

## Tech startups showcased at entrepreneurship competition in Istanbul

- Final “Demo Day” of EFSE and Technolera acceleration program announces 15 graduating startups
- Cash and mentorship prizes awarded in various impact and business categories

On 16 October 2019, fifteen startups took the stage at Maslak Orjin Plaza in Istanbul to pitch their tech innovations for the chance to win prizes to accelerate their businesses.

This “Demo Day” was the second and final pitching competition in the Ventourage Diversity Social Impact Driven Entrepreneurship Program, which aims to support social startups in the region. The program is an initiative of venture building organisation Technolera together with the Development Facility of the European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE DF).

The Demo Day drew around 200 attendees from venture capital organisations, angel investors, corporations, academies, and more. Mr Şerdil Dara Odabaşı, Mayor of Kadıköy – one of Istanbul’s largest districts – opened the event with an address showing his support for using innovative solutions to address business problems. Also welcoming the audience were Marianne Sulzer of the EFSE DF; Professor Cem Avcı of Bosphorus University; and Aylin Lim, Manager of Technolera.



Cash prizes of TL 10,000 each were granted to three of the participating startups to help them launch and grow their businesses overseas.

- In the Most Scalable Business Model category, **ULAK** won for its economical approach to supporting last-mile delivery needs. Specifically, the company has developed an Uber-like platform that allows MSEs to obtain cost-effective delivery and pick-up services, thereby creating income opportunities for couriers.
- Recognized as generating the best Environmental Impact was **Urban Agricult**, a startup driving urban agritech and vertical farming of fresh fruits and vegetables in Istanbul, thereby using empty spaces in the city.
- The award for Most Innovative Business Model went to **Popilight**, an innovative startup that has developed a technology to synchronize mobile phones for an event, be this at a concert

(e.g., synchronised motion pictures) or for mobilising a community (e.g., synchronised messaging).

In addition, three further innovative startups – Livsquare, Panki, and Artificaid – received prizes for mentoring support with 4K Ventures, Technolera’s stakeholder venture capital company in the Netherlands, for scaling up their businesses worldwide.

Markus Aschendorf, Chairperson of the EFSE Development Facility, remarked: “We at the EFSE DF would like to offer heartfelt congratulations to these innovative and hardworking entrepreneurs, whose projects all strive to push the boundaries of what is possible for tech. At its core, EFSE is about promoting an environment where entrepreneurs can thrive; and by working together with impactful organisations like Technolera, we can help provide these businesses the resources they need to launch successful, sustainable enterprises.”

Omur Filiz, Founder and CEO of Technolera, remarked: “With this entrepreneurship program, we aimed to reach hidden talents and democratize entrepreneurship. We’re proud to have achieved our initial goal; our next goal will be continuing our support for the 15 innovative startups that kicked off with this program and also to share our experience in venture building and program management with similar institutions in nearby regions.”