



APPLICANT INFORMATION PACKET

Sunbirds

E.S.I.R.P. 2026

Everything a founder needs to know before applying: what the program is, whether it fits your startup and how to apply.

Open to ICT and Fintech startups in Rwanda | 50 places



Your questions, answered



What is Sunbirds?

See slide 3



Is it right for me?

See slide 6



Is my startup eligible?

See slide 7



What do I get?

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What does it cost, and how much time?

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What is Sunbirds?

The Ecosystem Startup Investment Readiness Program (E.S.I.R.P.) is a three-month program that gets ICT and Fintech startups ready to raise investment.

3

months of blended service and coaching

50

champion startups selected

2

sectors: ICT and Fintech

You work hands-on with RG Partners' experts through the program. The program was co-designed by RG Partners, the Rwanda ICT Chamber and development partners.



Why Sunbirds exists: most startups are not investor-ready

78%

of African startups are not investor-ready

<20%

of Rwandan startups have investor-grade financial documentation

65%

of funded African startups fail to secure Series A

The four gaps Sunbirds closes



Weak financial infrastructure



Compliance gaps



No CFO-level guidance



Weak governance

Who is behind Sunbirds



RG Partners

Delivers the program with its team of experts: financial readiness, tax and regulatory compliance, fractional CFO services, governance and investor relations. Has run Sunbirds since 2022.



Rwanda ICT Chamber

Co-leads the 2026 applications campaign and connects the program to Rwanda's ICT and Fintech founders, hubs and universities.

Is Sunbirds right for you? It is, if most of these describe you



You run a registered business

Your organisation is registered with RDB.



You build digital products

ICT and Fintech startups, and digital-enabled businesses.



You have early traction

At least 6 months of operation, with some revenue or active users.



You plan to raise investment

You intend to raise early-stage capital within 2 years.



You want hands-on coaching

You are open to working on your finances, compliance and governance.



Your business creates impact

It supports the SDGs or Rwanda's Vision 2050.

Is your startup eligible? Answer six questions

Question

Answer "no"? Do this

1

Is your organisation registered with RDB?

Complete registration before the closing date.

2

Do you keep financial records, even basic ones?

Start a simple record of income and expenses now.

3

Is your business ICT or digital-enabled?

Sunbirds focuses on ICT and Fintech.

4

Have you operated for 6+ months with revenue or active users?

This cohort is for startups with early traction.

5

Do you plan to raise investment within 2 years?

Sunbirds is built for startups heading to investors.

6

Does your business support the SDGs or Vision 2050?

Be ready to explain your impact.

Eligibility: common questions



My financial records are messy. Can I still apply?

Yes. Basic or disorganised records are fine. Putting them in order is part of the program.



I have no revenue yet. Can I apply?

You need at least 6 months of operation and some revenue or active user traction. Active users count.



Is my sector included?

Sunbirds focuses on ICT and Fintech. Digital-enabled businesses can apply. Sector focus is 20% of your score.



Do I need to be raising money right now?

No. You need an active intention to raise early-stage investment within the next 2 years.

What you get: six areas of hands-on support



Financial readiness

Clean, reliable books and reporting you can show investors.



Tax and regulatory compliance

RRA, VAT, withholding and payroll put in order.



Fractional CFO services

CFO-level guidance without a full-time hire.



Investor-grade modelling

Financial model, cap table and valuation.



Governance and legal

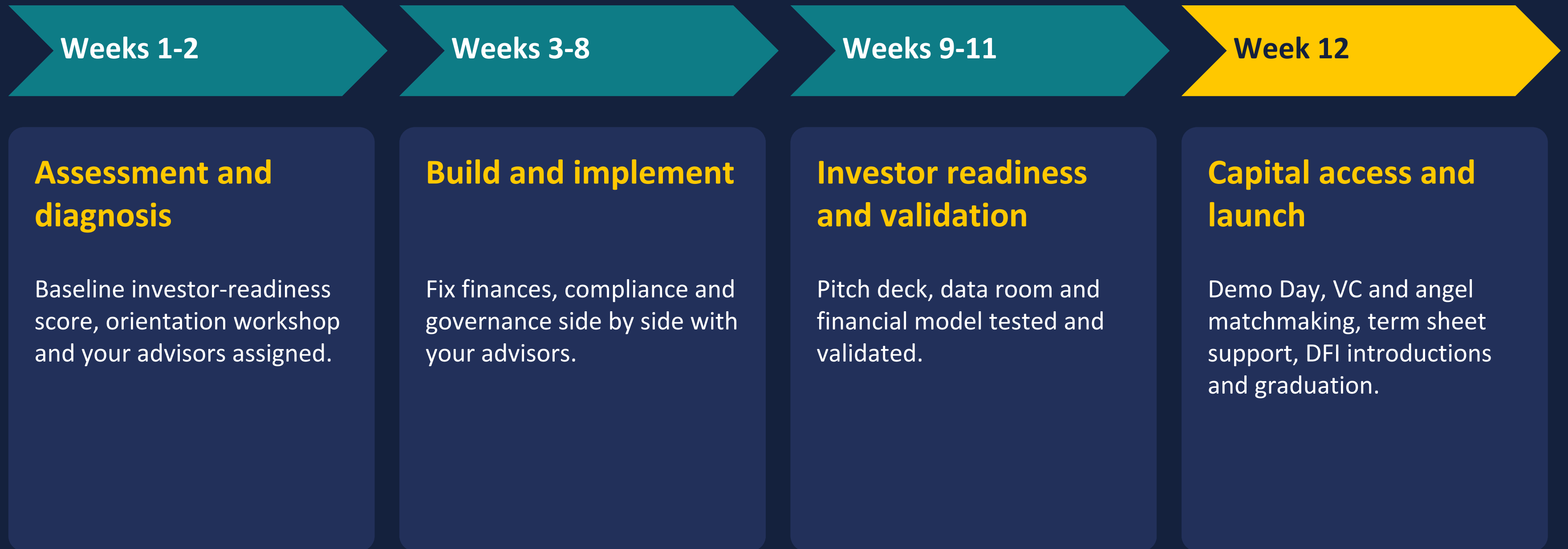
The structures investors expect to see.



Investor relations

Pitch deck, data room and warm introductions.

Your three months, week by week



After graduation you keep follow-on advisory support.

How Sunbirds is different

	Typical startup program	Sunbirds
Delivery	Theory-heavy workshops	Done-with-you implementation
Length	6 to 12 week sprints	3 months of continuous engagement
Compliance	Left for you to sort out	Gaps resolved with you
Investor introductions	Often made early	Warm introductions only once you are investor-ready

What we ask of you



Be open

Share your real numbers and challenges.



Share your records

Basic financial records are enough to start.



Be coachable

Act on advice from your advisors.



Do the work

Implementation is done with you, not for you.

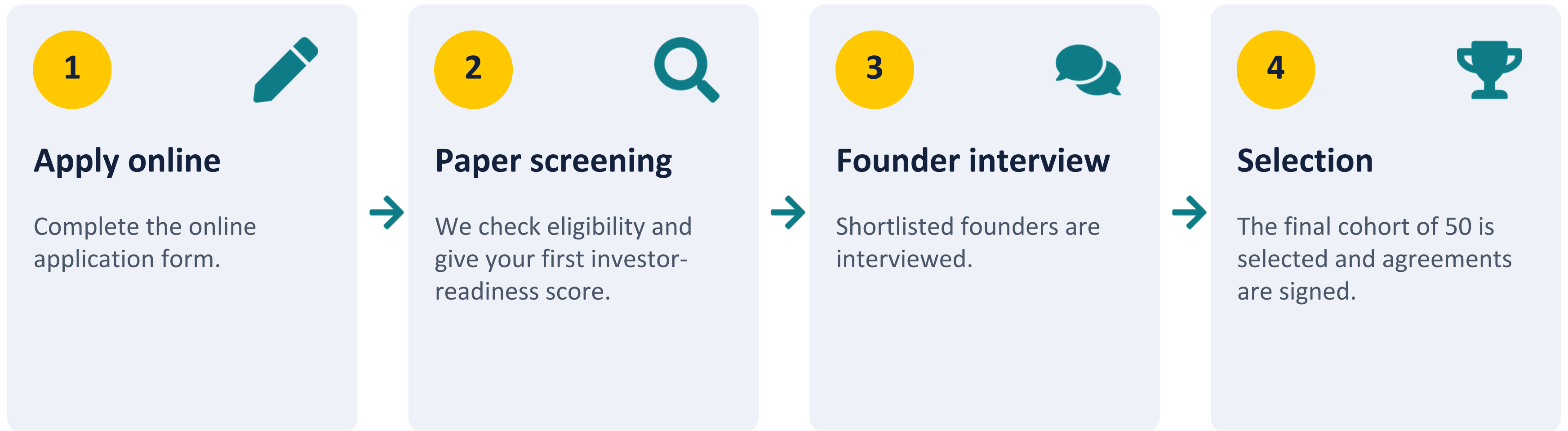


Stay for three months

Continuous engagement through graduation.

Your weekly time commitment is agreed with your advisors at onboarding. Ask us at an information session.

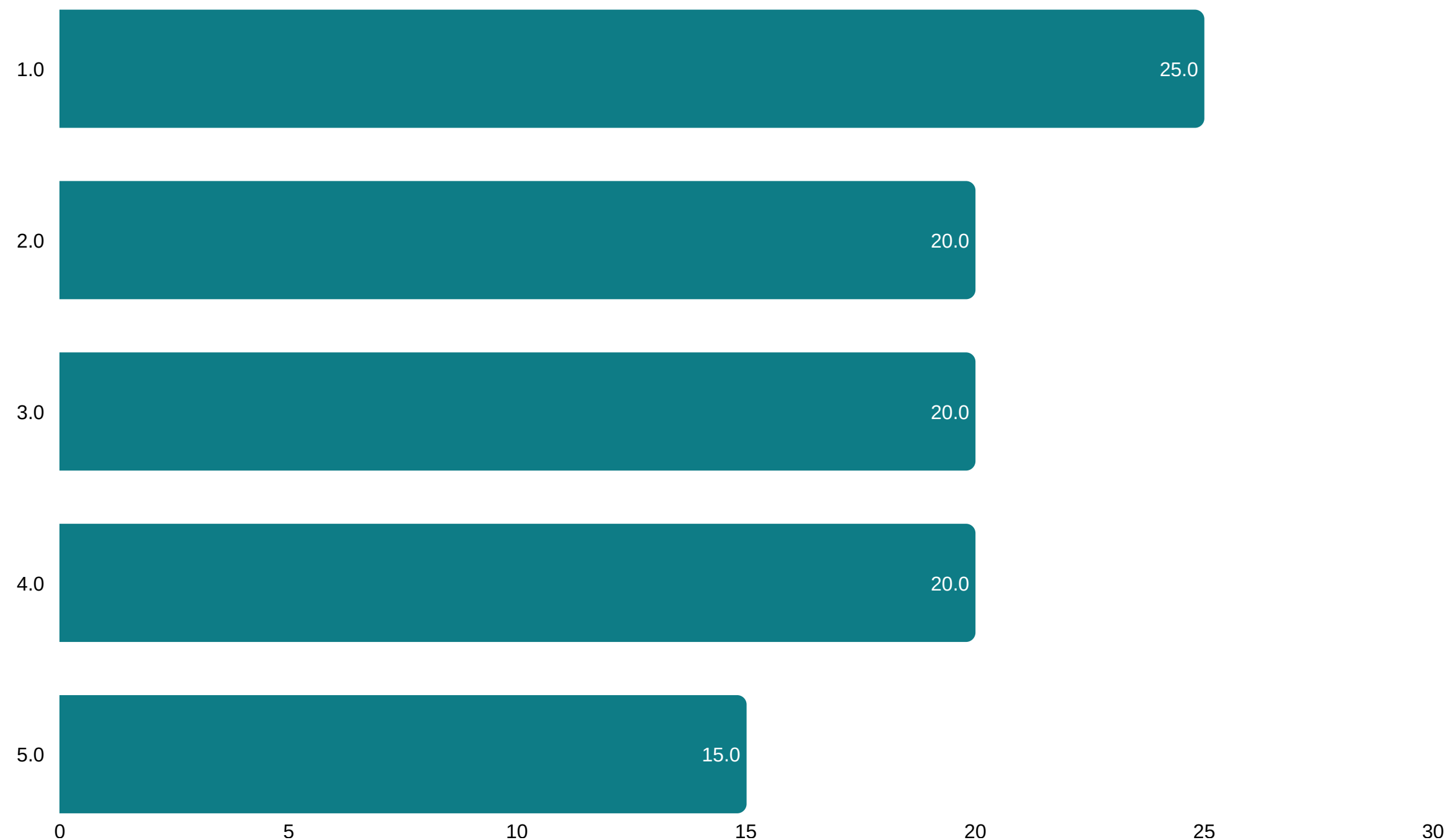
How to apply: four stages



Once selected

Baseline investor-readiness score > onboarding and orientation workshop > advisors assigned > your three months begin

How your application is scored



What this means for you

- Show how your business makes money. It carries the most weight.
- Share real traction: revenue or active users.
- Show that you are open to coaching.
- Tell us your plan to raise investment.

Have these ready before you apply

- ✓ RDB registration certificate
- ✓ Basic records of income and expenses
- ✓ Evidence of traction: revenue or user numbers
- ✓ A short description of your product and customers
- ✓ Details of your founders and team
- ✓ Your plan to raise investment: how much, when, why
- ✓ How your business supports the SDGs or Vision 2050
- ✓ Contact details for your founder interview

A suggested list to help you prepare. Check the application form for the exact requirements.

Key dates



After the closing date: paper screening, founder interviews and final selection. Information session times and links are shared on RG Partners and Rwanda ICT Chamber channels.

Results so far: 17 startups supported since 2022

17

startups supported

12

achieved tax compliance

8

secured investment

USD 1.84M

raised after the program

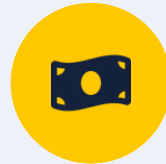


“RG Partners didn't just help us get our books in order. They transformed how we think about financial strategy. When we sat down with investors, we had answers to every question.”

Rose Ingabire, co-founder, EasyPlug (Sunbirds 2024)

Funds raised came from angel networks, grants, invoice discounting and venture capital.

Cost, time and funding: your questions



Does it cost anything?

There is no direct cost to selected startups.



Is Sunbirds a grant?

No. It prepares you to raise investment. Investor introductions come once you are investor-ready.



How long does it last?

Three months, with follow-on advisory support after graduation.



How much time will it take?

Your weekly time is agreed with your advisors at onboarding.

Selection and next steps: your questions



How are startups chosen?

Applications are scored on five criteria, then shortlisted founders are interviewed.



When will I hear back?

After the closing date. Screening, interviews and selection follow.



Where can I ask questions?

Join an information session or email business@rgpartners.rw.



What happens if I am selected?

Baseline score, orientation workshop and advisors assigned, then your three months start.

After the three months: meeting investors, prepared



Demo Day



**VC and angel
matchmaking**



**Term sheet
support**



DFI introductions



**Graduation and
follow-on advisory**

Only investment-ready startups advance to investor introductions. That protects your reputation and gives investors a reason to say yes.

Ready to apply?

Closing date: Fri 27 Nov 2026

Apply online:

hangacentral.org/opportunities/.../apply



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