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KICKSTART INCUBATOR

Guide

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS THE KICKSTART INCUBATOR?

The Kickstart Incubator is an exclusive program for all the entrepreneurs of tomorrow. During the funding period, you will receive full support and expertise from the Startup Campus team, access to many other benefits and the chance to receive up to €7,500 to build your first prototype. You can apply for the funding program at any time. Within the framework of our support services, the Startup Campus team will review your general eligibility for funding. If you meet the requirements, you will be invited to apply.

WHO WILL BE FUNDED?

- All persons who have a legal affiliation with the university or who enter into such a affiliation. This includes students, employees and alumni.
- Start-up teams consisting of at least two persons (single persons possible in consultation).
- Start-up projects that have not yet been founded.

WHAT WILL BE FUNDED?

We fund startup ideas with the potential to establish themselves on the market – at their earliest stages of development. At this stage we can provide the funding that is it is necessary to generate either a proof-of-principle, to construct a demonstrator, to conduct a market or profitability analysis or merely to test the idea. If this stage is successful, the team is prepared to further pursue the start-up idea. This can take place, for example, in the form of an application for more extensive start-up funding, such as that offered by the EXIST start-up grant.

Special consideration will be given to the following areas of focus:

- Innovative technology-oriented idea proposals
- Innovative services with high customer benefit, based on scientific findings and expected to have unique selling points on the market

In particular, the following areas are supported:

Biotechnology/pharmaceuticals, energy technologies, communication technologies, mechanical engineering/automation, microelectronics, software, environmental technologies, innovative services, Internet, material technologies, medical technology, optical technologies/vessel technology, others.

The Kickstart Incubator promotes ideas in the pre-founding phase. In order to be accepted into the Kickstart Incubator, the company must not yet have been founded. During the funding phase, the company can also not be founded.

OUTLINE OF THE FUNDING

- The program consists of a concept phase (max. 6 months) and a prototype phase (max. 6 months)
- Support in the development of a business model
- If required: Funding of up to €7,500 for the construction of a prototype (materials)
- Access to a creative working environment in the Startup Lab (co-working space)
- Coaching by the experienced Startup Campus team
- Exchange of experience with other founders in the Startup Lab
- Free initial consultation on industrial property rights (patents, etc.) by experienced lawyers
- Free initial consultation on the subject of product liability, CE Marketing by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK)
- Support from mentors (professors) from the university environment and external experts from the business world
- Free participation in possible meet'n'work workshops from GZDN/ITC1
- Preparation for the EXIST start-up grant
- certificate for successful participation in the kickstart incubator

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APPLICATION

Applying for the funding program is possible at any time. Within the scope of the Startup Campus support services, your eligibility will be reviewed. Afterwards, you can be invited to apply. The admission procedure is a two-step process. Based on your written application, the Startup Campus jury will make an initial assessment of your ideas. If the assessment is positive, a pitch follows (second phase). In this second phase, you will convince the jury of your idea in the form of a 10-minute idea pitch. At the end of the presentation you will be asked critical questions. The jury will then consult internally and announce the decision whether you will be accepted into the Kickstart Incubator.

Ideas are always in competition with each other. In case the jury rejects your startup pitch, you will receive a critical feedback. This feedback can help you hone your idea and you will be able to re-apply for the funding following the same procedure.

The written application and the pitch can be submitted in German or English.

CONTENT OF THE APPLICATION LETTER

(max. 2 pages Arial 12, 1.5 lines, see Word template in the Founders Box)

1. **problem definition and innovation**

   - Description of the problem you want to solve with your idea
   - Description of the technology or product innovation or knowledge-based innovative service
   - A developed approach and the current status of implementation (laboratory or functional samples, if applicable)

2. **market situation**

   - Data on market volume, market segments, forecast market growth and market protential

3. **unique selling proposition and customer benefits**

   - A unique selling point of the product or service compared to competitors with a similar portfolio
   - The customer benefit of the product or service

4. **the know-how carrier**

   - A brief presentation of the planned entrepreneur team and the distribution of tasks among the persons involved
   - Significance of the know-how acquired at the university or research institution for the start-up project or the preliminary scientific work
   - Existing business management, entrepreneurial experience or training or industry-specific contacts
   - Involvement of other people, such as scientific advisors, partners, mentors, etc.

5. **goal and use of funds in the kickstart incubator program**

   - What is the goal of the Kickstart Incubator?
   - Is there a plan to use Kickstart funds? If so, what´s the plan?

An official application for the Kickstart Incubator can only be made by sending a completed Word template as an attachment by email to startupcampus@th-deg.de . The evaluation will usually take place within 14 days after receipt of the application.

PITCH CONTENT (10 MINUTES)

The idea pitch should be a concise presentation of your business model (10 minutes). This should include the answers to the following questions:

- Who is the team?
- What problem do you solve with your idea?
- What is your product/service?
- Who is your target group?
- How does your target group benefit from your product/service?
- What does the competition do?
- What makes you innovative and unique?
- What are the core competences of your team?
- What is your planned revenue model?
- Are you dependent on external support?
- What is your rough design for a prototype that you will develop during the prototyping phase?
- What do you need the Kickstart funds for and in what amount?

PROGRAM SCOPE

If you are accepted into the Kickstart Incubator, a roadmap with the following key points will be defined in an initial meeting with the Startup Campus team:

- Defining a first contact person from the team
- Assigning a person from the Startup Campus Team to advise and support you.
- Clarification of whether you need to use the coworking space in the Startup Lab (ITC 2, D2, Deggendorf). If required, the team will sign for the keys to the Startup Lab.
- Setting up the infrastructure (Nextcloud folder, booking option seminar room 2.33, inclusion in e-mail distribution list startupcampus-lab@th-deg.de, kitchen plan, etc.)
- Creation of a marketing package for your team (team photos, website, brochures, etc.)
- Set up a coordination meeting to report on the progress of the project and to clarify questions
- Discussion about the two concept phases (concept phase and prototype phase)
- Creation of the milestone plan via "Tasks" tab in Nextcloud and release to team members
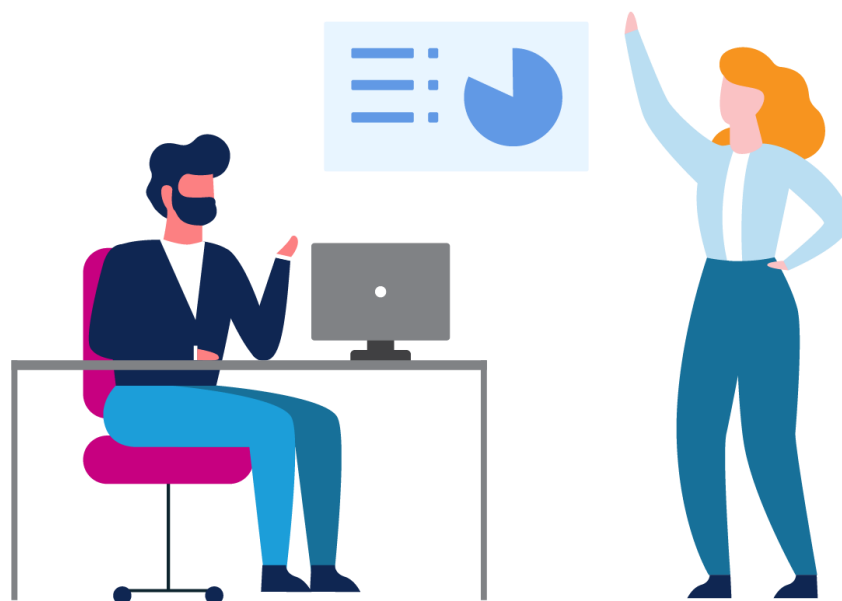
CONCEPT PHASE

The concept phase serves to refine your business idea, form the founding team, develop the business model for your idea and prepare you for the prototype phase. This is also where the first contacts to pilot projects and cooperation partners are prepared.

The following key points are of particular importance in the concept phase:

- Determining the duration of the concept phase (max. 6 months - always from the beginning of the month)
- Completion of the founding team (if required)
- Assignment of a professional mentor for your idea + an external mentor from the business world to help you get started (optional)
- Development and validation of your business model through a joint workshop
- Market and target group analysis
- Establishing initial contacts to possible pilot projects and cooperation partners
- Summary of the start-up idea in a concept paper (on the basis of the draft concept paper summary)
- Planning the prototype phase, centered around a detailed procurement plan including a justification for the individual items required for the prototype (see templates: Procurement Planning Kickstart Funds + Application for Kickstart Funds)

The following milestones are to be achieved by the end of the concept phase:

Nr.	Milestone	Deadline
1	Acquisition of the internal mentor (professor)	by month 2
2	Business Model Workshop	by month 3
3	Write an outline of the concept paper (EXIST start-up grant) and submit it to the project management agency PTJ	by month 5
4	Submit project to the project management organisation VDI for release of Kickstart funds (according to template)	by month 6

PROTOTYPE PHASE

The prototype phase serves to design and develop a product or service prototype based on your business model. Here you have the opportunity to receive funding of up to €7,500. In principle, ideas that require little or no funding are also supported. Eligible costs include the necessary materials, the procurement of special parts, tools, consumables or special consulting services for the prototype, which are necessary to provide a "proof of principle." (Personnel expenses are not eligible). You should use this prototype to validate your start-up idea. This is the basis for further funding, such as the EXIST business start-up grant, which you can then use to focus more on market entry.

The following key points are of particular importance in the prototype phase:

- Determining the duration of the prototype phase (max. 6 months - always from the beginning of the month) with the aim of a seamless transition to follow-up funding (ideal case).
- Discussing the procurement formalities at DIT together with the Startup Campus Team
- Procurement of the necessary tools and consumables in accordance with the detailed procurement plan
- Construction and validation of the prototype(s)
- Pitch training with video recording to reflect on improvements and improve pitch deck
- Identification of first partners (pilot projects, first customer relationships, etc.) who support the idea with a Letter of Intent (LOI)
- Formulation of the concept paper for the EXIST start-up grant (25 pages)
- In principle, the funded prototypes are the property of the university. After the end of the funding period, a decision will be made – on a case-by-case basis – as to how DIT can allow the team to obtain the prototypes free of charge so that you can continue to work with them. The tools for the production of the prototypes remain the property of the university. Further information on procurement can be found in the FAQs.

The following milestones are to be achieved by the end of the prototype phase:

Nr.	Milestone	Deadline
1	Pitch training and develop professional pitch deck	by month 3
2	Business partners interested in supporting the idea with an LOI	by month 4
3	Application for the EXIST Start-up Grant (optional)	by month 5
4	Final presentation with prototype pitch at a public event "meet the team"	by month 6
5	Formal finalisation date with material resources report and preparation for handover/return Kickstart acquisitions and key return	by month 6

FAQs

Is the team allowed to have already founded?

The Kickstart programme only supports teams in the pre-founding phase.

What are start-up ideas?

Proposals for ideas are initial considerations that could lead to the establishment of a company. For example, a proof-of-principle, the construction of a demonstrator, a market or profitability analysis or the mere testing of the idea is necessary. If successful, the idea test should lead to the further pursuit of the start-up idea.

Who can apply for an idea proposal?

All persons who have a legal affiliation with the university (or who are willing to enter into such an affiliation). This includes students and staff in particular. According to the basic regulations, alumni are also university members and can therefore also be supported.

Can alumni of the university participate in the KickStart@FH program?

At DIT, alumni, as per basic regulations, have a legal affiliation with the university and can therefore participate in the Kickstart program. If teams or some members of the team obtaining the grant no longer have a university affiliation (exmatriculation from the degree programme), the grant will still run. Only the university affiliation at the time of the start of the funding of the team counts.

Are EXIST-funded teams allowed to participate in the KickStart@FH programme?

No, EXIST-funded teams cannot be funded via KickStart funds (even if they are in the pre-founding phase), as the programme is basically considered a preliminary stage to EXIST.

How much Kickstart funding can be applied for?

Max. 7,500 €. The principle of economy applies: only apply for as much as the team actually needs and credibly presents in advance via a procurement plan.

What about orders from abroad?

Domestic orders are preferable. For foreign orders, the DIT purchasing process, in accordance with the directives in place, must be adhered to. Exception: If the foreign supplier has a German VAT ID, it is considered a turnover within Germany, as the supplying entrepreneur has a permanent establishment in Germany. The invoices therefore show VAT at 19% and are therefore in order.

Is it possible to license software during the Kickstart Incubator?

Yes, but please note that the license will be run from the university. Please refer to the software catalogue on the DIT intranet. If you have any questions, please contact the ITZ.

Where does the prototype remain after the end of the prototype phase?

In principle, the funded prototypes created are the property of the university. However, it makes sense to leave the prototypes to the teams so that further steps can be taken with regard to starting the business. After the team has received funding, DIT reviews whether the prototype can be handed over and decides on a case-by-case basis which items will be handed over to the team and which will remain the property of the university (tools, consumables, prototype). If the prototype exceeds a notional sales value of € 800, DIT will make a proposal to the project sponsor, who will decide on the transfer. If the prototype falls below this value limit, the university itself decides. Tools purchased and used for the production of the prototype remain with the THD in any case, regardless of their value.

What can be purchased with the funding in the prototype phase?

The necessary materials, the procurement of special parts for the demonstrator / the provision of a "proof-of-principle" or special consulting services can be funded.

ELIGIBLE EXAMPLES

- Electrical components (plugs, sensors, cables)
- Mechanical components
- 3D printing consumables
- Prototyping tools (such as 3D printers)
- Special consulting services
- Software (procurement via THD during the funding period)
- Special legal advice

INELIGIBLE EXAMPLES

- Personnel expenses
- Contract award (only in exceptional caser after consultation with project sponsor)
- Literature
- Patent application
- Certifications
- Personalized software
- Applications for industrial property rights
- Tickets for events