



Application Guideline

Who we are

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) belongs to a family of multilateral development banks. Our main mission is to help businesses and economies thrive through financial investments, business services and involvement in high-level policy reform, promoting entrepreneurship and resilience. EBRD operates in [38 countries of operation](#), helping them to transition to market economies. We invest around €10 billion a year into a mix of small, large private firms, local banks and microfinance institutions, venture capital and local and national authorities. Our aim is to provide the right financing and a strong valuable partnership to help these bodies grow and develop their own skills.

The Bank is unique in its outreach to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Not only do we reach over 200,000 MSMEs annually through +€1 billion in direct and indirect financing, but we also provide business advisory services to over 2,200 small businesses a year across our regions. Moreover, we extended our focus, beyond SMEs, to the early-stage business space, investing in a number of young venture capital funds in the regions and mobilising know-how through the **Star Venture Programme**.

The aim of the Star Venture Programme is to identify high-potential start-ups and to mobilise globally sourced expertise to help these nascent firms scale up rapidly. We offer technical expertise, mentorship, local advice and strategic business development expertise to help start-ups unlock new opportunities for growth. Currently, the programme operates in 22 countries across the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED), the Western Balkans region, Eastern and Central Europe, and Central Asia, supporting over 550 early-stage companies, with the plan to expand to other EBRD regions over the coming years.

The Star Venture Programme was launched in the Western Balkans in 2019. Since then, the programme has established a collaboration with selected regional accelerators and deployed local advisory support to enhance the start-up ecosystem. So far, the programme has supported [31 high-potential start-ups](#) and [16 regional partner accelerators](#). The programme is run by EBRD and jointly funded by Luxembourg through the EBRD Small Business Impact Fund and EU – Western Balkans Enterprise Development & Innovation Facility (EDIF).

What we offer

The programme will be delivered on a competitive basis and selected enterprises will join a cohort of dynamic venture teams in an intensive and tailored 18-month experience-based Scaling Programme. The programme engagement includes - but is not limited to - strategic innovation business diagnostic workshops, advisory projects, mentorship, business matching with different types of stakeholders regional and international expansion,





Star Venture Programme

fundraising support, and investor pitching events. The areas of support and intervention will depend on the competencies and needs of the individual enterprises and could include:

Support Area	Support Input Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and Planning • Engineering and Technical Solutions • Fundraising and Financial Management • Accounting and Financial Reporting • ICT and Digitalisation • Internationalisation and Scaling • Lean and Agile Processes • Legal, Governance and Compliance • Marketing, Communications and Sales • Operations and Quality Management • Organisation, Leadership and HR • Pitching, Equity and Investor Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to all commercial consulting & technical skills as required • Introductions to investors, funders and credit sources • Negotiating, Valuations, Term Sheets & Investment • Cash-flow Management & Operational Planning • Identification, evaluation, introduction & negotiation with potential customers, suppliers and channel partners • Entering international markets and establishing international business entities • Developing & Implementing Marketing & Sales Plans

Eligibility

We are looking to support and engage with high-potential, innovative, growth-oriented startups that demonstrate the potential to scale rapidly and to attract finance. They will be supported by a suite of advisory instruments. The programme looks for registered private enterprises that fulfil the following criteria:

- A proven innovative technology-based solution or innovative business model;
- A large market opportunity;
- A strong competitive advantage;
- Managed to substantially increase revenues within 3 years of business operations;

Interested companies are asked to submit an online application following the guidance under “Application process”.

Timeline (for 2023 intake)

Programme Stage	Timeline (Tentative)
Application deadline	16 April 2023
Preliminary selection notification	28 April 2023
Company pitch sessions and Final selection announcement	May 2023





Star Venture Programme

Application process

Please check for more info about the programme and the application link (under “How to Apply”) at our website: <https://www.ebrd.com/starventure/start-ups>, and submit your application form by **16 April 2023**. Before you fill out the application, please ensure that your company's financial data and pitch deck are ready to be uploaded. Please fill in the form as accurately as possible.

Further information

Once companies are shortlisted, they will be asked to pitch their presentation to an international panel of experts and investors in the final round of selection. It is therefore important that applicants provide as many details under each section of the application as possible, and also clearly present why and how the company, its product/solution and strategy are best placed to exploit and scale within the identified market opportunity. For tips on how to deliver the perfect 5 minutes pitch, we have prepared for you the presentations of Francesco Cracolici from Nomadic Minds, who is responsible for running the mentoring platform and fundraising activities within the Star Venture Programme. You may access the presentations here:

<https://vimeo.com/522333873/97d41ed428>
and <https://vimeo.com/521896436/15e613ac07>

For the additional information and clarifications, please contact Dejan Tonic, the Programme's Regional Coordinator for the Western Balkans (tonicd@ebrd.com). Further assistance with the preparation of applications will be provided by the EBRD Western Balkans local teams and regional partner accelerators as part of regular bi-weekly Open Doors group sessions (to be announced), so please contact us for additional information and keep in touch.

