

# Methodology for selection and evaluation of candidates for participation in the Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups from China and the CEE countries

## 1. General provisions

This methodology regulates the procedure for selection of candidates for the Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups from China and the CEE countries, carried out by the “Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation Between China and the Central and Eastern European countries” (APACCCEEC).

The main objectives of the program are supporting projects that develop innovative products, services or processes in agriculture, encouraging entrepreneurship and support the implementation of innovative projects of start-ups in the field of agriculture, contributing to the competitiveness in this sector in the CEE countries and China, promoting and giving identity to the entrepreneurial ecosystem for agricultural technologies among the CEE countries and China and promoting youth entrepreneurship in agriculture among the target audience of CEE countries and China.

## 2. Stages of selection

### 2.1. Initial selection:

Only applicants who meet the following requirements together are eligible to participate in the Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups between China and the CEE countries:

- the applicant is a start-up company registered in one of the Member States of the Initiative for cooperation between **China and CEE countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia)**;
- the applicant has already formed a team and developed a good project idea, as the date of the legal establishment of the company should not exceed 5 years at the time of applying for the Accelerator Program;
- the applicant presents a project that is focused only in the field of agriculture and related activities;
- the applicant submits only one project proposal;
- the applicant is not a franchise company;

The initial selection ends within 3 (three) working days after the last day announced for application under the program.

**2.2.** In order to overcome the initial selection, the applicant should also, in addition to meeting the conditions under item 2.1. above, within the specified application period for the program to have

submitted an application for participation together with his project proposal through an application form through a specially developed subdomain to the website of APACCCEEC ([www.startups.china2ceec.org](http://www.startups.china2ceec.org)).

### **2.3. Subsequent selection:**

Subsequent selection is carried out by an external jury, which after evaluating the submitted projects allows 20 start-ups from CEE and China to participate in the Accelerator Program for agricultural start-ups between China and the CEE.

The main criteria for evaluating the project proposals submitted by the applicants are related to the extent to which the submitted projects correspond to the goals and objectives of the program, namely:

- food technology projects;
- innovations in agriculture;
- creation of mobile applications compliant with the COVID-19 environment;
- implementation of technologies in restaurants;
- food waste solutions;
- use of GIS technologies in agriculture;
- sustainable food and beverage supplies;
- sustainable agriculture and organic products;
- culinary tourism;
- environmental projects.

The project proposal must be related to the development of innovative services, solutions or products in the field of agriculture.

The project proposal should be aimed at creating good practices in the field of agriculture.

The project proposal should be aimed at increasing the competitiveness of agriculture in the economies of CEE and China.

### **3. Notification**

Applicants are informed of the outcome of the evaluation procedure by letter or online notification, regardless of whether their proposal has been accepted or rejected.

### **4. Signing a contract for participation in the program**

Candidates approved after the subsequent selection under point 2.3 shall sign a contract with the APACCCEEC for participation in the Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups from China and the CEE countries, which describes in detail the rights and obligations of the parties.

The contract serves as a basis for establishing the rights and obligations of the parties to the project.

### **5. Reserve participants**

When making the subsequent selection, the jury prepares a list of reserve participants according to the evaluation of the project proposals submitted by them.

If any of the selected candidates refuses to sign a contract for participation in the Accelerator Program for Agricultural Start-ups from China and the CEE countries, regardless of the reason for this refusal, APACCCEEC has the right to propose to the next ranked participant who was in the list of reserve participants, to sign a contract for participation.

## **6. Evaluation of the projects during the implementation of the Accelerator program and the accompanying events**

The organizer of the program provides an opportunity to each of the selected candidates with whom a contract for participation in the program has been signed to present their project proposal during specially organized events in Sofia, Bulgaria.

After these events, the organizer ensures the holding of a final event, where the 20 finalists present their projects to the jury, diplomats from CEE and China, the public and the media.

Each participant has 15 minutes to present their project.

An external jury evaluates and selects the finalists, awarding the three best projects.

The final evaluation of project proposals will meet the following criteria:

- project/company with innovative business model;
- team ability to implement the project;
- feasibility of the idea;
- potential impact on agricultural sector in the region;
- have potential for growth and/or scalability;
- environmental, social and economic impact.

7. The issues not settled in this Methodology will be settled in detail by the contracts between APACCCEEC and the approved candidates.

8. Amendments and additions to the Methodology shall be made by a decision of the Director of the APACCCEEC.