



# Europe

## Building a deeptech Europe

### D4.1: Service Plan

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**STARTUP**  
EUROPE





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### X-Europe Partners



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## 1. Introduction

This document was developed by Design Terminal as part of the X-Europe project (XEUROPE). It corresponds to the deliverable D4.1 - Service Plan, as detailed in the Description of Action in Annex 2 of Grant Agreement no. 871795.

D4.1 is included in Work Package 4 (WP4) – Connecting and Nesting, which aims to ensure that participating startups of the X-Europe project will receive services that connect them to key members of the ecosystem. Service Plan 2 and Service Plan 3 will be submitted later during the project, with a similar aim as D4.1.

The Service Plan is a public document, providing a comprehensive overview of the services that will be delivered during the full lifecycle of the project. D4.2 - Delivery of Services Handbook (to be provided in Month 4) will be a more detailed document for internal use to ensure a clear guideline for all Partners as they carry out the X-Europe programme.

### 1.1 Overview of the X-Europe programme

The X-Europe programme was created by a consortium of five European organisations from the Netherlands, the UK, Latvia and Hungary, with additional offices in the Nordics and southern Europe. Each organisation (F6S, The Next Web, Growth Tribe, TechChill and Design Terminal) is internationally active in extensive startup ecosystem networks, including the developing ecosystems in the Baltic and Visegrad regions. This partnership comprises significant experience in entrepreneurial training and numerous connections with relevant experts, funding opportunities, corporates. Together, we hold years of experience within deeptech industries.

Our team is a truly powerful partnership with a strong foundational capacity, networking savvy, and a diverse skillset. We can provide a unique blend of promotion, matchmaking, soft-landing, and training services to startups across the continent. We are well placed to provide startups with market-leading services.

### 1.2 The X-Europe team

**F6S:** F6S Network Limited is a European SME that is the largest social network for startups in the world. With over 3,400,000 profiles for the startup community and more than 1,300,000 tech startup participants, it currently supports the majority of the startup ecosystem through deal flow, applications, job listings, free services, communication forms, technology transfer infrastructure, and more.

**The Next Web:** The Next Web is a global media tech company with 10,000,000 monthly readers, over 20,000 attendees at its annual conferences, and over 100 corporate <> startup matchmaking programmes. These events contribute to The Next Web's placement as a global leader in startup support and showcasing.

**TechChill Foundation:** TechChill is a non-profit organisation that helps Latvian/Baltic startups succeed in the world. The annual TechChill conference, held each February in Riga, provides a space for experts from a diverse range of fields to close gaps in knowledge, skills, and networks. The conference also acts as a platform for the promotion of companies, startup communities, and technological innovations from the Latvian and/or Baltic regions. Each year, the conference draws 2,000 attendees, 400+ startups, 200 investors, and 70 media representatives.

**Growth Tribe:** Growth Tribe leads the way in adult education, digital re-skilling, and up-skilling. They teach people and train companies to become more data-driven and bridge the gap between rapidly evolving technology and stagnant skills. More than 8500 people and 900 companies have benefitted from Growth Tribe training in a diverse range of digital skills, contributing to their trainers' significant education expertise.

**Design Terminal:** Design Terminal is central Europe's leading innovation agency. They build "Innovation Champions" through corporate partnerships and talent acceleration. Design Terminal aims to give corporate leaders and startup founders the knowledge and access they need to catalyse innovation across any organization. Their incubation programmes are active in seven countries, and since 2014, the organization has worked with more than 1000 startups and several leading corporations. With its extensive network of experts, mentors, corporations, and investors, Design Terminal effectively provides tailor-made support for startups.

## 2. Objectives

The core objective of X-Europe's services is to boost startups across Europe by providing international matchmaking, training, and promotion services that allow companies to grow sustainably and intelligently across Europe. These services will be provided with a specific focus on the Benelux region, the Nordics, the Baltics, and the Visegrad region.

X-Europe also encompasses the following objectives:

- **Engaging startups and SMEs**
  - The X-Europe partners have a European-wide network and will reach out to the top European deeptech startups across the different programme elements.
- **Provide access to skills, training, and job creation**
  - After identifying the barriers and challenges faced by deeptech startups, we will provide training and matchmaking support tailored to each startup's maturity and needs.
- **Access to public and private capital**
  - We will provide a direct connection to investors and public funding opportunities, not only generating capital investments but also opening new doors by building cross-border relationships.
- **Creating corporate <> startup pilot programmes**
  - As in The Next Web's X Innovation Fastlane programmes, two corporates per cohort will present a business challenge to that cohort's startups. The startups will be invited to pitch their solution to their cohort's corporate challenges with guidance from The Next Web. Corporates will select startups to partner with based on the quality of these solutions.
- **Promote and publicise deeptech startups and developing ecosystems**
  - Startups will be promoted through an active marketing campaign that provides them with:
    - media exposure on The Next Web's platforms, reaching 10 million readers;
    - conference presence in the Netherlands, Latvia, and Hungary involving a huge international audience
    - social media campaign support through Partners' channels

To best deliver these services, X-Europe will activate leading corporates, investors, ecosystem builders, and support agencies across Europe to create community-driven impact and support.

### 3. Challenges

The X-Europe project's main goal is to strengthen developing ecosystems by connecting relevant actors and enhancing deeptech startups. These startups face several challenges arising from the characteristics of the ecosystems and deeptech teams themselves, including the following:

- European ecosystems are still uneven in many aspects; the flow of investment opportunities, corporate partnerships, sales channels, and talents between developed and developing ecosystems remains restricted.
- Opportunities are unevenly spread across Europe, so ecosystems in cities far from the main hubs may face a lack of network access.
- Deeptech startups often excel in research and development while failing to exploit their business potential.
- Access to broader business network and experts is limited, which cause difficulties in startup growth.
- Deeptech companies sometimes struggle to incorporate their product or service into their business goals.
- Startups must face the challenge of “invisibility,” which makes it even more difficult to attract investment opportunities, corporate partnerships, and talent.

X-Europe will deliver several services to minimise these obstacles, including:

- Training and one-on-one mentoring services to provide relevant skills to startups.
- Incubation and acceleration services to provide soft landing and improve startups' understanding of different ecosystems.
- Matchmaking services to facilitate partnerships and connections to investors, public funds, corporates, and talents.
- Publication and event promotion services to popularize the participants of the programme and relevant stakeholders of the ecosystems.

## 4. X-Europe Services



**Figure 1. X-Europe services**

X-Europe services facilitate the achievement of the project, with a particular focus on fostering startup connectedness. We will support startups and ecosystems from a number of different angles at once, providing strong, comprehensive support.

These services are detailed in the following sections, presented in three subgroups:

- 1) **Training**
- 2) **Matchmaking**
- 3) **Other services**



## 4.1 Training

During the X-Europe programme, we will deliver a series of in-person and online trainings, focusing mainly on growth marketing processes that enable startups to carry out self-reliant, fast, data-driven work. Participants of the trainings will have the opportunity to learn from hands-on exercises and examples directed by professional trainers that can provide tailor-made guidance.

Trainings will preliminarily cover the following topics (with the possibility of adjustment according to participants' maturity and interest):

- Growth marketing and process implementation
- Customer acquisition
- Lead generation
- Behavioural psychology
- Usability
- Persona development
- High-converting landing page creation

The content of the trainings will be elaborated in detail for each cohort, taking into consideration the participating startups' maturity levels, sector, and interests as presented in their application.

Physical trainings will be delivered during X-Europe events - six times during the full lifecycle of the projects - and each cohort will have access to an online learning environment to support what they've learned in those trainings. Methods of delivery and course content will be considered after collecting feedback from the participants to implement any necessary changes for the forthcoming cohorts.

A more detailed training plan is fully presented and publicly accessible in D3.1 - Training Plan 1.

## 4.2 Matchmaking

A key criterion for developing startup ecosystems is a wide, interconnected network of diverse actors. To ensure this, the X-Europe project will provide support in matchmaking at different levels:

### 4.2.1 Corporate matchmaking

Creating sustainable corporate <> startup relationships is a great way to accelerate startup growth. Starting with an achievable pilot programme is a tried and tested format at The Next Web. We will facilitate at least two corporate <> startup matchmaking sessions per cohort.

The objective of this service is to facilitate the cooperation of startups and corporates, encompassing pilot projects and new partnerships.

In the frame of the corporate matchmaking service, we will define unique innovation challenges and explore deeptech problems together with corporates; invite startups who can offer solutions to these challenges to pitch their solutions; meet key stakeholders through roundtable sessions; and collaborate with those key stakeholders.

Each cohort will see two corporates propose innovation challenges and we will support ten startups in pitching to these challenges.

#### 4.2.2 Investor matchmaking

Startup growth is dependent on finding the right investment and funding opportunities, which corresponds startup maturity and product readiness.

The matchmaking activity's objective is to engage investors and public funds in portfolio companies, with a particular focus on supporting cross-border investment opportunities.

To enhance this, investors will be invited to X-Europe events so startups in each cohort can be connected directly to funding opportunities through startup-investor discussions. Investor matchmaking will be facilitated based on investors' profiles and startups' maturity levels, assessed through information provided in the application form and during the onboarding calls. In addition, investors will be continuously informed about portfolio startups, while companies will be introduced to public funding opportunities through partner networks.

#### 4.2.3 Talent matchmaking

In order to boost the ecosystem, it is vital to find and attract the right talents for startup jobs, ensuring diverse team skillsets. In this context, talent matchmaking services help startups attract employees with the right skillsets by creating an international talent exchange to attract the best professionals for each position.

In the frame of the X-Europe portfolio, startups in each cohort will be connected to job and talent platforms on an international level via the X-Europe consortium's network (F6S, Growth Tribe, and The Next Web's Talent platforms) with the possibility to disseminate their job openings.

We expect 60 talent leads during the whole lifecycle of the programme.

### 4.3 Other Services

Other specific services will be delivered during the programme to ensure full support for startups.

#### 4.3.1 One-on-one mentoring

Although thematic workshops and training offer valuable opportunities to acquire necessary skills, they cannot efficiently address each individual startup's specific set of challenges. Some startups lack the resources to tackle these challenges; one-on-one mentoring sessions provide the necessary resources by directly targeting each startup's specific needs.

Through one-on-one mentoring sessions, we'll provide tailor-made help for participating startups to address their specific challenges. Four partners will be delivering one-on-one mentoring sessions, open to all startups subject to interest and availability throughout the program - TNW, Growth Tribe, Design Terminal, and TechChill. Mentors from within the partners organisations and network will be brought in to provide this one-on-one mentoring. Selection will be made early on in each cohort and will be supported by engagement with startups to understand their challenges and needs.

Dedicated mentors will be appropriately chosen to participate in the programme based on their fields of expertise and the dispositions of selected startups. Mentors should possess and demonstrate a broad knowledge base and have previous experience either in training or in an industry-leading position. Design Terminal and TechChill will lead the management process of the mentors and maintain the network in a database available to all the partners, with contributions from TNW and TechChill.

Startups from each cohort will be matched with the mentors that can offer them the greatest input and support. Matchmaking will be carried out by the partners of the X-Europe project on the basis of startups' application form descriptions and onboarding engagements.

After the selection process, a target amount of mentoring sessions will be set for each startup-mentor set and monitored by Design Terminal and TechChill. In addition, physical one-on-one mentoring sessions will be delivered at each X-Europe event as detailed in D5.3, the Event Strategy Guide. Furthermore, each cohort will have an opportunity for online mentoring sessions before and after the events.

The one-on-one mentoring sessions will also offer a chance to get more personal feedback from the participants to enhance the X-Europe experience, as well as provide high value, personalised experience. This feedback will be combined with the results of other assessment and analysis activities and reviewed after each cohort.

### 4.3.2 Acceleration

In order to scale up their companies, deeptech startups need special soft skills to present the value of their innovation in a comprehensible, business-focused way. Connections to a broad range of stakeholders in their ecosystem are also essential to upscaling success.

Through the acceleration services provided by X-Europe, startups can get a closer look into the Visegrad ecosystem and business environment while also acquiring the necessary soft skills for company and network growth.

The programme provides a five-day-long sprint for three selected startups per semester at Design Terminal's Acceleration Programme. It will cover:

- soft skill trainings
- meeting with the actors of the regional ecosystem
- deeptech meetup
- startup success and failure stories

### 4.3.3 Incubation

Startup growth is facilitated by their entry into international markets. The X-Europe incubation services will startups' soft landing and integration to developed ecosystems by directly connecting them to new markets.

Through these incubation services, startups will have access to physical workspaces and community benefits, engaging them in several events and connecting them to relevant ecosystem stakeholders. Selected companies in each cohort will gain membership at The Next Web's TQ Incubator in Amsterdam and TechChill's incubation space in Riga.

### 4.3.4 Publication

Visibility and promotion are key elements of startup success. Via programme communication, partners' channels, and local, regional and international media coverage, X-Europe will provide valuable publicity to startups.

Startups will primarily be promoted through The Next Web's platforms, which reach 10 million readers. The consortium will publish six articles per year, a total of twelve articles during the programme duration.

#### 4.3.5 Events Promotion

Besides media coverage, in-person meetings with startups and their products can truly engage future B2C and B2B customers. Startups in each cohort will be showcased in X-Europe events, offering opportunities to meet an international audience containing the most important actors of the ecosystem.

Depending on the cohort and its corresponding X-Europe event, each startup must participate in and have a stand at their assigned event pavilions (either a TechChill event, The Next Web conference, or a Design Terminal event). This will give startups exposure to a larger audience and allow them to engage with contacts outside of their respective regions. All events will adhere to the content and promotion guidelines detailed in D5.3, the Event Strategy Guide, which is created and maintained by TechChill.

#### 4.3.6 Growing Ecosystems

In order to provide grassroots engagement and create sustainable impact outside the activities of the X-Europe programme, ecosystem builders in key regions will be engaged in a number of ways.

Firstly, during the open call, ecosystem builders (such as accelerators, incubators, and co-working spaces) will be engaged in order to raise awareness about the X-Europe programme with their communities and allow startups to apply to the programme. This will allow X-Europe to reach companies from the ground up during the open call, as well as create longer term relationships with these ecosystem builders.

Second, X-Europe will take steps to promote the opportunities that these ecosystem builders have to the X-Europe cohorts, and provide our beneficiaries a steady stream of additional support programmes offered by these partners.

Thirdly, select ecosystem builders will be invited to participate in the X-Europe events, with their presence adding to the value and opportunities for networking available at these physical touch points and creating the opportunity for relationships to be created between the members of the X-Europe community and breathe life into activities beyond the scope and timeframe of the X-Europe Programme.



## 5. Timing of activities

This section presents a big-picture timeline for X-Europe participation in 2020, indicating the most important milestones of a startup's journey through the X-Europe programme.

**The timeline is preliminary and any updates (including those motivated by the need to ensure safety of all stakeholders during covid-19 pandemic) will be communicated to participants and presented on [www.xeurope.eu](http://www.xeurope.eu).**

### 2020 - 1st cohort

- The X-Europe journey begins with the opening of the application period via F6S on 1 March 2020. The application window closes on April 30, 2020.
- Startup selection will take place by 18 May 2020.
- After the selection of participants of the first cohort, TNW Webinar will be available to prepare for the The Next Web conference.
- Between mid-June and mid-September startups will get support in investment matchmaking and they will also have access to online one-on-one mentoring sessions.
- In the same period startups will have access to The Next Web TQ Incubation (in Amsterdam) and TechChill (in Riga)
- From mid-June until the end of the X-Europe project (February 2022) startups will get support in job posting on Partners' platform and in promotion and visibility on X-Europe channels.
- In September, before the event startups will have investment readiness training and online training preparation materials from Growth Tribe.
- The Next Web conference will be held in Amsterdam from 1-2 October 2020.
- During the event, physical trainings, one-on-one mentoring sessions, and investor and corporate matchmaking (only for selected startups) will take place.
- All startups will have their own conference booth.
- After the event, startups will have access to Growth Tribe's online learning materials until February 2021.
- Three selected startups from the first cohort will have the opportunity to take part in Design Terminal Acceleration between 9-13 November 2020.

### 2020 - 2nd cohort

- The second open call on F6S will run from 1 July to 31 August 2020.
- Companies will be selected by 14 September 2020.
- After the selection of participants of the second cohort, startups have to prepare through TNW Webinar.
- Three selected startups from the cohort can participate in Design Terminal Acceleration between 9-13 November 2020.
- The Design Terminal event will be held in Budapest between 16-18 November 2020.
- During the event, physical trainings (for each startup), one-on-one mentoring (only for selected startups), and investor and corporate matchmaking will take place.
- After the event, startups will have access to Growth Tribe online learning materials and the opportunity to participate in The Next Web TQ Incubation (in Amsterdam) and TechChill Incubation (in Riga) until 31 December 2020.

## X-EUROPE 2020 TIMELINE

1<sup>st</sup> cohort

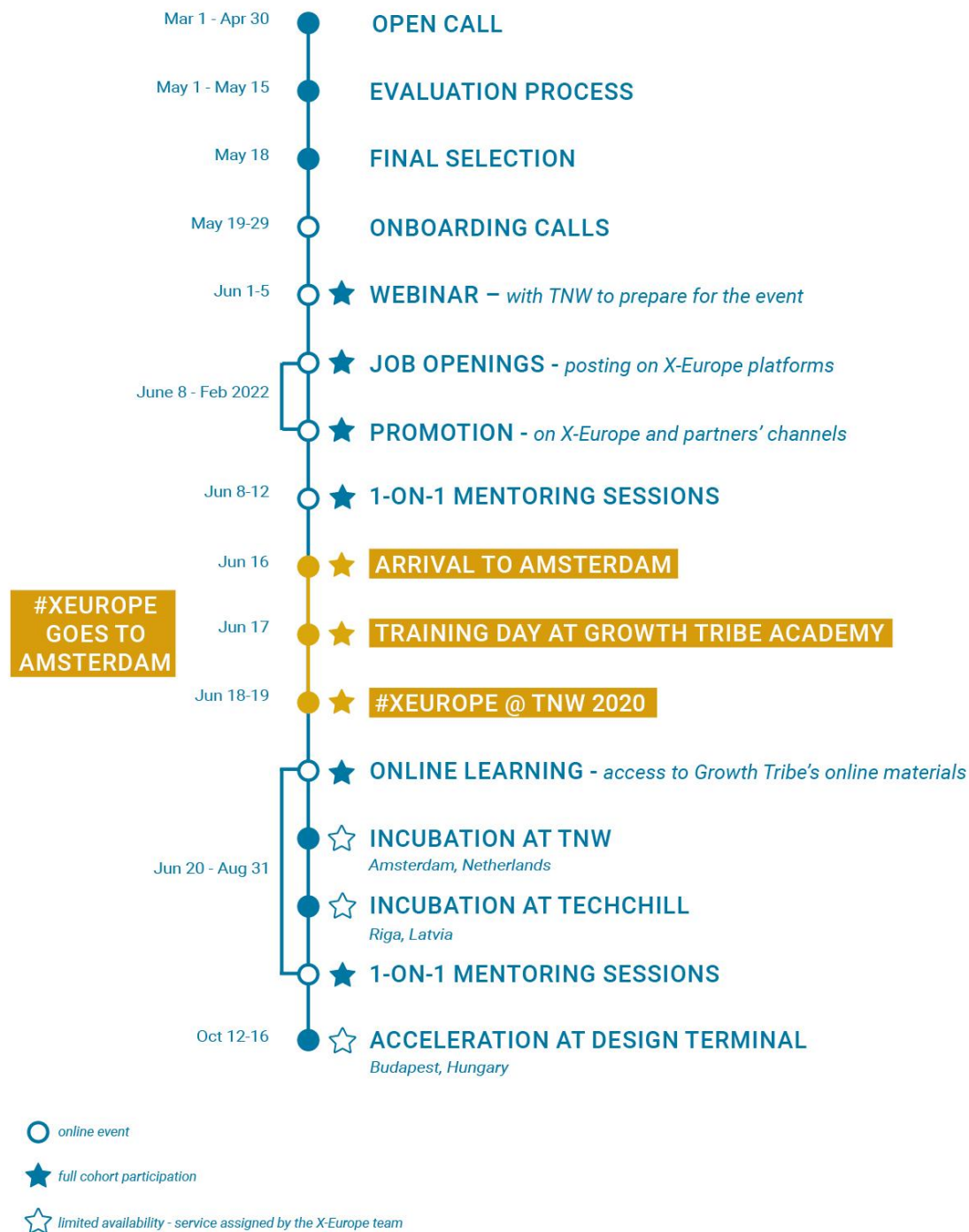


Figure 2. X-Europe 2020 participation timeline – first cohort

## XEUROPE 2020 TIMELINE

2<sup>nd</sup> cohort



Figure 3. X-Europe 2020 participation timeline – second cohort

## 5.1 Startup engagement

Startups will be selected for participation in each cohort based on the evaluation of their application via F6S. We encourage startups to take the application step seriously, providing a well-written, detailed introduction to their company, activity, and team. The X-Europe programme requires participation of a founder or C-level team member, with the optional participation of a second team member (founder/C-level/business development/marketing).

Once the startups are selected, we will organise onboarding calls with them. At this point, companies are expected to confirm their participation and commit fully to project activities.

### **Activities with full cohort participation:**

- Participation in onboarding calls
- Participation in webinar to prepare for the conference
- Participation at the training day, event and event activities
- Matchmaking with investors
- Access to online learning environment
- Promotion and visibility activities
- Opportunities to post job openings through X-Europe channels

### **Activities with limited availability (services assigned by the X-Europe team):**

- One-on-one online mentoring sessions
- Matchmaking with corporates
- Incubation at TechChill in Riga
- Incubation at TNW in TQ space in Amsterdam
- Acceleration week at Design Terminal

Participating startups will be kept up to date about X-Europe deadlines and programme opportunities.

## 6. Conclusion

X-Europe services will address a set of startup challenges, offering great opportunities for their growth. Services will be elaborated and adjusted in each cohort according to participants' profile, needs and problems and they will be revised based on feedback received.