

# Entrepreneurship Support Track

## Public Procurement from Startups: Unlocking the State as Strategic Innovation Partner



### Challenge Description

Public procurement represents one of the most powerful levers for innovation in Europe. With over €130 billion in annual purchasing volume in Germany alone, the public sector has the potential to act as a strategic lead customer for startups, especially in deep tech and high-impact innovation areas. However, only a marginal share of public contracts currently go to startups. Complex regulations, a risk-averse procurement culture, and insufficient visibility of young companies remain key barriers.

This thesis explores how to better enable startups to access public procurement markets and how public demand can be used as a driver for innovation, startup growth, and ecosystem development. The work should identify current structural and cultural hurdles in public procurement processes and develop practical and strategic recommendations to position the state as a catalyst for innovation.

### Objective

The goal is to develop concrete, solution-oriented recommendations for more startup- and innovation-friendly public procurement processes. The thesis should provide valuable insights for policymakers, procurement professionals, innovation agencies, and ecosystem actors and contribute to the strategic discourse on how the state can become an enabler for innovation and entrepreneurship in Bavaria and beyond.

### Guiding Questions

- How can public procurement processes become more innovation-friendly?
- Which startup characteristics are (or should be) relevant in the awarding process?
- What best practices exist in other countries and how transferable are they to Germany?
- What changes are needed in procurement regulation or support mechanisms?

- How can procurement foster innovation in areas such as AI, biotech, or quantum technologies?

### Methodological Framework

- Qualitative interviews with startups, procurement officials, public innovation agencies, policymakers, and investors to understand practical bottlenecks and incentives
- Comparative analysis of policy frameworks, regulations, and instruments across countries
- Desk research: Evaluation of existing data, academic literature, public reports, and legal texts
- Derivation of actionable recommendations for public actors to implement reforms

### Profile and process

You apply individually with a motivation letter and a CV (but no project draft) and will write an individual master thesis which is suitable to your study program.

- Currently enrolled in a Master's degree at TUM in business or related subjects with a strong affinity to entrepreneurship.
- Fulfilment of all the usual requirements for registering a Master's thesis.
- High level of motivation and independent, entrepreneurial approach to work.
- Openness to contribute own ideas to concretise the research question

Upon successful application, you will become part of the TUM Entrepreneurial Masterclass with all according benefits, such as real added value from the ecosystem in and around Munich

### **TUM Entrepreneurial Masterclass**

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