STARTUP³

D2.2: Technical and business support services design

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	✔
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the EC Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the EC Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the EC)	

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STARTUP3 Consortium			
Participant Number	**Participant organisation name**	**Short name**	**Country**
1	POLE SOLUTIONS COMMUNICANTES SÉCURISÉES	POLE SCS	FR
2	INOSENS DOO NOVI SAD	INO	RS
3	AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS	AGENSO	EL
4	ITC - INOVACIJSKO TEHNOLOSKI GROZD MURSKA SOBOTA	ITC	SI
5	HOLA-UP	HOLA-UP	FR
6	LATVIJAS INFORMACIJAS TEHNOLOGIJU KLASTERIS	LITC	LV
7	ETHNIKO KENTRO TEKMIRIOSIS KAI ILEKTRONIKOU PERIECHOMENOU	EKT	EL

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List of Founder Studio (FS) modules

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	
MVP	Minimum Viable Product
AC	Average Cost (total cost of production divided by the number of products)
FS	Founder Studio, the STARTUP3 Upscale digital education platform
KPA	Key Performance Area

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1   Introduction

1.1   Challenges for business

Survivorship and prosperity in the marketplace is a monumentally challenging endeavour, especially for startups and SMEs. Difficulties are severe and numerous. The current competitive landscape is also very challenging. Just to mention a few, one can attempt to ponder the plethora of snags the road to success is coated with, starting with the innate intricacies of any trade. However, not only the nature of an industry itself can constantly be evolving, requiring prompt and never-ceasing adaptation, but also reputation among the customer base can be fragile and hard to upkeep over time: it's easy to spoil and difficult to build.

More importantly, the behaviour of competitors poses a constant threat to a business. Rightfully, the competition environment has been paralleled to a battlefield, where all are left to cope on their own devices.

1.2   Challenges for startups

During the whole life-cycle for a new venture, and especially at the time of its creation, a newly established small-medium company - by definition a startup at this point - is usually going through a phase of product refinement and adaptation, in addition to blueprinting a business plan that will ensure successful penetration to the market and subsequent viability. Having already persevered tough issues like the inception of a valuable product or service for its target market and potential customers, initial R&D expenditures and funding for the development of the MVPs and/or proof of concept prototypes, it becomes clear that challenges are far from over.

More specifically, the next major milestone for the company would be to achieve sales traction and ensure its future operational cash-flows and income. However, this venture depends on a greater range of the capabilities, as well as the existence of favourable economic environment parameters, thus risks remain a significant obstacle in the whole process.

Focusing on competition, economic analysis curriculums clearly describe the added adversities an entrant business will face by competitors already active in the market, who will put deliberate efforts to block any intrusion among them. There are many similar variations of the strategy, and while those are well outside the scope of this document, it should suffice to note that said entry barriers are manifested through calculated price reductions (price war) against the entrant. To elaborate a bit further, due to the established companies' ability to increase output, leveraging dormant means of production thus achieving economies of scale, per unit costs (AC) are driven down. Consequently, the asked price can be drastically curtailed as well. That way, they attempt to become more competitive over the newcomer who typically lacks a comparable production capacity and cannot compete with such low prices. These findings are neither recent, nor consist part of cutting-edge scientific publications. They are instead consolidated knowledge in both classic and modern economic theories, typically taught to BSc students in courses related to Microeconomics and Business Economics. This happens in Monopolies and Cartels where strategic manipulation of prices and quantities is still possible, unlike in perfect and/or monopolistic competition, where individual companies in a market are powerless over their entire industry.

Alternatively, competition may not present such a big problem for startups that are heavily reliant on innovation, being involved in non-commoditized sectors, trying their best to find their position in niche markets or create new ones for them. Those are instead plagued by a different class of perils, related to product value. In fact, there needs to be an existing and considerable problem in the first place, that the product plans to solve for the end-users. Subsequently, it has to do so in an efficient and cost effective way, thus presenting a valuable proposition to its potential buyer.

Additionally, the company will need to also cater for more issues related to transactional burdens, making the product in terms of supply chain, given the available channels to reach its target audience, without unnecessary hassle. Equally as importantly, they should provide a consistent experience by supporting users after sales services in order to achieve higher retention rates and customer loyalty. For such startupers, bringing home the silver medal can be as good as finishing last, as there is the risk the winner to take it all. Especially the youngest of those entrepreneurs may abruptly face the harsh realities of the markets: unlike their previous recent experiences within a formal education environment, hard work and sincere efforts might turn out to be completely in vain, yielding no form of tangible reward whatsoever.

A further risk which all companies are susceptible to, regardless of reliance on innovation, is the fact that potentially weak performance in one or more among a set of key areas cannot be counterbalanced/annulled by excellence in other similar areas. For instance, a company will fail if they manage to consistently pitch their proposal unconvincingly enough, no matter how well and solid their technical expertise is. This is a quite vicious reality of professional endeavours, as deficiencies will likely go undetected at first, thanks to the other key areas where a business might do well instead. The early success only postpones a crisis for a later time and further conceals it. At some point, the issues will become evident to administration that will attempt a counteraction, hopefully with time to spare. However, insufficient mitigation strategies, that do not address the root causes of such issues, still only delay the inevitable failure.

2   A solution: STARTUP3 Upscale

The business threats presented above, by no means constitute a definitive and exhaustive list but provide clear insights on the nature of the major risks faced by startups in the beginning of their journey. This means , that an entrepreneur in the early stages, needs to be alert for various other aspects that could possibly jeopardize his/hers endeavour. Disheartening as the facts may be, the realities of market dynamics cannot be altered to protect commendable startups, where brilliant and hardworking people have invested their precious time and capital (bot human and monetary). What can be done however, is the augmentation and cultivation of top-notch skillsets among those businesses for them to acquire the necessary soft skills they need to thrive in the market. Coupled with the catalytic acceleration of interconnection/networking to established actors in their industries' ecosystems, including investors, experts and mentors, such an operation can drastically increase the success probabilities in business proposals that harbour real potential, innovation and passion.

Focusing on the two-fold solution proposed to help startups survive and prosper, the "Upscale" portion of STARTUP3's lifecycle attempts both interventions (i.e. capabilities augmentation & interconnection) through its sophisticated methodology that stands out thanks to its distinctive principles of operation that are presented next.

2.1 Modularity

The concept behind this simple idea is that the educative actions that empower STARTUP3's Upscale operation get organized into manageable chunks in terms of duration, topics and content structure. Each module is considered autonomous and highly personalized in coordination with the rest of the actions organized by the STARTUP3 (such as the workshops, discovery missions etc). In this context of this project and focuses on a single very specific subject that is analysed and presented in a manner that values easy understanding of its concepts. That is because they consist of comprehensive yet rather concise material, delivered in diverse formats including text, multimedia, files available for download and interactive practice/evaluation exercises and self-assessments. In contrast, some of the modules are instead conducted in a synchronous fashion, such as one-to-one meetings and sessions, this also enhances the personalization of the process and the knowledge and skills building based on the specific startups' needs.

The main reason behind modules demonstrating variance in their format and method of delivery is that their objectives can be accomplished by a range of procedures, and as such, a few distinct types have been employed. Those differ in periodicity, the level of involvement (i.e. the actors' roles in each module type) across the STARTUP3 consortium members, the startupers and third parties (i. e. investors, industry experts and/or other stakeholders). They also differ in the individuality of each session, with some being held with the attendance of the entire class of startups of a given Phase while others are being strictly private for each startup alone.

2.1.1 Webinars

Seminars (also called webinars, since they are often being held online, and not through physical gatherings) are one-off (not recurring) events, that resemble lectures. They are being moderated by members of the STARTUP3 consortium and are generally unidirectional, having a consortium member or a guest expert present and explain a topic for about an hour. A slideshow is used to help convey the most important points and help ensure audience engagement and good coverage of the material. These are events where the entire startup classroom attends and are being recorded and uploaded to the module's page on *Founder Studio* (FS) for future reference. That relevant page typically also contains a check-list to aid in evaluation, while it is possible to store further educational material as well (.PDFs / web links).

2.1.2 Workshops

Workshops can be regarded as live trials and rehearsals for aspects of business activity that are crucial for the success of the attendee. For instance, in the Problem Solving Workshop, startupers will be tasked to present the problem they aspire to mitigate and their proposed solution, represented by their product.

The Competition Radar Workshop instead, revolves around similar practical exercises on differentiation against competition, and so on. Workshops are further divided in multiple sessions, since every one of those is dedicated to a single startup enrolee, offering a degree of privacy among the "classroom". This is done to protect sensitive data that might give away the company's competitive advantage and trade secrets. An additional reason is that the group of mentors can focus solely on a given startup and dedicate much more time to address the complex issues of the workshop. Furthermore, workshops are meant to be a lot more bidirectional in comparison to seminars / webinars, and even assign startups the leading, central role in these ceremonies.

2.1.3 One-to-One (1-1) Coaching Sessions

Building on the concept of a workshop, 1-1 coaching sessions allow the mentoring committee to go beyond focus to a single company at a time, but rather more deeply, to the individual talents that comprise the team. They help highlight their distinctive strengths and character traits to assist them in developing skills in the areas they need most and allocate them in the correct roles in the confines of their organization. On the matter of roles within a company, there are also coaching sessions that focus on specific ones, like developing the unique soft-skillset a CEO of a successful startup would need. Many of the 1-1 modules are composed of multiple sessions per attendee, thus allowing for more total time dedication, greater focus on the sub-topics of interest and a higher degree of interaction.

2.1.4 Tribunes

This is yet another module type that focuses on single startups, much like workshops. What sets these apart from the latter type, however, is that tribunes are also attended by other stakeholders as well. Specifically, potential investors and collaborators come into direct contact with startups during these events. This is a type of module that is reserved for later stages of the Upscale operation, where candidates have already been served a nearly complete package of business education. They have a very well laid-out plan of business profitability and they excel in a plethora of business aspects, possessing clear situational awareness on market needs, competition, internal procedures and financial exploitation of their solution.

For these reasons, tribunes are considered not only an educative event, but mostly an interconnection opportunity to established actors of the market the startup has the ambition to disrupt. Startups will be able to pitch their idea in their potential future business partners and the attendees of these events will explore funding options to ensure market viability.

2.1.5 Investor Meetings

These modules are very similar to Tribunes and they serve as their continuation, since they take place during a very mature phase of the Upscale. What differentiates them from Tribunes is the fact that members of the STARTUP3 consortium do not participate nor moderate the talks. That is because startups have already been connected to investors that have shown clear interest and these meetings rather revolve around matters and procedures that will facilitate their business deal on topics like funding, acquisition or partnership.

The following figure depicts the distribution of the available module types across the entire STARTUP3 acceleration program.
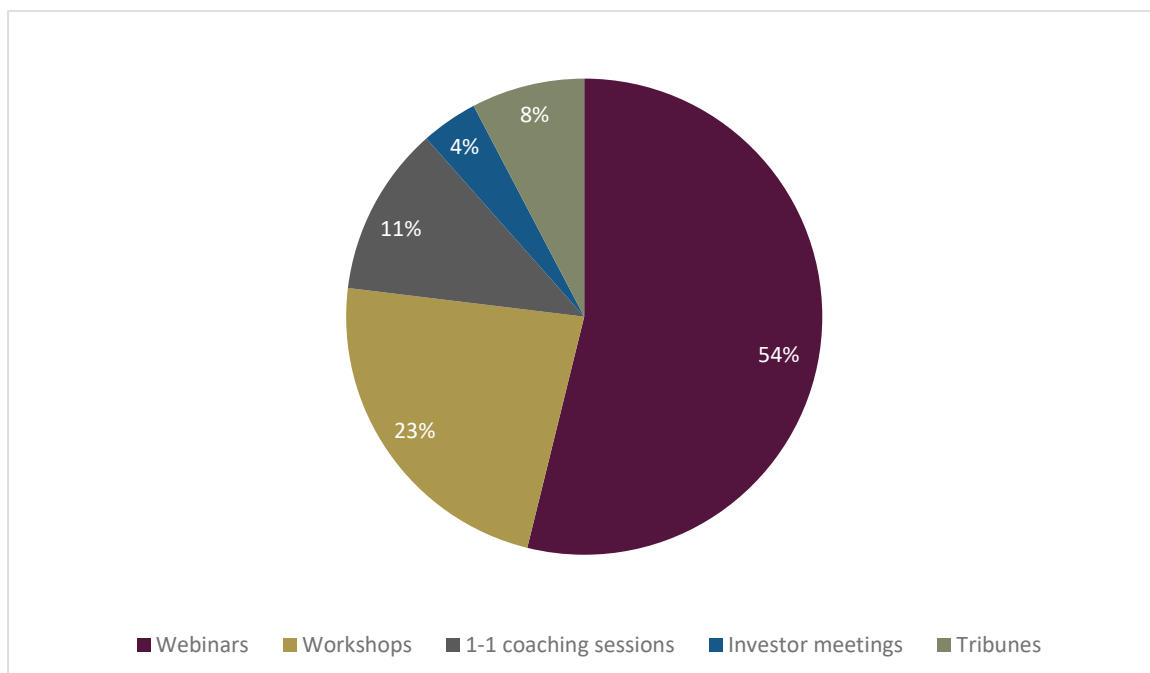
Figure 1: Module type breakdown for the duration of STARTUP3's Upscale

Regardless of the type of the module, it is evident that a lot of work goes into preparation for the event. That applies to all participants:

- **STARTUP3 consortium members and guest speakers / mentors:**
  Prepare the content which consists mostly of educative material, involve expert speakers from STARTUP3 and outside partners, engage in sessions with startupers evaluating their inputs carefully in order to provide meaningful mentorship. Of course, they are also tasked with event scheduling / organization and moderation of discussions. Finally, they write and deliver personal reports on the progress of attendees.

- **Startups and SMEs:**
  Allocate a significant amount of time trying to absorb the information provided by modules, either synchronous or asynchronous, and put effort in preparation for their part during the more interactive elements of the Upscale operation, like Workshops and 1-to-1 coaching sessions. They also model their idea on the FS platform and update it regularly. They demonstrate their progress by completing check-lists attached to modules.

- **Large Corporates and Investors:**
  Although their presence is rather discreet and silent at the early phases of the program, investors have a front-row seat in observing the evolution of STARTUP3 enrollees over time and they monitor their performance as well as the particularities of their products and services. As the operation matures along with all stakeholders in it, investors acquire an ever-clearer picture of the startups with whom they perceive a potential cooperation profitable, while records are constantly erased from their "shortlist". Besides, from a different perspective, fruitful engagement in business negotiations with investors is a major motivation for startups to excel during the Upscale.

2.2 Classification in Domains

As previously explained, various business strengths cannot really mask deficiencies in other key areas and make up for them. That is the reason why the skillset of a company needs to be uniformly developed, or at least avoid having extreme discrepancies across its components. Unfortunately, it is commonplace among company personnel that some aspects of their capabilities' profile are malformed. Similarly, on an aggregate level, the companies as entities might suffer from inadequate / ineffective procedures, protocols and departments as a result of misallocated resources within them, rather than lack of human skill. These effects stem from chronic neglect and figurative malnourishment that only adds to the problem. The Upscale strategy in the context of STARTUP3 takes into consideration that major obstacle which impedes the success of any startup; determined to help new businesses avoid that jeopardy, the program offers a well-balanced augmentation service, designed to eliminate such deviations early on.

To ensure viability for the startups enrolled to it, STARTUP3 Upscale architects have identified the aforementioned key areas of capabilities, essential for the young businesses, and have set in motion a plan to develop those aspects individually, delving deep in various concepts of each one. That approach is incremental, starting from base concepts and moving to more demanding and complex topics.

The key areas, or Domains in STARTUP3's terminology, are aggregate containers that group together modules of relevant matter. That is, they enclose modules of sub-topics associated to the same knowledge area.

The five Domains in STARTUP3 Upscale are:

- Innovation
- Organization
- Solution
- Business
- Operation

Those capability regions can be better understood as they are explored along with the modules they enclose, in a subsequent part of the document; Domain-wide descriptions are delegated there.

2.3 Temporal Segmentation

Proceeding to further analyze the methodology of STARTUP3's Upscale, the placement of modules in different points in time is the next major aspect to be presented in greater detail. To understand the reasoning behind the discrete milestones in the program's duration, the reader needs to be aware of an innate characteristic of an effective acceleration program, which is its temporal dimension and the constraints brought with it. The strategy governing the setup of the actual acceleration process should be examined as well, since it takes into account such considerations, exposing them clearly through the challenges it tries to address.

At the crudest level of design, one could divide such a program in two consecutive phases, *Homogenization* and *Specialization*. In the context of STARTUP3, those can be explained in further detail as per the following:

Homogenization / Integration

Startups that have prevailed after the peer-to-peer evaluation procedure following their application to enroll, have already most certainly demonstrated a very high potential to succeed and offer society a valuable solution in their field of expertise. However, those companies' origins can still be very diverse, meaning they could potentially lack fundamental abilities in conducting business. Those abilities could reflect basic background knowledge, not only useful in itself, but also comprising a common basis on which further communication could rely on, and sophisticated concepts could be built upon. In other words, enrollees need to be "on the same page" with each other and with the other stakeholders to secure proper acceleration to mature stages and fruitful connection to the investor ecosystem.

What is important to note for our analysis is that such common knowledge can be propagated with lectures, i.e. one-to-many unidirectional lessons. Fortunately, STARTUP3 has an established tool for that job: Webinars / Seminars, the "workhorse" for bringing skills up to the same level. Since that material is shared for all attendees, it can be broadcast simultaneously and universally, and even be recorded for asynchronous access, since those events do not require much input from the startupers anyway. That saves enough resources for mentors to be able to serve the rather large number of startups.

Specialization

Having established a baseline of capabilities and understanding across Domains, the next steps involve moving further to cover topics in each one that are not only more complex, but also require differentiated and personalized action per startup. In order to mate the advanced concepts to the particularities of each company and even to individual team members within those, different elements existing in the project's arsenal are employed. Indeed, modules like *1-1 sessions* and *Tribunes* that are delegated for later stages of the Upscale, are designed just for that.

Complete and successful delivery of those personalized modules is understandably a very time consuming process for the mentoring team, as these modules require individual and bilateral interaction with each startup for extended periods of time, that might also have to be divided to recurring sessions. Their "two-way" communication also means that by far the most convenient manner for them to be held in, would be a synchronous one. This comes in stark contrast with the *Homogenization* phase, where there is a degree of flexibility in scheduling both for content preparation and consumption. In this period however, preparation cannot typically be done in an

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arbitrary time for the mentors, as it relies on real time inputs from each enrollee, putting an extra strain on consortium resources. Precisely that lack of time to properly cater for all attendees for the duration of the program and especially Specialization, is the main restriction of the temporal aspect.

For this reason, a system that gradually eliminates under-performing startups is implemented during the *Upscale* operation, as the latter is divided in 3 temporal Phases, that take place consecutively and without overlap:

Phase	Number of Enrollees	Duration (months)
1	25	3
2	10	6
3	5	3

Table 1: Gradual elimination of applicants

While still honoring the principles of both *Homogenization* & *Specialization*, the schedule is organized in three phases, offering a seamless transition from the former to the latter. Hence, the Upscale is mostly comprised of Webinars and other mass broadcast events at the beginning and it is interconnection-heavy at the end, lined with modules of personalized services.
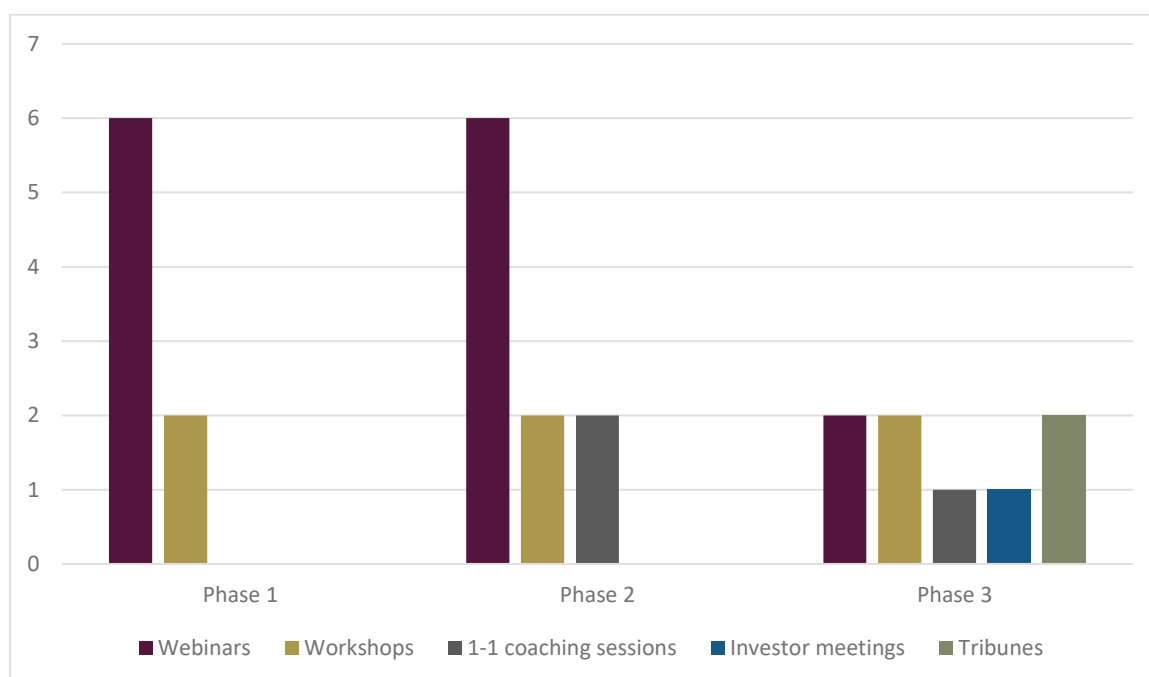

Figure 2: Module type distribution per Upscale phase

The two eliminations that take place during the Upscale, namely in the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 and from Phase 2 to the final Phase, have to be done for reasons that pertain to quality assurance, much like the selection phase that took place after the Open Call and ended before admission to the program.

Using Open Call's Self-Evaluation method, that was conducted on an external software tool, as a reference point, a total of 25 enrolees could then be selected based on their potential via mutual (peer-to-peer) assessment of their own deep-tech community of applicants. That number reflects the maximal estimated number the consortium's finite resources could very effectively service as per the demands of Phase 1, hence for Integration / Homogenization work, mainly. The first during-Upscale elimination round further brings down the number of startups from 25 to 10, reflecting the increased demands of the next phase due to its more personalized curriculum. Phase 3 halves the number of enrolled innovators by eliminating 5 more as a response to the ever increasing complexity of the acceleration venture at this mature stage.

Trying to keep all the startups on board until the end of the Upscale would only mean the inevitable loss of quality, as a result of the apportionment of a fixed amount of consortium resources and time to all. That would bring the amount of attention each one receives below a threshold which the intervention is deemed adequate and meaningful to actually contribute to their acceleration struggle.

The elimination rounds are an unfortunate necessity due to the nature of the acceleration program. For that reason, they are of course based on anything but arbitrary criteria, avoiding the possibility to dismiss the startups that do have what it takes to make an impact in their markets. Those rounds need not only ensure that the numbers go down enough to meet each Phase's capacity, but also that the survivors in each one are only the absolute top-scorers of the group. Much like a financial optimization problem, said resources ought to be invested to the most promising businesses alone. Unlike the initial community-based mutual evaluation that took place prior to the Upscale's launch which assessed applicants regarding the potential of their proposed solution, the two mid-Upscale elimination rounds are based on a list of concrete criteria. Those are to be monitored closely by the consortium and STARTUP3 stakeholders in a more private manner: enrolees will not be bothered with further evaluations of their classmates and will have their data concerning their progress kept confidential.

2.3.1 A note on evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria that will dictate the mid-Upscale eliminations reflect the startupers' responsiveness and their eagerness to engage the program. However, they are rather measured via transparent quantitative indices as gauges of their progress. Those values are gathered throughout five categories of Key Performance Areas (KPAs), monitored on the platform. The values are weighted by Domain and evaluator role and contribute to scores, as per an algorithm that is outside the scope of this document[1]. To give a gist of that process however, the lists of criteria are laid out, alongside to the assessing parties:

KPAs categories:

- Idea / Concept
- Innovation
- Business Model / Product
- Market Access
- Team / Talent

Stakeholders as evaluators:

- STARTUP3 Organization Team
- Experts & Mentors
- Investors
- Corporates
- Public

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[1] See Annex 2 "Guidelines for Applicants" of the project's Deliverable No 3.1, "Open Call Document Kit" by INOSENS for the specifics of the evaluation procedures, including KPAs and evaluator roles.

3   The Upscale Syllabus

As explained, the strategy behind the STARTUP3 Upscale combines a temporal aspect with a carefully selected mix of educational content organized in fields of interest (Domains) and delivered in various formats. The two dimensions of the acceleration program are obviously depicted in the matrix of modules, below:

Domain	Phase		
	1 (25 participants)	**2 (10 participants)**	**3 (5 participants)**
Innovation	Disruption Impact Seminar	IP Mentoring Seminar	PR / Communication Seminar
	Startup Benchmark Radar (Seminar)		
Organization	Founder Studio 360° S&W (Seminar)	Team Evaluation And Coaching (1-1 session)	CEO Coaching
		Pitch Coaching (1-1 session)	
		Recruitment Plan Seminar	Accelerators Tribune
Solution	Problem Solving Workshop	MVP Optimization Workshop	Product Roadmap Workshop
	MVP Strategy Seminar		
Business	Persona & Marketing Target Seminar	Digital Marketing Plan Seminar	BID Mentoring Workshop
	Competition Radar Workshop	Sales Funnel Workshop	Funding Tribune
		Funding Seminar	Investors Meetings
Operation	Architecture Dev-Sec Ops Seminar	Design Seminar	Security Stress Test Seminar
		GDPR Compliance Seminar	

Table 2: Modules per Domain and Phase (the Module Matrix)

It should be noted that modules of the same Domain that span across multiple Phases, are sometimes "connected", becoming a bit more comprehensive than their counterparts of a previous Phase. Also, the content format tends to get more synchronous at the later phases, were instead of Webinars, modules consist mostly of 1-1 sessions and similar ones.

With a clearer picture over the strategy of the Upscale program, the philosophy that guided its design, most notably the essential organization in respect to time periods and thematic categories, as well as various intricacies it demonstrated, the document can now focus in each individual module.

The Syllabus lays presented in a Domain major order, meaning that the modules of the same Domain are explored at the top level, with each one grouping the same modules in it that coincide temporally, at a nested level of presentation. This is to emphasise the importance of capabilities in those sectors,

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as previously explained. It also provides an opportunity to demonstrate the highlights of each distinct Domain's philosophy.

3.1 Innovation Domain

This domain focuses on those specific services that the STARTUP3 Upscale provides towards the development of a strong and well-defined competitive advantage of all enrolees. Startups will understand the importance of having a clearly differentiated product portfolio that will confidently address market needs in unique ways, rendering their contribution valuable to the consumer. Furthermore, they will be able to incubate product assets through which they can stand out of competition.

3.1.1 Phase 1

Title	Type	Code
DISRUPTION IMPACT SEMINAR	Seminar/Webinar	T3.2.3
Description		
The aim of this seminar is to expose to the participants what characterizes the disruption potential on a market by concrete examples and indicators that each startup or SME must seek to identify, measure, reinforce and develop. The second part of the seminar is to present the platform FOUNDER STUDIO and more particularly the INNOVATION domain. Based on what they have learnt, the participants will gradually feed the platform FOUNDER STUDIO from their own elements. This will allow the instruction and selection process to move from phase 1 to phase 2.		
Domain	**Phase**	
Innovation	1	

Module 1: Disruption Impact Seminar

Title	Type	Code
STARTUP BENCHMARK RADAR	Seminar/Webinar	T3.2.2
Description		
This seminar aims at helping the founder to make an accurate analysis of the battlefield first and secondly a clear and objective competitive positioning of its solution. We focus here on the destination of the study and therefore on the criteria of analysis and finally how to best show it. The second part of the seminar is a brief tutorial of the STARTUPLYNX solution and the COMPETITION check-list. At the end of the seminar, participants will gradually be able to feed the COMPETITION cards from their own content and enrich it regularly.		
Domain	**Phase**	
Innovation	1	

Module 2: Startup Benchmark Radar

3.1.2 Phase 2

Title		Type	Code
IP MENTORING SEMINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.4.1
Description			
The aim of this seminar is to expose to the participants what are the good practices and the different approaches their new or future company will have to define in terms of IP. We illustrate several strategies according to the maturity of the solution, the maturity of the market, if it is global or not and of course the result of the IP RADAR WORKSHOP generated during Phase 2.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Innovation		2	

Module 3: IP Mentoring Seminar

3.1.3 Phase 3

Title		Type	Code
PR / COMMUNICATION WEBINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.4.1
Description			
The aim of this seminar is to expose to the participants what are the good practices and the different approaches to manage the Press and Communication actions. We illustrate several strategies according to the market, segment and the product. We focus on the ways to define, conduct and budgetize the communication plan.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Innovation		3	

Module 4: PR / Communication Webinar

3.2 Organization Domain

This collection of sessions aims to develop the inter-personal skills of members of the startups. A lot of the effort and planning in this Domain is geared towards the individuality of each team member, the unique abilities and inclinations one of each one, their traits that might set them apart. The result of such in-depth profiling will enable a much more wise allocation of the talents discovered to suiting tasks and positions. Such distribution will not only maximize their contribution to the company overall, since human capital will be allocated to several positions, where they can perform at a maximum level, but will also ensure their own satisfaction and content in their work life. The acceleration ingredients of the Domain are not only applied to the startupers, but also shared with them to an extent, to guide adequate performance of their own for their team's future expansion through the correct recruitment selection.

Moreover, the Domain concerns the communication abilities of startupers, aiding in conveying their proposition message to third parties concisely, yet descriptively and by being engaging to their audience that includes potential investors and other stakeholders like customers, members of press and collaborators.

This domain also familiarizes the enrolees to the Founder Studio by requiring them to model their startup in to the FS platform.

3.2.1 Phase 1

Title	Type	Code
FOUNDER STUDIO 360° S&W	Seminar/Webinar	T3.2.1
Description		
The aim of this seminar is to introduce the FOUNDER STUDIO PLATFORM. Basically the participants will understand all the indicators that are key for investors and partners. In the next Phases the Startups/SMEs will have the opportunity to reinforce their weaknesses with the STARTUP3 teams during workshops in order to optimize their scores. The report will also be used for the valuation of the startup.		
Domain	**Phase**	
Organization	1	

Module 5: Founder Studio 360° S&W

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3.2.2 Phase 2

Title	Type	Code
TEAM EVALUATION AND COACHING	1 to 1 coaching session	T3.3.3
Description		
The structure and links between team members are one of the linchpins of the Startup project. Based on our observations during the previous seminars we identify strengths and weaknesses of the team (based on investors' expectations). Through team coaching (3 sessions), we analyse and we value the group dynamic, the potential of each team member (technical and soft skills) in order to organize, structure roles and select the most relevant person for pitching the project and lead the vision of the product.		
Domain	Phase	
Organization	2	

Module 6: Team Evaluation and Coaching

Title	Type	Code
PITCH COACHING	1 to 1 coaching session	T3.3.2
Description		
The pitch is the passport for convincing the investors, that is why it's crucial to prepare it. More than presenting a product, it's the moment to convince within a very short time unfriendly and cold investors. It requires a mental and oral communication preparation. Includes four (4) coaching sessions dedicated to build a persuasive, pithy, and clear elevator pitch, without stress and showing straight the perceived quality of the product and be able to defend it.		
Domain	Phase	
Organization	2	

Module 7: Pitch Coaching

Title	Type	Code
RECRUITMENT PLAN SEMINAR	Seminar/Webinar	T3.3.1
Description		
The aim of this seminar is to prepare the startup for defining its recruitment plan. Basically the participants will understand all the indicators that are key for investors and partners. In the next Phases the Startups/SMEs will have the opportunity to reinforce their weaknesses according to what they work on during the Team Coaching.		
Domain	Phase	
Organization	2	

Module 8: Recruitment Plan Seminar

3.2.3 Phase 3

Title		Type	Code
CEO COACHING		1 to 1 coaching session	T3.4.2
Description			
After the fundraising, the story of the startup is just beginning; the CEO and his/her team will have to deal with many technical and organizational constraints for delivering the product expected. That is why we provide to the CEO a strong mental preparation and strategic coaching sessions for facing all these crucial steps for scaling the project.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Organization		3	

Module 9: CEO Coaching

Title		Type	Code
ACCELERATORS TRIBUNE		Tribune	T3.4.3
Description			
This TRIBUNE enables the selected candidates to reach out and pitch in front of several motivated accelerators. Accelerators are familiar with the STARTUP3 methodology and the FOUNDER STUDIO platform. That means that each parties can go "straight to the point" on pragmatic actions.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Organization		3	

Module 10: Acceleration Tribune

3.2.3 Phase 3

3.3 Solution Domain

A practical Domain of modules that nurtures capabilities in companion with which, startups will be able to portray a clear view of the problems, that their business proposal addresses and the methodology that leads to the best-considered solution, they aspire to roll out to markets. Entrepreneurs will have to be able to accurately describe the current situation / aspect of economic life and explain the lack of a sufficient remedy at the moment of their business idea inception. Moving ahead, they will learn the basics of the MVP as a tool for both the persuasion of investors on the soundness of the solution and as a proof-of-concept model to guide a full-fledged, marketable and viable solution further along the effort. In later phases of this domain, startups will learn how to refine their MVP in ways that will inspire confidence to investors regarding the abilities of the solution to remain effective in larger-scale.

3.3.1 Phase 1

Title	Type	Code
PROBLEM SOLVING WORKSHOP	Workshop	T3.2.4
Description		
The aim of this workshop is to evaluate with the Startup/SME the problem that is addressed and solved by their solution on the market. This workshop is also a way for the STARTUP3 teams to evaluate the innovators and their capabilities to convince auditors. It also prepares the future coaching and mentoring sessions.		
Domain	**Phase**	
Solution	1	

Module 11: Problem Solving Workshop

Title	Type	Code
MVP STRATEGY SEMINAR	Seminar/Webinar	T3.2.7
Description		
The aim of this seminar is to help Startups/SMEs to define a good MVP strategy according to several KPIs. Even if the candidates already have a MVP, it is important to challenge how this MVP best illustrates their solution and, moreover, how it best attracts users. What are the most important aspects that a MVP needs to integrate and expose. At the end of the seminars, the candidates will have the opportunity to enter their information in the FOUNDER STUDIO platform and prepare the MVP OPTIMIZATION one to one workshop for those who will be selected for it.		
Domain	**Phase**	
Solution	1	

Module 12: MVP Strategy Seminar

3.3.2 Phase 2

Title		Type	Code
MVP OPTIMIZATION WORKSHOP		Workshop	T3.3.5
Description			
This workshop has a twofold purpose. On the one hand, to identify the key features of the MVP that can generate traction. On the other hand, to lay the foundations for an agile, scalable technical architecture and ensuring the implementation of a DevOps approach to ensure quality, security and viability.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Solution		2	

Module 13: MVP Optimization Workshop

3.3.3 Phase 3

Title		Type	Code
PRODUCT ROADMAP WORKSHOP		Workshop	T3.4.4
Description			
During this workshop, we work with the startup/SME on the product roadmap in order to enrich the value proposal and by the way the company valuation. It also enables us to materialize some company scale milestones and define the needs to achieve it. It's important for the investors and customers to understand what is the global offer that has been designed, why the company decide to concentrate on the MVP perimeter and what will come soon.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Solution		3	

Module 14: Product Roadmap Workshop

3.4 Business Domain

This is a multidimensional Domain as it involves topics related to customers, competitors and investors alike. In a higher level of abstraction, the modules with the "Business" designation on FS are associated with effective relations management on elements external to the organization, yet extremely important to the fabrication of a successful future for it.

As far as competition is concerned, startups will lay out a detailed mapping of possible adversaries, assessing their commercial readiness and they will validate their own solution for uniqueness against them, as a security measure to ensure their uncontested market share.

Regarding the essential clientele, attendees shall acquire the skillset necessary to evaluate and categorize a potential customer's profile in order to adapt their entire marketing strategy and communication approach to the most effective one for a given case. At a later stage of the acceleration program, enrolled organizations will learn the importance of precise mapping of the eligible customer base, the conservation of their resources via selective targeting to the "best fits" and the established best practices for the undeniably useful digital tools for personalized marketing, that leverage the interconnected nature of online communications.

Another major focal point of this Domain is the commercialization of the business entity via strategic partnerships, mergers or acquisitions that will not only result to generous funding, but will also unlock access to new markets, IP and assets of a higher order of magnitude. To that end, startups will cultivate and refine their commercial proposal in a way that it is clearly perceived as an interesting and profitable investment. At very mature stages of the Upscale, the few and already proven by that point enrolees will discover ways to detect investors' interest, evaluate their offers and intents, as well as justify their own commercialization demands based on their value. Finally, private meetings will be held between them to negotiate and hopefully contractually agree on a business deal.

3.4.1 Phase 1

Title	Type	Code
PERSONA & MARKETING TARGET SEMINAR	Seminar/Webinar	T3.2.5
Description		
The aim of this seminar is to convey the marketing methodologies and tools that the STARTUP3 program uses. We call it PERSONA because the customers' targeting is crucial to prepare the marketing strategy. In addition, the seminar will give some guidelines and best practices to the participants who are not always familiar with the marketing purpose and more especially the growth hacking approaches. At the end of the seminars, the candidates will have the opportunity to enter their information in the FOUNDER STUDIO platform and prepare the BUSINESS one to one workshop for those who will be selected for it.		
Domain	Phase	
Business	1	

Module 15: Persona & Marketing Target Seminar

Title	Type	Code
COMPETITION RADAR WORKSHOP	Workshop	T3.2.6
Description		
The aim of this workshop is to evaluate with the Startup/SME which competitors they have already identified and how they evaluate their maturity and differentiation.		
Domain	Phase	
Business	1	

Module 16: Competition Radar Workshop

3.4.2 Phase 2

Title		Type	Code
DIGITAL MARKETING PLAN SEMINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.3.6
Description			
This seminar aims to present the best practices concerning digital marketing. We shall present the methods and tools to treat the 4 major axes of digital marketing, namely: reach, engage, convert and act by integrating growth hacking approaches. At the end of the Seminar, the participants will leave with a synthetic support to implement what has been seen in the Seminar and the ability to assess the cost of a digital marketing plan.			
Domain		Phase	
Business		2	

Module 17: Digital Marketing Plan Seminar

Title		Type	Code
SALES FUNNEL WORKSHOP		Workshop	T3.3.7
Description			
The aim of this workshop is to prepare the "fast to market" stage by working either on a cross industries map, or on the first core targeted customers. According to the solution it would be corporates, public enterprises or PMI. The Workshop enables the candidates to manage the principles of generating a sales funnel. In case of a candidate having already a sales plan, the workshop goes deeper in its evaluation. Finally, the workshop is linked with the marketing seminars.			
Domain		Phase	
Business		2	

Module 18: Sales Funnel Workshop

Title		Type	Code
FUNDING SEMINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.3.8
Description			
The aim of this seminar is to prepare the candidates to the funding trails they will have to explore during the early stages up to the seed level and serie A. It is not a financial class nor a long debate on the pros and cons of VS, CVCs etc.. But, a guideline on what the investors are looking for and how to make a "bankable" executive summary. Several valuation models are exposed in order for each candidate to prepare their coaching sessions with a valuated and consolidated pitch.			
Domain		Phase	
Business		2	

Module 19: Funding Seminar

3.4.3 Phase 3

Title		Type	Code
BID MENTORING WORKSHOP		Workshop	T3.4.5
Description			
This workshop focuses on several commercial aspects: The detection of calls for tender, the Bid management mainly focus on the commercial proposal and its defence. The workshop will be prepared in advance to address real cases whenever possible. A major effort will be made by STARTUP3 teams to solicit industrial companies and public institutions to engage market consultations.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Business		3	

Module 20: Bid Mentoring Workshop

Title		Type	Code
FUNDING TRIBUNE		Tribune	T3.4.6
Description			
This TRIBUNE allows selected candidates to have access to several investors during a special event. The investors we work with are aware of the STARTUP3 methodology and the FOUNDER STUDIO platform. All the work done in previous phases is essential to make this rendezvous a success. By contacting these investors early in the program and working with them during months, we create a very consistent and confident environment.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Business		3	

Module 21: Funding Tribune

Title		Type	Code
INVESTORS MEETINGS		Investor Meeting	T3.4.7
Description			
This meeting is the natural continuation of the FUNDING TRIBUNE. The objective is clearly to prepare the conclusion of a letter of intent. The STARTUP3 team does not act as a third party and its mission stops at this stage. The conclusion of the fundraising will involve specialized lawyers who will advise the company.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Business		3	

Module 22: Investors Meetings

3.5 Operation Domain

This group of modules revolves around practical matters that the startup will invariably need to tackle during activities adjacent - or directly related - to value production. Unlike other Domains, Operation puts a greater emphasis on internal and administrative procedures the creation of products or services depends on. In order to maximize customer satisfaction and become successful, attendees will discover how to shift towards workflows that are more flexible. More specifically, those that promote frictionless collaboration among their professional teams and delegations by introducing practices that encourage bilateral communication and response to feedback, as well as increased flexibility and increased output rate.

Other areas where this Domain contributes include the visual appeal and usability of products while respecting social inclusion and ease of access. Furthermore, improvements are to be expected in the delivery of the intended output in a cost-effective manner that is also sensitized to data protection and privacy regulations. The modules prepare the startupers' workflow to materialize solutions that are highly secure, legally compliant and safeguarding data integrity. Finally, attendees will be exposed to methodologies that put their products to extensive testing to determine potential security breaches and proactively adjust accordingly.

3.5.1 Phase 1

Title	Type	Code
ARCHITECTURE DEV-SEC OPS SEMINAR	Seminar/Webinar	T3.2.8
Description		
The aim of this seminar is to expose to the participants that work on digital solutions the standards they have to adopt for their solution in terms of infrastructure and security. It prepares the participants to a self-audit and some stress tests that are essential at the end of the process for customers and investors to be in confidence with the product and the data.		
Domain	Phase	
Operation	1	

Module 23: Architecture DevSecOps Seminar

3.5.2 Phase 2

Title		Type	Code
DESIGN SEMINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.3.9
Description			
The objective of this seminar is to make participants aware of design principles for products, services or systems (websites, intranets, software, applications) that are easy to discover, use and master, but also attractive, captivating and inspiring to improve the lives of those who use them. We will help candidates to be conscious of THE key business principle "Our efforts are in vain if the proposed product or service generates a bad experience with the people who use it." How? By focusing on the UX (User eXperience) and design methods to make this human interaction experience optimal, in addition to ways to put it into practice with professionalism.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Operation		2	

Module 24: Design Seminar

Title		Type	Code
GDPR COMPLIANCY SEMINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.3.10
Description			
The objective of this seminar is to make aware participants to the "Privacy by design" approach in order to make sure that the new solution they work on is compliant to the data and privacy regulation. It is of course important for the respect of the regulation but it is also a key indicator for private and public customers. As a matter of fact, it is a key indicator for inspired investors.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Operation		2	

Module 25: GDPR Compliancy Seminar

3.5.3 Phase 3

Title		Type	Code
SECURITY STRESS TEST SEMINAR		Seminar/Webinar	T3.4.8
Description			
The aim of this Seminar is to help participants find and learn how to fill gaps in their security strategies. The approach is to sensitize the participants through these four main axes: • <u>Predict</u>: Understand your risk level, map your attack surface and uncover weak spots • <u>Prevent</u>: Minimize your attack surface and prevent incidents • <u>Respond</u>: React to breaches, mitigate and control the damage • <u>Detect</u>: Recognize threats, isolate and contain them Provision of tips, common rules and processes to design better applications, products, services or systems that are less vulnerable. Nowadays security aspects are key for investors and customers. Candidates need to get strong arguments.			
Domain		**Phase**	
Operation		3	

Module 26: Security Stress Test Seminar

4   Final Thoughts

This document has described the strategy that guided the design of the main acceleration apparatus of the STARTUP3 program, the Upscale, along with the business support services it consists of. A clustering approach was taken in planning the educational content, which is designed to be delivered via a plethora of mechanisms. Those allow for various degrees of personalization of interaction while striking a balance with temporal conservation. The program composition was carefully formulated to achieve its goals in a manner that does not overstress set consortium resources, yet still assure quality for the duration of this demanding endeavour.

Mindful of our next tasks in the context of STARTUP3, and specifically in view of the upcoming report on the program's technical and business support services that concerns lessons learned, a comprehensive introspective is due. Aiming at a meaningful and informative presentation, the relevant operation requires extensive feedback be collected throughout the project lifecycle.

At that point, the STARTUP3 team aspires to be able to narrate a success story within those pages and we are quite confident that we will. In any case, there always seems to be room for improvement in acceleration programs, and certainly so in complex ones like ours. Both errors and elements that will prove to have been thought out well, need to be adequately documented to serve as material for esoteric debriefing sessions near the conclusion of the program. The motivation behind those introspective insights is solely our vision for services of high quality, capable to assist in the survivability and success of a new generation of startupers.

For these reasons, the Upscale represents a period where the mentoring team and other administrative members of STARTUP3 are charged with a dual, yet intertwined, duty in response to interaction with the enrolled startups:

- Active mentoring and coaching aims to give specific guidelines so that the startups could be able to correct any existing misconceptions and errata within the startupers' mindset, to enhance their capabilities, and conduct corporate-wise and other soft skills. In other words, the actual acceleration process, is one of the fundamental concepts in STARTUP3 program.
- Constant feedback gathering where the enrolees' responses are being closely monitored and recorded. For the entire duration of the crucial Upscale portion, mentors and other professionals of the consortium shall continue this process, whose raw material consists of the progress and inputs of startups. As argued, this aims to not only aid them in a timely and decisive way, but also attain useful insights on advanced and intricate business acceleration techniques to guide future development ventures.