



Case Study Restarup Project

CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

ASA – ANJE Startup Accelerator was an accelerator with an innovative and “born global” vocation, which planned to support the set-up of 10 startups through an acceleration programme held in four ecosystems.

SUMMARY

In Porto, the business ideas received training, mentoring and specialised consultancy services for six months. Once the business models were established, using the most up-to-date validation, testing and acceleration tools, the startups moved on to a scale-up period, i.e. international acceleration, held in Berlin, Tel Aviv and Silicon Valley.

Co-sponsored by ANJE, in conjunction with the University Company Development Association – TecMinho and the University of Porto, this programme had a network of international mentors, partners and investors, gathered together in order to facilitate the globalisation of these projects. Each one of the 10 startups created had access to a support package estimated at 18k, which included 5k in prize money.

ASA's main objective was the acceleration of startups, placing innovative products and services on the local and international market and facilitating contacts between high-potential companies and global markets, partners and trends. This acceleration programme gave entrepreneurs access to knowledge, senior specialists and sources of funding. In this way, it made it possible for entrepreneurs to develop their startups through tried and tested analysis processes and methodologies, validation and implementation of business models. All of which happened in a short time, thus avoiding the most frequent errors and enhancing pre-existing resources.

The main objectives of ASA were boiled down to nine strategic intervention aims:

1. Testing and fine-tuning the business model (fine-tuning the model, pitching and continuous interaction with the team);
2. Participation in and access to the most advanced entrepreneurship support ecosystems;
3. Access to cutting-edge knowledge (competitors and experts);
4. Accelerated learning on repositioning the company on the global market;
5. Forging contact networks (potentials clients, partners, suppliers, etc.) all around the world;
6. Increasing motivation levels and strengthening entrepreneurial spirit;
7. Cultural impact (changing mentalities: ambition, risk, networks of trust, disruptive innovation);
8. Access to investors for rapid growth or for Exit (for Startups, Spin-offs and high-potential Startups that are already attractive to investors and that have this interest);
9. Fund-raising and partners.

CHALLENGE

The operational aims of Restarup corresponded to a five-point intervention embraced by the ANJE, U.Porto and TecMinho consortium, which focused on some of the priority areas of the regional smart specialisation strategy, seeking always to improve results through connections with the five main international ecosystems providing support for startups.



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CHALLENGE

1. Promoting/enhancing the national innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.
2. Enhancing and supporting the appearance of new products and services that are competitive worldwide.
3. Building and expanding strategic global links
4. Working towards facilitating the internationalisation process for high-potential companies.
5. Boosting economic growth and skilled employment

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Lead Partner: Associação Nacional de Jovens Empresários(PT)
Partners: Universidade do Porto (PT)
Tecminho (PT) Tecminho (PT)

TARGET

Candidates could apply individually or in teams of up to three people, aged over 18, who want to set up a company in Portugal, in the eligible territorial area

The ideas put forward had to be technology-based and had to lead to the creation of startups of medium/high technological intensity. They also had to operate in areas that, in addition to having high development potential through technological incorporation, are strategic to Portugal from a socioeconomic standpoint.

Candidates were accepted to ASA through the submission of an application following the call opening. However, throughout the programme, there were specific periods for the assessment and selection of candidates to move on to the subsequent phases.

SERVICE OFFER: PROCESS

Methodology adopted by the project:

ASA-ANJE Startup Accelerator lasted for approximately six months, at varying degrees of intensity.

The programme covered four phases, corresponding to the process of evolution of a Business idea, to the creation of a startup and its subsequent globalization:

Action 1

Identify high potential technologies and produce working papers and videos to promote them;

Action 2

Phase 1: Call for proposals - analysis of registration forms and of the 30 teams of promoters moving on to Phase 2.

Phase 2: Pre-Acceleration Stages.

- Six workshops to introduce the Lean Startup methodology;
- Selection of 10 teams/projects to move on to Phase 3.

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SERVICE OFFER: PROCESS

1. OPEN DAY – At OPEN DAY, participants worked with Design Thinking tools to generate the ideas that best respond to the challenges proposed.

The topics covered included:

- Presentation of the ASA2 Programme;
- Idea generation and prototyping using Design Thinking tools;
- Pitch and selection of the best product/service ideas;
- Development of the 1st version of the Business Model (BMC – Business Model Canvas);
- Environment Analysis (BME – Business Model Environment);
- Sizing the market and the value of opportunity;
- Pitch and selection of the best business ideas;
- Uploading ideas to the Entrepreneur Roadmap platform, so that the work can be further developed before the next workshop.

2. PROTOTYPE DAY – Once all the Design Thinking work has been done, the time comes to validate the assumptions behind each one of the ideas selected and uploaded to the platform. Its use will support the participants in the idea validation process, according to the following methodology:

- Validation of the value proposition, through interviews with potential clients;
- Lean Startup methodology and the development of minimum viable products and allow the market interest to be validated. The effort involved in the development of the MVP should be minimal, with the aim of testing market interest, even if the product or service behind the ideas does not exist yet;
- Developing the Product Lifecycle.
 - How will the market learn about the product?
 - How do you attract clients and turn opportunities into revenue?
 - How can you make clients continue to buy from you (and keep coming back)?
- Testing methods for taking advantage of new channels and relationships with clients, using startup metrics and Analytics tools for measuring the conversion and engagement of clients and providing fundamental growth indicators to mitigate the risk of the project not gaining a foothold.

The Lean Startup methodology used in the acceleration programme is clearly set out in the philosophy of the Entrepreneur Roadmap platform. Thus, the cooperation tool between mentors and startups promotes the validation of ideas through developing and testing the MVPs (Minimum Viable Product), reducing the risk normally associated with the development of new business models.

3. VALIDATION DAY – At this stage, the topics covered included:

- Validation of the pricing policy for the new solutions, as well as the revenue model;
- Validation of implementation costs and potential partnerships.

4. REFLECTION DAY – On Reflection Day, the entrepreneurs presented their projects, arguing their validity.

- Pitch for project business models.

The presentation of the innovative projects and their business models and the progress made in their validation allowed the panel of judges to select the best projects, which were also those that show the best investment potential.

The soundness and sustainability of the assumptions presented by the teams reaching this phase were the best guarantee of value creation and maturity, i.e. they were their passport to inclusion in the portfolio of finalist projects on the ASA programme.

Phase 3 - Acceleration:

- 10 best teams;
- Duration: six weeks;
- Programme: Interventions and connections with international mentors;

1.FINE-TUNING – After the 20 finalists had been selected, it will be time for the Born Global acceleration to begin. At this stage, the Business Model and Plan of the best projects were fine-tuned in order to assure that they will be able to yield profits. The entrepreneurs who had reached this phase developed a proposition that created value for clients and a business model that created value for the organisation.

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During the Acceleration Programme, the entrepreneurs made use of the Entrepreneur Roadmap platform to consolidate the Business Model and Economic and Financial Plan and to build a dossier for national and international investors.

2. DEMO DAY - On Demo Day, the finalists defended the viability and sustainability of their projects.

- Pitch for project business models;
- Can I prove that a project's business model is sustainable and can be repeated?
- Project Assessment;
- Defining the next steps;
- Programme close.

On DEMO DAY, the finalists were able to clearly present their innovative projects and their business models to a panel of national and international investors. This was the time to reveal the arguments to justify the equity investment requested, as well as the volume of funding needed for the project to grow, explaining in detail where the money was going to be invested, what the aim of the investment was and how much return was offered to investors.

Phase 4 - Scale-up:

- International acceleration - for a selection of 10 startups created in the previous phase.
- Three international acceleration missions - Berlin, Tel Aviv and Silicon Valley.
- Access to a vast network of potential investors, partners and clients.

The 10 startups created during the ASA programme had to develop an enterprising culture and a business model that could be repeated, where revenue grew at a speed substantially faster than the overheads and variable costs behind the project.

The finalist projects, although it is not easy to be original in a world that is constantly online, had to identify new niche opportunities for needs common to a large number of international markets.

1. Scale-up Phase 1 - After the acceleration period, the 10 companies created had access to three workshops for preparation for the three international missions they were going on;

2. Scale-up Phase 2 - Later on, the 10 companies created under the scope of ASA took part in three international missions. The aim of these missions was to give them privileged access to three skilled entrepreneurship ecosystems where, according to the mission plan, the companies had access to a vast network of potential investors, partners and clients, which allowed them to take the first steps towards globalising their startups.

Monitoring and Assessment Phases:

1. Phase 1 - ASA call:

- Analysis of the registration forms by the ASA coordination team and the Panel of Judges, including analysis of the Promoters' CVs and the required answers submitted on registration. At this stage, the Panel assessed the Promoters' CVs based on an identification code allocated to each Promoter, in order to assure maximum impartiality through anonymity;
- Selection was made by the Panel of Judges and subsequent announcement on Restartup platform of the 30 Teams of Promoters to move on to Phase 2.

2. Phase 2 - Workshops:

- Assessment of the Business Models produced in the workshop with the 30 teams and selection of the ten Teams of Promoters to move on to Phase 3;
- Presentation and defense of the Business Models before the Panel of Judges;
- Announcement of the ten Teams of Promoters moving on to the third phase of ASA.

3. Phase 3 - Acceleration:

- The ten best teams will go on a six-week acceleration programme, which included interventions and connection with international mentors;

4. Phase 4 - Scale-up:

- The companies created under the scope of ASA took part in three international missions. The aim of these missions was to give them privileged access to three skilled entrepreneurship ecosystems where, according to the acceleration plan outlined, the companies had access to a vast network of potential investors, partners and clients, which allowed them to take the first steps

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towards globalising their startups.

Prizes

ASA awards prizes worth a total of 180K, which meant that each one of the 10 startups created and accelerated benefited from a prize of 18K, divided up as follows:

- 5K - Prize Money (set-up prize);
- 3K - Support prize (this prize came in the form of coaching and mentoring in preparation for the three international missions.
- 10K - Scale-up prize (this prize came in the form of participation in the three international globalisation support missions for the ten startups created).

OTHER PRIZES

- Direct access to the semi-finals of the "Young Entrepreneur Award" - The 10 projects created under the scope of ASA had direct access to the semi-finals of the "Young Entrepreneur Award" organised by ANJE, which meant they could go on to the final of the competition and won an extra prize with a total value of 80K. The winner of the Young Entrepreneur Award also had access to a round of investment from Caixa Capital Award, where a restricted group of startups competed for additional investment of 100K;
- Access to free services from the ANJE partner network (including Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Bizspark).

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Overall project value: 1,236,050.24€

INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

Continuous follow up of the companies providing theoretical tools and capacitation to the development of their business abroad.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Expertise of the training company and their monitoring of the whole process not only the training.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Retention of startups throughout the project period.

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OUTCOME AND IMPACT

Acceleration of 10 startups.

