

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

HOW TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN IMPACT ENTREPRENEURS, SEEKING
LEGAL SUPPORT AND THOSE WHO
WANT TO OFFER PRO-BONO LEGAL EXPERTISE? (GROUP PART)

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN IMPACT ENTREPRENEURS AND PRO-BONO LEGAL
EXPERTS BY DEVELOPING A GO-TO-MARKET STRATEGY (INDIVIDUAL PART)

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Abstract

With the rise of impact entrepreneurship, young founders are increasingly driven to tackle global challenges but often face setbacks due to limited funding and legal barriers. At the same time, legal experts express a growing interest in corporate volunteering to support social initiatives. Despite these promising trends, a significant gap persists between impact entrepreneurs and legal professionals. This study aims to bridge this divide by developing a two-sided platform connecting both stakeholders and overcoming the chicken-and egg problem. Employing a multi-faceted methodology, including literature review, qualitative interviews, design thinking, and user testing, the platform features a user-centric interface, no-code/low-code MVP development, and a phased go-to-market strategy.

Keywords:

Impact Entrepreneurship, Corporate Volunteering, Legal Support System, Social Development Goals, Frontend Design, Backend Design, Go-To-Market Strategy, Low-Code/No-Code Development

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Access the Platform's Website [here](#)

Access the Platform's Prototype [here](#)

Access the Platform's MVP [here](#)

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2. Introduction

In recent years, the rise of impact entrepreneurship has captured the attention of both established businesses and young professionals (Welker 2023). With increasing awareness of global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and inequality, a growing number of individuals, particularly young entrepreneurs, are motivated to launch ventures aimed at creating positive societal and environmental impact (Welker 2023). These impact entrepreneurs are often driven by passion and a vision to make a difference, but many face significant challenges in transforming their ideas into viable businesses (Welker 2023). While they possess strong intentions to solve pressing social issues, they frequently lack limited experience, financial constraints, and a lack of established networks (Welker 2023). The barrier to success includes the complexity of turning an idea into a business and the prohibitive costs of hiring expert consultants and legal professionals, especially in the early stages of development. In their research, Gonzalez and Dentchev (2021) explore the importance of ecosystems in social entrepreneurship and highlight that particularly legal knowledge is a fundamental component for the success of impact entrepreneurs. However, it is often unavailable, inaccessible, or underutilized (Gonzalez and Dentchev 2021).

At the same time, there is a growing interest among corporate employees, to contribute their skills to meaningful projects in the form of corporate volunteering (Rodell 2021). They often seek opportunities to engage in social initiatives, whether as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments or through personal interest (Rodell 2021). Despite this willingness to help, there remains a disconnect between those offering expertise and inexperienced entrepreneurs in need of it. Gonzales and Dentchev (2021) explain that the interaction between impact entrepreneurs and volunteers is highly dependent on the available ecosystems, and its structure. Stummer et al. (2016) emphasize the chicken-and-egg challenge faced by such ecosystems, which rely on simultaneous engagement from multiple user groups.

This makes it challenging to attract and connect both user groups on one platform. Existing solutions provide some level of connection, but they often lack the specific focus or affordability that impact entrepreneurs require, leaving a gap in the market for an accessible, flexible, and tailored solution.

With this research, the project aims to answer two questions:

- How can the project close the gap between social entrepreneurs seeking legal support and those who want to offer pro-bono legal expertise?
- How can the project address the chicken-and-egg challenge and attract both impact entrepreneurs and legal experts?

To answer these questions, the thesis explores creating a platform that bridges the gap by enabling a skill and knowledge exchange between impact entrepreneurs and legal experts. The proposed solution focuses on developing a low-code/ no-code platform to facilitate these exchanges, ensuring it is both cost-effective and scalable. By leveraging technology, the platform aims to support impact entrepreneurs in overcoming their knowledge deficits, reducing their dependence on expensive legal services, and empowering them to bring their ideas to life.

Therefore, the thesis begins with a problem diagnosis, analyzing the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in accessing necessary expertise. Following this, it conducts a market analysis to identify the existing solutions and market gaps, which inform the platform's unique value proposition. The methodology section outlines the research methods used, including in-depth interviews with stakeholders and user tests. Based on the findings, the thesis then presents the overall layout of the proposed platform, detailing the frontend design and customer journey.

Subsequently, it explores the backend functionality using the OutSystems platform as a low-code solution. Finally, the paper discusses a go-to-market strategy, focusing on how to successfully launch the platform and ensure its adoption by both entrepreneurs and experts.

3. Problem Diagnosis

3.1 Importance of Impact Entrepreneurship and Innovation

To understand the core problem in more depth, the paper defines the key terms used throughout the thesis. Mendez (2023) defines impact entrepreneurship as businesses founded to solve social and environmental issues while striving for financial sustainability. She emphasizes that this approach not only aims to generate economic value but also prioritizes a positive impact on society and the environment. Together with the sustainable scale-up foundation, Mendez (2023) explains the critical role of impact entrepreneurship as it uses innovative solutions to address major global issues. Therefore, impact start-ups closely align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to foster significant social and sustainable change. She defines the SDGs as objectives that were designed as global targets to address the urgent environmental, political, and economic challenges facing the world.

3.2 Challenges of Impact Entrepreneurs

After understanding the importance of impact entrepreneurship to address global problems, it is crucial to recognize the challenges impact entrepreneurs encounter in the early stages of their business development. In her study, Wronka-Pośpiech (2018) explores the failure among social entrepreneurs and emphasizes that failure and exit are inevitable aspects of entrepreneurship. However, she argues that in the case of social enterprises, the consequences are more serious and affect the well-being of the people, public or the environment. This is reflected by a study published by Sheppard (2018), who finds that 71% of social entrepreneurs struggle to make a living from their venture and hence can create sustainable impact. Additionally, research

indicates that alongside a lack of financing and cash flow issues, legal challenges, accounting for 19%, are a significant reason for startup failure (Statista, 2022). Kumar (2023) examines these legal challenges faced by social enterprises. His research emphasizes the complex legal landscape, the compliance hurdles encountered by social enterprises, and the importance of collaboration between legal stakeholders and entrepreneurs.

3.2.1 Limited Access to Legal Experts

In a study from the Federal German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Evers & Jung (2016), argue that social entrepreneurs have specific support needs during the funding phase and that general support structures regarding legal questions are not given. Their research shows that the demand for qualitative support is growing and that initial supporting centers are only in their pilot phase, leaving space for emerging solutions. Subsequently, Gonzalez and Dentchev (2021) study the importance of ecosystems in social entrepreneurship to close the gap in legal support systems. Their study confirms that legal knowledge is a fundamental component for the success of impact entrepreneurs. However, they indicate that legal support systems are often unavailable, inaccessible, or underutilized (Gonzalez and Dentchev 2021). Olinsson (2017) highlights the significance of a network as one of the key elements of building a social enterprise. In particular, he argues that social enterprises must be integrated within a local network, rather than solely relying on an individual entrepreneur's efforts.

3.2.2 Limited Budget to Legal Experts

While limited access to legal experts is a significant challenge for social founders, another potentially bigger obstacle is the constrained budget for affording legal services. In contrast to profit-focused start-ups, social enterprises struggle primarily with securing adequate funding. The study, published by McKinsey, indicates that half of the respondents view fundraising for impact entrepreneurs as very or extremely challenging, despite the growing impact sector. Gonzalez and Dentchev (2021) highlight that human capital is often prohibitively expensive,

highlighting the importance of leveraging insights and skills from supportive ecosystems. Their research specifically notes that social entrepreneurs are dependent on volunteers rather than costly legal firms. However, they also identify a persistent gap in the ecosystem that connects entrepreneurs with these volunteering legal experts.

Consequently, the core problem addressed is the gap between social entrepreneurs who seek legal experts and those who want to provide pro bono support. To understand the problem in more depth, the project identifies the causes and effects. By interviewing five impact entrepreneurs, the thesis aims to validate the problem and receive practical insights and their perception of their legal challenges throughout the founding process (Appendix B1).

3.3 Causes Validated by Impact Entrepreneurs

The interviews reveal three major causes of limited knowledge exchange: limited financial budget, limited capacity, and lack of local connection. Firstly, as Olinsson (2017) points out, a significant challenge for impact entrepreneurs is their limited financial access. All interviewees confirmed that their constrained budgets restrict their ability to consult with experts in various fields. Unlike profit-driven start-ups, impact ventures face difficulties securing funding from venture capitalists (VCs), which also limits their access to the networks that often come with such funding. Secondly, Erika Rid (Appendix A1), an impact entrepreneur, described collaborating with institutions like universities though their expertise is often specialized in one area, leaving other critical topics unaddressed. She highlights that the university's legal team, in particular, has very limited availability and is frequently overbooked. Additionally, she notes the difficulty in attracting technical talent to support impact start-ups, as competition for these skills is high and most experts prefer to work in profit-driven sectors. Lastly, Emir Mirzamuhammed (Appendix A2) shared that his foreign background has resulted in a limited network in Germany, making it difficult for him to connect with experts who could assist with

his questions. This lack of local connections has posed significant challenges in finding the right support. In particular, he mentioned how legal questions required a long time to be answered, as he had to learn everything by himself without professional expertise.

3.4 Effects Validated by Impact Entrepreneurs

The research and interviews reveal three principal effects arising from the core issue of legal challenges and the disconnect with legal experts: slower growth, diminished impact, and stagnation in innovation. Firstly, discussions with interviewees show that limited access to legal experts significantly constrain the growth and scaling of ventures. For instance, they highlighted procedural delays such as company or trademark registration, which are prolonged due to the necessity of independently navigating these processes without direct expert guidance (Appendix A). Secondly, Emir Mirzamuhamend (Appendix A2) pointed out that the lack of adequate legal knowledge exchange weakens the venture's ability to implement effective solutions, thereby reducing its impact on targeted communities. Lastly, as explicated by Kim et al. (2021), the introduction of new ideas and innovative solutions is essential for the continuous relevance and development of any venture. Restricted access to a diverse set of skills and knowledge can suppress creativity and innovation, thus hindering the progress of social ventures in alignment with societal demands.

4. Market Analysis

ETo tackle these challenges, various solutions have emerged, including different types of platforms and other solutions that aim to connect social entrepreneurs with experts (Figure 1). The following sections review these support systems, offering detailed examples of successful initiatives and identifying gaps that impact entrepreneurs still face. This approach highlights both the strengths and limitations of existing mechanisms in addressing the specific needs of social entrepreneurs.

4.1 Platform-Specific Solutions

Mentoring Platforms: According to Iqbal (2020), the concept of a mentoring platform has increased interest from entrepreneurs. These are designed to connect individuals seeking professional guidance with experienced mentors across various fields (Iqbal 2020). The mentoring platform GrowthMentor, specializes in one-on-one coaching for startup founders and entrepreneurs, with a particular emphasis on growth strategies and marketing advice (Growthmentor 2024). However, a gap in the market remains, as these platforms typically cater to broader business or marketing needs rather than offering specific support in areas like legal or compliance issues.

Volunteering Platforms: Another supporting system are volunteering platforms, where corporate volunteers support social projects with their time and expertise. Corporate volunteering initiatives, particularly those aligned with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals, serve a critical role in supporting social welfare projects through mentorship and skills-sharing. This symbiosis is not only beneficial to social projects but also rewarding for employees, who find a sense of purpose by contributing to socially impactful projects (Rodell 2021). Platforms like Purposed provide tailored solutions for managing corporate volunteering programs. Purposed customizes volunteer opportunities based on employee interests, skills, and availability, particularly focusing on social projects. These initiatives span areas like environmental sustainability, community service, and support for underprivileged groups (Purposed n.d.) However, these platforms often focus on traditional social welfare projects, such as volunteering at animal shelters or supporting local community services. While these efforts contribute to social well-being, they often do not provide the kind of skills-based, expert support that social start-ups need to overcome early-stage challenges, such as securing funding, refining business models, or accessing vital networks.

Freelancer Platforms: Another platform category that connects social entrepreneurs with experts to gain support and insights into specific topics are freelancer platforms like Upwork and Fiverr (Bellesia et. al 2019). These allow founders to hire individuals for projects across multiple domains, including design, writing, programming, and marketing (Bellesia et. al 2019). Upwork provides a comprehensive marketplace with options for both short-term projects and long-term contracts, while Fiverr offers a gig-based structure where freelancers list specific services at set prices, making it easy for clients to browse and purchase services quickly (Fiverr n.d). Many freelancers on these platforms set hourly rates that can be too high for early-stage social enterprises working on a limited budget. Daniel Watz (Appendix A2) explains that he struggles to pay the freelancers he works with. This shows that the pricing structure on these platforms may limit access to quality professionals.

Community Platforms: Guerrini (2016) explains how networking platforms for impact entrepreneurs are essential in providing resources such as mentorship, knowledge sharing, and connections with industry experts. These platforms cultivate collaboration, allowing entrepreneurs to exchange ideas, overcome challenges, and grow their ventures (Guerrini 2016). In addition, peer-to-peer networks foster the exchange of ideas and collaboration, which are crucial for the success of social enterprises (Mills et al. 2012). 2hearts, a platform dedicated to supporting individuals from immigrant backgrounds in Europe's tech industry, serves as an example of such a solution. It provides mentorship and peer-to-peer guidance to help young talent overcome challenges, such as navigating cultural barriers, while building successful careers or launching start-ups. While targeted platforms like 2hearts foster strong communities, their focus on specific demographics, such as immigrants in tech, limits access for other social entrepreneurs. Additionally, many platforms provide general mentorship, which, while useful, may not offer the in-depth, hands-on guidance required to navigate industry-specific challenges

(Guerrini 2016). Entrepreneurs in highly specialized sectors often struggle to find the niche expertise necessary to scale their ventures effectively.

Legal Platforms: While the platforms listed above, lack specialization in legal expertise, dedicated legal platforms fill this gap by offering access to a variety of legal professionals. For instance, platforms like Raketstart provide startups and small businesses with affordable legal resources and expert guidance. Raketstart offers a range of legal templates, advisory sessions, and step-by-step guides to help entrepreneurs navigate legal requirements in the early stages of their businesses. These platforms often target specific needs within the legal domain, making the support more accessible to new entrepreneurs who may not have the budget for a dedicated legal team. However, a gap in the market is that these platforms may lack integration with other forms of support, such as connections to mentors or social enterprise experts. Additionally, they may primarily focus on document preparation and compliance rather than ongoing, personalized legal guidance, which is crucial for social entrepreneurs with evolving and unique legal needs.

4.2 Other Solutions

Alongside knowledge exchange platforms, social entrepreneurs often turn to additional resources for support in launching their ventures. These resources include universities, incubators and accelerators, NGOs, and government initiatives. By leveraging these networks, they gain access to mentorship, funding opportunities, and structured guidance tailored to social impact projects.

Universities: Firstly, universities act as key innovation hubs and support early-stage start-ups, particularly through their internal entrepreneurship centers. These institutions provide essential mentorship, and access to cutting-edge technology and research, and enable social

entrepreneurs to test and validate their business ideas in a low-risk environment (Kumar & Gooneratne 2019). In this way students gain access to the university's knowledge base, including human capital, network access, and intellectual property which are vital resources for entrepreneurial ventures (Middleton et al. 2020). In one of the interviews, Erika Rid highlights a major challenge of university programs. While her university provided access to business contacts, it offered limited capacity, when it came to specific concerns around legal and tax (Appendix A1). Key areas like company registration, trademark concerns, and shareholder agreements were left largely unaddressed, creating significant hurdles in the early stages of her start-up journey (Appendix A1).

Incubators and Accelerators: Business incubators and accelerators are designed to support early-stage start-ups by providing critical resources such as office space, mentorship, management training, and access to investor networks (Bhatli et al. 2015). These programs foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing, helping start-ups access crucial external resources, such as suppliers, customers, and research institutions, which ultimately improves their chances of long-term success (European Commission n.d.). However, despite the existence of impact-focused incubators, these programs often prioritize high-growth start-ups that fit the traditional venture capital model, limiting the inclusion of social ventures with long-term social impact over immediate profitability (Interreg Europe 2024). Even within these impact incubators, competition for limited space remains fierce, and the criteria to participate can be extensive. Furthermore, Constantin Lutz, a social entrepreneur who has participated in both incubator and accelerator programs, highlighted that these platforms are often inefficient. He explained that they require significant time and resources, with mandatory workshops and events taking time away from operational tasks, further slowing down the growth process (Appendix A4).

Business NGOs and Non-Corporate Actors: Established organizations such as NGOs and research networks play a crucial role in supporting social entrepreneurs. As they leverage their sector expertise and community relationships to offer critical distribution networks and insights into local customs. This local knowledge can be invaluable for social enterprises looking to scale their impact (Ashoka n.d.). Through programs like the Dela Accelerator, the NGO Ashoka works with strategic partners, such as IKEA Social Entrepreneurship, to provide mentorship, financial backing, and strategic advice. However, from the perspective of social entrepreneurs, NGOs often lack the specific business development expertise needed to help start-ups grow effectively. While NGOs excel in advocacy, policy influence, and community engagement, they typically struggle to provide hands-on, operational business guidance (Dahan et al. 2010).

Government Initiatives: In the Social Enterprise report by the European Commission, Göler von Ravensburg et al. (2018) explain how government funding serves as a valuable resource for start-ups by providing both financial and non-financial support to help businesses launch and grow. Various mechanisms, such as grants, loans, and tax incentives, offer start-ups access to vital resources for development. However, these government programs face various limitations, particularly for social entrepreneurs. Programs like the EXIST Start-up Grant tend to prioritize students, graduates, and researchers, leaving out social entrepreneurs who lack formal academic qualifications but who often propose innovative solutions to societal challenges. The bureaucratic processes required to access government funding are also time-consuming and complex, making it difficult for small social enterprises to secure immediate assistance. This lack of flexible, readily accessible funding further limits the effectiveness of these programs, preventing many social entrepreneurs from receiving the timely support they need (EXIST-Gründerstipendium – NRW BANK n.d.).

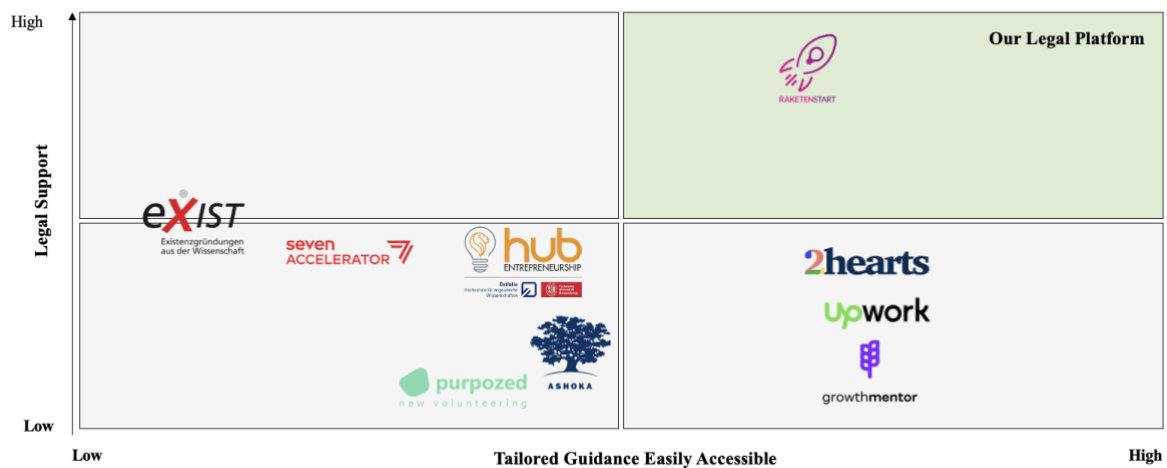


Figure 1: Competitor Matrix

4.3 Market Opportunity

Despite various solutions available in the current knowledge exchange landscape, these efforts remain fragmented, each addressing specific aspects of social entrepreneurship with different approaches but failing to comprehensively address the holistic needs of social entrepreneurs. Direct and indirect competitors often emphasize scalability and profitability over providing tailored support for founders. As a result, they tend to prioritize funding rather than knowledge exchange and frequently involve complex, bureaucratic processes. In addition, such solutions tend to focus on general business content, overlooking the exchange of specialized knowledge in critical areas like legal and tax guidance. This leaves a gap in the market for a more flexible, ad-hoc solution that caters specifically to the tailored needs of founders (Figure 1). Findings from interviews and market research underscore the necessity for dynamic platforms connecting entrepreneurs with professionals. In the interviews, all founders responded to the question, “*Did you receive support in specific areas (legal, technical, design)? If yes, from where?*” by highlighting significant bureaucratic and legal challenges. These responses indicate a clear demand for legal and tax guidance, as many social entrepreneurs face

difficulties navigating complex legal frameworks, such as company registration, tax requirements, and contractual agreements (Appendix A1, A2, A3, A4).

5. Objectives

Therefore, the overarching objective of the solution is to fill the gap between impact entrepreneurs and pro-bono legal experts by developing a digital platform. This platform enhances founders to overcome legal challenges and hence provide the ability to scale their ventures and address global challenges through innovation. In particular, the solution aims to support the growth of social ventures and Community Building. These pillars serve as a guiding framework for the platform's mission and functionality, ensuring a holistic approach to fostering impactful entrepreneurship.

5.1 Support Growth and Promote Sustainable Innovation

This objective aims to provide impact startups with access to expert advice, and essential resources to increase their success rates. Direct mentoring from legal experts helps entrepreneurs address critical issues and challenges they may not have the experience to address independently. This one-on-one support is particularly valuable in overcoming barriers that might otherwise limit the success of their venture. As a result, the project aims to promote sustainable innovation, by supporting entrepreneurs whose ventures contribute to addressing broader societal challenges, creating a future-oriented, impactful business ecosystem.

5.2 Community Building

The platform actively fosters a diverse and engaged community of founders and legal experts. This community serves as a vital space for knowledge sharing, mentorship, and collaboration, all aimed at driving impactful change. By bringing together a network of industry leaders, peers, and innovators, the platform enables entrepreneurs to access a wide range of experiences and perspectives. This collaborative environment not only helps solve complex problems but

also builds lasting relationships that play a key role in the startup ecosystem and contribute to both personal and professional growth.

6. Validation logic

6.1 Growing Focus on Sustainability and Social Entrepreneurship

As sustainable awareness grows among consumers and entrepreneurs, more people are prioritizing environmentally conscious choices, creating higher demand for socially and environmentally responsible businesses (Welker 2023). This growing global shift towards sustainability is strongly reflected in Germany, where sustainability has become a major factor influencing consumer behavior. Consequently, this trend is mirrored by the increasing emergence of social enterprises that aim to meet both environmental and societal needs. The global landscape for social enterprises is expanding rapidly. Today, around 10 million social enterprises generate \$2 trillion in annual revenue and create over 200 million jobs across sectors like agriculture, education, and financial services (World Economic Forum 2024). These figures underscore both the growing global influence of social entrepreneurship and its substantial role in addressing societal challenges while contributing to the global economy (World Economic Forum 2024). Particularly in Germany, social entrepreneurship continues to rise (German Social Entrepreneurship Monitor 2024). Göler von Ravensburg et al. (2018) describe the emerging growth of support networks and impact labs that indicate an expanding impact ecosystem. Additionally, Sofia Amândio, an EU-level member of the Social Innovation Community of Practice, confirms that EU member states must allocate European funds to support social innovation ecosystems by 2030 (Appendix A11).

6.2 Strategic Selection of Germany as Initial Target Market

To strategically capitalize on this compelling market opportunity, the platform has identified Germany as the ideal initial target market for its launch. This decision reflects a deliberate

focus on aligning the platform's objectives with the strengths and demands of Germany's social enterprise ecosystem. Selecting the right target market is essential for the platform's success, as it can significantly impact its growth and long-term viability (Sarvary & Elberse 2005). Germany stands out as the optimal choice for the platform's initial launch, given the founders' established networks and expertise within the local ecosystem, particularly in (Impact) Venture Capital, Social Impact Consulting, and Startup Scaling (Appendix C1). These connections provide a strong foundation for an entry and growth within Germany's social enterprise market.

Moreover, Germany presents a highly suitable environment due to its substantial growth in social entrepreneurship. By early 2023, the country hosted over 100,000 social enterprises led by more than 154,000 social entrepreneurs (German Social Entrepreneurship Monitor 2024). This represents a significant increase from the 77,500 social enterprises recorded by the European Commission in 2017, indicating a 29% growth over six years (Göler von Ravensburg et al. 2018). This steady expansion highlights an evolving ecosystem with a growing demand for structured support services, particularly in legal and tax assistance. The Service Obtainable Market (SOM) for this platform focuses on social enterprises with no revenue or those generating up to €10,000 monthly. This critical group, representing emerging businesses with limited resources, accounts for approximately 72% of the total Social Addressable Market (SAM) of social enterprises in Germany (SEND e.V. 2018). This subset, estimated at around 110,880 social entrepreneurs, aligns with the platform's goal to support those requiring foundational assistance in navigating legal and tax challenges (Appendix C2).

7. Methodology

To effectively address the problem, identify market gaps, and develop solutions with a technical product, this project uses a combination of secondary and primary research methods. Figure one shows the process of including secondary literature, 18 qualitative interviews,

design thinking, and ten user tests in the product development. This multi-method approach enables the development of a user-centered and impactful product that bridges existing gaps in the market.

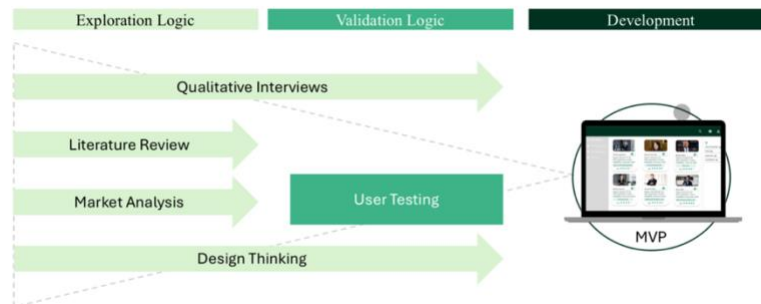


Figure 2: Ideation Methodology

7.1 Secondary Literature Review

Initially, to analyze the problem in more depth, the research starts with an extensive review of academic literature and market analysis reports. This phase is crucial for setting a foundational context for the study and identifying existing literature and market trends relevant to the solution. By synthesizing insights from these sources, the research ensures a comprehensive understanding of the problem space and its market implications.

7.2 Qualitative Interviews

The project's exploration and validation phase are grounded in practical insights. Given the niche user group and market, the thesis investigates their needs and behaviors through qualitative interviews. As shown in Figure 3, the primary research includes 18 interviews divided into three key groups: impact entrepreneurs (potential customers), market experts (such as managers from impact venture capital and specialists in corporate volunteering), and lawyers (representing the expert perspective). Therefore, the paper uses a non-random, purposive sampling method to select suitable participants, whereby individuals are chosen based on the researcher's judgment of their potential utility and representativeness for the study (Pandey &

Pandey 2015). These participants were contacted via LinkedIn. The interviews with founders and lawyers were conducted using a structured format, while market expert interviews were semi-structured, allowing adjustments based on the experts' specific knowledge areas. The objective of these interviews is to gain insights into current customer challenges, validate the secondary research findings, and gather informed suggestions on market needs and potential features for the solution.

| Interviewee | Description | Category |
|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Constantin Lutz | Constantin Lutz is the Co-founder of RAYNY GmbH, located in Cologne Germany. Focus on SDG 6. | Impact Entrepreneur |
| Daniel Watz | Daniel Watz is the Co-founder of SolarHub GmbH, located in Freiburg, Germany. Focus: SDG 7, 11, 13 | Impact Entrepreneur |
| Erika Rid | Daniel Rid is the Co-founder of Rebe, located in Berlin, Germany. Focus: SDG 12 | Impact Entrepreneur |
| Emir Mirzamuhammed | Emir Mirzamuhammed is the Co-founder of PaPaasch, located in Cologne, Germany. Focus: SDG 10 | Impact Entrepreneur |
| Samuel Keitel | Samuel Keitel is a young entrepreneur, and co-founder of Senior Connect, located in Munich, Germany with focus on SDG 8, SDG 10. | Impact Entrepreneur |
| Dr. Rainer Prokisch | Dr. Rainer Prokisch is a retired professor in international and European tax at Maastricht University. He has worked in tax and law firms and currently engages in a volunteering program that supports elderly people with legal questions. | Legal Expert |
| Günther Flaskamp | Günther Flaskamp is a specialist in labour law and runs his own law firm. He has been working in the industry for more than 30 years and has extensive knowledge in this field. | Legal Expert |
| Lucas Corleis | Lucas Corleis studied law at the University of Mannheim in Germany. He has 13 years of work experience and is currently Senior Associate in labour law at Littler. | Legal Expert |
| Javid Safaei | Javid Safaei holds a law degree from the University of Giessen and an LL.M. from Columbia Law School, specializing in M&A law. | Legal Expert |
| Joel Kreklau | Joel Kreklau studied International Taxation at the University of Hamburg. He has worked in tax law for several years, including at firms such as Forvis Mazars. Joel is currently a partner in a tax firm. | Legal Expert |
| Eva Pohl | Eva Pohl is a judge at the Federal Social Court in Kassel with a background in law and an experience of more than 25 years. | Legal Expert |
| Feray Altunsuyu | Feray Altunsuyu is currently studying law, with a focus on labor law at the University of Cologne. Her goal is to be a judge in the future. | Legal Expert |
| Manuel Gaspar | Manuel Gaspar serves as the Community Manager at Casa do Impacto in Lisbon, where he supports entrepreneurs through acceleration and incubator programs. In this role, he regularly interacts with impact-driven entrepreneurs, facilitating their development and growth. | Market Expert |
| Andi Dreger | Andi Dreger facilitates corporate volunteering initiatives for local projects in his hometown, aligning closely with the core concept of our initial product idea. Additionally, he possesses a deep understanding of corporate needs and expectations. | Market Expert |
| Konrad Kirner | Konrad Kirner, in addition to being the founder of an impact startup, serves as an advisor to entrepreneurs. In his professional experience, he also collaborates with corporate entities through his venture, gaining insights into the corporate landscape. | Market Expert |
| Kim Duc Tran | Kim Duc Tran is a partner at a German early-stage venture capital fund, Dieter von Holtzbrinck Ventures. He has been a VC investor for 20 years and specializes in ed-tech and climate-tech. | Market Expert: VC-Investor |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Bernd Klosterkemper | Bernd is a Partner at Ananda Ventures, a Munich-based impact VC that was one of the first impact VCs in Germany. He has more than 20 years of experience in impact investing. | Market Expert: Impact VC-Investor |
| Anonymized Corporate Employee | The individual is employed by a corporate consultancy that promotes participation in social projects in Burkina Faso, where she has also contributed personally. | Market Expert: Corporate Employee |
| Sofia Lai Amândio | Sofia has extensive experience in social innovation, European funds, and public policy. She currently serves as a Strategy and International Relations Advisor for Portugal Social Innovation and is actively involved at the EU level as a member of the Social Innovation Community of Practice (2023–2027). | Market Expert |

Figure 3: Interviewee Participant List

7.3 Design Thinking

The research by You (2022) argues how design thinking serves as a mindset and methodology for business model innovation and emphasizes its role in fostering a collaborative and iterative design process. Hence, together with the interviews, design thinking approach provides the ground to develop the project’s solution. This process involves problem definition, ideation, feature selection, prototyping, and feedback integration, which were facilitated through regular team brainstorming sessions. These cycles were instrumental in refining the proposed solutions, ensuring they were practically feasible and aligned with actual user needs. This phase was pivotal in transforming theoretical insights and identifying real-world challenges into practical, user-centered solutions.

7.4 User Testing

The final stage of the research process involved user testing, during which the developed solutions were trialed with a selected group of potential end-users. In these sessions, participants were assigned specific tasks to complete using the solution, allowing the team to observe their interactions and identify potential challenges. This phase was critical for refining the technical solution, enhancing usability, and improving user satisfaction. Systematic analysis of feedback from these sessions informed final adjustments to the solution, ensuring alignment with user expectations and preferences.

7.5 Limitations

Despite the comprehensive approach, this methodology has certain limitations. The use of purposive sampling, while beneficial for gathering targeted insights, may introduce bias as the selection is subjective and based on the researcher's judgment. This could potentially limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Furthermore, the reliance on primary data from a relatively small sample of experts and entrepreneurs might not capture the full spectrum of perspectives and experiences within the wider market. The design thinking process, while iterative and adaptive, may vary in its accuracy and relevance and can be highly subjective and biased. Recognizing these limitations is crucial for interpreting the findings, suggesting areas for future research, and understanding the applicability of the developed solutions in real-world settings.

8. Solution

8.1 Core Product Solution

Based on the current problem of limited knowledge exchange between impact entrepreneurs, the emerging market trends, and the objectives, this project creates a solution that offers an innovative platform based on low-code technology. Therefore, it connects impact entrepreneurs with legal experts for tailored, pro bono support. The project was originally designed to offer comprehensive long-term mentoring for various challenges encountered by impact entrepreneurs. However, 100% of founders in the interviews specifically highlighted a critical need for these niches but widespread legal challenges (Appendix A1, A2, A3, A4). As a result, this insight prompted a strategic pivot to focus on legal assistance. Hence, the platform works together with law firms to provide professional legal expertise. On the one hand, it provides immediate, specialized support to impact founders, addressing legal challenges. On the other hand, as part of a corporate volunteering benefit initiative, companies allow their

employees to serve as experts and volunteer their skills while earning ESG certifications for their contributions (Appendix B2).

8.1.1 USP for Impact Entrepreneurs

The solution provides unique benefits to impact entrepreneurs in three particular ways: Firstly, once registered on the platform, founders receive immediate and ad-hoc support as they need. The platform responds to urgent inquiries, ensuring they don't face lengthy delays often encountered in traditional settings like incubator programs. Secondly, customers receive tailored consultations. Unlike generic online resources, the advice provided through this platform is individualized, addressing the unique legal challenges and needs of each founder. Lastly, the platform provides a broad choice of legal experts. Founders can select from a pool of legal experts based on specific expertise, experience, peer recommendations, and personal fit. This choice enables them to partner with advisors best suited to their business' needs and sectorial demands, ensuring the highest quality of guidance (Appendix B2).

8.1.2 USP for Legal Experts

Corporate experts participating in this initiative enjoy several professional and personal benefits that reinforce their company's commitment to social responsibility: Firstly, participation in the program contributes towards the company's ESG goals, as the company and its employees earn a certification that highlights its commitment to sustainable and ethical practices. Secondly, engagement in impact-driven projects provides legal experts an opportunity to engage in projects that have a direct social impact, enriching their professional experience and satisfying personal aspirations to contribute to meaningful causes. Lastly, initial pro bono legal consultations serve not only as a philanthropic endeavour but also as a strategic business development tool. These sessions often establish foundational relationships with emerging enterprises that may require more extensive, paid legal services as they grow and

scale, transforming initial volunteer engagements into valuable long-term client relationships for legal firms.

8.2 Sustainable Development Goals

By strategically matching entrepreneurs with the right legal expert, the platform ensures a mutually beneficial relationship that promotes sustainable business growth and a stronger social impact ecosystem (Figure 4). With this solution, the project aims to tackle SDG 8, “Decent work and economic growth” by supporting economic empowerment in an inclusive, ethical, and sustainable way (United Nations n.d.). Moreover, with its platform, the solution aims to build a resilient infrastructure that fosters sustainable innovation by connecting and supporting impact ventures. Therefore, it tackles SDG 9, “Industry, Infrastructure, and Innovation”, increasing access to information and communication (United nations n.d.). Lastly, the platform actively contributes to SGD 17, "Partnerships for the Goals," by facilitating impactful collaborations that are essential for tackling the various challenges outlined in the SDGs (United Nations n.d.). It creates a network of partnerships between corporate experts and impact entrepreneurs, fostering an environment where shared knowledge and resources are leveraged to accelerate progress across all SDGs. These partnerships enhance the capacity for sustainable development by mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources.



Figure 4: Targeted SDG Impact

8.3 Features

Building on the platform's role in fostering impactful collaborations and advancing sustainable development goals, the following section presents its key features, developed through expert insights and iterative design, that aim to support social entrepreneurs by providing access to legal experts. The feature-long list categorizes various potential features and tools collected in the exploration phase and is subsequently refined into a feature short list using an Impact-Effort Matrix. The platform's layout ensures that entrepreneurs and legal experts can efficiently navigate and collaborate, driving impactful social innovation.

8.3.1 Feature Long List

The feature-long list draws from multiple sources, including secondary literature, design thinking, iterative product development, and qualitative interviews. Consequently, the long list can be categorized into five key features that are essential for the platform's design and development: 1) Find the Right Lawyer or Project and Matching, 2) Profiles, 3) Impact Measurement, 4) Work and Collaboration, and 5) Add-ons (Appendix D1). These categories not only structure the feature set but also serve as guiding principles in the platform's overall design and functionality. Categorizing the feature set ensures that the platform addresses the key challenges faced by impact entrepreneurs, while also promoting efficient collaboration and legal expert engagement.

8.3.2 Short List

To transition from a long list of relevant features to a prioritized shortlist for development, the Impact-Effort Matrix serves as a guiding tool (Appendix D2). The matrix simplifies decision-making by making trade-offs visible and offering a structured approach to resource management (Kim, Wilson, Mosher & Breland 2021). By focusing on "quick wins", teams can develop and release features early, allowing them to gather user feedback and iterate rapidly,

an essential aspect of agile methodology, while simultaneously reducing time to market (Claassen & Boekhorst 2015). Consequently, the project establishes a concise list of prioritized features for the digital product developed.

Ad-Hoc Project Dashboard with Filter Methods: The core feature of the solution is a dashboard, where founders and experts can find each other and efficiently connect for short-term, high-impact tasks. Its ad-hoc nature allows for quick, low-commitment involvement, identified as essential for enhancing user engagement and platform usability. Moreover, insights from various expert interviews revealed that this feature addresses a fundamental pain point experienced by many entrepreneurs. On the question “*What features would you find most valuable in such a platform?*”, the impact founder, Constantin Lutz noted that entrepreneurs often face challenges finding reliable experts for specific tasks, and a well-filtered dashboard may significantly improve access to qualified professionals (Appendix A4). In addition, Emir Mirzamuhammed expresses his need for personal fit and therefore wants to select legal experts himself, rather than relying on an algorithm (Appendix A2).

User Reviews: Constantin Lutz explains his fear of sharing private content with others, including experts (Appendix A4), highlighting the importance of transparency and trust for sustained engagement. The platform's review system ensures quality control by allowing founders to rate experts based on their reliability and quality, a key feature for Bernd Klosterkemper (Appendix A8). This system not only fosters trust but also encourages accountability and high standards among experts, strengthening the platform's credibility.

Chat Functionalities: To enable flexible and need-based knowledge exchange, the platform offers multiple communication features, including community chat, direct messaging (DMs), and topic-related chats. These tools ensure that users can collaborate effectively and share

insights in ways that suit their specific requirements, emphasizing the importance of exchange as highlighted in the problem diagnosis. Real-time interaction not only fosters collaboration but also helps to build an inclusive and supportive community. Emir Mirzamuhamed stressed the necessity of human interaction with real people, rather than automated systems, as essential for fostering trust and effective collaboration, further underscoring the value of these communication features for user satisfaction (Appendix A2).

SDG-Tracker and Certificate Printing: To align with the project’s impact-driven goals, the platform includes an SDG tracker that records the hours experts dedicate to supporting projects aligned with specific SDGs. This feature offers a structured method for tracking and reporting SDG-related contributions, enhancing user engagement and facilitating detailed CSR reporting for businesses like “Impact Konnection” (Appendix A7). Duc Tran highlighted that tracking volunteer hours toward specific SDGs motivates corporate volunteers and fosters continued participation (Appendix A9). Additionally, the platform enables users to generate a personalized certificate summarizing the hours worked per SDG, further reinforcing commitment to social and environmental impact.

8.4 Further Execution

In the following sections, this paper dives into the specific execution of the proposed platform and solution. It examines the frontend design and user experience, the backend development using OutSystems, and the strategic approach for market implementation. Together, these elements form a comprehensive roadmap for bringing the solution to life and ensuring its effectiveness in the market.

9. Go-To-Market (GTM) Strategy

After detailing the frontend and backend infrastructure of the platform, the following section introduces the GTM strategy to bring the MVP to the market. A GTM strategy is a comprehensive plan that outlines how a new product, or an existing product entering a new market, will establish itself and connect with its target users (Srinivasan 2010b). According to Srinivasan, (2010b) it involves a structured approach to identifying target audiences, defining value propositions, selecting appropriate distribution channels, and determining pricing and positioning. The primary goal is to align product development, marketing, and sales to create a pathway for growth that maximizes value delivery and user engagement from the outset (Srinivasan 2010b). While platforms share these core GTM priorities, they also face unique challenges (Edelman 2015). For new platforms, particularly those targeting social entrepreneurs, a GTM strategy requires a tailored approach that balances the needs of both sides of the platform (Evans 2009).

9.1 (Social) Business Model Canvas Framework

Building an effective GTM strategy requires a deep understanding of the underlying business model. For this reason, Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) developed the Business Model Canvas (BMC) (2010), a widely used tool for business model design. Consisting of nine interrelated elements such as value proposition and revenue streams, the BMC provides a comprehensive view of how a business creates, delivers, and captures value (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, Appendix E). However, social enterprises often need an additional focus on social impact, which leads to the development of the Social Business Model Canvas (SBMC) (Sparviero 2019). The SBMC builds on the basic structure of the BMC, adapting it to address the dual mission of social enterprises to generate both social and financial value. Specifically, the

SBMC introduces four additional areas focused on social impact: Social Value Proposition, Impact Measures, Type of Intervention and Surplus. (Appendix E):

9.2 The “Chicken-and-egg” problem of launching digital platforms

The economic potential of multi-sided platforms (MSPs) has been demonstrated by the success of companies such as eBay, Airbnb, and Amazon (Øverby & Audestad 2021). These platforms illustrate how creating ecosystems that facilitate user interactions and drive network effects can capture significant market share (Antipina 2020). As the influence of MSPs continues to grow, the path to a successful platform launch presents unique strategic challenges (Edelman 2015). Unlike traditional products that serve a single-sided market, MSPs must balance the demands and value propositions of multiple user groups (Stummer et al. 2016). One of the most prominent challenges in MSP development is the “chicken and egg” problem, which reflects the platform’s reliance on simultaneous user engagement from different sides, such as buyers and sellers (Stummer et al. 2016). Specifically, the chicken-and-egg problem arises because users on one side of the platform may be reluctant to engage if they do not perceive sufficient activity on the other side (Haurand & Stummer 2018).

To address this dilemma, MSPs need to reach critical mass, the point at which there are enough active users on both sides to sustain ongoing engagement and support growth (Hagiu & Rothmann 2016). Achieving critical mass allows network effects to take hold, where increased participation on one side naturally attracts more users on the other, thereby balancing supply and demand (Stummer et al. 2016). Effective strategies include targeting niche audiences for early traction, incentivizing early adopters, and forming key partnerships to accelerate initial growth (Stummer et al. 2016). These effects drive platform growth and help balance supply and demand (Hagiu & Rothman 2016).

10. Implementing Go-To-Market Strategy

To overcome the chicken-and-egg problem and achieve critical mass, the project develops a comprehensive GTM strategy. A structured, four-phase roadmap guides the platform from launch to sustainable growth and international expansion (Figure 5). Each phase focuses on key elements of the SBMC and GTM strategy, with an emphasis on customer acquisition through strategic partnerships and targeted marketing channels. The analysis is structured to address the dual-sided nature of the platform, focusing on the specific needs of both legal experts and social entrepreneurs. In addition, the strategy includes actions such as expanding the target group of legal professionals to support the platform’s evolving goals.





| Phases |  Phase 1 (Launch) |  Phase 2 (Growth) |  Phase 3 (Market Consolidation) |  Phase 4 (Expansion) |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Social Entrepreneurs | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Partnerships and Incubator Programs Government Partnerships <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offline Marketing at University and Incubator Events SEO Marketing | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded University Collaborations Social Entrepreneurship Communities and Networks (e.g., SEND) <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn Social Media Advertising SEO and SEA Marketing Sponsorship at Events (e.g., Social Impact Award Germany) | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Partnerships with major Social Impact Organisations/Networks (e.g., Ashoka Germany) Expanded University and Incubator Networks <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEO and SEA Marketing Participation in Key Industry Events (e.g., Social Innovation Summit) LinkedIn Social Media Advertising | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University and Incubator Partnerships in New Market Governmental Partnerships in the Target Country Cross-Market Partnerships (e.g., Ashoka International) <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn Social Media Advertising Direct Outreach to local Law Firms Event Marketing and Content Marketing |
| Legal Experts | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None for Phase 1 <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Outreach to Law Firms | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with Legal Associations and Law Chambers (e.g., DAV and BRAK) <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn Social Media Advertising Content Marketing in Legal Publications (e.g., Deutscher AnwaltSpiegel) | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Partnerships with Legal Associations and Chambers Law Alumni Networks (e.g., "Deutsche Juristenakademie") <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Marketing (e.g., Legal Tech Conference Germany) Software Ads (e.g., RA-MICRO) Enhanced Content Marketing | <p>Strategic Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Partnerships with Legal Associations and Chambers International Law Alumni Networks <p>Marketing Channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkedIn Social Media Advertising for Target Market Content Marketing in Legal articles/magazines Software Ads Event Marketing |

Figure 5: Strategic Roadmap

10.1 Objectives and Strategic Goals of Phase 1

In Phase 1, the platform focuses on establishing credibility and relevance with key user groups with limited resources. This phase emphasizes cost-effective acquisition strategies to build an initial user base, drive growth and optimize resource allocation. By prioritizing affordable

methods, it aims to create a solid foundation, generate early momentum and build key relationships within the ecosystem, setting the stage for later phases.

10.1.1 Strategic Partnerships – Phase 1

Social Entrepreneurs: In Phase 1, the platform's strategic partnerships focus on collaborations with universities, incubator programs and government institutions. Partnerships with entrepreneurship hubs such as SCHub at Leuphana University Lüneburg serve as entry points to reach early-stage social entrepreneurs (Leuphana University 2024). By positioning the platform as a trusted resource within the academic environment, it gains visibility and fosters long-term engagement among future founders. This cost-effective and targeted approach leverages institutions that naturally attract aspiring entrepreneurs. In addition, partnerships with governmental institutions such as the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection (BMWK) align the platform with public initiatives on sustainable and social entrepreneurship (BMWK n.d.). These collaborations enhance credibility, expand the reach of the platform and lay the foundation for sustainable growth.

Legal Experts: On the legal expert side, formal strategic partnerships are not pursued during this initial phase. Due to capacity considerations in the first phase, the focus for engaging legal professionals will primarily be on direct outreach efforts. By concentrating on personalized communication and early engagement, the platform lays the groundwork for potential collaborations in later phases.

10.1.2 Marketing Channels – Phase 1

Social Entrepreneurs: In Phase 1, the strategic plan promotes the platform through targeted event marketing at university and incubator events, using offline methods such as flyers, posters and branded merchandise to engage social entrepreneurs. Research shows that 74% of

event attendees develop a more favorable perception of brands through face-to-face engagement (Event Marketing Institute and Mosaic 2016). This approach fosters direct connections with students and emerging entrepreneurs in relevant settings. By focusing on locations such as entrepreneurship hubs and startup accelerators, the platform reaches individuals in the early stages of launching ventures or seeking resources. These efforts build awareness and genuine interest in the platform's services. Furthermore, SEO marketing complements the offline strategy by increasing visibility in search engine results when users search for legal support and social impact resources. With over 90% of online experiences starting on a search engine, SEO effectively captures user attention and aligns with the budget-conscious goals of Phase 1 through organic, low-cost content (Baluch 2023).

Legal Experts: Direct outreach serves as the primary marketing channel to engage legal professionals in Phase 1. Targeted email campaigns and personalized communications allow the platform to effectively highlight its alignment with pro bono work and ESG initiatives. Previous studies indicate that 87% of B2B professionals prefer to receive promotions and offers via email, making it an ideal method for initial engagement (State of Marketing 2024). Engaging a single law firm can onboard multiple professionals, maximizing outreach efficiency and addressing the chicken-and-egg problem. This targeted approach generates initial interest, establishes credibility and lays the foundation for future partnerships and growth.

10.2 Objectives and Strategic Goals of Phase 2

In Phase 2, the primary objective is to accelerate platform growth and broaden user engagement. Building on the success of the initial launch and an established user base, this phase leverages increased visibility and early revenue streams to drive sustainable expansion.

To achieve these goals, Phase 2 focuses on scaling marketing efforts and expanding strategic partnerships to reach a wider audience, particularly within key target groups.

10.2.1 Strategic Partnerships – Phase 2

Social Entrepreneurs: Building on the foundations of Phase 1, Phase 2 aims to expand partnerships with universities and incubators to reach a wider audience of emerging social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, collaborations with established social entrepreneurship networks, such as SEND e.V., provide valuable access to active communities within the social impact sector. Engagement with these networks, including participation in events through workshops, webinars, and interactive sessions, enables the platform to connect with target audiences, build credibility, and showcase its offerings (Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland n.d.). To build on this, studies show that participation in collaborative networks increases innovation by 38.5%, due to effective knowledge sharing (Vătămănescu et al. 2020).

Legal Experts: For legal professionals, Phase 2 prioritizes partnerships with key legal associations and chambers, such as the Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer (BRAK) and the Deutscher Anwaltverein (DAV). These partnerships provide direct access to an extensive network of legal professionals. Through initiatives such as webinars and networking events, the platform can effectively communicate its value, highlighting opportunities for pro bono work and alignment with ESG goals.

10.2.2 Marketing Channels – Phase 2

Social Entrepreneurs: In Phase 2, LinkedIn advertising becomes a key channel for engaging social entrepreneurs. With over 770 million users worldwide and a focus on professional, business-oriented content, LinkedIn effectively connects with individuals and organizations

aligned with the platform's mission (Statista 2024). Through LinkedIn Ads, organic posts and collaborations with networks such as Startup Insider, the platform increases visibility and credibility. SEO efforts from Phase 1 continue, complemented by Search Engine Advertising (SEA) to target keywords such as *"social enterprise legal advice"* and *"how to draft a first employment contract"*. This ensures prominent rankings for users seeking these services, positioning the platform as a trusted resource. Additionally, event participation becomes critical in phase 2, with a focus on social impact events such as the Social Impact Award Germany and sustainability summits (Social Impact Award 2024). Research shows that 74% of customers prefer face-to-face interactions to build trust, highlighting the value of a physical presence at such events (Archambault 2020).

Legal Experts: For legal professionals, LinkedIn serves as an essential marketing channel, with targeted advertising focusing on career development and CSR opportunities. Content marketing through specialized posts and collaborations with sites such as the Deutscher Anwaltsverein (DAV) increases visibility and credibility in the German legal sector. Further, publishing articles in reputable legal publications such as Deutscher AnwaltSpiegel allows the platform to communicate its value directly to legal professionals, highlighting the benefits of pro bono work and alignment with ESG goals. According to the B2B-Entscheideranalyse (2014), 83% of decision-makers in Germany rely on trade publications as their primary source of professional information.

10.2.3 Strategic Expansion of Target Audience – Phase 2

In Phase 2, the platform expands its audience within the legal community by engaging retired legal professionals who bring substantial experience and a desire to contribute to meaningful projects. Stakeholder interviews highlight the interest of former lawyers who are motivated to contribute their skills to socially impactful initiatives (Appendix A14, A16). This strategy

enriches the platform's expert base with unique perspectives while providing entrepreneurs with a broader range of legal expertise to meet diverse needs.

10.3 Objectives and Strategic Goals of Phase 3

In Phase 3, the primary objective is to consolidate the platform's presence and strengthen its credibility among its target groups. With an established user base, the platform aims to be recognized as the primary solution in the German market for comprehensive legal and tax support. In addition, outcome-based services will be expanded to include additional features tailored to the evolving needs of the target audience, further enhancing the platform's value proposition. By the end of Phase 3, the platform aims to fully establish its role as a holistic resource for users.

10.3.1 Strategic Partnerships – Phase 3

Social Entrepreneurs: In Phase 3, the platform further strengthens its partnerships within university and incubator networks, extending its reach to a national scale. Building on previous phases, this expanded network provides the platform with extensive access to emerging social entrepreneurs across the country, facilitating broader engagement and establishing a robust national footprint. In addition, collaborations with major social impact organizations such as Ashoka Deutschland strengthen the platform's credibility and support its long-term growth and brand presence (Ashoka Deutschland n.d.).

Legal Experts: For legal professionals, Phase 3 focuses on strengthening partnerships with legal associations and chambers, while exploring new networks to build the platform's reputation. Deepening relationships within existing networks and expanding to new chambers increases visibility and credibility among legal professionals. Moreover, Phase 3 targets legal alumni networks, such as the "Deutsche Juristenakademie", and university law faculties

(Deutsche Juristenakademie n.d.). This approach engages both recent graduates building early career skills and current law students, appealing to their interest in career development and socially impactful work.

10.3.2 Marketing Channels – Phase 3

Social Entrepreneurs: In Phase 3, the platform expands its SEO and SEA strategies to ensure high visibility for users searching for legal and social entrepreneurship support. Participation in key industry events, such as the Social Innovation Summit, strengthens the platform's presence in the social impact sector and fosters direct engagement with entrepreneurs and stakeholders. LinkedIn remains a core marketing tool, focusing on organic growth through content contributions and collaborations with established sites. As the user base grows, LinkedIn advertising complements these efforts, combining organic and paid strategies to effectively build the platform's brand and attract new users aligned with its mission.

Legal Experts: In Phase 3, the platform enhances its content marketing strategy by focusing on reputable legal publications to communicate its alignment with pro bono work and ESG goals. Consistent publication of authoritative content builds credibility and positions the platform as a trusted resource within the legal community. Event marketing is introduced through participation in key legal conferences such as the Legal Tech Conference Germany, which enables direct connections with legal professionals (German Legal Tech Summit n.d.). Targeted advertising within legal management software such as RA-MICRO also provides access to over 70,000 law firms that integrate the platform into their daily workflows. This approach maximises visibility and engagement, making the platform a practical resource within their professional tools (Kanzleisoftware - Anwaltsoftware Mit beA | RA-MICRO n.d.).

10.3.3 Strategic Expansion of Target Audience – Phase 3

Building on Phase 3's partnerships with law schools and alumni networks, the platform expands its audience to include law students and recent graduates. Stakeholder interviews reveal a keen interest from these groups in high-impact projects that offer practical experience and mentorship (Appendix A14). To address this, the platform introduces a mentoring feature that pairs experienced legal professionals with students to support early career development and skill building. This initiative broadens the user base while aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education) by promoting educational and social impact among emerging professionals.

10.4 Phase 4: International Expansion and Endgame Vision

Once significant impact has been achieved in Germany, as evidenced by key performance indicators such as successful scaling of social ventures and tangible contributions to the SDGs, the platform progresses to Phase 4. This phase marks the strategic decision to expand the platform's reach beyond its initial geographic market, with the goal of replicating its success in other regions. An endgame vision defines the specific role an organization intends to play in addressing its core issue area at scale and guides strategic decisions about how it will operate once maximum impact has been achieved (Gugelev & Stern 2015). Potential endgame models include replication, open source, government adoption and sustainable service (Figure 6).

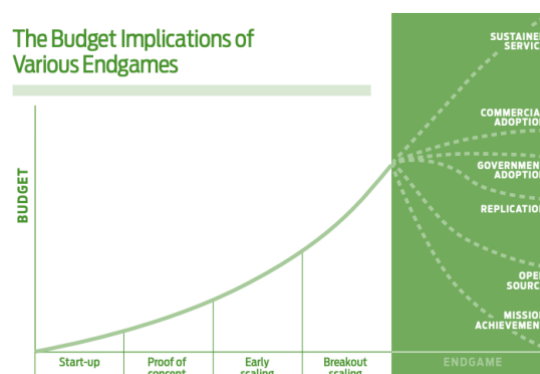


Figure 6: Endgame Scenarios

Building on its success, the platform pursues an international expansion strategy to address global challenges faced by social entrepreneurs, particularly legal and tax barriers (Li & Qu 2023). Addressing these universal issues requires a scalable model, making the replication strategy the most suitable. This approach allows the platform to deploy its services across regions with minimal adaptation, leveraging partnerships with local organizations to build trust, facilitate market entry and ensure scalability. Replication supports cost-effective growth while maintaining alignment with the platform's core mission. Preliminary analysis identifies Portugal and the UK as promising markets for expansion. The UK offers a mature social enterprise ecosystem, while Portugal has a growing entrepreneurial landscape supported by government-backed social innovation initiatives. Although not finalized, these markets provide a basis for strategic planning to ensure alignment with the platform's scalability goals and mission.

10.5 Monetization Strategy of the Platform

To achieve the goals outlined in the strategic roadmap, a clear revenue strategy is critical for both short-term sustainability and long-term growth. Based on stakeholder interviews with social entrepreneurs and legal experts, the monetization model is designed to align with the development of the platform. Both groups were asked, "*How much would you be willing to pay for such a service?*" 100% of the legal experts responded they are not willing to pay for the platform as their contribution is to offer their expertise and time (Appendix A12, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18). On the other hand, 50% of the social entrepreneurs responded with a low willingness to pay but a high preference to test the value of the platform first (Appendix A1, A3). To address these findings, the platform adopts a freemium model, encouraging early adoption through a low barrier to entry and promoting word-of-mouth growth.

The premium pricing model is developed using a cost-based approach, whereby the pricing structure is calculated to cover the core operational costs. This ensures the platform's financial sustainability and long-term viability. While this model aims to cover operational needs, it is also adjusted to align with the low willingness to pay of social entrepreneurs. They emphasized the need for pricing to remain considerably below the average hourly rate of €250 for lawyers, which they considered to be unaffordable (Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer n.d.). This feedback highlights the importance of offering an affordable alternative to attract and retain users. The premium version includes an outcome-based service, meaning that lawyers not only provide consultancy but actively help to achieve successful results. At launch, the Premium version offers three key services: drafting employee contracts, preparing year-end tax closures and determining the appropriate entity type. A safety buffer is included to manage unexpected costs and ensure stability in the early stages.

10.6 KPI Measurement

The technical solution addresses the core problem faced by social entrepreneurs, the limited access to knowledge exchange relevant to the growth of their business. Barriers such as financial constraints, limited networks, and limited connections collectively hinder knowledge exchange, slow innovation, and reduce the potential impact of social ventures. To evaluate the platform's effectiveness in mitigating these issues, measurable indicators are aligned with its objectives of supporting sustainable innovation and community building. Consequently, KPIs in the areas of impact, commercial performance, and platform performance, assess the success of the solution. While the UX section defines platform performance KPIs that focus on the user experience, the GTM section emphasizes monitoring impact and business-related KPIs.

Impact KPIs ensure accountability and highlight the platform's ability to achieve mission-aligned outcomes (Maas & Liket 2011). Metrics such as SDG contribution tracking measure

legal support for specific SDGs, while volunteer retention tracks active pro bono legal professionals. Entrepreneur growth monitors the number of social entrepreneurs scaling their impact, reflecting alignment with global goals (Appendix F). In addition to impact, the sustainability of the platform depends on economic stability. Business KPIs (Appendix F) assess financial health and operational efficiency to ensure the platform continues to deliver measurable impact (Montijn et al. 2023).

10.7 Financials

This section outlines the financial model of the platform, detailing projected operational and marketing costs, as well as expected revenues from the user base. These projections provide insight into economic sustainability and alignment with strategic objectives. A profit and loss (P&L) statement is included for a comprehensive view of the financial performance (Appendix G).

10.7.1 Cost Structure

The costs of the platform are divided into operational fixed costs and marketing costs. Operational fixed costs include core costs such as platform maintenance, development and personnel, while marketing costs include expenditure on strategic partnerships and channels aligned with the strategic roadmap. Cost estimates are based on market standard assumptions tailored to each development phase (Appendix H1, H2, H3, H4). Total costs are €36,400 in the first year, rising to €222,950 in the second year, €308,598 in the third year and €651,242 in the fourth year (Appendix H5). The main cost drivers are personnel and marketing costs (Appendix H6).

10.7.2 Revenue Structure

The platform generates revenue by users who subscribe to the premium version, paying a monthly fee of 44,99€ for access to the described outcome-based services. Assumptions

regarding customer growth, conversion rates, churn rates and monthly fees form the basis of the revenue forecasts (Appendix I1). In fiscal year 2025, the platform is expected to have 860 paying users, generating revenues of €38,687. This increases to 2,765 paying users in 2026, contributing €124,393. By 2027, the number of paying users grows to 7,778, generating €388,811. In 2028, driven by expansion and significant user growth to 24,541 paying users, total revenue reaches €1,349,529 (Appendix I2)

10.7.3 Funding

The funding plan is to secure a grant of €200,000 from Impact Funding Europe to support the platform's development and growth. This aligns with their funding strategy, which prioritizes initiatives that enhance the social entrepreneurship ecosystem and contribute to achieving key SDGs (Impact Funding Europe: About Us 2024). Grants are particularly beneficial for social enterprises as they provide non-repayable funding, allowing ventures to focus on scaling their solutions without the immediate pressure of financial returns (Lall & Park 2020). This initial funding primarily covers operational and marketing costs during the critical first two years.

11. Limitations

While this study presents a comprehensive exploration of developing a platform that fills the gap between impact entrepreneurs who seek legal advice and legal experts to drive social innovation, several limitations must be considered when interpreting the platform and strategic implications. Given the scope and context of this research, limitations within the sample method and technology can impact the implementation of the platform in the market. These limitations are addressed to provide a balanced view of the study's contributions.

One limitation lies within the potential bias in interviews, which formed a basis for developing the platform's technical solutions. While these interviews provided valuable insights, there is a risk that the sample may not fully represent the broader market of social entrepreneurs. Consequently, feature prioritizations and design decisions could reflect the specific experiences of a limited participant group rather than the needs of a more diverse audience. Additionally, the platform's user testing sample was limited in scope, which may constrain the validity of conclusions drawn about the user experience. Testing within a small or demographically narrow group can overlook usability needs and challenges that might arise across a more varied user base. Broader and more diverse testing could reveal additional insights essential for optimizing the user interface.

From a technological perspective, the use of a low-code/no-code solution, while advantageous for rapid prototyping and efficient implementation, may introduce scalability issues as the platform grows. Higher volumes of users or an increase in data-intensive features could exceed the capabilities of the current setup, necessitating more custom-built solutions to ensure continued functionality and performance. Furthermore, data security and compliance present notable challenges. Given the platform's handling of potentially sensitive data related to legal

advice, ensuring full compliance with data protection regulations (such as GDPR) may be difficult within the constraints of a low-code/no-code framework. Such frameworks can limit the customization options needed to fully secure user data, potentially affecting the platform's ability to meet stringent compliance standards

12. Conclusion

The work project aims to tackle two questions: Firstly, how to close the gap between social entrepreneurs seeking legal support and those who want to offer pro-bono legal expertise? Secondly, how to overcome the chicken-and-egg problem and attract both user groups? The main objective of addressing these questions is to foster growth, encourage sustainable innovation, and cultivate a supportive community. The research revealed that impact entrepreneurs face significant challenges in launching their ventures, particularly due to limited resources for guidance, with legal support emerging as a critical unmet need. Existing solutions largely focus on general mentoring or freelance services but lack affordable and accessible legal support tailored to the unique requirements of social entrepreneurs.

To address this gap, the study developed a two-sided platform connecting social entrepreneurs with legal experts, particularly corporate volunteers motivated by social impact and ESG certification. This platform provides a targeted solution by pairing entrepreneurs with professionals dedicated to supporting social innovation. Key contributions include the UX development of a customer-centric frontend, which features an accessible dashboard and chat functionality. Through customer journey mapping, this study identified relevant personas and touchpoints, highlighting both pain and gain points. Consequently, the customer-centric frontend design, enhances usability. A second contribution is the transformation of the prototype into an MVP using no-code/low-code technology, enabling efficient backend

development while maintaining functionality and scalability. Lastly, the study addresses the “chicken and egg” problem through a GTM strategy structured in four phases, each focusing on strategic partnerships, targeted marketing channels, and revenue streams, including a freemium model. This phased approach aims to sustainably grow the platform’s user base while balancing service accessibility and revenue generation.

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14. Appendix

Appendix A: Interviews

Appendix A1: Interview with Erika Rid (Entrepreneur)

Name: Erika Rid

Date: 23.09.2024

Time: 16:00 p.m

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

Background: Erika Rid is an impact entrepreneurship student and the co-founder of ReBe, a B2C platform for secondhand fashion. Their platform allows users to search for and find their favorite clothing items or accessories, no matter which secondhand marketplace they are listed on—ReBe searches them all! Their mission is to empower consumers to choose secondhand fashion over fast fashion, helping to combat climate change. In doing so, they focus on advancing SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production)

Objective: Understand and validate the challenges of impact entrepreneurs in the early stage of founding their startup. Gain insights into their problems, needs and interests.

Introduction:

As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals. In particular we aim to connect corporate employees who are looking to contribute to social impact and ESG initiatives. The platform aims to facilitate skills exchange, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities that align with corporate social responsibility and employee benefits programs. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing employee benefits programs, how it might enhance employee engagement, and what specific features or support might be needed from an HR perspective.

Question 1: Status Quo

How did you start connecting with other people to gain insights, support, and knowledge?

Answer:

Erika explained that she co-founded her startup with four fellow students. During her impact entrepreneurship studies, she learned how to write business plans, which was a key aspect of the program. The university served as her primary source of contacts, providing access to other founders and potential investors through various founder initiatives and events organized by the institution.

Question 2: Problem Diagnosis

Was it easy for you to start executing your social idea? Did you receive support in specific areas (legal, technical, design) if yes, from where?

Please elaborate on the first steps of your business development.

Answer:

Erika also highlighted that one of her main challenges at the start was navigating legal and tax-related questions. She found it difficult to determine where and how to begin the process of registering a business. While her university network, especially through the “Gründungszentrum, ESF+ program,” provided access to business contacts, the availability of legal advice was limited. The legal consultation

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| <p>What are the causes and effects of limited collaboration opportunities?</p> | <p><i>offered had restricted capacity, which made it harder to address specific concerns.</i></p> <p><i>Erika pointed out that although there is some legal information available online, it tended to be superficial and not tailored to her individual situation. Some of her key legal questions included how to register a company, how to handle trademarks and logo issues, how to set up employment contracts, the implications of being a shareholder, and taxation related to funding's.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Interest Would you be interested in a platform that connects you with experts in different areas (legal, design, strategy, tech) who support you with your idea?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Erika mentioned that she would be particularly interested in a platform that could connect her with experts, specifically for consultations with lawyers and tax specialists. Additionally, she expressed a desire to connect with other founders, as she believes this network would be valuable in addressing shared challenges and learning from their experiences.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Feature What features would you need to join this platform? What features would you find most valuable in such a platform?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching tool to pair experts with entrepreneurs based on skills, interests, and goals • A board or marketplace where social entrepreneurs post projects needing expertise. • Certificates and Badges Recognition for participation • Anything else? | <p>Answer: <i>Erika suggested that certain features would significantly increase her interest in a platform connecting young entrepreneurs with experts. One key feature she mentioned is the ability to post free job offers, particularly for finding critical roles like a Chief Technology Officer (CTO), which is often a challenge for early-stage startups. By offering free job postings, the platform could help startups connect with skilled professionals without the financial burden of traditional job boards.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, she expressed interest in templates that provide step-by-step guides on essential business processes, such as "How to set up an employment contract" or "How to register a business." These templates would include integrated checklists, offering a structured and user-friendly way for entrepreneurs to navigate complex legal and administrative tasks. Erika believes that such practical, hands-on resources would be highly beneficial, particularly for founders who may not have extensive experience in these areas. In addition, she suggests referring to experts within this step-by-step approach.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Monetization How much would you be willing to pay for such a service?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Erika expressed that she would not be willing to commit to a subscription model, particularly if she is not familiar with the product. Instead, she prefers a</i></p> |

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| Subscription, on time fee, freemium? | <i>flexible approach where she can access a test phase, including 1-2 trial consultations, to evaluate the platform's value. Following the trial, she would like the option to book additional consultations as needed, ensuring a needs-based, on-demand approach to accessing expert advice. This model would allow her to only pay for services when necessary, aligning with the unpredictable and varying requirements of startup founders.</i> |
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Appendix A2: Interview with Emir Mirzamuhammed (Entrepreneur)

Name: Emir Mirzamuhammed

Date: 23.09.2024

Time: 10:30

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Emir, an Iranian living in Turkey, founded his impact startup PaPaasch in Cologne, Germany. With his migrant background, he has faced various challenges in launching PaPaasch, a platform designed to educate migrant children in a fun and engaging way to help them integrate, without raising concerns about digitalization or trends like the Metaverse.</p> <p>PaPaasch focuses on building a better future by providing quality education to migrant children and shaping a sustainable future, with a strong focus on advancing SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Understand and validate the challenges of impact entrepreneurs in the early stage of founding their startup. Gain insights into their problems, needs and interests.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction:</p> <p>As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals. In particular we aim to connect corporate employees who are looking to contribute to social impact and ESG initiatives. The platform aims to facilitate skills exchange, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities that align with corporate social responsibility and employee benefits programs. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing employee benefits programs, how it might enhance employee engagement, and what specific features or support might be needed from an HR perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Status Quo</p> <p>How did you start connecting with other people to gain insights, support, and knowledge?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>In his early entrepreneurial ventures in Iran, Emir leveraged his local knowledge and existing networks to start various businesses. He identified a significant problem concerning the integration of children with migrant backgrounds and conceived an educational app aimed at facilitating better integration for migrant children in new countries. His research indicated that Germany would be an ideal location to launch this app.</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>Upon moving to Germany, however, Emir faced considerable challenges due to his limited local network and language barriers. These factors significantly slowed down his progress and made it difficult to establish connections necessary for gaining insights, support, and knowledge in a new entrepreneurial environment. This experience underscored the importance of a robust support network in expediting business processes and integration into a new market.</i></p> <p><i>He worked together with a German university for 1,5 years that supported his idea.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Problem Diagnosis Was it easy for you to start executing your social idea? Did you receive support in specific areas (legal, technical, design) if yes, from where?</p> <p>Please elaborate on the first steps of your business development.</p> <p>What are the causes and effects of limited collaboration opportunities?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Emir highlighted that one of his main challenges in Germany was the limited network, which prolonged every business process compared to his experiences in Iran. He described Germany as highly bureaucratic, which made processes not only longer but also more complicated. This strong contrast emphasized the need for professional guidance, which became crucial for navigating the complexities of the German system.</i></p> <p><i>Throughout his entrepreneurial journey in Germany, Emir noted a cultural difference in the reception of new ideas. He encountered frequent rejections and a generally pessimistic attitude towards innovation, which he felt was more pronounced against migrant entrepreneurs. Emir believes that this skepticism stems from a societal perception that native individuals may have superior knowledge or expertise, posing an additional barrier for migrants trying to establish new ventures. This aspect of his experience highlights the unique challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs in environments that may not be as receptive or encouraging as their home countries.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Feature What features would you need to join this platform? What features would you find most valuable in such a platform?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching tool to pair experts with entrepreneurs based on skills, interests, and goals | <p>Answer: <i>Human Interaction: Emir emphasized the importance of being able to communicate with a real person rather than an AI. He values human interaction, especially in contexts where nuanced understanding and empathetic responses are essential.</i></p> <p><i>Expertise in Startups: He expressed a strong preference for experts who specialize in startups and are well-acquainted with the associated risks. Emir is</i></p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A board or marketplace where social entrepreneurs post projects needing expertise. • Certificates and Badges Recognition for participation • Anything else? | <p><i>looking for professionals who have firsthand experience and deep understanding of the startup ecosystem, which can provide him with relevant and practical advice.</i></p> <p><i>Personal Fit Matching: Emir is interested in a matching concept that not only aligns experts based on professional qualifications but also considers personal compatibility. He believes that a good personal fit is crucial for effective communication and successful advisory relationships, which can significantly enhance the support received by entrepreneurs like himself on the platform.</i></p> |
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Appendix A3: Interview with Daniel Watz (Entrepreneur)

Name: Daniel Watz

Date: 20.09.2024

Time: 11.30 a.m.

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Daniel Watz is the co-founder of Solar Hub. With his technical background, he founded Solar Hub in 2022. Using 3D photovoltaic planning, Solar Hub provides fast, simple, and tailored energy solutions for buildings. Their mission is to empower individuals in need of sustainable energy solutions to make informed decisions. In doing so, they contribute to the fight for SDG 7 (clean and affordable energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 13 (climate action).</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Understand and validate the challenges of impact entrepreneurs in the early stage of founding their startup. Gain insights into their problems, needs and interests.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals. In particular we aim to connect corporate employees who are looking to contribute to social impact and ESG initiatives. The platform aims to facilitate skills exchange, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities that align with corporate social responsibility and employee benefits programs. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing employee benefits programs, how it might enhance employee engagement, and what specific features or support might be needed from an HR perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 0: Consent Are we allowed to transcribe the talk to put it in the Appendix of our Master's Thesis?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Yes</i></p> |
| <p>Question 1: Status Quo</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Daniel began his entrepreneurial journey as a hobby project, which evolved into a more formal business</i></p> |

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| <p>How did you start connecting with other people to gain insights, support, and knowledge?</p> | <p><i>venture as he gathered Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential customers or partners.</i></p> <p><i>To gain insights, support, and knowledge, Daniel turned to the internet and his network of acquaintances who had previous entrepreneurial experience. He specifically sought advice from friends who had already founded companies, leveraging their experiences to guide his own entrepreneurial decisions.</i></p> <p><i>Both founders of Daniel's venture are industrial engineers, which provided them with a technical background that likely influenced their approach to problem-solving and managing the startup's operational challenges.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Problem Diagnosis Was it easy for you to start executing your social idea? Did you receive support in specific areas (legal, technical, design) if yes, from where?</p> <p>Please elaborate on the first steps of your business development.</p> <p>What are the causes and effects of limited collaboration opportunities?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>He spent about 2-3 weeks intensively handling various foundational aspects of the business, such as registering the company with the commercial register, drafting the articles of association, working with notaries, and setting up essential documents. This phase was characterized by a significant administrative hurdle that he needed to navigate to officially launch the business. He adds that he barely is able to pay his freelancers and therefore, highly relates to the issue of finding affordable and quick support.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Interest Would you be interested in a platform that connects you with experts in different areas (legal, design, strategy, tech) who support you with your idea?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Daniel said is somewhat interested in this feature, but also expressed his limited willingness to pay. He highlights that he would use such a platform in particular for legal questions as he works with freelancers for technical advice.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Feature What features would you need to join this platform? What features would you find most valuable in such a platform?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching tool to pair experts with entrepreneurs based on skills, interests, and goals • A board or marketplace where social entrepreneurs post projects needing expertise. | <p>Answer: <i>Daniel expressed interest in a platform that could connect him and other entrepreneurs with experts across various fields such as legal, design, strategy, and technology.</i></p> <p>Roadmap and To-Do List: <i>Daniel sees the benefit of having a structured roadmap and to-do list integrated into the platform, which would help in organizing and prioritizing business tasks effectively.</i></p> <p>Document Management: <i>He highlighted the importance of document management capabilities within the platform. This feature would allow for</i></p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates and Badges Recognition for participation • Anything else? | <p><i>efficient handling and sharing of essential documents, which is particularly important when collaborating closely with a co-founder.</i></p> <p>Collaborative Workspace: Daniel values the ability to share the workspace within the platform with his co-founder, ensuring that both founders can work collaboratively and have synchronized access to all necessary information and tasks.</p> <p>Knowledge Sharing and Tips: He also mentioned the usefulness of having a feature for knowledge sharing and receiving tips, which could provide practical advice and insights from experienced professionals and other founders.</p> |
| <p>Question 5: Monetization How much would you be willing to pay for such a service? Subscription, on time fee, freemium?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Daniel expressed no initial willingness to pay for the platform's services. He prefers to explore and assess the value of the platform before committing financially.</i></p> <p>Alternative Monetization Suggestions: Expert Payments: Daniel suggests that the experts themselves could pay to be part of the platform. This model would treat the platform as a lead generation tool for experts, where they gain access to potential clients in exchange for a fee.</p> <p>Funding Options: Another monetization idea involves incorporating funding opportunities, such as connections to accelerators. This could attract users by offering additional value beyond just expert advice, supporting startups in securing financial backing as well</p> |

Appendix A4: Interview with Constantin Lutz (Entrepreneur)

Name: Constantin Lutz

Date: 26.09.2024

Time: 15:00 p.m

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

Background: Constantin Lutz is the co-founder of the impact startup RAYNY. They recognized the issue that, while people in Germany have access to water, many don't drink enough, whereas in other parts of the world, people lack access to clean drinking water. At RAYNY, they develop hydration-tracking solutions that help promote healthy drinking habits and support global drinking water projects with every liter consumed. RAYNY rewards users with virtual coins for each liter they drink, which can be donated to water projects through the app and later exchanged for rewards. Their efforts are focused on advancing SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation).

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| <p>Objective: Understand and validate the challenges of impact entrepreneurs in the early stage of founding their startup. Gain insights into their problems, needs and interests.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals. In particular we aim to connect corporate employees who are looking to contribute to social impact and ESG initiatives. The platform aims to facilitate skills exchange, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities that align with corporate social responsibility and employee benefits programs. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing employee benefits programs, how it might enhance employee engagement, and what specific features or support might be needed from an HR perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Status Quo How did you start connecting with other people to gain insights, support, and knowledge?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Constantin started to connect with other people to gain insights and knowledge through incubators and accelerators. He emphasized the variability in the quality of these programs. Specifically, Constantin stressed the importance of having well-qualified and motivated mentors and coaches in these incubation environments. He expressed concerns that many startup coaches at the incubators were not adequately equipped in terms of skills and experience, which in his view, detracted from the potential value these mentors could provide. Moreover, he experienced incubators and accelerators often to be too inefficient, as they demand time and resources for founders. (taking part in various workshops)</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Problem Diagnosis Was it easy for you to start executing your social idea? Did you receive support in specific areas (legal, technical, design) if yes, from where? Please elaborate on the first steps of your business development. What are the causes and effects of limited collaboration opportunities?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Constantin emphasizes that the founding phase of a startup is fraught with numerous problems and challenges, making a broad and robust network essential for navigating this turbulent period. He underscores the significance of having access to a diverse range of contacts that can offer practical advice and support when unexpected issues arise. One of the predominant hurdles he identifies is legal challenges, which he regards as a principal obstacle for young entrepreneurs. Constantin believes that it is inevitable for founders to collaborate with a qualified lawyer at some stage to navigate these complexities effectively. Constantin also highlights various ad-hoc challenges during the early stages of his venture, such as developing software, constructing robust financial models, and designing products. These tasks underscored the necessity for specific</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>technical and financial expertise, which was not always readily available within his immediate network.</i></p> <p><i>Moreover, he expresses concerns about data security, particularly the discomfort associated with sharing his IP address with unfamiliar entities. This highlights the broader issues of privacy and the need for secure operational protocols in startups, which are increasingly relevant in a digitalized business landscape where sensitive information is frequently exchanged</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Interest Would you be interested in a platform that connects you with experts in different areas (legal, design, strategy, tech) who support you with your idea?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Constantin also discussed the potential relevance of a platform designed to connect entrepreneurs with experts. He indicated that such a platform would be beneficial to him, provided he can trust the quality of the experts available. This trust is pivotal as it influences the decision-making process of young founders who rely on expert advice to navigate the complexities of starting and running a business.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Feature What features would you need to join this platform? What features would you find most valuable in such a platform?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching tool to pair experts with entrepreneurs based on skills, interests, and goals • A board or marketplace where social entrepreneurs post projects needing expertise. • Certificates and Badges Recognition for participation • Anything else? | <p>Answer:</p> <p>Transparent and Data Security: <i>Constantin emphasizes the importance of transparency, data security, and honesty in the platform. He considers these not merely as features but as essential foundations that ensure the platform's reliability and user trust.</i></p> <p>Open Innovation: <i>Constantin proposes an 'open innovation function' where founders can post challenges on the platform. Experts can then sign up to participate in solving these challenges, fostering a collaborative and interactive community. This function aims to connect entrepreneurs directly with skilled professionals to tackle real-time business issues.</i></p> <p>Client Portal: <i>Constantin proposed an extension to the platform's functionality that could further enhance its value for entrepreneurs like himself. He suggested that the platform could also facilitate connections not just with experts, but with potential B2B clients. He highlighted the challenges he faced in finding appropriate networks and contacts within companies to pitch and sell his business idea. Access to a reliable and targeted network of potential business clients would significantly</i></p> |

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| | <i>alleviate the marketing and sales challenges faced by startups, making such a platform an invaluable tool for new entrepreneurs seeking to establish and expand their market presence.</i> |
| <p>Question 5: Monetization How much would you be willing to pay for such a service? Subscription, on time fee, freemium?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Constantin acknowledges the potential for a pay-per-use model, where users are charged based on the specific services they utilize. However, he expresses concern that this model might not be the best fit for the platform, as this assumes a high user base to be profitable.</i></p> <p><i>Constantin proposes a membership fee model to uphold an exclusive and prestigious brand image. Under this model, founders would need to apply for access to the platform, ensuring that only serious and committed individuals are admitted. Once accepted, members would pay a fee, contributing to the platform's sustainability and quality.</i></p> |

Appendix A5: Interview with Samuel Keitel (Entrepreneur)

Name: Samuel Keitel

Date: 05.11.2024

Time: 11:00 a.m.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/samuelkeitel/>

Background: Samuel has an entrepreneurial background with experience in founding and managing startups, particularly Senior Connect, a platform that connects individuals over 50 with tailored job opportunities. Their focus on impact entrepreneurship is evident, as they also co-founded the Zukunftswiesen Summit, fostering innovation and decision-making. As a young graduate from TUM School of Management, specializing in Digital Technologies, his perspective as a fresh founder aligns perfectly with the target group to support impact entrepreneurship.

Objective: Understand and validate the challenges of impact entrepreneurs in the early stage of founding their startup. Gain insights into their problems, needs and interests.

Introduction:

As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals. In particular we aim to connect corporate employees who are looking to contribute to social impact and ESG initiatives. The platform aims to facilitate skills exchange, mentorship, and volunteer opportunities that align with corporate social responsibility and employee benefits programs. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing employee benefits programs, how it might enhance employee engagement, and what specific features or support might be needed from an HR perspective.

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| <p>Question 1: Status Quo</p> <p>How did you start connecting with other people to gain insights, support, and knowledge?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Samuel explains that he has primarily worked with Orrick to address legal topics, collaborating closely with them. He mentions that Orrick initially provided their services pro bono, as they were hopeful that he would eventually raise funds. Now that the funding round is being managed through them, they receive their "fair share." Additionally, he has utilized a mix of resources offered by the university, incubators, and other programs. However, he highlights that legal matters have been the biggest pain point, taking a considerable amount of time to resolve.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Problem Diagnosis</p> <p>Was it easy for you to start executing your social idea? Did you receive support in specific areas (legal, technical, design) if yes, from where?</p> <p>Please elaborate on the first steps of your business development.</p> <p>What are the causes and effects of limited collaboration opportunities?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Samuel explains that when looking for support, he focused on building networks. He reached out to associations, established partnerships, and ensured that seniors participating in his initiative would not have to pay anything. He also leveraged opportunities like economic summits, noting that such events often have an interest in forming partnerships and collaborating with accelerators. Additionally, he highlights the YFN Founders Network, backed by the Bertelsmann Foundation, as well as resources available through entrepreneurship programs.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Interest</p> <p>Would you be interested in a platform that connects you with experts in different areas (legal, design, strategy, tech) who support you with your idea?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Samuel stressed that legal requirements, particularly during the process of forming a new company, are overwhelming and took a significant amount of time for him to fully understand. As a result, he expressed interest in a platform designed to address these challenges and believes it has the potential to gain traction quickly due to the strong demand in the market.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Feature</p> <p>What features would you need to join this platform?</p> <p>What features would you find most valuable in such a platform?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching tool to pair experts with entrepreneurs based on skills, interests, and goals | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Samuel mentioned that instead of using filters, an AI-based search function could be more relevant, where users describe the challenge they face, and appropriate legal experts are recommended. He also emphasized the importance of gaining traction quickly and bringing the first MVP to the market as soon as possible, suggesting that such an AI-based feature could be a valuable addition to the platform.</i></p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A board or marketplace where social entrepreneurs post projects needing expertise. • Certificates and Badges Recognition for participation • Anything else? | |
| <p>Question 5: Monetization</p> <p>How much would you be willing to pay for such a service? Subscription, on time fee, freemium?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Samuel explained that monetization could be challenging when it comes to startups, as they are often unwilling or unable to pay. He suggested offering tiered packages tailored to different startup phases. Reflecting on his own experience, he noted that his startup would not have been able to pay for such a service in the past, though this situation is now changing with their recent financing. He also emphasized that monetization might be easier through legal experts, as they are often willing to pay for access to a network of startups and the opportunities it provides.</i></p> |

Appendix A6: Interview with Manuel Gaspar (Market Expert)

Name: Manuel Gaspar

Date: 11.10.2024

Time: 11.00 a.m.

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Manuel serves as the Community Manager at Casa do Impacto. He is responsible for organizing benefit-oriented events and overseeing the Incubation Program, which provides startups with support in incubation, acceleration, and investment grants.</p> |
| <p>Objective: Gain insights into the best practices, challenges, and success factors for creating and running a platform. We aim to learn about the challenges of impact entrepreneurs and what impact hubs are lacking to support them.</p> |
| <p>Introduction:</p> <p><i>Problem:</i> We are all young students who are eager to found something in the future! All with the goal to create impact. However, we realized in the past month, that we only have the perspective and skills of a business student. We realized we need legal advice, technical support, designers etc. to help us. However, we have very limited budget and therefore, cannot execute our ideas easily.</p> <p><i>Solution:</i> As part of our Master Thesis, we are in the process of creating a platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experts, including corporate employees. To ensure our platform’s success, we are seeking insights from individuals who have</p> |

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| <p>experience in launching and managing similar platforms. We want to understand the best practices, challenges, and critical success factors from their perspective. This will help you identify effective strategies for user engagement, platform features, monetization, and sustainability, and learn from their experiences to avoid common pitfalls.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Consent Are we allowed to use the talk as personal communication in the Appendix of our Master's Thesis?</p> | <p>Answer: Yes</p> |
| <p>Question 2: Status Quo What are you doing? Tell us about you.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>In 2021, Manuel began his internship at Casa do Impacto, during which he wrote an article about the organization's ecosystem. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree at ISEG. Following his internship, Manuel became the Community Manager at Casa do Impacto, where he was responsible for organizing and managing the events hosted by the organization. These events were designed to be benefit-oriented, focusing on providing value to participants. Additionally, Manuel oversaw the Incubation Program at Casa do Impacto. In this role, he managed three key areas of support for startups: incubation, acceleration, and investment grants.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Challenges Impact Entrepreneurs What are the most common problems that (impact) entrepreneurs face, more in early Stage? (For example, legal and tax issues) Do you also see the problem that many impact startups struggle due to a lack of skills, such as in business management?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Manuel highlighted that the startups and people involved with Casa do Impacto represent a diverse range of profiles. As a result, Casa do Impacto must remain flexible to accommodate various challenges faced by these different groups. The main goal of Casa do Impacto is to help startups go to market and create viable MVPs (Minimum Viable Products). However, they also support companies that have already been generating revenue and operating for a few years. Manuel noted that most common challenges faced by their "customers" are early-stage projects founded in Portugal. These startups often seek assistance with project management and financial planning. Legal matters are also a significant concern, with patenting being one of the frequent issues. In addition to legal support, many entrepreneurs seek networking opportunities and access to office spaces. Manuel pointed out that venture capitalists (VCs) are often interested in creating value propositions through connections.</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>Regarding the profiles of entrepreneurs Casa do Impacto works with, Manuel described several distinct groups:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Domestic Entrepreneurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>○ Young and inexperienced: This group often has limited knowledge and struggles with basic questions like how to contact potential partners or suppliers. They usually try to implement early solutions on their own and require guidance on using low-code and no-code tools.</i> <i>○ Older and experienced: These entrepreneurs have more knowledge and are familiar with how the industry operates.</i> 2. International Entrepreneurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>○ Recently relocated and unfamiliar with the local ecosystem: These individuals often lack knowledge of the current status quo in Portugal and are just starting their projects.</i> <i>○ Experienced international entrepreneurs: This group consists of those who bring well-established projects to Portugal, particularly during periods like the COVID-19 pandemic.</i> <p><i>Manuel also emphasized that domestic entrepreneurs tend to conduct a lot of research but frequently struggle to gain access to startup hubs. They often face challenges in contacting companies or suppliers, a common difficulty for first-time founders. According to Manuel, around 60-70% of the startups they work with consist of small teams, typically no more than three people, and often not even working full-time. The remaining 30% tend to have slightly larger teams, with five or more members. The challenges faced by each startup vary significantly depending on the size of the team and the nature of the project.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Experts What are the contact persons in the incubator program? Where do the experts come from?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Manuel emphasized that feedback is crucial for community building. Entrepreneurs often share their contacts and resources with each other, fostering a collaborative environment. He also mentioned the importance of finding a more dynamic way to present this information to enhance engagement and knowledge sharing within the community.</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>He referred to the Maze platform, which connects impact-driven entrepreneurs with corporations, as an example of how to effectively build such networks. When it comes to involving law firms, Manuel stressed the need for a compelling case to convince them to participate. Law firms view young entrepreneurs as potential future clients, which motivates them to offer support, seeing these partnerships as a long-term investment in relationships.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Helped Startups How many Startups do you have helped, and do you think they are Startups who you cannot serve?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Manuel mentioned that Casa do Impacto has helped several cases by facilitating introductions between entrepreneurs and legal or business experts. This approach is also common in other incubators. However, these introductions are not intended to address all of the entrepreneurs' questions in detail. Instead, they provide a broader opportunity for networking and initial guidance. There remains a gap, as more in-depth, ongoing support may be needed beyond these initial connections.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: What do you think of our idea for a platform that integrates corporate volunteering into social entrepreneurship to exchange skills and knowledge? Which features would you like to see on the platform? What challenges do you foresee in implementing this idea?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Manuel observed that many entrepreneurs struggle primarily with regulatory challenges. Often, they do not require formal legal representation but instead seek informal discussions for orientation and guidance. These conversations help entrepreneurs better understand the regulatory landscape without the need for official legal intervention.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 7: Partnership with Law Firms How are the partnerships to law firms structured? What kind of projects are they doing for entrepreneurs? What is their benefit? How is the process for an entrepreneur to access a lawyer?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>To address legal concerns of entrepreneurs, Casa do Impacto has established partnerships with two major law firms. While Casa do Impacto itself does not provide legal advice, they offer a framework for founders to understand how legal processes work, allowing them to inquire about specific legal matters. When asked about the idea of connecting pro bono legal experts with founders, Manuel expressed support for the concept. He identified that legal challenges often start with fundamental issues like employment contracts but can extend to more complex topics such as partnership agreements. Entrepreneurs can freely book consultations with the law firms through Casa do Impacto's platform. The two partnered law firms have different objectives. The first firm is highly engaged and provides practical</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>assistance, such as reviewing partnership contracts and offering mentorship on establishing business strategies. They offer many office hours pro bono, which entrepreneurs use to resolve everyday legal concerns. The second law firm deals with more significant legal challenges, often focusing on advocacy and more complex legal issues.</i></p> <p><i>Manuel explained that the partnered law firms offer their consultation hours on a pro bono basis through Casa do Impacto's platform. Entrepreneurs can book these sessions on a first-come, first-served basis. This allows startups to access valuable legal assistance at no cost.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, these law firms use the partnership as an opportunity to enhance their branding and visibility within the startup ecosystem.</i></p> |
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Appendix A7: Interview with Konrad Kirner (Market Expert)

Name: Konrad Kirner

Date: 17.09.2024

Time: 2pm

Link: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Konrad is an experienced entrepreneur who has worked on around 20 digital products, with a focus on product management and no-code development using platforms like Bubble.io. He specializes in building impact-driven solutions and streamlining internal processes for companies, helping them save time and reduce costs. Konrad is currently developing an impact solution that he sells to corporate clients. Drawing on his experience, he has developed a lean process to guide businesses from idea to high-quality product, minimizing risks associated with no-code projects by focusing on proper planning and management.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Gaining insights from the expert’s experience with the impact venture "impactful," focusing on identifying our target group, social startups and projects, understanding corporate perspectives, learn how to build trust to these organizations, and exploring potential partnerships.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Thesis, we are working on a project to develop a new platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals, including advisors and mentors like yourself. The goal of the platform is to facilitate meaningful connections that support social ventures through mentorship and expert guidance. We are particularly interested in understanding how such a platform can best serve the needs of advisors and mentors, and how it can create impact. Currently, we are ideating on our product.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Consent Are we allowed to use the insights of our talk as a</p> | <p>Answer: Yes</p> |

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| reference for our Master's Thesis? | |
| <p>Question 2: Impactful What are you currently working on as the founder of Impactful?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Founded two years ago an app to seed trees. Now he developed an app that focuses on donation processing and corporate volunteering, which has become increasingly popular.</i> <i>The problem we need to solve is identifying whom we provide value to.</i> <i>They are an agency for product development utilizing a no-code tool, with a product manager based in San Francisco.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Impactful: Identification How did you identify and engage with social entrepreneurs who you support?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>From different perspectives (NGOs and companies), the following points can be made:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. An NGO that delivers on its promises is crucial for establishing trust.</i> <i>2. Collaborating with NGOs should be a priority.</i> <i>3. A financial benefit must be evident for the partnership to be appealing.</i> <i>4. The organization of the initiative should not be overly complicated; the initial focus should be on convincing companies to engage.</i> <i>5. Addressing the specific problems faced by companies is essential for establishing a successful partnership.</i> <i>6. While NGOs may not require such collaborations, corporations do see the value in them.</i> <i>7. The most popular areas for involvement—such as animal welfare, children's initiatives, and environmental protection—are those where people feel they can contribute without causing offense.</i> <p><i>Overall, social impact is an appealing aspect for corporations. There is potential for knowledge transfer; however, challenges include complexity and the question of who will cover the costs. A unique selling proposition (USP) for companies must be clearly defined.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Impactful: Go-To-Market What were the biggest challenges you faced in the early stages of development? Especially regarding trust of and access to corporations?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>To address trust issues, it is important to note that large corporations often connect with NGOs that already have established relationships and trust through reliable contacts.</i> <i>Initially, we should focus on identifying startups and examine whether they have established partnerships with companies. Developing a case with clear benefits is</i></p> |

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| <p>What have you found to be the most critical elements for a successful corporate collaboration in the impact space?</p> <p>What do corporations look for when choosing to partner with impact-focused platforms or ventures?</p> | <p><i>crucial. Alternatively, we can also explore the go-to-market strategy by identifying which NGOs have partnerships with companies and understanding the challenges they face in order to offer effective solutions. Starting with a niche focus, such as legal or tax services, allows for more targeted efforts. Initially, manual matching can be employed to connect relevant parties. Additionally, offering a certification or seal for companies that allocate employees to social causes can enhance their credibility and commitment to corporate social responsibility.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Contacts Do you have any recommendations of an impact startup or project, that works with volunteers, to talk to, to develop the product based on their needs?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Have a look at "voluntario". Intro to its founder to be made.</i></p> |

Appendix A8: Interview with Andi Dreger (Market Expert)

Name: Andi Dreger

Date: 17.09.2024

Time: 1:30 p.m.

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

Background: Andi is the founder of Impact Konnection, a startup that offers local corporate volunteering projects as company events for corporations. With a background at Digital Hub, Andi shifted towards creating greater social impact by addressing sustainability's social pillar. At Impact Konnection, he helps companies engage employees in impactful volunteering initiatives, such as the "Social Day," where corporate teams contribute to various local projects, demonstrating the powerful role of corporate volunteering in driving social sustainability.

Objective: Our objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of Andi's work, as he currently provides a service that aligns with our initial product concept. Additionally, we seek to learn about the challenges he encountered and the reasons behind the failure of a similar initial idea. Furthermore, we aim to explore the daily obstacles he faces in his professional activities.

Introduction: As part of our Thesis, we are working on a project to develop a new platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals, including advisors and mentors like yourself. The goal of the platform is to facilitate meaningful connections that support social ventures through mentorship and expert guidance. We are particularly interested in understanding how such a platform can best serve the needs of advisors and mentors, and how it can create impact. Currently, we are ideating on our product.

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| <p>Question 1: Consent Are we allowed to transcribe the talk to put it in the Appendix of our Master's Thesis?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Yes</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Impact Konnection What are you currently working on as the founder of Impact Konnection?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Andi had previously worked at Digital Hub, where the focus was more revenue-driven rather than impact-driven. After several years, he realized that he wanted to shift towards creating a greater social impact, which led him to found Impact Konnection. He identified three pillars of sustainability: Social (People), Ecology, and Economic Efficiency. Unlike most organizations that prioritize ecological sustainability, Impact Konnection focused more on the social pillar, specifically in the "People Business," offering consulting services in this area."</i> <i>Andi said that one of the major initiatives at Impact Konnection was the "Social Day," where employees actively engaged in various social projects. According to him, during this event, 15 companies came together to support 40 different projects, contributing a total of 1110 volunteer hours. He emphasized that this significant participation clearly demonstrated the powerful impact corporate volunteering could have as part of the social sustainability pillar.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Impact Konnection Did you think about supporting impact konnection with a digital product? Do you think it is feasible?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Andi said that they had indeed thought about supporting Impact Konnection with a digital product. He identified the digital product as a matchmaking platform, which is used during the Social Days. Through this platform, companies can access and select suitable social projects to participate in. Andi explained that the platform is locally oriented because Impact Konnection is purpose-driven, and they want to directly observe the impact of their efforts. He mentioned that not every social initiative has the same focus or is equally effective, so a targeted selection through the platform is important. In terms of strategy, Andi said that their approach was to start small and local to ensure the greatest possible impact, focusing on quality rather than broad, unfocused engagement.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Impact Konnection: Corporations What do you feel are the most common reasons for corporates to look for volunteering</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Andi said that one of the most common reasons for corporates to seek volunteering opportunities is employer branding. He explained that these kinds of projects significantly contribute to enhancing the</i></p> |

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| <p>opportunities? branding? employees are pushing → kind of corporate benefit?</p> | <p><i>company's brand, which is crucial for both recruiting new talent and retaining current employees. Additionally, Andi mentioned that corporate volunteering also supports employee development. It promotes team building as employees engage in social projects together, which helps foster a sense of community and personal growth within the company. This, in turn, can lead to higher employee satisfaction and loyalty.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Alternative What do you think about our alternative idea to provide a platform, incentivized by regional benefits, to bring high-school graduates to volunteering opportunities in the region?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Andi said that he found the idea very interesting and mentioned that it reminded him of a similar concept called Zlto, a South African version of the idea. He highlighted that Zlto successfully incentivizes young people to engage in volunteering opportunities by offering regional benefits, which could be an effective model for implementing in other regions as well. He suggested looking into Zlto's approach as a potential inspiration for developing a localized platform that connects high-school graduates with volunteering opportunities, emphasizing that regional benefits could play a key role in motivating participation.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: General: Key Learnings Are there any common pitfalls or mistakes you would advise avoiding? What revenue models have worked well for you?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Andi said that the market for corporate volunteering is not an easy one. He emphasized that it can be difficult for companies to clearly understand the direct benefits they gain from such team events, which can sometimes create a barrier to entry. In terms of revenue models, Andi highlighted the importance of the matchmaking process. He explained that this process serves as a key revenue stream by connecting companies with relevant social projects. In the future, this could be expanded to include consulting services, providing more tailored solutions to corporate clients. Andi also mentioned that the community aspect is significant, as companies on the platform have the opportunity to exchange experiences and insights. Most of the leads are generated regionally, often coming through existing relationships or "warm leads." In addition, he shared plans to expand the CSR knowledge base to include content such as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which could serve as a valuable resource for companies involved in corporate volunteering.</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>Regarding KPIs, Andi said that at the end of team events, companies receive metrics that provide feedback on the success and satisfaction of the participants, helping them assess the impact of the event.</i></p> <p><i>As for the cost structure, Andi outlined the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Start fee: €249</i> • <i>Per employee: €49</i> <p><i>He added that companies pay for the matchmaking service, and there are different service packages (Basic, Mid, Premium), with the higher-tier packages offering additional features such as social media support.</i></p> |
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Appendix A9: Interview with Bernd Klosterkemper (Market Expert)

Name: Bernd Klosterkemper

Date: 18.09.2024

Time: 16.00

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Bernd is a partner at Ananda Ventures, one of Germany's pioneering impact VC firms. With over 15 years of experience in the field, he works closely with numerous impact-driven entrepreneurs, helping them scale solutions that create positive social and environmental change. Bernd is passionate about the growth and maturity of the impact investing ecosystem and finds it highly rewarding to witness the progress that impact startups have made over the years.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Gain insights into the best practices, challenges, and success factors for creating and running a platform.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction:</p> <p><i>Problem:</i> We are all young students who are eager to found something in the future! All with the goal to create impact. However, we realized in the past month, that we only have the perspective and skills of a business student. We realized we need legal advice, technical support, designers etc. to help us. However, we have very limited budget and therefore, cannot execute our ideas easily.</p> <p><i>Solution:</i> As part of our Master Thesis, we are in the process of creating a platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experts, including corporate employees. To ensure our platform's success, we are seeking insights from individuals who have experience in launching and managing similar platforms. We want to understand the best practices, challenges, and critical success factors from their perspective. This will help you identify effective strategies for user engagement, platform features, monetization, and sustainability, and learn from their experiences to avoid common pitfalls.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Consent Are we allowed to transcribe the talk to put it in the Appendix of our Master's Thesis?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Yes</i></p> |

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| <p>Question 1: Status Quo What are you doing? Tell us about about you.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Bernd explained that he is a partner at Ananda Ventures, one of the first German Impact VC firms. He has been involved in the field for more than 15 years and expressed how much he enjoys witnessing the progress that impact startups have made over time, as well as the evolution of the broader ecosystem.</i> <i>Bernd highlighted the growth and maturity of the impact investing space, emphasizing how rewarding it has been to be part of this journey and to see more startups focused on making a positive societal and environmental impact.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Industry Trends What market or industry trends have you observed recently in the area of social network platforms for social startups?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Bernd mentioned that he hasn't observed many new trends in this area recently but provided a broader perspective based on his experience. He explained that when Ananda Ventures started working with social ventures 15 years ago, the idea was to see what could be economically profitable in this space. At that time, the term "impact investing" wasn't even widely recognized. The goal was to align these ventures as much as possible with regular capital markets, but Bernd noted that this approach didn't work well under the umbrella of social entrepreneurship.</i> <i>He pointed out that there are misunderstandings in Germany about the concept, which is why they prefer the term "impact ventures" instead of "social entrepreneurship." Additionally, VCs are often not the right target group for corporate volunteering, as it doesn't create a sustainable win-win situation in their view. Bernd shared that corporates don't see a direct economic advantage from corporate volunteering and typically treat it as part of a CSR program, which is sometimes only temporary.</i> <i>He also mentioned that their experience with corporate volunteering hasn't been positive, as it requires a reliable partnership to build something substantial. From Bernd's</i></p> |

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| | <i>perspective, corporate volunteering doesn't provide that level of dependability.</i> |
| <p>Question 3: Challenges Impact Entrepreneurs</p> <p>What are the most common problems that impact entrepreneurs face? (For example, legal and tax issues)</p> <p>Do you also see the problem that many impact startups struggle due to a lack of skills, such as in business management?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Bernd shared an interesting example of founders with a recruiting background, pointing out that many experienced professionals in their 60s, who may not have been promoted but possess significant knowledge, could be valuable experts for startups. He suggested that impact entrepreneurs often overlook this pool of talent, which could greatly benefit their ventures.</i></p> <p><i>He also mentioned that Ananda's portfolio could potentially gain from this expertise. This highlights a common challenge for impact startups: the struggle to attract experienced talent and fill critical knowledge gaps, particularly in areas like business management.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback</p> <p>What do you think of our idea for a platform that integrates corporate volunteering into social entrepreneurship to exchange skills and knowledge?</p> <p>What challenges do you foresee in implementing this idea?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Bernd suggested that it could be useful to look at incubators as indicators of what founders truly need. He emphasized that incubators are often a good reference point for understanding the kinds of support, skills, and resources entrepreneurs require. By analyzing these models, you could better tailor the platform to meet the specific needs of social entrepreneurs.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of challenges, Bernd pointed out that understanding and adapting to the actual needs of founders, especially through incubator insights, will be key to making the platform effective.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Tasks for Corporate Volunteers</p> <p>In your opinion, what tasks would be particularly suitable for corporate volunteers in a startup context?</p> <p>Would you recommend that we focus on a specific niche (e.g., pitch deck creation), or should we pursue a more comprehensive, holistic approach?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Bernd suggested the idea of creating a platform with reviews and recommendations, which would help identify who is knowledgeable and reliable. He emphasized that a system where startups can see which corporate volunteers have expertise and a proven track record would be a critical and valuable feature.</i></p> <p><i>He also noted that ensuring the reliability of volunteers is a big and important point. This could guide startups in choosing the right</i></p> |

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| | <i>support, whether it's for niche tasks like pitch deck creation or broader, more comprehensive business development needs.</i> |
| <p>Question 6: Differentiation & Competitive Advantage What potential challenges or competitive advantages do you see for us? How could we differentiate ourselves from existing platforms?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Bernd highlighted two main challenges: managing both quality and quantity. He explained that these are the key issues you'll likely face, particularly on the supply side. Ensuring a sufficient number of high-quality volunteers will be difficult, but it's critical to the platform's success. However, he also noted that there's a chance to succeed with corporate volunteering even if it's in smaller quantities, as long as the quality is maintained.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Hypothesis - Ecosystem Support Our hypothesis is that we are not competitors to impact VCs but rather supporters of the ecosystem by helping startups become more professional and reducing the likelihood of failure through skill development. This could also benefit impact VCs, as the entire ecosystem becomes more professional. What do you think of this hypothesis?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Bernd agreed that supporting startups by solving practical pain points, such as providing expertise that helps teams overcome early-stage hurdles, is crucial. He noted that this approach directly addresses some of the issues that prevent teams from making progress. While this does indeed benefit the ecosystem, Bernd emphasized that the real value lies in resolving these frustrating pain points that can keep teams stuck.</i></p> |

Appendix A10: Interview with Kim Duc Tran (Market Expert)

Name: Kim Duc Tran

Date: 24.09.2024

Time: 11.00 a.m.

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Kim Duc Tran is a partner at a German early-stage venture capital fund, Dieter von Holtzbrinck Ventures. He has been a VC investor for 20 years and specialises in Ed-tech and Climate-Tech.</p> |
| <p>Objective: Gain insights into the best practices, challenges, and success factors for creating and running a platform.</p> |
| <p>Introduction: <i>Problem:</i> We are all young students who are eager to found something in the future! All with the goal to create impact. However, we realized in the past month, that we only have the perspective and skills of a business student. We realized we need legal advice, technical</p> |

support, designers etc. to help us. However, we have very limited budget and therefore, cannot execute our ideas easily.

Solution: As part of our Master Thesis, we are in the process of creating a platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experts, including corporate employees. To ensure our platform's success, we are seeking insights from individuals who have experience in launching and managing similar platforms. We want to understand the best practices, challenges, and critical success factors from their perspective. This will help you identify effective strategies for user engagement, platform features, monetization, and sustainability, and learn from their experiences to avoid common pitfalls.

Question 1: Consent

Are we allowed to transcribe the talk to put it in the Appendix of our master's Thesis?

Answer:

Yes

Question 2: Industry Trends

What market or industry trends have you observed recently in the area of social network platforms for social startups?

Answer:

Kim observed that several networks are slowly emerging, such as Enactus. He noted that universities are increasingly creating networks specifically for impact entrepreneurs, offering them essential support. One key trend Kim highlighted is that many founders, especially in the early stages, need significant help when it comes to regulations. He mentioned that navigating these regulations can be one of the biggest hurdles for social startups. Additionally, Kim pointed out that corporate volunteering is becoming more prominent in connecting employees with ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) topics. He emphasized that this kind of involvement helps prevent greenwashing, as it ensures that employees engage genuinely with social impact initiatives.

Question 3: Challenges Impact Entrepreneurs

What are the most common problems that (impact) entrepreneurs face, more in early Stage? (For example, legal and tax issues)

Do you also see the problem that many impact startups struggle due to a lack of skills, such as in business management?

Answer:

Kim pointed out that legal and tax-related issues are always a significant problem for (impact) entrepreneurs. He also mentioned that technical skills, such as understanding how to build a product, can pose a major challenge. One of the biggest problems, according to Kim, is that founders often struggle to take the leap from testing their ideas to actually moving forward and officially launching their startup. It's not just about experimenting; it's about committing to the process and taking real steps toward building the business. In addition, Kim highlighted the importance of having the right connections for conducting initial

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| | <i>surveys and acquiring the necessary know-how to overcome early-stage challenges.</i> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback What do you think of our idea for a platform that integrates corporate volunteering into social entrepreneurship to exchange skills and knowledge? Which features would you like to see on the platform? What challenges do you foresee in implementing this idea?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Kim emphasized the importance of first addressing the core problem before developing the platform. He explained that it is crucial to clearly identify the specific needs of both the social entrepreneurs and the corporate volunteers to ensure that the platform effectively facilitates the exchange of skills and knowledge.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Differentiation & Competitive Advantage What potential challenges or competitive advantages do you see for us? How could we differentiate ourselves from existing platforms?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Kim suggested that one potential competitive advantage could be offering an ESG certification for companies that actively participate in the platform. This would not only provide recognition for their efforts in corporate volunteering but also create a clear incentive for businesses to engage with the platform regularly.</i></p> |

Appendix A11: Interview with Sofia Amandio (Market Expert)

Name: Sofia Lai Amândio

Date: 11.11.2024

Time: 3.00 p.m.

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

Background: Sofia has extensive experience in social innovation, European funds, and public policy, with roles spanning research, strategy, and international relations. She currently serves as a Strategy and International Relations Advisor for Portugal Social Innovation and is actively involved at the EU level as a member of the Social Innovation Community of Practice (2023–2027), promoting the transfer and scaling of innovative solutions across Europe. Her work focuses on fostering collaboration between national and international stakeholders to advance social entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems.

Objective: The objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact entrepreneurship ecosystem from a top-down perspective. Additionally, it aims to identify the common challenges perceived within this field.

Introduction:

Problem: We are all young students who are eager to found something in the future! All with the goal to create impact. However, we realized in the past month, that we only have the perspective and skills of a business student. We realized we need legal advice, technical support, designers etc to help us. However, we have very limited budget and therefore, cannot execute our ideas easily.

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| <p><i>Solution:</i> As part of our Master Thesis, we are in the process of creating a platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experts, including corporate employees. To ensure our platform's success, we are seeking insights from individuals who have experience in launching and managing similar platforms. We want to understand the best practices, challenges, and critical success factors from their perspective. This will help you identify effective strategies for user engagement, platform features, monetization, and sustainability, and learn from their experiences to avoid common pitfalls.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Consent Are we allowed to use the talk as personal communication in the Appendix of our Master's Thesis?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Yes</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Status Quo What are you doing? Tell us about you.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Sofia serves as an advisor on international relations strategy, maintaining ongoing communication with national stakeholders as well as international bodies, such as the European Union and COP. She plays a significant role in influencing public policy on social innovation, with a particular focus on shaping European policies in this area.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Challenges Impact Entrepreneurs How does Portugal compare to other countries in supporting impact entrepreneurship? Are there specific programs or institutions that facilitate access to legal experts?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Sofia highlighted that Portugal has been a pioneer in social innovation since 2014, being the first EU member state to allocate European Social Fund (ESF) resources to catalyze social innovation ecosystems. At that time, no similar initiative existed within the European Union. Portugal took the lead by investing European funds to create financial instruments aimed at developing a national social innovation ecosystem.</i> <i>Recently, under the new partnership agreements between EU member states and the European Commission for the 2030 period, it has become mandatory for all member states to allocate European funds toward fostering social innovation ecosystems. Previously, there was no consistent policy or mandate guiding or requiring this investment.</i> <i>Sofia noted that Portugal's leadership in this area has influenced other member states, largely through knowledge-sharing within the Community of Practice on Social Innovation. This collaborative learning has enabled Portugal's model to serve as a template for social innovation funding across Europe.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Social Initiative Examples</p> | <p>Answer:</p> |

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| <p>Could you provide examples of social initiatives and describe their key offerings that are commonly available?</p> | <p><i>Sofia explained that Portugal Social Innovation, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and now ESF Plus, supports social innovation and social entrepreneurship initiatives with high potential for social impact. The goal is to fund projects that address social issues through innovative solutions that differ from existing approaches in the public and social sectors. For Portugal Social Innovation, fundable projects must demonstrate a unique approach to solving social problems and show significant potential for impact.</i></p> <p><i>Portugal’s indicators reflect the success of these initiatives: they have approved 698 applications, with a total funding allocation of €152 million. This has mobilized €51 million in social investments at the national level, supporting 481 social innovation projects and engaging 848 social investors, including municipalities. Portugal is pioneering in this area by leveraging public investment, particularly by engaging municipalities, which have a deep understanding of local challenges and can connect these projects to communities in need.</i></p> <p><i>Sofia also highlighted the use of blended finance in Portugal, combining ESF funds, social investments, and national budget contributions. Although some other EU countries have strong ecosystems for social entrepreneurship, such as France, Germany, and Italy, Portugal’s model for social innovation funding is regarded as a leading example. With the new EU mandate for allocating ESF funds toward social innovation, other member states are beginning to adopt similar approaches.</i></p> <p><i>For examples, Sofia recommended exploring the Portugal Social Innovation website, which provides details on funded projects, searchable by social investor, sector, and region. She mentioned projects that range from incremental improvements to entirely disruptive innovations. One example is the “Pavilion Mozart” project, developed by the organization SAMPS in the central region. This initiative reduced social isolation among inmates at the Leiria prison by offering music and opera lessons, including recent rap classes. Through these activities, funded to enhance artistic skills, inmates showed better self-control, received fewer sanctions for misconduct, and had an easier transition back into society after release.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Challenges</p> | <p>Answer:</p> |

What challenges do social projects typically face?

Sofia described her experiences navigating the Community of Practice (COP) for social innovation and attending meetings in cities such as Brussels, Paris, and Turin, which brought together 100 to 200 social entrepreneurs and managing authorities involved in social innovation. She emphasized that, in digital terms, there is a significant opportunity to create a platform that meets the needs of social entrepreneurs. According to Sofia, the ideal solution would involve advanced technology, including artificial intelligence and agile platforms, to enhance the matching process for projects and partnerships. She explained that entrepreneurs desire a digital environment that does not yet exist—a platform where social innovators could showcase their projects and efforts, enabling entrepreneurs from different member states to access and learn from what others are implementing. While there are existing platforms that allow social entrepreneurs to upload project information, these remain in a rudimentary stage. Sofia added that such platforms typically rely on validation to ensure accuracy and compliance with platform requirements, but they lack the sophistication needed to fully meet the demands of the ecosystem.

Sofia envisioned a comprehensive international mapping platform for social innovation projects. This platform would be geo-referenced, enabling users to pinpoint specific regions and access detailed information about projects, including timelines, implementation calendars, budgets, types of partnerships, financing structures (e.g., blended finance), and levels of innovation. It would also detail what the social entrepreneur or innovator seeks in terms of next steps. She likened this concept to a specialized "LinkedIn for Social Entrepreneurs," where individuals from around the world could connect, share information, and easily discover key project details and social impact indicators in a visually compelling and concise format.

She acknowledged that this type of platform remains a dream, as current systems are fragmented, with information scattered across various platforms. Despite some efforts to consolidate this information, no unified system yet exists. Sofia highlighted the potential value of such a platform for entrepreneurs in Portugal, the European Union, and beyond, such as in transatlantic regions like Canada. For instance,

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| | <p><i>she noted, if a social entrepreneur wanted to replicate or scale a project like Pavilion Mozart in Paris, they could use this platform to identify relevant partners, social investors, and funding opportunities. This comprehensive tool would allow them to efficiently connect with key players and establish their project in a new location. Sofia concluded by emphasizing that this vision, while ambitious, represents a crucial step toward supporting social innovation at a global scale.</i></p> |
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Appendix A12: Interview with Employee Participated in Corporate Volunteering Initiatives (Market Expert)

Note: At the request of the parties involved, the names of the individual and the company mentioned in the discussion have been anonymized.

Name: Anonymized Corporate Employee

Date: 26.09.2024

Time: 4:30 p.m.

LinkedIn: -

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| <p>Background: She is a corporate employee at a consultancy firm and actively participates in the corporate volunteering program offered by her company.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: The purpose of this discussion is to gain insights into corporate volunteering programs. The interviewee previously worked at a consultancy that, together with an intern, developed a corporate volunteering initiative. Given that corporate volunteering could serve as a viable go-to-market strategy for our product, we are particularly interested in learning about the internal structures, incentivization methods, how volunteering is integrated with daily operations, and the potential benefits of externally branding such initiatives.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Thesis, we are working on a project to develop a new platform that connects young social entrepreneurs with experienced professionals, including advisors and mentors like yourself. The goal of the platform is to facilitate meaningful connections that support social ventures through mentorship and expert guidance. We are particularly interested in understanding how such a platform can best serve the needs of advisors and mentors, and how it can create impact. Your insights and experiences are invaluable to us in shaping a platform that effectively supports social impact initiatives and fosters impactful mentorship relationships.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Consent</p> | <p>Answer: <i>She gave her consent while asking to anonymize the company she worked for “consultancy” and the country the corporate volunteering projects were in (developing country).</i></p> |

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| <p>Question 2: Structure Can you describe the structure of the corporate volunteering program you participated in?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>During the interview, the participant explained that involvement in the development project in a developing country was not mandatory. The interviewee completed a 3–4-month internship and was then able to support the project for an additional 1-2 months. Although the impact institute operates independently, a connection to the corporate is made that allows every employee at the consultancy to participate in 1-2 projects in the developing country if they choose to. Some of the example projects mentioned include the construction of student dormitories, the development of accelerator programs, teaching English, and organizing fundraising initiatives. Some of these tasks were described as requiring significant effort and involvement. Regarding financial arrangements, the interviewee was not fully informed, but mentioned that during their two-month stay, they received their full salary. Participation in the project was voluntary but encouraged by the company. In terms of branding, the participant noted that there are no signs or advertisements of the consultancy in the developing country. The company does not promote its involvement under its own name locally. Finally, it was mentioned that employees do not receive additional benefits, such as vaccination support, for participating in these development projects.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Structure How was it integrated into your work schedule and responsibilities?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>It is not always the case that an employee is stationed in the developing country. However, the accelerator project on-site holds a series of workshops in the spring, during which employees fly out for 1-2 weeks. The willingness among staff to be there on a permanent basis or at least once annually is not particularly high. The workload is very variable, typically amounting to 2-3 hours per week, but it can occasionally exceed this. Social project work is in addition to the regular duties, meaning that sometimes one may leave at midnight instead of 11 PM.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Incentive In your view, what are the most significant benefits employees derive from participating in corporate volunteering?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>The program is very well organized, and the willingness to participate is high. However, no one gains any personal benefits from engaging in Burkina Faso. However, for example, she mentioned, and she heard the same from other colleagues, that this program was a reason for starting at the consulting firm in the first place. It allows employees to engage in meaningful work</i></p> |

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| | <i>alongside their regular duties, thereby enabling them to contribute positively to society in a structured manner.</i> |
| Question 5: Skill-Matching In what ways could the platform help employees better align their professional skills with the needs of volunteering opportunities? | Answer: <i>There is no fixed person responsible, but there is always someone accountable for specific tasks, such as the accelerator program. An organizational chart outlines the leadership positions within the university, including the heads of departments for the degree programs overseen by the supervisors.</i> |
| Question 6: Features In your opinion, what are the most critical factors that companies consider when adopting or scaling a corporate volunteering program? | Answer: <i>Communication between the development country and the consulting firm is already established, operating through Microsoft Teams. However, there was a lack of overview regarding all the projects. Her project team was simultaneously developing a product for automated scheduling, and additional features needed to be integrated, such as identifying the supervisor of each project and tracking the project status. A centralized platform would be very beneficial for the consulting firm. On the other hand, for the individuals on-site in the development country, it would be less useful, as they are often overwhelmed by the simplest tools.</i> |
| Question 7: Open Question Do you have any remarks or any spontaneous hints for us? | Answer: <i>No.</i> |

Appendix A13: Interview with Günther Flaskamp (Legal Expert)

Name: Günther Flaskamp

Date: 01.10.2024

Time: 4:15 p.m.

LinkedIn: -

Background: Günther is a partner at a law firm and a potential customer for the law experts-tailored solution.

Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate.

Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company

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| <p>formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Introduction What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Günther studied law in Germany and has been working in the legal industry for more than 25 years. He runs his own law firm with a partner, focusing primarily on criminal law and labor and social law.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bone Work Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Although Günther's firm does not formally undertake pro bono work, they often provide advice to clients without charging a fee, which could be considered pro bono. Günther explained that they also help non-clients by offering free advice, which is similar to informal pro bono cases.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Startup Legal Challenges In your experience, which areas do startups need the most support with during the early stages of their business? What challenges do you see for young startups, particularly in the legal field, when they are just starting out?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Günther emphasised that start-ups often struggle with choosing the right legal form for their business. Despite a wealth of online resources, many remain uncertain about the tax and legal advantages and disadvantages of different forms. Another common challenge is that startups underestimate themselves in early partnerships, especially in contract negotiations, as they often lack legal representation and make critical mistakes.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services? Would you or your firm use such a platform? What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Günther found the concept attractive, especially because an official platform could clearly display active cases and completed projects, making the process more transparent. In contrast to informal telephone advice, an official platform would allow structured pro bono case handling.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Implementation Challenges What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Günther emphasised that simple legal tasks, such as drafting contracts, can provide a significant boost to start-ups without being overly complex for</i></p> |

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| <p>in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p><i>lawyers. The biggest challenge, however, is finding enough lawyers with the capacity to take on pro bono work alongside their regular caseload.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Outreach Approaches for Legal Experts In terms of strategic partnerships and marketing channels, what do you think would be the most effective way to engage legal professionals like yourself and encourage them to join the platform?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Günther said that he prefers classic methods such as a phone call or an email containing key information that immediately captures his interest. From there, he would proactively seek more details. Additionally, he mentioned that he frequently reads legal journals to identify trends relevant to his work. For instance, he recently came across and purchased an AI platform for legal experts that had been advertised in such a publication. He also highlighted that legal events, such as conferences or trade fairs, are highly effective for introducing new platforms or solutions targeted at legal professionals. He has often seen companies successfully present their products or services at such events.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding strategic partnerships, Günther suggested that collaborations with organizations like bar associations would be particularly beneficial, as they provide access to a broad network of lawyers and often host events tailored to the legal community.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 7: Platform Usage Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Günther is firmly convinced that he and his team already contribute significantly to social causes through their daily legal work. However, he sees the platform as an excellent opportunity to further assist founders while also being able to track the outcomes of his social contributions with a platform. As long as the system can be implemented in a small firm with around five employees, they are definitely open to using it. However, Günther noted that lawyers typically view pro bono work as an unpaid service to the community and may not be inclined to pay for access to such a platform.</i></p> |

Appendix A14: Interview with Lucas Corleis (Legal Expert)

Name: Lucas Corleis

Date: 23.10.2024

Time: 11:30

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Lucas is a Senior Associate at a law firm and a potential customer for the law experts-tailored solution.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Introduction What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Lucas studied law at the University of Mannheim and specialized in labor law. He has 13 years of work experience and worked for large corporations, like Mercedes, and major law firms, such as Littler. Currently, he holds the position of Senior Associate at Littler, specializing in labor law. In addition to his primary focus, Lucas has also gained extensive experience in M&A law transactions.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bono Work Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Lucas said that pro bono cases are part of the work within his firm. These cases are often directed towards clients who may not have the financial resources. Lucas explained that pro bono cases are typically handled internally, although he noted that coordination can sometimes be problematic.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Startup Legal Challenges In your experience, which areas do startups need the most support with during the early stages of their business? What challenges do you see for young startups, particularly in the legal field, when they are just starting out?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Lucas said that one of the main challenges for startups is identifying the right point of contact when it comes to legal support, as lawyers can be costly, and internal resources may not be sufficiently developed at the early stages. He explained that during the founding phase, startups often struggle with choosing the appropriate business structure and drafting their first contracts. As the company moves towards later stages, especially during the seed phase, handling legal agreements for initial funding rounds becomes crucial. Lucas pointed out that while external funding partners might provide some assistance, founders</i></p> |

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| | <i>are often overwhelmed by the complexity of these early agreements and legal formalities.</i> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback</p> <p>What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services?</p> <p>What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Lucas said he found the concept of a platform connecting lawyers with startups for pro bono work very appealing. He mentioned that, as he previously noted, pro bono work in his firm can sometimes face organizational challenges, especially when team members are unaware that someone is handling a pro bono case. With a platform, the process would feel more “official” and transparent. Additionally, Lucas expressed that it would be helpful to track the number of hours dedicated to each project. This feature would allow lawyers to demonstrate their commitment and showcase their pro bono contributions more clearly within the firm and potentially to the broader legal community.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Implementation Challenges</p> <p>What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Lucas said that one of the key advantages of such a system would be its contribution to the startup ecosystem, especially in supporting social startups. He added that the platform could provide lawyers with a sense of giving back to the community, which he sees as a meaningful motivator. However, he identified the main challenge as attracting a sufficient number of lawyers to join the platform. Lucas pointed out that, unlike professionals in management or finance, lawyers tend to be less network oriented. He emphasized that marketing efforts for the platform should be tailored to appeal to lawyers specifically, focusing on strategies that resonate with their professional interests and motivations.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Platform Usage</p> <p>Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Lucas said he personally finds the idea very appealing, especially because, from an entrepreneur’s perspective, he understands the pain points startups face. He expressed an interest in using the platform to support startups with his expertise. However, whether his firm would officially adopt the platform is something that would need to be discussed with the company’s decision-makers responsible for such initiatives. Regarding payment, Lucas noted that, as lawyers, they already contribute on a volunteer basis with pro bono cases and thus may not be inclined to pay for the platform. He added that it’s likely other lawyers would feel similarly about paying for access to a pro bono platform.</i></p> |

Appendix A15: Interview with Eva Pohl (Legal Expert)

Name: Eva Pohl

Date: 25.10.2024

Time: 11:30

Website: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Eva Pohl is a judge at the Federal Social Court in Kassel with a background in law and a potential customer for the law experts-tailored solution.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Introduction What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Eva Pohl is an Associate Judge at the Federal Social Court in Kassel. With a background in law, she has transitioned into retirement but remains actively involved in the legal field. Eva has served as a volunteer judge in the social court for over twelve years, and on June 1, 2010, she moved to her current role at the Federal Social Court. Additionally, she has held a position in the District Women's Committee, where she contributes her expertise on a volunteer basis.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bono Work Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Eva said that when she practiced as a lawyer, pro bono work was present but far less common and not as well-implemented as it is today. At that time, it was much more challenging to take on such cases due to restrictions from employers. She noted that the working environment has since evolved significantly, making it easier and more accessible for lawyers to engage in pro bono work.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Startup Legal Challenges In your experience, which areas do startups need the most support with during the early stages of their business?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Eva said that startups commonly need support with foundational aspects, such as selecting the appropriate legal structure. However, from her perspective as a judge, she frequently encounters more complex challenges. She explained that startups often face lawsuits related to patents or accusations that their</i></p> |

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| <p>What challenges do you see for young startups, particularly in the legal field, when they are just starting out?</p> | <p><i>business model violates regulatory guidelines. Health startups, in particular, are vulnerable, as they may risk insolvency if they fail to secure proper legal guidance on regulatory matters. Eva emphasized that these issues can be detrimental to the survival of a startup and highlight the importance of comprehensive legal advice from the outset.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services? Would you or your firm use such a platform?</p> <p>What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Eva said she finds the idea of such a platform very exciting and would love to use it. She explained that giving back by helping others brings her great joy and is something she truly values. Eva mentioned that if the platform is user-friendly and easy to navigate, she would be eager to engage with it. Furthermore, given her familiarity with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and her involvement in promoting these goals in her hometown of Cologne, Eva expressed interest in knowing which SDGs each pro bono project aligns with. She added that SDG 11, focusing on sustainable cities, is particularly meaningful to her as she is passionate about contributing to sustainable urban development.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Implementation Challenges What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Eva said that the platform's greatest advantage lies in its ability to connect two worlds—lawyers eager to give back and startups in need of guidance—creating a dynamic ecosystem where both parties can thrive. However, Eva noted that the primary challenge would likely be ensuring a steady supply of motivated lawyers willing to participate. She observed that, while many lawyers are eager to make a difference, finding time outside of regular responsibilities can be a barrier.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Platform Usage Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Eva said that she would certainly use the platform as an individual and could even imagine interest from institutions like the Federal Social Court in similar initiatives. However, regarding payment, Eva emphasized that she would prefer not to pay a fee, as she views this as a social project rather than a profit-based company. If a fee were unavoidable, she would only consider a very modest amount, as she believes accessibility is crucial for a platform focused on social impact.</i></p> |

Appendix A16: Interview with Feray Altunsuyu (Legal Expert)

Name: Feray Altunsuyu

Date: 31.10.2024

Time: 12:30

LinkedIn: -

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| <p>Background: Feray is currently studying law, with a focus on labor law at the University of Cologne, and a potential customer for the law experts-tailored solution after her studies.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Introduction What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work.</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Feray is currently studying law in Germany at the University of Cologne, specializing in labor law. She aspires to become a judge in the future. She envisions her future role as a judge not only as a position of law but as an opportunity to drive positive change and inclusivity in society.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bon Work Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Feray said that she first learned about pro bono work in a university course where the concept was introduced as a way for lawyers to help those with limited financial means. During one of her internships, she also observed an initiative where the firm was beginning to explore pro bono cases, aiming to assist people who couldn't afford legal services.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Startup Legal Challenges In your experience, which areas do startups need the most support with during the early stages of their business? What challenges do you see for young startups, particularly in the</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Feray said that one of the biggest challenges for startups lies in navigating regulatory requirements and ensuring compliance. She pointed out that new businesses can quickly become overwhelmed by the range of industry-specific regulations they must adhere to, including data protection, consumer rights, and environmental standards. Additionally, for technology-driven startups, protecting intellectual property becomes crucial.</i></p> |

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| <p>legal field, when they are just starting out?</p> | |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services? Would you or your firm use such a platform?</p> <p>What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Feray said the idea of a platform connecting lawyers with startups for pro bono services sounds very interesting, as she hadn't encountered the concept of pro bono work tailored specifically to startups before. She explained that it aligns well with her interests in both the startup ecosystem and the legal field, so she would definitely be interested in using it.</i></p> <p><i>As for features, Feray suggested a match-making system that aligns lawyers' specialties with the specific needs of startups, ensuring the best fit for each case.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Implementation Challenges What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Feray said that the platform's main advantage would be its potential to strengthen the startup ecosystem, particularly by supporting social startups, which could help attract more people into the space. She believes that by assisting socially driven startups, the platform could inspire other entrepreneurs to launch impactful projects, knowing that legal support is available.</i></p> <p><i>On the challenge side, Feray pointed out that effectively advertising the platform and reaching the right audience could be difficult.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Platform Usage Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Feray said she would definitely use the platform to support startups, especially since it aligns with her passion for fostering innovation and helping socially conscious businesses. She sees it as a unique chance to apply her legal knowledge in a meaningful way. Feray added that it would be incredible to have access to a mentor on the platform as a student, allowing upcoming jurists like herself to start advising early on under professional guidance. She believes this platform could greatly benefit many aspiring lawyers by providing them with real-world experience. Regarding payment, Feray emphasized that the platform should ideally remain accessible for lawyers contributing pro bono, as they're already volunteering their time and expertise.</i></p> |

Name: Rainer Prokisch

Date: 05.10.2024

Time: 18:00 p.m.

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

Background: Rainer Prokisch is a retired professor of International and European Tax Law from Maastricht University. Previously, he served as a legal and tax adviser at a law firm.

Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate.

Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective.

Question 1: Introduction

What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work.

Answer:

Rainer Prokisch is a retired professor of International and European Tax Law from Maastricht University. Previously, he served as a legal and tax adviser at a law firm. Now, he volunteers his expertise to support social projects, including advising clients on tax and inheritance matters for charitable causes. He also volunteers at an organization that assists elderly and dementia patients who need tax help.

Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bono Work

Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms?

Answer:

He is currently gaining initial experience with pro bono work by supporting elderly individuals in an organization. Since retiring, he has aimed to find meaningful projects where he can contribute and create value, especially now that he has increased capacity. Additionally, he notes a shift in the legal field, observing that more law firms are beginning to offer pro bono services. He mentions Pöller Kanzlei in Berlin and Munich as an example, highlighting their support for projects in African villages through on-the-ground assistance.

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| <p>Question 3: Platform Feedback</p> <p>What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services? Would you or your firm use such a platform?</p> <p>What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Rainer mentioned that he is highly interested in a platform that would connect him with social entrepreneurs to find impactful projects he can support. He envisions using this platform to offer consultation and advice but emphasizes the need for it to be trustworthy and credible. His primary focus is ensuring that the founders he supports are genuinely making an impact. Therefore, he would like the platform to provide a transparent selection process for startups joining, to ensure they meet impact-driven criteria.</i></p> <p><i>He also emphasizes that founders often have unrealistic expectations regarding consultation sessions, making expectation management crucial. While he can act as an advisor and provide support, he cannot represent clients in court for specific matters as a volunteer. He sees the platform's value in generating new leads for future engagements while setting clear boundaries on the advisory role.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Implementation Challenges</p> <p>What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Legal advisors can offer valuable guidance but are limited when it comes to providing more comprehensive support. Due to professional regulations, bar associations are restricted from offering free services. However, volunteers are often able to provide advisory services, though they are limited to consultation rather than full legal representation. Furthermore, it's essential to define the market clearly, as the choice of legal structure can vary significantly depending on the country.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Platform Usage</p> <p>Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>When asked if he or his firm would actually use this platform to support startups, his response was positive. He is interested in using it as a way to scout for new social projects he can support. However, he clarified that he is only willing to contribute his time, rather than paying a fee to participate.</i></p> |

Appendix A18: Interview with Javid Safaei (Legal Expert)

Name: Javid Safaei

Date: 25.11.2024

Time: 16:30

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

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| <p>Background: Javid Safaei holds a law degree from the University of Giessen and an LL.M. from Columbia Law School. With a background in M&A law, he is currently Managing Director of a healthcare consultancy, focusing on legal and holistic support for medical practices. Additionally, he is an active business angel.</p> | |
| <p>Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate.</p> | |
| <p>Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective.</p> | |
| <p>Question 1: Introduction</p> <p>What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work.</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Javid said that he started his career with a traditional law education, practicing law during his studies. He later pursued an LL.M. at Columbia Law School, which allowed him to explore opportunities in the U.S. and shift his focus to the business side of the legal profession. He explained that he found startups and M&A activities far more exciting and dynamic compared to traditional civil law, which ultimately influenced his career path.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bono Work</p> <p>Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Javid said that he first encountered the concept of pro-bono work during his legal studies and even through popular law series like "Suits". He personally experienced pro-bono practices in the U.S., where he observed how law firms integrated them into their services. Additionally, he mentioned that some of his colleagues in Germany also include pro-bono work within their firms. Javid finds the idea of helping disadvantaged individuals, ensuring they receive proper legal guidance for their problems, highly commendable.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Startup Legal Challenges</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>From Javid's perspective, he said that he thinks that startups often require the most support in areas like</i></p> |

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| <p>In your experience, which areas do startups need the most support with during the early stages of their business?</p> <p>What challenges do you see for young startups, particularly in the legal field, when they are just starting out?</p> | <p><i>accounting and legal and tax, as many founders have limited knowledge. He emphasized that challenges can vary significantly depending on the founder's background, but typically, selecting the appropriate legal entity and preparing the first tax declaration are critical hurdles.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback</p> <p>What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services? Would you or your firm use such a platform?</p> <p>What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Javid said he found the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services innovative and impactful, as he hadn't seen anything like it before. Combining startup support with a pro bono approach, he believes, fills a valuable gap in the startup ecosystem.</i></p> <p><i>Although his current consultancy work is not directly related to law, Javid mentioned that he would consider using such a platform to help startups with his experience from his studies and practical experience from M&A law. He also suggested features such as a chat function to enable networking and collaboration between legal experts and entrepreneurs, fostering a more connected ecosystem.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Implementation Challenges</p> <p>What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Javid said that one of the biggest advantages of a pro-bono system is its ability to efficiently connect startups with legal experts, enabling quick and accessible advice. He emphasized that such a platform could significantly streamline the support process, making legal guidance more approachable for startups. However, Javid pointed out potential challenges, particularly in creating a platform that effectively caters to the needs of both sides—startups and legal experts. Ensuring that the platform is user-friendly and addresses the specific requirements of each group is crucial for its success. He also highlighted the difficulty in maintaining the motivation and long-term engagement of participating lawyers, suggesting that providing clear incentives and demonstrating the value of their contributions would be essential to overcome this hurdle.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Platform Usage</p> <p>Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer:</p> <p><i>Javid said that he would personally consider using the platform to support startups, as he finds the idea innovative and aligned with his interest in fostering the entrepreneurial ecosystem. However, he noted that he would not be willing to pay for access to the platform, as his contribution would already involve investing time and</i></p> |

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| | <i>expertise in pro-bono work. Javid emphasized that for many legal professionals, pro-bono efforts are seen as a service to the community, and additional costs might discourage participation.</i> |
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Appendix A19: Interview with Joel Kreklau (Legal Expert)

Name: Joel Kreklau

Date: 29.11.2024

Time: 18:30

LinkedIn: [Link](#)

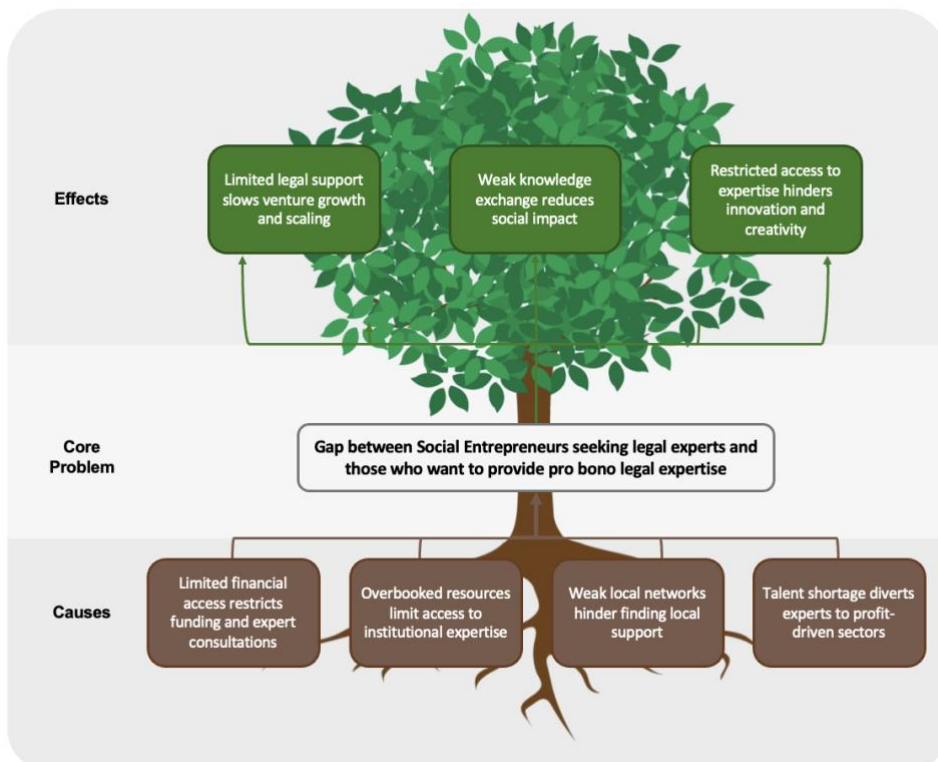
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| Background: Joel is a partner at a Tax Law firm and a potential customer for the law experts-tailored solution. | |
| Objective: Understand how legal support, particularly in the areas of corporate law, contract law, and tax law, can be provided to startups. The goal is to demonstrate the benefits of a platform that facilitates pro bono services for startups and evaluate the willingness of law firms to participate. | |
| Introduction: As part of our Master Thesis, we are developing a new platform designed to connect young startups with experienced lawyers who are willing to offer pro bono services. In particular, we aim to engage law firms and legal professionals interested in providing their expertise free of charge to assist startups with legal issues such as company formation, contract drafting, and tax matters. The platform seeks to facilitate knowledge exchange and legal advice by matching startups with the appropriate legal experts. Our goal is to understand how such a platform could be integrated into existing pro bono programs, what benefits it offers, and what specific features or support might be needed from a legal perspective. | |
| Question 1: Introduction What are you doing? Tell us a bit about yourself and your work. | Answer: <i>Joel Kreklau completed his Master's in International Taxation (M.I. Tax) at the University of Hamburg and earned his certification as a tax advisor from the Steuerberaterkammer Köln, Germany.</i> <i>Professionally, Joel has several years of experience as a tax advisor, having worked for prominent firms such as Forvis and Mazars, as well as the Bremen Tax Office in Germany. He currently serves as a Partner at a tax advisory firm.</i> |
| Question 2: Experience with Pro-Bono Work Have you ever encountered pro-bono cases in your firm or from other law firms? | Answer: <i>Joel shared that, while he does not officially participate in pro-bono work, he often helps friends and colleagues with tax-related questions without charging fees. For him, this feels similar to pro-bono work, as it involves providing expertise to those who lack the knowledge or</i> |

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| | <p><i>resources to address certain issues. Additionally, he mentioned a colleague, Markus Wollweber, who founded an initiative called "Tax Clinic," which provides pro-bono tax advisory services. Joel found this initiative highly inspiring and believes it reflects the growing interest in supporting underserved communities through tax expertise.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 3: Startup Legal Challenges In your experience, which areas do startups need the most support with during the early stages of their business?</p> <p>What challenges do you see for young startups, particularly in the legal field, when they are just starting out?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Joel emphasized that one of the biggest challenges for startups is finding the right tax advisor. Many firms either lack the expertise needed for startup-specific issues or are prohibitively expensive. Additionally, availability is a significant issue, as many tax advisors are overbooked and unable to take on new clients. He highlighted that startups often face difficulties navigating legal and tax complexities without proper guidance and finding advisors with the right experience and availability is particularly challenging.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 4: Platform Feedback What do you think of the idea of a platform that connects lawyers with startups for pro-bono services? Would you or your firm use such a platform?</p> <p>What features or functionalities would you like to see on such a platform to make your work easier and add value?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Joel finds the idea of a platform that facilitates quick and efficient legal and tax support for startups very compelling. He noted that one of the biggest pain points is the time it takes to find suitable advisors, and such a platform could address this issue. He also sees potential in the platform's ability to enhance reputation and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) aspects for mid-sized and large tax firms, particularly those looking to strengthen their social image in contrast to more profit-driven approaches.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of features, Joel highlighted the importance of fast communication, such as a chat function that allows immediate responses. Additionally, he suggested including detailed profiles of both advisors and entrepreneurs, as this would build trust and transparency on both sides.</i></p> |
| <p>Question 5: Implementation Challenges What do you see as the biggest advantages and potential challenges in implementing such a pro-bono system?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Joel noted that the main advantage of such a platform would be its official and structured nature, providing a centralized solution to connect legal and tax advisors with social entrepreneurs. He emphasized that demand from social entrepreneurs would likely be very high, as they often struggle to access affordable advisory services.</i></p> <p><i>However, he also acknowledged potential challenges on the supply side, particularly with legal and tax</i></p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p><i>professionals. Many advisors already face high levels of stress and heavy workloads, which might limit their willingness to participate in pro-bono initiatives, even if they are interested in the concept</i></p> |
| <p>Question 6: Platform Usage Would you or your firm actually use this platform, to help startups? What is your willingness to pay?</p> | <p>Answer: <i>Joel stated that while he values the concept of dedicating time to pro-bono work, he would not be willing to pay a high membership fee to access the platform. He explained that, as a partner in a tax advisory firm, his time is already a significant investment, and he would only consider paying a very minimal fee if it served as a marketing tool for his firm.</i></p> <p><i>He further noted that smaller firms and freelancers might find such platforms less attractive due to resource constraints. However, for larger firms with more resources, the platform could be essential, especially if the time commitment remains minimal and does not interfere with day-to-day operations.</i></p> |

Appendix B: Market Challenges and USPs

Appendix B1: Problem Tree



Appendix B2: USPs Per User Group

Impact Entrepreneurs and Legal Experts Benefit From Three Key USPs Each



Appendix C: Target Market Selection

Appendix C1: Founding Team

Meet our Team



Neele Himmelsbach
CEO

Academic experience:

- Bachelor in International Business at Maastricht University
- Exchange Semester at Stellenbosch University
- Master in Management at Nova SBE

Professional experience:

- Deloitte Digital (*Brand & CX Strategy*)
- HelloFresh (*Brand Storytelling*)
- FRIDAY, EatFirst (*Startups*)



Caner Uslu
CFO

Academic experience:

- Bachelor in International Business at Cologne University of Applied Sciences
- Exchange Semester at Istanbul Yeditepe University
- Master in Management at Nova SBE

Professional experience:

- BMW Group (*Finance Strategy*)
- FINVIA Family Office (*Private Equity-Impact Investing*)
- Dieter von Holtzbrinck (*Venture Capital*)



Karim Qunaibi
CTO

Academic experience:

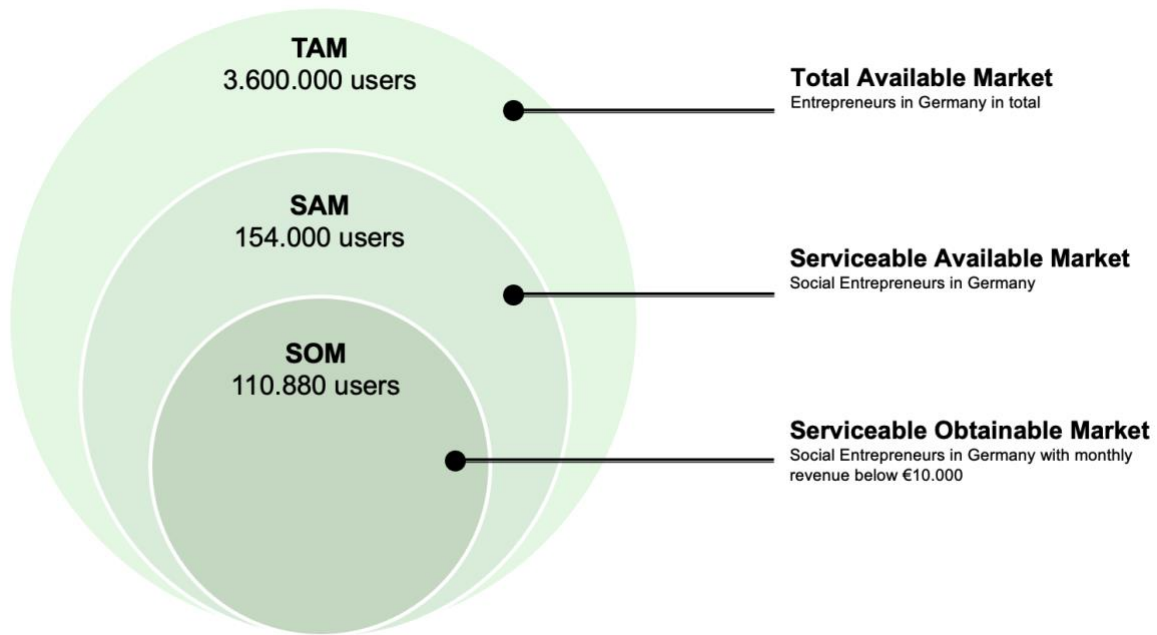
- Bachelor in International Business at Maastricht University
- Exchange Semester at UC San Diego
- Master in Management at Nova SBE

Professional experience:

- Liberty Ventures & Lhotse (*Startups*)
- Flex and HTGF (*PE and VC Fond*)
- Deloitte (*IT-Strategy and M&A Consulting*)



Appendix C2: Market Opportunity



Appendix D: Feature Development Process

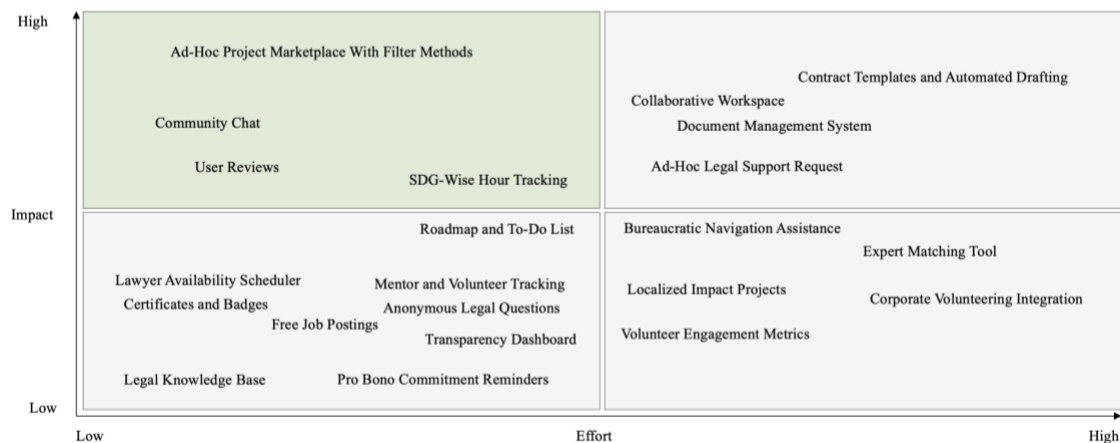
Appendix D1: Feature Longlist

| Name | Description | Short List |
|--|--|------------|
| Category 1: Find the Right Lawyer or Project and Matching | | |
| Ad-Hoc Project Dashboard with Filter Methods | A dashboard/marketplace where corporate volunteers browse social projects and collaborate, with filters for project type, impact, and required skills. | Yes |
| Expert Matching Tool | Pairs entrepreneurs with experts based on relevant criteria such as skills, interests, and project goals. | No |
| Ad-Hoc Legal Support Request | Enables entrepreneurs to request quick legal consultations for urgent matters like contract reviews or legal clarifications. | No |
| Lawyer Availability Scheduler | Displays available slots for legal experts to offer pro bono consultations, simplifying connection with legal professionals. | No |
| Category 2: Profiles | | |
| User Reviews | A rating and review system that helps entrepreneurs assess the reliability and skill level of advisors on the platform. | Yes |
| Certificates and Badges | Recognizes experts and volunteers for contributions through certificates and badges, encouraging engagement. | No |
| Mentor and Volunteer Tracking | Tracks volunteer contributions and mentor engagements, ensuring transparency and quality within the platform. | No |
| Category 3: Impact Measurement | | |
| SDG-Wise Hour Tracking | Allows users to track hours worked on SDG-related tasks, aiding in impact reporting for CSR purposes. | Yes |
| Localized Impact Projects | Connects social entrepreneurs and volunteers within specific regions to create local impact. | No |
| Volunteer Engagement Metrics | Tracks corporate employee engagement in social projects, offering data on CSR performance and employee development. | No |

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| Transparency Dashboard | Tracks completed legal cases and pro bono work, offering lawyers a clear view of their contributions and impact. | No |
| Category 4: Work and Collaboration | | |
| Roadmap and To-Do List | Organizes workflows and prioritizes tasks, improving productivity for startup teams. | Yes |
| Document Management System | Centralizes document storage and sharing, enabling entrepreneurs to manage and share legal and business documents securely. | No |
| Collaborative Workspace | A shared virtual workspace for co-founders to collaborate on tasks, documents, and business roadmaps in real-time. | No |
| Bureaucratic Navigation Assistance | Assists entrepreneurs in navigating bureaucratic procedures like company registration or funding applications. | No |
| Contract Templates and Automated Drafting | Provides customizable legal templates for common business documents, ensuring quick review and legal compliance. | No |
| Category 5: Add-Ons | | |
| Community Chat | Facilitates real-time communication among users, fostering collaboration and the exchange of ideas in a supportive network. | Yes |
| Free Job Postings | Entrepreneurs can post job offers to fill key roles, aiding in team building without recruitment costs. | No |
| Corporate Volunteering Integration | Integrates corporate volunteering into the platform, encouraging corporate employee participation in social projects. | No |
| Legal Knowledge Base | A repository of frequently asked legal questions, providing startups with easy access to basic legal advice. | No |
| Pro Bono Commitment Reminders | Sends automated reminders to lawyers about their pro bono commitments, ensuring obligations are met. | No |
| Anonymous Legal Questions | Allows entrepreneurs to ask legal questions anonymously and receive quick responses from experts. | No |

Appendix D2: Impact-Effort Matrix

Using the Impact-Effort Matrix to prioritize features for development



Appendix E: (Social) Business Model Canvas

Social Business Model Canvas

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Key Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Experts working pro bono People (staff) Social Entrepreneurs (platform users), reimbursements) Digital Platform Funding (grant, angel investors) <p><i>What resources will you need to run your activities? People, finance, access?</i></p> | <p>Key Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matching Social Entrepreneurs with Legal Experts Providing tailored legal advice and one-on-one mentoring Facilitating workshops and knowledge-sharing sessions Developing and scaling the platform using low-code/no-code tools Tracking and reporting SDG contributions <p><i>What programme and non-programme activities will your organisation be carrying out?</i></p> | <p>Type of Intervention</p> <p>A digital platform that bridges the knowledge gap for social entrepreneurs by offering tailored legal expertise. The intervention focuses on connecting impact entrepreneurs with corporate legal experts to address pressing challenges while fostering innovation and SDG alignment.</p> <p><i>What is the format of your intervention? Is it a workshop? A service? A product?</i></p> | <p>Segments</p> <p>Social entrepreneurs (early-stage and scaling ventures) who face challenges in legal and tax areas due to limited knowledge and expertise.</p> | <p>Value Proposition</p> <p>For Social Entrepreneurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate, tailored legal advice and access to a diverse network <p>For Social Entrepreneurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to ESG goals through pro bono work <p>Social Value Proposition</p> <p>Impact Measures</p> <p>Improved knowledge and understanding of legal and tax aspects, reduced failure rates due to legal and tax challenges, and higher satisfaction levels among social entrepreneurs. Enhanced collaboration within the ecosystem.</p> |
| <p>Partners + Key Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law firms Legal associations Social Entrepreneurship Networks Government bodies University hubs & Incubator programs <p><i>Who are the essential groups you will need to involve to deliver your programme? Do you need special access or permissions?</i></p> | <p>Channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct outreach to Social Entrepreneurs and Legal Experts via email, phone and LinkedIn University and incubator events (workshops, info sessions) Content marketing (blog posts, publications in legal magazine) Event Marketing LinkedIn Advertising | <p>Surplus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinvestment in platform scalability and feature enhancement Expanding services to include new markets and user groups <p><i>Where do you plan to invest your profits?</i></p> | <p>Revenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premium Service subscriptions for outcome-based legal services with a monthly payment model <p><i>Break down your revenue sources by %</i></p> | <p>Customer Value Proposition</p> <p>Empowering social entrepreneurs to overcome legal and tax barriers by providing affordable, tailored expertise and access to a collaborative network, enabling them to scale their ventures and drive greater social impact.</p> <p><i>What do your customers want to get out of this initiative?</i></p> |

Inspired by The Business Model Canvas

Appendix F KPI Overview

| Category | KPI | Description |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Platform performance | Task Completion Rate | Percentage of users who successfully complete essential onboarding steps, such as registration and profile setup. |
| Platform performance | Bounce Rate | Percentage of visitors who leave the platform without taking any action. |
| Platform performance | Time on Task | Measures how long users take to complete important actions, indicating the efficiency of the interface. |
| Platform performance | Click-Through Rate (CTR) | Indicates how effectively the design guides users to complete key actions. |
| Platform performance | Pages per Session | Average number of pages viewed per session, showing overall engagement. |
| Platform performance | Retention Rate and Churn Rate | Percentage of users who continue using the platform over time (retention) versus those who leave during a specific period (churn) |
| Platform performance | Net Promoter Score (NPS) | Measures user satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the platform to others. |

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Commercial Success | Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) | Average cost to acquire a new user. |
| Commercial Success | Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) | Total revenue or profit generated by a user over their entire relationship with the platform. |
| Commercial Success | Cash Burn Rate (CBR) | Measures how quickly the platform uses its cash reserves over a specific period. |
| Commercial Success | Conversion Rate | Percentage of registered users who complete or accept a project. |
| Commercial Success | Referral Rate | Percentage of users who refer new users to the platform, showing organic growth. |
| Commercial Success | Freemium-to-Premium Conversion Rate | Percentage of users who upgrade from free to premium. |
| Commercial Success | Monthly Active users (MAUs) | Tracks the number of active users on a monthly basis, reflecting user engagement. |
| Impact Measurement | Total Pro Bono Hours | Tracks the total hours of pro bono legal work completed on the platform. |
| Impact Measurement | SDG Contribution Tracking | Measures the amount of legal support provided towards each Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). |
| Impact Measurement | Volunteer Retention | Percentage of legal experts who remain active and provide ongoing pro bono support over time. |
| Impact Measurement | Entrepreneur Growth | Number of social entrepreneurs who successfully scale their ventures with the platform's legal support. |
| Impact Measurement | CSR/ESG Utilization | Number of companies using the platform to support their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting. |

Appendix G P&L Statement FY2025-FY2028

| EOY Summary | FY2025 | FY2026 | FY2027 | FY2028 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Total Paying Users | 860 | 2.765 | 7.778 | 24.541 |
| Total Revenue | € 38.687 | € 124.393 | € 388.811 | € 1.349.528 |
| Revenue from Premium Users | € 38.687 | € 124.393 | € 388.811 | € 1.349.528 |
| Fix Costs | € 25.000 | € 154.670 | € 218.202 | € 496.117 |
| App & Website | € 12.600 | € 14.860 | € 16.326 | € 24.705 |
| Founding, Launch & Legal | € 10.000 | € 11.450 | € 13.113 | € 22.412 |
| Labour Cost | € - | € 125.160 | € 183.960 | € 441.000 |
| Other Cost | € 2.400 | € 3.200 | € 4.803 | € 8.000 |
| Marketing Cost | € 11.400 | € 68.280 | € 90.396 | € 155.125 |
| Strategic Partnerships | € 6.000 | € 6.600 | € 7.260 | € 10.890 |
| Marketing Channels | € 5.400 | € 61.680 | € 83.136 | € 144.235 |
| Total Costs | € 36.400 | € 222.950 | € 308.598 | € 651.242 |
| EBITDA | € 2.287 | -€ 98.558 | € 80.213 | € 698.286 |
| Corporate Tax (21%) | € - | -€ 20.697 | € 16.845 | € 146.640 |
| Net Income | € 2.287 | -€ 119.255 | € 63.369 | € 551.646 |

Appendix H Cost Structure

Appendix H1: Operational Fixed Costs Assumptions

| Category | Description | Phase | Monthly Cost (€) | Yearly Cost (€) | Growth Rate assumption (phase 1-3) | Growth Rate assumption for Phase 4 (Expansion) | Source of Costs |
|---|---|----------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Platform Development | Lower fixed costs are achieved in comparison to market-standard costs, as the CTO, who is a founding team member, is responsible for developing and maintaining the platform. The growth rate reflects the addition of new features, continuous adjustments to the platform, and scalability efforts as the platform grows. | Year 1-4 | 1.050 € | 12.600 € | 10% | 50% | How Much Does It Cost to Build an Online Platform 2024 |
| Platform maintenance | As the platform is developed and launched in the first year, no maintenance costs will be incurred during this phase. Starting from Year 2, yearly maintenance costs are estimated at €1,000, which includes server upkeep, bug fixes, and small adjustments to ensure optimal platform performance. | Year 2-4 | 83 € | 1.000 € | 8% | 70% | Website Maintenance Cost in 2024: A Full Pricing Breakdown |
| Licensing and Permits | Initial costs include business licenses and permits required to establish the company. | Year 1-4 | 83 € | 1.000 € | 10% | 80% | Assumption |
| Legal Fee | Ongoing legal support is estimated at €9000 per year. This includes routine legal consultations, contract drafting, compliance reviews, and any necessary legal assistance to ensure the business operates within regulatory requirements. | Year 1-4 | 750 € | 9.000 € | 15% | 70% | Startup Legal Fees: How Much to Budget in 2024 |
| Operating and Business equipment | Operating and business equipment costs include essential tools for employees, such as laptops, monitors, software subscriptions, and other office-related equipment. | Year 1-4 | 67 € | 800 € | 10% | 50% | Assumption |

Appendix H2: Labor Costs Assumptions

| Category | Description | Source |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Founders Salary | To minimize costs and maintain a business-focused and risk-taking approach, no salaries are allocated to founders in the first year. This assumes that the founders will get External Funding from a Startup Founder Grant, to cover their basic needs. Starting in Year 2, founders will receive a minimum wage to sustain themselves while continuing to prioritize the growth and development of the business. | Assumption |
| Number of Employees | The platform will start with the three founders, and additional employees will be hired incrementally. By the end of Year 3, the team will expand to five employees (one new hire per year). With the planned expansion into a new target market in Year 4, the team size will double to ten employees, incorporating experts with local market knowledge. | Assumption |
| Social Expenses | All salaries will include a 40% social expenses allowance to account for taxes, benefits, and other employment-related costs. This ensures a realistic calculation of staff expenses within the financial model. | https://taxsummaries.pwc.com/germany/individual/other-taxes |

Appendix H3: Strategic Partnerships Cost Assumptions

| Category | Description | Phase | Monthly Cost (€) | Yearly Cost (€) | Growth Rate assumption (phase 1-3) | Growth Rate assumption for Phase 4 (Expansion) | Source of Costs |
|--|---|-------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| University/Incubator Partnerships | Collaboration with universities to leverage student engagement. These partnerships are agreed to be cost-free due to the mutual benefit of providing students with exposure to social entrepreneurship initiatives. | 1-4 | 0 € | 0 € | - | - | Assumption |
| Government Partnerships | Government partnerships are structured based on mutual interests in fostering social entrepreneurship, with no associated costs due to the alignment with public interest goals. | 1-4 | 0 € | 0 € | - | - | Assumption |
| Social Entrepreneurship Network | As this platform directly serves the interests of social entrepreneurs, most networks agree to minimal fees, primarily to cover administrative or bureaucratic expenses. | 2-4 | 500 € | 6.000 € | 10% | 50% | Assumption |
| Legal Associations | Partnerships with legal associations are free of charge, as they aim to incentivize the trend towards sustainability and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). | 2-4 | 0 € | 0 € | - | - | Assumption |

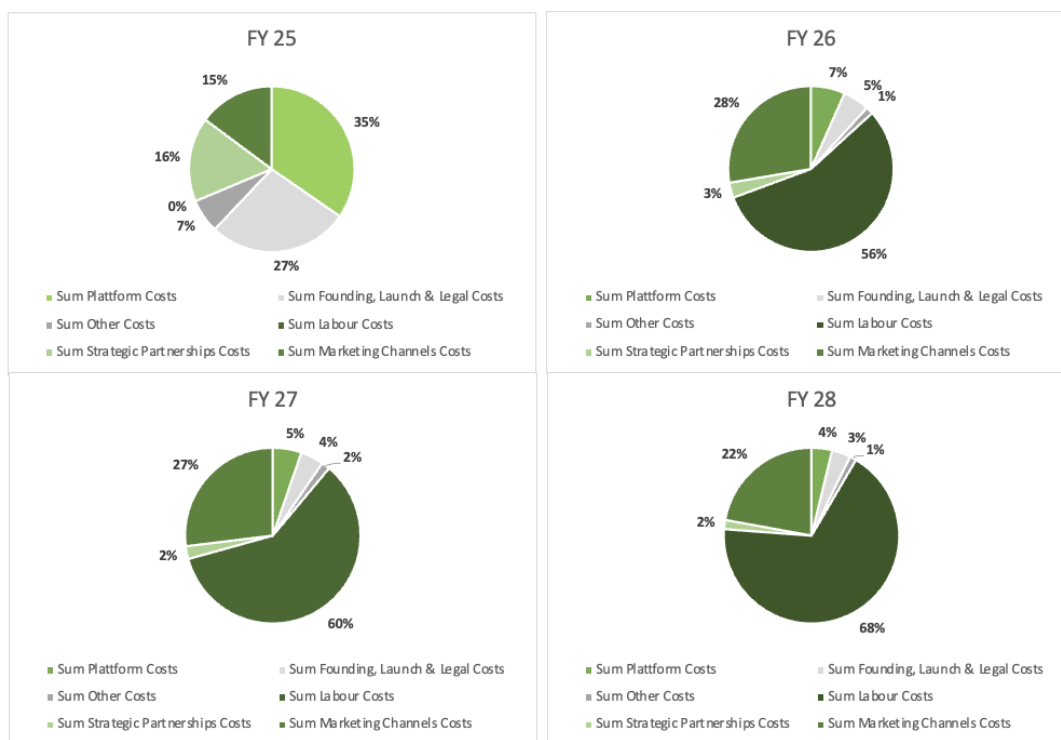
Appendix H4: Marketing Channels Cost Assumptions

| Category | Description | Phase | Monthly Cost (€) | Yearly Cost (€) | Growth Rate assumption (phase 1-3) | Growth Rate assumption for Expansion (Phase 4) | Source of Costs |
|---|--|----------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Offline Marketing (Incubator & University Start-up programs) | Offline marketing efforts involve distributing flyers and posters at university and incubator events | Year 1-4 | 150 € | 1.800 € | 20% | 90% | Assumption |
| SEO Setup & Maintenance | SEO efforts to improve platform visibility on search engines. This is an ongoing investment to ensure long-term discoverability and organic traffic growth. | Year 1-4 | 300 € | 3.600 € | 20% | 80% | https://foxxr.com/blog/how-much-does-seo-cost/ |
| Direct Outreach to Law Firms | Direct outreach to law firms via mail or phone, outreach to law firms is conducted through emails or phone calls using cost-free tools and direct website contact forms. | Year 1-4 | 0 € | 0 € | - | - | Assumption |
| LinkedIn Social Media Advertisement | Targeted advertising campaigns on LinkedIn to engage social entrepreneurs and legal professionals. Ads will commence in year 2 to complement organic reach efforts. | Year 2-4 | 1.500 € | 18.000 € | 10% | 100% | https://octopuscrm.io/blog/linkedin-advertising-costs/ |
| SEA Marketing | SEA campaigns to increase visibility in relevant search terms. | Year 2-4 | 1.000 € | 12.000 € | 12% | 80% | https://convidentdigitalagency.com/sea-marketing |
| Sponsorship & Participation at Events | Participation in events like the Social Impact Award Germany and Legal Tech Conference to enhance platform visibility. The plan involves attending one major conference per month. | Year 2-4 | 1.000 € | 12.000 € | 10% | 100% | https://sustainabilitysummit.de/anmeldung |
| Content Marketing | Publishing content in respected legal publications | Year 2-4 | 1.100 € | 13.200 € | 10% | 80% | https://wordsmatt.io/advertisements |
| Software Ads | Advertisements placed within legal management software commonly used by law firms. | Year 3-4 | 1.200 € | 14.400 € | 8% | 100% | https://www.hubspot.de/pricing/marketing/enterprise |

Appendix H5: Total Costs Overview FY25-FY28

| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Position | FY 25 | FY 26 | FY 27 | FY 28 |
| Fixed Costs | | | | |
| App & Website | | | | |
| Platform development | 12.600 € | 13.860 € | 15.246 € | 22.869 € |
| Platform maintenance | 0 € | 1.000 € | 1.080 € | 1.836 € |
| Sum Platform Costs | 12.600 € | 14.860 € | 16.326 € | 24.705 € |
| Founding, Launch & Legal | | | | |
| Legal Service | 9.000 € | 10.350 € | 11.903 € | 20.234 € |
| Licensing and permits | 1.000 € | 1.100 € | 1.210 € | 2.178 € |
| Sum Founding, Launch & Legal Costs | 10.000 € | 11.450 € | 13.113 € | 22.412 € |
| Other Cost | | | | |
| Operating and business equipment | 2.400 € | 3.200 € | 4.803 € | 8.000 € |
| Sum Other Costs | 2.400 € | 3.200 € | 4.803 € | 8.000 € |
| Labour Cost | | | | |
| Staff | - € | 125.160 € | 183.960 € | 441.000 € |
| Total employees | 3 | 4 | 5 | 10 |
| Sum Labour Costs | - € | 125.160 € | 183.960 € | 441.000 € |
| Marketing Costs | | | | |
| Strategic Partnerships | | | | |
| University/Incubator Partnerships | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € |
| Government Partnerships | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € |
| Social Entrepreneurship Network | 6.000 € | 6.600 € | 7.260 € | 10.890 € |
| Legal Associations | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € |
| Sum Strategic Partnerships Costs | 6.000 € | 6.600 € | 7.260 € | 10.890 € |
| Marketing Channels | | | | |
| Offline Marketing | 1.800 € | 2.160 € | 2.592 € | 4.666 € |
| SEO Setup & Maintenance | 3.600 € | 4.320 € | 5.184 € | 6.221 € |
| Direct Outreach to Law Firms | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € | 0 € |
| LinkedIn Social Media Advertisement | 0 € | 18.000 € | 19.800 € | 39.600 € |
| SEA Marketing | 0 € | 12.000 € | 13.440 € | 15.053 € |
| Sponsorship & Participation at Events | 0 € | 12.000 € | 13.200 € | 23.760 € |
| Content Marketing | 0 € | 13.200 € | 14.520 € | 26.136 € |
| Software Ads | 0 € | 0 € | 14.400 € | 28.800 € |
| Sum Marketing Channels Costs | 5.400 € | 61.680 € | 83.136 € | 144.235 € |
| Total | 36.400 € | 222.950 € | 308.598 € | 651.242 € |

Appendix H6: Percentage Distribution of Total Costs FY25-FY28



Appendix I Revenue Structure

Appendix II: Revenue Assumptions Overview

| Category | Description | Year 1 (Launch) | Year 2 (Growth) | Year 3 (Market Capitalization) | Year 4 (Expansion) | Source |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Starting Customer Base | The initial customer base consists of 225 social entrepreneurs secured through strategic partnerships with incubators and universities. This cohort serves as the starting point for the platform, allowing the creation of an early adopter community and establishing a strong foundation for growth. | 225 | - | - | - | Assumption |
| Customer Growth Rate | The Growth rates begin at 5% monthly in the launch, driven primarily by organic acquisition through partnerships and offline events. As marketing investments increase in Year 2, monthly growth rises to 8%, reflecting broader outreach through digital campaigns and event sponsorships. In Year 3, growth stabilizes at 7% as the platform focuses on retention and consolidating its market position. By Year 4, growth accelerates to 8% as the platform enters new markets and implements advanced marketing strategies. | 5% | 8% | 7% | 8% | Assumption |
| Conversion Rate (Freemium to Premium) | Industry benchmarks indicate that typical Freemium conversion rates range between 2-5%. Based on this, an initial conservative rate has been adopted at the lower end of the range, reflecting typical user behaviour during early adoption phases, where exploration and testing are common. Over time, the conversion rate is expected to increase steadily as the platform gains credibility, the community expands, and its value becomes more widely recognized, particularly during market consolidation and expansion phases. | 5% | 5% | 6% | 8% | The effect of free sampling strategies on freemium conversion rates (Koch & Benlian 2017). |
| Churn Rate Paying Customer | Premium users may churn due to unmet expectations, changing needs, or perceived lack of value. Industry benchmarks for SaaS platforms suggest churn rates of 5-7% annually. Initially, churn starts conservatively low, reflecting confidence in the platform's value proposition. As the user base grows and becomes more diverse, churn may rise temporarily due to varying preferences. Over time, improved features, user feedback integration, and higher value delivery are expected to reduce churn, stabilizing as the platform matures and loyalty strengthens." | 5% | 6% | 5% | 4% | Forecasting and the Role of Churn in Software-as-a-Service Business Models (Sukow & Grant 2013) |
| Monthly Premium Fee | The Premium subscription is strategically priced at €44.99 for the first two years to balance affordability for users and financial sustainability for the platform. This pricing aligns with research and industry benchmarks, where the average hourly rate for a business lawyer in Germany is approximately €280, offering significant value at a fraction of the cost. The pricing is designed to minimize financial risk by covering operational costs. In Year 1, the goal is to achieve a narrow positive Net Income with a €2,000 safety buffer, providing stability while building the user base. Although Year 2 involves higher costs due to planned growth investments, the pricing supports a sustainable foundation for scaling. Starting in Year 3, the fee increases to €49.99, reflecting expanded features and improved services. By Year 4, the fee rises to €54.99 to support long-term scalability while maintaining affordability and ensuring the platform's ability to sustain operational costs effectively. | 44,99 € | 44,99 € | 49,99 € | 54,99 € | Assumption, Average Hour Price of German Lawyers - 250€: https://www.brak.de/presse/zahlen-und-statistiken |

Appendix I2: Total Platform User and Revenue Growth Forecast FY25-28

| Year | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Position | FY 25 | FY 26 | FY 27 | FY 28 |
| Total Platform User | 4.430 | 14.863 | 40.842 | 108.872 |
| Total Paying User | 860 | 2.765 | 7.778 | 24.541 |
| Revenue from Premium User | 38.687 € | 124.393 € | 388.811 € | 1.349.528 € |
| Total Revenue | 38.687 € | 124.393 € | 388.811 € | 1.349.528 € |