

Call for business ideas



MEnt PROJECT

MEnt is an innovative and dynamic incubation and mentoring programme which gives migrants and refugees the chance to be supported in the first steps of launching entrepreneurial projects. MEnt enables you to develop key competencies in entrepreneurship.

MEnt is a pioneering incubation programme designed to inspire and equip budding refugee and migrant-entrepreneurs with vital business skills and networking opportunities to help kickstart their own businesses.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

- Take your business **from idea to launch**
- Receive training in **entrepreneurship and innovation**
- Be mentored by **experienced sector experts**
- Pick up tips on **running a successful business** in your new home country
- Gain access to a network of local and international **funders**
- **Have fun** while getting to know like-minded entrepreneurs
- All this at **zero cost** to you!

HOW THE PROGRAMME LOOKS LIKE

Conducted over 5 months, you will take part in:

- Two-day business training
- Mentor-matching events
- Two incubation workshops
- Final pitch event in front of funders and potential business partners

WHO CAN APPLY

We are looking for applicants who:

- Possess an entrepreneurial mind-set
- Have the motivation to launch their business ideas
- Are from a migrant or refugee background
- Must be 18 years of age and older
- Have a recognized legal status in their country of residence

HOW TO APPLY

Find the application form on our website <http://www.mentproject.eu/>.

WHO WE ARE

MEnt is a cross-national project, financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the EU, delivered across 5 European countries — Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium and France — and is jointly organised by 6 partners:

- ZSI (AT) is MEnt's project coordinator, experienced in different domains of social innovation and in migration issues. ZSI conducts research on the social embedding and impact of all types of innovations, and contributes to the design and diffusion of socially accepted and sustainable innovations to meet social challenges. By deployment of innovative research, education, advisory services and coordination of networks, ZSI creates new knowledge, evaluate measures, develop concepts and forward their implementation.
- Avanzi (IT), established in 1997, has been working for nearly 20 years in the area of social innovation, with particular attention to policy makers support, innovative partnerships and issues related to social businesses. In Italy, it has created the first incubator (Make a Cube, controlled at 100%) and acceleration programme dedicated to social entrepreneurs, as well as implemented large scale pre-incubation and incubation projects, involving close to 50 potential entrepreneurs at the same time.
- Codici (IT) is dedicated to the social inclusion of migrants and disadvantaged people. It operates as a partner to local governments and offers skilled support to migrants and refugees and related associations. Codici has significant experience in field work as well as advising on policy changes.
- Kiron Open Higher Education (DE and BE), is a non-profit organization that provides refugees access to higher education and successful learning through digital solutions. Established in 2015, Kiron is based in Berlin, with a liaison office in Brussels. It offers education and training to migrants and refugees as a unique reference target. Providing early stage support to migrants willing to establish new businesses, Kiron also operates as a connector among migrants, incubators and investors, business angels and long term partners.
- Make Sense (FR) adopts an innovative approach to social innovation and social entrepreneurship by connecting, virtually and physically, a wide number of innovators, experts, entrepreneurs.
- SomosMas (ES) connects ideas and know-how using a crowdsourcing approach to different kind of social issues. It supports the development and reinforcement of social ecosystems.

Website: <http://www.mentproject.eu/>

FAQs:

1. HOW TO APPLY?

Find the application form [here](#). Scroll down to the section "Click here to apply to the programme in your country", and choose your country of residence. You will then be directed to the platform page of your selected country.

You will also be asked to register to the F6S.com platform.

Although optional, we encourage you to include a short letter of motivation in your application, where you can introduce yourself (and your team members), and your business idea.

2. WHO IS THIS PROGRAMME FOR?

MEnt is specifically designed to benefit newcomers interested and committed to starting their own business in Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and France. What matters most is your motivation and commitment to participate in MEnt's activities and work towards creating your own start-up.

3. WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

Before you apply, please make sure you (and your team members) meet these prerequisites:

- All newcomers with legal residence status in EU are eligible to apply.*
- EU citizens are also welcome, although preference will be given to newcomers.
- You need to have a good grasp of English in order to be able to fully participate in MEnt's activities.
- You should also estimate to set aside a minimum of 10-15 hours a week to not only attend all of MEnt's activities and events, but also to work on your business idea with your team.

**Newcomers interested in MEnt but hold uncertain residence status may reach out to us: info@mentproject.eu. We will do our best and see how you may still participate in MEnt.*

4. WHAT DO I GET OUT OF THE PROGRAMME?

MEnt offers a unique platform that combines business idea development with training, mentoring, and networking opportunities. By the end of the programme, you would have:

- Transformed your initial business idea into a strong value proposition and a viable business plan
- Tested and validated your idea into a feasible product/service offering
- Increased your business literacy and acquired essential know-how in financial planning, marketing, creating compelling presentations, and working with external partners
- Gained valuable contacts in the start-up scene, as well as in the sector(s) relevant to your product offering

**subject to certification requirements*

5. WHAT KIND OF COURSES ARE OFFERED WITHIN MENT?

Our curriculum will be finalised after the selection and acceptance of the participants. That said, the following courses are already planned into our curriculum and will be part of the short training sessions and light incubation:

- How to understand your market and users
- Identity, mission and vision
- Prototype-Test-Repeat: Ready your product for implementation
- Master the basics of accounting
- Budgeting and managing your finances
- Sales and marketing 101
- How to write a funding proposal
- Analysis of the impact framework
- Pitch to sell: Create winning business presentations
- How to form lasting business relationships with partners and clients

6. WHAT KIND OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT WILL I GET?

Mentoring is a cornerstone of the MEnt project. All our mentors are selected based on their experience and in-depth insights into a specific industry. We will 'match-make' each team/idea with a dedicated mentor with expertise in a field similar to your business idea.

Your mentor will accompany you/your team throughout the length of the programme, guiding the development of your idea, and giving you 'reality checks'. They will offer you insights into the field your business will play in, how to reach the right customer segments, and help you open doors to potential partners.

Through MEnt, you will also be connected to experts and other important players in the start-up community—e.g. Tax and legal experts, web developers, app designers. We have earmarked several of such networking events for the purpose of helping you grow your professional network.

7. WHEN WILL THE PROGRAMME START, AND HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE TO DEDICATE IN THESE 5 MONTHS?

The first cycle of the programme starts at the end of May, and will run till September.

The programme opens with an intensive 2-day workshop (Short Training Session). Thereafter, expect to set aside a minimum of 15 to 20 hours every week to use the new knowledge and contacts we provide you to develop your idea and business (i.e. customer research, market discovery, prototyping, user testing etc). Dates of the workshops will be differ in each country. You can find this information in the documents available on the website.

A second cycle is also planned for November 2017. Applications for this second cycle will be announced at a later date.

8. HOW MANY PROJECTS/TEAMS WILL TAKE PART IN THE PROGRAMME?

One program cycle runs for 5 months, and each cycle will support up to 10 innovative ideas that are developed either by individuals or in teams. Projects/teams will undergo two rounds of selection:

1. Selection 1: Application -- 20 projects/teams.
Out of all the applications received, 20 projects/teams will be selected to take part in the Short Training Session (2 days). There is no maximum number of members in each team, however to ensure fairness, up to 3 team members may participate in our workshops and events.
2. Selection 2: Short Training Session -- 10 projects/teams
At the end of this 2-day workshop, the selected 20 projects/teams will be asked to prepare a short report. Based on this report and their performance in the workshop, up to 10 projects/teams will be selected to carry on to the incubation phase.

We strongly encourage working in teams. Mixed and diverse teams (across genders and nationalities etc.) are very welcome. Teams comprising members of refugee or migrant backgrounds, and members of native or naturalised EU citizenship are also invited to apply.

It is not mandatory to have already formed a team at the time of application. You may still apply as an individual as MEnt allows the flexibility for you to either become part of an existing team, or form a new team with other individual participants in the programme.

If you are applying as a team, your team should consist of at least one member of refugee or migrant background.

9. ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SPECIFIC PROJECT/BUSINESS IDEAS?

No, the programme does not focus on any particular topic or business field. Instead, what we value are innovative, inspiring, and practical ideas that will bring about meaningful impact or change. No-tech, low-tech and high-tech projects are all welcome. We will also select for-project and socially-driven projects equally. The positive social impact of all projects, including the profit-driven ideas, is a plus criteria for us.

10. DO I HAVE TO PAY A FEE TO ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

No, this program is free of charge. In return, we expect all participants to dedicate around 15 hours/week (at workshops and working on your business).

11. WILL I GET ANY FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THIS PROGRAMME?

We do not provide direct financial support for your idea. We will, however, support you by providing you advice and access to potential funding sources for your projects (e.g. crowd-funding campaign, micro-credit institutions, investors). MEnt's also includes classes on preparing the necessary legal and business documents to acquire and secure funding.

12. HOW DEVELOPED SHOULD MY IDEA OR PROJECT BE WHEN I JOIN THE PROGRAMME? WHAT IF I ONLY HAVE A ROUGH OR UNCLEAR IDEA?

We accept projects at various stages of their idea's development. However, you should already have a clear idea of your project and have done some preliminary market research to know whether your idea seems plausible in your city in the near term. You can do this by telling people in your personal network (e.g. friends, colleagues, relatives, family) about your idea, and/or check out stores, companies or projects with similar product offerings or similar objectives. If you are already further in the process (you started to test your idea or your business already exists), you are welcome to apply because our tools and networks can help you to generate new products and business models. If you have more questions, do not hesitate to drop us an email at info@mentproject.eu.