

Incubation Program

2026/27





The idea: in 6 months, you launch

BIRD's Incubation Program is for early-stage founders. Most teams join without a live product, and that's the point.

You know how to build. What you don't know yet is everything else. How to sell it. How to price it. Who to even ask. That's normal, and it's exactly what BIRD is for.

Mentors who've done this before. A community of founders building next to you. A clear path forward instead of guessing. Six months in, you launch.

You come in with an MVP, or come to build one. Six months later, you're live.

"Without BIRD, Unlokie wouldn't be live right now."

— Unlokie, BIRD alumni

How the program works

The first 12 weeks. Four blocks. One question every week.

Block A · Evidence

Weeks 1–3

Does anyone actually want this? You'll talk to actual customers, not just people who are polite to you, and figure out if there's a decision hiding in what they say. Then you'll test demand before you build anything.

Block B · First Value

Weeks 4–6

Can you deliver value and get a yes? You'll cut your idea down to the one thing worth building, sell it yourself to your first customers, put your positioning into one clear sentence, and set a price.

Block C · Investable

Weeks 7–9

Is this fundable and durable? You'll learn the numbers investors check, what makes an AI product defensible, the legal basics, what the EU AI Act means for you, and how to handle co-founder issues before they become a problem.

Block D · Tell the Story

Weeks 10–12

Can you make people care? You'll turn three months of evidence into a pitch, a deck, and a real understanding of how fundraising works.

The Full Calendar

Phase 1 · Sep–Dec 2026 · Zagreb · 2 evenings a week · 6–8 PM · At least 1 team member is required to attend.

Block A · Evidence

Tue Sep 29	Break the Ice (kickoff)	Event · Oliver Linzbauer
Thu Oct 1	Talking to Users	Workshop · Josipa Bauser
Tue Oct 6	Startup Stories #1	Event · Antonio Matušan · Crumbs
Thu Oct 8	Interview Synthesis	Workshop · Josipa Bauser
Tue Oct 13	Testing Demand Without a Product	Workshop · Mak Gračić
Thu Oct 15	Mentor Speed Dating	Event · 20+ mentors, investors

Block B · First Value

Tue Oct 20	Build the Smallest Real Thing	Workshop · Marko Linke
Thu Oct 22	Founder-Led Sales	Workshop · Siniša Lukač
Tue Oct 27	Positioning & Distribution	Workshop · Damir Firšt
Thu Oct 29	Pricing	Workshop · Ivan Bračić
Tue Nov 3	Pitch Rehearsal #1	Event · 5 jury members
Thu Nov 5	Startup Stories #2	Event · Boris Sesar · mStart plus

Block C · Investable

Tue Nov 10	Legal That Matters	Workshop · BDV Law Firm
Thu Nov 12	EU AI Act & Regulatory Reality	Workshop · BDV Law Firm
Tue Nov 17	Know Your Numbers + AI Cost Reality	Workshop · Marijan Bračić
Thu Nov 19	Pitch Rehearsal #2	Event · 5 jury members
Tue Nov 24	AI Defensibility & What to Own	Workshop · Davor Aničić
Thu Nov 26	Co-Founder & Team	Workshop · MEHR

Block D · Tell the Story

Tue Dec 1	How to Pitch	Workshop · Scott Coleman
Thu Dec 3	The Deck	Workshop · Lisa Lines
Tue Dec 8	Fundraising Mechanics	Workshop · NVision · Monika Mikac
Thu Dec 10	Startup Stories #3	Event · TBA Successful Founder
Tue Dec 15	Pitch Rehearsal #3 + December Checkpoint	Event · 5 jury members

Block A · Evidence

Weeks 1-3 · Does anyone actually want this?



Break the Ice (kickoff)

Tue Sep 29 · Event · Oliver Linzbauer

Meet the cohort, set expectations, start week one.



Talking to Users

Thu Oct 1 · Workshop · Josipa Bauser

Run conversations that surface truth, not polite encouragement.



Startup Stories #1

Tue Oct 6 · Event · Antonio Matušan · Crumbs

Unscripted founder talk. The honest version.



Interview Synthesis

Thu Oct 8 · Workshop · Josipa Bauser

Turn messy notes into patterns and a clear next test.



Testing Demand Without a Product

Tue Oct 13 · Workshop · Mak Gačić

Prove demand with a fake door, landing page, or concierge test.



Mentor Speed Dating

Thu Oct 15 · Event · Event · 20+ mentors, investors

Rapid one-to-one rounds with mentors across functions.

Block B · First Value

Weeks 4-6 · Can you deliver value and get a yes?



Build the Smallest Real Thing

Tue Oct 20 · Workshop · Marko Linke

Scope to the single core value. Decide what to fake vs build.



Founder-Led Sales

Thu Oct 22 · Workshop · Siniša Lukač

Get first customers by hand. No funnel, just conversations.



Positioning & Distribution

Tue Oct 27 · Workshop · Damir Firšt

Say what you do in one sentence. Pick one distribution channel.



Pricing

Thu Oct 29 · Workshop · Ivan Bračić

Set a real price. Understand AI pricing models.



Pitch Rehearsal #1

Tue Nov 3 · Event · 5 jury members

Three-minute pitch practice with structured feedback.



Startup Stories #2

Thu Nov 5 · Event · Boris Sesar · mStart plus, Gamepires

Another founder, another honest story.

Block C · Investable

Weeks 7-9 · Is this fundable and durable?



Legal That Matters

Tue Nov 10 · Workshop · BDV

Incorporation, cross-border flip, shareholders' agreement basics.



EU AI Act & Regulatory Reality

Thu Nov 12 · Workshop · BDV

What actually applies to an early AI product and what bites.



Know Your Numbers + AI Cost Reality

Tue Nov 17 · Workshop · Marijan Bracic

The metrics that matter. Sanity-check your AI cost structure.



Pitch Rehearsal #2

Thu Nov 19 · Format · 5 jury members

Second round. Sharper pitches, harder questions.



AI Defensibility & What to Own

Tue Nov 24 · Workshop · Davor Anicic

What do you own when the model is someone else's?



Co-Founder & Team

Thu Nov 26 · Workshop · MEHR

Equity, vesting, role conversations before they blow up.

Block D · Tell the Story

Weeks 10–12 · Can you make people care?



How to Pitch

Tue Dec 1 · Workshop · Scott Coleman

Tell the story so an investor leans in. Evidence-led, no jargon.



The Deck

Thu Dec 3 · Workshop · Lisa Lines

Hands-on clinic on each team's actual deck.



Fundraising Mechanics

Tue Dec 8 · Workshop · NVision · Monika Mikac

SAFEs, convertibles, term sheets, dilution. Before you need them.



Startup Stories #3

Thu Dec 10 · Event · TBA Successful Founder

Third founder story. Still unscripted, still honest.



Pitch Rehearsal #3 + December Checkpoint

Tue Dec 15 · Event · 5 jury members

Final rehearsal. Internal review closing Phase 1.

What comes after

Phase 1 isn't the whole program. It's the foundation.

Phase 2 · Jan–Apr 2027

After the winter break, Phase 2 consists of events (one Startup Story and one pitch rehearsal per month), monthly calls with the BIRD team, and meetings with any mentors you'd like us to connect you with. No new curriculum, just execution.

Teams set their own goals. The structure is lighter, but the expectations are higher.

Demo Day · April 2027

The finale of the six-month programme and your time to present what you've built to the jury, investors, mentors, other startup ecosystem stakeholders and the wider community.

Each startup delivers a three-minute pitch in English, followed by a five-minute Q&A with the jury. No more rehearsals, just showtime.

End of Sep 2026 ——— Phase 1 ——— Jan 2027 ——— Phase 2 ——— Demo Day Apr 2027

Selection Process & Important Dates



Apply

Fill out the application form and upload your pitch deck.

Deadline: September 18, 00:00



We reach out

If you're shortlisted, BIRD emails you a Calendly link. Pick a 30-minute interview slot.



Interview

Interviews run September 21–24.



Decision

We email you by September 25 to let you know if you're in.



Program starts

September 29.



Your six months to launch start here.

Applications are open.

Apply now



Got questions? Email us at info@bird-incubator.com



bird-incubator.com