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Think Global, Act Regional

EU|BIC Essentials 2026

Module 3. Designing and Delivering Internationalisation Support Programmes

20 November | 10h00 to 12h30 CET

ebn

From Services to Impact

Successful internationalisation does not happen by chance. Behind every startup entering new markets, securing international customers or establishing global partnerships, there is often a structured support system helping founders navigate risks, build capabilities and access opportunities.

For EU|BICs, the challenge is not only understanding internationalisation, but translating it into effective programmes that generate measurable outcomes for companies and regional ecosystems. Whether through acceleration programmes, soft-landing initiatives, international missions, open innovation partnerships or investment readiness support, EU|BICs play a critical role in helping startups move from ambition to execution.

Building on Modules 1 and 2, this Training Lab examines how EU|BICs can design, implement and continuously improve internationalisation support programmes. Through three concrete case studies, participants will explore different delivery models, partnership structures, operational considerations and impact measurement approaches that can be applied and adapted within their own organisations.

Participants will be able to:

- Design internationalisation support programmes tailored to the needs of startups and SMEs.
- Build effective service portfolios and international partnerships.
- Mobilise mentors, experts, investors and market-entry partners.
- Structure soft-landing, acceleration and open innovation initiatives.
- Define indicators and methodologies to monitor programme effectiveness and impact.

Structure

10h00-10h05	**Welcome**	**EBN**
10h05-10h15	**Icebreaker | Postcards from EU|BIC Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China**	**Vitor Ferreira, Stratup Leiria**
10h15-10h55	**Case Study | Corporate-Led Internationalisation Through Open Innovation**	**Neil Cocker and Shivani Sondhi, Tomorrow Street**
10h55-11h00	**Break**	
11h00-11h40	**Case Study | Designing and Scaling an International Growth Accelerator**	**Miray Şanlı, Teknopark İzmir**
11h40-12h25	**Case Study | Soft-Landing Programmes as Gateways to New Markets**	**Cristina Fanjul, CEEI Asturias**
12h25-12h30	**Closing**	**EBN**

Sessions and speakers

Postcards from EU|BIC Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China

Building on the experiences gathered during the EU|BIC Ecosystem Discovery Mission to China, two participants will share practical observations on how internationalisation support is structured and delivered within one of the world's most dynamic innovation ecosystems.

Through brief reflections and examples from incubators, accelerators, innovation parks, corporate programmes and entrepreneurship support organisations visited during the mission, participants will explore different approaches to supporting startup internationalisation and ecosystem development.

The objective is to encourage participants to reflect on different ways of structuring internationalisation support and to set the scene for the programme design case studies that follow.









Case Study |Corporate-Led Internationalisation Through Open Innovation

Neil Cocker and Shivani Sondhi will present the experience of Tomorrow Street, a unique initiative created through the collaboration between Vodafone and EU|BIC Technoport. Positioned at the intersection of corporate innovation and startup development, Tomorrow Street offers a distinctive model for supporting international growth by connecting startups with global markets, corporate customers, strategic partners and international innovation ecosystems.

The session will explore how open innovation programmes can serve as powerful internationalisation vehicles, creating pathways for startups to access opportunities that would otherwise be difficult to reach independently. Participants will gain insight into how startups are identified, selected and supported throughout their internationalisation journey, as well as the organisational capabilities, stakeholder relationships and operational structures required to manage such programmes successfully. The discussion will also examine the challenges associated with balancing corporate expectations and startup needs, together with the lessons learned from developing and refining the model over time.



Neil Cocker
Shivani Sondhi
Tomorrow Street



Case Study | Designing and Scaling an International Growth Accelerator

Drawing on the experience of Accelerate İzmir, Miray Şanlı will explore how internationalisation-focused acceleration programmes can be designed, implemented and continuously improved to meet the evolving needs of startups and SMEs. Over several years, Accelerate İzmir has developed into a comprehensive growth programme combining mentoring, acceleration, investor readiness and international market development.

The session will examine the programme's inception and strategic goals, and how it evolved through experience, feedback and learning. Participants will explore the practical considerations involved in building and managing acceleration programmes, including startup selection, partnership development, programme delivery and the mobilisation of public and institutional support.

Particular attention will be given to how the programme measures performance, incorporates participant feedback and adapts to changing realities. Miray will also reflect on the different requirements of software ventures, deep-tech companies and more established SMEs, highlighting how internationalisation support must often be tailored to different business models and growth trajectories.



Miray Şanlı
Teknopark İzmir

Case Study | Soft-Landing Programmes as Gateways to New Markets

Cristina Fanjul will present the experience of CEEI Asturias in developing and delivering soft-landing initiatives. While soft-landing programmes have become increasingly common, their effectiveness depends on more than organising international visits or facilitating introductions. Successful programmes require long-term partnerships, clearly defined services and strong organisational commitment.

Drawing on practical examples from CEEI Asturias, Cristina will discuss the different models of soft-landing support, the role of local and international partners and the importance of aligning soft-landing activities with incubation, acceleration and business development services.

Participants will gain insights into the operational and strategic dimensions of programme delivery, including resource requirements, stakeholder engagement, service design and impact measurement. The discussion will also reflect on the lessons learned through programme implementation and evolution, highlighting common challenges and practical recommendations for organisations wishing to strengthen their own soft-landing offer.



Cristina Fanjul
CEEI Asturias

Practical Takeaway

Throughout the module, participants will be invited to analyse three distinct internationalisation support models and reflect on choices, partnerships and organisational capabilities for success.

The session will help participants identify suitable partners, define operational requirements, establish performance indicators and consider mechanisms for continuous improvement.

By the end of the module, participants will have a practical framework that can serve as a starting point for designing, refining or scaling internationalisation support activities within their EU|BIC and regional innovation ecosystem.



European Business and Innovation Centre Network - EBN

Avenue Roger Vandendriessche 18,

1150 Brussels, Belgium

www.ebn.eu