



# D3.5 Current findings and needs by data-centric companies in Europe v2



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<b>Abstract</b>	This document outlines the lessons learned throughout the three iterations of the Data Market Services (DMS) Accelerator project. We discuss the needs of data-centric startups and SMEs in Europe with regard to fundraising, promotion, entrepreneurship, data skills, standardization and legal services offered by the programme.

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## Executive Summary

The Data Market Services Accelerator (DMS), was a H2020 funded initiative that aimed to help data-centric startups and small-medium enterprises (SMEs) to overcome barriers of participation and innovation in the European data economy. The programme offered a comprehensive range of services that addressed companies' needs in relation to fundraising, promotion, entrepreneurship, data skills, standardization and legal issues.

In this report, we outline the insights into companies' needs that were developed throughout the duration of the programme. This document builds on a previous deliverable ([D3.4](#)), which discussed early observations and approaches for monitoring companies' needs during the first year of the programme. The present analysis documents all stages of companies' participation in DMS across the entire three cohorts. We used several methods to monitor their needs, including initial application forms, subsequent onboarding surveys, service engagement metrics and feedback after graduating.

We found that companies were most interested in services related to fundraising, promotion, entrepreneurship and data skills, while areas such as standardization and legal skills (e.g. GDPR, IP) required further encouragement. This mirrors the challenges that have previously been identified by the European Commission with regard to engaging smaller companies in standardisation and legal activities.

In terms of the preferred modes of service delivery, we observed a strong interest in 1-to-1 mentoring and coaching, as well as a need for tangible support with investor matchmaking and promotion.

Based on our observations of the needs of data-centric startups and SMEs, we derive a list of practical recommendations that can be implemented by other innovation programmes for a more effective uptake of services. This includes:

- Requesting detailed information about companies' needs during the selection process.
- Establishing a personal rapport during onboarding and at later stages of the programme.
- Creating a well-planned curriculum and service calendar.
- Using strategic communications to remind companies about the available opportunities and to steer them towards services which they may be reluctant to pursue otherwise.

By monitoring and addressing companies' needs through the above mechanisms, DMS was able to engage their interests and simultaneously align with the objectives of the European Commission.

## 1. Introduction

Data Market Services Accelerator (DMS) was launched in 2019 under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. DMS aimed to help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups to overcome various barriers to participation in the European data economy.

The European data market has grown rapidly over the recent years<sup>1</sup>. However, its progress is still dependent on resolving the data skills gap, stimulating the diffusion of data-driven innovations and supporting a fair and competitive economy. Among the wide range of stakeholders who contribute towards these goals, startups and SMEs have the greatest capacity to innovate, but they also face the most severe constraints in terms of accessing finances, resources and skills needed to participate in the digital economy. Besides limited funding, startups and SMEs are under-represented in technical standardisation activities<sup>2</sup>, and tend to make less use of the opportunities offered by intellectual property (IP) protection<sup>3</sup>. These patterns have been attributed to a lack of knowledge and resources among smaller and younger companies, issues that have traditionally been addressed through business incubation and acceleration programmes.

DMS Accelerator brought together a team of coaches, consultants, lawyers, researchers and communicators to develop a comprehensive curriculum of free support services and trainings to help startups and SMEs to accelerate their data-centric business. The services were grouped into five categories as listed below.

### **Acceleration:**

- Providing trainings in different non-technical skills required for start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop their business adequately.
- Facilitating the mobility of early stage start-ups across different entrepreneurship hubs and programmes in Europe.

### **Fundraising:**

- Training and supporting startups and SMEs in their fundraising strategy.
- Organizing meetings and networking events with investors.

### **Marketing:**

- Training and supporting startups and SMEs with their marketing skills and the go-to-market phase of their products and services.

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<sup>1</sup> Cattaneo, G. et al. (2020). [The European data market monitoring tool: Key facts & figures, first policy conclusions, data landscape and quantified stories.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Gupta, K. (2017). [The role of SMEs and startups in standards development.](#)

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2020). [Making the most of the EU's innovative potential: An intellectual property action plan to support the EU's recovery and resilience.](#)

**Standards & legal:**

- Training and coaching high-tech companies across Europe in handling and exploiting their intellectual assets.
- Training and coaching in the standardisation arena.
- Training and coaching in GDPR compliance.

**Data skills:**

- Helping entrepreneurs to develop a deeper understanding of cybersecurity risks and solutions for regulatory compliance.
- Access to courses in data science and AI to reduce the digital skills gap.

The above services were delivered through five different ways:

- Webinars
- Courses
- Mentoring
- Live training
- Participation in events and networking

In the next section, we present the methods that were used at DMS to gain detailed insight into the needs of companies who participated in the programme, as well as the findings generated through each approach. We then summarise our findings in Section 3, which includes a discussion of the main topics of interest among companies, as well as their preferred modes of service delivery. Our report concludes with a list of recommendations in Section 4, where we share suggestions to help other similar innovation programmes to better meet the needs of data-centric startups and SMEs.

## 2. Methods for discovering startup needs

Shortly after the launch of the DMS programme, the consortium quickly learnt that companies' engagement with the services was heavily dependent on the extent to which the programme was able to meet their needs and expectations. A range of approaches was developed to explore the participants' needs throughout the various stages of their involvement in the programme. Specifically:

1. **At the application stage**, the consortium reviewed the startups' motivations for joining the programme and the services they wished to receive.
2. **During onboarding**, startups were presented with a needs analysis survey to better understand their interest in each service category and to select companies that would receive coaching.
3. **During service delivery**, we monitored the startups' engagement with DMS webinars, mentoring sessions and events to ensure that these services were still aligned with their interests.
4. **After graduation**, the startups were presented with impact surveys which evaluated the ways in which the programme had addressed their needs and what could be improved.

In the following subsections, we discuss how each of the above steps were implemented and the insights they revealed into the needs of DMS startups and SMEs.

## 2.1. Startups' applications

When applying to participate in DMS, the applicants were requested to provide information about the needs of their company. This stage of the selection process was valuable in revealing the self-perceived needs and priorities of the applicants.

Below are some of the questions from the application form that gave startups an opportunity to write about their needs (the full form can be found in [D2.3](#)):

- What issues do you face as a company and how will this program's services benefit you?
- What specific skills or knowledge would you like to acquire through these services and how will they benefit your business and product?
- How would your company use this investment round?

The application form also contained a multiple choice question:

- Which training services would you be interested in receiving? (up to 5; options shown in Figure 1)

From looking at the services that were selected by startups (Figure 1), we observed that venture capital matchmaking, public fundraising and marketing were in highest demand, followed closely by requests for acceleration, mentoring and data skills training. Relatively less interest was expressed towards services related to GDPR, standardization and IPR. The incubation program was also in low demand, which may be attributed to the COVID pandemic.

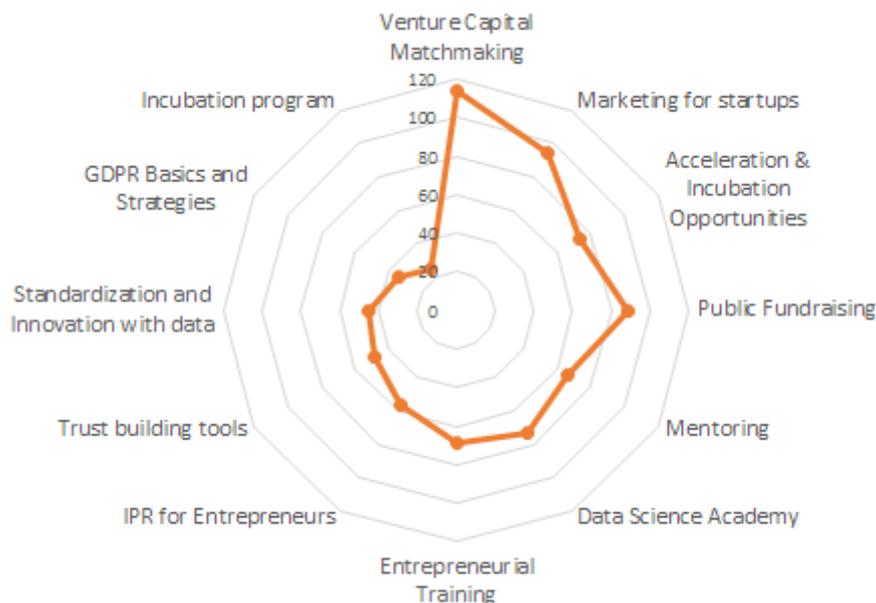


Figure 1. Counts of services selected by startups at application stage, based on data collated across all three cohorts of DMS.

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In addition to tracking which service categories were selected most frequently, we also conducted a qualitative analysis of the written applications from Cohort 2 (a sample of 50 startups) to better understand their self-perceived needs and motivations. Below we summarise some of the themes that emerged from our analysis in the scope of each DMS service category.

Among the services that received the greatest interest:

- **Fundraising** was deemed important by startups because it enabled them to cover the costs of operations (including staff), technology development, innovation & marketing. Funding was also viewed as a necessary step towards achieving internationalisation (e.g. by financing trips abroad), commercialisation (e.g. covering IP costs) and market fit (e.g. covering the cost of validation studies), suggesting a close link between fundraising and the company's ability to accelerate in other areas.
- **Acceleration** encompassed several ambitions, including expansion into new markets, scaling operational capabilities and sales. A commonly expressed wish was to develop a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and to validate it in new markets.
- **Data skills** were viewed as something that could offer a competitive advantage through more efficient, effective and ethical analytic tools. Applicants who selected this service category were also interested in improving their data-driven product or introducing new features.
- **Promotion** was requested as a means to improve communication with the startups' target market, to form partnerships, visibility and reputation.

Other services such as standardisation, GDPR and IPR received relatively less interest. However, the startups who did request these services expressed strong and well-informed motivations. For example:

- **GDPR** compliance was perceived as a necessity for success and leadership in industry. This theme was most commonly mentioned by startups whose innovations made use of customer data or anonymisation solutions, which required them to mitigate the risks of working with personal data.
- **Standardisation** was recognised as a way to align with the knowledge and benchmarks set by other industry stakeholders. This area was particularly relevant to companies who were building interoperable solutions or exchanging data.
- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** were considered as a means to increase company value in the eyes of investors and to bring products to market. Several startups were interested in learning about the specifics of patenting data and AI technologies, since these innovations are different from other types of technology.

A more extensive summary of the above insights can be found in a separate [paper](#)<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.2. Needs analysis survey

In addition to learning about startups' needs from their application forms, we also used a "Needs Analysis" survey that asked selected participants to elaborate on their needs when entering the programme. This survey included questions about their preferred mode of service delivery (e.g. via webinars, courses or 1-to-1 mentoring), which were used by the consortium to fine tune the service offerings and to identify companies that would be most receptive to personalised coaching sessions. A copy of the Needs Analysis survey can be found in Appendix A. This was administered to DMS cohorts 2 and 3, collectively generating 97 responses (97% response rate).

When asked to rank the importance of different service categories, the startups expressed priorities that reinforced what was stated in their application forms. This is to say, they were most interested in areas such as fundraising, upskilling their workforce, promotion, entrepreneurial skills and exploring international markets. On the other hand, data compliance, GDPR and IP were ranked slightly lower in importance.

Other questions in this survey asked startups about their preferences for specific modes of service delivery. These questions were phrased as: "From 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), how well do you think the following services would suit the needs of your company?", followed by a request to "briefly explain the reason for your choices". We report the responses to these questions below for each service category.

### Marketing

In the service category of marketing, startups expressed the strongest preference for tangible help with promotion (e.g. via content, media channels and event attendance), followed closely by webinar training. Figure 2 shows the extent to which these service categories suited their needs.

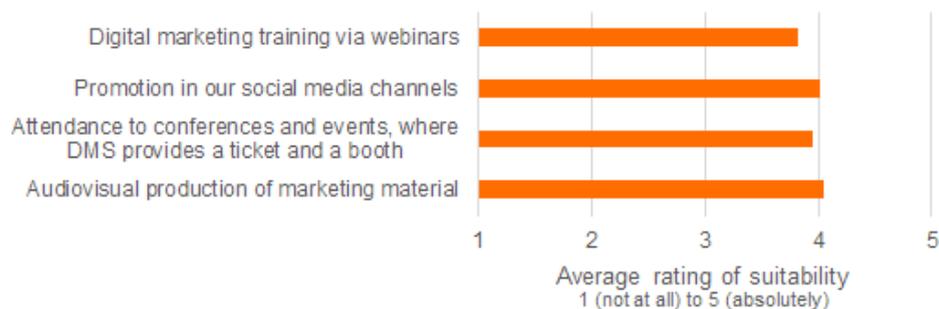


Figure 2. Service preferences for promotion.

<sup>4</sup> Priestley, M. & Simperl, E. (2021). [Open innovation programmes related to data & AI: how do the entrepreneurial orientations of startups align with the objectives of public funders?](#) *Data for Policy conference 2021*.

### Fundraising

In the category of fundraising, the strongest preference was expressed towards the matchmaking service with investors. Webinar training about pitching and pitch deck design were also deemed suitable. Figure 3 shows the extent to which these service categories suited the startups' needs.



Figure 3. Service preferences for fundraising.

### Acceleration

Among the entrepreneurial trainings, startups were most interested in learning about how to improve their sales process, while trainings about product development and business plans were deemed slightly less suitable initially (Figure 4).

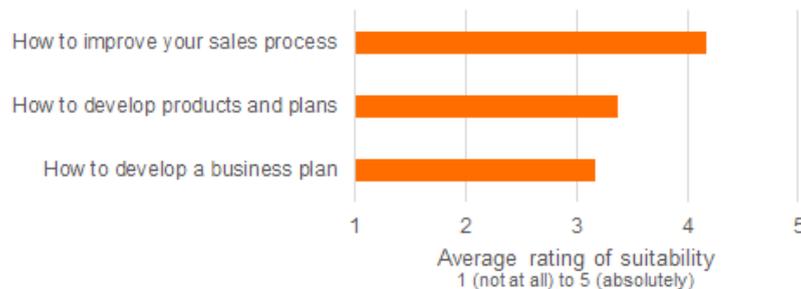


Figure 4. Service preferences for acceleration.

### Standards & legal

Services related to data and legal compliance encompassed topics such as GDPR, standardization and IPR. Of these, IPR and standardization received slightly higher levels of interest (Figure 5). It is worth noting that different modes of service delivery (webinars, courses and tutoring) received similar ratings on average. However, wider variation was observed within the scores of 1-to-1 mentoring in IP management and standards & legal compliance. Here, around half of the respondents indicated a low suitability for tutoring, while the other half indicated that tutoring would “absolutely” meet the needs of their company. This suggests that the level of interest in standards and legal mentoring was quite polarized across different companies.



Figure 5. Service preferences for standards & legal issues.

### Data skills

In the second and third cohorts of DMS, the needs analysis survey was accompanied by a separate survey aimed at understanding the Data Skills needs of participating companies, generating a total of 66 responses (66% response rate). We learnt that 50% of the responding individuals came from non-technical backgrounds, and 42% came from technical backgrounds, while others reported a mixture. Of those who had experience with Data Science or Python programming language, 53% considered themselves beginners, 34% intermediate, and 13% advanced.

Despite significant differences in disciplinary backgrounds and technical experience of the applicants, they were similar in their interest in Data Skills training. 85% of respondents indicated interest towards specific courses and 80% towards webinars. Due to the wide range of specialist topics that could be addressed through these trainings, we asked respondents to select up to 3 preferred topics from a longer list of possibilities. These findings indicated that Machine learning, visualization, data analysis in Python, and Natural Language Processing (NLP) were most in demand (Figure 6).

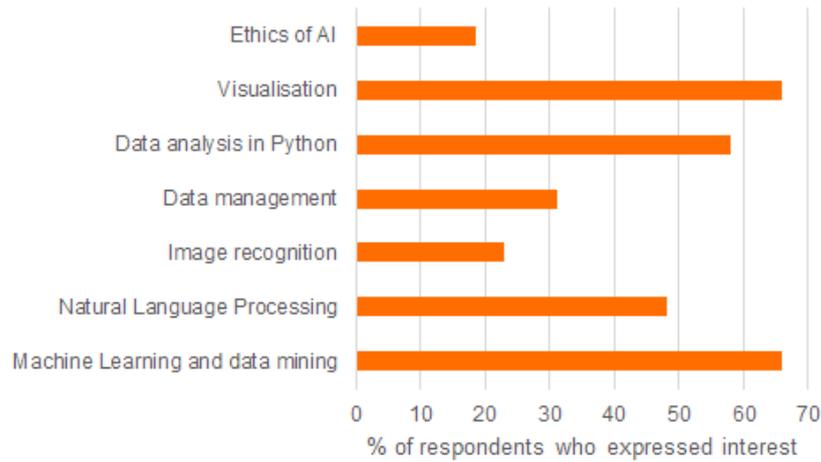


Figure 6. Data skills webinar topic preferences.

### 2.3. Service monitoring

The previous section presented the preferences expressed by companies during onboarding, before they had a chance to experience the DMS programme. In this section we summarise the uptake and feedback metrics of DMS services once they had been delivered to the participating companies. These findings capture all three cohorts of the programme. Below we report the results, grouped by their mode of delivery: webinars, courses, mentoring, and events.

#### Webinars

Webinars were the most common mode of service delivery in the DMS programme. On average, around 30 webinars were delivered to each cohort of companies. The webinars covered each of the five DMS service categories; for example, Cohort 3 received 14 webinars in acceleration, 7 in fundraising, 7 in standards & legal issues, 3 in promotion, and 3 in data skills.

Across all cohorts, an average of 20 participants signed up for each webinar, and an average of 11 actually attended. However, the uptake of webinars varied across the different service categories and different cohorts of participants. Figure 7 shows the average number of attendees per webinar, classified according to service category and cohort.

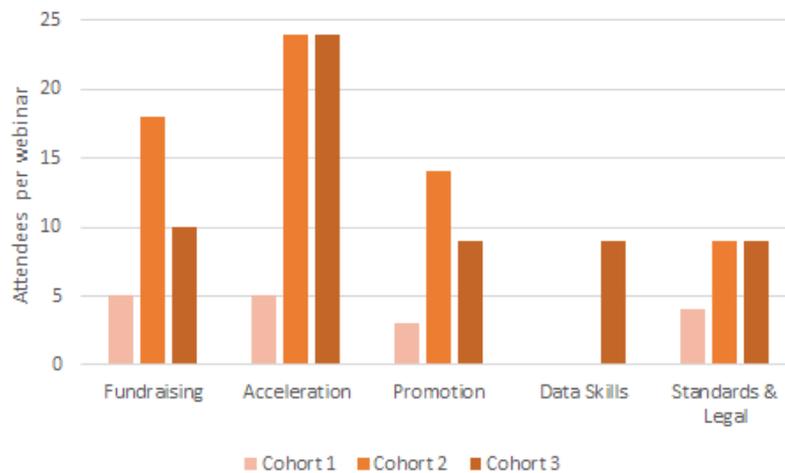


Figure 7. Attendance rates of DMS webinars<sup>5</sup>.

We observed that acceleration webinars experienced the highest rates of attendance, followed by fundraising, promotion and data skills trainings. The attendance rate for standards & legal webinars was slightly lower compared to the other service categories. However, satisfaction ratings were high across all areas, averaging 4 in a 5-star rating system.

Figure 7 illustrates the significant increase in webinar attendance that occurred after the first DMS cohort. The consortium attributed this change to various improvements that were implemented after the first iteration of the programme. Specifically:

- Application forms were extended with additional questions to gather more information about companies' needs and motivations. This enabled DMS evaluators to identify companies whose requirements and ambitions were aligned with the DMS service offering.
- The onboarding process was adapted to include personalised calls between the consortium members and incoming companies, helping to establish a rapport and a better understanding of their needs.
- The DMS communications strategy was improved to share more detailed information during the open calls and to remind startups about upcoming services through monthly emails.

The above steps contributed to increased participation in webinars as well as the other modes of service delivery discussed below.

## Courses

The data skills service category was mostly delivered through three online courses:

<sup>5</sup> Data Skills webinars were introduced only in Cohort 3 as a replacement for one of the Data Science courses.

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- A Data Science course including data management, analysis and visualisation with Python (6 weeks 60 hours)
- An Artificial Intelligence for Business course (6 weeks 60 hours)
- A data security and compliance course (8 weeks 16 hours)

The two first courses were cost-free bespoke versions of [Southampton Data Science Academy](#) online courses, currently offered commercially at the cost of around €1800. The commercial version of the courses has completion rates over 90%, and high learner/customer satisfaction rates.

The course uptake and completion rates by DMS participants were initially low, but this increased during the second and third iterations of the programme. Figure 8 shows the course participation and completion rates across cohorts. We observed that the level of engagement in courses tripled as the programme progressed.

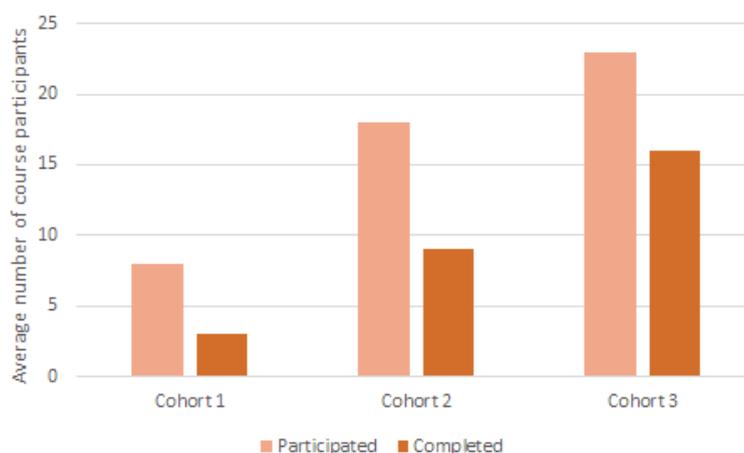


Figure 8. Average participation and completion rates of DMS Data Skills courses.

Each of the courses required a high time commitment from participants, many of whom were also attending other DMS trainings while running their business. In order to ease this burden, the programme took care to ensure that the courses did not overlap during cohorts 2 and 3. An additional change was made during cohort 3, where one of the courses was replaced with three shorter Data Skills webinars. This enabled participants to better focus their efforts on the trainings that were available.

Despite the intensity of the courses, the startups reported high satisfaction rates, with an average of 5 in a 5-star rating system.

#### Mentoring and coaching

DMS provided personalized support to startups via individual coaching and mentoring sessions.

The coaching service was provided to 20 selected startups, and consisted of bi-weekly calls with a contact point within the Consortium. The coaches were responsible for:

- Identifying the needs of the startups.

- Informing startups about the opportunities of the project.
- Connecting startups with both internal and external mentors.
- Monitoring the performance of the startups.
- Helping startups to set a series of goals to be achieved by the end of the programme.

Besides coaching, a mentoring service was open to all startups, enabling them to book a session with internal or external experts who specialize in a particular topic. These sessions covered the following topics:

- Public and Private fundraising
- IP
- GDPR
- Marketing
- Business model Validation
- Data standardisation

The coaching and mentoring services were in high demand throughout the entire duration of the programme, receiving particularly strong interest during the second and third cohorts. We also observed that startups who participated in mentoring tended to return for multiple sessions. Figure 9 summarises these findings.

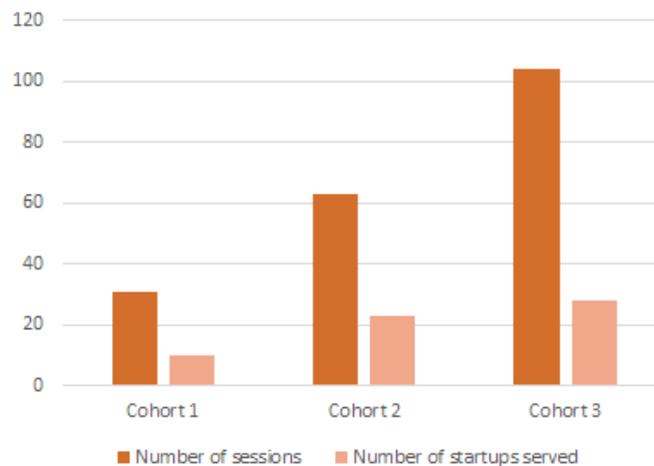


Figure 9. Mentoring service uptake.

A feedback survey was circulated to participants after each mentoring session, asking for feedback and ratings on the following aspects:

- Quality of the content
- Level of organization of the session
- Quality of delivery
- Openness to questions and discussion

The average rating was 5 in a 5-star rating scale, indicating that the startups were highly satisfied with mentoring as a form of service delivery.

### Events

DMS provided startups and SMEs with invitations to participate in relevant events such as the TNW conference, the South Summit, Wolves Summit, and the Big Data Value forum. SMEs who took advantage of these services reported high satisfaction via direct communications with the consortium.

## 2.4. Impact survey

At the end of each iteration of the programme, the participants were presented with an “Impact Survey” to determine the possible effects of DMS services on their business operations. The survey contained questions that aligned with each of the service categories provided at DMS, in addition to monitoring the companies’ general development and achievements. A copy of the survey can be found [here](#). Similar versions of the survey were administered twice to cohorts 1 and 2 – first upon leaving the programme and again one year later.

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3
Initial survey	11	21	13
Follow-up survey	6	6	
Total companies responded	13	21	13

Table 1. Impact Survey response rates.

Table 1 summarises the response rates received by the Impact Survey. On average, 15 responses (30%) were received upon leaving the programme, and 6 (12%) for the follow-up survey. Although the response rates were low for each iteration of the survey, aggregating the responses across all cohorts enabled us to generate a reasonably sized sample of 47 companies. Our findings for these companies are reported below.

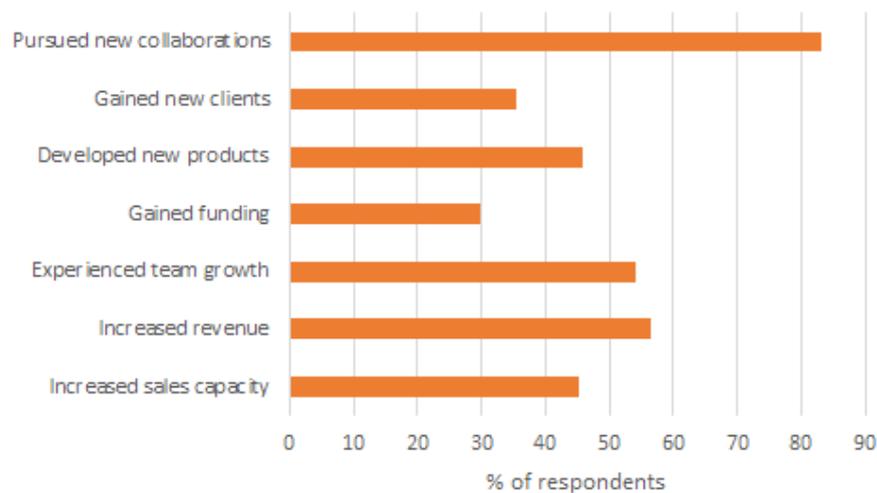


Figure 10. Impact Survey findings. The bars indicate the proportion of respondents who experienced a positive change in each aspect of their business.

A significant portion of the respondents (83%) reported pursuing new collaborations, and approximately 36% were successful in securing new clients, reporting approximately 3-4 clients on average. Close to half of the respondents (46%) had developed new products or services, including hardware and software solutions in specific sectors. Around 30% were able to secure additional funding, collectively reporting approximately €2M<sup>6</sup>. Just over half of the respondents (54%) had experienced team growth, collectively reporting 78 new jobs and an average of 2-3 new team members per company. The position types were specified for 43 of the new roles, with approximately 52% of the reported roles being in technical and data-related fields, 26% in business development, 10% in marketing, and the remainder related to finance, sales and HR. A small portion of the respondents (around 28%) experienced a change in the gender composition of their team, with the representation of women increasing by an average of 14% per company. Just over half of the respondents (56%) experienced an increase in revenue, with the magnitude of increase being 63% on average. For sales capacity, 45% of the respondents reported an increase, averaging around 36% among those who answered.

Although these positive changes could be attributable to influences outside of DMS, the participants commented on specific contributions of the programme that were effective in meeting their needs. This included:

- Improved public image thanks to the audiovisual materials created by DMS as part of the promotional service category.
- Improved negotiation capacity, selling proposition, and reach generated through DMS entrepreneurial services.

<sup>6</sup> Please note that this estimate comes from a small sample of DMS participants and therefore represents only a fraction of the funds raised in reality; further desk research via [Crunchbase](#) revealed that over €70M had been raised by DMS graduates overall since joining and graduating from the programme.

- Increased confidence in pitching to investors and developing a better understanding of funding opportunities.
- Meeting investors and partners via DMS events and features.
- Improved GDPR compliance and data management after leaving DMS.

In addition to positive aspects, the respondents also commented on aspects of the programme that could be improved. The most salient challenge was needing more interaction with other startups and SMEs that were part of the programme. This request was addressed at DMS by creating a peer-learning webinar and a common Slack channel where the participants of the programme could communicate.

### 3. Summary of findings

The previous section presented a range of insights into the needs of startups and SMEs who participated in the DMS programme. These insights were obtained using various methods, including startups' application forms, onboarding surveys, service monitoring metrics and impact surveys. Below we summarise our findings in terms of three types of startup needs: 1) their main topics of interest when choosing services, 2) their preferred modes of service delivery, and 3) their latent needs, which were identified by the consortium when trying to increase startups' engagement with the programme.

#### Topics that are of interest to startups

We learnt that the main priorities of startups and SMEs were focused on fundraising, acceleration, and promotion. Their motivations for pursuing these services appeared to align with the objectives of the European Commission. For example, fundraising was often viewed as a means to support employment and innovation, while acceleration and promotion services were requested in order to help them expand into new European markets and to establish collaborations. We also observed a general interest in data skills, often for the purposes of developing products or gaining a competitive advantage through more efficient business operations.

Despite a strong commitment to data skills, the participants tended to have less interest in specialist topics such as data standardisation and GDPR. This may be due to a lack of awareness about how standards and GDPR can benefit their business, or the importance of these topics when it comes to building data integrations and data sharing, which were part of the ambitions of our startups. Another service category that could benefit from further engagement was IP. While a small number of startups were highly interested in IP and expressed a strong case for pursuing these services, the majority of participants did not prioritise this aspect of their business upon entering the programme.

#### Preferred modes of service delivery

DMS services were delivered predominantly online in the form of webinars, remote mentoring sessions and digital resources. Participants were also provided with

opportunities to attend a small number of face-to-face events where possible. Each mode of service delivery was effective at addressing certain needs.

A particularly strong demand for 1-to-1 mentoring and coaching sessions was observed by the consortium. This service provided tailored guidance on the specific ambitions and challenges faced by each startup. The sessions also helped to build rapport between consortium members and startups, which kept them engaged in other aspects of the programme and provided us with a better understanding of their needs.

In addition to expert guidance, the participants requested tangible help with certain aspects of their business. This included social introductions and matchmaking with investors, as well as promotion via audiovisual content and the project's media channels. The startups reported particular benefits from the professional videos that were created by DMS, which they could then publish on their own social media or website.

When it came to upskilling, we found that webinars and courses were well received as a training tool. This format worked well for conveying factual information and introducing startups to topics that were new to them. Webinars tended to receive more engagement compared to more static training resources such as PDF guides.

### Latent needs

In addition to the insights that were generated by directly asking startups about their preferences and monitoring their engagement with different service categories, the consortium detected other, more subtle, needs as the programme progressed.

One of our most important observations was that **a good rapport between startups and consortium members** had to be established early on in order to maintain the startups' interest in services. At DMS, this personal connection was implemented through individual calls during the onboarding process, in addition to 1-to-1 mentoring sessions that were available throughout the project. Moreover, there was strong demand for peer to peer networking opportunities among the participating companies.

Besides personalized support and networking, DMS offered a wide range of services and events that required startups to make decisions about where best to invest their limited time. In order to assist with this process, the consortium developed a **well timed communications strategy** for reminding participants about which services were available at every stage. We found that monthly email reminders were most effective at stimulating interest without overwhelming the recipients.

Another challenge related to the extensive training curriculum was a need for **coherence in the sequence of services**. We found that it was easier to retain startups' interest when services from similar categories were scheduled closely together in time. It was also beneficial to time the services to become progressively more technical as each cohort progressed (e.g. starting with entrepreneurial, fundraising and marketing trainings, followed by data skills, standards and legal). Organising the service calendar in this way made it possible to promote blocks of

similar services each month, and provided DMS startups with the focus and clarity needed to fully engage with each stage of service delivery.

## Recommendations

Based on our learnings, we make a set of recommendations to other innovation programmes similar to DMS. We feel these recommendations are particularly applicable to publicly-funded initiatives that face challenges to engaging companies in topics that are meaningful to the funder but may be ranked lower in the companies' own list of priorities. Our recommendations are as follows:

- **Design the application and selection process to include fine grained details of the applicant's needs** and their motivations to join the programme. This is important to ensure that the selected applicants are those who will make the most efficient use of the services provided.
- **Establish rapport with incoming companies** through personal calls during onboarding, as well as subsequent opportunities for 1-to-1 mentoring with consortium members and peer networking with other participants.
- **Prepare for a lack of engagement in some service categories.** To mitigate this in advance, less desirable services such as GDPR, standards and IP can be communicated to appeal to the companies' more urgent motivations (e.g. fundraising, sales, market leadership) by presenting:
  - Standardisation as a source of insider knowledge, networking opportunities and a means to ensure interoperability between platforms.
  - IP as a way to secure their position in the market and to signal their value to investors.
  - Compliance with GDPR as a way to build trust and leadership.
- **Anticipate time constraints in companies** that reduce their ability to dedicate attention to the programme. This can be addressed by careful planning of the service calendar to allow some flexibility (e.g. mentoring timings and course deadlines), as well as curating a concise service offering that does not overload the participants.
- **Establish a coherent curriculum of services** where trainings are grouped by themes and delivered in a logical sequence.
- **Maintain continued communication streams** before, during, and after service provision. Different communication methods, such as monthly email newsletters, social media updates, and surveys, can be effective at reminding companies about the services that are available and assessing their ongoing requirements.

## Appendix A

### DMS Accelerator Needs Analysis

The aim of this set of questions is to elaborate upon the responses of your application form. As you are aware, DMS accelerator offers a wide range of services. To fine tune these services, it is convenient to identify what are the most important needs of your company. Please answer the following question, focusing on the needs of your startup for the next six months.

\* Required

1. Company Name \*

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#### Service categories

2. Service categories: Please rank the above categories, from the most important (1) to the least important (5). \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Promoting your company	<input type="radio"/>				
Fundraising	<input type="radio"/>				
Upskilling your workforce	<input type="radio"/>				
Data compliance management	<input type="radio"/>				
IP management	<input type="radio"/>				
Entrepreneurial skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Explore international markets	<input type="radio"/>				

## D3.5 Current findings and needs by data-centric companies in Europe v2

### Acceleration services

3. PROMOTING YOUR COMPANY: From 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), how well do you think the following services would suit the needs of your company? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Attendance to conferences and events, where DMS provides a ticket and a booth	<input type="radio"/>				
Audiovisual production of marketing material	<input type="radio"/>				
Promotion in our social media channels	<input type="radio"/>				
Digital marketing training via webinars	<input type="radio"/>				

4. Please briefly explain the reason for your choices

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5. Can you think of another related service that would be beneficial for accelerating your company?

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6. FUNDRAISING: From 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), how well do you think the following services would suit the needs of your company? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
Introduction and matchmaking with investors at the appropriate round of investment	<input type="radio"/>				
Pitch deck design training via webinars	<input type="radio"/>				
Pitching to investors training via webinars	<input type="radio"/>				

7. Please briefly explain the reason for your choices

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### D3.5 Current findings and needs by data-centric companies in Europe v2

8. Can you think of another related service that would be beneficial for accelerating your company?

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9. ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAININGS: From 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), how well do you think the following services would suit the needs of your company? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
How to develop Business plan	<input type="radio"/>				
How to develop products and plans	<input type="radio"/>				
How to improve your sales process	<input type="radio"/>				

10. Please briefly explain the reason for your choices

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11. Can you think of another related service that would be beneficial for accelerating your company?

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13. MANAGING YOUR DATA FOR COMPLIANCE: From 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), how well do you think the following services would suit the needs of your company? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
GDPR training via an online course	<input type="radio"/>				
GDPR training via webinars	<input type="radio"/>				
Data standardisation and legal compliance training via webinars	<input type="radio"/>				
Data standardisation and legal compliance via 1-1 tutoring	<input type="radio"/>				

14. Please briefly explain the reason for your choices

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15. Can you think of another related service that would be beneficial for accelerating your company?

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### D3.5 Current findings and needs by data-centric companies in Europe v2

16. **MANAGING YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** From 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), how well do you think the following services would suit the needs of your company?

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5
IP management via webinars	<input type="radio"/>				
IP management via 1-1 mentoring	<input type="radio"/>				

17. Please briefly explain the reason for your choices

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18. Can you think of another related service that would be beneficial for accelerating your company?

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19. Are you interested in having a coach during the 6 months of the programme? Please, note that this will require time to meet with coaches at least twice a month (ca.1h) \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

20. Are you ready to be the next DMS Success Story? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes