



Europe

Building a deeptech Europe

D3.4: Training Plan 2

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STARTUP
EUROPE





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1. Introduction

This document was developed by Growth Tribe BV (GTBV) as part of the X-Europe project. It corresponds to [Training Plan 2](#) (Deliverable 3.4), as referenced in the Description of Action in Annex 2 of Grant Agreement no. 871795.

This document is part of Work Package 3 (WP3) – Skills and Training, which concerns the planning, preparation, delivery, assessment, and review of X-Europe skills and training services. These services include training sessions, acceleration, incubation (as permitted while adhering to COVID-19-safe practices), and one-on-one mentoring. X-Europe offers matchmaking and visibility services as well, as detailed in [Service Plan 2](#) (D4.5; please read for the complete timeline of the programme).

D3.4 is one of three publicly accessible documents outlining the structure of these X-Europe services. The [Training Plan 1](#) (D3.1), which was submitted in Month 2 of the project, presented the consortium's initial plans, which chiefly concerned the delivery of services to the first and second X-Europe cohorts. [Training Plan 2](#) (D3.4; this document) incorporates any necessary changes to the original approach in D3.1 based on lessons learned from the first cohorts, and lays out the consortium's approach to delivering these services to the upcoming ones:

- **Cohort 3 – Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning:** January – May 2021
- **Cohort 4 – SpaceTech:** May – October 2021

The following report provides a big-picture overview of the high-quality skills and training services offered by the X-Europe programme, offering potential participants and the European Commission a concise introduction to the programme's benefits to European deeptech startups, investors, corporations, and ecosystems. The consortium is pleased with the positive participant feedback we've already received, summarised in the following statement from a Cohort 1 MedTech participant:

"In a disrupted pandemic world, X-Europe offered the opportunity to connect many European startups despite physical distance, providing practical tools, valuable mentors and actionable expertise to improve their businesses and help them face their challenges." – Softcare Studios

As the X-Europe programme continues and more feedback is gathered and available for analysis, we aim to maintain the high standard of quality services produced for Cohort 1 and make any possible improvements to raise the quality even higher. More detailed information on the consortium's feedback collection process can be found in D3.1, D3.2, D3.3, and D3.5.

This overview is outlined as follows:

- **Training services**
- **Mentoring services**
- **Acceleration services**
- **Incubation services**

2. X-Europe Training Services

Skills development training sessions and workshops are an important element of the value that X-Europe provides to participating startups. There are a number of different delivery methods for the training services. Firstly, each X-Europe cohort participates in two remote, real-time growth marketing training sessions delivered by Growth Tribe, a leading industry educator. Secondly, X-Europe startups get access to four training webinars run by TNW.

2.1 Growth Tribe Training Sessions

2.1.1 Goal

The X-Europe Growth Tribe training sessions aim to build deeptech startups' growth skills, addressing the following training areas: "Business growth in the area of digitalisation," "AI in business," and "Startup readiness and business development training."

2.1.2 Format

There are two training sessions for each cohort, each approximately 3 hours long. The training dates for Cohort 3 are April 21st and 22nd, 2021, and Cohort 4 training sessions are scheduled for June 8th and 9th, 2021.

These sessions are delivered in a remote, live, interactive format until the transmission risk that live events pose with COVID-19 transmission is mitigated. Some materials from the virtual classroom are pictured in Figure 1.

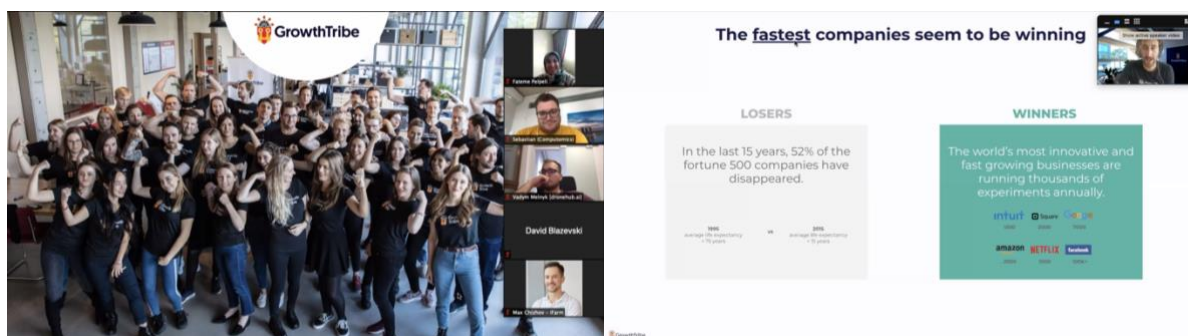


Figure 1: Cohort 2 training screenshot

Participants are assigned to a digital classroom with two trainers and other startups from their cohort; attendees from the same startup (up to two per startup may participate) are placed in the same classroom. These digital classroom environments allow for participant interaction and small-group discussion through breakouts into smaller groups. Learning takes place in the format of active and rapid experimentation on startups' own websites, collaboration and feedback from peers, and testing innovative growth tools such as Zapier and HotJar, among others. Screenshots of some learning materials from Cohort 1's Growth Tribe training sessions is given in Figure 2, found below.

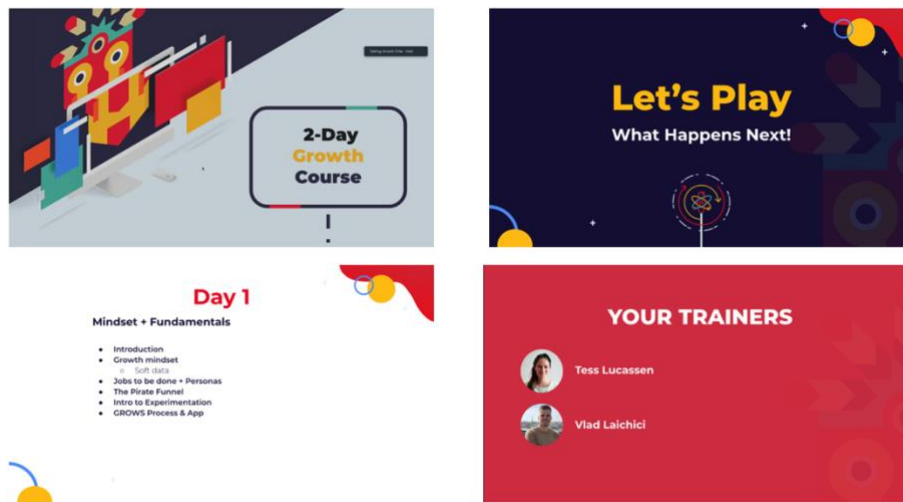


Figure 2: Facsimile of X-Europe training resources

Throughout these sessions, participants are supported in their learning journey by access to Growth Tribe's online learning environment, presented below in Figure 3.

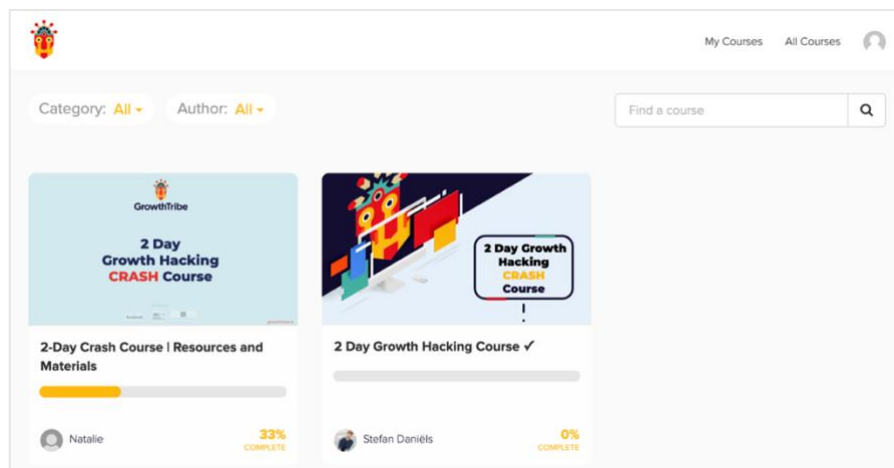


Figure 3: Growth Tribe's online learning environment

2.1.3 Main topics

The main topics of the Growth Tribe training sessions are as follows:

- Growth mindset and soft data
- JTBD (jobs to be done) and personas
- Pirate funnels
- Rapid experimentation
- Engineered marketing
- Conversion copywriting
- Landing page optimisation
- Working in sprints

These subjects will be supplemented by exercises and industry-specific advice tailored to the startups in each cohort, so they may vary slightly for each cohort.

2.1.4 Initial feedback

X-Europe participants from Cohort 1 (the only cohort for which feedback data is currently available) found these training sessions helpful, giving both sessions an 8/10 average rating for satisfaction with the content, engagement, and relevance. Startups were especially enthusiastic about the breakout sessions, the session tailoring to their field, and the real-world applicability of the skills they learned, as summarised in the feedback data below.

Table 1. Training session testimonials

Statement	Startup
"The breakout sessions were a good way to interact with other teams."	Kids' Speech Labs
"The effort they put to make it relevant for an area like biotech, which works a little bit different than other B2B areas. For example, in the training sessions working with personas, the GROWS process etc. Personally, I found the tools that were shared quite useful in the long run."	Lucero AB
"Actionable tools and insights, very good feedback emerged from our challenges and needs."	Softcare Studios

As this positive feedback shows, X-Europe offers tangibly valuable skills training for participating startups. The quality of these sessions will be maintained and heightened for upcoming cohorts as the consortium is able to fine-tune their delivery by analysing and addressing participant feedback. An example of one such adjustment to the training services for future cohorts is that some participants found the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 training sessions somewhat lengthy, at 4 hours each; as a result, the training sessions for Cohort 3 will be adjusted to 3 hours each.

As a consortium, we currently see no need for any more comprehensive changes; however, the consortium will continue to analyse and review the situation through biweekly meetings and make changes as deemed necessary. A comprehensive review of WP3 services is provisionally scheduled for January of 2021 to ensure that all partners are able to give constructive input and the services continue to be maximally valuable.

2.2 TNW Training Webinars

2.2.1 Goal

The X-Europe TNW training webinars address the following training areas: “Investment readiness”, “Startup readiness and business development”, “Peer learning” and “Event readiness”. These are covered through four webinars for each cohort, further elaborated in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.2 Format

The expert-moderated webinars are planned for an hour and a half each and are held through Zoom. This online format, depicted in Figure 4, makes it easy to ensure that startups are able to send as many attendees as desired without the restriction of travel costs, and that the webinar moderator can easily field questions from startups via Zoom chat, while keep up the interactivity level and facilitating discussions and the sharing of experiences between the participants.



Figure 4: A screenshot from the startup readiness and business development webinar for Cohort 1

The preliminary dates for Cohort 3 webinars are:

- Investment readiness training – January 13th, 2021, 12:00-13:00 CET
- Startup readiness and business development training – March 18th, 2021
- Peer learning and one-on-one mentoring exchange – April 7th, 2021
- Event readiness training – May 4th, 2021

The preliminary dates for Cohort 4 webinars are:

- Investment readiness training – May 12th, 2021, 12:00-13:00 CEST
- Startup readiness and business development training – June 17th
- Peer learning and one-on-one mentoring exchange – July 29th, 2021
- Event readiness training – September 7th, 2021

Timings are to be defined for certain webinars.

2.2.3 Main topics

Each of the four TNW webinars for each cohort focuses on a different X-Europe training mission. Run by experts from TNW or TNW’s network of European tech leaders, the webinars are focused on the following topics:

- Investment Readiness: *Insights on how to hook an investor and increase your chances of fundraising.*
- Startup Readiness and Business Development: *Develop your product, understand your stakeholders, and create a scaling company.*

- Events Readiness: *From events and community experts gain insight in how to prepare for and get the most out of events (including online!) and network like a boss.*
- Peer Learning & 1-on-1 Mentoring Exchange: *Gather the learnings of the one-on-one mentorships in a facilitated, group learning session.*

2.2.4 Initial feedback

As with every X-Europe service, feedback is gathered from startups to assess their experience with these training webinars. This feedback is analysed, discussed among partners at biweekly meetings, and used to guide any necessary changes and improvements for the TNW webinars for future cohorts.

Presently, full feedback is only available for Cohort 1, but it speaks well to the high value of the service. All webinars received an average score of above a 7 out of 10, with 10 being the highest possible rating. Consortium partners will consider this webinar feedback and that regarding future cohorts, discussing the outcomes and incorporating any improvements. In this way, the X-Europe partners will not only maintain this positive webinar experience for startups, but even improve it further.

3. X-Europe Mentoring Services

Over the course of each X-Europe cohort, representatives recommended by each partner will deliver a series of one-on-one mentoring sessions to the participating startups.

3.1 Goal

The one-on-one mentoring is designed to provide specific and relevant training and support to address the startups' business & development needs. Some of the deeptech startups selected for X-Europe work on technical levels with medical research or other highly specified sciences; there is little guidance our mentors can give on the whole at this advanced technical level, but often much good to be done for the company's marketing, development, and sales skills. As such, sweet spot for company participating in X-Europe is a company with a strong technical expertise, good understanding of their industry, but lacking in skills such as marketing, business model development, storytelling, and sales.

3.2 Format

Startups will receive four, 1.5-hour mentoring sessions from top-quality mentors including those in the table below, from Cohort 1. These mentors have ample preparation time (4 hours per session) and aftercare time (3 hours) to ensure that sessions have the greatest impact possible.

The X-Europe mentoring dates for Cohort 3 run from February 1st through April 2nd, 2021. The mentoring sessions for Cohort 4 will take place between June 1st and July 29th, 2021.

3.3 Content

Mentors are matched with startups according to the startups' needs, mentors' strengths, and mentors' interests. This information is collected via a survey at the start of each cohort, after startups have been notified of their acceptance in the programme. Table 2 lists some of the mentors from Cohorts 1. These personalised pairings ensure that the mentors are able to provide the maximum tailored support to their startups, an approach that was extremely effective with Cohort 1 and will thus be continued for Cohorts 2 through 6. One such effective pairing is shown in Figure 5.

Table 2: Some X-Europe mentors

Name	Top 2 focal areas	Partner
Zoltán A. Vardy	strategy, business/business model development	DTERM
Margit Kohanecz	digital marketing, lead generation	
Péter Vidos	product development, digital product development	
Tess Lucassen	growth, coaching/ training teams	GTBV
Vlad Laichici	user acquisition strategy, business experiments	
Fré Vandenweghe	growth, innovation	
Ramiar Arya	colleague support, leadership techniques	
Carolina Lapa	corporate innovation journey, startup-corporate collaborations	TNW
Gianluca Bellan	sales process mentoring, business development	
Sebastien Toupay	storytelling, pitching	

Viesturs Sosārs	product-market fit, fundraising strategy/tactics	TCHILL
Amid Moradganjeh	product design, interaction design	
Wallace Green	storytelling, pitching	
Patrick Collins	b2b lead generation, sales	



Figure 5: A happy mentor-mentee pairing from Cohort 1

3.4 Initial feedback

Feedback is gathered about the one-on-one mentoring services after each cohort. Some testimonials to the efficacy of the X-Europe one-on-one mentoring system are shared below.

Table 3: One-on-one mentoring value

Statement	Startup
"After each session, we had a clear plan for the next practical steps for HautAI, which we would review during the following sessions. During the program, we have managed to implement several useful processes for marketing and sales."	Haut AI
"[The mentoring provided us with] hands-on tips and tools for the concrete problems we are currently dealing with as a company."	Adent Health

The X-Europe consortium will continue to deliver and hone these quality mentoring services for future cohorts by continuing the approach described above and gathering and analysing feedback from all participants. This is done via a review presentation of the analysis of each Cohort's feedback forms shared as processed data (word clouds mapped by frequency, score averages, etc.) in the partner Slack channel and discussed in the consortium's biweekly meetings.

4. X-Europe Acceleration Services

The acceleration services for each X-Europe cohort are provided by Design Terminal during the Design Terminal Acceleration Week event, a five-day bonanza of expert business growth panellists, learnings through group discussion, and networking opportunities.

4.1 Goal

The Design Terminal Acceleration Week aims to reinforce the “training and skills” objective of the X-Europe programme. In conjunction with the programme’s training events, one-on-one mentoring sessions, and incubation services, these acceleration services will ensure that startups are able to identify, troubleshoot, and overcome the blockers they may face as small businesses by ensuring that the latest tools in business automation and most innovative contacts in deeptech ecosystems across Europe are well within reach.

4.2 Format

The five-day event (May 24th-May 28th, 2021, for Cohorts 3 and 4 together) involves approximately 25 hours of valuable online content in the form of workshops, storytelling sessions, mentoring, meetups, and other networking opportunities (similar to the programme elaborated in Table 4).

These elements will be delivered remotely for the foreseeable future in order to prevent the risks of COVID-19 transmission; the initial plan was for them to be delivered in Budapest, Hungary. A snapshot of Acceleration Week attendees on Zoom from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 is shown below.

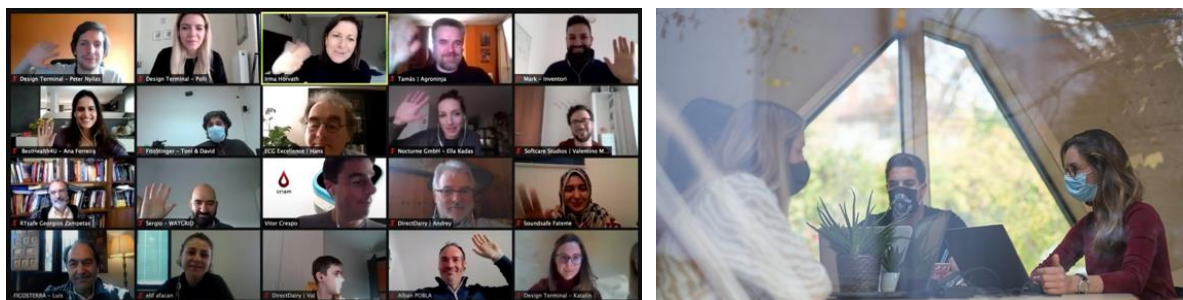


Figure 6. X-Europe Acceleration Week 1 (attendees and delivery)

4.3 Main topics

Each X-Europe cohort will benefit from a similar acceleration programme, adapted to the cohorts’ industries. The first X-Europe acceleration week took in November 2020, for the first and second cohorts. The schedule and topics for this first week of acceleration events is presented in Table 4.

The first day of acceleration services will focus on community-building through games and teamwork activities. In addition to fostering personal networking connections between participants, these activities will also support the startups in developing a better understanding of each other’s’ products and services. Additionally, this community-building session will give participants a closer look into the Visegrad ecosystem and its business environment as leading actors from the region will be invited to present a short summary of their work and background.

The following three days of acceleration services, startups will benefit from mentoring and workshops. The workshops will focus on several soft skills including communication, creative thinking, teamwork, team dynamics, time management, and conflict-resolution skills. Mentoring sessions will reinforce the development of these soft skills as startups meet with experts and mentors who are professionals in the aforementioned areas. Startups will also be given homework to test and reinforce their learning and address any residual questions. Some of this homework will be in the form of individual tasks, while other assignments will involve startups working in teams. The X-Europe workshops and mentoring sessions will be rounded out by the attendance of other invited regional deeptech partners and startups with whom X-Europe startups can build relationships.

On the final day of the acceleration programme, startups will meet remotely from to review lessons learned and put the spotlight on inspiring, educational startup success and failure cases. The review portion will involve discussing the results of the acceleration, evaluating individual homework, and recapping group work. The closing of the remote acceleration week will encourage startups to continue their growth and maintain an innovative mindset beyond the confines of the X-Europe programme.

Table 4: Cohorts 1 and 2 – remote acceleration week

 X-Europe Budapest Acceleration Week				
9 Nov - Monday	10 Nov - Tuesday	11 Nov - Wednesday	12 Nov - Thursday	13 Nov - Friday
10:00 - 10:15 Welcome speech by Design Terminal	13:00 - 13:10 Short intro of the daily program	13:00 - 13:10 Short intro of the daily program	13:00 - 13:10 Short intro of the daily program	13:00 - 13:10 Short intro of the daily program
10:15 - 10:30 Introduction of the 5-day program	13:10 - 14:40 Negotiate with confidence workshop	13:10 - 14:30 Pitch like a pro - workshop	13:10 - 14:40 Speedmentoring session for healthtech startups with mentors and experts	13:10 - 14:10 Must-know remote hiring and working tips - best practices and tips
10:30 - 11:30 Short introduction of the startups	14:40 - 15:00 Community coffee break (optional)	14:30 - 14:50 Community coffee break (optional)	Meetups session for agritech startups with relevant companies	14:10 - 14:30 Community coffee break (optional)
11:30 - 12:00 Community building game	15:00 - 16:30 Walk the talk - workshop about effective communication in different situations	14:50 - 15:50 See it, solve it, scale it - business development workshop	14:40 - 15:00 Community coffee break (optional)	14:30 - 16:00 Pitch and feedback session
12:00 - 13:00 Lunch break	16:30 - 17:30 Startup success and failure stories	15:50 - 16:00 Short break	15:00 - 16:30 Meetups session for healthtech startups with relevant companies	16:00 - 16:30 Closing thoughts about the whole week
13:00 - 14:00 Panel discussion with actors from the V4 region		16:00 - 17:00 How to validate properly? - validation techniques workshop	Speedmentoring session for agritech startups with mentors and experts	16:30 - 17:00 Networking session
			16:30 - 18:30 Healthtech and agritech startup stories & networking	

4.4 Initial feedback

As the acceleration week is still taking place, we do not yet have enough feedback to do a thorough analysis; this will occur the week following the workshops. Still, startups have already given positive feedback about the accelerating potential of X-Europe participation through feedback forms for other services, including this positive testimony from MedTech startup Triumpf Health:

“Taking part in the X-Europe acceleration has made a world of a difference to our startup Triumpf Health. Our mentor was a perfect fit to our current needs, and we were able to take our digital marketing efforts to a new level, we are utilizing more valuable tools and are working in a more strategic manner. We are very grateful for the opportunity to participate in the programme.”

Once the complete feedback is gathered from the first X-Europe acceleration week, the consortium will provide a more thorough analysis, but we are pleased that the services are already proving helpful to at least one participant and will hopefully be equally useful to the other participants.

5. X-Europe Incubation Services

The WP3 training, mentoring, and acceleration services are rounded out by incubation services delivered by TNW and TechChill. TNW will select one startup per cohort each for a three-month-long membership to their TQ Incubator at TNW in Amsterdam, while TechChill will select a startup for a week-long membership during a three-month window at the TechChill Incubator in Riga. This selection process will involve an individual meeting between TNW's incubator teams and each cohort's startups to evaluate which of the startups would most benefit from the incubation services.

Depending on the status of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, these memberships may involve virtual access to the contacts and services described below in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 rather than physical access in Riga and Amsterdam.

5.1 Incubation at TNW's TQ Incubator

Incubation at TNW's TQ incubator will consist of the following:

- A space to work at TNW Spaces City, access to other Spaces if requested
- Access to community events
- Possibility to host their own events
- Access to Slack Community
- Introductions to help companies locate in the Netherlands (e.g., banks, legal support, local support agencies)
- Matchmaking (potential partners, clients, fellow startups)
- TNW will take a personalised, needs-based approach, completing a detailed intake session in order to identify and best service company needs

Incubation at The Next Web's Amsterdam-based community incubator includes many valuable aspects: a physical workspace at TNW Spaces West (and access to other Spaces if requested, COVID-19 permitting), access to TNW community events, matchmaking services and a foot in the door with TNW's network via personal introductions to their community.

Given that conditions are safe in regard to COVID-19 for startups to access the space in person, the startup selected for incubation by TNW will be given access to a flex desk. The startup will also have the opportunity to use other TNW Spaces by request as they take advantage of the chances X-Europe provides to grow their company.



Figure 7. TQ Incubator

Again, whether this is in-person or virtual (depending on COVID-19), the startup will also receive access to TNW community events. These include events like monthly meetups, investor office hours, business consultant visits, AWS and Google for startup support, and more. Because these events keep a finger on Europe's fast-changing startup scene, these events are often planned and executed in a month or less. As such, the specific event topics and dates are still being developed by TNW.

Finally, the startup chosen for TNW incubation will have a networking advantage through personal introductions to the TNW community and its Slack channel. This community incorporates partners throughout the Netherlands including banks, legal support, local support agencies, etc. With these rich incubation offerings, TNW will further the X-Europe goal of building deeptech startup connections.

The incubation period for Cohort 3 is planned for April and May 2021, while the incubation period for Cohort 4 is planned for August-September 2021.

5.2 Incubation at the TechChill Incubator

Incubation at the TechChill Incubator located in Riga includes many valuable aspects: a physical workspace (COVID-19 permitting), access to TechChill and TechHub community events, and a foot in the door with TechChill's network via personal introductions to their community.

Given that conditions are safe in regard to COVID-19 for startups to access the space in person, the startup selected for incubation from each cohort by TechChill will be given a desk or other physical workspace in TechHub Riga.



Figure 8. TechHub Riga

The startup will also have the opportunity to use TechHub Riga's meeting rooms as they take advantage of the chances X-Europe provides to grow their company. The incubation period for Cohort 3 is planned for April and May 2021, while the incubation period for Cohort 4 is planned for August-September 2021.

Again, whether this is in-person or virtual (depending on COVID-19), the startup will also receive access to TechChill and TechHub community events. These include events like monthly meetups, investor office hours, business consultant visits, and more. Because these events keep a finger on Riga's fast-changing startup scene, these events are often planned and executed in a month or less. As such, the specific event topics and dates are still being developed by TechChill.

Finally, the startup chosen for TechChill incubation will have a networking advantage through personal introductions to the TechChill community and its Slack channel. This community incorporates TechChill partners such as corporations, accelerators, VCs, banks, government officials, etc. TechChill will further the X-Europe goal of building deeptech startup connections through the incubation services offered for one participant per cohort.

5.3 Covid-19 mitigation strategy for incubation

The X-Europe incubation services aim to help with will startups' soft landing and integration into the Dutch and Latvian developed ecosystems by directly connecting them to new markets, stakeholders, and cultural norms.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, physical incubation has proven to be limiting due to the travel restrictions imposed across Europe. Therefore, X-Europe will host a series of live panel discussions with representatives from the regions to act as ambassadors for the area. These discussions will address the strengths and development areas of the regions, the startup ecosystem in general, and serve as a masterclass session on how to arrive and thrive in the X-Europe regions.

6. Conclusion

A primary goal of the X-Europe programme is to deliver high-quality training and skills services to participating startups through growth training sessions, one-on-one mentoring pairings, and acceleration and incubation services. [Training Plan 2](#) (this document) outlines the skills and training services to be delivered to cohorts 3 and 4. The approach initially presented in [Training Plan 1](#) (D3.1) has been largely effective in reaching this goal, as emphasised by the strongly positive feedback presented in Sections 2-5 above.

These testimonials provide confirmation that the X-Europe consortium is succeeding in these proposed services. Therefore, the initial training and skills plan will be replicated for upcoming cohorts. However, the consortium is dedicated to not only reaching its goals but exceeding them and adhering to the highest possible standard of quality. As such, feedback will be continuously gathered from participants and analysed to consider any ways in which these X-Europe services can be improved.

Apart from the skills and training services, X-Europe provides matchmaking and visibility services. For a complete understanding of the programme's offer for cohorts 3 and 4, please read [Training Plan 2](#) and [Service Plan 2](#) (the latter provides the full timeline), available on xeurope.eu/resources.

The X-Europe team looks forward to receiving applications from and further benefitting startups interested in the valuable services described above. Find out more at xeurope.eu!