D3.4 Plan for Exploitation & Dissemination of Results (PEDR) - update

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[1] 1 Confidentiality level:
PU = Public
PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the EC services);
RE = Restricted to a group specified by the Consortium (including the EC services);
CO = Confidential, only for members of the Consortium (including the EC services).
INN - Internal only, only the members of the consortium (excluding the EC services)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

EU	European Union
OC1	Open Call 1
OC2/RS	Open Call 2 / Remote Schooling
OC3	Open Call 3
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
SEN	Special Educational Needs
MVP	Minimum Viable Product
DLSG	Digital Learning Stakeholders Group
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
PEDR	Plan for Exploitation and Dissemination of Results
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Consumer
VET	Vocational Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
IT	Information Technology
VC	Venture Capital
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
NGI	Next Generation Internet
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
MoE	Ministry of Education
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
GA	Grant Agreement

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1. Introduction

The IMPACT EdTech project was created with the purpose of setting up a hybrid incubator-accelerator to boost 43 of Europe's best startups in the educational technology (EdTech) field. The project aimed to do this through tailor-built business and educational support. The business support was to help startups refine their product and take it to the market in the most effective way. The educational support was to make sure the startups had a strong pedagogical element that truly supported the startup's learning goals, whether those were focused on the K-12 classroom or on a wider audience. Furthermore, from its inception, the project had a strong focus on personalised digital learning and an aim to foster inclusive solutions that could help bring equity in gender, ability, and other areas to education.

The principal IMPACT EdTech values laid out in the Document of Work are four: challenge-driven, transparency, high performance, and continuous improvement. A discussion of what these terms mean to the IMPACT EdTech project can be found in Deliverable 3.3, the first version of the Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results. That document also includes a discussion of the two pillars of the exploitation and dissemination strategy:

- Widely promoting the new personalised and inclusive EdTech solutions supported within IMPACT EdTech and fostering interaction with the digital learning ecosystem.

- Positioning IMPACT EdTech, at a European level, as a 'MVP Builder' model for EdTech solutions to be replicated.

This update to the Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results will cover what has been done since the first version was published in M22, as well as focusing on actions to be done in the last months of the project and beyond.

1.1. Definition of key terms

It is important to understand the difference between the key terms **communication**, **dissemination**, and **exploitation**. Communication refers to actions designed to attract third parties to the project (e.g. as part of an open call for startups). Dissemination has the aim of raising awareness about the project itself and the project's results. Finally, exploitation focuses on the actions taken to further the work done during the course of the IMPACT EdTech project, to make sure that

the momentum built up during the project is fully taken advantage of.

A deeper discussion of these terms can be found in Deliverable 3.3.

2. Performance analysis

The IMPACT EdTech project's primary aim is to provide an EdTech-specific incubation ecosystem that can reach a wide range of disruptive startups across Europe, offering support to facilitate business consolidation and improve pedagogical results, ultimately encouraging the rapid uptake of emerging technologies by the market.

As previously discussed in D3.3 Plan for the Dissemination and Exploitation of Results, the project's success is measured by various KPIs (key performance indicators). These KPIs are interrelated somewhat like matryoshka dolls. Each FSTP startup's individual product KPIs are tracked and can be thought of as the innermost doll. Around these metrics related to the product fit the KPIs measuring the impact each startup has: who is being positively affected by the project and how are their lives being changed? Finally, surrounding all of the individual startup KPIs, we find the project's meta KPIs. These ensure that the project offers high quality support to the startups. They also measure the impact of the programme itself beyond the participating startups. They gauge whether the consortium was effective in disseminating information about the aims and activities of the project, and how the work carried out in this project can be used to the benefit of the wider European EdTech community.
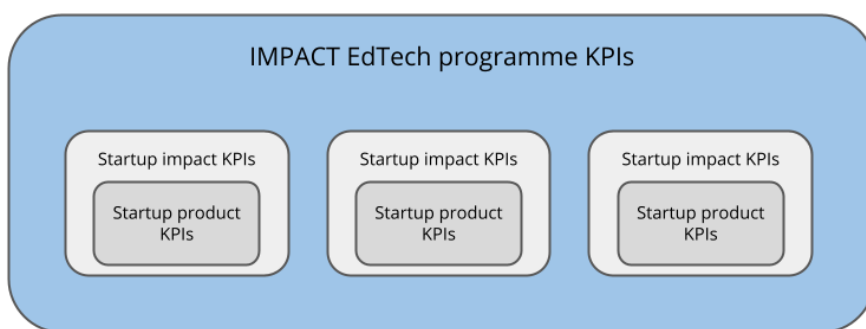

Figure 1. IMPACT EdTech meta-KPIs

2.1. Project impacts and KPIs

The programme's meta-KPIs are divided into areas based on how they contribute to expected impacts. In this section, each impact will be examined separately, along with the relevant KPIs, results achieved so far, work done to achieve those results,

and lessons learned. The discussion around each set of KPIs has been simplified here; a fuller explanation of each can be found in Deliverable 3.3.

2.1.1. Impact #1: uptake of technology for inclusive learning

Impact #1 states that the programme will contribute to a significant *Increase in the overall uptake of technology for personalised and inclusive learning for all, regardless of their age, gender or other socioeconomic factors*. In order to achieve this impact, KPIs in this area focus on the number of stakeholders (teacher, educators, schools, learners, countries) directly involved in various aspects of the programme and the number of stakeholders (same as above, plus experts, ministers and policy makers) informed about the project and its outcomes.

The results of the work done toward these KPIs can be seen in Table 1. KPIs related to impact #1. The table shows progress made at the time that D3.3 Plan for the Exploitation and Dissemination of Results was submitted, month 22, as well as up-to-date results by month 32. (Please note that the numbering follows that of the Grant Agreement, which is erroneous - there are two KPIs with the number 1.3.)

Table 1. KPIs related to impact #1

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved - M22	Achieved - M32	Comment
1.1	Number of teachers and educators involved in trainings and focus group activities	54	45	89	Teachers and co-creators who participated in MVP live testing from OC1 and OC3 and in the strand A piloting and co-creation activities from OC1, OC2/RS and OC3 are counted in this KPI. The target has been met and exceeded, always striving for a balanced group of teachers of different countries, subjects, and age levels.
1.2	Number of schools and countries participating in K12 School pilots	25-27 different schools	39	54	These KPIs measure the participant schools and countries in the piloting carried out by startups in Strand A.1. Both KPIs have been well exceeded.
		At least 9 countries	16	18	
1.3	Number of K12 School pilots sustaining or extending deployment in the year after	At least 4	-	14	It was too early to monitor this result in M22. In M32 EUN sent a survey to OC2 and OC1 pilot teachers to monitor the sustainability of the school pilots one year after the end of the

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved - M22	Achieved - M32	Comment
	the project ends if the solution is sustainable				programme. Our of the 23 teachers that answered our survey, 14 of them continued to use the startup's solution in their classroom with their students.
1.3	Number of representatives or experts from national/regional authorities informed of 'Best-in-Class' outcomes	At least 60	33	60	This KPI has been met and ensured the proper promotion of Best-in-Class startups among experts and authorities at a regional or national level.
1.4	Number of learners participating in pilots and engaging with disruptive technologies during the 5-month short-cycle of piloting	More than 420	1,387	1,969	This KPI has been successfully met, as we have achieved over three times the target. The number of learners engaged with the technologies has surpassed our expectations.
1.5	Number of national and regional policy and decision makers informed about the technologies piloted.	More than 30	33	34	This KPI has been met and exceeded.
1.6	Number of teachers, educators, school directors and decision makers informed about the technologies piloted.	More than 1,000	6,350	9,466	This KPI ensures that the partner's network of educators and decision makers are informed about the IMPACT EdTech piloted solutions from Stage 2. This KPI has been met and almost exceeded by ten times.

Results and lessons learned

The KPIs in this group are focused on ensuring that the project has a wide educational impact, measuring teachers, educators, learners, schools, countries and policy makers impacted by IMPACT EdTech activities. It is safe to say that the results have been highly successful. KPIs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 have been exceeded.

The number of educators and learners engaged in the testing of the solutions the solutions has surpassed our expectations and we are very proud of the great and positive results it brought. The KPI 1.3 monitoring the sustainability of the solutions is also encouraging. It shows the pilots were useful to the educators and they continued to work with the solution after the end of the piloting phase.

2.1.2. Impact #2: learning solutions for children with special needs

Impact #2 states the project's intention to contribute to an *Increase in the number of distributed learning solutions for children with special educational needs (SEN).*

The results of the work done toward these KPIs can be seen in Table 2. KPIs related to impact #2. The table shows progress made at the time that D3.3 Plan for the Dissemination and Communication of Results was submitted, month 22, as well as up-to-date results by month 32. (Please note that the numbering follows that of the Grant Agreement, which is erroneous - there are two KPIs with the number 1.3.)

Table 2. KPIs related to impact #2

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved – M22	Achieved – M32	Comment
2.1	EdTech Trials developing solutions for children with SEN	At least 6	2	7	This KPI measures the number of EdTech Trials that have participated in the IMPACT EdTech Jury Days, which focus on developing solutions for children with SEN. A total of 7 SEN-focused solutions participated in the Jury Days.
2.2	Validated MVPs for children with SEN	At least 4	2	4	This KPI measures the number of MVPs which are validated during stage 1 of the programme, which are focused on SEN. The KPI of 4 SEN-focused startup MVPs were validated during stage 1.
2.3	Piloted MVPs for children with SEN	At least 3	2	4	This KPI measures the number of SEN-focused solutions which were piloted during Stage 2 of the programme. 3 solutions were brought to school and one SEN-focused solution benefitted from the co-creation programme.

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved – M22	Achieved – M32	Comment
2.3	EdTech Trials developing solutions for children with SEN successfully piloted and/or obtaining early deals to start commercialisation	At least 1	1	1	This KPI measures the number of solutions which are SEN-focused and that have successfully piloted their solution or have obtained an early deal to begin commercialisation of their solution, following Stage 2 of the programme. This KPI has been achieved in full. Key2Enable successfully piloted their solution in stage 2 of OC1 and were subsequently awarded Best-in-Class.

Results and lessons learned

These KPIs have all been achieved. Not only is the IMPACT EdTech programme attracting SEN startups, but the SEN startups that enter the programme are of a high quality, as can be seen from the fact that Key2Enable was selected as a Best-in-Class. The 4 solutions that piloted their prototypes with SEN students reported great results and a strong impact to the targeted students.

2.1.3. Impact #3: deploying to the market

Impact #3 aims *to Increase the number of startups/SMEs deploying personalised and inclusive learning solutions to the market*.

The results of the work done toward these KPIs can be seen in Table 3. KPIs related to impact #3. For more information about technology readiness level achieved in the programme, please see section 2.1.5.

Table 3. KPIs related to impact #3

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved – M22	Achieved – M32	Comment
3.1	Prototype High-Fidelity MVPs	24	15	32	This KPI measures the number of startups considered to have successfully completed Stage 1. All 15 startups from the first batch reached this milestone. As the second batch began with Stage 2, those startups are not accounted for here. Finally, all 17 startups from the third batch reached this milestone, for a total of 32, well over the target of 24.

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved – M22	Achieved – M32	Comment
3.2	Introduction to business partners, accelerators and early investors	At least 27	50	91	Stage 2 startups were surveyed regarding their fundraising needs. They were then introduced to relevant investors on a tailor-made basis. This accounts for 21 of the introductions. The other 70 came from business and educational mentors, who introduced their mentee startups to potential business partners, schools and investors in their personal networks. The fact that mentors were willing to use their personal contacts to help further the startups' aims speaks very highly of the trust these mentors had in their mentee startups. The goal of 27 introductions has been well surpassed for a total of 91 reported introductions.
3.3	Startups/SMEs having an early deal closed during the project/one year after the project closes	At least 10	-	At least 9	This KPI is difficult to measure, as it relies completely on self-reporting by the startups. In response to a request for information, of the 24 startups from the first and second batches, 10 of them replied. Of these 10, 9 had closed significant partnerships in the months after leaving the IMPACT EdTech programme. While there is likely a high degree of reporting bias in this result (startups not doing well are less likely to respond), this can still be considered a significant result. Probably, this KPI has been well more than achieved, although that cannot be verified at this time. A lesson learned for the consortium is that it is difficult to successfully track metrics of this kind.
3.4	Startups/SMEs reaching high maturity levels at the end of the programme	At least 6	5	7	This KPI measures the number of startups selected as 'Best-in-Class' at the end of the programme. From the first batch, two startups were selected and from the second batch, three were selected. From the third batch, two were selected. These 7 startups represent the pinnacle of excellence in the IMPACT EdTech programme.

Results and lessons learned

It is clear from the results of the KPIs that the programme was on track. More startups than anticipated were accelerated, and the quality of the support appears

to have been high.

As seen in the first version of this deliverable, D3.3, the KPI related to introductions was exceeded by quite a lot. This is primarily due to the mentors' eagerness to introduce their mentee startups to contacts in their networks. Approximately 50% of the mentors did this during the programme. This indicates a high level of trust in the startups.

Finally, while it seems that many of the IMPACT EdTech startups went on to form successful partnerships and close important deals after their time in the programme, due to the difficulty of collecting the relevant data, this KPI was not completely verified. A learning for next time would be to find a better way to collect data relevant to this point. It can be time consuming to gather this information, but it is valuable to the programme to ensure that these metrics are tracked.

2.1.4. Additional Impact #4: verticalised support

The fourth impact is an "additional impact". It aims to *Contribute to verticalise support that is being given to European EdTech startups*. The results of the work done toward these KPIs can be seen in Table 4. KPIs related to impact #4.

Table 4. KPIs related to impact #4

#	KPI Name	Target	Achieved – M22	Achieved – M32	Comment
4.1	Validated incubation methodology for EdTechs	1	1	1	The aim of this KPI is to validate the methodology used in the IMPACT EdTech programme - taking startups from MVP to short-cycle piloting and to the market. The good results achieved speak for themselves in supporting the conclusion that this KPI has been reached.
4.2	Number of stakeholders engaged in open innovation strategies for education	At least 30 members	27	30	At present, the Digital Learning Stakeholders Group (DLSG) has reached 30 active members.

Results and lessons learned

As commented in the table, the results achieved in this programme indicate that the methodology is solidly validated and backed by a complete Digital Learning Stakeholders Group (DLSG). A crucial element of the dissemination and

exploitation in the last part of the project has been to make sure that the project's learnings are spread. This, ideally, will help keep the momentum set in motion during the project. More information on this can be found in section 4.2 of this report.

2.1.5. Startups' technology readiness level (TRL)

A key aspect of assessing the real impact the IMPACT EdTech programme had on participating startups is by looking at technology readiness level (TRL)[2]. The objective, clearly stated in the Grant Agreement, is that startups entering Stage 1 of the programme would have an initial TRL of at least 5, and that they would reach TRL 7 or beyond by the end of Stage 2.

The average starting and ending TRL for each batch can be seen in Table 5. Starting and ending TRL of startups. This information was obtained via the "end-of-programme feedback survey" that each startup was asked to fill out regarding their experience in the programme. The first and second cohorts were only asked to fill it out at the end of Stage 2. However, by the third cohort, it was seen that information provided was extremely valuable, and third cohort startups were therefore asked to fill out a similar survey at the end of both Stage 1 and Stage 2. Information on the first and second batches is repeated from the first version of this deliverable; information on the third batch is new to this update.

Table 5. Starting and ending TRL of startups

First batch	
Average starting TRL (beginning of Stage 1)	6.2
Average ending TRL (end of Stage 2)	8.3
Second batch	
Average starting TRL (beginning of Stage 2)	7.7
Average ending TRL (end of Stage 2)	8.3
Third batch	
Average starting TRL (beginning of Stage 1)	4.7
Average ending TRL (beginning of Stage 2)	5.6
Average ending TRL (end of Stage 2)	7.5

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[2] TRL is a scale that goes from 1 to 9, where 9 indicates the highest level of technology readiness. The European Commission's definition of each level can be seen at https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

Results and lessons learned

In all three batches of startups, a clear improvement can be seen. Almost all startups moved from a relevant testing environment to a complete and qualified system and/or deployment on the market during the course of the programme.

The startups in the second batch were the most mature, which was the intention of that cohort. As it was created to respond to the COVID crisis, startups were sought who were already ready to pilot in schools.

In contrast, the startups in the third batch reported themselves to be less advanced than any of the two previously batches. Nevertheless, as a group they made great progress during the programme.

2.1.6. Gender equality

An important aspect of the open and inclusive learning stressed in this project is gender equity. While recent decades have seen strides being made in this area, the fact remains that women and girls face negative stereotypes and exclusion in many aspects of education. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the IMPACT EdTech project is actively working to combat these biases. This is done in two ways: by ensuring the under-represented gender constitutes a minimum percentage of decision-making groups, including the consortium managing the IMPACT EdTech project and the composition of the selected startups themselves; and by paying attention to inherent biases that might be present in the learning solutions.

Composition of groups by gender

The objective established in the Grant Agreement was to have at least 40% of the governing bodies be composed of women. In addition, the pool of mentors (external experts) was to be at least 40% female.

Table 6 shows the number of total employees involved in the IMPACT EdTech project from all consortium partners, as well as the number of these which are females.

Table 6. Number and percentage of female employees working on IMPACT EdTech

total employees on the project	total females on the project
75	51
	68%

Females constitute 68% of the people involved in the management and execution of the IMPACT EdTech project — up from the 65% reported in the previous version of this deliverable and well over the established threshold of 40.

Table 7 shows the updated number of total follow-up mentors, both business and educational, involved in the IMPACT EdTech project (for all three batches), as well as the number of these which are females.

Table 7. Number and percentage of female follow-up mentors

Total mentors	Female mentors
63	31
	49%

Again, the threshold of 40% has been cleared, and near complete gender parity is reached. This is an improvement on the previous version of this deliverable. At that time, only 46% of follow up mentors were female. Now that number has been brought closer to equal.

In addition, a survey was made of the specialised mentors. Table 8 shows the number of different specialised mentors involved in all three batches of the programme, as well as the number of female mentors and the percentage that these female mentors comprise.

Table 8. Number and percentage of female specialised mentors

Total mentors	Female mentors
78	32
	41%

In this instance, too, the threshold of 40% female mentors has been reached. It was most difficult to achieve that in this category, as the specialised mentors tended to be experts in business, a field currently dominated by men. Nevertheless, special effort was made to locate, reach out to, and onboard exceptional female mentors for the programme.

Finally, the startups themselves were surveyed regarding the number of female employees working on their solutions. At the end of Stage 2, they were asked to state the total number of employees and the number of female employees when they entered the programme and when they finished the programme. For the OC1 and OC3 startups, this covered the nine-month period of both Stages. For the OC2/RS startups, this covered only the five-month period of Stage 2.

Table 9. Female employees in OC1 startups

Start of programme (Oct 2020)		End of programme (June 2021)	
total employees	female employees	total employees	female employees
50	13	77	27
	26%		35%

Table 10. Female employees in OC2/RS startups

Start of programme (Nov 2020)		End of programme (April 2021)	
total employees	female employees	total employees	female employees
73	34	98	45
	47%		46%

Table 11. Female employees in OC3 startups

Start of programme (Oct 2021)		End of programme (June 2022)	
total employees	female employees	total employees	female employees
52	38	60	33
	54%		55%

As can be seen, the startups from OC1 did not meet the threshold of 40% female employees. Nevertheless, the percentage of female employees did improve over the course of the programme, from 26% at the beginning of the programme to 35% at the end, a total increase in 14 female employees.

The startups from OC2/RS did meet the threshold of 40% female employees, although the percentage of females went down slightly over the course of the programme, from 47% female to 46%. However, 11 females were hired at OC2 startups during the programme, which is positive.

Finally, the startups from OC3 well surpassed the objective, having 54% female employees at the beginning of the programme and 55% at the end. This shows that the consortium's efforts in this area have been met with success.

Detection and correction of biases in the learning solutions

In addition to making sure that balanced teams are working on the IMPACT EdTech project and the selected learning solutions, it is important to verify that the startups themselves are addressing potential gender bias in the implementation of their solutions.

To address this, all startups that reached the end of Stage 2 were asked to describe

problems identified, actions taken, and planned next steps in order to correct any issues of gender bias.

In OC1 and OC2, it was seen that many of the startups did not seem to be aware of the existence of potential problems, an observation at odds with the assessment of the consortium.

In OC3, nearly all of the startups are aware of the potential for bias, even in seemingly gender-neutral solutions. These startups offered detailed plans for overcoming these issues and helping more women and girls succeed in traditionally male-dominated fields, such as STEM.

More specific and identifying information cannot be shared due to the public nature of this deliverable. However, this information is available to the European Commission and its employees upon request.

2.2. Lessons learned and next steps

This section compiles the lessons learned from the previous sections and presents possible next steps previously suggested to address those lessons (indicated in italics). New actions taken and outcomes are addressed in the subsection "Outcome".

Informing national or regional authorities of Best-in-Class outcomes

- *Lesson learned. The KPI related to informing representatives or experts from national/regional authorities of the Best-in-Class outcomes (KPI 1.3 (2)), is only about halfway to completion. It is true that the Best-in-Class startups were not nominated until April 2021 (OC2/RS) and July 2021 (OC1). Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that very little meaningful contact is generally had with authorities of the type described during the summer months (June, July and August). Nevertheless, this KPI should be flagged as one to which extra attention should be paid.*

- *Next steps. As the school year gets underway, the consortium — led by European Schoolnet, in this instance — will organise events and carry out other outreach in order to continue to promote the Best-in-Class startups among a variety of authorities and stakeholders.*

- Outcome. The 5 best-in-class startups were invited as guest speakers during the School Innovation Forum organised by European Schoolnet on June 9

and 10, 2022. It gave them visibility and widened their outreach among national and regional authorities.

Involvement of SEN startups

- *Lesson learned*. It was found that the KPIs relating to SEN startups in this project were all successfully met. Furthermore, the SEN startups are of high quality, as evidenced by the fact that one of them was selected as a Best-in-Class. It is believed that the reason for this success lies in the outreach performed around the open call. We successfully targeted SEN startups. Furthermore, the value proposition was interesting enough to the startups that they were motivated to apply.

- *Next steps*. No next steps are needed here. However, this point is highlighted as this is a success case for the programme. The consortium should consider sharing information about the successful campaigns — how they were planned, who was targeted, how quality was assured — so that other stakeholders in the wider community can learn from it.

- Outcome. SEN startups blended well in the programme and performed as well as their peers.

Outcomes of introductions of startups by mentors

- *Lesson learned*. Approximately 50% of the mentors introduced their mentee startups to investors, potential business partners, schools, corporations and other members of their personal networks. At a first glance, this appears to be a good result. However, it is too early to know what the actual outcome of these introductions are.

- *Next steps*. It is suggested that the consortium follow up with the OC1 and OC2/RS startups 9-12 months after the end of their respective programmes to ask about outcomes from these introductions. If this course of action is followed, results should be reported in D3.4 Plan of Exploitation and Dissemination of results (PEDR) - update, due in M32.

- Outcome. The consortium followed up with the startups around one year after the end of their programme. However, as reported above in Table 3, the response rate to the request for information was low, and therefore statistically unreliable.

Increase in average TRL during the programme

- *Lesson learned. It was discovered that the average TRL increased from 6.2 to 8.3 for OC1 and from 7.7 to 8.3 for OC2/RS. This is aligned with project goals and can be considered a success. After analysis, it appears that this is due to two key factors: (1) the ambitious and rigorous framework of the programme itself, and (2) the high-quality support offered by the mentors.*

- *Next steps. In order to replicate this success in OC3, the same course of action must be followed. First, the ambitious demands of the programme should be correctly communicated to the startups. One opportunity for this is during the Stage 1 kick-off bootcamp, when startups are first exposed to the programme and its demands. Second, mentor matching should be carried out with the same care and attention that was spent on it during OC1 and OC2/RS. Mentors should be selected who can help advise on product development and who will push the startups to evolve quickly and achieve at a high level.*

- Outcome. The average TRL for OC3 startups progressed from 4.7 at the beginning of Stage 1 to 7.5 at the end of Stage 2. This is an average increase of nearly three levels, the largest to date in the programme. This could be seen as the result of good implementation of the "next steps" suggested above: ambitious demands correctly communicated to the startups in combination with excellent mentor matching.

Gender balance of mentors involved in the programme

- *Lesson learned. The target for percentage of female mentors participating in the programme was 40%. This target was reached, but by a thin margin. Therefore, it is worth pointing out that this is an important criterion when identifying and onboarding mentors for the programme.*

- *Next steps. ISDI and European Schoolnet, the two organisations leading mentor matching, should be sure to have this criterion in mind when carrying out mentor matching. In cases when there are multiple possibilities, both equally good, preference should be given to females.*

- Outcome. The percentage of female follow-up mentors by the end of the programme was 49%, a step up from the previous 40% and near total gender parity. This is a clear success on the part of the IMPACT EdTech mentor selection process. Furthermore, the gender balance of specialised mentors was not previously reported. When it was examined for this deliverable, it was found to be 41%, also over the threshold of 40%.

Gender balance of participating startups' employees

- *Lesson learned. While the startups from the OC2/RS batch did meet the threshold of 40% female employees (having 47% female employees at the beginning of the programme and 46% at the end), the startups from OC1 did not (having 26% female employees at the beginning of the programme and 35% at the end). Although it is cheering to see the huge improvement in the OC1 percentage during the programme, it would be ideal if that threshold of 40% could have been crossed.*

- *Next steps. The aspect of gender balance was not clearly brought to the front during OC1 and OC2/RS. During OC3, it should be more explicitly stated as an aim of the programme. Startups should be more clearly encouraged to think about the gender balance in their own employees, and support should be offered to help the startups identify and hire females. One way this can be done is through specialised mentoring.*

- Outcome. This aspect can be said to have improved, given that OC3 startups reached a ratio of 55% female employees by the end of Stage 2, the best result so far. However, it is true that the programme itself did not do as much to support this as it could have. It would have been ideal to have addressed this issue specifically during the bootcamp, which was not done. A learning for the future could be to be more explicit about incorporating awareness of gender bias into education for EdTech startups.

Fighting gender bias in implemented solutions

- *Lesson learned. As described above, some of the startups are fully aware of the possible gender bias in their solutions and are taking active steps to combat this. However, others do not seem to understand the issue at all.*

- *Next steps. Possible next steps to consider would be to make a discussion of gender bias and exploration of hidden biases more explicitly a part of the IMPACT EdTech curriculum. A good space for this could be during the Stage 2 bootcamp, which covers topics related to hiring and culture.*

- Outcome. As stated above, OC3 startups seemed to be more generally aware of this issue. However, as in the issue of gender balance, more could have been done during the framework of the programme to specifically address this. A learning for the future could be to incorporate more sessions about this into the bootcamps, as stated above.

3. Dissemination of project results

Dissemination is concerned with the spread of project results, in order to communicate to the wider community the work that was done during the project. The objective is to instruct and inspire through examples of work performed, results reached and successes achieved. A fuller discussion of dissemination can be found in Deliverable 3.3

In IMPACT EdTech, dissemination has two prongs. The first is dissemination of the **portfolio of MVPs resulting from bottom-up projects** (the startups selected as beneficiaries for the programme). The second dissemination prong is the **IMPACT EdTech blended incubator- accelerator programme** itself.

This report covers efforts undertaken to support both prongs, along with results achieved so far and planned actions for the last months of the programme.

3.1. Portfolio of MVPs resulting from bottom-up projects

As discussed in detail in other deliverables D4.1 Report on EdTech Trials Incubation Stage 1 - batch 1 [M14] and D5.1 Report on EdTech Trials Incubation Stage 2 - batch 1 and batch 'Remote Schooling [M20], the portfolio of startups was selected and supported in a multi-stage process. Throughout each stage of this process, information about the participating startups is disseminated by both the startups themselves and the consortium.

3.1.1. Dissemination by the projects themselves

As part of the IMPACT EdTech programme, each startup is required to build its own dissemination roadmap, using the following template as a guide. A full discussion of the template can be found in Deliverable 3.3. As previously pointed out, although the template is standardised, each startup's dissemination plan is different, depending on the goals and maturity level of the startup.

Specific details are not included here, due to the public nature of this deliverable. These details are available to the European Commission upon request.

However, some general figures can be seen below. This report covers the first batch

(OC1) and second batch (OC2/RS) of startups, information which was also included in the previous version of this deliverable. New to this deliverable are the results from the OC3 batch of startups.

OC1 (first batch of startups)

Stakeholders impacted.

- At the start of the programme (September 2020), the estimated number of stakeholders being impacted by all seven Stage 2 startups was 5,125, with the average startup reaching 730 stakeholders.

- By the end of the programme (June 2021), the estimated number of stakeholders being impacted by all seven Stage 2 startups was 22,450, with the average startup reaching 3,200 — an increase of more than 400%.

- Projected figures for one year after the end of the programme (June 2022) show that the estimated number of stakeholders that will be impacted by all seven Stage 2 startups will be 533,000, with the average startup reaching 76,100.

Countries reached.

- At the start of the programme (September 2020), the average startup reached stakeholders in just 4 countries.

- By the end of the programme (June 2021), the average startup reached stakeholders in 12 countries.

- Projected figures for one year after the end of the programme (June 2022) show that the average startup will reach stakeholders in 31 countries.

OC2/RS (second batch of startups)

It is important to note that the OC2/RS startups entered the programme directly in Stage 2. By design, nearly all of them had significant traction prior to the start of the programme. Thus, one can see a noticeable difference between the numbers of the previous batch and this one.

Stakeholders impacted.

- At the start of the programme (October 2020), the estimated number of stakeholders being impacted by all startups was 7,917,600, with the average startup reaching 880,000 stakeholders.

- By the end of the programme (April 2021), the estimated number of stakeholders being impacted by all startups was 9,190,231, with the average startup reaching just over 1,000,000.

- Projected figures for one year after the end of the programme (April 2022) show that the estimated number of stakeholders that will be impacted by all startups will be 14,674,140, with the average startup reaching 1,630,000.

Countries reached.

- At the start of the programme (October 2020), the average startup reached stakeholders in 77 countries.

- By the end of the programme (April 2021), the average startup reached stakeholders in 84 countries.

- Projected figures for one year after the end of the programme (April 2022) show that the average startup will reach stakeholders in 89 countries.

OC3 (third batch of startups)

Stakeholders impacted.

- At the start of the programme (October 2021), the estimated number of stakeholders being impacted by all eight Stage 2 startups was 10,848, with the average startup reaching 1,356 stakeholders.

- By the end of the programme (June 2022), the estimated number of stakeholders being impacted by all eight Stage 2 startups was 39,152, with the average startup reaching 4,984 — an increase of close to 400%.

- Projected figures for one year after the end of the programme (June 2023) show that the estimated number of stakeholders that will be impacted by all seven Stage 2 startups will be 425,500, with the average startup reaching 53,200.

Countries reached.

- At the start of the programme (October 2021), the average startup reached stakeholders in just 6 countries.

- By the end of the programme (June 2022), the average startup reached stakeholders in 9 countries.

- Projected figures for one year after the end of the programme (June 2023) show that the average startup will reach stakeholders in 17 countries.

Conclusion

It is clear that the startups are, in general, on a positive upward path towards achieving significant impact with their dissemination efforts. They have benefitted from marketing, communication and dissemination support during the programme, including sessions in both Bootcamp 1 and Bootcamp 2, availability of specialised mentors, and support from their business follow-up mentors. This was seen in the previous version of this deliverable and appears to hold true in this update.

It should be noted that, as seen elsewhere in this deliverable, the overall level of the OC2/RS startups is higher than the other two cohorts. As already explained, this is due to the fact that the open call specifically sought mature startups already on the market or with a market-ready solution. This is why numbers regarding stakeholders and countries reached are much higher for that group of startups.

3.1.2. Dissemination by the IMPACT EdTech consortium

The IMPACT EdTech consortium itself also takes into account the content/audience/channels/impact framework when preparing dissemination. In the case of dissemination about the selected startups, this framework can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12. Framework for dissemination of portfolio startups

Portfolio of disruptive EdTech solutions			
Areas	**Users (target audience)**	**Channels**	**Impact**
- K12 Education - Non-formal/informal learning - Others to be defined as result of the Open Calls (i.e. VET, HE, at workplace)	- Educational Establishments - Training companies - Digital content providers - IT corporates with Education verticals - Learners, Teachers, Tutors (B2C)	- Media (storytelling) - Web - Crowdfunding platforms - Others To be defined as per the nature of each bottom up project	- Users adopting the services/products - Geo-coverage of users - Public/Private Funds committed for deployment - Net effect of externalities linked to the resulting service/product

A detailed description of each area, target user, channel and impact included above can be found in Deliverable 3.3 and will therefore not be repeated here.

Dissemination carried out

An attempt has been made throughout the project to consistently give the selected startups a chance to shine on IMPACT EdTech's channels, and to help them achieve more visibility than they might have otherwise. Dissemination actions taken to help achieve this were typically multi-channel, using a variety of avenues to reach relevant target audiences. Table 13 is a comprehensive list of actions taken to promote the startups selected for batch 1 (OC1), the Remote Schooling batch (OC2/RS) and batch 3 (OC3). While every effort has been made to include every link, it is possible that some links to social media posts and other small, time-sensitive media may be missing.

Table 13. List of dissemination actions taken

Description of action	Date	Channel(s) used
Showcase of winners of OC1 and OC2/RS - link, shared on social media	19 Oct 2020	Blog, social media
Spanish-language showcase of winners of OC1 and OC2/RS - link, shared on social media	19 Oct 2020	Blog, social media
Newsletter introducing OC1 startups - link	7 Dec 2020	Newsletter
Highlighting female founders in IMPACT EdTech as part of Women's Day 2021 - link, shared on social media	8 Mar 2021	Blog, social media
Newsletter promoting 7 startups selected for OC1 stage 2 - link	9 Mar 2021	Newsletter
Promotion of 7 startups selected for OC1 stage 2 - link, shared on social media	16 Mar 2021	Blog, social media
OC2/RS webinar series to showcase individually each startup that completed piloting in schools – promotional blog post, registration link, shared on the website's outcomes page, shared on social media in various posts	15 Apr 2021	Events, blog, social media
Newsletter promoting OC2/RS webinars - link	21 Apr 2021	Newsletter
Promotion of OC2/RS best-in-class startups - link, shared on social media	7 May 2021	Blog, social media
Newsletter promoting open call, success stories, and webinars - link	31 May 2021	Newsletter
Newsletter promoting success stories (best-in-class startups) - link	15 Jun 2021	Newsletter
OC1 webinar series to showcase individually each startup that completed piloting in schools – promotional blog post, registration links (different for each startup), shared on the	23 Jun 2021	Events, blog, social media

Description of action	Date	Channel(s) used
website's outcomes page, shared on social media in various posts		
Promotion of OC1 best-in-class startups - link, shared on social media	9 Aug 2021	Blog, social media
Announcement of 17 startups to enter OC3 - link, shared on social media	21 Sep 2021	Blog, social media
Spanish language announcement of 17 startups to enter OC3 - link, shared on social media	21 Sep 2021	Blog, social media
Newsletter promoting OC3 startups (among other news) - link	13 Dec 2021	Newsletter
Creation of new "past batches" section on the project website	Jan-Feb 2022	Website
Promotion of OC3 stage 2 startups - link, shared on social media	7 Mar 2022	Blog, social media
OC3 wrap-up webinar series – blog post, webinar programme, promoted on social media, shared on outcomes page	30 Jun 2022	Blog, flyer, social media
Announcement of OC3 best-in-class startups - link	14 Jul 2022	Blog, social media
Newsletter about OC3 best-in-class startups and wrap-up webinars - link	20 Jul 2022	Newsletter
Continuous resharing of news and updates from startups – example 1, example 2, example 3, example 4, etc.	Ongoing	Social media

This table does not include actions taken to promote the programme itself; these are discussed in section 3.2.

Actions proposed in D3.3

In the previous version of this deliverable, a number of improvements were suggested. This section offers an update on whether those suggestions were carried out and how effective they were.

- **Continue to promote all portfolio startups via a balanced range of channels throughout the programme.**

   o Here, we aimed to create at least five different pieces of content about the various steps of the journey through IMPACT EdTech. As

this is concerned with dissemination of the project itself and not specifically about the startups involved, this will be covered in the next section.

o In addition, we aimed to better showcase the solutions themselves, as suggested during the Interim Review. Not only did we make a more concerted effort to spread each of our pieces of content through the blog, the home page, our newsletter, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube (this last where relevant), but we also redesigned parts of the website to give more visibility to the startups. See the next bullet point.

- **Carry out an internal audit of our dissemination tools and channels to ensure maximum effectiveness.**

   o We aimed to review all current communication channels in order to make sure we were communicating the intended messages effectively, to ensure we were reaching the intended audiences and to see if we could be doing anything better. This suggested change was aligned with feedback received as part of the Interim Review.

   o As a result of this, we made significant changes to the website, in order to bring the startups front and centre. Now, when a visitor comes to the website, they are prompted to learn more about the startups first thing:
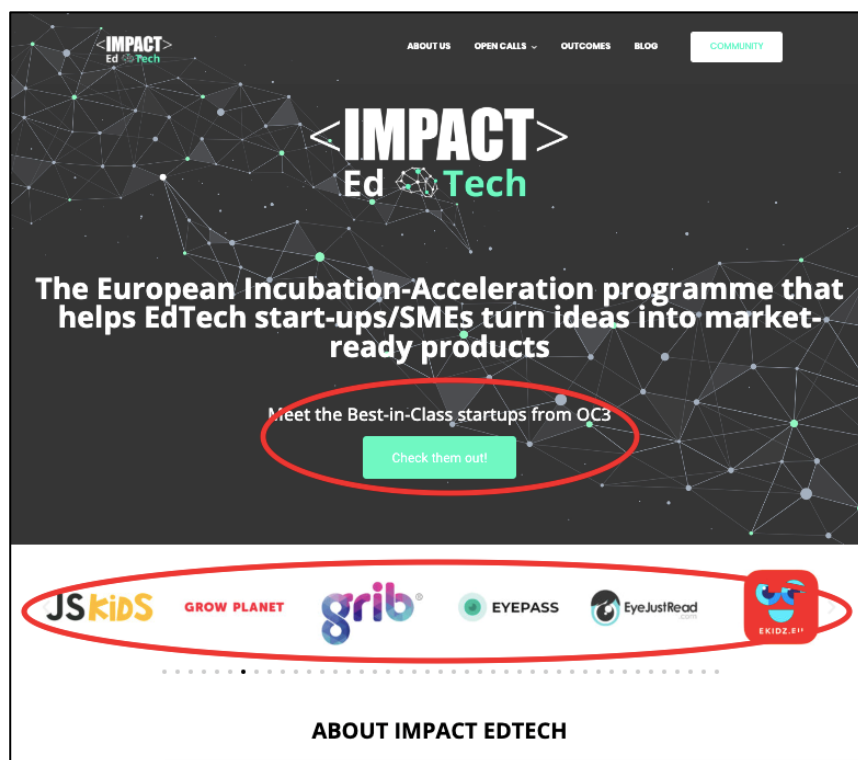
Figure 2. IMPACT EdTech home page, with circles indicating changes to showcase startups

- o In addition, new sections have been added, one for each batch of startups. These sections are accessible through the header, via Open Calls > OC1 (or OC2 or OC3). Each section showcases the participating startups and takes the visitor through the different stages and particularities of that batch's acceleration journey.

- o Finally, the "outcomes" section has been more dedicated to showing the work performed by the startups, specifically the wrap-up webinars mentioned above in Table 13.

- **Do more to ensure that the IMPACT EdTech "badge of excellence" is known.**

  - o Although a "badge of excellence" had been created, it was suggested that we could work harder to promote this badge and the quality it stands for. This point is discussed in section 4.1.

Future dissemination roadmap

Although the programme is coming to an end in October of 2022, there is still some

time left to generate more impact.

To this end, the following dissemination actions are planned for August, September and October 2022:

- **Connect media event** – Best-in-Class startups will pitch in front of journalists, media judges, and other media professionals. It is expected that, as a result of this, many or most of the startups will land articles and interviews in the most relevant tech publications. [More information here](#).

- **ISDI Investors Club event –** IMPACT EdTech startups who are looking for funding from external investors will be invited to pitch in front of the ISDI Investors Club. Priority will be given to Best-in-Class startups (although not all of these are seeking investment). It is expected that, as a result of this, a few of the startups will enter into conversation with interested investors.

- **Final branding actions** related to the programme will be organised with large media publications include [Emprendedores](#) and partner media organisations.

- **Individual interviews** will be conducted with all startup founders in order to showcase their experience in the programme.

- Final changes will be made to the **website** (take away info about open call on home page) + add OC3 + add startups section explaining what Stages they made it through communicating about the IMPACT EdTech badge of excellence.

3.2. IMPACT EdTech blended incubator-accelerator programme

In addition to promoting the portfolio of IMPACT EdTech startups, many dissemination actions have been dedicated toward promoting the incubator-accelerator programme itself. A complete discussion of the areas, users, channels and impact can be found in Deliverable 3.3.

Table 14. Dissemination roadmap for the incubator-accelerator programme

IMPACT EdTech blended incubator-accelerator programme			
Areas	**Users (target audience)**	**Channels**	**Impact**
- Knowledge transfer - Ecosystem building	- Researchers and Innovators (entrepreneurs, Startups, SMEs)	- Media & social media (storytelling) - Partner's Communities - Digital Learning Stakeholders Group - NGI Community - Digital Innovation Hub Network	- New EdTech & MVP solutions - Technology transfer from Research to Education & Training Markets

Dissemination carried out

Work in this area ramped up later in the project, after significant results had already been achieved. Table 15 shows a list of actions taken in order to disseminate the project itself and its results, including processes and lessons learned. In some cases, there may be some overlap with actions included in Table 13 – that is, actions undertaken to disseminate the startups may also disseminate the project itself and vice versa. However, overlap has been avoided, and none of the actions included in the previous table are included here.

Table 15. List of dissemination actions taken

Description of action	Date	Channel(s) used	Purpose
Announcement of the launch of the IMPACT EdTech programme - link, shared on social media	7 Apr 2020	Blog, social media	Awareness raising among stakeholders
Spanish language – announcement of the launch of the IMPACT EdTech programme - link, shared on social media	7 Apr 2020	Blog, social media	Awareness raising among stakeholders
AI for personalised and inclusive learning – article to promote the launch of the Remote Schooling call - link, shared on social media	13 May 2020	Blog, social media	Awareness raising among stakeholders
Announcement of the launch of the Remote Schooling call – link, shared on social media, boosted with paid ads	2 Jul 2020	Blog, social media, digital ads	Awareness-raising among stakeholders
Newsletter announcing the Remote Schooling open call & sharing news about the event "What's Next for School Education?" - link	28 Jul 2020	Newsletter, event	Engagement of stakeholders

Description of action	Date	Channel(s) used	Purpose
Call for independent experts (engaging stakeholders) - link, shared on social media	31 Jul 2020	Blog, social media,	Engagement of stakeholders
First open call evaluation report summary – data & processes - link, website (Outcomes > Deliverables)	15 Oct 2020	Blog, website	Knowledge transfer
Remote School open call evaluation report summary – data & processes – link, website (Outcomes > Deliverables)	30 Nov 2020	Blog, website	Knowledge transfer
Call for teachers & educators (engaging stakeholders) for the RS open call - link, shared on social media	18 Dec 2020	Blog, social media	Engagement of stakeholders
Call for teachers & educators (engaging stakeholders) for the 3rd open call - link, shared on social media	22 Mar 2021	Blog, social media	Engagement of stakeholders
Overview of the OC1 stage 2 bootcamp - link, shared on social media	23 Mar 2021	Blog, social media	Knowledge transfer
Call for primary school teachers (engaging stakeholders) for one OC2/RS startup - link	26 Mar 2021	Blog, social media	Engagement of stakeholders
Call for teachers & educators (engaging stakeholders) for the 3rd open call- link	7 Apr 2021	Newsletter	Knowledge transfer
Announcement of the 3rd open call – link, shared on social media, paid advertising campaigns	7 Apr 2021	Blog, social media, digital ads	Awareness raising among stakeholders
Spanish language: announcement of the 3rd open call - link	7 Apr 2021	Blog	Awareness raising among stakeholders
Announcement of the Remote Schooling webinars – link, registration page	15 Apr 2021	Blog, social media, event	Awareness raising, knowledge transfer
Remote Schooling webinars wrap-up - link	5 May 2021	Blog	Awareness raising, knowledge transfer
Promotion of the 3rd open call and showcasing of the Best-in-Class startups - link	7 May 2021	Blog, event	Engagement of stakeholders
Online event about 3rd open call, dissemination of OC2/RS webinars - link	11 May 2021	Newsletter	Awareness raising, engagement, knowledge transfer
Description of the 3rd open call Jury Day – data, info – link	20 Sep 2021	Blog	Knowledge transfer
Promotion of programme at South Summit startup event in Madrid	5-7 Oct 2021	Event	Awareness raising

Description of action	Date	Channel(s) used	Purpose
Summary of OC3 Stage 1 bootcamp – description, overview, dive into each session - link, website (Outcomes > Deliverables)	1 Feb 2022	Website	Knowledge transfer
Description of piloting kick off – link	21 Apr 2022	Website	Knowledge transfer
Promotion of programme at South Summit startup event in Madrid	8-10 Jun 2022	Event	Awareness raising
Summary of OC3 Stage2 bootcamp – description, overview, dive into each session - link, website (Outcomes > Deliverables)	10 Jun 2022	Website	Knowledge transfer

As can be seen from the above table, each dissemination action had a purpose. Toward the beginning of the project, these actions were focused on raising awareness of the project. After some time, the primary focus changed to being on engaging stakeholders with the project, whether through their participation in online events, their engagement as a pilot teacher, or some other way. Finally, as the project matured, dissemination actions were built around knowledge transfer – showcasing the work that was done as part of the project and the results that were achieved, so that others might be able to extract lessons learned and use them in their own work.

Finally, as the project reached maturity, dissemination of the programme began to happen organically, without any input from the consortium. IMPACT EdTech was showcased in an article published on The Next Web, an online publication reaching up to 1.8 million monthly readers[3]. When this type of publicity begins to appear, it is clear that efforts are starting to pay off.

Future dissemination roadmap update

In the previous version of this deliverable, we stated two goals:

- Share relevant and transparent information about the planning, setup and management of the IMPACT EdTech programme.

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[3] Data gathered on 28 July 2022 from
https://www.similarweb.com/website/thenextweb.com/#overview

- Engage the DLSG, NGI community and DIH network in ecosystem building.

These goals were made concrete through the proposal of specific actions to be undertaken. This section will discuss the progress made on these proposed actions and any modifications to the objectives.

Specific actions related to the first goal are the following.

- **Create blog post analysing takeaways from the IMPACT EdTech programme**

  o We intend to leverage the PEDR itself for this action. Once the PEDR is published, we will write a blog post with a type of executive summary, leading the reader to this document. We will launch a small publicity campaign in order to get the blog post in front of the target audience of Incubator/accelerator managers, innovation directors, innovation and entrepreneur community leaders

- **Compile 15-minute video describing the IMPACT EdTech programme from various points of view (consortium partners, participating startups, etc), being transparent about how the programme was built and lessons learned**

  o This is expected to be completed before the end of the programme (October 2022). It will then be shared via all channels in order to attract attention from the target audience of Incubator/accelerator managers, innovation directors, innovation and entrepreneur community leaders

- **Hold webinar in roundtable conversation format to discuss the experience of putting together the programme, encouraging Q&A from audience members**

  o As we have seen attendance at online events wane greatly with the end of the COVID pandemic, this does not seem like such a good idea anymore. Instead, we plan to focus our efforts on the other items on this list.

- **Publish results of the IMPACT EdTech project on the Horizon Results Platform website**

  o In progress, to be completed by September 2022.

Specific actions related to the second goal are the following.

o **DLSG engagement**. Throughout the course of the project, DLSG members were kept informed of the latest developments of the EdTech start-ups involved in the programme and we sought their continuous support in the project's activities. They were invited to attend all public events and share the project results and activities with their networks (i.e. open call promotion, news item, public events and webinars, best-in-class).

o **Building up the Acceleration programme of the European Digital Education Hub.** EUN is a consortium member of the [European Digital Education Hub](#), more specifically involved in building the Acceleration programme of the Hub. EUN endeavours to leverage the IMPACT EdTech know-how and Acceleration experience to co-design a tool that will help the education sector take substantial steps in its digital development and transformation. The EDEH Acceleration programme offers intensive training, mentoring, testing in the field, and showcasing results showcasing to a selection of prototypes from all education sectors and different European countries

4. Exploitation

The IMPACT EdTech exploitation strategy focuses on how to position IMPACT EdTech at a European level as an 'MVP builder' model for EdTech solutions and other programmes to replicate.

This section explores how the results achieved can be exploited for this purpose. Not only can the participating startups themselves can be supported, but they can contribute to the exploitation of the project. Finally, if benefit is to be gained through the work done in this project, if is essential to have a plan for what will happen after the project's official end date. These elements were discussed briefly in Deliverable 3.3. They are fleshed out here, with updates.

4.1. Portfolio of MVPs resulting from bottom-up projects

Startup business plans

As the IMPACT EdTech programme has a strong go-to-market focus, all startups that reached Stage 2 were asked to create a business plan, detailing how they would sustain their business activity after the IMPACT EdTech programme ended and they were no longer receiving financial support from the accompanying grant. For the OC1 and OC2/RS batches of startups, this business plan could take whatever form the startups chose. Feedback demonstrated, however, that the startups wished for more guidance on this task. Therefore, startups in OC3 were required to use the business model canvas when building their business plans. Through the creation of these plans, the startups are working to ensure their own continuity in the long term.

Due to the public nature of this deliverable, these business plans are not shared here, as they contain sensitive information. This information is available on request to the European Commission.

Funding support

As discussed in Deliverable 3.3, it is essential for startups to have clear funding plans in order to support future growth. Some startups choose to "bootstrap," which means they will fund themselves purely from their own pocket and using profits from sales. Others look for outside funding in order to get started on a faster timeline. Outside funding may include loans, public grants or investment from

business angels or venture capital firms. Whatever the tactic chosen, startups need to have detailed plans for obtaining and using the money.

Introducing interested startups to custom-matched startups is an important part of this programme, as seen in KPI 3.2, Introduction to business partners, accelerators, and early investors. As described in section 2.1.3, Stage 2 startups were surveyed regarding their fundraising needs via a form which asked about previous funding, funding sought, ideal timeline, profile of ideal investor, and so on. The startups were then introduced to relevant investors on a tailor-made basis.

Over the course of the programme and counting all three batches, 21 introductions were made directly by the IMPACT EdTech consortium. In addition, the startups received a total of another 70 introductions from business and educational mentors, who introduced their mentee startups to potential business partners, schools and investors in their personal networks. This is an incredible success, as the KPI for this was 27, which was more than exceeded.

Engagement of public authorities

In order for Europe to cultivate an ecosystem that supports and contributes to the success of EdTech startups, it is necessary to raise awareness and seek engagement of public authorities. Throughout the course of the programme, EUN regularly and proactively kept MoEs and DLSG members informed of the latest developments of the EdTech startups involved in the programme.

A yearly online gathering was organised with the DLSG members to keep them updated with the cohort's latest endeavours and assess their involvement in the programme and how they could support the startups to thrive.

In addition, regular communications via emails and newsletters were also sent to the MoEs and DLSG members with informative pieces of news on the programme. EUN also sought their engagement in the dissemination and promotion of the cohorts' activities.

EUN also presented the programme's results with a highlight on the Best-in-class performances to a panel of high-level public authorities representatives, during the 2022 School Innovation Forum, that took place in Brussels on 9-10 June 2022.

Peer-to-peer learning

The effects of the learning done by the startups as part of the IMPACT EdTech programme can be multiplied through the use of peer-to-peer learning, among the startups in a given cohort, among the various cohorts, and between project startups

and the outside world. As discussed in Deliverable 3.3, this type of engagement was not a focus of the programme as initially conceived, but the importance of it became clear early on, from observations by the IMPACT EdTech consortium members, from feedback from participating startups, and from comments from the external reviewers as part of the project's Interim Review.

In order to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, three types of interactions were identified.

- **Among startups in a cohort**. As discussed at length in Deliverable 3.3, this sharing took several forms, including open discussions and coffee breaks.

- **Among cohorts**. In June 2022, we organised an open discussion for the OC3 Stage 2 startups outside of the framework of a bootcamp. All startups from OC1 and OC2/RS who had previously given consent to be contacted were invited to participate. However, results were more lukewarm than expected. While almost all of the OC3 Stage 2 startups attended, only two other participants joined, and both of these were from OC3 Stage 1. While the conversation was fruitful, it seemed to be the same people talking over and over. The final conclusion was that it was a fine activity, but it was not worth trying to repeat too often.

- **Between programme startups and the wider world**. Many of the dissemination activities described in section 3.1.2 and section 3.2 were specifically focused on the transfer of knowledge between programme startups and stakeholders outside the programme.

Certificate of quality

As discussed in Deliverable 3.3, a certificate of quality has been created for IMPACT EdTech participating startups and teachers. The purpose of the certificate is the following:

- Create a "badge of quality" that not just anyone can earn – displaying the certificate means that the startup (or teacher) has gone through a rigorous selection process and has worked hard to achieve exceptional results.

- Develop a sense of shared identity and community among participating startups and educators. Make them proud to have been part of this programme.

- Raise awareness for the programme as connections of participants see the certificate and learn about IMPACT EdTech.

There are three different certificates for startups: for those who participated in Stage 1, for those who participated in Stage 2, and for those who were selected as a Best-in-Class.

Figure 3. Badges for Stage 1, Stage 2 and Best-in-Class startups

Additionally, there is one for teachers who participated in the piloting.
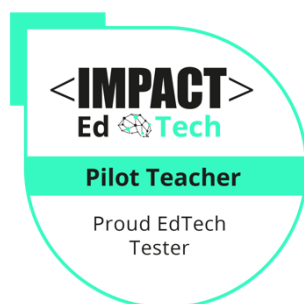

Figure 4. Badge for pilot teachers

Finally, in addition to the badges, the Best-in-Class startups were also awarded with a diploma.
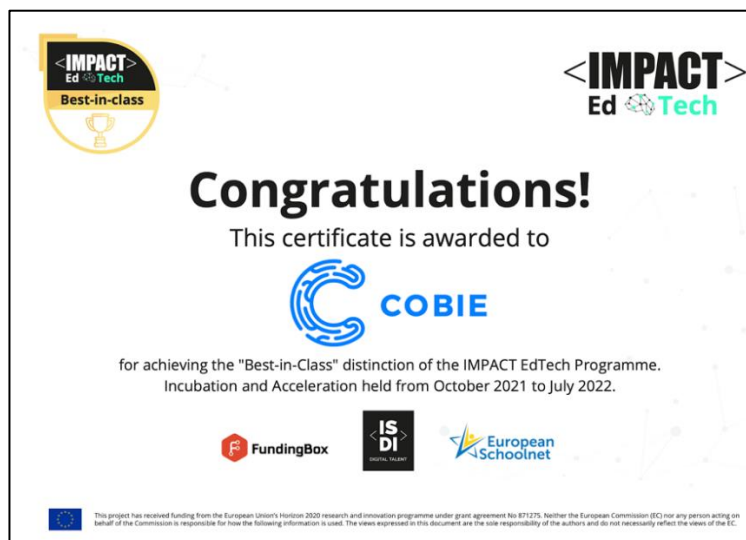
Figure 5. Diploma awarded to the Best-in-Class startups

4.2. IMPACT EdTech blended incubator-accelerator programme

Deliverable 3.3 showed the business plan initially developed for the continuation of the IMPACT EdTech programme. A full description of that, including the purpose and key information, customers, and costs, can be seen there and below, in Figure 6.
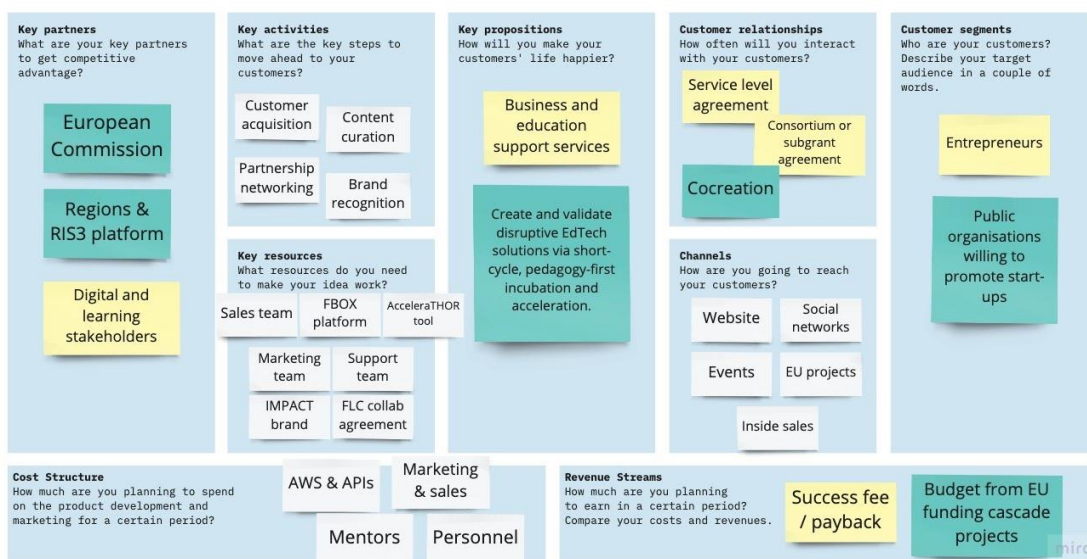

Figure 6. Initial business plan for IMPACT EdTech continuing venture

The business plan is presented in 'business model canvas' format. It includes detailed information about the value proposition of the programme, key activities, resources, customer segments, costs, and so on. It also includes two potential revenue streams: **success fee/payback** and **budget from EU cascade funding projects**.

In the period since the first version of this deliverable, much effort was spent investigating the second of those two revenue streams, EU funding.

Purpose of the investigation

The idea was to find and apply for a call that would be similar in scope and objectives to IMPACT EdTech and which would allow all the consortium partners to continue to build on the work done in this project, supporting the growth of disruptive SMEs and startups from both a business and pedagogical side.

Identifying and analysis of calls

The work of mapping and analysing potential calls was primarily carried out during the last year and a half of the project. As IMPACT EdTech is a large endeavour, calls from the Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe and Digital Europe programmes were explored. Erasmus+ has relevant calls for educational programmes, but as the size of the grant is smaller and it would be difficult to carry out activities with the same level of effectiveness, these options were not explored during this period. Depending on the outcome of relevant calls identified below, exploring Erasmus+ could be a possible next step.

The following list details all of the calls that were analysed, together with the conclusions formed.

- **Integration of emerging new technologies into education and training** - [link](#).

  - Scope of the call: Proposals should support the purposeful and pedagogical use of emerging technologies, including applications of artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and robotics in education and training, in order to foster 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration, digital literacy, critical as well as design thinking and creativity.

  - Analysis: The call is focused on education and particularly on the adoption of digital technologies in the classroom, an area which overlaps with the work being done in the IMPACT EdTech project. Many of the same stakeholder groups which were relevant in

IMPACT EdTech are also relevant here. The call straddles pedagogy and technology in ways that are similar to IMPACT EdTech. Nevertheless, the major difference is that this call is focused on a deep investigation and the formulation of recommendations and best practices. There is no support programme for startups or SMEs, which comprised the majority of the work in IMPACT EdTech and is the part which we would most like to continue.

- o <u>Conclusion</u>: This call is not relevant enough to IMPACT EdTech. It was decided not to further explore the idea of developing a proposal for this call.

- **AI, Data and Robotics for Industry optimisation** – [link](#).

  - o <u>Scope of the call</u>: Proposals are expected to integrate and optimise AI, data and robotics solutions in order to demonstrate, by addressing use-cases scenarios in actual or highly realistic operating environments, how they optimise production and service use cases.

  - o <u>Analysis</u>: This project is a stretch, but it was interesting due to the fact that it is seeking proposals "involving the use of financial support to third parties, where a number of companies in a given application sector will identify in the proposal common challenges and use-cases, and organise competitive calls for AI, data and robotics solution providers [including SMEs and startups] to address such challenges." The support provided here could adopt the structure of the IMPACT EdTech acceleration programme in order to provide a data-driven, purposeful support regimen. However, there is no focus whatsoever on education, leaving some partners completely excluded and others in a field where they have little expertise.

  - o <u>Conclusion</u>: It was decided that this call is much too far from the IMPACT EdTech subject matter. No proposal was pursued.

- **Promoting European innovation in education** – [link](#).

  - o <u>Scope of the call</u>: This action will support the digital transformation of the education sector at European level by boosting innovation in education in Europe by supporting EdTech startups and SMEs to accelerate their disruptive EdTech solutions.

  - o <u>Analysis</u>: Many of the aims stated in this call are highly aligned with the work done during the IMPACT EdTech programme, including offering support to EdTech startups and SMEs and fostering collaboration among education stakeholders. This call has a stronger emphasis on developing guidelines and a roadmap than IMPACT

EdTech does. While there is a clear role for each partner here, other partners might need to be brought on board to support with the development of best practices and recommendations. However, there is one key difference, and that is the lack of FSTP funding in this call. This is a crucial point that can strongly affect the quality of the startups participating.

- o <u>Conclusion</u>: The deadline for this call fell close to the deadline of the call described in the next bullet point. As there was only operational capacity to work on one large proposal at a time, it was decided to focus on the following call. No proposal was developed for this call.

- **eXtended Reality Learning - Engage and Interact** – <u>link</u>.

  - o <u>Scope of the call</u>: Proposals are expected to contribute to the following outcomes: to develop innovative eXtended Reality applications for learning, training and education, to test and support take-up of proven, successful eXtended Reality tools, making Europe a leader in cutting-edge technologies for education.

  - o <u>Analysis</u>: There is clear continuity here with the work done during IMPACT EdTech, although this call differs in some key aspects from the IMPACT EdTech programme, particularly in the focus on AI, VR and AR and in the structure of the support provided to the SMEs and startups. There is a role for each of the three existing partners, although other partners would need to be integrated. Like IMPACT EdTech, a significant portion of the budget is dedicated to FSTP. In addition, the extent of the services to be provided is wide. Many of the lessons learned in IMPACT EdTech about building helpful support programmes for startups and SMEs could be easily applied here.

  - o <u>Conclusion</u>: All three partners decided to team up and collaborate on a proposal, in a process led by FundingBox. **Other partners were invited to participate, and the proposal was submitted.**

It is hoped that the consortium can win the call described above. If so, lessons learned from IMPACT EdTech will be brought forward into a new project. If not, the consortium can discuss other options, such as exploring future EdTech-focused calls, including Erasmus+.

5. Management

5.1. Data management

In keeping with the description of work, EUN supervises all the procedures of data management. A Data Management Plan was elaborated by the Data Manager at EUN. It contains a risk assessment of data management issues, detailed information on the procedures that are implemented for data collection, storage, protection, retention and destruction, the Protection of Personal data, and confirmation that they comply with national and EU legislation. Each partner of the consortium acts as Data Controller in their specific field of Data collection for the project.

The first Data Management Plan was drafted by the Project Consortium as Deliverable 6.2. Following the commencement of project activities in April 2020 and EC recommendations, an updated version of the Data Management Plan was drafted and sent to the Project Officer in December 2020. The updated Data Management Plan can also be found here: https://files.eun.org/SciEduDept/IMPACT-EdTech/IMPACTEdTech-D6.2_DataManagementPlan_update_11.12.2020-final.pdf

The updated Data Management Plan was accepted pursuant to the project review carried out in June 2021. The Review Report, dated the 20th September 2021, states that the existing Data Management plan is robust and appropriate for the project in question. The experts' opinion is that the Data Management Plan is thorough and addresses clearly the way in which the Consortium manages data across all levels of the project cycle, including and importantly also in the screening of applicants to the open calls and through to the incubated/accepted projects' pilots where relevant.

5.1.1. Data exploitation and/or shared/made accessible for verification and re-use

All data collected and stored in the two platforms, FBA's FundingBox Platform for Communities & Open Calls Management as well as data gathered via surveys, interviews or focus groups, are protected according to the procedures for privacy and intellectual property rights defined in the consortium agreement. The IMPACT EdTech partners strictly follow the procedure for data exploitation (as described in the DA Technical Annex Section (a).3):

- Storage: The platforms provide a cloud-based environment located within EEA

- Protection: databases containing data deemed to be sensitive are encrypted using the current industry-standard level of encryption.

- Retention: All personal data collected within open calls are fully anonymised upon completion of the project, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR.

- Transfer: The exchange of data between partners are handled by a secure server to ensure maximum security during transmission.

- Destruction: Data used during the project will be destroyed after completion. Only data needed for compliance reasons will be kept.

5.1.2. Data curation and preservation

The processing of personal data that is absolutely necessary and takes place on a legitimate basis pursuant to Art. 6 Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR). Data is not retained for longer than what is necessary for the purposes of each processing activity.

5.1.3. Data management by EdTech trials

Each EdTech trial underwent an ethics assessment by the EUN Ethics Committee, aiming to evaluate any potential ethical issues that may be posed by the solution, considering

amongst other issues, the existence of adequate data management procedures during pilots, in consonance of the general criteria in terms of protection of personal data and data curation as well as, if applicable, the particularities required when managing data from children/minors and/or vulnerable groups.

The evaluation resulted in the ethics consensus report that was shared with each selected startup at the beginning of the stage. The Ethics consensus report is composed of a series of requirements (which were added to the sub grant agreement for the startups), and recommendations. The Ethics Committee asked the startups to produce the following documents before the start of the piloting phase:

- A Risk assessment on any GDPR or ethical risks related to the implementation of the project. The risk assessment has to reflect on

general points such as data protection structures, third party processors used, etc.; but also had to include the specific ethics requirements.

- Information sheets and consent forms for the pilot participants – students, their parents/legal guardians and teachers, and a Data Processing Agreement with the school (if needed). To facilitate the preparation of these documents, the Ethics Committee had prepared templates.

Only when these two requirements were met and approved by the Ethics Committee, could the startups commence their classroom piloting.

The information sheet templates prepared by the Ethics Committee are available to consult in Annexes 3, 4 and 5 of Deliverable 5.1.

5.2. Knowledge management and protection

The following information regarding the Knowledge Management and Protection is in keeping with the information originally provided for the Grant Agreement. These considerations have been taken into account throughout the course of the project and will continue to apply beyond the completion of the project, with respect to the dissemination and exploitation of project results.

5.2.1. Project coordinator (EUN) as IPR manager

Over the course of the project, EUN Project Coordinators have acted as IPR Manager as planned, working in consultation with EUN's Data Management and GDPR internal expert.

5.2.2. Protection of results

To date during the project, due consideration has been given towards the protection of results of the project, which belong to the Disruptors, as stated in the GA. The project has consistently sought to balance the need for dissemination of results, with the need to protect the results of each Disruptor who participates in the IMPACT EdTech Programme. The consortium has put a strong focus on the dissemination and communication of project results, creating a cohesive communication strategy designed to reach as many relevant members of the project target audience as possible at various stages of the project. All partners exercise due consideration when preparing communications content to ensure that the confidential information of each startup is not disseminated. Any information shared within large scale dissemination activities (in-depth interviews, webinars, events etc), has been disseminated by the disruptors themselves through their

participation in the activity, or with their consent. This consideration will continue to be given beyond the end of the project.

5.2.3. Ownership of results

Due consideration regarding the intellectual property rights and ownership of results has been taken into account throughout the course of the project, with respect to each cohort of startups that participate in the IMPACT EdTech programme. Data and results deriving from Disruptors (beneficiaries) has remained their property only, and IPR has remained their exclusive property. Provisions regarding the ownership or results and intellectual property rights are specifically provided for in Article 27 the Sub Grant Agreement, which all disruptors must sign before entering the Programme.

5.2.4. Access to results

To date, there have been no official IMPACT EdTech publications. All results that are published within the project have been published through a variety of media, such as blog posts, newsletter, webinars, and social media posts. These results are available to view in Open Access, as indicated in the GA. These results will continue to remain open access following the end of the project.

5.2.5. EdTech disruptors funded (third parties)

In keeping with the GA, the project Consortium has provided dissemination opportunities to the beneficiaries throughout the course of the project, but final decisions on dissemination opportunities are made by the beneficiaries themselves. Each FSTP has been responsible for taking the appropriate steps for securing intellectual property of their results yielded during the project. The consortium has also supported the IPR protection of each beneficiary throughout the project. For example, this support has occurred through Bootcamp sessions which cover IPR, and specialised mentor sessions at the request of disruptors, which consisted of a one-time in-depth session that covered IPR for that disruptor.

For more information on Data Management and Knowledge Protection, please consult the Data Management Plan, as referenced above, in section 5.1.

6. Conclusion

The IMPACT EdTech project is nearly at an end. Almost all project KPIs have been met, and most have been well exceeded, showing that the project has been a success for those startups who have participated in and benefitted from it.

In the last several months of the project, the consortium has used communication and dissemination tactics to share knowledge gained and lessons learned with the wider world, thus contributing to an overall improvement in the European EdTech ecosystem.

As the project draws to an end, the consortium is exploring ideas for maintaining momentum. It remains to be seen whether IMPACT EdTech can continue in its present form or if it will evolve into a different type of support programme. In either case, it is hoped that the work done here will continue to reverberate throughout the continent, bringing better and more innovative educational possibilities to all.