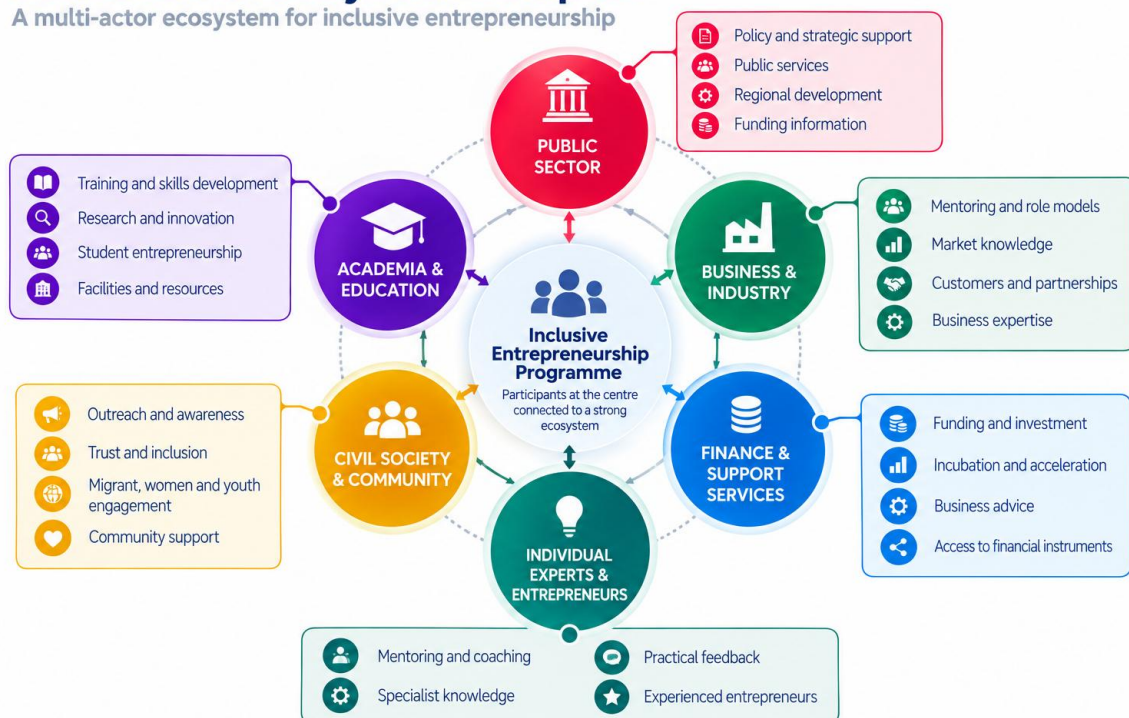


4. Reach underserved groups	Civil-society organisations, migrant organisations, women's networks and community groups can provide trusted outreach to groups that may not access mainstream business support.
5. Connect participants to the ecosystem	Universities, incubators, businesses, experts and support organisations can provide mentoring, knowledge, customers, partnerships and follow-up support.
6. Avoid duplication	Mapping existing services helps the new programme complement rather than duplicate what is already available in the region.
7. Adapt the model to the territory	The stakeholder structure reveals what needs to change when transferring the programme to a different institutional, economic or social context.
8. Strengthen sustainability	A programme embedded in an existing ecosystem is less dependent on one project organisation and has more opportunities for continuation after the project ends.
9. Support participant progression	Stakeholders can provide different forms of support at different stages: recruitment → training → mentoring → matchmaking → finance → market access → follow-up.
10. Make replication measurable	The stakeholder map can become a basis for monitoring partnership development, referrals, ecosystem connections and longer-term cooperation.

The Stakeholder Helix helps replication organisations identify the actors, resources and functions required to support participants throughout the entrepreneurial journey, from recruitment and skills development to mentoring, networking, finance, market access and follow-up support. The purpose is not to reproduce the same organisations involved in the five TASK4ISI pilots, but to identify local actors that can fulfil equivalent ecosystem functions. This enables the programme to be adapted to different territorial contexts while maintaining its core principles and strengthening its sustainability beyond the project period.

Stakeholder Ecosystem Compass

A multi-actor ecosystem for inclusive entrepreneurship





5.6 Replication Checklist as practical tool

Before launching the programme, ensure:

Phase	Checklist
Preparation	☐ Target groups clearly defined ☐ Barriers identified ☐ Programme objectives set ☐ Need assesment completed
Ecosystem	☐ Stakeholders ecosystem mapped ☐ Roles and contributions identified ☐ Key Partners engaged ☐ Mentors/trainers identified ☐ Funding and referral pathways identified
Programme Design	☐ BSP/BMP elements selected ☐ Modules adapted ☐ Language and accessibility measures defined ☐ Delivery format selected ☐ Timeline established
Recruitment	☐ Open call prepare ☐ Inclusive outreach channels identified ☐ Community partners involved ☐ Open call prepared ☐ Selection criteria defined ☐ Participants onboarding planned
Implementation	☐ Trainers and mentors secured ☐ Materials prepared ☐ Coaching structure defined ☐ practical exercises integrated ☐ participant feedback mechanism established
Ecosystem integration	☐ Networking events planned ☐ External experts engaged ☐ Entrepreneurs/ business involved ☐ Matchmaking opportunity planned ☐ Market-testing exposure considered
Monitoring	☐ Indicators defined ☐ Indicators defined ☐ Baseline/participant needs information collected ☐ Participant feedback tools prepared ☐ Trainer/mentor feedback collected ☐ Results assessed



	☐ Improvements documented
Sustainability	☐ Referral pathways established ☐ Alumni/community engagement planned ☐ Follow-up support identified ☐ Funding for continuation explored ☐ Replication lessons documented

5.7 Reflection Questions for Adaptation:

Before implementing the programme in another region, organisers should consider the following questions:

- How will you identify the target groups that would benefit most from the programme?**
Programme design should begin with a regional needs assessment and stakeholder consultation to identify the groups facing the greatest barriers to entrepreneurship and the support they require.
- How will the programme balance common learning with target-group specific support?**
While all participants benefit from shared entrepreneurial knowledge and networking, dedicated modules should address the different needs and challenges of each target group.
- Which practical learning methods will best support entrepreneurial development?**
Consider how workshops, Business Model Canvas, SWOT analysis, mentoring, coaching, peer learning, and practical assignments can help participants transform ideas into viable business concepts.
- How will the programme strengthen both business competences and personal resilience?**
Successful entrepreneurship requires technical knowledge as well as confidence, motivation, stress management, communication skills, and the ability to overcome setbacks.
- Which organisations can support programme delivery and participant development?**
Look for Development agencies, business support organisations, universities, incubators, entrepreneurs, mentors, and local authorities should contribute according to their expertise and strengthen participants' connections with the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- How will participants remain connected to the entrepreneurial ecosystem after the programme ends?**
Future implementers should consider how mentoring, networking, business support services, and access to funding opportunities can continue supporting participants beyond the formal training period.
- How are participants connected with the entrepreneurial ecosystem in your region?**
Consider which organisations, entrepreneurs, mentors, and business support providers can actively participate in networking and matchmaking activities. Sustainable partnerships strengthen both programme quality and long-term participant support.
- Which organisations can support recruitment and programme delivery?**
Universities, business support organisations, incubators, development agencies, entrepreneur associations, and local businesses can all contribute to recruitment, training delivery, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
- How can networking and matchmaking reflect local conditions?**
Networking activities should be adapted to the characteristics of the local business environment, available ecosystem actors, and regional economic priorities. The objective should always remain the creation of meaningful professional relationships.
- How can personalised guidance be integrated into the programme?**
Whether through formal mentoring or informal consultations, participants benefit from opportunities to discuss their ideas individually with experienced experts. Personalised feedback should remain an integral part of the learning process.



11. How will collaboration continue after the programme ends?

Future implementers should identify mechanisms that encourage participants to remain connected with mentors, peers, and business support organisations, ensuring that matchmaking leads to lasting cooperation rather than one-off networking events.

6. CONCLUSION & LESSON LEARNED

6.1 Recommendations

6.1.1 Malopolska, Poland

The Kraków pilot confirmed that the model works for “missing entrepreneurs”, but a few choices made the difference between a workshop and a launchpad. Based on our experience, we would highlight four recommendations:

1. Choose the format to fit the participants, not the curriculum. The intensive bootcamp worked precisely because it minimised the time and travel cost for seniors, women with care duties, working migrants and students. Decide the format around the target group’s real constraints before designing the content.
2. Reach participants through trusted intermediaries. The right people did not come from open calls alone. Migrant, senior, women’s and student organisations were essential to reach those who never approach mainstream business support. Build these partnerships early and let them co-shape outreach.
3. Plan and resource mentoring from day one. Personal, language-matched mentoring was the single most valued element of the pilot. It must be scheduled, budgeted, and matched deliberately - never added as an afterthought once the agenda is full.
4. Make the ecosystem connection real and concrete. A closing demo/pitch with external partners, plus individual next-step referrals, is what turns a course into a launchpad. Secure committed ecosystem partners before recruitment starts and follow up with participants after the bootcamp so that momentum is not lost.

6.1.2 Italy

This toolkit brings together the experience, learning, and validated practice generated through the TASK4ISI pilot process to support the further development of inclusive entrepreneurship across different regional contexts. By documenting key implementation steps, contextual conditions, programme components, and lessons learned, it is intended not only as a record of what was achieved, but also as a practical resource for adaptation, transfer, and future scaling.

At its core, the toolkit highlights that inclusive entrepreneurship requires more than individual support measures: it depends on coordinated action, responsive programme design, and enabling ecosystem conditions that address the needs of underrepresented or “missing” entrepreneurs. It is therefore hoped that this toolkit will serve as a useful reference for practitioners, institutions, and policymakers seeking to strengthen inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems and to build more accessible, equitable, and sustainable pathways into entrepreneurship.



6.1.3 Thuringia, Germany

The implementation of the Business Skills and Business Matchmaking Programmes showed that inclusive entrepreneurship support requires more than technical training. Based on the regional pilot experience, the following recommendations are considered essential for future replication.

1. Start with community-building before moving into technical content.

One of the most important lessons learned is that community-building is not an additional activity, but a necessary foundation. Many participants entered the programme with different levels of confidence, language ability, entrepreneurial experience and familiarity with the local ecosystem. Informal exchanges, icebreakers, shared meals, networking moments and collaborative exercises helped create trust and encouraged participants to be open, ask questions and share their ideas.

2. Consider intensive boot-camp formats as the core learning moment.

Although the modular structure allowed flexibility, participation across several months was sometimes difficult to maintain. For future implementation, the programme could benefit from an intensive 3-4-day boot-camp or hackathon-style format, ideally in a location away from everyday distractions and with accommodation included. This would allow participants to fully immerse themselves in the learning process, build stronger peer relationships, develop their ideas more deeply and leave with renewed motivation, confidence and direction. Follow-up mentoring, networking events and ecosystem referrals could then be organised around this core intensive experience as complementary support.

3. Build stakeholder relationships early and make the mutual benefit clear.

The success of the programme depends strongly on the quality of connections with local ecosystem actors. Organisations should not only invite stakeholders at the end, but actively go to them, explain the purpose of the programme, and show how participation can be mutually beneficial. Stakeholders gain access to new target groups, fresh ideas, diverse entrepreneurial perspectives and potential future clients or partners. Participants gain mentoring, visibility, practical advice and entry points into the local business ecosystem. This reciprocity should be clearly communicated and embedded in the programme design.

4. Create real testing and visibility opportunities for participants.

A strong recommendation is to include a practical pilot or prototype space where participants can temporarily “take over” a hub, pop-up space, office, market stall or public venue to present their ideas as if they were already operating a business. This type of trial setting would allow participants to receive feedback from the public, test their communication, observe customer reactions, improve their offer and increase visibility. Such spaces can help bridge the gap between training and real market experience, especially for participants who lack confidence or access to professional business environments.

5. Adapt language, format and support to the actual participants.

Language and communication choices strongly affect inclusion. In the regional pilot, English helped reduce barriers for migrants and international students, but future programmes should always assess the linguistic needs, literacy levels and confidence of the group. Materials, examples and facilitation methods should be clear, fair and accessible to everyone involved. Adaptation may also be needed regarding timing, digital access, childcare, transport, legal status or administrative constraints. Inclusion should therefore be treated as a continuous design principle, not only as an outreach strategy.

Overall, future organisations should see the model as a flexible but relationship-based process. Its strength lies in combining entrepreneurship training with trust, belonging, practical experimentation and ecosystem connection. The easier the programme makes it for participants to feel seen, supported and connected, the more likely they are to transform early ideas into concrete entrepreneurial pathways.



6.1.4 Split, Croatia

The implementation of the Business Skills and Business Matchmaking Programmes generated several valuable lessons that may support future replication and long-term sustainability.

One of the key lessons learned relates to participant recruitment. Reaching the intended target groups proved more challenging than anticipated, despite extensive promotion through project partners, universities, business support organisations, social media, and local media. Women entrepreneurs often face competing professional and family responsibilities, making regular participation in training programmes difficult. Similarly, young entrepreneurs and students balance studies, employment, and personal commitments. Future programmes should therefore involve target groups in the planning phase to better understand their availability, preferred learning formats, and priority topics before designing the programme.

Another important lesson concerns mentoring and networking. While participants highly valued individual guidance and opportunities to connect with experienced entrepreneurs and experts, providing sustained mentoring requires significant time and commitment from professionals. Long-term mentoring and business advisory services are difficult to sustain on a voluntary basis and therefore require dedicated financial support.

The experience of the Split ISIHUB also demonstrated that entrepreneurial training should not end with the completion of workshops. Many participants developed promising business ideas but continued to require guidance in accessing funding opportunities, preparing project applications, connecting with relevant business support organisations, and further developing their ventures.

For this reason, future ISIHUBs should evolve into long-term regional support platforms that continue accompanying entrepreneurs beyond the training period. Publicly funded support mechanisms should enable ongoing mentoring, networking, business development advice, and assistance in accessing national and European funding opportunities. Such continuous support would significantly increase the long-term impact, sustainability, and effectiveness of inclusive entrepreneurship programmes.

6.1.5 Central Budapest, Hungary

Both KATAPULT and Szatellit demonstrated that structured, criteria-based recruitment combined with personalised support and peer community produces measurable shifts in confidence, skills, and concrete entrepreneurial outputs – even within compressed timeframes (six and eight weeks respectively). The pilots confirmed that for women entrepreneurs, the central barrier is often psychological (confidence, role models, network access) rather than purely technical, meaning programme design must prioritise mentoring, personalisation, and community over content volume alone. Both programmes also showed strong organisational sustainability thanks to Impact Hub Budapest's existing infrastructure, alumni network, and ecosystem relationships, though both remain dependent on continued grant or co-financing to stay free-of-charge and accessible to underrepresented groups.

1. **Build in mentor/expert capacity planning from the outset.** Mentoring (KATAPULT) and in-session personalised support (SZATELLIT) were consistently rated as the most valuable elements, but they are resource-intensive. Organisations replicating this model should secure a sufficient, well-matched pool of mentors/experts before launch, as under-resourcing this component is the single greatest risk to programme quality.
2. **Use a small, intensive cohort size rather than scaling up prematurely.** Cohorts of 11-12 participants allowed genuine personalisation and strong peer bonds, leading to concrete collaborations and high



satisfaction. Organisations should resist the temptation to maximise reach by enlarging cohorts before testing whether their mentor/trainer capacity and venue/format can sustain quality at scale.

3. **Invest early in recruitment design tailored to the specific target group.** KATAPULT's open call with weighted selection criteria and SZATELLIT's trust-based, invitation-only approach both required upfront effort to reach genuinely underrepresented or appropriately ready participants. Replicators should not default to generic open calls but design recruitment specifically around the barriers and trust-levels relevant to their target group.
4. **Plan for post-programme continuity before the pilot ends.** Alumni integration, referral pathways to ecosystem partners (banks, innovation agencies, mentors), and a continuation financing strategy should be established during – not after – programme delivery, to avoid participants losing momentum and to support a funding case for future editions.

In MGFÜ Hungary, the implementation of the Hungarian Business Skills Programme demonstrated that entrepreneurship support is most effective when it is adapted to the specific needs of different target groups. The combination of practical training, mentoring, peer learning and flexible online and face-to-face delivery proved particularly valuable.

One of the main lessons learned was that **different target groups require different forms of support**. The online format worked well for neurodivergent entrepreneurs by providing a more accessible and predictable learning environment, while face-to-face sessions offered valuable opportunities for networking and group work. The pilot also confirmed the importance of **mentoring and peer support**, particularly for participants who benefited from sharing experiences with entrepreneurs facing similar challenges.

The programme showed that participants value **practical tools that can be immediately applied**, such as the Business Model Canvas, financial planning, market research and networking. The continued interaction requested by participants after the formal training also demonstrated the importance of maintaining connections beyond the programme itself.

Based on these experiences, four key recommendations can be formulated:

1. **Assess participants' needs in advance.** Training content, format and support should be adapted to the specific characteristics and challenges of each target group.
2. **Combine training with mentoring and peer learning.** Personalised guidance and opportunities to exchange experiences significantly strengthen the practical impact of training.
3. **Keep the programme flexible.** A combination of online and face-to-face formats, together with flexibility regarding schedules and additional sessions, can improve accessibility and participant engagement.
4. **Ensure follow-up after the training.** Alumni networks, peer communities and continued mentoring can help participants apply their knowledge and maintain the benefits of the programme over the longer term.

6.2 Lessons from the Five Regional Pilots

Across the five pilots, replication should be understood as **adaptation rather than duplication**. The regional experience shows that the same programme logic can be delivered through different formats, durations, languages, recruitment approaches and ecosystem partnerships.

The five regional pilots demonstrate a common approach to inclusive entrepreneurship support while also showing the importance of place-based adaptation. The strongest recurring elements are targeted outreach, practical and experiential learning, personalised mentoring or guidance, peer and stakeholder networking, and links to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.



The toolkit therefore functions as a reusable implementation framework rather than a fixed programme package. Organisations can select and combine the Business Skills and Business Matchmaking components and adapt delivery to their target groups, resources, ecosystem and regional priorities.

The five regions provide complementary examples of how the common model can be adapted.

Region	Distinctive adaptation / lesson	Implication for replication
Małopolska, Poland	Intensive bootcamp formats, bilingual delivery and targeted outreach through migrant and women's organisations; matchmaking connected directly to the Kraków start-up ecosystem.	Intensive formats can reduce participation barriers; trusted community organisations can be critical for reaching missing entrepreneurs.
Emilia-Romagna, Italy	Applied learning combined collective training, practical assignments and individual mentoring; funding, administrative and networking issues were integrated into the programme response.	Training should address both entrepreneurial skills and concrete local administrative, financial and ecosystem barriers.
Thuringia, Germany	Strong focus on migrants, international students, women and young people; English-language delivery, flexible formats, mentoring and ecosystem connection were important.	Accessibility measures and direct ecosystem referrals are particularly important where participants are unfamiliar with the local support system.
Central Hungary	KATAPULT and SZATELLIT demonstrated differentiated approaches for skills development and market-oriented matchmaking, with a 24-week replication roadmap.	Replication can use different programme pathways according to participant maturity and can combine overlapping phases rather than following a strictly linear process.
Split-Dalmatia, Croatia	Strong emphasis on needs-based design, target-group-specific support, practical tools, mentoring and ecosystem-driven matchmaking.	Combine common learning with tailored support and maintain strong links to local entrepreneurs, support organisations and academic actors.

6.3 Sustainability and Continued Use

The toolkit is intended to remain usable beyond the project lifetime. Continued value depends on regional organisations integrating the methods into existing entrepreneurship support, maintaining stakeholder relationships, updating local examples and referral information, and using monitoring evidence to refine future delivery cycles.

Expected participant-level changes include improved entrepreneurial competences, stronger confidence and motivation, clearer and more developed business ideas, better understanding of markets and finance, stronger pitching ability, and improved access to mentors, peers and business-support networks.

Uptake of the toolkit by regional authorities, business-support organisations, incubators, NGOs, education providers and other ecosystem actors can strengthen their capacity to design, adapt and deliver inclusive



entrepreneurship support. The pilots also show the value of coordinated stakeholder engagement and referral pathways.

The continued use of the toolkit can contribute to more accessible and better-connected entrepreneurship ecosystems, stronger cooperation among support organisations, improved access to skills, networks, mentoring, finance and markets, and greater integration of inclusive entrepreneurship into regional development approaches. These effects depend on continued organisational uptake and adaptation after the project period.

In the longer term, continued uptake of the Toolkit can support:

- **stronger entrepreneurial competences and confidence** among aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs;
- **greater participation of underrepresented groups** in regional entrepreneurship ecosystems;
- **improved access to mentoring, networks, finance, markets and business-support services;**
- **stronger cooperation between public, private, educational and civil-society actors;**
- **better integration of entrepreneurship support into existing regional ecosystems and development structures;**
- **greater capacity of organisations to design and adapt inclusive entrepreneurship programmes;** and
- **continued experimentation, learning and replication beyond the TASK4ISI project lifetime.**

Overall, the five pilots demonstrate that the territorial value of inclusive entrepreneurship support lies not only in the number of participants trained, but in the **connections, capacities and support pathways created around them**. The Toolkit provides a practical basis for maintaining these connections, adapting the validated model to new regional contexts and embedding inclusive entrepreneurship more firmly within regional development and innovation ecosystems.

6.4 Contribution to Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Regional Development

The combined evidence from the five regional pilots demonstrates that inclusive entrepreneurship support can contribute to stronger entrepreneurial ecosystems and more inclusive regional development when individual skills development is connected with mentoring, networking, market exposure and accessible support structures. Across the regions, the pilots addressed different territorial barriers – including limited entrepreneurial knowledge and practical experience, restricted access to finance and professional networks, administrative and regulatory complexity, low confidence, weak links to support services, and specific participation barriers affecting women, migrants, young people, seniors and other underrepresented groups.

The pilot implementation shows that these barriers cannot be addressed through training alone. In Małopolska, the intensive bootcamp format, trusted community intermediaries, language-matched mentoring and direct links to the Kraków start-up ecosystem helped reduce participation and access barriers. In Emilia-Romagna, practical learning, individual mentoring, information on finance and administrative requirements, and networking responded to knowledge, financial and relationship-capital gaps. In Thuringia, accessible English-language delivery, flexible formats, mentoring and ecosystem referrals supported migrants, international students, women and young people who were less familiar with the local entrepreneurial support system. In Split-Dalmatia, needs-based programme design, practical tools, mentoring and networking were used to address the limited experience, confidence, finance and professional networks of women and young entrepreneurs. The Hungarian pilots further demonstrated the value of differentiated pathways, combining skills development with a market-oriented matchmaking approach.



A key contribution of the TASK4ISI approach is therefore the **connection between individual and territorial levels**. At participant level, the programmes strengthen entrepreneurial knowledge, practical business skills, confidence, business ideas, professional networks and access to mentoring. At ecosystem level, they create or strengthen relationships between public authorities, universities, business-support organisations, entrepreneurs, NGOs, incubators, funding actors and other support providers. This creates pathways through which participants can continue to access expertise, finance, markets and business support after the formal programme ends. The Split-Dalmatia pilot, for example, involved a broad ecosystem of development agencies, support organisations, educational institutions, incubators, SMEs, NGOs, mentors and funding institutions.

The approach can also contribute to **more inclusive regional entrepreneurial ecosystems** by improving access for groups that may not be reached by mainstream entrepreneurship support. The pilots show the importance of targeted outreach through trusted intermediaries, accessible programme formats, tailored mentoring and practical opportunities to engage with established entrepreneurs and support organisations. In this way, inclusion is not treated only as participant recruitment, but as a broader effort to reduce structural barriers to participation in the regional entrepreneurship ecosystem.

At territorial level, the potential longer-term contribution lies in stronger cooperation between existing support structures, improved visibility of available services, better connections between entrepreneurs and regional actors, and greater capacity to identify and support locally underserved entrepreneurial potential. The toolkit provides a framework through which these approaches can be adapted to different territorial conditions rather than transferred as a fixed programme.

The contribution to regional development should consequently be understood as **incremental and ecosystem-based**. The pilots do not by themselves resolve structural barriers such as access to finance, administrative complexity or unequal participation in entrepreneurship. Rather, they provide tested mechanisms through which regional organisations can respond to these barriers more systematically, connect existing resources and create more accessible pathways into entrepreneurship.