# DIGITAL STARTUPS SCALE UP PROGRAM: SHANGHAI

Below is the **Digital Startups Scale Up Program: Shanghai** to be held in Q4 2025 at **KHAN TENGRI INNOVATION HUB** in Shanghai powered by Astana Hub and IT Park Uzbekistan, and developed by Growth Vision Pro.

**The first Acceleration program will be exclusive to 4 startups from Kazakhstan and 4 startups from Uzbekistan after the selection process.**

China's tech market is incredibly attractive and challenging for startups. It's booming across fields like artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, life sciences, deep tech and smart-city innovations - with Chinese cities considered global pioneers in tech adoption. China hosts over 6,100 deep tech startups (the world's second-largest pool) focusing on cutting-edge AI and robotics and it's even outpacing the U.S. in life sciences R&D output. This massive market offers unparalleled opportunities, but entering it alone can be challenging due to cultural, legal, and competitive barriers.

**Digital Startups Scale Up Program: Shanghai (Program)** is an 8-week soft-landing program for technology startups from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan focused on entering the Chinese market. The program combines practical training, structured mentoring support, market deep-dives, direct access to local networking of Chinese investors and corporations, and a year of post-program residency access to Khan Tengri Innovation Hub activities and support. All of these will guide startups in their navigation of China's unique business landscape.

**Why it's unique:**

- Access to China's tech and startup ecosystem with on-the-ground exposure, insights, latest trends and market overviews through Growth Vision Pro, XNode, S-Tron, National Eastern Tech Transfer Center, Technode, and other partners network.
- Opportunity to test the product in China and refine it based on market feedback.
- Develop startup roadmap for entering the Chinese market.

The program consist of a 2-staged selection process, program phase, Demo Day, and post-program support phases. Selection process is designed as a test of startup investor readiness. This will help to identify startups that have strong foundations and are mature enough to compete in China's fast-paced arena.

**Investor Readiness Test link and Application link: https://scaleup.khantengrihub.com/**

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## Digital Startups Scale Up Program Plan

| Time | Description | Phase |
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| **September 15-25** | Acceleration Program application and selection period. | |
| **September 25–30** | Due diligence and final selection of winners.<br><br>**Requirements for startups:**<br><br>**Proven Traction in Home Market -** demonstrated customer base, revenue growth, or strong user engagement within Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan.<br><br>**High-Quality Pitch Deck in English -** clearly presenting the business model, traction, financials, and China market entry strategy.<br><br>**Completion of Due Diligence & Risk Analysis -** submission of required corporate, financial, and operational documentation for review.<br><br>**Selection Criteria:**<br><br>**Readiness for International Scaling -** clear evidence that the product/service can expand beyond the local market.<br><br>**China Market Adaptation Potential -** strong fit for Chinese consumer or B2B needs, with a feasible plan for adapting the product, service, and customer experience to local cultural, linguistic, and regulatory requirements.<br><br>**Product Localization Readiness -** ability to translate and adapt product interfaces, marketing materials, and technical specifications for the Chinese market, including integration with local platforms after legal registration of company (e.g., WeChat, Alipay, Douyin). | **Selection & Preparation Phase** |

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| | **Team Capability** - experience, skills, and commitment of the founding team to execute a China market entry strategy. | |
| ● **September 26 - ICT Week Uzbekistan** <br> ● **September 29 – AI Week of Digital Bridge and October 3 Digital Bridge** | Startup showcase in Tashkent and announcement of winners from Uzbekistan in Tashkent during ICT Week on 26 September 2025. <br><br> Startup showcase during AI Week on 29 September 14, 2025, and announcement of winners from Kazakhstan during Digital Bridge 2025 on 3 October 2025. | |
| **October 20–December 14\*** | **8-week Digital Startups Scale Up Program: Shanghai** <br><br> Key components of the program include: <br> ● **2 individual mentoring sessions** (one per month, at least 16 hours in total), covering topics such as fundraising, partnership building, and market entry into China. <br> ● **4 control group sessions** (twice per month, at least 4 hours in total). <br> ● **26 masterclasses, information sessions, meetups, informal talks, webinars, and other forms of training and practice** (at least once a week, at least 43 hours in total). <br> The training topics include: <br> 1. An overview of the Chinese market, <br> 2. Analysis of the venture and startup ecosystem, <br> 3. Legal aspects, <br> 4. Fundraising and scaling strategies, <br> 5. Interaction with corporations, government, and competitors in China, <br> 6. Business validation and localization of the business model, <br> 7. Financial modeling, optimization of business processes for scaling, and others. <br> The list of topics is preliminary and may be adjusted depending on participants' focus. <br> ● Access to the co-working space based on the Khan Tengri Innovation Hub <br> ● Available for participation potential networking events (final list and number of events will be announced later): | **Program Phase** |

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| | <ul><li>Tech G Show 2025, Shanghai (International Robot Exhibition, International Consumer Electronics Show)</li><li>China International Import Expo (CIIE), Shanghai</li><li>China Electronics Fair (CEF), Shanghai</li><li>2025 IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS 2025), Hangzhou</li><li>2025 7th International Conference on Machine Learning, Big Data and Business Intelligence, Hangzhou</li><li>2025 7th International Conference on Robotics, Intelligent control and Artificial Intelligence, Hangzhou</li></ul> | |
| **1-4 weeks:**<br><br>**Oct 20 – Nov 16: Understanding & Positioning** | **China Tech & Market Deep Dive:** Macro view of the economy and priority tech verticals (AI, robotics, biotech, smart city) + how innovation clusters and accelerators work.<br><br>**Ecosystem & Talent Basics**: Mapping the VC/startup landscape, understanding business culture, and practical ways to build a local team.<br><br>**Scale-Up Readiness**: Quick audit of your internal processes for scale; tune your model and operations for China's pace.<br><br>**Compliance & Setup Pathways**: What to know about legal, IP, contracts, and incorporation options so you don't step on landmines.<br><br>**Funding Preparation**: Negotiation fundamentals, investor expectations in China, and "China-style" pitch storytelling.<br><br>**Financial & DD Prep**: Tighten your unit economics and create a clean data room so diligence moves fast. | **Program Phase** |

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| | **Partnership Playbook**: How to open doors with Chinese corporates and convert interest into pilots.<br><br>**Mentor Work & Milestones**: Weekly 1:1s, group check-ins, and an internal pitch scrimmage to cap Month 1.<br><br>**End-of-Month Outcome:** Clear China entry thesis, refined pitch deck, DD checklist started, and first partner/investor targets identified. | |
| **5-8 weeks:**<br><br>**Nov 17 – Dec 14: Execution, Validation & Investor Access** | **Policy & Corporate Navigation:** Practical ways to work with government priorities and enterprise buyers; etiquette that accelerates deals.<br><br>**Investor Relations Engine:** IR roadmap, pipeline building, outreach cadence, and Q&A readiness for China-based funds.<br><br>**Localization & Market Validation:** Adapt offering, pricing, channels; run customer discovery and mini-tests to validate demand.<br><br>**R&D & Industrialization Landscape:** How labs, manufacturing hubs, and tech parks collaborate with startups (what's realistic, fast, and compliant).<br><br>**Competitive & Market Analysis Sprints:** Build sharp competitor views and market reports; share findings and next steps.<br><br>**Community & Founder Insights:** Ecosystem events and firesides (local and foreign founders) to pressure-test your approach.<br><br>**Ongoing Mentor Cadence:** Weekly 1:1s, group control sessions, and targeted expert sessions to remove blockers.<br><br>**Demo-Ready Execution:** Final polish on narrative, numbers, and traction proof—then public pitch to investors and corporates.<br><br>**End-of-Program Outcome:** Localized go-to-market plan, investor/partner pipeline in motion, validated assumptions. | **Program Phase** |

| December 15 | **Demo Day in Khan Tengri Innovation Hub**<br><br>Final pitch/demo days with investors and corporates tailored for China.<br><br>- Acceleration program results<br>- KPI overview<br>- Startup pitch for investors in China<br>- Networking<br>(*final dates will be announced later*) | **Demo Day** |
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| **December 2025 - December 2026** | Post-acceleration support and residency status in the Khan-Tengri Innovation Hub | **Post-program phase** |

# Fees:

**Commitment fee from startup:** $5,000 per 1 person
Includes:

- 2-month co-living housing
- Digital Startups Scale Up Program: Shanghai (2 months)
- Khan Tengri Innovation Hub Residency during one calendar year

**Not included:** Startups additionally cover flight, visa, and other personal expenses.

**Expenses covered:**

- Full access to the co-working space at Khan Tengri Innovation Hub (2 months).
- Digital Startups Scale Up Program: Shanghai (2 months)
- Khan Tengri Innovation Hub Residency access during one calendar year

**Not included:** Startups additionally cover flight, visa, and personal expenses.