

# From Idea to Industry

Policy Whitepaper  
Berlin, June 2026

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For a sovereign Europe, built in Berlin.

## Preview

# BERLIN AUF DIE EINS

## From Idea to Industry

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### A Policy White Paper for the State of Berlin

*How Berlin builds the pipeline that turns talent, local and international, into Europe's leading startups, and the decisions the Senate must take to let these entrepreneurs truly thrive.*

**For a sovereign Europe, built in Berlin.**

Europe needs a third path next to the US and China: technology and AI built on European values. Berlin can be Europe's decisive lever. This paper sets out a prioritised, measurable set of asks the State of Berlin can act on now, ordered to reflect what the startup community itself voted for, to make Berlin the number-one city to build and scale companies.

### Published by the BAD1 (Berlin auf die Eins) movement

A grassroots, community-led campaign of founders, investors, corporates, researchers and policy stakeholders. Started by a founding circle of Berlin entrepreneurs, powered by ambitious young founders, and supported by the startup campus and venture studio The Delta, the startup factory JUNI and the creative agency RCKT - A Dentsu Creative Company.



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## 0. Zusammenfassung

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Berlin ist Deutschlands führender Standort für Startups - noch. Im Jahr 2025, in dem Deutschland mit 3.568 neuen Start-ups einen Rekord aufgestellt hat, verzeichnete Berlin allein 619 Neugründungen – ein Anstieg von 24 % gegenüber 2024. Zudem ist Berlin auch bei Venture Capital Finanzierungen mit rund 2,7 Milliarden Euro in 2025, was etwa 31 % der gesamten Investments in Deutschland entspricht, stark aufgestellt. Das gesamte Berliner Ökosystem hat einen geschätzten Unternehmenswert von ca. 169 Milliarden Euro, darunter befinden sich 16 stark positionierte Unicorns (Unternehmensbewertung von 1 Milliarde Euro oder mehr).

Die Stadt hat jedoch deutlichen Nachholbedarf, wenn es darum geht, mehr der vielversprechenden Unternehmen von der Frühphase bis zur globalen Marktführerschaft zu begleiten. Am weitesten hinkt sie hinterher, Weltklasse-Wissenschaft in Start-ups im Venture-Maßstab umzuwandeln. Hinzu kommt, dass Berlin den Talenten, die es anzieht, durch Wohnungsmangel, Sprachbarrieren und bürokratische Hürden erschwert, auf den vorhandenen Stärken der Stadt und des Startup-Ökosystems aufzubauen. Die Ursachen sind struktureller Natur. Die Reibungspunkte liegen u.a. in den Schnittstellen zwischen Einwanderungsbehörde, Universitäten und Forschungseinrichtungen, Investor:innen, der Gewinnung früher privater und öffentlicher Unternehmenskunden und dem ersten investierten Euro – und genau diese Schnittstellen können durch Politik und Verwaltung vereinfacht und gestärkt werden.

Dies ist ein Bottom-up-Papier. Die Analyse basiert auf mehr als 80 Ideen, die von über 920 Gründer:innen, Investor:innen und weiteren Teilnehmenden des Ökosystems im Rahmen des BAD1-Kampagnenprozesses eingereicht, in fünf Schwerpunktbereiche gebündelt, in einem Ideation Workshop auf ihre Tragfähigkeit geprüft und bei einem Hackathon in pilotierungsreife Konzepte umgesetzt wurden. Rund 4.000 Community-Mitglieder unterstützen die Bewegung.

Das Papier „Born to Change“ des Startup-Verbands fragt, wie man Berlins beste Unternehmen davon abhalten kann, die Stadt zu verlassen. Dieses Papier fragt, wie man die Pipeline aufbauen kann, die überhaupt erst mehr davon hervorbringt.

Was dieses Papier zur bestehenden Analyse auch beiträgt, ist genau der Teil, der regelmäßig fehlt. Er enthält eine konkrete, mehrstufige Liste von Forderungen, die direkt von der Gründergemeinschaft formuliert wurden. Die Forderungen sind so geordnet, dass sie die Ergebnisse der Abstimmung widerspiegeln.

### HAUPTFORDERUNGEN

**Die Hauptforderungen sind zweierlei: zum einen Herausforderungen, die Gründer:innen regelmäßig begegnen, hin zur langfristigen Zielsetzung die Lücke zwischen Forschung und Unternehmensgründung zu schließen**

**Zunächst gilt es, strukturelle Hindernisse abzubauen.** Das deutlichste Signal der Community betrifft Reibungsverluste, nicht Geld. Berlin muss englischsprachig funktionieren, internationale Gründer:innen und Talente müssen hier einfach Fuß fassen und bleiben können, Unternehmensgründungen müssen in Gänze schnell vonstatten gehen, das öffentliche Beschaffungswesen muss für Start-ups geöffnet werden, und die Kapitalinstrumente, die Berlin bereits aufgebaut hat, sollen ausgebaut und geschärft werden. Das sind Forderungen, die der Senat sofort aufgreifen kann.

**Darüber hinaus gilt es, die Lücke zwischen Forschung und Unternehmensgründung strategisch anzugehen und langfristig zu schließen.** Auf der Grundlage von Beiträgen aus der Community, Gesprächen mit erfolgreichen Gründer:innen und VC-Investor:innen während des BAD1-Kick-offs sowie weiterer Analysen wurde die Lücke zwischen der Berliner Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft und der Tech- und Start-up-Szene deutlich. Die Schließung dieser Lücke hat sich äußerst positiv auf andere Ökosysteme ausgewirkt. Ein Deeptech-Master-Studiengang der Berliner Hochschulen, das Berliner Modell für fairen und schnellen IP-Transfer sowie eine Reform der Anreizstrukturen an den Universitäten wurden hierfür als Instrumente identifiziert. Dies ist eine mehrjährige, parteiübergreifende Verpflichtung und Agenda, auf der Berlin eine neue, innovations- und investitionsfreundliche Strategie aufbauen kann. Maßnahmen sind bereits im Gange, benötigen jedoch konsequente Unterstützung für langfristigen Erfolg.

Zusammenfassend fordert dieses Papier den Berliner Senat auf:

- 1. Berlin auf Englisch funktionsfähig machen.** Das ist die eindeutigste Forderung aus der Community-Abstimmung. Start-up-relevante Verwaltungsangelegenheiten müssen standardmäßig auf Englisch funktionsfähig sein, mit kompetenter, englischsprachiger Unterstützung und den wichtigen Formularen rechtssicher übersetzt.
- 2. Möglichkeit für internationale Gründer:innen und Talente in Berlin anzukommen.** Das Landesamt für Einwanderung soll einen serviceorientierten Fast-Track für Gründer:innen und Talente bekommen, Inhaber:innen der Blue Card müssen einfach gründen können. Temporäres Wohnen ist ein Sprungbrett für Ankommende.
- 3. Wirklich schnelle Unternehmensgründung.** Die Initiative G24 (Gründen in 24h) muss über die Gewerbeanmeldung hinaus auf den gesamten Gründungsvorgang ausgeweitet werden, von der notariellen Beurkundung bis zum Geschäftskonto. Berlin soll über den Bundesrat die EU-Inc, bzw. das 28th Regime eindeutig und nachdrücklich unterstützen.
- 4. Öffnung des öffentlichen Beschaffungswesen für Start-ups.** Schaffung eines Innovationsbeschaffungswegs mit wirklich start-up-tauglichen Prozessen, aufbauend auf der Verwaltungsreform 2026 und den weiteren begonnenen Initiativen.
- 5. Skalieren von verfügbarem Kapital, direkt in Berlin und über die Bundesagenda.** Unterstützung für IBB Ventures und den B#-Pre-Seed-Fonds (auch wenn die EU-Fördermittel gekürzt werden sollten). Förderung eines wiederkehrenden und international deutlich sichtbaren Formats zur Verbindung von Gründer:innen und Investor:innen. Stärken der relevanten Bundes- und EU-Maßnahmen.
- 6. Schaffen einer zentralen Anlaufstelle für das Ökosystem.** Klare Position für Direktflüge, die Berlins Gründer:innen mit der Startup-Welt verbinden (SFO, China). Langfristig soll ein physischer Innovationscampus mit internationaler Strahlkraft entstehen. Das muss bereits heute bei Großprojekten wie der EXPO mitgedacht werden.
- 7. Verständnis des Projekts als Ganzes, um sinnvolle und langfristige Veränderungen voranzutreiben.** Benennung von Startup-Liaison-Stellen als erste Anlaufstelle in jeder Senatsverwaltung. Diese Gruppe ist seitens des Senats verantwortlich, sektorübergreifende Initiativen zu treiben, inkl. klarer Anreize und messbarer KPIs.
- 8. Schließen der Lücke zwischen Forschung und Unternehmertum.** Unterstützung von Deeptech-Masterstudiengängen und einem Wahlfach „Unternehmertum“ für alle Studierenden. Stärkung des Berliner Modells für den IP-Transfer sowie für eine Reform hochschulischer Anreizmechanismen. Dafür braucht es mehrjähriges Engagement, das in Zukunft im Hochschulrecht reflektiert sein soll.

Darüber hinaus hat der BAD1-Prozess die Reibungspunkte des Ökosystems auf fünf strukturelle Herausforderungen fokussiert.

- A. Regulatorisches und politisches Umfeld (Forderungen 1, 2 und 3). Die Einhaltung gesetzlicher Vorschriften über den Lebenszyklus eines Unternehmens hinweg, insbesondere bei der Gründung, ist komplex. **Konzept: halloLena**, ein Navigator, der behördliche Schreiben in einen personalisierten, rechtssicheren Aktionsplan umwandelt.
- B. Marktzugang und Branchenkooperation (Forderung 4). Gründer:innen erreichen nicht die Kunden und Entscheidungsträger, die sie benötigen aufgrund des fragmentierten Ökosystems. **Konzept: ReversePitch**, eine Umkehrung des Beschaffungsprozesses in Unternehmen, bei der Unternehmen ihre Bedarfe einfach äußern können und geprüfte Start-ups mit ihnen zusammengebracht werden.
- C. Kapital & Finanzierung (Forderung 5). Privates Kapital bleibt ungenutzt und Investorennetzwerke sind häufig nicht zugänglich. **Konzept: Berlin Citizen Fund**, ein demokratisch ausgerichteter Risikokapitalfonds, der bürgerschaftliches Engagement und privates Kapital in vielversprechende Start-ups und Scale-ups lenkt.
- D. Infrastruktur und Ökosystem (Forderungen 6 und 7). Gründer:innen navigieren sich aktuell hauptsächlich durch Hörensagen im Ökosystem. **Konzept: KiezFounders**, ein KI-Concierge-Service auf Basis einer kuratierten, dynamischen Plattform aller Berliner Start-up-Ressourcen – alles an einem Ort und leicht zugänglich.
- E. Talente, Bildung und Forschung (Forderung 8). Kluge Köpfe bringen ihre Ideen nicht in die Praxis: Die Forschung bleibt in den Laboren, Talente in der Wissenschaft, und Start-ups können sie nicht erreichen. **Konzept: STAR·UP**, eine KI-Plattform, die Forschungsergebnisse, Talente und ungenutztes geistiges Eigentum aufspürt und sie mit Gründer:innen, Industrie und Investor:innen zusammenbringt.

Die damit verbundene Forderung zur Bewältigung dieser strukturellen Herausforderungen:

**Zugang zur Selbstverständlichkeit machen.** Die Startup-Teams, die der Analyse folgend an gesellschaftlich relevanten Problem arbeiten, sollten vom Senat (im besten Fall über die zügig benannten Startup-Liaison-Stellen) mit den relevanten Expert:innen und Entscheidungsträger:innen in Kontakt gebracht werden und Zugang zu Daten (DSGVO-konform) und Schnittstellen erhalten, die sie für eine schnelle Validierung benötigen. Der Zugang ist die entscheidende Einschränkung, die die Regierung ausräumen kann.

Nichts davon erfordert, dass Berlin mehr Geld investieren muss als München, Paris oder London. Es erfordert vielmehr, dass Berlin der wirtschaftlichen Stärke der hiesigen Startups Priorität einräumt, Hindernisse beseitigt, Bestehendes sinnvoll miteinander verknüpft, private Initiativen und Kapitalzuflüsse zulässt und diese durch öffentliche Mittel ergänzt sowie alle weiteren Hebel nutzt, die bereits zur Verfügung stehen. Im weiteren Verlauf dieses Papiers werden die Diagnose, die umsetzbare Agenda zum Abbau struktureller Hindernisse, das längerfristige Engagement zur Überbrückung der Lücke zwischen Forschung und Unternehmensgründung sowie ein praktischer Aktionsplan für die Umsetzung dargelegt.

# 1. Executive Summary

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Berlin is Germany's number-one location for new founders- for now. In a year when Germany set a record with 3,568 new startups, Berlin saw 619 new foundations, up 24% compared to 2024. It is the country's funding capital, drawing around €2.7 billion of venture capital in 2025, about 31%, and it holds €169 billion in ecosystem value, including 16 healthy unicorns. Turning more of the early-stage and most promising companies into global category leaders is where the city still falls short, and converting its world-class science into venture-scale industries is where it falls furthest behind. On top of that, Berlin undermines the talent it attracts through a shortage of housing, language barriers and bureaucratic hurdles that stop the city from building on strengths that reach well beyond the existing tech scene. The causes are structural. The friction sits in the layers between the immigration office, labs, universities and research institutions, early customers and the first euro of invested capital, and those are exactly the layers public policy support with.

This is a bottom-up paper. Its diagnosis comes from more than 80 ideas submitted by over 920 practitioners through the BAD1 campaign process, clustered into five priority areas, stress-tested in an expert ideation workshop, and turned into pilot-ready concepts at a hackathon. Around 4,000 community members now back the movement, and the asks in this paper are ordered to reflect what they voted for. The Startup-Verband's 'Born to Change' paper asks how to keep Berlin's best companies from leaving. This paper asks how to build the pipeline that produces more of them in the first place.

What this paper adds to the existing body of analysis is the part that is usually missing. It sets out a concrete, tiered set of asks formulated **by the founder community** directly and addresses the State of Berlin, to allow them to strive.

## THE HEADLINE ASKS

**Start with the barriers founders feel every day, and commit to the research-to-venture gap over time.**

**Now, reduce the structural barriers.** The community's strongest signal was about friction, not money. Make Berlin work in English, let international founders and talent land and stay, make company formation genuinely fast, open public procurement, and scale the capital instruments Berlin has already built. These are asks the the Senate can immediately pick up.

**Commit to closing the research-to-venture gap over time.** Based on community inputs, discussions with top founders and VC investors during BAD1 kick-off, and further analysis the gap between Berlin's science community and the tech and startup scene became apparent. Closing this gap has had a tremendous positive effect on other ecosystems. A deeptech founders' master across the Berlin universities, a championed Berlin Model for fair and fast IP transfer, and university incentive reform. This is a multi-year, cross-government commitment, and the agenda on which Berlin can build a new, investment-friendly coalition. Measures are underway, but need consistent support to ensure long-term success.

In summary, this paper asks the State of Berlin to:

1. **Make Berlin work in English.** The single strongest signal in the community vote. Make startup-relevant administration available in English by default, with proficient English-speaking support and the essential forms translated.
2. **Let international founders and talent land and stay.** Run a service-based founder fast-track at the immigration office, enable Blue Card holders to found, and provide welcome housing as a landing pad for top talent.
3. **Make company formation genuinely fast.** Push the 24-hour founding work beyond trade registration to the full digital GmbH chain, from notarisation to the business bank account, use the Bundesrat and EU-Inc / 28th regime to facilitate.
4. **Open public procurement to startups.** Create a well-known innovation-procurement track with truly startup-ready processes, building on the 2026 administrative reform.
5. **Scale the capital Berlin already has, and push the federal agenda.** Sustain IBB Ventures and its B# pre-seed fund (even if EU-funding in the future is reduced), back a recurring flagship investor moment, think creatively about how to involve citizens.
6. **Improve connectivity and seed a centre of gravity.** Push for the direct flights Berlin's founders need and keep a physical innovation campus in scope for the longer term while having it on the radar during early decisions.
7. **Govern it as one to drive meaningful and long-term changes.** Appoint a Startup Liaison at each Senate Department to serve as first point of contact. This group is responsible for driving cross-sector initiatives while being rooted into the administration. Incentivise the group on KPIs, and give founders a standing seat.
8. **Over time, close the research-to-venture gap.** Commit to a deeptech founders' master and an entrepreneurship elective for all students across Berlin's universities, a championed Berlin Model for IP transfer, and university incentive reform. A multi-year, cross-government commitment that should translate into university law in the future.

In addition, the BAD1 process distilled the ecosystem's friction into five structural challenges.

- A. Regulation & Policy Environment (ask 1, 2 and 3). Legal compliance across the company lifecycle is too complex. *Concept: halloLena*, a navigator that turns official letters into a personalized, statute-linked action roadmap.
- B. Market Access & Industry Collaboration (ask 4). Founders cannot reach the clients and decision-makers they need, and the ecosystem is fragmented. *Concept: ReversePitch*, which flips enterprise procurement so corporates post problems and vetted, procurement-ready startups are matched in.
- C. Capital & Funding Infrastructure (ask 5). Private capital sits idle and founder and investor networks stay closed. *Concept: Berlin Citizen Fund*, a democratically informed venture fund that channels citizen engagement and private capital into Berlin's most promising startups and scaleups.
- D. Infrastructure & Ecosystem Experience (ask 6 and 7). Founders cross a fragmented ecosystem on word of mouth. *Concept: KiezFounders*, an AI concierge over a curated, living map of Berlin's startup resources all in one place.
- E. Talent, Education & Research (ask 8). Smart people are not building things: research stays in labs and talent in academia, and startups cannot reach either. *Concept: STAR·UP*, an AI platform that surfaces research, talent and dormant IP and matches them to founders and investors.

The related ask to solve structural challenges:

**Make access the default.** When a team is working on a public problem, the state (in the best case the swiftly appointed Startup Liaison) should connect it to the relevant experts and decision-makers and grant access to the data (GDPR-conform), APIs and environments it needs to validate quickly. Access is the binding constraint, and it is one the government uniquely controls.

None of the above requires Berlin to outspend Munich, Paris or London. It requires Berlin to prioritize an economic power, remove friction, meaningfully connect what already exists, allow private initiatives and capital inflow and leverage it with public funding, and use all additional levers it already controls. The rest of this paper sets out the diagnosis, the actionable agenda to reduce the structural barriers, the longer-term commitment to close the research-to-venture gap, and a practical game plan for moving both across this legislative period.

## 2. Why This Matters, and Why Now

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Europe is at a crossroads. Between a hyper-capitalist model on one side and a surveillance-state model on the other, Europe needs a third path besides the US and China: technology and AI built on European values of freedom, human dignity, privacy and fairness. That path will not come from statements. It needs product, talent, capital and speed. Berlin can be Europe's decisive lever, and as the capital of Europe's largest economy and the world's third-largest, it carries a responsibility to play that role.

This is why the asks in this paper are written for action. The immediate goal is to get the Senate going and to secure cross-party alignment on a simple proposition for any new, democratic government: the startup, technology and investment ecosystem is central to Berlin's economic future, the overall society of the city and to European sovereignty. The full potential will only be delivered by an innovation and investment-friendly governing coalition, especially one that backs and fosters existing strengths within the startup scene but also builds on research potential. The groundwork can and should begin immediately to make Berlin the most innovation-friendly hub for founders across Europe.

### **Why this is not a partisan paper**

More innovative companies, more future-proof jobs, higher tax base, and a measure of technological sovereignty for Berlin and for Europe are goals every democratic party in the Abgeordnetenhaus can own. The Startup-Verband projects that Berlin's startup sector, already close to 100,000 jobs, could add a further 100,000 by 2031, worth on the order of €9 billion in additional annual payroll. That is a prize worth a cross-party commitment, and this paper is written so that any democratic governing coalition can pick it up.

### 3. The BAD1 Movement

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BAD1, short for Berlin auf die Eins (Berlin for Number One), is a grassroots, community-led campaign to make Berlin Europe's number-one place to build and scale companies. It was started by a founding circle of Berlin entrepreneurs (Bastian Meyer, Bela Wiertz, Benedict Kurz, Leonard Darsow, Linda Büscher and Max Linden), is powered by the startup campus The Delta, the startup factory JUNI and the creative agency RCKT - A Dentsu Creative Company.

Its premise is that Europe's competitiveness gap lies mainly in the commercialisation-to-scale stack, and that a stronger Berlin is a prerequisite for the technological independence of the European Union. The campaign set itself a 12 to 24 month horizon and runs on four principles: it is community-driven, action-focused, cross-sector, and execution-oriented. What gets built is the measure of success. The community also identified long-term projects that will manifest Berlin's position and require strategic decisions today to lay the ground.

#### A bottom-up process, in three phases

**Exploration.** An open platform on [berlinaufdieeins.de](http://berlinaufdieeins.de) let anyone in the ecosystem submit, debate and up-vote ideas, with no institutional filter. Over 920 ecosystem players joined and submitted more than 80 ideas, and community votes alone determined which ideas rose. The campaign launched with a kick-off opened by Governing Mayor Kai Wegner and strong support from Senator for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises Franziska Giffey and featured leading founders and investors.

**Analysis.** Each idea was assessed for quality, overlap with existing initiatives, and solvability, then clustered into five priority areas and sorted into short-term action, long-term advocacy, and work already in motion. An ideation workshop on 29 April 2026 at The Delta Campus brought around 60 founders, investors, operators and policy experts across five cluster groups to define the core problem in each area, map its root causes, and develop solution directions.

**Action.** The BAD1 Hackathon on 30 May 2026 put around 100 cross-sector builders onto the five tracks, with each team delivering a defined solution, a named owner and a pilot opportunity. The BAD1 Conference on 12 June 2026 drew 500+ attendees, including 100 unicorn founders, global top-tier VCs and most promising young founders, and showcased those concepts as the movement moved from diagnosis into execution. A recurring flagship Berlin tech conference was the single most-voted infrastructure idea in the dataset, and 12 June was its first edition.

#### The gap this paper is designed to fill

Berlin does not lack analysis. The IHK's #CityofDeepTech paper, the Bitkom Berlin Startup Report 2025, the Deutscher Startup Monitor and the Senate's own Startup Agenda (2022-2026) and their regular reviews of the tech ecosystem as well as the work of the Startup Unit in general all reach similar conclusions. Each works from its own institutional vantage point. What is missing is a ground-level reading of what founders actually need. BAD1 puts the demand side in direct dialogue with the supply side, so the next wave of policy is shaped by the people who live by its outcomes.

## 4. Today: The Opportunity and the Structural Gap

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### 4.1 Berlin's position in Europe

Berlin is Germany's leading startup ecosystem and its funding capital. The Berlin Startup Ecosystem Report 2025 puts the total value of the city's VC-backed startups at €169 billion, about 43% of the German total, with 57 unicorns and thoroughbreds and more than 1,400 VC-financed startups. In 2025 around €2.7 billion of venture capital flowed into Berlin startups, 31% of the national volume. Over the past five years the city's roughly 5,000 startups and their close to 100,000 employees have attracted some €23 billion in investment. Berlin ranks third in Europe for AI and fourth for climate tech, and 37% of its early-stage startups reach a Series A. On top the capital region has nearly 250,000 students, 30,000 researchers and relevant excellence clusters to build future success upon.

**Still, the community agrees that Berlin is only at roughly 20 to 30% capacity of its potential and can do so much more.**

The challenge is clear. Successful companies frequently relocate once they reach (early signs of) growth, and the city's research base, among the strongest in Germany, produces far too little venture-ready spinouts and startups. Only 3 to 5 % of students are learning actively about entrepreneurship causing world-class talent to strive elsewhere, mainly in the US. Germany set a record with 3,568 new startups in 2025, yet venture capital per head still lags badly: in 2024 around €90 per person was invested in German startups, against €108 in France and €510 in the United States. The gap keeps rising in 2025. The ambition is to move Berlin from a city of founders to a genuine 'Capital of Startups and Scaleups', where companies are both launched and scaled without leaving, and to diversify its industries into deeptech and life sciences by leveraging the university and research base the state is actively and meaningfully investing in. Today that potential still sits largely siloed from the existing startup and tech ecosystem.

## 5. Addressing the Five Structural Challenges: What the Ecosystem Built Already

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Section 2 introduced the five challenges and the pilots in brief. This section goes deeper, drawing on the working-group findings from the ideation workshop, and is ordered to follow the sequence of the asks, so each challenge sits next to the recommendations it underpins. For every cluster: the priority problem as practitioners defined it, then the pilot-ready concept produced at the hackathon. The real problems run deeper than any single pilot can solve. The point is to showcase what could be done quickly before structural changes unfold.

### 5.1 Regulation & Policy Environment (asks 1 to 3)

**Priority problem.** Navigating legal requirements across a company's lifecycle, from formation through growth, fundraising, operations and exit, is costly, complex and slow. Berlin has the most company incorporations in Germany in absolute terms and the highest density of migrant-founded businesses, which makes it a high-impact role model. But it is losing ground to cities where starting up is simply easier. The working group traced the root causes to fragmented government stakeholders, powerful notary interests, complex systems, and legal processes that have not kept pace with a digitized business environment. The fix is collaboration with notaries and regulators plus standardisation and digitisation: fewer intermediaries, trusted digital workflows, and a clear lifecycle navigator.

**Hackathon pilot, halloLena.** A regulatory navigator for the earliest stages of company formation. A short intake on company type, stage and residency generates a personalized action roadmap, founders can upload official correspondence to re-prioritise their steps by legal urgency, and every step links directly to the underlying German statute, giving traceable legal context instead of generic advice. (Team: Jure Čerkez, Valentina Vidović, Ahmed Sohail).

**What it points to.** This cluster sits behind asks 1 to 3: make Berlin work in English, let international founders and talent land and stay, and make company formation genuinely fast.

### 5.2 Market Access & Industry Collaboration (ask 4)

**Priority problem.** Founders cannot easily reach the industry players and enterprises nor public tenders they need to refine a product and win first clients. The ecosystems of universities, events, coworking spaces, incubators, accelerators, and movements are quite fragmented and overall access is sometimes blocked. Berlin has plenty of hungry founders building high-potential companies. Due to Berlin's rich history, the city is rather decentralised, and too much of what exists is invisible. The blunt conclusion: Berlin has the people, the network and the energy, and what it lacks is transparency and coordination.

**Hackathon pilot, ReversePitch.** A platform that flips procurement processes. Corporations post a problem, a rough budget and a deadline, and AI agents return a curated shortlist of vetted, procurement-ready startups, with vendor onboarding, GDPR and security checks and approved-supplier status handled. (Team: Nurgun Rafizade, Enis Mustafaj.)

**What it points to.** This cluster sits indirectly behind ask 4: open public procurement to startups.

### 5.3 Capital & Funding Infrastructure (ask 5)

**Priority problem.** Berlin has capital, but too little for its ambitions. Money from high-net-worth individuals, family businesses and corporates is not flowing to startups, held back by risk aversion and a lack of incentives, while early-stage founders cannot reach the top investors who stay largely inside their networks. The shortfall is structural and national: Germany invests far too little in startups per head, around €90 per person in 2024 against €108 in France and €510 in the United States, and much of the country's considerable private wealth sits in low-yield, rigid savings rather than productive capital. The working group named two root causes: a low risk appetite among corporates, with successful founders not yet reinvesting sustainably as a habit, and fragmented networks with no flagship moment that brings top founders and VCs together at the density where deals and trust form. As domestic growth capital dries up, exit value leaves Europe and talent grows more reluctant to come.

**Hackathon pilot, Berlin Citizen Fund.** A citizen-owned investment platform that gives every Berliner a stake in the city's startup economy. Residents discover and support promising startups through a small investment via their digital platform, generating democratic investment signals, while professional fund managers make final investment decisions and deploy both public and voluntary private co-investment into Berlin-based startups and scaleups. (Team: Sarib Samdani, Cihan Bayat, Ahmet Diler)

**What it points to.** This cluster sits behind ask 5: scale the capital Berlin already has with innovative approaches.

### 5.4 Infrastructure & Ecosystem Experience (asks 6 and 7)

**Priority problem.** At every stage of the company lifecycle, founders lack access to relevant information, networks and service providers, and they fall back on word of mouth and informal recommendations. The opportunity costs are high. All the puzzle pieces exist in Berlin but are not connected. The working group traced this to three causes: no central agenda coordinating efforts with sufficient reach yet, public and private service providers largely operating in silos, and no low-barrier flow of information across stages. The opportunity is the network effect: founders are the customers, ecosystem service providers are the partners, and connecting them creates scale. Success means more startups reaching Series A, more Berlin unicorns and global category leaders, and more talent entering the city.

**Hackathon pilot, Kiez Founders.** An AI-powered ecosystem platform. Founders describe their situation in natural language and an AI concierge returns tailored recommendations drawn from a curated, continuously updated map of coworking spaces, communities, events, services, universities and resources, improved over time by peer validation in a pay-it-forward model. The result is a trusted, searchable entry point that replaces word of mouth. (Team: Olivia Helmuth.)

**What it points to.** This cluster sits behind asks 6 and 7: improve connectivity and seed a centre of gravity (here a coordinating digital structure). The root cause the group named, no central agenda and departments in silos, is exactly what the liaison circle is designed to fix. Publicly funded structures such as the Startup Unit and its experiences should be considered.

## 5.5 Talent, Education & Research (ask 8)

**Priority problem.** Smart people are not building things. Talent and technology are fragmented: research stays in labs, talent stays in academia, and startups cannot thrive on the combination. Berlin can be one of Europe's top deeptech hubs, with more than €1.7 billion invested in 2024 (sub-segment of overall investments) and world-class research, yet around 40% of EU STEM graduates report being underutilised and roughly 70% of patents never reach commercialisation. The working group put the root cause down to silos and misaligned incentives that isolate academia, corporates and startups, and to the absence of any scalable way to surface viable research, startup-ready talent or dormant IP. Done well, Berlin could become Europe's most efficient innovation hub within five years, turning research into companies and channeling talent into high-impact ventures.

**Hackathon pilot, STAR-UP.** A living discovery platform where every startup and research project appears as a star in an interactive galaxy, with brighter stars marking more mature projects. An AI readiness engine scores each project across seven dimensions and powers a matchmaking layer that surfaces the right co-founders, domain experts or investors, while a built-in incubator guides teams through their weakest areas. (Team: Hamid Reza Momeni, Dokeun Oh, Subhin Lee.)

**What it points to.** This is the cluster behind ask 8, the longer-term commitment to close the research-to-venture gap set out in Section 7.

### Next Steps for the Hackathon Pilots

As the pilots reflect on what entrepreneurs in the ecosystem are focussing on, the recommendation is that together with the teams and further ecosystem partners the idea stage concepts are developed further. A viable path for the teams would be to apply to existing grants such as the Berlin Startup Stipendium or Gründungsbonus to kick-off further development. With the Senate's and ecosystem partners commitment to support the teams with expert guidance further validation can be facilitated.

The Delta will continue working with the teams building in the areas of Capital & Funding Infrastructure and Infrastructure & Ecosystem Experience (5.3 and 5.4). JUNI is committed to support the teams working on Regulation & Policy Environment, Market Access & Industry Collaboration, and Talent, Education & Research 5.1, 5.2 and 5.5).

## 6. Reduce the Structural Barriers: The Actionable Agenda

This is what the community voted for most. For one, these votes served as guidance for the structural challenges (section 5). However, the votes also pinpoint specific measures the Senate should resolve as these are structural barriers that hold Berlin back according to founders. The list is ordered to reflect both their impact and the community's own priorities. Each is tagged by lever, meaning the kind of action it takes, and by horizon, meaning when it can be done.

### How to read the recommendations

**Lever.** **DIRECT** means the action sits within the state's competence. **CO-INVEST** means Berlin deploys its own instruments, such as IBB Ventures or Berlin Partner. **ADVOCATE** means the substance is federal or EU law, so Berlin pushes through the Bundesrat and federal channels.

**Horizon.** **NOW** means the current Senate can start immediately. **NEXT TERM** means it belongs in the 2026 to 2031 legislative period.

### 6.1 Make Berlin work in English

Lever **DIRECT / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NOW** · Lead desk *Sen. Interior / Sen. Economic Affairs / Tax Offices*

*Community vote: the strongest cluster in the whole dataset, with Bilingual Support Platform 61, English Compatibility 57, Digital Language Support 25, and more adjacent suggestions.*

Language is the barrier founders named most often. International talent arrives motivated and is then worn down by German-only letters, forms and appointments. The ask, on the levers Berlin controls: make startup-relevant administration available in English by default, with a clearly visible and reliable English option at the key steps of company formation and employment, proficient English-speaking support services, and the essential forms, those that cover the bulk of cases, translated. This should also be true for grants handled via IBB, that additionally need to be improved regarding process transparency, speed, reliability and grant management from the founders perspective.

Three lessons from the community keep this realistic. Translating every form into legally binding English is genuinely complex, so the focus should be on strong English-speaking support plus the highest-volume forms. Previous projects to build an English roadmap for founders apparently faced budgetary constraints, so this should be resourced properly and / or learned from. The three areas that block people most are immigration, tax, and non-state actors such as health insurers and banks, with non-EU founders, US citizens in particular, often unable even to open a bank account. A mentioned best practice (no startup focus): A founder-built service, Booka Local, which connects newcomers with trusted local translators was praised by employment office staff. It shows the demand is real and the fix is possible. AI can play a vital role and timing could be just right now.

**Longer term:** make English a durable part of how Berlin's administration and state-owned enterprises interact with individuals and businesses, not a one-off pilot, extending it across the full company lifecycle and putting emphasis on related public interactions, so the city can keep attracting international founders and talent it competes for.

## 6.2 Let international founders and talent land and stay

Lever **DIRECT / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NOW** · Lead desk *Sen. Interior (LEA) / Berlin Partner*

*Community vote: International Founder Fast-Track Visa 30, Welcome Housing 34, Enable Blue Card Holders 20.*

Berlin loses founders to cities where landing is simpler. The ask is a service-based fast-track, not a new residence permit but a service model with appointment prioritisation, standardised checklists and parallel processing for people relocating with families. It should be based on the best practice delivered through the Business Immigration Service at Berlin Partner, by ensuring sufficient resources, and measured on the time from a job offer or founding decision to an actual start. The main ask is a 30-day founder fast-track and should bundle residence and company setup, and Blue Card holders should be able to move into entrepreneurship without risking their residency. It could at scale be tied to programs such as Berlin Startup Stipendium, EXIST (already possible but cumbersome) or initial private funding. This can also be a federal point Berlin can carry through the Bundesrat supporting the “Work-and-Stay-Agency” the Startup Association is demanding until it actually shapes.

Landing also means a roof. Welcome housing, time-limited furnished units linked to the fast-track, removes the single most concrete relocation blocker and lifts offer-acceptance rates. State-owned and municipal housing companies such as Berlinovo already run comparable stock, so the route is to create a startup-focused category and speed up allocation rather than to build from scratch.

## 6.3 Make company formation genuinely fast

Lever **DIRECT / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NOW / NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Sen. Economics Affairs / Sen. Justice / Amtsgericht Charlottenburg*

*Community vote: Faster GmbH Registration 15.*

Registering a GmbH in Germany commonly takes four to eight weeks and can be a costly endeavour. It is genuinely positive that Berlin, with Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia, is a front-runner on the planned federal Gründungsbeschleunigungsgesetz and its goal of 24-hour founding. The catch is that the current work centres on the “Gewerbeanmeldung” and the tax office, which covers just parts of the registration but not the full path a startup founder must walk.

**The ask:** push this toward true end-to-end digital formation of a GmbH or UG, covering notarisation, the Handelsregister entry, the tax number, transparency register entry and (if possible) the business bank account. Resource and further digitise the Handelsregister, pilot end-to-end workflows with notaries and banks, and set ambitious benchmarks (e.g. Estonia’s e-Residency). The honest constraint is notarisation, which is set in federal law, so meaningful change here runs through the Bundesrat. The notaries are an essential and expert part of company formation, and the priority would be to bring them along: working with the Bundesnotarkammer on faster, digital-first notarisation, including video notarisation and standardised templates for routine startup cases, so that speed and legal certainty advance together. In parallel, Berlin should improve what it already controls, further resourcing and digitising the court-side processing at the Handelsregister. Pushed together, the federal track and the Berlin track turn formation from a multi-week wait into a matter of days.

## 6.4 Open public procurement to startups

Lever **DIRECT** · Horizon **NOW / NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Lead desk Senate Chancellery (Chief Digital Officer / administrative modernisation) closely with Sen. Economic Affairs, Sen. Finance and state-owned enterprises*  
*Community vote: Tech for Kiez 35, GovTech Pipeline.*

Berlin and its state-owned enterprises are among the largest buyers in the city, yet public demand, one of its most powerful levers, works against startups: tenders are built for incumbents, requirements are complex, and onboarding and compliance reviews can outlast a startup's runway. The public sector that could be a founder's first reference customer is effectively closed almost completely.

The ask is a dedicated GovTech and innovation-procurement track that: uses the flexibility the law already allows (below-threshold rules, negotiated procedures, innovation partnerships); buys the problem rather than the product through challenge-based tendering with paid pilots; onboards startups once, with reusable security and data-protection checks and pre-cleared frameworks; right-sizes lots, requirements and payment terms to what a young company can work with; and commits to a published, annually reported target share of procurement from innovative startups.

This does not start from zero. The Senate has already analysed new procurement processes. That work now has a clear home: procurement reform and administrative modernisation sit with Berlin's Chief Digital Officer in the Senate Chancellery, so a startup track can be anchored there and connected to the digital-formation work in 6.3, with the 2026 administrative reform as the vehicle.

**Make buying from startups a value, and accept that some projects will underdeliver (as it is already the case).** The deepest barrier is cultural: buyers are penalised for mistakes, so the safe choice appears to be the established supplier. Berlin should make sourcing from young companies an explicit value, with political cover for the officials who do it, accepting openly that a portfolio of startup contracts will include some that fail. Concretely: ring-fence the defined procurement quota from startups, protect civil servants who back good-faith pilots, and judge the programme on aggregate results, not on whether every project succeeded, and incentivise administration leadership to lead by example. A state that cannot tolerate the occasional failed pilot will never buy true innovation.

## 6.5 Scale the capital Berlin already has, and push the federal agenda

Lever **CO-INVEST / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NOW / ongoing** · Lead desk *Sen. Economic Affairs / Sen. Finance / IBB Ventures*  
*Community vote: Choose Berlin Summit 15, Stop Wiring Funding to AWS 11.*

Berlin has already built the right early-stage instrument successfully over the past decades and keeps innovating: IBB Ventures and its new pre-seed deep-tech fund, launched in late 2025 with €10 million. It works; it is simply too small of a signal given the potential. The ask is to materially scale B# and the wider IBB Ventures pre-seed and deep-tech mandate, keep decisions fast and founder-friendly, and potentially use matching structures to crowd in the family-office, corporate and high-net-worth capital sitting on the sidelines. A complementary, community-backed idea is to issue compute grants on sovereign European infrastructure, so that public and VC money for AI founders does not flow straight back out to US hyperscalers.

**Push the federal and EU agenda.** The per-capita gap is stark: in 2024 Germany saw about €90 of startup investment per head, against €108 in France and €510 in the United States. A trend that continues in 2025. Berlin must be the loudest state-level voice for closing it, mobilising institutional capital from pensions, insurers and foundations in line with the federal WIN initiative and the German Venture and Growth Forum, and championing a pan-European company form through the EU-Inc agenda and a 28th regime, alongside the Savings and Investments Union. Berlin cannot legislate these, but it can lead on them.

**Lean in when people are actively driving the flagship movements and moments.** A recurring flagship tech conference in Berlin was the most-voted infrastructure idea. The BAD1 Conference on 12 June 2026 can be its first edition. The current momentum can be a significant driver to build across private initiative and public stability. An internationally marketed ‘Choose Berlin’ moment that puts the city back on the global calendar.

## 6.6 Improve connectivity and seed a centre of gravity

Lever **DIRECT / CO-INVEST / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NOW / NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Sen. Urban Development / Sen. Economics Affairs*

*Community vote: SFO to BER Direct Flights 37, Station D Mega-Campus 29.*

Berlin has no direct flights to the US West Coast, the ecosystem it most needs to be plugged into, and no single anchor point on the map. On connectivity, the community is in line with a broader demand as recent numbers by the BER show. The Berlin government has worked on the San Francisco link for some time; but Lufthansa and unions together continue lobbying against new long-haul competition and hold Germany’s capital back. Connections to Greater China (Shenzhen and Shanghai) belong on the same list. This is largely a federal and aviation-policy matter, so Berlin’s role is sustained strong advocacy backed by the public to finally force the rational decisions needed.

**A centre of gravity, over time.** In 2025 a single building in Paris, Station F, was associated with more capital raised than parts of Berlin’s decentralized ecosystem manage together. A ‘Station D’ style campus, where startups, investors and corporates share density, would give Berlin the front door global investors look for. Berlin also already has designated innovation locations, the Zukunftsorte, that link science, business and startups, and a centre of gravity should connect and build on these rather than start from a blank map. It is a multi-year project, best combined with a moment such as an EXPO. The point for now is that today’s decisions on location and planning should already be taken with that perspective in scope.

## 6.7 Govern it as one programme

Lever **DIRECT** · Horizon **NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Governing Mayor / Senate chancellery*

The recurring finding across every Berlin analysis is fragmentation: strong actors in specific areas, scattered coordination, and asks that fall between departments. Rather than rely on a single coordinator, the ask is to build a standing startup liaison circle across the Senate. The departments most central to this agenda, the Senate Chancellery (Senatskanzlei), Science and Research (Wissenschaft), Economic Affairs (Wirtschaft), Interior (Inneres), and Building and Housing (Bauen und Wohnen), each appoint a full-time startup liaison. Every other department names a representative who carries the same remit as an additional mandate. The circle owns the agenda end to end, meets regularly, and becomes the standing body to which new ecosystem problems are brought as they arise. The Senate Chancellery liaison should sit close

to the Chief Digital Officer and the administrative-modernisation function, which already coordinates digital delivery across departments. Selected candidates should have a strong understanding of the startup ecosystem and its relevance.

To make it work, bind the circle to a small set of public KPIs, such as time-to-formation, time from job offer to start, early-stage capital mobilised, and the +100,000-jobs-by-2030 target, and tie a share of each department's delivery objectives to joint outcomes, so cross-department cooperation is rewarded. Give founders a direct standing seat through an ecosystem advisory drawn from the community, so the people who live by the outcomes help shape them, and keep industry voices, founders and investors, close to the circle's leadership.

**In addition: Liveability is part of the offer**

Talent compares Berlin internationally. Its unique culture, clubbing, art and metropolitan pull are a genuine, hard-to-copy advantage, but they sit on groundwork that the same, largely progressive talent base also weighs: a clean and safe city, reliable childcare and good schools, strong public transport and generally proper infrastructure. These are not startup-policy levers in the narrow sense, and they are not asks in this paper, but they shape whether the people Berlin attracts choose to stay. The community vote made the point bluntly, with a cleaner city ranking surprisingly high.

## 7. The Longer-Term Commitment: Closing the Research-to-Venture Gap

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Closing the gap between research and its venture output is the vision that will matter over the next decade. The *Forschungspolitische Strategie*, *Deep-Tech Berlin Agenda*, *Berlin Transfer Bridge* and *Innovationsagenda Berlin-Brandenburg* to be published soon all acknowledge this on the state level and are backed up by the *Hightech Agenda Germany* (HTAD). Unlike the asks in the previous Section 6, it cannot be delivered on the short-term nor by any one department. It needs three things at once: long-term and cross-government cooperation, a multi-year commitment, and an engine whose core mandate is turning research into companies while turning stakeholder complexities into opportunity and strength.

Berlin already has that engine. JUNI, a founding partner of the BAD1 movement, is a deeptech startup factory built specifically to foster an entrepreneurial mindset, to help commercialise university research by working directly with their science and industry partners, and support startup and spin-off teams across the Berlin-Brandenburg landscape. JUNI is already working towards closing the research-to-venture gap by pushing two out of three most voted community suggestions (excellence track and IP transfer model).

### 7.1 Build a deep-tech founders' master across the Berlin's universities

Lever **DIRECT / CO-INVEST** · Horizon **NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Sen. Research, with Sen. Economic Affairs*  
*Community vote: Excellence Track 'CDTM Berlin' 33, Entrepreneurship-Readiness 15, Local Talent Pool 12.*

Munich's Center for Digital Technology and Management (CDTM) has shown for over two decades that entrepreneurship can be taught at scale, with alumni founding hundreds of companies. Berlin should learn from it rather than copy it, and tight budgets mean the answer is not a new institution but a reshaping of existing programmes. Work is already in motion: initiated by TU Berlin the Berlin University Alliance together with JUNI is developing a master's in which founding a company can replace the thesis, building a blueprint for a new entrepreneurship mindset. Interconnection between universities, founders and investors will be a vital part of the success. Other universities are invited to adopt the model, while some, e.g. CODE University of Applied Science already are moving into this direction. However, scale is critical.

**The ask:** back a cross-university deep-tech founders' master enabled by Berlin's universities in which building a venture, on a student's own idea or on an existing patent, is part of the degree. The realistic ambition is 30 to 50 students a cohort, more than ten new deep-tech ideas a year, and around 100 founder-graduates by 2030. Given the current budget constraints, a public-private partnership is the realistic route and should be championed by the respective Senate Department. A dedicated state funding line based on the model of Bavaria's Elitenetzwerk would put it on a durable footing in the long-run.

**Why it is realistic:** Ecosystem partners, including JUNI, The Delta, the BAD1 community are committed to give back, and have offered to contribute mentoring, accelerator access, infrastructure and investor networks. The programme though remains owned by the universities.

## 7.2 Champion the Berlin Model for university IP transfer

Lever **DIRECT / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NOW / NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Sen. Research and Sen. Economic Affairs (via Transferrat)*

*Community vote: Best-in-Class IP Transfer 15.*

Since the abolition of the Hochschullehrerprivileg, German universities own their researchers' inventions and negotiate licences and equity spinout by spinout. The result is structural negotiation asymmetry: founders face slow, opaque, bespoke terms and often hand over stakes large enough to damage the cap table before the first institutional investor arrives.

**The ask:** university autonomy means the state cannot simply require a standard, but it can champion one. The Senate should continue to endorse and actively promote a standardised, founder-friendly framework, the Berlin Model, and use the Hochschulverträge dialogue and targeted incentives to encourage adoption. Core elements include published default term sheets, an evidence-based standard for equity or royalty position, a hard timeline to a signed term sheet of three months or less, and transparency. The standard has to account for the very different worth of IP across fields (e.g. biotech and software), rather than one-size-fits-all. This requires the administration to ensure all legal uncertainties are cleared step by step and that Berlin advocates for the necessary federal and EU level changes via the Bundesrat.

**Why it is within reach:** Berlin does not need to start from scratch. Work commissioned by the Senate to create clearer standards and reduce negotiation asymmetry is already under way, an emerging coalition of investors is willing to support it, and Berlin already backs research and university spin-offs through IBB Ventures and its B# pre-seed fund. This is the reform with the highest unlock potential to close the gap in the paper, and Berlin can be the first ecosystem across the large economies in Europe to solve it.

**Berlin's first mover advantage.** Around 70% of EU patents never reach commercialisation. The city that fixes the transfer layer first sets the European benchmark, a positioning prize well beyond Berlin's own commercialisation rates.

## 7.3 Reform university incentives so founding is a recognised career path

Lever **DIRECT / ADVOCATE** · Horizon **NEXT TERM** · Lead desk *Sen. Research*

*Community vote: Entrepreneurship-Readiness Program 15.*

Even with a great programme and fair IP terms, researchers and students will not found if the academic system penalises them for it. The reputation currency still is mainly granted by papers and partially patents rather than spin-offs.

**The ask:** work with the universities to remove the entrepreneurship-hindering parts of the legal framework, recognise spin-off and venture work for credit, build an entrepreneurial component into appointment procedures (Berufungsverfahren), recognise spin-off activity in performance metrics, guarantee leave-of-absence and return rights for founding professors and postdocs, and set commercialisation as an explicit, measured mission within research and teaching. A world-class, Berlin-wide alumni programme would knit graduates, founders and the universities together over time. Because this touches university autonomy and several layers of law, it is squarely a longer-term, cross-government effort, best carried by the coalition agreement and the next Hochschulverträge.

## 8. Delivery: Building on What Already Works

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Policy asks are only as strong as the actors who can execute them, and Berlin does not have to build that capacity from scratch. The wider ecosystem already runs much of the infrastructure these reforms depend on, which is what makes them lower-cost and fast to start.

On the near-term barriers in Section 6, much of the delivery sits inside government itself: the immigration office and Berlin Partner's Business Immigration Service, the Handelsregister, the procurement bodies, and IBB Ventures, all of which exist and mainly need resourcing, English-readiness and a mandate to move faster. On the longer-term research-to-venture agenda, Berlin's universities and research institutions hold the talent, the research and the patents.

Strong Berlin ecosystem partners, including the startup campus The Delta and the startup factory JUNI, work alongside these institutions, offering convening, mentoring, accelerator access, infrastructure and investor networks, much of it as a contribution rather than a cost to the state. These partners stand both to help and to benefit from a stronger ecosystem, which is the kind of alignment durable reform needs.

The point for the current and future Senate is simple: the delivery capacity exists, and the task is to put it to work, through resourcing where the levers are public and through public-private partnership where they are shared. A recurring theme runs through these asks: the Senate has already laid real groundwork, from the Zukunftsorte and its analysis of new procurement processes to the B# fund, the commissioned work on IP-transfer standards to just mention a few, and most importantly a dense and excellent science landscape. Much of what this paper asks is to carry that groundwork through to completion as quickly and focussed as possible and connect it, not to start over.

## 9. Priority Asks at a Glance

A single-page reference for briefings and manifesto drafting, ordered to reflect the community vote, where language and talent-landing barriers ranked highest. Levers: DIRECT (state competence), CO-INVEST (Berlin's own instruments), ADVOCATE (federal or EU via the Bundesrat).

### The actionable agenda: reduce the structural barriers

#	Ask	Lever	Horizon
6.1	Make Berlin work in English across startup-relevant administration	DIRECT / ADVOCATE	Now
6.2	A service-based founder and talent fast-track, plus welcome housing	DIRECT / ADVOCATE	Now
6.3	Genuinely fast formation: the full digital GmbH chain, not only trade registration	DIRECT / ADVOCATE	Now / Next term
6.4	Open public procurement with a GovTech track	DIRECT	Now / Next term
6.5	Scale IBB Ventures and B#, and push the federal and EU capital agenda	CO-INVEST / ADVOCATE	Now / ongoing
6.6	Push for key direct flights; keep a centre-of-gravity campus in scope	DIRECT / ADVOCATE	Now / Next term
6.7	A Senate startup and tech-transfer coordinator from industry, with KPIs	DIRECT	Now / Next term

### The longer-term commitment: close the research-to-venture gap

#	Ask	Lever	Horizon
7.1	A deep-tech founders' master across the Berlin University Alliance	DIRECT / CO-INVEST	Next term
7.2	Champion the Berlin Model for IP transfer; promote voluntary adoption	DIRECT / ADVOCATE	Now / Next term
7.3	Reform university incentives so founding is a recognised career path	DIRECT / ADVOCATE	Next term

## 10. Conclusion and Invitation to Collaborate

Berlin has the talent, the ideas and the ambition to be Europe's leading startup ecosystem. What has been missing is a community-led effort to turn that potential into coordinated action with government, administration and public actors.

This paper documents the first phase of that effort and sets out concretely what the State of Berlin should do. Most of it is not exotic and not expensive. It is making the city work in English, letting talent land and stay, forming companies in days, opening procurement, scaling the capital instruments Berlin already built, and giving the whole agenda ownership. Alongside that near-term agenda sits a longer-term commitment, closing the research-to-venture gap, that will define Berlin's next decade and that deserves a cross-government, cross-party push.

The time to act is now, with the current Senate, and to carry the energy of the momentum into the next legislative period. We invite the Senate, every democratic party, the universities, and the investors, corporates, and ecosystem players of this city to take up these asks, and to work with the BAD1 community to deliver them. **For a sovereign Europe, built in Berlin.**

### Sponsors Acknowledgements



## Appendix A. Full Ideas List

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All ideas submitted through the community process, organised by cluster, with community vote counts where available, documented for transparency.

### Cluster 1: Talent, Education & Research

- Excellence Track 'CDTM Berlin' (33); Digital Language Support (25); Best-in-Class IP Transfer (15); Entrepreneurship-Readiness Program (15); Local Talent Pool Bridge (12); Boost Tech Spinouts from Berlin's research institutions; R&D Office Package.
- Mentoring System; 'Berlin's Best Founders Mentor 24/7'; Berlin Startup Playbook Community (BEST-PC); AI & Robotics Learning Lounge; Tech and Entrepreneurship Student Club Ecosystem; AI-Native Apprenticeship Hub.

### Cluster 2: Capital & Funding Infrastructure

- Tech for Kiez (35); Annual 'Choose Berlin' Investment Summit (15); Stop Wiring Berlin's Funding to AWS (11); Lean Funding Processes; European 'NASDAQ' in Berlin; crowdfunded citizen investment platform with tax benefits; hackathon-to-investment track; SME Robotics Adoption Fund.

### Cluster 3: Market Access & Industry Collaboration

- SFO to BER Direct Flights (37); BER to Shenzhen or Shanghai Direct Flights (11); Quarterly Startup Tour Berlin (15); GovTech Pipeline; '500 Builders, Zero Pitch Decks'; Permanent Robot & AI Expo Showroom; Grandparent Robotics Program; Berlin Tech Embassy Network; Berlin Global Business Attraction Program.

### Cluster 4: Regulation & Policy Environment

- Bilingual Support Platform (61); English Compatibility (57); International Founder Fast-Track Visa (30); Enable Blue Card holders to start companies (20); English Option pilot for startup-relevant procedures (17); Faster GmbH Registration (15); KAI Card, to be renamed (13); Tax Employee Stock Options as Capital Gains; Competitive EU HQ Incentive Package; KPI-driven 'startup' Finanzamt; AI-Powered City Services; Berlin Robotics Deployment Pilot Zones; Incentives to shift from employee to founder.

### Cluster 5: Infrastructure & Ecosystem Experience

- Welcome Housing (34); Station D Mega-Campus (29); More Events, Competitions and Hacker Houses (13); Make Berlin cleaner (45, a liveability signal); Berlin Builder Residency Houses; Berlin Open Data for AI; Berlin Sovereign AI Cloud; More Factories in Berlin; Multiple Hacker Houses; Innovation Area for EXPO 2035; Berlin Founder Village; Startup rent guarantee; Digital Sovereignty Hackathon; Symposium on Bio-inspired Computation.

### Robotics (cross-cutting)

- AI & Robotics Learning Lounge; SME Robotics Adoption Fund; Permanent Robot & AI Expo Showroom; Grandparent Robotics Program; Berlin Robotics Deployment Pilot Zones; Berlin Robotics Olympics. Several of these are already being taken forward by private initiatives such as MotionLab.