



STARTUP AGENDA

2022 - 2026



Berlin Startup Agenda 2022–2026

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Berlin ...

... is developing into one of the most important business and technological locations in Europe and aims to become a role model for sustainable business. This is a joint effort by all parties involved. Startups have long been making an indispensable contribution to this. With the implementation of the Startup Agenda 2022-2026, the State of Berlin is preparing the conditions for the sustainable development of the ecosystem.

Startups are stable pillars of the Berlin economy

Since the mid-2000s, the Berlin startup ecosystem has developed into an indispensable – and even in difficult times stable – pillar of the Berlin economy, unleashing relevant employment potential in the process. The Berlin digital economy employed more than 120,000 people in 2021. In recent years, tens of thousands of new jobs have been created by Berlin startups – more than 600 new startups are founded each year. More than half of the VC money invested in German startups has been flowing to Berlin for years. Through cooperation with established companies, startups also contribute to strengthening competitiveness in many sectors of the economy with their innovative solutions.

The state of Berlin as an accelerator and facilitator for startups

Berlin competes with other international startup metropolises. Well-trained young talent, a high-performance and modern infrastructure, good networking opportunities and an open and accessible public authority for the needs of founders are relevant factors to ensure continued success as a startup capital in the future.

Berlin drafted a startup agenda back in 2016. In the meantime, our city has evolved, has become more dynamic and has grown faster. The Startup Agenda 2022-2026 takes up these positive developments – in the common interest of the continually growing startup hub of Berlin.

The State of Berlin will make the necessary decisions to strengthen Berlin as a startup location. It wants to act as an accelerator and facilitator. All relevant identified action items are continuously reviewed – especially regarding their need for further development. The agenda does not work according to fixed milestones but is very much oriented towards the development potential of the ecosystem and supports processes that minimise friction as far as possible.

The Startup Agenda supports the Berlin startup ecosystem

Berlin provides a diverse, goal-oriented support portfolio for startups. Some examples are the Starter Center of the Chamber of Commerce, the programmes of the Investment Bank Berlin (IBB) and especially IBB Ventures that are open to startups, the Business Location Center, the Business Immigration Service and the other startup activities of the Berlin business support agency Berlin-Partner for Business and Technology, the programme for internationalisation, the Berlin Startup Scholarship, startup-map.berlin and the coordinating Berlin Startup Unit.

The present Startup Agenda is intended to provide a roadmap and guideline for the further development of these services in the years to come. Further goal-oriented activities are and remain welcome.

Together with the Startup Ecosystem, the State of Berlin has developed action items and activities as part of the Berlin Startup Agenda.

Together with the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, Berlin Partner for Business and Technology, the business associations of Berlin-Brandenburg, the Senate Chancellery, the Senate Department for Economic, Energy and Enterprises, the Berlin Investment Bank, the universities and other public institutions, this Startup Agenda was developed through contact and discussions with well over 100 startups and other stakeholders. Particularly in cooperation with partners such as the German Startup Association and Bitkom, the Senate is reaffirming the leading role of Berlin's startup ecosystem in Germany. Together we see the potential for further consolidating Berlin as a European startup centre and internationally renowned ecosystem.

The State of Berlin supports the implementation of the Berlin Startup Agenda

The State of Berlin has commissioned the Core Group of the Berlin Startup Unit with the Senate Chancellery, the Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises, Investment Bank Berlin, Business Support Agency Berlin Partner for Business and Technology and Chamber of Commerce Berlin to jointly drive and coordinate the implementation of the agenda.

The members of the Startup Unit are responsible for incorporating startup needs in relevant initiatives and activities in Berlin. This applies in particular to the processes and activities of the strategy “Gemeinsam Digital: Berlin,” the planned promotion of living labs, the de:hub initiative, InnoBB, the Future Places, the overall strategic framework of the Capital Region, the universities and colleges, CityLAB, the Technology Foundation and the Verwaltungsakademie Berlin.

Utilising startup-map.berlin and the data obtained there, reports will be created in the coming years to increase the understanding of relevant topics in the Berlin startup ecosystem.

The State of Berlin sees itself as the mouthpiece and door opener for the Berlin startup ecosystem – also with respect to the European and the federal level. Berlin will continue to be strongly committed to the interests of founders – for example, concerning immigration or financing topics.

The five action items of the Berlin Startup Agenda:



Berlin – City of Impact Startups

The State of Berlin will create an excellent founding and growth environment for impact startups in order to enable the contribution of startups to strengthen the sustainability and future viability of the economy.



Berlin – City of Talents

The State of Berlin will resolutely counter the shortage of skilled workers and position Berlin as “the place to be”.



Berlin – City of Enablement

The State of Berlin is driving the creation of a digital and modern administration by exploiting the potential of startups.



Berlin – City of Diversity

The State of Berlin will promote diversity in the startup ecosystem, in particular female entrepreneurship.



Berlin – City of Cooperations

The State of Berlin will further develop solid networks between SMEs, startups and universities in order to promote cooperation.

BERLIN – CITY OF IMPACT STARTUPS

The State of Berlin will create an excellent founding and growth environment for impact startups in order to enable the contribution of startups to strengthen the sustainability and future viability of the economy.

Not all startup founders are exclusively concerned with growth and profit – more and more want to contribute to ecological and social sustainability. This aspiration is often linked to the ambition to fundamentally transform entire industries and business models so that society can benefit in the long term.

To create an excellent startup and growth environment for impact startups, the following activities are taken:

The State is committed to create an enabling environment for impact startups

Berlin **location marketing** specifically addresses entrepreneurs and founders with socially and ecologically sustainable innovation ideas. Economic administrations and promotion agencies in the capital region agree to expand marketing accordingly and to support the **establishment of an event for impact startups** and sustainable innovation.

In addition, Berlin promotes existing formats for **national and international networking** of impact entrepreneurs with partners from industry, science, etc., and secures their endowment and long-term viability through public funds.

The transition to more sustainability calls for bright minds and talents. Whether or not sustainability can be embedded as an **interdisciplinary topic in relevant**

university programmes should therefore be evaluated. In entrepreneurship and management courses as well as startup seminars, the opportunities of impact startups will be increasingly focussed upon.

Wherever possible, existing **public funding opportunities** shall be made available to impact startups.

The State of Berlin exploits the potential of impact startups for the sustainable transformation of the metropolis

The State of Berlin sets itself ambitious **sustainability goals** – for example, in the context of the genesis of the sustainability strategy. To achieve these goals, the State of Berlin provides space and resources to develop ways to achieve those goals by using public challenges. For this purpose, it uses the potential of Berlin impact startups and connects them with the initiators for the “Ort des nachhaltigen Wirtschaftens”. It will be examined if a new entity (“impact agency”) is needed to organise and support impact challenges and to network with the relevant administrative units.

The State of Berlin promotes the **networking** of impact agents by using existing platforms and events and provides an overview of the impact technology and startup scene.

The State of Berlin, its districts, and its authorities are striving to take the lead in socially and ecologically sustainable transformation and, together with private partners, are developing the **city into a digital test field**. They are also striving to enable living labs available to founders.

Berlin – City of Talents

The State of Berlin will resolutely counteract the shortage of skilled workers and position Berlin as “the place to be”.

The shortage of skilled workers affects all skill levels and hierarchical levels and slows down the growth of startups. Due to a lack of skilled workers almost 60 percent of Berlin startups had refrained from pursuing opportunities for growth – as stated in 2021. There are fears of a decline in the capacity for innovation.

To specifically address the shortage of skilled workers and to position Berlin in as startup metropolis and career platform, the State of Berlin is undertaking the following activities:

The State of Berlin will increase the impact of the Business Immigration Service

To facilitate the influx of interested professionals from abroad, the State of Berlin will further strengthen the role of the Business Immigration Service.

To this end, the State of Berlin will initially expand its digital services. An interdepartmental working group will prepare corresponding proposals by June 30, 2023.

In addition, the State of Berlin will relaunch and rebrand the Business Immigration Service as “Berlin Tech Visa” (brand name) based on the current legal regulations.

In order to offer Berlin startups and incubators a free platform on which they can publish their job offers and programmes, the State of Berlin will link the “startup-map.berlin” and “Jobportal Talent-Berlin”. Such services are particularly relevant for early-stage startups.

The State of Berlin will work to make better use of existing pools of skilled workers

Berlin schools, universities, research institutions, and private education providers are central institutions when training future specialists. The State of Berlin will work together with other relevant decision-makers to make these talents stay in the city, even after their training has ended.

For this purpose, the State of Berlin will develop offers on how local talent pools can be better used (accompanying life partners, researchers/teachers from universities, coding school graduates, and alumni networks), including using suitable measures that provide all university graduates with the career option of startups and innovation in Berlin.

The State of Berlin will strengthen global perception as “the place to be”

Berlin has a robust startup ecosystem and will strive to give this a higher profile in the future. To this end, Berlin Partner for Business and Technology, as the states main marketing institution, will communicate startup activities in an even more targeted and bundled manner. The State of Berlin also supports the organisation of an international, vibrant annual startup event in the capital.

To enable quick and easy access, especially for newcomers, greater transparency for English speaking partners is needed, especially concerning innovation-driving activities, stakeholders and actors. To this end, the State of Berlin will continue to expand and link channels and platforms in a meaningful and concerted manner, such as startup-map.berlin, the Business Location Center, the Startup Unit website as well as the “Gründen in Berlin” website.

Berlin – City of Enablement

The State of Berlin is driving the creation of a digital and modern administration by exploiting the potential of startups.

Startups are drivers of innovation. The public sector in particular can benefit from the technological solutions, services, and creative approaches of many founders. On the way to digital and modern administration, GovTechs should therefore be actively involved, and their solutions merged with the challenges of the State as well as state-owned companies.

In order to enable startup contributions to digitizing and modernising public administration, the State of Berlin is undertaking the following activities:

The State of Berlin will create transparency about initiatives, actors and contact persons

Access-points to public actors, headquarters, subordinate authorities, state companies and other relevant services will be made transparent for innovators. In coordination with activities of the strategy “Gemeinsam Digital: Berlin”, the state will set up “gateways” into the startup-relevant authorities and innovation-supporting public institutions as well as a central interface to public institutions. GovTech startups shall be making use of Berlin’s participation in the federal GovTech Campus.

The State of Berlin will ensure the link between startups and test-beds and labs

Locations for experimenting and field trials are often scarce or difficult to find, especially for young startup teams.

Therefore, the State of Berlin aims to further expand the network of test options for modern technologies and to make access as open as possible. Close interaction with the planned “Reallaborgesetz” (Federal Law Governing Research Laboratories) will be ensured.

Technologiestiftung (“Technology Foundation”) Berlin with CityLAB Berlin, the implementation programme of the strategy “Gemeinsam Digital: Berlin” and the

“Zukunftsorte” will be involved as key stakeholders. To this end, Urban Tech Republic at Tegel and the “Zukunftsorte” will continue to open for startups and launch further dialogues.

The State of Berlin will support the implementation of innovations with startups

The State of Berlin is very interested in tackling challenges together with startups, for example in the field of digitalisation of public services.

For this purpose, the State of Berlin will prepare, initiate, expand and secure long-term, **low-complex and low-bureaucratic tenders and cooperation between public and private actors and stakeholders**. Relevant actors in the public sector, state companies and public law institutions **are sensitised to innovation needs and motivated to innovate**, for example in the context of events of the “Verwaltungsakademie” Berlin or through offers of the Smart Country Convention or the Creative Bureaucracy Festival.

The establishment of a “Berlin Innovation Agency” as an interface for startups to administrations, associations and other institutions is to be considered.

Berlin – City of Diversity

The State of Berlin will promote diversity in the startup ecosystem, in particular female entrepreneurship.

Research shows that underrepresented groups often are confronted with special challenges when it comes to founding a startup, even in Berlin. Much human and professional potential is lost – especially with regard to meeting current challenges such as climate change.

In order to promote diversity - in particular female entrepreneurship - in the startup ecosystem the State of Berlin undertakes following activities:

The State of Berlin will facilitate access to funding for women founders

A small percentage of female founders in the early stage leads to the under-representation of female founders in later stages. To counteract this, Berlin will strengthen its commitment to female founders. For this purpose, the State of Berlin will **provide exceptional support to early-stage founders** to enable equal opportunities in the founding process.

Furthermore, there are often fewer chances for female founders to access growth capital, also because investors (VC, Business Angel) are still a predominantly homogeneous, strongly male-oriented group. The valuation of female business concepts is, therefore, often subject to a structural “bias” that reduces the chances of investment. The aim is thus to **increase the number of female investors as well. The State of Berlin is providing funding for the strengthening of women founders**

The State of Berlin continues to **strengthen the English language** in public administrations and funding programs in order to make advice and support services for international founders more accessible.

The State of Berlin will promote the perception of entrepreneurship as a career option for all

Founding as a career option continues to be discussed only very late and primarily in business disciplines. Role stereotypes of founders are dominant.

In order to increase early awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option of equal value for all target groups, as well as to demonstrate diverse startup personalities and diverse startup concepts, Berlin is committed to improving the perception of entrepreneurship as an attitude and problem-solving competence for the challenges of the future. **For this purpose, the State of Berlin will lead by example and use formats such as Girls Day, the founding fair deGUT or company visits such as the “Made-in-Berlin Tour” and strengthen suitable activities in universities.**

The State of Berlin will support the networking of underrepresented groups

On the one hand, there have been welcoming initiatives from under-represented groups recently – also using mutual support. On the other hand, there needs to be more transparency of private and public networks that exist. The State of Berlin will make these **existing networks and initiatives more visible and strengthen them.**

Berlin – City of Cooperations

The State of Berlin will (further) develop solid networks between SMEs, startups and universities in order to promote cooperation.

The cooperation between startups with universities and small and medium enterprises has great potential for innovation. Joint development and research projects, pilot projects, customer relationships, digitalisation activities or growth support are some of the forms of possible cooperation. Potential exists, but in many cases currently there only is low profile.

In order to develop, consolidate and intensify the networks and cooperation between SMEs, startups and universities, the State of Berlin undertakes the following activities:

Berlin will strengthen the visibility of cooperations and opportunities for cooperation

The Berlin startup ecosystem features openness as well as complexity, is also notable due to its size and agility. Berlin networks, startup events and meetups allow quick entry into the ecosystem, integrating newcomers well and quickly.

Particularly for early-stage startups and innovators, it's helpful to have a central and easy-to-find point of contact in both the private and public sector. The State of Berlin **therefore ensures that competent and reliable contact persons can be found even more quickly and are having an even higher profile in the relevant channels, at events and on portals.**

Berlin is destined to become a beacon for cooperation between startups, SMEs and universities. To this end, Berlin will **increasingly communicate best practices by means of storytelling and location marketing, also internationally.** An award category "Cooperations between startups and SMEs" in existing competitions or events might be conceivable.

The State of Berlin supports the linking of networks

Linking existing networks has potential for future cooperation. In order to orchestrate this cooperation, the State of Berlin initiates a **regular roundtable hosted by the Senator for Economics**, which, in addition to the public actors and stakeholders in this field, also brings the private participants together at one table.

Universities and research institutions in particular have a wealth of knowledge and expertise that can be valuable for companies and startups. The State of Berlin **supports suitable formats – often already established in associations or universities – for increasing transparency, mutual communication and discussions between actors.**

Aim is transferring knowledge and technology towards applications. Strengthening universities in order to make resources economically viable and increase their impact will be further pursued in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The State of Berlin will also improve the networking of stakeholders in the metropolitan region in conjunction with Brandenburg, for example through metropolitan space management or within the framework of innoBB.

Berlin promotes cooperation and strengthens transfer

The State of Berlin is examining how existing state funding programmes (e.g., the "Digitalprämie Berlin", TransferBonus, ProFit) can be further optimised for **cooperation projects between startups, SMEs and universities.** Above all, a low level of bureaucracy and support in the application process are important. The communication of best practices can also take place with the help of the partners and a communication campaign. In order to promote cooperation, Berlin is striving to **set up real-life labs and test areas** in which Brandenburg stakeholders can also participate. **These real-life laboratories and test areas are communicated transparently**, in particular to enable low-thresholds for startups and SMEs and their cooperation.