

# TAKOMO

## *Policy Hackathon 2026*



Finnish  
Startup Community

Helsinki

Business  
Helsinki

BUSINESS  
ESPOO

# Introduction

On May 13, 2026, the Finnish Startup Community organized the first TAKOMO policy hackathon in Helsinki, bringing together startup founders, investors, and researchers to develop solutions to Finland's key growth challenges.

The goal of TAKOMO was to create concrete policy proposals addressing three central challenges facing the startup ecosystem.

As the highlight of the event, the teams pitched their proposals to a jury consisting of Members of Parliament Nasima Razmyar, Markus Lohi, and Oras Tynkkynen, Espoo City Council member Henrik Vuornos, and investor Inka Mero.

The event was organized in collaboration with the City of Helsinki and the City of Espoo.



**10**  
*teams*

- Startup founders and ecosystem activists
- Diverse backgrounds and perspectives

**6**  
*judges*

- Members of Parliament and key startup figures
- New perspectives and shared insights to support decision-making

We wanted to experiment with a new approach to startup advocacy. Startups understand the challenges of growth exceptionally well because they deal with them every day. At the same time, they are used to finding solutions quickly and creatively. This expertise should be utilized much more in policymaking as well.

Riikka Pakarinen, CEO



TAKOMO was organized because the startup ecosystem has extensive hands-on experience with Finland's growth challenges, along with a strong ability to rapidly develop concrete solutions to them.

The hackathon format was chosen because it enables fast-paced ideation, practical problem-solving, and close collaboration between participants from diverse backgrounds.

At the core of the hackathon were multidisciplinary teams in which startup founders, investors, and researchers worked together to solve shared challenges. The proposals were rooted in problems and experiences identified through the day-to-day realities of the startup ecosystem.

# Why TAKOMO?



# *Three main themes* of TAKOMO

Talent Shortage & Skilled  
Immigration



Tax Incentives for Founders &  
Talent



University Spinouts



# Comments from *the Jury*

The jury discussions particularly highlighted the concreteness, feasibility, and practical understanding of growth challenges reflected in the proposals. Several pitches introduced ideas that could also be further developed as part of real-world policymaking processes.

*“The ideas contained a remarkably high level of concreteness and feasibility. It was great to see how proposals emerging directly from the startup ecosystem’s practical experience could, in some cases, be advanced into political preparation very quickly”,* highlights Markus Lohi.

*“It was immediately clear from the solutions that they were developed by some of Finland’s top entrepreneurs and coders. The level of ambition was high. And most importantly, the proposals related to immigration, permits, and taxation were clearly well-justified and designed to scale quickly”,* says investor Inka Mero.



# *Participant feedback*

**4.5 out of 5**

**Overall  
Satisfaction**

*"Thank you for the great event and I am looking forward for more such events in future."*

— Anonymous participant

*"The Political Hackathon is a great concept. The Members of Parliament and startup people were highly knowledgeable."* — Anonymous participant

## **Key Takeaways from Participants**

- Inspiring event and development-positive atmosphere
- High quality of discussions and pitches
- Strong collaboration between startups, academia, and politics
- Opportunity to work on concrete ideas with long-term impact for Finland and Europe



## What happens *next?*

The Finnish Startup Community will compile and further develop the proposals created during the hackathon and advance them in discussions with policymakers.

The TAKOMO policy hackathon received highly positive feedback from both participants and the jury, and plans are already underway for future editions of the event.

The goal is for the best proposals to eventually be reflected in concrete policy measures and become part of the Finnish Startup Community's advocacy work.

# Summary of the Teams' Policy Proposals

# Team 1: International talent and immigration

## *Onboarding program for international talent*

### Challenge

The everyday lives of professionals moving to Finland and their families are complicated by fragmented administrative processes, uncertainty related to housing, and difficulties in spouse employment. According to the group, the current system creates unnecessary friction and delays both starting work and integrating into Finnish society.

### Proposed solution

The group proposed a 12-week onboarding program in which practical matters would be handled in a more centralized and streamlined way already before moving to Finland. In this model, services such as banking, tax cards, housing, daycare, and other administrative processes would be combined under one unified service.

The solution emphasized a “one-stop shop” approach, where responsibility for settling in would not rest solely with the employer. According to the group, the service could also be used as a competitive advantage when recruiting international talent.

# Team 2: International talent and immigration

## *Talent pool for international professionals*

### Challenge

The skills and networks of international professionals in Finland are often underutilized, especially in situations where individuals are seeking more flexible work opportunities or are between jobs.

### Proposed solution

The group proposed a digital talent pool that would connect employers and professionals in real time. Employers could announce their talent needs, while professionals could share their skills, location, and interest in different work opportunities.

In this model, artificial intelligence would be used to match the needs of professionals and companies. According to the group, the solution could particularly serve the needs of startups and SMEs, while also enabling more flexible and shorter-term work opportunities than currently available.

# Team 3: International talent and immigration

## *The Year of Choice*



### Challenge

The current immigration system forces international professionals to quickly choose a single path, such as employment, studies, or entrepreneurship. According to the group, this does not reflect the reality of the labor market or the flexible career paths common in the startup world.

### Proposed solution

“In the “Year of Choice” model, individuals would be able to study, work, or start a business for one year under a single permit, without burdensome transitions between different permit categories.

According to the group, the model would give international professionals the opportunity to explore different paths in Finland without fear of losing their permit if their situation changes. The model would require legislative changes as well as closer cooperation between authorities than currently exists.

# Team 4: International talent and immigration

## *Shadow a Founder*

### Challenge

Decision-makers do not always have a sufficient understanding of the day-to-day reality of startup entrepreneurs, the experiences of international professionals, or the barriers faced by growth companies.

### Proposed solution

In the “Shadow a Founder” program, decision-makers would spend a day alongside a startup founder, gaining firsthand insight into entrepreneurial life and its practical challenges.

According to the group, the goal of the program would be to increase human-centered interactions and build policymaking more strongly on practical experience. The model was proposed as an ongoing program that would also include onboarding new members of parliament to the startup ecosystem.

# Team 5: Tax incentives for growth entrepreneurs

## *Reinvesting exit capital into new startup companies*



### Challenge

Capital generated from startup exits is not sufficiently reinvested into new growth companies in Finland. According to the group, early-stage growth companies are currently facing a shortage of funding.

### Proposed solution

In the model proposed by the group, tax incentives would be offered for proceeds from company sales when they are reinvested into startup companies.

The model proposed, for example, tax relief for long-term ownership as well as tax deferrals in cases where capital is reinvested into new startup companies within a specified time period. According to the group, the solution could be implemented as a lightweight pilot without heavy bureaucracy.

# Team 6: Tax incentives for growth entrepreneurs

## *Reducing the risk of early hiring for startups*

### Challenge

Hiring the first employees is expensive and risky for startups, which slows growth especially in the early stages of a company.

### Proposed solution

In the model proposed by the group, tax incentives would be introduced for hiring the first employees in order to reduce the entrepreneur's risk during recruitment.

The discussions highlighted in particular the need to lower the costs of the first hires and to improve startups' ability to build their initial teams at an earlier stage.

# Team 7: Commercialization of research

## *University commercialization incentives*

### **Challenge**

The startup funding landscape is particularly difficult for early-stage entrepreneurs to navigate, and finding the right financing options requires a significant amount of time.

### **Proposed solution**

The digital decision-making tool proposed by the group would help companies identify financing options suited to their specific situation.

The goal of the tool would be to bring together different financing instruments, grants, and investment options into a single platform, while also supporting entrepreneurs in making decisions during different stages of company growth.

# Team 8: Commercialization of research

## *Faster spinouts, more predictable research funding*

### Challenge

The commercialization of research progresses slowly in Finland, and researchers spend a significant amount of time applying for funding. According to the group, the constant changes in funding structures make long-term development work more difficult.

### Proposed solution

The group's proposal emphasized more predictable research funding, faster commercialization processes, and greater autonomy for universities in managing early-stage funding.

The discussions also highlighted the need to harmonize spinout processes and to create a fast-track model that would accelerate the transition of research into business activity.

# Team 9: Commercialization of research

## *The Incentive Flip -model*



### Challenge

Current university incentive structures place greater emphasis on research publications than on the commercialization of research and the creation of new companies.

### Proposed solution

In the “The Incentive Flip” model, a portion of university RDI (Research, Development and Innovation) funding would be tied to the creation and impact of spinout companies.

According to the group, the goal would be to build a system that incentivizes universities more strongly than today to create research-based companies and turn research into practical business activity.

# Team 10: Commercialization of research

## *Reforming impact metrics*

### **Challenge**

Current university performance metrics do not sufficiently account for the commercialization of research and the creation of new companies.

### **Proposed solution**

The group proposed introducing more metrics into university funding models that take spinout companies, commercialization activities, and the economic impact of research into account.

The discussions also highlighted international examples where funding is allocated increasingly based on overall impact rather than individual projects.

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