Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups from China and the CEE countries

Pilot Edition

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why Accelerator Program for Agricultural Startups from China and CEEC?

- Show the potential of the agricultural sector;
- Attract talent and investments;
- Support early-stage startups;
- Connect the startup ecosystems of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and China.

What are the Program`s goals?

- To support the development of innovative services, solutions and products;
- To attract young and entrepreneurial people to the sector;
- To facilitate know-how exchange and implementation of good practices;
- To increase the competitiveness of the agriculture within the economies of CEE countries and China.

What are the Target Group & Areas of Interest?

- food technology projects;
- innovations in agriculture;
- creation of mobile applications compliant with the COVID-19 environment;
- implementation of technologies in restaurants;
- food waste solutions;
- use of GIS technologies in agriculture;
- sustainable food and beverage supplies;
- sustainable agriculture and organic products;
- culinary tourism;
- environmental projects.

Who can apply to the Program?

- The participation in the program is open for start-up companies registered in one of the Member-States participating in the Initiative for cooperation between **China** and **CEE** countries (**Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia**);
- The company should be created in the last 5 years;
- Only project proposals of start-up companies, whose projects are focused only in the field of agriculture and related activities, will be considered.
- Project proposals from franchise companies will not be considered.

Is it free?

Applying to the Accelerator Program is completely free.

Can I apply with two different projects?

Only one project proposal from a company will be considered by the Jury in the Program.

How can I participate?

Application window is open **from January 10th, 2023 to March 10th, 2023** at www.startups.china2ceec.org

What is the selection procedure?

Eligible start-up companies will apply with a project proposal through an application form via www.startups.china2ceec.org . After a selection, based on a Methodology for Evaluation of Candidates and in accordance with the General Rules and Regulations of the Accelerator Program, an external jury will allow 20 start-up companies from CEEC and China for in-person participation.

When the finalists will be announced?

The twenty finalists will be announced on **March 18th, 2023** /Saturday/.

When and where the Program will take place?

The Program will last for 1 week starting on **27th of March, 2023 and ending on 2nd of April, 2023**.

The Program will be held in Sofia Tech Park – Bulgaria.

The Program includes:

- Workshops;
- Networking events;
- Mentorship meetings;
- Follow-up meetings for each project;
- Field visits;
- Inspirational lectures and discussions;
- Final public presentation of the projects to potential partners, clients, investors and media.

All the participants will benefit from the network opportunities with investors, representatives from the real sector, VC funds and experts.

What does the presentation before the Judges entail?

After the conducting of the Accelerator Program and its accompanying events will be carried out, a final event will be held. During the Final Pitch Day, the 20 finalists will present their projects to the jury, invited diplomats from China and CEEC, investors, the public and media. Each project proposal will have a time slot of 15 minutes in which they need to convince the Jury why their idea should win the competition.

What are the criteria followed by the judges for the selection of projects?

- Project/company with innovative business model;
- Team ability to implement the project;
- Feasibility of the idea;
- Potential impact on agricultural sector in the region;
- Have potential for growth and/or scalability;
- Environmental, social and economic impact.

Is there a prize at the end?

The best three projects among the twenty finalists will be awarded.

- 1st place – 25 000 euros;
- 2nd place – 15 000 euros;
- 3rd place – 10 000 euros.

Who are the jury and mentors of the Accelerator Program?

The jury for evaluation, selection and approval of project proposals by applicants will consist of successful entrepreneurs in agriculture and IT fields, members of business associations, proven lecturers from universities and investors from CEEC and China.

There are several mentors with different profiles with the purpose of providing validation and scalability to the business model, also giving advices and support for the growth of the project proposal.

Do the organizers cover transport and accommodation for the twenty selected participants?

The organizers cover only accommodation for one week in Sofia, Bulgaria of participants, which business is registered outside of the city of Sofia.

Selected participants should cover their own expenses for transportation to/from Sofia.

Who are the Programs` partners?

The partners of APACCCEEC for the pilot edition of the Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups from China and the CEE countries are:

Science and Technology Park Montenegro

Sofia Investment Agency

Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Sofia Tech Park

Sofia University - Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

Agricultural Academy – Sofia

University of National and World Economy - Institute of Entrepreneurship

Bulgarian Association of Information Technologies (BAIT)

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