eubic

Think Global, Act Regional

EU|BIC Essentials 2026

Module 2. Startup Internationalisation Strategies and Tools

18 November | 10h00 to 12h30 CET

ebn

Assessing Readiness and Supporting International Growth

Internationalisation is critical for many startups and SMEs to grow. Expanding internationally demands preparation, strategic decision-making, market intelligence, strong partnerships and the ability to navigate unfamiliar business, regulatory and cultural environments. **EU|BICs are uniquely positioned to support companies throughout this journey**. They play a key role in helping entrepreneurs assess their readiness for international expansion, identify suitable markets, access the expertise, networks and resources for successful growth.

This module explores how startups internationalise and how EU|BIC managers support them throughout the process. Combining practical frameworks, diagnostic tools and real-world case studies, participants will gain a deeper understanding of tools in supporting international growth and pathways, readiness assessment methodologies, market intelligence approaches and the role of AI-enabled tools for international growth.

Participants will be able to:

- Assess a startup's internationalisation readiness.
- Identify suitable internationalisation pathways and growth strategies.
- Apply market selection and market intelligence methodologies.
- Select practical tools for evaluating international growth opportunities.
- Match startups and SMEs with appropriate internationalisation support services and programmes.

Structure

10h00-10h05	**Welcome**	**EBN**
10h05-10h15	**Icebreaker | Postcards from EU|BIC Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China**	**Ángel Prieto Sotos, CEEI Albacete**
10h15-11h00	**Setting the Scene | Why do startups internationalise and what does successful internationalisation actually look like in practice?**	**Jens Boehm, RTC North**
11h00-11h25	**Focus | Assessing Internationalisation Readiness and Designing Tailored International Growth Pathways**	**Valeria Centinario and Lorenzo Sonni, Promos Italia**
11h25-11h30	**Break**	
11h30-12h25	**Focus | Export Strategy, Market Entry and Digital Internationalisation**	**Jeff Sheridan, Cristina Zygomalas and Giuseppe Ditaranto, Matrix Internet**
12h25-12h30	**Closing**	**EBN**

Sessions and speakers

Postcards from EU|BIC Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China

Participants share reflections from the EU|BIC Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China, exploring internationalisation strategies, venture growth pathways, and programme design lessons for innovation ecosystems.

Participants from the EBN Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China will share practical reflections on how innovation ecosystems support international expansion, highlighting lessons related to market access, ecosystem building, business culture and international collaboration. The session aims to stimulate discussion around the opportunities and challenges startups face when exploring global markets and the role EU|BICs can play in facilitating those journeys.









Setting the Scene | Why do Startups Internationalise and What Does Successful Internationalisation Actually Look Like in Practice?

Drawing on RTC North's extensive experience delivering Innovate UK Global Business Innovation Programmes and international innovation missions, Jens Boehm will provide a practical overview of a startup internationalisation journey. He will explore internationalisation as a strategic growth journey rather than a single market-entry decision. Participants will examine the motivations that drive innovative companies to expand internationally, including access to new customers, partnerships, investment opportunities and specialised ecosystems.

Through real-world programmes and company experiences, Jens will discuss the different stages of the internationalisation journey, from readiness and preparation to market entry and long-term growth. He will speak of the role business support organisations play in preparing companies for international growth. Jens will address common challenges faced by startups entering new markets and reflect on lessons learned from delivering and scaling Innovate UK's internationalisation support model.

Participants will leave with a structured framework for understanding startup internationalisation and a clearer view of how EU|BICs can support companies at each stage of the process.



Jens Boehm
RTC North

Focus | Assessing Internationalisation Readiness and Designing Tailored International Growth Pathways

With over 40 years of experience supporting companies in international markets, Promos Italia will explore how to assess a company's readiness for global growth and how to translate diagnostic insights into tailored internationalisation strategies.

The session will showcase practical methodologies and assessment approaches to evaluate different dimensions of international readiness, recognising that no single framework fits all companies. It will show how assessment tools can help advisers understand a company's profile, identify barriers, and determine the most suitable internationalisation pathway.

The session will also highlight how different internationalisation objectives often require different support approaches. Readiness assessments can be powerful advisory tools. Participants will gain insights into how EU|BICs can use assessment methodologies to better segment clients, tailor services, reduce internationalisation risks, and guide companies towards realistic and effective international growth strategies.



Valeria Centinario
Lorenzo Sonni
Promos Italia



Focus | Export Strategy, Market Entry and Digital Internationalisation

Drawing on Matrix Internet's extensive international experience supporting startups and SMEs across multiple sectors and markets, Jeff Sheridan, Cristina Zygomalas and Giuseppe Ditaranto will explore how organisations can help companies design and implement effective international growth strategies.

The session will examine the practical decisions that businesses face when selecting target markets, developing export strategies and adapting their value proposition to different cultural and commercial environments. Through real-world examples and lessons learned from client projects, participants will gain insights into the factors that contribute to successful market entry as well as the common mistakes that can slow down or derail international growth efforts.

Particular attention will be given to the growing role of digitalisation in internationalisation. The speakers will demonstrate how digital marketing, market intelligence platforms, customer engagement tools and emerging AI-enabled solutions can support export development and accelerate market expansion. Participants will also explore how communication strategies, cultural adaptation and digital presence influence international performance across different sectors, including software, deep tech, manufacturing, healthcare and sustainability-related industries.

The session will provide participants with practical methodologies, tools and recommendations that can be directly integrated into incubation and acceleration programmes, enabling EU|BICs to offer more structured and effective support to startups pursuing international growth.



Jeff Sheridan
Matrix Internet



Cristina Zygomalas
Matrix Internet



Giuseppe Ditaranto
Matrix Internet

Practical Takeaway

Participants will reflect on the startups and SMEs they support and assess how prepared they are for international growth. Building on the concepts, tools and examples, participants will develop a preliminary Startup Internationalisation Support Canvas.

This practical framework will help participants assess internationalisation readiness, identify capability and resource gaps, prioritise target markets, explore suitable market-entry strategies and match companies with relevant support services, programmes and partnerships.



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