

Learn & Share #4

From learning to doing

22 June 2026

Introduction

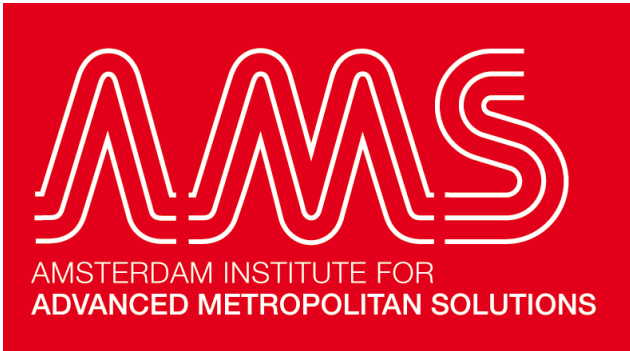
Learn & Share – Scaling up Startups

Why we started this series

- Compared to other European hotspots, Amsterdam's tech ecosystem has lost momentum ([Dutch State of AI](#) by Prosus, Dealroom and Techleap, July 2025).
- There is a big support system for startups, but not a lot of communication between them.
- **Goal: Connecting professionals and sharing knowledge in the startup ecosystem, so we can prevent overlap and fill the gaps.**



A co-creation by



- ✘ Gemeente
- ✘ Amsterdam
- ✘





The series

How to support start-ups and improve the start/scale-up ecosystem

This is the final edition in a series:

- #1 How to support startups? @AMS Institute
- #2 Financing @Rabobank
- #3 Collaboration & Procurement @Startup Village
- #4 From learning to doing @VU

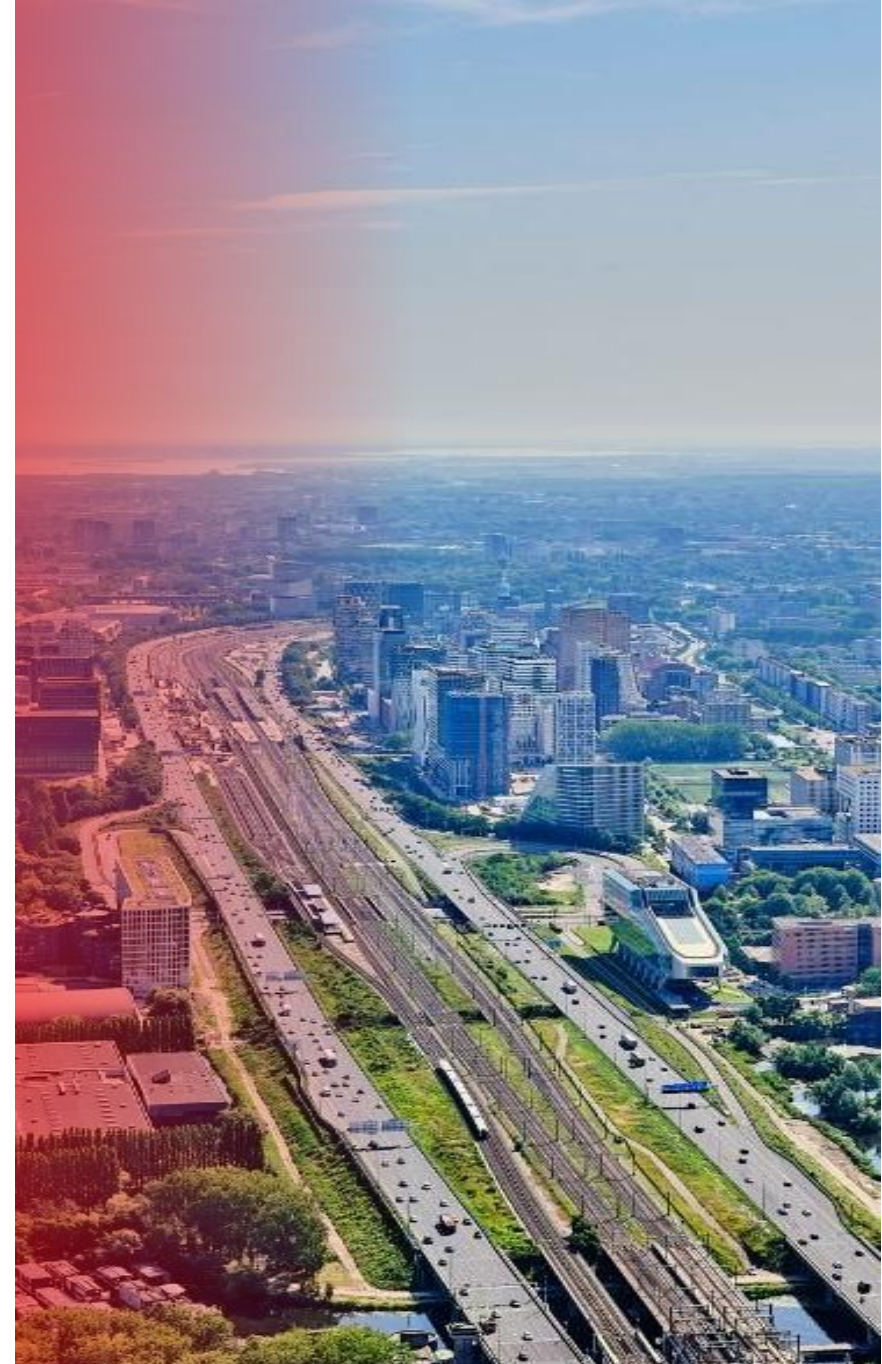


About Amsterdam Economic Board

The regional network where businesses, governments, knowledge institutions and civic organisations in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area collaborate on a future-proof economy. For the region, and in doing so, for the Netherlands and Europe.

Our mission

Working from a shared agenda in public-private coalitions towards sustainable earning capacity, resilience and broad prosperity.



Our network



Programme

- Introduction & recap session 1 – 3 - Bart Krull, Amsterdam Economic Board
- The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem – Jorn Eiting van Liempt, ROM InWest
- Introduction Gritd Framework – Stephan Botz, Gritd
- Plenary session: mapping the ecosystem
- Break*
- Parallel working sessions
- Closing remarks – Margrethe Jonkman, Vrije Universiteit
- Networking & Drinks

Recap sessions 1 -3

Session 1 – Ecosystem

How do we better support startups?

Startup success is regionally determined Access to customers, talent, capital and networks are the decisive factors — all rooted in the regional ecosystem.

No shared language between support organisations Only when success and progress are defined consistently can guidance truly contribute to scalability.

Amsterdam has talent — but collaboration falls short Regional boundaries sometimes act as unintended barriers. Better alignment is needed. (central government; other regions)

Ambition as a cheat code Bold, ambitious plans attract talent, capital and attention. Thinking big has challenges — but a far greater upside.

Market validation and international focus are essential Startups that stay local for too long fall behind their international competitors.



Session 2 – Financing

Capital as a means, not an end

Redefining success Not capital raised, but customers, recurring revenue and a sustainable business model. Capital is a means, not an end.

Traction counts most Paying customers and willingness to renew are the strongest risk reducers for investors — more than prior funding rounds.

Structural funding gap: €10–50M Too-small rounds, too few large funds, and over-reliance on foreign investors — especially in deep tech.

Pension funds and family offices are slowly moving Governance mismatches make direct VC participation complex. Fund structures offer more promise.

The difference with the US is mindset The willingness to think big, take risks and act ambitiously at scale is largely absent in Europe.



Session 3 – Collaboration & Procurement

From pilot to ecosystem

From one-to-one to ecosystem venturing Societal challenges require multiple corporates and startups to work together in consortia.

Three success factors Define the problem clearly, create space to experiment, and build long-term relationships.

More than half of collaborations fail Root cause: mismatches in timelines (startups: months; corporates: years), incentives and governance.

Startups as partners, not suppliers Corporates must stay involved beyond the pilot phase to help innovations actually land.

End users are too often forgotten Without their buy-in, every pilot stalls — however well-intentioned.



Common Thread – Customer over Capital

Customer over capital

Traction and paying customers are the strongest signals For investors and for collaboration alike — more than capital raised or pilots completed.

Paying customers **Betalende klanten en bereidheid om te verlengen** Dit zijn de sterkste risicoreductoren voor investeerders en voor samenwerking.

Succes herdefiniëren Niet opgehaald kapitaal, maar klanten en herhaalbare omzet zijn de echte maatstaf.

Market validation before scaling Startups that validate with real paying customers grow stronger and more sustainably.

The ecosystem should celebrate revenue, not just funding rounds
A startup with loyal customers is stronger than one with press



Common Thread – Think Bigger

Think bigger

- **Ambition is a prerequisite, not a luxury** The ecosystem should encourage bold plans, not discourage them.
- **Thinking big is a cheat code** Large ambitions attract talent, investors and press — the problems you face are the same, but the upside is far greater.
- **Go to work in the US or a large market first** Experience in scale gives founders a different frame of reference.
- **We need a Dutch DARPA** Government-led moonshot challenges can reshape entire industries and train a generation to think bigger.
- **The ecosystem must model big thinking** Support organisations should push startups toward international ambition, not local comfort.



Common Thread – System over Organisation

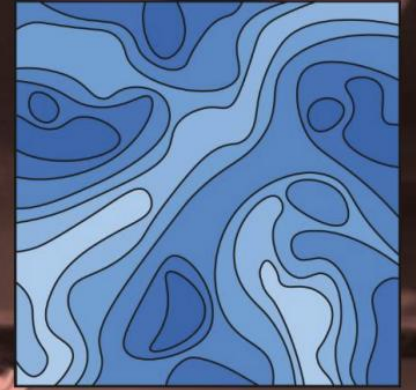
System over organisation

- **From isolated initiatives to coherence** As an ecosystem, we need to connect better, align and learn from each other.
- **A shared language is missing** Without common metrics and definitions, support organisations cannot align or measure impact.
- **The Gritd framework offers a way forward** A practical tool to map where startups are, what support they need, and where the gaps are.
- **More coherence, less overlap** Better alignment between startups, support organisations and investors leads to more effective guidance.
- **The ecosystem is us** Every organisation in this room is part of the solution — and part of the responsibility.



Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Index 2026

Tien jaar inzicht in regionale ecosystemen



ENTREPRENEURIAL
ECOSYSTEM
OBSERVATORY

Auteurs:

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Bram Schoenmakers MSc (bram.schoenmakers@birch.nl)

18 juni 2026



Utrecht University

School of Economics



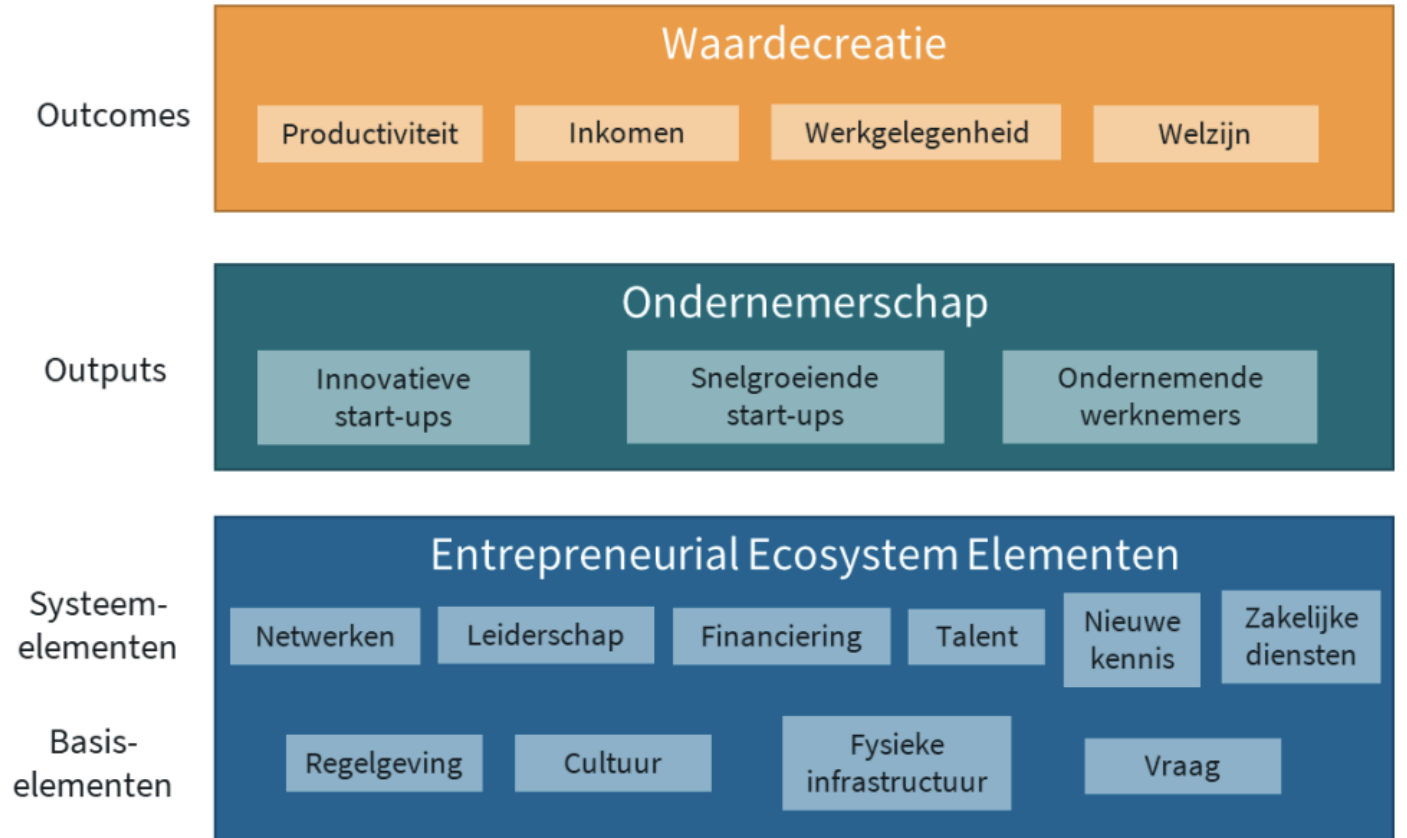
Inhoud

- Entrepreneurial Ecosystems – Eric Stam
- NL Ranglijst & Amsterdam
- Bijna alles bovengemiddeld
- Details van Amsterdam

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

- Economie = complex systeem van actoren en factoren dat ondernemerschap mogelijk maakt.
- Ondernemerschap = proces waarbij individuen kansen zien en realiseren om nieuwe waarde te creëren.
- Kracht 'ecosysteem' bepaald of dat lukt.
- Ecosysteem voor ondernemerschap = 10 elementen (Stam, E & Van de Ven; 2021)

Schematische weergave van alle relevante variabelen in een ecosysteem voor ondernemerschap



NL Ranglijst & Amsterdam

- Weinig beweging in Top 10
- Verschuivingen bij de rest
- Afstand Brainport groter

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Index ranglijst: stadsregio's naar sterkte van ecosysteem voor ondernemerschap; 2026

1. (-) Delft en Westland	21. (-) Noord-Limburg
2. (-) Zuidoost-Noord-Brabant	22. (↑1) West-Noord-Brabant
3. (↑1) Groot-Amsterdam	23. (↑1) Kop van Noord-Holland
4. (↓1) Aggl. Leiden en Bollenstreek	24. (↑5) Midden-Limburg
5. (-) Overig Groningen	25. (↓3) Zuidoost-Zuid-Holland
6. (↑1) Utrecht	26. (-) Flevoland
7. (↑1) Twente	27. (↑1) Zuidwest-Gelderland
8. (↓2) Veluwe	28. (↓3) Oost-Zuid-Holland
9. (-) Arnhem/Nijmegen	29. (↓2) Achterhoek
10. (-) Agglomeratie 's-Gravenhage	30. (↑1) Noord-Overijssel
11. (-) Zuid-Limburg	31. (↑6) Overig Zeeland
12. (-) Het Gooi en Vechtstreek	32. (-) Delfzijl en omgeving
13. (-) Agglomeratie Haarlem	33. (↓3) Zuidoost-Friesland
14. (-) Groot-Rijnmond	34. (↓1) Zuidwest-Friesland
15. (↑4) Alkmaar en omgeving	35. (↑5) Zeeuws-Vlaanderen
16. (↓1) Zuidwest-Overijssel	36. (↓1) Zuidwest-Drenthe
17. (↓1) Noordoost-Noord-Brabant	37. (↓1) Noord-Drenthe
18. (↓1) IJmond	38. (↑1) Oost-Groningen
19. (↑1) Midden-Noord-Brabant	39. (↓5) Noord-Friesland
20. (↓2) Zaanstreek	40. (↓2) Zuidoost-Drenthe

Bijna alles bovengemiddeld

Behalve....

Ondersteuning vanuit Overheidsinstanties, zoals

- Lokale wet en regelgeving
- Inkoop vanuit overheden
- Dit is ook een 'houding' tov van

Beschikbaarheid van kennis, zoals

- Kennisinstellingen
- Opleidingsinstututen
- Kenniswerkers

Scores van EE-Index-elementen voor stadsregio's Amsterdam & Brainport

Element	Groot-Amsterdam	Δ	Zuidoost-Noord-Brabant	Δ
Leiderschap	1,48	0,05	1,83	0,15
Netwerken	1,57	0,05	2,02	0,12
Cultuur	1,71	0,02	0,94	0,03
Instituties	0,97	0,00	1,00	0,00
Diensten	1,14	-0,01	0,99	0,00
Infrastructuur	1,14	0,00	0,92	0,00
Vraag	1,90	0,00	1,24	0,01
Talent	1,25	-0,01	1,02	-0,01
Financiering	1,37	0,10	0,95	-0,03
Kennis	0,96	0,05	3,48	0,10
Totale Score	13,51	0,23	14,40	0,39
Regio ranking	3 ^e van 40		2 ^e van 40	

Noot: delta is gebaseerd op de verandering tussen de metingen van 2025 en 2026.

Hoe nu verder?

Versterking iondersteuning vanuit Overheidsinstanties:

- **Lokale wet en regelgeving** → regeldruk verminderen, vergunningen versoepelen, en???
- **Inkoop vanuit overheden** → tender processen vereenvoudigen? Lokale aanpak tov EU tender regels?
- Dit is ook een '**houding**' tov van → zet ondernemerschap op een voetstuk, geld 'verdienen' is voorwaardelijk

Beschikbaarheid van kennis:

- **Kennisinstellingen** → betere aansluiting op hoofdthemas, aanbod verduidelijken & aansluiten op behoeften, internationale studenten aantrekken tbv behoud positie
- **Opleidingsinstituten** → aanbod versterken? Aansluiting buitengebied Groot Amsterdam?
- **Kenniswerkers** → langer doorwerken bestaande kenniswerkers? Bonus/waardering bestaande kenniswerkers? Open staan voor buitenlandse kenniswerkers?

Stephan Botz

Gritd

AMSTERDAM ECONOMIC BOARD · 2025

Decoding Startup Growth

What 3.500+ startups reveal about the path from startup to to scale-up.



AGENDA

01 StartupFramework©

02 Metrics

03 Venture development

About Gritd.

We offer a framework to measure, structure and improve venture development.

Measurable outcomes

3500+

Assessed ventures

1220+

Supported ventures

523+

Venture Developers trained



Supported Ventures

Everything we do is focused on accelerating the journey from startup to scale-up

From SaaS, to deeptech, to climatetech and beyond.

		<small>Use Water Twice</small> 					
				 <small>Insect Inspired Innovations</small>			 <small>DE ONLINE LICHTSPECIALIST</small>
	 <small>SAVE TIME. SAVE WATER.</small>						
						 <small>on with silicon</small>	
		 <small>The algae creators</small>					 <small>RESOURCES THROUGH INNOVATION</small>

STARTUP

FRAMEWORK

DIAGNOSTIC

 gritd

STARTUP INSIGHTS

Built on the largest
startup dataset in the country

3.500+

UNIQUE COMPANIES

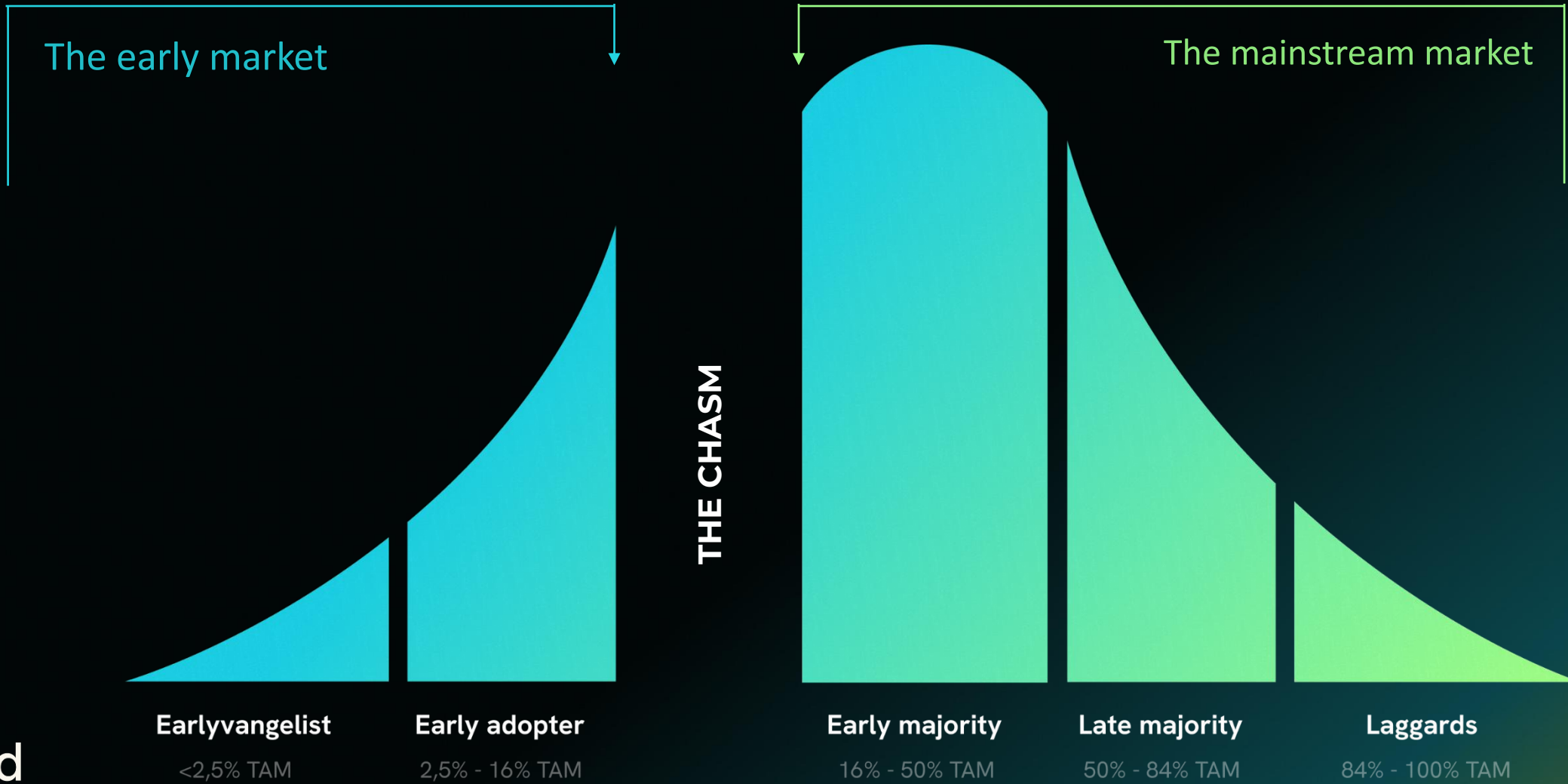
250.000+

DATAPPOINTS

Validated with leading research



Adoption Model



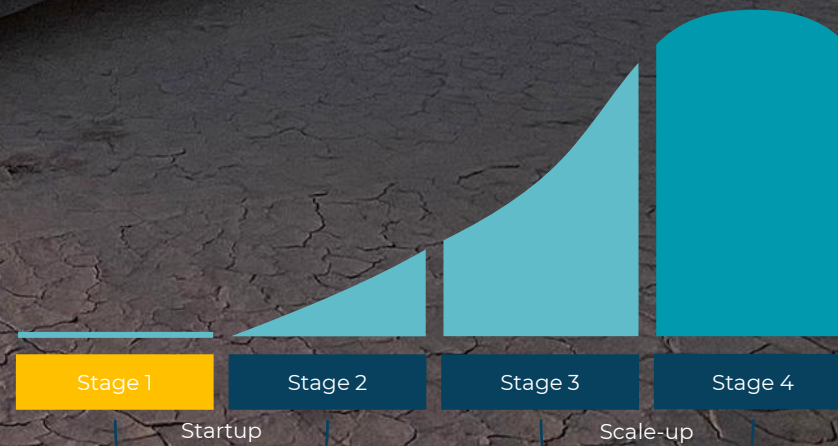
The four stages of customer development



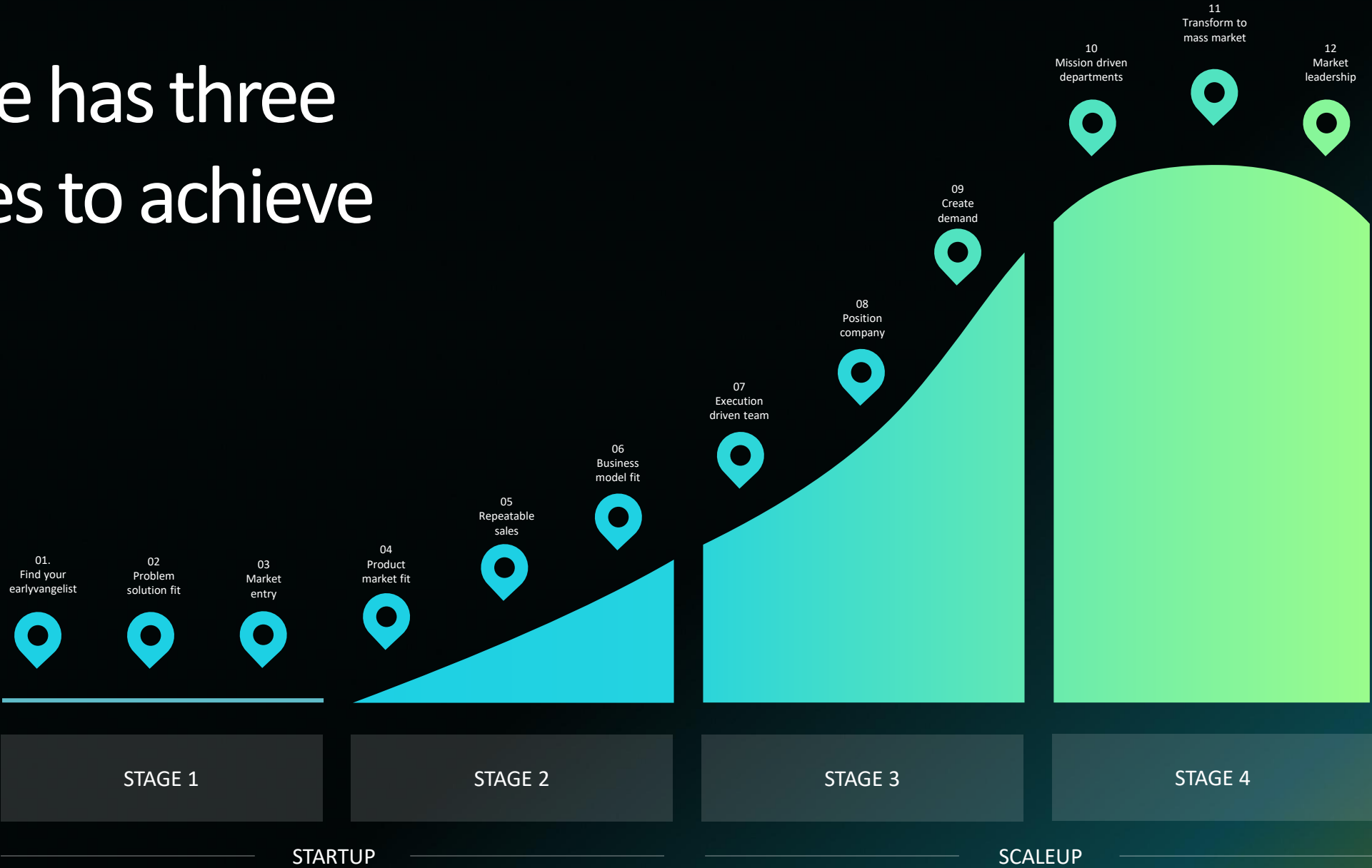
2022

FROM STARTUP TO SCALE-UP

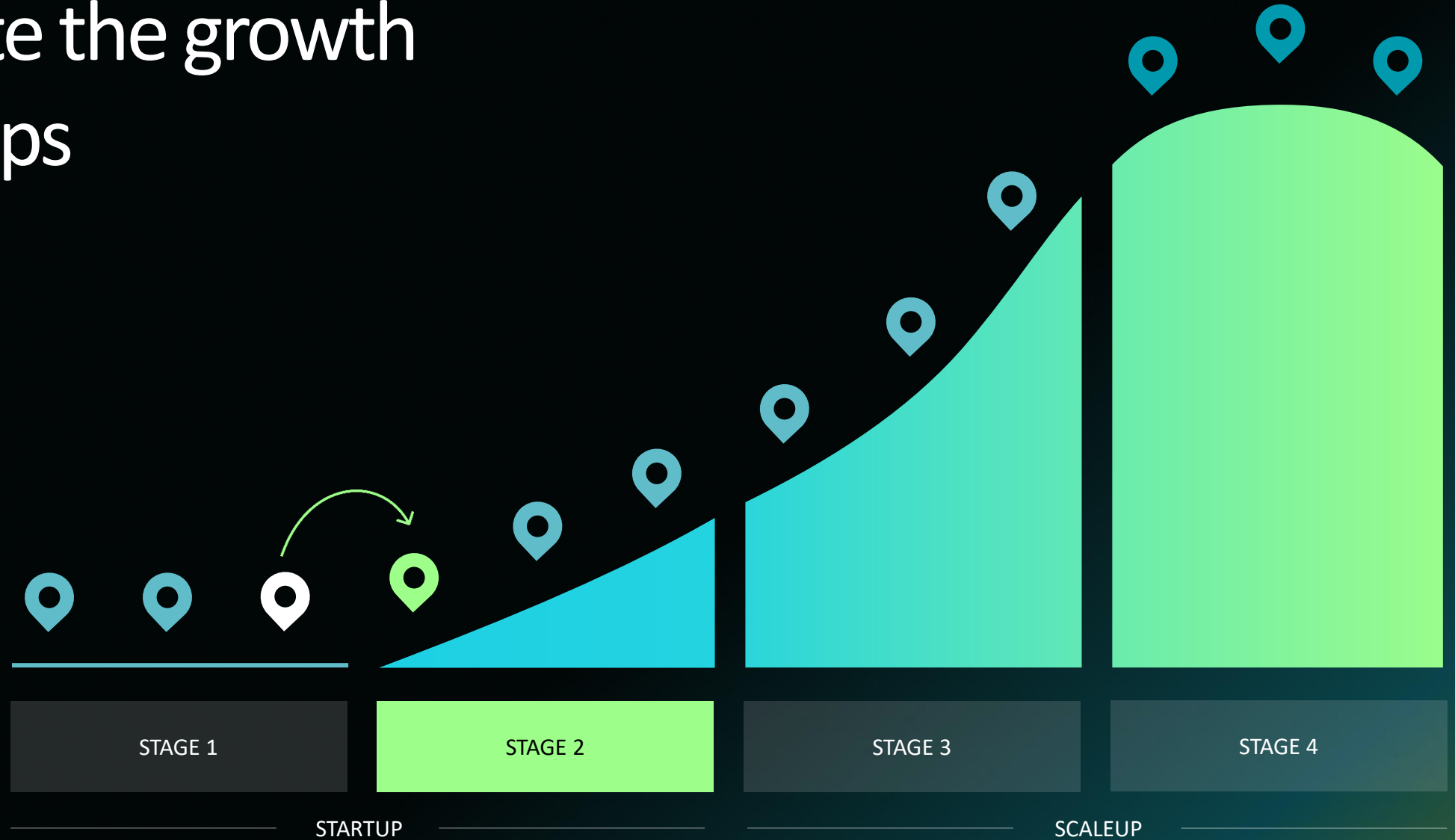
Built to **scale**



Each stage has three milestones to achieve



Accelerate the growth of start-ups



PREMATURE SCALING

WHY STARTUPS FAIL

PREMATURE SCALING IS THE MAIN REASON WHY 90% OF ALL STARTUPS FAIL

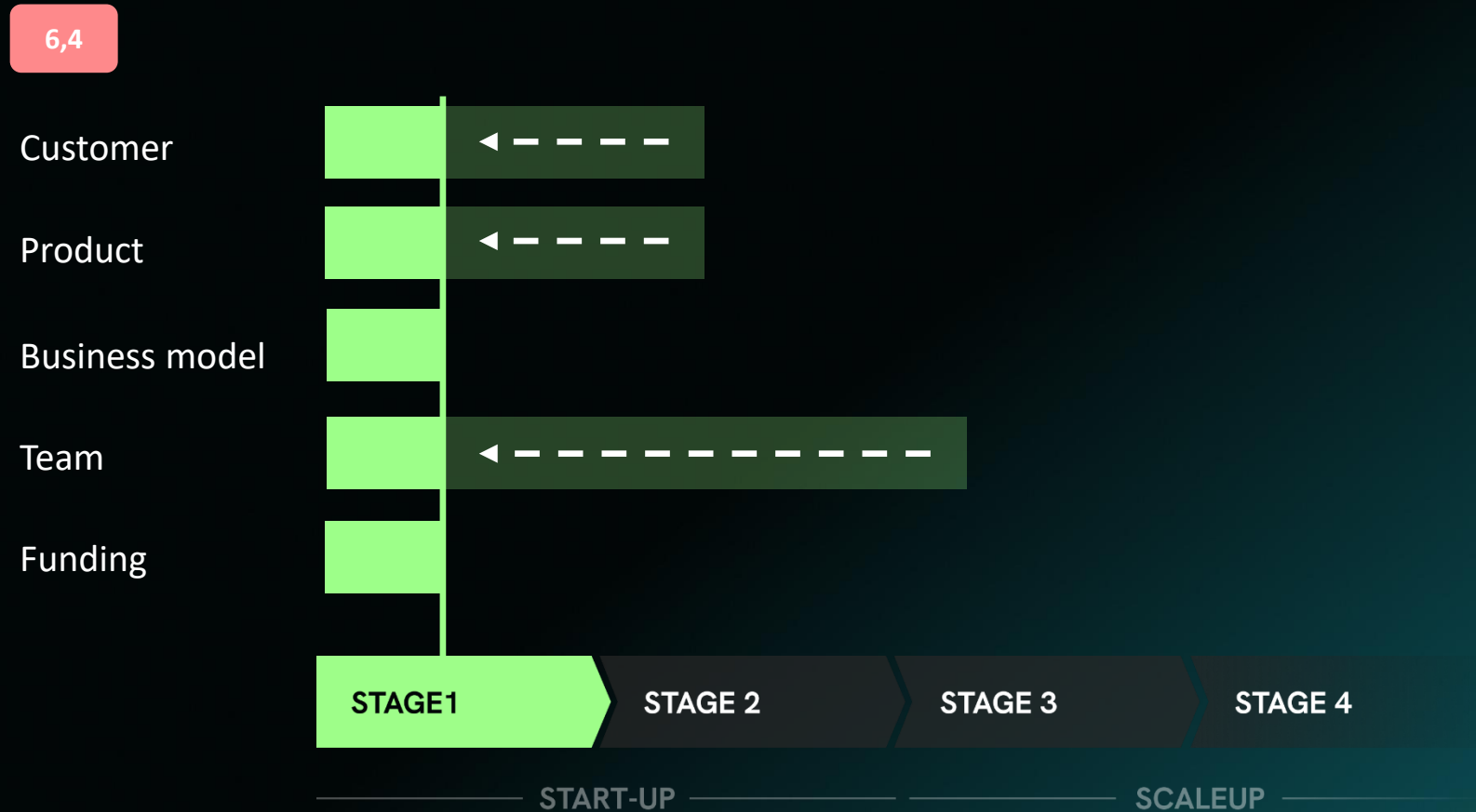
Marmer, M, et al., (2011). Startup Genome Report Extra: Premature Scaling.

Consistent Behaviour



Goal = Create focus

- Subtitle here

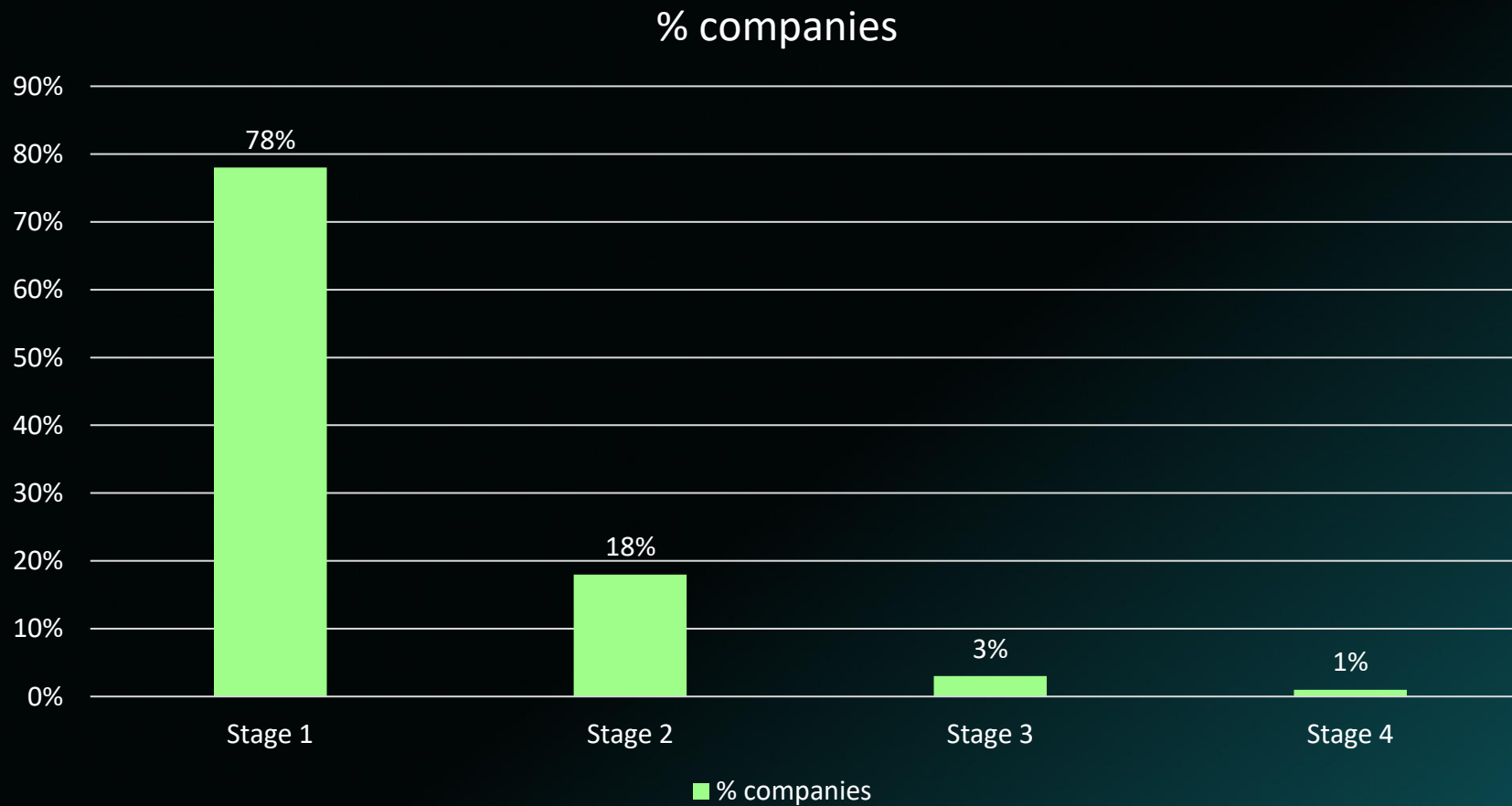


STATE OF DUTCH STARTUPS

Insights 3,000+ startups

INSIGHT #1

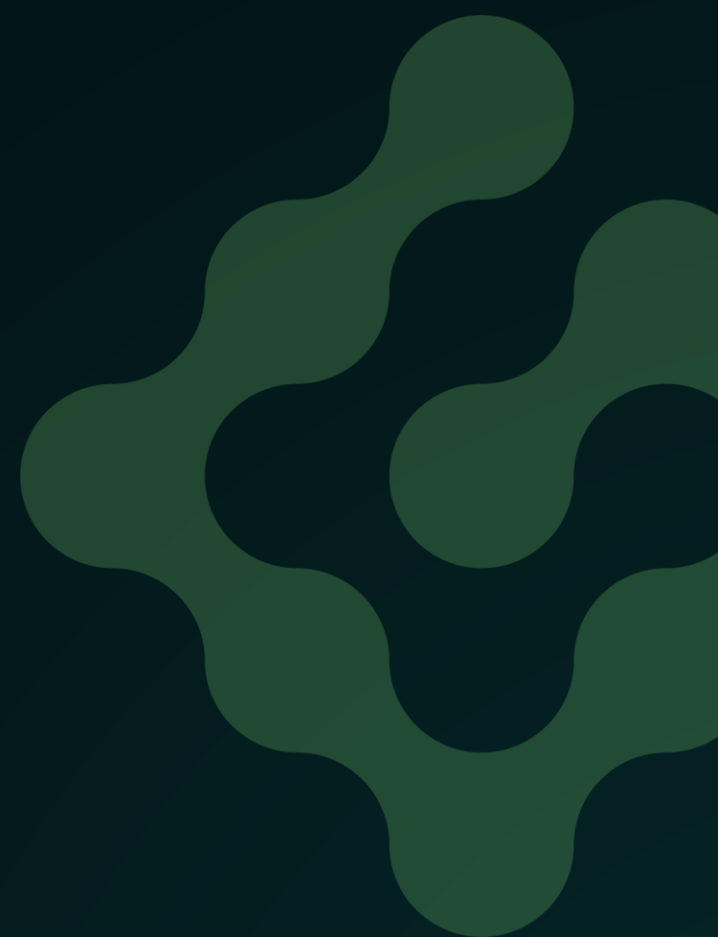
Companies **struggle** to grow from startup to scaleup



INSIGHT #2

95%

of Dutch start-ups **scale prematurely**



INSIGHT #3

92%

seek investment to
finance premature scaling

INSIGHT #4

83%

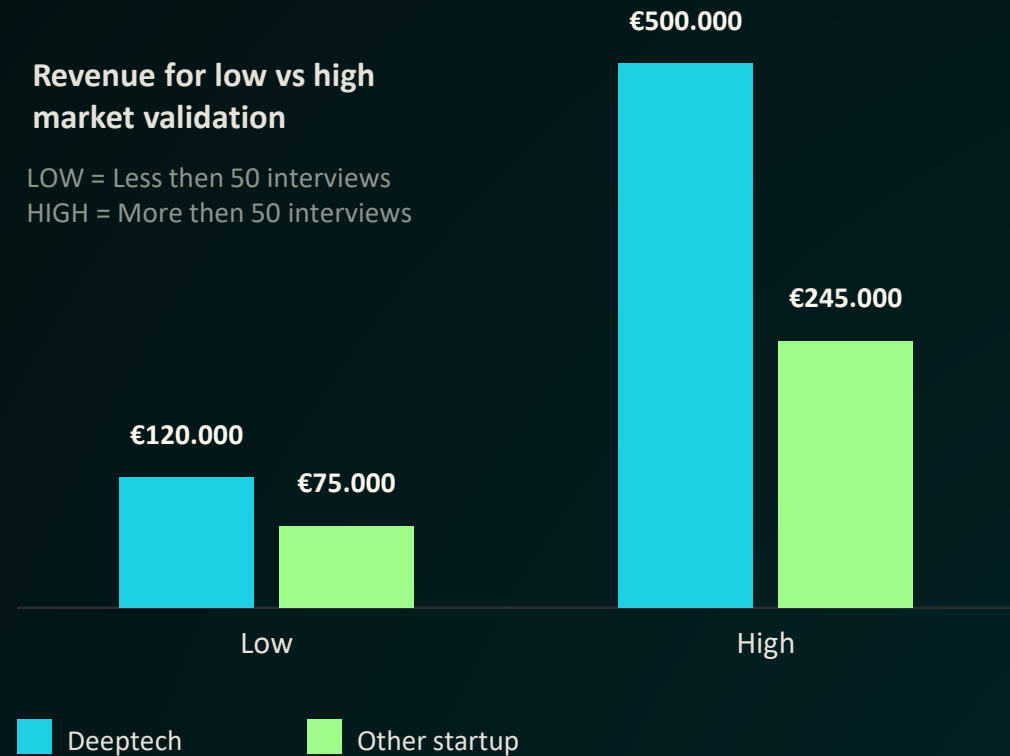
of stage 2 companies do
not yet have product-market fit



INSIGHT #5

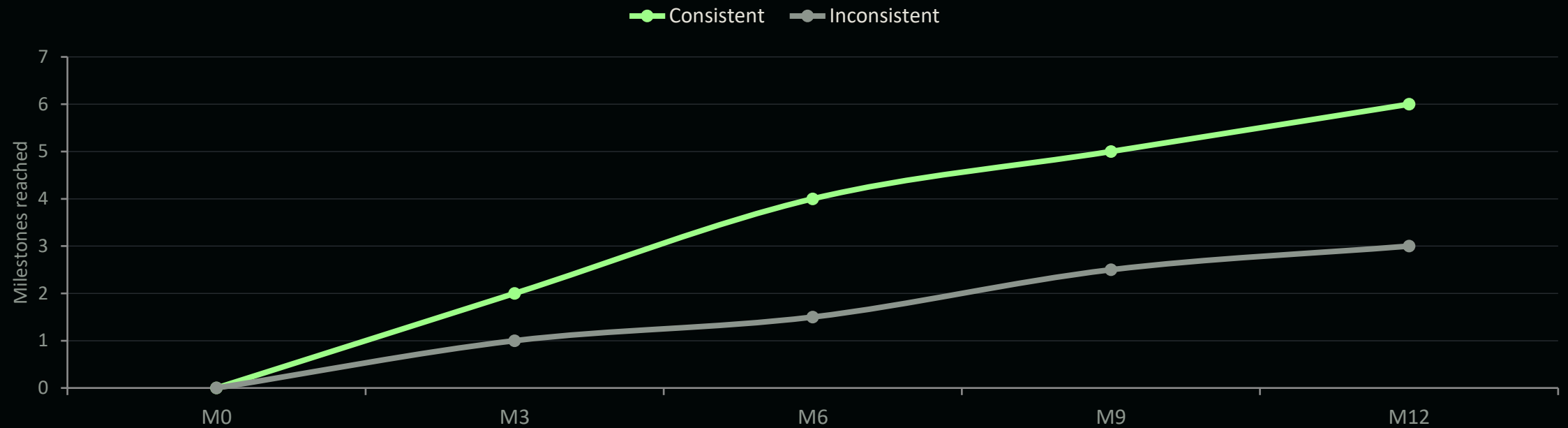
More interviews before market, **more revenue**

Dutch startups that conduct more than 50 customer interviews before they enter the market generate more revenue than startups that conduct fewer than 50 interviews pre-market.



INSIGHT #6

Startups that scale consistently reach **stage 1** faster



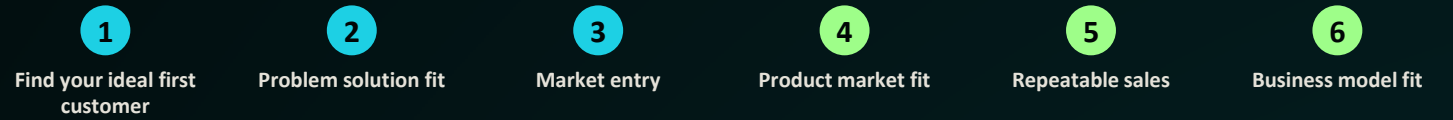
03 · THE PROOF

Venture Development

Insights from our acceleration programs



Milestone progression



9x Measured startups

5x Progressed milestones

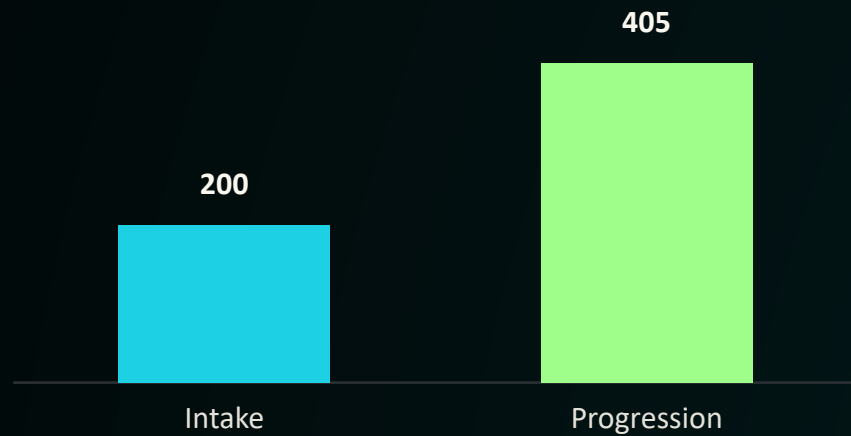
IN-PROGRAM IMPACT

Customer development

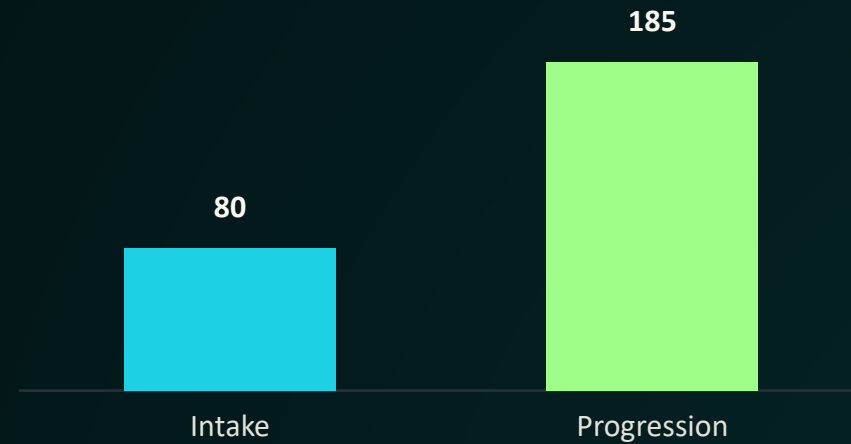
Within the program there is a huge increase in client interviews to validate the client problem. Companies made approximately **2x more** client interviews to validate the problem.

Within the program there is an increase in customer interviews to validate the solution. The cohort made **2.2x more** customer calls to validate the solution.

Client interviews

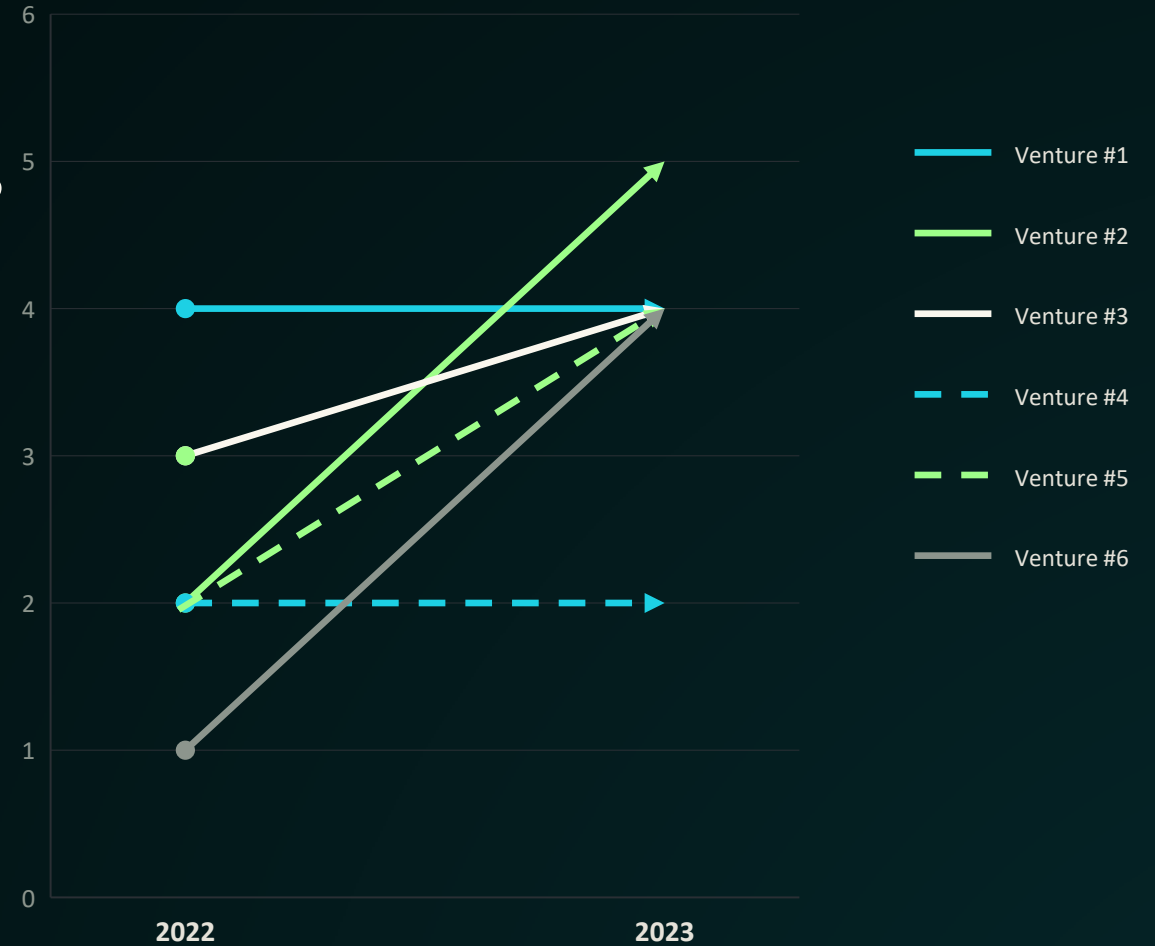


Customer calls



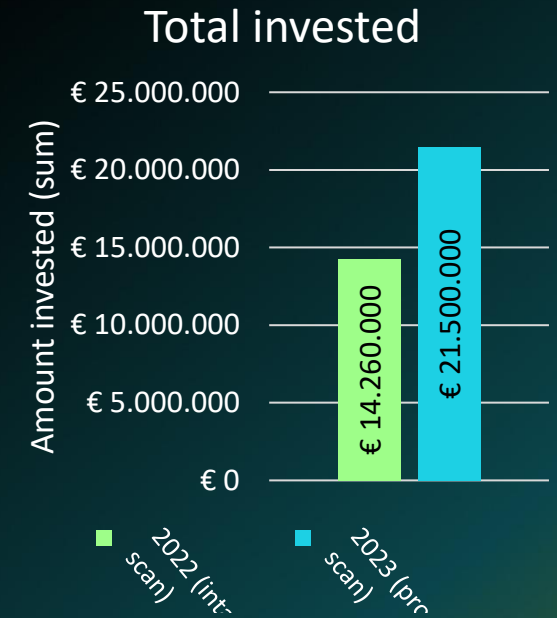
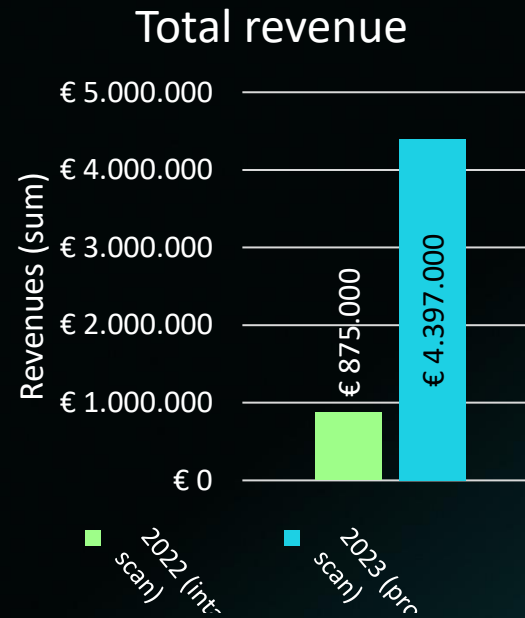
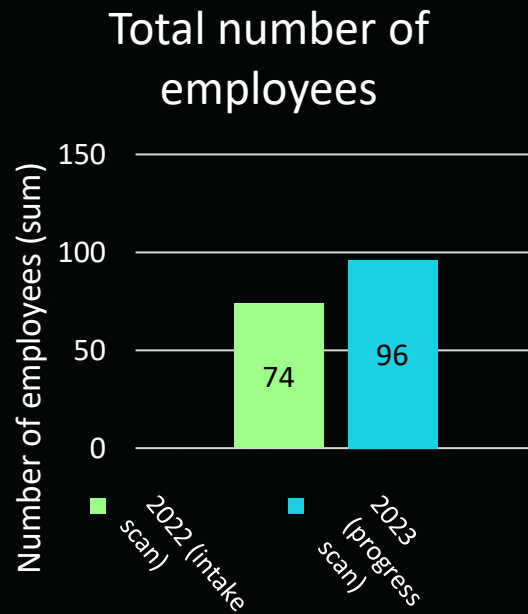
Venture support has a **positive impact** on the progress in milestones

Next milestone



Progress in milestones drives growth of employees, revenue and funding

Fastlane impact cohort #2



THANK YOU · AMSTERDAM ECONOMIC BOARD 2025

Let's decode your growth

gritd.nl

Stephan@gritd.nl

 gritd

DECODING STARTUP GROWTH

Working sessions

Learn & Share – Scaling up Startups

Working sessions

- **Financing** — how do we close the scale-up funding gap in the Amsterdam region? Hosted by ROM InWest/Jorn – **Spectrum 5**
- **Procurement & demand** — how do we build structural procurement pathways that help startups become sustainable suppliers? Hosted by AMS Institute/Ioannis – **Spectrum 1**
- **Ecosystem collaboration** — how do we turn fragmented initiatives into lasting, structural cooperation? Hosted by Gemeente Amsterdam/Joel en Stephan – **Spectrum 2**

Enjoy the working sessions

16:45 – Back for plenary discussion

Each stage has three milestones to achieve

Workshop sheet: note your actions and contributions for each stage.

1 Find your earlyvangelist

2 Problem solution fit

3 Market entry

4 Product market fit

5 Repeatable sales

6 Business model fit

7 Execution driven team

8 Position company

9 Create demand

10 Mission driven teams

11 Transform to mass market

12 Market leadership

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

Startup

Scale-up

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

Welcome back!

Learn & Share – Scaling up Startups

Working sessions

- **Financing** — how do we close the scale-up funding gap (€10–50M) in the Amsterdam region? Hosted by ROM InWest/Jorn
- **Procurement & demand** — how do we build structural procurement pathways that help startups become sustainable suppliers? Hosted by AMS Institute/Ionannis
- **Ecosystem collaboration** — how do we turn fragmented initiatives into lasting, structural cooperation? Hosted by Gemeente Amsterdam/Joel en Stephan

The way forward

Upcoming events & Other initiatives

Word digitaal weerbaar

1 juli @ CRLC Park, Marineterrein Amsterdam

Word Digitaal Weerbaar

Digitale autonomie voor de Amsterdamse regio

More info and registration at:
<https://www.worddigitaalweerbaar.nl/>

LSH Capital Match

5 november, 12:30 - 17:30 uur

Does your scale-up or start-up in the Life Sciences & Health sector need a financial boost? Are you a researcher looking to start a company? Or are you an investor hoping to connect with promising innovators? Then join the LSH Capital Match event.

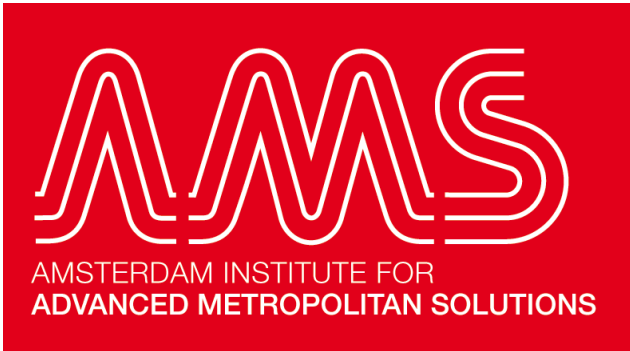
Registration? Get in touch with Gerty Holla
g.holla@amecboard.com

Margrethe Jonkman

President Vrije Universiteit



A co-creation by



- ✘ Gemeente
- ✘ Amsterdam
- ✘



Thank you for joining!