



THE NEXT SOCIETY

Cluster Booster Track
Call for mentors

The Cluster Booster Track CALL FOR MENTORS

What is mentoring?

“Mentoring is a system of semi-structured guidance whereby one person (the mentor) shares their knowledge, skills and experience to assist another person (the mentee) to progress.”

“**Mentoring** is more than ‘giving advice’ or passing on what your experience was in a particular area or situation. It’s about **motivating and empowering** the other person to identify their own issues and goals, and helping them to find ways of resolving or reaching them – not by doing it for them, or expecting them to ‘do it the way I did it’, but by **understanding and respecting different ways of working**.”

During the mentoring relationship, mentors will also learn from mentees and develop new ways of approaching a specific issue. Mentoring is “a chain for ‘passing on’ good practice so that the benefits can be widely spread”.¹

About THE NEXT SOCIETY and the Cluster Booster Track

THE NEXT SOCIETY is an **open community of change makers** engaged in **innovation and economic development**. It brings together entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, NGOs, public and private innovation, research and economic development hubs from Europe and the Mediterranean countries. It already gathers a large network of over 300 business & innovation, research and investment organisations, 2,500 international SMEs and entrepreneurs from 30 countries. In 2017, THE NEXT SOCIETY has launched a four-year action plan co-funded by the European Union, which impacts several levels of the innovation ecosystem, including clusters.

The [Cluster Booster](#) track is the special programme that targets clusters. It is an **exciting peer-to-peer learning and booster programme** that helps MENA cluster managers (from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine*, Tunisia) improve their management skills, multiply business opportunities and open new channels of inter-clustering collaboration at national and international levels.

About Cluster Mentoring Reloaded

This programme is based on the matching of:

- **experienced cluster practitioners** (cluster managers or cluster management experts) willing to develop inter-cluster cooperation and share successful experiences, *the mentors*,
- **with 15 selected MENA cluster managers** interested in peer feedback, *the mentees*. The mentees are from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine*, Tunisia.

¹ Source: University of Cambridge, Personal and Professional Development, What is mentoring?

*This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue



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Who can apply?

The call is **open to all cluster managers** (or cluster management experts²) willing to share their experience and offer support to mentees. Mentoring will be an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and gain new perspective on their organisation as well.

Objective

The aim of the mentoring activity is twofold: on the one side, support the development of **cluster management practices**, and, on the other side, provide inspiration for **new business ideas and cooperation opportunities**.

Areas of knowledge

Please find below a non-exclusive list of knowledge areas and competences that you can offer to share through the Cluster Booster Track mentoring programme:

- Cluster strategy
- Financing model – sustainability
- Communication strategy & branding
- Member engagement
- Service portfolio
- Governance of the cluster
- Management and development of the cluster management team
- Monitoring, evaluation and impact
- Cross-sector cooperation and inter-clustering (both at national and international level)
- COVID-19: good practices in adapting any management aspect resulting from the pandemic implications.

Practical information for mentors

Selection process

The selection process is set up in two phases: a first phase consisting of the [online application form](#) and a second one consisting of **a brief online interview** with the candidate.

Candidates will be informed of the result of the selection process by the **24th of December**.

Selected mentors will be accompanied by the ACCIÓ team who will provide its guidance and support through dedicated documentation and a specific working group set up for this purpose on [i-Community](#), the collaborative network of MENA cluster managers, their teams and their peers.

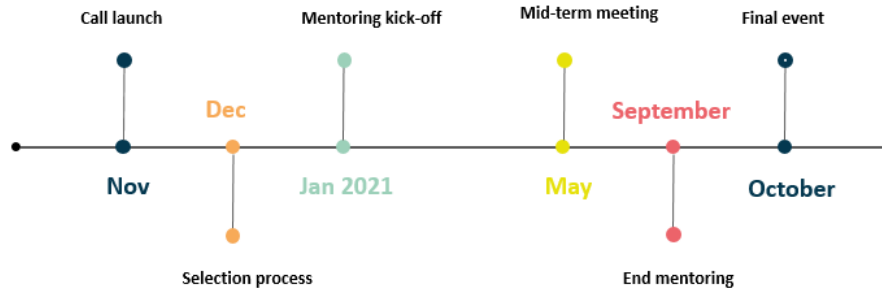
² Experts in cluster management must have either a professional experience of at least 5 years in management of a cluster organization; or a strong experience in strategic counselling/support to the development of cluster organizations in the past 5 years. Evidence of the expertise must be included in the application form ("Experience in cluster management" section).



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Timeline



The programme will begin by **mid-January** and it will end in **October 2021** with 3 joint meetings and 1 mentor group session in which participation will be compulsory.

Most of programme will be **delivered online**, some **physical meetings** and a **final event** are planned but the preservation of these events is subject to the evolution of the global pandemic of COVID-19.

The online mentor session will take place between February and September (to be jointly agreed with the Cluster Booster Track coordination team).

Main responsibilities and activities

The *Cluster Mentoring Reloaded* programme is limited to **45 hours per mentee** (one mentor may offer support to various MENA cluster managers).

The hour package includes the following:

- Bilateral mentoring with the assigned mentee.
- Participation as expert in one mentor group session in which the mentor will run a group session on a competence he/she excels at (to be jointly agreed with the Cluster Booster Track coordination team)
- Participation with active contribution at the three joint meetings.
- Time allocated to back-office preparation, reporting and administrative issues.

Bilateral mentoring sessions

Bilateral mentoring will start after the kick-off meeting and the sessions will need to be completed by the **30th of September 2021**.

The mentoring sessions, their periodicity and duration, will be agreed by each mentoring pair. By no means will the bilateral mentoring sessions represent less than 18 hours of the total amount of 45 allocated hours.

The mentor is responsible for finding the best suitable communication means for their mentee (MS Teams, Zoom, Google meet...) with strong preference for video calls to foster a good exchange and guaranteeing a standard quality (good connection, sufficient broadband).

Deliverables and Reporting

- At the beginning of the programme the mentor will be provided with a couple of simple documents to be filled in, in agreement with their mentee, essentially describing the goals to be reached by way of the participation in the programme.
- Mid-way: Progress report to be prepared by end of April/beginning of May.
- End of the programme: Final reporting document.

All documents must be written in English. Failure to comply with the responsibilities in due time and manner may result in the reduction of the financial contribution accordingly.

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Financial contribution

The financial contribution for mentors is limited to maximum **EUR 5,000 (VAT excluded)/per mentee**.

How to apply and deadline for submission

Cluster practitioners (cluster managers or cluster management experts) interested in becoming a mentor must fill in [the online application form](#) by **04/12/2020 end of day** (CET)

Contact of the coordination team

If you have questions regarding this call, you may contact Laura Sánchez, International project manager assistant at ACCIÓ: laura.sanchez@gencat.cat