



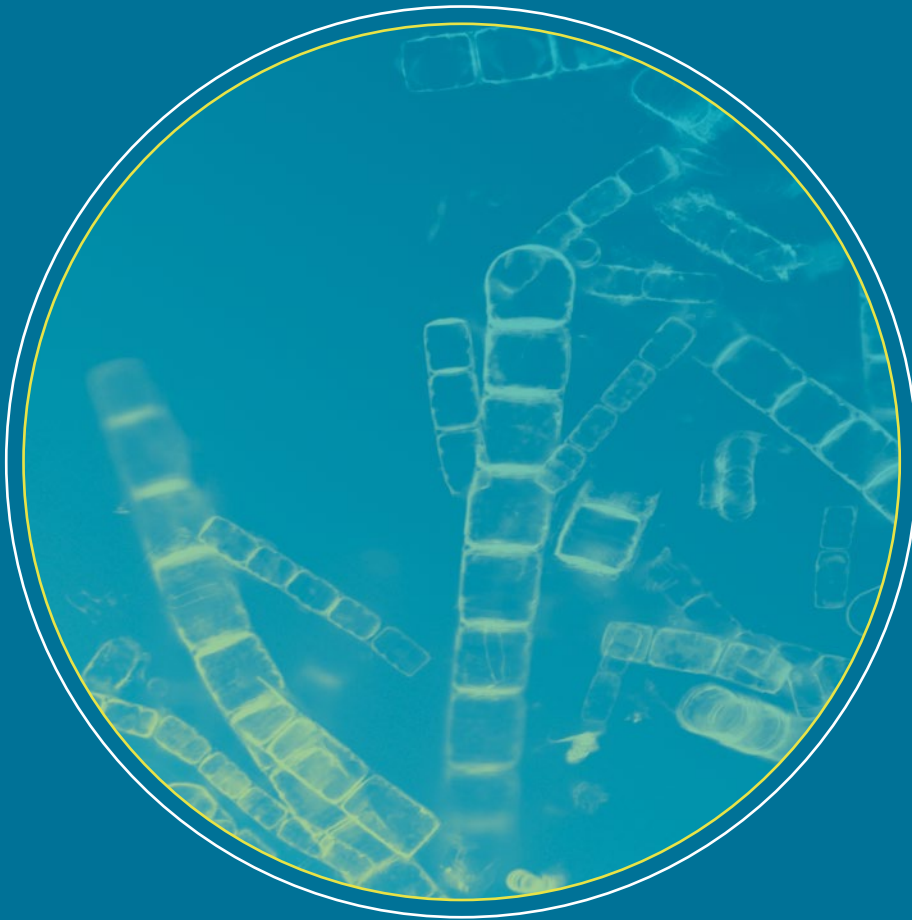
Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance



SUBMARINER NETWORK
FOR BLUE GROWTH ACCELERATOR EEIG



MENTORS' HANDBOOK



About this handbook

This handbook has been produced to the SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth accelerator within the project Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance+. It introduces the accelerator and its services and also the role of the mentor. It is intended to serve as a teaching material for new mentors but it is also a checklist for the existing mentors.

The mentoring process of the accelerator was established during the original Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance project. Since this procedure was proven to be successful with the 26 enrolled cases, the general structure remained, but the procedure has been adjusted based on the gathered experience from the previous project.

The Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance and Alliance+ projects are co-funded by EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme.

The Handbook has been created by Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance+ project partners.

Graphic design has been done by Eurydyka Kata of re:design studio.

Contents



2	About this handbook	15	3. How to become a Blue Detective?
4	Terminology	15	3.1. How to be a Blue Detective
5	1. How does the accelerator work?	15	3.2. What to do if you find an interesting case that needs help?
6	1.1. The role of a mentor		
6	1.2. The process of accepting cases to the accelerator		
8	1.3. Mentors' interaction with the case		
8	1.4. Mentor's interaction with the Network		
9	1.5. End of mentoring		
9	1.6. Documentation and knowledge sharing		
9	1.7. Service providers		
10	2. Accelerator services		
10	2.1. Scientific and technical support		
10	2.2. Bioresources		
10	2.3. Legal matters		
11	2.4. Communication and marketing		
11	2.4.1. Creating a mentor profile to the Alliance database		
11	2.4.2. Creating service offer to the Alliance database		
12	2.4.3. Creating bioresources to the networks databases		
12	2.4.4. Assisting cases in developing attractive case profile and prepare them for pitching/match-making		
13	2.5. Business assessment		
14	2.6. Market studies		

Terminology



BLUE DETECTIVES: are scouting and recruiting new potential actors to the Alliance community. These actors can be new case owners, mentors, consultants, investors. Blue detectives also initiate and intensify links to complementary partner networks of the Alliance such as Blue Bio Value (<https://www.bluebiovalue.pt/>) BioMarine (<https://biomarine.org/>) or EMBRC (<http://www.embrc.eu/>). The blue detective recommends, refers and passes information of those potential new actors to the central access point of the SUBMARINER Network (the central access point is Efthalia Arvaniti/SUBMARINER Network). All Alliance+ project partners are acting as blue detectives; all network members incl. former partners from the Alliance main stage project as well as associated organizations are highly encouraged to act as blue detectives.

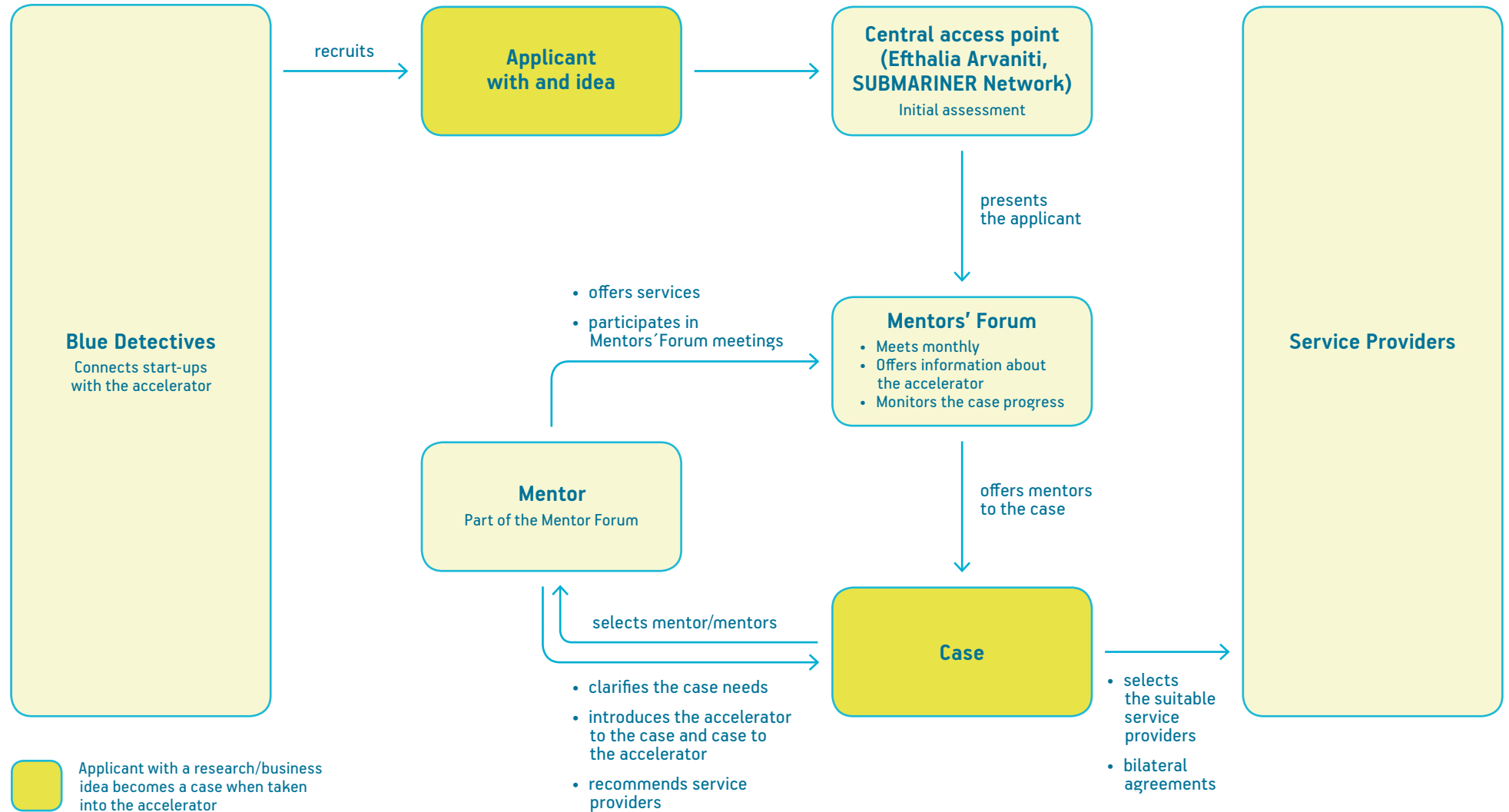
MENTOR: conducts the initial assessment (incl. business assessment) of a recruited case. Mentors connect the case owners with the mentors' forum. Newly recruited mentors should be willing to undergo the mentor's training. Mentoring is conducted on a voluntary basis.

CASE: A service recipient enrolled in the accelerator. The case is represented by a case owner who is in contact with the SUBMARINER Network's main contact point and the mentor/s. The case can be a start-up, SME or a project of e.g. a municipality, student with a business mindset etc. The case can also voluntarily become a mentor and follow procedures accordingly. Cases are expected to be open to promotion opportunities, are highly encouraged to attend suitable events and road shows, and finally be loyal to the mentorship agreement. The cases are welcome to become SUBMARINER Network associates after their mentoring agreement ends or concludes.

MENTORS' FORUM: the mentors' forum meets virtually on a monthly basis. Here, the mentors shortly report on the mentoring progress and the meeting is an opportunity to scout potential service providers, to introduce new applicants to the network and search new mentors. Here, utmost care is taken not to violate any confidentiality agreements between mentor and case.

SERVICE PROVIDER: experts, consultants and also mentors who offer to implement a service (equipment, scientific-technical, consulting, advisory) to a case. Service providers and case owners conclude bilateral agreements before actual work (i.e. case implementation) can start.

1. How does the accelerator work?



1.1. The role of a mentor

A mentor is an expert in any of the fields in blue growth providing guidance to the cases on a voluntary basis. Mentors can offer their services to cases they are interested in. Provision of mentoring and accelerator services are based on the pro-active mentor-client (case) relationship, in which the client in need of a service should be the driving force. Before starting the mentoring, mentor and case will sign a mentorship agreement, where the form and frequency of communication will be defined.

Mentor also introduces the accelerator, its services and the Network to the new case and the case to the network. If the case need is not clear enough, mentors should discuss with the case to clarify the needs, so that the right service providers and contacts can be found.

Newly recruited mentors under Alliance should be willing to undergo the mentor training.

1.2. The process of accepting cases to the accelerator

Anyone having a business idea within blue growth areas can apply to the accelerator. The actor fills an application with basic information on the idea and the initial need from the Alliance community. This application is sent to the SUBMARINER Network central access point (contact: Ms. Eftalia Arvaniti, ea@submariner-network.eu).

The application goes through the following process:

- 1) The submitted application is first evaluated by SUBMARINER Network programme manager. This usually takes 2–3 weeks from submission.
- 2) The evaluation criteria for the acceptance of cases are:
 - a. relevance for the Baltic Sea Region
 - b. sustainability
 - c. feasibility
 - d. market potential and
 - e. suitability of competences of network mentors and service providers to applicant's needs.


The evaluator is assessing the submitted application, not the overall potential of the idea.

- 3) After the positive result of the quick-scan, the idea is presented to the mentors' forum, where the suitable mentors will offer their services to the case. From this point, the case is officially enrolled in the accelerator. In case there is no capacity from the 'mentor pool', the process will stop. Also vice versa, if the client does not accept mentors proposed by the mentors' forum, the process will stop.



Evaluation sheet (attached to the application form), to be filled by the evaluator:

Case application name:		Country:	
Type of project:		Incepted:	
Basic idea:		Founded:	
Criteria	Score 1–3 (1 low, 3 high):		Urgent needs from accelerator:
Relevance for the Baltic Sea Region			
Sustainability			
Feasibility			
Market potential			
Suitability of competences of accelerator mentors and service providers to applicant's needs			

 The application form can be found from the SUBMARINER Network webpages:
<https://www.submariner-network.eu/apply-for-alliance-accelerator>

1.3. Mentors' interaction with the case

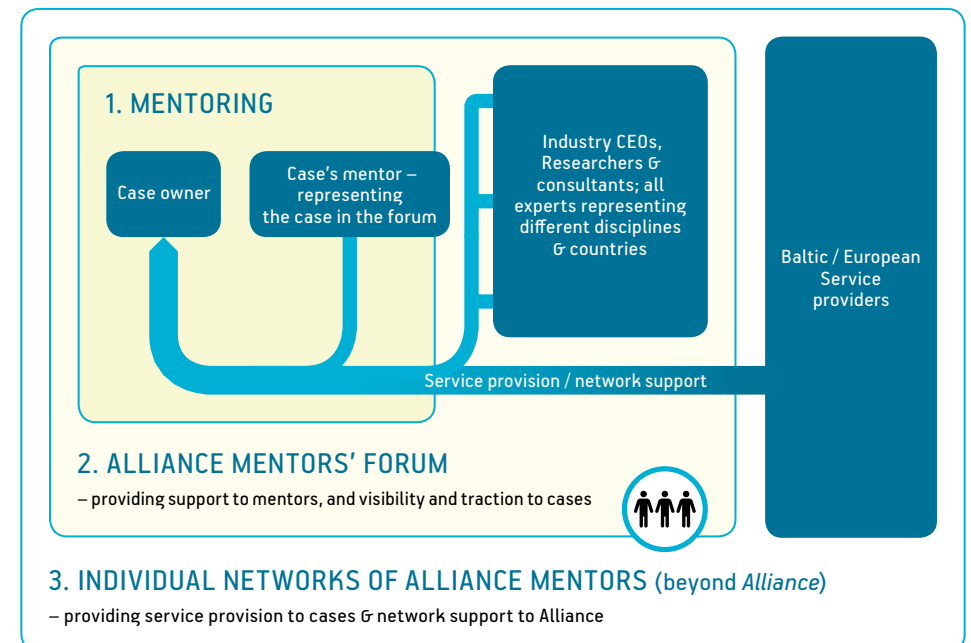
The mentors who are interested in the case and have the needed expertise, should react within 10 working days by contacting the applicant and informing the SUBMARINER Network central access point (Ms Efthalia Arvaniti). The case can choose from the offered mentor services.

A mentorship agreement will be filled and signed between the case and the mentor. A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) can be signed if needed. In the membership agreement the case and the mentor define how often and in which form they will be in touch. During the first meeting (physical or virtual), the mentor gives an introduction to the accelerator, clarifies the idea and needs of the case and fills the logbook form. Based on this meeting, the mentor recommends suitable service providers. It is then the case's responsibility to contact the recommended service providers and conclude bilateral agreements (Non-disclosure agreement (NDA), Material transfer agreement (MTA), service contracts, etc.), only after which actual implementation will start. During actual implementation between service provider and case, the mentor can and should be updated on the progress, even if not participating the implementation. The mentor can also offer services to the case and become a service provider.



1.4. Mentor's interaction with the Network

The mentors' forum is an important structure developed within the Alliance project. The mentors' forum is realised by regular meetings organised virtually and physically. The purpose of the forum is manifold: the forum allows mentors to participate and exchange information by sharing case progress, discuss and find joint solutions for challenges encountered during case implementation, announce events and exchange news, and also ask for expertise among the network to match service requests articulated by case owners. For example, when a service cannot be delivered by the assigned mentors (since during the Alliance project mentors were often also service providers and hence absolutely crucial for case implementation and success), then these mentors can reach out to the forum to address a service request and search for other service providers to satisfy the request. Usually, the case needs are satisfied by reaching out to the forum, which reflects the high agility and flexibility of the mentoring programme to meet differential needs and, moreover, the diversity and versatility of expertise available within the network.



↑ Scheme presenting the mentors' forum and relationship with mentors and cases.

1.5. End of mentoring

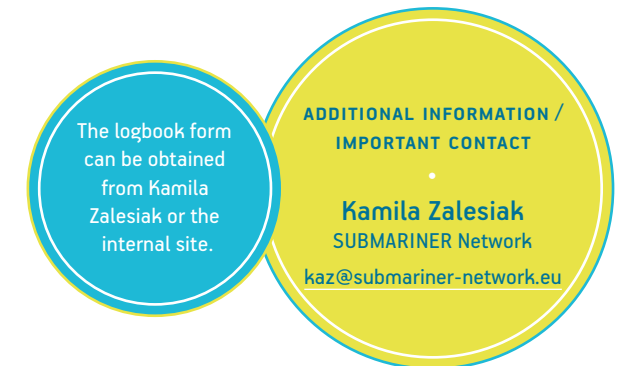
There are several potential scenarios to end the mentoring: 1) The case finds a suitable service provider, who helps with providing analyses or advice as requested by the case, the case reaches the pre-set goals and possibly evolves into a new network mentor. 2) No matching expertise (technical/scientific/legal/business) is found in the network; after obtaining consent of the case, the mentor can ask the mentors' forum to link to complementary partner networks to find suitable expertise to answer the case's needs. 3) Lack of communication between mentor and case. The entire workflow relies on the concept that the case is the driving force behind the idea and if there is no progress due to lack of communication, the respective active party informs the mentors' forum or the central access point. After a maximum of 3 months of silence/no progress, the mentors' forum decides on closing the mentoring process. The non-reacting party is informed in written form via email. 4) Change in the (scientific or business) focus. With the consent of the case, a new mentor can be searched using the same process as outlined before. The central access point should be informed about every step in the process.



1.6. Documentation and knowledge sharing

The interaction between a mentor and a case should be documented in a logbook a form provided by the accelerator. The template consists of company data, mentor's data and information about the interactions while being part of the accelerator.

Internal site (intranet): the accelerator offers an internal cloud for saving files and documents. This possibility can be optionally used by mentors and cases enrolled to the accelerator. If confidential documentation is required, between the mentor and case, another storage place should be used. Access to the internal site can be obtained through the SUBMARINER Network.



1.7. Service providers

All experts in the network can act as service providers. Typically, the mentor will suggest suitable service providers and the service provider and the case will negotiate together how they want to proceed. The accelerator provides suitable contract templates. Mode and amount of reimbursement for the delivered services is negotiated bilaterally between service provider and case owner." The provided services can be free of charge and for example lead to scientific collaboration or joint projects, but can also be a paid assignment.

2. Accelerator services



2.1. Scientific and technical support

The SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth accelerator includes many important research institutes in the Baltic Sea Region. Their expertise in different fields of blue growth and in some cases also research infrastructure (e.g. access to laboratories, equipment, research vessels) can be made available for the cases, but need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis between case owner and service provider. Scientists in the institutes can also help to evaluate, test or analyse the idea or plan and help to perform analyses or conduct literature research.

2.2. Bioresources

Some research institutes of the network have large collections of marine bioresources. These resources can be found in the network's Bioresource database (<https://2019.submariner-network.eu/projects/balticbluebioalliance/one-stop-info-shop-for-bioresources>) where they are categorized as bacteria (incl. cyanobacteria), fungi, viruses, microalgae, macroalgae, crustacea, molluscs and fish. When requested, different bioresource types can be collected from the Baltic Sea with negotiable terms.

2.3. Legal matters

The network possesses a series of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) templates and guidelines needed for the collaboration between SMEs and mentors, experts and institutions.

The documentation was created under the Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance main project.

The available templates are:

- Material transfer agreement (MTA)
- License agreement/patent (two versions)
- License agreement/trademark (two versions)
- Non-disclosure agreement (NDA)
- R&D collaboration service agreement (two versions).

The available guidelines are:

- Checklist for consortia
- Standard operating procedure (SOP)
- Decision guide

To overcome potential barriers, it is planned to extend the Alliance community by legal partners who would contribute to solution-orientated negotiations in transnational collaboration between organizations within the community.

2.4. Communication and marketing



The Network provides many possibilities for communication, promotion and marketing. SUBMARINER Newsletter is a regular communication channel to a large audience in blue growth in the Baltic Sea Region. All Network members are encouraged to use this channel. The Network is also organizing several different types of events every year from pitching events to workshops and conferences. Information about these events can be found from the website (<https://www.submariner-network.eu/news-home>).

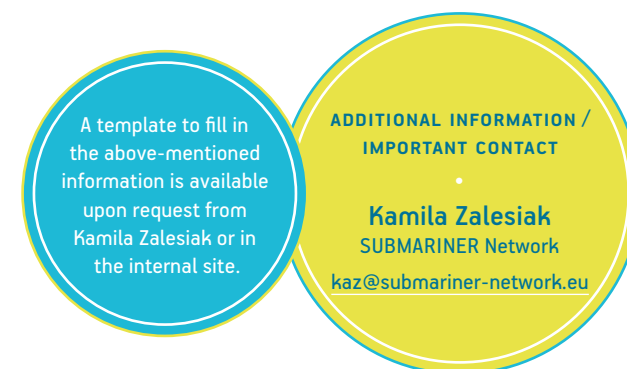
All members are welcome to join these events and

use them to market their knowledge or product or to find new collaborators. The network is also lobbying the blue growth in regional, national and EU level.

2.4.1. Creating a mentor profile to the Alliance database

The network recommends mentors to create either a personal or an institutional mentor profile. This short mentor profile should be informative and give a concise overview about the expertise, focus areas and service offer of the mentor. The mentor profiles will be presented under the Blue Biotechnology topic on the SUBMARINER Network website (<https://www.submariner-network.eu/blue-biotechnology-topic>). To raise interest among new actors approaching the network with blue biotech needs, each profile should begin with a max. 2 sentences testimonial and introduce expertise and motivation to act as a mentor in a blue bioeconomy network. A short teaser (max. 1000 characters) should serve as “appetizer” to learn more about the mentor/organization. This should be followed by further information on the organization, such as geographical location (city, country), type of organization (e.g. research institution, university, company, business support organization), size of the organization, name of the department or working group involved in the mentorship (applicable for larger institutions such as universities), the main focus areas (scientific, technical, business,

networking expertise), link to the institution/department website and contact data (email address and phone number). The mentor or institution profile should also contain an expressive, appealing image from their own repository. To comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation, no information will be published on the website without the written consent of the mentor.



2.4.2. Creating service offer to the Alliance database

To sustain its service offer in a publicly available way, the network has built up and hosts a service offer database (<https://www.alliance-database.eu>). This database is currently sub-structured into 6 categories, namely Analytical Techniques, Research Infrastructure/Equipment, Business Development, Communication, Legal Advice, and Biological Resources. Analytical techniques can encompass scientific research related to biodiscovery or biotechnology such as biological activity assays, growth optimization, chromatography techniques, natural products chemistry. Research Infrastructure specifies the instrumentation used for performing the analysis specified in the Analytical Techniques section, but there is also the possibility to enter organization-wide resources such as e.g. research vessels. Any restrictions concerning accessibility of equipment should be specified (e.g. subject to availability and to the respective applicable legal and organizational rules, only trained personnel allowed to operate any equipment). Business development includes – among others – support in business planning, life cycle assessment reports, and marketing.



The Communication category comprises networking as well as science-to-market communication. The Legal Advice category comprises support related to intellectual property rights, patenting, legal framework requirements.

Network (contact: kaz@submariner-network.eu). A manual/how-to on entering data into the database is also available upon request.



2.4.3. Creating bioresources to the networks databases

Since biological resources are the basis for most blue bioeconomy endeavours, their management is realized in two ways in the network. On the one hand, there is a "one-stop info-shop for bioresources" available on the SUBMARINER website in the Blue Biotechnology section (<https://2019.submariner-network.eu/projects/balticbluebioalliance/one-stop-info-shop-for-bioresources>). Marine bioresources are categorized into 8 subsections, namely bacteria (incl. cyanobacteria), fungi, viruses, microalgae, macroalgae, crustacea, mollusks, and fish. A click on the category links to the organizations hosting the respective bioresources incl. additional information, contact data as well as a link to the respective National Focal Point for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Actual storage of the biological resources is regulated in a decentralized way and access to these biological resources is organized after bilateral agreements between the providing and the requesting organizations. For entering new data on biological resources of a new mentor organization to this info shop, a template is available (please contact: mbluemel@geomar.de). After the filled template is sent back, the new bioresources will be added to the catalogue. The second option (operating in parallel) is the Bioresources category of the database, in which this information will be added. For entering data into the database in any of the categories, each organization should have one representative person responsible for it. The access to the database must be requested from the host SUBMARINER

2.4.4. Assisting cases in developing attractive case profile and prepare them for pitching/match-making

Assisting the case for developing case profile:

The cases receive the opportunity to present their own ideas and needs on the accelerator website. The description of a case profile includes the following elements:

- Portrait of the organization
- The idea
- The needs

After implementation of the services of the SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth accelerator, the following parts could be added:

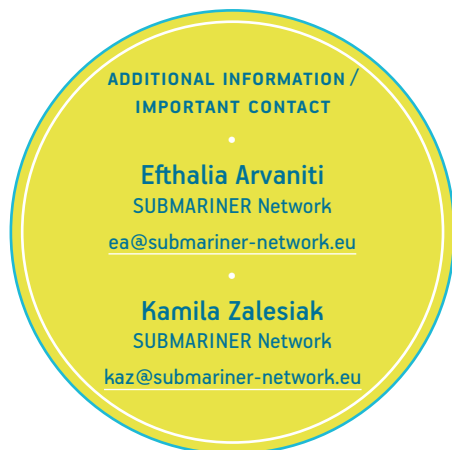
- The mentor(s) who had worked with this case
- A testimonial describing the experience with acceleration services.

The case profile includes also a banner picture, which should feature the organization or the idea, and which is placed on the top of the description online. A series of case profiles can be viewed under the following link: <https://www.submariner-network.eu/alliance-cases>

Preparation for pitching and matchmaking event:

The preparation of a case to a pitching or a matchmaking event is conducted in the following way: After successful application of a case to the accelerator, the invitation to a pitching/matchmaking event is sent out by the SUBMARINER Network central access point to the case. The network team defines the scope of the pitch, the dedicated time for presenting of a case (3–7 minutes, depending on the pitching type).

The pitching of a case should contain the following elements: who are you, your idea, what service do you need and who are you looking for? The pitch documentation of a case is shared with the network before the actual event.



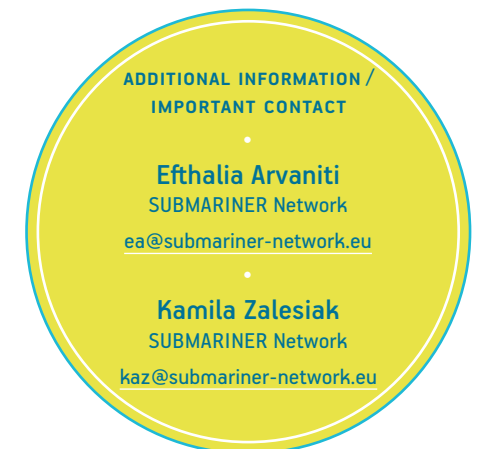
2.5. Business assessment

The business assessment of cases is performed according to a three-steps procedure developed by the Finnish consulting company Gaia Consulting Oy (<https://www.gaia.fi/>):

- **Step 1:** mentor or evaluator sends a thematic questions template to the case
- **Step 2:** case returns the filled thematic questions template after which an oral virtual/physical interview will be conducted (additional clarifying questions are discussed)
- **Step 3:** the mentor or evaluator analyses the provided answers and the feedback from the oral interview according to the qualitative assessment template based on a traffic light system. A second virtual/physical meeting is arranged between the case and the evaluator to share the assessment results with the respective case.

All templates needed for the above business assessment are available at the SUBMARINER Network central access point (<https://www.submariner-network.eu/contact>) or the internal website.

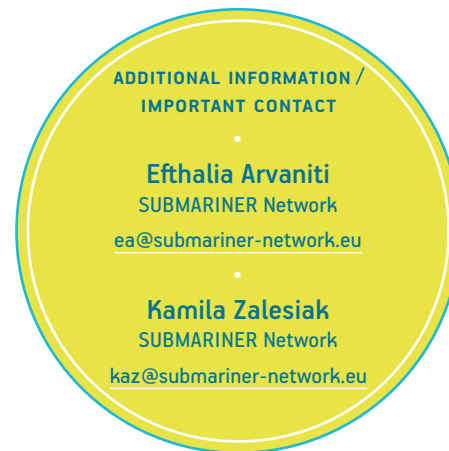
The business development support procedure can be conducted when a case comes to the network and can be repeated one year later to check the progress and status of business development.



2.6. Market studies

The SUBMARINER Network central access point provides a list of market research institutes/companies specialized in environmental and biological topics upon request. Moreover, the accelerator offers general guidance about a market research inquiry (how it can be formulated when contacting a market research company). The Alliance community collects a general overview of selected reports related to the blue biotechnology available at the SUBMARINER Network website (<https://www.submariner-network.eu/blue-biotechnology-topic>).

The network does not offer any in-house market research studies.



3. How to become a Blue Detective?



Blue Detectives who find people with innovative blue bioeconomy ideas or start-ups who need help in developing their idea or product and brings them in contact with the accelerator program.

3.1. How to be a Blue Detective

In order to introduce the accelerator and attract new experts or teams to join mentoring programme we can provide some suggestions below to overcome the barriers for spreading the information.

- Find out if your organization (institute/company) has regular meetings on organization-wide level (such as seminars, staff meetings), in which different working groups and/or departments meet and exchange information. Clarify the following questions: How often these meetings occur, what are the topics, is there space and opportunity for presenting initiatives such as the Alliance accelerator? If such an organization-wide meeting exists, reserve your slot for presenting the accelerator; if not, consider to initiate such a meeting series.
- Are there existing mailing lists for different departments of institutions and are there opportunities to use these for spreading information?
- One-to-one interaction – it's always possible to connect directly to a colleague, ask if this person has heard about the accelerator and would like to hear more about it.
- Talk to your colleagues and/or scan conference websites in order to learn about relevant events (workshops, project meetings, conferences) they usually attend. If appropriate, present the Alliance accelerator and its services in your own presentations on these events. If possible, contact the local organizing committee

of an event and ask for a time slot or space (poster, desk presentation) to inform about the accelerator.

3.2. What to do if you find an interesting case that needs help?

- Inform the case about the accelerator. Information can be found from the following link: <https://www.submariner-network.eu/apply-for-alliance-accelerator>
- Ask the case to fill the application form and send it to ea@submariner-network.eu.



