



### **D3.1. | Business Acceleration Service Portfolio**



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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this document is to offer a quick, but comprehensive overview of the co-creation processes carried out in the pilot regions of the Food-scalEUp project, and to present a compiled set of the services designed to be piloted in the first half of 2024 in the emerging/moderate regions of the project.



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## 1 Introduction

Food-scalEUUp T3.1. aims to develop new services and tailor-made the existing ones through co-creation among the partners and – as a value-added supplement to the original proposal, to cover the whole range of co-creation stakeholders - accelerator actors of the different regions. Its objective is to offer new or improved business scale-up services by the project partners, considering how to maximise the impact of what is already in place.

In line with our activities in the earlier project phases, the new and further developed services cover the following elements for the co-design of the services:

- Strategic, legal, financial, risk and technology management, with the aim of improved selection-evaluation-support-follow up procedures. It will also include the exchange of experts.
- Improved mentoring schemes, by introducing on-demand mentoring system, multiplying the partners' resources.
- Revised training offers and training providers' roles, based on the existing Living Lab initiatives around the partnership.
- Tech transfer, knowledge exchange, market extension and collaboration services among actors of the regional innovation/acceleration ecosystem with strong focus on the special values of living labs' offer.
- Exchange of experiences services for scale-up SMEs involved in accelerator programmes in modest/moderate regions, together with the accelerators' staff involvement.
- Support programmes for open innovation that bring together the large driving companies of the different regions involved with start-ups and SMEs of those regions to achieve growth driven by demand and help their scaling and consolidation as SMEs.

Co-creation is tricky and delicate. It works just as much with soft concepts like empathy and trust as with neat algorithmic top-down design processes. And to top it off, much of its effect depends on *other* people, who might not realise or misidentify what is asked of them and might not have the language to convey their thoughts even if they are eager to share. In short, it may be way out of the modus operandi comfort zone of policymakers and enterprises alike.

At the same time co-creation is the tool of choice to build a solid foundation of the stakeholders' actual needs to design for, can provide disruptive insight and can develop organic and close relationships within any ecosystem that very few other approaches are capable of. When done right, co-creation maps and builds motivation, shortens R&D&I response time, provides direct access to the root causes of complex issues, and thus builds competitiveness in every stakeholder. In short, it can be effective like nothing.

Food-scalEUUp project has chosen to introduce the co-creation approach into accelerator service development. The objective is twofold – at least:

1. Using co-creation in the pilot processes is a clear statement for providing the best possible feedback for the policy guide. The approach ensures the quality of the insight and in turn the quality of the Manual itself. The choice makes it clear that



the partners do not only focus on building new services, but on building well-targeted, easy-to use and attractive services which respond to actual needs.

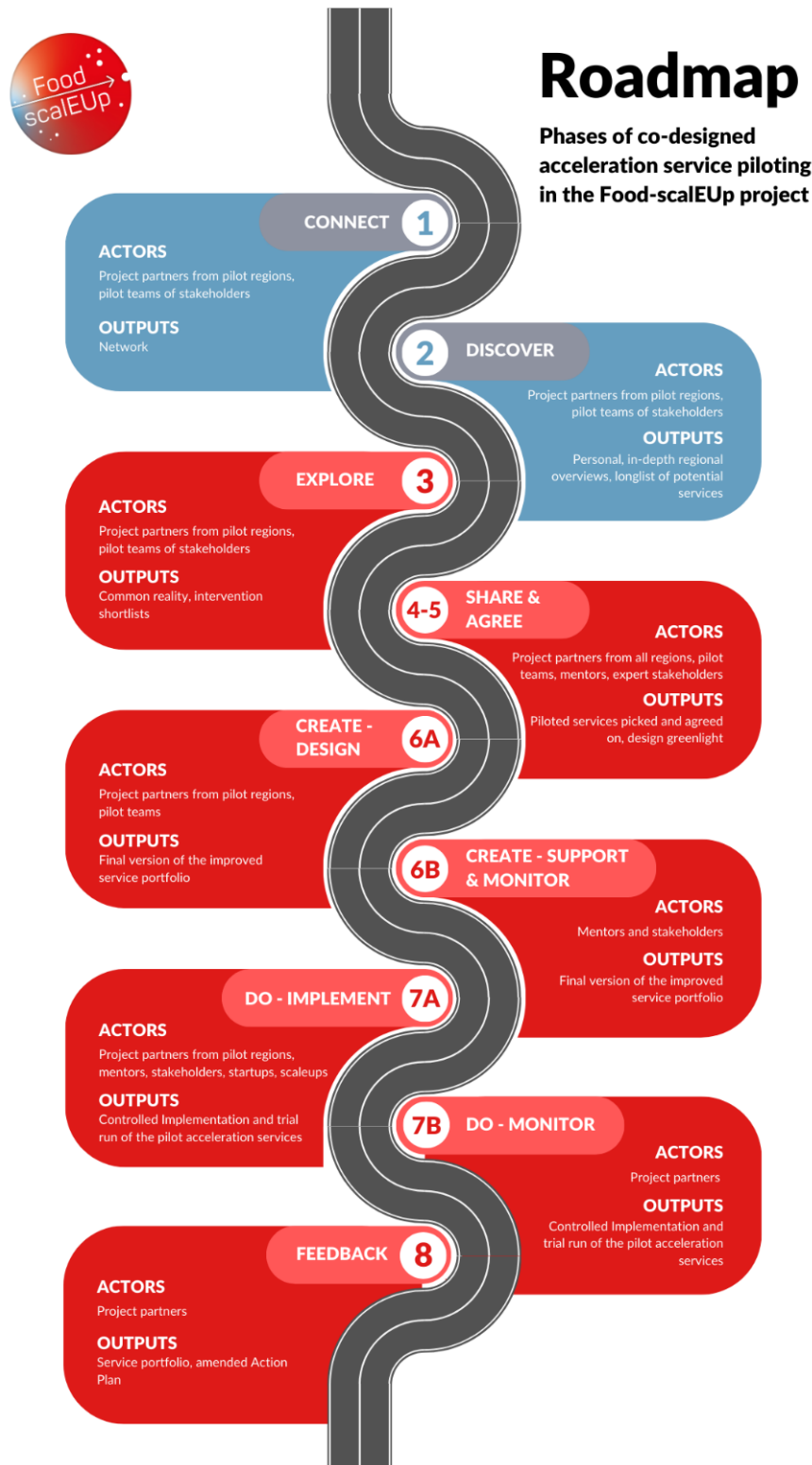
2. The introduction of co-creation into the service design process also tests the meshing of the approach with the local culture and lays the foundation of a potential permanent future system. This longer-term vision is almost as impactful, if not more than the explicit project objectives, and needs to be considered as such.

The core results of the co-creation process, that ground the pilot actions in T3.2. are summarized in the current document, stressing on the results of the emerging and moderate innovator regions. Additionally, a transversal service – mostly offered by the strong and leading regions – is added as an overall support service that provides all partner regions updated knowledge on existing state of the art technologies and living labs.



## 2 Process and methodology

To provide a structured framework to practice and implement the co-creation process in, the project partners decided to utilise the 8-step circular co-creation model (see figure below) as it clearly shows the continuity and sustainability of the approach. At the same time, it regards the process from a primarily interpersonal point of view, moving the focus from the insular expert design to the collaborative aspect.





Partners from 5 “moderate innovator” regions have been moving along the steps of this model. At the point of presenting this paper the process has reached Step 6 and offers service design concepts that all have their goals and definitions set by those to whom they matter most – stakeholders of every role relevant in the acceleration ecosystem.

After a joint interregional methodology training all pilot regions worked primarily by themselves in their local ecosystems, but with close cooperative support from both the other pilots and the strong and lead innovator regions. The process started with building solid regional stakeholder networks and finding all the key players, then continued with interviewing them, and getting them to commit to the process with an offer of real value stemming from their contributions. From all the local exercises more nuanced, more personal snapshots of the respective ecosystems and their motivators, drivers were drawn and shared. These snapshots, which were sometimes unexpected and sometimes quirky, resulted in a shortlist of potential services in every region, which both the stakeholders and some dedicated experts from more developed regions helped refine and finetune until the services found below emerged.

It is not in the scope of this document however to pinpoint every tiny modification, every realignment of values during the co-creation and design process. These are documented within the project, and in time, may see the light of day as a monograph. Some of the more significant highlights are noted in their respective design sheets though, and it proves the resilience of the process how seamlessly these medium-level pivots and innovations are subsumed within the design.





## 3 Regional Pilot Design Sheets 1: Galicia (ES)

### 3.1 Core information

Clusaga will test three services in the Galicia pilot, which will be primarily implemented with the start-ups and scale-ups from the Business Factory Food (BFFood, a vertical accelerator managed by Clusaga and promoted by the regional government). Two of these will encompass improved methodologies (coaching and mentoring), while the third service is a completely new service.

<b>Service title</b>	<b>1. Improved methodology for coaching start-ups</b>
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	
<b>Country/region</b>	Galicia / Spain
<b>Partner regions involved in development</b>	North Rhine Westfalia (Food Processing Initiative)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	Business Factory Food (BFFood)
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	Clusaga
<b>Target audience</b>	Primarily start-ups / scale-ups participating in BFFood
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	FEUGA (Galician Foundation University-Enterprise), collaborator involved in BFFood to provide coaching services
<b>Program start-end</b>	January – July 2024

<b>Service title</b>	<b>2. Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups</b>
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	
<b>Country/region</b>	Galicia / Spain
<b>Partner regions involves in development</b>	North Rhine Westfalia (Food Processing Initiative)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	Business Factory Food (BFFood)
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	Clusaga
<b>Target audience</b>	Mentors (from leading food companies) involved in the BFFood Primarily start-ups / scale-ups participating in BFFood
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	AGACA (Galician Association of Agrifood Co-operatives), collaborator involved in BFFood to coordinate the mentoring services. Mentors involved in BFFood
<b>Program start-end</b>	January – July 2024
<b>Budget forecast</b>	n/a

<b>Service title</b>	<b>3. Pitch training and investors event</b>
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	
<b>Country/region</b>	Galicia / Spain



<b>Partner regions involves in development</b>	Wageningen (Food Valley NL)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	Business Factory Food (BFFood)
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	Clusaga
<b>Target audience</b>	Primarily start-ups / scale-ups participating in the BFFood
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	Food Valley NL
<b>Program start-end</b>	February – May 2024
<b>Budget forecast</b>	n/a

## 3.2 High-level overview

### 3.2.1 Improved methodology for coaching start-ups / scale-ups

Coaching service that is centrally structured yet adapted and tailored to the needs of each start-up / scale-up. This coaching service will be also better coordinated with the additional services provided in BFFood.

The coaching service will go through the following steps:

- Initial meeting and questionnaire to know the starting point, maturity level, and needs. Based on this, other additional services are also recommended.
- Meetings (initial, intermediate, final) with coach, mentor and start-up / scale-up, to align the awareness and the recommendations and suggestions from the coach and the mentor.
- Meetings between coach and start-up / scale-up to follow-up progress and needs. The process will cover aspects such as business model, market, recommendations of events and promotional channels, funding.
- Final meeting between coach and start-up / scale-up for evaluation (assessment of maturity, achievement of objectives and next steps).

### 3.2.2 Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups / scale-ups

Provision of guidance and methodological support to start-ups / scale-ups and mentors on how to maximise the benefits and impact of the mentoring support.

Each start-up / scale-up in BFFood is chosen by one or more mentors from leading regional industries, based on the interest of the industry in the start-up solution (open innovation approach).

A set of guidelines and templates will be prepared and explained to the start-ups / scale-ups and mentors covering aspects such as: i) how to get to know the mentor – what can the start-up get from the mentor AND what can the start-up give to the mentor; ii) prepare calendarization of meetings; iii) reflect about needs and lacks and how the mentor can support in those aspects.



## 3.3 The Service Proposal

### 3.3.1 Hosting program overview

The piloting of these services will be done primarily in the scope of the Business Factory Food (BFFood). BFFood is the accelerator of the food sector of Galicia. It is promoted by the regional government and managed by Clusaga and leading companies in the food industry.

BFFood seeks to attract and promote innovative entrepreneurship projects in the food sector and foster their transformation into innovative, viable and scalable companies.

BFFood is focused on solving the challenges posed by food industry companies. For that purpose, calls are launched to identify and select projects that are aligned with the previously set challenges and, therefore, have also the highest chances to be successful in the market.

BFFood has two specific support programmes (acceleration and consolidation) according to the development level of the projects, going from the initial idea with the acceleration programme, to the consolidation of sales with the consolidation programme. For the upcoming edition in 2024 and considering the needs and suggestions expressed by start-ups, the consolidation programme can include projects initiated up to 7 years before (instead of up to 5 from the previous editions) thus, better addressing scale-up needs.

The BFFood programmes include a whole range of benefits and services that are to be provided to the start-ups / scale-ups: mentoring, training, coaching, networking activities and access to a catalogue of infrastructures, facilities and technical services. It should be highlighted that each of the projects has a specific mentor belonging to a leading company in the food sector to guide and facilitate its development in the ecosystem and following an open innovation principle. Likewise, the projects will have access to specific financing in the form of non-refundable grants and participative loans, to encourage their take-off and consolidation.

### 3.3.2 Target audience, selection process

The target audience of the pilot are primarily the start-ups / scale-ups supported in the BFFood.

Currently, the V Edition is being implemented, which will end in January (acceleration) and consolidation (February).

Furthermore, the call for projects for the VI Edition was closed on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The start-ups selected in the VI Edition will start being supported by BFFood in the end of January 2024.

In this regard, specific targets will be as follows:

#### 3.3.2.1 Improved methodology for coaching start-ups

- This improved service will already be piloted with the V Edition (in January 2024) and later with the VI Edition in February-July 2024.



### **3.3.2.2 Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups**

- This improved service will be piloted with the VI Edition in February-July 2024.

### **3.3.2.3 Pitch training and investors event**

- This improved service will be piloted with the VI Edition in February-May 2024.

## **3.3.3 Topics/themes covered**

### **3.3.3.1 Improved methodology for coaching start-ups**

- Topic: experts & mentoring

### **3.3.3.2 Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups**

- Primary topic: experts & mentoring
- Secondary topics: product development; market access and validation

### **3.3.3.3 Pitch training and investors event**

- Primary topic: Funding
- Secondary topics: Competences & skills

## **3.3.4 Process of the planned service, sessions/milestones**

### **3.3.4.1 Improved methodology for coaching start-ups**

The purpose of this service is to provide to the start-ups / scale-ups overall and continuous support throughout their process in the acceleration programme.

The coaching will go from the identification of main needs and areas of improvement of the start-ups / scale-ups, to later provide recommendations, information, contact, or redirection to other BFFood services available (e.g. technical services). In this regard, the fields that may be covered through the coaching include:

- Identification of funding and investment opportunities
- Identification of relevant networking events
- Technical assistance for promotional material
- Industrial and intellectual property
- Identification of key players and competitors
- Market analysis support

The coaching process starts with an initial questionnaire to know the starting point of the start-ups / scale-ups, starting point, maturity and needs (TRL, IP situation, team, market). This information is analysed before a first meeting for feedback, and to agree in the strategy for the coaching support; also complementary BFFood services are recommended. Following this initial meeting, several meetings between the coach and the start-ups / scale-ups take place to follow-up progress and needs and continue providing support, based on the coaching topics listed above. Towards the end of the programme, a final meeting between coach and start-up / scale-up takes place for evaluation (assessment of maturity, achievement of objectives and next steps).



<b>MODELO DE NEGOCIO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dar soporte en la IDENTIFICACIÓN de fortalezas y debilidades</li> <li>• Trabajar de cerca con el promotor para alcanzar PERSPECTIVAS amplias</li> <li>• Colaborar en la evaluación y desarrollo de ESTRATEGIA</li> <li>• Soporte y acompañamiento identificación soluciones necesidades técnicas</li> <li>• PROPIEDAD INDUSTRIAL E INTELECTUAL: relevancia estratégica y evaluación preliminar</li> </ul>
<b>MERCADO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofrecer herramientas para la identificación de COLABORADORES/COMPETIDORES</li> <li>• Capacitar en la búsqueda de DATOS CLAVE</li> </ul>
<b>EVENTOS Y CANALES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identificación de CANALES de promoción y EVENTOS de interés para el proyecto</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCIACIÓN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soporte en el diseño y contenido clave del MATERIAL PROMOCIONAL</li> <li>• Monitorización y soporte en la búsqueda de COLABORADORES y/o INVERSORES, proyectos I+D, open calls, financiación público privada</li> </ul>

### 3.3.4.2 Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups / scale-ups

The improved methodology for mentoring aims to ensure that the start-ups / scale-ups take as much advantage as possible of the access they have to mentors from relevant industrial companies in the region.

The methodology will try to:

- Ensure that the start-ups / scale-ups understand the value of having access to key actors in the Galician food industry
- Ensure that the start-ups / scale-ups have the tools and necessary planning to take advantage of those mentoring sessions (this is because, as mentors work pro bono, it is important that the start-ups / scale-ups take the lead in the contact with the mentor)
- Ensure that the start-ups / scale-ups have conducted some strategic and market reflexion about their relationship with the mentor (what can the start-up / scale-up provide to the mentor? What can the mentor and its company provide to the start-up / scale-up?)
- Facilitate the assessment of the mentoring process to be able to make improvements in following editions.

For this, the improvements will include the following:

- Preparation of blueprint planning for the mentoring process (mainly meetings), including the overall definition of main meetings, and main objectives to be addressed in each of them. This is also a workbook, in which the start-up / scale-up can collect the key aspects discussed in each meeting.
- Preparation of support materials and templates, including: mentoring canvas, brief templates for meetings, etc.
- Follow-up by Clusaga of meetings between mentors and start-ups / scale-ups to ensure a proper calendarization and satisfaction on each side.
- Evaluation process, with questionnaires and informal consultations.

### 3.3.4.3 Pitch training and investors event

This is a new service that will be included in the BFFood as part of the pilot.



Currently, BFFood start-ups / scale-ups do not receive a specific pitch training and there is also a need to reinforce access to potential investors. Based on these needs, the service will include:

- Pitch training for start-ups / scale-ups
- Organisation of an international investment event

The service will be implemented as follows:

- Pitching competition:
  - o A first pitching event is organised, in which the start-ups / scale-ups do their pitches, having received guidelines to do so. During the event the other start-ups / scale-ups, members of the BFFood (Clusaga, mentors, regional government) and other experts comment, wrap-up and provide suggestions for improvement.
  - o A second pitching event is organised, repeating the same format as above.
  - o Best pitches are selected to participate and pitch in an event with international investors.
- Event with international investors: Selected start-ups / scale-ups will be invited to participate in an event with international investors, which most likely will take place in the scope of the F&A Next event, taking place in Wageningen in May 2024; FoodValley NL taking the lead in the organisation.

### 3.3.5 Actors involved

#### 3.3.5.1 Improved methodology for coaching start-ups / scale-ups

Besides the start-ups / scale-ups, the actors that will be involved are Clusaga and FEUGA (organisation involved in the BFFood and that is responsible for the coordinating the coaching service).

#### 3.3.5.2 Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups / scale-ups

Besides the start-ups / scale-ups, the actors that will be involved are Clusaga, the mentors (leading food companies) and AGACA (organisation involved in the BFFood and that is responsible for coordinating and supervising the mentoring service).

#### 3.3.5.3 Pitch training and investors event

The actors to be involved are:

- For the pitching competition: the start-ups / scale-ups, Clusaga, mentors, FEUGA, AGACA, regional government. External experts (to be selected based on their availability)
- For the event with international investors: the selected start-ups / scale-ups, Clusaga, FoodValley NL, CEIN and other Food-scalEUUp partners interested in participating in the event and in bringing companies.



## 3.4 Food-scalEUp pilot relevance

### 3.4.1 Development Objectives

#### 3.4.1.1 Improved methodology for coaching start-ups

		Relevance (1-3) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	2
	More Connected Ecosystem	2
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	1
	Tailor-made Support	3
	Better Access to Finance	2
	Teams and Talend Access	1

#### 3.4.1.2 Improved methodology for mentoring start-ups

		Relevance (1-3) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	2
	More Connected Ecosystem	1
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	3
	Tailor-made Support	3
	Better Access to Finance	1
	Teams and Talend Access	1

#### 3.4.1.3 Pitch training and investors event

		Relevance (1-3) <sup>3</sup>
<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	2
	More Connected Ecosystem	2
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	2
	Tailor-made Support	1
	Better Access to Finance	3
	Teams and Talend Access	2

Justify/expand on your choices in a paragraph or two. Refer to WP1 results if relevant and link the development choices to the regional needs identified there.

<sup>1</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'

<sup>2</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'

<sup>3</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'

### 3.4.2 Support services included and improved

Service types	Base service level <sup>4</sup>	Changed to <sup>5</sup>
<b>Hosting/ co-working/ incubation</b>	Yes	No changes
<b>Training</b>	Yes	No changes
<b>Coaching/ mentoring</b>	Yes	Improved methodology
<b>Networking/ matchmaking</b>	Yes	Improved (access to investors)
<b>Visibility / media coverage</b>	Yes	Videos and posts of the start-ups / scale-ups projects
<b>Funding</b>	Yes	Improved (access to investors)
<b>IPR and legal services</b>	Yes (through coaching)	No changes
<b>Other (specify 1)</b>		

<sup>4</sup> 'Relevant level'<sup>TM</sup> - consider the easily available complementary/substituting services in the region at the time of the pilot. 1-5 points, where 1 is 'technically available at most, low quality, low level', and 5 is 'ideal, easily available, high quality, high levels accessible too'.

<sup>5</sup> N/A if the pilot does not have an effect on that service type, or 1-5 scale used in the previous column





## 4 Regional Pilot Design Sheets 2: Navarra (ES)

### 4.1 Core information

CEIN will pilot two new services in Navarra that will be integrated into the CEIN AGROFOOD Scaleup Programme. The beneficiaries of these improved services will be start-ups, scale-ups and SMEs from Navarre. These services will provide services that have not been available until now and will include new and improved methodologies in the region.

<b>Service title</b>	<b>1. SUPPORT IN NEGOTIATION DURING FUNDRAISING</b>
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	
<b>Country/region</b>	Navarra / Spain
<b>Partner regions involved in development</b>	Food Valley (Netherlands)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	CEIN AGROFOOD
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	CEIN SL
<b>Target audience</b>	start-ups, scale-ups and SMEs from Navarre
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	To be decided
<b>Program start-end</b>	January – July 2024
<b>Budget forecast</b>	To be calculated

<b>Service title</b>	<b>2. PROGRAM FOR SMEs ON DIVERSIFICATION AND INVESTMENT IN START-UP INNOVATION</b>
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	
<b>Country/region</b>	Navarra / Spain
<b>Partner regions involved in development</b>	Food Valley (Netherlands)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	CEIN AGROFOOD
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	CEIN SL
<b>Target audience</b>	start-ups, scale-ups and SMEs from Navarre
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	To be decided
<b>Program start-end</b>	January – July 2024
<b>Budget forecast</b>	To be calculated

### 4.2 High-level overview

The main objective of the CEIN AGROFOOD SCALEUP Programme is to promote the growth and consolidation of agri-food business start-ups/ scaleups that can become future driving forces in Navarra.



This programme is part of a complete itinerary of entrepreneurship in the agri-food sector, whose ultimate goal is to enrich the business fabric of the sector in Navarre. The services offered by this programme are adapted and tailored to the needs of each start-up / scale-up.

Based on the results of the 'mapping of acceleration ecosystems' and 'characterisation of start-ups and SMEs' carried out in Navarre for WP.1, two main areas for improvement were identified in this region: **To build a better connected ecosystem and to build better access to finance.**

Additionally, **two regional workshops** were held with the aim of delving into the needs of startups/scaleups regarding these areas of improvement. Different stakeholders comprising Acceleration Service Providers, Investors and Funding institution and startups and scaleups took part in these workshops.

The objective of the first workshop **was to define what needs an emerging company has depending on the level of development (startups / scaleups / SMEs) in terms of access to financing.** What are the key moments in which they need financing, which financing tranches are more complex to reach and how these are being covered, significance of accessing international funds as a source of financing (investors / markets) in order to see what services could be structured or improved to facilitate access to this financing.

The objective of the second workshop was to **go into detail on the definition of what elements these services should contain**, how they should be structured and who should be the promoters, beneficiaries or providers of the financing services proposed to the companies.

A key element in the development of this project is the involvement of the strong and leading innovation regions through the support of emerging and moderate regions in the design and implementation of pilot projects.

Elements of improvement were also incorporated into the design as a result of Food Valley's collaboration during this process. The vision provided by Food Valley takes the focus away from the funding process and puts it on the importance of making the start-up more attractive to the investor. This should be achieved by means of co-operation with companies in the sector.

On this basis, a programme has been designed to integrate new or improved services that respond to these challenges.

The programme, **THE ECOSYSTEM AND FINANCING AS DRIVERS OF GROWTH IN THE DIGITAL AGRI-FOOD SECTOR**, will include two new services that will be piloted while being integrated into CEIN AGROFOOD.

The objective of this programme is to build an **improved foodtech ecosystem with greater capacity for funding and collaboration** through a multi-objective approach:

- Provide the necessary **support to foodtech start-ups / scale-ups to successfully manage the different rounds of funding required to grow and consolidate their business.** This support should be tailored to the stage of development of the company.



- **Increase the pool of companies with the capacity to invest in the sector.** Raise awareness and provide training to SMEs on how to diversify and invest in innovation through start-ups.
- **Encourage collaboration between SMEs and start-ups/scale-ups.**
- To promote intrapreneurship or the possibility of generating spin-offs from the collaboration between SMEs and start-ups.

## 4.3 The Service Proposal

### 4.3.1 Hosting program overview

The programme will operate on two fronts, driven by two new services.

#### 4.3.1.1 Support in negotiation and fundraising:

The CEO has to know how the investor or banker thinks and adapt the language. Often they do not know how to explain their project from a financial point of view. This becomes even more relevant when the business project involves an important and lengthy technological development that requires significant financing before it can be self-sufficient, since they will need to raise funds to be able to achieve their objectives.

The services that have traditionally been offered in the CEIN AGROFOOD program in terms of financing support have been classified according to the state of development of the company and the size of the round to which they want to access.

According to Dealroom, any round under 250,000K€ is called preSeed, followed by a Seed round that goes up to 1M€. Rounds between 1-4M€ are referred to as Bridge or Seed +, and any round between 4M€ and 15M€ is referred to as Series A.

Early-stage startups in the process of raising a round are offered services such as **identifying red flags** in any element of their business model or growth strategy, defining the initial **fundraising roadmap**, **deck preparation** or **data room creation**.

On the other hand, scaleups in a more advanced stage of development will have access to services such as defining the fundraising strategy or company valuation. The new service to be piloted in Navarra is the **Support in negotiating with investors**. This service will allow the companies to better conduct the negotiation process.

#### 4.3.1.2 Impulse for SMEs on diversification and investment in startups innovation:

Traditionally, open innovation programmes or corporate ventures have focused on generating collaboration between large companies and start-ups, despite the fact that a large percentage of the Navarrese business fabric, especially in the agri-food sector, is made up of SMEs. In many cases, SMEs see the possibility of investing in innovation as something distant or unattainable. However, we believe that there is a significant number of SMEs who, given the right impetus, could invest in start-ups as part of the innovation ecosystem.

SMEs with capacity to invest or give support to emerging companies, will be able to access a training program on diversification and investment. SMEs will gain an insight



into how working with start-ups can provide them with a capacity for innovation that they had not previously considered. This collaboration can take the form of investment or a synergy of cooperation in which SMEs and start-ups benefit from each other.

Participants in both services will be able to meet at a **networking event (hybrid)** where the emerging companies will have the opportunity to pitch to the SMEs participating in the programme as well as to a select group of investors, which may include investors provided by partners from the different regions of the project. B2B meetings between investors/SMEs and startups/scaleups will also be organised. This event could take place in the framework of an existing high-impact sector event such as Food4Future.

### 4.3.2 Target audience, selection process

The programme is aimed at innovative SMEs operating in the agri-foodtech sector or providing specialised services to the sector. The aim is to help them grow and scale their business models.

The call will be opened to all SMEs with their registered office and/or tax domicile in Navarre and operating in the agri-food sector, as defined in Navarre's S4 strategy. If all the places are not taken, it is possible to open up to companies from outside Navarre.

There are two types of participants, depending on the service being accessed:

- Startups and scaleups in the process of fundraising. Focus on €1-10M rounds. Focus on the need for support during the negotiation process.
- Medium-sized SMEs with the capacity to invest or support a scale-up start-up in some area of its development.

### 4.3.3 Topics/themes covered

#### 4.3.3.1 Support in negotiation and fundraising

Assistance with fundraising strategy to emerging companies which will compile different services. Although the program will focus on companies that are in the process of negotiating Seed + or Series A rounds, depending on the stage of development of the company, the support will be tailored in some of the following aspects:

- **Financial training and education:** Importance of the CEO being financially literate and able to speak the language of investors and understand the implications for their business. The CEO has to see finance as something strategic and not just operational. Being able to draw a fundraising roadmap from the beginning contemplating the different stages to be faced.
- **Financial planning and strategy:** strategic planning of financing is key from very early stages, covering the different types of financing: debt, investment, public financing...
- **Support in negotiation with investors:** Negotiation and legal aspects are considered key in the negotiation process. Have a tutor or mentor to improve negotiation skills: Rehearsing, reflecting, questioning, asking uncomfortable questions, confronting fears...



- Select the most suitable investors, or those who are more aligned with the company's objectives and/or those with whom you have a greater chance of success.
- To better prepare the negotiation process and be able to speak the same language as investors.
- Learn to **rebut questions/objections** from potential funders and consistently **defend your project**.

#### 4.3.3.2 Impulse for SMEs on diversification and investment in startups innovation

Training of SMEs in diversification strategy and investment in innovation through startups.

Identifying synergies as the basis for a diversification strategy.

Investment in emerging companies as a way to access innovation. Possible tax benefits, implications of shareholders' agreement, technology protection, knowledge transfer, negotiation process, signing of NDA, letter of intent, due diligence, investment structuring...

#### 4.3.4 Process of the planned service, sessions/milestones



#### 4.3.5 Methodology, logistics

A mixed programme that combines training and mentoring will be carried out.

#### 4.3.6 Actors involved

Experts will be selected to meet the specific needs of the program participants. Mainly experts in financing and negotiation of investment rounds with experience in emerging companies. Also experts in diversification strategy and the generation of synergies between companies.



### 4.3.7 Target outcomes/results/impact, KPI

<b>1. COMMUNICATION &amp; CALL OPENING</b>	<b>JAN 24</b>
<b>2. SELECTION AND MATCHING STAGE</b>	<b>JAN-FEB 24</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Selection of startups</li> <li>➤ Pre-selection of sMes</li> <li>➤ Compatibility analysis sMe-Startup/Scaleup</li> <li>➤ SME-Startup/Scaleup Matching</li> </ul>	
<b>3. SUPPORT IN NEGOTIATION AND FUNDRAISING</b>	<b>FEB-JUN 24</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Diagnosis and goal definition (a diagnosis session will be conducted individually with each company)</li> <li>➤ <b>NETWORKING &amp; INVESTORS EVENT</b></li> <li>➤ Support in negotiation with investors and fundraising (A minimum of 4 mentoring sessions with experts will be organized and, depending on the number of participants, a group training session may be considered.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feb</li> <li><b>april</b></li> <li>mar-june</li> </ul>
<b>4. IMPULSE FOR SMEs ON DIVERSIFICATION AND INVESTMENT IN START-UP INNOVATION</b>	<b>FEB-JUN 24</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Training program for SMEs (a minimum of two training sessions will be organized)</li> <li>➤ <b>NETWORKING &amp; INVESTORS EVENT</b></li> <li>➤ Mentoring program for startups/scaleups (a minimum of 4 mentoring sessions will be organized)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feb-mar</li> <li><b>april</b></li> <li>april-june</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Food-scalEUp pilot relevance

### 4.4.1 Development Objectives

		Relevance (1-3) <sup>6</sup>
<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	1
	More Connected Ecosystem	3
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	3
	Tailor-made Support	3
	Better Access to Finance	3
	Teams and Talent Access	1

### 4.4.2 Support services included and improved

Service types	Base service level <sup>7</sup>	Changed to <sup>8</sup>
<b>Hosting/ co-working/ incubation</b>	5	N/A
<b>Training</b>	4	5
<b>Coaching/ mentoring</b>	4	5
<b>Networking/ matchmaking</b>	3	4
<b>Visibility / media coverage</b>	4	N/A
<b>Funding</b>	4	5
<b>IPR and legal services</b>	3	4
<b>Other (specify 1)</b>		

<sup>6</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'

<sup>7</sup> 'Relevant level'<sup>TM</sup> - consider the easily available complementary/substituting services in the region at the time of the pilot. 1-5 points, where 1 is 'technically available at most, low quality, low level', and 5 is 'ideal, easily available, high quality, high levels accessible too'.

<sup>8</sup> N/A if the pilot does not have an effect on that service type, or 1-5 scale used in the previous column



## 5 Regional Pilot Design Sheets 3: Normandie (FR)

### 5.1 Core information

<b>Service title</b>	Service for facilitating industrialization in start-ups
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	Promoting implementation of deeptech solutions in agrifood industries
<b>Country/region</b>	France/Normandie
<b>Partner regions involved in development</b>	Bretagne (Valorial) Normandie (Normandie Incubation) Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur & Auvergne Rhône-Alpes (Innov'Alliance)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	NormanDeepTech by Normandie Incubation
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	Normandie Incubation
<b>Target audience</b>	Start-ups
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	Food-scalEUUp partners
<b>Program start-end</b>	n/a
<b>Budget forecast</b>	n/a

### 5.2 High-level overview

The primary goal of the Normandie pilot service is to address the challenge of change adaptation for industrial players and to support the industrialization of startups (only located in the Normandie region).

Within the framework of the NormanDeepTech acceleration program, which follows a generalist and tailor-made approach, the aim is to tackle the lack of confidence deeptech solutions in the agri-food industry.

Thus, the acceleration service aims to optimise and foster partnerships between providers of digital solutions and their potential users in the agri-food sector. To achieve this, the service will include networking opportunities through the organization of industrial site visits to facilitate an in-depth exchange of knowledge, focusing on the specific needs of industrial players.

This approach aims to maximize development and growth by providing practical insights into the benefits and applicability of deeptech solutions in the agri-food sector.

Valorial will support the visibility as well of start up in events.

Highlights of key aspects:

- Matchmaking enhancement (regional needs with available solutions)
- Vertical approach (directed to agri-food)
- Credibility development (overcoming scepticism)
- Market insight (practical feedback)



## 5.3 The Service Proposal

### 5.3.1 Hosting program overview

In 2021, Normandie Incubation introduced a new acceleration service offering for deeptech startups (across all themes). The incubator provides support to Normandy-based startups in various aspects:

- Business (support with fundraising and commercialization)
- International (assistance in internationalizing projects)
- Management (guidance and support in company management, human resources, and related topics)
- Industrialization (assistance in scaling deeptech startups and industrializing projects)

The program is characterized by its personalized support journey, ranging from 6 to 24 months, designed to effectively structure projects and significantly increase their chances of success. Focused on the goal of supporting deeptech startups, it concentrates on developing the full potential of their human resources. To meet the diverse needs of these innovative companies, the program offers a tailor-made solution, perfectly adaptable to the unique needs of each startup.

### 5.3.2 Target audience, selection process

The pilot service in Normandie is designed for start-ups operating across multiple themes, with a special focus on those incorporating deeptech aspects. A criterion in the selection process is firstly to be located in the Normandie region, and secondly the willingness of these startups to offer solutions that are relevant to the agri-food industry.

Therefore, this service targets also agrifood companies able of addressing specific challenges of the sector through their technological and digital approaches.

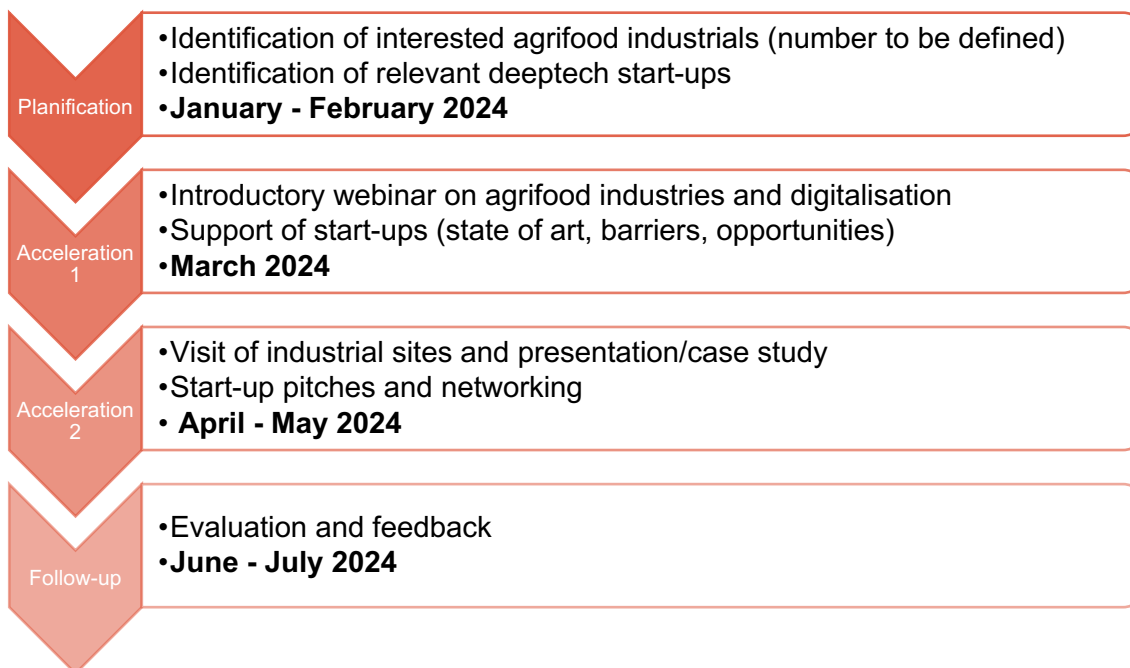
### 5.3.3 Topics/themes covered

The central theme of the hereby acceleration service is industrialization and change management. The topic is therefore to build bridges between start-ups and industry.

This theme has been carefully selected to support both startups from pilot phases to full-scale integration of their solutions. The selected topic is particularly focused on addressing and overcoming scepticism of industrials regarding the sustainability and effectiveness of digital Innovations.



### 5.3.4 Process of the planned service, sessions/milestones



### 5.3.5 Methodology, logistics

The planned method focuses on bridging the gap between digital solution providers and beneficiaries. The strategy will be implemented toward the agrifood industry by :

1. Targeted communication with industrial prospect at regional level.
2. Gather a group of start-ups interested to be introduce to the agrifood industry.
3. Implement an introductory webinar (feedback, challenges, needs...)
4. Support of start-ups including agrifood focus.
5. Implement networking event (visit of industrials and pitches)

This format will allow deeptech startups to be introduce to the agrifood industry, allowing them to showcase their innovations and gain practical insight from key regional players.

A key element of this approach is the organization of industrial visit sites. This kind of event can be considered as "opening gates sessions", aiming to feature knowledge exchange and potential collaboration. For the practical organization of these events, the involvement of industries is necessary and need to be taken in consideration during the whole process.

To provide some clarity on the issue, we concur that the industrialization aspect encompasses two key areas:

- Technologies developed by start-ups that may be of interest to industrialists
- Technologies developed by start-ups that need to be industrialized (scaled up), hence the need to create bridges between startups and industrialists.



### 5.3.6 Actors involved

The implementation of the service involves Normandie incubation that has taken advantage of over the past three years on establishing new acceleration services, with a focus on support for industrialization. Valorial and Innov'Alliance, as part of the Food-scalEUp project will accompany the service development.

In addition, to successfully complete this pilot phase in the first half of 2024, it is necessary to understand the complementary nature and expertise of the structures involved in setting up the pilot project.

[AREA](#) has established a strong network of agri-food companies, particularly industrial ones. They have significant experience in supporting their members in integrating new technologies and in facilitating connections between startups and industrialists by showcasing, through pitching, the technology developed by the startup that could potentially be integrated within the industrial company.

[FFWD](#) boasts experience with three groups of accelerated and supported agri-food companies. FFWD benefits from a robust network of solution-providing companies in the region, as well as local industrialists.

In 2023, Normandie Incubation and FFWD organized a joint event to highlight startups from the incubator and the industrialists.

### 5.3.7 Target outcomes/results/impact, KPI

The targeted results of a startup acceleration service designed to introduce digital start-up to agrifood industries, particularly in terms of industrialisation and change management, can be considered by having prospects for testing's/pilots.

## 5.4 Food-scalEUp pilot relevance

### 5.4.1 Development Objectives

		Relevance (1-3) <sup>9</sup>
<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	1
	More Connected Ecosystem	2
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	3
	Tailor-made Support	3
	Better Access to Finance	2
	Teams and Talent Access	2

Justify/expand on your choices in a paragraph or two. Refer to WP1 results if relevant and link the development choices to the regional needs identified there.

<sup>9</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'



## 5.4.2 Support services included and improved

Service types	Base service level <sup>10</sup>	Changed to <sup>11</sup>
Hosting/ co-working/ incubation	3	n/a
Training	2	3
Coaching/ mentoring	2	3
Networking/ matchmaking	2	3
Visibility / media coverage	2	3
Funding	2	n/a
IPR and legal services	2	n/a

<sup>10</sup> 'Relevant level'<sup>TM</sup> - consider the easily available complementary/substituting services in the region at the time of the pilot. 1-5 points, where 1 is 'technically available at most, low quality, low level', and 5 is 'ideal, easily available, high quality, high levels accessible too'.

<sup>11</sup> N/A if the pilot does not have an effect on that service type, or 1-5 scale used in the previous column



## 6 Regional Pilot Design Sheets 4: Pays de la Loire (FR)

### 6.1 Core information

<b>Service title</b>	Improved sourcing of start-ups at European level
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	Facilitating international collaboration in open innovation
<b>Country/region</b>	Pays de la Loire / France
<b>Partner regions involved in development</b>	Bretagne (Valorial, Technopole Quimper-Cornouaille) Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur & Auvergne Rhône-Alpes (Innov'Alliance)
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	Fork & Care
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	Start-up Palace
<b>Target audience</b>	Start-ups
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	Food-scalEUUp partners
<b>Program start-end</b>	January 2024 – May 2025
<b>Budget forecast</b>	n/a

### 6.2 High-level overview

The pilot acceleration service in the Pays de la Loire region relies on Start-up Palace, which is a private acceleration programme operator. It focuses on raising synergies between innovative startups and large corporations, specifically within the framework of open innovation. From 2024, they will launch a new acceleration programme named 'Fork & Care' that targets the health food sector. Seizing this opportunity, the Food-scalEUUp pilot aims to facilitate effective matchmaking between the needs of food corporates and innovative solutions developed by start-ups at European level.

The attempt aims to develop the scope of collaborative opportunities, ensuring relevant and successful partnerships. The emphasis is on identifying innovative solutions developed by start-ups at European scale, thereby increasing the reach and impact of collaborations between startups and large enterprises.

Therefore, the launch of a start-up sourcing service is highly addressing regional needs by connecting food industries with a diverse selection of emerging businesses and entrepreneurs.

Highlights of key aspects:

- Matchmaking enhancement (regional needs with available solutions)
- Vertical approach (health food sector)
- Open innovation field (collaboration between startups and large corporations)
- European dimension (expanding opportunities)



## 6.3 The Service Proposal

### 6.3.1 Hosting program overview

Created in 2015 in Nantes (Pays de Loire), Start-up Palace design and run acceleration schemes with white label startups on behalf of companies. To remain as neutral as possible in the support process, they don't take any participation in the capital of the supported startups. Startup Palace positions itself as a trusted third party between startups and large companies to help everyone work well together.

Here are the main areas of focus:

- Co-design of acceleration program with startups
- Startup sourcing
- Management of the collaboration project between a startup and the large group
- Facilitation of acceleration programs through technical support in strategy, product management, communication, finance and web development.

For instance, it has developed acceleration programme in several domains such as the media sector, insurance sector.

Launched in 2023-2024, Fork & Care is an acceleration programme which aims to help healthcare establishments, food and healthcare industries, and start-ups to initiate collaborative projects around the challenges of healthy eating. Thus, the Fork & Care acceleration programme is designed within open innovation characteristics to address strategic challenges by fostering collaboration among consortium members and, fundamentally, with selected startups each year.

The programme is scheduled as follows:

1. Pooling the priority issues & needs of consortium members of food corporates and health stakeholders to identify the topics to be addressed over the current programme
2. Call for applications and sourcing of start-ups at National & European scale & Selection of start-ups on the basis of synergies with consortium members
3. Framing and operational implementation of collaborative projects & Scientific diagnosis of the startups' solutions by the care establishments
4. Running the acceleration programme with rituals and highlights & Monitoring experiments and collaborative projects & Impact studies.

Hereby, the acceleration programme ultimately aims to expand the scope of experimentation in collaboration with industry professionals and healthcare institutions. Participants will benefit by accessing to a network of industry experts and receive tailored support throughout the process. The program also ensures medical and scientific validation for the solutions developed, adding credibility and enhancing their potential impact. Additionally, it provides paths for funding innovation in enhancing visibility for the participants and their projects, contributing to their overall success and recognition in the field.



### 6.3.2 Target audience, selection process

Fork & Care acceleration programme is an initiative developed to foster collaborative ventures with startups focused on the theme of healthy eating, and the target audience extends to solution providers not only in France but across Europe.

Also, it is fundamental to mention that the service established in the Pays de la Loire region is an acceleration service designed to facilitate the selection of startups that best meet the needs of the related industrial players.

Therefore, when considering the selection process, it is based on explicit criteria within startups focusing on health and nutrition. In practice, since the aim of the service is to identify start-ups that meet the needs of industries, the selection process remains open, as it is in the context of the food and health.

### 6.3.3 Topics/themes covered

The topics covered are part of a comprehensive Europe-wide service, aimed at enhancing networking and visibility to identify potential collaborations between startups and large corporations. It is specifically tailored to address significant health concerns within the food health sector with several defined areas of focus.

### 6.3.4 Process of the planned service, sessions/milestones

The Food Scale Up pilot idea is planned to test a sourcing process of start-ups at European level for the Fork & Care acceleration programme.



### 6.3.5 Methodology, logistics

The planned method focuses on the opportunity for health food start-ups to collaborate with food industry players. The sourcing process will be implemented across several European countries through to the SS4F partnership and the Food-scalEUUp partners.



1. Set up appropriate communication material and targeted communication in EU networks: a sourcing marketing approach.
2. Implement an initial series of webinars (e.g. France, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Hungaria...) as “Flash sessions”
3. Launch of call for interest of start-ups
4. Support interested start-ups to pitch
5. Implement a second session, bringing together the set of European startups for pitches as “Connect session”

This format will allow startups to showcase their innovations and position themselves for potential collaborations.

A key element of this approach is the organization of several "Fork and Care" webinars. These sessions, which can be described as "Flash sessions" and “Connect session”, aim to highlight collaboration opportunities. For the practical organization of these events, a traditional video conferencing tool will be used, ensuring optimal accessibility and ease of use.

The final selection of start-ups involved in Fork & Care will be operated by Start-up Palace.

### 6.3.6 Actors involved

The implementation of the pilot involves several actors, namely the Fork & Care consortium, Start-up Palace and the partner organization of the Food-scalEUp projects. However, the execution and coordination of the pilot are primarily in the hands of Valorial, Technopole Quimper-Cornouaille for Brittany (Strong Region) and Innov'Alliance for Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Auvergne Rhône Alpes (Strong Region).

In addition, Start-up Palace, as a part of the wider Fork & Care consortium, is actively engaged in representing, advocating for their initiatives & co-designing the pilot process.

Furthermore, the other partners in the Food-scalEUp project, such as CTRIA, Food-processing Initiative, CEIN, Clusaga, Agrifood Capital, and Food Valley, are expected to promote the collaboration opportunity with key regional industries in France that are centered on issues related to healthy food.

### 6.3.7 Target outcomes/results/impact, KPI

The targeted results of a startup sourcing acceleration service at European level, particularly one aimed at fostering collaboration with food industrial players, can be considered by having a comprehensive overview of interested and aligned start-ups.

## 6.4 Food-scalEUp pilot relevance

### 6.4.1 Development Objectives

Relevance (1-3)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'



<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	3
	More Connected Ecosystem	2
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	3
	Tailor-made Support	2
	Better Access to Finance	1
	Teams and Talent Access	1

### 6.4.2 Support services included and improved

Service types	Base service level <sup>13</sup>	Changed to <sup>14</sup>
<b>Hosting/ co-working/ incubation</b>	4	n/a
<b>Training</b>	4	n/a
<b>Coaching/ mentoring</b>	4	n/a
<b>Networking/ matchmaking</b>	3	5
<b>Visibility / media coverage</b>	3	5
<b>Funding</b>	4	n/a
<b>IPR and legal services</b>	4	n/a

<sup>13</sup> 'Relevant level'™ - consider the easily available complementary/substituting services in the region at the time of the pilot. 1-5 points, where 1 is 'technically available at most, low quality, low level', and 5 is 'ideal, easily available, high quality, high levels accessible too'.

<sup>14</sup> N/A if the pilot does not have an effect on that service type, or 1-5 scale used in the previous column





## 7 Regional Pilot Design Sheets 5: Central Transdanubia (HU)

### 7.1 Core information

<b>Service title</b>	Sector-based Business Coaching/Mentoring
<b>Subtitle if applicable</b>	Problem-focused Business Development for Potent SMEs
<b>Country/region</b>	Hungary
<b>Partner regions involved in development</b>	FPI Nordrhein-Westfalen
<b>Hosting acceleration programme</b>	CTRIA Accelerator 1
<b>Hosting organisation</b>	CTRIA
<b>Target audience</b>	Food industry SMEs with high innovation/growth potential
<b>Providers/experts involved in providing the service</b>	
<b>Program start-end</b>	01.2024-05.2024
<b>Budget forecast</b>	

### 7.2 High-level overview

In Hungary both incubators and accelerators are easily accessible as a service, but mostly due to market reasons they almost exclusively focus on a blanket approach: non-personalized, easily repeatable provision of services and competences without sectoral specificities. CTRIA aims at testing a paradigm that is novel in this ecosystem: a sector-based and solution-focused boutique coaching service aiming at not just transferring but implementing/interiorizing the new competences, adapting them to specific individual bottleneck situations.

### 7.3 The Service Proposal

#### 7.3.1 Hosting program overview

CTRIA Accelerator 1 is a self-contained test programme set up explicitly to test the Agency's capabilities as an independent and/or subcontractable acceleration service provider. The individual scopes of the SME experiences are therefore narrow but varied. The programme aims to be a flagship of small-scale vertical acceleration schemes, which are currently missing from the Hungarian market – even though the co-creation discovery showed great interest in them from almost all sides of the acceleration ecosystem.

While market size and logistical complexity may make it unfeasible to launch such services in larger programmes, but calculations and feedback both seem to imply that small-scale, highly tailored, and result-oriented “boutique” services could have a viable niche for the foreseeable future.



### 7.3.2 Target audience, selection process

CTRIA Accelerator 1 is designed to cater for 10-15 established SMEs working either directly in the food industry or providing services for it. The call is set to be open for all, with special consideration offered to the actors of the regional acceleration ecosystem that contributed to the cocreation process, to facilitate meaningful process feedback.

Ecosystem actors that participated in the co-creation process, but are not eligible to be beneficiaries – promoters, acceleration service providers and large/veteran industry representatives are to be involved in the pilot as reviewers and experts.

The selection process is designed to be user-friendly, personal, in-depth and specific.

- **User friendly:** the application to be submitted is simple and to the point, it focuses on a short, balanced overview of the SMEs past, present and future in a couple of numbers and paragraphs.
- **Personal:** A 1–3-hour expert interview and analysis session is scheduled with every applicant over the threshold. The interview verifies the comprehensiveness of the applicant's view of their enterprise, validates the feasibility of the selected development goal, and maps the company market situation and value chain in an actionable format.
- **In-depth:** The interview report provides value even to those not selected via a complex snapshot of their company and clearer choices to be independently utilized.
- **Specific:** At the end of the selection process all selected SMEs need to agree to a very specific issue to work on during the service period. This issue is jointly selected as the result of the interview and is to be as close to their root bottleneck as possible while still maintaining short-term actionability.

### 7.3.3 Topics/themes covered

One of the key paradigm features of this pilot experiment is openness, meaning that no two SMEs *need* to tackle the same topic if it is not relevant for both. In addition, all cases are expected to be mostly specific to the individual issue, therefore major differences are expected even within the same rough field. That said, participants are expected to apply with issues belonging to the following topics, identified during the cocreation process:

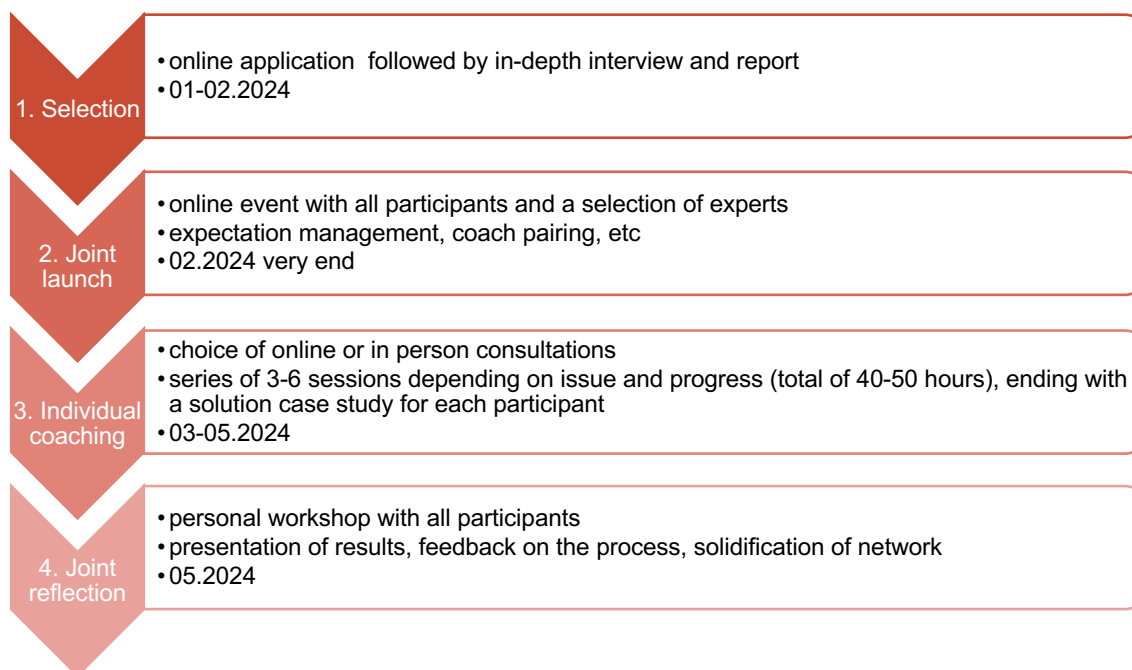
- 1) **Business development, strategic management.** This area was one of the most mentioned during the co-creation exploration workshops and interviews. While a number of elements are quite widely included in most of the existing incubation and acceleration programmes, both the venture capital side and the beneficiary/SME side was emphatic about the need for way more direct everyday applicability and persistent visioning in this regard. It is expected from the feedback received so far, that the most common issues in this area will include realistic growth forecasting, business planning, market analysis and solidifying the goal hierarchy of the company, i.e. identifying key value points and developing them.
- 2) **Production management.** This area is not often included in similar services, because in order to be practical, it works best with on-site visits and direct reflections, which grows both complicated to organise and diluted in content when



offered for larger groups. At our target service size however, these tasks can be tailored to the one person/company being coached, and the value received can be directly translated into actionable ideas. While a complete LEAN introduction is way out of scope for this programme, process optimization, practical technological considerations, bottleneck-management and similar issues are definitely expected to be among the ones addressed during the service.

- 3) **International markets.** The role of internationalisation in acceleration is ambivalent. It is considered a key trajectory for start-ups, and is therefore a part in every existing programme, and all the participants interviewed listed it as something interesting too. However, most of them also showed both reticence and some confusion when asked about specific goals, plans or even market directions. It is one of the main results of our co-creation discussion that tackling the topic of internationalisation needs to be reimagined to focus only on potent products/services, to actively break down reservations and offer a solid, tailor-made battle-plan to the company, complete with tools to analyse, target and enter a foreign market.
- 4) **Innovation management and twin transition.** Once again, this is an area that tends to appear in many existing acceleration programmes. Our value added is the part of mentored practical application and verification that is missing from larger-scale programmes by necessity. A credible, personalised guidance process scored high among the wishes of even some of the more innovative SME contributors. Since this is a key competence of CTRIA, it was clear from that start that this service can and should be included in the service portfolio.
- 5) **Resilience.** The concept of resilience has gained a lot in importance during the recent crises and instabilities. Risk mitigation and business flexibility have both become things to consider at much earlier stages of business development. It needs to be recognised though that caution, if exercised properly, need not bite excessively into margins, and long-term survivability does not come at the cost of ALL the short-term profits. A conscious focus on the long-term benefits can actually help kickstart the development of SMEs that became paralysed with fear and/or indecision. Parallel sourcing and market separation are both considerations here, just like developing plans for automatization, social distancing protocols, and even specific HR development scopes.

### 7.3.4 Process of the planned service, sessions/milestones



### 7.3.5 Actors involved

Two types of experts are involved in a matrix-like structure: business coaches and industry veterans.

A business coach facilitates the process of each participant and is the primary contact point. The role of the coach is to provide the structure that enables the coachee to work through their issue at their own pace, never taking away agency, but providing tools whenever necessary. Coaches are fluent in business development, but their key role is not to solve problems, but to accompany the coachee down the path of practical, self-paced development.

Business coaches do not necessarily have experience with the dynamics of the particular industry though. While most issues can be generalized, it is key for participant experience that sectoral insights and credibility are showcased too. This is where industry veterans are brought in. During the later half of the coaching process, when the goal is crystal clear and solution implementation is being worked out, industry veterans are brought in to consult and provide unique insight and direction in a workshop session.

A shortlist of both types of experts is to be finalized in December 2023, onboarded during the selection period in January-February 2024. The onboarding process includes a train-the-trainers session in February in order to fix expectations and prepare the experts for both the pedagogical/psychological and the sectoral specificities of the programme.

### 7.3.6 Target outcomes/results/impact, KPI

- 1) 20.02.2024 – Expert onboarding
  - a. 31.12.2023 – shortlist of experts to be involved covering all expected fields
  - b. 31.01.2024 – cadre of experts set, conditions of participation negotiated



- c. 20.02.2024 – train-the-trainers workshop for experts
- 2) 29.02.2024 – Participant selection
  - a. 10.01.2024 – 1 online application template prepared and published
  - b. 31.01.2024 – 25 online applications received
  - c. 29.02.2024 – 15 in-depth interviews done, reports sent back to applicants
  - d. 29.02.2024 – 12 participants selected, target issue agreed on
- 3) 29.02.2024 – Joint online launch event with all participants and selected experts
- 4) 15.05.2024 – Coaching
  - a. 40 coaching/consultation sessions conducted
  - b. 12 coaching/consultation processes concluded
  - c. 12 issue solution case documentations received
- 5) 20.05.2024 – Joint reflection event with all participants and experts
- 6) 31.05.2024 – Pilot conclusions and evaluation document submitted

## 7.4 Food-scalEUp pilot relevance

### 7.4.1 Development Objectives

		Relevance (1-3) <sup>15</sup>
<b>Ecosystem approach</b>	Acceleration Opportunity Awareness	1
	More Connected Ecosystem	3
<b>Business Service approach</b>	Valuable Partnership	2
	Tailor-made Support	3
	Better Access to Finance	2
	Teams and Talent Access	1

### 7.4.2 Support services included and improved

Service types	Base service level <sup>16</sup>	Changed to <sup>17</sup>
<b>Hosting/ co-working/ incubation</b>	5	N/A
<b>Training</b>	3	4
<b>Coaching/ mentoring</b>	2	4
<b>Networking/ matchmaking</b>	3	4
<b>Visibility / media coverage</b>	3	N/A
<b>Funding</b>	4	N/A
<b>IPR and legal services</b>	3	N/A

<sup>15</sup> 1-3 points, where 1 is 'indirect at most', 2 is 'plays a notable role', 3 is 'primary objective'

<sup>16</sup> 'Relevant level'<sup>TM</sup> - consider the easily available complementary/substituting services in the region at the time of the pilot. 1-5 points, where 1 is 'technically available at most, low quality, low level', and 5 is 'ideal, easily available, high quality, high levels accessible too'.

<sup>17</sup> N/A if the pilot does not have an effect on that service type, or 1-5 scale used in the previous column



## 8 Transversal service on building living lab connections

Many start-ups have a need to conduct tests and studies to improve their products or scale-up their production in all project regions. These needs can be addressed through the living labs network within the Smart Sensor for Agrifood (SS4AF) partnership, who have developed start-up services.

With the primary objective of building valuable partnership, strong/leading innovator regions plan to *organize a webinar to present the network of Living Lab and Foodleap concept, as well as to present techs and outstanding facilities/services provided by them.*

To be a good way of the dissemination of international facilities, as well as promotion of new technologies and services, the webinar as a service (Innovations in Food Tech: Empowering Startups and SMEs) will cover the following main elements:

- **Keynote: “Living Labs in the Food Sector”**
  - Why, how and what are Living Labs? Insights in the food industry landscape.
- **Case Study Living Labs: Accelerating Innovation in Food**
  - Case study of successful Living Lab participant
    - Role of living labs in fostering collaboration between startups, SMEs, and research organizations.
    - Real-world examples of joint value co-creation and rapid prototyping.
    - How living labs validate and scale up innovative solutions.
- **Untangling the Quadruple Helix and other open systems of innovation**
  - The 3/4H theory in practice
  - Providing context of Living Lab implementation in policy
  - Latest state of play in research
- **Tech Showcases: Startups and SMEs**
  - Highlighting innovative technologies developed or adopted
  - Demonstrations of food-related solutions.
  - Opportunities for collaboration and investment
- **Panel Discussion: Challenges and Opportunities for Food Tech Entrepreneurs**
  - Topics:
    - Access to funding and resources
    - Regulatory hurdles
    - Leveraging living labs for product development
    - Market trends and consumer preferences



## 9 The Way Forward

As already apparent from the design sheets, the implementation phase of the pilots (WP3.2) launches with January 2024. During the following 6 months all partners implement, monitor, test and improve their designs. This also gives us ample time to reflect on the process and the impact, make comparisons and draw conclusions. This meta-level observation is the key to the pilot implementation process. It enables meaningful feedback into the acceleration system and brings out one of the greatest virtues of co-creation: a collaborative ecosystem, which can handle on-the-fly direction shifts smoothly and kindly.

All these experiences will feed into the policy recommendations to be produced at the end of the project, which aim to draw up a better, more flexible, more resilient acceleration vision.