

Terms & Conditions

Entrepreneur of the Year

Entrepreneurship Awards 2026



2026

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Entrepreneur of the Year 2026 - João Vasconcelos Award

This award aims to annually recognize an entrepreneur or a team of entrepreneurs from a company based and/or with significant operations in Portugal who stand out for their leadership abilities and the performance/progress of their project throughout the year. The award is named after João Vasconcelos, the first Executive Director of AIEL, to honor his work towards entrepreneurship and innovation.

This year marks the eighth edition of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award, an initiative of the Entrepreneurship Awards by Unicorn Factory Lisboa.

Article 1

Scope

The Entrepreneur of the Year aims to reward entrepreneurs of a company developed in Portugal who stand out for their performance in the phase of expansion of their businesses.

Article 2

Objectives

It also has the following goals:

- Foster and promote an entrepreneurial and initiative-driven spirit;
- Foster and promote innovation;
- Value entrepreneurs according to the business potential and leadership profile.

Article 3

Recipients

All entrepreneurs or teams of entrepreneurs who have their company based and/or with significant operations in Portugal, has demonstrated outstanding leadership and

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achieved notable progress or performance in the growth of their startup, are eligible to apply or be nominated or to apply for the Entrepreneur of the Year.

A startup is defined as an innovative company that incorporates technology, with a highly scalable business model.

Article 4

Application process

- a) Applications and nominations must be submitted through dedicated forms available on the Unicorn Factory Lisboa website;
- b) The nomination period runs from July to 18th September 2026 (including, until 23:59h), and the application period is from July to 23rd September 2026 (including, until 23:59h);
- c) The organization is not responsible for any loss or non-receipt of applications, even if this is the result of network interruptions or failures or the website created for the purpose or the platform that use for receiving the applications.
- d) All nominees will be contacted, and they will be asked to confirm their intention to be candidates for the Entrepreneur of the Year;
- e) If the nominees wish to proceed with their applications, they must complete the application form available on the Unicorn Factory Lisboa's website, by the application deadline;
- f) Each entrepreneur or team of entrepreneurs can only be the subject of one application.

Article 5

Application Evaluation

- a) Applications will undergo a preliminary review to verify the formal eligibility conditions of the entrepreneurs.
- b) Eligible applications will undergo for pre-selection, with the aim of selecting the entrepreneur or team of entrepreneurs who will advance to the final phase.
- c) This assessment is based on the information provided in the application form and will be conducted by Unicorn Factory Lisboa representatives and/or those appointed by it.

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- d) Applications that do not meet the conditions outlined in Article 3, or that do not provide sufficient information for evaluation, will be notified by email that they will not proceed for assessment.
- e) Following these preliminary stages, the finalist entrepreneurs will undergo a public jury session aimed at selecting the winner and presenting the award.
- f) This jury will consider the following criteria:
- Vision and strategy in the development and expansion of the startup
 - Individual contribution to the national entrepreneurial ecosystem
 - Leadership and team management
 - Growth achieved by the startup in the last year (October 2025 to September 2026)
 - Startup's international penetration/expansion plan
 - Awards/distinctions won by the startup in the last year
 - Scalability of the business model
- g) The jury mentioned in the previous point will be announced in due course and will be composed of members from Unicorn Factory Lisboa and from the national entrepreneurial community.
- h) This session will take place in the final event of the Entrepreneurship Awards.
- i) Unicorn Factory Lisboa will make every effort to ensure the selection of a winner; however, it reserves the right not to award the prize.

Article 7

Confidentiality

Unicorn Factory Lisboa and the jury members undertake to maintain confidentiality regarding the content of all information they have access to under this initiative, including intellectual and industrial property, even after its conclusion, except to the extent strictly necessary for the execution of this initiative and for the purposes of disclosure and promotion of the program.

Article 8

Data protection

The protection of the privacy and personal data of the applicants is of great importance to Unicorn Factory Lisboa. By registering for this initiative through the completion of the application form, you are accepting the Privacy Policy of Unicorn Factory Lisboa, which can be reviewed on our website at <https://unicornfactorylisboa.com/privacy/>.

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Article 9

Final provisions

- a) Due to unpredictable reasons, Unicorn Factory Lisboa reserves the right to modify this Terms & Conditions informing the participating entrepreneurs of such changes.
- b) Matters not covered by or contemplated in this Terms & Conditions will be subject to decision by the Management of Unicorn Factory Lisboa.
- c) Participation in this initiative implies the explicit acceptance, by the candidates, of the terms and conditions outlined in this document.