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D4.5 First report on Mentoring and coaching services

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Abstract	TETRA is an EU-funded project under the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme which aims to offer well-tailored business support services to the third-party beneficiaries of the R&I Actions and the C&S Actions funded under the Next Generation Internet (NGI) - An Open Internet Initiative (H2020-ICT-24-2018-2019) topic. The aim of the task 4.3 is to actively match the experts of the pool of TETRA mentors with different project teams and to provide the mentoring and coaching services. The objectives

	are planned for this task:
	1. Each mentor is expected to cover on average 4 topics with the project team. 2. Personalized mentoring and coaching support will be provided to 40 teams, by 25 experts. 3. Each project team is going to benefit from 20 hours of mentoring (online and face-to-face during the TETRA boot camps).
Keywords	Next Generation Internet, TETRA, Mentorship programme, matchmaking

Document Revision History

Version	Date	Description of change	List of contributor(s)
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* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

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ABBREVIATIONS

D	Deliverable
NPS	Net Promoter Score
T	Task
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
WP	Work Package

1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the TETRA project is to develop and implement a series of business-support activities targeted at 'R&I Actions' and their third parties funded under the topic H2020-ICT-24-2018-2019 to help turn their research results into marketable products and services and prepare them for success in the marketplace. D4.5 First report on Mentoring and coaching services falls under the WP4 which objectives are to assist EU financed OII 'R&I actions and their third parties to scale up and increase their investor readiness potential, provide IPR assistance and additional knowledge on alternative funding opportunities. This report will offer an overview of the task T4.3 Mentoring and coaching expanding over the period of M10-M36. Relation to other work packages include WP2 T2.4 Mentor Pool creation and management. Mentor pool is composed of experts with deep experience in innovation, business development and commercialisation from a variety of ICT-areas. The pool of mentors is utilized as a source to find relevant expertise to support the TETRA project startups.

The mentoring services were developed with an aim to help startups turn their research results into customised marketable products by providing assistance in terms of advice, mentoring and tailored support. The foreseen mentoring activities will be also focused on managing specific characteristics of foreign markets in order to make the expansion of the project's results much more easier.

A more detailed structure of the activities covered in this report related to mentoring include:

- Matching each project with at least one mentor, that will support the projects
- Instructing mentors on the TETRA framework and expectations on mentors
- Monitoring mentor activity to ensure quality of the mentoring process and accordance with TETRA activities and expectations. This will be done through short feedback questionnaires filled each month.

TETRA mentoring services are expected to be provided over the period of 5-6 months for 40 teams selected from 6 bootcamps (Note: In consequence to the project review recommendations the expected number of the bootcamps has been reduced to 4). One of the aims of the programme is to foster the development of selected startups by following up with identified gaps in knowledge and experience related to business development, commercialization and ICT. Further sections present the methodology used for the mentoring programme, describe mentorship support provided for the 1st and the 2nd batch of teams and to offer further insights into the outcome of the programme and possible areas of improvement.

2. METHODOLOGY

Following the aim of providing personalized mentoring for the teams a methodology has been developed to achieve results. The overall aim of the process is to select 40 teams from 4 bootcamps and provide 20 hours of mentoring for each team resulting in 800 hours in total during a project lifetime as presented in the figure below.

FIGURE 1. TETRA PERSONALIZED MENTORING PROCESS
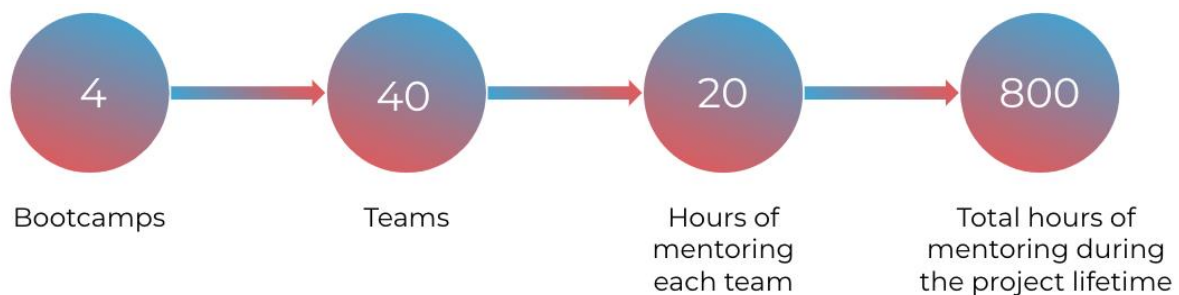
This methodology TETRA mentoring methodology has been created to ensure that individual needs of each team are fulfilled joining the programme after the bootcamp. Mentorship process is comprised of 3 main steps and will be discussed further in more detail including:

- Mentor and team selection practices
- Mentoring sessions execution framework
- Mentorship monitoring process

2.2. MENTOR AND TEAM SELECTION

Teams that receive mentorship support are selected during TETRA bootcamp events. Initially, six bootcamps were planned in total (Note: In consequence to the project review recommendations it has been decided to reduce the bootcamp number to 4). After each event the top teams are selected according to the scores received during the bootcamp. To evaluate the participant performance the teams are asked to pitch their business idea three times through the bootcamp. Pitching the first time allows participants to introduce themselves to the organizers. The final pitches are delivered on the last day of the event, when teams have a chance to rehearse their pitches and receive feedback in order to improve their performance for the final pitch. The winners are chosen based on the final pitches performed. Aspects that are evaluated in final pitching include:

- Performance
- Progress made during the bootcamp
- The business case
- Potential for scaling
- Pitch content
- Possibility to benefit from TETRA's follow-up services

In addition to the pitch evaluation, coaches and jury members follow team progress during the event which is one of the criteria assessed at the final pitching at the end of the bootcamp. The top scoring teams are later matched with mentors to further receive mentorship support in the follow up TETRA services (Note: As the number of bootcamps has been decreased to 4, the clause mentioned above is only applicable to the teams from the first 2 bootcamps. All the participants starting from the 3rd bootcamp will receive mentorship support). Mentor selection process follows different guidelines. Following a task T2.4. "Mentor Pool creation and management" a pool of TETRA mentors was created to select the experts that will provide support for the teams.

i.2.2.1 Mentoring Pool

A pool of mentors is composed of experts bringing knowledge from the areas of innovation, business development, and commercialization from a variety of ICT areas including:

- Future internet
- Cloud
- Content
- Components and systems
- Robotics
- Data privacy
- Blockchain
- Machine learning and etc.

Health, environment, space, transport, security could be mentioned among other areas that benefit from ICT.

Through the mentor selection process it is important to choose the mentors based on their knowledge and expertise as well as prior experience with the projects related to NGI topics. TETRA partners use their mentor and network pools to find relevant candidates. In addition to this, further networks are utilized to identify and recruit mentors via subcontracting who could contribute the most to the TETRA service package to NGI. The aim is to match one mentor from the pool with one team or one mentor with several teams.

Teams are also able to receive support from a different mentor, if their assigned mentor or a team itself recognize a need for a different type of mentoring expertise needed. In this situation a task leader would arrange a meeting with another mentor selected from the pool of mentors.

2.3. MENTORING SESSIONS

ii. 2.3.1 Introductory sessions

Ahead of the start of the mentoring sessions a joint introductory meeting is planned for the selected mentors. The meeting should provide information for the mentors regarding an action plan, introduce the expected outcome and help to align the expectations from the programme. Discussion topics is arranged in the following order:

- Information about TETRA project

- Background about the teams (open call & selection to the bootcamp, bootcamp, selection for mentoring)
- Structure of mentoring programme (duration, expectations, feedback collection, etc.)
- KPIs
- Communication (agreeing on certain means of communication)
- Payment procedures
- Questions and answers

Mentors are also provided with written guidelines in case they cannot participate in the joint event.

A separate joint introductory session is planned for the teams as well to cover the main points of the programme:

- Information about TETRA project (reminder)
- Structure of mentoring programme (duration, expectations, feedback collection, etc.)
- KPIs
- Communication (agreeing on certain means of communication)

The same set of rules applied to the teams meeting if the event was not possible.

iii. 2.3.2. Mentorship sessions planning

Referring to the project objectives each team should receive 20 h of mentoring. Two different frameworks could be established to set up the mentoring sessions:

- 1 hour long session on a weekly basis with a mentor over 5-6 months.
- 2 hours long session on a bi-weekly basis with a mentor over 5-6 months.

However, a more flexible approach could be applied, if the teams require more intensive mentoring. Therefore, following up with a mutual agreement between mentors and the teams the 20 h of mentoring might be spent over a shorter period of time if sessions are planned more frequently.

Primarily teams should start off with an introductory meeting with their selected mentors where they are presented with the overview of mentoring programme, session monitoring process and feedback collection. It is also an opportunity to discuss any further topics the teams and mentors might be interested in.

As mentioned above at the start of the mentoring process the teams should work together with their mentors to define goals and desired outcomes of the mentorship programme. It is recommended for the teams to express their desired results in a form of milestones and/or KPIs in order to keep track of the better measure of their progress. Goals should be regarded as highly individual depending on each team, therefore the formulation should be based on the mutual agreement between the mentor and the teams. The following forms could be used as an example on setting measurable goals, e.g. acquire X number of customers,

validate value proposition or project idea with X number of potential customers, test the MVP with X number of potential customers, etc.

iv. 2.3.4. Mentorship monitoring

To monitor satisfaction and progress of the team during the programme interim check ups each month. The monitoring process is applied both for the teams and mentors to see how the teams are performing in terms of their KPIs and milestones, set at the beginning of the mentoring sessions and also to make sure that the teams are happy with the quality of mentoring they are receiving and all the sessions are happening as per initial plan.

If there are any indications regarding possible issues with the mentoring process revealed during the interim check-ups measures could be taken to resolve the problematic areas as represented in the table below.

TABLE 1. POSSIBLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Problem	Solution
Mentor is not the right fit for the team	Another mentor from the mentor pool is assigned to the team
Mentor is unresponsive	Task leader aims to contact mentor by themselves and identify the problems for lack of communication; if situation does not change; another mentor is assigned to the team
Mentor lacks certain skills (required for 1 or 2 sessions)	Task leader organizes additional mentoring session with a mentor possessing the skills required by the team

Towards the end of the mentoring programme a final team and mentor evaluation and feedback survey is set to take place. Two main objectives of the final survey are to evaluate the quality of the mentoring program and the team progress. The quality will be assessed in the terms of engagement, communication frequency and etc., while the team progress will be evaluated by development and improvement towards KPI goals.

Final team and mentor evaluation and feedback survey will be double sided. First goal will be to evaluate engagement, communication frequency, etc. Second goal will be to evaluate progress, development, and whether KPIs were achieved.

v. 2.3.5. Mentorship program closing event

An experience sharing event is planned towards the end of the mentorship programme. The main idea is for the teams to share their experience, wins, feedback and other thoughts regarding the success of the program. Initially the event is set to take between 1-2 hours and include a voluntary participation in the sharing activities.

3. MENTORING FOR THE 1ST BATCH OF PROJECT TEAMS

The mentoring sessions for the 1st batch of teams started right after the first bootcamp. The teams were matched with mentors from the TETRA pool mentors to receive 20 h of mentorship support in total as per original plan.

3.1. MENTORING POOL

The mentoring pool was created within a T2.4. Mentor Pool creation and management. The main aim of the pool is to create a network of experienced specialists offering teams extended support and help with development for the selected top teams. Mentors who want to be part of TETRA mentor pool are asked to fill in the form providing their contact details, short resume and description of their previous mentorship experience, sectors of their expertise, the knowledge areas in the terms of technology and general specializations. The example of the registration form is demonstrated in the figure below.

FIGURE 2. MENTOR REGISTRATION FORM AND CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT CONTRACT EXAMPLE

The experts were chosen to the pool of mentors based on their expertise and knowledge as well as experience working with projects relevant to the NGI topics. The mentor and network pools of TETRA partners were screened to find the most suitable candidates for NGI third parties. Further networks were utilized to find experts who could bring the most value as mentors in the TETRA service package to NGI. The selected and matched mentors had to sign contracts before starting their sessions with teams. The example of the contract for mentors is listed above. In total 69 mentors were added to the mentoring pool as possible candidates providing a vast range of expertise in different areas. Some of the mentor areas of expertise could be listed as:

- Transport & Logistics

- FinTech
- Mobility
- AdTech
- SaaS
- Blockchain
- Proptech
- Health
- Travel
- eCommerce
- Digital media
- B2B
- Energy and etc.

As planned beforehand the selected mentors expertise covered the areas of business, a variety of ICT domains and other sectors that could possibly benefit from ICT.

Mentors that became a part of the pool were divided into two groups depending on their experience with similar projects. The ones marked in green already successfully worked with one of the TETRA partners. Others marked in yellow, were active in a project that TETRA partners would be aware of (e.g., EU funded), but no direct experience. They also might not be currently actively involved in mentoring. This division was one of the factors on choosing the right mentors for the teams. The mentors pool was later utilized in a search for the experts that would be best suited in supporting selected startups.

3.2. TEAM AND MENTOR SELECTION

Following the conclusion of the bootcamp top 7 teams were selected to receive mentorship support based on their bootcamp scores. The list of top teams included:

TABLE 2. TEAMS SELECTED FOR THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Team	Country	TRL	Description
Casper	Serbia	4 - Small Scale Prototype/Technology Validated in Lab	Project Casper is designed to protect children from online threats.
Georepublic	Germany	4 - Small Scale Prototype/Technology Validated in Lab	A geolocation technology company.
Sensio	Spain	4 - Small Scale Prototype/Technology	Simplify publishing, licensing and copyright

		Validated in Lab	transfer of creative content.
B-Smart	Italy	3 - Experimental Proof of Concept	A platform where users can set privacy settings and check the behaviour of devices and a back end that is able to propagate existing settings to newly discovered objects.
Lightmeter	Germany	4 - Small Scale Prototype/Technology Validated in Lab	Open Source email delivery monitoring tool that makes mail deliverability transparent and aiding in fixing deliverability issues.
Eyemmersive	UK	3 - Experimental Proof of Concept	Eyemmersive - A Digital Marketplace For Virtual Reality Based Tourism
Own your data	Austria	3 - Experimental Proof of Concept	OwnYourData is a non-profit association and helps you to achieve unrestricted access to your data for your benefit.

Consequently, these teams were matched with the mentors in relation to their direct needs to provide further support and foster the progress of the startups. It was important to find mentors from the mentor pool that fit the profile of teams selected for the mentoring programme i.e. the industry they are operating in, TRL and could provide specific expertise that would support the development of the solution from each SME. Each team received one assigned mentor as per the list demonstrated in the following table. Therefore, 7 teams matched with 7 mentors after the 1st bootcamp.

TABLE 3. 1ST BATCH TEAMS AND ASSIGNED MENTORS

Startup/Project name	Assigned Mentor
Casper	Javier Criado Nesofsky
Georepublic	Dirk Lievens

Sensio	Lennaert Jonkers
B-Smart	Martin Gorosko
Lightmeter	Wallace Green
Eyemmersive	Roderick Lindner
Own your data	Mark De Colvenaer

3.3. MENTORING SESSIONS

Once the matching process of teams and mentors was completed, introductory sessions were organized for all parties to set up objectives, expectations and overall guidelines for the mentoring programme.

vi. 3.3.1 Kick-off Events for Mentors and Teams

The mentors Kick-off event took place on December 3rd, 2020. The event was hosted by Indre Kulikauskaite (SD). All selected mentors were invited to join.

FIGURE 3. MENTORS KICK OFF EVENT, DEC 3RD, 2020

During the kick-off event mentors were introduced to the TETRA project objectives and the services package to better understand the main ideas behind the initiative. General guidelines were given in the terms of time planning and engagement with the teams. Selected experts were also introduced to the mentorship monitoring process through continuous feedback collection. Furthermore, mentors were presented with the idea of progress tracking by using KPI's/Milestones and informed to set up and define these indicators during the first session with their respective teams.

This event was also a great opportunity for the mentors to meet each other and present themselves ahead of the programme to get more familiar with the project environment.

FIGURE 4 MENTORS PRESENTATION
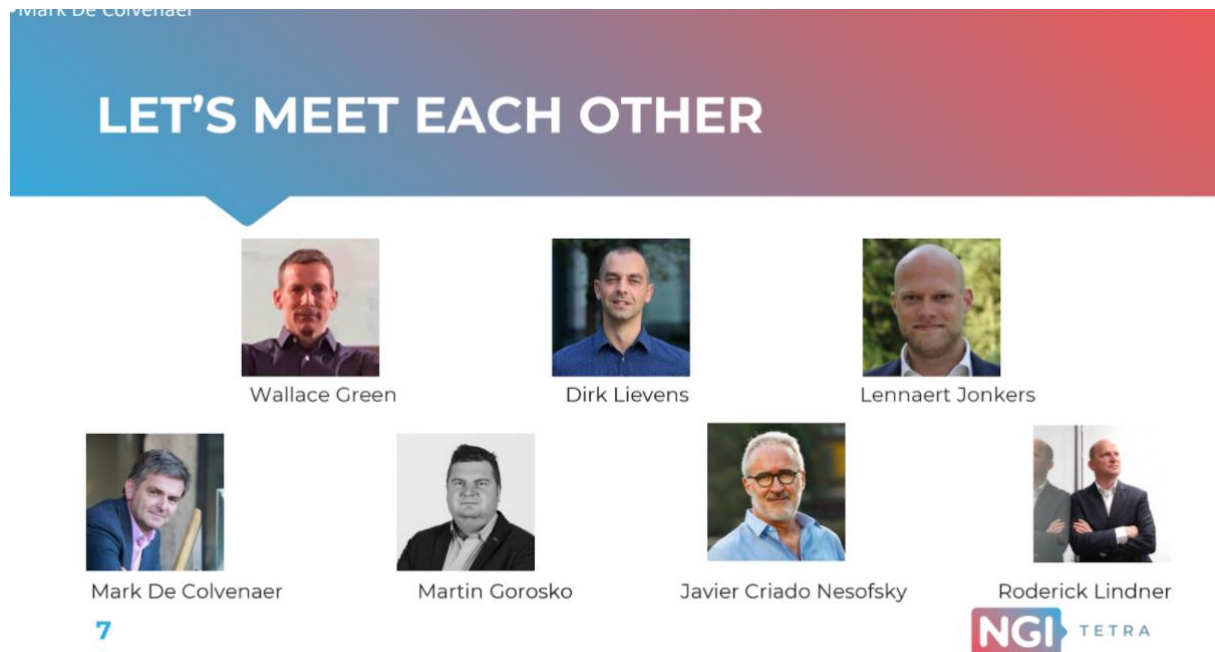
Each of the mentors were asked to sign an agreement with the project partner organizations Startup Division or ESN. Among other topics discussed were administrative matters including payment procedures. Mentors were also able to ask questions throughout the entirety of the event.

The full list of agenda topics covered in the kick-off meeting is displayed below:

- TETRA objectives
- TETRA services package
- Mentoring services timeline
- Mentor introductions
- General guidelines and information
- Feedback collection
- KPIs and Milestones
- Communication tools to use
- Contract and payment procedures

Overall, the kick-off proved to be a great opportunity to align mentors expectations to the project outlook.

A similar type of event was hosted to meet the teams and to offer an introduction to TETRA mentorship programme. The event took place on the 25th of November just ahead of the introductory session with mentors. The kick off was hosted by Indre Kulikauskaite from the Startup Division.

The main topics included in the event agenda are listed as follows:

- Mentoring programme timeline

- Mentor- startup matching process
- Feedback forms
- KPIs and milestones
- Recommended communication tools
- General guidelines

FIGURE 5. TEAMS KICK OFF EVENT, NOV 25TH, 2020

vii.

Similar to mentors teams were introduced to the general format and guidelines of the mentorship programme including recommendations for time planning and engagement. The startups were also encouraged to be active in the meetings, and to not miss the sessions or homework tasks as these actions could result in the possible elimination from the programme. In addition to this, the participants were informed of the prospect to receive further support from other mentors, if specific topics need to be addressed related to the team's progress. Moreover, recommendations were made regarding the possible communication platforms that would make the virtual mentorship process easier and more accessible.

FIGURE 6. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Recommendations:
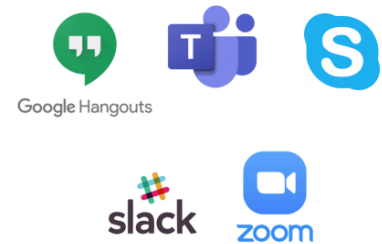
There is no obligation to use one communication platform, it is completely up to, which tool you decide to use altogether.

viii.

Startups were notified of the mentorship monitoring through feedback forms. Furthermore, a KPI/milestone approach was also introduced as a means to track the team progress. A following method was presented as an example for the teams to be able to define their KPIs and milestones:

Start with the basics and to understand what are the key objectives, try answering these questions:

- What is your desired outcome? Why does this outcome matter?
- How are you going to measure progress?
- Who is responsible for the outcome?
- How will you know you've achieved your outcome?
- How often will you review progress towards the outcome

The session concluded with some recommendations and a Q&A session to clarify any concerns or missing points. The indtroductionary meeting allowed the teams to define their perception of the entire mentorship programme and their expectations.

ix. 3.3.2. Mentorship Monitoring

First of the mentoring sessions were set for December. As the length of the mentoring program is 20-24 weeks, each of the teams were recommended to schedule 1 hour of mentoring sessions per week or 2 hours every 2 weeks. To keep the sessions more productive participants also received a recommendation to keep the session topics close to their business activities and needs. Currently most of the teams are already half way through 20 hours of mentoring sessions they are supposed to receive.

As described in the previous sections teams were expected to set up their KPIs and milestones with their mentors in order to be able to measure their success and progress throughout the mentorship period. Each of the participating startups were able to provide this information in the first feedback survey.

FIGURE 7. TETRA MENTORSHIP FEEDBACK FORM EXAMPLE TEAMS AND MENTORS

Surveys were distributed in order to monitor both mentors and the teams. Each member of the teams was supposed to fill in the survey once a month by the end of the month. The same rules applied for the mentors. A deadline was set in place each time and the both of the parties were expected to respect the indicated time frames to complete the surveys. The role of the feedback forms was not only to evaluate the progress of the teams but also the suitability of each assigned mentor. So far, 3 surveys have been distributed among the participants. The final survey will take place once the mentorship programme is completed.

4. MENTORING FOR THE 2ND BATCH OF PROJECT TEAMS

Following up the results of the second bootcamp hosted between the 16th-18th of March for the Scale-up teams, 7 winners have been selected to further receive mentorship services:

- EyeGauge
- Evolveum
- Koruza
- Orvium
- Least Authority
- Nebulous System
- Fairkom

The overview of teams and their respective solutions is displayed below:

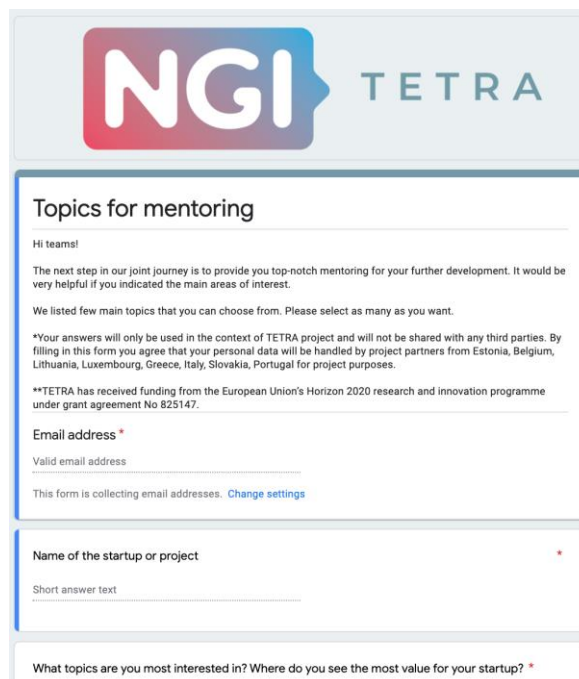TABLE 2. TEAMS SELECTED FOR THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Team	Country	TRL	Description
EyeGauge	France	7 - System prototype demonstration in operational environment	Sea.vision for the maritime transportation sector is an integral non-intrusive accessible solution for digital fleet performance monitoring.
Evolveum	Slovakia	5 - Technology validated in relevant environment	Evolveum created a self-hosted open source identity governance and administration platform that keeps an organisation in control.
Koruza	Slovenia	7 - System prototype demonstration in operational environment	Open source free-space optical communication system, enabling next generation last-mile connectivity and versatile installation options
Orvium	Spain	6 - Technology demonstrated in relevant environment	Orvium is a scientific publishing platform for all publishing needs.
Least Authority	Germany	6 - Technology demonstrated in	Magic Wormhole,

		relevant environment	enables easy, fast, secure file transfer. Building and supporting the development of usable technology solutions and ethical business practices.
Nebulous System	Spain	9 - Actual system proven in operational environment	Solutions for security, privacy and remote operation in IoT scenarios for smart labs.
Fairkom	Austria	6 - Technology demonstrated in relevant environment	Faircom offers open source software tools, cloud and hosting services.

In comparison to the build up teams from the 1st bootcamp event the participants from the second batch proved to be more advanced in their technological approach defined by the TRL level, with some of them already having first users and attracted private funding.

Prior to the mentor selection process, the teams were asked to fill in a mentorship topics form to access and better understand their needs ahead of the mentoring sessions. Identifying the most valuable topics further contributed to the mentor selection process.

FIGURE 8. TETRA TOPICS FOR MENTORING FORM

Following the results of the survey "Marketing & Internationalisation" and "Growth Strategies" topics gained the most traction among the respondents. The selected startups were later matched with the mentors recognized for having the most relevant experience based on the programme participant needs listed in the survey. Furthermore, the relevant mentors were selected based on team expectations, industry the startup is operating in, TRL relevance, specific technology needs related to the solution SMEs are offering in order to advance their projects.

TABLE 4. 2ND BATCH TEAMS AND ASSIGNED MENTORS

Startup/Project name	Assigned Mentor
EyeGauge	Jose Antonio Garcia Pacheco
Evolveum	Dominykas Stankevičius
Koruza	Martin Gorosko
Orvium	Dirk Lievens
Least Authority	Oscar Gallego
Nebulous System	Veerle De Colvenaer
Faircom	Melanie Rieback

Similarly to the introduction sessions set for the 1st batch of teams, startups from the 2nd batch and mentors were invited to participate in the kick-off events. The first kick-off event was organized for the startups on the 8th of April. The second event was held for the mentors on the 19th of April. Both of the events were hosted by Vilma Bukauskaite (SD) and Inga Baltaseviciute (SD).

FIGURE 9. TEAMS KICK-OFF EVENT, 8TH OF APRIL 2021; MENTORS KICK-OFF EVENT, 19TH OF APRIL, 2021.
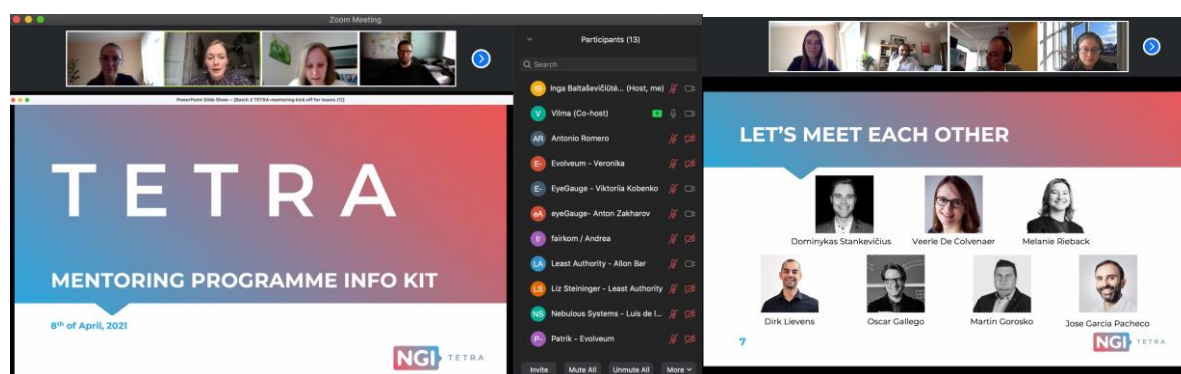
After the initial kick-off events mentors were introduced to their respective teams to start planning their first mentoring sessions. Through the next steps in the mentoring programme the sessions will be monitored by utilizing monthly feedback surveys and time tracking sheets in order to closely observe the course of the upcoming sessions.

5. EVALUATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

The following section will overview findings from the feedback received from the teams and mentors as well as provide some insights into programme evaluation, lessons learned and improvements towards the future development of the TETRA mentorship services.

5.1. FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

The teams and mentors were asked to fill in interim feedback forms every month. Net Promoter Score (NPS) was used to measure the success of the mentoring sessions. NPS demonstrates the willingness of customers to recommend a company's products or services to others. The respondents were asked to rate likelihood of recommending TETRA mentoring programme to a startup similar to their own in a scale of 1 (not all likely to recommend) and 10 (extremely likely to recommend). According to the NPS calculation method, the participants who rated the mentoring programme between 1 and 6 are considered to be "Detractors" or teams, who were not particularly thrilled by the service. Teams, who rated the service between 7 and 8 are somewhat satisfied but could easily switch to another programme given the opportunity, therefore they could be described as "Passives". The participants who loved the service and gave a rating of 9 to 10 are defined as "Promoters". The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of "Detractors" from a percentage of "Promoters". After a careful review the interim NPS for the TETRA mentorship programme so far has been 53, which is considered a great result. Overall, the feedback has been positive, the teams were satisfied with the quality of support they received from the mentors.

The variety of topics were discussed during the meetings including business and product development:

- Product development and MVP
- Go-to-market strategies
- Customer discovery
- Value proposition development
- Fundraising
- Pitch techniques
- Product roadmap
- Business model development
- Use cases identification and validation
- Market research

"Customer discovery", "Value proposition development" and "Pitching techniques" were among the most frequently discussed topics which are consistent with the low TRL level of the companies in the programme. The other topics outlined to a lesser extent included "Product development" and "Product development and MVP".

As mentioned in the previous sections participants were recommended to set their KPIs and milestones during the first session to be able to track their progress through the duration of the programme. However, according to the feedback survey results not all the teams made progress in this respect. One of the teams are

still about to set their milestones, therefore this issue will have to be addressed in the upcoming mentoring sessions.

From the startups that have already provided KPIs as a way of measuring their progress the following results could be established.

TABLE 5. TEAM KPIS AND MILESTONES

Startup/Project name	KPIs/Milestones
Casper	Follow number of parties contacted for financing
Georepublic	Define 3 use cases within 3 different sectors, and define the assumption to validate for each use cases (and early adopters)
Sensio	Road map: defining particular steps & goals for product development, marketing strategy
B-Smart	KPI: 1 pilot customer; investor pitch-deck; business model setup
Lightmeter	Getting into an accelerator program and deciding where to incorporate the company
Eyemmersive	TBD
Own your data	Define a few 1 or 2 new value propositions

Mentors have also provided some useful inputs regarding the team progress and challenges they are currently encountering as well as areas of improvement. Some progress improvements could be already established based on the information gathered from the mentors. The teams are stepping out of their comfort zone and exploring new market opportunities, business plans are being reassessed in line with go-to market approaches and future value propositions. Some of the achievements accumulated halfway through the mentoring sessions are presented below:

- Growing team
- Incorporation of new product features
- Participation in NGI calls and other relevant programmes
- Website launch

While the majority of the teams are looking for future plans and advancements others based on their current state are focusing more towards the basics in regards to internal organization and legal presence. As the mentoring programme is not finished more of the results are expected to be visible in the next couple of months.

All things considered, although the general satisfaction levels with the programme are high, the overall team progress could be defined as two-fold, as some of the teams are progressing at a slower pace. Based on the continuous monitoring findings the current progress outcomes might be attributed to the individual work and low engagement. As more of the concrete progress updates are envisioned

towards the end of the programme, the full impact and results should be reassessed once the sessions conclude.

5.2. LESSONS LEARNED

One of the key takeaways from the feedback is to utilize the learnings gathered through mentorship support and incorporate them into the further sessions for the future batches of teams.

Regarding the possible improvements a couple of the areas were mentioned:

- Implementation of more structured meetings
- Experience sharing sessions with all teams

Furthermore, considering the current outcomes some of the interesting discoveries that stem from the mentoring sessions could potentially lead to the stand-alone webinars or even dedicated boot-camp sessions.

5.3. PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS AFTER THE FIRST BATCH OF TEAMS

Due to the timing issues or other conflicts some of the planned activities were not implemented during the mentorship programme for the 1st batch of teams. However, they will be taken into consideration for the future mentorship batches with one of the improvements already implemented for the 2nd batch of teams.

x. 5.3.1 Survey of key topics

For the upcoming batches of teams it was planned to include a survey prior to the final steps of team and mentor matching process. This was considered to make the process more customized towards the team needs. Each mentor from the pool of mentors has strengths or greater know-how in different areas, therefore a survey with key topics was created for the teams to choose the main areas for further development. The topics are listed as following:

- Marketing and internationalisation;
- Growth (sales-wise, team-wise) strategies;
- Private investment;
- Public funding;
- IPR protection, regulatory and compliance;
- Other - teams can add additional topics.

It was planned to send the survey before finalization of the team-mentor matching stage, to ensure that the mentoring is as personalized as possible. This step was already implemented for the 2nd batch of teams. The answers from the teams enabled to foresee which areas they would like to focus on and what expertise the assigned mentor should display.

xi. 5.3.2. Mentorship program closing event

An experience sharing event is planned towards the end of the mentorship programme. The main idea is for the teams to share their experience, wins, feedback and other thoughts regarding the success of the program. Initially the event is set to take between 1-2 hours and include a voluntary participation in the sharing activities. This activity falls under the section of planned activities as the 1st batch of selected participants are continuing to receive mentorship support and the event is planned towards the end of the sessions.