Finnish
Startup Community

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Startup Barometer Q3/2025

What is Startup Barometer?

Basics:

- Quarterly survey for FSC members to measure the sentiment of the startup ecosystem
- 3 key questions assessing sentiments for the past and next three months.
- Results presented using balance figures, indicating optimism (+100) or pessimism (-100).
- Quarterly average of all balance figures provide an overall sentiment.

Survey questions:

- Financial Situation: Rate (1-5) the financial situation of your company.
- Economic Surroundings: Rate (1-5) the surrounding economic situation.
- Employment Changes: Rate (1-5) changes in the number of employees.
- Barriers to Growth: Insights on barriers to business growth.

Details:

- Balance Figures: Reflect sentiments, positive or negative, calculated by subtracting the percentage of negative answers from the percentage of positive answers.
- Startup Index: Quarterly average of balance figures, offering a comprehensive overview.

Theme Questions:

- Additional questions are included when relevant to explore timely topics in more depth.
- In Q3/2025, the theme focused on financial reporting solutions and the usage of AI to improve them.

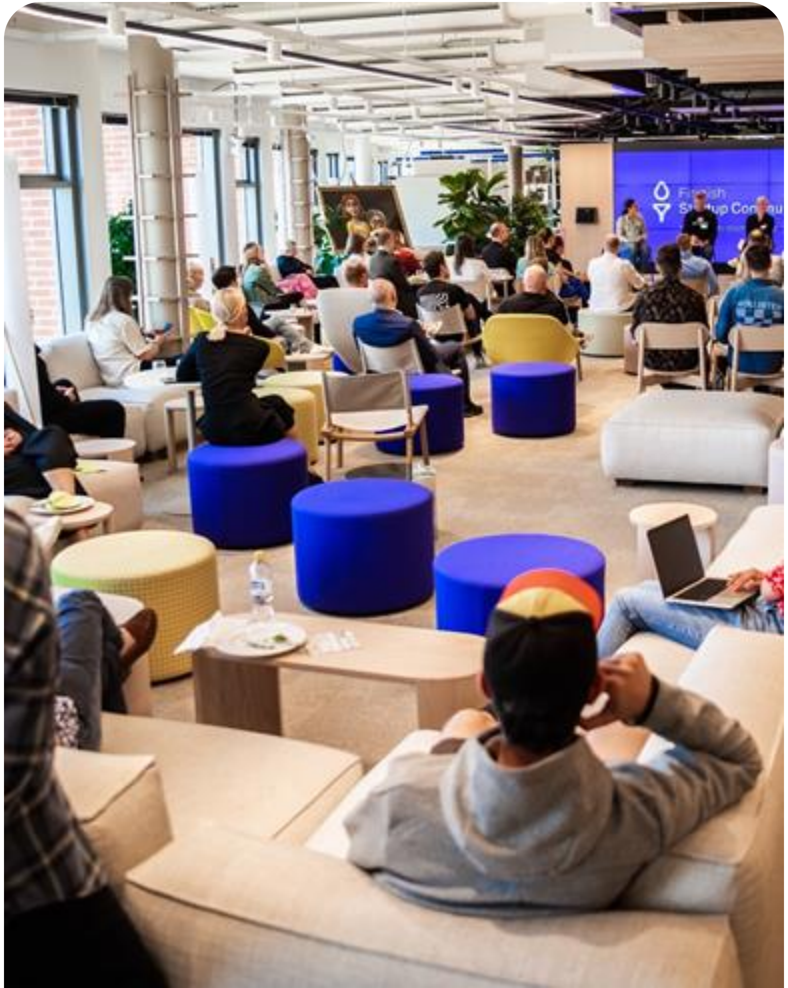
Barometer results in short

Forward-looking sentiment for companies' financial situations and surrounding economy increased for the first time in a year. Hiring rates are expected to remain relatively stable compared to previous surveys, despite the turbulence in the global economy in recent years.

For the backward-looking indicators, both company financial solutions and hiring pace are still positive even though they decreased from previous quarter.

In this Barometer survey, we asked FSC members about their financial reporting solutions and potential operational functions to outsource.

On average, **FSC members are decently satisfied with their level of automation (or usage of AI) in their financial reporting**. At the same time, the members are satisfied with the timeliness and accuracy of said solutions. For **potential operational functions to outsource**, top candidates were **accounting and financial reporting** (51% respondents), **CFO services** (23% of respondents) and **HR** (16% of respondents)



Company financial situation

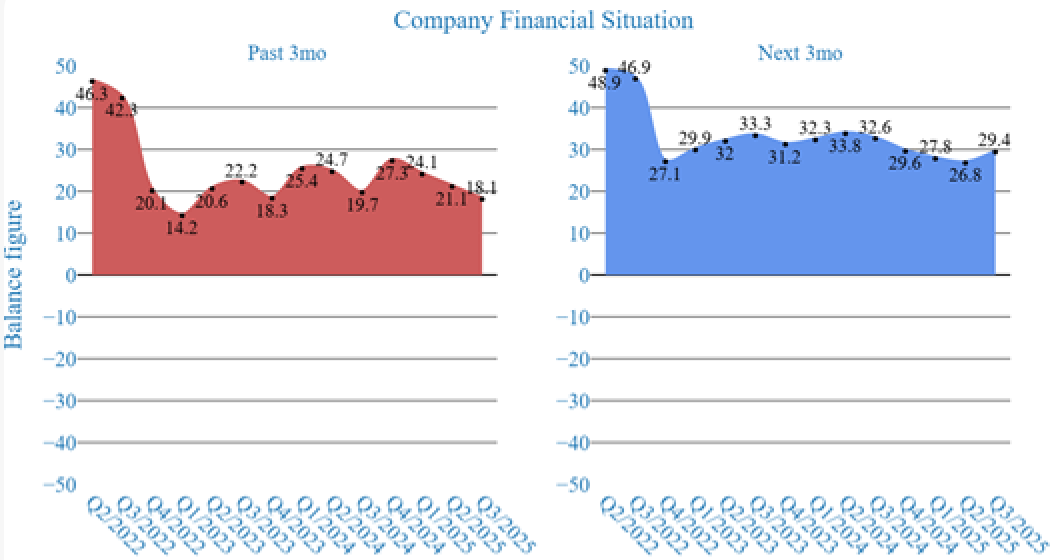
Red: Past 3 months (Backward looking)

- Balance figure for the past 3 months has slightly decreased to 18.1, down from 21.1 in Q2/2025.
- Despite the small decline, the overall trend remains positive, and the indicator is still in optimistic territory.

Blue: Next 3 months (Forward looking)

- The forward-looking indicator has increased to 29.4, compared to 26.8 in Q2/2025.
- This rebound may reflect growing optimism as it seems that the most turbulent period of 2025 trade war seems to have passed
- The balance figures are firmly on optimistic levels and increased for the first time in four quarters, which indicates more positive expectations for the near future

Both backward- and forward-looking indicators remain in clearly optimistic territory. Startups continue to report a positive financial situation but appear to be cautiously optimistic heading into Q4 of 2025.



Balance figure: Values between -100 and +100. Lower value = pessimistic sentiment

Surrounding economic situation

Red: Past 3 months (Backward looking)

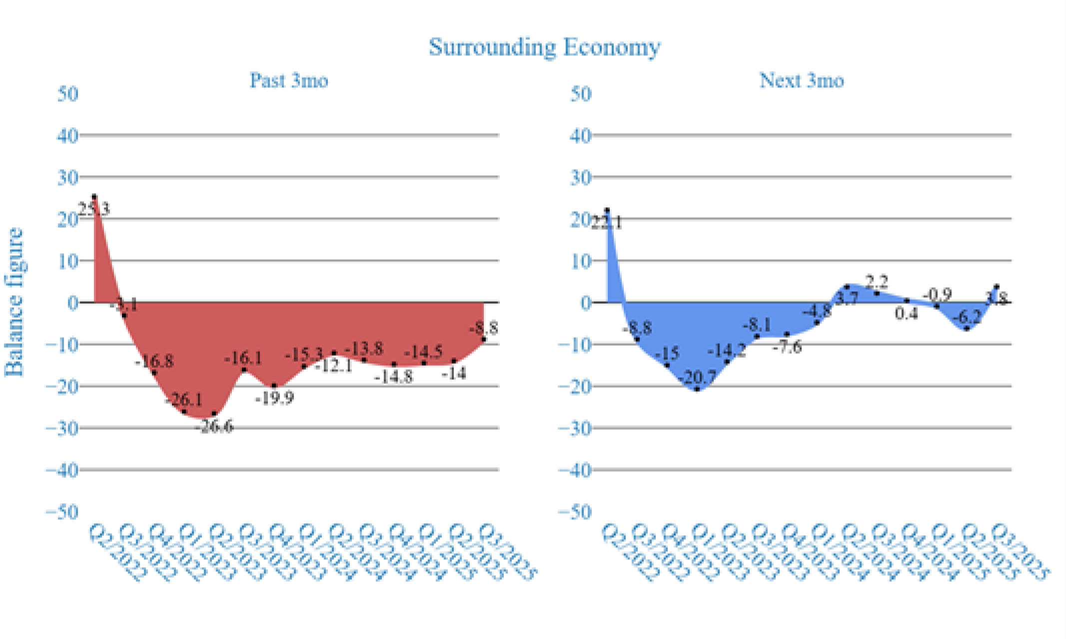
- The backward-looking indicator has improved to -8.8, up from –14 in Q2/2025.
- The views about the surrounding economic situation are still pessimistic. While still in negative territory, the sentiment has improved drastically compared to most of 2022–2023.

Blue: Next 3 months (Forward looking)

- The forward-looking indicator is positive again, increasing to 3.8 from -6.2 in Q2/2025.
- This quarter was the first quarter with increasing sentiment ending a four consecutive quarter of declining sentiment in the forward-looking indicator.

Key Takeaways:

Sentiment towards surrounding past economic situation increased greatly and startups again are starting to be cautiously optimistic of what to expect for the rest of the year.



Balance figure: Values between -100 and +100. Lower value = pessimistic sentiment

Number of employees – how fast startups are hiring

Red: Past 3 months (Backward looking)

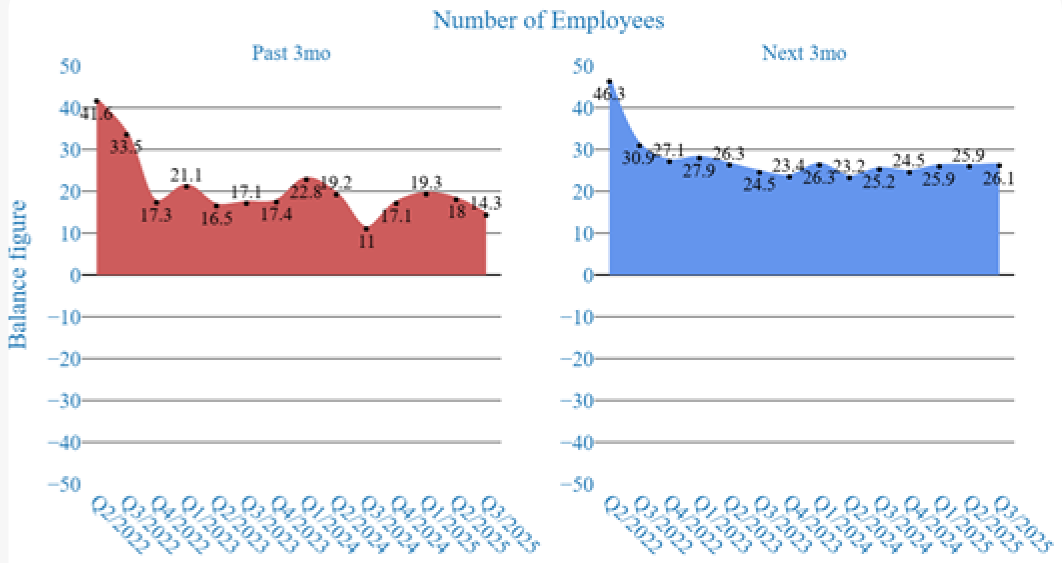
- The backward-looking indicator has decreased to 14.3, down from 18 in Q2/2025.
- This suggests that startups have slightly decreased their hiring pace, but the overall trend remains flat.

Blue: Next 3 months (Forward looking)

- The forward-looking hiring indicator minimally increased to 26.1 from 25.9 versus Q2/2025.
- The gap between expected and realized hiring remains

Key Takeaways:

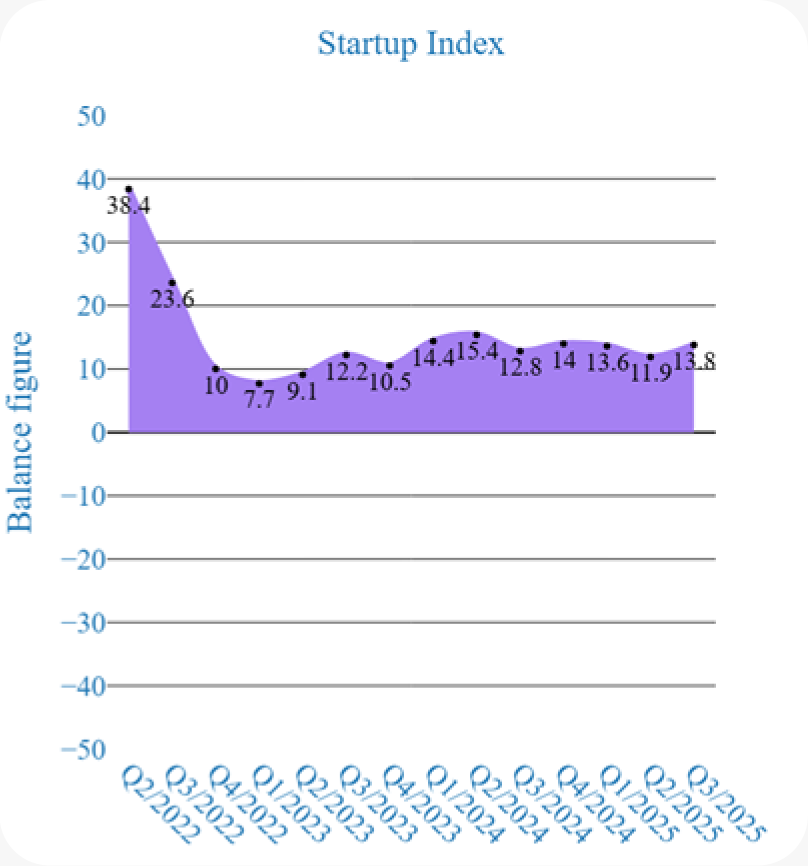
Startups have stopped to grow headcount gradually. Backward-looking indicator shows worse hiring versus forward-looking indicator.



Balance figure: Values between -100 and +100. Lower value = pessimistic sentiment

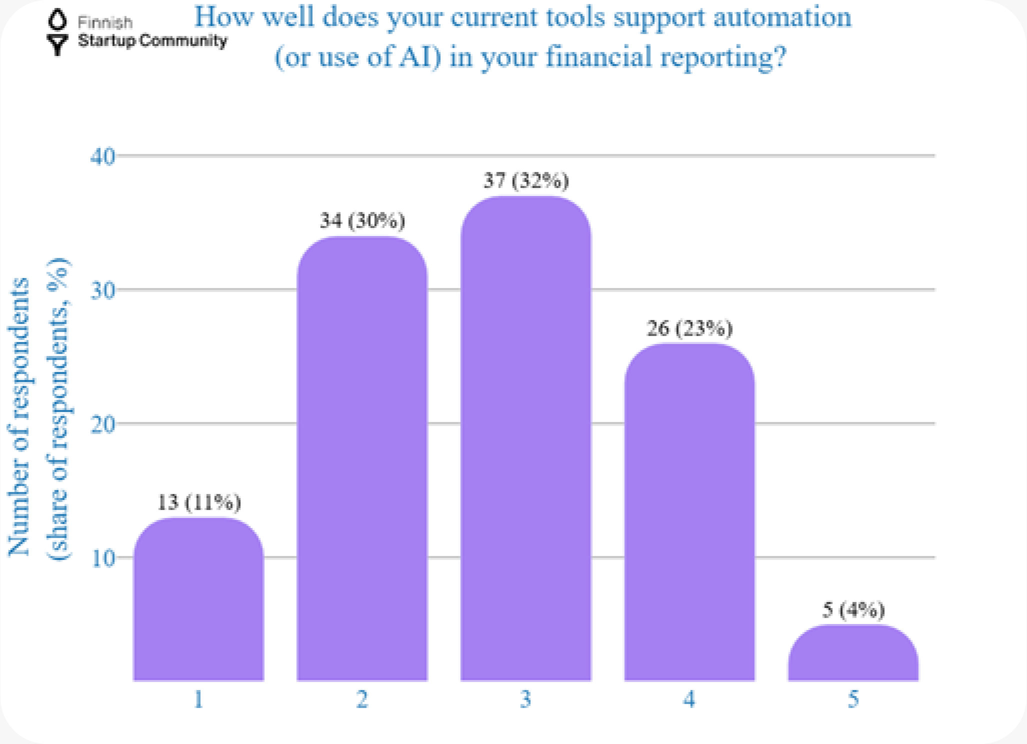
Startup index slightly increased from previous quarter

- **Startup Index:** Quarterly average of the balance figures for each basic question in the survey.
- Low point at Q1-2023 and after that a slow rebound.
- Startups adapted swiftly to economic changes, but the optimism levels may not return to the 2022 peak anytime soon.
- The sentiment during the beginning of 2022 might have been abnormally positive.
    - We lack longer-term data
- It appears that the Startup Index is ranging and seems to have stabilised



Automation of financial reporting

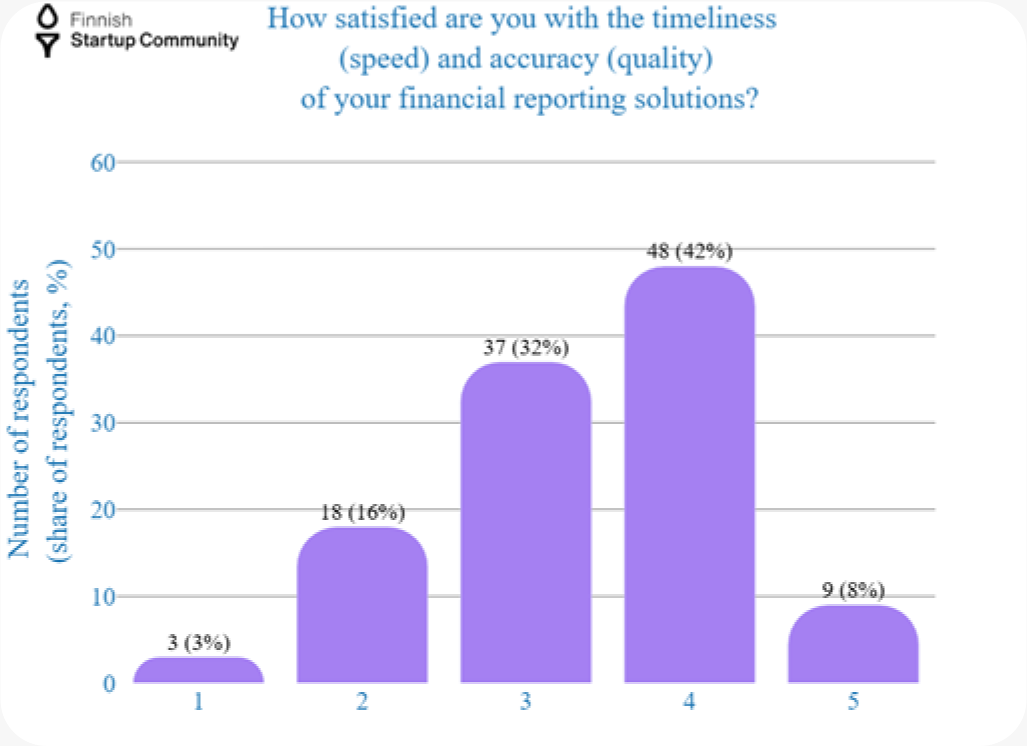
- **Financial reporting:** How well does your current tools support automation (or use of AI) in your financial reporting
- Results highlight how on average startups current tools support automation somewhat but there is more room for improvement
- Only 4% of respondents feel that their current setup of automation (or use of AI) in financial reporting is done very well
- With the rapid advancements of AI, one could expect the level of automation to increase dramatically in near future



1= Not well at all 5 = Very well

Speed and quality of financial reporting solutions

- **Satisfaction of financial reporting solutions:** How satisfied are you with the timeliness (speed) and accuracy (quality) of your financial reporting solutions?
- Half of respondents are at least quite satisfied with their current financial reporting solutions
- Only fifth of the respondents are not not satisfied with their current financial reporting solutions
- On average, even while the respondents feels that their financial reporting solutions do not support use of AI very well, they are quite satisfied with their current setups



1= Not satisfied at all, 5 = Very satisfied

Operational functions to outsource

- **Outsourcing operational functions:** Which operational functions would you consider to outsource or have already outsourced
- Half of the respondents has considered or have outsourced their accounting and financial reporting
- Second highest option is CFO services with approximately quarter of respondents choosing that option
- Only 5% of respondents selected customer support, likely because they doubt the availability of truly high-quality options in the market
- Other -option include legal, data compliance, IPO support, R&D, accounting but not reporting, development and none