



# Founders ABC Deep tech start-up support program

Terms and conditions for applicants

August 2023

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM (objectives and outcomes).**

The EIT HEI<sup>1</sup> funded ABCD<sup>2</sup> project aims to be a leading platform for innovation and deep tech entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans. It fosters an entrepreneurial mindset and supports deep tech start-ups to thrive globally through effective collaboration with stakeholders and the local innovation ecosystem.

By pooling together, the knowledge and expertise of the ABCD consortium members, being prestigious universities and well-known innovation hubs from the Western Balkans and beyond, our main goal is to create partnerships to fuel the deep tech start-up ecosystem, supporting students designing their business, founders from the birth of their deep tech start-up down their path to successful commercialization.

By stakeholder engagement and partnership aiming for capacity building and dissemination of results, effective collaboration, promotion of an entrepreneurial mindset and capacity building among students, faculty members, and staff will result in increased participation in incubation services and training programs, ultimately supporting start-ups and enhancing their readiness for seed investment and participation in the EIT<sup>3</sup> Accelerator programs.

### **1.1. OBJECTIVE & OUTCOMES**

FoundersABC Deep tech start-up support program aims to strengthen innovation and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Western Balkans and focuses on scouting for, training, preparing deep tech start-ups to get access to funding and the pan-European innovation networks of the EIT KIC<sup>4</sup>s and promoting entities that can offer innovative solutions at the international level.

FoundersABC Deep tech start-up support program goal is to improve their maturity level (prototype stage), to prepare for pre-seed investment (access to funding) and to open the doors to Europe through EIT KIC Accelerator programs.

It is a two-month long support program with the aim of increasing deep tech startup readiness level to participate in EIT Accelerator programs and embed start-ups from the Western-Balkans into EIT Activities.

FoundersABC Deep tech start-up support program engaged a network of top-notch partners, including innovation hubs, universities, research and technological centres and the scientific community, entrepreneurs, global companies, investors, public authorities, among others, offers

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<sup>1</sup> HEI – Higher Education Institution

<sup>2</sup> ABCD stands for: Alliance for Boundary-Crossing in Deep tech

<sup>3</sup> EIT – European Institute for Innovation and Technology

<sup>4</sup> KIC – Knowledge Innovation Communities

significant advantages to the participants, transforming research into products and startups into globally competitive companies.

## 1.2. TOPICS

Founders ABC Deep tech start-up support program is looking for fresh, innovative and unique solutions from deep tech and sustainability related areas. Consider these guidelines and the proposed topics as an inspiration and directions, not as limitations. At ABCD we focus on (i) Artificial Intelligence, (ii) Advanced materials, (iii) blockchain, (iv) biotechnology, (v) robotics, (vi) drones, (vii) photonics, (viii) quantum computing, etc.

## 2. A CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

### 2.1. WHO CAN APPLY?

- Only startups from WB economies (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*) can apply.
- The Applicant is a legally registered business unit in one of the mentioned WB economies, established after 2015.
- The Applicant is a private sector (at least 80% privately owned), micro or small-sized company (Startup), with at least two co-founders.
- Each co-founder of the Startup must be at least of age 18
- ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program Selection Committee shall use information obtained by the Applicant, and all other publicly available resources, to check the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria.

### 2.2. HOW TO APPLY?

Startups wishing to apply to the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program ("applicants") must submit their application files online on the following [LINK https://abcd-project-deeptech.org/apply-form](https://abcd-project-deeptech.org/apply-form). Applications sent through other channels will not be accepted. Applying does not constitute admission into the Program, and the ABCD Selection Committee may accept or reject any application, at its sole discretion.

### 2.3. TIMELINE / PHASES

ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program (the Program) shall commence on 14/08/2023 at 8.00 PM CET and the applicants must submit their application no later than 13/09/2023 at 11.59 PM CET.

The Program Selection Committee shall by 18/09/2023 choose up to 10 applicants, which will be invited to take part in the online program, taking place between 25/09/2023 and 30/11/2023.

- The selected applicants must confirm their participation within 2 (two) days after receiving the notification of their selection.
- reserve list of eligible applicants will be prepared and if a selected applicant resigns from the Program, the applicant with the highest score from the reserve list shall be invited to participate.
- Program implementation – online: 9 weeks starting from 25 September 2023 (each Tuesday - 4 hours; exact hours TBC)
- Final pitching event (Demo-day): In person, on 30 November 2023 (TBC)

Dates could change, but the project management team will report them appropriately.

#### 2.4. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

After the Application is submitted, the Program Selection Committee will conduct a review of the eligibility and administrative completeness of the submitted Applications. Only fully completed and electronically submitted Applications will be evaluated.

Selection of Applications is made by the Program Selection Committee, comprising of 6 (six) members (3 non-HEI and 3 HEI designated team members, each from different WB country), after eligibility checks for all received Applications had been conducted.

##### *Evaluation criteria*

When choosing the applicants for participation in the Program, the Program Selection Committee shall consider the following criteria:

- (a) Maturity and the area of Technology (Deep Tech solutions are the focus of the program). They include but are not limited to (1) Artificial Intelligence; (2) Advanced materials; (3) Blockchain; (3) biotechnology; (4) Robotics; (5) Drones; (6) Photonics, and (8) Quantum computing. The maturity of technology should be on at least TRL3<sup>5</sup>.
- (b) Management and key personnel credentials and ability of the applicant to deliver; co-founders should have complementary, diverse, cross-functional skills and be able to demonstrate why they are a good team for the problem they are solving;
- (c) Market need and commercialization potential of the business opportunity;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/career-development/researchers/manual-scientific-entrepreneurship/major-steps/trl>

- (d) Business model;
- (e) Technology and implementation risk management.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM AND MENTORING

The program will be implemented over a period of 10 week, covering 20 topics within 8 modules spread in 9 weeks, delivered by lecturers, industry experts, experienced entrepreneurs, and other ecosystem facilitators. During the program startups will also have the opportunity to learn more about available funding opportunities for deep tech, available at European level, and work 1:1 with Mentors.

The last (10th week) is reserved for the Final pitching event (Demo Day) to ABCD partners and investors, where the program participant will have the opportunity to showcase their progress and overall potential of their business opportunity.

<b>Module 1 (Week 1) Deep tech start-up journey: what to expect, who to collaborate with and when for access to funding</b>
Funding the journey starting from idea to commercialisation
Public EU funding opportunities for Deep Tech
<b>Module 2 (Week 2) Problem-Solution Fit</b>
Problem definition
Alternative solution analysis
Novel solution and Unique Value proposition
<b>Modul 3 (Week 3) Market</b>
Customer analysis and profiling
Target market, size and trends
Competition analysis
Mini session #1 (additional): Presenting EU funding for deep tech #1
<b>Modul 4 (Week 4) Go-to-market</b>
Product development, Time to market and KPIs
Pricing and sales
Mini session #2 (additional): Presenting EU funding for deep tech #2
<b>Module 4 (Week 5) Go-to-Market</b>
Marketing and Distribution
Intellectual property Rights
Mini session #3 (additional): Presenting EU funding for deep tech #3
<b>Module 5 (Week 6) Impact and sustainability</b>
Value-based innovations, creation and measurement of impact

Development of an innovative solution in the context of sustainability and SDGs
Mini session #4 (additional): Presenting EU funding for deep tech #4
<b>Module 6 (Week 7) Financials</b>
Financial planning (Costs and Revenues)
Funding roadmap development
Mini session #5 (additional): Presenting EU funding for deep tech #5
<b>Module 7 (Week 8) Pitch</b>
Pitch structure
Pitch practice
Mini session #6 (additional): Presenting EU funding for deep tech #5
<b>Module 8 (Week 9) Relationships</b>
Partners
Team management (creation, development, communication, conflicts, etc.)
Mini session #7 (additional): Presenting EIT Deep Tech Talent Initiative
<b>Final Pitching event / Demo Day (Week 10)</b>
Pitching in person to ABCD partners and investors to showcase your progress and the potential of your business opportunity

#### 4. FINAL PITCHING EVENT

The final event will take the form of a one-day onsite event, which is considered a final review of the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program and achieved results. The event will be open to the public, and besides participating startups, Program contributors, and project partners, other stakeholders will be invited. The agenda will be prepared in due time with all relevant details included. It will be disseminated together with the invitation to the event through different communication channels, in order to achieve maximum reach.

Each participant should transform the knowledge, opportunities and experience shared during the program into following outputs:

- 1) Developed / improved 3-minute pitch with pitch deck;
- 2) Devised / refined Business model using Canvas;
- 3) Developed Funding roadmap

The final pitching event is scheduled for the period between 20 and 30 November 2023 where the participants will pitch (present) their solution and business model in person.

The costs for traveling and accommodation to the destination of the final event are covered by the ABCD Project.

## **5. PARTICIPANTS BENEFITS:**

- Joint session by lecturers and guest speakers for selected topics of intense work sessions to improve your business models (9 weeks);
- Ability to dive deep in experiences of successful regional and global startups;
- Carefully selected mentors per startup that will devote their time and be responsible for your development and carefully matched to your needs;
- Opportunity to tap into mentors and industry specialists' network as well as get connected to the successful startups presented during the program;
- Opportunity for learn about EIT, EIC and other EU funding opportunities
- If you are accepted into the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program, you may receive certain benefits from time-to-time as determined in ABCD Project sole discretion, such as, but not limited to: mentoring; free participation in ABCD project partners events; access to ABCD Project partners network; access to ABCD Project partners research facilities and office infrastructure, benefits and perks offered by partners, sponsors, customers and other stakeholders of ABCD Project partners etc. You will be deemed to have accepted any additional terms and conditions, as applicable, before receiving these benefits. All L ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program benefits you receive are personal to the Startup you represent. You may not sell, license, rent, or otherwise transfer any ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program benefits.

## **6. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS STARTUPS**

Participants must sign a separate agreement regulating their rights and obligations in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program.

- All chosen applicants must:
- Ensure the online attendance and participation of at least one team member of the chosen applicant in weekly sessions and mentoring activities for the duration of ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program;
- Ensure attendance and participation of at least one co-founder at the Final Event
- Publicly announce, share and promote their participation in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program in written and oral communications, including social networking (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram etc.);



- The applicants chosen for participation in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program must confirm their participation within 2 (two) business days after receiving the notification of their selection.

## **7. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA**

ABCD Project will collect and process certain personal data from Participants during and after ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program, in accordance with all applicable data protection laws. Participants should refer to the [privacy notice](#) for further details on how their personal data will be processed.

## **8. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

- By submitting your application, you guarantee that you own the right, title and interest in and to all intellectual property created by you and any third parties and shared as part of your application / Project, including, but not limited to, all logos, trademarks, names, ideas, concepts, creative materials, promotional materials, advertising, and graphics, including all copyrights and proprietary rights therein, and any inventions and discoveries first conceived or developed, whether or not protected by patent, trade secret or copyright.
- ABCD project shall own no right, title and interest in and to all intellectual property created by you and any third parties and shared as part of your application / Project, including, but not limited to, all logos, trademarks, names, ideas, concepts, creative materials, promotional materials, advertising, and graphics, including all copyrights and proprietary rights therein, and any inventions and discoveries first conceived or developed, whether or not protected by patent, trade secret or copyright.

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- When submitting an application, applicants will be required to share sensitive information about their Startup and its members/employees. All information contained in applicant's application and its content, included in the answers to the questions in the application form, and all accompanying documentation and information, as well as any sensitive information, shared during the Program, will be treated as confidential information ("Confidential Information"). This Confidential Information can include but is not limited to information about applicant's business, business model, revenue, segments, customers, competitors,

technology, product, marketing, sales, personnel, markets, cost, profit and loss, cash flow, financial statements, investments, and any business or technical plans and forecasts, as well as information about individuals such as the educational and professional background of the team members.

- ABCD project will treat the Confidential Information with a reasonable degree of care and safeguards.
- ABCD project will restrict access to the Confidential Information to employees, contractors (including Selection Committee) and third parties as is reasonably required. ABCD project shall ensure that people with access to Confidential Information are bound by similar non-disclosure restrictions.
- ABCD project will not disclose, without the prior written approval of the applicant in question, Confidential Information in any form to any third party other than those stated above or make any commercial use of the information.
- The Confidential Information will be treated as confidential for a period of 5 years from the application date or until the applicant provides a written notice that the Confidential Information should no longer be treated as confidential or until the information becomes public knowledge.
- This non-disclosure clause does not apply and will no longer apply to any information that was known to ABCD project, without an obligation to keep it confidential, before it was disclosed to ABCD project by applicant; and is or becomes lawfully available to ABCD project from another source than Applicant.

## **10. CHANGES TO ABC FOUNDERS DEEP TECH STARTUP SUPPORT PROGRAM**

- ABCD project may change (in whole or in part), postpone or discontinue the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program or any aspect of it, including these Terms at any time in our sole discretion (with or without prior notice to you), including without limitation, changing or discontinuing any benefits offered under the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program. We may update this site or send you an email using the email address provided to us in your application for the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program to reflect any changes to the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program. Unless stated otherwise, any changes to the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program will become effective at the time we update this site with the change, or if we send you an email,

as stated in the email message. It is your responsibility to check this site regularly for modifications to these Terms. We last modified these Terms on the date listed below.

- By continuing to participate in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program after those changes become effective, you agree to be bound by and comply with the revised ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program including these Terms. If you do not agree to the revised Terms, in whole or in part, it is your sole responsibility to discontinue your participation in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program.

## **11. TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION**

- ABCD Project reserves the right to, at any time, at their own discretion, exclude from the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program any applicant who engages in immoral, illicit, or illegal conduct, including activities that violate these Terms, including but not limited to lying, deceiving, cheating, engaging in any criminal activity (whether or not related to the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program) and/or any activity that, in the sole discretion of ABCD Project, may adversely affect the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program, other participants, the image of ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program, or any of our affiliates or sponsors. Furthermore, ABCD Project reserves the right to, at its sole discretion and for any reason, remove or disqualify any chosen applicant from the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program.
- If your participation in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program is terminated for any reason:
  - o all licenses granted by you or us arising from your participation in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program shall immediately terminate; and
  - o you will immediately cease use of all ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program benefits; and
  - o you will no longer identify yourself or hold yourself out as a ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program participant.

## **12. DISCLAIMERS**

- ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program and any benefits or other materials that may be offered through the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program or on this

site are provided “as-is.” We make no express or implied warranties or representations with respect to the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program or any benefits or other materials that may be offered through the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program or on this site.

- Where our site contains links to other sites and resources provided by third parties, these links are provided for your information only. Such links should not be interpreted as approval by us of those linked websites or information you may obtain from them. We have no control over the contents of those sites or resources.

### **13. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY**

ABCD Project:

- shall not be liable for any damages that you might incur because of participating in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program;
- shall not be liable for any indirect, punitive, special, incidental or consequential damage (including, but not limited to, loss of business, revenue, profits, use, privacy, data, goodwill or other economic advantage) through your participation in the ABC Founders Deep Tech Startup Support Program, however it arises, even if the possibility of such damage has been previously advised of; and
- shall not be liable for any claims by a third party, including, but not limited to, any misleading statements made and/or incorporated into any content provided by third parties, such as applicants.

### **14. EFFECTS OF TERMINATION**

All provisions of the Terms which by their nature should survive termination shall survive termination, including, without limitation, intellectual property provisions, disclaimers, limitations of liability, privacy clauses and confidentiality clauses.

### **15. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION**

These Terms, any contract that incorporates them, and any dispute or claim (including non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with them or their formation, are governed by the laws of The Netherlands jurisdiction. You agree that the courts of The Netherlands will have exclusive jurisdiction.