



## D5.1 Training methodology

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# TABLE OF CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENT .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Training methodology.....	4
2.1 Application process for training .....	4
2.2 Delivery of training .....	5
2.3 Feedback and finetuning of training sessions .....	6
ANNEX I .....	7
Training programme for startups .....	7

# 1. Introduction

Regardless of the location, the entrepreneurial process is the same in every part of the world. The startup begins with an idea, goes through the conceptualization process, the establishment, commercialization, and thrives with its growth. Startups are small enterprises with an exponential growing capacity which depends on the idea but, most importantly, depends on the team that works in the backdrop and its ability to make the greatest possible advantage of the various funding opportunities. Startups thus cannot unleash their full potential and reach European and foreign markets without proper support. This is why training startups and entrepreneurs and bringing them closer to the best funding opportunities is crucial.

Startups and innovative companies are not always aware of the European funding landscape and the specific programmes designed for them. Moreover, some lack the soft skills to assess their needs and apply for the appropriate funding calls. However, in order to escape the traditional classroom environment and deliver such knowledge in a practical and fruitful manner, a new approach must be incorporated which will be appealing for the startups.

Usually, startups come into being when like-minded people mastermind a ground-breaking idea and decide to cooperate in order to develop a sustainable project. One of the best occasions where the foundations of a new startup can be laid is the hackathon. These 'data dives' gained popularity throughout recent years, to such an extent that talking about the 'hackathon model' is rooted and widely accepted. Besides the transnational exchange of knowledge between teams and individual participants, these events offer the possibility to gain visibility, become part of a broader network of like-minded experts and, most importantly, to access investment opportunities from venture capital or multinational corporations. The hackathons produce novel and original technologies but, above all, they foster a work-based learning model that forges entrepreneurial subjects. Therefore, the intent is to build on the hackathon model as the most viable approach to teach startup members about the European funding landscape.

Just as these data dives foster collaborations and provide a huge pool of opportunities in terms of networking, mentoring and work-integrated learning all in one place, the training will be based on face-to-face interactions for a short period of time 2 days, group work, and privilege a hands-on course. Building on their extensive and first-hand experience in this field, Europa Media (EM) and Startups.be (SBE) will provide training on public and private funding respectively. At the end of this two-day intense training, participating startups will interactively learn about the available funding possibilities, strategies to apply successfully for them, and practical insights on how to best administer the obtained funds. The basis for

the delivery of the training will be a training methodology which will aim to touch upon the most important aspects of the training curriculum, application procedures and feedback review.

## 2. Training methodology

The overall objective of the course is to introduce the funding landscape and provide a better understanding on the available private and public funding opportunities.

To support this objective, the training methodology will focus on establishing the application process, structure and delivery of training that will be delivered on public and private funding to the startups from Romania, Slovenia and Czech Republic.

From the area public funding, different funding possibilities, programmes and initiatives will be introduced to the participants. The workshop will be interactive, focusing on equipping startups with the necessary knowledge skills to search and select calls where they can submit their applications. Additionally, startups will learn how to transform their idea into a successful proposal and learn the necessities of managing EU grants. As a wrap-up of this segment the partners from the CEE countries will present available local funding opportunities as well.

Private funding opportunities have a significant impact on the growth of the startups. This portion of the training will focus on introducing the participants with the various pros and cons and will cover areas such as: private equity through angel investors, venture capital, crowdfunding and investment plans.

### 2.1 Application process for training

The training will aim to provide an intensively immersive environment for startups. Startups will be recruited in two ways: (i) open calls; and (ii) contacting startups that have collaborated with MY-GATEWAY earlier on in the project.

In order to provide structured and specific advices to startups a questionnaire will accompany the open calls for the training. The application form (presented in Annex I) will aim to cover a set of general questions where startups will indicate their basic information, their familiarity with public and private funding (if any), whether they have applied for any funding opportunity and an open section where startups can submit their questions to be answered during the training. MY-GATEWAY consortium will have the right to modify the questionnaire if there is a need to do so. For easy access and processing the form will be available in a Google Forms format and if needed it will be translated into Romanian, Slovenian and Czech language.

The second phase of recruitment will be to contact startups that have collaborated with MY-GATEWAY earlier on in the project. During the initial implementation activities of MY-GATEWAY the CEE partners have utilised their extensive network to harness the support of the startups. As a result, a strong collaboration was established between the project and an extensive number of startups in the ecosystems of Slovenia, Romania and Czech Republic. MY-GATEWAY will offer these startups the chance first to participate in the training, any open slots will be filled with an open call.

Ideally, MY-GATEWAY consortium will welcome between 10 to 20 startups per training session per country. Startups will be encouraged to come with 2 representatives in order to maximize their absorption of the training.

## 2.2 Delivery of training

From the presented theoretical background that aims to support this methodology, the delivery of the training will be within the framework of a practice-based face-to-face training programs for the startups. The ultimate goal of the training will be to increase the knowledge and capacities of the staff and the startups and also increase their understanding of the availability of public and private funding. The training will provide an option for startups to choose whether they would like to attend both days or select only one day in which they would like to attend. MY-GATEWAY consortium is aware that startups have different background in terms of funding and needs assessment and as such has created a training curriculum that will answer to these needs which will be a 2-day model.

Utilizing the approach of hackathons the training will aim to place the representatives of the startups in an intensive learning environment and equip them with the basics of European funding, provide them an overview of the European funding landscape and train them how to assess their funding needs in order to search and apply for the best funding option.

After the applications are received the trainers from EM and SBE will assess the answers of the startups regarding their interest and experience in funding opportunities and prepare a future set of recommendations specifically for each startup.

The first day of the training will provide a detailed overview of the EU funding landscape and available public funding opportunities such as: SME instrument; Fast track to innovation; Prizes, COSME and its financial instrument: InnovFin – EU Finance for Innovators, Eurostars, European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) etc. Tips and tricks will be provided related to scanning call texts, startups representatives will learn how to assess their capacities and strengths to see where they can submit their application. Moreover, the basics in EU grant management will be presented and finally the team of trainers will provide answers to the questions that will be asked in the application process from the startups.

The second day of the training will introduce the participants with the private funding landscape such as VC funds, angel funds, bank instruments and alternative financing. It will present the various opportunities available for startups in order to maximise their potential for acquiring private funds. Complementary to these presentations, MY-GATEWAY will provide the participants with an introduction of the MY-GATEWAY funding investment data sheet which will aim to provide simplified structure for the information that is submitted by the startups and a refined structure which will be tested with several funding suppliers. The MY-GATEWAY funding sheet will serve as a mechanism to ease access to funding between the startups and the funding suppliers.

A hands-on workshop will follow where the participants will have the chance to put into practice the knowledge that they have gained in the first day. Under the guidance of the trainers, each team will have the change to practice on identifying and refining their funding needs.

The culmination of the workshop will be a funding pitching session. Several teams will be selected where they will present their identified needs, which public or private programme they choose to apply for and why. They will present this in front of a panel of funding experts consisting of local ecosystem investors and EU funding experts. The pitching session will not be a competition rather a forum for the startups to receive direct feedback and advice on their results.

After the pitching session ends, there will be a networking component which will enable the startups to get acquainted with the local ecosystem investors, EU funding experts and amongst each other.

## 2.3 Feedback and finetuning of training sessions

In order to sustain the quality of the delivered training curriculum, the MY-GATEWAY consortium will do an internal assessment of the received feedback from the participants and the training after the first 3 delivered training sessions. If fine tuning will be required the partners will agree which areas should be improved and update the necessary documents, presentations and application form. After the delivery of the second round of training feedback forms will be distributed to the startups in order to see their satisfaction of the training. This feedback will serve as a direct contribution to D5.4 Report on the delivery of the training courses.

# ANNEX I

## Training programme for startups<sup>1</sup>

Application format for startups and entrepreneurs to participate in the training session.

1. Name of the startup
2. Country
3. Describe your startup and your product, service, innovation. [please include the website]
4. In which stage is your startup?
  - Seed [the startup is in its conceptualization stage and does not generate any revenue yet]
  - Startup [the startup is about to complete a marketable product and already generates its first revenue and/or customer value]
  - Growth [the startup has succeeded in creating a marketable product and achieves high sales/customer value growth]
  - Later [the startup is an established player and/or is planning to conduct trade/sale]
  - Steady [the startup does not create significant sales/customer value growth]
5. Have you ever applied for funding?
  - Yes
  - No
6. If yes, to which of these funding opportunities did you apply for?
  - National funding
  - Private funding
  - EU funding
7. If you know the link to the call, the topic number or identifier, please share with us:  

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8. How much investment have you received so far (EUR)?
  - None
  - <50K
  - 50K-150K
  - 150K-500K
  - 500K-1M
  - >1M

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<sup>1</sup> This application contains a draft set of questions which can be refined at any point if requested by the partners from Romania, Slovenia and Czech Republic.

9. To which kind of funding opportunity would you like to apply for in the future?

- National funding
- Private funding
- EU funding

10. What would you be interested to learn more about regarding private and public funding?

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