

European Champions Alliance

Mentoring & Coaching Program

Mentor & Coach Guidelines

Including onboarding process, conduct expectations, confidentiality rules and revenue-sharing logic

Purpose

This document guides approved and applicant mentors, coaches and advisors in the ECA Mentoring & Coaching Program. It explains how to participate professionally, how mentoring and coaching differ, how matching works, and how paid coaching engagements connected to the program are handled.

Contact: welcome@european-champions.org

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European Champions Alliance - Internal program document for participants and applicants

Mentor & Coach Guidelines

ECA Mentoring & Coaching Program - updated launch-phase version

Important: This guideline is an operational program document. It does not replace the applicable Program Terms, Expert Agreement, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, Data Protection Addendum or any direct coaching agreement between a coach and coachee.

1. Program Purpose

The ECA Mentoring & Coaching Program connects ECA members with trusted mentors, coaches and advisors across Europe. It supports startups, scale-ups, SMEs, corporates and innovation leaders with practical guidance on growth, leadership, strategy, go-to-market, fundraising, scaling, operations, technology, governance and other key challenges.

ECA acts as a facilitator and matchmaking organization. ECA helps connect participants with suitable experts, but ECA does not provide the expert service itself, does not employ experts, does not process coaching payments and does not guarantee outcomes.

Who this document is for

- Applicant mentors, coaches and advisors who want to join the ECA expert pool.
- Approved mentors, coaches and advisors who participate in the program.
- ECA team members who need a consistent baseline for onboarding and quality assurance.

2. Roles and Definitions

Role	Meaning
Mentor	An experienced professional who provides voluntary, flexible and experience-based support. Mentoring is usually free or freemium and focuses on perspective, sparring and practical lessons learned.
Coach	A professional who provides paid, structured and goal-oriented support. Coaching focuses on defined objectives, session structure, accountability and measurable progress.
Advisor	An expert who provides strategic, operational, technical, regulatory, governance, market, innovation or business guidance. Advisory support may be voluntary or paid depending on the agreed model.
Mentee or coachee	The person or organization receiving mentoring, coaching or advisory support.
Match	An introduction or pairing facilitated by ECA or the ECA Mentoring & Coaching Platform.

3. Mentoring vs. Coaching

Dimension	Mentoring	Coaching
Nature	Voluntary, flexible, informal,	Paid, structured, professional, goal-

Dimension	Mentoring	Coaching
	relationship-based.	oriented.
Main value	Experience-sharing, perspective, strategic sparring and guidance.	Targeted development, defined support, accountability and progress on specific goals.
Typical format	Ad hoc or regular conversations based on mutual availability.	Agreed session format, cadence, scope and objectives.
Payment	Usually free or freemium.	Paid directly by the coachee to the coach.
Contracting	Usually light-touch, with confidentiality and conduct expectations.	Direct written agreement or clear written terms between coach and coachee recommended.

Conversion note: Mentoring can later lead to paid coaching or advisory work. Before paid work starts, the expert and participant should agree clear written terms. If the paid work is generated through or connected to the ECA program, the ECA revenue-sharing model applies.

4. Expert Onboarding Process

The program is currently in the launch phase for ECA members. The process is selective and designed to protect trust, relevance and quality.

Step	What happens
1. Express interest	The expert contacts ECA and indicates whether they want to join as a mentor, coach, advisor or a combination.
2. Introduction call	ECA schedules a short 15-minute introduction call to understand the expert background, expertise, motivation, language coverage and fit with member needs.
3. Membership check	Mentors and coaches need to be ECA members or become members before activation. Individual membership is possible.
4. Platform access	After the introduction call and membership confirmation, the expert receives access to the ECA Mentoring & Coaching Platform.
5. Expert profile	The expert adds their profile, expertise, topics, languages, availability and whether they offer mentoring, coaching or both.
6. Review and activation	ECA reviews the profile. Once approved, the expert becomes eligible for mentoring and coaching requests from ECA members.

5. Core Expectations for Mentors, Coaches and Advisors

Professional conduct

- Act professionally, respectfully and in good faith at all times.
- Provide high-quality, practical and relevant guidance within your area of competence.
- Be transparent about your background, expertise, availability and limitations.
- Respect the time of participants and honor scheduled meetings.
- Avoid aggressive selling, hidden referral fees and inappropriate self-promotion.
- Protect ECA reputation and use the ECA name only in line with the program rules.

Quality of support

- Clarify the participant need before giving advice.
- Focus on practical next steps, not only general discussion.
- Adapt your approach to the participant stage, sector, maturity and context.
- Avoid making promises about funding, sales, introductions, certifications, regulatory outcomes or business success.
- Recommend specialist professional advice where decisions are legally, financially, technically or operationally significant.

6. Structuring Sessions

Before the first session

- Review the available request information and clarify what the participant wants to achieve.
- Check whether the topic is suitable for mentoring, coaching or advisory support.
- Consider whether an NDA is needed before sensitive information is shared.
- Identify any conflict of interest and disclose it early.

First session checklist

- Introduce yourself, your relevant experience and your role in the program.
- Clarify objectives, expectations and boundaries.
- Agree on confidentiality expectations and whether the session may be recorded. Recording requires consent from all participants.
- Define next steps, follow-ups or potential continuation.

Recommended session format

Type	Suggested approach
Mentoring	Flexible length and cadence based on mutual availability. Use the first session to clarify the challenge, share relevant experience and agree practical next steps.
Coaching	Usually structured sessions, for example 60 minutes at an agreed cadence. Agree scope, objectives, fee, cancellation rules and confidentiality before paid coaching starts.
Advisory support	Adapt the format to the topic. For sensitive or highly technical topics, agree scope, limitations and confidentiality before detailed discussion.

7. Confidentiality, Data and AI Tools

Participants may share confidential business, technical, financial, strategic or personal information. Experts must treat such information carefully and use it only for the purpose of the mentoring, coaching or advisory relationship.

- Do not disclose confidential information to third parties without permission.
- Do not use program contact details for unsolicited outreach or unrelated business development.
- Do not record, transcribe or summarize sessions with automated tools unless all relevant participants consent in advance.

- Do not upload confidential information or personal data from program interactions into external AI tools unless all relevant parties consent and appropriate safeguards are in place.
- Use secure and appropriate communication channels for sensitive topics.

NDA guidance: For sensitive matters such as fundraising, IP, cybersecurity, health tech, customer pipeline, product roadmap or M&A, participants should consider signing a separate NDA before detailed information is shared.

8. Conflict of Interest

Experts must disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest where they could affect trust, independence, confidentiality or decision-making.

Examples of conflicts

- Investment interests in a relevant company, competitor, supplier or partner.
- Board, advisory, employment, reseller or supplier relationships.
- Hidden referral fees, commissions or financial benefits from recommending a vendor, investor, tool or service provider.
- Competing mandates, procurement interests, personal relationships or pre-existing disputes.

How to handle conflicts

- Disclose the conflict as early as possible to the participant and, where relevant, to ECA.
- Do not proceed if the conflict cannot be managed transparently.
- ECA may pause, reassign, terminate or review a match where conflict risks are not manageable.

9. Paid Coaching and Revenue Sharing

If an expert provides paid coaching services through or connected to the ECA Mentoring & Coaching Program, the revenue-sharing model applies.

Core model

- The coach and coachee agree fees, scope, deliverables, session structure, payment terms and cancellation rules directly.
- The coach invoices the coachee directly and remains responsible for tax, invoicing, accounting, insurance, licensing and professional obligations.
- ECA does not process payments between coaches and coachees and does not invoice coachees for coaching services.
- ECA receives 10 percent of all coaching fees actually paid by the coachee to the coach for paid coaching generated through or connected to the program, plus applicable taxes where legally required.

Reporting and invoicing

- Coaches must report program-related paid coaching income quarterly where paid coaching has occurred, or upon ECA request after a match.
- ECA invoices the coach for the applicable commission.
- ECA commission invoices are payable within 30 calendar days from invoice date, unless otherwise stated.

- Failure to report income, pay commission or comply with the revenue-sharing model may lead to reminders, suspension, profile deactivation, removal from the program and recovery of unpaid amounts where legally available.

10. Communication and Collaboration Tools

Experts and participants may choose the communication method that suits the session, such as phone, email, Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams or other suitable tools. Where ECA provides platform or community tools, participants should use them according to ECA guidance.

- Use calendar invites and clear agendas for structured coaching sessions.
- Use collaborative whiteboards only when helpful and appropriate for the sensitivity level of the topic.
- Contact ECA if you need information about available community or collaboration tools.

11. Feedback, Quality Assurance and Support

ECA may request feedback after sessions to improve match quality, participant experience and program operations. Experts are expected to support this feedback loop constructively.

Feedback may cover

- Match relevance and fit.
- Session quality, preparation and practical value.
- Clarity of next steps.
- Whether paid coaching was discussed or started.
- Concerns, complaints, no-shows, confidentiality issues or conflicts of interest.

Contact for support

For assistance, clarification, onboarding, platform access or issue escalation, contact: welcome@european-champions.org.

12. No Regulated Advice and No Guarantee of Outcomes

Program interactions may cover strategy, leadership, scaling, fundraising, sales, governance, compliance, policy, technology, cybersecurity, innovation and operations. Unless an expert is properly qualified and separately engaged under appropriate written terms, ECA program interactions do not constitute legal advice, tax advice, accounting advice, investment advice, medical advice, audit advice, cybersecurity certification or other regulated professional advice.

- Participants remain responsible for their own decisions and outcomes.
- Experts must avoid presenting guidance as guaranteed, certified or legally binding where this is not the case.
- ECA does not guarantee expert availability, quality, performance, investment, funding, sales, market entry, regulatory approval or any other outcome.

13. Compliance and Removal from the Program

ECA may take action where an expert breaches program expectations, damages trust, misuses data, fails to disclose conflicts, circumvents the commission model, provides misleading profile information, repeatedly misses commitments or acts in a way that risks ECA reputation.

Possible actions

- Informal reminder or clarification.
- Written warning.
- Temporary suspension from matching.
- Profile deactivation or removal from the platform.
- Exclusion from future ECA activities.
- Recovery of unpaid commission or other amounts where legally available.

14. Expert Acknowledgment

By participating in the ECA Mentoring & Coaching Program as a mentor, coach or advisor, you acknowledge and agree to the following principles:

- I will act professionally, respectfully and in good faith.
- I will maintain confidentiality and use program information only for program-related purposes.
- I will disclose relevant conflicts of interest early and transparently.
- I understand that mentoring is voluntary, flexible and experience-based.
- I understand that paid coaching is a direct relationship between coach and coachee.
- I understand that ECA acts as facilitator and is not the provider of the coaching service.
- I will comply with the applicable revenue-sharing model for paid coaching generated through or connected to the program.
- I will not record, transcribe or use AI tools with confidential session information without appropriate consent and safeguards.
- I will comply with the applicable Program Terms, Expert Agreement, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy and Data Protection Addendum.

Field	Information
Name	
Organization	
Role in program	Mentor / Coach / Advisor / Combination
Date	
Signature	

15. Practical Quick Checklist

Before accepting a request	During the session	After the session
Check fit, availability and conflicts. Clarify whether the request is mentoring, coaching or advisory support. Consider NDA needs.	Clarify goals, boundaries and next steps. Keep guidance practical. Respect confidentiality and avoid guarantees.	Send agreed follow-up if appropriate. Report paid coaching income where applicable. Provide feedback to ECA if requested.

Important: Document status: Updated launch-phase version prepared for ECA program operations. This document should be reviewed against the final Program Terms, Expert Agreement, privacy documentation and live platform process before publication.