

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Who is considered a Young Founder? Do I have to be of a certain age?

To us, a Young Founder refers to an individual who has started his or her own company within the last five years. The entrepreneurs in our programme are typically between 20 and 35 years old, although we do not impose an age limit.

2. Do I have to be an entrepreneur to participate?

Yes. The goal of the Young Founders Programme is to support young entrepreneurs from emerging and developing countries. Our programme caters to the specific needs of startup founders. Therefore, only entrepreneurs from for-profit companies can participate. Employees of startups, journalists or founders of non-profit organizations are not eligible to apply for the programme.

3. I am the founder of a non-profit organization. Am I eligible for the programme?

No, only founders of for-profit companies can be considered.

4. What kind of startups would you be looking for?

Our international programme is sector agnostic, unless otherwise stated. This means that we look for young entrepreneurs from a wide variety of sectors who have founded a scalable and preferably tech-based startup.

5. Are only social entrepreneurs eligible to apply?

No. Although many of our Young Founders are social entrepreneurs, you do not have to be one to participate in the programme. It is more important for us to see that the solution which you bring to the market is financially sustainable in the long run.

6. At what stage should my startup be for me to qualify for the programme?

You need to have at least achieved Product-Market Fit and have ideally secured first external investment or have participated in local incubator/accelerator programmes. If your startup is at a later stage, you are also eligible to apply for the programme.

7. I have an idea for a startup and would like to develop it further. Can I apply for the programme?

Unfortunately not. The programme focuses on entrepreneurs who already have their own startup and are looking to grow their international network.

8. Do you only accept technology-based startups?

No. But we do prefer scalable startups that have the possibility to expand into international markets. If your startup is not tech-based, it has to have a unique service or product to be accepted into the programme. You may refer to our list of former participants to get an idea of what we are looking for.

9. Is a good command of English a requirement?

Yes. All the workshops and communications in the programme will be conducted in English so all participants are required to demonstrate a good proficiency of English.

10. How will the applicants' English skills be examined?

The applicants' English skills will be examined from the written application as well as during the interview.

APPLICATION

1. Am I allowed to submit more than one application for the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme?

No. Each applicant is only allowed to submit one application.

2. Can I submit an application other than via the online form?

No. Only applications submitted in time via the online form will be reviewed.

3. Can several co-founders of one startup apply for the programme?

Several founders from the same startup may apply for the programme but only one founder per startup can participate in the programme.

4. I've applied to the programme before and wasn't accepted. Should I apply again?

Yes. We encourage startup founders to apply again even if they had not been accepted into the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme before. A rejection is not a judgement of entrepreneurial skills or the business idea as the application process is highly competitive.

5. I do not have a pitch deck. Is the pitch deck mandatory for the application?

It is not mandatory for the application. We might however ask applicants to provide the pitch deck at a later point during the selection process.

6. Can I still make changes to my application after submitting it?

Unfortunately, no further changes can be made to your application after it has been submitted. Please proofread and check your answers before you submit the application to make sure everything is correct.

7. How do you select the participants?

We screen all applications and invite shortlisted candidates for a Skype interview. Based on the results of both the written applications and Skype interviews, a jury then selects the candidates who will get to participate in the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme.

PROGRAMME

1. Will I have to pay to participate in the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme?

We will cover the costs of the flight, accommodation and food during the kick-off conference in Berlin. Additional costs for health travel insurance, visa and personal expenses have to be borne by the participants.

Activities throughout the 6 month programme – such as mentoring via Skype and other online coaching activities – are free of charge. There is also the possibility of applying for further support to attend entrepreneurship conferences worldwide.

2. Do you provide funding or grants for participants of the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme?

No. We do not provide funding or grants to the participants. We also do not take any equity in the startups that participate in the programme.

3. What support do I get in the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme?

1. A personal mentor who is an experienced entrepreneur and will function as a sparring partner with whom you may discuss upcoming challenges and new opportunities.
2. Monthly peer mentoring calls with other successful Young Founders of the cohort to share knowledge and support each other.
3. Expert sessions on relevant topics (e.g. OKRs, investor KPIs, marketing & sales).
4. A strong alumni network that functions as a platform for all Young Founders to connect with each other, exchange ideas and find support for existing challenges.
5. Exposure to the Berlin startup scene and the public for you and your startup via our social media channels and our networks.
6. Assistance beyond the programme as we remain a contact person for our Young Founders and will help to find suitable experts for challenges, offer possibilities to share learnings with current cohorts or celebrate successes.

4. Do I need to attend all programme activities?

Yes. We expect all participants to be present and actively participating during the kick-off conference in Berlin as well as in all the mentoring and peer mentoring calls that follow. As the programme's aim is to create a strong network of Young Founders, the exchange with the other participants and the support that you extend to each other is an important cornerstone.

5. Is there a chance to meet investors?

During the kick-off conference in Berlin, there will be a session with investors and the chance to talk to them. However, we cannot guarantee the participants any opportunities to secure funding while taking part in the programme.

6. What happens after the end of the Westerwelle Young Founders Programme?

After the programme, you remain a part of the Young Founders Network as an alumnus and we will continue to support you on your entrepreneurial path. You will be able to take part in upcoming webinars, get support from our network, and even become an active part in future cohorts of the programme.