Terms of Reference – Mentor

The BIOTECHNET II Mentoring Programme aims to support the professional development of mentees through structured guidance, knowledge sharing, experience exchange, and constructive feedback.

Purpose of the Mentor Role

Mentors are experienced professionals who support mentees in reflecting on their goals, identifying development opportunities, and strengthening relevant skills and networks.

The mentor will:

- Support the mentee in identifying and working towards agreed development goals, checking that they are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) within the agreed duration of the programme. Help to refine them during the first meeting so that they are realistic and achievable.
- Share relevant knowledge, experience, and lessons learned.
- Provide constructive feedback and encourage self-reflection.
- Facilitate access to relevant professional networks and resources where appropriate.
- Encourage the mentee to take ownership of their development and agreed actions.

Scope of Responsibilities

The mentor is expected to establish a respectful, open, and trusting relationship with the mentee, agreeing on expectations, communication methods, and boundaries at the start of the mentoring relationship. Mentors should encourage open discussion of questions, concerns, and challenges while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries throughout the programme.

Mentors are expected to prepare for and attend agreed mentoring sessions, review progress against agreed objectives, provide constructive challenge where appropriate, and share relevant tools, resources, experiences, and practical examples. They should also support the mentee in identifying strengths, development needs, and opportunities, encourage independent thinking and decision-making, and provide constructive and relevant feedback. Where appropriate, mentors should direct mentees to additional resources, expertise,

or support. Mentors are also encouraged to ask for feedback from the mentee and adapt their approach accordingly.

Expected Commitment

- Mentors are expected to participate in the programme for **3 to 6 months**, depending on what is agreed with the mentee. **At least one meeting per month is required, but a frequency of one meeting every three weeks is preferred.**
- Each meeting normally lasts around 60 minutes. The exact frequency and format of the meetings will be agreed jointly by the mentor and mentee at the start of the programme.
- Mentors should allocate reasonable time for preparation and follow-up activities between sessions and respond to mentees' messages within the agreed timeframes.
- Mentors are expected to check the email address provided in their application regularly. Once a mentee's application is received, the mentor should accept or decline it within 10 days. If declining, the mentor is encouraged to provide a brief explanation. If accepting, the mentor is responsible for proposing the first meeting, which should take place within two weeks. Subsequent meetings will be organised by the mentee.
- Completion of a final report or survey to provide feedback on the programme is required.

Professional Conduct and Confidentiality

The mentor will conduct the conduct the mentoring relationship in a professional, respectful, and supportive manner, fostering a safe environment in which the mentee can reflect, learn, and grow. Mentors are expected to respect confidentiality, maintain appropriate boundaries, encourage the mentee's independence and ownership of decisions, and avoid conflicts of interest. Where a matter falls outside their expertise or role, mentors should guide the mentee towards appropriate sources of support or advice.

Support from ICGEB

Mentors may contact ICGEB at biotechnet@icgeb.org at any stage of the programme for guidance, resources, or support related to the mentoring process. ICGEB serves as a point of reference for mentors and mentees, helping to address challenges, provide clarification where needed, facilitate programme delivery, and collect feedback to support the continuous improvement of the mentoring programme. Any significant concerns regarding the mentoring relationship should be raised with ICGEB at an early stage.

Success Measures

The mentoring relationship will be considered successful when mentor and mentee engage regularly and constructively, establish clear development objectives, and work collaboratively towards achieving them. Success is reflected in the mentee's progress, learning, and increased confidence, supported by relevant guidance and feedback, while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and contributing positively to the overall goals of the programme.