

Business Mentorship Scheme for Creative Startups

An initiative of the **Malta Business Bureau**

and

the **Valletta Design Cluster** within the **Valletta Cultural Agency**

Supported by **Enterprise Europe Network**



GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

July 2021

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Introduction

These guidelines are meant to assist applicants interested in participating in the Business Mentorship Scheme that will be organized by the Malta Business Bureau in collaboration with the Valletta Design Cluster, within the Valletta Cultural Agency, in 2021.

This business mentorship scheme is meant to support start-ups in the creative sector wishing to increase awareness and knowledge about fundamental business practice aspects that can support their core operations. The scheme will run as a series of workshops where a mentor will engage interactively with a small group of participants. The sessions will be dialogue-oriented, and are practice-based (not theoretical lectures), focusing on the ongoing business concerns of participants and building on the inputs and contributions made during the sessions by the participants themselves and guided through insights by the mentor.

The target beneficiaries of the scheme are new and early stage entrants into the creative sector, consisting mainly of freelancers and microenterprises. The objectives of the scheme are:

- To support start-ups in the creative industries in getting an basic understanding of core business practice concepts as applied in Malta's and European business environment;
- To provide mentorship on a practice-based approach to start-ups, with a view to assisting scheme participants in their development and growth;
- To provide an environment where knowledge-sharing and trust-building can provide a safe and enriching peer-learning experience

Registration and submitting your application

Operators interested in applying for the mentorship programme are to register their interest via the Valletta Design Cluster [membership website](#). When registering, applicants shall indicate whether they want to join the VDC community through its mailing list (under 'Keep me Updated') or as regular members (under 'Regular Membership').

Following the basic registration (keep me updated or regular membership), you will receive a username and password to access the Valletta Design Cluster membership platform. You will be sent an email with a link to the online application form. This will have to be filled in and submitted online by the end of July (30th July noon). Notification of results will be sent out by the end of August. Eligible start-ups who have already registered on the VDC portal need not register again, and will be sent the application details directly.

Application Timeframe

The call for applications for the mentorship programme will be launched in the beginning of July 2021 and will remain open **until the 30th of July noon**.

The evaluation process will take place throughout August, and notifications to selected participants will be carried out by the end of the month. The mentorship sessions will then take place during September to November.

Modules and Schedule of Mentorship Sessions

The mentorship scheme will consist of six plenary sessions during which participants in the scheme are expected to be present and engage actively during the workshops. These sessions will focus on thematic areas relevant to key business practice, and will be held on a bi-weekly basis as shown in the table below. Sessions will be led by Mr Joe Tanti from the Malta Business Bureau, who may also be joined by various experts during different sessions, based on the inputs required during the discussions on the various topics covered by the programme.

Mentorship Session No.	Thematic focus	Date and Time
1	Business Planning	15 th September 2021 10:00am-12:00pm
2	Building up your team	29 th September 2021 10:00am-12:00pm
3	Selling your product or service	13 th October 2021 10:00am-12:00pm
4	EU Funding Opportunities	27 th October 2021 10:00am-12:00pm
5	Local Funding & Alternative Finance Opportunities	10 th November 2021 10:00am-12:00pm
6	Accessing the Enterprise Europe Network	24 th November 2021 10:00am-12:00pm

An attendance certificate award event will be organized in December, together with an evaluation session.

Commitment by Participants

The mentorship scheme is being supported by Enterprise Europe Network and participation in the scheme is free of charge. However, selected participants will be required to provide a refundable deposit of €50. Refund in full will be provided on condition of attendance to a minimum of five sessions.

Eligibility Criteria

The following mandatory criteria will be used to identify eligible applicants for this scheme:

- **Criterion 1:** The applicant must be a formally Malta-registered economic operator (company, partnership, cooperative, VAT registration, freelance) – a *formal proof of establishment document needs to be submitted with the application form.*
- **Criterion 2:** The applicant's formal registration date as an economic operator must not be earlier than 1st January 2018 – *this date must be shown on the formal proof of establishment document to be submitted with the application form as per criterion 1.*
- **Criterion 3:** The applicant must be a micro-enterprise, i.e. it employs between 1 and 10 full-time employees – *a declaration by the applicant will be requested at application stage.*
- **Criterion 4:** The applicant must be an operator in the cultural, creative or design-intensive sector – *the formal registration document showing the applicant's core activity is to be submitted during application stage.*
- **Criterion 5:** The applicant has submitted the completed application together all the mandatory documentation.

Selection Process

Submitted applications will be assessed for eligibility by the Valletta Design Cluster team and a final decision on the selected group of participants will be made by the Valletta Design Cluster and the Malta Business Bureau. The final selection will be based on the collective coherence of the group of participants based on the range of practices that they operate in and on the readiness of the applicants for the mentorship programme. A maximum of ten (10) applicants may be selected for the programme. If there is greater demand, the organisers may also provide an option for a second round of mentorship sessions following the completion of this first programme.

Venue for the Sessions

The mentorship sessions are planned to be held in person at the Valletta Design Cluster on the dates shown in the table above, subject to all the health and safety provision in force at the time.

Non-Disclosure Agreement

A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) will be provided by the organisers to ensure that both the participants and the organisers will bind themselves to confidentiality related to any information relating to business practice disclosed during the sessions.

To register for the Business Mentorship Scheme for Creative Startups

go to the Valletta Design Cluster [membership website](#)

mark 'keep me updated' or 'regular membership'

Type of Registration *

Regular Membership

Keep me updated on VDC

for more details about the Valletta Design Cluster membership

see vcavdcmembership.eu