

## Deliverable 4.4

# Consortium mentoring tools and methodology inventory

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CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CI	Classified	

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## The TRACK Consortium

N°	Beneficiary name	Beneficiary short name	Country
1	VEGEPOLYS	VEGEPOLYS	France
2	ASOCIATIA CLUSTERUL AGRO-FOOD-IND NAPOCA	ATC	Romania
3	CLUST-ER AGROALIMENTARE	Clust-ER	Italy
4	FUNDACION CORPORACION TECNOLOGIA DE ANDALUCIA	FCTA	Spain
5	STICHTING GREENPORT WESTLAND OOSTLAND	GPWH	Netherlands

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## Scope of document:

This document aims at framing the work to be done in TRACK Task 4.3 Internationalisation Mentoring led by AgroTransilvania Cluster.

The main objective of the Deliverable 4.4 is to provide a methodology how internationalisation plan will be done depending the capabilities and expertise of each TRACK partner.

The selected SMEs in frame of WP4 will receive support to internationalize their agrifood business plan until M24. The SMEs will be mentored for increasing their internationalisation capabilities process. Relevant mentoring tools and methodology of the consortium are selected based on the WP2 task analysis. The agrifood business plan of the selected SMEs were analysed to identify the companies needs for internationalisation. The identified needs were matched with the relevant mentoring tools and methodology the Consortium can provide during the process of International Mentoring.

## 1. Identification of SMEs needs for internationalisation

The selected SMEs for the WP4 internationalisation mentoring are listed into the table below:

SME legal name	Country	Webpage	Main activity
SINAPSSA	Spain	<a href="http://www.sinapssia.com/">http://www.sinapssia.com/</a>	Artificial Intelligence and Big Data
SIS-TER	Italy	<a href="http://www.sis-ter.it/about-us/?lang=en">http://www.sis-ter.it/about-us/?lang=en</a>	Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Zuffellato	Italy	<a href="https://www.zuffellato.com/it/">https://www.zuffellato.com/it/</a>	Software solutions for traceability
Centric IT	Romania	<a href="https://cloudcentric.biz">https://cloudcentric.biz</a>	Software solutions for agriculture
Landfiles	France	<a href="https://landfiles.com/en/">https://landfiles.com/en/</a>	collaborative platform for producers
Agrithermic	France	<a href="https://agrithermic.fr/en/home-2/">https://agrithermic.fr/en/home-2/</a>	expert in climate modelling in greenhouse
Nutrasing	Spain	<a href="https://www.nutrasign.io/">https://www.nutrasign.io/</a>	Artificial Intelligence and Big Data
Sixphere	Spain	<a href="https://sixphere.com/">https://sixphere.com/</a>	Software solutions for agriculture
Symbia Solutions	Spain	<a href="http://symbiasolutions.com/">http://symbiasolutions.com/</a>	Software solutions for agriculture

### 1.1. Scrutinising the needs of the SMEs

Analysing the BPs, it was observed that SMEs have a common understanding in seeing the process of internationalisation benefit for the future of the company and they feel as they do not have the necessary competence to appropriately approach foreign markets.

In the same time, the analysis of the each of the submitted BPs of the SMEs applying for Internationalisation mentoring reveals a number of factors that should be taken into consideration for identifying the appropriate mentoring tools and methodology:

- SMEs are located in different countries (Spain, Italy, Romania, France). Each country has a different understating and culture about internationalisation process and specific internal market
- SMEs have different levels of experiences on the market
- the staff of SMEs has different background, education and experience
- the main activities of SMEs are complex and diverse (Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Software solutions for traceability, collaborative platform for producers, expert in climate modelling in greenhouse), and inside of the main level of specificity is high

For each of the SMES there were individually identified the **specified needs** (the ones that are clearly mentioned into the BPs), but, also the **Additional needs** (the ones that are not clearly mentioned into the BPs, but they are considered to be significant for a successful process of internationalisation for this specific SME). The specific needs and additional needs for each SME are detailed in D4.6 Individual road map for business internationalisation plan of each selected SMEs.

### 1.2 Analysis of the SMEs needs

Based on this analysis, it is possible to identify some **general affirmations**:

- all selected SMEs should improve their general abilities to prepare and to present a BPs, by being more specific and more convincing
- the final target foreign market is Europe, even if there are some differences in approaching it
- It's necessary to improve the SMEs abilities to reach the clients and to adapt the communications channels and marketing support
- abilities to identify and participate to fairs, shows and events where to communicate their values and their products

Beside those general facts, **the process of internationalisation mentoring should be adapted** to each of the companies' requirements, identified on the previous table.

In conclusions, the abilities and skills to be provided to SMEs could be presented below:

Generic abilities and skills (for all the SMEs)	Specific abilities and skills (for specific SMEs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abilities to prepare and to present a BPs, by being more specific and more convincing</li> <li>• Convince the clients on the utility of the products</li> <li>• abilities to develop the BPs cash flow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abilities to attract new staff</li> <li>• Abilities to attract funds</li> <li>• Abilities to invest on staff training</li> <li>• abilities to coordinate client's needs and developers activities</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of consolidation of the sales in local and regional areas, as prerequisite to jump to international areas</li> <li>• abilities to penetrate new markets</li> <li>• abilities to identify relevant national and international fairs and events to promote the business</li> <li>• to enhance and implement exportation and projects abroad, through a more structured activity and organization (dedicated office or company area).</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders</li> <li>• abilities to promote their products on foreign markets</li> <li>• getting access to funds (for research and development)</li> <li>• abilities to approach new potential clients (communication, promotional materials etc.)</li> <li>• knowledge about how to identify long term perspectives and abilities</li> <li>• knowledge to create local teams in EU countries</li> <li>• knowledge to adapt the products and communication to the main market targets (growers, consultants, greenhouse builders and equipment manufacturers)</li> <li>• knowledge to adapt the technical language to the level of farmers as potential customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce into the food logistic market</li> <li>• Consolidate a network of partners</li> <li>• Search for large networks close to the field (associations, networks from public funding, chambers of agriculture)</li> <li>• Abilities to connect to relevant stakeholders from EU countries</li> <li>• setting up regional, national and international projects with partners.</li> <li>• Develop a cost effect marketing / sale strategy to gain customers</li> <li>• Abilities to identify the competitors and the market forces</li> <li>• Keep our advance over our future competitors</li> <li>• To expand the business to less digitally developed countries in the EU, aiming food processors and retailers</li> <li>• Diversifying the range of clients</li> <li>• abilities how to promote their products on foreign markets (by intermediaries, as clients)</li> </ul>
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As a general conclusion, for SMEs' mentoring, the following competences are required for mentors:

- marketing and communication
- specific ITC competences
- logistics
- business models development (including innovation)
- attracting funds
- cooperation (nationally and internationally)
- penetrating international markets

## 2. Mentoring tools

### 2.1. Definitions

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mentor>), the term “**mentor**” is defined as “**a trusted counsellor or guide**”, and it could mean, also, “tutor” or “coach”.

Based on this definition, in acceptance of International Mentoring Group (<https://mentoringgroup.com/what-is-mentoring.html>), we should think about mentoring process as “**process of direct transfer of experience and knowledge from one person to another**”, based on the main features of Mentoring: “I” – interactive; “M” – motivation; “E” – efficiency; “N” – network; “T” – trust; “O” – optimality; “R” – recognition.

From this perspective TRACK will try to offer to SMEs an unique experience, as:

- a personal, empathic approach between mentors and beneficiary
- a vivid interaction, bidirectional
- an additional motivation for SMEs to work and find its own solution on already anticipated problems, or the ones the mentor can additionally observed
- increase efficiency in creating BPs able to penetrate new, foreign markets
- abilities to enter and consolidate its position on new, relevant, networks
- an increased level of trust in order to increase the level of accepted risks
- optimisation of resource use
- possibility of increase it recognition on international markets

### 2.2. Tools and Methodology

Corroborating the results of the analysis with the mentors required competences (- marketing and communication, specific ITC competences, business models development (including innovation), attracting funds, cooperation (nationally and internationally) and penetrating international markets), it can be observed that the TRACK Consortium has the abilities to provide valuable mentoring services to SMEs. Each TRACK partner will do the mentoring to each allocated SMEs. If they need support from external experts, the consortium will try to externalise specific services.

#### Tools

An important issue is the available system of tools for mentoring program in order to clearly provide to the beneficiary useful and specific information. To answer to the question “**How will we deliver the mentoring program?**”, there are a few aspects to be clarified:

- a) How many meetings we propose to have the mentored person in what time interval?
- b) How long a meeting will take - minimum time vs maximum spent by mentor with mentored person?
- c) All mentoring activities will have the same duration?

- d) All mentoring activities will pursue the same goals?
- e) Mentors will communicate in other way with SMEs?

**a) How many meetings we propose to have the mentored person in what time interval?**

The mentors will have **at least one monthly** virtual meeting during the period of 12 months. If it is necessary, additional meetings can be scheduled with the beneficiaries, on a common agreed time framework. After each meeting a short meeting minutes will be elaborated by the mentor.

**b) How long a meeting will take - minimum time vs maximum spent by mentor with mentored person?**

In order to be efficient, each meeting will last **between 30 and 120 minutes**, depending on the topic, on the complexity of problem to be solved. A shorter interval is considered to be not enough for a bi-directional flow of information, while a meeting longer than 2 hours, is, usually nor constructive, because of the lack of attention. Only in exceptional case the interval will be shorter and longer, and the mentor will specify into the meeting minutes the reason.

**c) All mentoring activities will have same duration?**

Normally, meeting **will not have the same duration**, but they have to respect the same interval between 30 and 120 minutes.

**d) All mentoring activities will pursue the same goals?**

There is a general methodology accepted at the beginning, but **each meeting will aim specific goals** in order to achieve a better BPs.

**e) Mentors will communicate in other way with SMEs?**

The only **compulsory communication channel is the virtual meeting**, but if necessary, phone discussions, email conversations and other available ways of communication could be used. Also, the mentors can personally meet the SMEs.

There are diverse sources of available information that can be used by mentors in the process of mentoring the internationalisation BPs of the SMEs. Among them, the following ones can be mentioned:

- For international activities development (provided by European Commission):  
[https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/international-aspects\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/international-aspects_en)
- For International contracts (provided by International Contracts):  
<https://internationalcontracts.net/contract>
- For business cultural differences (provided by What is Passport to Trade 2.0):  
<https://businessculture.org/business-culture/>
- For international business legislation (provided by Business Laws):  
<https://business.laws.com/international-business>
- For financial capacity check (provided by Horizon 2020 Program of European Commission):  
[https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/applying-for-funding/register-an-organisation/financial-capacity-check\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/applying-for-funding/register-an-organisation/financial-capacity-check_en.htm) .

## Methodology

The objective of the internationalisation mentoring is to help the SMEs to create an improved BP in order to increase the chance to be more competitive on foreign market, and not to let the mentor to create a BP for the SMEs. In fact, for each meeting specific needs of the companies will be discussed, and, new tasks that SMEs have to prepare for the next meeting will be agreed.

The proposed general methodology (that has to be road mapped for each mentored SMEs at the first meeting), is presented below, but it can be adapted, if necessary, accordingly to each mentored case, but all the topic has to be run (also available on excel).

	M18	M19	M20	M21	M22	M23	M24
MILESTONES		<b>mission, vision, objectives and activities</b>	<b>view on international competitors</b>	<b>analysis of internal and potential Resources</b>	<b>Marketing and Communication plan</b>	<b>Financial forecasts</b>	<b>Business Plan</b>
Introduction	The partners will get to know each other						
Activities / Technology	The partners will get to know each other	<b>Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy</b>					
Technical and Human resources	The partners will get to know each other	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	<b>Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy</b>				
Marketing and Communication	The partners will get to know each other	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	<b>Common understanding of Marketing and Communication plan</b>			
Financial statements	The partners will get to know each other	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	Common understanding of Marketing and Communication plan	<b>Common understanding of the Financial statements</b>		
Final	The partners will get to know each other	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy	Common understanding of Marketing and Communication plan	Common understanding of the Financial statements	<b>Common accepted improved BP</b>	



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The detail on each of the 6 proposed meetings are presented into the table below.

Meeting	Topic	Steps	Results
1	Introduction	The mentor will introduce him/herself and the project and the methodology The SME will present the company and the BP The mentor will present the results of BP analysis and the identified needs for international mentoring of the SME	The partners will get to know each other The mentee will understand the steps of the mentoring program and the expected results <b>Tasks for next meeting</b> An improved BP, with clearer internationalisation mission, vision, objectives and activities
2	Activities / Technology	Discussion on the mission, vision, objectives consistent with technology, process of production consistent with resources: - Carrying out the analysis of the current situation, including legal requirements and constrains - Defining the production objectives and operations - Defining the production strategy and operations; Mentor should help the mentee to better understand the international competitions - Contracts specificities on external markets	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with strategy <b>Tasks for next meeting</b> A better view on international competitors
3	Technical and Human resources	Discussion of the mission, vision, objectives consistent with future activities and the resources (actual and foreseen) - Carrying out the analysis of the current situation - Defining specific needs for working with in an international environment - Defining the human resources objectives - Defining the human resources strategy;	Common understanding of the correlation of resources with international strategy <b>Tasks for next meeting</b> A deeper analysis of internal and potential resources
4	Marketing and Communication	Discussion on: - new markets opportunities (SWOT, PESTEL analysis) - Porter; 5 Forces model - communication channel - specific ways of promotion and communication - visual identity - other subjects specific to the company's international	Common understanding of the International Marketing and Communication strategy <b>Tasks for next meeting</b> An improved Marketing and Communication plan correlated with the strategy of the company

		communication - identifying marketing and communication cultural specificities on the international target market - understanding the consumer from other country	
5	Financial statements	Discussion on: - sources of funding - cost/benefit analysis - provisions of costs, revenues - management of risk - other subjects specific to the company - legal considerations in specific countries	Common understanding of the Financial statements for international purposes <b>Tasks for next meeting</b> An improved Financial forecasts correlated with the strategy of the company
6	Final	Both parts will present their final statement on the BP The final content of the Internationalisation BP will be checked and accepted	Common accepted improved Internationalisation BP for the SME

For each meeting a meeting minute is filled by the mentor and offered to the SME, according to the following template (see Annex 1).

As the information may be confidential for the SMEs, a BP confidentiality agreement will be signed by the mentor and all the other persons who will have access to the BP, so the information will not be used for third parties (Annex 2)

## Conclusions

It can be concluded that the proposed process of internationalisation mentoring for selected SMEs is complex and demanding. The needs of the SMEs are, also, diverse and the mentoring process should be accordingly adapted. There are available numerous references regarding the process of mentoring and/or internationalisation.

In these conditions, the proposed methodology offers a general template for the road map of the process of internationalisation. For each of the 6 meetings there are clear perspective on the subject to be discussed, the expectation and the work that SMEs have to prepare for the following meeting. It is essential to emphasize the fact that the mentoring process is designed as a bidirectional flow. In this flow the SMEs are the most active partners, for each of the meeting they have to prepare a part of the task that is communicated by the mentors.

Finally, it can be concluded that the proposed methodology and tool have the potential to be useful for SMEs. In that way, the beneficiaries will have the potential to improve their international activities.

## Annex 1. Meeting minute

### Meeting Minute

SME	
Contact Email/Phone	
Additional participants	
Mentor Contact Name/Title	
Meeting no.	
Subject	
Meeting type	<i>Face-to-face, virtual meeting</i>
Date	

**1. Subject information:**

*Provide the information requested*

**2. Milestone analyses**

*List each major issue for milestone prepared by SME, using the following:*

- *Status of work*
- *Problems that have not yet been resolved (why?)*
- *Problems that have been resolved (how?)*

**3. Current Status:**

*Details of the topic:*

- *Knowledges and information delivered*
- *Issues that are under investigation*
- *Other*

**4. Tasks:**

*Details of the topic:*

- *Planned: issue to be resolved*
- *Deferred: issue to be eliminated or postponed*
- *Other*

**5. Remediation Timeline**

*Enter when you anticipate that the issue will be resolved (next meeting or in advance)*

**6. Comments (optional):**

*Provide details/description regarding the issue*

**7. Additional Information (optional):**

*Provide any additional discussion regarding business plan*

## Annex 2. Template of Confidentially agreement

### **Business Plan Confidentiality Agreement**

The undersigned reader of [Company's Name] Business Plan hereby acknowledges that the information provided is completely confidential and therefore the reader agrees not to disclose anything found in the business plan without the express written consent of [Business Owner's Name].

It is also acknowledged by the reader that the information to be furnished in this business plan is in all aspects confidential in nature, other than information that is in the public domain through other means and that any disclosure or use of the same by the reader may cause serious harm and or damage to [Company Name].

Upon request this business plan document will be immediately returned to [Business Owner's Name].

This is a business plan. It does not imply an offer of any securities.

### **Applicable Law**

This contract shall be governed by the laws of the \_\_\_\_\_ and any applicable international law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name