

DRIVE NEWSLETTER



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Welcome to the sixth Newsletter of **DRIVE - Driving Rural Innovation through startup Villages across Europe** - is a Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action dedicated to strengthening rural innovation ecosystems. It does so by connecting startups with accelerators, mentors, and funding bodies through dynamic roadshows, hackathons, and training events.



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Mentoring in Progress: tailored support for the DRIVE teams

Following the DRIVE Roadshows, the mentoring phase is now well underway. We gathered feedback from our mentors to hear how the sessions are progressing and what kind of progress they are already seeing in the teams.

F6S, mentor for Investors and Digital Platforms

The mentoring activities are now moving from general training into more tailored support for each startup. So far, the focus has been on reviewing materials, assessing readiness, and helping teams sharpen their investor approach. The remaining sessions will build on this work by refining pitch decks, improving investor targeting and outreach, and helping startups close the main gaps before entering real fundraising conversations.

CSI Cyprus, mentor for Social Innovation for SMEs

The mentoring activities are progressing very positively, with participants actively engaging in sessions focused on strengthening their business models, integrating social innovation principles, and identifying ways to measure social and environmental impact. Through the sessions, teams are refining their ideas, improving demand predictability, and exploring practical strategies to reduce waste while creating sustainable value. The next steps will focus on turning these insights into more concrete actions and stronger market approaches.

Cleantech Bulgaria, mentor for Access to Finance and Related Funding



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Consorzio Italbiotec, mentor for Sustainability and Bio-based Business Models

Following an introductory technical workshop, each team entered a tailored mentoring pathway focused on business model development, market positioning, and economic sustainability. During the sessions, teams are supported in analysing their value proposition, market opportunities, revenue models, scalability, and impact potential. So far, around half of the teams have already participated, providing very positive feedback and highlighting the value of the practical guidance and strategic discussions with mentors.

AB Corporation, mentor for Effective Pitching and Communication

The individual mentoring sessions have progressed very well and are now close to completion, with only two sessions remaining. Teams have shown strong engagement and active participation, with a clear willingness to improve how they present and communicate their ideas. Feedback collected after each session has been very positive, and several teams also requested additional materials and further advice, showing that the content delivered was useful, relevant, and directly applicable.



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WHAT'S NEXT?

The DRIVE mentoring journey is now moving into its final stage, with the last sessions helping teams further refine their ideas, strengthen their pitches, and prepare for the next steps of their development.

Stay tuned for details!

Stay Connected

For more information visit the [DRIVE WEBSITE](#)

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