

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Cross-Border Startup Support Programme

CROSSBORDER STARTUP POINT – Mentoring & Consultancy

The partners of the **Crossborder Startup Point** project (ATCZ00090) hereby announce a **call for applications** for a programme focused on the development of early-stage entrepreneurs and innovative companies in the **South Bohemian Region (Czech Republic)** and **Upper Austria**, with a strong emphasis on **cross-border cooperation and market expansion**.

Key Definitions:

Applicant

A natural or legal person (self-employed individual, startup or company up to 10 years of existence) applying to participate in the Crossborder Startup Point programme in order to use mentoring and/or professional consultancy services. The applicant becomes a beneficiary only after approval of the application by the evaluation committee.

Beneficiary

A startup or early-stage entrepreneur whose application has been approved and who is provided with a free subsidised service consisting of **10 hours of mentoring and 10 hours of professional consultancy**. The beneficiary is obliged to actively cooperate, fulfil the agreed Mentoring and Consultancy Plan and provide cooperation to the Startup Point managers.

Mentor / Consultant

An expert with proven experience in a specific field, involved in the Crossborder Startup Point partner network, who provides beneficiaries with professional guidance, feedback and specialised consultations.

- **Mentor** – focuses on strategic and entrepreneurial guidance of the startup (strategy, sales, marketing, validation).
- **Consultant** – provides specialised expert know-how (finance, technology, law, design, digitalisation, etc.).

At least **one mentor or consultant must come from the partner country** (Czech–Austrian cross-border principle).

Subsidised Service

A service provided to the beneficiary free of charge in accordance with public aid rules (block exemption).

Within this call, the subsidised service includes:

- 10 hours of mentoring

- 10 hours of professional consultancy
- Participation in the **Crossborder Startup Camp**

The subsidised service may not be commercially used or resold by the beneficiary.

Mentoring / Consultancy Service

A comprehensive support service provided by a mentor or consultant, aimed at the development of the startup and its readiness for cross-border expansion. The service is delivered according to an individual Mentoring and Consultancy Plan.

1. Programme Objective

The objective of the programme is to strengthen the readiness of startups to enter a neighbouring foreign market, develop their business and innovation potential, and support the creation of long-term cross-border partnerships between business entities from both regions. The programme contributes to the development of a cross-border innovation ecosystem and supports company growth through expert guidance and targeted consultancy services.

2. Programme Content / Supported Activities

The programme provides support in the form of a **free service** consisting of:

- **10 hours of individual mentoring**, and
- **10 hours of specialised consultancy** for each supported startup.

Examples of supported mentoring areas:

- Development and adaptation of a business plan with regard to entering a foreign market, including validation of market and customer potential
- Sales and marketing strategy, definition of target markets and customer segments, creation of value proposition and communication channels
- Legal and administrative conditions for doing business in the partner country, especially commercial law, tax regulations, intellectual property protection and contractual relations
- Support in competitor analysis and provision of product recommendations and evaluation
- Networking with partners in the cross-border innovation environment, including companies, experts, investors, incubators and support institutions

Examples of supported specialised consultancy areas:

- Digitalisation and process optimisation
- Technical and technological consultancy
- Product and service design
- Intellectual property protection
- Financial modelling for growth and expansion

Online workshops for startups

(approximately 2 hours each, may include the following topics):

- Online Sales Playbook
- Pitch Deck Workshop
- Business Model Canvas
- Value Proposition Canvas
- Competitor Comparison Table
- TAM–SAM–SOM Model

Support is provided in the form of **non-financial aid (block exemption)**.

3. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include early-stage entrepreneurs (self-employed individuals or commercial companies) and startups with an innovative business idea, headquartered or operating in the South Bohemian Region or Upper Austria, with a business history of up to 10 years as of the application submission date, who are interested in entering a foreign market and are ready to actively cooperate within the mentoring process.

The maximum number of supported applicants is 10 from South Bohemia and 10 from Austria (as defined by the project).

4. Scope of Support

Type of Support	Scope	Support Scheme
Mentoring	10 hours	Free of charge (block exemption)
Consultancy	10 hours	Free of charge (block exemption)

Crossborder Startup Camp	4–5 March 2026	Free of charge (block exemption)
--------------------------	----------------	----------------------------------

5. Application Submission

Applications are submitted via an **online form** (Application CZ / Anmeldung AT) or during a personal meeting with a Startup Point manager. The application must include a **brief description of the business idea (max. 1 page)** and a specification of the expected support.

6. Preparation of the Mentoring and Consultancy Plan – Procedure

- a) Joint consultation between the applicant and Startup Point managers

- b) Selection of mentors and consultants – at least one must be from the partner country (for Austrian startups from the Czech Republic and vice versa)

- c) Preparation of the Mentoring and Consultancy Plan

7. Application Evaluation

Applications are evaluated by an **evaluation committee** composed of project managers of the project partners.

Evaluation criteria:

- Startup or innovative idea with a business history of up to 10 years
- Potential for cross-border expansion
- Language skills (ability to communicate in **English or German**)
- Active participation (motivation to actively participate in pilot activities)

In case of a higher number of applicants, the ranking and final decision of the evaluation committee are decisive.

8. Confirmation of Participation

After approval and evaluation of the application, each beneficiary will be informed by email about their inclusion in the pilot phase and the provision of the subsidised mentoring/consultancy service.

9. Evaluation of Results

After completion of the mentoring and consultancy services, the following outputs will be submitted to the Startup Point managers:

- Handover protocol
- Evaluation of the provided services via an online form or in person (completed by both the beneficiary and the mentor/consultant)

10. Timeline

- Start of application submission: **1 January 2026**
- Application deadline: **11 February 2026**
- Crossborder Startup Camp: **4–5 March 2026**
- Implementation of support: **1 March – 31 July 2026**
- Feedback collection: **1 September – 30 September 2026**

11. Ostatní podmínky výzvy

- The provider reserves the right to change the conditions of the call.
The beneficiary undertakes to cooperate in the control of fulfilment and delivery of the ordered services by the service provider.

12. Contact Persons

Ing. Veronika Chrobočková (JVTP) veronika.chrobockova@jvtp.cz

Ing. Michal Emmer (Startup Point manager CZ/VŠTE) emmer@mail.vstecb.cz

Heller Karolina (Startup Point manager/Biz-Up) karolina.heller@biz-up.at

Dorner Cathrin Johanna (Startup Point manager/Biz-Up) cathrin.dorner@biz-up.at