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Based on the Agreement on the implementation of the project Boosting CBRNE Innovation in Southern CEE: Building a Resilient Ecosystem through Fostering Academy-Industry Collaboration, acronym "GROUNDUP", project number 101214954 funded by EISMEA within the Programme HORIZON-EIE-2024-CONNECT-02, Director of the Vinča Institute for Nuclear Sciences, an Institute of National Importance for the Republic of Serbia, University of Belgrade (hereinafter: Vinča Institute) announces

COMPETITION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE HACKATHON SERBIA

I. GROUND UP HACKATON

The GroundUp project is an EU-funded initiative that supports civil applications of CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive) technologies to enhance public safety, environmental protection and crisis management. The project aims to connect academia, research and industry, as well as bring new technologies to the market across Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The GroundUp Hackathon aims to engage students, researchers and young innovators from Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria in developing creative, practical concepts that solve real-world civilian challenges in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) operations.

Participants will work in teams, guided by expert mentors from academia, industry, and government, to design and present innovative ideas that improve public safety, environmental protection, and emergency preparedness.

Hackathon Serbia will be held on March 13, 2026 online and March 28, 2026. live.

II. APPLICATION CONDITIONS

Students or young researchers up to 35 years of age who are citizens of the Republic of Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria have the right to apply for the competition to participate in Hackathon Serbia.

III. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Candidates are required to submit their application electronically by filling out the form at the following link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1gLdEQd565cSfVgF_vCPf0Q6oUJLjaoqKG7WKHULw67E/viewform?edit_requested=true

Applications must be submitted electronically only via the link above, and any applications received in any other way will not be considered.

After formal review of the submitted application, eligible candidates will be notified of the interview date.

III. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS

The call for applications is open until March 1, 2026.

All information about the competition will be published on the official website of the Vinča Institute and on the project website www.groundup-project.eu/

IV. CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCEDURE

The first round of candidate selection is carried out based on the fulfillment of the mandatory requirements prescribed by the competition.

Candidates who make it to the second round of selection will be invited to an interview with an appointed committee at the Vinča Institute composed of participants in the Boosting CBRNE Innovation in Southern CEE: Building a Resilient Ecosystem through Fostering Academy-Industry Collaboration project, acronym "GROUNDUP".

Selection in the second round is made based on the personal achievements and affinities of the candidate, that meet the following criteria:

- educational and business goals,- preference and orientation for pursuing innovations in the field of public safety, environmental protection and emergency preparedness,
- volunteer work and extracurricular activities from a social and national perspective importance, as well as overall social engagement.

After the interview, the director, upon the proposal of the Commission, makes a decision on the selection of candidates who will participate in Hackathon Serbia.

The decision on the selection must be made no later than March 12, 2026.

V. PARTICIPATION FEES

Hackathon participants in Serbia will receive a monetary amount to cover travel and accommodation expenses in the Republic of Serbia for the duration of the Hackathon, as follows:

1. Citizens of the Republic of Serbia in the amount of 130 euros,
2. Citizens of Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria in the amount of 180 euros.

Participants are required to submit proof of non-residency and account details for payment of funds.

VI. GOAL OF THE HACKATHON

Hackathons serve as a direct entry point into the GroundUp Mentoring Program. Outstanding teams and individuals are invited to continue developing their concepts under expert guidance. Through personalized mentoring, they will receive business, technical, research and strategic support as well as the contacts they need to prepare for market

readiness, EU funding opportunities or future partnerships. This ensures that hackathons act as launch pads for long-term innovation within GroundUp ecosystem.

VIII. PARTICIPATION IN THE HACKATHON

Over two intensive days, participants will work in teams, guided by expert mentors from academia, industry and government, to design and present innovative ideas that improve public safety, environmental protection and emergency preparedness. On 14.03.2026. an online workshop/lecture by mentors and lecturers will be held on the introduction and education about the Hackathon itself. It aims to help participants and prepare for better and higher quality tasks on 28.03.2026.

Benefits of participating in a Hackathon:

- Access to the European innovation network GroundUp,
- Rewards tailored to professional development,
- Covering travel and accommodation expenses,
- Possibility for visibility and cooperation across borders,
- An inspiring environment for the realization of ideas.