



STARTUP APPLICATION GUIDELINE

Rules & Regulations Season 2

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Disclaimer: By applying under this Startup Call for „The Founder Games“, organized by the Applicant agrees to all the Terms and Conditions outlined in these Guidelines. Furthermore, by submitting an application, the Applicant agrees that Networker cannot be held liable for any of the costs incurred by it prior to and/or during the application and selection process.



Welcome to **The Founder Games!**

The reality show that takes you
behind the scenes of entrepreneurial
success!

The Founder Games™ - TFC © is more than just a competition show. It's a showcase of the potential that lies within every bold idea. From heart-pounding pitches to strategic pivots, witness the highs and lows of startup development as our participants strive to turn their visions into viable businesses.

This document provides applicants with informative overview of how to submit a high-quality proposal for the “The Founder Games -TFG” - Season 3 Program, that aims to support innovative and prosperous startups.

Intro

A one-of-a-kind reality show that takes you backstage as startups are built, guided by experienced entrepreneurs competing for the grand prize: €300k of investment from our investment partners, and a ticket to Silicon Valley, the ultimate startup destination.

Background

„The Founder Games - TFG” is a project of Networker Ltd. a Venture Studio aimed at establishment, operation and investments of TFG Accelerator for developing and implementing a self-sustainable business acceleration programme in the SEE Region for support of start-ups encompassing a variety of business support services and access to finance.

The Founder Games is also a one-of-a-kind platform for startups that blends the traditional aspects of an accelerator program with the excitement of a reality show. This unique approach gives entrepreneurs unparalleled exposure, mentorship, and funding readiness through a vast network of investors, partners, and sponsors.

After the successful completion of the 1st season, which you can check out [here](#), we’re now opening slots for Season 2 and inviting all entrepreneurs and startups from the SEE & CEE region to join.

About the Show

The reality show aspect adds a dynamic twist to the TFG program, capturing the highs and lows of the startup journey as you navigate challenges, pitch your ideas, and receive feedback from mentors and industry experts. It brings the entrepreneurial process to life, offering viewers an inside look at the grit and determination it takes to build a successful startup, all while giving you a platform to showcase your progress and innovations to a broader audience.

The Acceleration Program

The TFG accelerator program offers a 12-weeks journey (out of which 4 weeks are on site experience) packed with mentorship sessions, expert guest-mentors on demand and exciting onsite events, all designed to supercharge your startup. What makes it stand out is that these activities are part of a reality show, giving you a chance to showcase your growth and ideas to a wider audience while benefiting from real-world guidance.

Startups Criteria

Broad Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for admission in “The Founders Game” applicants must constitute one of the following:

- Startup legal entity, or
- Startup Team

Definition of Startup

“The Founder Games” will consider an entity as a Start-Up, if they are established in the South East Europe - SEE or Central East Europe - CEE countries, incorporated no longer than 5 years ago, by the end of this call.

Definition of Startup Team

“The Founder Games” will consider an Startup Team as single, or a group up to five people (1-5 entrepreneurs), which have jointly created a prototype (or are in process of its development) of a new service or a product as part of a business process but have not established a legal entity yet.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants (startups / startup teams) must complete an Online Application Form to determine if Applicant meets the following eligibility requirements:

- has a technology orientation through its operation and/or services/products
- has a developed /in the developing stage of prototype of the company's product or service;
- has legal rights to the company's technology and/or product or service (valid only for legal entities)
- be a for-profit entity as a corporation, limited liability company, partnership or sole proprietorship, or a team of entrepreneurs that has the potential of fast incorporation and scaling ;
- be a new or early-stage business less than 3 years old; or an existing business which is just beginning for the first time, to develop / prototype and commercialize an innovative new product or service;
- be innovative and contribute to the circular economy and / or the greening of businesses
- demonstrates a need for “The Founder Games” and it's services;
- demonstrates receptiveness to the input available from “The Founder Games” staff and external mentors and advisors;
- has the potential for growth.

Equity & Funding Opportunities

Applications which are selected, will be eligible for admission in the 12 weeks “The Founder Games” program and offered training, consultancy and mentorship opportunities. After finishing this program, successfully graduated startups/teams will be offered a Demo Day pitching Event, where they can pitch their business idea/concept in front of “The Founder Games” and Networker business angels, investors, VC’s, corporations and partners.

The selected startups in the program will receive an acceleration package made of: networking, mentorships, training, and investment opportunities in **exchange of 3% equity** of the applicant's startup, which will be done in separate Agreement upon entering the program.

If startup teams graduate TFG Acceleration Program, and they are not incorporated by the time of potential investment, they will have to legally register their business within a period of 3 months.

Additionally, a set of services will be added as supporting services on top of the seed- investment (such as: office space, meeting room, networking events, additional mentorship, consultancy, infrastructure, R&D etc.) if applicants are in need of such services.

Duration and Content of the Acceleration Program



The accelerator program lasts for 12 weeks. The planned timeline is: **April 2026 - June 2026.**

The TFG accelerator program features one-on-one weekly sessions with a specially assigned mentor over a six-month period. Your mentor will provide personalized guidance tailored to your specific product or service, your current stage of development, and other relevant aspects of your startup journey.

Additionally, The Founder Games will equip you with top notch trainers, essential tools and resources sourced from our extensive network of partners and sponsors, designed to support you as you build and scale your startup effectively.

Throughout the program, all participants will meet in pre-determined location, and a predetermined schedule alongside their mentors, guest experts, investors, and the production team. These meetings will include specially designed events that not only facilitate learning and networking but will also be featured in the reality show. To make this experience more accessible, travel expenses for these meetings are covered by the TFG accelerator. This unique blend of mentorship, collaboration, and exposure aims to enhance your startup experience and increase your chances of success.

Throughout the 12 weeks accelerator program, you can attend mentorship sessions online, so there's no requirement to be permanently onsite. However, for the onsite sessions, we've got you covered — your travel and accommodation expenses will be fully reimbursed to ensure your participation.

How does the reality show enhance the accelerator experience?

The reality show enhances the acceleration experience by providing participants with a unique platform to showcase their journey, challenges, and growth. It adds an element of excitement and engagement, allowing startups to connect with a broader audience, including potential customers and investors.

Additionally, the visibility gained from the show can open doors for networking opportunities and partnerships, making the entire experience not just about mentorship - but also about building a brand and community around your startup.

Can I join the accelerator without participating in the show?

No, participation in the reality show is a requirement for joining the accelerator program.

We believe that being part of the show offers valuable exposure and unique opportunities for growth. Your journey and experiences can inspire others while also providing you with increased visibility among potential customers and investors. We encourage you to embrace this opportunity!

Please note that if your startup drops out during the competitive rounds of the reality show, you can still continue with the accelerator program and its benefits.

Will all startups be featured, or just select ones?

All startups will have their moment in the spotlight.

How will a mentor be assigned to me?

A special Committee will oversee the matchmaking process between startups and mentors. Using a sophisticated AI algorithm, they will consider various factors such as: your startup's industry, stage, needs, mission & vision, as well as the mentor's background, expertise and capabilities. This tailored approach ensures that you are paired with a mentor who can provide the most relevant guidance and support for your journey.

How can I track my progress during the accelerator program?

You can track your changes via the unique TFG Platform, but also in real life from our: trainers, mentors, Selection and Investment Committees and TFG Team as you progress.

What happens at the end of the program? Is there a demo day or pitch event?

The accelerator program ends with an onsite Demo-Day for the most promising and prospectus startups that will go all the way through the Acceleration Program.

Can I join the accelerator without participating in the show?

No, participation in the reality show is a requirement for joining the accelerator program.

The official TFG Accelerator training, mentoring and consulting program itself will be based on 10 topics. Topics to be covered through the program duration are consisted [but not limited to] of the following:

1. **Business Model & Value proposition**
2. **Validation & Pivoting**
3. **Leadership & Team Building**
4. **Traction & KPI/s**
5. **Go-To-Markets Strategy**
6. **Marketing & Communication**
7. **Sales**
8. **Finance Projections**
9. **Storytelling / Pitching**
10. **Fundraising & Investment Readiness**

“The Founder Games” may adapt the program and the duration of some of the project phases if needed to best suite unexpected circumstances.

Means of Submission

Applicants shall submit their application in electronic format and online by filling-in the Online Application Form. One applicant / Startup / Startup Team may submit only one application.

Language

All applications are to be submitted in English. Proposals which are submitted in any other language will not be evaluated.

Documentation Formats

Any document requested shall be submitted electronically in PPT, PDF, Word or any other format without restrictions for printing.

Submission Process

Call Domains

„The Founder Games” places a specific emphasis on technology. While the Call Domain revolves around technology, digital solutions, green and circular economy, TFG has endeavored to list potential areas of interest. These include:

- Education-tech
- Bio-tech
- Software as a Service (SaaS)
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- Robotics
- Fintech
- Health-tech
- E-Commerce
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Entertainment
- Logistics
- Big-Data
- Agri-tech
- Virtual Reality (VR)
- Electronics
- Hardware
- Software
- 3D Printing
- Telecommunications
- Internet or web-based products or concepts
- Multimedia
- Green and/or Circular Economy

Any other technology-related products or services.

While “The Founder Games” does not exclude, service-oriented business models, it prefers companies that either possess or are developing some form of proprietary technology.

Applicant Registration

To register for the “The Founder Games” please submit your registration by filling-in the online application form. This will be the central place for submitting an application.

Advice for Submitting an Application

In preparing a successful application “The Founder Games” advises the following:

- Read the Call Document, the Guidelines for Applicants and related templates, and other relevant material on the “TFG Accelerator” carefully to ensure you have understand the application process and what exactly will be considered a high quality application.
- If an applicant does not understand a particular aspect of the process contact our help desk via: email, phone, or scheduled face-to-face meeting. Our support is not crucial to the success of your application, but demonstrating an attempt to reach out and understand their needs will reflect favourably on your application.
- Do not modify the application template.
- Respect the general instructions within the templates, incorrectly submitting an application may lead to a proposal’s ineligibility for evaluation.

- Be precise and to the point in answering your questions.
- Submit your application within the deadline. “TFG Accelerator” reserves the right not to evaluate an application that is submitted outside the specified deadline.
- The “TFG Accelerator” call will be competitive therefore it is recommended that each applicant review their proposal a number of times to ensure it is well written, clear, concise and answers the questions which have been requested as well as properly formatted and spell-checked.
- It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance.

Evaluation Process



This Call for Startups is a two-step process. Applications for Step 1 are due to be submitted their application online. All applications which are submitted by the final date will be screened to ensure they satisfy the eligibility criteria. Proposals passing the eligibility check will then be assessed through a transparent evaluation process that will be managed and led by “The Founder Games” team and external experts/investors in partnership with Networker. Each application will be reviewed by minimum two (2) assessors. This will ensure a better consistency across the evaluation process and will further enable assessors with a background in business and technology to review and assess the proposal.

Applications from Step 1 which are assessed and deemed successful fulfilling Eligibility criteria specified in Section 2 will proceed to Step 2 of the process.

The general Eligibility Criteria are:

- **Innovative, technology-based product or service.** (Examples of acceptable businesses include: Technology-based industry (e.g., education-tech, bio-tech, SaaS, IoT, robotics, Fintech, electronics, hardware, software, telecommunications, Internet or web-based products or concepts, multimedia, or any other technology-related or circular economy products or services). While “TFG Accelerator” does not exclude, service-oriented business models, it prefers companies that either possess or are developing some form of proprietary technology).
- **The beginning of a sound management and/or product development team.** The owner(s)/manager(s) of the business must demonstrate a capability to manage the business successfully; and/or a strong knowledge of the product or service.
- **Sufficient commitment** to the proposed business to achieve success in the time frame stated in the business model which has been reviewed and approved by both “TFG Accelerator” and the Admissions Committee.
- **Sufficient resources.** We prefer that the startup possess sufficient resources, and time-frame to carry forward with the proposed business model for at least a six (6) month period or can develop access to valid resources with assistance from “TFG Accelerator”, if necessary, to assure its success in the Accelerator program.

- **A product or service which is around 180 days from market.** “TFG Accelerator” is in the business of assisting commercial enterprises, not conducting research and development.
- **Realistic financial projections** demonstrating the ability to generate sales within 180 days after acceptance into the Acceleration program and significant revenues and/or employment within the first five (5) to seven years (7) of business operations.
- **A desire to leverage the services offered by “TFG Accelerator”.** “TFG Accelerator” admits only startups that possess a real need for the services provided by our team and a demonstrated receptiveness to the advisory, mentoring and other value-added services offered.
- **Cause no harm to the environment or other clients** of the Accelerator. We strive to provide a comfortable and safe work environment for all clients and their employees. “TFG Accelerator” admits only startups that are appropriate to locate in the type of space that is offered and which can co-exist with other clients without causing material damage to their operations.

The assessors will follow the scoring system outlined below - valid for Step 2:

- **Grade 0: Fail** - The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information
- **Grade 1: Very poor** - The criterion is addressed in an unsatisfactory manner.

- **Grade 2: Poor** - There are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **Grade 3: Good** - While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.
- **Grade 4: Very Good** - The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.
- **Grade 5: Excellent** - The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criteria, and any shortcoming as of minor nature.

Scoring Thresholds

The general minimum threshold for “TFG Accelerator” will be the Grade 3: Good.

This will permit to select the most promising teams/startups in terms of technical and market readiness criteria, with a strong support to the “TFG Accelerator” The idea is to invest in those projects with real potential, regardless of the proposers’ experience.

The startups that won’t be selected, upon request, will receive a direct one-on-one mentoring sessions from the team of Networker in order to future improve their application or business model for the next „The Founder Games“ acceleration program call, or other, third-party calls and competitions.

Communication

During the application and evaluation period all communication between “TFG Accelerator” and applicants will be conducted via email.

It is important therefore that if a change of email occurs at any point during the process that “TFG Accelerator” is informed to ensure each applicant remains updated on the latest developments.

The unofficial communication may be conducted by phone, via social-media or in person.

By submitting an Application form, the Applicant confirms:

- Acknowledges reading and understanding the selection criteria.
- Acknowledges that he/she is applying for admission to the „TFG Accelerator“ and understands that the information contained in this application and attached business-model will be held in strictest confidence; and
- Acknowledges that he/she understands that this application is subject to review and in no way guarantees Applicant’s admittance to TFG Acceleration Program and TFG Show.
- Acknowledges reading the Startup Application Procedures, Eligibility Assessment Form, Eligibility Requirements, Application Requirements, Review Procedures, and Evaluation Criteria, the Disclaimer and agree to the terms therein.

Points of Contact



Contact points for applicants for „The Founder Games“ :

- General Info: foundergames@networker.mk
- Applicants Info: gogo.rafajlovski@networker.mk
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Good Luck!

