

Scale-Up Academy 2027

a 12-month, cohort-based scale-up programme for teams with an existing software or hardware-based pilot or prototype of an AI application starting in January 2027

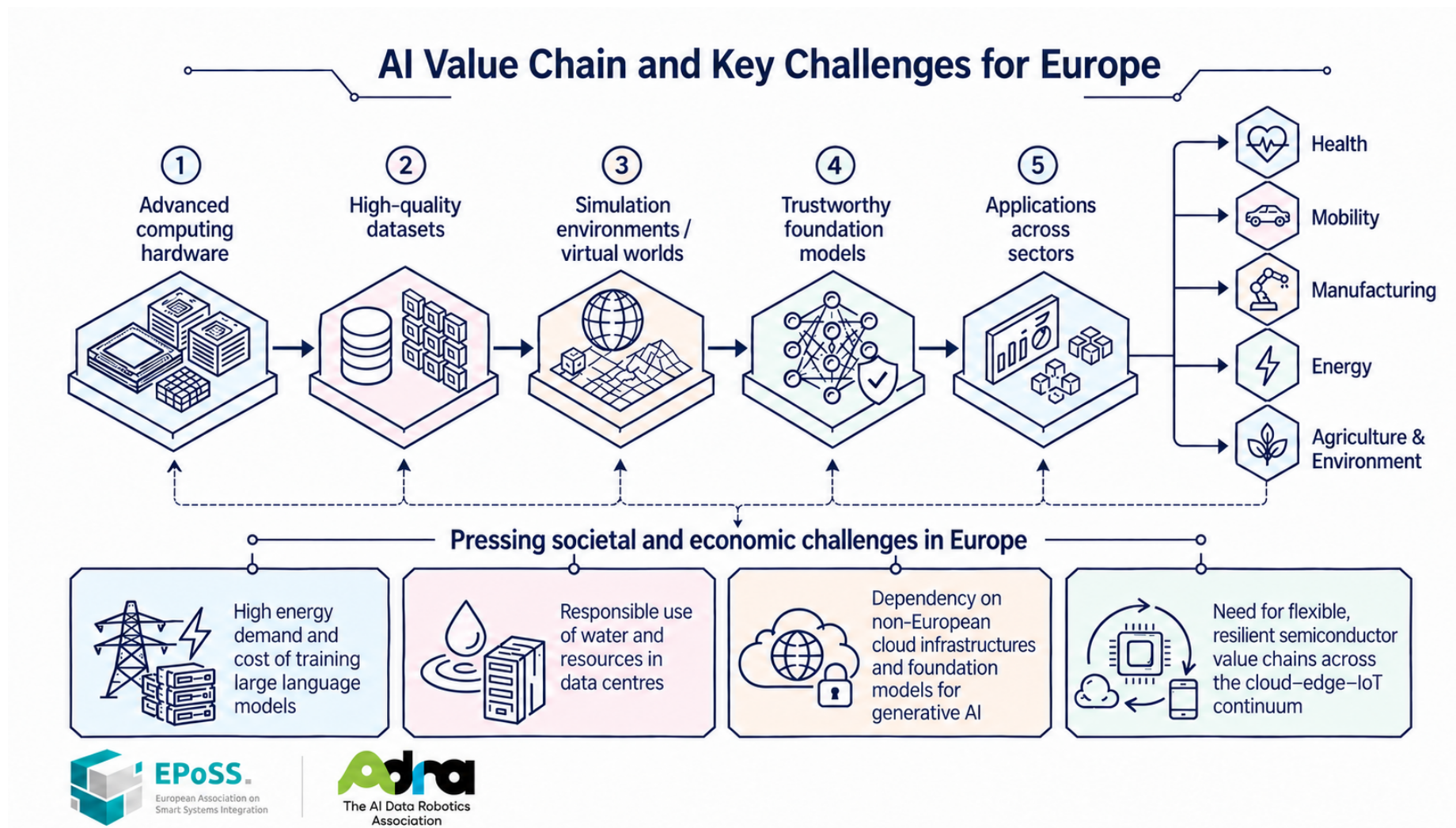
[Expression of interest for joining the scale-up academy](#)

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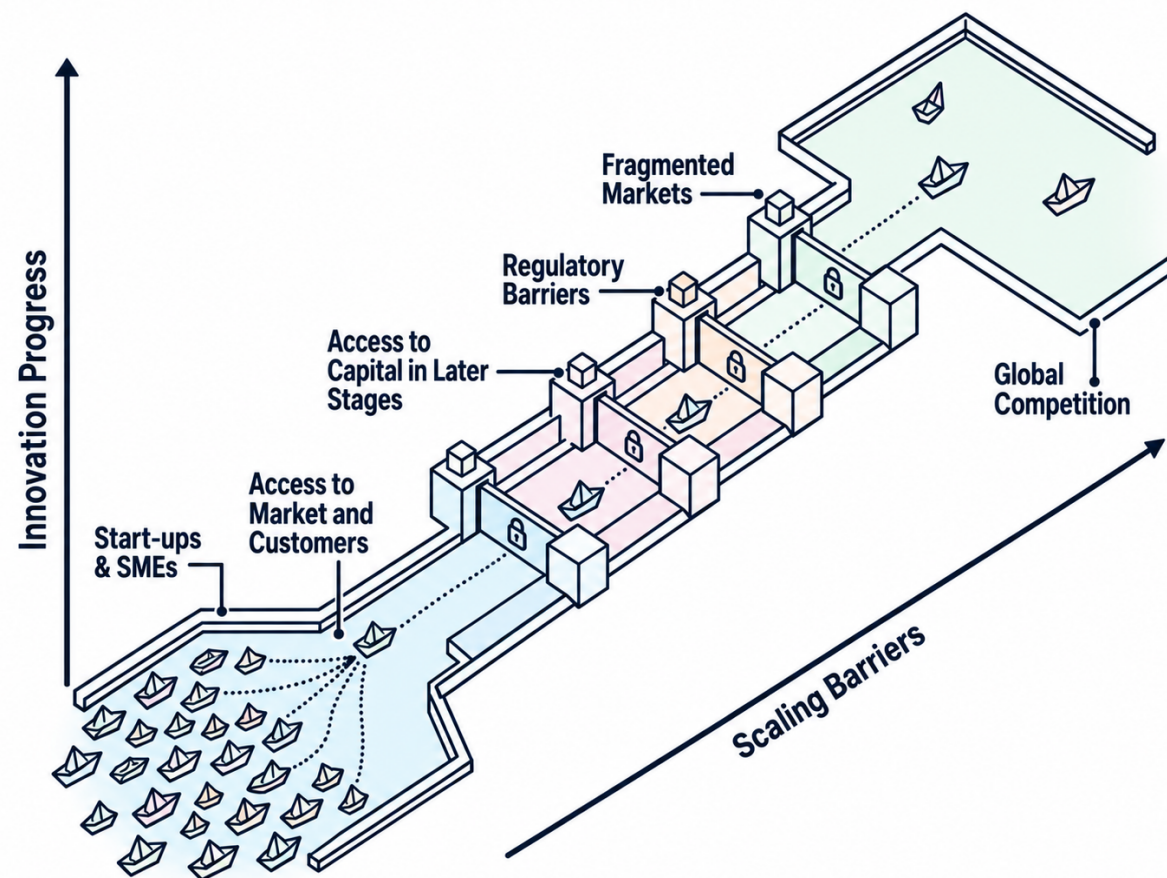
Funded by
the European Union
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EXPANSE AI – strengthen the European AI value chain



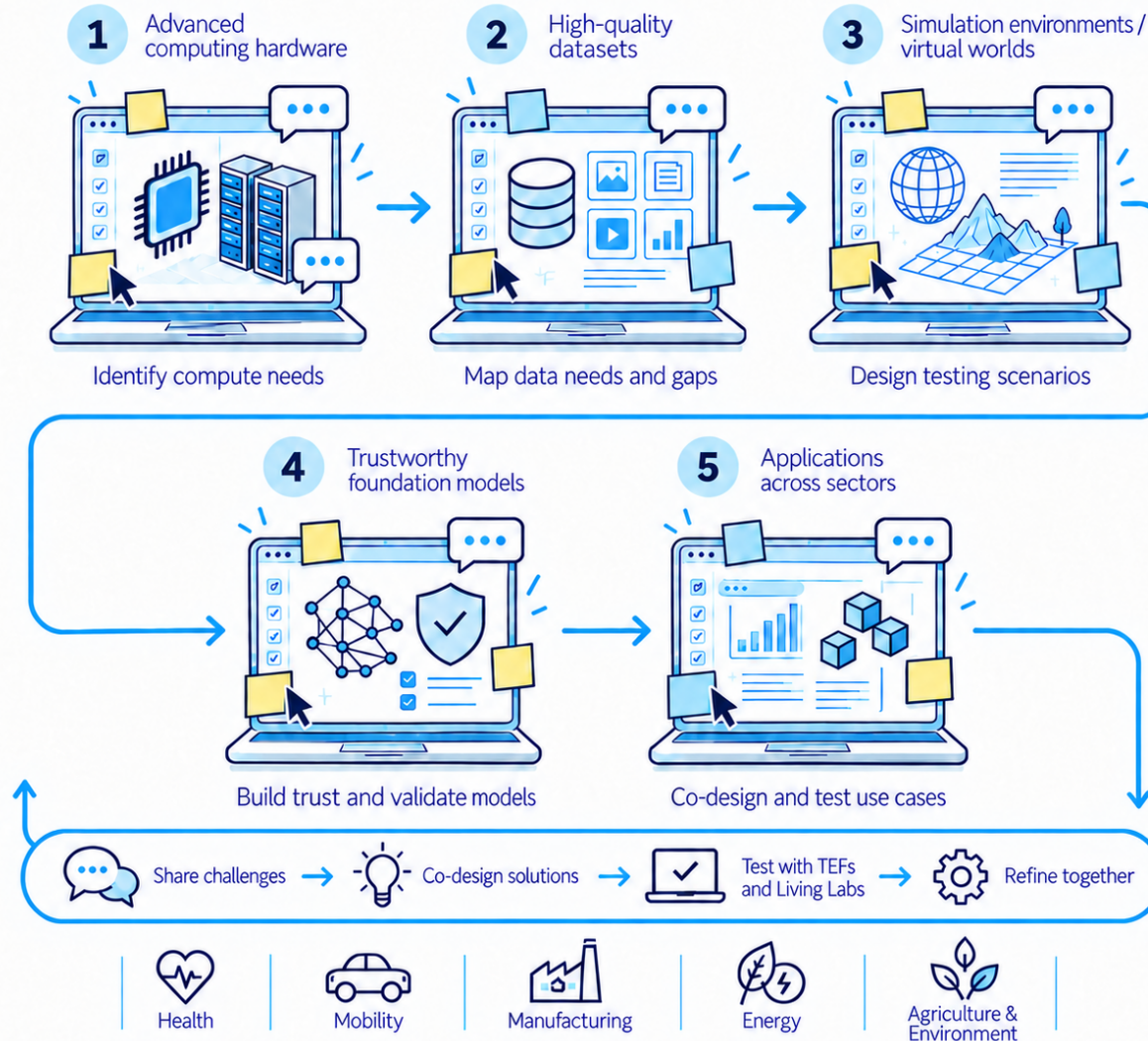
EXPANSE AI Mission: Bridge the Innovation Gap

EXPANSE AI connects promising research results and pilot teams with potential customers and investors, facilitates partnerships and introduces real-world perspectives needed to move research towards trusted market application



Co-Creation Workshops for Pilot Teams

Researchers, innovators, real-world use cases and societal challenges

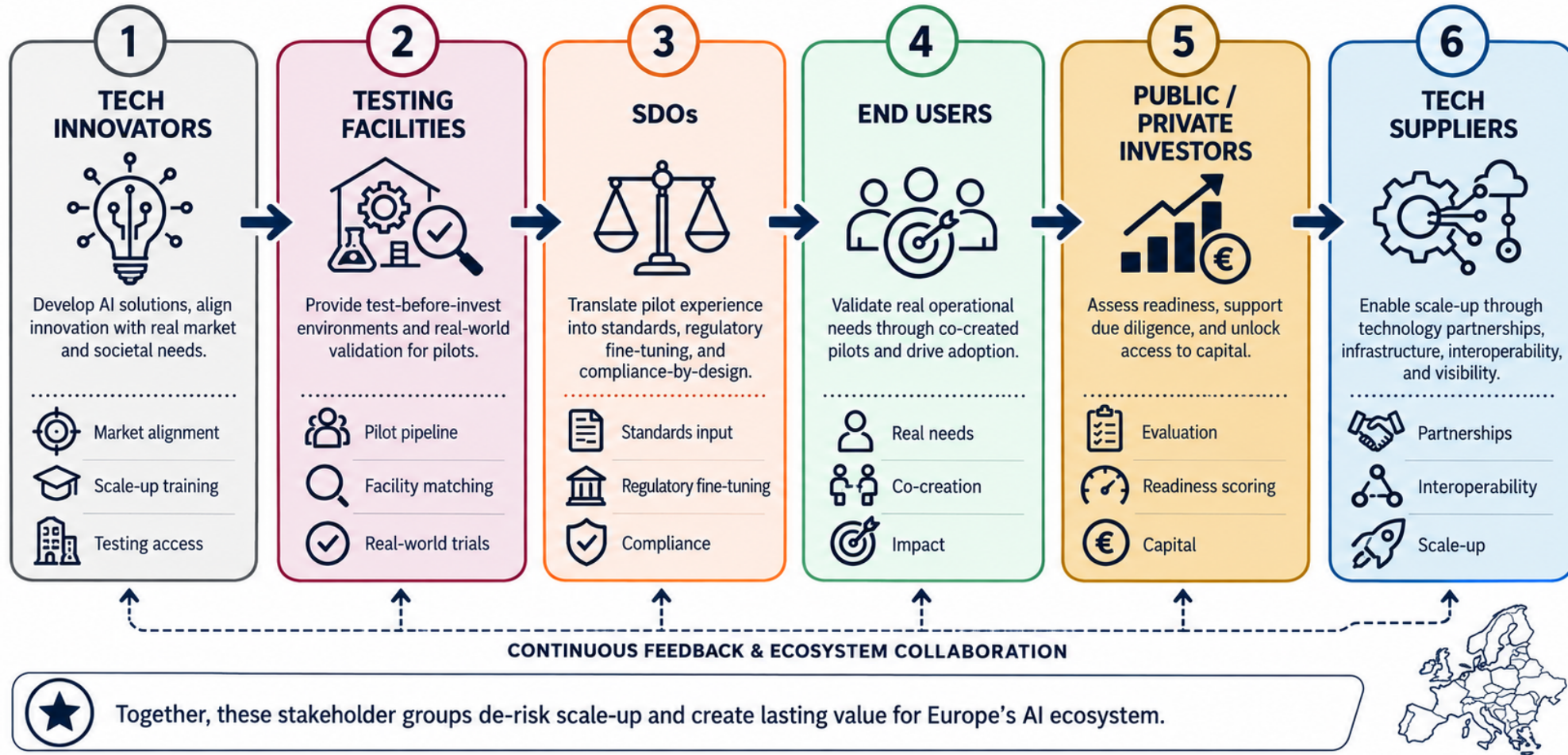


2026: Researchers, Startups & Innovators

- [Expression of interest until 24 October](#)
- Co-Creation Workshops
 - 16 November 13:00-15:00
 - 17 November 09:00-11:00
 - 17 November 14:00-16:00

EXPANSE AI STAKEHOLDER PIPELINE

From innovation to testing, standardisation, adoption, investment and scale-up



SCALE-UP ACADEMY

12-sprints curriculum to strengthen societal value, compliance, market readiness, cooperation and investment capacity



IMEC |
Human-centric & societal value



Webinar 1 |
Human-centric & societal value



Webinar 2 |
Ethical readiness & trustworthiness



Focus on societal benefit, ethics and trust in AI.



VDI/VDE-IT |
Excellence, innovation, legal compliance & business opportunities



Webinar 3 |
AI, legal frameworks & societal norms



Webinar 4 |
Data-driven business models for hardware sensors & advanced chips



From regulatory understanding to revenue opportunities.



IDC |
Market insights



Webinar 5 |
Value proposition aligned with market needs & societal challenges



Webinar 6 |
Uptake readiness: scalability, technical feasibility, regulatory fit & sector integration



Market analysis across at least 5 priority verticals.



BluSpecs |
Cross-sectoral value chains & multi-stakeholder cooperation



Webinar 7 |
Co-design of value chain models



Webinar 8 |
Shared governance, role definition & transparent decision-making



Align research, industry, regulators and end-users.



ADRA & EPoSS |
Ecosystem visibility & outreach



Webinar 9 |
Stakeholder engagement, critical dependencies & technology ambassadors



Increase ecosystem reach and visibility.



Dealflow |
Investor strategy, market readiness & funding access



Webinar 10 |
Capital processes



Webinar 11 |
Go-to-market planning



Webinar 12 |
Effective pitching



Prepare pilot teams for funding and scale-up.

OUTCOMES



Human-centric & trustworthy AI



Compliance & legal readiness



Market-fit value propositions



Cooperation across value chains



Investment readiness & scale-up

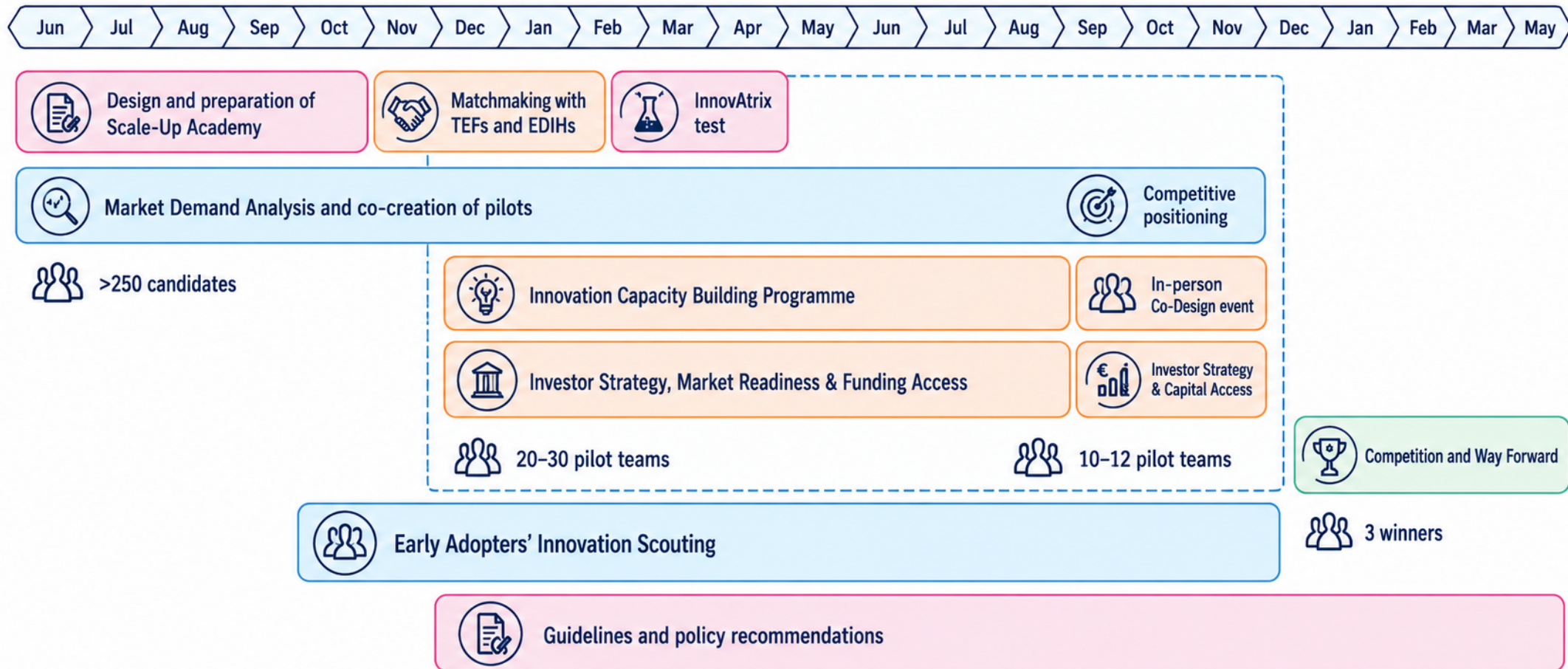
Innov Altrix

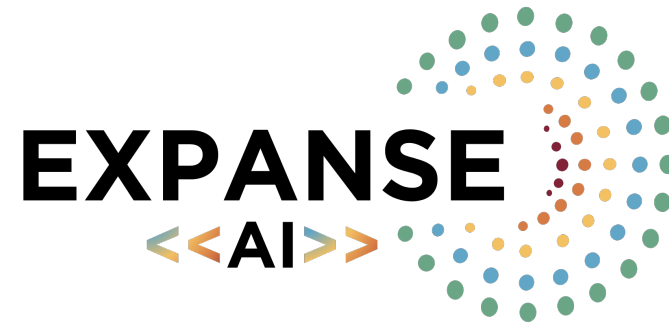
- The **Scale-Up Academy** builds on the Innovatrix methodology, used by imec.istart to coach tech start-ups, combining two linked steps:
- **Map:** Capture knowledge and assumptions for promising AI use cases in an eight-element business model canvas.
- **Validate:** Test critical assumptions through existing evidence and targeted testing activities.

INNOVATRIX imec.livinglabs Illustrative example: humanoid robotics company **imec**

CUSTOMER SEGMENT	Automotive manufacturers	Warehouse and logistics operators	Retail chains	Research labs and universities
NEEDS	Reliable line feeding; less repetitive lifting	Handle variable demand; reduce physical strain	Shelf availability; inventory accuracy; staff support	Programmable platforms; repeatable experiments
CURRENT PRACTICES	Manual material handling; fixed automation	Manual picking; conveyors; mobile robots	Manual shelf checks and replenishment	Custom prototypes; simulators; robot arms
VALUE PROPOSITION	Flexible task support in existing workspaces	Adaptable handling of varied items and layouts	Free staff time for customer-facing tasks	Shared platform for embodied AI research
SOLUTION	Supervised humanoid for parts delivery and kitting	Supervised humanoid for tote handling and sorting	Supervised humanoid for backroom handling and shelf scans	Modular humanoid with SDK and simulation tools
KEY PARTNERS	Factory integrators; component suppliers; testing facilities	Logistics integrators; gripper suppliers; pilot customers	Retail IT providers; store operators; living labs	Universities; AI labs; sensor suppliers
VALUE CAPTURE	Robot leasing; integration fees; maintenance	Robotics-as-a-service; support subscriptions	Per-store subscription; deployment and training fees	Platform sales; software licences; service contracts
BARRIERS	Safety validation; uptime; cycle time; workforce acceptance	Grasping reliability; battery life; system integration; ROI	Public-space safety; privacy; aisle access; acceptance	Budget constraints; reproducibility; hardware reliability

Roadmap from pilot demand analysis to academy activities, competition and policy impact





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