

space
hubs
network

Open Call
documentation



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PU	Public, fully open, e.g. web	X
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CO	Confidential to SUN project and Commission Services	

* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports), DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs, DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc. OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this document is to describe the selection procedure and the criteria used to select the start-ups or scale-ups to the individual 1-on-1 mentorship programme.

More specifically, the document outlines the selection and eligibility criteria that are applied when reviewing the applications.

This document will be updated and extended, if required, through the lifecycle of the project.

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ABBREVIATIONS

IRL	Investment readiness level
TRL	Technology readiness level

1. INTRODUCTION – ABOUT SUN

Despite the growing interest and investments in space industry, European space start-ups and scale-ups struggle to commercialize their products and get access to finance. There is a support network for European space projects, however the fragmentation in space hubs and initiatives still exists.

SUN aims to fill the gaps and build bridges between those initiatives by ensuring continuous individual support; raising awareness on the available tools to enhance financial sustainability and viability of businesses within the space sector. To address the multiple challenges, SUN has multi-level support initiatives.

One of the main challenges that European space start-ups and scale-ups face today is limited access to funding as well as difficulties in product commercialization. Moreover, the existing support initiatives are fragmented and lack inter-connection – they provide different services and while some of them are overlapping, some services are not supported.

The designed SUN activities of the SUN project focus on increasing the investment readiness of space start-ups and scale-ups, offering them a follow-up support that is tailored to their needs; and building bridges between the current initiatives. This will be completed by scouting, advising and mentoring space entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups during the 1-on-1 mentorship programme.

2. SUN PARTNERS

2.1 ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME

The SUN project is implemented by 7 organizations from 6 European countries (Lithuania, France, Ireland, Austria, Romania, Poland).



Startup Division
Powered by CIVITTA



Science Park
The High Tech Incubator
Graz



FIGURE 1 : SUN PROJECT IS IMPELMENTED BY 7 PARTNERS

2.2 SUN CONTACT POINTS

For any enquiries regarding the SUN project, please contact the Project Coordinator:

Silvia Ursu at silvia.ursu@civitta.com

For any enquiries regarding information and/or clarification about the present open call, please contact:

info@spacehubs.network

3. OPEN CALLS FOR THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMMES

This open call for the mentorship programme is supported by the SUN project and is financed by the EU's Horizon 2020 Programme under Grant Agreement 101004374.

SUN's key ambition is to provide continuous individually-tailored support, enhancing business viability and its financial sustainability.

3.1 MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME LEVELS

The table below outlines the 1-on-1 mentorship programmes offered by the SUN project.

Based on the selection criteria, outlined in this document, applicants can choose what level programme is suitable for them.

TABLE 1: 1-ON-1 MENTORSIP PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMME	DESCRIPTION
Pre-incubation support	Supporting entrepreneurs that have promising business ideas and helping them to reach problem/solution fit, preparing them for the incubation services and matching with incubation initiatives best addressing their needs and matching their profile. Duration of the mentorship programme – up to 3 months.
Pre-acceleration support	Providing help to start-ups that received incubation support, helping them to reach market/solution fit, preparing them for the acceleration stage and helping them to get into the most reputable acceleration programmes or secure pre-seed investment. Duration of the mentorship programme – up to 6 months.
Post-acceleration support	Scouting and mentoring start-ups and scale-ups that already have significant traction and have a validated project and helping them to secure seed or series A investment or sell their products/services to a large number of customers. Duration of the mentorship programme – up to 6 months.

3.2 WHAT SUPPORT IS PROVIDED?

During the SUN mentorship programme:

- ➔ Participating teams (or entrepreneurs) will be assigned one mentor, acting as their coach and supporting them throughout the whole programme.
- ➔ If there is a need, and additional mentor (e.g. expert of specific topic) maybe assigned for one or two consultations.
- ➔ The teams will have regular sessions (online or face-to-face) with their mentor (e.g., bi-weekly meetings).
- ➔ Additional time should be dedicated by the team to complete the tasks (assigned by their mentors), participate in experience sharing sessions etc.

4. METHODOLOGY FOR START-UP SCOUTING AND SELECTION

The key moments of the SUN project are scouting and selection of the most promising space entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups to participate in

the mentorship programmes. The recruitment process of entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups is summarized in the below figure.

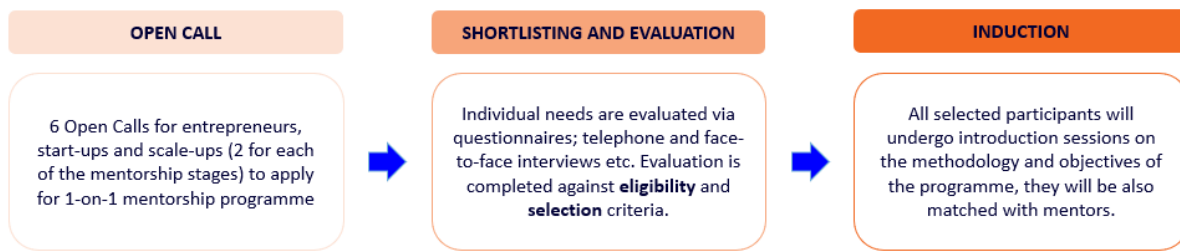


FIGURE 1: SUMMARY RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1. **Open call.** Start-up scouting methodology is based on a three-fold approach:
 - Pan-European open-call – six open calls (two for each of the mentorship stages), disseminated on the pan-European level;
 - Partners’ community reach – consortium’s network approach and internal scouting;
 - SUN hackathons and other industry events – consortium partners will organize 6 SUN hackathons as well as attend at least 10 other industry events to scout entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups.
2. **Shortlisting and evaluation.** The process will be completed based on the eligibility and selection criteria and will include but will not be limited to questionnaires, telephone and face-to-face interviews.

5. OPEN CALLS

The summary of the process of the open calls is as follows:

- ➔ The open calls will be launched via F6S platform for three levels of the programme (pre-incubation, pre-acceleration and post-acceleration).
- ➔ The application forms will be in English.
- ➔ The beneficiaries will be able to select for which level they are applying.
- ➔ When evaluating the applications, a deep check-up will be completed to ensure that the team is applying to a suitable level mentorship programme. In case a participant does not meet the criteria for that particular level, but is suitable for a different programme – they will be redirected.
- ➔ If there are less than 30 applications submitted, the open calls may be extended.

5.1 TIMELINE

The figure below outlines the timeline that will be followed during the open calls.



FIGURE 2 : TIMELINE FOR THE OPEN CALLS & SELECTION

5.2 WHERE TO APPLY AND HOW ?

Applications have to be submitted via the following links:

- ➔ [Pre-incubation programme](#)
- ➔ [Pre-acceleration programme](#)
- ➔ [Post-acceleration programme](#)

The SUN project team will only evaluate the applications submitted through the SUN submission tool within the published deadline. Upon receipt of each application, the system will send you a confirmation of your submission.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The table below outlines the factors that are taken into account during the evaluation process. Firstly, entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups are evaluated against the **eligibility criteria**. Only those that meet these criteria can be selected to the programme.

TABLE 2 : ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

CRITERIA/LEVEL	PRE-INCUBATION	PRE-ACCELERATION	POST-ACCELERATION
Relation to space	Product/service must be space related		
Representative type	Individuals	Individuals legal entities	or Legal entities only

Geography	Must be based in EU or associated country or consider relocating
Technology	Space downstream or upstream solutions
Applications	Applications must be written in English (application partially written in another language will not be eligible) and must not exceed the maximum number of characters stated in each text box in the application form.
Submission deadline	Applications must be submitted before the indicated deadline.
Indicated IRL and TRL level	<p>Applications to the specific programme (e.g., pre-incubation) must be of suitable corresponding IRL and TRL level (explained in detail below).</p> <p>If an application does not correspond to the correct level of IRL and TRL but meets all other eligibility criteria, it may be considered for a different level programme and evaluated against the selection criteria.</p>

When applying to the programme, the teams (or entrepreneurs) must select the programme level that is suitable for their team (based on the level of their technology and investment readiness). The below table indicates what level is suitable for each programme.

CRITERIA	PRE-INCUBATION	PRE-ACCELERATION	POST-ACCELERATION
IRL	Level 4 and below	Level 5-8	Level 9
TRL	Level 2 and below	Level 3-6	Level 6-9

The following tool should be used to determine the correct IRL AND TRL. If the team corresponds to different levels when IRL and TRL are compared (e.g. start-up has IRL Level 4 but TRL level 6), the assigned activity level is determined according to the importance of the indexes in this order: 1. IRL 2. TRL.

TABLE 3 : THE INVESTMENT AND TECHNOLOGY READINESS TOOL

LEVEL	IRL	TRL
Level 9	Identify and validate metrics that matter.	Actual system proven
Level 8	Validate value delivery	Actual system completed and went through test and demonstration
Level 7	Prototype high-fidelity minimum viable product	System prototype demonstration in a space environment
Level 6	Validate revenue model	System/sub-system model or prototype demonstration in relevant environment (ground or space)
Level 5	Validate product/market fit	Component and/or breadboard of validation in the laboratory environment
Level 4	Prototype low-fidelity minimum viable product	Component and/or breadboard of validation in the laboratory environment
Level 3	Problem/solution validation	Analytical and experimental critical function and/or characteristic proof-of-concept
Level 2	Market size/competitive analysis	Technology concept and/or application formulated
Level 1	Complete first-pass business model canvas	Basic principles observed and reported

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

Once the **eligibility** evaluation is completed, the applications are evaluated against the **selection** criteria, described in the table below. Based on these criteria, entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups are either selected or rejected.

The table below outlines what criteria are evaluated when selecting the participants. It should be noted that teams must apply to the correct programme level (based on the indicated IRL and TRL level).

7.1.1 Team evaluation

Team evaluation score consists of 3 sub-criteria scores as described below:

1. The technical and commercial competency of the founding team.
2. Teams' understanding of the assumptions and metrics about the market.
3. Product management skills – understanding of the competitive environment, ability to translate the market needs into a plan that could be delivered in a timely fashion given the limited resources.

7.1.2 Business development and product development

Entrepreneurs, start-ups and scale-ups must first choose the correct corresponding level of IRL and TRL using the IRL and TRL tools (as shown above). Therefore, IRL and TRL are first considered as eligibility criteria (to define if the team applied to the correct programme).

When evaluating the applications, the product and business aspects are also considered, but during this stage the following are taken into account:

- ➔ Innovation potential
- ➔ Business model
- ➔ Route to market
- ➔ Product development status
- ➔ Commercial application of the product

8. EVALUATION

The submitted applications will be evaluated based on the pre-defined evaluation procedure (remote evaluation of experts consisting of representatives of SUN partners).

First of all, an eligibility check will be completed according to the above-mentioned pre-defined criteria. The evaluation (based on selection criteria) and the ranking of the applications will be based on a set of criteria in addition to the eligibility requirements.

The following table explain the different aspects which will be considered for each evaluation criteria.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SUB-CRITERIA	SCORE
Business development	Innovation potential	1-10
	Business model	1-10
	Route to market	1-10
Product development	Product development status	1-10
	Commercial application of the product	1-10
TEAM	Technical and commercial competency in the team	1-10
	Understanding of the assumptions and metrics of the market	1-10
	Product management	1-10

8.1 SCORING MECHANISM

Evaluation scores will be awarded based on the criteria mentioned in the section above. The average score of all sub-criterion will be calculated.

- ➔ Each sub-criterion is rated between 1 and 10 points; no half points are allowed (decimal points may arise during normalization, but not as individual evaluation grade).
- ➔ Each sub-criterion has equal weight for the final score.
- ➔ The final score will be calculated as an average of scores given to each sub-criterion.

The meaning of scores is explained in the below table.

TABLE 4 : MEANING OF SCORES

SCORE	GRADE	EXPLANATION
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1-3	Poor	The sub-criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
4-5	Fair	While the application broadly addresses the sub-criterion, there are inherent weaknesses.
6-7	Good	The application addresses the sub-criterion well but with at least one moderate weakness.
8-9	Very good	The application addresses the sub-criterion very-well, although with some minor weaknesses.
9-10	Excellent	The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the sub-criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

In case of applications with equal overall scores, the prevailing one is the application with higher scores in Business development category, then Product development and Team in such order.

8.2 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Submitted applications will be assessed by the SUN project partners. Each application will be evaluated by two evaluators independently. In case of any disagreements, a third independent evaluator will be asked to assess the application.

The assessment period will take no more than 4 weeks, starting from the closing day of the call.

The applicants will receive an email about the outcome of their application directly after the assessment is finalized along with the instructions for the next steps in case the applicant is successful. The successful applicant will also be asked to sign the Participant's agreement and the Declaration of Honour.

9. CONTACTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

For any enquiries or complaints regarding the Open Call, please contact info@spacehubs.network

Your email should include the following information:

- ➔ Platform username and application name
- ➔ Lead contact name and details
- ➔ Object of your enquiry / complaints

➡ Information and evidence of the alleged breach (if applicable)

The SUN project team will examine the complaint on the basis of the information brought forward by the applicant and will assess the case. A decision will be made whether the complaint is considered justified. In such cases, where the complaint is justified, the application will be re-evaluated. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated to the application in writing within 20 working days from the date of submitting the complaint. The decision will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the programme if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

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End of Document



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