



Міністерство
цифрової трансформації
України



startupgrind
KYIV, UA



Western NIS
Enterprise Fund



Eight innovative companies will get a chance to represent Ukraine at SXSW 2023. How to get on the list?

The USAID Competitive Economy Program in Ukraine, Ukrainian Startup Fund, Startup Grind Kyiv, and Western NIS Enterprise Fund, supported by the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine and Innovation Bridge Europe, invite Ukrainian companies to pitch their innovative technologies at the SXSW 2023 international conference in Austin, USA.

SXSW (South by Southwest) is an international conference founded in 1987. Each year, the event holds panels that bring together prominent leaders from all over the world, who discuss the achievements in technology, innovation, culture and other areas. The conference also encompasses music, film and media festivals and conferences, and takes place in mid-March in Austin, Texas, USA. The event is attended by over 70,000 visitors and about 10,000 companies. Among the guests of SXSW you'll see Elon Musk, Barack Obama, Mark Cuban and many others.

This year, eight companies will represent Ukraine. The delegation members will be selected through an open competition that will last until January 30, 2023. The contestants can submit the application through the [Ukrainian Startup Fund](#) website.

Requirements for participants:

1. Own an innovative business: a startup, product or a studio that works with Web 3.0, NFT, Blockchain, AR/VR, XR or other technologies; video production with licensed music, video or special effects; an IT company, creative business or ecosystem platform that supports technological and creative businesses.
2. Present a working product or service.
3. Have an English-speaking company representative.
4. Have a Ukrainian legal entity or a Ukrainian sole proprietorship registered to one of the company's owners.
5. Have a team in Ukraine.
6. Use technologies created in Ukraine or develop products here.
7. Posture the company as "Ukrainian" in the public space.
8. Have solvent customers and a good retention rate or customer acquisition dynamics.
9. Have a plan to attract investments, clients or partners to SXSW 2023.
10. Have a history of attracting investments from well-known business angels or funds.

All applications will be reviewed for compliance with the terms of the contest. Shortlisted contestants will pitch their startups to the jury on February 6, 2023. The organizers will cover the cost of stands and participation in a special networking event where eight winners will meet with corporations and investment funds' representatives.

In 2023, Ukraine will be represented at SXSW for the second time. Last year, due to Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukrainian startups were unable to attend the conference in person. Sustainable women's clothing brand FRAMIORE, eco-friendly toothbrushes Effa, mobile app for light shows FlashBeats, deep3dstudio, a studio for developing photorealistic characters based on 3D body scans, and smartphone insurance service SPOKK were pitched by volunteers.

Participation of the Ukrainian delegation in the SXSW 2023 was made possible with the support of the USAID Competitive Economy Program, and cooperation with the Ukrainian Startup Fund, Startup Grind Kyiv, Western NIS Enterprise Fund, and with support of the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine and Innovation Bridge Europe.

Organizers' comments:

"For the second year in a row, USAID CEP supports Ukrainian companies that have something to surprise the global tech community at SXSW. This year, 8 companies will pitch their most creative developments and innovative solutions at one of the most renowned events in the world. Despite the war-induced challenges, we need to develop talent and create opportunities for Ukrainian companies to scale their business in global markets, as well as to strengthen Ukraine's image as an innovative country," said **Olesia Zaluska, Chief of Party at USAID Competitive Economy Program.**

"Ukraine's participation in such international events strengthens our global position as a country with an innovative way of development. Every time our powerful startup delegation wheels out breakthrough ideas and innovative products that impress the world. This is not only a chance for startups to find new customers, partners, investors and talent, but also a great opportunity for Ukraine to once again attract the much-needed attention of the international community. I believe that the trip to SXSW 2023 will be fruitful for our tech ecosystem and the country as a whole," commented **Pavlo Kartashov, Ukrainian Startup Fund Director.**

"Ukraine's participation in SXSW 2023 is originally a presentation of products and innovations being developed even during the war. It is a signal to the international business community that our companies are competitive, active, and ready for scaling and investment. It also strengthens Ukraine's presence in one of the largest tech and creative ecosystems in the United States, as our first mission to SXSW in 2022 showed a great interest in Ukrainian innovators," said **Kateryna Dehtiar, Startup Grind Kyiv Chapter Director.**

"In context of a full-scale war, Ukraine's participation in the SXSW international conference is seen as a unique opportunity to reinforce support for Ukraine abroad. Ukrainian innovative entrepreneurs and artists who keep on supporting the country on its path to victory reflect our country's resilience in the world," said **Vitalii Bihday, WNISEF Export Promotion Program Manager.**

For more information, please contact h.zenn@startupgrind.com.

Info:

***The USAID Competitive Economy Program in Ukraine (CEP)** helps startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to become more competitive in Ukraine's domestic and international markets, contributes to building a simple and transparent business climate, and enables Ukrainian companies to take advantage of international trade.*

***The Ukrainian Startup Fund (USF)** is a state fund launched at the initiative of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. The fund's mission is to promote the creation and development of early-stage tech startups (pre-seed and seed) in order to increase their global competitiveness. Over the 2 years of USF's work, more than 240 Ukrainian startups at the seed or pre-seed stage have received grant funding, with the total amount exceeding \$6,300,000.*

***Western NIS Enterprise Fund (WNISEF)** is a \$150 million regional fund, a pioneer in Ukraine and Moldova with 28 years of successful experience in investing in small and medium-sized companies. WNISEF was funded by the U.S. government via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Since its inception, WNISEF's cumulative investments total over \$188 million to 136 companies employing around 26,000 people and made it possible to unlock \$2.3 billion for companies in Ukraine and Moldova. In 2015 WNISEF has launched a \$35 million legacy program focused on export promotion, local economic development, impact investing and economic leadership.*

***Startup Grind Kyiv** is the official representative of Startup Grind (a community of about 5 million of the world's best entrepreneurs), which has been holding regular events in Kyiv since 2014. Over the past four years, the directors of the Kyiv branch, Kateryna Dehtiar and Hannah Zenn, have organized more than 30 meetings with experienced entrepreneurs, experts, and VCs. The pool of Startup Grind Kyiv speakers include among others: Ihar Makhaniok, founder of Geek Ventures; Marvin Liao, 500 startups ex-partner; Oleh Malenkov, TAVentures partner; founders of Kabanchik.ua, Delfast, Let's Enhance, RetargetApp, Effa, and others. Startup Grind Kyiv's mission is to educate, connect, and inspire entrepreneurs and innovators.*

***The Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine** is a central executive body responsible for the formation and implementation of state policy in the sector of digitalization and open data. The Ministry is responsible for the development of the IT industry. By launching Diia.City, Ukrainian Tech Ecosystem Overview, Ukrainian Startup Fund, and Ukrainian Fund of Funds projects, the Ministry aims to create a strong startup ecosystem in Ukraine and encourage overseas investments.*

***Innovation Bridge Europe** is an international, inclusive, collaborative network for innovators, founders and creators, as well as other stakeholders focused on Human-Centered Tech and improving our common future.*