

PROGRAM GUIDE

SkillHeart Industry Labs

Verifiable experience in real professional environments,
with supervision, clear boundaries and technical control.

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Industry Labs at a glance

ITEM	DETAILS
Format	Supervised technical collaboration program with real organizations
Participants	Emerging digital talent with sufficient foundations to contribute to real technical needs
Organizations	Companies, startups, nonprofits and other entities with projects compatible with a supervised environment
Model	Discovery, defined scope, prioritized backlog, technical supervision and a controlled boundary with production
Cost for participants	Free for selected participants
Stable counterpart	SkillHeart
Participant management	Managed by SkillHeart; the partner organization does not directly manage individual participants
Production access	Not by default
Integration	Only work that has been reviewed and approved is proposed for integration
Outcome for participants	Verifiable experience on real technical needs
Outcome for organizations	Supervised, reviewed technical work subject to defined scope, standards and acceptance criteria
Economic model	The organization may contribute through a program fee linked to scope; participant conditions are documented separately

Industry Labs turns suitable technical needs from real organizations into structured, supervised workstreams.

The program only makes sense when it creates value **on both sides**: verifiable professional experience for participants and useful technical outcomes for organizations, without turning learning into junior outsourcing or transferring educational risk to the partner.

1. Why Industry Labs exists

Many people develop technical knowledge through university, specialist training or independent learning and still struggle to access a solid first professional experience.

The barrier is not always a lack of knowledge.

What is often missing is the opportunity to work with:

- existing systems;
- real constraints;
- codebases they did not create;
- product priorities;
- review processes;
- testing;
- documentation;
- releases;
- incidents;
- operational continuity;
- security;
- and technical decisions shaped by business needs.

SkillHeart Industry Labs exists to reduce that gap.

The program turns suitable real technical needs from partner organizations into structured, supervised and traceable work.

Real professional experience requires real environments.

Industry Labs does not attempt to simulate a company. It creates a responsible framework in which participants can contribute to genuine problems without unnecessarily exposing the organization or using learning as a substitute for paid professional work.

2. Who it is for

Industry Labs is designed for two groups that need to fit each other.

Participants

It may be suitable for people who:

- have sufficient technical foundations;
- have demonstrated capability through personal projects, Open Source Labs or other environments;
- can work with feedback and standards;
- communicate reliably;
- understand the responsibility involved in working with third-party assets;
- and are ready to take on real tasks within a supervised framework.

It is not necessarily the first SkillHeart program for every profile.

In some cases, SkillHeart may recommend a prior stage in **Open Source Labs** or another preparation environment.

Partner organizations

It may be suitable for:

- startups;
- technology companies;
- nonprofit organizations;
- teams with digital products;
- organizations with compatible technical debt or backlog;
- and entities willing to collaborate through a supervised model with clear boundaries.

Industry Labs is not designed for organizations seeking:

- low-cost labor;
- workforce replacement;
- unlimited development;
- permanent availability;
- direct access to participants as if they were their own staff;
- or the transfer of critical responsibilities to SkillHeart without sufficient supervision.

3. What it is – and what it is not

Industry Labs is

- a supervised professional-experience program;
- a collaboration model between SkillHeart and real organizations;
- an environment where selected technical needs are turned into structured work;
- a system of review, testing, QA and control before integration is proposed;
- an opportunity to work with real constraints and priorities;
- and a way to create technical value while preserving quality, security and learning purpose.

Industry Labs is not

- unsupervised junior outsourcing;
- a temporary staffing agency or job board;
- unrestricted production access;
- educational experimentation on critical systems;
- unlimited development under a flat monthly fee;
- a way to obtain free technical work;
- a replacement for a full technical team;
- or a guarantee that any organizational need can be turned into participant work.

The program fee does not buy participant hours.

Where it exists, the organization's financial contribution funds a program framework that may include selection, coordination, supervision, tooling, infrastructure, QA, continuity and participant development.

Industry Labs does not compete on labor cost and is not structured around access to lower-cost talent.

4. How it works

Industry Labs is structured around three actors.

The partner organization	SkillHeart	Participants
Provides context, priorities, needs, technical information, feedback and validation.	Acts as the stable counterpart and maintains the program structure, participant selection, working environment, supervision, review and integration boundary.	Contribute within the defined scope and under the appropriate level of supervision.

The general flow is:

- 01 the organization shares context and needs;
- 02 SkillHeart carries out discovery and assesses fit;
- 03 a prioritized backlog is defined;
- 04 SkillHeart identifies which needs can become suitable program work;
- 05 tasks are structured according to level, complexity and risk;
- 06 participants with the appropriate fit are assigned;
- 07 work is carried out within the agreed environment;
- 08 SkillHeart reviews, tests and validates;
- 09 only approved work is proposed for integration;
- 10 the organization retains final approval over its assets and production.

Participants may rotate according to stack, demonstrated capability, complexity, availability and risk.

Continuity is maintained through documentation, task history, reviews, handovers and supervision.

The stable layer is SkillHeart.

5. Organization and project fit

Industry Labs selects both participants and partner organizations.

Before proposing a pilot, SkillHeart may assess six dimensions.

Technical Fit

The stack, architecture and type of work are compatible with the capabilities and supervision available.

Learning Value

The work can generate relevant learning and professional evidence for participants.

Risk Fit

Operational, security and continuity risk are proportionate to the program model.

Supervision Fit

SkillHeart can assign appropriate supervision to the scope and complexity.

Partner Fit

The organization accepts the rules on confidentiality, access, communication, integration and participant protection.

Sustainability Fit

There is a reasonable scope and continuity model that does not depend on indefinite availability or a single person.

A project may be technically interesting and still not be suitable for Industry Labs.

6. Discovery before commitment

Industry Labs follows a simple principle:

We understand first. We define second. Only then do we commit.

Before starting a collaboration, SkillHeart may carry out a **Technical Discovery & Baseline Review**.

Its purpose is to determine whether there is a responsible technical and operational fit.

Discovery may cover:

- product and architecture;
- frontend, backend, mobile applications and APIs;
- repositories and dependencies;
- build, deployment and releases;
- infrastructure;
- databases;
- environments;
- monitoring and logging;
- backups;
- secrets management;
- access controls;
- data flows;
- documentation;
- ownership of technical assets;
- backlog;
- known issues;
- priorities;
- and roadmap.

The review will be progressive and proportionate.

Basic information and read-only access will be prioritized, avoiding production and sensitive data where suitable alternatives exist.

Possible outcomes

Discovery may result in:

Proceed – there is sufficient fit to propose a pilot.

Proceed with conditions – a pilot may be appropriate once specific requirements or risks are addressed.

Not currently recommended – the scope, risk, supervision requirements or technical environment are not currently suitable.

Where appropriate, SkillHeart may then prepare a **Pilot Scope Proposal** covering scope, exclusions, initial backlog, responsibilities, standards, duration, success criteria and economic conditions.

Discovery is a mutual suitability assessment. It does not oblige either party to continue.

7. Technical boundary and integration

The partner organization retains control of:

- its product;
- its main repositories;
- its data;
- its infrastructure;
- its critical accounts;
- and its production decisions.

SkillHeart may work through a separate environment or a repository and permission model specifically agreed for the pilot.

That environment may support:

- participant branches;
- internal pull requests;
- testing;
- continuous integration;
- documentation;
- QA;
- review;
- and technical validation;

without unnecessarily exposing critical branches or production workflows to the learning process.

The conceptual flow is:



Not every need should become participant work.

If a task exceeds the appropriate level, presents elevated risk, affects critical systems or requires specialist expertise, SkillHeart may:

- escalate it to an appropriate supervisory layer;
- separate it from participant work;
- or exclude it from scope.

Product integrity, security and continuity take priority over the educational objective.

8. What SkillHeart provides

Industry Labs is not simply a source of people.

SkillHeart provides the structure that enables responsible contribution.

Governance

Responsibilities, permissions, acceptance criteria, scope and escalation paths.

Technical supervision

Defined responsibility for review, technical acceptance and integration.

Participant management

Selection, assignment, access, rotation, follow-up and handover.

Quality and continuity

Testing, documentation, version control, QA and processes designed to reduce dependency on specific individuals.

Organization protection

Separation between learning and production, least privilege and traceability.

Technical environment

Repositories, development and testing environments, professional tools and infrastructure where appropriate.

No pilot should begin until SkillHeart has confirmed that appropriate technical supervision exists for the relevant stack, scope and risk level.

9. Participant selection and rights

Participation in Industry Labs is selective.

SkillHeart may assess:

- technical capability;
- quality of work;
- reliability;
- communication;
- autonomy;
- ability to incorporate feedback;
- knowledge of the stack;
- previous experience;
- task complexity;
- risk level;
- and supervision needs.

Assignment to a project is based on demonstrated capability and fit with the context, not simply on a technology listed on a CV.

What a participant can expect

SkillHeart will seek to ensure that each participant can expect:

- reasonably defined scope;
- appropriate supervision;
- known evaluation criteria;
- technical feedback;
- reasonable protection of their data;
- confidentiality and IP conditions known before working on affected assets;
- no unnecessary production access;
- a channel for raising questions, risks or disagreements;
- the ability to reject work outside the agreed framework;
- and an experience that is not used as a disguised substitute for paid professional work.

Participation is voluntary.

A person may leave the program, although appropriate communication and, where reasonable, an orderly close-out of tasks, documentation and access will be expected.

10. What the partner organization provides

The organization does not directly manage individual participants.

Its role is to provide the context SkillHeart needs to structure a useful collaboration.

Depending on the pilot, it may provide:

- priorities;
- product context;
- relevant technical information;
- proportionate access for discovery;
- feedback;
- validation of outcomes;
- business criteria;
- and final approval where appropriate.

SkillHeart retains responsibility for program structure, participant selection and access, task definition, supervision, review, QA, documentation, reporting and handovers within the agreed scope.

Specific responsibilities will be documented before each collaboration begins.

11. What kind of work may fit

Scope will always depend on discovery and the supervision available.

By way of guidance, Industry Labs may work in areas such as:

Product maintenance

- bug resolution;
- dependency updates;
- compatibility;
- web or mobile maintenance;
- progressive improvements.

Product improvement

- performance;
- accessibility;
- user experience;
- small features;
- progressive modernization.

Engineering foundations

- testing;
- documentation;
- CI/CD;
- technical debt;
- observability;
- development-process improvement.

Technical operations

- release support;
- monitoring;
- logging;
- deployments;
- publishing;
- technical continuity.

Major migrations, complete new applications, substantial architectural changes or work outside the agreed scope must be planned separately.

12. Security, privacy and artificial intelligence

Industry Labs applies a basic principle:

Minimum exposure. Maximum traceability.

As a general rule:

- no participant receives production access by default;
- least privilege applies;
- development, staging and sandbox environments are prioritized;
- real data is avoided where suitable alternatives exist;
- secrets remain outside working repositories;
- critical branches are protected;
- and relevant access and actions must be reviewable where the context requires it.

Participant identity, assignment, access and contributions will be managed by SkillHeart.

Information shared with the organization will be limited to what is necessary to operate, meet obligations and maintain appropriate traceability.

Use of artificial intelligence

AI tools may be used where permitted by SkillHeart and the partner organization.

AI-assisted work is allowed when the environment permits it. Work the participant does not understand is not.

Each participant must be able to explain, modify and verify the work they submit.

The following must not be entered into external tools:

- proprietary code;
- secrets;
- credentials;
- personal data;
- confidential information;
- or restricted assets;

unless expressly authorized and compatible with the applicable policies.

Each pilot may define permitted tools or providers and specific restrictions.

13. Confidentiality, intellectual property and evidence

Access to code, infrastructure or non-public information will be subject to appropriate confidentiality obligations.

The organization retains ownership of its product and pre-existing technology assets.

Participation does not, by itself, automatically transfer to SkillHeart or the organization any participant's pre-existing code, tools, methodologies or other assets.

Before work subject to specific intellectual-property conditions begins, the terms applicable to contributions created within the pilot must be defined.

SkillHeart may retain independently developed methodologies, templates and reusable tools, provided they do not contain confidential information, project-specific intellectual property or code derived from the organization's proprietary assets.

Evidence for the participant

Industry Labs exists to generate verifiable experience.

Accordingly, where confidentiality and intellectual property allow, SkillHeart will seek to ensure that participants can retain verifiable evidence of their contribution.

This may take forms such as:

- visible contributions;
- validated descriptions of work;
- non-confidential technical evidence;
- structured evaluations;
- Contribution Records;
- or references regarding observed capabilities.

The inability to publish proprietary code should not eliminate the possibility of documenting, within reasonable limits, the experience gained.

SkillHeart will not publicly use an organization's name, brand, results, testimonials or experience as a case study without prior authorization.

14. How we measure success

A pilot should only be considered successful if it creates value on both sides.

For the organization

Factors may include:

- agreed work completed;
- sufficient quality before integration;
- adherence to the process;
- documentation;
- continuity;
- predictability;
- and satisfaction with the collaboration.

For participants

Factors may include:

- supervised experience;
- demonstrated competencies;
- ability to work on real systems;
- technical quality;
- feedback received and applied;
- communication;
- reliability;
- autonomy;
- and verifiable evidence of contribution.

Participant learning does not compensate for poor outcomes for the organization.

Likewise, value for the organization must not come at the expense of an irresponsible or exploitative learning experience.

15. Communication, continuity and reversibility

Each pilot will define an appropriate communication cadence.

This may include:

- a shared backlog;
- issue tracking;
- written updates;
- release notes;
- documentation;
- periodic reports;
- and follow-up meetings where they add value.

The organization should have sufficient visibility without becoming the day-to-day manager of participants.

If the collaboration ends

- access will be revoked;
- open work will be documented;
- a reasonable handover will be completed;
- backlog status will be recorded;
- and code or asset copies will be handled in accordance with the agreed terms.

The organization should remain able to operate independently of SkillHeart.

16. Economic model and sustainability

Industry Labs is designed to be sustainable without shifting program costs to participants.

Participation is free for selected participants.

Organizations may contribute through a **program fee** or another agreed economic model linked to defined scope, priorities and responsibilities.

The fee may reflect:

- complexity;
- volume of work;
- technology stack;
- risk;
- supervision requirements;
- infrastructure;
- release frequency;
- and delivery expectations.

The model is not unlimited development under a flat fee.

Scope, exclusions, new features and additional work must be expressly defined.

Separation between program economics and participant conditions

The fee paid by an organization and the participant's economic conditions are separate frameworks.

The existence of a program fee does not mean that the participant provides services directly to the organization, nor does it determine by itself whether individual compensation exists.

Where a pilot includes a stipend, grant, compensation or another economic condition for participants, it must be communicated and documented separately before the relevant participation begins.

Resources generated through the program are reinvested in SkillHeart's mission and operations, including supervision, tooling, infrastructure, quality, participant development and the sustainability of future cohorts.

The objective is to create real value for the organization without turning access to emerging talent into a cost-reduction strategy.

17. Legal and contractual framework

Industry Labs is a program, not a service catalog or an SLA.

Each pilot will require:

- discovery;
- mutual validation of capability;
- scope definition;
- risk analysis;
- confidentiality and IP conditions;
- responsibilities;
- access and integration rules;
- data-processing arrangements where applicable;
- and a specific agreement before work begins.

Each collaboration must operate under a framework appropriate to its scope, participants and jurisdictions.

Where an activity requires a different employment, professional or contractual relationship, it will not be structured as ordinary participation in Industry Labs.

The specific terms must be validated under the applicable legal framework before the pilot begins.

18. How to start a collaboration

Organizations interested in collaborating may contact SkillHeart to explore fit.

The general process may be:

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 01 | initial conversation; | 06 | Pilot Scope Proposal; |
| 02 | exchange of basic context; | 07 | agreement on responsibilities, technical conditions and contractual framework; |
| 03 | Technical Discovery & Baseline Review; | 08 | participant selection; |
| 04 | Partner & Project Fit assessment; | 09 | Lab preparation; |
| 05 | scope definition; | 10 | pilot launch. |

No commercial decision is required before sufficient information exists.

We want to earn that decision with a proposal that is technically responsible, operationally clear and valuable to both sides.

Information and collaborations skillheart.org

Contact admin@skillheart.org

About SkillHeart

SkillHeart is the public-facing name of the *Asociación para el Desarrollo del Talento Tecnológico y la Empleabilidad Digital*, a nonprofit association registered in Spain.

Its mission is to help emerging digital talent develop relevant capabilities, gain verifiable experience and access professional, educational and entrepreneurial opportunities responsibly.

Its initial focus gives particular attention to collaboration between African and European technology ecosystems.

SkillHeart does not seek to operate as a source of low-cost labor. Its model is based on dignity, autonomy, supervision, quality, reciprocity, transparency, privacy and sustainable value creation.

Document status and updates

This document describes the general model of **SkillHeart Industry Labs**.

Each collaboration will be subject to technical assessment, mutual fit, scope definition and formalization of the relevant framework before it begins.

The specific conditions of each pilot may differ from this general guide and will prevail where appropriate.

ITEM	DETAILS
Version	1.0
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SkillHeart

Skills open doors. We build the bridges.

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