



Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program

Terms and Conditions for Applicants

March 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The EIT¹ HEI² funded ABCD³ 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 startups 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 startup ecosystem, supporting students designing their business, founders from the birth of their deep tech startup 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 startups and enhancing their readiness for seed investment and participation in the EIT Accelerator programs.

1.1. OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program aims to strengthen innovation and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Western Balkans and focuses on scouting for, training, preparing deep tech startups to get access to funding and the pan-European innovation networks of the EIT KIC⁴ and promoting entities that can offer innovative solutions at the international level.

Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program goal is to improve their maturity level (prototype stage), to prepare for early stage 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 startups from the Western Balkans into EIT Activities.

Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program engaged a network of top-notch partners, including innovation hubs, universities, research and technological centers and the scientific community, entrepreneurs, global companies, investors, public authorities, among others, offers

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

¹ EIT: European Institute for Innovation and Technology

² HEI: Higher Education Institution

³ ABCD: Alliance for Boundary-Crossing in Deep Tech

⁴ KICs: Knowledge Innovation Communities

1.2. TOPICS

Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup 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: Advanced Computing / Quantum Computing, Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Aerospace, Automotive and Remote Sensing, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Big Data, Biotechnology and Life Sciences, Communications and Networks, Cybersecurity and Data Protection, Electronics and Photonics, Internet of Things, Semantic Web, Robotics, Semiconductors, Sustainable Energy and Clean Technologies, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Web 3.0, Blockchain and other.

2. CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

2.1. WHO CAN APPLY

- Only startups / applicants from the Western Balkan economies (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo*) and Hungary can apply.
- The applicant must be a legally registered business in one of the listed WB economies and Hungary (applicants can be in the process of registration, or will be required to register up until the end of the program).
- The applicant must be established after 2015.
- The applicants must be from the private sector (at least 80% privately owned), micro or small-sized company.
- Must have minimum 1 founder, at least 18 years of age.
- Should have deep-tech focus.
- Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program ("applicants") must submit their application files online on the following link: [LINK](#). Applications sent through other channels will not be accepted. Applying does not constitute admission into the Program, and the ABCD Program Selection Committee may accept or reject any application, at its sole discretion.

2.3. TIMELINE / PHASES

Applicants must submit their application no later than 19 April 2024 at 11.59 PM CET. The Program Selection Committee shall by 24 April 2024 choose 8 to 10 applicants, which will be invited to take part in the online program, taking place between 7 May 2024 and 5 July 2024.

- The selected applicants must confirm their participation within 3 (three) 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 7 May 2024 (exact days and hours

TBC).

- Final Pitching Event (Demo Day): during the week of 1 July 2024 (exact day TBC).
- Dates are subjected to 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 will be made by the Program Selection Committee, comprising of 4 (four) members, after eligibility checks for all received applications had been conducted.

2.5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

- (a) Team Composition
- (b) Product and Area of Technology
- (c) Technology Readiness Level (the maturity of technology should be on at least TRL3⁵)
- (d) Intellectual Property
- (e) Competitive Advantage
- (f) Market Potential
- (g) Business Model
- (h) Scalability Potential

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM

The program will be implemented over a period of 9 weeks. It will cover 8 thematic modules that will consist of interactive lectures and discussions delivered by industry experts, experienced entrepreneurs, and other ecosystem facilitators; thematic exercises and assignments; individual mentorship sessions; and a final Demo Day. The structure of the program is: (the structure of the program is subjected to change at the discretion of program management)

Module 1: Intro to program; and, Problem/Solution Fit
Module 2: Startup Pitching
Module 3: Value Proposition
Module 4: Impact and Sustainability
Module 5: Market and Competitive Landscape
Module 6: Go to Market and Sales
Module 7: Team, Key Partners and Resources
Module 8: Finance and Investments

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

Pitching Dry-Run (practice session)
Final Pitching Event (Demo Day)

The last week is reserved for the Final Pitching Event (Demo Day) to ABCD partners and investors, where the program participants will have the opportunity to showcase their progress and overall potential of their business opportunity. The top three participating startups will be invited to pitch live at the event, while the other participants will pitch online.

4. FINAL PITCHING EVENT

The one-day Final Pitching Event is considered a final review of the Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program and achieved results. The event will be open to the public, and besides participating startups, program contributors, 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.

The top three participating startups will be invited to pitch their venture live at the event. Travel and accommodation expenses of the top three startups, will be covered by the program. The other participants will be able to pitch online. The Program Selection Committee will select the top three participants (finalists). Each participant should transform the knowledge, opportunities and experience shared during the program into following outputs:

- 1) Startup Pitch
- 2) Description of their improved business model

The Final Pitching Event will be scheduled for the week of 1 July 2024. The exact day will be confirmed at a later time.

5. PROGRAM AWARD

The top three finalists in the program will have a chance to compete for an award in a total amount of EUR 10,000. The program may grant a single award of the total award amount (EUR 10,000), OR grant two awards of equal amounts (EUR 5,000 each).

6. 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 Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program benefits you receive are personal to the Startup you represent. You may not sell, license, rent, or otherwise transfer any Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program benefits.

7. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS / STARTUPS

Participants will be required to sign a separate agreement regulating their rights and obligations in the Founders ABCDeep 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 the Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program in written and oral communications, including social networking (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- The applicants chosen for participation in the Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program must confirm their participation within 3 (three) business days after receiving the notification of their selection.

8. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

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

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. CHANGES TO FOUNDERS ABCDEEP TECH STARTUP SUPPORT PROGRAM

ABCD project may change (in whole or in part), postpone or discontinue the Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program to reflect any changes to the Founders

ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program. Unless stated otherwise, any changes to the Founders ABCDeep 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 following date: 25 March 2024.

By continuing to participate in the Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program after those changes become effective, you agree to be bound by and comply with the revised Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program.

12. TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

ABCD Project reserves the right to, at any time, at their own discretion, exclude from the Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program) and/or any activity that, in the sole discretion of ABCD Project, may adversely affect the Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program, other participants, the image of the Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program.

If your participation in the Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program is terminated for any reason:

- all licenses granted by you or us arising from your participation in the Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program shall immediately terminate; and
- you will immediately cease use of all Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program benefits; and
- you will no longer identify yourself or hold yourself out as a Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program participant.

13. DISCLAIMER

Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program and any benefits or other materials that may be offered through the Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep Tech Startup Support Program or any benefits or other materials that may be offered through the 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.

14. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

ABCD Project:

- shall not be liable for any damages that you might incur because of participating in the Founders ABCDeep 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 Founders ABCDeep 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.