

PROPOSAL
"Armenia Startup Catalyst"
on grant programme

Title page

Name of the organization	Plug and Play Tech Center (Plug and Play LLC)
Abbreviation (if any)	Plug and Play / PnP
Name of the programme	Armenia Startup Catalyst
Start/End of the Programme (day/month/year)	01/08/2024 - 30/01/2025 (illustrative, 26 weeks from the signature of the contract)
Location of implementation of the Programme (region, community)	Yerevan, Armenia
Head of Organisation (name, telephone number, email)	Plug & Play Germany GmbH Sascha Robert Karimpour sascha@pnptc.com +49 1607008996
Head/Coordinator of the Programme (name, telephone number, e-mail)	Alfredo Soria alfredo@pnptc.com +49 151 57 67 49 01
Registered office and contact details of the Organisation (telephone and e-mail)	Plug & Play Germany GmbH Pfaffenwaldring 19, D-70569 Stuttgart
Budget of the Programme (AMD)	AMD 333,079,123 (= EUR 800,000)

Brief Summary

Plug and Play proposes to launch the *Armenia Startup Catalyst*, an acceleration program in Armenia to empower local entrepreneurs and facilitate their connection with global innovation ecosystems. The 16-week programme will commence in Yerevan, to empower startups in their development and growth through tailored business advice. The program aims to attract financing, support refining investment pitches, enhance funding negotiation skills, and expand the network of participating startups through connections to global markets, corporations, investors, and mentors. Additionally, the program aims to transform Armenia into a startup hub, drawing in regional businesses, and emphasizing investment opportunities. The *Armenia Startup Catalyst* program will consist of key components, including tailored mentoring, workshops, matchmaking events, and demo days, to ultimately elevate Armenia's startup ecosystem and support Armenian startups in achieving globalized success.

Description of the Programme

The program encompasses key topics including startup fundamentals, product development, customer acquisition, market research, business modeling, pitching, legal and IP considerations, financial, team-building and management, scaling, networking, ethics, crisis management, and support following the program's conclusion. These topics are fully aligned with the objectives and requirements of the Ministry of High-Tech Industry, guaranteeing comprehensive support for participating startups.

By offering educational workshops, seminars, personalized meetings, and practical assignments, the program will equip startups with practical knowledge and hands-on experience. Implemented in Armenia, a project team located in Yerevan and by international experts through online engagement will support the program, ensuring comprehensive assistance and facilitating international connections. Additionally, the participating startups will be hosted in a coworking space equipped with all the necessary tools allowing the selected startups to work in the best conditions.

The program will ensure participants get access to legal, HR, and IT support through Plug and Play's extensive network. This support structure aligns with the tender's goal of equipping startups with the necessary tools for effective business management and growth. By facilitating connections with a minimum of five investors and integrating startups into Plug and Play's global network, the program guarantees the expansion of business connections, directly addressing the tender's objective of broadening networks and linking with global markets and investors.

The program includes an intensive one-week training course for ecosystem local actors, including government officials, to ensure the establishment of a broad and supportive environment. In summary, the Armenia Startup Catalyst program meets and exceeds the requirements of the tender, offering a robust framework for the growth and success of Armenian startups and the Armenian startup ecosystem.

Experience of the Organisation

Please, present the mission and goals of the Organisation, as well as similar programmes (time period, grantor organization, budget, goal, outcomes) implemented

Plug and Play is the world's largest innovation platform. Since 2006, Plug and Play has invested in 2,000 startups, which have raised a total of 12 billion dollars. In parallel, Plug and Play manages +60 accelerator programs annually worldwide and accelerated a total of 2,700 startups in 2023 alone. Over the years, we have built a large network of trusted stakeholders including leading VC firms (+300), large corporations (+650), as well as mentors, universities and governments. Supported by a team of +750 people globally, Plug and Play has a presence in +60 locations on 4 continents and is widely recognized as the leading international innovation catalyst. Furthermore, we are fortunate to have grown our unicorn community to over 30+ unicorns.

Our experience and achievements are extensive, coming in as the #1 most active Venture Capital in the world and the #1 company with the most successful startup exits in the world in 2023.

Experience of staff involved in the project

Please, present the work activities of the trainers, business consultants and mentors included in the programme and the experience corresponding to the objectives of the competition, attach the biographies.

- Philipp Gneiting, Program director
- Christina Branmair, Program manager
- Hannah Boomgaarden, Trainer
- Thomas Bigagli, Ventures lead
- Carolin Weis, Tech expert

Also describe the scope and responsibilities of employees and/or experts to be engaged and paid.

- **Program director:** The Program Director will be the executive point of contact for the contracting authority and will be responsible for steering the overall project.
- **Program manager:** The program manager will lead the overall coordination and implementation of the Armenia Startup Catalyst program. They will engage with all the stakeholders, such as the contracting authority, the selected startups, mentors, and the Plug and Play global teams. Among other things, their responsibilities include the day-to-day management of the program elements and the achievement of milestones.
- **Tech expert:** The tech expert will assess startups and their technology as their core responsibility. They will be responsible with the venture leads for reviewing the applications of the startups and engaging with every one of them to provide dedicated advice supporting their immediate challenges.
- **Venture lead:** They will evaluate the startup applications, and provide mentorship along with the tech expert. They will also facilitate the startup engagement with the VC and corporate ecosystem through direct introductions and matchmaking.
- **Trainer:** The trainer will be responsible for designing the schedule of workshops that are part of the program. They will be responsible for engaging with the most relevant mentors from the Plug and Play network based on the topic considered for each workshop. Additionally, they will be in charge of implementing these different workshops.
- **Global support team:** The Global Support Team comprises strategic leaders in their respective fields. They will provide expert guidance on the program's structure. They will leverage their existing network to draw attention to the initiative and facilitate business engagements.

Selection parameters and evaluation methodology of the companies participating in the programme

Sourcing and Engaging Startups

To select and engage startups, we will employ a multi-faceted approach by leveraging our long-lasting experience in startup sourcing. Our strategy includes:

- **Call for application:** We will launch a call for applications that will be promoted through social media, press, and relevant startups.
- **Partnerships:** We will collaborate with local incubators, universities, and startup communities to identify and source relevant startups.
- **Referrals:** We will receive recommendations from our network of mentors, investors, and corporate partners to find suitable startups.

Selection Parameters

The selection parameters will be rigorous and based on the following criteria:

- **Potential:** We will examine the innovative potential of the product or service the startup offers
- **Market Fit:** We will examine the potential market size and demand for the startup's product or services
- **Scalability:** We will analyze the potential for growth and scalability at a local and international level
- **Team quality:** We will meet with the founding team to examine their potential, expertise and commitment
- **Traction:** We will examine evidence of market traction – including customer feedback, sales, and pilot projects (if applicable)
- **Alignment with Programme Objectives:** We will analyze the extent to which the startups align with the overall objectives of the program.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation of received applications will occur under the Plug and Play selection framework:

1. **Initial Screening:** Following an initial evaluation, applications will be reviewed to ensure they are complete and match the basic requirements for selection.
2. **Comprehensive Review:** Each application will be comprehensively evaluated, taking into account the selection criteria, which involves the analysis of pitch decks, business plans, and market analyses.
3. **Interviews:** Shortlisted startups will be invited to participate in interviews aimed at gaining a deeper insight into their potential and a better understanding of their needs and objectives.
4. **Final Selection:** The cohort for the Programme will be selected based on the cumulative scores from the previous steps, including the comprehensive review and the interviews.

Results Evaluation Criteria (KPIs) for the Conclusion of the Programme

The program's success and the performance of the participants will be evaluated using the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- **Funding:** Number of investor meetings and strategic conversations initiated with investors (NDA signed, data room reviews, due diligence process started, ...).
- **Perspective of revenue Growth:** Number of matchmaking with corporations and strategic conversations initiated during the program.

- **Mentorship Engagement:** Level of engagement and satisfaction with the mentoring received.
- **Network Growth:** Expansion of the startups' professional networks, including connections with investors and industry experts.
- **Sustainability and Scalability:** Long-term sustainability and ability to scale operations post-program.

By employing these comprehensive selection and evaluation methods to choose the most promising startups, we will ensure that the program and its participants can achieve significant growth and success which will be reflected in the achievement of the aforementioned KPIs.

Program content and expected results

The proposed objective of the accelerator is to attract startups and encourage-based business development in Armenia and we would like to highlight a few main goals:

Help companies to attract risk financing from foreign investors

- Prepare companies for investment, offering entrepreneurs valuable feedback on their investment pitches, market strategies, and growth plans.
- Conduct training sessions that enable companies to improve their abilities to secure seed funding, negotiate with investors, and gain insight into the key elements required for a successful financing round.
- Facilitate interactions between companies and investors by organizing matchmaking events and investor presentations, creating more opportunities for them to meet.
- Expanding companies' networks and connecting them with markets and investors from around the world.

Enhancing Armenia's international reputation as a favorable destination for both domestic and foreign startups to thrive and attract promising foreign startups.

- Facilitate the attraction of businesses from the Caucasus region to establish operations in Armenia.
- Foster the inflow of foreign capital into Armenian-based companies by highlighting the benefits and opportunities within the Armenian ecosystem.

Promote the growth of start-up activities and their international development

- Access to a wide-ranging network of international investors, mentors, corporations, and startups from the network of Plug and Play.
- The identification and selection of the most promising startups, exploring the European ecosystem, and imparting industry expertise drawn from our various hubs scattered throughout Europe and beyond.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing between startups and international lecturers and mentors.
- The expansion of companies' networks, inclusive of providing contact details for larger companies operating in diverse industries and markets.

- The enhancement of the probability of startup companies forming partnerships, thereby granting them access to product testbeds, prospective customers, marketing and distribution channels, and industrial collaborations.
- Expanding corporate networks to attract suitable talent to the organization.

KPIs are mentioned above.

Actions

What are the specific actions and methods to achieve the goal of the programme? Submit a weekly/monthly work plan using the format below.

The Plug and Play Programme will introduce a comprehensive 16-week accelerator within the 26-week time frame designed to assist Armenian startups in achieving business growth, investment readiness, and international expansion. The following structure outlines our proposal and our methodology, including a weekly and monthly work plan.

Program Structure and Implementation

Pre-Program Phase (Weeks 1-6)

1. *(Weeks 1-3) Outreach and Sourcing:* Initiate a comprehensive outreach campaign across multiple channels to attract applicants, promoting the programme through social media, partner networks, and industry events.
2. *(Weeks 3-6) Selection Process:* Review applications and shortlist potential candidates, conducting interviews and selecting a minimum of 20 startups
3. *(Week 6) Preliminary Schedule:* Provide the contracting authority with a detailed schedule.

Acceleration Phase (Weeks 7-22)

- *(Week 7): Orientation:* Introduce new startups to the Plug and Play team and available resources.
- *(Weeks 8-10): Foundational Workshops and Mentoring*
 - *Workshops:* Cover essential topics such as Startup Basics, Product Development, and Market Research
 - *Mentorship:* Individual sessions tailored to the specific needs of each startup
 - *Office Hours:* Weekly sessions with the Plug and Play team for feedback and guidance
- *(Weeks 10-15): Advanced Workshops and Pitch Polishing*
 - *Workshops:* Concentrate on customer acquisition, monetising business models, and managing finances
 - *Pitch Presentation Workshop:* Aid startups in perfecting their presentations for investors and stakeholders
- *(Weeks 16-18): Scaling and Operations*
 - *Workshops:* Covering topics such as Scaling Operations, Team Building, and Leadership
 - *Office Hours:* Ongoing personalized support and preparation for the Demo Day

- *(Weeks 19-21): Industry-Specific Mentoring and Networking*
 - *Mentoring:* Specialized sessions with industry experts
 - *Networking Events:* Facilitate connections with potential investors, partners, and customers
- *(Week 22): Getting Ready for Demo Day*
 - Final pitch preparations, rehearsals and feedback
 - Marketing preparation and outreach for the Expo/Demo Day.

Post-Programme Phase (Weeks 23-26)

- *(Week 23): Demo Day*
 - Organize the Demo Day event, featuring presentations to international investors, corporates and the Armenian innovation community
- *(Weeks 22-26): Post-Acceleration Support*
 - Maintain access to Plug and Play's global network of alumni and integration into Playbook.
 - Offer ongoing mentoring and support to assist startups in seizing new opportunities

Competitive Advantages

What are your competitive advantages?

Plug and Play is the largest innovation platform worldwide, benefiting from extensive experience in startup investment, business support, and matchmaking. Our competitive advantage is notably reflected in our network of 650+ of the largest corporations in the world and 300+ venture capital firms that represent sources of business opportunities for the startups enrolled in the program. Plug and Play further operates in over 60 locations globally, providing Armenian startups the unique opportunity to connect with global markets and partners.

Additionally, Plug and Play investment track record in +2000 startups including +30 unicorns gives us the necessary experience to identify the startups having the most potential when it comes to growth and investment attraction. Furthermore, Plug and Play proprietary software *Playbook* gathers more than 70,000 startups of which we are constantly monitoring the progress. The Armenian startups participating in the Armenia Startup Catalyst program will be enrolled into Playbook giving them more exposure to investors and corporations during and after the program.

Plug and Play's long-lasting experience in organizing successful expo days and large-scale events that gather leading players in innovation from around the world allows us to organize impactful events that give additional exposure to the participating startups. These startups will also be allowed to participate in at least 5 Plug and Play events (in-person such as Expo Days, Silicon Valley Summits, or online pitching sessions) after the completion of the program.

Work Plan

The program work plan is available in the annex "Schedule Armenia Startup Catalyst".

Organization: Plug & Play Germany GmbH
Programme: Armenia Startup Catalyst
Period: 01/08/2024 - 30/01/2025

Risk Assessment

Below are the possible contingencies and the risk mitigation measures that will be taken to address any possible risks if they occur.

1. Stakeholder Disengagement

- a. **Prevention measure:** To reduce the risk of stakeholder disengagement, we will create thorough plans for engaging stakeholders, ensuring open and regular communication.
- b. **Mitigation measure:** Our mitigation measures will include implementing conflict resolution methods that aim to tackle disengagement, and adjusting engagement strategies and ensuring adaptability for the programme to reinvolve stakeholders and manage internal conflict diplomatically.

2. Lack of Investor Matchmaking Opportunities

- a. **Prevention measure:** To prevent the lack of investor matchmaking opportunities, we will form and uphold our extensive network of investors and consistently communicate with them to provide updates about the program, and conduct extensive market research to identify potential investors. Furthermore, we will arrange virtual investor networking events as a backup plan to ensure accessibility to the participants.
- b. **Mitigation measure:** If a lack of opportunities becomes apparent, we will enhance marketing initiatives to draw in further investors. Moreover, we will establish a specialized program to prepare participants for investments, offering increased training and resources to the participants, and giving them the knowledge and skills needed to effectively interact with investors.

3. Operational Risks:

- a. **Prevention measure:** To prevent inadequate staffing or resource allocation that affects operational efficiency, we will develop a detailed staffing plan with clear roles and responsibilities, allocating our experienced team members to designated and clear positions. We will additionally monitor workload distribution to ensure effectiveness and prevent burnout.
- b. **Mitigation measure:** Our team will be cross-trained in other roles to mitigate the impact of unexpected absences or dismissals. We have designated Plug and Play team members who will be updated on the program and will be able to substitute team members in case of emergency to ensure continuity.

4. Timeline Risks:

- a. **Prevention measure:** To avoid delays in the timeline, we will create a practical project schedule during the planning phase, incorporating extra time for unexpected setbacks. This will involve dividing tasks into achievable milestones with specific deadlines and assigning responsibilities accordingly. Regular

monitoring of progress and performance evaluations will help detect potential delays early. Furthermore, we will promote a culture of accountability and teamwork among team members, ensuring open communication channels and regular meetings to discuss progress and promptly handle any arising issues and delays.

- b. **Mitigation measure:** In case of any delays, we will prioritize important tasks and allocate additional resources wherever possible and necessary to ensure continuity and progress. This might involve reallocating staff or extending work hours to meet deadlines without compromising quality. Additionally, we will thoroughly analyze the reasons for the delays and promptly take corrective actions, which may include revisiting the timeline and adjusting milestones. A flexible program will minimize disruptions and ensure the timely delivery of end goals.

SEENA ATIDHROOR (MANAGING PARTNER ETEN)

name of the participant (position of manager, first name and last name)



signature

CONFIDENTIAL

PLUGANDPLAY

Armenia Start-Up Catalyst
International Accelerator Program

Accelerate Armenia Global Impact with the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst program

To the Ministry of High Technologies of Armenia,

Dear Ministry Representatives,

We appreciate that you considered Plug and Play as a strategic partner to establish and implement an acceleration program that will kick-off in the course of 2024. We believe this project aligns with our experience and capabilities and would lead the way towards a fruitful collaboration.

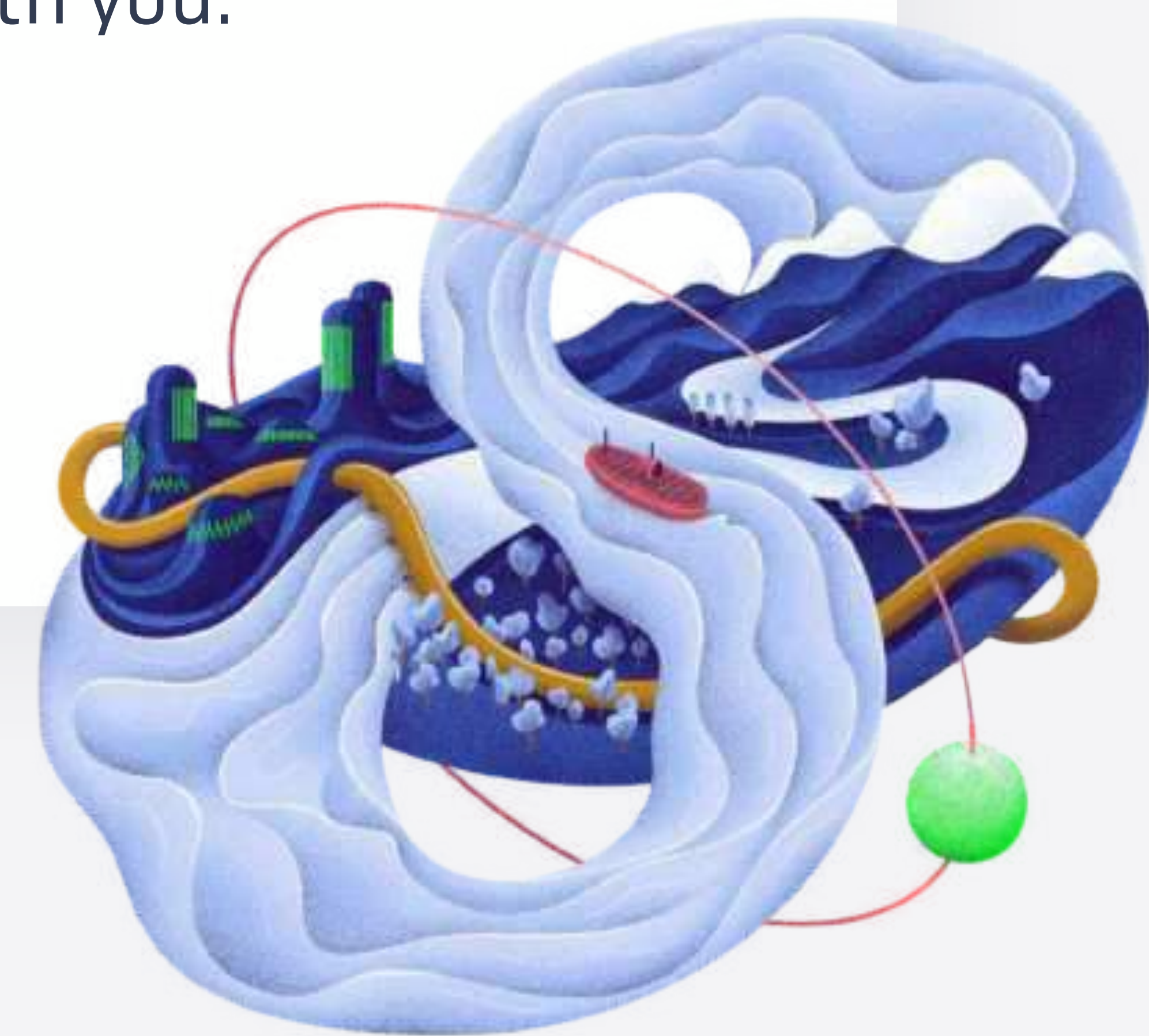
The proposal below outlines our vision for designing and implementing the program aligned with the objectives of the tender “ԲՏԱՆ-ԴՄ-2024/04”. Every aspect has been curated to fulfill two core objectives. First, empowering Armenian entrepreneurs by providing tailored advice to support each selected entrepreneur in their business journey. On the other hand, we envision to connect the Armenian innovation ecosystem with other global ecosystems to allow the selected start-ups to scale at a global level.

Thanks to our extensive international experience in accelerating start-ups over the world in over 60 different locations, we are able to propose a unique model that would maximize the program’s outcomes. Our program will offer tools, resources, and a global network of mentors, corporate partners, and investors. We have replicated our success in 60 locations worldwide, and we are confident that our program will help Armenian start-ups achieve world-class status.

The program will kick off in Yerevan, where carefully selected start-ups will have 16 weeks to enhance their ideas, business models, and products. The start-ups will then advance to one of our European locations. There, they'll acquire the knowledge and skills to scale their businesses in Europe and gain access to our vast corporate network of industry leaders. Our program aims to help Armenian start-ups achieve global success and develop into world-class companies.

We are confident that the program will meet your objective to boost the local ecosystem in Armenia and we are looking forward to working with you.

Warm regards,
The Plug and Play team



Our Vision For Armenia

The 6 Foundations of the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst program

Drawing on Plug and Play's vast experience in start-up international acceleration programs, investor relations, corporate innovation, and fostering collaborations between start-ups and established industry players, the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst will be founded on 6 principles:

1

Internationalization

To drive unprecedented growth, the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst will adopt an outside-in view on how to grow the sizable pool of high-potential start-ups. Therefore, internationalization and attracting foreign investments will be crucial to foster the development of the national ecosystem.

2

Industry-Agnostic Approach

To effectively cover upstream and downstream industry segments, the program will leverage the traction of strong industry sectors in Armenia and attract players from different industries worldwide.

3

Project Management

To distinguish itself from the fragmented landscape of other accelerators across Europe, the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst will offer a simple organizational structure and lean management with pan-European coverage.

Our Vision For Armenia

4**Mentors and Lecturers Pool**

To overcome the closed networks of regional mentors, the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst's mentor pool will be open to all experts, and start-ups will be actively guided to the right mentorship to enable organic growth and international expansion.

5**Coaching Methodology**

To educate and coach a wide range of start-ups in a short time frame, the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst will deploy a lean program layered with advanced learning methods and content to allow start-ups to focus on achieving their goals while learning new skills.

6**Building Unicorns**

In Armenia, Plug and Play would leverage its network and experience to quickly scale, retain and grow the most promising companies with the potential to scale globally and become the next unicorns.



Proposed Approach: The 5 Phases

Key Components of the Program

Orientation:

Start-ups are introduced to the Plug and Play team at the beginning of the program. Start-ups familiarize themselves with the host of services that Plug and Play make available to them in addition to Legal, HR and IT support (<https://pnptc-it-perks.getproven.com/>).

16-Weeks Accelerator Program:

There will be a number of events throughout the program that are designed to accelerate start-ups and connect them with business development and investment opportunities. These include pitch polishing, webinars, workshops, corporate introductions, focus weeks, and networking events.

Demo Days (EXPO):

The program will features mid term demo days culminates with a local EXPO in Yerevan, where the batch start-ups pitch in front of an audience of international investors, corporates, entrepreneurs, and the wider Armenian innovation community.

The Pitching Feedback Event

Companies that haven't been accepted for the Batch can apply and being selected for a pitching session with our Ventures Team from the Plug and Play Knowledge center with a Q&A session to receive feedback on the company to apply for a following batch from another program.

Workshops

Each batch of start-ups will participate in workshops designed to introduce entrepreneurs to the European ecosystem and business environment. Topics include (but are not limited to): *Sales and Business Development, Funding process, Design Thinking and Scaling.*

The 5 Phases

Design and Preparation

Our Responsibilities and Promises

The accelerator program, which is industry-agnostic and will be held in Armenia and online, consists of one cycle, with a possibility of being extended at a later stage.

Plug and Play, at the start of the cycle, will provide, within 30 days, the Contracting Authority with a preliminary schedule outlining the implementation. This schedule will include the preliminary dates for the selection of Program Participants for the processes of the cycle, as well as the starting and ending dates for each process.

The Program will start in August 2024. The Program will be 26 weeks long*, and Plug and Play will accept and admit 20 companies to the Batch.

Materials and Information provided in the Program

Brochure

Plug and Play is obligated to provide Program participants with a Brochure no later than 5 days prior to the start of the Program. This Brochure will include the following information:

- *Schedule of the activities:* Plug and Play will provide the agenda that outlines the schedule of activities, workshops, and information.
- *Experts list:* Plug and Play will provide a list of mentors, experts, and lecturers along with their areas of expertise and background, to ensure that the appropriate mentor is matched with each program participant.

Communication System

We propose utilizing a communication system such as Slack to maintain regular communication with Program participants, facilitating chat and ensuring that relevant information about the Program is conveyed. This will allow for effective collaboration and ensure that all participants are well-informed throughout the duration of the Program.

The advantages of utilizing a communication system like Slack in an accelerator program are numerous. Firstly, Slack provides a centralized platform for communication, making it easy for participants to access information and interact with each other. Secondly, the use of a chat-based system allows for real-time communication, enabling participants to ask questions and receive prompt responses from mentors and other experts.

The 5 Phases

Design and Preparation

Goals and Objectives of the Program

The proposed objective of the accelerator is to attract start-ups and encourage-based business development in Armenia and we would like to highlight a few main goals:

Help companies to attract risk financing from foreign investors

- Prepare companies for investment, offering entrepreneurs valuable feedback on their investment pitches, market strategies, and growth plans.
- Conduct training sessions that enable companies to improve their abilities to secure seed funding, negotiate with investors, and gain insight into the key elements required for a successful financing round.
- Facilitate interactions between companies and investors by organizing matchmaking events and investor presentations, creating more opportunities for them to meet.
- Expanding companies' networks and connecting them with markets and investors from around the world.

Enhancing Armenia's international reputation as a favorable destination for both domestic and foreign start-ups to thrive and attract promising foreign start-ups.

- Facilitate the attraction of businesses from the Caucasus region to establish operations in Armenia.
- Foster the inflow of foreign capital into Armenian-based companies by highlighting the benefits and opportunities within the Armenian ecosystem.

Promote the growth of start-up activities and their international development

- Access to a wide-ranging network of international investors, mentors, corporations, and start-ups originating from the network of Plug and Play.
- The identification and selection of the most promising start-ups, with a view to exploring the European ecosystem, and imparting industry expertise drawn from our various hubs scattered throughout Europe and beyond.
- The facilitation of knowledge sharing between start-ups and international lecturers and mentors.
- The expansion of companies' networks, inclusive of providing contact details for larger companies operating in diverse industries and markets.
- The enhancement of the probability of start-ups companies forming partnerships, thereby granting them access to product testbeds, prospective customers, marketing and distribution channels, and industrial collaborations.
- The widening of companies' networks to attract suitable talent to the organization.

The 5 Phases

Design and Preparation

Target Groups

The proposed objective of the accelerator is to attract start-ups and encourage founders to start their businesses in Armenia. The aim is to attract companies that can leverage the current industry expertise residing in the country, including those working in **Transportation, Financial Services, Enterprise tech (AI), Energy, Mining and Agriculture** also attract **companies from every industries that want to explore opportunities in Armenia**. Additionally, the accelerator aims to encourage other start-ups to explore Armenia's ecosystem as a developing market for innovative businesses.

Moreover, the proposed approach intends to bring in new knowledge and promote the exchange of best practices across different industries. Therefore, the accelerator is going to be industry-agnostic and designed to attract the following target groups:

The **target group** of start-up companies includes in particular:

- Start-ups in their early or growth stages, ranging from the idea stage to the development of a working prototype or a product ready for market launch.
- Companies of every industry with a market potential in multiple countries
- Start-ups created by the Armenian diaspora across the world aiming to establish a presence in Armenia (in line with Neruzh activities and program)

Mandatory Selection Criteria

The **selection** of participating start-up and scale-up companies is restricted as follows:

- Companies that have opened or will open a legal entity in the Republic of Armenia before the start of the program.
- Corresponds to the definition of a start-ups, provided by the Law of the Republic of Armenia ("*<...> very small or small company with a large and innovation-based business development potential, which has been registered in the general Commercial Registry for no longer than 8 years*").

The 5 Phases

Design and Preparation

Brand identity

The goal of the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst Program's communication strategy is to promote the Armenian start-up ecosystem and the Armenian government's acceleration program.

Plug and Play is a well-known brand in the global start-ups, investment, and open innovation markets, Plug and Play would leverage Plug and Play Armenia to add value to the program's branding and communication. However, the accelerator's name will be determined by the partners.

During this onboarding and preparation phase, the **marketing team** will review all branding requirements with the partner and establish a timeline for execution. The team will also define the contact person responsible for marketing and communication decisions on the partner's side.

Plug and Play will create design templates for social media, emails, event presentations, venue dressing, and video branding that follow the brand guidelines. The design team will support all design needs for the program's marketing aspects.





Publicity and Selection

The 5 Phases

Publicity and Selection

How the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst program will be Advertised

Plug and Play's **digital marketing team** will create a standalone website to house program information and the application form. They will also create the application forms and backend system, email list subscription, and forms for information sessions and call applications. The website will host smaller events of the program, such as information sessions in the selection phase.

Plug and Play's **social media team** will create a new LinkedIn page reflecting the decided branding for the program. The page will be managed by a program manager at Plug and Play, who will coordinate posting with the marketing team. They will also agree with the partner on the selection of program updates to be shared on the Plug and Play channels. The schedule for all emailings will be planned after the signing of the contract, and the partner will communicate any email requirements needed.

Furthermore, the Armenian Government and Plug and Play will agree on the list of events covered by photographers and/or videographers. Videos can be distributed on Plug and Play channels to promote the collaboration and program.

Procedures and Selection Criteria

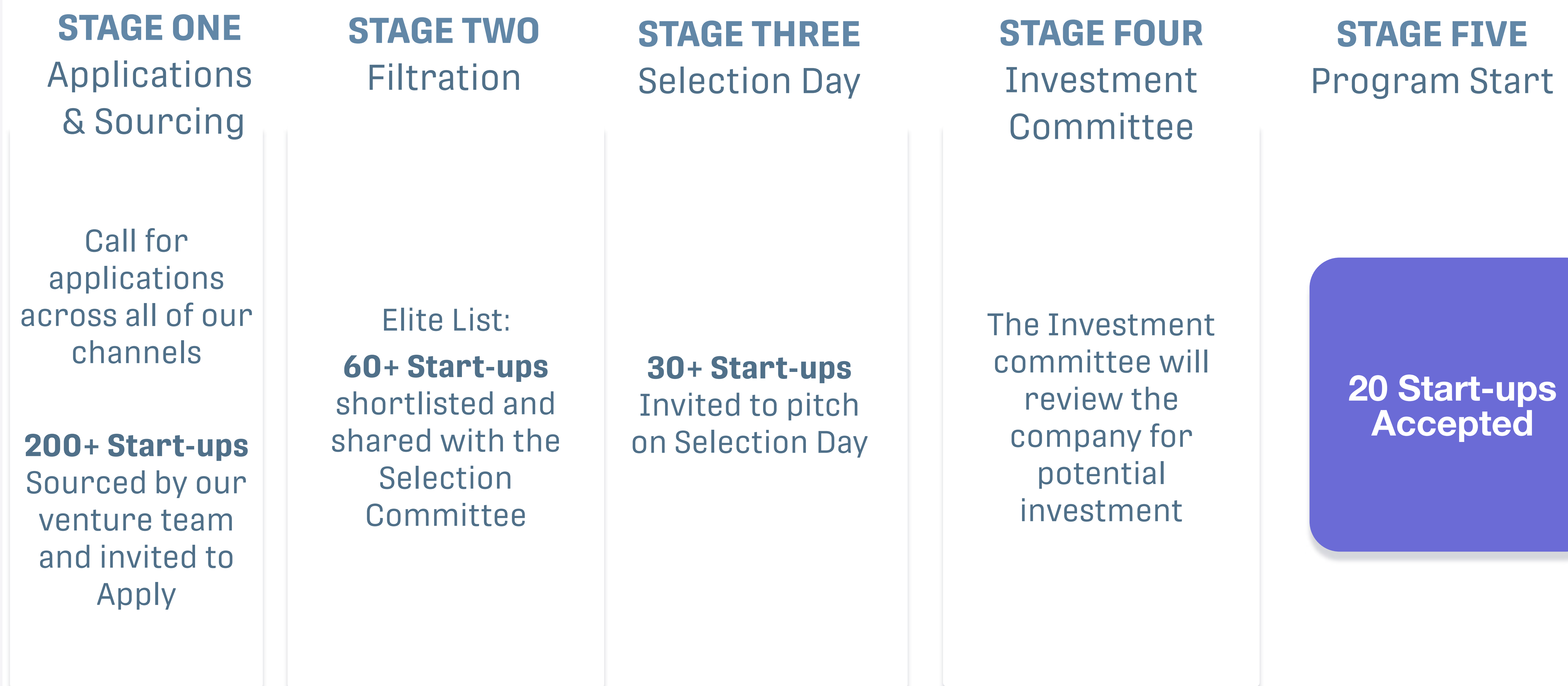
The primary objective of Plug and Play is to draw global start-ups to Armenia with the aim of engaging in regional activities. A customized selection process has been devised to ensure the high caliber of participants and attract companies that align with the program's goals.

Furthermore, the program's selection criteria encompasses a combination of factors, including the strength of the business and the value proposition, the founders' international ambitions to establish world-class enterprises, as well as the suitability of the company's product and stage in relation to the accelerator program activities.

The 5 Phases

Publicity and Selection

The Path to the Batch of the Program



Key Components to Select the Program Participants in each cycle

The Venture Team

After receiving the applications from the Open Call at the beginning of each batch and after collecting the start-ups from the internal sourcing process, the venture team will begin analyzing the companies for the batch.

Elite List

The Elite List of 60+ start-ups will be shared with the board members, who will then use our rubric to choose the start-ups to invite to Selection Day. After the top 60 start-ups are identified, the venture team will begin inviting start-ups to prepare a live pitch.

Selection Day

The top 30+ start-ups will pitch in front of the Board and selected people from the Armenian community. From this event, the Board casts their votes to choose the top 20 start-ups accepted into the first batch.

Selection Committee

Board members will select the companies that will be accepted in the accelerator and will advise which companies should be considered for potential investment.

The 5 Phases

Publicity and Selection

STAGE ONE: How Start-ups will be attracted and scouted

Open Call

To ensure a successful launch of the Program, we will implement an effective communication strategy. Our plan involves launching an Open Call at the beginning of the cycle, for start-ups to apply, which will be promoted through various channels to reach a broad audience of start-ups.

The Open Call for applications will allow us to select a diverse range of start-ups from Armenia and Armenian diaspora. The selection process will follow established best practices, ensuring that the most promising candidates are chosen for the accelerator program.

During the kickoff meeting of the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst, Plug and Play and the Contracting Authority will finalize plans for the Open Call launch. Plug and Play will assist in creating a brand identity and developing media assets for the program, as well as executing the communication plan outlined earlier.

Plug and Play will start the implementation of the publicity and selection of the Program after preparing, and coordinating with the Contracting Authority the stages of international publicity and the selection of the Program Participants.

Open Call Description

To successfully launch the Open Call for applications, it is crucial to have a well-defined set of requirements for participants. Notably, it is important to provide a clear explanation of the application process, program information, and timeline. This will enable potential applicants to quickly assess whether they are eligible for the program.

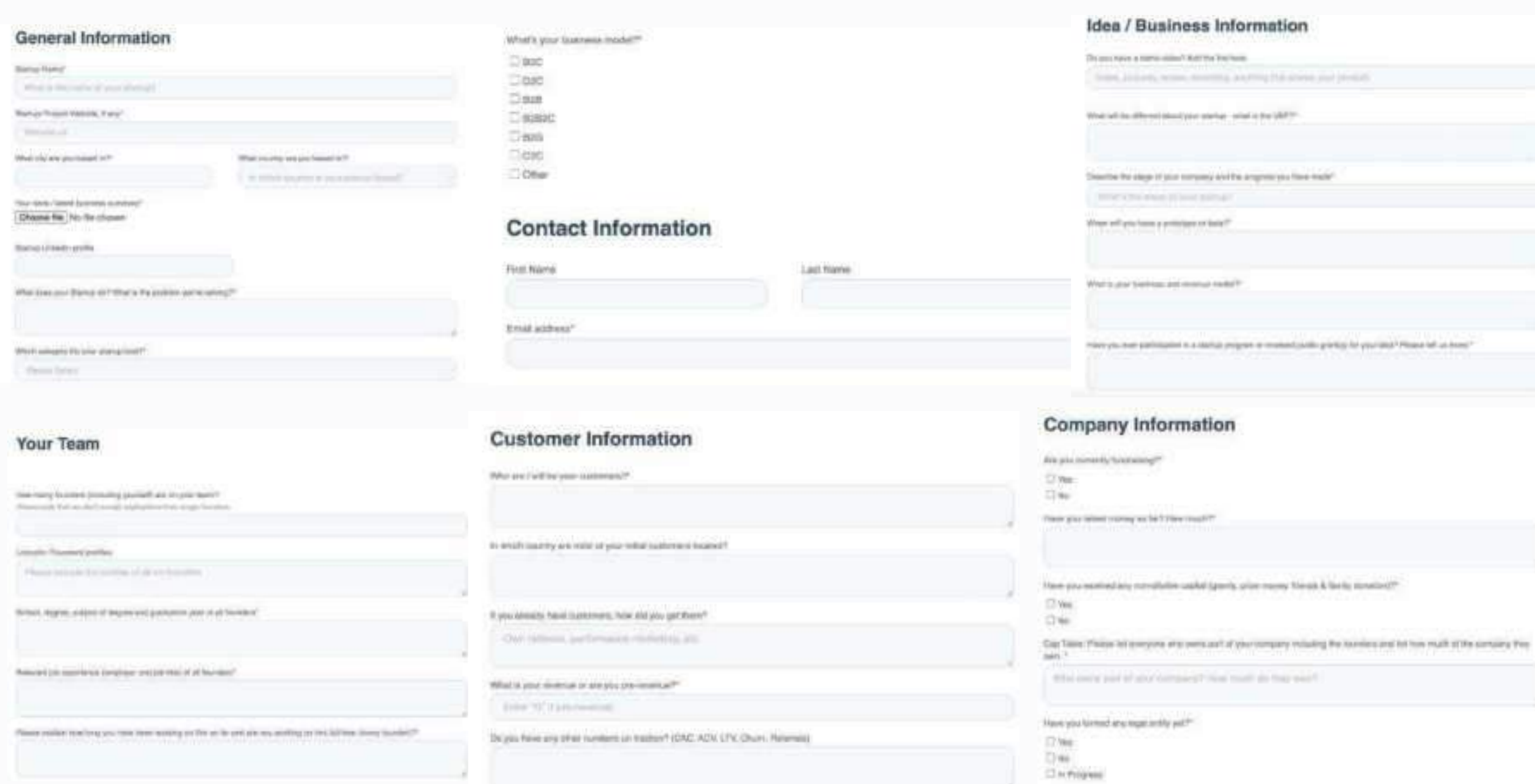
The 5 Phases

Publicity and Selection

STAGE ONE: How Start-ups will be attracted and scouted

Open Call: Online Application

Our proposed approach for an easy and efficient selection process for the acceleration program involves a straightforward online application form. This will be the sole requirement for start-ups when they register for the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst program. Start-up founders or teams will be responsible for completing the application form in its entirety. Once submitted, they will receive confirmation that their application will be reviewed ([See template of the form](#)). A sample of the start-up application form is provided below for reference.



The form is divided into several sections:

- General Information:** Includes fields for Startup Name, Startup Project Website, and checkboxes for 'What city are you based in?' and 'What country are you based in?'.
- What's your business model?:** A list of radio button options: B2C, B2B, B2B2C, B2C2B, B2C2C, and Other.
- Idea / Business Information:** Includes a text area for 'What will be different about your startup - what is the USP?', a dropdown for 'Describe the stage of your company and the progress you have made?', a dropdown for 'When will you have a prototype or MVP?', a dropdown for 'What is your business and revenue model?', and a dropdown for 'Have you been participating in a startup program or incubator/accelerator program for you? Please let us know!'.
- Contact Information:** Includes fields for First Name, Last Name, and Email address.
- Your Team:** Includes a text area for 'How many founders (including yourself) are on your team?' and a dropdown for 'Please provide the names of all our founders'.
- Customer Information:** Includes a dropdown for 'Who are your customers?', a dropdown for 'In which country are most of your initial customers located?', a dropdown for 'If you already have customers, how did you get them?' (with sub-options: CRM, Customer, performance marketing, etc.), a dropdown for 'What is your channel or are you pre-revenue?', and a dropdown for 'Do you have any other numbers on hand? (GMC, ADN, LFC, Churn, Retention)'.
- Company Information:** Includes a dropdown for 'Are you currently fundraising?', a dropdown for 'Have you raised money so far? How much?', a dropdown for 'Have you received any convertible preferred equity, venture-backed & bank financing?', a dropdown for 'Cap Table (Please list everyone who owns part of your company including the founders and let how much of the company they own)', a dropdown for 'What is the role of your investors? How much do they own?', and a dropdown for 'Have you formed any legal entity yet?'.

Open Call & Scouting

In addition to the Open Call, our accelerator program shall employ diverse methods to identify potential start-up companies. These methods include utilizing our in-house start-up databases and establishing industry relationships with networks of local and international stakeholders. To ensure a comprehensive outreach strategy, we will employ multiple scouting processes. In addition to launching an Open Call for applications, and conducting press releases and promotional campaigns, we shall leverage the networks of participating parties and maintain an "active always-on" scouting approach.

The 5 Phases

Publicity and Selection

STAGE ONE: How Start-ups will be attracted and scouted

Scouting Tools

In order to effectively scout promising start-ups and investors, it is essential to have access to reliable and comprehensive sources of data. We will certainly rely on Pitchbook and Crunchbase, both of which are global providers of information on start-ups and tech ecosystems.

In addition to these mainstream sources, Plug and Play also relies on alternative data sources, in order to gain valuable insights into emerging technologies and industry trends.

Other sources include accelerators, universities, and Playbook, our own global innovation platform. Playbook allows us to tap into our vast network of start-ups providing us with unparalleled access to the latest trends and emerging technologies.

By leveraging these multiple sources, we are able to create a comprehensive and data-driven approach to scouting for and reaching out to promising start-ups and investors. This enables us to make informed decisions and build strong partnerships that drive growth and success for all parties involved.

STAGE TWO: Elite List

Criteria and Tools for Selection

After receiving all the applications from the Open Call and from the sourcing effort, the Ventures team will analyze the applications and the companies sourced for the program. Then, the venture team will prepare a shortlist of 60+ companies to be presented to the Selection Committee and receive advice on the companies to invite to the selection day.

Given the goals of the program, the companies should receive an applicability score from 0 to 5 as shown in the exhibit.

The Exhibits show the internal tool that Plug and Play can rely on and a template of the description of the companies.

The 5 Phases

Publicity and Selection

STAGE THREE: Selection Day and Participants' Selection

Selection Day

The Plug and Play team shall proceed to organize the Selection Day event. During this event, the top 30 start-ups with the highest ratings shall be accorded the opportunity to pitch their ideas, with a view towards participation in Plug and Play's 16-weeks accelerator program, and the European GOAL 1-week program.

The pitching session shall be conducted either virtually, in a hybrid format or in person, with the Selection Committee and Plug and Play Ventures Team in attendance.

Selection of the Program Participant

Following the Selection Day, the Ventures Team, with the advice of the Selection Committee will choose the Program participants based on a set of leading questions that will contribute to the rationality and criteria of the selection process.

- **Potential:** We will examine the innovative potential of the product or service the startup offers
- **Market Fit:** We will examine the potential market size and demand for the startup's product or services
- **Scalability:** We will analyze the potential for growth and scalability at a local and international level
- **Team quality:** We will meet with the founding team to examine their potential, expertise and commitment
- **Traction:** We will examine evidence of market traction – including customer feedback, sales, and pilot projects (if applicable)
- **Alignment with Programme Objectives:** We will analyze the extent to which the startups align with the overall objectives of the program.

The selection of the Program participants will take place and be completed within the 6 weeks from the date of publication of the call for application.

Kick-Off Event:

Our kickoff event is dedicated to presenting our accelerator's, services, and program schedule to the selected start-ups.



Execution of the Program

The 5 Phases

Execution of the program

The 16-Weeks Program

Plug and Play will conduct an industry-agnostic accelerator program in Armenia consisting of one cycle, wherein program participants shall be selected from the target groups specified earlier. At the beginning of the cycle, Plug and Play shall furnish the Contracting Authority with a preliminary schedule, within 30 days, outlining the implementation of program.

This schedule shall contain the tentative dates for the selection of Program Participants for the cycle, as well as the starting and ending dates for the program. The Program shall last 26 weeks (with 16 week of acceleration), and Plug and Play shall accept and admit a minimum of 20 companies to the Batch.

The high-level framework of the accelerator program is depicted below.

This section explains our methodology for the companies participating to the program, as well as our quality assurance during the Batch period. The majority of this section focuses on the activities that Batch start-ups will undertake during the program. We will outline our mentoring pool, including the different types and roles of mentors, as well as the mentor assignment process. Additionally, we will explain how we will supplement the program's training and mentoring structure with other key initiatives that will help start-ups develop their business and investment readiness as well as their international expansion.

Advanced Workshops

The 16-week Program entails that the participants will engage in various activities pertaining to the main areas of the accelerator Program, including the attraction of investments, marketing, business growth and sales development, attraction of customers, international development, and product development. The Program Participants will be exposed to workshops facilitated by industry experts.

The 5 Phases

Execution of the program

Mentoring

The successful execution of the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst Program is contingent on the active involvement of mentors. The mentors' overarching role in the Program is to provide guidance, assistance, education, and encouragement to the selected start-ups throughout their 16-week development journey.

The acceleration programs of Plug and Play benefit from a network of over 300+ exceptional industry and business mentors.

Their expertise extends to virtually every industry vertical, including insurance, marine, banking, energy, agro, mobility, consumer electronics, construction, chemistry, medical and life science, fast-moving consumer goods, and more. Additionally, some of these mentors have played a part in creating or investing in successful unicorns like Flyr (N), N26 (D), Owkin (F), Lending Club (US), PayPal (US), and Dropbox (US), to mention a few examples.

During the program, the mentors will work closely with the Program participants through one-on-one sessions and ongoing communication. In addition, mentors work closely with founders to provide the tools, resources, and insights they need to achieve their vision.

For the Armenian accelerators, we identified a wide range of specialists that will mentor start-ups in the program on the topics of the different modules.

The 5 Phases

Execution of the program

Pitch Polishing

Plug and Play will offer a Pitch Polishing Workshop designed to help entrepreneurs refine their start-ups pitches and increase their chances of success. This workshop is a crucial part of the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst's program, as it provides participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver a compelling pitch that captures the attention of investors, customers, and other stakeholders.

Office Hours

As part of the Plug and Play accelerator program, each team will have access to weekly Office Hours with the Plug and Play team. These touch-points provide a valuable opportunity for teams to receive personalized feedback, guidance, and support from the experienced Plug and Play team.

During these weekly Office Hours, teams can discuss their progress, challenges, and opportunities with the Plug and Play team. The team will provide feedback and advice on various aspects of the start-ups, such as market research, product development, fundraising, and networking.

Demo Days

At the end of the program, Plug and Play will host an exclusive Demo Day that will serve as the culmination of an intensive program cycle.

This event provides an exclusive opportunity for participating start-ups to present their innovative products or services to a diverse range of potential investors and corporations from international markets where Plug and Play has established activities and invested in the past years.

The 5 Phases

Execution of the program

Marketing

During the execution of the program, marketing of the Armenia Start-Up Catalyst will be handled as follows:

Social Media:

Plug and Play will be responsible for managing the LinkedIn page for the program. The schedule will include 1-2 posts per week, which will provide updates on program events, start-ups profiles, and other public announcements.

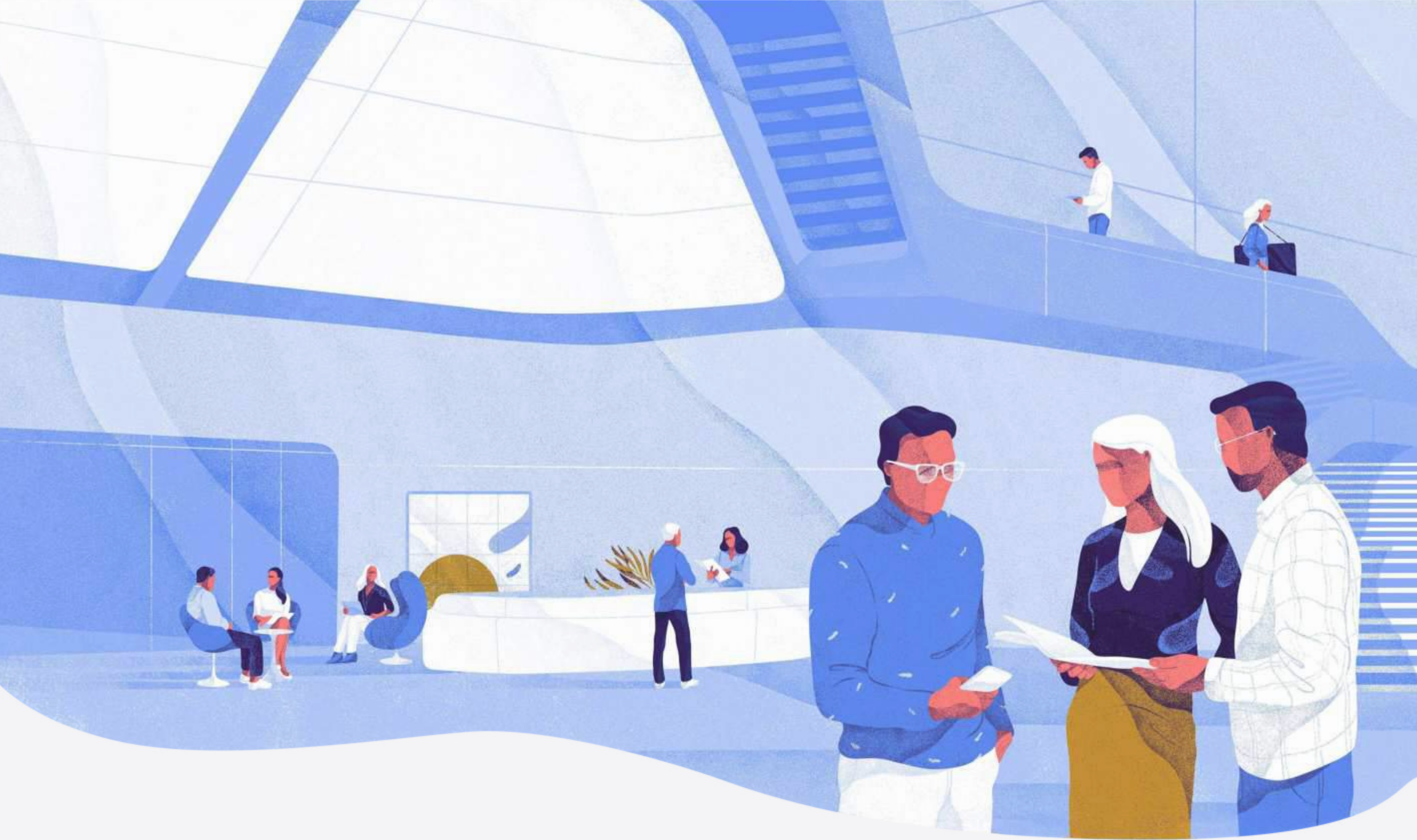
Video:

Upon completion, a video will be created featuring testimonials from a selection of participating start-ups, partner representatives, and the Plug and Play director. This video will serve as a promotional tool for the upcoming cycles, and will be distributed on both Plug and Play and program channels.

Partners Marketing Echo:

To maximize our reach, we will utilize the communication channels of both the Ministry of High-Tech Industry and Plug and Play. By doing so, we can create an "echo" of all communications where appropriate. The Plug and Play channel boasts an impressive following across various social media platforms, including LinkedIn (+98K followers), Instagram (+16K followers), Twitter (+25 followers), Facebook (+20K followers), and a newsletter subscriber base of over 30K. Additionally, our website receives over 300K visits per month.





Appendix

Mentorship in Armenia

Plug and Play's Approach to Mentorship:

Plug and Play has a global network of more than 500 mentors and has built extensive connections with the innovation ecosystem worldwide to allow us access to the most qualified and engaged experts. In each of our locations, we attract best-in-class mentors that support over 60 Plug and Play accelerator programs, including:

- Technical and subject matter experts
- Investors and venture capitalists
- University professors
- Executives from our corporate network
- Start-ups/Founder alumni from our accelerator programs
- Legal experts
- Executives in residence

Plug and Play Mentorship in Armenia:

Each start-up's needs will be evaluated and then matched to a dedicated mentor who will help with business coaching, support and advice. Mentors will work with founders or other start-up leadership to develop and review existing business models and facilitate the identification of a product-market fit. Mentors may set up initial interviews with experts in the domains or industries relevant for the respective start-ups.

We will have a two-pronged approach to recruiting mentors in Armenia:

1) International: Recruiting mentors from our international network to participate in mentorship opportunities in Armenia. These mentors will be selected based on their industry-specific knowledge and will alternate from batch to batch. For example, we will source mentors from one or more of our current Food, Agtech & Animal Health programs to support the Agri-Food start-ups that participate in our Agtech accelerator in Armenia. Mentors in our existing network are familiar with the Plug and Play model and are able to provide an international perspective to batch start-ups.

2) Regional: Tapping into local business networks to source mentors will be equally as important to support the program. To recruit mentors to the program, Plug and Play will reach out to business, start-ups, and government leaders in various fields who have insights and perspectives that are unique to Armenia's innovation ecosystem. Regional mentors will bring in-depth knowledge that will help create synergies between start-ups and other stakeholders in the province, such as investors, corporations, service providers, and educational institutions.

Combining both of these approaches will result in a comprehensive mentorship curriculum that is designed to prepare start-ups for growth locally and internationally.

Going the extra mile

Long term dynamism of the ecosystem

At Plug and Play we strongly believe that every part of the world can create a strong ecosystem with the capabilities to create world-class technologies only if industry leaders and organizations are collaborating together to share knowledge, expertise and solve global challenges together.

This is why we want to set a vision going beyond the 26-weeks and paving the way for a long term collaboration with the Ministry of High Technologies.

In our vision for Armenia, we want to build a strong network with an ecosystem that can add industry expertise during the acceleration program and can potentially be the starting point to create industry-focused accelerator program sponsored by local corporations. Besides introducing the best Armenian entrepreneurs to the US, APAC ecosystems, our objective would be to bring the best minds and entrepreneurs worldwide to help local corporations and organizations transforming their businesses thanks to the technologies of the best start-ups worldwide.

Additionally, by gathering the most innovative and promising Armenian start-ups within this acceleration program we will contribute to strengthen the local innovation ecosystem, gathering the best start-ups, Armenian leading corporations as well as local VCs and universities. By doing so, this large network of entrepreneurs and innovation stakeholders will benefit from Plug and Play global expertise and strong network which will allow them to take a leading role in Armenia.

This will create a stronger innovation ecosystem and community. Should the program be extended, Plug and Play will organize a Armenian Universal Expo. This expo will host companies who participated in the Goal Program from the previous batches, as well as companies from the current batch.


Environment & Tools

Playbook is our proprietary full-stack innovation software that will be used to manage our operations and engagements during the accelerator program. Playbook is a powerful tool that enables us to track start-ups progress and connect them with stakeholders throughout our worldwide ecosystem.

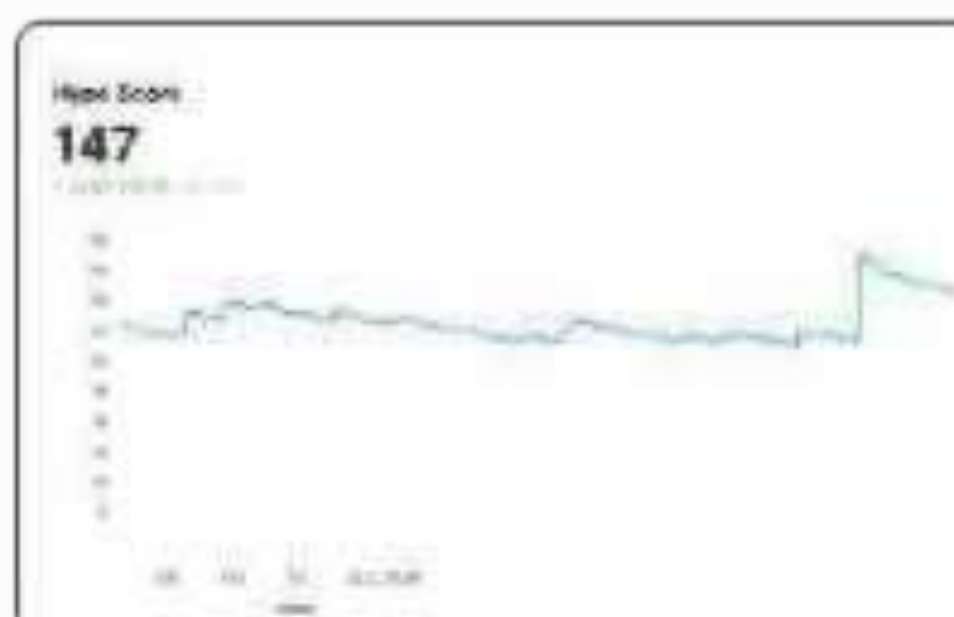


- Discover the best start-ups in the industry
- Build pilots and partnerships online and offline
- Track, measure, and understand your progress

Innovation Platform
The combination of accelerator programs, co-working spaces, events, and networking, that bring together start-ups, corporations, and VCs.


 **Digital Infrastructure**
Our proprietary software, Playbook, connects the dots.

Physical Infrastructure
40+ global locations are the bedrock of our ecosystem.



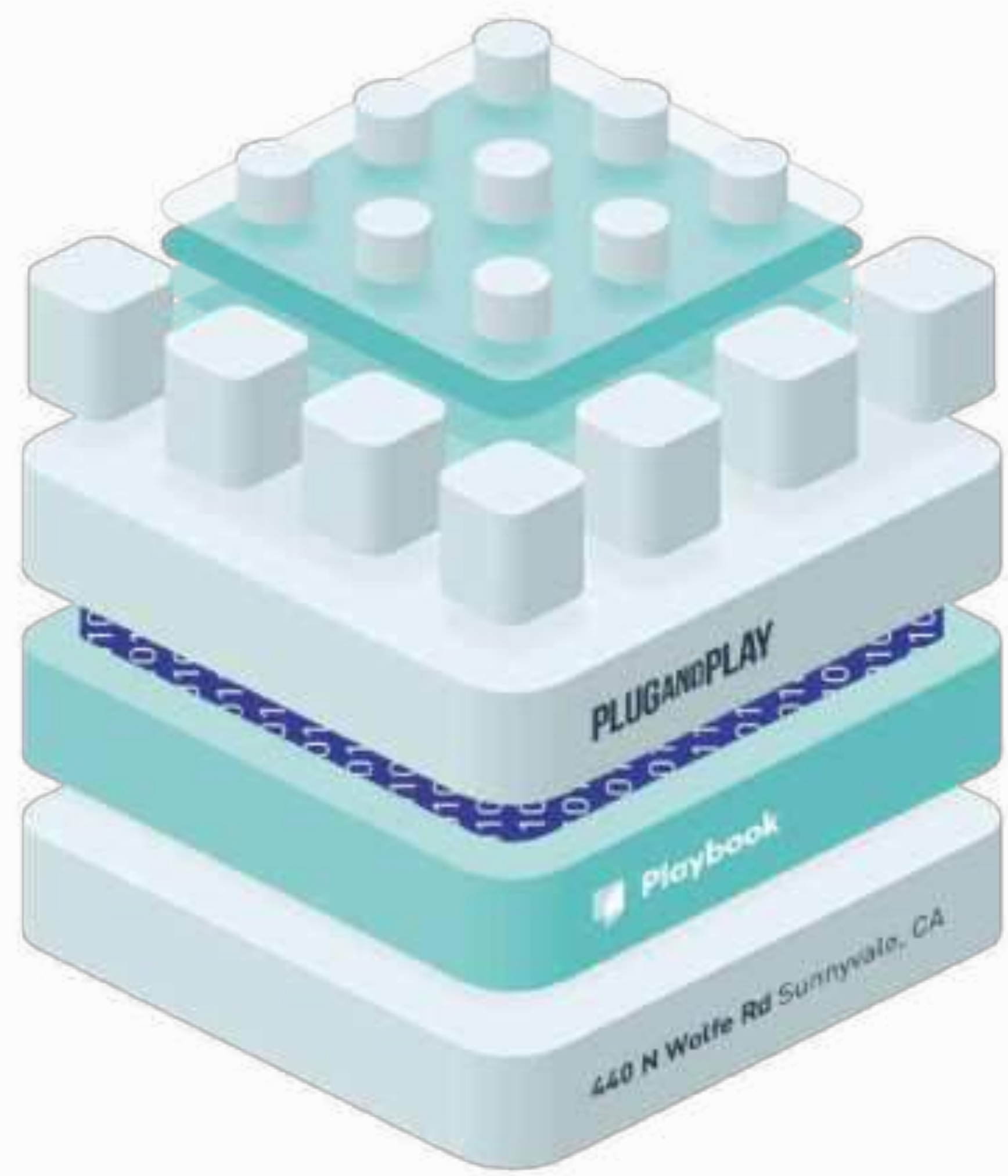
Hyper Score


Hype Score leverages our unique indicators to measure the “hype” of a start-ups at any given time.





Engagement Tracker

Our enhanced tracking feature gives corporate partners the ability to track pilots, investments, and other connections with start-ups.




QUALITY ASSURED
Each start-ups has been interviewed, assessed, and carefully considered.


RELEVANCE ASSURED
Our vetting process ensures start-ups create meaningful results for you.


REST ASSURED
The all-in-one innovation software: from search engine to project management.

Environment & Tools

Start-ups Support Services



Portfolio Plus

Benefits

- \$10,000 in AWS Promotional Credit valid for 2 years or \$100,000 in AWS Promotional Credit for 1 year
- 1 year of AWS Business Support (up to \$5,000).
- 80 credits for Self-Paced Labs (\$80 value)

Eligibility

- Must be Series A or below
- Start-ups that participate in our accelerator programs
- Haven't received any AWS cloud credits before



Spark Package

Benefits

- \$20,000 in credit for 1 year – Credit can be applied to all Google Cloud Platform and Firebase products
- Receive 12 free months of Google Apps for Work (up to 10 users - only valid for new domains)

Eligibility

- Must be Series A or below
- Start-ups that participate in any of our international accelerator programs
- Haven't received any Google Cloud credits before



Global Entrepreneur Program

Benefits

- Up to \$120k of free IBM Cloud services (Softlayer / Bluemix)
- Technical Support from IBM
- Business Mentorship from IBM

Eligibility

- Less than 1 million in annual revenue
- Incorporated less than 5 years
- Start-ups that participate in any of our international accelerator programs
- Haven't received any IBM Cloud credits before

Tools used by Plug and Play to operate the accelerator:

