

TRIANGLE Startup Mentorship Programme Handbook

Phase 2 Implementation (2026)

1. About the TRIANGLE Project

The **TRIANGLE Project** is a European initiative funded under the **EIT HEI Initiative**, aiming to strengthen entrepreneurship and innovation capacity within higher education institutions. The project brings together universities, innovation experts, and ecosystem actors to support students, researchers, academic staff, and innovators in transforming ideas into viable entrepreneurial initiatives.

Through training, mentoring, and collaboration activities, TRIANGLE promotes the development of entrepreneurial skills, cross-sector cooperation, and the creation of sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe.

The **Startup Mentorship Programme** is one of the key initiatives of the project, designed to support early-stage startups in developing and strengthening their business ideas.

2. Programme Overview

The TRIANGLE Startup Mentorship Programme provides structured guidance to early-stage startups through collaboration with experienced mentors from academia, industry, and innovation ecosystems.

The programme supports startups in developing their business models, validating market opportunities, and strengthening their entrepreneurial capabilities.

Selected startups will participate in a **mentoring cycle lasting approximately two months**, during which they will receive targeted mentoring support and feedback.

The mentorship programme will run between **May and October 2026**.

3. Who Can Apply

The programme is open to **early-stage startups with innovative ideas**, including startups originating from:

- Students (Bachelor, Master, or PhD level)
- Researchers
- Academic staff
- Non-academic staff
- University spin-offs
- Innovation-driven entrepreneurs

Applicants must meet one of the following conditions:

- The startup is **legally registered** and possesses an official registration number (e.g., VAT, CIF, or equivalent).
- The startup is **currently in the process of being registered**.

Startups may operate in any sector, with particular interest in innovation-driven and knowledge-based ventures.

4. Programme Duration

The mentoring programme runs between **May and October 2026**.

Each selected startup will participate in a **mentoring cycle lasting approximately two months**, during which they will work closely with mentors to advance their project.

5. Mentoring Structure

The mentoring programme follows a **structured development pathway**, guiding startups through key stages of entrepreneurial development.

Stage 1 – Kick-off and Needs Assessment

The mentoring cycle begins with a kick-off session where startup teams introduce their project and discuss their objectives and challenges with mentors.

The purpose of this stage is to identify the startup's development needs and establish a mentoring roadmap.

Stage 2 – Business Model Validation

During this stage, mentors support startups in refining their value proposition and validating their business model.

Typical topics may include:

- Business Model Canvas
- Revenue models
- Value proposition
- Risk identification

Stage 3 – Customer Development

Startups are guided in understanding their target customers and validating market demand.

Mentors may support startups in:

- Customer discovery processes
- Market validation techniques
- Identifying product–market fit

Stage 4 – Market and Brand Strategy

In this stage, mentors help startups define their market positioning and communication strategy.

Topics may include:

- Competitive analysis
- Branding and positioning
- Go-to-market strategy

Stage 5 – Network and Ecosystem Development

Mentors may introduce startups to relevant actors within the innovation ecosystem, such as:

- Potential partners
- Innovation hubs
- Entrepreneurial networks
- Funding and incubation opportunities

6. Mentorship Format

Mentoring support is delivered through a combination of:

- **Structured mentoring sessions** (typically 2–4 sessions per startup)
- **Task assignments** to help startups progress between sessions
- **Document reviews and feedback** (e.g., business models, pitch decks, strategy documents)
- **Strategic advice and informal guidance**

Mentoring sessions may take place **online, hybrid, or in person**, depending on availability and programme activities.

This approach ensures that mentoring is **continuous and practical**, allowing startups to work on their projects while receiving feedback and guidance.

7. Programme Coordination

Each startup participating in the programme will be assigned a **Partner Leader from the TRIANGLE consortium**.

The Partner Leader ensures coordination throughout the mentoring cycle and acts as the main contact between the startup, mentors, and programme coordination team.

This role helps ensure continuity, clear communication, and effective mentoring support.

8. Mentors

The mentorship programme involves a diverse network of mentors, including:

- Experienced entrepreneurs
- Startup founders
- Industry professionals
- Innovation ecosystem experts
- Academic experts with entrepreneurial experience

Mentors contribute their knowledge and expertise to support the development of startup ideas and guide participants through key entrepreneurial challenges.

9. Certification

Participants who actively complete the mentoring programme will receive the **TRIANGLE Startup Mentorship Programme Certificate**, recognising their participation and progress within the programme.

10. Expected Outcomes

Through participation in the programme, startups are expected to:

- Strengthen their business model and value proposition
- Validate customer needs and market opportunities
- Develop strategic thinking and entrepreneurial skills
- Expand their professional networks
- Advance the development of their startup projects

11. How to Apply

Interested startups can apply by completing the **online application form** available on the TRIANGLE website.

Applications will be reviewed by the programme coordination team, and selected startups will be invited to participate in the mentorship programme.

👉 **Application [Form](#)**

12. Contact

For further information about the TRIANGLE Startup Mentorship Programme, please contact:

TRIANGLE Project Coordination Team

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