

# Desafía

Impact and lessons learnt from DESAFIA San Francisco Program for women entrepreneurs

Informal Working Group for Trade and Gender  
WTO

# ¿WHAT IS Desafía ?

✓ DESAFÍA is an ICEX Program for fostering the internationalization of entrepreneurs

✓ DESAFÍA works for the scalability of Spanish startups abroad through a net of immersions in the most referenced tech and innovative ecosystems in the world

✓ DESAFÍA takes special attention to gender equality, and 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (SDGs 2,3,5,6,7,11,12,13,14,15)

✓ DESAFÍA is based in private-public partnerships



## Selection

**Selective and Taylor-made program for startups** with a technological, commercial, financial and organizational background



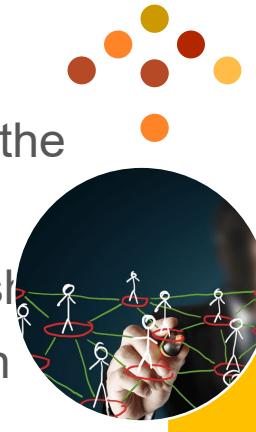
## Bootcamp

**Preparatory training** on the target market, definition of the company's strategy and objectives, meeting the local partner staff



## Immersion

**Alumni phase** for building business alliances, identifying opportunities and maintaining the contact with local partners



## DESAFÍA Community

Intensive **two-week program at the destination** with training workshops, meetings, working visits for an effective entry into the market/ecosystem

# Desafía

## IS A LONG TRIP: CONSOLIDATED PROGRAM

2011

2016

2018

2019

2021

2023

2024

**Spain Tech Center  
STC**

Cambio de  
modelo

2 nuevos STCs

Punto de  
inflexión

Fondos PRTR  
2 nuevos  
DESAFIA

2 NUEVOS  
DESAFIA

7 NUEVOS  
DESAFIA

2011-2016: 10 programas  
en la sede establecida del  
STC SAN FRANCISCO

Creación en SAN  
FRANCISCO del Spa  
Tech Center STC, origen  
del programa DESAFIA



-En 2014, entrada de  
Red.es en el programa

- Más dotación de servicios y acompañamiento – programas de validación y orientación
- La inmersión se reduce a 2 semanas
- Decisión sobre ampliación de número de ecosistemas
- Mantenimiento programa referente STC San Francisco

STC LUXEMBURGO  
(orientado a finanzas)

STC TEL AVIV



CREACION  
MARCA  
DESAFIA

Desafía

-Diversificación de  
ecosistemas y

-Diversificación de verticales

-Desaparición de programas  
de validación y orientación,  
foco único en la inmersión,  
pre inmersión y PLAN  
COMUNIDAD DESAFIA

DESAFIA BERLIN  
MOVILIDAD

DESAFIA LONDRES  
CLEANTECH



DESAFIA FOODTECH  
PAISES BAJOS

DESAFIA CIENCIAS DE LA  
VIDA SINGAPUR

Julio 2014 LANZAMIENTO  
COMUNIDAD DESAFIA

1t2024 DESAFIA  
CIBERSEGURIDAD  
NUEVA YORK

2t2014 DESAFIA  
FOODTECH REINO UNIDO

2t2024 DESAFIA  
FOODTECH ALEMANIA

2t2024 DESAFIA SALUD  
NORDICOS

3T2024 DESAFIA  
BIOTECNOLOGIA  
BOSTON

3T2024 DESAFIA  
SOSTENIBILIDAD  
SUIZA

4T2024 DESAFIA  
INTELIGENCIA  
ARTIFICIAL CANADA

## 2023-2024 immersions:

- San Francisco (deep tech)
- Tel Aviv (digital transformation)
- Singapore-Australia (life sciences)
- Berlín (mobility)
- London (cleantech)
- Boston (biotech)
- New York (cybersecurity)
- Nordics (digital health)
- United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands (foodtech)
- Switzerland (sustainability)
- Canada (artificial intelligence)



In Autumn 2023, ICEX decided to launch a 100% women entrepreneur, CEOs and founders immersion program in DESAFIA San Francisco.

### **Desafía** Before DESAFIA San Francisco Autumn 2023

- 222 startups taking part in the different immersion programs.
- 250 million € of capital and financing rised in the 6 months after the immersion
- Changes in business models, new strategic orientation, impact in employment and international incomes
- Surviving rate: 8/10
- But, ONLY 31 women entrepreneurs, CEOs or founders as representatives of the startups, over 222 –  
~~15%~~

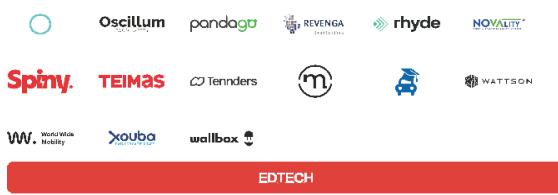
### **Desafía**

After DESAFIA San Francisco Autumn 2023....-the same as before, BUT:

- Direct effect DESAFIA SF: 7 Spanish women entrepreneurs joining at the same time the program.
- Indirect effect: 30 of the new 90 startup participation in DESAFIAs 2024 were women – 33%

More 100% women **Desafía** conclusions:

- At the selection process: better target market, better potential future scaleups.
- At the bootcamp, each cohort is a team: 100% women entrepreneurs trend to collaborate more since the very beginning. Even they talk and share more than in a gender mixed cohort.
- At the bootcamp: more attention paid and more chance of moving beyond.
- At the immersion program: conciliation situations meant more resignations than usual. How to avoid it?
- At the immersion program: more level of satisfaction once the two weeks are completed. Once we made it, why not 3 weeks?
- At the DESAFIA Community: women entrepreneurs are more involved than men. More in person activities.



In Spain, women are under represented in the tech and innovative entrepreneur ecosystem. Only 12-16% of the Spanish startups are leading by women entrepreneurs, CEOs, founders. Only 5% of the investment in Spanish startups is reaching to startups lead by women entrepreneurs, CEOs, founders.

In Autumn 2024, ICEX launched a second DESAFIA immersion program in San Francisco for 100% women entrepreneurs, CEOs, founders. It was very successful as well

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH MUCHAS GRACIAS**